



LORD ASHCROFT'S  
"HERO OF  
THE MONTH"

# Captain Montagu Shadworth Moore

VC

## ENDURANCE

AGGRESSION · BOLDNESS  
INITIATIVE · LEADERSHIP  
SACRIFICE · SKILL

The many Victoria Crosses and George Crosses in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery at the Imperial War Museum in London are displayed under one of seven different qualities of bravery. Captain Montagu Shadworth Seymour Moore's award is part of the collection and Lord Ashcroft feels that it falls within the category of endurance:

"Endurance is the opposite of Aggression. It is all about 'cold courage', about knowing the cost and being prepared to pay it. It involves mental and physical resilience, not giving in and rising above the pain. It is almost infinite."



TOP RIGHT  
A shell bursts in the background as wounded are being brought in, some by German prisoners, during the fighting on, 20 September 1917 - the start of the Battle of the Menin Ridge Road. (HISTORIC MILITARY PRESS)

RIGHT  
Captain Montagu Shadworth Seymour Moore VC. (LORD ASHCROFT COLLECTION)



**M**ONTAGU SHADWORTH Seymour Moore was born in Worthing, Sussex, on 9 October 1896. He was the elder son of Frederick Moore, a barrister who had earlier served in the Army, and his wife Gertrude. Moore was educated at Bedford (Grammar) School from 1906-13, later receiving a year's private tuition while his family lived in Bournemouth, Hampshire, followed

by classes at the town's Municipal College. His education was completed at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

In August 1916, and aged 19, "Monty Moore was commissioned as a second lieutenant into The Hampshire Regiment. Within a month, he had been dispatched to France with the regiment's 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion - one of the newly-raised Kitchener battalions.

In a letter home dated 5 November 1916, Moore revealed his daring nature: "One night I crawled out across 'no man's land' up to the Boche [German] wire 60 yards away, it was most exciting. I discovered the position of a machine gun that was causing a lot of trouble. When I got back, I put the Lewis gun team on to that spot & they cleared them out. I think their Boche gun was put out of action..."

In a letter to his mother dated 18 November 1916, he disclosed that he had been appointed Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the Brigade General on a month's trial. After a short spell at Brigade Headquarters, he was transferred to the 1st Battalion of his regiment in January 1917.

Moore was back with his original battalion, the 15<sup>th</sup>, in time for the operations at Messines, Belgium, on 7

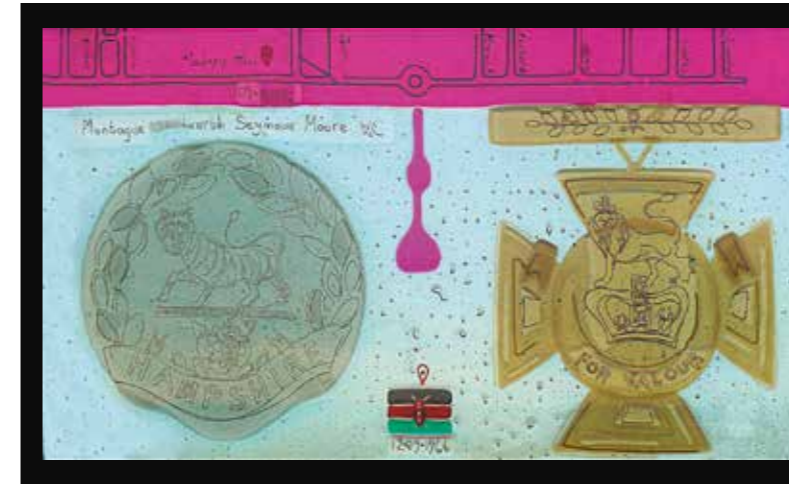
June 1917. During the advance, Moore was wounded in the leg by shrapnel and he needed hospital treatment.

Within three months of being wounded, and having taken some leave, he was back in action with his battalion, and during September and October he served in the Flanders region of Belgium.

The second phase of the Third Battle of Ypres began on 20 September 1917 and there was soon some fierce fighting. During the battle, Moore showed quite exceptional bravery and endurance in the "Tower Hamlets area of fortified trenches and pill-boxes. The immediate result of this was that he was elevated to company commander with the rank of acting captain.

On 8 November 1917, his VC was announced in the *London Gazette* as a result of the remarkable bravery he had shown in that September. His citation stated: "For most conspicuous bravery in operations necessitating a fresh attack on a final objective which had not been captured.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Moore at once volunteered for this duty and dashed forward at the head of some 70 men. They were met with heavy machine gun fire from a flank which caused severe



casualties, with the result that he arrived at his objective - some 500 yards on - with only a Serjeant and four men. Nothing daunted, he at once bombed a large dug-out and took twenty-eight prisoners, two machine guns and a light field gun.

Gradually more officers and men arrived, to the number of about 60. His position was entirely isolated as the troops on the right had not advanced, but he dug a trench and repelled bombing attacks throughout the night. The next morning he was forced to retire a short distance. When opportunity offered he at once reoccupied his position, re-armed his men with enemy rifles and bombs, most of theirs being smashed, and beat off more than one counter-attack.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Moore held this post under continual shell fire for thirty-six hours until his force was reduced to ten men, out of six officers and 130 men who had started the operation. He eventually got away his wounded, and withdrew under cover of a thick mist.

As an example of dashing gallantry and cool determination this young officer's exploit would be difficult to surpass.

Moore later recalled that his General and Commanding Officer greeted his

return with complete astonishment, having "given me up as dead long ago."

He received his VC from King George V at Buckingham Palace on 21 November 1917. He was also awarded the French Croix de Guerre for having "shown the most brilliant military qualities."

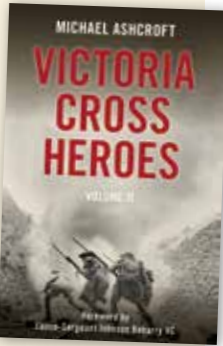
After his VC action, Moore's battalion was removed from the frontline and spent time training drafts from a yeomanry unit. He served as a bombing instructor ("bombs" being the term used for "grenades during the Great War") and, later, as ADC to Lieutenant-General John Du Cane, the commander of XV Corps.

After a short spell in early February 1918 with the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Infantry School, he was soon back in the thick of the action; after the Germans launched their Spring Offensive on 21 March 1918, he was sent, along with his training unit, to try to halt the enemy advance.

Moore survived the war and, in May 1919, he continued to serve with his regiment as part of the 238<sup>th</sup> Special Brigade in North Russia Relief Force. After his return to Britain, he was transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and was dispatched to Constantinople, joining the Army of the Black Sea.

## VICTORIA CROSS HEROES II

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC is a businessman, philanthropist, author and pollster. His sixth book on gallantry, *Victoria Cross Heroes Volume II*, is published in paperback this month. For more information, please visit: [www.victoriacrossheroes2.com](http://www.victoriacrossheroes2.com). Lord Ashcroft's VC and GC collection is on public display at Imperial War Museum, London. For more information visit: [www.iwm.org.uk/heroes](http://www.iwm.org.uk/heroes). For details about his VC collection, visit: [www.lordashcroftmedals.com](http://www.lordashcroftmedals.com). For more information on Lord Ashcroft's work, visit: [www.lordashcroft.com](http://www.lordashcroft.com). Follow him on Twitter: @LordAshcroft



After being seconded to the Colonial Office for service in February 1921, he embarked on a new adventure - to East Africa, where he was posted from March 1921 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, King's African Rifles, in Tanganyika Territory, now Tanzania.

On 1 September 1926, Moore retired from the Army with the rank of captain and he went on to work as a ranger and chief game warden in Tanzania and Kenya.

Moore died from renal failure in Kiganjo, Nyeri, Kenya, on 9 September 1966, a month short of his seventieth birthday. He was cremated at Langata Cemetery, Kenya, and his ashes were scattered in both Nairobi National Park, Kenya, and the Serengeti National Park, Tanzania. There is a memorial plaque to Moore in the Memorial Hall at Bedford School (formerly Bedford Grammar School). I feel privileged to be the custodian of his medal group having purchased it privately in 2011. ☺

TOP LEFT  
Captain Moore VC's medal group. (LORD ASHCROFT COLLECTION)

LEFT  
A memorial stained-glass panel which, commemorating Captain Moore VC, can be seen on the pier at Worthing. (ROBERT MITCHELL)

BELOW  
The commemorative paving stone to Captain Moore VC in Montague Place, Worthing. Moore was born in 13 Montague Place in 1896. (ROBERT MITCHELL)

