



1983 Mountbatten Medal – Patrick Abram

Shortly after 1.15pm on 5 January, 1983, three police vehicles responded to an emergency call on the lower promenade at Blackpool in Lancashire, England. A holidaymaker had entered the sea in an attempt to retrieve his pet dog and had been subsequently swept along the sea defences for some four tenths of a mile, supported by life belts thrown to him by passers-by.

In sea conditions of a heavy swell, and temperature just a few degrees centigrade and an onshore wind of force 5 to 6, the three officers, Police Constables Patrick Abram and Gordon Connolly and Woman Police Constable Angela Bradley, realised that only immediate action on their part could offer the possibility of rescue to the holidaymaker, Mr. Alistair Anthony, who was on the point of being dashed against the 20 foot vertical sea wall.

PC Abram entered the water twice, secured to the land by a life belt and line held by his colleagues, who were standing on the sloping ramp running down into the sea, parallel to the promenade. On the first occasion, the secured line did not permit him to reach Mr. Anthony. During his second attempt, for which the line had been untethered, his fellow officers holding the line, were swept into the sea by a freak wave.

The sea conditions had deteriorated and the three police officers, with a fourth, Constable Colin Morrison, and the holiday maker, found themselves in imminent danger of their lives with no prospect of a rescue. Constable Abram, despite his own perilous condition, attempted to secure his colleague, Constable Morrison, on the life belt which he was wearing. As his own strength declined, the second heroic rescue bid failed.

Whilst his colleagues and the holidaymaker (whom they had sought in vain to rescue) tragically drowned, PC Abram was miraculously rescued from the sea at 2.15pm. One of the throwing lines from the many emergency vehicles now in attendance caught around his neck; at grave risk of strangulation, he was lifted some 10 feet to the promenade, where both his heart and breathing were found to have stopped: in addition, he was acutely hypothermic. The resuscitation applied by a doctor and ambulance personnel was effective and he was transferred to hospital, where he recovered.

For his great gallantry in making two rescue attempts in the most adverse weather and sea conditions, Police Constable Patrick Richard Abram of the Lancashire Constabulary is awarded the 1983 Mountbatten Medal.