

644403 Corporal Charles Edward Casey, Royal Air Force.

In April, 1942, a Henley aircraft was forced to alight on the sea some 800 yards from the shore. The aircraft turned over on to its back on alighting and the dinghy was lost. One member of the crew was apparently unable to swim and, supported by his life jacket, was soon in an exhausted condition some two or three hundred yards out. Corporal Casey swam out towards the airman and, when he had nearly reached him, an uninflated dinghy was dropped nearby from an aircraft. Corporal Casey swam to the dinghy but, not knowing how to inflate it, was compelled to abandon it. He then swam on to the airman who by now had ceased to show any signs of life. Corporal Casey persisted in his rescue efforts however and was later joined by another airman who had swum to his assistance. Between them they were able to tow the unconscious airman towards the shore. Despite strenuous efforts against the strong currents, the attempt proved almost beyond their strength and it was only with the further assistance of an officer that their unfortunate comrade was brought to the shore. The attempt to save his life proved unsuccessful but Corporal Casey took a very great risk in going to his assistance on a stretch of coast notorious for dangerous currents, and showed a high example of gallantry.

996888 Corporal John Fergusson, Royal Air Force.
89301 Corporal Arthur Edward Gwynne Roderick, Royal Air Force.

1426815 Aircraftman Second Class Henry Alfred Simpson, Royal Air Force.

In April, 1942, an Oxford aircraft which was taking off collided with another and immediately caught fire. It was extensively damaged and was broken in two just in front of the door, thus completely cutting off the retreat from that exit. The pilot was unable to move, however, as he was rendered unconscious by the crash. The petrol tanks of both aircraft were pierced and the escaping petrol which ignited immediately enveloped the whole of the aircraft. Despite the fierceness of the fire Corporals Fergusson and Roderick and Aircraftman Simpson climbed on to the wing of the aircraft and, with their bare hands, broke open the window. Their efforts to rescue the pilot were greatly handicapped as he was strapped in the machine and wearing a jacket-type parachute harness which was attached to his seat type parachute. Nevertheless these airmen succeeded in extricating him and undoubtedly saved his life by their prompt and gallant action.

*Air Ministry.
28th July, 1942.*

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.

Wing Commander Tristram Barnard De La Poer BERESFORD, D.F.C. (33156).

This officer continues to display skill and leadership of a high standard. He has led his wing in numerous sorties many of which have been as escort to our bombers. One day in June, 1942, he intercepted a formation of enemy bombers and personally shot down one of them and shared in the destruction of another. The masterly leadership and keenness displayed by Wing Commander Beresford have set an example of the highest order.

Acting Wing Commander Howard Clive MAYERS, D.F.C. (77976), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Wing Commander Mayers has commanded a wing since April, 1942. He is an expert on bombing and machine gun attacks, whilst his tactical knowledge has contributed much to the success of long range fighter operations. On two occasions in May, 1942, this officer led a formation in attacks on aircraft bringing supplies to the enemy and destroyed many of them. Wing Commander Mayers has displayed gallantry and great devotion to duty in the direction of recent intensive operations.

Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross.

Squadron Leader Osgood Villiers HANBURY, D.F.C. (81357), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 260 Squadron.

This officer continues to display outstanding skill, courage and fine leadership. Under his leadership his squadron has inflicted heavy losses on the enemy both in air combat and on the ground. During a recent sortie he led a formation as escort to our bombers, far behind the enemy lines, and heavy damage was caused. All our bombers returned safely.

Major Johan Daniel Wilhelm HUMAN, D.F.C. (103021), South African Air Force, No. 1 (S.A.A.F.) Squadron.

This officer has completed a large number of operational sorties. He is an extremely efficient and reliable leader whose work has proved most valuable. One day in May, 1942, whilst on patrol he sighted 12 enemy aircraft which he immediately engaged. During this combat he destroyed 1 enemy aircraft. Shortly afterwards, when acting as escort to our bombers he encountered 6 Stukas accompanied by 4 fighters which attacked our aircraft. On this occasion Major Human destroyed another enemy fighter. He has displayed courage and devotion to duty which have set an inspiring example.

Acting Squadron Leader Billy DRAKE, D.F.C. (39095), No. 112 Squadron.

Squadron Leader Drake is a skilful pilot and a fine leader. He has displayed great energy and has led his squadron on every sortie in the latest battle of Libya. One day in June, 1942, an attack was made against Gazala aerodrome which resulted in a number of enemy aircraft being destroyed or damaged on the ground. Squadron Leader Drake has personally scored hits on enemy transport vehicles and on a heavy tank. In addition he has destroyed at least 5 enemy aircraft and damaged a number of others in air combats.

Distinguished Flying Cross.

Wing Commander Harold Arthur FENTON (27127).

This officer has led his wing successfully on many sorties. One day in May, 1942, he encountered 15 enemy bombers escorted by an equal number of fighters. Wing Commander Fenton, with two other pilots, immediately attacked the bombers and delivered four attacks before his own aircraft was hit by fire from an enemy fighter. Wing Commander Fenton's windscreen became covered in oil but he was able to return to base where he made a safe landing. This officer is a fine leader who inspires much confidence in others.

Lieutenant Colonel Henry James MARTIN (102613), South African Air Force, No. 12 (S.A.A.F.) Squadron.

This officer has led his squadron in many successful sorties. One day in June, 1942, he completed 4 separate attacks against the enemy and, on the following day, he led his squadron in four further raids. He has displayed skill, fine leadership and complete disregard of danger.

Acting Squadron Leader Robert H. GIBBS (Aus. 714), Royal Australian Air Force, No. 3 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

This officer has displayed exceptional skill and gallantry in combat. One day in May, 1942, he encountered a large force of enemy bombers heavily escorted by fighters. Displaying great courage, he ignored the fighters and led an attack against the bombers. During the combat his aircraft was damaged and he was forced to abandon it by parachute. Squadron Leader Gibbs has completed a large number of operational flying hours in the Western Desert and has destroyed 6 enemy aircraft and probably destroyed a further 14.

Major Derrick Dunbar MOODIE (102683), South African Air Force, No. 4 (S.A.A.F.) Squadron.

This officer assumed command of his squadron when our forces were withdrawing from Benghazi. Displaying great energy he has since led it on every sortie. In April, 1942, a courageous attack was made against 20 Stukas escorted by an equal number of fighters. Shortly afterwards, he was the leader in an attack against at least 30 enemy fighters. He was reported missing from this operation but returned later. His keenness, devotion to duty and masterly leadership have contributed largely to the successes which have been achieved.