A Ceremony to mark
the action on 19th November 1915
which led to the award of the
Victoria Cross

Squadron Commander
Richard Bell Davies, V.C. D.S.O, R.N.

Sloane Square War Memorial

Thursday 19th November, 2015
At 11.00 a.m.
Those in the Civic Procession having taken their places at the Memorial, the ceremony will commence.

Can You Remember .......?
Sung by pupils from Holy Trinity School
Cadogan Gardens

Words of Welcome
The Mayor of the Royal Borough
of Kensington and Chelsea
Councillor Robert Freeman

The V.C. Paving Stones Initiative
The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Williams of Trafford
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Communities and Local Government

Events leading up to the Action
on 19th November, 1915
Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown
Leader of the Council

Richard Bell Davies
Rear Admiral Graeme Mackay
Director Carrier Strike
The Victoria Cross Citation
Lieutenant Commander Richard Calhaem
Commanding Officer 771 Naval Air Squadron

The Unveiling of the Commemorative Stone
by the Mayor of the Royal Borough
and Lady Bell Davies
(daughter-in-law of Richard Bell Davies)

Prayers and the Blessing of the Stone
led by the Rev’d. Canon Nicholas Wheeler
Vicar of Holy Trinity, Sloane Street

The Naval Prayer
All: O eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea; who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end: Be pleased to receive into thy almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us thy servants and the Fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea and of the air and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth and her dominions, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our Islands and Commonwealth may in peace and quietness serve thee our God;
and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land with the fruits of our labours and with a thankful remembrance of thy mercies to praise and glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer**

**All:** Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not in to temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, The Power and the Glory, for ever and ever

**Amen.**

**The Alert**

**Ceremonial Sunset**

**Carry-on**

**The Blessing**

The Rev’d. Canon Nicholas Wheeler

*Following the ceremony there will be an opportunity to view the Paving Stone and to take photographs.*
Richard Bell Davies was born on the 19th May, 1886 at 3, Topstone Road (from 1907, 3 Nevern Place) Earls Court, Kensington, the son of William Bell Davies of Rickmansworth. He was orphaned by the age of six and was brought up by an uncle, Dr Edwin Clifford Beale, a throat and chest specialist at the Victoria Park and Great Northern Hospitals.

He was educated at Bradfield, and in 1901 sat for the Navy Examination, which he passed and the following term began his training as a Naval Officer on Britannia at Dartmouth.

Bell Davies learned to fly at his own expense, whilst on leave from the Battleship, HMS Dominion, in 1911 at the Graham White Flying School at Hendon. His course cost him £50 plus a deposit of £25 against damage. It would be fair to say that at this time, the Admiralty was not universally convinced of the possibilities of naval aerial warfare and it was the result of the efforts of Sir Winston Churchill and a few pioneer naval aviators, such as Richard Bell Davies, that an Air Department was established in the Admiralty, against considerable opposition.
In 1913, Bell Davies was accepted into the Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps (R.F.C.) and trained at the Naval Flying School at Eastchurch, where he gained his wings. The Royal Naval Air Service (R.N.A.S.) separated from the R.F.C. in 1914, and in that year Bell Davies was appointed a Squadron Commander. He was posted to Belgium and was awarded the D.S.O. for his part in a raid on the German submarine base at Zeebrugge in January 1915, during which he was severely wounded in the thigh.

In April 1915, Bell Davies, Squadron Commander of 3 Squadron R.N.A.S., joined the Dardanelles Campaign. On 19th November 1915, during an attack on Ferrijik Junction in Bulgaria, whilst under fire, he rescued another pilot, Flight Sub-Lieutenant G.F. Smylie, who had been shot down behind Turkish lines, the first ever search and rescue by another aircraft, and was awarded the V.C. on 1st January 1916.
The Citation read:

“The King has been graciously pleased to approve of the grant of the Victoria Cross on 1\textsuperscript{st} January 1916 to Squadron Commander Richard Bell Davies, D.S.O, R.N., and of the Distinguished Service Cross to Flight Sub-Lieutenant Gilbert Formby Smylie, R.N., in recognition of their behaviour in the following circumstances:-

On the 19\textsuperscript{th} November these two officers carried out an attack on Ferrijik Junction. Flight Sub-Lieutenant Smylie's machine was received by very heavy fire and brought down. The pilot planed down over the station, releasing all his bombs except one, which failed to drop, simultaneously at the station at a very low altitude. Thence he continued his descent into the marsh.

On alighting he saw the one unexploded bomb and set fire to his machine, knowing that the bomb would ensure its destruction. He then proceeded towards Turkish territory.
At this moment he perceived Squadron Commander Davies descending, and fearing that he would come down near the burning machine and thus risk destruction from the bomb, Flight Sub-Lieutenant Smylie ran back and from a short distance exploded the bomb by means of a pistol bullet. Squadron Commander Davies descended at a safe distance from the burning machine, took up Sub-Lieutenant Smylie, in spite of the near approach of the enemy, and returned to the aerodrome, a feat of airmanship that can seldom have been equalled for skill and gallantry.”

Bell Davies was flying a Nieuport 10, a single-seat aircraft with a decked over front cockpit. He picked up Smylie under rifle fire behind Turkish lines. Smylie was able to wriggle into the tiny covered compartment through the controls, and it is said that he was so tightly wedged in that it took two hours to extricate him.

From 1917, Bell Davies was involved in the development of aircraft carriers. He was appointed to Wing Commander on HMS Campania, a converted Cunard liner, and in 1918 carried out the first true carrier landing.

By the end of the First World War, he had also been awarded the Air Force Cross (A.F.C.), and the Croix de Guerre with Palm plus Mentions in Despatches.

In 1918, the R.N.A.S. was subsumed into the newly founded Royal Air Force. However, Bell Davies declined to transfer, preferring instead to remain in the Royal Navy and resumed his mainstream Royal Naval rank.
He had various commands and stints in the Admiralty, and was instrumental in wresting control of naval aviation from the RAF in 1937, and that year was promoted to Rear Admiral. He was appointed Rear Admiral in charge of Naval Air Stations in 1938 and was promoted to Vice Admiral on retirement in 1941. He became a C.B. in the King's Birthday Honours of 1939. However, his Naval career was not over. He volunteered for the Royal Naval Reserve with a reduction of rank to Commander and served in convoys as commissioning captain of the escort carrier HMS *Dasher*. This was followed by time on the trials carrier, HMS *Pretoria Castle*. He left the RNR in 1944.

Richard Bell Davies was not only courageous; he was a pioneer in the development of naval aviation and the use of aircraft as strike weapons as well as a driving force in the development of aircraft carriers. He was also an accomplished administrator and negotiator.

Vice Admiral Richard Bell Davies died on 27th February 1966 at the Royal Naval Hospital Haslar aged 79.

He had married in 1920, Mary, the daughter of Major-General Sir R. A. Kerr Montgomery, and they had a son and a daughter. His son, Vice Admiral Sir Lancelot Bell Davies, died in 2010 aged 84.

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## Victoria Cross centenary ceremonies in Kensington and Chelsea

Kensington and Chelsea was home, at the time of the First World War, to nine recipients of the Victoria Cross. Their connection with the Royal Borough will be marked in ceremonies over the next four years on the 100\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the action for which they received the award.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VC awarded</th>
<th>Birthplace address</th>
<th>Ceremony location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George DORRELL</td>
<td>23 G Street, Queen's Park Estate</td>
<td>Kensington War Memorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Horse Artillery</td>
<td>1st September 1914</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard BELL-DAVIES</td>
<td>3 Topstone Road</td>
<td>Sloane Square War Memorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Naval Air Service</td>
<td>19th November 1915</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humphrey FIRMAN</td>
<td>26 Queensbury Place</td>
<td>Outside property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Navy</td>
<td>24th April 1916</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George EVANS</td>
<td>14 St Clements Road</td>
<td>Kensington War Memorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Regiment</td>
<td>30th July 1916</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank WEARNE</td>
<td>45 Matheson Road</td>
<td>Outside property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Regiment</td>
<td>28th June 1917</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian GRIFFLE</td>
<td>34 Lennox Gardens</td>
<td>Outside property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Warwickshire Regiment</td>
<td>23rd March 1918</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor CRUTCHLEY</td>
<td>28 Lennox Gardens</td>
<td>Outside property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Navy</td>
<td>9th May 1918</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roland BOURKE</td>
<td>40 Redcliffe Square</td>
<td>Outside property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve</td>
<td>9th May 1918</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George CARTWRIGHT</td>
<td>5 North Street</td>
<td>Sloane Square War Memorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Australian Imperial Force</td>
<td>31st August 1918</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to those who have formal roles in the ceremonial element of today’s event, and who are mentioned above, the following are among the guests joining the Mayor and Members of the Council of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea:

Members of the family of Richard Bell Davies, V.C.

Lady Arnold, D.L.
   Representative Deputy Lieutenant
   for Kensington and Chelsea

Commodore Martin Atherton O.B.E.
   Naval Regional Commander, Eastern England

Sergeant Johnson Beharry, V.C.

Colonel Hugh Bodington
   Chief of Staff, H.Q., London District

Rear Admiral Richard Burn, C.B., A.F.C.
   Chairman, Chelsea and Kensington Branch,
   The Royal British Legion

The Rt. Hon. the Earl Cadogan, K.B.E., D.L.
   Freeman of the Royal Borough

Rear Admiral S.B. Charlier, C.B.E.
   Chairman, Fleet Air Arm Officers’ Association

   Freeman of the Royal Borough

Admiral Sir Ian Garnett K.C.B.
Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns K.C.B., C.B.E., A.D.C.
President, Fleet Air Arm Officers’ Association

The Lord Sterling of Plaistow, G.C.V.O., C.B.E.
Honorary Vice Admiral

Major General Michael Scott C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.

Lieutenant-Colonel David Utting
London District

Major Jonny Pass
2 i/c Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment,
representing the Commanding Officer

Garrison Sergeant Major Vern Stokes
London District

Lieutenant Commander Mark Van Den Bergh
DCOS & Royal Navy Regional Liaison Officer
(Resilience & UK Operations)

Mr. Graham Mottram
Former Director, Fleet Air Arm Museum

Mr. David Hill
Senior Heritage Project Officer, Fleet Air Arm Museum

Mrs Gill Kerslake
Fleet Air Arm Officers’ Association
Mr Tony Wheeler
Managing Director, Peter Jones

Tim Boughton, K.C.N, G.C.M

Commander S.J. Eagles, Q.V.R.M, R.D., R.N.R.
Campaign Director, Fly Navy Heritage Trust

Lieutenant Katie Steele
Oxford URNU

Commanding Officers or their representatives from Units of the Armed Forces which have the Freedom of the Royal Borough

A detachment from the Royal Navy together with other military representatives and Cadets

Honorary Aldermen and Past Mayors of the Royal Borough

Representatives of local organisations and services charities