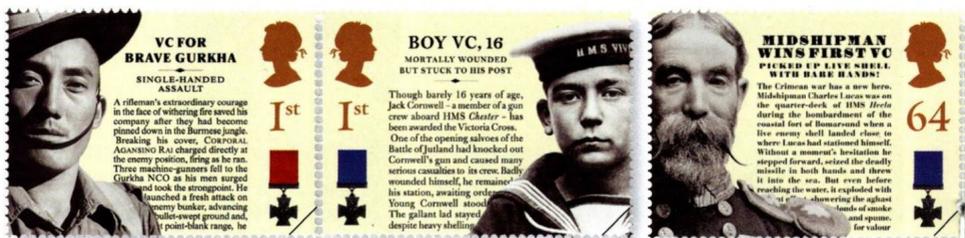


The Victoria Cross A new issue celebrating



1st class Agansing Rai and Boy Seaman First Class Jack Cornwall.

64p Midshipman Charles Lucas (awarded the very first VC, for hurling a live shell over the side of his ship during the Crimean War) and Captain Noel Chavasse.

72p Captain Albert Ball and Captain Charles Upham.

SIX COLOURFUL STAMPS, a miniature sheet and a prestige book go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and at Royal Mail Tallents House on 21 September to mark the 150th anniversary of the introduction of the Victoria Cross by Queen Victoria in 1856. The stamps, designed by Atelier Works, are printed in horizontal se-tenant pairs. The stamps are overprinted with panels of phosphor, and the year of issue ('2006') can be seen reversed out of the phosphor, similar to the 2005 Christmas stamps.

The stamps will be issued to Post Office branches in sheets of 30. However, sheets of 60 with gutter margins will be available from Post Office philatelic outlets and Royal Mail Tallents House.

MINIATURE SHEET The miniature sheet includes the 20p VC stamp from the 1990 Gallantry issue as well as the six new VC stamps, price £3.56. The new stamps are printed in vertical se-tenant pairs of each value, as opposed to horizontal pairs on the normal sheet stamps. The sheet measures 190 × 67mm. The new stamps have phosphor panels, the 20p stamp an all-over phosphor. Please note that the original 20p Gallantry stamp was printed in gravure; on the miniature sheet (and prestige book – see p338) it is litho.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 21 September, price 30p. The cover features the VC medal. Orders for FDCs with the stamps or miniature sheet cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House or Cuffley must reach Tallents House by the day of issue. Price £4.42 UK or £3.77 overseas with stamps, £4.66 or £3.97 with miniature sheet.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (for Tallents House postmark), or to one of Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centres (Cuffley postmark) marking the outer envelope 'FD0633' (Tallents House), or 'FD0634' (Cuffley). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Cuffley postmark. A non-pictorial Cuffley is also available from Special Handstamp Centres, request 'FD0634 NP'.

Sponsored handstamps for 21 September will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé Stamps

Process Lithography

Stamp size 41 × 30mm

Sheets 30 and 60

Perforation 14.5 × 14

Phosphor Phosphor panel

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical



KNIGHT

ALFRED JOSEPH

The London Regiment (Post Office Rifles), Western Front, Belgium 1917

On 20 September 1917 at Alberta Section, Ypres, Sergeant Knight's platoon came under heavy fire from an enemy machine-gun. Without regard to his personal safety Sergeant Knight rushed through the barrage to capture the machine-gun nest single-handed. Under continuous fire he carried out several more acts of conspicuous bravery, taking command of his own platoon and others when their officers were killed or wounded.

Sergeant Knight, who was later promoted to Second Lieutenant, is the only Post Office Rifleman to have been awarded the Victoria Cross.



BEHARRY

JOHNSON GIDEON

Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, Iraq 2004

On 1 May 2004 Johnson Beharry's Warrior armoured personnel carrier came under fire from rocket-propelled grenades, and many of the soldiers inside, including the platoon commander and gunner, were injured. Driving through the ambush, Beharry led a convoy of five Warriors to safety, then helped his wounded colleagues out of the vehicle to safety while still under fire.

In a second ambush on 11 June 2004, Beharry received serious head injuries; despite this he took control of the vehicle and drove his colleagues to safety before lapsing into unconsciousness.



The VC prestige book panes

VC stamps: 1st Rai, 64p Lucas, 72p Ball

VC stamps: 1st Cornwell, 64p Chavasse, 72p Upham

Definitives: 4 x 1st class (revised design, as issued 1 August) and 4 x 50p with label featuring the VC medal

Gallantry stamp 4 x 20p (1990 stamp)

VC prestige book The PSB (£7.44) was designed by Atelier Works, with text by Bernard Cornwell, and printed by Enschedé. Mr Cornwell, the novelist and creator of *Sharpe*, is a distant relative of Jack Cornwell vc. The design of the book is based on the vc medal presentation box, reproducing a medal and distinctive red ribbon. Illustrations include Queen Victoria presenting medals to recipients and the cannon from which brass is used to manufacture the medals. There are biographies of the recipients honoured on the stamps, and of Alfred Joseph Knight, the only member of the Post Office Rifles awarded the vc, and of Johnson Gideon Beharry of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, awarded a vc for service in Iraq in 2004. The vc and Gallantry stamps are printed in lithography, the definitives in gravure.

Royal Mail's serviced FDC bears the definitive and label stamp pane cancelled by Tallents House or Cuffley postmark (£4.33 UK, £3.69 overseas) •

Coin cover A VC coin cover, encapsulating two 50p coins, will be available from Royal Mail Tallents House, priced £15.50.

