

FOWLER, Edmund John VC



NOTICE/CITATION

War Office 5th April 1882

London Gazette No. 25093 Fri. 7 Apr 1882 p1586 [Gazette] [1]

THE Queen has been graciously pleased to signify Her intention to confer the decoration of the Victoria Cross upon the undermentioned Officer and Soldier, of Her Majesty's Army, whose claims have been submitted for Her Majesty's approval, for their conspicuous bravery at the assault of the Inhlobane Mountain, in Zululand, as recorded against their names:-

2nd Battalion, The Cameronians [Scottish Rifles] Lieutenant Henry Lysons
Private Edmond Fowler [since discharged]

On the 28th March, 1879, during the assault of the Inhlobane Mountain, Sir Evelyn Wood ordered the dislodgement of certain Zulus [who were causing the Troops much loss] from strong natural caves commanding the position in which some of the wounded were lying. Some delay occurring in the execution of the orders issued, Captain the Honourable Ronald Campbell, Coldstream Guards, followed by Lieutenant Lysons, Aide-de-Camp, and Private Fowler, ran forward in the most determined manner, and advanced over a mass of fallen boulders, and between walls of rock, which led to a cave in which the enemy lay hidden. It being impossible for two men to walk abreast, the assailants were consequently obliged to keep in single file, and as Captain Campbell was leading, he arrived first at the mouth of the cave, from which the Zulus were firing, and there met his death. Lieutenant Lysons and Private Fowler, who were following close behind him, immediately dashed at the cave, from which led several subterranean passages, and firing into the chasm below, succeeded in forcing the occupants to forsake their stronghold. Lieutenant Lysons remained at the cave's mouth for some minutes after the attack, during which time Captain Campbell's body was carried down the slopes.

***** Gazetted when with 2nd Bn. The Cameronians [Scottish Rifles] 1882, VC awarded when with The 90th [Perthshire Volunteers - Light Infantry] Regiment [Old title]**

Forfeiture of the Victoria Cross

Rule 15 of the Royal Warrant dated 29th January 1856

Fifteenthly. In order to make such additional provision as shall effectually preserve pure this most honourable distinction, it is ordained that, if any person be convicted of treason, cowardice, felony, or of any infamous crime, or if he be accused of any such offence, and doth not after a reasonable time surrender himself to be tried for the same, his name shall forthwith be erased from the registry of individuals upon whom the said Decoration shall have been conferred, and by an especial Warrant under Our Royal Sign Manual, and the pension conferred under Rule 14 shall cease and determine from the date of such Warrant. It is hereby further declared, that We, Our Heirs and Given Successors, shall be the all judges of the circumstances requiring such expulsion;

moreover, We shall at all times have power to restore such persons as may at any time have been expelled, both to the enjoyment of the Decoration and Pension.

#####

Status: -
Rank/Service: 1317 Private, later C/Sgt – The 90th [Perthshire Volunteers - Light Infantry] Regiment 60th Bde.
Renamed 1881 The Cameronians [Scottish Rifles] [2]

Born: c. Feb 1859 – Crook, Waterford, Ireland
Parents: John Fowler and Catherine Fowler [q.v.] [**Bridget?**]

Education: Army certificate of Education [Class II post 1882]
Pre Service: -

Ranks, Appointments & Service: Enlisted Waterford as **EDMOND FOWLER** 3.30pm 17 Mar 1877 [by Sgt. Major Ward] Medical 18 Mar 1877, Attested Waterford 4.25pm 19 Mar 1877 [4] Approved 21 Mar 1877: Private 19 Mar 1877/29 Jan 1880: Joined Regt. at Limerick 23 Mar 1877: Moved Portsmouth 20 Apr 1877; Aldershot 28 May 1877: Vaccinated 29 May 1877: Posted Cape of Good Hope 9 Feb 1878: **Awarded good conduct pay of 1d p.d. 18 Mar 1878**: Served Cape Frontier War: Invasion of Zululand: Storming of Hlobane Mountain 28 Mar 1879: Battle of Khambula 29 Mar 1879: Battle of Ulundi 4 Jul 1879: Purchased discharge [£18] at Netley Jan 29 1880 aged 20yrs and 11m. Discharge Board held 29 Jan 1880: Discharge approved 24 Feb 1880 under Royal Warrant Scale III [5] Extra service accredited 30 Jan/24 Feb 1880: [Total service 2yrs 317 days] Re-enlisted 2nd Bn. Royal Irish Regiment, Chatham aged 23: Attested Private 373 at Rochester, Kent 14 Feb 1882 [Attested by Sgt. Nicholls, Witness Cpl, Dwyer] Medical, Chatham 14 Feb 1882 [Pulse 80, respiration 18, Good muscular development – Surgeon-Major Payton]: Approved 15 Feb 1882 for 3rd Bn: Documentation approved 16 Feb 1882. Re-vaccinated 13 Mar 1882, failed: Re-vaccinated 25 Nov 1882. Home Service 14 Feb 1882/10 Aug 1882: **VC** LG 7 Apr 1882: Promoted Corporal 10 April 1882: Sailed SS. *City of Paris* for Egypt 11 Aug 1882 arr. 24 Aug 1882: Promoted Sgt. 24 Dec 1882: Served Egypt to 18 Feb 1883 Sudan operations: Nile Expedition: Posted Malta 19 Feb 1883/28 May 1883: Returned England, Home Service Aldershot 29 May 1883/10 Sep 1883: Posted India 11 Sep 1883 arr. India 2 Nov 1883 [**11 Nov 1883?**] **Enteric Fever** 25 Apr 1884: Hospitalised 56 days: Arr. Naini Tal 2 Sep 1884: Transferred 1st Bn. 11 Sep 1884/1 Nov 1884: Medical board 18 Oct 1884 [**varicose veins** found, recommended change of climate] Returned England, Home Service 2 Nov 1884/13 Feb 1900: Sgt. Depot Royal Irish Regt 2 Nov 1884/21 Sep 1885: arr. Netley Hospital and admitted 19 Dec 1884/2 Jan 1885: Posted Clonmel, Ireland 5 Jan 1885: Posted 1st Bn. 22 Sep 1885/14 Jan 1887: **Forfeited Good Conduct Pay 31 Dec 1886: In cells 15 Jan 1887/23 Jan 1887: Court martialled Devonport Mon. 24 Jan 1887. Guilty of embezzlement, reduced to the ranks and VC and medals forfeited under Army Act 910/R10/1884. Medals restored 26 Apr 1887 reportedly by HM QV who stated that his detention was sufficient punishment. Good Conduct pay restored 24 Jan 1888**: Appointed U/L/Cpl 1 Feb 1888: Posted Colchester 10 Jan 1889: Accredited disallowed service under Army Order 398 of 1889: Extended service to 12 yrs 2 Feb 1889: Promoted L/Cpl 4 Mar 1889: Promoted Cpl 1 Jun 1889: Promoted L/Sgt. 24 Nov 1890: Promoted Sgt. 10 Sep 1891: Posted The Curragh, Ireland 9 Nov 1891: Transferred 3rd Bn. Royal Irish Regt. 12 May 1892: Re-engaged to 21 yrs 21 Apr 1893: Transferred 1st Bn. 25 Jul 1894: Posted Birr, Ireland 11 Aug 1894: Posted Limerick 31 Oct 1894, hospitalised 17 days [**leg ulcers**] Transferred 3rd Bn. Cameronians 16 Mar 1896 as Sgt. 5484 [Authority 9 Mar 1896] Posted Hamilton, Scotland 21 Mar 1896: Posted Lanark Camp 3 Apr 1897, hospitalised 59 days [**severe leg ulcers**]: Hospitalised 89 days Hamilton 31 May 1897 [**severe leg ulcers**] Elects to serve under new rules of Army Order 2 Apr 1898 at Hamilton 23 Apr 1898:

Promoted C/Sgt 11 May 1898: Hospitalised [6th time] 21 Aug 1899 [**Chronic ulcer of left leg, middle of tibia**, aggravated by service and climate] Medical board, Edinburgh 2 Nov 1899 [**Leg Ulcers and Varicose Veins, permanent disability**] Recommended for discharge as unfit for further service [Board in partial agreement as to cause, employment possibility 33%] Discharge approved 15 Nov 1899 Medical discharge 13 Feb 1900 [Severe leg ulcers and Varicose veins] [Authority Edinburgh 14 Nov 1899 approved 15 Nov 1899]

Honours & Awards: [2] *Victoria Cross
Inscription –

PTE. EDMOND FOWLER
90TH FOOT
28
MARCH
1879

*South Africa Medal/Clasp 1877-8-9 [Pte Edmond Fowler 90th Foot]

*Egypt Medal 1882/No clasp [373 Cpl E Fowler]

*Khedive's Bronze Star 1882 [Egypt] ["373" on reverse]

Other presentations:

-

Award action:

28 Mar 1879 - Hlobane Mountain, Zululand SA [2]

Decorated:

13 May 1882 by HM Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle

Medal History:

VC sold £42 Sotheby's London Feb 1906

Medals now held by The Cameronians [Scottish Rifles] Museum, Low Parks Museum, 129 Muir Street, Hamilton, Lanarkshire, Scotland ML3 6BJ Tel. 01698-328232

A replica VC was on display at Colchester Castle, Essex from 7 Nov 2008/Feb 2009 as a tribute to Sgt. Fowler during an exhibition to honour Colchester's two VC recipients

Post Service:

Fruit shop proprietor, shop damaged by fire 1920 [1910?]

Landlord of "Live and Let Live" public house, Stanwell St. Colchester 2 Jan 1900/20 Aug 1901[6]

Family

[See family tree \[q.v.\]](#)

Died:

26 Mar 1926 – Berechurch Rd. St. Giles, Colchester, Essex aged c.65

GRO Death Registration – Q1 1926 District of Colchester, County of Essex Vol. 4a p842

Buried:

31 Mar 1926 in Colchester Borough Cemetery Section G Grave 12-42 [Refurbished Winter 2000]



Memorials:

- A [Indirect] Memorial plaque to Ronald George Elidor Campbell, Holy Trinity Church, Windsor [3]
- B Headstone in Colchester Cemetery rededicated Apr 2001 by Father Andrew Lloyd, RC Padre, Colchester Garrison
- C Plaque on old Colchester home unveiled 7 Nov 2008



Re-Dedication of grave of Fowler VC 2000

[L-R Joan Soole, Captain Ronnie Cootes, Father Andrew Lloyd, Lorraine Collins [Colchester Co-Op] Bob Russell MP, Ernie Cooper [Co=Op Masonry Manager]

- Artefacts: -
- Ephemera: A A colour print of the action by Richard Scollins exists in a limited edition 290 x 195mm
- Other Connections: -
- Remarks: Awards were made to **Fowler** and **Lysons H [VC0762]**
- Interests: **Known to have attended the following functions and events**
 VC Garden Party, Buckingham Palace 26 Jun 1920
 Unveiling of the Cenotaph, Whitehall, London 11 Nov 1920
- Authorship: -
- Bibliography: Refer to Victoria Cross Bibliography [VCB] 217pp hb
 Jon Mulholland/Alan Jordan & VC Research Group, Spink, London 1999
 B13, C130, K45
- References: A **Magazines**
- 1 **Journal of the Victoria Cross Society* No 1 Oct 2002 Brian Best
 "Gallantry, Patronage and Cover-ups – The Zulu War VCs"
 - 2 *Soldiers of the Queen* No 39 n.d.
 - 3 **Medal News* Nov 2000 - "Incident at Inhlobane" Derek Hunt
- B **Newspapers**
- 1 *The Times* 23 [27th?] Mar 1926 "Death of a VC. Fight in a Mountain Cave recalled"
 - 2 *Essex County Standard* 3 Apr 1926 "A Colchester VC. Great Bravery in Zulu Campaign
 Fight in Mountain Cave Recalled" Includes description of funeral
 - 3 6 Apr 2001 – Photograph of graveside Re-dedication ceremony
 - 3 *Essex County Telegraph* 3 Apr 1926

- "Colchester's VC passes. The Last Survivor of the Mount of Valour"
 4 *Colchester Gazette* 20 Feb 1901 [Details of licensing offence]
 C **Books**
 1 VCB mentions and general references
 B14, F6, H52, M124* [P35, P36 Obsolete] S131, T10/ [1981, 1988, 1997 Obsolete] T25 [7]
 A Specimen signature is shown in S100
 D **Public**
 1 London Gazette 25093
 2 Chelmsford Record Office [Licence applications]
 E **Miscellaneous**
 1 **Research/Information**
 Brandon Smith, Portsea, Hants.
 Iain Stewart, Dawlish, Devon
 Graham Mason aka "Sapper" Llangefni, Anglesey
 Joan Soole, Colchester, Essex
 F -
 G **Internet contacts/links**
www.ancestry.co.uk
www.northeastmedals.co.uk/britishguide/zulu/vc_edmund_john_fowler.htm
www.victoriacross.org.uk/pufowler.htm Iain Stewart
www.victoriacross.org.uk/cccamero.htm Iain Stewart
graham.mason2@homecall.co.uk
j.soole@hotmail.co.uk
www.victoriacrosssociety.com/news.htm

- Notes: [1] London Gazette checked
 [2] Medal entitlement checked [*] 1 Apr 2009 – Iain Stewart website
 [3] Inscription

**SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
 RONALD GEORGE ELIDOR CAMPBELL
 LIEUTENANT AND CAPTAIN AND FOR SEVEN YEARS ADJUTANT OF
 THE 1ST BATTN COLDSTREAM GUARDS. HE FELL ON 28TH MARCH 1879
 LEADING AN ASSAULT ON THE STRONG POSITION ON THE ZLOBANE
 MOUNTAIN, ZULULAND, AND WAS BURIED UNDER FIRE BY HIS COMRADES.
 THE TWO MEN WHO FOLLOWED HIM RECEIVED THE VICTORIA CROSS**

- [4] Physical on Attestation – Age 18, Height – 5'7¼", Chest 34", Fresh complexion, Blue eyes, Brown hair, Mole on left loin, Religion – Roman Catholic
 [5] Character on discharge – Good. 1 Good Conduct badge. No record of Education. No wounds Not in Defaulters book. Civilian Occupation – Butler/Servant [Signed papers as **EDMOND FOWLER**] Physical – Age 20yrs 11m, Height 5'7½ Intended residence – Portman Square, South London
 [6] Demolished 1909
 There are unsubstantiated reports that he was also the landlord of the "Cups Hotel Tap" in Colchester and was also a local Councillor. There is no record of him ever being at the "Cups Hotel Tap" in the records at the Chelmsford Record Office.
 In Jan 1901 he was charged with selling beer after licensed hours. A Sgt. of the Essex Regt. was seen entering the "Live and Let Live" at 11.17pm 17 Jan 1901 by a P.C. Simpson and Fowler was observed selling him beer at 11.18pm.
 [7] Books marked obsolete are considered to be so by the compiler due to later publications and/or revised editions

VC0424 – Edmund John Fowler vc

FAMILY TREE

1.1 John Fowler [Father]

m. – Catherine

2.1 Son Edmund John Fowler [VC] born 1861

1891 Census [RG12/1407/49/14] – Soldier, Sergt, Royal Irish Regt. aged 31 living at Middlewick Cottage, Old Heath, Colchester with wife age 28 and issue 3.1, 3.3 [q.v.]

1901 Census [RG13/1706/14/5] – Publican aged 42 living at “Live & Let Live” Public House Stanwell Street, Colchester with wife aged 40 and issue 3.1 – 3.6 [q.v.]

m. Aldershot 8 Jul 1883 - Mary **McGUIRE** [Mary Bridget DENNY??] born Donegal, Ireland c.1863

GRO Marriage Registration – Q3 1883 District of Farnham, County of Surrey Vol 2a p169

3.1 Dau. Mary J. Fowler born Crowhill, Plymouth 23 Mar 1887

3.2 Dau. William Fowler born Ireland 8 May 1889

3.3 Son Catherine Fowler born Devenport 2 Jan 1892

3.4 Dau. Margaret Fowler born Ireland 5 Nov 1894

3.5 Son Patrick Fowler born Scotland 20 Apr 1897

3.6 Dau. Annie Fowler born Scotland c.1900

2.2 Son Thomas Fowler

2.3 Dau. Annie Fowler

2.4 Dau. Catherine Fowler

2.5 Dau. Mary Bridget Fowler