

own personal safety and ignoring the possible explosion of the fuel tanks, immediately went to the assistance of the pilot. He released him from the aircraft moved him out of danger and, with assistance, extinguished his burning clothing.

Mr. Miller displayed gallantry and initiative of a high order and his action saved the life of the pilot.

Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct.

Clarence Peter SEMMENS, Farmer, Tinamba, Victoria.

For helping to rescue the pilot of an aircraft which crashed and caught fire.

Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation,
Berkeley Square House, W.1.
3rd July, 1956.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased, on the recommendation of the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, to make the following awards:—

The Silver Medal for Gallantry in Saving Life at Sea.

- Charles Stanley OWSTON, Chief Officer, m.s. "Liparus".
John Ralph MILLER, 4th Engineer, m.s. "Liparus".
Thomas ERSKINE, 5th Engineer, m.s. "Liparus".
John William MORGAN, Boatswain, m.s. "Liparus".
Frederick BISSON, Deck Storekeeper, m.s. "Liparus".
John Charles HARTY, Able Seaman, m.s. "Liparus".
Norman MACDONALD, Able Seaman, m.s. "Liparus".
John MORRISON, Able Seaman, m.s. "Liparus".
George SCOUTTAR, Able Seaman, m.s. "Liparus".

The Bronze Medal for Gallantry in Saving Life at Sea.

Clement GRIFFITHS, Able Seaman, m.s. "Tresillian".

A distress message was received by m.s. "Liparus" that m.s. "Tresillian" was listing heavily to port in the entrance to St. George's Channel. Course was altered and emergency rescue preparations were put in hand. The seas were high with a heavy swell and severe squalls.

As "Liparus" approached the distressed vessel the Master of "Tresillian" asked for oil to be spread on the water but shortly afterwards "Tresillian" sank and when "Liparus" reached the vicinity of the wreck, lights indicating survivors were seen on the surface of the water. Owing to the rough seas "Liparus" had to be navigated with the utmost caution to avoid injury to

the survivors and it was necessary to await a lull in the heavy squalls before a lifeboat could be launched.

The lifeboat manned by a volunteer crew, got away under the command of Chief Officer Owston and did sterling work under appalling conditions. Having picked up all the survivors who could be found in the water, it made its way back to "Liparus" under the falls amidships. Attempts were made to hook on the falls, but the heavy seas pouring over the deck of "Liparus", made this impossible and it became clear that the foredeck offered the best chance of getting the survivors, who were past helping themselves, aboard. The boat was accordingly ordered forward, but the engine failed and this, coupled with the oil which made the handling of ropes and survivors extremely difficult, added greatly to the hazards of the operation.

Thirteen survivors were taken aboard "Liparus", one of whom died shortly afterwards. Throughout this operation visibility was at times almost nil in the squalls and "Liparus" was out of sight of her lifeboat for minutes at a time because of the swell. Only from the crests of the waves could survivors be seen and the search for them demanded the greatest skill and courage. There is no doubt that the survivors owe their lives to the skill, bravery and endurance of the "Liparus" lifeboat crew.

When "Tresillian" foundered one lifeboat got away with about seven members of the crew aboard, the remainder took to the water. Able Seaman Griffiths went down the side of the ship into the water and swam towards a lifebuoy to which five other men were clinging. Shortly afterwards the six men came across a large piece of timber and held on to it as well as to the lifebuoy. For the next two hours or more Mr. Griffiths inspired his shipmates to greater efforts of self-preservation by exhorting them to hold on and supporting them as they became exhausted, but one by one they died until only he and an apprentice were left. They then sighted m.v. "Ardglen", which had answered "Tresillian's" distress message. The apprentice was too exhausted to reach her, but Mr. Griffiths pulled him away from the timber and, holding on to the lifebuoy, drifted and swam with him towards "Ardglen" until they were seen and a line was thrown to them. Mr. Griffiths put the line under the arms of the apprentice, who was pulled aboard almost unconscious. Griffiths then climbed aboard.

Although in grave personal danger, Griffiths considerably reduced his own chances of survival by using his strength to support and encourage his shipmates, and there is no doubt that the apprentice owes his life to the fortitude and endurance displayed by Mr. Griffiths.

LONDON

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

1956

Price Sixpence net.