

*The award of the George Medal to  
Station Officer Lawrence Barclay Young – Newcastle-upon-Tyne.*

Lawrence Barclay Young was born on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1914 in South Shields, and after working in the family horse-drawn haulage business in that town, he joined the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Police Fire Brigade in April 1938.

On Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1941 a crater made by an enemy bomb during an earlier air raid in Tarsett Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne was practically filled with debris, but a small cavity ten feet deep and two feet wide remained, through which seven years old Irene Page fell whilst at play. There was unsuspected concentration of gas in the hole, and twelve years old Boy Scout Ernest Smith very courageously volunteered to attempt a rescue, and tied a rope around his body and was lowered into the hole. After the courageous Scout had reached the bottom there was no movement from him, and it was thought that he had fainted; he had however succumbed to the fumes. At this point hysterical screams from women who had come to the scene brought a number of people to the spot including two members of the Auxiliary Fire Service who happened to be passing; thirty-five years old John Tulip and thirty years old George Wanless. Tulip, who was the uncle of Irene Page, dropped into the hole to help the unconscious children, and he managed to secure a rope to the boy who was then hauled to the top, but he failed to reappear. Wanless then committed himself to the crater, and in what proved a gallant, though futile, rescue effort, he collapsed at the bottom of the hole. Leading fireman George Bruce then made an attempt to effect a rescue, but was badly effected by the gas and was rescued by Fireman Larry Young on his arrival. Young although aware that previous attempts at rescue had almost certainly proved fatal, and without any protection against the fumes immediately entered the crater, and after removing some debris which had fallen on the casualties, was able to place ropes around them. He made three descents into the gas filled hole and brought out the victims. Young was badly effected by the gas, but on recovery helped apply artificial resuscitation until all casualties were removed to hospital.

Extract from 'Warriors in Fire Boots' by Arthur Lockyear.