



## PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

April 2017

**Three Freemasons from Aldershot Camp Lodge, a Freemason from Needles Lodge, Isle of Wight and a Freemason from the Lodge of Hope in Portsmouth to be honoured for receiving Victoria Crosses during World War One**

**They will be amongst 63 'Brothers in Arms' being remembered with a new memorial**

- **All 63 were Freemasons and members of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE)**
- **Their medals represent one in 10 of all VCs awarded during World War One**
- **The memorial at Freemasons' Hall in London will be unveiled by HRH The Duke of Kent as part of UGLE's Tercentenary celebrations**

**Tuesday 25 April 2017:** The 63 Freemasons awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) during The Great War (WW1) will be honoured with special commemorative stones bearing their names to be laid outside the iconic Freemasons' Hall building in Covent Garden, London. The building is one of the largest peace memorials of our time and was built in honour of every Freemason who fell in WWI.

The ceremony is not only part of the celebrations to mark this year's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), but also looks ahead to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW1 in 2018.

The Victoria Cross is the highest award within the UK honours system that recognises '*conspicuous bravery in the presence of the enemy*'. It can be awarded to anyone serving with the Armed Forces with no distinction of rank or class, a value shared by Freemasons who come from all backgrounds and walks of life. The 63 being recognised include:

**Harry Daniels, Aldershot Camp Lodge, born 1884 (died 1953)**



**Harry Daniels was the 13th child of 16 born to a baker in Wymondham, Norfolk. He joined the army at a young age and served abroad in India.**

He was 30 years old, and a Company Sergeant-Major in the 2nd Battalion of The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own), British Army during the First World War when the following deed took place for which he was awarded the VC.

On 12 March 1915 at Neuve Chapelle, France, his unit was ordered into an advance on the German trenches across no-man's land which was covered by machine guns and strewn with barbed wire. Daniels and another man, Cecil Reginald Noble, voluntarily rushed in front with cutters and attacked the wires. They were both wounded at once, Noble dying later of his wounds.

For further activities on the Western Front he was awarded the Military Cross and later achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel.

He represented Britain in boxing at the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp and attended the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 despite having a heart attack a few days before.

His Victoria Cross is displayed at the Royal Green Jackets Museum at Winchester, England.

**William Robert Fountaine Addison, Aldershot Camp Lodge, born 1883 (died 1962)**



The Reverend William Addison attended Sarum College, was ordained in 1913 and became curate of St Edmund's Church, Salisbury (now closed). During the First World War, he was a Temporary Chaplain of the Forces, 4th Class in the Army Chaplain's Department, British Army, when the following deed took place on 9 April 1916 at Sanna-i-Yat, Mesopotamia, for which he was awarded the VC "for most conspicuous bravery."

He carried a wounded man to the cover of a trench, and assisted several others to the same cover, after binding up their wounds under heavy rifle and machine gun fire.

In addition to these unaided efforts, by his splendid example and utter disregard of personal danger, he encouraged the stretcher-bearers to go forward under heavy fire and collect the wounded.

After the war, Addison continued as an army chaplain and served at Malta, Khartoum and Shanghai and at army bases in England. He was Senior Chaplain to the Forces from 1934 to 1938 when he left the army and became a parish priest. He was Rector of Coltishall with Great Hautbois in Norfolk from 1938 to 1958. However, on the outbreak of the Second World War he returned to the army and again served as Senior Chaplain to the Forces.

**Spencer John Bent, Aldershot Camp Lodge, born 1891 (died 1977)**



He was 23 years old, and a drummer in the 1st Battalion, The East Lancashire Regiment, British Army during the First World War when the following deed took place for which he was awarded the VC.

On the night of 1/2 November 1914 near Le Gheer, Belgium, when his officer, the platoon sergeant and a number of men had been struck down, Drummer Bent took command of the platoon and with great presence of mind and coolness succeeded in holding the position. He had previously distinguished himself on two occasions, on 22 and 24 October by bringing up ammunition under heavy shell and rifle fire. Again, on 3 November, he brought into cover some wounded men who were lying, exposed to enemy fire, in the open.

He later achieved the rank of Regimental Sergeant-Major. He survived the war and died on 3 May 1977. Bent was cremated at West Norwood Cemetery, London.

Bent's VC, along with his Military Medal and Russian Cross of St. George was sold at auction in June 2000 for £80,000. His VC is on display in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery at the Imperial War Museum, London.

**Thomas Edward Rendle of The Needles Lodge, which still meets in Ryde. He was born in 1884 in Bristol and died aged 61 in Cape Town, South Africa.**



*He was 29 years old, and a bandsman in the 1st Battalion, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, British Army, during the First World War when the following deed took place for which he was awarded the VC.*

*On 20 November 1914 near Wulverghem, Belgium, Bandsman Rendle attended to the wounded under very heavy rifle and shell fire and rescued men from the trenches in which they had been buried from the blowing in of the parapets by the fire of the enemy's heavy howitzers.*

**Norman Augustus Finch of the Lodge of Hope, which still meets in Horndean near Portsmouth. He was born in 1890 in Birmingham and died in 1966 in Portsmouth.**



*On 22/23 April 1918 at Zeebrugge, Belgium, Sergeant Finch was second in command of the pom-poms and Lewis gun in the foretop of HMS Vindictive. At one period Vindictive was being hit every few seconds, but Sergeant Finch and the officer in command kept up a continuous fire, until two heavy shells made direct hits on the foretop killing or disabling everyone except Sergeant Finch who was, however, severely wounded. Nevertheless, he remained in his battered and exposed position, harassing the enemy on the Mole until the foretop received another direct hit, putting the remainder of the armament completely out of action. His award was by virtue of ballot.*

The laying of the memorial stones is part of the Victoria Cross commemorative paving stones programme – a nationwide initiative led by the Department of Communities and Local Government in which every one of the VC recipients of the First World War is commemorated. The initiative aims to honour their bravery, provide a lasting legacy of local heroes within communities and to enable residents and visitors to understand how a community contributed to The Great War effort.

**Peter Norton GC, Chairman of The VC and GC Association, said:**

“That so many recipients of the Victoria Cross from the First World War are being honoured today is a remarkable achievement. These men, from all walks of life, were part of an extraordinary group of people recognised for their outstanding bravery. I am proud to represent them.”

### **Freemasonry and the Military**

Because of their shared values of service and camaraderie it is not surprising that there have been close links between Freemasonry and members of the Armed Services since the earliest days of organised Freemasonry.

The first known lodge with military connections was formed by the Grand Lodge of England to meet in “The Garrison on Gibraltar” in 1729. With regiments often being on the move, travelling warrants would be issued to military lodges allowing them to meet wherever the regiment was stationed. As a result the spread of Freemasonry overseas mirrors the development of the British Empire.

The two World Wars had a great effect on English Freemasonry. In the three years after the First World War over 350 new lodges were set up and in the three years after the Second World War nearly 600 new lodges came into being. In many cases the founders of those lodges were servicemen who wanted to continue the camaraderie they had built up during their war service, and were looking for a calm centre in a greatly changed and changing world.

**The British Forces Network, with the full cooperation of the United Grand Lodge of England has released this video about the connection between Freemasonry and the Armed Forces:**

**<http://forces.net/news/masons-and-military-inside-secret-world>**

