

THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY MEDAL (N.Z.B.M.)

Sophie Christina ALLISON **Sergeant, New Zealand Police**

Date of action: 10 May 2021

Date of award: 6 December 2024

Citation

Mid-afternoon on 10 May 2021, a man with a short kitchen knife in each hand attacked a staff member at a supermarket in central Dunedin, causing multiple wounds as she tried to defend herself. Several shoppers and staff in the busy supermarket attempted to restrain the offender during his frenzied attack, which occurred in little over a minute, with four people in total sustaining stab wounds.

Constable Sophie Allison (now Sergeant), an off-duty Police officer, was shopping in the store at the time. She heard screaming and saw people running, so moved towards the commotion to investigate. She saw blood, a person lying on the floor, and the offender struggling with a staff member and members of the public. At this point, the offender broke free and stabbed a woman who was involved in the struggle. The offender then grabbed a man who intervened, stabbing him several times. Constable Allison attempted to pull the offender off the man. The offender swung his arm around, catching Constable Allison in the head.

At this time another off-duty Police officer, Detective Constable Jeremy Toschi, was throwing items at the offender to distract him. Constable Allison grabbed a plastic chair and used it to pin the offender to the ground. She saw a knife still in the offender's right hand and threw her bodyweight down on top of him to stop him getting up. She grabbed the offender's wrist, preventing him from manoeuvring his arm while holding the knife. Assisted by another woman holding his arm and Detective Constable Toschi, Constable Allison held the offender in place and, with the others, repeatedly directed him to drop the knife. Constable Allison used her other arm to control the offender's left arm beneath his body, to ensure he did not have another knife. Eventually the offender dropped the knife, with uniformed Police then arriving to arrest the offender.

Constable Allison demonstrated bravery by entering the struggle with the offender without hesitation, attempting to pull the offender off a wounded person and restraining the offender to prevent further harm.