

THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY DECORATION (N.Z.B.D.)

Dennis (Matt) HUNT (Posthumous) Constable, New Zealand Police

Date of action: 19 June 2020

Date of award: 6 December 2024

Citation

Mid-morning on 19 June 2020, Constable Matt Hunt and Constable David Goldfinch were on traffic duty in West Auckland in a Police vehicle. A vehicle approached from the opposite direction which caught the officers' attention, and a check of the Police system found that the vehicle owner was the subject of several Police alerts. They activated their lights and followed the vehicle, intending to perform a traffic stop.

The vehicle sped off and, as the officers followed, it lost control and crashed into a parked vehicle, which was being loaded by a member of the public, who was injured in the collision. The fleeing vehicle sustained crash damage making it inoperable. Constable Goldfinch exited the Police vehicle intending to provide first aid to those involved in the crash. However, the occupant of the crashed vehicle exited and pointed a semi-automatic firearm at Constable Goldfinch. Constable Goldfinch was unarmed and attempted to reason with the offender to put down his weapon. The offender responded by firing at Constable Goldfinch.

Constable Hunt was still in the Police vehicle and radioed the Police Comms Centre as the first shot was fired, requesting assistance. Constable Goldfinch initially took cover behind parked cars as the offender continued to fire at him, before fleeing further down the road. Constable Goldfinch received gunshot wounds before taking cover in a nearby property. Within 14 seconds, the offender had fired nine shots at Goldfinch. As the offender was firing, Constable Hunt radioed again to advise shots fired.

Without knowledge of Constable Goldfinch's location, Constable Hunt exited the Police vehicle to assist his fellow officer. Constable Hunt took only a few steps before the offender returned from following Constable Goldfinch and shot Constable Hunt several times. Constable Hunt fell to the ground and made one final attempt to radio Police Comms. The offender retrieved a second firearm from his crashed vehicle and threatened a nearby resident, forcing her to drive him away from the scene in another vehicle. Constable Hunt died at the scene.