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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

HONOURS AND AWARDS

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
 THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1
 18th September 1979.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the George Medal to:

Able Seaman (S) Terence Patrick LOFTUS, D109327S.

On the morning of 15th February 1979 the Greek registered ship *MV Iris* sank during a gale some 30 miles west of Cape St. Vincent. The crew of 28 abandoned ship without being able to launch lifeboats and were soon scattered between large pieces of wreckage which were being tossed about in the sea. Two merchant ships arrived at the scene of the disaster shortly followed by H.M.S. *Jupiter* and all three ships began recovering survivors. Sea conditions were very rough with a Force 8 gale and a high swell causing H.M.S. *Jupiter* to roll violently and preventing the use of the ship's seaboat and helicopter.

The use of scrambling nets and lines with helicopter strops attached was unsuccessful as the men in the water were too weak to help themselves and did not understand what the strops were for. In addition, the men clinging to the nets were in danger of drowning by being repeatedly submerged as the ship rolled. It became clear that the only possible way of recovering the survivors was to send swimmers in to help them. This was a daunting prospect for the ratings concerned and in particular for the swimmer of the watch, Able Seaman LOFTUS. He was the first diver to attempt a rescue and as such he had to demonstrate that it was possible for a swimmer to rescue a man in the exceptionally severe conditions of wind and sea prevailing at the time.

On his first jump he was in constant danger of being entangled in the scrambling net and line to which a survivor was clinging grimly. LOFTUS struggled to place a helicopter strop over the man and despite the strong suction created by the ship's rapid drift and the severe rolling, which was causing the survivor to be submerged repeatedly, he succeeded in rescuing the man. After resting, LOFTUS

made a second jump and rescued another survivor. As he prepared to make his third jump he saw one of the survivors being sucked beneath the ship and large and dangerous pieces of wreckage being tossed about in the sea next to the group of men he was attempting to reach. Undaunted by what he had seen LOFTUS coolly picked his moment before jumping and effecting his third rescue. After another rest he made four consecutive jumps to recover the bodies of four dead seamen. He did this to spare the younger swimmers this gruesome task.

Able Seaman LOFTUS made in all seven rescue jumps into the sea in extremely dangerous conditions without regard to his own safety. His professional skill, selfless dedication, courage, outstanding stamina and fine example to the other swimmers was not only instrumental in saving lives but was also in the greatest traditions of the Service.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
 THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1
 18th September 1979.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of The Queen's Gallantry Medal to the undermentioned:

Seaman (S) Jason GARLICK, D166720S.

Able Seaman (R) Simon Wilson HUTT, D162257N.

Petty Officer (R) Norman WILLIAMS, D095538Y.

When H.M.S. *Jupiter* began recovering survivors from the stricken M.V. *Iris* on 15th February 1979 Seaman Garlick, Able Seaman Hutt and Petty Officer Williams all acted as swimmers of the watch.

Seaman Garlick was the second ship's diver to attempt a rescue in the very rough seas then prevailing. Although he could see the difficulties and dangers faced by Able Seaman Loftus, who was struggling to rescue the first survivor, Garlick nevertheless jumped into the sea with a life-line attached to him and attempted to rescue a second man. He became entangled in the scrambling net when the survivor he was rescuing was submerged by the rolling of the ship. Despite spraining his thumb and being in some