

Text of Citation for award of Mentioned-in-Despatches to Sergeant John S. Vautin

Sergeant John Vautin enlisted in the Australian Regular Army on 13th July, 1961 and was allotted to the Royal Australian Infantry. He was posted to 9th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment on 12th January, 1968 and arrived in Vietnam on 20th November, 1968.

At approximately 1745 hours on 26th October, 1969, a platoon of A Company encountered a large enemy force, possibly a battalion, in bunkers. The remainder of A Company deployed and commenced an assault from a flank, supported by the fire of artillery, mortars and armed helicopters.

Sergeant Vautin was acting platoon commander of one of the assault platoons. Approximately 50 metres from the objective, his platoon came under intense and accurate automatic fire from at least three enemy locations. By skilful use of fire and movement he continued to advance his sections until the leading elements were within a few metres of the bunkers. Just then, one of the supporting helicopters was shot down by enemy fire from another part of the objective; artillery and air support was stopped whilst the aircraft was located and the crew rescued. Sergeant Vautin was ordered not to continue his advance, but to consolidate in the vicinity of his present position. Again by fire and movement he reorganised his platoon on the edge of the camp from where he could continue to hold the ground won and dominate the enemy.

Throughout the assault, the fire-fight and the consolidation phase, Sergeant Vautin exhibited command and control of the highest order, which, in spite of the enemy's superior numbers, enabled his platoon to dislodge the enemy without sustaining any casualties.

His outstanding leadership, personal vigour and determination were an inspiration to the whole platoon and reflect the greatest credit on himself and The Royal Australian Regiment.