

For the first time saw a bed let into a nich in the wall. For ~~60~~ 73 73
warmth I was told. I was now on Sopworth Camels having already flown the Sopworth/a smaller machine. The Camel was known as a suicide machine as it had some peculiarities and took a lot of handling until you got well into the air. It had one bad fault and that was on a steep right hand turn it was liable to go into a spin and -unless you pulled out quickly- likely to spin into the ground when it would be 'Tickets'. One had to know what to do but some chaps got into a flap and did the wrong thing. It was also in taking off unless you got the tail off the ground as soon as she started to move the machine simply swung round and nothing could stop it turning up on its nose. I had this experience one and until the mechanics came up and released my belt I had petrol pouring down my back. Fortunately it did not catch

While out doing some aerobatics the old Camel developed engine trouble and I had to land across the bay from Montrose in a field quite near a big double story house. The owner of the house came across to the field to see what had gone wrong and offered to phone the drome to send out mechanics. In talking he found out I was from South Africa and so he said as he knew the O.C. Very well he would ask his permission to have me stay with him for the week end. I pointed out that all I had was what I stood in -my well oiled flying kit. He said "Don't let that bother you. I will fix you up with all you require" I had a very pleasant week end with Sir somebody Grant of Grants Scotch Oatmeal a -very homely couple. The mechanics duly arrived fixed the machine and returned on the Monday to get me started. The following my instructor, Lydford, asked me to take one of his new pupils up in an Avro. It was this chaps first flight and he was to get a bit of a fright for here again my machine cut out and I had to make a forced landing on the Golf Course but unfortunately struck a bunker and the machine was slightly damaged. Well no harm done except that it had to be dismantled and taken back to the drome in a breakdown van.

We were only in Montrose for a few weeks before being moved to a new drome ten miles out at Edzel. This was on Lord somebody's estate and here he had his shooting box and to look after the birds there were two gamekeepers who were frequent visitors to our mess where they could do their share of drinking but never seemed to get tight. Before moving out there my friend Strange and I had visited the village several times to play golf and call on the bank to cash cheques. This proved useful as the teller knew us and made no bones about our cheques after we settled at Edzel drome. Other chaps he made get references first.

Here apart from the ordinary machine guns we had shot guns - twelve bore - for clay pigeon shooting to make one quick on the draw for aerial fighting later. Well the gamekeepers gave us to shoot rabbits within reason but not pheasant. But they said after all you may sometimes mistake a pheasant for a rabbit. They were fine men. Being trained I was sent to France for a spell but unfortunately only went once over the line and on the return went down - owing to the severe cold with a very bad case of malaria with very high temp. and it was decided, as they were badly in need of instructors, to send me back to Edzel. I would be of more use than cluttering up the hospitals.

My late instructor made a report to the O.C. that he thought I would make a first class instructor and so it was arranged that I should go to the training school at Ayr where I could be trained in a very short time. Within three weeks I had been passed out and sent back to Edzel with a very good report. I was given ten pupils to train on Avros and single seater Sopworth fighters.

One of my pupils was a Canadian Chennery, with whom I had become friendly and very fond of his spots. His welcome to me was "Geoff as you are now on the staff you can sign for bottles of whisky. We as pupils have to pay cash. What about a bottle?" "Chen I thought