



FIFTH SUPPLEMENT  
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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF  
KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.  
10th April, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointment 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 Member of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:

Flight Lieutenant Harold John SHUTTLEWORTH (51452), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Awarded the George Medal:

Acting Wing Commander Donald Leslie KINGS (72222), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.  
Flight Lieutenant John Preston LEWIN (31337), Reserve Air Force Officers.

Awarded the British Empire Medal (Military Division):

1071150 Corporal Sidney Benjamin ROCK, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.  
1202817 Corporal James Sim PETERS, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

On Monday, November 27th, 1944, an explosion on an immense scale occurred in a mine forming the R.A.F. bomb storage depot near Burton-on-Trent. The depot, which consisted of tunnelled workings into low hills, was divided into two parts, known as the Old and New Mines, by a solid wall partly of native rock and partly of artificial construction. The explosion occurred in the small New Mine where some 4,000 tons of bombs and other explosives were stored, including over 1,500 four-thousand pound bombs. This part of the depot was completely obliterated, a crater 350 yards by 600 yards being formed with an enormous open rent in continuation to the north-west. Serious damage was also done to the Old Mine, alongside where some 8,000 to 10,000 tons of bombs were stored. Here blast caused dangerous roof falls and cracks and scattered bombs and other explosives over the floors whilst poisonous fumes generated by the explosion percolated from the New Mine. Apart from the damage to the depot, a nearby commercial mine was completely wrecked by huge quantities of rock and sodden earth thrown up by the explosion and by the escaping waters of a small lake which had burst open. Over 60 people lost their lives.

Wing Commander Kings was temporarily commanding the R.A.F. Unit on the spot. He was the first to enter the mine, some 10 minutes after

the explosion had occurred. All the lights had been extinguished but with the help of a hand-lamp operating intermittently, Wing Commander Kings made as full a search of the underground area as was possible before he was affected by dangerous fumes and had to retire. He then took control of the emergency work above ground, including the control of stacks of incendiary bombs which had been set alight outside the mine entrance. He arranged for further help and took steps to determine the extent of the casualties and damage. On arrival of the National Fire Service with oxygen apparatus, Wing Commander Kings, with Foreman Salt and three National Fire Service men, again searched the mine, concentrating particularly on the areas where the roof had fallen. He continued this search until for the second time he was forced to retire by the effects of noxious fumes. Thereafter Wing Commander Kings made every effort to keep the situation under control, accepting and co-ordinating offers of assistance as they came to hand. Throughout, he acted with conspicuous gallantry and resource, and showed fine leadership.

Flight Lieutenant Lewin on his own initiative, and alone, entered the mine some 20 minutes after the explosion and carried out a prolonged search in the underground workings. He later entered a second time with Foreman Coker and remained underground for about an hour searching most of the roads in an endeavour to find the missing persons. The fumes had by this time become more dangerous and while Foreman Coker persisted as long as he could, he had in the end to be carried out by Flight Lieutenant Lewin who then re-entered the mine alone to continue his endeavours. He did not abandon his search until the arrival of teams of the Mines Rescue Organisation with oxygen apparatus. Flight Lieutenant Lewin then went to the nearby commercial Mine and descended the airshaft several times to a dangerous gas-filled area to remove casualties. Finally he assisted Wing Commander Kings in organising overground relief measures. Throughout he acted with gallantry, initiative and complete disregard for his own safety.

Flight Lieutenant Shuttleworth accompanied Foreman Salt into the mine on his first re-entry, some half-hour after the explosion when conditions underground were still unknown and there were all manner of possible risks—further explosions, fire, roof falls, noxious fumes. With Foreman Salt he helped rescue an injured man. Later Flight Lieutenant Shuttleworth played an important part in maintaining control and, by his fine example, greatly encouraged other rescue workers.