

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

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

to find that the op was scrubbed due to weather, so this will give us a little breathing space to get settled again. In the meantime, the armament officer told me that V-Victa will have to be raised as soon as possible since the mines will become alive after 5 days. if we don't get them defused & anything might happen then. It is rather a ticklish job at the best so I had to lead a crew of volunteers out to get them started. We finally decided to chop holes through the bomb doors to reach the detonators & got things cleared up with no untoward happenings.

Sat. Oct. 27/44. Op came through at 11.000' clock this morning for take-off at 8.00 pm. tonight. We were all right for a/c for a change with 14 from 424 & 18 from 433 on the line so I got everything all organized early in the afternoon, came up to the billet & changed & then cycled the two miles into Hirsch to catch the 4.00 pm train for York. There I met Bill Boone who was still in bed in the Station Hotel & recovering from the party the boys at East Moor threw for him last night - apparently, it was quite a good one from the hangover he had. Anyway he was feeling pretty well by this time so we went down to dinner with his bride-to-be, bridesmaid & a few of the wedding party. We had a fairly quiet evening - a little bit of

a party but not too much & so to bed. I met a pretty cute little W.A.A.F. friend of Eunice Robinson so got along very well during the evening.

Sat. Oct. 28th. 1944. Set up bright & early this morning to get polished & brushed up & then met the gang again at breakfast. Bill & I got a taxi at 10.30 & arrived at the church - Clifton Parish Church in plenty of time. The wedding itself went off very nicely with not a hitch - I didn't even lose the ring - there was quite a crowd there & a lot of the gang from HQ & Group who I knew fairly well. After the wedding came the Reception at the Drury Restaurant where I acted as m.c. & also gave the toast to the bride & groom - this also went off much better than I expected due no doubt to a couple of good stiff whiskies I poured for myself before the proceedings started. We saw them off at the station afterwards & then the party broke up about 2.15. I saw my W.A.A.F. friend of last night - Moira Jewitt to where she was going & then left to myself, wandered around York to look at the old castle walls & fortified city wall which I have never had a chance to investigate before. Then I went through York Minster Cathedral which is a pretty marvellous place - much of it built in the 12th & 13th century - & it is still the most

Beautiful and outstanding building in York. Then I went to a cinema & from there back to the hotel for dinner where I fell in with an old Swiss bloke who is a member of the International Red Cross & had some been around & was very interesting to talk to. Then I caught the train back arriving back at Skipton at 11.00 pm.

Met Charly Seagar who gave me all the gen on what had been going on. The op last night was scrubbed again apparently just before take-off but they took off at noon to-day to bomb Cologne. Almost every bite was holed with flak & we got 3 Cat AC's out of it so I guess it was a pretty hot target. At 6.00 tonight we had seven bites on a gardening effort which didn't go so well since the other ac were just arriving back at the time of take-off & things got all balled up with bites landing & taking off all over the place, getting bogged here & there & generally disorganizing things. These ac were diverted too which didn't help things much.

Sun. Oct. 29. - Was very busy all day getting things in shape again & more or less licking our wounds. Ops come thru at noon for an early T.O. tomorrow. Bomb loads & patrol loads changed at 1715 hours so I worked until 11.30 pm. Tonight & have just come up from the flight now. Take off is at 8.00 so

that means me up at 7.00 so here goes for some sleep.

Mon. Oct. 30, 1944. Take off was put back this morning after I had already got up so it didn't do me much good. We got them all away - 16 from 424 & 18 from 433 with no non-starters or early returns. The target was Cologne & we had 10,600 lbs. of HE's up on each so I guess they gave it a good pranging. Unfortunately the weather closed in here before we got them back so they were all diverted down south.

Tues. Oct. 31. Spent all day getting the a/c back by ones & twos but there are still quite a few away tonight. Went up to Leaming tonight on an invitation to a WAAF Halloween dance from Moira Jewitt & had a very nice time - but quiet.

Wed. Nov. 1st. Well we are starting off on a new month so are going to try for a real clean sheet. Ops came thru this morning with 18 on for 424 & 20 from 433 - target Oberhausen. One guy made a false start & came all the way around the perimeter track with his brakes on to make a second attempt. The brake drums got red hot & both tyres went flat just as he was about to start so we had one non-starter in 433. However there were no early returns & 10,110 lbs. of bombs up

on each so we counted this as a fairly successful effort. We had one missing - K. of 424 (P/O Jacobs) unfortunately. These German targets are starting to get a little hotter these days so I guess we can expect more losses. We had our Halloween dance here tonight on the station so invited Moira down from Leving on a return engagement.

Mon. Nov. 2. No rest again to day & had bags of panic in getting 16 from 424 & 17 from 433 away on Dusseldorf with 10,110 lbs of bombs up. We seem to be getting along all right these days with no non-starters or early returns again. It seems that the oftener we fly these crates, the better they operate. We lost two tonight both from 424 P/O Bonar in "J. Johnny" & P/O King in "F. Freddy" but got some good news too when word came in that P/O ~~Jacobson~~^{King} his crew who went missing ~~last~~^{the} night were picked up ok when they baled out safely behind our lines. Poor old 424 however seem to be taking quite a beating & we only have 18 bites left in the squadron.

Tue. Nov 3. They fortunately gave us a rest to day & we sure needed it. However ops came through tonight for noon tomorrow so we worked most of the night to get ready for it. I seem to be missing an awful lot of sleep these nights.

Sat. Nov. 4. After postponing the op twice, we finally got them all away tonight at 5.00 o'clock 15 from 424 & 16 from 433 - no one started nor early returns which was a good thing. The target was Bochum & we had 11,150 lbs. of bombs up - it was very successful too. These targets sure are getting bad since we lost two again tonight - another from 424 - "Q" - Queenie (F/O Loving) & F-Freddie (433) - F/O Mountford, so that's 5 we have lost in 3 ops so far this month. F/O Wood - the Flying leader of 424 was lucky in that this morning he found he had an infection in his arm which had come up over night & the M.O. wouldn't let him fly tonight. They exchanged him at the last minute for a spare in "Q" which of course went missing. He feels pretty badly about it too since Loving only had 4 more trips to do in his second tour & was a pretty good guy.

This morning at 1.30 a.m. we got word we had to refuel all the bikes & measure the petrol left in the tanks after the op for the SASO - A/c Rouquier & he wanted it by 9.00 a.m. so we had to root everybody out of bed for this job & work them all night - as if we didn't have to work hard enough as it is to do the regular ops without dizzy things like this. I finally got up

to the bellat about 3.00 & was quite disgusted with things in general. especially so since my batman went away on a "48" last Friday & hasn't showed up since - it is now 9 days - during which time there has been no bed made, no water hot or cold, no fire laid & no way to make one & it's damn cold these days too - what a life!

Sun. Nov. 5: Had a stand down to-day but as usual ops came through about 3.00 o'clock to say we were on again at 6.00 am. in the morning so here we go working all night again. They sure are keeping up the pace & I don't know who is going to last out the longest - Jerry or us. However, I suppose they have to take advantage of every scrap of good weather they get these days since it is pretty horrible on the whole with terrific winds & driving rain - bitterly cold too.

Mon. Nov. 6. - Well the op was scrubbed again this morning as we more or less expected so we stood by all day waiting for something to come through. However, nothing did & we had howling winds & bitter cold all day to put up with. Am spending a quiet evening tonight after a cinema - darnin' socks, writing letters & trying to keep the blasted fire going.

Tues. Nov. 7, 1944: Well ops came through early this morning with take-off at 11.30 - 14 from 424 + 18 from 433 on the oil refinery at Selmsbierken - not far from Essen. We had 6950 lbs of incendiaries up & apparently the boys did a good job - all the way we had two early returns in 424 Spide & two of them deviated away & badly shot up with flak. - one M.V. gunner wounded. 424 are down to 15 planes on the station in spite of a brand new one which arrived to-day for them.

Wed. Nov. 8, 1944. - Not all set for a gardening day to-day but had it scrubbed on us again. This is getting to be a very discouraging business again to put it mildly. The weather has turned very cold but clear which is something & reminds me very much of those clear cold rugby days at home. I guess the weather must be bluff over on the other side to keep us grounded so much. The Canadians have now cleared the Scheldt estuary & Walcheren island so we now have access to the great port of Antwerp & now all we have to do is wait for the preparations to be made for this last (we hope) all-out offensive which appears to be almost at hand. There should be a lot of fireworks when the whole front starts to move.

Thurs. Nov. 9, 1944 - Got all bombed up again to-day with 16 bites from 424 + 20 from 433 but of course it had to be scrubbed again - what a life - it is the most aggravating business we ever had to deal with + everyone's nerves got on edge so that everyone seems to walk around with a chip on his shoulder all the time - all except me of course - thank goodness I take after Mother in that respect. We had a big party tonight at which everyone tried + most succeeded in drowning their sorrows so at least that's one way of releasing the strain.

Fri. Nov. 10, 1944. We de-bombed most of the bites to-day to do some practice flying + then had to work most of the night getting them bombed and fueled up again in preparation for a nice all-out - "Armistice Day" effort tomorrow.

Sat. Nov. 11, 1944. The big do was scrubbed this morning to everyone's great disappointment but we got six bites away from 433 Spahn on a "gardening" effort on a "vegetable" patch near Oslo Sweden. There was a sudden flurry tonight when warning came through of an expected diversion of between 30 + 40 Lancasters to land here but apparently they made their own base since none arrived here. It was a good thing to sense

The ground crew sqts. Men were having a big party & it would have been quite a job getting enough men together. As it was, I had to go down & take interrogation myself since Charlie Seager got so tight he couldn't see & then went back up to the party & stayed till 2:00 a.m. singing all the songs we could think of - they were still going strong when I left.

Sun. Nov. 12. Got up about 10:00 a.m. to-day but nothing exciting was doing due to bad weather. Seager felt so bad at noon to-day, he had a few beers at noon & stayed tight for the rest of the day and night - I don't know how he does it.

Ops came through at 6:00 o'clock tonight for 16 from each squadron early in the morning.

However they scrubbed it around midnight after an American Army tactics conference - I guess we were going to support their new push which they are starting near Metz.

The rest of the front is very quiet these days as Montgomery marshals his forces for this last do-or-die push which appears to be imminent.

Mon. Nov 13. More training to-day & a further bombing up tonight just in case we are out tomorrow.

Tues. Nov 14. Rained all day & things are very quiet. Took the opportunity to gather about 150 of my

Daily Servicing Squadron boys together and give them a great old pep-talk on the alarming incidence of V.D. Called on the M.O. to supply all the gruesome details & generally tried to scare a lot of them since it seems to be about the only way of checking the spread of these terrible diseases. It sure is a bad situation & getting worse all the time.

Tue. Nov. 15, 1944 - Last night I was awakened up at 2:30 a.m. by ops ringing me on the telephone in my room, to say that we were on again at 10:30 in the morning. Consequently I had to get busy & get all the boys out to get cracking & get things organized. We got 15 a/c away from each squadron the target was Juelich just ahead of the American spearhead points on the long awaited all-out offensive which started to-day. Something like 3000 heavy bombers were out plus over 3000 fighters so it looks like things are really beginning to happen. The news of the offensive hasn't broken through to the public yet but I guess tomorrow's papers will have lots of headlines about the start of the Battle of Germany.

Ops just rang through again on my phone now at midnight to say we are on again at 9 a.m. in the morning so here I go again.

Thu. Nov. 16, 1944 Worked all night last night until 5.00 a.m. this morning when I came up to get a couple of hours sleep before take-off at 8.00 o'clock. However at 7.00 am. my controller phoned to say that the op had been scrubbed so I rolled over & slept soundly till noon. This afternoon I went for my first aeroplane ride in over two months with W/C Marshall in R/O Roger of 424 Sqdn. We went on a very pleasant cross-country & practice mining trip at about 12000 ft. - over to Ireland - crossing the Irish sea in about 15 minutes which is hard to imagine from the ground but at 12000 ft you can see England, Ireland & Scotland all at once. We went on then over Bangor & Belfast where I was able to pick out familiar land marks & so on up to the Northern tip. From there we hit over to the rocky crags & highlands of Northern Scotland - land a few practice mines in difficult bays & lochs etc & thence down into England again. The whole trip only took 3 hrs but we sure saw a lot of territory at 200 mph.

Fri. Nov. 17, 1944. Worked most of last night getting the sites ready for take-off at noon to-day

It was one of these troublesome double-barreled efforts with some pits on bombing as well as mining making different petrol loads, bomb loads & take off times. However the mining was finally scrubbed so we got 15 from 424 & 15 from 433 away successfully on bombing with Munster as a target & a nice load of 16 - 500 pounder H.E.'s on board. We had no non-starters, no early returns & none missing so it was considered a very successful attack.

Sat. Nov. 18, 1944. - More or less stand-down to-day which I spent mostly phoning all over England trying to get our diverted a/c back to base again. Weather however, stopped most of them from making it.

Sun. Nov. 19. - got 6 from 424 & 7 from 433 ready to go to-day - (the only pits left on the station) however it was finally scrubbed.

Mon. Nov. 20 - a few more back to-day & had 10 from 424 & 10 from 433 on for 1930 hrs. take-off - scrubbed.

Tues. Nov. 21. Most of the a/c arrived back this morning so we got 7 from 424 ready for a mining effort near Oslo, 9 from 424 on bombing and 17 from 433 on bombing - target Castrop - Rauxel in aid of the American Army offensive on that front - 16 - 500 pound H.E.'s too which do a lot of damage. No non-starters or early returns but two 433 pits missing. Didn't know the crews so didn't affect me which at the

stage of the game & proceeded to get two new a/c out of storage as replacements.

Wed. Nov. 22. - Got 16 from each squadron ready to go again to-day but finally scrubbed.

Thur. Nov. 23. Got 14 from 424 & 12 from 433 on bombing & 8 from 424 & 433 combined on mining but operation scrubbed again - what a life!

Fri. Nov. 24. Same effort as yesterday prepared again but bombing scrubbed. However mining kits took off to the Kattegat & we had a non-start when a W/AG cracked his head open on an escape hatch in climbing into the aircraft. a/c diverted to Venloss but all back safely - we were the only station in Bomber Command operating tonight on a very special target & with very bad weather conditions so we were all glad to hear they got back safe and sound.

Sat. Nov. 25. Everyone is about ready to drop after this strenuous week so we fortunately got a stand-down tonight - the first in 7 days & I went up to Leamington to a dance with Moira Jewitt - had a very nice but quiet time.

Sun. Nov. 26. - Got 14 from 424 & 12 from 433 ready to-day but scrubbed due to foggy weather. It snowed to-day for the first time this year & turned bitterly cold & started to freeze. As there was an op warning through for the morning, I had to get the boys out

at 11.00 pm. I worked through the night with them getting the snow & ice off the mainplanes
 Nov. 27
 we had 9 from 424 + 16 from 433 on bombing target
 Nauss with a good incendiary load up as well as
 9-424 spent time on mining this special target in
 the Kattegat. The runways + perimeter track were
 all freezing + we finally got them all away
 after a lot of trouble - one flat tyre + had to
 use a spare etc. + a few shaky take-offs however
 we got them all away OK with no early returns +
 none missing although it was so foggy we
 couldn't land any of the bikes back here + had to
 divert them all.

Nov. 28. Spent all day getting the diverted ac
 back + sorting out personnel problems with the 200
 odd new Canadian men posted over to me + a lot of
 my experienced men getting repatriated - the lucky
 fellows. Went up flying today in R. Roger of 424
 to try out our new smoke bomb for formation flying
 it worked well so we ended up trying to do
 sky-writing with it - more darned fun.

The old allied offensive seems to be getting
 bogged down due to the mud + rain again what a
 country they picked to fight a war in. Wish
 they'd get cracking soon.

Wed. Nov. 29, 1944. Well, we got word of an op to-day but it was scrubbed almost before we got started so we took advantage of the day to try and get things in good shape again. Had to work the boys most of the night to get prepared for a take-off tomorrow morning at 0900 hrs.

Thur. Nov. 30, 1944 Take off was put back this morning until 1620 hrs. & we got 18 away from cool squadron without too much trouble. The target was good old Duisberg again & we had only one early return to end off a splendid month with only 6 op. failures among both squadrons & with nearly 300 trips packed in. We should rank pretty well up with the leaders this month. Didn't get to bed again until 200 a.m. after interrogation. Had to check all bomb doors in the squadron to see if we were responsible for a 500 pounder falling out & pronging a little village near Leeming. However it wasn't us altho we did have one bite which had a runaway engine which resulted in a whole prop and reduction gear flying off near York - some farmer will be surprised to see it sticking up in his garden or something tomorrow morning.

Fri. Dec. 1. - Had a little respite to-day which was a good thing so I slept in until noon for a change.

Sat. Dec. 2. - Got twelve off in each squadron to-day with 5 tons of H.E.'s on board each bite & bound for the town of Hagen (railway centre) west of Essen. We had two early returns due to bad icing weather - one of them was Don Ross - one of my old classmates at Riverdale who just arrived on 424 Squadron recently. We also lost one bite - C. Charlie of 433 - P/L Cook & crew

Sun. Dec. 3. To-day was a horrible rain sleet & fog day with everyone wet & cold & not in the best of spirits.

Mon. Dec. 4. Got twelve away to-day from each squadron with a mixed H.E. & incendiary load up. The target was Karlsruhe so we sure are hitting the railway centres these days - I guess the Allied pressure is building up & they are expecting a breakthrough any day now. We had one early return due to a stiff C.S.V. worse luck.

Tues. Dec. 5. Got to bed about 2.30 a.m. & got up early to get ready for another "do" to-day. 14 from 424 & 13 from 433 on Soest with a 5 ton H.E. load up. They all got away ok. with no non-starts, early returns or missing bites - in other words a perfect

effort. Got to bed about 3.00 a.m.

Wed. Dec. 6. Another op away to day - we
seem are putting on the pressure these days.

13 from 424 + 12 from 433, on Osnabruck near Munster.

We had two early returns due mainly to icing
weather again & lost one bite - D of 424 Jdn -
1/2 M. Calbough & crew. We had a very exciting
time getting them all away since one bite got
a bad mag drop while another got a flat tyre
on the perimeter track just leaving up to take
off - however we finally managed it after a
mad panic with the last guy taking off
7 minutes after the last take-off time. However
there were a few corners to cut so he made it
ok.

Thu. Dec. 7. Well, we got a much needed stand-down
to-day & everyone made the most of it to get caught up
in some of the office paper work.

Fri. Dec. 8. More dull weather to day with snow & slush
outside. Very miserable & cold all day.

Sat. Dec. 9. Had the crews out most of the night
keeping the mainplanes clear of snow & then had
further panic this morning but cleared with a
heavy deposit of low frost. We got 14 from 424
& 13 from 433 all ready to go to day but scrubbed
at the last minute due to weather.

Sun. Dec. 10. - Nothing doing to-day except bags of practice flying.

Mon. Dec. 11. - Old Charley Seager got a cable from his old home girl friend to say she was in England - just back from Italy where she has been for the past year and a half as a nurse - boy is he lucky - packed off on leave to-day.

Got 17 from 424 & 13 from 433 ready for ops again to-day after two complete changes of bomb & petrol loads & then finally scrubbed again.

Tues Dec. 12. - Nothing doing to-day due to more horrible weather.

Wed Dec. 13. - Got 21 from 424 & 17 from 433 ready to-day & finally scrubbed. Went down to #6 Sq. HQ. to-day to an engineering conference & then we all got together later at the old pub at Stavely & had a few beers & a nice dinner. Very nice to meet all the old gang again. Came home about midnight in pouring rain.

Thur. Dec. 14. 21 from 424 & 18 from 433 on again & again scrubbed about 10 minutes before take-off - this business is getting beyond a joke since it is every bit as hard for us to get the kits ready for a scrub as for an op that really gets away.

Fri. Dec. 15. - Again 21 from 424 & 16 from 433 & again a scrub - most discouraging.

Sat. Dec. 16. After all these scrubs I decided to take a little jaunt up to Wombledon to get some gen on the Lancasters they have there since we will be getting them here very soon & understand there seems to be big moves afoot to get us on to Lone III's with good old Merlins again & then the gen is that 63 Base will move out complete to the far east with the as yet secret Lincoln 'a/c' which is just a bigger & better Lancaster. So Tahiti here we come as soon as things topw off over here. The only thing is Jerry has now started a big counter-offensive which looks pretty strong - I hope it is just a dying kick but "hau me doota". Anyway, off I went to Wombledon with the added attraction that Betty was home at ~~the~~ Rose Cottage on leave from the A.T.S. As it happened the op carried through to-day without me there - it never fails to happen & after 5 scrubs in a row too.

Had a very nice ride up the thirty or so miles to Wombledon on my motor-bike & then spent a swell evening with the Dumbys (and Betty of course)

Sun Dec. 17. Came home this morning after having to get a new rear tyre & tube for my motorcycle at Wombledon & then came down in a pouring rain & got soaked through & through. It seems that there was a lot of pilot trouble last night causing an early return in each squadron due to false starts & oiling up of plugs. However, there were 20 from 424 & 15 from 433 on the target - good old Duisberg again which is the railway concentration point for the Jerry counter attack. We had a nice load up of 1x2000, 6x1000 & 2x500 lb H.E.'s. Went to a party tonight given by my Radar Mechs. & danced all evening with a cute WRAF driver on the station here who I hadn't noticed before but she's not bad at all!!

Mon Dec. 18. Another op for to-day but most of the bikes are still diverted so it was only 6 from 424 & 5 from 433 - finally scrubbed anyway.

Tues Dec. 19. Heaviest fog out to-day I've ever seen over here bar the one I encountered the first night I went to London. Anyway it was really heavy & persisted solid all day in spite of the fact that we had an op laid on for this afternoon with 18 from 424 & 14 from 433 made all serviceable and ready to go. - Scrubbed of course. Spent a quiet evening tonight writing letters etc.

Wed. Dec. 20. - Nothing very much doing to-day - still a heavy fog out as yesterday. Went up to Leamong this afternoon for a conference with w/c King about personnel etc & also to get the S.T.I.s & modifications tied down properly.

Thur. Dec. 21. A small mining do laid on for a late take-off tonight so all we engineers & electrical officers went into the Golden Fleece pub at Thirk for a pre-Christmas chicken dinner & a few beers. We had a very good time while I left Charley Sager in charge to look after the take-off. We had one non-starter due to a plugged up restrictor valve on a hydraulic line and two early returns out of six bites so it was a very poor showing.

Fri. Dec. 22. More bad weather to-day - no flying at all. In the meantime this German break through of our lines has got everyone on edge since they sure seem to be beating us back quickly & have gained as much in the last three days as we accomplished in the last three months. If we could only get some decent weather I know we could help the boys a lot.

Sat. Dec. 23. - Well here I am - twenty-six to-day & I'm sure not getting any younger. It makes me boil to think of this damned war interfering so greatly with all my plans & ambitions. I just

for a promising career after I left college. Three years is a big hunk of wasted time out of anybody's life and sure doesn't make me any happier. We had a very quiet day & I came up early tonight saving my celebrations for Christmas. Sun. Dec. 24. As luck would have it we operated to-day on a mining do. The aircraft had to take off in a very thick fog & it was quite a shaky do. However there were six on & they all made it ok. The landing area was near Oslo again. The weather was too poor for the a/c to land back here so it was a tough break for the boys missing their Christmas at the station here. We had a real old binge tonight & I wasn't doing too badly by the end of the evening.

Mon. Dec. 25. When word came through that there were no ops this morning, I gave all my boys a stand-down & then gave myself a Christmas present & slept in until noon. Piped knock running all afternoon & lost 10 shillings, had a few drinks & then went in to a nice turkey dinner with all the trimmings including plum pudding with rum sauce. It was very good too although not quite the same as being able to carve off as much turkey for myself as I wanted. At night we proceeded to have another big party in our new bar, then the

4/8 I went down to visit the Sgt. Mess & from there to a dance being held in the NAAFI. from there I staggered home to bed.

Thurs Dec. 26. Woke up this morning with no hangover which surprised me & at 10 o'clock they came through with a surprise op. take off at 12.10 there was great panic with all the ice & snow to come off mainplanes, a/c to be D.T'd, bombing up & fueling up to be done & all the M.T. vehicles etc because of the very cold, frosty morning & none of them would start. Anyway, everyone worked like mad & with 16 up on from each squadron things looked pretty bad at about 1230 and no hits had taken off. With 40 minutes left to go we got 31 a/c away & would have got the last one away too only through a little pilot trouble. As it was he was just one minute too late for last take-off time & they wouldn't let him go. However it was a great effort all around - as it was, we beat coming by two when they only got 29 away. The target was St. Vith right at the spearhead of the German offensive & apparently it was a pretty good prang. since this is the only part of the line holding out against the Jerry attack.

Wed. Dec. 27. All the a/c were diverted after yesterday's target so we were busy getting them back to base.

Had a quick op come thru this morning with 8 kites on but it was scrubbed later. Now it is 1.00 a.m. & we have been working all evening to get 9 kites from each squadron ready for ops with take off about an hour from now. The weather is nice for a change with a full moon so things should go ok. I hope.

Thur. Dec. 28. The op last night finally got away at 3.00 a.m. & we managed it ok with no non-starters or early returns. However, there was a little excitement since when I left the control tower at 4.00 a.m. I heard that there had been a crash on take-off at Leeming & the kite was burning fiercely near the village of Leeming Bar with a full load of bombs on board about 10 miles from here. When I came up to the billet I climbed a steps hill back of the quarters here to have a look around & see if I could see the fire but couldn't see a thing. I came in & started to get undressed when the first two 1000 pounders went up with a terrific concussion even tho far away. I went out again & could see it really burning fiercely this time when suddenly 3 more 1000 pounders went up with a terrific flash & flame shooting hundreds of feet up in the air. After that things quieted down considerably & I went to sleep.

About 8:00 am. (after 3 hours sleep) I was awakened by an air raid alarm with a few buzz bombs passing near here. At 9:00 am. our bites came back from the target Opladen a railway junction suburb of Cologne - it was a good prang apparently with a nice load of 9x1000 & 4x500. At 10 o'clock word came thru of our next op so I gave up trying to get some sleep & got up. Incidentally, all day long there were bombs going off over at Leining since they were setting off the unsafe ones as they got them dug out of the wreckage. The crew got out ok by the way & there were no casualties. Just at dusk we got 4 bites away on a mining operation to Oslo Fjord & they all got back ok. near midnight. Another op warning came thru in the meantime for early tomorrow & I'm working the crews all night again tonight to get 10 bites ready from each squadron. We sure are blitzing them heavily these days.

Fri. Dec. 29. - The op for early this morning was scrubbed on account of weather but at 3:30 we got another away - 14 from 424 & 11 from 433 on Oberlar another suburb south of Cologne & also 3 mining bites on Oslo Fjord again. They all got away & back safely at 11:00 o'clock tonight & they had just got back when a warning came

through for an all out effort tomorrow. Again I have to get the crews out to work all night & most of us are just about on our last legs.

Sat. Dec. 30. After 3 exchanges of bomb loads & fuel load, just to make things difficult we got 15 away from 424 & 13 from 433 at 1730 hrs tonight. At an hour before take-off old N-Nan of 433 was taxiing down the perimeter track from practice flying when a tyre burst & it swung badly to the left & fully bombed up a/c. It looked dangerous for a moment but the pilot poured full throttle to one side & it straightened out & then ground looped twisting off the stub. We let it down on its belly. It didn't interfere with the take-off though so it didn't matter too much.

Sun. Dec. 31 New Year's Eve doesn't seem to make much difference to the Air Force since we were hard at work all day & sent three a/c off from each squadron on a mining "do" up near Oslo again. These mining or gardening efforts are very important since they have to be laid very accurately & usually in the face of heavy flak & night-fighters. We have sunk innumerable troop transports etc & caused terrific damage to shipping with them & have prevented any large scale withdrawal of troops

from Norway so they really are just as important or more so than the bombing trips even if not quite so spectacular. We got them off all ok & expected them back about midnight which sort of dampened things in the way of celebration since most of us had to stay sober for interrogation. However I went to the safe mess dance & had a good but quiet time. All the kites got back safely too. I wonder how the folks at home were faring tonight - probably a party at the Mays again as per usual.

Mon. Jan. 1, 1945. Well the beginning of another year - I wonder where I'll be next year at this time. Weather was dull to-day so things were rather quiet with no ops. on & most of the beer & spirits gone from the bar too.

Tues. Jan. 2, 1945. - Our first op of the new year was a great success with 16 from 424 & 13 from 433 on Ludwigshaven as a target with a nice bomb load of 16 x 500 pounder H.E.'s - All got off ok. with no non-starts or early returns.

Wed. Jan. 3, 1945. Got everything ready to-day for 8 kites from each span. on but was late scrubbed. We stood down both A flights to-day to get under way with replacing our Halifaxes with

London I & W's & it's going to be quite a major job but after we do convert we sure will be able to carry some hefty bomb loads.

Thur. Jan. 4. Got packed tonight in preparation for a long awaited leave starting tomorrow. I figure it is a good time to take it with the reduced scale of operations during our converting. No ops to day to to wet rainy weather.

Fri. Jan. 5. Got away this afternoon & caught the 5.20 train for York after getting things organized for an operation on Hanover with 8 a/c from each sqdn. At the Station Hotel in York I met Bill Boone & his wife Eunice & also Moira of course where we had dinner & then went to the de Bray ball room to dance. Had a swell time for my first night of leave.

Sat. Jan. 6. Got up early & had tea in Bill's room with the two girls, then a late breakfast & took a few snapshots out in the hotel grounds. After lunch we took in a movie - had another nice dinner with Champagne as an added attraction & then saw them all off on their respective trains. After that I went for a walk & got to bed early.

Sun. Jan 7. Slept till noon, got up for lunch & then walked all around the old Roman walls which surrounded the ancient city of York. Also investigated the old part of town with the very narrow twisted streets & the old fashioned houses which haven't changed much in the past 500 years. Took a few pictures & visited the very old St. Mary's Abbey ruins (around 1000 AD). Had a late dinner at the hotel & then visited a favourite pub where I met a few old friends for a few beers & then finished off a very pleasant day.

Mon. Jan. 8. Slept ^{almost} till noon again & then caught noon train for Nottingham where w/c Clyde Marshall & I had booked rooms together to spend a few days of our leave there. We stayed at the Victoria Station Hotel & I met him there at about 5.30 this evening. Found our way down to the famous Black Boy Hotel for a few drinks before dinner & got all the information about good places to go & things to do from a few Americans we met there. We pub-crawled from there to a big dance hall called the Palais de Danse. Had a pretty fair time & looked over all the pretty girls - which there were in large numbers & outnumbering the boys about two to one. It's also

quite exciting when they hold tag dances since
 over here the girls do the tagging - more dangerous!
 Went back to the hotel for a few beers & so to bed.
Tues. Jan. 9. Slept right through until noon & then
 after dinner, went to a cinema - Black Boy
 Hotel for dinner & pub - crawled to the dance
 again by a different route this time. Danced
 all evening & then walked two girls to the sleep-
 station where they had to catch a train at
 midnight.

Wed. Jan. 10. Got up for breakfast this morning
 for a change & started off to visit Nottingham
 castle of Robin Hood fame - Sherwood Forest
 is just on the outskirts of the city. The castle
 was very interesting & many remains of the
 old original castle, moat & walls etc still
 remained. Took a few pictures & then visited
 what is supposed to be the oldest pub in
 England - called - "A Trip to Jerusalem" founded
 & run ever since 1189 & at which the old
 Crusaders used to stop & drink on their way to
 the Crusades. It sure looks the part too & is
 carved out of the solid rock under the castle
 with a very old wooden frame front to it. Inside,
 the walls are of stone with old flagstone flooring
 & braced with old blackened oak beams which I

had to duck every time I passed since they were
so loco. After dinner, we went to see the R.C.N.V.R.
show "Meet the Navy" which happened to be obving
at one of the theatres & it was very good too.
After that, we met Al McDonald & Keith King -
two of the Wings' crew at the hotel. Finished off
half a bottle of whiskey & then went to a little club
called the Beaufort club which the Americans told
us about. There we got a real steak dinner -
my first in over two years & boy did I enjoy it.
From there we went to the Black Boy & thence to
the dance again. Got tangled up with a married
woman this time who had to leave me early to
go & meet her husband! of all things.

Thur. Jan. 11. - Got up at noon & after dinner went to
see Pearle's Bucks' "Dragon Seed" with Katherine Hepburn.
Ended up at another dance this time - the Victoria Ball
Room where I met a cute little gal - Babs Collier &
then took her home.

Fri Jan 12. Left the other boys & caught the 1.00 o'clock
train to Leeds where I booked in at the swanky
Queen's Hotel after a cold uncomfortable train ride.
First thing I did was have a nice hot bath & then
a sleep. Blew myself to a 135 dinner & sat
around quietly at night to catch up on a few
letters. Also phoned Mrs. Asford - Mrs. May's sister.

Nancy & got myself invited out tomorrow afternoon.

Sat. Jan. 13. - 13 is still my lucky number - Slept till noon & then after lunch went out to Mrs. Ashfords & met them all including daughter, daughter-in-law & two grand-children. After tea & a nice homey visit, went over to the Sandwood Golf Club at night to a nice dinner & party after & had a very satisfactory time.

Sun. Jan. 14. - Slept till noon again after having breakfast in bed. Went out to the Ashfords again in the afternoon for tea & bridge & had a great time. They want me to come back again for a visit any time which I think I'll take advantage of.

Mon. Jan. 15. Caught noon train for Skipton & arrived back down at the office after getting my Adj. to drive down & pick me up. Got all genned up on what has been happening while I was away & apparently it is plenty since half our Habis have been sent off & we have about 20 lanes now on the conversion scheme. Ops went fairly well. On Jan. 5, the day I left, the 15 Habis got away ok to Hanover & gave it a good going over apparently with one early return on 433 due to coming on the S.O. On Jan. 6, they got 8 from 424 & 7 from 433 away on Hanover with no

non starts or early returns. There was nothing then
until Jan. 12 when 5 from each sqdn. were put up on
bombing & 3 from each on mining. The bombing
was finally scrubbed but the gardening effort got
off ok. with no non-starts or early returns ^{on Hönning station} & However
424 had some bad luck & 2 of their 3 belts didn't come
back including P/Lt Mackie one of my good friends here
- and he only had two more trips to do here ^{unfortunately}
On Jan. 13, there were 6 from 424 & 5 from 433 on bombing ^{Saarbrücken}
& 2 from 424 & 3 from 433 on mining. However,
this time the mining effort was scrubbed & the
bombers gave Saarbrücken a good posting with no
non-starts or early returns. On Jan. 14, there were
6 from each sqdn. on bombing at Brevenbroich &
2 from 424 & 3 from 433 on mining at Oslo. we had
one non-starter in 433 due to a cliff mag & that
all the ops while I was away - plenty at that.
Tues. Jan. 16. We had a new G/C posted in while I was
away & while I was sorry to see old G/C Kern go, the
new G/C Rutledge seems like a good type too. Spent
all day trying to get things sorted out with the
new lance arriving & at the same time getting
5 from 424 & 3 from 433 away on bombing to Magdeburg
& 2 from 424 with 4 from 433 on mining near Oslo.
They all got away fortunately with no non-starts
or early returns.

Wed. Jan. 17, 1945 - No ops on to-day so took the opportunity to catch up on some of the work which piled up while I was away.

Thur. Jan. 18, 1945 Got a whole of a snowstorm to day which sure caused lots of trouble with extra men out cleaning runways & getting it off the piles. Started in with a real drive to get our Lances as operationally fit as possible & at the same time try to get all the possible training time in so as to have the crews converted as soon as possible. W/c Williams got post today to take some dual time with W/c Marshall who only has 4 more trips to do to finish his tour.

Fri. Jan. 19, Got 8 Holo ready from each squad for bombing but it was scrubbed at the last minute due to diff weather - more snow - It's beginning to look like home around here now.

Sat. Jan. 20. Stood by for the op all day but they still couldn't go. Found out to day the Lances have to be fully modified & operational by a week tomorrow so it's going to make a lot of hard work next week. We had lots of excitement on the camp tonight when a terrific gale broke loose with wind quite up to 80 mph. We were all out all night trying to hold it all down

in spite of it all two of them rolled around a bit but luckily no damage was done. It is the first time I've ever seen a Heli moved by the wind. At the same time 3 German prisoners escaped from a camp near here & we were warned that they were making for our aerodrome to steal on a/c if possible. There sure was lots of excitement & everyone had their guns out with them. ~~Other~~ Furthermore, the wind blew some power lines down & the whole camp was in darkness, the water pipes were all frozen so there was no water & the coal deliveries were not able to get through so we had no fires. It was sure pretty grim.

Sun. Jan. 21, 1944. I guess the wind & cold was too much for the Germans since they gave themselves up to our service police. I caught a glimpse of them being herded into the prison Black Maria & they were pretty young but decent looking blokes. To-day we borrowed an Oxford from Laming to help out in ferrying our transferred Heli's around. However, it ran off the runway & went over on its nose - it sure did look funny but is going to be quite a job to fix up. One of our lanes had two engine failures down south yesterday & had to make an emergency forced landing down at an American

aerodrome at Harrington near Northampton. I flew down in ^{our own} the Oxford for a conference as to how best to get it fixed up & to look things over. We had an interesting flight down but coming home it was just at dusk & a heavy ground mist rolled in. I was trying to map read without much success due to the poor vis. & we soon got ourselves pretty well lost & running low of petrol too. It was pretty exciting for a while but we finally reached an aerodrome which we recognized from about 100 ft. altitude & got back to our own station safer & sound & about $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour over due.

In the meantime, the ops planned for to-day with 8 from each group made ready was finally scrubbed.
 Mon. Jan. 22. More snow etc. to-day & it sure is cold. The coal, lights & water are still very erratic & living & sanitation conditions are pretty horrible. However I guess we will survive.

Tues. Jan. 23. Well, the Russians are really going to down with their all-out offensive for Berlin & are advancing rapidly through the broken German lines. The news looks almost too good to be true & I sure wish the weather would clear enough so we could get airborne & give them a helping hand.

Wed. Jan. 24. I seem to have broken out in a few spots on my face with impetigo & have been dosing it regularly with a concoction of the new drug penicillin & sulphamylamide jelly. It sure is wonderful stuff & it looks like I just caught it in time to keep it from spreading. It would be a shame to have to cut off my new moustache which I just started to grow on the 21st. - just to see if it could be done!

Thur. Jan. 25. Going all out to get the bites operating & I think we can just make it. Got routed out of bed tonight by flying control who had a plane sailing around trying to make a landing but unable to get his flaps down & wanted to know what to do. I sent him to the cross dome at Carnaby where they have terrific long runways & I hear he got down safer sound. Never a dull moment around here.

Fri. Jan. 26. Things were still quiet here to-day with bitterly cold fog all day. It doesn't seem to be stopping the Russians at all since they are still advancing pretty quickly.

Sat. Jan. 27. Got 8 from 424 & 6 from 433 ready to go on ops to-day but later scrubbed again due to weather. We sure aren't doing very well with complete ops this month although the

now starts & early returns have been good so far with none in 424 & only 2 in 433.

Sun. Jan. 28. Well, we had quite an exciting day (and tragic too) as seems to happen quite frequently on Sundays. We got 8 a/c from 424 & 6 from 433 all ready to go on an op to Stuttgart. The bomb load 1-2000 pounder plus 12-500lb. clusters of incendiaries - 10% of these being the explosive type. Everything was shaping up well just before take off at 7.15 pm. & all the bits were lined up raring to go. Old Sanders was off first in 424 in "S" Cbee & then W.C. Clyde Marshall in "T" fare. The runway was pretty icy but it didn't seem to bother them much. I was up in the Control tower as per usual checking the bits as they took off. W.C. Ted Williams who was to take over 424 sqdn. from Marshall when he finished his tour was third off in "S" for Sugar. I watched his lights down the runway, & thought he was safely airborne when for some unaccountable reason the lights didn't seem to lift as they should & the thought flashed through my mind "Oh, oh, here it comes!" Sure enough it did! If it hadn't been so horrible, it might have been very pretty. A great blinding flash of flame rose up followed by thick billowing clouds of black smoke right

at the intersection of the two runways. At intervals of a second or so, the pyrotechnics were going off in all colours of the rainbow & then the incendiaries started with their vivid white flames interspersed with the occasional explosive one which sent up streamers of white fire in all directions, & silhouetted against the black clouds of smoke & reddened by the flames underneath. It looked very much like the front to ~~be~~ fireworks especially with the sharp chattering of the machine gun ammunition going off in the background.

The crash trucks & ambulance raced out immediately while we endeavoured to think out a way of getting the other 11 a/c away on the op which of course always comes first. Unfortunately the crash blocked the only two cleared runways while the third hadn't been cleared of snow yet so we were stuck & cancelled the rest of the op for good.

When the crash occurred, it shook the building a little but not as much as if a big bomb had gone off so we all decided that the 2000 pounder hadn't gone off yet. We know from experience that it takes almost $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour for a 2000 pounder to heat up enough to blow up in a fire so we had to work fast to

prevent any more damage to the aircraft parked near the crash. Lt. Gambling & I raced out in his car to see what we could do with 15 minutes of our 1/2 hour grace already gone. We picked up. Lt. Stenson on the way & decided to start up & taxi the ~~at~~ two nearest bites away from the vicinity. I climbed in with Gambling first to get him started & noticed he was so excited he tried starting the engine without turning on the fuel cocks nor the boost mag switches. For some reason or other I hadn't got too excited yet & fixed him up ok. The man just seemed to tear by before we got him started up & away he went. I hopped out then to get Stenson going - he hadn't even got his engine started yet & there was less than 5 minutes to go! Then was when I had to make up my mind whether to start running for safety or go to help him which of course didn't leave much choice. Exactly on the 1/2 hour mark we got two of the four engines going but to get out of the digress we had to taxi up nearer the blazing wreckage than ever - about 50' or so between me & a 2000 pounder ready to go up at any second. - more damn fun. Anyway after what seemed ages we made it out ok & got well away from the crash. Back at the control tower the

crash truck had returned to say that there was one survivor - the tailgunner who was only slightly bruised but was quite dazed from shock & found wandering around on his feet amongst the debris. By the time an hour was up ~~with~~ the fire almost out & still no bomb gone off, we ventured out to find a great crater about 20 feet deep & 40' across - it had gone off the moment of impact! all our taking a/c to safety was for nothing but still exciting enough when we didn't know what was going to happen. Blast always seems to work in peculiar ways & what to us seemed like a very ~~small~~ explosion from petrol tanks in the comparatively close vicinity of the control tower shook everything up even as far away as Leeming & threw people out of bed a few miles away. The bodies were all recovered finally in pieces & so we packed up for the night to get some sleep. As a slight aftermath, when I got up to my billet, all the parcels & groceries which I had sitting on a shelf in my room had been blown off on to the floor including my nice birthday cake - candles & all which I hadn't eaten yet - the one Mrs. Mac sent me. Note - I believe this was the event which earned the MBE for me don't you?

Mon. Jan. 29. Got up bright & early this morning to investigate the cause of the crash & had some pictures taken of the scene - didn't find any reason though & I guess they will have to start a formal investigation. Had crews out this afternoon clearing the runways of debris & disposing of unburned incendiaries - there were 1200-4 lbs in the load. We got 5 from 424 & 6 from 433 ready for a mining stooge which was finally cancelled. Also the Halifaxes were stood down to-day & our next ops will be on Lancasters so we were wound up our Halifax ops in great fashion! - a crash & 11 non-starters!

Tues. Jan. 30. Big snow storm to-day mired us in again - nothing much doing.

Wed. Jan. 31. Got 8 Lancs from 424 & 6 from 433 ready for ops to-day. What a bomb load they can take! - up to 15000 lbs where the Hal. couldn't take over 11,500 & also travel 2000 miles in the bargain with a full load of 2154 gals. of petrol which sure beats out the old Halifaxes. The Russians are still going strong & are within 100 miles of Berlin itself now - it sure does sound good.

~~Thurs. Feb. 1.~~ The ~~British~~ ~~European~~ ~~operation~~ was finally cancelled to-day but a big U.S.A. effort went out & dropped 2500 tons right in the middle of

Berlin. They couldn't get back to base because of weather + we ended up with 29 Liberators + 4 Fortresses forced down here - an engineering officer's nightmare. However we weren't so badly off as some since poor old Leaming got over 60 of them to handle.

Then Feb 1st. Got all but two of the visiting bites off this morning + got prepared for 17 planes from each sqdn. totaling no less than 1-4000 pounds + 14-five hundred pound incendiaries, all the way to Ludwigshafen. We had a lot of trouble getting them ready due to various little snags but they all got away ok. Five minutes after they all got away Lt Sanders reported back by code on R/T that he was on early return so we readied around + got one of the spare bites airborne & in time to join the stream - we were really getting good these days. Here we were all hoping that since the bad crack on the last op with the Halib, our first op on the lanes would go well. However, when they returned, poor old Lt Stinson was missing in 433-"A"-Able. We had seen the flames of a crack in the distance but hadn't figured it was one of ours. Nevertheless, it was Stinson who piloted in over near Dalton in a terrific smash up. Two of the crew baled out in

time but the other 5 bought it.

Fri. Feb. 2. Got up bright & early to rush over & investigate this latest crash - what a horrible mess it was. It looked ^{like} he was in a power dive when he went into the deck at about a 30° angle & there wasn't much of it left. Three of the 4 engines were buried in the mud out of sight with only the tip of one prop blade showing. The fourth engine had been torn out & was burst open alongside. Part of the kite had skidded forward & set fire to a farmer's haystack which was still burning when I got there. It was a pretty grisly sight too with broken bits of bodies lying all over the place.

Just in my wanderings through the wreckage I noticed bits of brain, intestine, part of a skull, part of a severed hand & a meaty looking joint which I figured was a thigh bone & knee joint. They had enough parts together to make up approx. four bodies but one is still missing in the wreckage somewhere. The only explanation about why it piked in was from the story of the two crew members who bailed out - they were badly shot up with flak over the target & it is thought his controls must have suddenly given away.

The afternoon we got 6 tons from 424 &

4 from 433 away from on ops to Weesbaden - a railway marshalling yard near the 9th Army front. It was a pretty shabby take-off with the short runway & little or no wind. We are not exactly superstitious about things happening 3 at a time & with a cross on each of our last two ops we were all sure praying hard tonight. As it turned out, everything went fine & they all returned safe & sound.

Sat. Feb. 3. No ops to-day which was a good thing to let us get set in keeping those new lanes serviceable & doing the 1001 mods & inspections that still have to be done on them.

Sun. Feb. 4. Dot 8 from 424 & 6 from 433 away on ops again tonight on Bonn - more tactical targets for our boys - it looks like a new offensive will be starting soon on this sector since this is the way we have launched all the others. Everything went well at take-off but our horrible Sunday luck came through again & F/Lt Mara in M - Mike of 433 Sqdn didn't come back tonight - we found out later - he had a midair collision over France & the 14/10 gunner was found over there near St. Vith wandering around in a daze with amnesia & not knowing what had happened.

or how he got there. Apparently he was the only one to escape with his life.

Mon. Feb. 5. Not ready for ops to-day with 7 from 424 + 4 from 433 made ready to go - however later cancelled due to poor weather.

Tues Feb. 6. The last of snow went to-day & I sure hope spring is in the air although I suppose that's a little too much to hope for yet. The Russians are starting to slow down & consolidate a little now just 45 miles from Berlin & have a front all along the Oder back past Dreslau. If our bunch can't get cracking now we should be able to finish things off in a hurry.

Wed. Feb. 7. Got 8 from 424 + 7 from 433 away on a real tactical target tonight - the town of Bock about 10 miles from the Canadian front. Only about half dropped their bombs due to not being able to recognize the target clearly & being afraid of hitting our own troops. However it was considered a successful do with nonstarts, early returns or losses.

Thur. Feb 8. - Ops were scrubbed to-day before we really got under way ^{due} to heavy rain. We were right about thinking our boys were getting ready for an offensive since the Canadians

under Arer broke through part of the Siegfried
lane on a 10 mile front to-day & headed directly
for Rock which we pranged last night. Had
a little party tonight down in Hirsch at the
Golden Place where we had a good partridge
dinner & then drinks & a sing-song. Both
Charlie Seager & Herb Wilson got drunk & a chair
& lamp shade were broken in a chair - throwing
exploit for which ^{we} were duly thrown out of the
Place - just at closing time anyway.

Fri. Feb. 9. - 8 from 424 & 6 from 433 got ready
for ops to-day but later scrubbed due to poor
weather again.

Sat. Feb. 10. 8 from each sqdn. got ready again
for ops to-day but again scrubbed at the
last minute. Had a small dance at the
Mess tonight but I guess I wasn't in the mood
or something (getting old more than likely) so I
left early & came home to my little billet -
made an unsatisfactory fire & wrote a few letters.

Sun Feb 11. Got 8 from each sqdn ready to-day &
again ops scrubbed for weather - getting to be a
habit.

Mon Feb 12 Stand down to-day with a cold rain
& fog. Took the opportunity to drive over to Leaning
this afternoon to have a nice hot bath & also

looked up Moira. Arranged a date with her in York on the night of the 23rd when we are to meet Bill Boone & Eunice for another day off together. Tues. Feb. 13. Got 7 a/c from each Spdn. ready for ops to-day. Tipped over to Topcliffe on my motorbike this afternoon to see w/c Sivins & do some scrounging. Arrived at a most inopportune time about 5 minutes after a bike had slipped off a jack in the hangar & nearly killed one man - also we think - broke Hank's arms - they seem to be having a lot of trouble these days. Our take-off went OK tonight at 2110 although we had to use two spares. It looks like they are going over to help the Russians on their front this time with a 9 1/2 hour trip - ETR. not being until 0650 tomorrow morning - that should take them a round trip of nearly 2000 miles.

Wed. Feb. 14 Well, as I suspected, the target last night was in direct aid of the Russians - Dresden got a real pounding apparently with a big follow-up attack by the Americans - apparently these are some of the tactics decided upon at the "Big Three" conference a week ago in the Crimea between Churchill, Roosevelt & Stalin. To-day we got 4 away on bombing from 424 - Chemnitz near Dresden was the target. Also we got 5 from 424 & 5 from 433 away on a mining "do"

somewhere in the Baltic. 424 had one early return with diff H₂S 9. we also lost A of 424 - Fk Aldworth who failed to show up.

Thur. Feb. 15, 1945. Bot 3 away from each sqdn on another Baltic mining stogie to-day & had one early return in 424 with H₂S 0/5 again. Found out to-day that the 433 bites yesterday, by an ops & armament mistake took off with an A.W. of 68,469 pounds or nearly 3500 lbs. over weight - my luck seems to be pretty good in that we didn't have any prangs on take-off or lose any of them or I probably would have got the well known edge.

Fri. Feb. 16/45. No ops to-day so was very busy getting caught up with the paper work all day. Intended to go out tonight & help fill incendiary cans with 150.4 pounders. We have been dropping them so fast lately the poor armourers can't keep up the pace so the whole station takes a crack at it periodically just to help out.

Sat. Feb. 17. - No ops to-day with a heavy mist & fog. Went over to Learning this afternoon to a conference & also found out by chance that some dope had recommended me for the O.B.E. - you'd know why. Anyway very few

of the recommendations ever come to anything
 I'm damn sure mine won't. Got a telegram
 tonight that Caron would be arriving at
 Shipton at 6.15. So I went down to Flisk to
 meet the 6.20 & pick him up - no sign of
 him. Went back again to meet the 7.30 - still
 no sign of him. Don't know where he has
 got to & I'm just afraid he has got to the
 wrong Shipton since there is another one
 down south of here on the Yorks-Lanes. border.
 I sure hope he gets in touch with me tomorrow
 since I sure would like to see him.

Sun. Feb. 18. Didn't hear from Caron all day so I
 guess he wasn't able to get again this vicinity
 at all. Sent 3 etc from each Sqdn. away on a
 gardening do to-day with no troubles at all
 although Don Ross scared us all by being about
 15 minutes late on return & we almost had him
 classed as overdue and missing. However, as it
 turned out he was just taking it easy on the
 return home.

Mon. Feb. 19. - No ops on to-day so took things easy
 again. Our side of the front is starting to get mobile
 now while the Russians get organized after their
 terrific offensive. I suppose that means we will be
 keeping very busy from now on.

Tues. Feb. 20. Had our first full squadron operation with our lanes to-day - 14 from each squadron. With a nice load of a 4000 lb. HE plus 10 x 650 # (150 x 4) SBC. It was ^{almost} a perfect do with Dostmund as the target & no non starts, early returns, one missing kite ^{Sgt. Cygan in K-424 again.} & although we did have a little trouble getting them all airborne in time.

Wed. Feb. 21. Busy to-day again after me staying up all night & getting to bed at 7.15 a.m. this morning after last night's do. To-day we had 15 from 424 & 14 from 433 on Duisberg with 11 x 4000 & 8 x 650 SBC. This was another perfect do with no non starts, early returns or missing kites. 433 are doing fine so far this month with no non starts, early returns or missing kites. 424 haven't been quite so lucky with 3 early returns & 3 missing so far. Heard to-day that some of Sgt. Cygan's crew had been picked up in France so here's hoping they all got out ok. S of 424 was so badly shot up with flak tonight, I had to make it a cat AC but no one was hurt fortunately.

Thur. Feb. 22. Slept till noon to-day after getting to bed around 4.00 a.m. this morning. There were no ops on to-day so got caught up on my office work. It was Moira's birthday to-day - 22 years old so I phoned her up to wish her Many Happy Returns - she got one

present she didn't like very well & got posted to the Middle East - she starts her embarkation leave tomorrow & is meeting me in York where we are to meet Bill Boone & Eunice as well.

Fri. Feb. 23. We were on mining to day in Frederikstad fjord near Oslo & things were well organized when I left at noon. Got down to York & spent about two hours in a nice hot bath & then met the gang about 5.00 o'clock. We had dinner at the Lodge, then a few beers & over to de Trays ball room for the dance. We left there about 11.00 & went back to our hotel rooms for a party with some gin & sherry that Bill had brought & some gin that I had scrounged from the Mess. We had a lot of fun too.

Sat. Feb. 24. Got up about 11.00 am. & after dinner went to a show. Later went down into the old section of town called the Slambles where the streets are so narrow the upstairs windows are not more than 3' apart across the street since the upper stories overhang quite a bit in the old style manner in which they are built. The girls persuaded us to have our fortunes told by a gypsy hand reading artist - she told me I would be very happy in August but would make a sea voyage before then - let's hope it is home.

She also said I had a dark haired girl waiting for me at home & another one who was desirous of making this sea voyage with me. - Ruth & Moira are the two I suppose.

After dinner, Bill & Eunice left early so Moira & I sat & talked & bemoaned the fact that she was posted away. However she is a swell girl & I really am sorry to see her leave.

Sun. Feb. 25. Got up at 6:30 am to catch the early train back to the station & left Moira there having said our good-byes the night before. Got back in time for breakfast & found that everything had gone well on the op on Friday. However, yesterday apparently we were on mining again with 5 hits from each squadron & had one early return in 424 due to manipulation on the Wopis part with his intercom ups. We had a warning though for ops this morning which never materialized & for which I was duly thankful, sleepy as I was.

Mon. Feb. 26. No ops to-day altho' it was swell here like a nice warm spring day - heard a robin chirping too. However, that doesn't mean a thing over here since it will probably be snowing again next month. I guess the weather must have been duff or we'd have been on ops sure. Morning came though to night for a big effort

tomorrow so we were hard at it to night.

Tues. Feb. 27. Put 5 from each squadron ready for mining and 10 from 424 plus 13 from 433 ready for a bombing op to-day. The mining one was scrubbed but the bombing went all right except for lots of panic trying to get the last two kites airborne with little snags on them. Half way through our take-off a kite crashed & blew up with a full bomb load at seeming 3 miles from here - we felt the concussion & saw the smoke so knew what it was from our own recent experience along the same lines - I guess they had a lot of non-starters too since it happened right on the runway. Our target was Mainz & everything went ok with no non-starts, early returns or missing kites.

Wed. Feb. 28. This last day of the month, we didn't operate & so ended the complete month without a single non-start in either squadron & not even an early return in 433 or a missing kite - quite a record for our first month of ops on the lanes. I sure hope we can keep it up.

Thur. Mar. 1. Now the old time does roll around! Put 9 a/c from each squadron away to-day on Mannheim in the Ruhr - not far now from the American front - it looks like we have them on the

run at last. Started out well with no non-starts, early returns or missing a/c.

Fri. Nov. 2, 1945 Got 14 a/c away ~~from~~ ^{this morning} from each squadron to Cologne this time - there sure can't be much left of that town by now. Worked all last night to get the bites ready after yesterday's op & they took off at 5:30 a.m. this morning with no non-starts or early returns. We came close to having some trouble though since by take-off time four of the bites were not even bombed up yet & there was lots of panic for awhile until we finally got them finished up & away before last take off time. Got to bed about 7:00 a.m. & slept till 1:30 hrs when the bites were due back again. Immediately had another "scramble" to get them ready again for another op early tomorrow morning - we sure are hitting a great pace with the advent of the good weather.

Sat. Nov. 3, 1945 The op this morning was cancelled after we had gone to work & got the a/c all ready to go again. However we left them all bombed up & got 1 more from 424 & 2 from 433 away at midnight on a mining effort. I was feeling pretty tired so sent Herb Wilson down to look after the take-off. However, I guess I wasn't meant to get any sleep tonight since word just came through

that 102 German prisoners had escaped from the camp at Pöpin & were heading this way. We had lots of commotion then organizing guard patrols with Sten guns for protecting the a/c & bomb dump - I even got my trusty revolver out & loaded just in case. However, about 3.00 am. the news came through that it was all a mistake on the part of the DAPM at York. - it was "one or two" not 102 prisoners who had escaped so we all packed up & went to bed feeling rather foolish & also I might add - a little disappointed - we were all just raring to find something to shoot at.

Sun. Mar. 4. 1945. Got 14 a/c ready for ops to day but it was later cancelled tonight after being put back several times. I had just nicely got tucked in bed tonight at about 1.30 am. when ops phoned to say that there was an intruder warning & to expect some diverted a/c. Then things began to happen! First we heard anti-aircraft guns & bombs going off not far away, then all the lights were turned out all over the district. Next Group phoned to say that there were some Halifaxes floating around returning from ops & that a large number of German fighters had joined the return stream.

To escape our radar defences & were now proceeding to shoot up all the air, towns, villages & airbases they could find. Next a distress call was received on RT saying that there were two Halifaxes in our circuit on emergency with only about 10 minutes petrol left. In the meantime we could see German twin-engine fighters shooting up Duxford & Tyecliffe & they sure were going to town - Ju. 188's they were with lots of cannon & machine guns on board. We, of course, had to turn our runway lights on to get these Halifaxes down & of course attracted attention. The first one made a fast approach & landing & made it with no trouble. However the next one came in with all its guns blazing at a Jerry fighter who followed him all the way up the runway at a height of about 25 feet. There was an echelon formation of four of them & they then started in to shoot up the drone properly. I was in the billet at the time & saw ~~some~~ most of it going on & of course heard the guns. Luckily, it didn't last long & so we finally got to sleep again.

Mon. Mar. 5. Sorted out the damage done to day & we got off very lightly with no casualties although two aircraft & No. 2 hangar were damaged by cannon shells. There were a lot of narrow escapes

on the camp, particularly among my men down working on the hills. Topcliffe had a few hills damaged & a WAAF killed. Desforth had an a/c shot down, seeming had one damaged & Roft had one shot down. The London-Edinburgh train was shot up at Thirsk & had one killed & a few wounded. It begins to look like Jerry might have a few hills left in him yet. However, it was all very exciting but really didn't mean much to me except some more damage to patch up on the lanes. Altogether they got 21 hills of ours shot down which was quite successful from the Jerry point of view since we only got six of theirs. However, it was just due to the surprise & they won't get the chance again for awhile not likely.

Got 14 a/c from each squad. away on ops again tonight at 5 o'clock & I think I'll catch a couple of hours sleep now before getting up for their return & interrogation at 200 a.m. Unfortunately there is another intruder warning out so it may mean some more excitement again tonight if they try to nail our boys as they land.

Queer Mar. 6 - Well, there was no excitement last night & things have more or less quieted down here now. No ops today or tonight for a change. The Allied push to the Rhine is going great guns.

* unfortunately we lost Flt. Don Ross in "H" of 424. it sure is too bad since he was a swell guy & of course went thru Riverdale College with me at home.

These days & things look very hopeful for a quick ending. * Chemnitz was the target last night of
Mar. 7, 1945 - Had a big panic to-day trying to get enough aircraft together for an op with a terrific amount of unserviceability due to cracked exhaust coolant ducts. Finally got 12 from 424 & 9 from 433 away on a long Stoge to Dussau s.w. of Berlin. Again we came through with no non starters or early returns although we lost two shot down from 424. Spdn. C with Flt. Holey as pilot & N with Flt. Lighthall as skipper. All the a/c were diverted down south due to another intruder warning in this vicinity.

Mar. 8, 1945 - Got 5 from 424 & 9 from 433 away on a gardening effort in Kiel Bay - we weren't allowed any spares either which was a little shaky but we were lucky & still got them all away with no early returns.

Mar 9, 1945 - Got 14 from 424 & 15 from 433 ready for ops to day but later was scrubbed. Good news again from the battle-front with all the area west of the Rhine cleared - our armies in Cologne & Dusseldorf & the Americans even crossed the Rhine in one place to-day. It won't be long now & I can hardly wait.

Sat. Mar. 10, 1945 - No ops on to-day. Went over to Leeming this afternoon to have a bath & also see May Jewitt who just finished her embarkation leave before going out East. Had a nice party in the Mess tonight & had a fair time dancing etc.

Sun. Mar. 11, 1945. Got 14 from 424 & 15 from 433 away at 1100 o'clock this morning with poor old Essen as the target. What a beating it took with 11,040 lbs of HE's upon each kite. Again we had no non-starters, early returns or missing a/c. We are getting pretty good these days!

W/C Clyde Marshall was screened after his first tour completed tonight & we had a small party for him although it was interrupted by ops coming through at 1100 o'clock for an early morning take off.

Mon. Mar. 12. Got 14 from 424 & 13 from 433 away at noon to-day with the same heavy bomb load as yesterday only the target was Dortmund to-day - another 1000 bomber do. & again no non starts or early returns. The busier we are, the better we seem to work. We just got these a/c nicely away when ops came through with 1 from 424 & 4 from 433 on a gardening effort - planting vegetables in the Kattergat somewhere that kept us all hopping too but it went off

very successfully except that F/O Farrel in E-433 Spdm didn't come back.

Thurs. Mar. 13. No ops on to-day for a change & we appreciated a good rest too, to get the kites right up into top line shape again. I've just about finished my new Servicing Wing Controller's office with a big 18 foot board & it will make things much easier.

Wed. Mar. 14. We were on an army co. op target to-day to help the American 3rd & 7th armies out in their drive to clean out the Saar basin. Our target was the big railway centre at Jweibrücken just east of Strasbourg. According to the boys, it just doesn't exist any more after tonight. We had 12 from 424 & 15 from 433 on with 10,660 lbs of HE's up on each - no failures or missing kites although F/O McInroy in F-424 Spdm had some trouble when he got back to our circuit here & crash landed downwind off the runway at Disforth - no casualties thank goodness but the kite is written off - what's another \$200,000 more or less !!! I don't know what the cause of the accident was yet. After T.O. tonight went over to Leaming to pick up May for our last evening together - she leaves tomorrow. We went in to Northallerton for dinner & then

a show - a very quiet time & another girl out of my life.

Thurs. Mar. 15. Got 12 from 424 & 15 from 433 away to Hagen tonight with the biggest bomb load we've ever carried yet 11,640 lbs. apiece. We had one shaky take-off when one engine of a bite sprung a bad oil leak half way down the runway but he kept right on going across the grass & perimeter track & just barely cleared the control tower. I was beginning to think my last few moments on earth had come since he had a 4000 pounder on board. However, he was a brave pilot & went on all the way to the target & back on the three engines - kept one feathered all the way. We also had some excitement when they came back tonight since there was an enemy intruder warning in the vicinity & we were expecting to get shot up by the Jerries at any time. Also at the same time we had two emergency landings to handle with red distress signals going off all over the place - the one was the 3-engine job while the other had no R/T or intercom. A few bites damaged by flak tonight too but nothing too serious.

Fri. Mar. 16. Got 2 from 424 & 5 from 433 away to day on a mining stogie to Heligoland. All OK & no

failures in either sqdn. yet this month. Boy,
it sure would be a feather in my cap if
we could get both squadrons through a whole
month of intensive operating with no failures
- it's never been done yet in 6 groups.

Sat. Mar. 17. - Good old St. Patrick's day & no
ops on so we made the most of it & had a
stand down this afternoon with a great party
on in the Sqts. Mess tonight. Things were in
full swing when "intake cover" warning came
through & all the lights went out - Jerry
intruders again. The boys made the most of
the opportunity of course & it only lasted for about
half an hour till the all clear went again.
Didn't see a thing this time except one lonesome
German fighter which came in low over the
drome & dropped 3 flares - probably taking
pictures for a return visit some time - bringing
his pals along too no doubt! Anyway there was
no bombs or shot up so we were happy enough.
A town north of here got a few bombs however
we heard later.

Sun. Mar. 18. Nothing doing to-day again - I guess
they figure we are due for a rest since we've been
going at it pretty hard lately. However, everyone
was ready to go again & seemed generally

quite disappointed. The war is at such a critical stage now that everyone wants to rush ahead & finish it off as soon as possible - me too!

Mon. Mar. 19. Again nothing doing so let most of my boys go this afternoon to enjoy the nice bright sunny weather. Went down to the Golden Pines tonight with the Gc & the two Wc's for a real luscious steak dinner which the Gc had arranged some how. Boy did I enjoy it. The best meal I've ever had over here & the steak was even better than the only other one I've had down at Nottingham. After dinner we had a few drinks. Then went up to Northallerton hospital to collect a few Canadian nurses & brought them back to the Gc's house for a party. It turned out very well.

I finally got home at 4:00 a.m. after a swell evening.

Tues. Mar. 20. Ops came through at about noon for a late take-off tonight. We had things pretty well organized so I went to another party tonight at the WAAF officer's Mess for one of our WD officers wasted home - lucky girl. I left at 1:00 a.m. nearly dead & went down to take-off which fortunately went very well. 15 from 424 & 17 from 433 on an oil refinery at Heide. There was another intruder warning during take-off which was a little scary since it would just need one of those 4500

pounders to get hit & go off & we'd have no aerodrome or personnel left since all the others on the kites would probably go too. However we had no troubles altho' we could see bombs flashing ^{at} the odd explosion in the distance - it looked like they were over in the vicinity of Scarborough & Wombaton.

Wed. Mar. 21. Got to bed about 3:00 am. this morning & up again at 7:00 to see the kites back in again - all returned safe & sound & still no failures - we sure are chalking up a record if we can only keep it up. Ops came thru again at 5:00 & I took tonight for an early take-off tomorrow morning so I'm hitting the hay right now to get caught up on some sleep. We have 14 kites all bombed up & raring to go & another intruder warning to worry about again tonight - this must be one of Jerry's last picks I hope.

Thur. Mar. 22. Got all 14 ops from each cycle away of this morning on Wildenheim & all back safely. Still no operational failures - boy are we really clicking right along these days.

Fri. Mar. 23. Had 13 from 424 & 15 from 433 ready to go to day but later scrubbed. I decided to take tomorrow off so had arranged to meet Betty in York. I met her up in the station late

where we had dinner & then went dancing. Got
 her home to her friend's place at midnight after
 a nice walk along the river.

Sat. Mar. 24. Met Betty this morning and
 visited Yorkminster Cathedral again. Climbed
 up to the top of the highest tower - 272 steps
 or less. After lunch we walked the 5 miles
 completely around the old city walls & ended
 up at the Castle Museum. After tea at 4 we
 met Betty's sister Ruby & I took them both to a
 show and then dinner, saw them off on their
 respective trains & got home here about 1100
 pm. after a very full day. Found we had
 lost 11 bikes away from each squadron on
 Rotterdam near Essen & back again ok while I was
 away & also were in the midst of a recheck
 early up for tomorrow morning with 14 from 424
 15 from 433 detailed. The boys had things pretty
 well in hand so I let them carry on & came home
 to bed. We had one bike missing after 6 days
 do. but found later he got shot up badly
 & made a forced landing at Everas Hill
 Brussels, - all the crew ok fortunately.

Sun. Mar. 25. Everything bad began to me on Sunday
 for some reason or other. After a lot of fuss getting
 smoke bombs on board 3 of the bikes for the day.

gaggle formation, we finally got all the
kites away to Hanover - a very hotly-contested
target these days. Anyway the inevitable happened
& we had an early return in each squadron.
424's the first this month & 433 broke their
string of 273 consecutive operations over the past
two months. However, we will probably still
stand well up in the group but it's a shame
we came so near to finishing off the month
without a failure. We had 14 kites badly
shot up with flak after 15 days do including
4 - 3 engine landings - However there were none
missing altho' I guess it was pretty tough on the
boys & there were a lot of narrow escapes. We
were digging flak pellets out from all over
the place & 2 of 433 had a hole about 12"
in diameter in the petrol tank & we got the
biggest single piece of flak I've seen yet out of
it - a piece about 12" x 3" x 1/4".

Mon. Mar. 26. Nothing on to-day for a change
& it's a good thing too for we didn't have many
kites serviceable after that last op. The Armin
are really going to town now & have broken
through all the way to the Rhine for the
whole length & even have the Remagen Bridge
left intact - what a lucky break!

Tues Mar. 27. Duff foggy weather to-day so no ops again. Things are really happening over in Germany now & we sure seem to have them really on the run at last with the Allies just pouring over the Rhine into the Remagen bridgehead.

Wed. Mar. 28. Got set for an early morning take off this morning with 13 from 424 & 12 from 433 ready to go. However, it was scrubbed at the last minute & after no less than 3 bomb load & petrol load changes - we heard later that Gen. Patton's army captured the town we were supposed to have hit. The Allies have now breached the Rhine all the way along & are fanning out all over the Ruhr capturing places which we have been bombing steadily for the past two years. The results sure show from the photographs we see with most cities not having a single undamaged building in them.

Thu. Mar. 29. - No ops to-day & serviceability is beginning to look pretty good again.

Fri. Mar. 30. Still nothing doing. Went on a liaison trip to-day up to Middleham. St. George to see Bob Bales. Came back by way of Croft. Richmond reputed to be the prettiest city in Yorkshire. It is very nice too.

Sat. Mar. 31. Set 10 bites from each sqdn. away on bombing Hamburg to-day & also had 5 ready from each to go on a gardening stodge but it was cancelled later. We fortunately had no non starts or early returns so we ended the month pretty well with only one early return in each sqdn. for the whole month.

Sun. Apr. 1 Everything very quiet to-day with no ops on. The Allies are really racing ahead now into Germany & the Jerries sure are taking on awful beating with the Ruhr surrounded & the armies advancing fast all along the line.

Mon. Apr. 2. - Set nine from each sqdn. ready for bombing to-day & also 5 from each on mining. Both scrubbed due to weather.

Tues. Apr. 3. Very aggravating day since we tried to get the same bites away again to-day. Then they changed take-off time after getting us all up at 5:00 a.m., then proceeded to change bomb load 4 different times & petrol load 3 times & finally scrubbed it all just 5 minutes before take-off time tonight with all the engines taking over and all. It seems that Gen. Patton's tanks arrived at the town we were to bomb too soon. Went up to the WAAF officers mess for supper tonight - chicken too.

216
Lost one from 424 - W.

Wed. Apr. 4. Det 13 from 424 & 11 from 433 on
Bombing Mersberg near Leipzig to-day & also
4 from each sqdn. on mining in Oslo Fjord.
They all got away ok. Tonight I had to go
down to Linton to a big Engineering dinner in
honour of A/c Roach, the chief engineering officer of
Camber Command who came up to pay us a visit.
It turned out to be quite a reunion since all
the Engineers of 6 Group showed up & a great
time was had by all. This afternoon I had
to be presented to A/c the Earl of Hereford
who is the King's brother-in-law - having
married the Princess Royal - Mary. - Showed
him around my section & talked to him for
awhile. The usual pompous old boy with a red
nose & disappointingly enough, no monoch.
Also tonight met the new AOC in C of RCAF
overseas - Air Marshall Johnston who has just
arrived to take over from Breadner. He & the
VM called in on our Engineer's party. What a day!

Thur. Apr. 5. Things quiet to-day until A/c Roach
came to pay us his inspection visit - seemed
quite pleased with the station & our work.
He looked over everything thoroughly. Also liked
our new Servicing Wing Controller idea which
has caught on all over the Group & everyone

doing it. Tonight had to go to Leeming on
the AC's invite to a Senior officer's formal
mess dinner for the new AOC in C. Had a
nice turkey dinner & lots of speeches including
all the g'n about Phase II operations &
what is in store for us in the Far East.
Drank free whiskey all evening & had a good
party. Later ended up with W/C Norris at
Boroughbridge at 2.00 to a place he knew
where we got a steak dinner - not bad.

Fri. Apr. 6. This seems to be turning out
to be quite a busy week. Got 16 from 424 &
17 from 433 ready for an op to-day - finally
scrubbed.

Sat. Apr. 7. - Things quiet to-day with no
ops planned. Stayed in to write some
letters for a change since I'm planning to go on
leave a week to-day.

Sun. Apr. 8. Got 10 from 424 & 11 from 433
away to Hamburg to-day. Also had 6 from
each ready to go on mining but it was
scrubbed. George Reynolds & crew had a
narrow escape tonight in V when their
rear turret had an electrical short &
caught fire on the way back from the target.
It went out finally but not before they

were all just about ready to bale out. Made the kite a Cat AC. Went to a party tonight which the Canadian nurses at Northallerton gave. Had a very nice time.

Mon. Apr. 9. Got 6 from 424 & 5 from 433 away on Kiel mining tonight. The bombers from other stations were attacking at the same time so it was quite a good show. Heard later that they sank the last of Jerry's pocket battleships the "Admiral Scheer" so we have no worries on that score any more.

Tues. Apr. 10. Got 10 from 424 & 9 from 433 away on Leipzig tonight. Had one early return in 433 with an engine failure & also lost one - W. Brisdale in "F" 433. The other crews saw him shot down by flak over the target. It was a very successful attack however in broad daylight & excellent visibility.

Wed. Apr. 11. - Nothing doing to-day. Went down to the village pub for a few beers & dart games tonight with some of the boys.

Thurs. Apr. 12. No ops to-day. The Germans are forging ahead now with one column across the Elbe near Magdeburg & only 64 miles to Berlin. The papers are even forecasting a link up with the Russians by Saturday so the

news, sure is good & it must be only a matter of days now. I hope it happens while I am on leave in London!

Fri. April 13. Good old Friday the 13th. I thought sure something really good would happen to me to-day but nothing turned up after all. Set 11 a/c from 424 and 10 from 433 away on Kiel to-day with no non-starts or early returns. At the same time we had 6 from 424 & 4 from 433 on a mining do at Kiel Bay so it was quite a combined effort. All a/c diverted when they returned.

Sat. Apr. 14 Set all packed this morning and caught the 2.00 o'clock train for Harrogate & Leeds & arrived at Leeds about 3.45 p.m. Phoned up Mrs. Asford & went right on up to the house by taxi. After tea, Mrs. Asford & I went over to the golf club where we had a very nice dinner & then a few beers. Next I played snooker while the others played cards & thence home to bed.

Sun. Apr. 15. Slept in until noon to-day & after a lovely hot bath had dinner. Set out in the sun all afternoon & played knock rammy in the evening. A nice auspicious beginning to my leave.

Mon. Apr. 16. Mr. Asford took me down to the station this morning on his way to work & it gave me

plenty of time to pick out a good seat for my 4 hour trip to London. The weather turned really warm & I had a very nice pleasant ride down arriving at King's Cross about 3.30. I got right on the tube then & after changing once arrived at Charing Cross tube station - very hot work lugging my "Gladstone" around in the crowds. I phoned Renee from there & told her I was on my way out. After some trouble, found the Charing Cross South railway station & sorted out the train schedules. Changed once at London Bridge & then an hour later arrived at Stone Crossing Halt after a refreshing trip down. I was quite surprised at the frequent signs of buzz-bomb & rocket bomb damage - they sure do pulverize the area where they hit. When I got off the train, Bill & Renee Fletcher were there to meet me & we started to get acquainted right away with no trouble at all. I was sure sweating ~~for~~ from the heat - quite a pleasant change actually after the cold in Yorkshire. I met Florrie Swift - an aunt of Renee, her father Mr. Nutt & her grandmother - all very nice. After a good wash & change, had tea & then sat around & talked about home mostly & all the goings on - what had been happening etc. etc. & I enjoyed it all very much hearing all

the old familiar names brought out again -
I'm just beginning to realize how really long
I have been away when I have trouble remembering
some of the names of neighbours etc. We finished
off at the nearby local pub - a great institution -
& so to bed.

Tues. Apr. 17. Started to break out with a small
spot or two of impetigo on my face - same as I
had when I was on my last leave - must be the
change of air & food. Slept till 1100 a.m. this
morning when Renee brought my breakfast up
to me in bed - bacon & eggs too - what a great life
this is. & got up in time for dinner at 1.00 o'clock.
Bill had to go into town this morning to report
to his unit since he is expecting to be leaving
for India any time now. Slept & read out
in the sun all afternoon & then after tea
sat around & talked more. I brought out
all my pictures of the folks at home & those I'd
taken over here. It sure looked strange to
me to see a large photo of Trudy sitting
up on the top of their piano. Baby Suzanne
was of course the great centre of attraction
in the household when she was up & about.
Really a very cute baby. We ended up at the pub
again tonight with Mr. Matt.

Wed. Apr. 18. Breakfast of ham & egg again this morning in bed - they really are spoiling me. Not more sun this afternoon & then got dressed to go into London with Renee to meet Bill. Had a beer to cool off & then went up to the famous Garrick Theatre where Bill had got seats for "Madame Louise" - a very good play just starting a run there - comedy. A friend of Renee's & a cousin of Florrie by marriage - in the Canadian C.W.A.C.'s named Vera Rogers made up the fourth. She is quite cute & very tiny - about 5'1" - Born in Canada but living over here with an Aunt since she was 3. - She's 25 now. However, she was lots of fun & we got along famously. After the play we had dinner at the Queen's Brasserie on Piccadilly & then danced & drank to cool off until about 10 when Vera had to get a tube & we then returned to Renee's for some more to eat & then bed.

Thur. Apr. 19. - Breakfast in bed again & spent a very lazy day sunning myself. This afternoon I went for a bike ride to Gravesend & beyond & then back. & then Bill & I & Renee went up to a new pub tonight for a change.

Fri. Apr. 20. - Not an interesting book to read to day "Wandering Mike" about Canada & the Yukon & spent most