

Citation for the Rutherford Trophy For Meritorious Act

Incident: # 0631 Sunday November 18th 2012

The Crew of Howick Rescue 1

**Ian Gibson (Skipper) - Steve Rowlands - Warwick Marshall -
Greg Noble – Ian Graham**

The crew of the Coastguard vessel Howick Rescue One began a duty day at 0900. After launching at Howick Beach they found some protection from the adverse conditions at Matiatia Bay on Waiheke Island and were listening and available.

At 0945 they heard a garbled Distress call and responded immediately. They established from the radio calls that a vessel had overturned between Crusoe Rock and Park Point on the South West corner of Waiheke.

Howick Rescue One was on scene within five minutes and located an overturned vessel close to Crusoe Rock with two persons nearing exhaustion holding onto the outboard motor. With the big swells running it took four or five minutes to retrieve the two males. They advised the crew that there were others in the water and that they had drifted off toward Park Point.

As Howick Rescue One headed toward Park Point with the two survivors, they came across a vessel with a number of people on board who pointed in the direction of Park Point.

At this time the Coastguard vessel Lion Foundation Rescue arrived at the scene and ran a track parallel to the port side of Howick. Lion identified a target in the water and went to investigate. Howick continued her track for several hundred metres until Lion indicated that they had contact with a target. When Howick arrived alongside Lion the crew could see that one person had been retrieved from the water and CPR was being administered. They also had hold of a second person but were struggling to retrieve him. At this time two Howick crewmen and one visitor were placed on board Lion to assist with emergency treatments. Howick Rescue One now with just the skipper and the helmsman and the two initial survivors on board stood off Lion. At this time the Westpac Rescue Helicopter arrived and dropped a swimmer. A harness was placed around the victim and he was lifted on board Lion. Tragically the two persons brought on board Lion did not survive their ordeal. Howick Rescue One at this time retrieved their crew from Lion to begin the transportation of the two initial survivors back to a waiting medical crew at the Auckland Marine Rescue Centre. During this time one of the victims became very cold and unwell. The Howick crew quickly arranged more thermal protection and began oxygen therapy which assisted with the cold and shock and stabilised him on the journey.

Without the quick initial response from the Howick crew and their high level of training it is very likely that there could have been a very different outcome.