

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

**Mark TAYLOR**

**Chief Petty Officer Combat System Specialist, Royal New Zealand Navy**

Date of action: 5 October 2007

Date of award: 2 April 2011

### *Citation*

On 5 October 2007 Chief Petty Officer Combat System Specialist Mark Taylor, a member of the ship's company of HMNZS Canterbury, was involved in a series of sea boat drills for coxswain training while on route from Cape Reinga to Auckland. He was standing in an alcove from which a rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RHIB) was being lowered. Everything progressed normally until the RHIB touched the water and tipped onto its side. Two crew members in the RHIB at the time managed to escape, but two others were restrained by their harnesses and forced back into the boat by the on-rush of water. As HMNZS Canterbury was being brought to a stop, an attempt was made to hoist the RHIB back on board. At this point, it turned over completely, trapping the two occupants beneath it. One crew member managed to escape, but the other remained trapped inside the upturned boat.

During this time, several of the ship's company entered the water and attempted to rescue the trapped sailor, including Chief Petty Officer Taylor, who had pulled on his wetsuit as the RHIB tipped on its side. He made several unsuccessful rescue attempts by free diving under the boat and trying to cut the trapped sailor's harness. During one of his brief periods on the surface, he attempted to release the boat's self-righting gear, but unfortunately this was also unsuccessful. He continued to try to rescue the trapped sailor, until, after almost losing consciousness and suffering from water in the lungs, he too needed to be assisted from the water. Chief Petty Officer Taylor was later admitted to the ship's hospital, suffering from exhaustion, salt water aspiration and a shoulder strain.

As an experienced diver, Chief Petty Officer Taylor was fully aware of how dangerous these rescue attempts could be, but he displayed bravery when, though injured, he persisted in his efforts to rescue his fellow crew member to the point of exhaustion and where his own life could have been at risk.