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A history of courage

Book review: Neville Howse — Australia's first Victoria Cross winner by Michael Tyquin

(\$39.95 Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1999. ISBN 0 19 551190 5)

NEVILLE HOWSE was not only the first Australian to win the VC, he remains the only Australian medical officer to win the award. He was decorated after his gallant rescue of a wounded soldier under shellfire at Vrededorf on 24 July 1900 in the Boer War. Howse went on to serve in World War One, rising to the rank of Surgeon General, and subsequently had a distinguished career as a rural doctor and government minister.

Captain Michael Tyquin's biography of Howse fills a serious gap in the history of Australian military medicine. The book was launched in Canberra in November 1999, on the occasion of the Centenary Symposium of the Boer War, an international seminar hosted by the Australian War Memorial. Captain Tyquin is a professional historian and career soldier within the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps. He has particular interests in Australian heritage and military medical history and has previously published *Gallipoli: the medical war*.

Howse played a key role in the conception and development of Colonel A G Butler's *Official history of the Australian Medical Services in the Great War* and one sees in this new biography the story behind much of that official history.

Major General John Pearn
Surgeon General