

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

Christopher Steven MCDOWELL
Constable, New Zealand Police

Date of action: 27 July 2014

Date of award: 1 August 2016

Citation

On 27 July 2014 Constable Chris McDowell attended a family violence callout to a house in the Auckland suburb of Papatoetoe along with two other Police officers.

A woman met the Police officers outside the property and stated that her husband was inside armed with a knife and was threatening self-harm, having earlier threatened to kill her with the knife. One of the officers observed the man through an open window and told him to drop his knives, to which the man responded by beginning to cut his wrist with a large kitchen knife. Constable McDowell then broke a glass panel to bypass the locked front door and the three Police officers entered the house, finding the man sitting on a couch with two knives. McDowell and a second officer aimed their tasers at the man and instructed him to drop the knives. When this was ignored McDowell fired his taser, which had no effect in subduing the man. A second shot from McDowell's taser also had no effect. The man then stood and charged at the Police officers with both knives outstretched. The Police officers became separated as they attempted to back out of the room. Constable McDowell was cornered by the man in the kitchen, who stabbed him in the stomach with the larger knife, which was stopped by stab resistant body armour. As the man tried to stab McDowell in the neck with the smaller knife, the second Police officer grabbed the man from behind while he still had both knives, and wrestled him to the floor. After a violent struggle the three Police officers were able to disarm and arrest the man.