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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

HONOURS AND AWARDS

NAVY DEPARTMENT

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
 THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1.
 16th January 1979.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Queen's Gallantry Medal to the under-mentioned:

Acting Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic James Thomas McWILLIAMS, D141758L.

On the morning of Thursday, 8th June 1978, the Polaris submarine HMS *Revenge* was on deterrent patrol. At 0833 A/L.M.E.M. *McWilliams*, who was the Turbo Generator Room Watchkeeper, heard a loud explosion followed by a very loud roar from the forward end of the compartment. He rushed to investigate and discovered that a major steam leak from an unidentifiable source had occurred on the Starboard side. As the compartment was rapidly filling with steam he went to the deck above, raised the alarm and informed the Engineer Officer of the Watch. With complete disregard for his own safety *McWilliams* then re-entered the Turbo Generator Room determined to locate, and if possible, isolate the steam leak. As he descended into the dense, hot cloud of roaring high pressure steam he found that he could breathe only by crouching below the thickening steam cloud. He realised that access could not be gained by the normal passageway so he crawled along a one foot wide catwalk from which there was no exit. In so doing he sustained a minor but painful back injury but pressed forward until, with the steam cloud only a few inches above deck level he was driven back by the intense heat. *McWilliams* might well have collapsed from suffocation or heat exhaustion and had he done so, he would have almost certainly have perished in the inextricable position into which he had voluntarily placed himself.

By this time it had become clear that the steam leak could not be isolated, so *McWilliams* remained in the Turbo Generator Room to initiate boiler blowdown. He then withdrew, donned protective clothing, and re-entered the compartment to continue with emergency operations. He remained at his post until ordered to the sick bay to be treated for his back injury, shock and heat exhaustion. After treatment he insisted in returning to his watchkeeping position to complete his watch.

McWilliams' correct and fearless initial actions were vital to the successful containment of this most hazardous situation. His quick thinking in the frightening circumstances of a major steam leak allowed the immediate identification of the area of the problem and did much to prevent the submarine from having to suffer a total steam isolation. By his subsequent actions in returning repeatedly to his place of duty he showed great courage, presence of mind, calmness and devotion to duty. His actions were wholly exemplary and in the finest traditions of the Service.

Whitehall, London S.W.1.
 16th January 1979.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct to the undermentioned:

Lieutenant Commander Paul Anthony THOMAS, Royal Navy.

Acting Chief Marine Engineering Mechanician Frank HURLEY, DO54758T.

Acting Ordnance Electrical Mechanician 1 Albert James McCrum, DO58029G.

Marine Engineering Mechanician 1 John McDONAGH, DO90944C.

Acting Marine Engineering Mechanician 1 Robert Anthony MURDOCH, DO88724R.

For their skill, courage and devotion to duty following a major steam burst in the Turbo Generator Room of HMS *Revenge* on 8th June 1978.

LONDON

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