

THE NEW ZEALAND GALLANTRY MEDAL (N.Z.G.M.)

John Frank Manila LUAMANU Lance Corporal, Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers

Date of action: 4 August 2012

Date of award: 3 December 2015

Citation

On 4 August 2012, KIWI Company of the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team were tasked with assisting a unit of the Afghan National Directorate of Security near the village of Baghak. Shortly after midday nine of the company's vehicles, spread out over 400 metres on a narrow road, came under heavy small arms fire from concealed insurgent positions on the high ground on both sides of the road. Lance Corporal John Luamanu was travelling in a Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) that was part of a separate three-vehicle patrol, positioned to the south of the vehicles which had come under attack.

As the battle with the insurgent forces intensified and KIWI Company sustained a number of casualties, the three patrol vehicles moved north to assist. Approaching the contact site, the lead patrol vehicle came under heavy fire from high ground to the north-east and west of their position. As the lead vehicle came to a halt, the patrol's second in command Sergeant Duncan moved forward and recovered a New Zealand casualty, bringing him to the rear of the lead vehicle for treatment by the Company's Nursing Officer. As Sergeant Duncan returned to his own vehicle he received a gunshot wound to his right leg and fell to the ground. Lance Corporal Luamanu assisted a comrade to move Sergeant Duncan to the rear of the LAV.

Orders were then received to move Sergeant Duncan to another vehicle that had other casualties on board for evacuation to the Casualty Clearing Post. Lance Corporal Luamanu picked up Sergeant Duncan and carried him 20 metres over open ground, exposed to insurgent fire, to the rear of the designated casualty evacuation vehicle. On arrival they found that it was already full and the only alternative transport was the third vehicle of their own patrol, which meant retracing their steps over the open ground they had just crossed. Without hesitation, Lance Corporal Luamanu picked up Sergeant Duncan once again and carried him safely to the rear of the third patrol vehicle to be transported to the Casualty Clearing Post for treatment.

Lance Corporal Luamanu displayed both gallantry and comradeship in twice carrying a wounded colleague over open ground and under enemy fire to ensure his safety.