

to attack a target in the Ruhr. During the attack the aircraft was intercepted by an enemy aircraft and sustained damage which rendered it impossible to release the flares. On arrival back at base the captain accomplished a successful emergency landing, but unfortunately some of the flares ignited. Ammunition began to explode and the aircraft was set alight and was in great danger of being blown up. Displaying complete disregard for his own safety, Flight Sergeant Couchman remained in the aircraft and assisted three members of the crew, two of whom were injured, to safety. In so doing he was twice thrown on to the flames when the floor collapsed, sustaining severe burns, but it was largely due to his courage and devotion to duty that his comrades were able to leave the aircraft safely.

937723 Flight Sergeant Peter William Hewitt, Royal Air Force.

In June, 1942, Flight Sergeant Hewitt was the 2nd pilot of a flying boat which crashed whilst alighting in a heavy swell, and sank. The crew were in shark-infested waters, 180 miles from land, with one rubber dinghy and four life belts. The captain of the aircraft was injured, and the dinghy would support only two people. Flight Sergeant Hewitt, finding that one of the crew was drowning, managed to get him on to the damaged dinghy and spent the whole of one night swimming alongside, holding the man's head out of the water, until he died. Even then Flight Sergeant Hewitt made strenuous efforts to effect resuscitations, to his own detriment and exhaustion. Later, when dinghies with food and water were dropped by an aircraft, Flight Sergeant Hewitt was the first to swim out to collect those within range. The crew were on the water for 70 hours before they were rescued, and it was largely due to the magnificent example of self-sacrifice and endurance of Flight Sergeant Hewitt and his cheerfulness in spite of the apparently hopeless situation, that only one of the crew was lost. When rescued he was in a far worse physical condition than his companions.

1206642 Flight Sergeant John Philp, Royal Air Force.

Can/R 73037 Sergeant George Kenneth Reardon, Royal Canadian Air Force.

912925 Sergeant Louis Victor Fossleitner, Royal Air Force.

Flight Sergeant Philp and Sergeants Reardon and Fossleitner were captain, front gunner and navigator respectively of an aircraft which attacked Munich one night in September, 1942. On the return flight the engineer reported that there would only be sufficient spare fuel to operate for 15 minutes on arrival at base. Flight Sergeant Philp therefore obtained permission to land at a nearer airfield. When nearing the airfield, however, one of the engines failed and it was necessary to descend on to the sea off the coast. Although the aircraft was kept level, it broke in four parts on impact with the water and these three airmen, together with the wireless operator and the mid upper gunner, were thrown into the sea. Flight Sergeant Philp, who is a strong swimmer, volunteered to swim to shore alone to get help. He abandoned this intention, however, as it was necessary to help the mid-upper gunner, and in company with Sergeant Reardon, started to swim to shore, taking the mid-upper gunner with them. They were picked up by a fishing boat after swimming for 3½ hours, but unfortunately the gunner was found to be dead. In the meantime, Sergeant Fossleitner, although badly shaken, had volunteered to remain behind on one of the wings and support the wireless operator, whose spine was fractured. He supported him for 2½ hours, until eventually both were picked up by an Air/Sea Rescue Launch. The courage and fortitude displayed by Flight Sergeant Philp and Sergeants Reardon and Fossleitner were of the highest order.

1379591 Sergeant Eric Wade, Royal Air Force.

One night in September, 1942, Sergeant Wade was taxiing an aircraft, prior to taking off, when an aircraft crashed on the flare path and burst into flames. Three fuel tanks exploded, Verey cartridges and ammunition commenced to detonate and there was a danger of a fourth petrol tank exploding. Sergeant Wade unhesitatingly entered the blazing fuselage and, finding the wireless operator in a dazed condition, helped him to safety just before the remaining petrol tank exploded and

the fuselage collapsed. Sergeant Wade's prompt and gallant action undoubtedly saved the wireless operator's life.

1101543 Corporal Stanley Banks, Royal Air Force.

Corporal Banks was second coxswain on a High Speed Launch on 19th August, 1942. He showed great coolness under fire and after the crew abandoned ship he swam around encouraging them and on at least two occasions inflated the life jackets of members of the crew who were too exhausted to help themselves. Corporal Banks has been in air/sea rescue launches since February, 1941, and has always been one of the keenest airmen in his unit.

Can/R. 107072 Leading Aircraftman Howard Roy Carter, Royal Canadian Air Force.

One night in September, 1942, an aircraft struck a stores hut on an airfield and burst into flames. Leading Aircraftman Carter and another airman who were working near by hastened to the scene of the crash and on arrival found that the perspex of the observer's astrodome was broken. Despite the fact that the front of the aircraft was burning fiercely and the remaining petrol tanks were likely to explode, Carter climbed through the hole in the perspex in an endeavour to rescue the observer who was in the middle of the aircraft and lying across the ammunition tanks. He had some difficulty in raising the observer as a cord of the latter's helmet was wound round his face and caught by a projection in the aircraft, but Carter succeeded in freeing his comrade and in getting him under the astrodome. The other airman had, in the meantime, broken away pieces of the perspex, and with his assistance Carter lifted the observer out of the aircraft just as the ammunition began to explode. His courageous action undoubtedly saved the observer's life.

1331108 Leading Aircraftman Albert Dargue, Royal Air Force.

Leading Aircraftman Dargue was Nursing Orderly on a High Speed Launch during the combined operations on 19th August, 1942. In spite of wounds, he endeavoured to carry out first-aid to the wounded until he was picked up in a seriously wounded condition. The courage and valuable services rendered by Leading Aircraftman Dargue are typical of the high qualities displayed by the nursing orderlies, who have carried out hazardous operations in High Speed Launches which play an essential part in air/sea rescue.

543864 Leading Aircraftman Arthur John Henry Hale, Royal Air Force.

1211303 Leading Aircraftman Stephen Albert Stepto, Royal Air Force.

Leading Aircraftmen Hale and Stepto have been employed in an airfield clearance party at Malta for several months. They have both performed their duties with the greatest zeal, often displaying complete disregard for their personal safety when clearing runways while heavy raids on the airfield have been in progress. They have set a magnificent example.

1003857 Leading Aircraftman William James Hitchcock, Royal Air Force.

In May, 1942, a Wellington aircraft crashed in flames on a landing ground and the occupants were killed. Leading Aircraftman Hitchcock displayed outstanding courage in removing most of the bodies from the blazing wreckage. Again, in August, 1942, a Kittyhawk aircraft crashed in flames on the same landing ground. Leading Aircraftman Hitchcock rushed from the fire tender with a hose, disappeared into the flames and shortly reappeared carrying the body of the pilot. With the assistance of another member of the crew, he managed to get the body clear of the burning wreckage. Leading Aircraftman Hitchcock has displayed the greatest courage and devotion to duty.

1169787 Leading Aircraftman Clifford James Jenkins, Royal Air Force.

1331128 Aircraftman 1st Class George Hogg Poppleton, Royal Air Force.

These airmen are nursing orderlies, who have always displayed the utmost courage and devotion to duty. One evening in October, 1942, they were on duty on an airfield with their ambulance during a heavy air attack on Malta, when they