

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0177

Gibbs, Mary Elizabeth

Occupation Teacher

Summary

In October 1972, two armed men abducted teacher Mary Gibbs and her students. 20-year-old Gibbs was in charge of the one-teacher primary school at Faraday, a farming district near Castlemaine, Victoria. The men left a ransom note and placed their hostages in the back of the van and drove to the forest. To help settle the young children Gibbs pretended the incident was a game and sang songs to them during the long cold night. Near dawn, she realised the men had left the front of the van. She urged the children to kick the van door with her. Luck was with them, the door came free and they were able to make their escape.

After this incident, the then Liberal Victorian Government closed one-teacher schools. Mary Gibbs received the George Medal on 22 January 1973 for bravery during a child hostage incident.

Published resources

Book

Twentieth-Century Women of Courage, Escott, Beryl E, 1999

Site Exhibition

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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