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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## HONOURS AND AWARDS

### NAVY DEPARTMENT

Whitehall, London S.W.1.  
19th November 1974.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Air Force Cross to the undermentioned:

Lieutenant Commander David Sumner MALLOCK, Royal Navy.

Lieutenant Anthony Roydon BAKER, Royal Australian Navy.

At 1242 on 16th January 1974, the Danish merchant vessel "MERC ENTERPRISE" carrying a cargo of barley, made a distress call to Lands End Radio, after she had developed a list to starboard in exceptionally heavy seas and storm force winds about 30 miles south of Plymouth.

Lieutenant Commander Mallock and Lieutenant Baker, both captains of Sea King helicopters from the Royal Naval Air Station, Culdrose, Cornwall, joined other helicopters in the search for survivors from the "MERC ENTERPRISE". Despite the exceptionally severe conditions with wind speeds of 50 to 70 knots and waves of 30 to 50 feet, which precluded the use of the Flight Control system for hovering, Lieutenant Commander Mallock's crew recovered two survivors and two dead bodies while Lieutenant Baker's aircraft recovered a body from the sea.

After 3½ hours in these exacting conditions the search was called off and Lieutenant Commander Mallock's aircraft was returning to Culdrose when both engines started surging. There followed a succession of compressor stalls as they approached the coast. Twice engine failure seemed imminent, but sufficient power was regained and escorted by Lieutenant Baker's aircraft, in complete darkness and with greatly reduced airspeed the coastline was crossed. Lieutenant Commander Mallock elected to carry out an immediate power-assisted forced landing because of the double engine failure. Avoiding a village, Lieutenant Commander Mallock made an autorotative landing in the corner of a ploughed field, bordered by trees on one side, on a steep slope, and with a power cable strung across the approach. In pitch darkness, in very bad weather and with a salt-encrusted windscreen Lieutenant Commander Mallock nevertheless with consummate skill, landed without damage to the aircraft or its crew. In so doing he dis-

played professionalism of the highest order and brought great credit to the Royal Navy, not only in the United Kingdom but also in Denmark.

After being on task for 1½ hours in these exacting conditions Lieutenant Baker was returning to base when he was ordered to escort Lieutenant Commander Mallock's aircraft. During this time Lieutenant Baker's aircraft also experienced a compressor stall in his No. 2 engine. He managed to recover power and elected to remain with the other Sea King helicopter until he had ensured that its crew had survived the forced landing uninjured. As Lieutenant Baker started to return to Culdrose both his engines stalled in succession. Putting his aircraft into autorotation, in complete darkness and with visibility impeded by the salt smeared windscreen, Lieutenant Baker made a skilful forced landing into the middle of a flat open field. Throughout the prolonged emergency Lieutenant Baker displayed great skill, coolness and initiative. Although aware that his own aircraft was following the same pattern and was likely to develop double engine failure, he stood by the other Sea King helicopter and eventually carried out a forced landing in extremely difficult circumstances without damage to the aircraft or property, and without injury to his crew. In so doing he brought great credit to the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Navy.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Air Force Medal to the undermentioned:

Petty Officer Aircrewman David John JACKSON  
J976002S.

Petty Officer Aircrewman David John Dudley FOWLES  
D072561M.

Acting Aircrewman Adrian John WILLIAMS D094384P.

Petty Officer Jackson was an aircrewman in one of the Sea King helicopters from the Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, which was involved in the rescue operation of the Danish Merchant Vessel "MERC ENTERPRISE". The prompt and accurate arrival of this first aircraft was vital in view of the physical state of the survivors.

It was possible to recover the first survivor by a single lift, but owing to their exhausted state and apparent ignorance of rescue methods it was necessary to use double lifts for the others, since they were unable to put on the rescue strop themselves. In spite of winds gusting up to 70 knots and waves of 30 to 50 feet Petty Officer Jackson donned the double lift harness. The aircraft lift was operable only

in the emergency mode which led to the added hazard to his personal safety of a length of slack wire in the water.

Undaunted by these adverse conditions and increasing fatigue Petty Officer Jackson was personally instrumental in the saving of four lives. His courage, fortitude and perseverance in exceptionally difficult and dangerous conditions are in the highest traditions of the Royal Navy.

Petty Officer Fowles was an aircrewman in one of the helicopters called to the rescue of the Danish merchant vessel "MERC ENTERPRISE" which had capsized in exceptionally heavy seas south of Plymouth.

Conditions were very severe with winds gusting to 70 knots and waves of 30 to 50 feet from crest to trough. On sighting an apparently unconscious person in the water the aircraft was brought to the hover to enable Petty Officer Fowles to be lowered into the sea to recover the body by means of a double lift. The attempt was frustrated when he received facial injuries from the winch wire which suddenly tautened in a deep wave trough.

Undaunted by the adverse conditions and his personal injuries Petty Officer Fowles continued in his efforts to recover two bodies from the sea but without success. His perseverance, courage and fortitude were in the highest traditions of the Service.

Able Seaman A. J. Williams was an aircrewman in one of the Sea King helicopters called out from the Royal Naval Air Station at Culdrose to assist in the rescue operation when the Danish merchant vessel "MERC ENTERPRISE" capsized in very adverse weather conditions, south of Plymouth.

On arrival the pilot, despite winds gusting to 70 knots and waves up to 50 feet, fought to maintain a low hover height so that Able Seaman Williams might be lowered on the aircraft winch wire in order to recover a body from

the sea. He was several times dragged through the crests of waves to be swung violently in the air and eventually he had to be raised to prevent being struck by another wave.

In spite of this Able Seaman Williams made a further attempt and succeeded in grasping the body as he was swept downward, and they were winched back into the aircraft. His persistence in the task, with little regard for his own personal safety, and his courage and fortitude were in the highest traditions of the Royal Navy.

## AIR FORCE DEPARTMENT

Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB.

19th November 1974.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the following award:

*Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air*  
Wing Commander Ronald Alfred EDWARDS (607376), Royal Air Force.

For his presence of mind and the skill he showed as a pilot, on 2nd September 1974, when the engine of his Hunter aircraft seized completely at 20,000 feet, 15 miles from Royal Air Force Laarbruch. As the track of the aircraft was, throughout, over populated areas, he decided not to jettison the drop tanks. With these retained and a cross-wind over the runway, the problems facing Wing Commander Edwards were very great indeed, but he brought the valuable training aircraft back to base and landed it safely.

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