



The London Gazette

Published by Authority

Registered as a Newspaper

**

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TUESDAY, 5TH NOVEMBER 1968

State Intelligence

Buckingham Palace,
31st October 1968.

This day had Audience of The QUEEN:

His Excellency Señor Don Alfonso Quiñonez Meza, to present the Letters of Recall of his predecessor Señor Don Arturo Ramón González, and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary from the Republic of El Salvador.

Aircraftman Recruit Wickerson, with difficulty, succeeded in dragging the unconscious member to safety. Once outside, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation was successfully applied to the victim.

Throughout this emergency Aircraftman Recruit Wickerson displayed exceptional gallantry, cool-headedness and resourcefulness. Completely disregarding his own safety he assisted several fellow recruits from a fire-ravaged building and by his courageous rescue almost certainly saved the life of one.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1.
5th November 1968.

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 undermentioned:

(To be dated 31st October 1968)

Aircraftman Recruit Kevin Henry WICKERSON, A118162, Royal Australian Air Force.

On the night of 14th March 1968, a fire occurred in Recruit Barrack Block No. 99 at No. 1 Recruit Training Unit, Royal Australian Air Force, Base, Edinburgh, South Australia. This block was mainly occupied by new recruits who had only arrived at the Unit that day. Aircraftman Recruit Wickerson was awakened by the call of "fire" and went immediately to the aid of another member who was attempting to extinguish a fire, which was spreading along the block rooms. The smoke and flames soon became so heavy that they were forced to leave the building. At this stage cries for help were heard from within the smoke-filled rooms of the building. Without hesitating Aircraftman Recruit Wickerson rushed into the building and assisted a dazed member clear. When told that others still remained inside he re-entered and, although almost overcome by smoke and fumes, assisted two others from the building.

Aircraftman Recruit Wickerson, on learning that yet another person was still inside, once more attempted to enter the building but was driven back by smoke and fumes. Firemen wearing respirators, who by this time were at the scene, were also unable to enter, owing to the overwhelming fumes.

Aircraftman Recruit Wickerson then assisted the firemen in containing the fire and, at the first opportunity, re-entered the building to search for the missing person. In spite of the smoke he was able to find, with the aid of a torch, this person lying unconscious on a bed. The dense smoke continued to prevent others from entering the building but

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St. James's Palace, London S.W.1.
5th November 1968.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased, on the advice of Her Majesty's Australian Ministers, to approve the award of the British Empire Medal for Gallantry (Military Division) to the undermentioned:

(To be dated 31st October 1968)

Corporal Barry Thomas Edward ADAMS, A315127, Royal Australian Air Force Emergency Force.

Corporal Adams was at Royal Australian Air Force Base, Laverton, for his period of fourteen days' annual training, when, on 11th October 1967, a Royal Australian Navy Vampire aircraft crashed and burst into flames during take-off. Corporal Adams, as No. 1 Rescue Man in the Base Fire Crew, quickly arrived at the scene of the crash although the location of the wreckage was such that he was forced to run some distance to the site dressed in an asbestos fire suit. He immediately entered the fire and tried to rescue a crew member who was lying under one wing, engulfed in flames, but misting of his fire suit visor forced him to withdraw. Corporal Adams then tried to enter the flames without his helmet but the intense heat forced him back. He persevered and after another two attempts was finally able to drag the crew member clear.

At this time Corporal Adams was unaware that a second crew member, the pilot, was still in the wreckage. He directed the fire fighting and organised the movement of the wreckage backwards to expose the nose section where the pilot's body was recovered.

Throughout rescue operations the aircraft was burning fiercely and there was a possibility that the fuel tanks would explode. At one stage, while Corporal Adams was carrying the crew member clear, an ejection seat cartridge exploded, adding to the dangers involved.

At all times Corporal Adams' sole aim was to rescue the crew with complete disregard for his personal safety. In so doing he set an outstanding example of courage and unselfish devotion to duty.