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## CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1  
14th June 1997

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards of the George Medal and 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 Bravery:

### *George Medal* G.M.

Miss Lisa Victoria POTTS, Nursery Nurse, St. Luke's Church of England School.

For services in saving the lives of a number of children from a man armed with a machete, despite being severely injured herself.

Whilst clearing away after a 'Teddy Bears Picnic', Miss Potts, a nursery nurse in charge of a class of some twenty 3½ to 4½ year olds, noticed a man walk into the school grounds. He was running across the grass outside the nursery play area but inside the school grounds. He stopped and attacked with a machete, a mother who was waiting to pick up her child from the nursery. The assailant then stepped over a low fence separating the nursery patio from the rest of the school grounds, and started to lash out indiscriminately at the children, moving towards Miss Potts and the children clustered around her. On seeing this, Miss Potts, with others, ushered and carried some of the now terrified and screaming children to the presumed safety of their classroom. Miss Potts was cut with the machete as she concentrated on getting the children around her to safety.

Miss Potts attempted to shut the classroom door behind her, but the assailant had his foot in the way, trying to gain entry.

Miss Potts pushed some of the children she had already brought inside into places she thought safe, but the assailant gained entry to the classroom and caught up with her, attacking her from behind with the machete causing deep wounds to her back and head. He then turned his attention to a child who was on the floor. As he struck the child with the machete, Miss Potts turned and, facing the assailant, grabbed the child to protect him from further harm, and was cut by a blow on the hand which severed a tendon. She then carried or pulled four other children along with her as she sought to get them to the safety of the main school entrance. The assailant

attacked Miss Potts again, cutting her arm and probably at the same time inflicting a serious blow which split her scalp, but she refused to release the children and free her arms to defend herself from her assailant. As Miss Potts ran out of the nursery the assailant gave up the attack and left the school. He was arrested by police the next day.

### *Queen's Gallantry Medal* Q.G.M.

Retained Firefighter, Stephen Paul GRIFFIN, deceased, the former Gwent Fire Brigade.

Retained Firefighter, Kevin Richard Thomas LANE, deceased, the former Gwent Fire Brigade.

For services in rescuing a child from a house fire.

In the early hours of the morning of 1 February 1996 a fire broke out in a mid-terraced house and the fire brigade was called. On arriving at the scene the fire officers found the house to be heavily smoke-logged.

The fire officers were told by the house holder, who had already rescued one child, that there was a second child trapped inside. Retained Firefighters Griffin and Lane entered the house, wearing breathing apparatus and carrying a hose, to search for the missing child. Within two minutes the two firefighters emerged from the house carrying the five year old child who appeared lifeless. The child was handed to a colleague and resuscitation was started.

A group of by-standers claimed that others were in the house. Despite the extreme intensity of the fire and the heavy smoke Retained Firefighters Griffin and Lane immediately re-entered the house and started to search. Shortly after this a 'delayed backdraught' caused the house to erupt in flame and overwhelmed the two firefighters who lost their lives despite rescue attempts.

Philip Ambrose LAWRENCE, (deceased) Headmaster, St George's Roman Catholic School.

For persisting in intervening to prevent injury to a pupil in a violent and seemingly premeditated gang attack.

Shortly after the end of lessons on Friday 8 December 1995, Mr Lawrence and a colleague were standing outside the main school gates, as usual, making sure that pupils dispersed and crossed the road safely. Mr Lawrence and his colleague noticed that pupils were not dispersing and that there was a group of youths, not pupils of the school, standing nearby. Some of the youths had scarves across their faces. It was clear to the pupils that a Triad gang was on the scene,

and would be prepared and armed for a fight. Pieces of wood, an iron bar and (seen only by a few) a knife, were noted.

Mr Lawrence's colleague then questioned a school pupil who was looking concerned. The pupil told him that some boys wanted to beat him up. The group of youths then started to move towards the pupil and in so doing passed Mr Lawrence. As they passed, Mr Lawrence asked one of them what was going on but his question was ignored.

The youths positioned themselves around the pupil who had been talking to the teacher. Suddenly two of the youths ran from behind, at the pupil, hitting him over the head with the objects they had been carrying. Then the pupil broke loose and ran past Mr Lawrence and across the main road, closely followed by the gang members and excited fellow pupils. Mr Lawrence tried to intervene but was unable to do so. He then pursued this crowd of pupils and gang members, catching up with one of the youths who had dropped back from the main group. There followed an exchange of words ending with the youth punching Mr Lawrence in the face and kicking him in the leg. Immediately after, the youth pulled out a knife from within his coat and stabbed Mr Lawrence, who died later in hospital.

Aaron OTOU-ACHEAMPONG, Civilian.

For services in taking the initiative to intercept, and then arrest, an armed robber following a Building Society robbery.

Mr Otu-Acheampong tried to enter a branch of his Building Society but found the door locked. He looked through the window and saw a woman lying on the floor being tended by a second woman, and a masked man holding a gun. Mr. Otu-Acheampong realised that the man was trying to rob the Building Society and despite being an untrained civilian he decided to wait outside and tackle the robber as he left. He decided that this approach would also minimise the risk for the customers and passers-by. As the robber left through the Society's entrance doors, waving the gun indiscriminately, Mr. Otu-Acheampong paused, and then grabbed the robber from behind in a bear-hug. This trapped the robber's arms at his sides preventing him from using the gun. During the ensuing, violent, struggle both men fell to the ground. A member of the public assisted by sitting on the robber allowing Mr. Otu-Acheampong to disarm the gunman. Mr. Otu-Acheampong and the member of the public continued to restrain the robber until the police arrived and arrested him. The police found the robber was also in possession of a large knife, which he may well have used had his gun (found later to be an imitation, but used in a "lifelike" way) failed to secure his objectives.

#### *Bar to the Queen's Gallantry Medal*

Patrick KIELTY, QGM, Sergeant, Metropolitan Police.

For services in arresting a man armed with a knife who had taken hostages.

Sergeant Kielty and a colleague were on patrol in a police van when they were informed that a man had taken a 5 year old girl hostage at knife point and had driven off in a hijacked car. Sergeant Kielty and his colleague caught up with the suspect car as it crashed into a parked van. The Kidnapper then approached the police van, from which the officers had dismounted, holding the hostage in one arm and making stabbing motions at her with the knife. The Kidnapper tried to drive away in the police van, but the van keys had been removed. At this point Sergeant Kielty tried to reason with the Kidnapper but he became more agitated and ran off down the street, still holding and threatening the child, and trying to open parked cars. Sergeant Kielty followed, as did his colleague who kept other units informed of the situation.

The Kidnapper stopped and again Sergeant Kielty and his colleague tried to reason with him. He then raised the knife as if to stab the hostage. Sergeant Kielty rushed forward and tackled him. During the struggle Sergeant Kielty narrowly escaped injury from the knife (which passed between his body and his upper arm), and the hostage managed to break free and run to safety. The Kidnapper also broke free and ran off, still holding the knife, closely followed by Sergeant Kielty. The Kidnapper then jumped through the window of a house door, and once inside he stabbed one of the occupants and took the other, a woman, hostage. He left the house with this second hostage at knife point, again trying doors of cars parked in the street.

By this time, Sergeant Kielty was aware of other officers close to him but he stayed in front trying to reason with the Kidnapper. Meanwhile, the Kidnapper approached another house and unsuccessfully tried to kick the door down. He then raised the knife as if to stab his hostage. At this point Sergeant Kielty rushed forward

and grabbed the hand that was holding the knife. He maintained this grip while other officers assisted in arresting the Kidnapper and releasing the hostage unharmed.

#### *Queen's Commendation for Bravery*

Richard Lionel BOWER, Civilian.

For services in arresting a Suspected robber armed with a knife and an iron bar.

Mr Bower, who suffers from disablement arising from fire injuries, was sitting waiting for a bus when he saw a young man crossing the road carrying a 12" long object in his hands. Immediately afterwards the keeper of a shop opposite came running from his premises, pointing to the youth and shouting that the man had robbed him.

Mr Bower immediately chased the Suspect down the road and into nearby gardens, where the Suspect climbed over a fence, closely followed by Mr Bower. As the Suspect tried to escape over another fence, Mr Bower caught up with him, and grabbed hold of him. During the ensuing violent struggle the Suspect dropped a 10 inch knife but hit Mr Bower on the head with an iron bar he was carrying. Although dazed, Mr Bower managed to restrain the Suspect until police arrived.

Mrs Mary Edith MacKinnan BLAKE, Teacher, Dunblane Primary School.

Mrs Eileen Mary HARRILD, Teacher, Dunblane Primary School.

Mrs Gwen MAYOR, (deceased) Teacher, Dunblane Primary School.

For bravery at Dunblane Primary School on 13 March 1996.

All three teachers were preparing some twenty five 5 and 6 year olds for a physical education class. A gunman entered the gymnasium and immediately fired volleys of shots from his automatic firearms at the teachers, seriously injuring two (Mrs Blake and Mrs Harrild) and causing the death of the third (Mrs Mayor). The gunman then started shooting indiscriminately at the children killing 15 of them and injuring 10 others. Mrs Blake and Mrs Harrild managed, despite their serious injuries, to crawl to a storage area where they stayed with and kept quiet a group of children who had also arrived in the storage area. In so doing they ensured that the gunman did not do further harm to the small group of children under their care.

Stephen Daniel COLLINS, Constable, Metropolitan Police.

For services in trying to arrest an armed suspect.

Constable Collins and a colleague were on patrol in their police vehicle when they stopped a car after seeing it apparently racing with another car. The Constables became suspicious as the replies to their questions became evasive. While his colleague continued to question the driver, Constable Collins started to search the vehicle. He then turned his attention to the passenger, who had moved to stand beside the car. Constable Collins began to search the passenger, who kept his right hand in his pocket, and asked him to remove his hand. The passenger was reluctant to do as asked, so Constable Collins pulled at his arm. In doing this he managed to pull the passenger's hand from his pocket revealing a gun.

Both officers immediately backed away. The suspect then fired twice towards Constable Collins, from about five and then 10-12 feet. He then started to fumble with the gun. On seeing this, Constable Collins rushed the suspect and during the ensuing struggle the gun was fired again at the Constable. The suspect then ran off closely followed by the driver of the car and by Constable Collins, with his colleague. After a short distance Constable Collins was asked if he had been hit by a bullet, and in response to his colleague's question he stopped. Realising then that he had a bullet wound to his chest, he stopped chasing the suspects who were followed by his colleague. Eventually the gunman was arrested by tracker dogs and armed police.

Tony John HARRISON, Firefighter, Humberside Fire Brigade.

David WOODLEY, Leading Firefighter, Humberside Fire Brigade.

For services in rescuing an RAF firefighter trapped in an oil tanker at sea.

On the evening of Wednesday, 27th March 1996, Humberside Fire Control received a call from HM Coastguard for assistance at an incident three and a half miles off Flamborough Head. Two Croatian crew members of an oil tanker had been trapped inside a sloop tank used to store residue and sludge after the main oil tanks on

board the vessel had been cleaned. The conditions inside the tank were toxic, and potentially explosive.

A team of four firefighters flew to the oil tanker by helicopter. They found that two members of the oil tanker's crew had been trapped in the slop tank of the vessel without respirators for at least two hours. An earlier rescue attempt by two RAF firefighters had failed, and one of the RAF men had been overcome by fumes and was still in the tank.

On arrival, Leading Firefighter Woodley entered the tank through the narrow deck hatch followed by Firefighter Harrison, both wearing breathing apparatus. They climbed down the five vertical access ladders which were slippery and covered in thick crude oil and sludge. They found the RAF casualty, who was incoherent due to the fumes, at the bottom of the tank by the fifth ladder. The bodies of the two crew members could be seen submerged in the sludge. Because of the confined space, Firefighter Harrison had to stand in the oil and sludge up to his waist—not knowing the depth of oil, and aware there were obstacles below the surface which made movement hazardous.

Leading Firefighter Woodley decided that a rescue attempt at this stage would be impractical and instructed Firefighter Harrison to return to the deck. Leading Firefighter Woodley remained with the RAF firefighter for a short period to provide reassurance but was forced to withdraw when his oxygen supply became depleted.

The weather conditions had deteriorated making the return climb for both firefighters extremely hazardous as the movement of the oil tanker necessitated climbing the ladders at very acute angles. Leading Firefighter Woodley, suffering from extreme exhaustion because of the climb, made it to the final landing where he was assisted to the deck by Firefighter Harrison.

After a brief rest, Leading Firefighter Woodley continued to help with the rescue operation and Firefighter Harrison took over the duties of Control Officer for the remainder of the incident. A fresh air supply was introduced into the tank, greatly improving the air supply to the RAF firefighter. A second breathing apparatus team from the brigade entered the tank and a rescue line and harness were lowered down to the RAF firefighter which he put on before being hauled to safety. The weather conditions had deteriorated to such an extent that, in consultation with a doctor, it was decided the bodies of the two Croatian crew members would be recovered when the vessel reached port. This operation eventually took over eight hours.

William Thomas HOUSTON, Constable, Royal Ulster Constabulary.

For bravery in Northern Ireland.

Alan Edward JARMAN, Sergeant, North Yorkshire Police. For attempting to save life at sea in dangerous conditions.

On the afternoon of Saturday 4th May 1996 two youths were playing on the slipway of a sea wall when one of them was struck by a

breaking wave and washed out to sea. Several members of the public attempted to throw a lifebelt to the youth but he was unable to reach it due to the rough sea. At this stage a Police Constable, who was on patrol duties, arrived at the scene. He decided it was too dangerous to enter the sea to rescue the youth and radioed for assistance.

Sergeant Jarman responded to the call. Waves were crashing against the sea wall, but he saw the youth, head down, some 15 metres from the wall. He decided to enter the sea from a nearby landing point and to try to bring the youth back to shore. He waded out to sea, taking a safety line with him, but found that the line was too short. He had let it go in order to reach the youth. The water was extremely cold and Sergeant Jarman could feel rocks being swept against his legs by the waves and tide. He managed to get within five metres of the youth but was pushed back by the force of the sea. Despite the rough and cold sea, Sergeant Jarman made several more attempts to reach the youth, but by this time he had been swept further out to sea. It was at this stage that Sergeant Jarman had to abandon his rescue attempt. Due to the ferocity of the waves he could not return to his entry point, but had to swim back with the tide to an open stretch of beach. A rescue helicopter and lifeboat then arrived but despite the best efforts of all involved, the youth drowned.

Stephen Donald LOWEY, Constable Royal Ulster Constabulary.

For bravery in Northern Ireland.

*Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air*

Friedrich MANSON, former Winchman, Bristow Helicopters Ltd.

For saving life at sea in hazardous conditions.

In the early hours of a winter's morning a search and rescue helicopter was scrambled to evacuate the crew of a Latvian ship that had run aground on rocks off the Shetland Isles. The weather conditions were not good and deteriorating with a 6 to 9 metre swell and winds of storm force 10. The ship was close to a 140 foot high cliff and broadside to the sea. The helicopter crew could see that the ship had started to sink, bow first.

Mr Manson, the winchman, was lowered onto the deck which was being constantly washed by the heavy seas that were breaking over the ship. As the first of the crew was lifted off the ship the bow went under and a wave washed over the deck dragging Mr Manson along the deck. Mr Manson went to the rear of the ship where he found a small railed gantry area from which it would be safer to winch, and during the next hour 25 crew members were winched to safety.

After landing the crew members, the helicopter returned to the ship, which had now broken clear of the rock and turned so that the stern was facing shore. Mr Manson then winched a further 31 crew members to safety.

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