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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 Service Order.

Acting Air Commodore Alfred Charles Henry SHARP, A.D.C., R.A.F.

This officer has participated in many sorties during which he has attacked such targets as Hamburg, Bremen and heavily defended centres in the Ruhr area. Throughout these operations he has displayed the highest qualities of skill and leadership, and his example has proved most inspiring. In addition to his work in the air, Air Commodore Sharp has shown great organising ability and his excellent work has contributed in a large way to the successes of the squadrons he commands. This officer has rendered outstanding service.

Acting Wing Commander Reginald William Cox, D.F.C., A.F.C. (43145), R.A.F., 7 Sqn.

In September, 1944, this officer captained an aircraft of a bomber force detailed to attack a target in the Calais area. In the operation the aircraft was hit and control was temporarily lost. The elevator control had been severed. Nevertheless, Wing Commander Cox succeeded in levelling out. Although his aircraft was most difficult to control Wing Commander Cox decided to attempt to fly the damaged aircraft back to this country. During the flight the aircraft climbed and dived alternately. Wing Commander Cox was faced with an extremely difficult task to retain a measure of control but he flew to an airfield and effected a masterly landing. This officer has displayed the highest standard of skill, courage and leadership and his example has proved a rare source of inspiration.

Acting Squadron Leader French SMITH, D.F.C. (Aus.412037), R.A.A.F. 635 Sqn.

Squadron Leader Smith has completed many more sorties since being awarded the D.F.C. Most of them have been against most heavily defended German targets. In September, this officer was detailed to participate in an attack on a target near Calais. Whilst over the target his aircraft was repeatedly hit and sustained damage. He afterwards flew the badly damaged aircraft safely back to base. His determination and splendid fighting spirit have been a fine example to all.

Acting Squadron Leader Peter Harrison SWAN, D.F.C. (Aus. 400498), R.A.A.F., 635 Sqn.

Since the award of the D.F.C. this officer has completed very many sorties involving attacks on

vital targets in Germany and also in Northern France. He has continued to display the highest skill and bravery and his example has greatly inspired all with whom he has flown. In September, 1944, he participated in an attack on a synthetic oil refinery at Gelsenkirchen. In the face of heavy fire from the ground defences, Squadron Leader Swan executed his bombing task with great accuracy. Following this successful attack Squadron Leader Swan was quickly in action again. This time the target was Frankfurt. In spite of strong opposition this intrepid pilot executed a most determined attack. His successes are a fine tribute to his outstanding ability, thoroughness and tenacity.

Distinguished Service Order.

Squadron Leader Thomas Woodruff RIPPINGALE (39159), R.A.F.O., 166 Sqn.

Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (Flying).

1802499 Sergeant Francis William CRIDGE, R.A.F.V.R., 166 Sqn.

This officer and airman were pilot and navigator respectively of an aircraft detailed to attack Neuss one night in September, 1944. When nearing the target the aircraft was attacked by a fighter. The fight ended with the destruction of the enemy aircraft which exploded in the air. The bomber had sustained much damage. The mid-upper and rear turrets were wrecked, the gunner of the latter being killed. The wireless apparatus, many of the pilot's instruments and much navigational equipment were rendered useless. The hydraulic gear was put out of action, making it impossible to operate the bomb doors mechanically. Even so, Squadron Leader Rippingale calculated that if the bombs were released their weight would force open the bomb doors. He gave the order and the bombs fell. A course was set for home and finally an airfield was reached and a safe landing made. In hazardous circumstances, Squadron Leader Rippingale displayed exceptional skill, inspiring leadership and great courage. Sergeant Cridge also proved himself to be a brave and devoted member of aircraft crew. In the fight he was wounded in the face, arm and the body by fragments of a cannon shell. His first thought was to give his captain all the assistance of which he was capable. Although in great pain and suffering from the loss of blood he navigated the aircraft home with much skill.