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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

*St. James's Palace, S.W.*1.

12*th December*, 1950.

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 of the British Empire Medal, and for the publication in the London Gazette of the names of those specially shown below as having received an expression of Commendation.

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

Reginald Herbert BLANCHFORD, County Officer, St. John Ambulance Brigade, St. Peter Port, Guernsey.

A boy who attempted to climb a cliff, 100ft. high and almost perpendicular, reached a point about 75ft. from the bottom and was then unable to go either up or down. He clung to the cliff face, feet splayed and hands gripping the rock above him, in great danger of crashing to death on the rocks below. Blanchford ran to the nearest telephone and summoned an ambulance car and cliff rescue equipment. When these arrived a rope was tied around a gorse bush and Blanchford commenced his perilous descent to the boy.

As he went, loose stones, lifted by the movement of the rope, fell around him. More than once the falling boulders narrowly missed him and before he reached the boy he was struck on the chest by a heavy stone and almost rendered unconscious. Recovering, but in severe pain, he managed to grasp and hold on to the boy and bring him safely to the beach.

In accomplishing the rescue Blanchford showed courage, skill and endurance of a very high degree.

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

Howard Frederick GRIFFITHS, Divisional Officer, Hampshire Fire Service.

Joseph Launcelot STOBART, Deputy Armament Supply Officer, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—

Lionel Mornington ABBS, Station Officer, Hampshire Fire Service.

Donald James Davidson MCGREGOR, Station Officer, Hampshire Fire Service.

Edward Alfred MARSH, Chief Inspector, Admiralty Constabulary, Bedenham and Priddy's Hard Group.

Charles Edward WALDER, Police Constable, Admiralty Constabulary, Bedenham and Priddy's Hard Group.

William Charles WOODS, Police Sergeant, Admiralty Constabulary, Bedenham and Priddy's Hard Group.

A fire ocurred on a barge loaded with ammunition which was moored at the pier head of the R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport. Access to the pier, which was more than half a mile from the Depot entrance, was possible only by way of a railway track.

Station Officer McGregor was first on the scene and gave instructions for a railway bogey to be loaded with fire fighting equipment. He and his crew took this to within 150 yards of the seat of the fire where the ammunition train on the pier head and other barges moored alongside were burning with

great intensity. Divisional Officer Griffiths then arrived and was joined by Station Officer Abbs. The situation developed rapidly and Griffiths ordered his men to take shelter whilst he himself went forward to obtain a closer view of what was actually happening. As he went forward he could see that the amunition train was burning fiercely and that the sides of the ammunition trucks were already falling apart. Shortly afterwards the first and major explosion occurred. Some of the men were injured and McGregor assisted in dealing with the casualties and getting them removed to hospital. Divisional Officer Griffiths then reorganised the fire fighters into two parties, one under Station Officer McGregor and the other under Station Officer Abbs.

By this time numerous small fires were burning amongst the grass around the magazines and McGregor took control of that portion of the Depot lying on the east side of the railway track. He was warned at this time that a further explosion was imminent, but despite this he deployed his men skilfully and effectively to deal with the many incipient fires which at this stage were threatening to create a very serious situation. It was not practicable to use water and McGregor and his crew had to beat out flames around the magazines and a number of loaded ammunition trucks in the sidings. Whilst so engaged they were out in the open and caught in the blast of the second major explosion. McGregor re-deployed his men to tackle fresh outbreaks and as a result of his persistence the fires were gradually brought under control.

Abbs took over command of the territory on the west side of the railway track where numerous small fires had started. He organised parties to combat these fires and to search the magazines containing ammunition to see if they had been affected by burning debris. He had been warned of the danger of a second explosion but he carried out his task with energy and courage and succeeded in gaining control of the fires in his sector when the second explosion occurred. The fire was subdued early the next day.

Divisional Officer Griffiths with complete disregard of his safety, displayed courage, coolness and leadership in very hazardous circumstances.

Station Officer McGregor showed splendid leadership in the face of great danger, looked to the welfare of the injured and his courage was an inspiration to the men working under his command.

The coolness with which Station Officer Abbs carried out his duties in the face of extreme danger played a very material part in preventing what might have proved to be a major disaster.

As the Senior Officer of the Department at the scene of the fire, Stobart carried out his assignment in an exceptionally cool and courageous manner in the face of considerable danger from explosives and flying debris. The possibility of further mass explosions did not deter him from pressing forward to the Pier whenever possible in order to obtain accurate information. His devotion to duty in the face of great personal danger was exemplary.

Chief Inspector Marsh was early on the scene of the fire before the mass explosion and throughout, in personal danger from flying debris, carried out his duties with commendable calmness of judgment and was responsible for the removal of an ammunition train of twelve loaded trucks from the danger area.

Police Sergeant Woods organised an attempt to bring into action a hose from the hydrant at Bedenham Pier foot. Police Constable Walder took the branch pipe and scrambled along the pier on hands and knees to avoid bursting ammunition in the endeavour to get a hose out to the burning lighter. Woods directed operations and with outstanding devotion to duty both men persisted in their efforts until ordered to withdraw.

Awarded the George Medal:—

Donald Edward MacLennan, Railway Porter, Aviemore, Inverness-shire.

A fire broke out in an hotel and two people were trapped in a room on the second floor. Smoke was rising through the floorboards and the passage was in flames. The couple knotted sheets and blankets into a rope but it was not long enough and reached only to the first floor. MacLennan obtained a tow rope from a nearby car, mounted a ladder contrived by tying together two short ladders end to end, and tied the tow rope to the make-shift rope. He then climbed up and was hauled in through the window. After skilfully fastening the rope around each in turn he let down first the woman and then the man, and then descended himself.

A domestic servant was trapped in her attic bedroom on the third floor, the only staircase being blocked by smoke. A lorry was backed against the foot of the wall below and the two ladders were mounted on it but did not reach to the roof gutter. MacLennan however, climbed up with a rope to about two feet from the roof and swung himself up by grasping the gutter. He levered his body round until he could lean against a chimney stack and then threw the rope to the young woman. He scrambled up the steeply sloping slate roof and entered the window. Having fastened the rope to the bedstead and around the young woman, he lowered her to the ground. He then descended himself. Shortly afterwards the roof collapsed.

MacLennan displayed considerable courage and skill and saved the lives of three persons.

Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—

Dennis Arthur Smith, Schoolboy, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex.

A boy was paddling a small canoe in the sea at Jaywick and when about 700 yards from the shore it capsized. He clung to the overturned canoe and not being a strong swimmer signalled for help. The sea was very choppy and the boy was in danger of being washed away.

Dennis Smith, who was on the beach, immediately swam to his assistance. The boy would not leave the canoe and Smith managed to push it along to within 100 yards of the sea wall. The boy then collapsed and was washed from the canoe by a large wave. Smith immediately dived after him and pulled him to the surface and swam with him to within 50 yards of the shore where others were able to assist.

Smith displayed courage and determination and but for his prompt action the boy would probably have lost his life.

KING'S COMMENDATIONS FOR BRAVE CONDUCT.

Douglas William Joseph BLUETT, Able Seaman, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

Sidney James DOWNES, Permanent Chargeman of Skilled Labourers, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport. (Titchfield, Hampshire.)

Robert Richard Leslie FILBY, Able Seaman, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport. (Portsmouth.)

Frederick George GOFF, Crane Driver, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

Reginald Albert HAMILTON, Labourer, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

Reginald HEARD, Skipper, Port of Portsmouth Steam Launch Company. (Gosport.)

Edward James HILL, Coxswain of Fire Float, H.M. Dockyard, Portsmouth. (Southsea.)

William John HUCKER, Inspector, Admiralty Constabulary, H.M. Dockyard, Portsmouth.

Leonard George LILLYWHITE, Fireman, Hampshire Fire Service. (Gosport.)

Thomas Harry Albert LONG, Principal Foreman of Storehouses, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

Harold Gordon LORD, Assistant Armament Supply Officer, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

Patrick MCGLEAD, Skipper, Port of Portsmouth Steam Launch Company. (Gosport.)

Albert Cecil MANSELL, Able Seaman, R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

Thomas MEIN, Police Constable, Admiralty Constabulary, H.M. Dockyard, Portsmouth. (Frater, Hampshire.)

James Percival WILLIS, Hired Skilled Labourer (Assistant Fireman), R.N. Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

For services when fires broke out in ammunition lighters and trucks loaded with explosives at the Royal Naval Armament Depot, Bedenham, Gosport.

Thomas Alfred CARTER, Colliery Manager, Maltby Main Colliery, North Eastern Division, National Coal Board. (Maltby.)

Frederick DAVIS, Collier, Maltby Main Colliery, North Eastern Division, National Coal Board. (Maltby.)

For services when attempting to rescue a man overcome by gas in a coal mine.

Joseph COOKSEY, (deceased), Bitteswell. Leicestershire.

For services when a farm worker was attacked by a bull.

Gordon Parker FORROW, Inspector, Essex County Constabulary.

Stanley John JOSLIN, Police Sergeant, Essex County Constabulary. (Witham.)

David William WILSON, Police Constable, Essex County Constabulary.

For services when apprehending a violent lunatic armed with an axe.

Kuguri KUSASI, 2nd Class Warder, H.M. Prison, Bawku, Gold Coast.

For rescuing a man from drowning in a well.

Arnold MITCHELL, Window Cleaner, Truro.

For rescuing a baby from a burning house.

Jack SHEPHERD, Member, Life Saving Apparatus Company, Yealm, Devonshire. (Noss Mayo, Nr. Plymouth.)

John STITSON, Assistant, Life Saving Apparatus Company, Yealm, Devonshire. (Noss Mayo, Nr. Plymouth.)

For services when a yacht caught fire at sea.

KING'S COMMENDATION FOR VALUABLE SERVICE IN THE AIR.

Captain Robert Clifford AALBASTER, D.S.O., D.F.C., Pilot, British Overseas Airways Corporation. (Wembley, Middlesex.)

The Christian names of No. 14473279 Sergeant Reginald George AVERY, The Devonshire Regiment, are as now shown and not as shown in London Gazette No. 39048 dated 24th October, 1950.

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