

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

### **Craig Munro JACKSON** **Senior Firefighter, New Zealand Fire Service**

Date of action: 22 February 2011

Date of award: 23 June 2014

#### *Citation*

On 22 February 2011 a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck Christchurch, causing the collapse of the Pyne Gould Corporation building, trapping around 30 people inside. Senior Firefighter Craig Jackson was initially part of a group of firefighters on the southern side of the building working with small tools and clearing debris to assist in locating trapped persons. Jackson then joined another firefighter to enter holes in the side of the building and conduct a crawling search between the pancaked floors, looking for survivors. The space they searched was too confined for the firefighters to wear protective gear. The first survivor located was a badly injured woman hemmed into a tight space around 50 centimetres high, four metres into the building. The two firefighters shifted rubble out of the way, allowing the woman to be rescued. A second man was located pinned underneath air-conditioning equipment and was freed using a hacksaw. Jackson joined a relief tunnelling team of firefighters who took over rescue efforts for a woman who had called for help on her cellphone. Jackson's team tunneled into a space of around 30 centimetres high, where Jackson's team members reported feeling concrete pressing simultaneously on their chests and backs during an aftershock. The woman was trapped around five metres inside the tunnel, and could not be reached due to a large concrete beam. The woman was later rescued by an Urban Search and Rescue team who tunneled down to her location. Craig Jackson's rescue efforts were conducted in unstable and confined conditions under the constant threat of aftershocks.