

The rebel forces then turned their fire on the hotel Mr SCULLY, along with a British military officer who headed a training team attached to a battalion of the Nigerian army supporting the Government, then re-deployed the forces at the hotel to secure a more effective defence of the building. During a fierce gun battle lasting seven hours, when the hotel came under sustained rocket and rifle fire, Mr SCULLY with the authority of the British officer frequently left sheltered positions to inflict damage upon the rebel forces. Mr SCULLY's actions were crucial in slowing down the rebel advance, and allowed time for negotiations to take place through the mediation of a second British Army officer. These enabled for the safe evacuation of some 800 civilians from the hotel.

#### Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Julia Vanessa BROWN, Constable, Greater Manchester Police

For services in confronting and disarming a woman with a knife

Constable BROWN and two other colleagues were called to an incident involving a woman who was drunk and in an agitated state, and who was threatening (with a petrol can and matches in her hand) to burn down her neighbours' house. Constable BROWN and her colleagues restrained and managed to calm down the woman. Constable BROWN's colleagues were then called to another incident leaving her with the woman (then calm and lying on the ground).

The woman became agitated again, got up and returned to her house where she picked up a knife and threatened to kill herself. Constable BROWN managed to grab the woman's wrist and force her to let go of the knife. The woman then ran into the kitchen and picked up another knife, and walked into the rear garden. As Constable BROWN followed, trying to persuade the woman to drop the knife, the woman threatened the Constable, turned and stabbed her. Constable BROWN's body armour took the force of the strike (though she suffered a fractured rib) and during the ensuing violent struggle Constable BROWN managed to force the woman to release the knife. The woman struggled free and ran back into her house followed closely by Constable BROWN who wished to prevent another attack. At that stage Constable BROWN was joined by further officers who assisted her in the arrest of the woman.

Patrick Edward FOLEY, Firefighter, Avon Fire Brigade

For assisting in the rescue of a colleague who had collapsed in a burning building

On Sunday, 4th February 1996, the fire service were summoned to a fire at a supermarket. Two units arrived on the scene and it was clear by the seriousness of the fire that further units would be required. Firefighter FOLEY with a colleague were tasked to take a hosereel jet to suppress the fire as another Team laid a guideline. They entered the burning store, but withdrew when the heat grew intense. The second Team remained in the building, until ordered to evacuate by their control. At that point, as the Team neared the entry point, a massive and unexpected flashover occurred. As the effects of the flashover subsided it became clear that only one of the firefighters had managed to make their way to the entry point. This firefighter immediately seized a hosereel and re-entered the building to search for his colleague. Despite the risks, Firefighter FOLEY followed him and together they located the lost firefighter, and carried her to the entry point.

David HURST, Civilian

For services in the rescue of a swimmer in rough seas

Mr HURST was swimming in the sea off Borth, Aberystwyth when he heard cries for help. Being blind, he shouted to the person in difficulty to keep shouting so he could swim towards the sound of the voice. Taking account of the wind direction, Mr HURST was able to calculate that the person was some way further out to sea. Despite choppy seas and strong currents, and with only the man's cries to guide him, Mr HURST was able to locate the man and reassure him. Mr HURST then assisted the man, a surfer, back to shore where the coastguard and other members of the public gave assistance.

Alastair Gordon SOUTAR (deceased), Engineer, HM Customs Cutter SENTINEL

For action during the arrest of suspected drug smugglers at sea

Mr SOUTAR was an Engineer on board Her Majesty's Customs Cutter SENTINEL, at sea off the Moray Firth, and a member of a boarding party detailed to board a suspected drug smuggling vessel. There was a moderate sea running (sea and wind force 3 or 4) and the boarding party were equipped with body armour and protective splash down suits. At first no-one appeared to be on the deck of the suspect vessel, but as the Customs Cutter's rigid inflatable boat carrying Mr SOUTAR and his six colleagues got nearer to the moving vessel (a converted Oakley class lifeboat) smoke was seen coming

from the wheelhouse. This alerted the customs officers to the fact that the suspects were probably trying to destroy evidence. Mr SOUTAR took the lead in boarding the target vessel, where he was charged to work with a colleague to bring the moving vessel under control. As he opened one of the wheelhouse doors one suspect came out and was detained. Meanwhile the other suspect left the wheelhouse through a door on the other side and, recognising that the fire was becoming more serious, jumped overboard. During questioning the first suspect revealed that there were gas bottles at the seat of the fire and that the vessel was in danger of exploding.

The smuggler's boat was at that stage moving under its own power with its engine controls jammed. Mr SOUTAR, with others in the boarding party, decided to move the suspect towards the bow where the smoke was least. Because the inflatable was trying to rescue the man who had jumped overboard, he also instructed a colleague to call the Customs Cutter to come alongside to assist the boarding party and the detained smuggler to leave the burning target vessel. Mr SOUTAR then moved back down the port side and, despite the fire, tried again to get into the burning wheelhouse, though he was unsuccessful. He then moved forward and positioned himself with a colleague so that when the Customs Cutter came near he could throw a line to them. As the Cutter came alongside the moving boat, which was then turning to port, the smuggler's vessel veered into its path and the two boats collided forward of where Mr SOUTAR was positioned. This caused the Customs Cutter to 'ride up' over the suspect vessel and Mr SOUTAR, who had lost his balance and could not move away, was crushed between the two boats. Despite the assistance of his colleagues, Mr SOUTAR died of his injuries after being air lifted to hospital. The smuggler's vessel, despite continuing to burn and suffer from an explosion, was eventually towed to port, where a large quantity of drugs were discovered within the burnt out vessel.

From the moment he led the boarding party on to the burning vessel until the time he received his fatal injuries, Mr SOUTAR's action were those of a man determined to fulfil his responsibilities and to seek to extricate his colleagues (and their prisoner) from the danger posed by the fire.

Christopher Charles WILSON, Constable, Nottinghamshire Constabulary

For services in the arrest of three armed robbers

Constable WILSON was on patrol in a police vehicle when he was informed of an armed robbery and instructed to make his way to the scene. On the way he spotted the suspects' van and started to pursue it. During the chase the van accelerated and decelerated and at one point stopped, and then started to reverse towards Constable WILSON's vehicle. The chase continued until the suspect van stopped, blocking the road. Three suspects alighted from the van. One stood in the middle of the road aiming a shotgun towards Constable WILSON who had stopped some 100 yards away and had been joined by two colleagues on motorcycles and one in a panda car. The other two suspects then transferred some bags to another van which was parked in an adjacent lay-by. All three suspects then got into the second van and drove off, with the suspect with the shotgun sitting in the back pointing the gun out of the open tailgate at the pursuing police officers.

The pursuit continued at high speed, with Constable WILSON in front followed by his colleagues, shortly after they were joined by an armed response unit car. As the suspect van approached a sharp bend it was momentarily lost from Constable WILSON's sight. As Constable WILSON turned the corner, he saw the van in the middle of the road and an armed suspect running towards him. This man stopped, aimed a handgun directly at Constable WILSON and fired two shots. The first missed, but the second shot smashed the rear passenger window of Constable WILSON's vehicle. Constable WILSON immediately started to reverse, but was prevented from moving far by a police motorcycle. As the shots were fired, the police motorcyclist abandoned his motorcycle and joined Constable WILSON.

Shortly after the armed suspect returned to his van, which moved away. The pursuit continued, this time with the armed response unit car in front and Constable WILSON (and a motorcycle colleague, who had got into his car), behind. After a further high speed chase the suspects hijacked another car but crashed shortly after in a ditch. There one was arrested at the scene by the armed officers. The other two suspects ran into woods but were arrested a short time later.

Andrew John WRIGHT, Constable, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

For services in attempting to arrest a man armed with a knife