

C A S E 1186.

Carl TAYLOR - 29 years.

Auxiliary Fireman.

Maison Carl, 59 Beckenham Road, Beckenham.

A.F.S. Service. - Beckenham - 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  years.

Civil Occupation: Master Hairdresser.

Rescue of Auxiliary Fireman from blazing vehicle, on 16th/17th April, 1941 at night.

Recommended by: Beckenham T.C. & Controller.

No. 5 (London) Regional Fire Officer's Recommendation: G.M. Dated 12/5/41.

Documents: (1) Report by Chief Officer.  
(2) Statement by Gunner J. Chambers.  
(3) " " Bombardier Campbell.  
(4) " " Gunner J. Davidson.

CASE CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE: 1941 RECOMMENDATION:

TREASURY RECOMMENDATION: GAZETTED: 1941.

Copy of Report by Chief Officer dated 21st April, 1941.

In connection with the severe air attack on the night of the 16th/17th instant, when 3 Auxiliary Firemen were killed and another severely injured, I wish to record the gallant action of a member of the same Pump's crew, which in my opinion is worthy of recognition.

The circumstances were reported to me as follows:-

At about 2 a.m. on the 17th instant a trailer pump unit with Leading-fireman D.J. Chalmers in charge, was returning from a fire in Chancery Lane and seeing another fire at No. 40 Wickam Road, at corner of Court Downs Road, a house in which members of the Canadian forces were billeted they turned their unit in that direction, to render assistance if required, a reinforcement pump from London being already at work there.

When turning into Court Downs Road a heavy high explosive bomb fell about 20 feet behind the towing vehicle and fragments pierced the petrol tank igniting the petrol, the vehicle being almost instantly enveloped in flames. Apparently Leading-Fireman Chalmers and Auxiliary Fireman Beacon who were on the running boards were killed instantly; the driver of the vehicle, Auxiliary-Fireman Carl Taylor, by some miracle, managed to open the door and escape, and although suffering badly from shock and other injuries, he, without thought for his own safety, immediately went back to the car, and by an almost superhuman effort, managed to drag Auxiliary-Fireman Maynard, who was badly injured, from the vehicle and then with the assistance of a Canadian soldier carried Auxiliary-Fireman Maynard to a place of safety.

Auxiliary-Fireman Taylor, along with this same Canadian soldier, made a gallant attempt to rescue Auxiliary-Fireman Huddens from the blazing vehicle but their efforts were foiled by the volume of flame and by the hose and equipment in the car.

Auxiliary-Fireman Maynard and Auxiliary-Fireman Taylor who, himself, was suffering from extensive burns and wounds in the hands and severe shock, were subsequently conveyed by a Canadian Army lorry to the Beckenham Hospital.

The Canadian soldier above mentioned was Gunner J. Chambers No.C.1014 of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery and other witnesses were Bombardier Campbell No.P.9215, and Gunner J. Davidson No.P.9361 also of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, who assisted to get the casualties away.

(Sgd.) A. Witherwood. (Chief Officer)

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Copy of Statement by Gunner J. Chambers, (undated).

I was standing 50/75 yards from junction of Court Downs Road and Wickham Road and had seen a fire appliance draw up at "Johannisbad" just at the junction of these two roads. There was a fire at "Johannisbad" but I think this appliance was about to leave when a bomb fell right at the junction and exploded. Two fire trucks were almost instantly on fire and when I got to the site petrol was blazing furiously. One fireman, whom I now know to be Auxiliary Fireman Taylor, was striving to carry a badly injured fireman away from the blazing vehicles and in this I assisted and carried the injured fireman to a place of safety. Taylor said he had another mate in the car with him. I went back to the blazing vehicles but neither of us could possibly approach owing to the fierceness of the fire.

I noted one side of Taylor's face was covered with blood as also was the more seriously injured fireman who was also groaning with the pain of his injuries. Taylor completely disregarded his injuries and feelings and continuously encouraged his more seriously injured comrade and promised soon to have him in hospital.

(Sgd.) G.M. Chambers.

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Copy of Statement by Bombardier Campbell, (undated).

When the bomb struck and exploded I was coming away from dealing with an incendiary bomb at "The Vicarage". I saw two firemen, both injured but one quite unable to stand, and Gunner Chambers in the gateway of "Johannisbad". The lesser injured fireman, whom I now know as Taylor, tried to approach the blazing vehicles for a mate he stated he had left behind in the car. He knew his other two comrades were having attention.

As both firemen were injured I detailed a driver and truck to take them to hospital. Taylor assisted in lifting the seriously injured fireman into the truck and then himself had to be assisted into the truck.

Taylor made no complain whatsoever of his own injuries and all the time I was with him was continually encouraging his more seriously injured comrade.

(Sgd.) S.A. Campbell.

Copy of Statement by Gunner J. Davidson, (undated).

When bomb struck I was on top floor of "Johannisbad" assisting firemen dealing with a fire in the roof. When I rushed out I thought gas main was on fire but from back gate I saw it was a car and fire pump and both were blazing furiously. I saw two firemen; one firemen had one arm round the other's waist and he was also taking the weight of the man's head and shoulders. One firemen was obviously seriously injured and the other firemen who was holding him and I now know to be Firemen Taylor, was dragging him away from the blazing cars. I saw another soldier helping Taylor before he was clear of the flames. With the help of this soldier Taylor laid his injured comrade down and when I came along with an old bed he assisted in getting him on to this and into a truck. When he had done all he could Taylor was "all in" and himself had to be put into the truck as I helped to do this I noticed wounds on Taylor's face and hands.

(Sgd.) J. Davidson.

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