

Dear Mother,

WELL, we're here and well and truly settled down now. We arrived at Edmonton a week ago last Friday, but I haven't had time to write letters. The camp (station is a better word) is very new and comfortable and by far the best station I have seen. We are only about 4 miles out of the City, possibly less, and have new barracks with lino. and rubber floors sprung bunks with mattresses, and very handy and well fitted wash rooms. All the huts and buildings are heated by natural gas, which is the universal method of heating here. The parade ground is just next to the tarmac, and as the staff are mainly civilians in the employ of Canadian Airways (training) Limited. The place is kept very tidy. We roll out at 6-15 for P.T., parade only once a day, after breakfast, and have classes for the rest of the time. We'll fly about twice a week, usually about a 300 mile trip, but our flying has been held up by smoky and hazy weather, making it impossible to get any useful flying. We were due to fly today, but it was cancelled. We worked Sunday, and get no overnight leave. That doesn't matter, because Edmonton is an awful dump of a town, and I'd far sooner stay at the camp. Quite a lot of the City is out-of-bounds to us. We get fed very well here, and get a lot of things we had come to regard as almost luxuries, such as grape fruit and tomato juice for breakfast, hot wheat-meal cakes and maple syrup, ice cream, loads of iced milk, and apples, spiced gherkins, cheese and pickles, apple juice and so on. The N. C. O's and Officers are all much more gentlemanly than the type we had at Lindfield, and seem only too pleased to do anything to help you. We arrived a week late so have to make it up in our lectures, and the course is, without that, a pretty stiff one, so we have plenty to do. The subjects are Dead Reckoning, Compasses, Photography, Maths., Reconnaissance, Instruments, Meteorology and Morse. Meteorology seems to be the biggest subject, but it will be fairly interesting. On Anzac Day we had to get up at 4-15 for a special service, which made it a long day. The first night we had leave we went into Town, had a look round (there's not much to see) and happened to meet an American newspaper man, a very nice chap, at the Macdonald Hotel, which is about the only building in the City, which would not look shabby in Melbourne. He had travelled up and down the West coast, and had met and played friendly tennis with Bromwich and Hopman and Quist, and we had a long yarn with him, and then moved off to another hotel for dinner, as the Mac. is a pretty expensive place. It's a big 15 storey place I think. After dinner Trem. Ken & I went to a Y.M.C.A. dance, but I couldn't make any headway. They dance differently here, more like an eggbeater. The dance broke up about midnight, and we went home. On the following Sunday morning we had Church parade, and had to march about 3 miles each way to the Robertson Church (United Church of Canada), a very nice Church, with a big gallery around three sides, no altar and a big organ where the altar usually is. They have a printed program of the service, which isn't a bad idea. The preacher was a very interesting chap, and the feminine section of the choir received a good bit of attention too. We were lucky, for in the afternoon the Adjutant came in with an invitation for four airmen to go out to dinner, and Trem pounced on him, so Trem. Neil Lindsay, Ken Williams and self were the lucky ones. We were given a very neat dinner by four charming Canadiennes, and afterwards played "hollywood", a kind of perverted "tripoley". At first the accent got everyone mixed up, for one of the girls of French decent, and two others Irish, while the four of us had different styles of speaking. They laughed at every second thing we said, and didn't laugh at the rest, only because they couldn't understand us

apparently. We thought their manner of speaking very cute, and were trying to develop a Canadian accent, but have decided to stay Australian now. They like the way we speak, and say it sounds like broad English to them. For instance when our S. Major says "Call the roll" it sounds like "Kahl the Rule". By the way would you please send me some Australian photos in your next letter, as they would be very much of interest to the people here, and also send some of you and Dad and Sis. Mary could take some. A Herald or so would be interesting too. Don't write by Air Mail, as it usually takes longer. Air Mail from here costs about 5/- half-oz. so I won't be using it much, but I buy some air mail paper, which goes about 6 sheets the  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz, I'll write one to you and Beau in the same envelope. I hope the cables turned up. I would have sent one to Auntie Daisy too, but they cost 6/- each, and I wasn't sure at the time, how finances would be. I've just written to Beau and sent her snaps which she will send on to you. It was great disappointment to me, but most of the snaps I took all the way across the Pacific turned out duds because there was a little hole in the bellows of my camera, which I didn't discover till I arrived here. I've had it fixed up by the Instrument Section here, and although there is not much to see, I hope to be able to send you a few snaps of us in a week or so. I'll send some more of the Rockies, and other places next letter. I'm getting prints from the other boys. For the last week we have been C.B. as we are duty flight, and have to act as Orderly Sergeants, Mess Waiters, Hospital Waiters and so on. I'll tell you something about the trip here now. We first sighted Vancouver Island, and the mountains of Washington, which looked beautiful, snow capped, like the Rockies, up above the low lying clouds on the horizon. That was in the morning, and just before lunch we came to Victoria where we had a short route march for about an hour. There was nothing much to see there, as we were in the least attractive part of the City. It took about six hours to get to Vancouver, sailing through the lovely islands in the Gulf of Georgia. The weather was fine, which was lucky, because it had been pretty cold previously. We came into Vancouver, past first of all wooded hills, and then precipitous mountains, with white heads, above 5000 feet up, and just at the water's edge. We went under the Guinnesses suspension bridge which was built by the man who makes stout of that name. When you write about the Rockies and so on, you have to talk a bit like a Guide Book - so be prepared. I had hoped that this letter would have been posted a couple of days ago, but have been so busy that I've been unable to get to it. When we fly we have to go over the course carefully the night before, and I have little time for anything else. We flew today, and yesterday, quite a few of us including self, and Trem. had our first flight, and in addition yesterday, I was assistant Orderly Sergeant so you see I have my hands full. I'll try and write as often as I possibly can though. More than half of the boys were sick yesterday, and today in the air, as it is very bumpy. The planes jerk all over the place, and it's very difficult to write straight. I was quite O.K. yesterday, and enjoyed it thoroughly, but today I was sick just for a moment. It didn't interfere with my work. Visibility is very low, sometimes down to about 3 miles, at present due to the farmers burning off all over the district. Poor Trem. was completely incapacitated yesterday after about 200 miles. And today too he was almost unconscious, lying down on the floor of the plane, very sick indeed. I tapped him on the shoulder after we had landed, and he didn't know we were on the ground. After only 150 miles or so today, we turned back, due to the bumpiness and poor visibility, and as Trem. 1st Navigator was out of action, I 2nd Nav. was called upon hurriedly for a course back to Edmonton, and was able to give it quickly. It took us right to the spot, and my E.T.A. (estimated time of arrival) was O.K. to the minute. There's not much thrill to the flying, not as much as the "big dipper" for instance, and navigation is hard work. You have so much to do & so little time to do it. We scoot along at 160, and there's almost no sensation of movement, (except up & down) and giddiness is just out of the question.