



SUPPLEMENT

TO

The London Gazette

Of TUESDAY, the 10th of OCTOBER, 1944

published by Authority

Registered as a newspaper

THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER, 1944

War Office, 12th October, 1944.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the posthumous award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:—

Jemadar (acting Subadar) Netrabahadur Thapa (28467 IO), 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force), Indian Army.

Subadar Netrabahadur Thapa was in command of the garrison of 41 men of the 2/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) which on the afternoon of 25th June, 1944, took over the isolated piquet known as Mortar Bluff situated on the hillside commanding the base at Bishenpur in Burma. The piquet position, completely devoid of any cover, was situated some 400 yards from the next piquet, from which it could be supported to some extent by 3 inch mortar fire, but was commanded by Water Piquet, a short distance away on high ground to the South, which had been over-run by strong enemy forces on the previous night and was still in enemy hands. Owing to its commanding position the retention of Mortar Bluff was vital to the safety of other positions farther down the ridge and to Bishenpur itself.

The relief had been harassed by enemy snipers at close range but was completed at 1830 hours without casualties. A little more than an hour later the enemy began to attack. For this purpose a 75 millimetre and a 37 millimetre gun were brought on up to the high ground overlooking the position and poured shell after shell at point blank range for ten minutes into the narrow confines of the piquet, and this was followed by a determined attack by not less than one company of Japanese. A fierce fight ensued in which Subadar Netrabahadur Thapa's men, exhorted by their leader, held their ground against heavy odds and drove the enemy back with disproportionate losses. During this time Subadar Netrabahadur Thapa with tireless energy and contempt for his own safety moved from post to post encouraging his young N.C.O.s and riflemen, of which the garrison was largely composed, and tending the wounded.

A short lull followed during which Subadar Netrabahadur Thapa gave a clear and concise report on the telephone to his Commanding Officer and asked for more artillery defensive fire. Having done this he made preparations to meet the next onslaught which was not long in coming.

Under cover of the pitch dark night and torrential rain the enemy had moved round to the jungle from the cover of which they launched their next attack. Still in considerable strength and as determined and ferocious as ever the enemy poured out from the jungle across the short space of open ground to the piquet defences under cover of small arms and 37 millimetre gun fire from a flank. For a time our men held their ground until, as ill-luck would have it, both the L.M.G. and T.M.G. of one section jammed.

With much reduced fire-power the section were unable to hold on, and the enemy forced an entrance and over-ran this and another section, killing or wounding 12 out of the 16 men comprising the two sections. Having no reserve Subadar Netrabahadur Thapa himself went forward from his Headquarters and stemmed any further advance with grenades.

The situation was however critical. With more than half his men casualties, ammunition low, and the enemy in possession of part of his perimeter, Subadar Netrabahadur Thapa would have been justified in withdrawing, but in his next report to his Commanding Officer he stated that he intended holding on and asked for reinforcements and more ammunition.

So efficient were his plans for defence and such was the fine example of this gallant Gurkha officer that not a man moved from his trench and not a yard more ground was gained by the enemy, despite their desperate attempts.

Thus the night passed until at 0400 hours a section of 8 men with grenades and small arms ammunition arrived. Their arrival inevitably drew fire and all the 8 were soon casualties. Undismayed, however, Subadar