

Lance Sergeant Johnson Beharry, centre, with Gordon Newton of The Stone Shop and mason Ian Acott, left



# Plaque tribute to a local hero

**AMONG the dozens and dozens of local people at a simple service of commemoration – not least the 90 or so Hunton primary school-children – only two had one distinct thing in common. A Victoria Cross.**

One was a surviving VC holder, Lance Sergeant Johnson Beharry; the other, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Drummond Borton, long dead yet evidently not forgotten.

Lance Sgt Johnson Beharry won the highest medal for battlefield “valour” for trying to save the lives of his comrades under fire in Iraq, suffering terrible injuries doing so.

On November 7, 1917, in Palestine, Hunton man Lt Col Arthur Drummond Borton led his battalion into a dawn attack against a strongly-held enemy position under withering fire until it was captured.

Later, he led a party of volunteers against a battery of field guns in action at point-blank range, again showing fearless leadership during the Battle of Gaza.

So on the exact centenary, to the day, his admirers gathered to remember his gallantry, his defiance and contempt for danger. Local firm The Stone Shop, in East Farleigh, sponsored the installation of a memorial plaque in the grounds

of Hunton primary school (pictured).

In attendance at the unveiling of the plaque were members of the Borton family, including Major General Nicholas Borton DSO MBE, as well as Lance Sgt Beharry, who served with the Princess of Wales’s Royal Regiment.

“It was a great honour to meet Maj Gen Borton and his family and Lance Sgt Beharry, who suffered

horrendous injuries when he won his VC. But you’d never have known it,” said Gordon Newton of The Stone Shop. “It was a lovely event and a privilege to be part of this important event to mark the achievements of Lt Col Borton.”

The unveiling was attended by the Mayor of Maidstone Cllr Malcom Greer, local Maidstone borough councillors and all the pupils of Hunton school who sang the national anthem during the ceremony. Cllr Brian Mortimer had made the suggestion of a

plaque and he was able to track down Maj Gen Borton, who is a distant cousin of the VC holder.

Lt Col Borton survived the war but died in 1933, aged 49, at Southwold in Suffolk. He is buried in the churchyard at Hunton.



THE Victoria Cross (VC) is awarded for acts of “most conspicuous bravery, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy”.



## Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Drummond Borton VC CMG DSO - The Queen's, Gaza, 1917

Born: 1 July 1883, Cheveney, Kent.

Died: 5 January 1933 age 49.

Buried at Hunton, Kent

On 7 November 1917 at Palestine, Borton deployed his battalion for attack and at dawn led his companies against a strongly held position.

When the leading waves were checked by withering fire, he moved freely up and down the line under heavy fire and then led his men forward, capturing the position. At a later stage he led a party of volunteers against a battery of field-guns in action at point-blank range, capturing the guns and the detachments.

His fearless leadership was an example to the whole brigade.

*VC held by The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum, Guildford, Surrey*