



Willie Apiata appointed Special Representative to NZDF

New Zealand's only living recipient of the Victoria Cross, Willie Apiata, has been appointed a Special Representative to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and promoted to Honorary Warrant Officer Class One (WO1).

The appointment and promotion was carried out in front of family and colleagues at Papakura Military Camp, home of New Zealand's Special Forces, by outgoing Chief of Defence Force, Air Marshal Kevin Short on Wednesday.



New Zealand's only living recipient of the Victoria Cross, Willie Apiata, has been appointed a Special Representative to the New Zealand Defence Force and promoted to Honorary Warrant Officer Class One, at a ceremony at Papakura Military Camp, home of New Zealand's Special Forces

Honorary WO1 Apiata is the first person appointed to the position of Special Representative. The holder of this new role will work across international, New Zealand and Defence Force activities to contribute to the mana of the NZDF.

The position enables the NZDF to provide enduring support and care to WO1 Apiata and any future recipients of the Victoria Cross (VC) - the highest gallantry honour which can be awarded to members of the NZDF.

“It is a privilege to be appointed to this new role,” WO1 Apiata said.

“As a recipient of the VC, I represent the NZDF every day and this appointment formally recognises that relationship.

“It is a great honour to be awarded the Victoria Cross and it comes with much pressure on the recipient. This sets a path not just for me, but for those who might be awarded the VC in the future.”

WO1 Apiata received the VC in 2007, for bravery under fire while serving in Afghanistan in 2004 - where he rescued a wounded comrade during a night attack on his SAS patrol.

In 2008, he donated his VC to the NZSAS Trust, so that the medal would be protected for future generations.

Chief of Army, Major General John Boswell said today’s appointment and promotion were a mark of the mana of WO1 Apiata.

“Promotion to Honorary Warrant Officer rank is a first for the NZDF and this is a reflection of the mark of the man. He is a humble Kiwi, who every day lives the values of the Defence Force.

“He will pass on his knowledge and experience to our new recruits and to our new leaders as a coach and mentor, to help create a better culture and a better ethos for the NZDF.”

It is anticipated that the Special Representative to the New Zealand Defence Force will also work across New Zealand and appropriate international organisations, as well as other government agencies.

Date

27 May 2024

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