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**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.**

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.  
23rd November, 1943.*

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

**George Preston Stronach, Esq., Chief Officer.**

When the ship was lying in harbour, a severe aircraft attack developed and she was hit and at once caught fire. The vessel had a large consignment of petrol and ammunition on board, which was exploding heavily all the time and in spite of strenuous efforts which were made to fight the fire she had to be abandoned. The Master was killed by the explosion and the responsibility for further operations devolved on the Chief Officer.

He had been rendered temporarily unconscious but recovered almost immediately and went forward to look for survivors. He found a number of the crew sheltering in the alley way and, braving the exploding ammunition, led them to a boat alongside which took them to safety. In order to provide for the transport of any other survivors who might be found, he then lowered another boat and brought it alongside the ship. Although the vessel was now burning furiously Mr. Stronach made his way to the officers' accommodation amidships. Finding a hose with a trickle of water coming through, he held this over his head and so kept himself sufficiently wet to protect him from the worst of the heat and flames. With great difficulty he climbed into the collapsed accommodation and found one of the deck officers, unconscious and badly burned. Mr. Stronach pulled him clear and dragged him along the deck to the lowered boat. Returning to the accommodation, he began to remove the debris from another officer who was trapped. By almost superhuman efforts he dragged the man through the porthole and

along the deck. He then tied a rope around his waist and lowered him over the side to the boat. As the situation was becoming desperate Mr. Stronach ordered a man to take the boat to safety and once again he returned amidships where he discovered an officer who had been severely injured. Dragging him along the deck to the side of the ship, he tied a rope around him and lowered him over the side on to a raft which had returned to the ship in response to his calls. Again Mr. Stronach continued his search for survivors and, taking a final look round aft, he saw a greaser lying unconscious in the scuppers. He dragged this man to the side of the ship, but finding there was no raft or boat alongside, put a lifebelt around him and threw him overboard. When he was satisfied that there were no further survivors the Chief Officer jumped overboard and swam to a raft which, under his direction, returned to pick up the injured greaser. In the full knowledge that she was likely to blow up at any moment Chief Officer Stronach stayed on this burning vessel searching for survivors for an hour and twenty minutes. His inspiring leadership induced a number of the crew to get away and so saved their lives and by his gallant efforts, undertaken with utter disregard of his personal safety, he saved the lives of three officers and a greaser, all of whom were badly hurt. His action equals any in the annals of the Merchant Navy for great and unselfish heroism and determination in the face of overwhelming odds.

**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.**

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.  
23rd November, 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 and of 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 Additional Officers of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Captain Terrot Glover, Master.

The ship was sailing in convoy when a submarine was sighted. Evasive action was taken and, shortly afterwards, the enemy was observed to alter course and to commence surfacing. The vessel headed direct for the enemy in an attempt to ram. A slight impact was felt and the submarine was seen listing heavily with the conning tower flattened out. The ship was then lifted on a swell and she rolled over on to the submarine which was not seen again.

The Master showed outstanding courage and initiative. His action in attacking the submarine resulted in the saving of his ship and damage to the enemy.

Captain William Reid, Master.

Andrew Frisken, Esq., Chief Engineer Officer.

The ship, sailing in convoy, was attacked three times by two enemy aircraft. Despite the defensive action taken, bombs were dropped near the ship. As a result of these close misses the engine-room was flooded and the engines stopped. Attempts were made to tow the vessel but the tow parted and, as she was rapidly flooding and the weather was deteriorating, the crew were taken on board the towing ship. A few hours later the Master and the Chief Engineer Officer reboarded the ship in a further attempt to save her. Towing was again attempted by a tug but the ship sank shortly afterwards.

The Master displayed great courage and leadership throughout and made a gallant and determined effort to save his ship. Under his orders temporary repairs were effected and the ship was prepared for towing despite the dangers of a further enemy air attack and the knowledge that she might sink at any time.

The Chief Engineer Officer was conspicuous by his courageous devotion to duty. At considerable risk he went down into the flooded engine-room and shut the tunnel door and main inter-valve, although heat and steam made this an almost impossible task. He set an outstanding example on this and on many previous occasions when he performed excellent work in effecting temporary repairs in circumstances of great difficulty and danger.

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

Captain Walter Denson, Master.

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

Ernest Lionel Jermyn, Esq., Chief Officer.

The ship, sailing in convoy, was torpedoed and sustained severe damage. As she was beginning to settle and there was no hope of saving her, orders were given for abandon-

ment which was successfully carried out. The ship sank and the survivors were picked up shortly afterwards.

The Master displayed courage and leadership of a high order and it was due to his excellent organisation that such a large number of the personnel was saved. His coolness throughout was an inspiration to all.

The Chief Officer showed outstanding courage and ably assisted the Master in exceedingly difficult and dangerous circumstances. His skill and coolness contributed greatly to the saving of many lives.

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

Captain Leonard Eccles, Master.

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

Maurice John Case, Esq., Chief Officer.

William Meredith Thomas, Esq., Second Officer.

Stephen Alexander Glossop Covell, Esq., Third Officer.

The ship, sailing alone, was torpedoed and as there was no hope of saving her, abandonment was ordered. While this was taking place she was shelled by the submarine.

The Master displayed courage and leadership of a high order. By his excellent organisation and coolness he ensured the safe abandonment by the crew. He then took charge of one of the boats, bringing it safely to land after a voyage of seventeen days during which many difficulties were encountered.

The Second Officer, who was in charge of another boat, showed courage and skilful seamanship. In spite of many dangers he brought the boat and its occupants to safety after a voyage of twenty days.

The Chief Officer, in charge of the third boat, made a voyage of seventeen days, and was actually in sight of land when picked up. It was mainly due to his outstanding courage, skill and example that the occupants were brought to safety.

The Third Officer showed outstanding qualities of courage, leadership and endurance. He took charge of the fourth boat and brought it to land after a voyage of twenty-two days.

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

Andrew Fell Dunn, Esq., Second Officer.

The ship, sailing alone, was torpedoed in darkness and sank within two minutes. Owing to the rapid sinking only two boats could be used but the crew got away in these and by means of rafts. Later, those on the rafts were transferred to the boats and, with the larger towing the smaller, a voyage of six days was made before the occupants were picked up.

The Second Officer displayed courage and leadership of a high order throughout. He was the only surviving Navigating Officer and he took charge of the two boats, kept them together and, by his skill and seamanship, brought the occupants to safety after a voyage of six days.

John Royston Evans, Esq., Senior Radio Officer.

The ship was torpedoed and sank in about four minutes. The force of the explosion damaged the boats and blew them overboard. Two of the four rafts were also damaged. The majority of the crew were washed overboard but were collected in one of the damaged boats which was temporarily repaired. Six days later a steamer was sighted and, in response to signals from the boat, she altered course and picked up the survivors.

Mr. Evans displayed great courage and devotion to duty. He transmitted distress messages after the ship had been hit and he assisted in cutting free the starboard boat which was hanging by one fall, thus allowing it to clear the sinking ship. This action probably resulted in the saving of a number of lives.

Samuel Philip Lloyd, Esq., Chief Officer.

Gwynfor Harries Fowler, Esq., Third Officer.

The ship, sailing independently, was torpedoed. Difficulty was experienced in launching the boats but some rafts floated clear when the ship went down.

The Chief Officer showed great courage and fortitude. When the ship sank he was in the water for an hour before he managed to board one of the rafts. When daylight came, three other rafts were collected and the four rafts, on which there were sixteen men, were secured together. Rations were short and the weather was bad. Mr. Lloyd's raft overturned four times during the voyage of eleven days and, when a rescuing ship came alongside, there were only two survivors.

The Third Officer displayed skill, excellent seamanship and great endurance. After being washed overboard, he clung to some wreckage for about thirteen hours before he was able to board another of the rafts. Two and a half days later he was picked up by the only boat which got clear when the ship went down. He took charge of this boat and, in spite of the very bad weather, he navigated it for eight days before being picked up.

Edwin James Stormont, Esq., Chief Officer.

Duncan McMillan Moir, Esq., Fifth Engineer Officer.

John McKechnie, Esq., Seventh Engineer Officer.

The ship, sailing in convoy, was attacked by enemy aircraft and severely damaged. The water service pipes had been fractured by the explosions of the bombs and, as it was not possible to control the fire which spread rapidly, abandonment was ordered. Some of the lifeboats were damaged but the other boats and a number of rafts were successfully launched. The survivors were taken aboard vessels which were standing by.

The Chief Officer displayed great courage and devotion to duty. He supervised the launching of the boats and, after seeing his own boatload safely aboard the rescuing ship, he returned with a volunteer crew alongside the burning ship to look for survivors, although by that time ammunition was exploding and showers of burning debris were falling.

The Fifth and Seventh Engineer Officers behaved with outstanding gallantry. Several

of the crew were blown into the bake-house by the explosions and seriously injured. With the aid of a torch Mr. Moir and Mr. McKechnie went into the bake-house and carried out several of the injured men. The two Officers then took a fire-hose and tried to work their way forward to the seat of the fire, but the fire had got too great a hold and the attempt had to be abandoned.

*Awarded the George Medal:—*

Hezekiah Hotham, Esq., Second Engineer Officer.

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

Ewart Alfred Gardner, Boatswain.

When his ship was set on fire in harbour by enemy aircraft, the Second Engineer Officer remained on board and displayed great and sustained courage with a complete disregard of his personal safety. He stayed alone in the engine-room and endeavoured to get more pressure on the pumps but all attempts to extinguish the fires had to be abandoned as the service pipes were fractured. He helped to get two injured officers into a boat and then returned to the engine-room and remained there endeavouring to get more pressure on the pumps. When the engine-room bulkheads were white hot he was ordered to leave.

Boatswain Gardner displayed outstanding courage and devotion to duty throughout. Although the ship was burning fiercely and liable to blow up he remained at his fire station in an effort to obtain a sufficient supply of water. When ordered to leave he took charge of one of the boats and got away a number of survivors.

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

Charles Frederick Bermingham, Ship's Cook.

The ship, sailing in convoy, was torpedoed and all the starboard accommodation was wrecked. An injured officer was trapped in a cabin the door of which was jammed by debris. When it had been broken open, Bermingham, with help, brought the unconscious officer on deck. He displayed exceptional courage without regard for his personal safety and this gallant action, undertaken while the ship was sinking, undoubtedly saved the officer's life.

#### COMMENDATIONS.

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

Edward Gordon Baines, Esq., Chief Officer.  
 Frederick Donald Bonney, Esq., Chief Officer.  
 Robert Peter Brittain, Esq., M.B., Ch.B.,  
 Ship's Surgeon.  
 George Lewis Campbell, Esq., Chief Officer.  
 Edwin Stuart Eddisford, Esq., Chief Engineer  
 Officer.  
 Captain Herbert Edward Augustus Emmett,  
 Master.  
 Edgar John Evans, Esq., Second Officer.  
 Thomas James Graham, Boatswain.  
 Captain George Keir Hudson (deceased),  
 Master.

Captain Elwyn Jacob, Master.	William Stuart Parsons, Able Seaman.
Captain Nelson Jamieson, Master.	Captain William Thomas Paul, Master.
Harold Lyndhurst Perston King, Esq., Chief Officer.	Miss Marie Kathleen Pearce, Passenger. (Clerical Officer, Ministry of War Transport.)
Neil McMillan, Esq., Chief Officer.	John Edmund Penhale, Cadet.
Donald McPherson, Esq., Third Engineer Officer.	Captain Ian Brownlie Barr Robinson, Master.
William McDonald Nicolson, Esq., Third Officer.	Captain Robert William Smart, Master.
James Joseph Owen, Able Seaman.	Captain John Steven, O.B.E., Master.
Captain Frederick Beales Parker, Master.	James Watson, Esq., Chief Engineer Officer.
	James Weatherell, Carpenter.
	Stanley Mason Williams, Esq., Second Officer.

## LONDON

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