

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

Kevin CARR

Lieutenant Commander, Royal New Zealand Navy

Date of action: 22 February 2011

Date of award: 23 June 2014

Citation

When the 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck Christchurch on 22 February 2011, Lieutenant Commander Kevin Carr was working at the HMNZS Pegasus Naval Reserve Personnel Division. After the majority of staff had left Pegasus to join their families, Lieutenant Commander Carr assumed command of the small team remaining and instructed them to search the immediate area and offer assistance. When Carr heard of the extensive damage in the central city he led a team of five into the city to support relief efforts. En-route to the central city the team assisted trapped survivors in various buildings where they were able.

At about 3.30pm Carr and his team arrived at the Canterbury Television building, which had collapsed in a “pancake” effect, and began a 12-hour rescue operation. Carr’s team faced significant danger from the fire burning within the building and beneath their feet, as well as persistent aftershocks. Carr crawled several times into tight, dark and smoke-filled gaps in the building to search for survivors. On one occasion part of the roof he was standing on collapsed and he fell part way into the hole that was created. Carr suffered a leg wound at this point but managed to free himself, and he continued to provide leadership for his team in a determined effort to rescue as many people as possible. Carr’s team managed to lift a section of the roof to see if any survivors were present in the fire-affected area of the building. The heat and the flames finally forced the team to withdraw.