

## Trooper Frederick Owen Potts VC

Frederick Owen Potts is Reading's only Victoria Cross holder, and is virtually unknown in the Town, due mainly to his own modesty. Fred died in 1941, and many people in Reading believe the time is long overdue to recognise his bravery with a suitable memorial in a Town Centre location.

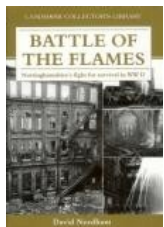
The Trooper Potts Memorial Trust has, therefore, been set up to raise necessary funds and commission a suitable memorial.

Please visit [www.pottsvctrust.org/YA.html](http://www.pottsvctrust.org/YA.html) for more information.



## Nottinghamshire Firefighters Memorial

Dedicated to the memory of those in the Fire Service and Civil Defence Organisations based within the City and County of Nottingham, who gave their lives in service to the people of this area.



This Appeal has been initiated by a group of retired Nottinghamshire Firefighters, who were inspired by the research and writing of David Needham in the production of his book, "BATTLE OF THE FLAMES," and have set out to erect a memorial to the memory of those who have died in duty, in the service of people of this area.

This is the story of Nottinghamshire people, and their fight for survival in the Second World War. Eye witness accounts from people interviewed by the author have been interwoven with information gleaned from official documents detailing the air raids on the County. The actions of the Civil Defence workers and the Fire Service are described in graphic detail, not only in relation to Nottinghamshire raids, but also when they valiantly went to the aid of others in London, Coventry, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield. The book is illustrated throughout with pictures, and there are 'then and now' illustrations that bring this period of history to life for the reader. The title of the book was taken from a speech given by the Minister of Home Security in April 1941.

**This Appeal has no direct association with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.**

If you would like to advertise your business, then please contact us. All advertising income goes directly to the fund, helping your business and our fund raising.

*The Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Victoria Cross Committee*



Email:- [notts.vc.memorial@btconnect.com](mailto:notts.vc.memorial@btconnect.com)  
<http://nottinghamshire-victoria-cross-memorial.org.uk/>

*Designed and Printed by the Committee.*



*The Nottingham & Nottinghamshire  
Victoria Cross  
Committee.*

Issue No1



# Newsletter

### **Latest News.**

The Committee is currently working on the three projects described here. A plaque for **Harry Churchill Beet VC**, who was born 1st April, 1873, at Brackenhurst Farm, Bingham, Nottinghamshire. He joined the 1st Battalion Derbyshire Regiment, and won his VC in the Second Boer War at Wakkerstroom, on the 22nd April, 1900. Later Lord Kitchener promoted him Sergeant for service in the field. Later again, he was promoted to Captain. The location for the plaque is still to be confirmed. For more details see our website.

**Sir Henry Wilmot VC, KCB, 5th Bart**, A renovation project in St. Mary's Churchyard, Chaddesden, Derbyshire. We are working with the Family, Church, Local Historians



and the Community, to renovate the Family plot. With the help of local schools and the Community, we hope to make it a "Living Churchyard" by planting thousands of bulbs and shrubs to create a place of natural beauty. The Church is one of only two grade A listed Churches in the City of Derby, and well worth a visit.



**James Upton VC**, born 3rd March, 1888, in The Meadows, Nottingham. At the outbreak of WW1 he was working at Bestwood Colliery, before joining the 1st Battalion Sherwood Foresters. He went on to win his VC on 9th May, 1915, at Rouges Bancs (Aubers Ridge), France. James died on 10th August, 1949, and was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium, London. He has no known individual memorial, but his name is now on the Nottingham Castle Victoria Cross Memorial, which was unveiled in May 2010.

### **Charitable Status**

The Committee is now in its second official year, and we feel that we have gained credibility by the professional way we conduct our affairs. We have recently decided to apply for charitable status, as this will help in fund raising through being able to claim back tax on donations through the Gift Aid scheme. This scheme works with any donation of five pounds or more, and requires the donor only to fill in a very small form. It makes every five pounds donated worth six pounds twenty five to our fund.



Golders Green Crematorium, London. A very interesting place to visit. In Spring, the display on the Crocus Lawn is one of London's most beautiful sights, with thousand upon thousand of crocuses in flower. Last year, another 90,000 bulbs were planted.

The Committee is willing to work with any other like minded Groups throughout the UK, with the aim to further the remembrance of these brave men, to educate, and to give further understanding of our Nation's highest award for bravery in the face of the enemy.

## In each issue we will be publishing a short story of a VC recipient

### Corporal James Upton VC.



Extracted from  
'Deeds That Thrill The Empire'

On Sunday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1915, in conjunction with a forward movement of the French troops between the right of our line and Arras, our 1<sup>st</sup> Corps and the Indian Corps attacked the German position between Neuve Chapelle and Givenchy, while the 8<sup>th</sup> Division of the 4<sup>th</sup> Corps attacked the enemy's trenches in the neighbourhood of Rouges Bancs to the northwest of Fromelles. Our artillery preparation at Rouges Bancs began shortly before 5 a.m., and half an hour later our infantry advanced to the assault of the German trenches, which were separated from ours by a distance of some 250 yards, the intervening ground being destitute of every vestige of cover. The East Lancashire, and two Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sherwood Foresters started the attack; but the artillery preparation had been altogether inadequate, and our men came up against unbroken wire and parapets. Many casualties occurred during the advance, and many more during the subsequent retirement. About 7 a.m., after a second bombardment of the enemy's position, the remaining two Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sherwood Foresters scaled the parapet and lined up about thirty yards in front of it, where they lay down in a shallow trench, to await the order to advance. With them was a young Lincolnshire man, Corporal James Upton, who on that day was destined to win the most coveted distinction of the British soldier. The ground in front of the Sherwood's was strewn with the wounded, some of them terribly mutilated, and their cries for help were heartrending. At last Corporal Upton could listen to them no longer; come what might, he was resolved to go to their succour. Crawling out of the trench, he made his way towards the enemy's lines, and had not gone far when he came upon a Sergeant of the Worcester's, who was wounded in the thigh, the leg being broken. Upton bandaged him up as well as he could with an old flag and put his leg in splints, which done, he carried him on his back to our trench and consigned him to the care of some comrades. Then, discarding his pack and the rest of his equipment, which included a couple of jam tin bombs, he went out again and found another man, who had been hit in the stomach. As this man was too big and heavy to carry, he unrolled his waterproof sheet, placed him on it, and dragged him in. Going out for the third time, he was proceeding to carry in a man with both legs shattered, and had got within ten yards of the trench, when a high explosive shell burst close to them. A piece of it struck the wounded man in the back, killing him instantaneously, and giving Upton, though he escaped unhurt, a bad shock. This obliged him to rest for a while, but soon as he felt better, the heroic non-commissioned officer resumed his work of mercy, and venturing out again into the fire swept open, succeeded in rescuing no less than ten more wounded men. During the remainder of the day, until eight at night, he was engaged in dressing the serious cases in front of our trenches, exposed the whole time to a heavy artillery and rifle fire, from which, however, he emerged without a scratch.

#### Letter to Pat:

On 18th May, he wrote to his sister, "I look like getting the VC for rescuing wounded men in a big scrap we had last Monday. I thought my time was up every moment, and I was carrying one chap out on my back when a shell hit him and killed him stone dead. I told you that I had given up my stripes but, for my heroic deed as the General calls it, he promoted me to be a Corporal again.

My God, Pat, one could not stop under cover oneself and hear the groans of the wounded and stick it. The shells were coming in hundreds, but I stuck to my task."

In another letter to his sister, Upton revealed the scale of the losses that the 1st Notts & Derbys had suffered up to that time, "I have been through mud, water and murder. We have lost 935 men during the last month. My other chum got killed the other day. I had been speaking to him and another man, and had only just left when a shell came and blew them all up.

. I am one of twelve in the whole Regiment who have never been in hospital during our stay in France. My Regiment has had 2,700 casualties of one kind and another. We are having very fine weather now, and it is quite enjoyable. One forgets there is such a thing as war, and cannot sleep if there are no big guns banging away."

He was a little less unambiguous when he spoke at a Recruiting Rally in Hucknall, on 27 July, 1915. He was there to encourage men to join up, so it was hardly surprising:

"If my leave was to go on much longer, I shouldn't be able to run. I am getting so fat, although just at present, life in the trenches is just a picnic from morning till night. We are waiting for more men, and then with a long pull, a strong pull, a pull together we shall get the Germans on the run.

I am going back on Saturday [31st July 1915], but I shall go back with a good heart. Can I persuade a few of you young men to get into khaki? It's a fine life with plenty to do, and plenty of food and drink to do it on. We don't get bully beef and biscuits now, but fresh meat, vegetables and bread - and hundreds of cigarettes."

---

### The 98th Australian has been awarded the Victoria Cross. Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith.

In Perth, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2011, Governor-General Quentin Bryce presented Corporal Roberts-Smith with his Victoria Cross.

For action in Afghanistan, The London Gazette says the decisive engagement caused the Taliban to retreat from the Shah Wali Kot District, and Corporal Roberts-Smith's most conspicuous gallantry in a circumstance of extreme peril was instrumental to the success of the troops against a numerically superior force.

"His valour was an inspiration to the soldiers with whom he fought alongside, and is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force," the citation says. Corporal Roberts-Smith was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for bravery in June 2006, when his Patrol was manning an Observation Post under insurgent attack near Afghanistan's Chora Pass. At one point, while alone in an exposed position, he used his sniper rifle to stop the advance of 16 insurgents, and held his position while under fire from other militia until air support arrived. Following the actions for which he was awarded the VC, Corporal Roberts-Smith was posted back to his Regiment's base in Perth in time to be with his wife, Emma, for the birth of their twins, Eve and Elizabeth. While his VC and his gallantry medal make him the most decorated member of the Australian Defence Force, he may still return to frontline duty.

---

#### Presentation and Talk.

Tony, our Chairman, has put together a Powerpoint presentation and talk about the twenty Nottinghamshire Victoria Cross Recipients, and the formation of the Committee. It lasts about fifty minutes, plus any discussion after. It is done free of charge to Groups, Schools, Clubs, etc, but any donation to our fund would be gratefully accepted. Please email us for further details - address on back page.

---

#### Brian Fare Aviation Artist

Brian has been serving in the Royal Air Force for over twenty years and, over the last few years, has built up a reputation for the quality of his art work. He has had many commissions from within the RAF, producing prints for special occasions, and gifts for visiting dignitaries. The Committee has a number of his very fine pencil prints of aircraft for sale. Please look on the website for examples, or contact us for more details.

---

#### Recommended Research Book

"Monuments to Courage" by David Harvey. ISBN No 1-847348-09-2  
Although there are a few errors in the book, it has to be one of the finest publications on the subject.