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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

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

24th July 1990

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

Petty Officer Aircrewman David Smith WALLACE, D130808C

On 28th October 1989, Petty Officer Aircrewman WALLACE was the diver in the Standby Search and Rescue crew of a Sea King helicopter of 771 Naval Air Squadron. The aircraft was scrambled to assist the duty Search and Rescue aircraft from 771 and 772 Squadrons, which were en-route to the assistance of the Pakistan Motor Vessel *Muree*.

On arrival the vessel, with 40 personnel on board, was found to be sinking by the bows in heavy seas. Wave heights in excess of 20 feet and winds gusting to 65 knots were causing the deck cargo of containers to break loose and fall overboard. Following the departure of the first two Sea Kings with 30 survivors Petty Officer WALLACE, in a situation requiring the utmost haste, was lowered to the after deck of the *Muree* to assist the Search and Rescue diver from the first Sea King, Petty Officer WRIGHT, in evacuating the last 10 crew members remaining on the stricken vessel. As the last 2 survivors were being winched clear WRIGHT and WALLACE heard a rumbling noise from inside the ship which then reared up at the stern and began to go under. With few other options open to them both men jumped from the stern from an estimated height of 90 feet into a debris strewn sea and swam hard to get clear of the ship. They were picked up by the third Sea King as the vessel disappeared beneath the waves.

Throughout this rapidly deteriorating situation, in appalling weather conditions, Petty Officer Aircrewman WALLACE and his fellow diver ensured the safe and expeditious rescue of the final 10 crew members of the *Muree* without any thought of risk to themselves. WALLACE'S most professional conduct and total disregard for his own safety were in the finest traditions of the Service.

Petty Officer Aircrewman Stephen William WRIGHT, D155244K

On Saturday 28th October 1989 a Search and Rescue aircraft from 771 Naval Air Squadron with Petty Officer Aircrewman WRIGHT, as the duty diver aboard, was scrambled to assist the Pakistan Merchant Vessel *Muree*. The vessel was sinking in heavy seas, winds were up to 65 knots and the deck cargo had broken loose and was falling overboard; the ship had 40 people on board. WRIGHT was lowered to the stern of the *Muree* and after assessing the situation he briefed and prepared the assembled passengers and crew for a hi-line rescue. Two women were winched first followed by 2 babies taken up in WRIGHT'S arms. A further 9 survivors were lifted before the aircraft departed leaving WRIGHT behind to assist winching another 17 survivors members into a second Sea King that had arrived on the scene.

WRIGHT was then joined by Petty Officer Aircrewman WALLACE who had been winched down from a third Sea King and together they achieved the safe recovery of the last 10 members of the *Muree*'s crew. As the last 2 survivors were being winched into the helicopter a rumbling noise was heard from inside the ship which then reared up at the stern and began to go under. Both men jumped from an estimated height of 90 feet into a debris strewn sea and swam hard to get clear of the ship before it disappeared beneath the waves.

For one and a half hours, in appalling weather conditions, Petty Officer Aircrewman WRIGHT remained on board the stricken vessel where his courage and firm leadership undoubtedly calmed frightened passengers and crew members and ultimately led to a complete and outstanding rescue.

After dropping off the survivors, WRIGHT'S aircraft was tasked again, this time to rescue personnel trapped on a cliff near Plymouth Sound. Despite sustaining an injury to his arm during the previous incident and suffering from exhaustion, WRIGHT successfully double lifted 2 Coast Guard personnel, 2 civilians and their dog to safety.

Petty Officer Aircrewman WRIGHT'S exceptional devotion to duty and professional conduct during both extremely hazardous incidents were in the finest traditions of the Service.

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