

HAMMAT, Edwin Laurence (407193 RAAF)



Image 1 © Susan ROGERS family Collection 2015
circa . late 1944

Name	HAMMAT, Edwin Laurence Squadron Leader RAAF
Service Number	407193
Date of Birth	20th April 1920
Died	30th October 1972
Place of Birth	Port Pirie SA
Resident	Victor Harbor SA
Cemetery	Not Listed

Edwin (Ned) Laurence Hammat was born at Port Pirie on 20 April 1920, the youngest of two children of Edwin Paul Hammat and Catherine Hammat (nee Stacey). After the death of the father in 1921, the family moved to Victor Harbor, and Ned was educated at Victor Harbor Primary, and the newly established Catholic Coolock School in Seaview Road. His older brother Ronald, age 18, was killed in a shooting accident near Victor Harbor on 5 February 1934.

Ned's secondary schooling was at Rostrevor College and upon leaving school he commenced pharmaceutical studies and worked for Ron Goldsack at the Corner Pharmacy, Victor Harbor. At the age of 20, he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force on 20 July 1940; training at No 2 Initial Training School (ITS), Bradfield Park (NSW). Ned was later mustered as an observer (navigator) for training at No 1 Air Observer's School, Cootamundra (NSW). Upon completion, Ned then travelled to No 1 Bombing & Air Gunnery School (BAGS) at Evans Head (NSW).

On 28 December 1940, his mother Catherine died, leaving Ned without any direct family. His nominated next of kin was his uncle, Mr J Stacey, and this was later changed to Ron Goldsack, his previous employer.

On 13 February 1941, Ned was at No 1 Air Navigation School (ANS), Parkes (NSW) for astro-navigation training. After some leave, he departed overseas on 6 April 1941 and arrived in Egypt and was posted to the RAF Middle East Pool, Kasfareet. Detached temporarily to 70 Operational Training Unit, Ismailia. Ned's next posting was to RAF Station, Eastleigh (Nairobi), Kenya. On 28 September, he joined 45 Squadron RAF, a Blenheim squadron.

The Squadron operated against Italian and German forces in Libya, Egypt and the Mediterranean. A number of Squadron aircraft were lost during this time. This could have been due to the three-man Blenheim which was more suited as a night-fighter. However it was outgunned because of its low-calibre weapons, and the fuel tanks were not self-sealing, thus contributing to losses.

With the Japanese threat in the Asia-Pacific region, more Allied forces were being deployed from the Middle East to India to oppose the Japanese advance. In early 1942, the Squadron was deployed to India and Burma. Ned sailed on the SS *Orestes* from Suez to Calcutta, whilst some crews flew aircraft to India.

Allied operations out of Burma against the Japanese invariably proved disastrous as a result of inadequate supplies and equipment, and problems with Indian nationalists who wanted independence. On 25 February 1942, the Japanese launched an aerial attack against the airfield at Mingaladon and a number of the Squadron's aircraft were destroyed. The Allied forces were subsequently pulled back into India.

The Squadron's new base was near Calcutta but a shortage of aircraft restricted flying activities. Many personnel were detached to other units. Early November 1942 saw the Squadron being re-equipped with a few Vultee A-31 Vengeances, a single engine dive-bomber, with a two-man crew.

Various postings in India Command followed until 19 March 1944, when Ned embarked for the UK where squadrons were being strengthened for the oncoming invasion of France.

Ned, by now a squadron leader, arrived at 464 RAAF Squadron on 22 August 1944; a unit that was equipped with Mosquitos and specialised in precision and intruder raids. Ned participated in many raids over France, Holland and Germany and completed two operational tours, each tour being 200 hours.

Most of these missions were intruder missions, along with providing army support. From January 1945, all the Squadron's missions were over Germany.

Returning to Australia in November 1945, Ned was demobilised on 31 January 1946. He later married Marie Doran on 8 November 1947 in Melbourne.

Ned operated a pharmacy at Seaton Park. He died of a heart attack on 30 October 1972, age 52.

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Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team, August 2015. Updated by T. Young & M. Young 27/11/2025

Appendix



Image 2 © Susan ROGERS family Collection 2015
Tom McGOVERN left and Ned



Image 3 © Susan ROGERS family Collection 2015
Ned is in India holding most likely a Sikh knife (kirpan). collection.



Image 4 © Susan ROGERS family Collection 2015
Ned (centre) is shown with two unidentified airmen during his service in North Africa (Egypt).



Image 6 © Susan ROGERS family Collection 2015
Petrel Cove December 1945; from left Kevin Nightingale (demobilised 6/11/45),
Tom McGovern (demobilised 12/12/45) and Ned HAMMAT (demobilised
31/01/46).

NEWS IN BRIEF.

Squadron-Leader E. L. ("Ned") Hammat returned to Victor Harbour on Tuesday night last after spending over four years overseas with the R.A.A.F. in various theatres of war. He is the guest of Mrs. Maloney, at "Warrings," and was met on arrival by a number of friends who were entertained at supper by Mrs. Maloney. "Ned" is the last of a gallant band of local boys to return home from overseas—a body of men of which any township might well be proud.

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Sedunary returned home last week after spending a fortnight's holiday in Melbourne where they met their son, Sig. Geoff. Sedunary, R.A.N., who was on leave.

The opening of the giant concrete draught board on the foreshore will take place on Sunday afternoon next at 3 o'clock, when a match will take place between Messrs. J. Greenbank and W. W. Jenkins, both recognised experts in this ancient game. All interested are invited to attend.

The monthly meeting of the local branch of the M.B.H.A. will be held in the Mayor's parlour on Friday next, 7th December, at 2.30 p.m. All members are asked to attend as arrangements are to be made for conducting a Paddy's Market, to be conducted on 18th January next.

Image 7
The Times, 30 Nov 1945

Victor Harbour Red Cross Circle will be held in the supper room of the Town Hall on Thursday afternoon, 7th December, at 3 o'clock. Miss Myra Morgan, chief director of handicraft for S.A. Red Cross, will be present and address members.

The following donations have been received during November:—Private donations, £5/8/-; sale of pelts (Mrs. Tapley), 2/-; Country Women's Association (P.O.W.), 4/-; sale of diaries (350), £17/10/-; Newland Memorial Church Ladies' Guild, 4/-.

Donations for civilian relief have been received from Mrs. Kirk, Back Valley, Misses Bond, Mrs. A. V. Hutton, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Hay, Miss Allen, Miss Jagger, Mrs. M. Jagger, Miss R. Battye, Mrs. F. E. Vickery, Mrs. F. Emmett, and Mrs. Wilson.

PROMOTED TO SQUADRON-LEADER.

Mrs. M. A. Maloney, of Victor Harbor, received a lettergram yesterday from Squadron-Leader E. L. (Ned) Hammat, R.A.A.F., advising her of his promotion from Flight-Lieutenant. Squadron-Ldr. Hammat has seen much active service in the Middle East, India, and over German-occupied Europe, and at present is attached to Mosquito Squadron. His promotion is well merited and adds further laurels to the fine achievements of other boys who have enlisted in the services from Victor Harbour.

Prior to joining the RAAF Squadron-Ldr. Hammat was articled to Mr. R. W. Goldsack, of The Corner Pharmacy. He was educated at the local Convent of Mercy and later attended Rostrevor College and the Adelaide University.

Image 5
The Times 1 Dec 1944 Ned's Promotion

daughter.

Late Mr. E. L. Hammat

The death occurred in the Royal Adelaide Hospital on Monday of Mr. Edwin Laurance Hammat, of Renwick Street, West Beach. Mr. Hammat, who was 52, recently suffered a coronary. Prior to World War II he lived at Victor Harbour where his mother conducted a guest house, "Wandearah", in Flinders Parade. He was educated at the local primary school, Coolock Convent of Mercy and Rostrevor College. At Victor Harbour he was a keen footballer and cricketer.

After leaving college he was articled to Mr. R. W. Goldsack at the Corner Pharmacy. He joined the R.A.A.F. in July, 1940, and subsequently served as a navigator with daylight bombers in the Western Desert and Burma. Later he did two tours of operational duties with Pathfinder Mosquitoes over Europe, rising to the rank of Squadron Leader. He was honoured by the King of Denmark, who presented him with a pair of gold cuff links.

After the war Mr. Hammat attended the University of Adelaide and obtained his pharmaceutical diploma. Later he acquired his own pharmacy at Seaton Park.

Mr. Hammat is survived by his widow.

Image 9
The Times, 3 Nov 1972 ned's passing