

# Colonel John Richard JAMES

## Distinguished Service Medal

Post-nominals

DSM (Retd)

Awarded on

28th of October 2025

Award event

## Citation

For distinguished leadership in warlike operations as platoon commander A company (Minus) The 5th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment during the Battle of Hat Dich on 21 August 1969.

## Media notes

Colonel (then Lieutenant) James displayed distinguished leadership during the Battle of Hat Dich on 21 August 1969 in Vietnam when he took command of two platoons facing a vastly superior enemy force. Colonel James' actions on the day resulted in the loss of only one Australian Soldier, with the remaining 51 members of his platoons, of whom 37 were wounded by the end of engagement, being safely extracted to a defence position from which continuous enemy attacks were repelled over several hours. His superior leadership inspired his men to show courage, determination and composure under extreme pressure and intense fire. Colonel James' decision-making and actions were the major factors in the successful fighting withdrawal, of what could have been a catastrophic defeat with many more injured or killed in this battle.