

### **A. E. Drayton**

During the spring of 1939, the British government introduced military conscription for males aged between 20 and 21 on the third of June.

My birthday was on June the 8<sup>th</sup> thus qualifying me to be involved for six months military training and four and a half years at fifteen training days per year. Being a student of Commercial Art for three years, I was fortunately selected for the Royal Air Force.

In September the war broke out and I was in training for my special position as a Fabric Worker. Thank goodness I was qualified to handle the pressure of work demanded by the Battle of Britain during the early 1940's.

When our fighter pilots were able to land their badly damaged Hurricanes and Spitfires, we were able to quickly patch, re-arm, refuel and return them to attack enemy aircraft who were limping back across the Channel with less fuel and ammunition. It was the task of Fighter Command to avoid destruction and to win the air battle. Eventually in September we brought down the greatest number of enemy aircraft, one hundred and eighty nine. The enemy pilots were accustomed to our fighters being able only fire forward. On that fatal day we mixed with the Hurricane squadrons a few similar looking Defiants with swivel machine guns mounted midships behind the pilot. When Gerry positioned himself alongside with false immunity he was "Gone".

In 1942 I was transferred to 141 Fighter Squadron who were receiving P.51 Mustang fighters from America. There I had to camouflage and paint our identification, together with selected symbols for each pilot beneath the cockpit of the plane they were allocated in the invasion of North Africa in late 1942.

In 1943 I was posted to 353 Transport Squadron in North India who were dropping supplies to our forces in the 14<sup>th</sup> Army who were defending India from the Japanese forces approaching through Burma and Malaysia.

By late 1944 our forces in Europe were closing in on Berlin, requiring some of the bomber squadrons be withdrawn and sent to India to assist in dropping supplies. During their experiences over Britain they sought the protection afforded them by dark clouds in which to hide from fighter planes and anti-aircraft activity. This became normal process and saved many lives.

Unfortunately it became too dangerous in India to carry out the above procedure as the cloud cover consisted of electrically charged cumulus clouds that caused explosion of aircraft and death to many aircrews. Therefore it was decided to emphasise these dangers by having an artist produce warning illustrations for publication throughout South East Asia Command. I was relieved of squadron duties and taken to 229 Group Headquarters in New Delhi, close to the secretariat and there I was given an office in the Public Relations section. I invented a character I called "Monsoon Moses" and illustrated many drawings of him and the dangers of flying in these electrically

charged clouds for publication throughout South East Asia Air forces. I believe that by making the pilots aware of these dangers through my illustrations that I helped save many lives.

Apart from my above activities, I was also the President of the Station Art Club and Art Editor of Tiger Rag, our Squadron Magazine, where many of my joke drawings appeared to elevate the necessary humour enjoyed by my dear comrades serving their duty and promoting their Sense of Humour. A very necessary attribute of winning the war.



THE DEADLY MIX



ROYAL AIR FORCE STATION  
PALAM

**PROGRAMME**  
*Christmas 1943*



ALL THE  
"GEN"

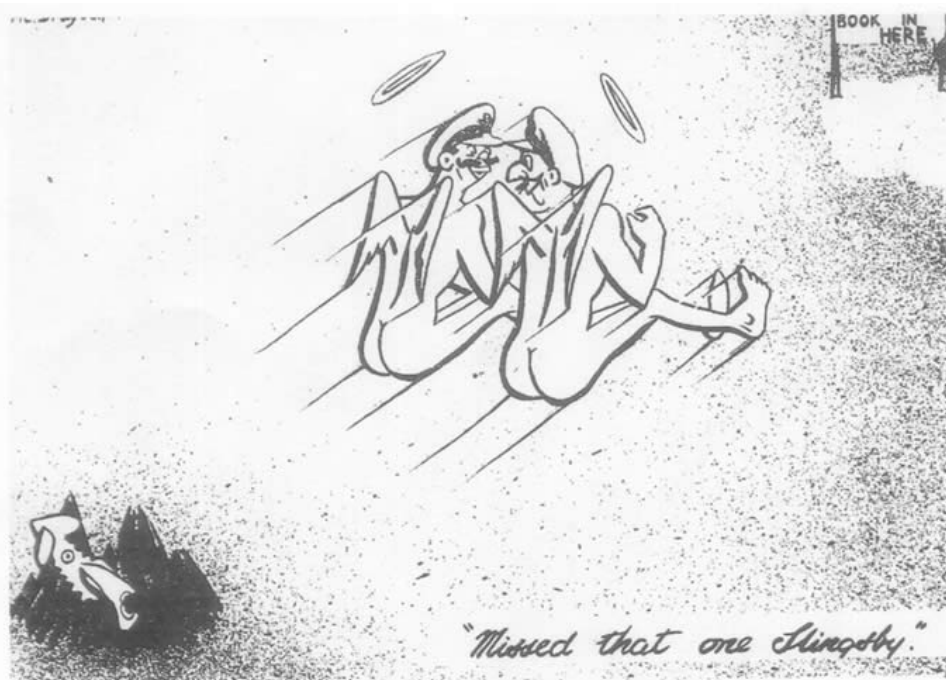
MY FIRST REPRODUCTION

Drayton

Illustrations by Eric Drayton

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13/09/2004



*"Missed that one Slingby."*

Illustrations by Eric Drayton

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