

corresponding decoration for the ordinary servicemen in the British army. The Crimean War was the first war which was covered by a war correspondent and for the first time the British public were made aware of the horrors of battle and the incompetence of those in charge and of individual acts of bravery by ordinary servicemen.

The reports of William Russell for 'The Times' highlighted the acts of bravery of ordinary soldiers as well as the fact that while 3,400 were killed in action, 20,000 died of cholera and typhoid fever.

There is a strong case for believing that Charles Davis Lucas's act of heroism led directly to the creation of the Victoria Cross.

The incident was widely reported and recounted and discussed throughout the land and it was certain that his action was greatly admired by Queen Victoria herself. In December of 1854 ex-navy Captain Thomas Scobell MP proposed in the House of Commons, *"that an Order of Merit to persons serving in the army or navy for distinguished and prominent personal gallantry to which every grade should be admissible"* should be created.



*Queen Victoria*

The idea was taken up by The Secretary of State for War, the Duke of Newcastle and enthusiastically supported by the Queen and Prince Albert. That a new award was to be created was announced on January 29, 1855. However it took some time to finalise the details such as the name, the form, the material etc. That the new award should be in the shape of a

cross seemed to be generally favoured and Prince Albert is credited with insisting that it be called 'The Victoria Cross'. There was much discussion as to the metal from which the cross was to be made. It was decided that a base metal of little value in itself would be used and this was appropriately bronze from two Russian cannon captured in the Crimea. The Queen herself was responsible for the inscription *"For Valour"*. Recipients of the cross were to receive an annual pension of £10.



*Victoria Cross*

Because of various delays, it was not until June 26, 1857 that the Victoria Cross was presented for the first time. There was much debate and argument as to whether the award should be confined to only those who had served in the Crimea peninsula but Queen Victoria was adamant that the award should be retrospective and that the navy be included. The list of those who were to receive the award was not published until three days before the presentation ceremony. On June 26, 1857 in Hyde Park, Queen Victoria presented the new Victoria Cross to 62 members of the army and navy and since the awards were presented in chronological order, Lucas was the first recipient, his action being the first to merit the honour.

Thereafter Charles Davis Lucas rose steadily through the ranks. In 1862 he became Commander, and in 1867 he was promoted to Captain at the age of 33. He served on, or