



SUPPLEMENT
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THURSDAY, 13 JULY, 1944

War Office, 13th July, 1944.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve awards of the VICTORIA CROSS to the undermentioned:—

No. 3663590 Fusilier Francis Arthur Jefferson, The Lancashire Fusiliers (Ulverston, Lancs.).

On 16th May, 1944, during an attack on the Gustav Line, an anti-tank obstacle held up some of our tanks, leaving the leading Company of Fusilier Jefferson's Battalion to dig in on the hill without tanks or anti-tank guns. The enemy counter-attacked with infantry and two Mark IV tanks, which opened fire at short range causing a number of casualties, and eliminating one P.I.A.T. group entirely.

As the tanks advanced towards the partially dug trenches, Fusilier Jefferson, entirely on his own initiative, seized a P.I.A.T. and running forward alone under heavy fire, took up a position behind a hedge; as he could not see properly, he came into the open, and standing up under a hail of bullets, fired at the leading tank which was now only twenty yards away. It burst into flames and all the crew were killed.

Fusilier Jefferson then reloaded the P.I.A.T. and proceeded towards the second tank, which withdrew before he could get within range. By this time our own tanks had arrived and the enemy counter-attack was smashed with heavy casualties.

Fusilier Jefferson's gallant act not merely saved the lives of his Company and caused many casualties to the Germans, but also broke up the enemy counter-attack and had a decisive effect on the subsequent operation. His supreme gallantry and disregard of personal risk contributed very largely to the success of the action.

Lieutenant (temporary Captain) Richard Wakeford (174363), The Hampshire Regiment (London, S.W.6).

On 13th May, 1944, Captain Wakeford commanded the leading Company on the right flank of an attack on two hills near Cassino, and accompanied by his orderly and armed only with a revolver, he killed a number of the enemy and handed over 20 prisoners when the Company came forward.

On the final objective a German officer and 5 other ranks were holding a house. After being twice driven back by grenades, Captain Wakeford, with a final dash, reached the window and hurled in his grenades. Those of the enemy who were not killed or wounded, surrendered.

Attacking another feature on the following day, a tank became bogged on the start line, surprise was lost and the leading infantry were caught in the enemy's fire, so that the resulting casualties endangered the whole operation. Captain Wakeford, keeping his Company under perfect control, crossed the start line and although wounded in the face and in both arms, led his men up the hill. Half way up the hill his Company came under heavy spandau fire; in spite of his wounds, he organized and led a force to deal with this opposition so that his Company could get on.

By now the Company was being heavily mortared and Captain Wakeford was again wounded, in both legs, but he still went on and reaching his objective, he organized and consolidated the remainder of his Company and reported to his Commanding Officer before submitting to any personal attention. During the seven hour interval before stretcher-bearers could reach him his unwavering high spirits encouraged the

wounded men around him. His selfless devotion to duty, leadership, determination, courage and disregard for his own serious injuries were beyond all praise.

*Department of National Defence, Ottawa,
13th July, 1944.*

THE CANADIAN ARMY.

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

Major John Keefer Mahony, The Westminster Regiment (Motor).

On the 24th May, 1944, "A" Company of the Westminster Regiment (Motor), under the command of Major Mahony, was ordered to establish the initial bridgehead across the river Melfa.

The enemy still had strong forces of tanks, self-propelled guns and infantry holding defensive positions on the East side of the river. Despite this, Major Mahony personally led his Company down to and across the river, being with the leading section. Although the crossing was made in full view of and under heavy fire from enemy machine-gun posts on the right rear and left front, he personally directed each section into its proper position on the West bank with the greatest coolness and confidence. The crossing was made and a small bridgehead was established on ground where it was only possible to dig shallow weapon pits. From 1530 hours the Company maintained itself in the face of enemy fire and attack until 2030 hours, when the remaining Companies and supporting weapons were able to cross the river and reinforce them.

The bridgehead was enclosed on three sides by an 88 mm. self-propelled gun 450 yards to the right, a battery of four 2 cm. A.A. guns 100 yards to the left, a Spandau 100 yards to the left of it, to the left of the Spandau a second 88 mm. self-propelled gun, and approximately a Company of infantry with mortars and machine-guns on the left of the 88 mm. gun. From all these weapons, Major Mahony's Company was constantly under fire until it eventually succeeded in knocking out the self-propelled equipment and the infantry on the left flank.

Shortly after the bridgehead had been established, the enemy counter-attacked with infantry supported by tanks and self-propelled guns. The counter-attack was beaten off by the Company with its P.I.A.T.'s, 2" Mortars and Grenades, due to the skill with which Major Mahony had organised his defences. With absolute fearlessness and disregard for his own safety, Major Mahony personally directed the fire of his P.I.A.T.'s throughout this action, encouraging and exhorting his men. By this time, the Company strength had been reduced to 60 men, and all but one of the Platoon Officers had been wounded. Scarcely an hour later, enemy tanks formed up about 500 yards in front of the bridgehead and in company with about a Company of infantry, launched a second counter-attack. Major Mahony, determined to hold the position at

all costs, went from section to section with words of encouragement, personally directing fire of Mortars and other weapons.

At one stage, a section was pinned down in the open by accurate and intense machine-gun fire. Major Mahony crawled forward to their position, and by throwing Smoke Grenades, succeeded in extricating the section from its position with the loss of only one man. This counter-attack was finally beaten off with the destruction of three enemy self-propelled guns and one Panther tank.

Early in the action, Major Mahony was wounded in the head and twice in the leg, but he refused medical aid and continued to direct the defence of the bridgehead, despite the fact that movement of any kind caused him extreme pain. It was only when the remaining Companies of the Regiment had crossed the river to support him that he allowed his wounds to be dressed and even then refused to be evacuated, staying instead with his Company.

The forming and holding of a bridgehead across the river was vital to the whole Canadian Corps action, and failure would have meant delay, a repetition of the attack, probably involving heavy losses in men, material and time, and would have given the enemy a breathing space which might have broken the impetus of the Corps advance.

Major Mahony, knowing this, never allowed the thought of failure or withdrawal to enter his mind, and infused his spirit and determination into all his men. At the first sign of hesitation or faltering, Major Mahony was there to encourage, by his own example, those who were feeling the strain of battle. The enemy perceived that this officer was the soul of the defence and consequently fired at him constantly with all weapons, from rifles to 88 mm. guns. Major Mahony completely ignored the enemy fire and with great courage and absolute disregard for personal danger, commanded his Company with such great confidence, energy and skill that the enemy's efforts to destroy the bridgehead were all defeated.

The great courage shown by Major Mahony in this action will forever be an inspiration to his Regiment and to the Canadian Army.

War Office, 13th July, 1944.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the field:—

The Distinguished Service Order.

Captain (temporary Major) Patrick Michael Leigh-Fermor, O.B.E. (143448), General List.

The Military Cross.

Lieutenant (temporary Captain) Ivan William Stanley Moss (200101), Coldstream Guards.
Captain (temporary Major) Ian Norman Patterson (69411), Army Air Corps.
Lieutenant (temporary Captain) Morris Elliot Anderson (13342V), South African Forces.

The Distinguished Conduct Medal.

No. 2581346 Signaller Leslie Norman Stephenson, Royal Corps of Signals.

The Military Medal.

No. 1436512 Lance-Sergeant William Thomas Jessie Asbery, Royal Regiment of Artillery.

War Office, 13th July, 1944.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve that the following be Mentioned in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the field:—

Royal Armoured Corps.

3rd C.L.Y.

319464 Corpl. (actg. Sergt.) G. J. W. Miller.

Royal Regiment of Artillery.

846525 Lce.-Bdr. D. Paterson.

Royal Corps of Signals.

557897 Sergt. L. O. Brown.

2573916 Lce.-Sergt. R. E. Kingsbury.

913296 Lce.-Sergt. J. R. Waterman.

Infantry.

K.R.R.C.

6896822 Corpl. (actg. Sergt.) R. A. L. Summers.

War Office, 13th July, 1944.

ERRATA.

Mentions-in-Despatches.

The London Gazette of 1st April, 1941 (No. 35120).

For 190497 S.-Sergt. A. J. Farquharson, East Africa Army Medical Corps, *substitute* 170497V S.-Sergt. A. J. Farquharson, South African Forces (attd. East Africa Army Medical Corps).

The London Gazette of 6th April, 1944 (No. 36456).

For Maj. F. P. van Oudtshoorn (216829), South African Forces, *substitute* Maj. F. P. van Oudtshoorn (216829), Pioneer Corps.

For Lt. F. W. Thompson (198665), South African Forces, *substitute* Lt. F. W. Thompson (198665), Pioneer Corps.

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