

GROUP BRAVERY CITATION

Awardees comprise members of the Birkenbeiners Nordic Ski Club and a member of the community.

Mr Robert BOLAND
Mr James Edward GARGAN
Mr Paul GRUSOVIN
Mr Gordon Foster GUEST-SMITH
Mr Jarrod Marc PAINE
Mr David Anthony PANOZZO

In the early hours of 9 August 2004, five members of the Birkenbeiners Nordic Ski Club and a member of the community were involved in the rescue of three cross country skiers caught in difficulty at the summit of Mt Bogong.

The six men in this group were volunteers tasked with the rescue mission. At approximately 12.30 am, carrying heavy loads of equipment for both their own and the three skiers' survival, they began the 4 kilometre, thousand vertical metres climb to the top of Mt Bogong in darkness, in temperatures of minus 10 degrees, with winds gusting up to 80 kmph and a wind chill factor of between minus 20 and minus 40 degrees. The terrain was very steep and covered in deep snowdrifts with dangerous drop-offs on both sides of the route they took. They found the three skiers at about 4.15 am. All three were partially buried in the snow and suffering from hypothermia, with one unconscious. The rescue party worked from then until 6.00 am erecting tents; moving the unconscious skier to shelter; and administering first aid, warm drinks and food. When the weather cleared briefly at around 9.00 am, the rescued skiers were evacuated by helicopter and the rescue party descended the mountain, arriving back at their vehicles some 12 hours after setting out.

Individual contact details:

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Mr David Anthony PANOZZO

Details not available at the request of Mr Panozzo.