

NZSAR Gold Award

This was awarded for the most significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue region in 2009.

Rob Berry, Murray Chong, David Manduell, and Noel Watson from the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust

For a rescue at Patea, carried out on the 11th of February 2009.

This Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust crew was called to assist Michael Muggerridge who had been thrown from a boat while it was crossing the Patea Bar. Michael was washed along the coast, eventually coming ashore on rocks at the base of a 30m cliff. He was exhausted and unable to move, and was being pounded by two metre waves. Those large pounding waves made it impossible for a rescue vessel to get to him from the sea.

The helicopter arrived and quickly located Michael. It was a dangerous situation - the base of the cliff was undercut and Michael was hard up against the cliff face. This meant that the helicopter could not lower the winch directly to him. Paramedic Rob Berry was winched into the surf as close to Michael as possible. The winch operator, Noel Watson, had to time Rob's descent into the surf so that he arrived between waves and wasn't washed away himself. The pilot, David Manduell, had to keep the helicopter steady against the wind and close into the cliff. Crewman Murray Chong recorded the rescue on the helicopter's cameras.

Rob reached Michael, placed him in a rescue nappy, got him out from under the overhang and into the open, and then the two of them were winched back into the helicopter. The helicopter flew to nearby farmland where Michael was stabilised before being transferred to Taranaki Base Hospital.

Rob Berry was not present at the Award ceremony, as he now works in Australia.

NZSAR Certificates of Achievement

These were awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region, either during 2009, or over an extended period.

Zane Baker, Murray Dix, Peter McInnes, and Dave McNeish from the Mangawhai Heads Volunteer lifeguard Service

For a rescue at Mangawhai Heads, carried out on the 1st of March 2009

At 4 o'clock in the morning the Mangawhai Heads Volunteer Lifeguards Zane Baker, Peter McInnes, and Dave McNeish, were woken by Police and told that a vessel with two people on board had hit rocks and was sinking. The boat was close to rocks, in dangerous 3 meter surf, and it was dark.

Murray Dix was called in from home to assist. He assessed the information and prepared the Club's offshore rescue craft - which he launched by himself in the dark. He then picked up Zane and Peter. Dave remained in the clubhouse to manage the communications.

Using the rescue craft's spotlights, the lifeguards showed exceptional rescue boat skills in challenging surf conditions to negotiate the dangerous bar entrance and locate the stricken vessel. They found it right on the edge of the surf zone, and perilously close to the rocks. The lifeguards worked fast and furiously to rescue the occupants of the sinking boat. They then attached a line to tow it offshore away from the white water and the rocks.

The Westpac Rescue Helicopter arrived and assisted the rescue by lighting the area with its nitesun search light. After about 30 minutes the Coastguard vessel from Whangarei arrived and took over towing the stricken vessel. The three surf lifeguards negotiated their way back to shore and transferred their patients to waiting emergency services. The two patients were assessed and although they were very shaken and cold, they were not injured.

Dave Krehic and his dog Stig, from LandSAR NZ Dogs For the recovery of Irina Yun in November 2009.

Dave Krehic and his search dog Stig had been involved on the last day of the original search for Irina Yun, who went missing in December 2008. Her pack had been found in the Dart River but nothing else was found at the time, and the search was called off.

Dave wanted to bring closure to the family so he undertook some research that led him to focus on a difficult area of the Dart River that had not been covered on foot in the original search. It was dangerous terrain to search, as the river is tightly confined and runs steeply down through large boulders.

After a risk assessment and consulting with local Police SAR Coordinators, Dave put together a team of specialists: two white water specialists, Andy Peddle and Mat McLeod; and an alpine cliff expert, Massa Sato. Helicopter transport was also essential for safety. Dave paid for that himself.

In an extraordinary display of teamwork and great effort - following all safety procedures, but still putting themselves at considerable risk - the team methodically searched downstream into the gorge. They had to abseil in certain places in order to search the area thoroughly. This included harnessing up Stig. On the second day, they found some personal equipment before Stig indicated an area of interest. It was here that the team found the remains of Irina's body. 11 months after Irina went missing, Dave, Stig, and the team were able to bring some level of comfort to her family.

Don Bogie, from the Department of Conservation For his services, leadership and dedication to Alpine Search and Rescue in New Zealand

Don was recognised for his long service, contribution and commitment, particularly to the DOC Alpine Rescue Team based at Aoraki/Mt Cook.

Don started as a mountaineer with the DOC team at Aoraki in the summer of

1978/79. He has been involved in numerous high profile rescues, including the Ingles and Doule rescue from high on Aoraki/Mt Cook.

Don 'built' the search and rescue operation in the Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park and his experience and advice is highly valued by all the staff there. Don also knows quite a bit about avalanches. He has advised a number of DOC areas on avalanche risk and mitigation in the South Island High Country, information that is vital to the safety of people working there. He has been instrumental in getting a modern, science-based system for avalanche risk accepted across New Zealand.

Don is often at the forefront of technical knowledge, and is constantly inspiring the Aoraki/Mt Cook team to be the 'benchmark' of alpine rescue in this country.

**Ross Gordon, from the Search and Rescue Institute of New Zealand (SARINZ)
For his services, leadership and dedication to Search and Rescue in New Zealand.**

You may recognise Ross from the TV series "The Missing" in which he played a leading role last year. In part this is why Ross received a Certificate of Achievement - that TV series illustrated his capability and depth of experience, and because of Ross's passion and ability to engage and teach, it also increased the general public's understanding of the science behind search and rescue.

Ross's involvement with search and rescue goes back 40 years when he joined the Levin Waiopahu Tramping Club and became a SAR member. In the last 15 years Ross has brought search technology in New Zealand to a new dimension, raising the bar of expertise applied to SAR. He was instrumental in setting up training in rescue techniques, and has made a significant impact on SAR volunteers through improving their skill levels.

As a search expert Ross has been called in to provide management advice on prolonged searches, such as the Erceg helicopter search. Ross has also put pen to paper - he's had input into 'The Land Search and Rescue Manual' as well as other national and international publications. Ross has raised the profile of New Zealand Search and Rescue internationally and has gained a respected reputation in other countries, as well as our own.

Although Ross is a staff member of the Search and Rescue Institute of New Zealand, a lot of what he does is done on a voluntary basis. This includes his role as a volunteer in the Methven SAR Management Team.

**AREC Taranaki, Taranaki Alpine Cliff Rescue, Taranaki LandSAR, Taranaki Police SAR Squad & 3 Squadron RNZAF
For their joint participation in Operation All Whites on the 10th of October 2009.**

Late on the afternoon of 10 October 2009, two brothers tramping on Mt Taranaki got into difficulty in the snow conditions. They managed to send a couple of text messages; one saying they needed an ambulance, and another which helped narrow the search area to within a 90 minute walk from Lake Dive Hut.

An advance team made up of three Alpine Cliff Rescue specialists, a LandSAR volunteer paramedic and a Police SAR Squad member set out in search of them, with another party following. They searched in severe weather conditions and darkness, which made it difficult to locate the missing trampers. However, about five hours after the alarm was raised, a searcher spotted a shoe in the snow. The team followed the shoeless tracks and finally found the two brothers huddled in bush just off the track. They were hypothermic and confused, but they were only ten minutes from Lake Dive Hut, where they were taken to receive medical treatment from the paramedic, and wait to be evacuated off the mountain.

An Air Force Iroquois Helicopter was needed to evacuate the brothers. The crew flew in tough weather conditions using their night vision goggles. It was too dangerous to land the Iroquois at the hut at night, so the crew, using great skill, winched the two brothers out and flew them to Taranaki Base Hospital. The pair's core body temperatures were so low they would have been dead by morning without the help of their rescuers, who later described the conditions as amongst the coldest they had ever experienced on the mountain.