

Kevin Norman WATTS, Branch Manager, Estate Agency

For services in securing the release of a kidnap victim. A senior negotiator with a firm of Estate Agents was kidnapped by a client who threatened her with a knife and chisel. She was held in a building for eight days—for most of the period bound, gagged, blindfolded and manacled to the floor, with cramped sleeping arrangements. The police feared for her safety, but having no indication of her whereabouts sought to use a sophisticated ransom demand to track down the kidnapper whom they suspected was mentally unstable and dangerous. The kidnapper demanded that Kevin Watts, a colleague of the victim, should deliver the ransom money. Despite the risks he agreed to do so and was coached by police on how to fulfil his courier role. He was aware that the police believed the kidnapper had previously killed another young woman and was made conscious of the danger he faced by being fitted with a bullet-proof vest. The handover of the ransom took place on a January evening when fog had reduced visibility to only a few yards. After a telephone call in mid afternoon, Mr Watts had to drive from his home to an area 150 miles away which he reached around 7 pm. There Mr Watts was directed around this totally unfamiliar area by means of telephone and typed messages from the kidnapper. The instructions had to be completed within strict time constraints in an isolated area, in circumstances of total uncertainty and a possibility of attacks on his person directly or by booby trap devices as he delivered the money. His brave actions secured the subsequent release of the victim.

Brian Compton WILLIAMS, Constable, Strathclyde Police

For services in attempting to detain a man armed with a gun. Following a number of robberies, police were summoned and followed a suspect to a nearby public house. On seeing the police officers, the man left and was chased on foot by Constable Williams. The man then stopped and pointed a gun at the constable's head. At this point a woman pedestrian shouted at the gunman not to shoot. With this the gunman turned, pointed the gun at her and fired, the bullet passing through both her legs. The gunman then ran off again with Constable Williams again giving chase. After a short distance the gunman stopped, turned and started advancing on Constable Williams pointing his gun at him which he then fired. The constable raised his hand to protect his face and the bullet struck his watch strap and lodged in his hand. The gunman then ran away still pursued by Constable Williams, who was by this time in pain and bleeding profusely from the bullet wound to his hand. Constable Williams lost the man during the chase but continued to search the area with other officers until taken to hospital for medical attention.

Roger Seymour WILLIS, Leading Firefighter (Retained), Cornwall County Fire Brigade

For services in rescuing two motorists trapped by flood water in their car. Severe weather had caused widespread flooding. A fire appliance was dispatched from the fire station in response to a call that persons were trapped in a car at danger from flood water. On arrival, the crew were confronted with a rapidly deteriorating situation. A motor car with two occupants had been swept off the road by a torrent of flood water from the river which had burst its banks and swollen to a depth of eight feet above the surrounding field level. The vehicle had been swept from the road to become trapped against trees and was being buffeted by the flow and pressure of water and was in danger of overturning. The motorists were holding on to the car through open doors but were rapidly running out of strength. Initially, the firefighters were swept away by the force of the current in repeated attempts to reach the casualties from downstream. Leading Firefighter Willis fought his way upstream above the trapped vehicle. Diving into the turbulent current he struck out for the car and, secured by a line to his colleagues, he was able to grab hold of the stricken vehicle as the current carried him past. From the comparative safety of the car roof, he assessed the position of the motorists and in the light of their failing physical condition decided to carry out an immediate rescue. Taking the male motorist, who was approaching unconsciousness, in a bear hug, Leading Firefighter Willis instructed his colleagues to pull them to safety. Fighting against the current and the cold water, he repeated the process for the second motorist.

John WOODCOCK, Reporter, National Newspaper

For services in apprehending a man with a sawn-off shotgun, Mr Woodcock was having a meal in a restaurant when a man entered with a sawn-off shotgun. The gunman ordered Mr Woodcock and other customers to leave. As he passed the gunman on the way out, Mr Woodcock grabbed the barrel of the shotgun with his left hand and the gunman with his right. The two men struggled for the gun which Mr Woodcock attempted to keep pointed towards the floor. The gun discharged and the gunman released his grip slightly, at which point Mr Woodcock took the gun from him. He held it out of reach and forced the gunman to leave the restaurant and to lie on the forecourt. Mr Woodcock then checked whether the gunman had any other weapon. Shortly afterwards the police arrived and arrested the gunman.