



**CASE NO. 1549    BRUCE RAYMOND COOKSLEY  
                         REGINALD PAORA ROYAL  
                         PAUL GEOFFREY BARTOSH  
                         DONALD GEORGE LOGAN**

**Certificate of Merit  
Certificate of Merit  
Certificate of Merit  
Certificate of Merit**

In the evening of 15 August 1998, the Otaki Volunteer Fire Brigade was asked to assist in the search of a missing farmer.

Two to them, BRUCE RAYMOND COOKSLEY and REGINALD PAORA ROYAL descended into a small river that ran through a gorge over 60 metres below the level of the farmland. After about 15 minutes moving downstream in cold, wet and dangerous conditions, they found the missing man's body.

They advised their colleagues above who then tried to work out how to bring out the body. The instability of the ground, the steepness of the drop to the river below and the lack of stable anchor points made this a dangerous exercise. It was also very cold and the only light was from torches.

Two rescuers abseiled down to the river level with a basket stretcher, and the dead man was strapped. PAUL GEOFFREY BARTOSH and DONALD GEORGE LOGAN then devised and operated a rope rescue retrieval system while all the time perched precariously 60 metres above the river.

The exercise had started as a search and rescue, but developed into a recovery mission. It required skill, courage and determination to bring it to a conclusion.

**CASE NO. 1550    JAMES MARINO**

**Certificate of Merit**

In the afternoon of 1 March 1999 a number of school children were jumping from a small jetty into the Uawa River when one of them struck her head on the bottom breaking her neck. She then floated face down in the river for some 3½ minutes as far as the Tologa Bay Bridge.

JAMES MARINO, then aged 16 years, was on the bridge and, summing up the situation, immediately jumped into shallow water knowing that he had to reach the girl as soon as possible. He landed about 20 metres from the unconscious girl, swam to the bank, ran along to a more adjacent place and swam out again to the girl. He dragged her to the bank where he was helped to bring her to shore. Artificial resuscitation was administered and when the girl was brought back to consciousness she was taken to hospital where she made a slow recovery.

**CASE NO. 1551    JAMES RICHARD KIRA**

**Silver Medal**

In the morning of 21 February 1999, JAMES RICHARD KIRA was taking his family to Takou Bay when he saw a man fishing off the rocks. As they approached, the man was swept away by large waves and carried into open sea.

James Kira stripped off his outer clothing and entered the water in a rescue attempt. By the time he reached him they were both 100 metres out in an outgoing tide with strong currents and in turbulent water. James Kira struggled for some 45 minutes to bring the pair of them to land by which time he was completely exhausted. Nevertheless he attempted, with his partner, to administer CPR in an unsuccessful attempt to resuscitate the dead fisherman.

James Kira had put his own life at considerable risk in an attempt to effect a very difficult rescue.

**CASE NO. 1552    ANDREW JOHNSON  
                          EVAN JOHNSON  
                          CHARLES JOHNSON  
                          DAVID FERGUSON  
                          JASON ALKEMA**

**Letter of Commendation  
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Certificate of Merit  
Certificate of Merit**

In the afternoon of 1 January 1999 a party of young people was swimming in pleasant conditions at Waihi Beach. One of them, a 15 year old youngster, suddenly found himself out of his depth and in difficulties. JASON ALKEMA and DAVID FERGUSON who were swimming nearby did not hesitate to go to his assistance, although they saw that he was caught in a rip. After a little while they too became very tired and were near exhaustion when three brothers, ANDREW JOHNSON, EVAN JOHNSON and CHARLES JOHNSON paddled out on surfboards to assist them all. They were successful in dragging them out of the water, onto the surfboards and brought them back to shore.

The three swimmers who had been in difficulty all suffered from shock for some time after the incident, but did not need medical attention.

**CASE NO. 1553    RICHARD NEVILLE CLARKE  
                          STEPHEN ARCHER SMITH**

**Silver Medal  
Silver Medal**

In the afternoon of 1 February 1997 a light aircraft carrying a pilot and one female passenger ran into bad weather on the way from Christchurch to Invercargill. While attempting to land outside Dunedin in poor visibility, the pilot crashed the plane against a barn on a farm near the motorway. The noise was heard by RICHARD NEVILLE CLARKE who at the time was only a few hundred metres away in his car. He immediately drove to the plane and on arrival found it had flipped upside down with the pilot and passenger trapped inside and smoke coming from the engine. Richard Clarke was joined by STEPHEN ARCHER SMITH who had also heard the crash. At this point flames had begun to burn and to enter the cockpit. The two rescuers with great difficulty pulled the side door off the plane and dragged out the female passenger. As Stephen Smith lifted the wing, there was more room for Richard Clarke who leaned into the plane again to extricate the pilot.

Both the occupants had received serious to moderate burns, but neither Richard Clarke nor Stephen Smith were injured. Very soon after the rescue had been effected, the plane began to burn very fiercely, so there is no doubt that without the valour and determination displayed by the rescuers, the two occupants would have burned to death.

**CASE NO. 1554    BRONWYN RAE TAYLOR**

**Bronze Medal**

While driving home on Christmas Eve 1998, BRONWYN RAE TAYLOR heard a loud bang caused by a two car collision on the northern outskirts of Christchurch. Having turned and stopped, she ran to the car encouraging the occupants to escape. Unable to open the door herself, she smashed a side window through which the occupants were able to climb out. Soon after this the flames became intense and completely destroyed the vehicle.

BRONWYN TAYLOR, although not physically burned, was suffering from shock until the arrival of police and ambulances.

There can be little doubt that had she not reacted so quickly and so spontaneously the two occupants would have been burned to death.

**CASE NO. 1555 PETER VICTOR TAYLOR****Bronze Medal**

On 15 February 1999, Police Constable PETER VICTOR TAYLOR was one of three officers directed to attend an incident in Albany, Auckland. They went to a stand of pine trees on farmland some distance from the road where a mentally disturbed young man had climbed one of the larger trees. At the police approached he, hurling abuse at them, climbed higher and threatened to jump. The police saw he was mentally unbalanced and were concerned for his safety. When about 20 metres off the ground, the man began to shake and appeared to lose consciousness.

Police Constable PETER VICTOR TAYLOR quickly scaled the tree and took hold of the man who was at grave risk of falling. Police Constable Peter Taylor used his body to pin him to the tree, calmed him down and brought him near to the ground where they were both helped to safety.

Police Constable Peter Taylor had demonstrated considerable courage and had saved the man from falling to possibly severe injuries at the very least.

**CASE NO. 1556 – NEIL CAMERON MACLEOD  
NICKO VARNQUEN NGWUN****Bronze Medal****Bronze Medal**

On 24 June 1999 a disqualified driver lost control of his motor vehicle and crashed through a chain mesh fence into a boggy muddy area in South Auckland.

Police Constables NEIL CAMERON MACLEOD and NICKO VARNQUEN NGWUN were quickly on the scene to discover that the driver had locked himself in the vehicle, doused himself with mineral turpentine and set fire to himself and the vehicle. The fire started in the driving compartment, but by the time Police Constables Neil Cameron and Nicko Ngwun had arrived, the vehicle was well engulfed in flames.

Police Constable Neil MacLeod smashed the window of the left rear passenger door in an attempt to pull the driver out, but was forced back by the flames and heat. Police Constable Nicko Ngwun attempt to extricate the driver through the other rear door, but found he was stuck between the front and rear seats.

The two Police Constables eventually forced entry and tried to drag the driver out using his belt. Unfortunately due to the fire damage this broke so they had to grab what they could of his burnt body and drag him clear of the vehicle.

At this stage he was still on fire so they doused the flames in the boggy water. The driver was taken away by ambulance, but subsequently died in hospital. Nevertheless the two police officers had made a valiant attempt to save the suicide's life and in so doing had put their own at severe risk.

**CASE NO. 1557 – DANE BASHAM****Bronze Medal**

A little after midnight on 6 April 1999, Police Constable DANE BASHAM, on scene guard in Helensville heard screams for help. On investigation he found a woman had fallen from a boat moored to the jetty at the Kaipara Cruising Club. She was in the muddy waters, clinging to a tyre fender.

Police Constable Dane Basham was unable to pull her out of the water and into the boat and could see she was becoming exhausted. If she lost her grip she would very likely disappear in to the 15 feet deep, very dirty water. At the time the area was poorly lit so visibility was limited.

Police Constable Dane Basham decided to jump into the water and tow the woman the 30 yards or so to the river bank. The tide was on its way out, which did not help, and a wind was blowing which kept the temperature very low.

Police Constable Dane Basham, although physically strong and a good swimmer, struggled hard to cover the first 10 yards, at which point he could touch the river bed. This, however, consisted of thick clinging mud which made matters more dangerous. He persevered, and eventually reached the bank. Summoning up a final effort, he lifted her about two feet over a vertical retaining wall.

By his quick, efficient and determined response to the situation, he had saved her life.

**CASE NO. 1558 – JOHN LEWIS GILLON**

**Certificate of Merit**

Late at night on 4 September 1999, Police Senior Constable JOHN LEWIS GILLON attended an incident on Bluff Hill in Napier where a distressed young woman was threatening to commit suicide by jumping off the 80 metre cliff. Senior Constable Gillon spoke to her for over 40 minutes, gaining her trust and confidence so that he could approach. When he became convinced that she would in fact jump and do herself serious injury, he managed to take hold of her with one hand. With the other he held a security fence which held them both back from the edge of the cliff preventing them from falling. Other police assistance arrived and took the woman into safety.

Senior Constable Gillon had certainly put himself in severe danger by his prompt and selfless action.

**CASE NO. 1559 – JEFFERY MAXWELL CRAMP  
MARTIN GEDDES  
JOHN ROBERT CAMERON**

**Letter of Commendation  
Letter of Commendation  
Letter of Commendation**

Over a two day period in January 1999 extremely heavy rain fell in the Hokianga area leading to very heavy flooding. A number of houses were isolated when roads were swept away and small streams became raging torrents.

When the police were called to rescue a number of trapped inhabitants they found conditions extremely unpleasant. JEFFERY MAXWELL CRAMP and MARTIN GEDDES were two officers called to an isolated house who had to wade through water up to their waist and higher. It was swift moving and full of trees, logs and floating vegetation. The two of them, showing considerable determination, were able to rescue a number of small children, intellectually handicapped people and elderly persons.

JOHN ROBERT CAMERON also assisted Martin Geddes in taking 13 people out of one house, a number of whom were disabled or extremely young.

The police worked long hours in difficult and dangerous conditions beyond the call of duty to save the local inhabitants from the effects of the severe flooding.

**CASE NO 1560 - MICHAEL WILSON**

**Bronze Medal**

In the morning of 31<sup>st</sup> December 1998 a six metre boat containing three people battled its way across the bar at Mangawhai Heads Northland when it was stuck by very heavy waves and overturned. Two of the occupants were thrown clear but an 8 year old boy was trapped in the cabin with his life jacket preventing him from escaping.

MICHAEL WILSON on duty in the rescue boat with a companion, set off as soon as they saw the incident. When they reached the scene MICHAEL WILSON twice dived under the upturned hull but had to return after being entangled in anchor ropes and fishing lines. Almost exhausted he made a third attempt and was successful in pulling the boy down and out of the cabin and to the surface. The boy was taken to hospital and subsequently recovered. There is no doubt however, that he would have lost his life had WILSON not been so determined

**CASE NO. 1561 – STEPHANIE DAY  
MIKE NOON**

**Silver Medal  
Silver Medal**

In the afternoon of 18<sup>th</sup> March 1999 a light aircraft carrying a pilot and four passengers on a reconnaissance flight around Pitt Island crashed into the sea when its engine suddenly failed. The impact was very violent causing severe cuts and bruises to all on board and making it impossible for them to don life jackets.

One of the passengers, Stephanie DAY saw that the pilot was in considerable difficulty. A poor swimmer, he was dressed in overalls and calf high boots neither of which he could remove. After calming him Day put him on his back and started to tow him to shore. There was a moderate swell but the water temperature was only 16 degrees. Because of his water logged clothing the pilot kept sinking but Day succeeded in over 40 minutes in towing him over 700 metres to land, almost certainly saving his life.

Mike NOON, also a passenger was the last out of the plane, at which stage it was some five metres below the surface. After organising the group so that they stayed together, he led them in the swim to shore. He talked to them and encouraged them. Part of the way to land, one passenger, who was overcome by the cold, started to hyperventilate. NOON calmed him and towed him the remaining distance.

The fact that no one lost their life was due in no small way to the efforts of Stephanie Day and Mike Noon

**CASE NO. 1562 – GABRIELLA TENNANT**

**Letter of Commendation**

On the 17 February 2000 a two year old boy climbed over his garden fence into an old works yard. He climbed on to the covering of a water reservoir, which gave way beneath him.

His sister GABRIELLA TENNANT heard the commotion but found she could not see her brother. She ran to the reservoir, reached into the water and pulled him out.

The water was old, dirty and very cold. Without Gabriella's prompt reaction to the situation, the little boy could well have drowned.

**CASE NO. 1563 – DION KAWI HADFIELD  
CRAIG ROBIN NELMES**

**Letter of Commendation  
Letter of Commendation**

In the small hours of 19 April 1998 a deep sea factory freezer trawler was fishing in rough waters south of the Auckland Islands. It was decided to haul the nets aboard, a demanding job taking about an hour.

Before this could be completed, the leading deckhand seems to have been caught by some of the equipment as he was tossed into the air and off the ship into the water.

As soon as was possible DION KAWI HADFIELD and CRAIG ROBIN NELMES were lowered into the sea in an inflatable boat. They searched for about 25 minutes before locating the man. There was a south-west wind blowing at 35 knots, the conditions were very rough and the surface water temperature was about 12 degrees.

Unfortunately the deckhand drowned, and although his body was successfully retrieved, all efforts to resuscitate him failed.

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| <b>CASE NO. 1564 – ROGER TAMATI NGAHOORO</b> | <b>Bronze Medal</b>           |
| <b>GEOFFREY TE-PUNI MULLEN</b>               | <b>Bronze Medal</b>           |
| <b>TE-PUNI HARRY MULLEN</b>                  | <b>Letter of Commendation</b> |
| <b>ANTONIO ROBERTO WAINUI TEEPA</b>          | <b>Bronze Medal</b>           |

In the afternoon of 28 December 1999, a small boat containing an elderly man and a middle-aged woman was returning from a fishing trip to the mouth of the Owaka River when it was swamped by a sudden heavy wave. The boat was overturned throwing the man into the water where he became entangled in ropes, gut, fishing lines and eventually the anchor rope. The woman was thrown clear and clung to an empty kerosene tin for buoyancy.

When advised of the accident, GEOFFREY TE-PUNI MULLEN, ROGER TAMATI NGAHOORO and ANTONIO ROBERTO WAINUI TEEPA went out in a boat but could do nothing because of the five metre swells. They returned to shore for diving equipment. The first two then waded and swam out to the man who was now floating face down in the water. They spent nearly an hour cutting him free, and a similar time trying to bring his body to shore. Eventually they had to let him go and they both reached land in an exhausted condition.

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| <b>CASE NO. 1565 – BRETT GRAHAM BUCKTHOUGHT,</b> | <b>Certificate of Merit</b> |
| <b>GRAHAM HUGH BUCKTHOUGH,</b>                   | <b>Certificate of Merit</b> |
| <b>RONALD GREGORY DAVID MAYOR</b>                | <b>Bronze Medal</b>         |
| <b>SHANE ALAN ROSS</b>                           | <b>Bronze Medal</b>         |
| <b>GRANT WORSLEY</b>                             | <b>Certificate of Merit</b> |

In the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> June 1999 fire broke out in a house at Waihi Beach in which an elderly woman was the sole occupant. The smoke activated her Medic Alert alarm, and GRAHAM HUGH BUCKTHOUGHT was notified. Together with his son, BRETT GRAHAM BUCKTHOUGHT he was driven to the house by GRANT WORSLEY.

Graham Buckthought smashed a ranch-slider door to enter the house, but was driven back by smoke. Brett Buckthought and Grant Worsley went in through the back door, located the woman, but were driven back by thick smoke and flames. Grant Worsley found a garden hose, and Brett Buckthought began to fight the fire with water from it.

Shane Alan Ross who lived nearby heard the noise, ran to the house past Brett Buckthought, and reached the unconscious woman. With the fire raging around him, he dragged her away and into the lounge.

Ronald Gregory David Mayor, who was visiting nearby, tried at first to gain entrance from the back, but was prevented by a wall of thick black smoke. Undeterred he went in through the front and helped Shane Ross carry the woman out.

Unfortunately she was already dead, but all concerned had tried bravely and strenuously to save her.

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| <b>CASE NO. 1566 – DEANE RODNEY SARDELICH</b> | <b>Certificate of Merit</b> |
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In the early evening of 8<sup>th</sup> January 2000, DEANE RODNEY SARDELICH was travelling behind a car which skidded off the road south of Te Poi, Waikato. It crashed down a 15 feet bank, and came to rest upside down in a swollen stream with only the chassis and wheels protruding from the water.

Without thought for his own safety, Mr Deane Sardelich stopped, jumped over a fence and slid down the bank into the stream. Standing in water up to his chest, he was able to force open a rear door, freeing the driver. He and the driver were then able to open another door and pull out the driver's wife.

Mr Deane Sardelich's prompt actions were largely responsible for a successful rescue, which almost certainly saved life.

**CASE NO. 1567 – GRANT DAVID TETZLAFF****Bronze Medal**

In the middle of the night of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2000, Police Constable GRANT DAVID TETZLAFF was called to a Balmoral, Auckland house. He found a car trapped down a bank with smoke coming out. Having established the driver was inside, Constable Grant Tetzlaff first extinguished the flames then moved around the vehicle to the front door.

At this point the flames flared up again, spreading around the car and making the situation very dangerous. Constable Grant Tetzlaff forced the door open and after a big struggle pulled the semi-conscious driver out and away from the burning car.

Since the vehicle erupted into flames some 60 seconds later, it is clear that Constable Tetzlaff's prompt and determined actions had saved the driver's life.

**CASE NO. 1568 – TAWHAI WILLIAM RICKARD****Bronze Medal**

In the middle of the day on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1999 a fisherman launched his 12 foot aluminium dinghy off Tuparoa Beach, Ruatoria to check his cray pots. There was a strong south-easterly wind of 30 to 40 knots and a one to two metre swell. Some 40 metres offshore the boat capsized and the fisherman was thrown into the water unable to swim to the shore due to a strong current.

When he became aware of the situation, TAWHAI WILLIAM RICKARD swam out to the man with an inflated tyre inner tube. He fitted this under his arms and tried to keep his head above water. By this time they were 500 metres from land and the current was too strong to contemplate swimming back.

Tawhai Rickard supported the man, who was almost unconscious by now, for nearly 30 minutes before help arrived by boat.

The man was suffering from hypothermia and needed hospital attention. There is little doubt that Tawhai Rickard's determination had saved his life.

**CASE NO. 1569– NEIL PETER BAKER****Bronze Medal**

In the morning of 29<sup>th</sup> December 1999, a visiting tourist went swimming off a very dangerous part of the Kaikoura Coast. She was soon in difficulties and a companion went to her assistance. Both were overcome by the turbulent water and strong undertow.

When the police were called, they decided it was far too dangerous for a rescue party to swim out from the beach, so a helicopter was called in.

Meantime, NEIL PETER BAKER who lived nearby changed into a wet suit and went down to the beach to help. The helicopter had dropped flotation devices to the two swimmers, but by this time they were too weak to make use of them. The helicopter therefore picked up Neil Baker and dropped him into the water with the devices. During this exercise the helicopter had to maintain a maximum height of 4 metres because of the turbulent water.

Neil Baker first secured the swimmers to the buoys and swam to shore towing first one and then returning for the other. Since both had lost consciousness it is clear that without Neil Baker's courage and determination, they would have drowned.

**CASE NO. 1570– STEPHEN PETER HARWOOD****Bronze Medal**

In the afternoon of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2000, Detective Stephen Peter Harwood was making inquiries in Island Bay, Wellington when he saw a young woman dive into the sea off an outcrop of rocks in an apparent suicide attempt. After taking off his jacket, he jumped in after her.

There was a cold southerly wind blowing, the waves were between one and two metres, and the temperature was 10 degrees Celsius. Detective Stephen Harwood eventually put her in a hold across his shoulders and swam with the tide back to the rocks.

This area is known for its dangerous rip, so Detective Stephen Harwood's prompt reaction was extremely courageous.

**CASE NO. 1571 – DEBBIE HARDING and ARIO TATAI****Certificate of Merit**

ARIO TATAI and his partner DEBBIE HARDING were visiting his in-laws in Northcote on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2000 when they saw smoke coming from the house next door.

They later found that an electric heater had overturned and for two hours or more had been smouldering. The elderly occupant had been overcome by the smoke and fumes.

Ario Tatai broke the glass in the door to force an entry and he and Debbie Harding crawled under the smoke to find the unconscious woman not far from the heater. They carried her to safety and cared for her until the ambulance arrived. They had effected a brave and efficient rescue.

**CASE NO. 1572 – RICHARD FRANCIS GALLAGHER****Bronze Medal**

In the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2001 Senior Constable RICHARD FRANCIS GALLAGHER responded to a call to the Glen Innes Railway Station where he saw an intoxicated man lie down across the railway track. He also saw a freight train approaching at a speed of over 40 kilometres an hour.

Seeing the man was not intending to move, Senior Constable Richard Gallagher ran to him and with the train only 10 metres away grabbed hold of him by both arms and dragged him clear. He was both heavy and unco-operative.

Although the train driver applied his emergency brakes, it still took over 100 metres before the train stopped, so there can be little doubt that without the Senior Constable Richard Gallagher's prompt and dangerous response to the situation, the man would have been killed.

**CASE NO. 1573– BRENT DAVID REGISTER****Bronze Medal**

In the morning of 29<sup>th</sup> December 2000 Police Constable BRENT DAVID REGISTER with his partner answered a call to Princess Margaret Hospital in Christchurch where a 13 year old patient, apparently psychotic, had climbed to the top of a seven storey scaffold erect on the face of the hospital. She had removed the safety rail and was threatening to jump off.

Constable Brent Register made his way on to the roof of the building, climbed over the concrete abutment on to the exposed platform and began to talk to the girl.

Although perched precariously with nothing between them and a seven storey drop to the ground below, Constable Brent Register spent an hour negotiating with the patient until he succeeded in persuading her to leave the scaffolding for the safety of the roof.

Constable Brent Register had shown a total lack of consideration for his own safety as well as great perseverance in effecting a successful rescue.

**CASE NO. 1574 – MARK DAVID CAMPBELL****Bronze Medal**

In the late afternoon of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2001 MARK DAVID CAMPBELL, then aged 16, joined his grandfather in netting for mullet in the surf at Glinks Gully, Dargaville. When they ventured out slightly too far, heavy waves swept the older man off his feet and out of his depth.

Letting go of the net, he swam through the breakers to his grandson, but in doing so exhausted himself. Mark Campbell therefore grabbed hold of him and for the next 20 minutes fought a long battle against the sea to keep the two of them afloat.

Eventually a couple of larger waves swept them toward the shore and Mar Campbell was able to stagger to the beach while practically carrying his grandfather. Both made a full recovery thanks to the great determination shown by the young man.

**CASE NO. 1575 – BARRY JAMES O’DEA****Certificate of Merit**

In the afternoon of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2001 a 14 year old boy was snorkelling around the rocks at Okari Beach when he was caught up in a severe rip which swept him over 100 metres out to sea.

BARRY JAMES O’DEA was notified and immediately took his surf board out to sea to save the youngster. By the time he reached him, the boy had swallowed a lot of sea water and was beginning to panic.

Barry O’Dea calmed him, put him on his surf board and stayed talking to him. The swell was too strong for Barry O’Dea to tow the board back to shore so he waited until help arrived.

There can be little doubt that his actions had saved a life.

**CASE NO. 1576 – SHARON STEPHENS****Certificate of Merit**

In the afternoon of 6<sup>th</sup> October 2000 Senior Sergeant SHARON STEPHENS was called to an incident in Te Atata. A mentally disturbed 16 year old girl had climbed to the top of a power pylon and was threatening to commit suicide.

Senior Sergeant Sharon Stephens climbed 30 metres up the pylon and commenced a dialogue with the girl which continued until the Fire Service arrived. She was able to keep her calm as the officers attached rescue harness and brought her down to safety. The wind at the time was blustery, making the Sergeant’s prompt and determined actions even more hazardous.

**CASE NO. 1577 – DEAN ANDREW FRANKLIN****Letter of Commendation**

In the early afternoon of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2001 a party of four went to Tapotupotu to snorkel for paua. Two of them after donning wetsuits swam to a rock some 20 metres off shore. The first made the rock, but the second, possibly weighed down by his equipment, paused halfway there and was hit by a heavy wave. It appears that he stuck his head on a submerged rock and became helpless.

His colleague no longer had the strength to help, but DEAN ANDREW FRANKLIN, assisted by a third member of the party, went into the very rough and very cold sea. They reached the helpless man and took him to the rock where they tried to resuscitate him. Unfortunately they were too late, for he had already died.

Nevertheless Dean Franklin had done his best in very trying and unpleasant conditions to save the life of a stranger.

**CASE NO. 1578 – AARON FRANCIS BUNKER****Bronze Medal**

In the afternoon of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2001, Police Constable AARON FRANCIS BUNKER was called to the Wanganui River where a young woman was thought to be attempting suicide. Fully clothed and intoxicated, she was in the water clinging to a piece of wood about 600 by 350mm in size.

Police Constable Aaron Bunker took off his uniform and went into the very cold, dirty and quickly flowing river after her. Clearly she did not want to be rescued, she refused to co-operate and when the police constable tried to close in on her she struck out at him with the piece of driftwood. At this point the river is 200 to 250 metres in width and quite deep in the centre. Police Constable Aaron Bunker swam around the woman gradually steering her to the opposite bank and when she was temporarily blinded by the sun, he took the opportunity to grab her.

This was after over 15 minutes of drifting in the cold water, but she was still able to struggle violently. After another 5 minutes of this, her efforts tired her out and Police Constable Aaron Bunker was able to tow her to a jetty. There she started to resist again. But, there was help there to pull her out of the water. This was just in time for past the jetty the river flow becomes unpredictable.

Altogether Police Constable Aaron Bunker spent over 20 minutes in the river and travelled a distance of over 800 metres.

**CASE NO. 1579– SAM NUTHALL****Certificate of Merit**

In the late afternoon of 6<sup>th</sup> February 2001, SAM NUTHALL, then aged 12 was on Milford Beach below the boardwalk when he saw a little girl being swept out to sea in a sea biscuit, an inflated ring with a floor. The off-shore breeze was so strong that she travelled very rapidly and was soon 150 metres away from the beach.

With no other help at hand, Sam Nuthall went to his home nearby, launched his plywood dinghy and set out to rescue her. At one point he had to restart his outboard motor and he had to contend with choppy seas.

When he finally reached the little girl, she had fallen out of the ring and was treading water. Sam Nuthall was able to pull her into his boat and bring her safely to shore. His prompt action had almost certainly saved her life.

**CASE NO. 1580– SERGEANT SIMPSON  
A M KINGI****Bronze Medal  
Certificate of Merit**

At 2:40 a.m. on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2000 at Tokoroa, SERGEANT SIMPSON located a motor car that had crashed into a power distribution box. The car was heavily ablaze and subject to obvious electrical shorting. The driver was inside the vehicle, intoxicated and disoriented. Sergeant Simpson approached the vehicle, breaking a window to gain access. He then leant into the vehicle and grappled with the driver to remove him from the vehicle. The driver resisted strongly and Sergeant Simpson had to make a second effort before he was able to drag the driver from the vehicle. The driver struggled to return to the vehicle and had to be handcuffed and restrained.

Mr A M KINGI accompanied Sergeant Simpson to the crash site. Mr Kingi approached the vehicle and warned Sergeant Simpson that an explosion was likely. Once he had got the driver out of the vehicle, Mr Kingi then assisted Sergeant Simpson to move the driver out of immediate danger.

Sergeant Simpson and Mr Kingi were acutely aware of the dangers of the situation, both for themselves and the driver. They elected to put their own safety at risk to prevent the imminent death of the driver. Sergeant Simpson and Mr Kingi's actions were in accordance with the highest traditions of the police.

**CASE NO. 1581 – GAVIN FITZPATRICK****Bronze Medal**

While driving his van along State Highway 3 between Otorohanga and Te Awamutu on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2002, GAVIN FITZPATRICK came across a motor vehicle accident. Two cars had collided and one of them had burst into flames.

After pulling over into a safe area away from the flames, Gavin Fitzpatrick ran back 50 metres and tried to open the passenger door, but found it had jammed. Even though the car was now well ablaze, he reached in through the window and pulled out a female passenger who was dazed and confused.

He handed her to his wife and returned to the burning vehicle. By this time however the heat was too intense and there was nothing he could do for the other two people. There is no doubt that the rescued woman owes her life to Gavin Fitzpatrick who had put his own life in danger to save her.

**CASE NO. 1582 – TONI MARINA OLDMAN****Certificate of Merit**

In the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001, TONI MARINA OLDMAN went on a fishing trip with her father and a friend of his near the mouth of the Rangitikei River off Tangimoana.

After a while the weather changed, heavy rain began to fall and the seas turned rough. They decided to head for home and abandoned one of their long lines. The boat then took a couple of very big waves which capsized it. The two men were trapped under the boat, but Toni Oldman had to pull his friend free of that boat. She zipped up his lifejacket, told him to float on his back and tried to guide him over to her father. A heavy wave then hit them and for the next minutes Toni Oldman was tossed about by the sea and the waves.

Eventually she saw her father heading to the shore and struggled after him. By the time she reached him, however, he had collapsed and died on the beach. She made several attempts at resuscitation, but without success.

She then went to fetch help, but the search for the missing friend was unsuccessful.

**CASE NO. 1583 – DWAYNE ANDREW BEYNON,  
ROBERT MAXWELL PASCOE and  
ROBERT ELSON PASCOE****Bronze Medals**

In the early evening of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002, a car driven by an elderly gentleman left the road near Lincoln, Canterbury and crashed into a concrete pole. It finished up against a hedge and caught fire. Three local men were quickly on the scene to help the unconscious driver.

DWAYNE ANDREW BEYNON arrived first, found the driver's door jammed and went round to the passenger's rear door. There he was joined by ROBERT MAXWELL (Max) PASCOE and his son, ROBERT ELSON PASCOE. Max Pascoe climbed into the back seat of the burning vehicle and, helped by the other two, dragged the still unconscious driver over the front seats and out of the car.

About two minutes later the vehicle was engulfed in flames which almost totally destroyed it. There can be very little doubt that the driver owes his life to the bravery and quick thinking of the three rescuers.

**CASE NO. 1584 – STACY LEA WATSON****Silver Medal**

In the early afternoon of 5 January 2002 a car driven by Stacy Watson's uncle went out of control on the Clinton - Owaka Road. It crossed the grass verge and rolled down a bank into the Waiwera River where it came to rest upside down in a water hole with only its rear wheels out of the water. The driver was trapped inside, disoriented and unable to open his door.

STACY WATSON was able to open the passenger door, pull back the seat and drag her uncle free. This was difficult because he is not a small man.

She took him to safety then immediately dived back under the water to locate and rescue her seven-year-old daughter. All three recovered after hospital treatment.

At the time of the crash the river was swollen and very discoloured after heavy rain. The water was cold and visibility almost nil. There was also the distinct possibility of the car rolling and either crushing her or trapping her inside. Thanks, however to the quick reaction of Stacy Watson, a double fatality was avoided.

**CASE NO. 1585 – LUKE DRENT****Bronze Medal**

In the morning of 30 December 2001, the driver of a car travelling west on State Highway 25 at Whangamata lost control of her vehicle which collided with a tractor parked on the grass shoulder of the road. After spinning around, the car slid off the road and down a steep bank into the Otahu river.

LUKE DRENT who was carrying out roadside repairs to the tractor reacted quickly and did not hesitate to jump into the fast moving stream. With difficulty he forced the driver's door open, unbuckled the seat belt and dragged the semi-conscious woman out.

Since the car was completely submerged and was being pulled downstream by the flow of the water, the driver would probably have lost her life had it not been for the prompt actions of her rescuer.

**CASE NO. 1586 – ALAN ROBERT COURTNEY****Bronze Medal**

About midday on 16 October 2002 a group of retired people was walking along the Loop Track at Mount Richardson. One of the women members was descending the last of a line of steep steps when she stumbled and fell down an almost vertical face towards the bed of the Glentui River below.

The leader of the party, ALAN ROBERT COURTNEY, immediately threw off his pack and slip feet first down the bank in a rescue attempt. After travelling over 25 metres he fell over a high cliff face into the river below. In the course of his fall he received bad bruising, cracked ribs and a deep gash, but he located the injured trumper and called to the other members of the party to telephone for an ambulance.

Sadly the woman died from her injuries despite the efforts of ALAN COURTNEY who himself required hospital treatment. It was, however, a very valiant rescue attempt.

**CASE NO. 1587 – TRENT MITCHELL INNESS****Certificate of Merit****DARREN RAYMOND BURFORD****Letter of Commendation**

In the afternoon of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2002 the Takapuna Police were advised of a child floating down the Milford Creek. This creek has smooth concrete sides and runs into the Milford Estuary. At this time, after heavy rains, the water was flowing down it very rapidly indeed.

Police Sergeant TRENT MITCHELL INNESS went to the scene from the Milford Bridge saw the child being swept downstream. He ran down a small ramp and leapt into the water which came

nearly to his waist. As the boy came past he grabbed him, but the force of the impact knocked the policeman off balance.

His companion, Police Constable DARREN RAYMOND BURFORD was fortunately nearby and was able to grab INNESS and haul the two of them out of the torrent to safety.

Only five metres past there was a waterfall with a two metre drop onto sharp rocks and further downstream a dangerous steel grill. There is no doubt that the prompt actions of the two policemen saved the boy from serious injury at best and death at worst.

#### **CASE NO. 1588 – JOSHUA JAMES REYNOLDS**

#### **Bronze Medal**

While on a kayaking expedition down the Buller River on 1 February 2002, a 21-year-old student found himself in great difficulty. Thrown from his kayak he was trapped against a large rock with a very strong flow of water preventing him from moving.

JOSHUA JAMES REYNOLDS took his own kayak as close to him as he could before abandoning it to grab hold of a nearby log. Holding this with one hand he kept his companion's head above water with the other. He continued like this for 10 to 15 minutes while all the time they were buffeted by the water. Eventually he could no longer sustain the effort and tried to free them both. The student then disappeared below the water and was subsequently retrieved by others. CPR was then tried, but unsuccessfully.

Reynolds, however had certainly put his life at risk in very trying circumstances.

#### **CASE NO. 1589 – CHRISTOPHER LAURENCE WHITAKER Silver Medal**

At about 3:00 a.m. in the morning of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2003 CHRISTOPHER WHITAKER was woken in his motel room by sounds of a woman screaming. When he investigated he found that his daughter in the unit next door was being held struggling by an intruder.

Without thought WHITAKER attacked and struck the intruder who turned on him with a 20cm knife. In the course of the ensuing fight, WHITAKER was cut nine times, including one very deep slash to his stomach.

The intruder escaped but was later captured, while WHITAKER and his daughter had to undergo surgery and hospital treatment for their cuts and stab wounds.

It is very likely that without his prompt and brave interference, his daughter would have been seriously injured or even killed.

#### **CASE NO. 1590 – STEPHEN JOHN HEYRICK Bronze Medal**

In the evening of 13 May 2002 Senior Constable STEPHEN JOHN HEYRICK was directed, with a partner, to the Mataura River at Gore where a mentally disturbed man was crouched in the middle of the river with the water up to his chest and struggling to keep his balance.

When he realised that the man, who had only one arm, was either unable or unwilling to move from his precarious situation, Constable Heyrick entered the almost freezing water to walk towards him. This was hazardous because the riverbed had a lot of large rocks and deep channels to negotiate. It was almost dark and the water, which was between one and a half and two metres deep, was swift flowing.

After about five minutes, during which he kept talking to the man, Heyrick reached him. Because of the current he had to guide him downstream but eventually they reached the bank and a waiting ambulance. Both were treated in hospital for hypothermia.

The partial incapacity of the man, together with the adverse conditions meant that he would certainly have drowned had Heyrick not saved his life.

**CASE NO. 1591 – KERRY PETER HEWITT**

**Bronze Medal**

While working at the National Aquarium, Marine Parade Napier, in the morning of 22 March 2003, KERRY PETER HEWITT heard a call for help. A boy aged 11 years had been playing in the surf, but had suddenly been swept out to sea by a strong undertow.

Two people had already tried and failed to reach him.

Hewitt grabbed a flotation belt, ran down to the beach and entered the water. He reached the boy who by this stage was unconscious and had only his hair showing. Making use of a couple of waves, Hewitt was able to grab the boy and pull him to shore which was not easy in the very rough conditions and two to three metre swell.

The victim recovered quickly, but owes his life to the prompt and determined reaction of Kerry Hewitt.

**CASE NO. 1592 – JOHN WILLIAM HARE**

**Silver Medal**

In the morning of 10<sup>th</sup> February 2003 JOHN WILLIAM HARE was driving along the State Highway south of Alexandra, when he was stopped and alerted to an incident then occurring at Bucher's Dam nearby. A good swimmer and trained lifesaver, he drove straight to the scene.

A three year old child was trapped in a car that had rolled almost six metres into the lake and was partly submerged.

Without hesitation, John Hare dived into the very cold water and swam to the vehicle. He then found it impossible to open any of the doors or windows and of course the child could not help. However, he found that the boot was open so he climbed in, and was able to push open a flap in the middle of the rear seats which gave access to the inside of the car. He reached through this 300mm opening, grabbed hold of the little girl and pulled her through into the boot.

Only seconds after they were clear of the car it disappeared into about nine metres of extremely cold and murky water. Without Hare's prompt and determined actions it is very unlikely the child would have survived.

**CASE NO. 1593 – ANTHONY GRAHAM BARROW &  
IAN DOUGLAS MILLS**

**Certificate of Merit**

Early in the morning of 28<sup>th</sup> August 2002 a party of police was despatched to Wairau River diversion mouth, Cloudy Bay, where a female white baiter had been swept into the river by a sudden wave.

The sea conditions at the time were extremely rough and the river was in full flow. The woman's body was floating face down some metres from the bank. After donning life jackets, Police Constables ANTHONY GRAHAM BARROW and IAN DOUGLAS MILLS entered the freezing turbulent water, reached the body with difficulty and brought her to shore. Both had problems keeping their footing on the shingle bottom.

Once they reached the bank they commenced resuscitation which they continued for some 20 minutes until the Ambulance Service arrived. Shortly after, the woman was pronounced dead.

It had been, however, a most courageous rescue attempt.

In the late afternoon of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2002 ERIC BRYCE DUGGAN was tramping with a companion at the foot of the Ramsay Glacier in the headwaters of the Rakaia River, Canterbury. Both were experienced climbers and were returning to a hut for the night.

Suddenly an avalanche of large rocks came down at them at high speed. One huge boulder hit Duggan's colleague and knocked him into Lake Ramsay below. At this time of the year the lake was barely above freezing point and quite deep. Nevertheless Duggan entered the water and tried to swim to his friend. At first he was forced to give up because his arms were numb and he feared he would drown.

Once out he saw his companion was still alive so he removed his jacket and re-entered the lake. This time he brought his friend to shore and then dragged him over 200 metres away from the area, which was still very dangerous. His companion had broken legs and a lot of bruising so was quite unable to help.

Duggan covered him as best he could, using some of his own clothing, and then tramped out to seek help. The climber, however, died as a result of his injuries and hypothermia, but without doubt Duggan had ignored his own personal safety and extreme discomfort while he tried to do what he could for his companion.





