

**Alexander Buller Turner** Royal Berkshire Regiment, Princess Charlotte of Wales's

The eldest son of Charles and Jane Turner who lived at Thatcham House. Alexander was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1893 and came to Thatcham when his parents moved here in 1902. He was a commissioned Officer in the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

The citation for his award, published in the London Gazette on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1915 reads:

Second Lieutenant Alexander Buller Turner, 3rd Battalion (attached 1st Battalion), Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire Regiment) For most conspicuous bravery on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1915, at " Fosse 8," near Vermelles.

When the regimental bombers could make no headway in Slag Alley, Second Lieutenant Turner volunteered to lead a new bombing attack: He pressed down the communication trench practically alone, throwing bombs incessantly with such dash and determination that he drove back the Germans about 150 yards without a check. His action enabled the reserves to advance with very little loss, and subsequently-covered the flank of his regiment in, its retirement, thus probably averting a loss of some hundreds of men. This most gallant Officer has since died of wounds received in this action.



**Private William John House**, Royal Berkshire Regiment, Princess Charlotte of Wales's, 2nd Battalion

William John House, son of Mr Thomas House of Park Lane, Thatcham, was born on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1879, enlisted into the Royal Berkshire Regiment on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1896 and was duly gazetted to the roll of the Victoria Cross on his 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday, in 1902. He received the Victoria Cross from HM King Edward VII on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1902.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1900, it was resolved to make an attack upon the Boer position at Mosilikatse Nek, and, for the purpose of ascertaining a better idea of the enemy's force, a sergeant was sent forward to reconnoitre. Before he could, however, rejoin his comrades, he was seen by the enemy, who, opening fire, wounded him most severely. He lay on the open ground, in full view of the Boer marksmen, who kept up a hail of bullets on and around him. House, though cautioned that almost certain death lay before him, sprang out from the cover, behind which he and the rest of the troops were concealed and attempted to carry in his wounded comrade. While making this heroic attempt he himself was badly shot, and, though lying fully exposed, in his turn, to the Boer rifle fire called to his comrades not to come to his assistance until the advance was made. This act, for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross was performed under the immediate command of Captain Sir Edward Pasley, Bart., Sir Ian Hamilton being Chief.



**Major (temporary Lieutenant-Colonel) Victor Buller Turner**, Rifle Brigade, The Prince Consort's Own

Victor Buller Turner was the younger brother of Alexander Buller Turner. Victor was born 17th January 1900 in Reading and moved to Thatcham House in 1902. After WW2 Victor moved to Norfolk and retired from the army in 1949. In 1950 was appointed to the Royal Household, with a post in the ceremonial King's Bodyguard of the Yeomen of the Guard and rose to be "Clerk of the Cheque and Adjutant" of the Guard in 1955. He was appointed a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (CVO) in 1966 in connection with his services to the Royal Household and was promoted to Lieutenant of the Queen's Bodyguard in 1967. He died on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1972 in Ditchingham, Norfolk.

For most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1942, in the Western Desert. Lieutenant-Colonel Turner led a Battalion of the Rifle Brigade at night for 4,000 yards through difficult country to their objective, where 40 German prisoners were captured. He then organised the captured position for all-round defence; in this position he and his Battalion were continuously attacked from 5.30 a.m. to 7 p.m., unsupported and so isolated that replenishment of ammunition was impossible owing to the concentration and accuracy of the enemy fire.

During this time the Battalion was attacked by not less than 90 German tanks which advanced in successive waves. All of these were repulsed with a loss to the enemy of 35 tanks which were in flames, and not less than 20 more which had been immobilised. Throughout the action Lieutenant-Colonel Turner never ceased to go to each part of the front as it was threatened. Wherever the fire was heaviest, there he was to be found. In one case, finding a solitary six-pounder gun in action (the others being casualties) and manned only by another officer and a Sergeant, he acted as loader and with these two destroyed 5 enemy tanks. While doing this he was wounded in the head, but he refused all aid until the last tank was destroyed.

His personal gallantry and complete disregard of danger as he moved about encouraging his Battalion to resist to the last, resulted in the infliction of a severe defeat on the enemy tanks. He set an example of leadership and bravery which inspired his whole Battalion and which will remain an inspiration to the Brigade.

