

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

Brian John PICKERING

Date of action: 25 September 2000

Date of award: 23 October 2005

Citation

On 25 September 2000, Mr John Painting and his son Matthew were tramping in the Kaimanawa Ranges. At an altitude of almost 5,000 feet, they were caught in what was later reported as a "50 year storm" with freezing temperatures, 70 knot winds and blizzard conditions. They were found by chance in a distressed condition and suffering from hypothermia by Mr Brian Pickering, who was on the first day of a six day journey into the Kaimanawa Forest Park. Using his skill and experience, Mr Pickering positioned the two men below a track, placed them in their sleeping bags and gave them food. He also tried to wrap them with a tent to shield them from the driving wind. He then dialled 111 on his cell phone and alerted the Police to the situation. He was able to provide details of their location and names, and requested assistance from the search and rescue organisation. He managed to get both men into one sleeping bag and remained with them, keeping them as warm as possible until help arrived. Throughout the incident he kept in regular contact with the search and rescue headquarters. Mr Pickering put his own life at risk by staying with the two men, who would have died in the storm had it not been for his actions.