

Nomad

5 PIASTRES



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NOMAD



454 SQUADRON
R. A. A. F.

C.O.'S MESSAGE

I am very pleased to welcome the second issue of our Squadron Magazine. It arrives under a new name, and much water has flowed under Sydney Harbour Bridge since the appearance of the first number. Since that time, too, we have accomplished a great deal; and, like the Arabs, folded our tents and moved away many times. Here then, is a souvenir of those times. I hope you will like it.

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EDITORIAL

First and foremost "Nomad" is this Squadron's magazine reflecting the pleased smiles and quiet chuckles of its squadron members.

We hope the paper has achieved its main objective.

It is our second issue since this conflict commenced and since the Squadron formed. Naturally the Squadron has evolved, matured and improved with experience, and we hope the present issue manifests a similar improvement on the last.

Getting the paper out has not been easy, but we feel that it is worth while passing on some ideas and sentiments of the boys to the folk at home.

Our team of story-writers, cartoonists and poets include all ranks from all sections of the Squadron, so we can truly say it reflects their thoughts, although they may be influenced by savouring of the sterile, arid and waterless environment.



That role was filled in Egypt until 454 Squadron personnel took over the job of servicing the Liberators of another squadron. That was their work for about three months.

At this time the Germans were driving towards the Caucasus and the Black Sea and it was feared that they might launch an offensive against Irak, Iran and the vital Mosul oilfields. To counter this threat a force was formed of which 454 Squadron was to be a part, equipped as a light bomber formation, and moved to Irak, for training.

Four-five-four stayed there for three cold, quiet, peaceful and enjoyable months of training. There it spent its first Christmas—a Christmas which was rendered more enjoyable by forethought in buying 61 turkeys at eight shillings each upon arrival and fattening them.

The period of training was not marred by either flying accidents or fatalities.

Early in the New Year 454 was ordered back to Egypt and soon the move began.

A short period of training over the Squadron settled down to serious business equipped with Baltimores. Squadron Leader D. N. Milligan arrived as Squadron Leader Flying.

In March came the first operation. Two Baltimore were scrambled suddenly to co-operate in an anti-submarine hunt, but the search passed off without incident. Anti-submarine hunts and convoy patrols were almost daily occurrences for the remainder of that month, sometimes in co-operation with two other Australian squadrons.

April saw a move from Egypt to an aerodrome in Libya, where 454 Squadron's neighbour was another Australian squadron also engaged on shipping patrols and anti-submarine searches. The unit had its first "prang" on April 24, when a Baltimore ground-looped and was wrecked, nobody injured. By now 454 was in full swing as an operational squadron and May was to see a great increase in activity and the scope of its operations.

On the night of May 7 the first of two leaflet raids on Crete was carried out. The leaflets were printed in German and were for the benefit of the enemy soldiers of occupation on the island.

It was in May and June that 454 was first on offensive shipping sweeps off the coasts of Greece and Crete, searching for small caiques of 20 to 150 tons which were being used by the Germans to provision their garrisons on the small islands of the Aegean and elsewhere. Here very useful work was done.

The object of the attacks was to stop this traffic, and this was attained. First the caiques were sent out by night instead of by day hugging the coast, and then the Germans were compelled to replace

them by J.U. 52's—a more costly method of transport and one which imposed additional strain on the Luftwaffe.

In search of these caiques a dozen or so offensive sweeps were carried out, the first on May 4. In the sweeps 450 tons of shipping was damaged. The A.O.C. sent his congratulations on "the fine work being done in the Aegean". On occasion caique crews, probably Greek, waded to the aircraft, took to their dinghies and rowed rapidly away. This meant that if the abandoned caique was not actually sunk it drifted to destruction on the rocks on the shore. The caiques were both bombed and machine-gunned.

On two occasions the squadron's Baltimores were intercepted and attacked by ME 109's. The first time was on May 30 when four aircraft were returning from a sweep near the Greek island of Kythera. The Baltimores closed formation and waited. The two Messerschmitts flew along with them for five minutes and then one climbed while the other fell back for an attack. When the attack was made all the Baltimores let the enemy aircraft have it and tracer was seen entering its belly as it broke away at close range. It was claimed as damaged. The top Messerschmitt dropped two sticks of bombs on the formation, both sticks bursting in the area.

The bombing attack was interesting, as these tactics had been tried out by Germans elsewhere without any success.

A similar attack on a lone Baltimore had an unhappy ending for the enemy. On a recce of the southern coast of Crete, Flying-Officer D. Lewis was subjected to eight separate attacks by two M.E. 109's.

On the second last occasion his rear gunner, Flight Lieutenant A. Carruthers, a Canadian, sent one M.E. away with smoke pouring from its engine. The other M.E. then made the final attack and Carruthers got in a good burst which caused it to pull up close also



First birthday party — and the cooks and waiters put in some heavy work dishing out the tucker.

with smoke pouring from its engine. The aircraft went into a spin until near the water it burst into flames and crashed into the sea. Flight-Lieutenant Carruthers was credited with one Messerschmitt destroyed and one damaged.

On June 8, 454 had its first fatal accident since it began training eight months before in Irak.

In the early days of July they were very busy on convoy duty in the Mediterranean playing their part in the invasion of Sicily.

A large scale attack on Crete was arranged, over a hundred Hurricanes, Beaufighters and Baltimores participating. 454 were detailed to carry out low-level bombing and strafing attacks on selected targets in the island and suffered losses but it is believed some of the crews escaped with their lives.

Flight-Sergeant R. G. Akhurst scored hits on a factory and a causeway before his port engine was hit by flack on the north coast of the island.

He then set off through the hills and ravines of central Crete under heavy fire from hill gunposts. His aircraft was vibrating so badly that he could not see his instruments, but on one engine he flew across 180 miles of sea and landed on a beach in North Africa. Although his aircraft was damaged beyond repair his crew were all saved. Flight-Sergeant Akhurst received an immediate award of the D.F.M.

Since then much has happened. For a time the Squadron switched from the offensive to the defensive, and records in flying hours were broken providing air cover for convoys off the African coasts.

The work was tiring, uneventful and unspectacular, but none the less necessary. And it provided a test of endurance for the ground crews from which they emerged with flying colours. Indeed this whole period was a triumph for the men who, working from dawn to dusk and often longer, in heat and frequently rising sand, kept the aircraft in the air. They groused. Of course they groused! But they never let up on the job, and 454 never failed to fulfil an operational commitment.

Thus ended the Squadron's first year. Wing Commander Campbell was posted back to Australia and Wing Commander Coates D.F.C. took his place as C.O. Tribute is due to Ian Campbell for the thundering good job he did.

There followed a brief stay in Palestine—"Too good to be true." And then the Squadron was ordered back to the desert to tackle the biggest task it has ever faced. But the nature of this task, and the story behind it, cannot yet be told. Perhaps in a future issue...

SSH! THEY MAY BE LISTENING

This article does not presume to give a comprehensive survey of the latest research on Gremlins, but rather is confined to their activities in relation to our Squadron.

Gremlins broadly may be divided into four main classifications:—

1. Wicked types.
2. Shocking types.
3. Mischievous types.
4. Good types.

There are also, of course, Amphibious types, which confine their activities to flying boat squadrons, Furry types, found in Iceland, and Utterly Unspeakable types. But you wouldn't want us to talk about them.

Those of the "Shocking" type specialise in opening gills and throttles after they have been closed; placing bomb dumps in front of taxi-ing aircraft; jumping up and down on mainplanes until landing wheels are driven underground, and pushing targets away after bombs have been released.

"Mischievous" type Gremlins, make a practice of snatching dividers and protractors from navigators' hands, and hurling them down between grill and escape hatch; blowing dust into turret guns; causing sudden wind changes in the vicinity of desert lilies; and for no apparent reason, and at the most awkward times, inflating Mae Wests, so that the unfortunate wearer has to be forcibly extracted from his cockpit.

"Good" types blow up sandstorms for the benefit of squadrons based near large towns. This is a good thing.

The depredations of "Wicked" types of Gremlin, are too disgraceful to discuss.



There are fortunately not many confirmed reports of Gremlin activities on our Squadron, but several instances have undoubtedly occurred. There is the case where a pilot making a landing approach, quite unaware that Gremlins of the 'Wicked' classification were industriously winding down the aerodrome, made a perfect landing twenty feet off the deck, with disastrous results for the aircraft. This was a bad thing. The fact that the higher authorities accepted the Gremlin explanation without question proves that people are now quite Gremlin minded. This is a good thing.

Until quite recently, it was generally accepted that Gremlins confined their attentions to aircraft, but it now appears that this theory is incorrect. In support of the later hypothesis is the instance in which an officer driving back late at night from a neighbouring mess found that no less than five forty-gallon oil drums had been placed directly in front of his truck at intervals en route, indisputably work of 'Mischievous' type Gremlins.

Most of our aircrews wear 'anti-Gremlin' scarves, and this is a good thing. It is also recommended that on Operational sorties, shorts be worn back to front, and a roll of paper be carried in the hip pocket. Since Gremlins are supposed to be unable to travel in straight lines, navigators are advised to give circular courses, and pilots should at all times fly in ever diminishing circles.

If all other expedients fail, aircrews should resort to prayer, and chant in unison over the intercomm:—

"Little Gremlins, please be kind,
"Don't be such an awful bind,
"Just bitch off, if you don't mind!"

DESIGN FOR THE PERFECT BREAKFAST



Do you remember that recipe given by O. Henry?

"There'll never be a perfect breakfast eaten", he wrote, "until some man grows arms long enough to stretch down to New Orleans for his coffee, and over to Norfolk for his rolls, and reaches up to Vermont and digs a slice of butter out of a spring house, and then turns over a beehive close to a white clover patch in Indiana for the rest. Then he'd come pretty close to making a meal on the ambrosia that the Gods eat on Mount Olympia."

We might add a couple of new-laid Aussie eggs and a rasher of two of English pre-war streaky. That almost forgotten luxury, kippers, shouldn't be forgotten either. And now if you'll get your irons and line up, the snags, beans and shai will be up immediately.

LOW-DOWN ON THE AUSSIE FRONT

by E. C. B.

Dear Mr. Editor,

I'm led to believe that you are welcoming suggestions, criticism, etc., but have nothing in that line to shoot. However I recently received (in the last batch of Aussie mail that is, about three months ago) a letter from an obscure uncle of mine who is bashing the Axis on another front—generally in front of the local bar back home. I say obscure, because he sports a growth of black beard that would shame some of our blokes who go on detachment; and also, he has a wife who tips 19 stone in her stockings, no more; and she has

very pushing ways as he told me particularly after he's had a bit of quiet "sess" with the boys—celebrating the 4th of July or something—and she comes to do close convoy patrol on him on the way home.

Says he has that horrible sinking feeling in no way assisted by the pick-me-up he's been sinking earlier in the night.

Getting back to the letter, (I had to get expert advice from the other fellers in my tent as to the fact that it was a letter, and not a piece of blotting paper which had been crammed into the envelope by mistake—probably by the censor) it gives, to my mind, a fair idea of the conditions existing in Aussie at the present time, so I thought that your Magazine would be an excellent place in which to present the 'gen', to all who are interested.

Here's the letter:

"Dear Boots, (*that's me!*)

Ow are yew? Yore arnt and me is very anxious to no how yew are bowling them over—the Jerries I mean. (I haven't bowled any 'over yet thought I've seen the M.T. go for the desert lilies in a big way). Yore mother as told us ow yew are with an Orstralian mob and that yew like it fine after the Pommie outfits. Things is pretty good an quiet since rationin come in—booze is short an yore arnt complains about th' clothin rationin (me too because enough stuff to make 'er a dress would build one of them E.P.I.P.'s).

I gone back to usin the 'orse an sulky because there ain't enough juice only for the WAAAF's to drive ossficers around in Packards with, an when we boils the billy now it seems waste er time there aint hardly enough tea in the weekly ration to colour the "moyer". (My

uncle was in the Middle East in the last do). I'm a bit old to take advantage of the blackouts like the young blokes, still I s'pose there'd be only trouble from the missus. I get into enough 'ot water now which I don't like at the best of times except cold in bottles with Ballarat Bitter on the label.

There is plenty of uniforms about—an I'm euchered when it comes to pickin out who's what. Of course I no the Ack I Foofs, being an old un meself, and the Air Force, and the Yanks is distinguishable by the bulge in their left and breast pocket—it's where they keep dough y'know—a roll a blessed kangaroo couldn't jump over. Also they always seem to 'ave a sheila in tow—I dunno why—our boys must be slipping a bit. I remember when I was in uniform: well, look at me now: well and truly married and how!

The women in uniforms is the trouble—introduced me to a lass the other night, who said she belonged to the AWAS, an not being slow to take the opportunity asked er did she, naturally expectin er to say "aywa" but darn near lost me uppers when she delivered a bit of this ere unarmed combat stuff. Yore arnt arst me what ad appened to me—said I'd run into a wall in the blackout—anyway that's what it felt like—only she weren't no wall flower. I only just found out what AWAS means in Orstralian—me Arabic is wasted back 'ome 'ere.

Well I reckon that's about all fer now—although it says nine pipemma by the alarm clock the sun says about midday—this darn daylight saving is a (censored).

Yore arnt promises to send a cake when the grocer comes good with some raisins and sultanas so ere's opin.

Orl the best an remember yew can't sink your cake an them get more—its too much ter expect. Remember me to orl yore cobbers son, from yore lovin uncle.

Bob.

P.S. I ear it rumoured that orl the Aussies are comin ome soon, do you reckon its fair dinkum?"

Well Mr. Editor, there it is. I trust you will see your way clear to publish it for those who might like to know what's going on.

Wishing your publication every success. E.G.B.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

All the mechanical power, wind power, horse power, and water power used in the England of Queen Elizabeth, for a week, would equal that released in a moment by a 8,000 lb. bomb!

Here then we may have some idea of the power that this generation wields.

NO TIME LIMIT

*He bet a thousand quid he could stay
insane for just one year.*



It all began in a little pub off Charing Cross one night last winter. There were quite a number present, representing all the trades and professions of our civilised world, lawful and otherwise.

We were accustomed to meet at this particular place every Tuesday night for an informal dinner and talk; drinks were served also in large quantities. On this particular evening, the conversation centred around the Cartwright Murder Case, which had caused quite a stir at that time.

You may remember how Morelli, proprietor of several shady night clubs, was charged with the murder of Stephen Cartwright, and eventually executed after the plea of insanity had been dismissed.

We were discussing the chances of such an appeal when Jimmy Bennet, a reporter on the "Evening Star" and a friend of mine, stood up and loudly declared that "anyone could, with his wits about him, feign insanity". He silenced the roar of protest, by saying that he was prepared to bet one thousand pounds, as proof of his ability to hoax all the so-called specialists we could produce, for one year. He made the stipulation that at the end of the period we should come forward, disclose the scheme, and so procure his release. I guess we were all a little intoxicated that night and so the details were fixed and the stakes handed over.

For several weeks Jimmy's crazy antics passed without much comment but at last he was sent to be medically examined by a board of specialists, and much to our surprise he did fool those so-called experts into pronouncing him insane, and in need of constant attention. So Jimmy went away to the Mental Home. I used to call in and see him once a week, and for a time he seemed to be enjoying the quiet life. We kept him well supplied with books, and he once told me that at last he would be able to write that novel he had always wanted to write.

As the months passed I could see that he was feeling the strain, and once I saw stark fear flash into his eyes. A month or so before

the date fixed for his "release", my business suffered a temporary set-back and I had perforce to go away to a distant branch office. Time passed until the day when I remembered Jimmy had won his bet. I motored through the dank, steaming countryside to the Mental Hospital, and asked to see my friend. He entered and on confronting me stared vacantly, with no sign of recognition.

"Jimmy", I cried hoarsely, "you've won. You've done it as you said you would". I reached for my wallet and handed him a cheque for one thousand pounds. Then like a flash of light, recognition dawned in his eyes, and screaming horribly, he tore the slip into a thousand pieces. Then he dropped to the carpet to sift them through his fingers.

NEVER HEARD AROUND THE SECTIONS

- Armament Officer: "Jones, you are doing well, think I'll have you made a Corporal".
- L.A.C. Jones: "Oh no Sir, I don't deserve it".
- A.C. Bluebottle: "Sir, may I exchange these socks?".
- Equipment Officer: "They are not worn out, but never mind—keep them and here is another pair to be going on with".
- Adjutant: "So you are going on leave, Smith. I hope you have enough money".
- A.C. Smith: "Yes Sir, I have saved five pounds".
- Adjutant: "That is not enough, here is another *ten pounds*"!!
- Must have a bath: I can't sleep with my feet again tonight.
- Advice to Innocent: Marriage is largely a compromise. If you want to go to the races and the wife wants to go to the theatre—you go to the theatre.
- Senior N.C.O.: "What sort of leave did you have in Alex?"
- V.S.N.C.O.: "Had a great time; lost twenty five quid and was put on two charges".
- Intelligence Officer: "Have you anything to report? Did you see anything?"
- Sgt. Oldhand: "Not much. A convoy of twenty ships, 3 109's and a rowing boat, otherwise nothing to report".
- Intelligence Officer: "My word! How many men were in the rowing boat?"

LILY OF THE DESERT



"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its fragrance on the desert air".

Egypt, land of the Pharaohs, consists of four things: the Nile Delta, the desert, tarbushes, and boot-blacks. The Egyptians live on the Delta and wear tarbushes. The English live in the desert, and the boot-blacks live on the English.

The Egyptians, with their glamorous and exotic yashmaked women, dwell on the fertile alluvial plain 'neath the cool green foliage of fruitful date palms, and verdant eucalypts. The English and Desert Lilies, share the sterile, arid, waterless waste.

The 'Desert Lily'—*Lilium potorum var kerostinium*—, was unknown to Linaeus, and never classified by him. Recent botanic research has finally determined it as the above. Apparently it is an extraordinary mutation, and very high in the scale of evolution. It has acclimatised itself, and now, like the English, thrives in the desert.

The origin of the 'Desert Lily' is unknown. It is an exotic species Nature probably introduced it as a necessity. This modern variety, *Kerostinium*, grows on a sandy soil, with a stony, rubble-like sub-soil, to a height of 2'6" to 3'. It has a simple bulbous tap root. The paucity of roots necessitates frequent watering. *Lilium potorum var kerostinium* reproduces by 'cuttings', never by budding or grafting. Irresponsible lorry drivers often cut short the seedling in its youth. When young, the bark has a hyshine bloom, but being very susceptible, rapidly succumbs to the 'rust' fungus, which usually extends over its entire surface.

The stem seldom branches, but usually bends at the node, and leans towards the direction of the prevailing wind. This chemotactic attraction of the prevailing wind is only partly understood, probably again the result of necessity. When the archeologists of posterity dig up and discover fossilized "Desert Lilies", they will exclaim... "Ha Ha! the English dined, wine, and drank beer here".

DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

When I meet a bloke who shoots a line
About time spent in Egypt's clime,
And tells me, then, to "Get some in,"
I smile, and sadly say to him,
Remember chum! The wooded lanes
That homeland's countryside abound,
The fields of green, quite scarce out here,
Where oft in Spring-time lambs are found



Then, later on, the wayside inn
Abounds with voices that you know,
Are full of cheer from mellow ale
That brings with it an inward glow.
As you walk home through winding lanes
With breezes sighing through' the trees,
Black against the evening grey,
Don't you remember all of these?

It's true you've done your job out here
And I'll agree, too, mighty well,
They greeted it at home I hear,
With vibrant peal of thankful bell.
I think it would have filled your mind
With memories of days long gone,
If you had been at home just then
And heard the bells peal out their song.

I missed them too, and now I'm here,
Although it's not so long ago
Since I had all the other things,
And watched the world arenas grow.
That's what it means to "Get some in."
And I think you too will agree
To have these things at any time,
Is best for you and best for me.
So when your homeland's drawing near
On that return ship by and by,
Just think of me, still waiting here.

RAID ON MELOS



I awake with a start and glance at the luminous dial of my wrist watch; wizard, only 0200, so off to sleep again. Awake again to find someone shaking my shoulder...0230.

The boys are crawling out of their blankets and the language is shocking. We dress by pulling on and lacing boots, slip on Mae Wests which have been serving as pillows. Half awake, we amble over to the Mess. There is a rainbow around the moon, and it looks wizard.

The bacon, eggs, and coffee are extra.

We pile on to the truck, and bump and sway across the uneven ground to the 'Ops' tent. Final briefing consists mainly of getting the latest 'Met.' gen, and then we are bumping and swaying once more out to our waiting aircraft. The last cigarette glows in the darkness; the boys are rather quiet.

Parachutes on, helmets on and into our cockpits. Hell! it's cold... Plug in on the intercomm., set the altimeter, check bomb switches, and do up safety harness.

"Pilot to crew, are you receiving me?"

"Navigator receiving you O.K."

"Wireless Op, receiving you O.K."

"Air gunner O.K."

"Okay".

The port engine shatters the quiet, then the starboard, and we are moving.

"Navigator to pilot, first course, 011 magnetic".

"First course 011, okay".

The navigation lights of the leading aircraft lead us through the half light. The engines roar in crescendo as we run up across wind, first port then starboard. Okay. It would be grim if our kite was

U/S after getting up at such a ghastly hour. The first kite glides away into the night.

"Pilot to crew, ready to take off?"
"Navigator ready"
"Wireless op ready".
"Air gunner okay".

We turn in by the chance light. The twin lights of the flare path flicker redly away to the perimeter. A green flash from the controller, and we get weaving.

The engines roar, and the first flares move slowly by; the nose comes down and now the flares begin to glide swiftly by; a slight bump and another.

0415 Airborne!

Engine sound changes as props go into coarse pitch and quieten as the throttles come back.

"Pilot to navigator... on course".
"Okay".

0417, base. Set course.

The altimeter creeps back as we dive to the 'drink,' height 100 feet. Hope the barometric pressure doesn't alter. Airspeed O.K. course O.K. We are flying through cloud static in milky white space without sense of motion or time. The cloud starts to break and lightning flashes intermittently on the horizon. A clear space ahead. "Hullo Wireless op. Get ready to drop flare... Go!"

"Air gunner to navigator, unobserved".
"Airgunner to navigator. Drift three degrees starboard".
"Damn! I knew that met, wind was up the creek".
"Navigator to pilot. Alter course 008 magnetic".
"Course 008 okay".

The lightning flashes are all around the kite now, and I haul out, the thermos. The hot tea is wizard. We are in the clear. The 'drink' shows suddenly close below and the moon sails indifferently and coldly above.

"Air gunner to navigator. Land on the starboard bow". But it can't be; still eleven minutes to E.T.A. In cloud again, but it breaks with the first light and our landfall comes up dead ahead.

0545. "Navigator to pilot. Alter course 023 magnetic, climb to ten thousand indicated.

"Okay navigator".

0604. Target ahead. Most of the Island is covered with low cloud, but the bay is clear. A rapid discussion with the pilot and the target is decided. Hell! it's cold. Wish that I'd worn my long strides! Setting on bomb sight O.K., bomb switches O.K. Tiny lights start flickering at us from the deck and the flak comes up.

"Pilot to navigator. Turning in," and we start to jink. Two thin wires and the target oscillating to each side.

"Left... left... five degrees."
"Bomb doors open... steady."
"Left... left... steady, steady."
"Steady, steady, right... steady."

"Steady... steady, one... two... three... four... five... six... bombs gone! Bomb doors closed Camera on."

"Pilot to navigator. Bomb doors closed," and we are jinking again.

"Navigator to pilot. Steady for camera."

We are over the target and the Wireless operator comes over the intercomm.

"Flak on the port quarter, bursting two thousand below".

"Navigator to pilot. Set course home 175 magnetic. Let's get to Hell out of here!"

"Course 175 okay," and we are on our way. The nose comes down and the needle starts to creep around the clock. Flying on the deck again.

"Navigator to pilot. Alter course 171 magnetic."

"Course 171 okay."

"Airgunner to pilot. Aircraft on the starboard quarter, one thousand above, one thousand yards." But it's wearing the same sweater.

The trip home is rather boring. On the deck all the way. The thermos flasks come out and then a thin brown line shows on the horizon. A wizard sight. We climb to clear the coast.

"Pilot to crew. Ready for landing." Airscrews into fine pitch, flaps down, and the nose dips sharply. The deck rushes up, nose up, touch, touch again, and we are down, and taxi-ing in to dispersal. Safety harness off and we clamber stiffly out.

A cigarette tastes wizard as once again we are bumping and swaying towards Ops, this time for de-briefing. Off for our second breakfast, and then to the cot.

Well... that's that!



EASTER LAMENT

Hair to our shoulders, beards to our knees,
Bully and biscuits, over-ripe cheese,
Water that's salty—and slimy too,
Grit in the saucepan, sand in the stew;
Miles we have travelled, months we have spent,
Prowling the desert, weary and bent,
Stop here today, push on tomorrow,
We've nothing to spend, hang-all to borrow.
Once we turned round and said, "Thank God at last",
But we turned round again, and went back twice as fast.
Arrived at Map Ref, Tee-Emas a bell—
Six chaps were missing—the cook-house as well.
Tomorrow is Easter, how happy we'll be—
No beer, no fags, we shan't half have a spree.
But ours is no hardship compared with the blokes
Camping in Blighty away from their folks,
Why! even J. Priestly complained of their trials,
Far from a pub—at least thirteen miles!
So tomorrow we'll pray for the boys back at home,
Away from their girls and all alone,
That's solved our great problem—we know what to do,
SPEND ALL OUR EASTER, WEEPING FOR YOU!!!

DESERT RAT.

HE WAS JUST A COMMON AUSSIE

(Sung to the tune, 'She was poor but she was honest').

*He was just a common Aussie
Victim of the Empire Scheme,
He was sucked into their clutches,
And now just hear him scream...*

*Eastern perfumes that he sent her,
Silken stockings, gowns and hanks,
Then the mailman brings a letter,
We are through... I've got a Yank,*

*Far away across the ocean,
He sailed to play his part,
Saw his shiela softly sobbing,
Leaving her with a broken heart.*

*See him riding in a pharric,
When in Alex down he goes,
Climbing stairs in search of pleasure
No more buys he silken hose.*

*Chorus: It's the same the Air Works over,
It's the "Erk" wot gets the blame,
It's the Sergeant gets the credit
Ain't it just a ruddy shame.*

THE CROW WHO WALKED

Personality note on Mick Ey, a South Australian who once wore his boots out coming back from a flight.

We have all used at various times, the expression, "As the crow flies". Usually this brings up a picture of winged flight, across the shortest distance, but to be a bit different, we here present you with the tale of a "Crow" who walked.

We have pleasure in introducing Warrant Officer Mick Ey, who hails from the "Mallee" districts of South Australia. Before joining the R.A.A.F. most of his time was taken up in coaxing wheat to grow, and filling in spare moments in the gymnasium at Mt. Barker, in the capacity of an instructor. Another of his hobbies is deep-sea fishing, where the Southern Ocean gave him ample opportunities to display his talent. The former was to serve him well in Libya's wastes.

For his initial training, Mick went to Pearce, West Australia, and from there back to his own State to Mt. Gambier, to learn about observing. After doing his O.T.U. at Kenya (where he also did quite a bit of trout fishing), he was posted to a squadron.

Warrant Officer Ey did not do many operations before he was forced to do his flying the hard way—per boot. As observer to Squadron Leader Mills, he was well out over Jerry's side of the fence, when one motor failed and they just had to force lob in the desert.

Salvaging what rations they could from the kite, the crew set off towards our lines. Water was a big problem and what they did get had to be drained from the radiators of derelict trucks, and the like, which they came across in the 'blue'. Mostly though, they had to do without, and the going was not what one would call easy. They kept plodding along and on the tenth day, when they were boiling a billy, of tea, a South African Armoured Car patrol came up and trained its guns on them. Luckily their identity was noticed, and with a series of hitch-hikes, the party eventually turned up at its base, long overdue, and posted as missing.



So they were all entitled to belong to the "Late Arrivals Club", the emblem of which Mick used to wear on his left breast,—the "Flying Boot".

Shortly after this, Mick was posted to another Squadron. Again 'Lady Luck' frowned on him—this time a piece of shrapnel in the foot—and he had to spend a few weeks in dock.

Since that time Mick has become a well-known figure with 454—and now that his tour has ended and he has got a berth with B.O.A.C. we wish him all the best for the future.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, we will go into the geography of the business. All Aussie States have various odds and ends poked into their respective "Coats of Arms". The one we are most interested in at the moment is South Aussie, and they proudly show the "Old Crow" as their guiding star and main source of nourishment. Consequently, all South Aussies are known as "Crow Eaters" or for short, "Crows".



Bill, Tommy, the Greenock Man and Boydy get stuck into a 40-hour. Ask Bill what he proposes to do with the oilcan.

IN THOSE DAYS THERE WAS A DESERT

And so it was decided.

Tommy was to visit his grandfather and great preparations were made for the all important visit.

How many times had he looked forward to this. His mother had often told him of his grandfather's adventure, of the strange world that existed not many years ago. Especially did Tommy want to know why his father had previously forbidden him to dwell for long on the subject of his grandfather.

"Putting such silly ideas into his head," was his father's favourite remark. "The child must not be worried with such crazy stories of an age that is best forgotten."

Tommy was very excited, yes, very excited. He had heard vague stories of the world when his grandfather was young. How large groups of people had even fought each other for years. He had heard (only vaguely mind you. For the world government in the Year of Our Lord 1996, had erased all histories of the great struggle) of engines made of metal, which flew above the ground and dealt death and destruction to sleeping towns below. He had heard how vast armies of men had sought to kill and destroy each other in the deserts of Africa, and the steaming jungles of the Tropics.

There were many questions he wished to ask.

Grandfather was not what you might call the 'black sheep of the family,' but it was understood by all its important members, that he was to be considered as a relic of the Dark Ages.

And now, here were the two of them. Tommy with his eyes wide open, hands on chin, listening to this famous grandfather of his. How thrilling it all was! Why he had actually taken part in the madness of those years.

"Yes, Tommy, very many of us would like to know how it really began. In those days my son, the world was divided into different countries, and people thought, spoke, and acted so differently, that no one could understand the other, and everyone mistrusted everyone else."

"But why didn't the world government put an end to such nonsense, Granddad?"

"There was no world government then, laddie: one group of people called themselves Germans, another group Italians, another British and so on. They were continually arguing amongst themselves who was going to do this, and who was going to have that.

"One day the world divided into two camps, and decided to fight it out, who should be the stronger. Each group had machines of war. Vessels with guns, machines which flew through the air and fired deadly missiles, and dropped even deadlier bombs that shattered whole towns and killed thousands of people."

"But the people surely did not want that to happen," burst in Tommy.

"No, that was the tragedy of it all. No one in their senses wanted it, but it just happened, and then everyone did their best to win in order to survive."

"Tell me Granddad, is it true that you spent ten years in what used to be called the desert?"

"Yes, son. You see in those far off days, there was a great desert along the coast of North Africa. Parts of it were not so bad, but for miles there was nothing but rock, sand, dust and more dust, sand and rock. I remember one spot in particular where for days the wind blew and the sand rose and filled our eyes and ears, mouth and throat with grit, and no one could see more than five yards."

"Had they never heard of irrigation, Granddad?"

"Oh yes, but they were too busy organising each other's defeat to think about that. The steel cars (tanks they were then called), thousands of trucks, thousands of aeroplanes (you know, like the one you saw in the museum), made the desert even worse, and men lived and died out there, all hoping that some day it might end and the world return to sanity."

"And did it, Granddad?"

"Yes it did, but only after a very long time. Fortunately for you and me, and everyone else, the time came when one side collapsed, and men of vision, and enlightenment came to the fore and decided at last to rule the world with justice and fairness to all. One language was enforced, engines of war were abolished, and slowly, oh, so slowly, the world recovered from its death throes and now, here we are, in a society that never again will see such terrible events."

"Well Granddad, I don't see why there was so much fuss about it all. You must have all been very foolish."

"Yes my son, we were all 'round the bend'... 'round the bend'... 'round the...' "

"Hey, Porky! it's nearly eight o'clock. Wake up and stop yelling... 'Round the bend' in your sleep. Get out of bed if you want any breakfast. It's blowing half a gale outside..."

So... It was a dream!

BURNING THE PAGES

Put these on your book list

"LINE SHOOTERS' MANUAL", by F/LT Parkin, Achmed & Hassan, 25 P.T.

The author renders a vivid description of many an operational triumph forced home despite the combined operations of the Luftwaffe, and the Regia Aeronautica. He also entertains us with several personal incidents during his periods of relaxation.

He tells me that unfortunately most of these little notes were deleted by the Lord Chancellor. This book will however appeal to all line shooters and indeed to all who like the "James Hadley Chase" style.

"BEHIND THE SCENES", by the Colonel, H.M. Stationery Office, 25 P.T.

The writer, who has played an active part in operations, ranging from the dark by-ways off Dawassa St. to that sector of operations known to the general public as 'No. 6', gives the reader an insight into the other side of a military career.

He promises us a sequel to this, which (we hope) will appear in the near future, entitled, "Whoopie With the Army".

FLIGHT SERGEANTS, I KISS "EM", by "Erk". Haltmark & Bullsh, P.T. 10.

The writer, who for various reasons wishes to remain anonymous tears aside the veil of officialdom to reveal the inner personalities of those "Three stripe and Crowners". A book to be enjoyed by Sergeants and below.

"CYPRUS NIGHTS," by "BALDY" Printed anonymously. Bound in pink paper covers, this volume is obtainable from most Cairo and Alexandria street touts.



"COLONEL"

AND THERE WE WERE!



Random extracts from
the Squadron Line Book

- Discussing Lines:* "I never shoot a line."
Ian the Scot.
- At the Bar:* "No thanks. I'm strong—I've been knocking back temptation all my life."
North Coast Cockatoo.
- After a '48' in Alex:* "I'll have a glass of water please."
R. U. Tani.
- Dance Committee:* "I've always run the dances—I've never had a good time in my life."
Cockatoo Again.
- After the Raid:* "I jumped out of my Hurricane and was half way across the aerodrome, when I noticed that I still had the 'stick' in my hand."
The Greek God.
- Strafed on the Ground:* "The flak bursts were so close, I could smell the powder."
R.U. Tani Again.
- Advice to Pilots:* "You boys had better be careful flying formation in future. I'm camouflaging the aircraft tomorrow."
Paddy.
- Captured Italian Fleet:* "I'd like to fly over them—Of course, I've flown over them many times before!"
Camel.
- After a Recent Prang:* "I said to myself, 'We're going through that Wimpy, but that didn't get me worried. ...It was when I saw the one beyond it!'"
Bruce.

GOING HOME

Not only "When" but "How"

by Padre Bob Davies R.A.A.F.

This is the substance of an address given in answer to the challenge of an Australian airman who said to me, "Padre, if you will preach about 'Going Home', I will come to your service tonight". We both fulfilled our contract—he came along, and I spoke on the theme uppermost in most chaps' minds.

Well now! Let us think about 'Going Home'. Have you ever realised how much 'Going Home' has meant to you during your lifetime? Do you remember 'Going Home' from school for the first time?

Later on, 'Going Home' from your first day's work—just a grown-up man now—what about your first pay day! Ten shillings on the table for Mum and four shillings for yourself.

You now get tangled up with clubs, societies, organisations, etc., but somehow always find comfort in the fact that you can 'go home'. Perhaps you lived in a city, and can now recall catching the last tram home after escorting your lady friend home—what tired faces one used to see in the last tram or bus. If you lived in the country perhaps it was your horse that conveyed a weary lover homewards.

Have you ever realised that every time you have gone home, you have been a different chap from the bloke who earlier set out?... Your school, your work, your clubs, societies, and your lady friends, have all sent you back home a different man; they have helped to make you what you are.

War. War!! What an interruption in our normal life. Here we are out here living under conditions and circumstances entirely different to which we have been used. Yes, war must and does leave its mark on our character, because its influence is so powerful; and this is where I come to my point. I have no 'gen' on when we are going home, but I know this, that what is practically as important as the question "When are we going home?", is "How are we going home?".

Yes, it is not so much 'when', but 'how' and please don't let us adopt the attitude of 'Maleesh' to this all important question. It is important for many reasons—here are some:—

'How you Go Home' concerns your wife, your family, your fiancée, your friends, and your loved ones.

'How you Go Home' concerns the community to which you belong—it needs you in the task of reconstruction.

'How you Go Home' concerns yourself, your own inward happiness, your future.

Let us ask ourselves this question and be honest when we answer it—"How am I going home?" There is one thing I know—Religion is being 'at home' with God, and if we are 'at home' with God we are at Home with our fellow men. That is what helps me, but we all become like the Prodigal Son at times and wander away from home. Nevertheless, the message of that parable was that the Prodigal Son did come to himself and return home. Perhaps that is our task! It will not be easy, but solutions of difficult problems are never terribly simple.

And why you don't go home!



Air-Vice Marshal Wrigley, C in C, R.A.A.F. Overseas, explains the repatriation position, and makes his points on his fingers!

Attack from the Rear

I wonder if ever you have had that feeling which starts in the nape, continues up the back of the head and finishes in the forelock? I have had it many times, but most of all it occurs when new adventures start. That first examination, a new school, meeting new colleagues, taking up a new position, or the entering of the Service, were among the milestones which were conducive to its appearance and the tingling which followed.

Then came that first Operation. Invasion was imminent. We had a 'sticky' job to do—why pick me to have such a "bleeding...?" Yes those tinglings were very prevalent.

The briefing, and this is the real thing,—why does the officer look so much like Hitler? Surely they could have chosen a better looking fellow. What was that he was saying?... "Knit two, purl two, and then serve in the left hand corner." I must have the jitters, but no, he has the map there or has he? Surely not Abbott and Costello, —why show a comedy film to crews about to go on a 'job' like the one we are to do? Perhaps he is a psychologist.

The briefing is over. My head feels empty. It will all come back. It used to happen like that in examinations. I remember Stan McCabe saying how confident he felt once, and how he failed. I squeezed through!

Surely we're not to fly in that thing!... Why it has no fin, and surely one wing is longer than the other!... A slit tyre too. I wonder if the other fellows feel the same? I steal a glance at them. The pilot is eight feet tall, so I must be drunk, helplessly drunk. But I don't drink. I detest the stuff. What is wrong with me? They seem assured and big in character, as well as stature, whereas I feel small and grotesque; I must control myself.

We're in the 'kite'... the ridiculous feeling will go now. Why doesn't the darn thing start? It has! I breathe a sigh of relief. Wait! We're going straight up! I feel sick... the roll is terrible. I know this 'kite' is not airworthy. Why do we roll?... and leap? Why ever did they accept me as an Observer?

I am fighting my biggest battle. No one can help me, and everything I touch is either microscopically small or gigantically large. I have twelve webbed thumbs and each one of them is joint-

(Please turn to foot of following page)

TAPES - AND ALL THAT

- AC 2. — The most privileged rank in the Air Force in that the holder cannot be demoted or stripped. Offers great scope for advancement.
- AC 1. — On attaining his 1 the holder reaches the adolescence of his Air Force career—usually omits to shave the top lip and in most cases advises his parents to select a new house as he is on his way up.
- LAC. — A Group Captain having a run of bad luck.
- CORPORAL. — Offers greatest scope for future advancement—possibly a generalissimo or dictator.
- SERGEANT. — This exalted rank entitles the wearer of the three chevrons to demand that corporals and below stand to attention before doubting the sergeant's legitimacy.
- FLIGHT SERGEANT. — No one doubts his legitimacy.
- WARRANT OFFICER. — No one doubts his illegitimacy.
- PILOT OFFICER. — The first step in the downward path. Known to the world as a gentleman. He may take out nurses and V.A.D.'s; reserve tables in restaurants and cash cheques.
- FLYING OFFICER. — The wider braid permits him to assume the Oxford accent, call other officers "Old Boy" and sign leave passes.
- FLIGHT LIEUTENANT. — Removes the wire from his cap.
- SQUADRON LEADER. — Drops the Oxford accent and signs nothing.
- WING COMMANDER. — Entitled to a tent of his own, a staff car and a blonde nurse and or V.A.D. and late breakfast.
- GROUP CAPTAIN. — Actually an LAC having a wonderful run of good luck.
- COOKS. — Divided into four categories:—
Stew slingers,
Bully Bashers,
Poisoners,
Plain bloody murderers.

less. Horror!... stark and grim. I cannot, will not, get a grip on myself.

Then it happens. Terrific searing pains in the region of my rump. I am falling... and where is that string? I must go to the Sick Quarters and also see what 'chippie' can do with my bed...

DAMN THE SCORPIONS!

FOOT NOTE

•By ASPRO JIMMY

his feet not mine, and I'm quite sure he didn't go to the trouble of putting himself on Sick Parade to argue about the ownership of flattened objects stuck on to the end of his legs. So obviously he wants me to enquire about his size tens, and I do.

"The skin's coming off in between me toes, Sir," comes the reply from he-of-the-weary face.

"How long has this been going on?", comes the official query.

"Two months, Sir."

"That's a long time to be running around spreading infection, eh?"

"But it's never bothered me, Sir. The heat, Sir, you know."

Assuredly it is hot, so I presume the lethargic one wants to infer that the heat has made his feet worse.

"You've got athletes' foot, my lad," says the learned one, and proceeds to inscribe his book with words of wisdom, pertaining to the cult of Aesculapius.

"But I'm not an athlete, Sir."

"Doesn't matter. You've got athletes' foot and you've been spreading it around the camp for two months. Wash your feet once per day, and paint them with brilliant green dye for a fortnight. You'll need to wear socks in bed."

The weary one picks up his treatment chit wondering what good 'this brilliantine' is going to do to his feet, and amazes to find that his chit says 'M.D.' Maybe it's a mistake after all...

"Do I keep on with me duties, Sir? I'm a fitter."

"Yes, M. & D.—you're fit to work."

The Sick Parade is in progress. In comes a tired looking airman, wearing that apathetic look peculiar to fellows on sick parade, as if there was a developing cancer gnawing at their vitals.

"It's me feet, Sir," says the weary one.

Now that remark involves a nicety of grammar. If he means 'one foot,' then 'my foot' is the correct term, but if he means 'two feet,' then 'they are my feet' must be the correct expression. It involves also a nicety of law, for assuredly they are

So the weary one departs, not understanding why the M.O. should be so unsympathetic when his feet look so bad. He's discouraged, and only washes his feet every second day, stops his treatment after a week because the dye makes a mess of his socks and blankets, and ceases to worry about the skin between his toes. He decides that it will do to try out on the next M.O., who may be a more sympathetic bloke and a devotee of the Weir Mitchell cult, which treats everything by rest, good food and fresh air... The Airman's Paradise.

Of course there is a moral. There is a disease called 'athletes' food,' which is spread by contact with infected floors, etc., and which is difficult to cure. If you have it, take care you are cured before you stop treatment. For further particulars, apply to the M.O.

HOW MUCH DON'T YOU KNOW?

10 right is terrific... 15 is stupendous... 20 phenomenal...
more than 20, you must be in the Orderly Room!

1. Who said, 'Bungo', and when?
2. How poor is a liquid?
3. How good is 'Fair Enough'?
4. What is an 'Oppo'?
5. What is the Colonel's P.O.R. Number?
6. Did the 'Killer' receive lessons from Sandow?
7. What happened to Charlie's Victory Dinner?
8. When will Destry fly again?
9. For what are the proceeds of a raffle?
10. Who said, "My bowling average is...?"
11. "Where is my Bombay Bowler?", Who asked this searching question?
12. "It will have to be on a 664B". Who said this?
13. When did the Jeeps have their last inspection?
14. What place could be made dust-free?
15. What is corned beef?
16. "It's a piece of Caique". How did this phrase originate?
17. What is the comprehensive adjective?
18. An erk has been in the Service 'too long, but not long enough'.
Is this statement true or false?
19. What is an L.A.C. with two bars?
20. Dare you ask Scottie, "Why?"
21. What relationship is there between "Ackers" and
"Paper Raid?"
22. Why have the digits, 2, 9, and 5 such lucky properties.

WHAT'S COOKIN'?



Cooking in the desert, we can bake or fry,
Capurtling round the trench fire, brewing up the shai,
Blowing up the boilers—blimey, what a bang!
You can judge the petrol once you've got the hang,
When the sand is blowing in your mouth and eyes,
Burma Road will have to do instead of Charlie's pies.
Up and down the Turley, in and out the tents;
We're lacking in equipment but we use our common sense.
De-hydrated vitamins, bags of bully stew,
Boil the lot together—what a lovely brew!
Late chits and early chits, mongerea for wogs,
Keeping down the fly pest, chasing off the dogs.
Here's the Orderly Officer,—“Any complaints today?”
“We cave their chests in here Sir, if they have too much to say”.
Killer's in his topee, Charlie does his turn.
We've lost Tich Hampson in the stew—Finder please return.
'Smasher', 'Tub', and 'Taffy', and 'Peachie' work like ten.
“How many?”—“Six”, “How many?”—“Four”—We'll say they work
like men.

Tommy is our flying cook and works while on his flips,
He takes the spuds to 1000 feet and brings them down as chips,
A tribute to the G.D.'s who work behind the scene,
They boil the water, cut the bread, and keep the dishes clean.
And when they're on they're black and when they're off they're white,
You can see the colour at its best on a get-together night.

From an English country paper: “Last weeks reference to Colonel Hawksby Poona as a 'Battle scared veteran,' should, of course, have read 'Bottle scarred veteran.'” Well, we're glad that's settled.

SLANGUAGE!

- Clue:** Don't worry, you'll never have one.
- Erk:** Like Welsh Rarebit—always "cheesed" and "browned off".
- W.A.A.F.:** A flower which blossoms in the presence of Wing Commanders and above, but does not flourish in the desert.
- Jerrycan:** A container designed and manufactured by the Hun, for the use of the Royal Air Force.
- Wing:** A unit appertaining to flying—has no motivating force of its own.
- You've Had It:** Signifies you haven't had it and won't get it.
- Wouldn't It:** Indicates that it certainly would.
- Intelligence Officer:** An officer.
- Equipment Officer:** Noted for his limited vocabulary—"You've had it," and "its on demand".
- D.A.P.M.:** Always turns up at the wrong moment. Knows all the M.E. Standing Orders you've never heard of.
- The Bost:** Obviously a myth. Subject of countless Service fairy stories.



"I wonder if she's part of Lease-Lend?"