



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2025-5323

28th
April 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 13 March 2025 to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the below information relating to your nomination for a posthumous award of the Victoria Cross for New Zealand to Warrant Officer Horan. Your request was transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) in accordance with Section 14 of the OIA.

I request that the Honours Unit supply a copy all records relating to the original 1945 nomination for the award of the (Imperial) Victoria Cross handled by the RNZAF South East Asia Command considered by the Honours Unit in their deliberations regarding my 2025 nomination.

I also request that a copy of all records considered by the Honours Unit regarding the 1954 review undertaken by the British Air Ministry of the 1945 nomination be provided to me.

Additionally I request that all records pertaining to the Honours Unit review of my 2025 nomination and request for review of the non-award of the Victoria Cross to John Spencer Horan be provided to me, including minutes of meetings and conversations relating to this.

Information relating to Second World War nominations for decorations is not held by the NZDF, and no such information was obtained by the NZDF Honours unit when considering your 2025 nomination. This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(g) of the OIA as the information you have requested is not held by the NZDF and there is no reason to believe that the information is held by another agency.

All records pertaining to the 1954 review that were considered by the NZDF Honours unit were contained in appendices 14 and 15 of your 2025 nomination. The NZDF considered no information beyond what you provided in support of your 2025 nomination. No minuted meetings were held. Emails containing the deliberation between the NZDF Deputy Director Medals Policy, NZDF Historian, and NZDF Honours unit are enclosed.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley
Brigadier
Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. Emails

Ministerial Services

From: Anderson, Donald
Sent: Tuesday, 18 February 2025 3:26 p.m.
To: s.9(2)(a)
Cc: s.9(2)(a)
Subject: FW: Proposed Posthumous Award of the Victoria Cross of New Zealand to WO John HORAN
Attachments: Colin Hanson, By Such Deeds, pp.258-259 - NZ40608 WO John Horan, RNZAF, mid - KIA 9 Jan 1945.pdf

Kia ora s.9(2)(a)

FYI too. s.9(2)(a) brought it down to HCP Group today for historians' perspectives. No action required by you.

The info from Colin Hanson's *By Such Deeds* is attached FYI. (It was not in the request received from Mr Stackhouse).

Ngā mihi

Donald

From: McLeod, John
Sent: Tuesday, 18 February 2025 3:16 p.m.
To: s.9(2)(a)
Cc: Anderson, Donald <s.9(2)(a)>; Crawford, John <s.9(2)(a)>
Subject: RE: Proposed Posthumous Award of the Victoria Cross of New Zealand to WO John HORAN

s.9(2)(a)

John Crawford, NZDF Historian, Donald Anderson (DD Medals Policy) and myself have reviewed this submission. John's comments are below and I support them. This is very challenging after all these years particularly since there were only two options available. There is not enough material justifying a reconsideration of the case even if it were possible. There is a strong argument for a gallantry award (if had survived) but not a VC.

Ngā mihi

John

John McLeod, ONZM
Director
Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group
HQ NZ Defence Force
Mobile: s.9(2)(a)

www.nzdf.mil.nz



From: Crawford, John

Sent: Tuesday, 18 February 2025 2:26 p.m.

To: McLeod, John <s.9(2)(a)>

Cc: Anderson, Donald <s.9(2)(a)>

Subject: Proposed Posthumous Award of the Victoria Cross of New Zealand to WO John HORAN

John

As requested, I have reviewed the package a papers on the proposal the WO John HORAN be posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross of New Zealand.

There is no doubt that WO Horan showed great devotion to duty and gallantry in the action in January 1945. Some consideration was clearly given at the time to the award of the VC to HORAN, but no award was made and instead he was posthumously mentioned in dispatches. As you know for every successful recommendation made for the award of the VC there are several that for various reasons do not succeed. I am aware of similar cases involving airmen during the Second World War in which deceased personnel were mentioned in dispatches after consideration was given to the award of the VC.

I agree with the arguments made and the conclusion that this case should not be revisited in the draft letter prepared for CDF's signature.

Regards

JC

John Crawford

NZ Defence Force Historian -, Heritage and Protocol NZDF

New Zealand Defence Force | Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa

M: s.9(2)(a)

www.nzdf.mil.nz

BY SUCH DEEDS

**HONOURS AND AWARDS
IN THE
ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE
1923 - 1999**

GROUP CAPTAIN C. M. HANSON, OBE, RNZAF (Rtd)

Volplane Press

[75(NZ)Sqn RAF (Lancaster)] *Flying Officer Hooper, as Pilot, has completed numerous operations against the enemy, in the course of which he has invariably displayed the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty.*

Flt Lt Hooper joined the RNZAF as an armourer and after initial ground training in NZ he embarked for the UK and was posted to 26 Sqn RAF (Lysander) in Sep 1940. On 1 Mar 1941 he joined 485 Sqn RNZAF (Spitfire) on its formation, serving with them until posted for aircrew training; pre-war he had flown as a pilot with the Hawera Aero Club. On completion of his pilot training in Canada and England he joined 75(NZ)Sqn at Mepal in Dec 1944. He completed one tour of 33 sorties to the following targets - Osterfeld(2), Witten, Siegen, Trier(2), Dresden, Rheydt(2), Cologne(2), Heligoland minelaying(2), Wesel(3), Vohwinkel, Nuremberg, Ludwigshafen, Neuss, Sterkrade, Kiel, Essen, Wiesbaden, Hohenbudberg, Chemnitz, Kamen, Gelsenkirchen, Datteln, Dortmund, Hamm, The Hague (leaflets) and Hallendorf. An uncle, Wg Cdr W E Hooper AFC, served with the RAF from 1930, while a cousin Sgt P J Hooper RNZAF (pilot) was kao over Europe on 24 Jul 1942.

HOPE, Squadron Leader Peter Elliot, **mid**.

77257; *Born* Horncliffe, England, 19 Jan 1915; RAF 2 Sep 1930 to 12 Aug 1948, 564695 & 51069; On loan to the RNZAF 2 Feb 1940 to 30 Oct 1945; RNZAF 6 Jan 1954 to 27 Mar 1970; Engineer, then Education.

Citation Mention in Despatches: (22 Mar 1946) *In recognition of gallant services rendered during the war.* Whilst on loan from the RAF during WWII Flt Lt Hope completed a tour of duty in the Pacific as Engineering Officer with 30 (Avenger/Corsair) and 2 (Corsair) SUs RNZAF. Post-war he enlisted in the RNZAF as an Education Officer serving at Woodbourne, Wigram and at Training Group HQ.

HOPE, Group Captain Sidney Maxwell, **MBE, AFC**.

NZ1853 & 70121; *Born* Wellington, 21 May 1921; NZ Army/TF (2 Bn Wgtn Regt) 1937; NZ Army 1 Jun 1940 to 30 May 1942, 2/1A/23; RNZAF 31 May 1942 to 22 May 1974; Pilot. Hon Aide-de-Camp to HE the Governor-General 5 Sep 1957 to 4 Sep 1958.

Citation Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (NY1950): *Flight Lieutenant Hope transferred to the RNZAF from the New Zealand Army in May 1942, in which service he held the rank of Captain. On joining the RNZAF this officer carried out a course of Pilot training and subsequently served on operations in the South and South-West Pacific. At the completion of the war he was a member of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan. On return to New Zealand he was posted as Adjutant to the RNZAF Station, Wigram, and then followed an appointment as Officer Commanding General Service Training School. Throughout his service Flight Lieutenant Hope has shown himself to possess exceptional personal and professional ability in both flying and ground duties. His administrative ability and his personal example in discipline and welfare matters have always been of the highest order. His initiative and determination have always been up to the highest traditions of the RNZAF.*

Citation Air Force Cross (26 Mar 1953): [14 Sqn RNZAF (Vampire)] *Not available.* Sqn Ldr Hope took command of 14 Sqn RNZAF (Vampire) at Ohakea in Oct 1951 and introduced a rigorous training programme to fit the squadron for its overseas deployment to Cyprus in Oct 1952. He then took the squadron overseas - NZ's first jet squadron - and commanded it in Cyprus as part of the RAF Middle East Air Force. The record shows - "The award of the AFC in March 1953 reflects the high standard achieved by his squadron and his dedicated, conscientious service". Flew a tour with 16 Sqn RNZAF (Corsair) in the SWPA in WWII. CO 14 Sqn RNZAF (Vampire) Oct 1951-May 1954.

HOPKINS, Flight Lieutenant Kevin James, **MNZM**.

K88122, *Born* Stratford, 8 Jan 1959; RNZAF 11 Jan 1977 to 10 Jan 1993; RNZN 11 Jan 1993 to 26 Feb 1995; RNZAF 27 Feb 1995 to 29 Sep 1998; Engineer.

Citation Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (NY1999): *Flight Lieutenant Hopkins enlisted in the Royal New Zealand Air Force in January 1977. He transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy where he was commissioned in January 1993. He transferred back to the RNZAF in February 1995. In February 1998 he was tasked to provide a data link capability for a P3K Orion aircraft which was about the depart for the Persian Gulf on Operation GRIFFIN. Not only did this ship-borne equipment need to be interfaced with the existing aircraft systems, but two types of radios and power supplies also had to be integrated with the attendant cabling, connections and racks. This all had to be designed, manufactured and work with only one available live test. Flight Lieutenant Hopkins assembled and directed a team which accomplished an extraordinary feat of innovative design and engineering within the impossible time constraint of seventy-two hours. In so doing, he displayed outstanding technical and leadership skills.*

HOPPE, Warrant Officer Louis Andreas, **mid**.

NZ415533; *Born* Wanganui, 14 Sep 1918; RNZAF 5 Oct 1941 to (kao) 10 May 1944; Wireless Operator-Air Gunner.

Citation Mention in Despatches (16 Mar 1945): *For meritorious service.* Served with 25 Sqn RNZAF (Dauntless). Crewed with Flt Lt J W Edwards, **mid** (qv). Kao during a strike against Lakunai airfield, Rabaul, 10 May 1944 with 25 Sqn. No known grave. Commemorated on the Bourail Memorial.

HOPPING, Leading Aircraftman Robert Edwin.

NZ431641; *Born* Martinborough, 27 Apr 1924; RNZAF 12 Feb 1943 to 6 Dec 1945; Aircrafthand (General Duties).

United States Commendation: *During the afternoon of 26 March 1944 a fire broke out in a large dead tree situated between two American pill-boxes on the front-line of the allied defensive positions on a Bougainville airfield. Blazing pieces were falling onto the wooden pill-boxes and the nearby under brush set alight to the danger of the defending forces. After unsuccessful attempts to control the fire a call was made for assistance from 25 SU RNZAF based nearby. Six members of the RNZAF, of whom LAC Hopping was one, responded and disregarding Japanese sniper fire successfully quelled the blaze.*

HOPWOOD, Flight Lieutenant Donald Ernest, **mid**.

NZ1313 & 133007; *Born* London, England, 25 Jan 1907; RNZAF 14 Feb 1940 to 28 Nov 1945, Res. to 13 Sep 1962; Pilot, then Intelligence.

Citation Mention in Despatches (12 Jun 1946): *For meritorious service.* Served as a flying instructor in NZ for 4½ years, followed by a tour in the S & SWPAs as Intelligence Officer with 8 and 4 Sqn RNZAF (both Ventura). Died Auckland, 22 Jun 1959.

HORAN, Warrant Officer John Spencer, **mid**.

NZ40608; *Born* Onehunga, 12 Apr 1920; RNZAF 13 Feb 1940 to (kao) 9 Jan 1945; Air Gunner.

Citation Mention in Despatches (NY1946): *For gallant service and devotion to duty.* On 9 Jan 1945, a Sea Otter ASR aircraft of 292 Sqn RAF was on a reconnaissance trip off the Akyab coast when Japanese Oscar fighters came into attack. W/O Horan opened fire. Two minutes later he reported that he was hit. The 1st navigator went aft and found him unconscious with his left hand blown off. Recovering consciousness as he was being dragged back into the fuselage, W/O Horan insisted on returning to his guns. He jammed them against his chest and continued to hold off the enemy. An engine was now on fire,

the instrument panel shattered, the flaps shot away and the tail ablaze. Bullets from the enemy were continually passing through the aircraft. W/O Horan received further wounds to his head, but his fire never faltered. The pilot managed to land the blazing aircraft outside the breakers and beach her. W/O Horan died immediately. Two hours later the remainder of the crew, including 2nd navigator F/S J A Lawson, RNZAF, were flying again searching for the crew of a missing Beaufighter. W/O Horan served with 264 Sqn RAF (Defiant) from Sep 1940; 277 Sqn RAF (Walrus/Sea Otter) from Jul 1942; and 292 Sqn RAF (Walrus/Sea Otter) from Apr 1944. Efforts, during 1945 and post-war, for the award of the Victoria Cross were unsuccessful. Buried Taukkyan War Cemetery, Rangoon, Burma.

HORE, Flight Lieutenant Marcel Launcelot, DFC.

NZ422402; *Born* Whangarei, 21 Apr 1921; RNZAF 27 Mar 1942 to (kaa) 6 Apr 1945; Pilot.

Citation Distinguished Flying Cross (23 Mar 1945): [149 Sqn RAF (Lancaster)] *Flying Officer Hore has completed numerous operations against the enemy, in the course of which he has invariably displayed the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty.* At the time of his death Fg Off Hore had completed his first tour of operational duty and was serving as an instructor at 26 OTU. Kaa at Sandhill near Verney Junction, Bucks, England, 6 Apr 1945 with 26 OTU RAF (Wellington), having completed 32 sorties. Buried Oxford (Botley) Cemetery, North Hinksey, Berkshire, England.

HORGAN, Flight Lieutenant Desmond George Geddes, mid. NZ39012; *Born* Temuka, 20 Jun 1914; RNZAF 15 Sep 1939 to 16 Jan 1946, Res. to 1 Jun 1956; Pilot.

Citation Mention in Despatches (14 Jun 1945): *For meritorious service.* Served as a Base test pilot on 31 and 73 Bases RAF. Had earlier completed a tour of 30 sorties with 75(NZ)Sqn RAF.

HORNE, Flying Officer David, (pff).

NZ439366 & 132685; *Born* Christchurch, 30 Jan 1925; RNZAF 19 Jul 1943 to 23 Feb 1946, Res. to 27 Sep 1958; Navigator. Pathfinder service with 7(PFF)Sqn RAF (Lancaster). Died Christchurch, 15 Feb 1976.

HORNE, Squadron Leader Herbert Keele, MBE.

NZ401764 & 132686; *Born* Blenheim, 19 Mar 1913; NZ Army/TF (Nelson/Marlborough Mtd Rifles) 1932 to 1935; RNZAF 2 Jul 1940 to 22 Jun 1946 & 1 Dec 1952 to 4 Feb 1965; Pilot, then Secretarial.

Citation Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (NY1965): *Not available.* Sqn Ldr Horne instructed in NZ before being posted to 2 Sqn then 4 Sqn RNZAF (both Hudson) in NZ and the SPA. Due to eyesight problems he transferred to the Administrative & Supply Branch and in 1945 served as Chief Ground Instructor at Woodbourne and then Movements Officer at various Pacific and NZ Stations. On rejoining the RNZAF in 1952 he served continuously in the Directorate of Organisation & Staff Duties as a specialist on establishment matters. His 15 years of varied service to the RNZAF and particularly his valuable service in the post-war years was recognised by the award of the MBE. Died Palmerston North, 24 Jan 1983.

HORNUNG, Flight Sergeant Walter, DFM.

NZ405275; *Born* Christchurch, 12 Sep 1918; RNZAF 22 Dec 1940 to (kao) 10 Apr 1943; Pilot.

Citation Distinguished Flying Medal (18 Sep 1945 to date from 9 Apr 1943): [221 Sqn RAF (Wellington)] *Flight Sergeant Hornung has participated in a large number of strikes against*

enemy shipping and has obtained excellent results. In January, 1942, while attacking enemy ships off Sicily, he released two torpedoes, at least one of which struck a merchant vessel, which burst into flames and split in two. During this attack, the aircraft was subjected to an intense barrage from the merchant ship and its destroyer escort. Flight Sergeant Hornung has invariably displayed exceptional coolness and skill and has proved to be a reliable and courageous captain. In the Jan 1942 operation mentioned above the target ships were illuminated by Sqn Ldr A H Harding (qv). Kao 10 Apr 1943, with 221 Sqn RAF (Wellington) on his 33rd sortie - an armed reconnaissance for enemy shipping between Cape Spartivento and Point dell' Alice on the south coast of Italy. His aircraft went missing after transmitting an SOS from a position 30 miles SSE of Cape Passero. No known grave. Commemorated on the Malta Memorial. W/O A J Milner, RNZAF, of Mosgiel, who was a member of the crew, also lost his life.

HORRELL, Captain Frederick James, mid.

No number; *Born* Woodend, 21 Sep 1890; 1 NZEF (Cant Mtd Rifles) 14 Aug 1914 to 18 Feb 1917, 7/444; RFC/RAF 21 Feb 1917 to 6 Jul 1919, 11580; NZAF 14 Jun 1923 to (kaa) 17 Mar 1926; Pilot.

Citation Mention in Despatches (29 Aug 1919): *For valuable services rendered in connection with the War.*

Wounded at Gallipoli 21 Sep 1915. Following further service in Egypt seconded to 3 School of Military Aeronautics, Aboukir on 13 Jan 1917, then transferred to the RFC, as a 2nd Lt, on 21 Feb 1917. Served with 56 Sqn RFC Jul-Sep 1917. Seriously injured in a take off accident with 188 Trg Sqn RAF on 7 Jul 1918.

Kaa Christchurch in 1926 - during the late afternoon of 17 Mar Capt Horrell, as pilot, with an officer and a civilian passenger was flying a Bristol Fighter over Papanui, Christchurch. After two loops the aircraft went into a spin and struck the ground killing the pilot and the civilian passenger.

HORSLEY, Wing Commander John Pearce, MBE.

NZ36122 & 70209; *Born* Wanganui, 30 Nov 1915; RNZAF 4 Nov 1936 to 27 Feb 1969; Engineer.

Citation Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (NY1945): [2 FMU, RNZAF] *As a result of this young officer's brilliant leadership, personal example, enthusiasm and boundless energy, a standard of serviceability, not excelled in the Pacific, has been achieved by the unit of which he is engineer officer. Working on fighter aircraft in the most forward area, very often under exposed and trying conditions and subject to frequent enemy air attack, Flying Officer Horsley has kept the maximum number of aircraft ready for instant use. The standard attained has been exceptional and is due to this officer's appetite for hard work, his ability to get the utmost from his men, by whom he is held in the highest respect. Flying Officer Horsley has on occasions worked himself, and led his men on emergency duty for 24 hours at a spell, and has met every demand made upon him for serviceable fighter aircraft to carry the war to the Japanese.*

Died Auckland, 14 Jul 1997.

HORTON, Wing Commander Thomas Welch, DSO, DFC*, (pff). NZ39920; *Born* Masterton, 29 Dec 1919; RNZAF 26 Oct 1939 to 10 Apr 1947; Pilot.

Later Wg Cdr T W Horton, DSO, DFC*, RAF 1 Jan 1948 to 29 Dec 1966, 59071.

Citation Distinguished Flying Cross (5 Aug 1942): [88 Sqn RAF (Blenheim/Boston)] *Throughout his operational tour, this officer has displayed courage, resource and high skill. He has participated in a large number of sorties, including low level attacks on shipping. His aircraft has been repeatedly hit and damaged by enemy fire and, on 3 occasions, he has flown his*