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Footnote to My Flying
"They will sink this little island!" is my grandfather's first recorded thought upon hearing that Britain and Germany were at war. What he did next is almost incomprehensible with the benefit of hindsight: he voluntarily enlisted to serve in a war that did not technically involve him, as a visitor to the UK. He was not motivated by foreknowledge of the horrific events set to unfold under the Nazi regime in Europe, nor was he aware that the probability of surviving a full tour of duty on a Lancaster bomber would be around 30%. One senses that he enlisted simply because he perceived it to be the right thing to do.

Papa compiled memoirs of his time in the Royal Air Force in 2004, and the text will make clear that his primary aim was to disseminate these stories to his family. They had often been recounted at the dinner table at family gatherings, with grandchildren listening attentively, no matter how often we had heard them before. The compendium put them all in one place for posterity, and a very limited print run was commissioned on home inkjet printer. As Papa remembered anecdotes, he typed up additional pages and inserted them.

What always amazed me was my grandfather's willingness to speak openly about what must have been a terribly harrowing time. What astonished me even more was that he never seemed to hold any ill will towards those fighting on the other side. Words like "the enemy" and "the Germans" were never spoken with malice; to my grandfather, these men on the other side - those firing the anti-aircraft guns at him as he flew above Berlin on a night raid - were simply doing what their country had asked of them. Difficult concepts, like heroism, ethics, and atrocities were not part of the narrative. The focus was on providing a good story.

I have adhered to my grandfather's original text as much as possible. Minor editorial corrections have been made, but I have purposefully refrained from making stylistic ones, so as not to obscure his voice. It is important to remember that, while my grandfather did come from an age of letter writers, his intended audience here is a very familiar, informal one. Where my grandfather had originally inserted photos or clippings that may be subject to copyright, I have replaced these with links to relevant Wikipedia articles.

My grandfather died in 2008 following a stroke. He is fondly remembered and missed by his family and friends, including his wife, Mary; his three children: Glen, Patricia, and Neil; and five grandchildren: Graeme, Dawn, Heather, Janice, and Keith.
Graeme R. B. Boocock, Ph.D.
November 2013
Ottawa, Canada.
How did I get to be in Scotland and England for 15 years?

Most of you will have heard this story already, but just in case, here it is again.

In 1937, my sister, Miriam arranged to spend her summer holidays with a visit to Scotland. I went with Mum and Dad to see her off at Union Station in Toronto. I don’t think the train was out of sight when Dad said, “Let’s go off to Scotland too.”

I told them that I could not really go, because I had promised to go to a boys’ camp at a farm just north of Klienburg, Ontario, to be a nature study leader. This camp was got going by one of my brother Ken’s friends, Al Richardson. The boys were mostly from Dufferin Street Baptist Church. We had cycled up there quite often in the spring to get things all set up. Of course Ken could not go to Scotland either, because he was already working.

Well, my parents quickly arranged for Mrs. Mascall to be our housekeeper while they were away and Mum and Dad took off for their holiday in Scotland.

1938 was the year of the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow, Scotland and I was hoping that somehow I could get to see it. We had friends, Dr. Ernie and Bella Pallet. We knew them as Uncle Ernie and Auntie Bella, though they were not relatives. Uncle Ernie was a government veterinarian. He suggested that I should work my way to Scotland on a cattle boat. I went for that in a big way, so he arranged the whole thing. I was to start my trip in Toronto at the stockyards at St. Clair and Keele Street, where I was to get aboard the caboose of the cattle train. Actually, I first had to climb up into the shunting engine, while they were hooking up the train: great fun for a sixteen year old. Then I climbed down and changed into the caboose. This part of my journey cost $2.00.

There were three of us in the caboose, me and an old Glasgow man, as well as the regular guard. It was quite a ride. Canadian Pacific had started their express freight trains, which was something new at that time. I was surprised to see a spanking new passenger engine on the front of our train. I was able to sit up top and look out over the train and all around as we took off along the CP line across the city just north of Dupont St. very close to home, then out through Agincourt on the line that still comes through Whitby. As night came on I was given a mattress to sleep on and it was on top of what looked like a storage chest, with a flat top. Everything was just dandy until the engineer decided to slam on the brakes. This was no stop like on a passenger
train. I went sliding, mattress and all, right off the bed place and hit the front of the caboose. The guard had a good laugh. So did I, once I realised that nothing was wrong. That happened just near Trenton.

Next day, I had to arrange about signing on as part of the crew of the cattle boat. Apparently I was the youngest of the lot. They decided that I should be pantry boy and that did not please me at all. I had hoped to be looking after the cattle. Strangely, the cattle were breeding stock. Usually, I thought, Canada imported breeding cattle from Europe, but apparently it worked both ways.

One of my duties was to take the brass ventilators off the officers’ cabin doors, polish them, and put them back on. I had them all set up in the pantry, perched myself on a high stool and started to clean them up. Well, the captain came by and started yelling at me. I hadn’t a clue was he was saying, although I found out later that he came from Port Gordon in Banffshire, Scotland, right next to Buckie, where my mother was from. Anyway, I got fired as pantry boy and was put on with the other cattlemen. I was happy about that. We had a real nice smooth trip across the Atlantic. It was like a millpond. A big Basking Shark seemed to follow us all the way. I had never seen one of them before.

There were all sorts of surprises; we were not strictly a cattle boat; we had other cargo as well. I remember watching as they loaded all sorts of stuff. I remember that there were crates marked as Singer Sewing Machines. As we sailed up the Clyde, I was surprised to see the big Singer Sewing Machine factory on the banks of the river.

We docked at Princess Dock in Glasgow, right in the centre of the city. We were told to wait on board until Customs and Immigration came aboard to clear us. Well I sat for a good half hour and then decided that nobody seemed anxious to see me. So off I went. I had an address to go to and started off on a tram. I was meeting Emily Gault, one of the women who made our house their meeting place. These women were in Toronto in domestic service. Emily worked in Rosedale.

We got together all right and I made some visits to the Empire Exhibition. Then Emily was to take me north to visit her family in Thurso, right up in the very north of Scotland. I remember that I had a hard time realising that it could possibly be 11pm and still be quite light.

My big memory from this visit was my first flight in an aircraft. The plane was a DeHaviland bi-plane with a crew of one, the pilot. The door to the cockpit was left open and I wondered how this guy could fly this plane and take pictures of the WW1 battle ships that had been scuttled in Scapa Flow back in those old days.
After that I went to visit all my relatives in Buckie and Aberchirder. Finally, I settled in Aberdeen with Aunt Miriam and Uncle John. I had a great summer holiday.

My father had asked me to look at a course with the North of Scotland College of Agriculture. We intended to go into a horticulture business together, once I graduated from my training. I really did not want to train in Scotland and told him that I would much prefer to go to Niagara College for my training. The result was that I suddenly realised that I was due to report in Glasgow for my return trip to Canada, but had never gone to see the college in Aberdeen. Their head office was in an old Victorian building at 41 ½ Union Street on the 5th floor. The elevator was an old-fashioned wire covered affair, which did not impress me at all. I took a look at the big mahogany door with frosted glass and gold lettering and decided this was not for me. Before I had turned to come away a woman came up behind me. She said, “You want the North of Scotland College of Agriculture? This way.” She seemed to almost push me through the door. I know she did not actually, but anyhow I was in.

Well, they did have a good course. One of my spur-of-the-moment decisions made me sign up for it. So there I was, a guest of my aunt and uncle, which my Dad had arranged, if I should decide to stay. Before I could start my course, they required a year’s experience working in horticulture. If I wanted, I could work without pay in their experimental gardens at Craibstone. I started almost immediately.

As Craibstone was about 5 miles from where I lived in Aberdeen, I soon got permission to buy a bicycle.

I well remember the day war was declared. On Sunday, September 3rd, 1939 I came out from morning worship service to find that special editions of the Press and Journal were being sold on the street corners. Britain had declared war on Germany after they refused to withdraw from Poland. We had been reading about their Blitzkreig tactics throughout their takeover of so many countries in Europe. I thought, “They will sink this little island!”

By this time I had finished my year at Craibstone. I started the course and I did finish my first year. Of course by this time Britain was at war with Germany. The government wanted to increase food production as much as possible. I was asked if I would postpone my training until after the war. I told them that I felt sure the answer would be, “Yes”, but as I was here at my father’s expense, it would have to be his answer. His reply to my cable agreed. The college then employed me at Craibstone as one of their gardeners.

Britain had conscription, so one by one the workers were absorbed into
the armed forces. I gradually took over different jobs. The last one I took over was to operate their big Dennis power mower. The lawns were to be cut with light and dark stripes and very straight. Mowing one direction I would make a light stripe. Going back the opposite direction it showed up as dark. The job was to keep all lines straight. Mr. Cox, their head gardener wondered whether I could manage this task. I was willing to try. He watched as I did a few lines and decided that I could do the job just fine. I must admit that they did look good.

My age group came along for conscription. I reported, showing my passport to show them my age. They told me that I was not a resident, just a visitor, and could not be conscripted. I was amazed and asked if anything could stop me from volunteering. No, I could certainly do that. I made my way to the RAF recruiting office and volunteered for the RAFVR (Volunteer Reserve).

Eventually I was asked to report at Lord’s Cricket Grounds in London. We were in a holding centre until we could finally be sent to an ITW (Initial Training Wing). They were really pushing pilot trainees through at this time and all ITW’s were going at capacity. I was sent instead, to a bomber airfield, Hemswell in Lincolnshire, where the education officer did his best to teach us what we had to know. I did manage to pass, although more than half of our course did not make it. They were sent to a regular ITW.

After finishing my ITW course at Hemswell in Lincolnshire, I was eventually posted to a holding centre in the Metropole Hotel in Brighton. This seemed to be a place where trainees were kept until somewhere would be available to start them on their flying training. In all I was there for 16 weeks. It was a case of being present for morning parade, where a roll call ensured that you were present. This was followed by a march along the promenade, for no better reason than there was nothing else to do with us. It did not take long for a few of us to find that being in the tail end of this parade, we could easily vanish down a side street and be lost. There was a convenient Lyon’s café that had delicious crumpets and marmalade. The local YMCA, I think it was, had a good billiard table. I became pretty good with billiards and snooker during this period. I did get a task to do in the post office in the hotel. Apart from sorting out the mail for inmates like myself, we also collected the old newspapers for disposal. I started doing the Daily Telegraph crossword puzzle, which developed my liking for good crosswords. We did get really fed up down in Brighton. A posting to Rhodesia came up, so I volunteered to go there for my flying training. After getting various inoculations for all sorts of diseases, I got a week’s embarkation leave. Then I was told that since I came from overseas, I could not be sent overseas for my training. Apparently they had lost one or two who had just vanished once they were away from
Eventually I did get a posting to an elementary flying training school at Booker, near Marlow in Buckinghamshire. I was happy at last to be flying, but it had taken until March 23rd, 1942 to get to this stage. I thoroughly enjoyed flying. Apart from my actual training there are events that I will never forget.

Early in my training my instructor was flying us to an auxiliary field. I decided that my harness was not tight enough. I pulled the release and began to pull them tighter when I noticed that the horizon was beginning to slowly go around. He was doing a slow roll. I had no time to even attempt to do up any of my harness. All I could do was to brace myself on the sides of my cockpit and hold myself from dropping out as the ground went slowly past as I looked down at it. When I told him what had happened he had a good laugh.

Again, early in my flying, it might have been my first flight (but I’m not sure about that), my instructor, an ex-fighter pilot got together with a Boston fighter-bomber. The two of them decided to have a mock dogfight. It was great fun, but my poor stomach. It was not accustomed yet to this kind of thing. I sat, holding my stomach, but enjoying the whole thing.

My first experience at night flying was quite something. We took off into the inky blackness of the blackout. The idea was to fly a square pattern to the left after getting up to 1000 ft. Then as we turned to complete the square, we should find that we were approaching the landing strip again ready for descending to make a landing. It was a scary feeling, to think that we were actually doing this with no navigation aids at all. However after several circuits it gradually became just the thing to do.

I was in real trouble on Easter weekend. The day before the weekend I was flying solo doing circuits and landings. I came in to land, right in front of the commanding officer’s office. There was a gusty sort of wind and I had trouble getting the plane to land. Right away I remembered the important instructions. With any difficulty in landing, give the engine full power and go round again for another circuit. I opened up the throttle and got the shock of my life. My port wing just dropped and hit the ground and the poor old Tiger Moth flipped right over, nose to the ground, leaving me hanging upside down in my harness. I quickly released my harness and dropped onto the ground. Then I remembered – turn off the ignition switch. I crawled back under the plane and did so. I was to report to the commanding officer right after Easter weekend.

I went into London for the weekend, and spent the time with my
brother, Ken. He was stationed at RCAF headquarters in London at Canada House. Unfortunately, I forgot the last train from Marlebone Station left 5 minutes earlier on Sunday nights. I just missed it. In fact I saw it pulling out of the station. We went to Ken’s place overnight, and I got up and made my way to the station, but the train I got was not the first one in the morning. I was on the mat for not being back to base by 11:59 hrs. I had to see the Commanding officer about that. Well it turned out that he gave me 7 days jankers for that. Then I had to wait to see him about my upside down landing. I was really down in the dumps, thinking I would probably fail as a pilot. What a surprise when he sent a message out that he did not want to see me about this, as he had watched my attempted landing and said I had done everything right. What a relief. I didn’t mind my 7 days of picking up litter etc. after that.

After 41 hours, 5 minutes of flying training at Booker there was another change of policy. There would be no more flying training in Britain. All training would be overseas.

All pilot trainees were to have a flying test after 8 hours flying to judge whether they should continue as pilot trainees or switch to some other aircrew training. I was told that I was to be sent to the U.S.A for my training. We got the impression that they were sending the better flyers to the “General Arnold” scheme. I don’t think I was any better than most, but my 8 hour test was done after 41 hours flying.

**Primary Training, Lakeland Florida**

I finished flying at Booker EFTS on May 10th, 1942. We were sent overseas in the old ‘Leticia’ which had been converted into a troop transport. We soon found ourselves in Moncton, New Brunswick, awaiting posting to get flying once again. I somehow found that we would be two or three weeks, so applied for leave to visit Mum and Dad in Toronto. I got it! It was great to see them again and to visit with lots of people that I knew. Then it was back to Moncton where we found a good swimming hole beside a railway line, not far from our base.

Finally we boarded the troop train, which was to take us to somewhere in the southern States. One of our stops turned out to be in the Union Station in Toronto. It looked as though we would be there for a while, so I phoned home and told Mum which platform we were stuck on. She came down and was able to meet a good few of my friends who were training with me. I think she was able to spend about an hour talking to us all.
I can’t remember the route we took going south, but I remember waking early one morning as we were going through the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia. That is a sight I will always remember.

We finally arrived at Macon, Georgia and were trucked to a holding camp several miles away. We had another wait here. We were living in tents. Mind you, they had solid wooden floors, but they were very hot in the mid-day sun.

It was good to once more climb aboard a train, bound for our Primary Training at Lodwick School of Aeronautics at Lakeland Florida. I remember finding where the Church of Christ met, and went there on Sunday. I was early, so I waited across the street looking at one of the many lakes, until it was time for services. Apparently a man was standing outside the church building and recognised my American uniform with the RAF cap, and told another fellow that I must be in the RAF. He said that although I was in the RAF, that did not mean that I was from England. “They come from all over the world.” Of course, when I went over he spoke to me and asked where I was from. When I said, Toronto, Canada, he was not too surprised. Mr. Matthews and his family pretty well adopted me while I was there. My friend, Ben Massey, who was a Roman Catholic, was adopted by another family in
the church too.

My flying began again on August 11th, 1942. This was a civilian flying school and my instructor was a civilian, P.N. Ross. On my first lesson, he said to me that I must have flown before. After I explained that I had done 41 hours on Tiger Moths, he said that he would probably be teaching me things I already knew, and did I think I would enjoy some aerobatics. Knowing how I enjoyed spins and rolls I said I thought that would be just great, so, if I successfully did an exercise first time, he would show me some aerobatics. I think this helped me quite a bit. I will never forget the first thing he did. He called it ‘The falling leaf’. He just turned that plane upside down, so that we were hanging by our harness and proceeded to wave left then right as we floated down like a falling leaf. Mind you, he always made sure that I could do all my required exercises before we had some fun.

One thing he did was to cut the engine and tell me to act as though the engine was out of commission and make a forced landing. I spotted what looked like a beautiful green and flat area and got ready to land. He said that I could not land there. The green field was in fact water, covered with floating water hyacinths. Well I vowed never to be caught like that again, so after that I always headed for a field with some livestock. I knew that would be solid ground. They would not walk on water hyacinths.

I came into the flight office one morning to find the blackboard with a drawing of a biplane coming in with a cow looking up at it. The inscription on the board was, “Cameron, herding Cattle.”

They loved to do precision flying. One time he took me to a landing field that had a white circle painted in the middle. The idea was to fly a take off and landing pattern, but on the downwind leg I was to cut the engine and glide the rest of the way, coming to a stop inside the circle. He did it first, then climbed out and sent me up to do the same thing. Well, I had watched pretty closely as to where he had cut the engine. No problem, I thought, I will cut mine at the same spot. This I did, but immediately hit a thermal, which bounced me up about a thousand feet. Well, I thought, I had better try my best, not knowing that he had seen what happened and was laughing his head off. Well with enlarging my pattern a bit and also some side slipping on my approach I got her right into the circle. I think the fact that we both treated everything as good fun, helped me quite a lot. I finished my primary training there on October 7th, 1942.

**Basic Training, Cochran Field BFTS**
Our basic training was from October 13th, 1942 to December 14th, 1942. The **BT 13A** had a fixed undercarriage, but was more advanced than the Stearman. By the time I got there I had done 102 hours, 5 minutes of flying. While on the **Stearman**, we had been introduced to various aerobatic things, not very advanced, but still fun. On the Cornell we got into more night flying and using our instruments, and cross-country flights. We felt that we were advancing quite a bit. There were things like slow rolls, snap rolls, and barrel rolls. Of course there was always stalling and recovery, steep turns, chandelles and lazy eights. We had been introduced to most of these while on the Stearmans.

There were quite a few cross-country flights into Florida and Alabama. We had more night flying. By the end of basic training my total hours logged were 170 hours, 55 minutes.

**Advanced Training, Napier Field, Dothan, Alabama**

Here we started flying the **Harvard AT6**. This is a really nice plane to fly. It had a retractable undercarriage, and a two-pitch propeller. On this plane we started to do more advanced flying. They were very keen on precision flying. We used the ‘Two Ship’ formation. Sometimes there would be several of us, but we still used the basic two-ship formation.

While at Napier Field I developed a bad dose of sinusitis and was off flying for a week. The doctor realised that I wanted to get back flying as soon as possible and gave me full strength drops. He said he had never done this before and was trusting me to use them exactly as he prescribed. They were very dangerous in over doses and were absolutely tasteless. Believe me I stuck absolutely to what he recommended and only lost a week of flying. I will never forget my first flight after that. Our instructor was an RAF man, Pilot Officer Johnston. He went with another trainee in the lead plane, or ship as they called them, and I was to follow in formation and do whatever they did. All of a sudden, while concentrating on keeping my position, I sensed that we were climbing. It became nothing but blue sky and I realised that he was doing a loop. I had never done a loop in the Harvard before, but I managed to follow him around. Then I began to guess that he was really trying to see if he could lose me. We ended up in a Luffman circle where I was chasing them around in an ever tightening circle it seemed. Suddenly I saw them seem to stand on their nose and shoot off downward. I tried, but just could not follow them. Well they decided to land in one of our satellite landing fields, so I landed too. I ran over to their plane and asked how they did that last manoeuvre. Johnston laughed and said that yes they were trying to see whether I could
follow them, whatever they did, but in the circle, as they tightened it up, they stalled. You see there were two of them in their plane, but I was on my own, and therefore lighter. Being heavier, they stalled before I would. Not much wonder I couldn’t follow them. I think they enjoyed that trip as much as I did.

We also had to fly to Eglin Field in the Florida Panhandle for our gunnery course. This was now January 1943. We first had to practice flying with four aircraft in a long string, all in two-ship formation. Each plane was a little lower than the one it was following. I felt sorry for the guy at the tail end. As we flew along the shore of the Gulf of Mexico the last guy was pretty close to the water. I think I was in second position, if I remember rightly. P.O. Johnston carried on with our ground gunnery, even when we had to do it below a thunderstorm. That was an experience that I would not repeat if possible.

We also had air gunnery to do as well. We shot at a target towed behind another aircraft.

I qualified for my Silver Wings as an Honorary 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Corps. on April 12th, 1943. My final flight in the course was a solo flight to do a slow roll, a loop and an Immelman. My final exercise was in the Link trainer, doing something called Kelly Field system and low-level approach. As far as the RAF were concerned I was now a Sergeant Pilot.

We returned to Moncton by train, just to wait for a troop ship. This was another train down the coast of New England to New Jersey. Our trip back to Britain was in the then largest vessel in the world, the Queen Elizabeth. Our cabin had six bunks, three and three on each side. It was quite an experience. One evening the sun would set behind us, but on another, the sun set in front. It took us a full seven days to make it to the Clyde.

It was on my leave I had after landing that Mary and I decided to be married on my next leave.

Twin Engine Training

We returned to do more advanced training in Britain. After disembarkment leave, I was sent to Windrush, in Gloucestershire. This was my introduction to twin engine flying. It was now May 21st, 1943 and the big emphasis was now on mass bombing of German industry. My training in the U.S. had all been geared to flying single engine fighters.

Now I was introduced to the Airspeed Oxford, a twin engine trainer. It
was back to the effect of controls, taxiing, cruising straight and level, medium turns, taking off into wind and engine assisted approach and landing. Somehow I lost a lot of my enthusiasm. It was on June 6\textsuperscript{th}, 1943 that my instructor must have realised how I was feeling. I remember him saying to me that I could fly this aircraft as well as anybody, but that if he sent me off solo now, I would probably kill myself. I had to admit to my loss of enthusiasm. He then took me into one of the hangars, where there was an Oxford, mounted on supports. I must have been in that Oxford for at least an hour doing all the cockpit drills, until I had everything just second nature to do. Then he told me to get back into the plane we had been flying before and do a circuit and landing solo. Actually, after that I began to enjoy flying the Airspeed Oxford. It was here that I developed – I don’t know what to call it – but a sense that something is wrong, before I really knew what was wrong. This stayed with me through my entire flying career. One night I had been flying for a long time doing just practice circuits and landings at night. It was almost dawn and I was very tired, but suddenly I was wide awake; something was wrong. What was wrong? I soon discovered that my port engine had lost power. I was doing my turn (to port) before landing. I was very glad of this sort of instinctive feeling that all is not right. An engine failure on the side to which you are turning could easily become fatal, if you were not careful.

While flying Oxfords, I was sent to Docking in Norfolk to practice the use of radio beam approach. Off to one side of the beam the radio signal was the letter ‘A’ in Morse code. On the other side it was ‘N’. When the dot/dash merged with the dash/dot, they made a constant continuous signal and that was right on the beam.

My flying at Windrush was completed on July 20\textsuperscript{th}, 1943. I was given a 72-hour pass, before reporting to No. 26 OTU (Operational Training Unit) at RAF Station Wing. On the train heading up to Aberdeen, a fellow asked what I was doing on this leave. I told him that I only had a three day pass and had no idea whether I was going to my wedding or not. I soon found out. Mary and I were married on July 24, 1943. It was a beautiful sunny Saturday too. It was in the middle of the Aberdeen Trades Week holiday and there were no facilities open for the reception. We had 14 at the reception in Mary’s Aunt’s tenement flat, next door to where Mary lived. My Aunt Barbara happened to be in Aberdeen that weekend. I insisted that she come to the wedding. She said she was ‘Black Affronted’ she had nothing to wear. I insisted that she come in whatever she was wearing. We, of course, had nowhere to go for even a brief honeymoon, but another friend, Jean, got on the telephone to another friend, Jeanie.

Jeanie had the hotel in Huntly. The phone call was hilarious. It started something like this, “Is that you Jeanie? Well this is Jean. There’s this
couple just newly married. They just have this weekend. Could you put them up?” When we got to Huntly, (incidentally, my Aunt Barbara travelled with us on her way back to Buckie) we found that Jeanie had cleared out the Bridal Suite for us (short but sweet, the honeymoon).

Operational Training Unit

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Strangely enough, I was a day late in reporting to No. 26 Operational Training Unit (OTU), and even more strangely, nothing was ever said about it. Here, at RAF Station Wing, (Little Horwood) I was crewed up and we flew Vickers Wellingtons Mk. 3’s and 10’s. Our flying began on
August 16\textsuperscript{th} 1943. We worked up to our special exercise, dropping leaflets on Rouen in France. I have included a copy of one such leaflet in these memoirs.

During some of my night flying, I had a new experience. While taking off one night, one of my tyres burst. I did manage to get the plane off the ground, but called up to let control know about it. My flight commander came on the radio and told me to just circle until all night flying was completed. My crew were of differing opinions as to which tyre was gone. I felt that it was the port main wheel. My bomb aimer was sure it was the starboard wheel. The rear gunner said that he thought it was the tail wheel. I decided to go with my own decision, because I was flying the plane, and it certainly felt like the port wheel. After many tedious hours of circling the airfield I got instructions to land. My flight commander spoke to me, giving me very detailed instructions as to what to do. I was to land using the starboard wheel to land on. I was to try to keep my port wheel off the runway as long as possible. I could expect the plane to veer off the runway once the port wheel came down. I had to repeat everything back to him. Then he wished me a good landing, and said that he would be right behind me
on his motorbike when I landed. Well I got it down on the starboard wheel, but as soon as we lost all lift the port wheel came down we veered into inky blackness. When we finally came to a stop, he was right there. I was calling each of the crew to make sure they were OK. He yelled to me to get out in case of a fire. Luckily there was no fire, but I did find the end of my port propeller imbedded about six inches behind my head. Nobody was hurt!

It was while we were here that Mary sent me a telegram telling me that grandmother had died. She did not specify that it had been her grandmother, so I figured I might get some time off. I went in to the commanding officer with the telegram and he gave me a 72-hour pass. I could leave in the morning after finishing all my night flying that night. By the time I arrived in Aberdeen, I had fallen asleep in the train. Mary had come to the station, but no Don. The cleaners came in, because the train had to leave again, so luckily they wakened me and I arrived at 31 Justice Street not very long after Mary and her uncle.

That crew of mine was split up after my navigator, Hugh Maher (pronounced ‘Marr’) RCAF, was invalided out of the air force and sent home to Montreal.

I was posted to No. 17 OTU at Silverstone, to take over a headless crew. Neither they nor I were very happy about this, but we soon got to know each other. They had not completed their OTU training, so I flew with them until they had all completed their various exercises.

We advanced from OTU first to 1651 Conversion Unit at RAF Station, Wratting Common, where we all had to get familiar with flying the Short Stirling. We flew the Stirling Mks. 1 and 3. I did not like the Stirling. This took us to January 5th, 1944.

So much for the Stirling; we were off to 1678 C.F. Waterbeach where we were introduced to the Lancaster Mk.2 (only 200 of this variant, with Hercules radial engines, were built). My first flip in the Lancaster was familiarisation with F/O Coles. Again we had a burst tyre. F/O Coles made a beautiful landing at Newmarket Race Course. On January 25th, 1944 we were sent to 115 Squadron at Witchford, near Ely. I was now a flight sergeant.
This was my first flight over enemy occupied Europe. I wondered how I would react. Fortunately I was okay.

On this night there was a raid by 406 aircraft on Frankfurt, with a diversionary 66 Lancasters bombing Ludwigshafen. There were 12 Mosquitoes went to Knapsack power-station, one mosquito to Aachen, five Stirlings did mine laying in the River Gironde, 8 OTU sorties. There
were no losses on the Ludwigshave raid. On the Frankfurt raid there were 10 RAF aircraft lost: five Halifaxes, three Lancasters, and two Stirlings. One of three American B17’s was lost. I was one of the 8 OTU sorties. We were not aware of these other activities at the time.

At this time I was doing my operational training, flying Wellingtons, at RAF Station, Wing. We were to go on a special exercise, our first time over enemy territory. We were to fly to Rouen in France, then up wind, a distance predetermined by the winds at the time. Then we were to drop our leaflets, which would float down to Rouen to inform the French people a bit of what the Allies were doing.

It was a funny feeling to be flying over enemy controlled territory for the first time. Our route was planned for us, but unlike later bombing raids there was no exact timing. We were to fly south to the Needles (Isle of Wight), then across to Fecampe on the French coast, south to Rouen, and then west, almost to Le Havre, where we were to drop our leaflets. Then we were to turn northeast to Fecampe once again, then home via the Isle of Wight.

The weather was fully overcast, but the clouds were quite low. We climbed into bright sunlight and headed for the needles. I had a rough idea of how long this should take us and was soon asking my navigator, Hugh Maher (pronounced ‘Marr’) if we were nearing our turning point. “No, not yet,” came the reply. It seemed to me that we must have passed the needles when I asked again. He had not yet fixed our turning point. Eventually I said to Hugh that by now, I was sure that we must be right across the English Channel and over the Cherbourg Peninsula, and asked what his air plot told him. He told me that he had not maintained his air plot, because this aircraft was fitted with GEE. He had been unable to get a fix with GEE. Great! Now I felt certain that we were lost somewhere over France. After establishing that there was no way he could work out any reckoning of where we were, I had to resort to radio. The Wireless Operator called for a fix - no reply. I asked him to try again with a priority. This he did. Yes, we were over the Cherbourg Peninsula of Normandy. I then told Hugh that we would fly northeast from this fix. He was to use only dead reckoning navigation, no GEE. When we reached our intended crossing route of the Channel, he would guide us to Fecampe, Rouen, up wind to dropping point, back to Fecampe and so on. This we did. However, after leaving the French coast, Hugh decided to get himself a fix using GEE radar. He was really worried. He came on the intercom telling me that he had just got a fix with GEE. We were not over the English Channel, but were over the North Sea.

A fix with GEE is a definite thing. I began to doubt Hugh’s ability with
his dead reckoning navigation. To reach base we should fly roughly west-southwest. He gave me the course to fly. Eventually he told me that we should be crossing the coast. It was pitch black but there was no sign of a coastline even though the clouds were no longer below us. I told Hugh that we were certainly not crossing a coastline, but he assured me that he had been doing an air plot, dead reckoning since the fix. Well, I said that we should get an answer on the R.T. That was my job, so I called. No answer, I called using the distress call, “May Day.” No reply.

At this point, I asked the Wireless Operator to ask for a fix using a priority. No reply. We were fairly low on fuel by this time so I said, “Same again with S.O.S.” Back came an immediate fix. We were over Brittany, in France.

To get home I had to turn almost 180 degrees. Then I gave my crew the serious news. One wing was completely empty of fuel. Both engines were using the almost empty port wing tanks. We still had a 60-gallon tank full, not much to fly very far. When the engines stopped we would pull the cross feed to use both engines on this 60 gallon tank. If they stopped after that was gone we would bale out.

Once again we were over 10/10 cloud, and as things turned out, this helped us. The airfield at Christchurch, near Bournemouth was having problems with their lighting. My bomb aimer was the first to see clouds off to starboard with lights going on and off, lightening them up.

We headed straight for them and I called up to get permission to land, asking what the cloud clearance was. I also told them I was very short of fuel. They told me that I had 800ft clearance under the cloud and told me to land. As we broke through the cloud, incidentally now using the last 60 gallon tank, I found right in front of me a beautiful runway lit with green lights at the beginning, white along the sides and red towards the far end. I did not care what airfield this was, I just landed. It turned out to be a Coastal Command station, Hurn. Later in my career I was based at this field with BOAC.

Poor Hugh! Once back at OTU, the navigation boys did a thorough review of his night’s efforts. They credited him with successfully flying to the target area and to the dropping point. It was the GEE fix that was the big error. The chain of stations was designed for the east coast of Britain. They were useless off the south coast, where we were flying. Previously he had suffered a severe bash on his head, coming out of a crew bus with his equipment. The rear-slanted doors had slammed on his head. Later, while flying with another crew doing practice bombing with smoke bombs, they apparently had a very heavy landing, which set off one smoke bomb they had not dropped. He was standing in the
They found that he no longer had the ability to navigate. He was invalided out of the RCAF and sent home to Montreal. My entire crew was split up. I was sent to RAF. Station Silverstone, where I took over a crew which had no pilot.

**January 30th, 1944: First Bombing Raid (Berlin)**

This is the night I first went on a bombing raid. I did not pilot the aircraft. The pilot was F/Lt. Hallet. I really wonder how he ever qualified as a pilot. When we crossed the enemy coast on the way home, he asked me whether I would like to fly right back to base, which of course I gladly did. As we came in to make our landing, he asked me what the green light was, just before the runway. “There has always been a red light there before.” The light, of course was the glide path indicator. If you were too high it shone amber. If you were too low it shone red. Right on the correct glide path it shone green. I explained to him what it indicated. On his next bombing trip, he actually hit the top of one of the Drem light poles on the way in.

However he was terrific as an operational pilot, and I picked up some valuable tips from him. He pointed out the slight difference between our Pathfinder markers at the target and the decoy markers dropped by the Germans. He also showed me a Lancaster going down in flames and the German oil bomb, which simulated this. We called them Scarecrows. Since the end of the war, we found that the Germans had no such things as these scarecrow bombs. They had, however a type of gun and gun sight which fired up from below on an angle. They called it in German, “Slant Music.” Maybe this is what we saw.

Before the briefing, we knew it was to be a long trip – full load of fuel. However, it was still a shock to walk into the briefing room. There was a big map of Europe with a red tape running from our base at Witchford, across the North Sea, over Denmark and the Baltic Sea. Then there was a 90 degree turn south to Berlin. The homeward trip was right across Germany, south of Brunswick and Hanover, north of the Rhur, across Holland and back to our base. I really believed that this was to be the last day of my life here on earth. Yet there was no thought of not going. After all, this is what all my training had been for. In fact this was some final training for me before I took my crew with me. It proved to be an excellent training trip. I did not know any of this crew I was flying with, but they did a very good job. F/Lt. Halley made a point of showing me various things, some of which I have mentioned. At interrogation after the trip they did a good job of giving an accurate
account of what happened. I felt ready now to tackle such a sortie on my own. However on 115 Squadron new pilots always did two trips as second pilot. My next trip would be on February 15th, 1944.

This raid was made up of 534 aircraft. There were 440 Lancasters, 82 Halifaxes and 12 Mosquitoes. 33 aircraft were lost, 32 Lancasters and 1 Halifax or 6.2% of the force.

Don Cameron standing with a colleague who did not return.

February 15th, 1944: Berlin

This was my second sortie as a second pilot. This time I flew with a crew, every one of which had the DFM (Distinguished Flying Medal). The pilot was an excellent flyer, but in my estimation, not a good captain of his crew. I honestly believe they probably got their DFM’s in
their fabulous interrogations, or de-briefings. I was really amazed at what I heard.

Fortunately it was a quiet trip, as far as contact with enemy fighters or flak were concerned. Again, the target was Berlin and we flew a very similar route to the one on January 30th. All the way along there was very little silence between crew members. One would talk to another and so on. My crew were never like that, even on local flights. On the ground we were just a great bunch of guys, but once inside the aircraft they were a real good crew.

There was a very unfortunate occurrence. After we had turned south from the Baltic and were flying towards Berlin, the intercom system broke down. There is a system of light signals for the bomb aimer to let the pilot know how to approach the target, to replace the, “right right” or “left” verbal instructions. Instead, the bomb aimer shouted his instructions from his position down by the bombsight. The pilot couldn’t hear properly what he had shouted, turned the plane fairly quickly. The bomb aimer presumed they were being attacked by a night-fighter and jettisoned all our bomb load. There was quite a mix up until they set off for home, with bomb doors closed. As I recall, the intercom did come on again, so things settled down more or less.

In my judgment, our load of bombs was dropped well east of Berlin. Of course we were not told of other activities that night, but I did see a raid in progress in Frankfurt-on-Oder. I think our load was somewhere between these two targets.

Back at base we were ushered in for interrogation. According to that crew we had been attacked while running up to the target. The bomb aimer had taken an opportunity as we levelled off to drop our bombs, he claimed, pretty close to the markers etc. etc. I could not believe my ears. Mind you, from my point of view, I could not have had two-second pilot trips with better teaching. The first, on January 30th showed me how; this one showed me how not to. From now on I would be skipper of my own crew.

It was in 1942 that work began on an airfield to be located at Witchford, a mile or two from Ely.

Aerial view of the airfield at Witchford.
There were 891 aircraft on this raid, 561 Lancasters, 314 Halifaxes and 16 Mosquitoes. The records show that on this night, apart from this raid, 23 Mosquitoes attacked 5 Night-fighter airfields in Holland, 43 Stirlings and 4 Pathfinder Halifaxes carried out mine laying in Kiel Bay. Also 24 Lancasters made a diversionary raid on Frankfurt-on-Oder.

Total sorties this night were 1070. 45 aircraft were lost, (4.2%).

**February 24th and 25th, 1944: Schweinfurt & Augsburg**

On the 24th, I flew with my own crew for the first time. We bombed the ball bearing factory at Schweinfurt. Then, on the 25th, we bombed Augsburg. On the Schweinfurt raid there were 734 aircraft involved, 554 Lancasters, 169 Halifaxes and 11 Mosquitos. This was the first Bomber Command raid on this target. On the previous day 266 American B17’s had raided this target. Bomber command introduced a new tactic on this night. 392 aircraft and 342 aircraft separated by a
two hour interval. The first wave of bombers lost 22 aircraft, 5.6% of the force. The second wave lost only 11 aircraft, 3.2% of the force. Total losses were 33 aircraft, 26 Lancasters, 7 Halifaxes – 4.5% of the force. These sorties were very similar and the same thing happened to us on both trips. It was a weird sort of route and seemed to last forever. Actually it was 7 hours 45 minutes on the 24th and 7 hours 15 minutes on the 25th. On both occasions we were routed over France and almost to Munich, before turning north to our targets. Many of our bomber stream wandered over Switzerland in error. The Swiss, true to their neutral position, fired anti-aircraft flak, apparently well away from any planes, but giving no excuse for the Nazis to say they were favouring the Allies. We ourselves did not track over Switzerland.

Our problem was with the searchlights around Munich. Both nights they got me coned in what were obviously radar-controlled lights. One lit up right on me and immediately the manually controlled lights swung right onto me as well. So there I was, very new to this job and feeling very naked; on view to the whole of Nazi Germany. To say I was scared would be putting it extremely mildly.

I immediately threw the Lancaster into a violent, “Corkscrew” manoeuvre. This is what was drilled into us once we started flying bombers. Mind you, I had never actually done it before, and luckily for me, we were taking part in a second raid that night, on Schweinfurt. What I managed to do was to keep the fires of Shweinfurt somewhere in front of me as I threw that aircraft down to port and up changing to starboard and so on. It seemed like hours that I was in those searchlights. Luckily the smoke from the target area blacked out some of the searchlights, and by this time the radar-controlled lights would be trained on some other unlucky aircraft.

Ever since those two sorties I have had a strong aversion to searchlights of any kind, even those used in advertising.

Another incident happened on the Augsburg sortie. Before we were caught in the searchlights, I noticed out of the side of my vision that, “Taffy” Jones had his arm up in the air. What made me look round, I’ll never know, but we were very fortunate that I did. Taffy was obviously the only one who saw a Messerschmitt 110 attacking us from above and starboard. He was apparently speechless with fear, which is not really surprising, but could have killed the lot of us. As I looked round to see what Taffy was doing, I realised what was happening and gave the stick a quick shove forward. With the Lancaster II, with Bristol Hercules engines you can cut all engines by doing this. I must have dropped a few hundred feet, but we saw all the cannon fire pass overhead. I spoke to Taffy after we got back to base. I asked him to try to poke me, or something if he couldn’t speak.
On the Augsburg trip someone had timed our searchlight ordeal. We were coned in searchlights for 10 minutes.

Taffy was a very good and very thorough flight engineer. Once we were back at base, my thoughts were to get through our interrogation, then our bacon and eggs and off to bed. Taffy, of course had to give a full report, which included dial readings of quite a few dials. He always was last one off the plane. I was always trying to egg him on. Once I had finished our tour, my ground crew, “Chiefy”, told me that they estimated we would last only about three or four sorties. They thought I was always arguing with my flight engineer.

Mind you, I felt that we could not possibly get through any of our sorties, even before we got airborne!

March 24th, 1944: Berlin

We set off on March 22nd for a sortie to Frankfurt, but had to return to base shortly after take off because of the failure of our port inner engine.

On March 24th, our next sortie was back to Berlin for me and for the first time for my crew. As it turned out this was the last major bombing raid on Berlin. 811 aircraft took part in this raid, 577 Lancasters, 216 Halifaxes, and 18 Mosquitos. 72 aircraft were lost, 44 Lancasters and 28 Halifaxes – 8.9% of the force.

In spite of strong winds, which were not forecast, we had no difficulty in reaching our target. Our route home was the one I had followed during the two previous trips to Berlin. This was south of Brunswick and Hanover. Jog around the north end of the Rhur, etc. If we had followed the route given me by my navigator, Rex Townsend, we would have flown right across the Rhur with all its flak. Fortunately, many ahead of us made this mistake, and it was strictly because of a serious error in the forecast winds. At any rate, using the Rhur searchlights for guidance, we successfully negotiated our way.

After that things began to go wrong. First of all our oxygen supply ceased to function. I maintained our height until we crossed the coast and were over the North Sea. This was very likely the cause of our troubles; 20,000 ft is far too high without oxygen.

Once over the sea, we came down to under 10,000 ft so that we would not suffer any effects of lack of oxygen. Another unforeseen thing happened. Low cloud had formed over all of East Anglia We must have passed fairly close to our base, judging from the talk we heard on the RT. However my navigator was not able to get us to Witchford, in fact,
according to his findings we were still a good distance from Witchford. On we flew, my RT signals were getting fainter. When Rex told me we were approaching base, I realised we were nowhere near and were getting a bit low on fuel. Fog was forming on the ground. As it turned out we were very close to Ludford Magna in Lincolnshire. They were equipped with FIDO, the fog dispersal system of gasoline fires along both sides of the runway. I called up and received permission to land. It was nice to get down onto the ground that night.

If this trip of ours to Berlin sounds a bit tame you should watch the video, “Night Bombers.” This is about a sortie to Berlin just a week or so before this. You would get some idea of what all our bombing trips were like.

How I Became a Commissioned Officer

Sometime between April 14th and April 18th, 1944 I no longer was F/S (flight sergeant) but became P/O (Pilot Officer). This is a crazy, almost unbelievable story.

Up until this time on 115 Squadron I was a flight sergeant. My crew were all sergeants. We all used the Sergeants’ Mess. We all lived in one Nissen Hut. This was a very good way to live.

Our flight Commander, Squadron Leader, George Mackie wanted all his pilots to be Commissioned Officers. I was well aware of this, but was quite happy living together with my crew, so did nothing about it. George Mackie was a typical air force guy, complete with a big handlebar moustache. Incidentally, he was from Aberdeen. His family owned Mackies Dairy in Aberdeen.

I got pretty good at avoiding this little business of applying for a commission. However, one morning I made my way to the flight office. Very unusual, the office was empty, except for Mackie. As soon as I went in he said to me. “Ah Cameron, just the man I wanted to see. Take a seat at my desk.”

I could see the forms all laid out for me to complete.

Mackie went over to a filing cabinet, took out his revolver, put in a full six rounds and pointing it towards me said, “Now fill in those forms.”

He was laughing and so was I by this time. I told him that he could very well be court martialed for threatening me with his revolver.

“What would they believe with such a story, you or me?” Well I pretty well had to fill in the forms for him. This is how I advanced from an
NCO to a Pilot Officer.

One strange thing about my flight commander, he was not a pilot. He was doing his third tour as a Bomb Aimer. The pilot of his crew never got beyond the rank of Flight Sergeant. They were lost on a trip to LeMans on May 19th, 1944 after he finished his 25 sorties.

Apparently our crew was the only one that reported seeing a Lancaster going down in flames on that trip.

Mackie must have had access to all the interrogations. He told me that I was the only one reporting this. As you can imagine, he was very upset. He asked me whether there was a chance of any survivors. I had to tell him that if they were in that plane, none of them could possibly survive. It just blew up.

I was sent on 7 days leave at this time, so that I could purchase my new uniform. A friend of mine, who was in the RCAF, P/O Don McKechnie said that I should not travel in a NCO’s uniform, now that I was a P/O.

Mary and I had our photograph taken during this leave (see below). We have it on the wall in our front room. A careful look will show that the pilot wings are actually RCAF and not RAF.
April 20th, 1944: Cologne

357 Lancasters and 22 Mosquitos took part in this attack. 4 Lancasters were lost.

After our Berlin Raid on March 24th, there was a change in the role of Bomber Command. Although Harris was still our commanding officer, he now came under General Dwight Eisenhower. This meant that the emphasis was no longer that of knocking out German industry, but was more designed to help with the coming, “Second Front,”

We had trips to Ville Neuve St. George on April 9th, and Laon on April 10th. We had some flak damage on this trip. Then it was Rouen on April 18th.

These were mostly railway marshalling yards, making railway transport more difficult for the Germans.

However, on April 20th, it was back to industry in Cologne. The Lancaster we were flying had one bad failing. It was very slow in climbing. All planes had various quirks, but I did not like this one.
Our route to Cologne took us to a point due south of Cologne, then we turned north to the target, climbing from 18 to 20 thousand feet. I knew that our aircraft would have no hope of making this climb and keep on time, so I instructed Rex Townsend, my navigator, to make our time at the turning point one minute ahead of the scheduled time. Unfortunately we arrived there one minute late.

I could not possibly climb to height without falling behind the bomber stream. I maintained our speed, but we could not gain much height at all.

We went ahead and dropped our bombs on target and were immediately hit, I presumed, by flak. Two fires developed, one in the port wing outboard of the engines. The second one was in the starboard inner engine nacelle.

I gave the order, “Prepare to Abandon the Aircraft.” Then several things happened. My indicator light came on which tells me my wheels are down and locked. (I knew they were still up.) Another light told me that I had the wrong supercharger gear on for landing. (Good, at 18 thousand feet I was not landing) Through my mind flashed the briefing we had before take off. The winds over the target are from 270 degrees. We had just turned due west and were heading out on 270 degrees. If we all bailed out, we would float right back into Cologne in our parachutes. I made a spur of the moment decision to blow up with the aircraft along with all my crew. We had it drilled into us that the maximum time we would have was 2 minutes, before the plane would blow up. Even today, I wonder how I could decide to kill all 7 of us. I guess it was the thought of floating back into Cologne in our parachutes.

Taffy Jones, my flight engineer, had clipped on his parachute in preparation for bailing out. He had the presence of mind to drag my one out from behind my seat and was holding it up for me to put on. You see, I was one of many pilots who did not have a pilot’s parachute. Instead, I had the same harness as all of my crew. This was clipped onto the chest when being used. Of course there was no room for me to wear mine, while I was flying the aircraft. I said to Taffy, “Just put it down there,” pointing to the floor beside my seat.

Taffy told me, when we eventually landed, that when I said that, he was no longer afraid. “You were OK and were not afraid, so why should I be afraid.” If he only knew!

Well the fires soon seemed to be dying down and both went out altogether. A pencil through the covers on my warning lights gave us darkness in the flight deck once again. However what would happen when I landed was anybody’s guess. Would my wheels lock down. I
decided to head for our emergency landing field at Woodbridge. This had a runway three times wider than our normal airfields and it was much longer as well. It was also lit up like a Christmas tree. Two bright searchlights pointing up and converging welcomed aircraft that were in trouble. We could see these as we left the enemy coast. We were given permission to land. I instructed all my crew to take up crash positions as I made the approach, which they did. My wheels and flaps seemed to be functioning normally, but we could not be sure. Then thankfully we made a perfectly normal landing. What a great relief!!

Next morning my ground crew was flown in to examine the aircraft – C-Cameron. I never used the call sign C-Charlie. One of my ground crew decided to get up onto the wing. He thought he saw something wrong from the ground. We watched as he reached down through a hole in the wing. He pulled out a live British incendiary bomb from one of our fuel tanks. We had not been hit by flak, but by incendiaries from a plane above us.

April 22nd, 1944: Dusseldorf

597 aircraft took part in this raid. There were 323 Lancasters, 254 Halifaxes, 19 Mosquitos.

On each night bombing raid, one or two squadrons were given the task of being a support to the Pathfinder squadrons, who mark the target for the main force. We still had to try our best to bomb the target aiming point, but this was not our main function. We had two jobs. One was to give the Pathfinders a bit more cover. The other was to toss out lots and lots of “Window.”

Window was strips of foil, the length of which were designed to appear on radar as aircraft. I believe the first time it was used was on a raid to Hamburg. It succeeded, making the German radar showing millions of aircraft. This provided cover for the main force coming behind us, but not for us. We had to try and bomb the aiming point, either by the markers, if available, or by our own recognition of the target. There was no problem; the Pathfinder Force was doing a good job.

This was entirely different from bombing with the main force. We were accustomed to a barrage of anti-aircraft fire, but this time it was not a barrage, they were aiming at individual aircraft, and that included us. This was much more scary; this was much more close generally than we were used to.

May 9th, 1944: Cap Griz Nez
This was a very short trip, just across the Strait of Dover to Cap Griz Nez. We carried deep penetration bombs. Our instructions were to bring back the bombs if we could not identify the target. Our target this time was one of the rocket launching sites for the V2 rocket which could not be avoided until they exploded in London.

We found the whole area was covered with 10/10ths. cloud, so we returned with our full load of bombs. Of course we were still far too heavy to land. Our instruction were to jettison some of our fuel load, so this is what we proceeded to do. We emptied two tanks, one in each wing. One tank emptied just fine, but the other one emptied into the wing. The fuel ran into the bomb bay. The fumes from this fuel filled the whole aircraft. I didn’t realise that these fumes were affecting the crew, except the rear gunner, who was sealed from things in his gun turret.

It was not until I started to make my final approach that I began to realise that these fumes had made me a bit drunk. I certainly did not fancy landing without my full capacity to know what I was doing. Don’t ask me why, but I had not brought along my goggles. In any case I had to stick my head out my side window to clear my head. Mind you I had to more or less close them to just a slit because of the speed. Never mind, we made a good landing with our full load of bombs. I made sure that I had my goggles with me after that.

These are a few other incidents that happened to us during our Bombing tour. Here are one or two incidents during some sorties.

**May 22nd, 1944: Duisburg**

510 Lancasters and 22 Mosquitos carried out the first large raid on this target for a year. 29 Lancasters were lost, 5.5% of the force.

Most of this trip was like any other trip, but two things stick out in my mind.

The first was as we approached the target. There were Lancasters circling everywhere, and cloud seemed to cover the whole target. They were obviously having trouble in finding the target. I instructed my Bomb Aimer, Attwood, that we would open the bomb doors as we ran up on the centre of the brightly lit clouds. If the worst came to the worst he should let them go as near to the centre of the searchlights as possible. Actually, this strategy worked in our favour. I soon found out the reason for all the circling. As we approached the centre of the lit up clouds, there was a big hole right down to ground level, and there, right on our path were the target markers. We were able to get
an aiming point on our photograph. I was glad that we did not have to circle and try again.

Coming out of the target area, we had one of our many narrow escapes, and so too did a German night fighter, who was heading into the target area to see what he could do. If he had been even six inches (15 cm) lower, or we had been that much higher, I am sure that we would have scraped each other and probably both planes would have been badly disabled and would have crashed. As he whizzed over us we felt the bump of the change of air pressure. That was the closest I ever got to a Junkers 88.

**June 5th & 6th, 1944 (D Day): The Normandy Coastal Batteries**

This day 1012 aircraft took part in raids on the coastal batteries at Fontenay, Houlgate, La Pernelle, Longues, Maisy, Merville, Mont Fleury, Pointe-du-Hoc, Ouisterham and St-Martin-de-Varreville. 946 aircraft carried out their bombing tasks. Three aircraft were lost, 2 Halifaxes on the Mont Fleury raid, and 1 Lancaster on the Longues raid. Only two of the targets – La Pernelle and Ouisterham were free of cloud; all other bombing was based on Oboe marking. At least 5000 tons of bombs were dropped, the greatest tonnage in one night so far in the war.

Our target was the coastal batteries at Ouisterham. Although we took off in darkness this trip turned out to be our first daylight bombing. We did not use any different tactics, which turned out to be a little bit scary. As we flew towards the target it began to get closer to daylight, I remember another plane from 115 Squadron came alongside me and we continued in a sort of loose formation towards the target. Others about us were doing the same, so that when we reached the target and tried to fly over the markers, we would have all collided. I was fortunate that I was able to drop my bombs on target, but there was no way that I could say my photograph would show this. As soon as the bombs were dropped, I climbed above the crowd to avoid collision with other planes.

I was due to go on leave on June 6th, but because of this trip, all leave had been cancelled. Mary and I had arranged to meet at Kings Cross Station in London, but instead I was on my way back across the Channel and into bed at Witchford. Fortunately I found someone trustworthy to waken me if leave was on again. As soon as he woke me, I was off to London. I was not too worried about Mary, as she knew where we had arranged to stay.

Instead, when Mary arrived at Kings Cross, she saw hundreds of service people but no Don. Somehow she saw this woman in air force
officer uniform, but with a different cap to the WAAF of the RAF. She spoke to her and asked whether she were Miriam my sister. Of course she said yes, and that she was there to try to meet Mary. I had not been in touch with Miriam, but of course she knew of our arrangement to meet at Kings Cross. They spent most of the day together. Miriam took her to her office with the RCAF, and introduced her to some of the people she worked with.

Mary and I had a very happy week together. We stayed with Mrs. Clark who had a house in the Elephant and Castle area. We had a lucky escape with this leave. The night, after I put Mary on the train for Aberdeen, and while I made my way back to Witchford, the room we had slept in had been demolished by a German bomb. I think it was one of their Doodle Bugs, the ones you could hear approaching and hoped would pass you before its engine stopped. Our room was upstairs. Fortunately Mrs. Clark lived one level below street level, but level with the back garden. She was not hurt, but had to be taken to a decontamination centre to get all the oil cleaned off. This was another of our narrow escapes during WW2.

After D Day

June 14th, 1944. Le Havre. There were 221 Lancasters and 13 Mosquitos taking part in this raid. It was in two waves, one in daylight and the other later in the evening in darkness. We were in the second wave. The objectives were the fast German motor-torpedo boats (E-boats) and other light naval forces which were threatening Allied shipping off the Normandy beaches only 30 miles away. Both waves were escorted by Spitfires. 1230 tons of bombs were dropped including 22 Lancasters from 617 Squadron, each loaded with a 12000-lb. Tallboy bomb. The E-boat threat to the invasion beaches from this port was almost completely removed by this raid.

I reported no problems on this raid, but next morning, Chief Williams asked me what had happened. One of the propeller nacelles was bashed in, with the paint from a British bomb on the bashed in part, another lucky escape that we were not even aware of at the time.

Including this raid on Le Havre, after D Day we did seven night bombing trips, mostly to railway marshalling yards. We also took part in 4 daylight raids, the last one on July 10th, completed our tour of operations. The final six or seven, although quite short trips, were very worrying. We all felt that we could not possibly make it to the end of our 30 trips with 115 Squadron and the end of our tour of operations.
After completing my bombing tour at Witchford I was sent to Feltwell. This was not far east of Ely. I was to be an instructor at this school. Crews came here after finishing their operational training, to get enough experience flying Lancasters before going to a bomber Squadron. I had to get experience in handling a Lancaster from a right hand seat, usually occupied by the flight engineer. They extended the connection of the wheel across from the regular control, for the instructor to use. The seat normally was fastened to the pilot’s seat and was clipped onto the right hand side of the aircraft when being used by a flight engineer. It was far from being comfortable. My complete training for this consisted of one afternoon, lasting 1 hour, 5 minutes. Now, I was an instructor.

Now that I was no longer flying with a bomber squadron, I found a room in a farmhouse about 5 miles from Feltwell in Methwold. This village consisted of 1 street, with 6 pubs. Our room had one 15-watt bulb for light. The floor slanted down from each side to a sort of trough along the middle. Mary came down from Aberdeen to stay with me. I told her that when I was finishing my flying for a day, I would fly over this house, and rev. up my engines, so that she would know I would be
home shortly. This worked just fine until I once did an air test with another of the instructors. “Oh that’s where you live.” Mary never knew when I would be finishing. All my friends would rev their engines over the house.

Mary, from about 500 miles north, could not understand the old man who owned the house. I, from 3000 miles away had to translate. The Norfolk dialect was really different to most English accents. His daughter and her husband kept house for him. They farmed a piece of land not attached to this property. The old man would sell her eggs from his chickens, as well as apples. In turn she would sell him any produce from their land. This was a new kind of family for us to experience. When we went on leave, to Aberdeen the old man would give Mary some apples. “Don’t tell Annie that I have given you these.” Annie had to buy hers from him. What a way to live.

Some of the old Lancasters we flew at Feltwell were in very bad shape. Feltwell was not a paved airfield. We had to land on a grass landing strip. I had taken one crew to a bomber airfield for some experience. We were recalled because some fog was beginning to form at Feltwell. I took over the controls and flew back to base. They had lit some fire flares alongside the landing strip, but I had no difficulty in making my approach and landing. As I tried to turn the plane to starboard into
where I was being guided, I could get no power from my port outer engine. I shouted to my guide to look at my port outer, as I could not get any power from it. He shone his light and yelled back that there was no engine there. It had dropped off as we landed. Years later I visited the aeronautical museum in Ottawa, with David, Patricia, Graeme and Heather. David and I were up looking into the cockpit of a Lancaster on exhibit there. Mary spoke to a man who was sitting on a bench looking at this Lancaster exhibit. Mary asked him if he had flown Lancasters. He said that no he had never flown, but he had worked as ground crew on them. He said that he had worked at No. 3 Lancaster Finishing School all the time it was in operation. I asked whether he had been there when the pilot of a plane that had just landed, asked the person directing the plane to shine a light on the port outer engine as he could get no power, and he said there was no engine there at all. He said yes, in fact he was the fellow who told me that there was no engine. What a small world. He belonged to an air force club in Oshawa and was very keen that I should join as well when he found that I lived in Scarborough. These clubs usually turn out to be just a drinking club, so I never did go near it.

After January 23rd, 1945, I was transferred to RAF Station Lindholme, near Doncaster in Yorkshire. This was a training station for Lancasters. We flew with crews who had not yet flown heavy bombers. They had a much more involved course of training.

I made a point of never looking at the students’ logbooks. I judged their flying ability from what they did for me. That was until I had one student, a flight lieutenant whom I thought was a danger to his crew. I looked in his logbook and found that in his flying career he had never had less than, ‘Above Average’ in his records. I thought perhaps there was something wrong with me, so I asked the flight commander to take him up. He failed this man after a single trip and thanked me for letting him take him for a test.

On April 4th, 1945 I was sent on a flying instructors course at F.I.S (Flying Instructors School) at Lulsgate Bottom, near Bristol, flying Airspeed Oxfords, where I did about 20 hours flying. This consisted of flying with only one engine, steep turns, really low flying, stalls, flapless landings, and forced landings (no power) - something called precautionary landings.

This turned out to be really great fun. I felt that this is how we should have been taught to fly Oxfords when I first started flying twin-engined planes. After this I became a category “C” instructor. While I was here, Miriam, my sister came from London to visit. We were able to take a tour through Cheddar Gorge and the cave. It was very interesting. The course lasted until May 4th, 1945, so of course Glen was born while I
there. I was given 7 days leave to visit Mary and Glen in the Osborne Nursing Home in Aberdeen. They had to stay in the nursing home quite a long time because Mary developed a fever. They called it Milk Fever. She could not feed her baby, so he had to be brought up on National Dried Milk.

While on my way north I heard the announcement over the loud speakers at Crewe Station, that the war in Europe was finished.

Then it was more instructing at Lindholme for a short time. During this short time, I took some air cadets up for a trip in an Oxford.

I was still flying Lancasters as an instructor. However there was one interesting break. On July 6th, 1945 I took some passengers on what they termed a Cook’s Tour. The war in Europe had come to an end. My passengers were all service personnel from Lindholme. I took them across the North Sea to the Rhur in Germany, and we flew down over the Rhur to see what Bomber Command had done to German Industry there. In comparison, you would say that London, with its blitzes had hardly been scratched. It was absolute devastation.

On July 17th, 1945 I was sent to Bomber Command Instructors School at Finningly in Yorkshire. This is where I was paired with John Cooksey. Frankly, this is where I really learned how to fly a Lancaster. This even included how to land a Lancaster with no engines. Mind you, for safety’s sake the engines were left just idling, so that if I goofed we could soon have power. The instructor did the first no power landing and then asked me to try it. I came in with more speed than usual, thinking I was avoiding a stall. But when I leveled off for a landing I could not hold it down. It just ballooned up and I could do nothing about it. All he said was, “Do you know what you did wrong?” I of course said that I had approached too fast. He told me to try once more, and this time I had no problem.

John Cooksey and I got along together just fine. Neither one of us were really interested in becoming instructors. So I would put him through each exercise and he would do the same for me. If we did them OK and we did, we would spend the rest of the time exploring the countryside and coast around there. We were both upgraded to category “B” instructors. This is the highest anyone could be graded at this B.C.I.S.

I went back to Lindholme until I was sent to RAF Station, Snaith. This was a B.A.T. flight, where I was introduced to making a beam approach. The beam is a radio beam. On the beam we could hear a constant signal. If we were off to one side we heard the Morse code for “A” on the other side it was the letter “N”. One was dot – dash. The other was dash – dot, so that when they came together you heard a constant sound. This was done with Oxfords and Link Trainers.
In February 1946, I was posted to Dishforth, where I flew the **Avro York**. This was just until I was familiar with handling this aircraft.

**Transport Command: 246 Squadron, Holmsley South**

On March 9th, they sent me to 246 Squadron at Holmsley South. I was now a F/Lt. (Flight Lieutenant) in Transport Command, with my new crew. For the first time in my flying career, I had a co-pilot, and a really good navigator. They made sure that I was familiar with such things as three-engine landings and overshoots, flapless landings, ground controlled approach. This also included a GEE let down for bad weather approach. Then finally on April 15th, I started my first overseas trip. My route was from base to Castel Benito in North Africa and on to Almaza at Cairo.

The photo shows my Transport Command crew at Cairo, on April 26th, 1946 (Jack Easton, Geof Sames, Gordon Megson, Me, and Johnie Ottewell).

Incidentally, my entire cargo was Sunday newspapers. As we stopped at Castel Benito the ground crew were keen to get a copy of some. I told them not to meddle, but said I was off to see about my flight on to Cairo. They were pretty good; the cargo did not appear to be tampered with, but I am sure we had a few less papers. We staged at Cairo for two days picking up the next plane to come from Britain. From there
we flew to Shaibah at Basra. Then, a long hop to Mauripur at Kirachi. Then another two day in Kirachi. Our next hop was supposed to be to Palam at Delhi, but we were asked to land at Jodhpur. This was my first experience of using a runway which was just a black strip of thick oil. Well I made quite a good approach to land right at the beginning of this strip, because it did not look to be very long. As I arrived over the hot black strip ready for a three-point landing – the aircraft started to float upward with the very hot air rising from the runway. I was determined to get the plane down so I just waited until we stopped floating up, then gave her lots of power as we started to fall. Hey, we made a nice safe landing after all, even if it was not too smooth. I was glad I had quite a bit of flying experience by this time.

Almaza, Cairo (June, 1946)

On the way home from Delhi, we made the same stops, except for Jodhpur, but when flying on the final stretch across the Mediterranean, we had to call up the station at Istres in the south of France for permission to carry on, depending on the weather in England. We were asked to land, so we had an extra day on our trip.

My next trip was the same route, but straight from Kirachi to Delhi, no stop at Jodhpur. Again we were asked to stop at Istres on the way home.

No. 242 Squadron, Oakington
The next trip, we carried passengers, service personnel of course. This involved first flying from our base to Lyneham, which was an international base, complete with customs officers. We had seats fitted. They did not look too comfortable to me. We carried troops who were being sent to relieve some who were coming back to Britain. This trip was only to Cairo. On our return journey we were bringing one stretcher case, complete with a woman medical officer. The man had a brain tumor. One officer, a Naval Captain, which is a fairly high rank, did not turn up on time. Well I refused to hold up the trip for him, telling the staff that he could pick up his luggage at Lyneham. I felt that getting my stretcher case to hospital in Britain was more important. There were a few fighter pilots among my passengers too. When we landed at Castel Benito, the plane just rolled smoothly along the runway with no kind of any bump. This was a rare thing for an Avro York. They could not be landed without a bump of some sort. My air quartermaster (Steward) bragged to these fighter guys that I did this all the time. I reminded him that I still had to land them at Lyneham. By this time I was sure that Istres always asked us to land no matter what the British weather. I made sure that I was fully aware of British weather conditions before leaving Castel Benito. Sure enough, they asked us to land. However I told them that I was carrying an urgent Stretcher case and wanted to get him to a hospital as soon as possible. They did not hesitate to allow me to proceed. I realised that I had made one goof. The troops were all wearing tropical dress and wanted to change, but did not wish to embarrass the woman medical officer. I brought her up front with me and had told her she could hear the various information I received as we flew. When I pushed for not landing at Istres, she told me not to fly on if the weather was bad. The invalid was not that urgent. I had to tell her that there would be layers of cloud when we got there and maybe a bit of drizzle, but nothing to make it a dangerous landing. Actually we didn’t even have the drizzle, but did I ever bounce in on my landing.

Then I was sent with another crew to get some route experience for a trip to Singapore. F/Lt. Audis was the pilot. Well, after we left Basra and were flying down the Persian Gulf, I went back to have a rest. I don’t think I was really asleep, but suddenly I became aware that something was wrong. Even though the aircraft was cruising OK, I went up front and asked what the trouble was. Well the port outer engine was not functioning, something wrong with the supercharger. The pilot had decided to fly lower, so that he could see more closely things at ground level. However at the bottom of the gulf, we would have to climb to over ten thousand feet to get over some hills, before flying along to Kirachi over the sea. He got permission to land at Sharjah, where we would wait until a replacement engine could be flown to us. We were
there from August 19th. to September 1st. Strangely enough a friend from my days on bombers flew the engine to us in a DC3 (Dakota).

Apart from one more flight along with another pilot, just doing an air test, that was my last flight with the RAF. I had flown a total of 1201 hours 50 minutes.

**My Flying with British Overseas Airways Corporation**

While at Aldermaston, back at school, in training for my various licences, I flew once with Captain Green on an air test in a Viking aircraft, just for 1 hr 20 min. This was strictly off the record and is not included in my logbook. I also went up for an air test in a Dakota with Capt. Levy. This lasted 1 hour 30 minutes. As we approached for a landing he suggested that I try the landing. I didn’t even know the speed to make the approach at. He told me the speed and said to go ahead. I would find that it would pretty well land itself. So I did land it and with a nice smooth landing.

I had to do some flying in the York again, which included landing fully loaded. I was sent on a cross-country flight with another First Officer, F/O Clink. However I was to be in charge. We had all sorts of different personnel on board. They came and asked if I was ready for dinner. As I was in charge, I was to them Captain. Well you have no idea of the fancy treatment I was given. Of course the stewards were also in training and were being watched. I have never been so handsomely treated to a meal before or since.

When I was fully qualified I was sent to Hurn, near Bournemouth.

**My first trip as First Officer started on November 23rd, 1947. Captain Phillips was in charge. We flew to London. On the 24th our route was first to Bordeaux and then to Castel Benito, then on to Lydda. This was a staging Post for the crew. The plane flew on with a different crew. On November 28th we took over a different plane on to Basra and Kirachi. On November 30th we were off again, this time with a Capt. Maltin. We flew to Dharan at Delhi. When we took off from Delhi, as we were gaining speed for take off, Capt. Maltin suddenly shut the throttles right down and exclaimed, “Holy cow!” This surprised me to hear him say a thing like this, but when I looked to see the problem, there was a cow strolling slowly across the runway. I laughed and said to him, “I have never ever heard that expression used correctly before.” Captain Maltin flew us as far as Lydda on the way home. We found ourselves as supernumery crew. In other words there were two crews, but only one plane, so we flew on in the same plane, but with a different crew. That saved us a day, as we stayed with the plane right through to Castel
Benito, but were delayed a day, I think by a sandstorm before returning to base.

The next flight started on December 24th, 1947. We had two children by this time, so Christmas arrived a wee bit early, but, neither Glen or Patricia were aware of that.

The name of the plane was Macduff. G-AGOF. We flew to London late on the 24th. Our take off was on the 25th. None of us in the crew were happy about this. Neither were most of the passengers. Captain Kelly came aboard and looked around at the long faces, and asked the steward if we had Christmas Crackers on board. We did, so he asked that a cracker be given to every passenger and every crewmember. There was a tiny decorated tree just at the entrance, which on the York was mid-way up the passenger cabin. When we all had our crackers Captain Kelly said, “Now all of you pull your crackers and put on the paper hat.” That broke the ice and we had a great trip after that. We made landings at Bordeaux for lunch (Christmas Dinner), then on to Castel Benito and Cairo.

Both passengers and crew had an overnight stop in Cairo. Then in early morning we flew down to Khartoum. A lovely breakfast was waiting for us in Khartoum.

As we flew south from Khartoum, Captain Kelly asked me to go back into the passengers to point out any wild game. He purposely flew fairly low and I pointed out large animals like giraffe and elephant and such like. Two little girls, about nine or ten years old, latched onto me at this time. They had a great time as I showed them quite a few animals on the ground.

As for me, I was very interested in not only seeing all this wild game, but also we flew fairly low over the Murchison Falls on this branch of the Nile River.

We arrived in Nairobi on December 27th and were treated once again to another Christmas Dinner. I am afraid the two little girls ended up sitting on my knees, one on each knee. This was hardly airline etiquette, but by this time passengers and crew were just like one huge family. When we finally returned to base, we received no less than 5 letters, commending the crew for a great trip. Most were being sent out from England on a scheme to grow groundnuts (peanuts), which turned out a complete flop in the end. None were very happy about going.

After Nairobi we flew past Kilimanjaro, quite a nice sight, to Mombasa, on the coast of the Indian Ocean. Then we headed south over Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. This was our final destination and my
first crossing of the equator. There were no celebrations on board.

Our return trip was still in the Macduff as far as Cairo. Then we staged, flying on December 31st in a York called Marston, G-AGSO. Between Cairo and Tunisia Captain Kelly gathered the whole crew up front. The radio was tuned to the BBC in London, and as the New Year came in we had a bit of a celebration. We were unable to land in London because of fog and were diverted to our base at Hurn. There was still a lot of cloud below us, but I suddenly spotted our base and gave Cpt. Kelly a nudge. He was determined to land at base, but the passengers must have wondered what was happening. To say the least it was not a normal approach, although to us up front it was certainly not dangerous. So we came to the end of one of my most enjoyable trips.

On January 22nd 1948, I did the same route again with Captain Bennett. Then my final trip was to India once again with Captain Buxton. This time we went one more stop after Delhi, to Calcutta.

I am not sure which of these trips this incident happened, but on one of our stopovers in Cairo, we arranged with a local man to take us from the Bentley Hotel (I think that was the name) to the Pyramids and Sphinx, with a tour up inside the Great Pyramid. We would pay him for the entire trip. We settled on a price. Everything went very well. I opted to ride an Arabian horse instead of one of their moth-eaten camels. All went very well including the climb up inside the pyramid, until nearly down inside. Then this guide decided he would like a bit more money. If we wouldn’t give him this he would leave us in the dark. He had been lighting our way with magnesium strips. Needless to say the poor guy was completely surrounded by us, and told he had better not try any tricks like that. I think he thought we would take the magnesium and leave him behind, but anyway we got out okay.

By this time, my left eye had really started to go blind. I realised that I could not renew my licence and so resigned from BOAC.

My total flying time, including air force and civilian was 1455 hours 55 minutes.
Footnote to My Flying

Mary and I were at our trailer up near Norland, when we received a phone call from our daughter, Patricia. She asked us what we would be doing on August 19th 2000. I looked at our calendar and told her that we had tickets for the theatre in Lindsay. We were going with some friends.

Well we were told to cancel these arrangements. Our three children had combined to give me a trip up in the Lancaster at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton. They had joined to purchase membership in this museum for me. As well, they paid for a flight of about 45 minutes in the Lancaster that is on site. It was a real thrill to be back in a Lancaster once again. A photo from that day is included below.
Don Cameron with his war medals
Monument to RAF Squadron 115 at Witchford
BRIEF SQUADRON HISTORY
115 SQUADRON
(FROM THE BOMBER COMMAND WAR DIARIES)

SERVICE
IN 3 GROUP FROM THE OUTBREAK UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR. FLEW WELLENGTONS AND LANCASTERS FROM MARHAM, MILDENHALL, EAST WRETHAM, LITTLE SNORING AND WITCHFORD.
DETACHED TO COASTAL COMMAND FOR ONE SHORT PERIOD IN APRIL 1940.

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE
RAIDS FLOWN
WELLENGTONS - 332 BOMBING, 54 MINELAYING, 4 LEAFLET
LANCASTERS - 281 BOMBING, 27 MINELAYING
TOTAL - 593 BOMBING, 81 MINELAYING, 4 LEAFLET = 678 RAIDS

SORTIES AND LOSSES
WELLENGTONS - 3,075 SORTIES, 98 AIRCRAFT LOST (3.2 PER CENT)
LANCASTERS - 4,678 SORTIES, 110 AIRCRAFT LOST (2.4 PER CENT)
TOTAL - 7,753 SORTIES, 208 AIRCRAFT LOST (2.7 PER CENT)
22 LANCASTERS WERE DESTROYED IN CRASHES.

POINTS OF INTEREST
115 SQUADRON HAD ONE OF THE FINEST RECORDS OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE IN BOMBER COMMAND.
AN ORIGINAL SQUADRON ON THE OUTBREAK OF WAR AND, EXCEPT FOR ONE VERY SHORT PERIOD OF DETACHMENT TO COASTAL COMMAND, SERVED CONTINUOUSLY UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR.
CARRIED OUT THE FIRST GEE TRIALS IN AUGUST 1941.
CARRIED OUT THE THIRD HIGHEST NUMBER OF BOMBING RAIDS IN BOMBER COMMAND HEAVY SQUADRONS AND THE MOST RAIDS IN 3 GROUP.
FLEW THE SECOND HIGHEST NUMBER OF SORTIES IN BOMBER COMMAND.
PREFERRED DROPPED THE SECOND GREATEST TONNAGE OF BOMBS, APPROXIMATELY 23,000 TONS, IN BOMBER COMMAND. DROPPED MORE BOMBS THAN ANY OTHER SQUADRON IN 3 GROUP.
SUFFERED THE MOST LOSSES IN THE WHOLE OF BOMBER COMMAND; THE ONLY SQUADRON TO LOSE MORE THAN 200 AIRCRAFT IN THE WAR.
CARRIED OUT MOST RAIDS, FLEW MOST SORTIES AND SUFFERED MOST LOSSES OF ANY WELLINGTON SQUADRON IN BOMBER COMMAND.
CARRIED OUT MOST RAIDS, FLEW MOST SORTIES, SUFFERED MOST LOSSES AND THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE LOSS RATE IN ANY LANCASTER SQUADRON IN 3 GROUP.
DONALD CAMERON
October 28, 1921 - May 17, 2008
(Flight Lieutenant in the R.A.F. and Lancaster pilot in Squadron 115 during World War II)

With great sadness we announce the passing of Donald Cameron at the Ajax Pickering Hospital following a stroke. He was the beloved husband and best friend of Mary for 65 years. Devoted father of Glen (Linda), Patricia (David), and Neil (Diane). Loving Papa and hero to his grandchildren Graeme (Louise), Dawn (Tony), Heather, Janice, and Keith. Friends and family may visit at THE SIMPLE ALTERNATIVE FUNERAL CENTRE, 1057 Brock Road, Pickering, 905-686-5589 on Thursday May 22, 2008 from 10 a.m.-11 a.m. Memorial service to follow in our chapel at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers donations to the Ajax-Pickering Hospital, 580 Harwood Ave. South, Ajax, Ont. L1S 2J4 would be appreciated by the family.
If you have enjoyed this eBook, please consider making a donation to:

The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum (http://www.warplane.com)
or
The Rouge Valley Health System Foundation (http://www.rougevalley.ca/rvhsf)

For those interested in learning more about life in a Lancaster bomber crew, Don Cameron always recommended the movie 'Night Bombers': the only known colour recording of Bomber Command during World War II, documenting a winter 1943 raid on Berlin:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujLVIESNGE