

1277445 Corporal Francis Battersby, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (since deceased).

In October, 1944, Corporal Battersby and six other airmen commenced work at a town in Belgium on the clearance of hotels and houses required for occupation by the Royal Air Force. They were engaged in buildings comprising about 1,000 rooms and the enemy had drawn the window shutters and removed the electric lighting system. The party worked with hand torches. On the following day 3 of the party were badly injured and a fourth member received severe shock from the explosion of a charge which was detonated by the fouling of a concealed trip wire. Corporal Battersby took charge of the remaining members of the party, until the arrival of his Flight Commander, and continued the work until 1400 hours on the seventh day when the hotels were finally cleared. During this period 80 enemy mines and prepared charges, ingeniously hidden and laid to be functioned by one or more trip wires, were recovered, neutralised and disposed of. On a previous occasion Corporal Battersby was required to continue this form of work after casualties had occurred among his party. He has displayed high courage and leadership.

504852 Corporal Henry William Greenbank, Royal Air Force.

1136342 Leading Aircraftman Fred Ponsonby; Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

One night in October, 1944, three aircraft crashed when attempting to land at an airfield on an improvised flare path, formed by trucks placed along the runway. The aircraft which first came in to land crashed into a truck, injuring the driver and killing an officer standing nearby, and immediately burst into flames. Corporal Greenbank and the fire crew under his charge got the fire under control and were attempting to rescue the pilot when a second aircraft collided with the first aircraft and also burst into flames, striking Corporal Greenbank as it landed. Ignoring his injuries and the fact that other aircraft were heading for the scene of the crash, he extinguished the second fire and then extricated the pilot of the first aircraft. As he did so the third aircraft crashed over the heads of the rescuers. Meanwhile Leading Aircraftman Ponsonby, an ambulance driver, had been attending to the driver of the truck on which the first aircraft had crashed. The latter had been trapped in his vehicle with fractures of both legs. Despite the fact that the two other aircraft were heading for the scene he towed the truck away in time to avoid a collision. Corporal Greenbank saved the life of a pilot and averted the total destruction of two aircraft, whilst Leading Aircraftman Ponsonby saved the life of the driver of the truck. They displayed courage in dangerous circumstances. On previous occasions, both had shown devotion to duty and courage of a high order.

Can/R.148018 Corporal Albert Elwood Henry, Royal Canadian Air Force.

In October, 1944, the enemy dropped a number of bombs on an airfield. One of the bombs killed 4 men and seriously wounded Corporal Henry in the thigh and chest. Other bombs, which fell in a dispersal area, set fire to two piles of cans and barrels containing petrol. Despite his wounds, Corporal Henry responded promptly to the fire call and continued fighting the flames until they were completely extinguished. He then laid down until picked up and placed in an ambulance. This airman displayed fortitude and a high sense of duty in ignoring his wounds and continuing his duty until his task had been completed.

*Air Ministry, 23rd March, 1945.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations:—

*Distinguished Service Order.*

Wing Commander Clifford Frederick Cecil WRIGHT, D.F.C. (34012), R.A.F.O., 547 Sqn.

This officer has completed much operational flying and throughout has displayed high qualities of skill and devotion to duty. Before joining his present squadron, Wing Commander Wright participated in several attacks on enemy shipping and harbour installations. During these operations at least 8 vessels were sunk and others were damaged. Much of the success achieved can be attributed to Wing Commander Wright's skilful

leadership. Recently this officer flew with great distinction in an attack on enemy shipping in Baltic waters. Wing Commander Wright has invariably displayed a high degree of courage and resolution and set an example which has impressed all.

Acting Wing Commander Frederick Desmond HUGHES, D.F.C. (74706), R.A.F.V.R., 604 Sqn.

Wing Commander Hughes has displayed the highest standard of devotion to duty throughout a long period of operational flying. His outstanding keenness, great skill and unsurpassed determination have been well reflected in the success of the squadron which, under his brilliant leadership, has been responsible for the destruction of a good number of enemy aircraft. Among his own personal successes, Wing Commander Hughes has destroyed 18 enemy aircraft.

Lieutenant-Colonel Johannes Morkel FAURE, D.F.C. (143113V), S.A.A.F.

This officer has completed numerous sorties on his third tour of operational duty. In these operations he has led large formations of aircraft in attacks against a variety of targets. Much of the success achieved can be attributed to this officer's outstanding ability, personal courage and unswerving devotion to duty. In addition to his gallant work in the air, Lieutenant-Colonel Faure has shown a high standard of organising ability and great drive qualities which have contributed materially to the efficiency of the formations he commands.

Acting Squadron Leader James Albert KING, D.F.C. (45734), R.A.F., 357 Sqn.

This officer has displayed the highest standard of skill and gallantry in air operations. Since being awarded a Bar to the Distinguished Flying Cross, Squadron Leader King has completed numerous operational flights, necessitating a high degree of courage and resolution. The success achieved is a splendid tribute to this officer's sterling qualities.

Acting Squadron Leader Geoffrey Stanton SHARP (N.Z.403476), R.N.Z.A.F., 4 (R.I.A.F.) Sqn.

In January, 1945, this officer led the squadron on a sortie in support of a landing by ground forces at Myebone. The purpose was to lay a smoke screen. Precise timing and great accuracy were essential to success. In spite of considerable anti-aircraft fire Squadron Leader Sharp led his squadron in to the target with great skill and, as a result of the excellent work performed, the ground forces were enabled to execute a landing under a well timed and accurately placed smoke screen. During the operation, Squadron Leader Sharp's aircraft was hit several times by anti-aircraft fire but he flew it back to base. This officer has completed many reconnaissances, over difficult terrain and in extremely bad weather, with excellent results. He has displayed exceptional skill, great courage and devotion to duty in the execution of his allotted tasks.

Acting Flight Lieutenant Maurice George BACHE (Aus.434095), R.A.A.F., 467 (R.A.A.F.) Sqn.

This officer has completed many operational missions and has displayed high qualities of skill, courage and determination. In January, 1945, Flight Lieutenant Bache piloted an aircraft in an attack against the Dortmund-Ems canal. When nearing the target the aircraft was hit in one of the wings and in the bomb bay by shrapnel. In spite of this, Flight Lieutenant Bache went on to execute a good bombing run. Shortly afterwards the aircraft was again hit. The port inner engine caught fire and the propeller had to be feathered. The port outer engine also was damaged. One of the petrol tanks was punctured and its contents drained away. Other damage, which affected the control of the aircraft, was also sustained. Height was lost rapidly and Flight Lieutenant Bache experienced the greatest difficulty in retaining control. Nevertheless he was determined, if possible, to reach the Allied lines. To ease the strain of flying with full rudder applied, Flight Lieutenant Bache instructed another member of the crew to fasten a cable to the rudder pedal. The damaged port engine now failed completely. Still, this resolute pilot held on. As he passed over the Rhine defences at a low altitude his aircraft came under considerable light anti-aircraft fire and was hit in many places. Nevertheless, Flight Lieutenant Bache reached the Allied lines before ordering his crew to abandon aircraft. Not until they were