

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Raymond Leslie BRUCKNER, Lowood Qld 4311

On the afternoon of 11 January 2011, following torrential rain which caused major flooding, two men were thrown from their five-metre aluminium boat into the water. As they travelled downstream in the fast moving water, the boat flipped and sank, however the men managed to grab a wire which traversed the swollen creek. Mr Raymond Bruckner and a colleague became aware of the men's predicament and entered the creek in a canoe in an attempt to rescue the two men. While instructions from the police were relayed from the bank, they paddled in the strong current to eventually reach the stricken men. Mr Bruckner and his colleague assisted one of the men to grab a rope that was tied to the canoe before they paddled their way over to the northern bank. The men then paddled upstream to make their way back to the other man still in the water, when Mr Bruckner's colleague was knocked out of the canoe by the wire. Both men in the water managed to climb back into the canoe and they paddled back to the riverbank to safety.

By his actions, Mr Bruckner displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Stephen Edward de LORENZO, 31 Moverly Road, Maroubra NSW 2035

In the early morning of 31 May 2009, police responded to the Lakes Hotel at Roseberry where a man had staff 'holed up' inside. On arrival, the officers including Mr (then Sergeant) Stephen de Lorenzo entered the Hotel main bar area. Leading the way, Sergeant de Lorenzo, who was unarmed, saw a man wearing a balaclava, armed with a .357 calibre revolver and had three hostages. He fired his taser unsuccessfully at the offender and the man immediately fired two shots at Sergeant de Lorenzo, narrowly missing him. Sergeant de Lorenzo retreated and put on a ballistic vest. He then commandeered a colleague's firearm and returned to the bar area, where the offender grabbed a hostage and aimed his gun at his head. Fearing imminent danger to the hostage, Sergeant de Lorenzo fired at the offender. The bullet grazed his head and he fell down however he was able to maintain his command over the hostages. Sergeant de Lorenzo moved towards the bottle shop, where he was able to fire again, wounding the offender. The offender shot Sergeant de Lorenzo in the right shoulder, before the Sergeant fired again and wounded the offender for a third time. One hostage then managed to escape. Sergeant de Lorenzo then exited the hotel and, following negotiations, the siege ended when the wounded man surrendered to the police.

By his actions Mr de Lorenzo displayed considerable bravery.

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Mr Samuel Julian EDWARDS, 9 William Street, Kiama NSW 2533

On the evening of 24 April 2011, Mr Samuel Edwards rescued a man after a helicopter crashed into the sea at Lilli Pilli near Batemans Bay, New South Wales. Standing near his residence Mr Edwards saw the lights of a Robinson Helicopter crash into the sea about 40 to 50 metres north of the headland between Circuit Beach and Lilli Pilli Beach. Returning home, he arranged for his brother to call 000, before Mr Edwards and his brother returned to where he saw the accident. Mr Edwards made his way down to the water while his brother waited for rescue services to arrive. Mr Edwards entered the water across rocks and called for survivors as he swam towards the helicopter. After hearing a voice, Mr Edwards located the elderly pilot who was clinging to rocks in heavy surf about twenty metres from the helicopter. When the pilot said that his wife was missing, Mr Edwards swam through debris to search for the woman. Unable to locate her, he went back to the pilot who was again in the water and pulled him onto the rocks. Mr Edwards then searched the rock area until a rescue helicopter and Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) arrived on the scene. After searching the area, the crew from the IRB found the woman. Sadly, she was unable to be revived on shore.

By his actions, Mr Edwards displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Ernst GOMSI, 130 Clarendon Road, Lowood Qld 4311

On the afternoon of 11 January 2011, following torrential rain which caused major flooding, two men were thrown from their five-metre aluminium boat into the water. As they travelled downstream in the fast moving water, the boat flipped and sank, however the men managed to grab a wire which traversed the swollen creek. Mr Ernst Gomsi and a colleague became of the men's predicament and entered the creek in a canoe in an attempt to rescue the two men. While instructions from the police were relayed from the bank, they paddled in the strong current to eventually reach the stricken men. Mr Gomsi and his colleague assisted one of the men to grab a rope that was tied to the canoe before they paddled their way over to the northern bank. The men then paddled upstream to make their way back to the other man still in the water, when Mr Gomsi was knocked out of the canoe by the wire. Both men in the water then managed to climb back into the canoe and they paddled back to the riverbank to safety.

By his actions, Mr Gomsi displayed considerable bravery.

Ms Lisa Margaret HALL, 7 Wilson Street, Lowanna NSW 2450

On the evening of 19 November 2006, Ms Lisa Hall rescued her brother who was being attacked by an armed offender. Ms Hall, who resides directly behind her brother's residence in Lowanna, heard hysterical shouts and immediately went to investigate. When she arrived, she saw that her brother was being assaulted by an offender who was intoxicated and in a drug fuelled rage. Ms Hall intervened and separated the offender from her brother. Despite continued threats of violence from the offender, she called 000 several times and relayed live information to the police. When her brother collapsed, she comforted him until emergency services arrived.

By her actions, Ms Hall displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Alfred John HARDING, deceased, late of Craigmore SA 5118

On the evening of 23 December 1927, Mr Alfred Harding rescued a boy from drowning in Lock No 6 at the Murray River near Renmark, South Australia. Mr Harding accompanied several children to go swimming in the river. After they entered the water, one of the children, aged nine, became caught in deep water and called for help. Mr Harding immediately swam into the strong current to the boy, where he attempted to calm him. Mr Harding attempted to swim the boy to safety but struggled in the fast flowing water. He went below the surface, however with great difficulty was able to hold the boy just above the water until help arrived. As the boy was being rescued by others who used a boat to reach him Mr Harding disappeared under the surface. Sadly,

Mr Harding was later pulled from the river deceased.

By his actions, Mr Harding displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Ryan John HARVEY, Margaret River WA 6285

On the afternoon of 4 September 2011, Mr Ryan Harvey assisted in the attempted rescue of a surfer who had been attacked by a shark. Mr Harvey was body boarding with a group of about ten other surfers at an area called the Bone Yards, at the eastern end of Bunker Bay. At the time they were approximately 200 metres off shore in a choppy swell when a surfer shouted 'shark'. After seeing a commotion in the water, all the surfers began to paddle frantically back to shore. When one of the surfers could not locate his friend, he turned around, saw the man's board being tossed around in a wave and immediately paddled back out to sea. Mr Harvey saw the man paddling back out and he went to assist. The man reached his friend's board and saw that he was submerged. He pulled him up so that his head was above the surface, and with great difficulty, started paddling back to shore. Soon after, Mr Harvey arrived and assisted to paddle and keep the injured man afloat. Despite being buffeted by the waves, the men managed to reach shallower water where they now saw the terrible injuries the man had sustained. Sadly, the man was deceased.

By his actions, Mr Harvey displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Bradley Damian HINDMARSH, 32 Tosti Street, Sorrento Qld 4217

On the morning of 11 January 2011, Firefighter Bradley Hindmarsh, onboard an Army Blackhawk helicopter, rescued a number of people stranded on their rooftops at Grantham. The helicopter, contained fire-fighter personnel on their way to Lockrose to conduct rescue operations as well as Swift Water Rescue Team (SWRT) members. The SWRT members were already exhausted after performing several rescues of people affected by the devastating floods at Grantham. In horrendous conditions, as they flew towards Lockrose, the crew spotted several people on rooftops. Concerned about the poor visibility, the Army crew requested the SWRT members conduct the winch rescues while the aircrew acted as observers, to ensure the helicopter did not make contact with power lines and trees. Firefighter Hindmarsh volunteered to perform the rescues, even though he was not trained to do so. After minimal instruction in extremely noisy conditions, Firefighter Hindmarsh went down the wire, and in several operations, he rescued a family of five, including a six month old baby. The family were then dropped off to police at a safe location.

By his actions, Mr Hindmarsh displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Johnathon Edward KLAASSEN, Grantham Qld 4347

On the afternoon of 10 January 2011, when flash flooding inundated Grantham, Mr Johnathon Klaassen assisted in the rescue of a number of residents. Mr Klaassen had taken refuge on high ground when he came across a distraught man who explained that his family remained trapped in their house. Mr Klaassen and the man ran up the road, entered the water, and allowed the current to take them about 50 metres downstream to the house. After they entered the house, they located two young children. They took the children to the roof where they were evacuated by helicopter. Later that day, Mr Klaassen and his brother arrived at a house where they located an elderly woman who needed assistance. They helped the woman gather her medication and then evacuated her to safety. Despite their own house being destroyed, the men continued to search for others in the dark. They rescued a boy and his father in two trees about 50 metres apart. Later, they located a ladder and rescued several people who had taken refuge on a house roof.

By his actions, Mr Klaassen displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr David Eric LOWRY, 21 Washington Street, Hilton SA 5033

On the evening of 22 August 2003, Mr David Lowry rescued an elderly man from a burning house at Plympton. Mr Lowry and his daughter were driving along a street in Plympton, when they noticed a bright orange glow inside the front of a house. Mr Lowry immediately stopped his vehicle and approached the house, and saw flames through the front door before one of the windows exploded. He ran to the front door and banged on a nearby window to raise the alarm. Mr Lowry then ran to the rear of the house and saw the back door open. He yelled inside and heard someone calling for help. Mr Lowry went inside the burning house and crawled through the thick smoke. He heard a man calling, and found him collapsed on the kitchen floor. Mr Lowry grabbed hold of the man's clothing and pulled him along the floor outside to safety, as the roof started to collapse.

By his actions, Mr Lowry displayed considerable bravery.

Inspector Bruce James McNAB, Queensland Police

During the morning of 22 August 2003, Inspector (then Detective Sergeant) Bruce McNab assisted in the capture of an offender after a colleague was fatally shot by a man armed with a high powered rifle. Earlier, three officers went to The Weir, Caboolture, responding to a report that a man had stashed a high-powered rifle in the bushland. The officers were unsure if the man remained in the area. One of the officers approached a concrete pit where the man armed with his rifle lay in wait. The offender shot one of the officers and then fired several shots at the other two. Along with colleagues, Detective Sergeant McNab arrived and parked his vehicle about one kilometre away from where he heard shots being fired. He evacuated a couple from a nearby house before he entered the dense bushland, and located his colleagues on the other side of a weir. They told him that one of their colleagues was not moving after being shot and he was laying in open ground, about 30 metres to their front. Detective Sergeant McNab crossed the weir and moved into bushland where he made his way through approximately one kilometre of bush back towards the clearing. Unaware of the exact location of the shooter, Detective Sergeant McNab then crossed twenty metres of open ground to reach the officer and found he was deceased. Detective Sergeant McNab saw a concrete pit about two metres away just as the other two officers moved towards him. Concerned that the shooter may be hiding in the pit, he moved to the pit and found the shooter had fatally shot himself.

By his actions, Inspector McNab displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Samuel James MATTHEWS, deceased, Late of Spring Bluff Qld 4352

On 10 January 2011, four members of the Matthews family were at their property, near Murphy's Creek and Spring Bluff Creek. Water had risen very quickly and surrounded their home. After calling 000, the family prepared to climb onto the roof, and water began to inundate the house at a very fast rate. Samuel followed his parent's escape plan and pushed his 15-year-old sister down the hallway and lifted her through the man hole into the roof cavity. When his parents did not follow, he returned to help them. Samuel saw the back wall and entire contents of the kitchen had been washed away, and that his parents were missing. As water was flowing straight through the house, Samuel headed back up the hallway, grabbed some towels from the laundry and climbed into the roof cavity. He used the towels to comfort his sister as they watched the water come to within half a metre of the ceiling. When the flash flooding subsided, Samuel and his sister made their way to safety.

By his actions, Mr Matthews displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Sollee MORRIS, Western Australia

On the afternoon of 4 September 2011, Mr Sollee Morris assisted in the attempted rescue of a surfer who had been attacked by a shark. Mr Morris was body boarding with a group of about ten other surfers at an area called the Bone Yards, at the eastern end of Bunker Bay. At the time they were approximately 200 metres off shore in a choppy swell. Mr Morris was paddling back to his friend when a surfer shouted 'shark'. After seeing a commotion in the water, all the surfers began to paddle frantically back to shore. When Mr Morris could not locate his friend, he turned around, saw the man's board being tossed around in a wave and immediately paddled back out to sea. Another surfer saw Mr Morris paddling back out and he went to assist. Mr Morris reached his friend's board and saw that he was submerged. He pulled him up so that his head was above the surface, and with great difficulty, started paddling back to shore. Soon after, the other surfer arrived and assisted to paddle and keep the injured man afloat. Despite being buffeted by the waves, the men managed to reach shallower water where they now saw the terrible injuries the man had sustained. Sadly, the man was deceased.

By his actions, Mr Morris displayed considerable bravery.

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Mr Brett MORRISSEY, Leichhardt Qld 4305

Early on the afternoon of 24 December 2011, Mr Brett Morrissey rescued two people from a burning house at Leichhardt. Mr Morrissey was at his residence when he smelt smoke and went to investigate to find a thick plume of smoke coming from a nearby house. He immediately ran past other bystanders to reach the burning house and saw a child inside peering out through a bedroom window. Mr Morrissey tore the front screen door away but was unable to kick the main door open. He picked up a garden statue and used it to smash the door open before he grabbed a blanket from a bystander, covered his face, and entered the house. Mr Morrissey was forced back outside by the intense heat and thick smoke. Grabbing hold of the statue again, Mr Morrissey smashed a bedroom window and, assisted by another person, he pulled the child to safety. After becoming aware that a woman remained inside, Mr Morrissey re-entered the front door, despite the house being consumed by fire. He located the woman on the lounge room floor and dragged her to the front door. Assisted by others, Mr Morrissey dragged the woman to the front lawn to safety.

By his actions, Mr Morrissey displayed considerable bravery.

Ms Bubby Kopaki TUHIWAI, Wagin WA 6315

Early in the morning of 2 April 2011, Ms Bubby Tuhiwai rescued a man from a burning house at Wagin. Ms Tuhiwai was walking home when she saw thick smoke emanating from a male friend's house. She immediately went to the front door of the house to raise the alarm and attempted to open the door. After finding the rear door locked, Ms Tuhiwai again ran to the front door and, after several attempts, kicked it open. The house was filled with heavy smoke. Ms Tuhiwai dropped to her hands and knees and crawled inside, where she found her friend lying on the lounge room floor. She grabbed hold of the man by his shirt, and, dragged him from the lounge room and out the front door. When they exited the house, Ms Tuhiwai saw that the entire back of the building was engulfed in flames. She then struggled with her friend to stop him going back into the burning house to locate his dog. The man was later treated in Perth Hospital for burns to nearly fifteen percent of his body.

By her actions, Ms Tuhiwai displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Con VARELA, 10 Kingscliff Street, Kingscliff NSW 2487

On the morning of 2 June 2011, Mr Con Varela rescued a man from assault at Murwillumbah, New South Wales. Mr Varela witnessed a verbal confrontation between three people inside his pharmacy. When the people left the store and continued to argue, Mr Varela followed them outside. Mr Varela saw two men wrestling between two parked cars and realised one of them had been stabbed. When he saw the offender had a knife in his right hand and was about to stab the man again, he moved forward and grabbed hold of the man's wrist. The offender released the knife on Mr Varela's orders. The police quickly arrived and arrested the offender.

By his actions, Mr Varela displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Nathan Christopher VISSCHER, Redhead NSW 2290

On the afternoon of 18 January 2012, Mr Nathan Visscher rescued a man who was attacked by a shark at Redhead Beach. Mr Visscher was surfing approximately forty metres from shore at Redhead Beach when he heard another surfer, who was about twenty metres away, screaming for help. Mr Visscher quickly realised the man had been attacked by a shark and paddled to him. As other surfers saw the commotion and paddled towards shore, Mr Visscher reached the man who had now climbed back onto his surfboard. The man was lying on his board but was weak due to the injuries he had sustained to his right thigh and buttock area. Mr Visscher saw a large trail of blood in the water and the shark following nearby. Mr Visscher comforted the distressed man and assisted him to catch a wave closer to shore. After catching another wave, he reached the man and they both caught another wave to shore. Mr Visscher helped the man to the sand and assisted lifeguards and paramedics to treat him.

By his actions, Mr Visscher displayed considerable bravery.

Mr Russell Robert VON NIDA, Buccan Qld 4207

On the morning of 11 January 2011, Station Officer Russel Von Nida, onboard an Army Blackhawk helicopter, rescued a number of people stranded on their rooftops at Grantham. The helicopter, contained fire-fighter personnel on their way to Lockrose to conduct rescue operations as well as Swift Water Rescue Team (SWRT) members. The SWRT members were already exhausted after performing several rescues of people affected by the devastating floods at Grantham. In horrendous conditions, as they flew towards Lockrose, the crew spotted several people on rooftops. Concerned about the poor visibility, the Army crew requested the SWRT members conduct the winch rescues while the aircrew acted as observers, to ensure the helicopter did not make contact with power lines and trees. Station Officer Von Nida volunteered to perform the rescues, even though he was not trained to do so. Soon after take off, they saw a man trapped at a house. After minimal instruction in extremely noisy conditions, Station Officer Von Nida was winched down about 50 metres and harnessed the man. They made their way out into the water and hooked themselves onto the wire, before they were winched up to the aircraft. Aware a neighbouring family was also stranded, they hovered above the property and saw a man frantically waving his arms. Although he was feeling dizzy, Station Officer Von Nida was winched down once again. Station Officer Von Nida rescued the family over several winch sorties, and they were transported to safety.

By his actions, Mr Von Nida displayed considerable bravery.

BRAVERY MEDAL

Mr Ross James WOODTHORPE ANDERSON,
23 Richardson Street, Lane Cove NSW 2066

On the afternoon of 27 November 2008, Mr Ross Woodthorpe Anderson rescued a woman from a rip at Tallows Beach, Byron Bay. Mr Woodthorpe Anderson and a friend were jogging along the beach when they saw a distressed woman caught in a rip. Mr Woodthorpe Anderson immediately entered the water and swam to the woman. He tried to tow the woman out of the rip, as she fought against him. Meanwhile, his friend ran to get help, before entering the water with others to rescue the woman. One of the rescuers who had grabbed a surfboard before entering the water dragged the exhausted woman onto the board. He then pulled one of the other rescuers who had become exhausted on to the board. He managed to get the pair to shore, while Mr Woodthorpe Anderson and another of the rescuers made their way back to shore, after being in the water for almost forty minutes.

By his actions, Mr Woodthorpe Anderson displayed considerable bravery.