

X-95-470

E A S T C O A S T F L O O D S .

The Home Secretary Presents Awards to
Five American Airmen

Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, the Home Secretary, presented Awards to five members of the United States Air Force at the Home Office this afternoon (Tuesday, 1st September, 1953) for their gallantry in the East Coast Floods.

The citations were read as follows:-

Honorary Member of the Order of the British
Empire (Military Division)

Major Julian E. Perkinson,
47th Installations Squadron,
Royal Air Force Station,
Sculthorpe.

Major Perkinson received a telephone call informing him that the sea had gone over the wall in Hunstanton and that people living along the beach were in danger. He went to Hunstanton where he found the South Beach flooded and people on roof tops unable to get to safety. Major Perkinson immediately took command of the situation. He asked the Royal Air Force Station, Sculthorpe, for rescue personnel, equipment and vehicles which could be used for rescue operations. Major Perkinson supervised the clearing of the road of civilian vehicles that had been flooded and were unable to move. The road was cleared to enable the rescue boats to be launched upon their arrival. He also organised and supervised rescue operations both at Heacham and Holme flood areas. Under his command the rescue activities were co-ordinated and the maximum use made of the equipment and men available, and many persons were rescued from the flood waters. Major Perkinson directed the entire operation continuously from 7.0 p.m. on the 31st of January until he was relieved at 7.0 p.m. on Sunday, the 1st of February.

George Medal

Staff Sergeant Freeman A. Kilpatrick,
3rd Communications Squadron,
Royal Air Force Station,
Sculthorpe.

On the evening of the 31st of January, 1953, Staff Sergeant Freeman A. Kilpatrick, when flood tides and winds above 85 knots were threatening to engulf his house in Hunstanton, went out into the storm without any regard for his own safety to warn other families, both American and English, of the impending disaster. He returned and placed his family on the second floor of his home: then, swimming in the raging water and debris, he rescued eighteen persons. He then swam back to his home to evacuate his wife, child and two English people to the roof of his home, where they remained until the following morning when rescued. Through his efforts, other families were able to escape while he and his family were forced to suffer the worst of the storm during the night.

BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL (Military Division)

Airman First Class Jake J. Smith,
67 Air Rescue Squadron,
Royal Air Force Station,
Sculthorpe.

Airman Smith, with complete disregard for his own personal safety and well being, displayed heroism above and beyond the call of duty. He was a rescue crew member of an amphibious track laying vehicle which was sunk by two large waves. He was stranded soaking wet on a roof top himself for two hours. Later, in helping to evacuate survivors, he heard another Airman calling for help and plunged into the water and dragged this man, who had fainted, and the seven survivors on the life raft, twenty yards to safety. Using a raft himself, he found three other survivors. Airman Smith continued searching for survivors in the icy waters for two hours until his Commanding Officer ordered him to rest. After resting an hour, Airman Smith again volunteered to go out in the flood waters to launch a stranded airborne life boat stuck on the railway track.

QUEEN'S COMMENDATIONS for brave conduct

Technical Sergeant John J. Germaine,
United States Air Force,
Sculthorpe.

Airman 1st Class Jimmy Brown,
47th Air Police Squadron,
United States Air Force,
Sculthorpe.

For rescuing persons trapped by the floods at Heacham,
Norfolk, on the 31st of January, 1953.