

Dear Mother;

18th September, 1945      1316 hours.

Many times I have decided to keep a diary - but the good intention has seldom lasted for more than a few days. This time I shall not be so ambitious, and will try to keep a record of events for the next ten days or so. The reason for selecting that period of time is merely that it will be the duration of a tour to some of the more interesting spots in India. I shall be accompanying the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, R.C.A.F. Overseas and his party of three Group Captains, who are due to arrive in India tomorrow.

Probably one of the more immediate reasons for starting this little diary is a sudden increase in energy because of a rapid drop in temperature that has taken place in this Dakota aircraft in the last few minutes. We were flying along smoothly below the clouds at about 500 feet altitude and probably the half dozen other passengers - as well as I - were perspiring mildly. The pilot decided to go upstairs to get on top of the weather - and now I have just donned my raincoat to protect from the cold gusts that are whistling about the aircraft.

Maybe you should know where I am going. Santa Cruz airport at Bombay to Mauripur airport at Karachi. The trip is about 600 miles. We left Santa Cruz at 1200 sharp in a DC3 of 267 Squadron. I recognize the unit because of the black winged horse painted on the fuselage. (Probably Pegasus). I often travelled in 267 Squadron kites in Italy early last year when they were stationed at Bari, and used to operate on most of the passenger runs between Naples and Foggia, Naples and Tunis, Algiers to Tunis, etc. Lloyd Harmon of Banff was a pilot on 267. He went home last month through Bombay, after completing his tour in Burma.

To get back to the present. The load in this aircraft is mostly freight. Part cases full of goodness-knows-what, and partly mail. There are five passengers besides myself. One, with whom I chatted in the truck on the twelve mile ride from Bombay to Santa Cruz, is a British Army Captain, recently released as a Prisoner of War in Japan.

I am quite surprised at his condition, which is much better than I would have expected. Although he is rather thin, he looks well. What is possibly even more important, his mental outlook seems to be quite healthy, and does not reveal any of the terrific stress and strain to which he must have been subjected. He was captured in Java, and taken to a camp in Japan. At first they were worked - on the roads and at similar manual labour - on an insufficient diet. After some months, the Japs decided that Officers should not perform manual labour, and accordingly segregated them into Officers' Camps and abolished the work. Some three months before surrender, however, their attitude became more vindictive, and the practice of working officers was re-introduced.

The British Captain reported that one Canadian - a Flight Lieutenant Morris from Montreal, was for some time in the same camp with him. He believed that he survived, and would now be on his way home via the Philippines.

The Captain expressed great admiration for the diplomatic and tactful way in which the Americans are effecting the occupation or "taking over" of Japan. Probably we overlook the fact that Japan is still a heavily armed country, and that any lack of caution at this stage might result in outbreaks that could have fairly serious consequences.

It is a few minutes after three o'clock (i.e. after 1500 hours) and I have had an hour's sleep. We are letting down through the clouds again which are not so thick now. The monsoon is definitely on its last legs in the Bombay-Karachi part of the world. We still have fairly heavy showers each day, but they lack the "continuity" they had a month ago. Flying weather is consequently much better.

We can see the ground most of the time now, and have levelled off at about 4,000 feet. There is an amazing pattern below. We are flying over what I take to be the delta of the river Indus, which covers hundreds of square miles, and is a great interlacing of channels through flat desert-appearing land. There is no evidence of life, except the odd dot here and there, which may be some kind of cactus or large desert plant. The channels go in circles and loops, and lead nowhere. Many are good sized rivers in themselves - probably 100 to 200 yards wide - and all appear deep.

Here is Karachi coming up, and it is only 1540 hours. We must have had a good tail wind. The city is different from any other I have seen in India, in that the roads are wide and either straight or gracefully winding, and there is little evidence in the town itself of crowding.

There is the harbor which I tried to visit last June, when at Karachi en route to Bombay. Had no luck, however, as the guards turned me away. From the air it is most uninteresting.

I think it could be said, with a good deal of reason, that Mauripur is presently one of the most interesting cross roads in the world. At the moment they are clearing 9,000 people a month through the airport for the United Kingdom. This, incidentally, is one of three airfields at Karachi, the others being Drigh Road and an American field.

Here is an example of what one sees in an hour there. (Apart from the few passengers on "my" aircraft, one of whom, a sergeant of the 15th Commandos, had lost an arm):

Two ladies came into the waiting room from a Calcutta plane. One carried a very young baby. Seeing my Canada badges, they immediately spoke up and said they were on their way to Canada. They were Mrs. Lorna Grobb, 12 Windley Ave., Toronto, and Mrs. Elizabeth Homer Dickson, c/o Col. Langmuir, Toronto General Trusts, Toronto. They told me that they had been held in a Camp in French Indo China. Mrs. Grobb had managed to get into Saigon with the Italian ex-ambassador - just in time to see the natives turn against the French. There was rioting and bloodshed, but, by wearing a Union Jack on her dress when it was necessary to be on the street, she managed to keep out of trouble. When the Japs "folded up", a few Americans came to Saigon looking for any of their countrymen they could find. They went to the camp where Mrs. Grobb had been interned, collected the few Americans there - and Mrs. Homer Dickson (that name sounds very familiar - shouldn't I know it?) and her six week old daughter - and got them out. Now they are on their way, by air, to the United Kingdom. What they didn't tell me - but I heard from one of our lads who met them at Canada House, Calcutta, the other day - was that both of their husbands were killed. I think they were missionaries.

In our conversation, Hong Kong was mentioned, where upon Mrs. Grobb pointed out a British Lieutenant Colonel, who was on his way home from there. I asked him the number of Canadians there were there when the Navy went in. He thought the number was about 370, and said that they were being evacuated by one of the Empress ships, via Manilla. The Lieutenant Colonel was with another Britisher, whose pick up attire did not indicate whether he was in the service or not. He was getting away after several years in Central China.

My conversation was cut short by A.T.O. (Air Transport Officer) telling me that he would send me into Karachi in a car that had been provided for a Rear Admiral Mansfield who was just in from U.K. in a York. There were just the two of us, and we had a chatty ride. The Rear Admiral was, I thought, a youngish man to hold such a rank in the Royal Navy. He complained, good naturedly, about having to sit or lie on mail bags in the freight aircraft he had come in - but though it was much better than making a voyage as a passenger at sea. That, he thought was one of the most irksome things. The Rear Admiral had been at Naples for the Anzio and the south of France invasions. When I remarked that I had been aboard a Canadian ship there on two or three occasions, he said

that he had known the Captain of it, Captain Godfrey, since 1913. Well, as I said a few paragraphs ago, Mauripur is an interesting crossroad.

As we got into Karachi, one of the first things we saw was a Karachi characteristic that I may have mentioned to you in a letter last June. The main method of heavy transport is by "camel truck". They are similar to the horse drawn drays we used to see (and still do, I guess) in Canada, except that they have pneumatic tires, and are drawn by a single camel. It is rather an incongruous looking "ensemble" of the new and the old. They are super-camels however, for not only are they larger and stronger looking than usual, but they possess in keeping with these superlative qualities, a more disdainful and supercilious expression than any other camels, I have ever seen. As a camel connoisseur, my experience is not wide, but includes a passing acquaintance with those that stand in snobbish cliques along the roadsides in Syria, those that plod unconcernedly along in the sand near the macadam highway in the Sinai desert, ("We would never let our loads be carried by a mere M.T. vehicle!") the blase ones that cart tourists from the drugstore opposite Mena House at Cairo up to the pyramid a few hundred yards away, and lastly, the nose-high-in-air agrarian variety that pull primitive ploughs in the rocky land on the heel of Italy.

Well, here I am at the Carlton Hotel, a British Overseas Airways hostel for the ordinary run of the mill person. We dropped the Rear Admiral at Sommerset House, a higher class place not far from here. It too is under the control of B.O.A.C.

19th September, 1945.

This is the first clear day I have seen for some time - since arriving in India (also at Karachi) on the 23rd of June. The monsoon had not started here then, and now it is apparently over.

Spent the morning finding the R.A.F. Post Office to which we have one Sergeant and one airman postal clerk attached to handle incoming and outgoing mail that is carried by air. Since I had time on my hands, I dickered with several gharry wallahs and taxi drivers over the price they wanted to take me there. The best gharry quotation was three rupees, and the highest four. Either would be ridiculous, as the "official" gharry tariff is one rupee, two annas, an hour, and even a round trip to the Post Office would not take that long. I started to walk, got lost, and finally weakened when I saw a taxi parked in the shade of an old wall. A honk on one of the horns (there were three of them, including an old rubber bulb type) brought the driver from his charpoy (wooden bed frame with rope "springs") under the steps that led up to a railway overpass. Three rupees was the best price I could get.

After doing my business with the postal chap (Sgt. Stevenson), I took a gharry to Elphinstone Street. It is the main shopping street of Karachi. Prices here are not so high as in Bombay, Calcutta, or Delhi. Moreover, there seems to be a wider selection of "tourist goods". Proximity to the North West frontier and Kashmir may have some bearing on that. It being the last stop in India for the several hundred who are now daily leaving the country by air, there are many last minute (Christmas-eve-type) shoppers wandering in and out of shops on Elphinstone Street.

The goods most displayed are leather (and imitation leather) suitcases, jaipur type cigarette cases, bookends, table bells, and compacts, white woolen and cotton embroidered jackets for ladies, chinese type kimonos, rugs, silver filigree jewelry, snakeskin purses, and semi precious stones. No doubt, many of the latter are imitations.

In the afternoon, our Staff Officer at 229 (Transport Group) Delhi, (S/L Hank Yeandle), came in by air. He wished to learn what arrangements the A.O.C.-in-C. would like made for him in Delhi. We chatted for a while at the Carlton, and took a taxi at 1730 for the airport.

The A.O.C.-in-C., R.C.A.F. Overseas (Air Marshal G.O. Johnson, C.B., M.C.) arrived at 1845 in Dakota aircraft number KN.648. He had a

R.A.F. crew. The numbers of his party were Group Captains H.H.C. Rutledge Can.C.149 (G.L.), F.R. West Can.C.159 (G.L.), and A.A.G. Corbet Can.C.4024 (Med.) Directory of Medical Services Overseas.

Accommodation had been arranged for them at Somerset House (BOAC), and since I was travelling with the party, I managed to slip in there too, although the R.A.F. Officers at the Staging Post had been most emphatic that no one below the rank of Group Captain would be accommodated there. This was the most comfortable accommodation I have yet had in India. My room was quite large - I had it all to myself, although there were two beds - and had an adjoining dressing room with marble top table, mirrors and wash basin, and a third room for tub, shower and toilet.

20th September, 1945.

Wish someone would invent a fountain pen with release valve to equalize air pressure when your aircraft is climbing. We are going up rapidly at this moment, and the air is forcing a good deal of ink out of my pen and onto my fingers. However, I have furtively flicked a few drops onto the carpet. Yes, carpet. We are now in the A.O.C.-in-C's private aircraft, and have been airborne five minutes en route to Bombay via Baroda. What a difference there is between the Dakota I came to Karachi in day before yesterday, and this one! Here there are twelve upholstered adjustable seats. Each has a folding table in front of it.

The interior of the aircraft is soundproofed, and the walls and ceiling covered with a grey material resembling whipcord. There is a nicely finished wooden partition and door, fore, between us and the Steward's room, and a similar one aft, separating this main section from the baggage compartment and the washroom. There are side lights as well as ceiling lights, and royal blue curtains in natural finish wooden window fittings - and, as I said before, the floor is carpeted.

The crew is R.A.F. with one Canadian member, the second pilot. I had thought the A.O.C.-in-C. would arrive in a Liberator with Canadian Crew - but see the wisdom of the present arrangement, as our pilot, at least, is apparently a gen man who is quite familiar with flying in India.

At 1100 hours, the steward (in white jacket) came around and asked if we would like tea or coffee. I am sure he must have been a butler in Civil life.

At 1145 we put down at Baroda where there is a Transport Flying Conversion Unit. The C.O., Wing Commander Morish, a short, wide-awake, energetic man, met us, and we were shortly in the mess having a lime squash. There were fourteen R.C.A.F. chaps at the Unit. All had been posted, and were reporting to Worli at the end of the month. The Chief spoke to the Officers in the mess, and answered their queries, and a few minutes later, had a similar chat with the airmen.

The airport at Baroda is a very grassy place. The C.O. said he employed 200 coolies to cut grass, and it would be several months before they would get it under control. If I were stationed there, I would certainly try to acquire a saddle horse. The feed problem would not exist.

The Maharajah of Baroda made the newspapers the other day when he paid a fabulous price in England, for a racehorse. The newspapers reported it at approximately three lakhs of rupees. A lakh is 100,000, so, at three rupees per dollar, the nag cost \$100,000. The question, of course, is where does the money come from? Does he collect it as taxes, does he get a rake-off on the marketing of rice, or is he just a smart boy? The C.O. of the Conversion Unit didn't know the answer.

I now reach over to the little "library" in an inset bookholder beside my seat, and draw out a booklet entitled "A Picture of India". I see from it that Baroda is the 14th Indian State in size (8,000 square miles), that it has a population of 2,855,000, and an annual revenue of about \$8,000,000.

It is only one hour and forty minutes from Baroda to Bombay. We flew about 5,000 - just above a well broken cloud layer. In the last half

each section were called in, and a date (in some cases approximate) was decided upon for the closing of each section. It looks as though I shall be out of India before the end of November.

I sent a few bottles of our special entertainment ration of beer to my flat to be put in the refrigerator, for a pre-lunch moistener. When I say, "my flat", that is a bit misleading, for I have one room, (bed-sitting room), a bathroom, and a balcony, in a large flat, belonging to Dr. E. Nadel (Polish), and his wife (Italian). The balcony looks out onto the bay, which is possibly the most interesting sight in the town. For the last month, there have been approximately one hundred ships congregated in "my front yard", in anticipation of the invasion of Malaya. I had better get back to the point - namely that I took the Chief and his three Group Captains to my place for a bottle of beer. We then lunched at the Taj.

Even though I am away behind on my diary, (we are, at the moment, above the clouds, en route from Colombo to Bangalore, on the 25th), I had better say a word about the Taj. It is the best hotel in Bombay, and possibly in India. It has about 400 rooms - many of them fairly large - but now accommodating four or more people each. The main attraction of the Taj is its air conditioned dining room, which is quite large, and fairly tastefully decorated. Going into it is just like walking into a cold storage warehouse - and coming out, is like stepping from a refrigerator into a Turkish bath. The chief story about the hotel, and it is a very common one, is that the architect, who came from England after construction had begun, arrived in Bombay to find that they were building the hotel backwards - i.e., with the back to the sea front, and the front with an open courtyard, with two wings looking into it, was facing into the second class shops and apartments that clutter the district. The architect was so upset - so the story goes - that he committed suicide. It is quite obvious that the building, as constructed, was designed to face the harbour, rather than away from it.

Leaving the Taj at 1430, we drove to the R.A.F. Base Reception Depot at Worli, about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles from town. We called on the Station C.O., (W/C Brereton) who accompanied us to the station theatre, where the 300 or so R.C.A.F. chaps on the strength of Worli had been called together to hear a few words from the A.O.C.-in-C. As was very appropriate, he asked them to be tolerant of any delay there might appear to be in their embarkation for the United Kingdom, and explained the shipping shortage consequent upon the occupation of Malaya, and the necessity of evacuating, with all speed, upwards of 100,000 released Prisoners of War and internees. In about fifteen minutes the lads were given the opportunity of asking questions which they did quite freely. The Chief was however able to answer all of them - with, in some cases, the assistance of G/C West.

After the meeting, we were in a bit of a dither, because chaps came up with personal queries as we were trying to get down to the Maple Leaf Hut, a few hundred yards away. Result, was we had to split up - Group Captain West remaining behind to bear the brunt of the queries. The Chief, the C.O. of Worli, and I, managed to get inside of the Hut, in spite of the crowd. They had run there from the cinema to get a seat before the main gang arrived. I was glad to see this very practical demonstration of the value of the Hut, since it had been a project that got me into considerable hot water a month or so before. It was obviously so necessary, that I had permitted the Salvation Army, who organized and operated it, to go ahead and spend 12,500 rupees (about \$4,200) on it before sanction was received from London to initiate any such project. Before our formal application and budget for the undertaking reached London, they heard from someone who went back, that it was already operating. Needless to say, they were not pleased - as was quite apparent from the signal I promptly received, which said that the project was not approved, and asked how much had been spent, and on whose authority. That was a hard one to get out of, but after some high power signals, and a few weeks of decided uneasiness, the approval finally arrived, a few minutes after I had signed a ten page letter that I think would have proved that the project had to continue - but at the same time would probably have precipitated my return to Canada and retirement from the Service. Needless to say, when the approval arrived, I wasted no time in getting to Central Registry to stop the letter from being mailed. I am keeping it as a souvenir.

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To return to the Chief - he was shown some of the officer accommodation and writing rooms at the camp, and then we returned to Town. We dropped the Chief at the Taj, and then the three Group Captains, and I, went down Hornby St., (the main street of Bombay) to do some shopping.

As we all know, it takes a bit of time to shop effectively in the East. The results were not bad, however, in the hour and a half at our disposal. We started at the "Saree Shop" down past the Eastman Kodak store. G/C West bought a powder blue silver bordered Crepe de Chine saree, and was quite pleased with it. If I remember rightly, the price was about 185 rupees. Then we went to the Army and Navy Store, where I dropped the others and dashed over to the office to get away a signal or two, and also to try to figure out a way to get paid. It was then after six o'clock, and I was going away with the party first thing in the morning. I phoned Harry Freestone, the imprest holder, and arranged to pick him up later at the Adelphi Mess and bring him back to the Office.

Back to the Army and Navy Store - picked up the Group Captains, and we started looking for sandals, similar to a pair that I had shown them at my place. We eventually found the shop, and Group Captain West was able to wear the only pair they had made up. They cost Rs. 29/8. I later sold my pair to Group Captain Rutledge, as I can order another pair later.

When we finished shopping (because of the shortage of time), we picked up Harry Freestone (in a deluge of rain that poured through the removable canvas section of the roof of the station wagon, and ran down the backs of Group Captains West and Corbett) - got paid - dropped the Group Captains at the Sea Green Mess - and I went to the Yacht Club, (It, the Taj Mahal Hotel, and my living quarters, are all within a few hundred yards of each other), and made final arrangements for dinner. That included signing in, as a temporary member, signing a declaration that I had read the rules for that type of membership, signing a book saying I was intown for a specified length of time only - and signing once for each serially numbered book of tickets I purchased. I just took seven to start with, and they cost ten rupees each.

At 2030 I called for the Chief at the Taj. The Group Captains were also there, and we walked over to the Yacht Club. It was a bit of nuisance having them all sign for a drink ration chit, without which one can get only Indian spirits.

The Yacht Club is the swankiest, and, of course, most reserved and aloof club in Bombay. It is upwards of 100 years old. The premises are quite extensive, and include, on the opposite side of the road, the "Yacht Club Chambers", a modern apartment block reserved for members. Paul Sykes, the Canadian Trade Commissioner, lives there. I had, incidentally, tried to invite him to dinner tonight, but he was out of town.

We ate in the dining room on the first floor (i.e. in Canada on the second floor). On the stairway there is an enormous silver plaque, or shield, on which are smaller "annual award" shields or plates, for the best time, by yacht, from Bombay to Portsmouth. There were no plates for the last ten years or so.

To get on with dinner - the guests were Air Marshal Johnson, Group Captains West, Rutledge, and Corbet, Air Commodore Waring, A.O.C. of R.A.F. Base Headquarters, Wing Commander Brereton, C.O. of the B.R.D. at Worli, W/C D.A. Willis, DFC, a Canadian transferring from the R.A.F. to the R.C.A.F., and from our own District Headquarters, W/C Nickle, Base Accounts Officer, S/L Cattanach, acting C.O. in my absence - and myself. We had a "fixed" menu, that I had selected from the card earlier in the evening - shrimps - mutton chops, and a "sweet". There was a fairly good sherry, a rather sweetish Madeira wine, and we topped off with a Portugese brandy. The party broke up almost immediately after dinner. Group Captains West and Corbet accompanied the C.O. home and had a few drinks with him. I went with Group Captain Rutledge to the Sea Green in a taxi, and then continued with Wing Commander Willis to my office, where I got the duty driver to run him out to Worli.

My own mode of locomotion was by gharri. And then to bed. And that gives me a thought. We are now at about 7,000 feet, 65 minutes north

of Bangalore, en route to Delhi. It is 1115 hours. We were up late last night. I am going to adjust my seat to a comfortable pitch, and sleep for an hour or so.

22nd September, 1945.

Still between Bangalore and Delhi. I must make an effort to get up to date with this diary. The first means will be to abbreviate the account of the 22nd's happenings.

We took off from Santa Cruz at 1020 hours, and landed at Ratmalana airport a few miles out of Colombo, at 1640 without an intermediate stop. At Ratmalana we were met by Group Captain Carr, the Station Commander, and F/L Garvie, the P.A. to the A.O.C. of 225 Group. (A/V/M Breakey).

The Chief proceeded to Air Vice Marshal Breakey's residence, and the rest of us to the Galle Face Hotel, where we stayed in the Annex, which is customary accommodation for Officers on Temporary Duty, and in transit.

G/C West contacted a Miss Bartlett and her sister, whom friends in London had spoken to him about. The Misses Bartlett dined with us at the Galle Face. I phoned a S/O Molly Upton, whose name Jean Drury (more about her later) had given us in July. S/O Upton was engaged for the evening, but was going to be in the Galle Face at 2000 hours, and we were to meet in the lobby. However, one of those silly things happened. I cut my lip when shaving, at about 1940 hours - and did a very thorough job of it. Blood was pouring off the end of my chin 45 minutes. So I didn't meet Molly Upton.

23rd September, 1945.

At 1025 hours we took off from Ratmalana, and headed towards the hills of interior Ceylon. We did not climb very much above ground level (probably less than 2,000) and it was interesting noting how every available piece of level - or low - ground was used for rice paddies, and ground that was not so level - or was such that it could not be easily flooded, was covered with regular rows of coconut palms. There was also an occasional rubber plantation.

As we got further inland, the paddies became just strips between the increasing number of hills. The strips narrowed and became fewer. In twenty minutes we were over Lord Louis Mountbatten's landing strip, and landed twenty-five minutes after takeoff. Air transport from Colombo to Kandy is not very economical of time. You spend forty minutes driving from Colombo to Ratmalana, twenty-five minutes flying from Ratmalana to Supremes Strip, and one hour driving from there to Kandy.

At the strip, the Chief was met by Air Marshal Pirie, the deputy Chief of Air Command, South East Asia. Air Marshal Sir Keith Park, the head man, was away. We were let off at the South Mess (17 miles from the airstrip), and the Chief went on to the Deputy's bungalow.

S/L Conrad, our staff officer at A.C.S.E.A., assisting Group Captain Patterson (then away), looked after all our needs. Before lunch, he miraculously produced some Canadian beer, which we consumed in his room in one of the long basha huts on the hillside above the Mess.

In the afternoon, the three Group Captains, S/L Conrad, and I, walked down to "The River", the name of which is quite unpronounceable. It winds through the hills about a half mile from the A.C.S.E.A. camp. We walked along the river bank for nearly two miles, with always very interesting performances to be seen. There is a great deal of bathing and laundering going. The women bathe in their normal costume, i.e., a long sarong. The men, who also wear sarongs, but only from waist to ankle, had donned a shorter garb for swimming. These people appear to be meticulously clean. They were even using soap, and some infants were almost hidden under the white lather. The approved method of un-soaping was for

a grown-up to pour repeated pails of water over the youngsters' head. Like kids of most countries, they didn't like soap in their eyes either.

The approved method of doing laundry, or dhobi as it is called, is to soak it thoroughly, then try to dislodge the dirt by swinging it over their head, at arm's length, and bashing it on a flat rock. At R.A.F. and British Army Camps, throughout the country, special dhobi ghats are made of concrete. They are a sort of stand, on which your clothing is gradually, over a period of a few weeks, beaten to a pulp. When washed, the clothes are invariably stretched on the ground to dry. I noticed that the sarongs were not one rectangular piece of cloth, as I had suspected, but were, in fact, a cloth, about the size of a bed-sheet, with the two ends sewn together to make it a tube. This makes a skirt large enough to go around a person with a diameter of about four or five feet. They get rid of the excess, however, by folding.

The main reason for going down to the river was to see some elephants, and to take pictures of them. In the first mile we saw several water buffalo that were almost 100% submerged near the middle of the river - just their noses, eyes, and horns, that lie flat on the water, could be seen.

We finally came across a mahout, who had a small elephant in the shallow water, just a few feet off the bank. The elephant was very black, and apparently was still in the training stage, as he had a sizable chain around one foot. The other end of the chain was anchored to a big tree. He responded very well, however, to the mahout's instructions to stand up, turn around, come nearer, etc., which were given for our benefit, as I wanted to take some snaps. We didn't know that there was another elephant in the neighborhood - just as we were ready to resume our walk, a great squirt of muddy water shot up through the air from near the middle of the river. It was another elephant, and apparently a very large one, lying on his side, in the deep water. All that showed of him was a black, rounded, lump, that would have been taken, even at a few feet distance, for one of the many large rocks of the same colour, along the river bed. This chap's head was entirely submerged, and he just put his trunk out into the air every minute or two to shoot out a bit of mud that he appeared to be dredging from the bottom, and to take in a fresh supply of air.

We stopped our river hike at quite a high and modern suspension bridge, for pedestrian traffic only. On the way back, we met a snake, which, according to local description, was a poisonous one. It was just as frightened of us, as we were of it, so we did not stay with each other very long.

We got back to our basha huts about 1700 hours. Had a shower, and got ready for a cocktail party at the Deputy Commander in Chief's bungalow. The bungalow is on the top of a hill that you reach by way of a winding, narrow, roadway from the camp. It was a very attractive bungalow, and the view across to the neighboring hills was superb. The guests must have numbered about forty, and included, as well as our own Air Marshal, an unheard of collection of wide stripes, gold braid, and red tabs. Air Vice Marshals were a dime-a-dozen. The main interest, however, so far as we were concerned, was the two Canadian girls in the W.A.A.F., who were there. They were, Jean Drury (from Lindsay, I think), and Anne Dammings from Peterborough, Ontario. The only other thing to remember about the cocktail party was the marvellous sun-set that produced a glorious combination of reds, oranges, yellows, and related colours. On leaving the cocktail party, we took the two Canadian girls, and two other W.A.A.F.'s, and went down to the Officers' Club at Kandy, which is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles from camp. We had a fairish dinner there, and returned to the mess just in time to see the bar being closed. This apparently was not an insurmountable obstacle, as the Corporal in charge very kindly produced some glasses and something to put in them. As a parting remark, he said, half under his breath, "that ought to be worth 500 Canadian cigarettes".

For the first time since leaving Rome, in March, I slept under a blanket. The camp is at about 1,500 feet altitude, and the evening temperatures are delightful.

24th September, 1945.

After breakfast, we went up to Squadron Leader Conrad's office, and saw, from there, several Officers with whom our visiting personnel from London had business. Incidentally, at breakfast we ran across Flight Lieutenant McVeity, one of our Public Relations Officers, who was just back from Singapore. He had had a very interesting time there, and was now all set to go back to the United Kingdom.

At 1000 hours, we left, by car (The Air Marshal's seven-passenger Buick) for Colombo. It is very pleasant to drive through the hills, for about seventy miles. We were a bit late in arriving, and had a certain amount of difficulty with a luncheon date that the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief had with Mel Dover, the Ford headman for India and Ceylon. I think the invitation was really for the Chief himself, but all of us ended up at the Colombo Club as Mr. Dover's guest. He is the husband of Mary Cross of Calgary, and had just returned a short while before from a trip to Canada. I got more Calgary news from him, than I have heard in the last two or three years.

After lunch we broke up into two parties, and went out to do the shopping that the Chief and the Group Captains had been itching to get at for some time. Group Captain Rutledge and I went together, and did much more window shopping than anyone else. Ceylon is supposed to be famous for its semi-precious stones. We met one honest jeweller, however, (Seidele), who told us that no stones had been mined since the war started, that most of the ones on the market now were inferior, that there were a great many imitations, and that prices were high. It didn't worry me particularly, as I had no intention of buying any jewels.

One of the major events of the evening was a clothes-sorting-bee, held in Group Captain Corbet and Group Captain West's room, at the Galle Face Annex, where we were staying. The three Group Captains, not having been equipped with tropical clothing, had borrowed from anybody and everybody at Overseas Headquarters, in London, who had any odd bits of khaki on hand, - result was they had a great collection of shirts, shorts, slacks, bush-shirts and khaki socks of varied sizes and patterns. They sent out their first laundry at Colombo, and this evening, when it arrived back, attempted to sort our and re-allot the clothing. Needless to say, nobody knew what clothing was his responsibility, as they were not very familiar with what they had borrowed. From this day on, there will undoubtedly be repeated discoveries that each has shirts and shorts that could not possibly be the ones they borrowed.

In the evening, we went to a Dine and Dance place called the "Silver Faun". It is quite an attractive place, and we had a good dinner. It was a bit tantalizing watching the other people dance, since we, of course, had no partners.

25th September, 1945.

This morning we got up late. While Group Captain Rutledge and I were in for breakfast, the Chief appeared. He had spent the night at Air Vice Marshal Breakey's home. The other two were still in process of trying to get out of bed when we took the Chief back to their room.

At about 1030 we all drove out to #35 British General Hospital, at Mt. Lavinia, about six miles out of town. There we saw F/O Couch, from Castlegar, B.C., who has had infantile paralysis. He was most cheerful, although he has completely lost the use of his left arm, and he is just now beginning to be able to move the fingers of his right hand. He has been medically boarded, and will be returning to U.K. by the first hospital ship. Then we went to see Warrant Officer Appleton, who had just arrived there a day or two before, on being recovered from the Japs, in Sumatra. He had obviously had a pretty tough time of it, although he was now very cheerful. He will be there for some time, while many sores on his body heal, and until he is strong enough to travel.

We got back to the Galle Face and had an early lunch, after picking up the Chief's baggage at the Air Vice Marshal's house. Before we got

away from the hotel, the Chief bought some more souvenirs, this time from Macan Markar's, a jewelry shop in the hotel. We then went out to the airport (Ratmalana) and took off at 1420 hours for Bangalore. The most interesting part of this trip is seeing "Adam's Bridge", between Ceylon and the mainland. A long and very regular spit of land runs out from the upper corner of Ceylon, towards the mainland. A similar spit runs out from the mainland, and the two, at one time were probably joined, are now separated by a few miles of water, with little sand islands showing between the two spits. No ships of any size can pass between Ceylon and the mainland. All traffic from Colombo to Calcutta, therefore, goes around the south end of the island.

At 1730 we arrived at Bangalore, and were met by Air Vice Marshal Thornton, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of #225 Group, and by his personal assistant, a bright, young aircrew lad, Flight Lieutenant Miller. The Chief and Group Captain Rutledge were put up at the British Residents. The rest of us stayed at the Western Hotel, which was two main buildings with a collection of bungalows nearby.

Air Vice Marshal Thornton, who lived in one of the bungalows, invited us over for a drink before he left to have dinner with the British Resident and our Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief. At this stage, we met a Canadian Radar Officer, by the name of Flight Lieutenant Evans, who was the only Canadian left in that area. He went with us to the B.U.S. Club, where we had dinner, and watched people dancing. We met there a Canadian girl, formerly Tony Ranger, now Mrs. Baxter, who had been with the Psychological Warfare Branch in West Africa, at Algiers, and at Cairo. She had then got posted to India, and married Baxter, who she met first in west Africa. We were invited to their flat after leaving the B.U.S. Club, and spent a half hour or so there.

To top off the evening, we went to Flight Lieutenant Evans' room, in an R.A.F. Mess, and saw the purchases that he had made, to take home as presents and souvenirs. The prices he had paid for things, were approximately half of what I had considered the normal price for articles he had.

26th September, 1945.

The usual tea and a banana or two came in this morning at 0730. I was a bit more than usual inclined to stay in bed, because it was so comfortable. There is an indescribable satisfaction in having a blanket over you. This is the second time, since I left Italy in March, that I have slept under one - the first time being night before last, at Kandy. It was pleasantly cool, and I ended up my bath with sneezing and a bit of sniffing.

I wandered about the grounds a bit before breakfast, and saw some lovely "Kodachrome flowers". Just took one shot, however, and that a "record" one of the hotel - a bungalow type building.

F/L Evans met us at breakfast, and went to the airport with us. He had risen early, found some cashews, and had his bearer roast them. They were still warm when he presented them to Group Captain Corbet.

We got away from the airport at 1010 hours, and had a very pleasant trip (including a sleep) before the first place of real interest slipped past, about 7,000 feet down. It was Hyderabad, the seat of the fabulously wealthy Nizam of Hyderabad, the "wealthiest man in the world". I saw something that might have been his palace, but I was not sure. Snapped one or two Kodachrome of the town generally. The country for a few hundred miles, either side of Hyderabad, looks very fertile, and completely under cultivation, with the exception of a few ranges of hills that are wooded.

Hyderabad itself looks like a rather well laid out city. Our steward produced a cold chicken lunch - with tomatoes, potatoes (cold) and cucumbers. It really hit the spot.

Well, the most important scenic spot on the trip has just come

over the horizon - or I should say - out of the distant haze. The Taj Mahal - this time it is not the Taj Mahal Hotel at Bombay, but the real thing. The Chief has been invited up forward to sit in the Co-pilot's seat while we circle it. That gives me the opportunity to move over to his seat on the port side of the aircraft - since we will be making a left hand circuit around it.

It is smaller than I had thought. It is also less colorful. The marble seems to be just one shade - nearly white. It seems to be square with the marble tower in each corner completing a very symmetrical design. The usual photo from the pond in front does not give that impression. The back of it, (or rather the side opposite to that from which the pond runs out) faces on the river.

I banged away at it with Kodachrome - taking about six or seven shots. The exposure is entirely by guess, and if not correct, will be "over". I took most at 1/200 sec. and what would be about f2.8.

Now we are past Agra and streaking on to Delhi. The streaking sensation results from the fact that we came down low to see the Taj, and are not climbing again for the hundred miles or so from here to Delhi. The disadvantage in staying down (probably 500') is that it is getting unpleasantly hot in the aircraft. Have just undone my bush shirt. Group Captain West, who is i/c "baggage and equipment" is finding out what bags will be taken off the aircraft, is digging into the cigarette supply in keeping with a day's stop, and is transferring some "refreshments" from the "warehouse bag" to the "overnight" ones.

We landed at 1720 at Willingdon airport, and were met by S/L Hank Yeandle and a R.A.F. Group Captain. The Air Marshal Commanding of B.A.F., S.E.A., had been waiting there with Group Captain Patterson, and they apparently popped away for a bottle of beer. They came in one gate, however, just as Air Marshal Johnson drove out the other. Fortunately, he saw them, and returned to the airport, where plans were laid.

The Chief went to the Air Officers' Mess, and the rest of us, including Pat, went into Old Delhi, to the Maidens Hotel. I went with Yeandle in his station wagon. The others coming in a swanky Chrysler, had a blowout en route, and were a bit late.

We chatted (and had the odd drink) before dinner, in Group Captain West and Group Captain Corbett's room. Group Captain Patterson had just returned from Bangkok, and had many interesting things to tell. Pat had conceived the idea of getting to Hong Kong as the first Canadian to arrive there after the occupation. He got permission from London, who, of course, got it from Ottawa. An aircraft was laid on, (Dakota KN 620 - Y kite of 436 Sqdn.), and he came to Bombay to load up with Canadian cigarettes and comforts from our Auxiliary Services Warehouse. An Accounts Officer (S/L Dick Heald) and a Medical Officer (S/L Bayne), a Public Relations Officer (S/L Joe Crampton) and an Auxiliary Services Supervisor (Don Ross) from District Headquarters, accompanied him. They got to Rangoon, and were held up because of supposed (or real) lack of permission to land at Hong Kong. When that came through, a week later, they went on to Bangkok, and there had an engine failure. They waited about a week for a replacement that was flown in by 232 Group, and were on the eve of continuing their trip, when they received a signal that the Chief despatched the morning we were at Karachi, instruction Pat to return, since the trip was now no longer necessary.

To get back to Maidens Hotel - we had dinner in a very well air-conditioned dining room - and then returned to the room for a bit more "chewing the fat" and a "night-cap".

27th September, 1945.

In to breakfast, about 0830 - and just finishing, when the Chief appeared. He sat with us until all were finished - except Pat, who hadn't shown up yet. His bearer had neglected to awake him.

When all were assembled, Group Captain Rutledge started working on the Chief to alter the itinerary to include Srinagar in Kashmir. To give Pat a chance to get in his sales talk, the Chief took him in his car en route to the airport.

We are now airborne - at 1000 hours - and are en route back to Agra to see the Taj from the ground. The Kashmir trip has not been definitely decided on yet, but the Chief has weakened, and, if all arrangements can be made - i.e., permission to land on the Maharajahs grass landing ground, etc., there is no doubt he will give his approval.

Well, here we are, back in the aircraft returning to Delhi. We landed at Agra (an American airfield, and were met by Air Commodore E.F. Pendern, A.O.C. of 237 (?) Group, and by the American Colonel (from St. Louis) who was the station Commander. We went to the hotel in which the Air Commodore and a few of his senior officers lived for a few minutes, and then proceeded right to the Taj.

It was built in the 17th Century, by Shah Jehan, one of the VIP's of that day, for his favourite wife. It took seventeen years for 2,000 men to throw it up. The old boy was taken prisoner by somebody who didn't like him, and he died in captivity. I would say that because of this masterpiece in marble, he will be remembered a long time.

You enter the grounds through a large arched "gate house" type of building in red stone. The Taj stands directly in front of you, about 250 or 300 yards away. The famous pool - which is narrower than I had thought, and filled with brackish water, runs directly towards it. The pool is shallow (about a foot deep), and people have written their names with the points of their umbrellas in the slime on the bottom. There is a walk on either side of the pond. About midway from the "gate-house" to the Taj, the first pool ends, and there is a raised "platform" about 50' square and five feet high. In the middle of it is a small pool, about 30' square, in which waterlilies are growing.

This platform is a good photo location point - and we used it as such. Between it and the Taj is another pool, 100 yards or so in length, and comparable to the first long one. To the right, and left, of the Taj are two buildings similar in stone to the gate house. They are domed.

It seems rather futile to try to describe the Taj itself, when so many <sup>photos</sup> points are available (or should be when I have all of mine processed). I'll make a very sketchy comment, however. The building is primarily white marble. It is square, and rises from a square base that is about 25 feet high, with the "Taj proper" in the middle. Each side of the square base is possibly 100 feet longer than each side of the building itself. The main structure therefore has a border or "floor space", about fifty feet wide and twenty-five feet above ground level, all around it. From each corner of this square base, arises a minaret. They too are of white marble. They are circular, and would have a bottom diameter of about twenty feet. Their height is three "storeys", and at each of these levels there is a little balcony. They can be ascended by way of a solid spiral stairway - in the dark.

The white marble of the structure is, for decorative effect, inlaid, at appropriate places, with cut stone of other colors, particularly blues. Many precious stones also are used. This inlay work can be inspected at close quarters in the interior of the walls of the enclosure around the tomb of the favourite wife. It is the same work that can be seen in Florence, in the shops where they copy oil paintings in stone inlay work. In fact, Italian stone cutters and artisans from other parts of the middle and far east were imported by Shah Jehan.

The Taj Mahal is an edifice that would grow on one, for there is no doubting its architectural beauty. The main dome is set off by four smaller domes - one in each corner. The shape of the domes is reflected in the shape of the tops of the archways.

After leaving the Taj, we were taken by Air Commodore Pendern to one of the best tourist shops. I confined my purchases to one evening

bag - black with gold embroidery on it. The cost was fifty rupees. We then went to the Hotel, where the Air Commodore lived, and immediately became involved with some small souvenir shops on the premises. Pat spent some time in finding six matched coasters of white marble with stone inlays - presumably an example of the materials used in the Taj. The shopkeeper wanted thirty chips, and Pat countered for twenty. The shopkeeper didn't appear to be interested in that price, so Pat showed his independence too, by stopping negotiations. I then came along, and took over where Pat left off, and eventually got the coasters for twenty-one chips.

We had lunch at the Hotel, went out, and inspected their very fine swimming pool, and then returned to the airport, taking off at 1510, and landing at Delhi at 1600.

That evening, we attended (through the good offices of Air Marshal Carr) a large cocktail party, given by the Senior American Officer at Delhi, on the eve of his return to the United <sup>States</sup> Kingdom. It was a very efficiently and properly run affair, with a presentation line of three senior Americans, and the daughter of one of them (in civvies). There were two bars operating to full capacity, and the drinks were good, with, of course, large quantities of ice. There might have been 200 people there, with a distribution of about one female to each six males. The ladies were in evening dress. By far the greater percentage of men were in uniform, and most of them were of the rank of Colonel, Group Captain, or above, with a liberal infiltration of various types of Generals and Air Commodores and Air Vice Marshals.

I chatted with a few people (the usual "How long have you been out here? When are you going home?" type of question) of whom, an Australian Army Lieutenant (MacKay) was the most interesting. He had just been released, after  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years in Jap hands in Singapore. He appeared to be in much better condition than any of the other released Prisoners of War I have seen - and had gone so far as to have a drink. Most of them have been advised by the medicos to refrain from smoking and from drinking anything of alcoholic content, until they are in good form again. MacKay's father (a Lieutenant General, I believe), who is the Australian Commissioner to India (or some similar appointment), was also at the party, as was his sister, a Mrs. Travers.

We left at 2100 hours, and repaired to the Air Officers' Mess, which is the residence of nine or ten Officers of Air Rank. Our host was Air Marshal Carr, the Air Marshal Commanding, B.A.F. S.E.A. The setting was in quite an extensive villa, built by the Maharaja of something or other, on his infrequent and short visits to Delhi.

After a drink or two, we sat down to a floodlighted table in the garden. It was quite an imposing gathering for a mere Wingco to be mixed up in. There were two Air Marshals, (one of them, the Chief), five Air Commodores (all R.A.F.), four Group Captains (all from our party), one Wing Commander, and one Squadron Leader (S/L Hank Yeandle).

The meal was as good as the setting. Six courses, and every one very appetising. Afterwards, we went inside and played poker dice (sitting on the beautifully carpeted drawing room floor) for an hour or so, for small stakes. The host was the only one who made any money.

28th September] 1945.

This is the first day we are off schedule. Our plans were made yesterday to go to Kashmir to-day, and Karachi was advised to change our date for accommodation there to the 29th, instead of the originally planned 28th.

When Air Marshal Carr learned of our plans, he advised against the Kashmir trip, and consequently it has been cancelled. To avoid asking Karachi to change our date there back to the 28th again - and alter dates for stops beyond Karachi a second time - we are staying in Delhi to-day.

The Chief came over to our Hotel (Maiden's) when we were having a late breakfast. We all sat and chatted afterwards, and about noon, went to the swimming pool at the nearby Cecil Hotel. The pool is small, but we had it almost entirely to ourselves. I shot a few snaps. One in color, of the whole gang, and quite a few black and white of Group Captain West doing sommersaults and other fancy dives.

At 1335, we returned to the Maiden's Hotel, and had a delightful couple of glasses of Canadian beer (Frontenac) that Hank Yeandle had somehow found for Pat. We finished lunch at 1500, slept until about 1700, and, at about 1800, got two tongas (the local horse-taxi - a two wheeled cart with a drivers seat wide enough for two, facing forward, and a passenger seat, also for two, facing backward. If there are four passengers, or if there seems to be too much weight, tending to lift the little horse off the ground, the driver sits sideways on the base of the shafts.

With three in one Tonga, and two in the other, (the Chief had gone back to his hosts after lunch), we proceeded to Chandni Chowk, reputedly the most wealthy street in Asia. There we did a bit of window shopping, and looking at trinkets, etc. in some of the jewellers and silver workers' places. I don't think anyone bought a thing.

Chandni Chowk is a medium wide street. Street cars run down the sides, instead of in the middle as is customary. Goodness knows why they don't run into people, donkey carts, bullock carts, or straying cows every few hundred yards. Most of the cows, however, seem to be smart enough to frequent the sidewalks and shop entrances only. The shops along Chandni Chowk are not large and palatial as the reputation of the street might suggest. They are quite narrow, and the shop owners are sitting on the floor, which is usually two or three feet above ground level. There are a great many gold and silver merchants - so the story goes - hence the wealth.

One point of interest was that one of the shopkeepers was not interested in doing business with us at all, and showed no inclination to let us in. Whether he drew his line because we were westerners, or not, I do not know.

We returned to Maiden's Hotel in tongas - by a different route, and spent a normal evening.

29th September, 1945.

At 0910 we took off from Willingdon Airport for Karachi. We flew over Jodhpur about half way, and I took two or three shots from about 7,000 feet.

The latter part of the flight is over country that gradually gets drier and drier. The all-over pattern of fields changes to a design of fields in the valleys only. Those fields too disappear, as the land becomes flatter and lacking in any signs of life. For 150 miles or so, you are over the Sind desert.

We landed at Karachi shortly after 1300, and were met by the Station Commander (Group Captain Evans). As at the start of the trip, I was unable to talk my way into the Somerset Mess with the other (higher ranking) members of the party.

In the afternoon, Pat and I went to A.B.C. to arrange return to Bombay. We would probably get passage day after tomorrow.

At about 1600, we all walked down to Elphinstone street for the last minute shopping. I was not interested, but the others - who were returning to London, picked up a few knick knacks.

All retired early - for about two hours. At 1230, we were awakened, and the Chief and the members of his party went yawningly away

to the airport to make an 0200 hour takeoff, which, they hoped, would get them to Lydda (near Tel Aviv, Palestine) that afternoon. As a parting shot, the Chief said "We will be expecting you back in November - I suppose you will be stopping in Rome". Although I wasn't very wide awake, Pat confirmed my opinion later, that it sounded like permission to stop in Rome if I wished.

30th September, 1945.

This is a day of rest. (Not that we need it!). With a day to kill before we can get an aircraft to Bombay, Pat and I went swimming at the Boat Club in the morning, and at Clifton Beach in the afternoon - and picked up a bit of sunburn. We tried to go to a show in the evening, but couldn't get seats - so ended by having a couple of drinks at the Carlton Hotel, and walking back to the Somerset - and bed.

1st October, 1945.

Once again at about 6,000 feet and over the Sind Desert, en route to Ahmedabad and Bombay. Took off at 1300 in an Expediter of Tata Airlines. Pilot and Co-pilot (that is the whole crew) are both Indians. There are just five seats in this dainty little aircraft. They are good machines, however, and make slightly better time than a Dakota.

When I arrive in Bombay, this afternoon, I shall have completed the trip, started on the 18th of September. Total flying hours will be 35½ hours.

This then, is the finis of my attempt to keep a diary.

Love,  
Alan.