

Reel C12,339/ C12,340

Number 31 Elementary Flying Training School, DeWinton, Alberta

April, 1941 - August, 1944

September 9, 1941

Organization Order No 154

Move of Numbers 31 and 32 EFTS

Numbers 31 and 32 EFTS have for some time been accommodated temporarily at Calgary and Swift Current pending the completion of permanent stations at De Winton and Bowden respectively. It is intended to move numbers 31 and 32 EFTS from their present temporary locations to De Winton and Bowden respectively.

The move of these two units is to be carried out under arrangements made by No 4 TC and is to be completed prior to October 6, 1941. Copies of the movement orders covering the moves of these two units are to be forwarded to AFHQ as soon as possible.

April 16, 1941 Kirkham, England

CO and administration officers and other officers and airmen arrive.

April 17, 1941

Other officers and airmen arrive making about 11 officers and nearly full complement of airmen. Preliminary measures taken to organize flights and appoint commanders.

April 22, 1941

CO held parade. Further secrecy instructions issued.

April 23, 1941

Parade at 0345 marched to station. Arrived at Glasgow. 1900 sailed from anchorage in SS Royal Ulsterman.

April 27, 1941

Arrived at Reykjavik, Iceland and disembarked. Proceeded by busses to transit camp 16 miles out.

April 29, 1941

All on board HS California, sailed from harbour.

May 1, 1941

Arrived at Halifax. Officers and airmen given advance of pay and en trained. Left Halifax in one troop train.

May 5, 1941

Arrived Calgary. Proceeded by lorries to the new station at Municipal Airport five miles from the town. Buildings very fine but barracks equipment deficient in many respects.

May 15, 1941

One Tiger Moth arrived on loan from No 2 Wireless School, Currie.

June 2, 1941

Commanding Officer W/C Noel Smith, CFI, S/L Bailey, F/L Oliver and three airmen pilots went by road to High River and brought back six Tiger Moths.

June 15, 1941

93 airmen untrained (u/t) pilots arrived at the unit on posting. Four more Tiger Moths arrived at the unit from de Havilland's by rail for assembly. G/C Banting, British air liaison mission, visited the unit. Flying training commenced in the afternoon.

June 27, 1941

Mr. MacKenzie King, Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, and party visited the station. G/C Farmer visited the unit on equipment matters from HQ RCAF Ottawa. Three officers and 300 airmen under command of S/L Worger-Slade took party in Calgary recruiting march in which Prime Minister MacKenzie King took the salute. Heavy rain during the parade and at night.

June 30, 1941

Strength: officers 29, senior NCOs 24, airmen 425, attached 35

Appendix C to Daily Diary

1. DH Tiger Moth
2. Pupil walked into moving airscrew
3. Calgary airport
4. Slight damage to airscrew
5. Pupil pilot 1072893 LAC Hilton received lacerated wounds on scalp and bruised right shoulder.

July 1, 1941

Emergency landing ground at Airdrie commenced operating. Four Tiger Moth aircraft arrived from de Havilland's, Toronto.

October 13, 1941

31 EFTS movement to De Winton, Alberta. Advance party consists of S/L P. Jackson, P/O J S Robinson and 84 other ranks. Barrack and technical stores also moved. No building is quite complete. Temporary heating and water systems installed. Sanitation primitive, no telephones. RCAF security guard, 29 men, posted to No 2 Wireless School, Calgary. P/O Cresswell, RCAF accountant officer attached from No 2 Manning Depot, Brandon.

October 15, 1941

Movement of main party to De Winton consisting of remainder of officers and 300 other ranks. A rear maintenance party, 43 other ranks, remains on attachment to No 37 SFTS Calgary. Aircraft are flown back and forth to Calgary for major overhauls and other maintenance.

January 1, 1942

The Adastrian being the journal of No 31 EFTS published at De Winton, Alberta, Canada. No. 1, January 1942 shows a picture of a target in one corner and a rectangular area containing a Tiger Moth.

How to Become an Ace Pilot

The first thing to do is to get fitted up with suitable clothing, the most important article of which is the helmet. So go down to the clothing store and select a helmet. Get a good large one to allow for ventilation. The next thing is to get the ear pieces fitted. These should not come anywhere near the ears but should fit snugly over the temples or the back of the neck if preferred. This is most important since if they come anywhere near the ears there is a slight risk of your being able to hear what your instructor is talking about which is most undesirable as you wouldn't understand his remarks about your doubtful parentage. Now, apart from anything else, all flying instructors are glad to seize the opportunity to exercise their throat muscles. The speaking tubes should be plugged with well chewed gum or better still, encourage a spider or an earwig to build a nest in them. This will remove the last chance of your being able to hear. Lastly the parachute. Don't waste too much time over this as all the packs are filled with old football jerseys, the only real ones being hung out to dry.

And now to land. Aim your air plane at another one on the ground or if you can't see one, at the CFI's office window. Keep heading straight for your selected object. When it is possible to see the whites of people's eyes it is time to land. To achieve this, move the column control right back and wait for it. There will be a considerable pause and then you will hear a curious crunching noise accompanied by a tearing sound and possibly a sharp pain in the small

of the back. This indicates that you have arrived.

Beautiful De Winton

When wild flowers bloom at De Winton
In spite of the dusty breeze
The gophers come up and eat them
Kneeling down on their knees

If the daisy dare open its golden eye
To welcome in the dawn
The pleasure of seeing De Winton
Won't be its for long

De Winton fair De Winton
I love your dusty trails
Your cow tracks and you pitfalls
Your ditches and your dales

I love to dream and oft I do
Of days long past and gone
When I was six thousand miles away
From thee O fair De Winton

March 18, 1942

S/Ls Mullen and Watts, RAF Pearce, on information visit.

May 31, 1942

Strength: officers 48, senior NCOs 52, airmen 306, pupils 193, civilians 30.
Aircraft on charge: 31 Tiger Moth DH82C, serviceable 28. 71 Stearman PT27, serviceable 67.

June 6, 1942

31 EFTS cricket A11 played 37 SFTS A11 and lost.

July 3, 1942

Dance was held in the recreation hall. Refreshments were available in the YMCA canteen from 2300 to 2345 hours. Wet canteen remained open until 2230 hours. Ladies were not admitted. Music was provided by Jack Latchly and his band. There was free transportation for lady guests.

July 6, 1942

S/L A C Bailey AFC assumes command of this unit today vice Wing Commander Noel Smith who has been posted to No 36 EFTS Pearce, Alberta. The opening of the Calgary Stampede was celebrated by a parade in which this unit took part. 7371 F/O G F C Caswell (A and SD) was posted today to No 31 PD Moncton, New Brunswick for overseas. It is interesting to note F/O Caswell, a pilot of the last war, was the first man to reach the wreck of the aircraft piloted by Captain von Richthofen, the German ace of 1914 to 1918.

July 8, 1942

This unit has been informed that the song "Captain of the Clouds" is not the official RCAF song. Simultaneously a record was received from AFHQ Ottawa entitled "Captain of the Clouds" and described as the official RCAF song. This unit would be glad to have the position explained.

July 13, 1942

The official reorganization of this unit on a civil operated basis takes effect today. S/L A C Bailey AFC ceases to be officer commanding No 31 EFTS and becomes officer in charge RAF No 31 EFTS De Winton. It is too early as yet to estimate just how successful this change over will be but it is not too soon to state that a measure of courteous cooperation has already been successfully achieved. The manager of the Malton Flying Training School Ltd, Mr E O Houghton, is an ex RFC pilot of the last war. The service will continue to afford him as much help and consideration as is possible. Meantime many personnel here have now been posted. Life of the unit appears to be maintaining a very high level.

July 17, 1942

Although so far there have been no complications through the presence of female employees on the unit an order has been issued to the effect that service personnel are not to fraternize with them or speak to them other than in the normal course of duty within the bounds of the camp. This seems to be a fairly obvious precaution.

July 22, 1942

F/L R Rendle today assumes the duties of officer in charge RAF vice S/L A C Bailey posted to No 3 Flying Instructor School Arnprior, Ontario. This unit now appears to be a veritable international brigade. The different nationalities are Belgian, Dutch, Danish, French, Czechoslovakian and Polish to say nothing of British and Canadian. All these varied tongues can be heard daily throughout the camp and some interesting conversations are the result. In this connection some of these pupils have some interesting stories to tell of their escape from unoccupied and Hun occupied territory. One of the Dutchmen, when asked how he managed to make his escape from Holland replied in broken English, "A Nazi plane landed near our house. My friend he can fly and me I have a gun". Brief, but very explanatory.

August 5, 1942

P/O F S Evatt AUS403572, this unit's first Australian instructor, reported for duty today. His Royal Australian Air Force uniform would normally arouse a certain amount of interested comment on account of its smartness but this unit is so overrun with uniforms of every style and colour from many parts of Europe that at first glance one might be excused for confusing it with one or two of the others. He has proven himself an efficient pilot and is very popular.

August 21, 1942

It has been found necessary to draw the attention of officers, particularly pupil officers, to these confidential orders maintained by the administrative officer referring particularly to such points of discipline as dress and deportment generally, particularly in the case of pupil officers of foreign extraction coming from all parts of Europe it is obvious that certain allowances must be made. The administrative officer in one specific instance had occasion to reprove a Czechoslovakian pupil officer. It was discovered afterward through another source that this pupil had only just received information that his family had been shot as hostages in Czechoslovakia by the Germans. It is instances such as this that while they render life rather delicate at times they certainly make it interesting.

August 24, 1942

72209 F/L R Rendle, officer in charge RAF No 31 EFTS is conducting an investigation into the case of the flying accident involving 1393779 LAC Lohar G W on 20 August 42. LAC Lohar on an authorized solo flight attempted to make a landing downwind on a ploughed field. The aircraft is a virtual writeoff and LAC Lohar sustained injuries which proved to be more serious than was thought at first. He is now sitting up, however, encased in some form of plaster of Paris and can even walk quite well. It is believed the accident was contributed to by his inexperience. This pupil comes from Mauritius and visitors to Colonel Belcher Hospital in Calgary seem to be quite amazed that a coloured boy can talk so intelligently and with an educated accent. This unit is certainly a veritable foreign legion and life is never dull.

August 27, 1942

No 27069 S/L R E Watts AFC (GD) joins this unit today from No 36 EFTS Pearce as officer in charge RAF.

September 6, 1942

This morning there was a fatal accident in the Bow River. 1071844 Sgt W A Howell, flying instructor and LAC J R Thompson 1455337 u/t pilot crashed in about four feet of water and the medical evidence suggests they were both killed instantaneously. There are no eyewitnesses to the actual crash.

September 13, 1942

30933 Lt Maurice Jaquelin, Free French u/t pilot has reported for training. He has been in the French diplomatic service in Honolulu and is possessed not only of the diplomat's well-known charm but also of the typical diplomat's wardrobe, fully stocked and supremely immaculate. It is the despair of every poverty stricken Canadian and Englishman in the mess by who it has been fingered with awe not unmixed with envy.

September 18, 1942

This unit's officer in charge, S/L R E Watts AFC, has just become the father of a baby daughter, Suzanne. Mrs. Watts is in England.

September 24, 1942

All flying instructors now take Link trainer instruction daily between the hours of 1230 hours and 1330 hours except Sunday and Saturday. All instructors are to receive a minimum of two hours Link training instruction per month. The Link trainer is now referred to malevolently as "that (censored) Hoover" or "the blue pencilled refrigerator". They all love it.

Volume I, Number I of the station paper our officer in charge RAF says...

"It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to send my greetings to the new school paper. I hope that the editor and the contributors will meet with the success they deserve. Everybody at this school has a big job of work to do and it will need the greatest cooperation between the civilian and service personnel to get the results we are after. We of the RAF appreciate the difficulties that the management have had to surmount in order to transfer this school from Malton and I am certain that all ranks will do their utmost to assist them whenever possible. I would ask the maintenance section to be patient when we request them to conjure up serviceable aircraft out of thin air but they know that a flying instructors greatest enemy is time and the fact that the weather in Alberta is anything but what it is supposed to be does not make the job of getting the courses out to date any easier. I would like to welcome the new course of pupils and hope that they enjoy their stay in De Winton and are successful with their training. Let me remind them that any hard work put in here will be amply repaid at their SFTS."

Signed
R E Watts, Squadron Leader

Squadron Leader Watts Says "Keep Them Flying"

We wish to welcome another international flight to the station, in particularly one member, a small dark gentleman of Scotch extraction. The changeover from Stearmans to Tigers has commenced with the new intake and this should simplify training to a great extent. The advantages of training on one type of aircraft are too well known to need any comment by me.

The school flying times for last month were very good but still about 1200 hours short of the target figure and the hours for the first half of this month are below the figures for the corresponding period in August. I am certain that if the aircraft allotted to the flights are utilized to the best advantage a big increase in flying times can be obtained. With the shortening of the days it becomes increasingly necessary that the aircraft be kept in the air for every minute possible. This of course is one of the primary jobs of the flight commanders. The instructors can help a lot by planning their whole day in advance. A word to pupils: the amount of flying you do here depends largely on yourselves. If you are handy when a spare aircraft is available the chances are that you will get it irrespective of whether or not it is allotted to your instructor.

October 18, 1942

The wives of P/O Browning and P/O Frost are arriving in Calgary today.

October 24, 1942

Today we have to report with regret another accident which proved fatal to the instructor. P/O A R Frost 591386 and 787381 LAC Symicek J a pupil were flying in Tiger Moth No 4072 when the aircraft stalled during a steep turn about 200 feet from the ground in the low flying area. The machine spun into an open prairie field. Dual instruction was being given at the time. The accident took place about seven miles southeast of the main aerodrome. P/O Frost died from his injuries the following day but the pupil who was also seriously injured is recovering. The most tragic part of this accident is the fact that Mrs. Frost and her ten-month-old baby only arrived in Calgary a week ago.

October 26, 1942

Today we start the pupils of course number 67 on their EFTS routine and this time we are in somewhat of a quandary. Our constant association with our allied friends has taught us to make some show of understanding many foreign languages but this time we have been bequeathed to us one Sinhalese but on scanning the nominal role we find that the powers that be have shown us the consideration of posting to us as a trainee an interpreter 1067101 Sergeant Epstein F who will probably find his time occupied in other ways besides learning to fly for this course consists mainly of Dutch, Danes, Brazilians, Fighting French, Belgians and Czechs. Only 11 are British. Altogether we have 3 officers and 29 airmen.

October 27, 1942

A subscription has been raised among service personnel to assist Mrs Frost and the magnificent sum of \$290 has been obtained. This is sufficient to provide a passage back to England.

November 6, 1942

Last night the officer in charge RAF decided that the Royal Air Force had not done sufficient in

the Victory Loan campaign so decided to organize a drive. He was ably assisted by F/L Eastwood and P/O Gunton. \$1200 was quickly raised in the officers mess and then the committee moved to the sergeants mess where the magnificent total of \$2300 was obtained. This brought the grand total for the officers and sergeants to \$4250 for the entire Victory Loan campaign.

November 17, 1942

S/L Watts returned from Lethbridge today where he has been on duty as president of a court martial. Unfortunately the accused was unfit to plead and the court had to be adjourned until the following Monday. As it had been the intention of the officer in charge to go on leave to New York to hear the opening of the Metropolitan Opera season on that day he is extremely disappointed that the adjournment was necessary.

November 19, 1942

The nine miles of road from the camp to the main highway have become exceedingly difficult to travel. The surface is icy and at one spot popularly known as Dead Man's Gulch where there is a sheer drop either side of about 30 feet the sides of the road have fallen away so much that there is only just room for one car. The road will have to be strengthened at this point in the very near future as it constitutes a real danger in its present state.

The Rookies by LAC Rowley

We think this camp delightful
The food is really good
The Stearman and the Tigers
With wind protecting hoods
Are tonic after waiting
For many weary month
To fly an aeroplane again
And do circuits and bumps
But the things we really like to see
On this camp out in the wilds
Are the girls who work in such a place
Yet wear such cheerful smiles

December 22, 1942

The padre provided a Tuesday evening gramophone recital of Christmas carols which was enjoyed by the few faithful civilians and service personnel who attended. The officer in charge RAF and the padre visited the Holy Cross Hospital and the sanatorium with Christmas boxes for personnel from this unit. From the letters of appreciation which have since been received the visit and presents gave the patients very much pleasure and feeling they were not forgotten

during the Christmas festivities.

December 28, 1942

Usual "post holiday" atmosphere prevailing but everyone was soon in the full swing of routine again and the wheels were not long in ticking over normally the break seemingly having done all ranks a world of good. Without exception, everyone was loud in the praise of Canadian hospitality which appears to be considered exceptionally open handed.

December 30, 1942

During this month, all Stearman aircraft have been withdrawn and all flying is now done in Tiger Moths.

Greetings from the Officer in Charge

This special edition of the Gremlin marks the second Christmas in the history of No 31. Let us hope that before next Christmas we shall publish our final edition with victory written large across the front page. During the past year, pupils from nearly twenty free nations have carried out their training here and today many of them are carrying to Hitler not a Christmas message but one which unfortunately he is best able to understand.

It is pleasant to be able to record that the relationship between the civilian and service personnel continues to be of the happiest but ground engineers must understand that they will continue to be badgered for aircraft during 1943 exactly as they have been here hitherto (by this time I expect they are used to it). For my part I shall be content with 99 percent serviceability. I expect no department to be perfect.

The past year has been marred by far too many flying accidents, the vast majority of which were due to deliberate breaches of flying regulations. Even the most dim witted pupil will realize the orders laid down are for his own safety and he would be the first to complain if a ground engineer carried out an inspection on an aircraft in the same damn fool way in which he, the pupil, attempts to fly it. During the past four months alone, six wives or parents have received news of fatal accidents at this school all of which could have been easily avoided and that news is hardly likely to add to their gaiety this Christmas.

To everybody on the station I wish a Happy Christmas and the best of luck for 1943. May it prove to be the best year yet for De Winton.

R E Watts
Squadron Leader

January 14, 1943

The equipment assistant reports that some airmen's boots have become unserviceable owing to becoming misshapen while drying out. He suggests that all boots and shoes while drying should be stuffed with paper to retain their shape. While ingenious, the forgoing did not appear very practical or productive of the result desired.

January 16, 1943

Flying carried out until 1500 hours when it had to be washed out as the breather pipe on the aircraft was freezing causing excessive oil pressure. Ailerons were also freezing. The SMO reports that fortunately none of the intrepid aviators had to force land outside the aerodrome. If they had done so they would have undoubtedly perished miserably as there would have been little hope of an ambulance reaching them in time.

January 18, 1943

The SMO has a sense of impending doom. A female member of the civilian staff has contracted mumps. It would be pure chance if many of her coworkers do not also succumb. Calgary hospitals will not admit her. This unit has no facilities on the station for hospitalization or isolation. The situation has been foreseen and previously mentioned. Considerable loss of man hours is anticipated.

January 21, 1943

As a result of the blizzard and in an effort to clear the road to the main highway so that the five private cars marooned and abandoned by the roadside could be rescued, the bulldozer had been sent out. Unfortunately, Alberta snowdrifts proved even too much for it and it had also succumbed and given up the ghost in the ditch. A heroic arctic volunteer rescue party, nobly lead by the CO and ably assisted by his chief henchmen, the padre and the CFI, muffled to the eyebrows ventured forth to extricate the bulldozer. Unfortunately after battling the six and a half miles to the bulldozer they found they required the keys to even get it out of gear for towing. In spite of this additional handicap heroic efforts were made but the unwillingness of the bulldozer to cooperate and the snapping of the several towing cables plus the most un-English weather proved too much for this intrepid salvage party and they were forced to turn back more than half frozen and baffled. Flying completely washed out.

February 1, 1943

Scarlet fever epidemic. The SMO reports still another case from 73 course making nine so far and isolation hospital at No 10 RD now full. He feels all we can do now is to trust in God and keep gargling.

February 3, 1943

Mr. Alexander, the school manager, enhanced the already strong entente between service and civilian personnel by very kindly providing a party in the officers mess for all flying instructors and other ground staff in recognition of the intense work which has been done over the past month and which resulted in this school having the largest number of flying hours as well as the most flying hours per accident. It may be added that despite some ten days of very cold weather (at one time the temperature hovered around minus 50 degrees F) the remainder of the month provided much better flying weather at this unit than was experienced by the majority of EFTSs. The CO once again exhibited his sporting inclinations by captaining one of the "high cockalorum" teams and although they went down to glorious defeat they were not disgraced. The minor casualties incurred were considered well justified by the excellent sport which was had by all participants and spectators.

February 13, 1943

The officers mess held a very successful Valentine dance, the music being provided by No 37 SFTS RAF band. The buffet supper was of the usual high standard and the cabaret, being the "Two Chinamen" conjurers and F/L Venuchteck who gave his usual Hitler act which is more like Hitler than he is himself, brought much applause. A very hearty vote of thanks is due to the Hudson Bay Co for the loan of their attractive decorations which transformed the mess out of all recognition particularly owing to the baskets of very natural looking flowers. The padre, S/L Welchman and P/Os Gibson and Dunlop departed for Lake Louise on leave, the padre to indulge in an orgy of photograph taking, Gibson and Dunlop to try and break their necks skiing.

February 18, 1942

Ideal weather and lots of solo and final tests. P/O Delmays "pranged" gloriously at Gladys Ridge which it is reported was recorded on the seismograph in Edmonton.

February 19, 1943

Advice has been received that W/C J Ambros, head of the Czechoslovakian Military Mission in this country, will visit this station on the 22 to present the Czechoslovakian Honorary Wings to S/L R E Watts AFC and F/L R F Eastwood, the award having been made by General S Ingr, Czechoslovakian Minister of National Defence, London. In preparation of this presentation, a full station parade was held at 1700 hours and as when the station church parade was held in January it was found that while the NCOs and airmen leave a lot to be desired in their drill and marching the officers, particularly the recently commissioned instructors, had no knowledge whatsoever of officers' drill and therefore another parade will be held on Monday morning.

February 20, 1943

Information was received that one of our aircraft had appeared to have been "shooting up" the

Calgary - Lethbridge train. It was found that the aircraft was captained by an officer instructor and charges were laid, the officer being remanded by the CO for a summary of evidence.

February 24, 1943

An amusing occurrence which must be unique in air force annals took place today when P/O Hill, who has been described as a benevolent deity's gift to the local female population, appeared for duty in his flight although his seven days leave had already commenced. He thereby lost a day in Vancouver. It is assumed that one of the local beauties has so turned this Lothario's head that he is no longer conscious of whether he is on leave or duty.

March 1, 1943

The officer who was remanded last month for a summary of evidence on a charge of "shooting up" in a Tiger Moth (!) the Calgary - Lethbridge train was released on instructions from HQ No 4 TC since it appeared to have all been a big mistake and in fact the two old ladies who were train passengers were not alarmed but merely titillated. Flying D Flight Commander reports "a new month starts with a big bang owing to shift system coming into force and a makeshift time keeper coming into flight. Weather was ropery and LAC Erks (Belgium) force landed through weather at Heronton. Flew over with P/O Bageley his instructor to pick him up and found he had been very clever about the whole thing. He had landed in a field beside a road, left the a/c into wind, large stones as chocks under the wheels (even tail wheel), a sack stuffed in air vent to engine and engine cowling covered with a blanket. Saluted very smartly when we arrived and seemed to have expected a "strip" but did not get one as I thought he had done very well for his first time away from the circuit and only 4.15 solo out of a total of 12.05. LAC Flower, the efficient but doleful central registry clerk, and drummer extraordinary in the station trio received his first good conduct badge today. This did not however relieve his customary dolorous expression.

March 4, 1943

The CO, S/L Watts AFC departed for two weeks well deserved leave to New York for the prime purpose of hearing the Metropolitan Opera. Since the CO's posting from the UK was originally changed from South Africa to Canada in order that he would be able to attend the New York Opera, only for him to find himself further by distance from New York than when he left the UK and also his previous attempts had been frustrated owing to court marshal duties, it is highly satisfactory he has eventually been able to realize his heart's desire. It is also expected the Tuesday evening gramophone recitals will benefit from some new classics to which he may be introduced while there.

March 19, 1943

Medical Officer reports "76 course comes to the fore with a case of scarlet fever." Menacing report from Moncton that new courses riddled with the fell disease. Medical staff spits on its hands and cleans the hospital for action.

March 20, 1943

The draft comprising course 77 arrived Calgary today only two hours late, nearly a record for the "prairie comet". Draft comprised of six officers and 50 airmen including one gentleman from Jamaica who did not appear particularly perturbed at the awe-inspiring reputation of the Alberta weather. Once again, practically all had an item of flying clothing which was a complete misfit and the officers had not been issued with any. So the whole draft had to be shipped to No 3 SFTS on route.

March 21, 1943

The medical officer reports "Moncton threat amply fulfilled. New course threatens to eclipse the record of 73 course. One man has already fallen, many suspects. The situation is discouraging. No sooner is one outbreak under control than new infection arrives from Moncton's ever-full reservoir of disease. Rather like trying to fill a bath without a plug."

March 24, 1943

Owing to the considerable thaw which took place all day the gullies on either side of the road from the camp to the Macleod Trail have become veritable lakes because the culverts are still frozen up and are not carrying off the water. In one place, the lake on the south side of the road must be twelve feet deep and is pouring over the road in a veritable Niagara Falls. This disconcerted the padre last evening when acting as his own chauffeur returning from hospital visits as he is not accustomed to this sort of thing in the quiet leafy lanes of Devon. However, recalling Cromwell's famous maxim and pulling his cap firmly over his ears, he put the noble station wagon to bottom gear, committed his soul to the higher authority and took off. Although he did not completely emulate the fleeing Egyptians 100 percent owing to the lack of cooperation on the part of the turbulent waters, the same result was achieved, even to the extent of succeeding charioteers, also like Pharaohs hosts, becoming bogged down as effectively. However in an endeavour to restrain the torrent from demolishing the road completely and possibly having in mind the Jordan bursting its banks, the civilian works and bricks manager elected to pour a number of large boulders, formerly the artistic roadway boundaries of the camp, into the breach. While the idea was excellent the result was appalling, endangering as it did the crankcase, battery and other underslung parts of each vehicle while trying to negotiate this rocky ford. Not only were several civilian intrepid motorists left not high and dry but low and wet in the middle but even the wily civilian maintenance manager Mr Rainer came a cropper in it and the poor padre who had a date with the bishop in town and an airman in tow but unfortunately not a rod to smite the waters, was forced to turn back despite the urging of the admin officer to "have a go." Since the padre was taking the airman to the bishop for formal induction into the church it almost seemed that higher authority was not interested in this lost lamb or something would have been done to provide a passage.

April 30, 1943

The CO announced that the total of 10,000 flying hours had been reached and that he had received a message from the Air Officer Commanding 4 TC that this unit had won the pennant for the most efficient EFTS in Canada during the past quarter.

May 5, 1943

More American Cornels are arriving ferried by both male and female pilots, many of them very interesting people. The ladies were entertained in the officers mess for meals to the mutual enjoyment of it is behoped themselves and certainly of the staff. The girls were Americans who looked very smart in their grey uniforms and seemed to be enjoying their work.

May 7, 1943

A very big day in station history when we heard we had been awarded the "Cock of the Walk" trophy. This has long been coveted and we have tried very hard so feel amply rewarded. Comments and congratulations came in from all sides and everyone is highly delighted. We have further added to our laurels by topping our target of \$25,000 in the savings drive for the fourth Victory Loan. This includes contributions from civilians and service personnel but we feel it is a very fine achievement. The news came in during the afternoon that Tunis and Bizerte had fallen and this capped a great day for the station.

May 10, 1943

F/L Rivas DFC, a pupil, gave a talk which lasted an hour and held his audience's attention for every minute. Apart from his own operational experience he drew from his experiences at the central gunnery school including such raids as the famous operation against Augsburg. The principal value to the pupils of a talk of this kind is to remind them of the ultimate purpose of their training which can perhaps be somewhat easily forgotten so many thousands of miles from the attack on Europe.

May 27, 1943

The air officer commanding No 4 TC A/V/M G R Housam MC arrived by air at 1400 hours to present the efficiency pennant. About the time he was due to leave a violent rainstorm swept over Calgary and his departure was delayed for a few minutes. Station personnel were drawn up on the parade ground in review order under command of S/L Watts and later formed a hollow square. The AOC inspected the front ranks speaking to several airmen and later addressed the parade congratulating the station on its performance. S/L Watts departed by rail tonight for Trenton for his course.

News clipping from the Calgary Herald

De Winton Air School Said World's Best

“Your station has been awarded the Minister's Pennant and in addition the ‘Cock of the Walk’ trophy as being the most efficient elementary flying training school in the British Commonwealth Air Training Scheme and the winning of the double award means much. It means undoubtedly that you have achieved the highest standard of efficiency of any elementary school in the world and there is no other flying training organization compared to your own.” So said Air Vice -Marshal G R Housam MC air officer commanding No 4 Training Command RCAF Thursday afternoon when he presented the efficiency pennant to No 31 EFTS De Winton operated by the Malton Flying Training School Ltd with Royal Air Force Personnel on the establishment. A station parade was held for the occasion and flights were inspected by the air officer commanding prior to his address and the presentation. The Air Minister's Efficiency Pennant was then flown from the flagstaff on the parade square below the RAF ensign. The efficiency pennant was previously held by No 2 EFTS Fort William, Ontario and the Cock of the Walk trophy has been brought to the West for the first time by No 31 having previously been held by No 2 SFTS Uplands and is awarded to the most efficient school of any kind in the training plan.

June 2, 1943

The Cock of the Walk trophy was due to arrive tonight accompanied by two senior officers from No 2 SFTS. Information was received by signal that they would arrive at Calgary by TCA (Trans Canada Airlines) and the commanding officer duly proceeded to meet them after accommodation had been reserved for them at the Palliser Hotel. When the aircraft arrived there were no officers on it so he retired. Nothing further happened and on enquiries being made at command it was found that information had been received that since the parade had already been held here it was not considered necessary for anyone to bring the trophy but that it would be sent by express. Unfortunately no one had ever informed this unit to that effect. The trophy duly arrived by express and is to be exhibited in the various messes.

June 13, 1943

Two new instructors arrived today from No 3 FIS Arnprior, P/O Slipper and P/O Golightly (ed: "slipper golightly"). Our strength is being gradually brought up. The incoming course, course number 83, is a veritable crowd of monsters, very many of them over six feet. For once we have no allied personnel and no officers.

June 16, 1943

A reselection board was held this afternoon. One Czech airman failed to appear before the board and had evidently disappeared into Calgary. He was arrested there by the service police and brought out under escort the next day and later awarded fourteen days close confinement. "Gone With the Wind" is showing in the station cinema tonight.

June 17, 1943

The SMO F/L Huey became ill in the morning and flying was washed out for an hour and a half until a relief could be brought out from No 10 Repair Depot by air as the other doctor was on a day off at Banff. (ed: no doctor, no flying)

June 30, 1943

Aircraft on charge as of June 30: 68 de Havilland 82C Tiger Moths, 15 Cornell I, 70 Cornell II, one Menasco Moth. Total instructional flying 9245.55 hours, total non-instructional flying 352.45 hours.

July 1, 1943

This was Dominion Day and to celebrate there was a fastball game on the station grounds followed by a free cinema shown in the recreation hall. The station golf team played a match against No 4 Training Command at the Country Club, Calgary but lost all four matches, a very tactful result. The flying orderly room reports F/L Gunton's trying experience in mid-air is as follows: "Suddenly a large something flashed before my eyes and I beheld a large four engine bumble bee cruising around the cockpit. I hastily took evasive action, opening the coupe top and putting the nose sharply down so that the intruder was forcibly ejected through the opening before he had time for his tail gunner to come into action." We might just add here that the enemy was cruising at an altitude of 4,000 feet.

July 5, 1943

The flying orderly room reports: "Peace descended upon De Winton. No roaring motors rent the air today with their full-throated song. No panoply of war disturbed the drowsy summer air. And why you may ask, why this easing of the total war? Has De Winton made a separate peace with the swastika-ed villains beyond the sea? Nay, indeed. Today is the wild west's big day and warriors from all around from aerodromes and Indian reserves, from barracks and camps, assemble in the friendly foothills city. Nearly everyone from the camp went to see this remarkable spectacle and those of us who stayed behind had a very nice quiet peaceful day.

Editor's Note: very good photographs of the stampede parade included in the microfilm showing a float from the station with the motto "We Teach The World To Fly" and names of countries represented at De Winton (USA, Norway, New Zealand, China, Tahiti, Netherlands, West Indies and many others).

August 6, 1943

The Belgian Minister to Canada, Baron Silvercruys, accompanied by the Belgian Air Attaché Captain D Ducq, together with S/L R A Kindrek, the Liaison Officer, Allied Nations, visited the unit today for the purpose of interviewing the Belgian pupils under training at this unit. While

here, Baron Silvercruys presented the Commanding Officer, S/L R E Watts AFC with the Belgian Military Service Cross, First Class, awarded to him by the Belgian government. The presentation took place on the parade ground at a full station parade.

August 17, 1943

The Commanding Officer S/L R E Watts AFC left today on attachment to No 32 SFTS Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. F/L Dew assumes temporary command.

August 27, 1943

The station was visited by Air Marshal L D D McKean CB OBE, Liaison Officer in Chief, United Kingdom Air Liaison Mission, Ottawa who is on a tour of all Royal Air Force Units within No 4 Training Command. An inspection of all sections of the unit was carried out. The weekly gramophone concerts have at last been resumed, the technical hitch having been rectified. This week, act two of Madam Butterfly (Puccini) was given and a very appreciative audience attended. F/L R C Morden and F/O W I Barton No 4 TC navigation officers made a routine visit to the station.

September 2, 1943

A full station parade was held at 1245 hours today at which S/L W Mullen officially assumed command of the unit from S/L R E Watts.

October 31, 1943

Strength of unit as of 31 October 43. Staff: RCAF 3 officers, 5 airmen; RAF 58 officers 43 airmen; trainees RAF 4 officers, 270 airmen.
Aircraft: one Menasco Moth, 14 Cornell I, 75 Cornell II.

February 2, 1944

The station was visited by Captain Hope-Poland of the South African Air Force, the purpose of her visit being the administration and organization of flying training. She was accompanied by S/L J Cadwell No 4 TC.

March 13, 1944

The many rumours that have been circulating regarding the closing down of the station were settled once and for all when it was announced over the radio and was seen in the newspaper that the date for disbandment was fixed for August 25, 1944. 40 pupils comprising course number 102 were taken from the storage pool and commenced their training today. A variety concert was given at the cinema show this evening in aid of the Red Cross and the sum of over \$60 was raised by a collection at the door. In all over \$300 was subscribed by the service personnel of

this unit in aid of this deserving cause.

March 25, 1944

84 pupils arrive today from St Hubert where they have been in storage, the greater majority of whom are French naval trainees. The unit took on a strange appearance as these strangely garbed sailors with a typically nautical gait walked about the camp. We are thinking of calling ourselves HMS De Winton and the more serious minded are considering evening classes in the French language.

August 1, 1944

And so we commence the last month of our existence for in 25 days time No 31 EFTS will cease to exist. Our personnel at the moment is mainly allied and it is an undoubted fact that these airmen are somewhat depressed by the knowledge that their service training is going to be delayed. Major MacMahon, the French military and air attaché, Lt Com Normand, the French naval attaché with W/C Kendrick visited the unit today from Ottawa to speak with the French cadets.

August 4, 1944

Tonight the last night flying detail came into operation. There will be no night flying after tonight and it will indeed be strange to experience a night free from the murmur of the Cornell speeding through the night though one wonders whether our cadets would entirely approve of the application of the words murmur and speed to the Cornell.

August 12, 1944

In the evening the officers held their farewell dance in the mess which had been ingeniously camouflaged to resemble an underground station in London. The good old London transport red circle with such destinations as Knightsbridge, Lester Square and slogans such as "Bass Builds Better Men" and "What We Want Is Wattney's," all familiarities to anyone who has known London's maze of underground railways, were much in evidence and everyone had a very good time.

August 17, 1944

The CO held his last parade today. The parades at De Winton have been unusual. Nothing big and spectacular for the unit is only a small school. But they have always held a certain air of distinction probably due to the gay striped shirts and red pompons of the French Navy and the staid smartness of the French Air Force and our own airmen in their dapper Canadian summer suits always seem to march so much better in these bright summer colours. An optical illusion, some sceptics will say. Nonetheless, our parades could hold their own with any other equal sized unit.

August 19, 1944

Today was the last day for flying at the unit and early in the afternoon flying commitments had been met and the strange silence which has been gradually creeping over the hangars and flights today became complete. De Winton, which had suffered the RAF flyers for nearly three years today to all intents and purposes was seeing the last of them in the skies.

August 26, 1944

The station is closed. It no longer exists on paper and the last cadets have gone. A few of the officers hang about but they are only here because they must wait for transportation to get them away. But there is still plenty of activity in station headquarters. The orderly room is a hive of activity with the staff only just visible beneath an impressive display of files, air force admin orders, routine orders, KRs and clearance certificates.

September 1, 1944

Today the remains are leaving and this is the end of the end, and the end of the end at any unit is a depressing time to say the least. The remains consist of the station administrative officer, the orderly room staff who will all proceed to No 31 Personnel Depot for staff duties, and the medical officer who is also going to Moncton. And so it is goodbye to De Winton's No 31 and on to things to come.

Editor's note: No 405 Aircraft Holding Unit, No 4 TC , became responsible for the care and maintenance of the buildings and property of the station.