

MC ALISTER, ERIC MILTON

415170

AWM 65

[3303]

AUGUSTINE PALMERIES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

Form 1000
2/2. 3.

TOTAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

Overseas Headquarters,
Kodak House,
Elizabeth, N.C.S.

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.D.C.

NAME (in full) McALISTER, ERIC MILTON NUMBER 415170

RANK AND BRANCH 7/0 NAV B DECORATIONS DFM

NUMBER I.T.S. COURSE 1715 O.T.U. - A.P.U. etc.

DATE LEFT AUSTRALIA 16.6.42 DATE OF ARRIVAL U.K. 16.7.42

CANADA)
S.W. AFRICA)

SQUADRONS 101 SQD. 299 SQD.

AIRCRAFT FLOWS LANCASTER STIRLING'S HALLIFOXES
WELLINGTON WHITLEYS

COMMAND & TYPE OF ACTIVITY BOMBER COMMAND. AIRBORNE 38-670

OPERATIONS OR TRAINING WITH AMERICAN 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) 266 HOURS.

(b) BERLIN - ESSEN - HAMBURG - DUISBURG -

Dusseldorf - Frankfurt - Spezia - Stettin

Bochum - Pilsen - DORTMUND - etc

also Special Operation Europe

Arnhem airborne op - Crossing Rhine

Glens - Special operation to Norway

Denmark - Transport troop -

Paratroops -

(c) First crew. Edwards 1, Reid B.C, Bakwell, W.

Maxwell, T. Second crew. Mowen T, Purcell, T

TWO TOURS -

Dates 5-7-45

SIGNATURE

Eric McAlister

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

DF M 12/10/43

8469.

Aus. 415170 Flight Sergeant (now Pilot Officer) Eric Milton McALISTER,
Royal Australian Air Force, No. 101 Squadron. Throughout his first
operational tour, Flight Sergeant McAlister has shown an admirable deter-
mination to complete the task in hand combined with great skill and
efficiency. His enthusiasm and cheerful courage have earned for him the
esteem of his crew whose successes have been largely attained by his efforts.
He has taken part as air bomber in a large number of operational flights.

RAAF London Release No. 1167

May 14, 1945.

AUSTRALIANS AT INVESTITURE

The following RAAF men are listed to appear at tomorrow's investiture:-

Flight Lieutenant Russell MARKS, DFM, pilot, of Teringa, Queensland. Born on December 8, 1918, at Toowoomba, Queensland, he was educated at Brisbane Grammar School, and became a sales clerk and farm hand. He served nine months in the artillery before joining the RAAF on July 17, 1940. He trained in Australia, and reached Britain in February, 1942. He has flown on at least 49 bombing operations.

The citation to his DFM, announced on December 10, 1943, when he was a sergeant, stated: "Sergeant Marks has successfully completed many bombing and mining sorties. An excellent captain of aircraft, he has shown great skill and determination in extricating his aircraft from more than one hazardous position. In July, 1943, this airman was detailed for an operation on Hamburg. Shortly after the take-off, the generator of his aircraft became unserviceable, putting out of action all electrical services. By skilful airmanship, Sgt. Marks successfully completed his mission and brought the bomber safely home on the small amount of current available from the spare batteries carried.

Flight Lieutenant Raymond Walters TREBOUTH, DFC, pilot, of Dulwich, South Australia. Born on December 29, 1913, at Unley, SA, he was educated there at the Central and High Schools, and became a motor mechanic. He served two years in the artillery (Militia) before joining the RAAF on November 7, 1941. He trained in Australia and reached Britain in March, 1943.

The citation to his DFC, announced on October 17, 1944, referred to his having completed numerous operations against the enemy, in the course of which he had displayed the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty.

Flying Officer Geoffrey Jonathan CAWESKOTT, DFM, pilot, of Hawthorn, South Australia. Born on April 20, 1922, in Adelaide, he was educated at Magill Public and Norwood High Schools, and became a clerk. He joined the RAAF on May 24, 1941, trained in Australia, and reached Britain in August, 1942.

The citation to his DFM, announced on December 6, 1943, when he was a flight sergeant, referred to his having completed many successful operations against the enemy in which he had displayed high skill, fortitude and devotion to duty.

Flight Lieutenant Reginald Graham WHITE, DFM, wireless operator-air gunner, of Albany, Western Australia. Born on February 20, 1917, at Geraldton, WA, he was educated at Albany High School and was employed by the Vacuum Oil Co., Pty. Ltd. He served two years in the Garrison Artillery before joining the RAAF on June 23, 1941. He trained in Australia and reached Britain in August, 1942.

His DFM, which he won as a flight sergeant, was announced on October 12, 1943, when he was a pilot officer. The citation stated: "As wireless operator of a very successful crew, this airman has achieved excellent results both in the battle of the Ruhr and in sorties against Hamburg. The co-operation among the members of this crew has led to success on many missions. P/Sgt. White has rendered sterling service to his squadron, both in the air and on the ground".

Flying Officer Eric Milton McALISTER, DFM, airbomber, of Perth, Western Australia. Born on December 7, 1920, at Sumner Hill, NSW, he was educated at the Christian Brothers' College, Lewisham, NSW, and became a tractor driver. He joined the RAAF on July 17, 1941, trained in Australia, and reached Britain in August, 1942.

His DFM, which he won as a flight sergeant, was announced on October 12, 1943, when he was a pilot officer. The citation stated: "Throughout his first operational tour, P/Sgt. McAlister has shown an admirable determination to complete the task in hand combined with great skill and efficiency. His enthusiasm and cheerful courage have earned for him the esteem of his crew, whose successes have been largely attained by his efforts. He has taken part as airbomber in a large number of operational flights".

McAllister

SECRET

954.

3rd December, 1943

Aus. 407947 F/O. I.D. Maxwell D.F.C. - rear gunner.
Aus. 409224 F/O. B. Reid, D.F.C. - navigator.

They completed a tour of operations crewed up with:

Aus. 408984 F/O. I.L. Edwards D.F.C. - pilot
Aus. 409492 F/O. Bakewell, D.F.C. - wireless operator.
Aus. 415170 F/O. E.M. McAllister D.F.M. - bomb aimer.

(F/O. A. Badman D.F.C. of Hereford - mid upper.)
(F/O. R.J. Hamilton D.F.M. of Reading - engineer.)

Maxwell was on 11 I.T.S. course and trained in Australia. He left on the 17th November, 1941 and arrived in the United Kingdom on the 27th February, 1942. From Bournemouth he was posted to 27 O.T.U. but his training was held up for some time by pneumonia.

Reid and McAllister were in 18 I.T.S. course and trained in Australia. They left on the 16th June 1942 on the Rimataka which arrived in the United Kingdom on the 24th August 1942. From Bournemouth they were posted to 27 O.T.U.

The crew went to 101 Lancaster squadron on the 8th March 1943. On the fourth of August they were screened after completing 24 operational sorties.

The raids they were on include three on Hamburg, the nights the port was being "blitzed"; three Essen; two Spezia; one Berlin, Stettin, Flisen, Duisberg, Oberhausen, Mulheim, Wuppertal, Bochum, Krefeld, Gelsenkirchen and Dortmund.

The Dortmund raid was the only one on which the crew were attacked by an enemy fighter though on four occasions they sighted them. The Lancaster was just coming off the target when an ME.110 came in on the port quarter. It opened fire at about 600 yards but at 400 broke away, then attacked again from dead astern. This time Maxwell did not allow it to come close but got in a strong burst at extreme range. The fighter broke off and disappeared.

Their aircraft was only once hit by anti-aircraft fire. This was when the bombers raided Stettin, and flew low level all the way there and back. These tactics proved a failure as the losses were very heavy. Reid puts it down to the flak ships which they encountered all along the Baltic coasts, as well as enemy shipping in the sea. At the height the Lancasters were flying they were on top of the ships before they knew they were there, and were unable to take effective evasive action. From his rear turret Maxwell saw five bombers explode in the air as the four thousand pound bombs were hit.

It was a bright moonlight night and Maxwell said they could see the white Danish farms built in squares round the farm yards as clear as in daylight.

Their aircraft was hit by light flak on the way to the target. A large shell blew the tyre on the starboard wheel to shreds and the aircraft was peppered with shell splinters all down one side. Shrapnel holed the petrol tanks but owing to the self sealing rubber the loss was slight. The bomber went on and bombed successfully. Only when he attempted to land at base did the pilot know they had been hit. As soon as the Lancaster touched down it slowed off the runway and skidded across the dross. None of the crew was hurt.

The crew consider the best raid of their tour the attack which wiped out the Krupps works at Essen at the end of July this year. They were late

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on the target and the city was a sea of flames. "It was as light as day over the target", Maxwell said. "As we came out and turned for home we saw a great column of smoke 23,000 feet high, dense and black. The fires were so bad that night that one aircraft from the squadron was just about turned over in the up currents from the flames."

They consider they have had a very quiet tour and put this down to extreme vigilance arising out of the will to live. "You've got to be keen to live to get through", Reid said. "Some crews get careless as they get more used to it and then the trouble starts". Maxwell believes there is nothing like a good fright to keep a gunner on the qui vive. Gunners he said, suffer very often, and more than the rest of the crew, from drowsiness. To combat this they are given Benzadrine pills and he usually took two, one before and one after the target. Inside the bombers drowsiness is induced by climatic inversions, which are particularly bad in the rear turret, and by the heating suits. To combat this the gunners open the clear vision panel which balances the heat. But above all he says regard for your own personal safety keeps you awake.

Aus. 415170 P/O. E.M. McAllister, D.F.M. - bomb aimer

(Interview filed under Aus. 407947 P/O. I.D. Maxwell, D.F.C.)