

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Ian Ross ANTONOFF, 14 Banool Street, Horsham Vic 3400

On the night of 18 May 2008, Mr Antonoff rescued a man from a burning house at Horsham, Victoria.

Mr Antonoff was preparing for bed when he noticed a neighbour's house on fire. He told his daughter to call emergency services and ran to the nearby house dressed only in pyjamas. The intense heat and smoke initially prevented him from entering the house and there was no response to his cries to alert his neighbour. After an unsuccessful second attempt to enter the building, Mr Antonoff heard the victim calling to him. Mr Antonoff crawled through the house and was able to find the incoherent victim in the lounge. As the fire developed, the ceiling began collapsing around them and the house was engulfed in flames. With the assistance of another neighbour who stationed himself at the front of the house and called out with audible bearings, Mr Antonoff was able to take hold of the victim and guide him to safety.

By his actions, Mr Antonoff displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Douglas Roy BERRYMAN, Gol Gol, NSW, 2738

On the afternoon of 30 July 2004, Mr Berryman rescued a man from a burning car wreck at Gol Gol, New South Wales.

A car carrying four people crashed into a concrete power pole, snapping it in two and bringing down a heavy transformer box. Power lines were scattered around the wreck and the car caught on fire. Mr Berryman and his friend, who both lived nearby, heard the crash and raced to the scene. Mr Berryman stepped through the live power lines to get to the driver's side door where he tried to comfort the driver. As flames began to take hold of the car, Mr Berryman used two fire extinguishers but they were ineffective against the intensity of the flames. With the fire progressing through the front interior of the vehicle, Mr Berryman and his friend tried to pull the driver free but his legs were pinned by the crumpled dashboard. Mr Berryman released the driver's seat belt and another person, who was also at the scene, was able to reach down under the dashboard and free the man's legs. Mr Berryman and his friend managed to pull the victim free and carry him to safety as flames engulfed the entire vehicle.

By his actions, Mr Berryman displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Robert George BROWN, ACT

During the early evening of 18 November 2008, Mr Brown attempted the rescue of a fifteen month old child in waters surrounding the wharf at Tathra, New South Wales.

Mr Brown and a small number of people were fishing from the Tathra wharf on a cold, windy and overcast evening. Amongst them were a father and his two boys, a four year old and a fifteen month old harnessed in his pram. Without warning the boy and his younger brother, still in the pram, toppled from the wharf into the sea. The children's father dived into the freezing waters calling for help. Mr Brown stripped to the waist and followed him into the dangerous conditions where he saw the father trying to hold his older son above the surface. Poor light prevailed and the base of the wharf was buffeted by a strong swell. Mr Brown could see the younger child harnessed to the pram. He succeeded in taking hold of the pram and struggled repeatedly to keep the boy's head out of the water. Against impossible odds Mr Brown also tried to free the child from his harness as successive waves crashed over him. However he was thrown against the pylons and lost his grip. He then lost sight of the child. Exhausted, Mr Brown was helped from the water and was later treated at hospital. Tragically, the young father and his two sons were unable to be resuscitated.

By his actions, Mr Brown displayed considerable bravery.

Ms Sandra CAIRNEY, 7A Margaret Street, Holmesville NSW 2286

On the morning of 10 January 2007, Ms Cairney rescued her brother who was attacked by an armed intruder at his home at Holmesville, New South Wales.

Ms Cairney was woken by the incessant barking of her dogs and her brother's dog next door. She grabbed a solid metal torch and went outside to investigate. Ms Cairney called to her brother, believing there may have been a burglary. Mr Cairney heard her cries and tried to illuminate the area with floodlight. When the light failed to operate, he went to the front of his house to check the fuse box. Moments later he was heard crying out for help. Ms Cairney rushed to her brother's aid and saw a stranger holding a machete and a knife, repeatedly attacking her brother around the head and chest. Ms Cairney moved in behind the offender and hit him solidly on the head with the torch and stunned him. The attacker recovered sufficiently to retrieve the machete and menace Ms Cairney while verbally threatening her. Ms Cairney called for another neighbour to call the police while she made to repel the offender again, but he fled the scene.

By her actions, Ms Cairney displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Robert John COUSINS, 122 Wilton Drive, East Maitland NSW 2323

In the early hours of the morning of 23 May 1996, Mr Cousins (then Senior Constable) took action at the site of a burning and exploding motor vehicle at Rankin Park, New South Wales.

Senior Constable Cousins and a colleague attended the scene of a burning vehicle located in a residential street. A portion of the surrounding roadway was on fire and a man was lying on the ground with burns to his entire body. The car's interior was engulfed in thick toxic smoke, and there was a distinct smell of fuel. Unable to determine if there were other people in the car, Senior Constable Cousins leaned into the vehicle to conduct a search. Moments later his colleague warned him to retreat, and as he did so, an explosion threw him backwards onto a median strip and set his jacket alight. Having observed an object on the rear seat and believing it might be a trapped child; Senior Constable Cousins attempted to get in the car on two more occasions but was repelled by explosions on both attempts. Sadly, the victim died a short time later at the scene. The police were able to confirm that he was the sole occupant of the vehicle.

By his actions, Senior Constable Cousins displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Trevor William EASTWELL, Late of Shoalwater WA 6169

During the afternoon of 18 April 2008, Mr Eastwell rescued three children from rough surf at Shoalwater, Western Australia.

Mr Eastwell was a frequent recreational angler and had decided to take his grand-daughter, his step-son and his step-son's friend beach fishing, choosing to spend the time at a sandbar which he knew very well. The day was quite cold and, concerned about the strong current and swell, Mr Eastwell suggested two of the children move away from where they were swimming. Shortly afterwards the two boys were buffeted by waves and found themselves in considerable difficulty, unable to swim against the pull of the water. Mr Eastwell's grand-daughter attempted to assist the boys and also began to struggle in the rough conditions near the sand bar. Mr Eastwell, fully clothed, swam out to the children. In turn he grabbed each of them and swam them back to the point where they could touch the sea floor and pull themselves back onto the sand bar. With successive rescues Mr Eastwell became exhausted and tragically drowned.

By his actions, Mr Eastwell displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Senior Constable Trent Charles ELLIOTT, New South Wales Police

On the afternoon of 26 January 2008, Senior Constable Elliott helped rescue a man during riots near the Rainbow Bay Surf Life Saving Club, Coolangatta, Queensland.

Senior Constable Elliott and a colleague attended a surf club car park where some 250-300 intoxicated people were massing. A distressed young woman approached the police seeking urgent help for her boyfriend who was being bashed. Senior Constable Elliott pushed through the crowd and was shoved around by the agitated group hurling beer cans. Separate fights were breaking out in the car park and surrounding areas, building an intimidating 'mob' mood. The police were able to disperse the crowd sufficiently to then assist the victim who was bleeding heavily. As they attempted to remove him for his protection, a group of 30 violent young men encircled Senior Constable Elliott and his colleague and turned on them, punching them and dragging the victim from their custody. The officers deployed OC Spray and radioed for assistance. Senior Constable Elliott was repeatedly assaulted and was forced to draw his baton as his colleague and the victim were chased by a large group of men. He shielded his partner until the victim could be removed, and then helped detain an armed offender. The mob repeated their attacks on the officers until police reinforcements arrived to disperse the crowd.

By his actions, Senior Constable Elliott displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Luke FIRTH, Karrinyup WA 6018

On the morning of 25 September 2008, Mr Firth rescued passengers trapped in a helicopter which had crashed into Talbot Bay, Western Australia.

A commercial cruise ship was exploring the waters of Talbot Bay when its companion helicopter carrying six passengers and the pilot left the ship on a sightseeing trip. Immediately after take off the helicopter's turbine failed and the aircraft plunged into the water, nose first. It quickly rolled upside down leaving no time to deploy the flotation devices. Mr Firth immediately jumped into the water with several other crew members and swam out to the half-submerged helicopter. Mr Firth helped several passengers who were able to free themselves from the upturned aircraft, and then dived under the surface to help free two remaining female passengers. One of the women was still strapped in her seat and unconscious. The first woman was rescued without incident but repeated efforts had to be made by Mr Firth and others before the second woman was finally released and dragged free of the cabin. Within minutes the stricken helicopter sank to the bottom of the sea. As a result of the swift action of the rescuers, the passengers and pilot all survived the accident.

By his actions, Mr Firth displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Senior Constable Troy Anthony HAMILTON, New South Wales Police

On the afternoon of 26 January 2008, Senior Constable Hamilton helped rescue a man during riots near the Rainbow Bay Surf Life Saving Club, Coolangatta, Queensland.

Senior Constable Hamilton and a colleague attended a surf club car park where some 250-300 intoxicated people were massing. A distressed young woman approached the police seeking urgent help for her boyfriend who was being bashed. Senior Constable Hamilton pushed through the crowd and was attacked by beer cans, one striking him in the upper back. Although an intimidating 'mob' mood had developed, the police were able to disperse the crowd sufficiently to reach the bleeding victim. As they attempted to remove him, a group of thirty young men encircled Senior Constable Hamilton and his colleague punching them and dragging the victim from their custody and resuming their assaults on the man. The officers deployed OC Spray and radioed for assistance before removing the victim and his girlfriend to the comparative safety of the police vehicle. The crowd attempted to grab Senior Constable Hamilton and the victim again, but an officer intervened with a baton and, Senior Constable Hamilton was able to shepherd the victim to safety. The mob repeated their attacks until police reinforcements arrived to disperse the crowd.

By his actions, Senior Constable Hamilton displayed considerable bravery.

Miss Christine Margaret JOHNSON, Ashfield NSW 2131

On the morning of 1 February 2007, Miss Johnson rescued a woman from a burning house at Arncliffe, New South Wales.

Miss Johnson, a school principal, was notified that a house across the road from her school was on fire. The fire brigade was called as Miss Johnson raced to the house where she saw a woman inside at the rear of the building unable to move. Miss Johnson crouched down on her hands and knees and entered the building. The rooms were unfamiliar to her, and although she was affected by thick black smoke and intense heat, she continued to move through the house calling out to the woman. As she crawled on she passed the lounge room which was now fully engulfed in flames. Miss Johnson inched her way to the end of the hallway where she found the elderly victim. The woman was disoriented by the black smoke and motionless. Miss Johnson grabbed her, pulling her down towards the floor below the level of the smoke and led her through the burning house and outside to safety. Fearing there might be other victims inside, Miss Johnson re-entered the building to make another search until fire fighters arrived at the scene.

By her actions, Miss Johnson displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Detective Senior Constable Jeffrey Lester LITTLE, New South Wales Police

In the early hours of the morning of 23 May 1996, Detective Senior Constable Little took action at the site of a burning and exploding motor vehicle at Rankin Park, New South Wales.

Detective Senior Constable Little and a colleague attended the scene of a burning vehicle located in a residential street. Fire had ignited a portion of the surrounding roadway, and a man was lying on the ground with burns to his entire body. Detective Senior Constable Little checked the victim and was concerned that someone else may be trapped in the vehicle. The interior of the car was engulfed in thick toxic smoke as he opened the driver's door to conduct a search with his colleague. Moments later flames erupted, and seeing what appeared to be a large container of petrol, Detective Senior Constable Little yelled to his colleague to jump clear of the car. Instantaneously an explosion occurred, shooting up a large fire ball and throwing the officers metres from the car. Detective Senior Constable Little then attempted to get into the car to search for other victims two more times but each time was repelled by explosions. It was later confirmed that no other people were trapped in the car. Sadly, the victim died a short time later at the scene.

By his actions, Detective Senior Constable Little displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Matti MINTZ, Wembley Downs WA 6019

On the afternoon of 19 October 2008, Mr Mintz rescued five people from a burning supermarket at Wembley Downs, Western Australia.

Mr Mintz was visiting a local supermarket and as he walked towards the entry, saw thick black smoke flowing from air-conditioning vents. The sounds of explosions could be heard as a public address announcement directed people to leave the building. Mr Mintz saw five people gathered in a section of the supermarket who appeared to be overcome by shock. He quickly forced open the entry gates to the shop and shouted to the customers to follow him out. A teenage girl ran from the supermarket; however two elderly women and a mother and her baby were unable to move. As Mr Mintz continued to encourage them to retreat, electrical sparks erupted from the ceiling and thick black smoke engulfed the shop. Mr Mintz ran to the two women and assisted them away from the scene. He then forced his way back into the supermarket, located the disoriented mother and child and guided them through the supermarket. As he did so, the ceiling collapsed, engulfing the group in a wave of thick black smoke. Mr Mintz led the victims out to safety and waited for emergency services to arrive.

By his actions, Mr Mintz displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Ms Dee-Anne Josephine MOHI, Traralgon Vic 3844

On the morning of 4 December 2007, Ms Mohi rescued her two sons from a burning house at Traralgon, Victoria.

Ms Mohi was at home with her two young sons, and believing they were playing together in the backyard, got ready to take a shower. Moments later she saw smoke billowing from underneath the door of her sons' bedroom. The floor was partially alight and the room full of toxic smoke. Although unable to see the children through the thick haze, she heard one of the boys crying and was able to grab him and carry him away from the burning room. As she did so she called out desperately for her other son but there was no reply. Ms Mohi raced her youngest from the house to safety and returned to the house to continue searching. Crawling on her hands and knees, she screamed frantically for her second boy but was so overcome by the smoke and intense heat that she was forced to retreat. Ms Mohi went back into the burning house on two more occasions before finding her son in a corner of the bedroom. She led him outside to safety. The family was later transferred to hospital for specialist treatment.

By her actions, Ms Mohi displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Bradley MOUCHEMORE, Dongara WA 6525

Details not released at the request of Mr Mouchemore.

Mr Jack Kevin MURDOCH, Queanbeyan NSW 2620

Details not released at the request of Mr Murdoch.

Mr Mark Edwin PACEY, 140 Alexandra Street, North Rockhampton Qld 4701

During the night of 13 February 2008, Mr Pacey rescued a six month old child from floodwaters at Gogango Creek, Queensland.

Torrential rains had swollen waterways near the Capricorn Highway west of Rockhampton, and on the night of the incident, Mr Pacey witnessed a four-wheel drive cruiser aquaplane across the road into a flooded lagoon. As the vehicle began to sink, the driver and his partner quickly removed their young children and clambered on top of the vehicle calling for help. Reassuring the couple that someone would help them, Mr Pacey drove to a nearby township and raised the alarm. Returning to the scene, and with only a miner's head lamp for light, Mr Pacey jumped into the flooded waters trying to dodge submerged barbed wire and other debris to assist the family. The couple were now clinging to trees. The driver was clutching his two year old son, pleading that his partner and infant son be rescued first. In her distress the mother was reluctant to let go of the tree desperately holding aloft her infant son. Reasoning with her, Mr Pacey was able to swim the child to a co-rescuer and then return to assist her. By this time however, the woman was overcome with exhaustion and had been slipping below the surface of the water. Other rescuers helped Mr Pacey drag the woman from the lagoon and administered CPR, but sadly she was unable to be revived.

By his actions, Mr Pacey displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Adrian John RIGBY, 14 Red Hill Road, Red Hill South Vic 3937

On the morning of 25 September 2008, Mr Rigby rescued passengers trapped in a helicopter which had crashed into Talbot Bay, Western Australia.

A commercial cruise ship was exploring the waters of Talbot Bay while its companion helicopter readied for departure from the ship's helipad. As it ascended and moved from the ship, the helicopter's turbine failed and the aircraft plunged into the water, nose first. The helicopter rolled upside down with six passengers and the pilot still inside with no time to deploy the flotation devices. Mr Rigby, quickly skippered a tender craft to the site. He entered the water and dived under the surface and repeatedly entered the cabin to help free two female passengers who were unable to evacuate themselves. One of the women was strapped in her seat. Following a number of unsuccessful attempts, Mr Rigby eventually released the victim who by then had lapsed into unconsciousness. As the helicopter continued to sink, Mr Rigby pulled the woman free and brought her to the surface. He administered first aid while dragging her back to the safety of the tender. Minutes later, the stricken helicopter sank to the bottom of the sea. As a result of the swift action of the rescuers, the passengers and pilot all survived the accident.

By his actions, Mr Rigby displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Tony SIMONETTA, Farm 28 Pittman Avenue, Gol Gol. NSW 2738

Details not released at the request of Mr Simonetta.

Mr Timothy William VANDENBERG, Gol Gol NSW 2738

On the afternoon of 30 July 2004, Mr Vandenberg rescued a man from a burning car wreck at Gol Gol, New South Wales.

A car carrying four people crashed into a concrete power pole snapping it in two and bringing down a heavy transformer box. Power lines were scattered around the wreck and the car caught on fire. Mr Vandenberg and his friend who both lived nearby heard the crash and raced to the scene. The car was on fire and four people were inside. Mr Vandenberg stepped through the live power lines and with the help of a friend carried the semi-conscious passenger in the front seat to safety. Two girls in the back seat managed to get out of the vehicle unaided. The fire spread from the engine bay into the interior of the car, and although extinguishers were used, they were ineffective in suppressing the flames. Mr Vandenberg saw that the driver's legs were pinned under the crumpled dashboard and that he had sustained a serious compound fracture. As fire spread and the cabin was billowing with thick smoke, another man reached in and was able to free the victim's legs enabling Mr Vandenberg and a friend to drag the victim to safety. Minutes later the car was entirely consumed by flames.

By his actions, Mr Vandenberg displayed considerable bravery.