

# **BRAVERY AWARD**

# **BRONZE**

Presented to

**Chris Sparg**

for his brave actions on 29 June 2022 when together with his son and daughter, managed to prevent 3 overboard crew in the water from being run down by their now unmanned boat at sea off the Krom River Mouth.

NSRI St Francis Bay duty crew were activated following multiple eye-witness reports of a boat that appeared to capsize off-shore of the Krom River Mouth with 3 male casualties reported to be in the water.

Whilst exiting from the Krom River Mouth, the casualty boat encountered a severe set of waves that ultimately caused it to veer wildly to one side, throwing all 3 crew overboard. The kill switch failed to engage, and the boat continued to sea, curving around in a large circle due to a bent steering rod, to head back towards the 3 crew in the water.

Chris Sparg, 54, skipper of Plane to Sea, a long-time friend of NSRI, who is also an aircraft pilot, had told NSRI that he, his son Cameron, 30, and his daughter Courtney, 23, were returning from fishing and had entered the Krom River Mouth when they saw the incident occur, they prepared themselves to return to sea and piloting back out of the river mouth through the sea break headed in the direction of the unfolding emergency to go to the assistance of the 3 casualties.

An unidentified man on a sea-kayak was also nearby and was attempting to assist the 3 casualties, checking that they were not injured.

Chris noticed that the casualty boat, still underway under motor power, had gently turned around and was headed straight back in a direction towards the 3 casualties in the water.

Fearing that the 3 men would be run over by their casualty boat, Chris shouted at them to swim away from the path of the unmanned boat which drove on a path through the casualties, narrowly missing them. The casualty boat had then slowly turned around and was again heading straight back towards the 3 men in the water.

Arriving on the scene Chris, checking that the 3 casualties were not injured and afloat in their life jackets, made the decision to instead of trying to rescue the 3 casualties from the water, and risking getting in the way of the casualty boat that was bearing down on them, to put his son Cameron onto the moving casualty boat to take over the helm placing it under control.

Chris skilfully manoeuvred his boat Plane to Sea alongside the moving casualty boat and rafting his boat against the hull of the moving boat in between the swells coming to shore. When just inside of the outer breaking wave line, with a calculated risk Cameron, stepped across from his boat and boarded the casualty boat, taking command and bringing it to a halt.

Chris established a towline from his bow after instructing his daughter Courtney to take over the helm, whilst considering their next move.

Cameron attempting to re-engage the motor of the casualty boat to move out of the breaking wave line and out of danger realised that the steering was not working due the bent steering rod.

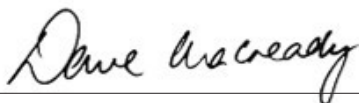
Unable to manoeuvre, it was decided to tow the vessel further out to sea and request assistance from NSRI. Between Chris and Cameron the towline was fastened from the bow of Plane to Sea to the bow of the casualty boat and Chris instructed his daughter Courtney to engage his boat in reverse thrust in an effort to tow the casualty boat further out to sea and away from the danger of the back breaking wave line and the 3 crew in the water.

Once in deeper water and out of danger Chris looked out for the 3 casualties noticing that they were now safely ashore, having been rescued by James Moore on his son's boat. The 3 men had been hit by several large waves and had drifted in their life jackets to the center channel and calmer waters, accompanied by the unidentified man in his Kayak, keeping an eye on their safety.

Once the NSRI sea rescue craft arrived on the scene, the towline of the casualty boat was transferred to tow it to shore and assisted the 3 men to recover their boat onto a trailer.

Chris Sparg's calmness and selfless actions under the difficult conditions, were exemplary, undoubtedly preventing a tragedy from occurring. The 3 crew of the casualty boat indeed owe their lives to Chris Sparg, his son Cameron and daughter Courtney's selfless actions that day.

As fellow South Africans we are proud to be able to recognise and honour this achievement.



Dave Macready  
Chairman: Board of Directors



21 July 2023

Date