

Geoffrey Heneage Drummond – Lieutenant Commander – Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve



Geoffrey was born on 25th January 1886 in Westminster the fourth child of Algernon Heneage Drummond and his wife Margaret Elizabeth née Benson. Algernon Drummond had served in the Rifle Brigade in India.

At the age of 9, Geoffrey fell down a flight of stone stairs and dislocated his neck, after which he suffered from severe headaches for the remainder of his life. Because of this, he found school difficult and only lasted for a few terms at Eton College before going to Clayesmore School then in Middlesex. Similarly, he only had a brief time at Christ Church, before changing to the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester to study Estate Management.

He was a keen yachtsman, so volunteered for the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in 1915. After training he served in several Motor Launches in the English Channel and was appointed in command of ML254 in December 1917, based at Dover.

During the First World War, and was awarded the VC for his part in the Second Ostend Raid.

On 9th/10th May 1918 at Ostend, Belgium, Lieutenant Drummond commanding HMML (Motor Launch) 254, volunteered for rescue work and was following HMS *Vindictive* to the harbour when a shell burst on board killing an officer and a deck hand and badly wounding the coxswain and Lieutenant Drummond. Notwithstanding his wounds, he brought M.L. 254 alongside *Vindictive* and then took off two officers and 38 men, some of whom were killed or wounded while embarking. He retained consciousness long enough to back his vessel away from the piers and towards the open sea before collapsing exhausted from his wounds.

Geoffrey married Maude Aylmer Tindal Bosanquet on 2nd July 1918.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, he tried hard to rejoin the RNVR, but was considered too old and unfit. Determined to serve, he signed up as a Second Hand (equivalent to an Able Seaman) in the River Emergency Service then transferred to the Royal Naval Patrol Service. In April 1941, while carrying a sack of coal, the leg, which had been injured during the Ostend Raid, gave way and he hit his head on the deck housing. He suffered a severe concussion and died on 21 April in St Olave's Hospital, Rotherhithe. He was buried in Chalfont St Peter Cemetery, Buckinghamshire.

His VC is on display in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery at the Imperial War Museum, London.

