



Government House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
28 October 2025

## Distinguished Service Decorations - December 2025

The Governor-General is pleased to announce the following Distinguished Service Decorations:

### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL (DSM)

#### Lieutenant Colonel Graeme Kingsley CHAPMAN (Retd)

For distinguished leadership in warlike operations as the Officer Commanding C Company, 7th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment in South Vietnam in February 1968.

#### Colonel John Richard JAMES (Retd)

For distinguished leadership in warlike operations as platoon commander A company (Minus) The 5th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment during the Battle of Hat Dich on 21 August 1969.

### COMMENDATION FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

#### Mr Dennis Wayne TOWNSEND

For distinguished performance of duty as the Number Two Machine Gunner with 9 Section, 6 Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment during a platoon ambush in South Vietnam on 15 December 1970.

By Her Excellency's command

**Gerard Martin PSM**

Official Secretary to the Governor-General

## **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL**

### **Lieutenant Colonel Graeme Kingsley CHAPMAN (Retd)**

For distinguished leadership in warlike operations as the Officer Commanding C Company, 7th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment in South Vietnam in February 1968.

Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Chapman made an extraordinary contribution to the 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, during his entire tour of duty in Vietnam. In particular, he displayed exceptional leadership during February 1968 when the 7th Battalion was deployed to protect major United States bases from enemy attack during the Tet Offensive. Lieutenant Colonel Chapman led his company with great skill and bravery in a prolonged action that became known as the Battle of the Bunkers. His Company's success in this battle was due to his tactical skill, tenacity and inspirational leadership. As Officer Commanding C Company Lieutenant Colonel Chapman consistently displayed distinguished leadership in warlike operations.

### **Colonel John Richard JAMES (Retd)**

For distinguished leadership in warlike operations as platoon commander A company (Minus) The 5th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment during the Battle of Hat Dich on 21 August 1969.

Colonel (then Lieutenant) James displayed distinguished leadership during the Battle of Hat Dich on 21 August 1969 in Vietnam when he took command of two platoons facing a vastly superior enemy force. Colonel James' actions on the day resulted in the loss of only one Australian Soldier, with the remaining 51 members of his platoons, of whom 37 were wounded by the end of engagement, being safely extracted to a defence position from which continuous enemy attacks were repelled over several hours. His superior leadership inspired his men to show courage, determination and composure under extreme pressure and intense fire. Colonel James' decision-making and actions were the major factors in the successful fighting withdrawal, of what could have been a catastrophic defeat with many more injured or killed in this battle.

## **COMMENDATION FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE**

### **Mr Dennis Wayne TOWNSEND**

For distinguished performance of duty as the Number Two Machine Gunner with 9 Section, 6 Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment during a platoon ambush in South Vietnam on 15 December 1970.

Mr (then Private) Townsend performed his duties as the Number Two Machine Gunner with great skill and in extremely hazardous circumstances. His actions were pivotal in enabling the Machine Gunner to operate the weapon effectively, preventing the entire section being overrun by a numerically superior enemy force. In addition to his duties, he restrained his wounded Section Commander, wrestling him to the ground and preventing him from further wounding or death. Mr Townsend's distinguished performance of duties in warlike operations has brought great credit upon himself, and the Australian Army.