

TfL Corporate Archives Research Guides: World War II 75th Anniversary Edition

Staff Acts of Bravery on the Home Front during WWII

So many staff, both on and off-duty, displayed great courage during WWII. Using original material from the Corporate Archives collections we highlight just a few...



Archive ref num: LT001768/001 U35555

During WWII, there were displays of great heroism. Many London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB) staff were awarded *the George Medal for gallantry*, not in the face of the enemy. Most of these acts of bravery were for rescuing civilians following bombing raids.

Bus Driver Earns George Medal

MEDALS for devotion to duty in air raids have been awarded to two London Transport drivers serving in the Army. They distinguished themselves by valuable work in a night air raid in Sheffield. They are: Cpl. A. G. Wisbey, R.A.S.C. (39), a Green Line driver at Epping Garage, awarded the George Medal.

Sergt. W. L. Eldridge, R.A.S.C. (36), who is a bus driver with Central Buses, Battersea Garage, awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division).

Wisbey led rescue parties and worked all night with disregard of his own danger; he freed people from a bombed house.

Eldridge spent the night putting out fire bombs and burrowing through wreckage to save people trapped.

A longer account of these men's deeds, and their portraits, will be published in *Pennyfare* next month.

Article from *Pennyfare*, the staff magazine, March 1941. Archive ref num: LT000030/078

Mr Ernest Price, a general hand from Middle Row garage rescued three women from the wreckage of a building, without considering the real danger to his own life from the presence of gas.

“Price, a slightly-built man of 48... seems strangle careless of personal risk. Always when there’s a raid, he tries to be first on the scene.”

Article from *Pennyfare*, the staff magazine, May 1941. Archive ref num: LT000030/078

Green Line driver Corporal Wisbey was awarded the George Medal, for working all night leading rescue parties freeing people from a bombed house, whilst Sergeant Eldridge was awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division) for putting out fire bombs and saving people trapped in wreckage.

A Garage Hand Saved 3 Women

FOR a second time the King has awarded the George Medal to a member of London Transport staff for bravery in civilian defence.

The recipient is Mr. Ernest Price, a general hand with Central Buses. He does night work at Middle Row Garage, North Kensington, parking buses as they come off service, but he earned the medal in circumstances quite outside London Transport and in his off-duty hours.

At 4 o'clock one morning he had been home from work an hour when, hearing an explosion, he cycled to the scene, a four-storey house in ruins, and went in with an A.R.P. post warden, Mr. A. H. Hollingdale. In the official words—

Hollingdale and Price managed to enter a wrecked building, and although there was a strong escape of coal gas they rescued two women. By that time they were themselves almost overcome by gas. They were warned not to go in again, but they re-entered the building and brought out another woman. They then made a third attempt, but were both on the verge of collapse and had to be removed to the open air.

The air raid was the 34th, says Mr. Price, in which he has given, or offered to give, help by rendering first aid or putting out fire. He has written it all down in a pocket book. By his own reckoning he has saved, or helped to save, nine lives.

Home Bombed, Pigeons Lost

He nearly lost his life in January. One day his house was bombed, his daughter was badly wounded and he lost everything, not least his stock of 24 racing pigeons.

Ernest Price, a slightly-built man of 48, has been with us 27 years, counting four with K.R.R.C. in the last war.

He seems strangely careless of personal risk. Always, when there's a raid, he tries to be first on the scene, *Pennyfare* learned in a chat. But he is eager to give credit to others. His work-mates have helped a lot, he says, but they look upon Price as a leader and follow him instinctively. Once when a bomb fell on a laundry four doors from his home, he tried to save four people trapped at the top. The stairs had gone, but they were saved by a fire-escape.

Middle Row Garage is proud of the honour Price has brought. So is the Royal Borough of Kensington, in which he has lived all his life. He has received written congratulations from the Council and is going to the Town Hall on May 27 to be publicly thanked for his gallantry.

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This account from March 1944 describes how Mrs Rosa Temple, a trolleybus conductor from Poplar Depot, rescued her husband from a fire bomb, drawing the admiration of her colleagues.

SHE TACKLED A BOMB

When a fire bomb pierced the bedroom ceiling of Mr. and Mrs. Temple's home in London, it fell on Mr. Temple and injured him severely. Quickly his wife seized the bomb, put it out of harm's way and ran for an ambulance. Mrs. Temple, as well as Mr. Temple, had to go and stay in hospital—her hands were so badly burnt.

The news, travelling, excited sympathy mixed with admiration at Poplar Depot, for Mrs. Rosa Temple is another of that force of married women whose hands are building victory. She is conducting a trolleybus of Poplar Depot.

Article from Pennyfare, the staff magazine, March 1944. Archive ref num: LT000030/078

Lengthman G. Grimwood volunteered to enter a crater to assist with the disposal of an unexploded bomb. His bravery was recognised by an officer of the Royal Engineers disposal squad.

Lengthman G. Grimwood (48), of Thornton Heath, department of Chief Engineer (Civil): Permanent Way (Railways) Section.



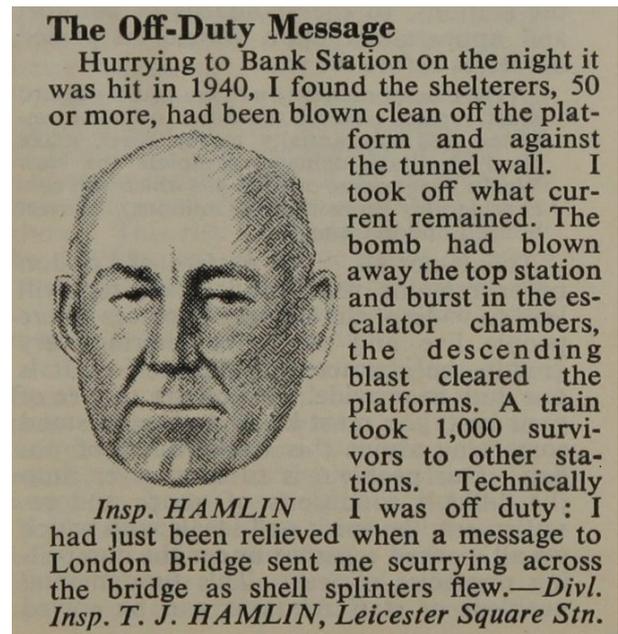
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After some bombing in the vicinity of Parsons Green there was an unexploded bomb in a deep crater. Grimwood volunteered to enter the crater. Next day an officer of an R.E. disposal squad arrived. Grimwood volunteered to do highly dangerous work. "His courage and cheerfulness were an example to all."
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Mr. GRIMWOOD, G.M.

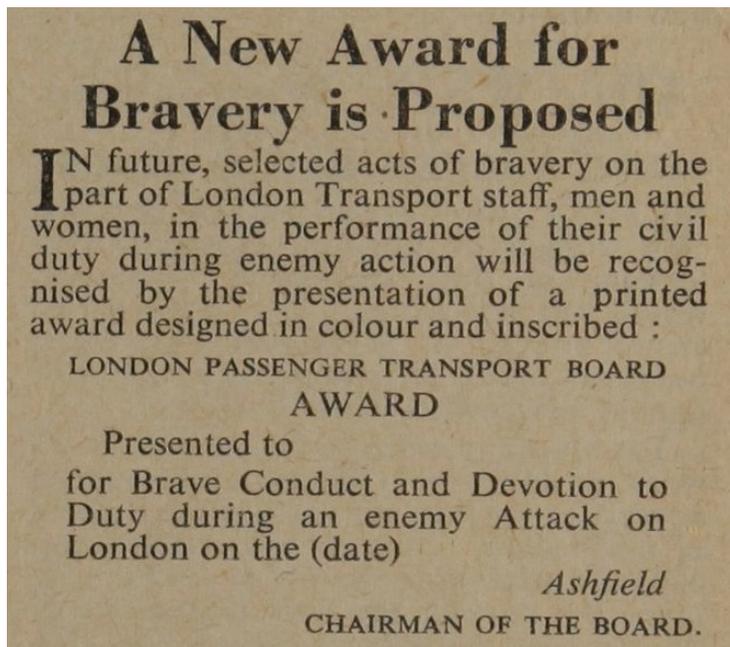
Article from Pennyfare, the staff magazine, March 1941. Archive ref num: LT000030/078

An off-duty London Transport Inspector arrived at Bank Station after it had been bombed in 1940 and helped to clear the platform of 1,000 survivors. His reminiscences were published in the staff magazine in August 1946.

“Technically I was off duty....
when a message to London
Bridge sent me scurrying across
the bridge as shell splinters
flew.”



Article from Pennyfare, the staff magazine, August 1946. Archive ref num: LT000030/078



Article from Pennyfare, the staff magazine, March 1942. Archive ref num: LT000030/078

The LPTB were so proud of the selflessness and loyalty displayed by their staff both on and off duty that they instituted their own medal –

The London Passenger Transport Award for Brave Conduct and Devotion to Duty during an enemy attack on London.

This story has been compiled using information in records at the Transport for London Corporate Archives. The Corporate Archives seeks to preserve and make accessible records, not to interpret them. A wider range of material is available for physical consultation. Email: CorporateArchives@tfl.gov.uk