

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

Blair John SPALDING Senior Constable, New Zealand Police

Date of action: 25 August 2014

Date of award: 1 August 2016

Citation

On 25 August 2014 in Hamilton a van was stolen by an offender with a history of violent crime and methamphetamine use. Constable Blair Spalding (now Senior Constable) responded and pursued the van into a traffic-heavy road, where he attempted to pass to warn traffic ahead and create a buffer between civilian traffic and the van. The van swerved into oncoming traffic to prevent Spalding from overtaking. Given his knowledge of the offender's propensity to carry firearms Constable Spalding deemed it an unacceptable risk to allow the van into the central city and pulled alongside the van, at which point it swerved and came into contact with Spalding's Police dog van. Spalding pushed the van off the road and across the footpath, before it broke free and continued along the street, eventually entering the carpark of a supermarket via the exit lane and colliding with a vehicle that was leaving. The offender left the van carrying a loaded sawn-off shotgun.

Constable Spalding entered the car park and swung around to cut the offender off. The offender, now on foot, ran into the side of the dog van before continuing and attempting to take another vehicle at gunpoint from an elderly woman at the supermarket's petrol pumps. Spalding exited his vehicle and encountered the offender grappling with Constable Benjamin Turner. Spalding ran to assist and held one of the offender's arms, while Turner restrained the other arm. During the struggle both barrels of the shotgun went off and Constable Spalding suffered a number of puncture wounds to his left foot and leg, while the offender caught ricochet pellets to his leg and torso. The offender was properly restrained once another Police officer engaged the offender with his dog and handcuffs were able to be applied.