

campaign in the Western Desert. Since the fighting at El Alamein, Lieutenant-Colonel Loftus has taken part in 35 sorties; displaying great skill and brilliant leadership throughout. By his personal example he has imbued a fine fighting spirit throughout the wing which has been responsible for many destructive attacks on the enemy's ground forces. Lieutenant-Colonel Loftus has destroyed 3 enemy aircraft.

Squadron Leader Ronald Bain THOMSON (90370), Auxiliary Air Force, No. 172 Squadron.

During recent anti-submarine operations, this officer has achieved several successes. Towards the end of March, 1943, he successfully attacked a U-boat and, 3 days later he accomplished a similar feat. On the latter occasion he pressed home his attack in the face of heavy opposing fire, straddling the U-boat with his depth charges. One night in April, 1943, Squadron Leader Thomson successfully attacked an enemy submarine with depth charges and, some 20 minutes later he attacked another one with machine-gun fire. This officer has displayed exceptional skill and devotion to duty, setting an inspiring example to the squadron he commands.

Acting Squadron Leader John Ronald URWIN-MANN, D.F.C. (42281), No. 126 Squadron.

Within the past 6 months, whilst operating from Malta this officer has completed a large number of sorties, involving attacks on factories, warehouses, port installations, power stations and airfields in Sicily and nearby enemy islands. On 1 occasion he led a formation which attacked an airfield and destroyed many aircraft on the ground; Squadron Leader Urwin-Mann also obtained a hit on a petrol installation, causing a violent explosion and a large fire. Another of his successes was the destruction of a portion of the main railway line during a sortie at Gela in January, 1943. During the same operation, Squadron Leader Urwin-Mann engaged a Messerschmitt 210, shooting away its starboard engine. By his great skill and inspiring leadership this officer has raised his squadron to a high pitch of fighting efficiency.

*Distinguished Service Order.*

Pilot Officer Raymond John HOPKINS (129481), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 466 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

*Distinguished Flying Cross.*

Flying Officer Reginald Francis CLAYTON (121139), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 466 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

*Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (flying).*

846405 Sergeant Edward Francis HICKS, Auxiliary Air Force, No. 466 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

*Distinguished Flying Medal.*

1126195 Sergeant Frederick Charles BLAIR, No. 466 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

In April, 1943, Pilot Officer Hopkins, Flying Officer Clayton and Sergeants Hicks and Blair were air bomber, navigator, captain and wireless operator respectively of an aircraft detailed to attack a target in the Ruhr. Over Germany the aircraft was attacked by an enemy fighter. The first burst of fire from the attacker fatally injured the rear gunner and wounded the air bomber, navigator and wireless operator. The fighter made a second attack but Sergeant Hicks avoided its gunfire by turning steeply under the enemy aircraft which was not seen again. Although the hydraulic and brake systems of the bomber were damaged, causing the wheels to drop down and the bomb doors to open, the crew decided to continue their mission. Pilot Officer Hopkins, the air bomber, although suffering from a compound fracture of the arm and, at times, only retaining consciousness with great difficulty, displayed unsurpassed determination by directing his pilot to the target and bombing it successfully. On the return flight, Pilot Officer Hopkins, Flying Officer Clayton and Sergeant Blair laboured for more than 2 hours to assist the mortally wounded rear gunner, extricating him from his turret and administering morphia; some of their efforts were made whilst flying at 15,000 feet and without oxygen. Sergeant Hicks eventually flew the damaged aircraft to an airfield in this country, where he effected a landing without the aid of flaps. These members of aircraft crew displayed great courage, fortitude and determination in most hazardous circumstances.

*Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross.*

Acting Squadron Leader Ian Radnor STEPHENS, D.F.C. (81915), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 162 Squadron.

This officer has completed 72 operational missions. One night in March, 1943, his aircraft was subjected to a series of attacks by an enemy fighter. Although much damage was sustained and the rear gunner killed, Squadron Leader Stephens resolutely held course until his purpose was accomplished. Displaying great skill he flew the damaged aircraft safely to base. Squadron Leader Stephens displayed great courage and devotion to duty in the execution of a hazardous task.

Flying Officer Nevil Everard REEVES, D.F.C. (110797), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 89 Squadron.

This officer is a most skilful and courageous pilot. In operations in the Middle East he has displayed exceptional keenness and great powers of endurance. Flying Officer Reeves has destroyed 9 enemy aircraft at night.

Warrant Officer Arthur Alexander O'LEARY, D.F.C., D.F.M. (630959), No. 89 Squadron.

Warrant Officer O'Leary is an observer of exceptional merit. He has invariably displayed great courage and keenness and has taken part in the destruction of 14 enemy aircraft at night.

*Distinguished Flying Cross.*

Flight Lieutenant Victor Charles LOVELL (85649), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 89 Squadron.

This officer has completed much operational flying and has displayed courage, keenness and devotion to duty throughout. Whilst operating from Malta he has undertaken numerous sorties over enemy territory. In other operations he has destroyed 3 enemy aircraft.

Acting Flight Lieutenant James Stewart FRAME (N.Z.41982), Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 221 Squadron.

This officer has completed 52 sorties, including numerous successful shipping reconnaissances. One of these in October, 1942, enabled a formation to make a successful attack on a convoy of merchant vessels and their escort. During a flight in February, 1943, he located 4 separate convoys. In spite of fierce opposition from escorting destroyers, Flight Lieutenant Frame shadowed the convoys which were later attacked by following aircraft. In April, 1943, he was detailed for a shipping search in the Trapani/Palermo area and located a convoy of 4 merchant ships escorted by 6 destroyers and 5 other vessels. Despite heavy fire from the convoy, Flight Lieutenant Frame shadowed and reported the position of the convoys which were subsequently attacked successfully. This officer has displayed outstanding skill and great courage, and rendered most valuable service.

Acting Flight Lieutenant Thomas Sidney LEA (109093), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (since missing), No. 77 Squadron.

One night in April, 1943, this officer captained an aircraft detailed to attack Frankfurt. Whilst still many miles from the target, on the outward flight, 1 of the engines in the aircraft became unserviceable. In spite of this, Flight Lieutenant Lea continued to the target and pressed home his attack. Whilst over the target area the bomber was hit in the wings, fuselage and astro-dome by anti-aircraft fire. Displaying great skill, Flight Lieutenant Lea flew the damaged bomber back to this country. In the face of adverse circumstances, this officer displayed great courage and devotion to duty. On other occasions his fine airmanship has ensured the safe return of his aircraft in difficult circumstances.

Acting Flight Lieutenant Ian Hardy Robertson SHAND (80102), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 145 Squadron.

This officer has taken part in 100 sorties. During a recent flight he flew the leading aircraft of a section in support of ground forces. South of El Hamma, 12 enemy aircraft were encountered and engaged. In the ensuing combats, Flight Lieutenant Shand's aircraft was attacked by 8 enemy aircraft. Displaying great skill and resolution he fought his way clear and in so doing shot down 1 of the attackers, although his own aircraft was hit in many places and temporarily went out of control. Flight Lieutenant Shand succeeded in regaining control, however, and flew