

SEAMAN RESCUED PILOT FROM BLAZING BOMBER

While ammunition and Verey lights in a Lancaster bomber, which had crashed and was on fire, were exploding, Leading Seaman R.J. Boyd, D.S.M., of Bournemouth, helped to move the badly injured pilot to safety, and then to recover the body of another member of the aircraft's crew from the wreckage.

For his bravery, Leading Seaman Boyd has been commended in a Special Order of the Day by the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth Command, Admiral Sir Charles J.C. Little, G.B.E., K.C.B.

The Lancaster crashed on the Sussex Downs.

When Leading Seaman Boyd arrived, four men, Mr. P. Chapman, Mr. F.T. Denyer, Mr. H. Privett and Mr. G. Scutt, all of Petworth, Sussex, had dragged the badly injured pilot from the wreckage.

A report to the Naval authorities states that the four men worked under Boyd's direction. Ammunition and Verey lights were exploding and the aircraft was burning fiercely. Some of the exploding ammunition narrowly missed the rescuers. On a stretcher improvised out of a parachute, the injured airman, a Squadron Leader of the Royal Air Force, was carried clear of the aircraft.

Leading Seaman Boyd thought another airman was trapped, and he led the rescue party to the wreckage. Oil had sprayed round the aircraft, and ammunition was still exploding, but Boyd and his party recovered another airman who was dead. The men rendered first aid to the injured man until he was removed to hospital.

"The men," the report adds, "seems to have totally disregarded any danger to themselves, and probably saved the injured airman from being burnt in the wreckage. They also seem to have appreciated fully that apart from exploding ammunition, there was a risk of bombs being on board the aircraft."

Leading Seaman Boyd, who joined the Navy in 1919, was awarded the D.S.M. for his courage during an operation off Bardia in July 1941.

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