



Government House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

5 February 2019

It is notified for general information that the Governor-General has approved the following Gallantry awards for Far East Prisoners of War:

In recognition of bravery and courage as an Australian prisoner of war who died while escaping from the Imperial Japanese forces or who were executed following recapture.:

## COMMENDATION FOR GALLANTRY

### *Australian Army*

#### **Private Phillip Mowbray BESSELL**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt in about April 1942.

#### **Private John Edward DURKIN**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in early March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt on 14 August 1945.

#### **Private James Frederick ELMORE**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army until his death on 22 May 1945, as a result of an escape attempt in March 1945.

#### **Lieutenant Wilkins FITZALLEN**

For acts of gallantry in action while held in captivity, during his escape and subsequent recapture by the Imperial Japanese Army on Dutch Timor during the period 23 February 1942 until his execution on, or before, 23 October 1942.

#### **Private Arthur Edward FORD**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt on 17 March 1942.

#### **Private Jack Victor JONES**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942, until his execution as a result of an escape attempt in about April 1942.

#### **Private Norman Heather McARTNEY**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942, until his execution as a result of an escape attempt on 12 July 1943.

#### **Sergeant Howard Thomas MANNING**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt in about April 1942.

#### **Private Sidney Arthur WEBBER**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942 until his death as a result of escaping on 18 June 1945.

#### **Sergeant Bertram John WEST**

For acts of gallantry in action while held in captivity, during his escape and subsequent recapture by the Imperial Japanese Army on Dutch Timor during the period 23 February 1942 until his execution on, or before, 23 October 1942.

#### **Sergeant Henry WHITTON**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt in about April 1942.

### *Royal Australian Air Force*

#### **Squadron Leader Daryl Maxwell SPROULE DFC**

For acts of gallantry in action following his capture by the Imperial Japanese Navy until his execution as a result of an escape attempt around the middle of August 1943.

#### **By His Excellency's command**

**Paul Singer MVO**

A/g Official Secretary to the Governor-General

## COMMENDATION FOR GALLANTRY

In recognition of bravery and courage as an Australian prisoner of war who died while escaping from the Imperial Japanese forces or who were executed following recapture.

### *Australian Army*

#### **Private Phillip Mowbray BESSELL**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt in about April 1942.

Private Phillip Mowbray Bessell, with other members of the 213rd Machine Gun Battalion attached to Blackforce, became a prisoner of war when allied forces surrendered Java to the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942. After 11 March 1942, Private Bessell and five other men escaped, making for the coast of Java by hiding among Royal Air Force prisoners of war. The group continued their escape from Djokjakarta but were recaptured by Japanese forces, interrogated and taken away to Tasikmalaya. Private Bessell and the five others are reported to have been executed near Tasikmalaya about April 1942.

#### **Private John Edward DURKIN**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in early March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt on 14 August 1945.

Private John Edward Durkin of the 212nd Pioneer Battalion of the 7th Division, became a prisoner of war when Blackforce surrendered in Java to the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942. On 7 January 1943 he was transported by sea to Singapore, then Thailand as part of Dunlop Force labouring on the Burma-Thailand Railway. In mid July 1945, Private Durkin escaped from Songkurai Camp for several days before his recapture. On 14 August 1945, Private Durkin was executed.

#### **Private James Frederick ELMORE**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army on 3 February 1942 until his death on 22 May 1945, as a result of an escape attempt in March 1945.

Private James Frederick Elmore of the 2/21st Australian Infantry Battalion, 8th Division, became a prisoner of war with other members of Gull Force on 3 February 1942 on the island of Ambon, Indonesia. Private Elmore escaped from Tan Toey Camp on 26 March 1945 with another Australian prisoner of war. He was recaptured on 21 May 1945 and subsequently interrogated. On 22 May 1945, Private Elmore died whilst under interrogation.

## COMMENDATION FOR GALLANTRY

### **Lieutenant Wilkins FITZALLEN**

For acts of gallantry in action while held in captivity, during his escape and subsequent recapture by the Imperial Japanese Army on Dutch Timor during the period 23 February 1942 until his execution on, or before, 23 October 1942.

Lieutenant Fitzallen was captured on 23 February 1942 at Irekum, Dutch Timor. With other members of the 2/40th Australian Infantry Battalion, he was relied upon to regularly undertake clandestine intelligence gathering tasks outside No 2 Field Prisoner of War Camp at Usapa Besar. He escaped in May 1942, and was believed to be making his way to the south coast of Dutch West Timor with Sergeant Bertram West, intending to escape Timor by boat. They remained at large until October 1942 when they were recaptured by Japanese forces. Both men were then executed near Klapalima, Dutch Timor, on or around 23 October 1942.

### **Private Arthur Edward FORD**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt on 17 March 1942.

Private Arthur Edward Ford, with other members of the 2/10th Australian General Hospital of the 8th Division, became a prisoner of war when allied force surrendered Singapore to the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942. On or around 16 March 1942, Private Ford and five other men escaped Changi Prison Complex, stole a boat but were recaptured by Japanese forces while wading ashore on the Malay side of the Johor Strait. Private Ford and the other five men were subsequently sentenced to death and executed on 17 March 1942.

### **Private Jack Victor JONES**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt in about April 1942.

Private Jack Victor Jones, with other members of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion attached to Blackforce, became a prisoner of war when allied forces surrendered Java to the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942. After 11 March 1942, Private Jones and five other men escaped, making for the coast of Java by hiding among Royal Air Force prisoners of war. The group continued their escape from Djokjakarta but were recaptured by Japanese forces, interrogated and taken away to Tasikmalaya. Private Jones and the five others are reported to have been executed near Tasikmalaya about April 1942.

### **Private Norman Heather McARTNEY**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942, until his execution as a result of an escape attempt on 12 July 1943.

Private Norman Heather McCartney of Australian 8th Division Petrol Company, Australian Army Service Corps, became a prisoner of war when the allied force surrendered Singapore to the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942. On or around 28 June 1943, Private McCartney escaped from Hindame Camp, Thailand and was recaptured around a week after. On 12 July 1943, Private McCartney was executed.

## COMMENDATION FOR GALLANTRY

### **Sergeant Howard Thomas MANNING**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt in about April 1942.

Sergeant Howard Thomas Manning, with other members of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion attached to Blackforce, became a prisoner of war when allied forces surrendered Java to the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942. After 11 March 1942, Sergeant Manning and five other men escaped, making for the coast of Java by hiding among Royal Air Force prisoners of war. The group continued their escape from Djokjakarta but were recaptured by Japanese forces, interrogated and taken away to Tasikmalaya. Sergeant Manning and the five others are reported to have been executed near Tasikmalaya about April 1942.

### **Private Sidney Arthur WEBBER**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942 until his death as a result of escaping on 18 June 1945.

Private Sidney Arthur Webber of 2 Company, Australian Army Service Corps became a prisoner of war when the allied force surrendered Singapore to the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942. On 7 June 1945, while three Allied aircraft flew overhead, Private Webber and four other Australians took advantage of the situation and escaped into the jungle. The group evaded capture until 18 June 1945, when they were approached by a small boat. Hiding in the boat was a Japanese soldier who appeared from beneath a cover and shot at and killed two of the Australians, including Private Webber.

### **Sergeant Bertram John WEST**

For acts of gallantry in action while held in captivity, during his escape and subsequent recapture by the Imperial Japanese Army on Dutch Timor during the period 23 February 1942 until his execution on, or before, 23 October 1942.

Sergeant West was captured on 23 February 1942 at Irekum, Dutch Timor. With other members of the 2/40th Australian Infantry Battalion, he was relied upon to regularly undertake clandestine intelligence gathering tasks outside No 2 Field Prisoner of War Camp at Usapa Besar. He escaped in May 1942, and was believed to be making his way to the south coast of Dutch West Timor with Lieutenant Wilkins Fitzallen, intending to escape Timor by boat. They remained at large until October 1942 when they were recaptured by Japanese forces. Both men were then executed near Klapalima, Dutch Timor, on or around 23 October 1942.

### **Sergeant Henry WHITTON**

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt in about April 1942.

Sergeant Henry Whitton, with other members of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion attached to Blackforce, became a prisoner of war when allied forces surrendered Java to the Imperial Japanese Army in March 1942. After 11 March 1942, Sergeant Whitton and five other men escaped, making for the coast of Java by hiding among Royal Air Force prisoners of war. The group continued their escape from Yogyakarta but were recaptured by Japanese forces, interrogated and taken away to Tasikmalaya. Sergeant Whitton and the five others are reported to have been executed near Tasikmalaya about April 1942.

## COMMENDATION FOR GALLANTRY

### *Royal Australian Air Force*

#### **Squadron Leader Daryl Maxwell SPROULE DFC**

For acts of gallantry in action following his capture by the Imperial Japanese Navy and until his execution as a result of an escape attempt around the middle of August 1943.

Squadron Leader Daryl Maxwell Sproule DFC of Number 77 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, was shot down by Japanese anti-aircraft fire on 2 August 1943. Swimming from his downed Kittyhawk, he reached the beach near Lindenhafen, in the Gasmata area of New Britain. Around the middle of August 1943, Squadron Leader Sproule was captured, and the following day attempted to escape. During the escape attempt he was shot and subsequently executed for this escape attempt.