

hip. Despite his injuries he dragged a wounded gunner from his gun turret and dressed his wounds. Only when his work was finished did he mention the fact that he himself was wounded. The calmness and courage of this airman were of the highest order and he set a fine example to others.

918736 Corporal Kenneth Batten Bassett-Thomson, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

1485611 Leading Aircraftman Stanley Goodacre, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

In June 1944, these airmen were working on an airfield when a Wellington aircraft, in an attempt to make a forced landing, crashed outside the airfield and burst into flames. They immediately ran to the scene and, by the time they arrived the flames were spreading towards the pilot's cockpit. Ammunition was exploding in the central turret. The pilot was unconscious and trapped inside the aircraft. Corporal Bassett-Thomson and a civilian assisted Leading Aircraftman Goodacre to climb on to the wing in an effort to reach the pilot. Leading Aircraftman Goodacre then saw a break in the perspex and, thrusting his head and shoulders through, he was able to seize the unconscious man and, twisting him round, he freed him. He then took off his parachute harness. Meanwhile, Corporal Bassett-Thomson had smashed a hole in the side of the cockpit. Leading Aircraftman Goodacre was able to lift the pilot out through this hole to Corporal Bassett-Thomson and the civilian, both of whom dragged him clear. As soon as this had been done the petrol tanks exploded and the aircraft became completely enveloped in flames. The presence of mind and outstanding courage of these airmen, who acted with total disregard for their own safety, was most praiseworthy.

1563144 Leading Aircraftman Robert Sadler Alexander, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

631449 Aircraftman 1st Class Robert Walter Chapman, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

In April, 1944, a refueller, containing about 600 gallons of aviation fuel, caught fire whilst alongside a Catalina aircraft. An attempt was made to put out the fire and so save the aircraft from catching alight. The above airmen were in the party which went alongside the refueller in the marine tender to make this attempt but it was found impossible to subdue the fire as the refueller was red hot and the fuel blazed again as soon as the extinguishers had been expended. An attempt to save the aircraft was then made by trying to tow the refueller away. It was fastened to a buoy, however, and a line had to be taken from the marine tender to the refueller which, when pulled, moved the refueller about 5 or 6 feet from the aircraft. Alexander and Chapman dived through this space into the water to disconnect the cable securing the refueller to the buoy but had to abandon their efforts as the heat from the red hot sides of the refueller was too great. These two airmen finally made an attempt to set the aircraft adrift. They dived and managed to unshackle the Catalina from the buoy; it was then towed to safety. Both airmen showed considerable courage in dangerous circumstances. The aircraft which might have caught fire, carried depth charges and had just been refuelled, facts of which they were aware.

625825 Leading Aircraftman John Judge, Royal Air Force.

One night in March, 1944, a Beaufighter aircraft crashed on take-off and burst into flames. The pilot was killed. Aircraftman Judge, a member of the airfield crash party, rendered sterling services by assisting to break into the rear of the fuselage, and climbing forward in an endeavour to free the observer. He was unable to free the latter but kept him sprayed with water. Ultimately the rescue party, working from the outside, were able to cut their way through and extricate the observer. This airman's action undoubtedly helped to save the observer's life. During the whole of his efforts, the aircraft was blazing with cannon and .303 ammunition exploding in all directions.

1576927 Leading Aircraftman Desmond Arthur Wilkinson, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Leading Aircraftman Wilkinson was a member of the crew of a high speed launch standing by for rescue work at Anzio in April, 1944. At about noon a pilot was seen to abandon his aircraft and fall into the sea. The launch im-

mediately proceeded to the rescue. A very heavy sea was running with waves about 10 feet high. When the pilot was seen it looked as though the attempt at rescue would have to be abandoned as none but an exceptionally strong swimmer could have faced the water and the launch could not get close enough to be of any use. Leading Aircraftman Wilkinson, however, volunteered to jump overboard and attempt to bring the pilot in. At great personal danger, he dived into the heavy sea with the end of a heaving line and, with its aid, succeeded in bringing the pilot aboard. Leading Aircraftman Wilkinson then applied artificial respiration all the way back to port but unfortunately the pilot succumbed. The bravery and devotion to duty displayed by Leading Aircraftman Wilkinson were of a very high standard.

#### *Air Ministry, 20th October, 1944.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy:—

#### *Bar to Distinguished Service Order.*

Acting Group Captain Peter Guy WYKEHAM-BARNES, D.S.O., D.F.C., R.A.F.

This officer has displayed the highest qualities of skill, gallantry and devotion to duty. He is a masterly leader whose good judgment and undoubted tactical ability have been reflected in the operational efficiency of the squadrons he commands. Since the landing in Northern France the squadrons have completed very many sorties and have achieved much success. Group Captain Wykeham-Barnes has participated in many of these missions, especially the more difficult of the assignments, and throughout his example has inspired all.

#### *Distinguished Service Order.*

Acting Wing Commander Walter Thomas BROOKS (39932), R.A.F.O., 635 Sqn.

In August, 1944, Wing Commander Brooks was detailed to attack, in daylight, an oil installation in Hamburg. In spite of fierce anti-aircraft defences, the attack was carried out with great accuracy. Wing Commander Brooks has raised the efficiency of the squadron to a very high standard. He has the complete confidence of his crew and the good results achieved by them have been due to his inspiring leadership.

Acting Wing Commander George Clinton KEEFER, D.F.C. (Can/J.5022), R.C.A.F.

This officer has completed many sorties since being awarded a bar to the Distinguished Flying Cross and his record is outstanding. Within the past few months he has led large formations of aircraft on air operations during which 40 enemy aircraft have been destroyed. The successes obtained reflect the greatest credit on the skill, gallantry and resolution of Wing Commander Keefer. This officer has been responsible for the destruction of 8 hostile aircraft.

#### *Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross.*

Acting Squadron Leader James Gillies BENSON, D.F.C. (81365), R.A.F.V.R., 157 Sqn.

Squadron Leader Benson has completed a large number of sorties. He has been responsible for the destruction of at least five enemy aircraft and six flying bombs; he has also effectively attacked several locomotives and supply trucks. This officer has shown a fine fighting spirit and his gallantry and determination have been exceptional.

Acting Squadron Leader John Christopher WELLS, D.F.C. (45883), R.A.F., 609 Sqn.

Squadron Leader Wells has led the squadron and, on other occasions, larger formations of aircraft in many attacks on difficult targets. He has displayed the highest standard of skill and resolution and his leadership has been most inspiring. Among his achievements, Squadron Leader Wells has destroyed 6 enemy aircraft.

Flight Lieutenant Maurice Henry PINCHES, D.F.C. (49207), R.A.F., 122 Sqn.

Flight Lieutenant Pinches has now destroyed four more enemy aircraft and damaged several others. He continues to display a fine fighting spirit and great gallantry.