

Flying Officer G A Bell

Flying Officer George Bell was the squadron Medical Officer from just prior to D-Day until the end of the war. One of his first humanitarian acts was to stop the practise of painting the rank rings on the horns of the squadron mascot - a goat. He determined that the aircraft blue dope, that had been used, was toxic.

As the squadron chased the advance of the Allied armour through France and into Belgium, they occupied airfields only recently evacuated by the Luftwaffe. on the 10th September 1944, they occupied an Airfield at Merville situated outside Armentieres, west of Lille. Apparantly, by command of 84 Group Commander, Group Captain Desmond Scott, a mixed party was Held. Doc Bell was instructed to round up as many nurses as possible:

Unfrotunately the nearest RAF hospital was 50 miles away, and though the nearer RAMC units had some nurses, the social calender of those turned out to be fully booked. As zero hour approached we were thus forlornly gathered together with a mess stocked with champagne and chicken to feed hundreds. Scotty (Desmond Scott) admitted that at the last moment he had sent some Belgians off in trucks to see if they could interest other female company, but if they didn't arrive by 20.00 the party would be the usual stag affair. I recall him looking at hiswatch before giving the signal to break out the champagne - when at that moment the mess doors opened and into the foyer spilled an assortment of women. There was a wide winding staircase on which they arranged themselves in echelon, the better to display their charms to the gaping pilots. It was only too evident from what establishments in Lille they had been invited, and my heart sank when I thought of all my anti-VD propoganda being put to the test in this way. To everyone's amazement, however, a hilarious type of mess night, without debauchery, ensued. Once again the Belgians had saved the day.

It is not clear whether Doc Bell served with the squadron after the war, when it was re-formed in 1946. Records show that a Flight Lieutenant Bell served as a Medical Officer with the squadron as an Auxiliary Officer between 1946 and 1957, but it cannot be confirmed, or otherwise, that these two are in fact, one and the same.