

valves in order to starve the fire of air. He had no special protective gloves with him but borrowed a pair of felt slippers to protect his hands and partially succeeded in shutting off the fuel valves and altering the ventilation flaps.

For the next hour Ashcroft monitored vital equipment in adjacent smoke filled compartments and then returned to help fight the fire. He led successive teams of civilian firemen down into the diesel compartment and assisted them. The civilian fire-fighting teams were relieved by fresh men at each attempt to reach the seat of the fire but Ashcroft personally accompanied each team.

By his initiative and persistence and with little regard to the very high risk to his own life Ashcroft displayed outstanding bravery and determination throughout the fire.

Acting Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic Martin Philip MIDDLETON, D104933H

A/POMEM Middleton was the first to make the difficult and dangerous entry into the Diesel Room to fight the fire and search for personnel. Visibility was almost nil because of the dense toxic smoke and because of his breathing equipment he continually became caught up and trapped in the cramped compartment. However without thought to his own safety he continued to search mostly by crawling on his hands and knees and feeling his way until he was satisfied that there was nobody left inside.

For the next two hours Middleton made repeated entries into the Diesel Compartment, accompanied by

successive teams of fresh civilian firemen to fight the fire. Because of the confined space, Middleton took charge of the firemen and led them in single file to the seat of the blaze, pushing the fire-fighting equipment ahead of him. After each incursion, he returned to give a lucid description of the situation to the Command. Eventually he was ordered to stop because of his exhaustion.

Middleton's gallant, selfless behaviour, and tenacity in performing his duty at great risk to himself was of the highest order.

Whitehall, London S.W.1.

18th January 1977.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct to the undermentioned:

Ordnance Electrical Artificer 1 David George PRITCHARD, D091819H.

Acting Ordnance Electrical Mechanician 1 David SMITH, D091446M.

Control Electrical Artificer 2 Raymond Thomas Frederick HADLOW, D107806U.

For their gallant and courageous actions when a serious fire broke out onboard HM Submarine WARSPITE on 2nd May 1976.

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