

THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY MEDAL (N.Z.B.M.)

Alan Maurice BUTCHER (Posthumous)
Station Officer, New Zealand Fire Service
(Deceased 18 October 2013, Christchurch)

Date of action: 22 February 2011

Date of award: 23 June 2014

Citation

On 22 February 2011 a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck Christchurch, resulting in the collapse of the six-storey Canterbury Television building. A fire had ignited in the lower levels of the building, complicating rescue efforts. Station Officer Alan Butcher was the Officer in Charge of the first firefighters to arrive at the CTV building. After tasking his crew with firefighting, Butcher carried out a reconnaissance of the building, gathering information about how many people were in the building and its layout. As no other firefighters had yet arrived, Butcher worked with a group of civilians to enter a narrow cavity, where he was able to reassure trapped victims. Butcher became stuck for a short time, but freed himself and was able to extract three survivors, passing them back to the civilian group. The rescue efforts of Alan Butcher were carried out in dense smoke from the fire and under the constant threat of aftershocks.