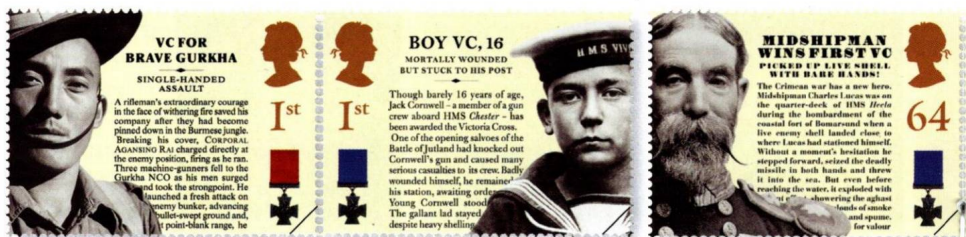


The Victoria Cross A new issue celebrating



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

150 years of the most prestigious decoration

64
RESERVED
64

BAR TO VC FOR ARMY DOCTOR

RESCUED WOUNDED FROM NO-MAN'S LAND

Captain Noel Chavasse, RAMC, has been posthumously awarded a second Victoria Cross in recognition of his gallantry in tending British casualties at Passchendaele.

"SELF-SACRIFICE BEYOND PRAISE"
Capt Chavasse, an accomplished athlete, won his first VC on the Somme. He ignored the constant bombardment of machine gun artillery, helping the injured under the threat of poison gas and



MISSING IN FRANCE CAPTAIN BALL FEARED LOST

The most famous of all British armies, Captain Albert Ball (D.S.O.) has failed to return to his airfield. He was last seen at dusk over enemy lines. Local reports in German papers claim his plane was brought down by Lt. von Kalkbrenner. Nearly 20 years old, Capt. Ball has already accounted for nearly 70 enemy aircraft. Sometimes he has engaged in single-handed combat with four or more enemy planes at once, without a moment's respite. He has also shot down several enemy victors. And yet he is a devoutly religious man, who derives pleasure from tending a small garden he has made

72
RESERVED
72

DOUBLE VC FOR COLDBITZ HERO

A VC-winning officer who had been given up for dead, but was later liberated from Colditz. Has been awarded a second Victoria Cross. Captain Charles Uryshov, an outstanding New Zealand, is only the third man in history to achieve this double honour.

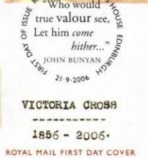
OUTSTANDING GALLANTRY
Uryshov's first VC was in recognition of sustained bravery during rearguard fighting in Crete in 1941. A year later, confronting Kommand's tanks in the Western Desert, his courageous leadership earned a second VC though badly wounded, he led a



1856-2006



Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither...
JOHN BUNYAN
21-9-2006



VICTORIA CROSS

1856 - 2006

ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
ROYAL MAIL TALLENTS HOUSE EDINBURGH
"Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither..."
JOHN BUNYAN
21-9-2006

150 YEARS OF THE VICTORIA CROSS

STORIES OF VALOUR

by General Sir Peter de la Billière

"Neither rank nor long service nor wounds nor any other quality whatsoever save the merit of conspicuous bravery shall be held as sufficient qualification for the order"

So stated the original Victoria Cross Warrant. Together with two other important conditions, these terms formed the basis of the Warrant instituting the Victoria Cross signed by Queen Victoria on 29 January 1856. It stated further that the VC should be awarded to only "those officers or men who have served us in the presence of the enemy and performed some signal act of valour or devotion to their country".

The first three awards were made to the Royal Navy, with Midshipman Charles Lucas gaining the first in June 1854 when serving on HMS Hecla in the Baltic. The medals are cast from the cascade of two Russian artillery pieces captured at Sevastopol during the Crimean War. At a time when rank and privilege dominated society, the inception of an award open to all ranks proclaimed the Queen's sense of egalitarian principles. Two of the three recipients of the double VC, or VC and Bar, were doctors while Major Charles Uryshov, a New Zealander was the only 'combatant' to be awarded a Bar.

At Guillemont, in August 1916, Captain Noel Chavasse of the Royal Army Medical Corps was seen creeping from shell-hole to shell-hole in broad daylight, completely exhausted and totally fearless, directing his stretcher-bearers, giving first aid and personally helping to bring in the wounded. Nearly a year later, after his battalion suffered cataclysmic casualties, he was fatally wounded and refused first aid, lying on a stretcher, with his dying words he asked the nurse to give his fiancée a message: "Give my love, tell her I'm duly called and called me to obey".

Another non-combatant was the Reverend Theodore Hardy, an Army Chaplain serving with the Lincolnshire and Somerset Battalions during the First World War. Telling his superior that he could not bring in sufficient

THE VICTORIA CROSS

1856 - 2006

A pack (at right, price £3.90) and stamp cards (£2.10 set) will be available from main PO branches and philatelic outlets and Talents House.

The pack has been written by General Sir Peter de la Billiere, leader of the UK forces during the first Gulf War, designed by Atelier Works, and printed by Walsall Security Printers. It features the VC recipients on the stamps, with images from contemporary press and other sources.

There are seven stamp cards, one for each stamp and one for the miniature sheet.

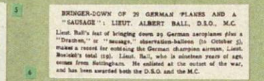
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
CUFFLEY POTTERS BAR HERTS
"I only did my job"
WILLIAM LEEFE
ROBINSON VC
21-9-2006



1 Private John Deegan, reserve infantry officer at Lanch' Park, South Africa in 1891, soon hero of the Boer Wars.



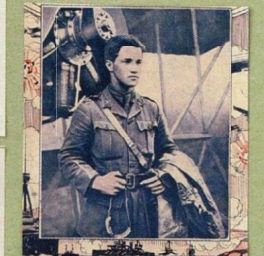
2 Illustration of Rear Admiral Charles Lucas with his heroic deed mark.



3 Cigarette card reverse tells the story of Lucas and the flying boat.



4 Clipping from The Illustrated London News shows Reverend Hardy receiving his VC from King George V.



5 Portrayal of Noel Chavasse (left) on the battlefield by PH Jones.

1 BRITISH DOWN BY 30 GERMAN PLANES AND A "GASTRO" LIEUT. ALBERT BALL, D.S.O., M.C. Lt. Ball's act of bringing down a German aeroplane plus a "Pterodactyl" or "Moose" - observation balloon - is credited as making a record for marking his German (Kaiser) aeroplane. Lt. Ball's mid-air crash - (Lanc. Star), who is another form of late, never from Wellington. He captured at the action of the war, and has been awarded both the D.S.O. and the M.C.



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

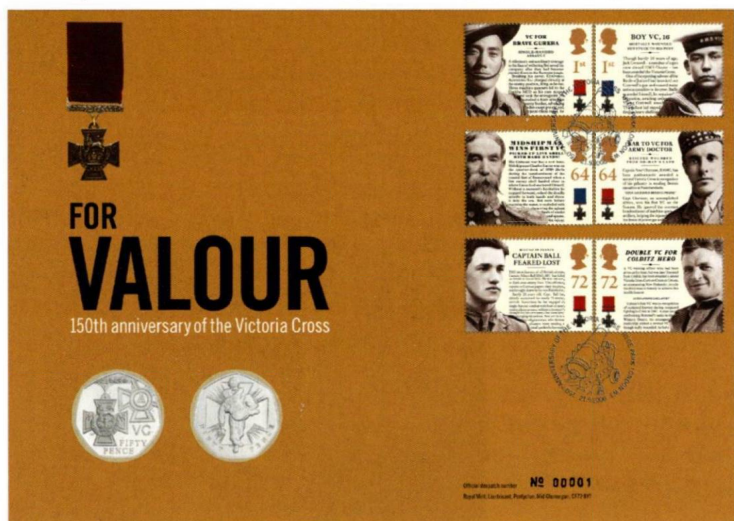
Definitives: 4 x 1st class (revised design, as issued 1 August) and 4 x 50p with label featuring the VC medal

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.



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