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TUESDAY, 15TH MARCH 1988

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## HONOURS AND AWARDS

### AIR FORCE DEPARTMENT

Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB  
8th March 1988

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

#### AIR FORCE MEDAL

Sergeant Paul Douglas John HOLMES (H8260152) Royal Air Force

On Friday 13th November 1987, whilst taking part in Exercise PURPLE WARRIOR, Sergeant Holmes was junior crewman on a Chinook of No. 7 Squadron tasked to carry personnel and freight from Her Majesty's Ship *Ark Royal* in the north-west approaches to the Royal Aircraft Establishment West Freugh. With the aircraft lashed to the deck in extremely turbulent weather conditions and with rotors turning, both rear crewmen were detached from their safety harnesses to supervise loading, with the senior crewman on deck and Sergeant Holmes on the aircraft ramp. Suddenly, and without warning, as the relative wind changed, the rear of the Chinook lifted and to prevent an accident on deck the aircraft captain had no alternative but to make an emergency take-off, breaking the lashings and accelerating vertically upwards without the Automatic Flight Control System engaged. This resulted in severely oscillating unstable flight. An extremely perilous situation immediately arose in the aircraft because passengers, crewmen and freight were all unrestrained. Sergeant Holmes and the two others on

the open ramp were thrown onto their backs by the unexpected movement. Those inside the compartment seized one of them but Sergeant Holmes, seeing the remaining individual still on the very edge of the fully open ramp as the aircraft climbed away, immediately rushed to his aid. At this stage the aircraft was more than 100 feet above an extremely rough sea, but despite the severe buffeting from the turbulence and oscillations, Sergeant Holmes dragged the airman involved to safety and having done so set about securing freight and passengers for their unexpected flight.

Sergeant Holmes has very little experience on Chinooks and his performance throughout this sudden and frightening incident was highly professional and exceptionally courageous. His actions undoubtedly jeopardised his own life whilst saving that of his comrade. Sergeant Holmes' outstanding bravery was in the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force.

Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB  
8th March 1988

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

#### *Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air*

Squadron Leader Peter Quentin HALLETT (5202205) Royal Air Force

For his high standard of airmanship, and his skilful handling of an inherently unstable aircraft, after landing on HMS *Ark Royal* in extremely turbulent weather conditions on the 13th November 1987.

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