



The George Cross was instituted in 1940 by George VI for "acts of the greatest heroism or of the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger" it is the highest gallantry award for civilians, and members of the forces.

Captain Douglas Ford GC, 2nd Battalion

"His Majesty The King approved the posthumous award of the George Cross to the late Captain Douglas Ford, 2nd Battalion The Royal Scots, in recognition of his most conspicuous gallantry while a prisoner-of-war in Japanese hands.

Captain Ford, who remained in the other ranks' prisoner-of-war camp at Sham Shui Po, was the leader in gaining contact with our agents. He was tortured, starved, and finally met his death on 18th December 1943. Throughout his terrible ordeal the behaviour of Captain Ford was superb. He refused to implicate any others. He maintained his spirits and those of his fellow prisoners until the end."

Born 18 Sept 1918, a trainee accountant when war was declared, he was commissioned into The Royal Scots and posted to the 2nd Battalion in Hong Kong in 1939.

Initially commanding a rifle platoon, he became Signals Officer and Adjutant during the fighting on the island.

Later, in the prison camps, he became involved in contacting loyal Chinese outside the camp for medical aid to help sick men dying through malnutrition and lack of medicine. Because he accepted full blame, torture of the most ruthless kind was used on Captain Ford. His steadfast refusal to give anyone away evoked the surprise and admiration of his torturers. "Ford lay for eighteen days with no hope of reprieve and the certain knowledge that he would not get even one square meal or five minutes exercise in the open air before his death, yet he never lost his courage." *Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard Vol II p132.*



The Victoria Cross was instituted in 1856 by Queen Victoria for exceptional gallantry by individuals in the face of the enemy.



Private H H Robson VC, 2nd Battalion

His citation reads: *"For most conspicuous bravery near Kimmel on the 14th December 1914. During an attack on the German position, when he left his trench under a very heavy fire and rescued a wounded officer, and subsequently for making an attempt to bring another wounded man into cover, whilst exposed to severe fire. In this attempt he was at once wounded, but persevered in his efforts, until rendered helpless by being shot a second time."*



Pte Robson sold his Victoria Cross in 1923 for £80 to pay passage to Canada and became a tram (streetcar) conductor. He died, aged 69, in Toronto in 1964.




The Royal Scots Museum


*Moments
in Time*



December

1	1804	3 rd Battalion raised at Hamilton sent to Spain to fight at the Battle of Corunna. Consisting of 13 Officers, 73 NCOs (chiefly from 1 st & 2 nd Battalions) and 845 NCOs and men.
4	1899	Troops disembarked at East London for the Boer War which ended in May 1902.
5	1825 1926	Battle of Ava, Burma. Colours of 12 th and 13 th Battalions laid up at St Giles Cathedral.
6	1857	Battle of Cawnpore, part of the Indian Rebellion of 1857.
8	1941	Hong Kong: Simultaneous to the Pearl Harbour attack, at 8am 3 Divisions of 38,000 of Japanese battle-hardened soldiers cross the frontier. With the support of 80 aircraft they destroy the Hong Kong airfield leaving no active aircraft. 12,000 men were left in defence – some raw recruits - The Royals were on the mainland alongside Punjabis, Rajputs and Volunteer battalions.
9	1708 1813  1917	Siege of Lille. On this day in 1708 the citadel surrendered. There was no rest for the Regiment which then moved forward to besiege Ghent on 24 th Dec. Crossing of the River Nive – 3 rd Battalion lost 13 officers and 113 soldiers. The Peninsular Medal was awarded in 1847 to survivors of the 1808-1814 years of fighting against Napoleon. Jerusalem - Nebi Samwil Ridge captured - 4 th and 7 th Battalions.
10	1897	General H P Raymond Colonel of the Regiment 1877-97 died and Major-Gen Sir E A Stuart becomes Colonel of The Regiment until 1903.
11	1899 1964	Battle of Stormberg and Battle of Magersfontein – 1 st Battalion. 1 RS moved back up country for its fourth and final tour of duty in the Radfan, Aden. C Company came under attack several times and on Christmas Day after finishing a large Christmas lunch came under heavy automatic and rifle fire from four directions. The cookhouse got the worst of this pasting. What had been a festive scene now became a mad scramble for stand-to positions. <i>The Thistle May 1965.</i> By the end of 1964, there had been one death through a traffic accident, but 66 vehicles has been blown up.
12	1934	Thomas Lord Lynedoch becomes Colonel of the Regiment until 1843.
14	1837 1914	Battle of St Eustache - 2 nd Battalion. Lower Canadian Rebellion. Private H H Robson awarded the Victoria Cross.
15	1871	Title of 'The Royal Scots' resumed.
17	1762	Lieutenant General Sir Henry Erskine becomes Colonel of the Regiment.



18	1843 1943	Sir George Murray, born 1772 becomes Colonel of the Regiment. Capt Douglas Ford executed at Big Wave Bay by a Japanese firing squad.
21	1817 1897 1941	Battle of Mahidpur - 2 nd Battalion. Third Anglo-Maratha War, India. Gen Sir E Blakeney becomes Colonel of the Regiment until 1868. Hong Kong: Churchill orders 'The enemy should be compelled to expend the utmost life and equipment. ... Every day that you are able to maintain your resistance you and your men can win the lasting honour which we are sure will be your due.' 0630: B and C Companies attacked in force with mortar fire. Sgt Taylor proved the superiority of 3 inch mortars over the enemy's until his ammunition ran out.
22	1845	Battle of Ferozeshah, with the Sikhs, Punjab region, India.
23	1817	Siege of Nagpore breached – on 1 st Jan the city ceded. Lt Bell died, 10 rank and file killed. 2 Sgts and 49 men wounded.
24	1708	The Duke of Marlborough resolved to besiege Ghent and the regiment was one of the corps selected for this service. An attack was made on the outposts and a detachment of the regiment formed part of the forlorn hope, and had several men killed and wounded. The garrison surrendered on 2 Jan. The French departed Bruges and the Regt remained in Ghent during the winter months.
25	1941	 2016 Royal Mint Canada coin honours the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada who also fought to defend Hong Kong in 1941. Hong Kong: Christmas Day began with 'Hold Fast' from General Maltby. At 1550 the order was 'Fly the White Flag' Hong Kong surrenders. Four officers and 98 soldiers answered the roll call in disbelief, thinking it was going to be a 'fight to the finish'. The Battalion lost 88% officers and 54% effective soldiers. 107 men killed with 230 wounded. Churchill wrote that his orders had been obeyed in spirit and to the letter: "The garrison, under Major General Maltby, were faced with an impossible task that from the outset was beyond their powers. The Colony had fought a good fight and they had won indeed the lasting honour. "
31	1918	16 th Service Battalion disbanded

"At 7am December 8th 1941, the Japanese simultaneously attacked Hong Kong and Pearl Harbour as well as Thailand and Malaya. ... There were only three battalions of British Troops with no air or artillery support, facing an enemy three divisions strong with well supported troops with about ten years' experience in the war against China. We faced impossible odds, so our lines soon crumpled and we faced a 'Dunkirk' thousands of miles from Britain." **William Spooner** 2nd Battalion The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment).

"Of the 630 Royals who became prisoners of the Japanese, 62 died in captivity and a horrifying total of 181 died at sea in consequence of the sinking of the

Lisbon Maru". **Robert H Paterson** from the Regimental History Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard, Volume II.

Burma

"The total casualties sustained by the Battalion during the two and a half years of the war in Burma was 146 killed, 57 missing and 420 wounded. Many had been lost at the beginning of the campaign in 1943. The Battalion had arrived at the Burmese frontier seven hundred strong, and in Arakan had suffered two hundred and fifty battle casualties, while another five hundred and fifty had been lost by sickness, mainly malaria. In spite of five hundred reinforcements, the Battalion that now entrained at Chittagong could muster no more than four hundred of all ranks. The first Arakan campaign was at an end." Augustus Muir p 153.

This was the second time the Regiment had been to Burma. After 18 months fighting they had lost 9 officers and 418 men in 31 December 1825.

Korea

July 1953 to June 1954. Started with the North Korean invasion of South Korea. US responded with air and naval assistance and in July with ground troops. The 1st Battalion left Southampton on 4 June 1953 to disembark at Pusan on 7 July. The Battalion was to take up positions on the front line on 29 July but on 27 July the long awaited truce was signed. The Battalion remained in Korea for twelve months, dismantling and salvaging the defence stores used to construct the front line, setting up semi-permanent camps and constructing a new defence position of sufficient strength should the war start again. When they left Korea they went straight to the Canal Zone of Suez in July 1954.

REFORM BILL DEMONSTRATION AND CHOLERA PLAGUE

"One day that year when on sentry over Mons Meg he says he remembers a procession of fully 50,000 persons marching down the Mound, carrying black flags and other demonstrative insignia, in connection with the Reform Bill agitation, and the impression created on him was that if the Bill had been rejected there would have been a revolution in the country.

That same year the cholera was raging badly, and all troops were confined to barracks for months. Great precautions were taken to isolate the Castle garrison from the populace, and one of the means adopted was the erection of a narrow gate near the waterhouse at the foot of the Esplanade. There a sergeant and sentry were posted, and no civilian was allowed to approach that isolation boundary nearer than 12 paces. Forbes says that although the inhabitants were dying in scores in the city, there was not a single death in the Castle. In 1833 a number of The Royal Scots were ordered to the West Indies, and Forbes was one of those. After six weeks at sea, Carlisle Bay Barbados was reached. The regiment left for home on 2nd December 1835, having been abroad from 1826, and out of the 600 of all ranks who left home in 1826, only 240 returned, thus in ten years the regiment lost 360 men, and that heavy mortality will convey some idea of what soldiering was in the West Indies in the early years of the century." *Reminiscences of "Old Willie Forbes" May 1900 p31 Thistle.*