

SMITH, GEOFFREY CHARLES CHAPMAN

424847

4748

AWM 65

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

STAY 25.2.44.

AW. 3879/386 (C.G.M.)

(6th member of RAAF to be awarded CGM)

INV 267

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
OFFICERS & AIRCREW

Issue: enc: 2087

The following biographical details are requested for use as R.A.A.F. Overseas Headquarters, London.

Surname SMITH.....Number 424,347.....

Christian Names GEOFFREY CHARLES CHAPMAN.....

Air Force Rank & Mustering 1/3gt AIRGUNNER.....

Degrees, Decorations, etc. C.G.M......

Present Appointment & Location...R.A.A.F. 11 P.D.R.C. BRIGHTON.....

Date of Birth 3/3/19.....Place SYDNEY AUSTRALIA.....

Educated STANMORE COMMERCIAL HIGH Sch., Sydney.....

Date of Entering Service 9/10/42.....

Previous Service Experience 3 YRS. Militia. (GUNNER + DRIVER).....

Places of Training in R.A.A.F. 1. I.T.S. - 2 WAGS. 2 BABS.....

Civilian Career & Activities PRINTER + PROCESS WORKER.....

Clubs, Recreations, etc. MASSONIC CLUB, SPORTS.....

Father's Name ERNEST SMITH.....

Wife's Name.....

Children.....

Home Address 32 LALEDDIX BUN. ST. BEXLEY - SYDNEY.....

Signature G.C.C. Smith.....

Date Embarked Australia 15/6/43.....Date 3/8/43.....

Destination.....United Kingdom.....

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

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R.A.A.F. Overseas Headquarters, London.

SURNAME SMITH..... NUMBER 424847.....

CHRISTIAN NAMES GEOFFREY CHARLES CHAPMAN.....

AIR FORCE RANK AND MUSTERING F/Sgt. Air Gunner.....

DEGREES ETC. -.....

DATE OF BIRTH 3.2.19..... PLACE SYDNEY.....

EDUCATED

DATE OF ENTERING SERVICE 9.10.42.....

PREVIOUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE

PLACES OF TRAINING

CIVILIAN CAREER AND ACTIVITIES

SPORT (TEAMS REPRESENTED) CLUBS ETC.

FATHER E. Smith.....

WIFE

HOME ADDRESS 32 Bayley Sydney.....

SIGNATURE

DATE

DATE OF EMBARKATION

HEADQUARTERS USE ONLY - DO NOT FILL IN

AWARDS C.G.M......

CATEGORY

INTERVIEWS.....

RADIO

OTHER REFERENCES Photo. U.K. 1278.1279.....

RTH

G.C.E. Smith
(CGM) 9/0.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

IRC. FORM.
I/R. 5.

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) SMITH, GEDFREY CHARLES CHAPMAN. NUMBER 424847

RANK AND BRANCH PILOT OFFICER: AIRGUNNER DECORATIONS C.G.M.

NUMBER I.T.S. COURSE 1. I.T.S. 32 Course C.T.U. - A.F.U. etc. 30,0,6,1: C.T.U. upwood Both U.K.

DATE LEFT AUSTRALIA } 14th June, 1943 } DATE OF ARRIVAL U.K. 3rd August, 1943
CANADA }
S. AFRICA }

SQUADRONS 625 Sq. Bomber Command: 156 Sq. P.F.F.

AIRCRAFT FLOWN FAIRY BATTLE, WELLINGTON, LANCASTER.

COMMAND & TYPE OF ACTIVITY BOMBER COMMAND (P.F.F.)

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) 47 hrs. 50 min. (b) SIX (NIGHT) + ONE ABORTIVE.

(c) SIX TO BERLIN: - ONE ABORTIVE ON FRANKFURT.

(d) NIL - (e) NIL -

(f) ON 2/12/43 J.M.B.S. DAMAGED, LAST SEEN DIVING ON FIRE. PRESUMED DESTROYED/ATTACKED BY ME.10 + FW190 AT SAME TIME ON 15/2/44. SHOT DOWN & DESTROYED ME.10 + SUCCESSFULLY EVADED FW190, 25MM GUNS. ~~WAS~~

9 SELF WERE HIT BY CANNON FIRE (9) ON 15/2/44 ATTACKED BY TWO EIA DESTROYED ONE, HAD FOOT BLOWN OFF BY CANNON SHELL PLUS TWO BULLETS IN THARS (OVER BERLIN) BUT STAYED ATPOST TELECAST REACHED. (H) NIL (I) NIL

DATE 2/12/45 SIGNATURE G.C.E. Smith (C.G.M)

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

Flying Officer Geoffrey Charles Chapman Smith C.G.M. (424847)

Date of Birth: 3rd February, 1919, at Marrickville, New South Wales

Occupation: Process Worker of Bexley, NSW.

Date of Enlistment: 9th October, 1942

Enlisted as ACII, LAC 5/12/42, Sgt. 27/5/43, F.Sgt. 27/11/43, W.O. 27/11/44
Commissioned as Pilot Officer 10/11/44, Flying Officer 10/5/45

Postings:

No.1 I.T.S. Somers	9/10/42
2 W.A.G.S. Parkes	10/12/42
2 B.A.G.S. Port Pirie	3/5/43
2 E.D. Bradfield Park	28/5/43
Embarked Brisbane	15/6/43
Arrived U.K. 4/	1/8/43
11 P.D.R.C.	1/8/43
30 O.T.U.	24/8/43
1667 C.U.	21/9/43
625 Squadron	16/11/43
7 Squadron	2/1/44
156 Squadron	2/1/44
RAF Stn. Upwood	14/12/44
Embarked for Australia	23/5/45
Appointment terminated	25/9/45

Conspicuous Gallantry Medal

Aus. 424847-Flight Sergeant Geoffrey Charles Chapman Smith, R.A.A.F.
No.156 Squadron.

This airman was the rear gunner of an aircraft detailed to attack Berlin one night in February, 1944. When nearing the target, Flight Sergeant Smith reported a fighter coming in to attack. As evading action was being taken the bomber was hit by cannon and machine gun fire from the enemy aircraft. Flight Sergeant Smith was hit by a bullet which shattered the lower part of his right leg and foot. The hydraulic gear had been damaged and his turret was rendered un-serviceable. Although suffering intensely and in a dazed condition, Flight Sergeant Smith refused assistance and insisted on remaining at his post to manipulate his turret manually until the enemy coast was crossed. In most distressing circumstances, this gallant airman whose leg has since been amputated, displayed courage and fortitude of a high order. His determination to defend his aircraft until the enemy coast was crossed set a magnificent example.

Smith commenced his tour with operating for the first time on 2/12/43 with 625 Squadron. He completed 4 trips to Berlin and one abortive one to Frankfurt, before being posted to 156 Squadron as a member of the path-finders. He completed two trips to Berlin, making a total of 47 hours 50 minutes operational flying. On his first trip on 2/12/43, he damaged a JU88 which was last seen diving away on fire. This was presumed to have been destroyed. On his last trip, on 15/2/44 he was attacked by an ME 110 and an FW 190 at the same time. He shot down and destroyed the ME 110 and successfully evaded FW190. His operational flying was down on Lancaster aircraft.

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CGM (424847)

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WO 27.11.44

Commissioned as Pilot Officer 10.11.44 FLY OFF 10.5.45.

<u>Postings:</u>	No 1 ITS Somers	9.10.42
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	Arrived United Kingdom	1.8.43
	11 PDRC	1.8.43
	30 OTU	24.8.43
	1667 CU	21.9.43
	625 Squadron	16.11.43
	7 Squadron	2.1.44
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Citation of Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (Flying)Gazetted 5/3/1944Aus. 424847 Flight Sergeant Geoffrey Charles Chapman SMITH, R.A.A.F., No. 156 Squadron.

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE OVERSEAS HEADQUARTERS

R.A.A.F. Bulletin No. 350

March 6, 1944.

156 Sqn R.A.F.

LEG SHATTERED, AIR GUNNER FOUGHT ON

With his right leg shattered, and the hydraulic control of his turret out of action over Berlin, a young Australian gunner refused to leave his post and operated his turret by hand until the bomber was clear of the enemy coast.

He is 25-year-old ^{AUS 424847} Flight Sergeant Geoffrey Charles Charman Smith, of Bexley, New South Wales, and for his courageous conduct he has been given the immediate award of the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal.

Smith is the sixth member of the R.A.A.F. to be awarded the C.G.M.

He was reargunner in a Lancaster which set out to raid Berlin one night in February. The Lancaster was the first bomber to arrive, and, on approaching the target, it was intercepted by enemy fighters. One made an attack from the rear and got in a long burst of fire. It was then that Smith's leg was broken and the hydraulic control of the turret put out of action. Although suffering intense pain, Smith insisted on remaining on duty in spite of endeavours by his crew mates to relieve him. The pilot finally had to order him out of the turret, and other members of the crew had to lift him out. The pilot said later that it was Smith who directed the defensive manoeuvre against the enemy aircraft, and probably saved it and its crew. Smith's leg has since been amputated.

Smith was educated at Starmore Commercial High School, Sydney, and in peace-time was a printer and process worker.

.....●.....



He lost his leg and won the
Conspicuous Gallantry Medal
in a raid on Berlin—Australian
Flight-Sergeant G. C. Smith.

38
Personal file -
F/S. G. C. Smith

Evening News.
7-6-44.

Cyril Fradley, and four others ran to release the airman, but were driven back by the intense heat. Fradley, however, made a second attempt. Undeterred by flames and exploding ammunition, he returned to the blazing wreckage, grasped the airman round the legs and lifted him clear. Unfortunately the airman died from his injuries some hours later. Fradley was severely burned about the face and hands.

The other aircraft crashed near West Keal, Spilsby in September last. Mr. Hale, a lorry driver, ran a half-mile to the scene of the crash. The aircraft was then on fire. Three members of the crew were already out and Hale assisted them to drag a fourth airman clear of the burning wreckage. Learning that other members of the crew were still inside the burning aircraft, he entered the fuselage and, in spite of danger from fire and exploding ammunition, searched amongst the debris. Unfortunately the men he found were dead. He then returned to the four who were clear of the aircraft and attended to their injuries, which were serious.

After doing all he could for them, he returned again to the wreckage, and helped in pulling out belts of ammunition until warned by one of the crew to stand clear because the petrol tanks were about to blow up.

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NOTE:- Fradley lives in New Road, Hixon, Staffordshire: Hale at West Keal, Spilsby, Lincs. He is a Corporal in the local Home Guard unit.

Aus. 424847 F/Sgt. G.C.C. Smith, C.G.M. - Air Gunner

He was on No. 33 I.T.S. course at Somers and trained in Australia at Parkes and Fort Pirie. He travelled to the United Kingdom via Auckland, San Francisco, and New York crossing America by train and the Atlantic on the Queen Elizabeth. From Brighton he was posted to Hixon, then to Lindholme O.T.U. then to Conversion unit at Forlingworth. He completed further training with 460 squadron at Binbrook then went to 625 squadron at Kelston.

Smith flew with an all R.A.F. crew. They did their first operational sortie, a raid on Berlin, on the night of December 2. They did three more Berlin trips after this one from 625 then early in January were posted to 156 squadron having volunteered for the Pathfinder Force. They completed two more Berlin raids with 156, the second, the attack of the night of the 15 February was the trip which won Smith the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal.

Smith is a mid-upper gunner but on his last trip he was flying for the first time in the tail turret. He took this position at the suggestion of the Squadron Gunnery Leader who thought it wiser to put the other gunner who had only arrived the night before from a training unit and was entirely new to Lancasters, in the mid-upper turret.

The Lancaster took off about five in the evening. The trip out was uneventful apart from the usual flak encountered over the coast and over defended areas on the route. The crew could actually see Berlin in the distance and were preparing to run in on their bombing run when the trouble started.

Smith was searching the Port beam when out of the corner of his eye he saw what appeared to be fighter flares in the sky. "I saw three white lights first" he said, "But as I swung my guns round I saw a green light on the inside of the port light. The lights were waving up and down and as soon as I saw the green light moving too I knew it was a fighter with wing tip, nose, and identification lights on." When Smith identified it as a fighter he gave evasive direction to his captain and swung his turret round swiftly and opened fire. The fighter was then about five to six hundred yards off. As he opened up the lights stopped waving and Smith knew the German pilot had them in his line of fire.

The Lancasters pilot threw the bomber into violent evasive action. As he dived to port Smith saw what seemed to be four lines of tracer and two of cannon streaming from the wings of the enemy which he could now identify as an Me 110. Before the Lancaster was hit however Smith got in approximately a hundred and fifty rounds from his turret and the enemy fighter disintegrated in the sky.

"There was a mighty flash and he blew up just a fraction of a second before we were hit" Smith said. "We were diving to port then. I told the skipper I had been hit. Then I saw four more lines of tracer coming in from dead astern. Two lines seemed to be going under us and the other two seemed to be going right through the kite. I followed the line of fire and could see the second fighter a Fw 190 coming in behind." Smith asked his pilot to dive to starboard but the pilot was already taking the action as he called him up. This manoeuvre succeeded in breaking the Focke Wulf's attack and it broke off and disappeared from view. It was not seen again.

Meantime Smith who had been hit by a cannon shell in the leg and machine gun bullets under the knee and in his leg, was in acute agony. He knew that his leg had been shattered by the shell and was pretty sure that he would lose part of it. His turret was rendered unserviceable and his parachute bag had been set on fire. Cannon shells had plastered the Lancaster from the tail right up the fuselage to the mid upper turret. The turret was out of action. A shell had exploded by the left foot of the midupper gunner breaking his leg and tearing the muscle of his calf. The oil pipe at the bottom of the turret had been pierced and the oil was blazing. The Y Box, scanner, had been blown to bits, the rear wheel was shot off, the hydraulics were shot away, and the ^{starboard} ~~port~~ wheel was hit. The flaps were damaged and went down and couldn't be brought up. A cannon shell pierced one engine and the bomb doors were jammed shut.

The captain called his crew to check for casualties. There was no answer from the mid-upper turret and he sent the wireless operator back to see what had happened. The mid-upper gunner was found lying on the floor behind the bulkhead door without an oxygen mask and almost unconscious. He had got down to beat out the fire with his helmet, then had attempted to crawl forward to inform the pilot. The wireless operator

jammed an oxygen tube into his mouth just in time to save him from being dangerously affected. The gunner was laid out and the wireless operator climbed into the midupper turret to assess the damage and watch for fighters. He remained there for the rest of the trip.

The captain called up Smith and told him he was ^{sending} ~~sank~~ the crew down to get him out. But knowing that the midupper gunner was wounded and the turret out of action Smith refused to be moved and insisted on remaining in his turret in spite of appalling pain, from his shattered leg. All efforts to persuade him to leave failed, and he continued to manipulate his guns manually. The navigator came back and put out the flames enveloping his parachute.

Meantime the bomber continued on its homeward journey. Owing to damage to the navigational aids the aircraft strayed off course ^{long} ~~away~~ at one time into a heavily defended area. Here the pilot threw the aircraft into such violent evasive action that the crew thought the aircraft must be out of control. "For eight minutes we were thrown about" Smith said, "what had happened was at some time in our flight a piece of flak had come up through the pilots legs and hit the throttle box and another piece just missed the engineer. *Two engines were out of* ~~Only one engine was under~~ control."

The pilot eventually got the Lancaster clear of the flak and they straightened out and crossed the coast to sea. Meantime Smith's oxygen mask had frozen up and unable to get any oxygen through, he had taken it off and was breathing the outer atmosphere. Over the sea the crew chopped the bombs away then came back to get him out. The door of his turret had frozen stiff and this too had to be chopped away with the crash axe. Still fully conscious Smith tried to pull himself out by using his left leg and both hands but he was caught on the right side. When the bomb aimer ran his hand down his right leg to free it he found it twisted round the ammunition belt and controls. It was completely shattered and the whole turret was drenched in blood.

Smith's leg was untwisted and he was carried back to under the midupper turret. It had taken in all about an hour to get him free. He was given morphia and laid on the floor of the fuselage.

The pilot prepared for a belly landing in case the wheels were shot away. But finding that the bomb doors could not be closed he decided to come down on the rim of the undercarriage. The bomb aimer and the wireless operator lay down either side of Smith to protect him in case of a crash. The pilot made his approach and then brought his crippled bomber down in what Smith describes as one of the most beautiful landings he could ever hope to see.

The Lancaster had come in at Woodbridge and station crash ambulance came out to meet it. The fuselage was hacked away and Smith and the wounded mid-upper were carried out on stretcher and taken to the East Suffolk hospital. The following morning Smith's leg was amputated.

In addition to the wounds in his leg Smith had suffered so severely from frostbite that for a time it was thought that certain fingers would have to be amputated. He was affected in both hands, the side of his face his forehead and cheek bones. From these injuries he is now well on the way to recovery.

Referring to the magnificent behaviour of his crew on this trip Smith said "I wouldn't part with them for all the money in the world. If it wasn't for the skipper we would never have got back."

For Smith's Diary, see 184/55/100
(ENC 3. B)

ACCOUNT OF FLIGHT TO BERLIN WHICH WON C.G.M. FOR P/SGT. C.C.C. SMITH, OF SHIRLEY,
GIVEN BY THE PILOT, P/O R.P.S. DOYLE, OF LONDON.

P/O. DOYLE crew were as follows:-

Navigator	P/Sgt. D. Winslow, of County Durham
Bomb-aimer	P/Sgt. A. Astle, of Swindon
Wireless operator	Sgt. D. K. Green, of London
Midupper	Sgt. Clark, of Chelmsford
Engineer	Sgt. C. Richardson, of Manchester.

uncensored

The Lancaster was within thirty miles of Berlin when the fighter attacked Doyle says. "Smith reported fighter coming in behind and gave me evasive direction and the next thing I could see tracer coming over my head" he said. "We had just gone into evasive action and the kite was nose down. The tracer was entering the tail and going over the top of the front." A minute later Smith asked Doyle to counter the other way as the second fighter came in. Doyle had already started this manoeuvre which proved successful and the fighter was shaken off. Doyle resumed course for the target. "Smith had reported he was wounded but I didn't know quite what had happened it had all been so rapid" he said. "I called all the crew up to check for casualties and I got no answer at all from the midupper turret. It appeared later that his intercom had been knocked out and the gunner had tried to get through but couldn't.

"We were still going on to the target but we found that we couldn't get the bomb doors down as all the hydraulics had been shot away so I had to turn off about fifteen miles short."

The navigator reported a fire burning in the back of the aircraft and Doyle sent him back with the fire extinguisher. The flames were Smith's parachute burning.

"I knew by then that Smith was very badly wounded because we could hear him groaning over the intercom" Doyle said. "As we were clear of the trouble I sent the bomb aimer back with an axe to get him out. But Smith wouldn't hear of that. As the midupper turret was unserviceable and the midupper gunner out he insisted that he wanted to stay and watch for fighters. So he hung on there until we crossed the enemy coast.

The crew set course as best they could with damaged navigational instruments. "Most of our equipment was shot to hell and we strayed off course" Doyle said. "We were about half an hour short of the coast when we ran into a heavily defended area and got shot up by flak. A lump hit the throttle box by my feet and severed the controls to the port engine so that they were more or less runaway, and I had practically no control over them at all. However we managed to get clear of that finally and out over the North Sea.

Once out to sea Doyle brought the Lancaster down lower and sent the bomb aimer and wireless operator back to get Smith out of the rear turret. They chopped the turret doors away with crash axes and after an hour or an hour and a half managed to carry the crippled gunner forward to the front of the fuselage. Here he was laid down in the best possible position in case of a crash landing. A fix was obtained and course was set for Woodbridge and Doyle called up and asked permission to land. This was granted. The wireless operator came out of the midupper turret and he and the navigator and bomb aimer lay down beside Smith and the midupper to wedge them in and protect them in case of crash. Doyle put his damaged bomber down safely on the rine of the undercarriage.

Doyle thinks all his crew behaved splendidly that night. The wireless operator who took the midupper's place when the former was wounded remained in the turret throughout the trip although he had lost his gloves tending the gunner and suffered severely from frostbite. He didn't mention the fact till after the crew had eaten in the mess.

Doyle thinks the world of Smith. "There's no doubt about it he's got bags of guts" he said. He'd come back with us now if we asked him." He says Smith is immensely popular on the station. "Everyone knows Smithy and likes him" he said. "Although he doesn't fly with us anymore we still feel he's an integral part of our crew." Doyle believes it is thanks to Smith that the crew is alive and Smith says that it is thanks to Doyle.

When he was allowed out of hospital the first thing Smith did was to return to see his crew. They were on leave but he stayed at a hotel nearby for three days waiting for their return. During his present leave Smith will be staying with each member of his crew in turn.

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