



FLEDGLINGS Flying schools all over the Empire are training thousands of R.A.F. pilots. Here is a group of pupils at an E.F.T.S. in Southern Rhodesia leaving their Tigers after the morning's instruction.

gunner respectively of an aircraft which was detailed to attack a target at Duisburg. Whilst flying through a large belt of searchlights in the target area the aircraft was attacked by an enemy fighter and sustained severe damage—the rear turret was put out of action, the wireless transmitter rendered unserviceable, the hydraulics hit, and with other damage also received the aircraft became practically uncontrollable. The second pilot was seriously wounded and the observer cut on the head. A large fire broke out near the rear turret, occupied by Sgt. Billington, enveloping it in flames. Intercommunication was impossible and, in the circumstances, Sgt. Billington, completely unaware of anything that was happening in the front of the aircraft, might have been justified in thinking that the aircraft was going down in flames. Undaunted, he got out of his turret and, regardless of the fact that he was drenched with oil, attempted to extinguish the fire with his hands. He then obtained his parachute from the turret and used it to smother the flames. Later, Sgt. Billington was able to secure a fire extinguisher with which he finally put out the fire. In the face of great difficulties P/O. Gregory flew the aircraft back to this country and made a safe landing. Throughout, P/O. Gregory showed great determination and fortitude while Sgt. Billington displayed great courage and a complete disregard for his safety. Both have previously participated in numerous operational missions.

Flt. Lt. L. H. CASSON, A.A.F., No. 616 Squadron.—This officer has been engaged on operations over a long period and has destroyed two, probably destroyed four and damaged a further two enemy aircraft. Flt. Lt. Casson carried out many offensive patrols following the Dunkirk evacuation and later fought in the Battle of Britain. This year he has participated in a large number of offensive patrols over Northern France. His efficiency, leadership and courage have set an excellent example.

Sqn. Ldr. A. D. NESBITT, R.C.A.F., No. 401 Squadron.—This officer has displayed fine leadership and exceptional devotion to duty throughout a long period of active operations against the enemy. On a particular occasion in December, 1940, Sqn. Ldr. Nesbitt led a section of aircraft over the sea for two hours without wireless assistance in extremely adverse weather conditions; visibility was practically nil. His judgment enabled the section eventually to land safely, although their petrol was practically exhausted, without loss to personnel. Sqn. Ldr. Nesbitt has destroyed two enemy aircraft.

Act. Sqn. Ldr. J. H. THOMPSON, R.A.F.O., F/O. W. J. O. COLEMAN, both of No. 269 Squadron, Coastal Command Sqn. Ldr. Thompson and F/O. Coleman were pilot and navigator-bomb-aimer respectively of an aircraft in which they carried out a successful attack on an enemy submarine. In very poor weather conditions, F/O. Coleman skilfully navigated to the position and, co-operating splendidly with his pilot, attacked with such good effect that the submarine surfaced.

When Sqn. Ldr. Thompson opened fire with his machine-guns, the submarine crew waved a white flag. One of His Majesty's Destroyers later took charge of the submarine. The success of the operation was undoubtedly due to the splendid teamwork of these two officers. Both Sqn. Ldr. Thompson and F/O. Coleman have previously carried out numerous operational missions.

Sqn. Ldr. E. V. KNOWLES
Act. Sqn. Ldr. J. T. BOUWENS, R.A.F.O., No. 51.
Act. Sqn. Ldr. G. K. LAWRENCE, R.A.F.O., No. 78.
Act. Sqn. Ldr. J. D. REARDON, No. 51.
Act. Sqn. Ldr. J. A. SLATER, R.A.F.O., No. 150.
Act. Flt. Lt. J. R. A. CARELESS, No. 35.
Act. Flt. Lt. P. W. M. CARLVON, No. 150.
Act. Flt. Lt. J. HURRY, No. 51.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING MEDAL

Sgt. W. BILLINGTON, R.A.F.V.R., No. 149 Squadron.—For citation see P/O. Gregory, D.F.C.

Sgt. R. S. COLVIN, No. 38 Squadron.—One night in August, 1941, this airman pilot carried out an attack on shipping in Tripoli harbour from a height of 1,500 feet. Defying an intense barrage, Sgt. Colvin secured hits on two ships, setting them both on fire. The flames acted as beacons to following aircraft thus enabling them successfully to attack targets in the harbour. Sgt. Colvin has completed forty-six operational missions and has at all times displayed great skill, courage and determination.

Air Sgt. F. JOUBERT, S.A.A.F., No. 24 Squadron.—In August, 1941, this airman was lower gunner of an aircraft which was attacked by six enemy fighters while returning from bombing an enemy aerodrome. As a result, part of the aircraft was set on fire while the top gunner was seriously wounded. Sgt. Joubert attempted to extinguish the fire but his efforts were unavailing. His captain by this time, had flown the aircraft over land and ordered the crew to abandon it but, as the intercommunication was out of action, neither Sgt. Joubert nor his wounded comrade heard the instruction. On seeing the pilot and observer leaving the aircraft, Sgt. Joubert realised the position and immediately assisted his wounded comrade from his turret to the bottom escape hatch where the wounded gunner's parachute harness became entangled on the rear sight of a gun. Lifting the gun from its mounting, Sgt.

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Joubert dropped both gun and gunner through the hatch. While doing so, the foresight of the gun caught the rip cord of Sgt. Joubert's parachute causing it to open inside the aircraft. Gathering up the parachute in his arms, Sgt. Joubert then jumped, falling to within 1,000 feet of the ground before his parachute opened properly. Throughout Sgt. Joubert displayed remarkable coolness and great gallantry in assisting his badly wounded comrade to escape from the burning aircraft.

Sgt. T. C. RIGLER, No. 609 Squadron.—This airman has carried out 82 sorties since March, 1941. He has displayed outstanding keenness to destroy the enemy in combat and to harass him on the ground. Sgt. Rigler has destroyed at least seven hostile aircraft (three were destroyed in one sweep) and has damaged a further two.

Awards Gained in the Cologne Raid

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

On the morning of 12th August, 1941, Blenheim bombers carried out simultaneous attacks on the great power stations near Cologne. A strong force attacked the station at Knapsack, whilst a smaller force attacked two stations at Quadrath. These missions involved a flight of some 250 miles over enemy territory, which was carried out at an altitude of 100 feet. At Knapsack the target was accurately bombed and machine gunned from between 200 and 800 feet and at Quadrath both power stations were hit from the height of the chimneys; the turbine house at one of the two stations was left a mass of flames and smoke. The success of this combined daylight attack and the co-ordination of the many formations of aircraft depended largely on accurate timing throughout the flight. That complete success was achieved, despite powerful opposition from enemy ground and air forces, is a high tribute to the calm courage and resolute determination displayed by the following officers and airmen, who participated in various capacities as leaders and members of the aircraft crews:—

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

Act. Wing Cdr. J. O. C. KERCHER, No. 21 Squadron; Act. Wing Cdr. J. L. NICOL, No. 114 Squadron. (Missing.)

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Act. Sqn. Ldr. W. J. EDRICH, R.A.F.V.R., No. 21 Squadron; Act. Sqn. Ldr. A. S. HODSON, No. 114 Squadron; Act. Sqn. Ldr. H. J. W. MEARIN, R.A.F.V.R., No. 82 Squadron; Act. Sqn. Ldr. R. T. STUBBS, No. 129 Squadron; Act. Flt. Lt. R. J. CHAMBERLAIN, R.A.F.V.R., No. 139 Squadron; Act. Flt. Lt. P. J. CHANNER, R.A.F.V.R., No. 18 Squadron; Act. Flt. Lt. F. R. H. CHARNEY, R.A.F.V.R., No. 107 Squadron; F/O. H. J. MADDEN, R.A.F.V.R., No. 114 Squadron (Missing); Act. F/O. T. H. BAKER, D.F.M., No. 114 Squadron; P/O. H. R. CROMBIE, R.A.F.V.R., No. 139 Squadron.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING MEDAL

Flt. Sgt. B. G. EVANS, No. 21 Squadron; Sgt. J. H. PILLEY, No. 18 Squadron; Sgt. J. D. WOODBURN, R.C.A.F., No. 12 Squadron.



UNOFFICIAL CHAT. The Hon. E. Lucas Guest, Minister for Air for Rhodesia, shares a joke with Air Comdre. C. W. Meredith, A.F.C., in command of the Air Training Group there.