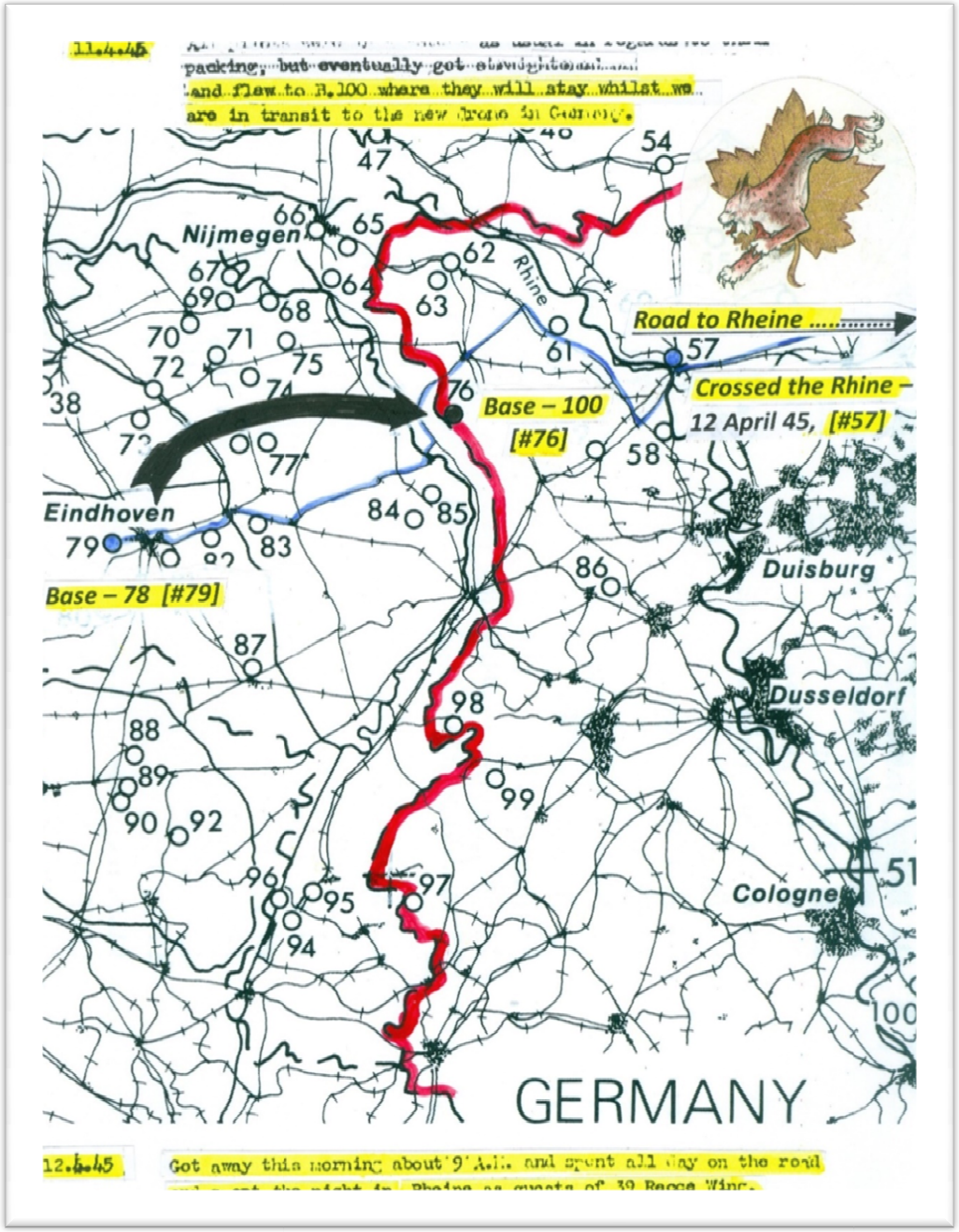
The Making of a WWII RCAF Spitfire Pilot

P/O Gordon Hill J37340

Part Six



The move into Germany begins on 11 April 1945, when thirteen squadron Spitfires depart for B.100 Goch, Germany, [76 on map] where they will remain until 14 April.

The ground party moves out on 12 April, and follow the blue line on map. They cross the Rhine River at Wesel, [#57 on map] and proceed to B.108 at Rheine, Germany, where they spent the night. Gordon was running the Orderly Room while Adjutant Howe was away, and requested to drive the squadron Jeep, so he could take photos of crossing the Rhine into Germany.

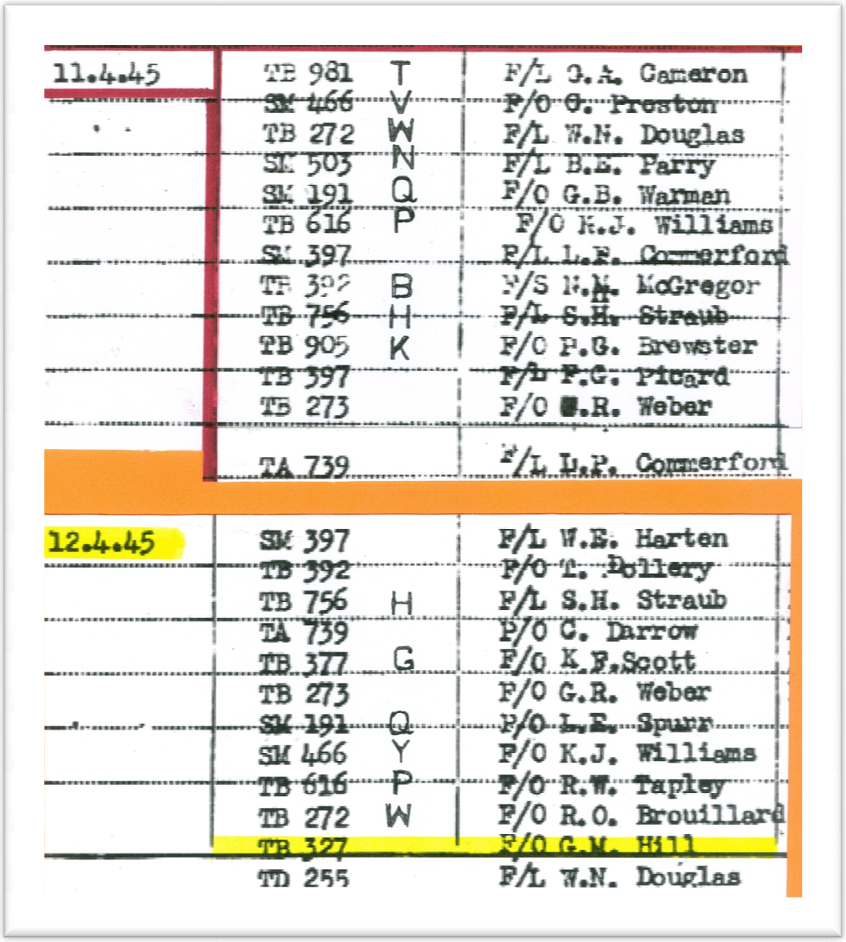
Crossing the Rhine [looking south] at Wesel, Germany, blue circle #57 on map

North bound to Wesel, Germany

On 24 March, the American 9th Army and British Second Army forces swept across the Rhine at this point and the city of Wesel was secured. At the same time airborne troops landed on the German plain north of the Ruhr.

No 416 RCAF ground "A" convey crossed at the same spot on 12 April 1945. Gordon returned to B.100 Goch and rejoined his flight.

The river banks were still heavily mined by the retreating Germans.



11.4.45	TB 981	T	F/L G.A. Cameron
	SM 466	V	F/O G. Preston
	TB 272	W	F/L W.N. Douglas
	SM 503	N	F/L B.E. Parry
	SM 191	Q	F/O G.B. Warman
	TB 616	P	F/O K.J. Williams
	SM 397		F/L L.P. Commerford
	TB 392	B	F/O N.N. McGregor
	TB 756	H	F/L S.H. Straub
	TB 905	K	F/O P.G. Brewster
	TB 397		F/L P.C. Picard
	TB 273		F/O G.R. Weber
	TA 739		F/L L.P. Commerford
12.4.45	SM 397		F/L W.E. Harten
	TB 392		F/O T. Dollery
	TB 756	H	F/L S.H. Straub
	TA 739		F/O C. Darrow
	TB 377	G	F/O K.F.Scott
	TB 273		F/O G.R. Weber
	SM 191	Q	F/O L.E. Spurr
	SM 466	Y	F/O K.J. Williams
	TB 616	P	F/O R.W. Tapley
	TB 272	W	F/O R.O. Brouillard
	TB 327		F/O G.M. Hill
	TD 255		F/L W.N. Douglas

The pilots and thirteen 416 Spitfire fighters flown to B.100 Goch, Germany, on 11 April 1945. Gord flew patrol the next day, attacking buildings, and trains, from 06:48 until 09:16 hours.

Welcome to Germany, flak damage at B.100 Goch, Germany, 13 April 1945

No. 440 RCAF Typhoon at B.100 Goch

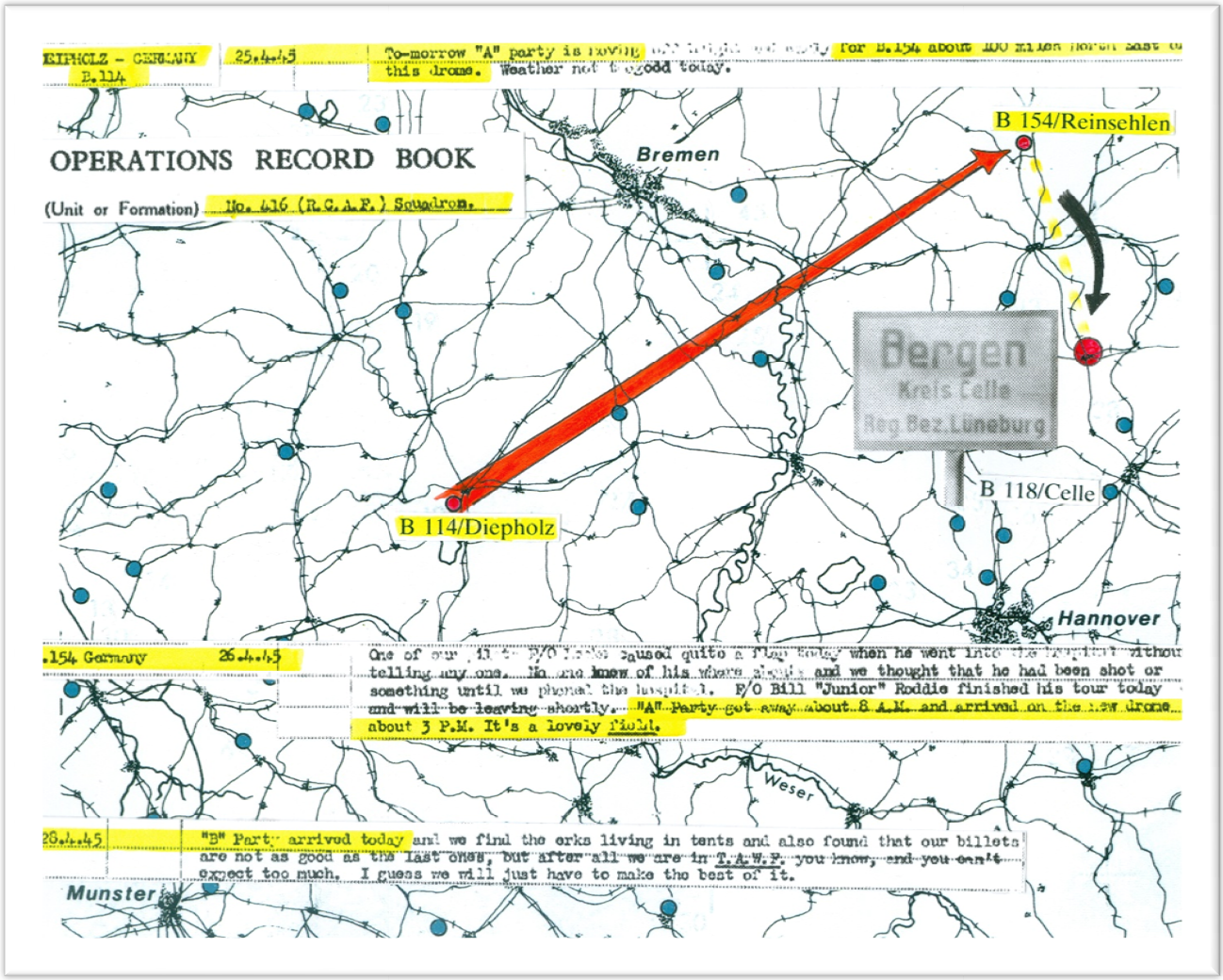
Year 1945 Month	Date	Aircraft Type	Aircraft No.	Pilot, or 1st Pilot	2nd Pilot, Pupil or Passenger	Duty (Including Results and Remarks)
—	—	—	—	—	—	— Totals Brought Forward
						Summary for Month of MARCH. Types.
						Date 30.3.45 SPIT XVI
						Unit 416 Squadron
						Signature [illegible] F/O Total
4	3	SPIT XVI	DN-D	SELF		FERRY B-90 - B-78
4	3	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		FRONT LINE PATROL - ENSCHEDE
4	8	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		DIVE BOMBING - CLOPPENBURG
4	9	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		FRONT LINE PATROL
4	9	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		FRONT LINE PATROL
4	10	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		BOMBER ESCORT - CLOPPENBURG
4	11	SPIT XVI	DN-S.	SELF		PATROL FRONT LINE
4	11	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		FERRY B-78 — B-106
4	12	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		ARMED RECCO
4	12	SPIT XVI	DN-K.	SELF.		ARMED RECCO
4	15	SPIT XVI	DN-T	SELF		ARMED RECCO
4	15	SPIT XVI	DN-T	SELF		FRONT LINE PATROL - BRAMAN - RETHEN
4	15	SPIT XVI	DN-T	SELF		FRONT LINE PATROL - "
4	15	SPIT XVI	DN-T	SELF		FRONT LINE PATROL "
4	16	SPIT XVI	DN-N	SELF		ARMED RECCO - LUNEBURG
4	16	SPIT XVI	DN-N	SELF		ARMED RECCO - LUNEBURG.
4	16	SPIT XVI	DN-F	SELF		A/C TEST
4	16	SPIT XVI	DN-J	SELF		A/C TEST
						GRAND TOTAL [Cols. (1) to (10)] 778.45 778 Hrs. 45 Mins. Totals Carried Forward

Gordon's April trip to Dusseldorf clearly shows the effects of the Allied bombing campaign.

On 14 April 1945, the Spitfires arrive at B.114 Diepholz, Germany, and Gord records the fighters. It snowed on 21 April, and this image was taken some time later, with still snow on the ground. No. 416 [Lynx] Squadron left B.114 on 26 April and arrived at B.154 Reinsehlen, Germany, where they remained for the next two months.

Gordon with his camera

B.114 Diepholz was a former Luftwaffe base and contained excellent hangars and aircrew living quarters. They only stayed for twelve days and then departed North West 100 miles to B.154.


DIEPHOLZ - GERMANY
B.114
25.4.45
To-morrow "A" party is moving ... for B.154 about 100 miles North East to this drome. Weather not too good today.
OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK
(Unit or Formation) No. 416 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.
Bremen
B 154/Reinsehlen
Bergen
Kreis Celle
Reg.Bez.Lüneburg
B 118/Celle
B 114/Diepholz
Hannover
.154 Germany
26.4.45
One of our ... F/O ... caused quite a flap today when he went into the hospital without telling anyone. In ... knew of his whereabouts and we thought that he had been shot or something until we phoned the hospital. F/O Bill "Junior" Roddie finished his tour today and will be leaving shortly. "A" Party got away about 8 A.M. and arrived on the new drome about 3 P.M. It's a lovely field.
Weser
26.4.45
"B" Party arrived today and we find the erks living in tents and also found that our billets are not as good as the last ones, but after all we are in T.A.W.F. you know, and you can't expect too much. I guess we will just have to make the best of it.
Munster

The ground "A" party left at 8 am 26 April 1945, and the Spitfires left just after 1 pm. The new drome was located 35 miles south east of Hamburg, Germany, near Schnenerdinge, Germany. Twenty miles south was the village of Bergen, Germany.

The fighter pilots were ordered to taxi to the end of the runway, park, and remain beside their aircraft, as the airfield had not been cleared of mines. Around 4 pm the British Army arrived and commenced to clear the area of German mines. By the time the area was secured, ground party "A" arrived and began to unload tents and supplies.

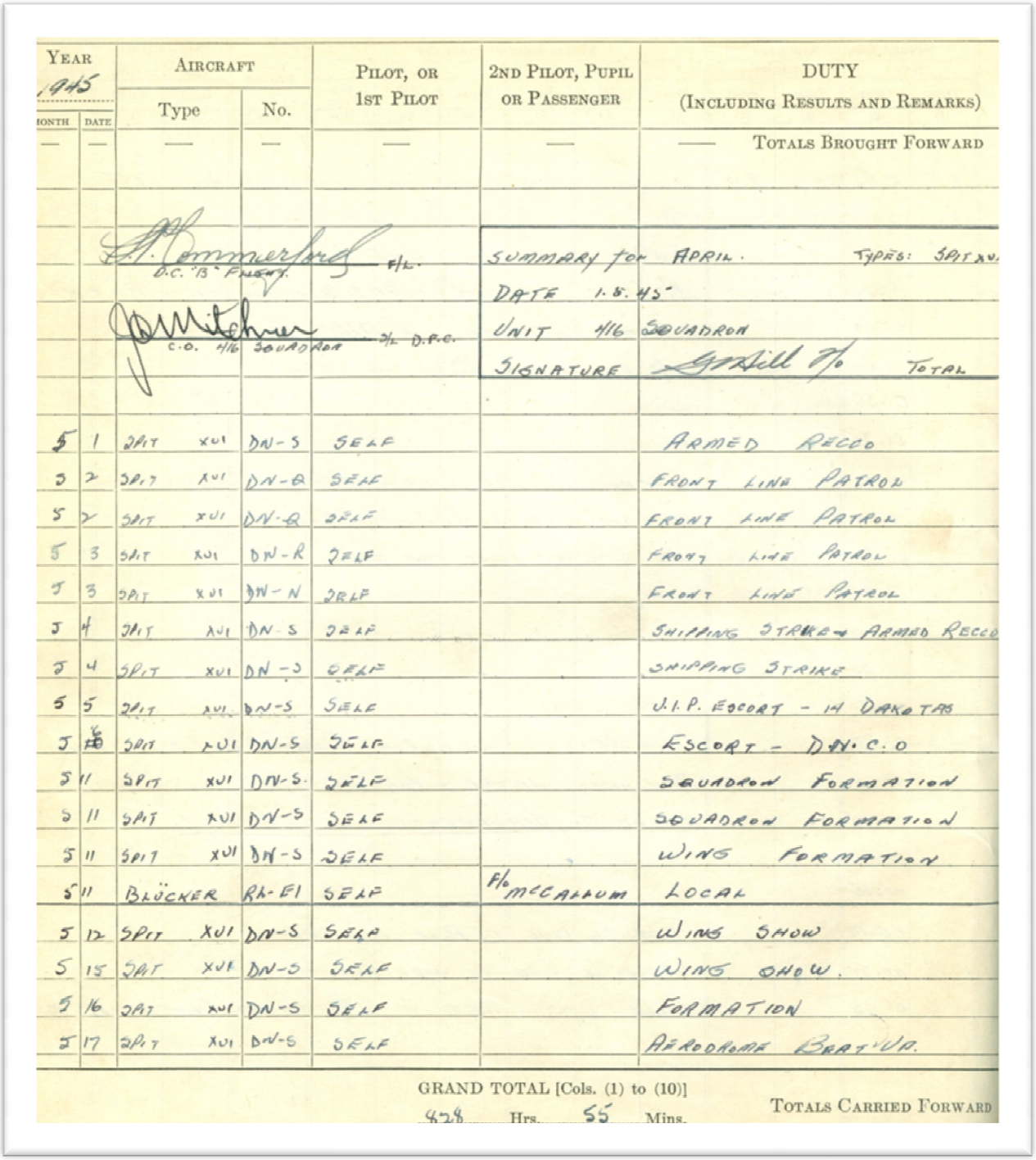
Ground party "B" arrived on 28 April 1945, and found they would be living in tents, and working out doors from their mobile hangar trucks. The Daily Diary made note the billets were not as good as the last ones, they would have to make the best of it.

The mobile aircraft hangar repair shop at B.154 Reinsehlen

The squadron group photo at B.154/ Reinsehlen, Germany, June 1945

Baseball game at B.154

On 2 May 1945, the pilots learned the village of Bergen was just 20 miles south of their location and two miles away was a large concentration camp named "Bergen Belsen."

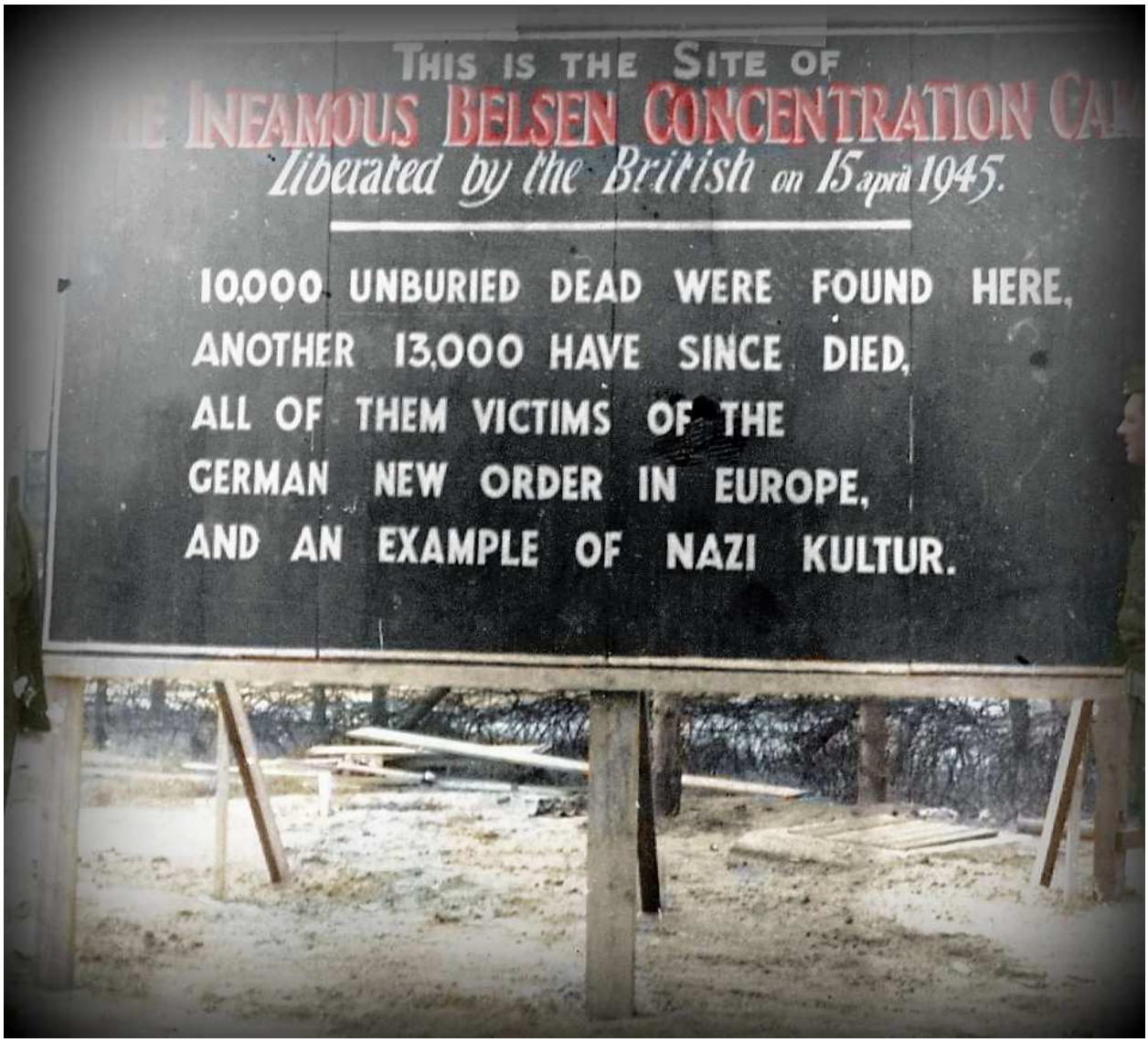


YEAR 1945 MONTH	DATE	AIRCRAFT Type	No.	PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)
—	—	—	—	—	—	— TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD
						SUMMARY FOR APRIL. TYPES: SPIT XVI
						DATE 1.5.45
						UNIT 416 SQUADRON
						SIGNATURE G.R. Gill F/O TOTAL
5	1	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	ARMED RECCO
5	2	SPIT	XVI	DN-Q	SELF	FRONT LINE PATROL
5	2	SPIT	XVI	DN-Q	SELF	FRONT LINE PATROL
5	3	SPIT	XVI	DN-R	SELF	FRONT LINE PATROL
5	3	SPIT	XVI	DN-N	SELF	FRONT LINE PATROL
5	4	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	SHIPPING STRIKE & ARMED RECCO
5	4	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	SHIPPING STRIKE
5	5	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	U.I.P. ESCORT - 14 DAKOTAS
5	10	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	ESCORT - DN. C.O
5	11	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	SQUADRON FORMATION
5	11	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	SQUADRON FORMATION
5	11	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	WING FORMATION
5	11	BLÜCKER	RA-E1	SELF	F/O MCCALLUM	LOCAL
5	12	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	WING SHOW
5	15	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	WING SHOW.
5	16	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	FORMATION
5	17	SPIT	XVI	DN-S	SELF	AERODROME BRAT'VA.
						GRAND TOTAL [Cols. (1) to (10)] 428 Hrs. 55 Mins. TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD

Gordon and four other RCAF pilots took the squadron Jeep and drove south to the large concentration camp. Gordon stated – "No amount of words can give a true impression of what we saw, heard, and smelled that horrible day. I still wish I had never gone, and it really bothered me for the next twenty years

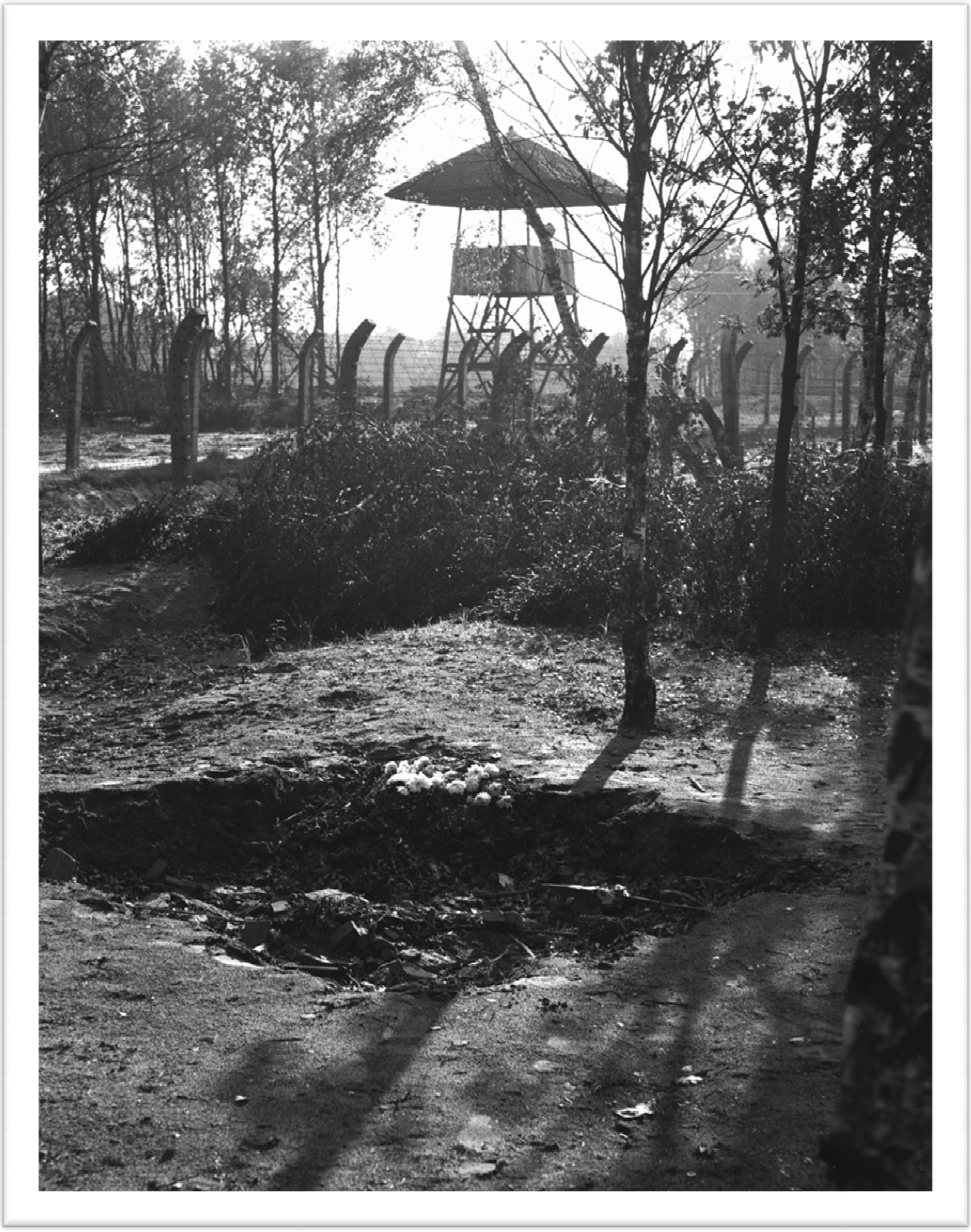
of my life. Nazi Germany conquered, enslaved, and plundered Europe, but we five pilots had no idea what to expect, and it defied any description, even still today."

The entrance sign erected by the British Army around 29 April 1945.



Colorised by Pierre Lagacé

Original black and white colorised by Pierre Lagacé

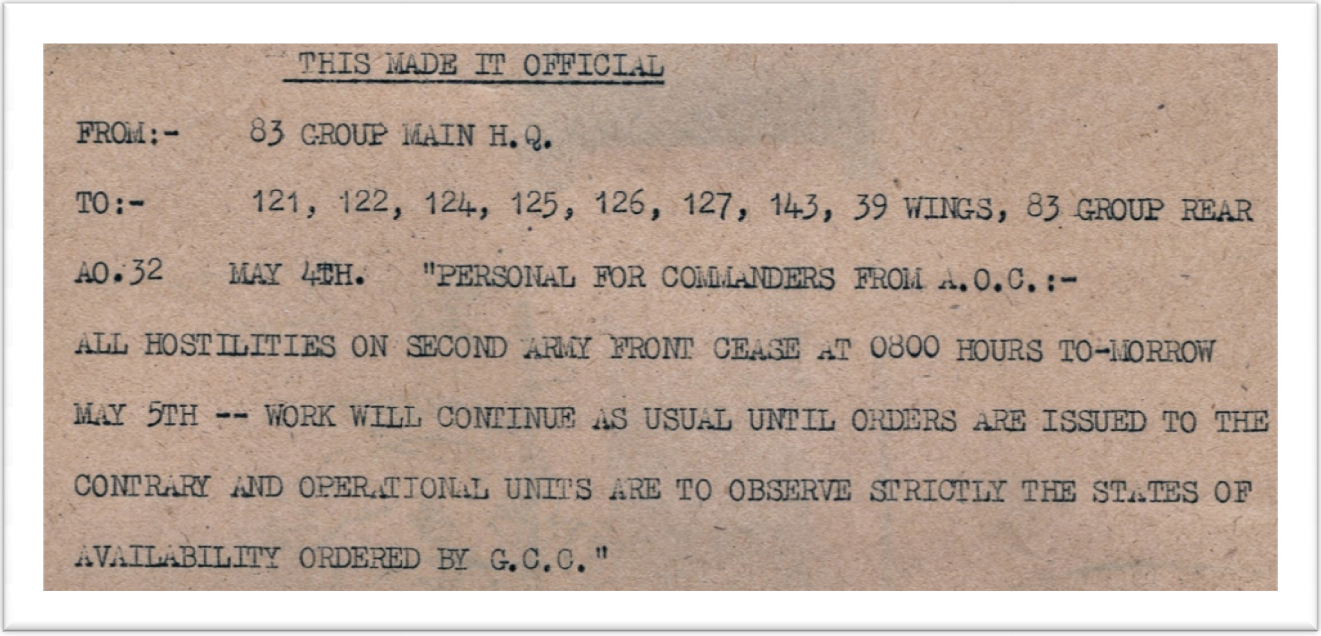


Flowers at a mass grave site.

Bremen bombed docks seen from a Canadian Spitfire, 3 May 1945.

F/O Picard and F/O McCallum

On 4 May 1945, F/O G. M. Hill was one of six Spitfires [TB237 - SM200 – SM191 – SM466 – SM470 – and his "S" TD187] attacking German shipping off shore at Eckerrerde Bay. They returned to base at 14:20 hrs. and were informed the war in Europe was over. This was later confirmed by radio at 20:30 hrs that evening.



THIS MADE IT OFFICIAL

FROM:- 83 GROUP MAIN H.Q.

TO:- 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 143, 39 WINGS, 83 GROUP REAR

AO.32 MAY 4TH. "PERSONAL FOR COMMANDERS FROM A.O.C.:-

ALL HOSTILITIES ON SECOND ARMY FRONT CEASE AT 0800 HOURS TO-MORROW MAY 5TH -- WORK WILL CONTINUE AS USUAL UNTIL ORDERS ARE ISSUED TO THE CONTRARY AND OPERATIONAL UNITS ARE TO OBSERVE STRICTLY THE STATES OF AVAILABILITY ORDERED BY G.C.C."

On 5 May 1945, No. 416 was assigned a special escort of 14 Dakota transport aircraft to Copenhagen, Denmark, and the signing of the German surrender of Northwest Germany. Gordon flew DN-S, serial TD187, and the return trip took 2 hrs. and 25 minutes. The RCAF Spitfires could not land, as they did not have a self starter like the American P-51 fighters, who were also conducting escort of VIPs.

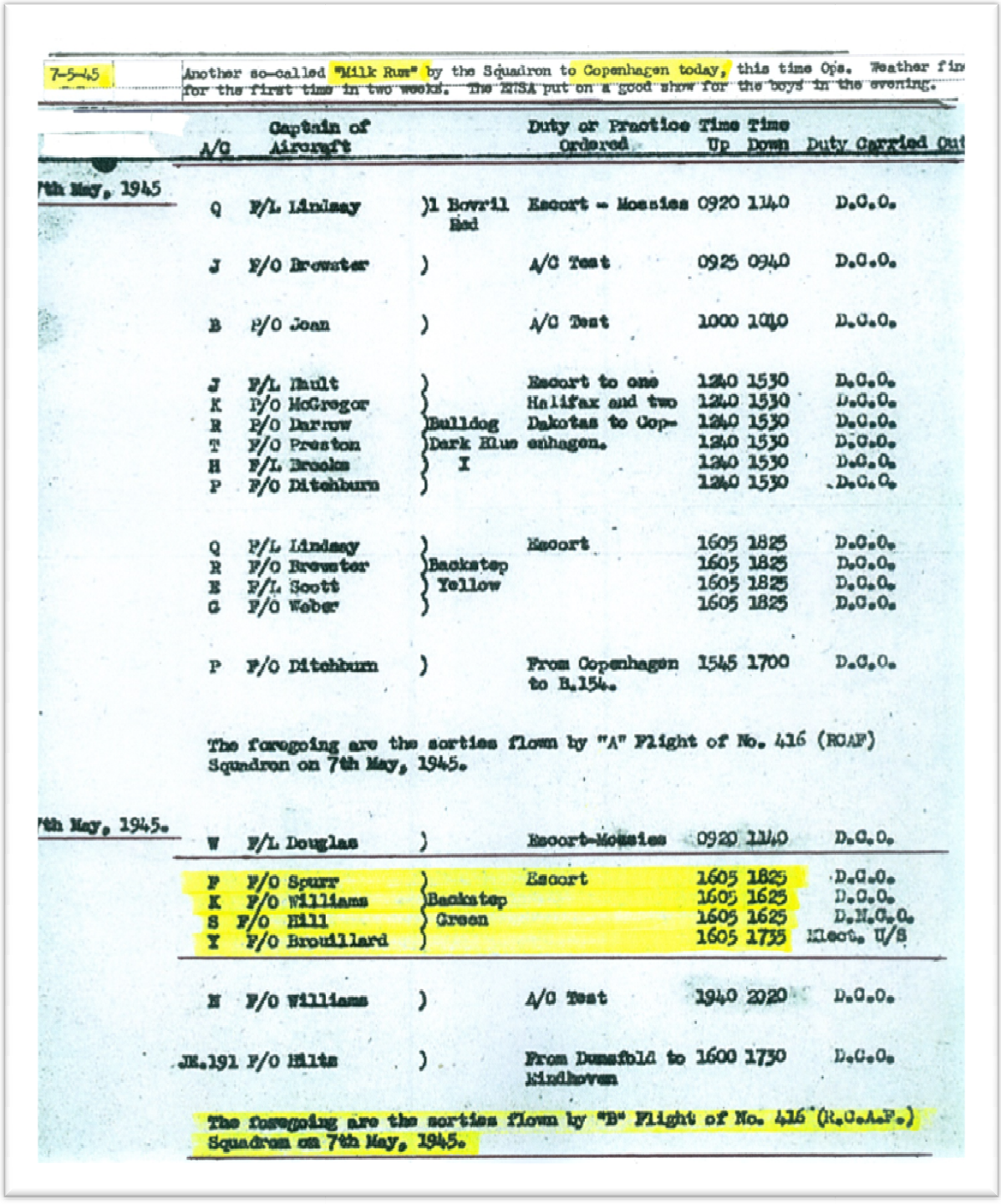
The 492nd Bombardment Group of the American 8th Air Force arrived at North Pickenham, England, on 14 April 1944, and flew a total of 64 missions until 7 August 1944. They were withdrawn from combat on 5 August and assumed special operations at Harrington, replacing the 801st Bomb Group. On the afternoon of 6 May 1945, Col. Robert W. Fish was assigned a secret mission to fly an American C-47 from Harrington, England, to Copenhagen [Kastrup] Denmark. The passengers were members of the Danish Government and two members of the Danish Royal Family. This was for a

secret unconditional signing of the German surrender documents, as the Germans Forces had surrendered on 5 May 1945. The V.I.P.s arrived at Harrington on 7 May 1945, and the C-47 took off at 10:00 hrs, stopping for fuel at Eindhoven, Belgium. They were then joined by two American P-51 fighters who escorted the C-47 to the airport at Copenhagen, Denmark. They were cleared to land, and found the airport was still partly in control of the Germans. The V.I.P.s departed and the flight crew were treated to a huge meal by the Danish, then returned to England.

On 7 May 1945, "B" flight, No. 416 Squadron was informed four pilots would be flying escort for a single RAF Mosquito fighter to Copenhagen-Kastrup, Denmark. The Mosquito was transporting a special VIP for the unconditional surrender of North-West Germany, Denmark, and Heligoland. The No. 416 escort pilots selected were – P/O L. E. Spurr, [TD251 "F"] F/O K.J. Williams, [TB905 "K"] F/O R.O. Brouillard, [SM466 "Y"] and F/O Gordon Hill, [TD187 "S"].

These four pilots flew – "The last No. 416 Squadron operation in World War Two."

This special escort took place from 16:05 hrs to 18:25 hrs, 7 May 1945. The special Danish V.I.P. is unknown. F/O Hill had aircraft problems and returned to base, recorded as [D.N.C.O.] Duty Not Carried Out. Gordon is unable to recall the events.



7-5-45 Another so-called "Milk Run" by the Squadron to Copenhagen today, this time Ops. Weather fin for the first time in two weeks. The ENSA put on a good show for the boys in the evening.

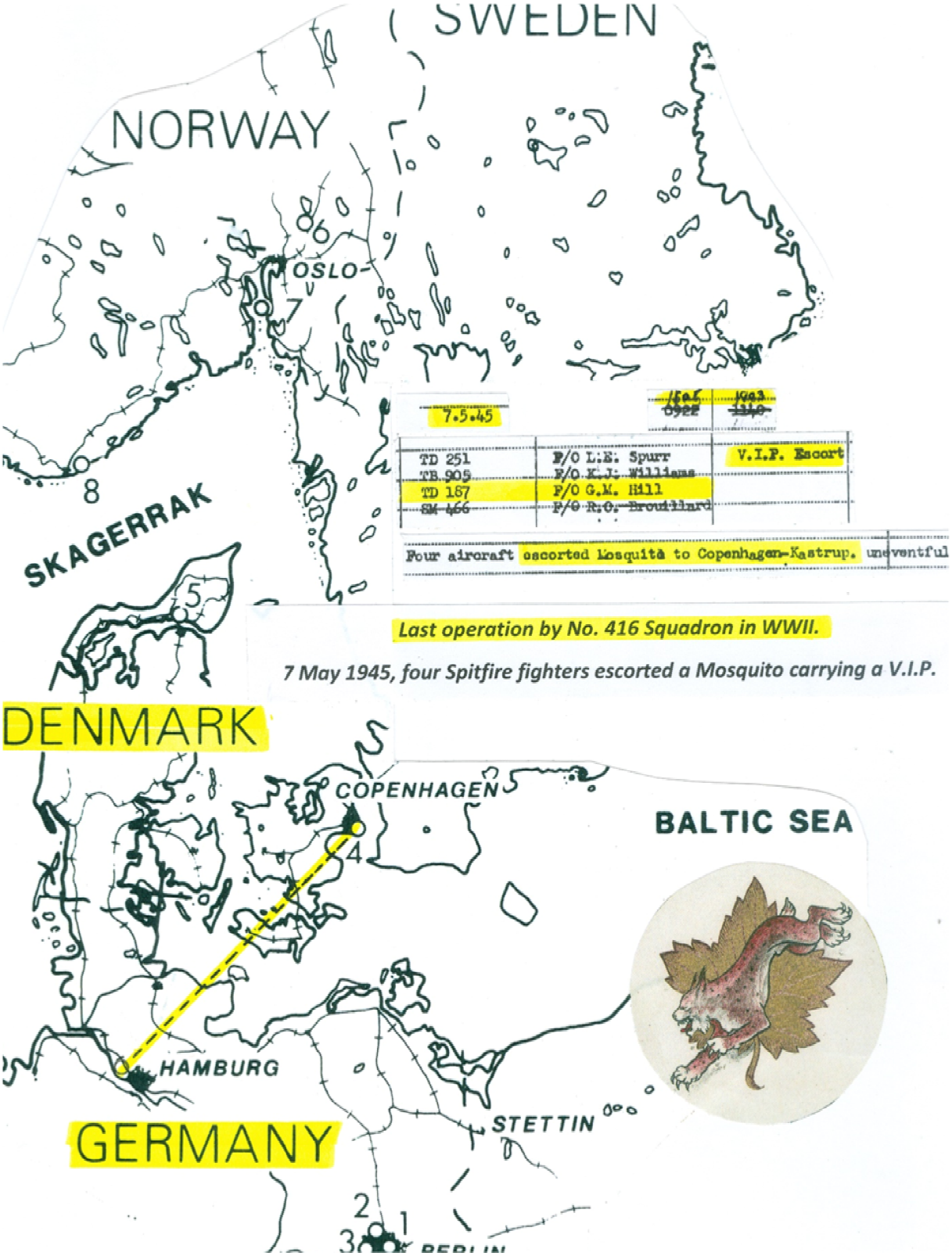
	A/C	Captain of Aircraft		Duty or Practice Ordered	Time Up	Time Down	Duty Carried Out
7th May, 1945	Q	F/L Lindsay	)1 Bovril Red	Escort - Mossies	0920	1140	D.C.O.
	J	F/O Brewster	)	A/C Test	0925	0940	D.C.O.
	B	F/O Joan	)	A/C Test	1000	1010	D.C.O.
	J	F/L Hault	)	Escort to one	1240	1530	D.C.O.
	K	F/O McGregor	)	Halifax and two	1240	1530	D.C.O.
	R	F/O Darrow	)Bulldog	Dakotas to Cop-	1240	1530	D.C.O.
	T	F/O Preston	)Dark Blue	enhagen.	1240	1530	D.C.O.
	H	F/L Brooks	) I		1240	1530	D.C.O.
	P	F/O Ditchburn	)		1240	1530	D.C.O.
	Q	F/L Lindsay	)	Escort	1605	1825	D.C.O.
	R	F/O Brewster	)Backstep		1605	1825	D.C.O.
	E	F/L Scott	) Yellow		1605	1825	D.C.O.
	G	F/O Weber	)		1605	1825	D.C.O.
	P	F/O Ditchburn	)	From Copenhagen to B.154.	1545	1700	D.C.O.

The foregoing are the sorties flown by "A" Flight of No. 416 (RCAF) Squadron on 7th May, 1945.

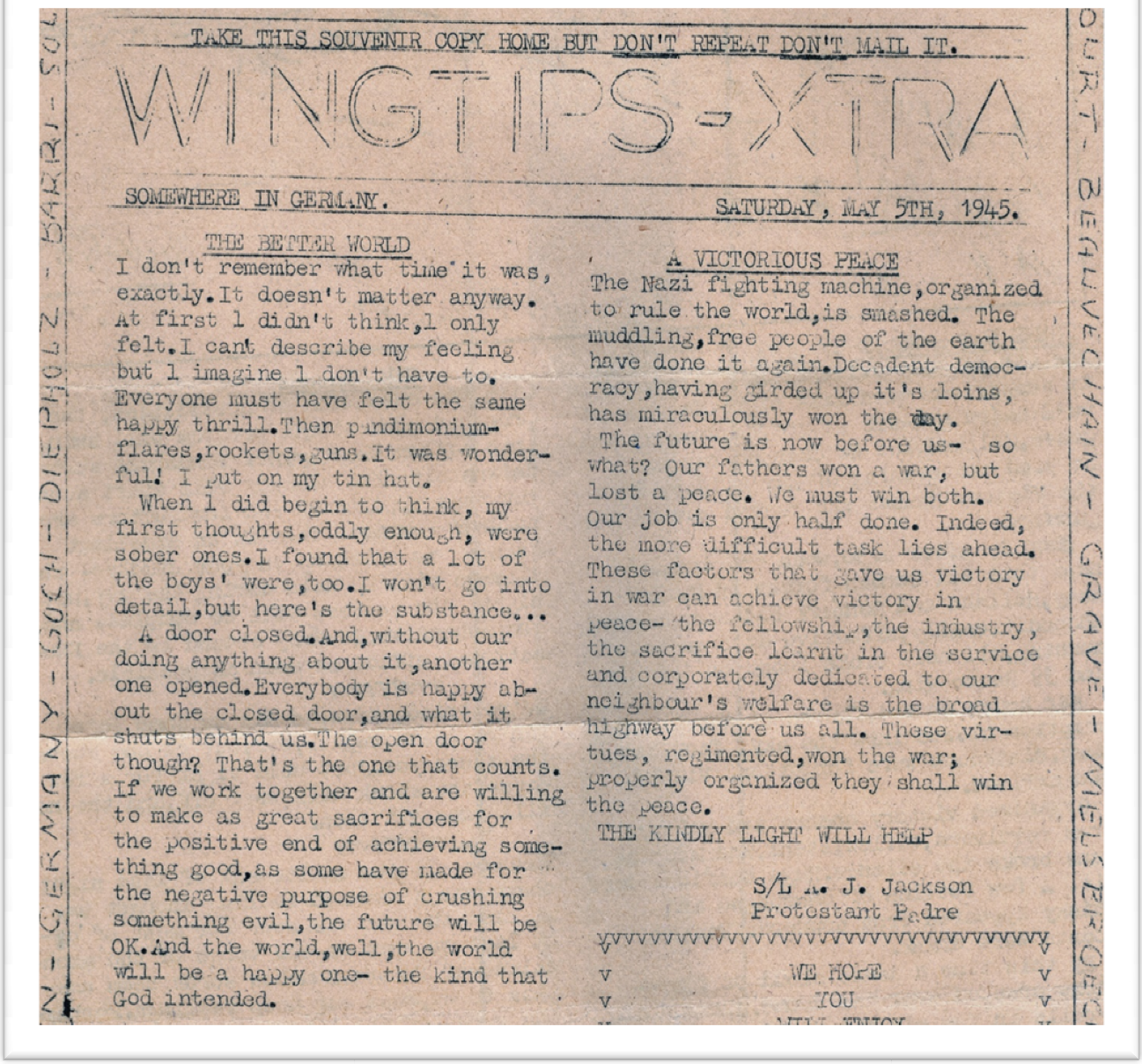
7th May, 1945.	W	F/L Douglas	)	Escort-Mossies	0920	1140	D.C.O.
	F	F/O Spurr	)	Escort	1605	1825	D.C.O.
	K	F/O Williams	)Backstep		1605	1625	D.C.O.
	S	F/O Hill	) Green		1605	1625	D.N.C.O.
	Y	F/O Brouillard	)		1605	1735	Elect. U/S
	N	F/O Williams	)	A/C Test	1940	2020	D.C.O.
	JE.191	F/O Hilts	)	From Dunsfold to Eindhoven	1600	1730	D.C.O.

The foregoing are the sorties flown by "B" Flight of No. 416 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron on 7th May, 1945.

The total number of special escort operations completed by No. 416 Squadron on 7 May 1945.


SWEDEN
NORWAY
OSLO
SKAGERRAK
DENMARK
COPENHAGEN
BALTIC SEA
HAMBURG
GERMANY
STETTIN
BERLIN
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
7.5.45
TD 251 F/O L.E. Spurr V.I.P. Escort
TB 905 F/O K.J. Williams
TD 187 F/O G.M. Hill
SM 466 F/O R.O. Brouillard
Four aircraft escorted Mosquito to Copenhagen-Kastrup. uneventful
Last operation by No. 416 Squadron in WWII.
7 May 1945, four Spitfire fighters escorted a Mosquito carrying a V.I.P.

This image was taken by Canadians at Fleasburg airfield, Denmark, 5 May 1945. The Danes had removed all the propellers and spinners from the German fighters, preventing them from being flown out.



TAKE THIS SOUVENIR COPY HOME BUT DON'T REPEAT DON'T MAIL IT.

WINGTIPS-XTRA

SOMEWHERE IN GERMANY. SATURDAY, MAY 5TH, 1945.

THE BETTER WORLD

I don't remember what time it was, exactly. It doesn't matter anyway. At first I didn't think, I only felt. I cant describe my feeling but I imagine I don't have to. Everyone must have felt the same happy thrill. Then pandimonium- flares, rockets, guns. It was wonderful! I put on my tin hat.

When I did begin to think, my first thoughts, oddly enough, were sober ones. I found that a lot of the boys' were, too. I won't go into detail, but here's the substance...

A door closed. And, without our doing anything about it, another one opened. Everybody is happy about the closed door, and what it shuts behind us. The open door though? That's the one that counts. If we work together and are willing to make as great sacrifices for the positive end of achieving something good, as some have made for the negative purpose of crushing something evil, the future will be OK. And the world, well, the world will be a happy one- the kind that God intended.

A VICTORIOUS PEACE

The Nazi fighting machine, organized to rule the world, is smashed. The muddling, free people of the earth have done it again. Decadent democracy, having girded up it's loins, has miraculously won the day.

The future is now before us- so what? Our fathers won a war, but lost a peace. We must win both. Our job is only half done. Indeed, the more difficult task lies ahead. These factors that gave us victory in war can achieve victory in peace- the fellowship, the industry, the sacrifice learnt in the service and corporately dedicated to our neighbour's welfare is the broad highway before us all. These virtues, regimented, won the war; properly organized they shall win the peace.

THE KINDLY LIGHT WILL HELP

S/L A. J. Jackson
Protestant Padre

vvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvv

WE HOPE
YOU

Copy of the final WWII newsletter – 'WINGTIPS XTRA."

of (Unit or Formation) R.C.A.F. UNITS OPERATING IN 2 T.A.F. No. of pages used

SECRET.

Date	Time	Summary of Events

8-5-45

SORTIES
1st - 8th MAY, 1945.

	DAY	NIGHT	TOTAL.
2nd TAF.	3678	72	3750
R.C.A.F.	1467	12	1479
	5145	84	5229

SUMMARY OF CASUALTIES
OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS.
R.C.A.F. SQUADRONS.

DATE.	TYPE OF SQUADRON.		COMBAT REPORT.	ENEMY LOSSES.			OUR LOSSES.	
1-8/5-45	SQDN.	OPERATION.	VETTED.	DEST.	PROB.	DAM.	A/C.	PILOTS.
1-5-45	430	TAC/R.	NIL.	-	-	-	1	1
1-5-45	401	PATROL.	YES	-	-	-	2	1
1-5-45	411	ARMED RECCE.	NIL	-	-	-	1	1
1-5-45	403	PATROL.	YES	2	1	8	-	-
1-5-45	421	ARMED RECCE.	YES	1	-	-	-	-
2-5-45	414	CONT/RECCE.	YES	6	-	2	-	-
2-5-45	411	PATROL.	YES	1	-	1	-	-
2-5-45	403	PATROL.	YES	1	-	-	-	-
2-5-45	439	DIVE BOMBING	YES	2	-	-	-	-
2-5-45	443	FIGHTER SWEEP.	YES	1	-	-	1	-
3-5-45	402	ARMED RECCE.	YES	1	-	-	1	-
3-5-45	411	ARMED RECCE.	NIL	-	-	-	1	1
3-5-45	412	ARMED RECCE.	NIL	-	-	-	1	1
3-5-45	416	PATROL	YES	1	-	-	-	-
3-5-45	439	DIVE BOMBING.	NIL	-	-	-	1	1
3-5-45	443	ARMED RECCE.	YES	1	-	-	-	-
4-5-45	411	ARMED RECCE.	YES	1	-	-	-	-
		TOTALS.		18	1	11	9	6

NOTE TO THE R.C.A.F. HISTORIAN.

The Form 540, R.C.A.F. Units Operating in 2nd T.A.F., will be discontinued with effect from this date, VE-Day, May 8th, 1945. Reconnaissances, escort missions and A.S.R. patrols continued to be carried out by 2nd TAF on a very limited scale for a short period after VE-Day. These operations are outlined in the 2nd TAF Daily Log (Appendix "D"), day by day. R.C.A.F. participation was negligible insofar as the post-VE-Day operations were concerned.

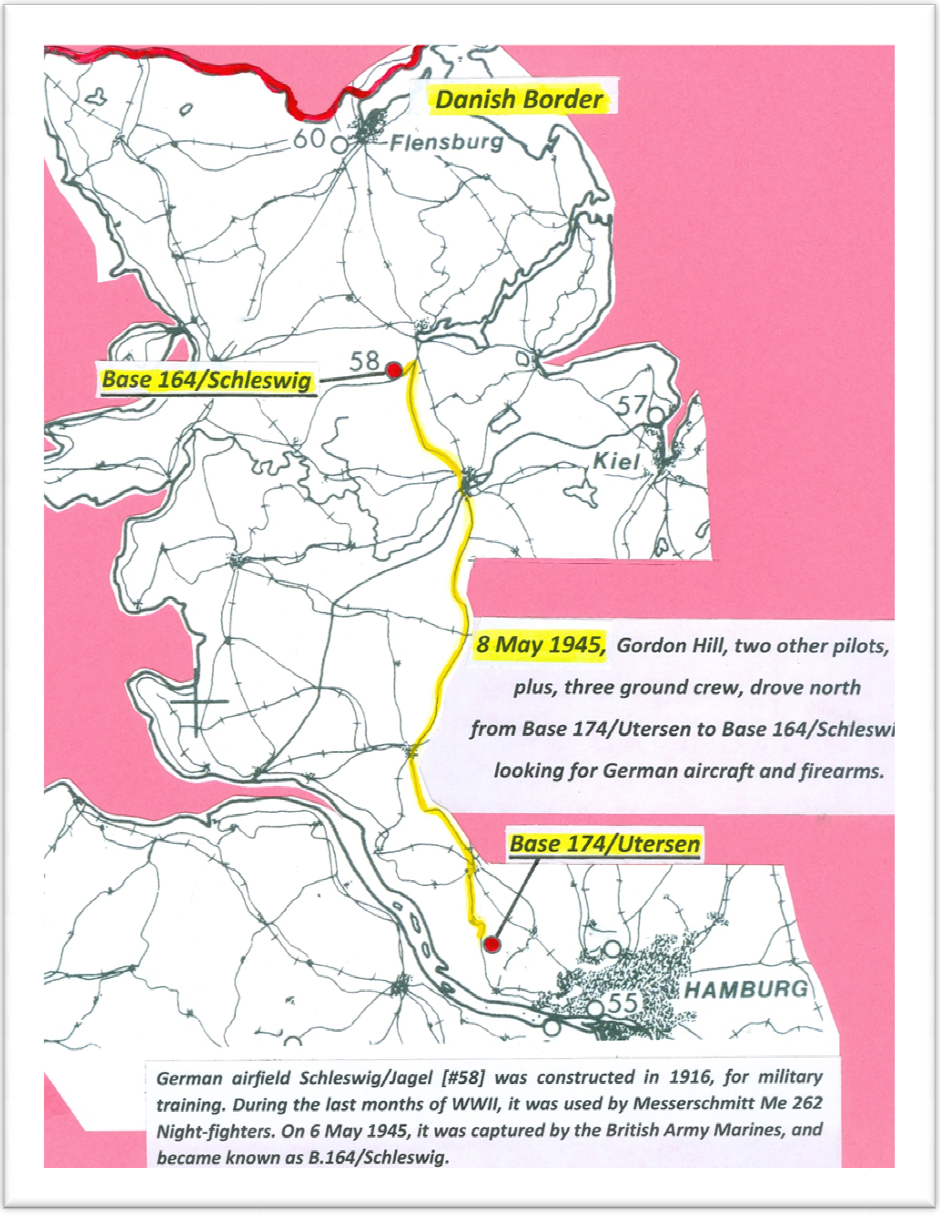
L. Daley

(L. Daley) F/L.
R.C.A.F. O.R.O.
2ND TACTICAL AIR FORCE

8-5-45

Some of the Pilots away to a Jerry aerodrome to bring back Jerry aircraft. Several promotions came in- F/O K.F. Scott to F/L. P/O Ken Williams has attained the exalted rank of F/O. F/S Mac McGregor is now Pilot Officer, and P/O Cliff Haines is Flying Officer. P/O's preston, Hiltz, Brouillard and W/O Clark to U.K. on leave. This is V.E. Day, but not much celebrating. Our big day will be the one when we climb aboard a boat homeward bound.-WHEN??

On 8 May 1945, the war was officially over, and all RCAF ranks had the day off. Gordon, two other pilots, and three ground crew, drove north from Hamburg to an airfield [B.164/Schleswig] south of Flensburg, Germany. They were looking for German aircraft to bring back to the squadron and German guns. They loaded two cases of rum [12 – 16 oz. bottles] and headed off into northern Germany.



ON MAY 7, 1945, THREE PILOTS AND TWO OR THREE OF THE GROUND CREW DROVE THROUGH THE LINES NORTH OF HAMBURG UP TO AN AIRFIELD NEAR FLENSBURG. WE TOOK ALONG TWO CASES OF RUM. OUR IDEA WAS TO ACQUIRE SOME AIRCRAFT + IF POSSIBLE SOME HAND GUNS. UPON ARRIVAL AT THE AIRFIELD WE FOUND THAT THE BRITISH MARINES WERE ALREADY THERE TAKING OVER THE AIRFIELD. WE WERE ADVISED THAT THERE WAS "NO BLOODY WAY YOU'LL GET ANY GUNS, LET ALONE AIRCRAFT!" WE REQUESTED LODGING FOR THE NIGHT AND INVITED THE CAPTAIN IN CHARGE + A COUPLE OF HIS OFFICERS OVER FOR A DRINK. THE NEXT MORNING WE FLEW OUT TWO BÜCKER (OR BLÜCKER) 181's AND A ME 108 LOADED WITH ALL THE GUNS WE WANTED. NEEDLESS TO SAY WE LEFT THE REMAINDER OF THE RUM FOR MEDICINAL USE.

WHILE ON THE AIRFIELD THIS JU 88 FLEW IN FROM DENMARK AND WE ACCEPTED THE CREW'S SURRENDER.

The original history by F/O Gordon Hill in his photo album.

The ex-Luftwaffe airfield was now home to a unit of British Marines, and they loudly advised – "No Bloody way you'll get any guns, let alone any German aircraft."

While standing on the airfield a German two engine bomber appeared, landed, and the two crew surrendered to the RCAF pilots. Gordon Hill took three photos.

The German pilot [right under engine] stated he came from Norway then Denmark. Possibly Junkers Ju188D-2 from 1. Fernaufklarungsgruppe 122, Kirkenes, Norway. Number on nose appears to be 032.

Standard green camouflage with pale blue-grey over spray, code white H and black letter R.

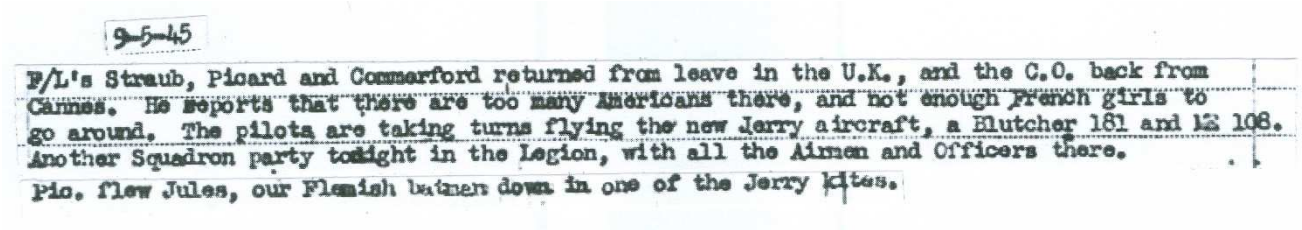
The Canadians requested lodging for the night, and that evening invited the British Marine Captain in charge, and two of his officers over for a few drinks of rum. The morning of May 9, 1945, the two ground crew returned to base driving the squadron Jeep. The three RCAF pilots each flew off in a German aircraft, loaded with German guns, and Gordon stated – "The remainder of the rum was left with the British Captain for medical use."

This No. 416 captured Messerschmitt Bf 109, was now joined by three more German aircraft.

Allow the
RAF Flight Lieut
to take away the
2 M.E 108's

A. Galland
Lt-Col.

This is the original note given to F/O Gordon Hill from the British Marine Captain, to take the two Bücker Bü 181 aircraft, which he identified as Me 108s. It's amazing the power a bottle of rum has in making a deal. F/O Hill flew one of the captured Bü 181s back to base, and this unofficial flight is not recorded in his log book. The German aircraft [RL-E1] were given the code DN-X and Gordon flew it on 11 May 1945, 6 and 19 June 1945, recorded in his log book.



9-5-45

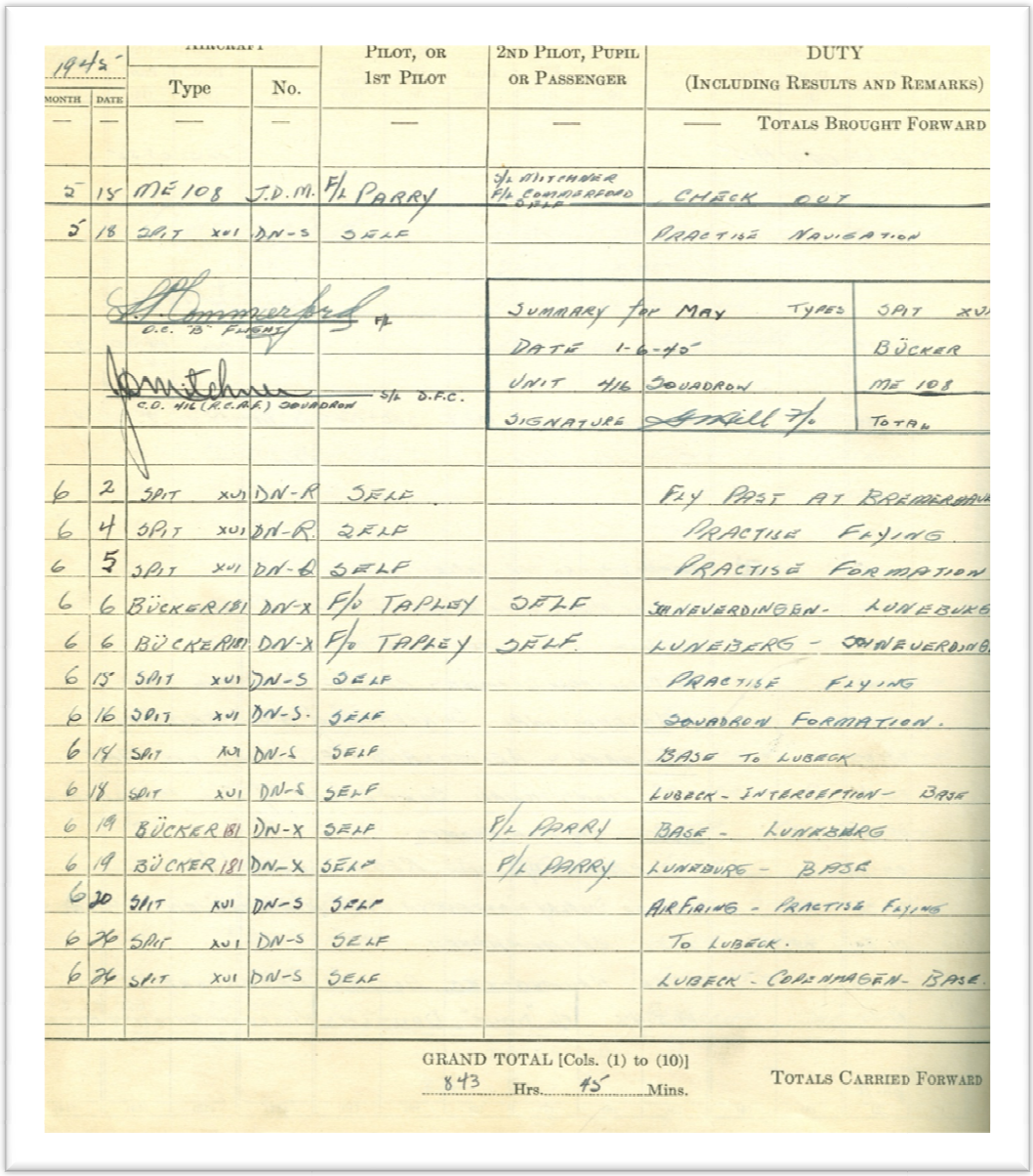
F/L's Straub, Picard and Commerford returned from leave in the U.K., and the C.O. back from Cannes. He reports that there are too many Americans there, and not enough French girls to go around. The pilots are taking turns flying the new Jerry aircraft, a Blutcher 181 and 12 108. Another Squadron party tonight in the Legion, with all the Airmen and Officers there. Pic. flew Jules, our Flemish batman down in one of the Jerry kites.

RCAF Batman LAC Grieve, [left] on right is "Jules" the No. 416 Flemish civilian Batman, who received a ride in the German aircraft Bucker Bü 181 courtesy of pilot "Pic" Picard.

The third captured German aircraft, a Bf 108, was taken by the C.O.

It became the new squadron 'pet' as this Messerschmitt Bf 108, was flown by all the squadron pilots, who loved her soft leather seats. F/O Hill flew it one time on 15 May 1945, with F/L Parry, F/L Commerford, and the C.O. S/L Mitchner as passengers. Marked with 127 Wing and the initials of 416 Squadron C.O. S/L J.D. Mitchner used it to fly around bases in Europe and even to England for meetings.

On 30 May 45, F/O Chuck Darrow was flying too low in one of the Bü 181s and hit wires, taking off the tail and made a crash landing. His punishment was one-week Duty Pilot and one-week of Orderly Officer. The second aircraft had her engine destroyed by using 150 octane aviation fuel from the squadron Spitfires.



1945 MONTH	DATE	AIRCRAFT Type	No.	PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)
—	—	—	—	—	—	— TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD
5	15	ME 108	J.D.M.	F/L PARRY	S/L MITCHENER F/L COMMANDING BASE	CHECK OUT
5	18	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		PRACTISE NAVIGATION
		O.C. "B" FLIGHT F/L			SUMMARY for MAY	TYPES SPIT XVI
		O.C. 416 (R.C.A.F.) SQUADRON S/L D.F.C.			DATE 1-6-45	BÜCKER
					UNIT 416 SQUADRON	ME 108
					SIGNATURE F/O	TOTAL
6	2	SPIT XVI	DN-R	SELF		FLY PAST AT BREMERHAVEN
6	4	SPIT XVI	DN-R	SELF		PRACTISE FLYING
6	5	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		PRACTISE FORMATION
6	6	BÜCKER 181	DN-X	F/O TAPLEY	SELF	SCHNEVERDINGEN - LUNEBURG
6	6	BÜCKER 181	DN-X	F/O TAPLEY	SELF	LUNEBERG - SCHNEVERDINGEN
6	15	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		PRACTISE FLYING
6	16	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		SQUADRON FORMATION.
6	14	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		BASE TO LUBECK
6	18	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		LUBECK - INTERCEPTION - BASE
6	19	BÜCKER 181	DN-X	SELF	F/L PARRY	BASE - LUNEBURG
6	19	BÜCKER 181	DN-X	SELF	F/L PARRY	LUNEBURG - BASE
6	20	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		AIR FIRING - PRACTISE FLYING
6	26	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		TO LUBECK.
6	26	SPIT XVI	DN-S	SELF		LUBECK - COPENHAGEN - BASE.
						GRAND TOTAL [Cols. (1) to (10)] 843 Hrs. 45 Mins. TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD

F/O Gordon Cameron, S/L Jack Mitchner, F/O Picard, and Dove, with war trophies.

Trap-shooting was used to keep fighter pilots eye-sight keen, and for pleasure.

14-5-45

Everyone on a Muster parade this morning. Another show north of Copenhagen A
to the Squadron today, when F/L Doug. Douglas was accidentally shot and killed.

F/L Walter Norman Douglas J2933, age 24, from Halleybury, Ontario, was accidently shot and killed by a shotgun blast. He is buried in the Becklingen War Cemetery at Soltau, Germany. F/O Gordon Hill witnessed this accidental shooting and was confined to barracks until the enquiry was completed. The official statements follow.

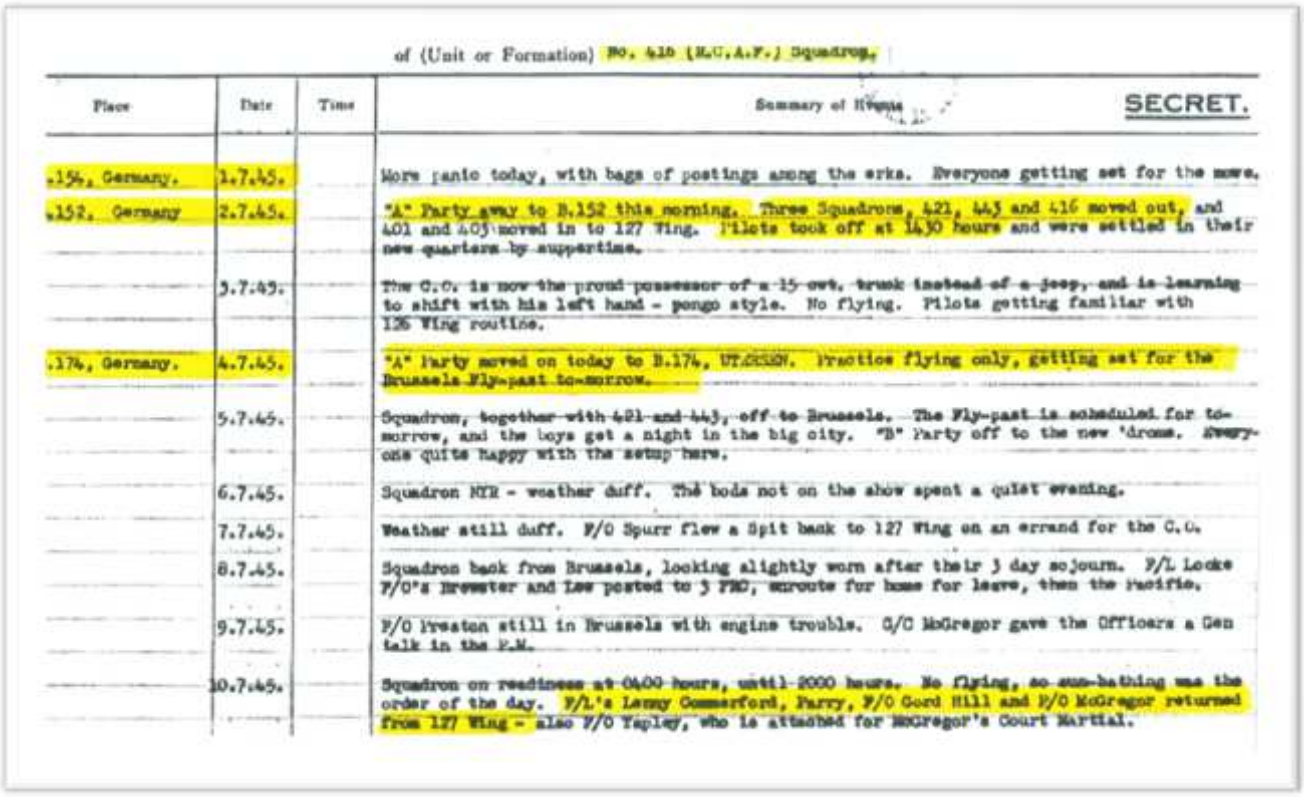
1st Wintess. The first witness, Pilot Officer Norman Melville McGregor, J.94563, states,
"I, Pilot Officer Norman Melville McGregor, J.94563, a pilot in 416 Squadron, R.C.A.F. had recently come into possession of an hammerless double barrelled Acier Comprime shot gun, number 6722. I was uncertain of the guage number of this gun, but I had previously tested the trigger mechanisms and safety catch. I then took it into a room occupied by Flight Lieutenant W.N. Douglas J.2933, Flight Lieutenant B.E. Parry J.14717, Flying Officer G.M. Hill J.37340, and Flying Officer R.W. Tapley J.19582, to determine the gauge number by testing some of their ammunition which I knew they had. I also wanted to show the room occupants the gun which I had recently acquired. I took a 16 gauge shot gun shell from a box on a table in the centre of said room. As I fitted the shell into the left hand barrel of the shot gun, I remarked that it seemed to fit rather tightly. I closed the breech by bringing the barrel up from at the floor with my left hand. I had previously been careful to keep the barrel pointing at the floor as a safety precaution. As the breech closed, or slightly before, the gun fired, discharging the shot into the face and head of Flight Lieutenant W.N. Douglas who was lying on his camp cot watching my actions with the gun. I am uncertain of my next actions but I learned at once that a Doctor had been immediately summoned and I then returned to my room. I believe that I left the gun in the room where the shooting occurred.
I am quite certain that in the action of closing the breech my fingers were not near the triggers or trigger guard, my right hand being clenched about the small of the butt, my left hand on the barrel.
This accident occurred at approximately 12:45 hours May 14/1945."

Signed:- N.M. McGregor F/O J.94563.

2nd Witness The second witness Flying Officer Gordon McKenzie Hill J.37340 states,
"I, Flying Officer Gordon McKenzie Hill, J.37340, a pilot in 416 Squadron, R.C.A.F., witnessed on the 14th day of May, 1945, the fatal shooting of Flight Lieutenant W.N. Douglas J.2933 by Pilot Officer N.M. McGregor, J.94563. Pilot Officer N.M. McGregor entered the room, carrying a double barrelled hammerless shot gun under his right arm, the muzzle pointed at the floor. He stated that he was not sure about the gauge of the gun, and would like to test the gauge of his gun with some ammunition lying in boxes on the table in the centre of the room. He picked up one sixteen gauge shell, trying it first in the right barrel, then in the left barrel remarking that it was a very tight fit. While testing the gun for gauge, he was standing up by Flight Lieutenant W.N. Douglas who was lying on his camp cot. He kept the muzzle of the gun some six inches from the floor, below the level of Flight Lieutenant W.N. Douglas' camp cot, heaving the shell in the left hand barrel, he proceed to close the breech, to test, as he said, the ejector. To close the breech he brought the barrel up with his left hand, keeping his right hand somewhere on the butt of the gun. To the best of my belief, the shell fired before the breech was fully closed fatally wounding Flight Lieutenant W.N. Douglas. Flight Lieutenant B.E. Parry and Flying Officer R.W. Tapley rushed at once to summon the Medical Officer. I left the room almost at once and when I returned an hour later the gun was lying on the table in the centre of the room.

Signed:- G.M. Hill J.37340.

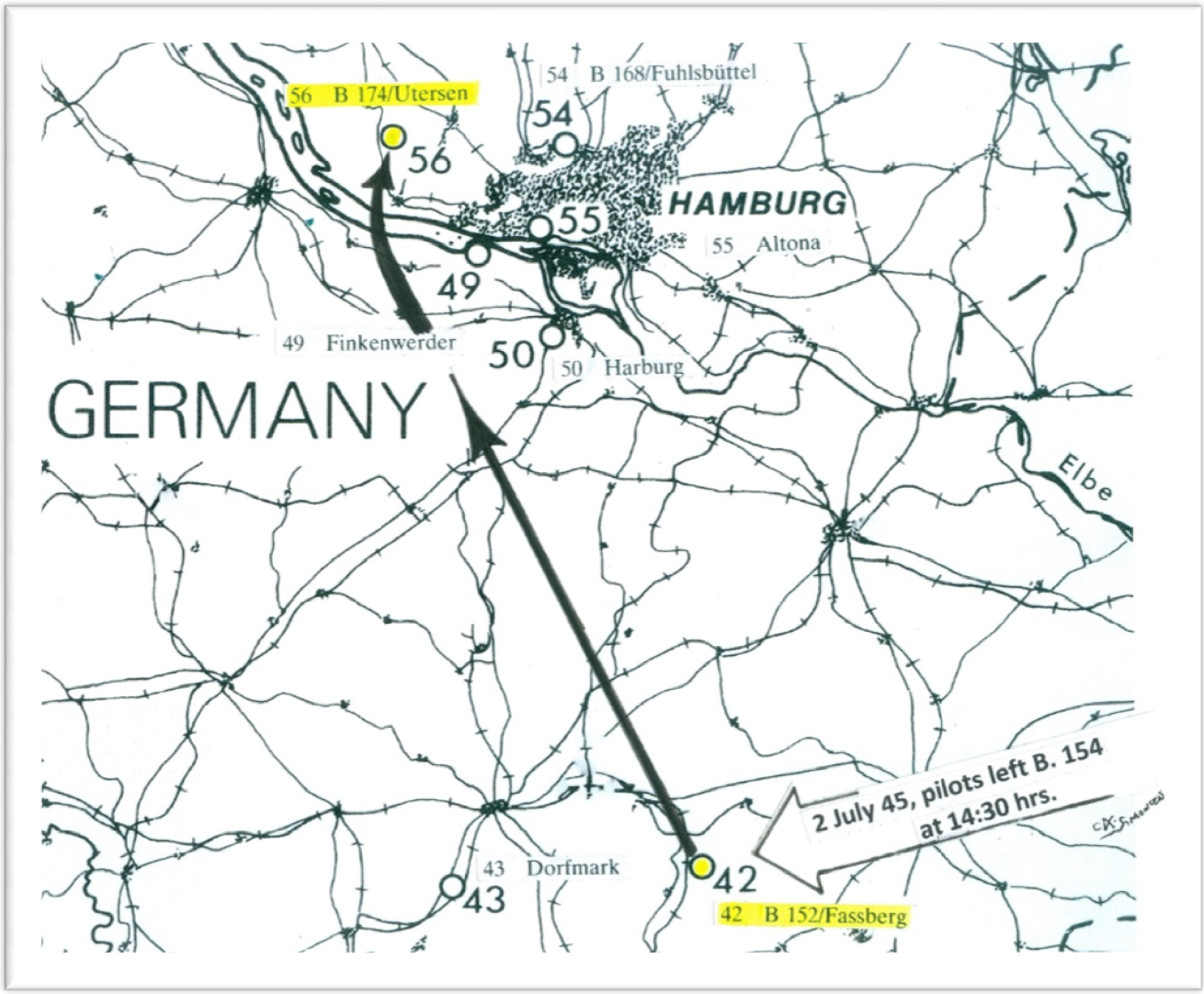
Now that the hostilities in Europe have ended, No. 416 is one of four RCAF day fighter units selected to remain in Germany under the British Air Forces of Occupation. They fly to Base 152, Fassberg on 2 July 1945, now under command of No. 83 [Composite] Group, No. 126 [RCAF] Wing.



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

SECRET.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events
B.154, Germany.	1.7.45.		More panic today, with bags of postings among the erks. Everyone getting set for the move.
B.152, Germany	2.7.45.		"A" Party away to B.152 this morning. Three Squadrons, 421, 443 and 416 moved out, and 401 and 403 moved in to 127 Wing. Pilots took off at 1430 hours and were settled in their new quarters by suppertime.
	3.7.45.		The C.O. is now the proud possessor of a 15 cwt. truck instead of a jeep, and is learning to shift with his left hand - pongo style. No flying. Pilots getting familiar with 126 Wing routine.
B.174, Germany.	4.7.45.		"A" Party moved on today to B.174, UTLINGEN. Practice flying only, getting set for the Brussels Fly-past to-morrow.
	5.7.45.		Squadron, together with 421 and 443, off to Brussels. The Fly-past is scheduled for to-morrow, and the boys get a night in the big city. "B" Party off to the new 'drome. Everyone quite happy with the setup here.
	6.7.45.		Squadron NYR - weather duff. The lads not on the show spent a quiet evening.
	7.7.45.		Weather still duff. F/O Spurr flew a Spit back to 127 Wing on an errand for the C.O.
	8.7.45.		Squadron back from Brussels, looking slightly worn after their 3 day sojourn. F/L Locke F/O's Brewster and Lee posted to 3 PRU, enroute for home for leave, then the Pacific.
	9.7.45.		F/O Preston still in Brussels with engine trouble. G/C McGregor gave the Officers a Gen talk in the P.M.
	10.7.45.		Squadron on readiness at 0400 hours, until 2000 hours. No flying, so sun-bathing was the order of the day. F/L's Lenny Commerford, Parry, F/O Gord Hill and F/O McGregor returned from 127 Wing - also F/O Yapley, who is attached for McGregor's Court Martial.


56 B 174/Utersen
54 B 168/Fuhlsbüttel
54
56
HAMBURG
55
55 Altona
49
49 Finkenwerder
50
50 Harburg
GERMANY
Elbe
2 July 45, pilots left B. 154
at 14:30 hrs.
43 Dorfmark
43
42
42 B 152/Fassberg

The RCAF grave site at Eindhoven, Holland, June 1945

End of Part Six

Next chapter: Postwar Germany