

helicopters which the Flight operates are not equipped for night rescue, but the Coastguards were told that the crew would be prepared to give every possible assistance if the situation became critical. At 0030 hours neither the Appledore Lifeboat, nor Her Majesty's Coastguards, had been able to get a line aboard and a further call was received by the Search and Rescue Flight, requesting helicopter assistance for the distressed vessel, which was now in danger of breaking up. Flight Lieutenant Dickens quickly assessed the situation and accepted the task, despite the exceedingly poor weather conditions. He and his crew were airborne at 0055 hours and arrived at the scene of the incident shortly after 0100 hours. They found the vessel, the 75 foot "Rossekop 2", beam on to the seaward wind, rolling through 45 degrees to port in the heavy surf which was breaking over her. Using the aircraft's landing lights, Flight Lieutenant Dickens surveyed the scene and decided that the only place from which it would be possible to winch was an area approximately six feet square, near the bows. In constant danger of striking unseen obstructions in the poor light, Flight Lieutenant Dickens, under the directions of his navigator, made repeated approaches to the winching area and, in spite of the extremely difficult conditions, succeeded in placing the winchman on board, where it was found that six men, a woman and three children awaited rescue. Holding his aircraft in as steady a hover as possible in the prevailing conditions, Flight Lieutenant Dickens ordered his crew to winch the woman and children up first, and then landed on a nearby beach to hand them over to the Coastguards. He then returned for a further two approaches to the vessel, winching up three men on each occasion. By his decision to accept this task despite exceptionally poor weather and by his outstanding skill, courage and determination, in conditions which were completely outside his experience, Flight Lieutenant Dickens undoubtedly took the lead in saving the lives of the ten people on board the vessel. In so doing, he displayed professionalism of the highest standards and brought great credit to the Royal Air Force.

*Air Force Medal*

F0686120 Flight Sergeant Richard GAGLIONE, Royal Air Force.

On the night of 4th November 1972, Flight Sergeant Gaglione, an Air Loadmaster, serving as a Search and Rescue helicopter winchman was a member of the duty crew of a helicopter of "A" Flight, No. 22 Squadron Detachment at Royal Air Force Chivenor, called to the assistance of the pleasure cruiser "Rossekop 2", aground on the Bideford Bar, at the entrance to the River Torridge, North Devon. On arrival at the incident, the vessel was seen in the aircraft's landing lights to be lying beam on to the wind and tide, rolling violently through 45 degrees to port, while heavy seas, six to ten feet high, were breaking over her. The only area from which winching could be carried out was approximately six feet square near the bows. Despite the danger of the vessel capsizing, and of his being hit by unseen obstructions in the poor illumination of the landing lights, Flight Sergeant Gaglione immediately volunteered to be winched down on to the vessel in an attempt to rescue the survivors. This was achieved, although in the process he repeatedly hit obstructions and had great difficulty in maintaining a secure foothold on the violently moving and slippery deck. Flight Sergeant Gaglione then made contact with the Master of the vessel, and discovered that, as well as six men, there were three children and a woman on board. Regardless of the imminent danger to his own life, he set about the long and difficult task of evacuating the woman and children. With the first four survivors safely on the beach, Flight Sergeant Gaglione was winched on to the deck on two further occasions. By this time the vessel was beginning to break up and, again using the double lift method, he rescued the remaining six survivors. Throughout the entire winching operation, which took over 25 minutes, Flight Sergeant Gaglione showed complete disregard for his personal safety, and, through his exceptional courage, determination and skill, undoubtedly saved the lives of the ten people on board the vessel. In so doing he has brought great credit to the Royal Air Force.

*Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air*

Flight Lieutenant Colin Lilico COCKBURN (578332), Royal Air Force.

For his exceptional courage, calmness, skill and judgment, as navigator and winch operator of a helicopter called to

the assistance of a pleasure cruiser, "Rossekop 2", aground at night, in heavy seas, on Bideford Bar, North Devon. With only the aircraft landing lights in which to observe obstructions and with only a small section of the deck, approximately six feet square, near the bows on to which the winchman could be lowered, Flight Lieutenant Cockburn was the vital link between the helicopter pilot and winchman in the successful lifting to safety of the ten people on board the vessel.

**AIR FORCE DEPARTMENT**

10th April 1973.

**ROYAL AIR FORCE**

**GENERAL DUTIES BRANCH**

*Promotion*

*Flying Officer to Flight Lieutenant :*

6th Apr. 1973

- D. J. CABLE (5200686).
- W. E. IVORY (5200689).
- F. R. KARL (5200688).
- B. G. WATTS (5200687).
- J. C. TURNER (4233455). 7th Apr. 1973.

*Regrading*

*Acting Pilot Officer to Pilot Officer :*

6th Apr. 1973

- N. ANDERSON (8025979).
- R. A. BARON (8025949).
- C. P. F. DAYMON (8025914).
- J. W. HENDY (8025976).
- C. D. HILL (8025832).
- M. KIDSON (8025955).
- P. G. LAMBERT (8025967).
- W. LASSETER (8025971).
- M. S. LOWES (8025954).
- D. D. MARTIN (8025977).
- B. J. MILLS (8025952).
- P. S. MURRAY (8025968).
- N. F. NICKLES (8025853).
- P. S. POWELL (8025948).
- A. L. REYNOLDS (8025975).
- B. P. TAYLOR (8025925).
- R. J. S. TOWNEND (8025856).
- D. A. UFTON (8025922).
- R. K. WILLCOX (8025958).
- D. L. WILLIAMS (8025837).

*Specialist Aircrew*

*Flight Lieutenant designated Specialist Aircrew :*

- C. H. HILDITCH (2608135). 20th Nov. 1972.

*Transfer between Branches*

Flight Lieutenant E. R. NEWALL (4275001) has transferred to the General Duties (Ground) Branch. 9th Apr. 1973, in existing rank and seniority.

*Change of Commission and Transfer between Branches*

Flight Lieutenant D. C. McLAREN, B.D.S. (5200696), has transferred to the Dental Branch and reverts to his previous terms of service to complete a Short Service Commission, 2nd Mar. 1973, in his existing rank with seniority adjusted to 18th Dec. 1968.

*Transfer to the Reserve*

*Flight Lieutenants :*

- N. C. R. JONES (4232686). 8th Mar. 1973.
- J. P. MARVIN (4232710). 25th Mar. 1973.

*Retirement*

Group Captain A. C. HOLLINGSWORTH (at own request). 2nd Apr. 1973.  
Wing Commander R. E. GLOVER, D.F.C. (44408). 29th Mar. 1973.

*Squadron Leaders :*

5th Apr. 1973

- D. G. RICHES (2735684).
- A. WRIGHT (157406).