

Chapter 1 : Captain Noel Chavasse the Double VC Winning Medic from Liverpool

Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, VC & Bar, MC (9 November - 4 August) was a British medical doctor, Olympic athlete, and British Army officer from the Chavasse family. He is one of only three people to be awarded a Victoria Cross twice.

The recipient of this exceptional double honour was not even a frontline soldier: Noel Chavasse, narrowly the younger of identical twin boys and one of seven children, was born in the vicarage at St Peter-le-Bailey, Oxford, on November 9, 1893. When his father became Bishop of Liverpool in 1900, Chavasse was educated at Liverpool College School, and in 1911 he graduated with a first in philosophy from Trinity College, Oxford. While at university, he was a talented sportsman, earning blues for athletics and lacrosse. He and his twin brother, Christopher, represented Britain in the Olympics, both running the metres. After qualifying as a doctor in 1914, Noel Chavasse became house physician at the Royal Southern Hospital, Liverpool, and the following year he was appointed house surgeon at the same hospital. He was awarded the Military Cross MC for his heroic efforts and, shortly afterwards, he asked one of his sisters to buy 1,000 pairs of socks and other comforts out of his own money for the battalion. On July 27, 1918, the battalion was moved to trenches in front of Guillemont, on the Somme. Despite being unable to reconnoitre the enemy positions, the men were still ordered to attack at 4.00. Not surprisingly, within a few hours they had sustained casualties out of 1,000 men. Chavasse attended to the wounded all day under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy, while during the night he searched for injured men directly in front of enemy lines. A life of sacrifice: Noel Chavasse in uniform The next day, he recruited a stretcher-bearer and, under heavy shellfire, carried a critically injured man yards to safety. On the return journey, Chavasse was wounded but it did not stop him from further sterling deeds that same night. Helped by 20 volunteers, he rescued three more wounded men from a shell-hole just 25 yards from the enemy trenches. He also buried the bodies of two officers and collected numerous identity discs from dead soldiers. It is absolutely nothing. The merest particle of shell just frisked me. I did not even know about it until I undressed at night. This compassion was highlighted by the regimental historian who wrote of Chavasse: Preparations were made for what was to be the third Battle of Ypres – an attempt to recapture Passchendaele Ridge. The offensive began on July 31 and the Liverpool Scottish, poorly protected against mustard gas, lost two officers and other ranks. On the first evening of the battle, Chavasse was wounded in the skull. He had his injury bandaged but refused to be evacuated. With virtually no food, in great pain and desperately weary, he undoubtedly saved numerous lives until, early on August 2, he was finally taking a rest at his first-aid post when it was struck by a shell. Christopher Chavasse, left, and Noel receiving their Oxford running blues Everyone in the post was either killed or wounded. Chavasse suffered at least six injuries but crawled for half a mile to get help for the others. He was taken through Ypres to the 46th Field Ambulance and then on to the 32nd Casualty Clearing Station, but his face was unrecognisable and he had a serious wound to the abdomen. He died at around 1pm on August 4, 1918. Gladys Chavasse was distraught when she heard the news: He was quite the most gallant and modest man I have ever met, and I should think the best-liked. What he did for his battalion of Liverpool Scottish was wonderful, and his loss to them is irreparable. I do not believe a man of more noble character exists. The wonderfully apt inscription in the white stone, chosen by his father, reads: Christopher Chavasse, who was awarded the Military Cross MC for his own bravery during the Great War, gave an insight into his own loss in a letter, written in 1919, to a woman whose identical twin sister had just died. Since his death, Noel Chavasse has had at least 16 memorials dedicated to his memory, including one at Liverpool Cathedral, and this total of memorials is greater than for any other VC holder in the world. However, in 1968, after lengthy private negotiations, the college took the decision to offer his medals to me. I was thrilled to add the Chavasse medals to my collection, which now totals more than 100 VCs, the largest collection of such decorations in the world. I was especially glad that the money I paid for the group of medals was going towards academic purposes: I had long felt that my VC collection would never be truly complete until it contained one of the three VCs and Bars that have been awarded since the decoration was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856. In many ways, I look upon the Chavasse decorations as the ultimate group of gallantry medals. I am immensely proud to own them and to know that they are now on public display at the Imperial War

Museum. Also in Inside the First World War, part two:

Chavasse Double VC has 11 ratings and 3 reviews. Chris said: This was a fine biography of a man whose bravery and self-sacrifice were awe theinnatdunvilla.com

The VC and Bar was sold by St. Chavasse was first awarded the VC for his actions on 9 August, , at Guillemont, when he attended to the wounded all day under heavy fire. On 30th July , The battalion was moved into the Somme battlefield near Mametz. The plan was for the battalion to be in reserve for an attack on Guillemont on 31st, but they were never used. The next week for the men was spent digging communication trenches. On 7th August, the battalion received orders to take part in an assault on Guillemont at 4: The battalion was part of th brigade and was again in reserve. The attack by th and th brigades was successful on the right but in the middle and left, it was held up. The Liverpool Irish in th Brigade appeared to be cut off near the railway station. The th were ordered to attack at 4: The guides failed to turn up, and while waiting for fresh guides, they were caught in German shelling which caused casualties. Eventually the guides arrived but they only had the vaguest idea of the route. The battalion reached the jumping off trenches with only minutes to spare. The attack was to be made past Trones Wood and Arrowhead Copse to capture the German front line trench and on into Guillemont. The attack started under a German bombardment of the trenches and no-mans-land. Heavy machine gun fire swept Death Valley and pinned down the attackers. In all four attempts were made by the battalion but all without success. The failed attack cost the Liverpool Scottish dear, out of a starting complement of twenty officers and about men, five officers were killed, five were missing and seven wounded. Of the men, sixty nine were killed, twenty seven missing and wounded. This attack was made over the same ground that 30th Division which incorporated 89th Brigade attacked on 30th July, with enormous casualties. The Scottish must have known the men who lay so thickly on the ground over the ground they were attacking. What this did to their morale does not need any explaining. During the action, Noel was wounded by two small shell splinters in his back, despite this, he performed the deeds that were to gain him his first VC. The evening of the attack saw Noel and a party of volunteers in no-mans-land helping bring in wounded men. He got as close 25 yards 23 metres to the German front line where he found three men. This went on all night and throughout all this, a constant rain of snipers bullets and occasional bombing swept no-mans-land. The battalion went back to a rest area at Valines west of Abbeville, Noel was granted sick leave to recover from his wound. He rejoined his battalion on 7th September near Delville Wood. Back in the thick of the fighting, he was again out rescuing men and treating those brought in to his Casualty Clearing Station. He told no one else in the battalion. The battalion moved from the Somme back to the Ypres Salient in the Weiltje sector, it was even more battered and grim than he remembered it. By this time, news started to reach the battalion of awards following the action at Guillemont. The Scottish received the news on 28th October and a celebration ensued, the officers held a dinner for Noel in a chateau at Elverdinghe. The citation in the London Gazette read: Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, M. For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. During an attack he tended the wounded in the open all day, under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy. Next day he took one stretcher-bearer to the advanced trenches, and under heavy shell fire carried an urgent case for yards into safety, being wounded in the side by a shell splinter during the journey. Altogether he saved the lives of some twenty badly wounded men, besides the ordinary cases which passed through his hands. His courage and self-sacrifice, were beyond praise. The offensive was scheduled to start on 25th July but due to several factors, it was delayed until 31st July. On 20th July, The Scottish moved away from their training camp and back to the familiar ground at Weiltje. The preliminary bombardment for the offensive had already started and the Germans replied by shelling the roads and communication trenches which caused 9 deaths in the battalion as they moved up to the front line. Mustard Gas and high explosive shelling caused a further casualties in the next few days. On the 24th July, the battalion were relieved and they moved back to make good their losses. On the 29th July, they battalion moved forward to its assembly positions, ominously, the fine weather now broke and the rain, which was to turn the battlefield into the infamous quagmire, started. Noel, moved into the dugout at Weiltje. This was no simple scrape but an excavation large enough to hold

several hundred men and deep enough to be safe from artillery. It even had its own generator to supply power for lighting and more importantly, water pumps. The attack started at 3: The Scottish were by this time already in open ground and made good progress towards their first objective and they pushed on towards the Steenbeek, a stream that crossed their route. As they crossed it, they were held up by uncut wire in front of them and by heavy machine gun fire from Capricorn Trench. One of the two tanks detailed to aid in the assault came up at 7am and despite being put out of action very quickly by three direct hits from a German field gun, it managed to break through the wire and by 7: Noel had moved his aid post forward with the attack and set it up in a captured German dug out at Setques Farm. The area was subjected to intensive German fire but he stayed put. The dugout was small and it served only as a patching up station before the wounded were sent further back Noel had been injured in the head by a shell splinter as he stood up and waved to indicate the position of his aid post. It is possible he suffered a fractured skull in this incident. After being dressed at the Weiltje dug out, Noel returned, despite advice to stay put, to his aid post. His stretcher bearers had been busy and Noel was very busy until sundown. As night fell Noel picked up his torch and went searching the wrecked landscape for survivors, it was raining again by this time. Early the following day, Noel found himself a German captive who was a medic and the two of them worked hard to treat wounded men in the impossible conditions of mud, blood and water. Noel went to the door of the dugout to call in the next man when a shell flew past him and down the stairs, killing the man who was waiting to be carried away by the Field Ambulance. Details get very confused at this point, Noel may have received another wound but he carried on. The official history of the Liverpool Scottish has it that Noel was wounded twice more in the head. One stretcher bearer had been sent to the aid post to tell Noel to return. There is no doubt that at about 3am in the morning of Thursday 2nd August, , another shell entered the aid post, Noel was sitting in a chair trying to get some sleep. Everyone in the aid post was either killed or seriously wounded. Noel had received four or five wounds, the worst being a gaping abdominal wound from which he bled profusely. Charles Wray of the Loyal North Lancs Regiment who sent for help and later sent an account to his local paper. Noel was sent to Casualty Clearing Station No. He was operated on immediately and after all the shell splinters had been removed he was patched up. It was not to be a happy ending however as Noel died peacefully at 1pm on Saturday 4th August, Three years to the day since the outbreak of the war. The Citation for the second award read: The award was announced in the London Gazette on 14th September, Though severely wounded early in the action whilst carrying a wounded soldier to the dressing station, he refused to leave his post, and for two days, not only continued to perform his duties, but in addition, went out repeatedly under heavy fire to search for and attend to the wounded who were lying out. During these searches, although practically without food during this period, worn with fatigue and faint with his wound, he assisted to carry an number of badly wounded men over heavy and difficult ground. By his extraordinary energy and inspiring example was instrumental in rescuing many wounded who would have otherwise undoubtedly succumbed under the bad weather conditions. This devoted and gallant officer subsequently died of his wounds. His grave Plot 3, Grave B15 has had several memorials over the years, the current headstone was erected on 28th April It is the only headstone in the world to have two Victoria Crosses engraved on it. This cemetery is looked after by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who do such a wonderful job in many countries of the world.

Chapter 3 : Chavasse: Double VC (Hardback) | eBay

Ann Clayton was born in Sunderland during the Second World War, and was brought up in the West Riding of Yorkshire. She read Modern History and Politics as an undergraduate at the University of Keele, and took her Master's degree at the Leeds University in Economic History.

Edit Noel Godfrey Chavasse was the younger of identical twin boys born to the Rev. In all, there were seven children born to the Chavasse family, in age order: The twins were so small and weak at birth that their baptism was delayed until 29 December and both were very ill with typhoid in their first year of life. Chavasse was offered the Anglican Bishopric of Liverpool. The move was not without regrets as Liverpool during this time was one of the busiest seaports in the Empire and also had a great deal of religious turmoil in progress. Noel and Christopher went to school at Liverpool College where they excelled at sports from the start. Their academic progress was initially rather slower but as they grew older, both did well until in , both were admitted to Trinity College, Oxford. Both of them stayed at Oxford, Noel to study medicine and Christopher to retake his exams. During their time at Trinity, both men had not neglected their sports, rugby union being a favourite of theirs. In , both twins represented Great Britain in the Olympic Games in the metres. Noel finished second in his heat while Christopher finished third, neither time being fast enough to progress further. By the following May, he was promoted to Lance-Sergeant. Noel finished his studies at Oxford in July and returned to Liverpool to continue his studies under such eminent teachers as Sir Robert Jones who went on to become a leading authority in orthopaedic surgery. On returning to Liverpool, Chavasse resumed his connection with the Grafton Street Industrial School , an institution for homeless boys in Liverpool. In the autumn, he went to London to sit his examination for Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. He failed, apparently because of ill health. When he sat the examination again in May , he passed it with ease. Noel progressed through his studies having studied pathology and bacteriology. As part of his course, he was obliged to undertake a hospital "placement". He found a position at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin. Whilst Chavasse liked Dublin, his first experience of living in a Roman Catholic community disturbed him. He took a dislike to the local priesthood whom he considered lazy and avaricious. His first placement was at the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool, [2] initially until 31 March and then for a further six months. He then became house surgeon to Robert Jones, his former tutor. Military career and decorations Edit In early , after discussions with some of his fellow doctors, Chavasse applied for and was accepted by the Royal Army Medical Corps RAMC ; he was commissioned as a lieutenant on 2 June. Chavasse joined the battalion on 2 June and was welcomed by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Nicholl, the commanding officer. As an officer in a Territorial unit, Chavasse now had to attend to both his civilian and military duties. Chavasse was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at Hoge, Belgium in June , although the award was not gazetted until 14 January Chavasse was first awarded the VC for his actions on 9 August , at Guillemont, France when he attended to the wounded all day under heavy fire. The full citation was published on 24 October and read: For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. During an attack he tended the wounded in the open all day, under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy. Next day he took one stretcher-bearer to the advanced trenches, and under heavy shell fire carried an urgent case for yards into safety, being wounded in the side by a shell splinter during the journey. Altogether he saved the lives of some twenty badly wounded men, besides the ordinary cases which passed through his hands. His courage and self-sacrifice, were beyond praise. Bar to Victoria Cross.

Chapter 4 : Noel Chavasse: the doctor who braved hell for others - Telegraph

Chavasse: Double VC and millions of other books are available for Amazon Kindle. Learn more Enter your mobile number or email address below and we'll send you a link to download the free Kindle App.

He was a prize-winning academic, qualified as a doctor, played rugby and represented Great Britain in the Olympics, running alongside his twin brother, Christopher, in the m. The recipient of this exceptional double honour was not even a frontline soldier: But this did not stop him from being responsible for some of the bravest and most unselfish acts of the entire conflict. Noel Chavasse, the younger of identical twin boys and one of seven children, was born in the vicarage at St Peter-le-Bailey, Oxford, on November 9, . When his father became Bishop of Liverpool in , Chavasse was educated at Liverpool College School, and in he graduated with a first in philosophy from Trinity College, Oxford. After qualifying as a doctor in , Noel Chavasse became house physician at the Royal Southern Hospital, Liverpool, and the following year he was appointed house surgeon at the same hospital. In the first few months Chavasse was kept busy dealing with trench foot, a condition caused by standing for long periods in mud and water. His duty was not a frontline soldier but he served as a medical officer. In March the regiment took part in the offensive at Ypres, where poison gas was used for the first time. By June only men out of the men who arrived with Chavasse remained on active duty. The rest had been killed or badly wounded. Chavasse was promoted to Captain in August and six months later was awarded the Military Cross for his actions at the Battle of Hooge. In April he was granted three days leave to receive his award from King George V. On July 27, , the battalion was moved to trenches in front of Guillemont, on the Somme. Despite being unable to resist the enemy positions, the men were still ordered to attack at 4. Chavasse attended to the wounded all day under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy, while during the night he searched for injured men directly in front of enemy lines. Of the men who took part in the offensive, of the men were killed and were wounded. Helped by 20 volunteers, he rescued three more wounded men from a shell-hole just 25 yards from the enemy trenches. He also buried the bodies of two officers and collected numerous identity discs from dead soldiers. It was during this period Noel performed the deeds that gained him his second Victoria Cross. By the summer of , the battalion had moved to trenches near Wieltje, north-east of Ypres. On the first evening of the battle, Chavasse was wounded in the skull. He had his injury bandaged but refused to be evacuated. With virtually no food, in great pain and desperately weary, he undoubtedly saved numerous lives until, early on August 2, he was finally taking a rest at his first aid post when it was struck by a shell. A short history of his Life.

Chapter 5 : Chavasse, Double VC, by Ann Clayton

Noel Godfrey Chavasse (Double VC Award). He was born 9 November at the Rectory, St. Peter-le-Bailey, Oxford. He died 4 August aged 32 from wounds received during his VC bar action, at Brandhoek Road Casualty Clearing Station, near Ypres, Belgium.

There is a further connection between these three men that I will explain later. Noel Godfrey Chavasse was the second of two identical twin boys born to the Rev. Christopher Maude was born 20 minutes before his brother. The twins were very small and weak at birth that their baptism was delayed until 29th December, and both were very ill with typhoid in their first year of life. The family grew up in Oxford until on 3rd March, , Rev. Chavasse was offered the the Anglican Bishopric of Liverpool. The move was not without regrets as Liverpool during this time was one of the busiest seaports in the Empire and also had a great deal of religious turmoil in progress. Noel and Christopher went to school at Liverpool College where they excelled at sports from the start. Their academic progress was to start with rather slower but as they grew older, both boys did well until in , both young men returned to Oxford, having been admitted to Trinity College. In , Noel graduated with First Class Honours but Christopher failed and this lead him to a nervous breakdown. Both of them stayed at Oxford, Noel to study medicine and Christopher to retake his exams. During their time at Trinity, both men had not neglected their sports, Rugby being a favourite of theirs. Noel finished second in his heat while Christopher finished third, neither time was fast enough to progress further. He must have been a natural as by the following May, he was promoted to lance-sergeant. It must have been difficult for him as he felt he had been promoted over the heads of some senior corporals and additionally his unit was inspected by General John French, on June 5th, , who in became Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Noel finished his studies at Oxford in July and returned to Liverpool to continue his studies under such eminent teachers as Robert Jones who went on to become a leading authority in orthopaedic surgery Now Noel was back home, he resumed his connection with Grafton Street Industrial School, an institution for homeless boys in Liverpool. In the autumn, Noel went to London to sit his examination for Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, he failed but it appears that he was ill at this time and when he sat it again in May, , he passed it with ease. Noel progressed through his studies having studied pathology and bacteriology. Whilst Noel liked Dublin, his first experience of living in a Roman Catholic community disturbed him. He took a dislike to the local priesthood whom he considered lazy and avaricious. January, saw Noel pass his final medical examination, he did very well. In fact in March, the University awarded him their premier prize, the Derby Exhibition.. His first placement was at the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool, initially until 31st March , it was renewed for a further six months at the end of which time Noel was delighted to accept the position of house surgeon to Robert Jones himself. It was in early that after discussions with some of his fellow doctors that Noel applied for and was accepted by the Royal Army Medical Corps R. Noel joined the battalion on 2nd June, and was welcomed by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Nicholl, the Commanding Officer. Noel now was a very busy man, he still had his medical career to attend to as well as his Territorial duties. The Great War Only twelve months had passed when the storm clouds of war appeared on the horizon. Noel was preparing for a two week summer camp with the battalion and signed the leave book at the Southern Hospital from 2nd to 16th August, he was never to return to his position, on 4th August Britain declared war on Germany. Being a Territorial Battalion, the 10th Kings were not obliged to serve overseas but on 10th August, whilst Noel was examining recruits at Chester, he heard that his C. There is evidence that Noel was prepared to use the friendship between Bishop Chavasse and Lord Derby, who was the Director General of Recruiting, for his own purposes, however it was Christopher who was the first member of the family to make it to France, he became Chaplain to Number 10 General Hospital at St Nazaire. Noel did not have long to wait, on 9th October, , orders were received for the battalion to move to Tonbridge Wells in Kent, prior to moving overseas. Much training and equipping went on until on 1st November, , the battalion climbed on board a train destined for Southampton Docks and France. Appropriately, the ship that carried them was a Liverpool ship, the Maidan, captained by a Birkenhead man. It arrived at Le Havre at 7am on 2nd November. Moving forward, Noel was determined to save everyone from

the effects of the oncoming winter and the dangers of living in the open. He obtained and was one of the first doctors to use anti-tetanus serum on wounded men. This serum was a great success, over eleven million doses were administered during the war and very few men developed tetanus as a result. The battalion moved into the front line for the first time on Friday 27th November near Kemmel. Noel soon became aware that his expectations of being safe behind the lines was fallacious, his speed as exhibited in , saved him from snipers in dashes across open areas more than once. Trench foot appeared early as the trenches around Ypres were notorious for the wet conditions. His charges had been standing in mud and water for 72 hours and more casualties were caused by this than by enemy action The Liverpool Scottish had started with men and 26 officers but by the first week in January, there were only fit men, only 32 had been killed. The filth bothered Noel a lot as there was no way he could treat his wounded men with clean hands. March brought change to the battalion as they were transferred into the Ypres Salient near Hill 60 just in time for the Second Battle of Ypres when poison gas was used for the first time in April , Noel managed to get his father to send out a gramophone for the battalion which went down very well. The battalion were not directly affected by the chlorine release by the Germans but it had caused much alarm. June brought the death of the first member of the Chavasse family. The 10th June, brought the battalion into the Battle of Hooze , by the time it finished, only men and two officers were fit, Noel had lost most of his friends and Noel was recommended by his Commanding Officer for a Military Cross for his work during the battle but unfortunately, the recommendations were lost at Division level and not one of the battalion received any recognition for their actions Noel finally was awarded The Military Cross on 14 January, , there was no citation in the London Gazette due to the lost recommendation and the length of the list. The battalion were granted leave after the battle and Noel was one of the lucky recipients. Promotion Noel was promoted to Captain in August and the next six months were spent in the gruelling tasks of trench warfare. Further promotions were denied him, primarily I think, because he was an outspoken critic of certain branches of the R. In February , Noel again had some leave granted, he returned to his unit shortly before another cousin, Lt. Arthur Chavasse, also a doctor, died of pneumonia on 12th March. Unfortunately his award was postponed and after many delays, he finally went to Buckingham Palace on Tuesday 7th June, , almost a year since the Battle of Hooze. This greatly added to the fears of the older members of his family back home. The plan was for the battalion to be in reserve for an attack on Guillemont on 31st, but they were never used. The next week for the men was spent digging communication trenches. On 7th August, the battalion received orders to take part in an assault on Guillemont at 4: The battalion was part of th brigade and was again in reserve. The attack by th and th brigades was successful on the right but in the middle and left, it was held up. The Liverpool Irish in th Brigade appeared to be cut off near the railway station. The th were ordered to attack at 4: The guides failed to turn up, and while waiting for fresh guides, they were caught in German shelling which caused casualties. Eventually the guides arrived but they only had the vaguest idea of the route. The battalion reached the jumping off trenches with only minutes to spare. The attack was to be made past Trones Wood and Arrowhead Copse to capture the German front line trench and on into Guillemont. The attack started under a German bombardment of the trenches and no-mans-land. Heavy machine gun fire swept Death Valley and pinned down the attackers. In all four attempts were made by the battalion but all without success. The failed attack cost the Liverpool Scottish dear, out of a starting complement of twenty officers and about men, five officers were killed, five were missing and seven wounded. Of the men, sixty nine were killed, twenty seven missing and wounded. This attack was made over the same ground that 30th Division which incorporated 89th Brigade attacked on 30th July, with enormous casualties. The Scottish must have known the men who lay so thickly on the ground over the ground they were attacking. What this did to their morale does not need any explaining. During the action, Noel was wounded by two small shell splinters in his back, despite this, he performed the deeds that were to gain him his first VC. The evening of the attack saw Noel and a party of volunteers in no-mans-land helping bring in wounded men. He got as close 25 yards 23 metres to the German front line where he found three men. This went on all night and throughout all this, a constant rain of snipers bullets and occasional bombing swept no-mans-land. The battalion went back to a rest area at Valines west of Abbeville, Noel was granted sick leave to recover from his wound. He rejoined his battalion on 7th September near

Delville Wood. Back in the thick of the fighting, he was again out rescuing men and treating those brought in to his Casualty Clearing Station. In early October Bishop Chavasse received a letter from Lord Derby which despite being "absolutely forbidden by War Office Rules" he informed the Bishop that "one of your sons in the RAMC attached to the Liverpool Territorials" had been forwarded to him and he "had the honour of forwarding his name to His Majesty for the bestowal of this magnificent Order the V. The Bishop wrote immediately to Noel who replied with some scepticism ". He told no one else in the battalion. The battalion moved from the Somme back to the Ypres Salient in the Weiltje sector, it was even more battered and grim than he remembered it. By this time, news started to reach the battalion of awards following the action at Guillemont. The Scottish received the news on 28th October and a celebration ensued, the officers held a dinner for Noel in a chateau at Elverdinghe. The citation in the London Gazette read: During an attack he tended the wounded in the open all day, under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy. Next day he took one stretcher-bearer to the advanced trenches, and, under heavy fire, carried an urgent case for yards into safety, being wounded in the side by a shell splinter during the journey. Altogether he saved the lives of some twenty badly wounded men, besides the ordinary cases which passed through his hands. His courage and self-sacrifice were beyond praise. Noel was inundated by letters from all sorts of people and true to his character, he found time to reply to them all. Noel was transferred further back to a small hospital because he had got himself in trouble by criticising two spheres of the RAMC. His letters concerning the Field Ambulance and the treatment of venereal disease amongst the troops aroused a lot of ill feeling, even up to his Major General, but Noel insisted that what he had written was the truth and he refused to back down. Eventually the furore died down and by Christmas , Noel was back with his beloved Scottish. In February, Noel was granted 14 days leave, he went on 5th February to Buckingham Palace where he was one of seven men being invested. It is perhaps a sign of the times to note that he was only accompanied by four female relatives, all the male members of the family were in France. It was during this leave, he became engaged to his longtime sweetheart Gladys. Noel returned to the Scottish and immediately found himself having to treat a condition, peculiar to kilted battalions in icy weather, frostbitten knees.

Title: Chavasse:Double VC Author: Ann Clayton Genre: Biography Rating: 5.0 I came across the story of Captain Noel Chavasse completely by accident late last year, when I was doing some research for a novel I was writing at the time.

Childhood[edit] Noel Godfrey Chavasse was the younger of identical twin boys born to the Rev. In all, there were seven children born to the Chavasse family, in age order: The twins were so small and weak at birth that their baptism was delayed until 29 December and both were very ill with typhoid in their first year of life. The move was not without regrets as Liverpool during this time was one of the busiest seaports in the Empire and also had a great deal of religious turmoil in progress. Noel and Christopher went to school at Liverpool College where they excelled at sports from the start. Their academic progress was initially rather slower but as they grew older, both did well until in 1900, both were admitted to Trinity College, Oxford. Both of them stayed at Oxford, Noel to study medicine and Christopher to retake his exams. During their time at Trinity, both men had not neglected their sports, rugby union being a favourite of theirs. In 1901, both twins represented Great Britain in the Olympic Games in the 100 metres. Noel finished third in his heat while Christopher finished second, but only the heat winners progressed to the semi-finals. By the following May, he was promoted to lance-sergeant. Noel finished his studies at Oxford in July and returned to Liverpool to continue his studies under such eminent teachers as Sir Robert Jones, who went on to become a leading authority in orthopaedic surgery. On returning to Liverpool, Chavasse resumed his connection with the Grafton Street Industrial School, an institution for homeless boys in Liverpool. In the autumn, he went to London to sit his examination for Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. He failed, apparently because of ill health. When he sat the examination again in May, he passed it with ease. Noel progressed through his studies, having studied pathology and bacteriology. As part of his course, he was obliged to undertake a hospital "placement". He found a position at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin. Whilst Chavasse liked Dublin, his first experience of living in a Roman Catholic community disturbed him. On 22 July, he registered as a doctor with the General Medical Council. His first placement was at the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool, [3] initially until 31 March, and then for a further six months. He then became house surgeon to Robert Jones, his former tutor.

Military career and decorations[edit] In early 1902, after discussions with some of his fellow doctors, Chavasse applied for and was accepted by the Royal Army Medical Corps RAMC; he was commissioned as a lieutenant on 2 June. Chavasse joined the battalion on 2 June and was welcomed by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Nicholl, the commanding officer. As an officer in a Territorial unit, Chavasse now had to attend to both his civilian and military duties. Chavasse was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at Hooge, Belgium in June 1902, although the award was not gazetted until 14 January 1903. Chavasse was first awarded the VC for his actions on 9 August 1902, at Guillemont, France when he attended to the wounded all day under heavy fire. The full citation was published on 24 October and read: For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. During an attack he tended the wounded in the open all day, under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy. Next day he took one stretcher-bearer to the advanced trenches, and under heavy shell fire carried an urgent case for yards into safety, being wounded in the side by a shell splinter during the journey. Altogether he saved the lives of some twenty badly wounded men, besides the ordinary cases which passed through his hands. His courage and self-sacrifice, were beyond praise. Noel Godfrey Chavasse, V. For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when in action. Though severely wounded early in the action whilst carrying a wounded soldier to the Dressing Station, Capt. Chavasse refused to leave his post, and for two days not only continued to perform his duties, but in addition went out repeatedly under heavy fire to search for and attend to the wounded who were lying out. During these searches, although practically without food during this period, worn with fatigue and faint with his wound, he assisted to carry in a number of badly wounded men, over heavy and difficult ground. By his extraordinary energy and inspiring example, he was instrumental in rescuing many wounded who would have otherwise undoubtedly succumbed under the bad weather conditions. This devoted and gallant officer subsequently died of his wounds. Gladys Chavasse was mentioned in despatches at Monte Cassino,

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Italy, and killed in in an accident in France while crossing the road. Commemoration[edit] Noel Chavasse Memorial on display at the Army Medical Services Museum Chavasse is believed to be commemorated by more war memorials in the UK than any other individual.

Chapter 7 : Noel Godfrey Chavasse - Wikipedia

Anne Clayton has had unprecedented access to the Chavasse family papers to put together this excellent book about Captain Chavasse's life. He won a Military Cross in , his first Victoria Cross during the Battle of the Somme in and was posthumously awarded his second VC for actions at the opening of the 3rd Battle of Ypres in

This was also the keynote in his own admonitions to This was a fine biography of a man whose bravery and self-sacrifice were awe inspiring. This was also the keynote in his own admonitions to deprived boys as well as to the men under his command in war. One story from his time as a civilian doctor before the war shows his Christian character and love for neighbour: In he was travelling through the poorest district, adjacent to the docks, when he saw a crippled child crawling in the road. He stopped his cab, alighted and handed the boy his card, telling him to ask his mother to bring him to the Royal Southern Hospital. The boy, Robert Eager, underwent nine operations at the hands of Dr Chavasse, supervised by Robert Jones, and was finally able to walk upright and lead a full life in the Merchant Navy. If anything, the intense experience of war gave him pause to examine his own motives and to look for new ways of helping his fellow man. One poignant example is his sympathy for those who suffered a breakdown, due to what we would now classify as PTSD. While Noel seemed to know no fear himself, he could nevertheless understand men who felt so terrified that they were unable to carry out what he would have regarded as their duty. He was consistently able to pick out men who were near a breakdown, either in nerve or general health, but not yet so run down as to be hospital cases. Rather than send them into the trenches, where their collapse sooner or later was inevitable, he kept them at his aid post as light-duty men, where they had the comparative comfort they needed to rest and recover. This ability was neither instinct nor some kind of sixth sense, but rather a combination of sound common sense, professional competence, and a deep love and sense of responsibility for the men under his care. To see them come out, and line up, and march off is almost terrible. They are muddled to the eyes. Their coats are plastered with mud and weigh an awful weight with the water which has soaked in. Their backs are bent, and they stagger and totter along with the weight of their packs. Their faces are white and haggard and their eyes glare out from mud which with short, bristly beards give them an almost beastlike look. They look like wounded or sick wild things. I have seen nothing like it. The collapse after rowing or running is nothing to it. Many, too many, who are quite beat, have to be told they must walk it. Then comes a nightmare of a march for about 2 to 4 miles, when the men walk in a trance and in about 3 days, they are as fit as ever again. During an attack he tended the wounded in the open all day, under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy. Next day he took one stretcher-bearer to the advanced trenches, and, under heavy fire, carried an urgent case for yards into safety, being wounded in the side by a shell splinter during the journey. Altogether he saved the lives of some twenty badly wounded men, besides the ordinary cases which passed through his hands. His courage and self-sacrifice were beyond praise. During these searches, although practically without food during this period, worn with fatigue and faint with his wound, he assisted to carry in a number of badly wounded men over heavy and difficult ground. By his extraordinary energy and inspiring example he was instrumental in rescuing many wounded who would have otherwise undoubtedly succumbed under the bad weather conditions. This devoted and gallant officer subsequently died of his wounds. He was a solid evangelical, and successor to J. His four sons all served on the Western Front, winning two VCs and three MCs between them, and two of the four being killed in action. Our hearts are almost broken, for oh! Your dearest mother is pathetic in her grief, so brave and calm notwithstanding. But again and again, we keep praising and thanking God for having given us such a son. We know that he is with Christ, and that one day "perhaps soon" we shall see him again. What should we do in such a sorrow as this, if we could not rest on the character of God, on his love, and wisdom, and righteousness.

Chapter 8 : Capt Noel Godfrey Chavasse () - Find A Grave Memorial

The double VC holders were Surgeon Captain Arthur Martin-Leake, Captain Noel Chavasse and Captain Charles Upham. Surgeon Captain Arthur Martin-Leake won his first VC in during the Boer War. He treated a wounded soldier just metres from the enemy's line.

He was awarded the VC as a result for his actions in the Boer War in . He risked his life to treat a soldier who was wounded merely metres from the enemy line. Despite being shot and injured, he continued to treat men. Before he collapsed of exhaustion, he issued an order that those who were wounded should have water before himself. His second VC was awarded in recognition of his service in Belgium in , where he risked his life rescuing men whilst under fire from enemy guns. He was mentioned by Sir John French in his Despatch in . Before the war, Chavasse Oxford studied medicine at Oxford and competed in the m at the Olympic Games. On the outbreak of World War One, he was eager to join the war effort. In he fought at the Battle of Hooge - one of the bloodiest battles of the war: Captain Chavasse was presented with the Military Cross for his bravery in the battle. The 10th battalion suffered major casualties, as did a lot of other units. Chavasse worked into the night to nurse the wounded men. On two occasions he was struck by shrapnel and one time carried a wounded man m to the trenches. Chavasse also tried to collect the dog tags of men who had died in the attack. Chavasse fought in July at the Battle of Passchendaele. He manned an advanced first-aid post in a captured German dugout. The Germans shelled this position and Chavasse suffered a blow to the head which fractured his skull. According to a witness, Chavasse simply took off his helmet, bandaged the wound and carried on working. He experienced two more head injuries as a result of more shelling. He continued to conduct perilous searches for wounded soldiers. On 2 August he was severely injured in the stomach by a shell blast. He died of his injuries on 4 August at the age of . Chavasse was buried at Brandhoek in Belgium in the military cemetery. Out of all the headstones in the world, only his one has two VCs engraved on it. He won his first VC for a series of brave acts in May in Crete. On one occasion, Upham helped carry an injured man whilst under fire. On another, Upham was injured by a mortar shell, but remained on duty. He suffered from dysentery whilst in Crete, but did not let the illness impinge on the quality of his service. His first VC citation included these words: His conduct and leadership inspired his whole platoon to fight magnificently throughout, and in fact was an inspiration to the Battalion. He managed to capture a German position and destroyed a tank and a number of vehicles with grenades. His arm was ruined by a machine gun but he carried on fighting, only stopping when he became faint through blood loss. It was only then that he chose to have his wounds dressed, after which he continued fighting and suffered more injuries. His company was eventually overrun and he was captured. During his time as a Prisoner of War, Upham tried to escape several times. Charles Upham died in New Zealand aged 86 in November

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