



SECOND SUPPLEMENT TO

The London Gazette

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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE
ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

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

18th December 1973.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to give orders for the undermentioned appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, and to approve the awards of the George Medal and the British Empire Medal for Gallantry (Civil Division) 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 :

Major Geoffrey William Biddle, Explosives Officer,
Metropolitan Police Office.

Captain Richard Vernon Hawkins, Explosives Officer,
Metropolitan Police Office.

Peter Edwin Spencer Gurney, G.M., Explosives Officer,
Metropolitan Police Office.

Following a report that a suspicious car was parked near two buildings which had wide areas of glass in their walls and housed large numbers of staff, Major Biddle and Mr. Gurney went to the scene.

Quickly realising the gravity of the situation they managed to get into the car and immediately recognised the smell of explosives. They saw a cord protruding from beneath the passenger seat which they knew was a detonating cord and this was traced to the rear seat which was lifted and found to be packed with explosives. They now realised they were dealing with a very large bomb and ensured that the immediate area was evacuated and that staff in the surrounding buildings were warned before they began the dangerous task of rendering the device safe. The officers found the initiatory system of the bomb in a wooden box

under the front seat; Mr. Gurney severed the detonating cord and together they removed the back seat containing the explosives as far as possible from the initiatory system. They suspected that there might be a second such system and immediately unpacked the seat squab and separated the bags of explosives to reduce the effects of any explosion. Finding no second system, they returned to the car where they cut the lead connecting a detonator to the wooden box. When the box was opened it was found to contain a device based on an alarm clock which would have exploded the bomb at 3 p.m. The car was then searched for further explosives and none being found, it was declared safe.

During the morning Major Biddle and Mr. Gurney with other colleagues were extremely busy attending to further suspect car bombs; these turned out to be false alarms.

At about 2 p.m. that afternoon an anonymous call to a newspaper warned that further car bombs had been planted and Mr. Gurney with Captain Hawkins went to deal with one of them. From the earlier events of the day they realised that the time for the detonation of any further bombs might be perilously close and they immediately approached the car and gained access. Again they were met by the distinctive smell of explosives and rapidly located a detonating cord in a position like the one found previously. The bomb was similar to the earlier one and having cut the detonating cord they removed the rear seat squab. Captain Hawkins carefully dismantled the explosive charge and made certain it contained no secondary means of detonation while Mr. Gurney made the initiatory device safe; this was again found to be based on an alarm clock and would have caused the bomb to explode at about 2.50 p.m. Together the officers searched the car for any further explosives and finally declared it safe.

Major Biddle, Captain Hawkins and Mr. Gurney were all involved in exceptional risks and displayed courage of a very high order and in successfully dismantling these bombs they undoubtedly saved a large