

British Empire Medal (For Gallantry) (BEM)

Ronald Edward McNaughton

645604. Sergeant.

Royal NZ Air Force.

NZ Services Medical Team

NZ Gazette Number 1 dated 16 January 1969

CITATION

Sergeant McNaughton enlisted in the RNZAF in September 1953 and has since served at Wigram, Ohakea and Whenuapai. He volunteered for service with the 1st New Zealand Services Medical Team in Vietnam, arriving **in May 1967**.

In Vietnam Sergeant McNaughton was employed as a Medical Corpsman at the hospital in Bong Son and at various times in dispensaries at Hoai An and Phu My. He worked at Phu My for a continuous period from December 1967 until May 1968. Since early February 1968 Phu My sub sector (where the New Zealand Services Medical team members are stationed) has been a constant target for North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces, this has necessitated constant twenty-four hour vigilance and – as far as 1 New Zealand Services Medical Team members are concerned – defensive patrols and command duty during their ‘off duty’ hours.

About 0300 hours on 3rd April 1968 an estimated two companies of North Vietnamese Army sappers attacked the sub-sector compound. Under cover of heavy mortar fire an estimated twenty to thirty of these commando troops forced their way into the inner compound. Early in the attack two Americans (one officer and one senior non commissioned officer), were hit by small arms fire. Sergeant McNaughton left his bunker in an attempt to reach the two casualties, but, after receiving well directed small arms fire which he returned, he was forced to withdraw. At 0430 hours Sergeant McNaughton again attempted to reach the casualties, but, again after returning heavy small arms fire he was forced to return to his bunker.

At first light Sergeant McNaughton succeeded in reaching the casualties only to find that they were both deceased. Three North Vietnamese sappers were found in the vicinity, all presumed killed by Sergeant McNaughton during the earlier engagements.

By his actions whilst trying to save the lives of the two American casualties, Sergeant McNaughton inflicted losses to the enemy, pinned the enemy down in that area with his accurate fire, and undoubtedly played a major part in preventing the compound from being completely over-run, with a further loss of life.

Sergeant McNaughton impressed all troops in the compound with his coolness during the action and with his bravery during his two attempts to assist the casualties, with no thought to his personal safety.

Notes to Citation:

Born Wellington 19 Sep 1934. Served with the RNZAF from 11 Sep 1953 to 12 Dec 1976. Retired as a Warrant Officer.