



# FIFTH SUPPLEMENT TO The London Gazette

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## CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.

1st June, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—

*To be Additional Members of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order.*

Flying Officer Geoffrey Hobbs (153926), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

In December, 1944, Flying Officer Hobbs was a pupil navigator engaged on a training flight in a Beaufighter aircraft when both engines failed. The pilot made a disastrous belly-landing, the aircraft bursting immediately into flames. Flying Officer Hobbs, though shaken by the crash, went to the assistance of his pilot who was dazed and unable to extricate himself from his cockpit. After first disengaging the pilot's parachute and safety straps, Flying Officer Hobbs lifted him out on the wing and pushed him over the leading edge, this being the quickest way to get the dazed airman clear of the flames. By this time, the clothing of both occupants was alight and Flying Officer Hobbs sustained severe burns to both of his arms and face. By his prompt and courageous action, presence of mind, and complete disregard for his own safety, Flying Officer Hobbs undoubtedly saved the life of the pilot.

Pilot Officer Herbert Eric GOLDSTRAW (Can./J.88659), Royal Canadian Air Force.

In July, 1944, a Halifax aircraft crashed at White Waltham on returning from operations and caught fire. Pilot Officer Goldstraw's aircraft had landed previously at the airfield and this officer, together with other members of his crew, as well as personnel of the A.T.A., immediately ran to the crashed aircraft. The unconscious rear gunner was lying partly in the turret and partly in the rear of the fuselage. The turret was jammed. Together with an A.T.A. instructor, Pilot Officer Goldstraw, finding that the turret could not be swung back to release the rear gunner owing to the position in which he was lying, entered the fuselage after forcing the normal entrance. At this time the starboard wing was blazing furiously and the heat was so intense that the starboard elevator burst into flames. It was necessary to remove the rear gunner's flying equipment before putting him back into the turret which could then be swung, thereby enabling helpers

outside to extricate him. The gallant rescue was successfully accomplished in circumstances of great danger. Despite the flames and smoke, there was risk of the petrol tanks, bombs and ammunition exploding and, when the rear turret had been swung and the gunner passed to safety, exit was only possible through smoke and fumes. Pilot Officer Goldstraw showed courage and self-sacrifice in an action which undoubtedly was responsible for saving the life of a comrade.

Warrant Officer Joseph Henry Frederick CUTLER (1576673), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

One evening in January, 1945, a fire broke out in an aircraft in a dispersal area at an airfield. The aircraft had been refuelled and loaded with bombs, and was being re-armed. Almost immediately ammunition commenced to explode in the aircraft, and there was a risk of the bombs exploding. Warrant Officer Cutler, with complete disregard for his own safety, began taxiing an adjacent aircraft away from the dispersal area when a 500 lb. bomb exploded, fragments and blast striking the taxiing aircraft. He continued to taxi the damaged aircraft to a safe place and, when this had been done, immediately returned and taxied another aircraft away. All this time ammunition was exploding and there was imminent danger of more bombs detonating as another aircraft was burning fiercely. Warrant Officer Cutler nevertheless returned to an office, which was near the burning aircraft and close to a petrol dump, and removed flying records and pilots flying helmets to safety. This Warrant Officer displayed great courage and complete disregard for his personal safety.

Warrant Officer Herbert Douglas RANDELL (Aus. 411642), Royal Australian Air Force.

In February, 1945, Warrant Officer Randell was a member of the crew of a flying boat detailed for an operational sortie. The aircraft crashed on taking off. Weather conditions were bad; the aircraft was rapidly filling with water, trapping members of the crew inside the hull. Warrant Officer Randell managed to enlarge a small hole in the hull sufficiently to allow exit. He helped three of the crew out through the hole he had made and inflated their safety jackets. Then, hearing cries for assistance, he went to the aid of the other members of the crew. In the darkness and through the ice-cold water he found them and after inflating their safety jackets he assisted them to safety. One member of the crew was so exhausted that he would probably have lost his life but for the courage and fortitude of Warrant Officer Randell.