

Originated 8 November 1944

G.P.A. 1
40/P & S/1420 (3080)

Date recommendation
passed forward

5 Cdn Inf Brigade 2 Cdn Inf Division 2 Cdn Corps

Received Passed

Schedule No. (to be left blank) Unit ~~C.I.C.~~ (RCAMC attached The Calgary Highlanders)

Brigade 10 Nov 44 12 Nov 44
NOV 12 1944 NOV 12 1944

Division
Corps NOV 15 NOV 19

Army No. and Rank Lieutenant

Army

Name ~~DeBiens~~, Joseph Gerard DES BIENS

21 NOV 1944 5 DEC 1944

(Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended
(Date and place of action must be stated)

Recommended by Honour or Reward (To be left blank)

During the night of 22/23 September 1944, The Calgary Highlanders had to cross the ALBERT CANAL at WYNEGHEM and establish a bridgehead to enable a bridge to be put across so that the Divisional advance could continue. This was accomplished against heavy opposition and many casualties occurred during the action due to heavy mortar, medium machine guns, and rifle fire. Evacuation of casualties during this action was most difficult owing to the canal bridge being blown and the bridgehead area being under continual heavy fire.

Lieutenant DeBiens, fully realizing the difficulty in the evacuation of casualties and with a total disregard for the enemy fire and his own safety, proceeded to the bridgehead to organize and personally supervise the evacuation.

The fact that there was no means of bringing stretcher cases across the canal caused Lieutenant

IMMEDIATE
M.C.
R.L. Ellis Lt. Col
O.C. - Calg Highrs
W. J. ...
CORD 5 CDN INF, BDE/
Maj-Gen
Comd - 2 Cdn Inf Div

(G G Simonds) Lt-Gen
Comd 2 Cdn Corps
Nov 44

H. D. G. Crear, Gen.
G.O.C.-in-C.
First Canadian Army
P.T.O.

DeBiens a great deal of worry. However this was soon solved when he saw an improvised raft going across with ammunition, and it was not long until he had organized the far bank to bring casualties back on the raft. As casualties became increasingly heavy, it was not safe to leave them near the bridgehead. This was soon rectified by Lieutenant DeBiens who established a relay post in a convent on the south bank. For ten hours Lieutenant DeBiens controlled the flow of casualties from the bridgehead to the convent and back to the Regimental Aid Post, and on many instances he personally carried wounded men back himself. In order to speed up this procedure he brought up his Jeep under heavy fire and narrowly missed being killed on many occasions, thereby establishing a Jeep ambulance service between the relay post and the Regimental Aid Post.

Throughout this entire action his extreme devotion to duty and his strong determination to get out casualties resulted in approximately forty men being evacuated under his supervision, which otherwise might not have got across until a bridge was established.

His personal example and high devotion to duty and extreme coolness under fire was an inspiration and example to the stretcher bearers and spurred them on to greater efforts in the evacuation of the casualties.

If a casualty as under, fill in date.

Nature of Casualty	Date
Killed in action	
Died of Wounds	
Died	
Missing	
Prisoner of War	

The infantry soldiers, seeing this magnificent accomplishment in caring for their wounded comrades were greatly heartened and its effect on their morale and determination was a very great factor in the success of this difficult situation.

B. L. Ronsonev.