

Cyril Bassett



Cyril Royston Guyton Bassett was a bank worker from Auckland.

He joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and was given a job in the Signals Division.

The Signals Division had to make sure that the soldiers could talk to each other and with their headquarters during battle. One of their important jobs was to lay and repair telephone lines in the battlefields to help the soldiers communicate.

At Gallipoli, Bassett was in the action straight away, laying communication cables on the beaches under fire from the Turks.

On 7th August 1915, during the battle of Chunuk Bair, he led a group of men that laid a telephone cable from the New Zealand soldiers on top of the hill to their Headquarters. He did this in daylight with the Turks shooting at him continuously. Two bullets went through his uniform but did not hit his body!

He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery – the highest award in the British and Commonwealth. He was the only New Zealander to receive the Victoria Cross at Gallipoli.

Later in the war he went to the Western Front and was wounded twice in France.

He went home to New Zealand in 1918.

Bassett went on to serve in World War 2 as well and became a Lieutenant-Colonel.

After World War 2, he went back to being a banker and he died in 1983 aged 91.

Cyril Bassett's daughter only found out that her father had been given the Victoria Cross when she learned about it in school! He was so modest about his achievements that he had never told her!



Cyril Bassett in the trenches in the Western Front in 1917.

1. What work did Cyril used to do before going overseas?

2. What job was he given when he joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force?

3. What was the date when he led a group of men to lay a telephone cable?

4. How many bullets went through Cyril's uniform?

5. For his bravery, Cyril was awarded the:

6.What do you think Cyril was like as a person? Why?

7. When Cyril went to serve in World War 2, what rank did he hold?

8. What job did Cyril do after serving in World War 2?

9. When and where did his daughter find out her father had been given the highest award, the Victoria Cross?
