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HONOURS AND AWARDS

AIR FORCE DEPARTMENT

Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

24th January 1984

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the following award:

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air

Flight Lieutenant (now Squadron Leader) David Warwick GALE (423304) Royal Air Force.

For his gallantry on 12th September 1982, when as Captain of a United States Air Force C141B Star Lifter aircraft he experienced a major engine failure immediately after take-off. The number 3 engine exploded with such force that the large engine cowlings were ripped from their mountings and struck the wing flaps, causing them to jam in the take-off position. The explosion caused severe damage to the right fuselage and underwing areas, as well as damaging the number 4 engine.

Flight Lieutenant Gale took immediate and effective action. He levelled the heavily loaded C141B at 200 feet above ground level to increase airspeed, and manoeuvred the badly damaged aircraft away from the heavily populated area beneath the climb-out lane. He elected to return to the short runway at Ramstein rather than risk the delay inherent in a diversion to the longer runway at Frankfurt, fully aware that the heavily laden C141B would need 7,500 feet of the 8,000 runway at Ramstein in which to stop.

By his courage and coolness in flying the aircraft and directing his crew, this officer was responsible for the safe recovery of 80 passengers, the large cargo, and his aircraft.

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