



Len GAIRNS served with 7 Squadron RAAF flying Beaufort Bombers. On the 27th January, 1943, Len and his crew were sent out to patrol the area near Wessel and Elcho Islands to search for survivors from a small naval vessel the HMAS Patricia Cam.

The small ship was sunk by a Japanese float plane and it was reported that the pilot of the Japanese plane landed and picked up one of the survivors. Len located the remaining survivors on a small sandy island and dropped food to them, they were later picked up by a naval craft.

Some time later it was discovered that the man the Japanese pilot took on board was the Rev. Leonard Kentish, the only man ever to be taken POW on Australian soil. Rev. Kentish was taken to the Japanese base and was beheaded on the 5th February, 1943. Sub Lt. Sagejima Mangan was hanged for this crime after the war.

FLIGHT SERGEANT Len GAIRNS

Below, entry in the Log Book of Flight Sergeant Len Gairns showing the finding of survivors of the supply ship HMAS Patricia Cam.

N ^o 7 SQUADRON . TOWNSVILLE.					
December 27	Beaufort	A9-108	Self	Crew 2.	Circuits.
1943.					
January 1	"	A9-116	"	" 3	General Practice.
" 4	"	A9-123	"	" 3	Operation. Base - Cooktown
" "	"	"	"	" 3	" Cooktown - "
" 5	"	"	"	" 3	" " - Base
" 6	"	A9-145	"	" 3	" Base - Cooktown.
" 7	"	"	"	" 3	" Cooktown - Base.
" "	"	A9-127	Sgt Hoskins	Self	Safety Pilot Inst flying.
" 8	"	A9-138	Self	Crew 3	Formation
" 19	"	A9-108	"	" 4	A/C Test
" 20	"	"	"	" 3	Townsville to Horn. Is.
" 21	"	"	"	" 3	Ops. "P" patrol. from Horn Is.
" 22	"	"	"	" 3	" "N" " " " " "
" 23	"	"	"	" 3	" Convoy duty " " "
" 24	"	"	"	" 3	" "P" patrol " " "
" 25	"	"	"	" 3	" Convoy duty " " "
" 26	"	"	"	" 3	" "N" patrol " " "
" 28	"	"	"	" 3	" "N" " " " " "
" 30	"	"	"	" 3	Horn Is to Townsville
GRAND TOTAL [Col. (1) to (10)]					
		675 Hrs		25 Mins	
Totals Carried Forward					
HMAS Patricia Cam					
Total for January					
		29-05		28-05	
				55-1	
		(1)		(2)	
		(3)		(4)	
		(5)			