

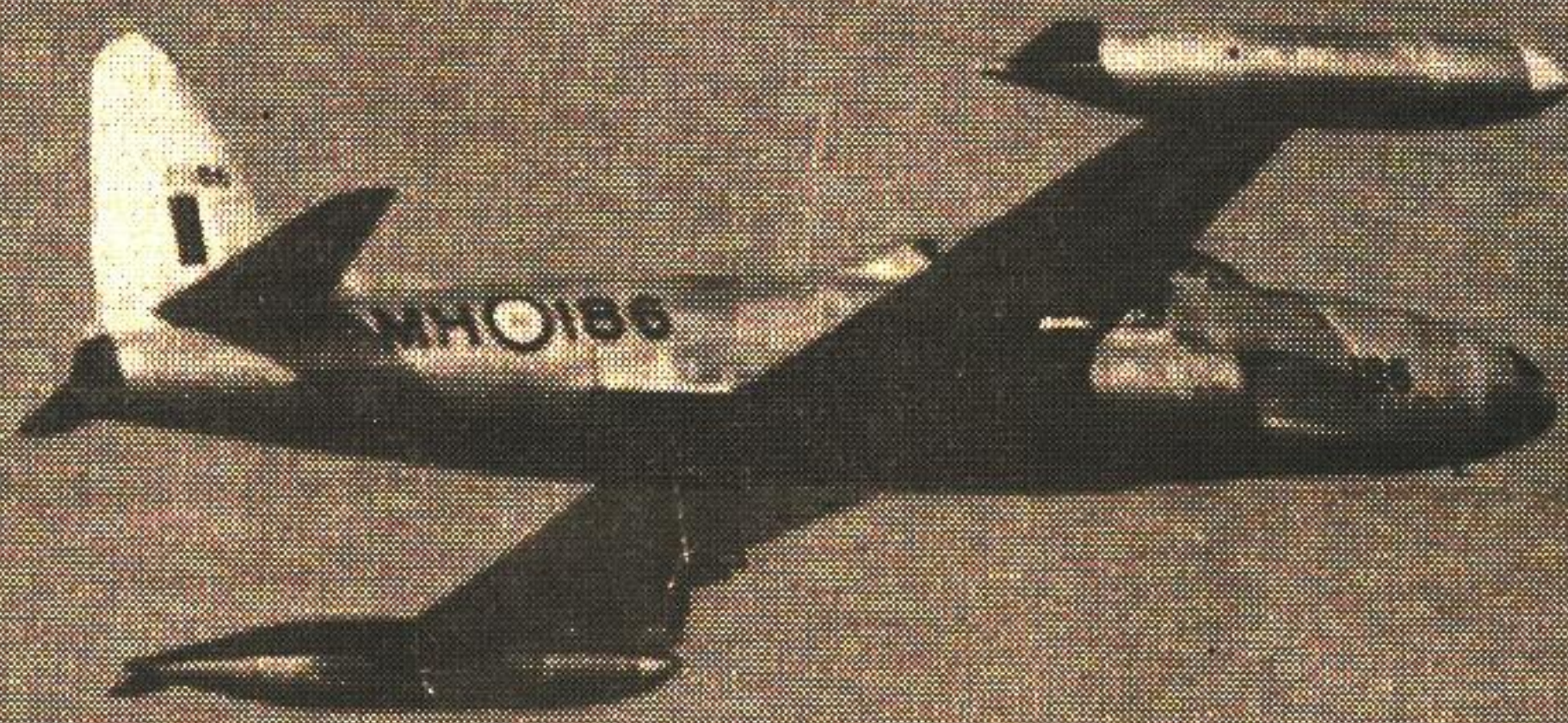
May 1, 1959
RCAF STATION
MACDONALD
MANITOBA
CANADA
VOL. 5
No. 6

The **ROCKETEER**

R.C.A.F. Station Macdonald Monthly (Mid-Month) Newspaper



FINAL ISSUE!



With articles and photographs covering the history of the station, past and present staff, and a listing of the names and postings of all Macdonald personnel.

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This Was Station Macdonald

MACDONALD FEBRUARY, 1941

*"Sure and they came and saw it,
It Looked so flat and bare
They said that's what we're lookin' for,
We'll build an airport there."*

RCAF Station Macdonald had its beginning in No. 3 Bombing and Gunnery School of the B.C.A.T.P. This station trained a total of 6498 Air Gunners, Wireless Operator Air Gunners and Air Observers for the Air Forces of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Norway. Of the total number of airmen trained, 5132 were RCAF, 577 RAF, 387 RNZAF, 385 RAAF and 17 RNAF.

When the buildings and runways on the site were nearing completion, SL. R. A. Cameron arrived, on February 19, 1941, to take temporary command for a fortnight pending the arrival of GC. G. A. Mercer, the first commanding officer. The early growth of the unit was somewhat marred by an outbreak of scarlet fever which caused the station to be quarantined for a time, but its development continued and on March 10, 1941, No. 3 Bombing and Gunnery School was offic-

ially opened. The first intake of trainees reported on March 17 and began training. By the end of that month the School had reached a strength of 627 staff (61 officers, 566 airmen) and 111 trainees, with a complement of 30 aircraft, mostly Battles plus a few Norsemen and Harvards.

New intakes continued to arrive at about two week intervals, each course averaging about 40 pupils and running six to eight weeks. Instruction included cannon and machine-gun (Browning and Vickers) firing on the ranges, trap shooting, turret manipulation, air-to-ground and air-to-air firing and bombing. A few Ansons and Cessnas were added to the training aircraft, and in May, 1942 the School welcomed its first W.D.s.

During this early period, March, 1941 through July, 1942, the staff of No. 3 B & GS increased from its initial 627 to

a peak of 1,183 officers, airmen and civilians, while the trainee strength remained fairly constant at about 150 a month.

Macdonald's present Chief Ground Instructor, SL. J. L. G. Lacombe, received his wings here during the wartime period. SL. Lacombe took the bombing course for his final qualification for Navigator's wings. He flew from "C" Flight. It is interesting to note that the Squadron Leader's barrack block was the same building in which he now works, the GIS Building. His bedroom was in what is now the GIS theatre.

At the end of July, 1942, bombing instruction ceased and thereafter the School was concerned only with gunnery training. At the same time the number of pupils were increased sharply, rising to 406 by the end of September, 1942 and averaging about 370 a month throughout the next year. One of the trainees at Macdonald

during the latter part of 1942 was LAC. A. C. Mynarski, who entered the School in September and graduated with Course 41 on December 18, 1942. In June, 1944, Andrew Mynarski, then a pilot officer air gunner on a Lancaster of No. 419 Squadron, won the Victoria Cross "by a most conspicuous act of heroism which called for valor of the highest order" at the cost of his own life.

PO. Mynarski's citation read as follows:

Air Ministry,
11th October, 1946

The King has been graciously pleased to confer the Victoria Cross of the undermentioned officer in recognition of most conspicuous bravery:—

Pilot Officer Andrew Charles Mynarski (Can./J.87544) (deceased), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 419 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

Readers interested in the story of PO. Mynarski's heroic act will find it covered in detail in the April issue of the "Roundel."

No. 3 Bombing and Gunnery School reached the peak of its flying activity in the summer and autumn of 1943 when its aircraft averaged about 5600 hours a month, and the strength of the School rose to a peak of 1,274 staff and 436 trainees (at the end of October). The Battle continued to be the School's "work-horse" until the beginning of 1944 when it was replaced by the Bolingbroke and Lysander. Through 1944 the number of pupils showed an increase, ranging from 515 to 687 a month, but the flying hours were less than in the previous year, averaging about 3,000 hours per month.

By the close of 1944 the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was being rapidly reduced as there was a large reserve of trained aircrew on hand adequate to meet requirements for some time to come. On Feb-



Pilot Officer Andrew Charles Mynarski, V.C. who trained as an air gunner at RCAF Macdonald and who received the Victoria Cross posthumously for valour.



ruary 1, 1945, the School held its last "wings" parade when 116 graduates of Air Gunners Course 95 received their badges from the commanding officer. Training ceased, personnel were posted away, buildings were closed, and finally on February 17, 1945, No. 3 Bombing and Gunnery School was officially disbanded.

During the four years that had elapsed since the first officers and airmen reported to Macdonald the School had had five commanding officers:

GC. G. A. Mercer, March 5, 1941 to Feb. 3, 1943; WC. GC. R. F. Gibb, AFC, Feb. 3, 1943 to June 9, 1944; WC. R. F. Gross, June 9, 1944 to Sept. 12, 1944; GC. W. F. C. Hobson, R.A.F., Sept. 12, 1944 to Dec. 18, 1944; GC. E. C. Tennant, Dec. 18, 1944 to Feb. 5, 1945.

(SL. R. A. Cameron had been Feb. 19, 1941 to March 4, 1941 during the early formative period, and SL. W. J. Wood was in charge during the closing-down period; Feb. 5 to Feb. 17, 1945, when he departed SL. A. S. Robbins headed the rear party.)

(Continued on Page 12)

Raising of RCAF Ensign Marks Official Opening

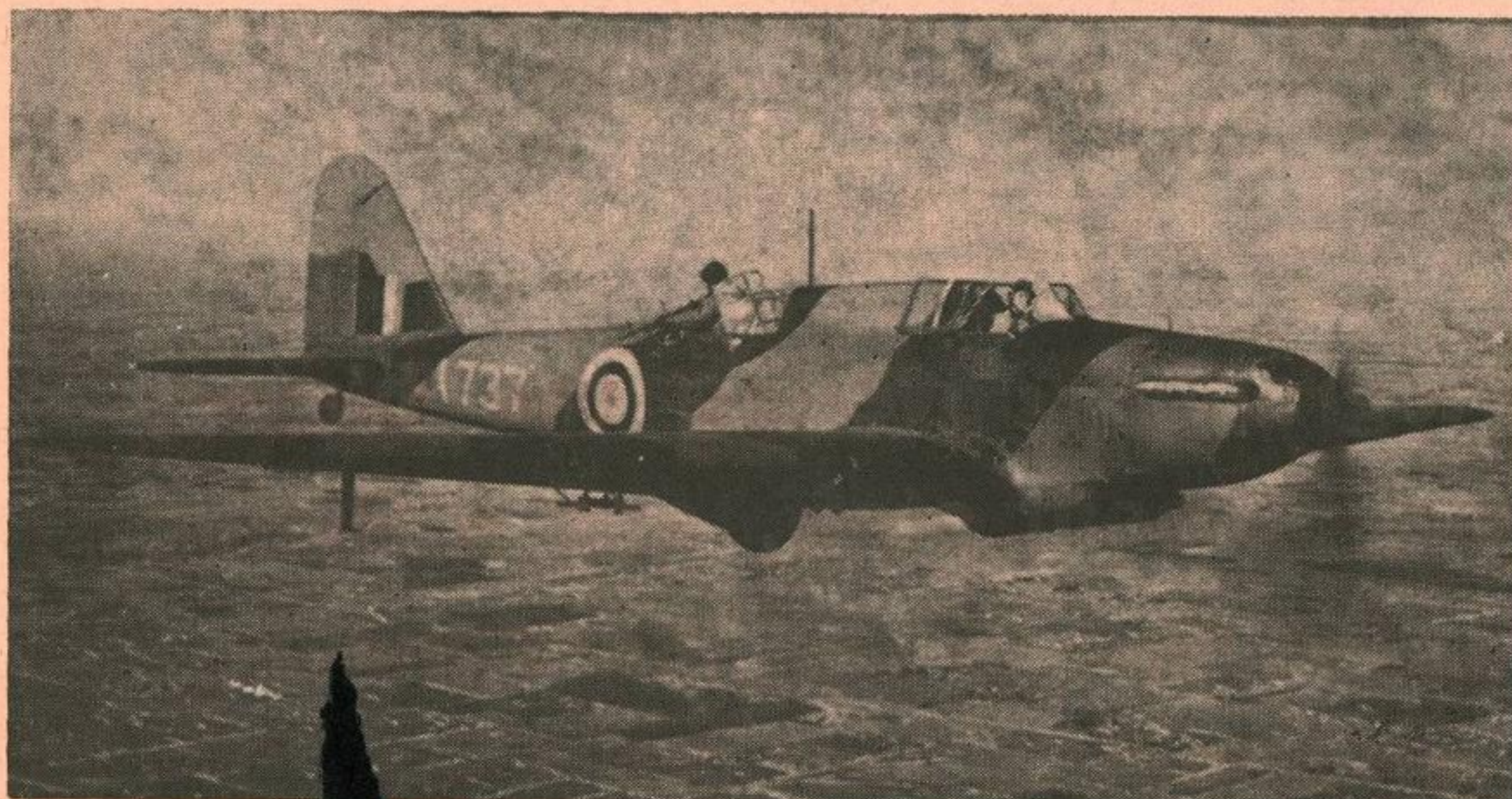
The Daily Graphic, 28 May, 1951:—

An advance party of officers and men, including WC. R. D. P. Blagrove (now Group Captain), and members of the Construction and Maintenance Unit, officially re-opened Macdonald air force station this morning with a general salute as the ensign was raised.

Up to this time the army had been using the field as a gigantic parking space for its vehicles.



RCAF MACDONALD AS IT APPEARED ORIGINALLY.



THE FAIREY BATTLE, primary training aircraft at Macdonald during the war.

The ROCKETEER

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Million Dollar Boom Hits Macdonald Base

Winnipeg Tribune, April 11, 1951 — The film writer who declared "You can't take it with you" didn't know about the RCAF station here and its mobile houses.

The buildings, part of a million dollar housing program for married airmen, are almost as mobile as the station's Harvard and Dakota aircraft — yet will be "permanent" living quarters as long as there's a need for them.

Forty-one airmen and 120 civilian workers are slapping the pre-fabricated steel one and two-suite buildings up in one day after piles have set and services brought to the sites.

Crews of 13 set up the steel frame buildings which, according to S. L. Riddell, officer in charge, "are really nothing but giant meccano sets."

MOBILE UNITS

Beauty of the building, though, air force officers state, is that they can be converted into barrack blocks in short order if required and also that they're "fully salvageable".

By that they mean the buildings can be knocked down and carried to new sites without leaving a trace above ground.

Even the beams, made of pre-cast concrete, can be used again

in setting the buildings up at a new site.

When completed the 100 housing units, comprising 47 "doubles" (each containing a two bedroom suite and a three bedroom one) and six "singles" (with four bedrooms each), will be arranged in three crescents immediately south of the camp.

SPRING DATE

S. L. Riddell said Thursday: "The quarters will be occupied this fall as completed and we hope the majority will be occupied by Christmas."

Total cost of the quarters will be approximately \$1,040,000, including water, services, landscaping and roads.

Servicemen working on the project are from the Air Force's own No. 2 Construction Maintenance Unit, a construction firm in uniform that is handling a 10 million dollar construction program this year.

This figure came from WC. A. C. Border of Calgary, commanding officer of the unit which ordinarily has a strength of about 600 airmen and 850 civilians.

Bad For Morale From All Sides

Families of Macdonald Airmen Need Living Space, CO Says

The Daily Graphic, 1951 — There is a dire need for living space for families of airmen and officers stationed at the newly opened Macdonald Airport, Wing Commander R. D. P. Blagrave, commanding officer of the station said today. Of all his worries connected with the establishment of the station, WC. Blagrave declared that the lack of housing for the families of his men was the greatest.

Although the RCAF tried to send single men out to bases like the Macdonald Airport where there was a housing shortage, it was impossible to have all single men out there. WC. Blagrave pointed out that unlike wartime, a large percentage of the men in service now, were married and had families. It is an accepted fact that a serviceman has to be away from his wife and children for long periods of time, but everything possible was being done to correct that situation, he stated. It was also bad for morale on all sides when people were separated.

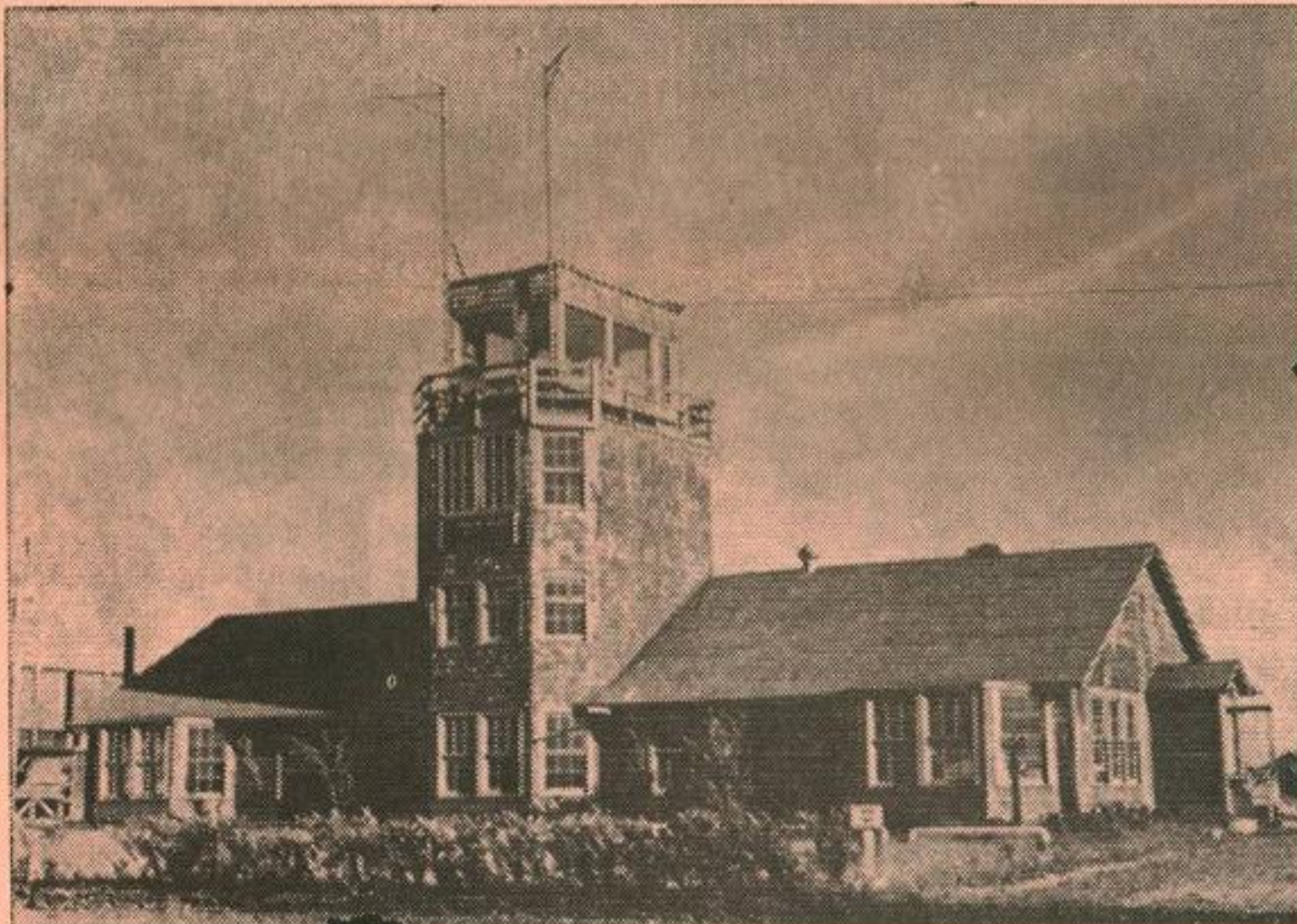
At the present time men and machines could not be spared for building quarters for the men and their families. The prime objective was to build the airport to accommodate men and aircraft as soon as possible and no men could be spared for supplying living quarters.

The Wing Commander made a plea to Portagers to come forth and help in obtaining living space for the men and their families. "It is only with the

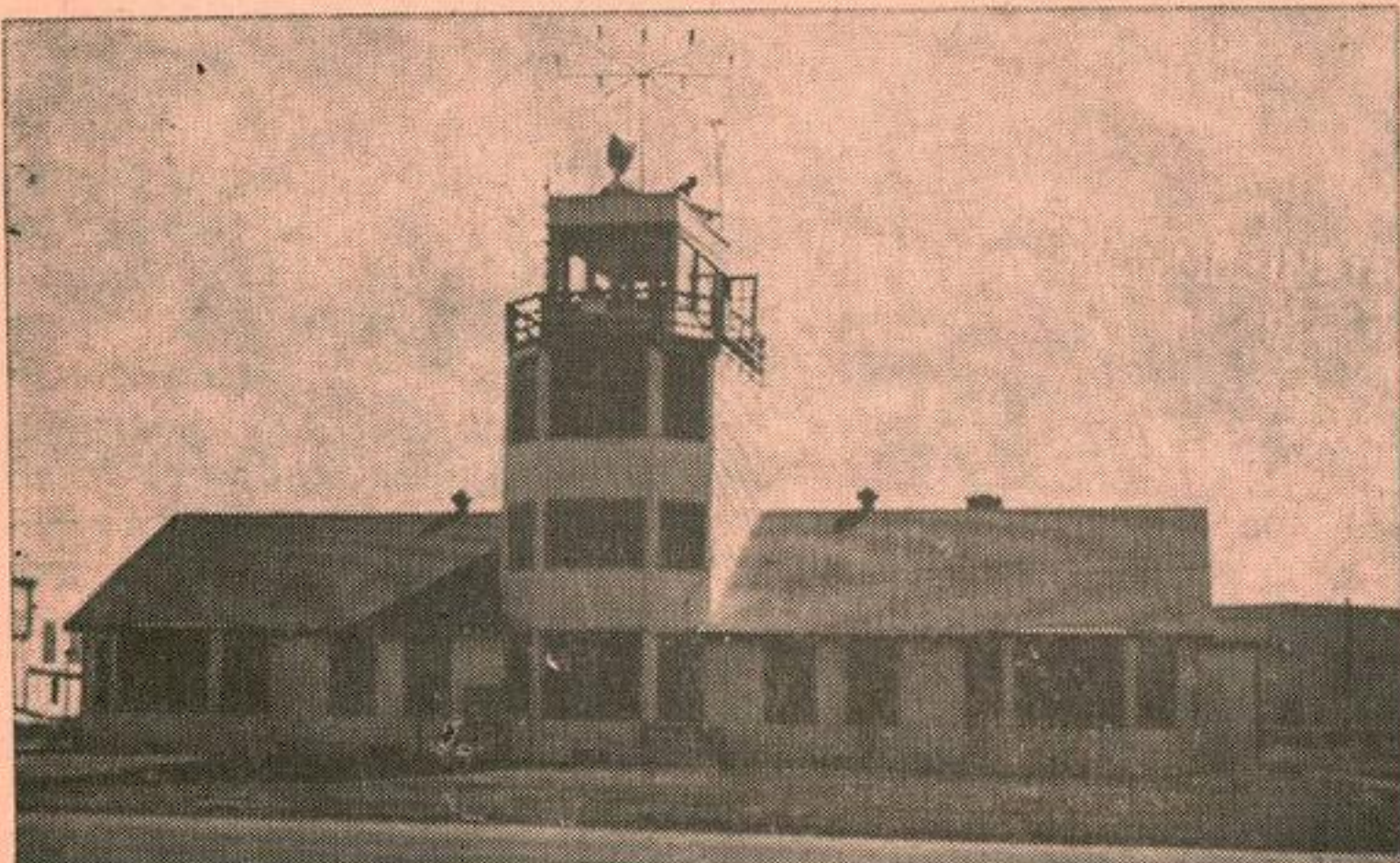
co-operation of the people in this city that we can solve the problem, which in my mind, is a serious one," he said.



GC. R. D. P. BLAGRAVE, CD, the first Commanding Officer of RCAF Macdonald when it was re-opened in 1951.



BEFORE — The control tower as it appeared in 1951 before the station was reactivated.



AFTER — The control tower after the station was re-opened.



ONE OF THE STEELOX BUILDINGS used for Private Married Quarters, taken just after construction was finished.

South Airport Gets First Trainees

Flying Instructions Commence Nov. 17, 1952

The training program at Air Station Portage la Prairie began this morning as the first course on the station began ground school instruction.

The flying program on the station will not start until Nov.

17 when personnel and planes from Macdonald air station AFS will transfer to Southport.

In the first course to arrive are five French students, two Dutch and seven Canadian.

They will train on Harvard

type craft and will convert to jet trainers on their arrival on the station in the near future.

TURN TO PAGE 4

For More Training Stories



THE RECEIVING LINE in the Officers' Mess at the Coronation Ball in 1952. The CO at that time, GC. Blagrave, is third from the right. On the right is Judge Stanley H. Fahrni, of Portage.

Macdonald as a Pilot Weapons School—1951

RCAF Students at Macdonald Train to Become Jet Pilots of Tomorrow

marked "Macdonald (abandoned)" on federal government maps used by RCAF aircrew trainees — and nothing could be farther from the truth.

Winnipeg Tribune, 1952 — There's an airfield

The "abandoned" airfield north of Portage la Prairie is a veritable beehive of activity producing an ever increasing stream of fighter pilots for the

RCAF's stepped-up post war expansion program.

ALL THEY WANT

Re-activated last fall after Second World War service as

No. 3 Bombing and Gunnery School, the airfield's new advanced flying and pilot gunnery schools have already graduated four classes of fighter pilots.

Far out over Lake Manitoba the staff pilots and trainees are "getting all the flying they want" blasting at targets trail-

ing behind the two-engined Dakotas with live ammunition.

Near the little hamlet of Langruth, two battered army tanks and ground targets are daily exposed to rocket and bomb batterings by the fighter pilots in their trim yellow Harvards.

ROCKET TRAINING

Besides pounding their targets with the 11½ pound bombs and the 25 pound armour-piercing three-inch rockets at the Langruth range, the pilots rattle ground targets with diving machine gun attacks.

In addition the double targets at the Langruth range, permitting simultaneous assaults by two planes, are the first of their type in Canada.

Students arriving at the station first receive a three week stretch of ground instruction in the Advanced Flying School

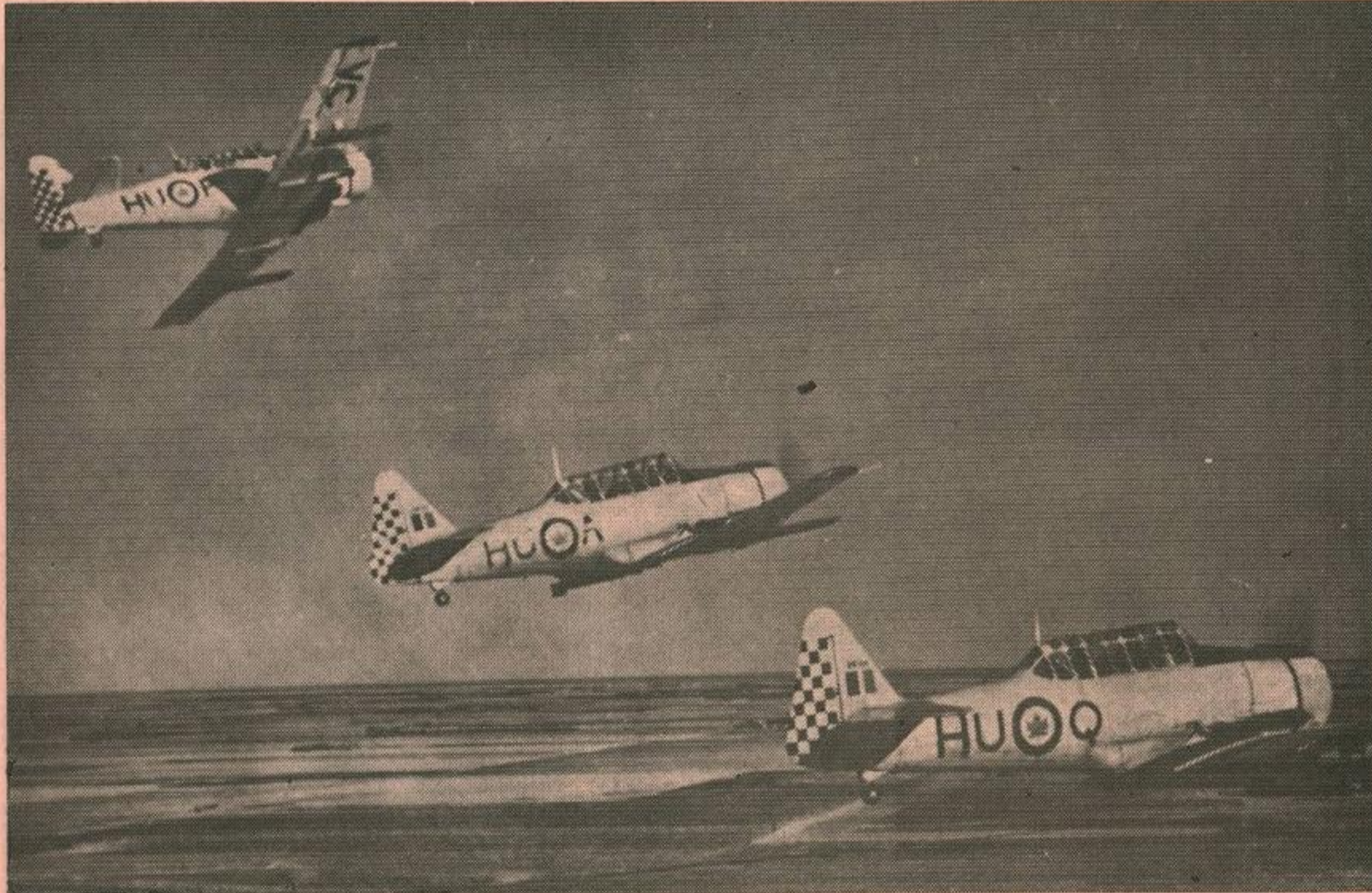
then six weeks in the air on a course of instrument flying and aerobatics.

Then they're posted to the Pilot Gunnery School where

AFS Training On Harvard Aircraft

It is interesting to realize that Macdonald was an AFS for a short period in 1952, officially known as No. 2 AFS, training on Harvard aircraft. The first students to receive their wings at the reopened station were 13 French NATO trainees. The trainees then remained at Macdonald for their pilot weapons training.

In November, 1952, 2 AFS moved to the reopened RCAF Station Portage.



THREE HARVARDS PEEL OFF for rocket firing over the Langruth Range, 1951-52.



THE FIRST COURSE TO GRADUATE from Macdonald in 1951 — Pilot Gunnery School Course No. 21. FO. MacKay, second from left, rear row, subsequently came back to Macdonald as an instructor.



PILOTS OF THE FIRST THREE T-33's to arrive at Macdonald, in July 1953, were SL. A. K. Ogilvie, FL. J. G. Christison, and FO. L. A. T. MacDonald, all from 129 Ferry Flight.

Fishing In Lake Ice Cuts Air Training

NATO Gunnery Practice Stops

Winnipeg Tribune, February, 1952 — Training at Canada's NATO pilot-gunnery school — RCAF Station Macdonald, Man. — has been brought to a virtual halt because commercial fishermen are casting their nets on the school's gunnery range in Lake Manitoba.

Officials at the school, 10 miles northwest of Portage la Prairie, said today the last class graduated on Feb. 6 with incomplete training.

Twenty-two young Canadian pilots were on the course and many made only one practice attack on the range. Minimum number of attacks required to pass the course was set at 12.

MORE TRAINEES

Two more courses — mostly airmen from NATO countries — begin training at Macdonald soon but station officers feel their training might also be curtailed.

A suitable and binding agreement with Lake Manitoba commercial fishermen should be negotiated, they stressed.

The problem does not only concern gunnery practice. Air to ground rocket firing is done on a range on land to the west of the lake.

The air to air range is rectangular, 24 miles long and 10 miles wide, extending north and south on Lake Manitoba's east side. The danger area be-

(Please Turn to Page Five)

3 T-33's Arrive At Macdonald Port

The Daily Graphic, July, 1953: The first three jet aircraft T-33 trainers have arrived at RCAF Station Macdonald and the familiar roar of the yellow Harvard will gradually be replaced by the high-pitched whine of its sleek successor.

Following conversion of Macdonald's staff pilots, these aircraft will be used for future pilots training which covers all phases of rocket-firing, machine-gunning and dive-bombing.

The first T-33's to arrive at Macdonald were flown by three pilots from No. 129 Ferry Flight at Trenton, Ont. — Squadron Leader A. K. Ogilvie, Flight Lieutenant J. G. Christison and Flying Officer L. A. T. MacDonald.

The three pilots were greeted on arrival at Macdonald by Wing Commander P. M. Hale, acting Commanding Officer at Macdonald, and Squadron Leader L. L. Nault, Officer Commanding Flying at Macdonald.



IN 1952 Macdonald gave up its AFS role on Harvards, concentrating on gunnery. RCAF Portage re-opened and assumed the AFS duties. Pictured above is the first Harvard to land at RCAF Portage after the re-opening. Greeting it are two "newspapermen", Capt. Shaughnessy and FO. Cooper, interviewing one of the arriving pilots.

FISHING IN LAKE ICE CUTS AIR TRAINING

(Continued from Page Four)

gins about 20 miles from the lake's southern shore.

Group Captain R. D. P. Blagrave, station commanding officer, told The Tribune that since the first week in January the equivalent of only one-half day's air-to-air firing practice has been completed because of the danger of hitting commercial fishermen who tend nets not only at the fringes of the danger area but also "smack in the middle of it".

The danger to fishermen if firing were carried on would be immeasurable. Harvard aircraft dive on flag targets towed by twin-engined Dakotas. They fire .303 calibre wing-mounted machine guns as they angle in on the target. Bullets, empty cartridge cases and belt clips are sent hurtling to the ice of the lake.

FISHING HOLES

GC. Blagrave said some of his officers have found cartridge cases alongside the holes in the ice used by the fishermen. A Tribune reporter and photographer flew the circuit of the range Wednesday and spotted some 15 fishermen in the danger area — many of them almost at the centre of it.

Air force regulations prevent the firing of a single round of ammunition if there is the slightest hint that persons are in the danger area or even at the fringe of it.

Fishermen who populate the range come from the Lake Manitoba shore communities of Oak Point, Scotch Bay and other

centres on the east and west shores.

COMPENSATED

Provincial government fisheries officials said today that many of them, whose traditional fishing grounds were in the range area were compensated in 1950 by the Defence Department.

The compensation, paid in a lump sum, was based on anticipated income and the value of their equipment. Fishermen agreed to waive fishing rights in the area for as long as the range was in operation.

Although government officials did not give the total compensation paid, one source indicated the figure would average about \$65,000 a year.

Oak Point district fishermen held a protest meeting the first week in January and recommended that the range be moved eventually to Sleeve Lake, to the east of Lake Manitoba. They recommended also that six miles be taken off the southern extremity of the range to "retain previous fishing grounds."

"TOO SMALL"

GC. Blagrave pointed that Sleeve Lake is too small for use as a range. But in a local agreement, the RCAF did hack off five miles from the southern end of the present range. That agreement is to be terminated Feb. 22.

Macdonald station officers said that many fishermen using the range area moved in from other parts of the lake. They reported that some even made rude attempts at camouflaging their fishing huts with snow.

Some fishermen, already com-

pensated, continued to fish the area under licences held by relatives.

Attempts had been made regularly — using snowmobiles, helicopter and ski-equipped aircraft carrying RCMP constables — to get fishermen to leave the danger area.

COSTLY CHASE

"But we can't take the time

continually playing hide-and-seek with the fishermen," said GC. Blagrave.

"It's a rough situation. This station was established in May, 1951, primarily because of the availability of firing ranges. There isn't much justification for the place if we can't use the ranges."

Pilots of tow planes spoke of

the frustration of heading into the range area for a shooting exercise only to find it thickly dotted with fishing huts and fishermen.

Macdonald Jets Break Sound Barrier

The Daily Graphic, 22 Oct. 54: Two of the three new Sabre Jets at RCAF Station Macdonald, Wednesday morning and Thursday afternoon startled Portagers in the downtown area when they went through the sonic barrier on two consecutive attempts.

The breaking of the barrier resulted in loud thunder-like claps which shook windows and buildings, leaving several residents wondering.

Flown by Capt. Don Britton of Cold Water, Mich., an exchange pilot from the United States, the first jet flew over the city at about 11:30 Wednesday morning and the second aircraft with Fit. Lt. Bill Stacey of Hamilton, at the controls, flew over at about 4.30 p.m. Thursday. The pilot of the third plane is FO. Bill Bain of Hamilton.

The Sabre jets were used with great success in Korea by Canadian pilots.

The speed of sound at sea level is 760 mph and the speed of the plane would decrease as it gained altitude.

Pilots of Tomorrow

(Continued from Page 4)

there's another three weeks of ground instruction and then six weeks in the air with the station's 35 Harvards.

AIR-TO-AIR

This is the part of the course that brings the actual shooting as the young officers go through "air to air" and "air to ground" phases.

It's the air to air phase that has them attacking a six foot by 30 foot target towed by a Dakota.

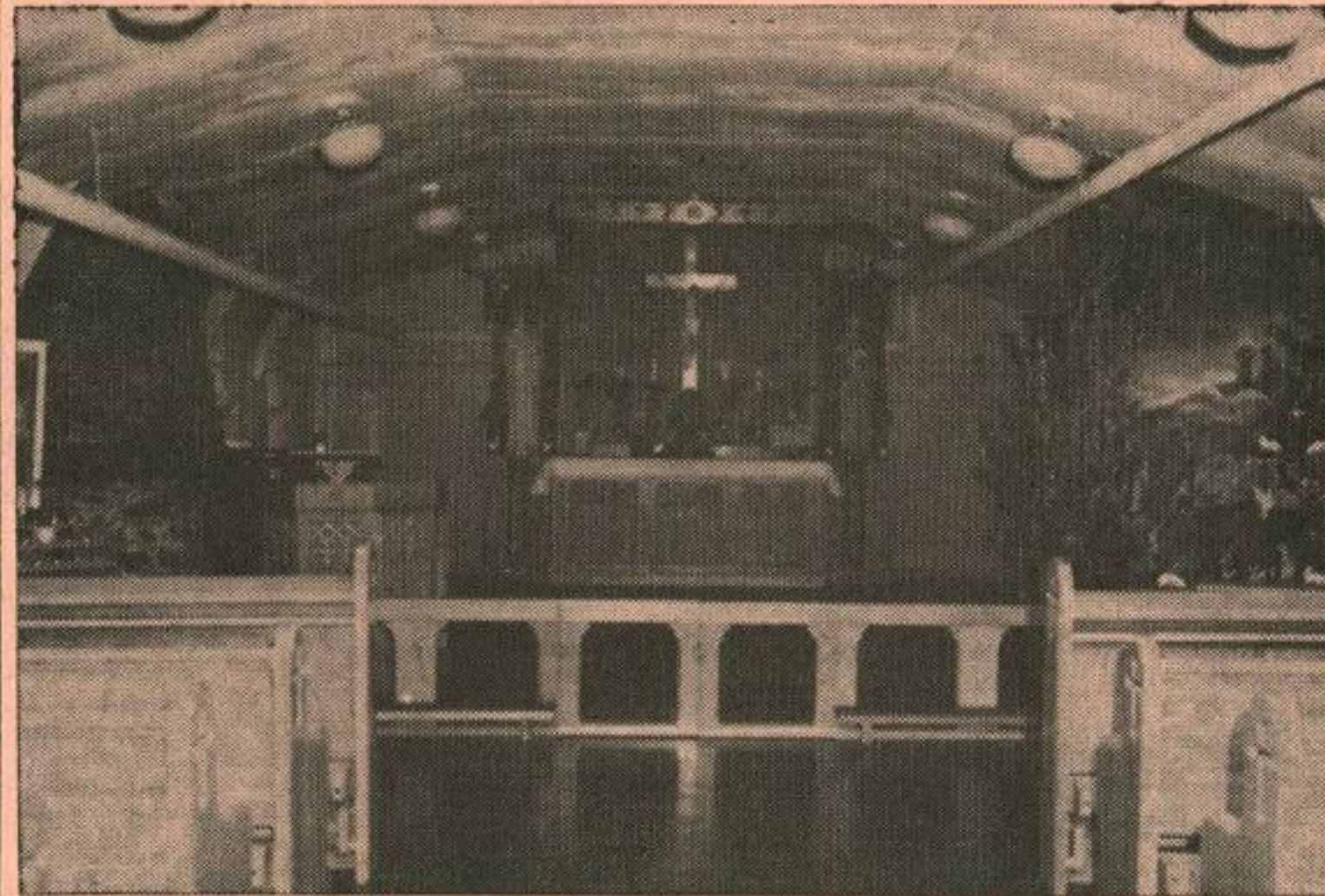
As many as six Harvards swoop in on the target blasting at it with their .303 machine guns. Each plane has different colored ammunition so that records of their accuracy can be kept. A 15 to 20 per cent average is considered good although weather conditions can affect the averages.

First trips for the trainees are with instructor pilots, majority of whom have seen service in Second World War. Then they get solo trips with cine-guns (cameras) to see how they're doing.

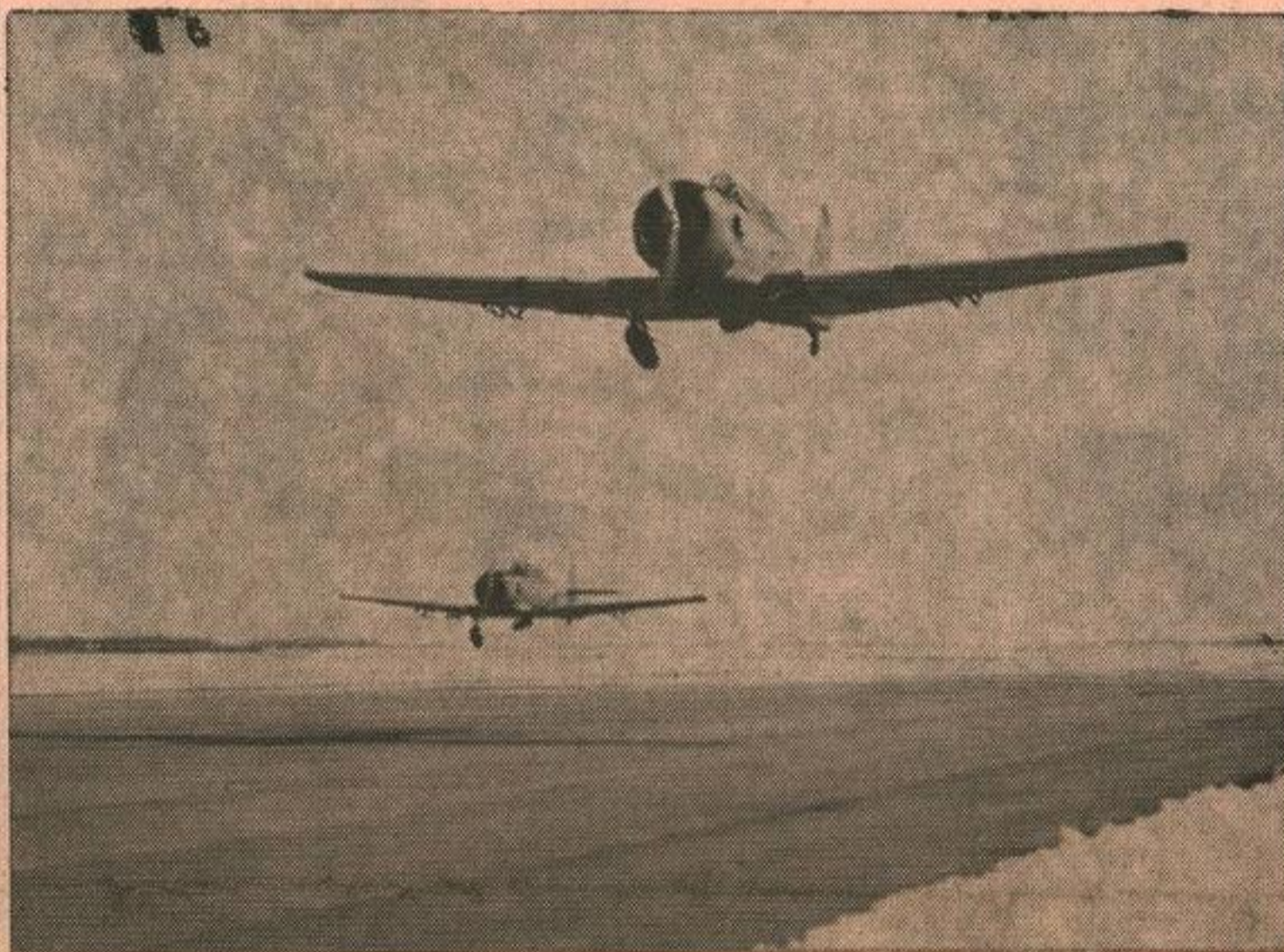
Some 30 families are now living in temporary married quarters as the station continues to expand and new buildings are erected and alterations are made to existing buildings.

Before the station could open last year hundreds of army vehicles standing in open fields had to be moved and equipment stored in barracks and other buildings had to be shipped away.

Group Captain Blagrave has been station commander since it opened and assisting him are Wing Commander P. M. Hale, officer commanding, PGS and AFS; Squadron Leader L. L. Nault, officer commanding PGS flying; Squadron Leader J. Edwards, officer commanding AFS flying; Flight Lieutenant J. Leach, chief ground instructor; Flying Officer Al Farris, adjutant, ground school; Flight Lieutenant C. Montgomery, DFC, commanding the Dakota flight.



INTERIOR OF THE RC CHAPEL, CHRISTMAS, 1954.



THE LAST TWO HARVARDS leaving Macdonald in early 1954.



A GROUP SHOT OF THE INSTRUCTORS OF MACDONALD IN THE SUMMER OF 1954.



THE MACDONALD LOCAL FLYING AREA as defined in 1953, after arrival of T-33's. Note the two restricted areas in Lake Manitoba, lower right hand corner, where gunnery training was carried out.

LAUGHING STEADY

by VERA JONES

A tall good looking blonde entered a shoe store and told the clerk:

"I want a pair of low-heeled shoes."

"To wear with what?" asked the clerk.

"A short, fat business man!" she cooed.

☆ ☆ ☆

Doc — "For insomnia try drinking warm milk an hour before going to bed. It should help you to relax."

A week later the girl returned to the doctor's office.

"How are you feeling?" he asked.

"Lousy," the girl said.

"Did you take my advice about taking the milk one hour before you retired?"

"Yes, but I couldn't keep it up for more than twenty minutes," she replied.

☆ ☆ ☆

Fred — "For months I thought I was a fox terrier. Then I went to a psychiatrist and he cured me."

Ed — "How are you now?"

Fred — "Just fine, feel my nose."

☆ ☆ ☆

Caller to telephone exchange — "These flowers are for the operators."

"Thank you sir. You flatter our service."

"Flatter, h - - . I thought you were all dead."

☆ ☆ ☆

Pat — "Did you see that pretty nurse smile at me?"

Mike — "That's nothin'. The first time I saw you I laughed out loud."

*The Life of
Macdonald
Air Station
From 1954 On*

MACDONALD AIRMEN TRIUMPHANT

On September 7, 1954, two Macdonald airmen, Cpl. John Gustaffson and AC1 Ron Johnson, paddled the 217 miles river

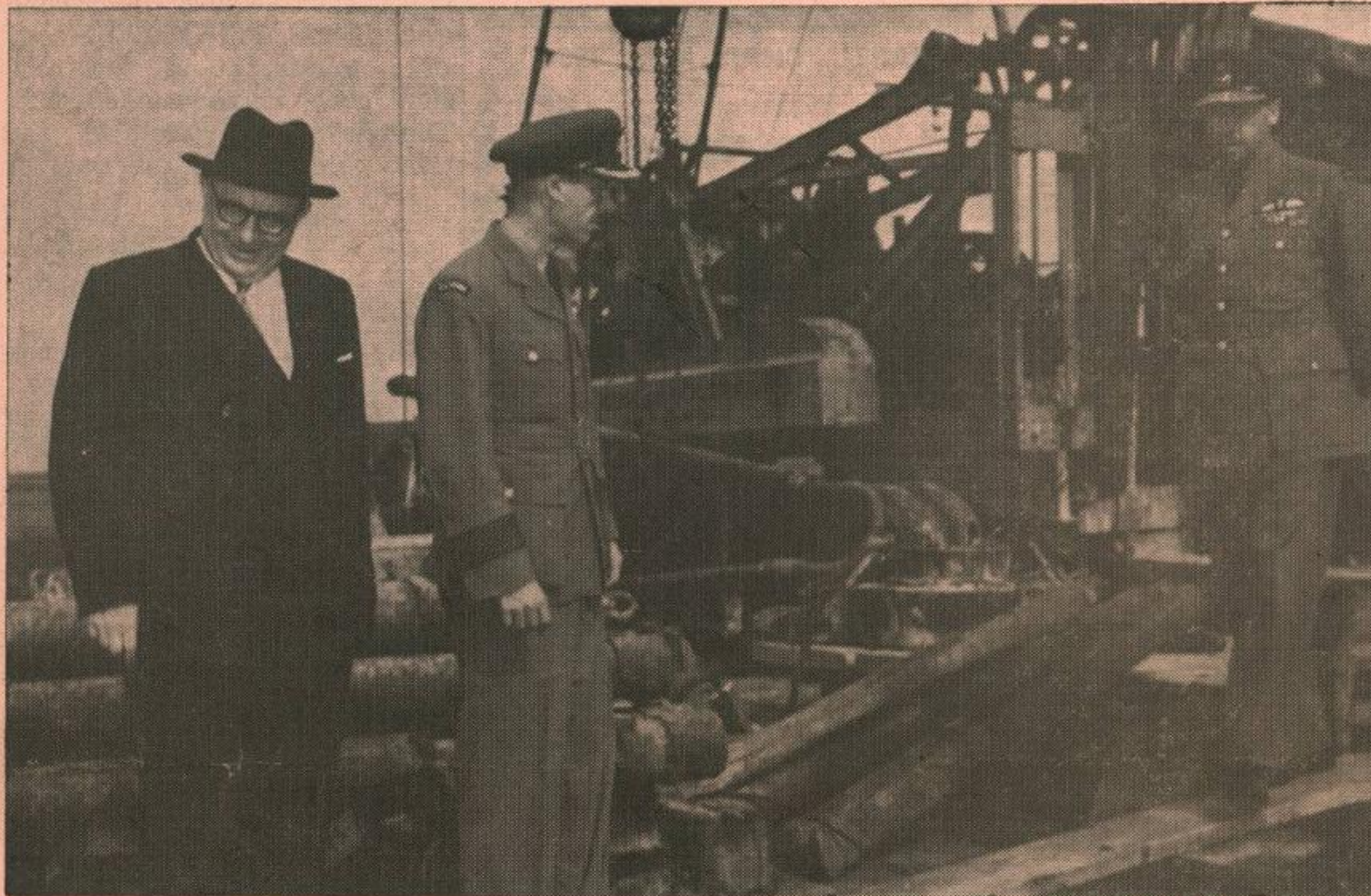
journey from Portage la Prairie to Winnipeg in 18 hours. Considerable newspaper publicity accompanied the feat, in Winnipeg newspapers and on the radio.



Two more Macdonald airmen then set out to beat this time, on September 11, 1954. Cpl. Frank Ferdick and LAC. Will Wenslay succeeded in paddling the 217 miles in 16½ hours.

A year later, canoeing again hit the Winnipeg headlines as 13 canoes participated in a challenge race to Winnipeg, eight canoes from RCAF Portage and five from RCAF Macdonald. Two Macdonald canoes were the only ones finishing, the winners again being the original team, Cpl. Gustaffson and LAC. Johnson.

PART OF THE VICTORIOUS Macdonald Canoe Team setting out for the race from Portage la Prairie to Winnipeg in September, 1955.



IN THE SUMMER OF 1954, the Honourable Ralph Campney, Minister of National Defence, visited RCAF Macdonald on an inspection tour. Here he is shown inspecting the site of an unsuccessful well which was dug on the station. A water pipeline subsequently had to be laid from Portage la Prairie to overcome the water shortage. Also shown are GC. Blagrove, the CO, and A. V. M. Kerr, then AOC of Training Command.



GC. J. J. JORDAN, AFC, CD, who was Commanding Officer of RCAF Station Macdonald from the summer of 1954 until late 1957.



THE CO's HANDING-OVER PARADE, summer 1954. GC. Blagrove inspecting the parade prior to his departure from Macdonald.



PERSONNEL OF THE SERGEANTS' MESS, LATE 1954.



THE PROTESTANT CHAPEL, shortly before it was dedicated in April, 1955, by GC. F. W. MacLean, Director of Religious Administration (P).

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*The Life of
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**LAC ALLAN RYAN BIDS
FOR WORLD "PIANOTHON"**

A Macdonald airman achieved some notoriety in the marathon craze in 1955 by attempting to exceed the record time for world marathon piano playing.

LAC. Allan Ryan on his first bid for the world "pianothon" record, on Sep 20, 1955, played for 46 hours and 15 minutes, two hours short of the world record. The attempt was made in the Rec Hall. He kept up his strength by consuming food and coffee from RCAF emergency packs provided by other Macdonald airmen who were standing by.

A month later, on 31 Oct 55, LAC. Ryan played for 55 hours and 17 minutes, establishing a world pianothon record. At 51

hours Ryan passed the Canadian record. The previous world record had risen to a straight 55 hours.

The second attempt took place in the Portage Kinsmen's Hall. Thousands of people visited and

parts of the event were covered on television.

The following year on 20 February, 1956, LAC. Ryan again regained the world record, playing in the Oddfellows Hall, for 60 hours and 4 minutes.



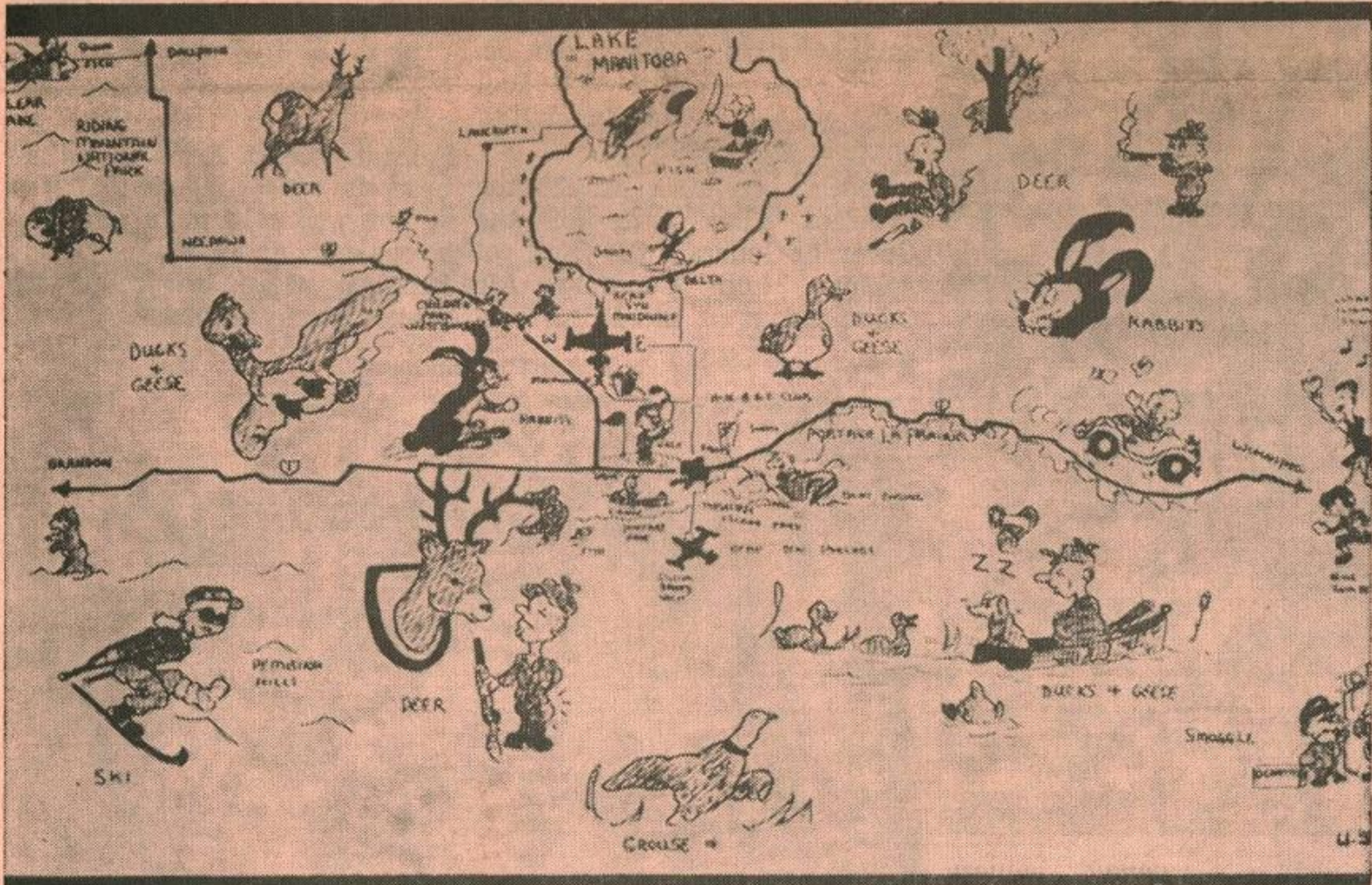
LAC. A. RYAN of Macdonald seen at the piano during the world piano-playing endurance record he set in 1955.



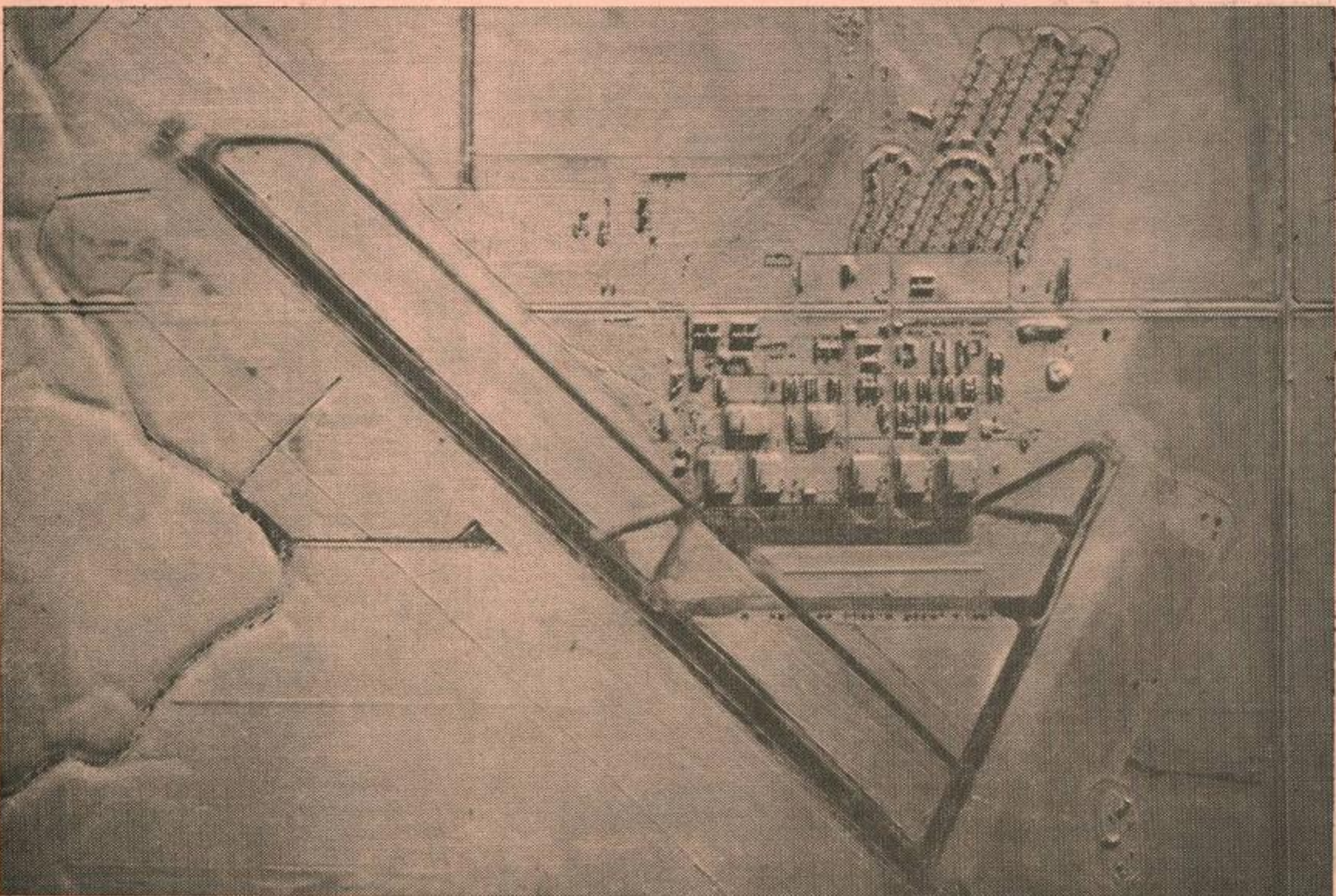
AIRMEN OF MACDONALD — THE HONOUR GUARD, LATE 1955.



THE AOC TRAINING COMMAND, A. V. M. Bryans, inspecting a gunnery target drogue for hits in the spring of 1955. At the AOC's left is GC. Jordan, the CO at that time.



A RECREATIONAL MAP OF THE MACDONALD AREA. IN THE SPRING OF 1955.



RCAF MACDONALD as it appeared in 1955 from the air at altitude 12,000 feet.



AN INTERESTING former Macdonald staff officer — WC. J. MacKay, DFC, CD, who was OC of the Pilot Weapons School in 1954-55. WC. McKay, a bachelor, had nine aircraft to his credit in World War II, plus one confirmed MIG in the Korean War.



SNOW SCENE — the station digging out after a snow storm in the winter of 1955-56. The picture is taken from the station theatre looking northeast towards No. 2 and No. 3 hangars.

The Life of Macdonald Air Station In 1956



THE CAS, AM. SLEMON, inspecting the Honour Guard during his visit to Macdonald, January, 1956.



THE PRESENTATION of a mug in the Corporals' Club to GC. J. J. Jordan, then CO, upon the occasion of his leaving Macdonald in 1956.

This Was Station Macdonald

(Continued From Page Two)

For a few months, October, 1941 to April, 1942, No. 3 Personnel Holding Unit (Temporary) was located on the station at Macdonald under the command of FL. C. A. R. Lawrence, with a transient strength of about 270 to 300 airmen.

Some highlights of the School's war-time life may be mentioned.

The winter of 1941-42 was marked by crippling blizzards which piled great drifts of snow half-way up the walls of the buildings. The snow removal equipment had to work 24 hours a day to keep the roads open on the station, and one one occasion extra rations and fuel were rushed in to forestall a possible shortage.

In October, 1942, H.R.H. the Princess Alice (wife of the Governor-General, the Earl of Athlone, and Honorary Air Commandant of the RCAF Wo-

men's Division) visited the School to inspect the various sections and take the salute at a muster parade of all the W.D.'s.

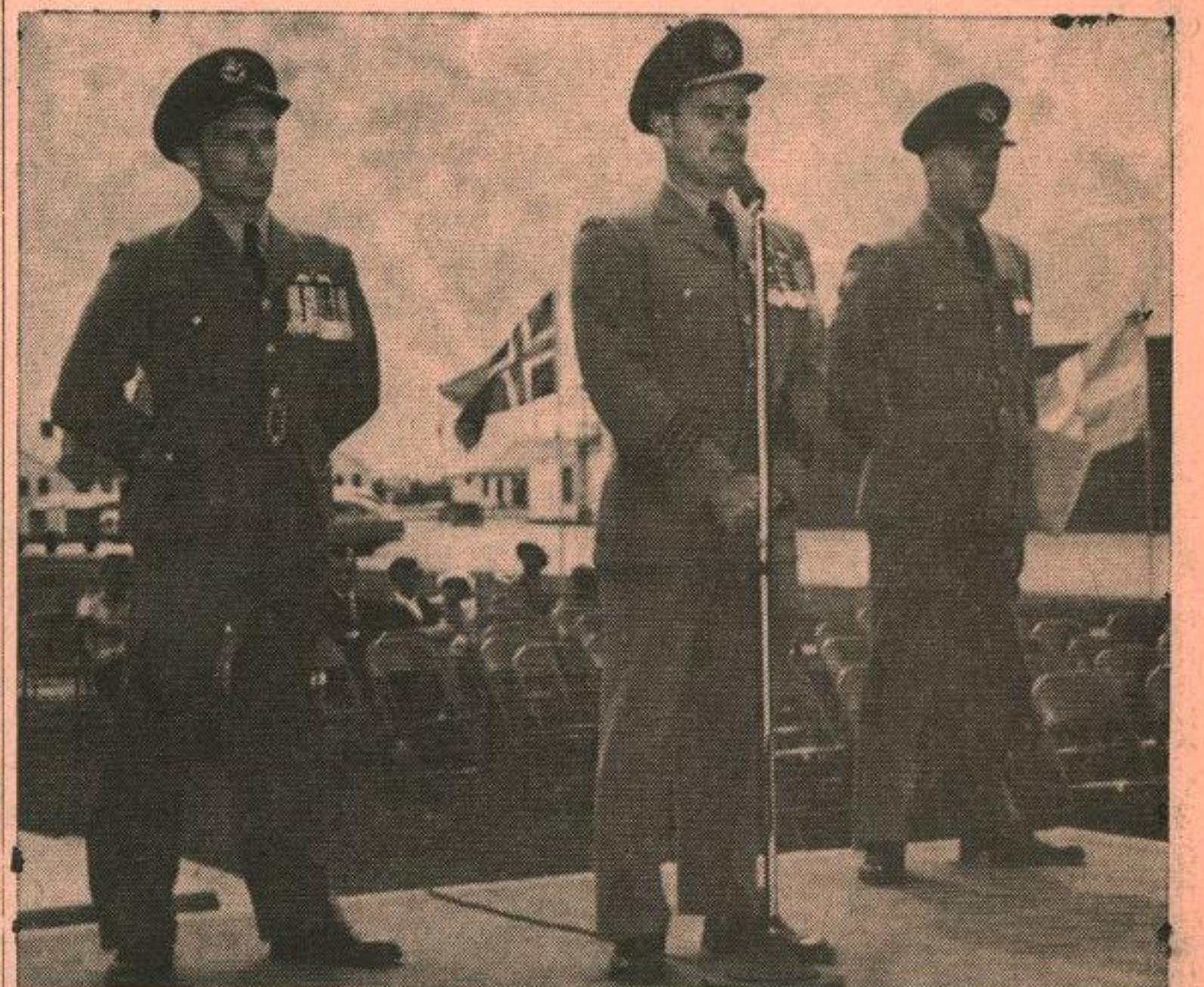
An epidemic of influenza in February, 1943 filled the station hospital to overflowing. When the blizzards abated and fine spring weather set in the School turned to gardening, cultivating a twelve-acre "Victory Garden" of potatoes, corn, carrots, onions, beets, cabbage, tomatoes, peas and parsnips.

In August, 1944 the School began publishing a magazine, called "Tracer," which went through four editions before No. 3 B & GS was disbanded.

RCAF Station Macdonald was officially closed, after its war-time period, on the fifth of February, 1955. From that time until the reopening in 1951, the station was used mainly for the storage of Army material—the runways were covered with parked Army vehicles.



THE OPENING of the Airmen's Games Room early 1956. The CO, GC. Jordan, is third from right.



A SCENE at the Handing-over Parade, summer 1956, in which GC. Jordan relinquished command to GC. J. D. Somerville. On the left is WC. L. Hall, then OC 4AFS.

THE LAST THREE YEARS — 1956-1959

New Role AFS Training at Macdonald Outlined

The Enterprise, Thursday, September 20, 1956: The new role of RCAF Station Macdonald, since its conversion from a Pilot Weapons School to Advanced Flying is contained in an article in the most recent issue of The Rocketeer, the station paper.

Macdonald is now the home of No. 4 Advanced Flying School. At this unit, trainees from the Flying Training Schools are given

en their first jet flying training. In addition to this group, other trained pilots who have up to this point, no jet training, are given the same course of instruction.

After arrival at Macdonald, the students spend their first four weeks in the Ground School. They study technical and handling aspects of the Silver Star jet trainer, high level navigation,

aviation medicine as it applies to a jet pilot, safety equipment, flight procedures and radio theory, some theory of high speed aerodynamics and meteorology.

ALTERNATE

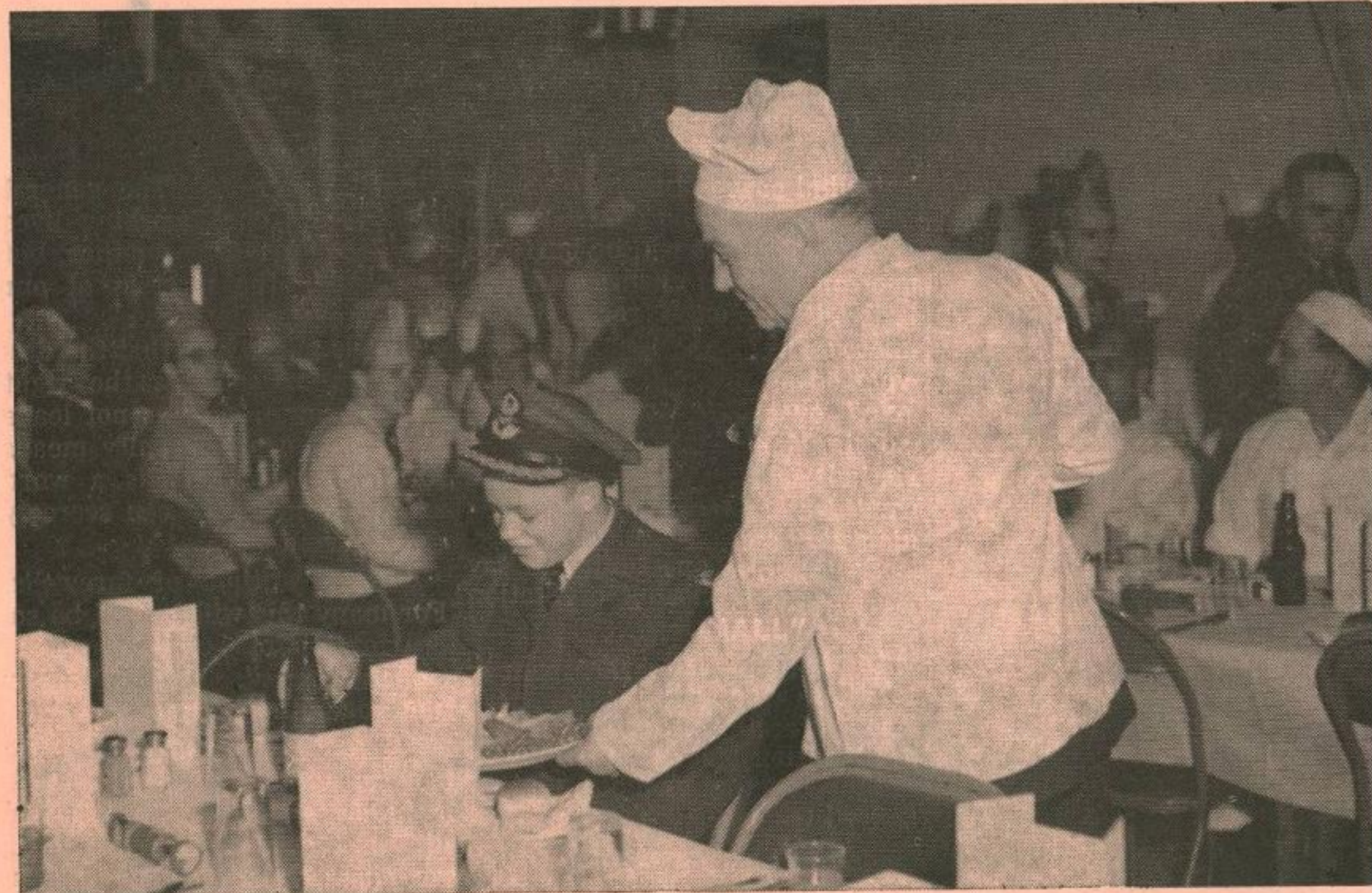
The next four weeks are spent alternating half days flying and half days in Ground School. Final ground school exams are written in the eighth week of training.

The flying program is designed to give the students instruction and practice in all phases of jet flying including aerobatics, high and low level navigation, night flying and formation flying.

Safety of operation is a prime consideration. A total of approximately 85 hours and 30

minutes flying time is given to each student in the Silver Stars.

On completion of training at No. 4 AFS, Macdonald, the trainees are either posted to Operational Training Units or repatriated. RCAF members go to other units, and NATO students return to their own countries to continue their air force careers.



AT THE AIRMEN'S CHRISTMAS DINNER, the officers traditionally serve dinner to the airmen of the station, and the youngest airman on the station becomes Commanding Officer for the day. Here, on Christmas Day, 1956, GC. J. D. Somerville is seen serving dinner to his "CO", AC1 H. R. Ryan.



GC. J. D. SOMERVILLE is seen inspecting the men during the Handing-over Ceremony at which he took command of Station Macdonald in the summer of 1956.



A SCENE at the airmen's first Mess Dinner, at the Airmen's Mess in early 1958.

Station Macdonald Terminates Flying Training With Course 5802 Graduation

To fourteen German and six Danish flyers of course No. 5802 goes the distinction of being the last trainees to graduate from No. 4 Advanced Flying School. Their training began on the 19th of January, 1959, and will be completed when the Commanding Officer, GC. J. D. Somerville, DSO DFC CD, formally presents them with the coveted pilots wings at an outdoor graduation ceremony planned for Wednesday evening, the 6th of May.

From Station Macdonald the newly qualified pilots will be transferred to operational training bases in Denmark and the USA for further post graduate training.

Names of the members of course 5802 are shown below:
GAF — 2 Lt. W. Gusek, 2 Lt. E. Hildemann, 2 Lt. D. Buuck, 2 Lt. H. Gering, 2 Lt. K. U. Horn, 2 Lt. G. R. Kull, 2 Lt. E. Paasch, 2 Lt. P. Treiber, 2 Lt. S. G. Lange, 2 Lt. G. Overhoff, Cpl. K. J. Romer, Cpl. R. Mosen, Cpl. L. F. Anslinger, Cpl.

D. Macholz.

Danish — Sgt. H. Christoffersen, Sgt. H. G. Hansen, Sgt. O. B. Johansen, Sgt. N. E. Skouby,

Macdonald's Accomplishments As a Jet AFS

From 1956 when Jet AFS Training began, 4AFS has graduated 27 regular and two conversion courses, a total of 529 graduates in all.

A breakdown of graduates by country is as follows:

RCAF	193
RCAF (Aux.)	21
GAF	60
RAF	67
Belgium	13
France	45
Italy	8
Netherlands	29
Norway	2
Denmark	37
Portugal	3
Refresher RCAF	20
Conversion	13



INSPECTION of the graduates of Course 5715 during their graduation parade, March, 1959. WC. W. H. Spafford, the present OC 4AFS, is performing the inspection.



A TYPICAL WINTER MORNING SCENE: FO. (now FL.) "Gord" Brennand and his student, PO. Williams, prepare to make the first flight of the day.

*** CURRENT NEWS, APRIL 1959 ***

The Macdonald Announcement

The Daily Graphic, July 5, 1958 — After months of rumors and speculations, Defence Department officials in Ottawa have finally confirmed reports that RCAF Station Macdonald will be closed in 1959.

Although the report gave only bare details of the decision it is believed the shut-down will take place in March of next year.

The news, though not unexpected, came as a blow to citizens of Portage and district. Many Portagers have developed close associations with personnel on the station and they will sorely miss their friends.

The Macdonald station has contributed much to our city. Most obvious, of course, is the economic lift given by the simple fact that most of the station personnel spend the greater proportion of their incomes in Portage. Less obvious, but equally important, are the more subtle contributions made by our friends of the Air Force.

There have been RCAF personnel and families prominent in city church work, in social

functions of various kinds and in almost every phase of our community life. Portage, though small by metropolitan standards, is a city, and we have welcomed the contribution of the RCAF toward making our city more fully rounded and cosmopolitan.

Goodbyes are never pleasant. Our only consolation in the present case is that no decision is irrevocable until it is finally acted on. There are still many months before any action is likely at Macdonald, and that station may still be relieved by a late decision from defence headquarters.

In the meantime, our sincere thanks to the personnel of the base for their many contributions to our city in the past, and our best wishes for their future will follow them wherever the future may lead.

Message from Protestant Padre Holobow

by Padre Holobow

It is difficult to realize that this is the souvenir issue of our paper. The time has come when we must say our farewells. And what shall we say? When the gate closes for the last time does this settle the issue? I guess it really doesn't. You see, God has given us memories and there we'll find good things and

bad things; bitterness and sadness, joy and gladness. Yes, all of these go with us. But one of the things that I have always appreciated about Macdonald is the fact that people try to face life squarely. I think we have all grown to a certain maturity where we realize that the truth, even though it hurts for a little while, can not and

does not disable permanently. With this in mind, once more, let us face the issue squarely.

First of all I would like to speak in the horizontal plane. That is, in our relationship of man to man. I don't think it will hurt you nor puff you up to know about your fine qualities. You have learned to live (Please Turn To Page 15)

Message from RC Padre Father C. Shea—To Thine Own Self...

The time of closing of R.C.A.F. Station Macdonald corresponds roughly to the student graduation ceremonies of our schools and colleges.

Valedictory addresses will

underline the future roles of the departing students. Some will depart on the course of his choosing, others will be buffeted by the winds of chance and perhaps arrive on a rocky inhospitable shore.

So it is for us. The general pattern of our working lives may be dictated by another, but we remain the masters of our inner selves.

Let us make sure that the destiny of our souls is the right and only one. Let us not leave it to chance. Eternity means forever, and that is a word whose meaning we can scarcely comprehend.

This is a time of farewells. For many this will indeed be so, but for others — "We pass this way but once". We may never meet again in this life.

Wherever our transfers take us, let us continue and increase the virtue of Charity — true love of God and our neighbor — in our hearts. Armed thus, we are independent of location. We will be happy irrespective of circumstances.

May God go with you.
FATHER C. SHEA,
R.C. Chaplain

A Farewell Message from the CO GC. J. D. Somerville, DSO, DFC, CD.

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to say a few words with regard to the forthcoming closing of Station Macdonald.

Firstly, I wish to express my appreciation for the manner in which RCAF personnel and civilian personnel alike have co-operated and contributed to the overall efficiency of the Station. This hard work has enabled Station Macdonald to fulfill its fundamental role of training pilots for the member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Secondly, you have contributed to the betterment of the Station by offering your time and services in assisting with projects which have a very great effect on making the Station and community a more enjoyable place to live.

Lastly, I would like to wish each and every one of you and your families continued happiness and success in future endeavour and sincerely hope we shall have the opportunity to meet again one day.



GC. J. D. SOMERVILLE, DSO, DFC, CD, Commanding Officer at RCAF Station Macdonald from 1956 until its closing in May, 1959.



STATION GRAND AGGREGATE MEN'S BONSPIEL WINNERS: Left to right: FL. Bill Walker, lead; Cpl. Frank Turner, second; Cpl. Stan Obre, skip; WO2 Earl Grey, third.

Premiere danseuses de Macdonald, April, 1959



Miss Julie Steeves, Geraldine Thibadeau, Roellen Dale, Barbara Spafford, Melonie Cunningham, Carol Palahicky, Sharon Killoran, Rosemonde Spafford, Louise Lambert, Joanne MacGillivray, Cathie McConachie, Olwyn Keating, Barbara Burns, Lynne Church, Mary Burns, Bonnie Folkard, Judy Killoran, Barbara Buston, Jane Keating.



MEMBERS of the victorious Headquarters Bowling Team. (See story, page 15.) Left to right, rear: LAC. J. J. Sweet, WO1 J. Sangster, Sgt. D. Turner, FL. S. J. Frith, FS. M. Warren. Front: LAC. J. W. Dube, LAC. E. V. Garnett, LAC. J. H. R. Martel

*** CURRENT NEWS, APRIL 1959 ***

Scouts and Cubs Finalize Activities

The Annual Father and Son Banquet held on March 25, 1959 had special significance this year as it was the final official act of RCAF Macdonald Group.

During the first part of the evening Cubs Keith Leadley and Murray Church were received into the Scout troop. Presentation of a Second Class Certificate was made to Scout Brian Mitchell.

Following dinner the chairman, Earl Grey, who has been chairman of the Group Committee for the past three years, introduced the guests and Bill Knight, Vice Chairman since 1957, introduced RCAF Macdonald Group members and leaders. Toasts were proposed to the fathers by Scout Douglas Wilson, to the sons by Mr. Ken Prout, and to the absent mothers by Scout Keith Leadley.

The Commanding Officer, GC. J. D. Somerville, extended a welcome to the visitors. He expressed the hope that the boys would continue their Scout and Cub training at their new locations.

Constable Merne Torresan of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was the guest speaker. Constable Torresan was a very colorful figure in his scarlet serge dress uniform which caught the eye of all the boys present. He outlined his experiences with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police since his enlistment in 1952. He gave a detailed account of his training and experiences with the world-famous Musical Ride. Both fathers

and sons enjoyed Constable Torresan's talk. Midge Whyte thanked the speaker and then discovered, by a show of hands, that a number of potential recruits were present.

Assistant Executive Provincial Commissioner Herb Norcott extended greetings from Provincial Headquarters. Presentations were made by Assistant District Commissioner Fred Dyer. Assistant Scoutmaster Lew Weber received Gilwell Beads which are awarded on completion of the Gilwell Wood Badge Training Course. Assistant Cub Master Tom Patterson was presented with his Warrant.

The Macdonald Group Charter was returned to the chairman of the District Council, Mr. Ralph Bailey, by Squadron Leader Lacombe, Mayor of the P.M.Q. Council. The P.M.Q. Council became the sponsoring body when the Women's Auxiliary was dissolved.

The climax of the evening was the showing of the colored film, "Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride".

Our appreciation is extended to all those who have contributed much of their time and effort in bringing Scout and Cub training to the boys in P.M.Q.'s. The Scout Troop Leaders are Scouters Sid Clements and Al Silcox who have been with the troop for the past three years and more recent arrivals, Scouters Lew Weber and John Martin. Scouter Roy Mitchell has been Cubmaster of our Mowgli

Cub Pack for the past four years and has as his assistants, Scouters Dave Hook and Charlie Ellis. Scouter George Sheppard has been Cubmaster of our Seon-nee Cub Pack for the past two years, taking over from Scouter Gus Mouchet, and has as his assistant Scouter Tom Patterson.

Our Group Committee is composed of Chairman Earl Grey, Vice Chairman Bill Knight, Secretary Treasurer Jack Rickett and Representatives Cliff McKay, Midge Whyte and Bob Jarvis.

GOOD SCOUTING.

Protestant Padre

(Continued from Page 14)

together well. It has been observed that your moments of sadness and gladness have always been shared. Your great respect for man, your love for him, your devotion to work, your loyalty to country, are qualities which each of you have exhibited, and for this you are commended. Therefore it can be said that your horizontal relationship between and among men has been of the highest order, the very best.

Secondly, permit me to talk to you about our failure. This takes us into the vertical plane, our relationship to God. This vertical plane is like the shaft of the Cross anchored in the ground of the earth but pointing up to Heaven and God. Here is where we have fallen far short of what God our Creator has called us to be. It is this vertical relationship between God and you that gives meaning and purpose to the horizontal relationship between you and your brother.

There stands the Cross of Christ. Christ calls each of you: "Lift up your eyes." It is well for us to use our eyes and see the needs of other men and to do good to them, but those same eyes must be used to see the whole picture. Indeed, we are poor men if our vision encompasses a narrow horizon, whose limit stops at the earth. Indeed, we are blessed men if our vision is upward and reaches for heaven.

This then is my wish for you as a chaplain and pastor of souls, that you fix your eyes upon Jesus Christ who takes away your sin, the sin of the world. Bitterness? No! Sadness? Perhaps a little! Gladness? Yes, very much gladness in bringing God's healing Word and Sacraments to you. Let us learn to live like men with our God.

Along the Bowling Trail

by LAC. (Daddy) Sweet

The bowling wind-up was at 2030 hrs. on the 17 Mar 59 and there was a very good turnout for this occasion. SL Lacombe presented the trophies to the winners on behalf of GC. Somerville.

The Headquarters Team came up with THREE winning efforts: FIRST — Winner of "A" Division.

SECOND — Winner of overall pinfall for the season.

THIRD — RCAF Station Macdonald Champions.

Members of the winning team are as follows:

Left to right, rear — LAC. J. T. Sweet, WO1 J. Sangster, Sgt. D. Turner, FL S. J. Frith, FS. M. Warren.

Left to right, front — LAC. I. Dube, LAC. E. V. Garnett, LAC. J. H. R. Martel.

The team had a scare thrown into them on the very last night of the schedule but came back strongly in the third game to take one game and total pinfall after dropping two games to MHQ who made a fight of it all the way.

The individual winners for the year were:

LAC. A. S. Nichols, High Single (Season) 339.

LAC. J. T. Sweet, High Average

(Roll-Off) Tie — 215. High Triple (Season) 799.

LAC. R. McColl, High Single (Roll-off) 349.

LAC. R. Keryluk, High Triple (Roll-off) 779. High Average (Roll-off) Tie — 215.

FL. W. B. Walker accepted trophy for hidden score on behalf of LAC. J. L. Masson.

Graduation Parade

An indoor wings parade was held in the drill hall at RCAF Station Macdonald on Friday evening 3 April in honour of graduating student pilots of AFS Course 5717. AC. H. H. C. Rutledge, OBE, CD, Group Commander 14 Training Group Winnipeg, presented pilot badges to four RCAF and six GAF students.

The scroll of honour for highest standing on course was presented to FO. A. K. Stuart, RCAF of Johannesburg, South Africa. The graduate pilots of both services have been posted to other training units in Canada and the USA to fit them for future operational duties with the NATO forces.



PROMOTED on the first of April 1959 were two Macdonald personnel, FS. Al Birosh and FS. Wes Kreh. FS. Birosh came from Alberta where he joined the RCAF in 1946. FS. Kreh's hometown was Aylmer, Ont., where he joined in 1942 as a WAG.



MACDONALD PERSONNEL PROMOTED TO SGT. on the 1 April 59 promotion list were: Left to right, front row — Sgt. T. A. McLennan, Sgt. D. C. Metheral, Sgt. J. Haynes, Sgt. J. L. McKindsey. Left to right, rear row — Sgt. R. T. Reid, Sgt. J. S. Balfour, Sgt. W. B. Kearney, Sgt. R. G. Britton. Missing: Sgt. J. F. Charette.



COURSE 5717 — Back Row (left to right): Cpl. Nagies, FO. Gallant, Cpl. Engelian. Centre Row: FO. Slater, Cpl. Mauritz, FO. Stuart, Cpl. Schickram. Front Row: FO. Mills, Lt. Kehler, Cpl. Chroboczek.



PROMOTED TO CORPORAL on the 1 April 59 promotion list were these Macdonald airmen: left to right, front row — Cpl. T. W. Cheesman, Cpl. K. J. Walker, Cpl. S. Melnychuk. Left to right, rear row — Cpl. W. R. Hoherty, Cpl. J. J. Lockwood, Cpl. J. A. D. Lafleur. Missing — Cpl. L. M. Parrish, Cpl. M. J. McMurdo, Cpl. G. E. Gerrie.

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