

AWM 65

[4847]

STEVENS, PETER ANDERSON

415190

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES  
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

The following Biographical details are required for use at the Overseas Headquarters, LONDON, :-

Surname..... **STEVENS** Mentioned 20.7.42  
P.O. No. 21024  
Number. 415790

Christian Names..... **Roger Anderson** Safe in 1st 28.5.42

Air Force Rank and Mustering..... **P/O. G.D.**

Degrees, Decorations, etc.....

Present Appointment and Location..... **3. P.R.C. R.A.F. BOURNE MOUTH.**

Date of Birth..... **22/10/1902** Place..... **ELBANY, West Aus.**

Educated..... **Modern School, Perth**  
 ..... **University, Western Australia**

Date of Entering Service..... **16/6/42** **26/2/41**

Previous Service Experience.....

..... **5175 "KARLE"**

Places of Training..... **3. ADS. MT. GAMBIER. 2. ADS. NH166**  
 ..... **3. BABS. R.F. Pirie**

Civilian Career and Activities..... **School Teacher**

.....

Clubs, Recreations, etc.....

.....

Father..... **Arthur Anderson, Stevens**

Wife.....

Children.....

Home Address..... **"51. NCA" Park St. Northam, W.A.**

Signature..... **P.O. Stevens**

Date..... **25/8/42**

Date Embarked..... **16/6/42**

Destination..... **24/8/42 UNITED Kingdom**



2/3/44.

1576 <sup>x</sup> SN

2046

Aus. 401908 F/Lt. P.A. Coldham, D.F.C. and Bar of Melbourne - Pilot

He was on No. 14 I.T.S. course at Somers and left Australia in July 42 for Rhodesia where he completed his training. He arrived in the U.K. in August and from Bournemouth was posted to A.F.U. at Shawbury and from there to 27 O.T.U. Lichfield, then to 1656 Conversion Unit at Lindholme. In March 43 he was posted to 460 R.A.A.F. Lancaster squadron.

Coldham completed 9 operational sorties with 460 Squadron then volunteered for PFF and was posted to 156 Squadron in 8 Group.

He has flown throughout his entire tour of 45 bombing operations with an R.A.A.F. navigator, 415190 F/Lt. P.A. Stevens, D.F.C. and Bar. The rest of his first crew stopped when they had done thirty trips, and he picked up a new crew at 156. This included an Australian bomb aimer 405881 F/Sgt. J.C. Ross, D.F.M. who was on the last fifteen trips with Coldham and Stevens.

The targets Coldham has bombed include Berlin (six times) Munich (twice), Pilsen (twice), Milan (twice), Spezia, Manheim, Frankfurt, Stettin, and all the raids of the battle of the Ruhr last summer.

He considers the best raid he has done was the attack on the research development establishment at Peenemünde when he was in the P.F.F. Force visual marking. This took place in brilliant moonlight and even the smoke screen the Germans put up from generators to the west of the target failed to obscure it. The bombers attacked from much lower level than usual <sup>bombing</sup> from a few thousand feet.

The visual markers went in one minute after the blind markers and met intense fire from light anti aircraft guns. The markers went down right on the target and the main force bombing that followed was concentrated and effective. Coldham pays tribute to the work of W/Cdr. Searby, D.S.O. R.A.F. who was Master of Ceremonies on this night. Although his advice was not necessary to the Pathfinders it was of considerable assistance to the Main Force and Coldham says as they left Searby, who was flying up and down off the coast, was directing the aircraft on to the most effective target indicators to bomb with noticeable success. Coldham had no trouble of any sort on the trip although the fighters were intensely active that night and the British loses heavy.



The Master of Ceremony idea he believes was abandoned after it was tried out over Berlin. On this night Coldham says Searby appeared to be running right over the centre of the target with not much more height than the bombing force. "He was very funny" Coldham said. "We heard him say 'Come on in boys theres nothing here, and don't bother about the searchlights they have'nt got a clue. But over a target the size of Berlin' wasn't really much help.'" Searby flew with an R.A.A.F. flight engineer 10427 F/Lt. F. A. Forster, D.F.C., D.F.M. the first Australian flight engineer to be twice decorated.

Coldhams crew have never been fired on by night fighters, although once or twice his gunners have opened fire first and driven enemy planes off. His aircraft has never been seriously damaged by flak. He puts these facts down half to luck and half to the keenness of his crew. He believes fear is the best element to keep a crew keen. "As long as you're frightened, you are on your guard" he said. "Its not difficult either."

His crew were mostly on as blind markers and in this capacity were first over the targets. On these trips he said they would meet widely varying receptions. "Sometimes we would take the defences by surprise when they were expecting only a feint attack and meet almost no opposition at all" he said. "At other times we would get caught by predictor flak or the searchlights would pick us up. We'd get a very bad run and as likely as not get the lot."

Coldham and Stevens were screened in January. They are now instructing with the P.F.F. Navigational Training Unit at Upwood.

BAR TO DFC

11/2/44

310<sup>B</sup>.

Acting Flight Lieutenant Peter Anderson STEVENS, D.F.C., Royal Australian  
Air Force, No. 156 Squadron. Since the award of the Distinguished Flying  
Cross, this officer has continued to display exceptional courage and coolness,  
skilfully overcoming intense opposition and guiding the attacks of his  
aircraft fearlessly and accurately. His outstanding efficiency as a  
navigator has been highly commendable.

DFC

12/10/43.

851A.

Flying Officer Peter Adnerson STEVENS, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 156 Squadron. This officer has invariably displayed great determination in his operational duties. His navigational skill has been invaluable to his crew on many occasions and he has contributed much to the success of many sorties. Flying Officer Stevens has set a high standard of keenness and tenacity to the whole squadron.