



Going West by Tim Davies

Director Sarah Bawler

1917; six young men from vastly different backgrounds - William 'Billy' Bishop from Canada, Edward 'Mick' Mannock from Ireland, James McCudden (Anglo-Irish), and Albert Ball, William Bond and Arthur Rhys-Davids (all English) - join the Royal Flying Corps to fight the Germans in the air. All full of brio, optimism and youthful courage, the play follows their progress via the memoirs and diaries that they keep, the letters they write home, and the response they get from their loved ones. Though they didn't all serve in the same squadron at the same time, they all knew, or knew of, each other (for instance, Ball, McCudden and Rhys-Davids were all in 56 sqdn at the same time for a period, McCudden was Mannock's fighter-instructor in England, and Mannock was known to Bond and Bishop since Mannock took over 85 sqdn from Bishop), so they are presented as all being together for dramatic purposes. The climax of the play is a battle between 56 sqdn and the lone German ace Werner Voss, who was universally admired by the men he fought. Very little is made-up; almost everything in the play happened as described and is based on their own recorded experiences and memories, often written down just after the events they describe while their aero-engines were still clinking as they cooled down. The only inventions are for 'linking' purposes.

Performance Dates:

St John's Church, Canton, Cardiff.

Rehearsal day/s in space to be arranged with cast

Thursday 18th October – tech/dress 11:30am to 3pm, 6pm to 10pm

Performances Friday 19th October to Saturday 20th 2018 (inc. late matinee)

The Museum of Army Flying

Middle Wallop, Hampshire (www.armyflying.com)

Rehearsal day/s in space to be arranged with cast

Thursday 8th November – morning tech, afternoon school performance

Friday 9th to Saturday 10th evening performances

Sunday 11th 2018 matinee for The Royal British Legion

We have been invited to be involved in events/performances leading up to 11th November.

We will keep you posted as dates are confirmed. We ask the cast to be flexible.

Frantic Assembly Workshop Saturday 19th May Llanover Hall – places have been reserved for those cast.

There will be individual rehearsals and ensemble sessions.

Do not worry about conflict of rehearsals and performances, if you are involved in the Festival this summer. Rehearsals will be arranged around existing Festival commitments.

Rehearsal days TBA once all unavailability has been accounted for, and space negotiated with the other productions.

Please note you may not be able to perform in *Journey's End* or *Blackadder* due to the performance clash on

Sunday 11th November.

Although Everyman Theatre are producing *Going West* they are unable to offer financial support for travel and accommodation costs. However, we will endeavour to negotiate low cost accommodation where possible.

The first individual rehearsal to be arranged with each actor as availability comes in to avoid any conflict with Festival rehearsals/performances, at Chapter Arts Centre

THE CHARACTERS

- The Synopsis and Character Breakdown apply to the play in its last draft format, and do not take into account any creative decisions or cuts to the text that may be made prior to or during the rehearsal process
- All roles are available, casting is open, and newcomers to Everyman are welcome and encouraged
- This piece will rely heavily on a strong ensemble feel, lots of movement and willingness to experiment.
- Six places have been reserved on the Frantic Assembly workshop on 19th May for those who have been cast.
- Please note that these characters did exist, books have been published, and you can find a wealth of material about them online.
- Tim writes *"Here's a few brief notes of the characters as I see them. I've got the relevant biogs and other materials that I'd like to see the chosen actors read to give them a good insight into their characters."*

Edward 'Mick' Mannoek Irish, but not to a caricature level; hot-tempered and impulsive, but with a quiet, reflective, introspective side which should come out in his letters. He was in many ways the most complex of the characters, and the actor needs to be capable of transmitting that. From what I can gather, he was massively talented in many fields (he was an expert violinist, and I pondered putting him in playing the violin offstage in contrast to Ball's awful screeching attempts to play, but didn't pursue the idea) but internally conflicted, which I think he would have been anyway, even without what he experienced in Turkey and thereafter in the war. Killed on 26 July 1918, aged 31. (estimated line count: 160)

William 'Billy' Bishop Canadian, five star- silk-lined, ocean-going psychopath. His autobiog makes this very clear, as does his post-war career - drunkenness, violence, wife-beating, failed businesses - though none of that's in his book. Neither is the distinct possibility that he was awarded far more victories than he actually got, mainly because most of them weren't witnessed by other servicemen (it is curious that, though all other aviators who claimed a victory had to have at least one other witness and preferably at least two, for some reason - possibly to keep Canadian morale up in the face of their terrible losses in the trenches - Bishop was allowed to be credited victories he claimed WITHOUT witnesses). Also, it is strongly suggested that his Victoria Cross, awarded for his report of a single-handed attack on a German airfield, was awarded on fabricated evidence. He arrived back from the supposed attack with bullet-holes in his aircraft, but they looked suspicious to those who saw them - as if he'd landed somewhere out of sight and shot the holes himself, so that they looked good but in fact didn't hit anything vital in the aircraft. The file on this matter has mysteriously disappeared...Survived WW1. (estimated line count: 180)

James McCudden Anglo-Irish, affects a nonchalant huntin', shootin' and fishin' air (think Michael Caine in "Zulu") but is hiding his ranker background. Again, possibly more complex reasons for this than given in the play (the bit about him being refused command of a RFC squadron - 85 sqdn - because of his humble background is completely true. Ironically, Mannoek commanded that sqdn later on, by which time they'd learnt that it didn't matter what school you went to). The actor needs to be able to transition between his affected and real character, especially when he and Mannoek are talking. Died on 9th July 1918, aged 24. (estimated line count: 280)

Albert Ball Thinks the whole thing is a glorious game to start with and writes unwittingly funny letters home. A big overgrown schoolboy, which makes his decline through exhaustion all the more touching as the play goes on. He is the key character for this aspect of the matter; the actor must be able to communicate this, his vocabulary in his letters is quite limited, all "ripping" this and "spiffing" that. He and the unseen German hero, Werner Voss, were very much alike - both came from lower middle-class backgrounds, were down-to-Earth characters who in "normal" life probably would have been quite happy as small businessmen running their own small companies; Ball was quite mechanical and probably would have run his own garage in peacetime. Died May 7th 1917, aged 20. (estimated line count: 140 – note some of these lines maybe given to a new 'parent' voice)

William Bond A "normal" family man with a bohemian Parisian background, as reflected in his letters with his wife. The contrast between his letters home and his thoughts to the audience - I chose him to go into matters such as the reality of the physical effects of combat flying and the lookout for those suffering from PTSD - are a more articulate version of Ball's attempts, but with a far more limited vocab, to convey the same thing. He is (hopefully) helped in this by the "normality" portrayed by Aimee. He is the dramatic foil to Mannoek, and the importance of the unlikely friendship between them, in terms of dramatic tension and revelation, cannot be overstated. Died 22 July 1917, aged 28. (estimated line count: 180)

Aimee McHardy Bond's wife. An Edwardian air to her, Aimee represents the life of Edwardian normality and propriety as it appeared before the cataclysm. Though she affects a bohemian air, I think in reality she was quite representative of a middle-class conformist and was, along with her husband, "playing" at being a proto-hippy (Art, Paris, Latin Quarter, etc) in her youth before settling for a sedentary life of respectability in the country. Whoever plays her must, at the end, be able to convey that all her im-

plied expectations, along with everybody else's, have gone now, not just with the death of her husband but with the change that the war wrought on everyone both during and after. She tries to cope with this by almost retreating into a fantasy world. In her 20s. (estimated line count: 160)

Arthur Rhys-Davids Big, bouncy public-schoolboy. Not much remains of his correspondence after a certain point because, apparently, it became quite terse and was the sole surviving reflection of the fatigue and stress that got even to him. In many ways he is the most problematic character to portray dramatically, simply because his buoyant spirit never seemed to let up. Yet he did by the end realise he wasn't going to make it, and the actor chosen is going to have the Herculean task of somehow portraying this, but without it being directly transmitted through the script. *I considered making up something to reflect this, but felt I didn't have the right to do so.* Died 27th October 1917, aged 20. (estimated line count: 240 – note some of these lines maybe given to a new 'parent' voice)

Smaller Role

Parent Voice could be anyone's sister, Mother, Brother, Father, etc. This character is not in the script but can be developed through the rehearsal process so that anyone could read the letters. This character will hopefully embrace the thoughts and feelings of the family and would be fully part of the small ensemble. These lines will be taken from different characters.

THE DIRECTOR

For this production, I am looking for a small company of players who are comfortable alone on stage, who are comfortable moving around the stage with excellent stage awareness, but above all work well as an ensemble. We need actors who are flexible, can act with conviction and love story-telling!

Sarah Bawler is a theatre practitioner and drama lecturer. Sarah trained at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RSAMD) and The Royal School of Speech in Drama. Sarah has been a member of Everyman Theatre for many many years and has focused her directing skills on the Everyman Youth Theatre, most recently NT Connections *The Blue Electric Wind*, the immersive piece *Ghostly Tales Theatre for One, Twelfth Night*, and *Richard II*. This summer, she is working with the E.Y.T on *King Lear* which will be performed at the Cardiff Open Air Theatre Festival, The Willow Globe and RSC Dell. It has been some time since Sarah directed for the main Everyman Company, having directed *Once A Catholic*, *Red Noses*, and *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* at the Sherman. Sarah has also been extremely lucky to perform in many productions with Everyman starting with *The Tempest* at Dyffryn Gardens through to *Fiddler on the Roof* this summer. Sarah also acts professionally from time to time, her latest venture as Miss Trunch'bucket' in the Cardiff wide production of *The City of the Unexpected*.

THE WRITER

The Butcher Bird (2004. Premiered at Chapter, toured around Wales on Nights Out scheme) - how a German aircraft landed by mistake at a sleepy Welsh airfield in 1942 and altered the course of World War Two.

The Throckmorton Cypher (2009, premiered at YMCA Theatre Cardiff, financed by Welsh Arts Council grant) - the story of Hugh Owen, a Welsh Catholic Recusant who fled Elizabethan Britain in 1576 and became head of the Spanish Catholic espionage service.

Drink Canada Dry (premiered at Chapter Arts centre, April 2012) - Brendan Behan, Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop and the first production of The Square Fellow.

The Winter Gift (premiered at the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, March 2014, second run at Chapter Arts centre 2015. Performed at the Edinburgh Fringe festival, 2016) - how an American flapper and a classically-trained German director came to make Pandora's Box, the greatest silent film ever made.

THE AUDITIONS

Before auditioning, please take a moment to consider the necessary level of commitment.

Please consider that some dates of this production clash with *Journey's End* and *Black Adder Goes Forth*

Take careful note of the rehearsal period and be honest about your availability within it. Do not worry if you are involved in the Festival, let us know when you are rehearsing so we can arrange one to one rehearsals around your existing rehearsal schedule.

Although the rehearsal process is dispersed over the summer months initially, and then weeks, consistent and punctual attendance is essential, as we will be operating within a very tight schedule.

A high level of unavailability, persistent lateness and/or no-show will regrettably result in your being asked to leave the production.

- Auditions will be held at **Chapter Arts Centre, Market Road, Canton, Cardiff** on:

Friday 4th May (7pm – 10pm)

Saturday 5th May (10pm – 3pm)

Recalls and further auditions will be held the following week.

- If you would like to audition but cannot attend on any of these days, please let us know as soon as possible
- Auditions will be held in 1 hour slots, where you will be asked to read your selected speech and work with other actors. You maybe asked to move your audition slot to work with other actors.
- Please arrive 15mins before your audition slot and bring with you your completed audition form. **NB. Please attach a photograph.** Spare audition forms will be available on the day
- When booking an audition slot, please refer to the character breakdown
- **Prepare a speech from any of the selected pieces included in this pack. You do not necessarily have to learn it, but you should be able to show your understanding and connection with the text through voice and physicalisation. You will also be asked to work with other actors in a workshop. Please bring the text with you.**
- We wish to take account of your talents and abilities when making casting decisions, so it is important that any special skills [eg musical instrument, physical theatre, dance, circus, combat etc.] are listed on the audition form
- Not being recalled does not necessarily mean that you are not being considered for a role.

To reserve your place at the audition,
please contact JO WAKELIN:
jlwakelin@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you!

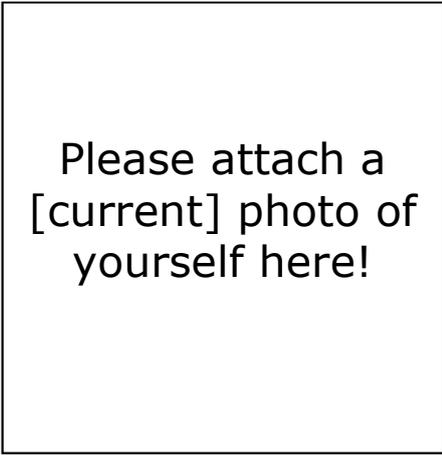
Everyman Theatre Cardiff Ltd.

Audition Form for

Going West [2018]

To book your audition time please contact JO WAKELIN:
jlwakelin@gmail.com

Please write clearly and don't forget to bring this form with photograph to your audition!



Name.....

Date of audition..... time.....

Address.....

Postcode..... email address.....

Tel.no [home]..... [work/mobile]

Playing Age

ANY SPECIAL SKILLS – eg, dancing/physical theatre, singing, juggling, combat, etc.....

Please state **all commitments** [family/work/holidays/other shows etc] that **may** conflict with the rehearsal period!

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE [continue overleaf if necessary]

Is there a particular role in which you are interested?

Do you give permission for your image/video recordings to be used Everyman Theatre and Sarah Bawler for their marketing and publicity?

Are you already a member of Everyman Theatre? yes / no

PLEASE NOTE – everyone cast must become an Everyman member.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

NOTES:

Not cast/recalled/cast as..... written acceptance rec'd **yes/no**

Audition Pieces

Please select and prepare one piece. (It does not necessarily have to be learnt)

MANNOCK (writing in diary): Today had a very disagreeable experience. Went out on patrol, engaged Huns and chased one over towards Courcelles. I got separated and was attacked by three Huns. My gun jammed and the gunsight oiled up. I thought it was all over. We were sixteen thousand feet up at the time. I turned almost vertically on my tail - nosedived down towards our own lines, zig-zagging for all I was worth with machine-guns crackling away behind me like mad. When I was about three thousand feet over Arras the Huns for some reason turned and left me. I immediately ran into another one but hadn't the pluck to face him. I turned away and landed here with my knees shaking and my nerves all torn to bits. I feel a bit better now but all my courage seems to have gone after that experience. The C.O. was very good and didn't put me on any more line jobs today... I hope I feel O.K. again in the morning as I am on the Dawn Patrol. (P.14)

BOND (reading from letter): ... To what I have told you I can only add that I am more than content to be in this squadron. There are some awfully good fellows in it. My flight commander came out a few months ago. Several years before the war he was an art student in the Latin Quarter in Paris, right round the corner from where we used to live. He leads our patrol, and I need not assure you how closely I hang onto his tail. My new machine is splendid. It climbed incredibly fast and flew level at a topping speed.

I haven't said much about going over the lines the first time - about my impressions, I mean. But I was elated to be so high above the clouds looking down through the holes on towns and villages eight or ten miles behind the German lines. It was thrilling to be all alone in my machine, depending on myself and good luck. The German Anti-Aircraft shells burst in black woolly balls and they generally put up a dozen all around at once. You can't hear them unless they're very close, and then they make a curious noise, something like "Woof! Brupp!", and if the burst is quite near the machine rocks about.

We were out one hour and forty-five minutes, and I was told that I had flown quite well.

With the mail, bringing your letters, came my new tunic and breeches. They are topping. The streamline cap is quite all right too.

Have you any of my towels? I need another one as I brought only two. Another khaki shirt too, if you please - the one my mother sent to Suvla before I got hurt,

All my love, Bill. (p19)

RHYS-DAVIDS: Dearest Mums,

I've been out on my first trips over the lines. Very good fun on the whole, though nothing much happened. Then yesterday I had my first pukka scrap, and was shot down.

No, don't get alarmed, I'm perfectly all right and got back in one piece, but the fact remained that I was hopelessly outflown.

We had a big show on. Once we were over the lines we flew through a lot of cloud and got separated. When we came out of the cloud I looked behind and saw a bright red and green Albatross, one of their best fighters, coming down at me. So we turned round and chased each other's tails, and I had my work cut out to stop him getting right behind me. Meanwhile I heard one bullet go into my undercarriage with the deuce of a wonk, others were spoiling my lovely smooth wings, while the tiresome young man behind me was finally unkind enough to plonk a ruddy great bullet into my engine. Then, for some curious reason, he completely sheered off and flew back towards Hunland. I'm jolly lucky to have got off so light, the man up against me was obviously a far better pilot than me. I can't think why he left when he had me stoney. Perhaps he was that Rara Avis, a sporting Hun who realized he was fighting a babe. The last is very improbable, but not impossible. Of course, he probably just ran out of bullets. But Bless that

Hun; he was a beautiful flyer and he was jolly decent to buzz off just when he was winning hard. Curious fellow - doesn't approve too much of war, same as me.

Did you see that poor Garnett was missing? He went down in flames... Gone West, I fear.

We've heard that Werner Voss, one of the best Hun pilots, has moved in next door to us, and that he's flying one of the new triplanes, which are reported to be wizard kites. If that's the case we'll be in for some fine sport, for he's a very Devil in the air.

Thanks for the baccy – I won't need any more as I've found a place where I can get stuff nearly as good here,

Love as ever, Arthur. (p.27)

McCUDDEN (to audience): That was a day to remember. We went North and climbed to about 6000 feet, scanning the sky for our unfortunate artillery spotter. There was no sign of him, but, just as we were about to engage six Albatross scouts, we saw one of our scouts spinning down, pursued at very close range by a Silver-Blue German Triplane. We were all excited and waving at each other in hopeful anticipation, for we realized that Werner Voss flew such an aircraft, and we'd longed to get a crack at him for months. Now, it seemed, was our chance. (All pilots signal excitedly to each other and wave and point at the imaginary German aircraft, then start running around as if maneuvering for position)

The Hun triplane was practically beneath us now, so down we dived at a colossal speed. I went to the right, Rhys-Davids to the left, and we got behind the triplane together. The German pilot saw us and turned in a most disconcertingly quick manner, and after a moment the triplane was right in the middle of our formation. Its handling was wonderful to behold. The pilot seemed to be firing at us all simultaneously, and although I got behind him a second time I could hardly stay there for a second. After that I temporarily lost sight of him, and when I next saw him he was very low and being engaged by Rhys-Davids, who was so close behind him that his propeller was almost touching the German's rudder. Then I saw the triplane go into a steep dive until he hit the ground and disappeared into a thousand fragments. (Red flash from OFF-STAGE to indicate explosion of crashing aircraft. Pilots all throw their arms up in celebration. McCUDDEN gets down off block, makes arm signals to all the others to go home. They all leave McCUDDEN, one by one, until R-D is left looking back at the crash site for a moment before turning and leaving after everyone else)

As long as I live I shall never forget my admiration for that German pilot, who single-handedly fought all of us for ten minutes and put bullets into all our machines. His flying was wonderful, his courage magnificent, and in my opinion he is the bravest German airman whom it has been my privilege to see fight. (All other pilots re-enter, carrying R-D on their shoulders to DCS. They put him down as McCUDDEN finishes speaking) After we landed Rhys-Davids came in for a shower of congratulations, but as he said himself -

(R-D: How I wish I'd been able to bring him down alive! (p.39))

BALL: .. had a topping fight today. Maxwell and I attacked two Hun two-seaters doing an artillery spot, but halfway down we were set upon by four Albatross scouts, and then another lot joined in from somewhere. Maxwell went west after two of the beggars latched onto his tail and sent him down in pieces, so it was just me against about a dozen of them. I think I might have got one or two of them, but it was impossible to be sure. It was a topping fight, but Oh! I am looking forward to some leave and seeing your dear faces again.

I am very surprised and most upset when you tell me that Cyril is trying to transfer from the Sherwood Foresters to the R.F.C. Please give him a bit of brotherly advice from me. He is doing a mad thing and if he will take my advice he will not join. Please tell him his regiment is the best job. I like flying but the nerves do not last long in this job and you soon want a rest,

Your loving son, Albert. (p.43)

BOND (to audience): There's only so much you can take, not just mentally but physically. We fly in unheated, open cockpits with inadequate clothing as high as 24,000 feet, where it's minus 50 degrees centigrade made worse by the propeller-driven wind-blast. It's so cold that you smear your face with foul-smelling whale-oil, but still icicles form on your noses and frostbite peels the skin from your cheeks. We don't have oxygen so we get dizzy and start to see things with hypoxia, and when you dive down through thousands of feet the sudden increase in pressure can rupture your eardrums and make blood pump out of your nose. The high G-forces created by tight turns and pulling out of steep dives can make you black out, rupture blood-vessels in your eyes and cause the airframe to break up in mid-air. The noise from the engines and the machine-guns deafen you, and the vibration, vertigo and airsickness caused by dogfighting, and the noxious fumes from the engine, make you vomit in the cockpit. And all to try and kill some other young fellow who's just as frightened as you and with whom you have no personal quarrel. It's no wonder that some of us go back to the trenches for a rest... (p.49)

BISHOP: I still remember the first machine I ever destroyed in flames. I was flying alone above the clouds when I spotted a two-seater above me. I crept up under him and opened fire, so close that he must have seen my smoking bullets passing all round him. He turned quickly, and a regular battle began between the two of us. We manoeuvred every way possible, diving, rolling, stalling, turning. The German gunner was firing very well, his bullets passing very close for a moment or two. Then, however, they began to pass well beyond my wingtips, and I knew then that his nerve was shaken. Then I could see my own bullets striking home, and I could see that I had hit the gunner. He stopped firing, and the German aircraft slowed down. I flew past him and looked back over my shoulder. The Hun machine looked perfectly all right for a moment. Then it burst into flames. A second later it fell a burning mass, leaving a long trail of smoke as it disappeared through the clouds. I thought for a moment of the fate of the wounded gunner, and the hooded pilot into whose faces I had just been looking – but it was fair hunting, and I flew away with great contentment in my heart.

Now, the moment you see a fire break out you know that nothing in the world can save the man in the doomed aeroplane. You know there is no pretence, no "camouflage" in this, and you have no fear that the enemy is trying any kind of flying trick in the hope that he will be left alone to escape your attack. You know his destruction is absolutely certain.

This is a thing that often happens, and while I have no desire to make myself appear as a bloodthirsty person, I must say that to see an enemy aircraft going down in flames is a source of great satisfaction to me. (p.52)

AIMEE: My Darling Bill,

Yesterday, Mother and I went into the park. "That", said Mother, nodding towards a circle of grass, "used to be a cricket ground... Many a time we spent an afternoon here, before the war, watching them play... We had county matches and all, you know", she finished, so I shouldn't imagine it to have been merely a provincial playing field. When we had admired the circle of cultivated grass, and walked on again in the sunshine, she continued:

"You should have seen them - how lovely they looked in their white clothes against the green all round!"

Overjoyed by the picture she visualised - of the players with their alert bodies springing upward to catch a ball; or running and bending with the grace that balanced muscular development gives - I smiled, and was smiling still when she cried in a voice full of rebellion:

"It's a shame - it's a dreadful shame to think of so many of them killed and gone!"

I traced a pattern on the ground with your stick, Bill dear, and asked:

"I don't know... is it a shame?"

Incredulously she turned to me.

"Not a shame... And them so young and full of health?"

I went on: "Death has to come at some time... it must be lovely to die when you're most full of life."

It's nearly a fortnight now that the telegram came telling me of your death. You, who were certain of coming back, and I who was certain of it, too, have had to own ourselves completely baffled. On that Sunday morning your life went out "into the ether", and you left me here. I, who could have rendered living beautiful for you, even if you had been crippled, or disfigured, or blinded, may not touch or see or hear you any more. I've been thinking of how many women must be feeling alone just now... Some, I suppose, have a definite religion to see them through. They will bow their heads and say to their God: "Thy will, not mine, be done!" Others must be rebellious, and are spending their vitality in a fury of pain which time will wear down to resignation. Those who, like me, have had to renounce what made them whole, will face the inevitable according to their ability, until the time comes when they too go out into the "nothingness" or to the "everything" that must come eventually.

At first they may believe - as I believed - that nothing would do except to follow at once - at once. But a small voice may whisper to them also:

"Death knows his own business... if you tamper with your Destiny you may miss him whom you seek... It is all too incomprehensible for you to interfere!"

Good morning, Bill! You see I say "Good Morning" just as though you hadn't been with me all night!... (p.62)

BISHOP: Albert Ball was killed on May 7th 1917. No-one really knows what happened. He was last seen pursuing a German scout into thick cloud. He emerged from beneath the cloud upside down and flew straight into the ground behind German lines. Like a lot of pilots, he knew he was going to die. On the final day of his last leave home he went to the pictures with his mother. Unable to say goodbye to her for what he knew would be the last time, he crept out of the cinema while she was engrossed in the silent antics of Charlie Chaplin, and never saw her again. He was twenty years old. (LIGHT off on BALL) (p.63)