

EXAMINER 1577

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MR. & MRS.

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H Flight 15 E.F.T.S.



REGINA, SASK.

Regina,
Saskatchewan,
Canada.
18/7/43.

Dear Father & Mother,

I'm at last attempting to write a letter as promised in airgraph, at last I've got a bit of spare time, well at least I've done all that has to be done to-day, although there is still a lot that I should do, (its now 20.00 hrs.) but it will have to wait until tomorrow.

As you have no doubt gathered by now the course here is pretty tough, compared with this the course at Cambridge E.F.T.S. was a "piece of cake".

I have so much to write about I hardly know where to begin, I think the best plan is to write a more or less connected account of my travels, from the diary that I've kept, I had intended to send the diary home, but now I don't feel inclined to risk losing it, and I'm afraid I should have to censor a lot of the "gen" so I'm going to keep it with me for the time being at any rate.

We sailed from a port somewhere in England one fine day in June, the first day out the

2

sea was like a mill pond, the boat which before the War was a large luxury liner, was rather crowded, but the food was jolly good, it was great to have pure white bread again, this was baked on the ship of course.

Shortly after sailing the canteens were opened, and did the fellows rush them, we could buy as many bars of chocolate, oranges, apples, cigarettes etc, as we wanted, I'm afraid some of the fellows had far more than was good for them; I managed to restrain myself after ~~the~~ five bars of chocolate.

At night I slept in a hammock which if you get the strings adjusted correctly, and fold the blankets the right way can be quite comfortable.

On the second day out the boat started a gentle pitching motion and a few of the fellows were ~~the~~ sick.

On the third day out the boat started rolling and pitching and the waves started breaking over the lower decks as she ploughed her way through a fairly rough sea, a lot more of the fellows were sick; I saw a couple of sailors leaning over the side looking a trifle green, I felt no ill effects though in fact I didn't miss one meal on the whole voyage I'm thankful to say.

3/



REGINA, SASK.

We had the usual three meals a day.

The first day we were aboard we were all given duties or jobs to do for the voyage some were sent into the galley to help the cooks etc, I was put on deck patrol, I did four hours on and eight off, it was rather a "bind" on the night shift, it was good fun in the rough weather though with the wind howling round the masts and the sea breaking over the bows.

During the next few days the weather improved and it began to get really hot, in fact to hot to be comfortable below decks, all the upper decks were covered with fellows sunbathing.

I saw a school of porpoise and a lot of flying fish which were about a foot long, they skim over the surface of the water for about 50 yds. the shape of the fins makes them look like miniature spitfires.

We disembarked at a port in one of the ~~States~~ States of the U.S.A. and spent the next few days on the train it was a really marvellous ride, we saw quite a lot of America, as we stopped

at Washington, New York, New London, Worcester (at Flaver-
 -hill ^(Mass) a town we passed through I saw a U.S.M.C.
 depot which stands beside the railway line)
 Portland and Bangor.

The long train, 13 coaches by the way eventually
 arrived at Moncton the Heaton park of Canada.
 Here again we were extremely fortunate instead
 of the usual waiting period some of us were
 posted to E.F.T.S. immediately, so we had quite
 a rush to get everything organized, we had the
 usual medicals, a test for susceptibility to
 scarlet fever, which proved negative in my case;
 and were issued with tropical kit as it gets
 really warm on the prairies during the
 summer, the two tropical uniforms look quite
 smart they are the same pattern as the blue
 uniforms but are made of a very light khaki drill
 with red eagles on the sleeves.

Moncton judging by Canadian standards is quite
 a large town, it had a peace time population
 of about 20,000, most of the houses are of the
 usual American type, all wood with a large
 veranda on both storeys, all brick buildings are
 very few and far between.

One thing that does strike you ~~is~~, not so much
 in Canada but in America, is that every small
 shack has a large modern car, in many cases

5/



REGINA, SASK.

the garage is nearly as big as the house.

The camp at Moncton is the best organized R.A.F. camp I've yet seen, it's like a small town in its self, it has everything from a cinema to a permanent church, built at the same time as the rest of the camp, mostly with voluntary subscriptions, so after those hectic days at Moncton we once more boarded the a train bound for the west, the coaches we travel in are very comfortable, they are quite as good as the Pullman sleepers that used to run between London and Scotland and the service would do credit to a modern hotel, we each have a sleeping berth which is made up for us every night by a negro porter, our own seat in the dining car, and the usual observation coach. The porter even collects our shoes during the night and polishes them for us.

We left Moncton on Wedn. night and arrived at Regina on Sunday morning.

The trains stop about every three hours for about 20 mins while the train is serviced, we usually get out then to stretch our legs and buy some fruit or ice cream.

We also stopped at Montreal for $1\frac{1}{4}$ hrs and

at Ottawa 1 hr. The run ⁶ between Ottawa and Winnipeg was by far the prettiest part of the journey, the line winds round hundreds of small lakes through great fir and pine forests and over swift flowing streams with occasional waterfalls. At Winnipeg we had a twelve hour break and changed stations from the Canadian National Railway (C.N.R.) to the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) after dumping my kit at the local Y.M.C.A. I had time to have a good look round the city.

The trip from Winnipeg to Regina was very boring, nothing but miles and miles of flat fields and rolling prairie land.

The aerodrome is about two miles from Regina (the Capitol of Saskatchewan) and is still used by T.C.A. aircraft on the transcontinental air routes. As I've said before we are kept pretty busy here, we fly on alternate mornings and afternoons, one day we fly in the morning and attend lectures at the ground school in the afternoon and visa versa the next day, seven days a week, we occasionally get an afternoon off ground school.

I went to an R.C.A.F. dance in Regina on Monday night.

The Canadians are very friendly and are really interested in the old country.

We had Wed. afternoon off this week to go



REGINA, SASK.

to the annual fair that is held in Regina for a week.

A family that I met in Regina took me round the fair and home to supper with them, the people are most hospitable.

The Indian reservation at the fair was jolly interesting and I spoke to a real mountie in full dress uniform, I had a really enjoyable day.

Reveille is at 06.00 hrs. we start flying at 07.00 hrs. and or lectures at 08.00 hrs we have one hour for lunch and finish at 12.00 hrs. we then have homework or private study to do which usually takes until about 22.00 hrs. we then stroll across to the canteen have an ice cream and a milk shake and crawl to bed having had just about enough for one day, I think you will agree that it is quite a full day.

I don't know when you will get this, the time for airmails apparently varies considerably but I understand it is a better service from Canada to England than from England to Canada, you can send an air-letter to me by the way. How long did that cable take?

8

Hope you had a comfortable journey home from Manchester, I've sent an airograph to Shieberts, and that Father is feeling better now, and Mother is still on top form, and everybody else at home is in the best of health, I'm getting quite brown in this sun, it was 95 in the shade the other day. I have also sent a cable and airograph to Barbara, I hope to send a letter as soon as I get some time.

Has Basil moved do you know? if he has please let me have his ~~new~~ new address and if you know how long he might stay.

I hope this letter is legible, I have a milk shake waiting for me (I hope), so must rush off to the canteen.

Best wishes and kind regards
to all at home,

Ever your loving son,

Ray