

AWARDS OF MILITARY CROSS & MILITARY MEDAL: CITATIONS

Following Citations issued for publication, apply to Military Awards gazetted on March 26 and April 23:-

THE MILITARY CROSS

Lieutenant Reginald Kilner Brasier HITCHCOCK (121761),
Royal Armoured Corps (Dragoon Guards) (Wool, Dorset).

In the vicinity of MSUS on the 23rd January 1942, Division Headquarters was being pursued by a considerable number of enemy tanks. Lieutenant Hitchcock, who was in charge of Divisional Headquarters protectional troops, was ordered to engage the enemy tanks; this he did immediately with three tanks, knocking out one belonging to the enemy. He then over-ran a number of enemy anti-tank guns in a neighbouring wadi, destroying several and killing the crews.

This officer displayed initiative, ability and courage in engaging and inflicting considerable casualties to superior enemy forces, without loss to his own troops.

Second-Lieutenant John Rennie BALLINGAL (170388),
Royal Armoured Corps (Hussars) (Chelsea).

Second-Lieutenant Ballingal was on patrol with his troop North of ANTELAT on the 25th January, 1942, when an enemy column approached his position on high ground. Despite the fact that there was a tank battle going on near him he gave valuable and accurate information. He shortly came under heavy fire whilst picking up the crew of a British tank. The fact that these men were on his car, rendered his guns, inoperative; he nevertheless continued to give information, although his chances of getting away became more remote. One of the cars of his troop was knocked out, but, instead of making good his escape he went to the other car to pick up the crew in the hope that he might be able to rescue them and get away. This was done under heavy fire from tanks at 500 yards range. He continued to give accurate and useful information till his own car was knocked out and he had to surrender. He was taken on the back of a German tank to MSUS, but whilst he was on this tank he managed to destroy codes and documents of high importance. On arrival at MSUS, he was transferred with the whole of his troop to lorries and left MSUS for the South, in convoy. The lorry they were on broke down and the rest of the convoy went on. The German Lance-Corporal in charge appeared to have lost his way so Second-Lieutenant Ballingal proffered assistance, which was accepted, and brought the lorry back to our lines, so that the captors and captives changed hands.

Second-Lieutenant Ballingal showed great bravery and intelligence apart from giving valuable information and saving his comrades whilst under fire.

Lieutenant William FRASER (132513),
The Gordon Highlanders (Warwick).

On the night of the 21st/22nd December, 1941, Lieutenant Fraser carried out a successful operation on an aerodrome East of AGEDABIA. He led a party of four men through enemy positions which had been located and fixed by observation during the day, and succeeded in reaching the aerodrome without detection. He destroyed thirtyseven aircraft, a bomb dump and fuel supplies, and then withdrew his party without loss, through enemy patrols attempting to intercept them.

Captain Archibald Miles CANTER (169597)
Royal Army Medical Corps (East Sheen).

On the 21st January, 1942, Captain Canter was sent to MNEISCA with a support group. About mid-day Stuka bombers appeared and dropped bombs causing serious casualties among the fighting troops. Among the casualties were four cases requiring immediate blood transfusion and one case requiring amputation of the foot. While the amputation was being carried out more bombers arrived and commenced bombing the vicinity. Captain Canter sent all non-essential personnel to take cover, and with a Serjeant continued to operate and give transfusions, despite the great danger from bombs exploding around them.

When all the wounded had been treated he would not leave the spot as he knew that more wounded were to be expected. An officer called and warned Captain Canter that a column of enemy tanks was moving in the direction of his station, but he still would not move until receiving orders personally from his Commanding Officer. He remained in situ until the last of the casualties had been evacuated; by this time all fighting troops had withdrawn from the area and there were no troops between him and the enemy.

Captain Canter's disregard of danger and devotion to duty were instrumental in saving the lives of at least five very seriously wounded men.

THE MILITARY MEDAL

No. 748458 Staff-Serjeant Arthur Holden,
Royal Regiment of Artillery. (Burnley)

At GHEMINES on 28th January, 1942, Staff-Serjeant Holden showed initiative, devotion to duty and determination. While attempting to recover a bogged vehicle, he and the driver were cut off by an enemy column. He walked some nine miles for assistance, but found the place he had proceeded to was occupied by the enemy. He returned to the lorry and continued work. At dawn on the 29th January an Italian officer and soldier drove up on a motor cycle. The officer who had a pistol demanded his surrender. S/Serjt. Holden drew his pistol and shot the officer in the hand. The soldier fled, but S/Sjt. Holden wounded him with a rifle shot and took both prisoner. He then met a lorry with Indian soldiers who were escaping from BENGHAZI, took charge of the party and headed Southward, eventually falling in with one of our Forces. He then handed over his two prisoners. S/Serjt. Holden has consistently shown coolness, resource and leadership under fire.

No. 1626138 Serjeant Sydney Barrett,
Royal Regiment of Artillery (Birmingham)

On 28th January 1942, between BENINA and BERCA, Serjeant Barrett with his gun detachment covered the withdrawal of the remainder of his Troop and unprotected columns of mechanical transport, in the face of shelling, machine-gun and rifle fire. With coolness, skill and courage he held his ground, engaged, and was largely responsible for destroying, an enemy column composed of a tank, two armoured fighting vehicles and other transport. Not until the withdrawal had been successfully achieved and all opposing fire silenced, did he take his gun out of action and rejoin his troop. By his fine leadership and disregard of personal danger he was an inspiration and example to the men under his command and the entire troop.

/Gunner Luke COWIE

(No. 845070 Gunner Luke COWIE,
Royal Regiment of Artillery (Wingate, Co. Durham).

On the 28th January, 1942, Gunner Cowie was with a patrol about 20 miles north of AGEDABIA, which was operating down the AGEDABIA-BENGHAZI road. An enemy lorry was seen approaching which had a machine gun mounted on it in front. The lorry was proceeding cautiously covered by two scouts on foot, who periodically waved the lorry to come on when they found the ground clear. The patrol laid an ambush and captured the two scouts. Gunner Cowie, who was the driver of the wireless truck, showed great resource in immediately putting on one of the scouts helmets and field glasses. He then went out into the road and made a pretence of observing the ground, and subsequently waving the lorry on. When it did not move he went down the road towards it waving furiously until it started to follow him. This had the desired effect and led the lorry into the ambush where it was engaged; one German officer and twelve other ranks being taken prisoner. During this episode Gunner Cowie showed great resource and complete disregard of personal danger which led to this successful ambush.

(No. 6397604 Serjeant William Richard RASELL,
The Royal Sussex Regiment (Haywards Heath, Sussex).

Serjeant Rasell was in charge of a Carrier Platoon on the 29th January, 1942, in the vicinity of ANTELAT, when the Platoon was ordered to attack an enemy column. Although fired upon at point-blank range by an anti-tank gun, Serjeant Rasell did not hesitate to take his carrier straight towards it and, after killing the crew, destroyed the gun. The courage and offensive spirit shown by Serjeant Rasell were beyond all praise and he set a magnificent example to all around him.

(No. 2928701 Lance-Serjeant Stanley GRAY, D.C.M.,
The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders (Edinburgh).

At EL FAIDIA on 2nd February, 1942, Serjeant Gray's Company were holding a position astride the main road, which was to be held as a rearguard during a withdrawal by night. When the enemy attacked the position, this N.C.O. showed a fine example of courage to his men under heavy fire and was instrumental in discovering enemy infiltration. The enemy overran two forward sections in the darkness and he went to find out the situation and was captured by a German officer and Italian N.C.O. Displaying considerable presence of mind he led these two up to the reserve section and when near it, shouted the order to fire. Both the enemy were killed and he escaped. He then organised the withdrawal of the remaining men under his Platoon Commander, who was wounded, and took up a position to delay the enemy. It was entirely due to Serjeant Gray's coolness and courage that the whole platoon were not overrun in very difficult country.

(No. T/92429 Driver Theodore Arthur WALKER,
Royal Army Service Corps (Charlton, S.E.7.).

On the 21st January, 1942, Driver Walker was sent forward to pick up some wounded men in the MNEISCA area. On his way back his ambulance became bogged in sand. When attempting to dig his vehicle out he was machine-gunned from the air; the back of the ambulance was riddled with bullets but no one was injured. With the help of his ambulance orderly, he took the patients out, carried them to cover, and then returned to try and recover his vehicle. He was again attacked and so took cover until darkness when he again returned and succeeded in getting his ambulance on to a track. He then went back with the orderly and carried the patients to the ambulance and proceeded to his destination during darkness, successfully evacuating the wounded men. During this time, he, the patients and also the vehicle, were in danger of being captured. By his gallant conduct Driver Walker set a splendid example of determination and courage.

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