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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD.

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
10th August, 1943.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the GEORGE CROSS to:—

Acting Wing Commander John Samuel Rowlands, M.B.E. (73378), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

For over 2 years, Wing Commander Rowlands has been employed on bomb disposal duties and has repeatedly displayed the most conspicuous courage and unselfish devotion to duty in circumstances of great personal danger.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
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*St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
10th August, 1943.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the British Empire Medal (Military Division) to:—

1312312 Sergeant Joseph Patrick Herbert O'Neill, Royal Air Force.

Sergeant O'Neill was captain and pilot of a Halifax aircraft carrying high explosive bombs and incendiaries which crashed and burst into flames shortly after taking off for an operational mission. Some members of the crew were trapped in the blazing wreckage and although Sergeant O'Neill was himself severely injured and burned and in a fainting condition through loss of blood, he resolutely refused to leave the scene of the accident. Disregarding his own injuries he worked unsparingly, directing and helping civilians in an attempt to save others in the wreckage. Without thought for himself, his efforts ceased only when he became unconscious. His coolness and great strength of will earned the unbounded admiration of all concerned.

Air Ministry, 10th August, 1943.

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

Distinguished Flying Cross.

Flying Officer Gordon Halse AVENT (Can/J.6377), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 40 Squadron.

This officer is a skilful, courageous and determined pilot. One night in June, 1943, he undertook a flight of special importance. Visibility was

only fair but Flying Officer Avent skilfully located his target and, in spite of heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire, completed his task successfully. Flying Officer Avent has completed very many sorties and throughout, his efforts have been characterised by great determination.

Flying Officer Donald Thomas BAIN (Can/J.9412), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 408 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

One night in July, 1943, this officer piloted an aircraft to attack Aachen. Whilst over the target area, the bomber was seriously damaged when engaged by an enemy fighter. Despite this, Flying Officer Bain made several determined runs over the objective. On the return flight 2 more enemy fighters were encountered but Flying Officer Bain out-maneuvred them. By superb airmanship and great tenacity he succeeded in flying the crippled bomber to this country. He displayed commendable courage and a fine fighting spirit in circumstances of great difficulty.

Flying Officer Leslie STEPHENSON (118959), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 153 Squadron.
Flying Officer George Arthur HALL (120955), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 153 Squadron.

As pilot and observer respectively, Flying Officers Stephenson and Hall have flown together on a large number of sorties and have displayed great skill and determination throughout. They have been responsible for the destruction of 6 enemy aircraft, 3 of them in one night. Flying Officers Stephenson and Hall have displayed exceptional keenness and fine fighting qualities.

Distinguished Flying Cross.

Flying Officer Peter Greville Kaye WILLIAMSON (107239), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 153 Squadron.

Distinguished Flying Medal.

1393221, Sergeant Denis Strickland LAKE, Royal Air Force, No. 153 Squadron.

As pilot and observer respectively, this officer and airman completed many sorties during the campaign in North Africa. They have displayed great keenness and co-operation and, in various combats at night, they have destroyed 5 enemy aircraft. During 1 sortie, they were forced to abandon their aircraft whilst over the sea and were subsequently adrift in the dinghy for 5 hours before being rescued. In spite of this trying experience, Flying Officer Williamson and Sergeant Lake quickly resumed operational flying. Both these members of aircraft crew have displayed courage and devotion to duty worthy of great praise.