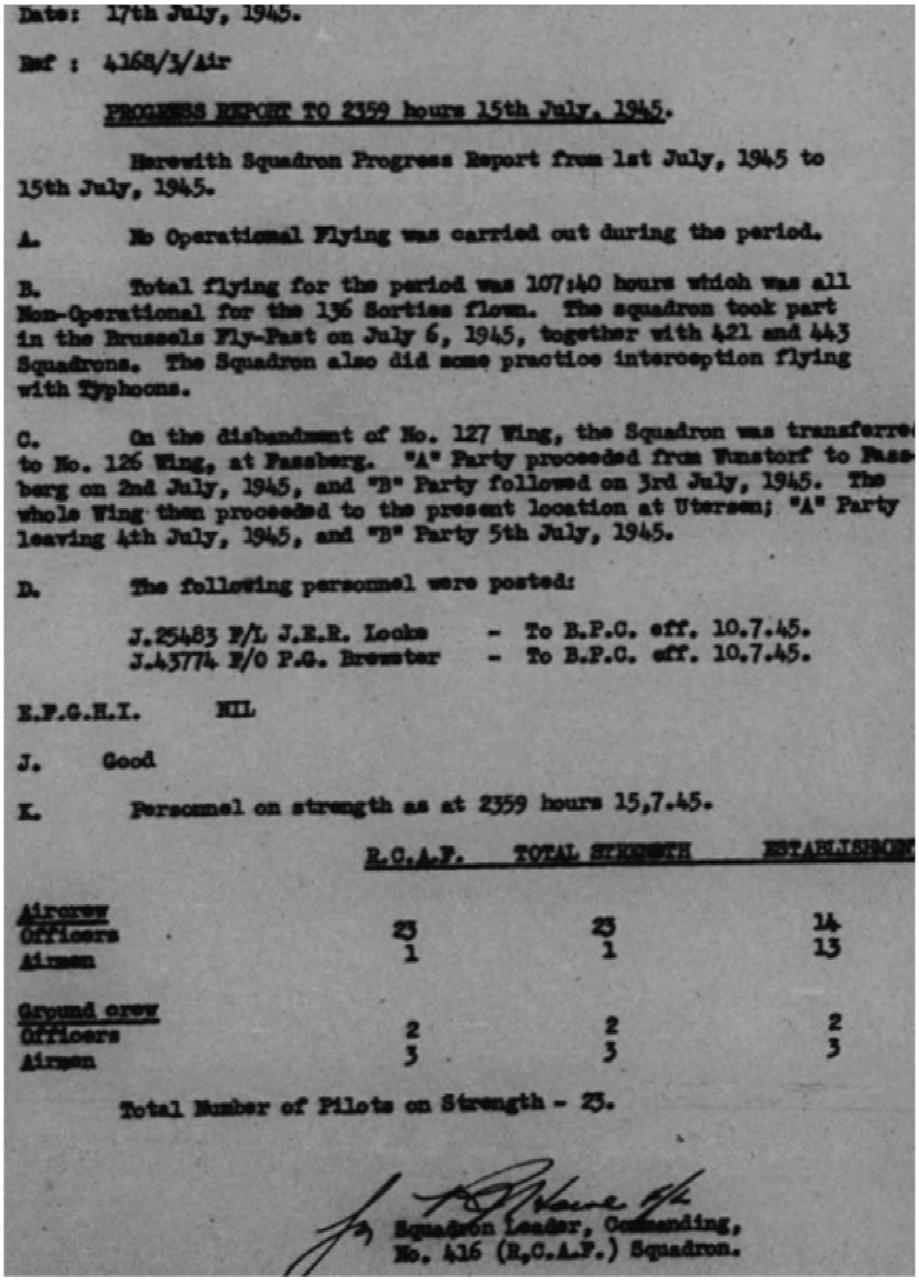
Postwar – Base 174, Utersen, Germany,

[5 July 45 to 21 March 1946]

Part One



Date: 17th July, 1945.

Ref : 4168/3/Air

PROGRESS REPORT TO 2359 hours 15th July, 1945.

Herewith Squadron Progress Report from 1st July, 1945 to 15th July, 1945.

A. No Operational Flying was carried out during the period.

B. Total flying for the period was 107:40 hours which was all Non-Operational for the 136 Sorties flown. The squadron took part in the Brussels Fly-Past on July 6, 1945, together with 421 and 443 Squadrons. The Squadron also did some practice interception flying with Typhoons.

C. On the disbandment of No. 127 Wing, the Squadron was transferred to No. 126 Wing, at Fassberg. "A" Party proceeded from Wunstorf to Fassberg on 2nd July, 1945, and "B" Party followed on 3rd July, 1945. The whole Wing then proceeded to the present location at Utersen; "A" Party leaving 4th July, 1945, and "B" Party 5th July, 1945.

D. The following personnel were posted:

J.25483 F/L J.E.R. Locke - To B.P.C. eff. 10.7.45.
J.43774 F/O P.G. Brewster - To B.P.C. eff. 10.7.45.

E.F.C.H.I. NIL

J. Good

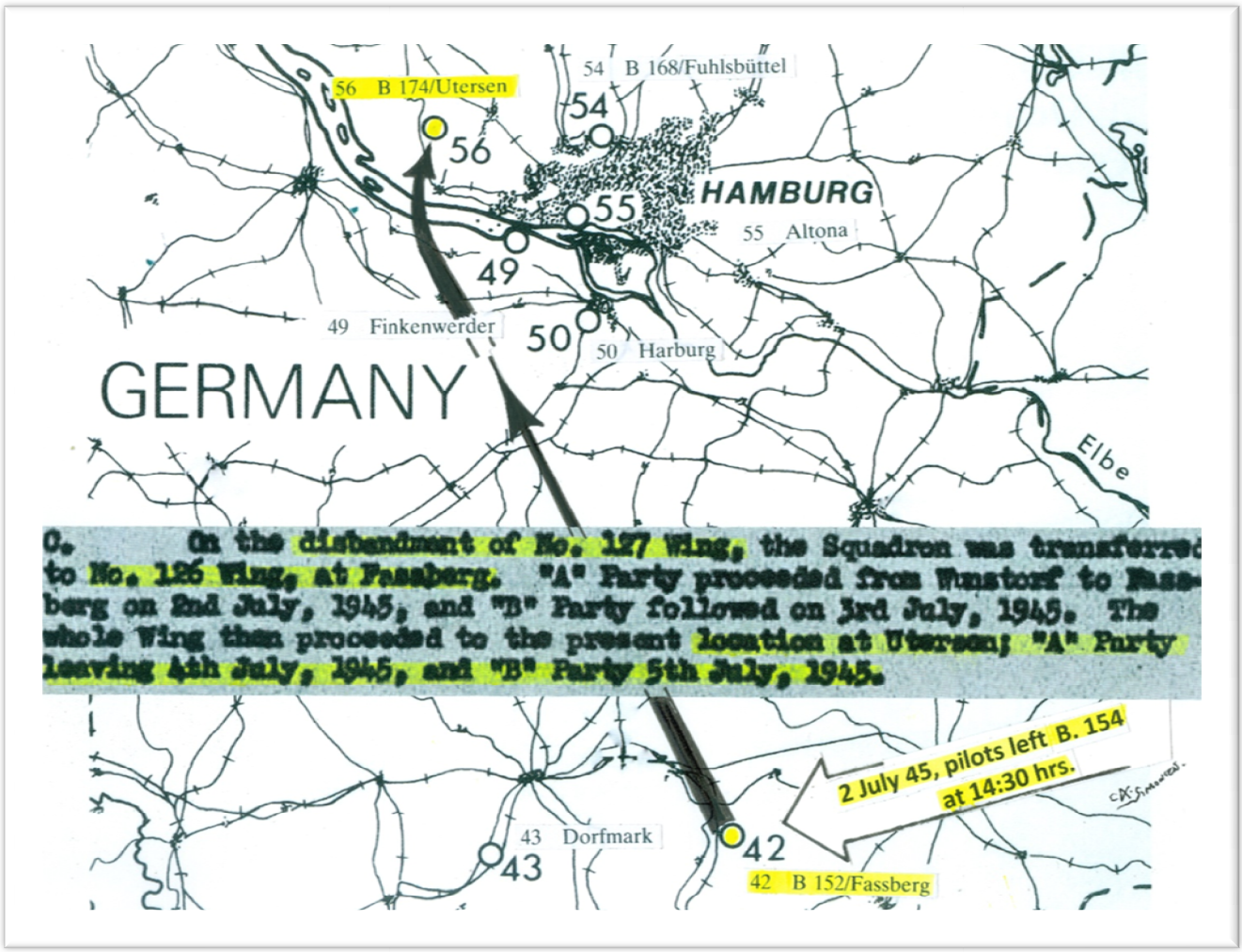
K. Personnel on strength as at 2359 hours 15,7.45.

	R.C.A.F.	TOTAL STRENGTH	ESTABLISHMENT
Aircrew			
Officers	23	23	14
Airmen	1	1	13
Ground crew			
Officers	2	2	2
Airmen	3	3	3

Total Number of Pilots on Strength - 23.

Squadron Leader, Commanding,
No. 416 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

On 2 July 1945, No. 416 [Lynx] Squadron came under control of British Air Forces of Occupation of Germany, No. 83 [Composite] Group, No. 126 [RCAF] Wing. This was their first day at Base 152, Fassberg, Germany, which was a total mess from Allied bomb damage.



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No. 416 Spits parked at Base 152, Fassberg, 3 July 1945, departed the following day.

Gordon only recorded two images of what remained at Fassberg.

5 July 1945, modern clean ex-Luftwaffe barracks at Base 174, Utersen, Germany.

F/O Gordon Hill, P/O Larry Spurr, and P/O Chuck Darrow get some sunshine.

Inside the modern clean ex-Luftwaffe barracks at B. 174.

This abandoned Messerschmitt Me 262A, appears to have a large light colored "I" with a dark "7" near the tail, serial appears to be 418 543. It was being moved by road when the war ended, possibly being used by 9 Staffel, Jagdgeschwader 7, in the last Defence of the Reich. If that is the case the rear fuselage contained a front blue band, followed by a red band, and painted over the middle would be a large yellow "I". Seems to fit, however I am not a Luftwaffe markings expert.

A captured Junkers Ju 88 in British markings, Base 174.

A Focke-Wulf Fw 200C Condor being painted over by the R.A.F., another war prize. Sadly, the code letters are gone, and the aircraft possibly went to England for testing.

A Heinkel He 111 showing her code letters.

Next, a large number of Focke-Wulf Fw 190 fighters under repair [or salvaged for parts] at Hamburg, Airport, July 1945. Used in the Defence of the Reich, until the end.

Gordon Hill captured this rare Junkers Ju 52/3mg6e, at Base 174.

This was a mine-clearing German aircraft equipped with large dural hoops under the fuselage, which are clearly seen in the image. The hoops were energised by an auxiliary motor which exploded enemy mines in harbors. The code appears to be IB, which possibly belonged to Gruppenstab, operating in the Gulf of Finland, 1944-45. The support pole and wires extending from front of the mid-upper gun show up very clear. I have no idea if this minesweeping aircraft had any effect on Allied mines in WWII, however it was still in use in May 1945.

Main entrance to Hamburg airport, July 1945.

Hamburg railway station had been bombed many times, in July 45, it was repaired and in full operation.

The bridge over the Elbe was untouched by bombing.

Major areas of Hamburg were destroyed. A German survivor takes home water.

TAF
83

Return to England, Air Firing course.

of (Unit or Formation) 416 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron. No. of pages used fo

B.174, Germany | 1 Aug.45. Summary of Events SECRET.

Big news - the Squadron and Echelon is going to Warmwell tomorrow on another Air Firing Course for 2 weeks. This will be a good break while we're waiting for Repats. A last fling in Hamburg for some of the boys in the evening. | 2 Aug.45

Bags of panic getting the groundcrew lined up for the trip. Ten truckloads of Erks, with a few pilots, off to Schleswig at 1130 hours to catch the Stirlings taking us over. The pilots flew over at 1500 hours, landing about 1900 hours at Warmwell. P/O's Brouillard, Williams, Lyons and Collins left at Eindhoven with engine trouble.

The pilots wait at Base 78 Eindhoven, Netherlands, 2 August 45, for the Spits to be refueled. Gordon is flying his DN-S, serial TD 187, seen in background.

Four aircraft remain at base with engine trouble, and the rest of the squadron arrives at Warmwell at 19:00 Hrs.

Date: 23rd August, 1945.

Ref : 4168/3/Air.

PROGRESS REPORT TO 2359 HOURS, 15th August, 1945.

Herewith Squadron Progress Report from 1st August, 1945 to 15th August, 1945.

A. No Operational Flying was carried out during the period.

B. Non-Operational Flying for the period was 227.55 for 240 sorties. From the 2nd of August, the Squadron was on an Air Firing Course at Warmwell.

C. On August 2nd, the Squadron proceeded to 17 A.P.C., Warmwell, for Air Firing Course. 6416 S.E. Personnel proceeded by Air Lift.

D. The following personnel were posted:

IN:

F/L W.P. Schram	-	From 400 Squadron.
F/L W. Uchacz	-	From 414 Squadron.
F/O R.E. Durling	-	From 414 Squadron.
F/O K.B. Cox	-	From 414 Squadron.
F/O R. Stalport	-	From 430 Squadron.
F/O H.W. Lucas	-	From 430 Squadron.
WO1 Burke, H.J.	-	From 83 G.D.C.
WO1 Henn, E.J.	-	From 83 G.D.C.
F/S Thompson, W.C.	-	From 83 G.D.C.
F/S Doherty, D.J.	-	From 83 G.D.C.

OUT:

F/L K.F. Scott	-	To 430 Squadron.

R.F.G.H. & I. Nil

J. Good.

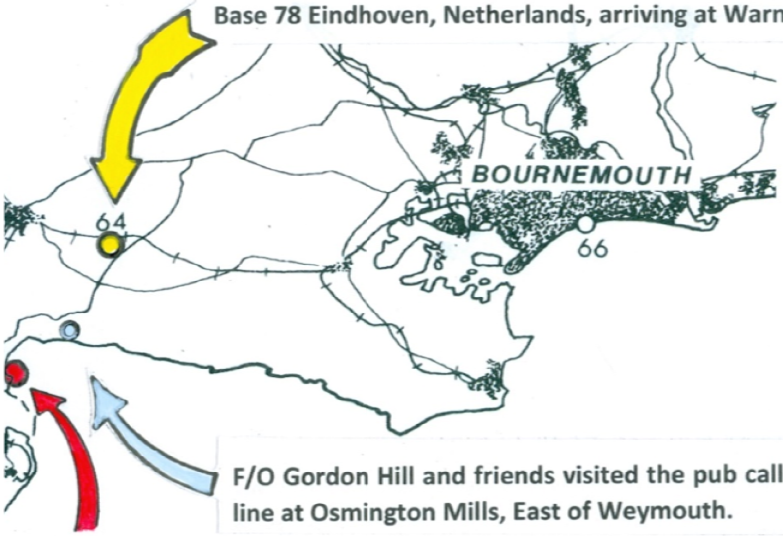
K. Personnel on Strength as at 2359 Hours, 15th August, 1945.

	R.C.A.F.	TOTAL STRENGTH	ESTABLISHMENT
Aircrew			
Officers	21	21	14
Airmen	6	6	13
Groundcrew			
Officers	2	2	2
Airmen	3	3	3

Total number of Pilots on Strength - 27.

Squadron Leader, Commanding,
No. 416 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

On 1 August 1945, No. 416 [Lynx] Squadron received orders they would leave for a two week "Air Firing Course" at Warmwell, No. 64 on map. The pilots departed Base 174 Utersen, Germany, at 15:00 hrs [2 August 45] and stopped for fuel at Base 78 Eindhoven, Netherlands, arriving at Warmwell at 19:00 hrs.



F/O Gordon Hill and friends visited the pub called "Smugglers Inn" on the coas line at Osmington Mills, East of Weymouth.

)n 3 August, the pilots conducted "Dinghy Drill" at the beach in Weymouth, and ıfterwards visited the local pubs, including "The Golden Lion Hotel." On 9 August ı large "DO" drinking party took place at the pub in the Golden Lion Hotel.

The Golden Lion Hotel drinking spot

17 A.P.C., Warmwell

3.Aug.45.	The course didn't begin today, so the Pilots went on Dinghy Drill to Weymouth in the afternoon, and spent the evening there, visiting the local pubs.
4.Aug.45.	The aircraft doing practice bombing from first light until late in the day. Weather very fine. More of Weymouth in the evening.
5.Aug.45.	Four pilots on leave today for 3 days. All the boys will get 3 days while we're here, and the airmen 4 days. Much flying throughout the day.
6.Aug.45.	No flying today - weather duff. Two trucks were rented from the RAF to take the airmen into town on a Liberty run, at 6d per mile.
7.Aug.45.	Squadron busy on practice dive bombing and air to ground Cine gun. If this keeps on the course will be finished in a week.
8.Aug.45.	F/L Neil Dove, one of the pilots attached to us for the course, was forced to crash land on the beach today, when his A/C sprung a Glycol leak, with no injury to himself except a shaking up. C.O. to London by Spit for an interview with the Chairborne division.
9.Aug.45.	More practice flying. Another "Do" in the Golden Lion in the evening. The taxiis are doing a thriving business between here and Weymouth these days.

I call this image, "Dog-Fight" on the beach at Weymouth. It's the 3 August 45, and they are on the beach doing Dinghy Drill, or just killing time until the course starts. Mascot "Peter" enjoys digging in the sand.

Peter [above] digging in sand on Weymouth beach, 3 August 45.

This is the cover art for October 1944 book – "RAF Parade" by Evelyn Thomas. Romance in England during WWII, which Gordon found at Weymouth beach.

9 to 12 August 1945, Peggy [a redhead] appears again and again, Weymouth beach.

Weymouth beach

Peggy

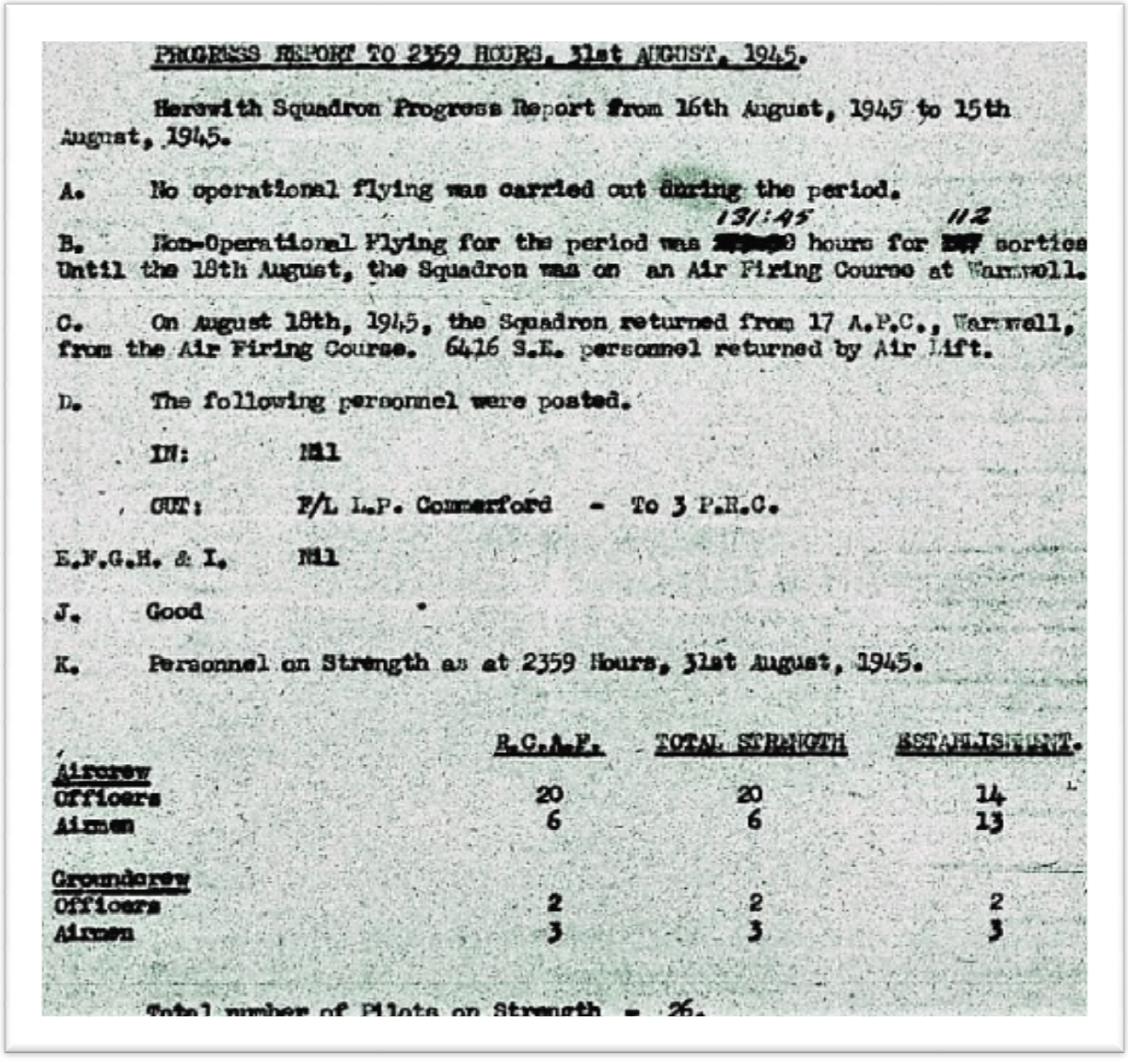
Weymouth beach and Peggy

14 August 1945, the big news arrived, Japan surrendered, its VJ-Day, and everyone gets two days off.

Gordon, Peggy, far right, and her sister, go East from Weymouth to a pub called "Smuggler's Inn" at Osmington Mills. It's still much the same today.

Smuggler's Inn, 14 August 1945.

On 15 August 45, a huge "Victory" party, [VJ-Day] was held in the Mess at No. 17 A.P.C. Warmwell, and the R.A.F. was kind enough to allow the Canadian NCO pilots to join their fellow officer pilots in the celebration. On 18 August, the Spitfires took off in the afternoon for B.174, Germany. The next day "B" party left by air to Scheswig, Germany, and then by truck to base 174, arriving at 19:30 hrs.



PROGRESS REPORT TO 2359 HOURS, 31st AUGUST, 1945.

Herewith Squadron Progress Report from 16th August, 1945 to 15th August, 1945.

A. No operational flying was carried out during the period.

B. Non-Operational Flying for the period was 131:45 hours for 112 sorties Until the 18th August, the Squadron was on an Air Firing Course at Warmwell.

C. On August 18th, 1945, the Squadron returned from 17 A.P.C., Warmwell, from the Air Firing Course. 6416 S.E. personnel returned by Air Lift.

D. The following personnel were posted.

IN: Nil

OUT: F/L L.P. Commerford - To 3 P.R.C.

E.F.G.H. & I. Nil

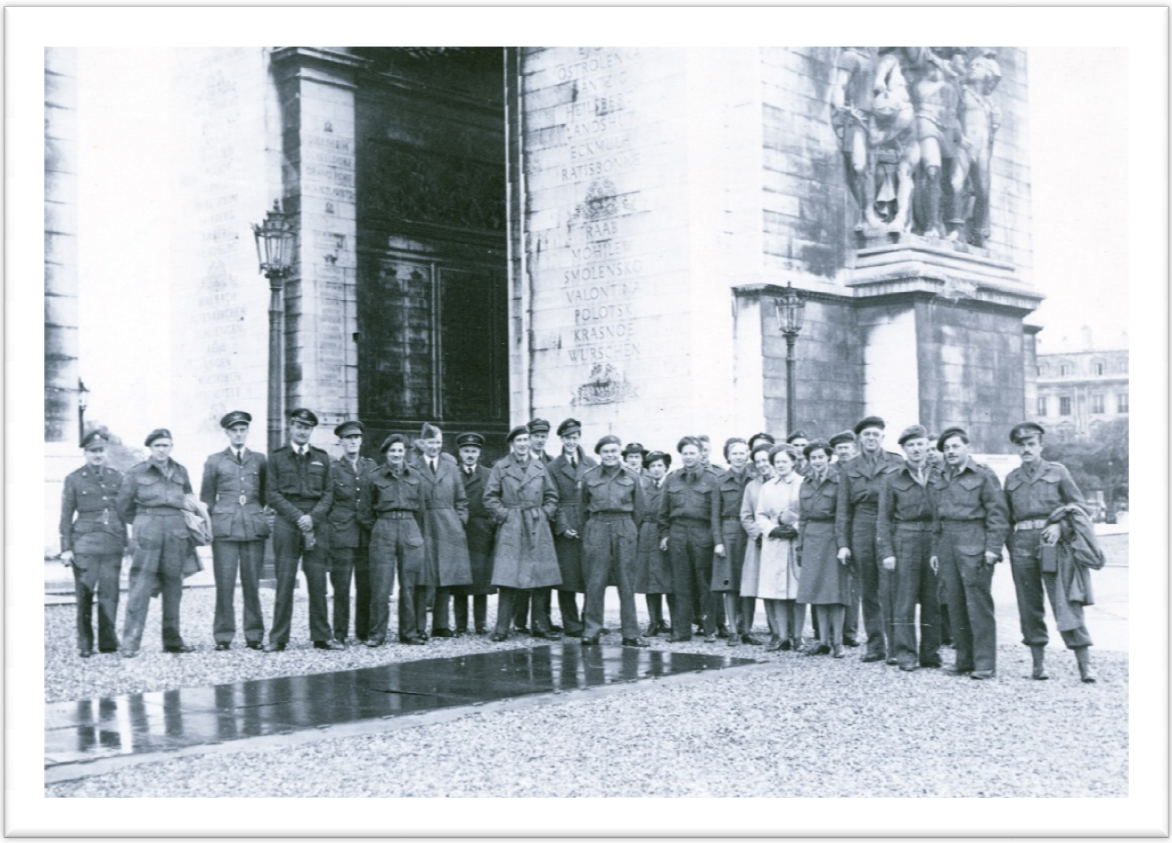
J. Good

K. Personnel on Strength as at 2359 Hours, 31st August, 1945.

	R.C.A.F.	TOTAL STRENGTH	ESTABLISHMENT.
Aircrew			
Officers	20	20	14
Airmen	6	6	13
Groundcrew			
Officers	2	2	2
Airmen	3	3	3

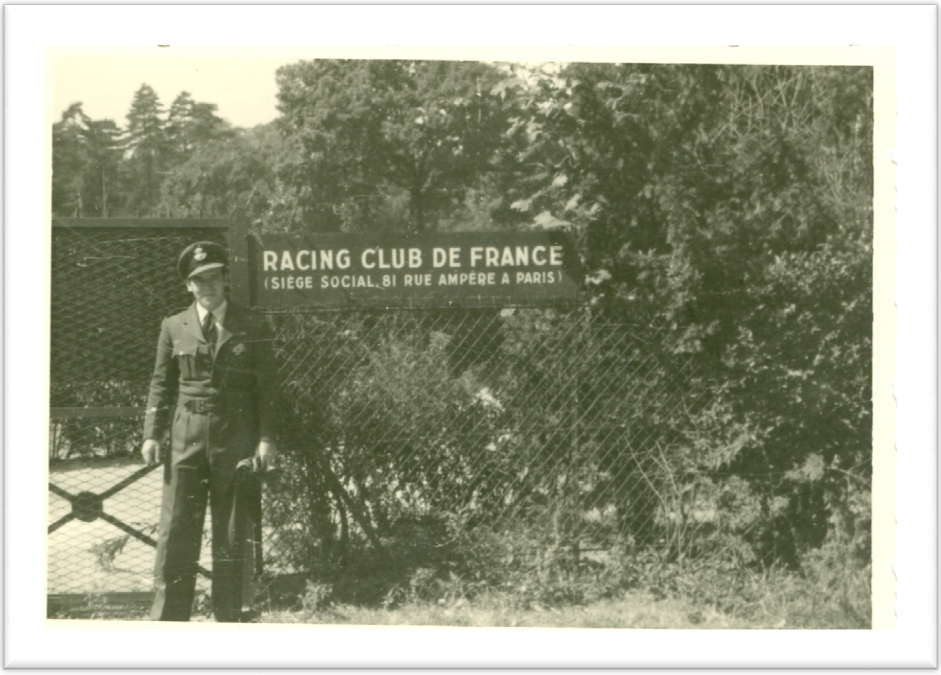
Total number of Pilots on Strength = 26.

On 23 August, F/L Straub and F/O Gordon Hill left for Paris on two weeks leave. Gordon and Larry Straub had spent their first two weeks leave in Paris from 18 May to 1 June 1945.



This tour photo was taken 30 May 1945, Larry and Gordon in center, 10th 11th from the left.

Gordon and Larry Straub were staying in a Hotel in the center of Paris, and while walking around taking photos, they were stopped by a French citizen. This person was a member of the Paris Racing Club de France and he extended an open invitation to the Canadian pilots to join him at his famous club. This was a private club operated by the wealthy and elite French V.I.P.'s.



F/L Straub in front of the "Racing Club De France, around 24 May 1945. Gordon and Larry were made honouree members of the club and informed they could attend any time they wished.

The pilots had time to meet an American female officer, however Gordon can't even remember taking her photo, twice. That's possibly because he also met a French lady at the Racing Club de France...

To be continued...