

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

### Grant Wayne EXETER

Date of action: 30 July 2008

Date of award: 2 April 2011

#### *Citation*

At 3.00 p.m. on 30 July 2008 Mr Grant Exeter, aged 53 years, was working at the Makuri Quarry, when he was told that a car with one occupant had been swept off the road nearby and into the Pongaroa/Pahiatua Rivers, which were in flood. The car had rolled down the bank and appeared to be sinking.

Mr Exeter and his workmate immediately ran to the scene and tried to throw a long cargo strap to the driver, who was trapped in the car. These attempts failed. Seeing that the water was rising steadily and there was a possibility the driver might drown, Mr Exeter decided to enter the freezing water and take the strap to the trapped vehicle.

Because of the strong current, Mr Exeter had to enter the river upstream and let himself be carried downstream towards the car. During the attempt his only link to safety was a light rope held by his workmate. If Mr Exeter were to miss his target, he would risk drowning or serious injury amongst the trees and other debris in the river. Fortunately his attempt was successful. On reaching the car, he braced his feet against it, and leant into the current for support while he tied the strap around the waist of the driver. While doing this he also had to hold the driver's face above the water, which was beginning to cover his mouth and nose.

Mr Exeter then clung to the car while his colleagues dragged its driver to the bank, and safety. The strap was then thrown back to Mr Exeter who, in turn, was pulled from the river.

Mr Exeter displayed bravery in entering the flooded river at risk to his own life to save the driver of the trapped car. Had he not been successful, both he and the driver could have drowned in the freezing waters.