

The Incredible Dogsbody

Reach for the Sky—Paul Brickhill (William Collins Sons & Company Canada Ltd., Toronto, 384 pages, illus. \$3.50).

Paul Brickhill is an ex-RAAF fighter pilot who has a unique, and now well known talent for telling stories of adventure and daring. His earlier works have included "The Great Escape" and "The Dam Busters", both tales that were as spine-tingling as they were true.

In *Reach for the Sky*, Author Brickhill has with his usual skill brought his sights to bear on one of the most incredible characters to emerge from the World War II holocaust—Douglas Bader (pronounced Bahder), a man to whom the loss of both legs presented only a challenge, not a handicap, and whose ability to amaze his friends was exceeded only by his talent for confounding his enemies.

"Dogsbody", as he became known as a result of the large identifying "DB" painted on his aircraft, was widely regarded as the best fighter leader and tactician of World War II, having been responsible in large degree for the development of the tactics which were so successful in beating off the Hun when he was at the peak of his strength. Though Bader was captured when 1941 was not much more than seven months gone, he nevertheless even then had a personal score of 30 enemy aircraft destroyed (plus a number of probables, and many "frightened"). Oddly enough, as borne out by his performance, his legless state had no effect on his piloting skill, which was considered exceptional by any standards.

A large portion of *Reach for the Sky* is concerned with the almost four years that Douglas Bader languished in captivity, though "languished" is an understatement of the most extreme sort. It appears likely that the Germans quickly reached the stage where if they could have thought of a reasonable excuse to ship this *enfant terrible* back to his homeland, they would have done so with indecent haste. Several times he provoked his captors until they were literally on the verge of shooting him. In one hilarious incident, the Germans turned out a company of 57 fully-armed soldiers to force Bader

to move to another prison camp. Bader, who went without protest so as to avoid starting trouble in which some of his fellow prisoners might get injured, calmly inspected the German guard before being marched away under their surveillance.

Much of Bader's great spirit is plainly attributable to his acute sense of humor. He seems to have been that rare sort of leader who could inspire worship from those who followed him, though as is always the case with such dominant personalities, there was the occasional individual on whom Bader had a somewhat adverse effect.

If this book has one weakness, it is probably that the biographer has fallen victim to his subject's charm; in one or two spots Mr. Brickhill stumbles into a quagmire of hero worship and with some difficulty struggles back onto the somewhat firmer ground of relative objectivity. The book's ending has a slightly maudlin touch that seems a little out of character. Still, Bader has—and continues to do so—set for his fellow man unparalleled examples of courage . . . that rare sort of nerveless bravery that actually finds joy in battle,

and that even rarer sort of cheerful courage that tramples down the most appalling obstacles to a full and happy life. Bader has both in full measure.

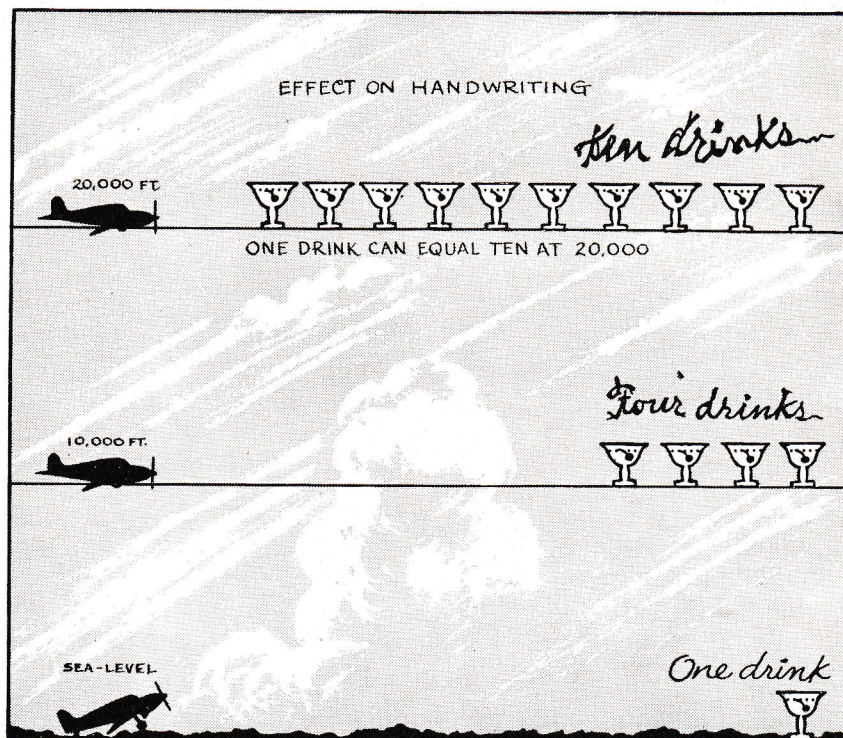
New Textbook

RCFCA Ground School Manual—compiled by the Royal Canadian Flying Clubs Association (Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons (Canada) Ltd., 381 Church St., Toronto. 367 pages, illus., \$7.00).

The RCFCA has been long in labor in bringing forth its new *Ground School Manual* but the result is undoubtedly worthy of the effort. The successful production of the *Manual* will, however, leave a large gap in the programs of business for discussion at the annual RCFCA meetings. The delegates to these meetings will feel as if they have lost an old friend.

The *Manual* is really a superior textbook which will prove indispensable to those working towards their private or commercial licenses. The fact that it is a Canadian book, written by Canadians, for Canadians and covering Canadian conditions and requirements, is an added fillip.

Our only criticism is that during its lengthy production it appears that some of the text has become dated, and this



GETTING HIGH: Copied from a drawing supplied by Al Michaud of Vancouver's U-Fly, this chart graphically illustrates the effect of alcohol at various altitudes. At 10,000 feet, a single drink has the same punch as four at sea level; at 20,000 feet, one drink equals ten in your favorite bar and by then, man, you're loaded. Moral: flying & drinking don't mix.

is something that is hard to avoid when dealing with a field that is in a constant state of change. In the section on radio, for instance, occasional reference is made to 3105 kc. as a frequency which Canadian and U.S. airways stations and control towers still guard. In addition the Able-Baker-Charlie phonetic alphabet is reproduced, when as long ago as September, 1952, the DoT reaffirmed its determination to enforce the use of the new ICAO Alfa-Bravo-Coca alphabet. These are small details, of course, and do little to detract from the value of the Manual as a whole, but at the same time they are the sort of thing that can be misleading to the student.

For any prospective buyer of this *Manual*, the line-up of authors of the various sections should be sufficient recommendation. "Theory of Flight" is by Prof. T. R. Loudon, formerly head of the Dept. of Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Toronto; "Navigation" by John F. Heard, professor of astronomy at the University of Toronto; "Meteorology," by Robert Rogers; "Airframes," by A. S. Howland of A. V. Roe Canada; "Engines," by H. R. Harris; "Instruments," by R. F. Overbury; "Radio," by Sandy A. F. MacDonald, president of Aviation Service Corporation (publishers of "From the Ground Up"); "Airmanship," by George C. Hurren, secretary-manager of the RCFCFA.

Two Directories

The Aeroplane Directory of British Aviation—prepared by the staff of "The Aeroplane" (Temple Press Ltd., Bowling Green Lane, London, E.C.1, England. 546 pages, 21 shillings or approx. \$3.00).

This directory continues to be the standard reference for the British aviation industry. At the same time, the sections on the Commonwealth countries show signs of steady improvement. The over 130-page "Who's Who in British Aviation" is particularly useful, but as with all directories, this one's value lies mainly in its comprehensive listings of British companies engaged in aviation activities, together with their officers and executives.

A new feature this year is the separation of the various sections by means of stiff, tabbed dividing pages, thus making the user's search for information that much easier.

• *Aviation Business Directory*—This quarterly publication is a product of

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