

**These are first
person accounts,
and are in original
format.**

**Some written
passages offer
imagery
that may not
suitable for all
readers.**

in the room. This afternoon was very nice. out & I was up flying for about an hour & a half with the wingco on a test flight. While we were at it, we temperature readings at every 1000 ft. up to 16000 & then tested the aircraft by putting her into stalls & spins - it is a very dangerous test in these big aircraft, but not so bad with the wingco as a pilot - he is really a wizard. We tried stalling her just by reducing airspeed, then with 30° flap, then with full flap & then with wheels & flaps down - the ASI were 96, 86, 76 & 73 respectively. Next he tried rudder stalls on both the port & stbd. sides - all quite thrilling. Finally he climbed out of the pilot's seat & let me in for about 1/2 an hour so all in all I had a good trip. Bryce is away on leave for 9 days now so I can see I'm going to be very busy for the next week looking after the whole works again. We still have about 3 or 4 bites up in this terrific storm - I sure hope they get down ok - incidentally I'd awfully hate to get called out on a night like this to chase a prop off the runway.

Tues. Sept. 28, 1943. Well, I had a feeling something was going to happen. I was awakened up at 4:00 a.m. this morning with the flying control sgt. worrying about S for engine which hadn't returned & was 3 hours over due.

Reports had been received about a crashed aircraft down near Marston Moor somewhere & they wanted me to identify some part numbers. However there was nothing in the log books so I couldn't do it. Went up & had bacon and egg aircrew breakfast at 5.30 a.m. & went back to bed again. Got up at 10.00 a.m. & went down to ^{the} flight but still no news of S's fighter. At noon we got word that the one crashed aircraft that had been found was a Lancaster so ours was still missing & we were beginning to think it must have gone down in the drink somewhere. At five o'clock tonight we finally got word of it - it had crashed somewhere down in the Cleveland Hills just east of York - four killed & two badly injured. I didn't think any plane could crash in England without somebody seeing it but I guess I was wrong. Last night was really a bad night on account of the weather & M.S.G. lost 3 bites on ops & two crash landed when they got back to the dome because of the storm.

Wed. Sept. 29, 1943 - This afternoon, the W/C and I went down to the crash after first visiting the two lads in hospital at Northallerton. The rear gunner was badly battered, eye & is just hanging on so he may not live. However the W/C was hit too badly off with one broken ankle, one sprained knee cut up. The rest of the crew were all killed.

From the W/O's story it seems they were flying along normally at about 1800 ft. just below cloud base. However the barometer had dropped over 200 ft. while they were away & the pilot apparently had neglected to correct for this so actually they were only at 1400 ft. & hit the top of ^{7 miles to the N. of the} the one of the highest hills in the dark. When he next woke up, dawn was just breaking so he crawled out of his part of the wreckage & not being able to walk, crawled over to another part of the fuselage picking up an opened parachute on the way, wrapped himself up in it & quietly passed out again. A shepherd in the moors had reported seeing a fire in the hills shortly after midnight and an army search party had finally found the crash at 1.00 pm. the next afternoon - it's remarkable that even two were still alive after 13 hours. After negotiating several terrific hills & paths we finally arrived at the wreck what a mess it was - lying way up in the towering hills forming part of the famous & desolate Yorkshire Moors. We could see where the plane had come up a narrow twisting valley with towering cliffs on each side - how high as far as he did is more than I can tell - anyway he pranged on the flat top of the hill across the end of the valley. - Just 25

more feet & he'd have been O.K. since there wasn't
a tree in sight but as it was he let go
all out & wreckage was strewn in a wide
swath for almost $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile - I never saw
a wreck nor realized that so many bits & pieces
could come off a kite as it skittered along.
The place where the W/O had been sitting was
just a crumbled up mass & I don't know how he
ever got out alive - similarly with the tail gunner's
turret. There was also blood & bits of intestines
etc. also scattered all over the place which
didn't make it very pleasant - also a dead sheep
with all four feet up in the air who never
knew what hit him. We spent all afternoon there
sorting out the bits & pieces & salvaging a
few items of equipment & clothing which were
still useful - also some secret equipment which
could not be left lying there - a really bad
crash to still further spoil our previous record.

Thurs. Sept. 30, 1943 - We flew hard to day to try &
pick up the hours over last month & I sent a truck
down to pick up some more bits of salvageable
equipment from the wreck although there wasn't
much of any use left. However, the weather closed in
and scrubbed our cross country so we didn't

get in as many hours as we wanted.

Fri. Oct. 1, 1943 - Well, we broke 1785 hours last month for another new record & to come within 150 hours of Popeliffe so that's not too bad. Our serviceability dropped a little to-day after all the hard flying lately so it will probably take a while to get back up into high gear again. The M.O. mentioned today that the tail gunner of our last prang is not going to make the grade he thinks - They are keeping him unconscious so he won't be in any pain since he is so badly battered up.

Sat. Oct. 2, 1943 We flew quite a bit to-day with no troubles & tonight I took Mary to the dance at Peercebridge. When we got back, we went to her place for tea & so had a very pleasant evening. She has persuaded me to take tomorrow off & go up to the famous town of Richmond which is supposed to be the prettiest in all Yorkshire where she has an Aunt we can visit & then she can show me around.

Sun. Oct. 3, 1943 I slept in till noon to-day, went down & answered a few questions under oath at the court of enquiry they are holding for 'S' & caught the bus back town after lunch. I also heard from S/Lt. Dillmore who was conducting the court that somebody - he didn't say who - a squadron was wanting me for an engineering officer.

and dropped the hint that I might be posted soon. It will be all right with me to get out on a real ground squadron for a change after all this command experience. I can't imagine who is asking for me unless it's W/C Turnbull who seemed to like me pretty well when he was my P.O. at Topcliffe.

I met May this afternoon and we caught a bus to Richmond - about 25 miles west of Darlington. There we had tea at her aunt's & then walked all over the great old town. It is just like a picture of old England - picked on the side of a river here with a little waterfall and all, surrounded by large hills & nestled in the river valley. The streets are all very narrow & cobbled & all paved with ancient old cobblestones all over town. The whole is dominated by the grand old ruins of Richmond Castle - an old Norman one with well preserved walls, battlements & moat & all the trimmings - It really was an interesting place to visit. We got home late tonight on the train after a very good day. I'd better quit going with her soon or I'll be getting involved again the first thing I know.

Mon. Oct. 4, 1943. Well, the big news came this morning and I've been posted to 427 Squadron - the one Hugh Lamb was on first - it's quite a progressive outfit & I'm going to like it. Sure enough, W/C Turnbull

is the C.O. so I made a good guess there. The posting is effective immediately but I think I'll hang on here until Wednesday since Bryce is away on leave & also W/C Clark the Ady. doesn't want me to go until he comes back.

I had a minor prang to-day due to the stupidity of a bomb-aimer - he wanted to open the bomb doors & pulled on the 4c lever by mistake & when one of my boys pumped the hand pump, the port 4c became unhooked & folded up. There was a stand under the port engine & it flattened it down as the wing hit the pavement. One lad on the stand narrowly escaped getting crushed to death but he got away with just a broken shoulder. Had it lifted up & back to the hangar in about two hours but it will take quite a time to fix it up.

Tues. Oct. 5, 1943. It rained all day to-day & was bitterly cold at the same time - I'll sure be glad to get down to 427 at Leeming in a nice central heated Mess. We didn't fly all day & things were very quiet - went to a show tonight at the Mess.

Wed. Oct. 6, 1943 - I scrounged a van this morning to go down to Leeming for "some spare parts" & moved all my stuff down at the same time - unfortunately, I was urgently needed here so couldn't wait to say good bye to Bryce & the W/C. Mr Roberge is taking my place at Craft - he was formerly an acting squadron leader & they took it off

him when he came back up here - I'm afraid he won't
take it very well. When I got to Leaming I contacted G. Rivers,
the Station engineering officer & a good bloke & found that 429
with 429 was at Skipton about 10 miles away temporarily
while the Leaming runways were being repaired. I got
down here this afternoon while Rivers took me around &
introduced me to the set up. W/O Dolander who seems like a
good fellow has been running things since P/O Burton left.
Apparently old George Burton really belted things up here, got
everything in an awful mess & almost caused a mutiny
among the men - almost all the senior VCO's came in to
P/O Rivers & asked for postings so I see he's got a great
job on my hands sorting things out & keeping the lads
happy. Jim Lewis & Norm Cuke are both here - both whom I
came over the boat with - Jim is 429 engineering officer &
Norm is just starting up 433 sqdn. a new one just forming.
It's really a small world too since Earnie Clifford is
here as an P/O under instruction - & I went thru Varsity
with him for 4 years, lost him, met him again briefly
at Aero School in Montreal & now again over here. This is
another muddy, dispersed station like Croy but
happily we shouldn't be here for over a week.
Thurs. Oct. 7. 1943 - Ops were scrubbed for tonight, due to
the weather so I had a good chance to visit all the
& inspect the aircraft & generally get organized.

I can see that there is a lot needs to be done since
 Burton really let things slide & get out of hand but I really
 think I'm going to like it.

Fri. Oct. 8, 1943. Well, we are on tonight & there was
 great fussing all day getting things ready. The weather
 was pretty duff right up till the last minute & there
 was great chances of it being scrubbed but the take off
 was ok. We had 11 bites on & had them marshalled &
 ready to go at 5.00 pm. Take off was at 10.30 with
 375 lbs. of bombs & incendiaries as the load. One 2000 lb.
 bomb was the big item. 429 had 13 on & it was very
 interesting since it was the first night take-off
 I'd witnessed. We had one bite E going a small glycol
 leak just before take-off but fortunately had a stand-by
 bite L which filled in nicely & only 3 minutes late.
 The bites were marshalled at one side of the take-off point
 & 429's on the other. The airbase control officer directed
 traffic by means of green, red & white Aldin lamps.
 As soon as one takes off, the next is wheelbar out & if
 things go well, they take off less than a minute apart.
 It certainly is thrilling to see them thundering down
 the runway one after another on the way to West Jerry.
 After they all got away, I was quite relieved since HQ takes
 a very dim view of engineering officers who promise
 to get so many bites away & then fail by one or two at

the last minute - it is a direct reflection on the maintenance work & is to be avoided at all costs.

However, knowing how many things can go wrong on these aircraft at the last minute & with no warning, it is small wonder that so many engineering officers are grey haired! After the business of take off come the harder job of waiting for their return since we have to be on hand at interrogation to find out if anything went wrong with the kite & if so what & so get the loads cracking on getting it fixed up for the next night - it's high pressure work all the time.

Early returns are another thing to worry about - that is those that don't reach the target because of some trouble. They are hard on us too but often it is pilot trouble too so the responsibility is at least shared a little.

Those of us who were on interrogation stretched out on chairs in the Mess & went to sleep. At 1.30 I got a phone call that H was in the circuit on an early return - however he had full bomb load on so he made off again to dump it in the channel & came back at 2.30 a.m. - I went down this time, on my motorcycle & questioned the pilot - found they had had boat trouble on one engine so had turned back. It's things like this that I've got to try and stop since a great deal of time, money & effort was wasted just to

drop those bombs uselessly in the channel. While
 I was there, 2 came back also - he said his
 pressure indicator wasn't working & I found he
 hadn't put his pitot head heater on before starting
 at least that return wasn't due to maintenance
 anyway. By this time it was nearly 4.00 a.m. so
 I went to bed when I heard that the rest of our aircraft were
 being diverted due to the heavy ground fog at our station.

Sat. Oct. 9, 1943. I got up at 10.30 this morning since this
 is the time we usually hear whether there are ops on for
 that night or not. However since 8 of our eleven bikes
 had been diverted, we got a "stand-down" for tonight.
 We located all our bikes down in the South of England
 sent crews down to get them fixed up. D. Donald is
 missing so I've now lost my first bike directly due
 to enemy action. It was the pilot & crew's first trip
 too, which is really too bad. 429 lost one too making
 out of 24 bikes which isn't bad. Hanover was the target
 from all reports they really pringed it properly. There
 was a heavy fog all day to-day so no chance of
 getting our diverted bikes back again.

Sun. Oct. 10, 1943. More fog all day to-day & another
 stand-down - also no bikes back yet. I went over
 to Lening tonight to get fixed up with a room &
 saw a show at the Cinema there. It looks like we

will be moving back tomorrow.

Mon. Oct. 11, 1943. Well to-day was nice for a change so we moved back this morning, the runways at Leaning having now been fixed up satisfactorily. We ferried back 6 of the 8 bites direct but two were still w/s. I got settled in a nice room & fixed up my office so am all set to go now. Thank goodness it was another stand-down.

Tues. Oct. 12, 1943. More fog to-day which just lifted at 5.00 o'clock so we got one more of our diverted bites back again & leaves just one to come tomorrow morning. This being the moon-period with a bright full moon we got another stand-down which seems to be quite a habit around here these days.

Wed. Oct. 13, 1943. Well, our last bite got back to-day & we also got another new one to replace one that went missing so things are really picking up. My w/o Dekander got posted to-day since he had asked for it when Burton was here as engineering officer. He didn't particularly want to go now that I'm here but couldn't do much about it. I was sorry to see him leave since it leaves me entirely on my own now and I think we would have become very good friends. It was another stand-down to-day due to moon trouble.

Thur. Oct. 14, 1943. A new w/o came in to-day - this is thought to be my grandfather & is the real old first-

better type with a string of medals up for last war
however, I guess hell do in spite of the fact that
he's never seen a Halifax before & has been on
marine work for the past two years back in Canada
boy do I run into troubles! Things are in very bad
shape here but the lads seem willing & I think I can
get it straightened out before long. Another stand-
down tonight.

Fri. Oct. 15, 1943 Bad fog all day to day & stand-
down again tonight - what a streak this is! Bill
Boone phoned up from East Moor at noon to day so
I went in to Harrogate by bus and train to meet
him. Whirl of a lifetime - we had a real chicken
dinner at the hotel - my first in 8 months & then
had a few rums at a local pub & next on to a dance
at the Baths dance pavilion. I had a fair time but
had to leave at 10 o'clock to catch the train back
However, it was good to get out with Bill again.

Sat. Oct. 16, 1943 - We had a station parade this
morning which I conveniently missed, Stand down
tonight & I played "volunteer snooker" all evening.
Another new kite came in to replace "D. Donald".
I'm gradually getting things organized in my
section although there is a lot of work to be done
yet.

Sun. Oct. 17, 1943 Egg for breakfast, meeting of all NCO's to-day for a pep talk with the wingco & myself & to meet them all officially & generally try to make friends with them. It rained steadily all day but cleared up tonight although it is quite frosty out. The moon is now coming up about 10 o'clock so another couple of nights will see us off on another series of raids until the next moon period with bags of panic & work in the meantime. Went to the show tonight & came back early to write letters.

Mon. Oct. 18, 1943 - The weather is still bad & it doesn't look as if we'll ever be going overseas.

Tue. Oct. 19, 1943 - No ops to-night because of the moon again. Went to the show to-night for something to do.

Wed. Oct. 20, 1943 Stand-down again to-day. We thought it was all set & worked like mad to get fourteen hits all bombed up & fitted with overloads & 20 minutes before take off time it was suddenly called off because of the weather. Maybe it was just as well since there would have been bags of panic getting things all fixed before take-off time.

Thu. Oct. 21, 1943 Another stand-down tonight so I went to the Enca show which was a very good musical & comedy show with lots of pretty girls. Had them all up to the mess afterwards for a little

party which went off very well.

Fri. Oct. 22, 1943 Well, we were on tonight for a change after a 2 week stand-down. I thought I'd make a special effort to make a good showing on my first real op all on my own. The boys co-operated fine and we got a record 16 hits up - each with 1882 gals. of petrol 6500 lbs of bombs - 1-2000 # lb. 5 cans of 4-30 lb. incendiaries & 8 cans of 90 - 4 lb. incendiaries as well as 14 bundles of "window" - the metallic strips they shower down when over the target to throw out & jam the Jerry radio-location beams. It looked pretty good at take-off & although we had 2 go ups just before take-off, we managed to shift the crew around to two stand by hits & so got them all away. I was feeling pretty good about this but soon things began to happen. First the weather closed in & it turned very cold with a sleet-like rain. Then, one after another we got the news that seven aircraft were coming back on early returns, never having reached the target. This was awful for my first "do" but it seemed that 3 of the seven were due to very bad flying conditions, 2 were due to maintenance faults for which I had to take the blame, one was due to the pilot getting lost & getting too low down over the Ruhr where he got badly shot up with flak while the 7th never

got back at all. He crashed down near East Moor
somewhere & burned up, all the crew were killed so I
don't suppose we'll ever find out what happened. With
5/1. Bordenston I drove around & met each pilot and flight
engineer as they got out of their bikes, ~~to~~ found out
their story & make out my report to the station
engineering officer. It was nearly 11.00 o'clock when they
all got back & since the weather was so duff, I was
getting a little apprehensive about how many of the rest
would get back. At 12.00 o'clock I went down to flying
control to watch as the rest of the bikes came in. It
was very exciting, hearing them talking them in one by one
by radio & watching them land. We had two near
accidents, one when he swung & ground looped just
after landing & the other when a fuel hung-up
incendiaries fell out of a bike on the runway &
went up with a terrific roar & bright flame.
However, no one was hurt & we kept counting them
one by one as they got down safely until there was only
3 more of ours to come in, - we waited & waited but they
didn't come & we finally had to give them up for lost.
About 1.00 a.m. I went up to interrogation to find out from
each pilot & flight engineer how the bike had functioned,
what damage had been sustained. Finally, after a last
look with the operators room to see if they had any

word of our missing aircraft (& they hadn't) I finally got back to the Mess at 3.30 a.m. Had fried potatoes and sausage & went to bed.

Sat. Oct. 23, 1943 Things were pretty grim here this morning with everybody worrying about our big losses of ours & 2 from 429 making six out of 28 aircraft. Flying since early returns didn't make me feel any too lousy. Fortunately we were stood-down to-night. The target was Hassel last night & 42 were lost altogether - mostly due to icing I imagine. Our K-Kitty which had several fleck holes in it, wasn't too bad altho' it reached an engine change. Not nearly so bad as the op just before I got here when W-Willie got shot up by a night fighter. One explosive shell had come up through the floor & hit the bomb aimer who was lying on his stomach watching through the periscope blister - it burst inside him & blew ^{him} all apart & made a very gory mess. Also, the tail gunner was all shot up & the tail turret all blown apart from a rear attack - he had to be washed out of the turret! Flew to-day with 5/1 Sanderton & we had to make a 3 engine landing ^{when P.L. failed.}

Sun. Oct. 24, 1943 - Stood down again to-night & much needed to get our heels back in shape again

Mon. Oct. 25, 1943 - Another stand down & we are gradually getting built up again. Met Don Arnot here on the station who is the son of old Mr. Arnot who used to

teach me Algebra at Recidale. He is half way through his tour here as a pilot on 427. Went to the show tonight after making a trip down to Craft to see the boys again & also pick up a few spare bits off a Cat E. They just got - a bit covering on landing and piled into one of the buildings on the camp - no one hurt but it was an awful mess. They have apparently run into some bad luck since I left & had 2 other prangs which burnt up & all the crews killed.

Tues. Oct. 26, 1943 - Another stand-down again to-day. I wish we'd get going again, I don't like these long lay-offs.

Wed. Oct. 27, 1943 Well we had a great flurry on to-day & got 13 aircraft all bombed up, gassed up, serviced & ready to go, then a fog closed in at the last minute & we had to scrub it after all - its a very disheartening experience since we have to do all the work whether the aircraft get away or not.

Thurs. Oct. 28, 1943 Rain & fog all day to-day - stand-down again, this is without a doubt the worst climate I've ever seen. Went to Popelife with w/c Turnbull tonight to the 1st anniversary of 1859 Con Unit & had a good time meeting all the boys & NCO's. Failed to work with. We didn't get back here to 4:30 a.m.

Fri. Oct. 29, 1943 Well we got 75 pilots all ready to go to do tonight but again it was scrubbed with

just 15 minutes to go before take off.

Sat. Oct. 30, 1943 Heavy fog all day - we haven't had an aircraft off the ground in over a week & there are about six waiting for a break in the weather just so they can be air tested - what a life!

Sun. Oct. 31, 1943 More fog & rain. We are right back up to strength with 18 kits now so should do all right unless we run into any more heavy losses like we had on the Kassel raid

Mon. Nov. 1, 1943. Fog & cold rain all day - what miserable weather this is! Haven't even seen the sun for a couple of weeks. I got a break to day however & touched up Mr. Swain - the ~~Black~~ ^{Philby} ~~large~~ ^{large} civilian rep. here for a dozen eggs (black-market) they cost 4/5 6d but are well worth it - 8/12 a dozen does seem pretty steep though.

Tues. Nov. 2, 1943. More fog & rain - went to the show tonight for entertainment.

Wed. Nov. 3, 1943 Well to-day started off poorly with a heavy fog but Met. said it would clear in time so the magic word came through at 10.30 this morning that we were "on" again tonight. They only asked for 13 kits although I could have got 16 away if necessary - however, this gave us some standbys in case of trouble. The bomb load was one

2000 lb, 5 cans of 8 x 30 # incendiaries & 8 cans of 90 x 4 # incendiaries making about 6600 lbs. bomb load. We had about 1692 gals of petrol so it looked like a short trip. The boys worked well & we had them all ready in lots of time, take-off was at 4.30 pm. & all thirteen got away without a hitch, 429 got away first so it really looked swell to see the whole 29 kites sail off one after another. There was one close shave where a kite swerved badly just as he opened his throttles & he came very close to crashing, however he straightened out just in time, got back on the runway & got away ok. It's just as well nothing happened since he was very close & with a full bomb load on board, the spot where we were standing at the end of the runway wouldn't have been very healthy. About 7 o'clock we heard a kite fly over in the dark & I was worried for fear we were going to get some early returns to night. However, luck was with us since 429 had 4 early returns while we didn't have any. Also, all 13 reached the target & all returned safely with no troubles except Q which set down at a neighbouring station. Church Norton when his C.S.V. went up. I went to the show to get out in time to go up to interrogation

at operations. #29 lost one kite - unfortunately one of a set of twins, was the pilot. The two of them looked much alike, no one could tell them apart. They joined up together, had consecutive numbers, got their commissions together & have never been separated while in the Air Force. The twin brother was also on the raid ~~last night~~ but he came back ok & took it pretty hard when his twin didn't make it.

Anyway, the target was Dusseldorf & they really blasted it good according to all reports. Good old 13 kites was a lucky number for me again & I feel a lot better about this op than the last one.

Mon. Nov. 4, 1943. Fog all day to-day & we spent the time fixing up all the little snags which cropped up last night. Played in the quarter-finals of the table tennis tournament tonight but wasn't on so well & lost out to a guy I've beaten several times before - I just wasn't on unfortunately.

Went to the ENSA show tonight & saw a very well acted play by G.B. Shaw - Men & Superman - enjoyed it very much.

Tue. Nov. 5, 1943. It rained all day to-day so things were very slow. Went to the show to night & saw a good film.

Wed. Nov. 6, 1943. Well, for a change, the weather was clear & cold with a high wind blowing - just like a good cold

Autumn day at home. We got 16 kites off the deck
to-day for air tests & so we got them back in shape again.
- no ops tonight because of the moon again.

Sun. Nov. 7, 1943 Tonight was a big party for 429 squadron
& they sure had a lot of trouble before it came off. First
of all, word came through that there would be no ops -
that was at 10.30 a.m. & everyone more or less took it easy
as is usual on non ops days. Then suddenly at 12.00
o'clock noon, there was great excitement, tannoy broadcasts
for all the missing people etc & it turned out that Bomber
Command HQ. had changed their mind and decided to put
us on after all. To make it worse, it was going to be
a long trip - 1683 track miles & needed full extra
over-load tanks to be carried in the bomb bay. Luckily,
the take off was late so we worked all through lunch
& all afternoon getting the tanks up & filled, the bombs
& window loaded & the kites in good shape. Just
before dark we got them fixed up - 14 in all. In the
meantime, 429 had made plans to postpone their party
until tomorrow night. We were starting to get the
aircraft marshalled at the take off point when suddenly
the two well known white flares went up from
the control tower denoting that ops were scrubbed
after all - what a disappointment since all the
ground crew work was done whether the kites

went or not. I was really mad about it but there was not much I could do. 429 decided to have their party after all so we went down to the NAAFI tonight saw the skits & show they put on, had a few beers, danced with a WAAF section officer from Hong Kong & then came back up to the Mess. It was bitterly cold old day with a wind that goes right through you & it's just as bad indoors. When I'm writing here in my room, I have to go to bed to keep warm (note the bad writing) & even then wear my red wool sweater-coat. Your hands also get almost paralysed trying to write.

Mon. Nov. 8, 1943. We had to stand by for ops until noon to day but it was scrubbed so they decided to put off 14 cross country training flights instead. That meant removing all the bombs & overload tanks which took all afternoon, we marshalled the bikes about 5.30 & I went down again to take off at 8.00 p.m.

It is still very cold out, especially on a motor bike. Everything went well with no snags, we got 11 away & 429 had 9 on so it looked like a real op. night. Now if they all get down again ok, everything will be fine. I find myself worrying about them like I would my own children. It is now about midnight & I can hear several in the circuit now, two have landed as I can tell by the sound so after 18 more

I can read & write here in peace. I won't go down as
usually do when they come in unless there is a
prang or ground loop. It should be OK since
there is a nice bright $\frac{3}{4}$ moon. It seems funny
when the moon is here we can't operate even though
it has been quite clear altho' cold & then as soon
as the moon goes down it turns rainy & foggy &
we still can't operate. Ralph Doshier, Bill Boyce,
Norm Green & the boys from 424 squadron who went
out to the Middle East last May with Wimpies
just got back to-day & I was talking to Ralph tonight.
He is very tanned & feels the cold here very much.
He's been down in Tunisia & had a great time - liked
it very well - I wouldn't mind getting down to Italy
or Sicily now myself - especially for the winter!

Tues. Nov. 9. We had a stand-down to-day since there was a
bright moon to night. Was up flying to-day with
Don Arnot testing G from acceptance check & it seems to
be a real bang-on kite.

Wed Nov. 10 - Another stand-down to-day & things very dull.

Thurs. Nov. 11 - Surprisingly enough, we were on tonight
in spite of there being a full moon. It was a speed
do with only 5 kites & our five best crews including
the w/c, the two flight commanders - Don Arnot being
one of them. They had a very long trip to make, taking

off at 6.00 pm. & not getting back till after 3.00 am.
 - 1803 track miles to Cannes to blast the Jerry railroad
 into Northern Italy. We had our load tanks up - 2112 gals.
 & it was none too much since 3. bites ran too low & had to
 make diverted landings at various aerodromes nearby.
 The W/C & Don Arnot both got back ok. since they flew more
 carefully & saved on petrol. They all got back successfully
 & Don had a few flak holes in his bite while the W/C had
 a night fighter trailing him - he stood off at about 900 yds
 & took pot shots with his cannon but didn't let anything
 & wouldn't come any closer for fear of getting within range
 of the tail turret guns.

Fri. Nov. 12. Stand down to day but lots of practice flying.

Sat. Nov. 13 - Another stand-down with a cold wind & rain
 & everyone is nearly frozen to death. My hands are so cold
 now it's hard to write & I can see my breath here in my
 room.

Sun. Nov. 14. Mail from home seems to be very slow these
 days - I guess it must be the Christmas rush. Got 300
 cigs from Uncle Reg & Aunt Hattie to day & they arrived
 just in the nick of time since I am just about out. We had
 a party tonight in the Sgt. Mess & had a pretty good time
 dancing with the W.A.A.F.S. - not very exciting though.

Mon. Nov. 15 - Another stand down but the moon is on the
 wane now so we should be on again one of these
 days. Saw a good movie tonight - Random Harvest was

Ronald Colman + Greer Garson & it was very good - we seem to be getting newer & better shows recently on the station. Found out to-day that Ralph Doerflinger got a "going" for his work out in Tunisia - the first one I've seen for an engineering officer. It seems that they were ready for ops one night with their Messerschmitt when one caught on fire and blew up scattering flaming bits & pieces all over. Their aerodrome was covered with long dry grass & the fire started to spread to the other sites with full bomb loads on. Ralph was knocked down by the first blast but got up & raced to a nearby site, started it up & taxied it away from danger which was a pretty good show - he got the MBE for it June Nov. 16. - The American Fortresses were out to Norway to-day on a big effort so we stood by with three sites fitted for air-sea rescue work - dinghy & supply dropping apparatus since usually one or two don't make it and have to ditch in the channel. Sure enough, about 4 o'clock word came through & they took off to try & locate the dinghy & site - they only had two hours before dark & so didn't see anything altho' 429 claim to have spotted one.

I got a surprise to-day & got a letter from Brig. Lt. Bob Penney who just arrived over here with the 100th Airborne. I'll be able to see him when I get down to London in the first week in December.

Wed. Nov. 17. Things were very quiet to-day with another stand-down - weather cold & rainy.

Thurs. Nov. 18. Well we were on to-day. Put 14 bites on with 6700 lbs. of bombs each & got everything off OK.

although they pushed up take-off time by $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour & caught us a little short with a few bites not bombed up yet. We had two early returns due to engine troubles. & Zebra was missing - the target was Ludwigshaven near Mannheim. I got to bed about 4:00 a.m. & pretty tired after a big day.

Fri. Nov. 19. Well they surprised us to-night & put us on again. I managed to get out the 12 aircraft I had promised but it was a shaky do with all the unserviceabilities from last night & the boys really had to work hard. It was cold & wet all day too which added to our troubles - I got out my waterproof "zoot" suit & rubber boots so wasn't too badly off on my motor-bike but I didn't get any sleep except for the little I had last night. We had two early returns - both legitimate engine failures & one had a hang-up of $\frac{1}{3}$ of a can of 4 lb. incendiaries - 30 in all. Jack Adams & I went down in the dark & went through the ticklish business of prying open the bomb doors just a crack & fishing them out one by one. We didn't lose any tonight & the target was Leverkusen but every aircraft without a

single exception, came home punctured with
flak holes - its amazing that we didn't lose
any since 4 landed with only 3 engines. 489
didn't lose any either so it was quite a successful
raid & I got a few congratulations for getting them
all off OK after last night.

Sat. Nov. 20. Well, there was a tremendous amount
of work to-day getting the flak holes patched up
and 6 engine changes so we kept pretty busy.

Sun. Nov. 21. We still only have about 8 aircraft
serviceable but are progressing nicely & if we
are only stood down another day, should be
back in shape again.

Mon. Nov. 22. As luck would have it, we were on
again to-day - a special big do with all the
aircraft we could muster. At the conference in
the morning I offered the w/c 12 to be and had settle
for 14 so we worked like mad all day - got one of
our diverted ac flown back just after noon &
also a perspex astrodome borrowed from Tegeloffe
at 100 p.m. It didn't fit but I got it cut down
at workshops & we just had it fitted & the
last screw in as the kite taxied away. A couple
of others were doubtful starters right up to the
last minute but they all finally got out to
the line & our whole 14 got away OK.

W. Miller with Sgt. George Laird had the s.i. engine cut at take-off & he coasted down to the end of the runway & off so I thought I'd had my first "abortion" or non starter, however he started up again & came around & tried it a second time & was OK, so saved the day. More than that, we had no early returns & they all came back so it was very successful. Berlin was the target & it was the biggest raid of the war with over 2500 tons of bombs in less than an hour - the destruction over there must be terrific when you see what 750 tons did to London & the other towns.

Tue. Nov. 23. Stand-down to-day, thank goodness & we got all kinds of compliments for getting all the bits away yesterday so. The W/C even wrote out an "order of the day" to all sections so we were quite pleased. Sgt. Herb Davis, the station engineering officer has gone away for a 9 day leave & left me in charge in his place so I see I'm going to be pretty busy for the next week or so handling both jobs.

Wed. Nov. 24. To-day we got the gen that there is to be an "all out" effort tomorrow night with a minimum of 16 aircraft from each squadron. The Group Captain called both Jim and I up to his office to tell us

all about it & since the last two successive raids
our serviceable bikes were running a little low.
I was terribly busy all day trying to cope with
my own work, handle S/Living work and now
this new effort. R & I have 11 of our aircraft on
engine changes & inspections so we decided to
bring all the boys in from the flights and work
all night. At 4 o'clock I got news of a crashed
Halifax about 10 miles from here, so being the
acting station engineer I had to go out to see it.
I found bits & pieces of it scattered all over
the hills but it got dark before I located
the main wreckage. However, I could see it
was a cat E so that was all I needed - the
whole crew were killed too. I stayed down at
the hangar till late to make sure everything was
going ok.

Nov. 25 - Started in early this morning &
worked like mad all day to get 17 bikes
serviceable for take-off - we only had 9 last night
so they really turned out some work. Take off was
scheduled for 11:00 pm. so we had to marshal the bikes.
Then the panic started - everything was proceeding
nicely - we had 17 on + 429 had 16. About half-
way through the take off 429's G edging out from a

dispersal collided with our G & locked the two
kites together & thus blocked the track. On
one side was a ditch so they couldn't get around
there & on the other was fairly soft muddy ground
with several 4 to 6" diameter trees in the way.
Everyone was in a panic & the C.O. said we couldn't
get the rest around & there were 18 more to
come. I thought we might be able to do it so
suggested chopping the trees down with the fire axes
from the crashed aircraft. I collected a few of the
boys, commandeered axes & flashlights, chopped down
the trees & directed the other 18 kites around one
after the other & not one got stuck although I never
did so much running around, stumbling & floundering
around in the pitch dark, through mud & water up
to my knees & directing the kites along. However
we finally made it & I got 16 of my 17 away - the
one that tangled of course couldn't go. There were
two of mine early returns but otherwise everything went
OK & we had no losses at all. 429 was not quite so
fortunate as they had 3 abortives including the one
that tangled with ours, two early returns & 3 missing.
Jim & I worked till after two pulling the tangled
kites apart & getting things cleared away &
then I staggered up to bed dead tired.

Fri. Nov. 26. I had left word to be called at 7.00 am. for the interrogation but I was so tired I turned off the alarm, answered the bathroom etc as of old & went right on sleeping. However, I did wake up at 8.30 in time for breakfast & to collect all the gen & planned to take the afternoon off & get some sleep. However, we were on again tonight & I promised 10 kites so I got no sleep again & had more panic getting them ready & also dealing with Sgt Rivers work which was piling up. I had my first abortive tonight when one engine of Y wouldn't start at the last minute due to flooding so only got 9 away. One of 429's crashed just after take off about 5 miles from here when an engine cut but the crew were all safe since the bombs didn't go up - no one knows why. We had an early return due to pilot trouble & when he landed he ran off the perimeter track & set a gun sight - holed the fuselage in several spots making our second cat AC in two days. 429 had another collide with a kite just over the coast & return with his tail all cut up with props - another cat AC & finally still another 429 kite ran out of petrol & ditched in the channel but all the crew were saved. The score - 3 missing, 10 drinks, 1 crashed cat E, & 4 cat AC's in just

two ops. 2 of ours + 7 of KR9's - maybe were not lucky!
 I slept for two hours & then got up for interrogation
 & found 6 Lancasters also here - diverted from
 their home base - more work. Finally got to
 bed again at 3.30 a.m.

Sat. Nov. 27. - Stand-down with cold wet fog all
 day - & we sure need the time to get things in
 shape again - I only have 7 a/c serviceable tonight.
 But K & I are working late so we shouldn't be too
 badly off tomorrow, went to the show tonight to
 relax & wrote some letters. Now 1.00 a.m. again so am
 turning in.

Sun. Nov. 28. - Stand-down to-day with more bad weather.
 Am keeping very busy getting the station engineer's work
 straightened out.

Mon. Nov. 29. Another stand-down to-day. The A.I.B.
 inspector came up to-day to inquire about the crashed
 kite I tried to locate last Wednesday. We set out right
 after lunch to-day & finally found it crashed against
 the base of a vertical cliff of rock, right up at the top of
 one of the highest hills in the Cleveland range. There wasn't
 much left since it had burned completely. All that could
 be found of the bodies had been removed - although I did
 find a leg burned off at the knee, sticking out of the
 pilot's cockpit so I stayed away from there as much
 as possible while we examined the wreckage. It
 looked very much as if it had a collision with another

aircraft since one wing + engine were missing & there was another crashed kite about three miles away. It was a nice change anyway out tramping over the famous Yorkshire moors so it wasn't too bad an afternoon.

Tues. Nov. 30, 1943. Hank Divins came back to-day & we got things more or less straightened around. The weather is still diff so it was another stand down to-day. Found out that I am to be posted to Wombledon soon to fill the Squadron Leader Vacancy there which sounds all right even though it is to be a combined Halifax + Lancaster Conversion Unit. I'll be the first of all the lads that came over with me as well as several others who beat me over here to get a chance like this so I feel as if I'm starting to get places - now if I can only hold down the job successfully I should be OK.

Wed. ~~Dec~~ 1st. Well, we were supposed to be on tonight & had 14 aircraft all ready to go plus two spares. First they postponed take-off from 4.35 pm to midnight & then scrubbed it altogether so that didn't make me very happy after all the work we had done. W/C Miller wants me to go to Wombledon as soon as possible so I'm going on a 7 day leave tomorrow night & think I'll come down to London to see if I can meet Carson or Doubt since they are both down around there.

somewhere.

Thurs. Dec. 2nd. We were supposed to be on again tonight & since the kites were all ready from last night, I let the W/O get things ready while I arranged to go on leave. It was scrubbed about 4 o'clock so since some of the gang were going up to a party tonight at Craft, I went with them. Met all the boys of 1664 again & had a swell time. They are about to move down to Dishforth so this was sort of a going away party to empty the bar of beer & liquor. On a lunch this afternoon, I phoned up Bill Boone to see when he was going on leave, sure enough, he was on his way too so I arranged to meet him at the Canadian Officers Club for lunch on Saturday. At the party, I met Mary again who has been taken over by another guy since I left. However, we had a few dances & it wasn't bad. It was spoiled somewhat at 10 o'clock by a crash - I heard this kite coming in for a landing & flying very low, all of a sudden there was a terrific crash & it pranged just about a hundred yards from the Mess - hit a tree & burst into flames. We all went out to see it, but it was pretty gruesome & some of the girls were sick so we all went back in again & tried to get the party going again. Five were killed & two were still alive when they dragged them apart altho' they were pretty badly burned. Mary, whose brother is

law was killed in a crash over at Middleton, started to cry & make a fuss but soon recovered. I caught a taxi into town at 11.15 after detouring into the field around the wreck - it was strewn all over the road & was still burning - caught the midnight train & slept in my seat most of the way to London.

Fri. Dec. 3rd. 1943. I got into King's Cross station at about 7.00 am, checked my bag & had breakfast at the Charing Cross Hotel, then I went up to the Strand Palace Hotel & booked a room. Slept until noon, had lunch at the Canadian Officers Club & in the afternoon got my bag to the hotel & sent telegrams to Caron, Ross, Doubt & Bill Harvey. In the hotel I met Al Stagg, the intelligence officer from Learning so we sat around & talked, visited a few pubs & then he had to leave to catch a train. I went up to the Empire theatre on Leicester Square - walked past a big long queue waiting for seats & used my "Cin" Squadron badge to get in for a free seat.

Sat. Dec. 4. 1943. Had breakfast in bed this morning - thrill of a lifetime & then went back to sleep until noon. Met Bill Boone at the Canadian Officers Club for lunch. Also by accident, bumped into Noral Mitchell (Luella Downing's girl friend) & her husband walking along the Strand - quite a coincidence. Had a little snack for lunch, Bill & I looked

up a Canadian W.D. he knew - Irene Lockwood
 so we took her to Odderinos for lunch. Then to a
 newsreel show, met her girl friend Jacquie Johnston
 also a W.D. working in BBC. & went back to Odderinos
 for dinner & dancing (2/10/0) opiece & then back
 up to Jacquie's apartment for sherry & toast, marshmallows
 & had a swell time. Caught a taxi home.

Sun Dec. 5, 1943 - Breakfast in bed, lunched with Bill
 & then I went out to visit Lynton's Aunt Annie
 - Mrs Davies & stayed for tea and supper & had
 a great visit with them.

Mon. Dec. 6, 1943 - Breakfast in bed again & then
 Bill & I went on the scrounge for a good place to eat.
 Finally ended up at a little old pub "Ye Olde
 Cheshire Cheese" which is exactly the same as it was
 in 1667.. Went shopping then & then to a show &
 met girls at 5.30 & saw "For Whom the Bell Tolls"
 with Gary Cooper. Ended up at Ley-Yon's chinese joint
 for the best Chop Suey dinner I've ever had. Finally
 went up to Irene's for lemon pie & coffee, took
 Jacquie home & again got back by taxi.

Tues Dec. 7. Breakfast in bed again this morning & then
 slept till 11.30. Bill came down then & we went to
 pick up the girls for lunch to a eat at a special
 little joint they knew where the food is extra good.

We went in first for a drink of slurry - pre-war Dry Ice
at 3 s a glass but it was very good. Then we
went into Nick's restaurant - just like the "old greasy
spoon" joints at home & had a very nice meal
with two thick lamb chops. After taking the girls
back Bill & I walked around, did some more
shopping & had a few drinks starting at about
4.00 pm. The girls had to work tonight so Bill &
I went out to the Hammersmith dance hall to
dance & had a fair time.

Wed. Dec. 8. - To-day, Bill had phoned up Mrs. Lloyd
George - the daughter-in-law of old David L.G. -
her daughter Dorothy married Hal Kirby - the w/c of
432 (Bill's) Spdn. & who was killed recently so the
boys all call on her to cheer her up a little since
Dorothy recently went out to Hal's people in Toronto
to have her baby - Roy Kirby of G.M. is the father-in-law.
Anyway we took her out to lunch at Odderino's
& had a very nice meal since everyone knows her
& we had head waiters & all hovering around our
table all the time. She was very charming & wanted
to know all about Toronto. Later she took us to the
exclusive Haymarket Club for a few drinks &
then back up to her swanky apartment for

After that, we met the girls at 5:30 & visited about 6 pubs, went to see Walt Disney's new film & then went to the famous Mayfair Hotel for dinner, dancing & a few more drinks - the whole evening cost us about £12 between us or about \$54.00 so things really aren't cheap here. After the dance we went back up to Jackie's apartment feeling pretty good & she brought out 1/2 a bottle of Scotch she had been saving & some beer & we finished that off. Bill & Irene left about 2:00 am. & Jackie & I sat and talked until about 3:00. Then I caught a taxi back to the hotel again after a swell day.

Mon. Dec. 9. On Tues, Bill & I had met a friend in the street who told us Don Brewster was down at Henley about 1/2 an hour from London so we had phoned him up & he came down for the day. He looks just the same as ever & we had a swell time. Went up to Nick's for lunch & by accident met Jackie there altho' she was with other people & I didn't talk to her much. After lunch we went down to the Strand Theatre & saw "Arsene & old lace" a very good play. Had dinner at the Strand Palace Hotel & met the girls for a few drinks. They saw me to the station & we said our goodbyes & I caught the 11:00 a.m. club train to York.

Fri Dec. 10: Arrived in York at 4.00 a.m. & walked around a bit to stretch my legs. Caught the 7.00 a.m. train to Northallerton & had breakfast there & caught the mail run out to the station. Found my posting had come so got everything cleaned up at the hangar, got my clearances signed & spent the evening packing my bags.

Sat. Dec. 11: Raced around all morning finishing off the last few things, said good by to the gang & caught a run to Skipton & then scrounged a ride to Topcliffe. Had lunch there & spent the evening afternoon with Freddy Sarlib & W/C Murphy - the 61 Base Engineering officer. Then I got a van to bring me the 27 odd miles & over the Cleveland Hills to this brand new station Womblesdon. I really played a good trick on myself on this deal since when I was with 1664 Con Unit at Croft, they were going to move us down here & when I came down to look it over I raised such a hub with the W/C that he got it scrubbed in favour of Dierforth. Poor old 1666 C.U. consequently got moved here & I go from Leeming to here just where I didn't want to be - way out in the wilderness. However, I'm certainly used to these dispersed stations anyway after Croft so think I'll like

it O.K. First I got settled in a 3/2 room in a Norian hut on the best site & then went up to the Mess - found I knew at least half the people here from having been on so many stations myself around the group.

Sun Dec. 12. 1679 Con Unit with Lancasters arrived to-day so this is going to be one of the toughest jobs to handle with 16 Halifax II's with Merlin Engines & 14 Lancasters with Hercules engines - the only unit in the group with two types of aircraft to handle. Spent the evening helping to unload trucks.

Mon. Dec. 13. The remainder of 1679 arrived & there was bags of chaos getting them sorted out & equipment unloaded. Got a motorcycle to-day & gave my van to Howie Walker - the Daily Services Squadron engineering officer who seems like a good type.

Tues Dec. 14. S/L Barlick & W/C Dunphy came up to look things over & talk over establishments. A Lancaster hit from 408 Squadron pranged in the hills up West of Helmsby so I had to rush up there & investigate it - It was a total wreck but not burned this time. - 4 killed, two badly injured & 1 ok. enough to walk out to the nearest town. At night, Howie & I took two girls out to dinner in the Kings

Head Hotel at Kirby Moorside - they work in the hospital there. Mine wasn't bad but Rawie wasn't funny about his. Betty Bumbly was mine's name. There was a terrific fog out too & it was all we could do to find our way back on the bicycles.

Wednesday, Dec. 15. Worked hard all day but the weather is horribly cold & damp with a real pea-soup fog all day. However, it gives us a chance to get organized a little. George Broomfield & I were invited out to a near by Manor House to a dinner party tonight & had a whale of a time. The station is so new & so out-of-the-way that we Canadians are still quite a novelty & the people are very hospitable to us. We cycled over thru the fog & were ushered into a nice warm living room - fireplace & all. Then Mrs. Bodheart (the hostess) brought out Scotch, Bin & Rum & we had a snort all around just to get warmed up. Then we went in to dinner in a great old oak panelled dining room. We had roast duck with warm red-wine & all the trimmings. After that we adjourned to the library & sat around & drank and talked all evening. George & I finally killed the bottle of Rum between us & cycled home here again at about 4.00 am.

Thursday, Dec. 16. Mr. Miller & Mr. Dumphy came up.

again to-day to look the place over + seemed fairly satisfied altho it isn't anywhere near ready yet in its final form.

Fri Dec 17. - It rained again all day and the place is just a sea of mud - everyone wears rubber boots all the time + mud + dirt is tracked in around + everywhere. Tonight there was a dance in at the Black Swan Inn at Helmsley + we had a pretty fair time. Met the same two girls again + I paired up with the youngest one Betty Bumbly again. She is fairly attractive but pretty young for me - about 18.

Sat Dec 18. Nothing of interest to-day except more work, rain + much.

Sun Dec 19. - same thing again.

Mon Dec 20. - To-day there was an engineers conference down at 6 groups near York so I went down in a van to it - met all the gang again + got all the latest engineering gear.

Tues Dec 21. One of 1679's Lancasters - DS 521 got closed off our circuit last night due to bad weather + was diverted to Topcliffe. Here he overshot + hit the tail end of a Halifax parked on a dispersal. It tore the tail right off + the plane turned end over

and stopping flat on its back with its wheels in the air & caught fire burning up completely. Three of the boys got out alive miraculously but the other three were lost.

Wed. Dec. 22. We flew all day to-day for a change & got on very well. Tonight, six officers & the D/C were invited over to a Mess party at a neighbouring army camp - the Royal Grenadier Guards - famous regiment. I went along & we had a swell time. Turkey dinner & everything we could drink. It ended up by we Air Force pitted against the Army boys playing Rugby up & down the middle of the Mess & using an Army Cap for the ball. We practically wrecked the place especially when W/C Langton got pushed into the stove knocked it over & brought all the stovepipes full of soot crashing down all over the place! A fitting party for the Eve of my birthday.

Thur. Dec. 23 - Well, I'm 25 to-day & feel as if I'm getting on - miss the usual birthday cake & fuss etc. but got a lot of birthday & Christmas cards - mostly from the folks at '43. Nothing particular happened to-day - very quiet all around.

Fri. Dec. 24. The Christmas spirit seemed to take over everyone to-day. I heard this morning

indirectly that the 427 boys were going to have a great re-union in Harrogate tonight - a low-level blitz as they call it. I decided to go to it at noon with Dave Ross - another ^{old} 427 boy. We caught a service truck going to Skipton & got there at four o'clock - scrounged an early supper by pretending we were posted there & got Norm Coker to drive us to the Balthersby railway station in his van. Here we caught the train successfully & met the boys in Alexis bar & started buying up the rounds. We had a great old time & since no one had a place to stay, & all the hotels were filled to overflowing it looked like the park bench for me. Most of the other lads picked up girls & so got fixed up that way however, not going in for that sort of thing myself. I finally met a very nice girl ~~too~~. Maura being who invited me up to a party her mother was giving. She was on fire-watching duties herself but they relaxed restrictions enough so that she only had to report in once every hour until midnight. Anyway she knew of a little known private hotel & arranged for me to get a room there & so I didn't do badly after all. Although I had to leave her at midnight so she could go on fire-watching duties.

Sat Dec. 25. I got up bright & early this morning,

caught a train to Northallerton & phoned Learning
for her to come & pick me up - against orders of course
they relax on Christmas. Anyway, I met all the
old 427 gang & arrived just in time to help in the
old tradition of the officers serving the men with
their Christmas dinner. They had a marvellous meal
& enjoyed it very much while I went around &
renewed contact with a lot of the boys. At 1.30
we went up to the Mess & had our own Christmas
dinner of turkey & roast pork & Christmas pudding
with rum sauce. After dinner, the bar opened
& everyone got pretty well oiled up. By 6.00 o'clock
when a lot left to go into Harrogate again. However
I'd had enough of that place & so spent a quiet
evening with Hank Givins at the WAAF officers Mess.

Sun Dec. 26. Since our Christmas dinner at Wombaton
had been postponed till noon to-day, I was naturally
anxious to get back up here early so as not to miss
it. Since the Oxford was going up flying on a test
flip, I managed to scrounge a ride back up there
in time for dinner & so got my second turkey dinner.
I found that while I was away on the afternoon of
Dec. 24, they had had a lot of excitement here since
a Lancaster on taxiing along the runway suddenly
had its S.I. engine catch fire. This caught in to
spilled petrol in the wing & travelled down

it to the cockpit so it became quite a big fire with the petrol tank liable to explode any minute. Hoover Walker & F/2 Whithead together managed to cut holes in the wing with the fire axe & finally after a struggle put it out for which we hope they will get a gong of some sort even though it's only a "mentioned in despatches".

Tonight I was invited over to a neighbouring Colonel's house for tea & had a quiet time. They live in the typical old English squire's house for years. Have plenty of money & don't work or anything - they have a horse for riding the bounds with & about two or three times a week get all decked out in plus-fours & tweed stockings to go "haring" which merely means that 10 or 12 of them get together complete with canes & beagle dogs & go tramping around the moors all afternoon, hoping to scare up a rabbit which the beagles kill. More often than not, they never see a thing, but enjoy it anyway. Then they usually all go to someone's house for tea & then break up to do it all again a couple of days later.

Mon. Dec. 27. - We flew heavily all day, & things gradually seem to be getting sorted out, although there still remains a lot to be done.

Tues. Dec. 28. Flew laid to-day & tonight cycled over to Kirby Mouside to a dance at the hospital there. Met Betty again & had a pretty good time. The mail situation has been very bad lately since I haven't had a letter from Ray or Ruth since Nov. 31. However I did get a marvellous & nice parcel from the folks at 43 with each item individually wrapped up a special chocolate bar from Bruce which he bought with his own money, two pair of knitted socks from Nona & all kinds of candy, cake & other foods which are really going to come in handy. I got it right on Xmas day too since I picked it up down at Leeming. It hadn't been forwarded through to me yet. Also got a nice parcel from Eric Rymol with cigs & various jams & honey etc.

Wed. Dec. 29. Worked hard all day to-day & went to a party in the Sgts. Mess tonight but left early to get some sleep.

Thur. Dec. 30. Slept in till 11.00 a.m. to-day & then tore around the rest of the day trying to catch up my work. It has turned very cold tonight & with my fire going full blast, I can still see my breath two feet away from it so guess I'll have to go to bed to keep warm.

Fri. Dec. 31. Worked hard all day to-day in preparation for an off day tomorrow after tonight's New Years Eve

party at the Black Swan in Helmsley. I didn't bother arranging for a girl but George Broomfield was bringing three so put my bid in for one of them. At 7.30 pm. George, Jack Clark & myself, wiped the ambulance from outside the hospital & went down to Colonel Kennedy's home in Kirby Mowbray to pick up the three girls - Joan & Barbara Kennedy & a visiting nurse from London. We brought them back to the Mess in time to catch the Liberty bus into Helmsley & finally reached the Black Swan. We were invited up to the D/C's room for free drinks so the party progressed. I was supposed to be with the visiting nurse but Barbara seemed to take quite a shine to me so I had to edge out poor old Jack Clark. We had a very good time - me with my flask full of Whisky & 5 O.P. rum, which I've harboured for so long, lots to eat & plenty of dancing. We saw the new year in on the dance floor & caught the bus back to the Mess at 1.00 a.m. Here we had a little more to drink & then got the ambulance & drove up to the hospital where the Doc (Ritchie) & the Canadian nurse Millie Melman invited us in for a few more drinks - everyone was quite lousy of course by this time. Then the whole gang of us climbed into the ambulance & went to the Karmel's where we had real fried egg sandwiches & so home to bed by 5.00 a.m.

Sat. Jan. 1, 1944 I slept in until noon to-day &

felt very good except for a bad cold which I've been fighting for the past couple of weeks & came to a head last night. I was supposed to go out for dinner tonight to Betty Dumbji but got out of it & went to bed at 7.00 o'clock to try & put down the cold. However I spent a poor night with chills & so forth.

Sun. Jan. 2. 1944. To try & stop the bronchitis, I went up to the hospital & as I had a temperature they dropped me in bed - the first time I've ever lost any time thru sickness since I joined the Air Force (almost two years). I slept most of the day & felt considerably better altho my chest still feels very tight.

Mon. Jan. 3. 1944. - Stayed in bed all day to-day & read a book. Cold started to loosen up & coughing quite a bit.

Tues. Jan. 4. 1944. - Got up to-day but stayed in the hospital all day, read, wrote letters & listened to the radio.

Wed. Jan. 5. - Doc let me out this morning altho I'm still coughing & wheezing. Worked this afternoon & got an invitation from Barbara Kennedy to come over for dinner so slipped over on the motor-cycle, had dinner & sat around ^{talked} to Barb & her folks all evening. They are in a pretty good set considering all the Barons, earls & so forth they knew at the New Year's Party in the Black Swan. There seemed to be quite a few big shots there. However, they have a

small big house, lots of money & should have servants etc. except there is none available since the war.

Consequently, Mrs. Kennedy has pitched in & does all the work herself, milks their two cows & looks after the chickens etc. which seems quite remarkable but this war sure does change things.

Thu. Jan. 6. - We flew hard all day to-day & did very well, things seem to be progressing fairly well. Barb invited me over for dinner again to-night but I thought I'd better not even though she is leaving tomorrow night to go back to her work. She is in the ATS & is on a radio-locator at a gun sight in South Wales.

Fri. Jan. 7. - Worked hard to-day & went over to Barb's for tea & to say good-by, but got ^{back} nearly in time for supper. Saw a movie in the Mess tonight.

Sat. Jan. 8. - Was on the go all day & since my cold is still bad, went to bed at 7.00 pm.

Sun. Jan. 9. - Weather was bad all day to-day with cold rain & sleet - very little flying but lots of work. Played back hummey in the Mess to-night.

Mon. Jan. 10. - Weather turned very cold to-day along with rain & sleet - what a country for bad weather. The runways have started to crack a little in a few spots after only two months flying. I'm firmly convinced that there is a lot of monkey business going on behind

the scenes in a lot of these government contract jobs to build these wartime aerodromes. They charge prodigious sums of money to build & are usually very bad workmanship, cheap materials & so forth. Almost every station in the group has to have its runways & perimeter track constantly under repair. They do things in the typical English way of muddling around through miles of red tape, doing things the hardest way they can find usually about 50 years behind the times with regard to machinery and tools. The foreman of a working gang toots a whistle every morning & afternoon & everyone drops whatever they are doing no matter how urgent & they all trot off for tea. They quit work about 4.30 every day, & stop at noon Saturdays until Monday morning. - They all belong to a union so can't work overtime war or no war! It's a little disappointing to see such things when the majority of the English people are really pitching in and doing an all-out effort.

Because of the runways, we are moving the Daily Servicing Squadron with all the aircraft & aircrew down to East Moor to fly from there while things are fixed up, so it means an awful lot of extra work from our point of view. We are all ready to go now - just waiting for the weather to clear up.

Tues. Jan. 11. They are planning the move for Saturday now so we've got all week to get ready for it + we can use it too.

Just heard to-day about the new super fighter out - still on the secret list - an advanced version of the Mustang with a brand new Rolls Royce Merlin Engine of about 1800 HP. - supposed to be bigger + better than any of the others.

Wed. Jan. 12. Things normal to-day - everyone working hard.

Thurs. Jan. 13. Things getting tied up for the move now + it should go off O.K. - Bill Boone is at East Moor, I wonder how hell like us moving in on him.

Fri. Jan. 14. Well, tomorrow is the big moving day if the weather is suitable - it probably won't be. However, I've got the lads working all night tonight cleaning up last minute items.

Sat. Jan. 15 - As expected the weather was cold + foggy all day so the move postponed for 24 hours.

The squadrons are sure going to town these days on blasting away at poor old Berlin, there can't be much left of it now - another 2000 tons last night with only 26 losses. They have developed a great technique now to avoid the night fighters. Usually the leaves cross the enemy coast heading in an altogether different direction + then make a big sweep around

to keep them guessing as to what the target is going to be. In the meantime a swarm of mosquitoes create a great diversion about 200 miles from the actual target thus drawing all the fighters over there in case that might be the concentrated raid. Thus the heavies bomb the target & get away again before the fighters can get back again to attack. That's another good reason for these 1/2 hour raids so the bombers can get away again in a hurry.

Sun. Jan. 16. Well, a year ago to-day I left home & two years ago to-day I joined the Air Force - boy how time does fly. The move was postponed again to-day because of the weather so I took the afternoon off, called Betty & went out for a walk with her to see the moors. She brought me back to her house in Newton for tea where I met the family. They live in a cute little cottage with a real thatched roof, it's very old but fixed up very nicely inside with the old original twisted oak beams sticking out & the little low doorways & huge fireplace. We spent the evening talking to the family & then I walked back to camp here - about two miles.

Mon. Jan. 17. Move postponed again to-day because of the weather. I moved into my new offices to-day & set up the proper wing organization complete with technical adjutant & orderly room so I feel at last

as though things were shaping up a little better.
 Tues. Jan. 18. More postponed another day - what weather?

Wed. Jan. 19. Ditto

Thurs. Jan. 20. At last the weather cleared and we moved
 2 Lancasters & 15 Halifaxes down to East Moor with
 a minimum of confusion. I wasn't here since last
 night at about 8.00 o'clock, I got a phone call
 from Carol who had come up to see me on leave &
 was in Scarborough. I'm sure was glad to hear
 his voice over the phone. The morning I caught the
 11.00 o'clock bus from Newton & arrived in Scarborough
 on the coast about 12.30 - first time I'd ever been
 there. I met Carol in the station & he looked just the
 same as ever except that I hadn't seen him with the
 Sgt's' looks up. We went right up to the Victoria Hotel
 where he had a room & I booked one too & then we had
 lunch. We had a great old talk then about Ray & home
 & the work we were each doing. In the afternoon
 we went for a nice walk to see the town, & walked
 up and down the seaside promenade. Next we went
 to a show, had dinner & then sat in the hotel bar
 all evening drinking alternate beers & whiskies
 while he told me all the happenings at home and
 as much as he could about Mother. We both got
 into difficulties before long & changed the subject to
 drink toasts to Ray & then to the expected arrival

Officially nicknamed "Junior" sealed the happy news arrival. After 10 o'clock we got some lemon squash & went up to my room where we finished off a micky of Maie's very potent rum & by this time were feeling quite happy & so went to bed.

Fri. Jan. 21. Slept till noon to-day & then had dinner at the hotel. Read the news about the latest 2300 ton raid on Berlin last night - lost 42 aircraft which is pretty steep but worth it I guess. Next we went for another walk, talking most of the time about our respective jobs & experiences. Went to another show after sitting on a bench on the sea side for awhile to enjoy the sun which was really out for a change. Then after dinner we went & visited a few pubs & then home to bed again. We went very cozy tonight after last night's two-man binge.

Sat. Jan. 22. This morning we caught the bus arriving at Newton here about 12.30. We were too late for dinner in the Mess so went to my billet where I opened out the groceries & we ate canned chicken, cheese & onion pickles & ritz biscuits. Mrs. Maie's birthday cake, candy & havant powdered milk so didn't do too badly. This afternoon, I showed Canon around the station, though a Halifax & also a Lancaster & he seemed to enjoy it very much. I got my F/5 to take us up to their Mess for dinner since I couldn't

bring him in ours & then we came back to the
 billet for a few rooms before bus time. I got
 quite a shock when I got back to the Mess to learn
 that Don Arnot & his crew from 427 went missing
 last night on a big do on Magdeburg where we
 lost 52 bites. It sure is too bad since he was a
 swell guy & had done 23 trips too with only 7
 more to go. We can only hope now that he baled out
 O.K. & got down safely altho' it is very unlikely.

I rode Caron down to the bus stop on the back of my
 motor bike & said good bye at 9.00 o'clock. He figures
 this is his last leave before going overseas so I'm
 not to mention it to Kay until after her baby has
 arrived & things are settled again back there.

Sun. Jan. 23. All kinds of things happened to-day
 on the station. First, my 5th came through & dated
 Jan. 14, 1944 so that made me feel pretty good.
 Next, Navy Rodwell flying up here in Halifax K-5D.689
 made a cross wind landing on the only serviceable
 runway, cracked the tail also, casting & later
 when taxiing, went into a violent ground loop,
 tore the tail wheel off & got both main wheels
 bogged well down in the mud & twisted the rear
 fuselage thus making it a beautiful Cat AC. &
 what a job it was getting it out. We got the crane out

to lift the tail on to a 1/2 track bogey, then we dug out the mud from the main wheels, laid down Demerfield planks & got ready to pull it out. We were handicapped all round by the fact that most of our crash equipment etc. was down at East Moor with the D.S. squadron. Finally I commandeered one of the contractors bull dozers & we hooked on a 3" dia. rope. The first pull didn't even budge the kite & snapped the rope like an elastic band. Next we hooked the steel towing cable on one wheel & pulled it out on the runway. Then the crane was used to reposition the tail on the bogey & then the other wheel was pulled out & so we finally got away.

Later tonight one of our kites DS. 839 - Lancaster was reported crashed down at Cranfield with all the crew killed including the pilot 1st Lt. Grove (American Air Force) was a good friend of mine. That's the second fatal accident we've had so far & I hope it's the last.

Mon. Jan. 24. Well I got my 5/4 stripes sewn on last night & it took me about two hours to do it myself on my bath dress. I hear that AIB (Accidents Investigation Branch of Air Ministry) are investigating the cause of last night's pump. However, it's usually a pretty logical proposition.

Tues. Jan. 25 26427. - Nothing much happened these days except for an epidemic of engine changes. They are coping with down at East Moor. During the day I was to...

inspections etc.

Fri. Jan. 28. - So far, I have bought just a few beers on my 5/2 stripe but am holding off until the gang get back from East Moor to have a real party. Tonight we decided at the last minute to go down to the Black Swan at Helmsley to the dance there so I didn't contact Betty. However we had a fair time & got mixed up in quite a drinking party.

Sat. Jan. 29. Getting near the end of the month now so they are trying hard to break the 1000 hour mark which we will do if the weather holds out. The gang from East Moor started to arrive back to-day so that will be much better for all concerned since maintenance gets very complicated with half the unit away from base.

Sun Jan. 30. Most of the aircraft arrived back to-day & things were in quite a flurry. Got notification to-day that I was given an award of "mentioned in despatches" - what for, I'm sure I don't know unless it's just for doing my job the same as lots of others are doing. Probably is due to the hard work we did in opening up Craft & maybe with sorting out the problems at H.27 Squadron. The award is a little bronze oak leaf which is to be worn on the service or victory ribbon.

Mon Jan 31. All the pilots arrived back safely to-day & had my 5/2 party to-night to celebrate the breaking of the 1000 hr mark (1000:25 to be exact) & also for beating the hour