

THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY DECORATION (N.Z.B.D.)

Heath Courtenay JONES **Sergeant, New Zealand Police**

Date of action: 7 May 2009

Date of award: 2 April 2011

Citation

On 7 May 2009, Sergeant Heath Jones was one of the first Police Officers to arrive at the scene of the fatal shooting of Senior Constable Len Snee, and the wounding of Mr Len Holmwood, and Senior Constables Grant Diver and Bruce Miller, by Mr Jan Molenaar in Chaucer Road South, Napier.

Sergeant Jones advanced into the immediate scene of the incident with several colleagues while under fire from Mr Molenaar. Once the position where the wounded Senior Constable Miller was lying had been located, he, along with Constable Kevin Rooney and Senior Sergeant Anthony Miller, moved over to where he lay to protect him. It was about this time that a group of three Armed Offenders Squad members passed close by, attracting the attention of the gunman who fired five to 10 shots from a high-powered rifle that kicked up dirt and stones very close to where they were crouching. Also about this time, Detective Sergeant Smith decided to use a red civilian car parked nearby to remove Senior Constable Miller from the scene. Sergeant Jones provided cover with his rifle while Detective Sergeant Smith drove the car to where Senior Constable Miller lay and, with the assistance of Senior Sergeant Miller and Constable Rooney, successfully evacuated Constable Miller from the scene.

Having assisted in the evacuation of Senior Constable Miller, Sergeant Jones and others withdrew from their position and established a cordon point at the northern junction of Chaucer Road South and Guys Hill Road. It was here that they were advised that the wounded Senior Constable Diver was located at No. 45 Chaucer Road South, two doors away from gunman Jan Molenaar's house at No. 41. A plan was formulated in which an evacuation party consisting of Detective Sergeant Clere, Detective Sergeant Smith and Mr Stephen Smith, an Advanced Paramedic from St John Ambulance, would take a stretcher to where Senior Constable Diver was hiding and attempt to remove him from the scene. The plan included provision for a "hot extraction" using an ambulance, should the group be fired upon at any stage. Sergeant Jones gave his ballistic vest to the paramedic and remained at the cordon point while the evacuation party set out. Having successfully recovered Senior Constable Diver from his position at No. 45, the evacuation party began its return journey to the cordon point; however, they encountered difficulty due to the steep gradient of the hill. Seeing this, Sergeant Jones, without his ballistic vest, ran down the hill, took over from one of the other Police Officers at the front of the stretcher and assisted the group to safety.

Sergeant Jones played an important role in the events that took place on the morning of 7 May. He displayed exceptional bravery and put his own life in danger during the successful evacuation of Senior Constable Miller from his exposed position near the gunman's house, while under fire, by providing cover while his colleagues protected Senior Constable Miller and then placed the wounded officer in the car. He performed a second act of bravery that morning by going to the assistance of the group evacuating Senior Constable Diver, even though he had earlier given his body armour to the paramedic in the evacuation team.