

PEOPLE PROFILES Corporal

Sefanaia Sukanaivalu vc

The only Fijian to receive the Victoria Cross



FACT FILE

D.O.B 1 January 1918

P.O.B Yacata, Fiji

D.O.D 23 June 1944

Years of service

Unknown - 1944

Rank Corporal

Unit 3rd Battalion Fiji
Infantry Regiment

Engagements

World War II
Bougainville
Campaign

Awards

Victoria Cross

CITATION

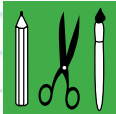
On June 23rd, 1944 at Mawaraka, Bougainville, in the Solomon Islands, Cpl. Sefanaia Sukanaivalu crawled forward to rescue some men wounded when their platoon was ambushed. After recovering two men this N.C.O. volunteered to go alone through heavy fire to try and rescue another - but on the way back was seriously wounded and fell to the ground unable to move further. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to rescue him; and realising that his men would not withdraw while he was still alive Cpl. Sukanaivalu raised himself up in front of the Japanese machine gun and was riddled with bullets. This brave Fiji soldier, after rescuing two wounded men with the greatest heroism and being gravely wounded himself, deliberately sacrificed his own life knowing that in no other way could his men be induced to retire from a situation in which they must have been annihilated.

The London Gazette, 2 November 1944



Corporal Sukanaivalu is buried at Bitapaka War Graves Commission Cemetery, in Papua New Guinea. Sukanaivalu's heroic tale was featured in America's prestigious *Time* magazine on Christmas Day 1944.

Project: For your eyes only



Cover Story. You are reporter Philip Jackson.

Write an article about the heroic Pacific Islanders for *Time* magazine and illustrate it with photographs or drawings. Add comments from American marines and survivors who served alongside the Islanders.



Troops of the Fiji Infantry Regiment preparing for overseas service against the Japanese in the Solomon Islands.