

The SS *Monterey* was a luxury liner, and the lucky ones travelled first class, in a deck cabin, which contained a large wardrobe, dressing table, bed side tables, chairs, and a private bathroom, with a beautiful white built-in bath, and hot and cold water. A steward looked after the room, and made the beds, and the occupants were given clean towels every day. The meals were also described as being of the highest quality and served by waiters.

NOTE

Conditions were vastly different on some of the other vessels involved in troop transport, such as the *Sea Barb*.

The first group of pilots under training, having completed their EFTS training in NZ, embarked on the *Awatea* on February 27, 1941 leaving from Auckland bound for Vancouver via Suva with 167 trainees comprising 52 pilots under training for No. 6 SFTS Dunnville, Ontario; 42 observers under training to No. 6 AOS Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; and 72 wireless/gunners under training to No. 3 W/S Winnipeg, Ontario. The wireless/air gunners would also train at various other bombing and gunnery schools to complete their graduation.

Also on this ship were 60 already fully trained pilots from New Zealand, disembarking with the above, going by train across Canada, then proceeding to the UK via Halifax Nova Scotia.

It should be explained that earlier ships (prior to the *Awatea* in 1941), had carried trainee air observers, navigators and bombers and gunners. Pilots, already fully trained in New Zealand had gone directly to Britain.

## FROM “DOWN-UNDER” TO “UP HERE”

NZ 431050 N. Hilton sailed on the UST *Uruguay* from Auckland on October 12 1943, destined for pilot training in Canada. This item is included with his kind permission. Neale has had a lifetime career as a journalist, within NZ, and in London.

Although it is now some time since Course 94 joined the strength of No.15 SFTS Claresholm, we have not yet said an official or mass “Hello” to all our new comrades on this most pleasant station. In common with Course 96, we arrived in Claresholm prematurely, and were fortunate in being given a few days’ leave, an opportunity which we fully exploited. Just in case our movements have been suspected we’ll turn back the already yellowing pages of time until when our New Zealand composite draft came to the end of a boring sea journey, which terminated at San Pedro, California.

Our first break was a period of about 2 hours in Los Angeles, where we were taken aback at times with remarks from well-meaning citizens. For example one man asked what part of Sydney we came from, and a woman shocked our group as she wasn’t sure where New Zealand was in the United States!

The most outstanding features of this city to our enquiring eyes were the Mexican people, Theatres and ‘zoot-suited’ youths, and the amazing prevalence of old lags and hangers-on. This was particularly noticeable in a time when the war industries in the country were crying out for workers. Some of the boys were lucky enough to see Hollywood – the majority of us were under the impression that the fabulous movie centre was forty odd miles away, whereas it’s not more than twelve – one lucky lad ‘cut the rug’ with Ginger Rogers at the Hollywood Canteen!

From this fair city, we made our way through the courtesy of the Union Pacific Company, to San Francisco where we were again fortunate indeed, in having 10 hours to ourselves. The size of Oakland Bay and Golden Gate bridges was one of the outstanding of the harbour sights, and we were suitably impressed with the diminutive grimness of Alcatraz Island, the Devil’s Island of the USA (or so we we’re told).

The Pullman carriages and dining cars on the train were a great change from the cramped quarters and strange food of our ship and, coupled with the decency and consideration of the conducting officer, made our actual travelling quite pleasant. A great difference from the uncomfortable, slow and smoky New Zealand Railways, we found.

An hour in our next stop, Vancouver, was all too short, as we found the people more friendly than in the American cities, and we also greatly admired the rugged splendour of the magnificent harbour view.

FROM “DOWN-UNDER” TO “UP HERE”

Passing through the Rockies, the snow proved to be an irresistible attraction, until the tinkling of glass at one of the wayside stations dampened the ardour of the combatants. Fall scenery, with its allied shades of gold, brown, and yellow, beautified the never ending kaleidoscope of white-capped mountains, green pine forests, flimsy-veiled waterfalls, rapids and streams. A great commotion was caused when we saw three bears.

Claresholm, now, instead of just being the end of a long, long trail has proven itself a second home to us, and we are in thorough accord with the commonsense principles under which the Station operates. Speaking broadly, we like Canada and its people, and have been so far, more than agreeably surprised with the weather here in Alberta. In conclusion it is the sincere wish of every ‘newsie’ (horrible word) that the station personnel will enjoy a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. We hope that our training at No 15 SFTS will continue to be as interesting and enjoyable as it has commenced.

– from “DOWN-UNDER” to “UP HERE”

by Neale Hilton, written for RCAF Windy Wings magazine, published Dec 21 1943, whilst stationed at Claresholm.

The above accounts of two or three different voyages reflect the more favourable experiences which a certain proportion of the trainees enjoyed on their trip across the Pacific. When reading other airmen’s biographies further on regarding the state of some of the ships, and their cramped accommodation as well as poor food and sanitation, different experiences will be noted. The heat in the holds of some vessels was extreme, and would have seen ‘OSH’ close down the accommodation and stop the war!

Embarkation procedure was pretty much as described earlier except that the parades did not occur at all departures, but the send-offs and farewells had their place where and when possible, with many a tear shed. Most poignant were the emotions felt by the men, as they watched the country disappearing over the horizon, maybe for the last time.

There were occasions, while New Zealand trainees lined the ships’ rails awaiting departure time, when they watched the loading of American casualties, shell-shocked or with limbs missing, some crying out in pain, being lowered into the ships’ holds, most in caged beds and tied down to stop them falling out. These men were being transferred from the Naval Hospital at Greenlane to the Naval Hospitals at San Diego or Los Angeles. They were from the war zone in

the Pacific area where casualties were very high, and they had been sent to New Zealand to assist their recovery, and when fit enough to travel, were sent home for more treatment and recuperation.

Disembarkation of our trainees at Vancouver stopped after the RMS *Awatea* made her trip leaving Auckland on August 14 1941. From that time onwards, disembarkations were made at San Diego, San Pedro, and San Francisco; some ships sailed via the Panama Canal to New Orleans; Newport Rhode Island, New York; and Halifax. German POWs from the Middle East (one sailing) and Japanese POWs from the Pacific (three sailings) were also carried to the US.

All RNZAF Aircrew who disembarked at the ports concerned were transferred to railway stations for onwards travel. Those arriving on the west coast of the USA were sent to Vancouver, Canada, and then they travelled across Canada to their respective final destinations. Leave was given from two hours to four hours at main points along the route, e.g. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vancouver, Banff, Jasper, and other major cities. The main rail networks used for the transport of RNZAF and RAAF personnel were Union Pacific and Santa Fe in the United States, and CPR (Canadian Pacific), and CNR (Canadian National) in Canada.

### **Meals on Ships**

On the established liners which were providing their mainline services for civilian passengers as well as New Zealand and Australian servicemen, meals were of good quality and supply. The New Zealand Government paid for all the meals and accommodation for the New Zealand draft and officials. Troop ships heading for the US and Canada were supplied with food for the men based on two meals per day, the thinking being that two proper meals a day would have been adequate and nutritious. In many cases these were not checked on by the Draft officials, and some ships provided only very substandard meals to the trainees, while Draft officials ate their meals in the ships' crew dining rooms which were of good quality. Ship supply officials were known to have made a lot of money out of ships' stores, and some were later brought to account after complaints were laid with the ship owners.

Canteens were open at certain times each day to cater for all passengers who wanted to purchase food and drinks to appease their hunger, and these frequently run out of food items and drinks. Proper supervision by draft staff could have avoided the problem of inadequate meals for the troops. Two major ports are mentioned in the Airmen's Stories (see Chapter 11).

### **Meals and Accommodation on Trains**

Just as the Government paid for the meals of our troops on board ships, so it paid for all rail trips including meals. After reading over a hundred air veterans' biographies we have not seen any problems with food except that meals were different to those they were used to, but that was understandable. Trains generally had snacks and drinks available, and well stocked canteens. Porter service was also available for those requiring to buy items.

### **Porterage**

This was something new to New Zealanders which came as a bit of a culture shock especially to the first groups travelling by train in Canada and the United States. This was a service charge known as a 'tip'. Kiwis believed that tips were a rort as the person was a paid worker, so why pay extra for a service already paid for? This reasoning was understandable, but they hadn't been exposed to this system and it certainly was not a very good welcome to the boys from down under.

They didn't know that the mainly negro porters were not well paid, but gave very good service from the time passengers entered up the steps into the carriages, until they left the train at journey's end. Porters fetched things for you when asked, shone your shoes, tidied the cubical and seating areas, brought you your meals, kept the ablution areas clean, and made up your bed or bunk (depending on the carriage style) and did all this with a smile.

Many Kiwis snuck out of the carriage at the opposite end to avoid paying, and probably felt sorry after they had left. It must also be noted that our boys had little spare money to throw away and didn't know when the next pay day was coming.

Some carriages appeared to be from the Colonial era, like some in use in New Zealand. Other carriages were modern and well appointed and built for the cold climate. Pullman Carriages were very modern with dining cars, and sleeping cars with double bunks and curtains which porters made up at night and redid next morning. Some had special observation cars for excellent viewing of the scenic wonders of the mountainous areas.

## SHIPPING LISTS

Appendix A contains a list of all ships that left New Zealand with RNZAF and sometimes with RAAF aircrew under training. Figures are for RNZAF only and are incomplete. Figures do not include Draft Teams, as they returned back to New Zealand on the next available ship.

All ship movements have been verified for correctness as known as at 1st August 2009.



Men on Mariposa.

Courtesy: G. O. Whatnall

IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE

SHIP	TONS	DATE	DEPART	VIA	ARRIVAL PORT	DATE	NUMBER	NOTES
<i>Aorangi</i>	17,500	9/10/1940	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	25/10/1940	70	
<i>Awatea</i>	13,500	5/11/1940	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	20/11/1940	113	
<i>Aorangi</i>		5/12/1940	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	23/12/1940	117	
<i>Empress of Russia</i>	16,980	6/01/1941	Ak		Vancouver	23/01/1941	142	
<i>Aorangi</i>		30/01/1941	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	16/02/1941	116	
<i>Awatea</i>		27/02/1941	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	16/03/1941	114	
<i>Aorangi</i>		27/03/1941	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	17/04/1941	165	
<i>Awatea</i>		29/04/1941	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	14/05/1941	218	
<i>Aorangi</i>		26/05/1941	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	13/06/1941	165	
<i>Awatea</i>		18/06/1941	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	3/07/1941	163	
<i>Dominion Monarch</i>		22/07/1941	Ak	Panama/Curacao	Halifax	16/08/1941	115	
<i>Awatea</i>		14/08/1941	Ak	Suva Fiji	Vancouver	27/08/1941	52	
<i>Capetown Castle</i>	27,000	5/09/1941	Wn	Panama	Halifax	29/11/1941	46	
<i>Monterey</i>	18,000	22/09/1941	Ak	Suva Pago Pago Honolulu	San Francisco	7/10/1941	160	
<i>Mariposa/Achilles</i>		20/10/1941	Ak	Suva Pago Pago Honolulu L.A.	San Francisco	4/11/1941	167	
<i>Monterey</i>		17/11/1941	Ak	Suva Pago Pago Honolulu	San Francisco	1/12/1941	224	
<i>Mariposa</i>		17/12/1941	Ak		San Francisco	30/12/1941	99	
<i>Empress of Canada</i>	21,517	28/12/1941	Wn	New Orleans	Newport R.I.	20/01/1942	96	
<i>Dominion Monarch</i>		8/01/1942	Ak		Halifax	3/02/1942	143	
<i>Boschfontein</i>	7,100	14/01/1942	Wn		Los Angeles	5/02/1942	52	
<i>President Grant</i>	14,119	20/01/1942	Wn	Peru	Los Angeles	18/02/1942	14	+ 31 w/s mechanics
<i>Bloemfontein</i>	10,080	12/02/1942	Wn		San Francisco	4/03/1942	74	incl Tiny White & Family

SHIP	TONS	DATE	DEPART	VIA	ARRIVAL PORT	DATE	NUMBER	NOTES
<i>Athlone Castle</i>	10,080	2/03/1942	Ak	Balboa and transferred to	<i>Warwick Castle</i> see below		99	
<i>Warwick Castle</i>	20,400	8/03/1942	Lyt	Balboa	Halifax	2/04/1942	55	
<i>Tjitjalengka</i>	11,000	17/03/1942	Wn	Panama Balboa	New Orleans	12/04/1942	83	
<i>Tjinegara</i>	9,200	21/03/1942	Wn	Panama	New Orleans	20/04/1942	12	
<i>Orcades</i>	23,456	5/04/1942	Wn	Honolulu Panama	Halifax	30/04/1942	99	
<i>USS West Point</i> (Ex SS America)	27,000	11/04/1942	Wn		San Francisco	24/04/1942	57	
<i>Uruguay</i>	20,600	27/04/1942	Wn		San Francisco	14/05/1942	98	
<i>Boschfontein</i>	7,100	10/05/1942	Ak		Los Angeles	1/06/1942	40*	
<i>Matsonia</i>		29/05/1942	Wn		San Francisco	11/06/1942	110	
<i>Dominion Monarch</i>		22/06/1942	Ak		Halifax	15/07/1942	141	
<i>John Ericsson</i> (Ex SS Kungsholm)	20,200	20/07/1942	Wn	Honolulu Panama	New York	18/08/1942	97	
<i>Bloemfontein</i>		14/08/1942	Wn		San Francisco	31/08/1942	141	
<i>Matsonia</i>		2/10/1942	Wn		San Diego	14/10/1942	176	Sick & Wounded
<i>Day Star</i> (Ex Laura Maersk)	5,000 Tons	31/10/1942	Ak		San Francisco	17/11/1942	165	
<i>Ile De France</i>	43,500	10/11/1942	Ak		San Francisco	24/11/1942	63	German & Japanese POW
<i>Mauretania</i>	35,739	24/12/1942	Wn		San Francisco	7/01/1943	177	488 German POW
<i>Bloemfontein</i>		10/01/1943	Ak		San Francisco	25/01/1943	186	
<i>Matsonia</i>		12/02/1943	Ak	San Diego	San Francisco	26/02/1943	172	
<i>Monticello</i> (ex Conte Grande)	23,861	1/04/1943	Wn	Panama	New York	24/04/1943	117	

SHIP	TONS	DATE	DEPART	VIA	ARRIVAL PORT	DATE	NUMBER	NOTES
<i>Wharton</i>		6/04/1943	Wn/Ak	San Diego	San Francisco	5/05/1943	43	
<i>Matsonia</i>	18,000	5/05/1943	Ak	San Diego	San Francisco	5/19/1943	162	
<i>Lurline</i>	18,000	17/05/1943	Wn	San Diego	San Francisco	31/05/1943	152	Sick & Wounded
<i>Matsonia</i>		20/06/1943	Ak		San Francisco	3/07/1943	123	
<i>Wharton</i> (ex <i>Southern Cross</i> )		18/07/1943	Ak		San Francisco	5/08/1943	123	302 USA Patients
<i>President Polk</i> (ex <i>Sobieski</i> )	11,030	16/08/1943	Ak		San Francisco	31/08/1943	138	
<i>Nieuw Amsterdam</i> (The <i>Custard Ship</i> )	36,287	4/10/1943	Wn		San Francisco	16/10/1943	221	Sick & Wounded
<i>Uruguay</i>	20,600	12/10/1943	Ak		Los Angeles	26/10/1943	167	222 USA Patients
<i>Santa Monica</i>		11/11/1943	Ak		San Francisco	26/11/1943	154	
<i>Sea Barb</i> (C3-A2)	7,942	15/01/1944	Ak		San Francisco	29/01/1944	371	Sick & Wounded
<i>Mariposa</i>		11/02/1944	Wn	San Pedro	Los Angeles	24/02/1944	353	Sick & Wounded
<i>Torrens</i>		21/03/1944	Ak		San Francisco	4/04/1944	151	109 USA Patients
<i>Sea Marlin</i> (C3-A2)		14/04/1944	Ak		San Francisco	25/04/1944	151	
<i>Orizaba</i> (A.P.24)	15,000	17/05/1944	Ak	Bora Bora	San Francisco	6/1/1944	170	395 USA Patients
<i>Tryon/Republic</i> (A.P.33) Ust Aph (Ex Deutschland)	21,000	23/06/1944	Ak	Transferred at Noumea	San Francisco	24/07/1944	143	200 Japanese POWs
<i>Tryon/Gen.R.L.Howze</i> (A.P.134)	9,980	6/07/1944	Ak	Transferred at Noumea	San Francisco	4/08/1944	179	
<b>Total Number of Ship Sailings = 58</b>							<b>Total Number of Aircrew Sailings known = 7,778</b>	

The total number of aircrew shipped excluded Draft Officials, Ottawa Officials, F.A.A., and Ground Crew Trainees. Departure dates are dates the ship officially left harbour – not embarkation dates.

Earlier ship departures had Australian Air Trainees on board, bound for Canada after embarking in Sydney. These are not included in totals, nor are any other passengers, or POWs, war brides and returning Americans heading back to the States.

# Contact

## ACROSS THE PACIFIC in ten minutes

In past issues "Contact" related, in photographic form, the training of the airman pilot in New Zealand. We continue now with the story of the air observers and air gunners training in Canada. The voyage to their destination, depicted in the following photographs, illustrates a "never-to-be-forgotten" event in the life of the trainee.



1. Leaving Levin Station, these observers and gunners have been airmen for only six weeks but are fully equipped both in knowledge and material for the task ahead.



3. After the usual bustle of departure the trainees are safely on board—baggage and all. After such a strenuous day, bed (in a two- or four-berth cabin), is the most appreciated place.



2. That happy final leave is now over and the flight assembles again at the appointed place of embarkation. Inspection over, they march to their ship.



4. With quiet efficiency the crew sails the ship out of the harbour in the early hours of the morning. An extensive menu for breakfast prepares the trainee for his first day at sea. Picture shows markers out for squadron parade on the boat-deck.



5. Realising that lassitude is the source of boredom, a syllabus is drawn for lectures, etc. Picture shows a gun lecture in the lounge. Warmer weather means khaki uniforms.

Page Five

Following pages – courtesy: RNZAF Official from 'Contact' Magazine

# Contact

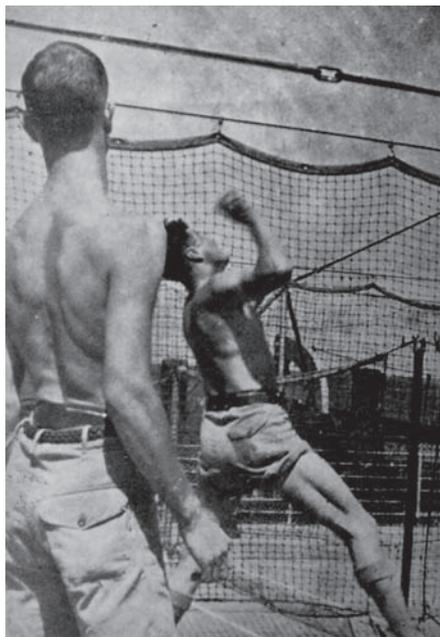


6. The boat-deck also forms a first-class lecture room. Clay pigeon shooting is a good sport and keeps the eye in practice.



8. Boat drill—an all important practice which must be efficiently carried out. Notice an officer in charge and a nurse to administer first aid, if necessary (this is position at each muster station). From cabins to muster stations, with life jackets on, is only a matter of seconds after the first week's practice.

9. Here, a group finds amusement in the odd duties of the ship's crew.



7. As always, sport plays an important part in training. This is an entirely new game to some—deck tennis. A large portion of the afternoons are devoted to this activity.

10. Being some distance from the tropics the warmer blue uniforms are still necessary in the evenings. One trainee is attempting a photograph of an elusive seagull.



## Contact



11. Only a few days out, but this port of call is a welcome sight to the trainees. A few hours shore leave is ample excuse to return laden with souvenirs for the folks at home.



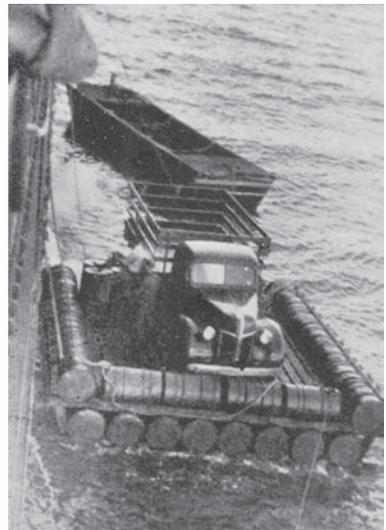
14. The inevitable "Crossing the Line"—a red letter day in the life of the trainee. The operations performed are not quickly forgotten.

15. Their decisions in the mock trial preceding the visit of Neptune, governed the punishments administered.



12. Swimming in winter is enjoyed by these lads as the ship nears the equator. Lectures are limited somewhat when the heat of the tropics is encountered.

13. This picture shows just another of the unusual tasks of the Merchant Service; unloading a modern truck on to a raft for a small island close by.



# Contact



16. This shot illustrates the many coral islands the ship passes on the voyage.

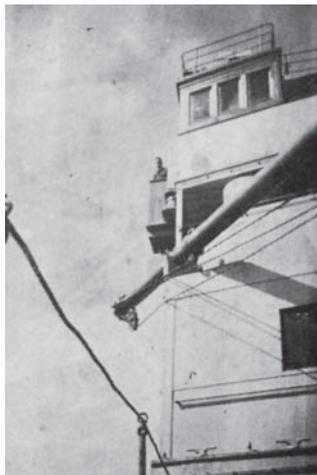


18. Land ho! One of the most beautiful sights the trainee has seen. The enchanting atmosphere of the famous Pacific island is reality now, not just imagination.

19. The enthusiastic population photographed the ship's arrival and gave these prints to the boys.



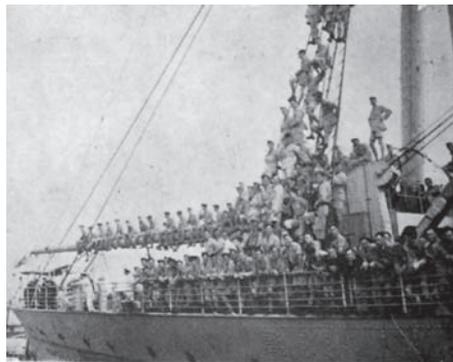
Page Eight

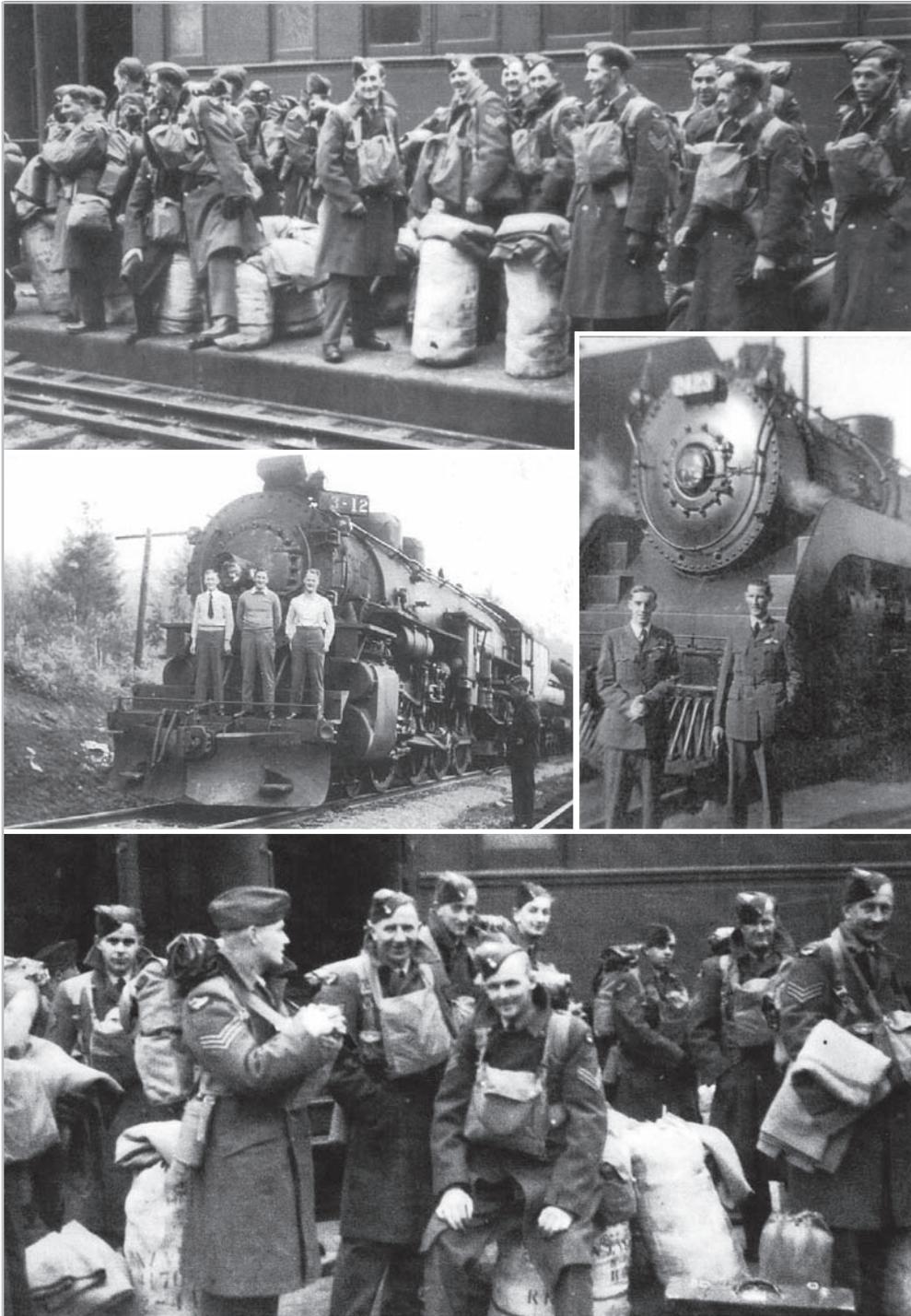


17. During the whole trip a very strict watch is kept. From eight vantage points on the ship, the trainees perform a 24-hour duty, two hours each man. Even the showing of a cigarette on deck after dark is a serious offence.



20. "Sorry, no shore leave!" Yes, it's a neutral island, but the inhabitants make up for no shore leave by "bringing the mountain to Mohammed!" Picture shows the trainees getting an "eyeful" of terra firma.





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*Centre left photo:* Standing on the front of the engine in the centre is J. L. (Les) Munro.

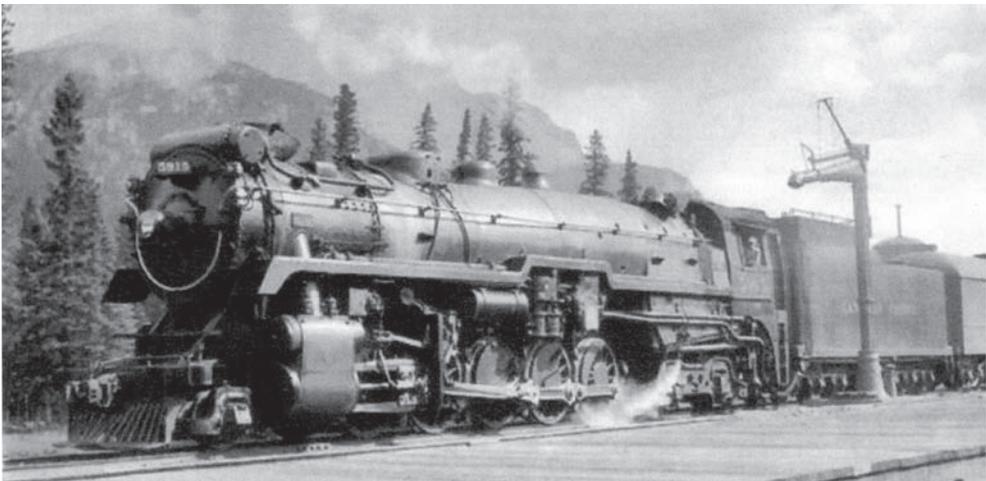
Courtesy: J. L. Munro and R. W. Allan



'Aussie' and 'Kiwi' aircrew  
chalk artists at work –  
Message for Hitler



Below: CPR Selkirk loco  
5915 at siding.



Courtesy: J. L. Munro

## Air Training in Canada

On completion of all examinations, a trainee graduated to LAC rank, and was posted to SFTS for advanced training on service aircraft either in New Zealand or he was posted to Canada for SFTS training.

The pilot or captain (as some were called in the bigger bombers) was responsible for the aircraft and its crew whilst flying, and all the crew were responsible to the captain for all operational duties. The pilot flew the aircraft and trained in combat warfare, evasion techniques, survival drills and night flying – all of greatest importance.

Multi-engined aircraft had as part of the crew, a navigator, gunners and wireless operators, but the duties of these changed as the war progressed. A flight engineer replaced the second pilot on the large bombers, and could fly the plane home if the pilot was incapacitated.

The introduction of radar and *Oboe and Gee* during the second part of the war saw a further change in duties as this new equipment came on stream. A navigator who had surveillance radar and *Oboe and Gee* to navigate with was able to bomb targets with better precision. The wireless operator had the added job of Bomb-Aimer over the target.

Trainee pilots built up their flying hours in Canada thanks to the flat prairies, in Harvards (singles), Ansons and Bolingbrokes (multies), flying diamond or straight line courses. Although winter flying was difficult with white-outs for up to three days, and there being shorter days, pilots could still catch up later.

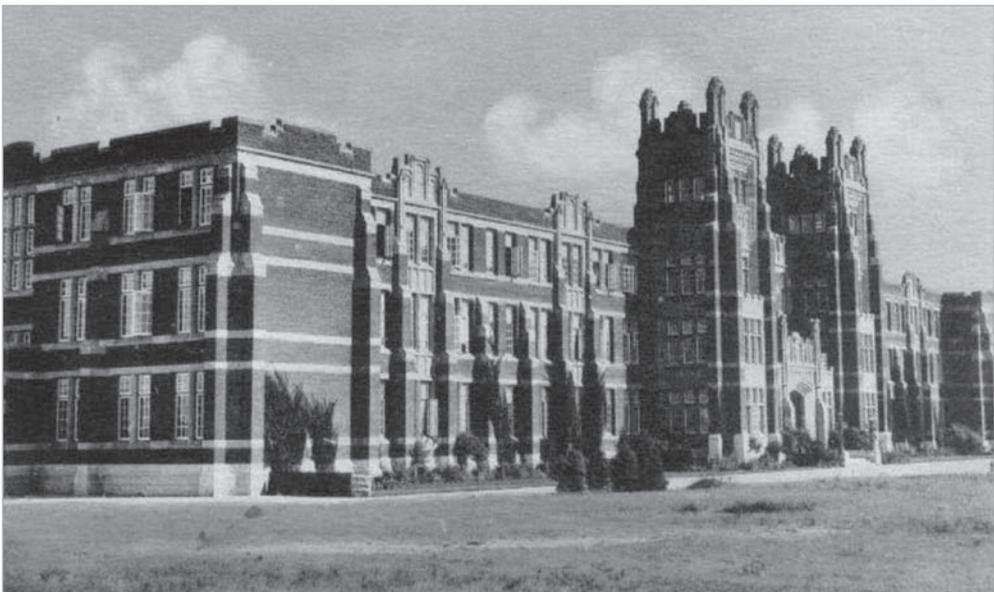
The position of observer was renamed as navigator at AOS (Air Observer Schools), W/S (Wireless Schools) and A/G (Air Gunners' Schools). As the war progressed, changes in the names of trades reflected the change or amalgamation of duties. The school names however remained the same.

Wireless Operators and Air Gunners changed to WAGs. Changes occurred within aircraft crews as technical changes altered the duties of the three trades mentioned above.

The most affected by these changes, were those crews who flew in bombers as these aircraft came in a variety of sizes requiring from 2 crew for a Mosquito (1 pilot, and 1 navigator/wireless operator) and up to 8 crew for the Lancaster depending on the gunner numbers and specialist air bombers.

*Observers (later known as Navigators/Bomb Aimers)*, were given specialist training in map reading, navigation day and night, astro navigation, air photography, bomb-aiming, communications, radar, and *Gee and Oboe* navigation/bombing systems. They also received basic flying instruction in case of the pilot being unable to carry on home. The observer/navigator was a key man and his efficiency was essential to any bomber crew.

*Wireless operators* were responsible for direct communications between aircraft and base, as well as with other aircraft in the area and their own bases. Later duties could include assisting in bomb aiming, assisting with casualties on board and assisting the gunners, and if necessary with navigation to get home should the observer/navigator be out of action.



Wireless School, Calgary

*Air gunners* were crucial for the safety of the aircraft in the sky, covering the whole sky, keeping a lookout for enemy activity, and communicating with the skipper about any danger of enemy attack.

Long hours were spent in training aircraft, learning and practicing shooting skills at air and ground targets. The skills taught were designed for accuracy at any angle and for gun equipment efficiency. Bombing targets was a specialist job.

FROM “WINGS FOR VICTORY”

### Canadian Training Stations where New Zealanders trained

#### Service Flying Training Schools (SFTS)

No 1 SFTS	Camp Borden, Ontario
No 2 SFTS	Uplands Ottawa, Ontario
No 3 SFTS	Calgary, Alberta
No 4 SFTS	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
No 5 SFTS	Brantford, Ontario
No 6 SFTS	Dunnville, Ontario
No 7 SFTS	Fort Macleod, Alberta
No 8 SFTS	Moncton, New Brunswick
No 9 SFTS	Summerside, P.E. Island
No 10 SFTS	Dauphin, Manitoba
No 11 SFTS	Yorkton, Saskatchewan
No 12 SFTS	Brandon, Manitoba
No 13 SFTS	St. Hubert, Quebec
No 14 SFTS	Aylmer, Ontario
No 15 SFTS	Claresholm, Alberta
No 19 SFTS	Vulcan, Alberta
No 32 SFTS	Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan
No 34 SFTS	Medicine Hat, Alberta
No 35 SFTS	North Battleford, Saskatchewan
No 36 SFTS	Penhold, Alberta
No 37 SFTS	Calgary, Alberta
No 39 SFTS	Swift Current, Saskatchewan
No 39 SFTS	Weyburn, Saskatchewan

#### Aircraft Types Used

Harvard, Yale
Harvard, Yale
Anson, Crane
Anson, Crane
Anson
Harvard, Yale, Anson
Anson
Anson, Harvard
Anson, Harvard
Crane, Harvard
Anson, Harvard, Crane
Anson, Crane
Anson, Harvard
Anson, Harvard, Yale
Anson, Crane
Anson
Oxford
Oxford, Harvard
Oxford
Oxford
Oxford, Anson, Harvard
Oxford
Anson, Harvard

FROM "WINGS FOR VICTORY"

**Air Navigation Schools (ANS)**

No 1 ANS	Trenton, Ontario moved to Rivers, Manitoba 1945	Anson
No 2 ANS	Pennfield Ridge, P.E.I. moved to Charlottetown, P.E.I 1945	Anson
No 32 ANS	Charlottetown, P.E. Island	Anson
No 33 ANS	Mount Hope, Ontario	Anson

**Aircraft Types Used**

**General Reconnaissance School (GRS)**

No 1 GRS	Summerside, P.E.Island	Anson
No 31 GRS	Charlottetown, P.E.Island	Anson

**Air Observer Schools (AOS)**

No 1 AOS	Malton, Ontario	Anson
No 2 AOS	Edmonton Alberta	Anson
No 3 AOS	Regina/Pearce, Alberta	Anson
No 4 AOS	London, Ontario	Anson
No 5 AOS	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Anson
No 6 AOS	Prince Albert, Saskatchewan	Anson
No 7 AOS	Portage La Prairie, Manitoba	Anson
No 8 AOS	Annciene Lorrette, Quebec	Anson
No 9 AOS	St Jean, Quebec	Anson
No 10 AOS	Chatham, New Brunswick	Anson

**Bombing and Gunnery Schools (AG)**

No 1 B&G	Jarvis, Ontario	Anson, Battle, Bolingbroke, Lysander
No 2 B&G	Mossbank, Saskatchewan	as above
No 3 B&G	Macdonald, Manitoba	as above plus Nomad
No 4 B&G	Fingal, Ontario	Anson, Battle, Bolingbroke Nomad
No 5 B&G	Dafoe, Saskatchewan	Anson, Battle, Bolingbroke
No 6 B&G	Mountain View, Ontario	Anson, Battle, Bolingbroke Lysander, Nomad
No 7 B&G	Paulson, Manitoba	Anson, Battle, Bolingbroke
No 8 B&G	Leathbridge, Alberta	Anson, Battle, Bolingbroke
No 9 B&G	Mt Joli, Quebec	Anson, Battle, Bolingbroke Lysander, Nomad
No 31 B&G	Picton, Ontario	Anson, Lysander, Bolingbroke

## FROM “WINGS FOR VICTORY”

**Wireless Schools (W)**

No 1 W/S	Montreal, Quebec
No 2 W/S	Calgary, Alberta
No 3 W/S	Winnipeg, Manitoba
No 4 W/S	Guelph, Ontario

**Aircraft Types Used**

Tiger Moth, Norseman,  
Stinson 105  
Fleet Fort, Harvard  
Finch, Fleet Fort, Tiger Moth,  
Norseman, Yale  
Tiger Moth, Norseman

**Operational Training Units (O.T.U.)**

No 3 OTU	Patrica Bay, British Columbia
No 5 OTU	Boundary Bay, B.C.
No 7 OTU	Debert, Nova Scotia
No 32 OTU	Patricia Bay, B.C.

Stranraer, Canso, Lysander  
Liberator, Mitchell, Kittyhawk,  
Bolingbroke  
Hudson, Bolingbroke  
Anson, Beaufort, Hampden,  
Oxford, Lysander, Dakota,  
Expeditor

No 34 OTU Pennfield Ridge, N.B.

Mosquito, Bolingbroke, Anson,  
Hudson, Ventura

No 36 OTU Greenwood, N.S.

Mosquito, Bolingbroke, Oxford  
Harvard, Hudson

**The Flying Instructors Schools ( FIS)**

No 1 FIS	Trenton, Ontario
No 2 FIS	Vulcan, Alberta

Fawn, Tiger Moth, Harvard,  
Crane, Cornell  
Fawn, Tiger Moth, Harvard,  
Crane Cornell, Finch, Stearman

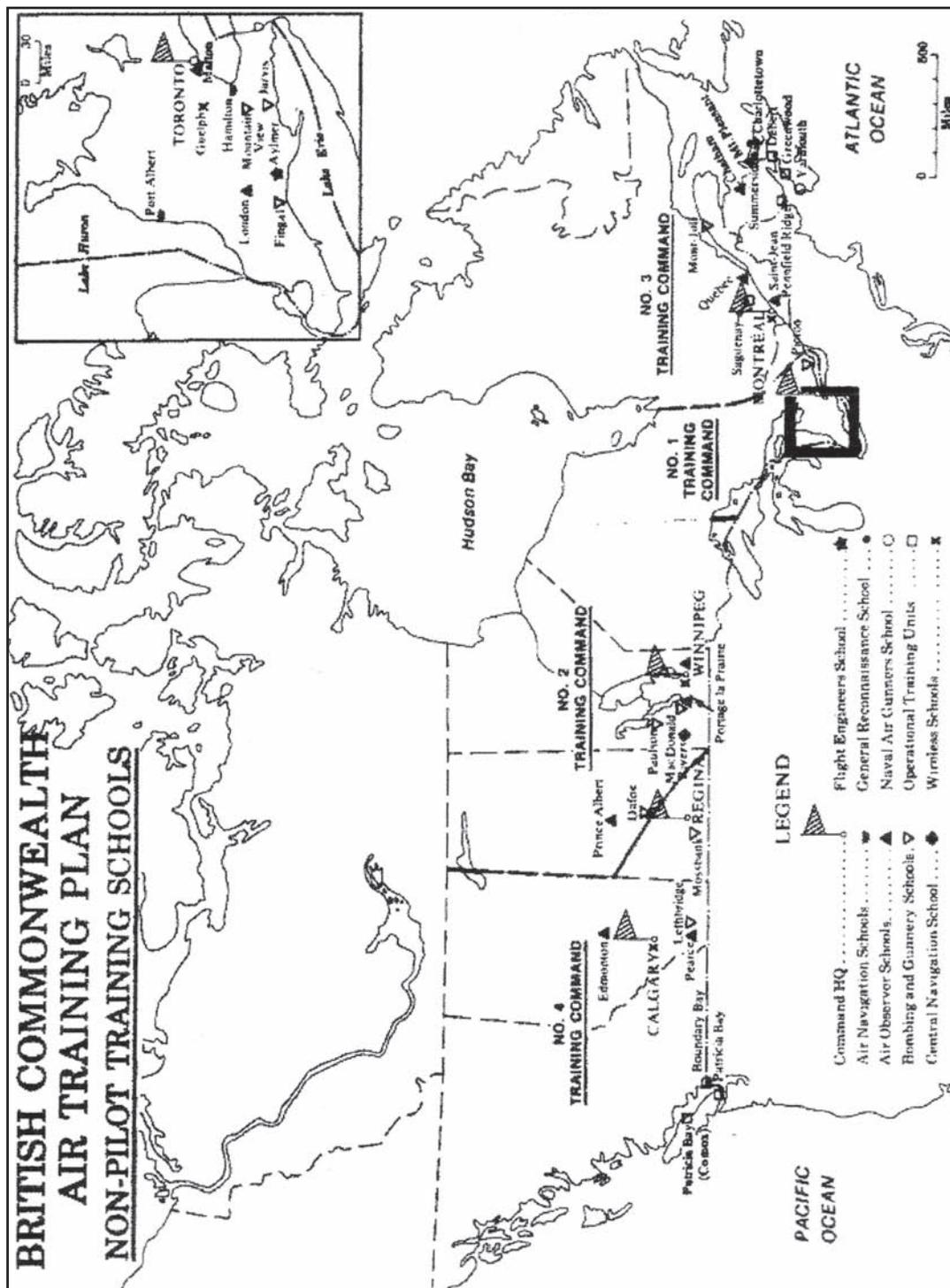
**The Central Flying School (CFS )**

Central Flying  
School Trenton, Ontario

Anson, Battle, Bolingbroke,  
Fawn, Cornell, Crane, Finch,  
Harvard, Hudson, Hurricane,  
Oxford, Ventura, Lockheed 10

From: *Wings for Victory* by Spencer Dunmore

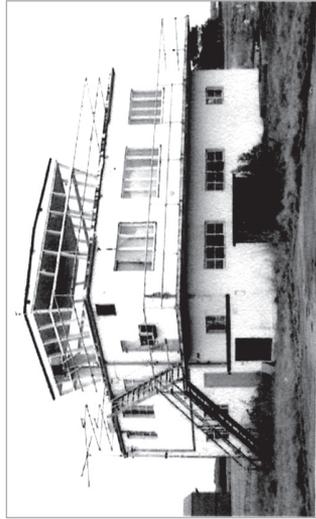
On the following pages we have included a map showing the locations of all the stations where New Zealand aircrew were trained. Some took large numbers of New Zealanders, and others took only a handful at any one time. The map will make it easier for readers to relate to the huge distances involved in travel throughout Canada.



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**BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AIR TRAINING PLAN CANADA**  
**LOCATION OF STATIONS NEW ZEALANDERS ATTENDED BY PROVINCES IN SECOND WORLD WAR**

ALBERTA	SASKATCHEWAN	MANITOBA	ONTARIO	QUEBEC	NB/NS
3 SFTS CALGARY 37 SFTS CALGARY 19 SFTS VULCAN 7 SFTS FT MGLEOD 15 SFTS CLAREHOLM  2 W/S CALGARY	4 SFTS SASKATOON 11 SFTS YORKTOWN 35 SFTS NORTH BATTLEFORD 32 SFTS MOOSEJAW 39 SFTS SWIFT CURRENT	<b>SERVICE FLYING TRAINING SCHOOLS</b> 10 SFTS DAUPHIN 2 SFTS BRANDON 5 SFTS BRANTFORD 6 SFTS DUNNVILLE 14 SFTS AYLMER  <b>WIRELESS SCHOOLS</b> 3 W/S WINNIPEG	<b>SERVICE FLYING TRAINING SCHOOLS</b> 1 SFTS BORDEN 2 SFTS UPLANDS  4 W/S GUELPH	13 SFTS ST HUBERT  1 W/S MONTREAL  9 B&G MT JOLI  8 AOS MALTON 9 AOS ST JEAN	8 SFTS MONCTON  <b>SPECIALIST SCHOOLS</b> PE.1 9 GRS SUMMERSIDE 31 GRS CHARLOTTETOWN 34 OTU PENNFIELD RIDGE
2 B&G MOSSBANK 5 B&G DAFOE  2 AOS EDMONTON	3 B&G MACDONALD 7 B&G PAULSON  3 AOS PEARCE/REGINA 6 AOS PRINCE ALBERT	<b>BOMBING &amp; GUNNERY SCHOOLS</b> 1 B&G JARVIS 6 B&G MOUNTAIN VIEW  <b>AIR OBSERVER SCHOOLS</b> 5 AOS WINNIPEG 4 AOS LONDON 7 AOS PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE	31 B&G PICTON  1 AOS MALTON 9 AOS ST JEAN	8 AOS ANCIENNE LORETTE	



**NOTE**  
 34 OTU Pennfield Ridge was used to give further practice to trained navigators before they were sent to the United Kingdom.

The map also shows the four training commands, into which the country was divided for administrative purposes. Their HQs were at Regina (Saskatchewan), Winnipeg (Manitoba), Toronto (Ontario), and Montreal (Quebec).

The Training Commands were split between nine Provinces of Canada. Training Command No. 1 was administered from Toronto; Training Command No. 2 was conducted from Winnipeg; Training Command No. 3 was conducted from Montreal, and Training Command No. 4 from Regina.



No. 36 SFTS, Penhold, Alberta

All stations had location signs at the main entrance alongside the guardhouse as shown here. This one depicts an RAF school at No. 36 SFTS, Penhold, Alberta. The Canadian schools had a Royal Canadian Air Force banner at the top of the sign. All nationalities used both types of school i.e. RAF, and Canadian ones. The sign indicated who ran the particular school. The largest number of schools were located in Alberta,

Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Quebec and the Atlantic provinces had the major Specialist Schools, OTU and GRS schools as added protection for the eastern sea-board as part of their training was over the sea. On the Pacific coast, operating out of Patricia Bay and Boundary Bay were also 2 OTU Training Bases giving some added protection along that coastline. Research has shown that graduates of these schools were assigned to Eastern offshore active Air Force units down as far as the Caribbean Islands, where they were keeping U-boats at bay and hunting down Germany bound freighters carrying supplies from South America. The freighters could then be intercepted by the USN, RCN and RN patrol ships. New Zealand aircrew losses in the North American/Caribbean area during the war totalled 94.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Errol Martyn's *For Your Tomorrow*, Volume 3, page 573.



No. 2 Wireless School, Calgary Alberta, October 21, 1941.



No. 6 SFTS Dunville Ontario Course No. 46, 1941

IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE



No. 8 Bombing and Gunnery School, Lethbridge, Course No. 110C.



No. 36 SFTS Penhold, Course 101 D Flight, September 4, 1944.

NZ421251 I. G. Sutherland left Auckland, New Zealand on February 12, 1943 on the *Matsonia*. The ship sailed via San Diego, and disembarked at San Francisco. Ian Sutherland then travelled by train to Vancouver, BC, and from there to No. 2 SFTS Uplands at Ottawa, Ontario, where he trained as a pilot on course No. 77, graduating on July 14, 1943.

## NOTE

The *Matsonia* left Auckland with 176 New Zealand aircrew who were heading for Canada to have advanced training on the latest aircraft entering service. Most were pilots, and the balance of the aircrew were navigators and airgunners, who were to be training in specialist schools. Also on board this ship was an unknown number of casualties from the US heavy cruiser USS *Chicago*, which was sunk in the Battle of Rennell Islands (in the Solomon Islands) where the ship took heavy casualties, due to Japanese heavy bombing attacks over two days, with a big hit on the last day by an additional four torpedos which sank her. It is not known whether the casualties were loaded in Auckland but they were apparently heading for San Diego where there was a huge Naval hospital.

Ian Sutherland commences this story after his subsequent posting to the UK.

### A Piece Of Cake

It was 1400 hrs (2 pm) on 28th December 1944 at RAF Station Spilsby, that No. 44 Squadron (Rhodesia) of No. 5 Group Bomber Command, was briefed to send a small force of Lancasters to attack the German light cruiser *Köln*, where it was reported to be lying in Oslo Fjord, Norway, locality Horten. The attack was carried out as planned. The red target indicators were bright in the clear northern air. There was a lot of flack, and a considerable amount of multi-coloured tracer was zipping past, far too close for comfort. Never the less, all our aircraft returned to base, although half of them were showing flak damage. This sortie, our crew's 25th sortie, was easy, in fact it was a real piece of cake.

Let's now move on in time, in fact 56 years to the day, that I received a letter from one Fritz Lamprecht (ex German Navy) now a civilian. Fritz served as a junior officer on the *Köln* in Hitler's navy when we attempted to drop 5 tons on him (11 × 1000 pounders and 1 of 500 pounds), hoping to blow his ship to oblivion. The enemy had good radar, and crew were well aware of our approach

as we crossed the North Sea. The *Köln*, being nimble, slipped her anchor and hid just a few miles away, behind the visual lee of some rocky cliffs, thus remaining unsighted by us and unscathed by our bombs.

Fritz Lamprecht, in his letter to me, sought material and news from our side that he could present at a forthcoming ship's reunion. I had a look at my old log book and there it was, seven hours and 10 minutes of night flying to Horten, a locality in Oslo Fjord, Norway. There was nothing more except that it was our crew's 25th operation. I had flogged all my bombing photos before I left the squadron, so I only had a vertical photo for him. These rarely showed 'plotable' detail but always showed plenty of 'target conditions'. I think these photos were only to keep us honest! No early dropping of bombs in the North Sea!

There was nothing more in my log, just the bare entry. We had not been told that Horten was a new U-boat maintenance depot, replacing a lost French one. News of such a new establishment was valuable. A Norwegian agent had done a good job, working through the British Embassy in Sweden. The less we aircrew knew about it, the less likely we would give the show away, should we be shot down and interrogated.

I do not recall any results of the attack being mentioned by our intelligence. All that was said was that the 'op' was a success, even if the *Köln* had not been located. RAF forces other than ours had laid sea mines near Horten, and others again had dropped supplies to the Norwegian underground in the forest nearby. All this on the same night, so overall, it could have been described as a success. Thus it remained for 56 years, just on 'op' that had been a piece of cake.

The only thing, other than my log book entry, which I had to send to Fritz Lamprecht, was a copy of my vertical camera photo taken 21 seconds after bomb release. Theoretically, the 21 second delay puts the camera over the aiming point. Different heights required different delays. Holding the aircraft steady after the bombs were gone, for the length of the delay was always a pain, and not always accomplished. You certainly would not remain a 'sitting duck' for a fighter coming at you just to get a good photo! Nor could you do much about airspeed wobbles caused by other Lancasters. Nevertheless our Horten photo was not too bad.

It had always been a mystery to me why this photo showed one massive circular shock-wave on the water. Our twelve bombs were dropped in a 'stick' (evenly spaced in a row) not as a salvo. However, Fritz Lamprecht provided the answer

when he wrote me a thank you letter after his reunion. In his letter he describes the result of our raid, with the details coming from the log book of a U-boat, U682, smacked up in the raid, and put out of the war. This log book had been written up with typical German efficiency, recording blow by blow, bomb by bomb, minute-by-minute, the whole operation.

Fritz Lamprecht observed the large circular shock-wave on my photo and he also saw the timing on my photo at 2354 hrs, and I quote him: “*Obvious the explosion of a tanker is to see. Just at this time it was hit and sink.*” The German log timing of the tanker explosion was 2355 hours, one minute after the timing on my photo. Thus the mystery of 56 years was well and truly solved! The vast shock-waves were the result of the explosion and demise of an 8000 ton fuel tanker. Only one of the crew survived. Submarine U682, the source of the log, was heavily damaged, so much so that it never went to sea again, and its log tells of the *Nordvard*, a Norwegian ship requisitioned by the Germans and converted to a workshop. It also suffered a direct hit and sank in 2 minutes with no survivors.

Thus according to Fritz Lamprecht, the damage inflicted by our small force of Lancasters was:

1. Sunk – An 8000 ton fuel tanker
2. Sunk – Submarine U 735
3. Sunk – Workshop ship *Nordvard* of 4110 tons
4. Heavily damaged – Submarine U682 (never again seaworthy) from which the log book was recovered

Quite a good result for a small force, but we had to wait 56 long years for all this to come to light.

That single raid cost the Germans hundreds of lives, and that is the sad thing to look back on. Then you realise that it was war, and that it had to be done. The submariners were going out into the North Atlantic to sink Allied merchant ships whose crews died in the flames and froze in the freezing waters. It is a case of kill or be killed. Such is the inevitable result of war. None of the other trips were as easy as this one to Norway. Trips to Munich and Politz, as examples, were definitely not pieces of cake and are quoted just to be sure that it is not thought that we had it easy.

### **Munich**

Leonard Cheshire VC, DSO (three times), DFC, regarded this operation as being the most memorable of all his 100 operations. It also stands out prominently

among the 36 operations that I did. Briefing on this day was done early and we could see that we were in for a long trip. It was evening and we flew low out over Lands End and on south over France. It was fascinating to be able to see the countryside and the French people who stopped and looked up to us, giving us a friendly wave. We were heading for Mt Blanc, at 15,771 feet, the highest point in Europe. Then on south from France to Italy over the St Bernard Pass. We were careful not to violate Swiss air space. Mt Blanc was a fantastic sight, glistening white with snow and ice just off and below our port wing tip. (I imagine I would have had a long last look before it disappeared, never expecting to see it again. Fifty years later on my way to London in an RNZAF 727 for the Victory in Europe celebrations I did see it again. This time it was under the starboard wing!) We were now heading north.

After leaving Mt Blanc, we lost height down onto northern Italy, and somewhere near Milan we turned eastwards, flying just south of the Swiss/Italian border and low enough to use the Swiss Alps as a radar shield. In fact we flew right around Switzerland on this night using this technique to fox the enemy radar. This leg of our trip was just so, so beautiful. The snow, the lakes and the masses of Swiss city lights around them made it an absolutely fairyland. We had all been under blackout for years. What a sight. Then we climbed again and went out over the Brenner Pass into Austria and back into blackout conditions again. We were now about 100 miles south of Munich, our target for the night.

Our plan of attack was as usual organised by our leader Leonard Cheshire VC. Our pathfinder boys would be ahead of us and would release illuminating flares from 16,000 ft so that he could find his selected aiming point by them. Exactly 11 minutes before H hour (attack time), we could hear their instructions over the VHF radio and would hope that all went well, dreading to hear a call from our leader for more flares, which would light us for the enemy fighters as we went into bomb. At this stage we would be about 25 miles from the target. Cheshire would be down there looking for the feature he had chosen for marking. The big red target indicator (TI) aiming point was quickly placed and we were then called in to bomb as planned. We loved to hear this! Let's get on with it before the fighters arrive!

The attack went well. Cheshire was in there under the falling bombs, directing us. Two hundred and seventy Lancasters would go over the target in the usual nine minutes, only two seconds apart. Each navigator was striving to be on time

to the second and to be exactly on his compass heading, and each to be exactly on his planned height. If all aircraft were on time, there would be something like 380 bombs per minute going down making a continuous stream of bombs. Cheshire would be somewhere down there. We could hear him over the radio-telephone. He could see if the bombs were going in error or where the bombs were needed. He would make adjustments by calling the bomb aimers to overshoot, undershoot, or go left or right of the TI, thus obtaining a good spread over the target area.

On this occasion our camera produced a 'plotable' photo, with a bomb error of 1400 yards. This error would have been the result of verbal aiming instructions by VHF from Cheshire to all crews, or simply a bit of a wobble in my flying when the camera operated. Large explosions were to be seen on the ground and many fires were burning. We had dropped our bombs and it was time to head for home, four and a half long weary hours away. German fighters were active. There could be no relaxation for a moment. Our gunner had to spot the enemy and give me early warning. He had to react like a flash initiating the correct evasive action.

At long last it was the good old White Cliffs of Dover, some white flashing navigation beacons, and then into the Spilsby circuit. "Buster Fox for landing" (that's me!) called control. The squeal of the tyres and then the rumble of the wheels on the runway. What glorious sounds. We were down. "What next? Will we make it to complete our tour? We have done 20 trips. We are a lucky crew, but we still have a long way to go." "Press on!" was the motto. Our station had provided 34 Lancasters from two squadrons for this raid. They all returned but many had battle damage. Our own four motors had run sweetly for 10 hours, gobbling 2000 gallons of fuel in the process, thus the total fuel used by all aircraft would amount to about 540,000 gallons for this one operation.

At debriefing twin-engined fighters were reported over the target. Some would have been Mosquitoes, eight being used for target marking, and Cheshire was using one himself. It was a risk to fly a Mossie amongst us. Trigger-happy gunners would blast them for looking too much like an enemy Me 110 in the dark!

To all crews, Cheshire was an inspirational hero. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, the Distinguished Service Order three times, and the Distinguished Flying Cross, plus other lesser awards. He deserved every one. What a great man. Cheshire would patter (talk) continuously. If the patter stopped it would be assumed that he had 'Got the chop' and his deputy would come in and run the show. A crude but effective arrangement.

### **Politz – An Oil Refinery North of Berlin**

Typically when ‘ops’ were on, word spread like wild-fire, from push bike to push bike, and down the perimeter tracks. On this occasion the word was, “It’s full tanks” which meant 2154 gallons of fuel for each of the Lancasters. It also meant 9 to 11 hours of flying for the aircrews. This brought out more than a few groans from the peddling crews as they rode out to their aircraft. The single Lancaster pilot had a long and responsible job ahead, so too for all other members of the crew. In the air the navigator worked like a ‘one armed paper hanger’. He had to find a revised wind every ten minutes! Such was the standard of navigation in 5 Group. All charts were carefully checked after every operation. A good navigator was the crew’s lifeline.

Not until we were in the briefing room did we know the name and location of the night’s target. Tonight it was Politz, an oil refinery north of Berlin, toward the Baltic. According to my log book it was a trip of 9 hours 10 minutes. Hitler’s oil refineries all over Europe were copping it. Brux, Homberg, Mersberg, and shortly Rositz, were all in ruins. Consequently the defences at Politz had been considerably increased. Intelligence had it that there were upwards of 100 searchlights in the area, big numbers of fighters, and at least half of Berlin’s flak had been rushed in. All this was daunting to say the least!

There was more. The predicted wind was all to pot, and very bad icing would slow us down, unless we found an ice-free height at which to fly. It was impossible to get to the target on time if we adhered to the planned legs of the route. So we cut corners at every turning point. Cutting corners was not good, it widened the stream and the radar protection of ‘window’ put out by the aircraft ahead was largely lost. In this situation we had to thank our lucky stars for having the best navigator on the squadron! He got us to the target on time, and safely home many times. Forty miles from the target we encountered fighters, Me 109s and Me 110s. Aircraft were going down ahead and abeam of us. We ourselves had two encounters with fighters but they broke off to seek an easier victim. It was now our gunner’s turn to be our lifeline.

As we progressed towards the TIs( Target Indicators) the reason for the mass searchlights was only too obvious. They deliberately massed to provide light for the fighters. We stood out like moths against the lit up clouds above us.

The target area was free of low cloud, enabling the leader to go in and place the big green marker on a carefully selected aiming point. We all knew exactly where

he was because he came over our VHF radio-telephone with continuous talk. If his voice stopped we would know he had 'got the chop' and the deputy leader would come in and take over. It was a crude but effective safeguard.

The high illuminating flares released by our pathfinders had all burnt out. We were glad of this. It meant less light on us for the deadly run over the target. We bombed as planned. There was a heavy smell of cordite, a sure sign of lots of flak coming up at us. Our bomb-aimer took over, calling for bomb doors to be opened and guided us with a few 'lefts' and 'rights', then he announced "bombs gone". We distinctly felt the 4000-pound 'cookie' leave us, followed by 12 cans of incendiaries. Old KM-FOX, like all aboard her, was ready for home. But we still had to hold steady that cursed 25 seconds for the photo. That done we were off like 'robbers' dogs'.

Our navigator gave me the DI heading for the first leg of our long journey home. Almost immediately he was logging reports from the crew of 'Balls of Fire' (rockets or jet tail pipes?) and 'Scare Crows' (which were exploding aircraft I'm sure) and burning aircraft going down. Obviously we were not out of the woods yet. Vigilance by all the crew was essential. Four long hours later the bomb-aimer reported the White Cliffs of Dover passing below. That was welcome news for all the crew! You could almost feel the surge of relief within the crew.

Our ground speed was low. We were carrying battle damage from both flak and fighters. At base we found fog. Landings were slow. Most pilots were overshooting once or twice before they got in. Ken Mangos, my friend from Christchurch, had problems. He landed but lost it, and collided with a parked Halifax. Their luck held, they all walked away. At long last we got the radio nod to land. The fog thinned just a little for us and the runway lights were faintly visible. On the final approach, our engineer called the airspeed. 110 mph if my memory serves me. This enabled me to better concentrate on the lights of the glide path indicator and the runway. Once over the runway the throttles were closed and I am sure that the 'crackle' of the good old Merlin motors was an expression of sheer joy on their part. They too, like us were weary.

The tyres squealed and then rumbled on the runway. We were home! Our 32nd sortie had been completed despite icing, high winds, flak, fighters and fog. We were a lucky crew.

*This op was definitely NOT a piece of cake.*

FROM BOMBER COMMAND DIARIES 1945

**Sequel to the raid on Politz**

*Politz:* 218 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitoes of No. 5 Group attacked this plant, near Stettin. 2 Lancasters lost. This raid had been planned as a blind-bombing attack but, because the weather conditions were better than forecast, low level marking was carried out and very accurate bombing followed. Bomber Command, on the basis of photographic reconnaissance, states that the oil plant was ‘reduced to a shambles’.

**A pilot and his plane**

- So many things, even after 62 years, are so vivid to me. Cockpit drill for one – T.M.P.F.F.G.H. before take off, Trim, Mixture, Pitch, Fuel, Flaps, Engine Air Ventilation, Hydraulic Pressure. Never ever to be forgotten!
- And then before landing, UMPH (Oomph) Undercarriage down. Mixture set rich, Pitch full fine, Hydraulic pressure OK.

I had my own system. All the crew had to know all these drills and I repeated them aloud that they might check me.

No unnecessary talk was allowed over the ‘intercom’.

Each crewman had to introduce himself and add to whom he was calling. That is how the RAF wanted it and the RAF was always correct! Our training was superb. Training for oxygen failure saved all our lives on one occasion. I was sitting on my flexible oxygen hose and was nearly a gonner, when my training told me what was wrong. On another occasion lax drill was very nearly fatal. It was pitch black and we were flying with an Instructor. At the end of the exercise he simply said “Let’s get home”, intending me to take over the controls which I did not. No one was in control! Fortunately we had plenty of height and the two of us pulled the aircraft out just in time.

The instructor did not follow the rules. He should have said “First pilot to second pilot, you take control” – I would reply – “Second pilot to first pilot, I have control” – all done to the letter. No problem. Instead we were heading down in an uncontrolled spiral dive. It was the shudder of speed that woke us both up. It took both of us to pull her out – a near run thing! It was an example of the need to follow the rules.

**Four Packard Merlins 6500 HP**

**On take off:** What a sensation it was to give the Lancaster 'full tit'. A bit more on one side to counter 'the swing'. Waggle the rudder pedal to feel the slip-stream for speed building up. With an all up weight of over 30 tons it would be awfully hard to stop a swing once it got started. I alone handled the throttles. Only the throttle clamp was tightened by my flight engineer when I called him to do so.

**Landing was a lot different:** A pilot had to make good landings, crew morale demanded it. Make poor landings, and what sort of a pilot have we got?

With the landing drill done, downwind wheels down etc, one turned into 'the funnel' at about 110 mph. The engineer called the airspeed which fell off rapidly to a steady 90 mph, from here on height was controlled by engine power, at least this is how I did it, and I wheeled her in, controlling the throttles myself – my word yes!

It is a surprise to most people that there was only one pilot to fly a Lancaster, and that meant 10 hours of flying on long trips.

– I. G. Sutherland

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NZ426180 I.A. Ritchie left for Canada on the *Matsonia* February 12, 1943. Disembarked at San Francisco. Trained at No.10 SFTS Dauphin. Graduated sergeant pilot July 9, 1943. Served with RAF No.23 Squadron on Intruder Mosquitoes in Europe.

**Story commences mid-EFTS Taieri January 1943**

I was to be checked mid-course, by the chief flying instructor (CFI) and was very nervous about it. I had been told so many times by now how useless I was and had no confidence any more. The CFI never said a word other than to tell me what exercises he required me to carry out. What a change not to have that sarcastic man continually yelling at me from the front seat of the Tiger Moth. Imagine my surprise when my instructor congratulated me on carrying out one of the best mid-course checks and added, "Now you will understand why I had to shout at you so much." I didn't, and I know I was on the verge of tossing it in, as I was so sure I would never make a pilot. I will never forget my first solo, no