

Reel C12,340

Number 32 Elementary Flying Training School, (Swift Current) Bowden, Alberta

May, 1941 - September 1944

May 19, 1941

Wilmslow, England

Initial formation of No 32 EFTS RAF with W/C F B Bristow, CO.

May 20, 1941

Entrained for port of embarkation, Grurock, Scotland.

May 21, 1941

Embarked on HMT Britannic.

May 22, 1941

At sea. Routine, inspections and boat drills.

May 25, 1941

All our escorts including HMS Rodney, the battleship, and four destroyers except one destroyer broke away to intercept the German battleship Bismark some 40 miles north of our position.

May 29, 1941

Arrived in Halifax and on the 30 entrained. On June 2, arrived in Swift Current.

July 9, 1941

Officers from this unit flew ten Tiger Moth planes, initial issue, for training purposes from Calgary.

July 18, 1941

The Under Secretary for Air, Captain H H Balfour MC MP, accompanied by his secretary W W Wakefield, F/L MP, arrived by air to visit this unit. In the course of his address to the airmen, the Under Secretary of State for Air assured them of preferential treatment as regards passages to this country for their wives. At the same time he told them shipping accommodation was so limited that the numbers obtaining passage would of necessity be very small. He also told them to advise their wives to write direct to him in the event of their homes being destroyed by enemy action, assuring them of his prompt personal attention. This assurance brought great ease of

mind to those who have been worrying over just such happenings.

November 20, 1941

There is a hum of activity in the air today. The unit is getting ready to move to Bowden in the near future.

November 24, 1941

The main convoy consisting of 11 MT vehicles and 22 airmen under the command of P/O E T Hawley left Swift Current for Bowden. F/L S Bender, MO accompanied the convoy. The convoy arrived in Medicine Hat where it was accommodated for the night at No 34 SFTS. On the 25th the journey was resumed and Bowden reached at 2300 hours. After the men had been served a hot meal, they were dismissed to their barrack hut. On the 26th, the unit entrained at Swift Current proceeding by rail to Bowden. On the 27th, the train arrived at Bowden camp where men and stores etc were off-loaded. The remainder of the day was spent in settling down in rather difficult circumstances. On the 29th, 12 of our planes flying from Medicine Hat encountered such strong head winds they had to make forced landings. All landed successfully.

December 1, 1941

Bowden. There is as yet no running hot water anywhere in camp. The hangars are without heat making working conditions somewhat difficult.

January 10, 1942

No 819092 LAC Bradley, A F N u/t pilot was seriously injured when his aircraft which he was flying solo crashed near Olds. This is the first serious accident to any u/t pilot of this unit since its formation. Maximum number of possible flying hours 8.5.

January 17, 1942

The usual Saturday night town festivities: dancing, skating and social intercourse claimed most of our airmen not on duty.

February 23, 1942

At the meeting of the PSI Committee the following resolutions were passed: the purchasing of a piano for the airmen's recreation hall, the construction of a boxing ring, the purchase of rifles for skeet shooting. Routine training. Maximum number of possible flying hours 9.5.

February 26, 1942

"Target For Tonight" was the principle feature shown in the recreation hall. It was greatly

appreciated by a packed audience. The picture has a definite instructional value.

February 28, 1942

Number and type of aircraft on charge: 72 Tiger Moth 82C.

March 18, 1942

The male voice choir practise held in the recreation hall this evening led to the discovery of additional talent in the new course. The choir will give its initial performance at the opening of the Canadian Legion Recreation Hall at Bowden on Friday, March 20, 1942.

June 3, 1942

The commanding officer carried out an inspection of the camp. A soccer match against No 37 SFTS Calgary was drawn and a soft ball match against Olds was won. A lecture on Indian life and customs was given by Chief Mountain Horse in the Recreation Hall. Number of flying hours possible 14.

July 9, 1942

F/L Cowley and other officers and members of No 16 EFTS arrived to conduct the taking over of the buildings on the handing over of the unit to the Edmonton Elementary Flying Training School.

July 21, 1942

S/L Townsend assumed command of this unit effective 19th vice W/C F B Bristow.

August 1, 1942

51 course completed training. 90 pupils started, 8 were transferred to course 59, 12 were added from course 49, one from course 59, 17 were suspended, one is in detention, one in civilian jail and one killed leaving a total of 75 graduates. These were posted to North Battleford 5, August 3; 35 to Penhold, August 2; 17 to Estevan; 16 to Swift Current and two to Kingston. The average hours per pupil and the standard reached was slightly higher than the previous course. The change of management was expected to reduce flying hours but the cooperation of all personnel, service and civilian, resulted in a record number of flying hours. The serviceability of Stearman aircraft has been impaired by the number of ground loops. This is largely due to pupils having to land on runways sometimes slightly out of wind. An attempt is being made to grow grass in the landing field to prevent soil drifting. This caused considerable trouble earlier in the year. Flying time 18 hours.

August 17, 1942

Balance of 51 course left station. One officer and 16 men to Estevan, 16 to Swift Current. F/L Laughton, T H SMO visited 4 TC for conference. Two planes crashed, one landing and one taking off at the relief landing field at Netook. Pupil pilots escaped injuries. U/t pilot Hewett sentenced by civilian magistrate to six months in Lethbridge jail for taking a vehicle without owners permission. Flying time 18 hours.

August 31, 1942

Strength of unit: 12 officers RCAF, 14 RCAF airmen; RAF trainees 277. Other personnel: officers 38, senior NCOs 18, other ranks 25. Civilians none for a total of 384. Number and type of aircraft on charge: Stearman PT 27 - 74, Tiger Moth DH 82C - 22.

September 14, 1942

Funeral of LAC Presland was held from the Anglican church, Innisfail. He was buried with full military honours in Innisfail cemetery. Course 61 started examinations. S/L Townsend resumed command of the station.

September 22, 1942

Funeral of P/O Williams and LAC Winne was held with full military honours from St Mark's Church, Innisfail. Burial was made in Innisfail cemetery. The army officers in Red Deer have been very cooperative in loaning rifles and ammunition for funeral parades. A soccer match was held between No 1 squadron of courses 63 and 64. Several internal postings took place.

October 12, 1942

The weather is becoming colder and the instructors are suffering severely in the open back cockpits of a Stearman. We expect the accident rate to rise as a result. P/O S C Cauthen posted to Trenton for repatriation to USA.

November 15, 1942

A blizzard swept northern Alberta. Quantities of snow piled up in front of the hangars and around the other buildings on the drome. Tractors drawing rollers were lost on the landing field. The one inadequate bulldozer we possess was unable to cope with the snow. The CO and other service personnel shovelled snow to clear the hangars. The aerodrome was u/s for three days.

December 17, 1942

A successful concert was held in the recreation hall to a crowded house. The artists were drawn from the station and were under the able leadership of Mrs Nonny Rutherton who has had

professional stage experience in England. The stage had been enlarged and curtains and a backdrop obtained.

January 23, 1943

Air Cadet League of Olds visited the station. They were particularly good at aircraft recognition. At 1600 hours the temperature was 40 degrees below zero F. Flying continued all afternoon.

March 24, 1943

Seven Canadian Pacific Air Line pilots arrived on the station to take a refresher course in instrument flying preparatory to the Department of Transport public transport licence tests. The arrangements for this course were made between the Department of National Defence for Air and the Department of Transport.

May 8, 1943

A fourth Victory Loan campaign parade was held in the town of Innisfail consisting of a march through the town followed by a drill display and a PT display. The parade then formed up around a Tiger Moth aircraft which had been on display all day in an open space in the town whilst the mayor gave an address. The parade was arranged in conjunction with the Innisfail War Loan Committee and the Lions Club.

May 31, 1943

Summary of aircraft accidents for the month of May, 1943

-Tiger Moth DH 82C 4126 C Category LAC Wood W pupil pilot uninjured Excessive use of brakes, aircraft turned up on its nose.

-Tiger Moth DH 82C 1121 C Category LAC Petrie pupil pilot uninjured Aircraft ground looped and went up on its nose.

-Tiger Moth DH 82C 4363 C Category Sergeant Bailey W A flying instructor uninjured LAC Brian, W R pupil pilot uninjured Aircraft struck rut and went up on its nose.

-Tiger Moth DH 82C 4238 B Category LAC Dockery B W O pupil pilot uninjured In correcting bad landing eased stick too far forward and aircraft turned over.

-Tiger Moth DH 82C 5105 B Category Sergeant Wright R I flying instructor uninjured LAC Uden R J pupil pilot uninjured. Engine cut at 2300 feet forced landing hit wire fence and aircraft turned over.

Aircraft on charge: Cornell 42, Tiger Moth 84

June 5, 1943

Special wing parade was held on the station parade ground. Sergeant Wilson J F 1339507 was

paraded before the commanding officer, officers and personnel of the station. The charge, the sentence of the court marshal and the confirmation were promulgated to the accused and AC2 Wilson left the station at 1100 hours for the detention barracks in Calgary.

June 13, 1943

A song and piano forte recital was given in the recreation hall between 2100 and 2230 hours by Mrs N M Bretherton, Mrs Sylvia Wood-Campbell and P/O Hansen. The audience numbered about 150 and were highly appreciative. No 83 course arrived from 31 PD Moncton, 64 u/t pilots.

August 6, 1943

Letter from AOC No 4 TC Calgary, Alberta

SECRET

The Manager No 32 EFTS Bowden, Alberta

Daily Diary

1. Your daily diary from July appendix B does not give the strength of your unit under the proper heading as outlined in Training Command instruction A.51/1 para. 22 dated 8 July 43.
2. In future please prepare the strength of your unit for daily diaries in accordance with the above mentioned paragraph of TCI A.51/1.

C F Falconberg W/C for AOC No 4 TC Calgary, Alberta

August 7, 1943

F/O M R Andrews NZ40615 was today posted to No 19 EFTS Virden, Manitoba. This officer who failed two complete courses at this unit including a supplemental in each course was completely unable to cope with aircraft recognition but the New Zealand Air Liaison Mission considered that owing to his keenness he should be given another opportunity. The only unfortunate aspect of cases such as this is their effect on RAF personnel who may fail a course as they are rarely given another opportunity. They are never able to understand exceptional cases such as this.

August 10, 1943

One of the features of the station which has been considerably built up during the past few months is the station library. The shelves are now assuming a most imposing aspect what with regular purchases of new books, donations by generous members of the staff and pupils and lastly by the Canadian Committee. It is very rare indeed ever to find it anything else but full during its hours of business. The station soccer team journeyed to Calgary today and played a

league match against No 11 ED at Mewata Stadium which resulted in a win for the unit of three to nothing.

August 11, 1943

Section officer F Funk, auxiliary services No 4 TC arrived by air from Penhold. This was a most interesting visit and the object being to discuss the welfare of RAF wives on their husbands repatriation to the United Kingdom. The whole matter was discussed with the CO and the station administrative officer and a number of suggestions were made:

1. That a central hostel in the east operated by the RAF for wives of personnel awaiting embarkation and whose husbands have already left for England should be set up. It is considered that rates should be in accordance with the rank of the personnel and would have the advantage of keeping these wives within easy call in cases of hurried embarkation.

2. The desirability of reducing the ocean fare to senior NCOs and airmen whilst this is a policy matter it is felt iniquitous that other ranks not having the same opportunities for saving as officers have to pay the same ocean fare. It was thought that the benevolent fund might be in a position to help by subsidizing if no other way can be found.

An accident to Cornell Mk II 10740 occurred at 0345 hours today on the main aerodrome. 1578881 Sergeant Day D F the instructor and 1604517 LAC Cole M J pupil were uninjured. The aircraft was held off too high.

September 7, 1943

S/L the Reverend R H V Vivian left by air for No 37 SFTS Calgary on route to De Winton from which station he will be proceeding to the University of Alberta Edmonton to take part in the education officers course on progress of war study and discussion. It is not expected that he will return to this unit until after his leave but he will doubtless be heard from as he has been asked to preach at the Cathedral of St John the Divine New York City, New York whilst on leave. It is understood that his address will be carried by the Columbia Broadcasting Company and the Blue Network. The members of the unit will be very interested to hear if the sermon will follow the same course as the harangues and wiggings he gives us on Sunday mornings.

October 1, 1943

The recorded concert was not produced tonight as the recreation hall has been turned into a dormitory, ladies, for the use of. This has become necessary owing to the invasion of the station by an array of bed bugs. After the initial shock, the hunted counter attacked with cyanide and it is hoped that the positions lost to this pestilence of beasties in barracks blocks etc. will soon be regained. A team of seven airmen today went to No 2 AOS Edmonton to take part in the inter-unit cross country run.

October 7, 1943

Tonight was the official opening of the bar in the sergeants mess. A very fine entertainment was put on to which many of the officers were invited and everybody admired the new addition to the mess. It appears more like a west end cocktail lounge than a mere plebeian bar containing as it does very attractive mural decorations, Varga fashion, executed by one of the mess members Sergeant D C Hickling.

October 9, 1943

The lighter side of service life came to the top on a rather serious occasion today. This is the wedding of P/O Ralph Green to Miss Mildred Devoto of Montreal. The whole officers' mess turned out for the affair and upon the return of the procession to the camp the unfortunate couple's car was drawn to the mess by the blushing bride groom's pupils. The wedding breakfast was held in the mess and the commanding officer S/L T W Hamlin (who had given the bride away) on behalf of the married types took it upon himself to commiserate with P/O Green upon his new estate. In the evening the usual weekly guest night took place.

December 3, 1943

There were some grim faces amongst the old timers of the RAF today. Snow fell heavily and those who had experienced the last winter in these parts were somewhat perturbed but the new arrivals greeted the snow with howls of joy and we are wondering how long they will be so pleased about it. Tonight saw the recreation hall packed with eager quiz fans nearly 200 being present. As usual the show was divided into two parts and \$23 in prizes were distributed.

December 7, 1943

There was very great excitement on the station today when it was announced over the radio that a number of the RAF stations were to close and the personnel returned to England. The passage outside the door to the station adjutant's office was reminiscent of a rugby scrum in the attempts of the people concerned to get inside and get some gen. Needless to say there just wasn't any. Presumably as no mention was made of this unit it is to remain as it is.

December 14, 1943

Today was remarkable for the presentation to the station of its much publicized and eagerly awaited annual magazine *The Three Corners* which had been edited and produced by the station adjutant F/L W F Miller. The magazine was printed by the Phoenix Press Co Ltd. of Calgary and the colour plates were made in Winnipeg. As far as can be seen at the moment sales are going strongly.

December 16, 1943

The most ambitious effort in the field of entertainment yet attempted by the station made its debut tonight. We refer to the famous London play *The Ten Minute Alibi* by Anthony Armstrong which was put on by service personnel assisted by a lady member of the civilian staff. The stage was set in a most professional manner the scenery having been built by the works and buildings department and really first-rate lighting installed. Between the second and third acts prizes were presented by Mr V F V Berton and S/L B L H House to the successful competitors in the station magazine competitions and at the end of the play after a lengthy applause had died away these two gentlemen spoke in praise of the performers. The hall needless to say was packed and if any more had been able to get in the walls would have bulged.

December 26, 1943

Holy mass was celebrated as usual this morning by Father Stewart. At three o'clock in the afternoon heralded by the loud wail of a car klaxon Santa Clause in person arrived outside the officers mess sitting on the bonnet of the car and burdened with a huge stack - stores reference 22B437 - filled with gifts for the children of the service personnel of the unit. The youngsters whose ages ranged from two to five years were agog with excitement and glee when Santa distributed the largess in the officers mess. Santa in the person of F/O D Follows pulled no wrong levers with the exception of his habit of smoking cigarettes to which a few of the older children took exception. Apparently they didn't consider that the smoking of cigarettes by Santa Clause was in the patter book (Ed note: a book of instructions to be given to pupil pilots by their instructors). After being stuffed with ice cream, chocolates, cake and other indigestibles they were posted home and the mess left to the unfortunate single types who had been promoted to uncles for the afternoon. A Boxing Day and formal guest evening was held in the officers mess from 0930 hours to midnight.

December 29, 1943

Possible flying hours day 9, night 15. Hours flown day 8, night nil. The CO's wing parade was held in the drill hall at 1400 hours. At 1830 hours every available motor transport on the unit left the station for Innisfail. On board were 157 cheering airmen who had been invited to a New Years party by the towns folk of Innisfail. This was given in the recreation hall and after being plied with turkeys, hams and other succulent confections they were guest of the town at the Innisfail armouries where everyone enjoyed a first rate dance. All returned to the unit shortly after midnight.

32 EFTS Edmonton Flying RAF Bowden Training School *Three Corners*

(from Shakespear)

Come the three corners of the world in arms and we shall shock them. Not shall make us rue if England to itself do rest but true.

Editor's note: the three corners also refers to the triangular shape of the layout of the runways at nearly all BCATP air bases.

January 13, 1944

Possible flying hours day 10, night 14. Hours flown day 9, night nil. The station dramatic society went to No 36 SFTS Penhold to play to them the three act thriller "The Ten Minute Alibi" which had been so successfully put over here a month ago. The play was a gigantic success at Penhold the audience at which numbered over 540 and it is understood that a couple of hundred more were clamouring outside the door of the recreation hall trying unsuccessfully to gain admittance. Our cast were afterward entertained by the officers mess of the Penhold unit.

January 18, 1944

Tonight the official goodbye was said to S/L The Reverend R H V Vivian who will be leaving this unit on Thursday for repatriation to the United Kingdom. It is with very great regret that we say goodbye to our padre who has been an absolute tower of strength on the unit and without any doubt the best friend any one of us could have had.

January 20, 1944

Tonight a games evening was held in the officers mess to which the members of the sergeants mess were invited. A very pleasant evening was spent during the course of which the officer commanding RAF personnel S/L B L H Howes suggested what a pleasant thing it would be to hold a reunion in England after the war. The station administrative officer F/L W F Miller then produced a plan which the CO and he had devolved for the formation of a club to keep the various members of the unit together during and after the war. This was entitled "The Gophers Club" and after the proposal and description had been received with hilarity it was unanimously decided to proceed with the plan.

March 15, 1944

The current affairs discussion group met to discuss "Should woman's place be in the home?" The attendance was 17 and was worthy of note because it was graced for the first time by the ladies. Though the size was smaller than hoped for, discussion was virile and lively.

June 6, 1944

The Manager, No 32 EFTS, Bowden, Alberta
Daily Diary May 1944

1. This was a well written diary but as in the April (see our letter of even reference D5, May, 1944) it is noted that training does not receive sufficient attention. A daily entry as to weather

and flying conditions generally should be made. Anything affecting training whether favourably or unfavourably should be noted. A definite effort must be made to improve the diary in this respect.

2. Comments and constructive criticism as occasion suggests would enhance the value of the diary.

May 2, 1944

If yesterday were May Day, today was most certainly flag day as we received advice that we had retained the Air Minister's Efficiency Pennant for a further quarter. Everybody was very pleased about it and no doubt there will be a certain amount of pushing out the boat to celebrate.

May 10, 1944

The CO's wing parade was held on the parade ground at 1415 hours and as last week consisted of a rehearsal for the future inspection by the AOC. The only thing in which exception could be taken was the music of the march past played over the public address system. For some unaccountable reason it appears to change time five times in the first twenty bars and a march past developed into a sort of a double shuffle. It has been decided to dispense with the canned music for the next parade.

May 14, 1944

A most regrettable accident occurred today, the first for many months in which 1119622 F/S Fowler J C died after an accident to His Majesty's Cornell aircraft 14396 at Sundre, 25 miles west of Olds at 1515 hours.

May 17, 1944

The power having failed in the evening the camp took on the appearance of a London blackout. All that was missing was the Wailing Winnies. To keep up the morale of the troops a dance was held in the recreation hall at 0830 in the evening by candle light, the music consisting of an improvised station orchestra of piano, cornet and violin. All concerned said it was played with great feeling but we do not know whether they meant the music or the groping for the notes.

June 6, 1944

This momentous day opened as any other day except the majority of the permanent staff appeared to be very tired. It transpired that one individual listening by accident on the previous night to somebody's advertisement for sleeplessness heard the announcement of the invasion and before long practically the whole permanent staff were listening in. As the radio stations were open all night it followed that most of the staff were up all night. In the evening a special service was held in the recreation hall at 8:00 o'clock for invasion day at which the whole station

attended and which was conducted by the station chaplain S/L The Reverend J C E Reuss. Course number 104 started writing their final examinations today.

June 13, 1944

Eight o'clock tonight saw the recreation hall bulging like Drury Lane for the final production of the station's dramatic society "Arsenic and Old Lace." When the curtain rose the audience was staggered by the elaborate stage setting which approximated so closely to that of the original production in New York and London and great credit is due to Sergeant Bennet its designer and LACs Brand and Archer for the building. The play was a gigantic success and Corporal Monkhouse, the producer, was congratulated very sincerely by the commanding officer S/L B L H Howes on the magnificent efforts of he and his cast.

June 14, 1944

At eleven o'clock today the final edition of the station magazine *Three Corners* went on sale. Within 35 minutes every one of the 1,000 copies had gone and many more could have been sold.

June 15, 1944

A/V/M L D D McKeen CB OBE visited the unit today. He inspected the unit and then addressed the pupils in the recreation hall. He pointed out to them that owing to the casualty rates being far less than had been expected it would be many months before their training could be continued and before they could hope to graduate as pilots. Two RCAF pupils arrived from No 1 Y Depot Lachine, Quebec and No 1 RD Rockport, Ontario for inclusion in number 110 course raising the total of this course to 80 pupils.

July 17, 1944

F/L Rees education officer from AFHQ Ottawa arrived on the unit in connection with the taking over of this station by the RCAF as a pre-air crew training school in September.

July 31, 1944

As it will be observed, no flying has taken place during the last three days due to the unusual weather conditions. If this continues very much longer we shall be running PT boats of the unit instead of aeroplanes.

August 4, 1944

Today saw the drill hall decorated like a Hollywood sound stage for the big event of the year, the farewell dinner and dance given to all the station personnel, officers, NCOs, airmen and civilians to mark the winding up of No 32 EFTS. It was a most successful affair with over 1,000 guests who were provided with a sit down supper including turkey, chicken and what have you in the

airmen's mess and music by the RAF Penhold orchestra. At the conclusion of the dance at two o'clock in the morning, Mr. Burton, the manager, spoke on behalf of the organizers and said how sorry we all were that this unit of which we were so proud had come to an end.

August 26, 1944

There was an accident today at 0845 hours one and a half miles south and approximately nine miles east of the town of Bowden to Cornell Mk.II 14498 piloted by 1802123 Sergeant Bennett G R with his pupil 1899831 LAC DeWever C E in which both the occupants lost their lives. As far as can be at present ascertained from civilian witnesses a report sounded from the aircraft which appeared to be flying straight and level.

August 28, 1944

Rain, rain, rain, a most unhappy augury for the sad event which is taking place tomorrow, the double funeral for Sergeant Bennett and LAC De Wever. A large part of today was spent in rehearsals of escort party, firing party, bearers and supporting parties and the weather was as depressing as the event which necessitated the practice. However, towards evening the clouds lifted and it is hoped that they will remain remote tomorrow.

Letter to the AOC, No 32 EFTS Bowden

Dear Sir,

The time is fast approaching when the RAF will have completed their work at the Bowden school and will be leaving our midst. On behalf of the citizens of the town of Innisfail and District I would like to express to you our sincere appreciation of the pleasant relations which have existed between the RAF Station No 32 EFTS and the town of Innisfail since the opening of the school three years ago. While we all rejoice at the turn of the tide in the theatre of war which has made it unnecessary to continue all the air training schools which have done such a grand job for the Empire in the training of air crews for our fighting forces, we regret that it means the closing of No 32 EFTS as an RAF school. Our citizens have since the opening of the station enjoyed many pleasant times as guest of the personnel of the school at your social gatherings and I wish to extend to you our sincere thanks for your many kindnesses. On behalf of the citizens of the town of Innisfail and the District I extend to you sir and through you to all the officers and other personnel of the RAF No 32 EFTS our very best wishes for health and happiness in the better times to which we all look forward.

Yours sincerely

S V Fox, Mayor

September 1, 1944

We are now beginning to really feel that which before has been merely a figure of speech, the closure of the unit. The last three days, since Tuesday in fact, has brought home to us all most vividly the beginning of the end. Tuesday of course saw the departure from this station of the second batch of instructors and all that is now left is the famous unwieldy 110 course. One shudders to think of what it will be like when they go next week.

September 5, 1944

Today marked another milestone in the progress of No 32 EFTS. The last aircraft went up and the last aircraft came down, taxied in and was wheeled carefully and tenderly into its hangar, there to remain until time and a ferry pilot takes it away. It is hard to believe that this once busy flying station will never again hark to the sound of circuits and bumps and circuits and bumps. Well, we are no prophets and who knows some day the gophers may again be disturbed by ropey pupils touching down with elephantine care.

September 8, 1944

A great day has come, the actual end of No 32 EFTS RAF. Number 109 course proceeded to Bowden for their new units and at noon all the permanent staff instructors left on the "Chinook" (train) cheered on the way by the few remaining members of the rear party who came to see them off. This afternoon the camp was a city of the dead with one or two stragglers trudging around empty roads where once had marched hundreds. The commanding officer performed the last rites at sundown when he walked unescorted across the parade ground to the flag staff and hauled down the Ensign, the S/L's pennant, and the Efficiency Pennant for the last time. The Ensign will fly again tomorrow but for the first time in three years it will fly alone.

September 15, 1944

The final day of No 32 EFTS has arrived. The commanding officer S/L B L H Howes left the unit at 1700 hours yesterday and all that remains is the station administrative officer F/L W F Miller and the orderly room staff, all of which will be leaving today. The service side of the station has been handed over to S/L Hay of the new RCAF Station Bowden. With the exception of the few last details we are all now ready to leave. This has been a very happy station and whilst we are all looking forward to going back to England we are all sorry to see the station close and to say goodbye to all the friends we have made on it, civilian and service, to say nothing of all the other generous souls we have met in Innisfail and the surrounding district. Had it not been for this war it is doubtful if even one percent of us would ever have visited Canada and it is something upon the credit side of the ledger that such a catastrophic thing as war has at least given us the opportunity of visiting a country which to us was before only a name in textbooks and to make the acquaintance of people whom otherwise we would never have known. At 1530 hours this afternoon the last party of the RAF left the unit for return to the United Kingdom.

Signed by W F Miller F/L
Officer Commanding Rear Party
No 32 EFTS Bowden, Alberta