



SUPPLEMENT

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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
18th November, 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 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:—

Captain William John Cloke, Master.

The Master saw about a mile away an aircraft flying directly at the ship. He jumped to the gun and trained it on the enemy who was by now half-a-mile away and a perfect target. He fired a full belt. The enemy swerved to starboard and just cleared the stern, dropping one bomb before he came down in the sea. The Master's prompt action and good shooting saved the ship and destroyed the enemy.

Captain George William Pountney, Master.

Captain Pountney has a record of gallant service in Mediterranean waters. By day and night his command, escorted and unescorted, has been many times attacked from the air. In the Greek campaign she bore her cargoes mainly unescorted. On one

occasion she was heavily attacked by two flights of dive-bombers which made her their chief target. She was badly damaged but, by ceaseless pumping, she was able to join a convoy the same day, and made within two knots of her full speed. Master and crew accepted all risk as their normal lot, although their freight was such that even one tracer bullet through the unprotected wooden hatch-covers might have blown it up.

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

Captain John Kerr, Master.

Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—

Donald MacNeil, Boatswain.

The ship was torpedoed in mid-ocean and settled by the head. The crew got away in two life-boats, the Master and three Officers staying on board in hopes of salvaging the vessel. A second torpedo struck her and, as there was no longer hope of saving her, they left in the second boat which had kept near. The next morning they decided to make for land but, during the following night, the two boats became separated. The starboard boat was picked up after nine days but the port boat, under the Master, sailed 1,200 miles in nineteen days before being picked up.

Captain Kerr's qualities of leadership and good seamanship saved the lives of the twenty-one persons in the boat. He was greatly helped by Boatswain MacNeil, who showed skill in handling the boat under sail in the rough weather.

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

Richard Hamilton Ayres, Esq., Second Mate.

The ship was torpedoed and three boats were got away. One, in command of the Second Mate, set out with thirty-one men in her, eight of them Europeans and twenty-three Indians. Only the Second Mate had any skill with boats.

It was a dark night and heavy seas were running, so they lay to a sea-anchor until dawn, when they set sail and steered East. Mr. Ayres fixed the water ration at two dippers a day and gave the Indians, who were least able to withstand the cold, the forward part of the boat under the canvas cover, and all the blankets. After seven days only seven men remained alive, the rest having died of exposure or from drinking sea water. By the eighth day the water had all gone, and the men's hands and feet were badly frostbitten. After thirteen days land was sighted. They were too weak to use the oars, so they ran under shortened sail for the inhospitable shore. A comber broached them to, overturned the boat, and all hands were thrown into the sea. Another breaker righted her and the Second Mate pulled himself aboard and helped to drag in others. Again she turned turtle. The only three men to survive this last ordeal now clung to the keel. One let go his hold and the others were too weak to help him.

The Second Mate and a Seaman now struck out desperately for the shore. Helpers came and the Seaman scrambled to a rock but before he could be rescued he was washed back into the sea and was not seen again. Mr. Ayres was unconscious when hauled ashore. Undismayed by suffering and death he had kept a stout heart and done all a man could to comfort his shipmates and bring them to safety.

James Flett, Esq., First Radio Officer, M.V. "San Casimiro."

The ship was attacked and captured by an enemy Raider. When she was first sighted Radio Officer Flett sent a message giving her position although the enemy jammed his set and the order had been given by signal lamp not to use it. The enemy opened fire but Mr. Flett went on with his message until the aerial was shot away.

The ship, as a result of Mr. Flett's messages, was found by one of H.M. Ships and was scuttled by the enemy. Mr. Flett was thrown into the water and it was some time before he was picked up. Though suffering from this he insisted on making a full report before receiving medical attention.

Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—

Percy George Berry, Gunner.

During an attack by an enemy aircraft bombs were dropped near the ship. Berry opened fire with the ship's defensive armament and the enemy was driven off. He came back and Berry, by his cool and accurate shooting, again drove him away. The machine dived steeply as if out of control and made off losing height rapidly.

Bertram Charles Covill, Gunner.

The ship was attacked in convoy by a German aircraft. She was hit by two bombs and began to sink. As her boats pulled away it was found that some of her crew were missing.

The jolly-boat returned to the vessel which was now low in the water. Covill jumped overboard and clambered on to the deck. The only person he could find was the Chief Engineer, who was badly hurt. He put him into a lifebuoy, lifted him overboard and, towing his charge, swam to the jolly-boat. The two men were pulled away from the suction of the sinking ship and hauled to safety.

George Bradley Doncaster, Second Mate.

The ship was attacked by an enemy aircraft. Doncaster, under machine-gun fire, climbed a ladder to man the gun on the bridge and bravely stood by throughout the action.

He showed coolness and courage in the face of great danger.

George Edward Giles, Gunner.

George William Macdonald, Ship's Carpenter.

The ship was attacked in moonlight by an aircraft which came in from the starboard quarter. She replied at once and hit the enemy. The aircraft burst into flames, released her bombs, which missed, banked and fell into the sea.

It was due to the readiness, coolness and accurate shooting of Giles and Macdonald that the enemy was destroyed with the least possible delay.

William Murray, Mate.

A small coaster was on her own when she was attacked at midnight by a German aircraft. The Mate, who had just gone into the wheelhouse to take over from the Master, was wounded by machine-gun bullets. The Master ordered him below. Later, bombs fell and the Mate was stunned. On recovering, he crawled to the wheel-house and found it a smouldering mass, the Master and helmsman missing. The ship was now sinking by the head, with the foredeck awash.

In spite of many wounds and concussion, the Mate made his way aft to see if anyone was alive. He found six men, two of them hurt. They lowered the port lifeboat and pulled away.

Murray showed courage and great fortitude.

John Patterson, Able Seaman.

The ship was torpedoed and sank in six minutes. Three boats were lowered but very heavy seas were running and only one was picked up. This boat was in the charge of Able Seaman Patterson who, though only nineteen years old, by coolness, steadfastness and good seamanship, kept it afloat in the great seas for fifty-three hours and so saved the lives of ten of his shipmates.

Stanley Pinchin, Gunner.

The ship was severely attacked by an enemy aircraft with machine guns and cannon shell. She replied and as a result the aircraft was set on fire.

Pinchin showed great coolness and it was largely due to his good shooting that the enemy was damaged.

Frederick William Smy, Barge Master.

It was the Barge Master's watch and the Mate was below when the barge was damaged by enemy action, and she started to settle fast by the stern. Smy's head had been badly gashed by the roof of the wheelhouse but he went down in the cabin where the water came up to his chest.

He found the Mate stunned and pulled him up the companion, put him on the raft, which had fallen down from its place above the wheelhouse and, as he climbed on to it himself, the barge went down like a stone. Smy paddled across to another barge which altered course and picked them up.

Although injured, the Barge Master, at the risk of his life, saved his Mate.

Matthew Spratt, Gunner.

While the convoy in which the ship was sailing was attacked by aircraft on the starboard side, another bomber glided through cloud with engines shut off and bombed her from the port side. Her defence was so alert that the gunners, though attacked from an unexpected quarter, shot down the enemy.

Spratt, although on his first voyage, proved very cool and resourceful. In spite of the ship being bombed and badly damaged, he hit the aircraft and played the leading part in bringing it down.

Thomas Williams, Gunner.

When the ship was attacked by a German aircraft Williams manned the Lewis gun and, although the enemy dropped bombs and raked the ship with machine-gun fire, he kept up a sustained fire and hit the enemy's nose and fuselage. Williams showed courage and coolness throughout the attack.

COMMENDATIONS.

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

Samuel Clayton Akester, Esq. (deceased), Chief Engineer.

Captain Cyril Allison, Master.

Joseph Arnott, Ordinary Seaman.

Edward Walter Baunton, Deck Boy.

George C. Beattie, Gunner.

Thomas R. Bell, Gunner.

Leslie Bradley, Able Seaman.

James Byers, Esq., First Mate.

Joseph Dyer, Gunner.

James Taylor Esplin, Steward.

James Penry Evans (deceased), Seaman.

Alex Flett, Esq., Mate.

John Stanley Ford, Gunlayer.

Stanley Herbert Gordon, Gunner.

James Frederick Hall, Gunner.

Henry Jeffs, Gunner.

Captain James Boyd Laird (deceased), Master.

Thomas Pickering Laybourne, Able Seaman.

Neil Macleod (deceased), Able Seaman.

Ernest Edward Markham, Gunner.

Captain David Martin, Master.

Edward James Montague, Gunner.

Francis Alec Meech Pain, Esq., Second Mate.

Alfred V. Palmer, Gunner.

Alfred James Smith, Able Seaman.

Walter James Smith, Gunner.

Frank William Theobald, Gunner.

John Stanley Thursfield, Gunner.

Harold Alfred Wyatt (deceased), Boatswain.

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The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following award:—

The British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—

Henry George Blogg, G.C., Coxswain, Cromer Lifeboat (Royal National Life-Boat Institution).

A call for the Life-boat was received to help six ships, ashore on sands. Eighteen minutes later the boat was launched. It was blowing a W.N.W. gale with hard squalls of wind and rain and the tide soon began to ebb. When the six ships were reached the Coxswain took his boat over the submerged deck of the first ship again and again, bumping heavily, until her whole surviving crew of sixteen had been hauled abroad from the bridge. Next he went alongside a second ship and held his boat there until thirty-one men had been rescued. These forty-seven men were then taken to a Destroyer. A third ship had only her bridge above water, and Blogg drove his boat over the ship's bulwarks and held her against the bridge until all her surviving crew of nineteen had come aboard. From a fourth ship twenty-two men were rescued. The Life-boat kept bumping on the sands and once ran hard aground, but she came off on the next sea. Survivors of the other ships had been saved by the whaler of one of H.M. Ships and No. 2 Cromer Life-boat.

By the courage and resolution of Coxswain Blogg and his crew eighty-eight lives were saved.

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