

## Appendix "A"

Extract from *Darwin Examiner* d. 5 Oct/44

### RAF Observer Tells About Near East Show

Flight Lieutenant John Stillwell, D.F.C., of the Royal Air Force, gave Barrie Kiwanis Club an interesting narrative at their dinner meeting Monday, Sept. 25, in the American Hotel, of his experiences while training in Canada, his first tour of operations as a bomber over Germany, and his second tour in the Mediterranean theatre.

F/L. Stillwell came to Canada in the early days of the war as an aircrew student of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. He trained at Malton and Fingal, Ontario, and Rivers, Manitoba. He graduated as a sergeant observer and was commissioned prior to getting overseas. His first tour was in the early days when the RAF was just beginning to hand something back to the Nazis. That tour completed, he was posted to Egypt for further operations. Early this year he was given a chance for pilot training and returned to Canada. Having completed his elementary training in the West, he is now at No. 1 SFTS, Camp Borden, for advanced flying.

A very modest chap but with a grand personality, F/L. Stillwell treated his unforgettable experiences as if they were matter-of-fact everyday occurrences. But he has a fine sense of humor and a ready grasp of wit that had his Kiwanis

### RAF OBSERVER TELLS KIWANIS OF EXPERIENCES

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audience chuckling most of the time. His impressions of Canada on his initial visit were worth hearing. Ontario he liked very well, also British Columbia, but the vast open spaces of the Prairies bothered him. "It's the only place I know where you can see three days ahead." Drug stores in this country amazed him—"over home they sell nothing but drugs, here there is hardly anything they don't sell."

On the trip from Gibraltar to Egypt, his bomber crew had a dangerous experience. They erred while flying over the Mediterranean and suddenly found themselves right above Crete, then the hottest hell of German anti-aircraft and fighters in the area. But the Huns didn't fire at them for some unknown reason, and they reached Egypt. Bombing operations were a far different thing in this area than over Europe. The good aircraft engines which ran so smoothly in England were sometimes affected by sand and intense heat. It was always a hazardous job and there were many forced landings and walks home from behind Rommel's lines. There was always a good chance of getting back in the wide open desert to the south of the fighting zone. He told of a Canadian lad who held the record for days lost and finally reached his base again.

A string of anecdotes of his experiences on his two tours made F/L. Stillwell's talk gripping and amusing. He was introduced by W/C. W. G. Welstead, commanding officer at Camp Borden RCAF Station, and thanked for the Kiwanis Club by Wm. Green.