

The Ballad of the Midget VC

by David Calcutt

Here's the tale of Arthur Vickers
Who came from Birmingham town,
In the boxing-ring and the battlefield
He gained fame and renown.

Now, Arthur grew up in Aston,
The pride of his parents' eyes,
And he took to boxing when he was a lad,
Though he was of moderate size.

He was small but he was wiry
And he could move fast on his feet,
And he had the pluck and courage too
To have his opponents beat.

So when Arthur stepped into the ring
All gave a mighty cheer,
"Go right at it, little 'un!"
Was all that you could hear.

And everybody liked him,
"He's a jolly good chap," they said,
"He could make a career out of boxing,"
But he joined the army instead.

Now at first they didn't want him
Because he was so small,
And he went from station to station,
Five times he tried in all.

But Arthur was determined
And at last he had his chance,
They signed him up at Gosta Green
And off he went to France.

<p>He took his place in the trenches Fighting day after day At Loos they advanced to the wire With the enemy not far away.</p>	<p>But he didn't like all the cheering He thought it was just a fuss, And he met up again with his boxing pals Who said, "You're a chap like us."</p>
<p>They didn't know what they could do, The situation was dire, So they called out for volunteers To go up and cut the wire.</p>	<p>And he said, "All this commotion, To me it don't seem right, I'm just an ordinary feller And it's just my job to fight."</p>
<p>Arthur didn't think twice, He said. "There's a job I must do," "Take cover, lads!" he cried And he cut the wire in two.</p>	<p>The army wanted to keep him in Brum To recruit more men for the war But Arthur chose to back to the front To fight the Germans once more.</p>
<p>They called Arthur a hero And they gave him the VC, He thought it was all a joke, He said, "A hero? Me?"</p>	<p>He fought the war to the finish And the end of all the strife And came back home to Aston To take up his working life.</p>
<p>And although he did feel honoured To have the Victoria Cross. There was sadness too in his heart As he thought of the lives that were lost.</p>	<p>And though he was a hero, And they called him the Midget VC, Arthur Vickers, the working man Was a chap like you and me.</p>
<p>"For war's a bad business," he said, "But it's something we must see through, And if you call me a hero, All them others are heroes too."</p>	<p>For war is a bad business And Arthur saw it through And if you call him a hero All the others are heroes too.</p>
<p>When he came back home to Brum He was greeted by crowds of fans, Everybody wanted to meet him And to shake him by the hand.</p>	<p>So here's to Arthur Vickers They called him the Midget VC, A soldier and a working man A chap like you and me. (And a Brummie, like you and me.) And a hero like you and me.)</p>
<p>The Lord Mayor asked to see him At a dinner at the town hall, "You're a gallant, chap, Arthur," he told him, "And we're proud of you, one and all."</p>	

Copyright David Calcutt and Midland Actors Theatre (www.midlandactorstheatre.com ; news@midlandactorstheatre.co.uk; 0121 608 7144). Teachers may use this ballad to recreate what CTC Kingshurst Academy students produced or contact David directly should they wish to commission him to help.