

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

William McCONNELL, Coxswain, Portpatrick Lifeboat. (Stranraer.)

Hugh NELSON, Coxswain, Donaghadee Lifeboat. (Donaghadee.)

"Princess Victoria" left Stranraer on the morning of 31st January, 1953, carrying 127 passengers for Larne. After leaving Loch Ryan she encountered north-westerly gales and squalls of sleet and snow. A heavy sea struck the ship and burst open the stern doors and sea water flooded the space on the car deck causing a list to starboard of about 10°. Attempts were made to secure the stern doors but without success. The Master tried to turn his ship back to Loch Ryan but the conditions were of such severity that the manoeuvre failed. Some of the ship's cargo shifted from the port to the starboard side and this increased the list as the crippled vessel endeavoured to make her way across the Irish Sea.

The coastal tanker "Pass of Drumochter" heard over her radio that "Princess Victoria" was in difficulties and Captain Kelly immediately put to sea with all speed, and blew blasts on the ship's whistle to attract the attention of the Master of "Lairdsmoor". The message was also picked up by "Orchy". "Lairdsmoor" had 100 head of cattle on board and "Orchy" was practically in ballast and for that reason very vulnerable to the elements, but Captain Bell and Captain Matheson at once put to sea. After leaving the shelter of Belfast Lough the vessels were almost overwhelmed in the very heavy seas. There was a strong north-westerly gale blowing and frequent squalls of snow and sleet reduced visibility at times to nil. In company with "Orchy" and "Lairdsmoor", "Pass of Drumochter" swept the area by the Cope-lands for traces of the distressed ship. At 2.45 p.m. "Orchy" ran into boats and wreckage from "Princess Victoria" and at once called the other ships.

The trawler "Eastcotes" was sheltering in Belfast Lough when she heard that "Princess Victoria" was in dire distress and about to abandon ship. Skipper Brewster at once decided to weigh anchor and sail for the position given in the hope of locating her. "Eastcotes" eventually arrived at the position of the disaster between 3 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. having been guided by the radio call when "Orchy" located the wreckage. While endeavouring to pick up survivors from buoyant apparatus and wreckage, Skipper Brewster was alone on the bridge handling his ship whilst the crew were stationed along the deck ready to assist survivors. One man and six bodies were picked up and "Eastcotes" continued the search until 6 p.m. when she returned to her former anchorage.

Due to the weather conditions it was not possible to launch boats from any of the rescuing vessels. Despite the difficulties, however, attempts were made to get survivors aboard the vessels and oil was pumped on to the sea.

Meanwhile the Donaghadee Lifeboat, under the charge of Coxswain Nelson, and

the Portpatrick Lifeboat, under the charge of Coxswain McConnell, were launched in a gale of hurricane force and very rough seas. The Lifeboats reached the scene of the disaster at 3.15 p.m. and rescued 33 people from lifeboats and rafts and then continued to search for survivors. The Donaghadee Lifeboat went out again at night and at 7 a.m. the following morning and searched the area until nightfall.

Awarded the George Medal:—

George Edward DORSETT, Constable, Metropolitan Police. (Chingford, E.4.)

Edward Norman SNITCH, Constable, Metropolitan Police. (Chingford, E.4.)

The manager of a firm at Hackney saw three men acting suspiciously just below his window. He informed the police and Constables Snitch and Dorsett, together with another Constable, went to the scene in a police car. On arrival they saw two men being pursued. The police car chased after the two men who ran across a bombed site. The car was driven across the rough ground as far as possible and while Constable Dorsett remained behind, Snitch and the other Constable jumped out and followed the men, who separated. Constable Snitch when about five yards behind one man called on him to stop. The man turned round, threatened the Constable and then reached under his raincoat with his right hand, pulled out a revolver and fired at the officer. The bullet grazed the right side of Snitch's face and he stumbled and fell to his knees. Constable Dorsett, believing Snitch to be shot, jumped from the car and ran towards the criminal. As he did so Snitch got up and, with Dorsett, closed with the man, who fired two more shots. Dorsett got hold of the man's head whilst Snitch grasped the weapon and wrenched it away. The revolver was found to contain three spent and three live cartridges. Although fired at, the two Constables persisted in the pursuit of an armed and reckless criminal.

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

Cecil CAREY, Station Officer, Berkshire and Reading Fire Brigade. (Newbury.)

A fuel tanker containing approximately 3,600 gallons of jet fuel became out of control whilst approaching the village of Lambourn, skidded violently, collided with and partially demolished three shops and overturned in the road. The jet fuel poured out of the tanker, ignited immediately, ran down the road, penetrated the storm water sewers and entered the River Lambourn, leaving in its wake a trail of fire which involved a pair of thatched cottages and eight other premises.

Station Officer Carey, who was in control of fire fighting operations, was told that the driver of the tanker was still in the cab and that rescue operations had been impossible owing to the intense heat. Without any hesitation Carey, protected by a salvage sheet, instructed a man to play a spray jet on to him and advanced towards the petrol tanker in an attempt to save the driver. With much difficulty and in the face of intense heat from the fire, Carey recovered the driver of the