

AWM 65

[4684]

SIMMONS, CHRISTOPHER HAROLD

406311

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

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

SURNAME..... SIMMONS..... NUMBER..... 406311.....
 CHRISTIAN NAMES..... CHRISTOPHER..... HAROLD.....
 AIR FORCE RANK AND MUSTERING..... ~~PLATE~~..... W/O.....
 DEGREES ETC..... NIL.....
 DATE OF BIRTH..... 4TH OCTOBER 1920..... PLACE..... LONDON.....
 EDUCATED..... NTH KANGARIE STATE SCHOOL - EASTERN GOLDFIELDS HIGH SCHOOL.....
 DATE OF ENTERING SERVICE..... 7TH OCTOBER 1940.....
 PREVIOUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE..... NIL.....
 PLACES OF TRAINING..... N^o 1 L.T.S. SCHOOLS - N^o 1 WORKS BALLARAT - N^o 1885 EVANS HEAD
 [N^o 70 (O/S) NARRIKI, ALBERTA]
 CIVILIAN CAREER AND ACTIVITIES..... ASSAYING (FIVE YEARS)
 FOUNDATION MEMBER OF EASTERN GOLDFIELDS AMATEUR ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
 SPORT (TEAMS REPRESENTED) CLUBS ETC..... ATHLETICS (SPRINT) LAMINGTON COAC (SCAD)
 SMALL BORE RIFLE SHOOTING - FORESTERS (KANGARIE FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ASSOC)
 FATHER..... HAROLD HARRY SIMMONS.....
 WIFE..... NIL.....
 HOME ADDRESS..... 84 WARD STREET - KANGARIE - WESTERN AUSTRALIA.....
 SIGNATURE..... H. J. Simmons.....
 DATE..... 19/10/43.....
 DATE OF EMBARKATION..... 5/11/41.....

HEADQUARTERS USE ONLY - DO NOT FILL IN

AWARDS..... 635^A D.F.M.
 CATEGORY..... INTERVIEWS.....
 RADIO..... OTHER REFERENCES..... C. E. file enc. 176.....

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

Overseas Headquarters,
Kodak House,
KINGSWAY, W.C.2.

PRO. FORMA,
P/R. 5.

SECRET & CONFIDENTIAL

The following biographical details are required for use at R.A.A.F.

Overseas Headquarters. These forms are to be filled in and handed to the
Adjutant of your unit immediately.

NAME..... SIMONS. Christopher, Harold, NUMBER..... Aus. 406311.
(In full)
RANK AND MUSTERING..... W/O. W.A.G. DECORATIONS..... D.F.M.
NUMBER I.T.S. COURSE..... Course. 7.
X DATE LEFT AUSTRALIA..... Australia, 5th July, 1941.
CANADA
Sth. AFRICA
DATE OF ARRIVAL UNITED KINGDOM..... 1st August, 1943.
O.T.U. - A.F.U. etc..... No.70. O.T.U. Nekuru. Kenya.
PRESENT UNIT..... No.3. S. of G.R. Squires Cete. AIRCRAFT FLOWN..... ANSONS.
PREVIOUS UNITS (with dates) AND AIRCRAFT FLOWN..... 70. O.T.U. (OXFORDS & BLENHEIMS.)
..... 9.10.41. - 22.11.41. 14 Squadron R.A.F. (BLENHEIMS, BOSTONS, MARAUDERS) 5.1.42.
..... 12.6.43.

DETAILS OF OPERATIONS (details of operations with dates to be given as fully as possible under the appropriate headings as shown)

(a) Number Operational Hours (b) Number Operational Sorties, day-night
(c) Target bombed
(d) Attacks on enemy surface vessels - type size etc.
(e) Attacks on enemy submarines (f) Combats with enemy aircraft
(g) Other attacks and incidents. (h) Other Australians in crew.

..... (a) Op. Hours. 248 Hrs. 5 Mins. (b) Sorties (D.30. N.9.) 39.
..... (c) Land Targets: (Tanks; M.T. Troops; Aerodromes) in Western Desert to Crete.
..... 7th, 8th, 25th, 28th, Jan 1942, 3rd, 5th, 15th, Feb 1942, 10th, 15th, March 1942.
..... 8th, 13th, 17th, 24th, 26th, June 1942, 18th, 21st, July, 1942.
..... (d) 20th Jan. 1942. Torpedo Attack - Aegean Sea - MV - 1500 Tons - Sunk. 15th April
..... 1943. Low level bomb attack - Tyrrhenian - MV - 1500 tons. Results not observed.
..... (e) Nil. (f) Chased and fired at on several occasions but no casualties or damage
..... sustained - Ju.88 - No.110 and Arado 196 claimed as damaged. (g) None ~~noting~~ noting.
..... (h) 406241 J.F. Elliott, D.F.C. Pilot. 406195 P/O. C.R. Davies D.F.M. Navigator.
..... F/Sgt. Mitchell, Co.Pilot.

use other side if necessary.

135A.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING MEDAL

9. 8. 43
GAZETTED ~~13. 1. 44~~

AUS 406195. FLIGHT SERGEANT CYRIL RAYMOND DAVIES(R. A. A. F.) 14 Sqd

AUS 406311. FLIGHT SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER HAROLD SIMMONS. 14 Sqdn.

As navigator and wireless operator respectively, these airmen have participated in a large number of sorties, including shipping reconnaissances and operations against airfields in Crete. They have displayed great skill throughout and have contributed materially to the successes obtained. Their diligence and determination have set a fine example.

SECRET

21/10/43.

14 56
ME.

Aus. 406311 W/O. C. H. Simmons, D.F.M. - W/AG (see P.R.5.)
Aus. 406195 P/O. C. H. Davies, D.F.M. - Navigator
Aus. 406241 P/O. J.H. Elliott, D.F.C. - Pilot.

They were on No. 7. Course at Bomers and trained in Australia. Simmons trained at Ballarat and Evans Head.

They left on 5.7.41. on the Queen Elizabeth bound for the Middle East., and arrived on 31st at Suez. From the M.E. Pool they were posted to 70 Blenheim C.F.U. in Kenya where they were crewed up. On 4.1.42 they were posted to 14 Blenheim Squadron then at Gambut.

They operated with 14. Squadron till 12 June, 43 when they were screened and posted to the U.K.

They flew together practically all that time. At first the squadron operated in formation close support to the army, flying always with fighter escort, but in June they were taken off this work as the Blenheims were considered too slow. They went on to intruder operations over Crete and later to night bombing. Their targets during this phase were M.T. concentrations, tank repair shops and shipping in Mersah Matruh harbour. Throughout their losses were negligible.

Elliott's crew did sixteen trips on Blenheims. In September and October 42 the squadron converted to Marauders and transferred to Coastal Command. At first they operated on anti-shipping reconnaissances but later half the squadron converted to torpedo bombers. Offensive shipping runs with torpedo load were carried out in daylight and Simmons says that the Marauders are very well suited to the work being extremely fast.

Elliott's crew were accredited with one certain kill on this work. This was a 1500 ton merchant vessel they attacked in the Aegean sea North of Crete on 20 Jan. of this year.

The enemy merchantman was alone but escorted by an A-20 196 single engine float plane. The first attempted attack by another Marauder from 14. Squadron was driven off by the fighter.

Then he turned on to us just as we were making our run in, coming head on towards us" Simmons said. "We turned to avoid him and our turret gunner let go as he went past. We went on and dropped our torpedo and I saw it hit about 12 feet back from the bows. It blew the bows right off.

We crossed in front then came round and did two or three circuits to get photographs. The A-20 came after us again as we circled but he wasn't fast enough to catch us."

By that time, Simmons said, the merchant man was sticking out of the water practically vertical and satisfied that it was destroyed both Marauders made off into cloud.

Early in the New Year the squadron moved up to North Africa and were based near Algiers. Elliott's crew did about 133 15 trips from this base, mostly straight out shipping reconnaissances.

They arrived back in the U.K. on 1 August and are posted to 3 School of C.R. as instructors.