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**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF  
THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD**

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

16th July 1968

The QUEEN 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 those specially shown below as having received an expression of Commendation for brave conduct.

*To be Additional Members of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, for Gallantry:*

Captain Robert Charles BALLS, Helicopter Pilot, Bristow Tetney Heliport Base, Grimsby.

During a severe storm the drilling barge "Ocean Prince", on station 100 miles out in the North Sea, was pounded by waves estimated at about 50 feet. A request was made about 6.0 a.m. to commence a precautionary evacuation of the barge. Captain Balls took off alone in a Wessex helicopter from Scarborough Heliport. About an hour later, while still en route, he learnt by radio that the drilling derrick on the barge had collapsed and he decided against trying to take all members of the crew ashore. He transferred two loads of passengers from "Ocean Prince" to another rig situated about 18 miles away. The landings and take-offs were particularly hazardous in the prevailing weather because the legs of the platform projected above the level of the helipad. In order to lift the maximum number of persons the pilot flew with the minimum fuel on board and refuelled on the rig. With the wind gusting to 90 miles per hour and the risk that the landing platform might capsize, exceptional courage and skill were necessary before and during the operations on "Ocean Prince". But for Captain Balls' initiative, bravery and splendid airmanship in planning and safely carrying out this risky operation as he

did, all 45 members of the crew of "Ocean Prince" would probably have lost their lives, since the rig broke up and sank a few hours after the last group of men had been lifted clear.

Ian CROSBIE, Section Naval Auxiliary Officer, R.N. Auxiliary Service.

Mr. Crosbie was Skipper of the XSV "Birdham" during a training cruise when an electrical fire started in the engine room. Mr. Crosbie called a ship to his assistance and this vessel took off those members of "Birdham's" crew who were not required to fight the fire. Mr. Crosbie and four crew members then continued for four hours fighting the fire which was finally brought under control. The "Birdham" was then taken in tow and brought into Greenock eight hours after the fire had started. Mr. Crosbie displayed considerable courage in his handling of the fire in XSV "Birdham", which is a wooden ship and where there was a serious danger of fuel explosion. He put himself at risk, saved his ship and brought the vessel safely to port.

*Awarded the George Medal:*

David HUNTER, Deputy, Michael Mine, Fife, National Coal Board.

A fire broke out in an intake roadway near the bottom of a shaft in the Michael Mine. It spread fiercely and rapidly and produced a vast quantity of thick black smoke which was carried by the ventilation current to all working sections of the mine. Without delay the surface control room attendant and officials who had discovered the fire telephoned instructions to all parts of the mine for the 316 men working underground to be withdrawn but nine lives were lost. The intake airway, the shortest way to the shaft and the one which the men were accustomed to travel, was full of black smoke. Deputy Hunter, after warning men at the coal face to withdraw at once, travelled along the intake airway to warn his own men and stayed in the thick smoke a short time to keep the conveyor running and to assist men to travel from the coal face. As only one man came up from the coal face, he became anxious about three

others and tried to reach them but was prevented by the smoke. By now he was feeling weak, so he walked out along the intake airway towards the shaft and eventually reached fresh air at a turn. He told men there to shout into the smoke to see if there were any answering calls and also to start up the conveyor to assist any men travelling along the intake airway. A voice was heard and Hunter returned along the intake into the thick smoke and fumes. Although visibility was nil, by following the shouts he found a man lying on the ground about 60 yards from the turn. Hunter picked him up and carried him back to fresh air. By this time Hunter was weak and dazed and had to be restrained to prevent him going back again into the smoke to look for other men.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal for Gallantry (Civil Division):*

Leslie Terence DOLAN, Sergeant 3rd Class, New South Wales Police Force.

In response to a message that there had been a stabbing in a dwelling, Sergeant Dolan and a Constable went to the house and were told that a man had gone berserk with a knife and had fatally stabbed one man and wounded two other persons. Although the man was no longer in possession of the knife he had armed himself with a firearm with which he had fired several shots through the walls of the house after being locked in his bedroom. A large gathering of adults and children were outside the premises whilst a number of others were in the dwelling. Sergeant Dolan instructed the Constable to clear the people from the precincts whilst he approached the window of the bedroom occupied by the man. Through the window the Sergeant saw him holding a rifle which he pointed in the Sergeant's direction, rejecting the latter's request to throw out the gun and surrender. Dolan then entered the house through the front door and in a room saw a man lying on the floor. The Sergeant examined the body which was covered in blood but could not detect any heart beat or pulse. In an adjoining room the Sergeant saw a man and a woman each of whom had stab wounds. Sergeant Dolan decided that in view of the killer's maniacal behaviour and the fact that he still had a loaded rifle in his possession, the safety of persons in the area would be in jeopardy if he were not taken into custody forthwith. The Sergeant accordingly approached the bedroom door and called upon him to throw down his gun and surrender but received no reply. After waiting for a short period, the Sergeant unlocked the door and stepped into the room. He saw the man slightly to his right holding the rifle in both hands, with its barrel pointing at him. The Sergeant lunged forward knocked the weapon to one side and grappled with the offender. After wrenching the rifle away he pulled him into the hallway where the Constable helped to overpower him. The .22 calibre rifle taken from the offender revealed that it was fully cocked and ready for firing. One bullet was in the firing chamber and seven rounds of ammunition in the magazine.

Ernest Ross NIXON, Sergeant 3rd Class, New South Wales Police Force.

Frank Alan DAY, Detective Senior Constable, New South Wales Police Force.

The police became aware that a gang of criminals responsible for three armed robberies

intended to hold up the Manager and Accountant of a Bank and force them to open the strong-room. With a view to preventing this offence the Bank was kept under police surveillance and Detectives were positioned at strategic positions throughout the Bank premises. Three armed and masked men were seen to enter the building. They were challenged by Detective Sergeant Nixon and Detective Senior Constable Day, who had been detailed to cover the main hallway and stairs. One of the men fired a sawn-off .22 calibre rifle at the Detectives, the bullet hitting Nixon over the right eye. Nixon and Day returned the fire and chased the offenders who ran to the stairs. One of the gang fell to the floor wounded and another who at the time was on the lower flight of stairs, turned and pointed his firearm at Day and Nixon. Day fired and wounded him. At this point other detectives who were also in the Bank premises came on the scene and together with Nixon and Day arrested the three offenders.

Isish TILLET, Lottery Vendor, Belize City, British Honduras.

Mr. Tillett, who was in his house, heard a shout and on running out he saw smoke and flames billowing from the kitchen of a wooden house on stilts on the opposite side of the road. Learning that there were children in the house and being unable to enter through the back door because of the smoke and flames, Mr. Tillett broke down the front door after three attempts and entered the house where he heard the sound of children crying. He found one boy and got him out of the front door where another helper took charge of the child. Although the fire was increasing in intensity and the floor and roof were in danger of collapse, Mr. Tillett went back into the house where he found a second child, also a boy, and brought him to safety. Mr. Tillett was then informed that there were also two babies inside the house whereupon he went back in the house yet again and groped around in the smoke until he found a door which was locked. He tried to force it open but was unable to do so before being driven out of the house by smoke and flames which were now emerging from the front door. Mr. Tillett called for a ladder and tried to get to the window of the room but by the time the ladder had been produced the flames had increased and made entry impossible. The Fire Brigade arrived shortly afterwards and later the bodies of two boys aged 1 year and 2 years were removed from the house which had been completely gutted. The house was a wooden one and very dry after several weeks without rain. By entering into it on three occasions while the fire was increasing in intensity, Mr. Tillett showed no regard for his own personal safety and it was wholly due to his bravery that two of the children were saved.

*Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct*

Frederick John COLES, Lorry Driver, Birmingham.

For services when a driverless lorry ran away downhill.

Dallas DACEY, Marrickville, New South Wales.

Thomas Charles REID, Sergeant 2nd Class, New South Wales Police Force.

For services when a man went berserk and shot and killed three people.

Arthur Vincent Gulston EVANS, Sergeant,  
Merthyr Tydfil Borough Police, Merthyr  
Tydfil.

For services when arresting a youth armed  
with a shot gun.

David Michael HACKETT, Constable, Sussex  
Constabulary, Hove.

For services when arresting a mentally con-  
fused man in possession of a firearm.

Hendrick Johan Willen LENCKERT, Doorman,  
Regent Theatre, Sydney.

For services when a youth armed with a rifle  
attempted to rob a theatre.

David Charles PIKE, Fireman, London Fire  
Brigade (Chelsfield, Kent).

For rescuing a woman from drowning.

Jeffrey PITMAN, Constable, Cardiff City Police  
Force.

Royston James PLUMMER, Constable, Cardiff City  
Police Force.

For services when arresting two armed  
offenders.

William SHAW, Fire Officer, Michael Mine, Fife,  
National Coal Board (Denbeath).

For services when a fire broke out in the  
Michael Mine, Fife.

## HOME OFFICE

Whitehall, London S.W.1.

16th July 1968

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to  
make the undermentioned award:

*Edward Medal*

Andrew TAYLOR (deceased), Deputy, Michael  
Mine, Fife, National Coal Board.

A fire broke out near the bottom of a shaft in  
the Michael Mine. The fire spread fiercely and  
rapidly, producing a vast quantity of thick black  
smoke which was carried to all sections of the  
mine. Instructions were telephoned from the  
surface to all parts of the mine for the 316  
men working underground to be withdrawn, but  
nine lives were lost. The intake airway, the  
shortest way to the shaft and the one which the  
men were accustomed to travel, was full of black  
smoke. Deputy Taylor set off along the return  
airway but after travelling some distance he  
decided to wait for some of his men who he  
thought were not far behind. When no one  
appeared, he became anxious and told the two  
other men who were with him that he was going  
back to search for them as he believed he could  
lead them safely out of the mine. The other  
men tried to dissuade him and warned him that  
if he went back he would lose his life. Deputy  
Taylor replied that he could not return to the  
surface if some of his men were missing. With  
complete disregard for his own safety, he went  
back into the smoke-laden return and was not  
seen again.

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