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Army Form W. 31

7th Australian Field Artillery Brigade. 3rd Australian Division. II ANZAC Corps. 3rd August 1917 Date of Recommendation

Schedule No. (To be left blank)	Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To b bla
	26th Battery	18479	Gunner A/Bdr. Eric HARDING.	On 2nd August 1917, at MESSINES, showed conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. An enemy attack had been reported as likely, consequently it was essential that the telephone line which runs over the MESSINES Ridge from Battery to O.P. should be maintained. Throughout the day in question the hostile shelling was exceptionally, with 8", 5.9 and 4.2s. Between the hours of 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. twelve rounds per minute were falling, and about five rounds per minute during the remainder of the day. The maintenance of the line to the O.P. was in the hands of Gunner HARDING, who went out time after time and mended breaks, on one occasion finding the line cut in 14 places. Twice the other linesmen whose work it was to maintain the O.P. end of the line were unable to proceed owing to the heavy shelling and Gunner HARDING went right along the line joining the breaks. By his determination, coolness and pluck this line, a most important one under the circumstances, was maintained throughout the day, with only very short intervals during the time he was actually finding and mending the breaks. This man has always displayed the greatest devotion to duty and a complete disregard for his own personal safety. I strongly recommend his exceptionally fine services on this occasion for reward.	Lieut-Colonel. Commanding 7th Australian Artillery Brigade.	Distinguished Conduct Medal.	

RECOMMENDED FOR IMMEDIATE AWARD.