

*Awarded the George Medal:—*

Thomas CONVERY, Foreman Rigger, P. Bauer (Salvage) Ltd. (Ardglass.)

James Sangster Melville CRAIG, Shipwright Diver, P. Bauer (Salvage) Ltd. (Aberdeen.)

Neil MACDONALD, Principal Salvage Officer, P. Bauer (Salvage) Ltd. (Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.)

Neil MACQUARRIE, Assistant Salvage Officer, P. Bauer (Salvage) Ltd. (Oban.)

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

Herbert BULLEN, Shipwright Diver, P. Bauer (Salvage) Ltd. (Stromness, Orkney.)

Peter HYNES, Welder, P. Bauer (Salvage) Ltd. (Kilsyth.)

While salvage work was being carried out on the vessel "Warspite," three salvage hands entered the air lock entrance to a section which was under pressure and then went into the compartment below. They found the compartment to be in good order and after about 20 minutes they began the ascent of the ladder back to the air lock. Whilst climbing the ladder two of the men were overcome by gas, but the third man managed to reach the deck and give the alarm. As soon as he learned what had happened, MacQuarrie, accompanied by Convery, entered the pressure chamber and without hesitation descended the ladder to the unconscious salvage hands. The two rescuers were soon affected by the noxious gas, which produced a heaviness in their limbs accompanied by a dazed condition. Nevertheless, MacQuarrie and Convery made every effort to get one of the men up the ladder to the air lock but they became weaker and had to abandon their task. While Convery remained in the pressure chamber MacQuarrie returned to the deck for help. Taking a rope with him he re-entered the air lock with an assistant who lowered the rope to Convery while MacQuarrie descended the ladder, but Convery lost consciousness as he tried to tie the rope around one of the unconscious men. MacQuarrie then attempted to fasten the rope but he too lost consciousness before it could be secured.

MacDonald, who had been engaged ashore, returned to the ship at this stage and took charge of the rescue work. He first gave orders for a gentle flow of oxygen to be fed into the pressure chamber and then entered the air lock with Craig. Together they descended to the pressure chamber and raised Convery to the air lock where he was taken out on to the deck in a state of delirium and semi-consciousness. MacDonald and Craig immediately returned to the air lock and were joined by Hynes. MacDonald again descended into the pressure chamber but was now becoming exhausted and could not raise MacQuarrie, but after further efforts fastened a rope to the unconscious man, who was then hoisted up to the air lock by Craig and Hynes. MacDonald saw that Craig was losing consciousness and helped him back to the deck.

Meanwhile Hynes had been joined by Bullen and they entered the pressure chamber and were successful in raising one of the unconscious men with the aid of a rope.

Craig had now recovered and, undeterred by his previous experiences, entered the pressure chamber for the third time and helped to complete the rescue.

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

Cecil Victor HOLLIS, Shift Charge Hand, Sugar Beet Factory, British Sugar Corporation, Cantley, Norwich.

Hollis was in charge of the boilerhouse shift of three men and was standing near the control panel when he noticed the fire blowing out from No. 1 boiler and large clouds of steam accumulating. Almost immediately afterwards the fires of the next three boilers on the high pressure range were blown out. Hollis switched off the blower at the panel and then climbed up the cat ladder to the narrow iron runway leading across the tops of the boilers. Realising that the conditions at the high pressure end were extremely bad owing to the accumulating steam, he took with him an old mackintosh. Owing to poor visibility he was not able to take a direct route along the walkway, but putting a sack over his head to protect his face and mouth, he climbed over to the isolating valve of No. 1 boiler and turned it off. The journey across the tops of the boilers was extremely hazardous in the circumstances and Hollis exposed himself to the risk of being badly scalded whilst climbing over the various fittings. He returned to ground level by the same route.

Hollis displayed courage and resource and prevented what might have been a serious accident and a complete break-down in the factory.

John Thomas MATTHEWS, General Foreman, Mitchell Construction Company, Rotherham.

During the construction of a cooling tower at Rotherham Power Station, scaffolding, encircling the tower 250 feet above ground, became detached from its moorings in a violent gale. Heavy timbers fell into a main road and the remainder of the scaffolding was in danger of being blown from its position on to surrounding property. Matthews, with four other men, climbed up inside the tower to deal with the situation. When they reached the top Matthews, despite the gale and heavy rain, passed over the top edge and climbed down the external ladders from the lip of the tower to reach the platform. He tied ropes to the loose planks so that they could be hauled in by the other men, who remained inside the tower, and he then made safe the insecure scaffolding.

Matthews, by his inspiring leadership, cool calculation and courage, prevented what might have been a serious accident with damage to life and property.