

AWM 65

[4850]

STEVENSON, RONALD DOUGLAS

403626

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

To AMB 7115 on "Cousin" attached
off Frisian Islands" see file of SEE MISC. UNITS
w/c C.D. CANDY.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

OFFICERS & AIR CREWS

~~1001~~ 83+
147
225
859

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

SURNAME..... STEVENSON..... NUMBER..... AUS 402626

CHRISTIAN NAMES..... RONAND DOUGLAS.

AIR FORCE RANK AND MUSTERING..... P/O..... C. D.

DEGREES, DECORATIONS ETC.....

PRESENT APPOINTMENT AND LOCATION..... OBSERVER..... SA SADM NORTH COAST

DATE OF BIRTH..... 4. 6. 17..... PLACE..... SYDNEY, N.S.W.

EDUCATED..... NORTH SYDNEY HIGH SCHOOL.....
INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE.

DATE OF ENTERING SERVICE..... 2. 2. 41.

PREVIOUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE..... SGT. in 7th Fd Sqdn R.A.F.(M).

PLACES OF TRAINING..... 11 course ITS at BRADFELD ARAO at RIVERS
ROB. EDMONTON, Canada 31070. DEBENT.

CIVILIAN CAREER AND ACTIVITIES..... ROBE. MOSSBANK DORVAL, flew across Atlantic with Ayr in 8 months
Statistical clerk at Loath & Co, Sydney.
General Commonwealth Institute of Accountants
Residual Australia. Institute of Secretaries.

SPORT (TEAMS REPRESENTED), RECREATIONS, CLUBS ETC.....
News representative - played tennis, & golf -
swimming & horse riding -

FATHER..... GEORGE DOUGLAS STEVENSON.

WIFE.....

CHILDREN.....

HOME ADDRESS..... 2 BROUGHTON RD. PATRAMOON,
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

SIGNATURE..... R. Stevenson

DATE EMBARKED..... SYDNEY 22. 4. 41..... DATE..... 1. 3. 42.

DESTINATION..... Canada..... U.K. 9. 1. 42 } S. Ais.

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

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN OVERSEAS HEADQUARTERS.

BULLETIN No. 227 "A".

27th October 1943.

FCW FIRST FLIGHT WAS MADE
ON ATLANTIC FERRY SERVICE.

The statement just issued by Air Ministry that to September 30 the percentage of loss on the Atlantic Ferry Service has been less than half of one per cent recalls that an Australian, Air Commodore D. C. T. Bennett, C.B.E., D.S.O., R.A.F., of Brisbane, was among those who founded the ferry service.

Bennett and his associates used Montreal as headquarters and obtained pilots and radio operators from British Overseas Airways to form the original nucleus. The organisation, at first known as Atfero, was taken over by the Royal Air Force in 1941.

Air Commodore
~~Wing Commander~~ Bennett led the first flight when the service was inaugurated on the night of November 10, 1940. Seven Hudsons manned by personnel from Britain, Australia, South Africa, Norway, Canada and the United States took off that dark, freezing night. At 20,000 feet Bennett's formation still flew in heavy snow and turbulence, but although formation had to be broken and each aircraft make its way individually, all arrived safely.

So the Service began. Later, Service navigators trained under the Empire Air Training Scheme became available. On January 9, 1942 two members of the Royal Australian Air Force and a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force are believed to have been the first crew entirely trained under the E.A.T.S. to ferry an aircraft across the Atlantic to Britain.

In doing so they created a transatlantic record. They were Pilot Officer R. A. Stevenson of Sydney, navigator, Pilot Officer George V. Syer, pilot, (an English member of the R.A.A.F. who trained in Australia) and Pilot Officer A. Harris, of Canada. (Syer, incidentally, is now a R.A.F. padre). They covered the journey, in temperatures as low as minus 35 deg. Centigrade, in 7 hours 40 minutes - 30 minutes better than the previous record set up by a Liberator.

Today Air Commodore Bennett is engaged in work of equal importance in another sphere of air operations.

AUB403626 PILOT OFFICER R.D. STEVENSON

Pilot Officer Stevenson left Australia in April, 1941, on the Awatea. He trained at Edmonton Observers' school then at Mossbank Bombing and Gunnery school and was sent to No. 31 Ferry O.T.U. at Debert. He crossed the Atlantic as observer in the Hudson that broke the trans-Atlantic record and was piloted by Pilot Officer George Syer.

They arrived on January 9, 1942. On January 29 he was posted to No. 59 Coastal Command Squadron at North Coates and was crewed up with Pilot Officer H.A.L. Moran.

(See Moran's interview).

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SECRET

RECORD ATLANTIC FLIGHT IN LOCKHEED BY

Hudson

Pilot Officer G.V. SYER

George Vivian SYER sailed from SYDNEY on January 23, 1941 on the "AORANGI". With him was Wing Commander GURNOW, who was formerly his Commanding Officer at NARROMINE, NEW SOUTH WALES. He undertook his service flying training on the U.S.A. twin-engined Cessna Cranes at BASKATOON and later proceeded to CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (Eastern CANADA), to pursue a general reconnaissance course for navigators. After a pilot's conversion course on Hudsons at AUBERT (NOVA SCOTIA) he was posted to the ferry command aerodrome at DUVAL, MONTREAL. He took off ~~for~~ with a Hudson for NEWFOUNDLAND where he picked up his "kite's crew" who were to accompany him to the United Kingdom.

- The crew was : Pilot, Pilot Officer SYER, R.A.A.F.
- Navigator : Pilot Officer R.A. STEVENSON,
R.A.A.F., of ARTAMON, SYDNEY.
- Wireless Op. : Pilot Officer A.HARRIS, R.C.A.F.

The Hudson was fitted with special petrol tanks in the bomb bay and the cabin which enabled them to carry 876 gallons. No other special alterations were made to the plane which was not new and had been used for training.

Setting off from GANDER, NEWFOUNDLAND, at 0020 hours G.M.T. on January 9, 1942, under overcast conditions, they flew up to 15,000 feet and later to 20,000 feet to get over the heavy banks of clouds. Oxygen was used for about 6 1/2 hours as the average height was between 20,000 and 23,000 feet. The use of oxygen for such a prolonged period had no ill effect on the men except to cause their faces slightly to peel. Conditions were "bloody cold" it being minus 35 degrees Centigrade. The sandwiches were inedible as they were frozen and the coffee in the thermos flasks stone cold. The crew wore ordinary flying gear.

No unusual incidents occurred during the flight but the observer and wireless operator became a little worried during the first change over from one petrol tank to the other. Pilot Officer SYER

to save petrol allowed the engine to splutter for lack of petrol before he changed over to a new tank. He used ~~up~~ the bomb bay tank first and pumped vigorously on changing over. He lost a few hundred feet during the process.

They were assisted by a tail wind averaging between 40 and 50 knots most of the way.

Landfall was made at SCOTLAND just south of the Clyde, about thirty miles out of reckoning. This was at 0800 hours G.M.T. making the time for the flight seven hours and forty minutes from taking off which is fifteen minutes better than the previous record put up by a Liberator.

He landed at 0821 at PRESTWICK. None of the crew showed any ill effects of the journey ^{but} and a few hours after alighting the re-_{action} was noticed in the degree of weariness.

PERSONAL DETAILS

A farmer and clergyman in civil life, Pilot Officer SYER joined the R.A.A.F. on September 18, 1940. He was trained at BRADFIELD PARK and NARROMINE before proceeding to CANADA. He was born on June 21, 1911, at CATERHAM, SURREY, ENG., and was educated at Caterham School and the London University. His father is E.J.SYER, Stafford House, CATERHAM, SURREY.

He is temporarily attached to ferry command awaiting posting.

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AIR FORCE MELBOURNE

AL.19 16.1.42

For Public Relations break.

A Hudson training aircraft piloted and navigated by E.A.T.S. members of the R.A.A.F. who recently completed their training in Canada has broken the trans Atlantic flight record. The crew were - Pilot, Pilot Officer George Vivian Syer, (Aus404544) formerly a clergyman in Victoria, Navigator Pilot Officer R. B. Stevenson of ^{PM} Artarmon, Sydney, and a wireless operator of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The flight across the Atlantic occupied seven hours and forty minutes which is more than thirty minutes better than the previous record put up by a Liberator. Flying at great height the crew used oxygen for over six hours. Landfall was made in the United Kingdom within a few miles of the point of reckoning. The flight was uneventful and none of the crew showed any ill effects. The temperature fell as low as minus thirty five degrees centigrade. The sandwiches were inedible as they were frozen and the coffee in the thermos flask was stone cold. break.

Pilot Officer Allan William Russell Triggs (Aus400500) of Elwood, Victoria, took off in another Hudson shortly after Syer and landed in the British Isles fifty minutes later. Break.

Note to D.P.R. Please ensure this story not published outside Australia as objections here as spread of competitive spirit may endanger crews.

W. B. Tart, S/Ldr.
for Air Marshal, Air Officer Commanding