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MATHIESON, ROBERT MALCOLM 403474

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVE ACCESS STATUS

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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, Wimmipeg and at 5 Bombing and Gunnery School Dafoe. 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., pllot, and an R.A.F. Navigator. They were posted from Bioseter to No.25 O.T.U. Finningly where they converted to Wellingtons, then to 165k Conversion Unit at Wigaly for Lancaster Conversion. On the 18th December, 1942 they were posted No.50 squadron. Matheison 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, Nuremburg, Bochum, Duisburg (2), Wuppertal. He was screened in

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 line astern. "The first shot holes all over the kite and completely smashed the bomb simers 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 don'to 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 the brake may and came wake later on the startourd bow where he was silhoutted against the moon", Mathieson said, "We crept over close and the bomb airmer 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 ene Lancaster broke away in the other direction and nothing further was men of the enemy aircraft. 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 Matheson 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 orew 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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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE OVERSEAS HEADQUARTERS

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WHATA.F. Bulletin No. 284--"B"

December 13, 1943.

Succe mair

CREW DISCIPLINE: Flying Officer R.W.Mathicson D.F.G. wireless operator, of Sydney, New Scuth Wales, who has campleted 29 operational sorties, attributes his safe passage to crew work. "Grew cooperation is life's blood to bember men. Good crew discipline comes to the fore when you run into trouble and nothing else will get you through," he says. Mathleson has been only once attacked by enemy fighters. That was on the way to Stuttgert. Two Ju.88s. attacked the Lancaster first, smeshing the bomb-aimer's panel, but although a cannon-shell went through the sleeve of the bomb aimer's packet, he was unhurt. As the Lancaster dived, Mathleson, 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 streight 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.

Flying Officer Robert Malcolm MATHIESON, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 50
Squadron. Flying Officer Mathieson has completed many operational sorties,
most of which have been against the enemy's heavily defended targets. He has

at all times performed his duties with efficiency and enthusiasm.

8th December, 1943.

Aus, 403474 Flying Officer R.H. Hathleson, D.F.C. of Sydney - Bircless operator.

Hydrag officer isthicanon was on Ro. 10 L.T.S. Course at Irredition of and Left instruction on the 15th Jume, 15th on the instruction. Be trained in Genedia at No. 5 Wirelass School, Windpage and at 5 Dooblage and Coursery Bohool Defect. He serviced in the United Linguise of ... Hermany 15th on the Roumenouth was posted to U.T.M. School at Malvern, then to No.35 C.T.C. Bisconter where he areased up with Filight Liesteeant Chinary, 3.M.J. No.35 C.T.C. Filianching where they converted to William the Robert School Course of the Cou

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"The skipper dived as the Ju opened fire and he came right across the of the skipper diver. The skipper got in a really good hurst on a last the skipper got in a really good hurst on a last the skipper got in the skipper got in a really good hurst he believes the Ju's were not vectored dupt their aircraft but came up on it by chemos. The second enew fighter followed straight on the path of the first end just belind end ski not open fire at all that time.

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