

## Fact file

### Flying Officer Kenneth Albert John Trott



**Ken with his Typhoon. As Ken stands over six feet it indicates the size of a Typhoon.**  
(Ken Trott)

Kenneth, son of Albert and Doris Trott from Bournemouth, Hants, born 28 December 1922, died 12 September 2013, volunteered for the RAF in September 1941, and joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve as Trainee Cadet Pilot.

During his training he held the rank of Leading Aircraftsman and did his initial training at Torquay, Devon before being posted overseas for flying training in Canada. Whilst in Canada Ken made full use of his artistic skills to draw a series of training aids which were posted up in each dispersal.

Ken made it well known that he wanted fly a Sunderland Flying Boat with Coastal Command. Nearing the end of his training one of his fellow pilots was killed and Ken went to his funeral. Upon return he learned that the postings had been allocated and to his dismay he was to be part of fighter Command.

In October 1942, he received his pilots wings and commissioned as Pilot Officer and returned to England for further training.



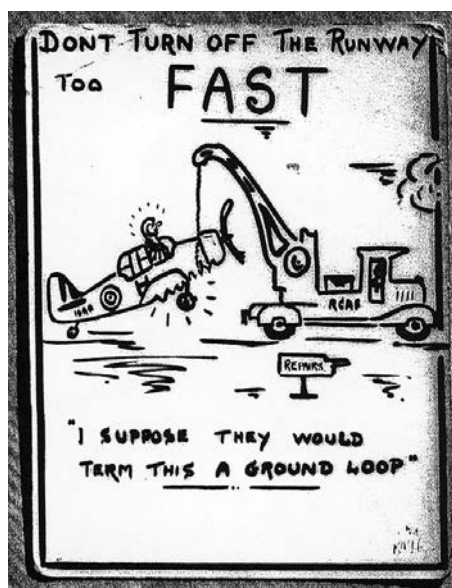
Then in April 1943 Ken was posted to Woodvale Airfield near Southport, Cheshire with 195 Squadron who were equipped with Typhoon single seat fighters.

Soon after, the Squadron was posted to Norfolk and Ken spent several months carrying out regular patrols over the North Sea.

In September the Squadron moved again, this time to RAF Fairlop. They carried out operations over France, often flying to RAF Manston in Kent for briefings.

Ken flew in 'JED' (JP648) which flew from Fairlop as part of 195 Squadron. Ken considered JED to be his personal aircraft and decorated it with a 'Popeye' motif! The original artwork drawn on RAF notepaper used by groundcrew who painted it on the engine cowling. Not to be outdone, his C/O Donald Taylor painted Donald Duck on his Typhoon. 'JED' later went to 164 and 257 squadrons and finally to 57 O.T.U. before being 'Struck off charge' in June 1945.

Ken and his fellow pilots were quartered in the mess at Hainault Lodge, at the eastern end of Forest Road on Hog Hill.



**One of Kens training drawings .**  
(Ken Trott)

Whilst at Fairlop he was invited to visit the Plessey factory in Ilford where they made cartridge starters for Sabre engines, used on Typhoons. He went underground at Gants Hill to see the Plessey Engineering workshops in a newly completed tunnel, later to become the Underground extension to Hainault. He also visited the Napier Sabre Factory at Acton, to see engines being made and tested. He was ordered to report to the M.T. Section for driving lessons, as all pilots were required to be able to drive a motor vehicle. Whilst Ken was entrusted with a Typhoon and quite able to fly it, he was not qualified to drive! He started off in a Bedford truck driving around the perimeter track and having mastered the

controls, his instructor allowed him out onto the highway and on to Ilford Broadway. Ken says it was quite useful to be about ten feet off the ground and see all that was going on! For the last two weeks at Fairlop the Squadron were without aircraft. On arriving at West Malling they are confronted with the terrible news that the Squadron is to be disbanded. Every one stunned.

Ken transferred to 197 Squadron. During the lead up to 'D' Day (6 June 1944), Ken was stationed at Needs Oar Point, near to Beaulieu in the New Forest.



**top: Ken Trott aboard 'JED'**  
**bottom : 'JED',**  
(Ken Trott)

#### **Ken's story using his own words.**

*"In July 1944 I was stationed at Hurn Airfield near Bournemouth, having moved with 197 Squadron (Hawker Typhoons) from Needs Oar Point near Beaulieu in the New Forest, our base for the D-Day operations. At that time we were carrying out offensive operations over France in support of the troops now based in Normandy. On 11th July we flew from Hurn to make our first landing on French soil at airfield B3 St. Croix as our base. This had been constructed with Somerfield Metal Tracking to provide a base for refuelling, rearming, plus tented accommodation.*

*I mentioned to a friend that I was glad it was only Thursday the 13th and not Friday the 13th as we were flying back to England that evening. It turned out to be one of the worse things I ever said, as I was at six o'clock, in the evening whilst on operations I collided with an Me 109 and after baling out, more like falling out I was*

*captured by the Germans to become a POW. I had broken out of cloud and noticed a solitary ME109 coming in my direction. I lined up for a head on attack, firing my four cannons and, the next minute I realised I would have to break to avoid a collision. As I did so, my starboard wing collided with the wing of the 109. I felt my head*

*hit the cockpit cover and my left shoulder the side of the cockpit, my helmet, oxygen mask, goggles and revolver holster were torn from my body and I hurtled into space with only my parachute intact. I realised I would have to pull my ripcord as my altitude was only about 3,000 feet.*



**JED drawing – Both Ken and JED survived the war**

(drawn by Claudio Meunier – Argentina)

*The next minute the canopy opened and I lost consciousness. I came to find myself hanging from a tree in an orchard, surrounded by several armed Germans, one of whom was attempting to release me from the parachute harness.*

*This he did and I fell on top of him to the ground where I lay for a while. The German NCO motioned me to stand up and put my arms up, it was then that I felt that my left arm remained at my side, I could not move it in any way.*

*We proceeded across a stream and fields to a French farmhouse where the Germans had their HQ. I was taken up some stairs and met a German officer seated behind a desk, I saluted him, a wise move, as I was then invited to sit down.*

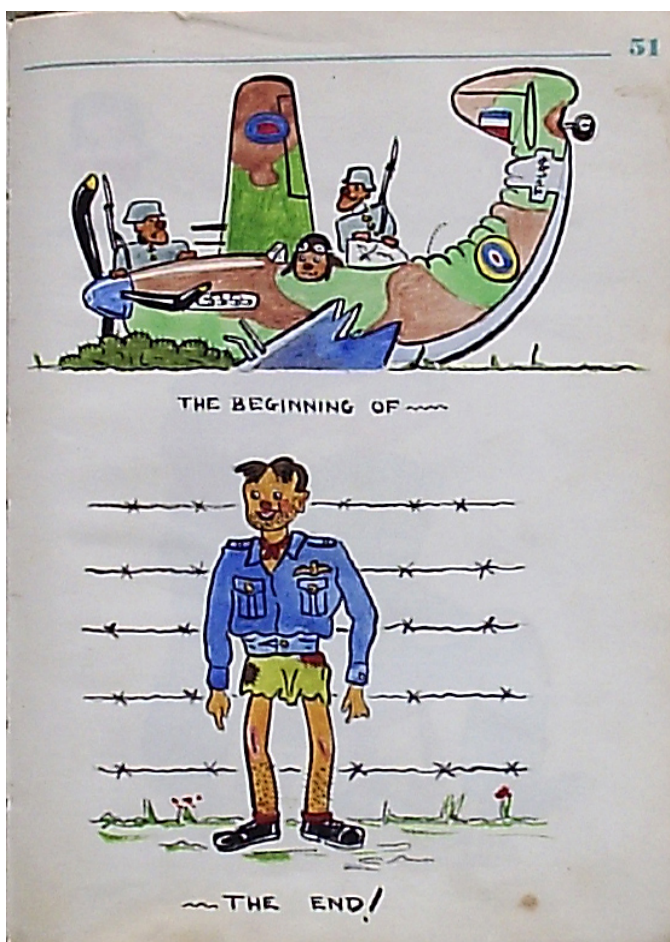
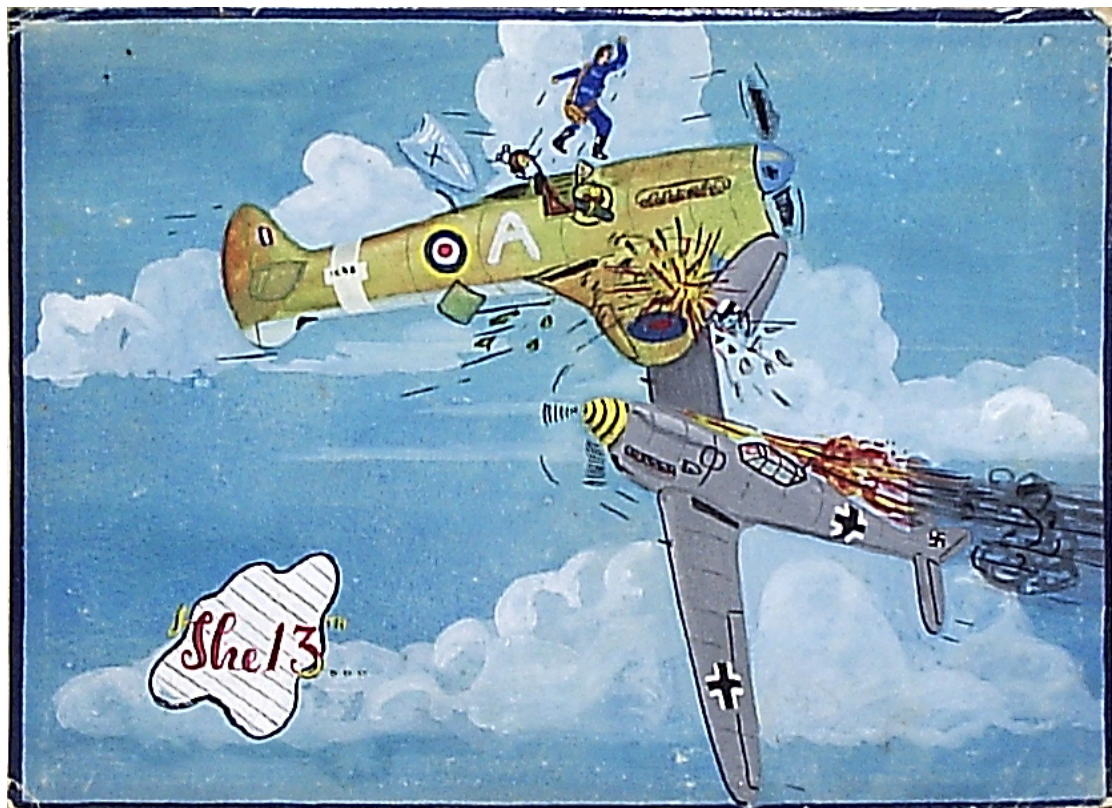
*After a brief interrogation I was asked if I felt well enough to be moved to hospital. I nodded and I then proceeded with an escort to an open top car parked in nearby farmyard. We set off with my escort and me in the back seat and after a few minutes we arrived in the village of Pont-l'Eveque where I was taken to a schoolroom.*

*By this time I was feeling rather unwell and coughing up blood. The guard called for his superior and eventually I was moved to a nearby chateau, part of a German military hospital.*

*Over the next few weeks I was moved onto Evreux, Paris, Trier (Luxembourg) and finally arrived at Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany at the end of September.'*

Kens Parents received a letter in July saying he was missing on operations after having been engaged by an enemy fighter. It was not until November they learned that their son was safe and well, albeit a POW.



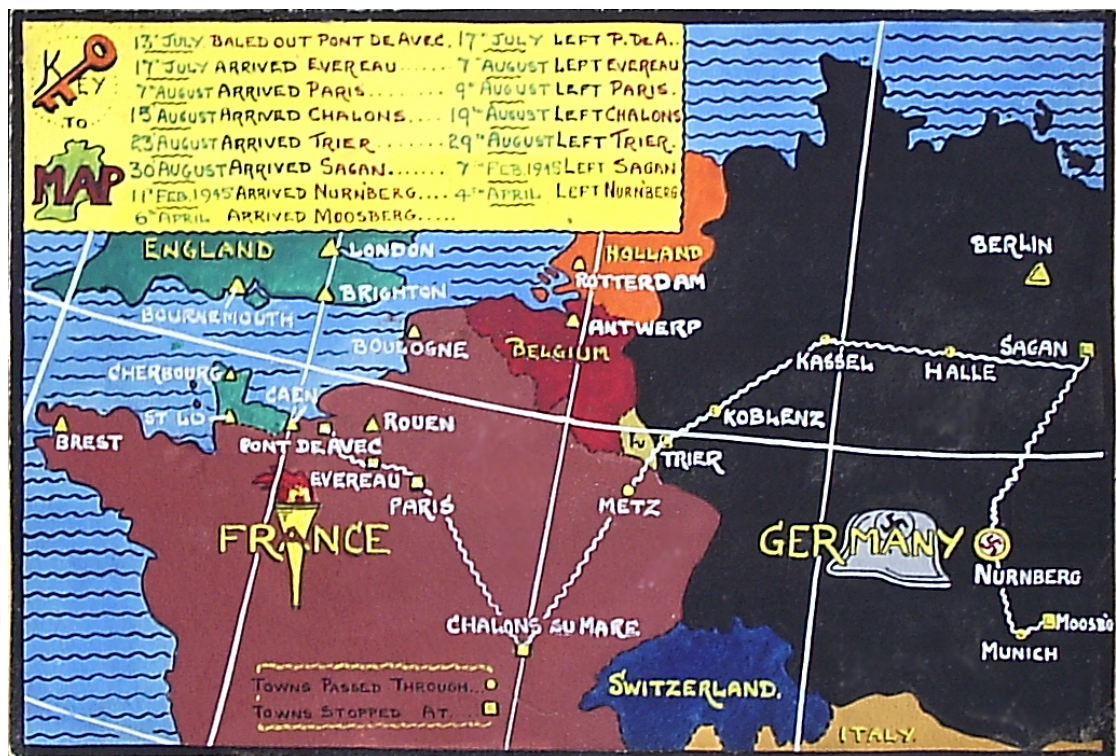


**Kens magnificent drawings  
of his near head on crash on  
13 July 1944.**

Showing his unique sense of  
humour and artistic skill, Ken  
drew these sketches in a Red  
Cross notebook, whilst a  
POW.

(Ken Trott)





Above:  
**Kens drawing of his journey to captivity.**

Left:  
**Popeye drawn on JED by an anonymous Ground Crew artist.**

(Ken Trott)

When Training in Canada Ken wrote a letter to his parents. This letter was printed on to a specially designed form. The airgraph was a means of reducing the weight and bulk of mail carried by air. The airgraph forms, upon which the letter was written, were photographed and then sent as negatives on rolls of microfilm.

The address should be printed in large CAPITAL letters in the panel above. Nothing else should be written above this line.

MRT MRS. TROTT.  
"BELVEDERE"  
65. WEST WAY.  
BOURNEMOUTH  
HANTS  
ENGLAND.

The address should be the same as for an ordinary letter.

604795

Print address in large CAPITAL letters in the panel above. Nothing else should be written above this line.

Please follow instructions on other side.  
The message should be written very plainly below.

Sender's Name and Address 1537163 H.A.C. TROTT  
No 13. S.F.T.S.  
R.C.A.F.  
ST HUBERT.  
QUEBEC.  
CANADA.

Date: 15 OCT.

Dear Mum & Dad.

I have already written you once this week but I thought I would just drop you a line and let you know just what is happening now. I have practically finished everything now and have only about a week to go before I get my "Wings". After receiving them I don't know what will be happening as yet as our postings have not come through yet and we still don't know if there is any leave forthcoming. Next time you write I shall probably be a Sgt or even a P/O. Anyhow just keep on writing to this address and the same rank and number until I send you a cable telling of my new address or anything else that has happened. All the chaps here are getting their wings & sewing them on the tunics now in readiness for next week. I expect I shall get a pair this week-end and then I shall be pleased. I hope I shall be hearing from you before long as I haven't received any mail from you lately. Well cheerio for the time being.

Love  
Ken

This space should not be used

### Letter from Canada (Ken Trott)

A General Post Office (GPO) poster of the time claimed that 1,600 letters on film weighed just 5oz, while 1,600 ordinary letters weighed 50 lbs.

At their destination the negatives were printed on photographic paper and delivered as airgraph letters through the normal Royal Engineers (Postal Section), also known as the Army Postal Services (APS).

In addition to postal censorship, the method of delivery deterred espionage communications by foiling the use of invisible ink, microdots, and microprinting, none of which would be reproduced in a photocopy.