

## Frank Kirby VC

## Medal Citation

As reported at the time (*London Gazette*, 5 October 1900) :

‘On 1 June 1900 a party of some 200 men, commanded by Maj A.G. Hunter-Weston and accompanied by the scout F.R Burnham left Orange Grove (Field Marshall Lord Roberts HQ, 5km NE of central Johannesburg) with the objective of cutting the Pretoria – Komatipoort (Delagoa) railway line by blowing up a culvert at Bronkhorstspruit. Having gone only about 15-20 km the party was discovered by a large group of burghers and instantly forced to retire’

The Victoria Cross citation reads

“On the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1900, a party sent to try to cut the Delagoa Bay Railway was retiring, hotly pressed by very superior numbers. During one of the successive retirements of the rearguard a man, whose horse had been shot, was seen running after his comrades. He was a long way behind the rest of his troop and was under a brisk fire. From among the retiring troop Corporal Kirby turned and rode back to the man’s assistance. Although by the time he reached him they were under a heavy fire at close range, Corporal Kirby managed to get the dismounted man up behind him and to take him clear off over the next rise held by our rearguard. This is the third occasion on which Corporal Kirby has displayed gallantry in the face of the enemy”

He was presented with the Victoria Cross by his Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York (the future King George V) at a ceremony in Cape Town on 19 August 1901 and, in 1920, as Major Kirby, was a guest of King George V at a party held at Buckingham Palace for all the recipients of the VC.

A local paper (*presume Thame Gazette*) reported that :

“The inhabitants of Thame and the Queen’s Own Oxfordshire Hussars should be justly proud of the announcement made in last Saturday’s daily papers that Corporal Frank Kirby (fourth son of Mr W H Kirby), Royal Engineers, formerly of this town, has had conferred upon him the coveted distinction of the Victoria Cross for valour in the field”

Frank Kirby’s Victoria Cross is now in the Ashcroft Collection at the Imperial War Museum.