



Citation for 2003 Mountbatten Medal - Simon Woodrow

At 2040 hours, on Saturday 24 May 2003 the Wiltshire Constabulary received a report that a road traffic accident had occurred involving one vehicle, containing three occupants. It was stated that a Volkswagen Golf had left the road and had entered the River Bourne at Riverside Road, Laverstock, Salisbury, Wiltshire after the driver had apparently lost control of his vehicle. Due to the fading daylight visibility was poor. The car was 20 - 25 feet from the bank in 4 - 6 feet of water.

Constable 1562 Simon Woodrow was the first officer to arrive and found the vehicle in the river upright but two-thirds submerged in the water. One man had already escaped from the car, making his way to the riverbank. A second man, seated on the boot/parcel shelf area, expressed concern about another passenger trapped in the rear of the car. Removing the heaviest items of uniform and personal equipment, Simon Woodrow entered the fast flowing water, which was chest deep. He initially guided the man at the rear of the vehicle to safety on the riverbank. He then returned to the vehicle and located a young woman trapped in the rear of the car. He immediately made an assessment of her condition and noticed that she appeared to be unconscious and not responding also that her head was going under the water. He noticed that she appeared to be having trouble breathing due to her airway being blocked and that she was trapped by her legs.

Realising the urgency of the situation and the risk of the vehicle being swept away, Simon first attempted to open the driver's door, however when this proved impossible due to the depth of the water, he had to gain access to the vehicle through the smashed rear windscreen, onto the parcel shelf. He first opened her airway enabling her to breathe and then pulled her clear of the rising water. He also closed a deep wound on her neck with his bare hands to minimise blood loss until arrival of the first Paramedic Unit at the scene. On arrival of the paramedics, Simon remained with the casualty to assist in her removal from the vehicle. This was done in spite of him suffering from prolonged immersion in cold water and also the unfortunate ingestion of fuel and oil from the contaminated water.

The three occupants of the vehicle were taken to a local hospital suffering from their injuries and the effects of the cold water. Simon was also taken to hospital suffering from mild hypothermia and the effects of the fuel and water entering his mouth and eyes. He recovered and insisted on returning to duty the following day. All those involved made a full recovery.

During the course of this incident Simon demonstrated extreme courage and also placed himself at a high degree of personal risk in order to save the young lady's life and prevent further injury or danger to the others involved. He acted with a clear head, minimising the risks prior to entering the water. For this outstanding action Police Constable 1562 Simon Woodrow is awarded the 2003 Mountbatten Medal.