

THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY STAR (N.Z.B.S.)

John Bell FENTON-PENETANA

Date of action: 10 December 1999

Date of award: 29 January 2005

Citation

On the morning of Friday 10 December 1999, a man entered his home and instructed his defacto partner to go to the shops for some cigarettes. While she was away, he killed their children by cutting their throats. When she returned to their home he attempted to cut her throat and stab her to death. Her screams were heard by two neighbours, Mr Fenton-Penetana and Mr Mokaraka, who both went to her aid. Upon entering the house they were confronted by the man who was attempting to kill his partner on the lounge floor. The two men tried to disarm him and in the process Mr Mokaraka received a fatal stab wound to the chest. Mr Fenton-Penetana and the woman continued to defend themselves against the man's crazed attacks with the knife. After a fight lasting some considerable time, Mr Fenton-Penetana managed to disarm the man before he and the woman were able to make their escape. The man then locked himself inside the house with his two deceased children and inflicted knife wounds to himself. These were not fatal. He was subsequently charged with three counts of murder and two counts of attempted murder, but was found not guilty on grounds of insanity.