



FIFTH SUPPLEMENT TO

The London Gazette

of Monday, 11th April 1988

Published by Authority

Registered as a Newspaper at the Post Office

TUESDAY, 12TH APRIL 1988

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

HONOURS AND AWARDS

AIR FORCE DEPARTMENT

Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB
12th April 1988

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the following award:

AIR FORCE CROSS

Flight Lieutenant Stephen Michael Fox (2623108) Royal Air Force

On 2nd July 1987 Flight Lieutenant Fox of Number 3 Squadron, Royal Air Force Gutersloh, was flying a Harrier at high speed and low level when his aircraft struck a large bird. The bird penetrated the cockpit leaving a large hole in the left hand console, causing an immediate and marked retardation. Fox was uninjured although shocked, but covered in bird remains and blood on his face, hands, legs and maps. He quickly realised that the impact had torn away the

emergency undercarriage handle and had initiated operation of the lowering system. Despite the high, but rapidly reducing airspeed and with all the wheels locked down, Fox realised he had just 5 minutes to land before hydraulic pressure dissipated and allowed the outriggers to unlock which would have prevented a safe rolling landing. The initial decision taken by Fox was to remain with his aircraft and try to recover to an airfield. This decision reflected a high degree of courage for the easier and simpler option would have been to eject from the stricken aircraft.

Fox was then faced with diverting to a German Air Force base with his problems increasing all the time. However, his coolness and calmness throughout this most unpleasant emergency resulted in the successful recovery of his aircraft at an unfamiliar foreign airfield within 4 minutes of the birdstrike. Throughout this incident Fox displayed outstanding skill in landing a sorely stricken aircraft without flap or instruments, and with a damaged engine, demonstrating professionalism, courage and coolness of the highest order. His performance during this incident has underlined the assessment that Fox is an outstanding officer and pilot. His exceptional airmanship, flying ability, coolness and courage was in the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force.

LONDON

Printed and published by HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE: 1988

Price 60p net

ISBN 0 11 661299 1

ISSN 0374-3721

