

Cheats Death-Then Thief Cheats Him  
Wings: Log of the R.C.A.F, March 1943

Twenty-three-year FSgt. Art Weaver of Toronto could hardly qualify for 'nothing ever happens to me' classification. Trouble has been his, but doubled.

Back from a two-week brush with death in the Arctic Circle where he and two RCAF birdmates were forced down during a ferry flight, FSgt Weaver was happy with the world again as he realized at home, his wife by his side and \$120 advance pay hidden in the family jewel case. His happiness soon was jolted, however, for a thief broke into this home relieved him of his money and other valuables and left him pondering over that angle about lightning striking twice.

In mid-January, the stock wireless operator made headlines with PO Dave Goodlet 23, of Simcoe, Ontario, pilot, and PO Alfred Nash, 27 of Winnipeg, navigator when they were rescued by a United States Coast Guard cutter after a two-week fight for life in 22 below-zero weather, during which time they had practically no food, and only snow for drinking water.

The three had been ferrying a Boston bomber to Britain and after a few hours experienced radio trouble necessitating "dead reckoning" navigation. High winds blew them off their course and Goodlet, with barely enough gas left to circle for landing, brought the plane in on its belly on a huge glacier. Later they learned they were about 200 feet above coast line level and 15 miles inland, the nearest point of habitation being more than 100 miles distant.

Their food supply consisted of 24 biscuits and a gallon of water, and the latter soon froze solid. Next morning, Weaver was able to get his radio working again and got a message through to Canada giving their position. Then the trio attempt to start a cross-country trek but bad weather prevent them from leaving their aircraft for a full week. Shortly after noon of the eighth day rescue planes sighted them and dropped food, clothing equipment and instructions.

Following orders the party proceeded to the coast but weather condition continued to be almost unbearable and the men were near compete exhaustion, shedding extraneous equipment as their fatigue increased. Rain, sleet and snow soaked and chilled them through and they were able to keep warm at night only by lying one atop the other, getting little protection behind a screen of makeshift snow shoes they had whipped together from box covers and leather cushions.

Late on the 13<sup>th</sup> day, their spirits dropping lower with continued slow progress, the trio suddenly were heartened by the sight of rescue ship off the coast. Noticing the ship's flares and searchlights in the dark, they shot off their last flare but it went undetected and although the airmen built two fires by burning their greatcoats they still failed to attract attention.

When it became dark again, they answered further signals by burning one of their parkas and this time their fire was seen. On boarding the ship the men were placed in hospital, all three suffering frozen hands and feet—but fortunately not seriously.

And so when Weaver reached home weeks later, he was feeling pretty happy generally. In fact, the last thing he expect was to escape from the Arctic only to get "stranded": in Toronto. But hearing about the robbery, the RCAF Benevolent fund came to his aid and the unlucky airman was once more in clover.

But he's still musing over that lightning angle.