

to get out unaided. His cockpit was soon enveloped by the flames. Displaying complete disregard for his own safety, Sergeant Preston returned to the blazing aircraft and, working in the flames, succeeded in dragging the pilot to safety. In so doing Sergeant Preston sustained second degree burns. His gallant and prompt action saved the pilot's life. Sergeant Preston was also involved in a similar accident in November, 1943, when he succeeded in dragging the pilot clear. On this occasion the aircraft did not catch fire but there was a constant possibility of its doing so.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD.

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1,
28th April, 1944.*

The KING has been graciously pleased, on the advice of His Majesty's New Zealand Ministers, to approve the award of the George Medal to the undermentioned:—

N.Z.403874 Sergeant Cyril George KENT, Royal New Zealand Air Force.

When a flare accidentally became ignited amongst a stack of bombs and depth charges, Sergeant Kent, well aware that a major explosion was likely, hurried to the spot and endeavoured to remove the flare. In his first attempt he had his left hand burned, but, regardless of his own safety, he persisted and removed the flare, still burning fiercely, to a place of safety. He suffered further severe burns before succeeding in an action which ensured the safety of other personnel, and saved a number of aircraft from almost certain destruction.

Air Ministry, 28th April, 1944.

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 Wing Commander Robert Norman BATESON, D.F.C. (39054); Reserve of Air Force Officers, No. 613 Squadron.

This officer has displayed the highest standard of skill and leadership throughout the many and varied sorties in which he has participated. In April, 1944, Wing Commander Bateson flew the leading aircraft of a formation detailed to attack a target in Holland. The operation, which demanded a high degree of courage and determination, was completed with success and reflects the greatest credit on the efforts of this officer, whose leadership was outstanding. His achievements have been worthy of great praise.

Acting Squadron Leader John Leslie MUNRO, D.F.C. (N.Z.413942), Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 617 Squadron.

Since being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross this officer has completed very many sorties, involving attacks on well defended targets. He has displayed unflinching devotion to duty throughout and his example of gallantry and leadership has inspired all. On many occasions his aircraft has been damaged by enemy action but in every instance, Squadron Leader Munro has flown safely to base. His achievements have been worthy of the greatest praise.

Flight Lieutenant Joseph SINGLETON, D.F.C. (09431), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 25 Squadron.

Since being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross this officer has completed very many sorties. Within a short period he has destroyed 5 enemy aircraft at night; 3 of which he shot down in one sortie. On this occasion his aircraft was damaged but he flew it to this country. When nearing an airfield both engines failed and caught fire. Nevertheless, Flight Lieutenant Singleton effected a successful crash-landing. After getting clear, Flight Lieutenant Singleton returned to the burning aircraft and switched off all the electrical circuits. Afterwards, unaided, he succeeded in extinguishing the flames by smothering them with earth. This officer, who displayed a high degree of courage, coolness and devotion to duty, undoubtedly saved his aircraft from becoming a total loss.

Flying Officer Howard Hatherall FARMILOE (157082), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 61 Squadron.

One night in March, 1944, this officer piloted an aircraft detailed to attack Berlin. When nearing the target the port inner engine caught fire. Two minutes later, the port outer engine became defective and had to be feathered. In spite of this, Flying Officer Farmiloe continued to the target. Much height and air speed were lost, whilst with its full bomb load the aircraft was difficult to control. Nevertheless, Flying Officer Farmiloe maintained a steady course and finally released his bombs over the target. The aircraft was still losing height as course was set for home. Some time later all moveable equipment, including guns and ammunition were jettisoned and the enemy coast was crossed at a height of 6,000 feet. The situation was extremely serious, but Flying Officer Farmiloe resolutely held to his course and the North Sea was safely crossed and an airfield was reached. This gallant pilot displayed outstanding determination in pressing home his attack with one engine on fire and his great skill and coolness in the face of increasing difficulties on the homeward flight set an example of the highest order.

Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross.

Acting Squadron Leader Joseph Charles McCARTHY, D.S.O., D.F.C. (Can/J.9346), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 617 Squadron.

Since being awarded the Distinguished Service Order this officer has completed numerous sorties as captain of aircraft, in which he has taken part in difficult and hazardous operations at low level. Squadron Leader McCarthy has displayed exemplary skill and courage which combined with his unflinching devotion to duty have contributed much to the success achieved.

Flight Lieutenant Alan Derek WAGNER, D.F.C. (65993), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 605 Squadron.

Since being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, this officer has completed very many sorties at night and has displayed skill, gallantry and devotion to duty of a high order. One night in March, 1944, whilst over enemy territory, Flight Lieutenant Wagner engaged first a Focke Wulf 190 and then two Messerschmitt 410s, all of which he shot down. In the last of these fights, Flight Lieutenant Wagner pressed home his attack at such close range that his aircraft was enveloped in burning petrol and oil which obscured the windscreen and burned the outer covering of the fuselage and the tail unit. Despite this, Flight Lieutenant Wagner intercepted another enemy aircraft which he attacked with damaging effect. He has now destroyed a further 4 enemy aircraft, all of them at night.

Acting Flight Lieutenant Colin Keith ASTBURY, D.F.C. (Aus.400897), Royal Australian Air Force, No. 617 Squadron.

As air bomber this officer has participated in very many sorties since being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and continued to set the highest standard of gallantry and devotion to duty. On many occasions his aircraft has been subjected to fierce fire from the ground defences. Nevertheless, Flight Lieutenant Astbury has executed his task with great coolness and his accurate bombing has played a good part in the success of many sorties. He has rendered much valuable service.

Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross.

Flying Officer James Ronald HUGHES, D.F.C. (Can/J.12639), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 254 Squadron.

Distinguished Flying Cross.

Flying Officer William Arthur BENNEWORTH (129590), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 254 Squadron.

These officers has flown together as pilot and navigator, respectively for more than a year. Both have displayed great skill and determination in their operational missions. One night recently these officers attacked a large and heavily escorted convoy. One of the ships was seen to explode and catch fire. The aircraft was hit by opposing fire and one of the engines failed but these officers skilfully flew back to base where a successful emergency landing was made.