

The

PRAIRIE HOWLER



BOBBY F. GARDNER

December 1943



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No. 35 SERVICE FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL
R. A. F. NORTH BATTLEFORD, SASKATCHEWAN

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EDITORIAL

When the magazine idea was first agreed we wrote an editorial - that was on the 8th November. Now, after collecting all the copy for this issue, (and a lot more for the next) we find that old editorial is no good at all!

The response to our appeals for contributions has been most surprising. We have tried to select and arrange the contents of the first 'Howler' in a way that expresses the spirit of the Station, and we hope that this magazine will be everybody's voice. Here is your chance to say something - tell us about your news from home, your adventures, your leave (well, not all of it), your operation, or your missus' new baby.

Our thanks to Group Captain Bruce for his blessing, approval and practical help; to the editorial board, artists and contributors all, and to you for having the kindness and courage to buy and read the "Howler".

Contributions not appearing in this issue will appear in the next; regular publication depends entirely on news and notes sent in, so let us have your copy early - typed if you can manage it, on one side of the paper only, double spacing.

By the time we appear in print, Christmas won't be far away, so here's all the best to our readers; good luck, and may the New Year see the defeat of the Hun, and maybe "The Boat" for all of us.

Once more, send in your stuff for the next issue - write and criticise, praise, curse, jeer or condemn, but don't ignore us or the old "Howler" will surely go for a Burton.

- The Editor.

The Commanding Officer

THE "Howler" makes its appearance at the right time to welcome G/Capt. Bruce, and some interesting facts about his personal history and service career have been collected which will be of interest to all who serve under his command. With a service career almost continuous since 1916, this station is fortunate to have the benefit of his experience and we should undoubtedly accept the fact that he probably knows *all* the answers!

Group Captain Talbot Baines Bruce, M. C., was born in Adelaide, South Australia, in 1897. In 1913 he went to England and was educated at Tunbridge School, Kent. His service career commenced on the 8th July 1916 when he was commissioned in the Royal Flying Corps, trained as a pilot and on the 17th March 1917 was posted to No. 3 Squadron, R. F. C. in France. On the 6th November of that year began for him an experience which is recounted in his book, "Missing", published in 1930. Whilst on an offensive patrol with three other aircraft of his Squadron, he was forced down by engine failure 120 miles behind the enemy lines. Belgian peasants hid him from the enemy for thirteen weeks in which time, disguised as a peasant himself, he made his way across Belgium to the Belgian - Dutch frontier where an attempt to cross into neutral territory was unsuccessful. Next, with the aid of friends, he crossed into Germany and thence across the German-Dutch line into Holland, arriving back in England on the 4th February 1918, when he was awarded the Military Cross, and summoned to Buckingham Palace for an audience with the King, who wished to hear the story of his adventures and escape.

For the remainder of the war and until demobilization he was a flying instructor, first at South Carlton, Lincolnshire, (where he was promoted Acting Flight Commander) and then at Eastbourne Flying School. In June 1919 he was demobilized and joined Messrs. A. V. Roe, Ltd., as a civil pilot.

Apparently life as a civilian was not attractive to him, for in January 1920 he was commissioned in the Indian Army. On returning to England in August 1921, he was gazetted out of the Indian Army to a short service commission in the R. A. F., and for three years he served in Iraq, immediately following which, in 1925, he went to Egypt. Returning again to England he was appointed Chief Flying Instructor of Cambridge University Air Squadron, which position he held from 1926 to 1927. He was promoted to the rank of Flight Lieutenant in June 1927, and in 1928 posted as Chief Flying Instructor of Oxford University Air Squadron, receiving a permanent commission in the same year. From 1930 - 32 he was Test Pilot at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, and again saw service in India from 1933-35. Promoted Squadron Leader in April 1936, he returned to Home Establishment the following month. He served as Maintenance Liaison Officer, Headquarters, No. 23 Group from 1937-38, was promoted Wing Commander in January



1939 and appointed to the post of Inspector of R. A. F. V. R. Flying Training until 1940. In 1941, being attached to Air Ministry, he supervised training at the University Air Squadrons of Hull, Sheffield, Reading and London, was promoted Group Captain in September 1941, and commanded the Recruit Centre at Yarmouth, Norfolk, which position he held until posted to Canada in September 1942 to command No. 33 S. F. T. S., Carberry, Man.

Tennis, Squash, Rugger and Swimming are a few of the sports enjoyed by the Commanding Officer. In 1926 he played for the "Adestrians" Cricket XI; but "as old age creeps on and the bones become more brittle" (to use his own words), he is more actively concerned with shooting and fishing, although he still displays keen interest and skill in ski-ing.

Cover Design and Title Competition

The prize of \$5 for title and \$5 for cover design are awarded to LAC Gardner of Log Book Section, Maintenance Wing. LAC Dobby prepared the design for the printers, and for this and other work included he deserves at least (to use his Sunday night phrase) "-a big hand!!" Congratulations to both of them on their talent, and may we see bags more of it!

Prune Forever?

A certain young officer-pilot
(To him all apologies due)
Wore a round hat without any stiffener,
And line-shootin' whiskers he grew.

He wore his brand-new Irvin Jacket,
Whenever he wangled some leave,
With flying-boots, down at the local,
And a large leather patch on his sleeve.

Just to make himself look operational,
This horrible line-shooting chap
Never did up his tunic top button,
And wore hair curling under his cap.

He had maps hanging out of his pockets,
A sweater right up to his neck,
And large leather flying-type gauntlets
For stoogin' around on the deck.

But when he was posted to Prangmere,
And entered the Officers' Mess,
His handsome young squadron commander
Took a violent dislike to his dress.

He said: "I don't care what you look like,
When dicing in Oxfords you go,
But you can't come in here in that rig-out.
In fact, it's a ruddy poor show."

So he clipped his untidy moustachios,
Put the stiffening wire back in his cap,
Stored his flying kit safe in his locker,
And became a respectable chap.

Now **he** is a Squadron Commander;
His list of achievements is long;
He's done seventy-six operations,
And collected two bars to his gong.

So remember, all ye of North Battleford,
Be you clerk, pilot, rigger, or staff,
If you're always precisely correct in your dress,
You can't help but win fame in the "Raf".



"I'm cheesed with pictures about aeroplanes"

SECTION NEWS

"X" Flight



During the last month, "X" Flight appears to have adopted the R. A. F. recruiting phrase in reverse . . . "Change your flying suit for overalls". Its crest now proudly bears two paint brushes rampant on a field of distemper.

One opens the door to the clatter of falling tins, against a quiet background of muttered epithets, to find the most amazing people doing the most unlikely things. In the far corner stands (pardon, lounges) the Flight Commander, criticising, cursing,

looking industrious, but, as is his wont, doing nothing. Behind the door, rage on his face, threatening hammer in hand, looms a certain Flying Officer, noted for his aggressive instruction and vocal ambition. Spud wanders around, his over-ambitious sweater forcing its manly way between protesting battle dress tunic and tired trousers, handling his paint brush like the more familiar shillelagh. Four of the five Macs have scattered to the winds, and on enquiring they would appear to be swotting hard at Link, Bombing-teacher, R/T practice, Ground School and P. T. The fifth remains behind to provide alibis for the other four. Two more lonely figures meet the eye - unfortunate wretches who could not go in time to escape the wrath of the great god of renovation.

All in all we find several days manual labour a pleasant (question mark) change, and curse rather than bless the good (more punctuation) fortune which brought us a few days respite from flying.

Maintenance Wing

It is not without regret that we of Maintenance Wing say farewell to F/Lt. C. H. W. Billinger, O.C. Repair Squadron. F/Lt. Billinger has sojourned in Canada for thirty-three months: two years at Medicine Hat and the last nine months at North Battleford.

We wish him Good Luck, "Bon Voyage", and happiness in his future work.

Prior to his departure, the Gestapo reported that F/Lt. Billinger had been doing a considerable amount of shopping. It is believed that a stock of gum was one of the objects of the shopping expedition.

Maintenance Wing take this opportunity of welcoming F/O Dunlop as the new O. C. Repair Squadron.

Officers' Mess

At last the dust of ages seems to be billowing away, and gradually the walls of the Mess resume their rightful place in the scheme of decoration. As the bare walls disappear under their bright coat of paint, one sees the ghosts of the past gradually slipping away with them, Bett, Veal, Spearpoint, Ditto, Dixie, Franklin, James, Dallin, Davies, all steal quietly past the clattering tins and slapping brushes out into the frosty night. Months ago we were all sorry to see our more fortunate colleagues leave, one by one, but I don't think there is one of us today who is sorry to say good-bye to our old chaircovers, curtains and bare walls.

At the moment of writing, we seem to be cursed by a new species of gremlin, as yet unseen, who steals in at the most inconvenient hours and smartly turns off all the heat, leaving us freezing in bed. Conversely, on warm evenings when the heat is off and we are all in bed with the radiators cold but the taps full on, he sneaks in and pours white hot steam through all the pipes.

No longer do we see the familiar horse wandering round and round the aerodrome, untethered and unwanted; but to make up for our misfortune we do get the occasional glimpse of a certain Flight Lieutenant hobbling his car in a moment of forgetfulness.

Yes! we miss quite a few people and quite a few things; but we have amongst us new faces who are fast replacing the people of 1942. To all the new members of the Mess we extend a hearty welcome - with one hand - and with the other rapidly take possession of their liquor ration cards.

P. P. D.

The Officers' Mess Dance was a great success—many officers brought their ladies and pranced about under the influence of the "Blue Aces"—others merely "syncopated", moving violently from bar to bar. F/Lt. "Paddy" Colgan COYLY declined an invitation to meet the belle of the ball.

F/Lt. Barney McPhail, "the flying doctor," on departing for an unknown destination—by air of course—was heard to say:—"Maltbeh. Are you coming in this crate too?" *F/Lt. Maltby's reply is censored.*

o o o

Heard at a Mess Meeting

The idea of acquiring a billiard table became "pregnant" many moons ago and though he denies paternity S/Ldr. "Nuffield" Morris is nevertheless "holding the baby" and must have had something to do with its "conception."

o o o

A "living out" officer remembered to sign the Casual Meals book.

o o o

F/Lt. "Barney" McPhail wants to know:—1. What's a 48? 2. Where is Saskatoon anyway?

o o o

F/Lt. Colgan says he dreamt of "Containers"—it must have been a nightmare not a dream if they were empty.

Headquarters Gossip

Enter, in a flood of green paint, the new C. O.

We hear with some alarm that not only are the walls of Headquarters to be spring cleaned but some of us are also to be involved in a game of "general post" with the Offices. It is reliably reported that one of the Senior N. C. Os. has been seen making several nocturnal visits to the incinerator. We suspect some archive dusting ("Receipt cannot be traced of your above referenced letter . . .")

After much rattling of adding machines and some determined propaganda the Chairman of the Victory Loan Committee announced a magnificent result for the Station's campaign. We supposed that, like the gophers, he had retired from active life for the Winter, but we were disillusioned when he reappeared a few days ago bearing armsful of Station Standing Orders. Ours was then much the same feeling that Keats felt with regard to Chapman. Or was it stout Cortez?

At the other end of the corridor the S. A. O. seems to be auditing something or other, and there have been many comings and goings of ledgers surmounted by frowning faces.

The Signals Officer is not often on view up here these days. It is reliably reported, however, that he is frequently seen on his beam-ends.

LAC Mortimore was seen working late once last month.

Cpl. Anderson was seen working once last month.

The Assistant Adjutant gathered up his photographs, the Mess Books and a handful of odd Committees of Adjustment and left us for Maintenance Wing. Never again, we fear, will D. R. Os. attain to that grammatical excellence which was their distinction during his reign.

Today's prices:-

Lost draft notes (married types only)	\$50.00
Lost F. 121 (bad types only)	\$25.00
Forged F. 1250 (guzzling types only)	\$50.00
Green Paint (bobbing types only—splash it about and make the C.O. happy)	\$75.00 per tin

(All prices subject to 2% tax, of course)

W-H-I-S-P-E-R-S

They Do Say:-

Sgt. Davis (married type) enjoyed a crafty night with the boys one evening last month. The occasion? S.H.Q. Football Dinner and Bachannalian Revels.

o o o

That upon the above occasion LAC Mortimore imbibed to the extent of one bubbling pint. Oh Roy!

o o o

Also present, Sgt. Goosey (our social let-down) reciting a not-so-nice poem.

POLICE GAZETTE

GUARDROOM CHATTER

It is with mixed feelings we notice that the storm which had been raging since Cpl. Snape arrived on this Unit has subsided. Perhaps this is due to the fact that he has moved to a new Station. Here's hoping he will not have to introduce new ideas in his new guardroom.

o o o

We would like to know the reason Cpl. Jim Howard never sits when he is on duty. Maybe he sat on a tack when he was young. Still we wont pile it on Jim.

o o o

Cpl. Lewis has come to the conclusion that none of us police need take an Education Course. He thinks we should make good Picture Theatre Commissionaires after this war.

o o o

It seems that the two Cpl. Smiths, 097 and 186, have taken a permanent liking to Hamlin. Maybe it's the Illuminations.

o o o

Just lately Cpl. Mayo has been heard muttering at frequent intervals, "I'm cheesed off". His cheerful outlook on life so resembles that of one of Walt Disney's dwarfs that he was duly dubbed "Happy".

o o o

The Post Office is seriously thinking of opening at 05.30hrs and closing at 21.00hrs so that Cpl. Barringer can collect his mail without having to rush.

CORPORALS' CLUB WINTER ACTIVITIES

The usual winter activities have so far been somewhat curtailed by the reduction of our quota by ten cases. However, we hope that by Christmas normal winter games will be in full swing with their usual support.

We should be able to get together a fairly good hockey team this season. Come on you new members fresh from the old country and show 'em that limeys can play hockey too! There are plenty of "old timers" who will show you the ropes, if they can find time in between binding about the winter of '41 and "Forty below boys!"

Don't forget to make a date for the grand Christmas Dance on December 21st. The admittance price will be up by two bits but you'll get a really whiz-o buffet thrown in. Bring your best girl—and her husband and his girl too—let no bitterness creep in at the festive season.

We are forced to have another social in the near future if the wallop holds out. Anybody with talent will be welcomed with open arms. At present the only new act to relieve the hard working regular performers is the male voice quartet giving their version of "Bottle-lobbing momma, lay that bottle down".

The First Sixteen Months

In The Western Desert

THIS does not set out to be a history of the beginning of that campaign, the winning of which after so many setbacks has resulted in the invasion of Italy and Sicily but rather it is a series of personal experiences in the unofficial history of a Squadron that did some grand work out there in the early days, a squadron that gave and took a terrible beating in the Greek campaign and later went hors de combat in the inglorious fight in the Far East.

The outbreak of war against Germany found No. 211 Bomber Squadron sitting out in the blue of the Western Desert waiting for the inevitable war to come and after months of living in tents, on bully beef and biscuits, thirsty, dusty, looking at the horizon and talking to lizards, even the prospect of a war seemed a bright one and although from September 3rd, 1939, we were officially on active service, we did not really get cracking until June 1940 when Italy joined the party. During that intervening period of inaction we were hard put to it to keep ourselves from giving in to that curious malady known in the desert as "going round the bend", a form of which I see in Canada under the label of "prairie stare". We had no "Pig and Whistle" to visit after working hours and very little else in the way of relaxation to keep our minds occupied. One could walk in to the Mess and find strong men writing poetry, building model aeroplanes and even knitting, whilst a favourite sport amongst the airmen was the matching of pet scorpions and tarantulas against one another and many a piastre changed hands over this form of sport.

Living conditions were not what one would call deluxe, although compared to some of the advanced units we were well off. Everything was at that time under canvas, the Messes being marquees and the living quarters bell tents, officers sleeping two or three per tent and airmen six. The food was adequate but uninteresting, bully beef being the staple diet, and water was rationed at the rate of one gallon of water per day and that's not much when one considers that out of that gallon a certain amount was used for cooking and a further amount had to go into the radiator of our transport. However there was some beer to be had and that made up for a lot. Generally speaking it wasn't too bad but when the wind got up, the dust rose with it and then life became almost unbearable. The dust seemed to get everywhere, in one's ears, eyes, mouth and even in one's beer—we could stand a lot but the last was almost too much. I have actually gone to bed at night in a dust-storm wearing my respirator in an attempt to escape this dust.

The first intimation of war came to us over the air from Rome radio, when one of our chaps who spoke Italian heard Mussolini make the formal declaration. We immediately rang up Group Headquarters and by dawn

we were off on a raid, the first over Italian territory, the target—Tobruk Harbour. We took the Ities completely by surprise and did quite a lot of damage to harbour installations, putting out of action the cruiser San Giorgio.

The next day it was the same target but this time they were waiting for us. Nine Blenheims came in from the sea and there were at least thirty CR 42's waiting. We dropped our bombs on the target before they could attack but in the shambles that followed some of us were forced out of formation whilst taking evasive action in cloud. The C.O. was livid when we returned and threatened the next pilot to break formation with Court Martial.

About two days later (my log book says June 13) we were due to take part in a combined operation on the Fort of Capuzzo, a Beau Geste type of fort about two hundred yards square overlooking the bay of Sollum. The plan was that we were to drop our bombs, the artillery would shell it and the Huzzars would capture it. All went well, we roared over the fort with our bombs fitted with fifteen seconds delay fuses, a squadron of nine Blenheims by flights, in line astern, with quarter mile interval between flights.

We dropped our bombs and they all exploded on impact, causing terrific damage to ourselves from our own bomb fragments as we were only about one hundred feet up. I was flying No. 2 to the C.O. and after the bombs exploded his starboard engine caught fire and went dead. In the evolutions that followed I was forced to weave back and forth across his tail to prevent myself from overshooting him. After he had got the fire out and we had landed at base he complimented me for protecting him so well from the possible attack from the fighters that were present. I was quite shaken for I had seen no fighters and had to admit that my one concern was trying to keep from losing formation and getting myself a court-martial as threatened. Anti climax! None of our bombs hit the fort, the Iti garrison decided that they had had enough and packed their hand in without firing a shot. We had at least six aircraft that had suffered some form of damage due to the fragmentation of our own bombs!

Shortly after the outbreak our job developed into one of routine raids, carrying out at least one attack per week on the port of Tobruk and generally at least one other smaller raid a week on lesser targets such as aerodromes. The attacks on Tobruk and other more important targets were generally done by a formation of three squadrons attacking in massed formation with quarter mile intervals between squadrons, and squadrons formed in squadron vic of flights in line astern. We always made our approaches from the sea after having made a wide detour out over the Mediterranean in order to avoid flying over enemy territory. We sometimes made massed wing attacks with squadrons stepped down behind one another and on those occasions it was not unusual to find one being narrowly missed by bombs dropped from a squadron above. I often wondered what I should do if one should drop in the cockpit and start fizzing.

We had none of the modern aids to bombing and navigation that one has today and we were naturally most inexperienced at first. We bought our

experience very cheaply at the expense of the Ities. Some of the raids we carried out would have been considered foolhardy based on modern standards but fortunately we were only fighting the Ities and they were not particularly aggressive or anxious to offer fight. They flew beautifully but liked life too well, I think. However, we were making a thorough nuisance of ourselves and I believe we worried the enemy not a little by our regular pinpricking raids. They used to throw quite a lot of flak up at us so I gather that they were not altogether pleased with us. The flack was particularly heavy over Tobruk and one of our pilots was overheard to remark that it was so thick on one particular raid that he had to fly through by instruments. That certainly went in our line books for we knew that our instruments were so full of sand they didn't work, anyway.

In those early days there was still a certain amount of chivalry between us and the Ities Air Force and any of our chaps that were forced down were always treated well. Whenever we could we always gave the Iti pilot a good party before sending him off to his P.O.W. Camp. We did on occasions actually drop letters on their aerodromes after their capture and they sometimes did the same for us. I remember the day Marshal Balbo was killed; it was the day that we had bombed an aerodrome that he was to review. (It was a perfect target with aircraft lined up wing to wing tip and troops all massed together). Many are the rumours concerning the way he met his death, and we will never know, but the next day we sent over a lone Blenheim and dropped a letter of condolence on his headquarters, regretting the passing of such a noble adversary and the following day we had dropped on us a letter of thanks. Actually this sort of thing gradually became more and more infrequent as the business got more serious but it gave one quite a glow at the time.

About the end of July they started dropping a type of booby trap bomb known to us as the "thermos" bomb, so named because of its resemblance in size and shape to a Thermos flask. This bomb did not become active until after lying on the ground for some time when the slightest vibration, such as walking near it, would set it off. To handle it was fatal. As it was almost impossible for us to locate all that were dropped we circularised the local Bedouins and, after duly warning them, offered a reward for any reported. One day I was in the C.O.'s office with one or two other officers when I saw one of our native workmen with one of these bombs in his hands. "Effendi" he said to the C.O. "Shoofti quois bomba!" ("Look at this lovely bomb"). After watching us disappear over the horizon, he threw his "quois bomba" away in disgust and the resultant explosion sent everyone underground, us temporarily, him permanently.

After some weeks of operating, the Ities found the location of our aerodrome and started paying it too frequent visits so we decided to move to a place less obvious, the new location being right on the railway line. This time we cut a couple of strips out of the camel thorn on a flat cliff top overlooking the Mediterranean and moved camp to there. Our Mess we set up within twenty yards of the edge of the cliff overlooking the sea and it was a pleasant change to have an horizon with a bit of sea in it for a change.

There was a three mile length of perfect bathing beach within a quarter of a mile and everything was lovely. It was indeed most pleasant in the evening sitting out on the edge of the cliff overlooking the Mediterranean, sipping our chota pegs and nattering on life in general; the war seemed quite remote and we were able to relax a bit more. The swimming was grand, as good as any I have ever known and the sunbathing on the sand glorious—. The station was perfectly camouflaged and the Ities never found us there in spite of their repeated efforts. Morale soared.

About this time the Ities made their first advance into Egypt. Another chap and I had just had an invitation to a party in Cairo so we got a forty-eight, borrowed the staff car and a driver, and set off. The distance was something like two hundred and thirty miles and this driver did it in four and a quarter hours. We had to knock off a couple of stiff ones after that trip. Just as we were about to leave for the party, a signal came ordering us back so off we went again. The Ities were streaming in and were advancing towards Mersa Matruh. We gave them a good belting and, due to the water difficulty, they had to stop at Sidi Barani, a minute native village about forty miles inside the border. Here they stuck and the lack of water beat them. This was in October 1940 and that was for me the end of my first sixteen months of war in the Desert as war broke out in Greece and we were pushed off to have a crack at them there. We all know what happened after this stage as it was the prelude to Wavell's first advance into Benghazi. Unfortunately we were not there to finish off the job for which we had done all the spade work. New squadrons were coming out and they took over whilst we were frightening ourselves in the mountain-filled clouds of Greece —but that's another story. F.

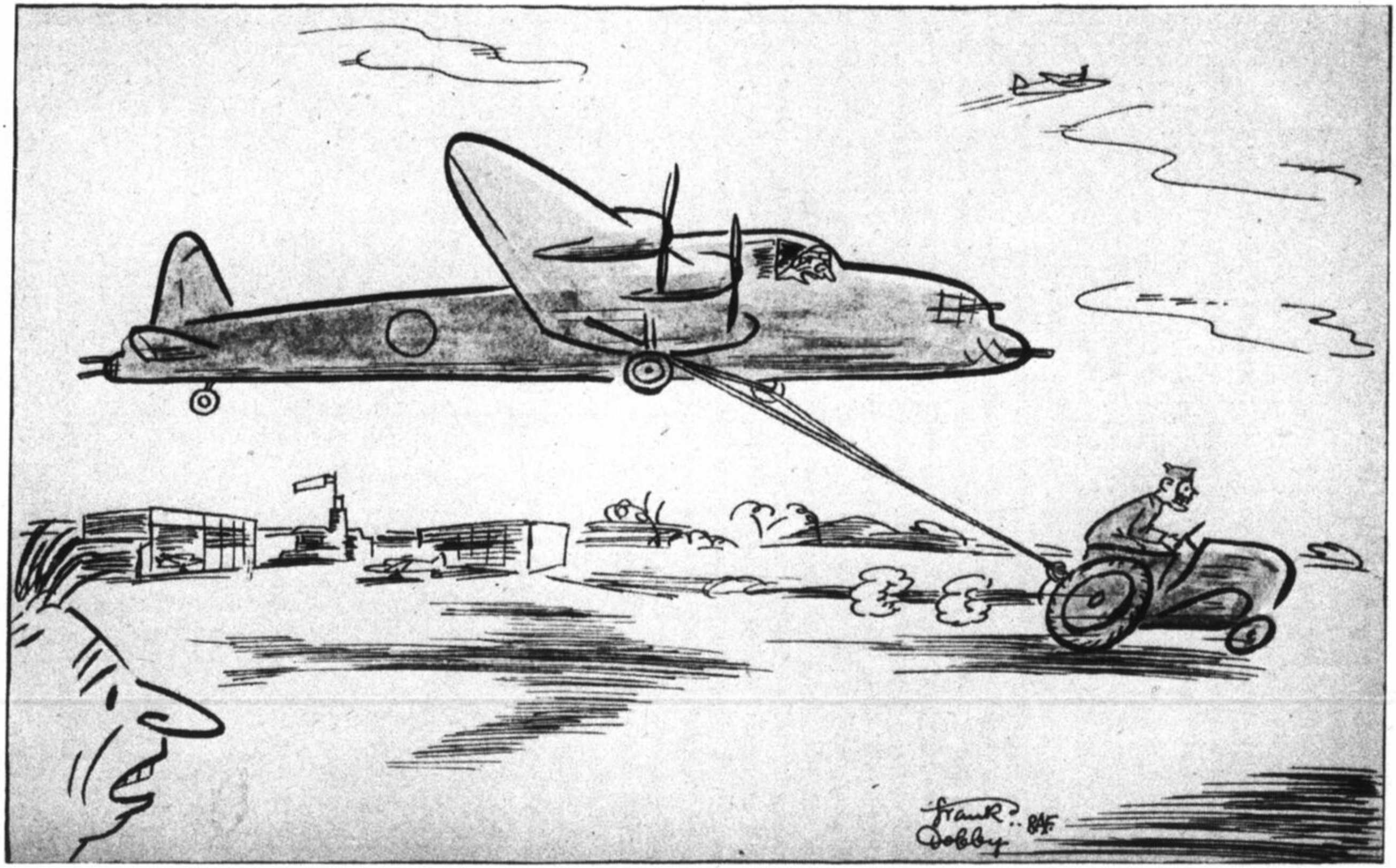
“P” Flite News

Ullo mister editor my names joe and im an aircraft pusherouter and im ritin this coz the flite comarnder aint ere e took orf larst nite in wun of them fives an e pulled the stick back an e went up an up an up an up an e aint cum back yet an there aint no other instruckter tipes ere they orl cum in this mornin about ten an sed ooray bagzerclamp an bug-sorry went erway - an im scenier aircraft pusherouter so im sort of actin flite comarnder see! Of corse if im flite comarnder i must ave me mornin gamer poker so excoose me please. slong joe.

A monthly prize is offered for the best 'line'. The nature of the prize may depend upon what kind of a line it is.

This month's line (which is anonymous) :-

“The pupils in my flight bounce so high that they have to use oxygen”.
Does anyone claim this? The editor's decision is (of course) final!





Sport

News



As this is my first report of sports activities taking place on this Station, I would like to introduce myself as successor to F/O Fell, who by now should be safely ensconced on that "Boat, journeys, elusive; U. K. only; airman, returning, for the use of!" Although a newcomer to Canada, and rapidly becoming acclimatized, I have not as yet seen boats floating on the prairie. However, time will tell. Joking aside, I am very pleased to be here, and as long as I am stationed here I hope, with your wholehearted assistance, to carry on the good work of my predecessor.

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

Soccer has been given a decent burial, Repair Squadron being chief mourners in winning both the inter-section league Championship Cup and the inter-section knock-out competition. In the final of the knock-out competition, they beat the Sergeants' Mess. The final placings in the League Table are given overleaf.

Special mention must be made of LAC Grundy and LAC Formby who acted as efficient referees at most of these League Matches.

INDOOR SOCCER

It has been decided to run an inter-hut indoor soccer league this winter - the first series of matches is scheduled to start in the very near future. This game is played with a team of six men and, as in basket-ball, substitutes will be allowed.

BASKET BALL

At the time of going to press the inter-hut Basket-Ball league is progressing well. The league has been divided into four divisions, - each team playing the other three teams in its division twice. A table of present positions appears overleaf. Teams are half-way through the first series of matches with huts 9B, 10B, 11B and the Officers having won all their matches so far. Some wisecracker suggested that hanging straps from the baskets should be provided to assist in adding to F/Lt. D 's already terrific number of points. Keen interest has been shown by all teams; for this, credit is due to the hut representatives who are doing a good job of work in organizing their teams.

BADMINTON

Badminton has been resumed with the magical reappearance of "birds". The airmen's doubles tournament has been started with an entry list of 34 contestants. The officers' singles and doubles tournaments are also under way. Rumour has it that there is a deadly combination in the doubles tournament. The sergeants' mess has not so far overwhelmed us with entries, but it is hoped

that they too will "get cracking". After these tournaments have been decided, the Sports Committee wants to put this game on a competitive basis, - so sections, spot your talent and be ready to assist.

ICE HOCKEY

With such rejoinders as, "You should have been here last year, Old Boy, 54 below.....", and having yet to experience a Canadian winter, I am still waiting for the really cold weather. Meanwhile, the ice-rink, like wedding-cakes back home, still lacks its coating of icing. Perhaps cold weather is rationed? Whilst ice hockey and skating fans are straining at the leash and waiting for the word, the rink has been prepared with the assistance of a kind civilian, and as soon as the ice can be made, we shall want your co-operation in getting this sport going on a competitive basis.

SKI-ING

Kit has been ordered and should arrive "any minute now". In conclusion, the P.T.I's and myself are here to organize all forms of sports, and if you don't see what you want in our sports window, come inside the shop and ask We shall always do our best to satisfy our customers.

P. W. Clear, F/O., Sports Officer.

O O O

Association League — final placings				
Team	Position	Goals for	Goals against	Points
Repair "A"	1	99	25	43
No. 1 Sqdn "A"	2	55	39	35
S.H.Q. "B"	3	51	33	33
No. 2 Sqdn.	4	67	46	13
M.T.	5	59	29	30
Airmen's Mess "A"	6	50	43	26
Repair "B"	7	56	63	22
Sergeant's Mess	8	41	45	18
No. 1 Sqdn. "B"	9	19	61	17
Airmen's Mess "B"	9	28	102	17

Basketball League—Positions to date:—									
39L. 3 2 1 — — 83 50									
Division 1.									
	Pla	W	Lo	Dra	Walk	Goals	Poi		
	yed	on	st	wn	f.	Agst	f.	Agst	nts
11B	3	3	—	—	—	—	64	47	6
39L	3	2	1	—	—	—	83	50	4
Sergeants	3	1	2	—	—	—	64	58	2
12B	3	—	3	—	—	—	36	92	—
Division 2									
9B	3	3	—	—	—	—	128	30	6
13B	3	2	1	—	—	—	92	42	4
14B	3	1	2	—	—	—	24	106	2
12A	3	—	3	—	—	—	22	88	—
Division 3									
Officers	2	2	—	—	1	—	73	19	6
39U	2	1	1	—	1	—	36	49	4
13A	2	2	—	—	1	—	25	66	2
33L	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—

Adjutant at S.H.Q.!

Lo! I pass the buck to you,
Though I know most certainly
It will soon return to me.

All the cans that ever were
You have born at some time, Sir,
But I've yet that can to see
You could not lose speedily.

Did I see my name in Orders?
Have my vests embroidered borders?
Have I checked my inventory?
What is A.P. 943?

Binding, skiing, bobbing, shooting,
Letter-signing, K.R.-rooting,—
Adjutant at S.H.Q.,
I for one don't envy you!

PADRE'S



PAGE

DEAR FRIENDS

In this first issue of the "Prairie Howler" I would like to express my appreciation of this opportunity, granted by the editorial staff, to address a letter to you all each month. Through the medium of these pages I look forward to giving you regularly the "Padre's News". I never intend that these pages shall assume the tone that insinuates that "This-is-the-voice-of-the-sublime-and-proper-and-all-that-is-good-and-right" for then I know that but the first line would ever be read.

This monthly effort will be in the nature of a "chat" about "things that matter" with a hope that they may be thought-provoking. There is a tendency not to think too deeply these days, but surely a few moments thoughtfulness can never harm us!

It is said of the late Chaplain General of the Forces, Bishop Taylor Smith, that he could not stand "milk and water" Christians, and his preaching was such that few would have passed over his words as "not much in my line".

He always insisted that his Padres should minister to Tommy's SOUL, MIND and BODY. Each morning as his orderly came to bring his shaving water or morning cup of tea, he would keep the poor lad to a certain routine. In the first place he demanded something for his SOUL, and the orderly was expected to quote a text of scripture; then something for his MIND, when the orderly had to find a new "joke" to amuse his mind. So often the Bishop would pretend that it was not at all funny and proceed to relate a far more amusing incident. Then finally he would demand something for his BODY, the morning cup of tea, or his shaving water.

Soul, Mind, Body—if these are the key words of the Padre's Chat, they should contain something that will interest everybody.

When travelling home from India one year the Bishop was warned that one of his fellow travellers was quite a "type" and that he "ought" to have a word with him.

The Padre endeavoured to get near enough to the man to talk with him, but having been warned that the Bishop was after him, the opportunity for a chat did not come, until one evening the Major was seen to enter the smokers' salon and sit down. The Padre went in and sat down beside him. Feeling that offence might be better than mere self-defence, the Major opened the conversation by saying, "May I ask you a question, Sir?" and following the nodded assent, added, "In as much as I am a human being with physical capabilities and instinct which I presume were given to me in the beginning, surely they have been given to me for my use and it would be wrong not to use them?" "Before I answer that question, may I ask something of you?" replied the Bishop. "By your argument, I suppose you

would agree that man being an intelligent being, the right use of his mind is essential to his well being? and further, as man is a spiritual being with a tendency to worship, it is but right that he should follow these traits and use them? If you use your mind correctly, and follow that which is right, then go ahead, use your body that God has given you!"

At that moment a ship's officer passed carrying a lantern in which was burning a tallow candle. Stopping him for a moment the Padre pointed to the burning candle and pointed out that it had three parts, the tallow (which we will call the body), the wick (which represents the mind), and the flame (which is the spirit). The wick feeds upon the body and burning evenly gives a good light to all and serves a useful purpose—the purpose for which it was made. Tilt the candle but a little and the light is impaired and it will begin to smoke. Inverted, the light is extinguished, and there is naught left but the stench.

"Keep the candle upright, that it may burn brightly" added the Padre as he turned away.

Many years later these two met again, and the Major introduced himself with the words, "well! Padre, the candle is upright and burning brightly".

By the time this edition is published, Christmas will be quite near and I want to wish all and everyone "A Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous Peaceful New Year". We all have great hopes for the near future, for the horizon glows very brightly. I do sincerely pray that we are not forgetting to trust Him with our Hopes, Fears and Delights, that we may continue to pray earnestly for the future and our loved ones' happiness in peace and security.

Do you remember Longfellow's poem?

I hear the Bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And mild and sweet
The words repeat
Of Peace on Earth, Goodwill to men.

And in Despair I bowed my head,
'There is no peace on earth' I said,
For hate is strong,
And breaks the song
Of Peace on Earth, Goodwill to men.

Then Pealed the Bells, more loud and deep,
God is not dead, nor doth He sleep.
The wrong shall fail
The right prevail
With Peace on Earth, Goodwill to men.

This year the Bells will loudly peal again on Christmas Day across the English countryside, and may we even more confidently face the issues of 1944, dedicating ourselves Body, Soul and Mind that "Right May Prevail" with Peace on Earth, Goodwill to men.

Your friend and Padre, Maurice S. Flint.

The Adventure of Little Margie Riding Hood With The Wolves

ONCE upon a time, many moons ago, during the time of world War II, there were sent to Canada from Ye Olde Countrie many of that queer birdlike species, known to all and sundry as the *Bluecoated Ayrmyrn*. Having once landed on the shores of the Dominion these creatures who had migrated from the Land of Raff were dispersed in all directions - far and wide over its vast domain. Some stayed on the East Coast, others were sent to the sunny (?) shores of the Blue Pacific, and some (bless their souls) were left on the Prairies to be entertained by (or to entertain) gophers, whatnots, and what-have-you.

As luck would have it some of these refugees from Ye Olde Countrie were despatched to the Northern hinterland of Saskatchewan and were doomed, by the Powers That Be, to spend two or more years of their miserable lives at that Prairie Metropolis—North Battleford. A few miles across the waters of the mighty Saskatchewan from North Battleford stood the residential town of Battleford, with its many mansions. (P. S. This district later became known to these people of the Land of Raff as “Ye Olde Towne”).

Now it came to pass that one of the inhabitants of this residential town was a beautiful maiden by the name of Margie - a prairie flower. And Margie worked, as did many of the occupants of Battleford, at that building with extensive grounds which stood on the Northern bank of the aforesaid river. This building possessed a smoke stack of great height and so became known to these Men of Raff as “the place of the Tall Chimney” (Lang may its lum reek). Its name was mentioned in hushed whispers by these Raff Men, as it was said that those who developed that peculiar disease known as “Prairie Madness” were doomed to spend the rest of their miserable lives behind its gray walls. (And help Margie make the beds).

Now Margie was a carefree child, going about her work during the day and jiving away the nights at such ballrooms as the Legion and the Cabin. (The latter belonged to an old gentleman by the name of Uncle Tom).

Although belonging to a birdlike species these Raff Men were somewhat related to the canine tribe. It was said that on the night of the full moon, wolf-like howls could be heard emanating from their encampment on the hill. (Some said that this was only the warning whistle of the “Saskabash Flyer” as it came around the bend. How wrong they were - these Duff Gen Merchants). Many a local inhabitant, peeping from behind shuttered windows, had seen them prowling around the low dives of town with wolfish instincts, in the early hours of the morning. Some would hunt in packs while others preferred to adopt “lone wolf” tactics.

What Will Happen To Poor Margie? Will The Wolf Kidnap Her? Will She Kidnap The Wolf? Dont Miss The Next Thrilling Instalment of “Margie’s Adventures In Wolfland”.

Lineshooting Through The Ages

Attention! you line-shooters. Have you ever thought, I wonder, about the things of which you talk? Have you ever thought that your—even your—subject-matter is not new? That what you have done, even in the air, has been done before?

There is ample evidence, as I shall show, that the poets, for instance, through the ages, have commented ably on matters aeronautical. And the poets reflect fairly well the spirit of their time.

One of the earliest of the poets, Khayyam, for all he was a scientist, seems to have had trouble with his

Instrument Flying, which undoubtedly aroused his plaintive:

‘The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But right or left as suits the Player goes;
. . . . He knows about it all,—he knows—he knows!’

There is evidence, too, that he overstayed his leaves, as witness his heart-broken comment on *Form 252*:

“The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all they Piety, nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.”

Keats must have been quite adventurous in his young life. He was obviously *Low Flying* when he wrote:

‘I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the bough.’

He even cursed, in his gentlemanly way, at the trials of *Coming in on the Beam*:

“Darkling I listen, and for many a time
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—”

And he obviously knew the nervous tension of a C.O.’s *Inspection*; such it must have been which inspired his classic comment:

‘He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
While far within each aisle and deep recess
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amazed and full of fear, like anxious men.”

It seems likely that the later poets were not unacquainted with S.F.T.Ss. Devoted *To an Instructor (Flying)* we find Wordsworth’s simple:

“Earth has not anything to show more fair”,
while his companion, Shelley, took a different view:
“I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care”.

Willy Wordsworth had his practical comments, too, saying of *Engine Failure*:

“The aircraft glideth at his own sweet will:
Good God! the very switches seem asleep,
And all that mighty heart is lying still.”

After which he puts himself entirely in the hands of *His Instructor*;

“To humbler functions, awful power!
I call thee. I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!”

Even the romantic Tennyson tried his hand at aviating, and had his fill. *Airsickness* did not please him:

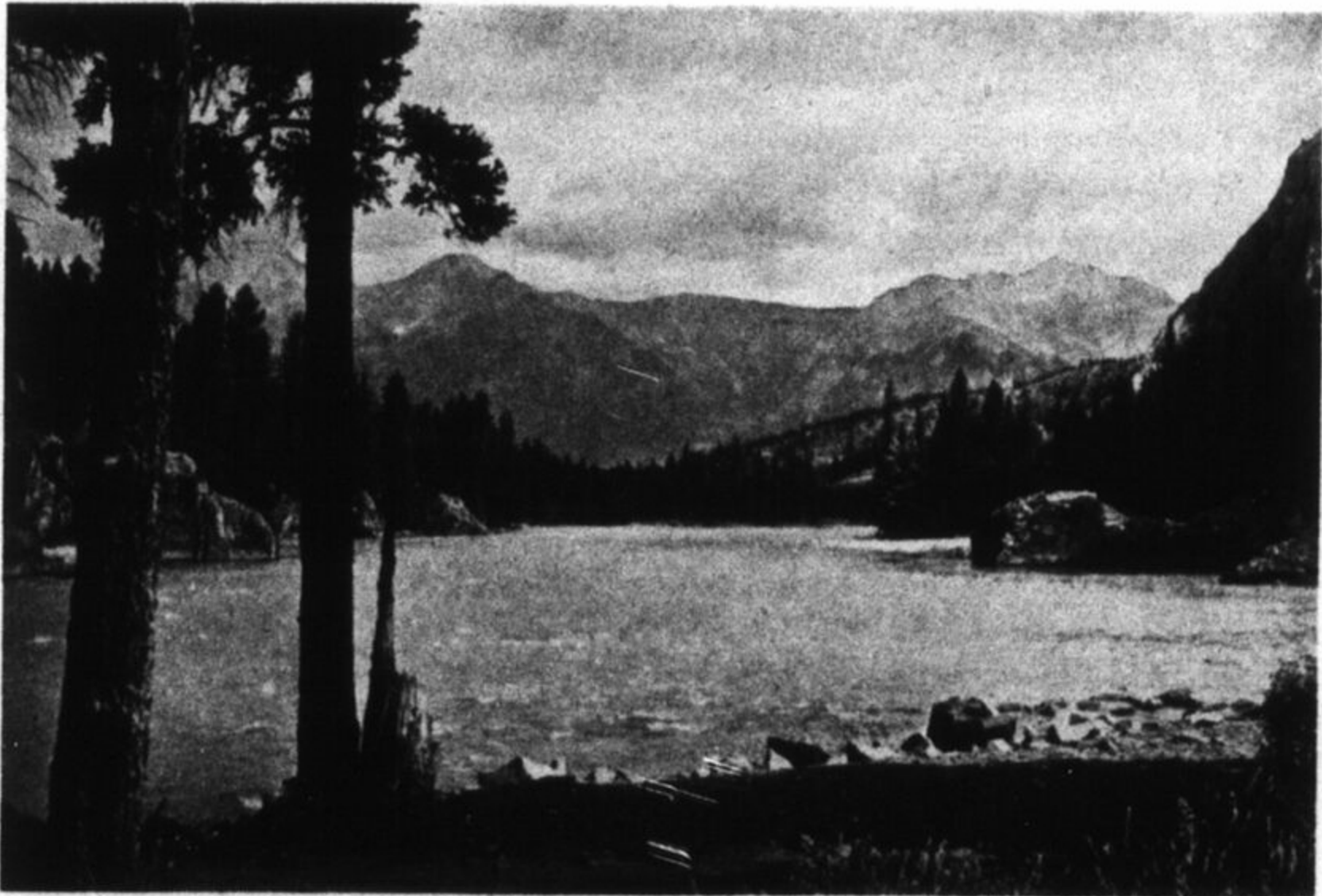
“We have had enough of action and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was rolling
free.”

Is this not evidence enough that the Poets through the Ages knew the trials of the would-be pilot? If you would have it confirmed by evidence, consider Portia's comment on a *Shaky Landing*:

“It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven,
Upon the earth beneath. . . .”

R.K.C.

Footnote: “Such a good landing, Old Boy, I didn't know I was down
. . . . And by God, I wasn't!”



THE BOW RIVER, BANFF



Entertainment

News

STAGE

During the summer, stage entertainments have been noticeable solely by their absence. However, now that the long winter nights are upon us, together with the cold weather, stage entertainment is well under way again, and it is hoped that some improvement has been noticed by the audiences. Such improvement is due to the sub-committee which has been set up, consisting of the heads of departments necessary for the regular production of variety shows and plays. These names might well be mentioned, for it is felt there may be others who are willing to help out in one way or another and who will come forward if they know who is running that part of the job in which they are interested. First of all, there are two concert parties, the producers being A/C Coggins and LA/C Hyde. These parties produce variety programmes.

The ever-popular Band-wagon is under the control of Sgt. Fletcher, whilst F/O Davies, with his co-producers Cpl. Quine and LA/C Weeks (R. T. Section), produces the plays. F/O Wilson (S.B.A. Flight) is in charge of the male voice choir.

All these producers are backed up by the services of the Stage Manager, F/Lt Bell, assisted by Cpl. Dennis and Cpl. Devey (Maintenance) in whose department come the scenic artist (LA/C Dobby), the stage carpenter and the electrician LA/C Richards - Link trainer section). This committee meets regularly under the chairmanship of the entertainments officer, and a programme is brought out monthly.

By the time the first number of the magazine goes to press, we hope to have the programme for January well under way, but at the time of writing it is not yet decided. We would like anyone who is interested or has any ideas whatsoever to get in touch with any of the persons mentioned above. All offers of help will be very much appreciated.

Finally, we would like to wish the Station magazine the best of luck and hope that it will thrive, and blossom as an important Station Institution.

DANCING

Many successful dances have been run by sections on the Station and others are "in the bag". The prop and stay of our dances is of course the ever-popular "Blue-Aces" combination, whose fame continues to spread throughout the land.

SKATING LESSON

THE Squadron Leader got out of the taxi, and started fumbling in his pocket. I approached, resigned to the inevitable touch, and sure enough, though I eyed him coldly and threw him up a smart one, he greeted me with an affability never apparent in the Mess (at least, not during bar opening hours), and asked if he could have the loan of ten bucks, Old Boy, to pay off the taxi.

Always on the look-out for a good bobbing opportunity, I brought out my wallet and accompanied the Squadron Leader into the Mess. Overcome, apparently, by such easily-acquired affluence, he confided in me that he had been buying skates. Dashed good fun, Old Boy, skating. What, never tried it? Oh, I say, over here if you can't skate they treat you as a postive pariah

So it came about that next afternoon we set out for a spot of initial dual. When I had disposed of the taxi (the Squadron Leader had left his wallet behind, dash it!), and had donned a pair of skates, the Squadron Leader led me on to the ice.

"Bit slippery, Sir," I remarked as I clung desperately to the barrier fence. But no. It appeared that skating was really dashed easy. Just as easy as walking. All I had to do was walk with long strides. Dashed easy - and dashed good fun.

I began walking with long strides. I accomplished half a stride. The Squadron Leader picked me up. I thanked him, and tried again. And again. And again.

The Squadron Leader thought somehow I hadn't got hold of the idea, Old Boy It worked like this. And he disappeared at a considerable knottage.

Now opportunist is my middle name. I seized this opportunity gratefully, and walked with long strides off the ice - on my hands and knees - to a little wooden shack which housed a refreshment counter. There I hauled myself to my feet with the aid of a chair, and, with as much dignity as I could muster in the circumstances, demanded a hamburger.

No sooner had I reached the pomeranian layer than a heavy hand fell on my shoulder.

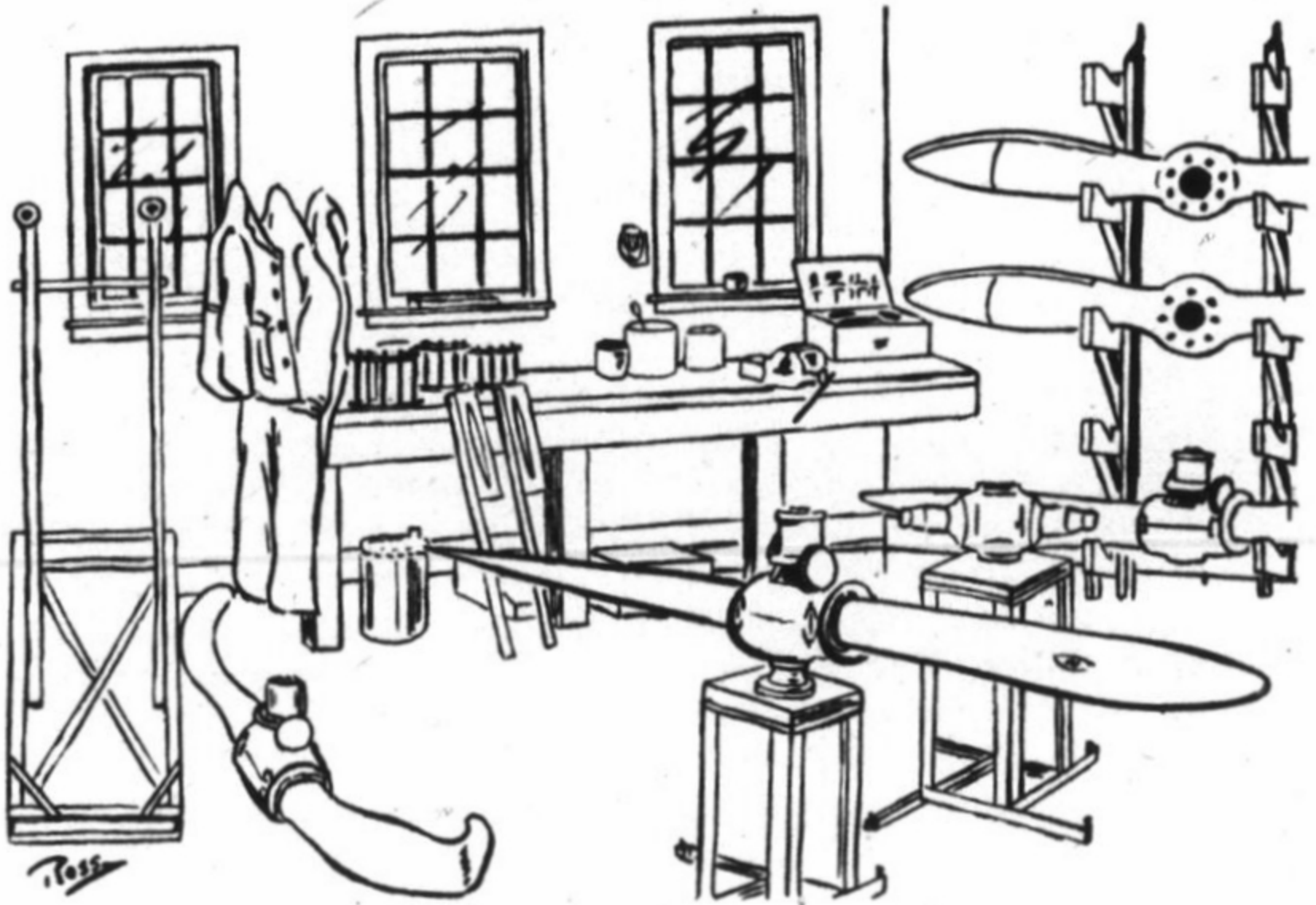
"Yes Sir!" I said, resignedly, and we returned to the ice

At last My Patience was Exhausted.

"Sir", I said, "I have the honour to report that in the past twelve minutes I have fallen heavily seventeen times, and lightly once, and that once to the detriment of the bodily well-being of a bulky matron of this estimable city. If you, Sir, will provide me with a pair of skates fitted with outriggers and strong brakes, and with further skates for my hands and for a portion of my anatomy which it is unnecessary for me to specify, then I will have another go. Until then, you've had it".

And I strode off the ice with my head in the air.

The Squadron Leader tried to pick me up again, but I waved him away, and sought solace once more in the hamburger.



"PROP SHOP"

MOAN FROM THE ELECTRICIANS SECTION:—There are bags of props in the Prop. Bay, but how about a "Prop" Board?

Congratulations to LAC Clarke (682) of 89 Course, and to Mrs. Clarke, on the birth of their son at their home at Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England. Congratulations also to Squadron Leader Raynor and Flight Lieutenant Bell, whose recent happy events have brought them many willing guests in the Officers' Mess!

TAIL PIECE

During a daylight attack upon a Hun factory, one pilot saw a large piece of concrete blown up as high as his aircraft. On the concrete was a lathe, and at the lathe a man was working. Astonished, the pilot throttled back to have a look, and of course, the undercarriage warning horn blew. The man on the concrete heard the horn blow, put on his cap, picked up his lunch-box, stepped off the concrete, and presumably pranged on the outskirts of the home town