

EVANS, LEWIS PUGH (1881-1962), soldier and public figure, Brigadier General, VC, CB, CMG, DSO

Name: Lewis Pugh Evans
Date of birth: 1881
Date of death: 1962
Gender: Male
Occupation: soldier and public figure, Brigadier General, VC, CB, CMG, DSO
Area of activity: Military; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration
Author: Christopher Evans

Born at Abermad, Aberystwyth, 3 January 1881, the second son of **Sir Griffith Evans, KCIE, DL, JP**, Barrister at Law, and Lady Evans, of Lovesgrove, Aberystwyth. He was educated at Eton in 1895-1898 and at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, January-December 1899. Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, The Black Watch, 23rd December 1899, he served immediately in the South African war and took part in the operations in the Orange Free State including actions at Poplar Grove, Drietfontein and Vet River and later the Orange River Colony. In the Transvaal he was present at actions fought at Johannesburg, Pretoria, Diamond Hill and Belfast. He was appointed Lieutenant 1st May 1901 and in the following years performed the duties of a Black Watch officer in India. He was appointed Captain in October 1906. He passed into Staff College in 1913, qualified as a Royal Flying Corps pilot with an aviator's certificate in 1913 No 595, and he passed out of Staff College and was appointed GS03 at the War Office. He was subsequently sent to France with the Royal Flying Corps, squadron No 3, serving as a pilot/observer on the Aisne, mapping the German lines. He later returned to the Black Watch as a company commander.

Lewis Evans won his first DSO at Hooge on 16th June 1915. 'When the troops became mixed up he moved up and down the line under continuous heavy fire for 14 hours reorganising units and bringing back reports', *London Gazette*, 24 July 1915. He was appointed Major, September 1915, and GS02 HQ 6th Division in March 1916. He was appointed Temporary Lieutenant Colonel and Commanding Officer 1st Lincolnshire Regiment in March 1917. He won the Victoria Cross at Passchendaele on the 4th October 1917, 'for conspicuous bravery and leadership'. 'Lt. Col. Evans took his battalion through a terrific enemy barrage, personally formed up all units and led them in the assault. While a strong machine gun emplacement was causing casualties and the troops were working round the flank, Lt. Col. Evans rushed at it himself and by firing his revolver through the loophole, forced the garrison to capitulate. After capturing the first objective he was severely wounded in the shoulder, but refused to be bandaged, and reformed his troops, pointed out all future objectives, and again led his battalion forwards. Again badly wounded, he never the less continued to command until the second objective was won, and, after consolidation, collapsed from loss of blood. As there were numerous casualties, he refused assistance, and by his own efforts ultimately reached the dressing station. His example of cool bravery stimulated in all ranks the highest valour and determination to win', *London Gazette*, 26 November 1917. He was decorated with the VC by H.M. King George V at Buckingham Palace, 2 January 1918. After recovering from his wounds he took command of his own regiment, The 1st Battalion The Black Watch, in January 1918. Lewis Evans won his second DSO at Givenchy 18-20 April 1918. 'For gallantry and devotion to duty over a three day period. On the first day he moved about all over the forward areas, the next day he personally conducted a reconnaissance for a counter attack which he led on the third day driving the enemy out of the forward system', *London Gazette*, 16 September 1918.

He was appointed Brigadier General and Commander 14th Brigade in June 1918 and Base Commandant Rhine Army Rotterdam in 1919. He was awarded CMG in 1919 for services in command of 14th Brigade and also awarded Officier de l'Ordre de Leopold (Belgium) in 1917 and Croix de Guerre (France) in 1918 for services to Belgium and France in the war. During the course of the war he was also Mentioned in Dispatches seven times.

Following the war Lewis Evans became an instructor at the Senior Officers School, followed by Command of the Devon and Cornwall Infantry Brigade, and other GSO2 posts in Belfast, Glasgow and Newcastle upon Tyne before eventually taking command of the 2nd Battalion The Black Watch in 1926. A period at the War Office in London followed in 1930.

His final appointment in 1933 was as commander of the 159th Welsh Border Infantry Brigade. On his retirement in January 1938 he was awarded the CB. During the World War II he became firstly the military liaison officer Western Command at the Wales regional headquarters in Cardiff and secondly chairman of the Wales Board for granting commissions in the Home Guard.

Following the death of his eldest brother Griffith in 1945 he inherited the Lovesgrove estate near Aberystwyth and returned permanently to Cardiganshire where he was active in agricultural and public affairs until his death from a heart attack at Paddington station 30 November 1962. He was buried at Llanbadarn Fawr churchyard, Aberystwyth.

Lewis Evans was a descendant of a very old Welsh family from Merionethshire that could trace its roots back to the Second Royal Tribe of Wales. Among his ancestors were the **Vaughan** family of Corsygedol and the **Owen** family of Dolgellau (who include **Baron Lewis Owen, M.P.**, Sheriff and Baron of the Exchequer for North Wales - his wife claimed she was a descendent of **Owain Glyndwr's** sister), Gruffydd Dda who fought at the battle of Agincourt, and **Sir Gruffydd ab Adda** of Ynysmaengwyn whose tomb and effigy are to be found in Towyn church.

Lewis Pugh Evans married Dorothea Margaret Seagrove Vaughan-Pryse-Rice of Llwyn y brain, Llandoverly 10 October 1918 and they had one son Griffith Eric Carbery Vaughan Evans who predeceased his father. Marriage to Dorothea connected Lewis Evans with the **Pryse** of Gogerddan and **Vaughan** of Golden Grove families. His wife died 5 December 1921.

Lewis Evans held many public appointments: Deputy Lieutenant Cardiganshire (1937-62), (he declined the post of Lord Lieutenant of Cardiganshire 1952 on the grounds of age); Honorary Colonel 16th (Welsh) Parachute Battalion from 1947; Honorary Colonel Cardiganshire Cadet Force; Chairman, St John's Ambulance Brigade, Cardiganshire, he was awarded the Order of St John of Jerusalem (Commander); member of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales; Freeman of the Borough of Aberystwyth; Justice of the Peace and Chairman of the Llanbadarn Fawr Bench; President of the Jersey Cattle Society (Wales).

An obituary notice states: 'Lewis Evans had a charming personality and endeared himself to all who came to know him. Under a gentle and unassuming manner lay a great force of character and a strong sense of duty. He was quite selfless where duty was concerned. This feature of his character combined with his great personal bravery resulted in the distinguished fighting qualities displayed in the 1st Great War.' He is the only Welshman to have received the Victoria Cross and two Distinguished Service Orders.

A portrait of Lewis Evans by S. Morse Brown in The National Museum and Galleries of Wales (commissioned by Sir Leonard Twiston Davies as part of a series of portraits of important Welshmen).

Author

Christopher Evans

Sources

A. J. Snelling, VC's of Passchendaele
Stephen Snelling, Passchendaele 1917
Williams, W. Alister, Heart of a dragon
Histories of The Black Watch Regiment

www.llanbadarnchurcyard.org.uk

Headstone in the Lovesgrove burial garden at Llanbadarn Fawr church
Memorial plaque in Llanbadarn Fawr village alongside the War Memorial
Personal knowledge

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Lewis Pugh Evans](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q16000236](#)

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