

AWM 65

[4034]

ORBUCK, LAURENCE DAVID

400029

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

Return to Sender

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

Missing

OFFICERS & AIR CREWS

11.4.42

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

SURNAME... ORBUCK NUMBER... RAE. 400029

CHRISTIAN NAMES... LAWRENCE. DAVID

AIR FORCE RANK AND MUSTERING... SGT. OBS.

DEGREES, DECORATIONS ETC.....

PRESENT APPOINTMENT AND LOCATION... N^o 20. DTU. LASSLEMOUTH

DATE OF BIRTH... 19. 8. 21 PLACE... MELBOURNE

EDUCATED... ELWOOD. CENTRAL. SCHOOL

..... MELB. BOYS. HIGH. SCHOOL

DATE OF ENTERING SERVICE... 29. 4. 40

PREVIOUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE... 3 YEARS. 46th BATT. A.M.F.

..... 7 months. H.F.F. 2/6th BATT.

PLACES OF TRAINING... (N^o 1 I.T.S. N^o 5 E.F.F.S.)^{CAN} N^o 2 S.F.F.S. N^o 1 B.O.S. N^o 4 B.O.S. N^o 1 A.M.S.

CIVILIAN CAREER AND ACTIVITIES... MANUFACTURING. JEWELLER

.....

SPORT (TEAMS REPRESENTED), RECREATIONS, CLUBS ETC.

..... MERCANTILE. ROWING. CLUB. (REP. Lybbe w eight. & Maiden Fours. 1939) ..

..... FOOTBALL. TENNIS. SWIMMING

FATHER... LOUIS. ORBUCK

WIFE.....

CHILDREN.....

HOME ADDRESS 21. BALACLAVA. ROAD. EAST. ST KILDA. S2. MELB. VIC.

SIGNATURE... Orbuck

DATE... 28. 1. 42

DATE EMBARKED... 5. 9. 1940

DESTINATION. UK. via. CONRAD.

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

POSTINGS DIFFICULTIES

(Interviews with Aust/400029 Sergeant Laurence David ORBUCK and AUST/402698 Sergeant Allan NICHOLSON)

ACCOUNT GIVEN BY SERGEANT ORBUCK

Landed in England in September, 1941. Spent ten days at Bourne-mouth at which centre conditions were satisfactory.

They then moved to No. 11 O.T.U., Bassingbourne, Hartfordshire, for air crew training on Wellingtons. It appeared that the R.A.F. at that stage were short of observers but when the Australians arrived there was such a heavy influx that the courses were overcrowded. They spent five or six weeks instead of the normal fortnight before starting flying on the Ansons. This was due mainly to bad weather. They were allotted to the pool of observers to wait for pilots for crewing up. Whilst in the pool they got a considerable amount of leave. There was a call for six volunteers to go to 20 O.T.U., Lossiemouth, Morayshire, Scotland. The two members thought that by doing so they would be crewed up more quickly.

On arrival at Lossiemouth they found that the school apparently only wanted untrained men. The sergeants convinced the authorities that they had done most of their training. Three of the six were thereupon selected for a course from which they would almost immediately be crewed up. The other three, including Orbuck and Nicholson, were sent to do more training in Ansons but were given a promise that they would be crewed up with the next course.

On January 24, 1942, they were sent in from the satellite drome to be crewed up with No. 43 course. When they arrived at the O.T.U., however, they were told that they were not being crewed up as there were no vacancies. They could get no assurance as to when they would be crewed up. They exploited every avenue and eventually interviewed the Chief Ground Instructor who told them that they were not wanted; that Australians were not asked to come to the United Kingdom and that there were insurmountable difficulties in the way of crewing up in the form of lack of aircraft; lack of spare parts and failure to make the runways. Thereupon the Australians asked for leave to proceed to London to place the case before the A.O.C., Overseas Headquarters, R.A.A.F., London. They were told that if the Australian administration was what they thought it was they (the sergeants) would be sent back after being reprimanded.

Both men said that they were sick of doing nothing and spent most of the day wearing their trousers out sitting in the mess. They were told very forcibly by one officer that they were one of thousands of air crews, just a name, just a number, so far as they were concerned.

The sergeants said that there was a general feeling adverse to Australians on the station.

The sergeants said that they would remuster to A.C.2's if they could only get some work or go home. One suggested that he would have to "jump" a boat in order to grab a rifle and do some good for Australia.
