

The Wartime Diary Of A 423099 Warrant Officer E J (Ted) Gore

Royal Australian Air Force

1942-1945

Foreword

When the eighteen year old RAAF trainee Ted Gore arrived in Melbourne by train from Sydney on the 24th of August 1942, prior to embarkation for Canada, he carried with him a last minute gift from his Mother in the form of a compact, closely lined notebook titled, "Service Diary". Published by Collins in Australia, it's purpose was for those men & women entering active military service to use it as record of their experiences.

For the next three years and seventy three days, until he arrived home by sea to his home in Sydney, and rarely missing a day, Ted Gore meticulously recorded this Diary, which in the view of the undersigned, is a unique and personal record of a young man's contribution to our country's total efforts toward victory in World War Two.

His Diary records the early days of aircrew training in Canada, where he qualified as a Wireless Air Gunner, (WAG), leave in Canada and the United States, further training and various postings in England and Scotland, then to the Middle East, then final operational training in Palestine, preparatory to joining the combined Allied forces campaigns in the defeat of the German occupation of Italy.

Assigned to No. 458 Squadron RAAF, as a crew member flying Vickers Wellington medium bombers, he completed some 34 operational missions, mainly at night, and often in severe weather conditions, seeking out and attacking enemy shipping, as well as night bombing raids on shore based targets. With the Italian campaign drawing to a close, his crew were re-located to Gibraltar, flying extended missions out over the Atlantic in protection of convoys against German U-boats.

A feature of Ted's Diary is his real interest in the areas in which he served, and there are little touches here and there of the nostalgia for he and many others must have felt for home. For example, being shown over a woollen mill in Bradford in England, he picked a little wisp of Australian merino wool, which is still pinned in the Diary today, and there is reference to the eucalypts seen in several places in the Middle East.

The descriptions of wartime flying operations however, are frequently graphic, as are descriptions of the collateral damage war does to people and places, and also some of the frustrations that occur during wartime deployments.

Ted Gore returned to civilian life around the time of his twenty second birthday. He later married, raised a family, and pursued a successful business career with several leading NSW companies, and died on 31st May 2002, after a short illness.

The undersigned is indebted to his widow, Mrs Jean Gore of Sydney, for making this Diary available. It has not been edited, it is exactly as he wrote it, with possible minor spelling errors in some place names, and future readers may note that some comments on people and cultures may seem out of step with today's values. However, this was recorded in different times, sixty years ago, and probably was similar to community attitudes prevailing at that time.

It is however, a very personal record, and one which truly reflects the thoughts and experiences of a very young, and very brave, Australian.

David Irons 7 July 2005

To Ted, With Love From Mum. 22.8.42

"May The Lord Watch Between Me & Thee When We Are Absent From One Another."

Hand written inscription in Ted Gore's Service Diary the day before he departed for overseas service with the RAAF.

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Monday 24. 8.42

Arrived 1 B D Melbourne 12.30 today after 17 hour train trip from Sydney. Looked around city at night went pictures, & bed at 12. Am in Agricultural Hall, Showground.

Tuesday 25.842

Started lectures today. An English PIO expressed his views which were typical. Told us his impressions of people and world. I rather liked him although he is " The British Army Old Boy" type .Went Melbourne with Smithy, met two girls, took them to pictures then home.

Wednesday 26. 8.42

Rankine & I went to see Mr George, was out, going to tea tomorrow, was invited by his daughter.

Thursday 27.8.42

Nothing special, only went to see Mr George, his other daughter & husband were there, had steak eggs & chips & apple pie.

Friday 28.8.42.

Just Rankine, met girl named Peg, went to pictures.

Saturday 29.8.42

Rained like h.... all day, went to town & bed at 8pm.

Sunday 30.8.42

Succeeded in spending all money apart from what I lent out, so now on the bludge again. Rained all day & night, so went to Fitzroy Methodist Church.

Monday 31.8.42

Visited Bryant & May's match factory at Prabran. It is the biggest in Australia & they own Federal. Make 60,000,000 matches a day, 8 hours, 5 days a week, besides wax. Tapers for these kept on rolls which hold 33 miles. Each match 1" long, they use 6 each day. Match is made of 16 strands Queensland cotton, passed thru boiling wax 4 times & then called auto core & stored to harden. Match boxes, wooden, cut from logs of Queensland wood. Came back to camp early.

Tuesday 1.9.42.

Had lecture from Alex, been thru Malaya. Came out as Nay on a boat full of Eng & Aust officers who were all above rank of Major. Gordon Bennett flew out Singapore in Hudson bomber 1 day before Sing fell. No leave.

Wednesday 2.9.42

Paid today, (Pounds) 5/4/0, went for swim in warm pool.

Thursday 3.9.42

Today had National Prayer Day at Flemington racecourse. Beautiful course, grassy plots and beautiful track, marched past the CO Ascot Vale. 8000 men & women, biggest march in RAAF history. Ascot Vale is twice as big as any establishment in Aust. Friday 4.9.42.

Air Commodore Barnwell wished us the best & and welcomed the Spitfire squadron back It has a few Pommies in it too, groundstaff. Paid 11/6/4 ,converted Sterling 7--\$22.00.

Saturday 5.9.42.

Went Flemington and saw straight six and steeplechase-backed two thirds and a fifth, so left and came home to bed.

Sunday 6.9.42

Had leave from 3pm, went Melbourne, came back to camp early.

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Monday 7.9.42.

Left Ascot Vale at 1.30 pm and boarded good ship Poeleau Laut at 2.35. A Dutch freighter of 9200 tons, quarters very crude, being the holds with bunks in sets of 6 and 3 high stuck in them. There are 35 "Bomb Happy" Yanks on board and crowd of civil salvage firm going to America to collect some boats & some "sailors" who man the guns, 2 x 3" at the bows, -1 x 3" & 1 x 4" at the stem, as well as 8 multiple 20mm ack ack guns which fire at a rate 200

rounds per minute.. Each emplacement (all 8 of them) has 4 of them in each. There are 6 emplacements for multiple Browning guns. Hope to find out later in the trip which according to rumours will be of 5 weeks duration with first stop Prisco, we shall see how correct this is .The boat left at 5pm on the dot and we were seen off by exactly 23 men-RAAF & US Army officials, & a few wharfies. I am settled in about 5 yards from the stairs so if we do run into some trouble I'll be well in the race.

I thought as we pulled out that I would feel very badly, but I was very jubilant, am still looking forward to the adventure of my life. Going to bed at 9.00. We have anchored off St Kilda, having stopped at 6pm. Apparently we are here in Port Phillip for the night & then shall move off in the morning.

Tuesday 8.9.42.

After stopping in Port Phillip we left this morning at 7 am & and went round in circles& finally arrived back at 12 at the wharf where we started, but turned around again & headed up Port Phillip for a distance of 40 miles until the Heads were reached at 4.10. A slight swell was on only nothing like grandad had told me about. I suppose this was due to the fact that the weather was absolutely beautiful, just like Sydney-no wind & hot sun. We lazed about on the deck all day and practiced "Abandon Ship" drill. Just after leaving the Heads the Pilot was taken off out to the boat "Victoria"- very small and efficient. Cigarettes

are good on the boat- 20 American for 7 cents, about 5 1/2 pence. At the moment it is 9.00pm & the boat is just nosing thru the swell. In some positions I don't feel too good, but I don't think I will be sick .We are making SW along the coast just as if we were going to Adelaide-but we may-who knows.

Wednesday 9.9.42

South Australia- last, last sight for this morning we were "somewhere at sea "& have been all day. Have seen nothing all day and done nothing. The weather is beautiful with bright sunshine. The boat has developed a slight roll now & and the customary lengthways rock. Have been travelling S to SW all day & presume now that we are past Tasmania. Pt Phillip was very uninteresting-just like Sydney Harbour and when nearing the Heads very like Broken Bay. The water here is a peculiar blue, just like Watsons Blue Pacific Ink Saw a most beautiful sight tonight. The wake of the boat was one mass of phosphorous & also along the sides. It was so bright we could see the horizon. There are a score or so seagulls following us, flying around all day. They say they will follow us all the way to Prisco. The food is good and improving.

Thursday 10.9.42

Have seen, done, heard nothing today only that the lectures & PT will start tomorrow. We are still making in a general S direction.

Friday 11.9.42.

Awake to find ourselves travelling E so it looks as if we are on our way properly. Seeing that I had to do kitchen duties I suddenly became seasick & and have just risen from bed at

about 12.30. This morning we put our watches on 25 minutes which brings us 400 odd miles nearer to our destination. We have worked it out that we shall pass New Zealand tonight, but they tell us we shan't be stopping.

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The weather is still beautiful although there is a cold southerly wind from the ice I suppose, but the sea is calm & there is only the rock and roll which although not great becomes very monotonous & naturally ones head swims a little. Played in a euchre tournament tonight, ran second but no prizes.

Saturday 12.9.42

Rose at 11am today, had dinner & went back to bed, have been here all day. It is getting rough & I'm not extra well. Advanced our clocks 22 minutes this morning so we are making good time.. There is a terrific southerly wind blowing & is it cold - never felt anything like it before. There are still about the same number of birds following us, but they are all different to those that started with us. During the day there has been an occasional wave break over the after deck where we are. What a way to spend a Saturday.

Sunday 13.9.42

Went to lectures for the first time today & did washing. No land in sight & all we did was advance our watches 30 minutes.

Monday 14.9.42.

Have seen & heard nothing, only advanced our watches 25 minutes. Monday 14.9.42

Two Mondays ?, yes, crossed the dateline & and put our watches on 28 minutes as well. Saw a whale today. About every 20 or 30 yds it would come to the surface & blow air & water into the air & then dive as a porpoise does. Had the usual lectures but nothing else.

Tuesday 15.9.42

Advanced our watches 25 minutes.

Wednesday 16.9.42.

A big cricket match this afternoon between 16 merchant seamen & 16 of us .Played with a ball made of rope & a wooden bat made by one of the former. 3 coffee tins comprise the wicket. Our team is formed of all the "stooges ", & and what a team, tipped this would happen, and sure enough it did. Despite this however we won by 4 runs. Advanced our watches 20 minutes.

Thursday 17.9.42

Advanced our watches 19 minutes. The gun crews had gun practice today but did not fire the big ones as they did on the trip out, the turrets nearly fell off. They fired tracers from the MGs & 20mm guns. 3 of the 6 they fired went "bung", so if we meat anything there will be a mess.

Friday 18.9.42.

Watches on 21 minutes today. the weather is getting hot & the sun is almost directly above us. There has been hardly a ripple all day today & tonight. The moon is directly above us, a place where I have not seen it before & there hasn't been a cloud in the sky all day. A lot of the boys are up on deck sleeping tonight as it is as hot as hell. Our eleventh day at sea without anything happening.

Saturday 19.9.42.

We are going close to due N at present, as our watches have been altered a further 5 minutes. At 10 pm tonight there was a terrific bump & the boat trembled for a few minutes. A sailor told me it was a "land swell" & and that we were passing the Society Islands and in fact I could see a faint glimmer of lights .It has been hot all day & tomorrow we shall be allowed to wear shorts and shirt to replace the "goonskins" Only for the strong westerly wind today the heat would be unbearable. The wind whipped up the water & as far as the eye could see was one mass of white horses.

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westerly wind today the heat would be unbearable. The wind whipped up the water & as far as the eye could see was one mass of white horses.

Sunday 20.9.42.

Getting hotter as we go further north & spent a day in the kitchen. Hottest day I ever spent. Ate dozens of apples & oranges from the cool room, worked all day in shorts & sandshoes & and must of lost 2 stone in weight No advance in time.

Monday 21.9.42.

Even hotter than yesterday. Our flight had day off because of working yesterday. Advanced watches 2 minutes. Sat in sun for about 15 minutes & got fried. Tuesday 22.9.42.

Watches put on 15 minutes. inter flight sports carnival today. Our flight ran nowhere in the tug-of-war & second in the tunnel ball. The weather was beautiful & sunny but very hot. Had about 5 salt water showers.

Wednesday 23.9.42.

Advanced watches 12 minutes. Still hot & sunny with showers all day. Saw thousands of flying fish they fly about 6" off the water & for a distance up to 100yds. They seem to average 7 or 8 inches in length with wings about the length of their body. The top of their body is black or blue & the bottom white. Judging by the speed of the boat they travel at about 15 knots.

Thursday 24.9.42.

Advanced watches 14 minutes, & crossed the "line" at 8.03am. This afternoon the Merchant Navy put on the old King Neptune act. They went to unending trouble to give us what they

called would be an unforgettable day & it certainly was. King Neptune, his Queen & secretary were very well made up wearing skirts of unravelled rope & brassiers of rope & hair of the same. The King's Court were the most curiously dressed & made up lot I have ever seen. They reminded me very much of Katoomba on New Years Eve. They had everything from scanties to silk pyjamas. Goodness knows where they came from as I'm sure they didn't belong to the sole female, the nurse on board. On the aft well deck they made a bath about 20'x 20'x 4 feet deep using a tarpaulin. The CO, Fit Lt Edwards received the best ducking of the lot, being tried & found guilty by the King & then pasted with flour & water & then walked the plank & received the finest three duckings I've ever seen. The moon tonight is the most beautiful I've ever seen. It is full & above the clouds. The rays from it show all colours & the way it transforms the clouds into glowing masses is an unforgettable sight. The reflection on the water is a definite change & the moon resembles a chinese lantern.

Friday 25.9.42.

Advanced our watches 14 minutes. Just on sunset we sighted a "6 master" steam ship about 8 miles away. With the naked eye one could see only the smoke, but with binoculars could see the masts. The MN men identified it as a big American transport. Tonight the lads put on a concert for the officials & us. The acts were wonderful - so good the Captain has invited the performers to his cabin for a dozen bottles of beer. Captain Van Beek presented prizes for the winners of the inter - flight competitions - he is a great scout. Saturday 26.9.42.

Advanced watches 15 minutes.

Sunday 27. 9.42

Advanced watches 3 minutes. Had a church parade today & a small sermon by one of the lads.

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Monday 28.9.42.

Advanced watches 1 minute. Stepped off Australia 21 days ago & I often wonder whether I shall set foot there again. Have decided to get home as soon as possible but I still think I'll go on when the moment comes. It seems funny. While I am determined to get home something says No. See what you can - whatever the result. I guess I'm just a sad'n, or as the boys of the old 14th Fid Amb would say, No Hoper. I often wonder where Tich,

Smithy & the boys are & whether they're had their "Baptism of Fire "yet. I suppose they have as the Japs are getting close. I only hope that the youngsters of the Militia will stand the strain, but knowing them I doubt it very much. This is a funny moment for me & I'd better stop as I feel I could reminiscence all night.

Tuesday 29.9.42

Advanced watches 3 minutes. All day today there has been a sea as calm as a swimming pool. Not a breath of wind & the sun very hot. It was no doubt a calm. There was a general alarm this morning when we crossed the wake of some craft & about 400 yards to the port there was a shining object in the middle of it. We immediately swung away & and clapped on the speed & and that is all that happened. I think it was only a tin of some description dropped from the boat

Wednesday 30.9.42.

Advanced watches 12 minutes today, bringing the total time to 5 hrs 20 mins, which leaves 40 mins to go. By these figures we should be in Prisco tomorrow. Today the weather is ideal again & there is a very big swell which creates the worst roll the boat has had this trip. Had a big dinner this evening. Roast beef, baked pots carrots & beans & trifle & cherries set in jelly. Invited the salvage crew & the ships officers & gave them a grand concert after dinner. The only trouble was that we were duty flight & I worked until 1. 30am Thursday, Finishing & cleaning up.

Thursday 1. 10.42

Advanced watches 20 minutes. Roughest weather we've had to date.

Friday 2.10.42

Advanced watches 12 minutes. After 27 days on this old tub we finally made it. Had leave in "Frisco from 6 to 12.30. Of course no one took any notice of the time we arrived back although the old mongrel Flt Lt Edwards threatened us with a court martial. Six of us started to wander around a little & finally finished up in the 365 Club. 6 beautiful girls made up the floor show & they put on some turns which only go to bear out what is said about America's morale. We stayed there all night & and arrived back at the boat about 3am. Saturday 3.10.42.

Given leave from 11am to 4.15 pm so Les, Smithy & I decided to look the town over. "Frisco is only very small, - about as big as Melbourne but it has many night clubs & beer parlours as they call them & the only big building (about 30 storeys high), is an apartment house. The trams in Prisco are worse than the oldest ones in Sydney & they are all privately owned as are the railroads. Having nothing to do in the afternoon we decided to go see a game of football. They call it gridiron & and it was between 2 crack colleges called Santa Clara & Stanford. The only thing that kept us there for the 4 hours was the amusing barracking by the cheer squads. Every 1/2 minute they have a rest either because there was a touchdown or someone was hurt. Another amazing thing was the tricycled box of iced water that both sides had.

Every break the box would be pulled into the middle of the field by some supporters for the players to partake. The field is 100 x 50 yds & the ball smaller than a league ball. After reporting to the Ferry building at 4.15 pm, we jumped a ferry to Oakland, a town on the opposite side of the bay to 'Frisco. On the way we over we caught another glimpse of

Alcatraz, which we had seen the day before on the way into harbour. According to Major McGee, the American who was in charge of the troops, anyone approaching to 200 yds of the island was just committing suicide. At Oakland we boarded a Southern Pacific train for Vancouver. Of course it is air conditioned & has fair dinkum negro waiters in the dining car. The first meal we had was a "boomer" as Jack would say. It consisted of everything from roast beef to ice cream. We were unable to see any of Oakland as we boarded the train as soon as we arrived & it was dusk then. These Yanks are beauts for the "bites", (tips), the negroes brought around a tin & told, not asked us to subscribe to them as it was our duty. We are cruising along at about 80mph tonight.

Sunday 4.10.42

Awoke to find the line surrounded by trees of a height of anything up to up to 150ft.. One moment the train would be on top of a mountain looking down on the most wondrous panorama I've seen. The big trees looked like matches in the distance 2000 ft below. Even on the top of these peaks the line was still a mere pencil line thru these terrific Oregon Pines for this was Oregon. Then the line would wind down a mountainside just clinging there & then into a chasm surrounded by mountain peaks covered with terrific pines. Here & there perhaps would be little clearings looking the size of a threepenny piece, where one could just perceive the huts of lumbermen & and from these clearings would run log chutes & a little track for cars looking so small among the terrific expanse of the "Cascades".

Occasionally the line would run along side a lake as smooth as glass with pines down to the very edge. The reflection of these in the water is truly marvellous. In a minute we'd be looking down on a lake, which was surrounded by pines in a terrific gully. Amongst all this one feels so helpless & smaller, useless. Most of these forests are virgin. In the afternoon we ran out of these mountains into more plain like country which was covered by young forest for it had been cut out. Into the hills again following the Oregon River & saw some beautiful sights as we did yesterday. The river for hundreds of miles is covered by logs until it reaches a dam where the water is harnessed for the three terrific paper mills about which is found the fair sized town of Oregon City. A further 38 minutes run to Portland where a few of us managed to duck off for a while & were just overwhelmed by hospitality. Received offers

for car rides & drinks & everything, but we only stopped to change trains, so soon knocked them all back & were finally recalled to the train belonging to the Great Northern. Nowhere near as good as the Southern Pacific, but air conditioned & as stuffy as a pub at 6 o'clock on Saturday.

Monday 5.10.42.

Made Vancouver at 6am & had breakfast, thru by 9am & received money & exchanged blankets for thicker ones. Some leave granted from 10am till 4.30. Vancouver is very unimpressive as a city the buildings & trams being mostly old and out of date even by our standards. Had a wonderful swim & shower at the YMCA & a better feed of steak at the Hotel Georgia. Went to Stanley Park which is surely marvellous, being untouched by human hands & squirrels running around all over the place. Explored many little bridle tracks which were cut out of thick bush dotted with enormous trees.

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At the station that night from 4.15 to 8. 00pm the boys attracted half the local population by the show of tossing & cheering & singing for the Escort. When that was finished at about 6.pm, we all stood around & sang & danced & shouted for the remaining 2 hours. We sang everything from Tipperary to Australia Fair & what a show. Steamed out at 8pm on a Canadian National train.

Tuesday 6.10.42.

Into the Rockies - truly magnificent, very much like the Cascades only much bigger with snow tops. All the morning we followed a river or rapids which were very shallow - only 12 or 18 inches in most parts. It was a distinct pale green in colour as were the numerous lakes surrounded by terrific peaks. Unfortunately it was cloudy all day & raining most of the time & there were many sights that were blotted out by fog & cloud. One wonderful scene was a view right up a deep canyon about 20 miles long. Lined both sides with snow capped peaks & at the end was Mt Robson, a terrific mountain of 13000 ft in height. The peek is the amazing thing about this mountain.. At last after about an hours run we came to directly below it. The top is apparently a plateau of tremendous size. The main beauty of the Rockies is their size which is spellbinding. Right thru the Rockies the mountain sides are covered by fir or pine trees in which is scattered a tree called the Larch. It is bright yellow in colour & makes a beautiful sight in amongst the rest of the perfectly green pines. Struck Jasper - which passed about 4.00pm when we advanced our watches 1 hour. Jasper has an Indian Reservation somewhere near, but it was raining cats & dogs & one could only just make out the snow capped peaks of the mountains surrounding the little town on all sides. Just had time to stretch our legs. After Jasper it was only an hours time to the Eastern foothills of the Rockies & then into the plains, where the wheat had just been harvested & as far as the eye could see there were fields of stubble. Then at approx 9.30 we struck Edmonton, a town in Alberta, one of the prairie States, finally got to bed in an air conditioned hut with a mattress & sheets & pillows.

Wednesday 7.10.42.

Got our photos & fingerprints taken today in the camp. Apparently it has bee a showground but is now a RCAF camp holding 3000 men. It is called a screening depot where all the "Drongoes" come to be equipped & knocked into shape. There are dozens of huts holding 144 men separated in the middle by showers etc & all airconditioned at any temperature desired. All the NCOs are great scouts, but the "5 week wonders" are fair b.....-demanding salutes wherever they go.

Thursday 8.10.42.

Went on a route march this morning, but the boys didn't like it After we'd been on the road about an hour we'd duck into any shops we may pass & finally we all arrived back in camp in cars, trucks & taxis, which formed quite a procession. The only ones who walked were the NCOs. Got leave tonight until 11 o'clock. Everyone I think got a lift into Edmonton - about 6 miles without ever asking for it We got a French Canadian who asked us where we wanted to go (he said he'd take us anywhere) we went to the town & bought him a beer & he then

took his leave. The RAAF took charge of the town tonight, I don't think anyone arrived back before 2.30am. I met a very nice girl called Gladys Sutherland from South Edmonton.

Friday 9.10.42.

Edmonton is very much like Vancouver - slow & old fashioned. Have done nothing all day.

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Have been told that we have been posted to a wireless school at Calgary, about 200 miles from here. Stayed at home & wrote letters home.

Saturday 10. 10.42.

Left Edmonton at approx 12 noon. Travelled 200 miles south in 4 hours. Some going. Traversed some more of the prairies, arrived at the camp at about 5pm. A big University of 3 floors it had been. The lecture rooms are still as they were & all airconditioned of course. The radio equipment here is said to be some of the best in the world. We shall be starting on that in about a month's time. Had a good look round tonight. A beer lounge & writing room & canteen equal to anything in Sydney. All sports equipment - any sport, plenty of paper & envelopes & everything one would want. Entertainment in the Auditorium every night. Concerts - pictures etc, all this is done by the YMCA - truly the greatest organisation for help to the services that is functioning today. They have 2 men employed here who do nothing else but help us as much as they can.

Sunday 11.10.42.

Had some leave on which Curly, Les & myself just looked things over. A very nice town this Calgary, with the Hudson's Bay Company having the biggest building in the centre of the town as in all Canadian towns. Met some nice people, one lot of which invited us in for a nice cup of tea & told us we would be very welcome on their farm at Carstairs, any time we liked. (60 miles from here).

Monday 12. 10.42

Had some lectures today, including 4 lots of morse. I don't think I'll ever be able to pick up the P.L. learnt that we are C/B for a fortnight but even then half the boys have gone out. I didn't go & aren't until the finances are in better shape.

Tuesday 13.10.42.

4 more morse periods & still P/L is still something I'm fishing for. The Corporal told me that one of these days it will just hit me,.

Wednesday 15. 10.42.

The usual morse periods.

Thursday 16.10.42.

ditto. Pictures at night.

Friday 16.10.42.

ditto. Concert at night.

Saturday 17.10.42.

Stood down at 12.15 & late on parade at 2.00, so the 6 of us had to drive cars to the Sergeants dance held in the Auditorium. They all arrived half drunk & half of them carried home women & all. Grand show.

Sunday 18.10.42.

Wrote letters & played ping-pong with Des all day.

Monday 19. 10.42

Back to the morse again - pictures.

Tuesday 20.10.42.

Ditto - Bob Hope.

Wednesday 21.10.42

Had 1 needle for tetanus & tests to see if we were subject to scarlet fever & diphtheria & blood test. Went to town & had quiet night at pictures with Curly.

we

Thursday 22.10.42.

Had the usual Thursdays wing parade & the whole school marched down to the city thru the main street & back again !. about 6 miles for a war bonds drive.

Friday 23.10.42.

Saturday 24. 10.42.

Went ice skating with the boys & seeing there was a trial blackout &

- YMCA were running a dance went to it. There were 10 men per girl so went to sleep in an

armchair. Temp 16 deg F in town.

Sunday 25.10.42.

Slept nearly all day. Snow from yesterday still lying around.

Monday 26.10.42.

Started snowing in earnest - all day & and the temp is fairly high. Tuesday 27.10.42.

Still snowing. 6 inches deep everywhere. it is beautiful, soft & warm, have had some wonderful fights. The more I see of the senior NCOs here the more I dislike them. As Bob used to say they are like women. They seem to try & overcome this by bullying in a very childish way. There is one wild W02 here tonight. The boys pasted him today in the

- club hall. He will be getting snow out of his hair & uniform all winter. Got 4 letters from

Mum.

Wednesday 28.10.42

Still snowing.

Thursday 29.10.42.

Still snowing

Friday 30.10.42.

Payday \$25.00 - whacko.

Saturday 31.10.42

- Had a nice quiet day with Shorty. Went to pictures & saw Paulette

Goddard & also Shorty had photos taken.

Sunday 1. 11.42

- Mum's birthday, must send cable tomorrow. Rose late & wrote letters.

Monday 2.11.42.

Got issue of winter clothes & "battle dress". All very happy - especially Shorty & his long underclothes.

Tuesday 3.11.42.

Got 8 letter today - one from work.

Wednesday 4.11.42

Had a wonderful snow fight with Curley. After about 5 mins were both done - but I managed to rub a lot in his hair.

Thursday 5.11.42.

Friday 6.11.42.

Saturday 7.11.42.

Had a great party at St Marks Hall, West Calgary. 40 girls from Hudson's Bay Company turned up. Took one of them home - very nice. A batch of Aussies arrived tonight. 20 Course & 29 course. They scrubbed 50% 29 Course pilots on the co-ordination test, ad ITS exams - not bad.

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Sunday 9.11.42.

Another wonderful day - as all Sundays have been up to date. Wrote letters this afternoon. Am off to the pictures in the Auditorium. The first month has simply flown & I only hope that the remaining 6 go just as fast as the first. The morse is beginning to get very

- monotonous & I would certainly like to drop it & be a straight gunner But they won't let me

& I know that Pop wouldn't like it so shall stick to it.

Monday 9.11.42

- Tuesday 10.11.42.

Wednesday 11.11.42.

Had 2 minutes silence today. Am beginning to wonder why I &

- thousands of others are suckers enough to fight for these Jews who shall end this war when

they feel like it. Although now I think they are coming to the same position as they did in

Russia in 1917. There are certainly going to be sparks flying after this show whether the - Allies come out on top or not.

Thursday 12.11.42

Went to the pictures at the Auditorium tonight. The YM certainly look after us.

Friday 13.11.42.

Had a Chinook today. A local phenomenon caused by air pressure or something of the sort. The Rockies which stand over us to the west about 80 miles away are spanned by a terrific arch of azure blue sky. The rest of the sky is covered by black clouds. The hot wind that is part of the Chinook, has melted most of the snow & everything is just mud & slush. The temperature at the moment must be every bit of 40 degrees, so it is quite hot.

Saturday 14.11.42.

This weekend was to have been a 48 hour leave until these Canadian-----decided that the way our flight (84A) got around the station "in an attitude & bearing that

- was unairmanlike ". On the strength of this they stopped our leave & made us duty flight. We

are one of the few all Australian flights on the station & we are getting the works. They give us all the dirty work to do all the time. Of course we have been playing up a little but only as much as an Australian always does. But I suppose all this is only what one has to put up with in someone else's country. What a way to spend a Saturday night -sweeping a building out. Sunday 15.11.42.

Still hot or rather about 40 degrees. Sunny day & still plenty of mud & slush around although it has cooled down considerably & the wind is coming up.

Sunday 15.11.42.

Experienced a "blizzard" today. 70 mph wind bringing with it about 18 inches of snow. Temperature dropped to about 20 degrees below .At Edmonton there was as - much as 6 ft of snow in the main street according to the newspapers.

Tuesday 17.11.42.

On glancing this have noticed that I missed the result of ITS exams. Averages 84% & came 9th or 10th.

Wednesday 18.11.42.

Really got cold today. The papers say that winter has shown first signs - of coming. Maximum temperature for last 24 hours was 2 degrees & mm -17 degrees - quite cool.

IIiui

Thursday 19,11.42.

Another Chinook this afternoon.

Friday 20.11.42.

The heat is still here but in spite of that there is still quite a lot of ice all - over the place. I hope it stays like today for the weekend

Saturday 21.11.42.

As there is a 21st birthday (Terry & twin Smith) on Saturday week

- Curley, Sailor, Arthur, James & myself tramped Calgary this afternoon after a ball. Finally

found one at the " Elks" & hooked same. Had quite a wild night arriving back at 4.30am. Sunday 22.11.42.

Rose at 12 o'clock & then devoured a roast pork dinner. Still quite warm

today.

Monday 23.11.42.

Results of tests last Saturday. 78% & placed 9th. Very satisfied as each subject has about 20 failures. Devoured Mum's cake just now.

Tuesday 24.11.42.

Started snowing last night. Had 10 inches in 16 hours. All lines are about 2 inches thick with snow. The snow plough has been at work cutting paths for us to walk on, very cold. Have been a bit worried about the morse, so had a yarn with Corp Browning - he told me there was no need to worry. Quite a relief.

Wednesday 25.11.42.

Went to town tonight & saw "Flying Tigers ", not a bad show.

Thursday 26.11.42.

Started to snow this morning & has just stopped. Very cold.

Friday 27.11.42.

Went for a "flip" today. Flew with young Pilot Officer & pupil in a Cessna, a twin engined trainer with speed of 200 mph. We were up for 2 hours during which the pilot did everything but turn the plane inside out. We dive bombed a bridge & flying up & down the valleys one wing & then on the other to negotiate a bend which was wonderful. Hedge hopping is a great sport although the first time I saw a high tension wire rushing towards us I certainly felt queer, but when we pulled out I could see the pilot knew what he was doing although I still wished That I were the one hanging on to those controls but still I don't suppose I shall ever achieve that ambition. I had the best 2 hours rye ever had so far & yet I am not over anxious to go up, maybe it is because everything was just as I had expected but this flying game will certainly do me.

Saturday 28.11.42.

- All broke as pay day is not until Monday. Shorty & I are going to see

"White Cargo". Very cold - the warmest it has been I think must be 20 deg below. -

Sunday 29.11.42.

Had a quiet day writing letters & then the pictures in the Auditorium tonight. Monday 30.11.42.

Tuesday 1.12.42.

Had a game of broom ball on the ice rink today. Everyone had a broom & the object was to hit a soccer ball into some ice hockey nets. With our rubber overshoes on it - was so slippery there was not one of standing on the ice.

Wednesday 3.12.42.

Thursday 4.12.42

P.12

Friday 4.12.42.

Sent cables to everyone at home for Xmas & also one for Grandad's birthday. Saturday 5.12.42.

I ran a big party at the Elks in 7th Avenue Calgary to commemorate the the 21st birthday of Tony & Doug Smith twins A great turnout - lucky supper & all. On arrival back at camp had a fight with Les Trumble & made quite a mess of him. All over remarks he has being passing behind my back ever since we left Melbourne.

- Sunday 6.12.42.

Snowing again.

Tuesday 8.12.42.

Wednesday 9.12.42

Thursday 10.11.42.

My birthday. That makes me just 19. The pressure is on aircrew. 2 of our flight have got 3 days CB for putting their hands in their pockets to get some money whilst walking across the parade ground. This place is just a kindergarten & if I know men there will be a strike before long. I wonder where I'll be for my next birthday.

Friday 11.12.42.

Saturday 12. 12.42

Big ice hockey match on this afternoon our flight played 48. Only for the Canadians in it we would have won it. As it was we were only beaten 3-1.

Sunday 13. 12.42.

Another Chinook with inches of slush all over the place as usual. this time it has been about 3 days coming with the temp gradually increasing until now when the sun is shining just as it does in Aussie. But of course it is in the south & much closer to the horizon. Monday 14.12.42

Witnessed a wonderful sight this afternoon just before sunset. The arch of clear blue sky was still there & the sun was just about to drop from the clouds. It lit up the

- Rockies which were covered with snow. It showed them up better than flashlights would & it

looked as though they were lit by a white neon light.

Tuesday 15. 12.42

Had our marks back. Morse 100, Visual 100, Procedures 65, Theory 87,

Practical 94. Very happy although I should have got more than I did in Procedure.

Wednesday 16.12.42.

Received cheque \$17.42 today from family for Birthday & Xmas.

Thursday 17. 12.42.

Got letter from Ethel Beanies a little piece I met in Melbourne. Very nice.

Friday 18.12.42.

Saturday 19. 12.42.

- Met a nice girl, Mary Anderson, & took her home - she came from Sweden when about 8.

Sunday 19. 12.42.

Snow again- looks like a white Xmas.

Monday 21.12.42.

Greatly relieved today. Had letters saying that some of mine had arrived. - Tuesday 22.12.42.

Wednesday 23.12.42.

5 days leave started 5.00pm

P.13

Spent a few hours in the Royal & boarded a west bound train at 11. 00pm Thursday 24.12.42

After crossing the Rockies & then Banff Arrived at Golden BC at 3.40, after coming distance of 170 miles. Slept nearly all the time in carriages worse than the old

- Aussie ones Had a room with "Sailor" at the Yeldham Hotel Mrs Cross is paying for it.

Drove around town delivering presents with same in a Plymouth car. The town is surrounded by mountains on all sides & is in the Columbia Valley. Plenty of snow - anything up to a foot.

- Was originally a lumber town, but now it is all cut out. The hills surrounding have only

young stuff on them. The only thing that keeps town going is a small mine out about 20 miles. The town will pass out in about another 5 years. There are 2 stores, 2 pubs, baker, &

2 cafes. Started snowing late this afternoon. Mrs Cross sent us to the Pounds - the United Church minister for supper. Had roast pheasant - very nice. This man has been in China, Europe, Syria, Jerusalem, Egypt, Singapore, but never in Aussie. Had quite a discussion, our hosts being quite inquisitive about Aussie.

Friday 25. 12.42.

Xmas Day. A White Xmas - beautiful sunshine. A turkey dinner at Pounds with cranberry sauce. They always have it here. Another turkey dinner at Cross's, and what a dinner - oh boy, never ate so much in my life. But I was put to shame by 2 bachelors - Jake & Bill. They stared by undoing their vests & finished with half their fly undone. 4 different kinds of vegetables & of course the white flesh of turkey, what more could one ask. Also 3 nips of whisky during the evening of "whist".

Saturday 26.12.42.

Rose 11 .00am as we have since arrival. Cold turkey dinner here at the hotel & this afternoon Sailor & I decided to climb one of the surrounding mountains. It was a beautiful sunny day but on getting half way to our goal it became so cold that we stopped & lit a fire with some grass & wood & after getting warm turned around & came back. Had tea again at Pounds - cold turkey & then looked in at the local country dance being run in the

- hall. Very slow & left about 9.30.

Sunday 27.12.42.

Awake 12.00 to find heavy snow falling as it had been since early this morning. Have just had a beautiful steak for dinner & Dr has just called & invited us to tea tonight. Last night Sailor went to bed & I stayed up & talked with E Jacobsen - proprietor of this pub. He is a Swede, but in 1907 was in Aussie & NZ working & says they are the best in the world. He raves over the "ironbark" & also over the wine which used to cost 1/6 a gallon & then get 3d back on the jug. That appeals to him more than anything. His wife is very nice

- & is Welsh. She keeps the place spotlessly clean & works very hard. The old man says that

they will be the last to leave Golden & that won't be very long. He wants to go back to Aussie to live. Went to Dr Barclays place for another Xmas dinner & what a beaut - ate everything

- but the kitchen sink. Left early & went tobogganing with Sailor & 2 lasses. Walked up the bill on the main road, but the snow was too deep & soft so we went to "Moody's" a special toboggan track about 200yds long - 16 feet wide & as steep as a cliff face. It certainly was sport. Dean on the front being blinded by snow tearing past his face & then a tree would loom up & everyone would lean over to avoid it. The bumps made it a thrill & a half. The toboggan must have in mid air for more than half the time. Went & had tea & cake at one of

- the girl's places & bed at about 2

P.14

Monday 28.12.42.

Rose at about 10 & made the rounds of goodbyes & left Golden with some regret at 12.30. We certainly enjoyed ourselves, but somehow it hasn't seemed like a Xmas to me. They do things properly here. The highly decorated trees & presents, & work of art in

- every house I saw. The climb from Golden to the summit at Field was negotiated with the

help of 2 terrific 59 engines with a capacity of 18000 imp gallons of oil. The rail line went thru two spiral tunnels & mostly followed by a terrific gorge, on either side of which towered

- terrific peaks covered with snow.. Then on to Lake Louise & Banff over country of the same

type. Banff is a reservation & all the way along may be seen buffalo, elk, & a host of animals. It was very hard to come back here last night but still it has to be done.

Tuesday 29. 12.42.

Back to the old grind with nothing new. Going back to Golden for a while. The only entertainment there is dancing, skating & "curling". The last of the 3 is a game enjoyed with immense enthusiasm by all ages. It is played on a stretch of ice 100ft long. Each end of this strip has circles ranging from 0 to 4 feet in diameter. The idea is to slide a 40lb block of granite the length of the pitch into the circle. The rules are the same as for deck quoits.

Wednesday 30.12.42 - Thursday 31.12.42.

New Years Eve. It doesn't seem like any time since last one spent down at the RAAF & at Katoomba with Bob. Had the wildest night ever at the Palliser Hotel, got to bed at 6am.

Friday 1. 1.43

1943 with quite a hangover. Wonder what this year will bring forth.

Saturday 2. 1.43 - Sunday 3.1.43.

Very quiet weekend with snow

Monday 4.1.43

- Still cold.

Tuesday 5.1.43 Wednesday 6.1.43.

Met a very nice girl named Dorothy. Went to town.

Thursday 7.1.43

Studying hard for next Monday. Am beginning to wonder where all this is going to end & whether it is worth hard work. War news is bright on all fronts & am a little worried as to whether I shall get into this war at all.

Friday 8.1.43.

- Saturday 9.1.43.

Sunday 10.1.43.

- Had a quiet weekend of study & sent photos of Xmas home.

Monday 11.1.43.

Exams today - 14th week. Did quite well I think. Doesn't seem like any time

- since we left Aussie.

Tuesday 12.1.43

Have just come into hospital with mumps - expect about 3 weeks. Have had

- complications & am now an incomplete man.

P.15

Tuesday 2.2.43

Came out of hospital today after 22 days. Lost 14 lbs & are as weak as a kitten. Found out that I got 85% in 14th week exams. 3 Days leave.

Wednesday 3.2.43.

Slept in & had a laze around - had a few beers in tavern with the boys. When in hospital the temperature reached 56 deg below - coldest for 27 years. The boys had good leave.

Thursday 4.2.43

Same as yesterday.

Friday 5.2.43

Ditto.

Saturday 6.2.43

Met nice little girl named Regina - a head waitress at "Jimmies". Sunday 7.2.43

Blizzard today. Had the warning last night over radio. Everybody is in the hut asleep. The heating system is ruined & temperature inside is 46 deg above.

Monday 8.2.43.

Started work today with 56 course. It is going to be tough parting with the boys, - but still !. Heard from Tich, Jack Porter dead with malaria & pneumonia & Bill Cameron

killed in his first action. According to Tich these Japs are swine. I only hope I get a chance to

meet some of the bastards. I wish sometimes I were in the infantry at Moresby. -
Tuesday 9.2.43.

Wednesday 10.2.43.

Morse test & visual today. Surprised myself with a 3 in morse & more in visual. Was pleased to see the Exam Board who told me the leave would be OK & also that I had "a fine record".

Thursday 11.2.43.

- Have decided where I am going on 9 days leave tomorrow. Train to Spokane & thence bus to Seattle or Portland. Gasping for money. Borrowed \$25.00. I intend having a good time & seeing all I can while I can.

Friday 12.2.43.

Left Calgary, headed for Spokane Wash. 7.00pm. Arrived Macleod midnight. Had to wait 4 1/2 hours for train. Took a stroll down town about 1/2 mile from the station & found it a typical little western "cow town" identical with those depicted on the films. Finally caught train about 4.30am.

Saturday 13.2.43

Arrived York just this side of the border at 8.00am, from York to Spokane was across hilly but not mountainous country which was mostly wheat farming. They had

- terrific snows here about a month ago. In places the fences in the fields were invisible with

only just the corner posts showing above the snow. Crossed the 49th parallel at about 10.00am at Eastport Idaho & Kingsvale Canada, 2 stations each about 30yds long next to each other. These two towns share the same main street which is crossed by a gate which represents the "line". Had a good feed of bacon & eggs. Arrived Spokane 6.00pm & was greeted by a Mr Spencer who looked after the 54 course lads when they were there. There

- were 15 of us & he took those who wanted homes with him, since I intended to catch the first

• bus out I went to the YMCA & stayed the night after having a very good look around town, which is of about 100,000 population.

P.16

Very much the same as Calgary as a town, only slightly bigger. Not at all impressed. Sunday 14.2.43.

Caught bus at 8.00am & what a bus. Cruised along, 45 - 50 mph all the way. 300 miles in 10 hours, with stops every 2 & 3 hours. Not bad going. They ride smooth as a glider. To Ellensburg - about 110 miles is over this useless sage brush desert. Crossed the Columbia River which is a beauty. The run from here to Seattle was mainly on the mountains over the summit of Mt Rainier. They had the heaviest snows in years here just recently. There were hundreds of cars & skiers. Telegraph posts were completely covered in places, & the road was just an alley cut thru the snow. For 30 odd miles the road was just about 20 feet wide with huge sides about 20 or 30 feet high of snow. It took 2 weeks working 24 hours a day to get this road open after the snow. Arrived Seattle about 6 pm & first job was to find a room. Got the last one in town after a search 2 hours, \$2.00 just for a so-called room. Went to the pictures which are open until 5.00 am for the "swing shift" at the docks & waterfront. Haven't seen much of Seattle yet.

Monday 15.2.43.

Rose late & after shower etc set out to look the town over. Went out to have another look at Lake Washington, which was blanketed in fog when we came in. Had another look at the floating bridge over the lake which we had crossed the night before. It is all concrete & floats on pontoons & is 1 1/4 (approx) long. Population of Seattle is just short of 1/2 million in normal times but is said to be 3/4 million now. Boeing has 2 big plants here. One a factory where the parts are made & the other the assembly plant. The ship building is a very big industry also. They build all the Navy's destroyers here. All over Seattle & suburbs are barrage balloons. Each one has a group of 12 men with a truck looking after it. They have nice huts & kitchens & nothing to do, but what a job. Met George Turner a Scotch shipwright

- who is married with a nice home in South Seattle overlooking Puget Sound. He took me

home in the bus - there are no trams here to sleep there until I left Seattle. It was a godsend. Very nice wife & a big Chev car which is in dock with a cracked block - a result of the cold weather. Home has 'fridge, electric stove, washer, water system, & "the works". He should have been named Hunt - he is so much like Jock in temperament etc. Had an early night after a fairly heavy day. Prices are terrific because of the wages being earned. I had a measly steak with fried eggs & chips & the cost was \$2.28 x 3% tax which is charged on everything above 10 c. For the smaller amounts they have tax tokens equal to 1/3 cent. Nickel stuff with a hole in the middle. Butter 75c lb & bread 20c a loaf. Unbelievable, but quite true. George earns \$95.00 a week & told me that an unskilled labourer could get \$45 or 50 quite easily. Tuesday 16.2.43.

- Slept in until after midday then went to town on the bus - no street cars in

Seattle. Had seen most of Seattle so decided to go into a saloon where they sell beer & wine.

Hard liquor has to be bought under permit at a Government store. Met a merchant seaman &

- learnt some interesting things. I asked him what he thought of Henry Kaiser's boats. The reply

was that he wouldn't care to sign on in one of them. George told me that 3 weeks ago they launched 2 of them & both broke in halves when they hit the water. He also said that the Yanks know nothing about ship building & yet after a month working in a shipyard they know more about than these Scots who have been at the game for generations. There's the Yanks. The number of women in the saloon was amazing. They were all married to either sailors or soldiers but think nothing of sleeping with anything else. This sailor who said he was off to Sydney told me he had been married 7 times & divorced as many times.

P.17

I gave him Dad's address as he said he would look him up when he got to Sydney. Everyone I have met has been unanimous in the attitude of these American women to their principles - if any, and obligations. They aren't worth a bumper - any of them. George told me that the men are the same. They'll tell you one thing one minute & stab you in the back the

- next. The percentage of "cross breeds" in the States is terrific & I defy anyone to pick out a

man & say he is a typical American. Their fight in Africa proves this. A terrific army pushed back 35 miles in 2 days. There is no unity whatsoever in these people & if they ever cop what

- London has then heaven help them. The Russians are certainly the boys. Now that they have retaken Rostov, the Japs have been outed from NG, only for Africa the war situation is very good. Went to a show tonight & saw "Eagle Squadron", another bit of American propaganda. Wednesday 17.2.43

Had a quiet day & just went to town to the pictures, a big Fortress crashed into Frye & Co's plant in Seattle, killing the crew & passengers of 14 & 14 workmen. The engines caught fire over Puget Sound & apparently the famous pilot Eddie Allen tried to reach the Boeing airfield, but fell short by about a mile. The whole thing is mysterious as he could have easily dropped her in the Sound. The fire that resulted remained burning for 36 hours & caused a main road to be blocked for 24 hours.

Thursday 18.2.43.

Getting very fed up with Seattle & jus about broke so think I will go home tomorrow. As usual I woke about noon. Stopped around the house all day & went to the White Center at night & knocked a few over. The locals are all very well off at present. All with brand new cars & big homes & fittings & all earning 90 to 100 dollars per week. George told me they are all penniless the day after payday & own nothing as they have everything on TP. He said that after the war they would just go back to their farms. He also told me that 80% of the

cars that General Motors make are partly paid for & these finances are controlled by the Company's own finance companies.

Friday 19.2.43.

- Caught bus at 2 pm at the depot in town & after a trip on which I slept most of the way arrived in Spokane at midnight. As I had very little "lucre" I decided that the army was the best bet for somewhere to stay until train time, which was midnight the next night. Went to the MPs & put it to them. They were only too pleased & ran me out to their camp at Fort Wright about 10 miles out of town. They were a great lot, & it is a great camp. Slept with sheets, pillow slips & the rest with the NCOs & men who all sleep together. Saturday 20.2.43.

had a wonderful breakfast in the mess where officers, NCOs & men eat. 10

- at a table with jams & sauces & are waited on by "rookie" orderlies. The tucker is wonderful

& is brought in big plates & one just helps himself & after a plate becomes empty you just whistle an orderly to pick it up. Spent the day there, had a good look around the camp. It is

- HQ of the 2nd US Army Air Force & it was where Clark Gable did his rookie training. The

MPs who are mostly young are from all over the States & the difference in their speech is very vast. Those from Georgia & Kentucky speak a foreign language compared to those from the Bronx - NY & Detroit. I found in the States that the children's "drawl" is even more exaggerated than their parents. It is the same in Canada. I don't find it hard to imagine them speaking a completely foreign language to our English within 4 or 5 generations. But the US

- Army is surely a great place for the private. He lives like a king. I don't think it does them

much good though after their show in Africa. They drove me into town to catch the train. I

- spent 24 hours in the US Army & I consider that quite an experience.

P. 18

Sunday 2 1.2.43.

Retraced tracks only changed at Lethbridge instead of Macleod. This time arrived in Calgary 10.00 pm & strange as it may seem am not sorry to be back "home". Monday 22.2.43.

Back to work today, very hard & the morse is driving me mad. Tuesday 23.2.43.

Getting on well with the boys in 560 but they are not as good a lot as 54A & - again they are not as good as the 14th Field Ambulance.

Wednesday 24.2.43.

Very pleased at a zero & 14 wpm today.

Thursday 25 .2.43.

Starting to study hard & am after a commission. Clean boots every morning & pressed battledress every week now.

Friday 26.2.43

Decided to go to Banff for weekend.

Saturday 27.2.43.

12 of us in 2 cars - Plymouth - 1939. Left Calgary at 2.00 pm & arrived at Banif- 84 miles away at 3.55. They arrived 20 minutes later. What a car & what a road. Unfortunately the last 20 miles was over ice covered road & had to slow down to about 60 mph. The rest was covered at between 70 & 80 & believe me we were flat out to get 80 out of it & I am very lucky to be alive. The boys were a little scared at my driving. I passed & raced everything on the road but still that's the life. Gee, its great to get some power under one's feet. The road for the last 20 miles was through a pass, towering on both sides were peaks going up to 10800 ft. One feels so helpless here amid these mountains whose size is beyond imagination. Arrived in Banff& the 12 of us strolled, or rushed did I say, to a pub. Had a rather quiet night at a dance. The main street of Banff ends at both ends with a terrific peak. We stayed at the Salvation Army where it costs us SOc.

Sunday 28.2.43.

Arose at about 8 & went for a swim. There is a hot sulphur spring about a mile out of town. The water originates in a cave. The smell in here is unimaginable & 1 minute is enough to do anyone. The water went into a pool which is surrounded by glass. We climbed over a fence & most of us went for a dip in the raw. One, Harry Armstrong, was in midair when an observation car full of women passed. It caused quite a stir with the boys. We got some good photos here too. It was very cool as the only place where there was no snow, or ice on the water which is 80 F. On the way to town from here "Sailor" was driving & when he applied the brakes on a slope we did a complete turn & damned near turned over. From town we attacked the 5 miles ice covered road to the skiing place. We were told not to attempt it but we knew best. Our car made it but the other one didn't. The road was so slippery that when they got stuck they just applied the brakes & the 6 of them just pushed her around. The sight when we reached the top was wonderful. Before us was a slope about a mile square of snow as smooth as a billiard table & also a big ski jump. No skis so no skiing for us. I can quite understand why Banff is world renowned. Mountains all around - hot springs - rivers - a big fish hatchery & the second biggest hotel in Canada, 2000 rooms & 9 storeys high. some of the suites are 11 rooms. It is built of rough Rocky Mountain rocks. The work in is terrific. Left Banff with Sailor at the wheel at 6.00 & arrived in Calgary at 8.30 to be met by a big snow storm. A great weekend.

P.19

Monday 1.3.43

Tuesday 2.3.43

Snow storm again today. Temp dropped from 40 deg to 20 deg below in 3 hours, wouldn't that ??.

Wednesday 3.3.43

Zero at 15 wpm today. I wouldn't be surprised if I had ulcers. There have been 9 so far from our flight. They are CT ing them on this station by the dozen. Have had pains in the stomach lately. Was worried about the Jap fleet advancing on NG but just heard that the Allies sunk 10 of them.

Thursday 5.3.43.

Friday 6.3.43

Getting warmer & as it isn't a chinook I think it must be the first touch of summer.

Saturday 6.3.43

Broke, so a very quiet weekend.

Sunday 7.3.43.

Monday 8.3.43.

The start of 17th week. Getting near now. What a break it will be after I get these "sparks" up.

Tuesday 9.3.43

Still warm - what a break to see the ground again.

Wednesday 10.3.43.

16 wpm today. I think I mucked it up.

Thursday 11.3.43.

5 mistakes in yesterdays test. I can see that I shall have to do a little extra over the weekend. The procedure is coming to me easier now that we are in outstations. Am worried about theory as Shanay doesn't know as much as I do.

Friday 12.3.43.

A blizzard today. The end of the warm weather. I thought it was too good to be true. A big blackout tonight. From 9 - 11. I hope they never have to have a real blackout. With an overcast sky & snow falling, or rather blowing, it was as black as the ace of spades. Before

the blackout we had a rehearsal in the Auditorium for the recording next week. Saturday 13.3.43.

Still blowing

Sunday 14.3.43

Starting to warm up a little & seeing there is no chinook it must be the first signs of spring.

Monday 15.3.43

Tuesday 16.3.43.

Big broadcast tonight. It went over very well. Didn't know my own voice on the play back.

Wednesday 17.3.43.

One mistake in today's test - 17 wpm.

Thursday 18.3.43.

- Still warm - plenty of mud.

Friday 19.3.43.

Big 19th week exams tomorrow.

P.20

Saturday 20.3.43.

The exams were swell. Should get 90% in each. Had a wild night tonight. Went to China Town & bed at 3.45 am.

Sunday 21.3.43.

First official day of spring. What a break after the longest & coldest winter in Calgary this century. It sure has been tough although not as bad as it could have been. It hardly seems like 7 months tonight since we pulled out of Central Station. Hope the rest of

- this war goes as quickly.

Monday 22.3.43.

Started snowing again today. No wind -just steady heavy snow.

Tuesday 23.8.43.

Still snowing. The heaviest of the winter. It is nice & warm & consequently is the usual mud.

Wednesday 24.3.43

Failed the first morse test today. The PL has me worried. Snow stopped. Thursday 25.3.43.

The usual BS parade again.

Friday 26.3.43.

The boys of the old course went to air operations today for 2 weeks. I sure would like to be with them - but still.

Saturday 27.3.43. Sunday 28.3.43.

Had a quiet weekend in camp. Did 6 hours morse - wouldn't it.

Monday 29.3.43

Stopped raining again

Tuesday 30.3.43.

Started out hot again - looks like old man winter has gone for good now. I hope.

- The war situation is good, but it looks like another 12 months at least. I may see a bit yet. I

hope.

Wednesday 31.3.43.

- Pay day & check from home. Was it needed? oh boy. The rotters charged me \$4.00 for a 5/-job on my watch.

Thursday 1.4.43.

Passed today's test. Pleased as punch. The usual parade again. Graduation today, 8 more weeks for us - whacko. Those sparks.

Friday 2.4.43.

Mucked today's test - wouldn't it.

Saturday 3.4.43.

A great day today weather still wonderful, more like home.

Sunday 4.4.43

Sunbaked all day today - got quite burned.

Thursday 8.4.43.

Donated 1 pint of blood to the Red Cross - very pleased with myself- no after effects.

- Saturday 10.4.43

Went to a show & had a very quiet day.

P.21

Sunday 11.4.43

Glad to have a rest after the hard week in outstations & Signal Trainers. The end of this course is not far away now - thank heaven. The Japs seem to be getting it - what a break. It won't be long now. Most of the boys from the old 54 arrived back today from air ops - was informed the work out there is nothing to worry about.

Thursday 15.4.43

Went to the funeral of a Canuck LAC Lindsay who was killed at Air Ops. The

- boys turned on a great show & he & the pilot certainly received a great send-off from the

boys with the rifles & the slow march. This funeral made us think a bit & I am wondering if it is all worth it or not. With the future so uncertain I wonder what we are fighting for. Bill Britten, Tom Burke - Ken Sisley - & who next!.

Friday 16.4.43.

Had a game of cricket in the hut tonight. Bat was broomstick - tennis ball & garbage tin for wicket - did \$11.00 worth of damage but it was well worth it.

Saturday 17.4.43 Sunday 18.4.43.

Had a very lazy weekend - drank, slept & sunbaked.

Monday 19.4.43.

Exactly 1 week before the old 54 have their finals - that makes it 5 weeks for us - whacko. Won't be long now.

Tuesday 20.4.43

Had our outstations key test today & was very pleased. It was out of 150 & counts in the finals. I am sure I got at least 130.

Sunday 24.4.43

Anzac Day. I wonder what the folks & "diggers" are doing at home. Only 1 more day for the old 54 to go. Came out here to Shephard for an air ops today. Did 2 1/2 hours in a Norseman taking bearings the accuracy of which surprised me. Saw them packing parachutes - fool proof & if they don't open none would. Very tired tonight.

Monday 26.4.43.

Flying as usual - great. The sets surprised me. They are much better & easier to operate in the air than on the ground.

Tuesday 27.4.43

First flight in a "fleet" today. Great. Loops - shooting up trains & houses & playing in the clouds.

Wednesday 28.4.43

The old 54 graduate tomorrow - hope I can get in.

Thursday 29.4.43.

Scrounged some leave (over the fence), & went to the graduation at the school & the dinner & dance later. A great turnout, all the boys were rather merry &

everyone had a good time. The majority are off to Mossbank where I think I'll be able to get next month. Only 4 weeks now.

Monday 3.5.43

Flying still going along - getting a little tired of it now. I think it is the monotony of the exercise more than the flying. It's a wonderful feeling up there above the clouds.

Thursday 4.5.43.

Finished the 14th morse test today - got 'em all

P.22

Wednesday 5.5.43

Finished flying today. I am the only one finished, I haven't had to do as much as the others on account of my high average in the exercises, 81%. It may be topped because there are quite a few not finished yet.

Thursday 6.5.43

Won't be sorry to leave this place - getting awful tired of doing nothing. Hope to go tomorrow.

Friday 7.5.43.

Big bludge today.

Saturday 8.5.43

Arrived back here at the school today. Not sorry to get back home again.

Sunday 9.5.43.

Mothers Day. Wonder will I see the best one in the world again.

Monday 10.5.43.

On the beam with the morse again.

Sunday 16.5.43.

Have just finished a week's very hard study.

Monday 17.5.43

With the things all over in Africa it looks like the war is nearly over, of course the Yanks did it all by themselves.

Sunday 23.5.43.

Final exams this morning - passed the morse & more than satisfied with the rest. Shorty made it & I am very pleased.

Monday 24.5.43

Results came out today.

Trade Test 227 out of 250 1st

Outstations 143 " " 150 1st

Procedure 188 " " 200 8th

Theory 38 " " 50 5th

Morse 160 " " 200 Not so good

Drill 34 " " 50 10th

CD & DI 35 " " 50 4th

Visual 50 " " 50 1st

875 " 111000 9th

This gave me 9th place out of 153. Aussies filled first 3 places & 8 out of first 10. Thursday 27.5.43.

Got "Sparks" today - what a break after 8 months. Seems little compensation for that work, but now I am a Wireless Operator. Got beautifully drunk -3 pass outs.

Friday 28.5.43

Left Calgary at 8 pm tonight

Saturday 29.5.43

Arrived Moose Jaw 9.00 am. Waited 2 hours for train & had a look around the town - very nice. Just like Orange. 45 miles in train out to Mossbank. A wonderful town 2 stores & a pub. Camp 10 miles from town, not a tree or hill in 500 miles - the real prairies.

P.23

Beautiful camp - some hundreds of W/Ds - swimming pool - all sports equipment - pictures 5 times a week. Plenty planes - Blenheims & Ansons - promises to be a good 6 weeks.

Sunday 30.5.43.

Started work today,. Had the usual lectures - all the BS in the world. The old 54 boys are here with 2 weeks to go. They say the course is OK - lets hope so.

Monday 31.5.43.

Good tucker on this station.

Sunday 6.6.43

Work all day today as we do for 6 weeks except a 48 hour break after 3rd week. The old 54th do their finals tonight. That leaves 4 weeks for us. The course to date is very interesting but we have covered a lot of ground & consequently have worked hard. Should be able to have a little bludge later in the course though.

Sunday 20.6.43

Exactly 12 months since we went into Bradfield. It hardly seems like that. Wonder where we'll be this time next year.

Monday 21.6.43

Started 48 hour leave today. Had a look around Mossbank & a few beers. Thursday 8.7.43.

3 days to graduation. Have done all our finals & have been issued with wing & stripes. After 13 months I have finally made it. We have finished flying & are now just bludging. Called for volunteers for 7 Depot yesterday. I was one of the five. I've always wanted to go to England & now all being well I will have that ambition realised. Should be just in time for the Second Front. I don't exactly want to see action but I joined up to fight & I am sure I will have what it takes when the time comes.

Sunday 11.7.43

Received wings today & am now a fully fledged WAG. What a break after all the work & trouble to get it. Went by bus to Moose Jaw & caught 8.30 pm train to Winnipeg. Monday 12.7.43

Arrived Winnipeg 8.30 am. A very nice town as big as Melbourne & the same type of city, rather old in parts. Caught the bus to Marden at 5.40 pm, arrived there, 80 miles away at 8.00. Mr & Mrs Tobias are a queer pair, the old fella is definitely touched. Winnipeg & Marden are fair in the middle of the prairies.

Tuesday 13.7.43

Driven around Marden today in the old A model Ford. These people aren't very well off but they can't do enough for us. They bought me a money belt when he found me without.

Wednesday 14.7.48

Left Marden at 9 am, spent day in Winnipeg & left at 8.30 pm for Montreal. Thursday 15.5.43.

Awoke to find that we had left the prairies & were running along the edge of the Great Lakes. At times we could not see the other side & we were crossing numerous little lakes which is surrounded by heavy timber. There is a lot of lumbering & coal mining along this part of the line.

Thursday 16.5.43

Arrived Ottawa 8.00 am & detrained. This is one of the nicest cities I have been in.

P.24

Numerous large & impressive Govt buildings & all the residential streets are lined with trees, which meet in the middle. The shopping centre is only small but it is a very nice town taken overall. Left Ottawa at 4 pm for Montreal & arrived there at 7.15 pm. Didn't leave the station but caught the 8.15 pm train for NY.

Saturday 17.7.43.

The last 3 hours to NY was along the banks of the Hudson River. Sing Sing is an impressive place to see. Arrived at 7.30. caught taxi to Picadilly Hotel. Feel that I am lucky to be alive. They don't stop for anything & never travel less than 55 mph. Was so tired, went to bed and awoke at 5 pm. Went to night club, Billy Roses & saw beautiful women & liquor. interior decorations amazing.

Saturday 18.7.43.

Came around to Anzac Club & met Shorty & Zeke. Shifted gear & now have a room there. Went to Empire State building. 102 storeys 1265 ft. Wonderful view of New York which is a terrific size. Saw Statue Of Liberty, went to Hurricane night club, Duke Ellington & band & beautiful women. 2 beers cost \$1.58. Wouldn't it, arrived back at 5 am. Monday 19.7.43.

Walked around NY which is much too big, many creeds & languages. The most beautiful women I've seen as much as it hurts me to say it. The dress & makeup & have hair done wonderfully - no stockings. Haven't seen one that looks over 30, wonderful makeup. Went to a show in one of the extra big theatres, good floor show with classy band. Anyone in uniform can go to any show in NY buckshhee. Also saw the Metropolitan Opera House, Carnegie Hall & Central Park & Zoo. (Bronx).

Tuesday 20.7.43.

Arose late & wandered around for a while, & caught train for Montreal. Not

-

sorry to leave NY, was not impressed.

Wednesday 21.7.43.

Arrived Montreal 8.00 am. Booked in at Ford Hotel where we slept until

evening. We were very tired as we had met two beautiful blondes on the train & consequently we didn't sleep at all. Had a look around Montreal & found it the same as Paris would be. Wild women & liquor, both expensive. Mostly French spoken. Everything labelled

- in both languages. Went into a shop to buy a few sandwiches & due to lack of English & common sense on the part of the shopkeeper finished up with a mince pie which cost 25 cents. After one of the wildest nights ever got to bed at 6.00am.

Thursday 22.7.43

Same as yesterday, only bed early - at 5.15 am.

Friday 13.7.43.

- Arose just in time to get 2.30 train from Montreal.

Saturday 24.7.43

- Arrived in Saint John at 7.00 am, & could not see anything for fog. The thickest

I've ever seen. Boarded the good ship Princess Helene a CPR boat & crossed the Bay Of Fundy in 3 hours. Saw a submarine supposedly on the way from a sweep in the Atlantic. Arrived in Digby where we boarded a train & then 6 hours to Halifax here. Nova Scotia is the best Province in the Dominion. Numerous lakes & orchards. Think I'll settle down for a few months in a cabin on one of these lakes. Halifax is cobbled & thousands of years old & stinks - that explains it.. The 7" depot here is a great station with tennis courts & all. Its great to have these 3 hooks, it throws a different attitude on you & your treatment altogether. Our quarters are barracks with big locks.

P.25

I suppose that is because there is so many of us senior NCOs.

Sunday 25.7.43

Had the day off& spent it sleeping & washing clothes as there is so much uncertainty as to when we leave.

Monday 26.7.43.

Started our clearances today. Had more identification photos taken & the usual medical & the rest of it.

Tuesday 27.7.43.

Went into the decompression chamber today, up to 25000 ft & had no ill effects. Most of the lads had either joint pains, dizziness or headaches. Went to town to the pictures.

Wednesday 28.7.43.

Had another night vision test today. Got 27 out of 32. At Calgary I had 29 in the same test & now they tell me that I have "cats eyes" as 13 is the average. Went to 25000 ft for 2 hours today & still no effects.

Thursday 29.7.43.

Went to 40000 ft in the chamber today & no effects. About 10% of the whole lot had no ill effects at the 3 altitudes so I consider myself lucky.

Friday 30.7.43.

Fired 25 rounds out of a 303 today. Scored 108 out of 125 so am quite happy. Had the afternoon off so went over the "mad mile", a commando course they have here. It nearly killed me.

Saturday 31.7.43.

Got oodles of mail today. That makes it about 35 letters, 4 parcels & 12 newspapers since we arrived here in Halifax. went to town & had a steak. (of a kind). Sunday 1.8.43

Informed we are leaving tonight - paid \$ 30.00. I bought 7 Pounds & now have \$10.00 & sank the rest in cigarettes & gum. Marched down to the wharves in full web equipment & then marched to the train which left at 12.25 in the night.

Wednesday 2.8.43

Travelled north up thru New Brunswick & around the neck of the peninsula & are still heading south to New York.

Tuesday 3.8.43.

The country crossed so far is beautiful being studded with numerous lakes & is nicely wooded & is dairy country. There sure are some great spots. Arrived west side of New York at 9.30 & caught a ferry across to Manhattan Island where we boarded the good ship Acquitania at 3.30 pm. It is a tremendous boat & is said to have 12000 troops aboard .The Queen Mary is on one side & the upturned Normandie on the other. We are on the second top deck & it is nice & cool.

Wednesday 4.8.43.

Pulled out at 9.00 am & headed up the river past the Empire State, Chrysler & all the other large buildings. Also Wall Street & it's massive cluster of skyscrapers. Past the Brooklyn Bridge, Statue Of Liberty, & thru the sub net & out to sea. Have had a blimp with us all the afternoon & there are still numerous aircraft of all descriptions flying around us. They say

that out of the 2200 miles only the middle 500 are the only ones unescorted. Thursday 5.8.43.

The blimp is still with us, so apparently we are of some value to someone.

Canteen opened today & was surprised to see Arnotts biscuits from Homebush & Melbourne matches. Found out that this tub took some of the 9th Div home to Aussie. Unlimited supplies of American cigs for 2/6 or 50c per carton. As there is a scarcity in England I have built up quite a stock The weather is still calm & the boat has not even moved as far as rocking yet.

Friday 6.8.43

We have to advance our watches tonight 1 hour. Have had a Yank Liberator & Fortress as escort all day today. With no work to do this is becoming very monotonous. It just shows up human nature. If we had to work we would still be moaning. Although it is cloudy & foggy there is still not a ripple on the water.

Saturday 7.8.43.

British marked aircraft (Cats) took over our escort today. They say they are from Iceland. Watches advanced another hour tonight. Saw a few porpoise, dolphin & whales & even a few flying fish today as strange as it may be. Very cold today but still not rough. Sunday 8.8.43

Still cold with a fair roll. Watches put on another hour tonight.

Monday 9.8.43

Watches on 1 hour. Expected to land today but only saw a large island & a convoy. They had some gunnery practice on the boat & I never thought it possible to have so many guns on a boat. All were manned by Yanks except the 2 x 6" & of course they were fired by jack tars. They fired ack ack for the small guns to fire at the puffs & dropped a smoke float for the 6". They never missed up to 8500 yds when they knocked up. They also sent up a few rockets which have a wire cable attached & when they reach the top a parachute opens & the wire drops slowly. This is mainly for torpedo bombers.

Tuesday 10. 8.43.

Advanced watches 1 hour

Wednesday 11.8.43.

Awoke to find ourselves in a harbour which was stacked with aircraft carriers & boats. The town was Greenock in the Firth of Forth. A beautiful little spot with houses lining the shore & hills covered with cultivation & everything beautiful & green. It is even prettier than the Hawkesbury. Left the boat at 8.00 pm by way of a little boat King Edward which saw service

in last war as a transport. Boarded a train which pulled out of the station at 11. There was no town around anywhere & just seemed to be a rail head.

Thursday 12.8.43

Awoke to find we were in England. The countryside is just beautiful & they are harvesting. Little fields, canals & roads all bounded by hedges look delightful. There are also numerous airfields all the way through. Passed thru Rugby & saw some of the kids from that school at the station. Also thru Croydon & part of London which certainly bears the scars of battle but it all looked very peaceful. Have seen all the types of aircraft made now I think. Arrived at Brighton at 2.00 pm & are now billeted in a big hotel just opposite one of the many amusement piers on the beach. We have hot & cold water in the big rooms with baths. There are from 2 to 7 in each room. The food has been surprisingly good with tons of spuds & quite a lot of meat & green vegetables. Sausages are meatless but not too bad. Plenty of beer & liquor. Beer 6 d per glass or 1 /1 pint & liquor 1/6 per nip. Cigarettes are OK being 1/6 for 20 & we are allowed 40 per week & as I have a big stock that is OK.

P.27

Friday 13.8.43.

Looks bad - Friday 13th. Everyone expects a raid tonight. I wonder. Saturday 14.8.43.

No raid last night. continued on the usual procedure & filled out hundreds of forms.

Sunday 15.8.43.

Day off so went to church & spent afternoon on promenade in the sun. Put our watches back 1 hour last night because of the approaching winter. Brighton is closed to visitors from now on & the general opinion is that there is a second front starting. Lets hope so.

- Monday 16.8.43.

Was awoken at 1.30 am by the sound of footsteps which we thought were the lads coming & going to breakfast, but they were coming back from the shelter. There had been a raid on for 1 1/2 hours & the sirens & gunfire failed to wake the 6 of us. The last one in didn't open the heavy black out curtains & windows & the sound didn't come thru. Tuesday 17.8.43

The food is getting better with plenty of meat & we are having the best bludge since we have been in the Air Force, but everything is becoming very monotonous & I am dying to get into it.

Thursday 19.8.43.

Another raid last night which lasted 1 hour & once again our room was not woken. There was a church (strange enough) hit about 3 miles away with 2 people killed. The weather to date has been just great. Nothing like I had heard of England. It has been sunny all & every

day. One can go into any shop & buy any kind of sandwich, except beef or mutton & tea or coffee or milk - another surprise.

Friday 20. 8.43.

Had some photos taken today. The best I could buy for 17/6.

- Sunday 22.8.43.

All day off so went for a swim in the local pool which is heated but only 7 ft deep. Nearly killed myself when I hit the bottom. Went for a bus ride & a walk in the

- country. Helped 2 girls pick blackberries & I ate twice as many as I picked as usual. The

countryside is beautiful with little villages everywhere.

Monday 23.8.43

Boris (Cliff Curtis) & self applied for posting together to Bomber Command Middle East. Hope we can get it. Also registered with Lady Ryder for place to spend leave. Tuesday 24. 8.43.

1 year since we left Sydney. Wonder how many more I shall be away from the best little town in the world. Had an air raid at 5.00 pm which lasted 20 minutes. We could - just see him very high up. Apparently reconnaissance.

Wednesday 25.8.43.

Payday & I am not broke - must be something wrong. found out our billets for leave, Atley in Yorkshire - missed Scotland but will go to Mrs Hunts place on next leave. Thursday 26. 8.43

Issued flying gear which is great stuff. All packed for leave tomorrow. Friday 27. 8.43.

Boarded train at Brighton station at 3.08 & arrived Victoria, London at 4.25 so caught cab to Kings X where we had to catch train.

IWIVI

On way in an old London taxi passed Trafalgar Square, Leicester, Charing X & eventually arrived at what is left of Kings X station. It has been bombed heavily & all surrounding buildings are razed to the ground. Spent night "having a few" & slept at a Canadian Club.

Saturday 28.8.43.

Caught train at 10.10 & arrived at Holbeck 3.15, which is 1 mile from Leeds. As there was a 2 hour stop over decided to see Leeds & the Yorkshire lingo - oh boy. Saw the Museum & of course the Leeds cricket ground - "the Oval", I think. Just an ordinary green surrounded by hills & a large grandstand. It is a filthy industrial town. Were met by Mrs

Davison of Leathley Grange at Pool - in - Wharfedale in a little Morris 12, went 2 miles to the driveway & another 1/2 mile to the mansion. In the garage are 3 more cars (light), due to the scarcity of labour there are only 2 maids & 1 cook & a "refo" & family & chauffeur employed at the moment. The home has only 7 bathrooms & 11 bedrooms with wall to wall carpet throughout. Two sons - one a Spitfire pilot killed in the Battle of Britain & another a Captain in the artillery who is missing in Sicily. What a bedroom (1 each) with wash basin & hot & cold water - belonged to youngest son. Big built-in organ in a room downstairs & also large grand piano with all antique furniture & valuable paintings.

Sunday 29.8.43.

Rained all day but went for a walk with Mrs Davison along the most delightful little tracks by rivers & under trees. A Major in the Army came & when I offered him a cigarette he replied "oh thank you, I always love these colonial cigarettes" Of course I feel a little badly towards him.

Monday 30.8.43.

Went in the Vauxhall 14 to 2 of his 19 properties in England where he has 3 & 2 tractors respectively & employs a total of 9 men. Went to Bradford which is the home of wool & had dinner at a classy club & then saw over his factory which is a spinning mill & now I don't wonder why he throws so much money around. The wool is washed in long vats & dried. Then run through a long affair that takes out the Bathurst burr & then into a more delicate machine that washes & takes out any remaining impurities & then spun. Here he has his 2 big cars stored, a Bentley & a Packard which with another one on the farm made 7 altogether. He has beautiful thoroughbreds which were hunters & also dogs called Boxers - the best kennels in the country. On the rounds of his farms he mentioned a pal of his whom he considered an excellent farmer because he only lost 1000 pounds per year, whereas he lost 3000 pounds per year, but he hopes to make a little on farming soon. The amount of wheat grown is amazing & the yield is 70 to 80 bushels to the acre. Some of the views are wonderful of the paddocks of pasture & stubbed wheat. Driving along these narrow is beautiful with the trees meeting on either side & very windy roads which run thru these tiny villages at all angles. There is never 50 yds without a change.

Tuesday 31.8.43.

Went to Mrs Gaunts for lunch. She is the daughter & her husband was a Major killed in an accident. Pots of shekels. Beautiful home & gardens. Walked there 5 miles. These little narrow country lanes with hedges & overhanging trees are the most beautiful I've ever seen & are all so much alike that we got lost but eventually turned up & were greeted with 3 big glasses of Scotch.

Wednesday 1.9.43.

Loaded wheat all the morning, also some hay wagons just for some exercise & went for drive past the biggest factory I've ever seen.

P.29

1 mile square & about 15 feet high. Most of it is underground & on top is earth & grass, trees, dummy houses & even concrete fences. Finished up about 15 miles away in a large property of 1600 acres called Mun Apperiton which has a drive of 2 miles long which leads to a 3 storeyed home which is 3 storeys high & has a lift just like a hotel. It is the property of Sir Benjamin Davison, Baronet & the brother of our Mr Davison. drank 55 year old sherry & ashed cigarettes in solid silver ash trays made by Ben who is a qualified silversmith & engineer. He has 6 Italian POWs working on the estate & they eyed the Australians on our shoulders very keenly, probably having come to grips with some of us before.

Thursday 2.9.43.

Were driven to train by Mrs Davison at 1.29 & arrived at Leeds at 2 & had a look around until 3 when we boarded the London train, where we arrived at 8 pm. On way passed many airfields & saw flocks of Fortresses on way back from France etc. Slept at a Sallies place.

Friday 3.9.43.

Good news this morning - they have landed in Italy. Arrived back at Brighton at 12 & found 16 letters & a cable waiting due from Bob Boulton. Was very pleased indeed. Shifted to a much bigger hotel in the Metropole

Saturday 4.9.43.

Big bludge day today with nothing to do.

Sunday 5.9.43

Air raid today which lasted 25 minutes this afternoon.

Monday 6.9.43.

Had an Air Vice Marshal with us this afternoon & have never been more disgusted with anything than I am at the Air Force. He did not know anything & when asked numerous questions was unable to give an answer at all. There have been three chaps stripped of stripes & wings through bad eyes & ears through flying & neglect of the doctors & yet they are penalised & stripped when they could be sent home as instructors & could relieve other men for active duty. But no, they would rather waste the year or so & save 50,000 pounds per man by just taking his stripes & wings. Had an air raid 9.00 pm to 9.45 pm.

Tuesday 7.9.43

Another raid that lasted 1 hour this morning at 3.00 am. Rather close as some of the lads saw the exhausts of the enemy machines. I slept through it. A rather good habit I have cultivated. Started lectures today which are all a waste of time because the instructors don't want to do any work

Wednesday 8.9.43.

Italy surrenders!. 1 down & 2 to go. Whacko !. Lets hope the good news keeps

UP.

Thursday 9.9.43.

Opened the big bank account today with a 5 Pound deposit. Doesn't seem like me somehow. Paid 8 pound also & still have that. Wouldn't it. Fli be a millionaire soon if I don't watch out. Still useless lectures.

Friday 10.9.43.

Put another 4 pounds in bank. Forgot to mention the 24 hour blitz on Europe. Never realised so many aircraft existed. They came over here in droves for the full 24 hours. Also heard how the Germans managed to bomb Dublin instead of one of the Midlands towns last year.

P.30

Sunday 12.9.43

Had a raid of 15 minutes but saw nothing overhead.

Monday 13.9.43.

Useless classes again. They are just a waste of time.

Tuesday 14.9.43.

Airgraph from Bob Boulton who has finished his tour of ops in the Middle East & is coming to England. Found out from the ACDRE (a great scout), that there is a batch coming from the ME on Friday. If Bob is in that crowd I can see my bank a/c dwindling but it's there to spend.

Saturday 18.9.43

Bob didn't turn up yesterday. Had a 40 minutes air raid this afternoon but saw nothing.

Monday 20.9.43

Posted today to Dumfries, Scotland -an OAFU. Left Brighton at 6.08 & arrived London (Victoria). On the way to St Pancras station passed thru Trafalgar Square again & had a good look at Buckingham Palace.

Tuesday 21.9.43.

Arrived Dumfries at 7.30. There is also an OTh here. Plenty of Wellingtons, Ansons, Whirlwinds & Miles Magister. Seems to be a good station. Don't know how long will be here. Passed thru Gretna Green railway station on the way, but couldn't see the Blacksmith's shop of fame.

Saturday 25.9.43

Have done nothing all the week only mucking around with batteries & radios. We are here for 4 weeks prior to starting the course. Have just been "joed" as NCO in charge of beacon. An all night job with the next day off.

Sunday 26.9.43.

Went OK last night. Just a navigational aid to ale. On again tonight. These Scotch people talk very queerly. Heather is out all over the place.

Monday 27.9.43.

Slept in 'til lunch time when I decided to get 2 days leave. Left Dumfries at 5.30 & arrived in Edinburgh at 9.15 where a room was not to be had for love or money, so finished up here at a pub & a bed cost 6 pds. In Dumfries the poet Robbie Burns lived for quite a while & there are numerous plaques in hotels etc to say that he sat or stood here & there & also a statue of him in the town square. It is pouring rain at present & I don't think much of Edinburgh so far.

Thursday 28.9.43.

Booked in at Darling's Regent Hotel opposite the PO & then went for a walk. Edinburgh is a city of old buildings, cemeteries & parks. Numerous statues of all the famous statesmen etc on every road junction. The usual 2 decker street cars which are peculiar to most towns over here. Saw Edinburgh Castle which must have been the "ants pants" in its day. Met a pair of "Diggers" who belong the forestry crowd that has been here since the war began. Also saw a park with a bandstand in it that I'm sure Gran has a photo of. To bed early in a beautiful bed.

Wednesday 29.9.43.

Awoke late this morning & just wandered around the town & saw many historic places & statues of famous men etc. Caught the bus at the Caledonian Station at 5.30 pm & set off for Dumfries.

P.31

Thni the mountains over a windy narrow road & across many moors & at last to Dumfries where I caught a bus out to camp at 10.00 pm. While waiting met an Aussie "digger" & had a few beers -just like home.

Friday 1.10.41.

Started a new job today, in the maintenance where we carry out inspections & repairs on R / T sets, SBA gear & Marconi & 1FF, very interesting of course but we are not allowed to do much as the corporals don't trust us Aussie WAGs with the work & I don't altogether blame them

Friday 8.10.41

Still at the same job & doing about 1 hours work per day. Am getting fed up doing nothing & am anxious to do a bit. I think I'll make an a fairly good WAG on operations. Tuesday 19.10.43.

Have had very bad weather lately broken only by an occasional half day of sunshine. Have I concert & 2 picture shows every week here on the station & I go to town every weekend & have a few beers & see the pictures. Went for an hours flip in an Anson yesterday - quite enjoyable. Have been doing maintenance work on the aircraft radio equipment & still show no signs of starting course. Now have the station band playing at lunch time every day in the mess.

Sunday 31.10.43

Have still been doing the same monotonous things. Went into Dumfries as usual last Saturday & on the River Nith which runs thru the town is a weir. The trout were on the way upstream & there were quite a few fishermen on the end of the weir with reel & rod taking in 21/2 to 31/2 lb trout by the dozen. Some of us also intend doing the same thing one of these days. Just above the weir is a very picturesque mile or so of nice flat water where we are going canoeing one of these days. Just in the town there are solid bridges which date back to the 14th or 15th century. They're about 200yds apart & on the smooth water between them float around dozens of white swans & ducks. Against the very ancient background everything forms a beautiful picture. One of the lads was pulled up this morning for not saluting an officer. Of course the said officer was an ignorant wingless wonder & in the lecture he gave he said something like, " You are a senior NCO & you should be a shining example to the rest of the station in disciplinary actions et. You are an Australian who are the best of the coloured troops we get over here, so in the future let me see you acting as a Aust senior NCO should act". This, together with many other things we have had pushed at etc to us & what they say to & about us have all gone to make me feel very badly about the English & their "old schools" & their aristocracies (supposed). In other words I am an Australian" coloured troop ". There are many types of aircraft on this station, & it is interesting to have a good look at these aircraft of which I have heard so much about spitfires, Hurricanes, Wimpies, Warwicks, Halifaxes, Fortresses, Mustangs, Swordfish & others. Hear that we are going on course in 2 days. I certainly hope so as I have just about "had" this waiting around doing work that is not our job.

Tuesday 2.11.43.

Started our course today. Have had outlines given us & as far as I can gather all there is to do is just become efficient in the operation of the Marconi radio equipment & reach 22 words per minute.

Monday 8.11.43.

First day off today which was spent in Dumfries. The weather has been beyond all imagination.

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How Scotland was ever called Bonnie Scotland I don't know.

Sunday 21.11.43

Since the last entry I have done some 30 hours of flying, mostly at night. I have had a good look at the Irish Channel & Isle of Man which is very small but appears a pretty little place. Much smaller than I had thought. These Ansons are steady old things & are hardly seem to be off the ground. Have been flying a lot due to the unusually good weather. It is not usually fine for more than 2 days at a time. Pleased to hear that Ethel "loves me ". It looks like I shall be marrying her when I get back. Received 2 parcels from home which contained 4 lbs of CSR loaf sugar. I gave 2 lbs to Dave, a corporal for whom I worked before we started course. His thanks were the sincerest I have ever seen offered & it was worth practically anything to hear & see it. He is a wonderful chap - well educated & read. Was a warden in the London blitz. Knows all about radio & any topic at all. Reminds me of Grandad with his knowledge. Had a swim in the heated & tiled pool at the local asylum this afternoon. It is now a regular thing every week We also have a regular game of football also a 3 to 4 mile cross country run. I certainly feel the benefit of this exercise. I am gradually getting into condition for the first time in my life. I am beginning to feel like a game of tennis, but of course there are no balls in this country & it is too wet in Scotland. I don't think Scotland can boast a tennis court even. Whoever called Scotland "Bonnie Scotland" must have been a Scot unless it was an Irishman said in concentrated irony.

Sunday 28.11.43.

Have oodles of French on the station at the moment. They are permanent French Air Force who switched sides when they took a hiding at Syria. They cannot speak English & when their interpreter became ill the instructors had a "wizard" job trying to explain to them the intricacies of astro compasses & gyro compasses etc. Also have some Yanks here on Spitfires. There has been some fun with them as they land across or down wind against red flares in front of other kites & in all are the duty pilots nightmare. Last time they were here 3 of them killed themselves in 3 days, but no fatalities this - yet. Half the Turkish Air Force train in Germany & the other half in Britain. Seems strange, but still money does strange things. Berlin has copped 13000 tons of "works" in about 6 days. What a shambles it must be when what happened to London was done by the biggest of the lot was 600 tons. 60,000 acres are in shambles. We all had our photos taken today due to some of the aircrew from this station" doing over" a pub in town last night Tables, chairs, windows,, glass doors beer glasses, & everything flew with the greatest of ease as the rumour has it. But it is about 10th hand

Monday 29.11.43.

Went to Glasgow today to see the MFDF section there. Truly amazing the speed & accuracy of the fixes that they give the aircraft. The equipment is absolutely beautiful though. Glasgow was blanketed in thick fog & the only impression that I received was that it was big, dirty & dingy. So that's Glasgow.

Friday 3.12.43

Left Dumfries at 10.45 today by train. Wednesday our WO asked for 1 volunteer to make up the no. to go to ME for 0Th. I was the only one. Changed trains at Carlisle which is not a bad place at all. I have seen it from the air many times & so it was not actually new to me. Changed again at Lancaster which is a very old industrial town & typically cramped, dingy, & dirty. The people here rushed around after us & asked where we wanted to go, did we want something to eat, and in all I've never seen so much hospitality as this place.

P.33

On the train again & so to Morecombe which is like a big Luna Park. Big Dippers "Dodgems", swimming pools & everything. We are billeted with a billeter who thinks that we are infringing on her privacy & so we are not fed very well but I had a steak quite as big as Repins & just as good in town tonight so I shan't go hungry. She insists that we have at least one bath per week. Was that an insult?. The bath at first glance could be either some infernal machine or the 8th wonder of the world. But we get along with one every day. We are treated fairly well here, particularly by the women who fall all over us & remind me of Stanley Holloway's Albert. This should be a pleasant stay here.

Tuesday 7.12.43.

Well, we have had trouble with the landlady. Originally we were to come in at 11 pm but had that extended to 12. Last night the 8 of us rolled in between the hours of 3 & 4 am & we were a little the worse for wear. The 2 old girls were shocked, it had never happened before, when we told her she didn't know Aussies she said she didn't want to know any more either. She is going to lock the door at 11 tonight so I guess we shall all finish up in a pub or on a bench. It is a great place for entertainment, this Morecombe.

Friday 10. 12.43

My birthday once again & I wonder where if anywhere, I shall be for my next. I am beginning to feel awful old. A world traveller at 21 they say. It is certainly true enough in my case. There will be quite a celebration tonight I guess. We were issued with .38 pistols today with 18 rounds. I managed to scrounge 60 which with my knife should make me a fairly formidable adversary. I have been seeing a lot of a little married lass, & I think too much of her so have given her up.

Saturday 11.12.43.

An awful hangover & we have had our movement orders. All my efforts to obtain leave have gone for a "burton". Off tomorrow.

Sunday 12. 12.43

Left Morecombe at 1.00 pm by train & arrived at Glasgow where we boarded the good ship "Sibajack" at King George Wharf on the River Clyde at 6.45 pm, bound for ----- . A Dutch diesel boat of 13000 tons, we are quartered on top deck with good wooden bunks & a fair amount of room. This promises to be the best trip to date. Went to bed early.

Monday 13. 12.43.

Gangways up at 11 am & we were dragged up the channel in the Clyde by 2 tugs past oodles of shipyards all working full speed. Just as one sees on the pictures. Dropped anchor once again at Greenock where we shall be for I don't know how long. I have not the foggiest idea of where we are going, only that we have pith helmets & tropical gear & have been inoculated against yellow fever. This little bay or firth is still stacked with shipping as it was when we arrived 4 months ago. I never thought I'd be leaving England so soon & only for the fact that I missed seeing Aunt Ada & the Hunts I am not in the least sorry as the English people are not exactly to my liking, although they have a beautiful little country.
Tuesday 14.11.43

Up anchor early & out of the boom. Really thought we were off but turned round & went back amid much fog.

Wednesday 15.12.43.

The fog cleared early this morning & about 200 yds to the starboard lies the Rodney of much fame & to the port is a very large carrier. Forward is the Largs Bay which makes me think of Gran & Grandad. She is not as big as I would have thought The Strathaird is also near at hand.

P.34

All the boats appear to be troop vessels so the convoy should be fairly fast. No movement all day.

Thursday 16.12.43.

Moved out of the boom late afternoon.

Friday 17. 12.43

Terrific seas - worse than I ever imagined. We are in convoy now moving along at a steady 10 knots. I can see at least 10 boats all of which are passenger boats therefore troops are the cargo. I have no idea how many boats are in the convoy & also no idea where we are headed & I'm not particularly worried about the latter. Sea sickness is very popular & so far there are very few of us who have not suffered.

Saturday 18. 12.43.

Still terrific seas - still the same convoy - still the same waves the size of the ship -still the same black clouds - still the same few down for meals - still the same destroyers buzzing around between the boats & everything is still the same. Retarded our watches one hour which still gives us no idea where we are headed

Sunday 19. 12.43.

Still the same. Rough as before. Same speed etc.

Monday 20. 12.43.

Awoke to a fairly calm sea with actually a little sunlight. There are 16 boats in this convoy in this order.

- . . 0.. xisus
- x o is flagship (Which is Strathaird)

There is a total of 11 destroyers which are doing a wonderful job out in front, in the rear & on both sides. I salute the boys in the destroyers. They are still taking a terrific hiding & during the storm they were tossed around like a cork Am I glad I joined the Navy ?? All the boats here are troopships as far as I can gather or estimate & all are from 15 to 30,000 tons. I think the Largs Bay & us are the smallest & all cruising along about 3/4 mile apart.

Tuesday 21.12.43.

Still the same. There is a distinct lack of bird life here which is quite different to the Pacific. The large steady swell that we have now must be the Biscay swell of great fame It is getting hotter so we must be getting nearer the Equator, but we still have no idea where we are, or our destination although Cairo is a very persistent rumour, so once again we shall see.

Wednesday 22.12.43.

As calm as a mill pond today with the weather getting much warmer. No bite in the wind at all. Two boats left us today & broke away to the east. I can't make out where they are off to unless it is Gibraltar & if that is the case we can't be going there but time will tell. A cargo vessel passed close to the convoy late this afternoon & was very conspicuous & peculiar in that the superstructure was white, the funnel red ,& was flying a flag, the latter is not the usual practice in wartime. It turned out to be Portuguese which is one of the few neutrals left in the world. What a war! The whole world involved in a death struggle for these -- -- Jews, but that's the way the world goes.

Thursday 23. 12.43.

Advanced watches 1 hour at midnight last night & now we are steering an easterly course apparently heading for Gibraltar.

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Quite a scare this one of the numerous destroyers buzzed around the rear of the convoy & dropped 7 depth charges which shook the whole boat just as if it had been hit by a giant hammer. A peculiar effect Hot sun with calm seas as usual. More like the tropics now but the sun has no super heat in it. Still heading due east. Must hit something soon even if it is Africa. Wonderful things - concerts, dances etc are arranged for the festival period. Tonight there was a fair concert with what local there is. The senior NCOs have the run of the boat the same as the officers. Sat on the top deck all afternoon & slept & read & slept & ate & ate. One of the advantages of being a senior NCO.

Friday 24.12.43.

What a difference from last year. No snow, no good tucker etc, but still it isn't too bad. Land sighted at approx 12 noon. Very mountainous with large bare cliffs. It is Morocco. The convoy went up amazingly close & then turned thru 180 deg & headed back for 2 hours & then once again we headed for land. Late afternoon saw the reason for our waiting. A large cargo convoy was coming out of the Gib Straits. Entered the channel at evening. First town "Tangier" which is quite a relief to see as it is brilliantly lit. Around the headland "Ceuta" was seen on the port side & this looked a large town. There are numerous lights along both sides of the channel & these are both navigation & lights from houses etc. It seems strange to be close to another world & yet so far away. Quite a ways on the port there is a cluster of lights & the "Rock" appears as a sharp pinnacle silhouetted against the much lighter sky which is very well studded with stars. Somehow with all these lights on both sides of the narrow channel there seems something which seems to tell me that this is the dawning of a new phase of my life. I have a feeling of high elation the like of which I have only ever felt when I walked on to a tennis court to play a final. Seems funny I should think of that. Maybe

because I have built up an ambition all my life to see the "Rock", which to me seems a wonderful thing as Grandad has always told me it is full of tunnels etc, & ever since I can remember it has been to me something more than just Gibraltar, even almost a "Wonder of the World". Anyway I have realised one more ambition. They say Alexandria is our destination. One of the lads has just scrounged a pair of night glasses thru which the Rock appears wonderfully plain & clear & exactly as pictures of it show. From the boat it is shaped like (diagram).

Saturday 25 12.43.

Xmas Day. So different to the last one & to the rest too I suppose. Awoke to find there is very rugged cliffs to the starboard. There is a very heavy swell in the pale green waters of the Mediterranean. The waves are terrific in size. Slowed down late in the afternoon & cruised slowly past Oran where we dropped off 2 of the convoy. We now have different & bigger & more numerous destroyers with us. They are all painted pale green. Seems funny to see these places which were so important & in the news a short time ago. Except during a few heavy showers we have land all day on the starboard side, but none to port. The land has been very barren & bare except for the white towers of Oran with high & steep cliffs on the waters edge. The ground on the cliffs seems brownish red in colour & lacks even grass apparently.

Sunday 26. 12.43.

Dawn found us in sight of land which steadily grew closer until we came into a large bay with wide heads. The sides of this bay are fairly steep & slope back to the top which is about 2 miles from the water. On this slope right down to the waters edge & covering half of the bay is the beautifully situated town of Algiers. We dropped anchor about 1 mile from the actual city of 1/4 million people.

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The buildings are very uniform although the streets appear to be a maze of alleys

- etc. The long line of modern hotels along the waterfront set the town off very nicely. Every

building is cream in colour & perfectly square & some run up to 15 or 16 storeys. The city on the whole is I think the most beautifully situated place I have ever seen. To each side &

- above the city are 3 very big buildings with large domes. These are the only ones of their kind & appear to be places of worship or they are rather as the Harems of old as depicted these days. Then as the reddest & big sun dropped quickly behind the mountains extend for

- miles & miles behind Algiers the numerous destroyers upped anchor & cruised past us into the Mediterranean & took up their positions. Before the last rays of the sun had gone the 4 boats left, Strathaird, Stratheden, Largs Bay, & our good ship "Sibajack" steamed out & took

- their places within the protective circle of the "Jacks of all Trades of the Navy", the destroyers & once more we are under way. Aerial activity was rather intense during the latter part of the day. several Liberators were seen & Blenheims circled the balloon barrage which is fairly large & is of American type balloons. Several DC-2 arose from behind the hills & headed for Sicily undoubtedly loaded to the hilt with gear for the Italian campaign. 8 Kittyhawks flitted around a passing convoy & so the day finished leaving a picture of Algiers in my mind which is indelible.

Monday 27.12.43

- Still hugging the coast at daylight. The coast still consists of almost sheer cliffs & as far as the eye can see all these hills go back & gradually become larger until they are mountains, for this is the Barberry coast. Plenty of cloud about but the sun penetrated those & has made the day a very pleasant one. the screen of destroyers is very heavy & apparently regard the convoy of soldiers, ground staff, & a few hundred aircrew with some importance. Spitfires, Kittyhawks, & Hurricanes have busied themselves playing above & around the convoy all day & there has been 2 trusty old Wellingtons doing complete circuits of the convoy very monotonously all day. About noon each boat hoisted a barrage balloon from which hang a few deadly looking cables. This is defence against dive bombing & aerial

- torpedoing. Mid afternoon & numerous balloons were seen a good deal inland which indicated the presence of a town. Also beyond the first line of hills many aircraft could be seen doing circuits & from the activity around there must be an airfield. Then the hills

- flattened out & a very large bay drew past on the shores of which was part of the town of

Bizzerta (Bizerte). This was the eastern part & although small, had some larger buildings & many. large & small boats were lying around at anchor. There were 2 more sections of the town which were undoubtedly the native parts. These were along from the eastern portion & were made up of all low perfectly white buildings with many domes amongst them. A very large & bloody sun dropped in a large portion of the sky that it had to traverse very quickly

to behind this place called Bizzerta. At this time we drew past the rocky island which is uninhabited of Galete. And so to my letters.

- Tuesday 28.12.43.

Awoke to find land a long way ahead to the starboard It turned out to be 2 large islands one about 2 times the size of the other. This turned out to be Malta. The haze was too heavy to see any details but houses etc could be seen. Everything looked nice & peaceful around this island of George Crosses which has withstood over 2000 raids since the war began. Its a wonder to me that it wasn't blasted out of the Mediterranean. A naval man in charge of the guns on board told one of the lads that the shores of Sicily were just visible from the bridge thru powerful glasses.

P.37

Many Wellingtons, Spits & Beauflights have been cruising around all day & otherwise it was an uneventful day. Watches to be advanced 1 hour at midnight tonight. Wednesday 29. 12.43.

Sighted land this morning which turned out to be the headland of Africa which nears the town of Bengashi (Benghazi). The town was not in sight & the coast was a lot less rough than it is further west, but there is quite a rise up to what appears to be a plateau which was still evident at the setting of the sun. The day has been the warmest to date & according

- to popular rumour we disembark at Alexandria tomorrow. The sea has been calm & the

same usual aircraft & destroyers around.

Thursday 30. 12.43.

Very warm today with land in sight on the starboard side. The land was seen intermittently & was very low with all of it lacking the high hills which scarred the coast further west. Have been passing the places where the AIF won its laurels & it seems hard to believe that that land meant so much only a few months ago. The usual air & sea coverage was present all day. Rumour now has it that we disembark at Pt Said tomorrow. These have varied so much I have no idea where we shall finish.

Friday 31.12.43

New Years Eve. No snow & cold like the last one. Quite the contrary. First thing to be seen was a breakwater made up of large squares of rock which appeared to be about 10 feet each side. We ran along this to the statue of De Lesseps whose hand is pointed straight along the Suez Canal. On the way inside the breakwater I could see many dhows with full sail beyond it in a very large bay around which was scattered the fairly modern city of Port Said. Many small boats with those birds the cormorants on with their keeper were fishing. Along the canal just in front of Pt Said is a terrific amount of shipping of all kinds with numerous dhows here & there & tied up to the side of the canal. We are at the moment

anchored about 200 yds the actual cutting of the canal & we have several "locals" diving for money. they are very independent & will not dive for anything that is not silver or that is too far away. Some of us put silver paper around pennies & when they were retrieved we were greeted with very hearty shakes of the fist. They are not at all pleased. The Suez Canal seems to be never ending from here & is just 2 straight sides which just disappear over the horizon in a shimmer of heat. The native quarters of the town are not visible from here. Dozens of small boats are kicking around with natives asleep on them whose clothes vary from large dresses to loincloths - all the official natives in the boats & on shore seem to wear a red fez. Several coal boats were being loaded from lighters in a strange way. Up from the lighters were planks & about 20 natives just fill up their baskets, put them up on their shoulders & up the plank into the boat with it. Very slow & rather cruel perhaps. And now with the time at 10 am we are still anchored in the same place with no idea of our destination. There are only 2 other of our original convoy with us now. Forgot to mention the funnels & masts of sunken

- boats just outside the entrance to the canal. They were apparently sunk at the time of the

evacuation of Crete. All the afternoon we have had what they call "bumboats" kicking around selling curios at exorbitant prices. It is quite possible to purchase these items at half the first price named. There are plenty of natives on the shore "putting on shows" of all kinds, some of which are of the filthiest variety. They sure are a colourful group with trousers, shirts, baggy dresses & weird & wonderful turbans & fez's of all the colours of the rainbow. Had a sin song which ended in "Auld Lang Syne" & the blowing of our whistles. The boats docked around all blew long blasts & series of "V" s & so we came to 1944.

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Saturday 1. 1.44

A fine hot day with us all dolled up in shorts. The 30 of us Aussies were the only ones on the boat who wore shorts on the route march thru Pt Said. The natives on seeing the shorts would rush up to us & say "Fair Dinkum Aussie & Dinki Di Aussie" & then they would claim to have come from Woolloomooloo. Its funny what a name the AIF have made for themselves. The natives in town are a filthy lot whose clothes have never been washed since purchase or acquirement. They all seem to have trinkets & curios to sell & one of the lads bought a bracelet for 10 piastres (2/-) after beating him down from 75 piastres (151-). The town of Pt Said has quite a few very modem hotels & cafes. Most of the cafes have

tables under awnings right out on the footpath. Saw several women in black who were veiled. They were the only women (native) I saw. There were quite a few European women who mostly looked like they had a lot of Jew in them & they were definitely a type which is probably the "camp followers". Back to the boat again just after dark.

Saturday 2.1.44.

About 2 pm today there were 26 of us on the deck when a launch pulled alongside. One way & another we found out it could be hired so there were very soon 20 or so Australians

on their way to town. We had to climb down a rope ladder & run the risk of being charged for AWL etc but as we decided to return after dark everybody was happy. We landed

- at the wharf in great style & the 4 hours we had in Pt Said was very very interesting. The

bargaining is looked upon by the Gypos or wogs as great fun & it is quite easy to purchase things for at the most, a quarter of the original price. I am waiting till I get to Cairo to buy all my curios etc. I have picked up a few of their words. They are effective for getting rid of the pestering pedlars, but not very nice for reproduction here. The boat trip in & out cost us 5 piastres each (1/-). The return trip & climb up the ropes was very enjoyable & made me think of the pirating days.

Monday 3.1.44.

Arose at 4.30 am, left the Sibajak at 6.30 & the train left Pt Said at 8.00 am. The train ran along the Suez Canal for about 20 miles. There were many dhows on the blue smooth canal & about every 300 yds a detachment of dark (SA) soldiers. The next 30 miles after we broke away from the Canal were over just plain sandy desert until we reached Ismailia. The town has one half beautifully modern with wide clean & treed streets & the other half of hovels, the stench of which is terrific. From Ismailia on there is very fertile land with much irrigation & plenty of corn. About every 10 miles is a fair sized town with its 2 usual parts. The home of the farmers are unbelievable. They are just mud huts built up against one another. At the sight of the train the population would turn out & shout for cigarettes & "bakshheesh". This land is cultivated by hand & the pumps are pumped by a blindfolded camel walking around the pump, thereby supplying the power. We eventually arrived in Cairo at 9.00 pm completing the 120 mile trip in 13 hours.. Bright moonlight on the way in & saw many ultra ultra modern homes of 3 & 4 storeys & also plenty of these mud hovels. Electric trams are everywhere. From the station we came in trucks to this 5 storey hotel. A beautiful structure about 400 yds long & 200 yds wide. In the middle is a big dome which forms the roof of a big shaft which runs from the dome to the bottom floor. 5 of us in a room about 30 x 40 feet. Our meal was wizard & our waiters were Italian POW. Tuesday 4.1.44

All we had to do today was just sign our name when we left the hotel grounds. Had a good look around this section of Cairo which is better class & is known as Heliopolis.

P.39

There are the usual urgers who annoy & some of the fellows have lost pens etc from these pickpockets. These wogs mill around by the hundred selling & peddling shoe shines, rings, bracelets, wallets & a host of other curios. The Heliopolis race track is only about 1/2 mile from our pub & there is a great canteen there. fruit salad & ice cream & eggs

& fruit. Just as in peacetime. Our NAAFI supplies bags of fried eggs & bacon etc at very reasonable prices.

Wednesday 5.1.44.

Went to Cairo this afternoon in one of the very fast trains. It took about 20 minutes to get there & we were dropped off right in the middle of a modern city which only for the colour & colourful dress of the natives could have been any other western city. The wartime population is about 1 1/2 million. We were picked up by a "Dragoman", who showed us around for 10 piastres each. He grabbed a "Gari" & off we went past the Royal Palace which houses King Farouk, past the statue of Mahomet All's son who is Farouk's father & into the native shopping centres. We first went to the "Blue Mosque" which was built in 1568. It has silver inlaid in the doors & the roof of the main part of it is brilliantly painted with blue & gold. Hence the name. It is the original painting which makes it so famous. The architect's tomb is there also. We had to wear canvas over our shoes in obedience to the Mohammedan custom & religion. It was 3 o'clock which is one of the 5 praying times in the mosque & so there were many natives praying. They have to wash their face & hands & feet 3 times each time they come to the mosque to pray. The old priest calls them from the high tower at each prayer time. From there we went to a bazaar which sells everything from beautiful tapestries to gold & silver curios. We were welcomed with great gusto by the proprietor who knows Aussies & Aussie slang. He had exhibited scents at the World's Fair of 1933. We were given Persian coffee & then tea & I finished up sending 2 lots of scent home. We finally drew ourselves away & caught a train home for the Palace Hotel, the peacetime luxuriant & leading Cairo Hotel. Then we had 3 eggs & bacon & chips for 6 1/2 piastres & then to bed.

- Thursday 6.1.44.

The Mohammedans practice polygamy & the merchant we were with yesterday has the maximum number of 4 wives & he says numerous girlfriends. Strolled around Heliopolis

- all the morning & read this afternoon. I now have a way to stop these annoying wog hawkers

& shoe shiners. The way is to just to walk straight ahead & don't even look at them. Once they see you look at them you are gone. Our hotel is beyond description & the size & decorations are marvellous. The large dome is the roof of a terrific shaft which extends to the ground floor which is a sprung dance floor. The dome must be at least 150' off the ground & the marble pillars go right up to it. There are marble pillars all the way up to where each floor is & to get on either the top one or the bottom & then look up or down is wonderful. The largest corridor is just the bare 450 yds long & that is at the least. It is 12 feet wide & 15 feet

- high. It is something that has to be seen to be believed. Concert in the dining room tonight.

Not bad.

Friday 7.1.44.

Have had quite a heavy day today. Kicked off at 8.30 am in a bus & into Cairo straight to a native bazaar with all the usual junk. Then past the King's Palace to the Laza Mosque. Just 500 years old with marvellous red carpets with plenty of wogs sprinkled

- around. Then to a great mosque called Mahomet Ali Baba's mosque. It is made of alabaster

entirely & has 5 terrific crystal glass chandeliers. The domes are wonderful in both size, structure & decoration.

P.40

This is where the present King worships & he has presented a pulpit to the church with a large alabaster dome & fine gold knob & ribbing. From here we went to the oldest mosque in Egypt -just 1100 years. There is an interesting story of a camel skin & permission to build it. There is a marble pillar there, which according to the Koran just "flew" from

- "Mecca" - one of the miracles. 2 stones (granite) with deep grooves in them made in the old days by the worshippers who licked them for good luck. These grooves are about 1 1/2 inches deep. Then on to the bus to the Pyramids & the Sphinx. Was disappointed in the Sphinx as it

- was smaller than I expected. Napoleon shot it's nose off for spite when he took England. Saw

the skulls of Cheops prime minister & wife in a tomb which is 3700 years old. Then to the Cheops Pyramid. 3700 years old. We went in the side thru passages up to halfway up where we came to Cheop's tomb opened in 1872. There are slabs of granite around the chamber measuring 27 x 10 x 6 & how they put them 2000 BC I have no idea. Down then to Cheops wife's tomb. The chamber is of limestone of the same size as in the other. The granite &

- limestone is polished & came from 530 & 120 miles away respectively. Near Mahomet Ali's

mosque we saw the quarry from which the extension of the pyramid was taken. From both chambers are vents running to the outside of the pyramid. There is no mortar or cement joining the blocks in the chambers. Everything is truly marvellous. Onto the bus & back to the pub for a shower & tea & the pictures.

- Saturday 9.1.44.

A very easy day spent reading & at the pictures in the evening.

Sunday 9.1.44.

Into Cairo & had a stroll around all morning then to the Heliopolis races in the afternoon. Succeeded in doing 1 1/2 pounds (Egypt).

Tuesday 11.1.44.

Went to RAAF HQ in Cairo & collected pay & Xmas Hamper from ACF. Learned some interesting things. Everything comes to a standstill in the Middle East - even the Air Force between 1 & 4 o'clock in the afternoon. These are taken off for a siesta. They work

- from 8 - 1 & then from 4-7 & these are known as Middle East hours. The natives here all

wear long nightgown affairs except the Gov't employees who wear western clothes with a red fez. Polygamy is practiced to the extent of 5 wives & the many has as many in this limit as he can support. There are not very many veiled women around at all & mostly all of them are barefoot. I have seen women trotting around with baskets etc on their heads which must weigh at least 1 cwt. They run around as if it were a basket of feathers. The natives are not

- the least particular about where they toilet & it is common to see them doing same even in

the main Street - men & women alike & nobody pays them the least attention.

Wednesday 12.1.44

Spent in the hotel with a pen & paper & a book

Thursday 13.1.44.

- Into Cairo tonight to the Metro Theatre - a beaut. Most comfortable seats I can remember having sat in, all set well apart. There is also a particularly high ceiling. All this space is because of the hot weather I guess. The weather here has been delightful so far even

- though it is mid winter. Never a cloud in the sky & always a cool breeze. There are a hell of a

lot of "gum trees" the same as Australia here in Egypt. I noticed that the highway between Port Said & here was lined throughout with Aust gum trees & now here in the hotel they are,

- with palms, the only trees. At the Pyramids & in the streets of the suburbs of Cairo they are

prominent. I would like to know how they came to be here.

P.41

Friday 14.1.44.

Lazy day but not so with the night. Went to a cabaret or night club in Cairo. Met the most despicable type of women ever. They were either French or English or else something with a tinge of colour. Some of them were exquisite to look at but what women!.

- As soon as one enters they crowd around you & so inevitably you sit down with one who

promptly orders 2 drinks - whisky. That costs 22 piastres. I had shaken about 6 off but by this time I was getting a little the worse for wear when I decided, (I don't know what prompted me), to switch drinks with the current woman & found that it was ginger ale for which I was paying that she was drinking. I went the rounds of the boys -7 other WAGS & 5

pilots & made this known to them - then we had a yarn with some English NCOs in the Army & then we decided that it was about time we did something about it. Finished up there were 3 of us behind the bar dishing out bottles of grog to the boys & not a Gypo or a woman to be seen. About an hour of this & we went home. If this diary reaches home without me please don't think I am a drunken outlaw, but bear in mind the way that these Gypos gyp us & the type of character of the Gypos & his women & there is good reason for what we did. The AIIF went as far as burning a cabaret down & not a word was spoken either by the authorities or proprietors, so we were quite justified.

Saturday 15.1.44.

Saturday 22.1.44.

The past week has been very tame with classes taking up every morning & reading the afternoon & either reading or the pictures took up the evenings. Last night I met several of the boys from the old 54th at Calgary. They are on their way to India in 6 Liberators. They had done their OUT in the Bahamas. All this afternoon was spent by 6 of us making up 600 rolls & 2 dozen loaves of bread into the necessary for a little "do" in the mess tonight. As all things point to quite a night I shall leave it until tomorrow.

Sunday 23.1.44.

What a night. An Aussie Group Captain came & was entertained in the Sergeant's Mess. The tucker was consumed in record time & the mess became dry in less time so some of us wound up at a dance for officers only at the Hotel Eurobrandi where there was plenty of women wine & song. When we arrived back at the hotel the officers mess was open so we stayed there till well after 3 ack emma. What a night.

Friday 28.1.44.

Heard from Jim English today & now am very broken up about Mery Smith. He married a fine girl from Calgary & 2 weeks later he went on a trip from Pat Bay & has never been heard of since.

Sunday 30.1.44.

Wandered around Cairo yesterday saw many interesting things including the famous Shepherds Hotel of much fame particularly in books. The station team played the RAMC

- Union today & won 25 nil. Good show as the 5 Aussies in the team scored all points.

Tuesday 1.2.44.

Informed early this morning that we have been posted to Palestine. Left the Palace

- Hotel at about 1 pm & trucked it to Cairo main railway station where we had about an hours

wait. This time was spent mainly in occupying the Wog orange vendors attention while some sneaked up behind & played havoc with his stocks. Finally pulled out & passed over the same country as we had before, ie, Ismailia & Zagazig. We branched off at the latter & turned toward the Suez which we crossed just on dusk.

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Friday 4.24.44.

As from inside the old city we can see the Mount Of Olives from where we are in this converted hospital which was German.

Saturday 5.2.44.

In Jerusalem today the Jews paraded with banners etc demanding the expulsion of the Arabs from their native Jerusalem. 2 shots from the police (mostly Englishmen) & they dispersed. The Arabs are very uneasy as they also claim Palestine & want a King elected to rule over them. The Arabs are according to rumour pretty well organised & a'rearin' to get to grips with the Yids, but the latter prefer to hide behind their British protectors. A pity they would not let them go & have these Yids fixed for good.

Tuesday 8.2.44.

One of the Arab lads who make our beds etc is called Saed. He is 15 & lives at a nearby native village. He is teaching us his tongue. He is a very amazing character in that he has a really surprising knowledge of the outside world & the present situation. He can read & speak English, French, German & Hebrew & all after 5 years of school & the rest has just been thru where he has worked etc. He even knows about Ghandi & his fasts etc. Met Gar Webb when I first arrived here & so have had a few nights on the grog. Also met Dan May with whom I did ITS & then met in Calgary. He is a pilot & he suggested we crew up together. It appears that a good quarter of the old 29 Course that came overseas have "had it" either training or in ops. Quite a few have finished their first tour one way or the other.

Saturday 12.2.44.

We have finished the first week of a so called 3 weeks refresher course. It is just a big bludge. Averages about 4 hours per day. Still consuming terrific quantities of oranges & their juice. Quite a stir in town last night when 8 time bombs, presumably planted by the Arabs in a few Govt buildings went off with comparatively little damage. A pity they wouldn't withdraw the Palestine Police (composed mainly of Englishmen who sign up for 5 years), & let the Arabs go to town on these confounded Jews. How they live together in such numbers is beyond me. Still no sign of a posting. Am just about fed up with the whole shooting match.

Monday 24.2.44

Some AIF came to town this afternoon. 52 of them now at Haifa on their way back home from Turkey after having delivered 500 horses for John Curtin. They were from all States & were all from Remount units. Anyway we & they took the town over & when the pubs closed at 10 pm Waltzing Matilda could be heard for many miles & the streets of Jerusalem were very wet indeed. What a night. They needed 2 trucks & 2 taxis to finally take us home at about 2 am.

Saturday 26.2.44

At last comes the day of a posting. Left the German Hospital at Jerusalem at 8.30 this morning in trucks & arrived at Eir Shemer or 78 OTU at 11.45. The country to here was very hilly, & of course the hills had the usual terraces for cultivation. This station has been open for 2 weeks & is very new indeed. I am pleased to see they have Wellingtons here as I always wanted them. The mess is pretty fair & the billets wizard. There are huts with walls about every 15 feet so this gives us a room 15 x 25 feet in which there are Sid Collins & myself. The huts & building are on top of a hill overlooking the landing field & dispersal area where there are 60 Wimpies scattered around.

P.44

Sunday 27.2.44

Started course today with a look around the station & that is about all. Saturday 4.3.44

Have been on course all week & so far have done very little. It is a new station & nothing is organised & they hardly know what to do with us. All the instructors are men who have done a tour out here & they know what they are talking about. Most of them are Dominion men. We shall definitely be going on to Wellingtons only I wish it were bomber command & not coastal. It is all General Reconnaissance work though & should prove interesting enough. The trips on ops will be about 8 hours apiece of which time the 3 of us WAGs will spend equal time in the turret, on the Marconi & the ASV so the changing will break the monotony, or we may be a torpedo bomber which have no monotony - all action while you last - which isn't long. Am now crewed up with an F/O Slater as 1st pilot - F/Sgt Perkins - second pilot - F/O Barker as navigator & the 3 of us WAGs - all NCOs. The whole crew is Australian & it looks as if we will go into an Aussie squadron from here. All we do here is refresh, all we have ever learned in our memories & become proficient at our jobs.

Fly for the first time in Ansons tomorrow in which we do 8 exercises before going up with our crew in the Wimpies. Have had some fun here with the lights we have made - they are cans with a hole in the lid & a piece of rope thru the hole & the other end in kerosene - wizard things. At the moment it is raining like hell after a week of almost unbearably hot weather. The mud also is terrific. This station is inland & about equidistant from Haifa & Tel Aviv. Went into the local village the other night (all Jews) & had a feed of 5 eggs. The pact between Jews & Arabs ends 31st of this month & they say there will be some fun. However we shall see. Have had several parcels during the week & some papers - both are the best things anyone overseas could have.

Friday 10.3.44.

Have been here at Eir Shemer for 2 weeks tomorrow, during which time I have found out some very interesting things both of the service & also about the AIF when they first arrived here. King Farouk of Egypt forbade them to enter Egypt in 1940 & so they came here to Palestine until things warmed up a little, & then the King was only too pleased to have them. The reason for this is that in the last show they burned down 2 streets of brothels in both Alex & Cairo. Went to the local Jewish village of Hadera which is 8 miles from here on the last day off. Had a few grogs, haircut & then hitchhiked back. Have half finished Anson exercise now & should be on to the Wimpies in 2 weeks from now if everything goes

OK.

Sunday 12.3.44

Quite a bit of life on this station during the last few days. It all started when a Canadian "pranged" his Wimpy. On takeoff he skidded off the runway & finished on the nose with both props ruined. This was followed the next day by an Australian & the same thing happened. Then the other morning the mail plane landed (a Harvard), & dug in fair in the middle of the runway. This is OK as far as nobody has been hurt. The same night a Canadian was taking off in a Wellington. He was 100 feet in the air when 1 motor cut & he promptly dove in. Fortunately there were only 2 others in the kite. The pilot was killed - the second dicky broke both legs - the W/Op fractured his skull & broke 4 or 5 ribs. The day after this a Hurricane hit some high tension lines about a mile from the airfield & the pilot went for a "Burton" as did the pilot of a Spitfire the day before about 3 miles away. Have done quite a lot of flying during the week in Ansons & have been over Tel Aviv which is a well laid out town of new white brick buildings.

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Sunday 2.4.44

First flight in a Wimpy today with crew. A 4 hour stooge up to Cyprus & back. Just went over the Eastern tip of Cyprus on the end of which is a lighthouse. The ground is very rocky & the end is high cliffs down to the very blue Mediterranean. the rear turret is wizard, as is the SE & Marconi. I'm sure the WAG has the best job. No panic among the crew who are a good lot indeed.

Sunday 9.4.44.

Have been flying pretty steadily all week, mostly over the Med. Did low level bombing & gunnery & photographic exercises. Only 2 weeks to go here now. Think I'll spend my weeks leave in Beirut with Alby & Fred. Alby Barker is an observer, Stan Slater our pilot. Bill Perkins second pilot, Fred Ayres, Sid Collins & self are the 3 WAGs. We have been flying as a crew quite a bit & are doing pretty well from results received & we are all quite happy together so there are no complaints. Watches were advanced 1 hour from April 1st. Wednesday 16.4.44

The curfew that was imposed on Palestine when they thought there would be trouble has now been lifted. One of the crews went out last night on a 6 hour stooge & just disappeared. There are kites from all over Palestine & Egypt out looking for it but still no

trace up to now. Looks as if they have had it. the pilot was a very decent chap, F/O Murray, a Canadian. but still, such is life.

Sunday 16.4.44

have now finished all our operational flying exercises. Went all over the western Mediterranean up to within 90 miles of Crete. Dropped some depth charges the other day & what a splash when they went off. 250 lbs babies they are. Have done quite a bit of air firing at a drogue towed by a Defiant & also at sea markers in the ocean. Have had 2 exams to date. Ship recognition 87.5% & aircraft 85%. Very pleased. These Wellingtons are wonderful aircraft. Get along at about 180 mph very nicely. Went to town over Tel Aviv today. I'll bet half the Jews on the waterfront lost their moustaches on our wing tip.

Saturday 22.4.44

Have finished OTU, a thing which quite a lot have failed to do. In gunnery practice & written I finished up top of the course & in wireless 11 out of 24. Am very satisfied with everything. Leave for Beirut tomorrow with Sid, Fred, Alby & myself. Have rooms booked & should have a wizard time.

Sunday 23 .4.44.

Left Eir Shemer at 2pm & not a bit sorry. truck to Hadea then bus to Haifa 20 miles away. Arrived Haifa at about 5pm & checked in at the Weiss Hotel - German Jew owned. Looked over the nightspots. Haifa is a fine clean town with many ultra modern buildings. It is built on a bay & slopes up on to a hill. There are many fine homes. All Jews.

Monday 24.4.44.

Caught a taxi out to a WD pickup for hitch hikers & caught to the Syrian border. All the way there is along the waterfront with numerous military camps & native settlements. The border crossing is on a cliff almost sheer, with the road above the sea about 300 feet. A beautiful view & some ideal swimming holes among the rocks. Here we waited for about an hour & then got another truck. Along from the military border is the old customs house which is still in use for civilians. Saw my first French soldiers here. The Allied transports just detour the Customs. French soldiers man same. Here was seen the first signs that there had been any fighting. A small graveyard with perhaps 100 white crosses. There were many of these between the border & Beirut.

P.47

All the way the road & railway line ran along the beach occasionally up on the cliffs & then down 50 yds from the water. There were many deserted military camps which had been occupied by French soldiers prior to the occupation. There are plenty of concrete pill boxes along the coast which by the bullet & shrapnel scars they were all very hardly contested. About every 10 miles we passed thru a Wog village. First actual town is Saida which is about half way between Beirut & the border. Here we stopped & had eggs chips at a French cafe where English was a new language. coming into Beirut are many olive, orange & lemon & loquat groves. At last we reached Beirut where hardly anyone knew a word of English. The

King & Queen & Churchill are stuck up everywhere in shop windows. Put up at the Select Hotel overlooking the harbour. Behind the town is still the snow capped mountains. There is the usual native quarter in Beirut but not as big as other towns in the ME. The French part is much like Montreal, with the customary low dives & prostitutes. There are plenty of French soldiers around who completely ignore us in our slouch hats & shorts. I guess I would too, if I were in the same in their position. The Gendarmes run around in swarms doing exactly nothing. Even the traffic cops have an umbrella & just wave a white baton very lazily at the traffic. The Gendarmes have more braid & brass than an English general & that "aint nuttin" !. There are some fine buildings here but most of them seem to be 40 years old. The Manageress here at the hotel talks American & does she swear. Although fluent I don't think she realise half of what she says. I hope not anyway. Spent the evening at the Balalaika Cabaret with a girl on each knee. It was a place for WOs & officers only, & seeing that we have 3 stripes & a crown we are WO third class.

Tuesday 25.4.44.

Had a wander round town & inspected the contraptions called trams. There are several gambling dens around here but they will remain uninspected as far as I am concerned.
Wednesday 26.4.44.

Checked out of the hotel & caught cab to the Haifa road where we had to wait over an hour for a lift to Saida - about halfway. Here we had a feed of eggs as usual & caught another truck to St Jean about 10 miles out of Haifa where we caught another truck into Haifa. Booked seats on the Cairo train which were the first available for Monday & put up again at the Weiss Hotel

Thursday 27.4.44

Had a good look around today particularly at the Arab quarters which stink as usual. Friday 28.4.44.

Most of the day spent in bed as the heat wave has just finished. This is called a "Canisine" (?) & appears to be a local phenomenon.

Saturday 29.4.44.

We are all in a state of near brokedness, but living frugally we should be able to exist until Monday which is the first train we could reserve on. We eat at the Garrison Club run by Jews for the Allied services, trusting the old Jews not to be too cheap, but it is by far the best place in town for good clean food. Slept in & found the first relief from this heat wave in the form of a nice cool breeze from the Mediterranean so took a dip in same about 3 miles out of Haifa. I am quite satisfied that Palestine cities, Haifa & Tel Aviv are the cleanest in the ME. The Jewish women are fine types & I have not seen so many truly shapely & beautiful "bints" together before.

Sunday 30.4.44

Ate & slept & read all day.

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Monday 1.5.44.

Off to a flying start packing & driven to the bus station where the 4 of us had left our 21 pieces of luggage at the rate of 1 1/2 piastres per piece per day. Had it carted down to the railway station on a hand trolley & eventually got aboard a cattle truck at 3.00 pm & left at 3.20. senior NCOs & the men travel together in 3rd class. Female members of the forces travel 2nd class & officers travel 1st class. This is an arrangement with which we do not readily agree so we finished up sneaking into the 2nd class carriage where we found 4 English WAAFs who filled in the 18 hours which was to follow. The line was along the coast for about 10 miles then cuts inland & passes Tel Aviv about 6 miles away at a place called Lydda. Soon after this we were in the desert until we reached Gaza where we had a cup of tea & sandwiches just on dark.

Tuesday 2.5.44.

Arrived Kantara - border town - at about midnight where we again had tea etc & changed money into Egyptian (if any),. An Egyptian pound is worth 1.0.6 Sterling - Palestinian = 1.0.0 & a Syrian 2/3. (About 8 3/4 in an English Pound) Am into the desert again & woke up at Ismailia where we had another cup of tea etc. About 20 more miles of desert & then we came into the Nile delta where there are oodles of irrigation channels & Arab hovels & farms. At last about 9.30 am we reached Cairo where 2 of us took a trolley from a wog & emptied his crates of oranges off it amid much protesting & eventually got our luggage on to a truck which took us out thru Cairo & Heliopolis to Almaza which is on the edge of the desert & much sand. A canvas camp & we started with the usual 6 or 7 papers to fill in again & eventually scrounged a feed of green peas & beans (most welcome) beef & chips & boy, did we eat & eat & then sleep.

Wednesday 3.5.44

There is an Australian orderly room here for the RAAF with a LAC in charge. There are 2 parades a day but the Aussies never go on them. We just go up to orderly room & get a leave pass at 9.00 am & that is all about it. Went into the RAAF APO today & collected a much needed 4 Pounds & then went around to the NZ Club - the best institution I have ever been in. Had chicken pie with chips & green beans soup - ice cream & fruit salad & a milk shake all for 16 piastres (3/3) Absolutely wonderful. Spent the afternoon over a few noggins with the rest of the crew & pictures at night. Found out we will probably go to Algiers in a few days & wait there to go to Malta or Italy to join 458 Squadron. I hope all this is true. Thursday 4.5.44

Spent the day reading newspapers & finishing off remains of parcels & the night writing a few letters. Hope to be posted by Saturday.

Friday 5.5.44.

Have just been reading about the figures of Bomber Command in England for April, 30000 sorties in 30 days. Terrific.

Saturday 6.5.44.

Lazed around in the sun all morning & then strolled into Cairo for a few beers & 2 double meals at the NZ club. Had an evening at a cabaret watching rude women display various "charms" in different ways. Saw 2 chaps do the best balancing act I have ever seen. Sunday 7.5.44

Up bright & early, 1.15 am to be exact. Informed that we are going to Algiers by air. Took a truck out to Payne Field a US airfield with our 110 lbs of baggage including parachute etc. I now have less than half my baggage now. Finally climbed into a Douglas Dakota with 23 others.

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There are 2 crews of us of 6 & the rest are were US & British officers of all ranks. The trip lasted 4.15 to Benira - an airport about 8 miles from Benghazi. The trip from Cairo was across rocky desert & sand with the occasional village built around an oasis. All over the place are tracks zig-zagging everywhere. Undoubtedly made by the tanks etc in the heavy fighting. Ran across the road several times along the edges of which were numerous bomb holes - usually in sticks. At last we circled the airfield of Benira which is surrounded by dozens of wrecks of Italian planes. Every building on the field had been razed to the ground by bombs & gunfire. What little was left was riddled by shrapnel & bullet holes. Just a few American planes on the field. All the property of the US Air Transport Command. Numerous graves were scattered around the place. The only making of any evidence was a bent propellor or tin helmet or a dud shell or bomb. A very unromantic end for a soldier or airman who gives his life. After a cup of tea & sandwiches took off & circled the town of Benghazi which is right on the coast & has part of it in a wrecked condition. It is rather peculiarly situated being on a point which is harbor next to it with a breakwater. On each side of the white buildings are 2 large shallow looking lakes, several sunken & upturned boats of a fair size. From here we set course for Tunis. These Yanks still haven't learned to navigate as we followed the coast all the way up for 4.40 when we landed at Turns airfield which is surrounded by wrecked Allied, Italian & German planes. The coast all the way up is very flat & rather uninteresting. Cape Bon has a large mountain & a good beach from which Rommel evacuated. The beach is littered with wreckage of all kinds - trucks etc. The bay has at least 20 sunken vessels of all shapes & sizes. The town of Tunis is about 20 miles from the main part of the bay & the airfield but the shallow water goes up to the town which is built around the bay. At the airport is the biggest selection of aircraft I have ever seen. Fortresses, Halifax, Spitfires & so on ad infinitum. We were billeted in a very large hotel affair which had been a hotel. The walls were all spattered pretty well with bullets & shrapnel. Caught a lift into Tunis on a Yank truck & who should we run into was General de Gaulle & his mob celebrating the 1st anniversary of Tunisia's liberation from the Hun. It is a very big city with less wogs than Palestine even. The main population is French & white at that. Very little English is spoken. Plenty of French soldiers were holding the crowd back from the

procession which consisted of Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Colored troops, (not Australians), & Frenchmen & de Gaulle & his push in a big open Renault. he is a rather striking looking

character because of his size I think. The city is pretty modern with large wide straight streets with large modern shops. Nearly all the places were closed except a few liquor joints which were full of the usual French prostitutes. Some of them very beautiful, but -- ?. After a few hours wandering around caught another truck back to camp where we slept between US army blankets. Retarded watches 1 hour at Tunis.

Monday 8.5.44.

Up early & airborne just after 8.30 am. circled around the town which is very white & well laid out & started along the coast for Algiers. The cloud was about 2000 feet & the mountains along the coast a few hundred feet high. Could just see the water now & again thru the cloud & the mountains just above them on the port side. (Around Turns the country is all under grapes. Thousands of acres of these vineyards with a few orchards here & there). Cut inland & down a wide valley for about 1/2 hour. This valley appeared to be under rye or wheat or some such things with nice modern homesteads. At last we landed at an airfield some 20 miles from the town of Algiers. While we were waiting for transport to a camp when all of a sudden what should happen but a big Dakota lands & Major Generals, & Brigadiers come from everywhere.

P.51

Steak, (3x1 1/2x1/2"), 4 eggs & chips for 165 piastres, -just the bare 16/6. Was still hungry but what there was was wonderful.

Monday 15.5.44

Have spent the last 2 days mostly on the beach reading & awaiting a posting which never seems to come.

Friday 19.45.44

Spent the week on the beach & in bed. Am gradually becoming accustomed to the small meals. As everyone appears to look pretty fit the tucker must be doing us good. Went into Algiers tonight to the pictures & saw Bob Hope in "Lets Face It" - not much. The women in Algiers have no stockings, dress beautifully in light dresses. Algiers is a city of brothels & hairdressers so the women have some weird & wonderful hair does. Most of them built up to give the impression of height. They have wooden soles on their shoes & a thickness of 6 inches is not uncommon. With their nice slim figures & these 2 accessories they look simply wizard. We got a lift into town easy enough, had a few cakes (the only things) at the WOs & Sgts club & went to the pictures. We came out at 8.00 pm strolled around until 9.30 when it became dark. Then the 3 of us set about getting a lift the 12 miles out to camp. As it was pay day the "mob" was in town we decided to walk. We walked, walked, walked etc until we came to the race track mid way between Algiers & camp when we finally caught a truck to the gates.

Friday 26.5.44

Last Sunday went to the races which were as crooked as can be found. They even pull them up as they cross the line. Of course I lost 300 piastres, (30/- St). Spent the week in bed &

on the beach. About time we were posted but as Alby is in hospital with throat trouble I guess we won't go for a while yet. With the tucker & nothing to do I am just about cheesed off with hanging around.

Saturday 27.5.44

Yesterday & today we have had nothing but locusts. Big yellow ones. Flying over in their millions. Big clouds of them darkening the sky in unimaginable numbers. Flew over all day yesterday & all this morning & now all that remains are dead ones. On the beach are big piles about 6 inches high where they have apparently fallen into the water & have been washed up - dead.

Wednesday 3 1.5.44

The locusts have now disappeared & only dead remain. Had an air raid alert last night when an unidentified plane flew from one end of the bay to the other amid searchlights & ack ack fire. He was not shot down. The searchlights are synchronised with the RDF & when they are switched on they come straight on to the aircraft without searching at all. Went into Algiers to the ARC baksheesh pictures yesterday. No doubt about the Yanks for looking after their services. The last few days the old Med has excelled itself & we have had some nice little breakers. Fully 10 yards on them. Am becoming very cheesed off with nothing to do in this place & am looking forward to a posting in the near future.

Saturday 3.5.44.

The last few days have seen us at the usual, sleeping, reading, swimming & eating, (not so much of the latter).

Wednesday 7.6.44

The popular rumour is so our destination has changed & now it is Sardinia. The Second Front was announced yesterday. No doubt it is the greatest thing ever attempted in military history

P.52

I give it 6 months now with even breaks before Adolph "throws in the sponge" - 12 months at the outside.

Wednesday 14.6.44.

Sf11 no e9ditifig happnngs aãft FtOĩñ the üUàl biuIdging & the Iäët that I Wht into Algiers yesterday, saw a show then as it was the weekly beer night I came back to the thSS & becaffle Slightly niebflated.

Monday 19.6.44

Thought we would have some fun last Saturday. The DAPM called for 20 volunteers to go on a raid to an Arab village where there has been a lot of trouble. They have been thieftig things & on previous raids had sniped & killed sevã1 MPs - "Good otieffl". Well we were all

ready with rifle, bayonet, ammo & pistols when the CO of the station decided it was no job for a few weeks who were worth quite a few tens of thousands of pounds. So we missed out. Went to a French "Estaminet" last night and partook of eggs & rather too much wine in a French style.. Apart from these happenings & the surf has been like the last few days everything has gone according to plan.

Saturday 24.6.44.

Out of bed at 4.45 am & down to the Maison Blanche airfield where we climbed into a Dakota & took off at about 9.00 am. Circled around & then flew down the very rocky coast to immediately south of Sardinia & then 3 hours after take off landed at the field of Cagliari which is almost covered in wrecked German planes. All the hangars lack roofs & the frames are only just. The town is not very modern & what there is left of it is not worthwhile. It appears that the enemy mounted machine guns on civilian buildings with the result that the Allies bombed the lot. After a pretty fair dinner at a Yank mess we took off & headed NW across the island. All that we passed was plain country under grapes & orchards & quite a lot was irrigated. Then we ran into some mountains in the middle of which we landed at a place called Aighero where 438 Sqdn is situated. Here are also Mustangs; Lightning, Marauder, Aircobra, Mosquito, Spitfire, Wellington & an Air-Sea Rescue squadron. We got a truck to our camp which is about 6 miles away from the airfield. All tents of course & about 85% Australians. Electric lights from captured German generators. On the side of the hill runs down to a nice white beach with the clearest water I have ever seen. The food is pretty good so far. The mess has plenty of stock - soap, cigarettes etc.

Sunday 25.6.44.

Paraded before the CO this morning & given the lowdown on things. 500 hours day, or 250 M—fs. Usually a few times a day. Sometimes bombings, sometimes ships & harbor installations on the south coast of France.

Monday 26.6.44.

Went down to the flights & got all the gear on the MK IV ASV which is beyond

reliance in the job it does. The crowd on the squadron are good types & there is no slagging off or anything like that. There are quite a lot of Italians around & they are armed. Their clothes are poor being full of patches & holes & they wear either wooden shoes or boots that show their feet.

Tuesday 27.6.44.

Another day on the 'drome where we learnt quite a lot more. We now intend to have a 500 ft morning. This morning the mess here is quite a nice one being a large marquee with boards for tables & bomb bins for chairs. The WCs are about 1/2 a mile away & are in the open air.

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The Italians here are so hard up that they hang around during meals & then dive for the pig bins where we throw our scraps. This is the truth, & they are in the Italian Army. Money is useless to them as they cannot buy anything.

Saturday 1.7.44.

Up until yesterday we had lectures on the SE & films on "ditching" etc & then we flew yesterday afternoon. As soon as we were airborne the starboard motor cut & we nearly "dug in". Luckily Stan saved us a few feet from the deck & we limped around the "drome & landed. In the terms of the squadron language it was a very "dicey show". Today we flew again for a few hours up to Corsica & back. This new Secret Equipment is wonderful. It picks up land at an amazing range & gives such an accurate interpretation that we read from the map & the screen & know where we are in respect to the land. Of course it also gives range. This is what we find ships & subs with at night - home on to them - switch on "Leigh Light" - drop bombs or depth charges or else flares so the Beaufighters can come out with torpedoes. Across the bay about 4 miles away is the town of Alghero which is Italian but most of it is out of bounds. It is a filthy little place but we get ice cream in there at night at

the YMCA. The mess here has plenty of Scotch & English gin & we get one bottle of English beer per week We have about 3 swims a day at the beach in beautifully clear water.

Sunday 9.7.44

All the week we have been working one day with the next day off. We have only been doing local stoooges of 2 odd hours. Hope to go on ops tomorrow night for the first time. We are getting ready for a swimming carnival here. We have the course all fixed up. The ends of the 33 metres course old German glider frames from down on the "drome. The "erks" here are strange. They all have German, Italian, or American firearms & there are quite a few motor bikes around too. All plunder from N Africa. There are several caravans also of Hun origin which belong to different officers.

Tuesday 11.7.44

We were standby crew last night & waited in vain for 24 hours to be scrambled after a submarine which seem non existent in the Med at the moment. Bill Perkins has a sore back but from what he says & what I think he is another Bruce Stocks. We flew yesterday morning on a training flight & had an FIO Jock Thompson from Queensland with us. He is better than Bill. Was a bit worried for a while though. Stan let him take over at 1000 feet & I was busy

on the wireless when I looked up & saw a water tower sail merrily past just above us. We were about 20 feet off the deck. Then he did a steep turn & at last Stan told him very quietly that he had 40 feet of wing each side & we were 50 ft. He had only ever flown small planes before & never realised the change. Bags of thrills but no spills as yet. Start a 48 hour pass tomorrow which we will spend at a close rest camp. They have these rest camps as meals are non existent in the local towns & villages. The Italian Army or "Musso's Supermen" are a very poor lot. They hang around the mess & scrape the scraps from our

plates. Also sweat on us throwing away bumpers. They have no boots but wear home made wooden soled sandals. Very small in stature, I can't imagine them against the AIF.

Wednesday 12.7.44.

One crew went out last night, picked up something on the SE - on investigation with the Leigh Light proved to be one destroyer escorting 2 merchant vessels. He promptly attacked with depth charges of all things. He made the first run & then 2 attacks with his light. The flack was most intense but he reached base with just a few holes in the old Wimp. That is guts. What he should have done was to send to base & get the Beaufighters out with their rockets.

P.54

Undoubtedly Jerry is trying to work out what this new kind of attack is. Leigh Light is a 26" searchlight installed in bottom of a Wellington. Fred & I boarded the "Liberty Game" at 9 am this morning & set off for the rest camp. We climbed the mountains & after travelling south for 50 miles finally got back to the coast where we reached "Bosa Maria" & now we are installed right on the waterfront at the mouth of a river in a one time palatial

hotel where we have Italians waiting on us with wizard tucker. In the mountains we passed thru several small filthy villages alive with children from 3 to 10 & that is just about all. It is very mountainous & rocky, but in the rockiest & steepest fields are harvested crops of wheat & oats. The way of getting the grain is rather quaint. They make a big pile of it & get 2 or 4 oxen which are driven around & around on it until the heads are broken up & then they sweep up the chaff & shovel the wheat into big boxes dragged by a small donkey of ridiculous size. Right thru the mountains the roads are steeper & crookeder than any I have ever seen. All over are cork trees which have been stripped of their bark which is piled up to dry & then cut to into required sizes. There are only about 20 houses here but hundreds of families occupy them. We have a bar in the same building where there is bags of "bombo". Will probably hit it tonight. As at Aighero this is a bad mosquito place so ever since I have been in Sardinia I have been taking the issued quinine tablets. Am going to an open air picture tonight, "Pistol Packing Mama" which starts at 10 pm which is dusk.

Thursday 13.7.44.

Spent the day in bed, eating, rowing, sailing (much fun), & fishing for fish that won't bite for me. A lot of the lads are using hand grenades to good effect. Plenty of sure catches that way.

Friday 14.7.44.

Spent the morning loafing around & then left at about 2.30 by truck for Aighero where we arrived at 5.00 pm & had some ice cream at the YMCA & then on to our camp, a further 5 miles where I am about to go to the mess & have a few grogs.

Monday 17.7.44

Have been doing nothing for the past few days except cleaning our guns which are in wizard condition. The last few nights the boys have been carrying bombs, but have not dropped any yet. Caught the station ghany into Sassari this morning where I sold a few cigarettes at good prices. It is a fairly modem town with quite a few well dressed dagoes & nice women. Had a few myself in a pretty good little bar & then met a French girl from Nice. Not bad either. The road to Sassari is over a big mountain & is absolutely beautiful. There are flowering trees on both sides & at the numerous hairpin bends there are garden plots. It is the steepest road I have ever seen & on the top you can look down on the road all the way & follow its switchback course all the away. Came back on another truck from which I "won" a bottle of wizard chutney. The races went off yesterday, I won nothing but Lyndon whom

I met in England & all points won all the big events - quite a swimmer.

Tuesday 18.7.44

Expect to go on my first operational trip tonight. certainly hope so.

Thursday 20.7.44.

Did not fly on Tuesday night as the weather was u/s. Have done nothing since, only celebrated Stan's 21St. The next day was very grim. Have had some wizard suppers in our tent lately. Salmon, tea, meat, potatoes. The origin of the tucker is a bit obscure & doubtful at times though. However it tastes good wherever it come from. The fishermen cast a net out from our little cove & netted 9 cases of very nice fish. I now have 2 wizard beds I pinched from a pranged Halifax, & the other from a tent down at the "drome

P.55

The latter is a folding one & I use it for when I sleep at the 'drome. Expect to fly tonight. Think it is bombing, hope so anyway.

Tuesday 25.7.44.

Had our first op trip yesterday, which was a daylight "shufli" up & down the French coast for a crew of a Ventura which ditched. We should have had fighter escort, but it was not forthcoming. There were 3 Wimpies & 2 Warwicks. We started at the Cape de Creus where there were some heavy ack ack batteries, so we didn't stay around long. Rather peculiar to see the tracer come up & the stuff burst about 100 yds away. From here we went south to Barcelona. At first it is rather mountainous & then it levels out somewhat in Spain & around Barcelona it is very flat & fertile. We couldn't find any thing so we set course for home & arrived at base with gas left for 10 minutes. One of the other kites sighted a German float plane Arado 196, but it didn't come near us. Barcelona looks a very clean town from the air & nicely squared. There is a large river down the side. Although I looked hard I couldn't find the customary "bull ring".

Wednesday 26.7.44.

Flew again last night. this time "Fair Dinkum". Took off- then up to the tip of Corsica & set course for Nice where we cruised NE looking for some ships to prang about 8 miles from the coast. Could find none so went on to Savona - dropped 6 flares the bombed the marshalling yards & oil installations. Plenty of flak It was red & green & white & some came fairly close. Set course for home & landed having got rid of 12 x 250 lb bombs. Friday 28.7.44.

Out again last night with 12 x 250 pounders. While being briefed we were commended on our efforts the other night by the news that the targets were still burning. Started our recce at Leghorn up past Spezia where we copped some flak & a few star shells, a Jerry night fighter followed us for 10 minutes & then broke off. He was seen due to the red glow they have in the nose which is in connection with their infra-red ray sighting gear. Went up around Genoa & then down to Nice, where we turned around & back to Monaco, then ran in over Menton with our flares. Experienced heavy & accurate flak of all colours & sizes. There we turned & dropped our bombs from 5000 feet on a railway bridge. Heard this afternoon that the bridge was damaged & the adjacent marshalling yards afire. A "shufti" kite went up this morning & took photos. On both these occasions there have been 4 white Wellingtons. When the flares light up the old Wimp stands out very well. The Yanks think us heroes to be going up there bombing white aircraft with SE & Leigh Light & a maximum speed of 140 knots & max ceiling of 5000 feet. We are not so much heroes or just plain mad

- what the hell anyway?.

Sunday 30.7.44.

Took off last night at 9.30 & did the usual stooge up the coast of Corsica & across the sea to Leghorn & then up around the Gulf of Genoa. At Spezia once again we had flares dropped on us by night fighters but never saw the planes themselves. Round to Monaco & then back to Pietra Ligure & bombed the shipyards & docks & sheds. The only thing we pranged was the sheds & made quite a mess of them with 12 x 250 lbs. Very little flak & set course base & got home without mishap.

Tuesday 1.8.44.

Took off at midnight last night with depth charges looking for submarines which were reported to be in the Gulf of Genoa. We cruised the area for 6 1/2 hours but found nothing. As usual we were very close to the coast the heavy ack ack opened up on us, but it never came very close. No U- Boats sighted nor night fighters.

P.56

Friday 4.8.44

Was standby crew last night in the event of anyone finding a sub then we took off with DCs. One of the crews found & sunk a 1500 ton merchant vessel. Otherwise nothing to note.

Sunday 6.8.44

Took off after midnight & did a recce of the Genoa Gulf for boats - found none. Ran into very bad weather, could neither get above or below it We were recalled before we could

find the land target. One kite is missing. Earlier in the night the target was clear & by the crews that came back the flak was intense & accurate. The missing one was probably shot down by either flak or night fighters. Mosquitos & Beaufighters got 3 JU 88s south of Corsica & around the target.

Monday 7.8.44.

We were to fly tonight but our kite is temporarily u/s so we stayed & wrote letters & drank our weekly bottle of beer. Nothing worthwhile recording happens. We have palled up with 3 Yanks from a Thunderbolt squadron on the 'drome & have been having them up here to the bar for several weeks. Last night they opened a bar of their own which is stocked with grog flown up from Sicily. 3 of us were invited down & what a do. Too sad this morning to talk about

Wednesday 9.8.44

On our 7th trip last night which was recce of Genoan Gulf with alternate target. Full moon as bright as day, but couldn't find any ships either visually or by SE, so bombed Sestrie Levante & hit the factories also took photos of same. Dropped 12 x 250 lbs. As we left the target area we copped heavy & light flak- both accurate. Got out of that OK & the we were picked up by a fighter which followed us nearly to Corsica without firing on us. The kite that was missing has not been seen again, nor has the crew so it looks as if they have had it.

Friday 11.8.44

Raining today for the first time since we have been on the island. We were very successful in our last bombing as the factories are still burning. It was a munition factory. We also destroyed 30 tanks which were parked outside. We have been sweating on an 8000 ton liner which is in Savona harbour. Bad weather prevented flying last night & it probably sneaked out & went to Spezia where no one dares to venture. In the last 3 weeks our squadron has done some good work & have been commended by Wilson. We find the ships - home the Beaufighters by wireless & then drop flares over them & the Beaus come in with rockets & then if there is any left we bomb them & if not we bomb a ground target. Unfortunately we have been taking off very late & by the time we get to area all the boats out have either been sighted & sunk or chased back into one of the big ports but we get them eventually. Yesterday we went out on a petrol consumption test & flew right around Sardinia at zero feet & shot up the towns & beaches on the way. We turned one sailing boat over with our slipstream. Bet the old Itie takes a poor view of it. All the way round it is rocky except for small sandy beaches every few miles. It is one of the most barren places of land there is I think.

Sunday 13.8.44.

Took off yesterday on a U-boat hunt but returned base due to w/t failure. Then we took off with our 12 x 250 pounders last night & searched Genoan Gulf for ships - finding none we bombed Sestri Levante where we saw the bombs burst right on the factories Heavy & light fairly accurate flak was encountered. Returned to base without mishap.

P.57

The last kite out landed with one bomb on which exploded. We were watching & it was a mass of flames in less than a second. By some miraculous phenomena all "bods" were blown from the kite. Only 2 are seriously injured & not expected to live. The flares - Verrey lights & ammo poofed off & exploded for a good 20 minutes & the kite is now just a lump of twisted metal. It seemed to bum instantaneously from one end to the other. Quite a shock.

Tuesday 15. 8.44.

Went out last night to patrol the Genoan Gulf & saw between 1000 - 1500 boats of all shapes & sizes which comprised the invasion force. Bombers had been coming over the 'drome all day on their way. When we finished patrol & had bombed Sestrie Larente we stooged down to Marseille & watched a bombing raid in progress. Thousands of flares & fires & whole blocks seemed to leap into the air. Came back to base where heavy cloud blocked the aerodrome which we circuited until we ran out of petrol when we ditched most successfully 13/4 miles from shore. The old kite floated for 25 seconds. Another kite did the same thing & ditched right on the shore in shallow water. Everyone got out. As we flew past Cannes we could see the battle in progress amongst much light & gun flashes. There were very few enemy aircraft around & we did not see any.

Thursday 17.8.44.

Was up until midnight at a court of inquiry over the ditching. Finished up going over the trip again & finally got to bed very much cheesed with the Air Force. Left this afternoon & went to Blida near Algiers to get a kite. Flew down the Sardinian coast & then straight across to Algiers.

Friday 18.8.44.

Stayed on the drome for the night - went into the town in the morning. Just a small dead loss French. Left late afternoon & arrived back just before the bar closed. This squadron has been flying about 15 sorties a day since the Third Front. Unfortunately they won't let us go back on to ops just yet The other crew that ditched has a weeks leave. Hope we get the same. They are after some subs reported to have left Toulon harbour.

Sunday 20.8.44.

Out again last night with our usual load of 12 x 250 lb bombs. Couldn't find any enemy shipping between Nice & Genoa so bombed Imperia. Everything was all right until just after we dropped our bombs & the flares had gone out when about 20 flak bursts came up & burst under the tail of the kite. Shook her about properly. When we got back the damage was investigated & proved to be 4 small holes in the tail plane. Only small though. Tuesday 22.8.44

Out early this morning on a boat hunt off Corsica & near the French coast. At dawn I picked up a signal which was intermittent on the S6 screen. Homed to within 3 miles & it disappeared. Must have been a sub & crash dived. There was one seen yesterday about 10 miles from where we saw it. Bad luck, still we kept him down.

Wednesday 23.8.44

Out again this morning to cover where the navy had picked up a sub on AZTEC equipment. We were working with 2 destroyers but nothing came to light. I have never seen so many boats in my life as were around Cannes & on the way to Corsica. Cannes was still burning brilliantly. Saw 2 hospital ships which looked really wonderful with all their lights. Saturday 26.8.44

Once again we did another anti sub search north of Corsica. Toulon most of them came from. We saw nothing but hundreds of our own ships.

P.58

Sunday 27. 8.44

Sailing again today. Have been doing quite a bit of it lately. Unfortunately I have yet to go on a sail without having to row there or back. All boats should have motors. Am just about cheesed with this a/sub stuff. The bombing is much better as you can see something for your efforts. They are always telling us that we are doing a job that must be done & by doing it we are keeping the subs underneath at least. We lost another kite last night - just didn't return to base & that is all there is about it. Flak is a thing that scares on first seeing but one gets so as not to worry about it. Can't hurt much unless it is right on the beam.

Wednesday 30. 8.44.

Have done nothing since last entry. Were to have flown last night but our aircraft was u/s. They have picked up 3 of the crew that was missing. The altimeter was reading incorrectly & they hit the "aqua" at 150 knots. Fortunately she broke in halves & 3 were thrown out together with one small dinghy on which they hung for 2 1/2 days before being seen by an ASR kite.

Friday 1.9.44.

Well, I've seen a bit of flak in person, on the screen, & in words, but last night topped the lot. When the bomber boys bomb Genoa itself they lose aircraft & we chased 2 barges into the harbour & before we knew where we were we were on top of the town. I was in the turret, & what a display. All colours, shapes & sizes on all sides. The bursts shook the old kite but we never got hit. Full moon, white kite & all. Then we cruised outside & found 2 more barges which we bombed, & then back to base where 2 of our aircraft had been wiped out on landing. One was an accident, the other was shot up at Spezia, the tyre exploding & blowing the dinghy from its stowage. They limped back to the "drome & no one was hurt in either landing. Quite a night.

Sunday 3.9.44.

Informed early this morning we were moving to Italy, so we packed up & pulled the tent down & trucked it to the 'drome where we loaded it all into our kite P for Peter. Stuff everywhere - tents, beds, cases etc. Finished fairly late & slept at Wing HQ the night. Off to an early start first thing this morning.

Monday 4.9.44.

Coast crawled down west coast of Sardinia & set course for Naples from Elmas. Hit Naples dead on after about an hour over the water. The town of Naples seems to be in about 5 parts scattered all over the place. The harbour has many docks around which is the oldest part of town. Hundreds, yes hundreds of big boats in the port. Mt Vesuvius is about 7 miles south - down the coast from Naples & looks a very vicious piece of work around its most jagged & rocky top. Flying at about 5000 feet & just above all the neighbouring mountains & there are plenty. Picked a pass & went east to Foggia which is on the plains & about 20 miles from the coast. The country around here is mostly wheat & grape with a bit of cattle. Landed at the 'drome which is the biggest I have been on, Fortresses, Liberators, bomber Wellingtons & numerous others. Pitched our tent right next to a vineyard & the grapes are good. With all

of us at them I can just imagine the growers loss. Food is bully beef & biscuits for the present as all except crews & essential personnel are coming over by boat & land. Good to see the CO & the rest of the officers line up among the erks & us. The WC is a shovel behind a haystack several hundred yards away. Just cover it up with a shovel. We arrived early this afternoon & had a tent up when the CO & one of the flight commanders arrived in a truck

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They took all their stuff off themselves & then pitched their tent like old hands in a not too pleasant wind. The CO, otherwise known as the "Big Digger" or "Tiny Tim", is a big bushwhacker of 6'1" & with his slouch hat he looks the part. All he needs is a plough. 5 of us walked into town last night which is about 3 miles from our tent. No indiscriminate bombing they say, what a mess. Whole blocks missing. There is not a stretch of road more than 50 yards without a bend. Thousands of Italians walking around & every doorway you can find opens on to a bedroom, kitchen etc - all one. Old & young are eating, sleeping & all in all it is one hell of a mess. Over 300 bombers took off from this area last night & the same tonight.

Tuesday 5.9.44

Intend to look the town over in daylight at the first opportunity.

Thursday 7.9.44.

Well, the authorities & MPs in town know very well that there is an Australian squadron in town. Tuesday night's effort was the best, when our ground staff (about 50), went to town. Curfew is 11 pm but they wouldn't come home so there was a big fight outside the ARC with the police. There were some taken into custody anyway. There were casualties on both sides. I have been in every day so far & there is a good senior NCOs club in there where good tucker may be had. The squadron started flying last night. 2 crews took off from here flew to Ancona - bombed up there & did the coastal Adriatic towns over then back to Ancona to refuel, then back here to Foggia.

Friday 8.9.44.

Took off yesterday & flew up the coast to Ancona. There are many rivers on the coast & of course roads all the way & every bridge is just a heap of ruins & is surrounded by bomb craters. The Poles have been here in the push up the coast. Ancona harbour is full of shipping - sunk & afloat. The 'drome there is just a landing strip cut through the fields & is in the bottom of a very fertile valley where there is very tall corn, vineyards etc. Everything is peaceful & it is hard to realise the front is only 40 miles away. The fighter boys there average at least one Hun a day - usually a Stuka. 454 Sqdn (Australian) is there on Baltimores doing close army support. Met Gar Webb who is showing signs of wear. Talked with these boys until we took off at 2 am, the kites having taken on 12 nice little 250 pounders & then we went on patrol between Porto Garibaldi & Venice about 5 miles from the coast. did this trip 4 times & found no shipping so bombed Porto Garibaldi which is about 20 miles behind Jerry's lines. We encountered only very scattered flak. We passed the front line twice & of course saw the artillery & smaller guns at it hammer & tongs. They say once they get into Rimini & get out on to the plains the show in Italy is just about over. About 40 Dakotas land daily at Ancona flying out prisoners & wounded from the front There are numerous landing strips right along the coast which have been used by both sides in turn. Our patrol was supposed to have been up among the islands of the eastern Adriatic but due to an Allied landing that was called off in favour of the west. According to the intelligence officers here there is a daily service of Dakotas to Yugoslavia flying in arms etc for Tito & bringing out escaped POWs & crews who have come down there. Certainly looks as though this war won't last long now.

Saturday 9.9.44.

Went to an ENSA concert over the other side of the 'drome last night. No bints - just men. Heard all the jokes years ago - a dead loss. There are droves of the bomber boys going over here day & night. Must be at least 1000 every 24 hours & that is quite a few kites.

I,.'

All day we see batches of 50 or 60 kites circling around gaining or losing height. Monday 11.9.44.

Nothing to do for a few days so Fred & self decided to take a few days off & go to Ban - on the coast. Went into Foggia & caught a lift in a staff car. Out on to the plains

-. where wheat & vineyards thrive. There was not one of the original bridges standing. All

Allied made. First town was Cerignola which is a dirty stinking little town of workers. Then out again on to better country & started running into almond & olive groves of immense size to Barletta, which is a fair sized town & fairly clean as well. Caught another lift in a Jeep & the same sort of undulating country under olives & almonds to Tram which is a dirty stinking

hole then through to Bari & the Toc H to bed after about 3 1/2 hours on the road. Tuesday 12.9.44.

Up bright & early & had a good look around. Some fine buildings indeed. Plenty of everything in the shops. Very few slums around the waterfront where there are big piers & rowing & sailing boats for hire. In peacetime Ban was a big seaside resort. The best building there is a big theatre taken over by the forces. It has an ordinary ground floor, then 6 tiers of boxes, then 2 floors of seats on top. All 9 floors run from one side of the stage to the other in a giant semi circle. The carvings on the ceilings may be good, but terribly crude in the positions etc. Nothing left to the imagination at all. Mussolini is prominent, being in everything from bronze to brick & is seen doing everything from being mounted on a charger leading his men to that of "sweet repose". The women are fine types until they reach the age of 23 or 24 by which time they have 5 or 6 babies & certainly look it. Sex is the main occupation of the Italian. Met some New Zealanders with whom we had a few drinks & a sing song with a guitar & then to the NZ Club for wizard meals & bed. There are several wide streets & the biggest there has 2 lines of trees on each footpath & you just walk along in the shade & look at the shop windows which are full of junk of various descriptions. Wednesday 13.9.44.

On the road early & caught a 30 cwt to Barletta where we got off & had a look

- around. Had some wizard tomato rolls in the WOs & Sgts club there. Quite a nice town, but

off the main road it is pretty dirty. Arrived back at about 1.00 pm & took off at 3.30 for Ancona where I met Gar Webb again & bombed up & took off (Thursday 14.9.44.) at 2.30

- am with 12 x 250 lbs on the old milk run again from the Front around to Trieste. On the way back we homed on to a blip which shot a hell of a lot of flak up. No explosive stuff though. We dropped flares, circled around & saw 4 destroyers heading for Venice about 8 miles from the coast, so we dropped our bombs on them & made off quick smart without seeing where they hit. Just saw the flashes. It would be my luck to be in the turret at the time & we were fired at for 20 minutes without a stop. It was all around us, but then this light stuff is only 40 mm & they are very lucky if they hit you, but they went darned close just the same. Headed for base & landed at Foggia at dawn.

Saturday 16.9.44.

Left again early for Ban. Had no trouble getting a lift. Spent the day looking around & the evening drinking with the Kiwis.

Sunday 17.9.44.

Left after lunch for Foggia, where we arrived & spent the night in town & arrived at camp a little the worse for wear.

Monday 18.9.44.

Retarded watches 1 hour at 3.00 am. The last few days have been much cooler & the nights actually cold.

P.62

Very light & scant & inaccurate flak was found which was good.

Friday 6.10.44.

Spent the morning in the Intelligence Section getting up to date with the war. Found out that the 4 "destroyers" we bombed were no more than 1 flak ship & 3 "R" boats &

they are now in Venice. Don't know whether we were to blame but they are being overhauled. Last night Mal Priest pranged a 3000 ton tanker just out of Trieste. He got one over the other side at Imperia as well. Since the move the squadron has flown 23 sorties & has bombed ships on 11 occasions. The tanker & 2 barges are the only confirmed but we have been commended in "Mare Nostrum" for the work, both in hitting the Hun & keeping him quiet.

Sunday 8.10.44.

I have not been feeling well for the past few days & am more or less in bed all the time. Go to sick quarters 3 times a day to have temperature taken & water tested. At moment am suspected malaria or jaundice - they don't know what. The weather has been bad for the last week or so & and there has been no flying. Yesterday was a grim day. started off early with a Lightning diving into the deck vertically from 5000 feet.. He was in formation at the

- time & just went down hitting about 300 yards from us. It is estimated that he hit at between

600 & 700 mph. The kite was spread over a large area & the biggest part of both aircraft & man was the fellow's mid section from waist to thighs - which was held together by parachute harness etc. Not even enough in one place for it to burn. Never thought a thing could disintegrate so well. It is thought that his dinghy, (under his seat), inflated, thereby pushing him & stick forward into vertical dive. Yesterday afternoon there was bags of blood & guts around too. It was the day when 5000 aircraft raided Germany. Those from this 'drome, (Forts & Libs), arrived back in a hell of a mess. They lost quite a few & those that did come back

-. were in a hell of a mess. Some had no flaps & undercart - others 2 or 3 engines & there were

plenty of crash landings on the 'drome & of course wounded taken out. Not a day likely to instil confidence in a new recruit, but the words of sympathy are never asked for nor given.

- Wednesday 11.10.44.

Took off at 11.330 last night & had a most enjoyable trip. Set course for Pula & then did our patrol up past Trieste & around to Venice where I picked up a blip on the SE. We homed on to it & dropped flares & continued doing so until we ran out of flares. It proved to be an enemy MTB & was moving of course at some speed. We chased it for more than 1/2 hour into Venice harbour where we were getting too close to the predicted ack ack sites. About every 5 minutes the MM sent up a burst of about 10 red flak, (20 mm probably), which of course came no where near us. Then we proceeded to the alternate target, Rivigno &

bombed same without opposition. Sid saw bomb bursts along the waterfront. Probably pranged a few hotel. Then came home.

Friday 13.10.44.

- Flew again last night. This time on a new patrol down south from Lagosta to Dubrovnik illuminated some uncharted rocks then a cruiser which turned out to be one of ours looking for E-boats & then at last we found an escort vessel which took refuge in a harbour south of Dubrovnik. We illuminated & bombed without seeing results. No flak throughout the trip. A searchlight from Dubrovnik played around every time we passed but we were a bit too far out for them Got back to base uneventfully. Found out this morning that we have been allowed 25 hours for our ditching of August.

Saturday 14.10.44.

Flew again last night.

P.63

Took off at 2330 & did the northern patrol. Did it twice & then found a boat by SE just out of Trieste. It was a big one & the cloud was 6/10 & only small views were found. We bombed it by SG & visually & were "handed the factory" by the boat & shore batteries. Reported the effort & when we got back found that 3 Beaus had been scrambled on to it &

- we will find out all the "gen" about what it was. Confident of these rockets. The Beaus found

it all right - a 2000 tonner which was in Trieste & was not attacked at night. They may go after it today. Heard a rather interesting piece of news last night. The Navy run about 6 MTB

- patrols in the Adriatic of 3 each looking for boats. Well one night about a week ago when the

weather was duff & we couldn't fly, the German navy came out with all available destroyers & blew 4 lots out of the water. The Navy kicked up a stink about there being no Air Force there to find the Hun before they got there, & according to popular rumour the Big Chief told them they that they were old enough to take care of themselves when we could not fly. What would the Navy do without the old white Wimps!.

- Sunday 15.10.44

Once again we were out up around Venice, Trieste & Pula. Found nothing so we bombed Revigno where we had moderate, medium & light flak. Apparently Jerry has just shifted some guns there. In the flares we saw the bomb bursts right on the wharves. Wizard. Played a game of Union this afternoon against the ground staff. 9-9. Good hard game but I

am done. Played front row & my neck is nearly broken as well as knees & shins. Wednesday 18.10.44

Flying again tonight. The weather doesn't look too good though.

Thursday 19.10.44.

Took off last night & were about 20 miles off the Yugoslav coast when we were recalled. It was pretty rough but didn't seem as bad as all that. On the way back they sent us a message telling us to land at Ban as Foggia was fogged in. This we did after jettisoning our bombs. Got a good bed for the night & took off first thing this morning & landed here in a 45 mph wind. Came up the coast where there is a fair sized town every 10 miles. The old tent is

- only just holding.

Wednesday 25.10.44

Haven't left the station since we last flew except for last night when we did the egg run without success, so we bombed the docks where hits were seen. Encountered only scattered light & medium flak & got back here without mishap. Cittonara was the town we bombed. E-boats are suspected to be kept there. We were commended by the AOC today for the work the squadron has done here. We now cover from Pula round past Trieste & Venice to the battle front all night. (3 aircraft in shifts) & the Beaufighters do it during the day. There

- has been no sightings for over a week which shows that Jerry has the wind up & that the job

is being done well.

Sunday 28.10.44.

- Still nothing doing. We are off on 7 days leave to Rome. Weather looks as if it is going to be good too.

Sunday 29.10.44

Left camp at 12 o'clock & caught a horse & dray to the Naples road where we got an American large jeep. Got well & truly into the mountains & at the bottom of "Suicide Hill", (the steepest I have ever seen) when we had a blow out & no spares. By this time it

- was pouring rain so Fred & I eventually got another lift into Avellino where the Canadians

have a big camp.

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For about 3 miles each side of Avellino the road is perfectly straight, wide, & concrete with frees lining the sides & touching the centre. The town itself is much the same dirty place as these others but for the fact that the main road goes straight instead of winding around the back streets. From here we caught an English army truck to the next town, which is the usual Italian effort. We then got another American big jeep to Naples. It is still pouring rain & we are by this time wet through. From 10 miles out of Naples the road is straight & free lined. Eventually we reached here amid rain & darkness. Fred, having been here before,

- brought us to this pub, (for officers), where we are about to retire. Had eggs & chips in a cafe

across the road.

Monday 30.10.44.

After early breakfast at the pub we set off & found the Rome road after walking nearly all over Naples. The main square is Garibaldi Sq which boasts a big bronze statue of same person & the railway station. About every 250 yards along the main road Via Roma (as in every Italian Town), there is a large square in the middle of which is either a statue or a fountain. There are many fine big buildings in Naples, which is not very much damaged by the war. Mt Vesuvius is always to be seen towering above. At last we got a lift to the airport about 6 miles out on the Highway "7". There after 15 minutes we caught a big jeep to Caserta. The rain up to this point had not stopped so we hung around the town where all the WAAFs, WRENs, & WACs are camped & had tea & cakes at the YWCA. It then stopped raining so we hit the road again & got a jeep to the intersection of Highways 6 & 7 where we were picked up in a little truck by a BBC war correspondent who covered the Greek invasion. Athens capitulated to 11 men. The Hun thought the whole British Army had turned up & the whole garrison retreated without a shot. From here the road is a beaut with of course all the bridges being new ones .Destroyed tanks, trucks etc line the road & all roadside houses &

- villages are razed to the ground. The worst being Formia of which there is not even a pillar

standing. I think the Yanks do a lot of it for devilment. I can't see that a place would get knocked around as much otherwise. We hit the outskirts of Rome just as darkness fell & this chap took us to the YMCA from where we got a horse gharry to the NZ club. Both these places are one time hotels & fine buildings indeed. Had a meal at the NZ club which is staffed by pre-war staff. The dining room is wizard, mirrors all round & about 30 foot ceiling. Got a room in a "pensione" opposite where I am about to go to bed.. The first person we met in Rome was an Italian who spoke Scotch. He was born there. Must mention the road across the Pontine Marshes which are about 40 miles. There is not one bend in the road.
Tuesday 31.10.44.

Went to the pay office which is near the "Venice Square" where the mob used to pack to listen to Musso. Saw the window from which he used to spout. The building is a very ordinary looking affair being old & dirty, but no doubt is different inside. Just on one side of the square, Victor Emmanuel monument & is also dedicated to the Unknown Soldier. It is a

- terrific affair of white marble & although started 55 years ago is still new to all appearances.

There is nothing inside it but there are many pieces of sculpture etc all over it. The most impressive of these is the one of old Victor Emmanuel. The measurements are 260 ft high & 450 feet square. From here I went to the ACF office & met an Aust priest who has been in Vatican City for 6 years learning the game. So he took about 20 of us over the St Peters

Church (the biggest in the world). I have forgotten nearly all of the history of the church so I'll just put down what I saw. First of all, the big square in front, in the middle of which is an 85 foot column which rests on 4 bronze lions. Just sat there. Wonder it doesn't fall off. It is also a big sundial & the time can be read off.

RM

Only saw a fraction of this as it would take years to see it all. Then to the Pope's library which is seldom thrown open. Here again are many original paintings & sculpturings & of course millions of books. Then we saw the railway station, admin building, mosaic

repair shop & so on & then we got out of the joint & I am feeling a bit fed up with sightseeing so shall spend the afternoon just walking around & seeing things close & handy. Just next to Victor Emmanuel is the ruins of the Forum which was built in 113 AD. There just remains about 18 pillars. This is where the Senate used to sit & discuss plans of war etc.

- when Rome ruled the world. Then we got a 1 horse ghany to the Coliseum which was built

in 72 AD, & of which the wall is still standing around most of it. The centre is just walls & pillars where the gladiators used to mix it. Perhaps the best & most imposing statue & square is that of Garibaldi in the square of the same name. It is a tremendous thing & he is mounted on a charger. Then we came across the Pantheon which I have found out since was built in 727 BC. It still stands & was built & dedicated to the gods. 8 pillars hold up the front & then there is a circular building at the back. I intend to see Mussolini's stadium tomorrow & then call the sightseeing off. Too much like hard work.

Thursday 2.11.44

It has rained all day today so have done nothing but mooch around the NZ Club, eat, read, & had a few drinks & then went to the ENSA picture show tonight & saw "The Lady In the Dark".

Friday 3.11.44.

Started off early with a NZ sergeant in a jeep; & went to the Musso Stadium which was very near completion for use at the Olympic games. The American Red Cross have it now but it is open for a look. It is a tremendous place, having 2 swimming pools & 2 for diving & tremendous sports arena & of course plenty of seating accommodation. The living quarters are the major part of the effort & at every turn there is a big shower room & gymnasium. There are 2 stadiums which would seat as many as Rushcutters Bay. It is all built with grey marble & stone. On the way back the Sgt took us past a pyramid which is some 120 feet high & where Cajus Caestius was buried in 30 BC. he was a politician. About 2 streets away from the NZ Club (Hotel Quinnale), is the Church of St Mary which is fairly large but fairly plain being long & square with pillars down each side. Built in 1743. Then he took us

back past the Coliseum to the Arch of Constantine which was built in 315 AD to commemorate the Emperor's victories over someone. About 150 yards from the NZ Club he pointed out the fountain in the middle of Esedia Square at the top of Via Nazionale where

the spray was going. It is supposed to be the most powerful jet in the world. I can believe that as it seems to reach 70 or 80 feet. Had dinner at the club where the war staff is still employed & spent the afternoon at the corner & the night at the ENSA pictures seeing Mark Twain. Saturday 4.11.44

Spent the day walking around admiring everything from vino to legs. The best selection of beauty I have seen is in Rome- even better than new York. They dress beautifully in spite of the fact that a pair of shoes cost 7.10.00. Of course they have to get money so they all, repeat all, go on to the streets. The result is that every 25 or 30 yards a luscious bit of flesh will approach & ask you what you are doing & so things go on. Had a few drinks tonight & am going to bed early so as to get up first thing in the morning & hit the road. Sunday 5.11.44

- Caught a NZ leave truck going back to Bari thru Foggia. Came back along the same road, but stopped at nearly every village. (What is left of them). One place called Gaete is on a headland & off the main road.

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We went along to it & it is just a pile of rubble & you could drive a tank over it. Here we were approached by an Italian who spoke English & produced his USA citizenship papers. He came over here before the war to collect his family & was caught here. He said that they had 100 Germans there as an army of occupation. When they arrived they naturally commandeered the best homes together with food & all women of suitable age to them & then when we landed in Italy they set about systematically destroying the town & so with our Air Force & Navy & the Huns there is nothing left. We eventually arrived at Caserta & after driving thru the Royal Palace gardens went to No.2 NZ Base Hospital where we were fixed up with a bed & tucker. There is also here a hospital for German POWs. I didn't see a dark one - all fair & I'll bet more than half of them are under 19. Of course there is barbed wire all around with South African niggers guarding them.

Monday 6.11.44.

Up early & on the road. Arrived Foggia for lunch & informed we are to fly up to Ancona tomorrow so packed up all ready.

Tuesday 7.11.44

Loaded up the kite with all our gear & took off after lunch. Landed Ancona OK. Am now in billets with no windows & it is as cold as hell.

Wednesday 8.11.44.

Spent the day getting settled in & went over to 454 Squadron tonight & had a few grogs with Gar Webb

Thursday 9.11.44

Have been shovelling gravel all day making a taxi strip in the mud.

Friday 10.11.44.

All the surrounding hills are covered in snow so apparently we had a fall last night,

- it is at the moment hailing & blowing. Perhaps the most impressive things I saw in Rome I have just discovered I omitted were firstly the bronze statue of St Peter in the church of the same name where the devout RCs kiss his toe. The right foot is worn down 2 1/2 inches at least. The other is where Jerry lined 200 Italians up against a wall & shot the lot & then blew the wall down on them. The stench is terrific & there is still 119 unrecovered. They are 30 to 40 feet underneath & the reason for their death was because of the assassination of one of the Gestapo.

Sunday 12.11.44.

Took off early this afternoon on an ASR which seemed helpless from the start. A Lib came in & landed & the only one in it was the pilot. It appears he ordered his men to bail out when 3 of his motors conked. They soon picked up & he came on home without trouble. It was over the sea that it happened so we went out looking for them in the worst weather I have ever been in. There was a big storm cloud every few miles & to go through any of them is certain death. The water temperature was down to 53 deg F so they would only last an hour at the most without a dinghy. After searching several hours we were recalled after the roughest trip I have known. Very pleased to get back on the deck.

Wednesday 15.11.44.

One of our kites disappeared the other night & no sign has been seen or heard since & then last night one came home on one motor for 1 hour & 5 minutes after being hit by flak. This drome is u/s & consequently there has been no flying from the detachment.

Monday 20.11.44

We flew last night & found 3 E boats just off Venice.

It has been so heavy that all the roads around here have been blocked for some period of the time. Several Bailey bridges have been washed away. Our billets here which were in an Italian cavalry school is built up about 3 feet & has a 2 foot thick wall all around. There are ploughed fields all around & they are all covered with at least 3 feet of water. There is now a dyke built at the back gate of sand bags, 44 gallon drums filled with sand & everything imaginable. This is to stop the water coming in. At the moment it is about 1 foot up the dyke & still rising, so we are just hoping for the best. Luckily the front entrance is on to the road which is built up 5 or 6 feet but now the water is nearly up to the road, so we don't know what will happen.

Saturday 2.12.44.

Well it stopped raining & the floods have subsided. Of course we have done nothing but bash the old spine which is becoming a very monotonous pastime. Oar Webb is coming over tonight as he is moving up to Cessenatia very soon, I guess it will be quite a night.

Sunday 3.12.44.

We were woken up at 9.30 this morning & told that we had 1 1/2 hours to get packed up & on the kite & head for Foggia as the detachment at Taleanous is packing up. We eventually arrived at Foggia where we found that the squadron has moved into billets next to a paper factory that has been wrecked. there are 16 blocks of flats where the factory workers used to be. Of course they are nowhere around now. We are in a room with no windows, doors, or anything. The bar was in the old days a bar, so it is wizard now. We came down the coast at 0 feet & scared more than a few dago fishermen. P11 bet they thought their last day was coming. I notice that I have never said anything about the town of Ancona. It is the most important port on the East Coast & is fairly modem & of course a big harbour. The people up there are much better types than down here. Prices are small - due to the fact that no Yanks are there. As usual there are several clubs & picture shows Scrounged around all morning & now have a big table, windows & door for our room. It has become an art - this scrounging. Thursday 7.12.44

Due to the capture of Ravenna, Jerry has started to evacuate Chioggia & other ports on the East coast. Last night there were 6 kites to take off in pairs & also 8 Beaufighters to be on patrol as well. The first crews took off but the weather was so bad they came back & so we didn't get off. Don't know whether we will be flying tonight or not.

Sunday 10. 12.44

Still haven't flown. The weather has been absolutely lousy & shows no signs of improving. Spent the day having a shower in town & the pictures but didn't even have a celebration though it is my birthday.

Saturday 16. 12.44.

Since the last entry I have thought several times that the end had come. Took off on Wednesday night & went out over the coast of Foggia & passed through some of the worst weather I have ever been in. Eventually we got through it, in the meantime we couldn't get any higher than 1200 feet & every few minutes we would drop at least 1000 feet & despite Stan's efforts we were thrown everywhere. At last we got through & did our patrol twice. There was a 35 knot wind blowing in the area & of course no shipping, so we jettisoned our bombs & made for base. To get over the coast we come thru a big valley on either side of which are big mountains which we can't get over. We tried to get through but more often than not we had 0 feet on the altimeter or else 1500 feet. We were just going along in gigantic bounces & of course the compass was useless.

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Luckily the SE was working & at last we crossed the lakes & out to sea where we

- headed for Ancona. In the meantime our wireless had gone u/s so we went straight into

Falconara & landed & then we found out that one of our kites had crossed the coast there & was not heard of again & another had crossed at Foggia & was not heard of. Eventually got to sleep in the officers lounge at 5.30 am. The next day W/O George Simon's kite & crew were found burnt out in the mountains behind Ancona. They had just run straight into the hill & of course, curtains. The other one was found out in the plains near Foggia. She iced up & Bob

- Duriman was very lucky to just straighten out before they hit the deck. the weather was still very unfit & we couldn't come back until today. They sent up a padre & some of the crew's mates for the funeral which was a bloody disgrace. All they did was sew the six bodies in six

- blankets & 4!;i them into graves which were half full of water. Quite some payment for

their sacrifice.

Tuesday 19.12.44.

- Today is beautiful - plenty of sun - being the first for 2 weeks or more. We are down to fly tonight but seeing the only time they have flown for some time was that bad night I suppose it will be scrubbed tonight. I might add that I am not as keen as I used to be. Knowing those chaps so well was quite a shock & then the "dicey do" on top of it. Oh well Maleesh.

Friday 22.12.44.

15 New Zealanders dropped into the mess on Wednesday night. There were 4 prisoners & 11 escorts. The prisoners were all deserters being taken to boob & they stopped the night in a nearby transit camp. No need to say they got drunk & things ended in a beat up of one of the prisoners. What a mess they made of him. He died at midday today & of course the enquiry is on. Had an amusing incident in town yesterday when I took 2 oranges from a dago kid & gave him 15 lira which is too much. Of course he started whining & then inevitably crying, but when he saw that it was to no avail he turned on the abuse which went like this. "You no bloody good - similar Tedeschi - take food - no money - no bloody good". From then on it was straight Italian abuse & as far as I know he is still going strong. The Italian is not half the man the Arab is & I think the main difference lies in the fact that the dago has no sense of humour whereas the Wog has more than any other race there is. They are flying tonight for the first time in over a week. The other flight, "A", is flying tonight & we will be on the list for tomorrow. It snowed on the surrounding hills today but none here in Foggia, but it is cold as ice never the less. I am orderly sergeant today & had an unenviable

- job to do. 2 English chaps who pinched a truck several days ago came back & gave

themselves up without the truck. As orderly dog they were sent to me & I had to put them under close arrest & take them to the calaboose. Not so hot, but it just had to be done.
Sunday 24. 12.44

Xmas Eve. The third away from home. Wonder how many more I will have - before I get back to good old Aussie.

Monday 25.12.44

Had quite an evening last night & have just come back from the officers mess where we were invited to have a few grogs. Of course we had them. Now I am going to wait on the airmen at their Xmas Dinner. This is a rule in the air force. Well, we waited on them OK & the Big Digger (CO) was there doing the same thing. Have just finished our Xmas

- dinner which was wizard consisting of soup, turkey, cauliflower, spuds, pork etc & of course

Xmas pudding & now I am off to the bar.

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Tuesday 26.12.44

We invited the officers to our mess this morning & of course it resulted in a rather expensive few hours, but it was well worth it. This afternoon there was a football match between the officers & sergeants & the airmen. It was a dead loss game of rules but everyone turned up & the game finished with over a dozen kegs of wine on the backs of trucks with a length of hose to drink from.

Wednesday 27.12.44.

Last night was quite a night. Nearly everyone was incapable of doing everything & I wound up trying to pull a nuisance out of bed, he got stuck into me with flying boots & I had no alternative but to do him. Unfortunately he is a WO & turned nasty & now I am on a charge of striking a superior officer & disturbing the peace. This bloke has been done on several other occasions, but they were always W/Os so he couldn't do anything. Anyway I am waiting to go up on a charge tomorrow morning. There has been no flying since the last entry but for several ASR trips today. A rather interesting point that I have omitted from here is the POW camp just out of Jesi-----, near Falconara. We went out there to play football against the Kiwis. The camp is a compound about 200 x 100 yds & fitted with tents. There is also a de-lousing centre where the Jerry's clothes are steamed & they stand there in a blanket looking far from Nazi supermen. They are all shapes & sizes & very few between 20 & 35, but of youngsters & old men there are plenty. They only keep them at that camp for several days & then they send them out of Italy.

Sunday 3 1.12.44

Eventually went up before the CO. but due to conflicting evidence he remanded the thing for a summary of evidence which is now halfway thru. I shouldn't be surprised if it were a

court martial but unless the witnesses tell a different story to the correct one I have nothing to worry about. 6 of our kites flew last night. They found 2 convoys. In each was a 1500 ton merchantman & with the Beaus they are reported to have damaged both & sunk several £ boats, so it was a good night's work. It started snowing just after lunch & it is coming down very heavily & doesn't look like stopping. The party in the mess looks like being beaut.

Monday 1. 1.45

What a night. Grog & snow. Not so good today though. No grog & more snow. It is still coming down very heavily. Let's hope this year shows us something better than the last. Tuesday 2.1.45.

My case has advanced no further since I last mentioned it & now the CO has gone to Cairo for an unspecified period & now I don't know what will happen. Maleesh. It stopped snowing late last night & now it is very cold & we will have plenty of mud & slush tomorrow afternoon. No flying since the previous entry.

Friday 5.1.45.

No flying since I last wrote in here. Went up to the Big Digger today & got a severe rep for causing a disturbance being not guilty of striking the -----within the meaning of the Act.

Monday 8.1.45.

No more flying since the last entry & no more snow but it is as cold as charity. Must mention the pastime of these dago bints. In summer they cut tomatoes in halves & put them in the sun to dry. As they dry they pick out the seeds & skins & then they have a paste left which they stir with a dirty finger every time they stick their head out of the room.

Each time they give it a stir with the old finger & eventually they wind up with tomato sauce. Every household does this. Now it is winter the old girls get on the fire, (a tin in the middle of the room), & spin wool some fibrous stuff into a thread. At the moment there is a smallpox epidemic in Foggia & consequently all the NAAFI's & clubs are closed as the work is mainly done by Italians. I can just imagine how it will spread among the mob. We are supposed to not worry as we have been vaccinated. This morning a Fortress with a full bomb load crashed about a mile away & what an explosion. Of course there was nothing left where it hit

Tuesday 16.1.44.

Last Thursday we had a very heavy fall of snow & in the inevitable snow fight that followed I sprained my ankle which resulted in 2 days in hospital. Now I am jumping around on a walking stick that the carpenter has made for me. There has only been one night of flying since last entry & as time advances we are becoming more cheesed than ever with this inactivity. They have now increased the tour to 300 night or 600 computed hours or of course 12 months so now we will undoubtedly have to go the full distance. Stan came back from a fighter controllers course yesterday & now he is acting flight commander in the

absence of the other big shots who are on the detachment at Pisa where half the squadron are now. They will be operating on the old "Egg Run" - the Genoan Gulf. In the same buildings here we have some of Tito's partisans. They come over to Italy & are fitted out & trained etc. Men & women alike are here - all living together but of course sex is out for the duration. The greatest disgrace they can have is for a baby to be born to anyone in the outfit. In Jugoslavia they send the woman who is unfortunate into the hills with a goat & a few necessities & there she stays on her own until the baby is born. Also here is an Army transit camp & of course

we have all races & creeds through here. A rather interesting thing is the Polish way of looking after their soldiers. They come through here in different numbers but always with a large truck which looks like an ambulance. In the front seat of these there is always at least one woman dressed up in the Polish soldiers uniform. This little layout is no less nor more than a travelling brothel supplied by the Polish government to their troops. Of course I think it would be wrong to say that all Polish women in the service are doing this job, but then this is one job I have seen them doing.

Wednesday 17.1.45.

Wonderful news this morning. The Squadron is moving to Gibraltar. We are told it is to do anti sub work in the Bay of Biscay & the Atlantic. Not such a good job but they say we that we may get to England from there. We are to standby to take off at 1 hours notice. The weather is still lousy & we have no idea when we will be going.

Thursday 18.1.44.

The move to Gibraltar has been temporarily suspended at which everyone is peeved. It appears that Coastal Command in England want us to do anti sub work in the Atlantic & sent us the necessary signal which was countermanded by the Navy in the Mediterranean as they say we are indispensable here in the Adriatic. We are due to fly again tonight, but as the weather looks crook I doubt if we will.

Friday 19.1.44.

Well we did fly last night & what a trip. Took off early in lousy weather & flew up to Ancona in worse & bumpy weather but from there it was perfectly clear & bright with a good moon. Started patrol at Cape Promentace & went round to Maestro Point where we could see the front line going to town. Turned here & went back to Pula before we got a sighting. And what a sighting!

P.

1 1/2 miles from Pula, which is the most heavily defended port on the Adriatic. Made our first run to drop flares when the observer said we wouldn't need them as he could see them. Of course it was too late then & we decided to go around again & bomb. From this moment until we left them after bombing we came under continuous fire, during

- which time I was in the turret trying to act as if I didn't care. Both times on the way out I

directed evasive action, but of course on the bombing run there is no such thing. What they did was put up a barrage of fire (medium & heavy), above the boats. It came from the boats,

- (Siebel ferries which are heavily armed), & Pula as well. Of course to bomb them you have

to steam right through it. We definitely hit one of them as I saw a bright red flash when the bombs hit. After that effort we came back through the bad weather & eventually found the drome after much hunting. I feel sorry for a new crew who did their first op last night. They found the boats & of course went over them & came under the same barrage. They did something for which I don't blame them & that was to get the hell out of it & jettison their

bombs & came home. It might sound as though they squibbed it, but the first time flak is seen is not the best of feelings, particularly when it is as heavy as last night. They had 3 hits in the tailplane & we got 2 hits in the fuselage between the Leigh light & the turret. You don't know

- anything about the hits as a rule until the ground staff go over the kite in the morning. I have

just found out that the CO took off for Gibraltar first thing this morning, meaning to see what

- the score is over there, so I wouldn't be surprised if we went soon.

Monday 22.1.45.

Well, the move is definitely scrubbed, much to everyone's disappointment, But I guess there is no use worrying or fretting about it. Our target the other night was a Siebel ferry & the Beaufighters went up the day after & saw it stranded on a small island just out from Pula & then yesterday it came through that it had been confirmed that we sunk it which

- is wizard. A crew that was TE'd 6 weeks ago here has struck it lucky. The Captain got a DFC

for his work both in the Genoan Gulf & the Adriatic. He had a large tanker & several other vessels confirmed. Also to get a DFC was S/Leader Knight who beached a destroyer in the

- Genoan Gulf with depth charges. About time they handed out some gongs anyway, seeing

that they usually get them in England for successfully completing a tour without making any bad mistakes.

Wednesday 24.1.45

The latest is we are going to Gibraltar. The CO is not back yet but everyone is standing by to go as soon as he comes back. He is in Italy at MACAF in Naples & is at a conference or

some such thing. In the meantime the squadron is once more non-operational, so all we do is eat drink & sleep - mostly the latter. What a life.

Friday 26.1.45.

The first of the crews for Gibraltar have taken off. The strength of the squadron has been cut down to 20 aircraft & 21 crews. 16 crews are flying & 4 are going by boat & our

- crew is staying to instruct 38 Squadron the MK XW Wellington & MK ifi SE, as they are

converting from MK XII to do the job we have been doing. We have sent nearly all our gear to Gib & have kept enough for one month or so until 38 Sqdn have completely converted & then we will go on to Gib by Dakota. I am a bit peeved about not going yet but it is a feather in our caps to be selected to instruct. Of course we are now the 4th oldest crew on the squadron.

Saturday 27.1.44

We take off for Grattagli where 38 Sqdn is to start our instructing. Stan has a kite that he has been give for his use until 38 Sqdn take it over.

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I saw a rather amusing thing in Foggia this afternoon. It was a funeral - Catholic of course. Out in front they have a dozen or so priests with heads in various states of unshavedness & then comes the hearse & then the mourning multitude on foot. They were progressing along the main street rather well when they came to a cross street where the priests just kept on going, but where the hearse & of course the urchers turned. As far as I know they are both going their different ways. Another show of the typical Italian intelligence.

Sunday 28.1.45.

A snow storm - no takeoff. Shower in town at the RAF showers which were not at all popular today by the number of patrons. Then to see the ice box picture show to see Ginger Rogers in "Lady In The Dark".

Monday 29.1.45.

The snow is still falling this afternoon but the sun is shining & we may be able to get off tomorrow.

Tuesday 30.1.45

The CO of 38 Squadron came up here last night & now we are awaiting the coming of "the Mountain to Mahomet". He told Stan he had spoken to our CO about us & as soon as he thinks his squadron is efficient he will send us back to good old 458.

Wednesday 31.1.45.

The last of the kites took off for Gib this morning & also the ground parties went just after dinner & now 38 Squadron advance party has arrived.

Friday 2.1.45

We have done nothing since last entry, but now all of 38 Squadron has arrived. All Pommies but for the Adjutant who is an Australian. I've had them already. They won't speak to anyone or even say good day. There is a war on between aircrew & ground staff & of course very bad feeling. We have 48 hours leave until they get organised but due to the very poor financial state I'll hang around here in the room which is now wizard. I have put in a reading lamp & of course have the old dinghy flag in a good position & it is the object of many questions which of course are answered with much enthusiasm.

Monday 5.2.45

These Pommies are tigers. For the last few days things have been disappearing right & left. From cigarettes to clothes. So far I haven't lost anything but nearly everyone has. Two of the lads got a parade to the Adjutant, but of course got no satisfaction. On 458 I never heard of even one thing being stolen, but here it is a very common thing. As they are still not organised at flights there is still nothing brewing, so we just go to the pictures, eat, read, & sleep.

Wednesday 7.2.45.

Since last entry to date I have lost one torch & one carton of cigarettes - both taken from the head of my bed. Gave a lecture today on the uses & operation of MK ifi ASV. Took 3/4 hour & I wasn't in the least nervous, but rather to the contrary - I didn't want to stop.

Thursday 8.2.45.

Went up with a crew of 38 Sqdn this afternoon & talked & worked myself to distraction showing a bloke how to work the stuff. He wasn't too badly either. It hasn't been serviced since the kite left England 4 months ago & it went u/s as it did on 4 other kites. They are all new but the SE needs checking & cleaning & the groundstaff on this squadron have never seen it before, so it looks as though we have a long hard job ahead of us. Showed him homing & tuning.

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Friday 9.2.45

Had a dicy trip today. Flew with the same kite & crew this morning. Of course the SE wouldn't go but there was a chance. Anyway we had a general muck around "buzzing" fishing boats etc & came back to land. No wind & the long runway u/s. The a/c ahead of us took 3 goes to get in & then overshot on the 1200 yard runway & finished up applying full brake & on its nose in the middle of the runway. When they eventually got it in we did our own third attempt & finished up doing a ground loop to stop the kite from doing a trip across the "bunduh". No damage done & when we got clear a Mosquito came in & overshot & using brakes he finished making terrific bounces & finally resolved to lifting his undercart

which stopped him on his next bounce. The kite broke up but didn't burn so they both got out. Saturday 10.2.45

Did another trip this morning but the SE went u/s after an hour, so we came back to base. We came from the coast at 100 feet as that was the cloud base, but we got in OK. Now I have been attached to one of 7 crews who have to stand by with 4 days kit packed for some special detachment. Heaven only knows what or where it is.

Sunday 11.2.45.

Nothing happened today, but we still have to stand by tomorrow. It has been raining all day.

Tuesday 13.2.45.

It appears that this detachment has fallen through as we have heard no more about it. I have given several short talks & demonstrated the tuning of the SE in the meantime & now the new chaps are coming on pretty well with it. I think we should have them operational in another week or two & then for Gibraltar. Whacko!.

Wednesday 14.2.45

Dicy do again today. I have now had this screen SE w/of business. Took off OK & started to circle around when the port motor stopped. The pilot made a good landing. Took off again later & when coming in to land we hit the slipstream of another kite & nearly went in. We left the pitot head on the control wagon. Went around again & made a very bouncy landing without of course any airspeed. I am just beginning to get the effects now -4 hours later.

Sunday 19 2.45.

4 aircraft went down to Malta today in order to escort President Roosevelt from there to Algiers. Have given a few more short lectures but have just about converted the whole squadron now. Should be on our way soon.

Wednesday 22.2.45.

The aircraft from Malta arrived back last night with the news that Roosevelt had reached Algiers safely. He had 2 cruisers -4 destroyers -4 Wellingtons & 50 odd Lightnings. The whole thing was just a show of co-operation between the RAF & USAAF. They carried DC's with orders not to attack anything as there are no German submarines in the Mediterranean. The boys brought back the news that 458 lost a kite in the Atlantic on a Leigh light attack. 3 of the crew were picked up. Bit of a bind not knowing which crew it was, but guess we'll find out only too soon. Just found out that Stan has to stay here as witnessing officer on a court martial which starts on the 25th of this month.

Friday 23.2.45.

Have now finished our job of instructing & are starting for Naples tomorrow. They have a football field here next to the railway.

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It was covered with various twisted oddments of railway parts & pieces & also guns but the boys have cleared it & intend to play soccer on it. Too much shrapnel for Rugby. I won't be in the least sorry to leave Italy.

Sunday 26.2.45.

The truck fell through due to the fact that the squadron is sending a Dakota to pick us & several ground staff up tomorrow.

Monday 26.2.45

Took off from Foggia early this morning & set course for Naples & from there to southern Sardinia from where we set course for Algiers (Maison Blanche) where we landed & had lunch. Left there straight away after & landed at Gibraltar at about 6. Had a wizard meal - fresh vegetables & meat & then came to this hut where we have beds the same as in England - sheets & all. Unlimited beer in the mess. retarded watches 1 hour.

Tuesday 27.2.45.

This runway is a beaut 2000 x 150 yards - all asphalt. The road to Spain from the town of Gibraltar runs across the middle. The dispersal area is next to the runway & then come our huts & then the border. Very heavily defended with barbed wire - tank traps, pill boxes, mine fields & guns from the Rock. On the way into town all these defences are repeated & on the Rock there are dozens of tunnels (well lit), going into the middle. All the control centres are in there. On one side of the rock there are huge concrete surfaces which are catchment areas. 1411 feet is the height of the Rock. All the shops are full of clothes & food & cigarettes said to be for propaganda purposes to influence Spain. Cigarettes (best brands), 20 for 1/1, English beer, 1/1 per pint. both in terrific quantities. Steak, eggs, chips & tomatoes, costs 2/8. The harbour is full of ships & flying boats. The airfield has our Wimps, Halifaxes & Venturas - all on anti submarine work. One sub was found by the RAF & sunk by the navy 4 days ago. The crew that went in was F/Sgt Yax. 3 were picked up, & 1 died after -2 were unhurt. Up to Flight Sergeants can go over the border in civilian clothes once a month - alone from 11am to 10pm, any time. Some of the lads are having trouble in town with their language. After so long in the "blue" it is hard to become civilised very quickly. Particularly with so many WRENS & WAAFs around.

Wednesday 28.2.45.

Had some lectures this morning on flying conditions etc from the rock. Good concert in the bar tonight with plenty of beer of course. A bus leaves the frontier gates & also the edge of the camp every 5 minutes & costs 2 pence to go into town which is on the west side of the Rock. Of course there are plenty of Spaniards work & shop in Gib & are crossing the border all day long. There is much searching done etc by both Spanish & English guards. Thursday 1.3.45.

A few more lectures this morning & then to town to have some passport photos taken & a feed of steak & chips this afternoon.

Friday 2.3.45.

Flew this morning - low level bombing on a target towed by an HSL. Town this afternoon.

Saturday 3.3.45.

Flew last night using the Leigh light on the HMS Vampire - a submarine they have here. Did pretty well. Am to do an air test this afternoon. There is a terrific amount of signals gen to learn here. The squadron hasn't flown for over a week.

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Sunday 4.3.45

Did our air test OK. During the week they have had Housie (Tombola), every second night to which the Pommies flock. Had an excellent concert the other night by an army unit on the rock. Bags of beer throughout. Ops are on tonight for the first time since we came. We are not flying.

Friday 9.3.45.

Nothing new since last entry. One of our kites picked up a blip about 200 miles out several nights ago. It disappeared as they turned to home on to it. We are on the flying list now after having done several more trips & lectures. I am not too keen on these trips. Seven hours out over the Atlantic at between 500 & 1000 feet. Sometimes 350 miles out. Awful long way to swim, but it isn't much use worrying about it. Besides there is a good chance of sinking a sub if you can pick one up. Stan got a letter from home yesterday with a record of our last trip & our names. "Pressed home the attack & probably destroyed one vessel despite heavy & accurate flak from ships & shore". Wouldn't it

Sunday 11.3.45.

Flew an op this morning. Took off at 2.15 am & picked up the convoy 250 miles out - escorted it for 4 hours & left at dawn just on 300 miles into the Atlantic. Very monotonous flying around & around it all morning. All done on radar & no sightings.

Monday 12.3.45

Did some practice homing on an English sub this afternoon. Picked it up at 8 miles fully engaged - 5 1/2 miles with both periscopes & 2 1/2 miles with 1 x 18" periscope - pretty good. Eyes pretty sore through staring at the screen.

Friday 16.3.45.

Met Sailor Smith today. He is on 520 Squadron in the Azores. Leigh Light Liberators & is over here for some practice homing on the sub. They go to England every 3 months on 7 days leave. He was there last Wednesday. It is annoying to think we are only 8 hours away & may as well be thousands of miles. Good to see him.

Sunday 18.3.45

Flew again last night on another convoy stooge. This time 27 merchant ships & 4 destroyers. It was between 80 & 160 miles west of Spain which is over 300 miles from here

which is too bloody far to fly over water for 6 3/4 hours. No sightings. There is a German sub kicking around here somewhere hence all the trips. Am going to have a night on the grog with Sailor tonight. Old times will cop a bashing I guess.

Thursday 22.3.45.

Nothing new since last entry. Have done one or two training trips but that is all. The weather at the moment is bad. Wind & rain They are still flying a few ops, but we are at the bottom of the list. The wind out there in the Atlantic is 45 - 55 knots so I don't envy the crews that are flying.

Monday 26.3.45

Not very many trips lately & we still haven't had another. Can't even get away from the Italians here. They are here & wear IPC on their shoulders. Italian Pioneer Corps. They build gun positions, roads, tunnels etc, & stroll around the streets in British uniform & hands in pockets as if they own the place. Saw a pretty good play in the station theatre the other night, Noel Coward's comedy, "Hay Fever" which was put on by the local dramatic society. Wrens, WAAFs, Army, Air Force etc, was good for amateurs. Last night was a wild one in the mess. 5 Spanish señoritas did plenty of turns on the stages in various stages of undress.

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Things reached a climax when an English sailor who had been to Australia called one of us an Aussie ----- It started a donnybrook which resulted in a win for us. Chairs, bottles, glasses etc. What a show.

Friday 30.3.45

Flew last night escorting a 33 ship convoy 350 miles out. Beautiful night. Full moon - no wind - no hostile sightings. Good Friday again & hot as Hades. Can't sleep even after a few pints at lunch. Will go for a swim before dinner. Food still wonderful in the mess. Went for a drive in & around the rock on a truck yesterday. It is full of tunnels - all big enough for trucks & well lit. Guns & rockets etc are everywhere but every thing is more or less concealed. According to Intelligence, La Linea - over the border is full of spies who have communication with Berlin. 13 minutes is the time for a happening here to reach there. We now use beacons set up in Spain that the German U-boats still use. They are still maintained & run by the Hun & are the most revolutionary & officially classified as the best there is. A U-boat in mid Atlantic can plot itself by them most accurately to within 1/2 mile. Of course so can we.

Wednesday 4.4.45

No ops since last entry. The 2 subs which were known to be down here are now on their way home. They find out all these things, but I'm hanged if I know how. Probably wireless interception & then by DIP' ing it.

Saturday 7.4.45

Had a meeting today with the CO presiding. It referred to discipline immediately after Peace breaks out. It seems that they fear much boozing which will result in the wilful destruction of HM property including a few aircraft etc & many deaths. All firearms are to be rendered useless. Depth charges taken from aircraft etc & there is to be a stand down for 4 days. Should be a wild time. Every week now all aircrew have a meeting with the CO etc to tell us the latest gen & what is likely to happen. And now we have discussion groups which meet every 2 weeks where general topics are discussed. 2 trips on tonight escorting the Mauretania & 2 destroyers. Rumour has it that the Navy put it on so as to get some photos. Our kites both are going to carry cameras. Who knows the motive?. There are supposed to be no subs around. The weather & food are still wizard & now the life saving team with reel & rope & belt is coming along extra well.

Thursday 1.4.45.

The last 5 days the weather has been terrible but today is hot & sunny. Went & saw Cecily Courtidge last night in town. she has an excellent company & is still good herself although getting old. I saw her when she landed here in a York & she just looks like an old painted woman but very sprightly. No more ops & the Yanks have just crossed the Elbe so it looks as if the war is really over.

Friday 14.4.45.

Black Friday. FDR died last night. Damned bad luck, but I guess we can't live forever. Great man.

Saturday 14.4.45.

Today the CO time expired 2 of the crews, one of which was us. Whacko !!. We are going to Cairo at the first opportunity. He told us he has to T/E 2 crews & he picked the 2 of us as we had done the most. Bad luck I couldn't get over the border before we go, but it will be 2 or 3 days so it looks as if it will be too bad.

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Wednesday 18.4.45

- Since the last entry I have been getting clearances & handing kit in & generally mucking around. There has been another crew added so now there are 3 & we are going at 10 am tomorrow. Every night since the last entry has been a drunken orgy with the TE crews turning it on to the extent of 20 pounds, so now none of us has any money. The best show was last night in the "erks" mess where we put on 30 cases of beer. (1440 bottles). Everyone got drunk & we ran out of beer at 3.30 am this morning. They are getting tough

- here now with bags of BS. A big inspection every day. Apparently they are getting ready to

clamp down on the mob when the war ends. Anyway Maleesh!.

Thursday 29.4.45

- Took off at 11.00 am from Gib in a Dakota & left it behind very soon & finally landed at Oujda in the middle of the mountains to pick up some passengers. It is 1500 feet above sea level & is composed of the usual 3 messes & sets of living quarters & a brick flying control building & feet of dust. Had a lousy lunch & took off for & landed at Algiers. There were no other aircraft at Oujda. Could not get immediate transport to Cairo & have to go into the town & arrange things tomorrow. We are staying at "Dakota House", which is near the 'drome & run by the Transport Command. Sheets etc & good food & the first freshwater shower for some months. Hot too - advanced watches 1 hour.

Friday 21.4.45.

Went into town this 'morning & now have seats in a kite for 6.30 am tomorrow. The only difference in Algiers since I was here last time is the decided lack of troops, particularly Yanks. And so to bed with a 5.15 am call over our heads.

Saturday 22.4.45.

Finally took off & flew across the mountains & desert to Marble Arch which is

- very near the coast & on the border between Libya & Tripolitania. Saw the Arch which

marks the border. Wizard feed at the staging post which is ultra modern & clean. Wizard runway. Before this we had landed at Castel Benito which is Tripoli's "drome. Here also we had a wonderful meal in excellent surroundings. It seems as if these posts are being built for peace time use as well. Finally landed at Cairo West, (36 miles from Cairo), at about 10 pm. another big meal & then into the NZ Club to bed. There are a lot more neon signs etc & new motor cars in Cairo than when we were here before. Watches on 1 hour.

Sunday 23 .4.45.

Wizard breakfast (2 eggs, chips, 2 sausages), & out to Almoza amid the usual sand. Into Cairo again where we met some of 221 Sqdn whom we knew at Jerusalem & Dumfries, so we had quite a "do" which finished in quite another "do" at Groppis & a gharry race to the train stop.

- Monday 24.4.45.

Into the Liaison Office today & found out that my W/O is through, is now being - POR'd before I can wear it.

Tuesday 25.4.45

Pottered around camp all day & read a few books.

Thursday 27.4.45.

Found out this afternoon that we are going tomorrow to Eir Shemer as instructors. Friday 28.4.45

Boarded the old train at 2 pm & left at 3 pm. Crossed Suez at about 8 pm & pulled in at Kantara for a feed at about 10 pm.

HER

Saturday 28.4.45

Arrived Hadera railway station at 10 am & got gharry to camp which has improved greatly since I was here 12 months ago & 4 days. There is now a swimming pool, hot showers, 2 shops where you can get eggs, steak, chips etc. 2 separate messes, one for

permanent staff, & one for pupils (wouldn't it?), a big picture theatre with different pictures

every night & so on ad infinitum. Hit the pillow this afternoon & will now go up & have a few with the many old 458 that we have here.

- Sunday 29.4.45

Day off on the station today & no one works so we couldn't find out anything from anybody. Musso's dead.

- Monday 30.4.45.

Well, - this afternoon we went to see the Chief Instructor & received some good news - to the effect that we were originally brought here to make up for a planned increase in the training but due to the turn of the war they no longer want us, so he sent us on 2 weeks leave & and are subject to being recalled as we may be posted somewhere in the meantime - probably back to Egypt. May go to England or even Australia from there or, of course we may do an instructors course & then come back here to 780 TW.

Tuesday 1.5.45.

Had a big feed at one of the shops on the station & then hit the road where we picked up a lift to Hadera which is still the same as before. Caught a bus here for Tel Aviv where we arrived 1 1/2 hours later. There are quick & regular bus schedules all over

- Palestine. Arrived Tel Aviv just on dark & found a pub right on the waterfront where we will

stay until the dough runs out, which won't be long even though we were paid the 51- per day that Lord Nuffield gives to aircrew on operational leave. Pretty good rooms here with fair beds. The Imperial is the name & run by a German Jew.

Wednesday 2.5.45

Looked the town over today & was amazed to find that all & sundry turn around &

- speak to you when they see the Australia on your shoulder. Every shop you enter you are

greeted with "fair dinkums" etc & a resume of the doings of the AIP whom everybody loved. It would be impossible for any body of men to have a better name anywhere. Just another time when one feels proud to have the magic name on one's shoulders. Tel Aviv is an extremely modern town, full of beautiful women & as a whole has everything that every modern city has except trams, but plenty of buses. Very few Arabs about - mostly boot blacks who greet you with a few well chosen Australian adjectives & with several coins to toss double or quits & then they yell out "100 in the guts to see him go - come in spinner" & so

- on. There is a wizard promenade here which runs the length of the town. The beach is sandy

but no surf. Went to a night club tonight & saw a wonderful show floor show during which the singer sang "Waltzing Matilda".

- Thursday 3.5.45

A few hours on the beach & an admiring walk along the promenade looking at the local talent. Pictures tonight - President Wilson. Good. Forgot to mention the terrific crowds around Palestine on Tuesday. It was May Day & a public holiday for all employers & workers. Boys & girls running round in their uniforms - blue shirts & khaki shorts or skirts. It was excellent news to hear last night that the Germans & Fascists in Italy have surrendered

- unconditionally.

Friday 4.4.45

Very lazy day today

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Met a girl on the beach today & took her for a long walk. Of course she is a Yid but never the less extremely nice. She loves the Australians & thirsts for knowledge of that fair country. She talks perfect English & wants to go to Aust. It seems to me as if she is looking for a husband to take her there. I told I was nearly broke so she didn't want me to take her anywhere. She can't stop talking about the Australians & she tells of the many exploits of the AIF. A favourite of theirs was to pawn their watch in the afternoon & then to go back on closing time & demand it back with threats to wreck his shop & himself. It worked too. Another one was that if they thought they were being gypped by a taxi driver, cafe proprietor etc. They would turn it over or wreck the place, but if on the other hand they thought it was cheap they would pay double. Anyway now the time is 2.30 am & I am very pleased with the nights work & have a date for tomorrow afternoon.

Saturday 5.5.45.

Met a Kiwi this morning who has just come out of Germany via Russia having been a POW since being captured at Crete. Very interesting to talk to and an extremely nice chap. Have to meet him tomorrow for a few grogs & a natter. Met my bint & she took me to one of these collective settlements which was very interesting. It has 1000 inhabitants & is of 1000 acres. Everyone helps everyone else. One doctor & one dentist for the lot. The houses are built scientifically - some having raised floors for free circulation of air. No yards but the streets are very wide & right up the middle of each is a wide park which serves as a communal play ground & resting place for everyone.. Every settlement has its own council & of course is governed by same. It seems strange to visit the school & see children about 4 or 5 years doing PT - army style. PT takes the major part of the school curriculum. I have never seen a healthier lot of kids. Apparently this girl is of some means as she took me to tea & the pictures. She, being a Yid - I am not in the least too proud to scrounge what I can from her. She has been in Palestine for 18 odd years having come from Russia. She is 24 years old & answers to the wonderful name of "Sarah". Wouldn't it?. Told her I was leaving on Monday at which she was very broken up & wanted to look after me for the remainder of my leave. She has got a very nice apartment, but a bloke might get in too deep.

Sunday 6.5.45.

Met the Kiwi again today & found that he was more fond of the Germans than the Russians. He was working in a hospital in Germany & said the front line soldiers that he met were good types but the base wallahs were the swine & evil as they come. He was billeted under guard with an Aussie & 2 Pommies at an ex cafe with an old lady in charge. She had 2

Sons on the Russian front & used to cry nightly over them & then every night she would she would always cook something extra for them & sneak in the occasional bottle of grog & generally was a mother to them & even cried when they left her. The four of them escaped when being evacuated in front of a Russian advance. The 2 Englishmen had consumption which was the result of 2 years in a coal mine. They scrounged a cart with 2 horses & finally

- got into Poland behind the Russian lines. One horse & one Pommy died there. They buried

the latter & went to look for another horse which they found tied up in the street. When they went to take it a Polish peasant woman came out & made quite a fuss, the result of which was the appearance of a Russian officer, who on finding out the situation took the woman behind a house where a revolver shot was heard. He said that a nights sport for 8 or 10 Russians was to get a girl & after finishing with her just shoot her. These tales are not the tales of a drunk ex POW but were told to me in an extremely serious attitude, & are backed up by the evidence in a diary he managed to keep while a POW.

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Tuesday 22.5.45.

Still doing nothing. Met the beaut hint last & have to again tonight. Our day's procedure is as follows. Woken up with a cup of tea at 8.30 am. Breakfast at 9.30. Beach from 10.00 till 12.00. Several ice cold beers & then lunch at 1.30 with beer. Bed 2.00 till 5.00. Shower,

shave etc. Dinner 6.00. Several beers 6.30. Meet girl about 8.30. Go to night club & see floor show & finally hit the hay at about 2 am. Good life.

Saturday 26.5.45.

Still nothing to do & still do the same. Have seen nearly all the floor shows in town now. They are all pretty good. Dough is getting short so will go home Monday morning. Monday 28.5.45

Got back again at noon today. It seems that Sarah is looking for someone to get her out of Palestine & Australia is her first choice, hence all the finesse etc. One of the boys has been up to the CO moaning about us having nothing to do & was told politely that it couldn't be helped but we should be posted to some where (he doesn't know where) within a month. (Wouldn't it ?). Well I guess it is no use worrying about it but I would certainly like to get home again, but I doubt if I will before the complete 3 years are up. It looks as if I will be getting 3 gongs -2 for sure (1939 -45 Star & Italy Star) & perhaps the Atlantic Star. I only really want the returned soldiers medal or badge, or whatever they call it. Found on arrival back here that 1/3 of the station is down with sandfly fever. All the hospitals around here are full & they even have the chaps in their own beds under treatment. Hope I don't get it.

Sunday 3.6.45.

Have done absolutely nothing since last entry but read, sleep & eat & go to the pictures. It is becoming very monotonous but I guess we may as well do nothing here as any where else. The CO told us the other day that all Australians were to be released from the RAF & sent home. When, of course is the big question. Stan now has a job as a screens pilot. Had a dicy trip the other night when the petrol feed went crook on one motor & then the

her. At one stage both stopped & he finished up coming the last 3/4 hour on 1 motor. Got down OK & no damage. We have dozens of bugs here. I think our room was about the last on the station to get them, but they have come with a vengeance. Got 14 of them this morning on my sandfly net. Some were big beasts as big as a little finger nail.

Sunday 10.6.45.

Have not lifted a finger since last Sunday. I have been up to the CO & asked why he didn't post us somewhere & was told that he sent away a month ago to AHQE Med & said he didn't want us. So there is nothing anyone can do but wait so that's what I will do. The papers or someone at home have apparently been telling the public that we are either on our way

home or will be very soon as all as all the others everyone is receiving from Australia say that they that they are not going to write much more as they expect all of us to be on the boat etc. Wouldn't it?.

Saturday 16.6.45.

Still have done absolutely nothing & are now more than cheesed. They have a good billiard room here & of late we have been haunting that. Playing snooker. Fm not much good

though. Stan was lucky again yesterday. There are some Greeks on course here & he was screening for them. Yesterday he was flying along nicely at 1000 feet over the land when both engines cut. He put her down OK & by the time it had stopped sliding he said everyone was 200 yards away. Anyway, fortunately it didn't burn & they all got out within nothing more than a few scratches. By gosh, the maintenance is bad here. The erks take no interest in their jobs whatsoever.

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There is to be an eclipse of the sun in Canada. The time here is 3 pm today so we intend to have a shufti & see if we can see anything. Saw partial eclipse at 1830. Wednesday 11.7.45.

Informed this morning that we were to fly down to Cairo so we packed our kit & went down to the kites & climbed aboard for the last time. Stan was flying & we finally arrived at Heliopolis after 1 hour 40 after crossing the Sinai desert. Got a truck there & came out to here 22PTC. Good view of Suez running to Gt Bitter Lakes.

- Friday 13.7.45

Still here at Almoza. Spent yesterday in Cairo & met the Hangman (Kerns), & finished up at a night club & got to bed at 4 am.

Sunday 15.7.45.

We are leaving from here at 6 am in the morning for Kas Yenet (21PTC), which is on the Great Bitter Lakes which form part of the Suez delta. All the Australians for repat are there.

Monday 16.7.45.

Up bright & early & on the usual old train & out to Ismailia which is on the canal & then around the Great Bitter Lakes to Kas Yenet which is half way to Suez.

Tuesday 17.7.45.

- A lovely station - in the middle of the desert. Water on 5 hours a day only - food

terrible - 3/4 hours walk to the lake & no sign of a boat. About a week ago the Orantes was in, 98 WO s were put aboard but the Captain ordered them off as there was no second class accommodation aboard. Eventually P/O Gar Webb went as OC troops, being in charge of erks, sgts etc. According to latest rumours they will be arriving in Melbourne tomorrow. It seems that the Captain had taken some WO s home before as troop class & had been reprimanded by the Gov't. Of course the Air Force here don't care & their one object is to get rid of us. Boats are very scarce & 2nd class accommodation even scarcer, so we will probably be here for months.

- Thursday 19.7.45.

Food is still lousy & absolutely nothing to do. There is a library here but it is the worst I have ever seen. The water is hot & we have bought 2 "cheddies", (earthenware pots

which cool down the water), without which we would die of thirst. Very cheesed. Tuesday 24.7.45

Still nothing doing. Much friction here between RAAF & RAF. Plenty of fights. The mob here are no angels having nearly all done a tour & the RAF admin staff are trying to stand over us as they do the Pommies. We have a Squadron Leader Australian here in charge & he is bothered every 5 minutes with a complaint. It is just a matter of who gets to him first. Some of the chaps have been here 2 & 3 months & are "a rarin' to go". One can feel the tension everywhere. Even under the showers where some wizard remarks by our chaps about

- the "chooms", they always make remarks about the "skirmish" in the Pacific & of course that

pleases us & any time now there will be a beaut "blue". After much complaining to the CO & the liaison officer, they are at last converting us to an Australian scale of rations, which means that we will have nearly 2 times as much meat & vegetables etc as we get now. Still no signs of a boat. Am beginning to think we will never get home.

Monday 30. 7.45.

Still nothing doing. They are arranging tours of Palestine now of one weeks duration for those that want to go. Also we can get leave if we want to, but it isn't worth it. No talk or sight of a boat.

P.86

Thursday 9.8.45.

15 bods went on Monday. They were all ex POWs or married men. Apart from that nothing new has happened. We now have kites & some of the boys are going to buy marbles in Cairo. The food is now wonderful & we have too much to eat. The weather is still

hot with never a cloud in the sky. Saw Coward's "Blithe Spirit" last night put on by WAAFs & the RAF. A good show.

Friday 10.8.45

The atomic bomb & Uncle Joe both in the war. Whacko. Shouldn't be long now. I am a bit dubious about the future of the world now that we have this bomb, but let's hope they know how to take care of it. Still no boat in sight or even a sign.

Wednesday 15.8.45

WAR OVER!!!!. Now we will never get home. What a break for everyone that there will be no more fighting to talk of Let's hope they are successful in laying the foundations for a peace that will last. Big party tonight.

Friday 17. 8.45

What a celebration we had. It is still on. My tent is a mess of empty beer bottles & broken glass. We drank right through Wednesday night & then went to bed after tiffin time yesterday in a somewhat inebriated state. We lost 2 chaps in the jug & 1 tent & 1 latrine were burnt down. Am off to Ismailia this afternoon to have a shufti around.

Saturday 18.8.45.

Caught a truck to Ismailia most of which is out of bounds. There are several beautiful parks in the centre of the town also some palatial homes. The latter belong to the French who seem to predominate in the better circles throughout Egypt. A sweet water runs through the town & along either side runs a park with smooth grass & trees. About every 1/4 mile there is a big lock. These canals both supply water to the town & all goods are shipped along them in dhows which carry huge sails. These canals are about 25 yards wide & every half mile or so there is a flat bottomed ferry which is dragged from side to side by a wire. At each lock there is a road crossing which opens up. Caught a truck back over the 40 miles of plain ordinary desert.

Sunday 19.8.45.

Set off early for Suez. Got about ten miles along the road & then caught another one to the canal where we caught a wog bus along the canal road to within 3 1/2 miles of Suez when the bus broke down. We went the rest of the way on a wog donkey drawn cart. Most of Suez is typical wog town & out of bounds. The railway runs through the centre of the town & there are 2 big pubs & a few cafes & beer joints. There is an excellent club for sergeants & above where the cheapest beer in town is available, viz 15 piastres per bottle. Very good floor show by nude & semi nude bints. Left town at 2 am & caught a taxi out to Shallufa where there are Australians camped. Slept in a tent with 3 Flight Lieutenants & breakfast in the officers mess & then back to the home of the happy. Every body is mad here. Nothing to do & many months to do it in. What makes it worth it is that there is good beer here.

Sunday 9.9.45.

Quite some time since I last wrote here & since then there has been quite a few developments. I had a weeks leave in Cairo during which I spent all my dough. It is still the same town & is an absolute den of iniquity with the Kiwis making it worse when they see an Australian. We have a beaut big kite here which three of us made & have 18 balls of string on it at 50 yards a time.

P.87

She flies like a bird. We also have marbles & play a lot of both big & little ring. My thumb is very sore though. The Pommies are amazed at our new pastimes & the boys have never been happier. A boat went this morning & took 40 odd NCOs from here. I wasn't on it & I have no idea how they picked the bods to go. I now have 3 years & 3 days overseas & a tour of ops which is more than the majority on the boat have. Desert all the way to Cairo. The Western Desert & this is not just sand as I had always supposed, but sandy soil with little & big stones all over it. Very much like gravel. In parts there is saitbush. Of course I hear that further inland in the middle of the Sahara it is just plain sand.

Sunday 16.9.45.

A letter came through from liaison yesterday saying that the Orantes, (which was to take us home), had been damaged by fire at the docks in England & that they expect to have another big boat for us by the first week in October. I now have permission to wear my gongs which total 4 & are the 1939/1945, Atlantic & Italy Stars & the Defence Medal. Still nothing to do here. The weather has improved a great deal as it has cooled down in the last week very noticeably. The days are shortening rapidly also. I guess if & when I get home it will be darned hot.

Sunday 29.9.45.

Still doing nothing, but there is supposed to be a boat going soon with 3 & 450 Squadrons ground staff & aircrew just down from Austria. Also a few officers from here. I guess we will be home by Xmas. Believe we get 5 weeks leave on arrival & then discharge - Beaut. Have had this desert in big heaps.

Sunday 30.9.45.

Have been overseas for 3 years & a month & have at last found out what home sickness means. I could cry, & feel very, very sorry for myself.

Saturday 6.10.45

Cairo is out of bounds. The writing is on the walls, "Get the British troops out of Egypt". All the wogs are revolting. The students mainly are causing all the trouble having mass demonstrations & objecting to everything in general. Also the Arabs are spoiling for trouble in Palestine. The 13th Army in France has been flown over to Yidland & the RN is standing by at Haifa. All camps in Egypt are closed until further notice. There is supposed to be a boat next Thursday to take us all home. It is from England & already has 3500 RAAF chaps on. The name is rumoured to be Stirling Castle of about 25000 tons. I'll believe all this when I see it.

Wednesday 10.10.45.

The boat leaves on Saturday & we are all on it. Whacko. We were to leave tomorrow but the boat is supposed to have broken down & will not be ready until Saturday. The cricket team are rumoured to be on it, & as they are going to India it looks as if we will be too. I guess at last we may get home.

Saturday 13.10.45.

Finally got down to the wharf at Port Tewfik, which is the harbour on the Canal at Suez. Across a mile long causeway from Suez to Tewfik. Found out that the Stirling Castle was still in the Bitter Lakes, half way down the Canal so they brought us back here to Shallufa about 15 miles from Suez at a RAF station. We are right next to the Canal.

Sunday 14. 10.45

Rose bright & early & saw our boat in the canal, headed for Suez. Left by truck & boarded a lighter at 10 am & finally climbed aboard about midday.

P.88

A fine boat of 26000 tons loaded with 4000 RAAF & Dutch troops & of course is loaded to capacity. Quite a few married men with their wives. Plenty of Italian & 2 Egyptian 1/2 breeds. Our bunks are the old 3 tier efforts but with sheets & pillows & the W/Os quarters are better than the Fits. Wonderful food served by the Dutchmen on table cloths. Picture show every 4 days for everyone. Up anchored at 5 pm & headed down the Red Sea.

Extremely hot. Got the shock of my life tonight. There is an enormous 2 up school going, & dozens of crown & anchor boards, most of which are run by officers. The decks are all lit & it is one mass of gambling which is completely ignored by the authorities. We eat in the dining room for W/Os & above. They announced over the Tannoy that we cruise at 18 1/2 knots & will reach Aden in 2 1/2 days, & Western Australia in 15 from there. As yet we don't know where we are going to stop, but popular rumour has it that it will be Fremantle & Sydney. I certainly hope so.

Monday 15. 10.45.

As calm as a millpond & as hot as Hades. Saw 2 islands with lighthouses on them during the day on the port side, also a boat at midday & another at 7 pm & exchanged signals with both.

Tuesday 16.10.45.

Still hot as Hades, but now we have blowers with cold air & our place is the coolest on the boat. On the way down the stairs the cool draught hits one. Saw flying fishes again this morning & they are the same as the ones in the Pacific. Also saw plenty of porpoises & boats including a big aircraft carrier which was going the other way. We have passed plenty of boats but as yet none have passed us. At dusk this afternoon I found out why this sea is called the Red Sea. After the sun had gone below the horizon the sea turned orange & almost red.. It remained that way for about 20 minutes. The Aussies from England are a queer lot. They won't talk to us from the ME & are always complaining about everything, even the food which is the best I have had since I left Gibraltar. Too much of a good thing I guess. They are nearly all commissioned & they were able to be for the asking for anyone who had done over 75 ops hours. They even have the Pommy outlook & views on things.

Wednesday 17.10.45

Awoke to find islands off to starboard with a strong wind from straight ahead. Eventually came to land on both sides & passed through the straits at midday. They are about 20 miles wide. Land on both sides are bare rock & there are several large rocks dotted about. Covered 439 nautical miles for the last 24 hours & 440 for the previous. Turned on to an easterly course & up past Aden which is barely visible from the distance through the rather heavy land haze. Lost sight of land about 5 pm & it was British Somaliland which is Africa & I am not in the least bit sorry to see the last of it. As I write we have just started to roll

slightly & I guess we shall be past the tip of Africa & into the Indian ocean To date the old tub has not even moved a foot in the water. Advanced watches 30 minutes

Thursday 18.10.45

In the middle of the Gulf Of Aden on awakening this morning & later came close to the British Somaliland coast & crawled along to the tip which is Cape Gwardafuy, which is the most eastern point of the continent of Africa. In 1886 Brit Somaliland voluntarily placed itself under British rule & survived the 2 weeks Italian invasion in 1939. Just on Cape Gwardafuy is a lighthouse against which lays the wreckage of an Italian submarine which surrendered to a British trawler it attacked 3 days after Italy's entry into the war. At 3 pm we passed this cape, headed south & far to the port sighted Socotra Is, which is also British & is under the rule of a Sultan.

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Popular rumour has it the Br Government pay him 5000 Pounds per year to keep his harem in order, thereby keeping him out of mischief. There are no harbours & the only way to get to the island is by way of native boats from the mainland. Population is approx 12000 among whom are many cave dwellers. Cape Gwardafuy is extremely rocky & is 857 ft high. All this information was given by a Navy chap over the amplifiers. Saw an enormous stingray next to the boat today. Must have been 15 feet across. Advanced watches 30 minutes, & are now in the open sea with 4535 miles to go.

Friday 19.10.45

No land in sight on awakening this morning. Very calm sea with a slight swell which has created a fair pitch. Saw schools of flying fish which are small & appeared to be white. Slight cloud around & a cool breeze which makes it very nice on deck & very cool on our deck. Steering SW direct for Fremantle. Will pass between the Chagos Islands & the Cocos islands & should arrive there on 29.10.45. Advanced watches 30 minutes. travelled 422 today & 413 miles yesterday.

Saturday 20.10.45

Travelled 430 miles up to noon today & advance watches 30 minutes tonight.. Pos'n at noon 0430N 621 SE. We are both rolling & pitching very steadily. No land or birds or fish or boats seen today. Fine all day. Food still wonderful. There are 2 good full length decks on the boat E & D, which are the top two. Peacetime capacity of this boat is 287 First Class, & 490 Cabin class. She runs to S Africa & carries the Royal Mail We are definitely supposed to stop at Fremantle & Sydney.

Sunday 21.10.45.

Travelled 438 miles up to noon & crossed the Equator at 1300 hrs without the least ceremony. The pitch & roll have both become more exaggerated & are now noticeable anywhere on the boat, particularly on stairs. Advanced watches 30 minutes. Plenty of cloud around & a fairly strong wind from astern which has created a fair amount of white caps. No land, boats or anything sighted. Awoke to find a large swell & very choppy sea. The boat is

being thrown about a hell of a lot. There is no sun & have had rain really all day. At first we ran into just squalls but this afternoon it was a constant. It is strange to see a squall several miles away & be out of the rain & then into the one first sighted & run out of it again. Have travelled 457 nautical miles up to midday. Advance watches 30 minutes tonight. Bad news has just been announced to the effect that all the deep sea kit has been rifled. So far I have not been called out as one of the unlucky ones, but they are still going through the hold finding out whose gear has been touched. They cut the bags with knives & chopped the locks of trunks a butcher's axe. It is thought that the guilty party is a mob of Aussie merchant seamen going home as passengers. They are a tough crowd having been in England after deserting the Queen Mary. I am hoping that mine is OK & that they catch the culprits. Tonight is the blackest night I have ever seen. It is raining cats & dogs & getting very rough. Tuesday 23.10.45.

Awoke to find a little sun shining & the sea still fairly rough. Going in & out of showers all day. Advanced watches 30 minutes. Travelled 433 N miles up to noon today. They tell me a small island was sighted to port early this morning, food still with chicken twice last week.

Wednesday 25.10.45.

Pouring rain first thing this morning & has been all day. Visibility was no more than 1/2 mile. Travelled 435 N miles up to noon. The water is very choppy & the old tub is bouncing around a hell of a lot. Advance watches 30 minutes.

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A pitch black & rough & wet night.

Thursday 25.10.45.

Bright sunshine & a terrific wind this morning & late this afternoon cloud came over & now tonight there is almost a gale blowing & the sea is enormous & of course we are all over the place. The sky is black & the water from the lights of the boat is jet black & very frightening & forbidding to look at. Travelled 414 N miles to noon today. Saw a very good

concert in the boats cinema tonight put on by the boys & the Navy & some of the women. Friday 26.10.45.

Bright sunshine & a terrific wind & swell. Travelled 414 N miles to noon today. Nothing seen or heard. Are supposed to dock at Fremantle Monday morning

Saturday 27.10.45.

Travelled 418 M miles to noon. Overcast all day with high wind. When we embarked at Suez I saw a rather peculiar thing in the form of a cloud. Along the coast was one great line of white cloud. To sea there was a lot of cloud & over the land there was none. It was just as if someone had drawn a line with a ruler & put cloud on one side & nothing on the other. Advance watches 30 minutes. We are still looking for the Southern Cross, but every night there has been too much cloud..

Sunday 28.10.45.

Covered 405 N miles to noon today. We are due in at Fremantle at 0830 tomorrow & we are supposed to get leave. Expect to sight land after dark tonight. There is still a strong cold wind blowing & bright sunshine. Advance watches 30 minutes tonight.

Monday 29.10.45

Sight land, (Rottnest Island), this morning at 0630 & went into the Gage Roads which is the closed water formed by 3 large islands around the mouth of the Swan River & docked at a wharf at Fremantle at 9 am. Got ashore at 10 & saw nearly all the town which is old fashioned & fairly dirty. About midday after a few drinks caught a taxi to Perth, which is inland on the River. The last 7 miles into Perth is along the Swan River which is extremely windy & wooded down to the banks with houses all along. Looking across a bend on the river to Perth itself is a beautiful view as the city rises up off the river bank. There are a few rather tall buildings standing out from the rest which makes it look very nice. It reminded me very much of Wagga & gave one a sense of peace. There are trams in both Fremantle & Perth & a bus service between them. Both are like any country town in NSW in that they are slow uncrowded places. Caught a tram out to Subiaco which is a very quiet suburb of Perth. It is apparently a working class suburb on the same lines as Marrickville. The thing that struck me most of all was the terrific accent of the Australians. It seems awful. Terribly broad. Made

me shudder. I guess we must have all lost most of ours. Pottered around all day & had 4 steaks & chips during the day & a few jugs & got back to the boat at about 10 pm & went to bed very tired.

Tuesday 30.10.45.

Left Fremantle at 6.45 & dropped the Pilot just out of the Swan. Fremantle only boasts about 5 wharves & not a very impressive harbour. Just after passing Rottnest we saw an enormous whale which caused clouds of spray every 10 yards & then spouted water occasionally. Also saw a large flying fish & then turned south, & as I am writing before I go to bed land is in sight on the port side. Advanced watches 30 minutes.

Wednesday 31.10.45.

Travelled 439 N miles to noon today. the old boat is rolling quite a bit as there is quite a swell. Bright sunshine over a blue sky.

P.91

There is also a slight cold breeze. The RAAF pay blokes are on the boat getting everything fixed up so we can get away quickly when we get to Sydney. Have seen many whales all day & now tonight the boat is rolling badly. Advance watches 30 minutes. Thursday 1.11.45.

Travelled 422 miles to noon. Awoke to find a heavy fog which lasted until about 11. Very cold on deck & still rolling a fair bit. Don't know definitely yet whether we shall land at Sydney or Melbourne as there seems to be some trouble regarding the Dutchmen & where

they are to go. Forgot to mention the RAAF band playing on the wharf & all the people at Fremantle. It caused many lumps to come into many throats including mine. Extremely cold on deck all day, although there is no wind. The water is as smooth as glass, but there is still a large swell. Advance watches 30 minutes.

Friday 2.11.45.

Covered 426 N miles to noon. No sun & very cold. Passed an aircraft carrier & a cruiser this morning. There are about 20 albatross following the boat. They are enormous things & some seem to have about 8 feet from wing tip to tip. Still rolling quite a lot, there is a lot of phosphorous in the water & in the wake of the boat, shows up almost to the horizon like a neon light. Advance watches 30 minutes & we are now on Eastern Australian time. We are supposed to be docking at Sydney on Sunday afternoon.

Saturday 3.11.45.

Covered 423 to noon today. Saw Wilson's Promontory from about 1 1/2 miles at 9.00 am this morning. Just a rocky mountainous projection about 1000 feet high at the top with a lighthouse at the tip. Many dead trees all over the place as there seems to have been a bush fire through within the last few years. 4 big islands to starboard but they are all rocky uninhabited efforts. We are due to arrive at Sydney at noon tomorrow, so I'll close this diary here.

"I shall have done all that any man can do & the least that any one who calls himself a man should do" E Gore

APPENDICES

- 1/ List of Stations, Bases, & Places Visited
- 2/ Operational Sorties
- 31 Unit No's & Locations
- 4/ 458 Squadron RAAF
- 51 Vickers Wellington Medium Bomber Aircraft

APPENDIX # 1

LIST OF STATIONS, BASES, & PLACES VISITED

20.6.42	SydneyTo	Bradfield Park NSW
7.8.42	Bradfield Pk it	Sydney NSW
10.8.42	Sydneyif	Leura NSW
13.8.42	Leura it	Sydney
23.8.42	Sydneyit	Melbourne Vie

7. 9.42	Melbourne	"	San Francisco	USA
3.10.42	San Francisco		Oakland	Cal.
4.10.42	Oakland	"	Portland	.Oregon
5.10.42	Portland	"	Vancouver	BC. Canada
6.10.43	Vancouver	"	Jasper	BC
6. 10.42	Jasper	"	Edmonton.	Alberta
10.10.42	Edmonton	"	Calgary	it
23.12.42	Calgary	"	Golden.	BC
28.12.42	Golden		Calgary	
12. 2. 43	Calgary	"	Macleod.	Alb.
13. 2. 43	Macleod	"	York	Wash. USA
14. 2. 43	York	"	Spokane.	
14. 2. 43	Spokane	"	Ellensburgh.	Wash.
14. 2. 43	Ellensburgh	"	Mt Rainier	
14. 2. 43	Mt. Rainier	"	Seattle	
19. 2. 43	Seattle	"	Spokane	
21. 2. 43	Spokane	"	Lethbridge.	Alb.
21. 2. 43	Lethbridge	"	Calgary	
27. 2. 43	Calgary	"	Banff.	BC
28 .2. 43	Banff	"	Calgary	
28. 5. 43	Calgary		Moose Jaw.	Sask.
29. 5. 43	Moose Jaw	"	Mossbank	
11. 7. 43	Mossbank	"	Moose Jaw	
11. 7. 43	Moose Jaw	"	Winnepeg	Man.
12 .7. 43	Winnepeg	"	Morden.	it
14. 7. 43	Morden	"	Winnepeg	it
16. 7. 43	Winnepeg	"	Ottawa.	Quebec
16 .7. 43	Ottawa		Montreal	If

16. 7. 43	Montreal	"	New York. USA
20 .7. 43	New York	"	Montreal. Queb.
23 .7. 43	Montreal	"	St John. Nova Scotia.
24. 7. 43	St John	"	Digby.
25 .7. 43	Digby "	Halifax	
1 . 8. 43	Halifax "	Moncton	
2. 8 .43	Moncton	"	New York. USA
3. 8. 43	New York	"	Greenock. Scotland
11.8. 43	Greenock		Brighton. Sussex UK
28.8. 43	Brighton	"	Holbeck. Yorkshire
28.8. 43	Holbeck	"	Leeds

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APPENDIX #1 (Cont'd)

LIST OF STATIONS, BASES, & PLACES VISITED.

28. 8. 43	Leeds To	Leathley. Yorkshire.	By	Train	
28. 8. 43	Leathley	if Bradford.	"	"	Car
30. 8. 43	Bradford	It Leathley	"		it
2. 9.43	Leathley	it London"	Train		
3. 9.43	London	Brighton. Sussex.	H	It	
20. 9. 43	Brighton	' London		it	
21. 9. 43	London	Dumfries. Scotland.			it
27. 9. 43	Dumfries	" Edinburgh.	'	"	Bus
30. 9. 43	Edinburgh	" Dumfries	"		it
29.11.43	Dumfries	" Glasgow	"	"	Train
29.11.43	Glasgow	" Dumfries	H	H	
3.12. 43	Dumfries	" Carlisle.			it
3.12. 43	Carlisle	Lancaster			
3.12. 43	Lancaster	Morcombe			
12.12.43	Morcombe	" Glasgow. Scot.			
13.12.43	Glasgow	" Port Said. Egypt.		"	Ship
3. 1. 44	Port Said	" Cairo. It	'		Train
1. 2. 44	Cairo "	Jerusalem. Palestine.			It
26. 2. 44	Jerusalem	" Ein Shemer. "			Truck
23. 4. 44	Ein Shemer	" Hadera.	It		If
23. 4. 44	Hadera"	Haifa if		Bus	
24. 4. 44	Haifa "	Beirut. Syria "		Truck	
27. 4. 44	Beirut "	Haifa. Pal.		it	
1. 5. 44	Haifa '	Cairo. Egypt.		Train	
7. 5. 44	Cairo	Benghazi. Libya	"		Air
7. 5. 44	Benghazi	" Tunis. Tunisia			it
8. 5. 44	Tunis	Algiers. Algeria			
24. 6. 44	Algiers "	Aighero. Sardinia			

13. 7. 44	Aighero	"	Bosa	it	"	Truck
17. 7. 44	Alghero	"	Sassari	if		It
4. 9. 44	Aighero		Foggia.	Italy		Air
7. 9. 44	Foggia "	Ancona.	11			11
12. 9. 44	Foggia "	Barletta	it	'		Truck
12. 9. 44	Barletta	"	Bari	if		
		it				
30.10.44	Foggia "	Naples	it		it	
30.10.44	Naples "	Caserta	it			
31.10.44	Caserta	"	Rome	if		'I
5.11.44	Rome "	Foggia	if	I'		
7.11.44	Foggia "	Ancona	Air			
3.12.44	Ancona'	Foggia				
26. 2.45	Foggia it	Algiers.	Algeria	I'		
26. 2. 45	Algiers "	Gibraltar.				
19. 4 .45	Gibraltar	"	Oujda.	it	H	H

APPENDIX # 1 (Confd)

LIST OF STATIONS, BASES, & PLACES VISITED.

19.4.45	Oujda To	Algiers By	Air.
21. 4.45	Algiers	Caste! Benito.	Tripoli
21. 4.45	Castel Benito	"	Marble Arch. (Cairo West)
27. 4.45	Cairo	Ein Shemer	Train
1. 5.45	Ein Shemer	Tel Aviv.	Bus
7. 5.45	Tel Aviv	Ein Shemer	it
11. 7.45	Ein Shemer	Cairo	Air
16. 7.45	Cairo	Kas Fareet	Train
18. 8.45	Kas Fareet	Ismailia	Truck
19. 8.45	Kas Fareet	"	Suez it

1.	9.45	Kas Fareet	Cairo	I'	
8.	9.45	Cairo	Kas Fareet		
13.	10.45	Kas Fareet	Shallufa		H
14.	10.45	Shallufa	Port Tewfik		
14.	10.45	Port Tewfik	"	Perth. (Fremantle)	Ship
29.	10.45	Fremantle	Sydney. (Arrived 4.11.45)		It

APPENDIX # 2 OPERATIONAL SORTIES.

No.	Type & Place	Hours (Night)	Hours (Day)	Hours (Computed)
1	Cape Decrus to Barcellona		6.40	6.40
	ASR Spanish coast. Bombed			
	Viare Ligure.			
2	Recce, Nice to Savona. Bombed		4.15	8.30
	Menton			
3	Recce, Viareggio to Nice. Bombed		5.00	10.00
	Pietro Ligure.			
4	Recce, Viareggio to Monaco	4.45		9.30
5	U-Boat search, Gulf of Genoa,		6.30	6.30
	recalled, bad weather.			
6	Recce, Genoan Gulf. bombed	4.20		8.40
	Sestre Levante.			
7	Recce, Gulf of Genoa	5.45		11.30
8	U-Boat hunt. W/T u/s	.40	.40	
9	Recce, Gulf of Genoa. Bombed		5.40	11.20
	Sestre Levante.			
10	Recce, Gulf of Genoa. Ditched		6.57	13.50
	off Aighero.			
	(Ditching Allowance)	25.00	25.00	
11	Recce, Nice to Genoa. Bombed		5.50	11.40

	Imperia.			
12	U-Boat hunt off Corsica	4.00		4.00
13	U-Boat hunt with Navy off Corsica	5.40		5.40
14	U-Boat hunt. Bombed barges	5.50		5.50
	off Genoa.			
15	Recce, Gulf of Genoa.	6.00	12.00	
16	Recce, Porto Garibaldi - Venice			
	Bombed Porto Garibaldi.	4.30		9.00
17	Ditto. Bombed 4 Destroyers	4.00		8.00
18	Recce, Revenna - Trieste. Bombed	6.00		12.00
	Chioggia.			
19	Recce, Cape Promontore-Venice.	6.20		12.40
	Bombed Revigno.			
20	Recce Revigno, & bombed Revigno	5.35		11.10

APPENDIX # 2 (Cont'd)

OPERATIONAL SORTIES

No.	Type & Place	Hours (Night)	Hours (Day)	Hours (Computed)
21	Recce, Lagasto- Dubrovnmch	6.50		13.00
	Bombed Lagasto.			
22	Recce, Cape Promontore-Venice			
	Bombed 2000 ton ship.	5.20		10.40
23	Recce, Cape Promontore-Venice			
	Bombed Revigno.	6.10		12.20
24	Reece, recalled due weather.			
	diverted to Ban.	2.45		5.30
25	Recce, Cape Promontore- Maestrypt			
	bombed Cittanova.	6.40		13.20
26	ASR, Adriatic NS.	2.15	2.15	

27	Recce, Maestrop- Trieste	3.20	6.40.
	Bombed 3 E-Boats		
28	Recce, Maesropt- Cp Promontore	4.30	9.00
	Bombed Grado.		
29	Bombed 2 EVs, landed Falcanara.	4.20	8.40
30	Recce, Venice to Trieste	6.05	12.10
31	Recce, Maesropt- Cp Promontore		
	Bombed convoy near Pula.	6.00	12.00
	Transfer to Gibraltar		
32	Convoy escort, Atlantic	6.50	
33	Convoy escort, Atlantic.	6.45	
34	Convoy escort, Atlantic	6.25	

Above is completion of one Operational Tour. (Note). Computed Hours refer to a formula where hours flown on night operations count more than those conducted in daylight hours. Also note that ditching referred to on Operation 10, carried a 25 hour allowance. (DI)

APPENDIX # 3

UNIT NO'S & LOCATIONS

No ITS No ED No ED HMT Ship

No 2 "M" Depot No WTS

No 2 BUS

No 1 "Y" Depot HMT Ship

No 11 PDRC No 10 (0) AFU No2 PDC HMT Ship

No 5 MEARC

No 1 MEARC No 78 OTU No 22 PTE No1BPD

458 Squadron No 29 Rest Camp 458 Squadron

it it

38 Squadron 458 (2) Sqdn No 22 PTC OTW

No 22 PTC No 21 PTC No REC HMT Ship

No 2 PD

Bradfield Park NSW

Ascot Vale. Vic Poeruleau Laut Edmonton. Canada. Calgary

Mossbank

Halifax Acquitania

Brighton. England Dumfries. Scotland Morecombe. England Sibajeck

Heliopolis. Egypt Jerusalem. Palestine. Ein Shemer

Almaza Egypt Algiers. Algeria Alghero. Sardinia Bosa.

Foggia. Italy

Ancona. Foggia Foggia Gibraltar Almaza Egypt

Ein Shemer

Almaza Kas Fareet

Shallufa Stirling Castle

Bradfield Park. NSW

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Australian Military Units 458 Squadron RAAF

458 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, was formed at Winghamtown, New South Wales, on 10 July 1941. Formed under Article XV of the Empire Air Training Scheme, the squadron was destined for operations in Europe. In early August, the 37 airmen then in it sailed for the United Kingdom, where they joined further personnel from across the British Commonwealth being gathered at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. The squadron was equipped with Vickers Wellington medium bombers, and as part of I Group Bomber Command, commenced operations over German-occupied Europe on 20 October 1941. For the next three months the focus of the squadron's operations was the strategic bombing campaign against Germany.

In January 1942 the squadron was reallocated to Middle East Command. Its relocation was a chaotic affair. The air and ground crew were separated and the squadron's aircraft were commandeered for operations by other squadrons from Malta, where they had stopped on their way to Egypt. Finally arriving in the Middle East, the squadron's ground crew worked on the maintenance of bombers operated by the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the United States Army Air Force, while the air crew were attached to 37, 70, 104, 108, and 148 Squadrons RAF. 458 Squadron was not reunited until 1 September 1942.

Based at El Shallufa in Egypt, the squadron was re-equipped with Wellingtons and trained in the techniques employed to attack ships and submarines with both bombs and torpedoes. Henceforth, 458 Squadron's primary role was to seek out and attack enemy shipping in the Mediterranean Sea. In this role, its aircraft operated from airfields in Egypt, Malta, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Sardinia, Corsica, and Italy. The squadron also undertook conventional bombing tasks, most notably in support of the Allied invasion of southern France in August 1944.

458 Squadron relocated for the final time, to Gibraltar, on 26 January 1945. With the occupation of southern France, and the continuing progress of the Allied campaign in Italy, enemy submarines and surface vessels in the Mediterranean presented little threat. From Gibraltar, the squadron roamed out across the western Atlantic, escorting Allied convoys and searching for German submarines. The squadron was still carrying out these tasks when the war in Europe ended on 8 May 1945. It disbanded on 9 June 1945.

Squadron Crest:

http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_1159.asp 19/05/05

Specifications

Version	B Mk.IC	B Mk.III
Engines	1000hp Bristol Pegasus XX	1500hp Bristol Hercules IX
Wing span	26.26m	26.26m
Length	19.68m	18.54m
Height	5.31m	5.31m
Wing Area	78.64m ²	78.04m ²
Empty Weight	8417kg	8417kg
Max. Weight	12928kg	13381kg
Max. Speed	378km/h at 4725m	410km/h at 3810m
Ceiling	5490m	5790m
Range	4100km with 454kg	3540km with 680kg, 2475kr with 2041kg
Armament	Two .303 guns in the front turret, four in the tail turret, and one in each beam position.	Two .303 guns in the front turret, four in the tail turret, and one in each beam position.

Bombs 2041kg2041kg

Sources

- Airplane Nr.140 -
- Jane's All the World's Aircraft, 1945 (collector's edition).

<http://www.bomber-command.info/sitemapwellington.htm> 5/07/05

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