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C

WO 373/146.....

N W EUROPE 1944-45

LG 3 AUG 1945.....

VC

(CAN)

Register No. 68/T/1392(M.S.3).

Minute Sheet No. 1.

-1-

C.-in-C., 21 Army Group, forwards recommendation for the award of the V.C. to Cpl. F.G. Topham, 1 Cdn. Para. Bn..... 1A - G.

-2-

C.I.G.S.P.U.S.

At 1A the Commander-in-Chief, 21 Army Group, recommends the award of the Victoria Cross to :-

No. B.39039 Corporal Frederick George Topham,
1 Canadian Parachute Battalion,
First Canadian Army,

in recognition of most conspicuous gallantry and outstanding devotion to duty in action against the enemy in Germany on 24th March, 1945.

The statement of service occasioning the recommendation is enclosed at 1B.

Will you kindly let me know whether you support the award of the Victoria Cross to this N.C.O.

I consider that the V.C. is well merited in this case.

H.B. Wiggins

18 July, 1945.

M.S.

3

I agree to the award of a Victoria Cross.

19 July '45

4.

Mrs. Jagoe

23/7/45.

5

S. of S.

At enclosures 1A-G on this file, the Commander-in-Chief, 21 Army Group, recommends the award of the Victoria Cross to No. B.39039 Corporal Frederick George Topham, 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, Canadian Military Forces, in recognition of most conspicuous gallantry and outstanding devotion to duty in action against the enemy in Germany on 24th March, 1945.

The Victoria Cross Committee (C.I.C.S., P.U.S. and M.S.) support the recommendation.

If you approve, will you please sign the enclosed submission.

M. B. Wiggins

25 July, 1945.

M.S.

6.

Signed by the Secretary of State

27.7.45

J. A. McGregor.
P.S. to S. of S.

Insignia ordered from Jeweller.

-7-

7A.

C.-in-C., 21 Army Group, informed of approval of award.

-8-

8A.

Signal from 6th Airborne Division. re citation.

-9-

9A.

Reply as at

9B.

Gazette announcement approved by Censorship.

-10-

10A.

Proof copy of Gazette announcement.

-11-

11A.

Delivery instructions for Insignia.

-12-

acknowledged at

12A.

12B.

M.G.O.F. Note - For payment see minute 80 - 68 Jan 7674 adn. 46.

Central Chancery

(Miss Hammersley)

confirm that Topham's

VC was sent to

Canada & .

presumably

presented by the then

Governor General.

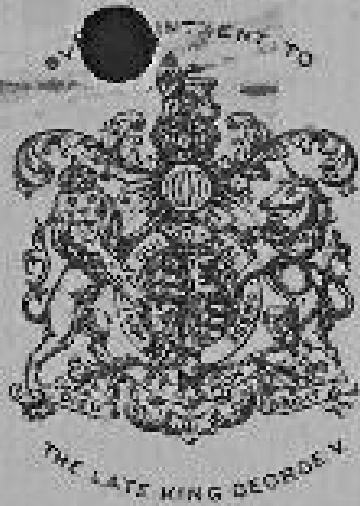
Announced in LG in London &
Ottawa 3 Aug. 45.

Minister of Treasury

100. 15/5/68.

C.D. MS3

ESTABLISHED IN BRUTON ST. BOND ST. IN 1848.

**HANCOCKS & Co.**

(JEWELLERS) LTD

PEARLS, DIAMONDS & PRECIOUS STONES

ANTIQUÉ PLATE &c.

W. H. J. WILKINSON
G. L. HANCOCK BORE
JOHN A. BOURNE.

CORNER OF

VIGO ST & SACKVILLE ST
LONDON, W.1.TELEPHONE, REGENT 1174.
CABLES, HANDORE, LONDON

18 August 1945

Sir,

We thank you for your letter received this
morning confirming instructions to send the
Victims' crosses as under to

Lt J. G. Sopher and
Lt A. Losens

to Miss R. G. Nepeck.

The crosses have been duly delivered.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours obedient servants

Lt Colonel Vesey
The War Office
(M.5.3)

Walter H. Huxley

KWmsington 8131. Ext. 422.

12A

(M.S.3),

LONDON, S.W.1.

68/T/1392(MS3.V)

xxx

13 August, 1945.

Gentlemen,

In confirmation of telephone conversation this afternoon, I am to request that you will kindly deliver the insignia of the Victoria Crosses awarded to No. B39039 Cpl. F.G. Topham, 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion and No. B46495 Sgt. A. Cosens, Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, to the following address on Wednesday morning, the 15th August, 1945 :-

Miss N.J. McLeod,
C.2(Investitures),
Flat 119,
Whitehall Court. S.W.1.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

ny.

h Lieutenant-General,
Military Secretary.

Messrs. Hancocks & Co.,
9, Vigo Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

11A

Department of National Defence, Ottawa.
3rd August, 1945.

THE CANADIAN ARMY.

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

No. B.39039 Corporal Frederick George TOPHAM, 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion.

On 24th March, 1945, Corporal Topham, a medical orderly, parachuted with his Battalion on to a strongly defended area east of the Rhine. At about 1100 hours, whilst treating casualties sustained in the drop, a cry for help came from a wounded man in the open. Two medical orderlies from a field ambulance went out to this man in succession but both were killed as they knelt beside the casualty.

Without hesitation and on his own initiative, Corporal Topham went forward through intense fire to replace the orderlies who had been killed before his eyes. As he worked on the wounded man, he was himself shot through the nose. In spite of severe bleeding and intense pain, he never faltered in his task. Having completed immediate first aid, he carried the wounded man steadily and slowly back through continuous fire to the shelter of a wood.

During the next two hours Corporal Topham refused all offers of medical help for his own wound. He worked most devotedly throughout this period to bring in wounded, showing complete disregard for the heavy and accurate enemy fire. It was only when all casualties had been cleared that he consented to his own wound being treated.

His immediate evacuation was ordered, but he interceded so earnestly on his own behalf that he was eventually allowed to return to duty.

On his way back to his company he came across a carrier, which had received a direct hit. Enemy mortar bombs were still dropping around, the carrier itself was burning fiercely and its own mortar ammunition was exploding. An experienced officer on the spot had warned all not to approach the carrier.

Corporal Topham, however, immediately went out alone in spite of the blasting ammunition and enemy fire, and rescued the three occupants of the carrier. He brought these men back across the open and, although one died almost immediately afterwards, he arranged for the evacuation of the other two, who undoubtedly owe their lives to him.

This N.C.O. showed sustained gallantry of the highest order. For six hours, most of the time in great pain, he performed a series of acts of outstanding bravery and his magnificent and selfless courage inspired all those who witnessed it.

Fr
 Military Advisers,
 Press Censorship,
 Room 7, M.O.I.,
 Easton 4321 Ex. 12 & 144

To:- M. S. 3

~~For~~

Subject: Proposed U.C.
 Citation of
 B 39039 Cpl. F. G.
 Topham, 1st Canadian
 Parachute Bn.

There is no censorship
 objection to the
 attached.



D. B. Adams

Major G.S.

WAR OFFICE.
July, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the VICTORIA CROSS to :-

No. B.39039 Corporal Frederick George Topham,
1st Canadian Parachute Battalion,
Canadian Military Forces.



On 24th March, 1945, Corporal Topham, a Canadian medical orderly, parachuted with his Battalion onto a strongly defended area east of the Rhine. At about 1100 hours, while treating casualties sustained in the drop, a cry for help came from a wounded man in the open. Two medical orderlies from a field ambulance went out to this man in succession but both were killed as they knelt beside the casualty.

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This M.C.O. showed sustained gallantry of the highest order. For six hours, most of the time in great pain, he performed a series of acts of outstanding bravery and his magnificent and selfless courage inspired all those who witnessed it.

Chief Military Adviser to the Censorship (I.P.3).

Will you please say if there is any censorship objection to the above statement being published in the London Gazette. This award has not yet been finally approved.

M.S.3 (Ken. 8131/422).
28 July, 1945.

M. J. Craig
for Lt.-Col.
A.M.S. Cant.

LONDON. S.W.1.

xxx

68/T/1392(M.S.3)(V).

Memorandum for:

Commander,
6 Airborne Division,
Syren Cot House,
Milston,
Bulford.
Salisbury.

No.B.39039 Cpl. F.G. TOPHAM . V.C.,
1st Canadian Parachute Battalion.

Reference your teleprinter message
A549, dated 8th August, 1945.

Enclosed is a copy of the citation
relating to the award of the Victoria
Cross to the above-named Canadian N.C.O.,
as requested.

M.S.3.(KEN.8131/422),
9 August, 1945.

FW
Lieutenant-General,
Military Secretary.

V PYF 70 OPOP

IMMEDIATE

Syren Coten Peruse

*Mission
Bulford
Aug 1945*

0084193

*R
A
9*

FROM 6 AIRBORNE DIVISION 081830A.

TO WAR OFFICE MSC30

BT

A549 . REF AWARD OF VC TO B39039 CPL T O P H A M F G

1 CANADIAN PARA BN . NO COPY OF CITATION HELD AT THIS HQ
OWING TO MOVEMENTS OF FILES . MAY A COPY OF THE CITATION BE
FORWARDED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THIS HQ

BT 081830A

~~549~~ 39039 TOPHAM 1

AS

BBB K

FGSASASAS

R 2002 K



BB'

UNPARAPHASED

CONFIDENTIAL

8A

From: War Office.

68/T/1392(MB3.V)

To : C-in-C.,
21 Army Group.

D.T.O. 1700 D/L

Your letter 21 A.Gp/1324/MB of 13 Jul @ Award Victoria Cross
to Cpl. F.G. Totham 4 Cdn Para, in approved by King @ will
be announced in London Gazette and Ottawa Gazette 3 Aug @
B.R.C. 2100 hrs 3 Aug and ^{English.} Press morning 4 Aug @

SEND IN CIPHER * IMPERATIVE

FW.
Lt.-Col.
A.M.B.

M.S.3 (Ken. 8131/822).
1. August. 1945.

KENSington 8131. Ext. 422.

7A.

(N.S.3),

38, Hyde Park Gate,
LONDON, S.W.7.

XI 68/T/1392(N.S.3.V).

31. July, 1945.

Gentlemen,

Will you please engrave and supply from War
Office stock the Victoria Cross awarded to :-

B39039 Cpl. Frederick George Topham,
1st Canadian Parachute Battalion.

24th March, 1945.

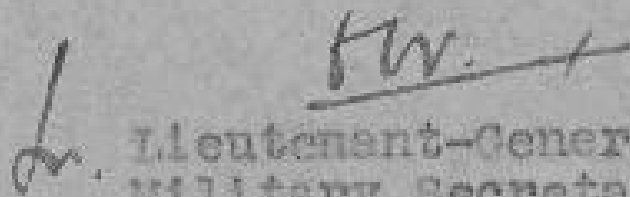
The date shown beneath the above name is
the date of the service which occasioned the
award.

Please deliver the insignia to the above
address as soon as possible.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,


Lieutenant-General,
Military Secretary.

Messrs. Hancocks & Co.,
9, Vigo Street,
LONDON, W.1.

return GMSI

*Most Humbly submitted to Your Majesty
by Your Majesty's Most Humble
and Most Devoted Servant.*

That the Victoria Cross be awarded
to :-

No. B.39039 Corporal Frederick George Topham,
1st Canadian Parachute Battalion,
Canadian Military Forces,

in recognition of the services set out
in the enclosed statement.

*app'd
GRI*

Suggest Friday next Gazette.

P. J. Giff

The War Office
27th July, 1945.

HCB



THE VICTORIA CROSS

No. B.39039 Corporal Frederick George Topham,
1st Canadian Parachute Battalion,
Canadian Military Forces.

On 24th March, 1945, Corporal Topham, a Canadian medical orderly, parachuted with his Battalion onto a strongly defended area east of the Rhine. At about 1100 hours, while treating casualties sustained in the drop, a cry for help came from a wounded man in the open. Two medical orderlies from a field ambulance went out to this man in succession but both were killed as they knelt beside the casualty.

Without hesitation and on his own initiative, Corporal Topham went forward through intense fire to replace the orderlies who had been killed before his eyes. As he worked on the wounded man, he was himself shot through the nose. In spite of severe bleeding and intense pain, he never faltered in his task. Having completed immediate first aid, he carried the wounded man steadily and slowly back through continuous fire to the shelter of a wood.

During the next two hours Corporal Topham refused all offers of medical help for his own wound. He worked most devotedly throughout this period to bring in wounded, showing complete disregard for the heavy and accurate enemy fire. It was only when all casualties had been cleared that he consented to his own wound being treated.

His immediate evacuation was ordered, but he interceded so earnestly on his own behalf that he was eventually allowed to return to duty.

On his way back to his company he came across a carrier, which had received a direct hit. Enemy mortar bombs were still dropping around, the carrier itself was burning fiercely and its own mortar ammunition was exploding. An experienced officer on the spot had warned all not to approach the carrier.

Corporal Topham, however, immediately went out alone in spite of the blazing ammunition and enemy fire, and rescued the three occupants of the carrier. He brought these men back across the open and, although one died almost immediately afterwards, he arranged for the evacuation of the other two, who undoubtedly owe their lives to him.

This N.C.O. showed sustained gallantry of the highest order. For six hours, most of the time in great pain, he performed a series of acts of outstanding bravery and his magnificent and selfless courage inspired all those who witnessed it.

Subject: Honours & Awards.

CONFIDENTIAL

1A

The Under Secretary of State,
The War Office, (M.S.3),
38 Hyde Park Gate, LONDON, S.W.7.

21 A Gp/1324/MS

21 A Gp/MS 3.

B - 39039. Cpl. F.C. TOPHAM. 1 Cdn Para Bn.

-I am directed to forward herewith the attached recommendation
for the award of the Victoria Cross in respect of the above named.

13 Jul 45.
M.S. Branch.

TO	MS3
READ FILE	
W. 15 JUL 1945	
LAST TRACE	

R. Waters
for Brigadier.
Deputy Military Secretary.



10
Lt C.B. Browne 1 Cdn Para Bn having been duly sworn states:-

At approximately 1100 hrs 24 March 1945 I observed Cpl Topham, without orders proceeding on to the DZ area and although at that time it was under heavy enemy fire from rifles and automatic weapons Cpl Topham covered the DZ from Coy HQ to the far side of the area (MR 1548 Pl/1/100,000) treating and helping to evacuate the wounded crews and passengers from the gliders which had landed and crashed on the field.

At that time the enemy was bringing intense incendiary fire from low angle 20mm flack guns to bear on the gliders in an attempt to cut them off from the airborne troops.

Cpl Topham showing outstanding courage and complete disregard for all types of enemy fire, continued throughout the afternoon to search the DZ area for casualties, treat them and bring them in to the safety of the MDS.

C.B. Browne Lt
(C.B. Browne) Lt
1 Cdn Para Bn

Sworn before me at Wismar Germany this 17 th day of May 1945.

W.B. Howard
(W.B. Howard) Lt
1 Cdn Para Bn

1D

STATEMENT BY D 141336 PTE WILCOX B.G.

D 141

D-141336 Pte Wilcox B.G., 1 Cdn Para Bn., having been duly sworn states: At approximately 1300 hrs on the 24th March 1945, at MR Pl/1/100,000, I heard a cry for help from the D.Z. Almost immediately I saw two Medical Orderlies from the 224 Field Ambulance proceed onto the D.Z. under intense S.A. fire to give aid to the wounded man. While kneeling at his side both Medical Orderlies were shot dead. I then saw B-39039 Cpl Topham run out to the wounded soldier, dress his wounds and carry the man to the safety of the woods. While he was dressing the wounds I noticed Cpl Topham stagger as though he had been hit, and then put both his hands to his face for four or five seconds. He then continued to dress the wounds of the wounded man, stopped the bleeding and carried him to safety. Cpl Topham's face was bleeding profusely when he returned to the wood.

B. Wilcox
D/141336 Pte Wilcox B.G.

Sworn before me this 31st day of May 1945
at Carter Barracks, Bulford, England.

A.A. Simpson
(A.A. Simpson) Major
1 Cdn Para Bn.

1E

Capt P.G. Costigan, Medical Officer, 1 Cdn Para Bn., having been duly sworn states: At approximately 1400 hrs on the 24th of March 1945, Cpl Topham came to the MDS. He was bleeding profusely from a T&T Gunshot Wound of the nose, and appeared to be in considerable pain. I examined the wound and stated that he would have to be evacuated following the cessation of haemorrhaging. He pleaded that I should allow him to return to duty with "C" Coy. I then took him to see Major Miller, 224 Field Ambulance, a Surgical Consultant, who agreed with me that this man should be evacuated. Cpl Topham again begged me to allow him to stay with his Coy. Major Miller and I discussed the situation and this man's keenness and sincerity influenced our decision. We decided to allow him to return to duty as long as he reported daily to have the wound cleansed and dressed.

P. G. Costigan Capt. R.C.A.M.C.
 (P.G. Costigan) Capt
 M.O. 1 Cdn Para Bn.

Sworn before me this 31st day of May 1945
 at Carter Barracks, Bulford, England.

J. A. Simpson
 (J.A. Simpson) Major
 1 Cdn Para Bn.

1F

Lt D.J. Proulx, 1 Cdn Para Bn., having been duly sworn states: At approximately 1530 hrs, 24 March 1945, I was proceeding to "C" Coy H.Q. (MR Pl/1/160,000). The headquarters was being shelled continuously at the time and a shell had landed on a carrier loaded with .303 S.A.A. and 3" Mortar ammunition. The carrier began to burn fiercely, the ammunition in it exploding continuously. A call for Medical assistance came from the carrier and I saw Cpl Topham, although wounded himself, go to the carrier and take out three soldiers, and give them medical treatment. One of them died almost immediately and Cpl Topham arranged to evacuate the other two to the M.D.S. immediately.

D.J. Proulx Lt.

 (D.J. Proulx) Lt
 1 Cdn Para Bn.

Sworn before me this 31st day of May 1945
 at Carter Barracks, Bulford, England.

G.A. Simpson Major

 (G.A. Simpson) Major
 1 Cdn Para Bn.

86611 H 54 8 E 57 21
 3 Parachute Brigade 6 Airborne Division XVIII US Airborne Corps

Date recommendation
 passed forward

Received	Passed
Brigade 9 Jun	11 Jun 45.
Division 21 Jun	3 Jul 45
Corps	
Army	

1B

Schedule No. Unit 1 Canadian Parachute Battalion.
 (to be left blank)

Army No. and Rank B-39039 Cpl

Name TOPHAM, Frederick George.
 (Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
<p>On 24th March 1945, ^{corporal} TOPHAM, ^{candidate} a medical orderly, parachuted with his ^{unit} onto a ^{well} defended area EAST of the RHINE. At about 1100 hrs, while treating casualties sustained in the drop, a cry for help came from a wounded man in the open. Two medical orderlies from a ^{field ambulance} went out to this man in succession, but both were killed as they knelt beside the casualty.</p> <p>Without hesitation and on his own initiative, ^{corporal} TOPHAM went forward through intense fire to replace the orderlies who had been killed before his eyes. As he worked on the wounded man, he was himself shot through the nose. In spite of severe bleeding and intense pain, he never faltered in his task. Having completed immediate first aid, he carried the ^{wounded} man steadily and slowly back through continuous fire to the shelter of a wood.</p> <p>During the next two hours Cpl TOPHAM refused all offers of medical help for his ^{own} wound. He worked most devotedly during this period to bring in wounded, showing complete disregard for heavy and accurate enemy fire. It was only when all casualties had been cleared that he consented to his own wound being treated.</p>	<p><i>G. E. Egan</i> Lt. Col. OC 1 Cdn Para Bn. (G. E. Egan) <i>[Signature]</i> Brigadier, Comd 3 Para Bde. (S. J. L. Hill) <i>[Signature]</i> Maj. Gen. Comd 6 Airborne Division. (E. L. Bols)</p>	<p>VICTORIA CROSS.</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> (HDG Greer) Gen GOC in C First Cdn Army</p>	

PTO

His immediate evacuation ~~from the MDS~~ was ordered, ~~but~~ ^{he came across} he interceded so earnestly on his own behalf ~~however~~, that he was eventually allowed to return to duty.

On his way back to his company ^{the camp across} there ~~was~~ a carrier, which had received a direct hit. Enemy mortar bombs were ^{and} dropping around, the carrier itself was burning fiercely and its own mortar ammunition was exploding. A major on the spot, ^{on the spot} ~~an~~ experienced officer, ^{warned} had ~~ordered~~ no-one to approach the carrier.

^{share of} ~~67~~ TOPHAM, however, immediately went out alone in ^{the face of} the face of blazing ammunition and enemy fire, and rescued the three occupants. ^{of the carrier} He brought these men back across the open. ^{and although} One died almost immediately, ^{but} but he arranged for the evacuation of the others. ^{two, who} These two undoubtedly owed their lives to him.

This NCO showed sustained gallantry of the highest order. For six hours, most of the time in great pain, he performed a series of acts of outstanding bravery and his magnificent and selfless courage inspired all those who witnessed it.

A. L. Non-Sparey

FIELD MARSHAL
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
BRITISH ARMY

If a casualty as under, fill in date

Nature of Casualty	Date
Killed in action	
Died of Wounds	
Died	
Missing	
Prisoner of War	

1G

Major J.P. Hanson having duly sworn states that at approximately 1530 hours 24 March 45 at M.R. 1548 M.R. PL/1/100000 C Coy H.Q. was being heavily shelled. I was advised that a Universal Carrier in the Coy area had been hit and its load of SAA and 3" Mortar Bombs was exploding. I rushed out of Coy H.Q. and saw several soldiers standing nearby. I gave an order so all could hear to the effect that nobody was to approach the machine. I then saw B-39039 Cpl. Topham, F.G. Medical Cpl from C Coy rush to the exploding carrier, and unaided, drag three men from it. One of the crew was badly wounded and died almost immediately. The other two were both wounded, but moved to safety and treated by Cpl Topham, who then arranged their evacuation.

J.P. Hanson
.....Major
(J.P. Hanson)

Sworn before me this 8th day of June 1945.

J.A. Lukasffy
.....Capt.
(J.A. Lukasffy) Adjt.