



Australian War Memorial

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[749]

COFFEY, PHILLIP JAMES

401907

466^A AW (D.F.M.)

✓ misc 419

Photo W.K. 1141 ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

OFFICERS AND AIRCREW.

The following Biographical details are required for use at R.A.A.F.

Overseas Headquarters, LONDON.

Surname Coffey Number AUS 401907

Christian Names Phillip James

Air Force Rank and Mustering Sgt Observer

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

Present Appointment and Location No. 3 P.R.C. Bourmouthe

Date of Birth 22/1/41 Place Gheerham, Victoria, Australia

Educated Mentone State School, Victoria, Australia.
Mordialloc-Gheerham High School, Victoria, Australia.

Date of Entering Service 26/4/41

Previous Service Experience Air Force - Nil

..... Australian Militia Forces - 6 months

Places of Training No. 1 & 2 S. Lancers (Auss.) No. 7 & 8 S. Wessex Junction
(Auss.) No. 1 A.S. Edmonson (Can) No. 2 B & G S Leckridge (Can) No. 1 C.N.S
Rivers (Can)

Civilian Career and Activities Bank Clerk - Rice Clerk, &
Relieving Teller

Clubs, Recreations, etc. Mentone Public Tennis Club
Mentone Darts

Father Robert John Coffey

Wife (single)

Children

Home Address "Nyora", 33 Compo Parade East, Mentone P.M.
Victoria, Australia

Signature P. Coffey

Date 25 June 1942

Date Embarked 14/6/42 13/11/41

Destination U.K.

PRO. FORM.
P/R. 5.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

Overseas Headquarters,
Kodak House,
KINGSWAY, 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) *Phillip James Coffey* NUMBER *Bus 401907*

RANK AND MUSTERING *Fet/24* *Nav B* DECORATIONS *DFM*

NUMBER I.T.S. COURSE *13* O.T.U. - A.F.U. etc. *O.T.U. - Lifford*
P.F.U. - Wexford

DATE LEFT AUSTRALIA *19/10/41*

CANADA *(approx May '42)*

DATE OF ARRIVAL U.K. *(approx) 13/6/42*

STH. AFRICA

SQUADRONS *103 Squadron + 460 Squadron*

AIRCRAFT FLOWN *Lancasters*

COMMAND & TYPED OF ACTIVITY *Bomber - Nav officer 460 Squadron*

OPERATIONS OR TRAINING WITH AMERICAN PERSONNEL, SQUADRONS, OR AIRCRAFT *Nic*

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 | (g) Outstanding sorties or incidents |
| (f) Combats with enemy aircraft | (i) Personnel in Photographic Reconnaissance
Unit, Transport Command, etc., should
give a brief report of their work. |
| (h) Other Australians in crews | |

(a) *257 hours*

(b) *29 (Nights) 9 (day)*

(c) *various (Hannover, German targets)*

(d) *Nic*

(e) *Nic*

(f) *No particulars*

(g) *nothing outstanding*

(h) *F/LT KEMP - Pilot - 1st tour @ 103 Squadron*

(i) *N/A*

DATE *25/1/45* SIGNATURE *PJ Coffey*

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

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

Now - Immediate 16-2-45


Acting Flight Lieutenant Phillip James COFFEY, D.F.M. (401907) NO. 460 (R.A.A.F.)
Squadron. R. A. A. F.

This officer has participated in attacks against many strongly defended German targets, including Berlin, Aachen, Kiel, Frankfurt and Essen. At all times his work has been outstanding in its precision and skill. Whilst attacking the Synthetic Oil Plant at Wanne-Eikel, in November, 1944, his captain was wounded. In the emergency Flight Lieutenant Coffey assumed captaincy of the aircraft. The bombs were released accurately and the aircraft was flown safely to base. Flight Lieutenant Coffey's outstanding initiative and courage, ensured the success of the mission.

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

Spare

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COFFEY

Wanne-Eickel 9/11/44.

~~Handwritten by F/O J. Hall, not used~~

With their aircraft hit and pilot badly wounded in the face by flak, the crew of an R.A.A.F. Lancaster, recently demonstrated the efficiency and courage which makes our bombers such a great factor in the winning of this war.

STW
7/1/44

F/Lt. **E**J. COFFEY 401907 D.F.M. of MENTONE, **Vic.**, immediately assumed captaincy of the aircraft, as, having almost completed his second tour of operations, he was the most experienced member of the crew. This ^{threw} ~~threw~~ a double responsibility on his shoulders and added to the strain of navigation, a difficult enough job at any time and more so in this case, as COFFEY had taken the place of the usual navigator at the last

minute and had had only 3 hours sleep the night before this daylight operation, for which, as squadron navigation leader, he had spent hours planning.

"We dropped our bombs on the south of the town," said COFFEY, and the air-bomber took the place of the pilot who losing blood rapidly was helped from his seat and given first aid by the W/O".

Being at 20,000 feet they decided to descend, so as to be able to remove pilot's oxygen mask and give him better attention. Thick cloud and icing conditions prevented this and they had to regain height, setting course for the nearest 'drome at 17,000 feet.

At the French coast they had to descend through this cloud for England.

"Our pilot, though weak from loss of blood, insisted on getting up and seeing the position for himself" said COFFEY "but the bomb-aimer, despite the icing up of some of the instruments, brought us on a steady course to the emergency ^{airfield} ~~aerodrome~~". "Here the pilot took over and made a successful landing with the crew in crash positions"

The pilot was immediately rushed to hospital.

When interrogated the crew were full of praise for the courage of the pilot, the skill of the ^{air-bomber} ~~A/B~~ in handling the aircraft and the calm methodical manner in which the navigator assumed captaincy, but as COFFEY points out it was crew cooperation as a whole, with no panic or even unnecessary questions, that made the performance possible.

HALL

Note: F/O. E.C. OWEN 409435 Pilot of WARRNAMBOOL .VIC.
& W/O (now P/O) L.W. WOODS 408463 airbomber of HOBART
each received immediate D.F.C.

Flt. F.J. COFFEY (above) has also been recommended
These citations apparently not been released
to date 18/12/44

46059

COFFEY

Wanne Eickel 9/11/44.

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-2-

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"We dropped our bombs on the south of the town," said COFFEY, and the air-bomber, (408453 W/O L.W. Woods) took the place of the pilot, who losing blood rapidly was helped from his seat and given first aid by the W/Op". (409435 F/O E.C. Owen)

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DFM.

9/7/43.

466A.

Aus. 401907 Flight Sergeant Phillip James COFFEY, Royal Australian Air Force,
No. 103 Squadron. Flight Sergeant Coffey has taken part in numerous operational sorties, the majority of which have been against the enemy's most heavily defended targets, including 3 against Berlin. An outstandingly successful navigator, his presence of mind and skill when face to face with the enemy have been largely responsible for the successes attained by his crew. At all times this airman's keenness, efficiency and fine fighting spirit have been most praiseworthy.