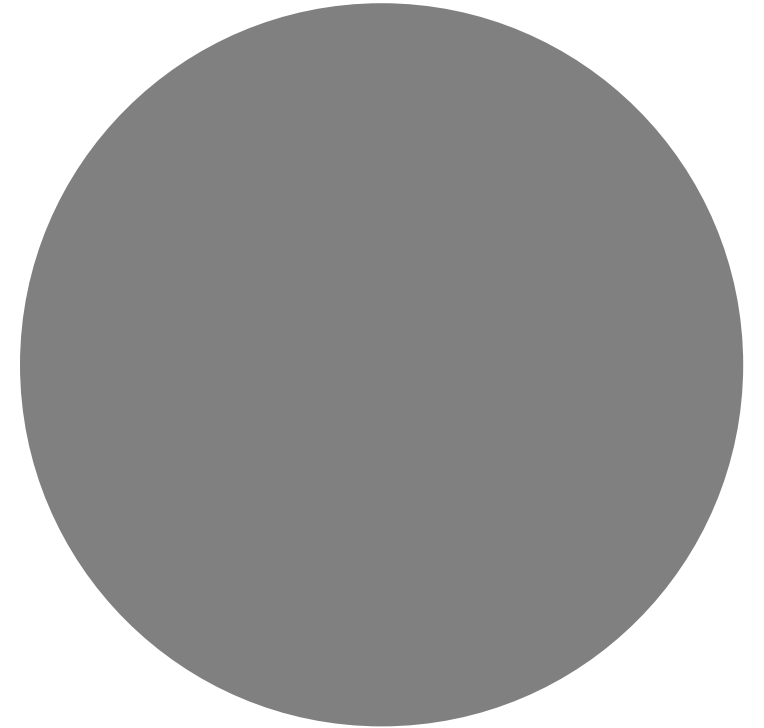


Presentation of the Elizabeth Cross to Our Great Uncle

Alex and Iris Sinclair



Introduction

- On the 6 September this year, we attended a ceremony in Aldershot;
- At this ceremony, our grandfather received the Elizabeth Cross on behalf of his brother, Douglas Henry Laventure;
- There were many representatives from the army there, and the proceedings were run by a Colonel who is the Deputy Commander of the 11th Infantry Brigade;
- The Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire and the Mayor of Haslemere also attended.

The Elizabeth Cross

- The Elizabeth Cross was created in 2009 to provide national recognition for the families of Armed Forces Personnel who have died on operations or as a result of an act of terrorism;
- This is the first time the name of a reigning monarch has been given to a new award since the George Cross was instituted in 1940 by the Queen's father, King George VI , for acts of bravery by both civilians and the armed forces. Prior to this, the Victoria Cross was introduced by Queen Victoria in 1856 for acts of gallantry by the Armed Forces.



Our Great Uncle

- Our Great Uncle, Douglas was a young man who loved playing football and watching motor racing.
- In 1955, when he was 19, Douglas was posted to Cyprus as part of his National Service. Cyprus was a British Crown Colony at that time.
- After the Second World War, National Service was introduced, which meant that all able bodied young men had to serve in the British Armed forces for 1-2 years. These men helped maintain British military commitments in different parts of the world.
- On 14th December 1955, Douglas was in a street in Nicosia in Cyprus doing some Christmas shopping, when he was shot by a Greek terrorist and sadly died. This terrorist was working for an organisation seeking to unify Cyprus with Greece and remove the British from Cyprus.

TRGBN SUP/RASC



BADAJOS
GUARDROOM



We were on TV!

- This was considered to be an important enough occasion to be on BBC South and ITV Meridian news and on Forces TV.
- We were also on the front page of the Haslemere Herald.

Family finally get medal for Cyprus terror death

A HASLEMERE man has been presented with a commemorative Elizabeth Cross medal in national recognition of the death on active service of his older brother more than 60 years ago.

In a moving ceremony held in Aldershot at the weekend, Brian Laventure from High Lane, was presented with the medal and memorial scroll by Nigel Atkinson, the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire to honour Douglas Laventure, who was killed while carrying out his National Service, in Cyprus, in December 1955.

Introduced in 2009, the medal is granted to the next of kin of Armed Forces personnel killed on operations or as a result of terrorism.

Mr Laventure's wife Ann said:

"Douglas, was 19 and newly posted to Cyprus when he was shot and killed by an EOKA terrorist in Nicosia, while out shopping for Christmas presents."

The presentation was attended by Army and civic dignitaries included David Round and Melanie Odell, the mayor and mayoress of Haslemere.

Mr Laventure said after the ceremony: "I am very glad that long last the Army have recognised that there's no distinction between someone who fights at the Battle of the Somme and is killed on the battlefield, and someone who is killed by a terrorist attack.

"Today has given me what is known as 'catharsis'. I am very humbled and happy to have received the Elizabeth Cross," he added. "It is lovely to know

that after all this time my brother's death has been recognised.

"It was very moving, we could have felt more welcome and honoured."

Almost 400 British soldiers were killed in Cyprus during the four years of the bloodshed.

Mrs Laventure added: "Brian used to visit the garden of remembrance Westminster every year just before Remembrance Day, and always came back saying there was no dedicated space for crosses for Cyprus."

Any family who lost someone during the Cyprus emergency (1955-9) who served on the island during that time may be entitled to receive the Elizabeth Cross. Contact Les Smith by email at cyprusveterans@gmail.com



Why was this a special occasion?

- Times were hard after the Second World War and Douglas' parents and brother could not afford to attend his funeral in Cyprus;
- After 63 years, Douglas was finally honoured and our grandfather (his brother) said he felt a sense of relief;
- It was very important that all of the family were there to share in the experience and we were glad to be there;
- I am actually named after my Great Uncle as my name is Alexander Douglas Sinclair so I feel a strong connection to him.

THANK YOU FOR
WATCHING

