

The Only VC Awarded to a Cotswold District Resident in WW1



Lt. Col. Dudley Graham Johnson VC, CB, DSO, MC

(Later Major General)

Dudley Graham Johnson was born in the then Parish of Bourton-on-the-Water on the 13th February 1884 and lived in Rockcliffe House Nr Upper Slaughter.

He started military service with the Wiltshire Regiment in 1901 and fought in the 2nd Boer War before transferring to the South Wales Borders in 1903 (the same regiment that fought at Rorke's Drift some 20 years earlier).

He mainly carried out regimental duties in his early career in the UK, Mauritius and Hong Kong and was promoted to Lieutenant in 1907 and Captain in 1912.

He was present at one of the first battles of WW1 in Tsingtao China and was awarded his first Distinguished Service Order (DSO) on 5th/6th November 1914.

He was shot and wounded at Gallipoli on the 25th April 1915; he was awarded a MC on 1st January 1918 and was wounded again on 27th May 1918.

While he served with the Royal Sussex he was awarded a second DSO on 18th September 1918.

He was awarded the Victoria Cross, and was one of the last recipients to receive this award in WW1 for action on 4th November 1918 at Sambre Canal Northern France.

He held various roles post-war, and was promoted to Major General on the 25th December 1937; he was awarded a CB in 1939.

He also fought at Dunkirk in 1940 and was an Aide-De-Camp (ADC) to King George VI, the Queen's father, between 1942 and 1944.

In 1944 he became Colonel in Chief of the South Wales Borders, which post he held from 1944 to 1949 and then retired after nearly 50 years' of Army Service.

He died on 21st December 1975 aged 91, and is buried in Church Crookham Hampshire.

To commemorate these events the following are planned,

4th November 2018 Sambre Canal, Northern France

To commemorate the actual 100th anniversary of the awarding of the VC, family members, and representatives from various Parish Councils, CDC, and groups and associations he belonged to will be present to mark the occasion; this will include a party of Year 6 school children from Bourton Primary school who will be visiting the area on a school trip.

9th November 7.30pm Victoria Hall, Bourton-on-the-Water

A talk with pictures about the life of Dudley Graham Johnson given by his Grandson Andrew Larpent OBE. (Free entry - cash donation optional - limited tickets are available from the Visitor Information Centre, Victoria Street, Bourton on the Water.

10th November 2018 War Memorial, Bourton-on-the-Water

To commemorate the awarding of a VC to a local resident in WW1 the Government has supplied a plaque to every City, Town and Village to mark the occasion. Bourton will be hosting the plaque unveiling and dedication event on 10th November with many dignitaries attending, along with local Scouts, Guides, Cadets, Youth Groups, WI, serving military and ex-servicemen, who will be marching with the 7th Rifles Band. The march will commence at 10.45am from the Royal British Legion in Lansdowne and proceed to the War Memorial; the plaque will be unveiled at 11am. The Citation will be read by the Head Boy and Girl from the Cotswold School followed by a dedication of the stone. The Band will then march back to the RBL where refreshments will be provided by the WI to the family and various dignitaries.

Bob Hadley

Chair, Bourton-on-the-Water Parish Council.