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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.

Acting Squadron Leader John OVERTON (122228), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 218 Squadron.

This officer has completed very many sorties against important targets in Germany and has displayed skill, courage and determination of a high order. On one occasion, during a sortie against Berlin, his aircraft was attacked by a fighter when nearing the target area. In the ensuing fight the bomber was hit in several places and one of its engines was set on fire. The rear gunner and the wireless operator were wounded. Nevertheless, Squadron Leader Overton out-manoeuvred the attacker and it was finally shot down. Squadron Leader Overton then went on to make a successful bombing attack and afterwards flew the damaged aircraft to base. This officer has always shown outstanding devotion to duty.

Acting Squadron Leader William Watson STRACHAN (Can/J.9863), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 432 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

This officer has taken part in many attacks against targets in Germany and has displayed commendable skill, courage and determination. One night in January, 1944, Squadron Leader Strachan piloted an aircraft which attacked Brunswick. Shortly after the bombs had been released the aircraft was hit by bullets from an enemy fighter. Much damage was sustained but Squadron Leader Strachan skilfully out-manoeuvred the attacker and afterwards flew the damaged aircraft to base. Squadron Leader Strachan is a model captain, whose example has inspired all with whom he has flown.

Flight Lieutenant Eric BROWN (102143), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 136 Squadron.

This officer is a fearless and resolute fighter. In December, 1943, he took part in an engagement against a formation of enemy aircraft, one of which he shot down. In the fight his own aircraft was extensively damaged. Some days later he took part in an attack on lines of communication. Flight Lieutenant Brown pressed home his attack with great vigour and completely disrupted a convoy. In the effort he flew so low that his

aircraft was damaged when it struck an overhead cable. Flight Lieutenant Brown is a most skilful leader whose courageous example has been most inspiring.

Flying Officer Ethan ALLEN (Can/J.21435), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 224 Squadron.

Flying Officer Allen has completed many sorties and throughout has displayed great keenness and determination. One night, as captain of aircraft, he executed an attack on a large U-boat. Pressing home his attack with great determination, Flying Officer Allen straddled the vessel with a number of depth charges. On several other occasions this officer has participated in successful attacks on the enemy's under-watercraft. By his skill, courage and coolness he has set a very fine example.

Flying Officer Paul CALDWELL (123099), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 224 Squadron.

Flying Officer Caldwell has completed a very large number of sorties, on one of which a U-boat was successfully attacked. One night in December, 1943, he was the navigator of an aircraft which attacked a motor vessel and other enemy targets. During the operation the aircraft was struck heavily and some 13 feet of the port wing was ripped away. Flying Officer Caldwell coolly released his bombs, however, and afterwards his skilful navigation over a large expanse of sea in darkness proved a valuable contribution towards the safe return of the aircraft. In addition to his work in the air, Flying Officer Caldwell has devoted much energy towards the training of other members of the squadron.

Flying Officer William Fulton McGregor DAVIDSON (130254), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 179 Squadron.

One night in January, 1944, this officer was the captain of an aircraft which attacked a fully surfaced U-boat. Defying a heavy barrage, Flying Officer Davidson pressed home his attack with great determination. In the run in, the aircraft was hit and the port wing was set on fire. Despite this, Flying Officer Davidson held to his course and released his depth charges from an extremely low level. By now, the aircraft was uncontrollable and it crashed into the sea when some 2 miles ahead. Flying Officer Davidson was thrown clear of the wreckage and, though injured, succeeded in getting aboard the dinghy from which he was later rescued. This officer displayed outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty beyond praise.

Flying Officer Bernard William HEARD (128964), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 172 Squadron.

Pilot Officer William Norman ARMSTRONG (Can/J.18086), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 172 Squadron.

One night, these officers were rear gunner and pilot respectively of an aircraft which sighted a fully surfaced U-boat. Pilot Officer Armstrong immediately went into the attack and straddled the vessel with depth charges. Despite heavy fire from the submarine's guns, Pilot Officer Armstrong made 2 more runs over the vessel and released more depth charges with great accuracy from a very low level. This officer displayed great skill, courage and determination. In the action, Flying Officer Heard was severely wounded in the leg and the arm but he displayed outstanding fortitude and praiseworthy devotion to duty, setting a splendid example.

Warrant Officer Class II Joseph Albert Roger COULOMBE (Can/R.96703), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 426 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

Warrant Officer Coulombe has completed many sorties, including 8 against Berlin. One night in December, 1943, he took part in an attack on the German capital and, whilst over the target, his aircraft was intercepted by a fighter. The enemy aircraft made several attacks but Warrant Officer Coulombe skilfully evaded them without sustaining damage until the final attack when one of the bomber's engines was hit. Later, the aircraft was hit by shrapnel. The hydraulic system was damaged and one of the petrol tanks was pierced. Nevertheless, Warrant Officer Coulombe flew the damaged bomber back to this country. This warrant officer has invariably displayed great skill, courage and resolution.

Warrant Officer Patrick Richard Murray NEAL (1211832), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 100 Squadron.

Warrant Officer Neal has completed very many sorties, 7 of which have been against targets in Berlin. He has invariably displayed great skill

and determination, setting a worthy example. One night in January, 1944, he piloted an aircraft which attacked Brunswick. Soon after leaving the area his aircraft was attacked by a fighter. The enemy's first burst of machine-gun fire hit the bomber. Much damage was sustained and the rear gunner was killed. Nevertheless, Warrant Officer Neal out-maneuvred his adversary and afterwards flew the damaged bomber to base. Despite difficulties, Warrant Officer Neal effected a masterly landing. He displayed great courage and resolution throughout.

Distinguished Flying Medal.

924906 Flight Sergeant Robert Walter Cross, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 136 Squadron.

Flight Sergeant Cross has taken part in many sorties and has destroyed 7 and damaged several more enemy aircraft. In December, 1943, he participated in an attack against a formation of enemy bombers escorted by fighters. In the engagement Flight Sergeant Cross fought with rare determination and shot down a fighter and afterwards hit a bomber which was seen to go down in flames. Throughout this spirited action, Flight Sergeant Cross displayed great skill and courage, setting a splendid example.

542139 Sergeant John Charles MCCARTNEY, Royal Air Force, No. 224 Squadron.

As flight engineer, this airman has taken part in a very large number of sorties and has proved himself to be a most dependable member of aircraft crew. On a recent occasion he took part in an anti-submarine patrol in the role of air gunner. During the operation his aircraft was attacked by a number of fighters. Although his turret was unserviceable, Sergeant McCartney called upon 2 members of the crew to turn it manually according to his instructions. Throughout the engagement which lasted for some 50 minutes, Sergeant McCartney fought with great skill and resolution and played a good part in frustrating the attackers. His exemplary conduct in the face of very trying circumstances was worthy of the highest praise.

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