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1282115 S/S. D. C. Smith,
Sergeant's Mess,

Royal Air Force,

Castle Combe,

N. Chippenham,
Wilt.

3/10/42.

Dear Vic.,

Well, here we are at F.F.S., and so far, not doing too badly. Castle Combe is a satellite of Hallowington, and is also where they have seen fit to dump our course. It's a brand new camp, very small - the landing ground isn't much bigger than the "News of the World" spread out flat, and surrounded by 200 foot trees, towers, electric pylons, folks on bikes, etc. (so I'm in my element) - and, of course, it's all dispersed, after the style of Chippy. This last point doesn't matter much, however, as we are issued with damn good cycles.

Castle Combe is reputed to be the prettiest village in England, and I can see no reason to doubt it. The surrounding countryside is really wizard, if you

appreciate that sort of thing - and, personally,
I do.

As for places to go, one has the choice
of Chippenham, Bath, and, slightly further
afield, Bristol. So far, I have only tried
Chippenham, which isn't fearfully inspiring,
consisting, as it does, of two picture palaces,
a couple of pubs, a doubtful fish and chip
shop, a cafe which has sold out, and
the infallible Woolworths, that irreputable
sign of civilisation in the midst of the
wilderness. Chippenham is O.K. for a
flic and a pint or two, but Bath or
Bristol is really the place to go. I shall
take the first opportunity of investigating
these places, and will let you have my report
in due course.

We haven't done a fearful lot yet.
This blasted morning mist seems to hang
around until lunchtime. I managed to go
solo after a dual circuit or two, and now
I'm getting the patter typed for taping,

taking-off, straight and level flight, and landing. You should try giving a running commentary, out loud, on what you are doing some time. It'll probably shake you rotten. It did me. However, I'm not doing so badly, and to judge by some of these Flight Lieutenants, and Squadron Leaders hopping across the aerodrome like a randy grasshopper, I think I must be displaying odd touches of genius.

Apart from flying, there is some sort of vague lecture programme every other day, which I haven't fathomed yet. There is also a certain amount of Link to be done. Despite all this, we have loads of time to ourselves. We are quartered in very comfortable bunks, and the Mess isn't too bad. The food is good enough, but in rather short ~~is~~ supply. Already, I have become very difficult to see with the naked eye when viewed side on. However, one can get as many Players as ~~one~~ wants - and at service price, 1/6^d for 20.

The chaps here - instructors, students,

(yes, they call you "students" here, as distinct from "peapots"), and Ground Staff alike, are the nicest bunch you could wish to meet. Surprising how keen everybody is, too. Even I am dead keen on this racket now that it's started. If I were you, Vic, I should try and get yourself a course. I think you'll enjoy it.

I spent this morning playing baseball, throwing the discus, and the javelin, and I also did an hour's fencing. My opponent was a damn great Australian Flight Lieut. He's so heavy that I managed to wipe the floor with him. But when I tried my luck on a Polish P/O, I didn't half go through it. At the moment, my legs and arms feel as though they are stuffed with cannon balls. Extraordinarily how we all enjoyed the exercise this morning. Hell of a sight better than moping around in a Cress Room when the weather is $\frac{1}{2}$. I wish we had something of the sort at Chippy.

So far, I haven't come into contact with Tom German. I think he's at another satellite. If I should see him,

I'll give him your message.

There are only two clouds on my horizon at the moment. One is that I've completely forgotten Linda's home address, and if I don't remember it and write to her while she's on leave, there will be a First Class Battle Royal when I get back. Can you do anything in time, Vic? Secondly, there is a C.F.G test on the horizon, which is causing me severe colour of the Adam's Apple when I think of it.

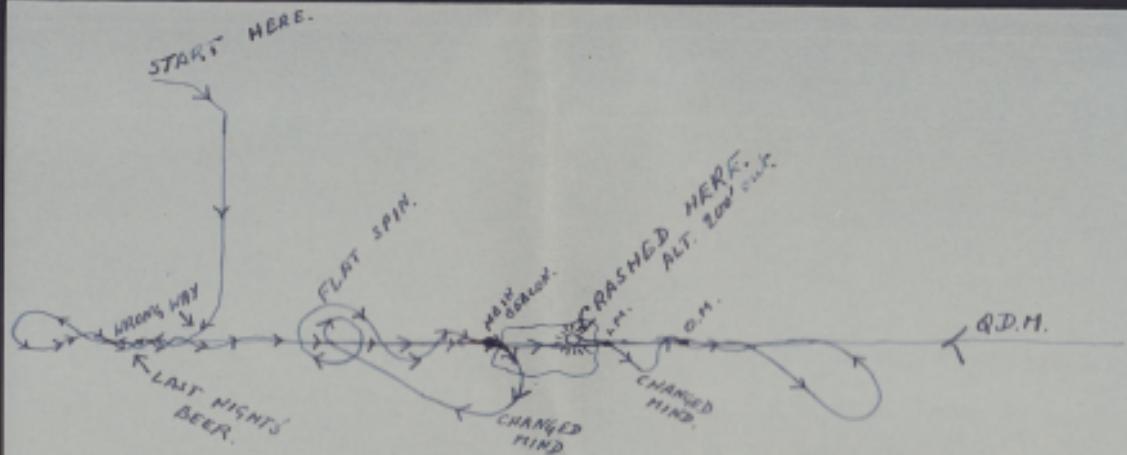
Well, old boy, I've rambled on for four pages more than I intended to give you, and I don't see why I should go on any longer.

Give my love to the Flight. (Have the gulls grown whiskers yet?), and remind Duggie that I must have some leave as soon as I get back. I don't care if the Flight falls apart, and questions are asked about it in Parliament, I must have my leave.

Don't forget to write back as soon as
possible — and let's have a letter, not
a ruddy postcard in an envelope.

your Chario, chump, — and look after
your fool self.

Thine to a Cinder
Doug.



MY LINK EFFORT: 1/10/42.