

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS  
OF KNIGHTHOOD.*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.**2nd July, 1946.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointment to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire and the award of the British Empire Medal (Military Division) to the undermentioned:—

*To be an Additional Member of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order:—*

Warrant Officer Harold NORTHRUP (348320), Royal Air Force.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division):—*

364791 Flight Sergeant Alfred Bertram Charles FROST, Royal Air Force, No. 298 Squadron.

On the 9th August, 1945, a Halifax aircraft, loaded with passengers and freight, crashed into a dispersed aircraft at Royal Air Force Station, Raipur. Both aircraft immediately caught fire. Warrant Officer Northrop promptly organised a rescue party and, although handicapped by the lack of fire fighting equipment he hacked his way into the burning fuselage to extricate the injured. Flight Sergeant Frost also forced his way inside. Despite the intense heat and imminent danger of exploding petrol tanks, they both managed to extricate some of the trapped occupants, making several entries on this errand of mercy. They did not desist in their efforts until all the crew and passengers were accounted for. Warrant Officer Northrop and Flight Sergeant Frost displayed exemplary courage and devotion to duty of the highest order and their actions were the means of saving valuable lives.

*British Empire Medal (Military Division).*

575210 Flight Sergeant Frank Leslie THOMSI, Royal Air Force.

Flight Sergeant Thomsit was parachuted into Java in September, 1945. He frequently acted in the capacity of an officer when all Dutch officers were either confined to camp or thrown into jail. At great personal risk, he undertook journeys through enemy territory and effected the evacuation of many repatriated allied prisoners of war and internees. In addition to this, Flight Sergeant Thomsit maintained wireless communication between Java and Ceylon. Throughout a long and dangerous period this non-commissioned officer has displayed consistent courage and outstanding devotion to duty.

613592 Sergeant Frederick John CURGENVEN, Royal Air Force, No. 2744 Squadron, Royal Air Force Regiment.

From 14th March to 24th April, 1945, Sergeant Curgenven was in charge of a detachment operating with the 2nd Polish Corps on the East bank of the Senio river. He rendered outstanding service in siting, laying and maintaining, under enemy fire, ground to air landmarks as navigational aids to heavy, medium and fighter bomber aircraft. This non-commissioned officer did excellent work in support of the ground forces.

Can/R. 136975 Sergeant (now Pilot Officer) Jean Louis Nazaire WARREN, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 434 Squadron.

Sergeant Warren was a member of the crew of a Halifax bomber which was shot down over Cologne in November, 1943. He got clear of the burning wreckage and hid in a haystack for the night. In the morning he left his hiding place and walked across fields most of the day, sleeping in the woods at night. He was so weak as a result of wounds and bruises sustained when the aircraft crashed, that he eventually went to a farm and gave himself up. He was imprisoned in Dulag Luft at Wetzlar and sent on to Stalag IVB at Muhlberg. On 17th March, 1944, Sergeant Warren made his first attempt to escape by joining a party of French prisoners going out for supplies. When the party reached the stores he broke away and went to a cemetery where, by pre-arrangement, he was to have met a Canadian airman who had previously escaped. On arrival, Sergeant Warren learnt that the other airman had been recaptured and the guards had been reinforced. As he had neither food nor maps, Sergeant Warren decided to return to the camp

and await a more favourable opportunity. He regained the camp undetected. On 1st May, 1944, Sergeant Warren made a further attempt using the same method as before. He met an R.A.F. officer and both successfully evaded the search parties and guards for five days. Four other escapers soon joined them and all managed to get on a train carrying rolls of paper to Holland. On arrival in Holland the party split up, and Sergeant Warren and one companion travelled north until they made contact with the Dutch underground movement at Borne. They stayed for five weeks and then moved on to Nijverdal, owing to the activities of the Germans. Early in August, 1944, Sergeant Warren moved to Zwolle and hid in a boat until the end of the month when he was given shelter in a castle near Hattem. The German search parties were very active, but he successfully evaded them and eventually reached Gorssel, where he remained for eight weeks. Of this period, six weeks were spent hiding in a cave under a pigsty, in company with two Poles and a Dutchman. The Germans made a surprise search and the members of the party were ultimately arrested. After brutal treatment, they were taken to the Landwach prison. Although Sergeant Warren produced his R.A.F. identity discs, he was treated as a "terrorist" and badly manhandled during interrogation, after which he was put in a cell measuring 12 ft. x 6 ft. with 13 others. For three weeks they remained in the cell, no one being allowed out for any purpose. Later he was taken to an empty house for interrogation and further brutal treatment was carried out. Eventually Sergeant Warren was moved to Oxelhof, where conditions were even worse. On 1st February, 1945, he and 93 others were put into two box-cars and sent to Germany. During the journey some of the party prised open a window of the truck and made an attempt to escape, but the guards saw them and opened fire. Sergeant Warren succeeded in getting away and evading capture by walking all night, through water waist-high. The next evening he made contact with an underground organisation, and was taken to Lobith. The next night an attempt to cross the Rhine was made but those who tried had to return to the starting point owing to strong enemy opposition. The party was then taken to a farm by a Dutch Nurse and given shelter. On the 22nd February, 1945, the Germans ordered all farms to be evacuated, so Sergeant Warren and some others posed as members of the farmer's family and moved with them. Later he posed as a Dutch policeman in order to prevent being taken again. He continued to evade capture until liberated by British Forces in April, 1945.

1671326 Leading Aircraftman Sydney FAIRLEY, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 67005 A.M.E.S.

This airman was a Radar operator of No. 6041 A.M.E.S. from 10th August to 10th December, 1941, engaged in locating enemy mortar and transport positions, during the battles of the Gothic Line. His unit was constantly under shell fire for 3-4 months, being as close as 1,000 yards to the front line. Leading Aircraftman Fairley was always keen and operationally efficient and set an excellent example to those around him.

1900312 Aircraftman, 1st Class, William MILLS, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 17 Operational Training Unit

On 9th October, 1945, a 500 gallon petrol bowser (with its tractor) was being refilled at the main petrol installation when some spilt petrol became ignited, setting fire to the bowser. Those who were engaged in refilling the bowser, fearing an explosion, immediately jumped clear. Aircraftman, 1st Class, Mills arrived at this time, driving another tractor and bowser. Realising the seriousness of the situation, he forthwith drove his bowser out of reach of the fire. He then ran to the blazing bowser which was a mass of flames. He unhesitatingly got on to the tractor, started up the engine and, in spite of intense heat and the risk of an explosion, drove the burning bowser away from the main installation. This airman displayed great courage and complete disregard for his own safety. His prompt action and outstanding devotion to duty averted a serious fire which undoubtedly would have cost life and inflicted considerable damage to government property.