

On 15th August 1991, during typhoon Fred, the oil rig barge DB29 with 195 personnel aboard capsized 75 nautical miles east-south-east of Hong Kong. Within an hour, 28 (Army Co-operation) Squadron based at Royal Air Force Sek Kong, Hong Kong, was tasked to generate as many Wessex helicopters as possible to assist in the rescue operation. Two aircraft were rapidly dispatched, but no winchman was immediately available to complete the crew required to launch a third helicopter.

Flight Lieutenant Boyland, a pilot who had served with 28 (Army Co-operation) Squadron since May 1991, without hesitation volunteered to act as winchman, even though he was untrained in this role, had no experience of fulfilling a winchman's duties while carrying out a rescue from the sea, and knew that the weather conditions were appalling. Accordingly, the third helicopter quickly took off. During a 2 hour sortie in severe turbulence, although suffering from continuous air sickness, Flight Lieutenant Boyland insisted that the winch operator teach him the basic techniques he would need to effect a rescue. However, unable to locate the incident because the navigation equipment had failed and because the visibility was often less than 100 metres in violent rain, the helicopter returned to Hong Kong to refuel.

Despite his poor physical condition through air sickness, Flight Lieutenant Boyland selflessly volunteered to participate in a second attempt to find the capsized barge. During this sortie a liferaft containing 5 survivors was located. On scene, the waves were some 50 feet high and the wind was gusting over 70 knots. Flight Lieutenant Boyland was lowered to the liferaft and in a 25 minute period succeeded in rescuing 4 men. Throughout, he was repeatedly submerged in the tremendous seas and became progressively weaker

through swallowing sea water, his worsening sickness, and his physical battle to effect successive rescues. He stopped only when he collapsed incapacitated in the aircraft cabin.

Throughout the 5 hour operation, Flight Lieutenant Boyland displayed determination, professionalism and bravery of the highest order.

## OVERSEAS AWARDS

### ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY AIR FORCE

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

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

Flight Lieutenant Frank James PLKINGTON Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force.

Flight Sergeant Edward Ho Dick-sang Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force.

Flight Sergeant David Arthur WALMSLEY Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force.

Sergeant Ross LAW Siu-hing Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force.

Sergeant Elton TANG Sing-chung Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force.

For their valuable services in the air on 15th August 1991, in the Search and Rescue operation during typhoon "Fred" involving the oil rig support barge DB29.

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