



Australian War Memorial

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[184]

BANKS, RAYMOND VICTOR

404463

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

OFFICERS & AIR CREWS

SEE MIC 610.

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

SURNAME... *BANKS* NUMBER... *404463*

CHRISTIAN NAMES... *Raymond Victor*

AIR FORCE RANK AND MUSTERING... *Sergeant Wireless Air Gunner*

DEGREES, DECORATIONS ETC.

PRESENT APPOINTMENT AND LOCATION... *Pupil, No. 19. O.T.H.*

DATE OF BIRTH... *30th August 1913* PLACE... *Toowoomba*

EDUCATED... *Matriculation Standard Grammar School, Toowoomba, Queensland*

DATE OF ENTERING SERVICE... *12.9.40*

PREVIOUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE... *none*

PLACES OF TRAINING... *Bradfield Park, Montreal, Jarvis, Cranwell, Rinton*

CIVILIAN CAREER AND ACTIVITIES... *Contractor, Mechanist, Engineer, Driver, Engineer, Shearer, Brewer, Farmer, A. Class Pilot's Licence (Flying)*

SPORT (TEAMS REPRESENTED), RECREATIONS, CLUBS ETC. *Rugby (Union & League), Toowoomba, All Athletics, swimming, Toowoomba Post Grammar Club, Matheron Flying Club, Brisbane*

FATHER... *George Joseph Banks*

WIFE.

CHILDREN.

HOME ADDRESS... *22 Herries St, Toowoomba, Qld. Australia*

SIGNATURE... *R. V. Banks*DATE... *3-2-42*DATE EMBARKED... *29-12-40*DESTINATION... *Montreal*

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

DFM

28/4/43

178A.

Aus. 404463 Sergeant Raymond Victor BANKS, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 178

Squadron. Sergeant Banks has participated as fire controller in 9 daylight sorties. During an attack on shipping at Benghazi in July, 1942, the formation in which he was flying was broken up by heavy anti-aircraft fire. Sergeant Banks coolly directed the fire of his aircraft, which was then subjected to concentrated enemy fighter attacks. Owing to his skill one enemy aircraft was shot down. He then assisted in repairing holed petrol tanks, thus enabling the aircraft to reach friendly territory. By his exemplary keenness and devotion to duty, this airman has invariably set an excellent example.

SECRET

11.3.43. A.M.

OVERSEAS MESSAGE

AUS 407023 PILOT OFFICER F.A. WOOD

(Continued)

The Fortresses stopped operating in December, 1941. When the American manned aircraft went into action they were armed with a top turret, a rear turret and an under turret, in place of the three-belt-fed guns, beam, top and under used by the R.A.F.

On April 25th, Pilot Officer WOOD was posted to No. 159 squadron. When the unit was posted to the Middle East, Pilot Officer WOOD flew his aircraft out by way of Gibraltar to Fayid on the canal. He had an Australian second pilot, Aus 403066, Pilot Officer J. G. MOXHAM; and Aus. 404463. Sergeant R. V. BANKS and Aus 401257, Sergeant K. E. WARD, both Wireless Air Gunners.

The crew went into action immediately. They arrived one day and bombed Benghazi and Tobruk the following night.

Pilot Officer WOOD did 21 operations in the Middle East, 8 of them with 159 squadron. Five of these were daylight raids on Benghazi and Tobruk.

On September 6th he was posted to a special Liberator flight attached to 108 squadron.

On 5th October, 1942, Pilot Officer WOOD was pilot of a Wellington forced down in the sea through engine trouble while on the way to Crete.

"One engine packed up when we were at about 4,000 feet", Pilot Officer WOOD said. "We couldn't get rid of our extra tank so we had to ditch. I turned on the landing lights and glided down as slowly as possible but it was still too fast and the aircraft went down in 25 seconds. The rear gunner was killed immediately when his head struck the main spar. The rest of us got out and climbed into the dinghy. The under tank had burst and the water was thick with petrol and we all swallowed a lot and were very sick for a while."

"We were in the dinghy for 43 hours. Luckily it was quite warm, although there was a heavy dew at night and we got wet through. On the morning of the sixth we were located by Bisleys who dropped us some water. They apparently took a fix and reported our position."

"But as soon as they had gone a storm blew up and drifted us 50 miles South East, and when the Sunderlands came out that afternoon they were unable to locate us. We could see them all that afternoon searching for us. We fired our Verey Cartridges, but in the dazzling sunlight they couldn't be seen. Most of them were damp anyway. At darkness the Sunderlands disappeared and we settled down to sleep. The following morning they started the search again. We watched them till latter part of the afternoon, when they left. We began to worry a bit then."

"We had some Horlicks malted milk tablets in the dinghy which we ate but we hardly touched our water as we thought we might have to sit for some time and we had decided to start using it on the 4th day. We half filled the rubber part of our life jackets with our water and cut the tin open as a rain catcher. But of course there was a clear blue sky from then on."

"On the evening of the second day we suddenly heard a motor running. We were watching the sky for aircraft but it turned out to be an M.T.B. We subsequently heard that the search had been cancelled by then from land, but the boat which picked us up had E.T. trouble and didn't hear the order and didn't stop. So we were again very lucky. We got quite merry on the M.T.B. and drank small their rum rations. When we got on shore we were entertained by the Air Force and then the Army. The celebrations went on for three days."

Pilot officer WOOD did two more trips then came off flying and was posted back to the United Kingdom.
