

east yorkshire aero company limited

air transport agents

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"Kodai",  
Carter Lane,  
Flamborough,  
Bridlington,  
Yorks.

10 April 1969.

Dear Bob:

I received your letter this morning and am pleased that the information that I was able to give you was what you required.

You may rest assured, Bob, that anything you tell me is always in the strictest confidence, especially as you know that, as far as we are both concerned, the Official Secrets Act could still be invoked.

As you say, except for a very short sojourn in 10 group at the commencement of the Battle of Britain, I spent the whole of the time in 11 group, and was proud and pleased to do so. I also spent the whole of my time in 501 Squadron which, you may or may not know, had the highest casualties of any squadron during the Battle. If anyone's morale should have been affected it should have been ours, but I can assure you it was not. We were tired, frightened, understrength, but never lacking in morale. Certainly not over the question of Big Wings. With any respect due to Bader, I do not think there was any fighter pilot at that time with enough experience to handle and effectively operate a Big Wing, and the B of B was no place for anybody to be fooling around gaining it. There was another side to this Big Wing. The basic fighting unit was, and is, a section. Whether this was 2 or 3 aircraft makes no difference. The Big Wing was only a method of getting the maximum number of sections to the killing ground, and in the 11 Group fighter pilots view (mine, of course) it was a damn cumbersome and time wasting method of doing it. We actually preferred small formations because it gave us mobility, and we really believed that if you did not get to the Bomber force before they had bombed you were only half doing your job. The Big Wing policy, at best, could only have intercepted over target. Far from morale being affected by the lack of big wings, I can honestly say that in 11 Group, with the job we had to do, we preferred to be without them.

If there is anything else you need, Bob, just ask.

Yours aye,

*James H. Lacey*  
James H. Lacey.