



THIRD SUPPLEMENT
TO
The London Gazette

Of FRIDAY, the 6th of APRIL, 1945

Published by Authority

Registered as a newspaper

TUESDAY, 10 APRIL, 1945

**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD,**

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
10th April, 1945.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the undermentioned appointment to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, for services to the Forces in connection with Military operations.

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

Edgar James Pritchard, Superintending Engineer (now Director of War and Emergency Works), Egyptian State Telegraphs and Telephones.

For services in the provision of communications.

**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD,**

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
10th April, 1945.*

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, and for the publication in the London Gazette of the names of the persons 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:—

John Robertson, Chairman, Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Mine Owners Association.

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

George Little Brown, Manager, North Midland Coal Owners' Rescue Organisation.

John Blackwood Drinnan, Agent, Moira Colliery Company.

Awarded the George Medal:—

Joseph Clifford Salt, Foreman, No. 21 Maintenance Unit, Royal Air Force.

Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—

James Appleby, lately Leading Fireman, No. 25 (Stone) Area, National Fire Service.

Harold Coker, Foreman, No. 21 Maintenance Unit, Royal Air Force.

Richard Charles Elliott, Company Officer, No. 25 (Stone) Area, National Fire Service.

Jack Perry, Superintendent, Ashby-de-la-Zouch Mines Rescue Team.

George Littel Roden, Leading Fireman, No. 25 (Stone) Area, National Fire Service.

An explosion on an immense scale occurred in a mine forming a Royal Air Force bomb storage depot. The depot, which consisted of tunnelled workings into low hills, was divided into two parts, known as the Old and New Mines, by a solid wall partly of native rock and partly of artificial construction. The explosion occurred in the smaller New Mine and this part of the depot was completely obliterated. Serious damage was also done to the Old Mine where blast caused dangerous roof falls and cracks, scattered bombs and other explosives over the floor, whilst poisonous fumes generated by the explosion percolated from the New Mine. The extent of the damage, the possibility of further explosions, the complicated lay-out of the underground labyrinth, the danger of roof collapses and the presence of bombs and noxious fumes presented a situation of bewildering difficulty. It was under these conditions that rescue operations were started in the Old Mine.

Foreman Salt was in charge of the civilian staff working in the mine at the time of the explosion. He was much shaken but remained in the mine until everyone in his area had been evacuated. On reaching the mine entrance he gave considerable assistance in removing casualties. He then re-entered the mine, found an injured man

and carried him out. The Foreman again went underground, this time with an oxygen mask, as a member of a rescue party. In the course of an extensive search of the damaged area, four of this party had to retire because of the effects of fumes. Later, he entered the mine for a third time to act as guide to rescue teams. Eventually, he had to be assisted into the open suffering from the effects of fumes. Foreman Salt showed great courage and was indefatigable in his efforts.

Mr. Robertson arrived at the depot within an hour of the call for teams of the Mines Rescue Organisation. He brought with him Mr. Drinnan and the first rescue teams with their Superintendent Mr. Perry. Mr. Robertson took full control and direction of the rescue work and went underground several times to explore the situation. By forbidding entry into the mines except by trained teams wearing breathing apparatus, he prevented further loss of life. He planned the operations at a Control Centre, received reports, called up additional teams and apparatus and arranged for the assistance of other technical personnel. Mr. Robertson's courageous leadership and firm control were largely responsible for the rescue arrangements working so smoothly and efficiently.

Mr. Drinnan was put in charge of the underground centre controlling the rescue teams. With Foreman Salt as his guide, he led in the first rescue team which continued its search until forced back by fumes. After the arrival of Mr. Brown with the Mansfield Rescue Team, Mr. Drinnan concentrated on methods to combat the fumes. He persisted in his efforts until all hope of finding any living person in the mine had been abandoned when, with the assistance of the rescue teams, he recovered many bodies. Mr. Drinnan throughout set a worthy example.

Mr. Brown brought with him two additional rescue teams and, in view of his expert knowledge of mines rescue work, he was put in charge of the briefing of the teams at the underground centre where he ably assisted Mr. Drinnan. He carried on this work continuously for twenty-four hours.

Mr. Perry entered the mine with the first rescue team. Because of the possibility of saving life by immediate action, he began rescue operations at once, although no stand-by team was then available to follow up in case of accidents. He took an active part in the direction of subsequent teams until he was overcome by fumes and had to be carried out.

Arriving at the depot about 15 minutes after the explosion Company Officer Elliott found two large stacks of incendiary bombs well alight. He took immediate and effective steps to prevent the fire from spreading and, equipping his men and himself with breathing apparatus, searched the maze of tunnels for survivors. Despite the many hazards and the lack of information regarding the true position, the party remained underground until their sets were almost exhausted. They then withdrew and handed over to the first mines rescue team, to whom they gave valuable information. Later the Company Officer led his men down an emergency shaft 85 feet deep and several bodies were found and brought to the

bottom of the shaft, as were also a number of N.F.S. personnel who had been overcome by fumes. The team withdrew only when their sets were exhausted. Throughout the operations, lasting several hours, Elliott displayed fine leadership, courage and initiative.

Leading Fireman Appleby, although affected by fumes inhaled during the preliminary fire-fighting operations, equipped himself with breathing apparatus and assisted in the search of the tunnels. He was aware of the risk of failing oxygen supply to the apparatus he was wearing, but continued in this dangerous and arduous work, which resulted in the recovery of several unconscious persons. Before he fully recovered from the effects of the fumes and his work in the entrance tunnels, he again entered the mine by the emergency shaft, without wearing breathing apparatus. In his attempts to recover two persons, who afterwards proved to be dead, he was overcome by fumes and was rescued by men wearing breathing apparatus. When partially revived by the administration of oxygen, Appleby continued to assist in the work of bringing the recovered bodies up to the surface until finally he collapsed.

As a leader of a breathing apparatus team Leading Fireman Roden pursued the work of exploration with calmness and courage, and was at all times a splendid example to his men. In addition to directing and assisting his team in the removal of exhausted men and dead bodies, he took an active part in the operations at the top of the shaft. When Roden was satisfied that further efforts at this position would be of no avail he again entered the tunnels, this time through the emergency shaft and assisted in the rescue of Appleby, as well as directing the removal of 4 bodies to the foot of the ventilating shaft. Being almost exhausted by his efforts and the slowly failing supply of oxygen to the breathing apparatus he was wearing, Roden was assisted up the shaft to the open air. On being revived with oxygen, he took an active part in the operations at the head of the shaft until removed to hospital suffering from the effects of exhaustion.

Murray George Heard, Assistant Overseer, Admiralty Outstation.

An explosion occurred in a Royal Air Force launch moored to a jetty. The engine-room casing was blown off, both sides were blown out and a fire started at the fore end of the engine-room, which flooded rapidly. A member of the crew, who had sustained injuries, was pinned down in the after end of the engine-room by a large piece of timber across his body, and his injured leg was entangled in a quantity of electric wiring and other debris. Water was rapidly rising round him and petrol fire was spreading on its surface. The craft took a heavy list away from the jetty, making it difficult to get on board. Heard managed to jump on to the launch, climbed down into the engine-room and helped to keep the victim's head above water and to free him. He continued until further help came and the casualty was released and passed to the jetty. Two minutes later the whole engine-room space was alight with burning petrol. Heard was well aware that

there was every probability of a further explosion, which would have released a flood of burning petrol. He showed courage without regard for his own safety.

COMMENDATIONS.

Those named below have been Commended for brave conduct:—

When aircraft crashed:—

Cyril Maurice Russell Davies, Apprentice, s.s. "Samvigna" (Hain Steamship Company, Ltd.).
 Frank Roy Eccleshare, Foreman, A. V. Roe & Company Ltd.
 Robert William Fennell, Outworking Fitter, A. V. Roe & Company, Ltd.
 John James Frost, Party Leader, Civil Defence Rescue Service, Dymchurch, Kent.

When an explosion occurred in a factory:—

James Morris, Process Worker Grade III, Royal Ordnance Factory, Hereford.

When an explosion occurred in a Royal Air Force launch:—

William Hodge, General Foreman, Boat Construction Company, Ltd., Falmouth.

When an explosion occurred in a Royal Air Force bomb storage depot:—

Francis Frederick Bates, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Mansfield.
 Maude Evelyn, Mrs. Degg, Welfare Assistant, No. 21 Maintenance Unit, Royal Air Force.
 Herbert James Hall, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.
 Arthur Hazell, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Donisthorpe.
 Jack Hinds, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Wilnecote.
 Albert Hunt, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Ellistown.
 Harold Insley, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Newhall.
 Donald Gordon Roberts, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Ilkeston.
 James Kendrick Tivey, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.
 John Webb, Leader, Mines Rescue Team, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

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 The award to Ronald Nunn announced in Gazette No. 36655 of 15th August, 1944, page 3769, is now dated 9th June, 1944.

LONDON

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1945

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S.O. Code No. 65-37022

