

Mark Henry BOYLE, Constable, Victoria Police.

Francis Joseph MILLS, Constable, Victoria Police.

During the early hours of 25th February 1978, Constable Boyle and Constable Mills were on duty in a Divisional van.

They saw that an old weatherboard dwelling house was on fire and burning fiercely with flames leaping 20 feet into the air. The two Constables notified their Section of the situation and went immediately to the scene where they were told by onlookers that three elderly people, who were handicapped and in poor health, lived there.

The officers tried to gain entry to the house through the front door but were beaten back by the intense heat and smoke from the blaze which by this time was burning across the back of the house and along the passage towards the front door. The Constables broke into the front bedroom and lifted two elderly woman, one of whom was unconscious, out on to the front verandah and then away from the danger of the fire. Both officers re-entered the bedroom and searched in darkness and smoke for the third person and after three attempts finally found an elderly man whom they led from the premises to safety.

Constable Boyle and Constable Mills displayed bravery of a very high order when regardless of their personal safety they rescued these three elderly people who, but for their efforts, would have perished in the fire.

Bryan Errol GROVE, Constable, Metropolitan Police.

On 14th April 1974 Constable Grove, with another officer, was on plain clothes duty in a police observation van. Their vehicle was overtaken by an estate car containing two men and driven in a manner which made the officers suspicious so they decided to keep it under surveillance. They saw the car stop outside an office block where one of the occupants left the vehicle carrying an oxygen cylinder whilst the other man drove away. The man with the cylinder was joined by another who was waiting nearby. The officers noticed that the men were wearing headgear which concealed their features and realised they were about to raid the premises: a call for assistance was sent out. At the same time two more men were seen to join the suspects, who hurled the oxygen cylinder to break open the front doors and then disappeared inside.

Constable Grove left his vehicle and faced the men as they left the building with two attaché cases containing large sums of money stolen from Security Guards. Constable Grove who had armed himself with a metal bar, struck at one of the men carrying a case; as he did so, the man swung the case, striking the officer on the head and knocked him to the ground. He saw three armed men run past and, as he attempted to get up, a fourth man stood over him, pointed a gun and fired. The four men ran off with Constable Grove in pursuit. He was again fired upon and threw himself behind a low wall and, at some time during this action, he was wounded by pellets in his right leg. In spite of his injury, the officer got up and continued the chase; as he came close one of the robbers turned and aimed a gun at him. He took cover behind a van and saw the men run to the car which the Constables had observed earlier, three of them clambered into the vehicle and the man who had aimed the gun struggled to enter the rear door and was pulled in by his accomplices. Constable Grove ran after the car and attempted to get hold of the man by his legs as he was trailed along, but the car was driven away too quickly for him to succeed.

Constable Grove displayed courage and devotion to duty of a very high order when confronted with more than one gun and despite his injuries he tenaciously pursued these four armed and extremely dangerous criminals.

Denis HENAGHAN, Sergeant, Merseyside Police.

During the early hours of 28th November 1977, a fire developed in a dwelling house where two small children were asleep in a first floor front bedroom. The fire brigade was summoned but only emergency fire-fighting facilities were available and two Army pump-fighting appliances, escorted by two police cars, were despatched. The living room, hall and staircase were a blazing inferno when the services arrived at the scene.

Sergeant Henaghan, with a member of the Army team, was joined by another fireman and climbed a ladder to a first floor bedroom window with the intention of rescuing the children and their grandfather, who had earlier made a rescue attempt and was believed to be still in the house. At this stage conditions were extremely hazardous, the door leading to the upstairs landing was jammed as the bedroom ceiling had collapsed. The Sergeant used an axe to break down the door and was confronted with the fiercely burning landing and upper staircase. With Sergeant Hanaghan using a hose to reduce the blaze, they managed to work their way to the head of the stairs where they found a man's body. The landing then collapsed and Sergeant Henaghan fell to the hallway below; fortunately he was uninjured and returned again to the upper floor by the ladder. At this point, however, all personnel were ordered to withdraw because of the dangerous state of the building.

Sergeant Henaghan displayed bravery and devotion to duty of a high order when without regard for his personal safety, he entered the building three times despite the fact that it was burning fiercely and the internal structure was collapsing.

David Bert MARTIN, Inspector, Metropolitan Police.

On 2nd July 1978, Inspector Martin, who was in uniform, was among the police on duty at a theatre where a group of foreign students were holding a political meeting.

The Inspector saw a group of about sixty students marching towards the theatre with the aim of attending the meeting and distributing leaflets. He spoke to the group and while they were talking he heard shouts coming from behind him and saw another group of ten or twelve men, some wearing crash helmets and carrying lengths of wood, coming out of the theatre. The officer turned towards these men and noticed as he did so that they had disposed of their weapons, presumably by passing them back to those behind them. In order to prevent a confrontation between the two groups, he spoke to one of those who had come from the theatre asking them to return to the meeting. Meanwhile the first group of students began to approach those from the theatre and the two factions were by then only a few feet apart. The man who had been asked to return to the meeting reappeared carrying a fire extinguisher from which he sprayed liquid at the rival group. Inspector Martin was now separated from the small group of constables under his command and the two factions were shouting at one another and the hostile atmosphere threatened to turn into an affray. He grasped the man with the fire extinguisher and warned him that he would be arrested for having an offensive weapon in a public place. The man struggled and backed towards the theatre followed by the