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Honours and Awards

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

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30 October 2001

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

Andrew James PENNINGTON (Deceased). Civilian.

For his actions in saving the life of a man who had been attacked by another man armed with a samurai sword.

On 28 January 2000, a Member of Parliament was holding a surgery for his constituents at his office in Cheltenham. Mr Andrew Pennington was assisting him when the receptionist showed a man into the office. The MP invited the man, who was wearing a full-length overcoat buttoned up to the neck, to sit down but the man declined and stood in front of the MP while he read a letter on which he had been asked to advise. A short conversation took place between them, whilst Mr Pennington looked on, but then the man began to talk nonsensically and without warning reached into his coat and drew out a long curved sword. He stood with the sword raised above his head in both hands, and as the MP stood up, lowered it, pointing the sword tip at the MP's midriff. At this point, Mr Pennington ran to the door of the office and called to the receptionist to get help.

Suddenly, the man lunged forward and thrust the sword at the MP who managed to deflect it with his left arm before grabbing the blade with both hands. The man

tried to pull the sword from the MP's grip and he fell face down onto the sofa with the sword beneath him. The man fell on top of him and struggled to wrestle the sword free without success. Mr Pennington then hit the man from behind and dragged him off the MP, telling the MP to get away. The MP managed to escape and ran out of the office to summon help, but the man got hold of the sword again. A violent struggle then took place in which Mr Pennington tried to restrain the man but was stabbed repeatedly with the sword and was fatally wounded. Mr Pennington died shortly afterwards from his injuries and the man was later arrested.

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Dominic Francis BUCK. Police Constable. Hertfordshire Constabulary.

Neil James SPENCER. Police Constable. Hertfordshire Constabulary.

Christopher John ROWLEY. Special Constable. Hertfordshire Constabulary.

For their actions in saving the life of a man who threatened to jump from a railway bridge into the path of an oncoming train.

On 3 January 2001, Police Constable Buck and Special Constable Rowley were called to an incident on a road bridge in Stevenage that spanned an electrified railway line. They saw a man standing on a narrow ledge on the parapet, about 40 feet above the railway line. After calling for assistance, they approached the man who told them that he was going to jump in front of the approaching train whose lights they could see. It was dark and raining and the steel parapet and ledge were wet and slippery, but

Constable Buck climbed over the wall and joined the man on the ledge, trying to reassure him as he edged closer. The man moved away, nearer to the line on which the train was approaching, so Constable Rowley climbed onto the ledge at the other end of the bridge. The man kept threatening to jump so, as Constable Rowley got closer, both officers grabbed his arms. He immediately struggled violently, but the officers maintained their hold on him and as the train neared the bridge, the man dropped his feet over the ledge, just above the live power cables, and continued to struggle sitting on the ledge with his feet dangling over the edge. Although he became momentarily calm as the train passed under the bridge, the man then began struggling again, and at one stage nearly escaped the officers' grip. Again, the officers managed to keep hold and pull him back.

Other officers then arrived one of whom, Police Constable Spencer, jumped onto the parapet and held the man's head and arm to restrain him further. Others officers held Constable Spencer's legs and Constables Buck and Rowley's arms for support. Constable Spencer began to talk to the man in an attempt to calm him down, but as a second train emerged from beneath the bridge he again struggled until finally calming down and listening to Constable Spencer, who persuaded him to stand up. As the man did so, the three officers managed to get him to safety.

Raymond COCHRANE. Civilian.

For rescuing a fellow passenger following the crash of a light aircraft.

On 1 June 2000, Mr Raymond Cochrane and another passenger boarded a light aircraft for a flight from Newmarket Race Course. As the aircraft took off smoke appeared from the right side of its fuselage. The pilot had difficulty controlling the aircraft, which veered off course and nose-dived before hitting the ground and somersaulting in the air before coming to rest. Immediately a severe fire broke out. Mr Cochrane and a fellow passenger were seated in the rear seats and as the fire took hold at the front of the aircraft, Mr Cochrane struggled to open the cabin door which had been buckled. Unable to do so, he managed to open a small baggage hatch behind the passenger seats and escape from the aircraft. Once outside, he assisted the passenger, who had a broken ankle, from the wreckage and moved him to a safe distance.

The aircraft was now engulfed in flames, but Mr Cochrane returned to try and help the pilot who was trapped in the cockpit. He was beaten back by the intensity of the fire, which caused burns to his face and hands, and had to abandon his rescue attempt.

Neil Haydn ROBERTS. Civilian.

For his actions in apprehending a man armed with a gun who had shot two people, and in detaining him until the arrival of police.

On 3 August 1998, Mr Neil Roberts, a Post Office investigator, accompanied by two colleagues, arrested a postman who was suspected of stealing a quantity of mail. They interviewed the man and he agreed to his home being searched. On arrival at the house, Mr Roberts and his colleagues made a search of the rooms. When Mr

Roberts entered the bedroom, he discovered 12 black bin bags and 25 cloth sacks full of mail. He called his colleagues and they began a detailed search during which they uncovered more mail and empty sacks. The man stood calmly in the doorway and, as Mr Roberts began to take some of the mail downstairs, he left the room.

When Mr Roberts returned to the bedroom, he went to the wardrobe next to the doorway, and began to empty out the mail packets that were stacked up inside. As his colleagues continued their search of other cupboards, the man appeared again and stood watching them. One of the investigators discovered a box of bullets in a drawer, and asked the man about them. Without warning, the man levelled a handgun, which he had concealed about him, and fired several shots in rapid succession at Mr Roberts' colleagues, fatally wounding one and seriously injuring the other. Mr Roberts, who had been out of view behind the wardrobe door, turned at the sound of gunfire and the man fired a shot at him. The bullet missed Mr Roberts, and he lunged forward and grabbed the hand holding the gun. A violent struggle took place as the man tried to turn his gun on Mr Roberts, and they stumbled out of the bedroom continuing the struggle at the top of the stairs. Mr Roberts managed to wrestle the gun away from the man and attempted to restrain him as they fought their way down the stairs.

In the hallway, he managed to pin the man to the ground and open the front door, calling for help. A passer by assisted him, phoned the emergency services, and stayed with Mr Roberts, who kept hold of the man until the arrival of the police. The man was arrested and later convicted of murder and attempted murder.

Lieutenant Colonel Murray Courtenay WHITESIDE. Army Air Corps.

James Kenneth INCHLEY. Civilian.

Mary INCHLEY. Civilian.

Victor Norman PARTRIDGE. Civilian.

For their actions following the crash of a helicopter in attempting to rescue an injured crewman.

On 18 May 1999, Lt Col Murray Whiteside (then Major) was Aircraft Commander in an Army Air Corps Lynx helicopter which was flying from Dishforth to RAF Odiham. Also on board were the flight pilot and two passengers. During the flight, the helicopter suffered an equipment failure and the pilot was forced to shut down one of the engines. Without warning, there was an explosion and the cabin filled with black acrid smoke obscuring all vision. As the pilot could not see, Lt Col Whiteside took the flight controls and, leaning out of the open cockpit window, attempted to land the aircraft. Though he had poor visibility, he managed to steer the helicopter clear of some houses before it hit the ground. The helicopter overturned several times on impact, shedding its main rotors and engine, and came to rest with the main cabin ablaze. The two passengers, who were thrown out of the aircraft on impact, received fatal injuries and died immediately. Lt Col Whiteside managed to release his safety harness and escape from the burning cockpit. A short distance from the aircraft he removed his helmet and gloves, which were smouldering, and then realised that he had been badly injured in the crash.

Despite this, he crawled back to the helicopter and attempted to rescue the pilot, who was trapped by his legs and struggling.

Mr James Inchley and his mother, Mrs Mary Inchley, had witnessed the crash and ran to where the wreckage lay. They could see Lt Col Whiteside trying to free the pilot, who was engulfed in flames and screaming for help, and ran to help him. Lt Col Whiteside then became overwhelmed by his injuries, and they pulled him away to a safe distance. Whilst Mrs Inchley stayed with him and tried to comfort him, Mr Inchley ran back and continued his attempt to free the pilot.

Mr Victor Partridge, a neighbour who had also witnessed the crash, then arrived and immediately ran to help Mr Inchley. Because of the heat of the blaze, they could only spend moments near the cockpit before moving away. Despite this, they persisted in their efforts to rescue the pilot, who was now unconscious, and after several attempts (during which they were again assisted by Mrs Inchley), they managed to free him from the wreckage. They moved the pilot to safety, but by this time he had died of his injuries. Mr Partridge, Mr Inchley and Mrs Inchley stayed with Lt Col Whiteside until the arrival of the emergency services. He later made a full recovery.

