

Military Cross (MC)
Brian Edward Hall

371836. Lieutenant.
Royal NZ Infantry Regiment
Victor Four Company

NZ Gazette Number 56 dated 17 September 1970

CITATION

Lieutenant Hall enlisted in the Regular Force in October 1965 and in July 1966 entered the Officer Cadet School, Portsea. He graduated into Infantry and in November 1968 was posted to Malaysia as a platoon commander.

He arrived in the Republic of Vietnam **in May 1969** as a platoon commander, 2 Platoon in Victor Four Company.

On 1st June 1969¹ Lieutenant Hall's platoon initiated an ambush against an enemy force which, it was subsequently learned, numbered in excess of twenty. Although two of the enemy were killed instantly, the platoon was immediately engaged with rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons. Lieutenant Hall skilfully drew his sentries to safety, moved his platoon weapons to provide covering fire and personally led a bold assault with one section on the remaining enemy. His prompt and aggressive action quickly forced the enemy to break off the engagement leaving behind one of his number and signs that he had sustained other casualties.

Late in the afternoon of 17th June 1969² Lieutenant Hall was carrying out a reconnaissance when four enemy were observed at a distance of fifteen metres, between his party and the rest of the platoon. Fire was opened on the enemy and the surrounding area to such good effect that the three surviving broke towards the rest of the platoon where they were killed. An hour after last light, a large enemy force again approached the platoon position. The platoon initiated its ambush, the enemy reacted sharply and within twenty minutes the platoon was withstanding probing attacks from all sides. For the next four hours the platoon fought off all attempts to penetrate its position. During this time Lieutenant Hall directed not only the fire of his platoon but also artillery and air strikes close to his position. It was a further two hours before all enemy movement ceased on his perimeter.

Between 1st June and 26th September 1969, Lieutenant Hall personally led his men in six contacts resulting in twenty dead without a single casualty being sustained by his platoon. These successes can be attributed directly to Lieutenant Hall's bold and aggressive leadership, his willingness to assume the most dangerous position when in contact and his skill as an infantry leader.

¹ Nil casualties

² Nil casualties

Additional Notes to the Citation

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On 1st June 1969³, Victor Four Company in two separate contacts killed four VC and wounded two others. 2 PI was ambushing a track that ran between a coffee plantation and rubber trees. At least two VC approached the platoon position and were engaged at a range of 15 metres by the two sentries Pte's PO Ramsay and JT Barrett, who were protecting the flank of the platoon. The sentries killed the two VC, but the remainder of the enemy group, later estimated at up to 20, then returned fire and attempted to outflank the position. Pte Ramsay fired a claymore and the two men withdrew back to the platoon under covering fire from 3 Section. The enemy continued to engage the platoon with small arms and RPG fire.

Supported by prompt and aggressive fire from the remainder of his platoon, Lt Hall led an assault with one of his sections into the area from which the enemy fire had come, forcing them to withdraw. The sweep through the area found the two VC killed by Pte Ramsay and Pte Barrett and another body killed by the assaulting section, was found in the rubber. Three AK47's, three packs and a quantity of documents were captured. The documents revealed that Lt. Hall's platoon (2 PI) had taken on a group of up to 23 VC.

Late in the afternoon of 17th June 1969⁴, 2 PI (Lt Hall) was in the process of setting an ambush when four VC approached the platoon along a track and were seen by one of the sentries, Pte J C Tocher. The four enemy were between Halls recon party and the main body of the platoon.

The ambush, although not ready, was opened and Pte Tocher killed one of the VC, who appeared to be a Main Force soldier. The other three fled back around a corner. A section commanded by Cpl W M Mathews was still getting into (ambush) position when the three fleeing VC came into view in single file. Cpl Mathews opened fire, killing one VC and the other two dropped out of sight. Mathews was joined by the PI Sgt S V Smith, and a machine gunner, Pte M T Hotene, who kept up fire on the area to prevent the enemy moving away. A sweep of the area later found three dead VC, in addition the one killed by Pte Tocher. Two AK47's and a SKS rifle were recovered.

The platoon then completed setting the ambush, and were rewarded when four hours later, Pte W G Doherty saw movement on the track only ten metres from the ambush. A large party was moving along the track, and when the maximum

³ "We too were ANZAC's" – Regimental History for 6RAR (ANZAC) Bn. Lt Col Brian Avery p.92

⁴ "We too were ANZAC's" – Regimental History for 6RAR (ANZAC) Bn. Lt Col Brian Avery p.109

number of enemy had entered the killing area, Doherty sprang the ambush using Claymores, only two of which operated correctly.

The VC retaliated sharply and then commenced a series of probes of the 2 PI position from all flanks.