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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD,

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

20th August, 1946.

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

Odette Marie Celina, Mrs. SANSOM, M.B.E.,
Women's Transport Service (First Aid
Nursing Yeomanry).

Mrs. Sansom was infiltrated into enemy-occupied France and worked with great courage and distinction until April, 1943, when she was arrested with her Commanding Officer. Between Marseilles and Paris on the way to the prison at Fresnes, she succeeded in speaking to her Commanding Officer and for mutual protection they agreed to maintain that they were married. She adhered to this story and even succeeded in convincing her captors in spite of considerable contrary evidence and through at least fourteen interrogations. She also drew Gestapo attention from her Commanding Officer on to herself saying that he had only come to France on her insistence. She took full responsibility and agreed that it should be herself and not her Commanding Officer who should be shot. By this action she caused the Gestapo to cease paying attention to her Commanding Officer after only two interrogations. In addition the Gestapo were most determined to discover the whereabouts of a wireless operator and of another British officer whose lives were of the greatest value to the Resistance Organisation. Mrs. Sansom was the only person who knew of their whereabouts. The Gestapo tortured her most brutally to try to make her give away this information. They seared her back with a red hot iron and, when that failed, they pulled out all her toe-nails. Mrs. Sansom, however, continually refused

to speak and by her bravery and determination, she not only saved the lives of the two officers but also enabled them to carry on their most valuable work.

During the period of over two years in which she was in enemy hands, she displayed courage, endurance and self-sacrifice of the highest possible order.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD,

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

20th August, 1946.

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 British Empire Medal, 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 James Alexander TAYLOR, Master,
m.v. "Empire Patrol" (Prince Line Ltd.).

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

Paul Francis Johns HUNTER, Chief Officer,
m.v. "Empire Patrol" (Prince Line Ltd.).

John Douglas HUGHES, Senior Second
Engineer Officer, m.v. "Empire Patrol"
(Prince Line Ltd.).

The "Empire Patrol" was carrying Greek refugees, mainly women and children, from East Africa to Greece, when a fire broke out on board.

The fire spread rapidly and the whole of the ship's fire fighting resources were brought into operation by the ship's officers.

About half an hour after the outbreak occurred a number of refugees jumped over the side of the ship. The Master ordered the boats to be lowered with women and children and made fast alongside. The fire had by this time spread to the whole of the midships section and the engine room had to be abandoned. Those remaining on board were confined to the fore and aft of the ship—the Chief Officer being in charge of one section and the Master the other. Communication between the two sections was impossible because amidships was a blazing furnace.

About three hours after the outbreak occurred an aircraft carrier took off the refugees and the crew.

Later she was taken in tow with the Master and some of the crew on board. The vessel, however, listed heavily to port and the party on board were taken off. The list increased and the "Empire Patrol" capsized and sank.

The Master was responsible for all the fire fighting operations of the ship. It was due to his leadership and organisation that the loss of life was so small. He also did his utmost to save the vessel.

The Chief Officer and the Senior Second Engineer Officer ably supported the Master throughout.

Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—

Leslie MATTHEWS, Company Officer, No. 4 (Yorkshire) Fire Force, National Fire Service.

John UTLEY, Leading Fireman, No. 4 (Yorkshire) Fire Force, National Fire Service.

An aircraft crashed in Tockwith and several houses were immediately enveloped

by fire. One house was burning furiously and a woman was trapped in a bedroom. Company Officer Matthews and Leading Fireman Utley mounted a ladder and, although the bedroom was a blazing inferno, without the slightest hesitation they entered the building. Utley located the occupant who was partially covered by debris. She was released and passed to Matthews who carried her to safety. Utley was so exhausted that he had to be assisted down the ladder. Both Company Officer Matthews and Leading Fireman Utley displayed exceptional bravery.

KING'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT.

Miss Eliane Sophie PLEWMAN (deceased), Women's Transport Service (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry).

For services in France during the enemy occupation.

Harry SAGAR, Police Constable, West Riding of Yorkshire Constabulary.

For services when an aircraft crashed and set fire to dwelling houses.

Reginald Ivor LELEU, Second Officer, m.v. "Empire Patrol" (Prince Line Ltd.).

For services when a fire broke out in a ship at sea.

The announcement relative to George ROBERTSON on page 333 of Gazette No. 37412, dated 9th January 1946 is hereby cancelled, the award to him of the B.E.M. having been already announced in Gazette No. 37122, dated 15th June, 1945.

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