

Too Brave to Live, Too Young to Die: Teenage Heroes from World War I

Nigel Cawthorne



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World War I was a slaughter on an unprecedented scale. Nevertheless, there was no shortage of young men willing to sacrifice themselves for their country. Some lied about their age to join up, not just at the start of the war when it was seen as a glorious adventure, but even towards the end, when the true horror of the mechanized butchery was known to one and all. This book concerns the young men who were not yet 20 when they won the Victoria Cross, the British armed forces highest award for gallantry. Many perished in the action that earned them the VC. Others survived to receive the award, but then went on to die later in the war. One was as young as 16. Several were just 18, though they were supposed to be 19 before they were allowed to serve overseas. They were sailors and airmen, as well as soldiers, and they came from Britain, Ireland, Australia, Canada, Nepal, and India. Each one demonstrated an exceptional nerve and bravery. While some did survive World War I—even going on to serve in World War II—they showed an reckless indifference to death that made them Too Brave to Live, Too Young to Die. World War I has been over for nearly 100 years now, but the tales of their valor live on. These men and their exploits deserve to be remembered—in the hope that young men will never be called on to do such things again.



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