

TONY WILLIAM BURDON CERIFICATE OF MERIT
MATTHEW THOMAS ELLIOTT LETTER OF COMMENDATION

On 29 July 2006, on the Wairau River, near Onamalutu, Constables Tony William Burdon and Matthew Thomas Elliott responded to a call for assistance to a man, trapped by his feet in his kayak which had hit a submerged rock. The kayak was wrapped around the rock, held against it by the force of the water in the fast flowing river, pinning the occupant who by the time of their arrival had been in the water for a half hour. The water was icy cold. The occupant was clearly having serious problems endeavouring to hold himself above the water. His kayak was submerged

With difficulty the two Constables, having themselves entered the water, managed to attach a rope to the bow of the kayak and after a number of unsuccessful attempts finally managed to pull it away from the rock. The kayaker then was able to extricate himself but was exhausted and he sank below the surface.

Constable Burdon dived down and brought him to the surface and while he held him they began drifting down the river. During this time Constable Burdon having lost his hold, had to dive again to retrieve the Kayaker from beneath the surface.

Constable Elliott, who had by this time swum after the two, then joined him and gave assistance in bringing the man to the shore.

The rescued man was hospitalised suffering from hypothermia and extreme exhaustion.

By their actions in very trying conditions and with little regard for their own safety Tony Burdon and Matthew Elliott had succeeded in preventing an almost certain tragedy.