

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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