



Headquarters  
New Zealand Defence Force  
Defence House  
Private Bag 39997  
Wellington Mail Centre  
Lower Hutt 5045  
New Zealand

OIA-2023-4804

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023

[REDACTED]  
[@nzme.co.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz)

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 28 August 2023 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), *copies of all information exchanged since January 2020 between the office of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence, DPMC and NZDF relating to Private David Edward Whawhai STEWART, who died on Ruapehu in 1990.*

The NZDF has no records of any communications with the Prime Minister's Office relating to this subject and this part of your request is declined under section 18(e) of the OIA.

Enclosed is a copy of a submission to the Minister of Defence and the Minister for Veterans dated 23 April 2021. The name of the staff member who provided this advice is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion. Their personal phone number is also withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy. The public interest in providing this information does not outweigh the reasons to withhold it in this instance.

Relevant email correspondence is provided at Enclosure 2. Where indicated, personal information is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, as explained above. The contact details of NZDF personnel and staff are withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(k) of the OIA to avoid malicious or inappropriate use of staff information, such as phishing, scams or unsolicited advertising.

Private Stewart's nomination for a Level One Bravery Award is withheld in full in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, as explained above, and section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA to avoid prejudice to the supply of information provided on a basis of confidence. Information concerning the nomination is withheld in accordance with sections 9(2)(ba)(i) and 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA, as explained above. On page 7 of Enclosure 2, a paragraph concerning a different matter is also withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA, as explained above.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**AJ WOODS**

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

**Enclosures:**

1. Submission to the Minister of Defence and the Minister for Veterans, 23 April 2021.
2. Email correspondence.



## NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE

SUBMISSION TO MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND  
MINISTER FOR VETERANS COVER SHEET

<b>Title</b>	BRAVERY HONOURS AWARDED TO NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE PERSONNEL AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE 1990 TRAGEDY ON MT RUAPEHU				
<b>Tracking No</b>	NZDF Tracking # 2021-130		Minister's Tracking #		
<b>Importance of the Issue</b>	High	v	Moderate		Routine
<b>Urgency for Attention/Sign-off</b>	URGENT		Request ministerial response by: Not required.		
<b>Contacts</b>	s. 9(2)(g)(i)		Tel: S. 9(2)(a)		A/H:
<b>Purpose</b>	On 20 April 2021, Sir Wira Gardiner emailed you both about likely Anzac Day publicity in the media and on Māori TV regarding the level of the bravery awards made to three soldiers as a consequence of the 1990 tragedy on Mt Ruapehu. Five soldiers and one sailor died on the mountain. A number of veterans are lobbying to have the level of the awards upgraded. This note provides you with a background to the events and an update on the current situation.				
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <p>a. <b>Note</b> that the level of the bravery awards made to Army personnel as a result of the 1990 Ruapehu tragedy remains an issue of concern for a group of Army veterans and that they will make a public case for a review over Anzac Day weekend.</p> <p>b. <b>Note</b> the media lines and the next steps will be based on advice from the Cabinet Office.</p>				
<b>MoD/NZDF Consultation</b>	Not required.				
<b>Minister's Comments</b>					
<b>Minister's Action</b>	Signed/Noted/Agreed/Approved/Declined/Discussion required				
	Referred to:				
<b>Minister's Signature</b>				<b>Date:</b> 11.5.21	

  
**KR SHORT**  
Air Marshal  
Chief of Defence Force

23 April 2021



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New Zealand Defence Force  
Defence House  
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NEW ZEALAND

NTM 2021-130

23 April 2021

Minister of Defence  
Minister for Veterans

## **BRAVERY HONOURS AWARDED TO NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE PERSONNEL AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE 1990 TRAGEDY ON MT RUAPEHU**

### **Purpose**

1. On 20 April 2021, Sir Wira Gardiner emailed you both about likely Anzac Day publicity in the media and on Māori TV regarding the level of the bravery awards made to three soldiers as a consequence of the 1990 tragedy on Mt Ruapehu. Five soldiers and one sailor died on the mountain. A number of veterans are lobbying to have the level of the awards upgraded.
2. This note provides you with a background to the events and an update on the current situation.

### **Background**

3. On 9 to 12 August 1990, a group of 13 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel (two instructors, 10 soldiers and one naval rating) were involved in an Army Adventurous Training Centre mountaineering course on Mt Ruapehu. The weather deteriorated significantly while the group was on the mountain. They were unable to reach shelter and were left exposed to the extreme weather conditions. An instructor and a soldier volunteer left the group to seek help and made a perilous descent at night in appalling conditions. Six of those remaining on the mountain died before assistance was able to reach them. It remains the heaviest one-day loss of life for the NZDF since the Second World War.
4. The Army Court of Inquiry identified significant issues with the operation of the Army Adventurous Training Centre. The then Chief of General Staff, Major General Bruce Meldrum (now deceased), accepted full responsibility for the tragedy on behalf of the Army.
5. The Court of Inquiry noted the "outstanding courage and bravery" of three members of the group – Private David Stewart (deceased), Private Sonny Te Rure (now known as Tavake), and Private Brendon Burchell. Colonel Phillip Maguire, the Commander of the Army Training Group Waiouru, raised recommendations for Private Stewart to be awarded a posthumous George Cross and for Privates Te Rure and Burchell to be awarded Queen's Gallantry Medals.
6. It is understood (my staff are still looking for the original citations) that Major General Meldrum downgraded the recommendation for Private Stewart to a Queen's Gallantry Medal. All three recommendations for Queen's Gallantry Medals were forwarded to the Honours Secretariat in the Cabinet Office. They were then put on hold while the review of the New Zealand Honours System was undertaken and then implemented. As a result, it was 1999 and under a new system before awards were made.

7. One of my predecessors, Air Marshal Carey Adamson (now deceased), had the opportunity to review the proposed award level under the new system and, based on staff advice, accepted the awards were at an appropriate level. There was a desire to ensure that all three were recognised and received the same level of award. The awards were then approved by the Prime Minister and all received the New Zealand Bravery Medal (see Enclosure 1).

8. The New Zealand Bravery Medal is a Level 4 award roughly equivalent to the Queen's Commendation for Bravery under the Imperial system. The Queen's Medal for Gallantry was a Level 3 award and is equivalent to the New Zealand Bravery Decoration. The Level 2 award is the New Zealand Bravery Star and the New Zealand Cross is the equivalent to the George Cross.

### **Current Situation**

9. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragedy and a sense of unfinished business is the catalyst for challenging decisions made 30 years ago. It is still a very emotional and raw issue for those involved. The two veterans fronting the campaign are Bernie Isherwood (who has a complete copy of the Court of Inquiry) and Bob Davies, a former Sergeant-Major of the Army.

10. At Mr Davies' request, I met with him on 20 April. Dave Samuels, Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Puni Kōkiri, was in attendance, while Sir Wira Gardiner was unable to attend. I took no position regarding their case and indicated that it was not a matter that I wished to engage on. I did offer to make available any material we might find that could be put in the public domain.

11. I also made Mr Davies aware that there was a very thorough process in consideration of the award level and all information was available to the decision-makers. There would be a need, as a starting point, to provide some additional information supporting their case rather than simply arguing that it was the wrong decision.

12. I also suggested to Mr Davies that he and his group might like to consider other recognition options should their case not be successful. The existing recognition already acknowledges the bravery of the three individuals and that there might be other ways of creating a legacy to their bravery.

13. I pointed out that under the New Zealand Honours system, the appropriate time for actions to be considered for bravery awards is close to the event, and generally not more than five years afterwards. The underpinning principle is that decisions should be made while all the relevant information is readily available, recall of the events is clear, and the actions concerned can be considered against the standards and values of the time and other contemporary examples.

### **Next Steps**

14. As Sir Wira notes, the veterans' group is seeking to leverage off Anzac Day to gain some momentum for their case. The main focus is likely to be on Private Stewart given he was recommended for the George Cross. The group is likely to criticise the NZDF, particularly focusing on Major General Meldrum's decision to downgrade the recommendation. While there is some speculation as to why he made this decision, the original documentation including advice he received has not yet been found. My staff have approached Colonel (Rtd) Raymond Seymour, who was Major General Meldrum's Military Secretary at the time and

would have advised him on the recommendations, to ascertain whether he can provide any more information.

15. My staff are working with the Cabinet Office to work up a media response and ensure that the Prime Minister is briefed. I will ensure your offices are aware of any agreed media lines. We will also take advice from the Cabinet Office on any follow-up action as a result of the forth-coming publicity.

**Recommendations**

16. It is recommended that you:

- a. **Note** that that the level of the bravery awards made to Army personnel as a result of the 1990 Ruapehu tragedy remains an issue of concern for a group of Army veterans and that they will make a public case for a review over Anzac Day weekend.
- b. **Note** the media lines and the next steps will be based on advice from the Cabinet Office.



**KR SHORT**  
Air Marshal  
Chief of Defence Force

**Enclosure**

1. Special Honours List 1999 (Bravery Awards)



[Cabinet Office](#) » [Honours Unit](#) » [Honours Lists](#)

## Special Honours List 1999 (Bravery Awards)

Issued 23 October 1999

### NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY AWARDS

The Queen has been graciously pleased to approve the following New Zealand Bravery Awards:

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

Jacinda Margaret AMEY

*Citation*

On 24 April 1992 Ms Amey was one of five members of a Meteorological Service team, stationed on the remote sub-Antarctic Campbell Island, who were snorkelling when one of them, Mr Mike Fraser, was attacked by a shark, believed to be a white pointer. The other swimmers, apart from Ms Amey, swam to shore. Ms Amey waited until the shark moved away from Mr Fraser and then went to his aid and towed him to shore. Mr Fraser had lost his right forearm and his left forearm was severely lacerated and appeared to be broken. He was having trouble breathing and required urgent medical treatment. Having got him to shore, Ms Amey then joined the rest of the team in doing what they could for Mr Fraser until he could be flown to New Zealand. Ms Amey displayed great courage and bravery with complete disregard for her own safety in going to Mr Fraser's assistance.

Reginald John DIXON (Deceased)

*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.

### **THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY STAR (N.Z.B.S.)**

Robert Edwin (Rob) HALL, M.B.E. (Deceased)

#### *Citation*

On Friday 10 May 1996, Mr Hall was descending from the summit of Mt Everest, in the Himalayas, following his 11-strong expedition's attempt on the peak, when a blizzard developed. From the Hillary Step, just below the summit, Mr Hall called on the radio for oxygen and assistance for an American climber in the party who had collapsed. Other parties on the descent were unable to reascend due to the storm, yet Mr Hall refused entreaties to descend without the stricken climber. Fellow New Zealand mountaineer, Mr Andrew Harris, did attempt to reach them, but the American climber died during the night. Mr Hall made his way down to the South Summit where early on 11 May he contacted Base Camp by radio. Exhausted and frostbitten, he was unable to descend further. When informed of a failed rescue attempt later that day he responded with dignity and courage. His last communication by radio and satellite link was to give encouragement to his expectant wife in New Zealand. Out of oxygen, he succumbed to the cold some time during the Saturday night. Mr Hall understood that by remaining behind with the American climber he reduced greatly his own chances of survival. His selflessness in deciding to remain with him was an outstanding act of bravery.

Andrew Michael HARRIS (Deceased)

#### *Citation*

On 10 May 1996 Mr Harris, a guide in an expedition on Mount Everest, in the Himalayas, attempted to go to the aid of Mr Robert Edwin Hall and an American climber who were stranded on the Hillary Step below the summit, and shortly afterwards perished in a blizzard. Mr Harris, hearing by radio Rob Hall's calls for help, turned from the safety of descending the mountain to go back up towards the summit ridge of Everest to assist Mr Hall and the other climber. Despite his own exhaustion, and knowing that his only chance of survival lay in descending, Mr Harris chose to go back up the mountain to try to help Mr Hall. Mr Harris was not heard of again although Mr Hall reported in a radio message that "Andy was with me last night..." and Mr Harris' ice axe and jacket were later found on the South Summit next to Mr Hall's body. To go to the aid of a fellow guide in the face of the most appalling conditions was an outstanding act of bravery.

Walter Bruce BUTLER

#### *Citation*

On the morning of 7 December 1998, Mr Butler, aged 76, heard screams for help from a neighbour, a sixteen year old girl, who was being attacked by a young male wielding a large knife. The youth appeared intent on sexually violating the girl and had stabbed her several times in the upper back. Mr Butler rushed to the girl's aid and in doing so was himself savagely attacked by the youth who left the scene when passengers from a passing car stopped to assist. Mr Butler received wounds to his face and body which required over 400 stitches. Mr Butler's actions may well have saved the girl's life and he was fortunate not to have lost his own. He displayed outstanding bravery.

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

*Civilian*

~~Terence~~ Albert HOOD

*Citation*

On the evening of 4 July 1989 Mr Hood, a security guard, accompanied an electrician as he carried out routine tests on newly installed 11,000 volt oil circuit breakers in the MED substation located in an area under construction at the Defence Department Building, Stout Street, Wellington. The electrician noticed there was a serious problem as one of the circuit breakers had been installed with no oil in the contact chamber. As he switched off the circuit breaker it exploded throwing out molten copper and flames. It also threw the electrician against a wall opposite the exit and blasted Mr Hood backwards out of the door. However, hearing the cries from the electrician, who was on fire he came back into the room past the burning equipment and dragged the electrician to safety and used his bare hands to extinguish the man's burning hair and clothes. Mr Hood's actions saved the life of the electrician.

Allan Donald CANTLEY

Sergeant, New Zealand Police

*Citation*

At Morrinsville on 29 July 1993, a mentally deranged man with a number of explosive devices strapped to his body, entered the Police Station. He held both the Police and three members of the public hostage and threatened to detonate bombs attached to his body. Sergeant Cantley entered the building and confronted the man and was able to facilitate most of the hostages' escapes, including his own. Sergeant Cantley then re-entered the building in an attempt to release the remaining hostage and overpower the man. Together with two other members of the Police he was able to achieve the release of the hostage but during this another Police Constable was wounded and the offender was fatally shot by Police. Throughout the incident Sergeant Cantley showed complete disregard for his own safety.

Christopher Michael CREAN (Deceased)

*Citation*

On 13 March 1996 Mr Crean witnessed a confrontation between two gangs in the New Plymouth suburb of Marfell where he lived. A young man was severely beaten in front of a number of people. Mr Crean was the only witness to this brutal assault who was prepared to testify against the assailants. Despite enormous intimidation, including verbal death threats made by gang

members at the Court, Mr Crean did not waver and he insisted on giving evidence against the gang members involved. His performance of his civic duty encouraged other witnesses to come forward, as a result of which gang activity in the area was curtailed and successful prosecution of two of the three defendants ensued. However, on 6 October 1996, Mr Crean, then aged 27, answering a knock at the front door of his home, was gunned down in the presence of his wife and young children. Four members of a gang are now serving life sentences for his murder. Mr Crean's performance of his civic duty undoubtedly placed his life in danger, with subsequent tragic consequences.

Graeme James HUNT

*Citation*

At Flaxmere on 21 April 1996 Mr Hunt was at his home when he heard a noise like a gun shot. Going outside, he saw a police car on the street in front of his house. He ran to the vehicle, accompanied by his two daughters, aged 12 and 10 years, where they discovered a shot police officer lying by the car. As Mr Hunt attempted to assist the officer, another bullet travelled in front of Mr Hunt, lodging in the driver's door of the car. Looking up, he saw a man in another car pointing a rifle at him through the vehicle's window, only some 5 to 6 metres in from of the police car. At this time Mr Hunt was with the constable between the two doors of the police car, the eldest daughter was standing in front of the car and the youngest behind her father. Mr Hunt moved quickly to the rear corner of the police car, before a further shot was fired, which also lodged in the driver's door. The other car then left the scene, after which Mr Hunt returned to the constable, whose wounds were unfortunately fatal. Mr Hunt placed his own life at risk to help the fatally wounded police officer.

Warren Gilbert SLOSS

Constable, New Zealand Police

*Citation*

On 12 October 1996, Constable Sloss responded to a call from a woman about the presence of her former boyfriend at her house. After accompanying her there from another address, he followed her inside. The boyfriend appeared from behind a door and attacked the woman with a large knife. Constable Sloss intervened and was himself attacked with the knife. The woman, who had suffered repeated blows from the knife in an attempt to kill her, was able to leave the house to get help, convinced that the Constable was about to be killed. Constable Sloss was then engaged in a fight for his life, being stabbed three times in the back, once in the abdomen, once in the right forearm, and a serious injury to his left hand. However, he succeeded in overpowering and handcuffing the man, before calling for assistance. The Constable's actions saved the life of the intended victim at the cost of his own severe injuries.

Hakihana Jackson POMARE (Deceased)

*Citation*

At Matauri Bay, on the evening of 21 June 1997, Hakihana Pomare, aged 11 years, rescued his younger brother from their burning temporary accommodation. He re-entered the burning structure, amid thick smoke and intense heat, to rescue another brother and his sister but all three tragically died in the fire. He displayed exceptional bravery.

**THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY MEDAL (N.Z.B.M.)****Brendon Drew BURCHELL (N52015)**

Private, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (Retired)

**David Edward Whawhai STEWART (S53606)**

Private, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (Deceased)

**Sonny Wayne TERURE (Y53819)**

Private, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (Retired)

*Citation*

Privates Burchell, Stewart and Terure were members of an Army Adventurous Training Course which became trapped near the summit of Mount Ruapehu by extremely adverse weather conditions on 11 August 1990. The next morning the party decided to move from the shelter of snow caves to the Dome Shelter, a distance of approximately 400 metres. They had covered approximately 250 metres when weather conditions forced them to stop and seek temporary shelter on an exposed feature. After some time in this location, two of the party succumbed to hypothermia and the others began to make the casualties comfortable. In the afternoon, two members of the party left to attempt to get assistance. As more of the party began to show signs of hypothermia, they were placed in their sleeping bags in what shelter there was.

Despite the continuing high winds and windblown snow, Privates Stewart and Terure maintained a continual vigil over their companions throughout most of the night, providing what assistance they could. When it became obvious that assistance was required, Private Burchell, although he had no previous mountaineering experience, volunteered to accompany one of the instructors to descend the mountain. The weather conditions were still extreme with windblown snow, limited visibility, darkness and a high wind chill factor.

The pair were continually blown off course by the winds and, as a result, had to traverse treacherous terrain including several steep bluffs with limited direction finding assistance. Some eleven hours later, they eventually managed to raise the alarm to enable a full search and rescue operation to be mounted. Private Burchell not only had to cope with the most extreme conditions but, because of his lack of experience, had no knowledge of how to adequately overcome them. His courage, determination and perseverance to continue in the face of extraordinary adversity not only brought great credit on himself, but certainly assisted in the rescue of five survivors from Mount Ruapehu the next day.

When a rescue party arrived at the scene about midday on 13 August, Private Stewart was found to have died during the night. Private Stewart would have been fully aware that his actions in continually moving out of shelter and the warmth of his sleeping bag to assist those of the party who were affected by hypothermia, meant that he had an increased chance of also becoming a casualty. He was also aware that he was becoming increasingly exhausted by the continual battling of the elements. Privates Stewart and Terure displayed selfless care of the casualties and their sense of responsibility to their companions testify to their bravery.

Keith Desmond TROON

Ross William McEWAN

*Citation*

On 22 January 1991 Mr Troon and Mr McEwan, employees of the Alliance Freezing Company, were alerted by a Sub-foreman that two contractors were in real trouble in a stickwater tank at the Alliance Rendering Plant at Kaiapoi. Both men were very experienced at rescue work. The contractors, a father and son, were cleaning the tank when they were overcome by lack of oxygen and toxic fumes. Mr Troon and Mr McEwan entered the tank and did their very best to lift the men through the manhole opening in the hope that they might be resuscitated. Their efforts were unsuccessful and the men died. Both Mr Troon and Mr McEwan were admitted to hospital for observation following the incident.

Mrs Anne Michele FRANCIS (formerly Miss Holdsworth)

*Citation*

Mrs Francis, while an Ambulance Officer with the Wellington Free Ambulance, on the evening of 2 September 1991, attended an incident involving a man who had taken an overdose of drugs. The patient confronted her with a loaded firearm. During a period of some 30 minutes Mrs Holdsworth persuaded the patient to put the weapon down and talked to him until the Police arrived. Her calmness and patience in an extremely difficult situation almost certainly prevented injury to a colleague, Police Officers and herself.

Mrs Tracey Lee-Anne CHAPMAN

Mrs Karen Ruth FOSTER

Mrs Jan Yvonne McCREA

*Citation*

In the early evening of 4 January 1992 a fire broke out in Otipua Block at Talbot Hospital, Timaru. Mrs Chapman, a hospital aide, Mrs Foster and Mrs McCrea, both staff nurses, calmly ensured that all patients were safely evacuated. Mrs Chapman and Mrs McCrea were on duty in Otipua Block when the fire broke out. With no regard for personal safety, Mrs Chapman and Mrs McCrea removed the three patients in the room where the fire started. Immediately after the patients were removed, the windows exploded. Black smoke in the room was down to eye-level at this time. Mrs Chapman continued to remove patients, while Mrs McCrea advised Mrs Foster, on duty in the other building, of the fire, and closed smoke stop doors. Eleven patients were evacuated by the three women before the fire brigade and police arrived. They then assisted with the evacuation of the remainder of the 35 patients by repeatedly entering the smoke-filled building until all were safely removed. All three women were in danger from smoke-inhalation. Mrs Chapman and Mrs McCrea, in the initial stages of the rescue, were in danger of being burnt by the flames, lacerated by shattering glass, and trapped by possible ceiling collapse. The actions of Mrs Chapman, Mrs Foster and Mrs McCrea, helped avert what could have been a major tragedy.

William John FUNNELL, M.B.E.

*Citation*

On the evening of 24 April 1992 Mr Funnell, chief pilot of the Taupo-based New Zealand Rail rescue helicopter, a Squirrel, made a flight to uplift from the remote Campbell Island a man, Mr Mike Fraser, who had been attacked by a shark. Mr Funnell was accompanied by another pilot and a paramedic. The rescue operation successfully carried Mr Fraser to Invercargill Hospital, and he made a good recovery from his ordeal. The Squirrel touched down again at Taupo 25 hours after

The request to make the trip. The flight over some 1200 kilometres of ocean was believed to be unprecedented anywhere in the world in terms of single-engine helicopter operations and was undertaken at considerable risk to those on board. Mr Funnell displayed bravery in undertaking this flight without which the shark attack victim would not have survived.

Stephen Robert GIBB

*Citation*

On the morning of 27 June 1992 Mr Gibb was the pilot of a helicopter taking six teenage Australian tourists on a scenic flight over the Fox Glacier. While flying up the Glacier, at about 2,500 feet, his helicopter faced an oncoming fixed wing aircraft. The wing of the aircraft embedded itself in the nose cone of the helicopter and made the anti-torque pedals, which control the helicopter, inoperable, tore the doors of the pilot's side and damaged the directional controls. As a result of the impact Mr Gibb's right foot was shattered. Mr Gibb, despite his injuries and the damage to the helicopter, managed an emergency landing without any loss of life or injuries to his passengers. The pilot of the aeroplane was killed when his aircraft crashed after the impact with the helicopter.

Mark Matti POVEY (E180715)

Driver, Royal New Zealand Corps of Transport (Retired)

*Citation*

On 17 September 1993, while travelling home from work, in the company of his sister, Driver Povey came upon a motor accident involving a motor vehicle and a motor cycle. The motor cycle and driver were trapped under the vehicle and the motor cycle had exploded on impact. Both vehicles were engulfed in flames and there was an imminent danger of either or both exploding. Driver Povey quickly assessed the situation and sent his sister to a nearby house to alert the emergency services. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Driver Povey then attempted to save the driver of the car. The driver was trapped in the car with his leg on fire, but Driver Povey managed to free the trapped leg and drag him clear of the burning vehicles. Unfortunately, and unknown to Driver Povey, the driver of the vehicle was already dead. The rider of the motor cycle was not able to be recovered and remained under the wreckage where he was burnt beyond recognition. Although Driver Povey was not able to save either of the two accident victims, he acted decisively displaying selfless courage and with complete disregard for his personal safety.

Dean William PLEYDELL

Constable (now Senior Constable), New Zealand Police

Patrick Anthony RICE

Constable, New Zealand Police

*Citation*

On 23 September 1993, Constables Pleydell and Rice pursued a man in a motor vehicle who had just committed an armed robbery of a bank in Auckland City. The offender abandoned his getaway vehicle and threatened two members of the public with a loaded pistol. Fearing for the safety of these people the two unarmed constables approached the gunman and Constable Pleydell confronted him but, despite being knocked off balance by a moving Police vehicle, the gunman levelled his pistol at Constable Pleydell. Fearing that the offender would shoot, Constable Rice tackled the man and was able to knock him to the ground, which gave both constables the

opportunity of overpowering and subduing the offender. Constable Rice's actions almost certainly saved the life of Constable Pleydell and in doing so he assisted in the apprehension of one of the country's most wanted criminals.

Michael James CANNON (D992039)

Flight Sergeant Helicopter Crewman, Royal New Zealand Air Force

Lisa Kay FRANKEN (nee De Waal) (W91399)

Sergeant Helicopter Crewman, Royal New Zealand Air Force

*Citation*

On 10 July 1994 a crippled Taiwanese fishing vessel, the long liner Kin Sin II which had suffered an ammonia explosion, was located 25 nautical miles south of Viti Levu in the Fiji group. The explosion and resultant fire had destroyed the ship's only life-raft and not all the 23 crew members were equipped with life jackets. Two Iroquois helicopters from a Number 3 Squadron Detachment, RNZAF, based in Fiji were tasked with carrying out a rescue mission. Flight Sergeant Helicopter Crewman Cannon and Sergeant Helicopter Crewman Franken were winched onboard the Kin Sin II to take charge of the rescue. Their efforts were hampered by the rolling deck of a burning and sinking ship, no communications with the Iroquois and an inability to communicate with the seamen, only one of whom was discovered to speak English late in the rescue. The vessel sank soon after the successful rescue of all 23 seamen. Both rescuers had only graduated as Helicopter Crew Members one month prior to this incident and were on their first search and rescue mission. In unfamiliar and difficult conditions they displayed courage and professionalism.

Peter Robert BROUGHTON Senior

Constable, New Zealand Police

Floyd Steven PRATT

Constable, New Zealand Police

*Citation*

In the evening of 11 October 1994 Senior Constable Broughton and Constable Pratt were in a party of four police officers, one with a dog, which entered a house at Palmerston North at night under the provisions of Section 317 of the Crimes Act. They were in pursuit of a man who had just been seen lurking in the vicinity of houses, and who had assaulted one of the constables. Once inside, this man again assaulted the constable, while a woman confronted Constable Pratt with a baseball bat and used it to hit the dog on the head. Senior Constable Broughton ran up some stairs to disarm the woman, but another man then used the bat to hit him several times on the body and head. Constable Pratt went to his assistance, but by this time Senior Constable Broughton had received further blows, suffering serious injuries to his head and multiple bone fractures to his hands and was unable to defend himself. Constable Pratt could hear the sound of breaking bone and crushing flesh, and could see the amount of blood his colleague was losing. Senior Constable Broughton was then hit over the head again. However, Constable Pratt was able to drag him down the stairs, where they decided to try to disarm the man. Constable Pratt, using his short baton, led the way up the stairs where the baton was smashed and he suffered a dislocated finger and a graze to the head. Further blows were then struck with the bat, but the two constables were eventually able to overpower and arrest the man. Senior Constable Broughton later underwent surgery to his serious injuries, while Constable Pratt was treated at hospital and discharged.

John Joseph McNAMEE

*Citation*

Mr McNamee, an employee of Alpine Guides Ltd, was guiding one of two groups on 11 July 1997 when he and four skiers in his party were buried in an avalanche five kilometres from Mt Cook, in the Southern Alps. Mr McNamee managed to free his pack, get his shovel out and then dig himself out in a very short period of time. With a quick scan of the area, he spotted visual signs of two of his skiers who were completely buried except that each had a hand visible. The priority was to free these skiers to the extent that they had clear airways and could breathe. Once this was accomplished, he located the other two skiers, one of whom had stopped breathing. Mr McNamee administered CPR by which time four other guides, who had been working nearby, had been summoned by Mr McNamee when the avalanches first started, had arrived and they were followed by other rescue personnel. All those buried by the avalanches were suffering to some extent from hypothermia and with the possibility of undetected injuries, it was decided to fly three of the skiers to Christchurch Hospital. All were released the next day. There is no doubt that if Mr McNamee had not managed to free himself and the others in such a short period, there would have been multiple fatalities.

Dated at Wellington this 23rd day of October 1999.

MARIE SHROFF,  
Clerk of the Executive Council.

---

## NEW ZEALAND GALLANTRY AWARDS

The Queen has been graciously pleased to approve the following New Zealand Gallantry Award:

### THE NEW ZEALAND GALLANTRY DECORATION (N.Z.G.D.)

John Clinton Lionel OXENHAM (W22215)

Chief Petty Officer Writer, Royal New Zealand Navy (Retired)

*Citation*

On 1 December 1992 Chief Petty Officer Oxenham, who was serving in Cambodia with a United Nations peacekeeping mission, was a member of a patrol conducting operations along the Shroeng Sen River. During this patrol, Chief Petty Officer Oxenham, together with three British officers and two Philipino senior ratings, were taken prisoner by members of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea, formerly the Khmer Rouge. The group was detained for four days while negotiations to release them took place. It was during this period that Chief Petty Officer Oxenham ensured that their capture did not have a tragic outcome. His positive and level-headed behaviour was instrumental in diffusing a very tense and potentially life-threatening situation. The controlled but relaxed approach adopted by Chief Petty Officer Oxenham helped to reassure his fellow captives, while this behaviour, which often bordered on careful affront, including two failed escape attempts, demonstrated to the captors that the group were totally unwilling to acquiesce to captivity. At a time when he and his colleagues were under extreme duress, he positively, bravely and effectively influenced the interaction between captors and captives, such that all prisoners were eventually released unharmed.



Dated at Wellington this 23rd day of October 1999.  
MARIE SHROFF,  
Clerk of the Executive Council.

---

For background information on these Awards see [New Zealand Gallantry and Bravery Awards](#)

Achive Manager

Export

From: [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#)

Sent: Wed, 07 Apr 2021 05:39:10 GMT

To: [Mcleod, John](#)

CC: [David Williams \[DPMC\]](#)

Subject: RE: Honours-in-Confidence Seemail 1990 Mt Ruapehu Tragedy [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks John.

Sent with BlackBerry Work  
(www.blackberry.com)

---

**From:** McLeod, John **s. 9(2)(k)**  
**Date:** Wednesday, 07 Apr 2021, 4:50 PM  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** David Williams [DPMC] <[David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: Honours-in-Confidence Seemail 1990 Mt Ruapehu Tragedy

\*\*\* [SEEMAIL] This message may contain classified information \*\*\*

Rachel

Thanks. Beginning of next week will be fine. Meeting is now on 20 April.

I have collected all the info around it, and talked to **s. 9(2)(a)** who dealt with it at the time. It was properly considered with all the information to hand, and there was agreement at both the CDF and staff level the right decisions had been made. People might not agree with them, but those entrusted with the decision made their decision after full consideration.

Ngā mihi

John

*John McLeod, ONZM*

*Director*

*Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group*

*HQ NZ Defence Force*

*Mobile: **s. 9(2)(k)***

*[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)*

**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] [mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 7 April 2021 4:09 p.m.  
**To:** McLeod, John s. 9(2)(k)  
**Cc:** David Williams [DPMC] <David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: Honours-in-Confidence Seemail 1990 Mt Ruapehu Tragedy

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi John

I was too heroic in promising a response today, David and I have both been swamped by other issues since then. Apologies – we'll get our comments to you tomorrow morning.

Kind regards

Rachel

---

**From:** McLeod, John s. 9(2)(k)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 6 April 2021 10:02 am  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** David Williams [DPMC] <David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: Honours-in-Confidence Seemail 1990 Mt Ruapehu Tragedy

\*\*\* [SEEMAIL] This message may contain classified information \*\*\*

Hi Rachel

CDF has a delegation of Sir Wira Gardiner, Dave Samuels CE of TPK and Bob Davies calling on him next week regarding upgrading the awards of several of those who received bravery awards for the 1990 tragedy on Mt Ruapehu. The main focus is Private David Stewart where the recommendation of a George Cross (drafted by me in Waiouru in 1990) was downgraded over time to a NZBM. By the time it was finalised I was working in HQ NZDF doing honours and awards among other things. Phillip and I had a few words over this.

s. 9(2)(g)(i)



Happy to have a phone conversation if there is a need for an off-line discussion.

Ngā mihi

John

*John McLeod, ONZM*

*Director*

*Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group*

*HQ NZ Defence Force*

*Mobile:* s. 9(2)(k)

[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)

<< OLE Object: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) >>

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**From:** Beck, Darren, LTCOL  
**Sent:** Thursday, 28 July 2022 1:07 p.m.  
**To:** s. 9(2)(a) Ministerial Services; s. 9(2)(a) McLeod, John  
**Cc:** Woods, Andy, AIRCDRE; s. 9(2)(a)  
**Subject:** RE: Hui with Minister of Defence on Mt Ruapehu Bravery Award - 31 Aug [seemail]  
**Attachments:** 130 - Bravery Honours Awarded to NZDF Personnel As A Consequence of the ....pdf; FW: Hui with Minister of Defence on Mt Ruapehu Bravery Award - 31 Aug

**Categories:**

s. 9(2)(a) Ref this RFI and the email from Bernard Isherwood on 26 Jul as attached.

While the decision to attend the dedication ceremony in Linton Camp on the 13 August is that for the Minister to consider it is extremely likely that he will be pressed on the matter related to NTM 2021-130 dated 23 Apr 21 as attached. With the Hui on 31 August also front of mind, further context to inform the Ministers decision to attend is below. The NZDF is currently preparing a more fulsome and formal brief for the meeting on 31 Aug. There is media interest and attendance at this event on the 13<sup>th</sup> and around the wider issue (see below). Again the Minister will likely be pressed by media. He may want to get briefed and receive the delegation on 31 Aug so as not be forced to confront the issue on 13 Aug or have some prepared lines prior should he decide to attend.

CDF met with Sir Wira Gardiner (RIP), Dave Samuels (CE Te Puni Kokiri) & Bob Davies on Tue 20 Apr 2021 here at DFH. 1230-1300 regarding 1990 Mt Ruapehu tragedy and the honours awarded to the late Pte D.E.W. Stewart, RNZIR and Pte S Te Rure, RNZIR.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the 1990 Mt Ruapehu tragedy and the honours which were awarded to two soldiers who were involved in it, one being the late Pte David Stewart, RNZIR and the other being Pte Sonny Te Rure, RNZIR. The proposal was that the level of award for one or both these soldiers be elevated to a higher level to recognise the bravery which was noted by the Court of Inquiry. They provided the attached document ahead of the meeting. The information came from the official Court of Inquiry.

Following the meeting with CDF further investigations were conducted despite most records no longer being available. It is clear that the process followed at the time was thorough. CDF was briefed accordingly and decided not to take the matter forward acknowledging that available options open were very limited and fraught with potential issues.

Regards,  
D

## Medal campaign for soldier who perished during training exercise

9:43am, Monday 26 April 2021. By [Herewini Waikato](#)

A campaign has been launched to upgrade the New Zealand Bravery Medal awarded to Private David Stewart.

Private Stewart died along with five other soldiers during an army training exercise on Mount Ruapehu 31 years ago. Despite the passage of time, some army veterans believe the extent of his bravery must be remembered and recognised.

Retired Sergeant Major Bob Davies says the reason Private Stewart lost his life was that he was trying to protect his comrades when they were caught in a blizzard during the training exercise in 1990.

"David's actions on Mount Ruapehu resulted in the loss of his life and the reason he died was because of selfless, courageous actions in keeping others alive. He gave up some of his equipment, he was in and out of his sleeping bag during a ferocious storm where people were dying around him. He kept people alive by getting the ice, snow off their chests and at the end of the day it cost him his life."

## He tangata hūmārie

The Stewart whānau gathered at the Anzac commemorations in Taupō over the weekend to honour Private Stewart and those who lost their lives on Mount Ruapehu alongside him. His whānau share fond memories of their beloved brother.

"He tangata hūmārie, he tangata aroha, he tangata whakapono, he tangata hīanga, he tangata puku mahi ki te mahi kai," his mother Kathy Stewart says.

*(He was a gentle person, a loving person, an honest person, a cheeky person, a person who did a lot of work when it came to food).*

Sister Veronique Stewart says Private Stewart was a Rambo-type character.

"He was tough, he was a hunter-gatherer," she says.

Davies hopes the campaign for a New Zealand Bravery Medal to be awarded to Private David Stewart is accepted and initiated by the Prime Minister.

**Lieutenant Colonel Darren Beck**  
Executive Officer – Office of the CDF  
Headquarters New Zealand Defence Force  
34 Bowen Street | Wellington 6011

s. 9(2)(a)

[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)



From: s. 9(2)(a)

Sent: Tuesday, 26 July 2022 6:48 p.m.

To: Ministerial Services <ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz>

Cc: s. 9(2)(a)

Woods, Andy, AIRCDRE s. 9(2)(k)

Beck, Darren, LTCOL s. 9(2)(k)

**Subject:** FW: Hui with Minister of Defence on Mt Ruapehu Bravery Award - 31 Aug

Team, advice on the Minister attending this event please.

The Minister is meeting with Bernard on 31 Aug to discuss this issue (John McLeod is providing advice and attending the meeting).

s. 9(2)(a)

s. 9(2)(a)

Military Secretary to Minister of Defence

Mob| s. 9(2)(a)

---

**From:** Bernard Isherwood s. 9(2)(a)

**Date:** Tuesday, 26 Jul 2022, 08:50

**To:** s. 9(2)(a)

**Subject:** RE: Hui with Minister of Defence on Mt Ruapehu Bravery Award - 31 Aug

Hello s. 9(2)(a)

Further to below, I have been asked to check as to whether the minister wishes to attend the memorial service to be held at Linton Camp on 13 August.

Appreciate this is short notice.

Regards,

Bernard

---

**From:** s. 9(2)(a)

**Sent:** Monday, 18 July 2022 2:14 p.m.

**To:** Bernard Isherwood

**Subject:** RE: Hui with Minister of Defence on Mt Ruapehu Bravery Award - 31 Aug

Thanks Bernard, I will note the attendees and let the Minister know of the event on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Ngā Mihi/ Thanks,

s. 9(2)(a)

s. 9(2)(a)

Military Secretary to the Minister of Defence | Office of Hon Peeni Henare

Minister of Defence | Minister for Whānau Ora

Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Tourism | Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing) |

s. 9(2)(a) Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

---

**From:** Bernard Isherwood s. 9(2)(a)

**Sent:** Monday, 18 July 2022 12:41 PM

**To:** s. 9(2)(a)

**Cc:** 'Bob Davies' s. 9(2)(a)

**Subject:** Hui with Minister of Defence on Mt Ruapehu Bravery Award - 31 Aug

s. 9(2)(a)

Just to confirm attendees for the meeting with the minister; myself, Bob Davies (in lieu of Sir Jerry) and Joe Harawira, representing Ngati Aawa.

Regards,  
Bernard

PS. Not sure if you are aware, but 1 RNZIR (Pte Stewart's old unit) are holding a dedication service for a memorial building, dedicated to Pte Stewart.

That will take place at Linton Camp on 13 Aug. You may want to make the Minister aware, as there may be some media coverage.

---

**From:** s. 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Friday, 26 August 2022 4:20 p.m.  
**To:** s. 9(2)(a)  
**Cc:** Beck, Darren, LTCOL; Ministerial Services; McLeod, John  
**Subject:** RE: Final Briefing Note for Meeting with Minister Wed 31 Aug [SEEMAIL]  
**Attachments:** DPB for MINDEF Meeting in Relation to Bravery Awards 1990 Tragedy on Mt Ruapehu.pdf

Hi sir

DPB attached.

Regards

s. 9(2)(a)

s. 9(2)(a)

Staff Officer Support to CDF - OCDF, Chief of Staff HQ NZDF  
Ngāti Tūmataunga | New Zealand Army

s. 9(2)(a)

[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)

**NGĀTI TŪMATAUENGA**  
**NZ ARMY**

---

**From:** s. 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 August 2022 10:04 a.m.  
**To:** Ministerial Services <ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz>  
**Cc:** s. 9(2)(a); s. 9(2)(k) Beck, Darren, LTCOL  
s. 9(2)(k); McLeod, John s. 9(2)(k)  
**Subject:** FW: Final Briefing Note for Meeting with Minister Wed 31 Aug SEEMAIL

Hi team,



Can I please have the final briefing note for the Minister in the office NLT Tue 30<sup>th</sup> for Wed's meeting.

Ngā Mihi/ Thanks,

s. 9(2)(a)

s. 9(2)(a)

Military Secretary to the Minister of Defence | Office of Hon Peeni Henare

Minister of Defence | Minister for Whānau Ora

Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Tourism | Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing) |

s. 9(2)(a) Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

---

**From:** Bernard Isherwood s. 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 August 2022 9:21 AM

To: s. 9(2)(a)

Subject: Meeting with Minister Wed 31 Dec

Good morning s. 9(2)(a)

The memorial dedication service on 13 Aug in Linton Camp went very well.

We look forward to the meeting with the minister next Wednesday at 1630hrs.

As advised, our group will be, in addition to myself, WO1 (Rtd) Bob Davies and Mr Joe Harawira, Nagti Awa.

Are you able to advise if there will be anyone attending from HQ NZDF?

In preparation for the meeting, I have attached some documentation and request that this be made available to the minister prior.

The documents are:

- The Listener article that gives a good summary of the incident
- A letter of support from s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(ba)(i)
- A letter of support from s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(ba)(i)
- A letter of support from s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(ba)(i)
- An affidavit from s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(ba)(i)

I would also be grateful if you could advise the access arrangements at the Beehive.

Will there be somebody from your office to meet us and do we need to bring ID?

Thank you,

Bernard

---

26 Aug 22

OMDRFI-2022-066

**DOT-POINT BRIEF FOR MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

**MEETING IN RELATION TO THE BRAVERY HONOURS AWARDED TO NZDF PERSONNEL AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE 1990 TRAGEDY ON MT RUAPEHU**

**Purpose**

1. To provide the Minister of Defence with briefing notes prior to a meeting on 31 Aug with Mr Bernard Isherwood, Warrant Officer (Rtd) Bob Davies and Mr Joe Harawira in relation to the bravery honours awarded to NZDF personnel as a consequence of the 1990 tragedy on Mt Ruapehu. Specifically the group is seeking an upgrade to the level of the bravery award posthumously made to Private David Stewart.

**Context**

2. On 9 to 12 Aug 90, a group of 13 NZDF personnel (two instructors, 10 soldiers and one naval rating) were involved in a Waiouru Army Adventurous Training Centre mountaineering course on Mt Ruapehu. The weather deteriorated significantly while the group was on the mountain. They were unable to reach shelter and left exposed to the extreme weather conditions. Six of the personnel on the mountain died before assistance was able to reach them.

s. 9(2)(ba)(i), s. 9(2)(g)(i)



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<sup>1</sup> The New Zealand bravery awards are awarded over four levels. The level of an award is generally determined by the nature of the incident which has resulted in the act of bravery, the degree of risk to the life of the person performing the act and their personal skills or qualifications relevant to the incident, and whether the actions were taken with disregard to their own safety.

### **Retrospective Reviews of Gallantry and Bravery Awards**

7. The award to Private Stewart had been through successive levels of review and had been fully assessed by both Army and the Cabinet office. Decisions were made by those entrusted to make final recommendations, including the Prime Minister, as is the case with all gallantry and bravery awards. These individuals are also the ones who have a more in-depth understanding of the key elements of each level of bravery or gallantry and undertake research and assessment against that criteria for reasons of consistency, clarity and comparison. As always it will remain partly subjective.

8. There have been regular calls to retrospectively review either the non-awarding or level of an award. Most of these relate to gallantry. Governments have repeatedly refused to make retrospective judgements preferring to leave it to the decision-makers at the time. Generally, a five year rule has applied to reviewing past honours decisions. The underpinning principle is that decisions should be made while all the relevant information is available, recall of the events is clear, and the actions concerned can be considered against the standards and values of the time and other contemporary examples.

- Last year the Prime Minister reinforced this position in relation to retrospective consideration of Vietnam gallantry awards

### **Campaign to Elevate the Award to Private Stewart**

9. There has been a campaign to have the level of the award to Private Stewart, in particular, elevated to a higher level to recognise the bravery that was noted by the Court of Inquiry into the incident. This has largely been led by Mr Bernard Isherwood, who was President of the Court of Inquiry in 1990, and Warrant Officer (Rtd) Bob Davies. Recent engagement on this has included:

- A meeting with the Chief of Defence Force (CDF) on 20 Apr 21.
- Anzac Day 2021 publicity through the media.
- A dedication ceremony for Private Stewart held at Linton Military Camp on 13 Aug and which attracted media attention.

### **Summary**

s. 9(2)(ba)(i), s. 9(2)(g)(i)



11. The NZDF position supports the process followed and the decisions made.

12. It is recommended that Mr John McLeod attend the meeting on 31 Aug.



**AJ WOODS**  
AIRCDRE  
COS HQNZDF

Achive Manager

Export

From: [Mcleod, John](#)

Sent: Mon, 29 Aug 2022 03:21:58 GMT

To: **s. 9(2)(a)**

Subject: Briefing Ruapehu Bravery awards Aug 22.docx Seemail In Confidence

Attachments may contain viruses that are harmful to your computer. Attachments may not display correctly.



[Briefing Ruapehu Bravery awards Aug 22.docx \(106Kb\)](#)

**s. 9(2)(a)**

You have the Dot Point Brief **s. 9(2)(a)** for the Minister's meeting with Bernie Isherwood. Attached is my report to CDF on the Ruapehu bravery awards process which includes more detail and may be useful to you as a backgrounder.

Cheers

John



Briefing Ruapehu Bravery awards Aug 22.docx

[Briefing Ruapehu Bravery awards Aug 22.docx](#)

Archive Manager

Export

From: [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#)

Sent: Thu, 01 Sep 2022 02:09:49 GMT

To: [McLeod, John](#)

CC: [David Williams \[DPMC\]](#); [Woods, Andy, AIRCDRE](#); **s. 9(2)(a)**

Subject: RE: Seemail In Confidence Ruapehu Gallantry Awards  
[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Kia ora John,

Thanks very much for those updates – both very helpful. We'll keep an eye out for the Ruapehu submission.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Nāku, nā Rachel

**Rachel Hayward (she/her)**  
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet  
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington  
6011, New Zealand

**s. 9(2)(a)**

Email:

[Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)

---

From: McLeod, John **s. 9(2)(k)**

Sent: Thursday, 1 September 2022 12:17 pm

To: Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>

Cc: David Williams [DPMC] <[David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Woods, Andy, AIRCDRE

**s. 9(2)(k)**; **s. 9(2)(a)**

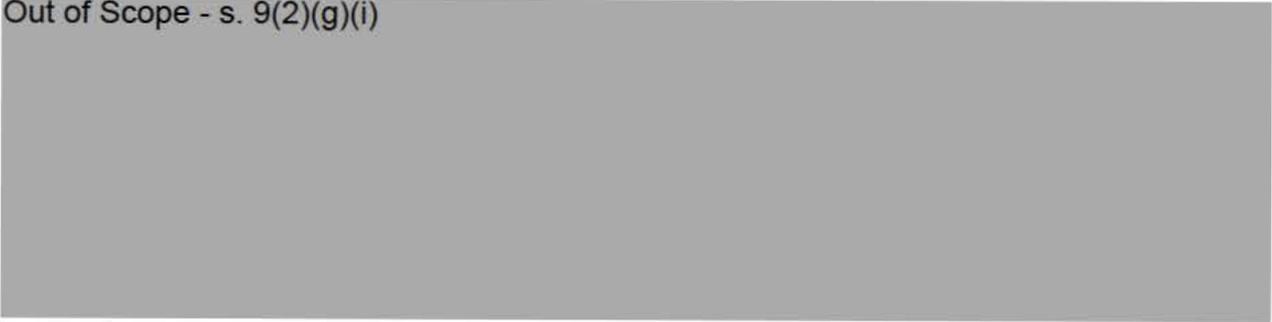
Subject: Seemail In Confidence Ruapehu Gallantry Awards

\*\*\* [SEEMAIL] This message may contain classified information \*\*\*

Hi Rachel

Last night I was with the Minister of Defence when he met with Bernie Isherwood, Bob Davies and Joe Harawira regarding the bravery award for David Stewart. The Minister was well-briefed and across the issues. He understands the challenges and issues around the status of the award as well as the implications of any change, but he agreed that he would support the recommendation for an upgrade to the Prime Minister. Bernie Isherwood was proposing to send DPMC direct a recommendation for upgrading of the award but he agreed to send it direct to the Minister who would put a covering note on it to the PM (drafted by me as I understand it). His intention is that this be done well before Christmas.

Out of Scope - s. 9(2)(g)(i)



Happy to have an off-line conversation with more information.  
Ngā mihi

John

*John McLeod, ONZM*

*Director*

*Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group*

*HQ NZ Defence Force*

Mobile: **s. 9(2)(k)**

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Export

From: [McLeod, John](#)

Sent: Tue, 20 Sep 2022 23:38:10 GMT

To: [s. 9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

Subject: Seemail FW: PROCESS FOR REVIEW of Nomination for Bravery Award - Pte DEW Stewart -IN-CONFIDENCE

Attachments may contain viruses that are harmful to your computer. Attachments may not display correctly.

 [Nomination for the New Zealand Cross for S53606 Private David Edward Whawhai](#)

[Stewart.docx](#) (24Kb)  [s. 9\(2\)\(a\), s. 9\(2\)\(ba\)\(i\)](#)  [s. 9\(2\)\(a\), s. 9\(2\)\(ba\)\(i\)](#)

[Pte Stewart.docx](#) (14Kb)  [s. 9\(2\)\(a\), s. 9\(2\)\(ba\)\(i\)](#)  [Letter of](#)

[Endorsement- Private David Stewart.docx](#) (70Kb)  [231763 Bravery Award nomination form - Current version \(October 2021\).DOCX](#) (41Kb)

Attached is draft letter for the Minister to send to the Prime Minister regarding a review of the bravery award made to Private David Stewart. The letter reflects the Minister's direction. I have consulted the Cabinet Office (David Williams) who was keen for the NZDF to have a view. I have avoided that in the draft because this is the Minister's position, not that of officials.

John

*John McLeod, ONZM**Director**Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group**HQ NZ Defence Force*Mobile: [s. 9\(2\)\(k\)](#)[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)

 [cid:image001.png@01D78DC4.1977FF80](#)

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From: [s. 9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

Sent: Friday, 9 September 2022 2:47 p.m.

To: McLeod, John [s. 9\(2\)\(k\)](#)Cc: Woods, Andy, AIRCDRE [s. 9\(2\)\(k\)](#); Beck, Darren, LTCOL[s. 9\(2\)\(k\)](#); Ministerial Services <[ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz)>

Subject: PROCESS FOR REVIEW of Nomination for Bravery Award - Pte DEW Stewart -IN-CONFIDENCE

Team,

Post the meeting with Bernard Isherwood on the 31<sup>st</sup>, the Minister agreed to supporting the attached submission for the NZBM review for upgrade to NZC for Private David Stewart for forwarding to the Prime Minister.

Can you please investigate the process and provide advice to get this submission presented in the appropriate format to ensure the Minister is able to sign it and have it forwarded to the PM through the Cabinet Office.

I am happy to remain the point of contact for Bernhard should there be any ongoing engagement.

Ngā Mihi/ Thanks,

s. 9(2)(a)



Red Coat of Arms

s. 9(2)(a)

Military Secretary to the Minister of Defence | Office of Hon Peeni Henare

Minister of Defence | Minister for Whānau Ora

Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Tourism | Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing) |

s. 9(2)(a)

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

6160, New Zealand

---

**From:** Bernard Isherwood s. 9(2)(a)

**Sent:** Wednesday, 7 September 2022 1:47 PM

**To:** s. 9(2)(a)

**Subject:** Nomination for Bravery Award - Pte DEW Stewart

Good afternoon s. 9(2)(a)

Please find attached the Nomination for the NZ Cross for Pte Stewart, together with five Annexes.

As directed, could you please pass to the Minister for his action.

Grateful if you confirm receipt.

Regards,

Bernard

---

---

**From:** McLeod, John s.9(2)(k)  
**Sent:** Monday, 12 September 2022 9:59 am  
**To:** David Williams [DPMC]  
**Cc:** s. 9(2)(a)  
**Subject:** FW: PROCESS FOR REVIEW of Nomination for Bravery Award - Pte DEW Stewart - IN-CONFIDENCE SEEMAIL  
**Attachments:** Nomination for the New Zealand Cross for S53606Private David Edward Whawhai s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(ba)(i)  
231763\_Bravery Award nomination form - Current version (October 2021).DOCX

\*\*\* [SEEMAIL] This message may contain classified information \*\*\*

David

The Minister's staff have sent the request from Bernie Isherwood for the upgrade of Pte Stewart's bravery award over to us to produce a covering letter. I was at the meeting with the Minister and his intention is to support it to the Prime Minister. In order to keep the process relatively straight forward I proposed just a covering letter, noting the representations made to the Minister, and his support for the case. Separately, I would provide the Cabinet Office all the material we have collected in relation to this request for a reconsideration.

Are you happy with this approach?

Ngā mihi

John

*John McLeod, ONZM  
Director  
Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group  
HQ NZ Defence Force  
Mobile: s. 9(2)(k)*

[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)



---

**From:** s. 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Friday, 9 September 2022 2:47 p.m.  
**To:** McLeod, John <s.9(2)(k)>  
**Cc:** Woods, Andy, AIRCDRE s.9(2)(k); Beck, Darren, LTCOL s.9(2)(k)  
Ministerial Services <[ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:ministerialservices@nzdf.mil.nz)>  
**Subject:** PROCESS FOR REVIEW of Nomination for Bravery Award - Pte DEW Stewart -IN-CONFIDENCE

Team,

Post the meeting with Bernard Isherwood on the 31<sup>st</sup>, the Minister agreed to supporting the attached submission for the NZBM review for upgrade to NZC for Private David Stewart for forwarding to the Prime Minister.

Can you please investigate the process and provide advice to get this submission presented in the appropriate format to ensure the Minister is able to sign it and have it forwarded to the PM through the Cabinet Office.



I am happy to remain the point of contact for Bernhard should there be any ongoing engagement.

Ngā Mihi/ Thanks,

s. 9(2)(a)

s. 9(2)(a)

Military Secretary to the Minister of Defence | Office of Hon Peeni Henare

Minister of Defence | Minister for Whānau Ora

Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Tourism | Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing) |

s. 9(2)(a)

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

**From:** Bernard Isherwood s. 9(2)(a)

**Sent:** Wednesday, 7 September 2022 1:47 PM

**To:** s. 9(2)(a)

**Subject:** Nomination for Bravery Award - Pte DEW Stewart

Good afternoon s. 9(2)(a)

Please find attached the Nomination for the NZ Cross for Pte Stewart, together with five Annexes.

As directed, could you please pass to the Minister for his action.

Grateful if you confirm receipt.

Regards,

Bernard

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From: [Mcleod, John](#)

Sent: Fri, 16 Sep 2022 03:31:35 GMT

To: [David Williams \[DPMC\]](#)

Subject: RE: Bravery Award Pte David Stewart Seemail In Confidence

Thanks David. I will check in with the Minister's office. s. 9(2)(g)(i)

I'll have another go at the wording to find a more nuanced way.

Ngā mihi

John

*John McLeod, ONZM*

*Director*

*Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group*

*HQ NZ Defence Force*

Mobile: s. 9(2)(k)

[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)



cid:image001.png@01D78DC4.  
1977FF80

---

**From:** David Williams [DPMC] [mailto:David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz]

**Sent:** Friday, 16 September 2022 3:04 p.m.

**To:** McLeod, John s. 9(2)(k)

**Subject:** Bravery Award Pte David Stewart Seemail In Confidence

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Kia ora john

I have an initial look at the draft, my comments (subject to review by Rachel/Pav) would be to note that:

- there needs to be advice included in the letter on NZDF's position on retrospective consideration of honours (in general and in this case).
- clarifying what were the informal enquires undertaken by the Minister?
- confirming with the Minister's office his position (supporting reconsideration).
- what are the implications of reconsideration? (as noted in final para of the draft)
- are there other options for recognition outside of the honours system?

I may have some further comment once I have been able to discuss this within the office, but this will not be available until after the Queen's memorial service at the very earliest.

Hei konā mai,  
David



**David Williams**  
**Senior Advisor (Honours)**  
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

s. 9(2)(a)

Email: [david.williams@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:david.williams@dpmc.govt.nz)

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**From:** McLeod, John s. 9(2)(k)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 15 September 2022 3:22 pm  
**To:** David Williams [DPMC] <[David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** Bravery Award Pte David Stewart Seemail In Confidence

\*\*\* [SEEMAIL] This message may contain classified information \*\*\*

Hi David,

Attached is a draft letter I have written for the Minister of the Defence to the Prime Minister supporting a review of the New Zealand Bravery Medal awarded to Private David Stewart. While this was not the advice to the Minister, he was very clear that he wished to forward and support the submission to the Prime Minister. This letter reflects the Minister's view. Prior to sending it to the Minister's office I just want to run it past you to make sure there is nothing in it that would be problematic.

I appreciate we all have a lot on but the Minister wants to progress this quickly – at least to the PM.  
Many thanks

Ngā mihi

John

*John McLeod, ONZM*  
*Director*  
*Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group*  
*HQ NZ Defence Force*  
*Mobile:* s. 9(2)(k)

[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)



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From: [David Williams \[DPMC\]](#)

Sent: Thu, 15 Sep 2022 05:02:21 GMT

To: [McLeod, John](#)

Subject: RE: Bravery Award Pte David Stewart Seemail In Confidence  
[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Thanks John, your right there is a lot on for both of us. I will provide comments on the draft tomorrow.

Kind regards  
David



**David Williams**  
**Senior Advisor (Honours)**  
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington  
6011, New Zealand

s. 9(2)(a)

Email:

[david.williams@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:david.williams@dpmc.govt.nz)

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---

From: McLeod, John [s. 9\(2\)\(k\)](#)

Sent: Thursday, 15 September 2022 3:22 pm

To: David Williams [DPMC] <[David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:David.Williams@dpmc.govt.nz)>

Subject: Bravery Award Pte David Stewart Seemail In Confidence

\*\*\* [SEEMAIL] This message may contain classified information \*\*\*

Hi David,

Attached is a draft letter I have written for the Minister of the Defence to the Prime Minister supporting a review of the New Zealand Bravery Medal awarded to Private David Stewart. While this was not the

advice to the Minister, he was very clear that he wished to forward and support the submission to the Prime Minister. This letter reflects the Minister's view. Prior to sending it to the Minister's office I just want to run it past you to make sure there is nothing in it that would be problematic. I appreciate we all have a lot on but the Minister wants to progress this quickly – at least to the PM. Many thanks

Ngā mihi

John

*John McLeod, ONZM*

*Director*

*Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group*

*HQ NZ Defence Force*

*Mobile: s. 9(2)(k)*

[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)



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From: [McLeod, John](#)

Sent: Thu, 29 Sep 2022 02:22:11 GMT

To: [s. 9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

Subject: To PM Re Stewart.docx seemail in confidence

Attachments may contain viruses that are harmful to your computer. Attachments may not display correctly.

 [To PM Re Stewart.docx \(15Kb\)](#)

Hi [s. 9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

As requested of me I have drafted a letter for the Minister's consideration to cover the submission by Bernie Isherwood to upgrade the New Zealand Bravery Medal awarded to David Stewart. I understand you have a hard copy of the papers in support of the submission.

We will separately provide the Cabinet Office with copies of all the documents and reports we hold.

Ngā mihi

John

*John McLeod, ONZM*

*Director*

*Heritage, Commemorations, and Protocol Group*

*HQ NZ Defence Force*

*Mobile: [s. 9\(2\)\(k\)](#)*

[www.nzdf.mil.nz](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz)

 [ATT70006.jpg](#)

 [To PM Re Stewart.docx](#) [To PM Re Stewart.docx](#)

Archive Manager

Export

From: **s. 9(2)(a)** Sent: Mon, 05 Dec 2022 18:59:54 GMT  
 To: [Ministerial Services](#)  
 CC: [Mcleod, John](#) ; [Williams, David](#) ; [Beck, Darren, LTCOL](#) ; **s. 9(2)(a)**  
 Subject: IN-CONFIDENCE SIGNED COPY OF MT RUAPEHU BRAVERY AWARD  
 UPGRADE SEEMAIL

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 [PH 35926 Minister Letter to Rt Hon PM re Mt Ruapehu Bravery Award Review Pvt](#)  
[Stewart 221205.pdf \(120Kb\)](#)  [Nomination for the New Zealand Cross for S53606Private](#)  
[David Edward Whaw...docx \(24Kb\)](#)  **s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(ba)(i)**  
**s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(ba)(i)** [Pte Stewart.docx \(14Kb\)](#)  **s. 9(2)(a), s. 9(2)(ba)(i)**   
[Letter of Endorsement- Private David Stewart.docx \(70Kb\)](#)  [231763 Bravery Award](#)  
[nomination form - Current version \(October 2021\).docx \(41Kb\)](#)  [11 11 22 Minister](#)  
[Henare re upgrading bravery award for Private David St...pdf \(659Kb\)](#)

Morena Team,

Please find attached the signed copy of the 'Consideration of Upgrade of Bravery Award – Private David Edward Whawai Stewart NZBM' with supporting documentation for your records. The letter will be forwarded to the Prime Minister's Office by close of play this week.

Ngā Mihi/ Thanks,

**s. 9(2)(a)**

 Red Coat of Arms

**s. 9(2)(a)**

Military Secretary to the Minister of Defence | Office of Hon Peeni Henare

Minister of Defence | Minister for Whānau Ora

Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Tourism | Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing) |

**s. 9(2)(a)**

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings,

Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Archive Manager

Export

From: s. 9(2)(a)  
To: Talisa Kupenga; TAYLOR, Kevin  
CC: Berry, Greer; Mason, Alex; s. 9(2)(a)  
Subject: RE: TVNZ request unclassified  
Evening All.

Sent: Mon, 10 Apr 2023 07:20:01 GMT

Apologies, still in catch up mode post the DPM Australia being here.

This topic came up during my handover. In addition, I received an email from the key external POC earlier this week inquiring about progress.

In short, the last Minister of Defence endorsed the upgrade of the medal to NZ Cross. This has been forwarded to the Cabinet Office who are working on a response to the request. This has come to a halt as the key people are involved with the PM's trip to the Kings Coronation. Therefore, there will be no update/progress until they have returned.

Ngā mihi

s. 9(2)(a)

Private Secretary, NZDF

s. 9(2)(a)

Office of Hon Andrew Little MP

Minister of Defence

Minister for the Public Service

Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations

Minister Responsible for the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service

Minister Responsible for the Government Communications Security Bureau

Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques

Reception: +64 4 817 8707 | E: [a.little@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:a.little@ministers.govt.nz)

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Authorised by Hon Andrew Little MP, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

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From: Talisa Kupenga <Talisa.Kupenga@parliament.govt.nz>  
Sent: Thursday, 6 April 2023 1:08 PM  
To: Taylor, Kevin s. 9(2)(k); s. 9(2)(a)  
Cc: Berry, Greer <Greer.Berry@nzdf.mil.nz>; Mason, Alex <Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz>  
Subject: RE: TVNZ request unclassified

Gotcha – thanks Kevin

Won't need a korero today but will give you a bell when it suits

Ngā mihi,

**Talisa Kupenga**  
**Senior Press Secretary Hon Andrew Little MP**  
DDI: +64 4 817 6895 | M: +64 27 405 7231 | E: [talisa.kupenga@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:talisa.kupenga@parliament.govt.nz)

**Office of Hon Andrew Little MP**  
Minister of Defence  
Minister for the Public Service  
Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations  
Minister Responsible for the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service  
Minister Responsible for the Government Communications Security Bureau  
Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques

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**From:** Taylor, Kevin **s. 9(2)(k)**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 6 April 2023 1:05 PM  
**To:** Talisa Kupenga <[Talisa.Kupenga@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Talisa.Kupenga@parliament.govt.nz)>; **s. 9(2)(a)**  
**Cc:** Berry, Greer <[Greer.Berry@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:Greer.Berry@nzdf.mil.nz)>; Mason, Alex <[Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:Alexandra.Mason@nzdf.mil.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: TVNZ request unclassified

There is a long history of this matter, which I'm happy to perhaps come over and explain today if you want.

The short version is that NZDF's Heritage Commemorations and Protocol unit advise that PMO has referred this matter to the Cabinet Office for advice.

Head of HCP, John McLeods, further advises that PMO is "where the question should go". However, you do need some background on it (I think) before simply doing that, and as I say, I'm happy to go over it for you.

---

**From:** Talisa Kupenga [<mailto:Talisa.Kupenga@parliament.govt.nz>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 6 April 2023 12:04 p.m.  
**To:** **s. 9(2)(a)**  
**Cc:** Taylor, Kevin **s. 9(2)(k)**; Berry, Greer <[Greer.Berry@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:Greer.Berry@nzdf.mil.nz)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: TVNZ request

Hi guys,

Any info re; this would be greatly appreciated

Ngā mihi

Talisa Kupenga  
Senior Press Secretary Hon Andrew Little MP  
DDI: +64 4 817 6895 | M: +64 27 405 7231 | E: [talisa.kupenga@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:talisa.kupenga@parliament.govt.nz)  
Office of Hon Andrew Little MP

Minister of Defence  
Minister for the Pacific  
Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations  
Minister Responsible for the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service  
Minister Responsible for the Government Communications Security Bureau  
Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Christchurch Mosque

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**From:** S. 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 6, 2023 11:47:19 AM  
**To:** Talisa Kupenga <[Talisa.Kupenga@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Talisa.Kupenga@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** TVNZ request

Kia ora Talisa,

I am wondering if there's an update from the Minister on getting the late Private David Stewart's medal upgraded to an NZ Cross?

It was a request made last year by retired army colonel Bernard Isherwood.

Stewart was the soldier who died saving fellow soldiers in the Ruapehu tragedy 32 years ago.

I think it was being considered before there was a cabinet shuffle after Jacinda Ardern stood down.

Thanks very much,

S. 9(2)(a)

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