

to re-enter the bedroom by means of a ladder which had been brought to the scene. After the rescuers had removed the rubble which had fallen on the victims from the burning roof and collapsed walls, the 2 old people were found. They were then lowered down the ladder to helpers on the ground. In the meantime the girl, who had been previously helped out of the house went into a blazing cow-shed in an endeavour to release the cattle. Leading Aircraftman Bannister had come upon the scene in the crash tender and, seeing her danger, he went into the shed and led her to safety, releasing some of the animals himself at the same time. Leading Aircraftman Bannister next entered the farm house, which was by now well alight, to attempt to rescue the other occupants. He groped his way up the partly demolished and obstructed stairs and, in spite of the smoke and flames, found a bed, but as the bed was covered with debris, he was unable to find anyone there. He then climbed back over the stairway into another bedroom, which he searched, also without success. As he left the room, the remains of the burning roof caved in. Leading Aircraftman Bannister then proceeded to help fight the fire with the crew of the crash tender. Leading Aircraftmen Bannister, Robb and Fox, by their courage, set a fine example to all those who were present at the incident.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal
(Military Division).*

1331525 Flight Sergeant Philip Henry Thornton CLAY, D.F.M., R.A.F.V.R.

During the morning of 1st January, 1945, the airfield from which 130 Squadron was operating was attacked by enemy aircraft, resulting in an R.A.F. aircraft catching fire. Flight Sergeant Clay, with complete disregard for his own safety and whilst the airfield was still being attacked, taxied two other aircraft away thus saving them from certain destruction. Ammunition from the burning aircraft was exploding at the time. He then directed the fire tender crew in their fire fighting operations and, by his efforts, over 200 gallons of petrol were saved. Flight Sergeant Clay set a fine example of courage and devotion to duty.

1540329 Sergeant James DONE, R.A.F.V.R.

Sergeant Done was the rear gunner of a Wellington aircraft which crashed and caught fire whilst engaged on a cross-country flight one night in January, 1945. He was thrown in his turret some distance from the blazing aircraft. Although suffering from shock and lacerations of the head, he extricated himself with difficulty and hurried to the assistance of the other members of the crew. Despite the heat and the danger of exploding ammunition and flash bombs Sergeant Done managed to extricate the wireless operator and the mid-upper gunner but the intense fire made any efforts to rescue the remainder of the crew impossible. Sergeant Done made the wireless operator comfortable and then ran for nearly two miles down a cart track to obtain help, but the wireless operator died before medical aid arrived. Sergeant Done acted with courage and initiative, showing complete disregard for personal safety in going to the rescue of his comrades.

985314 Leading Aircraftman Alexander Gray HERON, R.A.F.

On 1st January, 1945, after enemy aircraft had attacked an airfield, Leading Aircraftman Heron observing an Anson aircraft on fire, proceeded at once to the scene with an extinguisher and played the foam into the flames. Very soon he noticed an airman inside the aircraft with his head on some burning parachutes. Leading Aircraftman Heron immediately dashed into the flames and dragged the severely burnt airman away from the aircraft. He then hailed a passing ambulance and had his comrade taken to sick quarters. The injured airman died the next day as the result of extensive burns and wounds he had received from enemy cannon fire. Leading Aircraftman Heron showed coolness and resourcefulness in his endeavour to fight the flames and a complete disregard for his personal safety in entering the aircraft to rescue his comrade, knowing that the fire might spread to the petrol tanks whilst he was engaged on his work of rescue.

1416276 Leading Aircraftman Eric Edwin Charles WEEKES, R.A.F.V.R.

In January, 1945, a crippled B.17 aircraft crashed into the hangars in which this airman was working and commenced to burn. Three members of the crew escaped from the aircraft and warned bystanders that there were ammunition and bombs on board. Leading Aircraftman Weekes, in spite of exploding ammunition rescued an unconscious member of the crew who was lying near the burning aircraft. He then returned and rescued another member who was lying unconscious inside the aircraft. Only when the fire gained hold beyond control and it was seen that the bomb load was liable to explode did this airman seek shelter. The bombs exploded two minutes later and razed the hangars to the ground. Leading Aircraftman Weekes set a high standard of bravery and devotion to duty.

1592504 Aircraftman 2nd Class Philip Richard Howard GILBANKS, R.A.F.V.R.

One evening in October, 1944, a Beaufighter aircraft crashed immediately after take-off and burst into flames. Aircraftman Gilbanks ran to the scene and entered the burning wreckage to rescue the pilot who was unconscious. He freed the pilot from his flying equipment and tore away obstructions. Then, with the aid of another airman who had arrived, he extricated the pilot and carried him to a place of safety. The pilot of the aircraft owes his life to the prompt action of Aircraftman Gilbanks in entering the blazing wreckage with complete disregard of his personal safety and knowing that the fuel tanks were liable to explode at any time. They did explode shortly after the pilot was dragged clear.

Air Ministry, 3rd July, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations:—

Distinguished Service Order.

Acting Wing Commander Charles Vivian WINN, D.F.C. (40586), R.A.F., 141 Sqn.

Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross.

Flight Lieutenant Ray Amherst Winckworth SCOTT, D.F.C. (47501), R.A.F., 141 Sqn.

As pilot and navigator respectively, these officers participated in an attack, by a small formation of aircraft, against the airfield at Munich-Neubibberb. The operation, which had been carefully planned, was brilliantly executed. Hangars and other buildings on the airfield were set on fire and much other damage was caused. By their skill, gallantry and determination, Wing Commander Winn and Flight Lieutenant Scott played a good part in the success achieved. These officers have a fine record of achievement and have set a splendid example to all.

Distinguished Service Order.

Flying Officer Angus Chessell BELFORD (Aus.427891), R.A.A.F., 463 (R.A.A.F.) Sqn.

In March, 1945, this officer was pilot and captain of an aircraft detailed to attack an oil refinery at Bohlen. When over the target, the aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire. The starboard aileron was shot away, the rear spar was almost severed, while one of the petrol tanks was blown out of the wing. A large hole was torn in the fuselage. The elevators, rudders and fins were also hit. The aircraft rolled over to starboard out of control. Although Flying Officer Belford warned his crew to be ready to abandon, he remained at the controls. Much height was lost, but this resolute pilot finally succeeded in regaining a measure of control. He thereupon decided to try to fly the crippled aircraft home. Sometime later, he became aware that two members of his crew had been badly wounded. Flying Officer Belford then altered course for an airfield in allied territory where he made a successful landing under circumstances of great difficulty at the second attempt. On this sortie, Flying Officer Belford displayed the highest qualities of skill, superb captaincy and exceptional resolution. He has completed very many operational missions and throughout his devotion to duty has been unswerving.