

From the private Diary
of Keith E Randall
ASN 31278916
854th B. Squadron
491st BG
A.P.O. 558

①

Log of Hikes

1st Lt. Keith E. Randall
A.S.N. 31278916
18th R.C.D. Sq. H.
71st A.P.O. 635
% T.M. New York, N.Y.



→ Hikes →

Left Nelson Hall at
12:30. Walked down
main route towards
Newcastle with Chris.
Walked within 3
miles of town. Time
2:00. Caught bus.
Arrived at Newcastle
center at 2:10. Visited
milk bar. Got cup of
tea. Went back to
bus stop. Caught
Eccleshill bus at
2:30. (Same one) rode
back to camp. Arrived
at 3:00. Took walk
up road towards

N/A

Explosion

at approximate 7.30.
P.M. on the evening of July
15, 1944. a section of the
Wetfield bomb dump went
up.

I was at the A.R.C.C.
at the time. There were
two blasts.

The first one I was
in the game room, as it
went off the whole place
seem to shake. The concussion
was great and the ears
hurt for awhile.

We ran out into

the street where we could see huge columns of smoke ascending nearly 1200 feet into the air.

Everybody was going up to the line, walking, jeeps, trucks, bikes, etc.

Almost 20 minutes later the second and worst of all went off.

I was in the hall of the Aero Club at the time, and the concussion almost knocked me off my feet.

After that we returned to the barracks. Fellows were coming back from the

line. We talked with them.

It was said that 700 - 100 demolition bombs went up.

There were unloading 1000 pounders at the time. Seven were said to be killed.

Quite a few were shaken up as they were working on the ships.

Today (July 16) I went to the line and saw the damage.

Pieces of bombs were all over the place, also wreckage of other stuff.

were weren't hit as bad as 853 but several of our planes were shaken up. Ordnance lost a number of buildings on the stock. The post house was a total wreck. I could see it but I haven't visited it as yet.

Our ship was a mess, both ends blown out, everything all over, tent blown down.

Both hangars suffered by doors being blown off.

The nearby towns of Mettled and Harlston were shaken up considerably.

The blint was also sent in Jap stop, a near-coast town 28 miles away. Moral: Take it easy with Sensitive Bombs!

Continued: By ship 101 was a remain of a 100 lb. demo. cracked open and molten power spread over ground. By ship 165, 100 lb. demo, struck straight up in ground, axis peg half buried in ground.

We unloaded the 500 lb. demo and inc. which were on the ships.

7/17/44

This afternoon I went on

a scenic tour of the
bomb dump.

Craters, large enough
to bury B-24's were all
over the place.

Large mounds of dirt
were piled up in different
spots.

Bombs of all sizes, shapes
and description were scattered
all over the place.

Remains of trucks
were laying around in
a heap.

Remains of trees were
scattered all over the dump.

Three ships from

the 853rd Bomb. Sqdn.
had to be salvaged.

Little Joe was salvaged
from our Squadron and
several went to repair.

7/18/44

Encounters going up at
10:30. We shot it!

Cause - Unloading 6
trucks of High Explosives.
Carelessness. all went up.