The Story of a Scottish Warrior John Simpson Knox by Mellisa

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The Victoria Cross is the highest award for valour in the British army. The medal was first given to a British soldier in 1857 when Scottish soldier John Simpson Knox was recognised for his bravery in the Crimea. Since then many Scottish soldiers have been awarded the Victoria Cross but the early Scottish VC recipients set an example to the British Army for the next 150 years.

Knox joined the army as an underage soldier of 14 but as tall boy he was promoted to Corporal before he was even 18, and by the time he had been deployed to the Crimea in 1854 he had gained the rank of Sergeant in the Scottish Fusiliers. The battle of Alma was one of the first near suicidal advances by the British and French forces during the campaign. Faced with crossing a river and climbing a hill with well dug in Russian Artillery opposing the allied forces were unlikely to succeed. The young Glaswegian, Knox, was in the reserve of the main attack but the impossibility of the mission meant he was soon trying take his men forward through the retreating men of the first attack.

Knoxâ€™s word sum up his attitude to the scene he was greeted by:

â€•The scene that met my gaze was the most awful description: it made me shudder. The bodies of our opponents were so thick on the ground that for some distance I had to go on tiptoe to pass without touching â€¦ the enemy cheered, and endeavoured to drive us back; however, we stuck to them until we were masters.â€•

This was the earliest event mentioned in a Victoria Cross citation for a British Soldier.

The later siege of Sebastapol was the second engagement where Knoxâ€™s bravery contributed to his VC. He volunteered for the ladder party as a lieutenant in the Rifles. His job was to lead the men under heavy the artillery fire over the barricades to break the siege.

When Knoxâ€™s Victoria Cross was sold in 2010 for Â£252,000 accompanying it was the cannon ball that hit his arm during the attack. Oddly, it was this injury that saved his life as another man was standing in front of him dressing the wound using a handkerchief when grape shot killed his colleague. He was injured again in the same arm later in the attack and the arm had to be amputated.

Knox served on in the army only retiring in 1872 and had seven children before his death in 1897. He was certainly not the first Scottish hero but his service was in a mode so often seen by Scottish war heroes he is seen by many as a true Scottish hero.

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Mellisa - About Author:
Melissa Turner is a 40 year old female from Edinburgh who is always out to explore something others have been known to fear â€“ the world outside their own comfort zones. Her father, grand father and great grand father were all big travelers and as are her siblings. Travel is the best education. She has acquired an amazing amount of travel

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