

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

### Roland IPENBURG

Date of action: 24 October 2022

Date of award: 6 December 2024

#### *Citation*

Mid-afternoon on 24 October 2022, a car crashed into a ditch and rolled onto its passenger side on State Highway 1 near Kekerengu. The female driver was injured and trapped inside, while the injured passenger was able to escape onto the roadside. The vehicle caught fire and passing motorists moved the passenger away from the car when it ignited.

Mr Roland Ipenburg arrived at the scene and exited his vehicle. He saw Mr Ian Anderson using a fire extinguisher on the car, and was given a fire extinguisher by another motorist, which he emptied onto the fire. Flames were coming from the gap between the bonnet and windscreen and were only temporarily suppressed by the extinguishers.

Mr Anderson entered the crashed car through the upturned rear passenger door and Mr Ipenburg held the door before following. They found the driver lying against the front passenger door. Mr Anderson and Mr Ipenburg attempted to lift the driver but were only able to roll her onto her right side. Mr Anderson was passed another fire extinguisher and deployed it within the cabin, seeing flames coming through the console. There was a burst of flame while they were in the vehicle, so Mr Anderson and Mr Ipenburg exited and began looking for more fire extinguishers. Flames were beginning to run up the clothing of the driver's right leg. At this time, Senior Constable Andrew Watson was the first emergency responder to arrive at the scene.

Senior Constable Watson deployed his fire extinguisher to suppress the fire on the driver's clothing. He lay on his stomach on the upturned side of the car, reaching into the vehicle through the rear door and managing to grasp the driver's hand. Mr Anderson held Senior Constable Watson's belt, so Watson could reach further into the vehicle without falling, with Mr Ipenburg grabbing Mr Anderson to assist. Together they tried to lift and pull the driver from the car, but Watson lost his grip. Senior Constable Watson's attempts to reach the trapped driver proved impossible and Mr Anderson and Mr Ipenburg pulled him from the car due to the severity of the fire. Soon after Senior Constable Watson exited the vehicle, it was engulfed by fire.

Mr Ipenburg demonstrated exceptional bravery by entering the burning vehicle to attempt to rescue the trapped driver.