

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

Thomas George Cooper, Section Leader,
National Fire Service, Northern Ireland.

A fire broke out in a shop and Section Leader Cooper was told that a woman was in the house above the premises. Despite the dense smoke and an escape of coal gas, he tried to ascend the staircase which was alight and in the attempt both his hands were badly burned. He was unsuccessful and called for a ladder. Putting on his breathing apparatus, he climbed to a window which he smashed, and then entered the room. Feeling his way past many obstructions, he heard moans and made his way through the smoke towards the sound. On the landing at the top of the burning staircase he found a stoutly built woman who was unconscious. He was unable to lift her but he dragged her back through the doorway. As he approached the window his breathing apparatus became dislocated by some of the obstructions and the mouth-piece was torn away. Almost overcome with smoke and

gas fumes he dragged the unconscious woman to the window-sill. He was by now exhausted and stepped out on to the ladder to get help. The woman was brought to safety by other members of the unit.

Cooper showed courage and devotion to duty in difficult circumstances, without regard for his own safety.

COMMENDATIONS

Those named below have been Commended for brave conduct:—

When a fire occurred in an ammunition store:—

John Wesley Borthwick, Leading Fireman,
No. 11 (Southend) Area, National Fire Service.

When rescuing the occupant of a burning house:—

William Douglas Reffell, Special Constable,
Surrey Joint Police Force.
William Charles Tucker, Constable, Surrey
Joint Police Force.

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