

1587162 Sgt. C.R.B. (Dick) Lewington – RAF

My name is Pete Belcher, I have lived in The Meads, Burton since 1979, sadly my wife Sallie passed away in 2014 To commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE day I thought I would like to tell you a little about my uncle 'Dick' Lewington who served as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force. In 1944 Dick was an aircrew member with Bomber command, a photo of his crew are shown below, he is back row 2nd left and fair haired.



I have included within this article a copy of a letter; hand written on the 23rd February 1944 by Dick to his father whilst airborne on a long-range mission across the North Sea towards Norway, as can be seen on the letter the exact location/destination is not disclosed for security reasons.

The letter captures the atmosphere within the aircraft and the conditions in which our gallant aircrews endured during such missions. To assist with deciphering the content of the letter, I have provided a typed transcript below which includes additional information relating to the names mentioned and their relevance to Dick.

According to RAF records:- Bomber Command War Diaries for 20/21 Feb 1944 lists 156 aircraft, 132 from training units and 24 from squadrons - flew a training exercise across the North Sea as a preliminary feint for the main raid that night to Stuttgart.

His service record shows that he was on 21 OTU [Operational Training Unit] at the time.

Sadly Dick was killed in action on the 17th June 1944 (aged 20 years) whilst on an operation with 10 Sqn. Bomber Command, enroute to bomb a V1 launch site at Domleger in France.

Dick was one of the 55,573 Bomber Command aircrew killed during World War 2

A crew member on a British bomber had a shorter life expectancy than an infantryman in the trenches of World War

1587162 SGT. LEWIS

X can't put my address
23rd Feb. in case anything
does go wrong
Dear Dad.

Thank you very much for the
money, I am sorry I have not written
before but as you can guess we have
been very busy just lately.

We are just at this moment
heading out over the north sea
towards Norway, (careless talk).

But we shall be OK don't
worry, I will post this as
soon as we get back.

2.

Sorry but I shall have to
write in pencil, the amount
of vibration shakes the
ink out of my pen to much,
as you can see on the
first page.

I was surprised but
glad to hear you were
home last week-end, I
wish I could have been
there.

We should be on leave
in a couple of weeks, I
will wire as soon as I
know for sure.

You will read all about
this in the paper tomorrow
I expect, as you have
done about the other
ones, a few which we
did our little bit in

but don't spread it too
far. Just a minute I have
to put my oxygen on. There
that's better, it was getting
pretty hard to breathe at
this height.

I should like you to see
it up here, all the kites
in a long stream, & it
is a smashing evening, I

5

there is going to be a
little bit of moon for us.

I am looking forward
to my couple of days
with you, hope if our
land lord is not too
stupid for a night out,
or will Mr. Venton come
anyway we will make a
good show of it, or I
don't know you.

This is quite a long

6

trip & I am beginning to
feel a little bit hungry,
but still have my rations
to eat so I shall be OK.

Have you seen or heard
of a good watch yet, I
hate to worry you but
I need one, but don't worry
I shall get one if it is
at all possible.

Hello, one has had to

4

turn back already, don't know what's the matter.

The "Black Dwarf", that's our kite, is running like an angel, bless her "canvas" socks.

Old Dick is making a name for himself, he is a good dog, remind me to him.

How is the old bus going, any trouble

8

lately, hope not.

By the way, your letter you had a nice spread at Tony's party, I bet Greta is proud of him now.

Please excuse writing but it is pretty cold & I have to wear my gloves.

We have a night off tomorrow, first one in

1587162 Sgt. LEWINGTON
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in case anything
does go wrong*

23rd Feb 1944

Dear Dad,

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Sorry but I shall have to write in pencil, the amount of vibration shakes the ink out of my pen to much, as you can see on the first page. I was surprised but glad to hear you were home last weekend. I wish I could have been there.

We should be on leave in a couple of weeks. I will wire as soon as I know for sure. You will read about this in the paper tomorrow I expect, as you have done about the other ones, a few of which we did our little bit in.

but don't spread it to far. Just a minute I have to put my oxygen on. There that's better, it was getting pretty hard to breathe at this height. I should like you to see it up here, all the kites in a long stream & it is a smashing evening !

there is going to be a little bit of a moon for us. I am looking forward to my couple of days with you, hope your landlord is not to stupid for a night out, or will Mr. Ventors come away we will make a good show of it, or I don't know you. This is quite a long

trip & I am beginning to feel a little hungry, but still have my rations to eat so I shall be ok. Have you seen or heard of a good watch yet, I hate to worry you but I need one, but don't worry I shall get one if it is at all possible. Hello one has had to

turn back already, I don't know what's the matter. 'The Black Swan' that's our kite, is running like an angel, bless her 'canvas' socks. Old Dink [1] is making a name for himself , he is a good dog, remind me to him. How is the old bus going, any trouble

lately, hope not. By the sound of mums letter you had a nice spread at Tony's party. I bet Greta is proud of him now [2] Please excuse writing but it is pretty cold & I have to wear my gloves. We have a night off tomorrow, first one in

week, so we shall have a few beers& make a right night of it in general & then back to it again. It will be good to get away on leave & forget it all for a while & have

a dam good rest. Well I must close now we have some slum clear-ing to do for 'Butch Harris' [3] Don't worry I shall be quite ok, I have been before & will write as soon as possible, look after yourself & write soon.

All my love & best wishes

Your son Dick

[1] Dinky is the family dog

[2] Greta his half sister and Tony her baby son

[3] Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Travers Harris GCB. OBE. AFC

Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) RAF Bomber Command