



FIFTH SUPPLEMENT

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ROYAL AIR FORCE.

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

Distinguished Service Order.

Acting Squadron Leader Maurice Michael STEPHENS, D.F.C. (33522), No. 80 Squadron.

In December, 1941, this officer led a bombing and machine-gun attack on enemy mechanical transport in the Acroma area. Following the attack, Squadron Leader Stephens observed the fighter escort in combat with a force of enemy fighters, but, whilst attempting to participate in the engagement, his aircraft was severely damaged by an enemy fighter pilot whose cannon fire exploded the starboard petrol tank which, with the oil tank, burst into flames. The same burst of fire wounded Squadron Leader Stephens in both feet and blew out the starboard side of the aircraft's cockpit. Squadron Leader Stephens then prepared to abandon aircraft but, when half-way out of the cockpit, he observed an enemy aircraft fly past him. He immediately regained his seat and shot down the enemy aircraft. Squadron Leader Stephens finally left his crippled aircraft by parachute and landed safely on the ground where he beat out the flames from his burning clothing. Although he had landed within 300 yards of the enemy's lines, Squadron Leader Stephens succeeded in regaining our own territory within three-quarters of an hour. Throughout, this officer displayed great courage and devotion to duty. Previously, Squadron Leader Stephens led his squadron on operations which were of the

greatest value during the battle for Tobruk. His leadership and example proved an inspiration.

Distinguished Flying Cross.

Acting Squadron Leader Sidney LINNARD (40179), No. 274 Squadron.

This officer has shown himself to be an exceptionally resolute leader. In December, 1941, he led the squadron against a force of 15 Junkers 87's escorted by 16 fighter aircraft. The engagement resulted in the loss of 5 enemy aircraft while the remainder were dispersed. Two days later, Squadron Leader Linnard led his squadron as part of a wing escort to a formation of bombers detailed to attack enemy columns between El Adem and Sidi Rezegh. During the flight, some 30 enemy fighters were encountered but, under the skilful leadership of Squadron Leader Linnard, his squadron provided protection for the bombers for some time and, when the enemy finally attacked, 3 of their aircraft were shot down and many others damaged. Squadron Leader Linnard has participated in operational flying over a long period, including the campaigns in Greece and Syria, and has always shown courage and skill.

Major Malcolm Stephen OSLER (102867), South African Air Force, No. 1 (S.A.A.F.) Squadron.

This officer has displayed exceptional skill and leadership as squadron commander during the present campaign in Cyrenaica. In December, 1941, whilst on an operational flight, Major Osler and the pilot of another aircraft became involved in combat with a large force of enemy fighters and bombers. Despite the odds, Major Osler at once attacked and the section shot down 3 of the enemy's aircraft. Major Osler has destroyed 7 enemy aircraft.