

A FINE SECOND WAR GRIMSBY BLITZ B.E.M. AWARDED TO A FIRE GUARD FOR HIS GALLANTRY IN FIGHTING FIRES DURING THE LUFTWAFFE'S INFAMOUS SD2 ANTI PERSONNEL 'BUTTERFLY BOMB' AIR RAID ON GRIMSBY AND CLEETHORPES, 13 JUNE 1943



BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL (CIVIL) G.VI, FIRST TYPE 'ALEXANDER ROSS GORDON'

B.E.M. *London Gazette* 5 November 1943. Ground for Recommendation: Devotion to duty and fire fighting in Auckland Road at Grimsby, Lincolnshire on 13 June 1943:

"Alexander Ross Gordon, fire guard, Grimsby. During an air raid, incendiary bombs fell around the building where Gordon was on duty. Under his direction, fires in adjoining buildings were tackled and great efforts made to prevent the flames from spreading. When the water supply temporarily failed, Gordon salvaged important documents and carried them to safety. By this time the building was ringed with fire, but although the smoke was very thick and the heat intense, Gordon continued to fight the fires and eventually they were subdued. Gordon showed courage and it was due to his energy and leadership that the building was saved from destruction."

AWARDS TO GRIMSBY FIRE WATCHERS

Fine Work During Blitz Wins Two B.E.M.s

BRAVE conduct by Civil Defence workers during an air raid on Grimsby is recognised to-day by the announcement of the award of two British Empire Medals and the bestowal of five commendations.

The recipients of the medals are **Alexander Ross Gordon, of 14, Cynthia-road, and Harry Dennis, of 152, Durban-road.**

Those commended are:—

Hugh Cardy, warden, 81, Freshney-street;

Miss Nancy Charlton, fire-guard sector captain, 136, Castle-street;

Jesse Alfred Hammond, fire-watcher, 79, Cooper-road.

The Rev. James Branchley, Merifield, head fireguard, Vicar of St. Stephen's;

Henry Stamp, firewatcher, 64, Mansel-street;

John James Tilley, fire-watcher, 118, Heneage-road.

When high explosive and incendiary bombs fell, Mr. Gordon was on firewatch duty with Hammond, Stamp and Tilley, all three last named are over sixty, at the premises of Consolidated Fisheries, Ltd. Fires were started in buildings on either side and at the rear and in front of the building.

FOUGHT THE FLAMES

Mr. Gordon, with his helpers, brought the firm's hydrants into action, and played on the flames to prevent them involving the premises.

When there was an interruption in the supply of water and the premises seemed certain to catch fire, he organised his helpers and removed from the premises the firm's books and documents. When the water supply was restored, he and his men resumed fire-fighting.

Forty-one, married, Mr. Gordon was a volunteer in the A.F.S. until it was transformed into the N.F.S.

"What I learned there stood me in good stead," he said to-day, "and the three regular firewatchers, though elderly men, worked splendidly as a team."

Premises all round were destroyed by fire, but the buildings of the Consolidated Company, apart from a hole made by one bomb, escaped serious damage through the men's devotion to duty.



REV. B. J.
Merifield

MR. A. R.
Gordon

Alexander Ross Gordon, a 41 year old Fire Guard of 14, Cynthia Road, Grimsby was awarded the British Empire Medal for his gallantry in fire fighting in Auckland Road, Grimsby, during German SD2 'Butterfly Bomb' air raid of the Grimsby and Cleethorpes on 13 June 1943:

"On the night of 13/14 June 1943 the air raid sirens sounded across Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Great Coates signifying an imminent air raid. But this was no ordinary air raid, over 3,000 butterfly bombs were dropped that night together with incendiaries and HE's, leaving 66 people dead and over 1000 homeless. Although not realised at the time this was the first 'area denial' raid to be carried out, never-the-less a blanket of secrecy was thrown down over the entire area, and papers at the time only reported that an air raid took place on the east coast with anti-personnel bombs. The secrecy seemed to work, although it took over 10,000 man hours to clear the town, no raid of its kind was carried out again."

Also see: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/the-northerner/2013/jun/21/butterfly-bombs-luftwaffe-cleethorpes-grimsby>

A newspaper article on the Gordon's award, published in the Grimsby Evening Telegraph 6 November 1943 notes that it was the premises of Consolidated Fisheries Ltd that Gordon saved.

The original recommendation, which may contain a more detailed recommendation, is held in the National Archives, ref: HO 250/85/2095A



Condition GVF couple of minor EK's or better. Edge prepared prior to impressed naming, as extremely common with B.E.M.'s