

COMMENDATION FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

AUSTRALIAN ARMY

Corporal Christopher Robert CASPANI, Qld

For distinguished service as an infantry section commander of the Australian Security Detachment VIII, Baghdad.

Corporal Caspani has excelled in the demanding, complex and dangerous operational environment of Baghdad. He is an exceptional infantry section commander who has provided the highest quality leadership to his men in difficult and dangerous situations and, in so doing, has enabled the best possible protection to be afforded to Australian diplomats in Baghdad. His achievements are of the highest order, and in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army.

Colonel Peter Alun DAVIES, NT

For distinguished service on operations as the Chief of Staff within Headquarters Joint Task Force 633 during Operation CATALYST.

Colonel Davies' performance as Chief of Staff of Headquarters Joint Task Force 633 was outstanding. His calm strong leadership and exceptional professional and selfless dedication won the respect and admiration of all who served with him. He achieved excellent results in a difficult and extremely dangerous and dynamic environment in Baghdad. Colonel Davies' performance is in the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

Major Mark Edward FLETCHER, United States of America

For distinguished service as Operations Officer for Al Muthanna Task Group Two as part of Operation CATALYST, Iraq.

Major Fletcher was heavily involved in the successful deployment of the Al Muthanna Task Group Two. His professional, selfless and dedicated contribution helped shape future Australian ground force commitments in Iraq. Major Fletcher was pivotal to the interoperability success with other Coalition Forces. He displayed distinguished leadership during the management of contacts and attacks against the Task Group. Major Fletcher's achievements are in the finest traditions of the Australian Army.

Warrant Officer Class Two Michael FUERSTE, NSW

For distinguished service as the Transport Supervisor to the Special Operations Task Unit 637.1 during Operation SLIPPER, Afghanistan.

Warrant Officer (then Sergeant) Fuerste's management of the Special Operations Task Group's tactical vehicle fleet directly contributed to the operational capability and success of the task group. His tireless diligence ensured the longevity of the aging vehicle fleet in a hostile environment. His management of locally employed logistical staff provided results that significantly improved the welfare and morale of the members of the Special Operations Task Group. Warrant Officer Fuerste's exemplary performance is in the finest traditions of the Australian Army.

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Major Martin William GRAVES, NSW

For distinguished service in the performance of medical duties as a member of Special Operations Task Unit 637.1 during *Operation SLIPPER*, Afghanistan 2005.

Major Graves demonstrated exceptional dedication in his performance of duty as the Medical Officer attending to mass casualties as a result of the detonation of a suicide bomber. His expert skill and tireless dedication saved the lives of at least six Afghans and ensured that the quality of life of many others was significantly enhanced as a result of the medical care he provided or coordinated. His actions exemplified the Australian respect for humanity and are in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army.

Lieutenant Colonel Steven Andrew SUMMERSBY, Vic

For distinguished service during *Operation CATALYST* as the Executive Officer to the Deputy Chief of Staff Strategic Operations, Multi-National Force – Iraq.

Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Summersby distinguished himself during *Operation CATALYST* as the Executive Officer to the Deputy Chief of Staff Strategic Operations, Multi-National Force - Iraq. His courage and military competence in the management of all information and activities, including security, assisted the senior Operations officer of the largest modern army deployed on operations to guide the successes in counter insurgency and nation building that shaped Iraq towards a sovereign democracy.

Lieutenant John Brendon TAYLOR, Qld

For distinguished service on operations as an Infantry Platoon Commander of the Australian Security Detachment VIII in Baghdad.

Lieutenant Taylor was the Platoon Commander of 6 Platoon during the Australian Security Detachment VIII in Baghdad. Throughout a demanding deployment, he led his Platoon with the highest of standards and with a commitment to excellence in all areas of both infantry and combined arms operations. He led from the front and by personal example in all aspects of his command. His training and encouragement of his men were outstanding and created a team that excelled in the complex and dangerous urban environment of Baghdad.

Corporal Gary James WHEELER, Qld

For distinguished service as the sniper Team Leader of the Australian Security Detachment VIII Baghdad.

Corporal Wheeler is an exceptional soldier whose consistent display of professional excellence has supported superior protection of the principal staff in the Australian Embassy, Baghdad and designated government dignitaries. His outstanding achievements have been a fine example to his fellow soldiers and are reflective of his consistent dedication and selflessness. Corporal Wheeler's efforts are of the highest order and in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army.

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

Air Commodore Richard David OWEN, NSW

For distinguished performance of duty as Chief of Staff Headquarters Joint Task Force 633 on Operation CATALYST during the period October 2005 to April 2006.

Air Commodore (then Group Captain) Owen demonstrated distinguished performance as Chief of Staff, Headquarters Joint Task Force 633. His calm, strong leadership and selfless dedication won him the respect and admiration of all who served with him. He achieved outstanding results in a difficult and dangerous environment. Air Commodore Owen's performance has been in keeping with the finest traditions of the Royal Australian Air Force and the Australian Defence Force.

Air Commodore Mark Alan SKIDMORE, NSW

For distinguished performance of duties in warlike operations as the Director of the Coalition Combined Air Operations Centre in the Middle East Area of Operations during Operations CATALYST and SLIPPER.

Air Commodore Skidmore is an exceptional officer who, as Director of the Coalition Combined Air Operations Centre, was widely acknowledged as a leading proponent of effects-based operations. He flawlessly directed the Centre across a broad range of operational activities in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and his leadership proved pivotal during the national elections in both countries. His outstanding leadership, skills and knowledge have raised the benchmark for the prosecution of Combined Air Operations in the Middle East Area of Operations.