

Reel C12,336

Number 36 Elementary Flying Training School, Pearce, Alberta

March 17, 1942 - August 14, 1942

March 2, 1942

Secret Organization Order Number 45

Transfer of Number 36 Elementary Flying Training School RAF to Canada

Information: It has been ascertained that No 36 Elementary Flying Training School will arrive at port of disembarkation in Canada about 3/3/42. The school will move in one echelon consisting of approximately 32 officers and 304 airmen plus pupils.

Intention: It is intended to locate No 36 Elementary Flying Training School at Pearce, Alberta.

Execution: The air officer commanding No 4 Training Command is to be responsible for the control and administration of No 36 Elementary Flying Training School.

Advances of pay and exchange of Stirling: RAF personnel on the strength of this school may receive advances of pay as follows to be recovered by the RAF account officer from issues of pay in Canada: officers \$50; warrant officers \$25; F/Sgts and sergeants \$15; corporals and below \$10. Facilities are available at the port of disembarkation for RAF personnel to exchange Stirling in their possession up to a maximum of 10 pounds.

Aircraft: The United Kingdom Air Ministry have arranged for the supply of the necessary number of Stearman aircraft.

February 14, 1942

Unit assembled at West Kirby under the command of W/C J B Stockbridge.

February 23, 1942

Unit left West Kirby at 2300 hours and entrained for Gourock.

February 24, 1942

Arrived Gourock at 1200 hours and immediately embarked on SS Demand/Spratt.

March 8, 1942

Land sighted at 1430 hours, put into Halifax at 1630 hours. Disembarkation commenced immediately ship docked at approximately 1700 hours. Unit entrained at Halifax at 1930 and 2000 hours.

March 9, 1942

Arrived Moncton, New Brunswick at 0300 hours. W/C Stockbridge, F/L R H Wood left for headquarters, Ottawa.

March 13, 1942

Unit entrained at Moncton 1000 hours leaving at 1030 hours for Pearce, Alberta under the control of the Canadian National Railway. Officer commanding train F/L A T Hatton-Smooker, Adjutant No 36 EFTS. Arrived St John, New Brunswick at 1315 AT and was met by Canadian Pacific Representative Mr J J McGowan who took charge of the train on behalf of the CPR.

March 17, 1942

Arrived Pearce, Alberta 0600 hours being met by the mayor of Macleod, Mr Davies, president of the board of trade of Macleod Mr J W Coleman and other prominent citizens with private transport. Train comprised twelve cars.

March 21, 1942

S/L T R Wheatly, Commanding Officer, and personnel of No 108 Advance Party proceeded to No 38 EFTS. Twelve Stearman aircraft arrived during the day from Lethbridge. Mobile photographic unit arrived 2330 hours.

March 30, 1942

W/C W K Robertson SEO No 4 TC and S/L T F L Gladden, No 4 TC, arrived on visit, left the same day. P/O A G Clark posted to No 31 EFTS de Winton. F/O T E Knight and 11 other officers departed by transport to Macleod for entraining to Winnipeg to collect additional aircraft.

March 31, 1942

Lt Col MacDougal CDO arrived to inspect the dental clinic. Left PM same day. A fire broke out on the aerodrome at 1545 hours, was controlled and extinguished by 1645 hours, no damage caused. W/C J B Stockbridge and S/L R E Watts left by road for High River AM, returned PM same day.

April 1, 1942

Ninety trainees arrived at Pearce station from Moncton 0930 hours.

April 2, 1942

F/O T E Knight and ten other officers returned from Winnipeg ferrying aircraft. P/O W S Kersey reported missing and crashed at Neepawa, Manitoba.

April 7, 1942

LAC Goldspink, first RAF u/t pilot to go solo Stearman aircraft in Canada. Number 48 course commenced flying.

April 10, 1942

The Air Officer Commanding No 4 Training Command A/C G C Howsam, accompanied by W/C Davidson, arrived at 1355 hours by air. On order of A/C G C Howsam, runways were used for takeoff owing to excessive dust being created and harming aerodrome surface. Landings being made on triangle and center of aerodrome.

April 10 and 11, 1942

Ten de Havilland Moths arrived from de Winton for instrument flying as Stearmans not equipped for this.

April 12, 1942

Flying two and a half hours only due to high winds.

April 14, 1942

No flying PM due to high winds.

May 5, 1942

Accidents: Stearman PT27 FD998 Pearce aerodrome at 1150 hours: pilot 1338381 LAC Chute V H solo practice, aircraft ground looped on landing damaging starboard wing. Stearman PT27 FJ752 Pearce aerodrome at 1425 hours: pilot Sgt Davies E, pupil 1390709 LAC Howard R dual instruction, aircraft ground looped on landing damaging starboard wing. Stearman PT27 FJ748 Pearce aerodrome at 1430 hours, pilot 995685 LAC Barbarrow J N solo practise, aircraft ground looped following a bad landing damaging starboard wing. S/L Townsend 32 EFTS arrived on temporary duty.

May 8, 1942

A dance was held in the sergeants' mess on May 8 this being the first entertainment of this kind on this Station. Approximately 150 guests were present. Music was supplied by the Station dance orchestra under the direction of P/O Morton.

May 15, 1942

At the YMCA cinema the feature film was "Bank Dick" starring W C Fields and Oona Merkle. The first airmen's dance was held in the recreation hall and a very enjoyable evening was spent. About 500 including guests were present.

May 17, 1942

F/O Sir Norman J Watson posted to this unit from No 32 OTU Patricia Bay to fill vacancy as assistant adjutant.

May 31, 1942

Number and type of aircraft on charge as of May 31, 1942: Stearman PT27 68; Tiger Moth DH82C 14.

June 1, 1942

First issue of the Station magazine "The Elevator."

June 9, 1942

Maximum number of possible flying hours five hours, 30 minutes. Rugby match, officers versus permanent staff resulted in a drawn game 0-0. Inclement weather curtailed outdoor sport but badminton was very popular again. Number 48 course took final examinations with an average of 76 percent in results. There were three failures.

June 13, 1942

On orders received from Ferry Pool No 124 Squadron, P/O W S Kersey proceeded in Stearman aircraft number FJ760 from Winnipeg to Neepawa. On landing at Neepawa, the machine ran forward and when nearing the end of its run the wheels sank in a soft muddy spot and the aircraft tipped up and over. A report was furnished to the commanding officer at Neepawa and by him to Training Command. A further report was made to the ferry squadron. Information received from the chief engineer showed that airscrew was bent, tail fin and rudder were broken, the main planes and fuselage and undercarriage were not damaged. Repair would take two days.

June 17, 1942

Mr F T Cook of the Department of Public Health, Alberta, visited the Station and gave lectures at 1900 hours on VD. The Station was represented in a boxing tournament held between boxers of Pearce, Macleod and Lethbridge. The arena at Lethbridge was made available to the Kinsmen Club for the event. Cpl Jacobson of this unit won the major bout.

July 9, 1942

Secret Organization Order Number 88
Disbandment of No 36 Elementary Flying Training School

The disbandment of certain EFTS's is necessary to provide sufficient accommodation for the expansion of air observer schools.

July 29, 1942

Accident: 1387747 LAC Gross D M, Stearman FD990, killed in flying accident, plane total wreck. P/O A G Clark and 1337274 LAC Brand, Stearman FD980, both killed in flying accident, plane total wreck. Both aircraft collided in air on the circuit.

August 1, 1942

Funeral of P/O A G Clark, LAC Brand, LAC Gross took place with full military honours at St Augustine Church, Lethbridge. S/L J C Lusk officiated.

August 4, 1942

Posting notes for all personnel of this unit received owing to pending disbandment of No 36 EFTS.

August 13, 1942

Official date of disbandment of No 36 EFTS. One week extension of flying granted to complete required number of flying hours.

August 20, 1942

Postings airmen: 150 airmen posted to various units throughout the Dominion due to disbandment of this unit. Extension of flying granted to complete necessary flying hours for course.

August 21, 1942

Postings officers: to No 32 EFTS Bowden, F/L I Palmer, F/L A G Davies, P/O R Moore, P/O K Andrews, P/O A K M Reed, P/O N Kreele. To No 33 EFTS Carron, P/O C L Smith, P/O Sayers, P/O A Maclean. To No 3 FIS Arnprior, F/O E James. To No 2 FIS Vulcan, P/O R B Morton, F/O T E Knight. To No 31 EFTS de Winton, P/O J B Anderson, P/O J R Eldridge, P/O J S Gibson.

August 27, 1942

Posting officers: to No 31 EFTS de Winton, S/L R E Watts AFC.

Editor's note: the cover of "The Elevator" shows grain elevators at Pearce and a pilot standing on the ground looking up.

This from the first issue of "The Elevator"

On the Camera Club

"Even before that never to be forgotten March morning to be known hereafter in the history books as St Patrick's Day, 1942, invasion of Pearce, it was evident that a keen interest in photography was shared by a large proportion of the unit. Almost the moment we stepped ashore and were released from the irksome but necessary restrictions of military secrecy, the cameras appeared in scores and our passage across Canada was marked for me by the rush at every stopping place of a crowd of amateur jarche's to all the likely viewpoints in sight and the trail of yellow film cartons which we scattered from Moncton to Macleod. At first glance the photographic possibilities of Pearce and its environs appeared even less encouraging than the social and personal but as with the latter, closer acquaintance brought many surprises and if the absence of vertical planes makes good composition difficult, no one is going to complain when the alternatives offered for our celluloid are dust storms, floods and the ever changing but always beautiful mountains."

Second Issue

Overseas Service

"Nearly 100 copies of The Elevator, No 1, went outside Canada. They went to every corner of the British Isles from Golders Green to Galway and Lands End to John O'Groat's. Not a few went even further afield to brothers and friends in far less salubrious surroundings than ours here at Pearce - Egypt, the Western Desert, and India.

End of Diary.

*Excerpts from the Daily Diary of No 36 Elementary Flying Training School
compiled by*

Tim Johnston

from copies of the BCATP Daily Diaries provided by

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