

From <https://twitter.com/PoliceTrust/status/1285805621808373765>):

Remembering today PC Bernard Lees GM of the Metropolitan Police.

Bernard was appointed to the 'Met' on the 29th August 1938 & served on G Division. In 1940, along with two colleagues he was awarded the George Medal for bravery during an air raid, the citation read:

Police Constables Bernard Lees, William Richard Gunn, Charles Nicholson, "G" Division, Metropolitan Police Force
Following an enemy air raid, a large number of buildings were demolished, many people being injured and trapped in the wreckage. (*G" Division covered Finsbury*)

A number of police attended the scene and assisted Wardens who were present in searching the debris for persons who might be trapped. Whilst searching among the ruins of a house moans were heard coming from the wreckage.

As there were no Rescue or Demolition Parties, all the police present immediately started to try to pierce the ruins with a view to releasing those who were trapped underneath and a hole was subsequently found amongst the rubble leading down from where the stairs had been.

The hole was a very small one and it was impossible to see where it led to or how deep it was and whether it was safe to enter.

P.Cs. Lees, Gunn and Nicholson immediately volunteered to go down to see if they could reach those who were trapped and by crawling on their stomachs they gradually got down to a depth of 20 feet where they found four or five people trapped and seriously injured.

Finding it impossible to remove them, they returned to the surface and reported exactly where they were and the best means of removing the wreckage.

All police present then began carefully to remove as much of the wreckage as possible during this time the three officers repeatedly entered the hole at great personal risk, speaking to and encouraging the people present by telling them that everything possible was being done.

When it was realised that the extrication was going to take some considerable time, the three officers asked for pieces of wood about three feet in length to be passed down to them with a saw.

P.Cs. Lees and Gunn lying on their stomachs in a small hole choked with dust and escaping gas, shored up the debris surrounding a young woman and sawed through a door which was pinning her down.

In this way they managed to effect her release and, passing her carefully from one to another they got her to the surface. The three men then carried on with their brave and heroic work until the time when Rescue and Demolition Parties arrived.

Shortly after this incident, Bernard joined the Royal Air Force becoming a Spitfire pilot with 26 Squadron, rising to the rank of Flight Lieutenant.

#OTD 1944 Bernard was killed in training accident whilst flying in Spitfire VB, AA850 of No 26 Sqn, which collided with two others of the same unit near Old Alresford in Hampshire. Bernard is buried in Eaton (St Andrew) New Churchyard, Norfolk.