

Anniversaries



VOL. II Nos. 5 and 6

25TH FEBRUARY, 1942

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## Wing-Commander Kerby, 400 Squadron



"To-day 400 Squadron embarks on its third year overseas service. Although, until recently, our activities have been confined to training, we have witnessed and assisted in the development of the technical and tactical aspects of our work, until now we can say with confidence that we can do any job they ask of us and do it well. We can be justly proud of our contributions to this development in engineering, wireless, photography, etc. This has only been possible by the hard work and willing co-operation of every man in doing his job allotted to him. Now we are putting our training and knowledge to the practical test. We will be putting it to even more severe tests in the future. Whether we come through those tests depends on the continuance of our cheerful spirits under all conditions and the driving desire to win.

To those men who have joined us during the past year, I say 'Welcome to 400 Squadron. You have joined a grand bunch of fellows and here you will make life-long friendships.'

To the staff and contributors to 'Wings Abroad' I say, 'Congratulations on your paper. I thank you on behalf of all your subscribers for your hard work and steady effort. We are proud of our paper and may it continue and prosper along the lines it represents.'"

## A word from a Former Adjutant, Flt./Lt. H. Mathews, R.C.A.F. H.Q.

"Just a word through 'Wings Abroad' to all ranks of No. 400 Squadron. Due to my sudden posting to Headquarters, I was unable personally to get around to say 'Good-bye' to many with whom I would like to have done so. May I express, however, how deeply I appreciate having worked with the Squadron and how happy I have been while on your strength.

"In my capacity as Adjutant, I had much to do behind the scenes with the working of the Squadron since last Spring, and I want to thank you one and all for the very fine co-operation they have given me in the jobs that have fallen to my lot to supervise. To the Section Commanders and their immediate subordinates I can only say that it is a pleasure to look back and know that in all cases I was dealing with Officers and N.C.Os. of the highest type, whose word could always be depended upon, and I feel that this is the spirit that has made 400 Squadron one of the happiest Squadrons overseas.

"In closing, I can only remind you of what you are probably already very much aware of, viz., that you have one of the finest Commanding Officers in the Service, who, along with his very able Second-in-Command, can't be beaten.

"Good luck, 400 Squadron—You can't miss!"

## Air Commodore W. A. Curtis, R.C.A.F. Overseas

"Many things have happened since the formation of No. 110 City of Toronto Squadron (now so ably perpetuated as No. 400 Squadron), operating out of De Lessep's Field, Weston, Ont., on Moths, Fleets, Avro 620s and 626s, with summer training at Camp Borden and Trenton and two winter operational trips to Port Carling in February of 1938 and 1939.

My recent trip to your Squadron convinced me that you still possess your high degree of enthusiasm, smartness and efficiency and are very keen on doing any job.

No. 400 Squadron, more than any other unit or person, realizes that Army Co-operation requires so much more work than other types of operational flying. You have now completed two years in England, mostly training, and I am well aware of your desire to get more action than you have had. When your opportunity does come I know that you will do a grand job.

I am very proud to have been a former Commanding Officer of such an efficient unit and wish to extend my compliments on the reputation you enjoy over here, both in the units and Services with which you operate, and in the localities where you have been situated during these two years.





## Air Vice Marshal H. Edwards, Air Officer Commanding R.C.A.F. in Great Britain

"On the Second Anniversary of our pioneer Squadron in England, I would ask 'Wings Abroad' to give my personal greetings to every R.C.A.F. man in these islands.

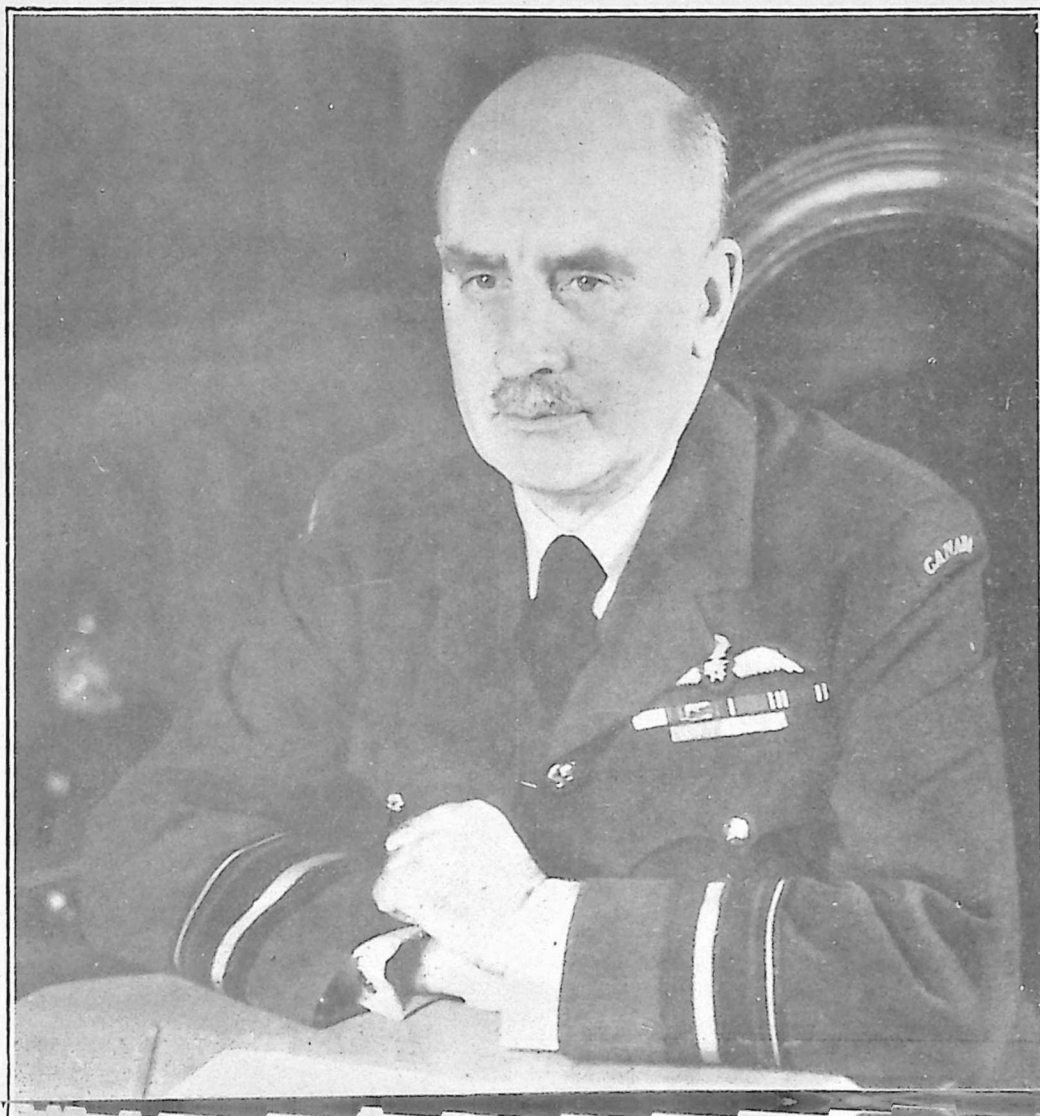
"Many of you I have already met personally in the course of my tours of the stations. The others I shall visit soon. Meanwhile let me assure you that the sole purpose of Headquarters is to ensure that every Canadian receives the best possible break during his overseas service.

"From every side comes the word that you are doing a magnificent job. Your achievements are already great, not least amongst them the establishment of those high traditions which to-day's huge draft of new volunteers from Canada will, in their time, strive to maintain.

"To 400 Squadron, my especial congratulations. Through two years you have applied yourselves unfailingly to one of the most difficult tasks which any unit can be called upon to undertake. I know that the waiting and inaction have been long and difficult; I know you have successfully upheld your high standards of efficiency and morale without the background of combat and excitement with which others have been favoured. An ability to stand up under this hardest of ordeals which troops on active service have to face is the strongest proof of an airman's calibre.

"You took, too, the heaviest blitz without the satisfaction of fighting back. But if there is one thing of which I am certain, it is that your time will come, and at no distant date; and when it does, you and your comrades at 414 Squadron will take your rightful positions in the forefront of the forces which will deliver Europe from the oppressor.

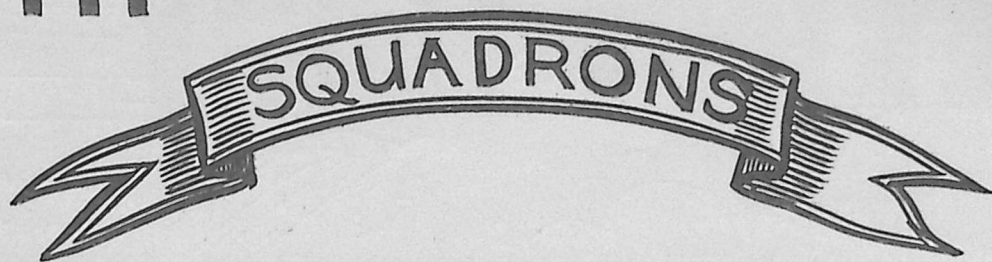
"And so, to 400, best wishes and many happy returns—and may your next anniversary be a victory dinner."



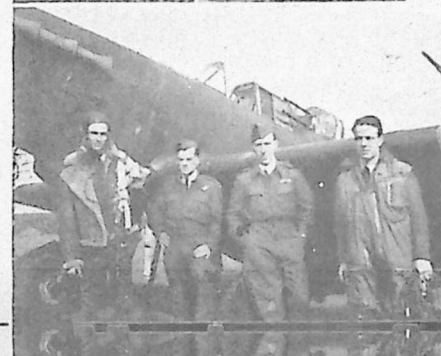
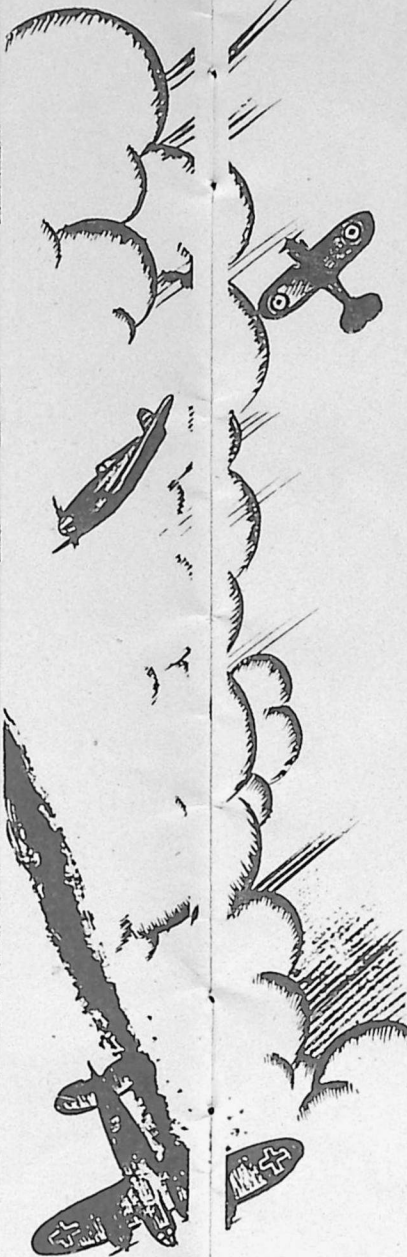


# OUR BOYS

# WITH



SOME OF THE FEW

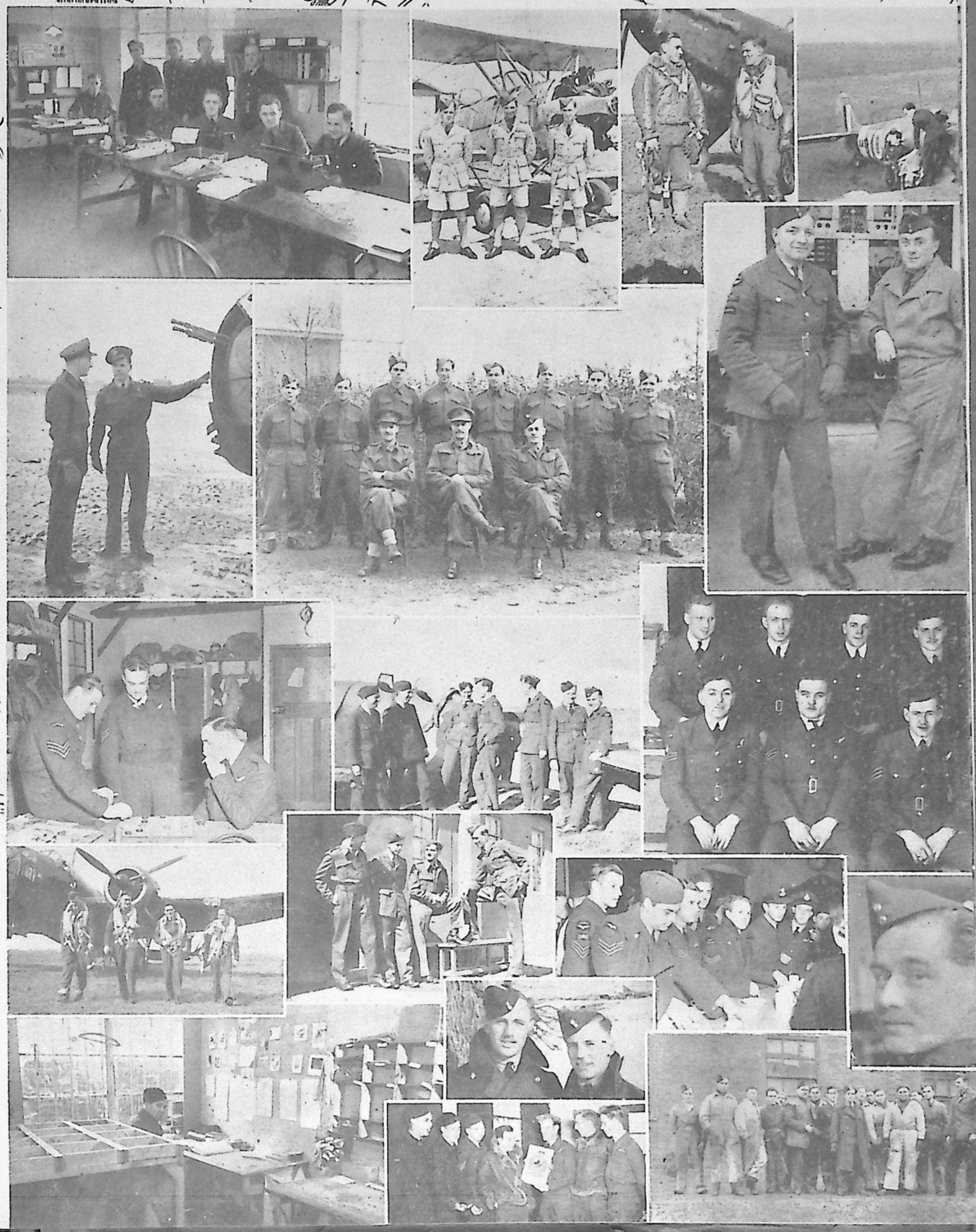




# FLYING HIGH



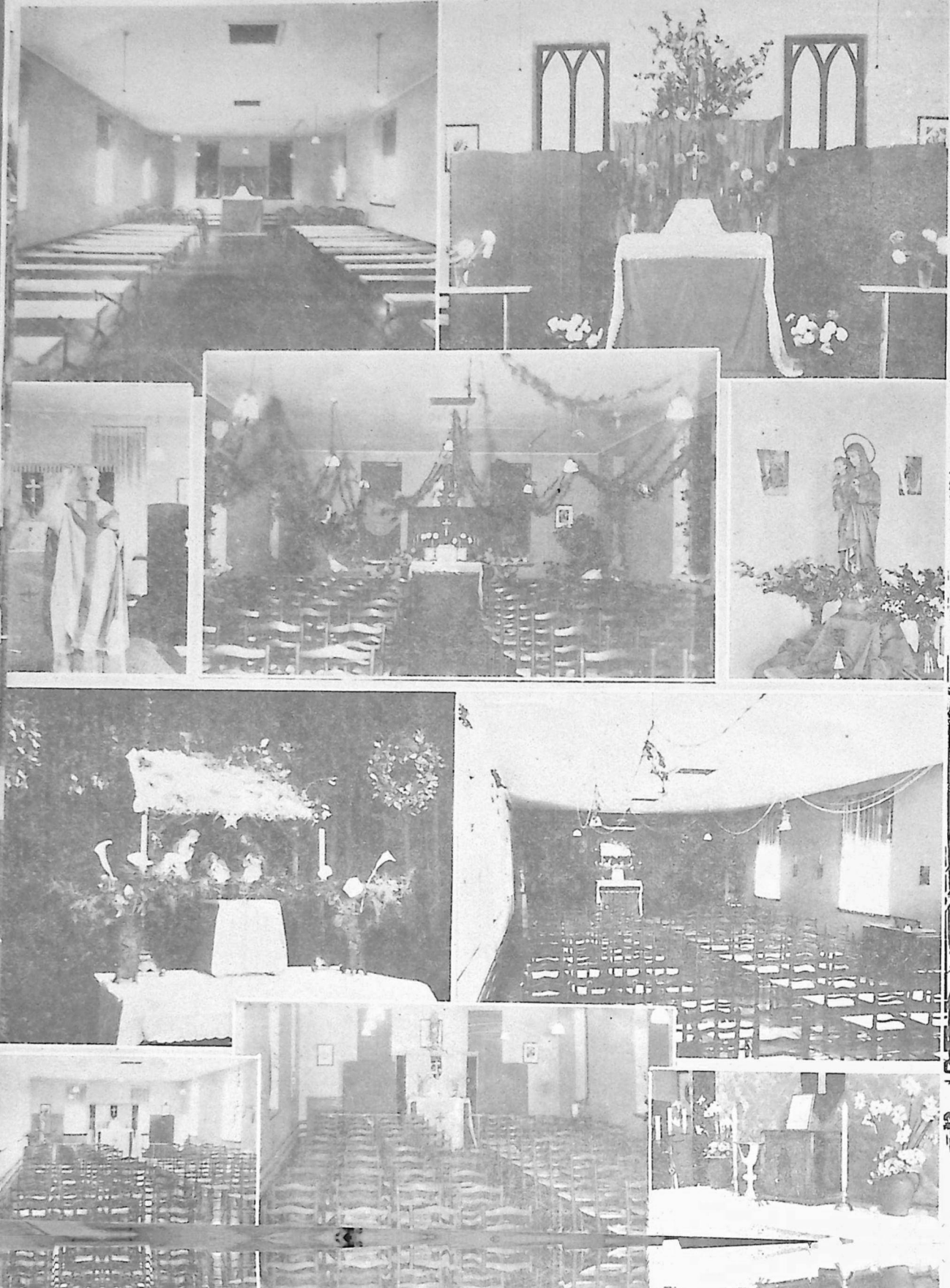
# "THE BOYS"





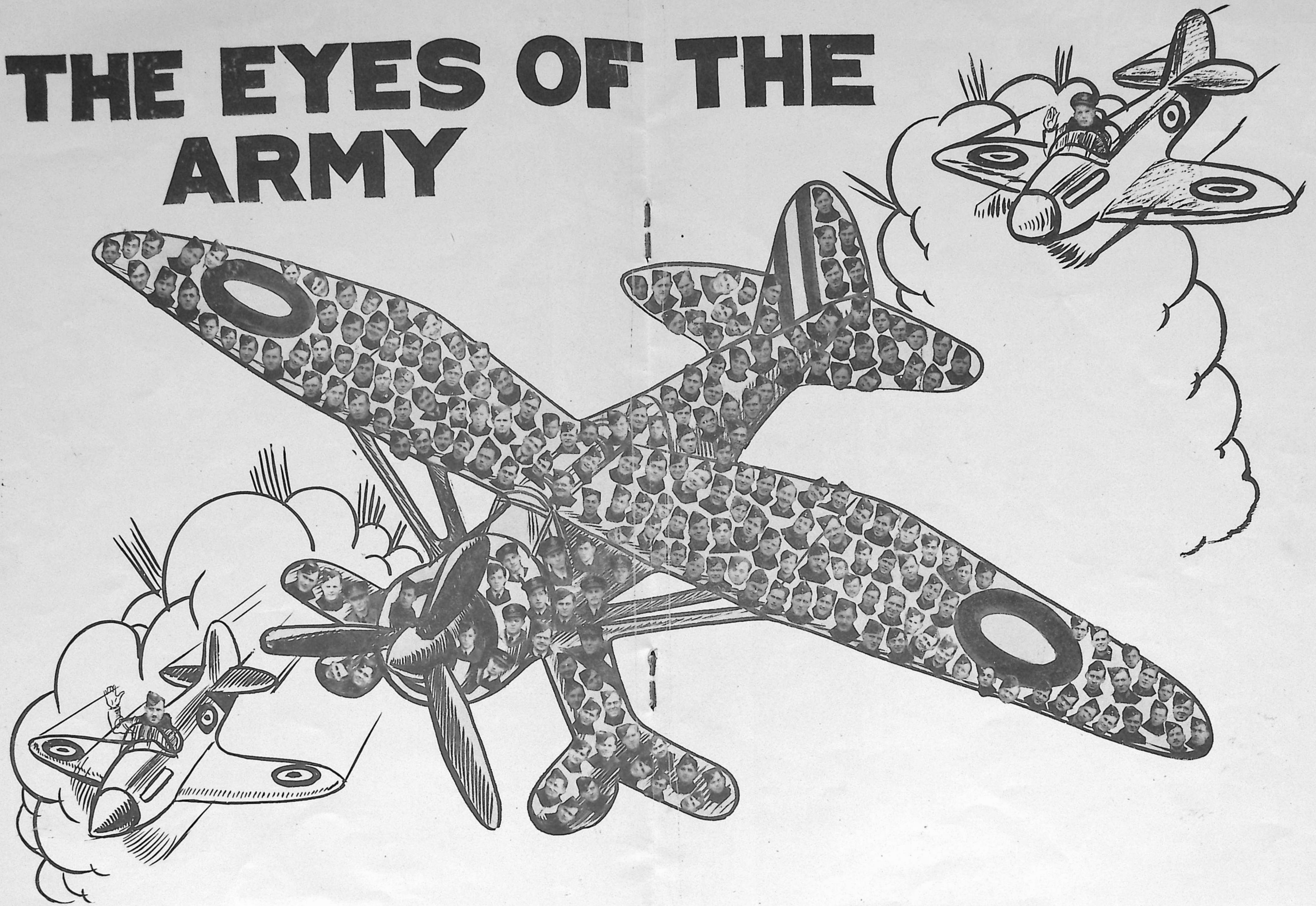
# AIRMENS CHAPEL

# ROTA MOTA—WINGS ABROAD 1940—42





# THE EYES OF THE ARMY





# WORK AND PLAY



# Here and There



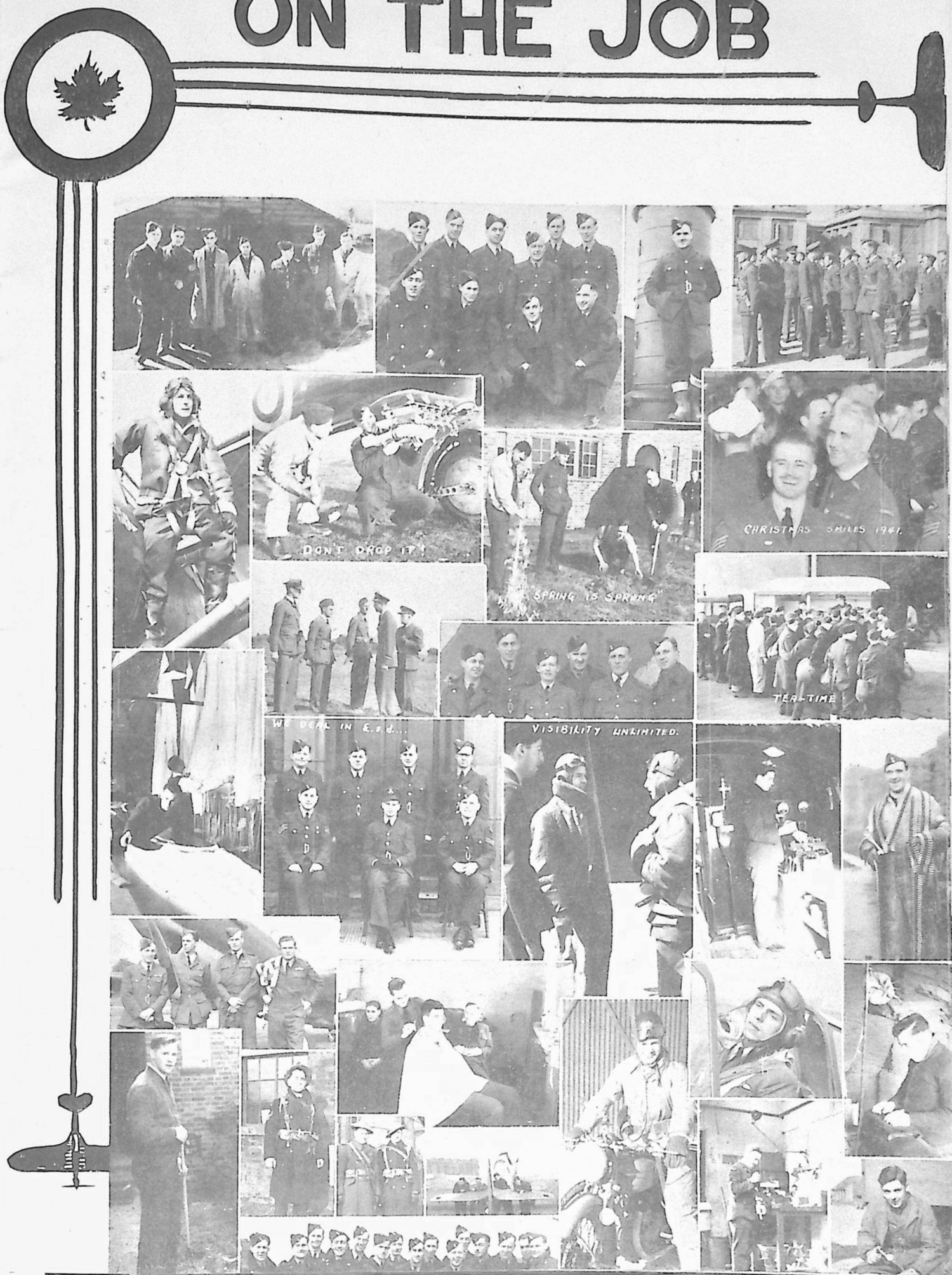


# CANADIANS WITH

# Bomber COMMAND



# ON THE JOB







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CIRCULATION



D.P. HOWELL  
SECRETARY TREASURER



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WINGS  
ABROAD

STAFF  
1942

An appreciation

An Anniversary edition like this one did not go without its headaches, sleepless nights and general hard work and effort. As a closing thought let us give a hearty appreciation to those "who did it," and by those "who did it" we mean particularly Fred McCormick, 402 Squadron; Vic Davidson, 400 Squadron; Jimmy Ednie, 400 Squadron; P/O. Harley, 401 Squadron; Sergt. Dawes, 414 Squadron; S/Ldr. McGuinness and F/Lieut. Johnson, R.C.A.F. Headquarters, and the entire Photo Section of an R.C.A.F. Co-operational Squadron.

All Pictures are R.C.A.F. Official Photographs.

"Wings Abroad" Commemorates the Arrival of the First Units of the Royal Canadian Air Force Overseas

Remember!

"Wings Abroad" commemorates the arrival of the first units of the Royal Canadian Air Force Overseas and One Year of Publication. To-day we celebrate two Anniversaries.

Two years ago to-day a Squadron of the R.C.A.F. set foot on British soil for the first time in history. . . . Over one year ago to-day "Wings Abroad" made its appearance to a not too staple future. From that first day the road was bumpy, the trail long and hard, and to-day it stands, well established and playing an important part in the lives of Canadians at home and overseas. "Wings Abroad" serves its purpose as a news letter home, a warm, cheery letter to our dear ones in Canada; something to look back on when this conflict is over, for the columns of this humble journal reflect but one spirit . . . good fellowship. . . . And so we move on with time to another year of publication and a third year overseas and as we move on let us look back and remember. . . .

Remember when we landed in England? . . . it was a dull day and the gulls wheeled and cried as the boat pulled into dock. Remember the train ride to camp? . . . the green, green fields of England, the cramped railway cars and the shrill, shrill whistle of the train . . . our first night in camp . . . the black-out and the corner pub where everyone played darts and drank mild and bitters. . . . Remember how Smitty fell into the canal in the black-out . . . and how Buck walked around the camp for two hours trying to find his barracks?

And above all, remember what we came overseas to do . . . remember the job we have to finish . . . and in the face of the dark days that lie ahead our Canadian spirit and determination will carry us through to the end.

Three Squadrons form Vanguard of R.C.A.F. in England

February 25th, 1940, marks an important date in the history of the R.C.A.F., for it was on that date that the first Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force ever to leave for an active theatre of war, landed in England. The Squadron was made up of men from every Province and principal city in the Dominion and was one of the oldest units in the R.C.A.F. Its first Commanding Officer was Group Captain O'Brien, followed by Wing Commander Russell and Wing Commander Irwin. The Squadron was led overseas by Wing Commander Van Vliet, who was followed by Squadron Leader Evans, Wing Commander MacKay and Wing Commander Kerby, present Commanding Officer. On its arrival overseas it immediately took up duties with the Royal Air Force and was attached to the Army Division commanded by General McNaughton.

However, this Army Co-operational Squadron was destined to wait, for its duties were closely bound up with the Army's, and therefore saw little action as did their Canadian brothers in khaki. This did not deter them, for they soon set up a record for efficiency in all phases of their work; artillery spotting, reconnaissance, calibration of A.A. guns, photography and sea-rescue work. Their contribution cannot be measured in numbers of enemy aircraft but in the valuable experimental work they have carried out. Those in this Squadron have had to be content with waiting, but everyone stands eager for the day when we invade, then they can show what the months of training have brought.

To the boys who came over with this unit belongs a distinct honour, and you can't find one who isn't proud of the fact that he came overseas with the first Canadian Squadron. . . .

Canadian Fighter Squadron

Close on its heels followed a Fighter Squadron that was destined to take away much of the glamour from the two units already overseas. The Squadron was led by Wing Commander McNab and arrived in June, 1940, at a time when the situation overseas was at its darkest. It became fully operational just in time to take part in the Battle of Britain and was allotted to the Defence of London. On August 15th, 1940, the Royal Canadian Air Force overseas claimed its first victim, a Dornier 215, shot down by Wing Commander MacNab. From then on that Fighter Squadron's score steadily mounted up and earned high praise from their companions in the Royal Air Force and the British Government. Here is a personal account of a victory that is indicative of most of the triumphs of our Canadian boys. This time the laurels go to Pilot Officer Ormston.

"I dived with my section, Flight Lieut. Neal, Pilot Officer Blake, Squadron Leader Morrison, from 18,000 to 6,000 feet. The huns made a steep climbing turn to the left when



we approached from the rear. I engaged a Me. 109.E and gave him a four second burst. I obtained no apparent results so I broke off engagement and climbed again to 10,000 feet. I spotted a hun making a wide turn and drove on him, giving him all my ammunition. He rolled over and I followed him down and saw him crash in a wood."

Thus runs the history of Canada's first Fighter Squadron that had been in the thickest fighting and carried on the traditions set by the Canadian boys twenty years ago in the Royal Air Force.

## Arrival of Second Squadron Unheralded

Actually this Squadron arrived a little before Canada's Fighter Squadron, but its arrival was unheralded and a little less spectacular than the other two Squadrons overseas. Its history is torn between being a reinforcement pool, army co-operational squadron and now a fighter unit that is gradually coming into the fore. In brief, here is a year with this Squadron as seen through the eyes of their regular columnist for "Wings Abroad."

The year was started in the Midlands of 'Merrie Old England' with weather at times reaching new heights to pile misery upon the heads of Canadian airmen. About three months grinding training was the order of the day, only punctuated by the occasional visit to the local pub, which brings to my mind many a fellow who was too tired to do his work during the day, set out in the evening for a short walk of three miles to 'unbrown' himself over a pint of bitters.

From the training period we passed on to operational work, which made us feel as though we were getting somewhere. About this time a new draft from Canada joined us and it was with mixed feelings we looked them over. They looked so full of pep that we felt in comparison rather scruffy and wondered whether we had ever had the spring to our step that they had. One of them was overheard to remark, when he gave us the once over, 'That if ever he got as mouldy-looking as that he hoped someone would shoot him.' Now he has a kink in his neck in case someone remembers.

## Best Squadron in World

In the middle of summer we strategically withdrew to Bonnie Scotland and took a rest cure in the form of lots of time off and such places as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Loch Lomond, etc., were quite common. Here we found that 'Scotch mists' were rainy days, that Scotch 'tightness' was only a joke and everybody had a Scotch accent. About the time we were acquiring a Scotch accent, along came autumn and a move to a spot near London Town, and just as we were getting dug in for winter, Father Time in form of November 6th gave us the 'V' sign to move on, with the result, at the present time, Southern England is now 'home.'

Some of the things we will always remember, changing from Army Co-op. to Fighter Squadron, long days, short nights, first session of readiness, damaging our first Gerry, getting our first Gerry and all too infrequent 'leaves.'

A milestone that can't be passed up was the appearance on our not so bright horizon of a cocky little magazine called 'Wings Abroad' (3d. a copy (adv.)). While some of the copy won't live for ever or go down in history, there is no doubt many a grandson will have to act interested while a toothless, tobacco chewing old man relates his adventures with the R.C.A.F. overseas and be shown a copy of 'Wings Abroad' for proof.

As you have probably guessed by now, the past has been a hectic and varied one for this Squadron, full of ups and downs, but through it all there has always been the pride of belonging to one of the best Squadrons in the world. Our Squadron is still carrying on. . . ."

## Canada's Women and the War

We cannot let this Anniversary issue pass without mentioning the people in Canada who have so generously contributed to the welfare of the boys since their arrival overseas. The women's organizations in particular stand out in the work they have done; women's organizations such as the Vancouver Women's Auxiliary, Winnipeg Women's Auxiliary, Ladies' Liberal Association, London and many others. One organization stands out above all in the spectacular way they have done their job, and that is the Women's Association of Toronto, led by Mrs. R. D. Kerby, mother of the Commanding Officer of the first Canadian unit overseas. In the two years they have been supporting this unit they have shipped thousands of pounds of woollen goods, chocolates, butter, honey, maple sugar, sports equipment, peanuts, and even one public address system!

Such is just one example of the calibre of our women back home and in view of that fact Canadians overseas are the best looked after in the world. It is their work that is doing so much to keep the boys happy and when you read of a Canadian victory on land, sea or air think of the Canadian women at home, the work they do and the important part they play in the lives of their boys overseas. . . ."

## Back On Duty



PO. Nolan Henderson, R.C.A.F., who has rejoined his squadron overseas after recovering from a flying accident. On April 15 of this year, he crashed in an upside-down landing "somewhere in England". Now, fully recovered, he is back in action. He joined the R.C.A.F. in September, 1940 and went overseas in June, 1941.

