

Minding my own business.

Walking down the street in
Bloemfontein. FID

We had trained as NAVIGATORS
1 BOMB AIMERS at 42 AIR SCHOOL
SOUTH AFRICA. BREVETTE STRIPES
up and happy, we were on our
way to DURBAN on the "BLUE
TRAIN." good food, good beds
with clean bedding supplied in
a valise with a seal which you
broke to prove it was fresh, the
train puffing along, walk to the
front of the train, swing door
to the track and pick what we
thought were melons, which
turned out to be pumpkins, vag.

7. the clip's back aboard the train to continue or, that slow. One of our number had fallen off the train in the night, going to the toilet he opened the wrong door, only had a shirt on, walked along the track until he come to a town. Named Watson (we called him Wiley), he did catch us up eventually.

This being a single track you had to halt in a place where another track was laid so that the trains can pass going in opposite directions.

We stopped at Bloemfontain, the brewing capital of S.A. for eight hours, and we were in

7. the middle of the town. I was walking along with my mate Loft Winterborn, 6 ft $3\frac{3}{4}$ " and don't forget the $\frac{3}{4}$ " he world say.

Six young fellows walked past and in the gutteral Afrikaans we heard RAF Bastards, next this I knew I was on the deck and they were jumping on me, they picked on me being smaller by the best part of a foot, however Lofty was doing his bit, I reached up and grabbed a shirt and pulled myself up and kicked someone where it was most painful, then they took off but not before I had ripped

3rd the foot of a slot. We went back to the train where we thought our attackers had gone, and along with the other 40 or 50, on the train we went all through the train looking for a torn shirt, with no success, by this time my eyes were black & closed & a little finger with a black nail - broken where they had stepped on it, we went into town again where we supped their special four XXXX brew, which helped to ease the pain. Then time to get back on the train & continue our journey to Durban.

We travelled the last 1-2-3 P.M. so we arrived at Bridgeorth, a bit full of waves off, wasting time since all the ships were being used for the South Africa landing, until eventually in early April we all left Liverpool on the "Stratmore" arriving after 3 weeks.

A happy band of NAVS, we came together at Heaton Park, where in front of the band stand we were designated our trades of PILOTS or BOMB AIMERS or NAVIGATORS, being released from essential service in the Woolwich Arsenal I had the option of returning to civvies since my release was specified for PILOT ONLY. I had soleed quite successfully at Grading School but the P.N.B Scheme had started so they just went through the list 1-2-3. P.N.B.

So we arrived at BRIDGE NORTH, a hut full of NAVS & Jr. wasting time since all the ^{big} ships were being used for the North Africa landing, until eventually in early 43 we all left Liverpool on the "STRATHMORE" arriving after 3 weeks

2.
in Durban, still together on to
EAST LONDON, then on to various
Air Schools for flying training. In
my case at 42 AIR SCHOOL PORT ELIZABETH
we went on our wings parade, where
we were called to return to our
classrooms. The married men were
told to fall out, while the rest drew
playing cards, the half of those
left that lost were to go to the
Middle East to O.T.U. while the
rest including the married ones were
to go back to Blighty. We all returned
to Durban where by various means
we made our way to CAIRO, then
went our separate ways.

Dear Sir. I am writing to you for the prospect of help for what has been a situation that has rankled for me for many years, I volunteered for the R.A.F. and was eventually released from an exempted occupation in the Royal Ordnance factory, the Woolwich Arsenal. I joined the RAF for aircraft training in early 1942, I served until October 1946 when I was demobilised. In that time I trained as a Navigator, my active service was with 37 Squadron a Wellington squadron on bombing raids from Italy. On completion of a tour I joined a Communications Flight out of Caserta & Algiers, flying on Baltimore & Ansons. I was fortunate enough not to suffer any apparent injuries, although I was hospitalised twice for what would be considered today as a Post Traumatic Stress syndrome, but the forces of the day being what they were I was discharged from hospital as

2% N.Y.D. which was the 'argot for "not yet diagnosed": or demot I returned to my civilian life. After a short time I realised that I had a loss of hearing. I was seen by a consultant hearing specialist who diagnosed what he said was "high tone" deafness which amounted to a complete loss of a spectrum of my hearing, he said that there was no treatment for the condition, and that a hearing aid would not be a cure.

The pension authorities at this time did not accept that this hearing defect was pensionable. Some years later I made an application and an appointment was made for another hearing test, which confirmed the original diagnosis, and this time I was granted a lump sum off £1,500 being the lowest award available, something over 2% disability.

After many years I received a letter from the pension department

3/ inviting me to have another car test, resulting from which I received another sum ^{just} in excess of £1,000. After a few more years I was ~~informed~~ informed that I had run out of time to make an appeal, but if I made an appeal it would be considered, although it was out of time. In the event I was told that the appeal would not be allowed. As a result of the hearing test I was considered for a hearing aid from the N.H.S. which I eventually received, as the diagnosis of 30 years or more proved correct the hearing aid was of no use. Being taken in by glowing adverts I paid over 800 pounds for the latest hearing aid which was no improvement on the N.H.S one. I was fortunate enough to receive most of my money back. After a few more years the hearing department of the N.H.S wrote a

He invited me to go for another consultation when they fitted me with a hearing aid for my other ear which once again proved useless. I have lived my life missing out on social functions theater, television etc, at our BIGGIN Hill Aircrew Association meeting just last week I sat ~~whole~~ right through the meeting without understanding a word. It is the same at the Sidcup branch of RAFA. My ^{old} wireless operator made an application for deafness disability and was granted a pension whilst nowhere as severely afflicted as myself. I will explain my reason for making the application at this time. I have ~~not~~ kept in touch with both my South African pilot & the rest of my crew all these years, including my bombardier also in South Africa. With the

On of E mails, I now keep in touch
via my younger brothers computer.
Of recent date my Pilot has passed
on news of one of our old squadron
members, a KURT LAVACK, who is
living in SWEDEN, he is a Canadian
who was a pilot on our squadron in
Italy, back in 1944. I was crossing
the runway one evening when I heard
a Wellington approaching to land, so I
halted to watch it land, as it touched
down there was a massive explosion,
and I watched as the aircraft
disintegrated in flames. I watched
as the fire rescue crews dealt
with the crash, surprisingly only two
of the crew died, the rest of the crew
survived with injuries & burns, except
for the pilot, who was unscathed, because
because the pilot's seat was mounted
to protect him from flak & bullets etc,
the rest of the crew were well know

(8) to me as friends. Kurt was back
in the air with a new crew within
a few days. It appeared that a hung
up bomb had released on landing,
slid forward & detonated on striking
the end of the bomb bay. My brother
managed to contact KURT by E mail
& we have corresponded this last few
months. He sent a recent E mail in
which he stated that some war-time ^{service}
people who he had befriended in
Sweden asked what pension he had
received for war service, they said that
the Canadian government would be
pleased to receive a letter from him
because funds had been made available
for ex-war service people, he received
from them a substantial sum of money,
they also apparently forwarded his
particulars to the War pensions in
England, since he served with the
RAF and not the Canadian air

7. force from the British he also received a substantial sum of money, still being in Sweden he felt that I should have a reasonable case for a pension as he had never lived in England. I am now 80 years of age, living on only a state pension, with a wife who is severely arthritic and in constant pain, do not construe this as an appeal for any financial help from yourself, I just want help to get from my government what I consider is well overdue