

On Her Majesty's Service

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Top firemen (left to right) Section Leader Eddie Hammonds, Acting Leading Fireman Collin Brookes and Fireman Louis Courtney with their awards. (1100)

Silver axe awards for top firemen

A FIRE at Waltham Abbey's top-secret weapons research station, with its stocks of high explosives, could turn into a major disaster.

But it's unlikely to happen while firemen Hammonds, Brookes and Courtney are on the spot.

For with these three men in its brigade, the Ministry of Defence experimental research and development establishment in Sewardstone Road can claim some of the country's top firefighters.

On three consecutive courses at the ministry's training centre in Kent, where firemen from all over the country go to learn the job, Section Leader Eddie Hammonds, from Coopers Hill, Marden Ash, Ongar, Acting Leading Fireman Collin Brookes, who lives at Sidney Terrace, Bishop's Stortford, and Fireman Louis Courtney, of Cheshunt, have been named

top students.

And when Eddie Hammonds and Collin Brookes went back to the centre, at RAF Mans-ton, for promotion courses, they repeated their success by coming top of the class again.

Their achievement won all three coveted Silver Axe awards and bronze flame-shaped trophies, which were presented last week by the Ministry of Defence (Procurement Executive) Chief Fire Officer Mr R. Griffin.

Said Mr Griffin: "This is a unique occasion. It's the first time I've ever presented three awards in one day to one station. For three men from a relatively small establishment, competing against the whole country, to sweep these awards is a great achievement."

"We can have every confidence that should anything happen here, these men will know how to deal with it."