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Air Ministry News Service

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FIRST AID IN THE AIR

The "admirable conduct" of a New Zealander, Sergeant P.H. Stewart of Auckland, has been commended by the commander-in-chief of Bomber Command in his routine orders. During a recent attack on Brest Sergeant Stewart, an observer, saved the life of his second pilot by administering first aid when he was wounded. The medical officer who saw the second pilot directly after the aircraft landed said that "no doctor could have given better treatment in the circumstances".

This is Sergeant Stewart's own account of the incident: "We were making our bomb-run on Brest when searchlights held us and shell bursts came very close. The second pilot was back in the astro hatch keeping a look-out for fighters when he was hit by a shell fragment. We had dropped our bombs and I hurried to give him help. His left arm was hurt pretty badly and he was losing blood fast.

"I could see that the arm was fractured, and it looked as if an artery had been cut. The wireless operator and I laid him out on the bed. We could not get his clothes off but I put a tourniquet above the wound and gave him some morphia. He did not complain of anything, except the cold, so the front gunner, wireless operator and I let him have our Irvin jackets to keep him warm. We also gave him oxygen and some hot coffee.

"We must have been fifteen minutes in flak and searchlights but we shook them off in the end and got out to sea on the way home. Each hour I undid the tourniquet, but our patient bled so severely that I had to put it straight back. When we landed at last, away from our base, the station medical officer said we had done all the right things and asked where I had picked up my knowledge. I told him I'd no other first aid experience than the instruction given by the medical officer on our station. I am glad to say that our second pilot is getting over his wound though they could not save his arm."

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