



Registered as a newspaper

Published by Authority

Established 1665

The London Gazette

of Thursday 23 March 2000

Supplement No. 1

Honours and Awards

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

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

24th March 2000

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

George Medal

William DEACON (deceased). Lately Winchman, Search and Rescue Helicopter.

For his actions during the rescue of the crew of a shipwrecked cargo vessel.

On 19th November 1997, Mr Deacon was a member of a Search and Rescue helicopter team called to assist the crew of a cargo vessel which had suffered engine failure and was drifting helplessly in a severe storm off the coast of Shetland. There were 15 crew members on board. While attempts to rescue them by a lifeboat and two other vessels enabled five crew members to be taken off, the extreme sea and weather conditions, with 30ft waves and surface winds of between 50 and 70 knots, prevented further attempts by the rescue craft. A helicopter was called to the scene.

An initial attempt by the helicopter commander to winch up two injured crew members was abandoned as the vessel was rolling badly and close to shore. However, once the tug had managed to secure the cargo vessel's anchor it halted the drift to shore and rescue operations

re-commenced. Mr Deacon, the winchman, was lowered to the deck to supervise the airlifting of the 10 remaining crew members. He detached himself from the winch and secured himself to another safety line. Three lifts, each of two crew members, were successfully completed before the anchor cable parted and the vessel once again drifted rapidly towards the shore.

A further lift was completed before the vessel ran hard against rocks and rolled heavily to one side. Mr Deacon and the last two crew members were engulfed by a wave, but he was able to attach them to the winch. The vessel's Master and the last crew member were airlifted to safety, leaving Mr Deacon alone, some 15 minutes after he had first been lowered to the deck.

At this point, the vessel, already unstable, began to roll violently, up to 60° either side of the vertical, and Mr Deacon was swamped several times by waves. Before the winch could be lowered again, he was washed into the sea. He then suffered the full impact of being thrown against the vessel and lost his life. His body was recovered the following day.

Anthony John DOHERTY (deceased). Lately Boatman, Fast Rescue Craft.

For his actions during the attempted rescue of a man who fell into the sea from a North Sea gas rig.

On 19th February 1998, a maintenance team was present on a gas rig 110 miles off Aberdeen conducting a routine inspection. Two men were examining the lower underdeck in the breakwater area when one of them fell through a hole in the walkway into a partially enclosed area of water. Although he was wearing a life jacket, the turbulence of the water and the effects of the cold quickly fatigued him. Within a few minutes, he was floating helplessly, unable to grasp the lines and rope ladder dropped to him by his colleagues on the deck above.
