

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

William John FUNNELL, M.B.E.

Date of action: 24 – 25 April 1992

Date of award: 23 October 1999

Citation

On the evening of 24 April 1992 Mr Funnell, chief pilot of the Taupo-based New Zealand Rail rescue helicopter, a Squirrel, made a flight to uplift from the remote Campbell Island a man, Mr Mike Fraser, who had been attacked by a shark. Mr Funnell was accompanied by another pilot and a paramedic. The rescue operation successfully carried Mr Fraser to Invercargill Hospital, and he made a good recovery from his ordeal. The Squirrel touched down again at Taupo 25 hours after the request to make the trip. The flight over some 1200 kilometres of ocean was believed to be unprecedented anywhere in the world in terms of single-engine helicopter operations and was undertaken at considerable risk to those on board. Mr Funnell displayed bravery in undertaking this flight without which the shark attack victim would not have survived.