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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

HONOURS AND AWARDS

ARMY DEPARTMENT

Ministry of Defence,
Whitehall, London S.W.1.
20th May 1980.

(To be dated 6th May 1980)

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

23732027 Sergeant Ian ALLAN, Royal Military Police.
For his calm and courageous conduct after an explosion.

AIR FORCE DEPARTMENT

Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB
20th May 1980

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

Air Force Cross

Flight Lieutenant Robert Edwin NEVILLE (4232554),
Royal Air Force.

On the evening of 27th March 1980 Flight Lieutenant Neville was the duty captain on the Sea King Flight of No. 202 Squadron at Royal Air Force Boulmer. At 1800 hours a call was received from the Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Pitreavie Castle reporting that the accommodation platform "Alexander Kielland" had capsized in the Ekofisk oil field with over 200 people on board. Within eight minutes the standby aircraft was airborne and en route to the scene of the disaster, some 170 miles north-east of Boulmer. The weather deteriorated rapidly as the aircraft neared the search area, with low cloud, driving rain and winds gusting to over 55 knots. Flight Lieutenant Neville immediately set up a low level search pattern and, despite the very poor visibility, soon located a liferaft with 10 survivors on board. Initial attempts to

place the winchman onto the liferaft by means of the auxiliary hover trim were frustrated by the mountainous 30 feet waves. Flight Lieutenant Neville elected to maintain the hover himself under the direction of the winch operator and despite the appalling operating conditions all ten seamen were successfully recovered into the aircraft. After landing these survivors on an adjacent oil rig the captain went back to the search area and found a lifeboat by means of the locator beacon. The weather by now had deteriorated still further and it was necessary to carry out an automatic transition to the hover in order to make contact with the boat. The winchman was lowered and found 26 survivors but as none was injured, a surface vessel was homed in to the lifeboat and they were taken aboard. After nearly 6 hours operating in the area the helicopter was landed on a nearby oil rig and the crew was able to take a much deserved rest. The search was then resumed for a further period of three and a quarter hours. During the entire mission, in the most appalling conditions Flight Lieutenant Neville displayed the highest standards of flying skill and leadership of his crew. His actions throughout were in the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force.

Air Force Medal

Q1948964 Flight Sergeant Charles Michael YARWOOD,
Royal Air Force.

On the evening of 27th March 1980 Flight Sergeant Yarwood was the duty winchman of the stand-by Search and Rescue Sea King of No. 202 Squadron at Royal Air Force Boulmer. At 1800 hours the helicopter was tasked to investigate reports that the "Alexander Kielland", an accommodation platform in the Ekofisk oil field, had capsized in heavy weather. The platform, used as a floating hotel, was thought to have some 200 oil men on board and was situated 170 miles north-east of Boulmer. As the aircraft approached the area the weather deteriorated rapidly and by the time the search began the wind was gusting at more than 55 knots with heavy driving rain, low cloud and very poor visibility. A liferaft with 10 men on board was located but attempts to establish a hover with the auxiliary hover trim proved impossible due to the mountainous 30 feet high waves and the rapid

gyrations of the raft. However, the aircraft captain finally succeeded in establishing a hover on voice directions and Flight Sergeant Yarwood was lowered to the raft. Several attempts were made to place him onto the raft but these were frustrated by its rapid movement and Flight Sergeant Yarwood sustained severe bruising of his legs from being smashed against its side by the heavy seas. Undeterred, he volunteered to be placed in the water near the raft and then, with complete disregard for his own safety, detached himself from the hook, swam to the raft and climbed aboard. With the hi-line still connecting him with the aircraft he was able to recover the winch cable and assist the ten survivors to safety before himself being recovered to the aircraft. Having landed the survivors on a nearby oil rig the helicopter was returned to the search area and a further 26 men in a lifeboat were located. Although suffering from exhaustion and pain from the battering he had received Flight Sergeant Yarwood volunteered again to be winched down to attempt a rescue. After having satisfied himself that all in the lifeboat were uninjured he allowed himself to be winched back aboard the helicopter and the survivors were taken aboard a surface vessel. Flight Sergeant Yarwood was undeterred by the inherent

personal danger of winching in such hazardous conditions and displayed outstanding courage, professional skill and pertinacity in the course of a well-directed and successful air-sea rescue operation.

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air

Flight Lieutenant Michael Julian LAKEY (4232923),
Royal Air Force.

For his cool courage and outstanding professionalism shown when navigator of a Sea King helicopter engaged on search and rescue operations following the capsizing of the oil rig accommodation platform "Alexander Kielland" in the North Sea during the evening of 27th March 1980.

L0689177 Flight Sergeant John Kenneth MOODY,
Royal Air Force.

For his great pertinacity, skill and courage demonstrated when winch operator of a Sea King helicopter during the successful rescue of survivors following the capsizing of the oil rig accommodation platform "Alexander Kielland" in the North Sea in the evening of 27th March 1980.

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