

at which time Private Fraser turned his back on the enemy fire to shield the casualty from fire and assisted a carrying party to evacuate the casualty.

During the extraction of the casualty Private Fraser showed complete disregard for his own safety in an effort to give maximum attention to the care of the casualty.

16646 Private Richard Beverley ODENDAHL, Royal Australian Infantry Corps.

On the 17th February 1967, Sixth Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment engaged a large enemy force near Lang Phuoc Hai in Phuoc Tuy Province in the Republic of South Vietnam. Private Richard Beverley Odendahl was the stretcher bearer attached to 5 Platoon B Company.

In the middle of the afternoon B Company assaulted a defensive position manned by a well trained, aggressive Viet-Cong force which was equipped with heavy machine guns, mortars and recoilless rifles.

During the assault 5 Platoon suffered fourteen casualties, all of whom were lying in an area swept by machine gun fire, and into which snipers were directing well aimed fire. Showing complete disregard for his own safety Private Odendahl moved forward into the area and carried or dragged a number of the wounded back to an area out of the direct fire of the machine guns. Although under continuous fire from the enemy he assisted and treated the wounded for over three hours until their evacuation was completed.

Throughout the action Private Odendahl's total lack of concern for his own personal safety was an inspiration to the whole company. But for his determination, courage and selfless devotion to duty many of the wounded treated by him may have died.

Mentioned-in-Despatches

15561 Lance Corporal Kerry Michael ROONEY, Royal Australian Infantry Corps (Posthumous).

2nd Lieutenant John Patrick O'HALLORAN (2781906), Royal Australian Infantry Corps.

1731228 Lance Corporal David Alan THOMAS, Royal Australian Infantry Corps.

37995 Private Christopher John GANNON, Royal Australian Infantry Corps.

1730902 Private Barry Kevin BARTSCH, Royal Australian Infantry Corps.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the under-mentioned awards in respect of gallant conduct in Aden:

Military Cross

Captain David Brian Wynn WEBB-CARTER (467644) Irish Guards.

Captain Webb-Carter, who had arrived from England only a few days before, was acting as Commander of his Company at Wadi Matlah camp on the night of 30th December 1966, since his Company Commander was on a detached operation. The Camp was a temporary one and necessarily in a rather exposed position.

At about 2200 hours, the camp was suddenly brought under intensive small arms, mortar, grenade and blindicide fire from a band of dissidents. Later it was discovered that this band numbered 35 to 40 and were firing from positions on two sides of the camp.

He was in the Company Command Post at the time of the attack. He immediately ran out across an open stretch of sand, which was by then being raked by small arms fire and raced up to a picquet position on the exposed side of the camp. Here by personal observation he ascertained the direction and position of the enemy. He then co-ordinated all available fire to be directed on to the enemy with the maximum effect and minimum delay.

The action continued and during it Captain Webb-Carter frequently left the comparative safety of his Command Post to visit positions under fire in order to encourage platoons and to acquaint himself with the enemy situation. Each time he did this he had to cross an open space of light coloured sand on which the shadow of any movement was very visible. He crossed this space four or five times during the engagement each time attracting heavier and heavier fire.

While maintaining control of the battle, he managed to find time to send sensible situation reports to his Battalion Headquarters to whom it was obvious at the time that his control of the situation was excellent. The enemy pressed the attack by firing on the camp for over an hour in all—an unusually sustained attack for the Radfan and undoubtedly suffered casualties as a result of No. 3 Company's counter fire.

His personal actions contributed greatly to the successful defence of the camp and to the discomfort of the enemy. His constant presence when needed and complete coolness under fire, as well as his total disregard for his own safety and his evident mastery of the situation, was an inspiration to everyone under his Command.

Most of those under his command were under fire for the first time and they owed a great deal to his courage, calm assurance and fine leadership, which more than measured up to that of a vastly more experienced officer.

Air Force Cross

Major Greville John Brooks EDGECOMBE (426867) Army Air Corps.

At approximately 0200 hours on 19th February 1967, following a dissident attack on Dhala, a request was made to Headquarters Area West in Habilayn, to arrange casualty evacuation for two Priority One cases—one a Mulazzim of the Federal Regular Army, the other a Marine of 45 Commando Royal Marines. Both men had been very severely wounded and the Medical Staff considered that their chances of surviving the night were very slight unless they were evacuated as soon as possible.

Major Edgecombe, Officer Commanding 8 Flight Army Air Corps, was asked if he would attempt the evacuation though a night evacuation from either the British or Federal Army camps at Dhala had never been achieved before. At Habilayn there was complete cloud cover but a weather report from Dhala revealed that, though some cloud could be seen moving across the plain, there was no cloud over Dhala itself. In spite of the adverse weather and the fact that there was no moon, Major Edgecombe, with his customary selfless approach to his duties, decided to make the attempt using a dual control Scout helicopter with Captain Grist as second pilot. The Scout helicopter is equipped with radio, and a full instrument panel, but it has no avionic navigation equipment; the pilot therefore has to rely entirely on a bearing and distance calculation. Between Habilayn and Dhala the country is very mountainous and the ground rises from 2,000 feet to 4,500 feet with several intervening peaks of 5,000 to 5,500 feet. For any small aircraft night flying in the area is always extremely hazardous even under good weather conditions.

After taking off from Habilayn, Major Edgecombe flew his aircraft through 1,000-1,500 feet of cloud until he was able to obtain some horizon even though only from the stars and cloud below him. He had asked for assistance from the radar at Royal Air Force Khormaksar but they were unable to see him on their screen. After about 15 minutes flying a descent was made towards the British camp at Dhala where the troops had positioned four Gooseneck Flares and an Angle of Approach Light, but the final approach had to be made between two dark hills into a small pad surrounded by sandbags. This was difficult. A landing in the Federal Regular Army camp would have been impossible and it was therefore necessary for the aircraft to wait on the pad whilst the Mulazzim was brought to the British camp; it was a slow journey. Dissident fire had ceased some time before but movement around the camp continued to be reported and the British troops kept up harassing fire to discourage further movement or an attack on the aircraft.

The journey to Aden was some 50 miles. Once more Major Edgecombe flew his aircraft above the mountains and the clouds and kept on this course for the next 30 miles. When clear of the mountains he then had to make a descent through the clouds, which had by now thickened to some 2,500 feet, and eventually landed his casualties on the helicopter pad outside the main entrance to Khormaksar Beach Hospital.

Major Edgecombe is an experienced pilot and he was therefore fully aware of every hazard he was facing and every risk he was taking. They were both considerable. That such a difficult flight was