

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

Robert Edwin (Rob) HALL, M.B.E. (Deceased)

Date of action: 10 May 1996

Date of award: 23 October 1999

Citation

On Friday 10 May 1996, Mr Hall was descending from the summit of Mt Everest, in the Himalayas, following his 11-strong expedition's attempt on the peak, when a blizzard developed. From the Hillary Step, just below the summit, Mr Hall called on the radio for oxygen and assistance for an American climber in the party who had collapsed. Other parties on the descent were unable to reascend due to the storm, yet Mr Hall refused entreaties to descend without the stricken climber. Fellow New Zealand mountaineer, Mr Andrew Harris, did attempt to reach them, but the American climber died during the night. Mr Hall made his way down to the South Summit where early on 11 May he contacted Base Camp by radio. Exhausted and frostbitten, he was unable to descend further. When informed of a failed rescue attempt later that day he responded with dignity and courage. His last communication by radio and satellite link was to give encouragement to his expectant wife in New Zealand. Out of oxygen, he succumbed to the cold some time during the Saturday night. Mr Hall understood that by remaining behind with the American climber he reduced greatly his own chances of survival. His selflessness in deciding to remain with him was an outstanding act of bravery.