SEDBERGH SCHOOL MILITARY TIMELINE

While Sedbergh is not seen as a 'military school', there is a distinguished history of military service by Old Sedberghians, a source of great pride to the School. Perhaps that sense of service stems from the values and standards embedded in a Sedbergh education and encapsulated in our motto, *Dura Virum Nutrix* – 'Stern Nurse of Men'. It is brought most starkly into focus by the bravery exhibited by Old Sedberghians – especially by the four individuals awarded the Victoria Cross but by many others too, and by their sacrifice, particularly the 448 old boys and 4 masters who died in the service of this Nation and are recorded on the Memorial Cloisters.

Lieutenant-General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE, CB

Pre 1900 · 1900s · 1910s · 1920s · 1930s · 1940s · 1950s · 1960s · 1970s · 1980s · 1990s · 2000s

Brigadier General C. Hotham
c.1679
Colonel of Royal Regiment Dragoons. MP for Beverley.

General Sir John Shea
GCB, KCMG, DSO
Sedgwick House 1880-85
Shea served in World War I. After the War he went on to be Adjutant-General, India in 1924 and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, India in 1928 before retiring in 1932. He was very involved with Sedbergh School serving on the board of Governors from 1935 until his death in May 1966 regularly attending speech day and supporting other school events.

Lieutenant General Sir Matthew Fell KCB, CMG, FRCS
Lupton House 1885-91
First Head of House. First Director of Medical Services R.A.F, mentioned in dispatches eight times. A barracks in Blackpool has been named after him in honour of his services to the armed forces.

Lieutenant Robert Digby Jones VC
Sedgwick House 1890-93
On 6 January 1900 during the attack on Wagon Hill (Ladysmith), South Africa, Lieutenant Digby Jones and a trooper of the Imperial Light Horse led the force which re-occupied the top of the hill at a critical moment, just as the three foremost attacking Boers reached it. The leader was shot by Lieutenant Digby Jones. He was awarded the VC for his actions.

Claude Worthington DSO
Lupton House 1891-94
Died in the final victory push October 1918.

Second Lieutenant Edward Hamilton MM
Lupton House 1893-97
West Yorkshire Regiment; France 1915-1918.

Private Harold Thorp MM
Sedgwick House 1895-99
Joined the Royal Medical Corps in 1915. During operations in France in 1916 he received the MM for 'bravery in the field'. In September 1917 he received a penetrating wound to the chest and leg and died in the Casualty Clearing Station from which it had been impossible to move him.

Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Duncan DSO (2nd Bar)
Hart House 1896-1903
France 1915-1919. Mentioned in Despatches 5 times. Wounded 1915.

Captain Jonathan Knowles
Sedgwick House 1897-98
Served in the Boer War, India and Burma. He was the first OS to lose his life in WW1, dying just a matter of weeks after the conflict began.

Corporal William Shaw MM
School House 1898-1900
North Auckland Regt., N.Z.E.F. Wounded 1915, 1917.

Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Irwin DSO (2nd Bar)
School House 1901-06
East Surrey Regt. Wounded 1916, 1918. Mentioned in despatches 4 times.

September 1901:
Sedbergh Rifle Corps founded.

Cadet corps 1903

Vice Admiral George Creswell CB, DSO, OSC, RN
School House 1902-02
Staff, Mediterranean Station. Mentioned in Despatches.

1904:
School branch of Navy League founded.

Campbell receiving the Victoria Cross, 1941

O.T.C. 1908

Lieutenant Miles Thursby MM
Evans House 1907-12
Canadian Machine Gun Corps.

1908:
Officer Training Corps (O.T.C) established at Sedbergh.

Private Edward Herd MM (Bar)
Day Boy 1908-10
Liverpool Scottish; France 1915-1917; Taken prisoner 1917-1918 but survived.

Captain Percy Bentley MC (3rd Bar)
Hart House 1908-10
Yorks. Light Infantry. Wounded 1915, 1917; Mentioned in Despatches.

Major-General Jock Campbell VC, DSO, MC
Evans House 1907-12
Royal Horse Artillery. Perhaps the most famous of all "Desert Rats", his name being a byword for courage throughout the division. He was awarded the Victoria Cross at Sidi Rezegh in November 1941, whilst commanding the Support Group. Accidently killed on active service. Buried in Cairo War Cemetery.

1910:
Crook Rifle range acquired and set up

Lieutenant Wilfred Turner MM
Hart House 1910-12
Tank Corps; France, 1915-1918

Brigadier Alastair Pearson CB, OBE, MC, DSO
Winder House 1930-33
Pearson took command of 1st Parachute Battalion and 8th (Midlands) Parachute Battalion fighting in Battle of France, Tunisian Campaign, Invasion of Sicily and Normandy landings.

Edward (Ted) Ruffman, OSC
Winder House 1929-34
In 1938 Ted joined the TA, was commissioned and sent to Norway. He was then sent to the Middle East and when he tried to rescue a colleague in Tobruk his carrier was blown up and he was invalided out of the army with many serious injuries. He then joined the SOE and took part in Operation Bridford crossing the North Sea to Sweden, evading the German blockade of the Skagerrak, to bring back supplies and transport arms for the Danish underground. After a collision in thick fog he had to blow up his ship and jump into the sea. For this he was awarded the DSC and mentioned several times in despatches and in the book *The Blockade Busters*.

Flying Officer John Stower
Hart House 1938-31
He took part in the famous 'Great Escape'. Stower succeeded in getting from Sagan into Switzerland, and after four days, unknowingly, walked back through the frontier into German territory, and was seized by a German patrol. He was amongst the 50 prisoners who were shot by the Germans on 31st March 1944.

Flying Officer Laurence Reavell-Carter
Lupton House 1928-31
Reavell-Carter was an Olympic Athlete for Great Britain. He took part in the famous 'Great Escape'. He was caught at the exit from the tunnel and put back inside the camp when he tried to save others by distracting the guard who was about to shoot them. Perhaps this helped save his life, for had he been re-taken at large, he would most probably have been one of the 50 who were shot by the Germans after being recaptured.

Field day 1930

Frederick Spencer Chapman DSO (Bar)
Lupton House 1926
Chapman was commissioned into the Seaforth Highlanders in 1939 and due to his exploration experience was chosen to train Australian, New Zealand and Singaporean forces in guerrilla warfare. During a mission behind Japanese lines in Malay the entire party except Chapman succumbed to starvation, disease and attack by Japanese forces. Chapman spent 18 months in hiding in the jungle sabotaging Japanese military efforts. In 1946 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order backdated to 31 March 1944. A Bar to D. S. O followed in 1946.

Second Lieutenant George Gunn VC, MC
Sedgwick House 1926-30
Royal Horse Artillery. Killed in action. Buried in Knightsbridge Cemetery, Lybia. Won VC Sidi Rezegh 21/11/41, Gunn held off an attack on Sidi Rezegh with single unarmoured gun when rest of battery had been destroyed or disabled.

Major-General Henry Alexander CB, CBE, DSO
Hart House 1925-29
Saw action in WW2 in North Africa, Italy, India, Burma and North West Europe. Commanding Officer 1 Battalion, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) and commanded 26 Gurkha Infantry Brigade. Former Chief of Defence Staff of the Ghana Armed Forces.

July 1924:
Service of dedication at Memorial Cloisters, Designed by Old Sedberghian J. Hubert Worthington the Cloisters feature five arches, one for each house that lost boys in WW1. The names of 257 boys and master were inscribed on the panels.

Major-General Harold Hodges CBE
Lupton House 1924-28
Brigadier Royal Artillery

1923
Current Armoury built.

Brigadier Harold Dimoline CBE, MBE, DSO, DL, CPM
Hart House 1918-21
Mentioned in Despatches twice. Served in India 4th Infantry in North Africa and Italian campaign, Acting Commander in Battle of Monte Cassino where Allies suffered 55,000 casualties.

Commemorations of the Royal visit of 1917

Boer War Memorial, Sedbergh School

Bisley 1914. The first time Sedbergh won the Ashburton Shield

Harold Ashworth
Hart House 1915-20
RAMC Acting Brigadier (Substantive Major). Manchester University Rugby Team to tour Germany after the WW1. Founder Fellow of the Society of Anaesthetists.

Corporal Fred Flatow MM
Evans House 1914-16
East Yorks, Regt.

The Military Medal awarded to F.W. Flatow in 1918

Air Vice Marshall Peter Furniss DFC
School House 1933-37
Commanded a Spitfire squadron in Italian and Balkan campaign in WW2.

Drill practice in Winder House Yard c.1937

Major-General Ronald McAlister OBE
Sedgwick House 1936-41
3rd, 10th Brigade of Gurkha Rifles. Bursar, Wellesley House Prep School. Retired editor 10th Gurkhas Regimental Journal.

1940:
Junior Training Corps (J.T.C.) founded. The Sedberghian Magazine stated 'The J.T.C., by weekly uniform parades and a revision and highlighting of syllabus have made us feel our military obligations'.

William Gemmell Alexander MBE
Lupton House 1932-36
After reading law at Oxford he served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 51st Infantry Division. He served in France until the Dunkirk evacuation where he had to escape in full uniform. He escaped unscathed after the attempted bombing of a ship he was asleep on. On his return from WW2 he was posted to Africa with the Eighth Army. He was involved in desert fighting and took part in beach landings in Sicily and Italy. He was present at the capture of the Belsen concentration camp. In 1946, he began several years of travelling the world with the Colonial Service.

Kenneth Campbell VC
Sedgwick House 1931-35
Flying Officer, 22 Squadron Coastal Command. Killed in action in Brest flying a Beaufort Torpedo Bomber in a successful attack on Battlecruiser *Gneisenau*. Buried at Brest.

Major-General Michael Walsh CB, CBE, DSO, DL
School House 1941-44
Joined the King's Royal Rifle Corps (60th Rifles) as a rifleman straight after leaving Sedbergh School. He rose in rank to become a divisional commander as a Major-General. Following retirement from the Army he became Chief Scout of the United Kingdom, a vice-president of the R.N.L.I and Director Overseas of St John Ambulance.

March 1931:
Victoria Cross Memorial unveiled above Cloisters. Three Old Sedberghians were awarded the Victoria Cross in WW2, two of them posthumously. Four newly inscribed panels in the Cloisters also unveiled, bearing the names of the 198 former members of the School who fell in the Second World War, dedicated by the Archbishop of York, Dr Cyril Garbett.

SEDBERGH LOSES A GALLANT SON
2Lt. Sergt. Batty Dies on 57th Raid

Brigadier David Biggart OBE
Powell House 1959-65
Regimental Colonel in the Royal Fusiliers 1996-2001. Became OS Club President in 2019.

Cadet drill 1947

CCF Band 1951-52

Admiral Sir Jock Slater GCB, DSO, DL, RN
(SH 1931-36)
Served in the Royal Navy from 1956 -1998 retiring as First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff. Former Chairman of the Imperial War Museum and of the RNLI.

Rear Admiral Robin Shiffner
School House 1935-39
Shiffner served with the Royal Navy for 35 years, spending a great deal of time in his early years at sea. He became Captain of the Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth.

Major-General Christopher Wilson CB, CBE
Lupton House 1967-72
Wilson was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1973. He was appointed the Senior Army Representative at the Royal College of Defence Studies in 2005.He was deployed as Deputy Commander, Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan in 2006 and became Director of Battlefield Manoeuvre and Master-General of the Ordnance in 2006 before retiring in May 2010.

Lieutenant Colonel Mathew Straker
Winder House 1968-73
Commissioned into The 15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars in 1974. Service with the Regular Army until 1999 before re-joining as Territorial Army Reservist in the rank of Colonel in 2003, which ended in 2014.

Lieutenant-General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE, CB
Sedgwick House 1970-75
Gregory was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1981 and served in Iraq. Promoted to Major General in 2007 then became Director General, Personnel in 2008, Military Secretary in 2011 and Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel and Training) with promotion to Lieutenant-General in 2013. He retired from the Army in 2016 and became CEO of SSAFA. He was appointed Master Gunner, St James's Park from 2017. Vice Lieutenant Wiltshire. Trustee of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Trust and of the On Course Foundation; Patron of Fighting with Pride; President of Tidworth Garrison Golf Club. He is a Governor of Sedbergh School.

Major-General Jonathan Shaw CB CBE
Sedgwick House 1971-75
Jonathan joined the Parachute Regiment in 1980 and served as platoon commander in 3 PARA during the Falklands War. He has commanded every level up to 2*. He has been Chief of Staff at HQ Land Forces, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (International Security Policy) and Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Global Issues). He retired from the Army in 2012. He was Chairman of Optima 2014-23. Currently Senior Consultant at MAST Security since 2023 and Head of Advisory Board at Reycber since 2024.

Brigadier Ian Mortimer CBE
Winder House 1980-87
Served in the British Army 2003-2016 and was Brigadier Commander of 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade in Germany 2014-16. He was Principal Staff officer at the UK Ministry of Defence 2016-18, Assistant Commandant (Land) and Director of the High Command and Staff Course at the Defence Academy of the UK 2019-22 and Senior Defence Advisor at UK MOD in Riyadh 2022-24. He has been Senior Defence Advisor for Kearney, Abu Dhabi, since 2024.

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew James MBE
School House 1981-86
Retired from the British Army in 2024 after over 30 year's service. In 2022 Andrew was a procession Marshal for the Garter Kings of Arms and Black Rod at the funeral procession of Queen Elizabeth II. He participated in both London processions (Westminster Hall to Westminster Abbey then Abbey to Wellington Arch/Hyde Park Corner) and also in the Windsor Procession.

Dr Andrew Brown MBE
Powell House 1986-91
Gained an MA in Physiological Sciences and a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) from University of Oxford. Joined the Royal Navy in 1999 and spent 17 years as a Royal Naval Medical Officer, becoming Principal Medical Officer in the Marines in 2013. He was a member of the successful Royal Navy Everest North Ridge expedition in 2003 and in 2006 took part in the Royal Navy Polar Quest expedition. Andrew has been an NHS GP partner since 2015 and is currently GP Partner at Bideford Medical Centre and also the Medical Director Nomad Risk. He is also a tutor in Extreme Medicine at Exeter University.

Alan Lewis
CCF Band 1990-2013
In the 1960s Lewis was the principal cornet with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and then the principal trumpet at the Royal Marine School of Music at Kneller Hall. He arrived at Sedbergh School in 1990 and founded the internationally renowned Sedbergh School CCF (Combined Cadet Force) Band. In 2002 he was awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate in recognition of his 'excellent contributions to CCF marching band and ACF Military Brass Music' and in the citation he referred to Sedbergh School's band being one of the best of its type in the country.

Alan Lewis conducting the CCF Band

November 2005
Cloisters were renovated and a service of rededication was conducted by the Very Reverend N T Wright, Bishop of Durham and Old Sedberghian.

Major Joshua Wray MBE
SJS 2002-04 and Hart House 2004-07
Josh commissioned into the Royal Engineers, having studied Civil Engineering at Birmingham University. He has had a diverse career including multiple deployments across the globe, spanning tactical command to strategic planning. He was appointed as a member of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 2025.

2014
To mark the centenary of the start of WW1 the OS Club launched a 5 year Pilgrimage of Remembrance as a tribute to Sedberghians who fought and died.

2018
The Pilgrimage of Remembrance was completed after visits to Gallipoli (2015), The Somme (2016), Passchendaele (2017), Mons (2018) and Ypres (2018). 259 graves of OS who fell in WW1 were visited in 14 different countries, with a cross and soil from Winder placed at each one.

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