

AWARDS BESTOWED SEPTEMBER 2009 to SEPTEMBER 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.

Case NO 1662

**PAREKURA LEO TE TAURI BROWN
PAREKURA LAURENCE BROWN
MOANA THOMAS PARATENE**

**BRONZE MEDAL
CERTIFICATE OF MERIT
LETTER OF COMMENDATION**

On Muriwai Beach in the late afternoon of Sunday, 6th December 2009, a family were near the estuary setting a net when a young boy lost his footing, was caught in a strong rip and swept out to sea. His father swam out to rescue him and although exhausted he was ultimately successful in getting him back to the shore.

However, in the meantime, the boy's grandfather, Moana Paratene, 62, had entered the water to go to the assistance of his son and grandson, but he too succumbed to the rip and was swept past them both and further out to sea.

The Brown family members, who were also on the beach, heard the shouts for help.

Parekura Leo Te Tauri Brown, 16, with little regard for his own safety, immediately entered the water and swam 100 metres out through the rip and one metre surf to reach the grandfather and give him support and encouragement.

His father, Parekura Laurence Brown, 51, ran to a nearby bach to get a surfboard, which he used to paddle out to Moana and his own son.

All three of them made a safe return to the shore using the board as a floatation device. Moana Paratene was exhausted and had to be helped from the water. He was driven off the beach to a waiting ambulance for treatment.

But for the swift action of Parekura Leo Te Tauri Brown and Parekura Laurence Brown, who, at risk to themselves had swum out to recover him, Moana Paratene would undoubtedly have drowned.

Case NO 1663

**AARON LUKE HARRIS
DEAN DANIEL HARRIS**

**CERTIFICATE OF MERIT
CERTIFICATE OF MERIT**

On Tuesday 20th October 2009, on the Southern side of North Head, Devonport, North Shore, a disturbed young woman who had apparently attempted to jump from a cliff, landed in trees on the edge and from there slipped further down a steeply grassed and bushed bank, to a spot where, as police had been informed, she was clinging onto a tree hanging over the cliff with a drop of approximately 20 metres to the rocks and water below her.

Constables Aaron and Dean Harris arrived at the scene together. Along with other officers they began a search in difficult terrain.

In the course of their search Dean Harris went to an unfenced area and thought he heard a faint voice coming through the trees. After calling to Constable Aaron Harris to alert him, he made his way down a steep slope leading to a small bush on the edge of the drop. Here he could clearly hear the woman calling and was able to locate her dangling over the edge. She was desperately holding onto a tree branch which was hanging out over the drop to the rocks and water below.

He was concerned that, in the position he was in, there was not sufficient support available to bear the weight of them both.

He stayed where he was above her while his partner, Aaron Harris, made his way to a position on the opposite side of the woman to Dean and they each found a strong branch, sufficient to support the weight of themselves and the woman.

Once they were both in a stable position, Aaron Harris reached out and grabbed onto the front of the woman's clothing. After ensuring that he had a strong hold, he lifted her towards Dean Harris who grabbed her wrists, pulling her up towards him while Aaron continued to push from below.

Together they managed to get her away from danger and assisted her up the bank where she was attended to by other police personnel before being taken to North Shore hospital.

With no regard for their own safety they had saved a young woman's life.

Case NO 1664

**RICKY LEE TE HUKI
PAUL BERTRAM GRAHAM**

**SILVER MEDAL
BRONZE MEDAL**

Early in the morning of the 18th November 2009 in Hulke Street, Foxton, a house caught fire. At 2.15am a smoke alarm sounding alerted a neighbour, Ricky Te Huki, to the fire in the house which was on the opposite side of the street. He went over to it and saw smoke coming from the back of the house. He initially thought it may have been coming from a shed but then he saw a ball of fire and smoke coming from high on the wall in an area in which he knew there was a kitchen. Earlier in the evening he had heard noise and he felt sure that there were adults and a child inside. He ran to the house and banged on the window calling to the occupants to get out.

A woman, who was partially obscured by smoke, appeared at the window. She was obviously disorientated but finally opened the window and he was able to pull her out. He had difficulty trying to establish who else was in the house but finally learned that there were a baby and a female still inside. .

At that stage, his brother-in-law, Paul Graham who was a visitor to his house, arrived to help. He went to the back of the house and entered through the kitchen window. While he was opening the back door he looked into the kitchen and could see that the top 30cm of the walls all round were on fire and the room was full of thick smoke. He ran outside to get air and then re-entered through the back door. Ricky followed him in. Both were having difficulty in the conditions. Ricky is an asthmatic. They got out as quickly as possible. Paul then ran round to the front door which was locked and he had to break the glass with his hand to enable him to reach in and open it

Both men went into the house trying to get to a room where they thought the two occupants were. There was thick black smoke and the glow of fire. Smoke was making it difficult to see anything and there were no lights.

The door from the hall into that room was open. Both men were calling out encouraging those inside to come out, but there was no response. They could hear but not see them. Paul could hear the baby crying and the voice of a female adult as well. Attempts to find anyone in the room, by feeling around, keeping low because of the smoke, were unsuccessful.

Both of the men were forced to go out very frequently to get fresh air, each of them recalled re-entering as many as five times.

Constantly they were being affected by the smoke and heat. They were finally forced to stay out when orange flame and thick smoke came down the hall towards them and the heat became intense. At that stage there were no sounds coming from the room.

Despite their earnest endeavours, Ricky Te Huki and Paul Graham had been unable to reach the woman and child. They were both found to have perished and were recovered by the firemen.

Case NO 1665

**GREGORY JONATHON ALISTAIR LARKIN
BARRY MALCOLM ROBERTSON**

**SILVER MEDAL
CERTIFICATE OF MERIT**

In the middle of the morning of 4th January 2010, at Peketa Beach near Kaikoura two teenagers went out into the sea in a small inflatable dinghy, in an area known as the “washing machine”. The sea current took them 300 metres south along the coast. They panicked and endeavoured to get back to shore through the 2 metre high waves, but the dinghy capsized.

One of the girls wearing a life jacket was able to reach the shore. The inflatable dinghy had drifted in, but the other girl was carried out to sea in the current.

Greg Larkin and Barry Robertson were further down the beach, at Kahutara River mouth, watching surfers. They noticed what appeared to be a small boat and people in the water, out beyond the 3 metre dumping shorebreak.

They knew that in those conditions something was obviously wrong and they immediately made their way by car through the Peketa Motor Camp to the northern end of the beach.

They grabbed one surfboard and their wetsuits, which they climbed into as they went, and ran the few hundred metres to where they could see that there was still one person in the water, out beyond the surfzone, with no boat and no life jacket. They could see that the girl was close to going under. She was struggling against the current and the big waves.

They agreed that Greg Larkin, 36, being the younger of the two, would take the surfboard, dive through the shorebreak and get out to her. Barry Robertson was to stay within the dumping shorebreak to grab them when they came back through. Mr Larkin successfully got through the huge wall of water and reached the 14 year-old girl. He put her on the board and paddled her into the break. The surfboard took a hammering on the way and broke in two, but Greg managed to hold onto the girl and get her to Mr Robertson, where he had waited for them within the break.

Together, all three were dragged up the steep beach, in the shorebreak, by others using a rope.

Gregory Larkin had put himself at extreme risk and with Barry Robertson, who was also at risk in the difficult conditions, assisting, had saved the girl’s life.

Case NO 1666

**IKE HANSON
TOBY SEDDON WALKER
KYLE REES WILLIAMS**

**SILVER MEDAL
CERTIFICATE OF MERIT
CERTIFICATE OF MERIT**

On Friday 5th February 2010, at about 3pm a jet boat was crossing the Rakaia river mouth bar from the sea to head back up the river. There were two men aboard, Kerry Sutton and Edgar Russ, both in their mid 60’s. The outflow of the river was swift (15-20 knots) and was causing pressure waves to build up on the entrance to the river, where the river mouth opening had cut a diversion to the north directly along the beach causing an extremely dangerous rip along the coast.

As the boat approached the mouth, it was swamped by a following wave, and overturned.

Mr Sutton was able to get out from under the upturned hull. Mr Russ was trapped under the hull, pinned by his lifejacket, but able to breathe from the air pocket in the bow. After a few minutes he managed to discard his lifejacket and surface, just metres from the bow of the boat which was very low in the water.

Kerry Sutton managed to grab and hold onto him with one arm, and onto the bow of the boat with the other, until the boat sank shortly afterwards. Edgar Russ went under a twice, and Kerry had to recover him.

Fishermen at the river mouth had seen the action unfolding.

Ike Hanson, saw one fisherman waving from the shore, south of the river mouth and came in. When told that two men were in trouble on the north side of the river, he immediately sprinted along the shingle beach in his bare feet, carrying his surf board. When he came to the south stream where the tide was extremely swift with a horrendous break on the bar, he launched himself into the water on his surfboard, crossed the south stream quickly and then crossed the main river in the same manner. By now the two men in the sea and without the boat for support, had been caught by the river current and were being rapidly washed north. Ike sprinted along the stones until he was level with them, launched himself into the very rough surf and paddled out to the two men on his board.

Kerry asked him to take his friend in first as he now had no lifejacket, and was suffering from the onset of hypothermia. Ike Hanson started off, with one man on his board, but when he looked back he saw that the other man had started to sink. His lifejacket was no longer effective. Swimming back, he put him on the board as well. This meant that he had to swim, towing the board, in the strong rip, just in his wetsuit. The water temperature was 10° C.

His two friends who had been surfing with him, Toby Walker and Kyle Williams, who had followed behind Ike, arrived and were able to assist in getting the two back to shore, 300 metres to the north of the river mouth.

The two men from the boat were completely exhausted and could not get to their feet. The surfers dragged them ashore beyond the waves which were crashing onto the loose shingle. Paramedics on the rescue helicopter which had arrived assessed the two and found that their body temperatures had fallen significantly below normal. They were immediately flown to hospital.

There is no doubt that, had Ike Hanson not acted as he did, putting his own life at risk in the dangerous conditions, this episode which lasted for over 30 minutes, would have resulted in two fatalities.

Case NO 1667 BRETT DARYL CUZENS CERTIFICATE OF MERIT
PENNI EGGLETON CERTIFICATE OF MERIT
RYAN DAVID KEMSLEY CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Just after 8pm on Sunday 29th November 2009 Sergeant Cuzens and Constables Eggleton and Kemsley responded to a call to a two-storied home on Homewood Avenue, Karori, Wellington.

A neighbour had raised the alarm after seeing smoke coming from the house. The occupant, a 60 year-old lady who lived alone, had not been seen for two days.

When they arrived the neighbour used a key to open the front door of the house. Despite being confronted by a house full of thick, black, acrid smoke, all three officers went in and began to search for the occupant.

During the search their visibility was severely limited by the smoke which they subsequently found was being generated by a fire in the kitchen. The officers experienced difficulty in breathing.

Constable Eggleton located the lady, who was unconscious, in her bed in an upstairs bedroom. She had an injury to her head which was later found to have been the result of a fall.

She called to her colleagues for assistance. Sergeant Cuzens and Constable Kemsley joined her and together they carried the lady down the stairs, out of the house, and onto the front lawn where Fire Officers who had arrived tended to her.

The woman was taken to hospital where she remained unconscious for some time.

By their swift actions in entering the smoke filled house as they did, putting themselves at risk, the three Officers were successful in removing the lady from a life threatening situation.