

New Zealand eyes borders for stolen medals

by UPI

WAIOURU, New Zealand -- International police are watching New Zealand's borders to prevent a dozen military medals stolen from a museum from leaving the country. The medals, valued in the millions of dollars, were taken early Sunday from the Army Museum at Waiouru, after thieves entered the alcove where the medals were kept and exited via a fire escape, Radio New Zealand reported. Museum security arrived within three minutes. Police said they expect the thieves to ask for ransom because such historical medals would be hard to sell, Radio New Zealand said. Stolen were nine Victoria Crosses and a Bar, and two George Crosses. "This crime is a crime against every New Zealander," museum Director Raymond Seymour told Radio New Zealand. "What they have done is taken the heartbeat out of every New Zealander. These medals ... were awarded to such brave men." Among stolen medals were a Victoria Cross and Bar from Capt. Charles Upham for valor in Crete and North Africa during World War II.

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