

## **PRIVATE E. KENNA V.C.** **2/4TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION, A.I.F.**

**CITATION:** At Wewak during the attack near the Wirul Mission, Private Kenna's Company had the task of capturing the enemy positions on the spur running North-West. The only position from which observation for supporting the fire could be obtained was continuously swept by enemy heavy machine gun fire, and therefore it was not possible at that stage to bring artillery or mortars into action. Kenna's platoon was ordered forward to deal with the enemy machine gun post, so that the company operation could proceed. His section moved as close as possible to the bunker in order to harass the enemy, so that the remainder of the platoon could attack from the Northern Flank. When the attacking sections came into view of the enemy they were immediately engaged at very close range. Casualties were suffered, and the attackers could not move forward. Kenna endeavoured to put his Bren Gun into position where he could engage the bunker and so assist the attackers, but was unable to do so because of the nature of the ground. On his own initiative Kenna stood up in full view of the enemy less than 50 yards away and engaged the bunker, firing his Bren Gun from the hip. The enemy machine gun

immediately returned Kenna's fire and with such accuracy that bullets passed between his arms and his body. Undeterred, he remained completely exposed and continued to fire at the enemy until his magazine was exhausted. As in his present position he was unable to shoot with sufficient accuracy with his Bren Gun, he discarded it. Although still a target, for intense machine gun fire, he, with amazing coolness, took deliberate aim and killed the gunner with his first round. A second automatic opened fire on Kenna, who still standing, again took deliberate aim and killed the gunner with his next round. The result of Kenna's magnificent bravery in the face of concentrated fire was that the bunker was captured without further loss and badly needed observation was obtained of the remaining enemy positions. The company attack proceeded to a successful conclusion, many of the enemy being killed and numerous automatic weapons captured. Private Kenna's great valour and complete disregard for his own safety made the success of the Company's attack possible and saved heavy casualties. His action was an outstanding example of the highest degree of bravery.