



## **1991 MOUNTBATTEN MEDAL – Ken Oswald Mayer**

At 1.30pm on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1991, the rescuer, who is the holder of the RLSS Canada, Instructor's Certificate, was on Soup Bowl Beach, Bathsheba, St Joseph, Barbados when he saw the 29-year-old male victim in difficulty in the sea. A strong wind was blowing, and the sea had 10 to 12 feet waves.

The victim was swept off his feet by backwash from the large waves and was pulled into a very strong rip. He was pulled into an area of large waves breaking onto a coral reef which was 200 metres long and 30 metres wide with a drop of some 12-15 metres deep at the end of the reef.

The waves were pounding the victim approximately every six seconds.

The rescuer ran into the water with a surfboard, paddled 50 meters to the victim and using the cross-chest tow began to return to the shore holding the surfboard under one arm as a buoyancy support.

In order to protect the victim, the rescuer turned his back to the waves taking the blows from them. Using his feet for propulsion he continued to fight the effect of these large waves and it took 25 minutes to get the victim to the shore.

Mr Mayer carried out the rescue alone even though ten people, four of whom were trainee lifeguards, were looking on.

The rescue has been described by Davidson Bascombe, Head of Barbados Lifeguard Service as "a sheer act of bravery".

The 1991 Mountbatten Medal was awarded to Ken Oswald Mayer.