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SUPPLEMENT

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TUESDAY, 17 DECEMBER, 1940

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD,

St. James's Palace, S.W.1,
17th December, 1940.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the GEORGE CROSS to:—

Roy T. Harris, Staff Officer, A.R.P. Engineers Service, Croydon.

For conspicuous bravery in carrying out dangerous duties.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD,

St. James's Palace, S.W.1,
17th December, 1940.

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following awards and for the publication in the London Gazette of the names shown below as having received an expression of Commendation for their brave conduct.

Awarded the George Medal.

John Arthur Blake, A.R.P. Incident Officer, Bermondsey.

Following an air raid an area had been burning for more than three hours and had been evacuated. Blake heard that a fireman was lying wounded somewhere in the area and would require transportation to hospital.

At great personal risk, he drove towards the spot, the property on either side being ablaze and burning debris falling continually on to the road. During the journey, a bomb exploded in front of his car, wrecking it completely. Blake then proceeded on foot and, climbing through a space in the burning fence, gained access to the inner dock buildings. As the area had been evacuated, no help would have been forthcoming if he had been injured.

After some searching, Blake found six firemen lying among blazing debris, all seriously wounded. He then went back and, finding a telephone still in service, called for an ambulance. While receiving this call the Deputy Controller who was in the Control Room, heard two heavy detonations through the telephone. Two bombs had blown Blake away from the instrument, but after recovering from the shock, he returned and again got into communication with Control Centre.

The wounded firemen were removed to hospital, where three of them recovered. There is no possible doubt that, but for Blake's action, none of these men would have survived.

His car was eventually discovered in the bomb-crater.

On the same day, elsewhere, Blake was informed that some people were trapped inside an Anderson Shelter which was entirely surrounded by fire, thus preventing any attempt at rescue.

Without hesitation, Blake went through the flames and succeeded in extricating three people, all of whom were suffering from shock.

John Gavin, Lorry Driver, Paddington.

During an air raid an Incendiary Bomb dropped through a roof into a yard where there were six motor lorries and a quantity of miscellaneous goods, such as furniture, waste paper and rags. The bomb fell into the body of one of the lorries, which was fully laden with furniture and waste paper and immediately caught fire.

Arthur Mitchell, a voluntary Air Raid Warden went to the yard and immediately rendered assistance with the stirrup pump.

John Gavin, who lives near by, then appeared on the scene. By this time the lorry was blazing and there was considerable danger to the other goods in the yard. Gavin realising this, with commendable promptitude jumped into the driver's seat of the lorry in order to move it forward away from the goods. The ignition key had however been hidden. This was obtained by Mitchell who jumped into the lorry beside Gavin, inserted the key and started the engine. Gavin then drove the vehicle forward a few yards and a fresh attempt was made by himself and Mitchell to extinguish the fire, but they were unsuccessful. Smoke and flames were then all around the driver's cabin, when Gavin again mounted the lorry and drove it out into the street. The yard was narrow, full of goods, and difficult to negotiate, and Mitchell assisted the driver by giving directions. The fire brigade eventually arrived and extinguished the blaze after considerable damage had been done to the lorry and contents. No damage had been caused to the goods in the yard or adjoining buildings, and no personal injury sustained.

The yard in question is situated in a thickly populated district and owing to the nature and quantity of goods therein, if the blazing lorry had been allowed to remain there a serious fire might have been caused. Gavin, in driving the vehicle, exposed himself to the risk of serious injury and both his conduct and that of Mitchell who rendered all assistance was highly meritorious.

Thomas Lee, Millwright, Coventry.

Thomas Lee, a civilian, was engaged in assisting Rescue Squads working to extricate nine persons trapped in a shelter at the rear of some damaged houses which had received a direct hit by a high explosive bomb.

Lee exerted his strength to the utmost for over two hours in raising heavy blocks of concrete pinning down a woman, and it was mainly through his efforts that she was ultimately released. His work with tools and even his hands was outstanding in every way.

Without regard for himself he got down underneath a mass of very heavy solid concrete blocks and large weighty pieces of masonry, and for two hours heaved and lifted under dangerous conditions with the almost certain probability that the materials would shift: had this happened he would either have been killed or seriously injured. He took everything out of himself and showed complete indifference to danger in performing his work. There was an added danger in the form of an unexploded bomb only about 50 yards away.

B. J. Lewis, Chargeman of Fitters, Frank Mallia, Chargeman of Labourers — H.M. Dockyard, Malta.

During an enemy air raid on the area of the Corradine a bomb scattered splinters and debris dangerously near to a gun and its crew, one of the crew being killed. To protect the equipment from further damage volunteers were called for to erect round it splinter plates, weighing three-quarters of a ton each. Lewis and Mallia volunteered immediately for this service and Mallia's exemplary coolness and his leadership inspired his gang to undertake the task.

On the following day these men and their gangs undertook the transport and re-erection of a gun, a task which in normal times would have taken fully four days using all available daylight. They did it in five days and three hours in spite of frequent aerial bombardments, with no protection beyond their steel helmets.

Frederick Mason, Leader, A.R.P. Rescue Squad, Coventry.

Albert Searn, Deputy Leader, A.R.P. Rescue Squad, Coventry.

Searn and Mason were engaged in endeavouring to release a woman and two men trapped in the basement of a house which had been demolished by a high explosive bomb.

The only means of access was by digging under the debris into the basement, making a tunnel in the loose material about two feet from the ground.

When Searn and Mason commenced to make an opening in the debris, it began to shift and they fixed some pieces of zinc as shoring, the only thing readily available. The weight of the debris was many tons. After making the small tunnel and getting out with their hands a quantity of loose bricks, rubble and so forth, Searn and Mason each in turn repeatedly crawled through the tunnel out of sight working for about two hours under the most dangerous conditions with a total disregard for their own safety and at great risk, persevering until the two trapped men were reached and released and brought safely out.

Leonard Matthews, Leader, A.R.P. Stretcher Party, Surbiton.

Immediately after the dropping of high explosive bombs it was learned that a man was trapped beneath the wreckage of two houses. He was located as being underneath debris immediately adjoining the party wall of another house which was in immediate danger of collapse and was, in fact, slightly moving the whole of the time that the following rescue operations were carried out.

Matthews forced an entry through the base of the debris and dug for himself a tunnel by which to reach the trapped man. Having made contact with the man he then proceeded to prop up the debris from the underside, gradually making a chamber large enough for him to move the man. He then propped up the tunnel by which he had entered and was successful in getting the man to safety. During the whole of this time Matthews' own

life was in very considerable danger, for it was impossible to shore up the collapsing adjoining wall as the strain would have been taken by the debris under which he was working.

Throughout the whole operation Matthews proceeded in a cool, calm and efficient manner, and apart from the fact that he saved this man's life he set a brilliant example to the members of the other A.R.P. services engaged in the locality.

Charles Roger Middleton, Refinery Manager, Messrs. "Shell" Refining & Marketing Company Ltd.

James McNaughton Imrie, Chief Engineer, Messrs. "Shell" Refining & Marketing Company Ltd.

During an air raid the enemy dived and dropped a bomb on a tank containing 2,000 tons of benzine. The bomb fell through the roof and the tank was soon burning rapidly. In view of the position of the hole in the roof and the fact that the manhole was closed, it was impossible to get a Foamite nozzle into the tank.

Whilst the tank was still burning and bombing still going on, Mr. Middleton mounted a ladder and threw a rope round the handrail, by means of which he "shinned up" the side of the tank on to the roof and placed the Foamite nozzle through the hole that had been made by the bomb. Later on, since Mr. Middleton was unable to ascend a second time because the soles of his shoes had been burnt through, Mr. Imrie did the same thing with another nozzle, and the fire was rapidly put out with the saving of a great deal of petrol.

All this work was carried out whilst bombing was still in progress.

Awarded the Medal of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, for Meritorious Service.

William Maxwell Scott, Officer in charge, A.R.P. Stretcher Party Depot, Hornsey.

A house was demolished by a direct hit from a bomb and the wreckage was in an extremely dangerous condition as it had not settled down. Some of the inner walls were tottering and the upper woodwork of the house was resting on these walls. Cries were heard from underneath the wreckage from persons who were trapped.

A Stretcher Party was quickly on the scene under the leadership of Mr. W. M. Scott. He promptly summed up the situation and in spite of grave personal peril crawled under the wreckage and rendered First Aid to the injured persons.

During the time Mr. Scott was engaged on this work enemy aircraft was repeatedly passing overhead. Coal gas was leaking from the fractured mains and Scott suffered rather badly from the inhalation of the fumes.

COMMENDATIONS

Those named below have been brought to notice for brave conduct in connection with Civil Defence:—

George Hencher Bateman, A.R.P. Officer, Mitcham.

Thomas Idris Goold, A.R.P. Warden, Port Talbot.

Arthur C. Mitchell, A.R.P. Warden, Paddington.

Frederick Charles Newman, Sub-Divisional Inspector, Royal Marine Police.

Emlyn Pillage, Constable, Royal Marine Police.

William Varcoe, Patrol Officer, Coulsdon and Purley Auxiliary Fire Service.

Charles Osborne John Weekes, A.R.P. Warden, Port Talbot.

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