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## Honours and Awards

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### CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St James's Palace, London S.W.1

13th February 2001

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the following award of 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.

#### Queen's Gallantry Medal

Christopher Malone HOWES (Deceased). Civilian.

For his actions in negotiating the release of Mines Advisory Group personnel in a hostage situation in Cambodia.

Christopher Howes was a member of the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), working in Cambodia to clear landmines and unexploded ordnance, managing a de-mining team comprising more than 20 staff. On the morning of 26th March 1996, his team was preparing to start clearance work in a village in the province of Siem Reap. As they commenced their activities, a group of 30 armed Khmer Rouge guerrillas emerged from the nearby forest.

The team were surrounded and, under the threat of armed force, ordered to their vehicles. They were driven to the end of a dirt track where the vehicles were stripped of equipment. Mr. Howes was then told by the Khmer Rouge leader to return to MAG for ransom money.

Talking through his interpreter, he refused, pledging to remain with his team and urging their release. The situation was already dangerous and difficult, and tensions increased further when a number of de-miners

managed to escape. Mr. Howes continued his efforts to urge the guerrillas to release the other team members and eventually they agreed.

However, the guerrillas kept Mr. Howes and his interpreter hostage and two days later the interpreter was killed. Mr. Howes was taken to the Khmer Rouge headquarters where he was held for several days before being shot dead on the orders of the Khmer Rouge General.

#### Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Paul FLETCHER. Civilian.

For saving the life of a young boy who had fallen into a flooded river drain.

On 23rd January 1999, three young boys were playing on the bank of a stretch of water called the North Forty-Foot Drain in Boston, Lincolnshire. One of the boys fell in and his friends ran to get help as he was struggling to climb out of the water because of the steepness of the bank. On their way, the boys met a postman, Mr. Paul Fletcher, and he immediately followed them back towards a bridge that spanned the water. He climbed over the bridge railings and slid down the muddy, wet and steep bank to the water's edge, where he saw the boy floating face down and motionless in the water about 15 yards away. He shouted to the boys on the bridge to call for an ambulance and then entered the water, which was freezing cold. Despite being stunned by its coldness, he managed to swim towards the boy and turned him over to clear his face of the water. The boy was unconscious, his face was blue and he was not breathing. Mr. Fletcher put his arm around the boy's neck, and swam backwards with him towards the bank. He attempted to climb out of the water with the boy but could not get a hold on the slippery slope.