

The Breeze



February 25, 1944

No. 24 EFTS, Abbotsford, B.C.

Number 26

Golden Operational Wing Awarded Student Pilot

**FO A. J. FRANCIS, DFC, VANCOUVER IS CITED FOR
SPECIAL HONOR CEREMONY AT NO. 24 EFTS HERE**

With formal RCAF ceremony, Flying Officer Alan John Francis, DFC, of Vancouver, was presented Operational Wings by Air Vice-Marshal George R. Howsam, MC, air officer commanding No. 4 Air Training Command, before the entire massed personnel of No. 24 EFTS here on Tuesday afternoon.

The award, representative of 33 operational flights as a wireless operator-air gunner over occupied Europe and Germany in Wellingtons and Halifaxes, was the highlight of a parade which also saw the graduation of another class of student pilots from the flying school.

Majestic Mount Baker was the backdrop for the outdoor ceremony as AVM Howsam stressed the teamwork and training that went into FO Francis' achievements overseas. "The winning of Operational Wings is no mean achievement," he told the recipient. "You may well be proud of it, as I assure you I am."

In the citation which accompanied the award, the air gunner's record told of 17 months' service as a private in the Saskatoon Light Infantry prior to air force training in Toronto, Montreal and Mossbank, Sask., following his enlistment in 1940.

200 Operational Hours

He was graduated as a WAG in December 1940 and the following February went overseas, serving for a year and 10 months—16 months of which were on actual operations totalling about 200 hours in his log book.

Commissioned in April, 1942, he was repatriated to Canada in November of the same year with a view to his taking pilot training, which he is now receiving here. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in February last year for his work on operations, the citation at that time saying:

"This officer has shown an eagerness for action, a keenness in his work and a courageous spirit which calls for the highest praise. He has been an inspiration to all those with whom he has come in contact and his sterling qualities have been a constant source of strength on operations."

Flying Officer Francis is a native of Saskatoon. Following his return from overseas, he served on operations in Canada before again taking initial training school course at Saskatoon and posting to No. 24 EFTS where he has now soloed and is making good progress with his pilot training.

As a pilot, FO Francis follows in the footsteps of his father, who flew in the last war. Both his parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Francis, of 2394 Cornwall street, Vancouver, were present when their son was honored.

AVM Howsam was welcomed to the station by SL Morley Gain, officer commanding, and Stewart McKercher, KC, manager of the Vancouver Air Training Co. Ltd., which operates the school.

PARKES SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS IN B.C. PENITENTIARY

**Also Committed on
Additional Charges**

Harrison Ernest Parkes, who elected to be tried by the local court and pleaded guilty to a charge of theft in excess of \$200 in Matsqui police court on Feb. 15, was sentenced to two years in the penitentiary with hard labor when he again appeared before Magistrate Milton C. Switzer at Mount Lehman on Thursday morning, Feb. 17.

The charges involved plumbing fixtures which Parkes had installed in several Matsqui and Abbotsford premises while heating foreman for a subcontractor employed at Abbotsford airport.

New Charges

On completion of this case new charges were preferred against
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Teamwork Wins Battles, Howsam Tells Graduates

**WILL SAVE LIVES
OF SOLDIERS AND
SAILORS OVERSEAS**

Text of the address by Air Vice-Marshal G. R. Howsam, MC, in presenting operational wings to FO A. J. Francis, DFC, and token elementary wings to graduates at colorful and impressive ceremonies held under bright skies at No. 24 EFTS, Abbotsford, on Tuesday afternoon:

"It is indeed a source of satisfaction to me to be here today and make, on behalf of the Minister of National Defence for Air, Hon. Mr. Power, presentation of Operational Wings to Flying Officer Alan John Francis, DFC, and at the same time present to the graduates the token elementary wings of this school.

"The winning of operational wings is no mean achievement. You may well be proud of it, as I assure you I am. They represent not only operational flights into enemy territory and many battles of hard fighting; they represent more than that—a high standard of training and teamwork—and it is teamwork in the final analysis that pays dividend.

"Teamwork has always been symbolized by the RCAF. Without that teamwork which begins with the first initial steps in training, there would be no great air victories such
Continued Overleaf

Matsqui, Abbotsford Men Graduate from 24 EFTS

**GRADUATES HONORED WHEN TOKEN WINGS ARE
PRESENTED BY AIR VICE-MARSHAL HOWSAM,**

Following the presentation of Operational Wings to FO Alan J. Francis, Vancouver, pins symbolizing completion of their elementary training were awarded to pilot trainees at a formal graduation ceremony at No. 24 EFTS, on Tuesday afternoon. The operational wings and the pins were presented by Air Vice-Marshal G. R. Howsam, MC, Air Officer Commanding No. 4 Training Command, Calgary.

"It is nonetheless satisfying to me to present these token elementary wings, symbolizing as they do, the first important step toward winning the coveted pilot's wings, at the completion of your next stage of training at service flying school," Air Vice-Marshal Howsam declared.

"To you airmen and other students at No. 24 EFTS, I say remember all I have said of the value of teamwork—it means the winning of battles, and the winning of battles is always the payoff in war. My congratulations to you."

Among the graduates were Sgt. Gordon G. D. Adams, Matsqui, formerly of the Royal Bank staff in Abbotsford, who return-

ed from overseas to take pilot's training; and LAC J. O. Callaghan and LAC R. Olver of Abbotsford.

Vancouver graduates included: Squadron Leader E. A. Peters, FS J. P. Little, LAC M. Cameron, LAC W. Stephenson and LAC J. MacLaren. Others with homes in British Columbia are: LAC R. Bradshaw, Kamloops; LAC D. MacLean, Victoria; LAC W. Mercer, New Westminster; and LAC R. Smith, Nelson.

Alberta trainees in the class are: Sgt. W. Langridge, Calgary; LAC N. Smith, LAC E. Northcott, Calgary; LAC U. Pittman, Warner.

USA Graduates

Among other members of the class were five residents of the United States, with homes in Dayton, Ohio; Pico, California; Los Angeles, California; Glendale, California, and Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Extra color was added to the ceremony by the presence of the Western Air Command band of Vancouver.



Sgt. Adams

'Great Plans Existing' for 24 EFTS McKercher Tells Graduate Airmen

Finishing its No. 24 EFTS career with a flourish, the latest pilot graduating class here welcomed Wednesday night for their wives and friends at a turkey banquet in the Airmen's Mess on the flying station. A Vancouver floor show added to the entertainment provided by the class itself during the course of the evening. More than 100 were present.

Principal speakers at the event were Manager Stewart McKercher, KC, and Squadron Leader Morley Gain, chief flying instructor. WOII Frank Martineau, editor of *The Breeze*, was master of ceremonies, introducing other station dignitaries including C. J. Clark, assistant manager; Flight Lieutenant Len Milne, assistant chief flying instructor; Secretary-treasurer Fred Graham, FL Peter Denbigh, squadron commander; Messing Officer Eric Adames, FO Roger Dinelli, and

FO Tom McGill, deputy squadron commanders.

"Great Plans"

"There are great plans existing for this school," the manager told the graduates as he invited them to return six months hence and see the improvement between now and then. Mr. McKercher remarked on the visit of AVM G. R. Howsam, air officer commanding No. 4 Training Command, and declared that the air vice-marshal was most interested in the future of No. 24.

"This school is the most ideally situated in Canada—and perhaps the world," the manager continued. "It is our aim to make it the best flying center of all. We hope your stay here has been pleasurable and profitable," he said in conclusion, "and we sincerely hope success will follow you at SFTS."

Song Premier

SL Gain voiced the congratulations of RCAF personnel to the graduates in his remarks to the class. "We will miss your splendid co-operation," he declared. "In addition we feel that we have not done all we could for you because our facilities here are not yet complete. We have few traditions at No. 24 EFTS because it is a young school, but all of you have left something here of which our traditions will be made.

"May each of you of this class be graduated from service flying training with your wings and commissions," the CFI concluded.

Premier performance of a song, "Needle, Ball, Airspeed," by LAC Lou Snider of the graduates, featured the evening; it was sung by a special chorus composed of class members. FL Harry Forbell, a member of the Trenton Visiting Flight then on the station, entertained with a story in the French-Canadian dialect and with a mysterious trick in which he removed Snider's shirt without

Teamwork Wins

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as we now daily read of in our newspapers and hear broadcast over our radios.

Two thousand-plane raids over Berlin! Think of what that means in terms of teamwork. Two thousand individual teams welded together into one gigantic team. Two thousand leaders working together and answering one leader; it is no small wonder that the world looks to victory through air power—and it is no small wonder that the allied world is fervently praying that our bombing will so flatten Germany and Japan that the lives of hundreds of thousands of our soldiers will be saved when our armies are called upon to occupy these well fortified countries.

"When this monstrous war has been brought to a decisive end and the ghoulis Germans and the despicable Japs, God grant, have been reduced to military impotence, historians may well pause to consider the means thereof. Well they may underscore the great factor of teamwork. Teamwork that had its origin in training schools of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, such as No. 24 EFTS.

"It is indeed a source of satisfaction to me, Mr. McKercher, to present the golden operational wings on behalf of the minister of national defense for air, to Flying Officer Alan John Francis, DFC."

taking off his tunic.

The floor show was presented by Service Shows, of Vancouver, and included the Hand Hill Lariats—Vi and Joy Olafson, guitarists and yodelers; Violinist Art Halling, Miss Constantia Stefanik, soprano; Tap Dancer Marguerite Hewston; and Mrs. McMillan at the piano.

PARKES SENTENCED

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Parkes of knowingly and unlawfully uttering forged documents, cheques. Evidence was to the effect that as foreman, Parkes continued on the payroll names of men who had left his employer's staff. Three of these men testified that the endorsement of their names on several pay cheques was not in their handwriting, that they had not seen the cheques or expected cheques as they had quit the job at previous dates. Other witnesses were called to testify in regard to the cashing of the cheques.

Parkes was committed by Magistrate Switzer for trial at a higher court on five of the charges Thursday. One charge was dismissed and two were adjourned to Monday forenoon when additional witnesses were called by the prosecution and two additional committals were made.

HMS VICTORIOUS ON PATROL



A new picture of the British aircraft carrier HMS Victorious on patrol, taken from her sister flat-top, HMS Indomitable. A British Admiralty Picture.

Miracle of the Century !**PUTTONEN DEFIES GRAVITY;
DECLARES THEORIES ALL BOSH**

Never has any sergeant-major anywhere in this world so scorned the fundamental laws of physics as did our own WOII Al Puttonen this week when conducting a parade on the tarmac.

Standing with but 30 degrees of angle between him and the ground - and still on his feet - the genial (but vociferous) warrant officer carried out his duties in what was practically a reclining position ! Almost parallel with the ground, he marched back and forth before his squadron.

True, there was a bit of wind that day and Putt had to stand on the windward edge of the parade to make himself heard, but that was of little moment.

The big thing was that he was able (no doubt by mystic powers of Yogi) to stand on his feet when they were some four feet south of him.

Eminent physicists the world over, hearing of the strange abilities of our leather-lunged sergeant-major, will without doubt scoff at his feet - and feet, which they will suspect of having been equipped with suction cups.

But 500 men saw it happen and marvelled !

BITS OF THE BREEZE

Things are coming to a pretty pass when even the service police are not sacred to the hat-badge pilferers. Cpl. Jimmy Coughlin, that braw son of Erin, was a victim this week.

Students of the latest graduating course made merry Monday night at their class smoker in the Canadian Legion quarters in town.

M.J. "Bud" Nugent, works chief here, has been appointed official station photographer by FO Eric McVeity, command public relations officer, who attended Tuesday's ceremonies with AVM. G.R. Howsam, MC, AOC of No. 4 T.C.

A big announcement on the formation of and plans for an OUTDOOR CLUB here will be forthcoming next week from WOII Jorge Proctor, who has devoted most of his recent spare time to arrangements for the extensive program of hiking, fishing, riding and skiing to be offered.

Public address system used at Tuesday's graduation kept a large group of visitors well informed of the proceedings. The parade itself was labelled the best ever held on this station.

Hugh McAllister, control operator recently added to staff from the Caron school, has been heard to say he used to sing over a Vancouver radio station.

From the gals: One said, "Gee, I wish I had a man to take me out tonight." Another piped up, "Any night, I'm not particular."

Sgt. Benny Steck, PT instructor here on temporary duty from command, has planned a big sports program for the station, to start when Town Hall opens next week, possibly.



OUR HERO

**VISITING FLIGHT LEAVES;
IMPRESSED BY STATION**

SL A. Patton, officer commanding No. 5 Visiting Flight from Trenton, Ont., declared at a meeting of all flying and link instructors in GIS Tuesday that the testing rroup found "no serious criticism" with the instruction on this unit. "In fact," he said, "it is quite good."

The flight left yesterday following the conclusion of its testing here. During its stay, one change was made in its personnel, with the addition of FL A.R. Ross in place of FL E. James. Other members of the group were FL H.C. Forbell and PO G.N. Seeler.

Via the grapevine, it was learned that A-2 instructional categories, highest the visiting flight can award, were given FL Peter Denbigh, FO Reg Witt, FO Andy Duncan, PO Bert Brice and WOI Art Bell.

In his concluding remarks following a complete two-hour discussion of sequences, SL Patton said another visiting flight can be expected on this station in about four months.

**SGT AND MRS. McLEOD
THANK ALL SECTIONS**

All departments of No. 24 EFTS came in for thanks today from Sgt. and Mrs. Bill McLeod, whose Abbotsford home was razed recently in a disastrous fire. Sgt. McLeod has since been posted to Pearce, Alta., for a service instructor's course, but from there came sincere appreciation for the fund which was raised to assist the couple.

"We want to express our thanks to all of you at No. 24 EFTS who have been so kind to us - the girls, the officers, the sergeants, the civilian employees and the students," the pilot declared. "The sum of \$347 is a treasure chest to us; may we again voice our appreciation."

**GIRLS' LOUNGE OPENED
IN QUARTERS WEDNESDAY**

Completion of alterations to the barrack block housing the company girl employees this week provided the lassies with a new lounge, converted from four rooms in the front of the east wing of the building.

Furnished with chesterfield sets and tables from the Caron, Sask., EFTS, the new sitting room was christened Wednesday night.

Convenient to the lounge is the girls' canteen, making of the parlor a cozy spot in which to chew the rag, write letters or sip the occasional coke. The gals, according to reports, enjoy the opportunity to "put their feet up," be-slacked and comfortable.

BITS OF THE BREEZE

Flying instructors yesterday had the opportunity to inspect a new aircraft carrier in Vancouver; similar trips for trainees awaiting instruction have been conducted recently under the direction of SL Ed Miller, himself a student.

Praise for the way in which cooks and waitresses pitched in for the class grad banquet was unstinted Wednesday night. Head Chef George Cox was brought out for a round of applause while Miss Agnes Green and Miss Laura Smith were given their due. LAC's served as mess boys, in white coats.

SCHOOL COUNCIL SETS UP SEVERAL NEW COMMITTEES

An Airmen's Messing committee, to consist of an officer, three airmen and Messing Officer Eric Adams was agreed upon at Wednesday's meeting of the 24 EFTS School Council, with Asst. Mrg. C.J.Clark presiding.

The personnel committee was revised to include Mr. Clark, Manager McKercher, FO Newcombe and Sec.-Treasurer Fred Graham, with the group health insurance committee including Mr. Graham, Mrs. Sue Jackson, J. Bertalino, the manager, the assistant manager, Dudley Darling and another member to be appointed by works and buildings.

A visiting committee, to supply the needs of all personnel, will include a member of the RCAF permanent staff, an airman, an engineer to be appointed by Chief Engineer W.E.Sambrooke and Miss Evelyn Gould.

Also discussed were Air Minster Power's speech in Commons, the Victory Garden, fire boxes and other business.

EXTRA !

24 EFTS TEAM IN FINALS OF LOWER MAINLAND LEAGUE

Airmen Take Gloverdale Series In Furious Game Here Last Night

By virtue of a two-point margin over Clover A.C. in games Monday and Thursday this week, the No. 24 basketball team now goes into the finals of the Lower Mainland league, against the Vancouver Billermakers.

Although last night's fray in Abbotsford was lost by a score of 45 to 36, our lads had an 11 point lead in the first game which left them two points - one basket - up on their opponents.

It was a closely contested battle all the way and keenly fought right up to the final whistle. LAC Crough and LAC Gordon of the 24 team plunked in five baskets each.

NEWS ITEM -

PO Morley Sparrow's bicycle was a casualty this week when a high wind blew over a staging which landed on the vehicle and crushed it into oblivion. Now the flying instructor has to walk across the aerodrome to get home. The bike was parked beside No. 2 hangar at the time of its demise.

THE WEEKLY BREEZE

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EDITOR
WOII Frank Martineau
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
PO George Sturgiss

SOCIAL CALENDAR

- TONIGHT - Movie here (east wing of Town Hall "Somewhere I'll Find You," with Clark Gable, Lana Turner. Dance for Abbotsford Hut in Matsqui; drawing on "Miss Rich." Dance at Elks in Langley.
- SUNDAY - Three airmen wanted for Sunday dinner in Langley Prairie home; see station warrant officer.
- TUESDAY - Movie here: "So Proudly We Hail" with Colbert, Goddard, Lake, Tufts. Dance in Mission; no openings.

BITS OF THE BREEZE

Official commendation for all students and instructors for Tuesday's splendid parade came today from SL M. Gain, CFI. "Good Show, Lads."

PO Eddie Brook of testing flight celebrates his sixth birthday Tuesday.

Cpl. M. Meade, of the service police, found riding a motorcycle tricky on Monday morning when a car turned shaply across his path at the car-teen corner. He's still in the hospital with three stitches in his right leg.

WOII Chuck Durand, variously "OC Boots" and "OC Parking Lots" during the past few weeks, thought he had another one tagged on him this week, but it was all a practical joke, he learned after seeing the CFI.

No. 24 is six months old next week !

