

No. 60.

New Zealand, Miscellaneous.

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 25th October, 1917.

With reference to my despatch, No. 607, of the 17th September, I have the honour to transmit to Your Excellency, for the information of your Ministers, copies of a circular letter issued by the War Office with regard to the standard of qualification to be observed in respect of recommendations for the award of the Albert Medal, the Edward Medal, and the Meritorious-service Medal.

2. The observations of the Army Council have particular reference to acts of valour performed at bombing or other schools, where the training is of a dangerous nature.

I have, &c.

WALTER H. LONG.

Governor-General His Excellency the Right Hon. the Earl of Liverpool,
P.C., G.C.M.G., M.V.O., &c.

Enclosure.

SIR,—

War Office, 201 Great Portland Street, London W.1, 15th September, 1917.

I am commanded to inform you that the Council have recently had under consideration a large number of recommendations for the award to officers and other ranks of the Albert Medal, the Edward Medal, and the Meritorious-service Medal under Article 1227, Royal Warrant, as amended by Army Order 45 of 1917.

2. It appears to the Council that these recommendations show considerable want of uniformity as to standard, and that it is not generally understood that the Albert and the Edward Medals are only awarded for acts of gallantry of a very high standard, equivalent, so far as it is possible to make a comparison, to those services which in the field are considered worthy of the Victoria Cross.

3. No names will be considered for the Albert or Edward Medal unless the standard of gallantry is of such a nature as to attain to the level of acts of valour which, if performed on military service, merit the Victoria Cross. These considerations can only be comparative; and though the comparative services may be widely divergent, the elements of determination and bravery displayed, viewed generally in conjunction with the attendant circumstances, enables a comparison to be made.

Exceptional initiative, or voluntary entrance into or continued submission to exceptional dangers, are the outstanding features of acts which win the Victoria Cross—acts which have gone beyond obedience to the necessarily insistent demand of self-preservation—and unless equivalent elements exist in cases put forward for the Albert Medal or Edward Medal recommendation can hardly be justified.

4. It does not appear desirable that the Albert Medal, the Edward Medal, or the Meritorious-service Medal should be awarded for services which, though undoubtedly gallant, are in many instances inseparable from the responsibilities connected with the appointment of the individual, and in respect of incidents at bombing-schools in particular there is a tendency for recommendations to become stereotyped.

5. When considering recommendations for the Albert Medal, the Edward Medal, and the Meritorious-service Medal the following conditions receive the close attention of the Army Council, viz. :—

- (a.) The responsibilities of the individual, having regard to the duties of his appointment.
- (b.) To what extent has the act or action gone beyond obedience to the instinct of self-preservation?
- (c.) Would the act, had it been performed in the stress of battle, have attracted sufficient attention to justify recommendation for reward? In other words, is every officer or soldier who picks up and casts away an enemy unexploded bomb to be rewarded?

6. To exemplify (a) of the preceding paragraph, the duties of a fireman may be conveniently quoted as an analogous example. Like the instructor at a bombing or other school where training is of a dangerous nature, he has constantly to face exceptional risks. Experience and expert knowledge, coupled with confidence in the manufacture of weapons or material, result in these risks not only being regarded in a far less formidable light, but also being in fact less formidable than would be the case if the risks had to be faced by an untrained man.

In regard to Bombing Instructors particularly, it must be borne in mind that little option remains for the Instructor but to remove the source of danger as speedily as possible.

7. It is to be pointed out that for services of a gallant nature not in the presence of the enemy the undermentioned forms of reward, other than promotion, present themselves :—

(A.) *Official Medals* :—

- (i.) Albert Medal for saving life on land (two classes).
- (ii.) Edward Medal for saving life from mines and explosions where there is danger of asphyxiation.
- (iii.) Albert Medal for saving life at sea (two classes).
- (iv.) Board of Trade Medals (silver and bronze) granted for saving life at sea in cases which are not of the standard required for the Albert Medal.
- (v.) Meritorious-service Medal, with additional pension.
- (vi.) Meritorious-service Medal.