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HONOURS AND AWARDS

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St James's Palace, London S W 1

20th November 1998

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards of The Queen's Gallantry Medal publication in *The London Gazette* of the names of those shown below as having received an expression of Commendation for Bravery

The Queen's Gallantry Medal

Kenneth DAVIES, Civilian

For assisting the Fire Service and helping thereby to safeguard the lives of the fire crews, in fighting a blaze at a Liquefied Petroleum Gas supply depot

On 28th December 1996 fire broke out at a Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) supply depot at Aiskew, North Yorkshire. Seeing the fire from the air, Mr Davies, an engineer with Calor Gas with experience of bulk storage installations and safety drills, landed his glider and went to offer assistance to the Fire Brigade who had been at the scene for around three hours.

The blaze was well established and some 200 gas cylinders had exploded in the first hour, and others were still likely to do so and be propelled into the air. The fire was being fed from the ruptured supply lines from two 30 tonne storage tanks, which were by then completely engulfed in flames. Mr Davies volunteered to assist the Fire Brigade in assessing the position from a hydraulic platform and then by a closer inspection from the edge of the site. From this it was decided, with

the incident commander, that the only way to reduce the fire and therefore remove the threat of a massive explosion of the main tanks would be to shut off the supply valves mounted on the two bulk storage tanks at the rear of the site. Mr Davies again volunteered to do this, despite the acute danger from the fire and risk of explosion.

Because of the intense heat, the incident commander decided to use hand held water jets to provide a protective "shield" for the firefighters so that they could move towards the tanks. After one and a half hours of preparation, involving briefing and equipping the fire teams, two teams of firefighters, with one back-up team and Mr Davies, entered the site. Using high pressure water they drove a tunnel through the intense fire, and gradually moved forward over a surface of burning and burnt out LPG cylinders until they reached the eight foot sloped wall that surrounded the two bulk storage tanks. They then had to scramble over the wall into a two foot wide corridor between the wall and the tanks. The flames then had to be pushed back by further jets of water so that Mr Davies could reach, and close, the valves on the first tank. As he did this, the intensity of the fire and heat increased and it became clear that the valve on the second tank had to be shut down also, and quickly.

One of the spray teams of firefighters was detached, with Mr Davies, to tackle the second tank. They inched their way along the narrow corridor towards it, where Mr Davies managed to shut down the valve. Because only one team could be spared to spray water at this time, the intensity of heat facing Mr Davies was even greater than before, and burned the hair on his face. Once the valve had been shut off the firefighters and Mr Davies slowly worked their way back towards the