

No. 292 Squadron Weekly Bulletin. No. 13.

30/10/44

Last Bulletin finished with our being grounded. Mr. Fisher of I.C.I. sent in his report to the A.O.C. which in so many words said that Warwicks have "Had" it as far as India is concerned. The Warwick has a much higher wing loading than a Wellington, to quote from memory, 47 lbs/sq.ft. as against 39 lbs/sq.ft. A special doping scheme was invented for the Warwick to produce the extra tautness of fabric necessary for this extra wing loading. I am prepared to bet that the Warwick has the highest wing loading of any fabric monoplane bigger than a fighter. Two months of strong light and great heat and the fabric is not tight enough for a Wellington, let alone a Warwick. Resultant flapping of the fabric cracks the dope, it comes loose, and the panels eventually burst like a blow out motor tyre.

2. I saw the A.O.C. the day after he got this report, and he was flat out to get us flying again. In so many minutes he suggested re-equipping us with Catalinas, Mitchells, Liberators, and Forts. He did say the Forts were tried out, out here, but were not a success. As he was speaking there were three aircraft requiring A.S.R. help. He was sending long, strongly worded signals to A.C., S.E.A. to the effect that something must be done about us immediately. That is a week ago, and nothing has materialised other than the suggestion that "C" flight aircraft fly down here. I did my best to stop even the idea. Assuming you can raise a couple, I am prepared to bet the fabric is very poor, and a fortnight here would ground them altogether.

3. After a lot of hard work, I got my Hurricane in fine working order, long range tanks on, consumption tests done, maps all made out with every aerodrome marked between Karachi and her, when (a) An important Conference was arranged to be held at Group on Nov. 1st. (b) The S.A.S.O. said he had asked Hoche to put in a appearance, and I must not risk being away, and (c) Almack wrote to say that he was flying here himself. If Almack gets a panic signal to arrive here as fast as he can, it will mean that Hoche is here. I am very keen he should be here at the same time as Hoche because the S.A.S.O. is ready to give battle on "E" Flight's behalf. Things were reaching such a pretty pass that I let him read through all "E" Flight reports. He laughed at first and finished by sobbing his heart out. Joking apart he now realises that the trouble is deep seated and nothing the odd visit of mine to Karachi can settle. The way I look at it is that either Hoche or Almack must go, or "E" Flight must come right under my wing until it is operational, and comes under a live operational Group. Another big snag is that 223 Group are responsible for administering you on a 226 Group Station.

4. All this effort to get the "C" Flight reserve a/c fell flat when it was found that all reserve aircraft were as bad as our. I feel it is the best thing for 222 Group to demand it direct in future.

5. We had another letter binding for the Squadron Crest. So far I have had one from Adams (serious) and one funny one from an airman. Don't forget I have offered 50 chips for the best funny one.

6. I am sorry to be done out of my trip to Karachi, because for the first time it can easily be done. I have got the Station at last more or less organised, and the Squadron here is jus one of India's bad jok es

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No. 292 Squadron. R.A.F.