



1978 Mountbatten Medal – George Geddes Parsonage

On 18th April, 1978 at 2.45 AM, a 43 year old woman threw herself into the River Clyde from the Albert Bridge in Glasgow. The river depth at this point was between eight and twelve feet and an additional hazard was constituted by the remains of the metal structure of a former range projecting from the river bed into the fast flowing waters

George Geddes Parsonage was awoken from sleep and rushed to the bridge, where Inspector Kenneth McLean and Sergeant Colin Campbell of the Strathclyde Police were in attendance. Parsonage dropped a life buoy into the river, securing its retaining line on the parapet of the bridge. The police officers then lowered him some 60 feet into the river by means of a second rope. In the pitch darkness and with the water temperature at 2C, he swam 6 yards to the woman and returned her by a chin tow to the rope end at his point of entry into the water. Her unconscious body caught on the parapet as it was raised on the rope by the police officers. Parsonage was himself raised by the second line to free her, before she was finally brought to safety. He applied artificial respiration and, within less than a minute, the woman's breathing restarted and she was removed to hospital by ambulance.

Parsonage holds the Award of Merit of the Royal Life Saving Society - United Kingdom, which he gained in 1960 at the Young Swimmers' Athletic Union in Glasgow. His great courage in making a precarious entry into a fast flowing river at very low temperature in the darkness of the early hours of the morning, his skilful rescue and subsequent care of the casualty were responsible for the saving of a life.