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HONOURS AND AWARDS

NAVY DEPARTMENT

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD
ST. JAMES'S PALACE, LONDON S.W.1

12th June 1993

THE QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Air Force Cross to the undermentioned in recognition of gallant and distinguished service during operations in the former Republic of Yugoslavia:

Air Force Cross

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (NAVY DEPARTMENT)

A.F.C.

Lieutenant Commander George William Alexander
WALLACE, Royal Navy.

Lieutenant Commander Wallace is the Commanding Officer of 845 Naval Air Squadron. On 24th March 1993 Lieutenant Commander Wallace was tasked to take three Sea King 4 Helicopters from a forward mounting base at Tuzla, in Muslim-held territory, across the front-line to Srebrenica, another Muslim enclave but one which was surrounded by Bosnian Serb forces and which had been the subject of repeated artillery, tank and small arms attack. His

mission was to assist in the evacuation of Muslim wounded, women and children from Srebrenica to Tuzla.

Despite many delays, caused by communications difficulties, the Bosnian Serb insistence that all aircraft be inspected on their soil, and the regular shelling of the town of Srebrenica and the landing site throughout the day, he remained cool, calm and patient. Finally, and in response to an urgent request to evacuate some casualties from the UN troops in place, he managed to fly into Srebrenica. The town appeared empty and there was no one at the landing site due to persistent attacks. After some moments on the ground, he again took off and circled Srebrenica trying to locate the casualty evacuation party. He was called in to hover beside the nearby telephone exchange building and had to conduct a 100-foot winching operation in extremely restricted and precarious circumstances. Despite intermittent shelling of the area, random anti-aircraft fire and alarms from the aircraft missile approach warning system, he remained in the hover for twelve minutes whilst five people, including one stretcher case, were pulled to safety. One further civilian casualty, a small girl, died before she could be rescued.

Throughout the mission, and during the sortie itself, Lieutenant Commander Wallace displayed, under most harrowing conditions, a calm and highly professional attitude. His flying skills and the courage he demonstrated throughout the day were a testament to this very capable and gallant officer and an inspiration to his subordinates.