

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Petty Officer Arthur AMIES, Royal Australian Navy

Petty Officer Arthur Amies displayed considerable bravery during the attempted rescue of a person from a burning house at Greenwell Point, New South Wales on 3 June 2017.

At 7:00am, Petty Officer Arthur Amies and a colleague were preparing to go fishing at a boat ramp at Greenwell Point when they noticed flames coming from a building nearby. Petty Officer Amies phoned emergency services whilst running with his colleague towards the building.

Neighbours had approached the burning building but were unable to gain entry. On reaching the building the men were informed that an elderly man was inside. After several attempts they managed to kick open a door and go inside.

Petty Officer Amies opened a rear door to provide another exit route. His colleague ascended internal stairs as thick black smoke began to cover them. At the top of the stairs his colleague saw one of the rooms was well alight and a man's body was on the floor. He called out to the man but he was unresponsive.

Petty Officer Amies arrived to assist his colleague. After concluding that the man was deceased, and due to the increased smoke and intense heat from the flames, he and his colleague went back down stairs and outside the building.

Emergency services arrived on the scene and extinguished the flames.

Mr Andrew James BLACK, Lake Cargelligo NSW 2672

Mr Andrew Black displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of people from a burning vehicle near Invergordon, Victoria on 26 October 2015.

At 12:30pm, Mr Andrew Black was driving near Invergordon with his wife and young daughter. A semi-trailer approaching from the opposite direction crossed over the centre lane and collided with a vehicle travelling in front of Mr Black, shunting it down an embankment on the side of the road.

Mr Black swerved to avoid the semi-trailer, and crashed down the embankment causing his vehicle's airbags to deploy. After checking that his wife was uninjured and able to exit the vehicle, he removed his daughter from the back seat, handed her to his wife and instructed them to move away from the other vehicles.

He approached the vehicle and saw smoke emitting from the engine bay. One of the occupants was attempting to exit the vehicle and Mr Black went and assisted him to move away from the fire that was spreading in the dry grass. The injured man informed Mr Black that the driver and another passenger were still in the vehicle.

Mr Black returned to the vehicle which was well alight and attempted to open the passenger side rear door, but it was stuck. Despite his condition the injured man also returned to help Mr Black.

At this time the back seat passenger moved to the smashed rear window and Mr Black jumped onto the burning vehicle and pulled the man out by the shoulders. The other man assisted in moving him away.

Shortly afterwards the vehicle was engulfed in flames and sadly the driver did not survive.

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Mr Renzo BRUSCHI, St Helena VIC 3088

Mr Renzo Bruschi displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of people following a petrol tanker accident in Melbourne, Victoria on 24 May 2016.

At about 8.30am, Mr Renzo Bruschi was travelling in his truck on the Calder Highway when he was struck from behind by a petrol tanker carrying 17,000 litres of high octane fuel. A car had cut the tanker off and, in swerving to miss it, the driver lost control and hit a number of vehicles before the tanker ended up on its side, emitting smoke and steam. The fuel tanks ruptured and fuel was pouring onto cars and across the roadway.

Mr Bruschi stopped his truck and rushed toward the tanker which still had its engine idling. Despite being covered in fuel himself, he smashed the cabin window and helped the distressed and injured driver to safety.

He then approached another car that had been flipped onto its roof. A woman was trapped inside and screaming as fuel flooded the interior of the car. Mr Renzo ripped open the rear driver's side door and assisted the woman to exit the car and took her away to safety.

Emergency services arrived on the scene and took control of the incident.

Chief Petty Officer Liam CARRUTHERS, Royal Australian Navy

Chief Petty Officer Liam Carruthers displayed considerable bravery during the attempted rescue of a person from a burning house at Greenwell Point, New South Wales on 3 June 2017.

At 7:00am, Chief Petty Officer (then Petty Officer) Liam Carruthers and a colleague were preparing to go fishing at a boat ramp at Greenwell Point when they noticed flames coming from a building nearby. Both the men ran towards the building.

Neighbours had approached the burning building but were unable to gain entry. On reaching the building the men were informed that an elderly man was inside. After several attempts they managed to kick open a door and go inside.

Chief Petty Officer Carruthers ascended internal stairs as thick black smoke began to cover them. His colleague went to the rear of the building and opened a door to provide another exit route. At the top of the stairs he saw one of the rooms was well alight and a man's body was on the floor. He called out to the man who was unresponsive. He attempted to pull the man out of the room but was unable to due to the man's significant injuries.

His colleague arrived to assist and, after concluding that the man was deceased and due to the increased smoke and intense heat from the flames, Chief Petty Officer Carruthers and his colleague went back down stairs and outside the building.

Emergency services arrived on the scene and extinguished the flames.

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Detective Senior Constable Samuel Joseph CLARKSON, Victoria Police

Detective Senior Constable Samuel Clarkson displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of a person from a burning house in Bellfield, Victoria on 10 February 2018.

In the early hours of the morning, Detective Senior Constable Samuel Clarkson and police colleagues were on-duty conducting patrols in Bellfield when they were flagged down by two men who indicated a nearby house was on fire. The men informed the police that a woman was still inside the dwelling. The police officers alerted other emergency services.

Detective Senior Constable Clarkson and a colleague approached the house. On opening the front door they were confronted by a large volume of smoke reaching nearly to floor level that restricted vision and made breathing difficult.

He entered the house and crawled through the thick smoke until he heard sounds coming from a bedroom. By this time the fire had nearly engulfed the house and the roof was beginning to collapse.

He located the woman and dragged her towards the front door where he was assisted by colleagues to evacuate her to safety.

Mr Gyles Bray DEACON, Wombarra NSW 2515

Mr Gyles Deacon displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of a fisherman from rocks at Wombarra, New South Wales on 24 June 2020.

At 11.40am, Mr Deacon was in the garden of his home when he saw a fisherman being swept off the rocks below his property.

A second fisherman attempted to reach the man using a fishing rod. He then threw an inflated life vest to the elderly man, who was battling the heavy swell, and called Triple 0.

Mr Deacon navigated the bushland between his property and the rocks, and holding onto a previously secured rope, dived into the water and swam to the fisherman.

He used the life vest to help keep the man afloat in the rough seas and remained with him for approximately half an hour until a rescue helicopter arrived and winched the man to safety and transported him to hospital.

A local surf lifesaver jet-skied out to Mr Deacon and transported him to shore.

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Mr Allan Lyndon DRECHSLER, Neds Corner VIC 3496

Mr Allan Drechsler displayed considerable bravery during the apprehension of an armed offender at Neds Corner, Victoria on 19 October 2017.

At about 8:30pm, Mr Allan Drechsler was at home in remote rural Victoria when he heard screaming coming from a neighbour's house. He went outside to investigate and saw a severely injured and bleeding woman running towards him pleading for help.

He ran to his neighbour's house and could hear his neighbour screaming. On reaching the house he looked in the back door and saw the man's former wife repeatedly attacking him with a boning knife and metal pole. His neighbour had sustained serious injuries from the assault.

Mr Drechsler entered the house, grabbed the offender by both arms and dragged the struggling woman across the yard to a workshop where he secured her to a metal pole. He returned to the house and provided first aid to the injured victims until police and emergency services arrived.

Mr David Michael FARCICH, Lancelin WA 6044

Mr David Farcich displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of people from burning vehicles in Breton Bay, Western Australia on 27 August 2019.

At about 6.30pm, two cars collided on Indian Ocean Drive, trapping both drivers. A fire started in one of the damaged vehicles. Mr David Farcich and other motorists stopped to render assistance.

Mr Farcich and another motorist went to the car which was on fire, and attempted to smash the driver's window. A fire extinguisher was passed to him which he emptied on the flames to little effect. He was able to break a rear window, enter the vehicle, and open the door. The vehicle's interior was filled with pieces of wood.

A police officer, who had arrived on the scene, emptied another fire extinguisher on the flames, which continued to intensify.

Mr Farcich and another motorist began to remove the wood but were forced back due to the heat. He went back to the driver's side and broke the window. The driver was pinned in his seat by other pieces of wood and was unconscious. The flames and heat forced Mr Farcich to withdraw.

He was then informed there was a driver inside the second vehicle which had just caught fire. A motorist had managed to open the driver's door but the man inside was trapped with broken legs. Mr Farcich, with the aid of two police officers and two motorists, removed the driver from the vehicle.

Moments later a small explosion occurred and the second vehicle was fully engulfed in flames. Sadly, the driver of the first car perished at the scene.

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Mr Russell IRWIN, Cranbourne VIC 3977

Mr Russell Irwin displayed considerable bravery during an armed home invasion in Cranbourne North, Victoria on 1 February 2021.

At about 7.30pm, Mr Irwin was in the backyard of his home when he heard screams coming from a neighbouring house. He jumped the fence and was confronted by two masked men who were armed with a baseball bat and tomahawk. He also saw a third man inside the house.

As the two offenders ran towards him they yelled and demanded to know where the money was. One of the offenders struck Mr Irwin with the baseball bat, splitting his lip. Mr Irwin grabbed hold of the man and began dragging him away, using him as a shield as the second man repeatedly hit Mr Irwin with the tomahawk.

Bleeding heavily, Mr Irwin pushed the first offender against the second and managed to get clear of the men, who then went back inside the house and joined the third man. During the melee the occupants of the house escaped.

Concerned for the safety of the occupants, Mr Irwin walked towards the house to see if the occupants were still inside. As he got close, two of the armed offenders came towards him so he jumped back over the fence and went into his own home and out the front door. He saw the offenders walking up the street and one of them turned and pointed a firearm at him and other bystanders before leaving the area.

Mr Irwin was taken to hospital for treatment of his significant injuries.

Mr Craig Jeffrey O'BRIEN, Park Avenue QLD 4701

Mr Craig O'Brien displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of a woman from a house fire at Park Avenue, Queensland on 3 February 2020.

At about 8:30pm, Mr O'Brien heard glass smashing and saw fire coming from the back window of their neighbour's house. Mr O'Brien called out for assistance from his brother, while their mother called Triple 0.

Mr O'Brien jumped the fence, ran up the back stairs and kicked open a locked door. He entered the house and ran through flames before locating the elderly and partially disabled woman in a smoke-filled bedroom. As he was getting the disorientated woman out of bed she fell over and he was forced to drag her out of the room as the flames began spreading to the ceiling. He pulled her into the kitchen but had to stop to move furniture that was blocking the way.

His brother arrived and assisted in moving the woman to the top of the stairs. By this time the intense heat from the fire was melting the house cladding and the eaves were on fire. Mr O'Brien instructed his brother to get a garden hose to douse them and the house.

With the assistance of two others, Mr O'Brien and his brother moved the woman down the stairs and away from the burning house.

Emergency services arrived shortly afterwards. Mr O'Brien, his brother, and the elderly woman were taken to hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation.

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Mr Alex OLIVER, Yallingup WA 6282

Mr Alex Oliver displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of a surfer following a shark attack at Bunker Bay, Western Australia on 31 July 2020.

At about 1:30pm, Mr Alex Oliver and a number of others were surfing 100 metres offshore when one of them saw the dorsal fin of a 5 metre Great White shark close to one of the surfers.

The alert was raised and the majority of the surfers paddled towards the shore.

The shark lunged at the nearest surfer, biting into his surfboard and lower leg, causing significant injuries, and tipping the now bleeding surfer into the water. The shark circled and attacked again. The injured man was able to shove half of his broken surfboard into the shark's open mouth. The shark continued to circle with the injured man fending it off.

Mr Oliver turned his board around and paddled to the injured surfer. On arriving at the scene the shark was laying on the sea bed directly in front of the injured surfer. Mr Oliver got the attention of the injured surfer, slid back and pulled him onto the front of the board, then continued to paddle towards the shore.

Despite the close proximity of the shark, two other surfers made their way to Mr Oliver and assisted him to convey the injured man to shore.

The rescue helicopter arrived and took the injured man to Bunbury hospital where he was treated for his injuries.

Father Liam RYAN, Midland WA 6056

Father Liam Ryan displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of a surfer following a shark attack at Bunker Bay, Western Australia on 31 July 2020.

At about 1:30pm, Father Liam Ryan and a number of others were surfing 100 metres offshore when one of them saw the dorsal fin of a 5 metre Great White shark close to one of the surfers.

The alert was raised and the majority of the surfers paddled towards the shore.

The shark lunged at the nearest surfer, biting into his surfboard and lower leg, causing significant injuries, and tipping the now bleeding surfer into the water. The shark circled and attacked again. The injured man was able to shove half of his broken surfboard into the shark's open mouth. The shark continued to circle with the injured man fending it off.

One of the surfers turned his board around and paddled to the injured surfer. Not knowing the exact whereabouts of the shark, he jumped into the water and pulled the injured man onto the front of his board. He then got back onto the board and paddled towards the shore.

Despite the close proximity of the shark, Father Ryan and another surfer made their way to the two men and helped to convey the injured man to shore.

The rescue helicopter arrived and took the injured man to Bunbury hospital where he was treated for his injuries.

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Mr Clayton James SCHILG, Mansfield QLD 4122

Mr Clayton Schilg displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of people from a rip at Wooyung Beach near Pottsville, New South Wales on 9 January 2020.

At around 2:00pm, Mr Clayton Schilg, then aged 14 years, and a friend were at Wooyung Beach when they became aware of a group of people approximately 50 metres from shore calling for assistance. The swimmers were caught in a rip and being dragged out behind the break.

Whilst his friend contacted Mr Schilg's parents, he grabbed a battered foam surfboard that had been left on the beach and paddled towards the group in distress.

He first reached two women, who confirmed they were safe and were able to make their own way back to shore. He paddled further out to where four men were in difficulty, one of the swimmers was going under and was in a bad way. Mr Schilg was able to pull him onto the board and instructed the other three to swim to him as the rip was pulling them all in different directions. One of the other three panicked on reaching him and pulled him down however, he was able to get himself free.

He instructed two of the swimmers to hang onto the board and the remaining swimmer to hold onto his waist. He positioned himself at the front of the board and began paddling towards a sandbank. On reaching the sandbank the man holding onto his waist let go and made his way to safety.

He continued to paddle the board with the other three swimmers towards the shore. As the group got closer other beachgoers came out to assist. On reaching the shore he placed the man on top of the board into the recovery position as he had ingested a large amount of water.

He and others monitored the man until paramedics arrived.

Mr Tyler James WHITE, Applecross WA 6153

Mr Tyler White displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of a man from the Canning River in Perth, Western Australia on 25 January 2020.

At about 7:30pm, a man was escorted from a hotel in Applecross after becoming aggressive. Shortly afterwards, Mr Tyler White and other hotel patrons saw the man jump from the Canning Bridge into the river about 10 metres below.

Mr White jumped into the river to locate the man. He made several dive attempts before noticing him a distance away. He swam over and managed to grab hold of him before swimming him back to the bank of the river. On reaching the bank, the man became aggressive and fought to get back into the river.

Police at the scene assisted in subduing the man and he was treated by St John Ambulance and taken to hospital.

BRAVERY MEDAL (BM)

Mr Jess WOOLHOUSE, WA

Mr Jess Woolhouse displayed considerable bravery during the rescue of a surfer following a shark attack at Bunker Bay, Western Australia on 31 July 2020.

At about 1:30pm, Mr Jess Woolhouse and a number of others were surfing 100 metres offshore when one of them saw the dorsal fin of a 5 metre Great White shark close to one of the surfers.

The alert was raised and the majority of the surfers paddled towards the shore.

The shark lunged at the nearest surfer, biting into his surfboard and lower leg, causing significant injuries, and tipping the now bleeding surfer into the water. The shark circled and attacked again. The injured man was able to shove half of his broken surfboard into the shark's open mouth. The shark continued to circle with the injured man fending it off.

One of the surfers turned his board around and paddled to the injured surfer. Not knowing the exact whereabouts of the shark, he jumped into the water and pulled the injured man onto the front of his board. He then got back onto the board and paddled towards the shore.

Despite the close proximity of the shark, Mr Woolhouse and another surfer made their way to the two men and helped to convey the injured man to shore.

The rescue helicopter arrived and took the injured man to Bunbury hospital where he was treated for his injuries.