

Bronze Cross – Example Citation

This report details the brave actions of Keith, an 18 year-old Assistant Scout Leader, who acted spontaneously to a call picked up on a hand-held scanner from the Coastguard channel.

Keith, a former Scout, is a leader with his old Scout Group. He is also a member of the RNLI inshore lifeboat crew.

On the evening of Wednesday 16 August 2000, Keith was on a cycle ride with his father, close to the beach at Westcliff-on-Sea. With him he had a hand-held scanner, which was tuned in to the Coastguard channel. On the scanner, he heard that people had got into difficulties in the sea, not far from his location.

Keith rushed to the scene and saw there were 3 people in the water. They were in difficulties at a point north of the outfall and very close to a group of rocks, approximately 60 to 70 yards out to sea. There were two boys and one man in the water. Approximately 100 people were at the scene, observing but not reacting. Realising the necessity for swift action, and without any consideration for his own safety, he entered the water.

Keith swam out and successfully pulled in one of the boys. He then went back to rescue the second boy, who was in shock and screaming. Whilst bringing him to shore he saw that the third person, an older male, was having difficulties and had given up the struggle to keep himself afloat. With the second boy still in his care, Keith went to the rescue of the man, who was now unconscious in the water. He put his arm under the man's chin and pulled his head above water. By now they were about 10 yards from the rocks and 50 yards from shore. With both casualties in his care and with great difficulty, he began the swim back to shore, calling to bystanders for help. He then administered CPR to the man until paramedics arrived.

The RNLI's detailed report clearly identifies the facts related to this incident and also the bravery and prompt actions of this young leader.

Keith, who was 'off duty' at the time of the incident, took decisive action to help the casualties despite great risk to his own life.