



1979 Mountbatten Medal – Patrick Farge

At about 8.30pm on Wednesday, 27 June, 1979, a car with four occupants crashed through a roadside barrier at Riverside Drive, Whangarei Town Basin, and entered the water upside down. Hearing the noise of the crash, Patrick Marie Bernard Farge, with his father, Paul Farge, left their trimaran “Tanea” by its dinghy and arrived on the scene within a minute or so; only the bottoms of the wheels of the crashed car were then visible. One of the occupants of the car struggled free by himself and told Patrick and his father of the three still inside the vehicle.

Patrick, aged 16 and a student, immediately entered the muddy water and dived repeatedly into the vehicle to release the three occupants. On at least two occasions, his clothing became trapped but he freed himself each time and continued with the rescue. The last casualty to be recovered on this dark winter’s night was brought to the surface some six minutes after the crash; the efforts of Police Constable Stephen Cook and of the ambulance crew subsequently failed to revive him however. The remaining three casualties were treated in hospital for shock

Patrick Farge holds the Resuscitation Certificate of the Royal Life Saving Society – New Zealand, which he gained at Whangarei in 1979, whilst the Sea Cadet Petty Officer. His courage and perseverance in very difficult conditions were the major factors in the saving of two lives.