



Beyond the Legend: Bill Speakman, VC

Derek Hunt

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Beyond the Legend is the authorised biography of William (Bill) Speakman VC. It covers the whole of his sometimes controversial life, from his childhood in Altrincham, Cheshire to his later life in South Africa - a period about which little has been known previously - and his recent return to Altrincham. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, one of only four for the Korean War, for his part in the defence of United Hill against a numerically superior Chinese army in November 1951. Though wounded, he continued to lead grenade attacks against the enemy. The VC action is covered in some detail, including Speakman's own account of the battle. After Korea, he saw active service in Malaya, Aden and Borneo before retiring from the Army, with the rank of Sergeant, in 1968. Speakman is one of only two surviving VCs of the British Army; the other is Johnson Beharry VC.

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