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person accounts,
and are in original
format.**

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

Diary. Vol. II - Jan. 31/44 to Apr. 20/45

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Mon. Jan. 31, 1944 (Continued from Vol. I.)

of the other two Conv Units in this base - 1666 and 1664. This was quite remarkable in view of the fact that this is only the second month we have operated, it included the ^{move} of the East Moor and our maintenance is made doubly difficult by only having two hangars, two completely different types of aircraft on the unit and very tough working conditions.

Tues. Feb. 1, 1944. Well we started off this month with an immediate slump in serviceability due to the piling up of small snags at East Moor. It seems to take me all my time to fight both land and nail to hang on to vital men: whom records are trying to post off right and left - it is very tough shoddy when we are already down 35 fitters.

Wed. Feb. 2, 1944. Kept all the boys working late tonight to try and get caught up & by the looks of things, it's going to take them all week to do it. Went down to 6 Syp. HQ. today to the engineers conference - we were at it all afternoon steadily discussing various aspects of the work. After that, a few of us went up to the Pine Avenue pub near Boroughbridge - 6 S's in all & two WAAF drivers. We had dinner & returned buying triple rum all evening until...

not feeling pretty good - it was nominally a further party to celebrate Cam Brown's & my ^{5/2} promotions & we had a great time.

Thur. Feb. 3. Went back hard at it to-day & cleared up a lot of work which accumulated yesterday while I was away. I don't know how I'm ever going to be able to get away on leave from here while there is so much to be done. My office is just like a bee-hive all day & every day with the phone ringing every other minute, people popping in & out for this & that all day long. The day just isn't long enough to do everything that has to be done. I usually work through from 12 to one at noon & from 5 to 6.30 or 7.00 every night since that's about the only chance I get to deal with brough & write letters & returns etc. without being bothered all the time with 101 other things cropping up.

Fri. Feb. 4. Full moon period now so not many ops these days - however we are getting in a fair amount of night flying in spite of the still low serviceability and the numerous bogged aircraft we are getting - at least one every other day & they sure are one hell of a lot of work to get out. It still amazes me often how we ever do manage to get

some of them out, they are in so deep. There is constant trouble with cables breaking at the crucial moment & letting the kite roll heartbreakingly back into the hole again & it is usually cold, windy & raining just to make things difficult etc.

Sat. Feb. 5. Things were more or less quiet to-day with the weather being dull so it gives us a little chance to get caught up.

Sun Feb 6. More bogged aircraft to-day - the usual Sunday drivers for some reason or other - I really think it's because most everyone goes out on parties Saturday night & are not up to scratch for Sunday.

Mon Feb 7 to Mon Feb 14 - Nothing happened this week except lots of hard slugging & we finally got our serviceability back up to normal again. Got three new aircraft in from Middleton - St. George which helped a lot. Sunday 5/1 Chyaling & myself drove down south of Malton to investigate a Hadrian transport glider which had force landed there, no one hurt & nothing damaged but it has to be dismantled to get it out. Tonight I've been here in England exactly a year & one day & it sure doesn't seem that long - boy how the time

actually arrived Feb 13/46

flies by! Got a lovely parcel from Kay with nice warm pyjamas, macaroni, pressed beef etc & it sure was swell to get since my supplies were starting to run low again. Poor Kay must be having her trouble right now & I sure hope & pray all goes well with her. She has had enough hard knocks to last her a lifetime - I'm expecting a cable momentarily telling me the news.

Tues. Feb. 15. One of our lanes, DS. 688 has been on the ground for weeks waiting for A.O.G. parts so I got mad to-day & raised a big stink with Group equipment officer & jumped in a van with Horvic Walker & drove down to East Moor & Linton myself to see what I could do - everyone else had tried & hadn't got anywhere. I called on various friends at East Moor & found they had given up their lanes to Linton & were converting to Pali III's. This was just my chance so I whipped into their stores, backed the van up & filled it full of all the lane spares we could find - it was a real haul for a scrounge trip & very successful. I'm afraid Linton are going to be awfully mad when they find we practically stole all this stuff right from under their noses. Next we drove on over to Linton, waited till 32 of their a/c took

off on an op - it looked like Berlin again, & I finally caught up to Welf Klessen - another 13th entry boy who I haven't seen for a year and a half - we had a great old visit & then traced down the missing AOG parts - took them off one of their Cat AC bites of all things & then went up for dinner with him. Later we sat around drinking rum, playing snooker & waiting for any early returns. It turned very black & foggy out, the AC were to be diverted so Howie & I decided to stay the night.

Wed. Feb. 16 - Got up early this morning & drove back up here with our load of spoils. Found a Heli III which had landed here in an emergency landing last night with only 12 gallons of petrol left in the tank - was he lucky! Another Heli III pranged after the do last night over near Whitty - killed all the crew & Andy Anderson had gone over to investigate it in my absence. We got the visiting heli here fixed up in a hurry & what did he do but run off the perimeter track & get very badly bogged down on the way to take off. I went out & worked on it myself & we finally got it out after commandeering the contractor's bulldozer with tracks on it, at 8 o'clock

tonight. I was covered from head to foot with mud before I got through - what a life!

There is great pressure being brought to bear now to get as many of our bikes operationally fit as is humanly possible & they are unloading ton after ton of bombs here so it looks as if we are going to see some excitement before very long when they open the second front & even use our comparatively ratty Con quest bikes for all-out bombing efforts. It's keeping me hopping trying to chase up all the mods. Also we are running two tests a day on all aircraft with a full load of bombs & petrol to see how they are on climb & altitude & I'm making weekly reports on how they stand so far as operation go so things are really coming to a head fast. On a guess, I'd say around the 1st. of April is the deadline for the second front to open.

Thur. Feb. 17. We flew pretty hard to-day & are gradually piling up the flying hours so things seem to be going not too badly.

Fri. Feb. 18. We sent off another two on operational test to-day & they went off quite successfully - otherwise, nothing of note happened.

Sat. Feb. 19. Took off another operational test to-day & it was OK. Our serviceability was better so we put in a real day's flying and even now at 1.00 am. the bites are still zooming around here keeping the whole countryside awake.

Sun. Feb. 20. Got a real blast from the C.O. to-day concerning poor old R&I who seem to be taking the brunt of all the unserviceability on the station. He doesn't see the whole picture as I do & consequently gets some very peculiar ideas. By interfering, he is making things worse too & if he would only let me handle the situation as I want to, I know things would work out all right. However, he wants Ft. Anderson posted and nothing else will do so it remains to be seen what's going to happen. I'm already stuck my own neck out too far in protecting & fighting the C.O. on Anderson's behalf.

Mon. Feb. 21. Still no word from Kay a week after she is supposed to be having her baby - I sure hope nothing has gone wrong. Got busy to-day again to chase R&I to see what I can do to straighten out that problem. and they seem to be picking up a little. Anyway, they are sure piling up the hours.

Tues. Feb. 22. Nothing much happened to-day extra a lot of hard work. More bogged aircraft slowed things down this afternoon.

Wed. Feb. 23. No day was a horrible nasty day with showers off and on all day. We had no less than three bogged aircraft this afternoon - two with flat tires at the same time just to increase the difficulties. The first we towed out with a petrol bouser OK. The second we had to use lifting bags to get it up for changing the wheel & then hooked a bouser on to it. The third was one of the worst I've ever seen. He had come off the runway, did a violent ground loop & headed straight for the control tower with a burst tire. It scared the daylight's out of them since it came to rest only about 50 yds. away from it right in the middle of a sea of mud and about 100 yds. from the runway. I was out with the gang giving them a hand and was covered with mud from head to foot. First we used Summerfield boards under the jacks & got the tire changed, then came the problem of getting it back out on the runway. None of our cables were long enough to reach & none of the bowsers with their rubber tires were any good for pulling in the mud. Somebody got the brilliant idea of calling on the Army for help so the We phoned the Grenadier Guards at Helmsley & they sent down two tanks

We hooked a tank on to each main wheel & with a tractor on the tail wheel, finally managed to get it out. The Army boys thought it was great fun sloshing thru the mud with their tanks & we were sure glad of their assistance since it was getting dark & pouring rain just to make things more difficult. The C/O in honor of the occasion, threw open the officer's mess bar to Walker & myself, the six army boys & 6 RCAF lads who worked so willingly & we had a few free beers & a hot meal. Anyway it sure was quite a sight to see these two tanks yanking the bike out of the mud.

Thurs. Feb. 24. Flew hard all day - nothing very exciting happened.

Fri. Feb. 25. Took Betty to a dance in Holmsley tonight at the Black Swan & had a pretty good time, got a ride on the bus as far as Newton and then walked back from there.

Sat. Feb. 26. Got a phone call to-day from Moirafing - the girl I met in Harrogate on Christmas eve - she was in York with a girl friend & wanted to know if I'd come down to a dance. I got Walker & we scrounged a ride down with Lysedale, the Bristol rep. We had quite a ride down thru the poor land, since he had a slotgun in the car

so we stopped every now & again to go after partridge & pheasants etc. which were all along the road. It was out of season of course & against the law but we were careful not to let anyone see us & finally managed to bag two.

I'd never stopped long in York before except between trains so was very interested in it since it is such a famous old place. It was the northernmost bastion of the Romans in their constant fights with the Picts & Scots & was later a great Norman stronghold. There are very many famous old places in the city which even now is completely surrounded by a huge stone wall. It still is in good repair & has all the old famous gateways in it as well as forts all around & the great old castle itself. Yorkminster cathedral is also very nice & is quite a place to see.

We met the girls, visited a few pubs, talked our way into a dance after all the tickets were sold where I met all kinds of old friends (including Jack Adams) from all the stations around here. Then came back to the hotel to another party & so to bed. We got up bright & early in the

Sun. Feb. 27.

morning to find it had snowed considerably during the night & we didn't get back until noon due to having been stuck on so many hells on the way home - these English Hillman's etc. have no power at all for getting out of snow. We also bagged another partridge & a pheasant so intend to have a feed some time this week. Tonight, the Group Captain invited Wk Dunphy, Lt. Cleghy, Lt. Cleveland, Major Eric & myself over to his quarters where we had real steaks & mushrooms & was it good! The first I'd had in a year. Then we sat around all night drinking his liquor & talking.

Mon Feb. 28. Had to go to a conference at Group today so borrowed Cleveland's car & drove down - picked up Wk Dunphy & Hugh Lamb at Topcliffe on the way down. It was still snowy & I got stuck on a couple of hells but finally managed to make it ok. We were at the meeting from 10.15 am till 7.00 pm. so we covered a lot of ground - mostly mtce. schedules & personnel problems.

Tonight the G/C threw a party for the Servicing Flight Ground crew at the Black Swan Hotel in Helmsley so I drove fast all the way back & got there about 20 minutes late but managed to eat and have a little party afterwards with the boys. It was a good gesture on the Group Captain's part.

Tues. Feb. 29. We flew very hard to-day to try and break the flying time record & had some bad luck trying to do it. We have gone all month with no accidents or prangs until at 5-10 tonight Wolfgang T-386 crashed down near Elsham Woods & killed all the crew which broke our perfect record. The Adj. Ripley & I were all set to go to a dance in Neiby Moorside & had a car arranged & the girls etc. However, we had to stay in to get the data on the crash for the crash signal & so killed the whole thing off at the last minute.

Wed. Mar. 1. Still no word from Ray & Jim beginning to get a little worried - I sure hope there is nothing wrong. We had a real formal parade to-day to present the boys with their operational wings & I had to take command of my whole wing (composed of three flights) for the first time. However, I had no trouble at all & it all went off very nicely. The rest of the station got the day off to celebrate our getting in 1260 flying hours & leading the rest of the command in the base in no. of training hours, but I couldn't afford to do it for my boys since the serviceability is starting downwards again.

Thur. Mar. 2. Well, at long last, the expected cable came from Aunt Aggie to say that Trudy June

had arrived & both she & Hoy were doing fine. It sure is good news to hear. We worked hard all day to-day but things seem to be piling up again.

Fri. Feb. 3rd. We had two more bogged a/c to deal with to-day & they sure set us back a good deal, serviceability is way down & I had to work the P&I boys all night tonight to try and catch up a little.

Sat. Feb. 4. Last night we had another prang - Lancaster Pfa. Peter - DS. 650 which crashed down in Norfolk somewhere & killed all the crew. We sure seem to be running into some tough luck this last week. To-day everyone was hard at it & again we worked till late at night.

Sun. Mar. 5. - Mon. 6 & Tues. 7. - Nothing much new turned up these three days except more & more work. Our serviceability hit a new rock bottom low of 43% yesterday & it sure is causing me a lot of worry. We think we found out what caused the crash of P. - on investigation it looked like the site had been pretty badly shot up with machine gun & cannon shells - now the question is whether it was a Jerry night intruder or one of our own night fighters which shot it up by mistake. They sure are pressing us strongly for operational sites & it looks like it won't be long before we are going operational with the opening of the second

front.

Wed. Mar. 8. Serviceability is still way down & there seems to be no way of stopping it since they are flying all the serviceable a/c & mounting up inspections and engine changes faster than we can do them. If I'm not careful, I'll be losing my job & my \$k. in the bargain so I'm really turning on the pressure these days & worked late tonight myself down at the hangar.

Thur. Mar. 9. Last night we had a bits force land down south of Workup Nott. - JB 859-11 for Harry. He apparently lost a prop blade which shook off the whole prop and reduction gear and broke three of the four engine bearers. It's a wonder he didn't lose the engine too on landing since it was just hanging there and that's all. I'm trying to have it made a Cat AC but the MU won't play ball & it begins to look as if we'll have to send a completely built up power plant down there ourselves & fix it up.

Fri. Mar. 10. Serviceability still way down - no less than 7 engine changes & 6 inspections on the go right now. Went to the dance tonight at the Black Swan in Helmsley & took Betty Bumbo again. Had a pretty good time, but got called to the phone there when

one of our bikes D for Donald got out of control on the perimeter track, ground looped and tore the tail wheel off on a concrete culvert - things seem to be going from bad to worse & nothing we can do about it.

Sat. Mar. 11 The newest snag now is that our crane had to leave yesterday to have a modification done on it & the one sent up from Topcliffe won't lift high enough to change engines so we have 5 engine changes stuck for that & serviceability is down around 40% - three majors on the go over at Topcliffe don't help matters very much either.

Sun. Mar. 12. Things in a mad panic now and serviceability at a new low. We are getting rid of Lt Anderson in R & I who doesn't seem to be coping at all & getting a new engineer officer in. I'll be next if I'm not careful. Everyone is working very hard however & doing the best we can.

Mon. Mar. 13. W/c Miller came up with W/c Dunphy to-day to look into our set up & blast me at the same time. However, I explained the set up to him & all our difficulties but he sure let me know he wasn't at all satisfied & I'd have to organize things better somehow.

It's a terrific job however & no one knows all the troubles we run into. I do think however that I can iron things out one by one given a little time.

Tues Mar 14. On the go hard all day to-day & driving the boys as hard as possible, things went wrong to-night on night flying so I missed half the movie in the Mess. Decided to shift personnel around a little from the flights to R & I to build them up a little stronger. Went to the Canadian RCAF "Blackouts" show last night in the NAAFI & it was very good. Also bumped into Alec Gordon who lives on Sandford at home - he was playing the trombone in the orchestra.

Wed Mar 15. Was terrifically busy all day to-day with $\frac{3}{4}$ Yatesman up here from Bomber Command to inspect the cooling fan mod on the lanes & all the other work to attend to as well. Didn't finish up till 11.00 pm. again tonight & had to cancel an invitation out to dinner down at Barbara Kennedy's place. However, maybe it was just as well at that.

Thur Mar 16. Very busy again today with CO's

conference etc. W/c Miller & W/c Palmer were up to-day to see how we are getting along but I didn't have a chance to see them. Stayed down with the boys until 11:30 pm. tonight to give them a little moral encouragement.

Fri. Mar. 17. Began to see signs of getting out of the flap to-day - good old St. Patrick's day! Went to the cinema in the Mess tonight

Sat. Mar. 18. Well, things got back into shape to-day again as far as serviceability goes after the worst session I've ever been through since I've been over here. I really feel in need of a leave after that but can't afford the time just now. However, went down to Barbara Kennedy's for supper to-night - real Yorkshire cured ham with two fried eggs, peaches & Jersey cream & then sat around drinking the colonel's gin & beer all night. It was sort of a celebration too since the son John had just arrived back here after taking his pilot's training out in the States. Just left Toronto a month ago so got an Englishman's view of things there.

Sun. Mar. 19. Got a letter from Ron Doubt to-day saying his posting had been changed to Duffell so I guess I won't get a chance to see him in here as much as I thought. The serviceability

was much better to-day & things going good.
Went down to Betty Bumbly's place for dinner
to night & went out for a long walk. Got
caught in an air raid alarm - the first one
we've had around here for a long time. It
was over toward Scarborough direction and there
were plenty of flares, searchlights and anti-
aircraft guns going off in the distance. It sure
is interesting to watch - from a distance!
We saw one Jerry kite weaving & twisting through
the sky like a bug trying to get out of a searchlight
cone which had him pretty well trapped - I mean
he finally got away ok.

Monday, Mar. 20, 1944. Serviceability up to 72%
tonight so was quite happy for a change. John
Witbeck posted in to-day to replace Anderson who
is finally on his way out - posted to #6 Group W.O.
Had a bombing-up exercise to-day to get the
kids practiced up in case we go on ops &
it sure looked like the real thing again
with loads of bombs trundling all over the
place this afternoon.

Tues. Mar. 21, 1944. to Tues. Mar. 28 - Things gradually
got back to normal again this week with nothing
very exciting happening. I for Johnny Halifax had
to force land down south at an American

aerodrome in Essex with both port engines v/s - overheating & glycol leaks & is still there until I can get a crew down to it with a couple of new blocks. The flying hours are mounting up pretty well altho' the other con units are quite a bit ahead of us due to our early slump in serviceability. Talked to Ross Dault on the phone to-day - he is down at Disflint on 1664 C.U. & should be through his navigator's training in a couple of weeks so I'll have to get down to see him very soon before he goes on ops.

Wed. Mar. 29 - Went down to Betty's for tea to-night & spent the evening playing the piano & putting a jig-saw puzzle together - what a thrill! However, it's nice to have a home to go to occasionally.

Thur. Mar. 30. We are really flying hot & heavy these days to catch up a little before the end of the month but the serviceability is pretty good so I guess we can stand it.

Fri. Mar. 31. Flew 93 hours to-day to break all previous records and it sure was good to see them go to town again. We got 1427 flying hours this month or 167 hrs. ahead of last month so I guess we can't kick.

Sat. April 1 - Went to York this evening with Howie Walker - had a good hot bath at the hotel.

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went to a dance & got to bed early for a change.
Sun. April 2. Came back early this morning to
work & then went down to Betty's for tea this
evening. I'll have to stop going down there pretty
soon or she will be thinking I'm serious & I'll
be getting hooked up again.

Mon. April 3. April showers came on with a
vengeance to-day although it isn't so cold
now. Spring is really in the air with the grass
green, crocus flowers, daffodils & violets out etc.
We went on double daylight saving time last night
so it doesn't get dark till around 9.00 pm. &
makes things a lot better.

Tues. April 4. Still pouring rain out all day to day
& no flying done since the first of the month. We
changed billets to-day & all the senior officers &
heads of sections moved up to 5 site in Lane huts
this time. The rooms are smaller but better & each
hut has a large room which we are going to use
as a common room when we can get it properly
fired up. Should be ok for the summer.

Wed. April 5. Fog & rain all day to-day but
excitement has been running a little high since
as of midnight tonight, all leaves and days
off have been cancelled - out of a blue sky &
we can't go more than three miles in any

direction from the station so it begins to look as if things are starting at last & they can't happen too quickly for me.

Thurs. April 6, 1944. Nothing much happened to-day & weather was a little better for flying so put in a few hours. Worked late to-night.

Fri. April 7, 1944. Lancaster X - DS-607 - crashed at Topcliffe last night. The pilot overshot and about 150 yds. off the end of the runway his port wheel hit part of an old disused gunpost, tore the wheel off & it went into a violent ground loop - damaging the port wing, centre section & tailplane considerably. I categorized it to-day when I went down to investigate, as a B hoping the M.O. will make it an E so I can use the spares.

Sat. April 8, 1944. Well, to-day was Mother's Birthday - I suppose Ray will be feeling pretty badly at home right now. Put in lots of flying time to-day for a change as weather was pretty good. Had a party in the Mess tonight for the opening of the new bar & it was pretty good too. Some boys came up from Group HQ & got pretty well pie-eyed - proceeded to paint the Mess & everyone in it with white paint but didn't do too much damage except to themselves. W.C. Murphy came up for the fun & seemed to enjoy it too.

Sun. April 9. - To-day being Easter, I slept in until noon - worked all afternoon & went down to the English church at Newton with the Adj. F/L Ripley - then went up to see the girls & went for a big walk after tea.

Mon. April 10. - flew hard all day & had a big house cleaning of the Mess tonight with all officers doing the work. we really got it looking pretty good in short order.

Tues. April 11. - Again we had good weather & really started to catch up on our flying. I got appointed Chairman of the Mess House committee to help keep the Mess in good shape & repair so that's going to take up some time too - so if I had any to spare - Worked until 11.00 p.m. tonight.

Wed. April 12. flew hard all day - got news of a crashed a/c west of Pickering at 4.00 pm. so got a van & drove out with John Wilbeck & Norm Brigg. After calling on the police stations & finally on army camp we located it at least way up in the Moors and what a mess it was. I had a hard time trying to find out what kind of an aircraft it was until I found an engine with a DH. Hydromatic prop on it & then I knew it was a Halifax Mk. III. - LW. 614 - "S" from East Moor - we found out later. It was still burning.

when we got there after driving a few miles across country in the van - up hill & down dale. It had knocked over a few trees & was lying in a gully blazing away. We passed a farmer with a horse & rig loaded with six of the recovered bodies - all Canadian boys - badly battered up & burned. A seventh had got away with it, only having a burned hand & suffering from shock while there was still another body in the wreckage - we found it as we were investigating but couldn't get it out since he was only in pieces anyway & pinned under a pile of debris. I've got over being squeamish about such things but I still don't like the smell that permeates the air around these wrecks - it is really & truly horrible. We investigated as best we could, questioned a few eye-witnesses who all told different stories & finally came away to the Army Camp. They invited us in to supper since it was getting late & then we finally got back to the station here about 10.00 o'clock tonight.

Thurs. April 13. - Kept very busy to-day - went down to Topcliffe to a lecture this afternoon & then called over to Disforth for dinner & a few beers with Ron Doult - he is moving down to Lenton tomorrow to start his tour of ops with 426 Squadron.

I met his pilot too & he seems like a pretty good fellow & the crew has lots of spirit which is a big help - I sure hope everything goes ok. with him.

Fri. April 14. Things went very well to-day. Got my new administrative adjutant posted in to help out & I can sure keep him busy. By a coincidence it turns out that he used to be the station warrant officer here & is now coming back here with his commission.

Sat. April 15. Worked pretty hard all day & then went down to Betty's for tea tonight - very quiet time & another long walk. Nothing much to do out these days.

Sun. April 16. Things going more or less smoothly now with lots of flying & P&I keeping up with the work nicely. Went down to Betty's again tonight - getting to be quite a habit but I still maintain it's her Mother's good cooking.

Mon. April 17. Started a new system of planned servicing and planned flying to-day which sounds like a good scheme - based on Bomber Command Charts and graphs. We flew 123 hours to-day for a real record - I've never heard of any con unit before, putting in so many hours in one day.

Tues April 18. Real spring weather coming on now. We are all busy up at the Mess building.

a new cloakroom to keep our hats & coats out of the main hall & are doing it out of all scrounged lumber, metal sidings and plaster board found around the camp. The main idea is to go out after dark with a van and fill it up with all the bits and pieces that can be found. The poor old contractors sure take an awful beating around here.

Wed. April. 19. - Turned a little chilly to-day & it would too just because we had a formal parade staged for this morning in order to promulgate the sentence of a district court martial held here for two of our men - one of mine who went A.M.O.I. & was picked up getting off a ship at Halifax - nobody knows how in the world he got that far - the other was for an SHQ lad who stole £80 out of a billet.

Thu. April. 20. Well, to-day we broke all previous records by flying 132:15 to beat our own mark of 123 set up last Monday. It's ok. as long as I can keep ahead of the game & R&I can keep pace with the inspections.

Fri. April. 21. Started to work with a vengeance tonight on scrounging wood & materials etc. for our new cloakroom at the officer's mess. We got an old a/c packing case out by No. 2 larder & broke it all up.

- lots of sledgehammer exercise.

April 22 (Sat.) Went down to Betty's again tonight & played knock running for awhile. They sure treat Ripley & I well with food & teas etc.

Sun April 23 - Decided to take to-day off - my first in 3 1/2 months which really sounds impossible but is true. I thoroughly enjoyed it too since I slept in until noon & then went down to Betty's after lunch. Ruby, Betty & I then proceeded on a long bicycle ride from Newton to the old pirate caves at Kirkdale, then up to Surprise View which really was a surprise. You seem to go along a fairly level road for a long time & then suddenly turn a corner & there is a most panorama of a deep valley, rolling hills etc stretching out at your feet & nothing but desolate moors covered with gorse & bracken bushes which are a dark brown or purple colour. We stopped for awhile here to take in the scenery & I also took a couple of snapshots. From here we coasted right down into the valley - a nice coast for about 3 miles. The circle around to a cute little village called Hutton - le-How - a throwback to the old Saxon residents. It had a wide stream flowing right thru the centre of the village green & right over the

road - they don't believe in bridges here apparently since you have to ford the stream to go along the road. Betty & I made the crossing ok but the front wheel of Katie's bicycle hit a small stone & she skidded sideways & ended up flat on her rear end in the middle of the stream. She was a good sport too & immediately started to laugh so much she just sat there laughing without attempting to get up. I finally helped her out after much hilarity & a passing resident kindly asked her up to the house to get dried out in front of the fire which we accepted on the spot. After this experience we rode back thru Kirbymoorside, past the aerodrome at Wombledon so the girls could see the planes & then back to Newton again. That night, Rip came down & then we went for a long walk & then ate a real meal. Very satisfactory day off.

Mon. April 24. Flying carried on well to-day. I wonder how Kay made out on her birthday - she sure will miss Mother's usual cake with candles & all.

Tues. April 25. - John Witbeck & myself went over to visit the Slingsby sailplane people at Kirby - moorside to-day. There were really two reasons involved - ① to visit my friend Mr. Lamb to see how sailplanes are made & maybe get a few hints

in how to fly them & ③ to look over the girl situation in the factory there since I'm in charge of getting as many girls as possible here to the party on Sat. night. We had a pleasant afternoon & continued to build our cloakroom attachment to the Mess this afternoon & night.

April 26, 1944. Wed. Well, our good accident record for this month was finally broken to-day when old Q for Queenie (W. 7804) ran off the perimeter track, blew a tyre & then went into a violent ground loop when the hub dug into the soft ground. She twisted the ole off & the kite broke its back so it became a cat & a gold mine of spares. Went down to Betty's tonight for tea & cakes.

April 27, 1944. (Thur) - What luck we seem to be having just now. Things went smoothly to day & tonight we almost finished off our cloakroom. Then saw a cinema in the Mess & were sitting around drinking beer about 11:30 pm. when flying control rang up to say we had another bad accident. We went right down to the aerodrome to find two bikes locked together on the perimeter track with the boys hacking away with axes to try and get a tail gunner out of his turret. It appears that the bikes were being manoeuvred on the track.

for an operational take-off on a bulls-eye exercise
 T fa Tommy JD106 was stopped in front & H Harry
 JB. 859 was parked about 30 yds. behind with the
 engines running. Somehow or other when the
 pilot of H was doing his cockpit check, the kite
 started to drift forward & he didn't notice it until
 it climbed right up the tail of T. The crew of T
 didn't know anything about it until they heard
 the tail gunner scream J - C... over the intercom
 & then came the crash. The port inner prop of H
 sliced right through the turret about 4 times
 & half tore the tail gunner's head off so he was
 a pretty gory mess when we pulled him out of
 the turret - dead of course. It looks like a
 court-martialed case of negligence but I sure feel
 sorry for the pilot who did it. This also counts
 up as 2 accidents for our ship so we are not doing
 so well this month. Anyway, it's the first fatal
 accident in a month and a half.

April 28, 1944 (Fri) We worked hard all day & half the
 night too in preparation for the big party tomorrow
 night. It should be a good one we hope.

April 29, 1944 (Sat) Had an early tea tonight & went
 down with Pip to pick up Betty & Ruby for the party.
 We sure dazzled the envy people around here. I
 arranged for about 30 girls to come up from York.

and about 15 from nearby towns so that wasn't too bad except for trying to organize the transport. The ante-room had a full length bar with a fountain of real water in the centre of the room - rock garden plants & all. A gang have been out picking daffodils around the district for the past two days & there were daffodils everywhere - thousands of them. The dining room was all decorated up cabaret style for dancing, had our own station orchestra in dress suits & plants & flowers all over with indirect lighting & all. The food was terrific with stuffed pigs heads & decorated fish, all kinds of meats, cakes etc. - it sure didn't look like wartime & best of all we had some ice cream - the first I've tasted since I left home. Betty had a wonderful time & really liked it a lot. Nobody got tight & it was a very well-mannered & quite successful party. Got home about 3.30 a.m.

April 30 (Sun). Well, to-day being the end of the month I kept very busy getting in monthly returns etc. R&I Sgdn. did 30 inspections, 35 engine changes & 12 block changes for a new record month. All our bad luck seems to run in one streak since we had another Cat. E accident to-day. This was an exciting one since Sgt. Dawson was the pilot of old W-miller DF737 & he blew a tyre out just at

take off and that meant he had to land again with a tyre already burst which isn't good. The noise spread around like wildfire & we were all out on the field to watch him attempt his landing. So was the fire truck, crash truck & ambulance! He came in nicely & held it down on the good wheel to start with but finally the other one came down, dug in & then he started to ground loop 3 times in succession. The crew were only a little shaken but the bite was really bad since its back was really broken - as you walked down the fuselage toward the tail you had to turn a 45° corner & when we looked a bow on & started to drag it away, the rear fuselage came right off. This really is a poor record for the month as far as accidents go since we won the pennant three times in succession in Jan, Feb & Mar.

Went down to Betty's but didn't do very much since we were all tired after last night's party.

Mon. May 1st. Weather started to warm up nicely today. Big things seem to be looming up for the end of the month with drastic cuts in all passenger travel & lots of troop movements. Saw 18 Flying Fortresses returning from a daylight sweep & flying in a nice close formation - they sure look good. They were telling me to day of one of #59's babies who got lost

at night & ended up over London instead of Bristol - he didn't last very long & got shot down by the anti-aircraft defences before he could identify himself.

Tues. May 2nd - Went down to Topcliffe to-day for a personnel conference with w/c Dempsey. I just checked in at the guardroom when I heard a loud crash & saw plumes of heavy black smoke coming up from the aerodrome. I raced right down & soon enough there was a prang blazing fiercely away. The tail wasn't on fire so I helped a crew get the rear gunner out but he was so badly battered up he died. The rest of the crew burned up since you couldn't get close to it at all with the intense heat. It's funny how things like that used to bother me when I first came over but you just don't think anything of it after awhile.

Wed. May 3rd - High winds all day kept our a/c on the ground since it was too dangerous for flying - it was the wind that caused the prang yesterday at Topcliffe. Went down to Betty's tonight.

Thurs. May 4th - Went down to a party tonight at Dorsford which they were holding for my old C.O. w/c Clark who is going back on ops. It was a real spontaneous affair & went with the S/C & the C.O. They had lots of beer & tomato etc. & some allowed

friends. Bob Scott - the CTOot Craft was there wearing his new OBE which he got for dragging a tail gunner out from a burning fuselage & saving his life. Before the party ^{partly} they had brought a huge big farm horse into the Mess & made the Wc ride around on its back for a while until it got sort of restless & knocked all the furniture in the Mess over & almost started a stampede. They got it out finally & brought in a motorcycle with which they took turns racing up & down the long main corridor until the Wc stopped them before somebody killed himself. However, it was quite a fair party.

Fri. May 5. to Fri. May 12. Nothing much exciting happened this week. Flying progressed well - went down to Bellis the usual Sat. Sun & Wed nights. The weather is still alternating between cold & wet days with the cold warm one thrown in but not nearly enough of them. Things seem to be coming to a head in Italy with the Allies getting prepared to start a new offensive - lots hope it is the beginning of the end.

Sat. May 13. Flew hard all day & am keeping up nicely with flying hours and inspections. Went down to Bellis again tonight for tea & cakes etc. & spent the evening having a good old fashioned sing song around the piano - very reminiscent of Sunday evenings at home.

Sun. May 14. It turned bitterly cold & wet to day so had to scrounge around considerably before finding enough coal to light my office fire. Went down to Betty's & stayed close to the fire all evening.

Mon. May 15. Pip & I decided to take tomorrow off & thus go to Scarborough tonight. We caught the 5:00 pm bus at Newton & arrived Scarb. about 7:00 pm. & booked in at the Pavilion Hotel. Had a few cocktails in the American Bar there & then went up for a fresh lobster dinner. Next we went to a dance at the Royal Hotel - danced & drank a little & so back to a swell soft bed by midnight with the plan being to sleep in until noon tomorrow.

Tues. May 16. Got up about 10:00 am just in time to make breakfast - poached egg on toast - that's the only thing that got me up. Then Pip & I went shopping for a few necessary items. We had a great time scrounging stuff without having ration books or point cards. I guess they took pity on us poor ignorant Canadians. The idea was to go in to a grocery shop or bakery & ask them what all we could buy without books of points etc. Usually, this was practically nothing but a good many of them let us

have a few things anyway. We finally ended up with raisin buns, jam tarts, pork pies, ginger snaps, marmalade, bramble jam, trifle, a bottle of Port wine, a bottle of Bin, a bottle of hard cider & a bottle of orange squash or cordial so we really had a great time. During our expedition we also stopped in at a little cafe down by the fishing docks & had fresh crabs served right in the shell & they were very good too - the first I'd ever tasted. In the afternoon we went to a cinema & at night back to the dance again & so to bed.

Wed. May 17. - Had to get up at 5.30 this morning to catch the workman's train out to Newton & then went to bed & slept till noon when I did get to the station. In the afternoon we had our first accident this month when B for Bear DT. 551 broke an undercarriage casting on landing & went into a big ground loop - nobody hurt but it made the site a cat & & a further gold mine for spares. Went down to Betty's tonight but remained very quiet after our spree in Scarborough.

Thur. May 18. Had our usual Thursday night domestic evening tonight when everyone pitches in & helps to clean things up. I found myself digging trenches with a pick. At 11.15 to-day went on

what they call a battle inoculation course when you walk slowly along a set route while British snipers fire real bullets all around you & blow mines etc up at your feet to get you used to battle noises. It was very interesting except getting showered with dirt & stones every few steps. We also threw live handgrenades & fired the Sarand rifle. All the aerodromes are making big preparations for the start of the 2nd front since they quite expect that Jerry will retaliate with airborne troops to try & disrupt communications etc. & poor old Wombaton is nearest to the coast so we may be in the thick of it yet. Next week I'm going to the Battle school for an hour a day for two weeks to get all the ground defence positions & all the various weapons etc.

Fri. May 19. Went to a dance tonight & had a great time. Picked up the party at Betty's & found we were short two men so we had a taxi - if you could call it that - it is a combined taxi & hearse - for taxi he puts in seats & if it is for a hearse he pulls them out & puts the seats in instead! Anyway, we went back to the Man & got two more fellows & away we went to Duncombe Park Manor - the home of Lord & Lady Beveridge & what a joint - about 100

rooms & all decked up just as you see in the movies. We piled out of our busses right at the main door & really shocked the old folks but I guess they have given up being amazed at all the dizzy things Canadians get themselves into. We really had a fine time anyway & then back to Betty's for tea.

Sat. May 22. Flying progressing well but lots of worry sorting out new establishment figures. Went down to Betty's again tonight but just for a short time as I was feeling in the need for some sleep. Sun. May 23. W/C Murphy is posted from Base to day & W/C Miller from 6 Day is taking his place - I think he will help to sort things out a lot better since he has so much more experience at this game. Went down to Betty's tonight & we went for another long walk with Roy & Ruby since the weather turned out fairly warm to day for change.

Mon. May 22. Was down to Popcliffe to-day on a personnel conference to see if we couldn't get things straightened out among the three units in this base - My own are in a muddle.

Tues. May 23. We had our second accident of the month when X-ray crashed in the sea just off Whitby. All the crew were rescued at

when their dinghy outfits worked successfully. It appears that the P.O. started to set up when he was at 1500 feet & by the time he got through fiddling, he found he couldn't get his prop feathers & had lost so much altitude he had to ditch. I guess there was a good deal of panic at the time or he'd have been able to carry on, on three engines, without any trouble.

Well, to-day is Grandma's 80th birthday. I hope she got my cable ok & is having a good time.

Wed. May. 24. Went down to Betty's tonight & out for another walk - not much else to do these long evenings.

Thur. May. 25. - Had a busy day to-day with Battle school this morning, C.O.'s conference at 1.30, domestic evening at 6.00 pm. & cinema at 9.30 in the Mess.

The latest plan came through about our objective for flying next month - no less than 2000 hours which means 40 inspections. I don't see how we can possibly do it with the manpower & facilities available & there sure is going to be lots of panic.

Fri. May. 26. - C.O.'s inspection this morning & got a nice strip torn off for the place being so dirty but more or less the usual thing. Flying seems to be going very well & our planned servicing scheme seems to be operating quite successfully.

Sat. May. 27. - Well we had the third of our usual string of three prange to-day when QY-B-ber - this is third B in a month as we are going to stop using that letter for awhile - H.R. 834 - one of our newest & best pilots with 4 brand new Merlin VIII engines in it - the 5.0 engine cut on take-off just after he got airborne, it swung to the right, ploughed through the top of 4 big trees right in the middle of the bomb dump - (I'm sure glad they didn't stop him or the whole dump would have gone up & I wouldn't be here writing this) & then careened off another tree to end up in the middle of a nearby farmer's field where the bike broke up badly & then caught on fire - there were 9 men in the bike & they all got out in one of the most miraculous escapes I ever expect to see with very minor injuries. I hopped on my motor bike & was there 5 minutes after it happened to see the crew wandering around not quite knowing how they got out. I helped get the rear gunner, who was cut badly about the face, ears & neck & when it got stuck in the mud, we had to pull it out. Two others had broken ankles & 3 had to be treated for minor shock & other than that, there wasn't much else the matter with them. We tried to get

the fire out but it was pretty hopeless - especially with all the ammunition exploding all over the place. I was using a fire extinguisher myself for a while until the intense heat drove me away. An investigation later showed that an inlet valve spring broke on the B bank causing the explosive charge to blow by into the induction manifold & setting fire to the mixture coming into the cylinder. Quite a small thing to write off in an aircraft & almost the crew.

Went down to Betty's tonight & then to a dance at the Black Swan in Helmsley & had a pretty good time.

Sun. May 28. Took the afternoon off & went for a long cycle ride up to Surprise view, Hutton-le-Hole, Eastingham, Appleton-le-Moor & back home again. Stripped to the waist & got a good layer of sunburn. The girls brought a lunch & I & the boys had a pretty good time.

Got a cable yesterday from Ruth saying that Ross Doubt was missing. I immediately phoned the Adjutant of 426 Sqdn. & confirmed it. He went on the night of May 12/13, the target was Louvain in Belgium near the French border. He is hoping he was able to take out one of the Iguess I'll just have to wait & see what happens. Etienne is going to be

tough on poor Susie though.

Mon. May. 29. Knew hard all day & are so well upon the flying that the G.C. has proclaimed a two-day stand down until Wed. night so I gave Servicing Sqdn tomorrow off & RVT Wed off as a reward for their hard work. I think they will appreciate it too.

Tues. May 30. - Went down to Betty's tonight after changing up odds & ends down at the office to day. Went out on the battle course firing sten guns to-day too & had a lot of fun. Weather is very hot for a change & I would pick this time to catch a good cold - what a life.

Wed. May 31. Slept in till 11.00 to-day & then went on battle course firing the Barand rifle. It sure is a swell weapon. Didn't do much for the rest of the day but took things easy.

Thurs. June 1. Finished off the Battle Course & won the shooting match with the Barand rifle 52 out of possible 64 including single & rapid fire shots - was I lucky - also won 10 bob. Kept up our flying schedule to-day in an all out effort to get in our 2000 hours this month.

Fri. June 2. W/C Miller came up from Base to-day to see how we are doing & seemed quite satisfied with my set-up. Our establishment has now been

changed so that I am filling a Wing Commander vacancy but don't entertain any hopes of getting my W/C with so many senior S/L's around.

Sat. June 3. - Well, we didn't do our accident ~~and~~ any good to day. This morning the Air Commodore was up & made the official presentation of the accident pennant which we have won four out of the five months this year & this afternoon we had a prang to chalk up no. 1. for this month. Wulfen II - W.1235 - old F. "Freddie" came in & made a terrible landing - he bounced high enough to clear the hangar the first time & I don't know how the W/C ever stood up to it. On the second bounce he decided to go around again so pulled on full throttle & proceeded to grab the wrong lever - opened his bomb doors instead of dumping his flaps. The bits wouldn't climb of course so he pulled up the W/C and made a crash landing in a near by farmer's field. Made the W/C a cat E but nobody was hurt fortunately.

Went down to Betty's tonight for a short while.

Sun. June 4. - Flew hard to day but got a shock when I found out we have to lose about 40 men to Base in the very near future - it is sure going to take everything we've got to keep going when we lose that many men.

Went down to Bally's tonight & cycled with her over to Sinnington where she is staying with friends
 Mon. June 5. Rip & I went down to Topcliffe to-day to discuss ways & means of exchanging these men & it is going to be very tough on me, I'm afraid. Got a tape-rec. record from Ruth to-day which I quietly played on the Mass. phonograph tonight. Not being sure what she would say, I played it very softly the first time but everything was O.K. so at last I played it through 3 or 4 more times. It is quite a good thing & very true to life tones.

Tues. June 6. - Everything was in a high state of excitement all day with the long awaited invasion starting last night. Bought a wireless set down to the office where we could follow the news broadcasts all day. Heard Gen. Eisenhower, Gen. Montgomery & the King all speak to-night & several very vivid first-hand accounts of the landings we made on the 4th beach coast between Cherbourg & Le Havre. 4000 ships & several thousand smaller boats used to ferry the troops & no less than 33,000 airmen over enemy territory today by plane. They sure don't fool these days. Things seem to be going quite well with an unexpected lack of resistance to the landings - got the Allies worried a little, I think - can't figure it out. Conquer

tomorrow should tell.

Wed. June 7, 1944 The news of the invasion to-day seems to be very limited - trying to keep the Japs guessing & guess. Anyway they sure are pouring in men & materials so I guess this is the real thing - we all thought that it would be one of these feints that Churchill was talking about. Went down to Bell's again tonight to get a real feed of fresh vegetable, eggs etc. - it sure is a good place for it.

Thur. June 8, 1944 Flying is going along very well & everyone seems quite happy with the way things have been going which at least means that I feel sure of myself now & have made a good job of opening up the outfit. We had had a lot of narrow squeaks but that is all behind us now.

Fri. June 9, 1944 Well, we had our first fatal prang last night in a long long time & our second so far this month. Nobody seems to know quite what happened & I guess they never will now since all the crew were killed. It was QY-A for Apple LW. 279 and what a crash! I went down to investigate it this morning & it sure was an awful mess. He had apparently spun in out of control on his way home from a security last

night & landed right smack in the middle of a farmer's field. It was one of those fields covered with a few inches of earth & a layer of hard rock underneath & he hit so hard it practically disintegrated the whole aircraft. All the engines were burst open like rose petals & it was hard to recognize anything - he sure must have been going fast when he hit. It would be a quick merciful death at any rate but it sure wasn't very nice to look at with bits of gore & bones scattered all over the wreckage - you would wonder how it was possible. They are holding an official investigation but I can tell them right now it won't do any good.

Sat. June 10, 1944. - Was very busy all day to-day & was all worn out tonight. I'm beginning to think it's time I had another day off. Betty was away visiting a friend tonight so didn't go down for our usual Sat. night feed.

Sun. June 11, 1944. - Things were terribly normal to-day & all went well. Went down to Betty's tonight & went on a nice long walk & they back for tea. She is going away to London for a week's holiday so I guess next week will be quiet for me. The invasion news is still good & the boys seem to be progressing famously altho

now the rumours are starting about the use of these new pilotless planes which is creating a little furor down in the South. It is quite interesting to note the various news broadcasts we listen to both from our side & from the Germans - they are claiming everything under the sun & apparently there is not much of London left whereas our B.B.C. calls them "nuisance" raids doing very little damage.

Mon. June 12. Well, I got some news to-day that doesn't make me feel very happy. This post I have been filling here has been increased to a $\frac{1}{2}$ vacancy & they are posting in a brand new spoz Canadian W/c to be under training under me for a while & then take over my place - what a break - the hard work is all done now & things are well organized & coasting smoothly along without much trouble so somebody else takes over. Everyone from the C/c down feels that it is sort of a dirty trick but on the other hand, I am so junior as a S/c that I couldn't expect much else. I don't mind not getting my W/c out of it so much as I do the fact that I'll have to leave here first.

as I was on easy street & beginning to really enjoy it - it is a swell station. As it stands now, I'm posted to No. 6 Exp. H. Q. & god knows what that means. I think I'll get after the G/C to see if he can't pull a few strings and get me back on to an operational squadron again - at least it is exciting.

Tues. June 13. - Got some gen. to-day about the trip where Ron Doubt went missing - the target was the railway yards at Louvain on May 12/13.

His pilot F/O Black & whole crew (8) were reported missing. 120 a/c were despatched, 98 attained the objective & 355 tons of H.E. were dropped.

The bulletin issued on May 14 states "Railway Centres - the position now is that since Bomber Command commenced operations on the transportation plan on Mar. 6/17, 38 attacks have been made on 27 different objectives, 7,000 sorties have been flown and 30,000 tons of H.E. have been dropped. Of the 27 objectives, 26 rly. centres have been sufficiently destroyed to be rated as not worth further attack by heavy bombers. Bomber Command has in fact completed the part of the plan (pre-invasion preparations) assigned to it." That's a good tribute to the lads who went missing on these

attacks anyway.

Wed. June 14 - Flying still going very well & we are really in good shape these days. Went down to Betty's tonight for a short time.

Thur. June 15 to Thur. June 22. Nothing very startling happened during this week. Flying still going splendidly with marvellous weather for a change. W/c Morten has arrived to take over my job here & will be w/c for awhile. I guess he will do all right after a bit but will take some getting up. The invasion is going pretty well these days with the Cherbourg peninsula cut off & a drive for that port under way now. We see fleets of Halifax & Lancaster going over almost every day, now on daylight ops & boy do they give them a fight in cover.

Fri. June 23. Well, we had our third prong of the month last night when T-Tommy - S.D. 106 ploughed into the top of a high hill about 20 miles north of here & right in the middle of the moors. The hill was 1490 ft. high & cloud base at 1500 & the pilot was letting down thru cloud in the dark to see where he was! - What a thing to do. Anyway w/c Morten & I drove up to find it - hunted all morning, had a bacon & egg dinner in a little

prob we found & then located the crash at 3.30 in the afternoon. It was spread over 1/2 a mile & was very badly broken up. The tail gunner got out uninjured & told the whole story, the flight engineer is still alive but just barely & they don't think he has much chance. The other six were killed.

Sat. June 24. - Had a lovely day to day with real sunshine for a change. Went down to Betty's tonight for a long walk & nice tea.

Sun. June 25. - Flying still way ahead of schedule & things are good. Went down to Betty's & went on another extra long walk this time & then had bacon & eggs for tea - I'm not doing too badly. However, I told her tonight I was posted & that wasn't so good - these goofy women cause me more trouble! This is worse than Drummondville.

Mon. June 26. - Rained steadily all day to day which shut off our flying. If things go well we should be able to shut down flying for the last three days this month.

Tues. June 27. Ripley & I have put in for leave starting July 1st - he's hoping we can get it OK - they are pretty sticky about it these days especially for ground crew. The weather was

very poor again to-day which makes the chances of our getting a station stand-down pretty slim. However, I got permission from the S/C to let the boys off when I see fit so I'm managing to wrangle a 48 for them by staggering their times off.

Wed. June 28. A few a little to-day but night flying was again scrubbed tonight due to the weather.

The weather has really been pretty terrible ever since the invasion started and it sure has interfered with things a lot. - especially in trying to provide adequate air cover for the boys over there. Went down to Betty's tonight for awhile.

This buzz-bomb or doodle-bug bombing they are getting down in the South of England seems to be getting pretty bad according to all the rumours we are hearing. Rip & I have decided that if we get our leave we will go down to London to see what it is all about & from there, are trying to arrange with Mrs. Harrower of York (Knights of Columbus) for a place to stay somewhere down south.

Thu. June 29. We are still disappointed with the weather since we were so far up on our flying schedule. However we did very well as far as this. Had another accident to-day when

a pilot was taxiing G. George (BB.217) along the perimeter track too fast. It got out of control & started to swing & with the port brake so hot, it caught fire & ploughed straight for flying control building. Then it veered slightly & hit a large brick garage just behind flying control building. It completely demolished the building but only did comparatively light damage to the a/c & made it a Cat. A.C.

Fri. June 30. Was very busy all day getting w/c Martin all genned up on what to do while I am away on leave. I suppose it will take a lot of sorting out to get things in shape again when I get back. I worked till late tonight finishing up the end of the month returns & left things in good shape.

Sat. July 1st. Got up early this morning & got a transport which we had previously arranged for to take us down to York to catch the London train. We have an address of a Mrs. Mackworth in a small town in Devonshire who is going to put us up for a week & we are to phone her from London. We caught the train ok. which was pretty crowded and had a very pleasant trip down arriving at Kings Cross station about 2.30. The train had just stopped & we were getting out

of the carriage when the first air-raid siren
went - more buzz-bombs. Nobody seemed to pay
much attention & went about their business normally
albeit quite a few people were seen to make
for the subways. Pip & I caught a cab to
the Strand-Palace hotel, booked a room, bathed
& changed & then went down for tea at 4.00 o'clock.
In the meantime there were about three more
alerts & four or five more bombs went off with
a dull crump somewhere in the city. We then
decided to go to a stage show & went to see
Phyllis Dixey in a good musical revue. There were
still air raids going on about every half hour.
When we came out we were standing talking to
the hat-check girl in the lobby. Phyllis Dixey, the
star, had appeared in a number of nude poses
& looked pretty good so we were asking if we
could get pictures of her to hang up in the
office's Mess Bar at Wombledon. She obliged too
& also gave us each an autographed photo - not
bad at all. At any rate, a buzz bomb suddenly
fell about 200 yards down the street just back
of Big Ben with quite a loud explosion & I
began to see the effect these things were having
on the morale of Londoners after 5 years of war
& passing through the previous Blitz. The hat check

girl was very nervous & grabbed hold of Pip with a real look of terror in her eyes. I guess it must be hard to take after so long & altho Jerry will never win the war with them. It appears that he is achieving something by diverting our heavy bombers to blasting the take-off installations in the Pas de Calais area instead of continuing on with the methodical bombing of German cities.

After the show we had dinner at the hotel and went out for a walk around town just before dark at 11.30 we went down to the Victoria embankment and stood near the Westminster bridge practically in the shadow of Big Ben & with Waterloo Bridge looming upon our left. The city noises had quieted down & we figured we could maybe see some of the buzz bombs. After about ten minutes an alarm went off and in another five minutes came the explosion. Then there were two or three others in quick succession & finally we heard one coming over very low. The motor has a peculiar throbbing sound which is unmistakable. It was a very low cloud base so we couldn't see anything but we could sure hear it. The motor got louder & louder until

it was directly overhead & then the motor cut out suddenly & there was a dead silence. This is the most uncomfortable time in the six seconds or so waiting ^{first} to hit. Suddenly there was a blinding flash right in front of us & a great explosion causing us both to duck to the pavement behind the nice thick embankment wall. It had hit a building just across the Thames from us & a great puff of smoke sailed upward & that was all - dead silence again. After this, we went back to the hotel & so to bed & slept soundly all night although there were nearly twenty raids during the night so they told us. We had quite a memorable Dominion Day celebration.

Sun. July 2nd. Just made it in time for breakfast this morning at 10.00 a.m. Then went for a walk down the Mall to Buckingham Palace & back to Hyde Park & thus back to Piccadilly by Park Lane. We decided to go to a cinema this afternoon so went into Lyon's famous Corner House for dinner. Here we met two girls who looked fairly respectable so took them to the Empire to see two girls & a sailor. I again used my Lion Squadron badge to get ahead of the queue & incidentally to get good seats.

I had arranged to go up to Bill Woodley's for tea so left Pip with the two girls & spent a pleasant hour at his flat with her and his wife. Then I came back to the hotel where Pip & I dug out the bottle of Whiskey we had been saving & had a few drinks with the girls - none of the bars had any hard stuff left by this time. The girls caught their subway home at 11.00 pm. so Pip & I went back, finished off the whiskey bottle & decided we would go up to Piccadilly circus & see for ourselves all these rumors we had heard out it being such a "red light" district we wanted to see for purely academic reasons of course. It was about midnight when we got there the ratio was about 4 American soldiers for every girl walking up & down. We stopped a couple of these "Chippies" & talked for a few minutes to enquire about prices £2/0/0 was the set rate & a special of £7/10/0 for the night if desired. They treat it all very matter of factly & strictly business. We decided that was too much & walked along a little further when a rather pretty girl was the centre of attraction of about a dozen American officers. Here they were bidding against one another & were up to about £5/6 when we

left. The MP's & ordinary police were walking up & down all the time in pairs but didn't stop any of the goings on until it got too disorderly. Next we caught up to a little blonde who wasn't more than 4'6" high & walked under my arm with half a foot to spare. She was so very tiny & cute too. We were kidding her about how she was able to cope & she said she seemed to do so since she had made £90 in the previous week. This shook me a little but nearly as much as when she asked if Rip & I wouldn't both come with her & we could take turns at £2/0/0 apiece. Needless to say, we declined (on the grounds that she was too little of course). That we found two more who had a different technique - they didn't have a flat or apartment but had a taxi arrangement. Of course we argued that there wasn't room in a taxi but they proceeded to explain how it could be done with all the grim details as well & were quite put out when we declined. In the meantime, buzz-bombs were coming over quite regularly & once more we had to hit the pavement when one fell a little too close for comfort. We saw this one too sailing along with a brilliant

white light coming from the exhausts.

Mon. July 3. We tore around this morning to the bank + RCAF HQ etc. + found that this place Ivybridge to which we were to go in Devon was in the banned area + it was illegal for us to go there. We phoned "6 Expt HQ etc. but they said no; we couldn't have permission to go down so close to the invasion beaches.

However, we decided we would go anyway + so rushed around + caught a taxi for Paddington station where we just got on a very crowded train bound for Bristol + Plymouth. We had to sit on our luggage out in the corridor all the way. We stopped for a while at Bristol + then got to Newton Abbot Devon - not far from Ivybridge + found we were already in the banned area + no one had stopped us yet. We put up at the Queen's Hotel there + I phoned to Mrs. Washford at Ivybridge who was already expecting us.

Tues. July 4. Missed the early morning train by a minute so got to Ivybridge at 2.30 pm having spent the morning shopping in Newton Abbot. There we caught a taxi + so out to Broom Hall which is a nice large roomy manor house just on the edge of Dartmoor + about 15 miles

from the famous old port of Plymouth. Admiral Mackworth (retired) lives very comfortably here & putters around doing gardening, looking after bees, hounds & horses etc. There is a splendid tennis court so it looks as if we are in for a well time.

They were both very friendly & made us feel right at home.

Wed. July 5. Played tennis most of the day - 5 sets in all & generally lazed around soaking up all available sunshine & having a good quiet time. Went over to a neighbouring pub to-night for a couple of drinks.

Thur. July 6. - Went for a great long walk up into the Moors this morning with the Admiral & then rested all afternoon with a set of tennis thrown in. The meals are marvellous with real butter & eggs & real Devonshire clotted cream & lots of honey & scones etc. This holiday will do me a lot of good.

Fri. July 7. Rip & my daughter Betty with a girl friend went riding this morning on the three available horses so I volunteered to stay home & read - feeling very lazy anyway. In the afternoon we had a few sets of tennis & then

got rained out. Pip & I have taken over the milking of the cow "Grace" every night since I found I could remember how to do it OK from the good old Alliston days.

Sat. July 8. Played tennis this morning & early afternoon & then Mrs. Mackworth and I went for a ride down to Ivybridge & back to do some shopping while Pip & the Admiral went for a walk. Tonight Pip & I went over to the Bullaven country club for a few drinks & had a nice quiet time.

Sun. July 9. Spent the morning polishing saddles etc. & also cutting up some lumber for the old boy on his power saw.

Down the road from the Admiral is another huge estate belonging to a man from Toronto of all places. He came over in the last war, married here & started a contracting business & made himself a pile of dough from the books of the place - the most luxurious home & estate that I've ever seen. Anyway we borrowed one of their horses & went for a swell long ride over the moors this afternoon galloping along for miles without a stop & it sure was a lot of fun. Tonight we went down to this Thout's Hobbs place

for dinner & had a real feed of chicken with all the trimmings. Then he showed us all around the estate complete with stables, kennels & foxhounds, greenhouses growing orchids & banana trees etc, swimming pool, summer house, gate house & all the rest of it. I succeeded in stuffing myself with nice prime raspberries, strawberries & red currants etc. much to their amusement & my enjoyment.

Tonight we packed & got all set to travel back in the morning & also phoned the B/C to tell him we would be a day late. Mon. July 10 - The wife of the Toronto man - I wish I could remember their names drove us down to the station & we caught the 8.00 o'clock train out after saying our good-byes to the Wackworths. Mrs. Wackworth said that the Admiral was 10 years younger from visit. I guess it must be pretty lonely for them with all their own kids away.

We got into London about 2.00 pm. & immediately started dodging more buzz-bombs - they seem to be getting worse. Anyway we went to the famous Windmill theatre & saw a good stage show & from there had a few drinks