

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HONOURS OR AWARDS

INSTRUCTIONS

DO NOT
WRITE IN
THIS
MARGIN

- To be completed in accordance with current instructions and forwarded to Ministry of Defence (MS3), Stanmore, Middlesex.
- NOT to be used in connection with campaign stars or medals.
- No abbreviations, except those officially authorized, will be used.
- Whenever possible, typescript should be used.
- This recommendation will NOT be considered unless the personal particulars of the individual are correctly completed.

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If a casualty complete below:—

(For Ministry of Defence use only)

Killed in action on	Citation No.
Died of wounds on	File(s)
Missing on	L.G. No. and date
Prisoner of War on	Previous awards

Christian or Fore Name(s) MICHAEL JOHN ANTHONY	Surname HEALY	Delete as appropriate Regular/ FAVR
Personal/Army number 479272	Sub. Rank CAPTAIN	Present rank (if different from Sub. Rank) -

Unit 22 SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGIMENT	Parent Regiment or Corps QUEENS DIVISION
Honour or Award for which recommended DSO	Award for which finally approved by Ministry of Defence (For Ministry of Defence use only) DSO

Name (in blocks) and official designation of initiating officer

LT-COL P.E. de la C. de la BILBERRIE, MC., CO 22 SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGIMENT

Date 16 AUGUST 1972

Signature *P. E. de la C. de la Biliberrrie*

Remarks of Brigade (or equivalent) Commander
An outstanding example of bravery and leadership well worthy of recognition. Very strongly recommended.

Remarks of Divisional (or equivalent) Commander

Signature *N7 Sem. 4 Brig*

Signature

Date 1 SEP 72 Place CHELSEA

Date

Place

Remarks of Corps (or equivalent) Commander

Remarks of Army (or equivalent) Commander

Signature

Signature

Date

Place

Date

Place

Remarks of Commander-in-Chief or other Recommending Authority.

Bugster

VERY STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

Signature

B O P BUGSTER

Official Designation : CINC UNLF

Date 27 Sep 72

Place WILTON

A11379

L5 9474

CITATION

(To be completed by Initiating Officer)

A. Recommended in respect of:—

- ~~(i) New Year 19.....~~
- ~~(ii) Birthday 19.....~~
- (iii) Immediate Award (operational)
- ~~(iv) Operational Award (other than immediate)~~
- ~~(v) Non-operational Gallantry Award~~
- ~~(vi) Meritorious Service Medal~~

Delete all descriptions not applicable.

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B. Action or service for which commended:—

- (i) Place NIRBAN, NICOTAR, SUBMARINE OF CHINA
- *(ii) Date of action or period covered by the citation 19 JULY, 1972
- (iii) How employed COMMANDER, BATTN, NIRBAN
- (iv) Other detail:—

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

* The period covered by the citation *must* be completed as accurately as possible.

SECRET

MIRBAT is a medium sized and important fishing town lying some 25 miles East of SALALAH. It is wired in and has a small military garrison of local gendarmerie and ASHARS, the latter being equivalent to home guard. The defence of the town is the responsibility of the SAS contingent and full responsibility for its control lies with the SAS Commander.

There has been no major attack on the town of MIRBAT since operations commenced in DHOFAR some two years ago until the night of the 19th July. On this night the communist insurgents decided to mount, against MIRBAT, the largest most determined and best planned attack that they have launched in the whole campaign. From captured enemy personnel it has since become clear that they were confident of their success and that had they captured the town they intended to occupy it permanently and establish a seat of communist government in DHOFAR. The political implications of such a dramatic turn of events need no further expansion.

At 0530 hours on the morning of the 19th July mortars started to rain in on the MIRBAT Garrison. The Garrison was stood to and under Captain KEALY's direction commenced the battle for the town. For over 4 hours the communists pressed home their attack; they infiltrated the town; they destroyed the stone defences with RCL, Rocket Launcher and Mortar fire; they concentrated a major effort against the SAS personnel in the town; they closed to grenade range and fought with a ferocity, tenacity and blind dedication that is the mark of all Communist shock troops. They launched this attack with an estimated 250 men against a small garrison town whose defence was designed to repel attacks from no more than a dozen men acting without determination. It was only after 4 hours of continual and ferocious fighting that they finally admitted defeat and withdrew leaving behind some 40 wounded and killed. A subsequent radio intercept indicates that they suffered at least 86 casualties and subsequent intelligence reports indicate that this figure may be as high as 100 or more.

Captain KEALY was the officer in charge of SAS Troops in MIRBAT and as such held full responsibility for all aspects of the defence of the town. When the battle commenced he immediately deployed his 9-man team to the 2 strategic buildings in the town, one of which was alongside the 25 Pdr gun position. So stretched were defences that the 25 pdr gun was manned by SAS soldiers in the absence of any trained crew. As the battle developed it became clear to KEALY that the gun position alongside the Dhofar fort was under considerable pressure. He decided to place himself in this location where he could best direct the most intensive fighting and where his personal leadership would make the most outstanding impression on the Arab troops under his command. On his way across to the gun he came under heavy fire from small arms and mortars and had to complete the final 250 metres under these conditions. On arrival in the position he found one of the crew had been killed and the other one was wounded. Together with a medical orderly, who had accompanied him, he treated the wounded man who continued to fight, and then became involved personally in the hand to hand fighting that was taking place.

Not long after this the only other unwounded British soldier (the medical orderly) was also severely wounded leaving KEALY on his own to repel the enemy and to command the overall defence of the town. For a further hour there were repeated attempts by the enemy to take the fort held by KEALY and a handful of Arab soldiers. Two appeared by the right wall and were fired on by Captain

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

KEALY. A fierce and bitter skirmish developed during which the enemy threw grenades at KEALY and the remaining living defenders. KEALY shot and personally killed several of the enemy during this exchange.

Due to his inspired leadership the local ASKARS, who had a reputation for being inadequate soldiers, fought with a confidence and determination that has never been seen in previous actions. When the main fighting was over and the town had been relieved by a reinforcement force KEALY personally conducted the evacuation of the wounded, the realignment and reconstitution of the defences and with tremendous zeal and energy generally rebuilt the shattered morale of the town.

On hearing that a Firqa patrol of his was still in the field he personally led a small patrol to contact them despite the threat from a considerable number of marauding gangs of enemy milling round the countryside. He found several of the Firqa and an ASKAR picquet had been killed and that the main Firqa force was in a position in which he was unable to offer them positive assistance. However, his determination and bravery in leading this subsequent patrol contributed greatly to the esteem and respect with which the Firqa subsequently held the British troops.

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There is no doubt that had MIRBAT fallen it would have been a major defeat to Western interests in the Middle East and could well have been the cause of a major political reappraisal of this country's attitude to its position in the Middle East. Thanks to KEALY's spirited fortitude, his determined leadership, his dauntless bravery and his outstanding conduct of a battle against tremendous odds, this crisis has not only been avoided but the threatening enemy have been defeated on a scale unparalleled in the history of Muscat.

ANNEX A - MIRBAT PLAN

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

WELL

75mm
STICK WIRE

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COPY No. 1

COAST LINE

FLAT BUT UNDULATING SLIGHTLY

TOWN WIRE
GATE

WALI FORT

DC FORT (VEHICLE REPAIRS)

MARKET

742

BATT HOUSE
BATT VEHICLES (LATER TO FIGHT AMMO RESUP)

(TEMPORARY)
(TEMPORARY)

LAGOON

WASHING WELL

HOUSES

LEGEND

- ENEMY SOLDIER
- OWN

SKETCH MAP NOT TO SCALE

SECRET

HOUSES



COAST LINE

TOWN WIRE



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