

Victoria Cross of Fallen Australian Soldier Heads to Auction

More than a century after Private Robert Beatham's extraordinary final act of bravery on the Western Front, his medal is set to make history as the first Victoria Cross ever offered at public auction in Queensland.



Figure 1 Victoria Cross awarded to Pte. R.M. Beatham

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA – October 2026

In August 1918, Australian soldier Private Robert Matthew Beatham repeatedly charged enemy machine-gun positions during the Allied offensive near Amiens, France, displaying extraordinary courage that would ultimately cost him his life.

His actions would earn him the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy.

Now, 108 years later, Beatham's Victoria Cross will headline Roxbury's Auction No. 162, taking place from **28–30 October 2026**. Estimated at **\$250,000–\$350,000**, it will be the first Victoria Cross offered at public auction in Queensland.

An Extraordinary Act of Courage

Born in England, Robert Beatham immigrated to Australia as a teenager, enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force and serving with the 8th Battalion during the First World War.

He saw action at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, where he was wounded on multiple occasions before returning to active service.

On 9 August 1918, during the Allied offensive east of Amiens, the Australian advance was brought to a halt by heavy German machine-gun fire.

Rather than remain under cover, Beatham charged forward with another soldier, attacking four enemy machine-gun positions. Together, they killed ten enemy soldiers and captured another ten, allowing the Australian advance to continue and preventing further casualties.

Two days later, on 11 August, the battalion was again halted by German machine-gun fire. Despite being wounded, Beatham rushed the enemy position, attacking it with bombs before being struck by multiple bullets and killed.

His extraordinary courage was recognised with a posthumous Victoria Cross.



Figure 2 Robert Matthew Beatham

For Roxbury's Director Scott Waterman, the significance of the medal extends far beyond its monetary value.

"When you read what Robert did in the face of danger, it's difficult to comprehend the courage it must have taken. This is an extraordinary piece of Australian military history, and it's a tremendous privilege for Roxbury's to be entrusted with bringing it to auction."

A Rare Piece of Australian History

Australian Victoria Crosses seldom appear on the open market, with many held by museums, institutions and long-established private collections.

Beatham's medal represents not only an exceptional act of individual courage, but also a tangible connection to the Australians who fought and died on the Western Front.

Its appearance at auction in Queensland is a historic occasion. Waterman added:

"Victoria Crosses are among the most historically significant medals an auction house can ever handle. We expect considerable interest in this medal, not simply because of its rarity, but because of what it represents in Australia's military history."

Australian Rarities and Remarkable Treasures

While Beatham's Victoria Cross headlines Auction No. 162, the three-day sale will also feature an extensive selection of rare Australian coins, historical medals, banknotes and exceptional jewellery.

Among the other highlights are:

- **Two legendary 1930 Pennies** – Australia's most famous circulating coin rarity, with examples estimated at \$30,000–\$35,000 and \$50,000–\$60,000 respectively.
- **Three 1813 Fifteen Pence Dumps** – remarkable survivors from Australia's earliest official coinage, produced during the colonial era to address a critical shortage of currency. The featured examples carry estimates ranging from \$8,000 to \$14,000 each.

- **An 1851 Bushranger's Medal** – a rare piece of Australian colonial history, awarded for bravery in confronting bushrangers during the gold rush era, estimated at \$55,000–\$65,000.
- **A spectacular 32.89-carat diamond gold chain** – estimated at \$70,000–\$75,000.
- **A 37-carat diamond and gemstone pendant** – estimated at \$50,000–\$55,000.

Together, these pieces offer a remarkable cross-section of Australian history, numismatic rarity and luxury collecting.



A Historic Auction in Brisbane

Established in 1985, Roxbury's Auction House has spent more than four decades bringing significant collections and historical treasures to the Australian market.

The forthcoming sale represents another milestone for the Brisbane-based auction house, with Beatham's Victoria Cross taking its place among the most historically important objects the company has offered.

Auction Details

Roxbury's Auction No. 162 – Signature Sale

Wednesday 28 – Friday 30 October 2026

Online bidding: bid.roxburys.com.au

Victoria Cross information: <https://roxburys.com.au/victoria-cross-wwi-medal/>

Media Enquiries / Interviews / Images

Roxbury's Auction House

Email: info@roxburys.com.au

Phone: (07) 3831 2599

Media opportunity: Victoria Cross available for photography, filming and interviews in Brisbane from Monday 19 October.