

Commissions signed by the Lord Lieutenant of the County of Buckingham.

Colonel Philip Ashley Hall, D.S.O., M.C., T.D., of Hatfield Way, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Bucks,

Colonel Thomas Richard Pennefather Warren, C.B.E., of The Old Rectory, Puttenham, Herts,

to be Deputy Lieutenants.—Dated 14th July, 1941.

(111)

*Air Ministry,
5th August, 1941.*

ROYAL AIR FORCE.

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

NZ/401793 Sergeant James Allen WARD, Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 75 (N.Z.) Squadron.

On the night of 7th July, 1941, Sergeant Ward was second pilot of a Wellington returning from an attack on Munster.

When flying over the Zuider Zee at 13,000 feet, the aircraft was attacked from beneath by a Messerschmitt 110 which secured hits with cannon shell and incendiary bullets. The rear gunner was wounded in the foot but delivered a burst of fire which sent the enemy fighter down, apparently out of control.

Fire then broke out near the starboard engine and, fed by petrol from a split pipe, quickly gained an alarming hold and threatened to spread to the entire wing. The crew forced a hole in the fuselage and made strenuous efforts to reduce the fire with extinguishers and even the coffee in their vacuum flasks, but without success. They were then warned to be ready to abandon the aircraft.

As a last resort, Sergeant Ward volunteered to make an attempt to smother the fire with an engine cover which happened to be in use as a cushion. At first he proposed to discard his parachute, to reduce wind resistance, but was finally persuaded to take it. A rope from the dinghy was tied to him, though this was of little help and might have become a danger had he been blown off the aircraft. With the help of the navigator, he then climbed through the narrow astro-hatch and put on his parachute. The bomber was flying at a reduced speed but the wind pressure must have been sufficient to render the operation one of extreme difficulty.

Breaking the fabric to make hand and foot holds where necessary, and also taking advantage of existing holes in the fabric, Sergeant Ward succeeded in descending three feet to the wing and proceeding another three feet to a position behind the engine, despite the slipstream from the airscrew, which nearly blew him off the wing. Lying in this precarious position, he smothered the fire in the wing fabric and tried to push the cover into the hole in the wing and on to the leaking pipe from which the fire came. As soon as he removed his hand, however, the terrific wind blew the cover out and when he tried again it was lost. Tired as he was, he was

able with the navigator's assistance, to make successfully the perilous journey back into the aircraft.

There was now no danger of the fire spreading from the petrol pipe, as there was no fabric left nearby, and in due course it burnt itself out. When the aircraft was nearly home some petrol which had collected in the wing blazed up furiously but died down quite suddenly. A safe landing was then made despite the damage sustained by the aircraft. The flight home had been made possible by the gallant action of Sergeant Ward in extinguishing the fire on the wing in circumstances of the greatest difficulty and at the risk of his life.

*Air Ministry,
5th August, 1941.*

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:—

Distinguished Service Order.

Wing Commander Charles Henry APPLETON, D.F.C. (24139), No. 604 Squadron.

This officer has commanded the squadron since February, 1941, and by his sound organisation, drive, energy, and high skill in flying has enabled it to attain a splendid record in night fighting. Whilst under his inspiring leadership, the squadron has destroyed at least 45 enemy aircraft at night and damaged many others. He has personally destroyed two and damaged two enemy aircraft.

Wing Commander John Ralph Alexander PEEL, D.F.C. (33011).

Since March, 1941, this officer has led the wing over France on twenty-eight occasions and, under his leadership, it has destroyed thirty-two enemy aircraft. In April, 1941, he led a formation of five aircraft on a successful low flying machine-gun attack against Berck and damaged or destroyed three Messerschmitt 109's. One afternoon in July, 1941, he was shot down off the French coast but, despite this experience, he led the wing the next morning. The success of the wing in escorting and destroying enemy aircraft has been due to Wing Commander Peel's training and leadership.

Squadron Leader Michael Lister ROBINSON, D.F.C. (37300), No. 609 Squadron.

This officer has commanded the squadron since October, 1940. He has acted as leader in recent offensive operations over occupied territory and, on numerous occasions, has led his wing with determination, skill and courage. The successes obtained reflect the greatest credit on the leadership and devotion to duty of this officer. He has destroyed at least fourteen enemy aircraft and damaged others.

Bar to the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Acting Squadron Leader Percival Stanley TURNER, D.F.C. (41631), No. 145 Squadron.

This officer has led his squadron on all sweeps over France and has set a splendid example by his quiet coolness in the face of