

High Hopes and Early Demise: 1915 - 1918 (2)

發展及式微：1915 - 1918 (2)

First World War 第一次世界大戰

Boy Scouts from all over the Dominion had eagerly signed on when the war started. In the United Kingdom alone, Baden Powell estimated that over 10,000 ex-Scouts and Scoutmasters had entered military services, some 1,300 as Coast Guard Scouts, and 50,000 were employed in support roles back home, in place of men who had gone to the front. The most famous of these would be Jack Cornwell, a former Boy Scout who had served on the cruiser HMS *Chester*, and had died of wounds received in the Battle of Horn Reef in June, 1916 (Figure 4). His heroism, an embodiment of the idealized Scouting spirit, is best described by his captain in a letter to the boy's mother:

His devotion to duty was an example for all of us. The wounds which resulted in his death...were received in the first few minutes of the action. He remained steady at his most exposed post at the gun, waiting for orders...under heavy fire, with just his own brave heart and God's help to support him.

Cornwell was only sixteen when he died, yet Admiral Jellicoe recommended that he be given special recognition. He received a Victoria Cross, the highest award for valor for the British forces, and a Bronze Cross, the highest Boy Scout decoration for gallantry. The Boy Scouts Association even took the opportunity to create the Cornwell Badge, given for "pre-eminently high character and devotion to duty, together with great courage, endurance or gallantry."

Leaders' Frontline Services 領袖前線服務

Like their brethren elsewhere in the Empire, a number of Hong Kong Scoutmasters and Boy Scouts had also served at the front. Captain Phillip Streatfeild, the initiator of Sea Scouting, left early as part of the redeployment of the Swiftsure Class battleship H.M.S. *Triumph*, which took part in actions in Tsing Tao against the Germans. In another article in this series, "The First Hong Kong Troop, 1913-1915," it has already been mentioned that Bowen also departed for war services in Europe. In June 1915, a farewell gathering was held in honor of Mrs. Rayner, who was to leave due to the transfer of her husband, Lieutenant Colonel Rayner. Other Scoutmasters who served active duty included Brookes, who left for the front before the end of 1914, and Commander Basil Taylour, who was transferred out in 1915.

Rev. Spink, formerly of the St. Andrew's troop, served at the St. Clement's Church in Liverpool following his return to Britain in 1912. Soon after the war broke out, he volunteered and went to the front with the Liverpool Regiment. He was killed by shrapnel in August 1916 in France, when he, as chaplain of the regiment, was on his way to bury his fallen comrades despite heavy enemy fires. The late Captain Rev. Hubert Octavius Spink was thirty-eight at the time, and was buried in Dives Copse Cemetery, five miles south-west of Albert. In taking his duties so seriously and courageously, he

apparently was an atypical Army chaplain. The Anglican chaplains were under strict order from the church to stay away from the fighting and not to risk their lives. Robert Graves declared that "[n]o soldier could have any respect for a chaplain who obeyed these orders, and yet there was not in our experience one chaplain in fifty who was not glad to obey them." Spink was quite popular with his former congregations, as witnessed by well-attended memorial services held both at the St. Andrew's of Hong Kong, and the St. Clement's in Liverpool. A memorial brass tablet was erected in his memory at the St. Andrew's in 1917, unveiled by the governor (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Commemorative plaque unveiled at St. Andrew's Church in 1917 in honor of Rev. Spink. 1917年聖安德烈堂為Rev. Spink 而立的紀念銅牌。

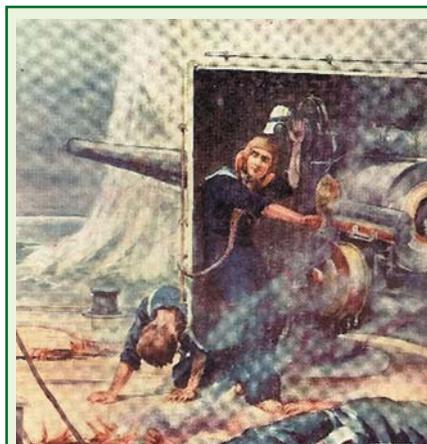


Figure 4. Scout Jack Cornwell, killed in a sea battle in 1916 (as illustrated by Baden Powell.) 童軍Cornwell 於1916年一海軍戰役中英勇殉職圖(貝登堡繪製)。

indicating that he had been in Verdun, and had been under bad weathers and short of food for days. He was still in good spirit though, as he asked for "old books and Scout text books" to be sent, if possible. In July 1917, Private Demee wrote from France again and modestly mentioned that he was decorated with the *Croix de Guerre* for bravery, which he described as "a rather nice bronze cross, attached to a green and red ribbon." (Figure 6) Demee and Prouchandy were obviously still quite young when they enlisted. This was, however, not unusual during the Great War. Many of the soldiers who fought on both sides, and some of the heroes, were merely young boys of eighteen, seventeen, sixteen, or even fifteen.



Figure 6. A WWI *Croix de Guerre*, similar to that won by Scout Demee. 一次大戰時期童軍 Demee 獲頒的法國戰爭十字獎章的樣式。

(Part 2 of 4)

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