

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

Timothy Nigel SMITH **Detective Sergeant, New Zealand Police**

Date of action: 7 May 2009

Date of award: 2 April 2011

Citation

On 7 May 2009 Detective Sergeant Timothy Smith was one of the first Police Officers to arrive at the scene of the fatal shooting of Senior Constable Len Snee, and the wounding of Mr Len Holmwood, and Senior Constables Grant Diver and Bruce Miller, by Mr Jan Molenaar in Chaucer Road South, Napier.

Though he was unarmed, Detective Sergeant Smith advanced into the immediate scene of the incident with several colleagues to a position across the road and slightly uphill from Mr Molenaar's house, and where two civilians were sheltering behind their cars. From this position, Senior Constable Miller could be seen lying wounded in a driveway next to Mr Molenaar's house and partially sheltered by a low brick wall. Having ascertained that one of the civilian cars had the keys in the ignition and was able to be driven, Detective Sergeant Smith ordered the two civilians to get clear of the area. Realising that it would not be possible to extract Senior Constable Miller without some means of protecting him, Detective Sergeant Smith decided to make a rescue attempt using the car. He climbed in, cleared the back seat of a guitar case and then heard a volley of shots, which made him duck for cover on the front seats. As he did so, he saw two Police Officers approach Senior Constable Miller on the other side of the road and cover his body with theirs to protect him from further injury. All three were afforded some protection by the low brick wall.

Assuming that the shots were aimed in his direction and fearing for the safety of his colleagues, especially those around Senior Constable Miller, Detective Sergeant Smith sat up, started the car, reversed, did a U-turn and then reversed again into the driveway where Senior Constable Miller lay. As he backed into the driveway, one of the officers with Senior Constable Miller opened the back door and he was quickly loaded into the back seat. Detective Sergeant Smith then drove away from the scene to a position of safety at the Police cordon and an ambulance was called. Until it arrived, Detective Sergeant Smith made Senior Constable Miller as comfortable as possible and kept him awake and talking until medical help arrived. It was during this time that Senior Constable Miller told Detective Sergeant Smith where the other wounded Police Officer, Senior Constable Diver, might be found. It was later noted that the car used in the evacuation had been hit twice by bullets fired by Jan Molenaar, one of which had entered through the middle of the roof and exited through the rear passenger's quarterlight on the driver's side.

Following the evacuation of Senior Constable Miller, Detective Sergeant Smith returned to the inner cordon. Shortly afterwards Detective Sergeant Clere of the Armed Offenders Squad arrived and made a plan to evacuate Senior Constable Diver from his hiding place at 45 Chaucer Road. This plan made provision for a "hot extraction" using an ambulance should the group be fired upon at any stage. Detective Sergeant Smith volunteered to accompany Detective Sergeant Clere and a St John Paramedic on this mission. On arrival at No. 45, Detective Sergeant Smith assisted in stretchering the seriously wounded Senior Constable Diver from the scene, back up the hill, to a waiting ambulance. While medical staff prepared Senior Constable Diver for evacuation by helicopter, Detective Sergeant Smith remained with him, talking to him and providing comfort.

That morning Detective Sergeant Smith played a prominent role in the recovery of two seriously wounded Police Officers. Though unarmed, he displayed coolness, initiative and exceptional bravery in effecting the rescue of Senior Constable Miller under fire from the gunman. He put his life in danger again only a short time later when he joined the team that successfully rescued Senior Constable Diver. Without his outstanding contribution, the outcome for the wounded officers might have been different.