



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Memorial Stone Unveiled for Local VC Hero**

4 July 2016

A commemorative stone has been unveiled in Hailsham to honour of Victoria Cross recipient Company Sergeant Major Nelson Victor Carter.

Marking the 100th anniversary of Nelson Carter's act of gallantry that earned him the prestigious award during the early years of the First World War, the special ceremony took place at the war memorial in Hailsham High Street on Saturday [2 July], where the commemorative stone was unveiled to the public.

The Mayor of Hailsham Councillor Nigel Coltman joined local councillors and Royal British Legion Hailsham & District Branch members at the event.

Company Sergeant Major Nelson Victor Carter VC, who was born in Eastbourne on 6 April 1887 and educated in Hailsham, was 29 years old and a company sergeant major in the 12th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment of the British Army when he died during the First World War.

He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on 30 June 1916 at Boar's Head, Richebourg l'Avoue, the award being the highest for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces.

The stone, which will be maintained by the Town Council, is part of a national scheme that will see every Victoria Cross recipient of the First World War - 628 in total - marked with a commemorative stone.

Town Mayor Councillor Nigel Coltman said: "We are honoured to have recognised the immense courage displayed by Company Sergeant Major Nelson Victor Carter. The people of Hailsham came together to commemorate his actions and there is now a permanent reminder of this at the war memorial for all to see."

Town councillor Frank Berry, who is vice-chairman of the Royal British Legion Hailsham & District Branch, commented: "It is a great honour to pay tribute to a hero who received the prestigious Victoria Cross during the First World War, a credit to Hailsham."

"The stone is a way of providing a lasting legacy within the community, remembering not just the gallant hero Company Sergeant Major Nelson Victor Carter, but all those who served during the First World War and made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom."

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### **Notes to Editors:**

- Company Sergeant Major Nelson Victor Carter VC was born in Eastbourne on 6 April 1887 and was educated in Hailsham. In December 1902 he enlisted under the name of Nelson Smith into the Royal Field Artillery, where he attained the rank of Bombardier, but was discharged on the 17th August 1903 as medically unfit.
- Declared fully fit in August 1906 Carter again enlisted into the RFA and served three years with the regiment. However, whilst on service with the RFA in

Singapore he was once again declared medically unfit and returned to England and discharged.

Upon the outbreak of WWI, Carter joined Lowther's Lambs in September 1914, promoted corporal on the same day, then sergeant and later Warrant Officer Class II.

He was then sent to France attached to 'A' Company, 12th Bn, Royal Sussex Regiment, and served with this detachment until his death on the 30th June 1916 whilst winning his Victoria Cross.

- The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is currently helping local communities around the UK to commemorate Victoria Cross (VC) recipients of the First World War by presenting councils in areas where they were born with commemorative paving slabs.
- The VC was introduced on 29 January 1856 by Queen Victoria and is the highest military decoration. It is awarded for valour "in the face of the enemy" and takes precedence over all other orders, decorations and medals. It is usually presented to the recipient or to their next of kin by the British monarch at an investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

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