

Member of the Order of British Empire (MBE)

Geoffrey Andrew Hitchings 30420. Major.
Royal NZ Artillery
161 Battery

NZ Gazette Number 62 dated 16 October 1969

CITATION

Major Geoffrey Hitchings was commissioned in the New Zealand Staff Corps on 9th December, 1952 and was allotted to the Royal New Zealand Artillery. He was appointed to command 161st Field Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery and arrived in South Vietnam **on 11th April, 1968**. His battery was allotted in direct support of 3rd Battalion and later 9th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

By long and arduous hours of close supervision in the Battalion Fire Control Centre, Major Hitchings was responsible for ensuring the safety of all artillery and mortar fire supporting friendly troops. The reliability of his battery in action developed in the supported arm a supreme confidence in the employment of close supporting fire. This largely contributed to success in two major defensive battles and several major enemy contacts. When required as an aerial observer he personally directed fire support skilfully and without regard to personal safety.

Major Hitchings coolness and judgement in action and his exceptional ability were evidenced by quick and accurate response to all requests for fire support. His performance was a source of inspiration both to his own unit and the infantry battalions which he supported.