

HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INC

LONGCAST

18 November 22 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Grey Lynn RSA

10 December 22 – Navy Club (Saturday)

16 December 22 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Birkenhead RSA

25 December 22 – Christmas Day

26 December 22 – Boxing Day

27 December 22 – Christmas Day observed

Hi Folks

NGAPONA ASSN MONTHLY LUNCH

Our next lunch is on this Friday, 18 November, at the Grey Lynn RSA. We have been most fortunate in securing a guest speaker for this lunch. It is the amazing story of the return to NZ from the UK during the Covid 19 lock-down.

Make an effort to attend and hear Lt Cdr Chetan Sawyer (HMNZS Ngapona) recount this fascinating tale.

See flyer below



HMNZS Ngapona Assn Inc



Chetan Sawyer - The story of Kingfisher: Repatriation of 4 Kiwis Tahiti to Auckland 2021

In late 2021 when MIQ was operating in full capacity as the Hunger Games, 4 kiwis banded together from 4 different continents to get home to their families.

Kingfisher was a Hanse 400 bought in Tahiti to act as the floating MIQ, and after 16 days on the high seas, the intrepid travellers made landfall in the Bay of Islands.

The result will probably remain in their memories as one of the best times of their lives.

**Grey Lynn RSA
Friday, 18 November at 1200**

All welcome. The club bar will be open

NGAPONA ASSN – NAME BADGES

For those who have not received their Association name badges, they will be available for you to receive at the lunch at the Grey Lynn RSA this Friday.

Northland



The *Pukaki* Ex New Zealand Naval Patrol Vessel *Heron* on the slip in Whangarei being refurbished prior to eventual delivery to the Irish Naval Service. Her Sister Ship *Rotoiti* has also been sold to the INS.
Photo: Bryan Shankland (c)

NEW ZEALAND RECIPIENTS OF THE VICTORIA CROSS

Charles Hazlitt Upham, VC & Bar (21 September 1908 – 22 November 1994)



Upham was born at 32 Gloucester Street in central Christchurch on 21 September 1908, the son of John Hazlitt Upham, a lawyer, and his wife, Agatha Mary Coates. His father was a great-grandson of artist John Hazlitt, while his mother was a granddaughter of pioneer colonist Guise Brittan. He boarded at Waihi School, near Winchester, South Canterbury, between 1917 and 1922 and at Christ's College, Christchurch, from 1923 to 1927. From an early age he was a quiet and unusually determined boy, and on more than one occasion he intervened to defend schoolmates who were being bullied.

Upham attended Canterbury Agricultural College (now known as Lincoln University), where he earned a diploma in agriculture in 1930. He worked first as a sheep farmer, later as manager, and then valuing farms for the New Zealand government. In 1937, he joined the Valuation Department as assistant district valuer in Timaru. The

following year, he became engaged to Mary (Molly) Eileen McTamney (a distant relative of Noel Chavasse, VC and Bar). In 1939, he returned to Lincoln to complete a diploma in valuation and farm management.

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In September 1939, Upham enlisted in the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF) at the age of 30, and was posted to the 20th Canterbury-Otago Battalion, part of the New Zealand 2nd Division. Although he already had five years' experience in the New Zealand Army Territorial Force, in which he held the rank of sergeant, he signed on as a private. He was soon promoted to temporary lance corporal, but initially declined a place in an Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU). In December, he was promoted to sergeant and a week later sailed for Egypt. In July 1940, he was finally persuaded to join an OCTU.

In March 1941, Upham's battalion left for Greece and then withdrew to Crete, and it was here that he was wounded in the action, from 22 to 30 May 1941, that gained him his first VC. When informed of the award, his first response was "It's meant for the men."

Citation

War Office, 14th October, 1941.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve of awards of the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned: —

Second Lieutenant Charles Hazlitt Upham (8077), New Zealand Military Forces.

During the operations in Crete this officer performed a series of remarkable exploits, showing outstanding leadership, tactical skill and utter indifference to danger.

He commanded a forward platoon in the attack on Maleme on 22nd May and fought his way forward for over 3,000 yards unsupported by any other arms and against a defence strongly organised in depth. During this operation his platoon destroyed numerous enemy posts but on three occasions sections were temporarily held up. In the first case, under a heavy fire from a machine gun nest he advanced to close quarters with pistol and grenades, so demoralizing the occupants that his section was able to "mop up" with ease.

Another of his sections was then held up by two machine guns in a house. He went in and placed a grenade through a window, destroying the crew of one machine gun and several others, the other machine gun being silenced by the fire of his sections. In the third case he crawled to within 15 yards of an M.G. post and killed the gunners with a grenade.

When his Company withdrew from Maleme he helped to carry a wounded man out under fire, and together with another officer rallied more men together to carry other wounded men out.

He was then sent to bring in a company which had become isolated. With a Corporal he went through enemy territory over 600 yards, killing two Germans on the way, found the company, and brought it back to the Battalion's new position. But for this action it would have been completely cut off.

During the following two days his platoon occupied an exposed position on forward slopes and was continuously under fire. Second Lieutenant Upham was blown over by one mortar shell, and painfully wounded by a piece of shrapnel behind the left shoulder, by another. He disregarded this wound and remained on duty. He also received a bullet in the foot which he later removed in Egypt.

At Galatas on 25th May his platoon was heavily engaged and came under severe mortar and machine-gun fire. While his platoon stopped under cover of a ridge Second-Lieutenant Upham went forward, observed the enemy and brought the platoon forward when the Germans advanced. They killed over 40 with fire and grenades and forced the remainder to fall back.

When his platoon was ordered to retire, he sent it back under the platoon Sergeant and he went back to warn other troops that they were being cut off. When he came out himself, he was fired on by two Germans. He fell and shammed dead, then crawled into a position and having the use of only one arm rested his rifle in the fork of a tree and as the Germans came forward, he killed them both. The second to fall actually hit the muzzle of the rifle as he fell.

On 30th May at Sphakia his platoon was ordered to deal with a party of the enemy which had advanced down a ravine to near Force Headquarters. Though in an exhausted condition he climbed the steep hill to the west of the ravine, placed his men in positions on the slope overlooking the ravine and himself went to the top with a Bren Gun and two riflemen. By clever tactics he induced the enemy party to expose itself and then at a range of 500 yards shot 22 and caused the remainder to disperse in panic.

During the whole of the operations, he suffered from dysentery and was able to eat very little, in addition to being wounded and bruised.

He showed superb coolness, great skill and dash and complete disregard of danger. His conduct and leadership inspired his whole platoon to fight magnificently throughout, and in fact was an inspiration to the Battalion.

— London Gazette, 14 October 1941

Bar to VC

Upham was evacuated to Egypt, now promoted to captain. He received a Bar to his VC for his actions in July 1942, before and during the First Battle of El Alamein.

Citation

War Office, 26th September, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of a Bar to the VICTORIA CROSS to: —

Captain Charles Hazlitt UPHAM, V.C. (8077), New Zealand Military Forces.

Captain C. H. Upham, V.C., was commanding a Company of New Zealand troops in the Western Desert during the operations which culminated in the attack on El Ruweisat Ridge on the night of 14th–15th July, 1942.

In spite of being twice wounded, once when crossing open ground swept by enemy fire to inspect his forward sections guarding our mine-fields and again when he completely destroyed an entire truck load of German soldiers with hand grenades, Captain Upham insisted on remaining with his men to take part in the final assault. During the opening stages of the attack on the ridge Captain Upham's Company formed part of the reserve battalion, but, when communications with the forward troops broke down and he was instructed to send up an officer to report on the progress of the attack, he went out himself armed with a Spandau gun and, after several sharp encounters with enemy machine gun posts, succeeded in bringing back the required information.

Just before dawn the reserve battalion was ordered forward, but, when it had almost reached its objective, very heavy fire was encountered from a strongly defended enemy locality, consisting of four machine gun posts and a number of tanks. Captain Upham, without hesitation, at once led his Company in a determined attack on the two nearest strongpoints on the left flank of the sector. His voice could be heard above the din of battle cheering on his men and, in spite of the fierce resistance of the enemy and the heavy casualties on both sides, the objective was captured.

Captain Upham, during the engagement, himself destroyed a German tank and several guns and vehicles with grenades and although he was shot through the elbow by a machine gun bullet and had his arm broken, he went on again to a forward position and brought back some of his men who had become isolated. He continued to dominate the situation until his men had beaten off a violent enemy counter-attack and consolidated the vital position which they had won under his inspiring leadership.

Exhausted by pain from his wound and weak from loss of blood Captain Upham was then removed to the Regimental Aid Post but immediately his wound had been dressed he returned to his men, remaining with them all day long under heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire, until he was again severely wounded and being now unable to move fell into the hands of the enemy when, his gallant Company having been reduced to only six survivors, his position was finally overrun by superior enemy forces, in spite of the outstanding gallantry and magnificent leadership shown by Captain Upham.

The Victoria Cross was conferred on Captain Upham for conspicuous bravery during the operations in Crete in May, 1941, and the award was announced in the London Gazette dated 14th October, 1941.

— London Gazette, 26 September 1945

King George VI had invested Upham with his first Victoria Cross at Buckingham Palace on 11 May 1945. When the recommendation was made for a second VC, the King remarked to Major-General Howard Kippenberger that a bar to the cross would be "very unusual indeed" and enquired firmly, "Does he deserve it?" Kippenberger replied, "In my respectful opinion, sir, Upham won the VC several times over."

Colonel Burrows approached Kippenberger after the Minqar Qaim action and was already mooted the nomination for a second VC even before the battle at Ruweisat Ridge and Upham's capture. General Inglis received citations for both Minqar Qaim and Ruweisat that each individually suggested Upham merited the VC for either occasion independently, but because of the excessive rarity of multiple VC awards opted to combine the citations into the single one forwarded to the King.

With this award, Upham became the third man to be awarded a Bar to the VC. The previous recipients were Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Martin-Leake and Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, both doctors serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Martin-Leake received his VC for rescuing wounded under fire in the Second Boer War, and the Bar for similar actions in the First World War. Chavasse was similarly decorated for two such actions in the First World War, subsequently dying of wounds received during his second action. Neither of these men were combatants, so Upham remains the only fighting soldier to have been decorated with the VC and Bar.

When Colditz Castle was captured by American forces, most of the inmates made their own way home immediately. Upham joined an American unit, was armed and equipped, and wanted to fight the Germans.

Upham was keen to see action again, but was instead sent to Britain where he was reunited with Molly McTamney, who was then serving as a nurse. They were married at New Milton, Hampshire, on 20 June 1945. He returned to New Zealand in early September, and she followed him in December.

Upham was also mentioned in despatches on 14 November 1946.

After the war, Upham returned to New Zealand, and the community raised £10,000 to buy him a farm. However, he declined and the money went into the C. H. Upham Scholarship for children of ex-servicemen to study at Lincoln University or Canterbury College.

He obtained a war rehabilitation loan and bought a farm on Conway Flat, Hundalee, North Canterbury. It is said that for the remainder of his life, Upham would allow no German manufactured machinery or car onto his property.

Although somewhat hampered by his injuries, he became a successful farmer and served on the board of governors of Christ's College for nearly 20 years. He and Molly had three daughters, and lived on their farm until January 1994, when Upham's poor health forced them to retire to Christchurch.

In 1953, Upham was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal. In 1992, he was presented with the Order of Honour by the Government of Greece, in recognition of his service in the Battles of Greece and Crete.

He died in Canterbury on 22 November 1994, surrounded by his wife and daughters. His funeral in the Christchurch Cathedral was conducted with full military honours. The streets of Christchurch were lined by over 5,000 people. Upham is buried in the graveyard of St Paul's Church Papanui. His death was also marked by a memorial service on 5 May 1995 in London's St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, attended by representatives for the Royal Family; senior New Zealand government and political figures; senior members of the British and New Zealand armed forces; Valerian Freyberg, 3rd Baron Freyberg, grandson of VC holder Lord Freyberg, the

commander of Allied forces in Crete and 7th Governor-General of New Zealand; representatives of veterans' organisations; and other VC and George Cross holders.

