



**SUPPLEMENT**

TO

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TUESDAY, 13 MAY, 1941

**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.**

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.  
13th May, 1941.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the undermentioned appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, for the following awards of the George Medal and the British Empire Medal and for the publication in the London Gazette of the names of Officers and Men of the Merchant Navy specially shown below as having received an expression of Commendation for their brave conduct.

*To be Additional Officers of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

**Norman Houfton, Esq., Chief Officer.**

One of H.M. Transports arrived at Berbera with troops and stores which were urgently required by our forces in British Somaliland.

Mr. Houfton by his fine example, leadership and hard work greatly helped the unloading, which had to be done into lighters, with the least possible delay. His services were invaluable.

**Captain Reginald Sanderson Kearon, Master.**

The ship was torpedoed and the damage was such that it was clear she would not last long. One boat was smashed but the other was put in the water and rafts were got

over the side. Wreckage knocked men off the rafts into the water and holed the boat. Those left on board pulled all the men they could out of the water and then lowered the rest of the rafts. They then set to work to make a new raft and launched it when the ship began to sink. All but four were got on to it. The Master floated off the ship and was sucked down but came up by a large spar to which the Chief Officer, an elderly man, was clinging. The Master lashed him to it and they were later joined by two others. After two hours they were picked up, but two, including the Chief Officer, were dead from exposure.

**Captain Archibald MacKinlay, Master.**

The ship was damaged by torpedo but got under way again. On the afternoon of the next day destroyers were met. The suggestion of a tug was refused. The next afternoon the weather was very rough and the ship was making water. A tug was asked to stand by. On the fourth day the weather got steadily worse and it was very difficult to steer. The ship lost touch with both tug and destroyers during the night, and she was making water rapidly along the main deck and flooding the port bunker. There was no means of pumping the water out from the bunker and the Master organised a bucket gang which saved the ship from sinking. It kept at work even when the Master, thinking that the ship would be blown ashore, ordered all hands on deck. She was brought safely into port.

*To be an Additional Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Captain William Royal Thomas, Master.

*To be an Additional Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Peter Gibb Johnstone, Esq., Fourth Engineer.

*Awarded the George Medal:—*

George Taylor, Quartermaster.

An aircraft made bomb attacks on the ship and raked her with machine-gun fire. She was hit and fires started.

When the plane passed overhead the Master jumped up to fire his rifle and Taylor went with him. The enemy machine-gunned them and Taylor received a bullet through his eye. Despite this he went back to the wheel and continued to steer all through the action.

The Fourth Engineer, Mr. Johnstone, showed courage and devotion to duty.

The Master, thinking the ship would founder, sent one boat away with old sailors and firemen in it, whereupon the enemy flew off.

The Master, the two Engineers, the Chief Officer, the Third Officer and the cabin boy stayed to fight the fires and eventually extinguished them.

All now went well and the ship reached port.

*To be an Additional Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Captain John Edwin Watson, Master.

*To be an Additional Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Stanley Stuart Howie, Esq., Second Mate.

A submarine attacked the ship with rapid and accurate gunfire. The Master put up a very good fight, manoeuvring to keep the enemy astern, and returning the fire. The submarine was hit more than once.

The Master, who was wounded, gave orders to abandon ship. The submarine now fired a torpedo and the ship began to sink quickly. All the boats but two had been wrecked, so rafts and any things that would float were thrown overboard. Distress signals had been sent out and the survivors were rescued.

The Second Mate fought the gun with great coolness.

*To be an Additional Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Captain James Beckett, Master.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—*

Henry James Ritchie, Boatswain.

The ship was attacked by an aircraft with machine-gun fire and bombs. In spite of the damage done every available weapon was brought into action, and the enemy was driven off. The steering-gear and hand-gear had been damaged and both holds were filling and could not be pumped out. The weather was very bad. Two tugs were sent and two days later the ship was towed to port.

The Boatswain acted throughout with great courage and took the place of two of the gunners who were wounded early in the action.

*To be an Additional Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Captain John Herbert, Master.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—*

James Francis O'Neill, Gunlayer.

A submarine was sighted abeam and opened fire as the ship swung away to bring her astern. The Master ordered the gunner to hold his fire till the enemy came within effective range. Shots were exchanged and the ship's second and fifth rounds were hits. The submarine did not fire again. The ship fired until the submarine was out of range.

She was still on the surface with her after end smoking.

The gunlayer O'Neill did his work well.

*To be Additional Members of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Thomas Cunningham Aitchison, Esq., Third Officer.

The ship was attacked by enemy aircraft and sunk.

The Third Officer, the last to leave the ship, saved the life of a shipmate who, unable to swim, was unwilling to leave.

William Arthur Allon, Esq., Chief Officer.

The ship was attacked by enemy aircraft in the Thames Estuary. She replied. Two aircraft dived near her, but the kite she was flying caused both of them to swerve away.

Chief Officer Allon, at the Lewis gun, withholding his fire until the second aircraft turned, shot so well that in one minute he brought it down into the sea.

Five bombs fell near the ship but they did no damage and no one was hurt.

Tom Collier, Esq., Chief Officer.

When the ship was attacked by enemy aircraft Mr. Collier was blown from the Monkey Island to the fore deck abreast the foremast, about 50 feet with a drop of about 40 feet. This broke two of his ribs and deafened him. He got up and began to search for survivors. He found five and put four on the raft and went on with another man searching for an hour and a quarter though the ship was listing more and more to port. When warned that she was going over and they ought to leave, he sent the other man off but himself went on looking till satisfied that no one was left.

Henry McGregor Post, Esq., Chief Officer.

The Chief Officer was in the port boat with the Master, who had been ill for some time before his ship was struck, and, therefore, much of the care of the boat and her crew fell on Mr. Post.

They were adrift in terrible weather for thirteen days. During that time Mr. Post's skill and courage were beyond praise. He was unfailingly cheerful and set a fine example.

William Walker, Esq., Third Engineer.

When the ship was torpedoed everyone left the engine room except the Third Engineer, Mr. William Walker. He remained and carried out the Master's orders though the engine room was flooding. His devotion to duty was such that he closed off the boilers before leaving thus preventing any chance of an explosion.

Mr. Walker is sixty years old.

*To be an Additional Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

James Tait Smith, Esq., First Mate.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—*

John Joseph MacNeil, Able Seaman.

When the ship was torpedoed, heavy seas made it hard to lower the boat on the weather side, but as all the crew could not get into the boat on the lee side, Mr. Smith and Able Seaman MacNeil, with great skill, lowered the boat, got into it and fended it off while others of the crew jumped. When it became too dangerous to keep the boat alongside, the First Mate ordered the Boatswain, who was still on board, to make a rope fast to the bulwark and drop the other end over for the boat to pick up so that one man at a time could come down the rope and be hauled into the boat. This was done and all hands left on board were taken off. The Master was the last to leave the ship.

Thereafter Mr. Smith and MacNeil shared in the rigours and duties of the 800-mile voyage, taking watch and watch about till they were picked up.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—*

Harold Bernard Cubberley, Able Seaman.

When the ship was attacked by aircraft the explosion of a bomb threw the guns crews to the deck. Though wounded in the ankle and knee Able Seaman Cubberley reached his gun and was engaging the enemy when the gun was hit by the rear gunner of the plane.

His example had a steadying effect on the members of the ship's crew who manned the guns.

Christopher Thomas Harris, Boatswain.

The ship was sunk by enemy action and went down almost at once. She lay in shallow water on her port side with the starboard side of the deck-house just clear of the water. Those not injured were able to climb out.

Boatswain Harris was under the fore-castle head at the time. As the ship turned over he came out on to the starboard side, worked his way amidships and helped several men. He lifted a steward through a port-hole. He then climbed over the bridge and raised the door of the chart room in order to rescue the Master, but found him dead.

Mr. Harris, who is fifty years of age, saved several lives and steadied those clinging to the wreck.

John Nivens, Donkeyman (Gunner).

An enemy aircraft dropped bombs which were avoided by the skilful action of the Master of the ship.

Ten minutes later another aircraft attacked with machine-gun fire. The Donkeyman, on the Master's orders, held his fire until the enemy presented a clear target at point blank range. He then fired the gun and repeatedly hit the aircraft which dived into the sea.

The ship held on her course, and reached port. The Master's seamanship and courage and Nivens' skill and coolness under fire saved their ship and destroyed an enemy bomber.

#### COMMENDATIONS.

Those named below have been brought to notice for brave conduct when their ships encountered enemy ships, submarines, aircraft or mines.

Harry George Christopher Allen, Gunner.

Captain Warwich Armstrong, Master.

Paul Frederick Meiring Buckholtz, Apprentice.

William Bowers, Gunner.

Arthur Ernest Burn, Steward.

Francisco Canipane, Esq., Second Mate.

Harry Willoughby Chadd, Esq., Chief Officer.

Robert Cobb, Esq., Second Engineer.

Harry Finestone, Esq., Chief Officer.

Captain Wilfred Ernest Fraser, Master.

Walter Green, Esq., Chief Engineer.

Castlefranc Guest, Esq., Third Officer.

Francis Joseph Guinevan, Esq., Chief Engineer.

Captain William Storm Harrison, Master.

Robert Hayward, Fireman.

Richard Glyn Jones, Esq., Second Mate.

Captain Charles Faulkner Linton, Master.

Calum McNeil, Able Seaman m/v. "San Demetrio."

George Arnott Mainprize, Esq., Fourth Officer.

William Melrose Manderson, Esq., Third Officer.

Patrick Jeremiah O'Keeffe, First Wireless Operator.

Captain William John Parkinson, Master.

H. Petrini, Seaman.

Herbert Lloyd Poulson, Esq., Chief Officer.

Kenneth Jones Roberts, Second Wireless Operator.

Captain Lester Saul, Master.

Alexander Sheehan, Able Seaman.

Captain Richard Septimus Simons, Master.

Cecil Stewart, Able Seaman.

Harry Terry, Esq., Chief Officer.

Captain William Thomas, Master.

Elisha Unsworth, Quartermaster.

Captain Samuel Riley Valler, Master.

Edward Windle Williams, Signalman.

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In the list of Commendations published in the London Gazette of 25th February, 1941, for the name of L. J. Dumbridge, Ship's Galley Boy, there should be substituted the name of John Michael Simpson, Ship's Galley Boy.

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