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TUESDAY, 15TH MAY 1962

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1.

15th May 1962.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased, on the advice of Her Majesty's Australian Ministers, to give orders for the following appointment to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:

To be an Additional Member of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order, for Gallantry:

Flight Lieutenant Leslie Jack HODGES (011445), Royal Australian Air Force.

During the disastrous floods of November 1961, Flight Lieutenant Hodges displayed outstanding courage, initiative and devotion to duty. When it became apparent that Royal Australian Air Force Base, Richmond, would be entirely isolated by flood waters, this officer returned to duty, entirely of his own volition, by walking from his home in Windsor across the only means of entry—the railway bridge—where rising and surging flood waters had already reached the level of the track. At this time the bridge had been condemned as dangerous for further use and all rail traffic had ceased. Within a few hours, flood waters were four feet above the line. Upon reaching his place of duty, Flight Lieutenant Hodges set about bringing the Transport Section to a state of readiness for the emergency, modifying many vehicles so that they could be operated in deep water. He then moved out with these vehicles into the area where the flood danger was the greatest and evacuated a number of families from flooded houses. On one occasion, he drove a Michigan tractor into flood waters in darkness to rescue a family. The depth of water was such that the tractor floated. Flight Lieutenant Hodges abandoned it, swam back to dry ground and had the tractor towed to shore. He again entered the water with two aircraft dinghies to complete the rescue of the family and their personal belongings. At a time when there was no known road connection between this Base and Windsor, Flight Lieutenant Hodges pioneered and cleared a route through scrub country, to enable urgent supplies and equipment to be brought to the town. He worked for 36 hours continuously, in danger, under pressure and without rest. His actions are more impressive when it is realised that, throughout this period and subsequently, he was suffering personal physical pain. This officer's actions in a period of emergency have added lustre to the traditions of the Royal Australian Air Force in the past. His behaviour was outstanding for courage in danger, for disregard of personal suffering and for determined resourceful initiative.

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15th May 1962.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased, on the advice of Her Majesty's Australian Ministers, to approve the award of the George Medal to the under-mentioned:

A. 21811 Sergeant Michael Stewart SWAIN, Royal Australian Air Force.

On 1st November 1961, Sergeant Swain was flying as a technical crew member of a Bell Sioux helicopter of No. 16 ALA Squadron when the aircraft crashed. On impact, the port side fuel tank ruptured and burned fiercely, particularly on the pilot's side of the aircraft. Sergeant Swain released his harness and escaped from the wreck with his clothing alight. He then heard a call for assistance from the pilot who was unable to release his harness. Sergeant Swain, with complete disregard for his personal safety, returned to the flame-enveloped cockpit to assist the pilot. At this stage there was a very great risk of explosion of either the whole of the wreckage, or of the starboard fuel tank. After assisting the pilot from the aircraft, Sergeant Swain attempted to smother, with his hands, the pilot's flaming clothing. This was unsuccessful, so he attempted to remove his flying suit. Being unable to do so, he removed his own overalls and with them extinguished the flames enveloping the pilot. Sergeant Swain's face and hands were very severely burnt. At hospital after the rescue, the pilot was placed on the dangerously ill list and Sergeant Swain on the seriously ill list. During this emergency, Sergeant Swain showed a complete disregard for his own safety. His coolness, self discipline and courage in the face of great danger were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Service. By his act of valour and gallant behaviour, he has set a magnificent example to others.

AIR MINISTRY

15th May 1962.

ROYAL AIR FORCE

GENERAL DUTIES BRANCH

Appointment to commission (permanent)

As Flight Lieutenants (Supplementary List):

Michael Richard MERRETT (3510758). 5th Jan. 1962.

Albert George TAYLOR (108135). 6th Feb. 1962.

Brian Malcolm ANDERSON (4178986). 30th Mar. 1962.