

Bert Freeman Diaries

The following diaries of Bert Freeman are available for viewing in the Research Room at the Bruce County Museum & Archives.

Only a few pages of each have been scanned and uploaded to the Bruceremembers.org website.

A2013.028.002

Five year diary, January 1, 1938 - Aug. 31, 1940

This "Five Year Diary" contains entries made by Robert ("Bert") G. Freeman, Teeswater, Ont." from January 1, 1938 - July 14, 1940.

His entries reflect his attendance and activities at Westervelt College, London, news of friends, social events and recreational activities (including movies, skating, fishing, dancing at dance hall at Wonderland & Springbank Rds., London, and time with friends), church attendance, work at Empire Life, London, Ontario (until early April 1940), bookkeeping and work for his father at the Superior Food Store in Teeswater, and flying lessons / night aviation courses in 1939. Deaths mentioned include the death of George Thompson in the Jan. 2, 1938 entry.

Bert also mentions the Second World War throughout entries in 1939 and 1940. For example, Aug. 28, 1939 "War news quite serious these days. Germany likely to invade Poland. Britain & France with Poland." Sept. 2, 1939 "Quite busy in store. Everybody talking about Germany and Poland." Sept. 5, 1939 "War news bad. Inquired about entering air service. Recruiting a lot [???]. Medical exams strict. Extra papers every few hours. Pilots only accepted for flying yet." Sept. 7, 1939 "... Many joining herein London. I don't know what to do." Oct. 4, 1939 "Army officer delivered radiogram re; position for me in Ottawa as clerk only for duration of hostilities."

His final entries in this book are sporadic:

June 16, 1940, July 1, 2, 8, 10-14, 1940

Aug. 31, 1940, indicates "Left Carling Heights Camp. Went to airport. Flying for a half hour with Al Smith. Hiked home to Teeswater o.k."

Sept. 19, 1940 "[???] Load of fellows to London. Flying 1/2 hour"

In the memoranda section at the back of his diary is a record of "Flying Instruction" with Al Smith at London Airport showing hours of flying, dates and skills practiced between Sept. 15

and Oct. 14, 1939. This section also includes a record of courses taken and marks at school and college from 1932-1937. Finally, it contains a list recording funds he received from his father "Money from dad" from 1937-1938.

Enclosed between pages May 7 and May 8 was a newspaper clipping re "Glen Allen Villa was the scene of a colorful party when Metropolitan Badminton Club at their first social event of the season." "Bert Freeman" listed as part of the organizing committee.

A2013.028.003

The services diary 1943, F/O R.G. Freeman, R.C.A.F., September 11, 1942 - December 31, 1943

This Services Diary contains entries made by Robert ("Bert") G. Freeman, Teeswater, Ont., Flying Officer, R.C.A.F. from September 11, 1942 - December 31, 1943.

The first 32 pages of the diary contain printed information related to the air force, military service and other facts.

Bert's entries reflect his experiences as a pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force, beginning in September 1942 with his arrival in Moncton N.B., then to Halifax by Sept. 27 and leaving Canada by ship Oct. 30, 1942 and arrival in Southern England, Nov. 6, 1942. Bert provides information about his experiences in England and Scotland, including a camp in Silloth, including flight training, weather, social activities (such as dancing and movies), and travel and tourism in England during leaves.

Includes information about his emergency admittance to Edinburgh City Isolation Hospital with spinal meningitis on March 12, 1944, his fight for his life and medical treatment in hospital from March 12 - Apr. 9, 1944, with information supplied by night nurse Marg Gillies.

The last page contains a list of people deceased or missing. The first preliminary page contains a list of leave dates.

A2013.028.004

The Royal Air Force and Dominion Air Forces diary 1944, F/O R.G. Freeman, December 31, 1943 - December 26, 1944

This Air Forces diary contains entries made by Robert ("Bert") G. Freeman, Teeswater, Ont., Flying Officer, R.C.A.F. from December 31, 1943 - December 26, 1944.

The first 61 pages of the diary contain printed information related to the air force, military service and other facts.

Bert's entries reflect his experiences as a pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force, including flight training, weather, social activities (such as dances and movies), and travel and tourism in England during leaves. He begins in England, with a leave in Scotland, then travels to Halifax from mid to late May 1944, returning home to Teeswater on May 30, 1944 - "Big reception by town folk." He then spent time at home and in Ottawa and Toronto before receiving on Sept 7, 1944 "word of posting to Pat Bay B.C."

People mentioned include: Irving Hyslop (Jan. 1-2, 1944). A list of deceased or missing people is in the notes section at the end of the diary.

A2013.028.005

F/O R.G. Freeman travel journal, April 20, 1944 - December 4, 1944

This travel journal contains entries made by Robert ("Bert") G. Freeman, Teeswater, Ont., Flying Officer, R.C.A.F. during leave and/or travel taken at times during the period of April 20, 1944 - December 4, 1944. This overlaps with his 1944 service diary (A2013.028.005).

Includes observations and experiences in Scotland and England in April 1944. Includes notes taken in April 1944 at Rhodes House during a presentation by Dr. C.K. Allen concerning democracy. Also includes notes, possibly related to issues of debate or discussion groups, such as "Are you in favour of boarding school or day school?" "A woman's place in the home?" Places noted include: Aberdeen, Oxford, Stratford, Southport, Blackpoole, and Manchester.

Also includes "To Vancouver & Victoria, B.C., Sept. 1944." In this section, Bert has made notes concerning store signs and displays.

Finally, entries from travel from Nov. 29, 1944 - Dec. 4, 1944 start at the back of the book. This concerns travel to Sand Point Naval Air Station near Seattle, then to San Francisco and Los Angeles area.