



SUPPLEMENT TO

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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

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

27th September 1991

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards of The Queen's Gallantry Medal and for the publication in the *London Gazette* of the names of those shown below as having received an expression of Commendation for Brave Conduct and Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air:

Awarded The Queen's Gallantry Medal

Chi-choi CHAN, Constable, Royal Hong Kong Police Force.

Kwok-wai CHENG, Sergeant, Royal Hong Kong Police Force.

On Saturday, 16th June 1990, at approximately 11 p.m. a cargo vessel reported that it was in difficulties north-east of the Nine Pin Group of Islands. The Marine Department Control Room alerted a police launch which set course for the vessel.

Sea conditions were extreme, waves of 20-30 feet were being experienced with winds gusting in the region of 40-50 knots; it was dark, and visibility was made worse by heavy rain. The master of the stricken vessel reported that his cargo had shifted causing a list but that as the ship was not taking in water he would await the arrival of a tug to provide assistance. The police launch, having reached the vessel, remained in close proximity. At about 2.30 on the Sunday morning, radio communication with the vessel was lost and through the thermal imagers on board the police launch, the crew of the vessel were seen to be lowering

lifeboats. Their attempts were unsuccessful and an SOS distress signal was flashed by torch light. As the rescue tug arrived to make preparations to take the stricken vessel into tow, the vessel capsized and crew members were seen jumping into the sea. Two more police launches were despatched to the area. The first police launch, with Constable Chan and Sergeant Cheng on board, moved in as close as possible and released two inflatable life rafts. Their launch was pitching and rolling through 30-40 degrees in the continuing hazardous conditions. Scrambling nets were the only viable means of rescue and these were deployed.

Constable Chan and Sergeant Cheng, with other officers, put on lines and safety harnesses to form rescue teams. Going over the side of the launch, holding on to the scrambling nets, they pulled survivors from the sea. Sergeant Cheng saw a sailor drifting about 20 metres from the launch. He was exhausted and unable to swim to the life raft or life line which had been thrown to him. Drifting cargo and floating debris were posing further danger to the sailor. Sergeant Cheng jumped into the heavy sea and dragged the sailor to the side of the launch where he was pulled aboard. From 3 a.m. to 4 a.m. Constable Chan and Sergeant Cheng continued the rescue operation with other members of the rescue team, during which a total of seven sailors were rescued.

At about 4 a.m. another sailor was spotted in difficulties and losing consciousness. The Sergeant and the Constable jumped into the sea to rescue the drowning sailor. They were guided to him by lookouts from the launches, as the height of the waves and adverse weather conditions made it difficult to locate him. Constable Chan managed to reach the man pulling him to the side of the launch. During the