

# COURAGE

Moral Courage | Tenacity | Bravery | Facing Fears



The Victoria Cross (VC) is the most prestigious award in the British honours system. The VC medal is granted “for valour” - for those who have shown exceptional bravery “in the presence of the enemy”.

The most recent recipient of the VC is Lance Corporal Joshua Leakey, of 1st Battalion, Parachute Regiment following action in Afghanistan on 22 August 2013.

Amongst others, the British paratroopers were searching a village for illegal weapons. Having been flown in by Chinook helicopters, landing on a hill, he could see where they were being attacked and heard over the radio someone had been injured. Leakey ran up the hill to assess the situation and realised urgent action was needed. Despite being of a lower rank, he took control of the situation and led his group down to the people under attack. On arrival he gave first aid to a wounded US Marine and began to evacuate him from the battlefield. While under fire he returned to the top of the hill. He moved to a better position to fire at the attacking Taliban even though bullets were ricocheting off the weapon he was carrying. His actions inspired other soldiers to join in the fight back.

Whilst manning his machine gun, he was shouting updates into his radio. He gave his machine gun to another soldier and ran once more through heavy fire to retrieve another machine gun to hold off the enemy.

The citation for his VC reads “ Under fire yet undeterred by the very clear and present danger, he ran across the exposed slope three times.....his actions provided the turning point, inspiring his comrades to fight back with renewed ferocity. Displaying gritty leadership, his actions singlehandedly regained the initiative and prevented considerable loss of life.”