



SUPPLEMENT TO
The London Gazette
 of Tuesday, 26th August 1969

Published by Authority

Registered as a Newspaper

FRIDAY, 29TH AUGUST 1969

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
 THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1.
 29th August 1969.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased, on the advice of Her Majesty's Australian Ministers, to approve the award of the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned:

(To be dated 28th August 1969)

Warrant Officer Class II Rayene Stewart SIMPSON, D.C.M., 217622, Royal Australian Infantry.

On 6th May 1969, Warrant Officer Simpson was serving as Commander of 232nd Mobile Strike Force Company of 5th Special Forces Group on a search and clear operation in Kontum Province, near the Laotian border. When one of his platoons became heavily engaged with the enemy, he led the remainder of his company to its assistance. Disregarding the dangers involved, he placed himself at the front of his troops, thus becoming a focal point of enemy fire, and personally led the assault on the left flank of the enemy position. As the company moved forward, an Australian Warrant Officer commanding one of the platoons was seriously wounded and the assault began to falter. Warrant Officer Simpson, at great personal risk and under heavy enemy fire, moved across open ground, reached the wounded Warrant Officer and carried him to a position of safety. He then returned to his company where, with complete disregard for his safety, he crawled forward to within ten metres of the enemy and threw grenades into their positions. As darkness fell, and being unable to break into the enemy position, Warrant Officer Simpson ordered his company to withdraw. He then threw smoke grenades and, carrying a wounded platoon leader, covered the withdrawal of the company together with five indigenous soldiers. His leadership and personal bravery in this action were outstanding.

On 11th May 1969, in the same operation, Warrant Officer Simpson's Battalion Commander was killed and an Australian Warrant Officer and several indigenous soldiers were wounded. In addition, one other Australian Warrant Officer who had been separated from the majority of his troops was contained in the area by enemy fire. Warrant Officer Simpson quickly organised two platoons of indigenous soldiers and several advisors and led them to the position of the contact. On reaching the position the element with Warrant Officer Simpson came under heavy fire and all but a few of the soldiers with him fell back. Disregarding his own safety, he moved forward in the face of accurate enemy machine gun fire, in order to cover the initial evacuation of the casualties. The wounded were eventually moved out of the line of enemy fire, which all this time was directed at Warrant Officer Simpson from close range. At the risk of almost certain death he made several attempts to move further forward towards his Battalion Commander's body but on each occasion he was stopped by heavy fire. Realising the position was becoming untenable and that priority should be given to extricating other casualties as quickly as possible, Warrant Officer Simpson alone and still under enemy fire covered the withdrawal of the wounded by personally placing himself between the wounded and the enemy. From this position he fought on and by outstanding courage and valour was able to prevent the enemy advance until the wounded were removed from the immediate vicinity. Warrant Officer Simpson's gallant and individual action and his coolness under fire were exceptional and were instrumental in achieving the successful evacuation of the wounded to the helicopter evacuation pad.

Warrant Officer Simpson's repeated acts of personal bravery in this operation were an inspiration to all Vietnamese, United States and Australian soldiers who served with him. His conspicuous gallantry was in the highest tradition of the Australian Army.

LONDON

Printed and published by HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE: 1969

