

January 11, 2014

To all the students,

Thank you very much for your interest in my story. I thoroughly enjoyed reading each and every one of your letters, along with the original artwork.

I have a few answers to some of the questions you asked.

Why did you join the military?

As a youngster I was fascinated with airplanes, so I joined the Air Force. I didn't like the idea of drowning in the ocean as so many sailors did, nor did I fancy being burned inside a tank as many army men did.

Was it scary?

The Air Force had many scary situations. In Bomber Command we flew in the dark of night, often in thunderstorms with hail, snow, heavy rain and high winds.

How old are you?

I am now 90 years old and I fly just as a passenger.

When did you go to war?

I joined the RCAF in February 1942 and trained to be a bomber pilot which I was in 1944.

Did you miss your mom, dad, brothers and sisters?

We all missed our folks at home as so many of us were a thousand miles away. We corresponded by writing letters which sometimes took weeks to reach their destinations.

How old were you when you fought in the war?

I began flying at 18 and began combat flying at 20.

Why did you take off at 21:47?

21:47 may be referred to as 13 minutes to 10 p.m. We had special times to take off. We tried for 1 per minute, with probably 20 aircraft.

Why did you get weather updates every half hour?

We would get base updates on every half hour which would be specific instructions for our plane, and group updates on every hour which would be general updates and information for everyone.

Where did you sleep?

After we were shot down, we were hidden by the French Resistance in the Fréteval Forest. We slept under tents made from spare parachutes or under tree bows. We would sleep right on the ground, or sometimes on soft branches we gathered.

What did you eat?

In the Fréteval Forest, we would eat lots of green apples. Some farmers brought in rabbits, and we would make coffee from roasted barley.

Were you scared when you slept?

Yes, it was scary. We took turns to be look outs at the edges of the forest.

When did you come home?

We were liberated by the Patton's Third Army on August 13, 1944, and went to England a day or two after that. We returned home to Canada in the beginning of October 1944.

Sincerely,

Alex Campbell Skipper of Lancaster A2 C