

holes and hatches thus localising the fire. The courage and devotion to duty displayed by Aircraftman Marsh undoubtedly saved his companion's life and prevented the refueller from becoming a total loss.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

*St. James's Palace, S.W.1, 2nd April, 1943.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the British Empire Medal (Military Division) to the undermentioned:—

1055558 Corporal Henry Douglas Houghton, Royal Air Force.

Corporal Houghton, who is employed as an armourer, has displayed outstanding zeal and devotion to duty. On one occasion during a period of intensive operations, Corporal Houghton was in charge of the bomb loading crew of a Lancaster aircraft when he observed a light under the bomb cell of another aircraft about 200 yards away. He saw some airmen leaving the spot and, knowing the aircraft to be loaded with bombs, he ran to it and found that a container of 90 incendiary bombs had been released. Displaying courage and initiative Corporal Houghton picked up and threw away some of the incendiaries, clearing those which were burning near to the wheels of the aircraft and others which were ejecting sparks into the bomb cell. The remainder were in one mass and burning fiercely. Corporal Houghton procured a steel sheet and covered the burning incendiaries with it. Having got this dangerous situation temporarily under control, he called to the ground crew who assisted him to push the aircraft clear. Under his direction the crew ultimately managed to subdue all the incendiaries. The aircraft concerned had on board several hundred incendiary bombs and one 4,000 lb. high explosive bomb. Corporal Houghton's gallant action undoubtedly saved a valuable aircraft and prevented damage to others in the vicinity. He sustained several burns on both hands which necessitated medical treatment for a considerable time.

750469 Corporal Herbert Leonard Sparks, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

This airman is a clerk in the station orderly room. During more than two years service in Malta he has displayed courage and determination, carrying out his duties under difficult conditions in a praiseworthy manner. Twice during heavy enemy air attacks, in March and April, 1942, the orderly room sustained severe damage, yet Corporal Sparks assisted in removing documents without thought of his personal safety. On one occasion he returned to his office to remove documents while a large unexploded bomb was within 50 yards of the building. Shortly afterwards the bomb exploded and destroyed the building. During a night in July, 1942, this airman was an occupant of a tent when one adjoining it, only five yards away, received a hit by an anti-personnel bomb. Although injured in five places by bomb splinters, Corporal Sparks crawled back into his tent which was on fire in an effort to extinguish the flames and rescue a companion who had been killed. Before he was taken to hospital he attempted to rescue another occupant of the tent who was injured. Corporal Sparks has displayed courage and devotion to duty which have been an example to all who have worked with him.

1318594 Leading Aircraftman Kenneth George Coles, Royal Air Force.

One night in December, 1942, Leading Aircraftman Coles was undergoing training as a navigator in an aircraft detailed for a navigation exercise. The aircraft crashed into the top of a hill and all members of the crew were seriously injured. Leading Aircraftman Coles, although suffering intense pain and being very weak, having sustained a compound fracture of the left arm with multiple abrasions and severe shock, dragged one of his helpless comrades out of the aircraft and clear of the wreckage. He then assisted the remaining two airmen to safety. During the whole of this time there was a grave danger of fire due to escaping petrol. Leading Aircraftman Coles displayed courage and devotion to duty of a very high standard.

*Air Ministry, 2nd April, 1943.*

ROYAL AIR FORCE.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy:—

*Bar to Distinguished Service Order.*

Acting Wing Commander Guy Pemrose GIBSON, D.S.O., D.F.C. (39438), No. 106 Squadron.

This officer has an outstanding operational record, having completed 172 sorties. He has always displayed the greatest keenness and, within the past 2 months, has taken part in 6 attacks against well defended targets, including Berlin. In March, 1943, he captained an aircraft detailed to attack Stuttgart. On the outward flight engine trouble developed but he flew on to his objective and bombed it from a low level. This is typical of his outstanding determination to make every sortie a success. By his skilful leadership and contempt for danger he has set an example which has inspired the squadron he commands.

*Distinguished Service Order.*

Wing Commander John Robert André EMBLING (36035), No. 77 Squadron.

In December, 1942, Wing Commander Emling captained an aircraft engaged on an operational mission. In hazardous circumstances his courage, fortitude and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force.

*Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (Flying).*

1383853 Sergeant Edward Wells TICKLER, No. 49 Squadron.

*Distinguished Flying Medal.*

Can/R.103101 Flight Sergeant John Lamont MATTHEWS, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 49 Squadron.

Can/R.96467 Flight Sergeant Edward John LOWANS, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 49 Squadron.

977392 Sergeant George Bernard SILVESTER, No. 49 Squadron.

One night in February, 1943, Flight Sergeants Matthews and Lowans and Sergeant Silvester were members of the crew of an aircraft captained by Sergeant Tickler, which was detailed for a mine-laying mission. When well on the outward flight an armed ship opened fire on the aircraft and the rear turret was hit but the captain proceeded on his course. Visibility in the target area was poor and Sergeant Tickler had to bring the aircraft down to 700 feet to locate the objective. Whilst at this height, during the commencement of its attacking run the aircraft was engaged by the ground defences. A number of anti-aircraft guns opened fire whilst it was held in the searchlights and the bomber was hit in the navigator's compartment, the rear turret, the pilot's cockpit and in the port wing. The flight engineer was severely wounded in the head and became unconscious. Sergeant Tickler was hit in the left shoulder and side, becoming so dazed that he almost lost control of the aircraft which commenced to dive. Sergeant Matthews, with great promptitude, however, pulled back the control column and brought the aircraft back to a height of 700 feet. Displaying great fortitude, Sergeant Tickler kept to his course, and the mines were dropped in the correct place. Not until this was accomplished did he inform his comrades of his injuries. On the return flight, although his left arm was entirely useless, he remained at the controls, being greatly assisted by Flight Sergeant Lowans and Sergeant Silvester who did everything possible to mitigate his task. Meanwhile, Flight Sergeant Matthews displayed great navigational ability and, although deprived of all wireless aid, he set courses which enabled his captain to reach an airfield in this country. Despite his injuries, Sergeant Tickler effected a perfect landing before collapsing over the controls. This captain displayed courage, fortitude and devotion to duty of the highest order, while the skill, gallantry and team work of his comrades, who rendered such valuable support, were worthy of high praise.

*Distinguished Flying Medal.*

1176875 Flight Sergeant Richard David ROBERTS, No. 158 Squadron.

One night in March, 1943, this airman captained an aircraft detailed to attack Nuremberg. Whilst some distance from the target,