

AWM 65

4819

STANLEY, WILLIAM MITCHELL

422737

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES  
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

The following biographical details are required for use at R.A.A.F. Overseas Headquarters, London.

SURNAME STANLEY.....NUMBER. AUS 422737  
 CHRISTIAN NAMES WILLIAM MITCHELL  
 AIR FORCE RANK AND BRANCHING P/O Pilot & P  
 DEGREES ETC.....  
 DATE OF BIRTH 8th MAR. 1923.....PLACE Grafton N.S.W.  
 EDUCATED St. Plazans' College Sydney  
 DATE OF ENTERING SERVICE 23rd May 1942  
 PREVIOUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE.....  
 PLACES OF TRAINING Bradfield Park (21FTS), Tamworth (COEPTS), Macleod (Cdn), Ch. Town; NASSA  
 CIVILIAN CAREER AND ACTIVITIES.....  
 SPORT (TEAMS REPRESENTED) CLUBS ETC. School Football, Swimming, Athletics, Cricket, Northern Dist. Football Club  
 FATHER.....  
 WIFE.....  
 HOME ADDRESS 94. Bawanga Rd. Northbridge, SYDNEY.  
 SIGNATURE W. H. Stanley  
 DATE 25-2-44  
 DATE OF EMBARKATION 15-2-44

HEADQUARTERS USE ONLY - DO NOT FILL IN

AW RDS.....  
 CATEGORY.....INTERVIEWS.....  
 RADIO.....OTHER REFERENCES.....

PRO. FORM.  
P/R. 5.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

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) S. STANLEY WILLIAM MITCHELL NUMBER A 422737

RANK AND HONORIFIC C.O. Pilot DECORATIONS

NUMBER I.T.S.F. COURSE 22 O.T.U. N/A etc. B.I.R.S., 20.9.39, 2.4.41, 2.4.42

DATE LEFT AUSTRALIA 2.8.43 DATE OF ARRIVAL U.K. 28.2.44  
CANADA 13.2.44  
Sth. AFRICA N/A

SQUADROIS No. 209 Sqn. C.R. Liberator & No. 451 RAAF Coastal Reconnaissance

AIRCRAFT FLOWN DM.2. Anson Mitchell Liberator Bomber Coastal Reconnaissance

COMMAND & TYPE OF ACTIVITY Coastal long range patrol. Reconnaissance

OPERATIONS OR TRAINING WITH AMERICAN PERSONNEL, SQUADROIS, OR AIRCRAFT Mitchells & Liberator at H.M.O.T.U. Nassau Bahamas B.H.I.

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

a) Sorties 10

b) No. of sorties 2

c) 1) - d) 1) - e) - f) - g) On returning from reconnaissance of Dutch Coast an engine a/c crashed and caught fire on landing. W/c Downport RAAF rescued me from the burning a/c. (W/c Downport was awarded the George Medal for this exploit.)

Date 19-10-44

SIGNATURE S. Stanley W. Mitchell F/L

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

Personal file - F/O. W.M. Stanley

10.9.44. No.27

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No.15584

PILOT RESCUED FROM BLAZING AIRCRAFT

Returning from a reconnaissance over the Dutch coast, after fighting a German convoy sneaking out of port, a Beaufighter of an Australian squadron of R.A.F. Coastal Command developed engine trouble and the pilot had to land on one engine. When he touched down he swung off the runway and the machine was soon a mass of flames.

His Squadron Commander, Wing Commander J.N. Devenport, D.S.O., D.F.C., of Blockhurst, Sydney, New South Wales, who was in the watch tower at the time, ran to his car and within a matter of seconds was alongside the blazing machine. Cannon shells were exploding all round him and there was intense heat. The navigator had got clear but the pilot was trapped by his feet in the nose of the aircraft.

Wing Commander Devenport ran straight into the flames and was soon astride the cockpit. Hanging down head first and pulling with all his strength he eventually got the pilot clear. He literally pulled the man out of his boots and then carried him through the flames to the ambulance.

"It was the most amazing thing I have seen in this war" said the Flying Control Officer. "The navigator ran to the front of the machine and then Wing Commander Devenport ran straight into the flames and stopped there for quite a time whilst he released the pilot and got him clear".

"The pilot had guts" said Wing Commander Devenport. "Although burned about the face, hands and body and in pain, he sat up in the ambulance and said 'there's a convoy moving down the coast' and gave me the bearing and number of ships involved. Before they took him away to hospital he insisted on seeing me as he thought I had been badly burned but I was able to assure him that mine were only slight burns and of no consequence."

The pilot, Flying Officer W.M. Stanley, of Northbridge, Sydney, New South Wales, is in hospital but his condition is not serious.

+++++

Note. Photo C.H.13607 of W/C Devenport can be obtained from F.M.A.