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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS  
OF KNIGHTHOOD.

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

20th July, 1943.

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

Donald Owen Clarke (deceased), Apprentice, Merchant Navy.

The ship, sailing alone, was attacked by the enemy and hit by two torpedoes. Fire broke out immediately, flames sweeping the vessel from bridge to poop. Apprentice Clarke was trapped in the accommodation and was severely burned. Despite this he made his way on deck and was one of those who got into the only boat which left the ship. The painter of the boat was kept fast and the helm put over and, as the vessel still carried some way, the boat was towed clear of the burning ship's side. When the painter was cast off the boat drifted back and it was clear to all on board that it would require a tremendous effort to pull it out of danger. Most of the occupants, however, were so badly burned that they were unable to help, but Apprentice Clarke took an oar and pulled heartily for two hours without a word of complaint. It was not until after the boat was clear that it was realized how badly he had been injured. His hands had to be cut away from the oar as the burnt flesh had stuck to it. He had pulled as well as anyone, although he was rowing with the bones of his hands. Later when lying at the bottom of the boat his thoughts were still with his shipmates and he sang to keep up their spirits. Next day he died, having shown the greatest fortitude.

By his supreme effort, undertaken without thought of self and in spite of terrible agony, Apprentice Clarke ensured the safety of his comrades in the boat. His great heroism and selfless devotion were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Merchant Navy.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS  
OF KNIGHTHOOD.

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

20th July, 1943.

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the undermentioned appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, for the following awards of the George Medal, a Bar to the British Empire Medal and the British Empire Medal, in the Merchant Navy, and for the publication in the London Gazette of the names of those specially shown below as having received an expression of Commendation for their brave conduct:—

*To be an Additional Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Captain Maurice Harold Jones, Master.

The ship, sailing alone, was attacked by an enemy aircraft. A torpedo missed and the ship was then attacked with machine-gun fire but the accurate and spirited defence put up by the vessel caused the aircraft to swerve and bank steeply. It was seen to be hit by the ship's gun-fire and was probably destroyed. Later, when the vessel had returned to port, she was again attacked and once more her splendid defence caused the aircraft to break off the engagement.

The Master displayed great courage and resolution in handling the ship during these attacks and the successful termination of each engagement was undoubtedly due to his efficiency, leadership and fearless example.

*To be an Additional Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Captain Godfrey Wentworth Highley, Master.

*To be Additional Members of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

George William Clark, Esq., Additional Chief Officer.

Thomas Roy Bowlerwell, Esq., Second Officer.  
 Alfred George Hartley Bland, Esq., Third  
 Engineer Officer.  
 Henry Sless, Esq., D.S.C., Junior Engineer  
 Officer.

*Awarded the George Medal:—*

Colin Fookes, Apprentice.

*Awarded a Bar to the British Empire Medal  
 (Civil Division):—*

George Whyte, B.E.M., Carpenter.

The ship was engaged in taking cargo from a damaged ship in an anchorage subject to heavy bombing. When about half the cargo had been transferred, a severe dive-bombing attack developed. The ship was hit and set on fire, five men being killed and four more injured. Despite this the fire was extinguished and the transfer of cargo continued. She sailed with a full cargo aboard, short-handed as a result of the casualties sustained and with only temporary repairs having been effected. Returning some weeks later to the same port, the vessel experienced frequent air attacks until leaving for home. During the passage to the United Kingdom the convoy was attacked by U-boats but damage was avoided by skilful evasive action. The convoy was subsequently heavily attacked from the air but, despite this and bad weather which developed during the voyage, the ship was brought safely home.

The Master displayed outstanding qualities of courage throughout. The successful completion of the extremely important work performed by this ship during her voyage was mainly due to his skill, resource and inspiring leadership.

Apprentice Fookes showed great bravery when the magazine was set on fire. He entered the magazine through dense smoke and steam and removed a case of cordite which was red hot and smouldering and threw it into the water which was flooding the magazine. This action, undertaken in circumstances of grave danger with a complete disregard of personal safety, probably prevented a major disaster.

The Second Officer and Carpenter Whyte showed courage and coolness in promptly and successfully attacking the fire in and around the magazine, opening the magazine flooding valve which was close to the magazine and so flooding the compartment.

The Additional Chief Officer was the Gunnery Officer of the ship and the spirited defence put up during many enemy attacks was mainly due to his high qualities of organisation, efficiency and devotion to duty. He also took part in the fire-fighting operations when the vessel was hit and helped to remove the dead and injured while the ship was still under attack.

The Third Engineer Officer and the Junior Engineer Officer showed courage and devotion to duty in the face of great danger. Mr. Sless remained at his post in the engine-room while the ship was undergoing heavy attack. When the vessel was hit and the magazine was on fire, Mr. Bland ran down to the engine-room to assist Mr. Sless in speeding up the fire pumps and in shutting off steam from the burst pipes.

*To be an Additional Member of the Civil  
 Division of the Most Excellent Order of the  
 British Empire:—*

Granville Richard Drayton, Esq., Third Officer.

*Awarded the George Medal:—*

Thomas Daniel Finch, Esq., Chief Officer.  
 Donald Wilfred Dennis, Esq., Chief Radio  
 Officer.

The ship, sailing alone, was torpedoed and set on fire.

The Chief Officer displayed courage and leadership of a very high order. When the ship was hit and set on fire he escaped through a 15 inch side scuttle on to the forward bulkhead and thence to the fore-castle, where he took charge of a party of seven men which got away in a boat and, in the face of great danger and difficulties, made efforts to rescue others. His bravery and leadership were an inspiration, while his judgment and skill in keeping the boat secured to the ship until way had been lost prevented the flames from reaching it. Throughout the night the boat stood by the ship, the uninjured caring for the others as best they could, but during the next day four died from burns. Shortly afterwards the boat was sighted by aircraft which dropped medical stores and later in the day the survivors were picked up. Undaunted by his grim experience, Mr. Finch at once volunteered to serve in another ship as soon as he landed.

The Chief Radio Officer volunteered to release the only undamaged boat. Although he was badly burned he crawled through the flames on his hands and knees and released the falls. Throughout he displayed outstanding courage and fortitude, and but for his brave act the boat would not have got away and there would have been few, if any, survivors.

The Third Officer displayed great courage and coolness, remaining on board until forced by the flames to jump overside. Later he was of great help to the Chief Officer in the boat.

*To be an Additional Member of the Civil  
 Division of the Most Excellent Order of the  
 British Empire:—*

Raymond Atkinson, Esq., Third Officer.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil  
 Division):—*

Thomas Wilson Chapman, Carpenter.  
 William Stringer, Seaman.

The ship, sailing alone, was torpedoed and seriously damaged. The vessel was stopped and the crew sent away in three of the boats, with instructions to lay off the steamer. A second torpedo hit the vessel and it sank immediately.

The Third Officer displayed outstanding courage and leadership. After the vessel had sunk, he took charge of one of the boats which contained 21 occupants. This was separated from the other boats by bad weather, but he successfully nursed the boat through the squalls and made a landfall after 14 days. Organized watches were kept during the voyage, food and water carefully rationed, and it was mainly due to the skill

and leadership displayed by the Third Officer that the 21 occupants of the boat were brought to safety.

Seaman Stringer showed courage and coolness during this boat voyage and rendered valuable assistance to the Third Officer throughout. His skill in handling the boat during the heavy weather contributed greatly to the successful outcome of the voyage.

Carpenter Chapman was in charge of a boat which made a voyage of 22 days, and he showed outstanding courage, leadership and resource. He set watches and introduced strict rationing of food and water. By his excellent seamanship the boat was navigated through very bad weather and, in addition to his other duties, he found time to nurse a sick man. During the voyage when food supplies were running low he was able to catch a shark, about 4 ft. 6 in. in length. Using his hand as a bait, he coolly waited for the shark to approach. Catching it by the gills, he threw it into the boat and then killed it. This resourceful action was the means of considerably augmenting the food supplies in the boat.

*To be an Additional Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Geoffrey Dennis Griffin, Esq., Fourth Officer.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—*

Alfred William Walden, Boatswain.

George Ernest Sagar, Able Seaman.

The ship has taken part in several convoys which have been heavily attacked by U. boats and aircraft and the vessel has been subjected to heavy air attack on numerous occasions when in port. The spirited defence put up by the ship and the loyal and willing co-operation of the crew prevented her from sustaining serious damage and she has now returned safely to the United Kingdom after having performed much good work.

During the vessel's last voyage she was in a port which was heavily attacked by enemy aircraft and the Fourth Officer, Boatswain Walden and Able Seaman Sagar displayed outstanding courage and devotion to duty during the raid and helped to extinguish numerous incendiary bombs which fell on the quayside, and thus helped to save the vessel from possible damage.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—*

Patrick Joseph Shirley, Donkeyman.

The ship, sailing in convoy, was torpedoed in darkness. She sustained much damage and the engine-room and machinery spaces flooded rapidly. As the vessel began to sink orders for abandonment were given, and the survivors were got away in three boats. The ship settled slowly, and later she was hit by a second torpedo which broke her in two.

Donkeyman Shirley showed outstanding courage. When the ship was hit, two men were injured and the flood waters forced them against the stokehold ladder. Although the ship was sinking Donkeyman Shirley, who had heard cries for help, gallantly went down into the stokehold in pitch darkness, and succeeded in rescuing one of the men.

#### COMMENDATIONS.

Those named below have been Commended for brave conduct when their ships encountered enemy ships, aircraft, submarines or mines:—

Charles Draper Bennell (deceased), Chief Steward.

Geoffrey Ronald Brownrigg, Apprentice.

Jack Buckley, Able Seaman.

Peter James Chrisp, Esq., Third Officer.

George Curphy, Esq., Third Engineer Officer.

John Dodds, Chief Steward.

Captain Arthur Eric Fishwick, Master.

Peter Albert Franks, Esq., Third Radio Officer.

Cyril Hancock (deceased), Assistant Steward.

Kenneth Hanham (since deceased), Ordinary Seaman.

Thomas Henry Hosking, Pumpman.

Robert Burton Hudson, Esq. (deceased), Second Officer.

Henry Haig Jackson (deceased), Greaser.

Captain Roy Jennings, Master.

David McMinn, Esq., Chief Engineer Officer.

Captain John Park, Senior Pilot.

Arthur Louis Richmond, Esq., Chief Radio Officer.

Albert Newton Rylett, Esq., Senior Chief Officer.

Thomas Shaw, Able Seaman.

John Edward Thompson, Esq., Radio Officer.

Captain James Wilfred Tozer (deceased), Master.

#### LONDON

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