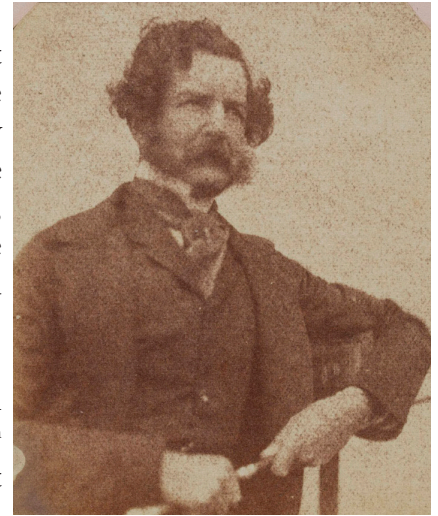


# Caribbean Victoria Crosses

Britain's highest award for valour, the Victoria Cross, was introduced in 1856 in the aftermath of the Crimean War. Amongst the many brave West Indians who have fought for Britain since then, seven men have been recognised with this award, two within ten years of its introduction. The backgrounds of these men reflect the diversity of the Caribbean.

**Henry Edward Jerome** was born on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1830 in Antigua. Whilst serving as a Captain in the 86<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1858, with the aid of Private Byrne, he rescued Lieutenant Sewell, who had been heavily wounded at Jhansi, India. Furthermore, he was commended for his brave conduct in the storming of the town and in an engagement with rebel forces, in which he, himself, was severely wounded on 28<sup>th</sup> May. Byrne also won the VC for his actions. Jerome eventually rose to the rank of Major General and died in Bath, England in 1901.

**Herbert Mackworth Clogstoun** was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1830. As a Captain in the 19<sup>th</sup> Madras Native Infantry, on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1859 he demonstrated "*conspicuous bravery*" for charging rebels at Chichumbah, India during the Indian Mutiny. He was severely wounded, but survived. He later rose to the rank of Major, but was killed in action at Hingoli, India on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1862.



Captain Herbert Clogstoun  
Image © National Army Museum,  
London

**Samuel Hodge** hailed from Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, although nothing is known about his date of birth or family. Hodge was the first member of the West India Regiments to be awarded the VC and only the second black man to win the award, after Canadian William Hall of the Royal Navy. On 30<sup>th</sup> June 1866, whilst serving in the 4<sup>th</sup> West India Regiment, he volunteered to break down the stockade at Tubabecolong, the Gambia, with axes. Having effected a breach into the town, he entered with Colonel D'Arcy, his commanding officer, and succeeded in opening two barricaded gates from the inside, allowing the rest of the British force to enter and secure the town. In the aftermath of the action, he was held up by D'Arcy as the bravest man in the regiment and cheered by his comrades. Unfortunately, whilst serving in British Honduras (now Belize), he contracted a lethal fever and died on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1868.



Samuel Hodge and Colonel D'Arcy in  
The Capture of Tubabakalong, Gambia 1866  
by Chevalier Louis William Desanges  
courtesy of Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance

Captain R.H. Chase of the Commissary of Ordinance on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1856 in St. Lucia. On 16<sup>th</sup> August 1880, whilst serving as a Lieutenant in the Bombay Staff Corps in Afghanistan, he rescued a wounded soldier, with the aid of Private Ashford, and carried him under heavy enemy fire to safety. He served the majority of his career in India and rose to the rank of Brevet Colonel and was even awarded the Order of the Bath. He died at Quetta, in what is now Pakistan, on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1908.

**William St. Lucien Chase** was born

to Susan Hill and



William St. Lucien Chase  
© Australian Army Museum of  
Western Australia

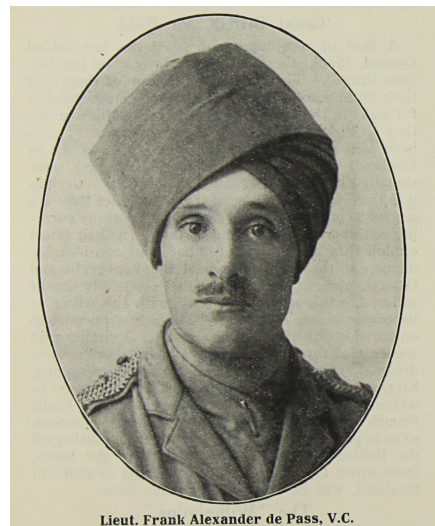


Sergeant William Gordon

**William James Gordon** was born in Jamaica on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1864. Whilst serving in West Africa as a Lance Corporal in the West India Regiment, on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1892, he put himself in harm's way to protect his superior, Major Madden, which probably saved the Major's life. During an attack on the town of Toniataba, Gambia as part of the campaign against local ruler Fodi Kabba, he threw himself between the Major and surprise enemy fire, pushing the Major out the way. He took a shot to his chest, which pierced his lungs. Gordon survived his wounds and later rose to the rank of Sergeant before he was discharged in 1902. He served for a time in the Kingston Militia and eventually joined a recruiting party for the West India Regiments at Up Park Camp, Jamaica. He died in August 1922 and was buried with full military honours, having spent his final years in charge of the Camp's firing range.

family, the Caribbean being home to the oldest Jewish community in the Western hemisphere. As a Lieutenant in the Indian Army, 34<sup>th</sup> Prince Albert Victor's Own Poona Horse, on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1914 at Festubert, France, he entered a German-held trench and succeeded in destroying a traverse, a defensive fortification, and rescued a wounded comrade whilst under heavy fire. He died the next day in an attempt to retake the same position that had been re-occupied by the enemy and was granted the VC posthumously.

**Frank Alexander de Pass** was born on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1887 to Eliot and Beatrice de Pass. Although born in England, he was a member of a prominent Jamaican Jewish



**Johnson Gideon Beharry** was born in Grenada in 1979 and moved to Britain in 1999, joining the Army in 2001 and seeing service in Kosovo and Iraq. It was in the latter country, whilst serving as a Private in the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment, that, following an enemy ambush on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004, he successfully guided his damaged vehicle and five others out of danger. He then proceeded to rescue his wounded comrades from the vehicle, all the while exposed to heavy enemy fire. On 11<sup>th</sup> June, he was again ambushed whilst driving and was seriously wounded in the head by an enemy grenade but successfully drove the vehicle out of danger before losing consciousness. He later required brain surgery for his wounds and, at the time of writing, is one of five living VC recipients.

Johnson Beharry  
(Photograph by Russel Meiklejohn CC BY-SA 2.0)