



THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF AIR PILOTS

incorporating Air Navigators

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SEARCH AND RESCUE CREWS AND MILITARY AVIATORS RECOGNISED BY AIR PILOTS 2015 AWARDS

SIX DECADES of daring rescues, emergency life-saving and a continuous readiness to scramble and help those in distress by the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force's search and rescue crews have been recognised by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots.

As the military search and rescue capability is handed over to civilian operators, the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force's role in helping the emergency services, rescuing and recovering downed military flyers and supporting British forces overseas over more than 60 years has been marked by the **Award of Honour** from the Honourable Company of Air Pilots - which recognises courage and the highest standards of airmanship.

The annual Air Pilots' Trophies and Awards are regarded as being among the world's premier aviation accolades and are particularly noteworthy because the recipients are selected by fellow flyers.

From operating over dangerous seas plucking sailors from sinking ships to racing to transfer new-born babies to hospital, hover-taxying through blizzards high up in the mountains to saving injured climbers to winching flood victims to safety, the bright yellow RAF and red and grey Royal Navy Sea King search and rescue helicopters have been Britons' ever-present guardian angels for generations.

Search and rescue personnel have also supported military operations overseas, including in the Falkland Islands and Afghanistan, where several winchmen served with distinction as paramedics on the Medical Emergency Response Teams.

The hallmark of the military search and rescue force has been the skill, bravery, determination and selfless commitment to others shown by its crews.

This has been recognised through the years by numerous State awards including a number of George Medals, Queen's Gallantry Medals, Queen's Commendations, Air Force Crosses and Air Force Medals.

But such selfless efforts to ensure lives are saved have not been without casualties.

The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force have lost crewmen during the many rescues they have conducted, while others have been seriously injured putting the safety of others before their own.

One recent example of this heroism was that displayed by Sergeant Daniel Allanson who was tasked with rescuing a fisherman overboard 60 miles off East Falkland.

Having been plunged into the freezing water on the end of his winch line, Sgt Allanson had to disentangle himself, manhandle a large casualty in 45ft swell and then, once back safely on board his helicopter, to provide immediate life support. In these extremely punishing conditions, Sgt Allanson demonstrated exemplary courage and determination far exceeding that which could have been expected of him, given the real threat to his own life.

Sgt Allanson has been individually recognised with the **Air Pilots Award for Gallantry**.



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The **Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award** for 2015 goes to the HMS Gannet search and rescue flight at Prestwick for a particularly hazardous mission to save two missing climbers at 3800 feet on Ben Nevis - the third rescue in a 24-hour duty period.

2015's winners will receive their awards on Thursday October 29 at London's medieval Guildhall. Among those receiving awards are military aircrew, commercial pilots and flying instructors. All have been chosen for their commitment to the highest flying standards.

ACCOLADES FOR Warbird Pilots

Two awards recognise the achievements of historic aircraft pilots who have become familiar to many air show visitors in recent years flying vintage military machines - known as warbirds.

Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander Chris Gotke receives the Master's Commendation for an inflight emergency which threatened his life as well as 21,000 people at the Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose Air Day in July 2014.

The vintage Sea Fury fighter Lt Cdr Gotke was displaying suddenly developed an engine problem, which forced him to make an emergency landing without power. Billowing smoke and losing power, Lt Cdr Gotke steered his Sea Fury away from the crowd and local villages instead of abandoning the aircraft to save himself. Under considerable stress and without time he opted to stay with the machine and glided back onto the airfield where the undercarriage collapsed leaving the Sea Fury to veer off the runway before harmlessly coming to rest on the grass.

Lt Cdr Gotke's outstanding judgement, skill and bravery stands out as one of the finest examples of gallantry in the air during peacetime and he is awarded the **Grand Master's Commendation**.

Another highly experienced warbird pilot, the Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Memorial Flight's Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader Duncan Mason, was also recognised in the awards. Showcasing the nation's proud aviation heritage displaying Spitfire and Hurricane fighters, Sqn Ldr Mason has also served on the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, and has made a significant contribution to display flying and thrilling crowds worldwide. For his dedication to this discipline he is nominated for the Hanna Trophy, which is named for the late Ray Hanna, an outstanding air display pilot and former leader of the Red Arrows.

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For further information please contact the Honourable Company of Air Pilots at:
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A full list of awards recipients is available at:
<https://www.airpilots.org/file/2101/list-of-winners-2014-15.pdf>



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Notes to editors:

1. *The Honourable Company of Air Pilots*

The Air Pilots was established as the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators in 1929. It is based in London but has an internationally based membership of professional and private pilots. The principal activities of the organisation are centred on developing action and activities to ensure that aircraft are piloted and navigated safely by aviators who are highly competent, self-reliant, dependable and respected.

2. The Grand Master of the Air Pilots, His Royal Highness Prince Andrew, Duke of York and his father, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh who is Patron, are both pilots and actively supported the recent grant of the Royal Charter. In addition, both the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry are qualified helicopter pilots, making the Air Pilots unique among City of London livery companies in having active Royal participation in its profession.

3 The Air Pilots support the education and training of pilots from the initial instruction of young pilots to specialist training at the highest levels. Through its charitable activities, education and training, technical committees, aircrew selection, scholarships and sponsorships, advice and recognition of the achievements of fellow aviators worldwide, the Honourable Company keeps itself at the forefront of the aviation world.

4. The Air Pilots also provides expert, impartial input to regulators, government and media on areas including aviation and the environment, airport capacity in south east England, aircrew flight time limitations and the maintenance of piloting skills in increasingly automated aircraft. Air Pilots experts are also available to all media on request, to ensure accurate and fully informed reporting of any aviation events. If you need our assistance, please contact us on the number or e-mail addresses above.