

*A PILOT'S STORY -
FROM FARMING TO FLYING
HEAVY BOMBERS
1942 - 1945*



Written By
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Chapter 1

Basic Training

In the spring of 1941 I was working on the farm for my brother, Paul. I was 20 years old at the time, and many of my friends had joined either the airforce, navy, or army, and some of them were already overseas and had died. I was really undecided as to what to do and was getting kind of restless so I took a couple of days off work, took a trip to Edmonton, and joined the RCAF as aircrew to be trained as a pilot.

I came home the next day and told my brother what I had done. He said "Why the hell did you do that? You can be killed." I explained that was why I did it . "If I come back at all, I won't be coming back crippled up." Paul could have gotten me off as farm workers were essential for the war effort but I didn't want him to do that. Had I not volunteered as aircrew, I had already been called to Edmonton to complete my medical for the army, and knew that if I did not join up voluntarily, I would be drafted into the army as soon as I reached the age of 21. I definitely wanted to be a pilot rather than any other part of the forces.

I took a pre-enlistment course during January and February in Edmonton to brush up on my math. They also taught us courses in navigation. The math teacher here was the same Mr. McKinley that taught math to our kids when they reached high school. This course taught a lot of math and rapid calculation was taught about three times a day. They also taught us a lot about navigation concerning ground in relation to airspeed, and compass courses in relation to the velocity of the wind. On April 11th, 1942, I was sworn into the Airforce, along with a large number of other boys, some of which I had gone to public school with. As I had already been given the name of Shorty Long, I was now A/C [Aircraftsman] Shorty Long K.L. R159115, paid \$1.30 a day and was stationed at #3 Manning Depot, Edmonton Alberta, which was located on the old Exhibition grounds close the Edmonton Zoo. At #3 we were taught discipline and the odd one of us had a hard time understanding that word, so had to pay the price. When it came to drill those old Sgt. Majors could really put us through the paces. Anyone that made a mistake was cursed and scorned and those Majors knew the perfect words. We were to look sharp at all times, hair cut and combed, uniforms pressed, shoes shone and buttons polished. We never knew when the billet was going be inspected so the beds were always made up to Air force regulations, floors clean and everything tidy. May the Lord help the one who was caught slacking off.

We had long route marches through the city and it was up to the Sgt. Major to say when. One red hot morning, the first one of the season, we were drilling on the parade square with rifles and with our shirts off, when without warning, we went off on a route march and we marched for hours. The combination of white skin, hot sun and the rifle made my shoulders blistered and raw. We returned to the station and after a miserable night, I went to the M.O. [medical doctor]. He said it was real nasty and treated my shoulders but with a warning that men had been court marshaled for less than that as we should have left our shirts on. I learned my lesson and was careful from there on in.

When we finished the course at Manning Depot, a lot of the fellows were posted to different parts of Canada for Guard Duty, but I was lucky and stayed right at #3 for guard duty training.

While doing guard duty, each man was to patrol his share of the fence that ran around the perimeter of the #3. This was to check anyone who was trying to get in or out; we had rifles with bayonets but no ammunition. The Edmonton Zoo ran adjacent to part of this fence and you wouldn't believe the noise the monkeys put up some nights. Although I can't remember his name, I can still see the face of one of the fellows who was so afraid that he refused to take his shift, so they shipped him out to another station. I never heard of him again.

One cold and rainy night I was detailed to guard a damned old barn outside the grounds. The Corporal of the Guards marched us around single file and the one in front would fall out to replace the one on duty who would then go to the end of the line. As it was raining way too heavy for me to even think of taking this duty, when it was my turn at the front of the line to replace the one on guard, I pulled a fast one, stepped out and when they marched off I fell in behind and went back to my barracks for a good nights sleep. No one was the wiser. Another night I finally got caught. Rather than guarding along the fence line, I fell asleep sitting on a bucket. I woke up with the Corporal of the Guard flashing a flashlight in my eyes. He sent me up in front of the Commanding Officer and I was sent to the Guard House for four days. Although my actions were written up and put on my record, these four days were not nearly as bad as I anticipated as I was treated well and enjoyed the work that I was assigned. It was my responsibility to keep track of the airmen as they came and went from the Guard House. After the four days were over I was granted farm leave and left for Lacombe to help Paul cut and stook his crop. This was the end of our basic training.

Chapter 2

Initial Training School (I.T.S.)



I was home for two days; Gad, how soft I was. The stooking sure seemed like work. That night when I went in for supper Ina said there was a telegram for me to report back to Edmonton for posting. Oh how glad I was. When arriving at #3 the next morning I learned that we were to leave the next day for #2 I.T.S. [Initial Training School], Regina, Sask. The course started on Aug. 22nd 1942. We were taught all types of navigation, how to use a compass, magnetic bearing and true compass bearing, all about the stars, how to find the true north and anything at all pertaining to navigation. We were all so enthused on becoming pilots that we kept our minds pretty well on the books. We did go down to the bar the odd night at the Regina Hotel, but otherwise spent a quiet summer and fall.

A word about the mess hall at #2... It was an older wooden frame building, the inside walls were sheeted up with shiplap but well painted. Time had shrunk the boards and there was a good quarter inch crack between each board, and in each crack there were hundreds of cockroaches, the ones with the long feelers. Gee, they were ugly, especially when we were eating. One Saturday noon I was having dinner. I thought the cook had overdone himself because everything was so good. I got my dessert which was some kind of pudding that I really liked. I put a little milk on it and tried a couple of mouthfuls and it was good. I was dipping up another spoonful and there in the center was the head of a cockroach, feelers and all, looking back at me. My stomach turned over about three times and I headed for the door.

We finished the course Oct. 26th and I was posted to #15 E.F.T.S. {Elementary Flying Training School}, also in Regina. They gave us seven days leave that I spent in Edmonton and Lacombe, and then I returned to Regina.

Chapter 3

Elementary Flying Training School (E.F.T.S.)


Nov. 8th ... I, along with my instructor, took to the air in a Gypsy Tiger Moth. It was a single engine biplane with a needle ball and airspeed for instruments. We were told that if we could fly a Tiger Moth we would be able to fly anything. Sgt, Austin said this first flight was just for air experience, and an experience it was. I asked him to show me a spin. He showed me a left hand spin and then a right hand spin; we then went up through a low layer of clouds. There happened to be another Moth up there and they took to dog fighting. We landed and in that short 45 minutes I became the sickest person that ever lived in Sask. The bed never stopped rolling all night long.

The next day we were in the air again for an hour but only for straight and level flying, climbing, gliding and stalling. From this time on we were taught takeoffs and landings, forced landings, loops and spins of every description, which incidentally, never bothered me in the least after that first flight. Sgt. Austin and I never seemed to get along that great, he either didn't understand me or I didn't understand him too well. Two different instructors took me up and they seemed to think that I was doing o. k.

It was really windy in Regina. Some days the wind was so strong that flying was canceled and we would spend time on the books. A friend of mine, Don Boyd went out to fly one day and as he turned his Moth into the wind to take off, a heavy gust of wind caught the plane and there was Don hanging upside down by his harness. He was rescued by the ground crew. The wind was so strong another day that another Moth was forced straight up for about 2000 ft. before the pilot turned the plane in another direction.

I was instructed to go out for an hour's flying doing spins, loops and rolls and anything that came to mind. All I had to tell the time was one of those dollar pocket watches. The Tiger Moth had a pocket to place a watch such as this. I kept looking at the time, thinking it was going awfully slow, but enjoyed every minute of it. After what I thought was a good hour, I went back to the base. My instructor met me when I stepped out of the plane and asked what the hell I had been doing for the last two hours. I guess that they had been watching me for about 2 1/4 hours and thought that I was sure to run out of fuel.

I AM SOLO

E. F. T. S.  NO. 25

K. S. Long STUDENT *A. J. Austin* INSTRUCTOR

DATE *Nov 21st 1942.*

I was very proud on November 21st. An instructor named Buckmaster took me up for what I thought was another lesson. We did a couple of circuits and bumps and when we stopped he pulled back the canopy, got out and said I was on my own, to take it away. Ten minutes later I was back on the ground after completing my first solo.

The rest of the course was mostly practicing what we were taught: spinning from every position- the loop, the slow roll, and whatever else there was to learn and the Tiger Moth was the aircraft to learn on. I think with just a little help it could come out of these maneuvers by itself. In November I was introduced to the link trainer, and completed 10 ½ hours on the trainer in Regina. It was a bullet-shaped machine that when you got in and closed the canopy, you were on instruments only. It was just like a real aircraft and the instructor was in the room charting every move you made.

We were all so gung ho about getting to be pilots that some would be practicing maneuvers on their bed at night. I was on one of the lower bunks, and another fellow on the upper bunk above me would be practicing with an imaginary joy stick, flying his plane through all the rolls, loops, and spins. Although this fellow really wanted to be a pilot, he was one of the unfortunate ones who did not make it - he went on to be a bomb aimer and was lucky to come out of the war in one piece. We still stay in touch with each other.

On December 31st, I was given the final flying check that lasted for 1 hour and ten minutes. After landing, I learned that I had passed the test and was posted to #3 S.F.T.S. {Service Flying Training School} in Calgary.

Chapter 4

Service Flying Training School (S.F.T.S.)

We were given leave and on January 11, 1943, I took my first flight on the twin engine Cessna Crane with P/O MacKenzie, who was to be my instructor throughout the course. We missed a lot of days flying due to snow and cold weather. On January 26th I took the "crane" off alone for the first time. The next day I was taught to land on a single engine. After a few days practicing circuits and bumps, I was told to go out and bring it in on one engine. I was nervous but everything went on schedule.

After a few days I was doing circuits and landings. On one circuit I was preparing to land. The landing checks were made, the wheel lever was down, and a visual check of the wheels showed that the wheels were down and the flaps were set. I was almost ready to touch down when a red light flashed in front of me. I knew it meant not to land, but I was so close to the ground I didn't think I could make an overshoot so I pancaked {landed}. I started to taxi down the runway to get the hell off it when I saw another red light flashing so I braked and stopped. The fire truck, ambulance, and rescue trucks came rolling across the field. Thinking there would be an accident or fire, I got out of the plane and found the wheels were down just far enough for clearance for the propellers. If I never made another perfect landing, I was thanking God for this one. The wheels must have been down enough for the propellers to clear the runway. Had I known that the wheels were not fully down, there was a crank that I could have used to lower the wheels all of the way. This incident brought me up before the Commanding Officer to give an explanation that must have satisfied him. He then asked why I had landed against the red light and I explained that. He smiled and said he would have to fine me a dollar for landing against a red light. They must have found a malfunction in the mechanism as I thought for sure that I would be washed out as a pilot, but I never heard anything further about it.



KEN # 35575 CALGARY
APRIL 1943
FLYING CESSNA CRANE AK



Pappy LE ROBERT-LENDYKE, KEN LAMG, SGT. MACKEN

The rest of February, March and April were spent learning the tricks of the trade. We were taught night flying and instrument flying. I also spent another 21 ½ hours on the link trainer practicing instrument training. I took several trips as navigator for other pilots on cross-country flights, cross country trips by myself, and again

with other pilots. On one of these night flying trips I was navigating for an Instructor, F/O McQuarrie On the way back close to Calgary he asked what town was coming up. I said I thought it was Carstairs. He says, " I think we should check it out". He dived the plane down towards the town, close to the elevator he turned the landing lights on and read the name of Carstairs, "sure enough" he said.

The time went quickly. The Mandarin Gardens in down town Calgary was the main hangout for the Airmen from #3. We were allowed to bring our own liquor and mix into the dance hall if we promised not to be too rowdy. More than a few Saturday nights were spent there. A good friend, Leonard Sykes and his wife always attended these dances, Leonard was a real neat fellow, every hair had to be in place and always shone up. I arrived late one night and here was Leonard, hair hanging every which way, up on the bandstand, arms waving, conducting the band. He had been drinking it up that night. Leonard was killed while bombing an airfield in France July 5th/44

April 10th ... I was scheduled for a cross-country flight to Stettler, Wetaskiwin and back to Calgary. I was over Lacombe around noon, got a little bit off course and found myself over my brother Paul and Ina's house. Paul had just come in from the field so I flew over Graves' and flapped my wings a few feet above their house. I thought by this time Paul should have his horses unhitched, so I flew across a field, I think I clipped a few stubbles and had to pull up to get over a granary. The four horses were at the watering trough getting their noon drink while Paul was standing there looking. He told me later that the horses put their bellies to the ground and headed for the barn.

Later on in April three of us took off, each in a different aircraft, for a cross-country exercise through southeastern Alberta. Although we were not allowed to be flying as a group we had decided that we might just as well have each others company during the trip. When we got away from Calgary we flew low to the ground. It was a glorious spring day and we had a lot of fun. Coming back across the prairie, we spotted a man on a John Deere 'D' pulling a tiller. We were in formation when we got to the farmer and the plane in the middle pulled up to fly over him while the other two planes flew on each side of him. What was on that fellows mind about then I wouldn't want to know.

On April 30th ... the Airforce had a ceremony for us and our families to present us with our Sergeant's stripes and pilots badges. My Mother and some of my sisters were there to wish me well. I remember one incident really well, after receiving my wings and stripes. I was showing my sister, Sereta, something on the station and without thinking walked right across the Parade Square {the Parade Square was sacred



Photo of me in uniform # 15076. January 42th
April 30 1943

ground and anyone caught walking on it when not on parade was in a lot of trouble}. I can still hear the bellow from that Sgt. Major - we got off in a hurry so he let us go. We were allowed flying pay now which along with our sergeant's pay, brought it up to between \$3.00-\$4.00 a day. We were feeling fairly wealthy.

We were given fourteen days embarkation leave that I spent in Edmonton and Lacombe. Not much thought was given to goodbyes- if there had been I might have backed out of the whole deal. We had a family get together for those who could make it. This was at Paul and Ina's the day before I left for Calgary to catch the train east.



Before leaving #3 S.F.T.S. for embarkation leave, a few of us decided to leave home two days early so we could spend a few hours in Montreal. Paul and brother Eugene drove me to Calgary early in the morning. We had our dinner and had a few happy hours in the York Hotel where we met the fellows who were leaving early. We had supper with my sister Vera and her husband Larry in Calgary, and I boarded the train in the early evening. I was standing on the steps as the train pulled out, and the last thing I said to Paul was to have six good horses ready for me when I came back.

Chapter 5

On Our Way to England

It seemed like a long trek across the prairies of Alberta and Sask. and through the rough lands of Manitoba and Ontario. When finally we arrived in Montreal we got a room in a hotel uptown - I don't know what for, as we didn't spend much time in it. In the middle of the city they had a German dive-bomber, Ju 87B, which was one of the better planes in the early stages of the war. It was surrounded by barbwire and was guarded by soldiers. Sometime in the black of the night I was walking by myself when I came to this Ju 87B and thought I should have a look up close. All was quiet. I got through the barbwire with a little difficulty, and then up on the wing to find that the canopy was wired shut. With great difficulty I got the wire undone but when sliding back the canopy, I made a lot of noise. I crawled into the pilot's seat about the same time as a soldier came out of the tent carrying a rifle hollering, "who's there"? Thinking that this was the guardhouse for me, I said "a friend"- that I was on the way overseas and if was going to fight those bastards, I would like to have a good look. I think he was as scared as I was so he told me to have a good look but be quiet about it.

Later on I joined up with Mel Bradford. We were walking down the street about sunrise. In front of a shop was a box that Mel thought was empty. He gave it a kick and a "corset" fell out. He had a great time kicking that box and when he finished there were must have been a dozen corsets scattered for a half block. Time finally ran out and I think we were all glad to be on the train and sleeping.

We arrived at #1 "Y" depot, Halifax, on May 15, 1943. I remember how dirty and dreary I thought the city was. We took the ferry to Dartmouth a couple of times and that city was much the same. A few of us decided to have one last bash before leaving Canada, I bought a 26 oz. of Five Roses whisky and along with what the other fellows bought there was quite a party. The half of the five roses that was left I stored in the middle of my kitbag. I can recall how sick I was when we boarded the boat on the 28th.

I was glad when we left the east coast aboard the "Louie Pasteur". It was a hell of a ship - so crowded that it felt like a cattle train. I was lucky to be able to grab a hammock to sleep in. I had never slept in one but it looked like the best bed available. There were not enough hammocks for everyone, and others had to eat and sleep on the same table. I had a good comfortable place to sleep and never felt the motion of the boat.

Chapter 6

Our Destination

After a long voyage of seven days, we docked at Liverpool on England's west coast. After spending the winter in Canada and seven days on water, I never realized a country could look so beautiful. Everything was a lush green with trees dotting a rolling countryside. We spent a couple of hours laying around on the grass, appreciating that great landscape before boarding the train which would take us to our new abode, #3 Personnel Receiving Centre (P.R.C.) Bournemouth, our first home in England. I would gladly have stayed there for the duration. It was a summer resort town on the southern coast and was a very pretty place. We were billeted in two large white buildings known as Bathe Hill Courts, two to a room. It must have been a beautiful place before so many Airmen took their toll. About two or three blocks away was a park in which we would lie around for many hours. Incidentally, the park had been strafed {shot up} by German fighter planes a few days before we arrived. One Airman had been killed and considerable damage was done throughout the park.

While unpacking at our first station in England I came to the Five Roses again. My stomach turned over a few times while pouring it down the drain. It was the worst I had ever tasted.

We were given disembarkation leave and left for Edinburgh, Scotland, where we spent a few days. We visited an old castle and a few other things that were supposed to be important, but I wasn't too impressed.

Arriving back in Bournemouth I was surprised to run into an old friend of mine, Peter Gulevich, from Wellington, Alberta. We met at pre-enlistment school and had trained together at #3 Manning Depot in Edmonton, then went our separate ways. We managed to stay together through our training in England and Scotland and then into operations. We became great friends.

It was at Bournemouth that we could state our preference as to what part of the Air force we would like. Some chose fighter planes or coastal command and others heavy bombers. Five of us, including Gully and I, signed up for Night Intruders. It was a branch of the air force that flew twin engine Mosquito Bombers and Beau fighters and would fly into enemy territory and strike anything that would disrupt or hinder the German War Machine. We were first given a thorough eye examination to make sure we had the night vision required for night fighting. Mine tested better than average. We were then given different navigational courses, link trainer courses, and so on. We all worked hard at this and I for one would have loved a chance to fly the "Mosquito" even though it was made of plywood.

Toward the end of July we were all called before the Commanding Officer and were told that he was sorry but there just weren't any postings for Night Fighters at this time. Although we all had to march up single file in front of the Commanding Officer to state our next choice, we all answered Single Engine Fighters. The Commanding Officer's answer, "Heavy Bombers" was the same to all but one airman. By now we all

knew the answer the Commanding Officer was giving everyone. The last airman, Sergeant McCarthy, walked up to the Commanding Officer, saluted and said, "Give me the heaviest S.O.B. you've got in the circuit". He was the only one of us that got posted to Night Intruders. How he made out I never heard.

Chapter 7
Advanced Training

We said adieu to Bournemouth on July 27th. After twenty-some hours ride on the train, we arrived at #14 A.F.U. {Advanced Flying Unit}, Banff, Scotland, which we called home until October 10th. We were joined here by two boys that had trained with us in Calgary, P/O Wright and P/O Ward. Just before getting our wings in Calgary, Ward and Wright were celebrating a bit too much and decided to rough up a sergeant, whom they met on the walk home. Needless to say they were sent to a disciplinary station for three weeks. Because of our three-week stay in Bournemouth, they had again caught up with us.

We began flying the "Airspeed Oxford". It was a Twin Engine job much the same as the "Crane" but a lot heavier and it was nice to fly. We were up for 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours every day and were cautioned many times about the dangers of the mountains close around, ones that I could never see. I finally asked the instructor on the way to the aircraft where these mountains were and he pointed them out. After flying next to the Rockies out of Calgary, they looked like molehills.

Overseas there were 38 ½ hours of link training, which was a more complicated part of flying - like bringing in the aircraft for a landing through 10/10 cloud by using a beam {a sound if followed properly would bring you down on the runway}. I finally got an above average mark.

Since joining the Airforce and keeping our noses to the grindstone for so long in order to pass the numerous courses and tests on the way to receiving our pilots wings, and having only heavy bombers to look forward to, I think we all decided it was time to let our hair down and let flying take second place. Gully and I had a poker game going anytime we weren't flying or the bars weren't open. (The bars in town were open from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. and again from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.) . There were a lot of poker games before we came to this unit and the rules were already laid down. Both Gully and I had been taught this game while kids sitting at the kitchen table, and knew how it was played. There were a lot of Australians and New Zealanders stationed there and they wanted to learn the game and were willing to pay. We were good teachers.

I was really lucky playing poker and having a couple of days off I took my winnings to Aberdeen to buy a bicycle. Several of the other fellows thought it was a great idea and because I had money from the poker winnings, before I left I had orders for as many as I could find. I returned by train with three bicycles which saved a lot of walking. When we left we donated them to the next bunch of boys to arrive.

It was during this time that Gully and I met up with a man and started talking to him. He was a friendly sort and he told us that he ran a brewery and made Scotch whisky. We had never been in a brewery, so he gave us a tour and handed us a bottle of scotch as we left. Gully and I had several birthdays in the next month, and we would go to the brewery and each time, this man would give us a bottle to celebrate. The last time Gully and I were going on leave, we hit him up for a bottle to celebrate a girlfriend's

birthday. He gave us the scotch and told us his whisky wasn't aging nearly as fast as we were, so he had to cut us off.

Late August our group was sent to another station for a B.A.T. (Blind Approach Training) course. This station was several hours away by bus and we were to arrive early afternoon. When passing through a small town, it was mentioned that the bars should be open. It was then that P/O Ward or Wright had to mail a letter. They talked the bus driver into stopping. When the door opened and Ward got out, he decided everyone should have a drink and we all filed out. The driver was dumbfounded. Needless to say, we shut the bar down that afternoon and arrived at the station after dark. I never saw so many unpleasant airmen at that Station as there was that night. They had to come back to work and issue us bedding and everything we needed. We hadn't had anything to eat. I don't remember, but I imagine they had to feed us. P/O Ward, P/O Wright, and P/O Oake were up on the carpet the next day. They were the Officers and took the rap for all of us. They were sent to another disciplinary station for a month. I never met them again, but I'll bet they were in far better physical shape than we were.

We were granted leave on September 7th. Five or six of us headed for London. It was a long and miserable ride (19 hours by train). Gully and I had previously met a couple of nice girls while in London. We met them again during this visit, and went to the Palais De Dance in Hammersmith, a district in London, and had a good time visiting all the bars. The time went only too quickly and we were soon on the train for the long ride back.

We arrived back on September 14th, to find out that they had shut the poker games down because they were interfering with sleep and flying. Everyone was really disappointed, especially Gully and I. We finished this course October 7th, logging 39 hours, 5 minutes dual (with an instructor) and 40 hours, 35 minutes as first pilot. We had a good time and also learned a lot about flying as well.

The pilots who were to be posted were driven to another small unit which was used for crew selection. There were pilots, navigators, bomb aimers, wireless operators, and some gunners. We were all in one big room and the pilots were told to select a crew. We were all strangers. I looked around and a Canadian, Tommy Chiverton (T. J.), a navigator from Saskatchewan, sat there with a grin on his face. I nodded and he nodded back, so I had myself a navigator. Behind him sat Scotsman Dave Bell (Jock), bomb aimer, from Paisley, Scotland. He had a scar running from his forehead around his eye to his cheek. I asked him and he said, "sur-r-re". He later told me he was in a bar in Glasgow, didn't duck fast enough, and a bottle got him. The wireless operator was Browne, English, with no nickname. He insisted his name was "Brown with an E" and that was the name that stuck with him, "Brown-with-an-E". There weren't enough gunners to go around so I was later assigned Sgt. Hughes Welshman, rear gunner, and a Welshman for a mid upper gunner. I don't remember his name. I must have scared the hell out of him as he wasn't with me very long. I got another mid upper gunner, Johnnie Law, an Englishman from Birmingham, England. He was thirty-eight years old and very

conscientious. He said he wanted to do his bit for his country, and he did his best to keep us all on the straight and narrow. I was very happy and lucky to have this group of fellows with me. Gully had a good bunch of boys with him also, and the twelve of us made one big happy family.

October 12th found us at #20 O.T.U. (Operational Training Unit) and we were to fly the "Wellington". This aircraft was used as a bomber earlier on in the war. I don't think they had much success with it as being only a twin engine it couldn't carry a big enough load of bombs. The "Wimpy" was a real nice aircraft and was reliable and was a pleasure to fly. It took me about six or seven hours Dual Instructing before becoming captain of the aircraft. As I had a crew flying with me, I had a lot more responsibility. We did a lot of flying; cross-country flights, taking pictures, etc. We were beginning to like the old "Wimpy".

December 3rd we were to go for a cross-country flight. Climbing away from the airport, the boost was falling on one engine, so I feathered the prop and returned to base on a single engine. We were warned in the beginning not to try an overshoot and if at all possible, to avoid one as not many had been successful. However, I entered the last leg to the runway a little too high. With not enough runway and a big hanger at the end of it, I opted for the lesser of the two evils. I gave that good engine all I could and in passing over the town of Lossiemouth, Jock, the Bomb Aimer said with a smile, "Skipper, your port wing is below the church steeple". I had to circle over the town to keep the good engine to the bottom side. My judgement was poor that day or I was scared; I think a lot of both, as I again came in too high and touched down far up the runway. The hanger was still there along with a few aircraft around. I can still see the service men jumping off the wings of the aircraft when we were headed for them. In order to miss them I had to open up the good motor again to make the turn. When finally we came to a stop we were in some farmer's potato patch with the plane missing a tail wheel. I had a lot of explaining to do.

The next day I was in the Flight Commander's office with orders to write a letter to the King apologizing for wrecking his aircraft. I labored over that letter a full two minutes and handed it to him. On the third try he accepted the letter and I bet he was thinking, "Oh well, he's just a bloody Canadian and it's the best he can do". He grabbed his cap and said he would show me there was nothing wrong with the aircraft. The ground crew had just finished stripping the cowlings and were checking the engine and informed the Flight Commander that it had a badly cracked manifold and could not have flown much longer which proved that I was right for returning to the airfield. This news sounded very good to me and I never heard another word about this incident. I never heard whether the king received my letter or not.

December 6th we started night flying again, which consisted of circuits and bumps, cross country flights, practice bombing, and aerial photos. We were getting along very well flying together as a crew and I was really confident that I had a good one. This was proven on the night of the 21st of December. We had been given the weather report

which was good with light winds. We were to make a cross-country flight and practice bombing at the range on the way home. We took off and circled the airport until reaching the correct height and headed south on the first leg. It wasn't long before we didn't know where we were. Jock, Bomb Aimer, was in the astro hatch trying for a fix on the stars. When he announced that we were being shot at, I noticed the tracer bullets whipping up past us. Jock was kept busy shooting off the colors of the day, to say that we were friendly. Tommy decided that we had to be down in England over some big city. The shooting had stopped because of the colors or maybe we had just passed on by. All this had happened in less than 40 minutes after leaving home base. Tommy came up with a fix on where we were and estimated the wind at 120 mph from the north. It took us almost three hours to get back to the bombing range. We did our bombing and returned to base 6 hours 5 minutes after take-off. We were one of two crews out of six that were able to find the home base that night. Gully was one of the crews that were missing. I was a little worried until it was reported that they had landed somewhere on the west coast of Scotland. On his return, he reported a good time was had in the town near where they had landed. The girls had never seen a full bomber crew before and Gully was one that could lay the bull on.

Christmas was upon us and a few Canadian Pilots and Navigators volunteered to hold the fort down so the ones who had a home to go to could get home for the holiday. All of my crew got away and Tommy went to some relatives in England. The food parcels were pouring in from home. Fruitcake, cookies, everything imaginable. I remember one from Paul and Ina that was well wrapped. I opened it and found a well-molded loaf of home made bread. My first thought was that they should have known better than to try to send a loaf of bread. As I picked it up to garbage it, the top came off and there lay a bottle of real Canadian rye whiskey, which was really appreciated and was saved for a special occasion. I think every Canadian had two or three cakes and pounds of cookies. By the time everything was gone we were well fed up. I haven't liked fruitcake since.

Dec. 24th ... Gully and I were walking around the town and we stopped at little shop and happened to find a bottom shelf that was loaded down with bottles of rum. We couldn't believe it, being a little leery we only bought one bottle and took it back to barracks to be sampled by all who were there. It was good rum so the shop had a good turnover that day. We were flying again the 26th and practiced cross-country flights, bombing runs and fighter affiliation, which were maneuvers we used if attacked by enemy aircraft. We finished the course at #20 Operational Training Unit on January 4th 1944 but stayed at the O.T.U. until February 14th. There were no postings available anywhere and we were getting fairly ticked off. Gully and I were given the duty of taxiing each day the 6 or 7 Wimpy's from dispersal yard to in front of the Flight Office to be used by the crews who were night flying. We would taxi two down and to keep in shape, we would run the distance back, which was a distance of quarter to a half mile, for two more. It was something to do and was fun. When we were taxiing these Wimpy's there were times that we'd be going fast enough that if we would have pulled back on the stick we might have been airborne. The biggest drawback to this job was that we would have to leave the bar before it closed.

Chapter 8

Waiting for a Posting

Our crews were lying around doing anything to fill the time. A few weeks prior Gully and I decided to put our applications in for commissions. At that time I couldn't have cared less but Gully was sending quite a bit of money home and I think he was a little short at times. One day we were so browned off, it had rained most of the day, sloppy and muddy and we had just finished taxying the Wimpy's for the night flying. We must have been a sight to behold, battle dress, rubber boots with tops rolled down to the ankles and mud up to our ----. We decided to see the C.O. about leave. We walked in, saluted and asked about some leave. Gully said "We've been good boys up till now." The C.O. took one look at all the mud and our unsightly appearance, and said, "you boys asked for commissions a short time ago". He must have been disgusted, because he reached in the drawer, drew out the papers, ripped them in half and threw them in the waste paper basket. We still didn't have leave and we were still Flt./Sgts. sitting around, still doing nothing.

The first week of Feb. they finally gave all of us leave. It didn't take us long to scatter, Tommy to his relatives, the local boys to their homes, and where else for Gully and I but to London. It was while in London this time that we witnessed the last German bombing raid on London. We were awakened during the night by what seemed like thunder and went to our second story window and leaned out. It was like the forth of July; bombs were exploding a short distance away, the anti-aircraft shells bursting in the sky and the air was filled with tracer bullets. The shrapnel and shells were falling so thick on the cobblestones it sounded like a good Alberta hailstorm. It didn't last long. The sirens blew the all clear and we went back to sleep.

Gully and I were in the bar one night and a flight lieutenant walked in who had just come from a raid over in Germany. Southern England was all fogged in so they had to land at our station in the northern part of Scotland. We had a drink together and Gully asked him how long it took to become a F/L. His reply was that it all depended on how fast they killed them off.

We were at Lossiemouth for a few days after leave and were posted to R.A.F. Driffield for a month. If I remember right, it was for a commando course which was to whip us back into shape and to show us that there was still a little discipline left in the Air force. It was here that they were showing us how to take the sten gun apart and assemble it again. This was taking place in an open lot with lots of trees and it was a beautiful day. The lunch gong sounded but the Major just kept rattling on, it was getting later and later until finally one of the boys threw his gun up in a tree. That was all that was needed - in seconds the trees were loaded with guns and we were on our way to lunch. Nothing more was heard of this incident.

It was here when Gully and I put steel corks in our shoes so they wouldn't wear out so fast. This caused my heels to get sore as the devil, and I was supposed to go to the Medical Officer that morning to see about it. The others were up and around and I was still in bed. My sergeant came in and asked why I was not up yet. When I said I was going to see the M.O., he reached down and turned my bed upside down. I remember I

got up and said "you stupid son of a bitch". He asked me what I said. I responded that he had heard me clearly the first time. He turned and walked off, and I got up and went to the M.O.

Gully, I and our crews were posted to 1663 C. U. [conversion unit], R.A.F. Station Rufforth Yorkshire. On this station we learned to fly the four engine Halifax II's and V's and as we now had four engine's, we had to have an engineer. We were assigned an English lad, Fielder Frederick Dew 'Dusty' from Herdford England. He had a cleft or what we called a hair lip; he was a very good engineer, really comical and gave us many good laughs. My first flight was March 24th with Sqd. Leader Neal. After a walk around check of the aircraft we were about to enter, S/L Neal stopped and said "its a big s. o .b., isn't it" I had to agree and he said "Just remember, it will get smaller every time you go through this door". He was right. The wingspan of this aircraft was just over 100 feet and in my way of thinking, it was huge. It could carry up to six tons of bombs, but the longer the trip, the larger amount of fuel and the smaller the bomb load.

We did a lot of practice flying to get familiar with the bigger aircraft. On April 25th we went on a cross-country flight through southern England. The whole countryside looked so quiet and peaceful after being up north for so long. I remember how hot it was in the plane with the sun shining through the windows. Then I noticed a couple of oil traces down over the wing, which could have been there when we took off from home. The whole crew agreed that we should land at Bassingbourne, which we knew was an American station, to have it checked out. I called our home station, Rufforth, after landing to say where I was and what seemed to be the trouble. They said I was to have the station mechanic check it out. The American mechanic, being a typical American, checked it out and said to advise them to send two new engines. We stayed overnight and had the best supper since hitting England - pork chops with a raisin sauce and everything else that goes with it, and also a dessert. Next morning they sent another Halifax with two pilots. As I wasn't allowed to take off without proper authorization, the 2nd pilot flew myself and crew home. I don't think there was too much wrong with the aircraft, but we had a couple of relaxing days. April 28th we made another 5-hour night cross country trip which ended our operational training.

It was during this period of training that we all decided to take in a dance at the town hall. We were all having a good time when they threw in one of those mixer-upper dances and I found myself dancing with a really nice older lady. We finished the dance and she asked me about our training. I told her we were about finished and soon would be operational. Before we parted she unpinned a broach from her suit jacket and pinned it above the pocket of my bomber jacket. It was a little red fish made of leather. She said it was her "Good Luck" charm and that she was wishing all the good luck on me, and said to make sure that I wore it. I did. It went through all my bombing raids in the same spot where she had pinned it and was still there when I came back to Canada. I still have it safe and sound.

Chapter 9
Bombing Operations

On April 29, 1944, Gully and I, along with our crews, were posted to R.A.F. Sqd. Brighton #78, which was located 19 miles S. E. of York, Yorkshire. After two long years and several months of training we were now ready to do what we were trained for, too bomb the hell out of Germany. Prior to leaving Rufforth, the O.C. {Officer Commanding} had called Gully and I to his office to inform us that we would be posted to separate squadrons, as they didn't like sending two friends together in case something might happen to one of us. Gully and I just laughed at him, saying it wouldn't bother us in the least, so here we were, still together. They did manage to put us in different flights; Gully in B and I was in A. They staggered our leaves and put us and our crews in different huts.

Before writing about the tour I will try to explain a few things. Port is left, Starboard is right. The aircraft guns were designed to bring aircraft down; the shells would rise to the required altitude and explode into hundreds of fragments. Bomb launching pads were for launching the buzz-bomb, which was later known as the V 2 bombs. They were an unmanned bomb whose timing device was a gas tank. When the gas ran out they came down. They terrorized the southern part of England for sometime. I have lumped several of my Ops. Together calling them quiet and uneventful and I am speaking for my aircraft only. These short hops were dangerous with a lot of anti-aircraft fire and enemy planes. More than a few planes were lost and many more came back damaged. Flying with a bomber loaded with five to six tons of bombs, eighteen hundred gallons of gas and being shot at, was always a shaky due. The dice had to roll right.

My first experience on Ops. was May 1st as second pilot to F/Lt. Bennett and his crew to Malines, France. It must have been a quiet trip as I fell asleep after leaving the target and was awakened just prior to landing at home base. >From then on I was on my own as 1st Pilot. The second and third trips to Boulogne and Orleans in France were also quiet except for the final leg into the target at Orleans. The rear gunner {R/G} yelled, "dive and turn port" and the mid upper gunner {M/up/G} yelled "dive and turn Starboard". Not knowing which way to go, I looked around and directly above, not 30 feet away, was another Halifax, bomb door open and fully loaded - a picture that will always be in my mind. I hurriedly slipped the plane to starboard and narrowly missed the bombs as they dropped. If I had turned and dived, my wing would have caught the belly of the other aircraft, and it would have been goodbye Charlie. Our first great escape.

The worst one of our Ops, the third, was a short night hop to Bourg-Leopold in Belgium on May 26/27. It was a quiet trip to the target, which we bombed shortly after midnight. We then changed course for the first leg home. Arriving at the coast of Holland, we were attacked by enemy aircraft that came at us from underneath and out of a fog. There was a terrible explosion within the Halifax and it looked as if there was fire from the pilot's seat back. As we were within 5,000 feet off the ground, the rule was that when there was a major fire, to put on parachutes and bail out - an order I gave but afterward regretted it. Tommy {navigator} came on the intercom saying we could be over water. Upon hearing this I told the crew to hang on and I would turn around and head for land.

Jock Bell {bomb aimer} had disconnected his intercom and didn't hear me give the second order. The parachute drill was for the navigator to jump first ahead of the bomb aimer. Tommy was shaking his head at Jock and Jock must have been thinking that Tom was afraid to jump. Tom said Jock smiled as if to say, "This is how it's done" and left the aircraft. At that time the enemy fighter hit us again, wounding Dusty the engineer, who later lost his leg. The wireless operator, Browne had his arm broken in different places and several bad wounds to his body. They didn't have a chance to jump and live so I gave another order that I would try for England but would likely have to ditch in the North Sea and those who wanted to parachute "to go for it". They all decided to take a chance on the aircraft. They all fought the fire the best they could and finally managed to put it out. About this time the fighter attacked us again and missed, all I saw was a lot of tracer as they went by our aircraft but no direct hits. Tommy gave me a course to fly which would bring us close to Woodbridge Airport [an emergency landing field in England], so with two starboard engines gone I turned on a course of 275 degrees. As wounded as he was, Dusty managed to change petcock's for the gas tanks and before landing, managed to get enough gas going through to start up a third motor in time for the landing. The wireless operator, Browne, his right arm useless, managed to send S.O.S. and Mayday signals all the way across the sea, which incidentally were picked up at our home base. Finally we crossed the English coast and were greeted by a set of runway lights at Woodbridge airport, the prettiest and the brightest lights I ever hope to see. As for the course that Tommy gave me, if we'd been prepared to land we could have brought it down right on the runway, but we were too high so had to go around again to loose some altitude. It was so foggy that night that we couldn't see the lights until we were very close. We landed and were met by the ambulance. Dusty and

Hazardous, Nerve-Wracking Trip Wins Medal for Lacombe Airman

K. L. "Shorty" Long of Lacombe, who won the Distinguished Flying Medal for his grim determination and courage while he was still a flight sergeant pilot of a Halifax bomber, and FO T. J. Chiverton of Maidstone, Sask., his navigator, were recently screened. it was learned here.

The mission on which Long won the DFM was one of the most hazardous and nerve wracking of his whole career in the RCAF—the attack on the military depot at Bourg-Leopold in Belgium. Long was bringing the big Halifax out of its bombing run when a German night fighter attacked. Not one member of the crew caught a glimpse of the enemy until cannon shells and machine gun bullets smashed into the bomber wounding the flight engineer and wireless operator.

FIRE BREAKS OUT

Both star-board engines of the Halifax were shot up, fire broke out in the bomb bay and the hydraulics were rendered useless.

Fearing he would have to abandon aircraft; Long ordered Chiverton and other members of the crew to prepare to bail out. He managed to straighten out the damaged aircraft, but just after the bomb aimer had escaped through a hatch, Long decided to try to get the wounded aircraft back to friendly England.

The skipper fought the controls all the way back and the fire in the bomb bay was finally extinguished by the other crew

Determined



FLT. LT. K. L. LONG

members a short time before Long set his badly damaged Halifax down on the runway of an emergency landing field in England. Long and Chiverton completed 14 trips to major German targets before they were screened.

Chiverton joined the RCAF in late 1939 as transport driver, re-mustering to aircrew in 1942. Long joined up in 1942, and they arrived in England within a few days of each other in June, 1943.

Browne were taken too Ipswich hospital along with Tommy, who while assisting the orderlies with the stretchers, fell through a hole in the aircraft, resulting in three broken

LACOMBE Globe 1944
**W.O. K. Long
Gets Distinguished
Flying Medal**

Keeping his badly-damaged Halifax bomber in the air long enough to get it safely back to his home airport with four injured members of the crew has



W.O. K. Long

won for Warrant Officer Kenneth Long, 22, native son of Blackfalds, the Distinguished Flying Medal. He is the son of Mrs. Thomas Long of Edmonton and the late Thomas Long.

On a recent flight made by W.O. Long's plane, the target was a military camp and the bombers met stiff opposition from German night fighters. One of the Nazis sent bullets into the airman's plane as it crossed the coast. On fire, the bomber flew on against heavy odds. One starboard engine was put out of action. As the bomber swerved and dived toward the sea, Long fought desperately with the controls, headed his machine inland and ordered the crew to bale out.

Then the German fighter attacked a second time and wounded three of the crew of seven. Realizing the wounded would have little chance of survival if they leaped, Long countermanded his order and decided to gamble on getting the craft back to England.

Although severely wounded, the flight engineer—who later lost both legs by amputation—managed to extinguish the fire which was licking the plane. Then the second starboard motor quit. The machine was down to 5,500 feet and more lopsided than ever.

The night fighter made its third attack but did little damage and finally disappeared. Although losing height gradually, the bomber finally reached the English coast and Long made a cushy three-point landing on the first field he spotted.

Born in Blackfalds, W.O. Long received his early education in the school at that place and completed his education in St. Joseph's College, Edmonton. He enlisted in the R.C.A.F. about 3½ years ago and went overseas in June, 1943.

ribs and badly bruising himself. After debriefing and telling about the trip, they sent us over to get a shot of rum. The fellow in charge asked about the rest of the crew, I just couldn't help myself- I must have been in shock. I just threw back my head and laughed and said that they wouldn't be coming. They must have had a good shot of something in that rum because we hit the bed and slept till late the next morning. When we awakened, Johnnie Law, the mid upper gunner said, "Skipper will you have a look at this?" He rolled over- his hip was swollen and turning blue. He reported to the M/O and had a good-sized piece of shrapnel removed from his posterior. This whole trip took three hours and fifteen minutes, but seemed like a short lifetime.

Journal July 1944
**Kept Badly-Damaged Bomber in Air,
Edmonton Airman Is Medal Winner**

Flt.-Sgt. Kenneth L. Long, 22-year-old Edmonton airman, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal, according to word received here. Son of Mrs. Thomas

Long, 9 Devonshire apts., the airman recently brought his bullet-ridden Halifax bomber and four wounded crewmates back from a hectic mission over Germany and Belgium.

The target was a military camp and the bombers met stiff opposition from German night fighters. One of the Nazis sent bullets into the city airman's plane as it crossed the coast. On fire, the bomber flew on against heavy odds. One starboard engine was put out of action. As the bomber swerved and dived toward the sea, Long fought desperately with the controls, headed



Flt.-Sgt. Long

his machine inland and ordered the crew to bale out.

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Flt.-Sgt. Long enlisted in the air force here about 3½ years ago and went overseas in June, 1943. Formerly of Lacombe, the airman enlisted after graduating from St. Joseph's high school.

*From an English Paper
1944*

Crew Saved Bomber Against All The Odds

HOW the crew regained control of a bomber when things seemed nearly hopeless, and brought it safely back, is told to-day in the latest list of R.A.F. awards.

Severely wounded and weak from loss of blood, Sergeant Fielder Bennet Dew, a flight engineer, of Kingstone, Hereford, extinguished extensive fires and restarted one of the two engines which had been put out of action.

Though he was then unable to move, being wounded in the foot, thigh, and arm, he directed his comrades, Flight-Sergeant K. L. Long, the pilot, a Canadian, and Sergeant L. C. Browne, of Wembley, in engineering tasks on the homeward flight.

For his courage and endurance he has been awarded the C.G.M. (flying), and his companions each receive the D.F.M.

Sergeant Long regained control of the machine after he had ordered the crew to prepare to abandon it, and eventually he made a safe landing.

Sgt. Air Bombardier David Bell, 1558691, 78 Sqd., died on the 27th of May 1944, 21 years of age and is buried in grave #220 Oostvorne cemetery, Holland.

Before going to the railway station to catch a train that would take us to London, Johnnie, the rear gunner, Sgt. T Owen who was a pick-up gunner for this trip, and myself went to the dispersal yard to view our "L" for lanky aircraft. The sun was shining brightly and from the inside, the roof looked like a sieve. The plane was badly damaged and we were very careful not to fall through the same hole as Tommy. I found out later that this aircraft was damaged beyond repair and never flew again. I was very lucky that I was not injured as I could have picked up a dozen pieces of shell right beside the pilots seat.

On the way to the train station, Johnnie Law, the M/u/G, said that he was going to quit when he got back to our home base. I asked him the reason. He said that he didn't see the plane coming up and blamed himself for being shot up. I said there was no reason for that, as nobody else saw the plane either, and that he could fly with me as long as he wanted to. If he had quit, he would have been branded as LMF (lack of moral fibre) and would have been stripped of his sergeant stripes and put on latrine duty somewhere. After our conversation, he changed his mind and finished 35 trips with me.

After a long, long train ride from London, we arrived at 78 Sqd. Brighton, and after another round of telling the same story about the op., we were granted seven days leave. Before I could leave I was instructed to take an aircraft up and fly again. Now not having a crew of my own, the Flight Commander offered his crew. I was in a hurry to catch the afternoon train and after pestering them for a crew and aircraft for a couple of hours, they must have decided that I wasn't afraid to fly as they finally told me to have a good leave and drove me to the rail station in the late afternoon. I arrived in Ipswich the next morning and spent some time visiting with Dusty and Browne at the hospital. This was around the first or second of June. They both had all their surgery and Dusty had his

A letter from the wife of Sgt. Johnnie Law my mid-upper-gunner, after the operation of May 27/28 1944.

1el.
SHEldon 2414

Eastnor,
Dove House Lane,
Solihull.
Nr. Birmingham.

6th June, 1944.

Dear S/Sgt Long,

I want embarrass you by writing a lengthy letter but as I owe so much to you and am so deeply grateful that your efficiency and courage averted disaster on your last "trip" will you please forgive my cheek in writing and allow me to say 'thank you' from the bottom of my heart.

may I wish you all the luck in the world - you deserve it.

Yours very sincerely,

Dorothy Law

leg amputated and Browne had his arm, which they said was quite a mess and was broken in three places set and well bandaged. They were in good spirits in spite of the ordeal they had gone through. I also saw Tommy. He was up and around but well bandage and sore; I'd bet that he was still chasing the nurses though. Tommy and I agreed to fly with each other when we were again back on Ops. I spent the night in some Hostel but didn't sleep much as they were preparing for "D" day and were moving tanks, trucks and all other equipment throughout the night, and I think they moved everything right by my window. The next morning I boarded the train for London to spend a couple of days. I can't recall what I did and arrived back at the Sqd. on June 7th.

On June 8th , Johnnie Law and myself, the only original members of the crew of seven, were posted to Marston Moor, Yorkshire #1652 Conversion Unit. I didn't take Sgt. Hughes, the rear gunner with us as

every time he didn't feel like flying he would drink a couple of cups of hot tea and go to the M/O and end up in the hospital with a fever. This is why we had to pick up a gunner the night we went to Bourg Leopold. I later learned that while we were away, Hughes, the A/G. had joined another crew and was missing.

CANADA

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE FOR AIR

Mrs. C. Long,
112th Street, Devonshire Apts.,
Edmonton, Alberta.

OTTAWA
August 11, 1944.

Dear Mrs. Long:

I am writing to say how much all ranks of the Royal Canadian Air Force join with me in warmly congratulating you and the members of your family on the honour and distinction which have come to your son Flight Sergeant Kenneth Lawrence Long DFM, through the award of the Distinguished Flying Medal for great gallantry in the performance of his duty while serving with No. 78 Squadron of the Royal Air Force.

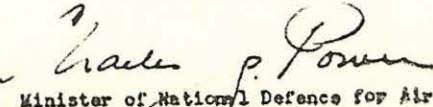
The citation on which this award was made reads as follows:

"Sergeant Dew, Flight Sergeant Long and Sergeant Browne were flight engineer, pilot and wireless operator (air) of an aircraft detailed to attack Bourg Leopold one night in May, 1944. When nearing the enemy coast, on the homeward flight, the aircraft was attacked by a fighter and sustained considerable damage. Two engines were put out of action and extensive fires started in the fuselage. The bomber temporarily went out of control. At this moment it was struck by bullets from another enemy aircraft. Sergeant Dew was badly wounded in the foot, the thigh and arm; Sergeant Browne also sustained severe wounds in the arm and thigh. The situation was critical but although Sergeant Long ordered his crew to prepare to abandon aircraft, he attempted to regain control. He succeeded in so doing. Meanwhile, Sergeant Dew, in spite of considerable suffering and weakness through loss of blood, fought the fires and his efforts were successful; he also succeeded in re-starting one of the damaged engines. By now he was unable to move about. Nevertheless, throughout the remainder of the homeward flight he directed other of his comrades in the necessary engineering tasks. Sergeant Browne also proved himself to be a devoted member of aircraft crew for, injured as he was, and suffering acutely, he insisted on remaining by his wireless apparatus to assist his pilot on his course. Eventually, Flight Sergeant Long reached an airfield in this country and made a safe landing. In the face of a trying ordeal, these airmen displayed high courage, great skill and endurance. Their example ranks high."

The personnel of the Force are proud of your son's fine Service record.

With kindest personal regards

Yours sincerely


Minister of National Defence for Air

On May 29th a friend that I had went to school with for a number of years, P/O Charles Allen Blackmore, Navigator was killed in action. The wellington aircraft, in which he was navigator, was returning from a nickel raid {leaflet raid} over N. W. France and was shot down by a friendly Night Fighter. The Wimpy crashed 4 miles from Sturminster Newton England. Junior {Charles} is buried in the Brookwood Military Cemetery Woking, Surrey, England.

While on #1652 we were given a new crew. The navigator, bomb aimer, W/Op. and rear gunner were all on their second tour of Ops. These were all good fellows and really knew their jobs. The engineer was a different story. After we got on Ops. again, he lasted about four trips with us. He insisted on letting the engines cut out before changing tanks. However, at Marston Moore we trained together for nine hours and forty minutes daylight and seven hours and thirty minutes night. While flying with an instructor one day he was showing me how to fly with an engine feathered. The rear gunner piped up over the intercom and said. 'Hey Shorty,'tell him how you flew over the North Sea with two engines gone on one side. The instructor started the feathered motor again and headed for home.

It was on this station while sitting alone reading a magazine and listening to the song 'Old Black Magic' that an airman stepped up to me and asked if I was Flight Sergeant Long. He gave me a telegram. My first thought was that something had happened to my mother. Upon opening the envelope I learned that it was from the O/C {Officer Commanding}, 78 Sgd., congratulating me for being awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal. I heaved a long sigh of relief that it wasn't about my Mother. A few days later I learned that Dusty Dew {Engineer} received the C .G .M. {Conspicuous Gallantry Medal} and Browne {Wireless Operator} received the D. F. M. I was very glad to hear this because it was through a team effort and a miracle that we were here and they truly deserved them too.

Charges to pay s. d.

RECEIVED

POST OFFICE TELEGRAM

No. 11 JU 44

Office Stamp

Prefix. Time handed in. Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words.

From 191 5.0 LS/7 OHMS 19

To

FLIGHTSERGT LONG PILOT RAF MARSTON HOOK YORKS =

YOU HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING MEDAL
CONGRATULATIONS = GC 78 SQUADRON **

CONFIRMATION
C.T. LS/7 OHMS 19++

For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form and, if possible, the envelope.

14752/22119 (Im. Post No W.S. Inf. (C.24) 11/7/72)

POSTAGRAM.

Originator's Reference Number:—

To: R.159115 P/Sgt. K.L. LONG,
No. 78 Squadron,
R.A.F. Station, Brighton.

EQ/S.23191/P.
Date:—
11th June, 1944.

From: The Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command.

My warmest congratulations on the award of
your Distinguished Flying Medal.

A. J. Harvie
Air Chief Marshal.

Originator's
Signature

Time of
Origin



HEADQUARTERS OF THE
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING-IN-CHIEF
R. C. A. F. OVERSEAS

20 Lincoln's Inn Fields,
LONDON .. W.C.2.

27th July, 1944.

Dear Long,

It is very gratifying to me to
learn that you have been awarded the
Distinguished Flying Medal by His Majesty.
I congratulate you most warmly and wish
you continued success.

Yours sincerely,

N. S. Breadner
(N. S. Breadner)
Air Marshal.

Warrant Officer K.L. Long, D.F.M.,
No. 78 Squadron.

On June 24, 1944 we were again stationed at #78 Sqd. and again ran into difficulties. Tommy still wanted to fly with me but the new navigator and bomb aimer wouldn't be separated. So I took Tommy and a bomb aimer by the name of Sutton and we were a crew again.

Op.#5, the first op. with the new crew, was to Blainville, France - a month after the last op. It was almost an identical night too. We bombed the target and headed for home at 5000 ft., which was the altitude at which we were ordered to fly. There was a bright moon and when I banked the aircraft I saw nothing but fog. I vowed then no enemy aircraft was ever going to get us in the belly again unless we could see him coming. I told the navigator that we were hitting the deck {flying low to the ground}. At some place on the way home, with the moonlight I could see the trees slipping by not too far below so I asked Tommy what the ground level was. He reported hill tops 1300 ft. I was at 1100 ft. at the time - needless to say the nose of the aircraft went up in a hurry. Later on we touched down, seven hours after take-off. The next ten days or so we made five trips {July 1, 5, 6, 9 & 12} for a total of 15 hours, 25 minutes for daylight raids and 3 hours, 45 minutes on a night raid. Gully was also on four of these trips. These were raids on Gun Installations or Buzz Bomb Launch pads and Anti Aircraft Guns. These were quiet and uneventful trips. One pilot, F/O. Andrews and crew ditched in the English Channel on July 9th and were lucky enough to be able to wear a badge with a fish on it. When a crew landed in the water and were lucky enough to survive, the Air Force awarded them with a badge with a picture of a fish on it that was worn proudly on the upper arm of their tunics. Later on I learned that a good friend of mine from the days of training, Leonard Sykes P/O and all his crew were killed while bombing an airfield at Velleneuve St. Georges, France, on July 5th.

I went on leave to London July 14th. It was during this time when the V bombs were coming into southern England quite frequently. I met this girl that I knew in the afternoon. We had taken in a show and had stopped at a bar for a few drinks before taking her home on a petrol bus. Having missed the last bus back into London, I was hoofing it back in the dark hours of the night along a cement and rock fence about four feet high. I heard a strange sounding motor coming, which I realized was one of the V bombs. I didn't pay too much attention to it until the motor stopped right above my head. I jumped right over the fence and squatted down - why I don't know, because one side was just as safe as the other. The bomb must have glided for a ways, for when I arrived at the place I was sleeping the windows were all gone. Luckily no one was hurt. Time flew by; the leave was over, so I headed back to #78.

When returning to 78 Sqd. on June 24th, the upper level decided I deserved an aircraft of my own to fly, which was "O" for Oboe #NA 513. Returning from leave July 23rd, our name was down with "O" for Oboe LL 546. I then learned that on July 18th/44, a daylight raid to Acquet, W/O Stratford had taken "O"NA 513. He had crashed it in France. That night, 21 crews from our Sqd. bombed Kiel, Germany. The target was warships, shipyards and Kiel itself. How many bombers hit Kiel that night I couldn't

guess. All our aircraft returned safely. In the late evening of July 24th, 15 crews from our Sqd., including Gully and myself, took off for Stuttgart, Germany, a fairly quiet trip. On the return, I was running short of fuel so decided to land on the southern coast of England. I radioed Tangmere Airport, which was a fighter base and had short runways, for permission to land there. After given the O.K. I dropped down to 2000 feet and was preparing to land when fire broke out in the Port outer engine. I gave the order to put on the parachutes and prepare to jump. I then feathered the propeller and pushed the button that activated the fire extinguisher. Thank God it worked. I told Control Tower what had happened. They held off other aircraft and told me to bring it in as soon as possible. We landed on three engines again that night. A note here about the engineer, MacDonald, a thick skulled Scotchman, after landing and in private Johnnie asked me if I knew that the engineer hadn't put his parachute on. I asked him why he hadn't followed my orders. He explained that he was waiting until we had jumped and then he was going to bring the plane in on his own. I said, "Another mistake and you will be gone". After a short sleep we were flown back to Brighton the next day.

A little story about Gulevich and his crew that may be of interest. His crew consisted of three Canadians, Gully, Nav. P/O Aldrich from Edmonton, Sgt. Hadwin from Ontario and four R.A.F. members. Hadwin was real skinny looking with arms double the size of a good broomstick, which gave him the nickname of "Muscles". They took off one night to a target in German held territory. When leaving the target, Muscles reported a fighter below and a little behind them. Gully instructed the Gunner to keep a good eye on him and when he started to raise his nose he would roll the aircraft a bit to give Muscles a good shot. The maneuver worked and Hadwin downed the fighter. After landing at home base, Hadwin said that he got what he had come over for and now he was heading home. A few days later he produced a birth certificate showing he was only sixteen years old. He had used his brother's I.D. to join up. He reported this to the Commanding Officer and in a few days and a couple more trips, he left the Sqd. on the way home. Muscles was sent back to Canada and was Gunnery Instructor at Foam Lake, Saskatchewan.

The trips on August 3rd, 5th and 9th were on buzz bomb launching pads and an airport, and on Aug 9th a daylight raid to Foret Demoral. We were to fly through 10/10 cloud all the way until we got to the target, which was to be clear. After takeoff and a short distance the wireless radio started smoking. As we were not allowed to go without a radio, we headed for the North Sea, dumped the bombs and returned to base. When the wireless was checked they found a wad of chewing gum hung up in some wires.

The trip to Dijon, France was a quiet 6 hr. and 35 min. trip. I can't recall what the target was but fifteen crews including Gulevich's left from 78 Sqd. and all reported an easy trip. It was on this trip that I saw a terrible thing happen. It's as plain in my mind as if it had happened yesterday, not 62 years ago. We took off in the early evening, circled the airdrome until we reached the altitude at which we were to fly, and then headed across England on the first leg of the route. We were flying along and I was relaxed, watching all the other aircraft for a half-mile around thinking that it was nice to have company. Then I noticed two Halifax's a little ahead and to the starboard, one right under the other and I

was thinking that they were getting fairly close. All at once the one underneath pulled his nose up right into the belly of the other plane. Why? Nobody will ever know. To me it looked like the Captain's nerves gave out and he decided to call it quits. My rear gunner reported one parachute opened and thirteen young airmen gone. We bombed the target around midnight and all our aircraft returned safely.

On Aug.12/13, the target was Brunswick, Germany; with 17 crew's leaving our Sqd. Gulevich was one of them. He must have had a premonition. We were not allowed to divulge any information about a mission although Gully and I always told each other what the target was and whether or not it was going to be a tough one. I was sitting in the mess hall when he came in after briefing. I asked him what it was going to be like; he just shivered and walked on by. That evening a few of us went to the pub in Bubwith and had the usual good time. On the way out of the bar, I bought a bottle of beer and tucked it under Gully's pillow so he would have a drink when he got back. Next morning in the flight room, I was told that all crews returned but one and that Gully's crew was missing. I went to the Nissen hut where Gully's crew stayed and removed the bottle of beer to make it look a little better. Gully crashed on a speedway at Fahr, one kilometer East of Bremen, Germany. There were no survivors. The crew was buried in the Becklinggen War Cemetery at Soltare, Germany. Gully was flying as a Warrant Officer - the next day he would have received his commission as a Pilot Officer, which would have made him so happy. Gully and his crew were missed by everyone who knew them, especially me, as we had been such good friends for so long.

The next day Aug.14th they had us bombing in front of the allied troops. Aug.15th. we destroyed an enemy airfield at Lialemont, France. On Aug. 17th we were sent to Brest Harbor on the western tip of France. There were a few German ships docked there. If there was cloud and we couldn't see the big ships we were instructed to bomb anything we could see in the water. Through a break in the clouds we spotted a very small boat. The bombs left our aircraft and we were on our way home. Aug. 25th, we bombed a gas site and a buzz bomb pad at Watten, France. Over the target was the blackest cloud that I had ever seen and it was all flak, as the rear gunner said "We should have lowered our under carriage and taxied across". Six aircraft from 78 Squadron were badly damaged. Oh yes, on this trip I was flying under the name of Pilot Officer Long - I finally got my commission and the wages were raised to just over \$6.00 a day.



On August 27th, 1944, twenty-one aircraft from Brighton were sent to Homburg, Germany. This was the first daylight raid by Bomb Command on the Ruhr Valley, better known by bombing crews as "Happy Valley". The flak was heavy and my "O" for Oboe received three flak holes. I then left on a leave, spending a few days in London. I was invited to Tommy's relatives somewhere in the south of England, but I can't remember where, for the weekend. They ran a pub in the town and Saturday night found Tommy and me with an apron on and serving drinks to the customers. A beer was sold for 10 ½ pence {about 10 cents}. I was reminded to make sure to get the ha'penny {half penny} from each customer as it wasn't much to them, but added up to quite a sum over the evening. The evening went well; it was quite a change serving instead of being served, and it was a great experience. We spent Sunday just loafing around and Monday it was back on the Squadron again after having a very enjoyable leave. September 10th we had a quick flip to Le Harve, France. We bombed some gun installations and returned home 3 hours, 20 minutes later. This trip I was flying by the name of Flying Officer "Shorty" Long, and again I received a raise in pay to about \$7.00 a day.

On September 12th, 23 aircraft left 78 Sqd. for Gelsenkirchen, Germany, "Scholven Buer". Another daylight raid on "Happy Valley" at the height of 18,500 feet, we hit the target at 13:38 in the afternoon, dropping eighteen 500-pound bombs. Anti aircraft was extremely heavy. Eleven of the aircraft landed at Base damaged. "O" for Oboe received two flak holes.

Late in the night of Sept. 15/16, we were along with 21 other aircraft from 78 Sqd., headed for Kiel, Germany. O for "Oboe" was loaded down with one 2000 lb. bomb and 13J x 500 lb. bombs. These 13Js, when dropped would break open into 4 lb. incendiary bombs for starting fires. On the way across the North Sea, Johnnie the M/ up / gunner, reported an aircraft overtaking us at a terrific speed. It was another Halifax and he went by us as if we were sitting still. The rear gunner then piped up and said " the S.O.B. left that fighter on our tail". I did some mild evasion action to let enemy fighter know that we knew he was there. He soon turned away; they weren't anxious to fight unless they had surprise in their favor. The last leg going into the target Johnnie reported a Halifax going down in flames behind us and Tommy said, " skipper, we've been hit." The rest of us hadn't heard or felt anything and the instruments were O.K. so we kidded Tommy about getting a little flak happy. We bombed the target at 01:15 in the morning. Because there was a bright moonlight, I flew "O" for Oboe low to the water and at 200 ft above the water we could still see the fires for a hundred miles and more. On returning home one crew was missing, F/Lt Harding. I often wondered if he was the one that went down behind us. The next morning, Sept. 17th, I was assigned another trip to Boulonge France. Checking I noticed I had a different aircraft, "P" for Peter. When asking the reason I was told to go down to the hanger. Tommy, Johnnie and I checked it out to find that three incendiary bombs had penetrated the main plane, one was wedged

between two gas tanks and they were still visible. The good Lord must have been riding with us and Tommy wasn't flax happy either. On this trip that dim engineer MacDonald let two engines cut out before changing fuel cocks. It scared the living hell out of me as we were down at 200 ft above water. Needless to say that when having breakfast next morning I told him that he would never fly with me again.

The trips to Boulogne on the 17th and to Calais on the 20th, were attacks on gun installations. Luckily for our crew, these Ops. over the gun installations and buzz bomb launching pads that I've been mentioning were easy trips for us, but a lot of other crew could tell a different story. When I was going into the briefing room before the trip to Boulogne I told the O.C. that I needed an engineer, that MacDonald and I had a disagreement, he turned to me and all he said was "Did you mark him up much"? He assigned me another engineer.

The night of Sept 23rd, 24 aircraft from our station were sent to Neuss, near Dusseldorf, Germany, carrying a new instrument that would enable us to bomb through clouds, and clouds there were, all to and over the target and back again. F/O Swanson was reported missing, but all other crews reported a very quiet mission. When my turn came to land, I flew into the circuit at a 1000 ft. and when approaching the funnel, which was the last leg of the circuit and when the aircraft should be 500 ft. or lower and in line with the runway. I glanced at the instrument panel, then looked up to find the clearance lights of another aircraft directly in front of me. There was no time for a second thought. I pushed the nose of "O" for Oboe down so hard that all four engines cut out. I don't know how close to Mother earth we came, but when those four Hercules engines opened up I had the four throttles fully open and the nose up. What a glorious sound they made. I pushed the button and informed the Control Tower that I was going around again. To this day I can still see those lights but do not know if they were real or just an illusion. We landed, were briefed and had a good nights sleep.

On Sept. 26th our crew, along with others, were sent back to Calais, apparently to finish the job we started on the 20th. I flew "P" for Peter that night and quite regularly for the rest of the tour. It had the reputation of being the fastest Halifax on the Squadron. On this trip I flew with the rank of F/LT. and wages were around \$9.00 a day.

The night of Oct. 4/5 we spent gardening in and around the water's of Kiel Canal. Gardening is a term they used when laying mines around the ports and shipping lanes to hinder enemy ships from doing their jobs.

Oct. 6th was another trip to Gelsenkirchen {Schoven Buer}, Happy Valley. An Instructor, Ft./Sgt. Boulton arrived at 78 Sqd. and went for a ride doing his 2nd dickie trip with me. At briefing they told us that it would be a flak free route to the target, but the target would be really wicked. They didn't have to tell us because we were there once or twice before. For the last 20 minutes or more before the target,

German anti-aircraft guns had us wired in by radar. They had the right altitude as the shells were bursting all around us right into the target. I remember one shell bursting right in front of us and slightly lower than us. There was a hell of a bang and lifted the nose of the plane right up. Ft. Sgt. Boulton just seemed to shrink away and I ducked down below the instrument panel. We weren't a darn bit scared, ha ha. We dropped our bombs on the target, did a quick turn and dropped 2000 to 3000 feet and left the target only God knows how fast. By doing this the radar lost us. Giving thanks that they couldn't shoot straight, we returned home safely to report several hits by flak. Sgt. Boulton was just as happy as the rest of us to have his feet on the ground. Out of twenty aircraft that left 78 Sqd. only two came back undamaged and three aircraft and twenty-one men were missing. It was after this trip that I first noticed my first patch of white hair. It seemed to have appeared overnight. When I got home, my Mother called it a "glamour" streak.

As I was leaving the flight room the Flt. Commander stopped me and asked if I was in any hurry to finish my tour. I had six or seven trips yet to do and without thinking I said "just pour them on, one trip a day would suit me fine". At the time I didn't know what he meant about being in a hurry but he left a few days after and another fellow took his place. I often wondered if he was thinking that I might want to take his place, and how different it would have been if I had.

These last few trips were the hardest ones of the tour. When starting the tour the odds of finishing were fairly slim so you just took them one at a time, had a few drinks and tried to have a good time between trips. When I got close to finishing, I'd come in from an Op. go to bed and if sleep would come it would be a troubled sleep tossing and turning, waking up, thinking "am I going to make it"--- How tough are the next four or so trips going to be? After the next trip it would be the same thing all over again.

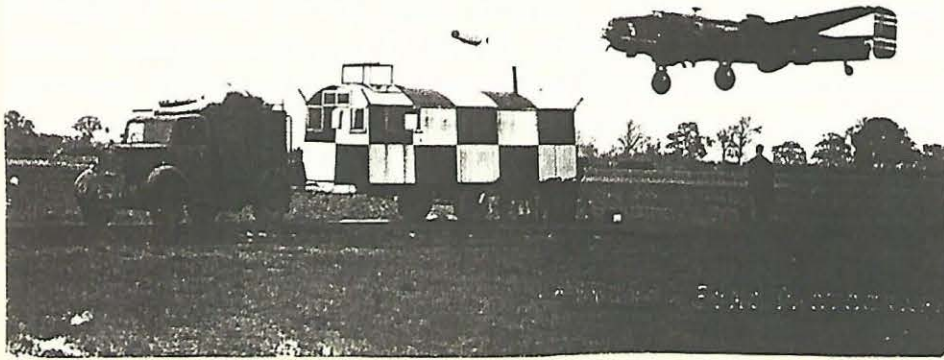
Oct. 7th, we went into the briefing room to learn that the target was Kleve. Usually the target was railways, oil refineries, airfields or some industrial areas, but this morning the target was the town itself and the order was to wipe the town out. There wasn't anything but enemy personnel in the town. 1205 Halifax', Lancasters and American bombers set out. What a sight to see! Wherever you looked there was aircraft. We learned later that our duty was carried out very well.

Oct. 8th I was granted leave again. I had read a notice on the board asking if any Airman would like to spend a few days on a farm. Having just five or six more Ops. to go and thinking that I might just get out of this alive, I gave the phone number a try and I was assured that I would be most welcome. I wish I could remember the name of the people and where they lived, but I just can't recall it. They met me at the rail station and we drove to their estate. It was a big dairy set-up and they were milking a large number of cows. The daughter, Mary was about twenty-four and she bossed and managed the whole set-up. I can still see her Dad coming home after the bars closed swinging his cane and tapping anything that got

in his way - A real English gentleman. Mary and I took in a flick {show} one night and the next night she had a date with her boyfriend and asked me if I would mind helping the hired hand, who was a German prisoner of war, with the milking. They had milking machines but we would have to strip the milk out after the machines were finished. It was nice to be back in the barns after so long away from the farm. On the weekend their two boys came home from boarding school. We went up into the hayloft and killed the one and only rat that I have ever seen. Saturday afternoon they took me out rabbit hunting. We walked for miles and didn't see a solitary thing that moved, so on the way home we did some target practice with some bottles. This leave ended only too quickly. It was a nice change to be out in the country - so quiet and peaceful.

On Oct.15th, a friend of mine from Blackfalds school days ,W/O Harold Leonard Ferguson R 159102 was killed in action. The Halifax that he was flying in as bombardier was hit by flak and went down in the Zuider Zee, Holland. All the crew got out and were in the rubber dingy except Leonard. He was hanging onto the tail plane and before the dingy got to him he went under. His body washed ashore on Oct. 17th 1944. He is buried in the General Cemetery at Staveren Freisland Holland.

78 Squadron sent twenty-two aircraft on a night raid to Essen, Germany, on Oct. 23rd. There was not too much enemy action. We bombed the target and were on our way home but I had a feeling that something was terribly wrong. I couldn't think of what it might be, all instruments showed the right readings. Tommy said that we were definitely on the right course for home. I had the engineer check his panel - everything was right on. I finally asked the bomb aimer to check the bomb bays again. Over the intercom a few moments later he said "Skipper, there's a bomb laying loose in the bay". It must have hung up when the Bomb Aimer pressed his button and got loose after the doors were closed. The rule was to drop all bombs that were hung up in the sea on the way home. I didn't like the idea of a loose bomb in the bay because if we would have to do some fighter affiliation it would raise hell and probably explode. I opened the bomb doors up and somewhere, I hope in an open field in France, there was an explosion that night. Everything felt as good as usual the rest of the way home. The ground crew couldn't figure out how the bomb bays got damaged, and I and not one of the crew volunteered an answer.



My 32nd. trip, Halifax M.Z.762, Time 17:25 Oct. 25th, 1944.
Home after successfully bombing Essen (Ruhr Valley) Bombed from
a height of 20000 ft. over a clear target.

There is a story about this picture that I must tell. While
attending a squadron reunion in England in Sept. 1992 I was
looking at a lot of pictures that were on a wall. This picture
was among them. A man was behind me with a Lady, and he pointed
at this picture and said that he was in that plane, I turned
and said so was I. He read the name plate on my coat. Surprised
He said "Flt. Lt. Long you were my pilot that day. We spent some
TIME thinking back. He was my wireless operator for the last five
missions that I flew. F/Sgt. Allen (Bob) Gilroy lives in

Jesmond
Lillfield
Gayton
Heswall

Wirral L60 8NT
England.

On my thirty- first trip Oct 25th, I and my crew flying "P" Peter with staff/
pilot F/O Loucks along for the ride as second pilot {as 2nd dicky, his first trip into
the land of wonders}, did a daylight raid on Essen, in the Ruhr valley. There was
some flak over the target, but otherwise quiet. I think the Luftwaffe were losing
their grip. Oct.28th and 29th were two short hops to Westkapelle to bomb gun
installations. Oct 30th was a night flight to Koln, Germany, and when we touched
down 5 hrs. and 50 minutes later in the morning of Oct. 31st that was the last time I
flew a Halifax bomber. I had completed a full tour of thirty-five operations. We all
felt wonderful, but we were too tired to start celebrating. Following a raid on Berlin
on the night of 16/17 December 1943 {to be known as Black Thursday} the official

communiqué stated 24 of our aircraft failed to return. Further to that, however, because of severe weather conditions, 32 aircraft crashed over England with 127 killed and 34 injured. These were by far the worst bad weather casualties sustained throughout the war and brought the overall total for the night, in grim reality, 294 killed, 14 prisoner of war... that for any given 100 aircrew in Bomber Command, 1939-45 the daunting breakdown was:

Killed on operations	51
Killed in crashes in England	9
Seriously injured	3
Prisoner of war	12
Evaded capture	1
Survived unharmed	24

- That Germany had 20,625 ack ack guns and 6,880 searchlights anned by 900,000 personal.
- It averaged out that it took 3,343 88mm shells at a cost of 27,000 pds. to shoot down one allied bomber.
- That many German night fighter pilots were Gefreiters- lance corporals-and that promotions in the Luftwaffe were announced annually on April 20th Hitler's birthday.
- That a Halifax bomber used one gallon of high octane per mile and that 2,000 gallons weighed 7 1/2 tons.
- That 537 pilots were killed during the Battle of Britain.... 545 aircrew of Bomber Command were killed on Nuremburg raid, 31st of March, 1944.
- That almost one third of Britain' War effort went into Bomber Command.
- That because of the bad siting of the escape hatches on the Lancaster your chances of survival in the Halifax were far better. Per seven-man crew 1.3 survived in the Lancaster and 2.45 in the Halifax.

Chapter 10

Tour Finished!

We were on #78 Squadron for about a month after finishing the tour. I think they were deciding on what to do with us. The Sqd. C.O. asked me one night in the Officers Mess Hall if I would like to be an instructor. My mind flashed back to the many times returning from Ops., hedge hopping 200 mph across England and at times trying to make the prisoners of war, who were working in the fields, lie down as we skimmed over them, how when coming to a wide river we would drop down one side "to check the water" then up and over the bank and thinking back and seeing how close we came to the trees one night, scary. I thought about all the other stupid things we so foolishly did that broke every rule in the book, but it did much to relieve the tension and pressure and put a little pleasure into flying. I looked at the C.O. and said that I would make a hell of a poor Instructor. I inquired about R.A.F. Transport Command and was told that there was a long list of Pilots waiting for that posting. The C.O. then asked me what I wanted to do and I replied that I wouldn't mind going home. Shortly after, they gave us leave, I spent a few days in London and returned by the way of Birmingham to see Johnnie and meet his wife and four year old daughter. They were packed and ready to go on vacation, so I headed back to base where I heard the good news, "I would be sailing for Canada shortly" To kill time and also because the price was right, I decided to get my dental work done. There was no such thing as freezing in those days and the R.A.F. dentists didn't know what sympathy was. I was glad when that ordeal was over.

Airmen Complete Operational Tours With Air Force

Flt/Lt. Kenneth Long, D.F.M., formerly of Edmonton and Blackfalds, has completed his tour of operations with the R.C.A.F. overseas. He has made 36 flights over Germany and enemy-held territory and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal for meritorious service.

Mrs. C. Long, mother of Flt/Lt. Long, resides in Edmonton, and he has a number of relatives in the Blackfalds and Lacombe districts. LALCOMBE, L. L. 09/44

On December 4, 1944, Tommy and I were posted to "R" Depot Warrington, Lancashire, to wait for a boat home. I was lying on the bed one afternoon when a sergeant came through the hut and passed out a Veteran's Land Act pamphlet to us. I thought of a quarter section south of Lacombe that my brother Paul and I had talked about and then just as quickly forgot about the whole thing. Nothing was as important as getting on that boat for home. The night before boarding the boat, Tommy, F/Lt. McNabney and I decided once again to drink England dry. As we had tried many times before we knew we couldn't succeed. After shutting down the bar, we were walking back to Barracks when we came to a bunch of hay along the road. I gave it a good kick. Little did I realize that the hay was covering a pipe coming out

DEC. 26/44
**Winner of D.F.M.
Returns to Home**

Leaving behind a distinguished flying career in the skies over Europe which won him the D.F.M., Flt. Lt. Kenneth L. Long, R.C.A.F.,



son of Mrs. Thomas Long, 9 Devonshire apts., returned to his Edmonton home Tuesday.

He told of the hectic mission over Germany and Belgium from which he brought his badly-riddled Halifax bomber and wound.

Flt. Lt. Long cremates back to safety in England. This was the "narrowest escape" during his one tour of operations with the Bomber Command.

Returning from a mission, Long's bomber met stiff opposition from German night fighters. "We flew against heavy odds, the starboard engine was put out of action, and the ship got out of control," he said.

Long, the skipper, fought with the controls and leveled out and headed the machine inland. He ordered the crew to bail out, but then a second German aircraft attacked and wounded three of the crew of seven.

Knowing that the wounded would have little chance of survival if they leaped, Long decided to gamble on getting his crippled bomber back to base in England. "We could always ditch, so I thought it was worth the chance," he said.

They turned, then the other starboard engine quit, and the machine was down to 5,500 feet, flying "lop-sided" with the two starboard engines "conked out." Under these circumstances, Long nursed the ship back to England, losing altitude gradually. He made a landing on the first airfield he spotted in England.

"There were many times when I thought we would never walk away from that bomber," he said, "but I guess it was our lucky day."

Flt. Lt. Long enlisted in the air force here about four years ago and went overseas in June, 1943. Formerly of Lacombe, the airman enlisted after graduating from St. Joseph's high school. He will spend 30 days' leave at home before reporting for duty in eastern Canada.

of the ground. It felt like my whole foot was gone. Next morning, with the help of other men who were carrying all my luggage, I hobbled onto the boat. I waited until we were out of port before reporting to the Medical Officer. No bones were broken but it was a very bad sprain. We were aboard the Queen Elizabeth, which had been a luxury liner before the war, but was showing the signs of wear and tear from transporting so many troops to and from North America. It was still a grand old ship compared to the Louie Pasteur that carried us to England. For some reason Tommy was held back for the next boat. F. /Lt. McNabney and I had a room to ourselves and he insisted we walk around the boat three times a night to exercise my ankle. When we docked in Boston on December 18th or 19th my foot was a lot better. We boarded the train for Montreal where we transferred to the train to Edmonton. We had a little wait in Montreal but it was snowing, blowing and so cold that we spent the time at the station.

After about six days on the train, we arrived in Edmonton the day after Christmas. I was met at the station by my Mother and a lot of the family. It was a grand reunion. From there we went to my Mother's apartment for a belated Christmas dinner which was, without a doubt, the best meal I had since leaving Canada and it was oh so good to see everyone again.

We were given leave and I alternated the time between Edmonton and Lacombe but had to report to the R.C.A.F. Station in the city every once in a while. It was nice to sit down for a meal again with Paul, Ina and their family and to spend time with my Mother after being away for what seemed like ages. New Years' eve, my brother, Eugene and his wife Isabel, stopped for me at Paul's and the three of us went to the New Year's dance at Clive twelve miles East of Lacombe. I was reunited with a lot of friends that I hadn't seen for quite a spell. A few of them had just returned from overseas duty and they were having a ball, just like myself. Going home Gene was unable to drive so I took the wheel but didn't know where I was going. A set of headlights was coming towards us so I stopped the car to ask which way to Lacombe. It was Shorty Thompson and a few others I knew. They laughed like hell to think that I was lost within twelve miles of home. But I was heading the right way.

In Edmonton there were a number of aircrew returning from overseas. I knew quite a few of them and we had more than a few good celebrations in the Selkirk Hotel on 101st and Jasper Ave. While at my Mother's apartment one evening, I was looking through the Lacombe Globe and came to the want ads when something caught my eye. "Land for 1/4 section south of Lacombe", the same one I had thought about while in England. The phone number was for N.D. Stewart, Vermillion. I made a call and was informed that he was at the Mayfair Hotel in Edmonton, just four blocks away from where I was. I walked over to see him that evening. He was asking \$6200 for the quarter and would agree to wait for the V.L.A. {Veteran's Land Act} but he wanted \$4000 down, which was a lot more than the twelve to fourteen hundred that I had saved up during the war. I walked home again with a let down feeling. The next Friday I rode the train to Lacombe again to take in a Friday night dance. The trains were free for us in those days. I told Paul about Mr. Stewart and He said "hell if you have that much money and want to farm, I'll scrape up the rest of the down payment. So within a week I was a farmer.

I was discharged from the R.C.A.F. on March 26th, 1945, but was still held in Reserve. I had trained for about fourteen months in Canada and another year overseas before being assigned bombing missions. I completed my 35 bombing ops in a six-month period, and then spent another 1 ½ months overseas before leaving for home. Looking back these were happy years filled with yearning, doubts and fear, with a lot of fun thrown in. If I were the same age, the same type of war was to occur, and the same reason for the war, that is 'to stop a mad man'; I would jump at the chance to do it all over again.



Taken in 1991
Dusty Dew, Browne and myself Ken "Shorty" Long
all 70 years of age.