

ROYAL AIR FORCE AWARDS No. 253 .

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the undermentioned awards in recognition of gallant conduct:-

MILITARY MEDAL.

532737 Sergeant Victor Clement CORDERY,  
747865 Sergeant George Cyril STARKEY, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, (missing).

In April, 1941, Sergeants Cordery and Starkey were members of the crew of an aircraft which, whilst at its moorings, was attacked by a formation of seven Junkers 87's flying in line astern. When the leading pilot dived to make a front gun attack, Sergeants Cordery and Starkey coolly withheld their fire until the enemy was in close range and continued these tactics against the remainder, who attacked at short intervals. During the action, the aircraft was repeatedly hit about the wings, midship section and free gunner's position and on the third attack the inner tanks caught fire and the aircraft rapidly became a mass of flames.

Nevertheless, Sergeants Cordery and Starkey remained at their posts and kept up their fire during the seven attacks, and destroyed one of the enemy aircraft and hit others. It was not until further action was impossible that Sergeants Cordery and Starkey left their posts. They were last to leave and the aircraft sank five minutes later. Both airmen displayed great courage and devotion to duty throughout.

939506 Sergeant William Allan THYNNE,  
520175 Sergeant Edgar William Henry ZIETHING.

In May, 1941, Sergeants Thynne and Ziething were, respectively, air gunner and observer in an aircraft which carried out an attack on a fort at Rutbah. After the attack Sergeant Thynne drew the attention of his pilot to an aircraft burning on the ground. A figure waving was seen to be beside the aircraft. The pilot landed alongside and Sergeant Ziething, who jumped out before the aircraft had completely stopped, went to rescue the survivor.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Thynne went to the burning wreckage, where Sergeant Ziething shortly joined him and, in the face of enemy fire from armoured cars and despite ammunition exploding in all directions, both airmen searched the wreckage in an attempt to discover the remainder of the crew. Unable to find any traces of them, Sergeants Thynne and Ziething returned to their own aircraft which flew off with the rescued officer on board. Both these airmen displayed great courage and complete disregard for their own safety.

550781 Corporal George Eric BANFIELD.

During the intensive bombardment prior to and during the enemy invasion of Crete, when telephone communication had been destroyed, Corporal Banfield maintained contact by wireless telegraphy between the station and operations room at Heraklion. For over three days he continued to pass vital information, whilst working in a tent without protection from machine gun fire and bombing.

Later, when the unit of some 50 R.A.F. personnel, mainly untrained in fighting, were cut off from the defended area at Heraklion and it became necessary to fight a way through German forces, Corporal Banfield displayed conspicuous bravery and was always the first to volunteer for any difficult or dangerous task.

On two occasions he led small parties in outflanking enemy posts which were keeping the main body under fire, destroying their posts and capturing prisoners.

When the main body were unable to enter our own lines, as our troops failed to recognise them, Corporal Banfield was the first to volunteer for a small party which succeeded in getting through and warning our troops of the approach of the main body. Corporal Banfield, by his courageous efforts, contributed materially to the ability of the unit to fight its way through a numerically superior enemy force.

#### Notes on Careers.

Sergeant Cordery was born at Harrow in 1916. He is a wireless operator/air gunner.

Sergeant Starkey was born at Southend in 1913. His wife lives at Thundersley, Essex. He was a postman before enlisting in the R.A.F.V.R. in 1939 as a wireless operator/air gunner, [unclear].

Sergeant Thynne was born at South Shields in 1921. His mother lives at Whitley Bay, Northumberland. He was a clerk before enlisting as a wireless operator in 1939. He is now a wireless operator/air gunner.

He was awarded the British Empire Medal earlier this month for his action in putting out a fire in the fuselage of his aircraft while it was engaged in dive bombing enemy transport on the Addis Ababa-Dessie road. (A.M.B.No.4681).

Sergeant Ziething was born at Southwark in 1914. He was a farm worker before enlisting in 1935 as an aircraft hand. He is now an air observer.

Corporal Banfield was born at Fulham in 1920. His father lives at South Morton, Didcot, Berks. He enlisted from school in 1936 as a boy under training as wireless operator. He is now a wireless electrical mechanic.

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