laid in position, the freighter had already entered the harbour and the order to fire was never issued. It was decided not to risk sinking a vessel in the harbour mouth since it might have impeded traffic.

Being so close to the war, the gunners at Fort Amherst lived through some tense moments. Nineteen-forty-two was the year U-Boat assaults began in earnest as Admiral Dönitz removed the limitation of his boats operating in the western Atlantic. As the eastern-most North American port, St. John's was in for a rough ride. The war hit close to home when on 3 March near 3 o'clock in the afternoon, an explosion took place and a geyser of water sprang up in front of the fort dousing the observation post. No sooner had the men taken up positions another column of water sprang up across the harbour. While no submarine was spotted, it was suspected torpedoes were the cause and where there were torpedoes, there probably was a U-Boat. The navy launched a search party consisting of HMCSs *Minas*, *The Pas* and *Lunenburg*, but the depth charge attack they launched yielded no prize. The culprit, the U-587, had missed its prey - a ship entering the harbour - through either gross incompetence or sheer bad luck.

The third coastal battery guarding St. John's was Fort Chain Rock. Located at the harbour entrance below Signal Hill, the battery's role was the same as Fort Amherst's in stopping any seaborne intruder from attacking the port. It possessed several wooden regulation huts such as stores and barracks, three searchlight emplacements and two 75mm pieces. Since the road going to the fort was barely passable, a wharf was put in for transport by boat.

After the war, the big guns at Cape Spear, Fort Amherst and Fort Chain Rock fell silent. Days after the 103rd Battery was disbanded, the guns were taken over by the RCA's Newfoundland Armament Maintenance Establishment (NAME) and kept in place until headquarters could decided what to do with them. The men from NAME conducted a few test firings to ensure the guns were in shape but other than that, they lay idle. In 1946, the Establishment was disbanded and the buildings at Cape Spear, along with those at Kenny's Pond, Lester's Field, Pennywell Road and Blackhead Road, were sold to a Montreal man.

<u>US armed forces.</u>

Even after over fifty years, St. John's residents will remember or know of the former American presence in their city. There were so many US troops stationed there, especially during the war, many had their lives touched by the Yanks one way or another. The city opened its arms to the boys in 1941 and in return, it collected memories of all kinds that have lasted to this day.

It had been agreed one year earlier by the Permanent Joint Board on Defence that the colony would be protected by both Canadian and American troops. Canadian soldiers established camps at Gander,

Botwood, Lewisporte and St. John's while GI's moved into Stephenville, Gander, Argentia, Goose Bay and also in St. John's. Senior American engineers arrived in the fall of 1940 to survey the city looking for a fairly large piece of land for a new base that would act as area headquarters. A piece was chosen on the north side of Quidi Vidi Lake that encompassed several farms and an internment camp for German merchant seamen, and after quick negotiations and signed deals, the land owners were ordered out ASAP.

It has been said many times that when Americans do something, they do it big. No sooner had the ink dried on the land deals construction crews moved in to build a large new base. Well before the new camp was built however, the GI's arrived in a huge behemoth of a ship, the *Edmund B. Alexander*, then the largest vessel to ever dock in the harbour. (The ship was so big when some people got up in the morning and looked out the window, it was all they saw.) The men of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, 24th Coast Artillery and 62nd AA Artillery immediately began their operational duties but until the new Fort Pepperrell was ready, the *Edmund B.* and a temporary tented compound on Carpasian Road, Camp Alexander, were their homes. The main army overseeing body, the Newfoundland Base Command, had its own at 44 Rennies Mill Rd.

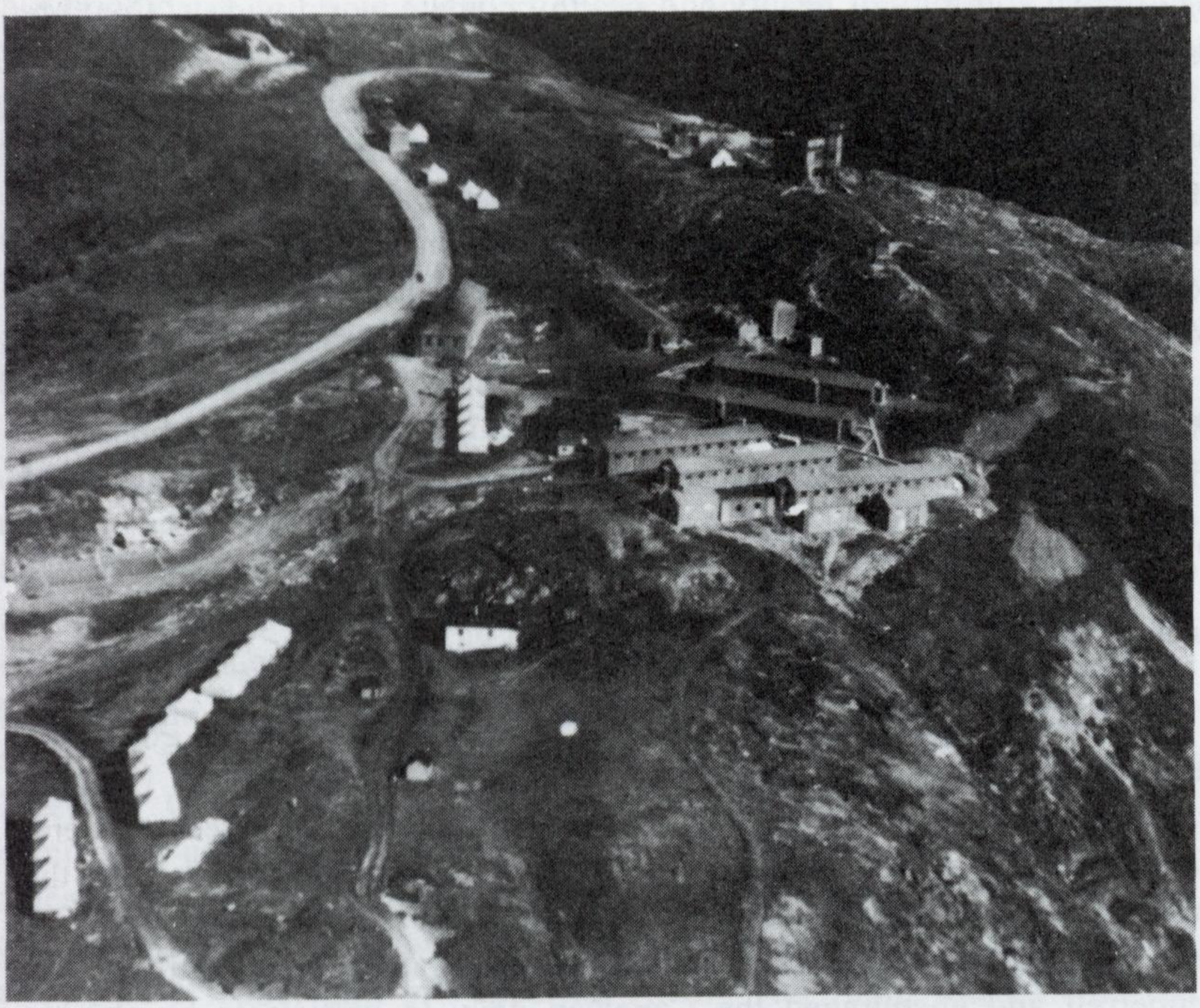
Fort Pepperrell was no small outpost. According to John Cardoulis in *A Friendly Invasion*, plans had initially called for a 3500-man facility but military records show twice the amount was reached at the war's peak. Several two-storey dormitories were erected as were headquarters for the Newfoundland Base Command, a concrete windowless operations centre, a large hospital with reinforced basement and various offices and supply shops. All this was in addition to a radio station, garages, a theatre, power plant, laundry, underground gasoline tanks and several ammunition igloos on nearby White Hills. Most of these structures were put along curved roads patterned after a huge Stetson hat. Some of the huts put up by the contractors as crew quarters were used by the army after they left. One of these was converted into a recreation centre with bowling lanes and swimming pool. From the air, the base looked like a modern city.

As headquarters for the US Army's Newfoundland Base Command, Fort Pepperrell's job was to manage the US units deployed throughout the colony. This included supplying the many gun and radar sites, radio stations and infantry detachments with food, spare parts, transport and other supplies. The fort, or more specifically the area behind it, also served as a training camp. The Commanding Officer was responsible for coordinating his troops with the Canadian services, liaison with the US Navy at Argentia and ensuring aircraft ferry operations at Gander and Goose Bay ran smoothly.

Separate from Pepperrell were other US installations around St. John's. An encampment at Signal Hill was built as an artillery base with heavy 6" and 8" guns to repel naval assaults and 3" guns to stop enemy

aircraft. Another artillery post at Red Cliff north of St. John's on the coast had two 8" M1888 guns on barbettes and two 40mm AA pieces and other guns were put at Flat Rock and Torbay. All these posts had their own barracks. Smaller sites were established around Logy Bay and Middle Cove with smaller armament such as 60 and 81mm mortars. Finally, an air defence radar post was installed along with the previously-mentioned searchlight company at Cape Spear near the lighthouse and the Canadian Army's heavy battery.

There was one group of men in uniform that performed highly secret work and that kept pretty much to themselves. In July 1941, a platoon of the army's 122nd Radio Intelligence Company then based at Fort Sam Houston in Texas received a despatch ordering them to the New York Port of Embarkation for a trip to a secret destination. That destination was Newfoundland. The platoon's order was to listen in on German army and air force communications and report the transmissions to Washington. The men were first based in a cow barn and stable on Carter's Farm on Nagle's Hill Road until December 1941 when they moved to Kearney's Place on Long Pond which had previously been a military hospital. In July 1942, they continued their work in a new camp at Snelgrove on Portugal Cove Road until March 1945 when they moved again, this time to Fort Pepperrell's signal office. The platoon's work was so good it received a citation from the Secretary of War.



US Army barracks on Signal Hill. (Photo: NAC, PA-135879.)

According to Walter Davenport writing for *Collier's* magazine, when the Americans first arrived in Newfoundland, the government looked for ways to raise revenues by attempting to levy everything brought in. Since Colonel Maurice Welty, the US man in charge, had no orders to that effect, he refused to accept the new taxes and told the revenuers to go to Washington. The government then tried to set up a post office to handle GI mail but again, Welty said no since he had his own on the *Edmund B.* Censorhip of mail? No, Welty looked after that too. Local milk? Forget it. He knew the cows were bad, so did the farmers and the government, but since no one wanted to compensate the owners, they could not be destroyed. The army built a dairy on the base proper. As for local establishments, they were inspected for cleanliness and hygiene but, as Davenport wrote, since some owners saw nothing wrong with a bit of mold in their soup (which added colour), 22 had to be declared out of bounds. When it came to beer in local bars, he said it might cost you 5¢ per mug but it might cost you $5 to get rid of its effects.

Some Newfoundlanders such as the St. John's *Evening Telegram* took exception to the article. The editor said he could just as well have written about poverty in Tennessee, injustices to the negroes in the south, the filth in some sectors of New York City or the corruption in all levels of American politics. He had so distorted the facts to make Newfoundland appear "... as a miserable sink of dirt and disease." This land, wrote the ET, had drawn admirers of beauty and healthy climate world wide. "Could he not have written about Newfoundland kindliness and hospitality?"

As well as the government trying to levy taxes, the local daughters of joy were another group looking forward to earning a decent (?!) wage, according to Davenport. The problem was some residents were not shy in advising a GI the lady he was with was a tramp or diseased. Furthermore, it was made illegal to sell booze in a bar to the girls. When one bar owner was charged with doing that, the following exchange arose at trial:

Owner: "Will you tell me, yer worship, how I'm to tell the bad from the good?"
Judge: "Ye'll decide that yourself ... Ye'll be running your business on the lawful side or not at all."
Owner: "I can't be asking every woman that comes into my place. If ye'd give me a list of the creatures now."
Judge: "THE OFFICER WILL REMOVE THE PRISONER!"

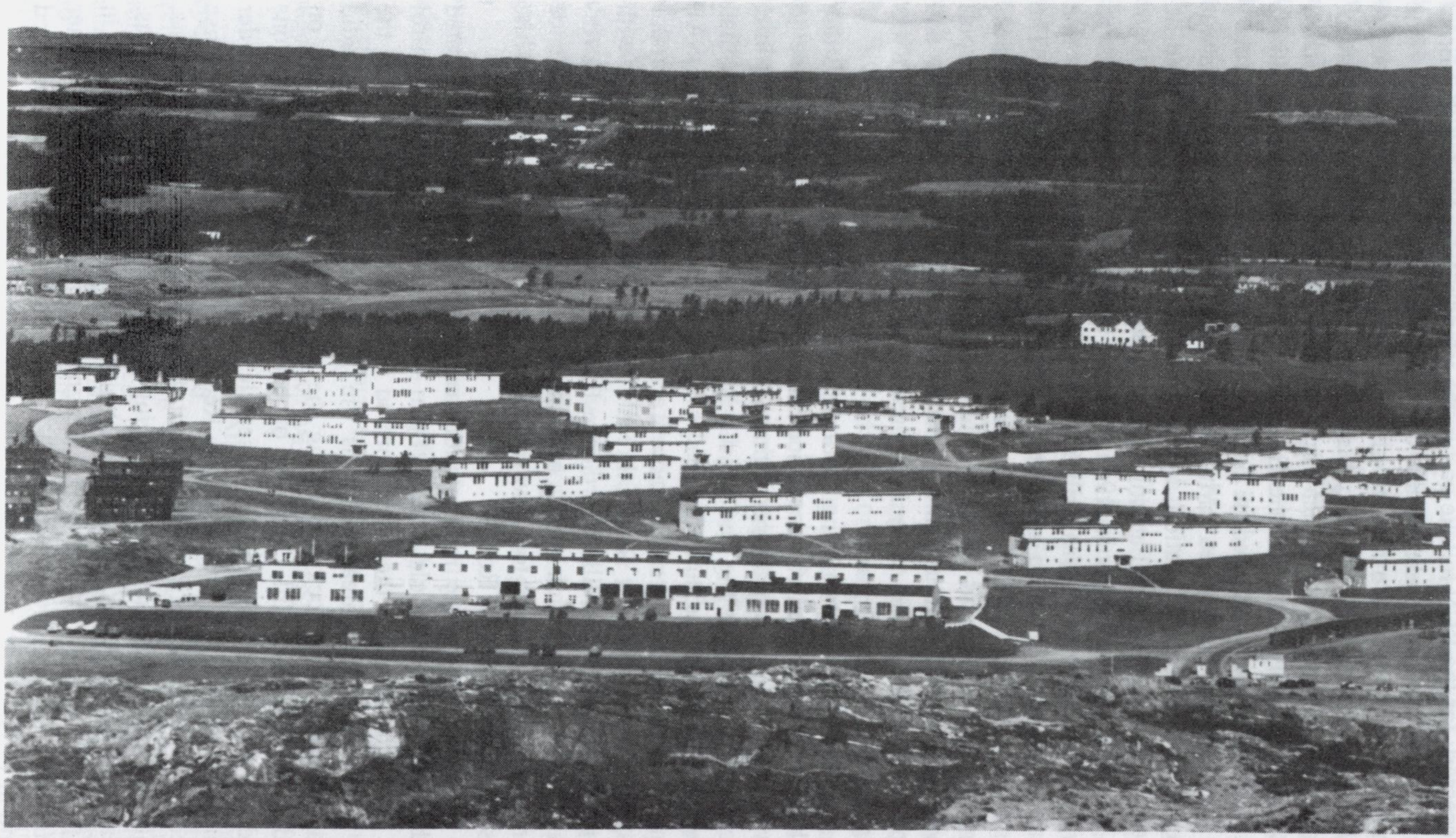
How well Canadian and American military leaders got along depends on the source consulted. Documents found at the National Archives of Canada indicate there was some tension between General Brant, the US Army's senior officer in Newfoundland after Welty, and the Canadian Flag Officer Newfoundland Force, Rear Admiral Murray. Brant had built a combined weather-communications intelligence centre at Fort Pepperrell and encouraged the Canadian navy to participate by sharing

information on its defensive measures, the idea being that coordination would lead to more efficient action. Admiral Murray felt it was unnecessary for the RCN to take part in the island's defences and that Brant did not have the need-to-know the disposition of his naval forces. The admiral did not see how a map of his forces in the new operations centre could benefit Brant. The US Navy, for its part, criticized Brant's aircraft for "dabbling in flying over the sea" and wanted his help only for convoy protection. Murray remarked the General felt he was being treated like a 2nd Lieutenant and suggested in a memo to the Canadian naval secretary that "he should be kept sweet." Murray thought the best way to do this was to keep him under observation and in touch so he could not "have an opportunity to sit by himself and nurse imagined wrongs."

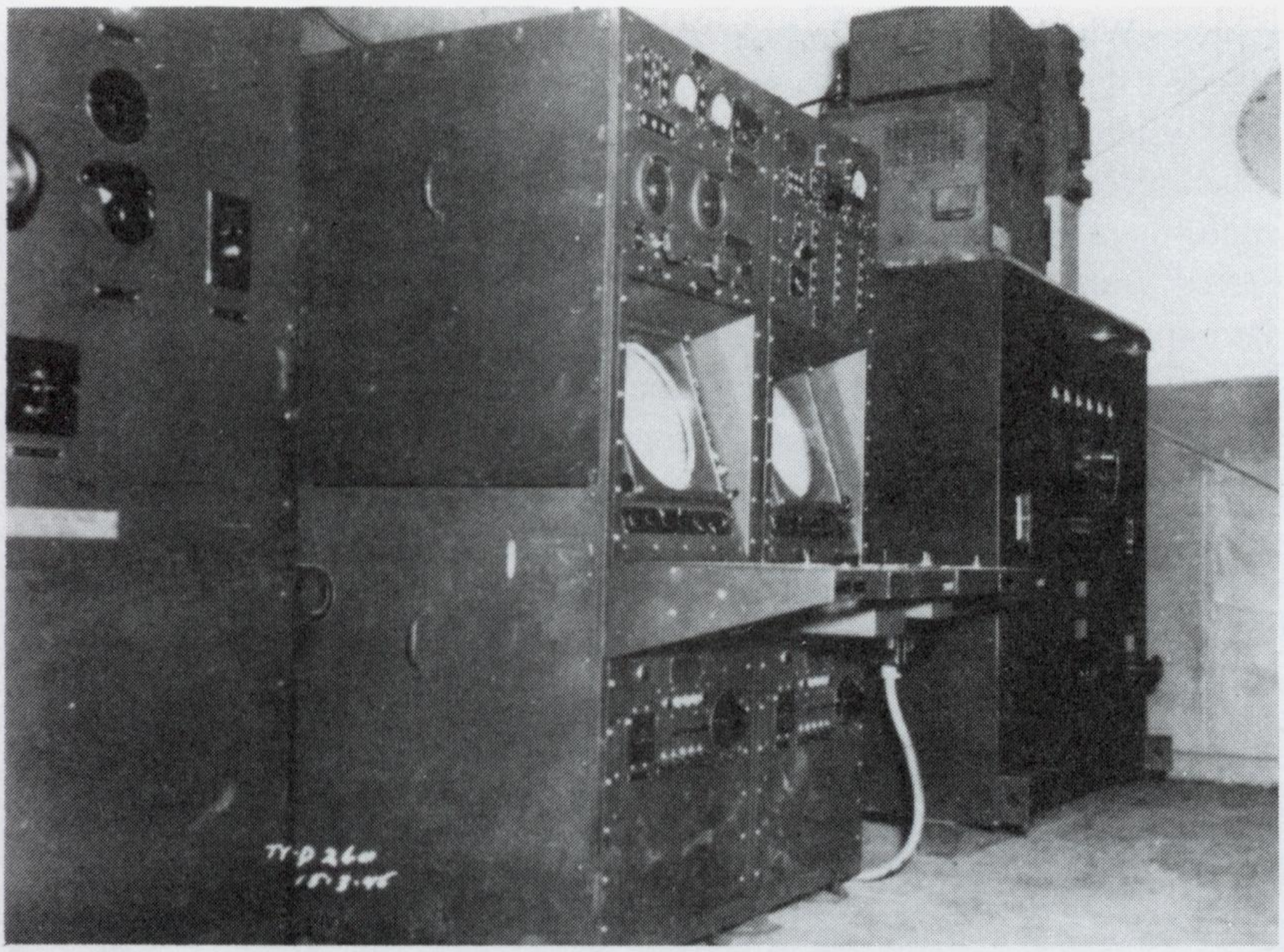
With the war over in 1945, activity at the various posts slowed down. Fort Pepperrell was still responsible for whatever troops that remained but now, it had to look after the busy job of asset disposal. The guns at Signal Hill and Red Cliff were taken away and some of the barracks dismantled. In 1946, as a unit of the USAAF's Military Air Transport Service, Pepperrell and its Torbay detachment became a transport and supply base and after the Army Air Force became the USAF, the Fort was designated an Air Force Base.

The 1950s was to bring a dramatic change to Pepperrell AFB due to the Cold War. American servicemen returned early that decade to Newfoundland for a repeat performance of what they did in wartime; watching the skies for the bad guys. By agreement with the Canadian government - Newfoundland now being a Canadian province - the USAF set up several air defence radar stations along the Newfoundland-Labrador coast to monitor the new Soviet threat. These new stations, along with fighter bases at Stephenville and Goose Bay, belonged to the new North-East Air Command, which had its headquarters at Pepperrell. Air defence information would be sent to a new reinforced direction centre on the White Hills called the "Air War Room."

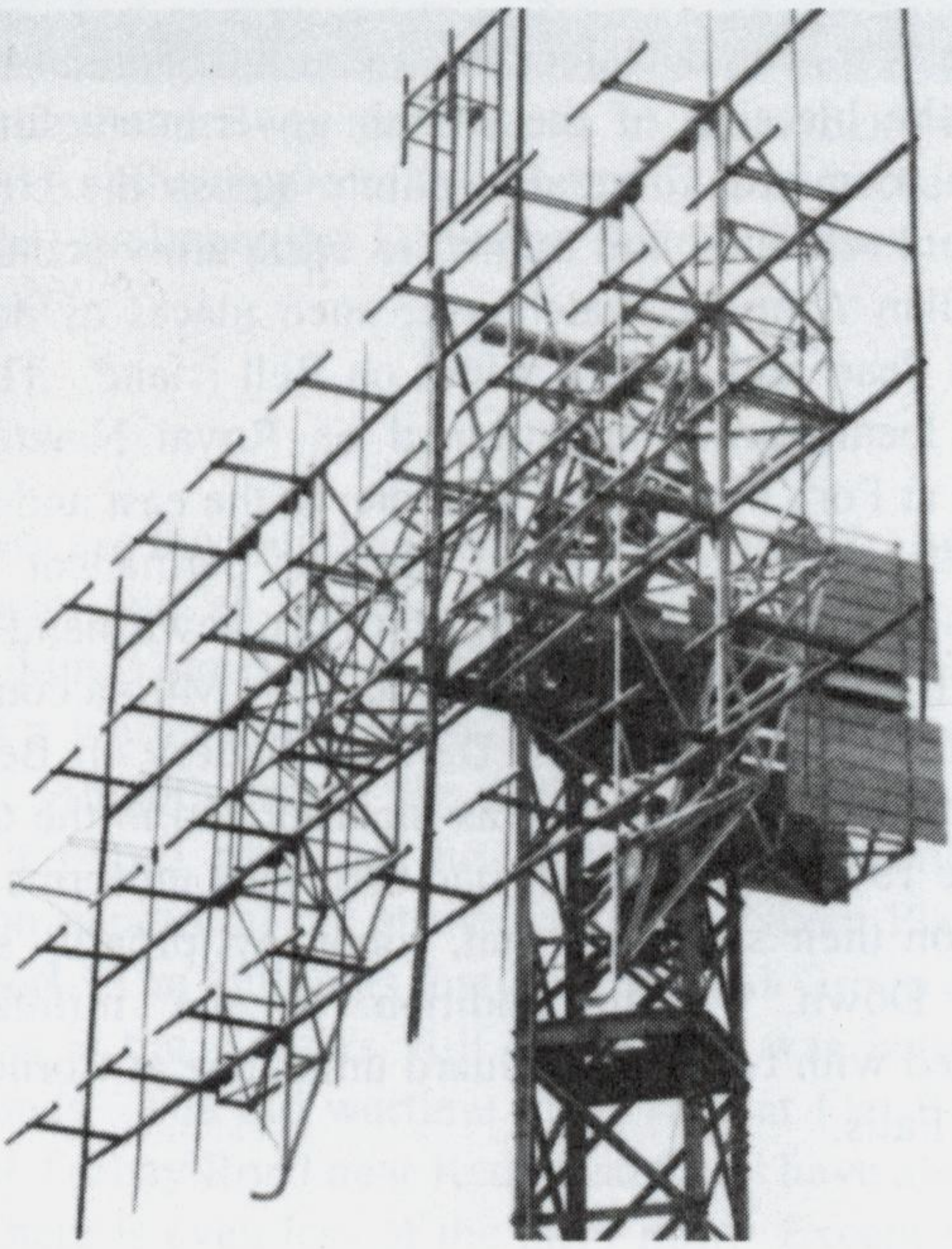
One of the many radar stations controlled by NEAC was located north of St. John's at the old Red Cliff gun site. The 108th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron there was formed in the early fifties to cover the city and its outlying areas much as the RCAF's No.14 and 17 Radio Detachments at Flat Rock did during the war. The small new base on windswept Flagstaff Hill consisted of barracks, mess halls, operations building and at first, an AN/CPS-5 search and AN/TPS-1D height-finder radar. As well as a standard radar unit, Red Cliff doubled as an Air Defense Direction Centre accepting radar input from all other NEAC stations, identifying unknown tracks and managing all aircraft intercept operations, at least until a new ADDC was built at White Hills. Unlike other stations in the province, Red Cliff was never designated an Air Station but rather existed as a lodger unit of Pepperrell AFB. The 108th was renumbered 642nd in 1953.



Fort Pepperrell in the late 1940s. (Photo: NAC, PA-128005.)



The US Army's 685th Signal Air Warning Company set up an air defence radar station at Cape Spear to detect enemy aircraft. In late 1944, the station was taken over by the RCAF becoming its No.42 Radio Unit. These were the radar consoles. (Photo: NAC, C-148417, ca. 1945.)



A US-type radar antenna. Compare it with the one on page 257. (Photo: NAC, C-148418, ca. 1945.)

Whether the 642nd AC&W Squadron would have worked as intended during an attack is open to question. In 1954 for instance, the poor weather often influenced radar effectiveness with sometimes a low detection capability of 54% obtained. Had the Soviets known this, they would have planned their assaults during those times. A further problem existed with having fighter squadrons based at distant locations such as Harmon AFB at Stephenville and Goose Bay. For bombers coming in from the east to attack St. John's, they would have been of little comfort. The extension of the runways at Torbay to accommodate fighter aircraft described earlier may very well have been the result of that realization.

The early sixties saw the end of a US presence at St. John's. The Red Cliff radar station was closed in 1961 after the US Navy began its Airborne Early Warning long-range patrols over the Atlantic. It was transferred to the RCAF on 24 October of that year and remained federal property until it was sold to the Newfoundland government in 1962. That same year, the eastern part of Pepperrell AFB was sold to the province while the rest went to the Canadian government. The blue uniforms of the USAF would be no more.

Newfoundland Militia.

Canadian and American soldiers were not the only troops to be deployed around St. John's.

Weeks before war was declared, the Newfoundland Commission of Government with the blessing of the British government formed the Newfoundland Militia to guard vulnerable points across the city. Men between 18 and 41 were recruited and trained to basic army standard with the help of the Canadian Army to watch over such places as docks, the radio station at Mount Pearl and the ore mines on Bell Island. The troops were first housed in local homes and trained on Royal Newfoundland Constabulary property at Fort Townshend and later at the east and west fire halls but in July 1940, they were moved to their permanent camp at Shamrock Field across Merrymeeting Road from Fort Townshend with the land donated from the Irish Christian Brotherhood. The Militia consisted of two infantry companies and the 1st Coast Defence Battery on Bell Island and while at first it was self-managed, it was incorporated in the Canadian Army's W Force in late 1941. The recruits had their own uniforms with the brass letters "NFLD" on their shoulders that, some say, proudly stood for "Not Found Lying Down."* In addition to the militia, other Newfoundlanders served with two Home Guard units, one at Corner Brook and the other at Grand Falls.

*The Newfoundland Militia became the Newfoundland Regiment in March 1943.



The Newfoundland Regiment's camp at Shamrock Field on Merrymeeting Road is seen in the centre of this photo. The barracks under construction to the left were probably the Canadian Army's Calver's Field camp. (Photo: DND REA 260-9.)

Remains.

Today, there are few buildings left to see around St. John's. At Torbay, one finds hangars and an old hut used by PAL Cargo, what looks like two supply buildings now used by the province, the drill hall as a recreation centre and a whole lot of roads. The army's South and North Camps are long gone. An anti-aircraft site to the west of the airport on Portugal Cove Road up a paved road on the north side has vanished as has an old ammunition depot that lay at the end of McNiven Place and another north of the airport. The buildings that housed No.1 Group at Fort William Place are gone as is the Kenna's Hill Camp that was between New Cove and Torbay Roads. The old wartime radar sites at Flat Rock that were on the east side of Torbay Road near Red Head Road have also disappeared.

There is even less of the navy now. Except for one building now used as a Bingo hall on Ricketts, Buckmaster's Field is gone and has been replaced by new houses. The only structures remaining at the dockyard on

the south side are the torpedo depot and the underground ammunition magazines. The latter were used by the liquor commission after the war and more recently to grow mushrooms. The various school buildings at the very end of the harbour are gone and have been replaced by the highway overpass and the mess hall, shell examination building and stores are no more. One finds HMCS *Cabot* and other concerns there now in new buildings. The navy's hospital on Quidi Vidi Road is gone and has been replaced by the Cavell Avenue Park but buildings at the other hospital in the west end remain in use as the College of the North Atlantic's Topsail Road Campus.



Along with the drill hall and the supply depot, this is one of the few buildings left at Torbay Airport from the war. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)

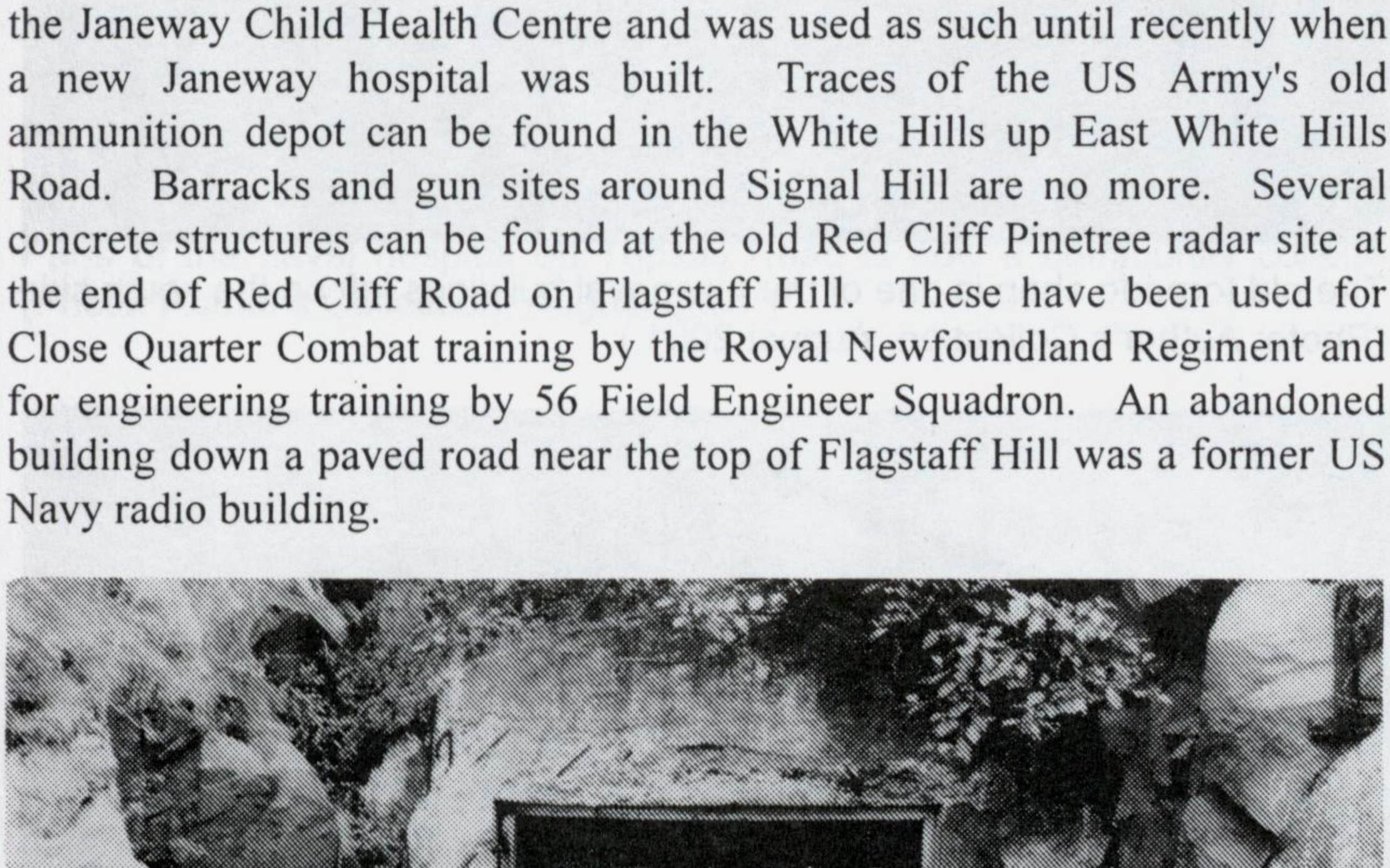
It is the same story with the army. Camps at Lester's and Calver's Fields are gone and no barracks are seen on Pennywell Road or at Kenny's Pond. Concrete remnants are found at Forts Chain Rock and Amherst but the author cautions the reader these can only be accessed by foot as they lie at the end of narrow cliff-side roads. The gun site at Cape Spear now managed by Parks Canada can also be found along with, some claim, a ghost lurking in the connecting tunnel. None of the barracks now stand there. None are also found at the old Blackhead AA camp which was on the north side of Blackhead Road probably on the highest point.

Most of Pepperrell AFB lives. The base is clearly recognizable by the presence of standard two-storey buildings. Some are used by the Canadian Forces while others are in private hands. As previously mentioned, Canadian Army and navy units moved into Pepperrell in the

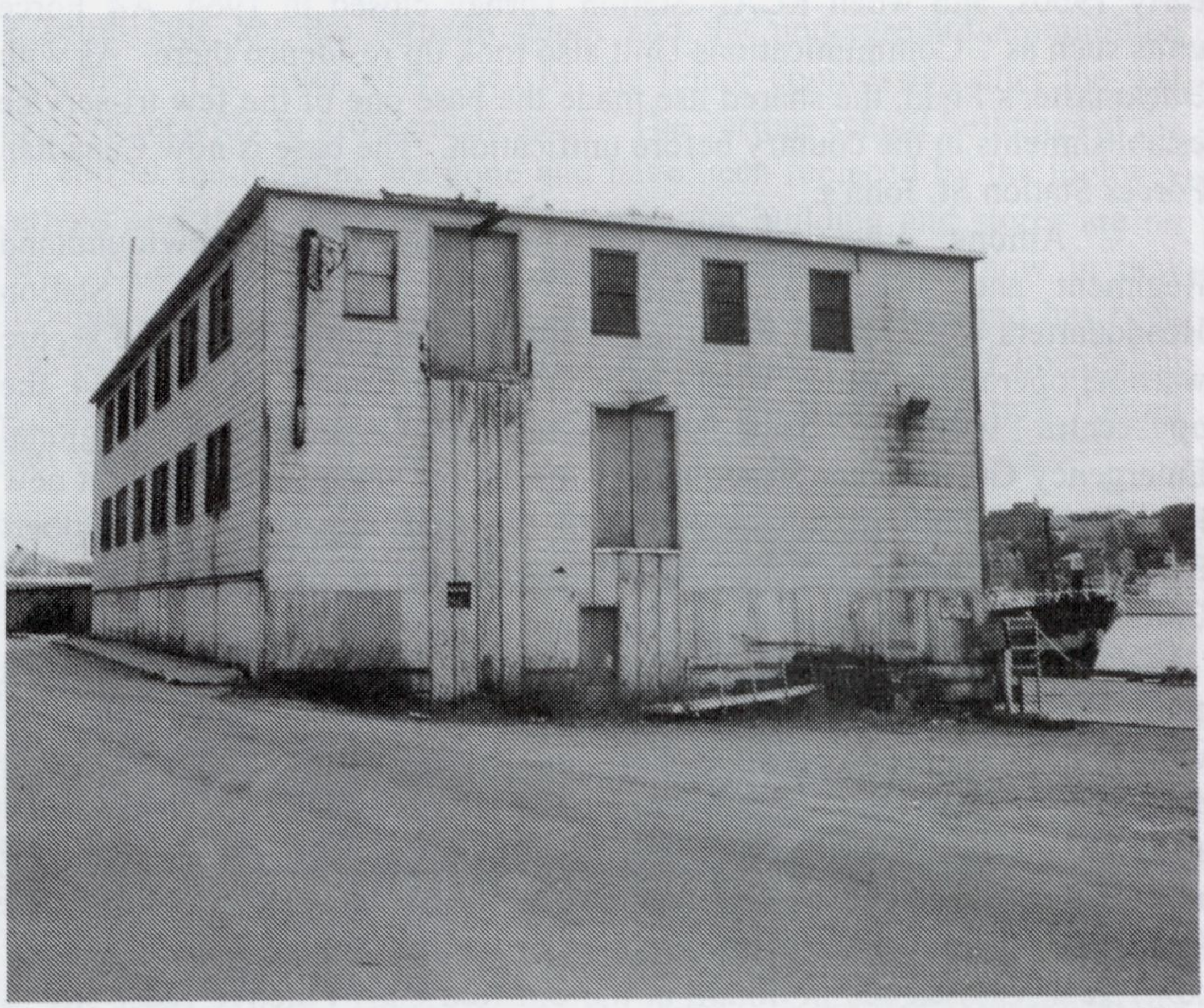
early 1960s, and when RCAF Station Torbay closed in 1964, Air Force units such as 7 Communications Unit also took up residence there. As with Buckmaster's Field, the shared use made the base one of the few tri-service establishments in the country before unification. The base is now Canadian Forces Station St. John's.

Among other tenants, one finds the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and 56 Field Engineer Squadron at the CFS. Station Headquarters were placed in Building 806 as it is connected to the secure wartime operations centre, what's called the "War Room." As of 1964, the op centre was the Emergency Measures Organization's Regional Emergency Government Headquarters for the province but in 1966, a new REGHQ was built in the basement of the (old) Sir Humphrey Gilbert Building on Water Street. The War Room is now used by 727 Communications Squadron.

Other buildings at Pepperrell, since 1965 called Pleasantville, have adopted new roles. Some have become apartments while others are used by various departments of the federal government. The base hospital became the Janeway Child Health Centre and was used as such until recently when a new Janeway hospital was built. Traces of the US Army's old ammunition depot can be found in the White Hills up East White Hills Road. Barracks and gun sites around Signal Hill are no more. Several concrete structures can be found at the old Red Cliff Pinetree radar site at the end of Red Cliff Road on Flagstaff Hill. These have been used for Close Quarter Combat training by the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and for engineering training by 56 Field Engineer Squadron. An abandoned building down a paved road near the top of Flagstaff Hill was a former US Navy radio building.



One of the naval ammunition magazines on the south side. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



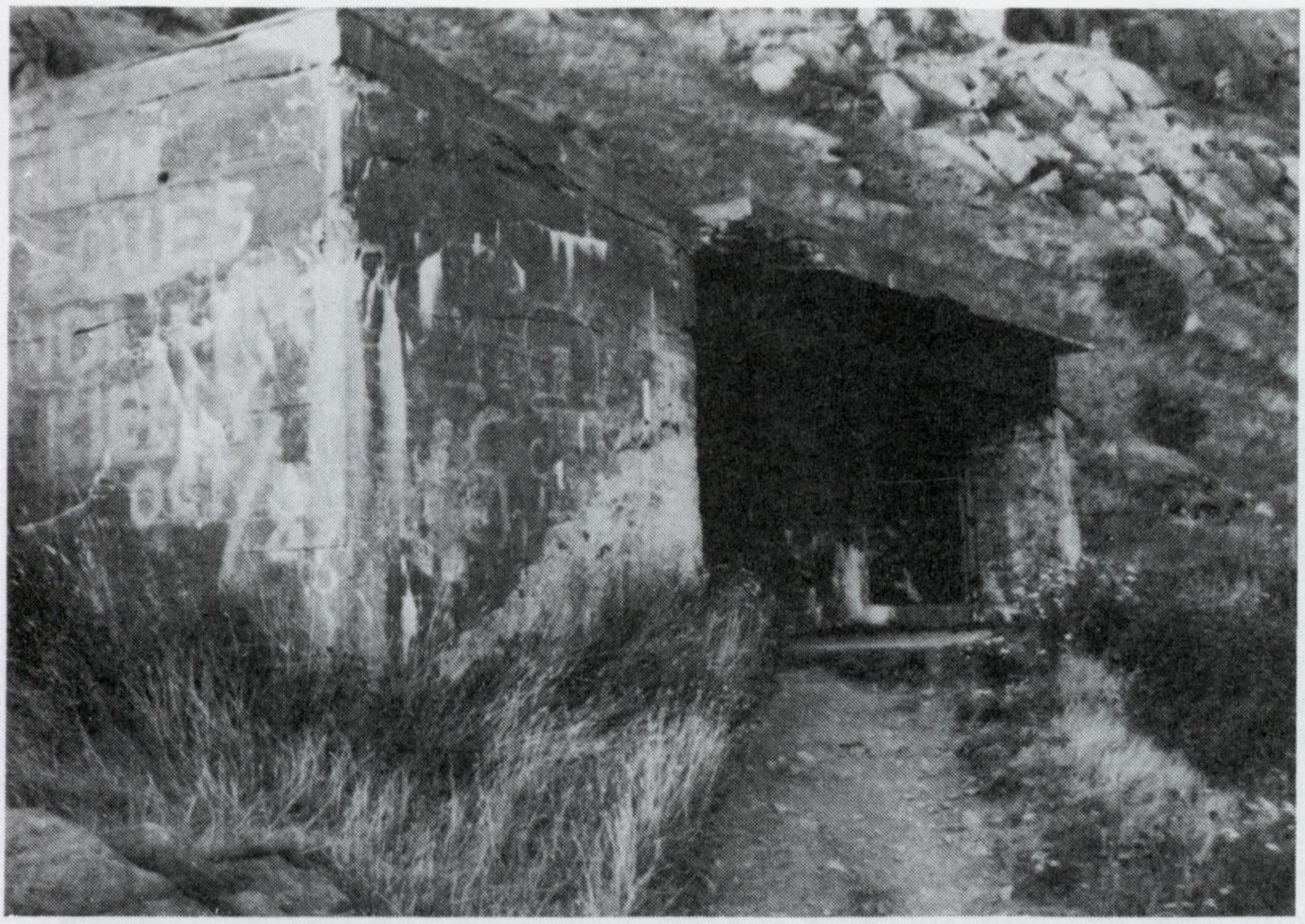
The old torpedo shop is one of the few naval buildings left on the south side. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



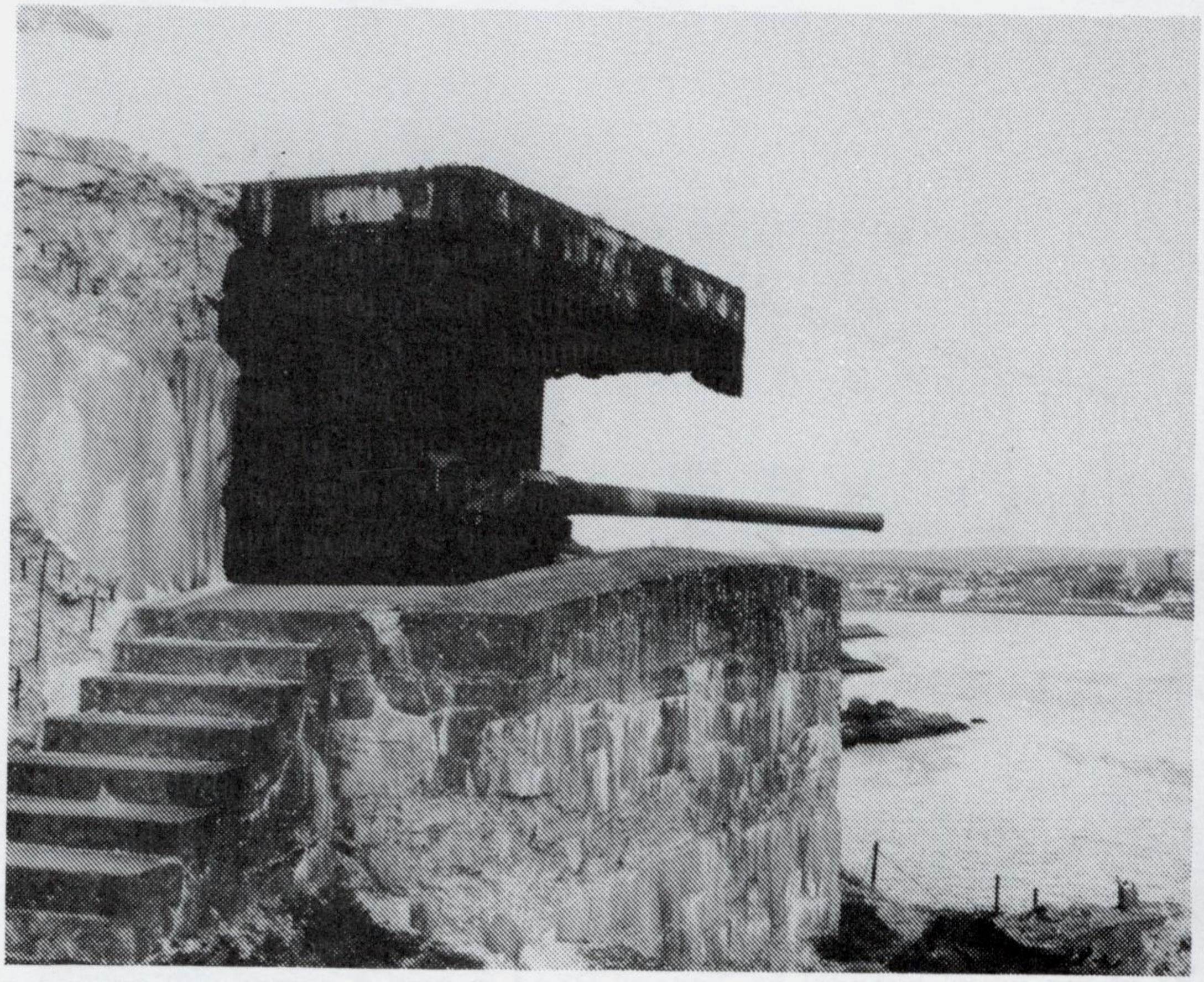
The only wartime building left at Buckmaster's Field is this Officers' Quarters. Now it's a bingo hall. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



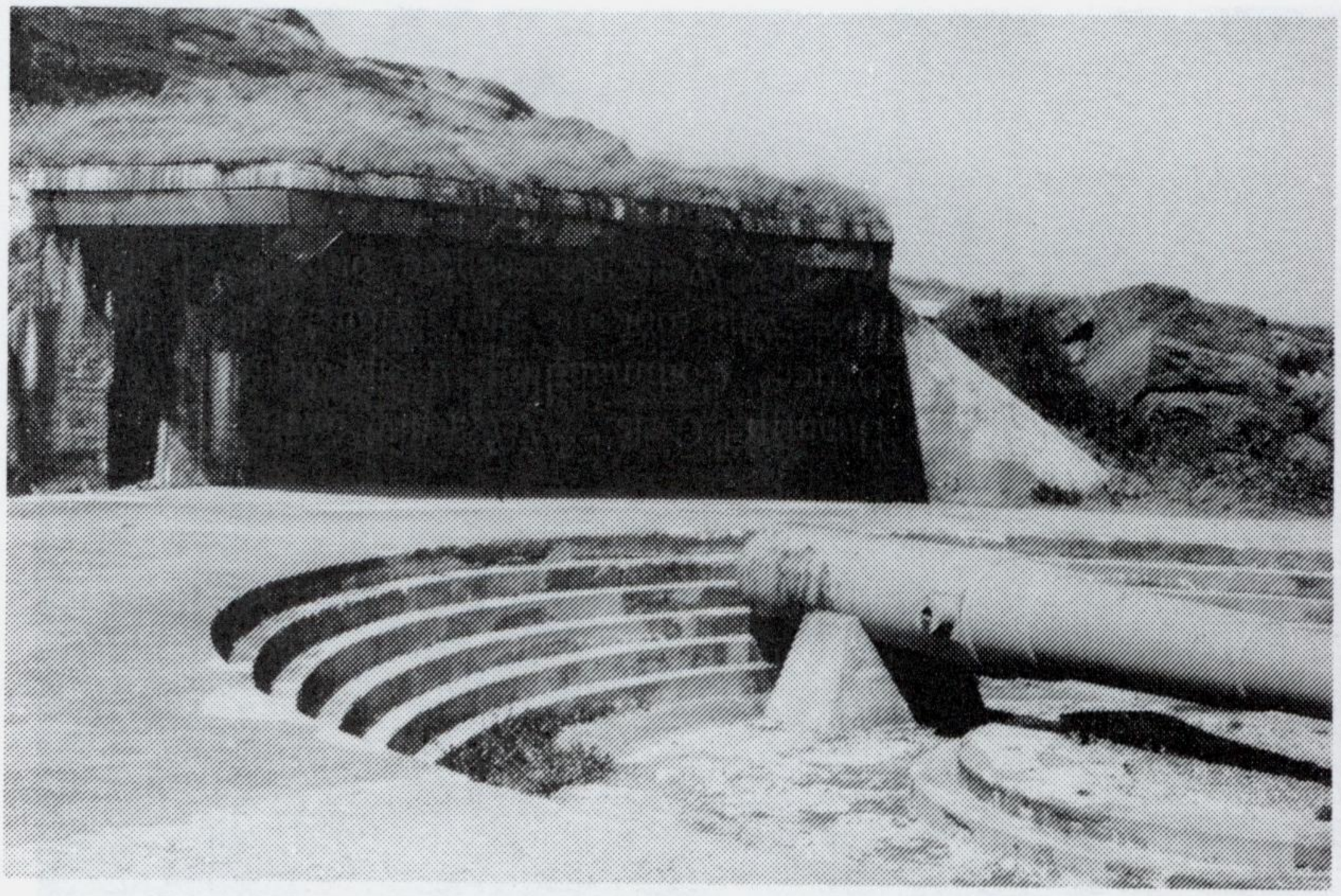
Parts of the naval hospital on Topsail Road is now a community college. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



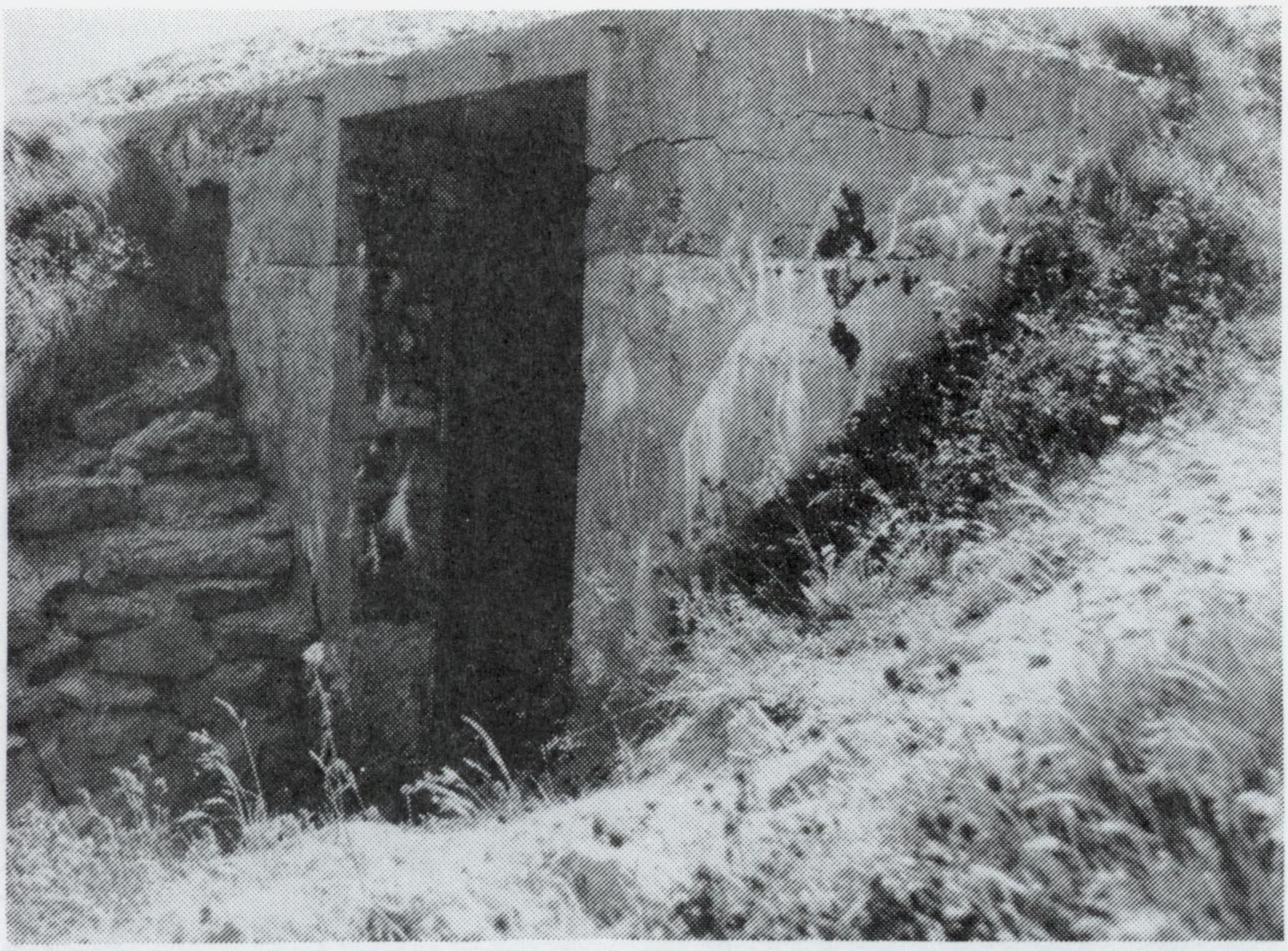
What's left of Chain Rock battery today. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



Fort Amherst stands today as a ghost watching the harbour. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



The gun emplacements at Cape Spear are a popular tourist attraction. There have been rumours of a phantom walking the tunnel. If true, it may very well be the gunner who fell over the cliff during the war. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



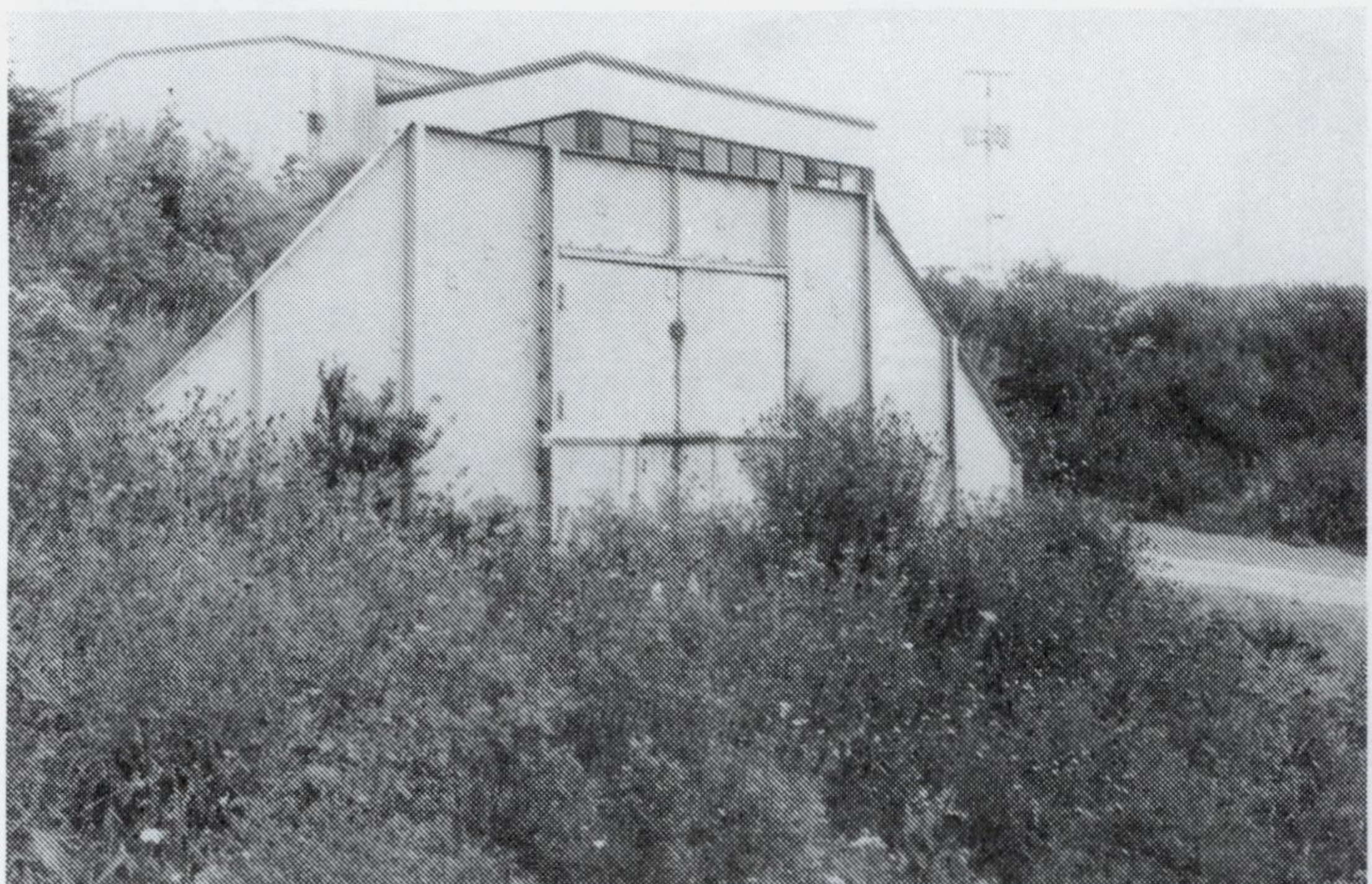
This artillery command post was the second version installed at Cape Spear. The first was threatened with destruction by high winds. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



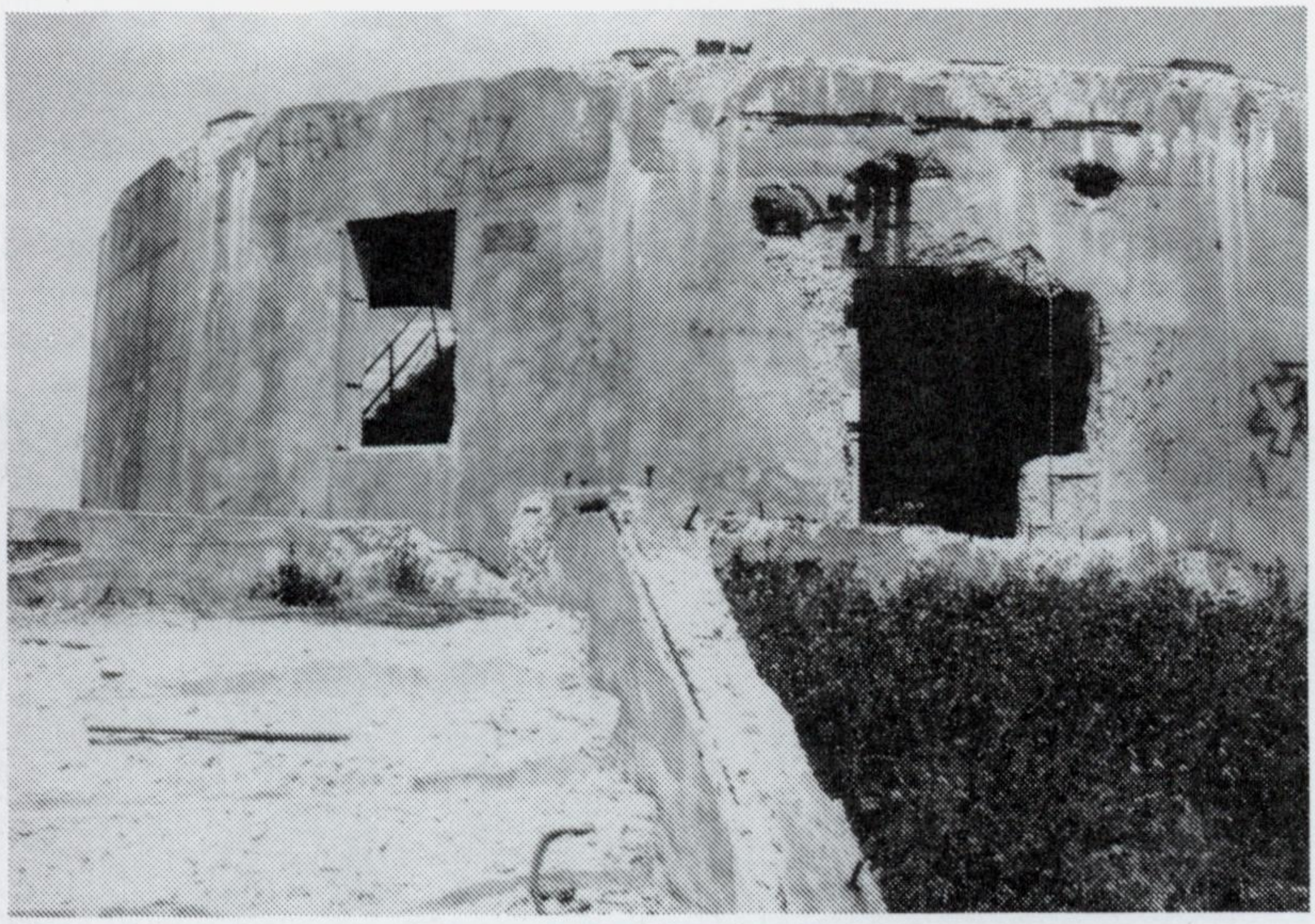
Headquarters for CFS St. John's at old Fort Pepperrell. Behind it was the wartime operations centre. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



The USAF's medical centre at Pepperell was known as the 4737th USAF Hospital. Until recently, it was the Janeway Child Health Centre. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



Possibly an old ammunition igloo on White Hills Road. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



There's plenty of concrete left at the old Red Cliff radar site. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



For a few years, the US Navy operated a radio site north of the radar station. This radio shack looks like its withstood an attack. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



Although not a military organization, NASA operated a satellite tracking station for a few years in the seventies at Pouch Cove at the end of Satellite Road. This building was probably the administrative/operations centre. It is now used by the Lions. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)

Units around St. John's

Canadian Army.

Victoria Rifles of Canada	14 November 1940 - 28 April 1941
103rd Heavy Battery	May 1941 - May 1942
7th AA Battery	August 1941 - 17 December 1941
HQ St. John's Defences	September 1941 - March 1944
Sherbrooke Fusiliers	1941 - 16 February 1942
Algonquin Regiment	7 February 1942 - 18 March 1942
Lincoln and Welland Regiment	18 March 1942 - 11 May 1943
102nd AA Battery	7 April 1942 - ?
25th AA Regiment	1 May 1942 - 13 June 1945
103rd Coast Battery	May 1942 - 31 July 1945
14th AA Battery	10 June 1942 - 3 March 1944
27th AA Battery	June 1942 - 17 March 1944
No.5 AA GOR	July 1942 - ?
48th AA Battery	21 December 1942 - 31 August 1943
54th AA Battery	22 December 1942 - 31 August 1943
55th LAA Section	December 1942 - 11 March 1943
Régiment de St.-Hyacinthe	18 April 1943 - 27 October 1943
148th AA Battery	1 September 1943 - 31 August 1944
154th AA Battery	1 September 1943 - 13 June 1945
Régiment de Joliette	27 October 1943 - 19 February 1944
1st Airfield Defence Bn., No.6 Coy.	October 1943 - 10 August 1944

49th AA Battery	28 February 1944 - ?
24th AA Battery	28 February 1944 - ?
Régiment de Montmagny	February 1944 - ?
HQ Defended Port of St. John's	March 1944 - 2 July 1945
No.16 ES&W Coy., RCE	1 April 1944 - ?
Régiment de St.-Hyacinthe	24 May 1944 - 9 September 1944
Régiment de Québec	4 September 1944 - 11 March 1945
Edmonton Fusiliers	7 March 1945 - 31 October 1945
No.26 Military Hospital	
No.84 Military Detention Barracks	
166th (Newfoundland) Field Regiment	24 October 1949 - May 1960
166th (Newfoundland) Artillery Regiment	May 1960 - March 1961

<u>RCAF.</u>

No.1 Group	10 July 1941 - 30 June 1945
No.11 (BR) Squadron	26 November 1941 - 31 May 1942
RCAF Station Torbay	15 December 1941 - 1 April 1946
No.5 (CAC) Detachment	24 April 1942 - February 1943
No.145 (BR) Squadron	30 May 1942 - November 1943
No.125 (F) Squadron	9 June 1942 - 24 June 1943
No.5 (CAC) Flight	February 1943 - 14 July 1943
No.5 (BR) Squadron det.	24 April 1943 - 9 May 1943
No.20 Sub-Equipment Depot	1 May 1943 - 30 April 1945
No.5 (BR) Squadron	10 May 1943 - July 1944
No.128 (F) Squadron	24 June 1943 - 15 March 1944
No.1 Composite Detachment	15 July 1943 - 31 March 1945
No.14 Radio Detachment	1 September 1943 - Sept. 1944
No.17 Radio Detachment	1 September 1943 - Sept. 1944
No.11 (BR) Squadron	28 October 1943 - 17 June 1944
No.5 Communications Flight	1943 - 15 September 1944
No.113 (BR) Squadron	20 June 1944 - 23 August 1944
No.160 (BR) Squadron	2 August 1944 - 15 June 1945
No.145 (BR) Squadron det.	17 August 1944 - 10 May 1945
No.14 Radar Unit	September 1944 - 31 October 1945
No.17 Radar Unit	September 1944 - February 1945
No.1 Ionospheric Recording Unit	20 February 1945 - 1 May 1945
No.1 Composite Squadron	1 April 1945 - 7 July 1945
No.2 Radio Wave Propagation Unit	2 May 1945 - 31 March 1946
No.10 (BR) Squadron	11 June 1945 - 15 August 1945
No.1 Composite Air Sea Rescue Flight	
No.6 Fuel Depot	
103 Rescue Unit det.	19 August 1949 - 31 March 1954
RCAF Station Torbay	15 April 1953 - 31 March 1964
107 Rescue Unit	1 April 1954 - 31 March 1964
Rescue Co-ordination Centre	postwar
4012 Medical Unit (Auxiliary)	postwar
8 Ground Observer Corps Unit	1952 - 1955
7 Communications Unit	

US troops.

Newfoundland Base Command	1941 - ?
Fort Pepperrell	1941 - 1949
21st Signal Service.Company	15 July 1941 - 10 February 1945
821st Signal Wire Maintenance Coy.	29 September 1942 - 1944
Pepperrell AFB	1949 - 11 August 1961
North East Air Command	1 October 1951 - 31 March 1956
642nd AC&W Squadron	1 August 1953 - 1 October 1961
64th Air Division (Defense)	1 April 1956 - 1961
Harbor Defenses of Argentia and St. John's, US Army	
3rd Infantry Regiment, US Army	November 1941 - September 1943
58th Engineer Company, US Army	
24th Coast Artillery Battalion, US Army	
62nd Coast Artillery, US Army	
421st Coast Artillery Battalion (Anti-Aircraft), US Army	
421st Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion (Composite), US Army	
470th Infantry Battalion, US Army	
805th Military Police Company, US Army	
108th AC&W Squadron, USAF	
1805th AACS, USAF	
1225th Air Base Group, USAF	
4737th Air Base Group, USAF	
4737th Air Base Squadron, USAF	
6600th Air Depot Wing, USAF	
6600th Operations Squadron, USAF	
6604th Air Base Wing, USAF	
6604th Base Operations Squadron, USAF	
6614th Air Transport Group, USAF	
950th Engineer Aviation Group, USAF	
3rd Installation and Maintenance Squadron, USAF	
11th Air Photo Flight, USAF	
622nd Engineer Aviation Maintenance Company, USAF	
138th Engineer Aviation Group, USAF	
6631st Radio Relay Squadron, USAF	
596th Air Force Band, USAF	

ST. LAWRENCE, NF

In December 1942, Captain Haskins of the Canadian Army's Intelligence branch was sent to St. Lawrence to see whether the dock and mines warranted protection by the army. The American Newfoundland Fluorspar Company mined fluorspar - a mineral used to make aluminium and high-grade steel - there and shipped this vital material by boat to large plants at Arvida, Quebec and Sydney, Nova Scotia. Haskins recommended in his report that infantry troops and RCAF anti-submarine sweeps could provide protection to the area, but due to the few ships using the dock, that coastal artillery was not necessary.

Haskins' report was accepted by Ottawa the following year. Army Headquarters decided the job of defending the small port would be given to the Newfoundland Regiment. Major-General Page, the Canadian Army's General Officer Commanding in Newfoundland, wanted the fluorspar company to foot the bill for the barracks but the company felt it was doing enough by putting up fences and instituting a pass system. The barracks ended up being installed at Ottawa's expense. Troops were stationed in St. Lawrence in 1943 only as by the following year, the "general strategic situation" was such they were not thought needed. (Rather a premature assessment given that U-Boat attacks were still taking place in 1944.)

After the war, the small army camp was acquired by the St. Lawrence Corporation of Newfoundland and used for warehousing, this until about 1958 when the firm closed its doors. The camp, which was on the road to the Iron Springs mine near Clark's Pond, no longer stands.

ST. MARGARETS, NB

Among other things, the Cold War produced the need to develop a capability to detect enemy bombers long before they could do any damage upon North American cities. This basic concept of air defence adopted by Canada where ground stations would track hostile aircraft and relay their coordinates to the nearest fighter interceptor unit for attack was the result of experiences gained during the Battle of Britain. When new international tensions arose in the postwar period, the methodology became the basis of a new continental air defence network. The RCAF Air Defence Command was created to manage new fighter squadrons and, to guide its aircraft towards the enemy, new ground-control intercept radar stations such as at St. Margarets.

RCAF Station St. Margarets' origins did not exactly lay with the town proper. Plans were quickly laid out by Ottawa in the late 1940s for a new radar network, called Pinetree, but until the individual stations were up and running, temporary sites and equipment were needed.(E) The RCAF acquired and deployed several mobile AMES-11 radar convoys to fill this gap and placed one of those convoys, the No.2 Aircraft Control and Warning Unit, at RCAF Station Chatham. Until St. Margarets was functional, the business of radar air defence in the Miramichi area was carried out by the AMES-11 equipment.

While No.2 AC&WU was helping Chatham pilots in their work, construction was underway at the permanent site at St. Margarets. Even though it would be closely-linked to the air base, the new station was designed for relative self-sufficiency. Built as a compact village, it had its own barracks, offices, medical centre, messes, supply building and an operations centre with three heavy radars, initially an AN/FPS-3 for searching and two ISG-98s for height-finding. At first, personnel lived in Permanent Married Quarters at Chatham but this unsatisfactory

arrangement was cancelled in 1955 when St. Margarets got its own PMQs. Once built, the base became home to 21 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron.

Operations officially commenced at RCAF Station St. Margarets in November 1953. The establishment began with 33 officers and 315 troops along with a few civilians in support roles. Most of the stations making up the Pinetree network had a dual warning and interceptor-control role and in that, 21 AC&W Squadron was no exception. Operators manning radar consoles tracked all flights within what was first called the Fredericton Air Defence Sector and those without flight plans or IFF signals were checked up on by fighters at Chatham. St. Margarets' radars covered a radius of approximately 200 miles.

Also located at St. Margarets was another air defence unit. By itself, a radar station was of limited use since once an aircraft leaves its area, there's no guarantee it would properly be tracked by a neighbouring station. What was needed was coordination between squadrons. Such a coordinating body was organized for the Fredericton sector, and since St. Margarets lay in the approximate middle, the body, No.2 Air Defence Control Centre, was placed there.

The core members of any radar station were the men and women who tracked aircraft day and night. The radar operators watched their consoles continuously for potential enemies and relayed their coordinates to Fighter Control Operators nearby for action. These in turn guided interceptors from such places as Chatham or Presqu'ile AFB, Maine, to their targets. At St. Margarets, the "Fighter Cops" were organized in six crews of about 20 each where each crew worked six days on and three off. Basic fighter controller and radar training was provided at RCAF Station Clinton, Ontario, while advanced training was obtained at the USAF's Fighter Controller School at Tyndall AFB, Florida, or through the Senior Controller's course at Stewart AFB, New York. Courses in all-weather fighter tactics were offered at other radar stations.

Exercises at these Pinetree stations were a must and, as with some aspects of training, the RCAF's dependence on the USAF was evident. Exercise *Think Fast* given on 13-15 September 1954 called for St. Margarets to guide twelve Sabres from 1 Operational Training Unit at Chatham towards an enemy formation of "Fakers," in this case 44 USAF B47s. In this scenario, 17 intercepts were attempted by fighter controllers, twelve of which were successful. This type of training was indispensable for the Fighter Cops to reach an acceptable level of proficiency since a real attack may not have allowed a second chance.

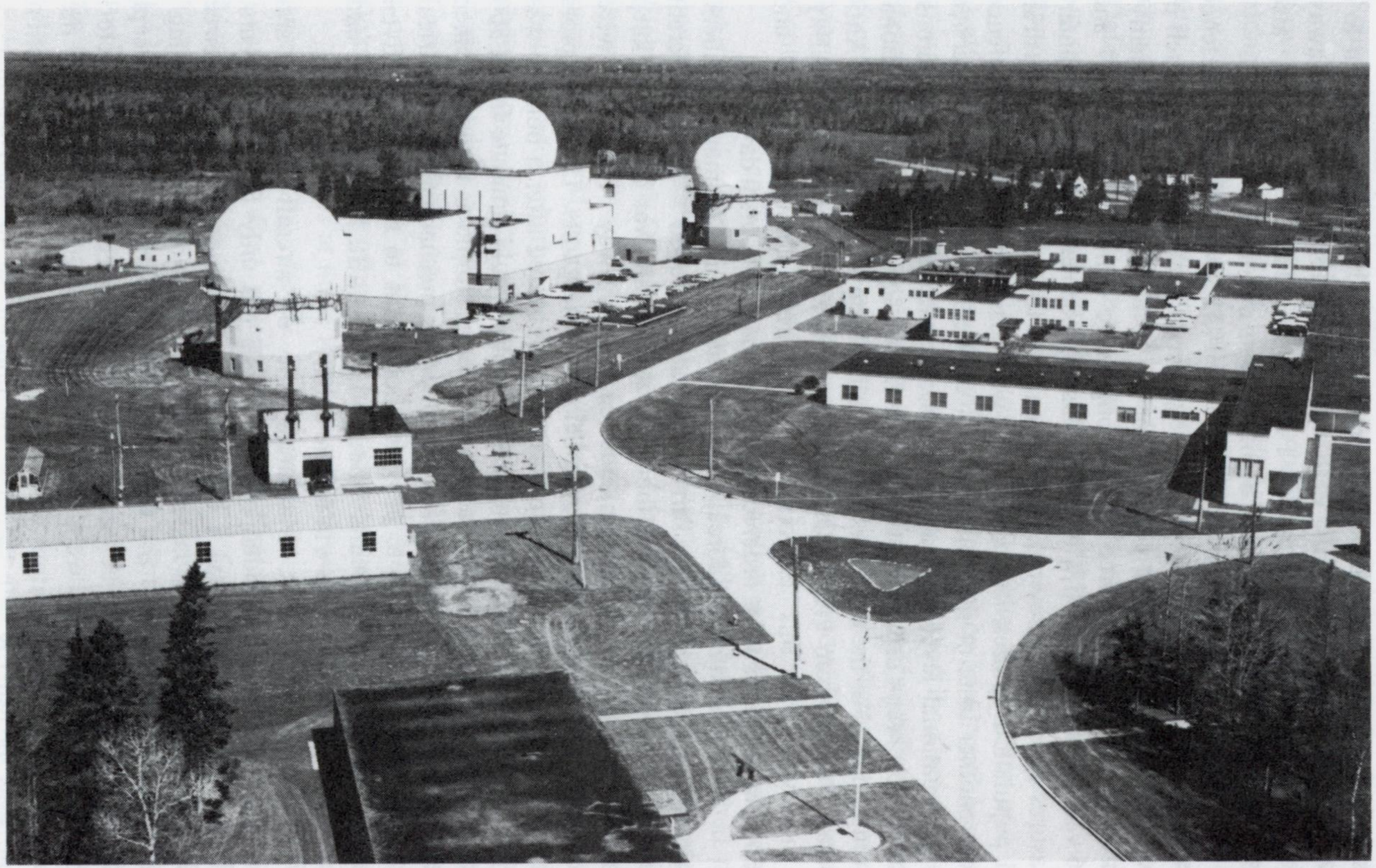
In its first few years, the Commanding Officer of Station St. Margarets realized there were too many amenities lacking. It was bad enough having his offices in one of the radar towers, the men and women did not care much for the daily commute to and from Chatham. Even movies were only shown at the larger base up north. St. Margarets was

alloted funds for the construction of several new buildings and by the late 1950s, despite tradesmen strikes, a new headquarters, dependent's school, hospital, fire hall and guard house were put up. This was in addition to a new transmitter shack with HF, VHF and UHF equipment five miles away. With the previously-mentioned Permanent Married Quarters also completed, the base truly became a village in its own right.

Another exercise held in December 1955 saw stations, air defence control centres and fighter units work together to beat off a larger bunch of Fakers. Intelligence reports prepared for the occasion warned the "enemy" possessed a formidable force of 500 long-range bombers of the B47 and B36 variety each equipped with 10,000 lbs payloads and electronic counter-measures or jamming devices. Their goal was to destroy major industrial and population centres. *Cracker Jack* was designed to give air defence forces another taste of the real thing but unlike *Think Fast*, it was carried out on a national level from all air defence elements: AC&W Squadrons, Ground Observer Corps units, all-weather fighter squadrons and operational training units. For the occasion, the Canadian Army's 127th Medium Anti-Aircraft Battery from Picton, Ontario, was airlifted to protect Goose Bay. So involved was this exercise St. Margarets' combined mess and engineering sections were ordered to remain open 24 hours a day.

The *Cracker Jack* force, USAF Strategic Air Command bombers, originated in the North West Territories and proceeded south in different directions. In New Brunswick, the OTU at Chatham was ordered to keep four Sabres on stand-by to meet planes heading their way. The Sabres were guided by No.2 ADCC's Duty Controller at St. Margarets. The interceptors could not use live ammunition so hits were registered after a bomber was subjected to two attack runs where an interceptor would simulate fire at 500 yards and break off at 200. An attack was not as simple as it seemed since when the ground radar operators were foiled by mechanical and electrical jamming, they were unable to provide coordinates to the fighters. Even turning on anti-jamming circuits failed to help. At St. Margarets, the end result of *Cracker Jack* was a win for the enemy.

RCAF Station St. Margarets role of aircraft detection and interceptor guidance continued on into 1960s but only for a few years. Early that decade, there was a big push for computerization at Pinetree stations to meet the threat of faster aircraft. This automation or "SAGEing" necessitated an overhaul of the operating equipment and intercept procedures with one result being a decreased reliance on the human factor. Fighter Control Operators were phased out and all that remained at the radar units were the operators to watch their scopes. All the real action would now be run by Air Defence Technicians at Sector Headquarters Direction Centres, which in St. Margarets' case was first at Topsham AFS, Maine, and later at 22nd Region HQ below-ground at North Bay, Ontario. The operating unit at St. Margarets was redesignated 21 Radar Squadron as a result.(F)



The St. Margarets radar station in 1969. (Photo: DND CM69-484.)

Yet another change seen at St. Margarets caused by the above automation was the creation of a back-up fighter control section designed to take over operations from Sector if and when it failed. Most SAGE Direction Centres were no less immune to attack than any other base, so alternate sites were needed to accept radar data from all the stations in a given sector and process same in a form usable to the interceptors. In 1965, Cabinet approved the formation of two such facilities, which became known as Back-Up Interceptor Control NORAD Control Centres (BNCCs), and the stations so chosen were Senneterre, Québec, and St. Margarets.

The BNCC was in a sense a division separate from the radar squadron. Its operators watched the airways, identified all incoming aircraft, and when North Bay was not able to do so, sent fighters to identify unknowns. Its operations centre used a GYK-19 data processing computer for constant communications with North Bay and a series of display consoles kept on-line at all times. Extra lines of communications were set up with headquarters and other radar stations in eastern Canada along with a back-up microwave relay tied into CN's telecommunications network. The BNCC became operational on 1 January 1969.

BNCC personnel were put to the test many times in a variety of scenarios. In 1970 alone, there were 60 live and simulated exercises that tested all facets of intercept control. There was a single *Snowtime* conducted jointly by NORAD and SAC at the regional level to test operations of the BNCC. These always relied on jamming. There were six *Fabric Braves* designed to test all levels of air defence operations in the 22nd Region, whether at Regional Headquarters, at the BNCC or at the radar stations, using Canadian Forces or USAF aircraft as intruders. Thirteen *Fabric Jabbers* that year tested BNCC to BNCC interactions. All these were in addition to periodic NORAD Operational Evaluations and Air Defence Command HQ staff testing visits.

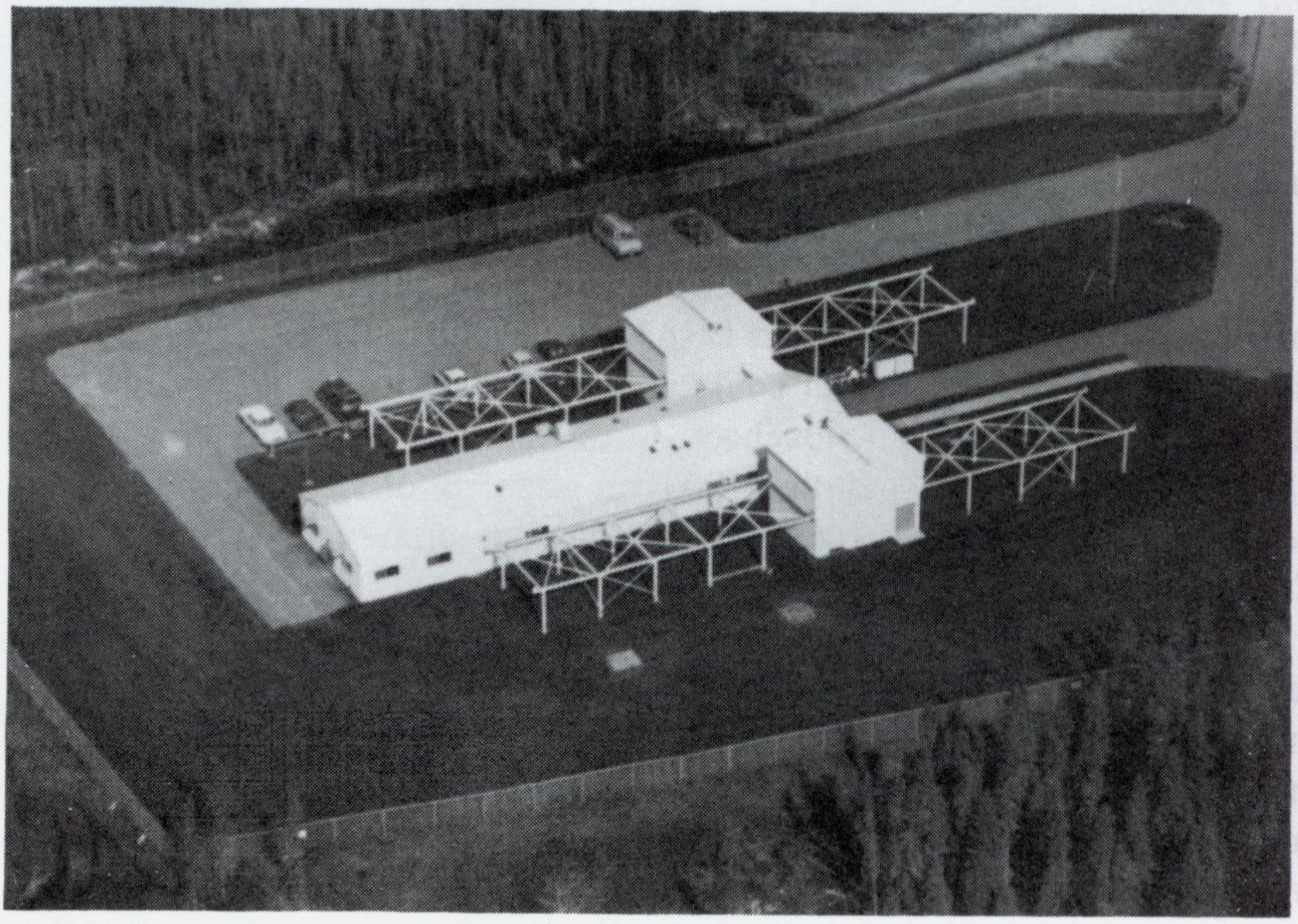
Further exercises involving St. Margarets took place off-base. In 1970, the BNCC weapons control team took part in a Bomarc surface-to-air missile shoot in Florida against a USAF drone target. This was necessary since St. Margarets' personnel could be called upon to fire Bomarcs from North Bay and La Macaza, Québec. In this particular instance, while the Florida launch was flawless, the USAF range safety officer "inadvertently" destroyed the Bomarc before it could hit the drone thus robbing the Canadians of their kill.

If the 1960s brought automation to St. Margarets, the seventies saw it reach into space. With the Soviets shooting more and more vehicles into outer space, there came a requirement to track and monitor their movements. Since NORAD already possessed the mandate of watching enemy bombers and missiles, it only made sense to extend that mandate to satellites. Continental radar networks were well established to detect bombers and the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System could spot missile launches in progress, but what was now needed was a way to track items in

orbit. NORAD was looking for world-wide space coverage and had already set up some stations around the globe, but as a gap existed over the Atlantic Ocean, it was decided to place a unit in eastern Canada. One of the camera's siting requirements for best reflection was the lack of ambient light and the number of clear days per year, and as rural New Brunswick was good for this, St. Margarets was chosen.

This then was the background behind the Canadian Forces' Satellite Identification and Tracking Unit (SITU) at St. Margarets. The heart of SITU was a large three-ton Baker-Nunn camera previously used by the Smithsonian in South Africa operating on the simple principle of filming objects with 8000 ASA 55mm film by their reflections. SITU was responsible for photographing objects in space, processing its film, on-site analysis and the transmission of data by teletype to NORAD's Space Surveillance Center at Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado. Statistics were kept by the unit on a monthly basis of objects requested in daily taskings, scheduled objects included in daily mission plans, objects photographed and unidentified objects found on the film. Rather appropriately, the Satellite Identification and Tracking Unit had the motto of: *Universitas Secreta Non Habet*. (The Universe has no Secrets.)

By itself though, the Baker-Nunn was not sufficient for the armed forces' needs. While it had the capacity to spot a basketball at over 20,000 miles, it could not yield any information on the object's configuration or motion. Something else was needed for that and that something was a Space Object Identification system.

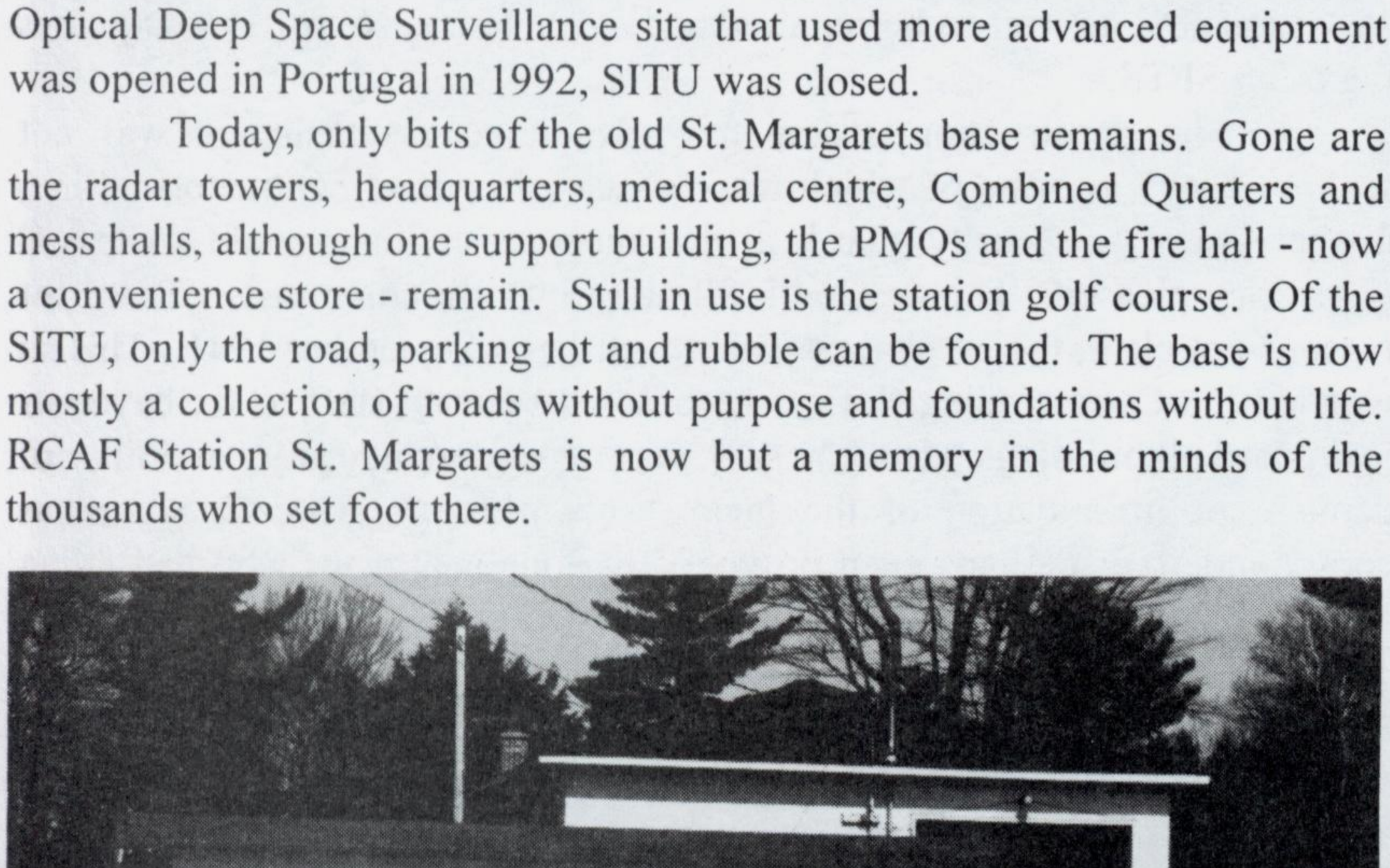


The SITU was located behind the radar station. (Photo: DND CMC 82-454-3, 1982.)

The SOI was a precision reflector telescope that recorded images electronically. While a track was followed for several minutes, its characteristics were analyzed by a Hewlett-Packard computer that was programmed to read its geometry and movement. By storing a track's signature in memory, future objects could be identified. As with the Baker-Nunn, SOI data was teletyped into NORAD's computerized Space Detection and Tracking System at the Space Surveillance Center. Both the SOI and the camera could only be used at night, so the 34 men and women learned to work owl-hours.

By the 1980s, the Pinetree system had outlived its usefulness. In the age of advanced ICBMs and cruise missiles, US and Canadian air defence authorities questioned the value of a network primarily designed to detect bombers, especially one this far south. When they decided a revamped DEW Line was enough for aircraft detection, Pinetree was closed. Twenty-one Squadron was shut down in April 1988 (leaving only SITU operational), which is just as well as the end of the Cold War soon after would have had the same effect. When a new Ground-Based Electro-Optical Deep Space Surveillance site that used more advanced equipment was opened in Portugal in 1992, SITU was closed.

Today, only bits of the old St. Margarets base remains. Gone are the radar towers, headquarters, medical centre, Combined Quarters and mess halls, although one support building, the PMQs and the fire hall - now a convenience store - remain. Still in use is the station golf course. Of the SITU, only the road, parking lot and rubble can be found. The base is now mostly a collection of roads without purpose and foundations without life. RCAF Station St. Margarets is now but a memory in the minds of the thousands who set foot there.



One of the few support buildings left from the Canadian Forces is the fire hall. (Photo: Author's Collection, April 2000.)

SCOUDOUC, NB

Along with Moncton airport, the RCAF had another busy airfield in the area during World War II. The large increase in training and operational units in eastern Canada mandated a new servicing depot. New equipment was constantly being tested for operational usage and aviation accidents occurred with such inevitable frequency that a facility devoted to repair and modification was necessary. No.4 Repair Depot was created with this in mind.

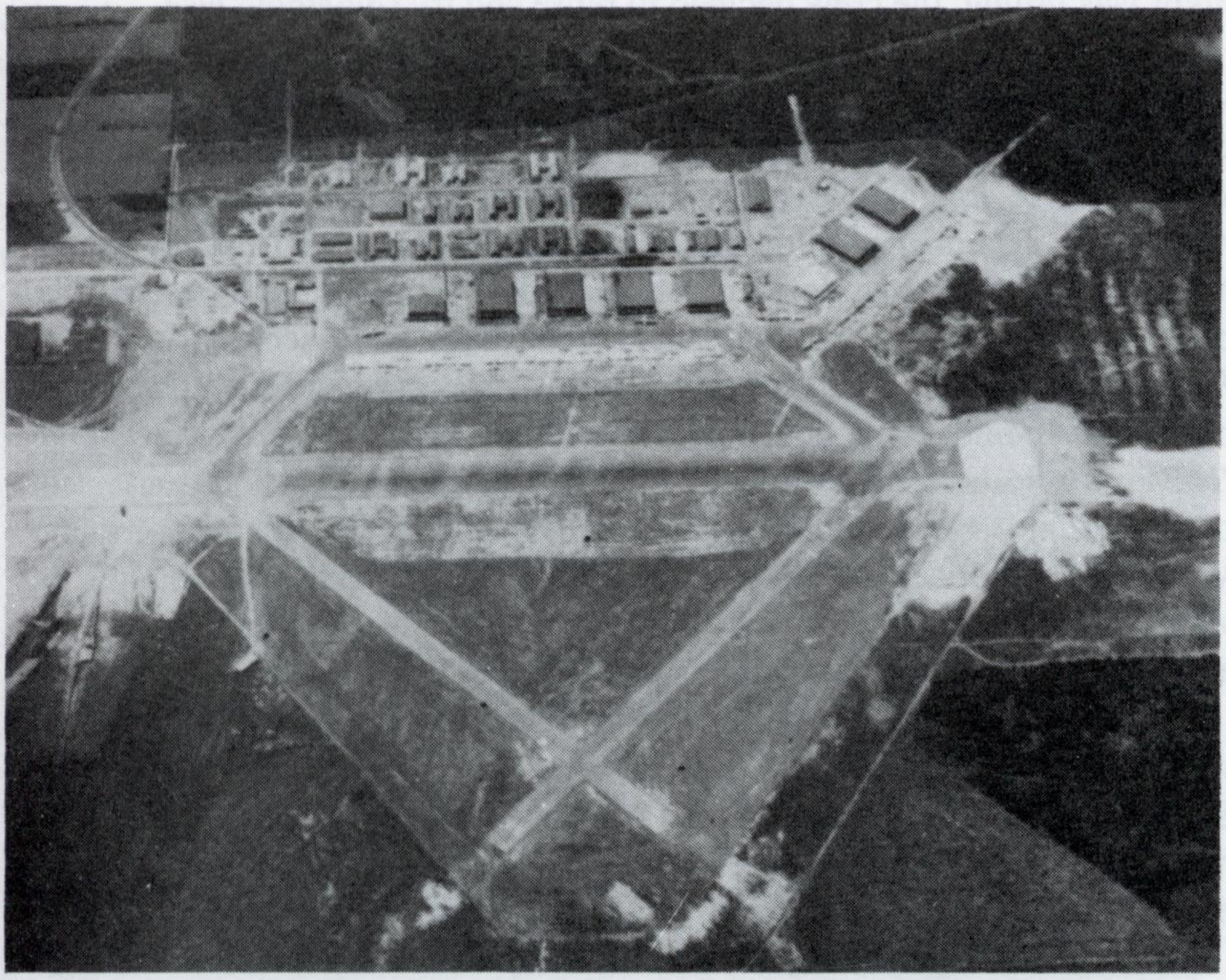
No.4 Repair Depot was originally placed at the centre of east coast action at RCAF Station Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Handy to service aircraft from the flying units next door, the arrival of so many of these created such a space shortage a new home had to be found for it. A survey of existing airfields showed No.8 Service Flying Training School at Moncton had a little relief landing field at Scoudouc that, with appropriate construction, could very well do. The RCAF quickly hired contractors to erect new buildings, a series of large hangars and additional runways, and by late 1941, the first aircraft to be repaired arrived. In size, No.4 RD was just as big as an SFTS.

The construction of the new Scoudouc establishment was not without problems, one of which was the use of civilian contractors. First, as there were no security guards at first on-base, civilians could come and go as they pleased. This invited infiltration by fifth columnists. Then, for reasons not clear, the carpenters went on strike in September 1941. This so worried the Commanding Officer he ordered security staff to fix bayonets and guard all buildings. This, he said, was to "... preclude any possibility of damage or intimidation of the men still working." The situation was compounded, or perhaps even provoked by, one contractor who had fallen off a hangar roof by accident, which suggested unsafe working conditions. The bayonet-bearing guards proved too much to the mutinous contractors these moved off the property that same day.

The depot's major roles were to recover downed aircraft and repair and replace components such as wings, engines and pneumatic lines in those that had become damaged. At first counting only twelve officers and 300 airmen, by late 1942 No.4 RD's population reached over three times that figure and two years after that, counted 63 officers and over 2000 airmen.* The shear number of fighters, bombers and transports in Eastern Air Command guaranteed the men and women would rarely remain idle. The base was a fully independent establishment with several barracks, mess halls, stores, drill hall, fire hall, guard house and eight prominent hangars. As a repair depot, it had its own railway spur line and a separate bulk fuel storage facility at Pointe-du-Chene near Shediac.

*The depot's population did not include staff of the No.1 RDF Maintenance Unit, a radar repair unit co-located there.

On a daily basis, the many technicians at No.4 could look at every component of a damaged aircraft. The depot had technical sections for fabrics, engine repair, electrical, armaments, airframes, general engineering and salvage recovery. Specialists could rebuild starters, repair carburettors, test compasses, change ignition harnesses or modify depth charge firing mechanisms. On a given day, a Wasp engine could be pulled out of a Canso for cleaning and inspection and on another, silver could be electroplated on electrical pressure contacts for longer use. Those assigned to No.1 RDF Maintenance Unit could be called upon to work at the many radar units along the coast. Late in the war, three parachute rescuers were assigned to Scoudouc after intensive training in Edmonton and Jasper to rescue downed airmen, specialists that would become the forerunners of today's SAR techs.



No.4 Repair Depot. (Photo: DND REA 132-13.)

Of all the salvage operations undertaken by No.4 RD, none was described in as much detail in the War Diary as that which took place in mid-1943. The story begins when the RCAF rescue schooner *Kodiac* ran aground at Grindstone on the Magdalen Islands on 19 June in such a way one could not count on the tide alone to pull her out. As the recovery of equipment was the responsibility of a repair depot, a call was sent to the nearest one, No.4 RD, for appropriate action. One of the officers responsible for salvage operations, Squadron Leader Whitney, was ordered to pick a crew and do what it took to bring her back.

After flying out to Summerside, PEI, and trucking it to Alberton, Whitney grabbed the crash tender *Arresteur* to get to Grindstone. Once there, he had to figure out how to tow the *Kodiac* out. Since it was low tide, the crew walked around the schooner to give her the going over and decided that since she only bore little damage, she was worth saving. Whitney's plan was simple: tie flotation bags around the *Kodiac* so that when the tide rose, so would she. The steamship *Beaver*, which had been called in to help, could then tow her out.

It did not quite work out that way. The towing cables and the bags were secured to the *Kodiac* and the crew waited for the propitious moment, high tide. Once the tide rose however, try as she might the *Beaver* could not yank her out of her misery. The cables that were laid under the schooner gave way. It was obvious a new tact would be required and as night was falling, the crew decided to retire and try something else.

Once the sun rose, Whitney set himself to work. The pontoons were to be tried again, but this time a pump was borrowed from a lobster canning factory to pump water out of the *Kodiac*. The lightened load was sure to make towing easier. This plan was later rejected when it was noticed the schooner was too well embedded into the sand for any kind of movement. It was then decided that instead of pontoons, underwater lifting bags be used to give her buoyancy. The bags were secured below the *Kodiac*'s water line, and by tying a thicker rope around her mast, it was hoped she could be pulled out. This time, both the *Arresteur* and the *Beaver* would be used as tugs. A flare was fired to mark the start of the operation and as horsepowers were applied, the *Kodiac* started to budge. When it was noticed she remained on an even keel and high enough, she was towed all the way to Grindstone. The praise Squadron Leader Whitney and his men received was well-deserved.

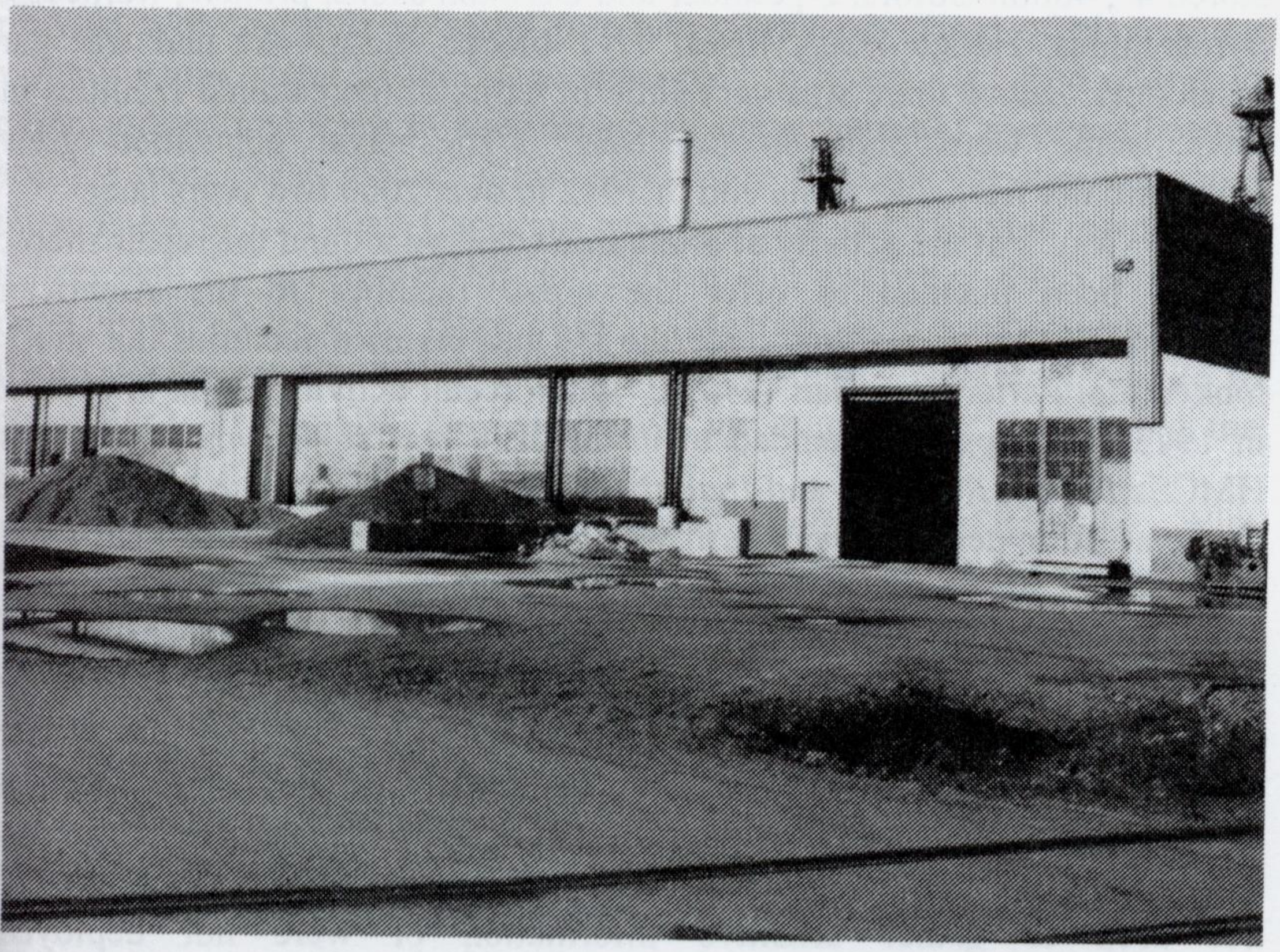
In July 1945, No.4 Repair Depot was disbanded and its personnel were transferred to a new repair depot at Moncton. RCAF Station Scoudouc was formed as a personnel holding unit, but this only lasted a few months. After the station's closure, it lay abandoned but remained nevertheless RCAF property.

The 1950s brought new life to what was now called RCAF Detachment Scoudouc. While RCAF Station Chatham's runways were being repaired, 1 (Fighter) Operational Training Unit moved in for two months in 1951 into two hangars, the control tower and some of the barracks. A more permanent occupant, 5 Supply Depot of Moncton, also took up residence in around that time as it required extra storage space to meet its needs. In 1953, it was Shearwater's turn to have its runways repaired so the RCN's 31st Support Air Group moved in with its Sea Furys and Avengers for three months. Three years later, the roar of trucks invaded the property as the Maritime Motor Transport Annual Roadeo was held there. Things quieted down later to the point where 27 of the buildings were declared surplus, sold and removed by the purchaser in 1958. The

RCAF supply detachment kept equipment of all types there, such as Sabre aircraft spares and new Coseley 275-ton pre-fabricated Quick Reaction Alert hangars, until 1964.* RCAF Detachment Scoudouc was shut down for good on 1 January 1965.

When the RCAF decided to rid itself of the Scoudouc base, it followed the normal practice of offering it to the other armed services. The Canadian Army considered taking it over to store national survival equipment such as vehicles and emergency rations but that idea fell through. It then pondered using it as a helicopter base but again, those plans never materialized. Two of the hangars were leased to Twentieth Century Mobile Homes before the official shut-down but in 1965, the entire base was sold to the province for use as an industrial park.

Today, there is much left at Scoudouc. Still serving as an industrial park, the base retains its hangars, the drill hall and a brick storage shed. All the wooden structures such as the barracks and messes are gone. One now finds Consumers Glass and Westwood Industries occupying some of the hangars and Vincor in the drill hall. The runways can still be seen but the heavy drone of aircraft engines has been replaced by the roar of transport trucks. Scoudouc Industrial Park is clearly marked by the highway.



One of the many hangars left at Scoudouc. (Photo: Author's Collection, June 2001.)

*See page 60 for more on QRA hangars.

SHELBURNE, NS

Senior Canadian naval leaders realized the concentration of naval assets at a single port - Halifax - during the war was a recipe for disaster. If the dockyard and loading ports were ever destroyed, the crippling effect on trade traffic would have been incalculable. For the shipping lifeline to therefore be sustained, the navy would have to build secondary operational and repair bases. A survey of the east coast revealed that Shelburne harbour was sufficiently sheltered and available year-round, so the decision was made to construct a new station there.

HMCS *Shelburne.*

The contract for the new naval base at Shelburne was awarded in July 1941 to Acadia Construction. Work began soon after and by 1942, the naval personnel, which until then had been billeted in local houses, moved into their new barracks. By the time it was completed, HMCS *Shelburne* would be a little town of its own with offices, a 3000-ton marine railway and repair facilities, mess halls, new jetties, machine shops and oil storage tanks. Across the highway was an ammunition depot with buildings that stored 4", 40mm Bofors, 2-pounder and Oerlikon shells, primers, warheads, pyrotechnics, Hedge Hogs, fuses, TNT blocks and smoke and tear gar generators. Since there was very little in terms of recreational facilities in town, some were built on the base. The naval population grew exponentially from 242 at the end of 1942 to over 2000 two years later.

Much of the activity at Shelburne centered around the repair shops. It had been planned to offer the repair facilities to the American government for its use, but since the US had its own facilities the shops looked more after Canadian vessels. When repair activity began in earnest in 1943, 42 ships were tended to in the first year alone, vessels such as HMCSs *Fundy*, *Rosthern* and *Ingonish* along with the heavy *Niagara*. The first craft to undergo a major refit was HMCS *Skeena* in 1944. Patrol and examination were the base's other functions and to accomplish this, Shelburne used a number of Fairmiles, HMCSs *Fleur-de-Lis*, *Lynx*, *Reindeer*, *Raccoon*, *Renard* and the Bangor minesweeper HMCS *Thunder* at various times.

One of the navy's tasks at Shelburne was the ship inspection service. Ships of foreign registry were kept under special observation to ensure they contained no contraband or that their crew or passengers were not used to gather sensitive information or were not deployed surreptitiously. Inspection crews worked off examination vessels, the first being *Adversus*, previously used at Canso, but when it ran aground in December 1941 at McNutt Island due to a blizzard, it was replaced by the armed yacht HMCS *Lynx*. When the Latvian freighter *Kegums* docked in front of the army's battery at Government Point in December 1941, the

artillery commander was asked to keep a watchful eye on it by the navy's Chief Examination Officer until it could be ascertained on whose side she was really on. A few hours after that message was received, the *Kegums* weighed anchor and proceeded out to sea, which forced the artillery commander to fire a warning shot across her bow in essence telling her to "Freeze!". The ship stopped but did not drop anchor. Again she left for the high seas and again another "heave-to" round was fired. The *Kegums* wisely sailed back into its original position and submitted to an inspection. By late evening, she was cleared for voyage and left for the US.

More dramatic than *Kegums'* visit was that of the Danish schooner *Gertrude Rask* two months later. The *Rask* had ran aground 400 yards off Baccaro Light and its crew had jumped to safety. An abandoned boat is fair game to any looting according to the Law of the Sea but if one person remains on board, such looting becomes piracy. The schooner's predicament was noticed by several locals with eyes on its cargo and this state of affairs was one the authorities wanted to settle fast. The navy and the RCMP asked the infantry unit present at the time, the Halifax Rifles, to board and hold her until her fate could be decided.

For the next few days, there was a stand off between the Halifax Rifles on board the schooner and the interested party. While this was going on, the Free Danish Council in New York was contacted to see if it could provide a diplomat or an agent to claim *Gertrude*. Tired of playing the waiting game, some of the locals attempted to board her. The officer in command warned them to keep away but these warnings were not heeded and the mob edged closer. Close shots were fired but the locals ignored these knowing full well Canadian troops would not kill their own. The officer sent for reinforcements and a Bren gun and when these arrived, a burst managed to scare them away. (Meanwhile, the navy was trying frantically to get any representative of the Danish government on site to claim her.) Eventually, the locals gave up trying never finding out the schooner was carrying a large sum of cash.

There was always some construction going on at Shelburne. With its naval population constantly growing, there came the added requirement for more living and eating space. New barracks were built, and when the RCAF seaplane base next door was closed in 1944, its huts were taken over. The same happened to the army huts when the artillery moved out the same year. By then, the naval base counted over 100 buildings.

Further construction was planned for 1945 and some, such as an addition to the army's hospital, was carried out. There were plans to build six more barrack blocks, an addition to the wharf and a 35-ton crane but when peace appeared on the horizon, the plans were put aside. At this stage though, DND's real estate holdings still surpassed the town's.

If there was one event that truly marked the end of the war at Shelburne, it was the surrender of Untersee-Boat 889. U-Boats remained active until the very last day of the war but Friedrich Braucker's boat had

not seen any action since leaving Norway on 5 April 1945. He first started on weather reconnaissance and was then ordered to attack convoys off New York City but had not fired a single torpedo by the time V-E Day came. On May 10th, the U-889 was spotted off the Grand Banks heading east by an RCAF Liberator and was flying the black flag of surrender to ensure she was not molested. Intercepted by HMCS *Oshawa*, her first destination was Bay Bulls but this was changed to Shelburne and there she sailed with her new guardians, the *Rockcliffe* and the *Dunvegan*. A crew change with the sub was contemplated but this was rejected because of the rough seas. Nearer to Shelburne, the U-889 was passed over to HMCSs *Buckingham* and *Inch Arran* and on 13 May, she pulled slowly into the harbour to an awaiting press corps. The navy finally had a chance to study the new device called Schnorkel, an air intake tube that allowed a boat to recharge batteries without fully surfacing. The following month, Braucker's submarine was commissioned into the RCN but by the following November, she was transferred to the American navy by international agreement. Braucker remained in the German navy for several more years.

Needless to say, things quieted down after the Second World War at Shelburne. Barracks were closed, personnel were demobilized and munitions were sent to Renous and Sydney or dumped at sea by HMCS *Melville*. HMCS *Shelburne* was transferred to the War Assets Corporation for disposal in 1946 with the initial caveat that the 100-plus structures could only be leased out. This suggests naval headquarters was unsure of the base's fate. Twenty-four buildings were in fact sold to the province's Department of Health in 1947 for $38,346 while another six went to Acadia Construction for $18,000. The land itself was leased to the province and part of that was sub-leased to Kraft Foods. Ven-Rez established itself in Building 108, the former recreation centre, to manufacture furniture while the Sick Bay - Building 59 - was converted into apartments. The naval base thus became an industrial park much as HMCS *Fort Ramsay* at Gaspé and other bases have. The provincial department of health moved into the former army headquarters to create a combination tuberculosis sanatorium/general hospital - the Roseway Hospital - while another government department turned other buildings such as the chapel and a drill hall into the Nova Scotia School for Boys. The marine haul-out went to the province's Department of Industry and Publicity for $6147 while several others went to the Department of Highways and Public Works. But the navy was not quite done with Shelburne yet.

Shelburnites knew something was afoot when naval uniforms began reappearing in the early 1950s. What was perhaps unexpected was that some of those uniforms were American. In 1953, the Permanent Joint Board on Defence began discussions for a binational plan to establish a submarine tracking station in Nova Scotia using an experimental technique known as LOFAR (low-frequency acoustic ranging), in essence a method that used sensitive underwater microphones to detect enemy vessels. A US

team was authorized to travel to Nova Scotia in 1953 to investigate potential sites, called pejoratively Lorac navigation stations, and by May 1954, a diplomatic exchange of notes by the two governments sealed the deal. Shelburne became one of the many cogs in the US Navy's secret Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS). Where the public was concerned, the base would be a joint "RCN/USN Oceanographic Research Station."

The Department of National Defence had recalled 23 of its old buildings at the naval base as far back as 1950 but the new SOSUS site was set for Government Point further south at one of the old artillery batteries. The land was leased from the Canadian Army in 1954. Due to the US's urgency in setting up SOSUS, Canada's normal requirement of using Canadian labour was waved and the USN's No.6 Mobile Construction Battalion took charge. The Seabees decided to install pre-fabricated Quonset huts, enough to house and feed 97, and in 1955 LCTs landed at Sandy Point to discharge what became endless convoys of construction equipment. The base was finished the same year. The Board considered the feasibility of US-Canadian co-manning under the same conditions seen in other defence-related projects, and while the binational agreement eventually signed allowed the two navies to operate the station together, its commander was Canadian. It was also agreed that after three years, Canada would have the right to take over the entire base after providing one year's notice. By 1959, HMCS *Shelburne* was, except for a handful of American sailors, pretty much a Canadian entity.

Even though it had a Canadian CO, Shelburne was not totally run by the Royal Canadian Navy. Operationally, it was responsible to the Commander, Oceanographic System, US Atlantic Fleet, known by the acronymic mouthful COMOCEANSYSLANT, at Norfolk with SOSUS data shared with the RCN. The Canadian navy still had administrative and disciplinary control. Shelburne was still subject to Canadian exercises and tests but its Operational Readiness Inspection was carried out by the US Navy, sometimes by as many as 25 inspectors. Most of the operational personnel were trained at the USN Fleet Sonar School at Key West, Florida. The Canadian attitude towards SOSUS was not, one could say, positively buoyant since the RCN apparently discredited its effectiveness. In a memo on training requirements from the Canadian Vice Chief of the Air Staff to the Chief of the Air Staff dated 1959, Air Vice Marshal Smith thought the RCN believed SOSUS to be of limited usefulness because "the operational escorts within the SOSUS environment interfere with the system ..." Since maritime patrol aircraft were capable of receiving SOSUS data, it still served a useful approximation role.

Not unexpectedly, HMCS *Shelburne* was only a fraction of what it used to be. When it reopened in 1955, it consisted of 35 buildings at Government Point and a handful in town, a third its wartime number. The heart of the station was the terminal building in one of the Quonset huts that was the receiving end to the two underwater cables that carried SOSUS

data. Other buildings had dorms, messes, stores, a gymnasium and an incinerator outside the operations hut to burn classified waste. The Quonset huts were temporary and in the early 1960s, a large new composite building was put up to house crew quarters, offices, galleys, shops and a laundry. At roughly the same time, PMQs were built to relieve housing shortage. When the provincial government vacated the old wartime Naval-Officer-in-Charge's house, it was reacquired by the navy as the CO's residence. For protection against atomic, biological or chemical attacks, there was a proposal put forward to convert the abandoned gun bunkers at Government Point into passive defence headquarters. These would have housed dormitories, mess hall, decontamination cubicles, communications room and operations centre with the two bunkers connected by new tunnels. The proposal was never accepted. In 1968, a new support building was opened to replace stores, shops, offices and the base exchange which had all been located in Quonsets from the 1950s. During the sixties, the station's population was about 140 navy personnel plus a few civilians such as technicians from Western Electric.

Many were the ships to visit Shelburne. The station had kept large oil tanks from the war in operation to resupply visiting vessels. Ships would drop in every now and then for a fill-up and sometimes would give station personnel a chance to look around. HMCS *Gatineau* was once such vessel to pull in for gas in 1968 and in a gesture of goodwill to land-lovers, the ship's Captain offered to take a number of off-duty Wrens to Halifax for her return journey. The ladies found the trip to be a memorable occasion. Two years later, HMCS *Chaleur* and an old acquaintance, HMCS *Thunder*, would visit port but *Thunder*'s visit was more memorable for her running aground near the government wharf. Among other guests, the USS *Accokeek* dropped into Shelburne to conduct repairs on the undersea cables in 1970.

As with several other bases throughout the world, Shelburne's demise was a direct result of the end of the Cold War. The nineties saw the disbandment of squadrons and regiments worldwide and a general reduction of troop strength on both sides of the Iron Curtain. CFS *Shelburne* was officially closed in 1995 and sold to the South West Shelburne Development Authority. Still standing today, the base is an industrial park home to a small campus of the Nova Scotia Community College, a boatmaker, hatchery and, when visited by the author, production office for the film *Virginia's Run.* In 1999, the provincial Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism announced it and the federal government, the South West Shore Development Authority and the Shelburne Business Development Corporation were jointly funding a new sound stage hoping to attract more film-related business.

Most of the old naval base in town is gone and the few remaining structures there are used by civilian firms such as Shelburne Ship Repair. Also standing are the oil tanks still with their DND signs and the three

ammunition storage buildings behind the School for Boys. The naval buildings acquired by the province after the war and used as the Shelburne School for Boys, now the Shelburne Youth Centre, were destroyed in the sixties and seventies and replaced by new structures. One of the contractors for one of the new dorms, Acadia Construction, was already familiar to the area.

Canadian Army.

It is axiomatic to say naval bases require defences for their protection and at Shelburne, as at other bases, the job fell upon the Canadian Army. Infantry units were deployed to run coastal patrols and repel land-borne attacks while artillery units were stationed there to meet naval and aerial threats. The overall local command entity for the army, HQ-Shelburne Defences, was based in a camp by Jordan Bay Road.

Infantry units were deployed at Shelburne beginning in 1941 with the Halifax Rifles making the first appearance. The plan was to have some troops used on a rotational basis to guard military assets and run patrols with others held in reserve or put in training to maintain a decent level of alertness. To prevent complacency, the regiments guarding Shelburne were replaced by other units as time went by.

The other branch of the army found in significant numbers at Shelburne was the Royal Canadian Artillery. Two types of artillery units were deployed there; coastal and light anti-aircraft.(I) The 104th Coastal Battery had the job of tackling seaward intruders through a number of gun sites. Old long-range American 10" counter-bombardment guns were placed at the southern end of McNutt Island while 4.7" close-defence guns were established at Government Point several kilometres south of the naval base. The motor torpedo menace would have been looked after two 75mm guns, first set up at Tea Chest point slightly north of Government Point but later moved to Sandy Point further north for better coverage. A Battery Observation Post was erected at Government Point while Forward Observation Posts were created at Red Head and McNutt Island. Four searchlights were deployed in the area, two at Government Point and two at Sand Point, following the standard practice of locating these with the inner defences. Government Point doubled as the examination battery whose role was to keep any suspect ship under observation until the navy's inspection vessel could clear it. Each position was given a code-word, vis:

Shelburne Defences	-	DURO
Fire Commander	-	KULA
McNutt Island guns	-	GIKI
Government Point	-	GOPO
Sand Point	-	BUZA

For approximately one year, Shelburne was also given light anti-aircraft guns to combat low-level intruders. The 26th AA Battery deployed four Bofors at various points around the naval base and occupied a small number barracks on the east side of the highway. These were taken over by the navy in 1944.

Along with keeping an eye on the high seas, both infantry and artillery units were responsible for watching the surrounding area for any unusual activity. When a flashing light was spotted nearby in the evening of 17 February 1942, a quick investigation was ordered to ensure these were not signals for the enemy. The light turned out to be only Master Gunner Cole (known as Ole King Cole) lighting his pipe. Red flares seen a few days beforehand were also investigated and there again, the excuse was a simple shooting party. In this instance, Captain Cossaboom, the Fire Commander, was said to be "heartily disgusted at being disturbed from his poker game."

After the war, the Canadian Army ridded itself of all real estate holdings in the area. The 23 buildings at Government Point were sold to a local man for $5500. Today, one can still see the gun bunkers there but the emplacements at Sandy Point are no longer seen and at Tea Chest Battery, one only finds a low flat concrete structure. While McNutt Island was not visited by the author, the gun pits there can still be seen as can one of the guns. The barracks there are long gone.

RCAF Station Shelburne.

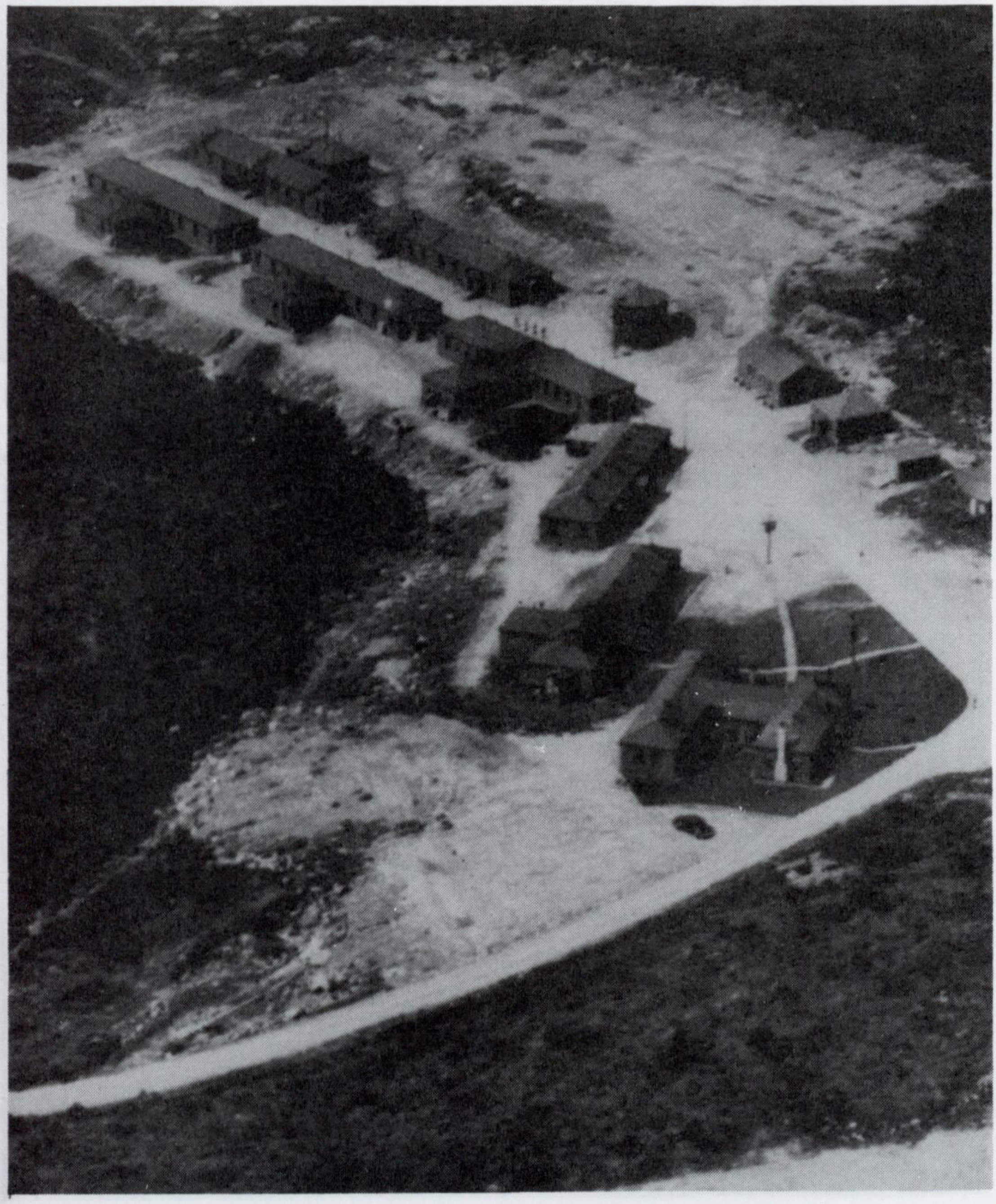
Directly south of the naval base was a small air force seaplane station. RCAF Station Shelburne had originally been built for use by American forces but when the US failed to give some indications as to when they'd move in, the RCAF decided to allot it to No.3 Operational Training Unit to train Catalina reconnaissance crews. As the desired Cats were slow getting off the assembly line, No.3 OTU was not formed as planned and Shelburne instead became an operational base.

The first air unit to work out of RCAF Station Shelburne was No.116 (Bomber Reconnaissance) Squadron. This unit had transferred in from Botwood, Newfoundland, a base that closed during the winter months, in November 1942. Catalinas and Cansos then began their routine of convoy escorting and ASW patrols, but only for two months as they were redeployed to Dartmouth. Returning the following February, the aircraft continued their work until June when it was decided to shut the station down for the summer. Except for brief usage by No.117 (BR) Squadron in late 1943 and by Lysanders from No.6 (Coast Artillery Cooperation) Detachment of Yarmouth for artillery spotting, RCAF Station Shelburne saw very little activity.

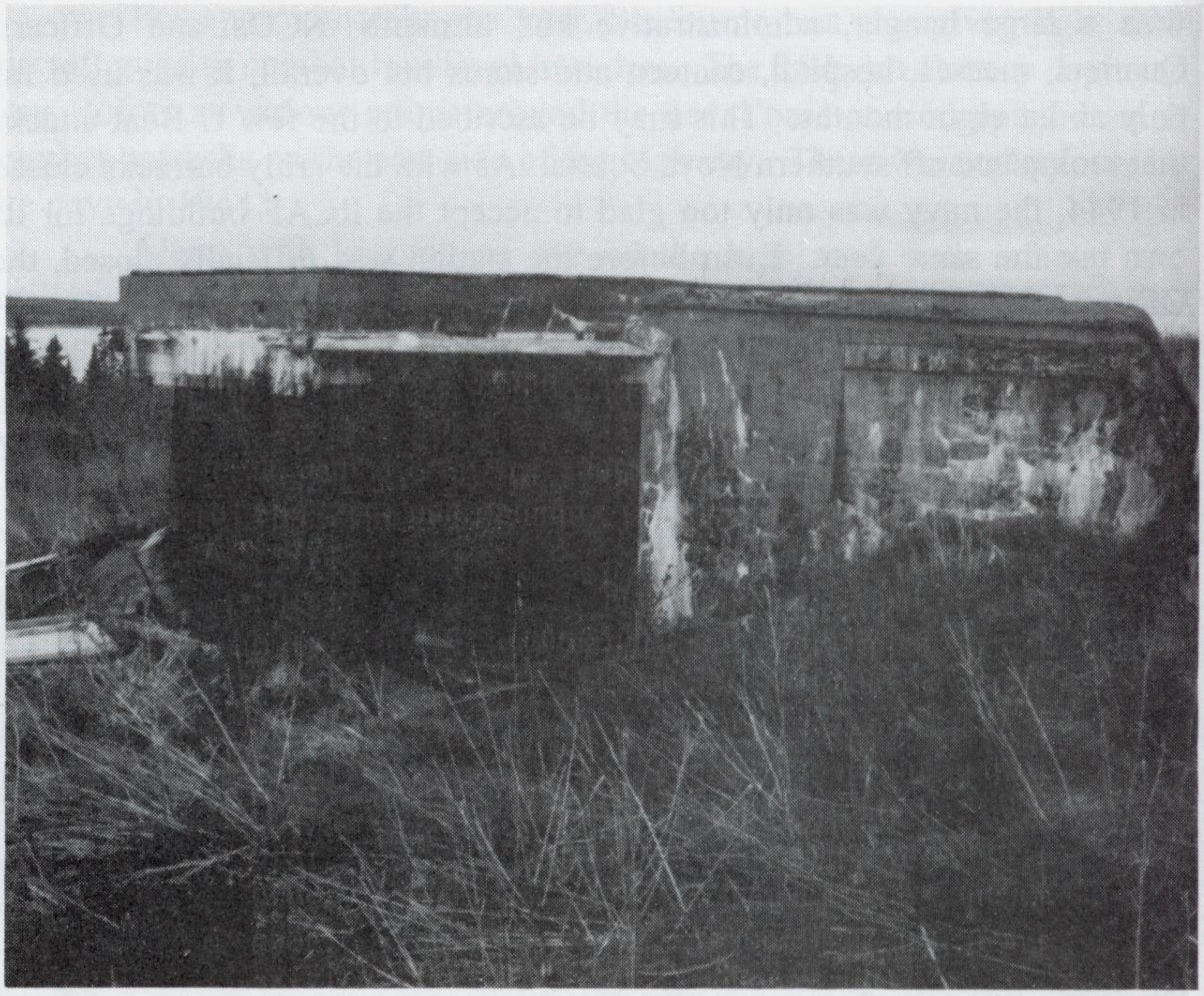
The Shelburne seaplane station may have been one of the shortest-lived operational installations in Canada. It was built as a complete base

with a large hangar, administrative hut, airmen's, NCOs' and Officers' Quarters, messes, hospital, canteen and stores but overall, it was used for only about eight months. This may be ascribed to the few U-Boat attacks that took place off southern Nova Scotia. As with the army barracks closed in 1944, the navy was only too glad to accept the RCAF buildings for its own use the same year. Even before the station was officially closed, the Officers' Quarters were used by the RCN as Wrens' quarters.

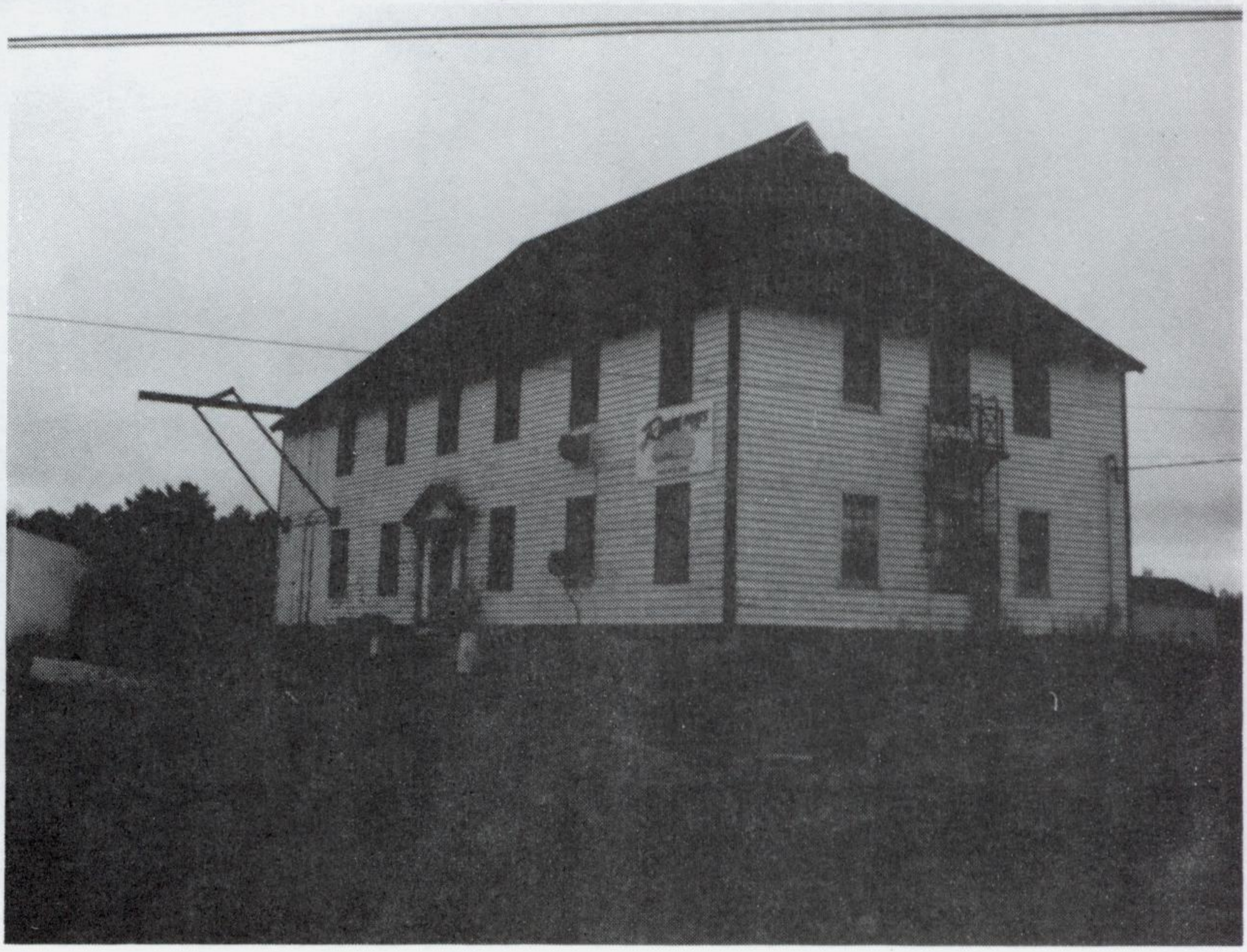
After the war, the RCAF buildings were sold off, the hangar going to the province for almost $20,000. Today, there is very little left of the old seaplane base. In fact, none of the buildings or the large hangar exist and one can barely make out the slipway.



Army barracks at Government Point. None of these can be found today. (Photo: DND PMR 82-091, August 1942.)



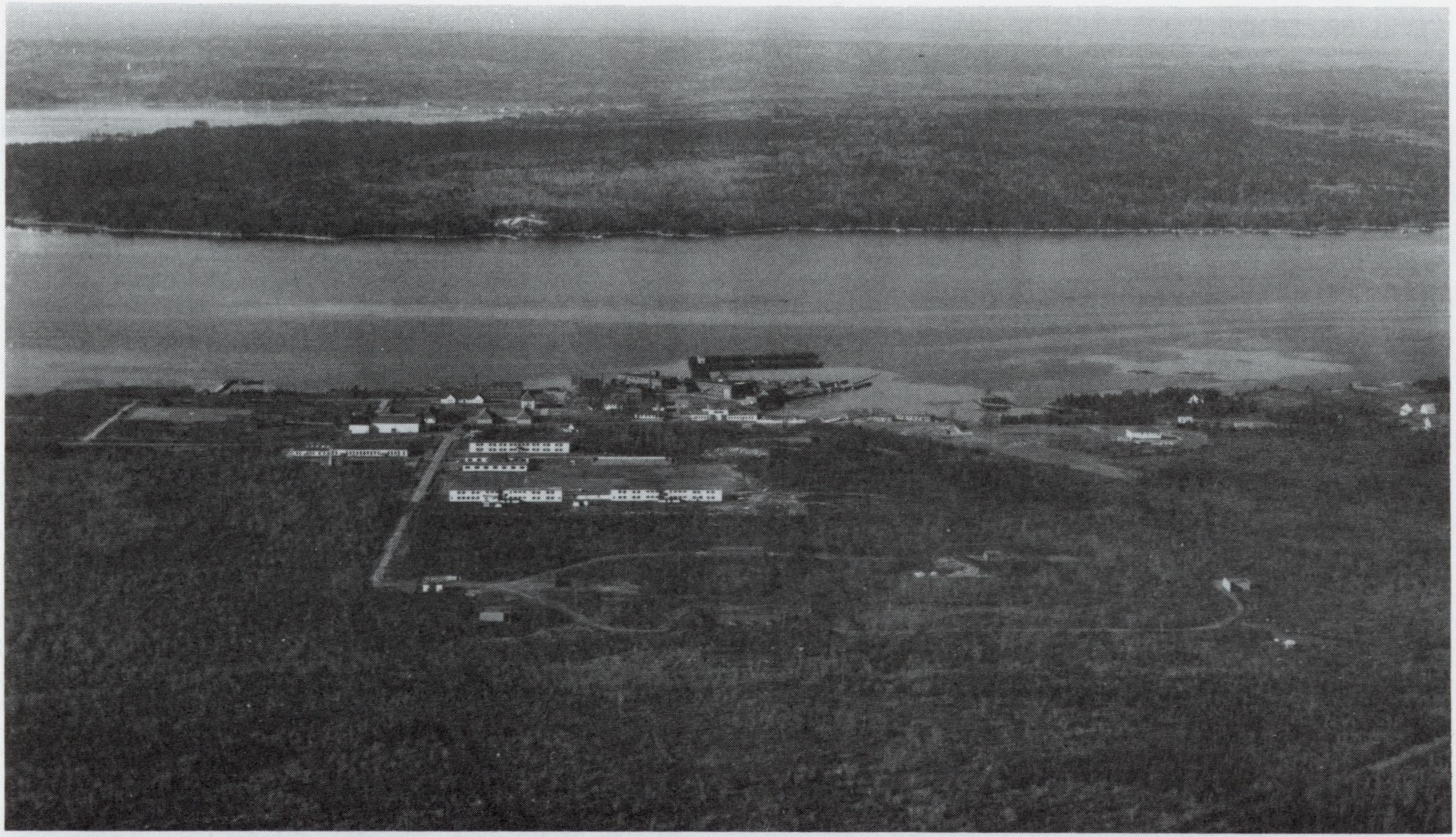
A gun bunker at Government Point. (Photo: Author's Collection, May 2001.)



One of the navy's old wartime buildings at the naval base. (Photo: Author's Collection, May 2001.)



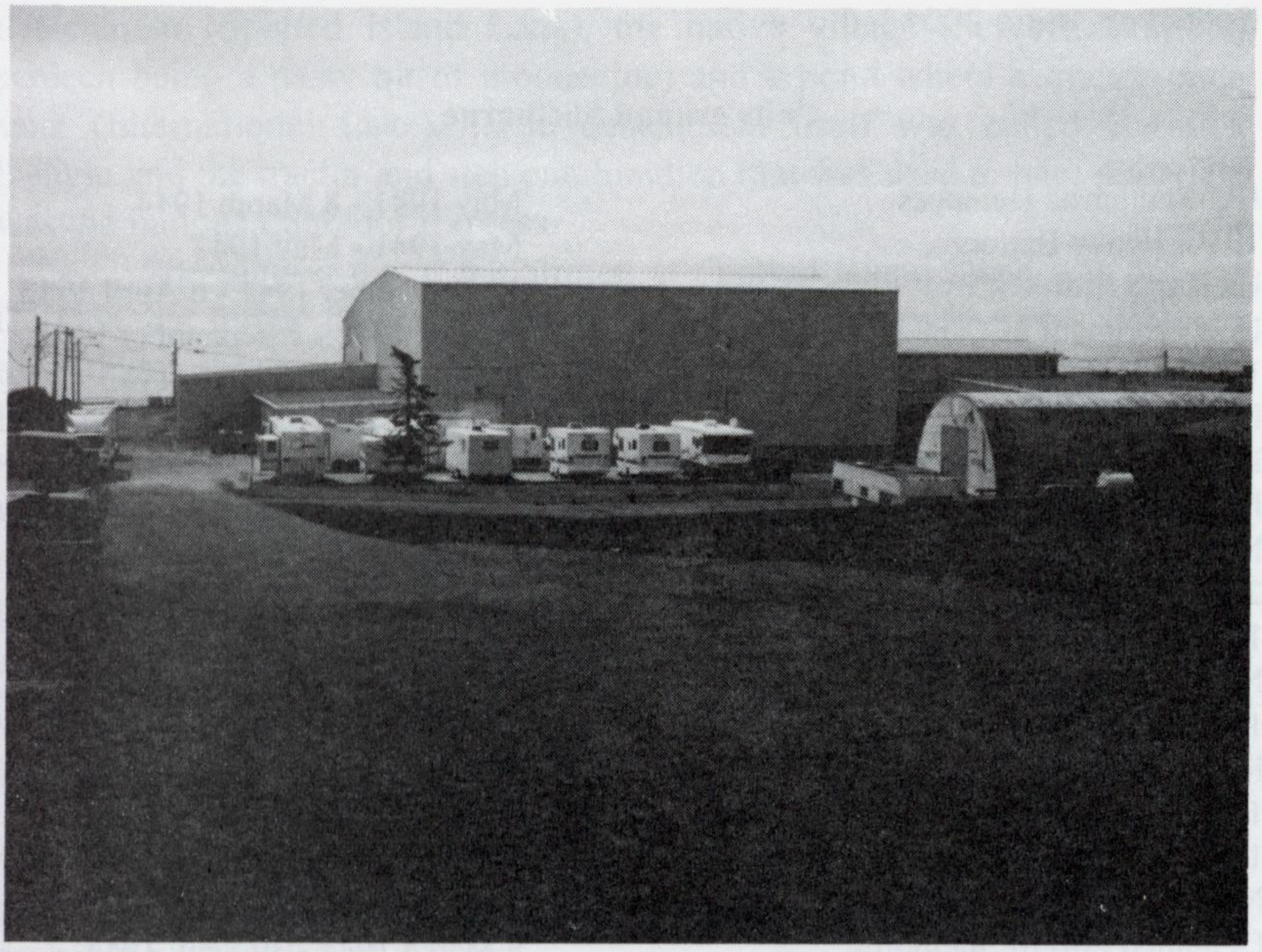
The guns on McNutt Island. The barracks (not seen here) were well camouflaged by trees. (Photo: DND PMR 82-089, 1943.)



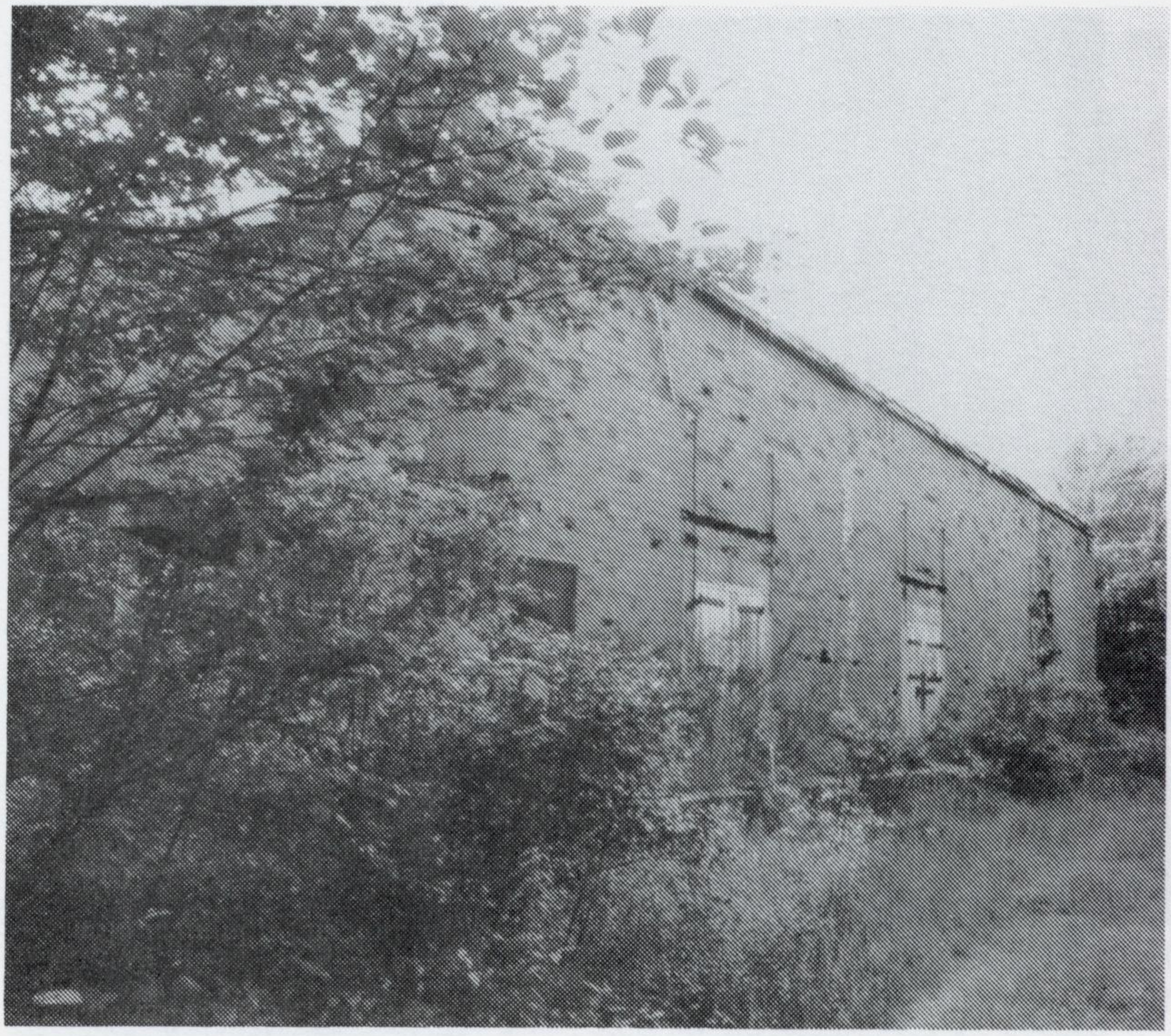
HMCS *Shelburne*. (Photo: DND SBC 70-374EK, 1970.)



The SOSUS base at Government Point. (Photo: DND DNS 29322, July 1962.)



The same base today. (Photo: Author's Collection, May 2001.)



One of the ammunition buildings behind the youth centre. (Photo: Author's Collection, June 2001.)

Units around Shelburne

HQ-Shelburne Defences	May 1941 - 8 March 1944
104th Heavy Battery	May 1941 - May 1942
Halifax Rifles, C Coy.	11 September 1941 - 6 April 1942
Irish Regiment of Canada	6 April 1942 - 7 September 1942
104th Coast Battery	May 1942 - 15 January 1943
HMCS *Shelburne*	1 May 1942 - 1946
RCAF Station Shelburne	20 July 1942 - 2 March 1944
Fusiliers du Saint-Laurent	7 September 1942 - 17 June 1943
No.116 (BR) Squadron	13 Nov. 1942 - 28 Dec. 1942
26th AA Battery	27 Nov. 1942 - 25 October 1943
105th Coast Battery	11 January 1943 - 31 March 1943
No.116 (BR) Squadron	14 February 1943 - 11 June 1943
104th Coast Battery	22 March 1943 - 31 August 1944
Royal Winnipeg Rifles, 3rd. Bn.	16 June 1943 - 5 August 1943
1st Aerodrome Defence Battalion, No.3 Coy.	3 Aug. 1943 - 5 October 1943
1st Aerodrome Defence Battalion, No.2 Coy	5 October 1943 - 23 June 1944
No.117 (BR) Squadron	29 Nov. 1943 - 15 Dec. 1943
Defended Port of Shelburne	9 March 1944 - 30 Sept. 1944
Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles	17 June 1944 - August 1944

1st Aerodrome Defence Battalion, No.4 Coy	6 July 1944 - 9 August 1944
No.6 Company det., RCASC	
Shelburne Military Hospital	
No.6 Company det., Atlantic Command Signals	
No.6 (CAC) Detachment, RCAF	
No.38 Provost Company Det., CProC	
HMCS *Shelburne*	April 1955 - 1967
CFS Shelburne	1967 - 1995.

SPOTTED ISLAND, Lab.

The realization that Canada's coasts were as vulnerable to attack as Pearl Harbor and Great Britain led the RCAF establishing a network of coastal long-range radar stations. These small bases were charged with scanning the skies around the clock to spot enemy bombers and report their presence to the nearest air base for quick action. It was perhaps odd to think the *Luftwaffe* would attack this far west, but if the RAF Ferry Command was able to fly across the Atlantic non-stop, some thought so could the enemy.(J)

One of those radar stations was No.36 Radio Detachment at Spotted Island south of Hamilton Inlet. Built in 1943, No.36 RD was a very small isolated outpost that counted less than 30 men. It consisted of a small number of buildings such as barracks, a mess hall and an operations complex, if it can be called that, some distance away. Some of the local landmarks were given names such as the trail from the landing beach to the detachment (Spotted Island Lane), the native village (Screech Corners, screech being a nasty bit of moonshine) and a pond where a tractor once sank (International Lake). The detachment itself was called Hermit's Delight and the tractor and sled combination that was used to haul materials was the famous Labrador Express.

The biggest threat the airmen at Spotted Island faced was not the German air force; it was boredom. Since the unit was never declared operational, the men had a lot of time on their hands. There was not much in terms of recreation either at the station or at the local village so the men had to make up their own. The lads could watch the bombers out of Goose Bay fly overhead but when that particular novelty passed, they had to create their own pastimes. The more inventive ones resorted to wet rag fights or imaginary ball games with all the motions of pitch and catch. If they were bored with those, they either carried out mock inspections or danced to jitterbug contest. Those that were really frustrated could always work the punching bag.

The diary for No.36 RD gives no date of disbandment but it is suspected it was closed in 1944. It is not known by the author what became of it afterwards. If one can judge by other wartime radar stations, there is probably nothing left of it today.



The radar detachment at Spotted Island in January 1944. (Photo: NAC, PA-209684.)

STANLEY, NS

The little town of Stanley is a quiet rural hamlet in Hants County about one hour north of Halifax. By most appearances, it has not changed in size or character over the years and looks more or less the same as it always did, except perhaps for the missing railway line. During its life-time, there has been one event that forever marked it in the history books and traces of that period can be found to this day.

The event that marked Stanley was the Second World War. In 1939, the RCAF embarked upon an ambitious program of airman training, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, that called for several educational establishments to train various classes of aircrew.(A) The Air Force needed several Elementary Flying Training Schools for basic pilot training and began looking for suitable plots across Canada where these schools could be placed. The Halifax Flying Club offered to run one of those schools in rural Nova Scotia and after a successful sales pitch and after a proper piece of real estate was found at Stanley, the RCAF decided to form the No.17 EFTS there.

No.17 Elementary Flying Training School's duty was to convert as many airmen into pilots as it could. Aircrew who made it through pre-flight subjects such as navigation and meteorology at an Initial Training School were sent to an EFTS for their first taste of flight. At Stanley, the new birds were introduced to take-offs, dives and landings, turns and stalls, formation and instrument flying along with gunnery practice in a curriculum that called for a total of 180 hours of ground school and 50 hours of flight. The student pilots were introduced to instruments such as airspeed indicators, altimeters, compasses and slide slip indicators to the extent these had to be completely trusted. Teachers looked for the proper application of brakes,

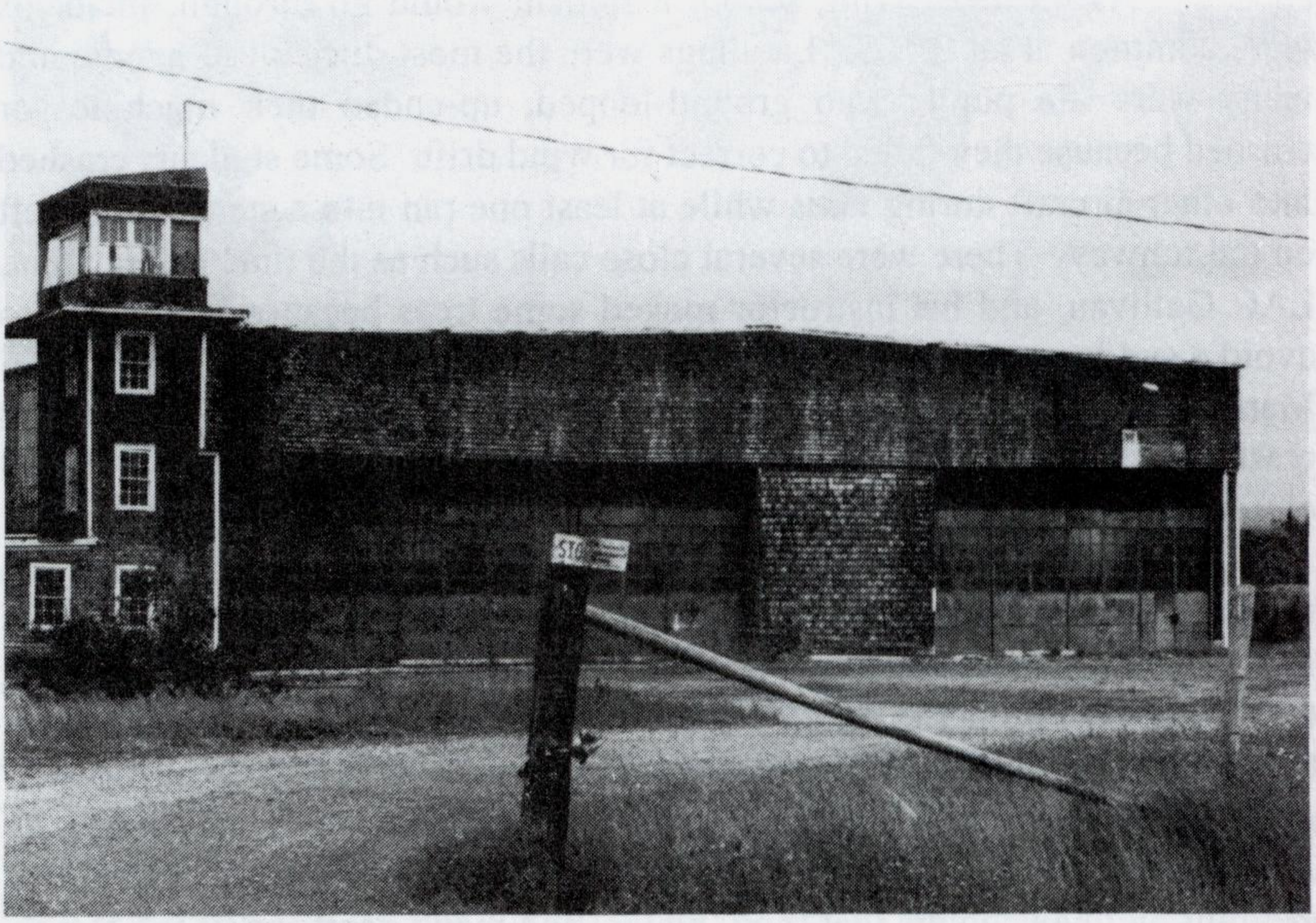
ease with which the students handled level flight and level of confidence, lack of which meant near-certain rejection. After about eight hours of flight, the students were allowed to go it alone. War Diary statistics show that at first, a low 60% of students earned their wings at No.17 but by late 1943, this percentage jumped to 80%.

As the first flying school a student would go through, incidents were common at an EFTS. Landings were the most difficult to handle and many were the pupils who ground-looped, up-ended their machines or crashed because they failed to correct for wind drift. Some students crashed into other aircraft during taxis while at least one ran into a steam roller left on the runway. There were several close calls such as the time one student, LAC Gallivan, and his instructor nicked some trees because he wanted to avoid a sudden snow storm. The first fatality at No.17 EFTS occurred on 6 March 1942 when a Fleet Finch collided after take-off into another and crashed into Minas Basin two miles off Walton. By 1944 when the school closed, at least five more airmen would die in various other mishaps.

Recreation was perhaps just as important to an airman's life as his training. Without a chance to unwind, a young man's tensions and anxieties can ultimately work against him and as the RCAF recognized this, it organized such things as bingo games and hockey matches or invited talent to entertain the men. The well-known Lifebuoy Follies were a popular group much in demand that made their only appearance at No.17 EFTS on 21 May 1943. The Follies were a variety show run by old entertainment veterans and newcomers that sang, played and made good fun of the forces. They had Jimmy Devon dance with Irene Hughes, Sasha Dever from Estonia sing baritone and Daphne MacFarlan play her guitar. Pretty seventeen year-old Joan Elaine regaled the audience with her piano-accordion and Jack Ayre played out a comedic version of a kit inspection. Then there was Helen Bruce, the "lovely Helen Bruce - with voice and eyes, and what eyes," according to the Commanding Officer, that captivated the officers and guests in "the bald-headed row" with her *Embraceable You*. The troupers were just as pleased with the reception they got as the audience was with their presence.

No.17 EFTS closed on 14 January 1944. That same day, it was designated a holding facility by the RCAF as the No.2 Aircraft Storage Unit. The Unit did what its title indicated for over one year. In 1946, the aerodrome was transferred to the Department of Transport and used by a flying club. By then, it had an estimated value of $822,000. Later on, 20 buildings were sold to Neal Dow of Windsor for $12,700. During the next few years, Stanley was considered for use as a fighter redeployment airfield by the RCAF's Air Defence Command but those plans were shelved. By the 1950s, the buildings were gone, save one of the hangars and the time-keeper's office, and the runways had fallen into disrepair. The provincial Department of Lands and Forests acquired what was left of the airport in the mid-fifties for $15,000 and used it for fire patrol operations.

There is not much left of Stanley airport today. Although the sole remaining hangar still bears a Lands and Forests Stanley Management Unit sign, it appears unused. The only people who do seem to use the airfield is the Experimental Aircraft Association. Except for the runways and the hangar, there is nothing left of the old air school.



The hangar at Stanley airport still stands today. (Photo: Author's Collection, June 2000.)

STEPHENVILLE, NF

Unbeknownst to the 500 souls that made up the quiet little community of Stephenville, World War II would forever change its character. In 1941, the US Army Corps of Engineers arrived to build a large new base there to be used as an emergency landing field and as a staging post for US Army Air Corps transatlantic ferry flights. The post, one of many negotiated under the US-UK destroyers-for-bases agreement, would act as a servicing and refuelling stop for aircraft on their way to the European theatre. So large would its acreage be and so numerous its facilities it would become the largest American air base outside the continental United States. For over a quarter of a century, Stephenville was more American than Canadian.

The first troops arrived in January 1941: engineers to supervise the base's construction and award contracts, signalmen to set up radio circuits, gunners to man heavy 155mm and light 40mm guns and infantrymen to guard the works. Residents were told to leave pronto but their houses were kept for use by the contractors as lodgings and offices. As there were not

enough for the many airmen and support personnel soon to arrive, over 100 huge tents were erected as a temporary base, Camp Morris. The workmen then began their duties of putting up barracks, mess halls and hangars for what would be, by April 1943, a large base of 4000. The station's main operating entity would be the 1388th Army Air Force Base Unit.

Until the aerodrome was ready to accept ferry flights in 1943, it was used primarily as an emergency landing field. From 1942 to 1944, it doubled as an anti-sub base used by the 429th Bombardment Squadron and for a few weeks in the fall of 1943, by a detachment of the RCAF's No.162 (Bomber Reconnaissance) Squadron. At first called Stephenville Air Base, it was renamed Harmon Field in June 1941 after a test pilot who crashed in Connecticut in 1933. Among other units, the US Army deployed the 471st Infantry Battalion as protective detail and the 421st Coast Artillery Battalion for anti-aircraft protection there. Construction of the base was finished in March 1943.

The end of the war brought a natural reduction in strength at the base. By 1948, there were 2000 men and women there (still a sizable population) and the field had been renamed an Air Force Base due to the creation of the USAF. The aerodrome was a responsibility of Air Transport Command's Military Air Transport Service and looked after the movement of personnel and cargo to and from Europe. The base was not slated for closure in the postwar period, unlike so many others, and late that decade, a construction program was commenced to upgrade the facilities and turn the installation into a modern city. Many of the old wartime regulation huts were moved or destroyed and replaced with comfortable new quarters. To many, it became the "Paradise of the North."

A change in the base's mandate in the early 1950s brought yet more construction. With its northerly geographic location, Strategic Air Command decided Harmon AFB would make a good refuelling station with aerial tankers based there to accommodate long-range bombers heading north. The USAF Air Defense Command for its part decided to post a fighter squadron there to deal with threats heading the other way. The construction program saw more married quarters and two seven-storey dormitories put up (called Hiltons), the runways extended, a new hospital, hangar and control tower erected and another hangar moved to the east side, all carried out by the 347th (later the 823rd) Engineer Aviation Battalion. Underground fuelling lines, hydrants and new ammunition bunkers were also laid out. A new road bypass was created to obviate civilian access through the base and when finished, the equipment was simply buried. Now, in addition to DC-3s landing at Harmon, there would be KC-97 Stratotankers of the 376th Air Refuelling Squadron, and F-94, F-89 and later F-102A fighter interceptors. By the late 1950s, the base's controlling unit was SAC's 4081st Strategic Wing. In the 1960s, Harmon had 1950 servicemen on the payroll as well as 1200 civilians making it by far the largest employer around. The 8000-acre base was valued at $140-million.

Up on nearby Table Mountain overlooking the Harmon base sat another military installation. This establishment was a USAF Air Defense Command radar station created as a link in the joint-Canadian-American Pinetree chain that spanned Canada from coast to coast and ran down the eastern seaboard.(E) The chain was a direct result of the Cold War and the air defence prerogative but unlike the fighters next door that went up looking for a fight, this one's purpose was only to scan the skies.

Built in the early 1950s, the little Table Mountain base consisted of a small number of buildings that made it an independent base. It had its own headquarters, mess hall, dispensary, dormitories and stores - in all about 30 buildings - enough floor space to sustain its 200-person staff. Its major pieces of equipment, the radars, consisted of at first a CPS-5C for searching and an MPS-4 for height-finding but these were soon replaced with a CPS-6B and a TPS-502 respectively to which was added a third, a FPS-502 for back-up searching. Such was the pace of progress that the equipment was always being changed since the CPS-6B and TPS-502 were traded for a more modern FPS-20 and FPS-6 in 1960 and later by other types. The equipment type notwithstanding, the base was normally capable of detecting aircraft to about 200 miles.

Throughout its lifetime, the Table Mountain establishment was run by the 640th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, a lodger unit of Harmon AFB. Its mission included area surveillance, guidance of fighters, navigational assistance to all aircraft civilian and military, and ensuring the safe passage of SAC planes on their way north. For several years, the 640th was also a master direction centre in that it looked over operations of all other radar stations in Newfoundland, these being at St. John's, Gander and St. Anthony. Typically of radar units, the 640th's function was represented in its motto of *Semper Vigilans* (Always Watchful).

Harmon AFB's role of aerial refuelling implied an unexciting job, although there were times the airmen witnessed odd events. Two KC-97s code-named Archie 29 and 91 on a mission in the early morning of 5 July 1955 off western Newfoundland sighted two mysterious bright objects. By contacting the 640th AC&W Squadron, they were able to confirm the objects' position and relative speed. Archie 29 was ordered to close in but lost visual contact when they began to climb. By this time, fighters were scrambled out of Harmon but the jet pilots never saw anything. Strangely, while this chase was going on, five smaller objects were spotted on the radar scopes below the KC-97s moving extremely fast (over 1520 knots) and forming shapes such as lines or circles. Unlike the first two objects, these were never seen by the tankers or even by a passing C-119.

The jets assigned to Harmon would come in three variants. The first to appear was the F-94B Lockheed Starfire. The Starfire was an offshoot of the P-80 Shooting Star that was developed during World War II as the US's first jet fighter. The deal to produce the F-94A model was signed by Lockheed in 1949 for 150 planes but this number was increased

to 368 after the Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb. The B model differed from the A in that its external tanks were placed along the wing's centre line and that it had a better gyroscopic and hydraulic system, but suffered from the same shortcoming as the A in its lack of a de-icing system. First deployed with the 61st Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Selfridge AFB outside Detroit in 1951, Harmon's F-94Bs arrived with the same squadron in July 1953.

Duty with an air defence squadron meant constant training and hundreds of sorties. The men of the 61st FIS went up as often as the weather allowed to practice intercept tactics or perform rocket training. Some pilots were kept on stand-by in an alert area for scrambles to meet unidentified or suspicious aircraft with an expected timeline of five minutes between alarm and take-off. According to the 61st's historical record, in January 1956 scramble crews had ample opportunity to practice at least their runway skills. In three instances, alarms were received in the alert hangar ordering them up but the planes never took off since these were found to be phoneys. The USAF Office of Special Investigations was called in to look into the matter but the historical record makes no mention of the investigation's outcome.

Another fighter based at Harmon, the Convair F-102A Delta Dagger was a different kettle of fish. The arms race being what it was, the F-94B Starfire and other early interceptors had almost become obsolete by the time they were deployed and were accepted only because there was nothing else to take their place right away. In 1949, the USAF requested proposals for a supersonic aircraft capable of higher speeds and altitudes to combat new Soviet bombers. Convair's first prototype failed to pass the Mach 1 barrier but after lengthening the fuselage and giving it a "Coke-bottle" tapered middle to reduce drag, the Delta Dagger made it to Mach 1.2 and over 50,000 feet in 1953.* The USAF soon issued a letter of contract to Convair and in 1956, the first production models were received. In October of the following year - the same month Sputnik scared the world - Delta Daggers would make their first appearance over Harmon, 25 aircraft with the 323rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron.

Convair was so confident of its prodigy it offered the B model to the Canadian government while the Avro Arrow was being developed. The F-102B's advantages were earlier availability, reduced manpower requirements due to its single seat and lower cost but its drawbacks were poor altitude, range and rate-of-climb, lower armament capability and poorer avionics. By having a second crewman, on the other hand, the Arrow could perform better in low-level attacks and make better use of ECM. Abandoning the CF-105 would also have meant the millions spent on R&D would have been lost. In the end, the F-102B was rejected by Ottawa, the Arrow scrapped, and Canada ended up buying American anyway, the F-101B and the F-104.

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*A later modification increased this to 55,000 feet.



Ernest Harmon AFB in August 1959. One can make out hangars at the bottom and the two Hiltons at the top. (Photo: NAPL, Natural Resources Canada, RR1856, Pic. 37.)



Seen in this photo are 29 aerial tankers, two F-102As and an F-94 at the bottom. (Photo: NAPL, Natural Resources Canada, RR1856, Pic. 54.)

The 323rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron was a unit in a class of its own. According to its diary, it held the world's record of expert jet pilots: 27. No other air defence units had that distinction. The requirement for the title of expert included 1000 hours total flying time with 750 in jets, two years in an Air Defense squadron and a minimum score of 80% for five intercepts. The record was one the 323rd's Commanding Officer was pretty damn proud of.

There were other instances airmen at Harmon could be proud of. Having jets based in Newfoundland had one advantage no one had planned: mercy missions. Military personnel are often called upon for help by civilians because people know they're trained for rugged duty and have some of the best equipment on hand. During the night of 9 March 1965, Captain Gillis of the 59th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Harmon received a call from his commander that a rare medicine was needed urgently for a Newfoundland child. Gillis wasted no time flying his F-102A to the US to pick up the drug and bringing it back for the medical staff. The speed with which the drug was brought back may very well have saved the child's life.



The level of cooperation between the USAF and RCAF were such that the two Air Forces shared everything: flight attack profiles, radar and fighter terminology and sometimes even aircraft. Here, two American and two Canadian pilots are off to a briefing either before or after a flight. The two Americans are Captain C.G. Williams and Jim O'Brien of the 323rd FIS and the two Canadians are Flying Officers Ron Hallstrom and Tony Beak of 410 Squadron from Uplands. (Photo: DND PCN 270, October 1957.)

Basing fighters in Newfoundland was not contentious in itself but some of the weapons they employed were. The F-102A was designed to carry the nuclear-tipped Falcon AIM-26A missile for use as an anti-bomber weapon. Manufactured by Hughes specifically for the Delta Dagger, the missile was about seven feet long, had a range of five to ten miles, flew at Mach 2 and carried a low-yield W54 warhead (0.1 - 1 kiloton) that detonated within 180 feet of its target by a proximity fuse. The W54 was so small it was incorporated in the US Army's atomic recoilless rifle and "Special Atomic Demolitions Munitions" or suitcase bombs.

Theoretically, the USAF did not need Ottawa's permission to deploy Falcons at Harmon. The base was after all US territory and would be so for several decades yet according to the Destroyers-for-Bases agreement. The US State Department nevertheless felt Ottawa should be consulted by the Department of Defense on all matters of atomic weapons on Canadian soil lest its refusal would generate resentment and even possibly lack of cooperation on future joint projects. Proposals were made to the Canadian Cabinet in the late 1950s for deployment of nuclear air defence missiles at Goose Bay and Harmon but Cabinet moved ever so slowly on the issue because of the potential political fallout and because they were afraid any base with such weapons would be given priority of attack by the Soviet air force. The USAF tried to get the RCAF to prod Cabinet to move but the agreement allowing it was not signed until a new government in Canada took power. Finally, the same year the Liberals beat the Conservatives, 1963, the deal was approved.

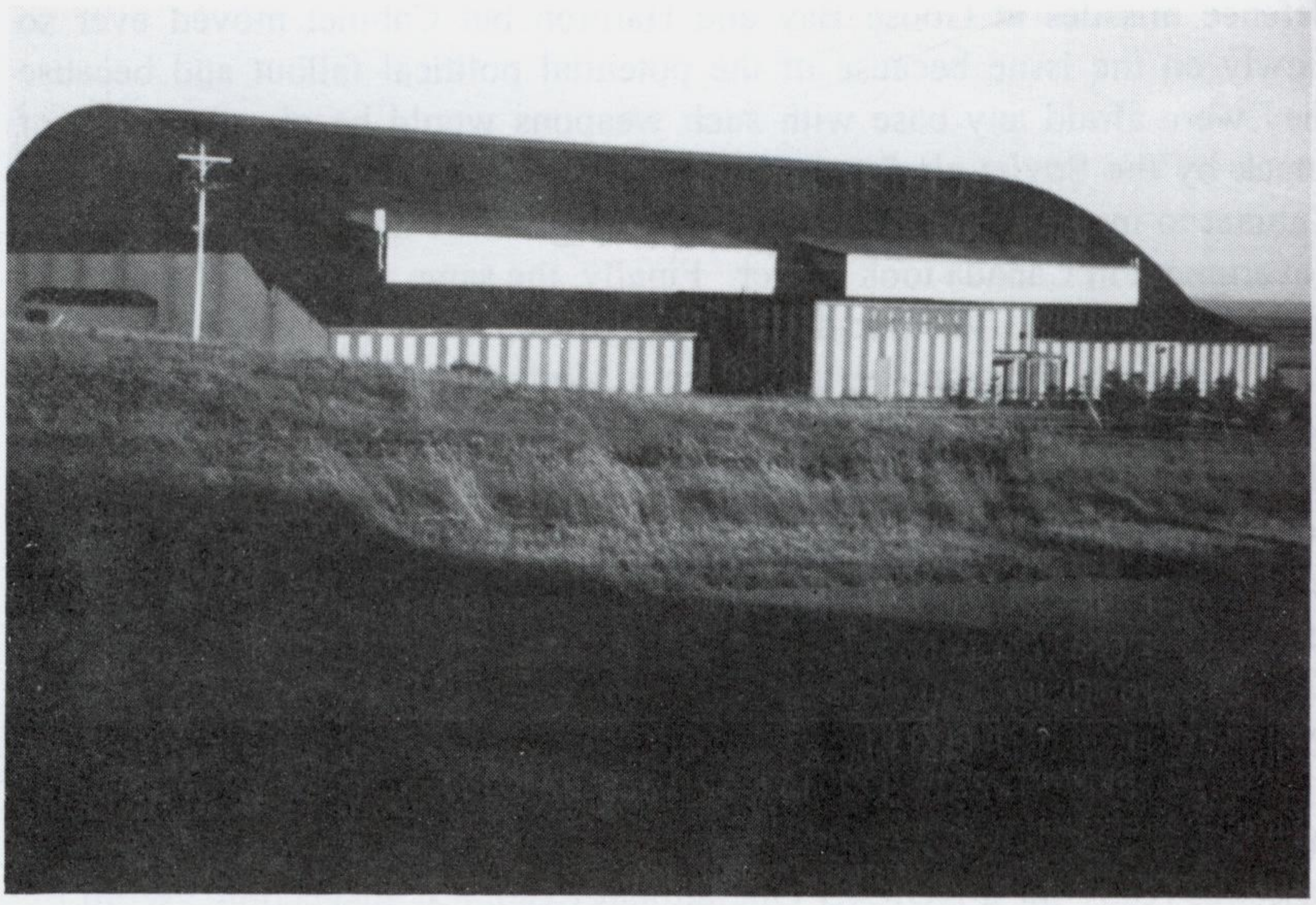
Lester Pearson, the new Prime Minister, had planned to make a full pronouncement on the deployment of atomic missiles at Goose and Harmon in the House of Commons but the US government pressured him not to do so since it violated the US *Atomic Energy Act.* Pearson was not entirely happy being censored by American legislation but nonetheless restricted the deployment locations to "US leased bases in Newfoundland." This was a joke since there were so few American bases in the province left by then that it was pointless to keep it a secret.

After special bunkers and security arrangements were prepared, the Falcons were received, this in the summer of 1965. In late July, the base was ready for a NORAD Operational Readiness Inspection. Word by then had gotten out among the locals that there were nukes on the base but Newfoundlanders were so pro-American there were no protests. Bureaucracy being what it is, the Department of National Revenue expected the proper importation paperwork to be filled out by the USAF, and while the Falcons had good tactical value, the DNR forms declared them to be of "no commercial value."

The deployment of nuclear missiles at Harmon AFB seemed unnecessary as there already was talk the same year about closing the base due to increasing commitments in Vietnam and the perceived shift in emphasis in Russia from bombers to ICBMs. The US had wanted to keep

the closure secret so it would not influence the upcoming election but the word was picked up anyway by the Canadian and Newfoundland governments. Locals had wanted the base to remain open due to its heavy influence on the local economy but the USAF made up its mind: Harmon AFB would close in December 1966. As John Clearwater put it his *US Nuclear Weapons in Canada*, the "base was now engaged in arranging deck chairs on the Titanic."

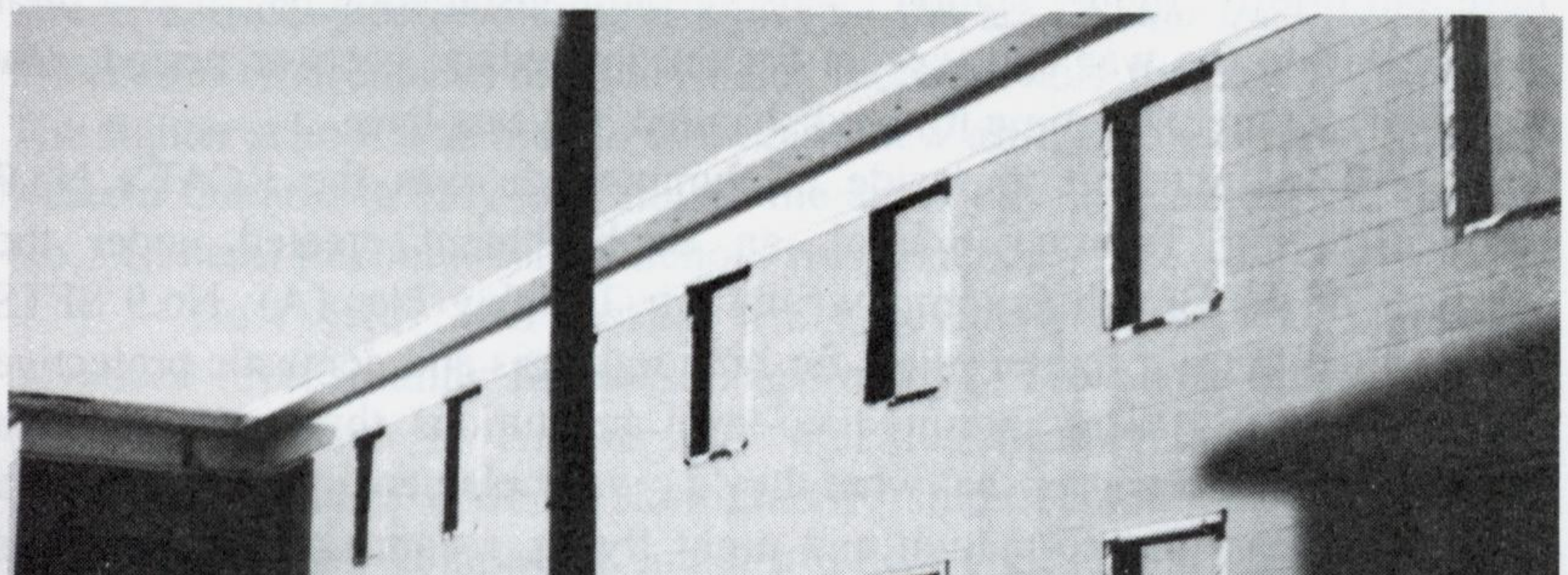
Today, there is much left of Harmon. The airport proper remains active as a civilian airfield while many of the standard rectangular two-storey barracks have found new roles, some as apartments, one as a Legion hall, one as a courthouse and one as a jail. The odd one is unused. One of the two Hiltons is now a retirement home, the Stephenville Manor, while the other was the Westviking Community College for awhile. One hangar became Stephenville Gardens while the old Air Force hotel, the DeGinque, is now Hotel Stephenville. Other occupants of the base include the RCMP and a company of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. The radar site on Table Mountain no longer exists.



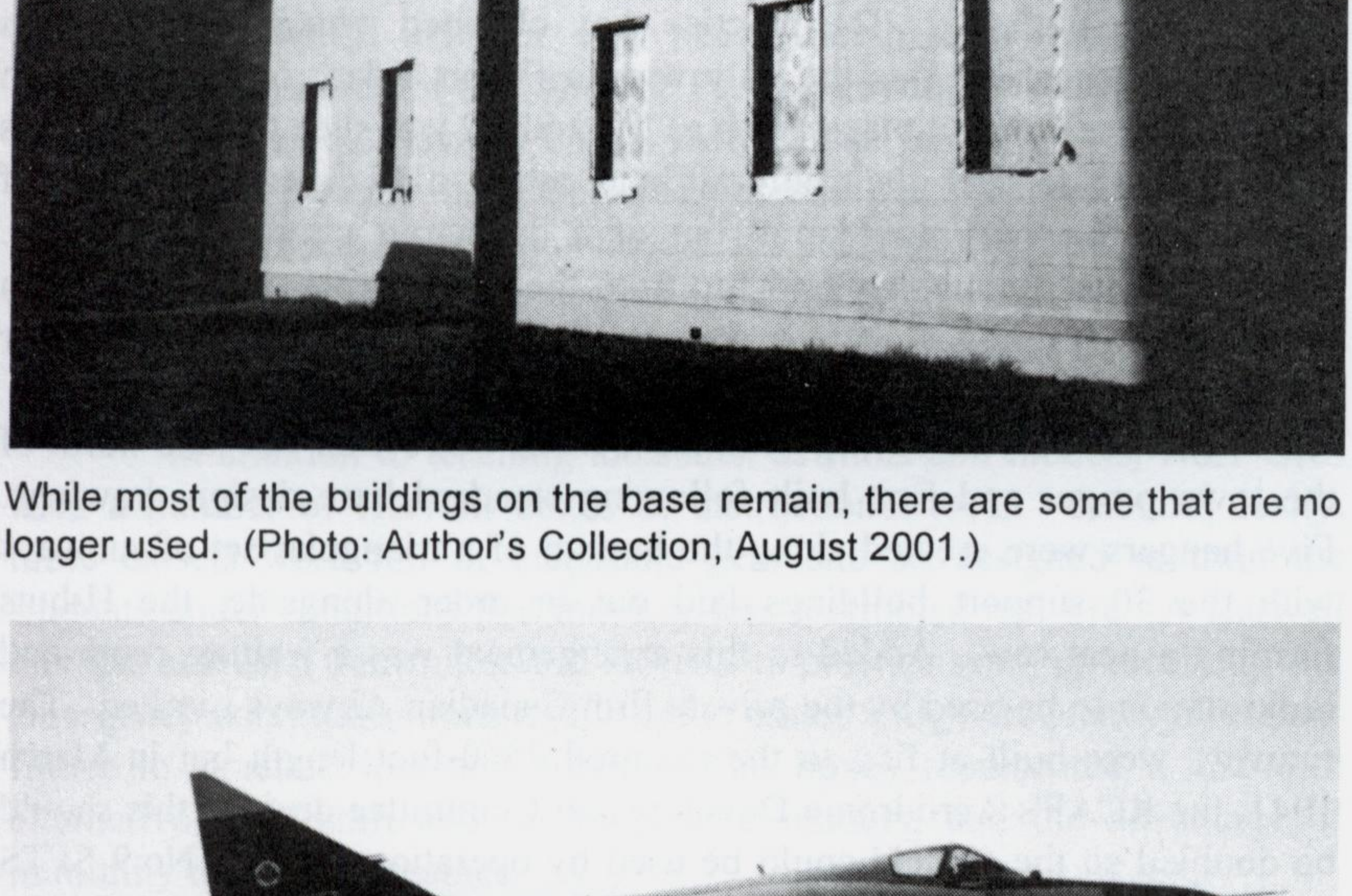
One of the hangars is now a recreation complex. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)

When Harmon AFB closed in 1966, there was the real threat the town would die. What saved it was the arrival of a new wood mill in the early 70s operated by Labrador Linerboard, an establishment encouraged by Premier Joey Smallwood. Opened in 1973, the mill soon ran into financial difficulties and was closed four years later but in 1978, it was sold to Abitibi-Price and converted into a pulp and paper mill that still operates today. Today's Stephenville survives as a town of 8000 complete with its

own Wal-Mart, Holiday Inn and McDonald's. When visited by the author, a new medical centre was being built east of town. The airport itself is struggling to survive and the city has recently stated it would not subsidize it. On the other hand, it has the honour of being one of the Space Shuttle's auxiliary landing fields, in a sense a return to its original role. What the future holds for the airport no one knows.



While most of the buildings on the base remain, there are some that are no longer used. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)



This F-102A will remind generations to come of what flew here. (Photo: Author's Collection, August 2001.)

SUMMERSIDE, PEI

Of Prince Edward Island's four military airfields - Charlottetown, Mount Pleasant, Wellington and Summerside - Summerside would be the one to live the longest. In its 50 years, the aerodrome would serve in such myriad roles as fighter school, reconnaissance school, maritime warfare unit, rescue base and briefly, fighter station. This versatile installation began as a pilot school during the war and, except for the immediate postwar period, saw activity right up to the time it was disbanded 50 years later.

The first unit to reside at Summerside was the RCAF's No.9 Service Flying Training School, an establishment created under the auspices of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.(A) No.9 SFTS was formed to train fighter pilots for both overseas and domestic protective service. SFTSs were intermediate-level institutions that gave students practice on aircraft faster that what they'd seen at elementary schools with a greater emphasis on formation and night flying, reconnaissance exercises and instrument flying. The practice they obtained with instruments was invaluable because it was the only way to fly on a dark night or through clouds. The training at places such as No.9 SFTS was such that the students had to learn to feel their aircraft and attain a high enough level of confidence that they could pull out of a dangerous situation with ease. Those fortunate enough to graduate from the course were either sent to an Operational Training Unit (e.g. Pennfield Ridge, NB) or to an instructor school.

No.9 Service Flying Training School was set on flat land north of the town proper and first built following standard base design drawings. Five hangars were erected along the bottom of a triangular set of runways with the 30 support buildings laid out in order alongside, the H-huts forming a neat row. Added to this arrangement was a waiting room and radio station to be used by the private firm Canadian Airways Limited. The runways were built at first to the required 2500-foot length but in March 1941, the RCAF's Aerodrome Development Committee decided this should be doubled so the airfield could be used by operational units. No.9 SFTS made use of an auxiliary landing field at Wellington.

From 1941 on, the RCAF would put its pupils through a heavy regimen of ground and flight training at No.9 SFTS. Safety was always emphasized but lectures and confidence notwithstanding, the school would nevertheless see several mishaps. In the very first course, the first fatal accident took place when LAC Murray on a long-range flight hit a snow squall near Sussex, New Brunswick, and crashed into the side of a hill. Two more bought the farm a few months later in a mid-air collision while performing low-level aerobatics. July 1941 was particularly brutal with four accidents occurring on the 3rd alone: one landed his Harvard with a flat tire and ended up on his nose, two others who braked too hard to avoid a collision also ended tail up, and one student damaged his wing by taxiing

into another aircraft. On the 20th, another mid-air collision killed both pilots and on the 25th, one plane swung off the runway and struck a tractor. August was just as bad.

No.9 SFTS was to last at Summerside for only one year and a half. With the growth in maritime operations, the RCAF decided in 1942 it needed a reconnaissance school to teach students how to detect ocean-borne threats and downed aircraft and allocated the aerodrome for this purpose, the coastal environment naturally being more suitable for this type of work. The fighter school was moved to a brand new airfield at Centralia in south-western Ontario in July and almost the same day it departed, the RCAF's No.1 General Reconnaissance School was created.

No.1 GRS was tasked with providing pilots and navigators advanced-level training for coastal operations. The pilots went through a two-month course in Ansons that included dead-reckoning navigation exercises, message coding, photography, ship recognition, meteorology, radio procedures, compasses and instruments, visual signalling and astro navigation. While medium and heavy bombers normally carried a navigator to do much of this, the Air Force knew there could be situations where a pilot would have to do his own course plotting. The navigators were taught separately in a four-week course that included much of the above in condensed form. Upon arrival, the students were tested for signals proficiency, including Morse at 18 words per minute and Aldis at 8, and those not meeting the standard were given appropriate remedial training. To pass the course, the navigators had to reach at least 20 wpm in Morse.

In addition to teaching aids such as films and models, No.1 GRS used a number of Harwell boxes as instructional tools. Cubicles really, these closets were full of electronic gear and so designed to train the students under conditions that more-or-less resembled real life. A Harwell box had at least a transmitter and receiver to practice sending, receiving and emergency communications and in some cases, a high-frequency direction-finder to practice lost and found. The boxes represented a low-cost alternative to aircraft and, as they were indoors, had the advantage of immunity to outside weather.

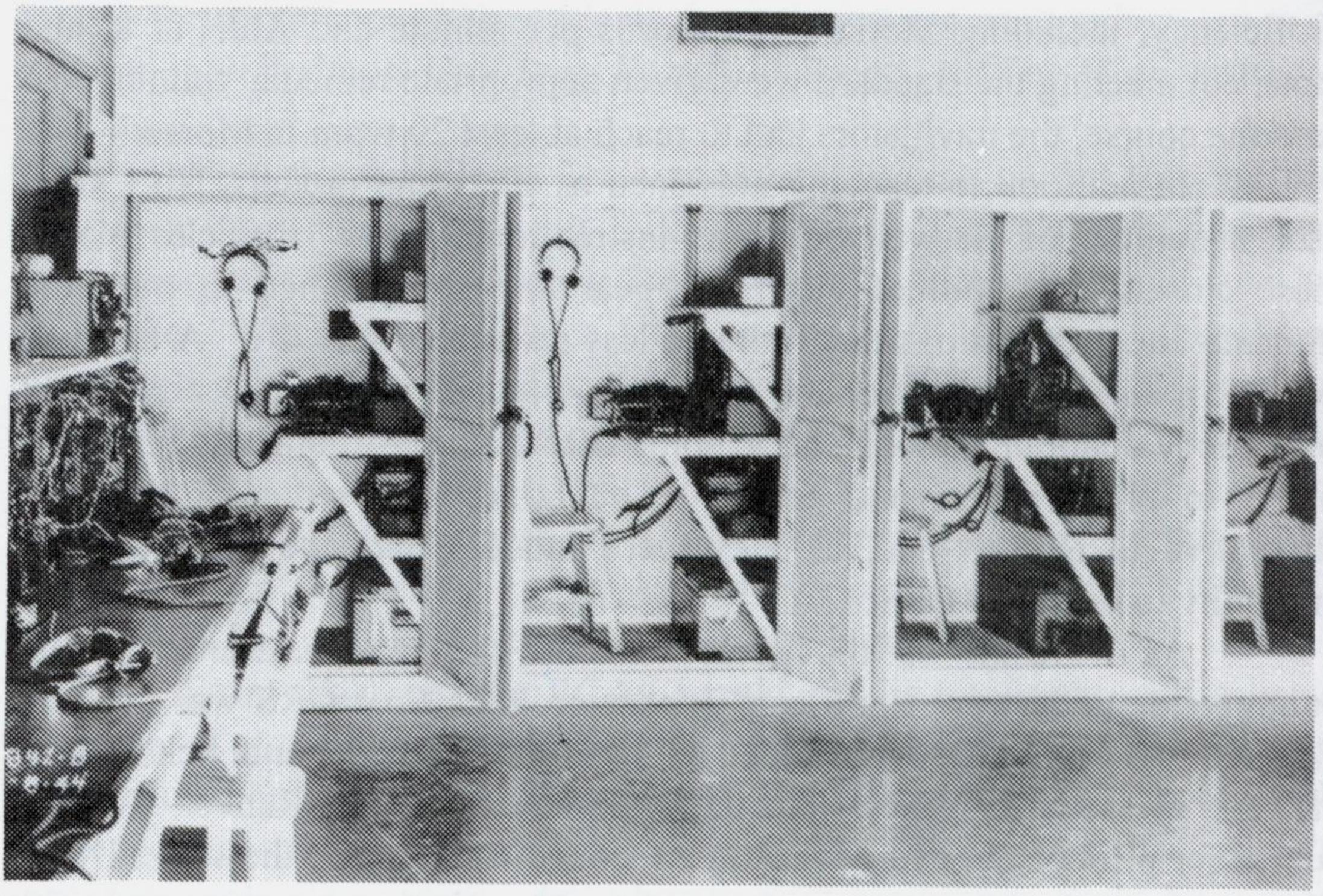
As a result of the great demand for reconnaissance pilots, Summerside underwent significant expansion after No.1 GRS was opened. To the SFTS's buildings were added a new Ground Instructional School hut, officers' mess, NCOs' mess and new quarters for Other Ranks. A new course for pilot began every week at 24 students per but by the second year of operations, the number had doubled to 48. Navigator courses had 72 students per class. The high success rate was likely due to the poor students having been previously weeded out. Most graduates were posted to a squadron in Canada or Britain while a lucky few were sent to the RAF's No.111 Operational Training Unit at Nassau for further training.

The Summerside school was truly a populous base. The aerodrome's roster of staff and students grew from the time it opened until

June 1944 when it peaked at 2185, and while the students were mainly from Commonwealth nations, there were a few Poles, Norwegians and Czechoslovakians in evidence. The base counted a large proportion of WDs (the RCAF's official term for airwomen) in support roles and in an effort to attract more, an open house was held on 30 June 1943 to show visitors what service life was like for the average girl. Groups of 15 to 20 guests were conducted through various buildings where women could be found - the maintenance shops, control tower, parachute section etc. - along with the recreational facilities and accommodations available to them. Among the questions most often asked to the tour guides were:

- Are airwomen a lot of trouble;
- Are airwomen allowed to fly;
- Did the girls actually take over men's jobs;
- Do the girls become masculine when they've been in the Air Force;
- How do you keep the men and women apart;
- Do airwomen go out with married men.

Some of the questions show the perception at the time that women in uniform adopted or possessed low morals and this myth was one all services fought hard to dispel throughout the war.



Harwell boxes at Summerside. (Photo: NAC, C-148422, August 1944.)

With so many people living on the base, it was just as well the school had plenty of recreational venues. Dances were sometimes organized that could see as many as 2000 attend. The first one, held in 1943, had the RCAF welcome Don Messer and his Islanders. The airmen

and airwomen could engage in several educational pursuits in their spare time through either correspondence courses or evening classes in shorthand, typing, music, leathercraft and French. Sporting matches of all kinds were held - boxing, softball, wrestling - all provided in an environment that gave Summerside the reputation of being the "slap-happiest" station in Canada.

Nineteen forty-five saw the winds of change hit Summerside in that the No.1 GRS was amalgamated with No.2 Air Navigation School of Charlottetown to form the No.1 Navigation and Reconnaissance School. The 20-week curriculum was basically the same as before and the aircraft were again Ansons. By that year, the aerodrome had grown to 65 buildings, not counting those it cared for at the Tignish radar site, the remote radio stations at Miscouche and on Summerside Road and two at the Tracadie Bay practice bombing range, and possessed 200 miles of runways and roadways. No.1 NRS was responsible for a search and rescue unit, the Gulf Rescue Flight, a group of men kept on stand-by in a church basement at Rustico ready to pick up downed flyers.

In late 1945, it was all over at Summerside. A few months earlier, the No.1 NRS had become the RCAF Air Navigation School but again, the change was more in name. In December, the ANS was moved to RCAF Station Greenwood and the PEI base was put to rest. It lay in a care and maintenance state with Ansons in storage, but only until 1947 when the RCAF decided to reuse it. To satisfy the requirements of a postwar air force, Ottawa decreed that once more, the skies around Summerside would be filled with navigators.

The RCAF's new postwar Air Navigation School was somewhat different than its predecessor. Where No.1 GRS had only one program of instruction for navigators, students at the new ANS had a choice of four: Basic Navigation, Specialist Navigation, Staff Navigation Instructor for Navigators (SNIN) and Staff Navigation Instructor for Pilots (SNIP). Most of the courses offered a chance to practice dead-reckoning navigation and compass using while at least one included instruments such as Loran, GEE, H2S radar and driftmeters. The Specialist Navigation program called for students to plot multi-leg courses to the US, Arctic or Great Britain and combine their flights with familiarization trips to such places as the USAF Bombardment School at Mather AFB, California, the RAF Flying College at Manby, Lincolnshire, or the RAF Central Navigation School at Shawbury, Shropshire. Students were also given a chance to visit the air traffic control centre at Dorval, the photo squadron at Rockcliffe and AV Roe at Malton. Training was aboard Dakotas but long-distance flights were taken with two modified training Lancasters, VC-DHZ and VC-DHP, affectionately known as Zenith and Polaris respectively, planes so good they set records in 1949 for the first non-stop eastern Canada to California flight, 2750 miles in 12 hours and 25 minutes.

The fifties saw many changes at Summerside. In October of the first year, the ANS began training foreign specialists under the NATO joint

training program. Reminiscent of the BCATP, the base once again saw RAF and Norwegian students but this time, there would be Italian, Belgian and French boys. The foreigners were taught the same subjects as the Canadians either in mixed classes (i.e. Italians, Norwegians and Belgians) or in groups of their own (i.e. British or French). Their success rate was just as good as the Canadians'.

If RCAF and NATO flying wasn't enough, the Royal Canadian Navy did its own there as of 1953. In September of that year, the RCN's 31st Support Air Group moved in from Scoudouc, New Brunswick, to fly two naval air units: 870 Fighter Squadron using Sea Furies and 880 Anti-Submarine Squadron using Avengers, units sent there to prepare themselves for deployment aboard the aircraft carrier HMCS *Magnificent*. The part of Summerside aerodrome lent to the navy was called a Naval Air Facility.

After several years of changes, re-organizations and re-structurings, 1953 was the year things would settle down at Summerside. The Air Navigation School was disbanded and in its place came one of the longest residents of the base. Two (Maritime) Operational Training Unit was a product of the Cold War with the mandate of giving aircraft crews a chance to learn about maritime warfare up close. After receiving instruction in their respective trades at other schools, pilots, navigators, radio officers and flight engineers were given advanced schooling at 2 (M) OTU with a view towards group work. The men were introduced to the Lancaster, initially the RCAF's main postwar reconnaissance aircraft, in a four-month syllabus whose content varied with the individual's assignment. The subjects taught included: airmanship, communications equipment and procedures, electronic counter-measures, in-flight reporting procedures, Magnetic Anomaly Detectors, navigation, Morse, radar, meteorology, ship reconnaissance, publications and codes, and sonobuoys. A pilot's training would emphasize aircraft operations and meteorology while the radio operator, communications equipment and Morse. As part of their program, the crews were sent to the Joint Maritime Warfare School at Halifax for two weeks of tactics.

There were times training at 2 (M) OTU provided some close-call experiences. On 10 September 1958, Flight Lieutenant Voellmecke was flying a Neptune that was recently acquired by the unit and was about to simulate a single-engine landing when he noticed his left wheel remained retracted when the landing gear selector was set for "Down." Playing with the gear several times and trying the emergency wheel extension had no effect, so to avoid a crash Voellmecke had to come up with a safe solution. Whether by instinct or design, the pilot decided G-forces could be used. By diving the Neptune at 230 knots while at the same time selecting gear "Down" and applying the emergency extension, the stubborn wheel finally dropped. This seemed to work except that now, the landing gear down indicator failed to light making it appear the wheels were not locked down. Again dives were performed and again, the light remained dark.

Voellmecke surmised there was a fault with the indicator system so he decided to try a touch and go landing on the runway to see if they would hold. He approached the runway, touched it and took off immediately without problem. Satisfied that the wheels were locked, Voellmecke brought the Neptune in safely. (The incident investigation revealed the carriage tension assembly cable failed on retraction fouling the sprocket chain and the carriage latch hook. By inducing heavy G-forces, the pilot caused the second carriage cable to fail and the wheel to drop.)

Every now and then, crews from 2 (M) OTU had the good fortune of going through a live ASW exercise. Exercise *Beaver Dam III* held over four days in mid-March 1959 saw three "enemy" subs (HMS *Alderney*, HMS *Ambush* and one US sub) creep up the east coast to launch a missile attack upon Halifax. RCAF active units and a dozen ships such as HMCSs *Bonaventure* and *Haida* were sent out to seek and destroy the enemy with 2 OTU responsible for providing continuous radar coverage and the SOSUS array at Shelburne used to pin-point targets. Two OTU picked up at least four targets during the exercise (one sub must have been spotted twice) and on the last day, after visually spotting one of its foe, one of its Neptunes tracked it with a sonobuoy pattern, localized it using MAD and "sunk" it with four practice depth charges. While Halifax had been theoretically devastated by the attack, at least naval headquarters survived since it was "adequately protected by deep layers of paper."

In addition to normal operations, 2 (M) OTU and the station commander had to contend with other issues. The RCAF was sometimes called upon to perform mercy flights whenever a medical emergency that could not be handled locally arose. When a new born baby was discovered to be lacking an oesophagus, the Unit quickly flew him to Montreal Children's Hospital for surgery. Specialists there implanted an artificial organ without which the baby would have starved to death within days. The unit's historical record does not say if the operations was a success.

Then there were visits, and plenty of them. In April 1952, Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton dropped in for an inspection on his way to a Liberal dinner. The otherwise pleasant occasion was marred by the crash of a Lancaster in which four of the twelve occupants were killed. In August 1956, a delegation of Russian and Canadian fisheries officials, the Russian ambassador and several media persons including a "Tass" correspondent were given a tour, although it was not clear why Russians would be shown around a maritime reconnaissance base. On 27 February 1958, it was John Diefenbaker's turn to check the place out, followed by his nemesis Lester Pearson two weeks later. Wrestler Billy "Whipper" Watson made at least two stops at Summerside for Easter Seal campaigns and Governor-Generals Vincent Massey and Georges P. Vanier also made appearances. On 30 July 1959, it was the Queen of England's turn, and the base must have impressed her so much she came back for a second visit five years later and again in 1973.

The late 1950s saw many physical changes at Summerside. Aircraft and ASW operations had become so complex and technically demanding in the fifties it was perhaps inevitable the PEI base would expand. New construction began in 1959 in the form of a large new cantilever hangar, readiness hangars and ammunition depot at the north end, a new FPN-33 Ground-Control Approach radar, central heating plant and a fuel tank large enough to hold a 30-day supply of Avgas. Some of these facilities were installed specifically for new aircraft the RCAF ordered that would soon arrive.

Within months of the above construction finished, RCAF Station Summerside gained a new child. The aforementioned increasing complexity of ASW technology pushed the RCAF to create a new outfit to test new equipment. The Maritime Proving and Evaluation Unit (MP&EU) was formed in 1961 to test new instruments that would be used by patrol crews. The MP&EU looked at such equipment as British Active Direction Sonobuoys, dual-depth hydrophones, sea markers and aircraft lightning arresters sometimes working in conjunction with the National Research Council, the RCN's Naval Research Establishment or the USN's Naval Air Development Centre. As examples, one project called for the evaluation of the SSQ-502 sonobuoy's passive listening characteristics while Project Nutmeg looked at the effectiveness of moored long-life devices.* On other occasions, the Unit tested the KD2 camera for filming APP-74 ECM Analyzer output, the Canadian Marconi ARR-52 sonobuoy receiver, the Spectocom experimental Heads-Up Display and the Cossor submarine cavitation detector.

The 1959-61 construction program was partly carried out to service a new unit that would call Summerside home. Four-fifteen (Maritime Patrol) Squadron was formed in May 1961 as a new anti-sub unit equipped with the new Canadair Argus. Designed as a replacement to the ageing Lancaster, the Argus was modelled on the Bristol Britannia and outfitted with a wide array of sensors capable of tracking both surface and sub-surface threats. The AN/APS-20 radar on the Mark I and the ASV-21 on the Mark II searched for surface vessels while the AN/ASQ-8 Magnetic Anomaly Detector looked for submarines. Another device, Julie, worked by Explosive Echo-Ranging by having a small charge explode in the water with the echoes that bounced off a submarine relayed back to the aircraft via an array of sonobuoys. (The in-joke was that Julie made passive buoys active.) The Argus was also equipped with electronic counter-measures, a state-of-the-art Air Navigation and Tactical Control system and, of course, rows of Canadian-made sonobuoys. It had so much in terms of instrumentation and controls the plane required 60 miles of wiring and was

*Co-incidentally (or perhaps not), Nutmeg was the code-name for Argentia's Sound Surveillance System hydrophone array which consisted of moored long-life passive devices.

so big Canadair had to modify its hangar to accommodate it. A scramble could put an Argus and its 15-member crew up in 58 minutes which, for a four-engined beast, was considered good. The all-seeing aircraft was appropriately named after the 100-eyed giant from Greek mythology.

One month after the patrol squadron was formed, it received its first Argus, No.20720. Further planes arrived in the weeks following and by August 1962, the unit had its full complement of eight. The squadron began its routine of reconnaissance flights and exercises and its 18-hour standard flight time was soon surpassed when Argus 20722 exceeded a record 30 hours on an Arctic flight. Four-fifteen Squadron was often called upon to fly long stretches to such places as the Azores, France and Gibraltar but these trips gave the crews the practice they needed. When the Soviet fleet exercised in the north-east Atlantic, both 415 and the evaluation unit were deployed to Keflavik, Iceland, to keep an eye on it. The squadron was particularly busy during October 1962 when the Cuban missile crisis brought the two superpowers close to a nuclear spitting match. The Arguses at Summerside were so reliable, at least at first, the squadron commander could not pass up the opportunity to fly all eight in formation over the other reconnaissance base at Greenwood once in 1962 just to show off.

Where ordnance was concerned, the Argus was built to carry a fair bit. It could hold a number of depth charges and a variety of torpedoes. Soon after rolling off the assembly line, the planes' bomb bays were modified to accommodate nuclear bombs, the 10-kiloton Mk101 and the higher yield Mk57. The entire weapons panel was redesigned to incorporate launch and safety features necessary for these special weapons.

Despite the preparation of nuclear ASW bomb deployment plans and low-key political discussions, these weapons were never accepted by the RCAF. The Cabinet Defence Committee had agreed to four nuclear weapons systems - the Bomarc, the Honest John surface-to-surface missile, the Genie and the Mk57 for the CF-104 - but the inclusion of nuclear anti-sub bombs without public consultations made Committee members uneasy. Some negotiations with the US had begun over the issue by the Diefenbaker government but after a new Liberal government was elected in 1963, the issue stalled. The new Minister of National Defence raised the matter a few times with Cabinet but each time, his proposal was rejected as it contradicted the Prime Minister's promise to stick to the four weapons. John Clearwater in his *Canadian Nuclear Weapons* writes that the Liberals' "delicate balance of votes in the House of Commons" was also an influencing factor. At the troop level, base personnel began in the mid-1960s to attend nuclear accident response exercises given by the base's medical and nuclear defence staff in case Summerside Arguses or visiting aircraft had mishaps. In the end, the planes were never outfitted with nuclear devices and by the 1970s, the exercises ceased to be held.

The Argus remained in the Air Force's inventory for 20 years. Each plane had by then averaged 15,000 hours or about 750 hours per year.

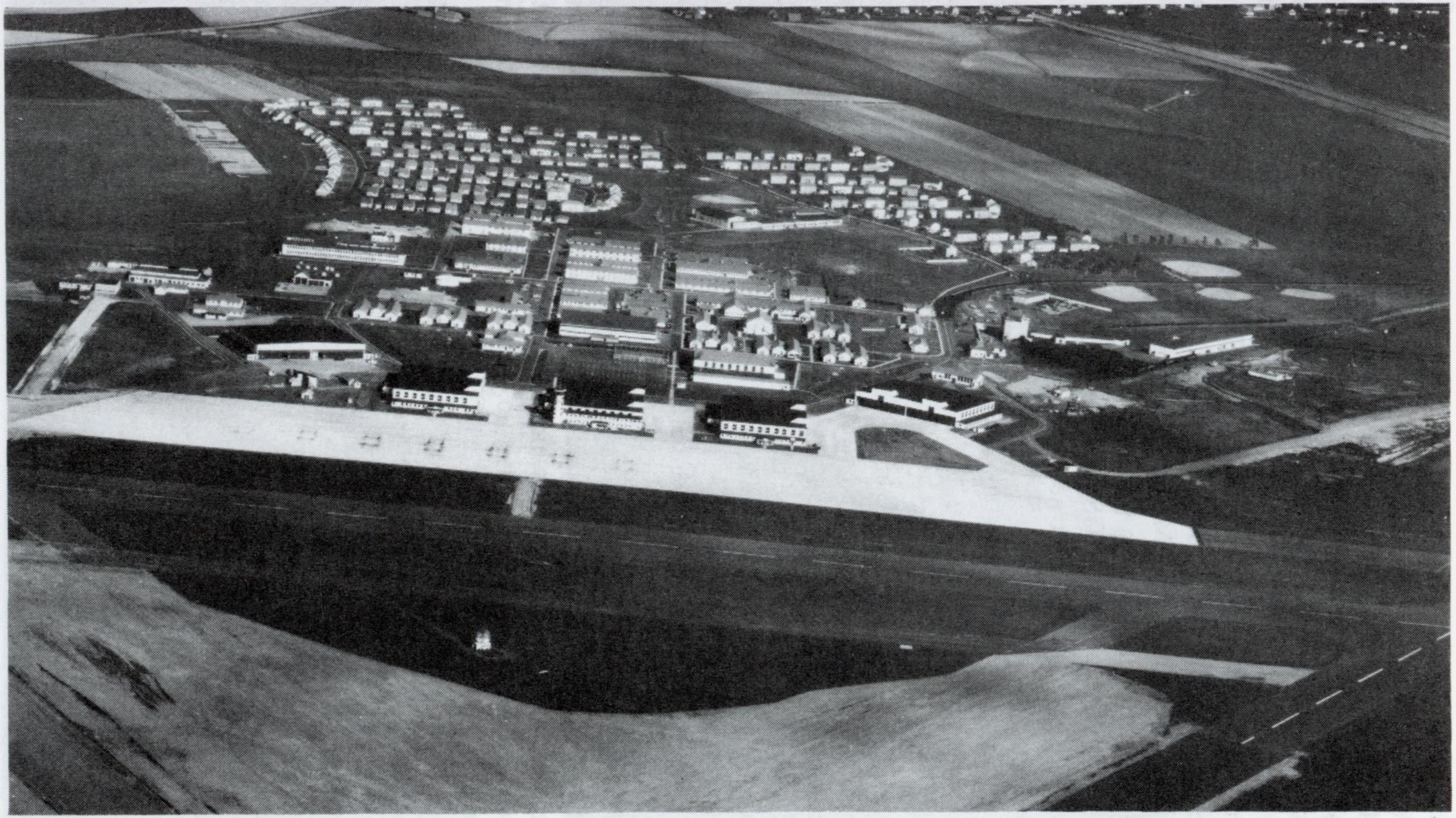
DND knew they would not last forever so as early as 1972, it decided they would be replaced. After several bids were received, a contract was signed with Lockheed in July 1976 for 18 P-3 Auroras, planes that had twice the cruising speed, were more comfortable and required a crew of only ten.

Since the new patrol planes were to be stationed at Greenwood only, 415 Squadron was ordered to move out of PEI. The Arguses remained at Summerside and were joined by those from 404 and 405 Squadron and held on the runway until they could be sold off. The Crown Assets Disposal Corporation advertised the planes as possible transports, water bombers and surveillance aircraft to foreign governments but before they could be sold, the Corporation changed its mind and offered them for scrap only. Bristol Metal Industries of Toronto bought several of the old beasts and melted them on the spot. Others have survived as monuments and, in one case, as an anti-terrorist training aircraft at the Mountain View, Ontario, air force detachment.

As well as training, evaluation and ocean reconnaissance, Summerside had a fourth role. As a flying machine, the helicopter turned out to be so versatile the RCAF acquired several for transport and rescue. Its capacity to stay put for long periods made it ideal to pick up the stranded or to drop loads off in inhospitable terrain. 415 Squadron at Summerside had already been given a search and rescue role in 1964 but as the Argus lacked the flexibility of a helicopter, a new unit was created for this purpose in 1968, 413 (Rescue) Squadron. From then on, freighters and fishing boats that called for help were often looked after by this unit.

Other units moved into Summerside later on. In 1981 after 415 Squadron moved to Greenwood, 880 Maritime Reconnaissance Squadron moved back in. After its departure in 1956, it had served aboard HMCS *Bonaventure* and then as a shallow-water ASW unit based at CFB Shearwater. At Summerside, 880 Squadron used its Grumman CS2F Trackers to conduct sovereignty flights to watch enemy ships and to perform search and rescue. The Trackers used a small three-man crew of two pilots and one Airborne Electronic Sensor Operator to man the radar and radios (for which training was provided here) and possessed CRV-7 rockets as armaments. The planes were used primarily to patrol Canada's territorial waters for overfishing and pollution.

If the 1970s were known for government spend-happy days, the decade that followed saw the opposite. By then, Canada had reached a huge debt and the new Conservative government of Brian Mulroney began to worry about paying it off. Certainly, the recession of the early eighties did not help government revenues and the Conservative philosophy of restraint meant some people would see less. The new government started by cutting back VIA Rail, privatizing Canadian Arsenals Limited and reviewing the nation's defence infrastructure with an eye on savings. By the late '80s, it was decided that several military bases would either be reduced in size or simply closed. Summerside was on the latter list.



The main part of CFB Summerside in June 1966. (Photo: NAPL, Natural Resources Canada, RR2680, Picture 34.)

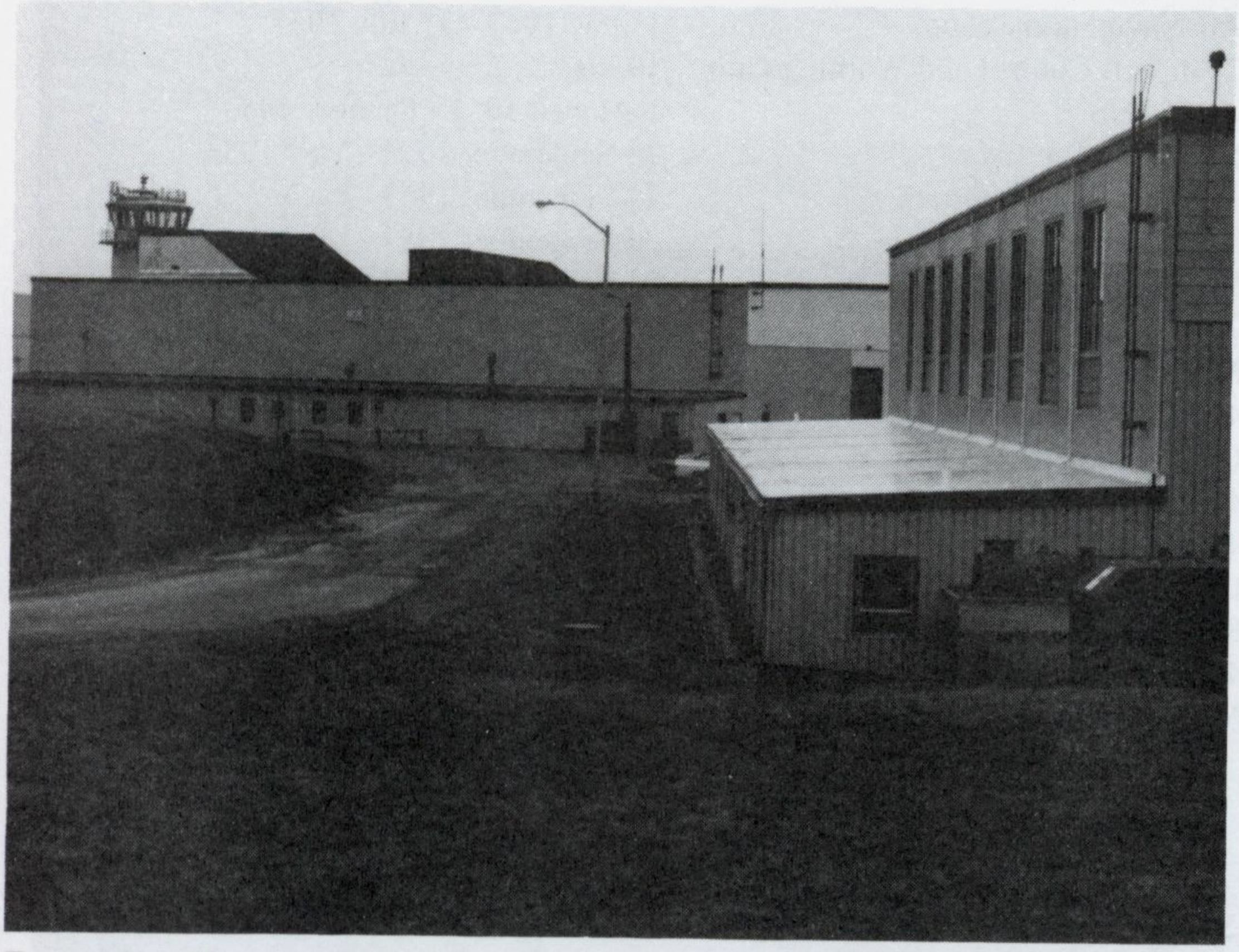
When the Minister of National Defence announced CFB Summerside's closure, the island's residents were outraged. How dare they, they said, close PEI's last military base. An estimated 10,000 marched through the streets of Summerside hoping their voices would reverse the government's decision. The base, after all, employed 1200, including 260 civilians, and injected an estimated $50-million into the island's economy per year, according to the *Globe and Mail*. Some say it was payback time from the Tories for PEI's lack of elected Conservative MPs. While it had been the fourth time its disbandment was announced, this time DND was serious. Liberal MP Paul Martin Jr. suggested the base be used as a NATO training centre but that idea went nowhere. The government made up for it by promising to build a GST processing centre, and although the new building it required offset some of the savings from the closure, the government kept its promise.

The disposal of CFB Summerside was covered to some extent in Stevie Cameron's book *On The Take*. After the closure was announced, London, Ontario, businessman and ex-Labatt president Don McDougall took interest in the property and offered to convert it into an aerospace shopping centre that would be shared between a few anchor tenants and small enterprises much like any large-sized mall. McDougall's proposal was accepted by the government and the base was turned over to his Ran Corporation for $2 who in turn transferred it to the new Slemon Park Development Corporation. The province for its part had tried to sue the federal government over the base's closure and lost but at least got a hand in the new corporation by having the right to nominate two of its directors. SPDC soon acquired its first anchor, a CHC Helicopter subsidiary named Atlantic Turbines Incorporated and owned by Craig Dobbin, that did aircraft engine repair work and which got an Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency grant of $4-million to start up. Prodded by tax breaks, other firms came.

But it was not all rosy at Summerside. Consultant Fred Fenton was brought in to help market the base to the world but for some reason, he was not allowed to go full speed. Leads he picked up at an Atlanta trade show were ignored and businesses that wanted to move in, such as Esso, were discouraged from doing so. Then suddenly, Fenton was laid off apparently due to a lack of funds. Dobbin had been running Air Atlantic out of the base briefly but in 1994, the company was in financial woes, the Royal Bank threatened to repossess one of its planes and in May 1994, he filed for bankruptcy protection.

The Summerside base still remains today and still employs a number of people. In fact, it has survived rather well with its various businesses generating about $100-million per year. One now finds Humpty Dumpty there, makers of those wonderful potato chips, the Atlantic Police Academy and the Slemon Park Inn in a brand-new building. The Canex is now occupied by a Robin's Donuts and a computer school. DND still owns

some of the buildings such as the armoury for B Squadron of the PEI Regiment and old wartime huts for the air cadets. The cantilever hangar is occupied by the Aerospace Technology Centre but the bomb dump nearby lays empty. The CBC has shot part of its show *Emily of New Moon* in one of the hangars. Visitors will always be reminded of the industrial park's military heritage by the Argus, Voodoo and Tracker on permanent display by the Canex.



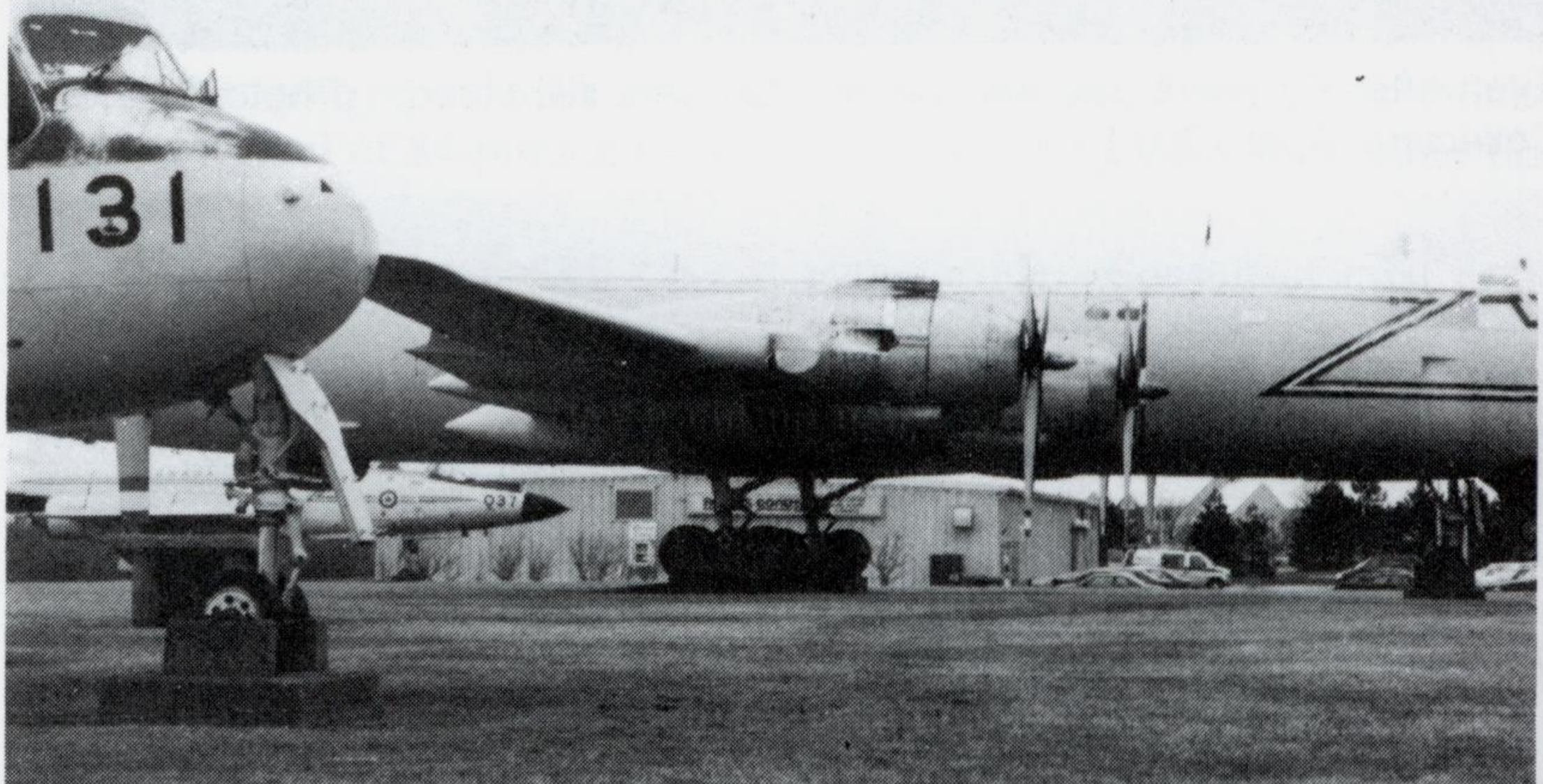
Even after 60 years, the old wartime hangars still stand. (Photo: Author's Collection, April 2000.)



One of the few Neptunes left in Canada is parked at the Greenwood Aviation Museum in Nova Scotia. (Photo: Author's Collection, May 2001.)

Units at Summerside

No.9 SFTS	6 January 1941 - 8 July 1942
No.1 GRS	6 July 1942 - 3 February 1945
No.161 (BR) Squadron	30 April 1944 - 15 December 1944
No.1 NRS	4 February 1945 - 15 September 1945
Air Navigation School	16 September 1945 - December 1945
RCAF Station Summerside	1 March 1947 - 31 March 1966
Air Navigation School	1 June 1947 - 31 July 1951
3 Aircraft Control and Warning Unit	1950s
No.1 ANS	1 August 1951 - October 1953
Naval Air Facility	24 September 1953 - May 1956
31st Support Air Group	24 September 1953 - ?
870 Fighter Squadron	24 September 1953 - March 1954
880 A/S Squadron	24 September 1953 - June 1956
2 (M) OTU	26 October 1953 - 12 March 1968
Maritime Proving and Evaluation Unit	1 June 1959 - August 1978
415 (MP) Squadron	1 May 1961 - June 1981
CFB Summerside	1 April 1966 - 5 January 1992
413 (Rescue) Squadron	8 July 1968 - 31 August 1970
413 (T&R) Squadron	1 September 1970 - June 1991
Canadian Forces Junior Leaders' School	March 1974 - July 1991
880 (MR) Squadron	4 August 1981 - 1990s
420 Air Reserve Squadron	15 September 1981 - 1990s
MAC Trade Advancement School	



Three of the types of aircraft that have flown out of Summerside: the Tracker, the Argus and, while Chatham's runways were being resurfaced, the Voodoo. (Photo: Author's Collection, April 2000.)



These ammunition bunkers now lay empty of their deadly cargo. (Photo: Author's Collection, April 2000.)



These old barracks still see people in uniform such as air cadets. (Photo: Author's Collection, April 2000.)

SUSSEX, NB

Like so many other former military installations, one would never know by driving down Leonard Road in Sussex one would be passing through what was once a large army camp. Today, a new armoury and a large recreation

centre bearing the cryptic letters 8CH are the only local traces of the Department of National Defence. The new park, businesses, regional high school, health centre and houses bear false witnesses to the thousands of men and women who marched there a long time ago.

Although built on an old Department of Militia training ground, Camp Sussex really came of age during the Second World War. Its first known wartime use as an enemy alien receiving station to accept those considered a threat to the Dominion was soon supplanted by a camp to train fighting units. One of the earliest to be stationed there, the 4th Canadian Motorcycle Regiment was well-known to the area and remains to this day as the Princess Louise's New Brunswick Hussars. It its six wartime years, Camp Sussex saw so many units pass through its doors one would be hard pressed to know if they were coming or going.

Regiments of all types trained at Sussex. At various times, there were infantry, artillery, medical corps and armoured corps units there as well as Veteran Guardsmen, provosts and engineers. Early in 1943, the advanced infantry school at Camp Utopia had run so short of space it set a detachment up at Sussex to train instructors. The camp had drill halls and orderly rooms, several H-huts, mess halls and good entertainment facilities such as a YMCA hut complete with a motion picture theatre along with Knights of Columbus and Salvation Army huts and a Legion library. The Edmonton Fusiliers remarked that supplies that were so lacking in the west were plentiful here.

The first major unit to occupy Camp Sussex was the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade. The 8th was made up of infantry regiments, artillery batteries and various support units and given the mandate for the province's land defence against the enemy. The brigade moved in when the camp was under construction and had to make due with what it could. Headquarters were put in an old house previously used as camp offices and called the White House that required some modifications by the commander, Brigadier Archambault, whom Priscilla Hazen of the *Montreal Standard* called the "Camp Number 1 Fighting Man." A man of humour, Archambault ordered the engineers to remove doors to two offices and replace them with walls so that they could become "hide-outs for the Brigade staff in case of invasion." The engineers were also ordered to install a new ventilation system in the latrine and ensure the air would be blown out and not in.

One usually does not give second thoughts to plumbers but in Camp Sussex's case, Brigadier Archambault thought his was a man of vision and a man of the future, one who was "essentially an idealist in spite of the light in which he is usually held" and one that could "soar to such heights of materialistic ecstasy that the results are impractical." What earned the plumber's praise was the installation of a hot water source to the toilets in one of the lavatories. Soldiers learned not to hang around toilets too long lest they be welcomed by a hot reception. The Brigadier thought

the idea so good it be "incorporated as a new secret weapon for use against the enemy in evacuated territory."

Troops in wartime were constantly drilled in security consciousness and trusted to some extent, but this did not prevent the Army from spying on its own. When two groups of soldiers in the RCASC support company were overheard speaking in German and Italian, it was enough for the Canadian Intelligence Corps' No.5 Field Security Section at Debert to dispatch two men conversant in the same languages to find out what was being said. After spending some time eavesdropping on the troops, the two infiltrators found nothing subversive and returned to Debert.

In another security case, when an officer from the Régiment de la Chaudière was on leave at Lachute, Québec, in early 1941, his host, a local Bell Telephone technician, commented that he had seen a secret telephone in the office of a German civilian near the Carillon canal at Grenville that had its line run inside the leg of a desk. The man also possessed a number of government maps. What made this doubly strange was that he was not interned when war broke out in 1939. Upon his return to camp, the officer thought it important enough to report to the RCMP.

Initially, Camp Sussex by itself had most of the amenities expected of an army installation with one exception. The large number of men stationed there needed a training area where brigade-level exercises could be held. Since artillery units were involved, this suggested the area had to be located away from the town. The Canadian Army looked for a large acreage that had features such as uneven terrain, a combination of open fields and forests, and a very sparse population. The training field it found was at Penobsquis.

Most of the training held at Penobsquis was rough. There was, however, one exception. In the summer of 1942, the Canadian Army wanted to test new emergency field rations and looked for volunteer guinea pigs willing to sample Ottawa's choices. The 17th Infantry Brigade took up the challenge and fulfilled headquarters' requirement of six groups of 20 men each to live on separate menus for ten days. Three groups of the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish tested Canadian, British and US Army K-rations respectively while the Fusiliers du St.-Laurent and the Régiment de St.-Hyacinthe tasted Vitamin-B deficient rations, one with and one without yeast. The 2nd Battalion Black Watch lived on a combination of US Army D, US Army K, Canadian and British rations. Every group was subjected to the same amount of work during the ten days for proper comparative analysis and kept under constant medical supervision. The net result to the experiment was a considerable loss of weight during their first two days but a quick recovery thereafter.

A constant for any basic military training program is discipline, that is following orders unquestioningly and showing enough self-restraint of one's baser impulses. One of the enemies of discipline is booze since it lowers the required mental guard to achieve this. Large-scale fights among

the troops were rare in the Canadian Army, and although one had already taken place on 18 January 1941 at Sussex due to "high spirits" between the 12th Field Regiment and the Régiment de la Chaudière, the one on 6 May 1943 between the Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles and the Voltigeurs de Québec was deadlier.

The Duffs were getting ready to go overseas and had prepared a dance to that effect, drinking of course having been allowed. At approximately 21.30, the dance had stopped and the men were on their way back to the barracks when some decided to drop in uninvited on the Voltigeurs. The intrusion was not well appreciated and the cold reception caused some Duffs to mouth off and throw stones at their huts. The Voltigeurs responded by stepping out armed, but when the Duffs attempted to disarm them, it only made it worse. The action set off a riot where fists flew, head were clubbed, bayonets were jabbed and shots were fired by unknowns. When it was over, one Duff was seriously wounded and several others on both sides injured. Sergeant A.B. Bowman of the 8th Anti-Tank Regiment who was waiting in a taxi was hurt by a stray shot. The wounded Duff, Private D. Bennett, died two days later.

Tensions remained between the two regiments afterwards. When troops from the two units neared each other in town later, another fight almost broke out and it was only the quick intervention of the Voltigeurs' Officer Commanding that prevented another melee. The OC decided it would be best if his unit was transferred out, which it soon was. The Duffs remained until August 1943 when they were sent to Niagara for guard duty.

Despite outgoing mail being censored, the story soon broke in an Ontario paper. According to the Duffs' OC, this made "a joke of our attempt at security." The RCMP meanwhile was called in to try and find out who fired the shots. A military court of inquiry into the fight was ordered and by the time it finished, it produced a voluminous file with hundreds of pages. The court determined that the cause was simply alcohol. While there had been rumours race or religion was a motivating factor, the court did not think so. In the end, one officer was charged with negligence - the charge later dropped as unfounded - and several men were court-martialled.

There were several lighter moments at Camp Sussex. When the Victoria Rifles' mascot Newfie chewed off a Bren gun sling, the OC charged him with destroying government property. Newfie, it was said, "exhibited elaborate unconcerns."

The following month, when the Vics were going through an inspection by General Leclerc, the General Officer Commanding 7th Division, the General enquired to Lance Corporal Butler about his service. The junior NCO stated he served with the Black Watch for three years but opted for service with the Vics upon mobilization. Leclerc turned to the Brigade Major, Major Knox, himself of the Black Watch, to say "that will teach you a lesson" perhaps implying the unit was not worthy of the man.

Knox turned around and asked Butler why he chose the Victoria Rifles. The reply: "Well Sir, it's like this. I always wanted to go overseas with a unit that wore pants."

Two weeks before the Vics arrived at Sussex in 1942, the Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles had moved in. One of the Duffs first functions was to help put out a forest fire about 18 miles from camp. It took a week but the boys managed. To be on the safe side, some of the troops conducted patrols to ensure it would not restart. Captain Staunton, for one, remained on the scene with a hose putting out whatever small fires there were. Unknown to him, some of his men threw lit matches behind his back and as soon as a fire started, Staunton would extinguish it. Suspicious that new fires had begun where he'd just walked, he quickly caught on to his men's game and suddenly turned around to hose the perpetrators. Thus ended the practice.

Another outfit at Camp Sussex was the A-34 Special Officers' Training Centre.(D) The SOTC was a special unit formed in early 1944 to train Canadian officers in a one-month course for service with the Imperial army in northwest Europe under the Can-Loan scheme. The 673 junior infantry and ordnance officers were greatly appreciated by Britain. The training centre then changed mandate and name to Special Training Centre (STC) the following summer when it began training privates with university degrees in the COTC an eight-week course preparatory to the Officers' Training Centre. It also instructed NCOs who'd acquired their rank only because of their prior civilian trade in basic military training.

The War Diary for the A-34 school provides several anecdotes worth repeating. On the humorous side, the padre was considering publishing a dictionary with every possible example of a "goddamned" thing. He had never heard of so many goddamned things until he joined the army and felt certain every man who used the evil adjective would be scared out of his life if he ever met the person who did the damning.

Swearing came hand in hand with cockiness in that the NCOs under training at the STC laughed at the easy time they were having on the obstacle course. Having already spent years in uniform made everything seem like child's play. Seeing this, the instructors decided to increase the tempo and add danger to their training with small 808 charges thrown in Trout Creek that ran below a rope bridge. The fuses were so set that the 808s would blow in the water and splash the trainees above. Some of the students fell into the creek as a result of the detonations with one losing his helmet and another, his false teeth. Although the men thought this quite fun, they began taking a more kindly view of the course.

Then there were the skunks.

In April 1945, it was noticed that a group of the furry so-and-sos had made their home under one of the kitchens. With spring having arrived, one of the oldest skunks chose to take his sun bath by the door to the coal bin. The stench prevented the cook from getting coal. Two of the

smaller skunks and a cat took to playing on the kitchen steps, but when one of the skunks got "too inquisitive," the cat walloped him with his paw. The situation was considered "worse than dynamite." A stick of 808 and a smoke generator had no effect, which did not surprise the Officer Commanding as the skunks were "well aware of the superiority of their own equipment." The school's War Diary does not say how the situation was resolved.

Soon after the skunk episode, the STC's commander was left with another stinker. Some of his students had behaved so badly during an evening training film they were rewarded with a ten-mile route march. After their return, the lads decided to break into one of the kitchens and help themselves to pork and beans. The following morning, a Captain Oldham reprimanded the guilty party for what they had done and warned them with a straight face that the first one "who expelled flatus" would be placed under close arrest. According to the Officer Commanding, "it took the men a little while to figure out whether to take him seriously or not."

April was an odd month at A-34. Two days after the beans business, the OC couldn't help but remark on the stupidity and lack of interest in some of his trainees. On the Sten machine gun range one day, the range officer instructed the students in safety no less than three times, set them up in line and gave them the order to fire. One of the Stens jammed and the student, seemingly not very safety conscious, turned to point his sub-machine gun at fellow students beside him all the while keeping his finger on the trigger. Fortunately, the Sten really was jammed.*

A week later, another student had trouble with a Thompson sub-machine gun. Somehow or other, he managed to insert a round backward in the magazine. Upon firing, the bolt rammed the round into the chamber where it remained stuck and unfired. "When last heard from, the armourer Sergeant was still thoughtfully scratching his head as he pondered on how to get it out."

Some situations at Camp Sussex were true close calls. Every now and then, the armed forces will have a recruit who freezes upon some action, whether in firing a pistol, rifle of machine gun. At A-34, one pupil with a live No.36 grenade in his hand would not let go when told to do so. Instead of throwing it, he dropped in on an inward-sloping parapet. In his excitement, the student prevented a Sergeant Fox from recovering the grenade. Fox pushed the student around a safety wall and with no time left in the grenade's fuse covered him with himself. The weapon went off without injuring anyone. It is probably not a co-incidence that Fox got the British Empire Medal a few months later.

*Forty years later, the same scenario was repeated in Newfoundland by a private of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. It's probably happened more times than the author wants to imagine.

Late in Camp Sussex's life, the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps set up a special unit there to care for the army's wounded. The No.5 Casualty Retraining Centre took in damaged soldiers and put them through physiotherapy and occupational therapy until such time they could either be discharged or returned to active service. One of the advantages to these CRCs were the female staff in the form of Nursing Sisters, but this could be a double-edged sword since if the men carried away, as one peeping tom did, they could find themselves chased by an officer. Until its closure in November 1945, No.5 CRC looked after 1740 soldiers.

During the war's final stages, AWLs became more common throughout Canada. Recruits invented scores of reasons to defer embarkation and the following is but one example. When the Officer Commanding the A-34 school asked one trainee who overstayed his pre-embarkation leave why he was so late, he replied it was because he caught the crab on the train and passed it on to his wife in Montreal. "She mad as hell so I have to stay there four more days to fix things up between us."

After V-E Day, things quieted down at Camp Sussex. There were very few operational units left, such as the Pictou Highlanders and the Hussars, and the Special Training Centre gradually reduced its output. A new OC arrived in September 1945, Lt.-Col. Lounsbury previously of Fredericton, but his appointment was short-lived as the school closed the following February. The Pictou Highlanders disbanded at Sussex a month later leaving only the Hussars.

At the close of the war, Camp Sussex consisted of 206 buildings over ½ square mile. In addition to Penobsquis, the camp consisted of another training area at Roachville and a rifle range to the south. Several camp buildings were sold to two individuals along with the provincial Department of Industry and Reconstruction in the late 1940s while others went to the town and again to the province in the sixties. None of these stand today and except for the recreation centre named after the 8th Canadian Hussars, there are no reminders of the war.

Units at Sussex

Enemy alien receiving station	September 1939 - November 1939
8th Canadian Infantry Brigade	14 October 1940 - 18 July 1941
4th Canadian Motorcycle Regiment (8th PLNBH)	July 1940 - 10 February 1941
Royal Rifles of Canada	23 September 1940 - 21 November 1940
Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, 1st Bn.	2 December 1940 - July 1941
North Shore (NB) Regiment	6 December 1940 - 18 July 1941
5th Canadian Armoured Regiment (8th PLNBH)	11 February 1941 - 24 April 1941
Régiment de la Chaudière	23 September 1940 - 20 July 1941
12th Field Regiment	

11th Field Battery
16th Field Battery
43rd Field Battery
18th Field Company, RCE
14th Field Ambulance, RCAMC
31st Light Aid Detachment, RCOC
24th/75th Field Battery
No.4 Provost Company det.
8th CIB Composite Company, RCASC

Cape Breton Highlanders	2 May 1941 - 22 May 1941
The Elgin Regiment	2 August 1941 - 17 March 1942
Canadian Grenadier Guards	5 August 1941 - 11 October 1941
Canadian Grenadier Guards	29 December 1941 - 11 February 1942
Military Detention Barracks	1941 - 31 May 1943
Régiment de Joliette	14 April 1942 - 24 June 1942
Régiment de St.-Hyacinthe	13 April 1942 - 23 June 1942
17th Canadian Infantry Brigade	25 July 1942 - October 1943

The Black Watch (RHR), 2nd Bn.
21 July 1942 - 1 December 1942
Fusiliers du St.-Laurent 10 August 1942 - September 1942
Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles 25 August 1942 - 11 August 1943
Victoria Rifles of Canada 8 September 1942 - 12 September 1943
Lanark and Renfrew Scottish
8th Anti-Tank Regiment, RCA
23rd Field Regiment, RCA
23rd Field Company, RCE
21st Field Ambulance, RCAMC

10th LAA Regiment	30 September 1942 - 3 November 1942
Pictou Highlanders	2 December 1942 - March 1943
A-30 CITC, Sussex Det.	January 1943 - 3 April 1943
Voltigeurs de Québec	26 January 1943 - 15 May 1943
PEI Highlanders	8 March 1943 - 9 April 1943
No.72 MDB	1 June 1943 - 30 June 1946
New Brunswick Rangers	8 July 1943 - 10 September 1943
Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	11 July 1943 - 20 July 1943
Queen's York Rangers	11 August 1943 - 13 October 1943
Edmonton Fusiliers	25 October 1943 - 3 February 1944
No.5 CRC, RCAMC	15 December 1943 - 11 December 1944

1st Aerodrome Defence Battalion (Régiment de Chateauguay)
12 January 1944 - 1 May 1944

Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles	7 February 1944 - 2 June 1944
A-34 CITC	27 February 1944 - 29 February 1944
A-34 SOTC	1 March 1944 - June 1944
Régiment de Québec	3 June 1944 - September 1944
A34 STC	June 1944 - 14 February 1946
Pictou Highlanders	August 1944 - 30 March 1946
Régiment de St.-Hyacinthe	12 September 1944 - November 1944
No.5 Conditioning Centre, RCAMC	12 December 1944 - 30 January 1946
Saint John Fusiliers	28 December 1944 - ?
Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles	29 January 1945 - February 1945

No.23 Canadian General Hospital, RCAMC
101st AA Battery, RCA
No.6 Special Employment Company
No.12 Field General Hospital, RCAMC
Sussex Military Hospital
No.9 Company, CDC
Lorne Scots
Veterans Guard of Canada, various companies
No.104 Light Aid Detachment, RCEME
26th Field Regiment, RCA
27th Field Company, RCE
8th Princess Louise (NB) Hussars January 1946 - January 1960
Royal Highlanders of Canada January 1955 - September 1958
8th Canadian Hussars (Princess Louise)(Militia), B Squadron
January 1960 - present

SYDNEY, NS

Ever since coal deposits were discovered in the Sydney area, there has been a requirement for a military presence there to guard the precious resource. Early steamships and locomotive engines were powered by coal and troops at Louisbourg and Halifax were kept warm by coal furnaces. Barracks and gun sites were established around Sydney as far back as the eighteenth century but from then on, the deployment of soldiers in the area followed the path of a roller-coaster with fortifications created only when really needed and closed when peace settled. The development of the town of Sydney and the creation of steel mills in the 19th Century provided an excuse for greater defences but again, the reluctance of politicians to plan for the long-term overruled military desires. The problem was always the same: funds.

Not surprisingly, Cape Breton would only see a large outlay of troops at the outbreak of World War I. During the war, infanteers would be stationed at Sydney, Glace Bay, North Sydney, Canso and other towns to protect its harbour, industries and communications facilities. The men belonged to the 94th and 78th Regiments and, for a few weeks in 1914, the Royal Canadian Regiment. Four 4.7" guns were assigned to the area and initially sited at Sydney Mines and Canso, but because of their inability to traverse quickly, they were considered useless against their expected targets, the U-Boats, and were installed only to boost morale. It was only in 1917 that concrete emplacements and proper pedestals were laid out for the guns at Cranberry Head and Fort Petrie. By the following year, other fixed gun sites were created at Low Point and Table Head. On the naval side, the Rhodes-Curry wharf in town was rented to the RCN and additional buildings built for the naval control officer, his staff and ship repair personnel. Aerial patrols were conducted by the US Naval Reserve Flying Corps at Canada's request from a seaplane base at Indian Beach and later

from a more permanent base at Kelly's Beach in North Sydney. Aircraft being new engines then, the public often strained their necks just to watch them fly.

The hustle and bustle of wartime Sydney soon died after the Armistice. To put a check on costs, Cabinet saw to it that mobilization would be quick and thorough. Most of the American flying corps personnel returned home in late 1918, its large hangar dismantled and the barracks taken up by local concerns. The artillery forts were stripped of their equipment and put under care and maintenance status while their barracks were sold off. The naval base's lease was not renewed and the buildings there were also sold off. All that remained as active was the small army complex at Victoria Park to house local militia units.

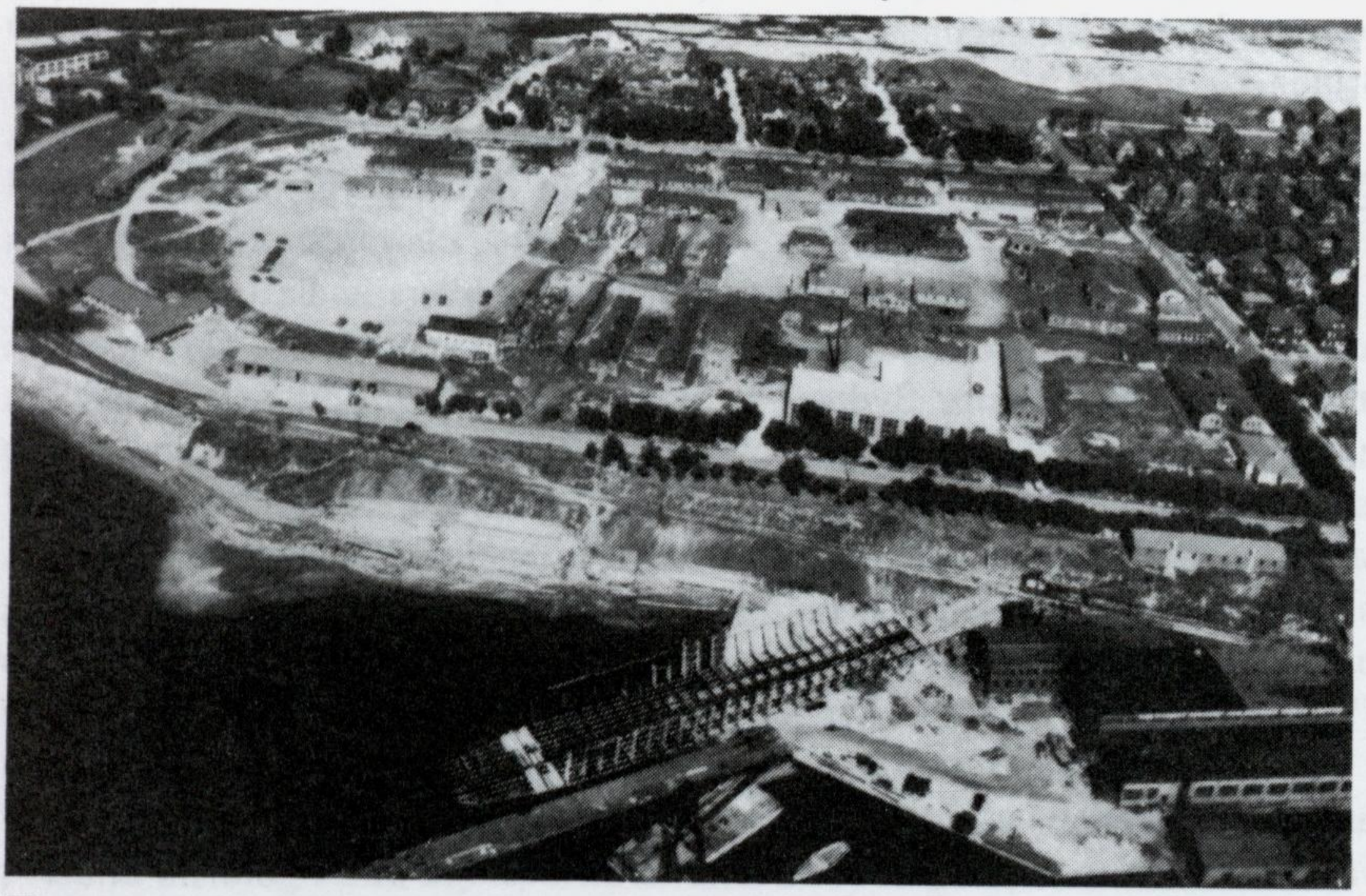
For the military, the interwar years at Sydney were lean and mean. Military officers wanted to see Sydney re-equipped with armament to protect it against the growing Japanese menace but there simply was not enough political support. Whatever hope there was for more defence was dashed when the Liberals gained power in 1921 with promises of further cuts. The Canadian navy was scaled back and left with a mere two destroyers, a handful of minesweepers and only 500 regular personnel. The Canadian air force had just come into being in 1924 but its mandate was restricted to aerial photography and mapping operations. The army numbered only 3000 nationally which, in the Sydney region, included the new Cape Breton Highlanders to replace the old 94th Regiment and the 6th and 36th Field Batteries. The only real action the forces saw was during this period were hunts with the RCMP to catch rum-runners, the navy providing training and ship support and the RCAF performing aerial reconnaissance, somewhat reminiscent of today's efforts at catching drug smugglers. By the late 1930s, the focus to the armed services would drastically change.

Infantry.

During the Second World War, the Canadian Army was principally represented by two corps in the Sydney area: the infantry and the artillery. The former guarded sensitive points and watched the coast while the latter scanned the heavens and challenged all ships approaching the harbour. Infantry battalions were quickly mobilized when the call to arms was sounded and deployed throughout Cape Breton to guard Vulnerable Points such as the Sydney steel mills, the radio station south of town, the transatlantic radio site and the Seaboard power plant at Glace Bay, the Grand Narrows bridge and seaplane anchorage at North Sydney, the cable landing at Lloyd's Cove and the airport at Reserve. The first units to begin this duty were the Cape Breton Highlanders and the PEI Highlanders but from then on, they were replaced by other units every few months to prevent complacency. Late in 1939, the RCMP took over guard duty at

some sites and as of 1940, the new Veterans Guard of Canada helped out.(K) The infantry's other role of coast-watching involved roving motor patrols looking for suspected enemy landings.

The various infantry regiments pulling guard duty were first quartered in whatever buildings the army could muster. The Cape Breton Highlanders were put up in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall on George Street in Sydney, the Legion Hall in New Waterford, a shack at Lloyd's Cove and in tents at the seaplane base. When a company of PEI Highlanders appeared in September 1939, the 263 men were housed in a Nova Scotia Steel and Coal building built to hold 71. The overcrowding was relieved when space was allocated for them at the RCAF anchorage at North Sydney. Barracks were quickly put up at the Glace Bay power plant, Low Point and at some of the heavy gun sites and more would be erected at Victoria Park alongside old structures dating from the 1700s. Eventually, most of the defensive infantry units would install their headquarters at the park while some would settle in new barracks on Royal Avenue. The parent organization to all army units around Sydney, Sydney Fortress Headquarters, was first found in the Officer Commanding's car, then in the Lyceum Building at 225 George Street and finally at Victoria Park.



The army camp at Victoria Park during the war. (Photo: DND PMR 95-041.)

To the soldiers based around Sydney, there were times the enemy's personification was not readily apparent. On 5 August 1940, the Officer Commanding the Cape Breton Highlanders warned his troops to be on the lookout for a threesome travelling in a 1936 green Plymouth with Minnesota license plates. The trio was carrying expensive photographic equipment along with a police courtesy card signed by the mayor of St-Paul, Minnesota, and co-signed by his deputy chief of safety. The OC

warned if they were spotted taking pictures, they were to be detained and both the RCMP and Fortress Headquarters notified. There were no reports in the Highlanders' diary whether they were ever seen or not.

Unit diaries make repeated references to the friendliness and generosity of Cape Bretoners but there were occasions when all was not well. Tired of seeing young able men walk around town while others died overseas, some Sydney residents began calling members of the Régiment de Joliette "zombies." Anyone not willing to volunteer for active service was so called and in the Joliette's case, the term was even used privately by the Officer Commanding, Lt.-Col. deBellefeuille. The OC was not proud of that fact his was a Home Defence unit but refused to accept any blame and hoped the day would come when there would be only one army in Canada. The use of "zombie" by local Sydneyers made deBellefeuille wonder what the point was sacrificing his civilian career to "protect their lives and their measly worldly possessions." His resentment was exacerbated when headquarters decided a few months later to transfer his unit to Simcoe, Ontario, for tobacco-picking duty, a punishment he felt he received for not having enough of his men go active. His wish for being sent overseas after Simcoe provided him a much needed morale booster, but this was quickly destroyed when his regiment was ordered to disband right after landing in Britain.

Canadian Provost Corps.

The men responsible for policing the soldiers and ensuring their adherence to regulations were the provosts. At first, there were not enough provosts in the army for Sydney to have its own company so infanteers, gunners and even medics were deputized until a proper company could be established. The MPs had the task of searching for AWLs, conducting train patrols to make sure the men were behaving, arresting drunks, investigating muggings by soldiers and checking up on unattended military vehicles in town. Although initially an all-male bastion, the Provost Corps began using CWACs as policewomen in Sydney in 1944.

As well as policing the troops in town, the Canadian Provost Corps ran a military prison at Edward Point. The Branch Detention Barracks, as it was first known, was a small outfit with an average of 20 soldiers under sentence managed by a staff of about 13 with a single officer rotated from the various army formations in the area. Old aerial photographs showed the barracks to be a single hut surrounded by a fence; this followed a policy decision that detention facilities be built small since large groups of prisoners were more prone to create trouble.

The Military Policemen saw all kinds of cases, many of which were not necessarily recorded in a unit's War Diary. In April 1943, a certain Lieutenant of the 6th AA Battery was arrested for conduct unbecoming an officer for using his swagger stick to wallop a woman twice

on the back. The woman was not in the best of conditions to begin with and the blows did her no good. It was hoped the officer "would realize it is bad business going around striking women who are perfect strangers to him." A year later, a Joliette took his guard role a bit too seriously when he stood in the middle of a road with his rifle and stopped all vehicles without proper cause. One driver who managed to get through found two bullet holes in his car later on. Sergeant E.F. LeDrew, an ex-gunner turned provost who had already gained experience handling troublemakers at the Detention Barracks at Edward Point and on McNabs Island near Halifax, managed to stop the soldier and arrest him with the help of his "Special Investigations Squad."

Royal Canadian Artillery.

Gunners were not an entirely new phenomenon around Sydney since they had been present in one form or another since the 1780s. Forts were built, used and taken apart depending on the political wind but it would only be in World War I when more permanent structures would be erected. During that time, concrete gunnery emplacements were put up at Chapel Point, Cranberry Head, Low Point, Point Petrie and Table Head near Glace Bay, and while most sites were retained by the Department of Militia after the Armistice, their equipment were shipped for storage to Halifax when no longer needed. In between the two wars, the only artillery units based around Sydney were field batteries at Victoria Park.

This did not mean plans were not prepared for a future war. Japanese expansionism and its concomitant naval construction worried military planners. A strike on the Canadian west coast and a capture of any port would have given the Land of the Rising Sun the foothold necessary to launch incursions in the US. This had been one of the conclusions of Admiral Jellicoe's survey of Canadian ports done on behalf of the British government in the 1920s. Another conclusion had been that in any future conflict, Saint John and Sydney were likely targets, the latter because of its coal and steel industries, so more permanent fortifications were recommended. Defences around Halifax were already well-established but the other ports were just as deserving. Since Jellicoe's masters predicted peace in the long-term, his report was filed away to gather dust. This was a time people preferred flappers over sappers.

A decade or so later, the mood had changed. A specialist was again brought in from Great Britain to survey both coasts and their defensive potential. Industries around Sydney still required protection as did nearby power plants and of course the harbour. The first line of land-borne defences proposed were counter-bombardment batteries at Oxford Point and Lingan to keep battleships away. For vessels that managed to pass through, other batteries at Chapel Point, Point Petrie and Edward Point were proposed as well as two smaller ones on the North and South Bars.

For night's work, a network of 15 searchlights was thought sufficient to cover all approaches. Engineers began pouring concrete in the late 1930s at Chapel Point and when war was declared, Sydney would have at least that.

The declaration of hostilities in 1939 prompted a flurry of activity in Cape Breton. Permanent sites required time and planning before installation so a number of interim gun sites were established. While ammunition was being brought in for the Chapel Point guns, Fort Petrie on the other side was reactivated and given two 6" naval guns. North and South Bars received two 6-pounders each and Edward Point got two 4.7-inchers. Artillery units manning these guns were the 6th Heavy Battery on the south side and the 36th on the north. Nine searchlights were initially installed, three at North Bar, three at South Bar, two at Petrie and one at Chapel Point and eventually there would be four more. These were first operated by the 3rd Fortress Company of the RCE but in 1940, the artillery took them over and created the 9th Searchlight Battery with headquarters at the Cross Fertilizer Building. The Batteries made up the 16th Coast Brigade, headquartered first at 40 Pitt and later at the Lyceum Building.(I)

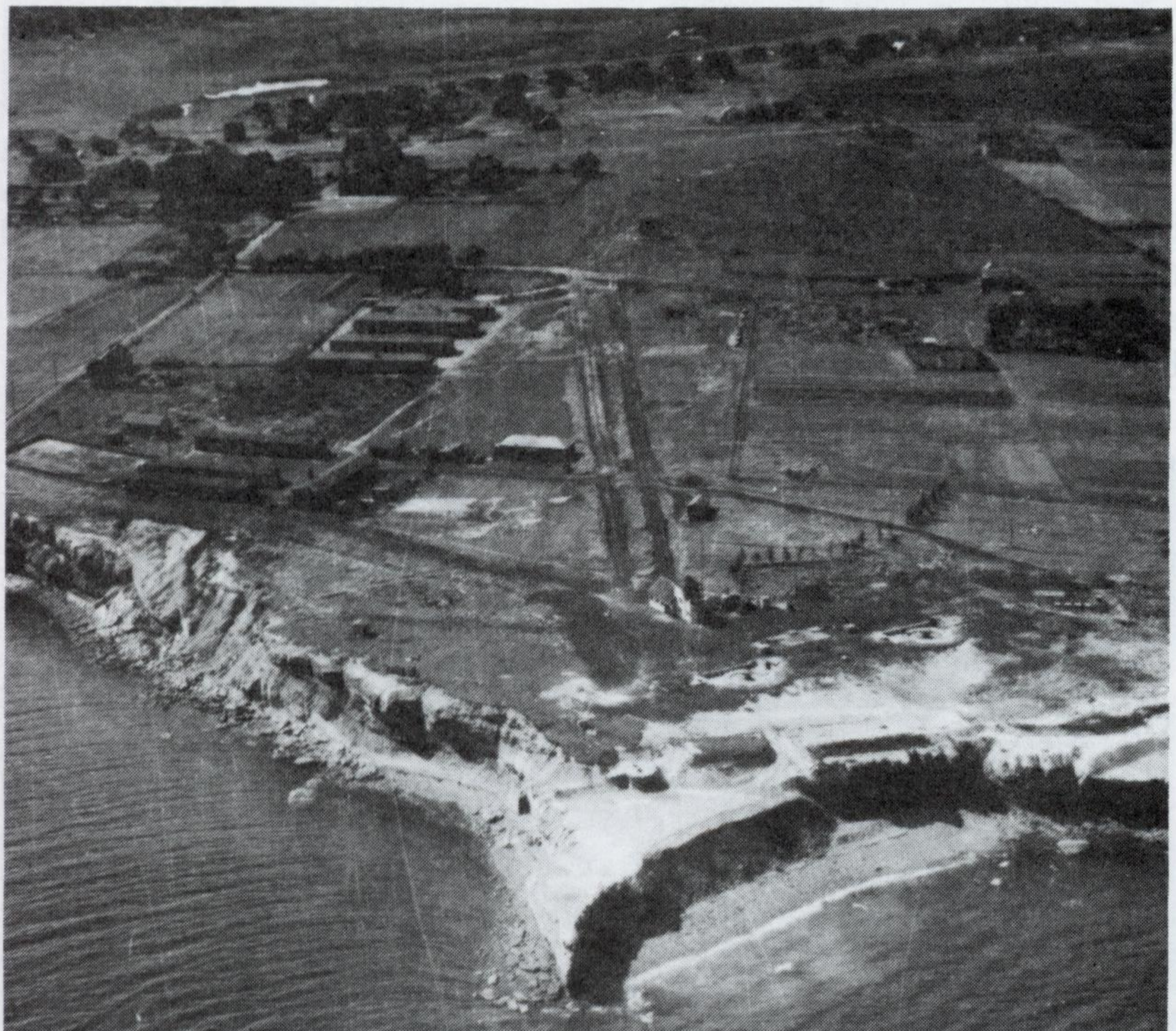
In addition to their guns, the forts possessed a number of ancillary buildings. Barracks, mess halls and orderly rooms were put up as standard tar-papered regulation huts for both the guards and protective infantry platoons. As well, a fire command post was erected near Kilkenny Lake Road that included, among others, its own quarters, messes, a radio station, garage and office. Its height gave a good command of the approaches. By late 1942, the post included an underground artillery plotting room that received data from three observation posts (New Waterford, North Head and Table Head) and calculated target coordinates. In case of trouble, the bunker was outfitted with an escape hatch.

Within the war's first year, the artillery had begun the process of change. Engineers began constructing a new counter-bombardment position at Lingan Point in 1940 and its three guns were fully manned by the spring of 1941. The guns had enough distance between them to prevent destruction by a single blow. The site included a battery command post built to look like an ordinary two-storey house and a fire control centre behind the guns with plotting room, target position finder and range-finders. Barracks were erected for the gunners and infantry guards. According to one of the gunners, three elderly persons who were living in a nearby house and who refused to move during the battery's construction were convinced from the first blast from No.1 gun that it was in their best interests to do so.

The army had initially installed a number of 36" searchlights around the harbour for night-time illumination but these were replaced later on with stronger Canadian General Electric 60-inchers. The newer lights came in dispersed and concentrated models where the former were used for general lighting and the latter, with ranges of 8000 yards, used to closely follow a moving vessel. Some were put at Cranberry Head near one of the

old World War I positions while others were placed at Edward Point and Fort Petrie. The lights were put in small concrete buildings equipped with shutters and were operated remotely from a battery command post. The whole searchlight network was tested in June 1941 and showed it quite capable of maintaining a moving target continuously in its beams.

Artillery construction continued in the Sydney area well into the war. A second counter-bombardment site was established at Oxford Point on a scale much larger than Lingan. Oxford Battery was built to cover the harbour entrance with 9.2" guns having 31,000-yard ranges, over 7,000 more than Lingan's 6-inchers, enough to match the range of 8" pieces on German cruisers. The fort consisted of three gun positions, magazines and 400 yards of interconnecting trenches and tunnels, not to mention over 20 surface buildings so built to resemble a village. It also included an underground plotting room with 10-foot thick concrete walls. Built on rock, the underground portion of the fort could only be kept dry by the continuous action of pumps, but even then as much as six inches of water could accumulate. Due to other commitments in Canada and England, the first two 9.2" guns were only received in 1944 and the third in the summer of 1945.

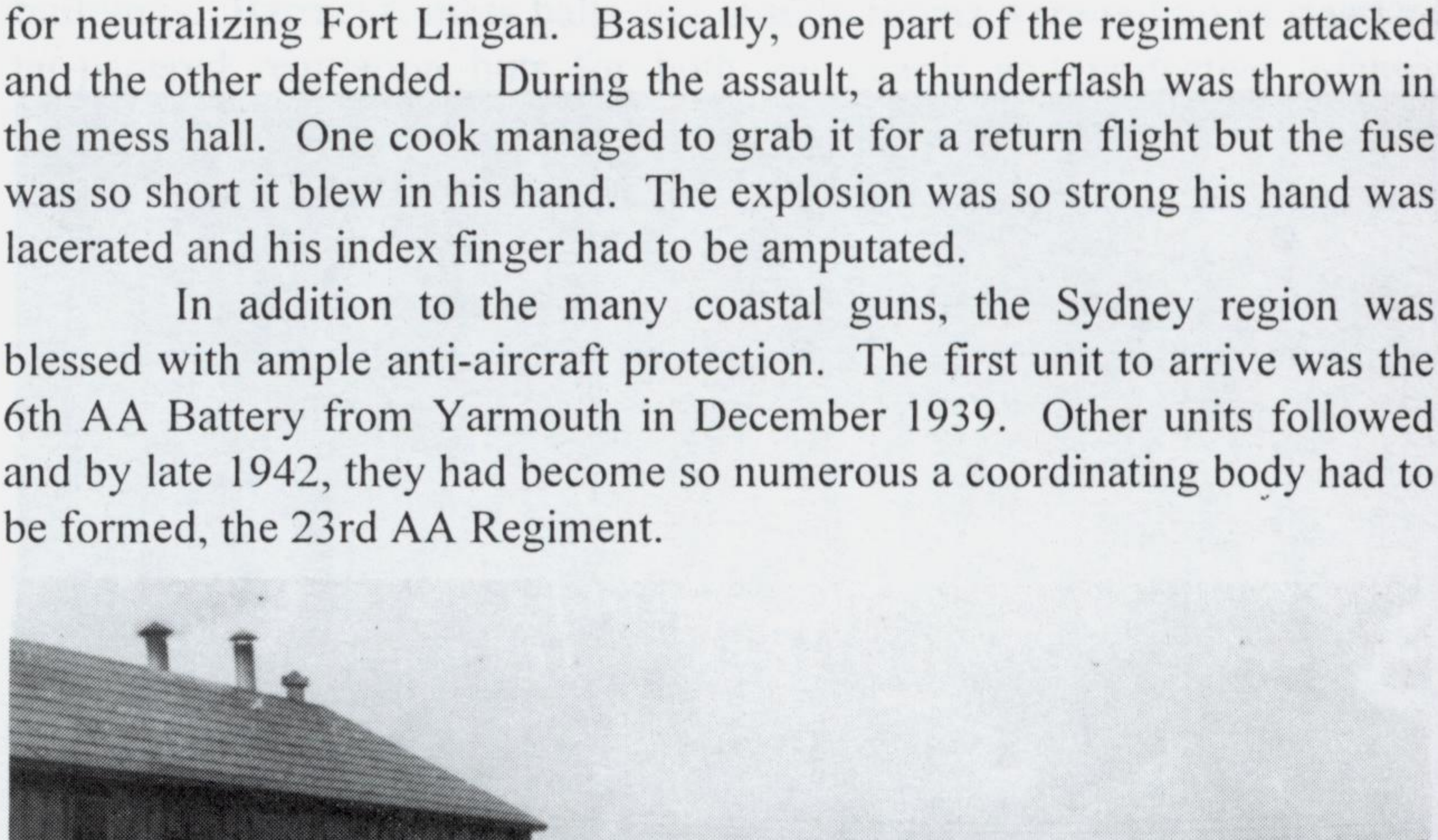


Chapel Point. The observation post is only just visible as the church-like building. (Photo: DND REA 241-77, 1942.)

When ships entering the harbour refused to signal or failed to provide the correct signal, it fell upon the examination battery at Chapel Point to fire warning shots and to do so safely. A relatively-rare occurrence, one round had to be fired when a Greek freighter showed the wrong flags one morning in July 1940. Warrant Officer Robertson was then the designated man to fire the gun but the officer in charge somehow got his bearings mixed. Normal procedure called for a shot 12 seconds to the right of the ship. The officer ordered deflection left, which made the gun aim straight for the boat. Robertson followed his instructions hoping the officer would correct himself in time, but such was not to be. Once fired, the plugged round went just over the vessel and landed across the harbour at South Bar where it ricocheted off the sand bar. While this happened to be near the location of the South Bar battery, no one was hurt. The Officer Commanding Sydney Defences, Colonel Dobbie, requested a smaller caliber gun as a result but his request was turned down. The event was somewhat repeated in 1943 and there again, no one was hurt.

There were other close calls around Sydney forts. In mid-January 1943, the 2nd/10th Dragoons were undergoing a combat scheme that called for neutralizing Fort Lingan. Basically, one part of the regiment attacked and the other defended. During the assault, a thunderflash was thrown in the mess hall. One cook managed to grab it for a return flight but the fuse was so short it blew in his hand. The explosion was so strong his hand was lacerated and his index finger had to be amputated.

In addition to the many coastal guns, the Sydney region was blessed with ample anti-aircraft protection. The first unit to arrive was the 6th AA Battery from Yarmouth in December 1939. Other units followed and by late 1942, they had become so numerous a coordinating body had to be formed, the 23rd AA Regiment.



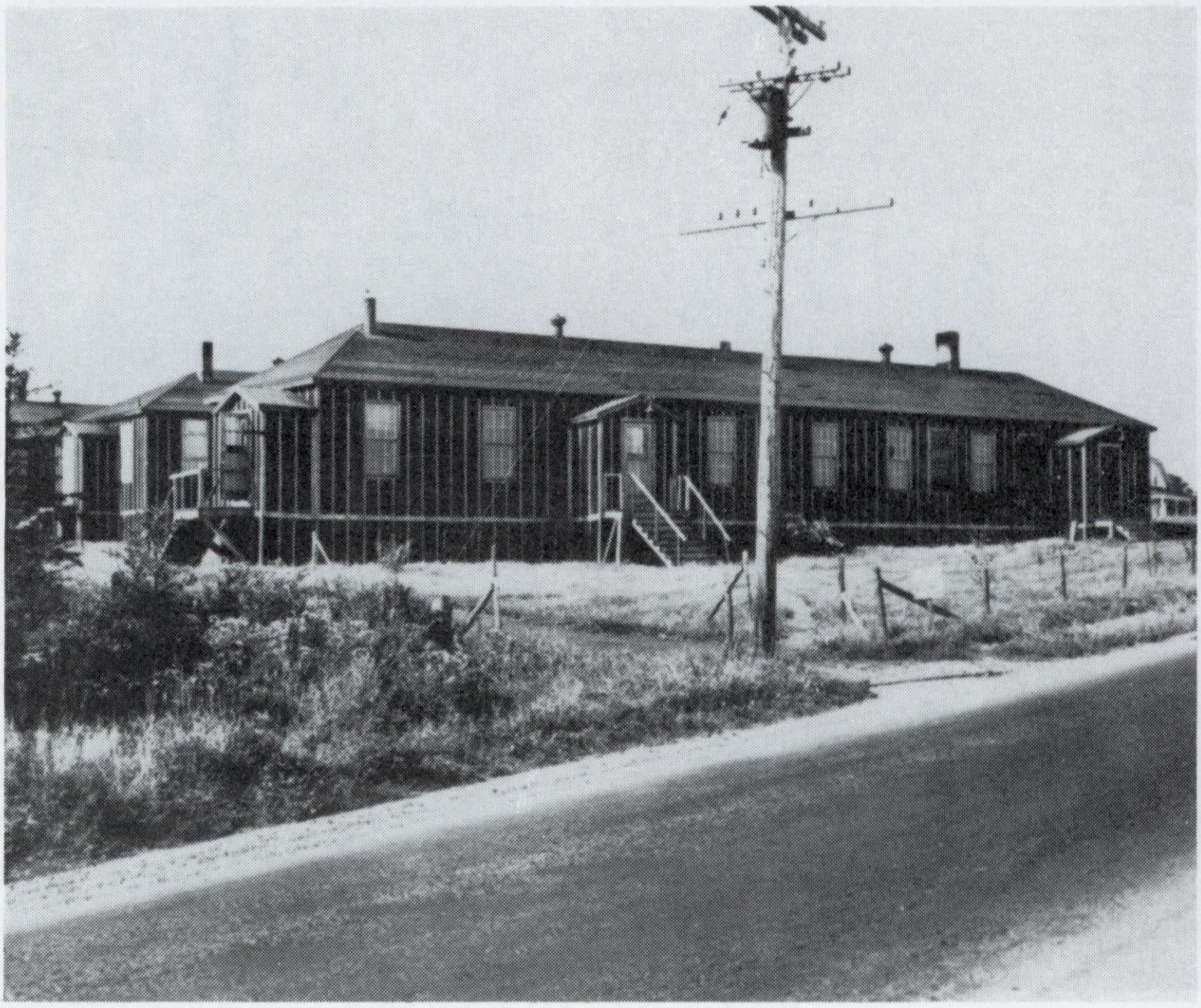
The 2nd/10th Dragoons at Fort Lingan, February 1943. (Photo: NAC, C-148413.)



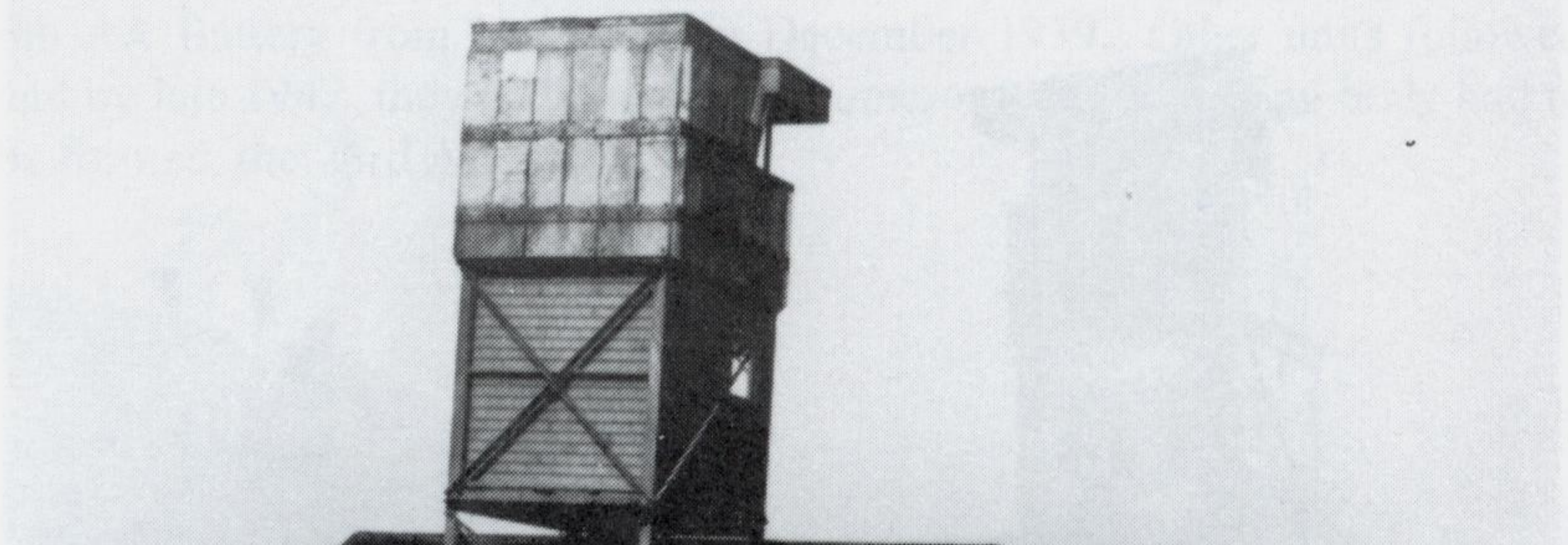
Point Petrie battery in 1942. Another church-like observation post was erected here. The two guns were located close to the water's edge. (Photo: DND REA 241-54.)



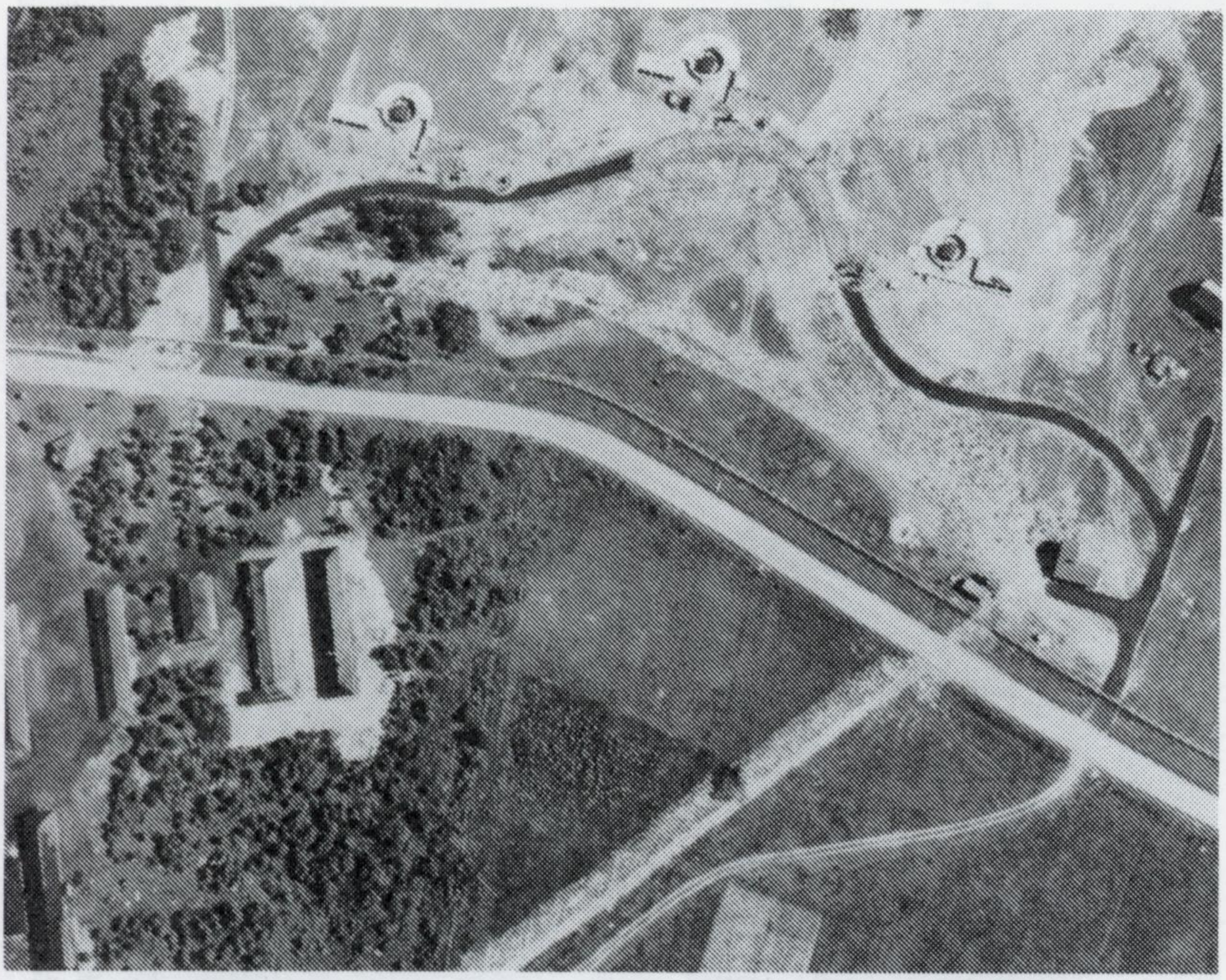
A gun at Stubbert's Battery near North Sydney. (Photo: DND PMR 91-175.)



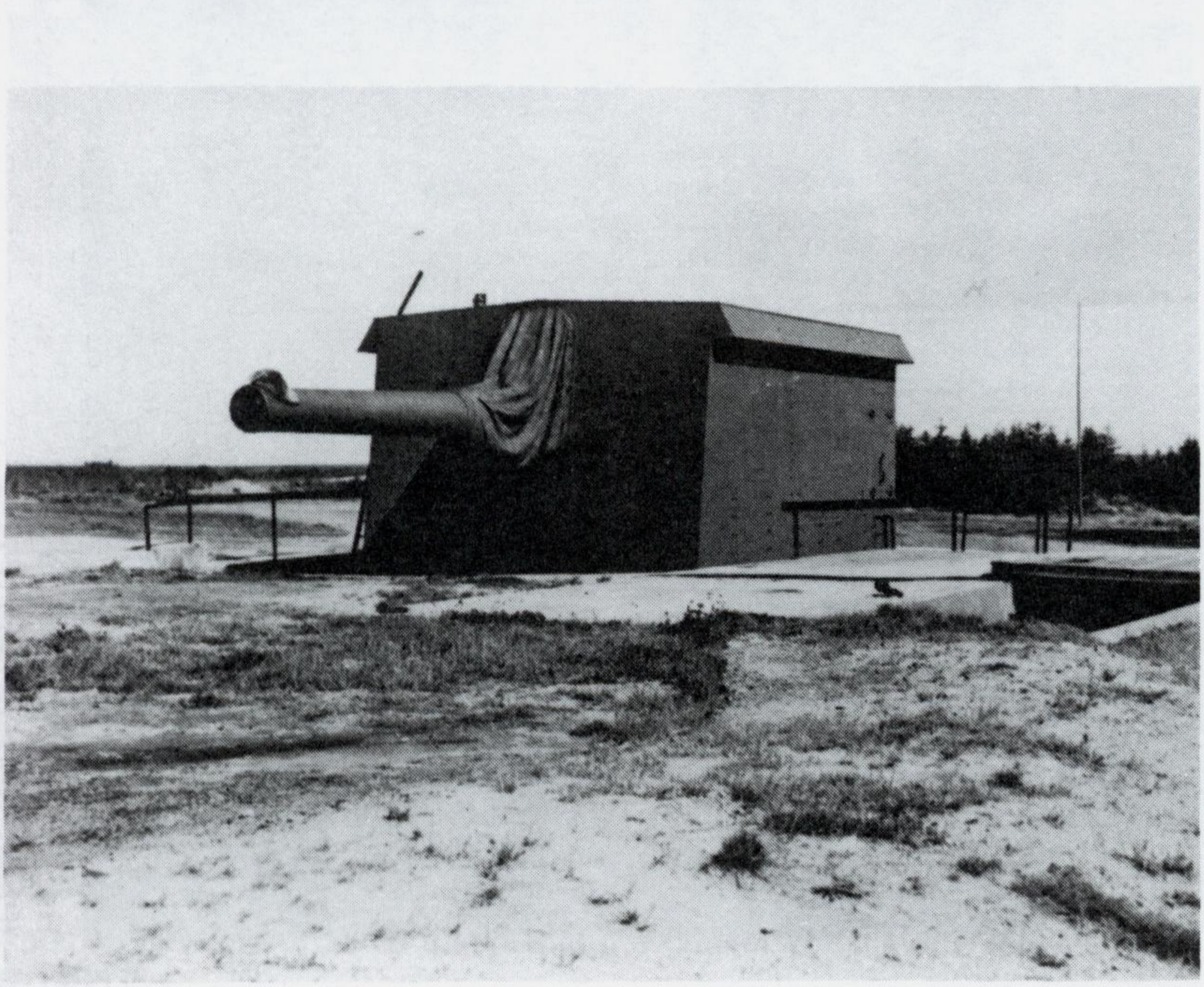
One of the barracks at Stubbert's. (Photo: NAC, C-148533.)



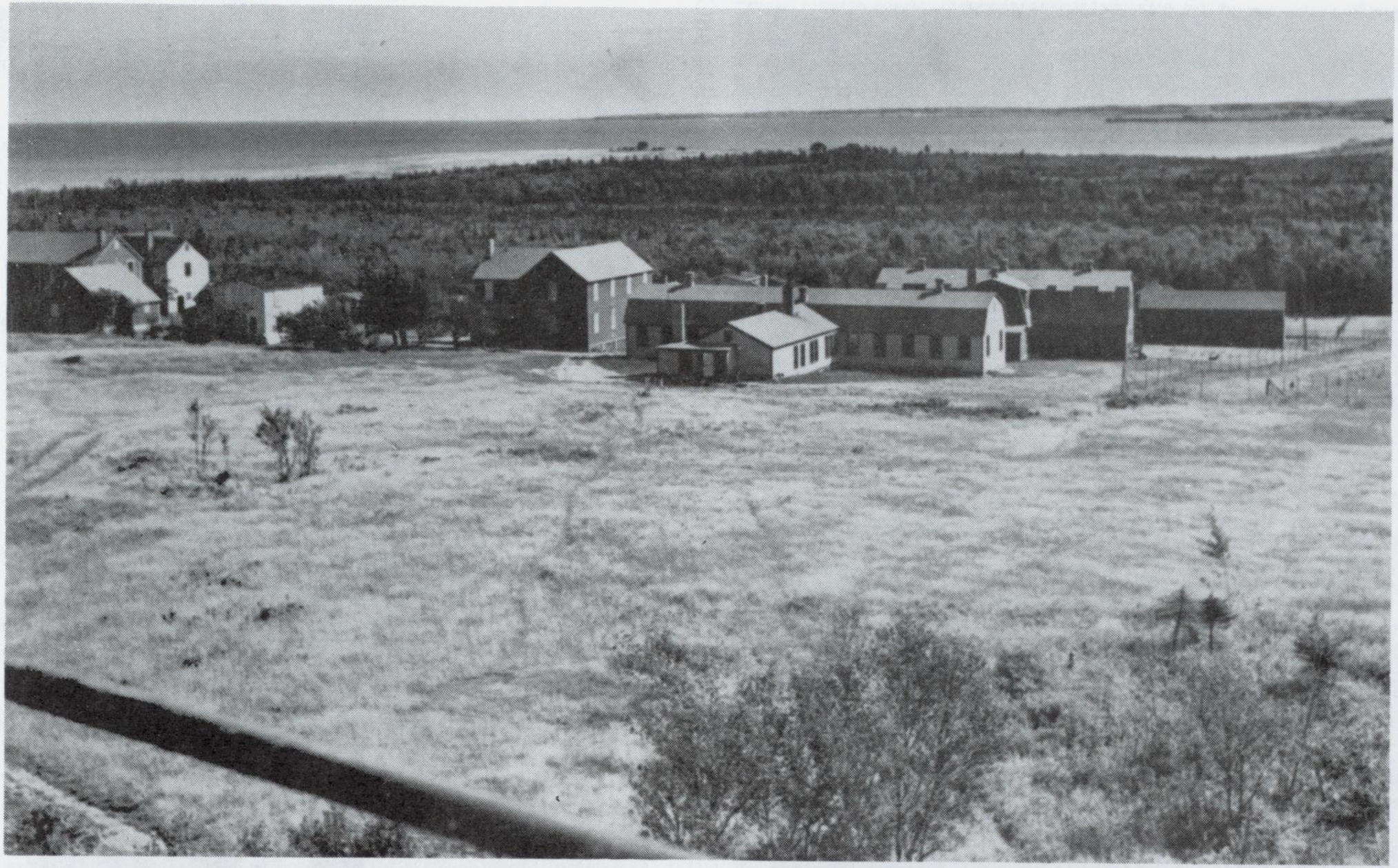
South Bar Battery. (Photo: NAC, C-148534.)



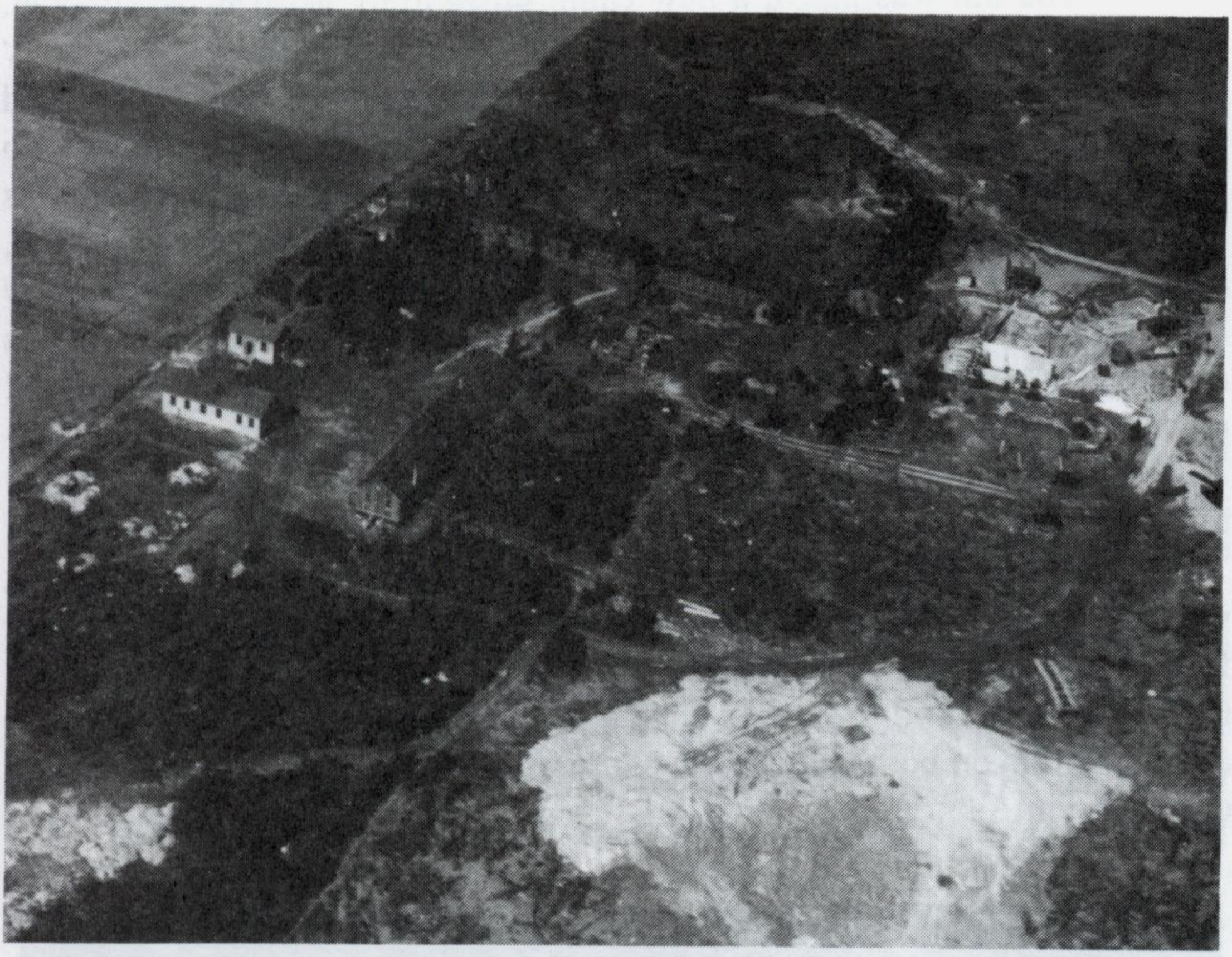
Fort Lingan. (Photo: DND PMR 95-049.)



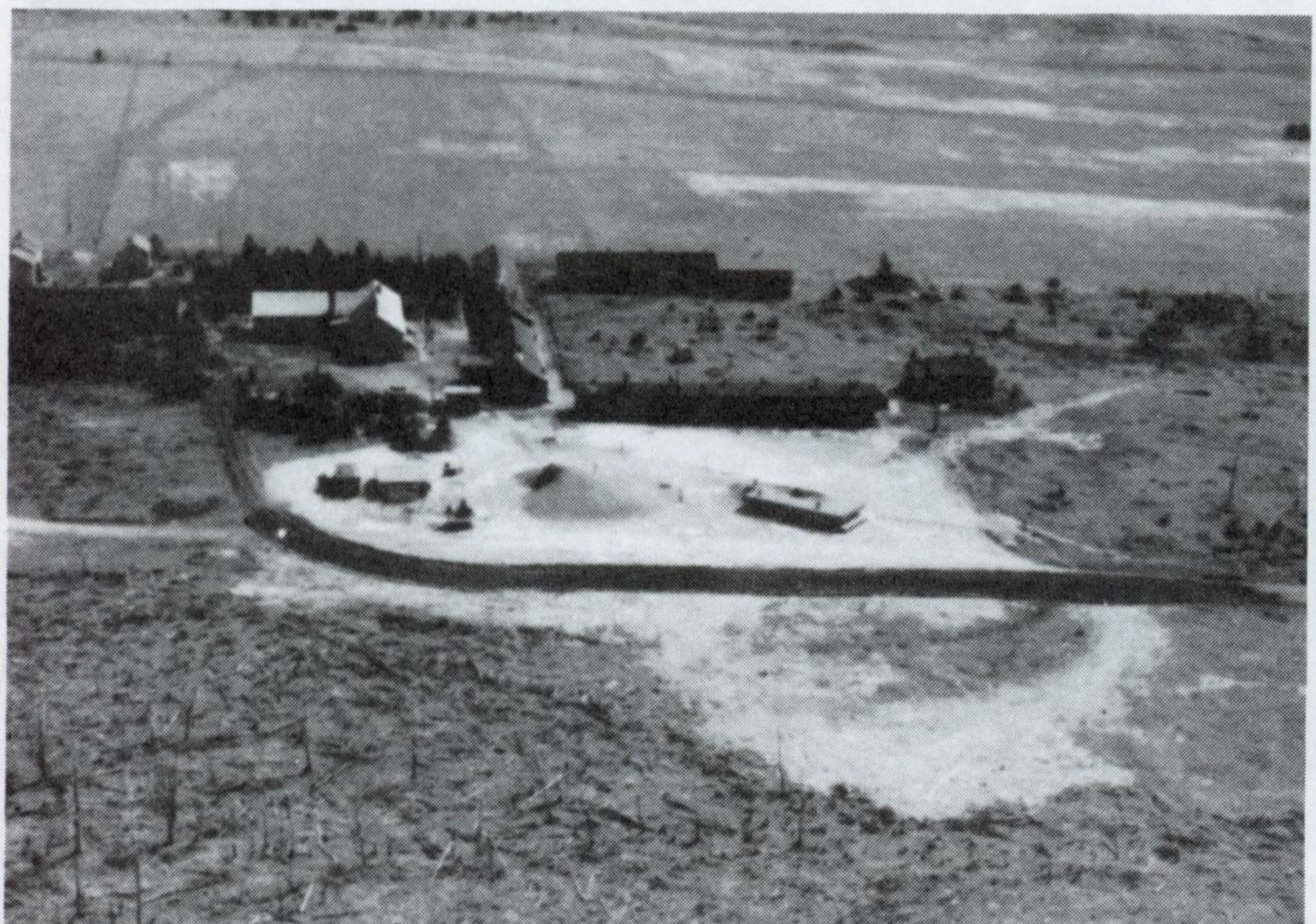
One of the guns at Oxford Battery. (Photo: NAC, C148532.)



The army encampment at Oxford Battery was indistinguishable from a common village as this picture shows.
(Photo: NAC, C-148531.)



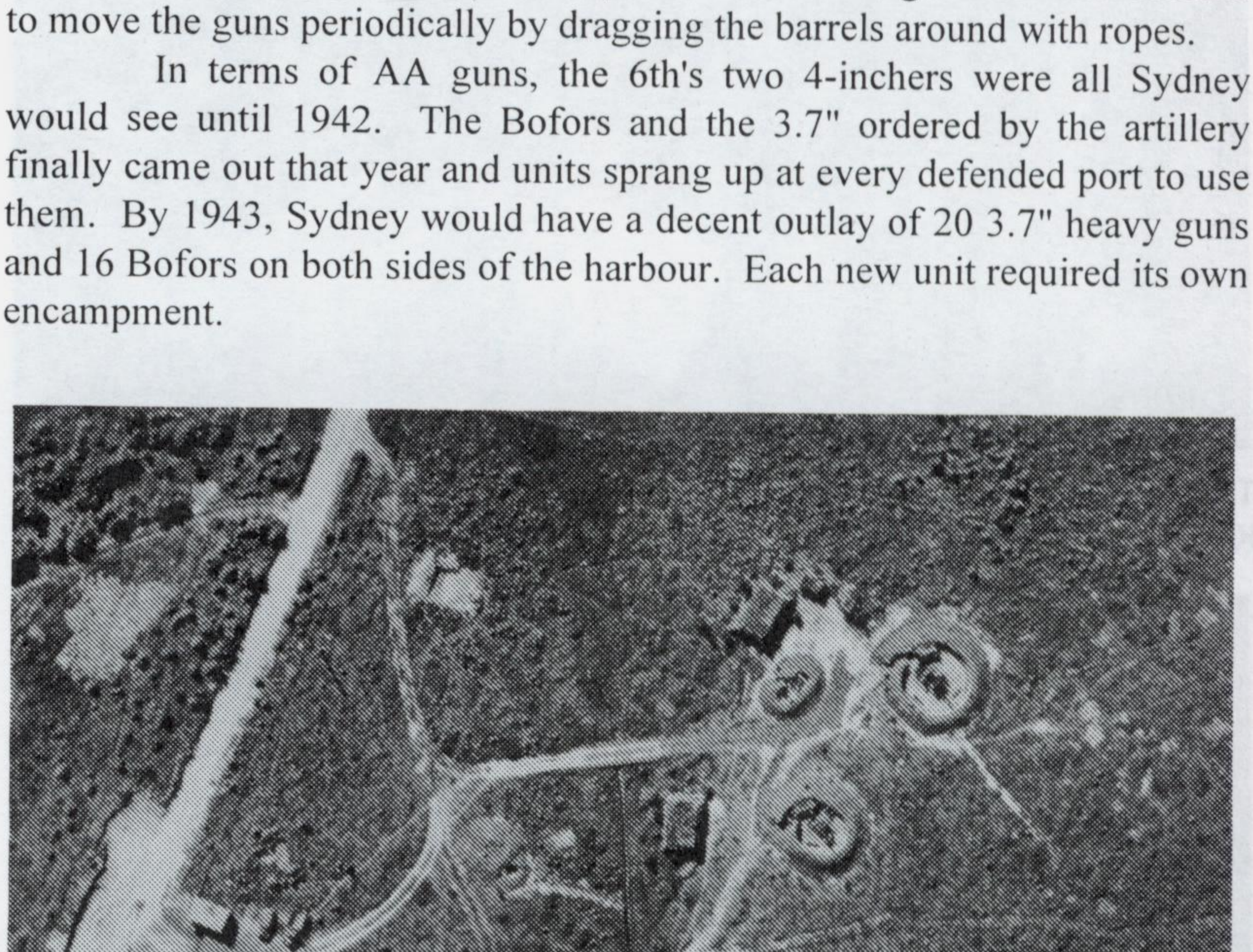
The barracks and the underground command post under construction at the Kilkenny Lake Road camp. (Photo: DND REA 241-57, 1942.)



Another view of the same camp with the bunker completed. (photo: NAC, C-148538.)

The 6th was put in a new camp on Murphy Road in Westmount. Setting the camp this far inside the harbour was necessary because the guns' limited elevation precluded contacts with high targets. The camp consisted of a handful of buildings - barracks, guard house, mess hall - and two World War I vintage Quick-Firing 4" MkV naval guns. No.1 gun was manufactured in 1915 by the Royal Gun Foundry at Woolwich, England, and was used by HMS *Aurora* while No.2 gun was built a year earlier by Elswick Ordnance and assigned to HMS *Undaunted*. The gun mountings required some modifications such as the addition of a sub-pedestal and recocking handle. One of their drawbacks was the tendency of the elevating and traversing gears to freeze up in winter so the gunners were ordered to move the guns periodically by dragging the barrels around with ropes.

In terms of AA guns, the 6th's two 4-inchers were all Sydney would see until 1942. The Bofors and the 3.7" ordered by the artillery finally came out that year and units sprang up at every defended port to use them. By 1943, Sydney would have a decent outlay of 20 3.7" heavy guns and 16 Bofors on both sides of the harbour. Each new unit required its own encampment.



The Westmount AA camp. (Photo: DND PMR 95-050.)

The breakdown of guns was as follows. One must keep in mind the 15th and 27th AA Batteries were replacement units, so there really were only four units around at any one time.

No. of Guns	Battery	Locations
4	6th	Westmount
16	24th	Steel plant, Crawley Creek, Westmount, Kelly Beach, Airport
8	50th	Cossitt Lake, South Bar
8	51st	Jacksonville, Wireless Hill
4	15th	Westmount
12	27th	Steel plant, Westmount, Airport

The 23rd Regiment's headquarters were first located at Victoria Park but were later moved to the Royal Avenue Barracks. After the move, the Officer Commanding was grateful he did not have to smell the gas from the coke ovens any more.

From the arrival of the first unit, the men were put through the paces of training and gun maintenance. The training consisted of lectures on gun drill, aircraft recognition, cartridges, primers, fuses, propellant charges, fire discipline and gunnery and instrument theory. This was mixed with regular army subjects such as map-reading, small arms, unarmed combat, gases, drill, reconnaissance and occupation and the inevitable PT. If the men were not training, they were cleaning the gun barrels, recuperator springs, the breech block and firing mechanism or testing and adjusting the sights. With the Bofors used by light AA units, the crews had to clean elevating and traversing gears, the platforms, gun cables, traversing handles and all other gears. Except when in maintenance or on practice shoots, the Bofors were always manned with three rounds in the auto-loader ready to fire within six seconds of spotting an aircraft. Practice shoots were held at Flat Point, Low Point and Cranberry Head.

The 23rd Regiment's War Diary showed the commander to have a sense of humour. When Lieutenant Wightman went on an intelligence course, the OC remarked that "he will be an intelligent man when he gets back." Similarly, when the Regimental Sergeant Major went on a camouflage course at Vancouver, "it is expected the 23rd will not be visible when (he) gets back." On the other hand, on New Year's Eve 1942, this entry made no sense: "Heavy rain all day. Slush knee deep. Visibility Zero. Good time was had by all." The OC thought the 24th Battery was getting so much practice in the spring of 1943 it would come in handy against the mosquitos next summer. And when one of the barracks at headquarters developed a leaky roof, he said "Lately we have just laid in our beds and taken a bath from the rain coming in instead of getting up in the showers."

With the tide having swung to the Allied side in 1943, cutbacks began around Sydney. The 24th Battery's Bofors at Kelly Beach and Crawley Creek were withdrawn in October of that year and the batteries at Chapel and Edward Points were similarly closed. Fort Petrie across the harbour from Chapel Point became the new examination battery. The 23rd

AA Regiment was disbanded and the last infantry battalion left at the end of the following year. By 1945, just about everything had shut down and soon, many barracks were sold to the city for postwar housing.

Several of the forts remained semi-active for some time. Oxford, South Bar and Stubbert Batteries along with Fort Petrie remained DND property but were put under the care of an armament maintenance establishment. By the 1950s, the Canadian Army realized the age of the big guns had passed and saw no reason to maintain them. The Fire Command Post had been vacated in June 1945 but was retained by the army as Kilkenny Barracks, declared surplus in 1954 and sold soon after to a Halifax man. The previous fall, a group of soldiers were sent to strip Oxford and send the guns, mountings and battery radar to Portugal's Azores military command. The crew were hampered by the lack of socket wrenches and the use of rivets instead of bolts on the No.1 mounting shell pit shield but these were relatively small obstacles that were overcome. Fort Petrie's guns and radar were taken apart in 1956 by the 49th Harbour Defence Battery of Halifax. Many of the huts had gone by then but some of the concrete structures remained, at least until 1967-8 when many were destroyed. The rest was abandoned and slowly left to be overtaken by dirt and vegetation.

Sydney Area Unit Codenames, ca. 1940-41

HQ - Sydney Fortress	COMO
16th Coast Brigade	DANO
6th Heavy Battery	TOTI
36th Heavy Battery	NOPA
3rd Fortress (E&M) Coy.	FIDO
No.5 Fortress Signals Coy.	KATE
Cape Breton Highlanders	BAKI
9th Searchlight Battery	NABO
No.1 Composite Coy.	SOTO
6th AA Battery	NOTA
Canadian Dental Corps det.	NOTO
Sydney Military Hospital	SAMA
Princess Louise Fusiliers	FUSA
Veterans Guard of Canada	YAGA
Branch Detention Barracks	PEDO
Elgin Regiment	DOMO
HQ Coy.	DINA
Sydney Mines Coy.	DOLA
Lingan Coy.	DUCO
Glace Bay Coy.	DADA
Reserve Airport Coy.	DEBO

Source: Elgin Regiment and Sydney Fortress War Diaries, ca. 1941. Some of these were changed later on.

DND Censorship.

Security was taken very seriously during the Second World War and the federal government created all sorts of regulations to deny information to the enemy. Photographs of anything remotely sensitive were forbidden and everyone was urged not to discuss such things as troop deployments and ship sailings. Methods of communications were also considered and to control these, the Department of National Defence formed an office for the Chief Telecommunications Censor (CTC) to limit what was transmitted or cabled.

The definition of censorship really meant two things for the Canadian government. First, the obvious one, denying information to the enemy and second, not so obvious, capturing any information that could be of use to the government. Assistant Censors were installed at every cable office to review messages and approve or deny them depending on content stamping the documents accordingly. They also kept Watch Lists to monitor the communications of any suspect person. Anything of value in cables was sent to Ottawa. In the Cape Breton general area, some CTC staff were located at the Commercial Cable relay office at Canso while others were placed at the Western Union shop in North Sydney.

One example of the fruits of the CTC's labour at the North Sydney post was the discovery that a certain German resident at Horta in the Azores was a secret agent working for his government. Otto Schroeder was the local superintendent for the German telegraph agency and was for all intents working as a message conduit for the fatherland. He was described as a mild-mannered executive with some 30 years experience in telegraphy and communications with "interests additional to those of promoting the political philosophy of his native country." Schroeder worked with a small team of technicians (a team that got yet smaller when the Allies cut the Emden-Horta cable) passing messages to German spies, the trivial ones *en clair* and the more sensitive ones in five-letter code groups. These originated from the German consul-general in Lisbon. The codebreakers at the National Research Council's Examination Unit, the government's then official cryptography service, found it noticeable that while several messages to Schroeder were intercepted, none from him were. This was ascribed to his "high professional knowledge of cable routings."

Navy.

Another member of the military triumvirate in Sydney during the war was the Royal Canadian Navy. The navy was responsible for harbour control and patrols, convoy management and escort, ship examination and degaussing, not to mention the control of detached ports at Mulgrave and Louisbourg. Most of this was a repeat performance from the First World War. As an important loading and convoy assembly point, Sydney required

heavy repair facilities and although private docks already existed, the navy soon demanded its own.

The Royal Canadian Navy's boss for the area, the Naval Officer-in-Charge (NOIC), Captain Goolden, first began operations and planning out of rented premises in the newspaper building on Charlotte Street and at army barracks at Victoria Park. This was an interim measure until more permanent accommodations were set up at the government wharf on the Esplanade. The move to the docks, now HMCS *Protector*, was made in 1940 into a large new administration building, sick bay, barrack block and small office building with sections for contraband, recruitment and transport. The administration building had everything the NOIC needed: decent offices, Officers' Quarters and a wardroom. At the time, the navy's other assets in the area were the Port War Signal Station at Low Point - a facility used to warn Sydney defences of incoming traffic - and an anti-submarine net strung between Stubbert's Point and Daly Point.



The Port War Signal Station at Low Point. (Photo: DND PMR 83-815.)

The first vessels to be used by the RCN in 1939 in Sydney were the former RCMP boats *Adversus* and *Alachasse,* both employed as examination vessels. These were replaced the following year by the *Lisgar* and *Bersimis* and by this time, HMCSs *Husky* and *Reindeer* and another RCMP boat, the *French*, were assigned there. Two trawlers converted into minesweepers and two armed yachts used as convoy escorts, the *Elk* and the *Lynx*, were also included in the fleet as were the *Kentville* and the *Drummondville* for awhile.

The naval and army defences around the harbour did not always work as expected. Men were on duty 24 hours a day but at night, they had the inevitable problem of reduced visibility. Somehow, the men's eyesight failed on the evening of 16 January 1943 when a British sub entered the harbour undetected. The anti-submarine net having been removed at the end of the shipping season the previous November, the craft glided in unseen and to avoid the shallow bottom, did so surfaced. The Officer Commanding the 2nd/10th Dragoons, then deployed in the area as security regiment, remarked "it is hoped that the men realize the serious nature of their duties."

The small naval yard in the city proper was not the only base the navy would have around Sydney. The harbour and city were well situated along the Gulf trade route to act as one of its defence points, just as Halifax and Shelburne could look after US to UK convoy. A decision was made to build a large servicing and supply base as early as October 1940 at Point Edward, but it was not given as high a priority as Gaspé or Shelburne since it already had some repair facilities. A year later, a contract was tendered to Dominion Construction of Toronto and on 15 March 1943, HMCS *Protector II* was commissioned and ready. Its high cost could be justified by the alternative it provided to Halifax; if the main east coast port was ever destroyed, Sydney could act as its back-up. Historians Roger Sarty and Brian Tennyson in their *Guardian of the Gulf* proposed the navy wanted to build a base that would last well into the post-war period, which is exactly what happened.

The Point Edward base was to become a rather sizable naval complex. The installation consisted of several barracks, offices, drill hall, hospital, workshops, fuel tanks and an L-shaped pier 1100 feet long. Ammunition magazines surrounded by earth walls were set apart at the northern end. Along with ship repair, the base trained some new entry seamen until HMCS *Cornwallis* at Deep Brook was ready as well as merchant mariners assigned to armed freighters. The gunnery instruction was provided at Cranberry Head in a naval anti-aircraft range. Some active naval personnel were given refresher training at Point Edward when not on operational assignments. The base was so useful to the navy an expansion was authorized the year it was commissioned for more accommodations and workshops. Well over 2000 were assigned there.

Many were the warships that called Sydney home. A number of escorts and minesweepers were assigned to Point Edward on an availability basis and in 1944, these included eight Bangors, three trawlers and the Norwegian *King Haakon II*, the *Suderoy V* and the *Star XVI*. A number of Fairmiles also worked the area but these were more often based at Ingonish. Of the few losses of Sydney ships, the HMCS *Shawinigan*'s was probably the most dramatic.

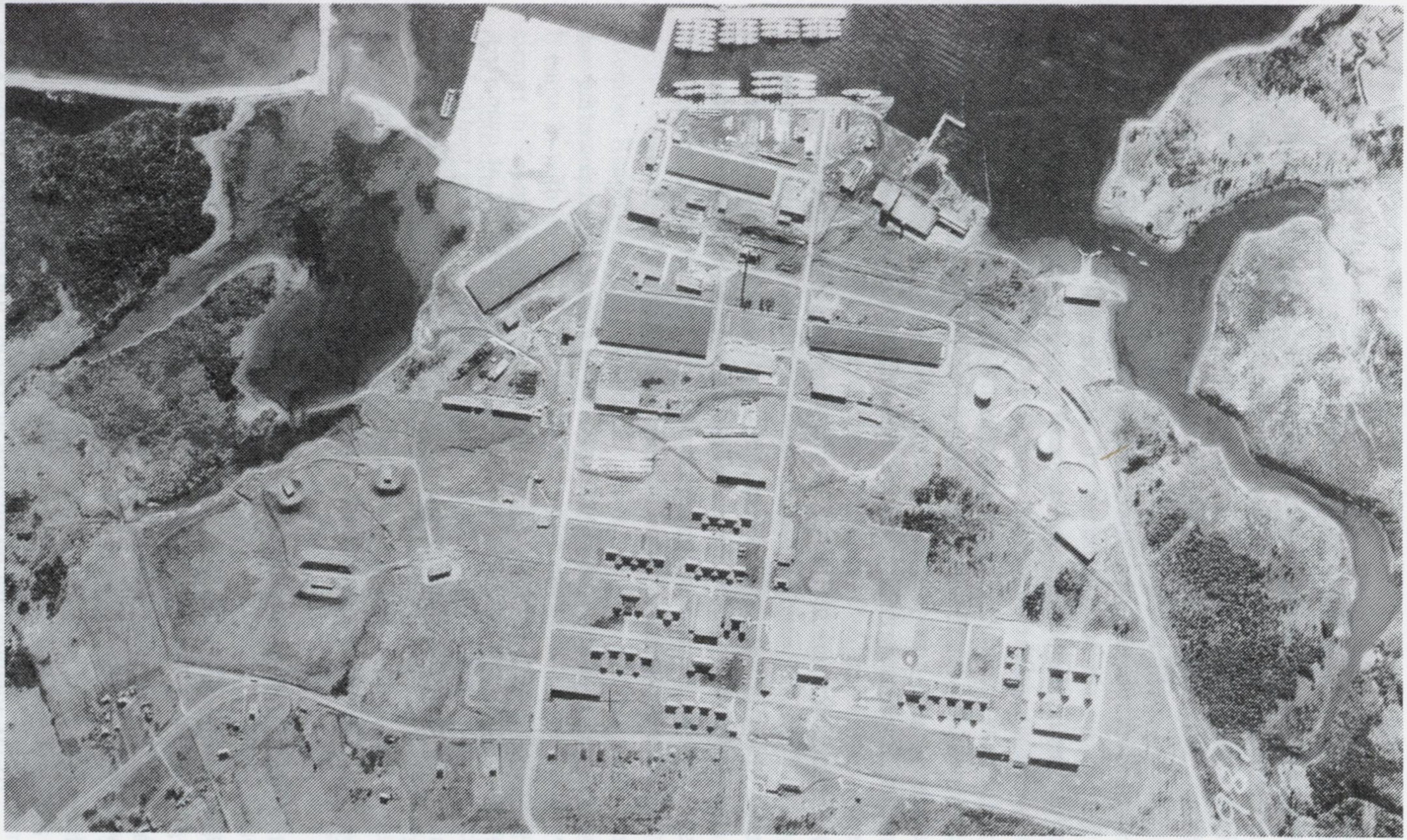
On 24 November 1944, the corvette *Shawinigan* along with the US Coast Guard's *Sassafras* were doing escort duty along the North Sydney-

Port-aux-Basques ferry run. It had just accompanied the *Burgeo* ferry into Newfoundland and waited along its return path for her return trip. U-Boats were still active in the Gulf that year and it was *Shawinigan*'s fate that the U-1228 would intercept her that night. The U-Boat fired a single acoustic torpedo and within minutes, the corvette had gone below with all hands. The next morning, the *Burgeo* was surprised at the ship's failure to rendez-vous and continued on to North Sydney unescorted, against standing instructions, all the time trying to raise the *Shawinigan* by radio. The *Burgeo*'s lone return worried the staff at Sydney who began suspecting the worse. One shore-watcher in Newfoundland had reported an explosion but headquarters made the incorrect assumption it was an American construction crew doing some blasting. Only when the proper conclusion was reached and only did the weather permit it did the RCAF began reconnaissance sorties and did the navy launch its own search efforts. Remnants of the *Shawinigan*'s bridge and a number of bodies were finally found on the 27th, but as there were no survivors, the full story would not be told until well after the war.

Closer to home, there were other incidents involving the navy. On 17 February 1945, several ratings and a few civilians boarded a bus at the Point Edward base hoping to spend their leave in town. After picking up another civilian, the bus proceeded across the Sydney River bridge and the railroad tracks only to be forcefully met by a freight train. The train sheared off the bus' rear section with enough force to propel most passengers out. All eleven ratings were injured and one of the civilian passengers died. There had been no warning of the approaching train and some discrepancy at the ensuing inquiry as to whether the driver, who survived, slowed down sufficiently or stopped. The only warning the driver received was when a passenger yelled out. Among the naval ratings, Claude Warwick of Regina was the most seriously affected. His initial care at the local naval hospital was followed by specialized treatment at the Montreal Neurological Institute but this was all for nought; Warwick's fractured skull had sealed his fate.

The Point Edward naval base remained active until V-J Day. Its last major function was to ready warships for battle in the Pacific but when Japan capitulated, it all stopped. There were no serious talks of closure as the navy wanted to maintain a second east coast port but due to large-scale reductions in military manpower, the base was run mostly by civilians. The fuel tanks were leased to a private firm while the rest remained in navy hands. After being used as a ship decommissioning port in 1945, HMCS *Protector II* served as a naval armament depot, boom defence equipment storage unit, as the Naval Records Centre and as a Naval Supply Depot.

The Korean and Cold Wars brought new life to the Sydney base. New international tensions pushed the Royal Canadian Navy to formulate plans for fleet modernization, but until its new vessels would hit the seas, old ones that had been declared surplus a few years beforehand were bought



The Sydney naval base in the postwar period. (Photo: NAPL, Natural Resources Canada.)

back and put on stand-by at Sydney. The navy's Reserve Fleet-Sydney Group was formed in 1953 with 18 Bangor minesweepers refit at yards along the St.-Lawrence. There were also plans to station a squadron of frigates there. But while the base was the only viable naval alternative to a Halifax hit by nuclear weapons, the lack of defence money meant its future was constantly in question. On the other hand, as the town's second largest employer, its closure would have had serious repercussions on the local economy. The new Diefenbaker government of 1957 saw the workforce at Point Edward cut by half but thanks to protests raised inside and outside the House of Commons, the base was saved from total disbandment. Some money was put in to fix the wharf and improve the ammunition and refuelling facilities but its expectations of usage as an operational base did not come about and the only naval work there was repair and refit.

It was the new Liberal government of 1963 that killed the Point Edward naval base. The problem was a recurring one: funds. Defence preparedness was costly and Minister of National Defence Hellyer was determined to do something about it. The RCAF saw many squadrons and bases close, the army a few, and the navy Sydney. To soften the blow, the lay-offs proceeded gradually and repair work was maintained until 1964. Sarty and Tennyson saw parallels in the naval base and military ventures around Sydney in that defensive assets were built only when needed and shut down after the threat of the day passed. What military role Sydney will see in the future is entirely unknown.

Other naval assets around Sydney included:

- A lookout station at Swivel Point that consisted of a guard house, power hut and combination barracks/operations room;
- A degaussing range at Whitney Pier with one building;
- The anti-aircraft practice range at Cranberry Head, consisting of quarters, a magazine, workshop, clay pigeon thrower and lookout post. This was used by both the navy and merchant mariners employed on Defensively-Equipped Merchant Ships.

<u>RCAF</u>.

The third part of the military triad around Sydney during the Second World War was the RCAF. The Air Force was just as busy as the army and navy fulfilling its mandate of coastal reconnaissance missions, cooperation with the artillery and running harbour entrance patrols and air defence operations. There were two separate bases of operations in the area, an airfield east of the city near the settlement of Reserve and a seaplane base at North Sydney with both for a while considered separate entities each with their own commanders.

RCAF planning for an air base at Sydney had begun as far back as 1937 most likely because AFHQ knew the war was approaching and the