

ROYAL AIR FORCE JOURNAL



Final Number

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The cover design and the drawings on pages 151, 160, 162, 163, and 176 are by Squadron Leader David Langdon. The drawings on pages 156 and 158 are by LAC M. Seabright and that on page 177 by LAC E. Alabarn. The photographs on pages 148, 170 and 179 are Air Ministry official photographs.

Although the Royal Air Force Journal closes down with this present number, contributions should still be submitted to The Editor, P.O. Air Ministry, Admiralty House, Kingsway, for publication in a new R.A.F. magazine. Articles, and stories of from 1500-2000 words, and cartoons and drawings, all with a Service angle, are welcomed. The Prize Competition will be continued each month as usual.

NOT TO BE PUBLISHED

The information given in the Royal Air Force Journal is not to be communicated, either directly or indirectly, to the Press or to any person not holding an official position in His Majesty's Service.

The circulation of the Journal is limited. Please do not put this copy in your pocket, but leave it for the use of other readers.



MAY, 1946

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 5

A Message from the Chief of the Air Staff

As a regular reader of the Royal Air Force Journal since its inception in September, 1939, as the Air Ministry Weekly Bulletin, I am sorry to have to write this note for its closing number.

The Journal has always been regarded as the Service's own magazine, and the bulk of its contents were contributed by all ranks from all parts of the world. It was this communal effort that helped to give the Journal its character and enhanced its reading value. It has done a good job.

It is planned to replace the Journal with another R.A.F. magazine to be run on similar lines. I hope the Service will give the same support to this new magazine as they gave to the Journal, so that it may prove a worthy successor.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force,
Chief of the Air Staff

Editorial

Last Words

THIS final Editorial serves the dual purpose of taking leave of readers of the *Journal* and inviting them to become readers of a new Service publication which will take the place of the *Journal*. The reasons for the closing down of the *Journal* are not secret. It was primarily a war-time effort and those who were responsible for its style and character have left, or are in process of leaving the Service on release. Rather than carry on with an imitation of the original it has been thought advisable to change the name and format of the magazine, and adapt it more to suit the needs of the post-war Service.

Elsewhere in this issue we go into the farewell business pretty thoroughly, even to the extent of including a potted history of the *Journal* from its infancy up to this final issue. We have sub-titled this 'powerful piece' 'Editorial Swansong' so that little should be added to it here, apart from reiterating thanks to our many contributors, past and present, who helped to keep the *Journal* going by supplying a steady stream of contributions.

The aim of the new magazine will be the same as that of the *Journal*. It will continue to be run by the Service for the Service and will remain the Service's own magazine, giving news and information about what is happening in the Service and letting you know what the other man is doing. Hence the responsibility for its success will in large measure continue to remain a collective one. Certain features which ran regularly in the *Journal* will be carried over in the new magazine as having proved their interest value. But articles, stories, cartoons, serious drawings and photographs, all with a Service angle, will be more than ever in demand from contributors, especially as so many of our regular contributors and artists are being released from the Service.

Suggestions of a constructive sort will also be welcome, as the launching of a new magazine is an opportune time to incorporate new ideas.

The success of the new magazine will depend on the continuance of the excellent reader-contributor relationship which was fostered during the lifetime of the *Royal Air Force Journal* and helped to maintain its standard to the end.

This Month's Journal

OUR EDITORIAL AND NEWS FROM AIR MINISTRY features, familiar to readers over a period of several years, will be carried over into the new Service magazine. ★ THE "JOURNAL" CLOSING DOWN is an article by the retiring Editor. Its title and its subtitle "Editorial Swansong" aptly describe its content. ★ SLIPSTREAM appears in this issue for the last time and is written all in one piece for that reason. It is hoped to replace SLIPSTREAM with a page of humor which will be contributed by readers. Short paragraphs describing humorous incidents in Service life and Service jokes which are neither camp nor risqué are welcomed. So, too, are comic drawings with a R.A.F. angle. ★ I WAS AN INVADER is a thrilling story of an R.A.F. officer who evaded capture by the Germans after being shot over the Ruhr. Air Vice-Marshal Sir B.L. Erber, Chairman of the R.A.F. Disciplinary Service, introduces it with a foreword. ★ LAC R. Williams gives an account in WANT A JOB? of how to go about getting a job as a teacher, even if you have had little previous preparation for this sort of career. ★ In 50 LONG, JOE! a previous Editor of the *Journal*, Squadron Leader R. B. Raymond, writes a farewell tribute to our strip cartoon character. Joe has tried to entertain readers each month for the past three years in the very limited confines of a four-by-two space at the foot of a page. There is no Joe strip cartoon this month, but

he will be found rather profitably elsewhere, on our cover, for example, and on pages 160, 162, 163 and 176. ★ OUR PARLIAMENTARY COMMENTARY is another regular feature which will be carried over to the new magazine with the aim of keeping readers informed of questions and answers in Parliament on Service matters. ★ In THE GOLDEN EAGLE Flight Lieutenant Kenneth Ains, D.F.C. and Bar, describes the work of the Pathfinder Force in war and the Pathfinders' Club in peace. ★ An interesting account of Russian servicemen's grief in a WAAP IN SOVIET RUSSIA by Section Officer J. E. Thomas, who was selected as the WAAP Officer for the British Youth Obligation which recently toured the Soviet. ★ Flight Sergeant L. J. Evans writes nostalgically from Cley Street of OUR MESS and leaves one wondering whether there is still a lot of truth in the saying that absence makes the heart grow fonder—of places as well as persons. ★ This month our roving reporter Flight Lieutenant Kenneth Lewis went back to Germany after an absence of six months and records his impressions in REPORT FROM GERMANY. ★ Our British Aircraft series features the famous HALIFAX. This series, too, will be continued in the new magazine.

NEWS FROM AIR MINISTRY

Redundant Aircraftcrew

THE position of redundant aircrew who wish to undertake further service as tradesmen in the R.A.F. is clarified in A.M.O. A.240/44. This states that aircrew will assume in their trade the temporary rank or classification they would have attained under normal promotion procedures, while those who were A.C.3s or A.C.1s will be re-designated immediately on re-entraining to their trade. If they reach L.A.C. standard, the date of reaching that classification will be taken as the date on which they entered aircrew training, and their temporary rank or classification will be determined accordingly.

Those who do not reach L.A.C. standard will be given every facility to do so within six months, and if successful will be granted a similar antedate of seniority and the appropriate rank.

Aircrew who have no basic trade will, after trade training, be given the opportunity to reach L.A.C. standard within six months, or within six months of acceptance for enlistment under A.M.O. A.805/44, whichever is later; and will also be granted a similar antedate of seniority and the appropriate rank.

The Order also states that these aircrew are eligible for the grant of substantive rank in their ground trade as specified in Nos. 4 and 5, and that they will retain the special conditions of service at present enjoyed by redundant aircrew, so long as they fulfil the terms on which these are granted and so long as these conditions remain in operation.

Release Medicals: A Warning

CASES have come to light of personnel withholding from Medical Officers details of their medical history when the time comes for them to attend for their release medical examination.

This may be due to an understandable desire to avoid possible delay in being released, or an unwillingness to be told that they are suffering from some complaint, and are in need of treatment.

Should you fall ill while on release leave, and have to be admitted to hospital, your leave cannot be extended because of this.

It is therefore in your own interests to disclose to the examining M.O. details regarding your health, and to receive any treatment which may be necessary at the earliest opportunity.

It should not be taken for granted that a medical examination will automatically disclose a malady; M.O.s rely to a great extent upon what you are able to tell them in their assessment of the condition of your health.

The R.A.F. Escaping Society

THE R.A.F. Escaping Society (mentioned in the foreword to the story "I Was An Aviator" on page 155) is in process of formation at the present time.

The aim of the Society is to foster the many friendships formed between successful escapees and exiles from former German-occupied territories, and the gallant people of those countries, who, often at grave personal risk, helped them to return to this country.

The idea for such a Society was first proposed by the former Chief of the Air Staff, Marshal of the R.A.F. Lord Portal of Hungerford, G.B.E., O.M., D.S.O., M.C., who is President of the Society. The Chairman is Air Vice-Marshal Sir Basil E. Ingham, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., D.F.C., A.F.C., himself a successful escaper.

Membership is open to all members and ex-members of the R.A.F., Dominions Air Forces and Allied Air Forces who served within the framework of the R.A.F., but for the time being it is limited to those who got away from Western Europe. Later on it is hoped to extend membership to include those who returned from Denmark, Norway, and Italy.

Although all known escapees and exiles from Western Europe have been circled by the Society, there may be some who have not received a communication. All those who are interested in membership should write to the Secretary, R.A.F.E.S., c/o D.P.S., Air Ministry, Room 475, Admiralty House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

The amount of the annual subscription is left to the discretion of each individual, but the equivalent of one day's pay is suggested as a basis.

A R.A.F. Memorial Album

A FEW months ago the *Journal* received a letter from France, from a young French girl, an admirer of the R.A.F. She explained how all during the German occupation and afterwards she had gathered cuttings about the R.A.F. from the newspapers, listened to stories of the exploits of our Squadrons on the R.B.C., and set it all down in an album.

We were able to complete the album for this French girl by sending her photographs of her special heroes: F/O "Collier" Kain, G/Capt. Butler, W/Cdr. Guy Gibson, W/Cdr. "Paddy" Fitzmaurice, and others.

A few days ago the album arrived for us to look at. The paper is set of fine quality, for there was none in France during the occupation; what is set down in the album is written by hand and because it was begun in 1939 the ink is beginning to fade.

The great thing is that this record of R.A.F. fighter exploits, bomber operations, and even our parachute landings in France, will not fade with the ink. In the mind of this French girl, it will remain. Many millions of people in Europe hold in high esteem the work of the R.A.F. If we wanted any further proof of it, this album gives it.

R.A.F. Unit Garden Competition

THE R.A.F. Unit Annual Garden Competition is being repeated this year with a special sense of urgency. The Unit making the best effort to be self-sufficient in vegetable produce throughout the year will be awarded the annual trophy.

Air Ministry horticultural experts will make a selection of the best gardens, and the final judging will be carried out during the first three weeks of August by officials of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Technical efficiency, food production plans and the amount of effort made by Station personnel are some of the factors for which points will be awarded in this Competition. Further details about it may be found in A.M.O. N.220/46.

Storage of Mess Trophies

RESPONSIBILITY for storage and safe custody of mess plates, trophies, pictures, etc. belonging to messes, institutions, squadrons and other units which may close down or be transferred overseas has been transferred from No. 220 Maintenance Unit to No. 14 Maintenance Unit, class A.M.O. A.302/46.

WAAF for Fire Force

W.A.A.F. personnel whose release groups have appeared in an advance promulgation are invited to apply for vacancies which exist in the administrative and operational branches of the National Fire Service.

Administrative vacancies are for uniformed or civilian personnel as shorthand typists, accountants, bookkeepers, stenographers and clerks. A limited number of senior appointments will be open to women qualified to take charge of administrative sections.

In the operational branch uniformed personnel are required in switchboard operators, wireless operators and telephonists.

Uniform for those required to wear it (it need be worn only when on duty) is issued free. Applicants are offered employment for a year, with the prospect of an extension of service.

Rates of pay vary from a minimum of 52s. 6d. per week for firewomen to £450 p.a. in the officer class. (Further details in A.M.O. A.285/46).

University Exhibitions

THE Grocers' Company is re-establishing the award of its Exhibitions for the Universities at Oxford and Cambridge, and extends an invitation to all Service personnel who intend resuming their University studies upon their release to apply for the Grants offered.

The Exhibitions are for £100 per annum and are to aid those with inadequate private means who are considered suitable for University education.

Candidates who hold Exhibitions or scholarships from the State, Local Education Authorities or other City Companies are not eligible for the Grocers' Company's Grants.

Full details of the scheme and application forms are obtainable from the Clerk to the Grocers' Company, Grocers' Hall, Princes Street, London, E.C.2.

Aircraft Apprentices' Exam.

THE qualifying examination for the September, 1946, entry of aircraft apprentices will be held at local centres in the U.K. and Northern Ireland on June 25th, 1946. Sons of personnel who are serving, or who have served in the R.A.F. (including the R.A.F.C.) and the W.A.A.F. are permitted to sit for the examination as "Service" candidates and will be required to reach a qualifying standard only.

Personnel will serving who wish to enter their sons for the qualifying examination should apply for a Service candidature through their C.D.s. In addition a nomination is required. The scheme is explained fully in Air Ministry pamphlet 15, and A.M.O. N.265/46 provides information relating to this particular entry.

Books and Articles by Serving Personnel

WRITERS of books, articles, broadcast scripts, essays and lectures on Service topics, should note that in future these must be submitted for approval, to an Air Ministry Branch known as S.D.5, before being offered for publication.

The Branch previously responsible for giving approval for matter intended for publication was P.B.4, and personnel will avoid considerable delay by making a careful note of this change.

It should also be noted that only material dealing with Service matters need be submitted for official approval. MSS. should not be submitted direct by the author, but through the "usual channels"—i.e. through your C.O. They must be submitted in duplicate.

The postal address of S.D.5 is Air Ministry, 29, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1.

Navigation Refresher Course

A REFRESHER course has been instituted at the Empire Air Navigation School for those officers entitled to the specialist symbol "N" who may not have been employed on navigation duties for several years and are now unfamiliar with modern technique and equipment. In future any officer not employed on navigation duties for five years or more who does not take this refresher course will forfeit his right to the symbol "N."

Application for the course should be made direct to Air Ministry (D.D.T. Nav.)

Travel to Eire PERSONNEL proceeding on leave to Eire are warned in A.M.D. A.206/46 that permission to embark will be refused if they arrive at Holyhead wearing uniforms. It should also be noted that there is only one sailing daily (Sundays excepted) from Holyhead, and all travellers to Eire should arrange their departure from units to enable them to connect with the Irish rail train which leaves Euston at 08.15 hours.

There is no sleeping accommodation available at Holyhead for those who arrive too late to catch the boat, which sails at 15.30 hours.

Hostels and Clubs in London THE Sussex Square Club and Hostel, 8, Sussex Square, London, W.2, has been opened for male officer ranks. There is sleeping accommodation for 300, and the cost of bed, bath and breakfast is 1s. 9d.

The Y.W.C.A. has opened a new house for women officers at David Mews, Portman Square, London, W.1. The charge for bed and breakfast is 6s.

The following houses have been closed: Marylebone Service Club, 191, Marylebone Road, London, W.1; The Gordon Service Club, 126, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W.1; Victoria League Club, Hephworth House, 88, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W.1, and the Victoria League Deacons Officers' Club, 4 & 5, Bramham Gardens, London, S.W.3.

Civil Aviation Vacancies THERE are vacancies in Civil Aviation for D/F Radio Operators (male) and Woman Teleprinter Operators who are about to be released.

Applicants from the R.A.F. should have had experience in D/F and maintenance work, and preferably possess the Postmaster-General's Marine or Civil Aviation Radio Operator's certificate. They should not be over 40, and must be willing to serve at any civil airport in the United Kingdom.

Qualified Women Teleprinter Operators are wanted at Northolt, Heathrow, Prestwick and other civil airports, but unqualified applicants will also be considered. Any members of the W.A.A.F. about to be released and who are interested in this type of work are recommended to read A.M.D. A.204/46 which gives details of pay, etc.

Applications for both these jobs should be made in writing to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (Establishments Division), 10, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

85 Squadron Club A CLUB has been formed with the object of keeping alive the spirit of 85 Squadron and renewing friendships made during the war.

Membership is open to all officers who have served or have had close associations with the Squadron, and to N.C.O. air crew.

It is intended to compile a register for circulation and to hold frequent reunions and an annual dinner.

Applications for membership should include dates of service with the Squadron, name of applicant's pilot or navigator, and permanent address. They should be sent to the Secretary, H. M. Broadbent-Jones, Esq., 33, Bedford Street, London, W.C.2.

11 Group Re-union ARRANGEMENTS are being made to form an association of all officers who have served on the Headquarters Staff of Number 11 (Fighter) Group. It is intended to hold a dinner at an early date, and all officers interested should communicate with F.L.P. Houston, 113, George Borrow Road, Norwich.

254 Squadron Re-union IT is proposed to hold a re-union dinner for former members of No. 254 Squadron, and all who wish to attend should communicate with Flight Lieutenant A. C. Beevor, 24, Crown Road, Epping, Essex.

FINAL EDITION

SLIPSTREAM

Call us Mister, Sister

THIS is our forty-second and last *Slipstream*. We say "we" and we say "our," but is really the use of the plural was and is an editorial affectation. Hence any blame attaching to the so-called humorous paragraphs printed for three-and-a-half years on this page attaches to the present writer, and not to a group of writers.

We first broached the idea of *Slipstream* with the then Editor in November, 1942. We gave it a big build-up. We blueprinted it as a pot-pourri of comment and opinion on Service life and matters, with a thin but bright thread of humour running through it. It, too, a glimmering sense in a confusion. Mining our metaphors, we also said it was to be a collection of random thoughts and ideas blown on the wind, from which mental pictures we derived the name *Slipstream*.

The then Editor however, and having said eventually and okay but how are you going to fill a page, and not only one page but one page every month, he said we thought somewhere we could, and we felt a cold clammy clutch at our hearts as we said so, because even then we had a vague idea what such a commitment would entail.

We were twenty-bunglums in those days. Newly-arrived from the cocoon-sealed atmosphere of Station life and full of inspiration, we got out our first *Slipstream* in next to no time. Ideas swarmed in one upon the other, and we had only to close one eye to revive the Station life we had just abandoned for

the cluttered precincts of Air Ministry. As the months flew by we found we had to pick our grips occasionally and go out into the blast to see what was cooking, and to breathe again the free air of the airfield and the moon.

From the beginning we made it a positive never to solicit ideas from readers, and this decision, made in the first flush of confidence, we occasionally regretted afterwards, because our readers took the hint and never bothered to send in any ideas. Seen the masterpiece per cent, inspiration and the one per cent, perspiration changed in value and we found ourselves more pumping than inspired. But we plodded gamely on, encouraged by other people here on the staff saying they wondered how we did it month after month. We ourselves wondered about this probably more than anyone else, having a sigh of relief when we sent one month's *Slipstream* off to the printers and wondering how on earth we were going to write the next.

Well now we've had all that, and we're not sure—unpredictable and perverse creatures that we are—we're not sure whether we're happy or not. The burden that we feel lifted from our minds has been replaced by a dead-weight of worry for the passing of *Slipstream* and all the mental exercise which sharpened our wit. But one thing we are sure about—*Slipstream* going to grab our blue-green felt hat and spend our fifty-five days in a deserted roadside village, lying on the beach and taking pebbles seriously into the sea. D. L.



The "Journal" Closes Down

By SQUADRON LEADER DAVID LANGDON

THIS is the last issue of the *Royal Air Force Journal* in its present form. Judging by the many letters we have received from readers during the five-and-a-half years of publication in its various formats, we gather that the *Journal* was a good thing. From there it is but a short step to saying that all good things come to an end some time, and in the case of the *Journal* that time is now.

It may be said that the growth of a magazine from its modest beginnings is often of little more than mild interest to those who have had no closer association with it than as readers. But I feel that the history of the *Journal* is worth recording in this final issue, even if only for the reason that if we do not record it, no one else will. Also, this final issue provides an opportunity of revealing the personalities and the purpose behind what has been for so long the inconspicuous organization which has been responsible for the publication of the *Journal*.

The Old "Bulletin"

The *Journal* traces its origin from an *Air Ministry Weekly Bulletin* which was produced for the Director of Intelligence of Air Ministry by Squadron Leader Hector Bellitto, the biographer and novelist. The *Bulletin* printed its first number in September, 1939. It was an unpretentious affair of a few mimeographed sheets, and its purpose was to provide information about the Service and the war generally which was not available to the Service reader in the daily press.

The *Bulletin* was a one-man job, and it came out every week for fifteen months. At the end of this period it was felt that in spite of its limitations it warranted a better type of publication, especially as the information it disseminated was useful and well-presented. So the pocket-sized, blue covered, letterpress *Royal Air Force Weekly Bulletin* made its appearance, and the

responsibility for its publication was transferred from the Director of Intelligence to the Director of Personnel Services.

Only about 3,500 copies were distributed throughout the Service, but in spite of this small circulation the *Bulletin* slowly built up a vein of good will among contributors for which we were grateful in later years. The Editor managed to secure contributions, without fee, from a number of officers and airmen, and these were judged to be of such excellent standard that in November, 1941, the Editor was again encouraged to extend the scope of his publication still further.

The Old "Journal"

A new format double the size of the *Bulletin* was designed, more photographs and line blocks were introduced, and the title was changed to the *Royal Air Force Journal*. It had a plain, grey cover and the title-lettering was specially hand-designed, this design remaining unaltered until this final issue. The *Journal* went to press every fortnight instead of weekly, and the number of copies was increased to 7,000.

Although this number was inadequate as the Service was expanding rapidly week by week, more copies did flow into Stations, and contributions flowed in steadily to the Editor. It was not long before a number of professional writers began to send articles to the *Journal* without asking a fee. Such writers as George Bernard Shaw, H. E. Bates, J. B. Priestley, Terence Rattigan, Frank Tilly, John Paddy, Nigel Tunney, and

James Hadley Chase" (S/Ldr. R. B. Raymond, who was to become Assistant Editor and subsequently Editor), all at one time or other were willing contributors. But the bulk of the material published came from hitherto unknown writers, Service men and women, some waiting for publication for the first time, and it was with the regular support of these contributors that the *Journal* managed to keep up its standard.

The New "Journal"

It became obvious as issue after issue of the *Journal* appeared that it was fast becoming an important medium for putting over Service news and information in an interesting way. As well as recording the work of all trades and branches and thus keeping the wider man informed of what the other man was doing, it constituted an important link between Air Ministry and Commands, Groups and Units.

The stage was set to aim at a still wider circulation, but before this could be done it was thought advisable to sound Service opinion in order to see how far the *Journal* could be still further improved and popularized. A survey was therefore made in 1942, and besides confirming the obvious recommendation that the printing figure of the *Journal* should be increased, there was a general demand for it to be presented in a much lighter form. The feeling was that it should look and read more like a popular magazine than the rather erudite *Journal* of that day.

It was obvious that the *Journal* would have to change its make-up. The existing Editor having performed his tour of duty and taken up other duties in the Service, the Assistant Editor, Squadron Leader H. B. Raymond, became Editor. The good will handed over to the new Editor with the editorial chair made an excellent basis on which to build a more popular magazine. It was at this time that I was invited to join the staff as Assistant Editor, having been an occasional contributor of drawings and articles since the old *Bulletin* days. With the aid of a mere generous grant from the Treasury, we set about redesigning the *Journal* to bring it into line with the best of the commercial magazines, and to be first in the field with a popular magazine written by the Service for the Service.

The circulation of the *Journal* rose in time to 50,000. This was not, however, a world-wide circulation. India had its own "Journal of the Air Forces" to which we sent the bulk of our contents for local reproduction. The Middle East "Air Force News" also carried many of the *Journal's* feature articles, and we instituted a weekly news and features service for

this paper and for other Service papers which were being published successfully in such places as the Bahamas, the Azores, Germany and Italy.

The People behind it

Our establishment, apart from two civilians, Miss D. Berry and Miss P. Bannister, was limited to an Editor and an Assistant Editor, and a third member joined in April, 1943. He was Flight Lieutenant George Simpson, co-editor of "Air Force News," and he became the London "end" of our own R.A.F. newspapers. In October, 1945, Squadron Leader Rayneley left the Service on release, and I took over editorship. Simpson became Assistant Editor in my place, and our third recruit was Flight Lieutenant Kenneth Lewis, a one-time occasional contributor, who became our staff reporter.

Producing the *Royal Air Force Journal* has been in every respect a happy and unique venture in Service journalism; unique because we were never part of the Public Relations organisation (although we are indebted for the photographs and specialist articles with which the P.R. office supplied us, but operated under the Air Member for Personnel, through his Director General and the Director of Personnel Services, who was really our Editor-in-Chief. To these Officers we looked for advice and guidance and they were always ready with both. Here, too, we must mention our gratitude to Group Captain F. D. Tindley, O.B.E. Although he had no official connection with our work, he took on voluntarily the task of correcting our proofs each month, and his good advice and encouragement were never lacking.

The success of the *Journal* also depended on the handiwork of essential office work which was efficiently performed by our two civilian employees, and on the printers and blockmakers who made such a good job of our production. But without the support of our contributors who ranged from Marshal of the Royal Air Force to A.C.C. and A.C.W.I., and who provided the bulk of the contents of the *Journal*, we could never have joined our more than a very insignia magazine. I hope

that when I leave the chair and the Service next month, our readers and contributors will continue to give the

same unstinting support to whatever new publication takes the place of the *Royal Air Force Journal*.

Officers' New Pay Code at a Glance

Daily Pay

Pilot Officer: 16/- (G.D.). 13/- (other branches).
 Flying Officer: 18/- (G.D.). 15/- (other branches). After 2 years: 20/- (G.D.). 17/- (other branches). After 3 years: 19/- (tech., equip., etc.).
 Flight Lieutenant: 22/- After 2 years: 25/- After 4 years: 27/- After 6 years: 29/-
 Squadron Leader: 35/- After 2 years: 37/- After 4 years: 39/- After 6 years: 41/-
 Wing Commander: 47/6 After 2 years: 50/- After 4 years: 52/6 After 6 years: 55/- After 8 years: 57/6
 Group Captain: 65/- After 2 years: 68/- After 4 years: 71/- After 6 years: 74/-
 Air Commodore: 77/-
 Air Vice-Marshal: 110/-
 Air Marshal: 135/-
 Air Chief Marshal: 160/-
 Marshal of the Royal Air Force: 180/-

Marriage Allowances

Squadron Leader and below	12/6 a day.
Wing Commander and Group Captain	15/- a day.
Air Commodore	17/6 a day.
Air Vice-Marshal and above	20/- a day.

"War Excess," Officers and Airmen

"War Excess" is the name given to the difference in pay between the old rate of pay and war service increment, and the new rate now coming into force.

Under the original arrangements "War Excess" was to have been withdrawn by half-yearly instalments from January 1st, 1947. Now it is announced that "War Excess" will continue indefinitely as an addition to the new rate of pay for officers and airmen until it is overtaken by increases of pay on promotion or re-rating, etc. If, however, an officer or airman reverts from his temporary or acting rank to a lower substantive rank, he will still get the "War Excess" due to him in the higher rank he held.

For example, if a Group 1 Flight Sergeant of six years' service now gets pay of 12/6 a day, badge pay of 3/- a day, and war service increment of 2/- a day, making 15/9 in all, under the new code he gets 14/6 a day plus 6/- a day badge pay, making 15/- a day. To balance up the two rates his "War Excess" is therefore 9d. a day. Suppose he reverts back to Sergeant, his new rate of pay will be 12/- and badge pay of 6d. plus the 9d. a day "War Excess" of his old rank, making 13/3 a day in all. If he is again promoted to Flight Sgt., the "War Excess" 9d. a day would go. If he is again instead of reverting to Sergeant, he retains his Flight Sergeant's rank, he will keep the "War Excess" until it is offset by increases of pay on promotion, etc.

Foreword by Air Vice-Marshal Sir B. E. Embry,

K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., D.F.C., A.F.C.,

Chairman of the R.A.F. Escaping Society

The following is a grand story written by an evader who remains anonymous. It shows what can be done with a little bluff, determination and common sense. It also reveals the truly courageous and heroic part played by the underground movements of Europe in assisting members of the Royal Air Force and Coastal Squadrons who found their way to freedom. The reader is told how they demonstrated their powers of endurance and an unwavering sense of duty in fighting his way through in spite of many difficulties and hardships, but I think he would be the first to admit that but for the help he received from the many brave civilians, his task would have been doubly difficult, if not impossible. I am happy to think that the R.A.F. Escaping Society will be a means of helping to renew and cement many of these friendships made during the war.

I Was an Evader

I WAS a member of the crew of a Halifax which bombed a target in the Ruhr. We had set course for Buse, but one engine was on fire and another had cut and could not be restarted. A few minutes later I heard "Bale out!" shouted over the intercom. I made my way to the forward escape hatch and baled out at about 5,000 feet.

I landed in a small field, and although I was somewhat dazed, I hid my parachute, Mae West and flying boots in a haystack. I put on a pair of R.A.F. issue shoes which I had grabbed just before I baled out. I then set off for a corner of the field, but my movements started some dogs barking, and I decided to wait until dawn. I went into a small copse, where I went to sleep.

I awoke shortly after daybreak and ate some of the food tablets which I had with me. I then started to walk southwards through the copse, eating loganberries as I went. It began to rain heavily and I sheltered in a deserted hut, where I stayed for the remainder of that day. As dusk I resumed walking, having filled my water-bottle from puddles I found in cart tracks. I walked through a village until I came to a fork in the road, where there was a signpost with the name Aurbach on it. I realised now that I was in Germany and followed the road running south-west. I passed two small villages and then reached a wood, where I hid and slept

until daybreak. When I awoke I cut off the shoulder straps of my battle-dress blouse. I wore my blue sweater over my uniform. I had already acquired an old cap from a scarecrow.

I then left my hiding place and crossed a main road, continuing through some woods on the other side. Eventually I came to a signpost with the word Koblenz written on it. I was able to form some idea of my position and I took shelter for the night in a barley stack. At dawn the following morning I resumed walking along the road and I found some raspberries and birds' eggs, which I ate.

I made my way to the top of a hill, from where I saw a large river which I knew to be the Rhine. I think I was somewhere between Honnau and Neuwied.

Later in the day a German soldier asked me for a light. I am under the impression that he asked me in English, but I cannot be certain of this. I replied "Nicht, Nein!" and continued walking. Much to my relief he took no further notice of me. As soon as he was out of sight I lay in a bed of nettles, where I remained until dark.

I then resumed walking along the footpath and passed through several small towns during that night. There were no incidents, and when it grew light I hid in some bushes. Later that morning I went into a field and stole some potatoes. As it was misty I lit

a fire and cooked them. When I had eaten this meal I decided that it would be better policy to walk by day and rest by night, as I was getting little sleep while hiding during the day.

Evasive Tactics

Next morning I reached the outskirts of Newwid. I lay down for a while in a small park and was seen by two policemen, who ignored me.

After I had rested, I walked through Newwid and eventually arrived at a bridge over the river which was being used by pedestrians. A German officer went up the steps and I followed him. When he got to the top of the steps he turned right. I was about to follow him when I noticed that he was approaching a sentry. I immediately turned left and found myself in a small park on the same side of the river. After resting there for a short time I decided to risk attempting to walk past the sentry, as I observed that civilians were doing so.

Beside the sentry there was a small booth, where pedestrians crossing the

bridge had to pay a toll. I passed the booth and the sentry without being stopped and crossed the bridge. When I saw that I was approaching another sentry on the bridge I crossed to the other side of the footway and passed him. I noticed that if anyone leered on the bridge this sentry moved then on. At the other end of the bridge I had to pass a third sentry, but he took no more notice of me than the others had done.

Now that I had crossed the river, I turned right to get on to the main road which led to Mogenheim. A party of civilian cyclists, armed with rifles, passed me going in the same direction. Two of them turned round and stared at me, but did not stop. That night I slept in a hollow near a stream.

On the following day, I saw a bicycle leaning against a tree. After ensuring that I was unobserved, I made off with it. I cycled south-west, keeping to the main roads, and hoping that I would eventually reach France.

I continued in this fashion until the evening of the following day, when I

reached the outskirts of Pons. I was feeling very weak by this time, but was able to steal milk from some milk cans lying by the roadside. I cycled through Pons and on reaching the north-western outskirts, hid my bicycle under a hedge and sheltered in the left of a cowshed. That night I drank half of the tin of orange juice which I had with me when I baled out.

On the following morning I finished the orange juice and set off once more. I ate anything in the house of fruit I could find by the roadside. After cycling for about 17 kilometres the road forked. I took the road to the north because I realized that I was too weak to reach France, and Belgium was nearer. I think I reached Lurebach and then turned in the direction of St. Vith.

A short while later I rode straight through the Siegfried Line with dug-outs and then a line of anti-tank traps strung out across the countryside. The area was completely deserted and I was never challenged.

I cycled through St. Vith, and then went on to Malmedy, crossing left for Tross Ponts. As I was riding along I saw a notice by the side of the road with the word *Wohracker* on it. I realized that this meant that the road was for the use of the German Army only. I doubled back and managed to strike a road running parallel to the one I had just left.

At the Frontier

Before I reached Stavelot I came to a barrier along across the road near a hamlet. An armed guard and a police dog were at the barrier. I knew, if I got off my bicycle I would be challenged, so I mounted the pavement and rode straight on. A short distance along the road I came to another barrier and I adopted the same procedure with equal success. Presumably this was the German-Belgian frontier.

I arrived in Stavelot that afternoon. By this time I felt very weak and was starving. I decided to approach some likely person and ask for assistance. I went through the town until I came to some isolated houses on the outskirts. I saw an old man at one of the cottages,

and seeing an opportunity when there was no one about, I went round to the back door to speak to him. I asked if he were a Belgian and he said he was. I then declared myself to him, showing him my identity disc and my flying badge. He kept me outside the cottage for a while, but when the road was clear he whisked me inside, where I met his wife.

At first they were very suspicious, but they gave me some food. Presently the man left the house and returned with a younger man who questioned me very closely in French, which I did not understand very well. Later that evening the young man's wife arrived and they took me to their own home, where I was fed and provided with a bed.

On the following day a woman who spoke fluent English came to see me. She questioned me closely, asking me my Squadron number, station, rank, etc. I refused to answer some of those questions, but she seemed to be satisfied and took from me one of my photographs. Later that day I was supplied with an identity card and civilian clothes.

Next day I was taken to the railway station by two men and given a ticket to Spa. The two men accompanied me about half way when they were released by another man. On arrival at Spa I followed this man to a house, where I was given more civilian clothing. I remained there for three days.

On the third day the man of the house took me to a flat in Brussels, where I met several members of his organization. They took me to a house where they had a large amount of wireless equipment.

Two days later my former guide came for me and escorted me to an apartment, where he introduced me to a man and woman. They then took me to Liege, where I remained for nearly three weeks. During this period the Gestapo arrested a member of the organization, and this was the reason for the delay in getting me away.

Eventually a woman arrived at the house and took me to meet the man who had escorted me to Liege. He in turn took me to the headquarters of an organisation, where I met two members of the U.S.A.A.C., also exiles.



"I had to pass another sentry..."



"She questioned me closely"

Subsequently a woman guide took one of the Americans and myself to Hax, where we stayed at a house for seven weeks, after which a man escorted us back to Brussels, where we were handed over to yet another man who took us to Ghent, where we spent the night.

Into France

The next day we travelled to a frontier town, probably Meuseux, where we walked through the barrier over the frontier into France without being questioned. We then went on to Tournai, where we were taken to a house. We stayed there for about a week, and were supplied with new identity cards. By this time, I was in high spirits and felt that I would be back in "Blighty" before long.

An attractive-looking girl then came to the house and escorted us to Paris. On arrival she took us to her own home and then to meet a man. The American and I were then taken to different houses.

On the following day the girl arrived and escorted the American and myself

to Quimper. There we joined a party of thirty evaders.

It was planned that we should be escorted by boat, but this miscarried. This news depressed us, and there was a lot of brooding. We were taken back to Paris about five days later and we got into training for our proposed crossing of the Pyrenees. We were very enthusiastic about this.

During the next four weeks I changed my address several times. At times I was impatient and suffered from a feeling of frustration, but I consoled myself with the fact that I was still a free man, and efforts were being made to get me away.

But eventually I joined a party of Americans, and, accompanied by two guides, we set off for Toulouse by train. Here we changed trains and went on to Pau, where we stayed for two nights. We then travelled by bus to a small town at the foot of the Pyrenees. We covered the next stage of our journey, a distance of about 25 kilometres, by taxi, then walked to a farm where we stayed overnight. We now felt that at last we were on our way.

ROYAL AIR FORCE JOURNAL

The following day we were joined by our guides for the mountain journey, and we walked for some distance to a farm, where we joined forces with a party of refugees.

Across the Pyrenees

We set off and crossed the French-Spanish frontier several hours later. The guides then left us after giving us directions to the nearest village. We reached the main Uztarroz-Ibaña road, where we were picked up by the Spanish police. Our delight at being in a neutral country and beyond the possibility of capture by the Germans can be imagined.

We were taken to the police station at Uztarroz, where we were searched. Our knives were taken from us. We gave our Service numbers, name and stated the Services to which we belonged,

but offered no further information and were not pressed.

I was then taken to various towns in Spain and eventually reached Gibraltar exactly eight months after I had baled out over Germany. I arrived back in England a few days later.

I feel that I must pay tribute to the many gallant Belgian and French men and women who risked their lives, and those of their families, in order to enable me and so many others to return to England to continue the fight against oppression and tyranny. No words of mine are adequate to describe their indomitable courage, resourcefulness and kindness. Many of these brave people of the Occupied Countries died, or were cast into foul concentration camps, because they had been detected helping Allied airmen to evade capture after they had baled out.

"Slipstream"

A Royal Air Force Anthology

The best articles and stories which have appeared in the *Royal Air Force Journal* during the past four years are being compiled in book form, and entitled *Slipstream*.

The publishers are Eyre & Spottiswoode, who hope to bring the book out in an autumn, 1946, publication, the price to be about 10s. 6d. The book will comprise 260 pages and 9 art plates. Proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

As the edition will be a limited one, it is essential to place an order with your bookseller immediately to avoid disappointment.

As a memento of Service life or as a gift to a friend or relative in the Service, *Slipstream* will be much appreciated.

The work of the following contributors appears in the book:—

W/Cdr. E. W. Anderson, D.R.C., D.F.C.	F/O. R. F. Clayton, D.F.C.	A/C1. Eric M. Partridge, D.F.C.
F/Lt. J. Auld	LAC. Sidney Cullen	F/O. B. Perkins
S/Lt. S. F. Barber	S/Lt. F. A. Curry	S/Lt. John Finney
S/Lt. R. E. Bass	W/O. A. J. Dixon	S/Lt. R. B. Raymond
Corpl. James Bayer	Corpl. E. M. Doherty	F/O. E. Roberts
LAC. F. W. Beatty	F/O. A. F. Melby	Sgt. B. W. O. Roy
S/Lt. R. E. Birk	LAC. Leslie Melwood	F/Lt. A. F. Taylor, D.F.C.
S/Lt. Horrie Birkby	Corpl. A. Hart	Sgt. G. Thomson
Asst. Chief Marshal Sir R. Bromie & Kipling	P/O. Gus Hughes	S/Lt. Frank Tisher
G.C.O., K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., A.F.C.	LACW. A. M. Monarch	Corpl. R. Uvace
W/Cdr. R. A. Burbridge, D.R.C., D.F.C. and Bar.	S/Lt. David Kunt	Sgt. N. A. Forley
S/Lt. G. A. Butler, D.R.C.	S/Lt. David Langdon	LACW. P. Hildrick
	S/Lt. John Macdonald	F/Lt. A. A. Williams
	F/Lt. P. R. Manning	Fltpr. Ian Withers
	S/Lt. F. Ogilvy	Corpl. C. R. Woodward

Want a Job?

By L.A.C. R. WILLIAMS

THERE must be many a man in the Service who is awaiting his release with some trepidation on account of uncertainty about his future in the labour market. Possibly he was very young when he came into the R.A.F. and he has no trade now at an age when he needs a man's wages. Or, like myself, he may have spent his last few years before donning a uniform on a war job in a shadow factory—a shadow factory which, with the coming of peace, has now closed. With the best will in the world, re-employment regulations cannot help in such cases.

I thought the matter over carefully, had a chat with the Education Officer, and decided to be a school teacher. Now, before you say, "Not for me," and turn to the next article let me hasten to add that I have no qualifications whatsoever. I left school—an elementary school—at fourteen without a certificate of any kind. The school discharged me from its portals without even so much as an introduction to the subjects of algebra and geometry.

The only thing in my favour was my age, which was well within the limits! These age limits are 21 years minimum, and 35 maximum.

I sent an application to the Ministry of Education at 14, Lennox Gardens, S.W.1, for consideration as a potential trainee under the Emergency Scheme for Recruitment and Training of Teachers. The Ministry sent me a form of application to complete. Rather a lot of detail was required, such as: nationality; place and date of birth; schools attended; whether any subjects studied since leaving school; occupations since leaving school. There is no need to fear the last question. I have had twelve jobs in fifteen years ranging from newspaper boy to anti-aircraft machine, but that did not deter me.

After the form had been sent away I had to wait rather a long time for the next development. So long, in fact, was the delay that I abandoned all hope, thinking I had been considered ineligible because of my lack of education.



However, in due course a long buff envelope marked O.H.M.S. arrived, informing me that I was required to present myself on September 18th at a school in Birmingham for the purpose of an interview in respect of my application. An additional slip of paper furnished thorough and lucid directions as to how to reach the school. Even the price of the 'bus ticket from Birmingham G.W.R. station was not omitted!

At that time I was on a fitters' course at Cofted, and a day off under such conditions is, of course, a serious business, but my Wing C.O. authorised it without the slightest hesitation—which is in line with the R.A.F.'s policy of backing up airmen who make efforts to enhance their post-Service prospects.

The printed directions took me to the address without a hitch. A lady receptionist ticked my name off a long list, and took me into a classroom. There were between fifteen and twenty other people in this room. They were all prospective teachers. All except four were girls, and all except me were civilians.

I confess I was nervous as I waited my turn to be interviewed; so much depended on the outcome of the interview. Success meant lifelong security; security for me, for my wife, and for my kiddies. It meant clean clothes and clean hands, and it was not unobtainable that made them so desirable. For years my job was such that my hands needed scrubbing before I could sit down to eat, and a complete change of clothing was

imperative if I wished to go out in the evening.

My turn came and I was ushered into an adjoining room to three four men and a woman. Their attitude was one of friendly interest. They were at pains to dispel my nervousness, and I soon felt completely at ease.

Most of the questions were on various aspects of education. For instance—

What effect do you think the closing of the school-leaving age will have on the children; on the schools; on industry?

What are your views on co-education?

My answers to these and other questions were received without the slightest hint as to whether my views were acceptable or otherwise. However, I gained the impression (for no reason that I could describe) that I was getting a favourable reception, and I left the room well pleased with myself.

Next followed the essay. Again there was no need to fear that lack of knowledge would constitute an obstacle. The subject set—"Describe a recent experience"—insured that everyone would have something to write about.

Back at Cofted I spent eleven weeks of anxious waiting. A magazine paragraph quoting the Ministry of Education stated that out of 24,000 applicants only 4,000 had been accepted. Of course it is likely that many of the 24,000 had not yet been interviewed, but the statement did little to restore my confidence.

However, the notification duly arrived.

I had been accepted! Now I am simply waiting for my demobilization, then I will go to a college for twelve months of intensive training. After that I shall be a teacher, though on two years' probation. At the end of that time I shall be a fully certificated teacher.

During my training I and my family will receive an adequate allowance. As soon as I begin teaching I qualify for rates of pay in line down to the Burnham scale, which provides that the teacher shall receive a commencing salary of £200 per annum rising by annual increments of £15 to £525 per annum. These rates of pay are a *minimum*. They can be supplemented, by special qualifications of a technical nature. A degree, too, has a hard cash value and I, for one, have every in-

tervention of studying for one as soon as I have established myself as a teacher. Then there is the possibility of becoming a headmaster; that, of course, carries correspondingly higher rates of pay.

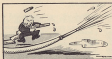
Let us assume that you have decided to have a crack at it and in response to your application you have been summoned for an interview. Let me give you a few tips on how to conduct yourself.

1.—Direct your talk to whoever is sitting in the centre of the group opposite you. He will be the Chairman. Apart from its being respectful to do so, the Chairman generally has more to say than anybody else about final decisions and selections.

2.—Be candid and frank in your talk. Reply to the questions promptly and concisely. At the same time do not through nervousness rush your replies if there is any risk of your getting them muddled. Much better to take your time. If the subject-matter is at all complicated, To do so is only reasonable. Seize any chance to expand the reply a little, bring forward judiciously some particulars about yourself which the appointing people may be glad to have. Don't prattle, but remember that they are actually anxious for you to talk about yourself to help them in making up their minds about you. Needless to say the expanding of your reply must be carefully done—to avoid leaving any impression of boasting or of undue forwardness.

3.—The selection board is probably interviewing several applicants and can spare only a short time for each. Hence, it is essential that you should appear (whatever your real feelings may be) completely calm, and unembarrassed, and confident, but not over-confident. If your attitude is calm, your speech clear and controlled, your talk lucid and relevant, they will decide that whatever may be said about your other qualifications—or lack of them—you are at least not a person easily flustered, and that is a most necessary attribute in a potential teacher.

And there you are. If you have no job to return to, and you fancy a clean, secure, and interesting if exacting job, see your Education Officer. 10,000 teachers are wanted—go in and win!



So Long, Joe!

By SQUADRON LEADER

R. B. RAYMOND

IN this last issue of the *Royal Air Force Journal*, Joe, the moon-faced, bespectacled little art who has appeared in the *Journal* for over three years makes his final bow. He accompanied his artist creator, David Langford, to the Release Centre and thence to Croy Street.

During the time Joe has occupied the small space on the bottom of a page in the *Journal*, he has made a host of friends. Not only was he popular with members of the Services, but also with their wives and children. Many officers and men, strictly against regulations, took Joe into their homes.

Joe represents the typical "little man" in blue, doomed to a lowly rank the never got beyond A.C.I., eager to get on with the job, living in awe of Officers and N.C.O.'s, but in spite of all, imbued with a full measure of *courage au corps*. Joe was one of the Fitters who, with all the other tradesmen, worked night and day to keep the fighters in the air when we were in our "darkest hour." One feels that Joe will remember the magnificent reputation that the R.A.F. made for itself during those hectic days, and will be jealous of it for as long as he lives.

Joe did his best to help win the war. He realised that in his relatively minor position of an art, he couldn't do anything as spectacular as a pilot or his C.O., or that legendary figure who appeared from time to time from Group or Command with the broad ring and a row of gongs that reminded Joe of liquorice all-sorts. But he did what he could. First, he did the job he had come into the Service to do. He serviced aircraft. But that, so Joe, wasn't enough. He wanted to help in other ways. He realised that a little thing like turning off the electric light in an empty room was, in its way, a contribution to the war effort. So he turned off the lights, and sometimes in his zeal he overlooked the fact that a visiting Air Chief Marshal was using the room at the time. Joe bought War Savings Certificates, he dug for Victory, he used the telephone less and he stopped careless talk: things that did not earn gongs or a mention in dispatches, but which were all very essential to winning the war.

The illustrations accompanying the above article have been re-created from "Joe" strip cartoons already published in the "Journal". Joe's last



During the last war, Bruce Reisdorfer created "Old Bill," a lovable grumbler, typifying the foot-sloggers of the British Army in Flanders. In this war, the United States Army had its Sad Sack and its Artie Greenberg; the British Army had its "Two Types"; and the R.A.F.—Joe and P.O. Percy Pratt.

These characters were all, with the exception of Joe, "bad types." The creators of the "Two Types," Pratt, Sad Sack and Greenberg approached their task along the line of least resistance. To get their interest and laughs they poked fun at discipline and showed how not to win a war by picturing their characters in the acts of virtually sabotaging the war effort, and then exhorting their readers by implication not to follow their bad examples. This was, to say the least, a negative form of teaching. But Joe showed his readers how to contribute towards winning a war by doing the right thing, and he succeeded in obtaining his laughs in spite of always being "Mr. Right."

How is it then that Joe did not degenerate into a first-class blunderer, if you like—a pig? Look at him and you have half the answer. He is a little fellow. He is likable at first sight. He stands very much on his own. He gets picked on by the bigger chap, and things don't go smoothly for him in spite of the fact that he tries always to do the right thing. Off-duty, Joe was as homes as they come. Witness him shoving off on his bicycle before a pretty WAAF and ending up in hospital. But, when on duty, Joe meant business.

The other reason why Joe is popular is because he makes you laugh. To be able to put over a point loaded to the teeth with propaganda, to make the reader laugh and yet remember the point, is a very difficult task—try it yourself sometime if you don't believe it, and then keep it up for thirty-six months.

And now Joe is going back to Croy Street. The Service will miss him. He has done a good job. Like his creator he has served his time. Let's wish him luck.

So long, Joe!

every now and then them into a memory hat and are so close they can reach the full sequence of which these drawings form part.



Release Probe-7

Below is given a selection of replies by Ministers in Parliament on release and other Service questions, extracted from the Parliamentary Debates (Hansard). Personal facts already been informed of many of the points dealt with, through "Dreadfuls" and "Newspapers" issued by the Air Ministry.

One-Man Businesses

MR. VANE asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware of the hardship caused to owners of one-man businesses whose release from the Forces under Class C is now being refused solely because their business had to be closed down when they volunteered or were called up; and what steps he proposes to take to ensure these men are not treated less generously than men whose position was exactly similar at the beginning of the war but who were able to find someone eventually to keep their businesses in existence for them and so improve their chance to be released now.

MR. LAWSON: Compassionate cases, of whatever sort, are dealt with on their individual merits. Owners of one-man businesses which were closed down after their entry into the army are not altogether excluded from consideration. An extremely limited number of cases where the opportunity of re-opening is unlikely to occur if the business is not re-opened immediately can be considered. Any further relaxation of the rules would either be at the expense of other types of compassionate cases or would be liable to interfere with releases under Class A.

(March 5th, 1946)

Signals Officers

SIR T. GRABHAM-LITTLE asked the Under Secretary of State for Air why the release of R.A.F. officers in the sub-branch, Signals, Radar, is delayed relatively to other branches of that service; and whether, in view of the fact that the need for many forces of Radar no longer exists, that officers of this sub-branch are being considered for other non-specialist duties, that some such officers have technical qualifications of use to industry; and that in the case of release of airmen in allied trades it above the general level, he will expedite the release of these officers.

MR. STRACHY: The main reason for delay in release of these R.A.F. officers is the deficiency caused by the withdrawal of officers who were members of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The duty of radar officers have not decreased in fact in those of other signals officers owing to the demands made by the air troping and occupation programmes, particularly in relation to the handling of aircraft safety equipment. I am not aware that radar officers are being employed on non-specialist duties but, if the hon. Member has any specific case in mind and will send me particulars, I shall be glad to look into it. The requirements of radar officers are different from those of airmen in allied trades and there are proportionately more officers than airmen in the earlier age and service groups. It is not, therefore, possible to keep the release of officers in step with that of airmen. I appreciate the need to speed up the release of radar officers and we are doing all we can to this end by training and retraining, but it takes over six months to train to the required standard.

(March 6th, 1946)

Agricultural Workers

MR. PAGET asked the Under Secretary of State for Air what steps have been taken to notify members of the R.A.F. their agricultural workers with a year or more service are entitled to Class B release; and whether commanding officers have been notified that disciplinary action will be taken if this release is delayed.

MR. STRACHY: Members of the Royal Air Force who are shown by their records to have been agricultural workers at the time of their enlistment and who have served for at least one year in the R.A.F. are being offered release under the block scheme in Class B. We have instructed commanding officers to accelerate the process of

Class B release and I am satisfied that the officers appreciate the importance of their responsibility in this matter. We have also notified the Service as a whole, through one of our Dornier forms, that any man who considers that he has been overlooked for Class B release can make representations to his commanding officer; the facts are then reported to the Record Office and, if confirmed, the man is offered Class B release.

(March 15th, 1946)

Science Students

MR. SOLLAY asked the Minister of Labour what are his plans for reviewing scientific personnel whose normal studies were interrupted, or who have been drafted into work which they would not normally have undertaken and are now in overcrowded professions.

MR. ISAACS: Science students of First Class or Second Class Honours standard selected by their Universities as research students or third year students, and other science students selected by their Universities as of high promise or who were called up before the end of their normal deferment and before they had had an opportunity of taking the Honours Degree, are eligible for release from the Forces in Class B if they are in release groups 1-49 or from industry, if they have performed work of national importance for not less than three years. Financial assistance is available to such students if they come within the scope of the Further Education and Training Scheme.

(March 15th, 1946)

Individual Specialists

MR. DE LA BEBE asked the Minister of Labour whether, in view of the delay in effecting repairs to railway locomotives, motor vehicles and boats and other, special consideration will be given to those categories for release from the Forces in those cases where it can be established that the men are well skilled and experienced in these trades.

MR. NESS FERGUSON: It is open to an employer in any of the trades mentioned to apply through the appropriate Government Department for the release of a particular man in Class B if he can properly be regarded as an individual specialist whose services are

essential for urgent work of national importance.

(March 21st, 1946)

Equipment Officers

MAJOR N. MACPHERSON asked the Under Secretary of State for Air whether he is now in a position to state whether the rate of release of R.A.F. equipment officers will have caught up with the average rate of release by June; and, if not, how many groups behind it will be on 31st June, 1946, and at what rate the release will be proceeding.

MR. STRACHY: In our advance promulgation for May and June, equipment assistants will be brought up to the general level of release of airmen, but I regret that equipment officers will then be 10 groups behind. The equipment officers have specially heavy responsibilities at present, and we depend largely on their experience for the proper disposal of large quantities of valuable equipment. Moreover, a very high proportion of our equipment officers are in groups 26-29. This means that for the period from February to May we shall have offered release to over a third of the officers who were in this branch on February 1st. We are doing all we can to raise their rate of release by training suitable G.D. officers, and I hope that better progress will be made when they reach the groups from 30 onwards.

(March 23rd, 1946)

Other Topics

Release Clothing

MRS. GANLEY asked the Secretary of State for War what is the length of time demobilised men have to wait for packclothes or overcoat; and whether supplies can be speeded up in order to allow of more garments being issued at the same time as rent, etc.

MR. LAWSON: When a man cannot be fitted with his correct size from stock, it is at present from four to eight weeks before he receives it by post. Every effort has been made to increase production; the position is improving, and I hope that the present difficulties will be overcome by the end of April.

(March 6th, 1946)

MR. CALLAGHAN asked the Under Secretary of State for Air why the system of providing allowances to purchase their

greatcoat or demobilisation has been discontinued.

Mr. STRACHAN: At no time have airmen on demobilisation been allowed to purchase a greatcoat. The issue of civilian clothing includes a raincoat, and, if a suitable raincoat is not available at the time, an airman is allowed to borrow a greatcoat. His account is debited 38s, which is cancelled on return of the greatcoat.

(March 19th, 1946)

Pensions and Grants

Sir W. DAVENPORT asked the Minister of Pensions if he is prepared to consider relieving the regulations so that in the event of any member of the fighting forces being involved, disabled or dying in service, the illness, disability or death shall be deemed to be attributable to Military Service unless the contrary is proved.

Mr. WILFRED PALING: The war pensions instruments already provide that, in determining entitlement in such cases, certain presumptions shall be made in a claimant's favour, and that the benefit of any reasonable doubt shall be given to him. I am, however, unable to recommend any departure from the long established principle that, where disablement or death was unconnected with war service, an award of pension cannot be made.

(March 21st, 1946)

Overseas Tour (India)

Mr. NAVLER asked the Under Secretary of State for Air if he has any further statement to make concerning the complaints still being received from men in the R.A.F. contingent in India, especially referring to the reduction in the maximum period of the tour: the recalling of men who have spent the major period of their service in England after serving only a short time in India, while others who have served several years abroad are being retained; and the anomaly of the repatriation of those expired men being given the lowest priority.

Mr. STRACHAN: In my statement on the Air Estimates on 12th March, I said that from 1st April the overseas tour of duty for single men in the Royal Air Force would be reduced from three

years and six months to three years, thus bringing their overseas tour into line with that at present laid down for married men. As I also explained then, it will take until 1st December to complete this reduction, which we are carrying out at a time when we already have a heavy programme of release and repatriation. After then we hope to go further.

Since the beginning of the release programme, I realise that it has sometimes been necessary, in order to avoid delays in the release of men due for demobilisation, to send other airmen overseas who have had only a limited further period to serve before themselves becoming due for release. This has been done solely with the aim of ensuring that release should not vary between members of the R.A.F. serving in this country and those overseas. It is for this reason, too, that those who are overseas and are due for release, have priority in transport, together with those who are posted home on compassionate grounds. Fortunately, this priority has not generally affected the repatriation of tour-expired airmen, very few of whom have been delayed in their return for duty in this country.

(March 22nd, 1946)

Reserve Command

Statement by Mr. Strachan

Reserve Command of the Royal Air Force will be re-established in the immediate future. Its primary function will be to maintain and train adequate reserves of flying and ground personnel. To that end it will recruit to the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve: foster the creation and development of the Auxiliary Air Force; assume responsibility for the Air Training Corps, and, in co-operation with the University authorities, re-create the University Air Squadrons. Group H.Q. of Reserve Command will be set up: they will coincide geographically with Army Commands.

These Group Headquarters will, in turn, set up Town Centres and will provide training facilities. Public announcements will then be made inviting officers and men released from the Royal Air Force to join the Volunteer

Reserve or the Auxiliary Units. The Territorial Army and Air Force Association will be the main recruiting agency.

The twenty Auxiliary Squadrons which existed before the war will be re-created on their old territorial bases. Commanding officers are now being appointed. Most of these units will be day and night fighter squadrons and, when fully trained, they will form part of the First Line Air Defences of this country. But several light bomber Auxiliary Squadrons will also be formed. In addition some non-flying Auxiliary Units will be formed, probably in such spheres as Operational Control and Radar work.

Discussions have been opened with the University authorities to determine at which Universities it will be possible to maintain University Air Squadrons.

For the present we propose to maintain the A.T.C. at a strength of 75,000.

From a corps of this size we should be able to accept all cadets of a satisfactory standard into the air force; but it must be realised that not all can become airmen.... We attach the utmost importance to these non-regular forces and it may well be that in the future, it will be desirable, and possible, to develop them to a much greater degree than before the war. Such developments will take time, however, and I must warn the House that we shall not immediately be in a position to give increasing recruits to the non-regular forces the same facilities as those that existed before the war. But the main thing is to get a firm basis laid down. The re-establishment of Reserve Command provides this basis, and we confidently appeal to all those who have the interests of the R.A.F. at heart to help us, in one way or another, in this rebuilding of our non-regular forces.

(March 27th, 1946)

W.A.A.F. SPORTS NEWS

List of Summer Representative Games

- Wednesday, 11 April, 1946.—WAAF v. ATS. Badminton.
Wednesday, 1 May, 1946.—WAAF v. ATS. Squash Racquet (part of five played).
Saturday, 15 June, 1946.—WRNS organising Inter-Service Tennis Tournament.
Monday, 17 June, 1946.—ATS v. WAAF. Golf.
Saturday, 29 June, 1946.—ATS v. WAAF. Inter-Command Sports Meeting. (See below).
Saturday, 29 June, 1946.—Nethal Match (First Seven).
Saturday, 29 July, 1946.—ATS v. WAAF. Cricket (full day).
Saturday, 27 July, 1946.—Inter-Service Swimming Gala. (See below).
Saturday, 2 September, 1946.—WRNS v. WAAF. Tennis.
Saturday, 28 September, 1946.—ATS v. WRNS. Tennis.

Sports Meeting

The WAAF and ATS Inter-Command Sports Meeting will include the following events. It will be run on an Inter-Command basis with the finalists from the ATS competing in the final heat against finalists from the WAAF in each event.

100 yards flat, 220 yards flat, high jump, long jump, hurdles, skipping race, obstacle race, potato race, basketball race, horse and driver race, relay race.

Swimming Gala

The Inter-Service Swimming Gala will include the following events:—Relay race—free style; Moleley race—breast, back, side and crawl; style swimming—breast, crawl, back crawl and English back stroke; stunts; diving—low, middle and high boards, free style; plunge; one length race—crawl, back and breast; obstacle race.

The Golden Eagle

★

The background picture is an aerial photograph of a 4,000 lb. incendiary burning below an attacking aircraft.

★

By FLIGHT LIEUTENANT KENNETH AMES, D.F.C. and Bar

FROM the heart of Mayfair to the peaceful fields of East Anglia is a fairly long cry; from the heart of Mayfair to the ruined cities of the erstwhile Third Reich is even further. But for the crews of Bomber Command's Pathfinder Force it was all a question of time.

At the end of Mount Street, just before you turn into Berkeley Square, is the inconspicuous entrance to the friendly club rooms of the Pathfinder Association. Here it is that the air crews who earned their golden eagle badges (golden efforters, for those who insist on literal accuracy) lighting the way for Bomber Command's offensive, now drop in and meet old friends to talk over some of the breath-taking experiences which they had together on their squadrons.

Most graphic of the numerous objectives of this Association, which is open to all former members of No. 5 Group, is "to foster and encourage the spirit of comradeship which existed in the Pathfinder Force" . . . a spirit which grew from the example set by Air Vice-Marshal D. Bennett when he founded this formidable striking force during the lean months of 1942.

Hence one must add that the name of P.F.F., and of its chief will go down in history as far ever inseparable. One of the most versatile figures in aviation, he was called upon to organize the new spearhead for Bomber Command and,

at the age of 35 became the youngest Air Vice-Marshal in the Service. Previous to this he had had a long and varied career; flying for the R.A.F., the R.A.A.F., and for Imperial Airways. As an airline pilot, Captain Bennett was the first man to fly a passenger across the Atlantic; he wrote a standard text-book on air navigation, and in 1940 inaugurated the Atlantic Ferry Service to bring aircraft to Britain. Later he rejoined the R.A.F., became commander of a bomber squadron, and was shot down and escaped via Sweden.

Back in England, Air Vice-Marshal Bennett established his Pathfinder B.O. in the peaceful market town of Harpenden. There, in August of 1942, he gathered a nucleus of specially-trained crews around him and set about the job.

The Fire Raisers

In the spring of that year matters had been going badly for this country and Bomber Command was perhaps the most effective offensive weapon we possessed; but for the bombers there was the difficulty of unfavourable European weather. Thick cloud over the target area often made bomb-sighting difficult and valuable loads fell wide.

The problem was to find an instrument which would tell the navigator where he was on the darkest of nights and direct the weight of bombs on to the objective.

The first step in the solution of that problem came with the advent of "Geos". The first Geo-controlled operation was carried out against Essen in March, 1942. A number of trained crews, known then as "fire-raisers" or "illuminators," led the main force against the Krupp works. Guided by the blaze of target-marking incendiaries, a huge force of heavies went in to attack.

The results were disappointing. True, there was some improvement, but still only a minute proportion of the total weight was falling within the target area.

So the initial "fire-raisers" became the core around which this new Pathfinder Force was developed. The early history of this force was not, as some have claimed, "immediately and unmistakably successful," but as raid followed raid, the skill of the crews increased and more and more bombs found their mark.

Yet, even then, neither Bennett nor the "bombers" who gave us "Geos" were satisfied. Within a matter of weeks, a new type of target indicator had been perfected which cascaded in brilliant columns from a height of 3,000 feet. These markers were visible even through thin cloud and were readily distinguishable amongst the night lights which consumed one city after another. Then in rapid succession, came the development of "Obos" and "H2S" which, together with the red, yellow and green T.L.s and the skymarker flares, remained the principal weapons of P.F.F. throughout the war.

"Obos" controlled Mosquito aircraft were assigned to the marking of targets in France, Belgium and the Ruhr, while Lancasters equipped with "H2S" carried the war from one end of Nazi-controlled Europe to the other, checking every village, town, river and lake on their radar screens as they thundered through the night to pinpoint their objectives.

Virtually, their first outstanding victory came on a return visit to the Number One Burning Ground—Krupp armaments works—in March, 1943. This was the first occasion on which bombing had any appreciable effect on the production of the greatest of Germany's armaments.

The "Master Bomber" technique, which was to become an integral part of P.F.F. tactics, was first tried out by Wing Commander Danik on Flensburg as early as 1942, but paid its first big dividend in the historic Potsdam raid of August, 1943.

The Potsdam Raid

A photographic interpreter standing on the roof of the Potsdam research station first observed a solid object resembling an aircraft on a long launching ramp. Word was quickly sent out and a strong force of bombers gathered to attack the station in moonlight. Orbiting the target at low level, Pathfinders' Master Bomber assessed the T.A. workers and passed corrections over the R.T. Then the bombs went down to obliterate Germany's flying-bomb research centre and afford a valuable lesson in the attacks on London. Now, twelve months after the conclusion of the war, this operation stands out as one of the most epoch-making blows dealt out by Bomber Command in the whole five and a half years of war.

As the winter nights of 1943 lengthened and the weather became worse the Pathfinders continued, with ever-increasing efficiency, to lead huge forces of Halifaxes and Lancasters out over the North Sea and into the heart of Berlin's defences. Night after night the target was the same; night after night the tactics were the same. The "Wanglers" skymarkers went down over Germany and laid their load of destruction followed through a solid blanket of cloud.

In March, 1944—with invasion in the offing—yet another phase of operations began. The new Mosquito Night Striking Force was left to deal the first blows at Berlin; the heavies were switched to small rail targets in France and Belgium. This necessitated a further modification in technique, for, with a friendly population sleeping only a few hundred yards from their targets, the bomber crews had to make 100 per cent. certain of putting their H.E. loads right on the objective, or else bring them back. The Master Bomber came into full prominence. Operating on

cloudless nights, hundreds of four-engine bombers flew to attack railway junctions, troop concentrations and gun-sites, directed by the Master aircraft. The targets were small and often cleverly concealed, but the Master Bomber seldom failed to locate them.

Before the Invasion

The crescendo came when more than sixteen hundred bombers battered the coastal defences, rail-communications, ammunition dumps and transport parks in one colossal pre-invasion offensive. That night every bomb-aimer held the same objective in his bomb-sight—the Red Target indicators laid by the marker crews of P.F.F. Cruising home over the Cherbourg Peninsula in the grey light of dawn, every crew saw the huge armadas sailing to the Normandy beaches; and they gasped that their work was almost done.

Only a few months after this, a suggestion was put forward to form an association or club to continue in peacetime the spirit and comradeship which had carried the Force forward

from one success to another during its great operational career. The vote was unanimous in favour of such a scheme.

New, in a world at peace, operations are but a faint memory for the men who forged them in their Mount Street headquarters.

Numbers of them are by now wearing civilian suits and are back at their city desks: it is an incredible changeover from the life they were living a year ago. Others come in for a drink and a chat wearing the smart blue uniform of airline pilots, for the Force is strongly represented by its crews in civilian aviation.

The majority, however, still in light blue, are scattered throughout the Service, on many and varied duties.

Whatever time of day you choose to step down into the club, there will always be at least a handful of people standing around, talking, signing the visitors' book, or sunk deep in the lounge-chairs. Although the association has only been established six months the membership already exceeds the twenty-five hundred mark, including a large number of non-flying personnel. Squadron Leader Edward Grant, the Secretary, has an aptitude for remembering names and understanding other people's problems, but even he is occasionally a little pushed by the constant stream of callers.

Pathfinder Employment Agency

Principal headache for the Squadron Leader is the career-finding agency which was inaugurated as one of the primary aids for rehabilitation of members. It claims to be one of the most unique employment bureaux in existence.

"If you know what you want—we'll have a first-class attempt at finding it for you" seems to be the motto of this agency. Anything from aircraft-designing to veterinary surgery, from cinema anti-directing to bridge-building, their files cover almost every conceivable type of occupation for demobilised air crew. Already scores of men have been placed by the Association, and the organization is working overtime at the gargantuan task of trying to fit its members into the best niches.

A W.A.A.F. in Soviet Russia

By SECTION OFFICER J. E. THOMAS



I WONDER how many W.A.A.F. knew that they were represented on the British Youth Delegation, recently returned to this country after two months' stay in the Soviet Union. I was the lucky one who was chosen as the W.A.A.F. representative, so I should like to tell you something about our travels.

There were seventeen of us, led by Mr. John Platts-Mills, M.P., and with our Russian hosts we covered about 8,000 miles of the country, mostly by air. Using Moscow as our base, we went as far north as the beautiful city of Leningrad, with its buildings painted yellow, red and green against a background of gleaming snow. We went to the Ukraine, over which the Germans advanced so triumphantly in the early part of the war on the eastern front. We saw Stalingrad, or what remains of it, where that advance was turned, and we had the wonderful experience of flying over the Caucasus Mountains and down the coast of the Black Sea, to the little health resort of Sochi. Here, for the first and only time, we could go without our boots and gaiters, as we wandered among the palm trees and lemon groves, or scrambled down the cliffs to the sea in the early morning to watch the porpoises and gulls.

In Search of Youth

Everywhere we went we were entertained really, in the true Russian tradition of hospitality, by young people.

In each place we visited we learnt to expect a banquet on our arrival, another one on leaving and at least one visit to the local ballet or opera during our stay. This was inevitable, and incidentally much appreciated, as was also the time devoted to sight-seeing. But we had gone with a purpose, and it was, in general, to examine the position of youth in the Soviet Union. Therefore, everywhere we went, we were taken as a delegation to kindergartens and children's hospitals, to schools and children's houses, where the children spend much of their leisure time. Wherever possible we visited the University or Technical Institute. We talked to young people on the farms and in the factories, and we attended services in the churches. This was of interest to us all, but most of us had our own special interests as well, and we did have some opportunity to follow it up.

I set out with the idea of talking to the girls in uniform whenever I met them, so that I could get some picture of the part that they had played during the war, and of their activities now. But the odd thing was that, for a long time, I could not find a single uniform among the women I met.

During our week's stay in Leningrad we heard a good deal about the siege, about the constant shelling and the



A Lancaster Master-Bomber on a night raid dropping a phosphorus bomb.

fearful hunger and cold. We were told that about 2,500 of the university students had volunteered to join in the fighting, and that the remainder had turned out to build the street blockades, and we understood that every able-bodied man and woman had played their part in the defence of the city. But the Leningraders seem to have put all that behind them. Their regular work has been so rapid that we could find few scars in the main part of the city. This great cultural and scientific centre has resumed its peace-time aspect. I do not think I saw one woman in uniform.

And about ten days later I discovered the reason. I was in Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, when at last a Red Army girl crossed my path. At least she was wearing uniform, but I soon discovered that she had been demobilised some months before. She had taken down her Lieutenant's epaulettes but otherwise her uniform, including her buttons, was unchanged. I asked her about demobilisation, and she told me that as soon as it started, all the women were free to return to their interrupted training, to resume their pre-war occupation or to help with the gigantic task of reconstruction. Already they are back in the Universities or technical schools, where they have resumed their pre-war studies. They are back in the factories and on the farms, which they left when their country was threatened, or they have volunteered to work in the damaged areas on clearance and rebuilding. In fact the majority of the service women are back in civilian life. There were a few who wished to remain in the service, but I met only three. One was a woman doctor, a Lieutenant-Colonel, who was in charge of an Army medical school and clinic, and there were two interpreters of oriental languages, to whom I talked in the theatre one night. To my amazement they both spoke a little English, and one of them said to me: "I expect to be in the service till my death." But she did not say it gloomily! These last were however the exception rather than the rule. There was no question of not being able to get a job on release. There was plenty of work to be done to get the economy of the country running

again, and the ex-service women were doing their share.

No Auxiliary Services

The next thing that I tried to find out from this girl in Kiev was how the women's services were organised. From her and from other people I gathered that there was nothing really comparable to our women's auxiliary services. The Russian women volunteered to work in almost every branch of the three fighting forces, and they did so on an equal footing with the men. They came under the same administration and they had the same punishments (including if necessary the death sentence). They received the same pay and they trained with them. For instance, this particular girl had been on anti-aircraft guns. She had started off with three months' preliminary training behind the lines in the detachment with which she later served as a fully-fledged private at the front. Then she was put up for a commission, so she went to Leningrad, and there she studied for a year at the same training centre as the men. This study included general education, as well as military training.

Direct commissions were given to those with previous training such as doctors and nurses. In Sochi, a station in the Caucasus, I came across a girl who had had three years' training as a nurse before the war. When the war started she became at once a Lieutenant in the Army. She served at the front, nursing and driving ambulances, and was herself wounded. After demobilisation she decided to become a doctor, so she came down to Sochi, though her home was in Moscow nearly 900 miles away, to study at the famous Stalin Institute. It was at a dance at this Institute that I met her. Unfortunately, I got hold of one of our male interpreters to translate for us, and every time the music started he took her off to dance. I did not make that mistake again.

In Sochi we visited a hospital dealing almost entirely with surgical cases arising out of the war, and we also saw the Red Army rest home, which is open to both men and women. It is a grand white modern building, with big windows overlooking the Black Sea. It is

surrounded by attractive gardens, full of the inevitable palm trees, many of which were covered by little wooden shelters in case any snow falls. A steep funicular railway runs right down to the shore, and I must say I almost envied any service people who had to come and rest in that beautiful place, so near to the mountains.

Girls who Fought

As I have told you, our next visit after Sochi was Stalingrad. There the devastation is quite beyond imagination. Even after seeing Berlin, it came as a great shock to drive for miles through a sea of bricks, not one of which is standing upon another. How the defenders survived in their two tiny salients on the bank of the Volga amid the encircling army broke the German attack is an epic that is well remembered. But I must tell you the story of Nina, just one of the defenders of that heroic city, when I met on my last night there. She was training as a medical student when the war broke out, so she joined up as a nurse and was active on many parts of the front. When Stalingrad was threatened she felt that, as she knew her way about so well, she could be of use in the defence. So she volunteered as a major and joined the infantry as a junior sergeant. She was awarded the Order of the Red Star for bravery in the fighting, and soon afterwards she had to be invalided out as she lost her right hand. When I met her she was studying for her entrance exam to the University, where she hoped to take up law.

Everywhere we went in the later stages of our journey I talked to girls

who had been fighting in the front lines, or with the guerrilla forces, or who had worked behind the enemy lines as members of the Secret Service. There were women, I was told, who sailed in the ships of the Red Navy, and were not barred from any post except that of captain of the vessel. And there were women pilots who flew alongside the men on operational flights. One of the well-known figures was a woman, Lt.-Col. Bezhinskaya, who commanded an air regiment comprising several squadrons.

One evening, towards the end of our stay, we visited a Red Air Force club in Moscow. It was a beautiful building, given over entirely to the use of members of the service, both men and women, and to their families. They have a theatre there where different Moscow companies present plays twice every night, there is an extensive technical and recreational library, and there are many study circles, run for those who wish to further their education. This club is one of many open to service people in Moscow and elsewhere. We stayed to see part of the play that was being given in the theatre that evening. And once again as I looked round at the audience I noted the lack of women in uniform. But this time I understood, and I could picture some of those who must have thronged this club during the war, each thinking her appointed job for the defence had appeared in her country's connection of her country. One of the most vivid impressions that I have brought home with me is of the spirit and purposefulness of these people. They know to what end they are working and they spare neither themselves nor others in the achievement of that end.

PRIZE WINNERS

Officers (R.A.F.)

- 1st Prize: FLIGHT LIEUTENANT KENNETH APPEL, D.F.C. and Bar for The Golden Kite (Page 148)
2nd Prize: SQUADRON LEADER R. B. RAYMOND for Sol Long for (Page 152)

WAAF (Drivers and Airwomen)

- 1st Prize: SECTION OFFICER J. E. THOMAS for A W.A.A.F. in Service Russia (Page 171)
2nd Prize: No award.

Airmen

- 1st Prize: LAC R. WILLIAMS for West A Job (Page 160)
2nd Prize: FLIGHT SERGEANT L. J. EVANS for Our Mass (Page 177)

Drawings

- 1st Prize: LAC H. SKARRIGHT for The Doctor (Pages 156 and 158)
2nd Prize: LAC L. ADRIAN for Sergeants' Mass (Page 177)

Report From Germany

By FLIGHT LIEUTENANT KENNETH LEWIS

SIX months ago I was in Germany. Last month I returned to the same places—to R.A.F.O. H.Q., to the Groups, the Wings and the Squadrons; and to see the final work of the Disarmament Units.

I found that things had changed a great deal since my last visit. Demobilisation has meant the return home of many of the old crews; men who came all the way up from Normandy with 2nd T.A.F. had landed in their war service dress. New men and women had taken over, and this new company were doing the old and the new jobs in the towns, villages and airfields of the Reich.

I found it unusual to meet an old associate; and when I did I found that he too was expecting his Release Group to come up any day.

Six months ago W.A.A.F. in Germany were as scarce as bananas in England; also like bananas they were arriving in small lots, being carefully guarded and in great demand.

To-day the W.A.A.F. have increased tremendously in numbers, are as popular as ever, and walk out alone, nonchalantly, in German streets. There are W.A.A.F. clubs, W.A.A.F. cooks, W.A.A.F. on Signals, W.A.A.F. on M.T., W.A.A.F. in Welfare, in E.V.T., in everything. W.A.A.F. at Groups, at R.A.F.O.—in fact almost everywhere.

Since VE-Day

The men and the equipment which are passing from the German scene can look back upon a tremendous achievement during the months since VE-Day.

The efforts of 2nd T.A.F. which preceded victory were so intense and concerted that a second hardly possible to expect anything like equivalent effort immediately following the end of the war.

There was the natural tendency to relax; all Units forced themselves on the move into new quarters in Germany; and everyone began to think of demob and home and the putting of uniforms. On top of this there was the collection of arm from German

civilians to be done and the necessity of keeping a watch for sabotage. R.A.F.O. was busy.

A great job has been done. Disarmament of the G.I.A.F. has been almost completed. The R.A.F. has rooted itself in Germany.

And the men and machines, drivers and Jeeps, pilots and aircraft which never stopped hitting the Germans in the sky and on the roads and railways all the way up through Europe and across the Rhine, those men, this equipment have finished their job.

One Group alone has disposed of hundreds of thousands of tons of Luftwaffe equipment since last autumn. Thousands of aircraft have been salvaged from German airfields. Some have been sent to England for use with our armies and others have been handed over to our Allies. Radar stations have been pulled down; every town, village, factory and garage has been searched for equipment. Underground works and fortifications have been earned and hundreds of secret documents scrutinised. Every experimental and research station in the British zone of Germany has had expert eyes trained on it to pull out secrets and get information.

And then the results have been sent to Portsmouth for further investigation, for trial and experiment.

The Big Bang

On top of all this there have been months of destruction of material which the Germans meant to send to England. In all, over 100,000 tons of Luftwaffe explosives were found in the British zone. The biggest bang of all time—disregarding the Alster Bomb—took place early this year in the heart of the German countryside when 800 tons of bombs were destroyed.

The boys called it "Gearing's football show".

R.A.F.O. has not only destroyed the material right of the Luftwaffe; it has also dissolved its manpower. Hundreds of thousands of men have been demobilised. I met an ex-Luftwaffe pilot

driving a Control Commission taxi in Berlin and a waiter in the W.A.A.F. mess at Buchenburg who was the equivalent of an L.A.C. in the Luftwaffe a few weeks ago. Great numbers of these Germans have been put to work on the land; some have gone to the countries; some are in factories or busy clearing away the rubble of German towns.

Settling In

While the Luftwaffe has been in process of dissolution, the R.A.F. has been settling into permanent establishments in Germany.

In Berlin and Hamburg, Buchenburg and Celle and on airfields and outpost stations, the R.A.F. has taken root: theatres and cinemas, shops and clubs have been established. In Buchenburg, "Pete's Tea Shop" serves 1,500 cakes a day and it is the exclusive right of the W.A.A.F. who run it to invite whom they will to afternoon refreshment.



An S.P. on horseback. An unusual sight, seen in Celle.

ROYAL AIR FORCE JOURNAL

In Celle, the only town anywhere where R.A.F. Police ride through the streets on white horses, there are German beer shops turned into typical English "Pubs." There is a gift shop, a book shop where they sell £2,000 worth of books every month, and a photographic studio which has recently had a rush of people wearing a last snap of the old style.

At Gifhorn airfield, just outside Berlin, the R.A.F. has opened up lake-side clubs; there English and American music, played by German orchestras, flows across the moon-lit waters of the Wann Zee. So also at Hamburg where the vast expanse of the Alster waterfront echoes with airmen's songs, and where the British Forces Network finds new stars of radio from the ranks of the R.A.F.

Yes, R.A.F.O. has settled into the Reich for a long stay, living in German houses or ex-Luftwaffe barracks, where a measure of comfort has replaced the grim austerity of test life. Preparations are being made to bring across from U.K. wives and families of officers and airmen.

The once-jockhotted Germans serve the humble airmen who defused their arrogance. There are German outlets at R.A.F. stations, German hairdresses, German drivers, German waiters—Germans to brew the coal and draw the water.

The Germans have a wholesome respect for the British "Luftwaffe," as they call us.

Recreation and Work

Week-ends are free from duty for most of the R.A.F. and W.A.A.F. Then there are riding clubs, gliding clubs, sailing clubs, theatres packed to hear concerts of classical music on Sunday afternoons, photographic tours, soccer matches, and the E.V.T. University for those who wish to study. There are also English church bells ringing out across German fields on Sunday mornings.

Some of the R.A.F. Units are away from all these amenities. They are the outposts. The Radar stations, near country villages make their own amusement except when the weekly cinema show comes along or the occasional concert party. Life in these places is

lonely, often uncomfortable and seldom exciting. These men guide our aircraft, which now fly over Germany unmolested, to safe bases. They are doing a job of war severity in peace. A great job.

Some fighters or fighter bombers, bombers or transport aircraft of the R.A.F. are still out somewhere over the Reich when weather permits. Then these out-post men are busy.

Some of the aircraft carry passengers, some freight, some take mail and some pursue the gigantic task of making a photographic survey of every square inch of German territory. The Royal Air Force help them on their way.

So Germany has been deserted in the air; but perhaps the job which lies ahead is the most important of all.

To-day and to-morrow and for many to-morrows yet the R.A.F. must keep watch over Germany.

Demobilization will deplete the Armies on the ground. Air vigilance alone will be able efficiently to arrest any attempt at insurrection, any outbreak of sabotage, any effort at uprising. The future work of B.A.F.O. is to police the Reich in the sky.

The efficiency of the old crews, on the ground and in the air, and the power of the old planning, brought the enemy low and took away his breath.

The newcomers will win their spurs by insuring that Germany does not become a new sword and draw it forth. It is a mighty commitment and the R.A.F. in Germany realize what is involved.



Our Mess

By FLIGHT SERGEANT L. J. EVANS

THERE are messes and messes. Some are good, some are bad, some are indifferent. Description of them all would run the gamut of adjectives. There are messes which are cosy and intimate; some are large and noisy; some are grand, cheerful and cheery; others garish with a spurious modernity.

There are messes which the most expressive derogatory epithets would fail adequately to portray, and a few which are near-perfect.

Ours is a friendly mess. Small, but not too small. Comfortable, but not overbearing so. There are twenty or so sergeants, flight sergeants and warrant officers, among them a sprinkling of airwomen. It is the best mess I have been in, after the wanderings of five and a half years. And now, on the eve of my re-entry to civil life to resume a half-forgotten profession, its characteristics have set me pondering on the qualities that make it so.

Let us first take the amenities. We have two fairly large dining tables, set squarely in the centre of the room, which is just the convenient size for two dozen people. There are dining chairs to suit; and half a dozen arm-chairs and a settee. There are cards, papers and periodicals, a radio gram and records, a piano and a dashboard. Along one end is a sideboard to hold crockery and food.

The flames of a cheery blaze lick the brick walls of the fireplace and the wistful stains of *Walden* float across the room from the radio. Over the fireplace is a notice board, and alongside it a smaller blackboard on which is chalked the menu for every meal. So when you enter the room you can tell immediately what there is to eat, and without ado, tell the waitress what you want and how much.

Such are the external manifestations of comfort. But then these things do not necessarily make a good mess, any more than fine clothes make the man, though they contribute substantially. What makes it a good mess more than anything is the friendly spirit you find in it. Arriving a new-comer, you are soon made to feel "at home" and within a week or even less you are one of the family. I have been in messes where you are almost as much a stranger after three months as when you arrived.

I have been in others where members congregate in cliques and admission is as difficult as if it were a secret society. You are regarded, if not with suspicion then with a faint distrust. Not so our mess. Perhaps the first morning, knowing no one, you will take your cup and saucer, pour out coffee or tea, tell the waitress you'd like some porridge, take a seat and begin your meal—all without a word. All the while others chat sociably, discuss the



NAAFI NEWS: COMING SHORTLY:

A Booklet that answers your queries about NAAFI

"An Enquiring Airman Wants to Know"

"Who runs NAAFI?" "What happens to the profits?" "How are NAAFI profits used?" "Why cut out one rebate and reduce the price?" "All these and many more questions frequently asked by R.A.F. personnel are answered in this booklet, which will be distributed free."

WITH the vast expansion of the Royal Air Force during the war, and the changes in personnel since the cessation of hostilities, many thousands of men are now serving who appear to know little of the constitution and practice of NAAFI. Under the pressure of active service, the wartime airman had scant opportunity to acquaint himself with the principles on which the canteens on all stations at home and overseas were operated. But, naturally, he was disposed to ask many pertinent questions and to feel suspicious if a satisfactory answer was not forthcoming.

This pamphlet is being produced in an endeavour to supply him with the information which he has a right to know. The questions are based on actual enquiries which have reached NAAFI Headquarters, posed on home airbases, from contact committees or from officials of NAAFI who have received them in the course of their duties.

owing to paper restrictions only a limited number of pamphlets will be available for each R.A.F. Station and all airman and airwomen are urged to look out for a copy and study its contents. NAAFI is your business, and you should know how it works.



morning's news or last night's frivolities. The next day perhaps you will say "Good morning" to your neighbour. A day or two later you know the Christian names of some of the members. Within a week you are saying brightly "Good morning, Bill" or "Good morning, Sally" and your initial shyness, if you had any, has dissolved in the general atmosphere of cordiality and good will. For the speed of your entry into the circle will, of course, depend upon your experiences. There is the person who will feel at home in rest to no time and adapt himself immediately to any environment; there are others who take a little time to break the ice. But in our men the most reserved and detached individual will soon be a "live" member of the mess; sometimes, indeed, almost against his will.

In such a mass personalities become clearer and more distinct; and after a while you begin to realise that you live among a fascinating microcosm of society. Each person becomes more of an individual and less a member of the Service. Superficial views, some posed, some acquired, some purposefully created, are drawn aside, revealing character and personality. Human relationships take on added interest, and there is a gentle excitement in the revelation of minds and the interchange of anecdotes and views.

Here is Robin the worker, the man who is invariably the last in for dinner and tea because he has been working at his desk; Robin for ever cheery and charitable, who will always do you a good turn for purely altruistic motives, who will chuckle at his own and others' jokes, and whose favourite phrase is "You've had your time, haven't you?" Everyone is Robin's chum and he is everybody's chum—a man who will pay for the first round in a crowd and disappear quietly back to his desk. Such men, you feel, make the world a pleasant place to live in.

Then there is the shrewd, the expert at the double entendre, fresh-faced and bright-eyed, of whom elderly and correct chattering ladies might say "What a nice boy" and those who know him will chuckle inwardly.

You have "Liz" and "Sally" who

will take any amount of leg pulling—and give it—and the next moment will enjoy silence in the room while a footballer's sympathy is played on the air. Liz is our schoolmistress, looks after the library and will organise gramophone recitals for the music lovers.

There is "Sandy," immediate and smiling, presiding without fuss over our meetings, and like "Taff" his fellow countryman, an insouciant scholar of rugby. And after tea you will see him immersed in a crossword puzzle, probably with "Taff," before the latter, tangle of many quips, battles off to the White City, or for a solitary walk.

There is, too, the inevitable "Doc" to fix our appointments at doc quarters or the dental centre; Doc, who is Wally's rival at the rugby contact, and captain of darts. The football stalwarts are here as well—Harold, tall and muscular, unimpeachable breaker of feminine hearts and keeper of sports gear—and Les, non-smoking but not without a touch of the much maligned O.D.s, who will never fail to stand by for a duty for you.

Peter will cheer us with satisfactory reports of the mess accounts, and play bridge, cricket and squash with equal facility.

"Gibbs" will take apart a wireless set and put it together again as easily as turning a switch.

Our mess has them all—the graduate, the student, the wit, the philosopher, the semi-retired, the reserved and the outspoken, the bridge fiends and the outdoor enthusiasts. Few want to leave the mess to go to another Station. If they do they often wish they could return, and indeed some do come back, for a party or a visit.

And so, I suppose, although the comforts and amenities are there, swifd and unobtrusive, it is the people in it more than material things, that make our mess a good mess. Now civilian life, with its unpredictable vicissitudes, beckons. Soon I shall be leaving this company of interesting people. I shall remember them and "Our Mess" with pleasure and affection.

BRITISH AIRCRAFT: 7

The Halifax

The arrival of a series of articles on British aircraft written specially for the "Royal Air Force Journal" by the Society of British Aircraft Constructors, Ltd.



THE name of Handley Page, Ltd., has been synonymous with the big bomber for more than 30 years. The association dates back to 1914 when the founder of the company (now Sir Frederick Handley Page) began to display an interest in the large aircraft which, with the outbreak of war, grew into a conviction that the big bomber was the true medium for bringing Air Power to bear on the enemy.

Few people at that time shared his conviction, and even today, alas, but he was able to catch the ear of Mr. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, and to secure from him a contract for a two-engined bomber larger than any previously contemplated by either the military or the naval authorities of his or any other country. Throughout 1915, day and night, work on the new bomber—named the 0/100—went forward without pause, and in December of that year the first off the line made its maiden flight.

The 0/100 was followed by an improved version, the 0/400, but even this did not give full expression to Handley Page's conception of the big bomber. Towards the close of the war he produced the four-engined V/1500 which was expressly designed for the bombing of Berlin and other cities deep in the heart of Germany. The V/1500 had a wing span of 126 ft., a length of 62 ft., and stood 23 ft. high. In flight it was as majestic as it was impressive and little skill in aircraft recognition was

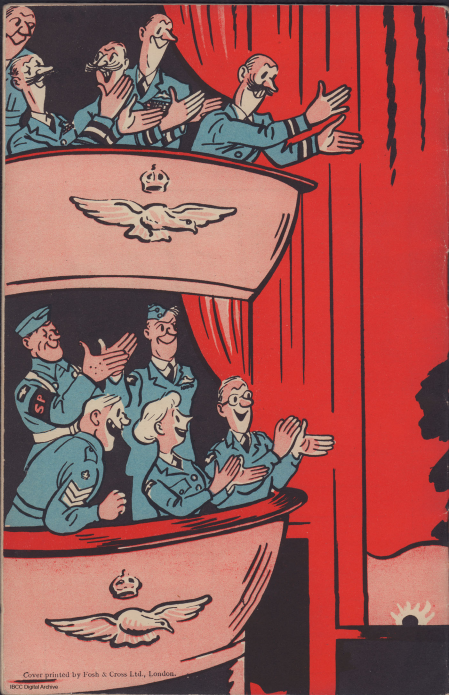
needed to identify it. It made a class of its own. Berlin seemed in flames; the Armistice was signed before the long hours of darkness, which were essential for such an operation, came round again.

Twenty-one years later other Handley Page bombers, with increased vigour and power, began again the work of destruction from which the 0/400 had been withdrawn in 1918. The first of the second generation of H.P. bombers to see active service was the *Whisperer*; the second, the *Halcyon*.

When the *Halcyon* first went into service, it could carry a heavier bomb load on the longer ranges than any other bomber then in service. Its basic design had been started in January, 1937, when a layout was begun for a new medium bomber to replace the *Blenheim*. This aircraft was to have been powered with two of the new Rolls-Royce *Psalter* engines, then in course of development.

In August, 1937, the Air Ministry decided that a likely shortage of *Psalter* might delay the new bomber and it was accordingly modified to take four *Merlin* motors. The new bomber was given a bigger span and a longer fuselage, but was otherwise unchanged.

Design work occupied the best part of a year, and the first prototype, L.7244, flew on October 2, 1939, only 27 months after the first of the revised drawings were made. It had four 1,145 h.p. Rolls-Royce *Merlin* A engines, a loaded weight of 55,000 lbs., and a top speed of about 280 m.p.h.



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