

WM 65

[4183]

PETERS, KENNETH WILLIAM

407872

ACCESSORIES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

AW. ~~207~~ / 207 (D.F.M.)ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE. See also: enc: 1700.
OFFICERS AND AIRCREW. (cont.)

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

Surname... PETERS... Kenneth William... Number... 407872.

Christian Names... Kenneth William

Air Force Rank and Posting... Sgt. Gunner

Degrees, Decorations, etc.....

Present Appointment and Location... 3 P.R.C. RAF. Bournemouth

Date of Birth 3.3.12..... Place... Millicent, S. Australia

Educated... Stoth. College, Norwood High School all
..... Stoth. Business College at Adelaide

Date of Entering Service... 1.2.41

Previous Service Experience... 1 year with 10th S. Australia
Battalion

Civilian Career and Activities... journalist

Clubs, Recreations, etc... Amateur Adelaide
Athenaeum Melbourne
Boating, Tennis, Hunting

Father... D. G. Peters

Wife.....

Children.....

Home Address... % J. V. Dwyer, 9 Linfield Ave. Edwardstown
Adelaide, S. Australia

Signature... KW Peters

Date... 13.5.42

Date embarked (Australia)... 20.3.42

Destination... U.K.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

OFFICERS AND AIR CREWS

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

SURNAME. PETERS.....NUMBER. 497872.....
CHRISTIAN NAMES. Kenneth William.....
AIR FORCE RANK AND MUSTERING. F/Sgt.....Avn. Squadron
DEGREES, DECORATIONS ETC.....D.F.M......
PRESENT APPOINTMENT AND LOCATION.....15 Sqdn. Mildenhall.....
DATE OF BIRTH.....3/3/12.....PLACE. Mildenhall, S.A......
EDUCATED...Monmouth High School.....
DATE OF ENTERING SERVICE.....1st Feb 1941.....
PREVIOUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE.....
PLACES OF TRAINING. Somerset Ballarat, Pt. Pirie.....
CIVILIAN CAREER AND ACTIVITIES. Railway Accountant.....
SPORT (TEAMS REPRESENTED), RECREATIONS, CLUBS ETC.....
Swimming, Tennis, Rifle Shooting.....
FATHER. William George Peters.....
WIFE.....
CHILDREN.....
HOME ADDRESS...9 Linfield Ave. Edwardstown, S.A......
SIGNATURE...K Peters.....
DATE. 28/7/43.....
DATE EMBARKED. 29/3/47.....
DESTINATION. England.....

(These forms are to be filled in and handed to the Adjutant of the Unit immediately after receipt).

MISCELLANEOUS

Aus. 407872 F/Sgt. K.W. Peters, D.F.M. of Edwardstown, S.A. - Air Gunner.

(Squadron ?)

1080

He was awarded the D.F.M. following a raid on Essen on March 13th 1949 when he shot down one ME 110 and damaged another.

The Stirling was about 20 miles off the target, flying at about 13000 feet with a full bomb load when the mid upper gunner reported a 110.1000 yards out on the starboard beam.

"He made three or four feinting attacks first which didn't mean much" Peters said. "He was well out on the side where I couldn't see him from the rear. Then he came in looking as if he meant business and the midupper told the skipper to turn in to the attack." "We turned in and dived at the same time to give him bad deflection shot. Just as were making our diving turn I saw another one dead astern on our tail about 1000 yards away".

Peters held his fire not expecting the night fighter to open up until he reached 400 yards range. At 600 yards the enemy cannons started blazing and the first burst put the mid upper turret out of action.

"I told the skipper to corkscrew starboard and I waited till he came within range" Peters said. "Then I had my innings. I let loose at 400 yards and I could see the stuff going right into his nose. I think I hit him with the initial burst because there was just a faint flicker from his guns - a sort of convulsive jerk - then no more fire. But he kept on coming in and closed right in to between 100 and 150 yards range. I was firing all the time. I had set alight both his engines and the whole of the aircraft was in flames."

"I think it was just the momentum of the plane that kept it coming in. I believe he was dead from my first burst. Anyway 100 yards of it rolled easily over on its side and fell slowly to about 2000 feet below where it blew up."

This engagement all took place in about 15 seconds. As the rear aircraft exploded the other attacked again coming from the port beam. Peters put in a long burst at 400 yards before the ME opened fire. He saw hits striking then the fighter dived straight down underneath the Stirling and disappeared from view.

By this time the bomber was down to 600 feet having lost height through evasive tactics. The pilot struggled to gain height but some of the controls had been shot away and the aircraft refused to climb.

Then an ack ack battery opened up suddenly beneath and started battering at the crippled Stirling.

"We had an ex-policeman from Newcastle as bomb aimer" Peters said. He was a real hard case. He said he wasn't going to waste his bombs. We had no hope of gaining sufficient height to bomb a heavily defended target like Essen so he announced he was going to bomb this battery.

We turned round and made a proper bombing run and he dropped his stuff dead on top of it. One minute there was an A.A. battery there, the next minute there wasn't. And just to prove it we brought back a target photograph."

The Stirling gained another thousand feet with the bombs gone and the pilot brought it home without further trouble.

"As a bombing trip it was a dismal failure, but from my point of view it was the most entertaining night I've ever had" Peters said. "It was the standing joke of the squadron for about two months."

DFM

27.

3/5/43.

of Edwardstown SA.

22/A.

~~Aus. 407872~~ Sergeant Kenneth William PETERS, ~~Royal Australian Air Force,~~

No. 15 Squadron. Sergeant Peters is a rear gunner of a bomber aircraft who has displayed courage and ability at his duties. His determination and devotion to duty have set a fine example to other gunners of his squadron.

On a recent operation his aircraft was attacked by two enemy fighters, Sergeant Peters successfully brought down one of these in flames and the second fighter then broke off the attack. Throughout his operational missions, which have included sorties against Berlin and Essen, he has displayed great courage and ability.

Ans. 407872 P/Sgt. K.W. Peters, D.F.M. of Edwardstown, S.A. - Air Gunner.

He was originally on No. 11 ITS Course as a wireless air gunner but half way through his wireless course at Ballarat it was found he had a broken wrist and he was remustered as a straight air gunner. He trained at Port Pirie W.A. and left Australia on 20.3.42. on the Andes, travelling via Panama and Halifax to the U.K.

He arrived on 7.5.42. and from Bournemouth was posted to Air Gunners School Castle Kennedy. From there he went to 20 O.T.U. Lossiemouth and from there to 1657 Conversion unit. On approximately 10.1.43. he was posted to No. 15 Stirling Squadron at Bourne, crewed up with an all English crew.

P/Sgt. Peters has done 20 operations, the first sixteen of them with this crew who were ^{operated on} missing on a raid on Cologne while he was in Hospital. The last four he did with a Canadian pilot and R.A.F. crew who have since been reported missing while he was again in hospital under observation for possible lung trouble.

Targets he has bombed include Lorient, Feb 7 (his first trip) Berlin (twice) Essen (twice) Cologne (three times), Hamburg, Wuppertal, Gelsenkirchen, Dusseldorf, Krefeld, St. Nazaire, Duisburg, Dortmund, Wilhelmshaven, Munich, Nuremberg and Le Creusot.

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He said that at that time the crew did eight raids in eleven nights. His birthday was celebrated over Hamburg. His pilots birthday was celebrated the next night over another target. When they finally got a breathing space they celebrated the two birthdays and Peters award in one hilarious celebration during which Peters fell down and broke his thumb. On the next trip his crew were lost.

He believes that his second crew with the Canadian pilot were shot down by a fighter and feels that if he had been with them this might not have happened as their tail gunner was on his first operation.

All his trips with this crew he describes as "nightmares". They ran into trouble on every turn and on one occasion were chased by six enemy fighters, three of which actually attacked but were driven off by long range fire.

Peters said that among Stirling pilots in the RAF there is none with a better reputation than F/O. G. Corser, D.F.C. R.A.A.F. of Maryborough. If one of F/O Corser's crew was ill or on leave, he said, spares would fight to get into the crew where they would normally do anything to avoid flying with a strange pilot for one trip.

