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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased on the advice of Her Majesty's Australian Ministers to approve the undermentioned awards in recognition of Gallant and Distinguished Services in Vietnam:

Bar to Distinguished Conduct Medal

31967 Warrant Officer Class I, Edward John MORRISON, D.C.M., Royal Australian Infantry.

Warrant Officer Morrison served overseas with the 2nd/1st Machine Gun Battalion during the Second World War from 1941 to 1945 and re-enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1951. He was decorated on two occasions for gallantry with the 3rd Battalion of The Royal Australian Regiment in Korea. In 1964 he was selected as an advisor with the Australian Army Training Team in Vietnam and was appointed a Battalion Advisor to the Vietnamese Armed Forces.

During the night 8th/9th December 1964, headquarters personnel of the 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Regiment of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, supported by two field guns, were in a defensive position on Hill 159 in Quang Tin Province. With this force were Lieutenant B. K. Skinner of the United States Army and Warrant Officer Morrison.

At approximately midnight, a Viet Cong force estimated as a reinforced battalion attacked the hill. During the attack, although severely wounded by grenades, Warrant Officer Morrison by leadership and example, sustained and rallied the small group in defence. Eventually, at 0330 hours with the defence pushed back by overwhelming numbers he organised a withdrawal to the artillery position where further defence was made with small arms and with the artillery firing at point blank range.

Lieutenant Skinner had also been wounded in the early stages of the attack and when their wounds could no longer be neglected both the advisors were temporarily moved to a nearby sheltered position for treatment.

As dawn was breaking, the artillery position was lost and at extreme personal risk both the advisors reconnoitred the Viet Cong disposition on top of the hill for counter-attack. During this reconnaissance Lieutenant Skinner was killed and Warrant Officer Morrison again wounded.

The defence by this small force was sufficient to delay the Viet Cong and permit the arrival of a relief column which, with daylight, retook the hill. The whole operation resulted in most severe losses to the Viet Cong and permitted highly successful follow-up action.

Although severely wounded, Warrant Officer Morrison displayed outstanding qualities of leadership, bravery and devotion to duty.

Distinguished Conduct Medal

21406 Warrant Officer Class I, Ernest Barrington OSTARA, Royal Australian Infantry.

Warrant Officer Ostara served with the Australian Imperial Forces during World War Two and saw active service with the 2/6 Australian Commando Squadron from 1943 to 1946. He enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in September 1947. Before being allotted for duty with the Australian Army Training Team in South Vietnam he served with the First Battalion Royal Australian Regiment in Korea in 1953 as well as in a number of instructional posts including appointments with cadets, commandos and the Infantry Centre. Warrant Officer Ostara commenced his tour of duty with the Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam, on the 10th November 1963, his first assignment being that of Advisor to the Vietnamese National Training Centre at Dong Da.

At 1500 hours on the 7th January 1965, the Reconnaissance Company, with Warrant Officer Ostara as Senior Advisor, was in refresher training at Dong Da Training Centre. An operation was in progress to the Northern end of the training area where a "Tiger Company" (a heliborne reaction force) was clearing a Viet Cong company from a nearby village. The Viet Cong broke clear and moved South across undulating scrubby country in plain view of a group consisting of Australians and Vietnamese troops. Under the guidance and with the assistance of the Australian members of the Training Team, the Vietnamese troops blocked the Viet Cong move with machine gun fire inflicting seven casualties on the Viet Cong and forcing them to take cover and move into a narrow steep sided water course. At this stage the group of ten Vietnamese troops who were being instructed by Warrant Officer Ostara, under his direction quickly took up an intercepting position further up the water course. The advancing Viet Cong on meeting this group threw grenades which caused panic among the Vietnamese troops under training. Quickly assessing the seriousness of the situation and to protect the troops under his care Warrant Officer Ostara single-handedly attacked the Viet Cong force. With his personal carbine he shot down the leading element of two who proved to be a senior Viet Cong Commander and his orderly. Rounding a bend to follow up, he found no remaining enemy. His actions made a tremendous impact on the force to which he was attached, which on succeeding days undertook further successful operations. Warrant Officer Ostara's action was a splendid individual effort and is in the highest tradition of the Australian Regular Army and reflects great credit upon himself.