

A VALIANT TEESSIDE HERO

Private William Henry Short, Victoria Cross
C Company, 8th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment
Born 4th February 1885 - Died 7th August 1916



William Henry Short from Eston was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest military decoration awarded for valour in the face of the enemy, for his bravery on 6th August 1916 at Munster Alley, Contalmaison, France, during the **Battle of the Somme**.

The Victoria Cross was awarded to William Henry Short, for conspicuous bravery during the battle.



At the time it was reported:-

“He was foremost in the attack, bombing the enemy with great gallantry, when he was severely wounded in the foot. He was urged to go back, but refused and continued to throw bombs. Later his leg was shattered by a shell and he was unable to stand, so he lay in the trench adjusting detonators and straightening the pins of bombs for his comrades.

He died before he could be carried out of the trench. For the last eleven months he had always volunteered for dangerous enterprises, and had always set a magnificent example of bravery and devotion to duty”.

William Henry Short died, aged 29, of wounds the next day. He was eventually buried in Contalmaison Chateaux Cemetery.

Known by his family as Will, he was sometimes called “Twig” or “Twiggie” by friends – because he always had a twig in his mouth.

A keen footballer for Grangetown Albion, and Saltburn and Lazenby United, aged 16, William Henry Short worked as a craneman at Bolckow, Vaughan & Co Steelworks in Eston until the start of the Great War. He enlisted on September 2, 1914 into the Green Howards, and travelled to France on August 26, 1915.

Throughout his service, William Henry Short always volunteered for dangerous enterprises, setting a magnificent example of bravery and devotion to duty. His Victoria Cross and other medals, the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal are kept at the Green Howards Regimental Museum, Richmond, his name is recorded on the Grangetown Memorial and the obelisk in Eston Cemetery.

The Victoria Cross was introduced on 29 January 1856 by Queen Victoria. The Victoria Cross is awarded for:

“... most conspicuous bravery, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy.”

The Victoria Cross is the highest military decoration awarded to members of the armed forces of various Commonwealth countries, and previous British Empire territories. It is first in the order of wear in the United Kingdom honours system, and takes precedence over all other orders, decorations, and medals. It may be awarded to a person of any military rank in any service and to civilians under military command.

