

**Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)  
John Douglas Peterson**

T82472. Flying Officer.  
Royal NZ Air Force  
Attached 9 Sqn RAAF.

NZ Gazette Number 2 October 1970

**CITATION**

Flying Officer Peterson, RNZAF has completed an operational tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam with No 9 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force. During his tour he flew over 810 hours in support of No 1 Australian Task Force.

Flying Officer Peterson's outstanding air leadership abilities became apparent very early in his tour and he quickly attained the status of utility helicopter mission leader.

In this role he consistently displayed remarkable initiative, discipline and a marked ability to cope with rapidly changing situations.

On 13 February 1970 Flying Officer Peterson was controlling the extraction of a series of SAS Patrols when one of the aircraft detonated a mine as it was departing the landing zone after it had emplaned a patrol. The aircraft was substantially damaged but apparently still airworthy. After two further attempts to fly the aircraft to a secure area were thwarted by extreme airframe vibration as the aircraft gained forward speed, Flying Officer Peterson directed the pilot to land on a nearby jungle trail. Following the landing Flying Officer Peterson, giving rapid clear orders, effected the extraction of the crew, instructed the patrol to establish a defensive perimeter around the downed aircraft and reinforced the securing party with two other patrols which had previously been extracted from nearby locations. Concomitant with these activities Flying Officer Peterson arranged for the eventual recovery of the damaged aircraft.

Frequently Flying Officer Peterson was called upon to fly in hazardous situations during the extraction of SAS Reconnaissance Patrols. On a number of occasions Flying Officer Peterson in the face of enemy fire extracted patrols shortly after they were inserted and who were still in contact with the enemy.

During his tour Flying Officer Peterson completed many medical evacuation sorties, often at night, sometimes in difficult weather conditions and on several occasion in the close proximity of enemy forces. Realising the seriousness of the situation, not only the urgency of getting the wounded to treatment but the need to remove the wounded to permit the remaining troops complete freedom of movement, Flying Officer Peterson ignored personal danger to expediently complete these sorties.

The dedication, outstanding devotion to duty, courage and leadership displayed by Flying Officer Peterson throughout his tour reflected credit on him and made a significant contribution to the operational success of No 9 Squadron.

**Notes to Citation:**

Born Takaka 13 July 1947. Served in RNZAF from 10 Jan 1966 to 23 Jun 1978. Also awarded Air Force Cross (Queens Birthday Honours June 1974) for distinguished work in search and rescue operations in New Zealand while serving as 3 Sqn RNZAF Squadron Training Officer.

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