

PETER JOHN BADCOE VC



A courageous soldier and leader.

Born: Malvern SA 11 January 1934

Died: Vietnam 7 April 1967

Attended ATHS: 1946 49

Career

On leaving school he joined the South Australian public service and in 1952 he entered the Officer Cadet School, Portsea, Victoria, from which he graduated second lieutenant on 13 December 1952. In August 1966 he joined the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV).

They called him the Galloping Major because he was always on the go, regardless of risk. It was as province (or sector) operations adviser that he was awarded the Victoria Cross for not one but three separate heroic actions. It was during the last of these on 7 April 1967 that, when he rose to throw, his radio operator pulled him down as heavy small arms fire was being brought to bear on them; he later got up again to throw a grenade and was hit and killed by a burst of machine gun fire. Soon after, friendly artillery fire was called in and the position was assaulted and captured.

Major Badcoe's conspicuous gallantry and leadership on all these occasions was an inspiration to all, each action, ultimately, was successful, due entirely to his efforts, the final one ending in his death. His valour and leadership were in the highest traditions of the military profession and the Australian Regular Army.

On 16 October 1967, The Prime Minister (Mr. Holt) announced that Major Peter John Badcoe, 33 of Canberra, had been awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously for outstanding heroism in Vietnam.

Awards:

For his services in Vietnam, in addition to the Victoria Cross, Maj.Badcoe was also awarded the following medals for outstanding heroism: - the American Silver Star with Oak Leaf (awarded twice), the National Order of the Republic of Vietnam (Knight), Gallantry Cross with Palm, Gold Star and Silver Star (3 awards) and the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Honour Medal, 1st Class. His widow presented his medals to the Australian War Memorial for display in the Hall of Valour.

He was buried at the Terendak cemetery, Malaysia, his epitaph being 'He lived and died a soldier'.