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TUESDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER 1963

**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
 THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD**

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1.

17th September 1963

THE QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the British Empire Medal for Gallantry (Military Division) to the undermentioned:

576567 Chief Technician Bernard Joseph William Wicks, Royal Air Force.

Chief Technician Wicks joined No. 543 Squadron as an Aircraft Servicing Chief in January 1961, and has since flown with Squadron Aircraft to many parts of the world. On 26th February 1963, Chief Technician Wicks was detailed to fly with his crew, in a Valiant Aircraft, to Palisadoes, Jamaica, to complete a survey commitment over British Honduras. On the morning of 7th March 1963, the Captain was carrying out a normal engine starting procedure, when an electrical fire developed in the upper servicing bay. This bay is reached via a hatch and a vertical tunnel above the nose wheel and is a dark and confined compartment. It is also in close proximity to the fuel tanks. Chief Technician Wicks, who was on duty forward of No. 3 Engine, immediately warned the Captain and then, without hesitation, and in spite of the danger, proceeded to enter the compartment to investigate. On climbing into the compartment he was confronted with dense black smoke, acrid fumes and an intense area of flames in the vicinity of the starter panel. At first his attempts to extinguish the flames were unsuccessful but, with complete disregard for his own safety, and in spite of acute physical discomfort, he entered this confined and enclosed space three times, although he was fully aware that the area was bounded by full fuel tanks and also housed high pressure oxygen storage cylinders and hydraulic pipes. He eventually succeeded in subduing the fire with a C.O.₂ extinguisher before losing consciousness and being assisted out of the bay by other members of the crew. An hour later, after the airport fire tender had flooded the compartment with C.O.₂ as a precautionary measure, Chief Technician Wicks had recovered sufficiently to ensure personally that the aircraft was rendered completely safe electrically. Despite the fact that he had been rendered unconscious by his efforts, he reassumed his responsibilities immediately he recovered and maintained a vigilant watch over his aircraft until he felt it was safe to open the bomb doors and disconnect the batteries. There is no doubt that Chief Technician Wicks's prompt and courageous reaction to this emergency was primarily responsible for saving a valuable aircraft. In fighting this fire, under conditions which would have deterred many a trained fireman, Chief Technician Wicks showed great

resourcefulness, energy, bravery and conspicuous devotion to duty, in keeping with the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force.

AIR MINISTRY

17th September 1963.

ROYAL AIR FORCE

GENERAL DUTIES BRANCH

Appointment to commission (permanent)

As Acting Pilot Officers (General List) :

Flight Cadet David Howard JACKSON (608318).
 6th Aug. 1963.

Cadet Navigator David Anthony WILDSMITH
 (4231873). 9th Aug. 1963.

*Appointment to commission (permanent) (D.E.C.(A))
 As Acting Pilot Officers (Supplementary List) :*

Cadet Pilots

9th Aug. 1963

Rodney ALFORD (4231881).

Royston William ALDERTON (4231864).

Clive COWIE (4231925).

Timothy James FEAR (4231898).

David Watson Montgomery KENNEDY (4231927).

Philip John RODGERS (4231938).

William Peter SWASH (4203051).

Michael Robert TANNER (685991).

Mansell Christopher WARD (4231876).

Colin John Middleton WILCOCK (5200409).

Cadet Navigators

9th Aug. 1963

Brian Percy Trevor JAMES (4231930).

Andrew JOHNSTONE (4231924).

Peter Sidney MOSS (4231926).

Rowland Beresford SMITH (4231827).

Richard John Carey VOUSDEN (4231915).

Air Electronics Cadet Keith Albert Richard
 KNIGHT (685677). 9th Aug. 1963.

Appointment to commission (permanent) (D.E.C.(B))

As Acting Pilot Officers (Supplementary List) :

Cadet Pilots

9th Aug. 1963

Frederick Peter BRYANT (4231856).

Gerald Laurence BRYANT (4231931).

Robert Keith CRAIGEN (5200217).

Neil Vaughan EVANS (4231920).

John Charles Sherlock LANG (4231862).

Walter John PARKER (4231911).

Edward John SOUTH, L.L.B. (4231929).