

A Winnipeg Flier in Germany

Adventures of Lieut. Hector Dougall, and Another Aviator, on Two Attempts to Escape.

AMONG the stories of adventure in the war, on land, on sea and in the air, many of which will not become known until after the war is ended, there can be few more thrilling than that of a Winnipeg boy, Lieut. Hector F. Dougall, the son of W. C. Dougall, of 251 Bell avenue, Winnipeg.

Young Dougall, after several months' service at the front as an aviator, was brought down in February last, eight miles over the German lines, after a running fight in the air, following upon his having destroyed a German observation balloon, or "kite," as such balloons are termed at the front, which he had gone after.



Lieut. Hector F. Dougall, R.A.F.

The Grain Growers' Guide is privileged to print herewith a letter received from an English aviator, Lieut. Sedley G. Williams, who was with Lieut. Dougall first in five days' journeying by day and lying concealed by night, after they had made their escape from a train, and later in nineteen days of being at large in Germany, on a second attempt to escape. Lieut. Williams, whose life Lieut. Dougall saved by preventing a German picket from shooting him, by striking aside the picket's rifle, managed to make his escape to Holland. Lieut. Dougall was taken back to a German prison camp. That was the second attempt at escape made by each of the two young men.

Lieut. Williams' letter, which is addressed to Lieut. Dougall's family, is here made public for the first time. By way of preface to it, extracts are here given from two letters written by Lieut. Dougall himself, the first to his mother, the second to his sister:—

Two Letters From Karlsruhe

Karlsruhe, March 15, 1918.

Dear Mother,

Well, I have changed my address again, you see, though it is no fault of mine. I hope you haven't worried about me. You might know I would be all right. I was shot down while I was shooting up an observation kite. I got the kite, and the Germans got me. I was awfully lucky to get down. My machine was blown to pieces. If I hadn't had good goggles on, I should have lost both eyes. As it was my face was cut, and my nose broken. I might have got back to our side, but could not see for the blood running in my eyes. Anyway I was eight miles over, so perhaps I didn't have much of a chance of making it. But I got that kite.

I suppose it will be a long time before you get this. I am allowed to write only two letters and four cards a month, so don't get excited, dear Mother, if you don't get many letters from me. I hope you haven't been worrying about me. I will be all right. You might know that. But I wish you would send me lots to eat. Sardines are \$1.10 a box here. I have no clothes or boots, but will get them about the middle of next month.

I was brought down on the 26th of last month, and believe me I have had some time since. I hope Dad is well. Don't let them worry about me. I am feeling fine, couldn't be better, and hope to be home soon.

Well, I haven't got any news, of course. I never hear anything, so all I can write is that I am well and happy, even if I am in rags. Don't forget to write often. They let us get all the letters that come to us. And send chocolate and cake. And don't worry. I'll take good care of myself.

Landshut, March 31, 1918.

Dear Mabel,

Well, I am away east in the centre of Bavaria now, doing time under sen-

tence. I escaped from the train when they were moving me from Karlsruhe, and struck out for the Swiss border. Had some pretty exciting experiences. Was at large for five days, and you can believe me I was pretty much all in when I had to give in just 15 miles from the border. However, that's all over now, and I am in Germany till the war is over.

There is a great push on now. I believe the Germans have driven our armies back a good bit, but everything will come out all right. I only wish I was in it. Cheer up, we'll all have a big time when I get home. I don't think I'll be here long. When I finish my sentence, I expect to be moved to some camp. It seems years since I heard from anyone, yet it's only six months since I left home.

A Letter From England

Here is (with only a few omissions) the letter of Lieut. Sedley G. Williams, which tells its own story of the second attempt to escape:—

Kynance, Highlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey. 16th July, 1918.

I was taken prisoner on the 21st February, 1918, through engine trouble. After spending 14 days at Courtrai I went to Karlsruhe and met your brother for the first time. He was brought down while strafing a Hun observation balloon on February 22. We were both very "fed up" with the life, and agreed that we would try and "hop" it on the first opportunity. We stuck together as much as we could and discussed various means of escape. Fortunately I had a compass on me so that helped matters considerably.

On March 18 we left the camp and proceeded by a train that was taking us to Landshut. About 4.30 a.m. on the morning of the 19th three R.F.C. officers (Hector, an Australian and I) jumped the train and started to make for the Swiss border. We had no map with us, so it was rather a difficult task to accomplish. We did not have much food with us so had to be very sparing with it. We were, of course, amateurs at the game, so you can bet we had plenty of "wind up."

We hid all day in woods and walked by night. On the second night Dougall went into a farmyard and pinched a duck. This helped us considerably, for every bit of food was welcome. We cooked the bird by day and enjoyed it immensely. It was very cold travelling in the bush; in many parts of the ground the snow was very thick. Water was sometimes scarce, so we had to drink the melted snow. On the third night the Australian gave up. I think he had had enough of it.

Hector and I carried on as best we could. We passed through the Black Forest and many more places not so important. Most of the time we followed the railway line. As we had no map I thought we were going in the wrong direction and were on a wild goose chase. Your brother was certain we were on the right track so we kept going.

Capture of the Fugitives

On the fifth day we passed through a large station, far larger than we expected. We thought we should have time enough to pass through it before the light came. Unfortunately the place was quite a large town and when we had reached the outskirts of it it was 6.30 a.m. in the morning and quite light. There was a river one side of us and a village on the other, so the only place to hide was a bridge under the railway. It was very cold, so we lit a fire in order to cook some beet root we had pinched and make soup out of it. As we were thus employed a

railway worker (plate layer) discovered us.

Hector wanted me to run for it, but the only way of escape was by swimming the river and as we were not certain where we were, I am sorry to say I did not go at his request. We were then taken to a guard room. I forgot to mention that before being taken to the guard room we stayed in a farmhouse for five minutes. During this time a German woman showed us a map of the district. We discovered to our regret that we were only 15 or 20 miles from the frontier. When we were in the guard room we tried hard to hop it again. We lifted the floor boards up and started to burrow a way through the brick building. Had we been there another hour I am certain we would have got "free" again, but unfortunately the guard came in and we were then taken by train to the camp we were supposed to have gone to.

On arriving at Landshut we were separated and put in a civil prison. Here we were searched very thoroughly for a map and compass. The compass was with Hector at the time, and when he was examined he placed it in his mouth. We were both continually searched as they did not find anything on us and were almost certain we had the above articles.

After doing three days there we rejoined our pals in the main camp. We spent four days with them and then we had to do a further eight days' punishment for escaping. The punishment consists of putting you into a room by yourself with nothing to do. It is very monotonous but not so bad. Of course, the food was rotten. After doing the eight days we rejoined the rest of the R.F.C. officers. At Landshut we were inoculated five times and vaccinated once. Each officer managed to buy one book to read, and as there were fifteen of us there we were able to change them about. Also we had a pack of cards. It was there that I learned the game of 500, Hector taught me.

The Second Getaway

On May 31 we left the place. We were going on a three-days' journey to Holzminden in Prussia. On entering the train Hector and I had to take our boots off and we were very closely watched. We had made an attempt to escape before. The officer in charge had special instructions from the Camp Commandant that we were a "bad lot" so he did his best to watch us carefully. We spent one night in the train and did not get any chance of escape then. In the morning we changed trains. We got our boots back as we had to walk on the platform some way. Hector and I then managed to keep together again and we got into an ordinary local train. He was the first one in the carriage and he managed to grab the railway map from the door. I and three other officers followed and then lastly the guard. Hector had by this time put the map into his pocket without the guard noticing it.

At 9.30 in the morning, when it was broad daylight, Hector and I jumped off the train. We were too quick for the guard, so he had not time to fire on us. We rolled down an embankment and made for the nearest bit of cover. We hid there for the day and started our walk when it got dark. We did not know where we were till we looked at the map. We were very much surprised to see that we had at least 300 miles to walk before reaching Holland. We thought that after travelling nearly a day in the train we would be closer to the frontier. However, we decided to make a shot at it and do our best. The only food in our possession was two loaves of bread and ten tins of sardines.

Commandeering Supplies

The first night we pinched three fowls and cooked them the next day. We did not eat all of them but kept some by in reserve. The next night we felt much braver after the fowl episode and so we broke into a house and stole as much as we could carry. We got about six dozen eggs, milk, bacon and other stuff. We had quite a good breakfast in the morning. The remainder of the eggs we "hard boiled" and placed them also in reserve. This house-break-

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