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FRIDAY, 9TH NOVEMBER 1973

## State Intelligence

### HONOURS AND AWARDS

**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD**

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1.  
9th November 1973.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased, on the advice of Her Majesty's New Zealand Ministers, to approve the award of the Air Force Medal to the undermentioned:

(To be dated 30th October 1973.)

Sergeant Allan George James CUNNINGHAM (Q80675)  
Royal New Zealand Air Force.

Sergeant Cunningham joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force on 9th January 1962 as an Airman Cadet in the Engine Trade. He was selected as a helicopter crewman in 1971 and promoted Sergeant in March the following year. He is currently a member of No. 3 Squadron, Auckland.

At 1920 hours on 16th January 1973 a call was made for a helicopter crew to proceed to a coastal cliff two miles south of Muriwai Beach to rescue two persons trapped on a ledge by rising tides, together with two Surf Life Savers who had swum to their assistance. Flight Lieutenant Butler (Captain), Flight Lieutenant Lamb (Co-pilot/Winch Operator) and Sergeant Cunningham (Helicopter Crewman) were airborne within 20 minutes and commenced the rescue at 2000 hours in rapidly fading light. The rescue called for a downwind hover winch with the aircraft's rotor tips not more than 10 feet out and some 150 feet down the cliff face. From this position Sergeant Cunningham was winched down. However, he could not be placed on the ledge which was by this time being reached by the wash of the sea and he found himself hanging level with, but some feet out from, the ledge. He elected to be lowered to another ledge which was exposed each time the sea ran out, and thence to scramble up to the rescue point. He

tried this twice but each time was caught in the heavily surging sea. He then decided to hang level with the higher ledge and have the persons to be rescued throw him a rope, with which he could be pulled across to the ledge. This was an extremely difficult and taxing feat involving him in considerable risk as it was carried out in arduous conditions with only helicopter lighting during otherwise total darkness. He repeated this operation four times, taking one person off at a time and swinging outwards as soon as he was ready to be winched in. The fact that the rescue was completely successful reflects considerable credit on the crew as a whole. But it was Sergeant Cunningham's skill, determination and resourcefulness throughout and in the face of personal danger that made the success possible.

Sergeant Cunningham's display of courage, skill and determination, is considered to be worthy of recognition by this award.

Sergeant Morris David BURKE (W81049) Royal New Zealand Air Force.

Sergeant Burke joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force as a Boy Entrant in January 1963 and has served subsequently as an airframe mechanic and fitter at R.N.Z.A.F. Bases, Ohakea, Woodbourne and Auckland. In February 1968 he trained as a helicopter crewman and is currently serving a second tour on No. 3 Squadron in that capacity.

He has flown as a crew member in Iroquois aircraft on 29 search and rescue and medical evacuation missions.

On 16th May 1972 Sergeant Burke was the crewman on an Iroquois helicopter called in to rescue a party of rock hunters who had previously been lost in the Kaimai Ranges near Te Aroha. The party which included elderly persons had to be lifted 120 feet from a narrow stream bed. Heavy driving rain with reduced visibility and severe turbulence creating pronounced cable oscillation made conditions for the rescue hazardous. In these difficult circumstances