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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF
KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W.1, 12th February, 1943.

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

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

Flying Officer Charles Surtees Mason (Aus 4636), Royal Australian Air Force

To be awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division).—

Q 123835 Private Horace Summers, Volunteer Defence Corps, Queensland

On the 31st March, 1942, in fog conditions, an Airacobra aircraft struck the top of a tree in a dispersal area, burst into flames and continued for approximately 150 yards before hitting the ground, rolling down a slope for a further hundred yards as a complete wreck. Flying Officer Mason followed the direction of the aircraft after it had collided with the tree and instructed an airman to telephone immediately for the ambulance and fire tender and to despatch the dispersal point fire extinguishers to the scene of the accident. Private Summers joined Flying Officer Mason at the scene of the crash. On first viewing the wreckage Flying Officer Mason thought that the pilot had been killed outright but quickly detected movements in the cockpit and, despite the fact that portions of the wreckage were burning fiercely, and ammunition was discharging from six magazines, he and his companion dashed in to rescue the pilot who was unconscious and jammed in the compartment by bent sections of the cockpit. Cannon shell was also in the magazines and the possibility of its discharging as the flames and heat increased was ever present. Assisted by Private Summers, Flying Officer Mason unfastened the safety belt. The locking device for the belt was a type which neither had seen before. Wreckage had to be pulled away from the pilot's left leg and right arm before he could be extricated. Difficulty was experienced owing to the absence of any device with which to prise apart the obstructions holding the pilot in the cockpit. Flying Officer Mason worked with speed and precision and was successful in releasing both limbs. Nevertheless, during the process, it was necessary in the course of removing the crumpled rudder bar from the pilot's left foot, to move still closer to the flames and in so doing Flying Officer Mason was burnt on the left arm. Finally, before

the pilot could be dragged clear, it was necessary to untangle or unlock the parachute harness. The latter process proved difficult and as the flames continued to spread, it was clear that speed was now essential if the pilot's life was to be saved. Flying Officer Mason therefore dragged the tangled harness clear of the burning aircraft while Private Summers held the pilot who was then carried clear and conveyed to the station hospital by ambulance.

Air Ministry, 12th February, 1943

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 —

Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross

Acting Wing Commander George Walton HOLDEN, D.F.C. (103484), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No 102 Squadron

One night in January, 1943, this officer captained an aircraft which attacked Lorient. On the outward flight severe icing conditions were encountered and one of the outer engines failed. The aircraft lost speed and height and was difficult to control. Despite this, Wing Commander Holden continued on his mission and bombed his target after flying over the area for some 20 minutes in order to ensure success. This officer has always displayed outstanding courage and determination to complete his allotted task.

Acting Flight Lieutenant Donald Joseph CURTIN, D.F.C. (Can/J 9340), Royal Canadian Air Force, No 106 Squadron

Since the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross this officer has participated in numerous operational sorties against heavily defended targets in the Ruhr and in North Italy. During a daylight raid on Milan in October, when attacked by two enemy fighters Flight Lieutenant Curtin skilfully evaded them and enabled his gunners to destroy 1 and drive off the other. On two consecutive nights in January, 1943, he took part in attacks on Berlin, on the second occasion spending 30 minutes over the target to ensure accurate bombing. This officer has always displayed the greatest courage and devotion to duty.

Distinguished Flying Cross

Acting Squadron Leader Cyril Wolrich PASSY (72028), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No 89 Squadron

In operations in North Africa, this officer has performed much excellent work which has been reflected in the successes obtained by the flight