



Government House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
14 November 2024

Gallantry Decorations

The Governor-General is pleased to announce the following Gallantry Decoration:

COMMENDATION FOR GALLANTRY

Australian Army

Private Samuel SOLONSCH

For acts of gallantry in action following capture by the Imperial Japanese Army on 7 March 1942 until his execution as a result of an escape attempt and activities in support of the Dutch Resistance in Java on 11 April 1943.

By Her Excellency's command

Gerard Martin PSM

Official Secretary to the Governor-General

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Private Samuel Solonsch, with other members of 105 Australian General Transport Company, became a prisoner of war following the capitulation of Allied Forces in the Netherlands East Indies. A few days later Private Solonsch escaped captivity with two other prisoners. He then formed and led an organisation of Australian, Dutch and local guerrillas. Private Solonsch's actions whilst 'at large' in Java over a period of eight months demonstrated skill and resourcefulness in evading Japanese detection and recapture, while coordinating resistance to the Japanese occupying forces demonstrated personal qualities of initiative and leadership. He was captured in November 1942 and tried by a court-martial for treason. On 11 April 1943, Private Solonsch was executed.