

AWM 65

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MATHIESON, ROBERT MALCOLM

403474

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
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Av. 753/34 (D.F.C.)

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Photo U.K. 84

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

OFFICERS AND AIRCRAFT.

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

Surname..... MATHIESON Number..... 403474
 Christian Names..... ROBERT MALCOLM
 Air Force Rank and Mustering..... P/O Fd Fd W.A.C.
 Degrees, Decorations, etc.....
 Present Appointment and Location..... 31.R.C. Bournemouth ⁵⁰
 Date of Birth..... 21st Dec '16 Place..... Sydney N.S.W. Aust.
 Educated..... Dulwich Hill
 Date of Entering Service..... 7th Jan '41
 Previous Service Experience.....
 Places of Training..... # 5 B96. Daffoe.
 Civilian Career and Activities..... Battery District
 Assistant Engineer Eled. Dept. Courier. Dist.
 Clubs, Recreations, etc..... Freshwater S.H.S.C. of St. Regue S.H.S.C.
 Ass. Mem. Assoc. of Eled. Dist.
 Football, Swimming, Baseball, Golf, Tennis etc.
 Father..... ROBERT CHALMERS MATHIESON
 Wife..... VIVIAN LENORE MATHIESON
 Children.....
 Home Address..... 2 Carlton St. Harbord. N.S.W. Aust.
 Signature..... M. Mathieson
 Date..... 23.4.42
 Date Embarked..... 1st June 41
 Destination..... U.K.

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SECRET.

8th December, 1943.

Aus.403474 Flying Officer R.M. Mathieson, D.F.C.
of Sydney - Wireless operator.

Flying Officer Mathieson was on No.10 I.T.S. Course at Bradfield and left Australia on the 13th June, 1941 on the Awatea. He trained in Canada at No.3 Wireless School, Winnipeg and at 5 Bombing and Gunnery School Dafeo. He arrived in the United Kingdom in January 1942 and from Bournemouth was posted to W.E.M. School at Malvern, then to No.13 O.T.U. Bicester where he crewed up with Flight Lieutenant Gilmore, R.N.Z.A.F., pilot, and an R.A.F. Navigator. They were posted from Bicester to No.25 O.T.U. Finningly where they converted to Wellingtons, then to 1654 Conversion Unit at Wigsly for Lancaster Conversion. On the 18th December, 1942 they were posted No.50 squadron. Mathieson was the only Australian in the crew.

Mathieson has completed twentynine operational sorties. The first was a raid on Berlin on Sunday, January 17th. Then followed raids on Essen (7, including the three big ones that wiped the target out); Dusseldorf, Stuttgart, Wilhelmshaven, St. Nazaire, Lorient, Milan, Spezia, Pilsen, Munich, Nuremberg, Bochum, Duisburg (2), Wuppertal. He was screened in June, 1943.

The crew were only once attacked by enemy fighters - this was on the way out to raid Stuttgart, about an hour off the target. Two Ju 88's attacked the Lancaster from the Port bow, coming in in line astern. "The first shot holes all over the kite and completely smashed the bomb aimers panel" Mathieson said, "A cannon shell went right through the sleeve of his jacket but didn't even scratch him".

"The skipper dived as the Ju opened fire and he came right across the top of us about 50 feet above. The mid-upper got in a really good burst as he went over! Mathieson was in the astro-dome all the time and says he believes the Ju's were not vectored into their aircraft but came up-on it by chance. The second enemy fighter followed straight on the path of the first and just behind and did not open fire at all that time.

"He broke away and came back later on the starboard bow where he was silhouetted against the moon", Mathieson said, "We crept over close and the bomb aimer got into the front turret and gave him a long burst - so long that I didn't think he was ever going to stop firing. He seemed fastened on to the guns. He was annoyed because his bomb panel had been smashed". The Ju broke away then and the Lancaster broke away in the other direction and nothing further was seen of the enemy aircraft. The bomber went on and bombed, visually, the main concentration of fires.

Their bomb aimer was very unlucky - or lucky - Mathieson said. On another occasion over Berlin his bomb panel was smashed by a large chunk of flak just as he leant over to straighten the sight.

Like all successful bomber crews Mathieson believes that he owes his safe passage to crew work. "Crew co-operation is life's blood to bomber men", he said. "I reckon that if even one man is slack you've 'had it'". "Good crew discipline comes to the fore when you run into trouble and nothing else will get you through". He added that he did his last trip with a green crew which had not yet settled down and could feel the uneasiness all through the flight. This crew have since become first rate.

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News release on
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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE OVERSEAS HEADQUARTERS

R.A.A.F. Bulletin No. 284--"B"

December 13, 1943.

NEWS MISCELLANY

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CREW DISCIPLINE: Flying Officer R.W. Mathieson D.F.C., wireless operator, of Sydney, New South Wales, who has completed 29 operational sorties, attributes his safe passage to crew work. "Crew cooperation is life's blood to bomber men. Good crew discipline comes to the fore when you run into trouble and nothing else will get you through," he says. Mathieson has been only once attacked by enemy fighters. That was on the way to Stuttgart. Two Ju.88s. attacked the Lancaster first, smashing the bomb-aimer's panel, but although a cannon-shell went through the sleeve of the bomb-aimer's jacket, he was unhurt. As the Lancaster dived, Mathieson, from the astrodome, saw the mid-upper gunner get in a good burst as the Ju. went over 50ft. above. The second enemy fighter followed straight behind, but did not open fire until later, when he returned on the starboard bow, making a perfect target silhouetted against the moon. The bomb-aimer got into the front turret and gave it a long burst, and the Ju. broke away. The Lancaster eventually bombed the target, guided by the concentration of fires.

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