



# FIFTH SUPPLEMENT TO The London Gazette

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## CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.  
20th October, 1944.

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, and for the following awards of the George Medal and the British Empire Medal:—

*To be an Additional Officer of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Squadron Leader Frederick Arthur James Chapman (44140), Royal Air Force.

*To be an Additional Member of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Flying Officer Lewis Leyshon Thomas (113772), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division):—*

3050143 Aircraftman 1st Class Verner Skerrett, Royal Air Force.

In April, 1944, an aircraft crashed and caught fire at a Royal Air Force Station, of the crew of five, one member was thrown clear. The above officer and airman went into the flames whilst ammunition was exploding all around in order to rescue the remaining members. Squadron Leader Chapman, the chief technical officer at the station, succeeded in dragging clear an airman who was trapped amongst the burning wreckage. Flying Officer Thomas, a physical training officer, was also able to extricate another member who was caught, near the lower part of his body, by the wreckage. Aircraftman Skerrett, an airman employed on fire fighting duties, was successful in extricating one of the pilots from the cockpit. In effecting this rescue, Aircraftman Skerrett sustained several cuts and bruises and was told to report to sick quarters. He insisted on remaining however, and helped in putting out the conflagration. All three rescuers displayed courage in dangerous circumstances. Four members of the crew, including the one thrown clear, were saved from the wreckage, a result which was achieved owing to the bravery of these two officers and airman.

*To be an Additional Member of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Flying Officer James Frederick Smith (141924), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division):—*

756609 Corporal Rex Arthur Deakin, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

One night in July, 1944, a Wellington aircraft, which was coming in to land stalled and crashed into a bomb dump. The aircraft immediately burst into flames and a large number of 30 lb. explosive incendiary bombs became ignited. Despite the appalling nature of the conflagration, which was greatly increased by the presence of hundreds of gallons of petrol, and high explosive bombs which commenced to detonate in the dump, Flying Officer Smith (the unit fire officer) immediately took charge of the fire fighting operations. With the help of Corporal Deakin (the non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge of the fire party) Flying Officer Smith directed the operations to subdue the fire in a most capable and efficient manner for a period of 1½ hours. The fire was fought from very close range, without cover, and eventually it was extinguished. The strenuous work had prevented it from spreading over the whole of the dump. This officer and airman displayed outstanding courage and initiative in the face of great danger and their actions resulted in much valuable property and material being saved.

*To be an Additional Member of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—*

Flying Officer Basil Thomson (130755), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division):—*

512356 Leading Aircraftman John Henry Trotter, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

At about 10.00 hours one day in May, 1944, a four engined aircraft crashed on a main surface bomb dump which contained a large number of 500 lb. and 1,000 lb. bombs. The aircraft burst into flames immediately and the port outer and inner motors were thrown on to the bombs. Flying Officer Thomson (the station fire officer) and Aircraftman Trotter (the non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge of a crash tender crew), were on the scene almost immediately and fire fighting appliances from two crash tenders were operating, under Flying Officer Thomson's direction, within 15 seconds of the crash. Petrol was flowing from the aircraft and a large part of the fuselage and wings were soon burnt out completely; the bombs became too hot to touch. During a hazardous inspection of the fuselage, Flying Officer Thomson observed one bomb, which had become dislodged from the dump, lying under the main fuselage of the