**FLIGHT LOG BOOK SUMMARY - WH (Bill) O’Callaghan**

Bill (Service Number 417876) enrolled in the RAAF in Adelaide on July 18 1942 and, after preliminary induction at Victor Harbor, he commenced training as a pilot under the Empire Air Training Scheme.

Postings, aircraft flown and the outline of his service has been extracted from his log book. There were numerous training flights documented in the log book at each of the bases to which he was posted. For some he was co-pilot, but increasingly he was the pilot.

21 Nov 1942 Parafield, South Australia.

First Solo Nov 30 Aircraft: Tiger Moth (De Havilland 82)

19 Jan 1943 Mallala, South Australia Aircraft: Anson (Avro)

Transferred to UK for further training before allocation to a RAF Squadron

31 Aug 1943 Greenham Common, Berkshire, UK. Aircraft: Oxford (Airspeed)

1 Dec 1943 Watchfield, Berkshire, UK. Aircraft: Oxford

28 Dec 1943 Castle Combe, Wiltshire, UK. Aircraft: Oxford

12 Feb 1944 Lichfield, Staffordshire, UK Aircraft: Wellington Mark X (Vickers)

20 April 1944 Church Broughton, Derbyshire, UK Aircraft: Wellington Mark IX

19 June 1944 Blyton, Lincolnshire, UK

HEAVY CONVERSION UNIT Aircraft: Halifax Mark II Handley Page)

26 June 1944 On his sixth flight in the Halifax, the third as first pilot, log book notes:

“CRASHED LOST CREW”

(The Halifax Mark II was notoriously underpowered and difficult to fly, especially at take-off. He lost power on take-off and was the only survivor)

There is no record in the log book of his hospitalisation and convalescence. However, he returned to the Heavy Conversion Unit at Blyton.

9 Nov 1945 “RE-CREWED” Blyton, Lincolnshire

Aircraft: Halifax Mark V (More powerful engines)

12 Jan 1945 “SHORT LANCASTER COURSE” (Still at Blyton)

Aircraft: Lancaster (Avro)

14 Feb 1945 Posted to RAF 170 Squadron, Hemswell, Lincolnshire

Pilot in Lancaster aircraft for all subsequent flights

It is evident that only flights involving definite enemy engagement were classified as “Ops”, as there were a number of local training flights and late in the War even flights over Europe that were not designated as “Ops”.

Feb 21 Op 1 Dortmund

Feb 22 Op 2 Duisburg

(Feb 23 Op to Deuss ‘recalled’ as ‘troops too close’)

March 1 Op 3 Mannheim

March2 Op 4 Koln (Cologne)

March 5 Op 5 Dessau (‘flak’ underlined twice)

March 8 Op 6 Kassel

March 12 Op 7 Dortmund March 13 Op 8 Gelsenkirchen

March 16 Op 9 Nurnberg

March 21 Op 10 Bremen

March 22 Op 11 Hildesheim

March 25 Op 12 Hannover

April 9 Op 13 Kiel

April 10 Op 14 Plauen

April 14 Op 15 Potsdam (Berlin)

April 18 Heligoland ‘Operation’, ? why not counted

April 22 Bremen ‘Operation’ , ‘Abortive’ … reason unclear

Subsequent flights appear to be related to “Spam dropping” or “Supply dropping” rather than combat. They are not referred to as operations.

April 29 Ypenburg (The Hague)

April 30 The Hague

May 2 Rotterdam

May 3 Rotterdam

May 7 Rotterdam

It is pertinent to note that VE (Victory in Europe) day was declared on May 8, and there are few further entries.

There were flight entries for the 20th and 21st May stating “Formation, Bombing, Air/sea firing” and “’Y’ X/CVY”, but it is unclear for what purpose.

There are no more entries for activity as a pilot, and no further entries until Sept 14when (not as pilot) there was a flight from ‘Base – Pomigliano (Naples)’, and a return flight on Sept 18 from ‘Pomigliano - Gladdon - Base’. Gladdon was formally known as ‘Glatton’ and was mainly a USAF base. Not clear what this flight involved, but there are photos of Bill in tourist mode at Pompei, which is near Naples.

It is unclear where Bill served between May and September, but elsewhere there are photos of him in Germany at a former Luftwaffe base, Fassberg, between Bremen and Berlin, and renamed as a RAF base. There are also photos dated in June from Ireland, Scotland and southern England, so clearly he was on leave then.

Subsequently he returned to Australia on the pre-war luxury liner, *Aquitania*, which had been converted to a troopship for the duration of the War.

**Summary**

Bill trained on four different aircraft before being involved in a Halifax (Four engine heavy bomber) crash, being the only survivor.

After four months hospitalisation and convalescence he returned to flying and, after conversion to the Avro Lancaster four engine heavy bomber, he was the pilot for 15 combat Operations over occupied Europe and Germany, as well as for other missions. He achieved Flying Officer rank and in all he was pilot for 604 hours before returning to Australia.