

AWM 65

[556]

CAMERON, JAMES ALAN
10402

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

OFFICERS AND AIRCROW

258 + 265

271

The following Biographical details are requested for use
R.A.A.F. Overseas Headquarters, LONDON,-

Surname..... Bancroft Number X 10402

Christian Names..... James Alan

Air Force Rank and Mustering..... p/o Pilot

Degrees, Decorations, etc..... NIL D.F.C.

Present Appointment and Location..... R.A.A.F. P.R.C. BOURNEMOUTH

Date of Birth..... 29. 9. 1914 Place Mindon, Victoria, Australia

Educated..... Wesley College, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Date of Entering Service..... 23. 5. 40

Previous Service Experience..... AMF 4 years

Places of Training in R.A.A.F. NO 1 ITS Somers Victoria

NO 10 EFTS WITENIORA NSW NO 1 SETS Pt. Cook, Victoria

Civilian Career and Activities..... Commercial Australia

Clubs, Recreations, etc. Lord Somers camp Victoria Aust.

Adma Squash Club Hockey, water polo

Squash, tennis, golf

Fathers name..... JB heb Bancroft

Wifes name.....

Children.....

Home Address..... 4 Koorring Rd, Melbourne, Vc. Australia

Signature..... Bancroft p/o

Date..... 22/12/42

Date Embarked Australia..... 12. 11. 42

Destination..... UNITED KINGDOM.

PRO. FORM.
P/R. 5.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

PTA

Overseas Headquarters,
Kodak House,
Kingway, W.C.2.

SECRET & CONFIDENTIAL.

The following biographical details are required for R.A.A.F.

Historical Records, Overseas Headquarters. These forms are to be filled in and returned to the Officer Commanding Repatriation Disposal Section, No.11 (R.A.A.F.) P.D.R.C.

NAME (in full) JAMES ALAN CAMERON NUMBER 10402
RANK AND METERING F/LT. PILOT DECORATIONS DFC
NUMBER I.T.S. COURSE 21 O.T.U. - A.F.U. etc. 20AFU 240TU 1662CU
DATE LEFT AUSTRALIA 12 NOV 1942 DATE OF ARRIVAL U.K. 23 DEC 1942
CANADA }
Sth. Africa }
SQUADRONS 460 156
AIRCRAFT FLOWN LANCASTER
COMMAND & TYPE OF ACTIVITY BOMBER COMMAND HEAVY
OPERATIONS OR TRAINING WITH ALLIED PERSONNEL, SQUADRONS, OR AIRCRAFT.

DETAILS OF OPERATIONS - with dates: to be given as fully as possible under the following applicable headings:

- (a) Number Operational Hours
- (b) Number Operational Sorties, Day-night.
- (c) Targets attacked.
- (d) Attacks on enemy surface vessels - type, size, etc.
- (e) Attacks on enemy submarines.
- (f) Combats with enemy aircraft.
- (g) Outstanding sorties or incidents.
- (h) Other Australians in crews.
- (i) Personnel in Photographic Reconnaissance Unit, Transport Command, etc., should give a brief report of their work.

(a) 205 (b) 35 NIGHT 2 DAY
(c) BERLIN (10) LEIPZIG (2) FRANKFURT (2) AUGESBURG, STUTTGART (2),
ESSEN, ROUEN, LEON, KARLSRUH, MONTDIDIER (2), NANTES,
HASSELT, DUISBURG, AACHEN, MARDICK, TOURS, ST. POL,
COUBRONNE, THIRVERNY, REVIGNY, AGNEV, WESSLING, DONGES,
STUTTGART.
(d) NIL (e) NIL
(f) Three damaged once (g) NIL
(h) F/L CAVENAGH DFC P/O ALCOCK DFC W/O FITZHENRY (KILLED IN ACTION)
(i) ---

DATE 18/8/45 SIGNATURE [Signature]
(use other side, or attach extra sheets, if necessary)

Copy of Citation of Award of D.F.C. NON-IMMEDIATE GAZETTED 15-9-44

Acting Flight Lieutenant James Alan CAMERON (14020) No. 156 Squadron.

The above mentioned officer has completed, in various capacities, many successful operations, during which he has displayed high skill, fortitude and devotion to duty.

Copy of Citation of Award of D.F.C. NON-IMMEDIATE. GAZETTED 15-9-44

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FOR AUSTRALIAN PAPERS3rd December, 1943Air Ministry News ServiceAir Ministry Bulletin No. 12253AUSTRALIANS OVER BERLIN

Three Squadrons of R.A.A.F. working with the R.A.F. took part in last night's battle over Berlin in which over 1500 tons of high explosives and incendiary bombs were dropped, in just over half an hour.

The real struggle began when the bombers were still 50 miles away from the target. The Germans had laid a long lane of fighter flares, which stretched brilliantly up to the capital itself, where the final battle took place.

Part of the area was covered by clouds, but there remained a clear patch of sky made still clearer by the fighter flares, and the scores of searchlights which the enemy had concentrated there. As our bombers flew into it the waiting fighters dived down in an effort to intercept them before they could drop their bombs.

"But they couldn't stop us", an Australian pilot said. "We got through and by the time we left, the gap in the clouds was being filled up by the black smoke from the fires. The smoke alone had reached a height of some 15,000 feet, and some of our fellows could still see the red glow of fires from 200 miles on the way home."

Flying Officer K. McIntyre, of Queensland, who was piloting a Lancaster, said that when he arrived over the capital he found that about half of Berlin was covered by cloud and the other half was clear. "But the clouds were drifting all the time", he continued, "so that the gap was always altering its position. There were great blocks of searchlights - hundreds of them, and whenever the crews managed to get on to one of our aircraft, they hung on to it for all they were worth. The rear gunner saw two aircraft coned while we were over the capital.

"The enemy appeared to be using a type of flak which looks like hose-piping as it comes up. It gives you the impression that it is impossible to get through it - but you do. We had one or two holes in the bomb doors from hits. That was the worst they did to us and we dropped our bombs and turned for home".

Flight Sergeant M. Stefford, another pilot of a Lancaster, who comes from Maryborough, Queensland, said that he could see the target indicators of the Pathfinders very clearly as he made his bombing run through the clouds over the capital. Suddenly the enemy dropped fighter flares across our path, and we went clean through a concentration of them without being attacked by one of the fighters".

Flying Officer J.A. Cameron, of Melbourne said: "Fighter flares were being dropped all over the target area. On the last 50 miles of the target, the Germans were dropping flares all the time in an effort to catch up. The route was brilliantly lit all the way in front of us. We got to Berlin all right, and there it was - an extraordinary sight, with big red fires burning below, hundreds of searchlights, and the brilliant flares coming slowly down from a good height. I put our aircraft into the bombing run, and just as our 4,000 pounder dropped, one of the engines cut. My heart missed a beat too. However, it was all right, and we got back on the others".

Flying Officer R.J. Taylor, a bomb aimer from Brisbane, who last night completed his 58th flight, said that the fires in Berlin were burning strongly as they set course for home. "Smoke was billowing up to the sky, and had reached a height of 15,000 feet".

Pilot Officer K. Schultz of Adelaide, a pilot, said that although he was in the first phase of the attack the fires had got a strong hold by the time he left. "The defences did not seem to have got really going while we were there", he said. "We saw only a few fighter flares, and the ground defences were light. The beams of the searchlights worked effectively when they concentrated on a gap in the sky, but they were hampered when we were using the cloud cover".

Bumcron.

258.

3rd December, 1943.

FOR AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS.

Air Ministry News Service

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Cameron.

265

265

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No. 12252.

ANOTHER 1,500 TONS ON BERLIN

Our heavy bombers dropped over 1,500 tons of bombs on Berlin last night, despite opposition at all stages of the attack from the night fighter squadrons guarding the German capital. Although full reports are not yet to hand it is known that our bombers destroyed three enemy fighters.

Even excluding the suburbs, the densely built up area of Berlin covers about 18,000 acres, and last night's attack was against new objectives in the city. The weather during last night's operation dictated the necessity of a very early attack. The first bombs fell a few minutes after eight o'clock when there was still a low moon.

It was very clear above the clouds and there was good visibility in the clear patches of sky. At times our aircraft had to make their bombing runs across a huge expanse of cloudless sky, with the city below and great banks of cloud all round. This made an arena in which crews fought their way past many night fighters which were patrolling the gaps. Lances of fighter flares were dropped to mark the track of the bombers, and at one point there was a brilliant junction of light where two long flare paths met at right angles.

"Fighter flares were dropped all over the target area," said F/O. J. A. Cameron, a Lancaster pilot from Melbourne. "For 50 miles the Germans were dropping the flares to catch us, and the way to Berlin was brightly lit up in a straight line in front of us".

With a strong wind and clouds drifting fast, the character of the battle altered rapidly. Some crews reported bombing through 10/10ths cloud, as in the early attacks on Berlin last month. The only fixed point, throughout their attack was made by the Pathfinder flares and markers. Whatever the condition of the sky these gave a steady point of aim for the bombers.

Another pilot in vivid description of his impressions said, "A great cloud formed a kind of boundary line above the centre of the target. One side of the line was fairly thick cloud up to 8,000 ft., while on the other side were scattered clouds and areas which were completely clear. It looked just like a

huge lump of cheese cut by a sharp knife, with half of it removed. The huge formation was shifting quickly in the wind."

The attack was made by a great force of Lancasters and by a smaller number of Halifaxes. Crews had the satisfaction not only of knowing that they had struck another great blow at the German capital, but also of seeing the fires which formed around the target indicators. Towards the end of the attack, masses of smoke were rising to a height of several miles. Mosquitos went in to bomb and reconnoitred the city some time after the attack was over. Cloud had again formed over the city, but the Mosquito crews saw the glow of fires and reported that the smoke was still rising thick among the clouds. The fires could still be seen when the main force was 200 miles on the way home. Reconnaissance pilots, circling after bombing, but while the attack was in progress, reported that the main concentrations of fire were in the area of objectives in the south-east of the city.

Large numbers of light anti-aircraft guns were used in an attempt to shoot down the Pathfinder flares as they fell. Higher still, there was a great deal of heavy flak, but some crews considered that, probably because many German fighters were over the city, it was less violent than during the last two attacks. The searchlights had to vary their tactics owing to the constant changes of weather. Sometimes they lit up the clouds in an attempt to silhouette the bombers and so guide the fighters. At other times they made large cones where the sky was clear. The enemy night fighter patrols were continually reinforced as the attack progressed, and many more flares were seen towards the end of the bombing.

A Lancaster pilot said:- "We saw fighter flares dropped close to a bomber and it was then attacked. A fighter passed very close to us, with a light in its nose, but did not attack us."

One Lancaster crew saw four Messerschmitt 110s flying close at hand, but only one of them attacked. The rear-gunner fired back and saw the enemy's starboard engine catch fire. The fighter went down in a steep dive. Another bomber was attacked with great persistence by a Messerschmitt, and though the fight went on for eight minutes the enemy was driven off.

Cameron.

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3.12.43. - No. 26.

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No. 12252

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