

POSTHUMOUS V.C. FOR GALLANT MAORI OFFICER.

On the recommendation of the Comander-in-Chief, Middle East Force the King has approved the posthumous award of the VICTORIA CROSS to SECOND LIEUTENANT MOANA NUI-A-KIWA 28 NZ (Maori) for most conspicuous gallantry and outstanding leadership during the action at Tebaca Gap in the Matmata hills last March.

2/Lt Ngarimu commanded a pl in a attack upon the vital hill feature -re POINT 209. He was given the task of attacking and capturing an under- feature forward of POINT 209 itself, and held in considerable strength by the enemy.

HE LED HIS MEN WITH GREAT DASH AND DETERMINATION STRAIGHT THE FACE OF THE HILL UNDETERRED BY THE INTENSE MORTAR AND MACHINE GUN FIRE WHICH WAS CAUSING CONSIDERABLE CASUALTIES, DISPLAYING COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP OF THE HIGHEST ORDER. HE WAS HIMSELF FIRST ON THE HILL CREST PERSONALLY ANNIHILATING IN THE PROCESS AT LEAST TWO ENEMY POSTS.

In the face of such a determined attack the remainder of the enemy fled but further advance was impossible as the reverse slope was swept by MG fire from PT 209 itself.

Under cover of a mist intense mortar barrage the enemy counter attacked in an attempt to regain ~~the~~ dug in positions. 2/Lt Ngarimu ordered his men to stand up and engage the enemy man for man.

This they did with such good effect that the attackers were mown down, 2/Lt Ngarimu personally killing several.

During this encounter he was twice wounded, once by rifle fire in the shoulder and later by shrapnel in ~~the~~ the leg, and though urged by both his Coy Comd and Bn Comd to go out of the line he refused to do so saying that he should stay a little while with his men.

Darkness found this Officer and his depleted pl. lying on the rocky face of the forward slope of the hill feature with the enemy in a similar position on the reverse slope about twenty yards distant.

FIERCE ATTACK.

Time and again throuout the night the enemy launched fierce attacks -s to ~~dislodge~~ in an attempt to dislodge Ngarimu and his men but each counter attack was beaten off entirely by this Officer's inspired leadership.

During one of these counter attacks the enemy by using hand-grenades succeeded in piercing a certain of the line.

Without hesitation Ngarimu rushed to the threatened area and those of the enemy he did not kill, he drove back with stones and with his Tommy -Gun.

During another determined counter attack by the enemy, part of his line broke. Yelling out orders and encouragement, he went to his ~~aid~~ dislodged men, rallied them and led them in a fierce onslaught back into their old positions.

All through the night, between attacks, he and his men were heavily harassed by MG and mortar fire, but 2/Lt Ngarimu watched his line very carefully, cheering his men on and inspiring them by his gallant personal conduct.

HOLDING FAST!

Morning found him still in possession of the hill feature but only he and two unwounded other ranks remained. Reinforcements were sent up to him

In the morning the enemy again counter attacked ~~and~~ it was during this attack that 2/Lt Ngarimu died.

He was killed on his feet defiantly facing the enemy with his tommy -gun at his hip, and as he fell he came to rest almost on top of those enemy who had fallen to his gun just before he fell to theirs.

The hill feature that this Officer had so gallantly defended was strewn with enemy dead and was abold witness of his great courage and fortitude.

He is the first Maori to win the VICTORIA CROSS.

REFERENCE

Archives New Zealand = Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanantanga
28 (Maori) Battalion War Diary, WAI 1 1666 DA 68/1/42, Appendix B