Nineteen awards to Australian soldiers for gallantry in Vietnam have been approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

Announcing this today, the Minister for the Army, Mr Malcolm Fraser, said that 17 of the decorations were Mention in Despatches (one posthumous), and two Queen's Commendations.

Of the 19 awards, 10 were won by members of 5th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment.

Recipients were:

- MID (Posthumous) - Corporal Norman James Womal, 28, married, formerly of Holsworthy and a member of 5 RAR.
- MID - Major Malcolm Bruce McQualter, 29, married, formerly of Bairnsdale, Victoria, a Company Commander with 5 RAR who died of wounds on March 5, 1967.
- Major Paul Netherton Greenhalgh, 31, single, of Currumbin, Queensland, a Company Commander with 5 RAR.
- Major Owen Maxwell Carroll, 35, married, of Holsworthy, NSW, a Company Commander with 5 RAR.
- Captain Jack Newman, 28, married, of Aspley, Queensland, (RAAOC) a member of 1st Australian Logistic Support Group.
- Captain Peter James Isaacs, 26, married, of Isle of Wight, UK, Adjutant of 5 RAR.
- Lieutenant John Curtis Hartley, 24, single, of Woombye, Qland, a Platoon Commander with 5 RAR.
- Captain Peter John Edwards, 27, married, of Wacol, Q'land, Officer Commanding 1st Division Postal Unit Detachment.
- W02 Gordon Cedric Reynolds, 43, married, of Sorrento, Vic., (RAASC) a member of 1st Australian Logistic Support Group.
- W02 John Henry Bates, 33, married, of Holsworthy, NSW, a company sergeant-major with 5 RAR.
- W02 Cyril Claude Carruthers, 38, married, of Wodonga, Vic., (RAAOC) Depot Sergeant Major of 2nd Composite Ordnance Depot. (now serving in Victoria).
MIDs cont'd

- Sergeant Ashley Graham Urquhart, 25, married, of Nollamara, W.A., a member of 3rd Special Air Service Squadron.
- Sergeant Francis Xavier Alcorta, 31, married, of Newmarket, Brisbane, a member of 6 RAR.
- Corporal William Richard Moore, 25, married of Stafford, Brisbane, a member of 6 RAR.
- Private William Roy Cavanagh, 21, married, of Wollahra, NSW, a member of 5 RAR.
- Private Sydney Lawrence Shore, 21, single, of Swan Hill, Vic., a member of 5 RAR.
- Private Lawrence Victor Lewis, 25, married, of Holsworthy, NSW, a member of 5 RAR. (now stationed in New South Wales).

Queen's Commendation

- Private Peter Charles Smith, 20, single, of Elizabeth West, SA., a member of 6 RAR.

Extracts from citations are attached.

Lists A, B, C.

Further information

Canberra - Maj. Allan S. Hinds
(65-4061) (49-6030)

Other States - PRO at Command HQ

28 March 1967.
Mention in Despatches (Posthumous)

• Corporal Norman James Womal, was mortally wounded by a sniper when leading his 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, to clear a Viet Cong ambush on October 17, 1966. From the position where he fell Corporal Womal continued to control the covering fire of his section machine gun. In spite of a large volume of accurate enemy fire from several positions which prevented Corporal Womal's section from moving, he propped himself on one elbow in an exposed position to indicate by voice to his platoon commander the exact location of the enemy and continued to direct the section machine gun fire onto the enemy. Corporal Womal died after being evacuated. His efforts contributed directly to the successful extrication of his section without further casualties.

Mention in Despatches

• Maj. Paul Netherton Greenhalgh is a company commander with the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. During operations he showed complete disregard for his own safety on numerous occasions when in contact with the enemy in order that his troops would receive the best possible support from him. He set a high standard and fine example to his men at all times.

• Maj. Malcolm Bruce McQualter (since died of wounds) as a company commander with the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, for eight months, at all times and particularly when in contact with the enemy set a fine example by his courage and disregard for his personal safety. He placed the welfare, morale and safety of his men above all other requirements and unselfishly devoted his entire energies to the requirements of his soldiers.

• Maj. Owen Maxwell Carroll served as Operations Officer and a company commander with the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. As Operations Officer he set a high standard by his devotion to duty, ability and coolness under fire on a number of occasions. As a company commander he provided excellent leadership on all occasions and the high morale and first class performance of his company is directly attributed to his efforts.
MID (contd)

- Captain Jack Newman, as a Staff Captain on Headquarters, 1st Australian Logistic Support Group, displayed an ability to learn quickly and adapt himself to an entirely new sphere of activity in a highly commendable fashion. In the execution of his duties he displayed commonsense, an ability to work hard for extremely long periods without rest, and a dedication to the tasks involved which was exemplary.

- Captain Peter James Isaacs, acted in the dual capacity of unit Adjutant and Assistant Operations Officer since the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment entered operations in Vietnam. He cheerfully carried out all tasks presented to him while continuous operations necessitated long hours of work under extremely arduous conditions. His coolness, ability and readiness to accept responsibility have contributed greatly to both the operational and administrative efficiency of the unit.

- Lieutenant John Curtis Hartley. On July 9, 1966, during Operation Sydney, Lt. Hartley's platoon was in the process of taking up a defensive position to protect company headquarters when six to eight Viet Cong were seen in fire positions waiting for the platoon. In the resulting firefight Lt. Hartley moved to the section being engaged and with complete disregard for his own safety controlled the fire of the section and moved the remainder of the platoon into position to dominate the enemy. Within a matter of minutes the enemy broke and fled. During the engagement Lt. Hartley was wounded but led his platoon in a sweep of the area. The personal courage and leadership of Lt. Hartley on this and previous occasions were of a high standard.

- Captain Peter John Edwards established and operated the postal facilities within the Vietnam theatre. He succeeded, through determination and conscientious dedication to his duties, to maintain postal facilities at the most efficient level attainable. The outstanding performance of the postal unit, its high morale and willingness and ability to work tirelessly to provide service for the combat area exemplifies the high order of leadership exercised by Captain Edwards.
WO2 Gordon Cedric Reynolds, as chief clerk and company Sergeant Major of Headquarters, 1st Logistic Support Group, had constantly produced work of the highest quality through selfless devotion to duty coupled with an unusual degree of mental and physical vigour.

WO2 John Henry Bates, as a company Sergeant Major with the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, has shown coolness and courage when in contact with the enemy and the standards he has set at all times on operations inspired all ranks and contributed to the high morale and efficiency of his company.

WO2 Cyril Claude Carruthers was Depot Sergeant Major of 2nd Composite Ordnance Depot during its formative stages. During his time with the unit he had proved an inspiration to all members by his devotion to duty, enthusiasm to get difficult jobs done, and drive to bring out the soldierly qualities in all ranks. He is a fine example of a soldier who puts service before all else.

Sergeant Ashley Graham Urquhart displayed skill, leadership and coolness resulting in the killing of six Viet Cong when his four-man fighting patrol of 3rd SAS Squadron ambushed an enemy patrol in the Nui Dinh Hills on July 27, 1966. The area was infested with enemy and Sergeant Urquhart successfully achieved a withdrawal despite enemy pursuit. His action was an inspiration to his patrol and to his Squadron.

Sergeant Francis Xavier Alcorta was acting Platoon Commander when a flanking platoon of the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment made contact with a party of about ten Viet Cong in the Nui Bao Quan Hills on 14 September 1966. Anticipating his company Commander's intention he immediately led his platoon in an attack which killed three Viet Cong, wounded several more and routed the remainder. By his correct reading of the battle and excellent leadership, he not only destroyed the enemy, but set an example of first class leadership and bravery while under fire.
Corporal William Richard Moore commanded a section of the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment when his platoon encountered a small group of enemy near the village of Long Tan on August 18, 1966. When the platoon followed the withdrawing enemy they came under extremely heavy fire and were forced to take up a defensive position. The enemy force of at least company strength repeatedly assaulted the platoon position mostly against the sector held by Corporal Moore and his eight-man section. Corporal Moore remained calm and directed the fire of his section with such good effect that each enemy attack was repulsed with heavy casualties.

Private William Roy Cavanagh

Private Sydney Lawrence Shore

Both members of the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, had shown complete disregard for personal safety while assisting in the removal of the second pilot of an RAAF helicopter which crashed in Phuoc Tuy province on October 18, 1966. Fire broke out in the Iriquois helicopter of 9 Squadron seconds after the crash and the presence of crew weapons, aircraft armament and a quantity of explosives posed a significant threat to those performing rescue operations. A RAAF crewman had rescued some occupants of the aircraft and under his guidance Privates Cavanagh and Shore assisted with bare-handed clearance of obstacles and parts of the nose section to free the trapped second pilot, before the spreading fire engulfed the nose section.

Private Lawrence Victor Lewis was a stretcher bearer attached to a platoon of 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment on June 19, 1966, when the platoon came under enemy mortar fire which killed two and wounded four men. Pte. Lewis moved forward under fire, with complete disregard for his own safety to treat the dying and wounded. He worked unceasingly and untiringly to save the lives of the wounded and was a constant source of comfort and reassurance to them. But for his cool-headedness and quick thinking their injuries could have become far more serious.
Queen's Commendation

Second Lieutenant Robert William Askew as pilot of an Army helicopter displayed calm and professional handling of a sudden and potentially hazardous situation when faced with an immediate emergency landing following an engine failure. In an area of flooded rice fields, rain soaked crops and jungle, he flew his powerless helicopter onto a narrow dirt road. His action prevented further damage to the helicopter and reflected great credit on his personal flying skill.

Private Peter Charles Smith leaped into the flooded Suoi Da Bang River on October 5, 1966, to rescue a soldier of 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment who had been swept away by the strong current. The company was crossing the river by pulling themselves hand over hand along a rope when one soldier lost his grip and could not stay afloat because of the heavy pack he was wearing. Private Smith, was standing on the far bank and promptly and unhesitatingly jumped into the river with no regard to his own safety. He supported the soldier as they were swept rapidly downstream until he was able to grasp a bush jutting out from the bank. Pte. Smith supported the soldier until help arrived. His brave action had averted an almost certain tragedy.
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