

AWM 65

[3021]

KING, GILBERT CHARLES
421539

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

Photo U.F. 1971.

OFFICERS AND AIRCREW.

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

Surname KING Number 421539
 Christian Names Gilbert Charles
 Air Force Rank and Posting Sgt AG W/O
 Degrees, Decorations, etc R.F.M.
 Present Appointment and Location R.A.A.F. P.R.C. BOURNEMOUTH
 Date of Birth 22/4/43 Place England
 Educated Sutherland Intermediate High School NSW
 Date of Entering Service 1/3/42
 Previous Service Experience Nil
 Places of Training in R.A.A.F. 2.I.T.S. Sydney 2.W.A.G.S. Parkes 2.B.A.G.S. Port Pirie 2.E.P. Sydney
 Civilian Career and Activities Sprinkler Mfr. fitter
Tester
 Clubs, Recreations, etc
 Mothers M. KING
 Fathers Name
 Wives Name
 Children
 Home address Audley th. National Park NSW
 Signature G.King
 Date 4/4/43
 Date Embarked Australia 13/12/42
 Destination UNITED KINGDOM

344. MESS

Duty Officers.	22.3.43. F/Lt. A. K. Goodacre.	23.3.43. F/Lt. C. G. Lloyd.
	24.3.43. P/O J. T. S. Guy.	25.3.43. " E. E. Tighe.
	26.3.43. P/Lt. H. A. LeBas.	
Mess Orderly Officers.	22.3.43. P/O. S. J. Ellis.	23.3.43. P/O J. T. Farnball.
	24.3.43. " W. M. Beiford.	25.3.43. " J. J. Collins.
	26.3.43. " P. E. Crocker.	
Officer Firewatchers. (Russell Court)	22.3.43. P/O. D. G. Norman	23.3.43. P/O. J. J. ...
	24.3.43. " E. I. ...	25.3.43. " G. I. ...
	26.3.43. " N. M. ...	
Duty N. C. O.	22.3.43. I/Sgt. Skittell. Sgt. Cook.	23.3.43. P/Sgt. Hall. Sgt. Rix.
	24.3.43. " Hollingworth. Cpl. Bracewell.	24.3.43. P/Sgt. Cook. P/Sgt. Wos
	26.3.43. " Miller. I/Sgt. Leask.	
Duty Clerks.	22.3.43. LAC. English.	23.3.43. AC. Walker.
	24.3.43. AC. Bado.	25.3.43. AC. Standing.
	26.3.43. LAC. Higgins.	
Duty Firewatchers. (Exeter Hotel)	22.3.43. LAC. Ogilvy AC. Morgan.	23.3.43. AC. Harris. AC. Walker.
	24.3.43. AC. Bole. AC. Fleming.	25.3.43. LAC. Chittam. AC. Linford.
	26.3.43. AC. Watts. AC. Cooper.	

345. DISCIPLINE

The practice of personnel walking around the streets with their hands in their pockets is to cease forthwith. Disciplinary action will be taken against personnel failing to comply with this order.

346. DISCIPLINE - WEARING OF RESPIRATORS.

Respirators will be carried by all ranks on Tuesday, 23rd. March 1943, from time of leaving their quarters until 11.00 hours. They will then be worn from 11.00 hours to 11.30 hours, both in offices and when proceeding outside billets and offices.

347. RELEASE OF AIRMEN TO BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION.

A number of AC's Clerk G. D. and Clerk G. D. (Temporary) between 25 and 32 years of age and medically fit for overseas, are still required as volunteers for release to civilian employment with the British Overseas Airways Corporation as Traffic Assistants. Preference will be given to airmen with shipping office experience or previously employed with Messrs Thomas Cook & Son. Airmen who volunteer will be posted at intervals to a selected R.A.F. Station for interview by a representative of the British Overseas Airways Corporation, if considered suitable they will be released for civilian employment with that Corporation. Any airman not accepted for release will be re-posted to his unit without delay.

The rates of pay given by the British Overseas Airway Corporation for airmen released are as follows:-

Traffic Assistant - £4 per week and if sent out of the U.K. will receive in addition an overseas allowance of £104 per annum. If stationed at Durban £154 per annum extra, less £90 if quarters provided.

Applications should be forwarded to this Headquarters as soon as possible.

PRO. FORM.
P/R. 5.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

Overseas Headquarters,
Kodak House,
KINGSWAY, N. 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) GILBERT CHARLES KING NUMBER 421539

RANK AND MUSTERING P/O A.G. DECORATIONS DEM

NUMBER I.T.S. COURSE 21TS 2nd course O.T.U. - A.F.U. etc.

DATE LEFT AUSTRALIA) 13/22
CANADA)
Sth. AFRICA) DATE OF ARRIVAL U.K. 4/4/43

SQUADRONS 6/9

AIRCRAFT FLOWN LANCASTER

COMMAND & TYPED OF ACTIVITY BOMBER

OPERATIONS OR TRAINING WITH AMERICAN PERSONNEL, SQUADRONS, OR AIRCRAFT
NIL

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) 207-30
(B) 30 NIGHT

- (C) 5-9-43 MANHEIM 7:00 14-1-44 BRUNSWICK 5:35 30-3-44 NUREMBERG 7:45
- 6-9-43 MUNICH 8:20 21-1-44 MAGDEBURG 6:55 10-4-44 TOURS 5:40
- 4-10-43 FRANKFURT 6:25 27-1-44 BERLIN 8:40 11-4-44 PACHEN 4:10
- 7-10-43 STUTTGART 6:40 25-1-44 BERLIN 8:20 15-4-44 PARIS 5:05
- 8-10-43 HANOVER 5:15 15-2-44 BERLIN 7:15 22-4-44 BRUNSWICK 5:55
- 15-10-43 HANOVER 5:15 19-2-44 LEIPZIG 6:45 24-4-44 MUNICH 10:10
- 15-11-43 BERLIN 8:05 15-3-44 STUTTGART 8:15 26-4-44 SCHWEINFURT 9:00
- 16-12-43 BERLIN 7:55 17-3-44 FRANKFURT 5:55 28-4-44 OSLO 7:50
- 1-1-44 BERLIN 8:00 22-3-44 FRANKFURT 5:15 1-5-44 TOULOUSE 8:30
- 2-1-44 BERLIN 7:15 26-3-44 ESSEN 4:50 3-5-44 MAILLY-LE-CAMP 5:40

DATE 20/10/44 SIGNATURE G. King

(Use other side, or attach extra sheets, if necessary)

- (F) 5 combats
- (G) 15-3-44 Stuttgart destroyed one JU88
- (H) Flt K Roberts DFC (missing)

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came in on the tail of another Lancaster and open fire. In the brilliant moonlight the Australian could see the four engines and the outline silhouetted perfectly. His gunners opened up and the enemy aircraft broke away and disappeared.

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Aus. 421539 W/O. G.C. King, D.F.M., of Sydney - air gunner

He was on No. 3 I.T.S. Course at Bradfield Park and trained in Australia at Parkes and Port Pirie. He left in December 42 on the S.S. "Nestor" travelling via the Cape to the United Kingdom and arriving in April 43. From Bournemouth he went to 16 O.T.U. Upper Heyford then to 1660 Conversion Unit at Swinderby then to 619 Lancaster Squadron on August 23.

King flew with five different crews in all. Four of these went missing when he was not with them. King has bombed Berlin nine times, Hanover twice, Munich ^{twice}, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Mannheim, Nuremberg, Tours, Calo, Toulouse, Aachen, Malley -- he has flown 30 sorties in all.

He had his first combat with enemy aircraft on the Hanover raid in September last year when the Lancaster in which he was rear gunner was attacked on the way into the target by a Ju.88 and a captured Lancaster. "We were just running into the target when the flight engineer reported a Ju.88 coming up from the starboard quarter about 800 yards off" he said. "At 600 yards the midupper gunner and I opened fire. A minute later a Lanc. dived on us from dead astern and above."

King says that over the target centre it was as clear as daylight and their bomber must have been clearly silhouetted against the fires. "We couldn't have been mistaken for anything but a Lancaster" he said. "Also, the bomb aimer was firing from the front guns of the other Lanc. and if it had been ours he would have been getting the bomb sight ready. The Lanc. came right in to 150 yards and he gave me a full belly shot. I just let him have it then and raked him right along. The wireless operator saw him go into a dive and disappear from view."

King's bomber was hit in the port engine and the rear turret by the fire from the captured aircraft, .7 machine gun bullets passing over King's right shoulder just by his right eye and embedding themselves in the platform in the tail.

After the Lancaster went down the Ju.88 made two more dummy attacks and the British gunners opened up when he came within range. After the second attack however, he broke away and disappeared from view. King estimates they scored several hits. The Lancaster went on and bombed successfully.

Three other crews from the squadron reported attacks by Lancasters that night.

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The sortie King remembers most vividly was the raid on Stuttgart on March 15 of this year following which he was awarded the immediate D.F.M. and his captain F/Lt. K. Roberts, R.A.A.F. the immediate D.F.C. He was flying with Roberts for the first time.

The Lancaster was running in on the edge of the target when the wireless operator reported something coming in fast, about 1800 yards off on the port quarter. "It closed in very fast, the wireless operator gave us ranges all the time and at about 800 yards range I saw it" King said. "It was a Ju.88. He and I both opened fire simultaneously but after about a hundred and fifty rounds three of my guns packed up."

As King's guns seized the midupper turret failed completely. The midupper gunner had only just opened fire and had got in about twenty rounds. The Junkers continued to close in and cannon shell ripped the Lancaster's fuselage under the midupper turret. King continued to fight the fighter off with his one remaining gun and at 300 yards it broke away.

There was a brief pause then the enemy came in again from the port quarter down. King was still struggling to get his three guns going. "I saw him when he was about 500 yards off and opened fire with my one gun" he said. "I got in two or three short bursts and that packed up too".

When the Junkers pilot saw no sign of life from either of the Lancasters' turrets he closed right in to about 100 yards off and throttled back and followed the bomber round as it corkscrewed through the sky.

A burst of cannon shot the bombers port fin and rudder away and half the tail plane was smashed clean off. Shrapnel holed the rear turret ripping past King's head so close that it tore his helmet. The fighter remained on the bomber's tail for four ^{seemingly} endless minutes.

"He was just sitting there about a hundred yards off shooting at us .
~~When~~ ^{At last} I ~~got~~ managed to get one gun going and I let him have it" King said. "I must have hit him straight away. I saw my fire run along the port wing from the cockpit to the petrol tank. Then he blew up. He spun down out of control and in a mass of flames. He must have been a lousy shot".

By then the Lancaster was right over the target and the crew opened the bomb doors and bombed. Then they started on the difficult trip home.

"It must have been hell on the pilot trying to hold her steady with half the tail plane gone and only one fin" King said. "She was skidding and

dropping all over the sky. The skipper did a marvellous job applying opposite rudder and opposite bank all the way home. When we got to base he made a wizard landing the "best he ever made". Roberts was so stiff when they got down that the crew had to massage him to get the cramp out of his legs and arms.

King completed twelve more sorties with Roberts then he was screened. Roberts failed to return from a sortie on D-Day. King had three other combats -- with an F.W. 190 over Munich, with a Ju.88 over Leipzig and with a Ju.88 over Berlin. He had 10 minor engagements.

King became a member of the Calypso club after he baled out of a blazing aircraft at D.R.V. The port engine of the Wellington burst into flames on a practice flight. All the crew escaped safely.

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Comm. and Price

THIS SIGNAL IS MY FL 531 P DATED 6th April. *S. King*
FOLLOWING IMMEDIATE AWARDS WILL BE GAZETTED 11th April.

Copy of Citation of Award of D.F.C.

" " " " " " D.F.M.

Pilot Officer Kimberley ROBERTS (415358) No. 619 Squadron.

Aus. 421539 Flight Sergeant Gilbert Charles KING. No. 619 Squadron.

This officer and airman were pilot and rear gunner respectively of an aircraft detailed to attack Stuttgart one night in March, 1944. Whilst over the target area, Sergeant King reported an enemy aircraft closing in to attack. P/O Roberts took the necessary evading action but the bomber was hit by the enemy's bullets and sustained damage. Even so, he cleverly manoeuvred to a position from which Sergeant King was able to engage the enemy. Following a well placed burst of fire from his guns, the enemy aircraft was seen to dive towards the ground, out of control and with its engines on fire. P/O Roberts then completed his bombing run and afterwards flew the damaged aircraft to base. This officer and airman displayed commendable skill, courage and coolness.