

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
OFFICIAL RECORD

Missing 2-10-44
P.O.W. 30-1-46
Safe 12-5-48

The following biographical details are requested for use at
Warwick House, London.

Service... M.A.C.P.M...... Sector... H.I.R. 257.....

Christian Name... Thomas Alexander.....

Air Force Rank & Posting... Sergeant, A.C. 2.....

Address, Despatch, etc.....

Present Appointment & Location... 2.4.47. 11 F.O.C......

Date of Birth... 12/7/01..... Place... Ellerwell, Preston

Education... G.P.C. St. Maria, Highton, New South

Date of Entering Service... 12/2/42.....

Previous Service Experience... Nil.....

Places of Training in R.A.A.F.... 2.1.T.S., 2.A.O.S., 2.A.O.S., 2.A.R.S.

Division Career & Activities.....

Clubs, Societies, etc... Football, Cricket, Tennis, Swimming

Father's Name... Ernest Charles.....

Wife's Name... A.P......

Children.....

Home Address... 78, Watkiss Rd., Hawthorn, Vic., Aus

Signature... T. Alexander

Date... 9/7/43.....

Date Reported Inactive... 5/5/43.....

Destination... Orford, England.....



**BOMB-AIMER
WAS PUT IN
BUCHENWALD**

Special Standard Correspondent
The Army today announced that a German pilot who had been shot down over England and captured by the British, had been transferred to the Buchenwald concentration camp. The pilot, who was identified as a member of the Luftwaffe, was reported to have been held in a prison camp in England for some time before being moved to Buchenwald. The Army said that the pilot was one of the many German prisoners who are being held in the United States and are being used for propaganda purposes. The Army said that the pilot was one of the many German prisoners who are being held in the United States and are being used for propaganda purposes.

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Evening Standard

19-5-45.

TYPHOONS ATTACK GERMAN SUPPLY BARGES

Rocket Typhoons of RAF 2nd TAF, just before dusk last night, detected German efforts to unload supplies from barges for the garrison of Hamburg. As soon as the activity was reported two attacks were made and many explosions were observed.

This was the climax to a day when the bulk of the effort of the fighters, fighter-bombers and medium bombers was directed to reducing the operation of the defenders of Emden, Bremen and Hamburg.

Amongst the targets were three buildings, believed to be the headquarters from which the enemy has been directing operations against the First Canadian Army attacking south of Oldenburg. Fighting French Spitfires of Air Vice Marshal Huddleston's 84 Group scored 27 direct hits with bombs and strafed the buildings. One building was almost completely destroyed, the second set on fire, and the third badly damaged.

After Spitfires had looked for, and failed to find, transport targets in the area around Berlin right up the line of the Russian advance, Tempests found signs of a general movement northwards into Denmark. Before nightfall they had destroyed or damaged at least 50 vehicles.

Apart from one encounter early in the day, when three FW.190s were seen and two destroyed, the search for the remnants of the Luftwaffe was in vain. The airfields were combed for anything on the ground, but most of them appeared to have been deserted and a modest score of only eight destroyed or damaged was returned.

On the other hand the search for transport both on road and rail was very productive. At least three hundred vehicles, 46 locomotives and 200 railway trucks were destroyed or damaged.

TAF lost seven aircraft but the pilot of one is known to be safe.

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SYDNEY DANGSTER FREE.

VICTORIAN TILLS OF DAYS IN BUCHENWALD

418 753
First Royal Australian Air Force prisoners of war to reach Britain by ship since the capitulation of Germany are two officers from Sydney and a flight sergeant from Hawthorn, Victoria; F/Lt. R.F. BURCHER, D.F.M. F/O G.B. HOCKEY, and Flight Sergeant T.A. MALCOLM. - 463 Sgn

They told their stories in London a few hours after their arrival. Burcher, who was shot down during the famous attack on the Moehe and Eier Doms in May, 1943, said he was blown out of the Lancaster in which he was the wireless operator, and parachuted to safety.

Civilians came running to him, and later he was taken to a Luftwaffe Station, and then on to Stalag Luft III.

On the way, the people living near the doms displayed great hostility, and at times the guards had to protect the prisoners from violence.

F/S. Malcolm was the bomb-aimer in a Lancaster which was shot down during an attack on Frouville, France, on June 24, last year.

He wandered about France for about a month before he was picked up by the Gestapo, who took him to a civilian prison near Paris.

When the Allies reached Paris, he was taken, with eight other Australians, to the notorious concentration camp of Buchenwald. "Buchenwald was a sickening place" said Malcolm. "We, as prisoners of war, were treated more or less correctly. But I was told that those poor devils who were unlucky enough to be political prisoners were subjected to all sorts of horrors and tortures. I actually saw the shrunken heads and the human skin on the lampshades referred to in the press and radio reports".

After a few days, Malcolm was transferred to Stalag Luft III. F/O G.B. Hockey was shot down by fighters in August last year while piloting a Lancaster on a bombing mission to Brunswick. He parachuted safely to the ground, and was the sole survivor of his crew.

He had been wounded in the attack, and had to give himself up to the German authorities, who sent him to Stalag Luft III, where he met Burcher.

When the American Army approached the Stalag, the Germans gave the prisoners half an hour's notice to prepare for a forced march north.

On this march, Malcolm joined Hockey and Burcher. "We were ill-equipped for the long trek, as you can well imagine", said Burcher, "With 22 degrees of frost on the ground, it was a nightmare".

They were halted at a couple of places before they reached Lubek.

There, they were eventually liberated by the 11th Armoured Division of the British 2nd Army, and began their journey back to England.

Several Allied ex-prisoners of war began the journey with them. But one by one, they dropped out at army camps. The three Australians hitch-hiked their way from Lubek to Ostend, where they shipped for England in a vessel bringing Dutch children to Britain.