

AWARDS BESTOWED SEPTEMBER 2009 to MARCH 2010

Case NO – 1650 MACKEY BOY POUWHARE

SILVER MEDAL

Shortly before 6.00pm on 22 November 2008, a car crashed into a power pole in Cravens Road, Blenheim, The pole collapsed, bringing down three live 6,500 volt wires which were hanging low over the road.

The occupants were two teenage mothers and their three infants, one of whom was a girl, 3 years old, and the other two, a boy and girl, 6 and 7 months old respectively.

Mackey Boy Pouwhare who lived close by, heard the collision and as he approached the crash site he saw that the two mothers had managed to remove their children from the car. Obviously dazed they were wandering around under the power lines. He saw one of them get electrocuted when she hit one of the wires with her head and when he arrived he saw that both adults had touched the wires and were lying unconscious on the road with the children around them. They were all under the power lines.

One of the mothers died at the scene while the other was removed to hospital where her life was saved.

Mackey Pouwhare went under the wires and first pulled one baby from near the front of the car, then encouraged the eldest girl to crawl towards him and safety. He then retrieved the second baby.

Once he had all three children out of danger Mr Pouwhare was assisted by his wife Suzanne in moving them to a safe area to await the arrival of emergency services.

The scene he faced on arrival would have been hard to comprehend and he showed great fortitude to control the situation and prevent further loss of life, including his own.

Case NO – 1651 GREGORY ZANE TOVIA BETHAM

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

At about 4.00pm on 20th November 2008 Police were informed that a lady had been seen at Whangarei Waterfalls, lying motionless beyond the safety fence and only a short distance from the edge.

When Constable Betham arrived and began talking to her she started crawling toward the cliff face. He climbed the rail into an area of unstable ground to intervene. By taking a hold by her clothing he endeavoured to restrain her. There was a struggle and they both ended up in the very loose soil right on the edge of the drop.

By taking a hold of a tree for support and with his feet in the loose soil Gregory Betham was finally successful in pulling the lady back and prevented the woman and himself from falling 25 metres down the cliff face.

Case NO – 1652 ALLAN WALTER MAXTED

SILVER MEDAL

On 1 July 2008 at 12.30am on Douglas Road, Amberley, a car crashed into a power pole and caught fire. The flames quickly spread throughout the vehicle which was wrapped around the pole.

Allan Maxted who lived nearby heard the car passing his house and then the impact. He dressed, called emergency services and ran 150 metres to the car where he opened the driver's side door and saw the unconscious driver slumped across the front seats. The heat was intense.

Mr Maxted entered the vehicle and began pulling the driver to remove him but had difficulty when the driver's legs and feet were caught inside. A Volunteer Chief Fire Officer who had arrived saw what was happening and, with flames building around them, he helped Mr Maxted to free the legs and drag the man to safety.

Allan Maxted's quick response had saved a life.

Case NO – 1653 DAVID BRIAN WRIGHT CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Just after midday on the 19th January 2009 Sergeant David Wright responded to a report that a worker at the cement works in Silverdale had climbed to the top platform of a 30 metre cement tower and was threatening to jump.

Access to the tower, which had a hand rail, was by an open steel ladder covered by a metal frame. Sergeant Wright climbed to the top landing where he found the man who had his back to him. He attempted to talk to him but received no acknowledgement.

When finally there was a response it was negative and challenging. The man suddenly spun around, was abusive and then moved toward the Sergeant who for his own protection wrapped his arm around a metal stanchion and called upon him to back off.

The man ultimately turned away and started leaning over and putting his leg over the railing.

Sergeant Wright continued to talk to the man who was clearly distressed and after an hour and having built up a rapport he was able to convince him to climb down where he received medical attention.

David Wright had put himself at risk to achieve a solution and prevent a potential death or serious injury.

Case NO – 1654 KIM ROCHELLE REES LETTER OF COMMENDATION

On the 5th May 2008 at 8.30pm Mrs Rees heard an alarm sounding. Believing that it was coming from a nearby school she went to investigate but found instead that it was a smoke alarm coming from a neighbour's house. She saw a glow through the kitchen window. She could hear the crackling sound of something burning.

She ran to the rear of the house to a ranch slider door which was closed.

She saw her neighbour lying on the floor 2 metres inside, with a pool of blood around his head. He had been severely injured.

She saw flames in the kitchen. The house was rapidly filling with smoke.

When she went inside she saw that the fire and smoke, described as putrid by an attending Fire Station Officer, was coming from a number of items, but not food, burning on the top of the range. Kim Rees ran outside to alert others, and then returned.

Although she was being badly affected by smoke inhalation for which she was treated at the hospital, she assisted the injured man and sat with him until help arrived.

**Case NO – 1655 TREVOR - JOHN GURNEY
PHILLIP ANTONNI LITTLE**

**CERTIFICATE OF MERIT
LETTER OF COMMENDATION**

On the 25th September 2008 at 10.45am a mentally disturbed woman entered the surf off Southshore, Christchurch where the estuary meets the sea. There was a strong current running.

When Constables Gurney and Little arrived at the scene she was already well out to sea. Constable Gurney ran into the surf, removing his outer clothing as he went, and swam 120 metres out to her where she was neck deep in the surf. She resisted his attempt to help. Constable Gurney managed to calm the woman to some extent and despite her continuing resistance and having to contend with the strong cross current, began to tow her towards the shore.

Meanwhile Constable Little who had located a surfboard in a nearby property paddled out to assist, reaching them part of the way back where he was able to assist in walking the lady out of the water and back to the shore.

They had had to deal with both the elements and a reluctant patient who required treatment for hypothermia.

Together Trevor Gurney and Phillip Little had been able to bring the lady to safety thereby preventing a drowning.

Case NO – 1656 TONY BRYAN GREY

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

On The morning of 14 August 2008 on Flume Road Te Miro, near Cambridge, in very wet conditions, a car carrying an adult and three children on their way to school left the roadway when passing a stock truck which was turning over a small bridge into a farm property. The car finished up in a swollen creek. It came to rest submerged up to its windows in the deep water, and lodged under the bridge.

Tony Grey, who was taking his own children to school, was driving past and saw people standing on the side of the road looking into the creek. He stopped and could then see the car in the water with the three children inside.

Without hesitation Mr Grey jumped onto the roof of the car as it was snaking backwards down the creek and endeavoured to get the children out through the car window.

Being unsuccessful he then slid off the roof and into the freezing water. In doing so he became pinned between the bank and the car, which was still moving.

He freed himself and succeeded in removing the children to safety.

Tony Grey had acted instinctively and put himself at risk in removing the children from a dangerous situation.

Case NO – 1657 ISAAC SAMUEL OWEN

BRONZE MEDAL

On 31st May 2009 just before 10.00am two 17 year-old friends went out in a Kayak at East End Beach New Plymouth.

What had started out as a mild autumn morning soon changed into a bleak, cold day with a strong offshore wind.

Isaac Owen, an 18 year-old lifeguard who had gone out early to train on his Surf Ski had paddled from East End to the Port and was heading back to the Waiwhakaiho river mouth, when he saw the two teenage girls in their kayak off East End Beach. The weather had made a turn for the worse and he told the girls that they should head back in. However, when he arrived at East End Surf Club and was putting his ski away he became aware that they were still out there. The girls were trying desperately to make their way in to shore but were being blown further out into the Tasman. The weather had quickly deteriorated. The temperature had plummeted to well below 10 degrees on the beach. The water was cold and the wind was very strong.

Isaac knew time was critical as the temperature combined with the wind chill factor out to sea made hypothermia a real risk not only to both of the girls but also to him.

Despite being clad only in shorts and a rash top, he used a paddleboard and headed out towards the pair, reaching them some 400 metres away.

The girls were distressed and tired. He took control of the situation, calming and reassuring them. He made the decision to use the Kayak and take one of the girls on his board, whilst the other, a strong swimmer would try and make it back to shore. The task for Isaac was difficult as he was not only contending with the offshore winds and seas, but also having to stop several times to help the girl when she fell off the board.

The rescue took over one hour, at the end of which Isaac Owen was exhausted and very cold.

A jet ski which had been launched late in the piece finally reached him and the girl he had with him, when they were 50 metres from the beach.

By his action Isaac Owen ensured that a potential tragedy had been avoided.

Case NO – 1658

TONY JAMES HOLT

SILVER MEDAL

Early in the afternoon of 1st March 2009, Tony Holt was driving on Whangamata Road near Kinlock when an oncoming car crossed the centre line on a moderate bend causing him to swerve to avoid a collision.

When he looked back in his rear vision mirror he saw the car roll and come to rest on its roof, engine down, on the sloping grass verge.

He turned and went back to the upturned car where he found the driver in front, suspended and held by her seatbelt, and 4 year-old girl upside down in the back seat, trapped in her car seat and belt. He went to his vehicle to get a knife and tools to pry the door open and returned to the car by which time the engine compartment was fully alight with flames and smoke travelling back up into the car. The driver had managed to get her upper body out through the window but her legs were trapped.

Mr Holt reached in, cut the seat belt to free her and dragged the lady completely out of the car onto the road.

With the car now fully alight he then climbed into it to free the youngster by cutting the seatbelt. She fell into his arms and he backed out with her, handing her to another driver who had stopped.

The car exploded as he started to pick up the driver. He managed to lift her and carry her across the road out of danger. Others who had stopped then carried her further away down to where her daughter was being looked after.

By his actions Tony Holt had saved two lives.

