

# Awards and Decorations

Eleven awards for valour or outstanding service by members of 4RAR/NZ(Anzac)Bn and 104 Field Battery were announced during the units' tours in South Vietnam. Doubtless, others will be announced. Unfortunately, because of printing deadlines, these could not be included here.



**Second Lieutenant Thomas Gary Reidy MC** was platoon commander of Seven Platoon, C Company. On 13 September 1968 late in the afternoon his platoon came under heavy fire from enemy entrenched in a large bunker system. Two soldiers were killed, one being a section commander, and a further seven wounded, including 2Lt Reidy. Unable to bring effective artillery fire to bear, he continued to fight forward. At a critical point in the action he was wounded again while resupplying his forward section with ammunition to allow the attack to continue. After being wounded the second time he selected a commanding position and shouted encouragement to his men. He showed complete disregard for his own safety and forced the enemy to withdraw by his sheer determination to take the position. His aggressive spirit, determined leadership and sustained courage were an inspiration to all.

**Sergeant Michael Rupert Carroll DCM** was platoon sergeant of Seven Platoon, C Company. On 13 September 1968 on a search and clear operation the platoon was fired on by enemy. Well dug in, the enemy's fire was sustained and accurate. The platoon commander and a section commander were wounded during the action. Under the platoon com-

mander's orders, Sgt Carroll took the leaderless section forward, although it was weakened by casualties. While fighting forward he was continually exposed to the enemy and reached the forward line of enemy bunkers alone. Sgt Carroll threw grenades into the bunkers at point blank range and about this time was wounded. Sgt Carroll was instrumental in rallying a second section and urging the section forward to force home the attack. He was continually under fire as he did this. While manoeuvring the section into position he con-



tinued to fire on a bunker to provide covering fire. By his immediate and sustained move forward, Sgt Carroll was responsible for maintaining the momentum of the attack, which forced the enemy to withdraw and prevented further casualties to his own men. He showed complete disregard for his own safety and an extremely aggressive spirit in an adverse situation. His cool courage and personal bravery were exemplary.

**Lt Maurice Francis Dodson MC** was platoon commander of One Platoon, V Company. On 22 June 1968 he was leader of a nine-man patrol which tracked, located and killed three Viet Cong. Immediately afterward the patrol came under heavy

automatic fire from about 15 enemy weapons from a range of 10 metres. It was subsequently discovered there were 70 to 80 VC in a well-prepared company defensive position. In the first burst of fire Lt Dodson suffered wounds to his head and shoulder which soon caused him to lose most of his vision. The enemy quickly tried to assault and envelop the group, but rifle fire prevented them being overrun and also prevented the enemy from capturing a wounded unconscious rifleman and his machine gun, both in an exposed position nearby. Lt Dodson coolly directed the actions of the patrol, arranged its dispositions, and used the radio to direct close mortar and artillery fire. Assaults were repelled by fire and armed helicopters directed by Lt Dodson. Many casualties were inflicted on the VC, who eventually abandoned a company-sized prepared defensive position. By his gallantry and leadership, Lt Dodson inspired his patrol to hold its ground, regain the initiative and defeat a strong enemy force under difficult circumstances.



On 23 July 1968 2Lt John Lindsay Burns MID was a forward observer of 12 Field Regiment attached to V Company, which was operating in the Hat Dich area. During an assault on an enemy bunker system the lead-



ing sections were halted and pinned down by accurate and heavy small arms fire from a range of 20 metres. 2Lt Burns positioned himself 50 metres from the enemy and with calmness and fine judgment, knowing fully the dangers to himself, he adjusted the fire of the direct support battery until the nearest rounds were falling on the enemy position. The artillery fire enabled the withdrawal of the forward sections of V Company without further losses. 2Lt Burns' bravery and calm judgment in this and other actions during his tour of duty instilled great confidence in the infantry he supported.



**Lance-corporal Arohanui Leonard Ropeta DCM** was a section 2IC in One Platoon, V Company. On 22 June 1968 he was a member of a nine-man patrol which tracked, located and killed three VC. The patrol came under unexpected and heavy fire from about 15 automatic weapons from a range of 10 metres. It transpired that 70 to 80 enemy took part in the contact. One of the patrol was killed and four wounded in the early part of the contact, the platoon commander and Lcpl Ropeta being among the wounded. Lcpl Ropeta remained at his

post, controlling the fire of the riflemen and encouraging them with cheerful comments while his wounded commander was free to control fire support and armed helicopters. The contact lasted one hour and 40 minutes and included an enemy assault at close range, an enveloping move by another platoon of enemy and a grenade assault. Lcpl Kopeta collected all available grenades and threw them personally from an exposed and dangerous position. He watched the arrival of enemy grenades and, by warning, the riflemen, arranged for each grenade to be kicked away before it exploded. He personally treated the wounds of two riflemen and when ammunition became low arranged its redistribution and ordered the fixing of bayonets. Lcpl Kopeta's energetic and cheerful leadership reassured his wounded officer and he inspired the riflemen by his disregard for his injuries and his coolness and tactical skill. His courage and leadership contributed to the platoon remaining steadfast, thereby turning what could have been a tragic loss into a clear defeat of superior enemy forces.



**Sapper Wiki Kahika MID** was a member of the assault pioneer platoon. On 22 June 1968 Spr Kahika was a member of a nine-man patrol from One Platoon, V Company, which was engaged by an enemy company of about 70 to 80 strong. The enemy opened fire on the patrol at about 10 metres range, wounding five men. During the initial exchange of fire one of the riflemen was badly wounded and lay unconscious only five metres from the nearest entrenchments. While armed helicopters were engaging the enemy, the 2IC of the patrol told Spr Kahika to move forward and recover the wounded riflemen under covering fire. Spr Kahika unhesitatingly ran forward over 10 metres of exposed ground, lift-

ed the wounded man and carried him to cover. He then continued to participate in the action, which lasted for one hour and 40 minutes. Later, when a relief force arrived, he asked to be allowed to remain to help search the area. He took part in the search of the enemy company defensive positions and personally investigated tunnel systems. His competence, quickness and, above all, bravery was an example and inspiration to the remainder of the patrol. In remaining after the action to give his specialised knowledge to the search he showed commendable endurance, toughness of character and devotion to duty.



**Captain Barrie Davidson Sinclair MID** was 2IC of the first W Company. Because the company commander had not arrived when the company was formed, Captain Sinclair undertook the task of forming, training, administering and dispatching the company. This was finished in three weeks, largely due to the untiring efforts, ability and devotion to duty of Capt Sinclair. He worked long hours during the tour to ensure administration and welfare of members of his company were of the highest order. On several occasions he commanded the company during operations, twice during contact, where his coolness under fire, judgment and leadership were outstanding. Capt Sinclair's cheerful unselfish attitude, devotion to duty, hard work and fine example were an inspiration to all who served with him.

**Private Richard John Foster MID** was a stretcher bearer with Twelve Platoon, D Company, when the platoon was ambushed on 8 October 1968. Although not involved in the initial contact, Pte Foster immediately moved forward under



heavy enemy fire and with complete disregard for his own safety treated several wounded soldiers. He continued to treat and comfort them throughout the contact until the enemy had been driven off, and then remained with them until they were evacuated. By his gallant and unselfish actions Pte Foster rendered valuable first aid and displayed courage of the highest order. His calmness under fire and his consideration for the wounded were an inspiration to the rest of the platoon.

**Corporal Kenneth Bruce Miller MID** was a stretcher bearer with Ten Platoon, D Company, during Operation Merino. On 19 July 1968 the platoon was following up a withdrawing enemy force when the forward scout, Pte U de Longis, saw a Viet Cong on the track and opened fire. Viet Cong in other positions returned the fire and the scout was hit in the stomach by shrapnel from an enemy claymore mine. He fell to the



ground and Cpl Miller ran forward under fire to treat Pte de Longis's wounds. Cpl Miller tried unsuccessfully to drag him out of the line of fire, then lifted him to his shoulders and carried the wounded soldier from the area of the contact to

the rear of the platoon. By his action Cpl Miller showed outstanding concern for the welfare and safety of the scout and complete disregard for his own safety. His action prevented Pte de Longis being further wounded and was instrumental in saving his life.

**Lt Brian Charles Barley MC** was a platoon commander in the first W Company. Lt Barley, by his determination, aggressive outlook and complete disregard for his own safety, inspired his platoon to perform in a most exemplary manner. On 12 March 1968, returning to an ambush position from his company base with two members of his platoon, he saw four enemy preparing to fire a claymore mine near the perimeter of the company base. Lt Barley and



his two riflemen attacked the group, killing one and injuring two. Lt Barley on three occasions mounted immediate assaults on occupied enemy camps, which were all captured without loss to his platoon. On 2 August 1968 Lt Barley was wounded in the head by enemy rocket shrapnel, but insisted on remaining with his platoon until contact had ceased. Lt Barley's constant aggressive spirit in the face of the enemy had a remarkable influence on his men.

**Staff Sergeant James Ross Hardie MID** was the company quarter-master sergeant of the first W Company. Sgt Hardie displayed enthusiasm, drive and professional ability of a very high order. His cheerful attitude and willingness to assist others made him an outstanding CQMS. Sgt Hardie also acted as platoon commander from time to time and, in March 1968, in this capacity, his platoon contacted the enemy on two occasions. His competent leadership, personal example and sound tactical con-



trol resulted in several enemy being killed and two taken prisoner. Sgt Hardie's devoted application to the welfare of his company during its South Vietnam tour is worthy of recognition.

## ADDENDUM

Further awards to members of 4RAR/NZ(Anzac)Bn, announced just before this book was printed, are as follows:

### Distinguished Service Order

Lt Col Leon Roderic Greville

### Distinguished Conduct Medal

Sgt John Aitchison Kennedy *SCOTT*

Cpl Malcolm Gibson

### Military Cross

Maj William John Reynolds

Maj John Pericles Deighton

Sgt. John Grant Sandford

### Military Medal

Cpl Wayne Laurence Brown

### Mentioned in Dispatches

Maj Brian David Valentine Lindsay

Maj Michael Chisholm Morrison

Capt James Rollo Brett

Capt Peter Kenneth Sharp

2Lt Peter Brian Sheedy

WOI Anthony Charles Toghill

WOII Robert Richardson MM

WOII Leslie George O'Keefe

Sgt Noel Robert McParland