

THE NEW ZEALAND CROSS (N.Z.C.)

Reginald John DIXON (Deceased)

Date of action: 9 June 1995

Date of award: 23 October 1999

Citation

On 9 June 1995, Mr Dixon, aged 47, and his wife were passengers on Ansett Flight 703 when the aircraft crashed in the Tararua Ranges near Palmerston North. Mr Dixon escaped from the wreckage with fractures. However, despite his injuries, he returned to the aircraft to help other passengers trapped in the wreckage. As a result of this selfless action, he was critically burned when a flash fire broke out on the left wing of the aircraft near a hole in the fuselage from which he was helping passengers escape. He was hospitalised and underwent surgery and skin grafts. Mr Dixon remained in a coma, and although he made some initial improvement, his condition worsened and he died two weeks later, the fourth victim of the crash.

The situation in which Mr Dixon found himself was extremely dangerous and he displayed great bravery in returning to the aircraft, although injured, to help other passengers, which subsequently resulted in the loss of his own life. His bravery undoubtedly ensured that the loss of life was not greater.