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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1,
12th September, 1944.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the undermentioned appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, and for the following awards of the George Medal and of the British Empire Medal, for brave conduct.

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

William Henry James Benton, Chief Regional
Fire Officer, Eastern Region, National Fire
Service.

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

Reginald Clarence Welch, Assistant Fire Force
Commander, No. 11 (Southend) Area,
National Fire Service.

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

Leonard Cyril Crickmore, Section Leader,
No. 11 (Southend) Area, National Fire
Service.

A fire broke out at a returned ammunition dump and following a major explosion the fire-fighting personnel were withdrawn until a reconnaissance could be made. Mr. Benton undertook to do this with the Assistant Fire Force Commander and it proved very valuable. During the inspection which extended well into the danger area, continuous minor explosions occurred, and there was a possibility that further major explosions might occur at any time. Mr. Benton not only showed courage and initiative of a high order, but set an admirable example to all personnel by his disregard of danger.

In conditions of considerable complexity and danger Mr. Welch showed courage and devotion to duty of a high order while carrying out his duty as Officer in Charge of the Fire.

Section Leader Crickmore was in charge of the first N.F.S. attendance at the fire. He showed great energy and initiative in tackling the initial problems. Shortly after his arrival the first major explosion put out of action the fire-fighting appliances and made necessary the temporary withdrawal of personnel. Although Crickmore was badly shaken, he continued to control the situation until the arrival of a senior Officer. He afterwards collapsed and was taken to hospital but as soon as he was released he reported back for duty at the fire. Crickmore showed courage, endurance and devotion to duty.

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

Frederick George Secker, War Office Temporary
Civilian Clerk, Ore, Hastings, Sussex.

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

Edward Turner, Cowman, Guestling, Sussex.

When an aircraft crashed, Secker and Turner raced to the scene of the crash and saw two of the crew extricating themselves from the burning wreckage. The pilot, however, because of his injuries, was unable to get away. Without regard for personal safety the two men immediately went to his aid. Despite the flames which at any moment threatened to reach them, they persisted in their efforts until they had freed the pilot and passed him to safety. But for their prompt and courageous action, the pilot would have undoubtedly lost his life in the burning plane.