

H.M. Motor Launch 306 in the St. Nazaire raid on the 28th March, 1942.

Motor Launch 306 came under heavy fire while proceeding up the River Loire towards the port. Sergeant Durrant, in his position abaft the bridge, where he had no cover or protection, engaged enemy gun positions and searchlights on shore. During this engagement he was severely wounded in the arm but refused to leave his gun.

The Motor Launch subsequently went down the river and was attacked by a German destroyer at 50-60 yards range, and often closer. In this action Sergeant Durrant continued to fire at the destroyer's bridge with the greatest coolness and with complete disregard of the enemy's fire. The Motor Launch was illuminated by the enemy searchlight and Sergeant Durrant drew on himself the individual attention of the enemy guns, and was again wounded, in many places. Despite these further wounds he stayed in his exposed position, still firing his gun, although after a time only able to support himself by holding on to the gun mounting.

After a running fight, the Commander of the German destroyer called on the Motor Launch to surrender. Sergeant Durrant's answer was a further burst of fire at the destroyer's bridge. Although now very weak he went on firing, using drums of ammunition as fast as they could be replaced. A renewed attack by the enemy vessel eventually silenced the fire of the Motor Launch but Sergeant Durrant refused to give up until the destroyer came alongside, grappled the Motor Launch and took prisoner those who remained alive.

Sergeant Durrant's gallant fight was commended by the German officers on boarding the Motor Launch.

This very gallant Non-Commissioned Officer later died of the many wounds received in action.

*War Office, 19th June, 1945.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:—

No. 18706 Sepoy Namdeo JADHAO, 5th Mahratta Light Infantry, Indian Army.

In Italy, on the evening of the 9th April, 1945, a Company of the 5th Mahratta Light Infantry assaulted the east floodbank of the Senio river, north of S. Polito. Three minutes afterwards another Company was to pass through and assault the west floodbank.

In this sector the Senio river is about 15 feet broad, 4 to 5 feet deep and flows between precipitous floodbanks 30 to 35 feet high. Both floodbanks were honeycombed with an intricate system of German dugouts and defence posts, with a mine belt on the inner face of the east floodbank above the dugout entrances.

Sepoy Namdeo Jadhao was a Company runner and when his Company crossed the river he was with his Company Commander close behind one of the leading sections.

When wading the river and emerging on the west bank the party came under heavy fire from at least three German posts on the inner face of the east bank. The Company

commander and two men were wounded and the rest, with the exception of Sepoy Namdeo Jadhao, were killed.

This gallant Sepoy immediately carried one of the wounded men through the deep water and up the precipitous slope of the bank through the mine belt to safety. He then made a second trip to bring back the other wounded man. Both times he was under heavy mortar and machine gun fire.

He then determined to eliminate the machine gun posts, which had pinned down the Companies, and to avenge his dead comrades, so, crossing the exposed east bank a third time, he dashed at the nearest enemy post and silenced it with his Tommy Gun. He was, however, wounded in the hand and, being unable to fire his gun any further, threw it away and resorted to grenades. With these he successively charged and wiped out two more enemy posts, at one time crawling to the top of the bank to replenish his stock of grenades from his comrades on the reverse slope.

Having silenced all machine gun fire from the east bank, he then climbed on to the top of it and, in spite of heavy mortar fire, stood in the open shouting the Mahratta war cry and waving the remainder of the Companies across the river.

This Sepoy not only saved the lives of his comrades, but his outstanding gallantry and personal bravery enabled the two Companies to hold the river banks firmly, and eventually the Battalion to secure a deeper bridgehead, which in turn ultimately led to the collapse of all German resistance in the area.

*War Office, 19th June, 1945.*

REGULAR ARMY.

Col. (local Maj.-Gen.) S. ARNOTT, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.D. (4215), late R.A.M.C., to be a D.D.M.S. and is granted the actg. rank of Maj.-Gen., 12th Apr. 1945.

Col. O. SLATER, M.C. (12910), having attained the age for retirement, is retained on the active list, supern., 19th June 1945.

Lt.-Col. H. A. SANDIFORD, M.C., M.B. (15676), from R.A.M.C., to be Col., 20th June 1945, with seniority, 28th Apr. 1943.

Col. G. S. BRUNSKILL, C.B.E., M.C. (26738), retires on ret. pay, 19th June 1945, and is granted the hon. rank of Brig.

ROYAL ARMOURD CORPS.

R.T.R.

Lt. J. ROGERS (123548) is placed on the h.p. list on account of disability, 20th June 1945.

FOOT GUARDS.

Gren. G'ds.

Capt. (War Subs. Maj.) J. E. HARRISON (40818) to be Maj., 20th June 1945 (with pay and alces. of a Capt. for the period 20th June 1945 to 15th July 1945 (incl.)).

INFANTRY.

King's Own R.

Lt. (Qr.-Mr.) (War Subs. Capt. (Qr.-Mr.)) Marshall DARKES (127398) from Emergency Commn. R.W. Fus., to be Lt. (Qr.-Mr.), 17th June 1945.

Essex R.

Ret. Offr. re-empld.

Capt. J. D. BURROWS, M.B.E. (146929) is granted the hon. rank of Maj., 20th June 1945, on ceasing to be empld.

A. & S.H.

Maj. D. DARROCH (77) retires on ret. pay, 13th May 1945 and is granted the hon. rank of Lt.-Col.

ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS.

Maj. (Qr.-Mr.) A. MUNCKTON (51493) retires on ret. pay on account of disability, 19th June 1945.