



FIFTH SUPPLEMENT
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Air Ministry, 24th April, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to confer the VICTORIA CROSS on the under-mentioned officer in recognition of most conspicuous bravery:—

Captain Edwin SWALES, D.F.C. (6101V), S.A.A.F., 582 Sqn. (deceased).

Captain Swales was "master bomber" of a force of aircraft which attacked Pforzheim on the night of February 23rd, 1945. As "master bomber," he had the task of locating the target area with precision and of giving aiming instructions to the main force of bombers following in his wake.

Soon after he had reached the target area he was engaged by an enemy fighter and one of his engines was put out of action. His rear guns failed. His crippled aircraft was an easy prey to further attacks. Unperturbed, he carried on with his allotted task; clearly and precisely he issued aiming instructions to the main force. Meanwhile the enemy fighter closed the range and fired again. A second engine of Captain Swales' aircraft was put out of action. Almost defenceless, he stayed over the target area issuing his aiming instructions until he was satisfied that the attack had achieved its purpose.

It is now known that the attack was one of the most concentrated and successful of the war.

Captain Swales did not, however, regard his mission as completed. His aircraft was damaged. Its speed had been so much reduced that it could only with difficulty be kept in the air. The blind-flying instruments were no longer working. Determined at all costs to prevent his aircraft and crew from falling into enemy hands, he set course for home. After an hour he flew into thin-layered cloud. He kept his course by skilful flying between the layers, but later heavy cloud and turbulent air conditions were met. The aircraft, by now over friendly territory, became more and more difficult to control; it was losing height steadily. Realising that the

situation was desperate Captain Swales ordered his crew to bale out. Time was very short and it required all his exertions to keep the aircraft steady while each of his crew moved in turn to the escape hatch and parachuted to safety. Hardly had the last crew-member jumped when the aircraft plunged to earth. Captain Swales was found dead at the controls.

Intrepid in the attack, courageous in the face of danger, he did his duty to the last, giving his life that his comrades might live.

Air Ministry, 24th April, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations:—

Distinguished Service Order.

Acting Wing Commander Rayner BAKER, D.F.C. (81930), R.A.F.V.R., 97 Sqn.

This officer has participated in more than sixty bombing missions during which he has attacked a wide range of enemy targets. He has displayed skill and courage of a high order and his determination to attack his targets with the greatest accuracy has set a very fine example. The successes he has achieved are a fine tribute to his sterling qualities.

Acting Flight Lieutenant Garry Munroe BLUMER. (Aus.413517), R.A.A.F., 450 (R.A.A.F.) Sqn.

This officer has completed a very large number of sorties against a wide range of enemy targets. He has displayed skill and courage of a high order and throughout his determination has been unbeatable. In March, 1945, in an attack on several enemy barges, Flight Lieutenant Blumer's aircraft was hit and damaged. He himself was wounded, suffering a broken leg. Although in much physical distress, this brave pilot flew back to a landing ground and brought his aircraft safely down with the undercarriage retracted. He displayed outstanding fortitude and resolution and his conduct impressed all.

Distinguished Flying Cross.

Acting Squadron Leader Robert Lionel John FITCH (41689), R.A.F.O., 143 Sqn.

Flying Officer Edward Leslie PARKER (152682), R.A.F.V.R., 143 Sqn.

As pilot and navigator of aircraft respectively, Squadron Leader Fitch and Flying Officer Parker