

**Name: William Arnold Moore**

**Date of Birth: 23.1.23**

**Place of Birth: Shanghai, China**

**Nationality: British**

**1941** - Enlisted in RAFVR (Volunteer Reserve) as an aircrew trainee (Pilot), in about April '41. Called up in August.

**1942 – January** - Sent to Canada for training. Their instructor and one pupil were killed in a crash in the first month.

**February 13<sup>th</sup>**. *Fancy choosing Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> for my first solo flight.*

**From April 3<sup>rd</sup> '42 to July 8<sup>th</sup>**, *a period of inactivity, during which I was failed for night flying. Inadequate night vision, especially for night landings. Remustered (changed over) to air gunner. The day I was due to start on return journey to U.K. for A/G course, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, I was told about air bombers course (later called 'bomb aimer'). A new category of air crew aimed at getting more accurate bombing results. Lancaster's, Halifax's and Stirling's now coming into operation, with much bigger bomb-loads.*

*Most of time before starting A/B's course spent at big RCAF (Royal Canadian Air Force) station at Trenton, Ontario, where I was severely messed about due to lack of documents. Volunteered for A/B's course, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, started July 19<sup>th</sup>.*

**May 11<sup>th</sup>**. *Delighted to hear my name was on A.G.'s posting to Moncton (3 squadron).*

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>.** *This morning C.O.'s told us A.G.'s about new air bombers job. 14 week course with pay etc., some as observer. Sounds fine. I and 18 others volunteered. Will start probably on Monday at Picton, Ontario. Knew about it at 10 o'clock, was on the train to Trenton at 1.55! Nine of us accepted.*

**November** – back to UK .

**December 21<sup>st</sup>.** *Told this morning we're going to 14 O.T.U., Cottesmore, in Rutland.*

**1943**

*Prologue:- Last Christmas I was feeling pretty rotten in the middle of the Atlantic on a Norwegian cargo ship, being transported to Canada to train in U.S.A. After nearly a year of training the final stage is reached, and here we are at number 14 Operational Training Unit, Cottesmore, Rutland, a large RAF station situated miles from anywhere, nearest town, and that's an exaggeration, being Oakham, 5 miles or so distant. Our course is likely to be 3 months or thereabouts, flying one day, lectures the next, and a day off about once a week. When in a thoughtful mood I sometimes get to wondering how many of the chaps on our course will be alive and free men at the end of this year.*

**January 15<sup>th</sup>.** *Packed kit bags hastily on hearing we were leaving for Saltby at 8.30.*

**January 21<sup>st</sup>.** *Something of a red-letter day. First trip up in a Wellington and first time to fly as a member of a crew.*

**January 27<sup>th</sup>.** Mentions "**Pete Toms, our rear gunner**".

**January 31<sup>st</sup>.** Mentions "**Reg Frost**" (my pilot)

**February 16<sup>th</sup>.** *In p.m. we heard that one of our kites (the crew were from our course) 'pranged' in the afternoon, spun in or blew up or something, nobody seems to know just what did happen. Whole crew killed except rear gunner.*

**March 2<sup>nd</sup>.** *Last night we went up in a kite that had flaps that wouldn't go up, which reduced our airspeed to between 60-80. Actually stalled once - in cloud! Reg managed to bring her out OK. and we put down at nearby 'drome. Returned to Cottesmore by truck. Lectures today.*

**March 9<sup>th</sup>.** *Another crew from our course have had a nasty accident, while apparently making a forced landing last night. So far as we know, pilot, bombardier and W/op killed.*

**March 17<sup>th</sup>.** *Mentions **Bob (the W/op)**.*

**April 18<sup>th</sup>.** *Hear we're going to Wigsley for our Conversion unit, and it's a Lancaster drome all right, for which three cheers.*

**April 23<sup>rd</sup>.** *Today we had our first trip up in a Lancaster, a familiarisation flight lasting about 2 1/2 hours. Weather was drizzly and dull, but I enjoyed it a lot. Seems a very manoeuvrable kite, and beautifully stable. We flew for a few minutes on one engine!*

**April 25<sup>th</sup>.** ***Reg**, our pilot, is getting his commission soon. Five groups are giving all their pilots commissions. (Not all, actually, - Reg didn't, being shot down soon after start of his tour.)*

**April 27<sup>th</sup>.** *Today is marked by quite a historical event, our first solo in a Lanc. We did 2 solo landings, and both nice ones, after doing 3 with instructor. Rotten weather for it, a pretty fair electrical storm and pretty bumpy, so Reg. really did well.*

**April 30<sup>th</sup>.** *We did our first night solo. Reg did some lovely landings, often doing some quite mediocre ones dual. Most pilots are better solo.*

May 18<sup>th</sup>. Mentions **Jim (the engineer)**.

**May 23<sup>rd</sup>.** *This morning we got the gen. about where we're going for our Op.'s. Our crew, with 2 others, neither of whom we know very well, are **going to 49 Squadron, at Fiskerton, just east of Lincoln.** From what we hear it should be really good.*

**All of June** spent at Scampton sick quarters with an infected foot.

**June 21<sup>st</sup>.** **Learnt today that Reg Frost and the rest of my crew have been missing since the Oberhausen raid a week ago.**

**July 13<sup>th</sup>.** *One kite missing from last night (Turin), and their loss makes me the sole survivor of 3 crews that arrived here on May 24th. They were the crew I nearly went with yesterday.*

**July 25<sup>th</sup>.** *Definitely a red letter day. Was told at tea time I'd be operating the same evening. Pilot is a New Zealand W.O. For a first trip the target was pretty ambitious. However, for **Essen** it seemed to me fairly quiet. Some lovely fires. We even saw the river lit up by them.*

**July 27<sup>th</sup>.** *We're on again today - it seems as though I'm with the crew I flew with Sunday night as their permanent bomb aimer. Went to **Hamburg**, which in my opinion was a tougher trip than Essen.*

*A rather unnerving incident occurred on this first trip to Hamburg. Lots of flak and we were hit by a small piece of shrapnel which made a hole in the windscreen from which some fragments of perspex flew back into the eye of the pilot, W/O McCabe. He was temporarily blinded and must have thought the injury was worse than it was, shouting in the intercom, "I've had it chaps!". He managed to get things, and himself under control, and we made it home, though a rough landing.*

**August 2<sup>nd</sup>.** ***Hamburg again**. Big black cumulo nimbus cloud over the target but we managed to identify and bomb it. Many crews jettisoned their bombs, the pilots being unwilling to fly straight into such clouds, where sudden up and down draughts can just about shake even a Lancaster to pieces. We managed to make out the target and gave it the works with comparative success*

**August 9<sup>th</sup>.** ***Mannheim** was entertaining the RAF this time. Weather was pretty ropey, but it was quite a good concentration. Quite a lot of searchlights but not much else.*

**August 10<sup>th</sup>.** *After getting to bed after 6 o'clock, and up for lunch, we find we're on again tonight, which is inclined to make our skipper not too happy at all. Went to **Nuremberg**, which looked quite a mess when we got there. Rather cloudy though. Not much flak and few searchlights.*

**August 12<sup>th</sup>.** ***Milan** was target. Post master general spoke a few words about the importance of the op. Alps were best part of trip. Lovely sight. Target was well and truly pranged. Very little opposition.*

**August 15<sup>th</sup>.** **Milan again**, and not such an easy trip this time. Defences over target quite heavy, but very good concentration of fires. One of our crews shot down over France.

**August 17<sup>th</sup>.** **Peenemünde**, on Baltic coast. German V1 and V2 research station. (V1's are crude shaped cylindrical bombs with short wings that made a noise like a motorcycle, V2's bombs were much bigger, like a rocket.) Special target and boy! did they plaster us. Still, we made up for it on the way back, when the rear and mid upper gunners between them shot down a Jerry fighter which had been following us for a long time and took a squirt at us.

We were told at briefing target had to be destroyed first shot, or we'd have to return until it was. Should be able to see it well enough to bomb it directly, or if obscured by smoke or cloud, to do a timed run from visible point on coast, if that's clear (it was). When we got there, after a long trip, we started a timed run in case of doubtful visibility over target and there was a lot of smoke. It seemed a good hit. We were one of the last to bomb (had one of the oldest aircraft - the newer crews were often lumbered with the older aircraft - tough bikkies eh?).

On the way home, with coast still visible, I spotted something way below that could be an aircraft. It was. Approached us, keeping directly below. As it came closer I identified it as a Junkers 88 (twin-engined fighter-bomber). We weaved to give them a harder shot. Gunners unable to get a good sight on them as they stayed right underneath. When they came up really close they let go a long shot, which passed in front of our nose - (I was in the nose-cone, giving running commentary - terse - intercom silence), brilliant flashes of tracer bullets appearing incredibly close. The fighter then dropped several thousand feet and started a cat and mouse game again. Our pilot weaved more violently and fighter moved over to be alongside us, perhaps 200 yds to stbd. I told pilot and suggested a quick bank over to starboard. Then the two gunners (rear and mid-upper) and I, when I'd got up into front gun position, could get a good shot.

*As I was squeezing up into B/A's gun turret and changing oxygen connection positions I heard the long rattle of our guns and saw a number of bright incandescent objects drifting downwards, amid smoke. As soon as I plugged into intercom again and became part of an excited conversation, I understood the gunners had hit the fighter, which had exploded! Rest of trip trouble free. Our squadron, 49, lost four Lancaster's out of twelve. Our fighter later confirmed as definitely shot down.*

September 1<sup>st</sup>. Mentions **Henry (mid-upper)** and **George (engineer)**

September 3<sup>rd</sup>. **Target was Berlin**, and we took off fairly early. Quiet, uneventful trip. Good concentration of fires on the target. Very low cloud over base, so we were diverted to another 'drome, where we landed at 4.30 or so, and only just in time as we had very little petrol left.

**September 5<sup>th</sup>**. Mentions **McCabe (our pilot)** and **George (rear gunner)**, flying with a new crew tonight.

**September 7<sup>th</sup>**. Mentions Sergeev (**Sergy**, navigator)

**September 10<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>**. *I am now flying with a **P/O Len Coxill, a good experienced pilot**. Our **navigator, Sergy**, is with him too, and we've been having special training with some new equipment which is going to be very nice to have on Op.'s, and we're very lucky to get it. We've been to **Hanover** with Coxill. Quite a good trip (Wednesday). .*

**September 23<sup>rd</sup>**. **Sergy and self are with Coxill** as we were last night. Wouldn't be surprised if we're with him permanently. Went to **Mannheim**, a pretty easy trip I thought, though we lost 2 crews, one new and the other in their 20's (number of trips).

**September 27<sup>th</sup>.** *Sergeev and I are with Len Coxill permanently* now, which suits me fine.

**September 29<sup>th</sup>.** *Danzig.* At briefing it sounded like an exciting trip. Our crew was to go all by itself, to the port of Danzig, our longest trip, and drop mines in a canal leading into Danzig. The mines had different settings, not necessarily detonating when the first ship went over them, to cause more confusion. A fine night was necessary, and it was. A timed run might be used if there was some cloud, but accuracy was essential in the actual drop. Mines would be on parachutes, and would be dropped at extreme low level.

*Approaching target, visibility was fine, and as far as I remember nothing much happened. I forget how many mines there were, but several. I said "steady" and pressed the bomb tit so that the mines started to fall from the aircraft. The pilot had to fly perfectly straight which made us extremely vulnerable, till all the mines had gone. As soon as the first mines went down and they knew what the target was, everything opened up. Searchlights and ack-ack (anti-aircraft) of all types. When I said "all gone" the pilot pulled into a sharp turn, highly relieved at being able to escape from the straight and level routine, and gave it full revs, (still keeping very low). It looked to me even lower than 50 ft - much lower. I could see the waves travelling fast towards us. We continued flying at this level until we reached the end of the bay and were well out of range. It was amazing we were scarcely hit. Perhaps we were so low it was hard to get a good bead on us. I distinctly remember some tracer coming down at us from above, and later learned that there were flak towers in that area, which would account for it. It seemed to me over the target and even as we finally turned away, heading for home, that we'd be very lucky to get away with it. Total time for trip 10 hours, 30 minutes - our longest.*

*Later we were told that the attack had been particularly successful, though we weren't able to get more detailed information.*

*We used a new gadget (H2S) for navigation, and with great success. Very little work necessary.*

**October 1<sup>st</sup>.** *Spent the morning cleaning guns in our kite, 'V' Victor (we're the only kite permitted to give the V-sign to the G/C and Wing Co. when we take off). Went to Hagen. Very cloudy and difficult to see target. Quiet trip.*

**October 2<sup>nd</sup>.** *At briefing Groupy (Group Captain) congratulated our crew on mining trip (Danzig, on the Baltic coast), which was very successful, though he wouldn't say why. Munich tonight. Lovely target conditions. Looked a good prang.*

**October 8<sup>th</sup>.** *Hannover and my 2nd time there. Pretty good target conditions and looked really good. Lots of fighters. Back early, due to a fast kite.*

**October 24<sup>th</sup>.** *Mentions Jock MacCallum, engineer.*

**October 27<sup>th</sup>.** *The big noises at group have confirmed our photo of Hanover as an aiming point (Oct. 8th), which is a very good show. Means that our bombs were right on the centre of the target.*

**October 28<sup>th</sup>.** *Mentions Henry, mid upper.*

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>.** *Mentions Terry Tyler (replacement navigator). Düsseldorf was target, with quite a few search lights and fighters. Clear target conditions. Looked a good prang.*

**November 4<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>.** *We did a nice trip to Modane in S.W. France, where Jerry keeps marshalling yards and has railway tunnels via which he sends supplies, or used to send them, to the Italian front. They had about four guns and no search lights there and no one saw any fighters. All the kites returned, which was another thing to make the trip practically unique. The place was just about obliterated (we used 1000 pounders), and we got an aiming point photograph.*

*The photo we bought back of Dusseldorf has also been confirmed as an aiming-point, which with Hanover on October 8th gives us three in succession, and a hat-trick in aiming-points is something nobody on this squadron has ever done before!*

*My promotion to Flight Sergeant came through.*

**November 22<sup>nd</sup>.** *Early briefing for Berlin. The continent was covered by ten tenths cloud, but the target was well marked. They had bags of these rocket-gun affairs, but no searchlights, - couldn't penetrate the cloud. No fighters either. Lots of flak on the route.*

**November 24<sup>th</sup>.** *This afternoon all the crews who have been here over 2 months got their 1939 - 43 stars. Shabby looking thing.*

**November 26<sup>th</sup>.** *Big City was target again. Fairly easy trip, though sky was clear over Berlin. Lots of searchlights, not many fighters. Flak was scattered. Saw the glow of fires 160 miles away.*

**December 9<sup>th</sup>.** *Mentions Junior (W/OP).*

**December 10<sup>th</sup>.** *Groups have confirmed our photo of Dusseldorf as an aiming-point, which with Hanover and Modane gives us a hat trick, a most unusual event.*

**December 16<sup>th</sup>.** War tonight. First time for P/O Coxill's crew for over three weeks. **Berlin** again (my 4th there). Very easy trip as far as we were concerned. Lots of fighter flares, but hardly any flak, didn't see any fighters, and searchlights couldn't penetrate cloud. Back by 12.30. Dropped a special cookie (2000 lb. bomb) with an extra kick to it.

**December 20<sup>th</sup>.** In morning went to see the Base Commander at Scampton (an Air Commodore) about my commission. Said he was "very pleased" to recommend it. Went to **Frankfurt** in evening. Quite a big effort. Photographers took our picture coming back and before going.

**December 23<sup>rd</sup>.** War tonight. **Berlin** was covered with cloud, but we put our bombs in the right place. Quiet trip on the whole.

**December 29<sup>th</sup>.** We dice again. Another **Berlin**, and target conditions the same as ever, with thick cloud that searchlight couldn't penetrate. Fair amount of flak, but no fighters seen. No excitement at all. All our squadron kites are back.

## 1944

**January 5<sup>th</sup>.** War tonight. Late briefing and long trip, to **Stettin**. Everyone expected a tough time, but it wasn't so bad. Our crew and a few others did something slightly different to the rest, which we can't say anything about till the result is known SSHHH!

**January 20<sup>th</sup>.** War tonight. **Berlin**.

**January 21<sup>st</sup>.** War again. Went to **Magdeburg**. As far as we could see it was dead easy, though later people said there were lots of fighters. Diversion over Berlin, but I don't think Jerry was fooled for long. All back from our squadron, as they were last night. Mentions **Duke Knobel (W/OP)**

**January 24<sup>th</sup>.** *a telegram had arrived with news that my commission is through.*

**February 9<sup>th</sup>.** *My posting came through - I'm supposed to be going, in a day or two, to Dunholme Lodge, where I'll be instructing on this new gadget (H2S) that I'm supposed to be a gen-man on, and which our crew used with notable success on ops (since I was with Len Coxill, that is).*

**February 18<sup>th</sup>.** *Lots of discussion about bombing lately on the part of Archbishop. Lord Lang and the Bishop of Chichester, who deplored the 'area' bombing of Berlin, etc. Funnily enough no-one seems terribly upset about our destroying the Monte Cassino monastery in Italy because the Nazi's were using it as a fortress. It seems to me odd, to put it mildly, that people should object to the partial wiping out of Berlin, a place of 90% Nazi's and Nazi culture with 10% important and beautiful ancient monuments, and yet not mind the total destruction of a lovely and unique monastery full of incredible ancient works of art and traditions, the home of peaceful monks, priceless treasures and manuscripts, but containing 5 or 10% Nazi's and Nazi guns. Moreover it wont make us any more popular with the Italians. Are we going to destroy every beautiful and irreplaceable building in Italy because there are Nazis in it or making use of it?*

**April 27<sup>th</sup>.** *One day early on in my leave, I was woken up by the telephone ringing, and then Mum gave a yell "Bill's got the D.F.M.!". The first I knew that I might receive an award was at a party at the Officers Mess, Fiskerton, when Len Coxill our pilot, said he was recommending me. That was early in 1944.*

**June 2<sup>th</sup>.** *Arrived at Wigsley, the Conversion Unit from which I was attached to Dunholme. My job is the same as Dunholme, instruction on secret navigational equipment,*

**August 11<sup>th</sup>.** *Crash landing after a cross-country in which I was instructing pupil navigator and bomb-aimer on the use of H2S navigation aid.*

*Returning from cross-country, flying at about 1000 ft. We appeared to run out of fuel. Care was needed to switch over fuel tanks correctly in Stirlings, and Pilot and Flight Engineer must have made a balls-up of the job, between them. Pilot had little time to do anything but tell us he was going to crash-land and to suggest we take up crash positions. Just a matter of holding on to anything that looked secure. I decided to open the rear door, which may have jammed in the impact. I was almost there when we hit, and being totally loose and not properly secured, was thrown a. over t., but able to pick myself up, amazed at what good landing it was in the circumstances. The pilot had to keep straight as possible, hoping for a large field, without obstacles, to land on (any turning to get into wind or find a better spot could have resulted in loss of airspeed and an uncontrollable crash).*

*As it happened, we flew into a large, flat field of recently harvested corn with a nice firm surface. Lots of leaking of fuel, but the aircraft stayed intact to all appearances, though a write-off. Total casualties, cuts and bruises. Collected by Air Force truck - we were only some 15 miles from base.*

*I like to think our bombing of their main rocket research establishment, Peenemunde, on 17.8.43, delayed any such efforts by several months at least, as well as careful dispersal to make further attacks more difficult.*

**August 1945.** *About this time my tour of instruction at 1654 Conversion Unit, Wigsley, and at 44 Squadron, Dunholme Lodge (earlier), came to an end and I was posted to 97 Pathfinder Squadron, Coningsby.*

**1946**

*The last wartime flying in my log-book is 24.6.1946. My demobilisation must have been very soon after that, when I swapped my officer's uniform (still have the top half) for a grey pinstriped suit, was given a few pounds, remainder of my pay, and let loose.*