



2nd Lt. Bruce Ingham Dent

1st Battalion,
Fiji Infantry Regiment



Fact file #1

1. 1 **Killed in action**

Action in book: The History of the
Fiji Military Forces 1939 -45

1. 2 **Roll of Honour**

Newspaper clipping, circa 1944

1. 3 **Military Cross**

Citation

1. 4 **Medals**

2nd Lt. B.I.Dent's medals held by
Auckland War Memorial Museum

KILLED IN ACTION

2nd Lt. Bruce Ingham Dent.
285658
1st Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment.
Platoon Commander 'A' Company. 2nd Coy.



David Duncan

Killed in action. Machine-gun. 1200 hours, March 25th 1944.
Age: 22.
Student.

2nd Lt. Bruce Dent Killed in Action **

The leading scouts had hardly got through the perimeter when they were fired on from a low hill.

'A' Company was sent forward to deal with the enemy who were well dug in, and had three machine-gun posts. On one side of the hill was a swamp, and on the other a minefield. As it was impossible to outflank it a frontal attack was made. This was repulsed with several casualties to the Fijians.

After several attempts to dislodge the enemy, a withdrawal was made and artillery support called for. A heavy barrage was laid down and the feature attacked again, and eventually secured. Three Japanese prisoners were taken after the machine-gun posts were silenced, while a 75 mm gun was captured.

The action which lasted all day cost the Battalion one officer, 2nd Lieut. Bruce Dent killed, and 14 other ranks wounded.

** Excerpts from; "The History of the Fiji Military Forces, 1939 - 45"

ROLL OF HONOUR

ROLL OF HONOUR

Second-Lieut. B. I. Dent

Second-Lieutenant Bruce Ingham Dent, killed in action on March 25, 1944, was the only son of Mr and Mrs D. I. Dent, Maungati. He was born on November 14, 1922, and was educated at the Maungati School and the Waitaki Boys' High School, where he was a member of the First Fifteen and Second Eleven. After matriculating at Waitaki he entered Canterbury University College as a theological student. He joined the Army in November, 1941, and in December, 1942, he left for Fiji where he helped train the 4th Battalion of the Fijian Infantry Regiment. Nine months later he received his



Second-Lieut. B. I. Dent

commission and was transferred to the 1st Battalion P.I.R. which was serving in the Solomons. On December 21 of last year the battalion was moved to Bougainville where he took part in the jungle warfare.

In a description of one clash between the Fijians and the enemy, the official correspondent with the New Zealand Forces said that the most sensational platoon action was commanded by Second-Lieutenant Dent. Lieutenant Dent had taken a routine patrol up the east coast of Bougainville when he encountered sniper fire from jungle trees. The Fijians deployed and advanced, and shot three snipers, two of whom fell immediately, leaving the third still tied up. Lieutenant Dent discovered they were ideally situated on the bluff overlooking a native village occupied by the Japanese. Shots had aroused the enemy, but they were completely disorganised, running, peering from grass huts, and attempting to climb trees. The Fijians cut loose terrifying cross-fire, mowing many down. Showing superb training, the patrol stopped firing on Lieutenant Dent's orders, and waited till the remaining Japanese thought they had been withdrawn and began cautiously to come out of the shelters. Many more were then killed. Private Blame Ratu, a 17-year-old Fijian, crept forward and threw grenades into the hut which the patrol believed was the Japanese headquarters. Altogether 50 Japanese were counted dead, though the Fijians count only those killed with rifle and machine-gun, so Private Ratu's grenades did not count on the casualty list. After a half-hour encounter, Lieutenant Dent withdrew without a man wounded.



MILITARY CROSS

Advice that the King has approved of the posthumous award of the Military Cross to Second-Lieutenant Bruce Ingham Dent, who was killed in action in March 25 last, has been received by the Minister of Defence (Mr. Jones). His father is Mr. D. I. Dent, Kildonan R.D., Timaru.

"Second Lieutenant Bruce Ingham Dent (285658).

Between the 31st January 1944 and 2nd February 1944, Second Lieutenant Dent commanded a combat and reconnaissance patrol in Japanese held territory in the vicinity of Pipipaia on the east coast of Bougainville.

On 31st January, Second Lieutenant Dent received word that Japanese were in the vicinity of Pipipaia village. He determined to push on...until on the morning of 1st February his platoon made contact with the enemy. Second Lieutenant Dent decided to engage them, and by his complete disregard and skill in handling the situation, inspired his men who succeeded in definitely killing 47 Japanese and possibly more and NO casualties were suffered by Second Lieutenant Dent's platoon...When the enemy showed no signs of following Second Lieutenant Dent withdrew to his base in Ibu.

Again from the 6th to 7th February 1944 Second Lieutenant Dent on reconnaissance in the same area made contact with a Japanese ambush and so capably handled his platoon that after a stiff fire fight he was able to withdraw: two Japanese having been killed for certain and probably several others from grenades. His platoon again suffered no casualties."

Numb. 36548

2683



FIFTH SUPPLEMENT
TO

The London Gazette

Of FRIDAY, the 2nd of JUNE, 1944

Published by Authority

Registered as a newspaper

TUESDAY, 6 JUNE, 1944

distinguished services in the South-West Pacific:—

The Military Cross.

Second-Lieutenant Bruce Ingham Dent (285658), Fiji Military Forces.

The Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Sergeant Ilala, British Solomon Islands Defence Force,
No. 556 Sergeant Semisi Belo, Fiji Military Forces.

The Military Medal.

Warrant Officer Class I (Sergeant-Major) Frank John Wickham, British Solomon Islands Defence Force.
No. 717 Sergeant Iaitia Waqa, Fiji Military Forces.
No. 633 Corporal Manoa Roko, Fiji Military Forces.
No. 592 Private Villiame Lautiki, Fiji Military Forces.

War Office, 6th June, 1944.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve that the following be Mentioned in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the South-West Pacific:—

Fiji Military Forces.

582 Sergt. Akuila Saukura.
573 Corpl. Malakai Mo.

2nd Lt. Bruce Ingham Dent's World War 2 war medals held by the Auckland War Memorial Museum

COLLECTION LIST :

1 MEDALS



a.) b.) c.) d.) e.) f.)



a.)

- a.) Military Cross (and box).
- b.) 1939 Star.
- c.) Pacific Star.
- d.) Defence medal.
- e.) War Medal 1939 - 1945.
- f.) New Zealand Service medal.

2 MEMORIAL CROSS



Memorial Cross and box.

3 MILITARY CROSS MEDAL PRESENTATION NOTE



Printed presentation note.

NARRATIVES	EVENT /YEAR	CREATED
"Mopping-up operation"	26.3.1944 - 10.4.1944	Oct 2016
"Soldiers in the air"	29.12.1943 - 15.2.1944	Nov 2016

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