No. 48703

SECOND SUPPLEMENT TO

The London Gazette

of Tuesday, 11th August 1981

Published by Authority

Registered as a Newspaper

TUESDAY, 11TH AUGUST 1981

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1

11th August 1981

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

F8073942 Corporal Michael PURVIS, Royal Air Force.

Corporal Purvis is employed at Royal Air Force Gibraltar as the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Aerial Section of the Electrical Engineering Flight. His post involves the servicing of the many radio aerials situated on the airfield and along the mountainous pinnacle of the Rock. On 11th December 1980 during a gale of unprecedented length in Gibraltar's meteorological history Corporal Purvis discovered that the rotatable log-periodic aerial situated on a very exposed point high on the spine of the Rock had been torn almost completely from its mounting. The aerial weighed four thousand pounds and was mounted horizontally on top of a thirty feet high lattice tower, projecting over a vertical drop of approximately one thousand three hundred feet to a closely packed fishing village on the sea shore below. On close examination Corporal Purvis found that, of the fourteen bolts which attached the aerial to its mounting in the centre of the tower, only two were still holding and they were damaged. Faced with the knowledge that if the aerial fell it would almost certainly land in the village beneath, Corporal Purvis immediately organised his team to secure the aerial. First, he cleared the immediate area of all except one person who was required to pass him securing straps. Then, undeterred by the danger that the aerial might fall at any time and being fully aware that the wind safety limit for climbing the tower was 15 knots, he scaled the tower in a gale of over 50 knots. Because of the high wind speeds, once at the top of the tower, Corporal Purvis had to secure himself to the structure thus greatly increasing the danger to himself if the aerial broke free, for he would then have been unable to jump clear. He secured the aerial by fixing it to the tower with three straps and, only when it was safe, did he allow other personnel into the area to assist with the final lashing down process. In climbing and securing the aerial mast, Corporal Purvis voluntarily placed himself in a position of grave mortal danger but, by his fearless act, he not only saved a very valuable piece of Service equipment, but also removed the imminent threat to civilian life and property. Corporal Purvis' actions were those of a very responsible and courageous man responding with selflessness and dedication in the highest traditions of the Service.

LONDON
Printed and published by HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE: 1981
PRINTED IN ENGLAND
Price 50p. net
ISBN 0 11 658703 2