

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

James Frederick BIRCH, Boatswain, Troopship "Empire Windrush," New Zealand Shipping Company, Ltd. (Southampton.)

Arthur Thomas RYAN, Bedroom Steward, Troopship "Empire Windrush," New Zealand Shipping Company, Ltd. (Dagenham.)

In the early hours of the morning, fire broke out in the engine room of the Troopship "Empire Windrush" when the vessel, homeward bound with over 1,500 passengers and crew aboard, was approximately 30 miles off the Algerian coast.

The fire was of great intensity and rapidly became a conflagration, the ship's decks and alleyways being filled with heavy smoke. The loud hailer system and the emergency alarm bells and whistles were put out of action.

Mr. Robinson was on watch when the fire broke out and took immediate action to combat it. This proved impossible as owing to the intensity and rapid spread of the fire, the water supply failed within a few minutes. He then took control of the operations preparatory to abandoning ship, ensuring that all passengers were at their emergency stations.

When the order to abandon ship was given he organised the lowering of the boats and showed great resource in carrying out the unorthodox method of tumbling the boats into the water to speed up the operation. He then joined the Master on the bridge and remained until it became untenable, when he went aft to take charge there. Communication being cut off, Mr. Robinson supervised the evacuation of the section of the ship now under his control and when certain that everybody was off he himself went over the side and swam to a lifeboat.

Mr. Robinson's conduct throughout was courageous and resourceful and his prompt and efficient execution of his duties inspired confidence and was an important factor in maintaining discipline and preventing loss of life.

Mr. Birch took charge of the fire-fighting squad until the water supply failed. He then went to his boat station and led his party of seamen in getting the lifeboats away. It was largely due to his seaman-like ability that the unorthodox operation of tumbling the boats into the water was successfully carried out. He went down into his own boat and embarked passengers by rope ladder and picked others up from the water.

His outstanding qualities of leadership were of immense value towards ensuring that the operation of abandoning ship was carried out rapidly and safely.

Mr. Ryan was in charge of bedrooms situated close to the engine room and he immediately got the passengers from the cabins under his charge on deck to their emergency stations. He accomplished this in difficult and dangerous conditions which were rapidly deteriorating due to dense smoke and increasing heat. After ensuring

that all the cabins were empty he went to his boat station and assisted in embarking his passengers and getting the boats away. He finally jumped into the water and was picked up by one of the rescue ships.

Mr. Ryan's conduct throughout was exemplary, and his disregard for his own safety was the means of preventing loss of life.

Awarded the George Medal:—

Leonard Geoffrey BOCKING, Police Constable, Metropolitan Police. (St. Pancras, N.W.1.)

George Alexander SINCLAIR, Police Constable, Metropolitan Police. (Walworth, S.E.17.)

Police were called to a jeweller's shop where they found the door locked but all the lights on. Three of the officers ran down a passageway at the side of the adjoining premises while another remained at the shop entrance to prevent anyone leaving. Constables Bocking and Sinclair entered the workroom at the back of the jeweller's shop and found two men lying in a pool of blood. One appeared to be dead and the other was unconscious with his hands tied behind him with a necktie. Sinclair searched the premises and Bocking went to the yard at the back.

When he reached an area basement Bocking looked down and saw a man crouched in a doorway. He shouted to the man as he made his way down the area steps and saw him bring his right arm from under the raincoat he was carrying. As the officer drew near he saw the man was holding a pistol. Bocking immediately jumped on him and grabbed at his right wrist in an effort to get the pistol away.

By this time Constable Sinclair had come to the back of the shop and hearing a noise from the area he looked down and saw Bocking grappling with the man from behind and trying to prevent him moving his arms and hands. Sinclair could see the pistol which was being waved from side to side in front of the man in the violent struggle that was taking place and ran down the steps to help. Just before he reached the Constable and his captive the pistol went off, but disregarding this Sinclair grabbed it and after a tussle wrenched it from the man's grasp. The man then collapsed and it was discovered he had shot himself in the struggle.

The weapon taken from the prisoner was an automatic pistol in good working order, from which three bullets had apparently been fired.

Awarded the George Medal:—

John Richard Thomas BAILEY, Detective Constable, Metropolitan Police. (Battersea, S.W.11.)

Awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division):—

Cyril Charles NICHOLLS, Detective Sergeant, Metropolitan Police. (Tooting, S.W.17.)

A man who had been arrested for being a deserter and a suspected criminal broke away from his escort, pulled a revolver from his pocket and ran off at a fast speed.

Detective Sergeant Nicholls and Detective Constable Bailey immediately gave chase and