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CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
6th September, 1946.

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

To be Additional Members of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order:—

Flight Lieutenant John William BEST (89772), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 39 Squadron.

Flight Lieutenant Best and his crew swam ashore west of Greece in May, 1941, and were met by Greeks who offered to help them. Instead of this, they were betrayed to the Germans and captured. In June, 1942, Flight Lieutenant Best and 20 others tunnelled their way out of Stalag Luft III (Sagan) and walked to the airfield hoping to steal an aircraft, but this proved impossible. They walked for 3 days until they reached the Oder where they stole a boat and rowed towards Stettin. After covering 30 kilometres they were seen and arrested. The following summer, whilst at Colditz, Flight Lieutenant Best participated in a scheme whereby certain officers disguised as Germans should relieve the guard while 25 others escaped through a window. The guard, however, suspected the identity of its relief and the scheme proved abortive. In January, 1944, Flight Lieutenant Best and a companion climbed out of a window by means of a sheet rope down a 35 ft. terrace. Under the eyes of the guard they cut the wire and made another drop and scrambled through the outer wire. They travelled by train to Halle and thence to Rheine, where they were arrested whilst walking round the town. Flight Lieutenant Best engaged in several tunnel schemes and also helped to construct a glider to carry escapers from the roof to the valley below. Although completed, the glider was never used. Flight Lieutenant Best was finally liberated in April, 1945.

Flight Lieutenant John Richard DENNY, D.F.C. (43954), Royal Air Force, No. 78 Squadron.

Flight Lieutenant Denny was captured on Juist Island in November, 1940, having been forced to crash land his aircraft. In October, 1941, while in transit from Lubeck to Warburg, he and a companion cut a hole in the side of the truck in which they were travelling and jumped from the train as it was leaving the station. Flight Lieutenant Denny followed the railway line and reached Bremen five days later. He boarded a train going to Amsterdam but, on arrival at Oldenburg, the truck was put in a siding and he

was forced to leave. He hid in a barn but was discovered by a farmer and handed over to the police. During his imprisonment at Stalag Luft I and Oflag VIB, Flight Lieutenant Denny was a member of the Escape Committee and engaged in tunnel digging operations. He also worked on a scheme for escape by man-lifting kites. One was just completed when the equipment was discovered.

Flight Lieutenant Ronald Alfred George ELLEN (39973), Royal Air Force, No. 82 Squadron.

Flight Lieutenant Ellen was captured near Aalborg in August, 1940, after he had been forced to abandon his aircraft and he was imprisoned in various camps in Germany. In March, 1941, whilst en route for Oflag XXA at Thorn, he jumped from a train travelling at 20 m.p.h. After walking towards Holland for ten days he was recaptured by German police. During his imprisonment at Oflag VIB, he became a member of the Escape Committee and helped to dig a tunnel through which seven officers escaped. Flight Lieutenant Ellen became a member of the Escape Committee at Stalag Luft III in 1942 and took charge of the camp radio, organising a news service which enabled the S.B.O. to maintain touch with England and which greatly assisted in keeping up the high morale of the prisoners. He has been commended by the S.B.O., and ten of his colleagues for his valuable work in connection with escape activities.

Flight Lieutenant Hugh Gerald KEARTLAND (43038), Royal Air Force, No. 207 Squadron.

Flight Lieutenant Keartland was captured at Geilenkirchen in August, 1941. Whilst in transit from Lubeck to Warburg he and another officer jumped from the train. The following evening, after failing to board a moving train, Flight Lieutenant Keartland found his companion badly injured on the railway track and, in obtaining assistance, he was recaptured. Flight Lieutenant Keartland made another attempt to escape in April, 1942, when, with three others, he crawled under the main gate of the camp whilst it was temporarily unguarded. He and a companion walked 275 miles towards Switzerland, but were finally recaptured after avoiding arrest on several occasions. Whilst serving a period of imprisonment at Paderborn military prison, Flight Lieutenant Keartland broke open the cell door and had released another officer, when he was discovered. During his captivity he engaged in numerous tunnel schemes.

Flight Lieutenant John Carson WILSON (40775), Royal Air Force, No. 6 Squadron.

Flight Lieutenant Wilson force-landed near Aghella in March, 1941, and was captured by