PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

FIFTY YEARS OF FLYING TRAINING: 1940-1990



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ISBN 1-55056-004-2

Published by
Manitoba Airshow 1990
C.F.B. Portage la Prairie
Southport, Manitoba R0H 1N0
Canada

First printing, 1990

Printed and bound in Canada by
Friesen Printers
a Division of D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd.
Altona, Manitoba R0G 0B0
Canada

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FOREWORD



Colonel Brian C. McKenzie
Base Commander
Canadian Forces Base Portage la Prairie

As the aerodrome at Portage la Prairie approaches the milestone of fifty years of military aircrew training, I realized that little of the colourful history of this Base was documented and readily available to the Canadian Military Community or indeed, to the people of the Portage la Prairie area. We committed ourselves, therefore, to writing the story of this Base and to consolidating and preserving the events which have occurred at RCAF Station/CFB Portage la Prairie during its fifty year history. With the announcement on April 27, 1989, that the Base would be closing within a few years, this project took on even more signigance for us and it became the task of chronicling the history of the unit from its inception, virtually to its demise as a military facility. I am fortunate that one of my officers, Major Gordon Greavette, shared my interest in documenting the Base's history and volunteered to research and write this book, as his contribution to the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations being planned for CFB Portage la Prairie.

In the fifty years since military flying training started at this aerodrome, over fifteen thousand students have graduated from the many and varied schools which have operated at Portage la Prairie. As CFB Portage la Prairie is the last of a large number of military flying training aerodromes in Manitoba opened under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan still operating as a military airport, its closure as a military facility will mark the passing of an enduring and integral part of Canadian military flying training history. We all hope, however, that it will continue to be an important part in the future of flying training in Canada.

The history recorded in this book is not intended to be solely a chronological order of events, but also a story about people. It is dedicated to all members, past and present, who served with pride and dedication at CFB Portage la Prairie, and also to the multitude of aircrew who have undergone training at one of its schools. They have all faithfully served the RCAF, Canadian Air Force and Canada during fifty years of wartime and flying operations.

I therefore believe that it is most appropriate for this historical account to honour those special individuals who served and trained under the proud motto "Such is the Path to the Stars".

Chapter 1

The War Years: 1940 1945

In The Beginning

The community of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, with a population of 13,500, is located on the Trans-Canada Highway, 90 kilometres west of Winnipeg and 125 kilometres east of Brandon. It is in the heart of Manitoba's rich farming area known as the Central Plains Region and has primarily a rural based economy. Additionally, Portage la Prairie has always been an important transportation centre from the old days of the fur traders on the old Saskatchewan Trail, and today it is a key Trans-Canada service centre with both major railroads, trans-continental bus service and the Trans-Canada and Yellowhead Highways. The surrounding area is rich in farmlands with a trading area of 30,000 people. It is also the major industrial centre of the Central Plains Region.

A site one mile east of Portage la Prairie was chosen as the second location of Fort la Reine which was established by Pierre Gaultier de Varnnes Sieur de la Verendrye on his trip to the Northwest in 1738. Here the voyageurs portaged their furs, canoes and supplies from the Assiniboine River across the plains to Lake Manitoba, 12 miles north of the city; hence the City of Portage la Prairie has derived its name from the "prairie portage". La Verendrye also used Fort la Reine as a base from which he left the Red and Assiniboine river systems and ventured out on the plains to seek the "White" Indians near what are now Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota.

As early as 1851, the Reverend William Cochran (later Archdeacon Cochran) began a new settlement at Portage la Prairie. Since this settlement was beyond the western boundary of the District of Assiniboia, the settlers formed their own local council. This led to the establishment of a short-lived "Republic of Manitobah" at the instigation of Thomas Spence in 1867-68. Incorporated in 1880 with a population of 800 people, the city is now the hub of the Central Plains Region. When the Base opened in 1940, the population of Portage la Prairie was 7,000.

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP)

On September 9, 1939, Canada declared war and, within seventeen days, the United Kingdom was suggesting the implementation of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). Three months after the first suggestions, the detailed working plan of the BCATP, part of a larger Empire Air Training Scheme, was signed on December 16, 1939, by Canada's Prime Minister McKenzie King and representatives of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

While much has been written about the BCATP, the information which follows is taken primarily from W.A.B. Douglas' book, "The Creation of a National Air Force - The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) - Volume II, Chapter 2", and from "The Record of No. 7 A.O.S. R.C.A.F. Portage la Prairie, Man. 1941-1945" by J.A. Mackay.

The BCATP called for the operation of 64 flying stations to train primarily three types of aircrew - pilots, observers and Wireless Operator-Air Gunners (WAGS). For the pilots, there were to be 26 Elementary Flying Training Schools and 16 Service Flying Training Schools. For the observers, 10 Air Observer Schools and two Air Navigation Schools and for both the observers and WAGS, 10 Bombing and Gunnery Schools.

One of the first questions to be asked about the BCATP is why Canada was chosen as the country in which these schools would be located. The most obvious answer was a matter of geography. First of all, Canada already had a number



Aerial view of the Portage la Prairie area taken in the early 1980's, with the Assiniboine River winding from left to right through the centre of the photograph. The City of Portage la Prairie is located in the top centre portion and CFB Portage la Prairie in the bottom centre portion of the photograph. (Courtesy of the Canadian Forces Photo Unit Central Negative Library)

of airfields, clear skies and plenty of unrestricted airspace, an immunity to enemy air attack and the country was a reasonable distance from the European theatre (as opposed to other dominions such as South Africa, New Zealand and Australia). Canada also had a greater population base and potential for industrial expansion. Finally, on the political side of the question, the governments of Canada and the United Kingdom had been arguing since 1931 with respect to the training of pilots for the Royal Air Force in this country. Throughout all of those years, agreement on a viable plan could not be reached. However, with the outbreak of war and concerted pressure by Britain, based on the fact that Canada offered the best location for aircrew training, the BCATP was quickly finalized. The cost sharing arrangements and student quotas were decided based upon a percentage formula of each participating country's population. Canada would provide 80.64%, Australia 11.28% and New Zealand 8.08%. The monthly aircrew production rate was set at 1,464 trainees.

To operate the 64 flying stations and the various ground schools required to complete the Plan, it was estimated that a staff of 40,000 would be needed. In September 1939, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) had only five aerodromes in service with a sixth under construction and a pre-war strength of 500 officers and 4,000 other ranks from which to draw experienced personnel. Still, in May and June 1940, within six months of the signing of the BCATP, the first schools opened. By the end of 1940, only a year after the Plan was finalized, 33 of the 64 flying stations planned for were operating. No small part of this speed in establishing the Plan was due to the civilian participation. While Department of Transport (DOT) planners quickly took over the responsibility for site selection and airfield construction, the RCAF designed and directed the erection of the buildings. The actual operation of many of these schools and most of the instructional staff could not be handled by the small number of available RCAF personnel. Civilians - the bush operators and the "Sunday pilots" of the flying clubs - filled this gap. All the 10 Air Observer Schools and all 26 Elementary Flying Training Schools, except for one added three years later, were organized and operated by civilians. In other words, throughout the five year operation of the BCATP, two of the three main categories of aircrew received much of their more critical training in civilian-operated schools.

This fact raises another interesting question as to why and how Canada had developed this flying expertise required to run the civilian-operated schools of the BCATP. The answer really begins in 1926, widely recognized as the birth year of Canadian civil aviation. As Mr. Mackay explains in "The Record":

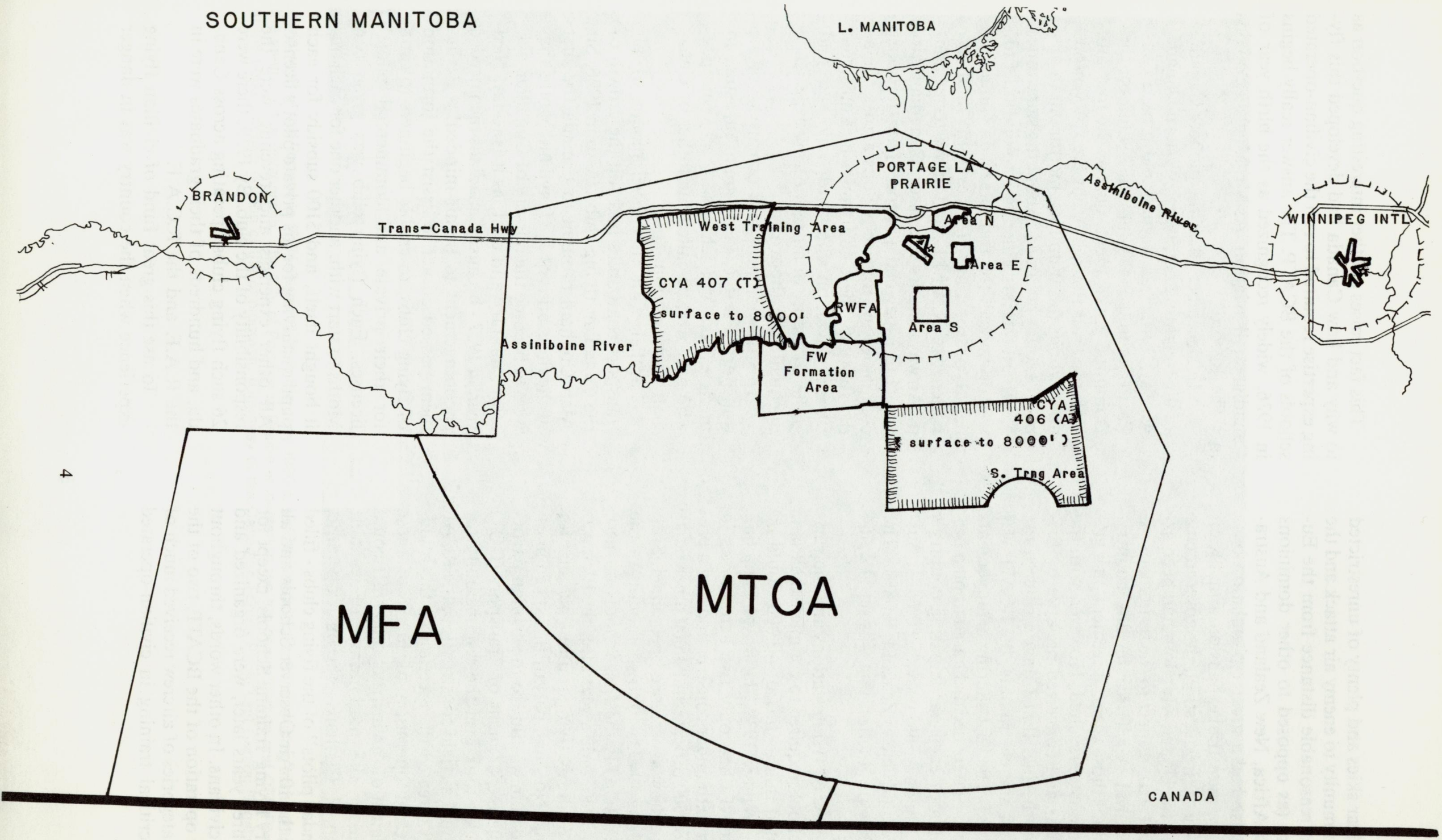
> "In December 1926, the pioneer Canadian air freighting company, Western Canada Airways Ltd., was formed and took a contract freighting into Churchill, Man., for the Dominion government. One of the four aircraft used was flown by Capt Fred Stevenson, after whom the Winnipeg metropolitan airport of today is named. About the same time, Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration Ltd. was organized, the trail-blazer in Canadian aerial prospecting. The example and experience of N.A.M.E. and of Western Canada Airways and its successor, Canadian Airways Ltd., spawned a brood of air transport companies in frontier regions across Canada. By 1939, these companies had mastered "bush" aviation the hard way and had gathered a store of air pioneering experience unequalled in the world.

This development and expansion of air transport was due, in no small measure, to the late Jas. A. Richardson, of Winnipeg, who may well be called the father of Canadian civil aviation.

Parallel with this development of air transport companies had run the growth of the Canadian flying clubs. Also in 1926, Sir Alan Cobham brought to Canada the first of the thousands of De Haviland Moths that were to become the nursery of Canadian aviation, military and civil, as it is today. Next year, in 1927 - because Canadians then needed encouragement to be air-minded! - Parliament passed an act to assist the formation of flying clubs, to enable beginners to train for their private and commercial pilots' licenses. Each flying club was given two Moths to start with, another one for each one it bought itself, and $100 subsidy for each pupil qualifying for his private pilot's license. All other expenses and revenue were the responsibility of the club. By 1939, there were 26 such flying clubs operating across Canada, and hundreds of their graduates were in the R.A.F. and the R.C.A.F.

To use this great fund of civilian flying experience when the country was in danger

SOUTHERN MANITOBA



This map shows the Portage la Prairie military flying area in southern Manitoba. (MFA means Military Flying Area and MTCA means Military Terminal Control Area).

was common sense. And it was made imperative by the way in which the R.C.A.F. had been starved of funds and denied men, equipment and full training for years after 1930.

As war became likely, therefore, plans were begun for using all civilian flying experience for military training purposes. The initiative was taken in Canada by the Canadian Flying Clubs association. Its representations, from 1937 on, led to the first classes of R.C.A.F. student pilots starting course at eight flying clubs in June, 1939.''

The BCATP was probably one of Canada's most important contributions to the war effort. From its modest beginning, the final results of the Plan were the operation of:

a. 7 Initial Training Schools (ITS);
b. 26 Elementary Flying Training Schools (EFTS) with six more schools being added later on;
c. 19 Service Flying Training Schools (SFTS) plus 10 RAF Schools;
d. 10 Air Observer Schools (AOS);
e. 4 Air Navigation Schools (ANS) plus 3 RAF Schools;
f. 4 Wireless Schools;
g. 10 Bombing and Gunnery Schools (B&GS) plus 1 RAF School; and
h. 8 Operational Training Units (OTU) plus 4 RAF schools.

In addition, there were also nine other ''specific to role'' schools such as Flying Instructor Schools, Flight Engineer Schools, an Instrument Flying School, a General Reconnaissance School and a Naval Air Gunner School. At its peak, the BCATP consisted of 97 RCAF schools and 24 RAF establishments, flying more than 10,000 aircraft and employing 104,000 men and women (many of whom were civilians and, of these, approximately one third were women).

In comparing the aim of the Plan with its final results, the initial BCATP agreement can be summarized as being:

a. Aircraft Requirement - 3,540 of all types comprising:
(1) 702 elementary trainers (Fleet Finch/Tiger Moth),
(2) 1368 twin engine navigation trainers (Avro Ansons),
(3) 720 pilot trainers (Harvards), and
(4) 750 bombing and gunnery trainers (Fairey Battle);
b. Trainee Production Targets - based upon the graduation of 1,464 aircrew per month, the ratios were:
(1) 544 pilots,
(2) 340 observers, and
(3) 580 wireless operator/air gunners; and
c. Projected program cost to March 31, 1945 only was approximately $607 million shared per country as:
(1) $185 M - United Kingdom,
(2) $66 M - Canada (for initial and elementary training), plus
(3) 287 M based on ratios for trainee populations.

In reality, when the war was won and the BCATP closed on March 31, 1945, a total of 131,553 airmen had been trained in Canada from New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, plus a few candidates from several of the occupied countries of Europe.

Some 70 percent of these graduates passed through the civilian-operated A.O.S.'s and E.F.T.S.'s. The overall total represented 45 percent of all Commonwealth wartime aircrew trainees. Of interest, Canada had actually spent $1.6 billion on the Plan, covering three quarters of its cost. This expense was reduced slightly because the Air Observer Schools voluntarily surrendered all profits and returned to the Dominion Government Treasury all of the savings that they effected. The Elementary Flying Training Schools similarly returned all of their savings except for $5000 per year per school, which was held for the sponsoring of flying clubs to enable them to resume the training of civilian pilots after the war. It is estimated that these savings, returned to the Public Treasury by the Civil Flying Schools, reached a handsome total of more than $11,000,000.

With respect to the RCAF and its success under the BCATP, it graduated 72,835 aircrew comprising 25,747 pilots, 12,855 navigators, 6,659 bomb aimers, 12,744 wireless operator/air gunners, 12,917 air gunners and 1,913 flight engineers. Canadian graduates alone manned 45 overseas squadrons and also made up 25 percent of the RAF aircrew. It was in this atmosphere and under the auspices of the highly successful BCATP that the Air Force training arrived in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

Origins of the Portage Airfield

Once Government officials in Ottawa finalized and announced the BCATP to the nation, the Royal Canadian Air Force organized a series of Air

Training Command Headquarters across Canada to implement and co-ordinate the BCATP. The immediate Portage la Prairie area was in the region controlled by Number 2 Air Training Command. It had its headquarters established in Winnipeg, with its regional responsibilities covering an area extending from the Lakehead westward through the entire Province of Manitoba, and encompassed a large portion of northern Saskatchewan.

By August 1940, only eight months after Prime Minister King's announcement of the BCATP agreement, Number 2 Air Training Command already had development expenditures in excess of $16,000,000. This figure included the expenses incurred in the construction and equipping of the initial units comprising Number 2 Air Training Command. They included six Service Flying Schools, three Bombing and Gunnery Schools, one Air Navigation School, three Elementary Flying Training Schools, two Air Observer Schools, one Repair Depot, one Equipment Depot and one Aircraft Assembly Plant.

It had been decided to establish three of these flying training centres in the Portage la Prairie area. A Bombing and Gunnery School, costing $1,065,000, was to be located at MacDonald, eighteen miles to the northwest of the city and a $600,000 Elementary Flying Training School plus a $250,000 Air Observer School would be collocated at Southport, four miles to the south. With the construction of these three flying training centres, the Portage la Prairie district became one of the more important training points within the BCATP.

During an interview with Mr. Eric Smith, a native of Portage la Prairie who began working at the Station in 1943 spray-painting aircraft, he described the site on which the aerodrome was built prior to the start of construction:

> "Tommy Dyer, a childhood friend, and I would often go out to the area now taken up by the Base and shoot rabbits. Others used the area to hunt coyotes from horseback. The area was extremely swampy due to being ten feet below the waterline of the Assiniboine River only a mile away."

Number 14 Elementary Flying Training School

RCAF Organization Order Number 59, issued on September 11, 1940, authorized the establishment of the Number 14 Elementary Flying Training School (No. 14 EFTS) at Portage la Prairie's Southport aerodrome. The new school was designated to open at the Southport location on October 28, 1940, exactly one year ahead of the orginally planned operational commencement date. This fact emphasizes the priority that the Canadian Government had placed on rushing the BCATP units to completion and into operation.

The contract to operate No. 14 EFTS had been awarded to the Central Manitoba Flying Training School Limited under a charter issued to the directors of the Winnipeg Flying Club. These directors were Mr. Cecil W. Nicholl, the President of the Winnipeg Flying Club, Mr. Floyd E. Howe, the Honourable W.R. Clubb, Dr. J.P. George, Mr. C.C. Phelan and Mr. F.E. Gallagher, all members of the Flying Club's Executive Committee. Also included as directors under the charter, but who were not personnel involved with the Winnipeg Flying Club, were Mr. John T. Boyd and Mr. G.M. Black. The Tiger Moth airplanes to be flown by No. 14 EFTS were supplied by the RCAF.

The operation of such Elementary Flying Training Schools was quite an undertaking for any organization, be it military or civilian. The BCATP had stipulated that such schools would normally have forty-eight students "in-house" at any one time, divided into two training courses of twenty-four candidates. Each school was to graduate one course or twenty-four students each and every month. These individuals would then proceed to more advanced flying training at another Service Flying School. To tackle this onerous task at No. 14 EFTS, the directors of the Central Manitoba Flying Training School Limited hired Mr. Clifford Kaake, formerly the manager and chief flying instructor at the Winnipeg Flying Club, as the Operations Manager and Mr. Herbert Taylor as the Chief Instructor.

The commencement of flying operations for No. 14 EFTS did not quite proceed as initially planned. On September 11, 1940, Mayor Ireland of Portage la Prairie announced a plan to construct a new federally funded water pipeline from the city, four miles south, to the new Air Base. It was to be capable of carrying thirty thousand gallons of fresh water daily to the Base. Furthermore, he announced that Mr. T. Porter, the city engineer, was to be in charge of laying the portion of the pipeline going beneath the Assiniboine River due to his extensive knowledge of local river conditions. Within a week, another contract to Partridge-Halliday Limited of Winnipeg was announced. This $7,000 contract was for the supply and installation of the heating systems at the aerodrome.

Both of these projects were scheduled to have a completion date of October 15, 1940. However, as that date neared, it became apparent that these and other projects to put the finishing touches on the new aerodrome and its accompanying facilities, were going to take a little longer than expected; in fact, more than a month longer.

To help speed things up and avoid delays and interruption during this advanced stage of construction, both schools at Southport and the school under construction at MacDonald were closed to sightseers. On October 10, 1940, Flying Officer Allan Sherritt, formerly of Portage la Prairie and now one of the Air Force Staff Officers overseeing the construction, announced that admission to the Southport construction site was being restricted to employees of the Station and construction or supply personnel with passes. He also announced that on October 26, various unnamed Air Force officers and their administration staff members associated with No. 14 EFTS were expected to arrive in Portage la Prairie. They would be moving into three large houses recently purchased by the Air Force. These houses were the former home of Dr. Cowan on Third Street Southwest, the former home of Mr. and Mrs. A.R. Johnston at 202 Crescent Road West and the former home of the Honourable and Mrs. D.L. Campbell at 39 Garland Street.

Due to the delay in the installation of various services at Southport, it became necessary to delay the opening of the new Air Training School. On October 22, 1940, only six days before it was scheduled to commence operations in Portage, RCAF Organization Order Number 74 amended the original Organization Order Number 59 in that the initial location of the School was changed. Due to the delay in the construction program, it became necessary to alter the initial location for No. 14 EFTS from Portage la Prairie to Stevenson Field in Winnipeg. Here the School could operate out of the building constructed for, but not yet occupied by, the Number 5 Air Observer School until construction was completed on its own facilities at Southport. As stated in the Execution Section of Organization Order Number 79, signed by Group Captain F.W. Long for the Chief of the Air Staff:

> ''No. 14 EFTS is to be formed at Winnipeg, October 28, instead of Portage la Prairie as previously notified. The School is to operate at this location until it is possible to accommodate at Portage la Prairie. No. 2 Training Command is to notify AFHQ by signal as soon as the date for the move has been determined. The School will be operated by the Central Manitoba Flying Training School under the supervision of an RCAF Supervisory Officer.''

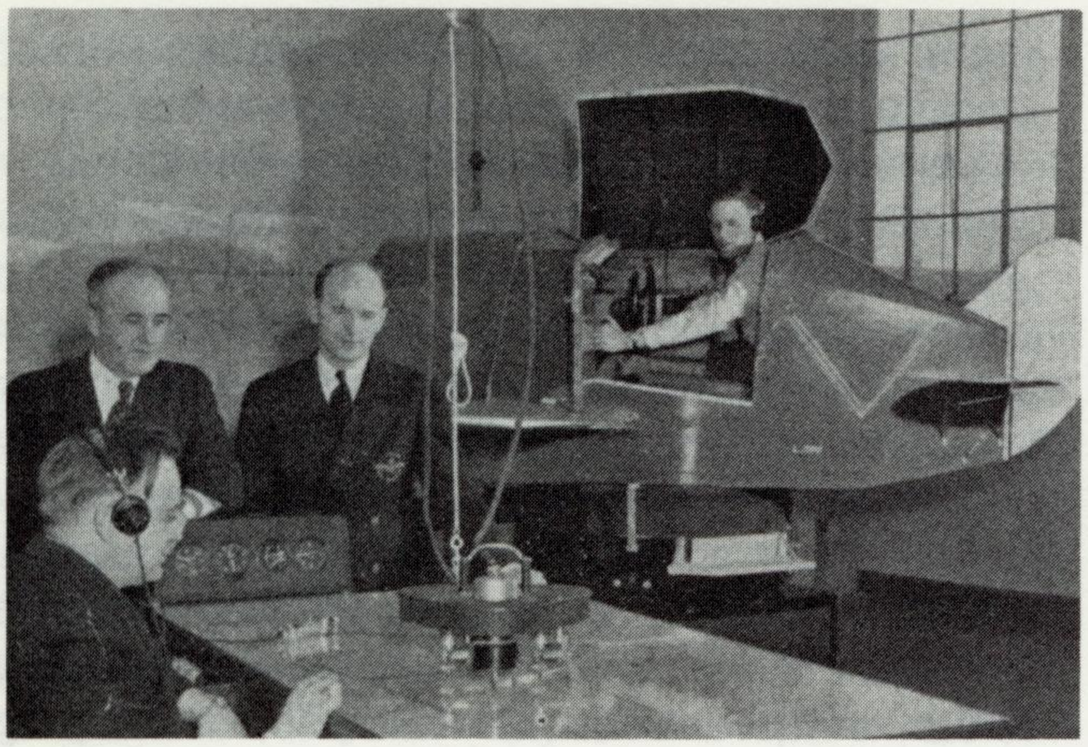
This order also increased the School's training requirement to a maximum of seventy pupils per course, with an intake of thirty-five candidates every twenty-four days. The actual Elementary Flying Course itself was to have a duration of forty-eight course training days. Under these guidelines, No. 14 EFTS commenced operations, as originally planned, on October 28, 1940, flying twenty-five Tiger Moth basic training aircraft.



A No. 14 EFTS Tiger Moth aircraft on the Portage aerodrome flight line, with Hangar 2 under construction in the background. (Courtesy of Mr. W.R. McRae)

In this passage from his autobiography ''Memoirs of a Stoopid Pilot'', Wing Commander (Retired) Cy Torontow explains the basic pilot selection process and initial flying programme followed by prospective pilot candidates, as well as giving a vivid description of some of the ''high tech'' features and capabilities of the Tiger Moth aircraft:

> ''All aircrew were sent first to an Initial Training School where you not only learned how to salute, scrub floors, make beds, march, jog two miles and do 50 push-ups, but you also got tested to see what aircrew category you were suited for. Everybody, of course, wanted to be a pilot, so the test was sort of an elimination process.
>
> Each candidate was put into a machine that looked like a little aeroplane mounted on a swivelling base. The machine could be made to turn through a full circle by manipulating controls that operated like those of a real aeroplane. This contraption was in the middle of a circular room whose walls were painted to resemble a landscape except



Aircrew selection using the Link-Trainer. (Taken from "The Record")

for one incongruous note, a big bull's-eye at one point on the horizon. The trainee was told to "fly" this machine through a full turn to the right, then a full turn to the left, and stop it with its nose pointing at the bull's-eye. If he came within a few degrees of the target, he was a pilot, if outside the limit, too bad. If the would-be pilot's ground school marks were good, he was a navigator; if not, a wireless air gunner. But, when I went through, somebody up there had decided there was an urgent need for pilots, so no matter where the hell our noses ended up, we were all pilots. So much for science.

Now that we were formally blessed, the next move was to an Elementary Flying Training School. I drew No. 14 E.F.T.S., Portage la Prairie, equipped with Tiger Moths, and there I proceeded in January, 1941. The Tiger Schmidt, as we old hands called it, was a bit grander than the Piper Cub, but not much. Just to mention one feature, the airspeed indicator was a thin metal rod hanging from a point on the underside of the left wing, and behind the rod was a plate inscribed with a scale of numbers.

With the aircraft at rest, the rod pointed straight down, opposite the zero; as the aircraft picked up speed, the rod was pushed back by the slip stream, moving past increasingly large numbers, to a point where you attained the frightening velocity of 60 miles an hour. Taking off and landing were therefore a continual swivelling of the head between the airspeed indicator outside the left window and a point straight ahead where you were hoping to be.

To further complicate things, the aircraft were on skis, since the field was constantly snow-covered and snow clearing equipment didn't exist. With skis, of course, there's no braking action, so anyone landing too fast or long usually ended up with the nose jammed against the far fence, or if he was lucky, into a snow-bank.

Amazingly, though, all incidents were minor, even including one unexplainable manoeuvre whereby a student got into a flat spin, but with a gentle rate of descent, so that he hardly made a dent when he landed on the roof of one of the hangars. The instructors were shaking their heads for days after that one.

And so most of us progressed, but some fell by the wayside. While any person with normal physical attributes can learn to fly, the Training Plan was geared to a production schedule in which each training sequence was allotted a fixed number of hours. The Elementary Flying Phase was assigned 50, with progress checks at the 20- and 50-hour points. Failure to carry out the designated sequences successfully, after allowing a few hours' extra training, usually meant being washed out and redirected to another aircrew category."

Later, in the same Chapter, Mr. Torontow describes some additional aspects of his flying training.

> "I'll never forget the man who taught us Airmanship. He'd been one of the early bush pilots, then had joined Canadian Pacific Airlines shortly before the war. When hostilities broke out, he was commissioned as a pilot instructor in the RCAF. In his first lecture, he admonished us to never, never, trust a navigator. In a flight from A to B, one must first climb over the airport until one spotted a landmark which lay along the intended track. Upon reaching this point, one circled until a second landmark was identified, then repeat the process until B was in sight."

Operations of No. 14 EFTS at Stevenson Field in Winnipeg continued until December 4, 1940. On this date, under the guidance of the Chief Supervisory Officer, Flight Lieutenant D.J. Thomson, RAF, the unit finally moved into its own facilities at Southport, although it did not yet have its full complement of staff members. At full capacity, No. 14 EFTS was to have seventy civilian staff members, including twenty instructors, with the rest being mechanics and other groundcrew plus



No. 14 EFTS Tiger Moths and emergency vehicles on the ramp at Portage la Prairie. (Courtesy of Mr. W.R. McRae)

a small civilian administrative staff. However, at the time of its relocation from Winnipeg to Portage la Prairie, it only had a complement of sixty-two civilians on its staff. At the School there were also to be another seventy RCAF trainees and permanent RCAF staff, including two supervisory officers, one medical officer, one armament instructor, one Sergeant disciplinarian and three military clerical staff. On May 15, 1941, Flight Lieutenant D.D. Rogers, RAF, arrived from No. 6 AOS in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, to be the new Chief Supervisory Officer replacing Flight Lieutenant Thomson who departed for No. 11 Service Flying Training School (SFTS) in Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

The No. 14 EFTS established close ties with the City of Portage la Prairie through various operational and social events. For example, on Friday, February 7, 1941, six airplanes from the School staged a noonhour flying spectacle over the city as a prelude to the upcoming Provincial War Savings Bond Campaign. Also, during the weekend January 25 and 26, 1941, the School held an open house with a Base tour and tea for participants. The event was sponsored by the War Auxiliary Services Committee who ran the tea portion, while student pilots and groundcrew served as the tour guides. The purpose of the function was to help foster community relations and to raise funds through the tea to equip the recreation room at the School. Apparently, over five hundred local citizens turned out, twice the originally estimated number.

Still, despite these close ties with its local community, this time spent in Portage la Prairie was very trying for the students, but maybe even more so for the staff. As Lieutenant Donald M. O'Rourke described life in an article which appeared in the Daily Graphic on Saturday, May 12, 1984 to mark the anniversary of the RCAF:

> "The first arrivals at Portage la Prairie had to contend with a unique obstacle, MUD! 'It was something scandalous' in the words of one of the first arrivals. The site of the camp and field was low - 10 feet below the level of the Assiniboine River bank a mile away to the north. So that frogs and lizards were familiar visitors in the hangars all through the station's history."

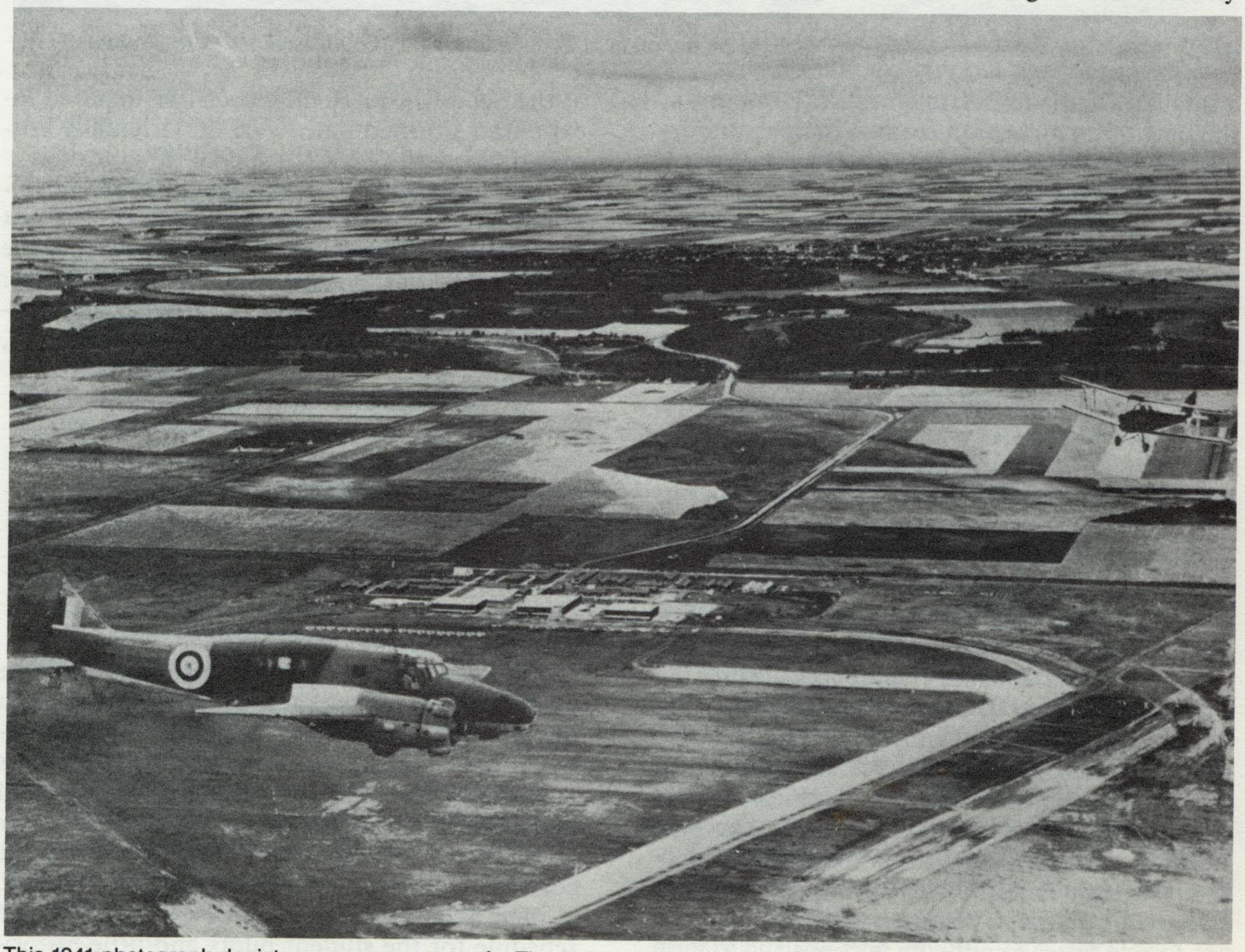
Mr. Eric Smith echoed this fact when he described a popular prank which stemmed from the infamous plague of salamanders. Apparently, the salamanders were gathered by the fellows in the paint shops and spray-painted, which would make them squirm quite frantically. The salamanders would then be dropped down the coveralls of the women workers and groundcrew.

The School operated a very tight, regimented schedule for the student pilots and little historical information of note was available, except for

unusual incidents such as airplane crashes or accidents. One such incident occurred on Tuesday, March 25, 1941, when Leading Aircraftsman (LAC) F.F. Duff of Toronto failed to arrive at Winnipeg as part of a routine solo flight. His yellow Tiger Moth airplane had been last spotted that morning near Sprague, Manitoba. When nothing had been heard from LAC Duff by the following morning, Wednesday, a search was initiated. It included six aircraft from the Southport aerodrome. That evening, while out checking his trapline, local trapper Ole Meland found the missing airplane near Moose Lake in the southeast corner of Manitoba. The plane was intact but no pilot could be found. As the search continued the following morning, Thursday, LAC Duff was finally spotted about ten miles from his Tiger Moth. He was rescued by Herb Taylor, the Chief Flying Instructor of No. 14 EFTS. Since he had not had any food since the emergency landing on Tuesday, he was hungry and cold from exposure, but was otherwise alright. Apparently, LAC Duff had been forced to land the airplane on rough terrain and did so without mishap. In fact, on Thursday, his Tiger Moth was one of the aircraft used in the search for him.

Later, on Friday, April 4, 1941, another incident occurred involving LAC Jone of Fort William. This EFTS student, again on a routine solo mission, was forced to land his plane in the field of J.E. Stickney, approximately six miles east of Portage la Prairie. During the emergency descent, the undercarriage was snapped off by a telephone pole and, on the ensuing landing, the wings of the Tiger Moth were torn off and the fuselage was badly damaged. The airplane actually came to rest just a few yards short of Highway 1.

Probably the most spectacular incident occurred at about 0900 hours on May 21, 1941, when LAC A.G. Hansen, a twenty-three year old from Prince Albert, crashed his Tiger Moth through the roof of Hangar 2 which belonged to another fly-



This 1941 photograph depicts a common scene of a Tiger Moth and Avro Anson Mark I flying over the Portage la Prairie aerodrome. (Taken from "The Record")

ing unit at Southport. LAC Hansen, a member of the senior course in-house at No. 14 EFTS, had just attempted to land his plane into a stiff westerly wind when he was required to overshoot. Unfortunately, trouble developed and the aircraft stalled at 200 feet, pitched downward over top of the hangar and crashed through the roof near the vacant Control Tower. The burning debris from the Tiger Moth fell onto an Anson aircraft inside the hangar and started a fire. The Anson, which had been refuelled only an hour before, exploded and in five minutes nobody could get near the hangar.

A heroic effort to rescue the downed pilot was made by Desmond Bob Shearer, an apprentice radio technician in the Radio Department at the No. 7 Air Observer School. He was near the hangar at the time, enjoying a day off duty, when he saw that LAC Hansen was having a problem with his airplane. Realizing that it was going to crash, he ran to the hangar, rushed inside and raced up the wooden stairs to the roof in the hope of prying open the coupe top, releasing the pilot from the seat constraints and rescuing him. Unfortunately, the gas tank exploded before Shearer was able to do so and the resulting fire and flames prevented him from getting to the trapped pilot. As a point of interest, Desmond Shearer was the son of Air Commodore A.B. Shearer, the Officer Commanding No. 2 Training Command and, as he later explained, if he had only arrived on the scene thirty seconds earlier, he might have been able to save LAC Hanson.

Not only did LAC Hansen die in the crash and fire, but the hangar was also destroyed along with six Anson aircraft belonging to No. 7 Air Observer School. Six other aircraft located on the north side of the hangar farthest from the flames and some equipment in the hangar at the time of the accident were saved by alert staff who either pushed or drove this equipment out of the hangar as the fire spread.

An example of this effort is described in "The Record":

"In the Radio room at the north end of



No. 2 Hangar being destroyed by fire on May 21, 1941. (Courtesy of Air Commodore L. Birchall)



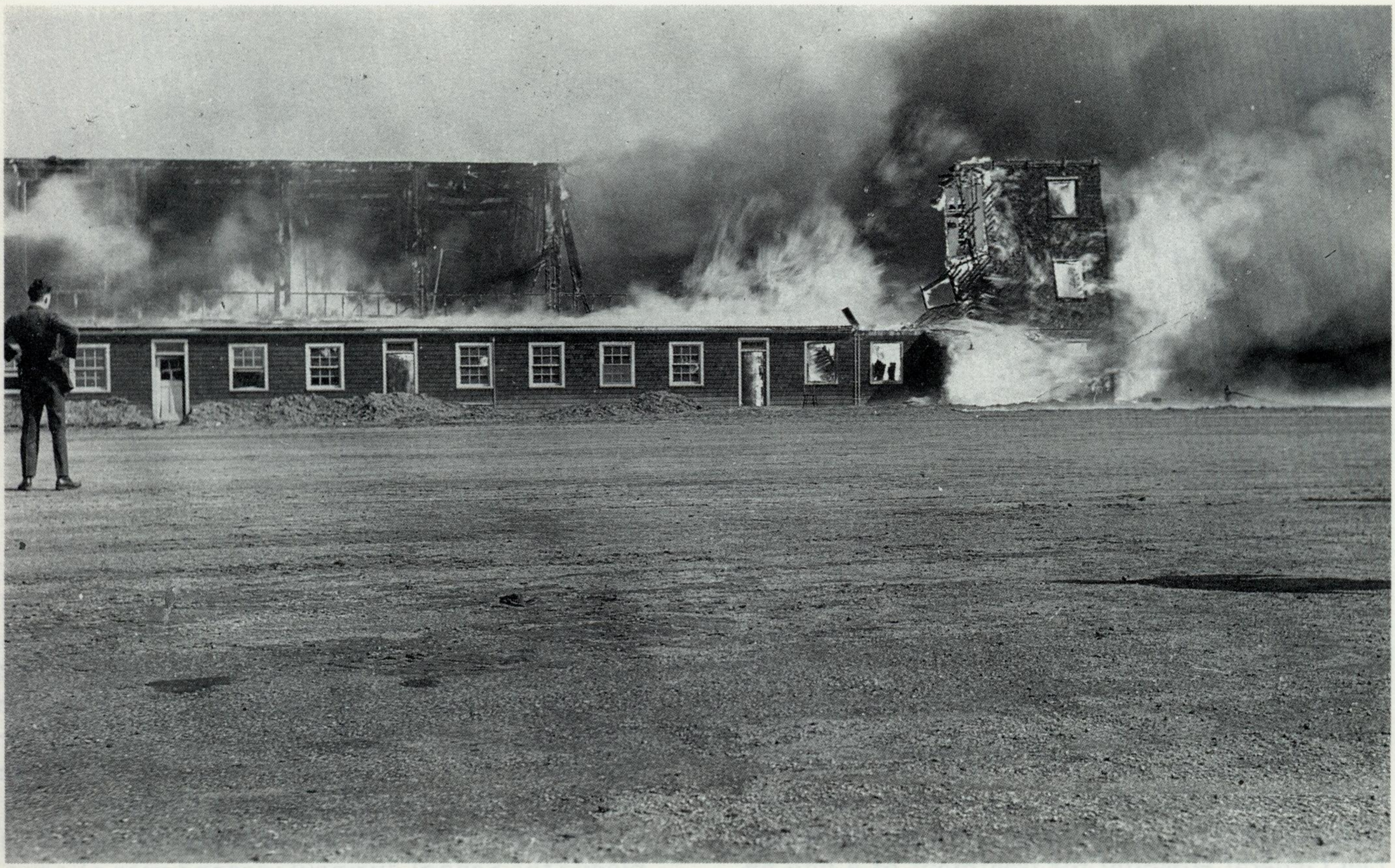
the hangar were four transmitters, each weighing 800 pounds. In a wild rush to save equipment, Barney Barnstable of Radio and Jack Dame, a pilot, without help, somehow put three of the four transmitters through a window. Yet afterwards it took four men to lift each of the transmitters when they were moved to safety in the Stores! The fourth transmitter was so wired in that it could not be saved.''

Also, while conducting research for this book, Mr. David Stevenson described his involvement in combating this fire. When the crash occurred, Mr. Stevenson, as the Chief Electrician at the Station, knew that he had to break the power to the hangar. Apparently, the main switch was then located at the guardhouse and, since the fire was taking hold quickly, he raced to the guardhouse. There was an instrument called a ''hotstick'' available to be used to perform this operation, but there was no time to get it so Mr. Stevenson grabbed a broom and threw the switch. He was successful and escaped unhurt, although afterwards he realized that he could have been seriously, possibly even fatally, injured by performing this stunt.

Three fire brigades, one from Southport, one from the Bombing and Gunnery School at MacDonald and the Portage la Prairie City Fire Brigade, under Fire Chief George Spriggs, battled the blaze. Unfortunately, the fire-fighting was hampered by the strong thirty miles per hour west wind which had largely contributed to the accident in the first place. Additionally, Mr. Eric Smith indicated that the water-line had not yet been hooked up to the flight line, also contributing to the fire-fighters' problems. With the wind blowing the flames eastward towards Hangar 1, they concentrated their efforts on saving it rather than fighting the blaze in Hangar 2. Within two hours of the crash, Hangar 2 was a mass of glowing embers level with the ground.

The entire strength of both Southport units, No. 14 EFTS and No. 7 Air Observer School, was employed on either fire picket or guard duty for the remainder of the day, and all flying and training operations were suspended. A Court of Inquiry, consisting of Wing Commander Pleasance, Squadron Leader Birchall and Flying Officer Sharpe, was convened to investigate the mishap. The Claydon Construction Company of Winnipeg was contracted to construct a new double hangar at Southport for No. 7 Air Observer School. This new hangar was completed in mid-August 1941, at a cost of $91,000.

With the loss of No. 2 Hangar, the Station also



lost its Air Traffic Control Tower. This drawback made life even more difficult and demanding for the Air Traffic Controllers (then called dispatchers). Not only were they plagued with the loss of their first tower, but once back in operation, they were usually stuck controlling aircraft which were not equipped with radios. Of the ninety-four aircraft on Station at that time, only a third had radios.

A number of other incidents involving No. 14 EFTS's personnel and trainees also occurred. One such accident occurred on Thursday, July 3, 1941, when a 30 year old pilot trainee, LAC Robert J. Miln of Beamsville, Ontario, was fatally injured during a solo flight when he crash landed his Tiger Moth on the aerodrome. On Tuesday, October 21, 1941, LAC F.J. Horan, another pilot trainee on a solo flight, was luckier. Shortly after entering a cloud bank, his Tiger Moth went into a spin from which he was unable to recover. With his airplane out of control, LAC Horan successfully bailed out of his aircraft, becoming another member of the elite Caterpillar Club, to which membership was restricted to airmen who had made successful parachute descents from their stricken airplane. *(The Caterpillar Club was formed in 1922 and, at its inception, was officially known as "The Caterpillar Club of Irwin Air Chutes". There was only one qualification for membership in the Club. This honour was reserved exclusively for those airmen who had saved their lives by using an Irwin Air Chute. The Caterpillar Club has only one class of membership, "Life", and the Club's sole privilege is its continued enjoyment. As was discovered while conducting research for this book, the Caterpillar Club has a large membership list. By July 1960, it had over 28,000 "Life" members.)* This was quite a feat for LAC Horan since pilot trainees were not given actual training in parachute jumps. They were, however, required to become very familiar with their personal equipment such as parachutes. For example, one training feature, enforced by the School's staff, was that if a trainee picked up his parachute the wrong way, say by the rip-cord thereby releasing his "silk", he was fined $1.00, a hefty fee by 1941 wage standards.

Mid-air collisions were a rarity at Southport but, in late October, 1941, two such accidents occurred within five days. In the first accident, on Saturday, October 25, two Tiger Moths from No. 14 EFTS collided at 1040 hours, approximately two miles southeast of Newton, Manitoba, a small community seven miles to the east of the aerodrome. The pilots, both on routine solo missions, were killed. They were LAC Leslie J. Cane, a Canadian citizen who gave Itasca, Illinois as his home



The hat badge with the dress tunic lapel pin and pilot's wings as worn by the civilian pilots of Central Manitoba Flying Training School (No. 14 EFTS) Limited. (Courtesy of Captain D. Dudgeon)

town, and LAC James R. Blackwood of Basswood, Manitoba. The second mid-air collision also occurred near Newton at 1100 hours on Thursday, October 30. Again, the incident involved two No. 14 EFTS Tiger Moths, piloted by two trainees on solo missions. LAC Thomas G. Stevenson of Belmont, Manitoba was killed and LAC Keith A. McPhadden of Bounty, Saskatchewan was badly injured. He was immediately sent to the Winnipeg General Hospital for treatment of a bad ankle fracture and severe abrasions to his face and body.

No. 14 EFTS celebrated its first successful year of operation on Monday, November 10, 1941, with a special dinner and dance at the Mayfair Hotel in Portage la Prairie. The celebration, sponsored by the School's operating company, the Central Manitoba Flying Training School Limited, was attended by over two hundred guests. Also, at the event the School bade farewell to its Chief Air Supervisory Officer, Flight Lieutenant D.D. Rogers and welcomed his successor, Flight Lieutenant G.H. Newsome. He remained at No. 14 EFTS until it disbanded in June 1942.

During its first year of operation, weather conditions and the resulting ground conditions also proved to be an occasional operational problem for No. 14 EFTS. For example, on Thursday, April 10, 1941, flying was halted due to mud. Because the runways were still gravel and dirt affairs, the rains and spring thaw had made the mud conditions on the airfield too treacherous to permit the Tiger Moths to fly. As a School spokesman explained to the local Portage la Prairie newspaper, the Daily Graphic, "Conditions at present are too risky for students to land on the drenched runway."

The gravel road, leading southward from Portage la Prairie to the aerodrome, was also in poor shape. In fact, in this instance it was so bad that even caterpillar tractors became mired in the mud. This problem effectively isolated the aerodrome and was a continuing problem encountered by the civilian school operators and city officials. More discussion with respect to the road leading to the Air Base will occur later in this Chapter.

Weather problems periodically continued to plague the School during its second year of operation as well. An example of this occurred during the weekend of March 28 and 29, 1942, when the worst snowstorm in over twenty-five years hit the Portage area. Flying ceased for several days as snow accumulation of over two feet deep on level surfaces, with drifts of between ten to fifteen feet, was experienced around buildings and other wind obstacles. Not even the School's new, modern, sleek, efficient rotor-type snow-plough, received as permanent aerodrome equipment on December 10, 1940, was able to control the effects of the blizzard until after it had subsided.

On Wednesday, June 24, 1942, an announcement concerning the future of No. 14 EFTS was made. In order to provide sufficient accommodation for the expansion of its sister BCATP School at Southport, No. 7 Air Observer School, No. 14 EFTS was to be disbanded and the civilian company operating it was to move to Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and take over the RAF Elementary Flying Training School located there. RCAF Organization Order No. 208, dated June 6, 1942, ordered the disbandment of No. 14 EFTS. Consequently, No. 14 EFTS ceased to exist on July 3, 1942, and all of its RCAF buildings were transferred by the Officer Commanding No. 2 Training Command to the civilian operating company of the No. 7 Air Observer School. No. 14 EFTS





Road conditions on the Station during the spring of 1942.

was now history. During its twenty months existence, No. 14 EFTS had received 794 student pilots (713 RCAF and 81 RAF) and had graduated 639 candidates (588 RCAF and 51 RAF).

Number 3 Bombing and Gunnery School

The Number 3 Bombing and Gunnery School (No. 3 B&G School), although not located at Southport and therefore not within the scope of this book, must be mentioned due to its proximity to Portage la Prairie. This closeness between the Air Training School at MacDonald (also known as Northport) and the two schools at Southport frequently extended not only to the close physical location, but also to the operational, social and sports arenas. Close ties between the Air Training Schools at these two sites were developed within days of the opening of the facility. They were maintained throughout the war years and for many years after that.

The No. 3 B&G School at MacDonald, eighteen miles northwest of Portage la Prairie, commenced operations on Monday, March 10, 1941, under the command of Group Captain A.M. Mercer. It was one of ten such schools authorized in the BCATP. Rather than having only one specific type of student following on the Course Training Plan, the School was an advanced training facility for three categories of aircrew. For example, upon graduation from flying training and upon receipt of their wings, the pilots were sent to No. 3 B&G School for a two week crash course in bombing and gunnery. Likewise, upon graduation from the Air Observer School, the qualified air observer was sent to MacDonald to undergo an extensive six week course in bombing interspersed with some machine gun training. Finally, upon completion of their twenty-four week wireless operator training, air gunners took a specialized four week Gunnery Course at No. 3 B&G School.

Number 7 Air Observers School

The Number 7 Air Observer School (No. 7 AOS) was built on land adjoining the No. 14 EFTS by the Claydon Company Limited of Winnipeg. It was based on a uniform BCATP pattern school requiring eighteen acres of buildings. Consequently, at this early point in its history, the aerodrome at Southport, serving a dual purpose with both No. 14 EFTS and No. 7 AOS operating out of its facilities, had triangle gravel landing strips 3,000



The No. 7 AOS Crest.

feet long and 500 feet wide. The flight line consisted of two single hangars 112 feet by 160 feet and two double hangars 224 feet by 160 feet. The newly built facilities were inspected by the Officer Commanding the Number 2 Training Command, Air Commodore A.B. Shearer, on April 23, 1941 and commenced flying operations on Monday, April 28, 1941. It was operated by the Portage Air Observer School Limited under the auspices of the parent air transport company, Yukon Southern Limited. This company and six other similar firms were purchased in January 1942 by the Canadian Pacific Airlines Limited.

The new school was the seventh AOS opened in Canada under the BCATP and the third AOS to commence operations within Number 2 Training Command. The Chief Air Force Supervisory Officer was Squadron Leader K.J. McDonald (RAF), who had just arrived in Portage la Prairie from Regina, Saskatchewan. Mr. C.W. Becker was initially appointed as the Civilian General Manager, with Mr. A.M. "Matt" Berry in charge of operations and Mr. D.W. "Scotty" Moir assigned as the Chief Pilot.

No. 7 AOS had a school mandate to train air observers for their aircrew roles of navigator, bomb aimer and photographer. The duration of each Air Observer Course was to be twelve weeks, with three courses running concurrently. In order to achieve this goal, their student intake was established at



Some of the original RCAF staff members of No. 7 AOS. (Courtesy of K.J. McDonald)

forty-two aircrew candidates arriving one course every four weeks. The initial course loading for the first course at No. 7 AOS, which commenced training on the opening day April 28, known as Course No. 23, was twenty-two Canadians and twenty trainees from the United Kingdom.



Members of one of the original No. 7 AOS courses relaxing on Saskatchewan Avenue in Portage la Prairie. (Courtesy of K.J. McDonald)

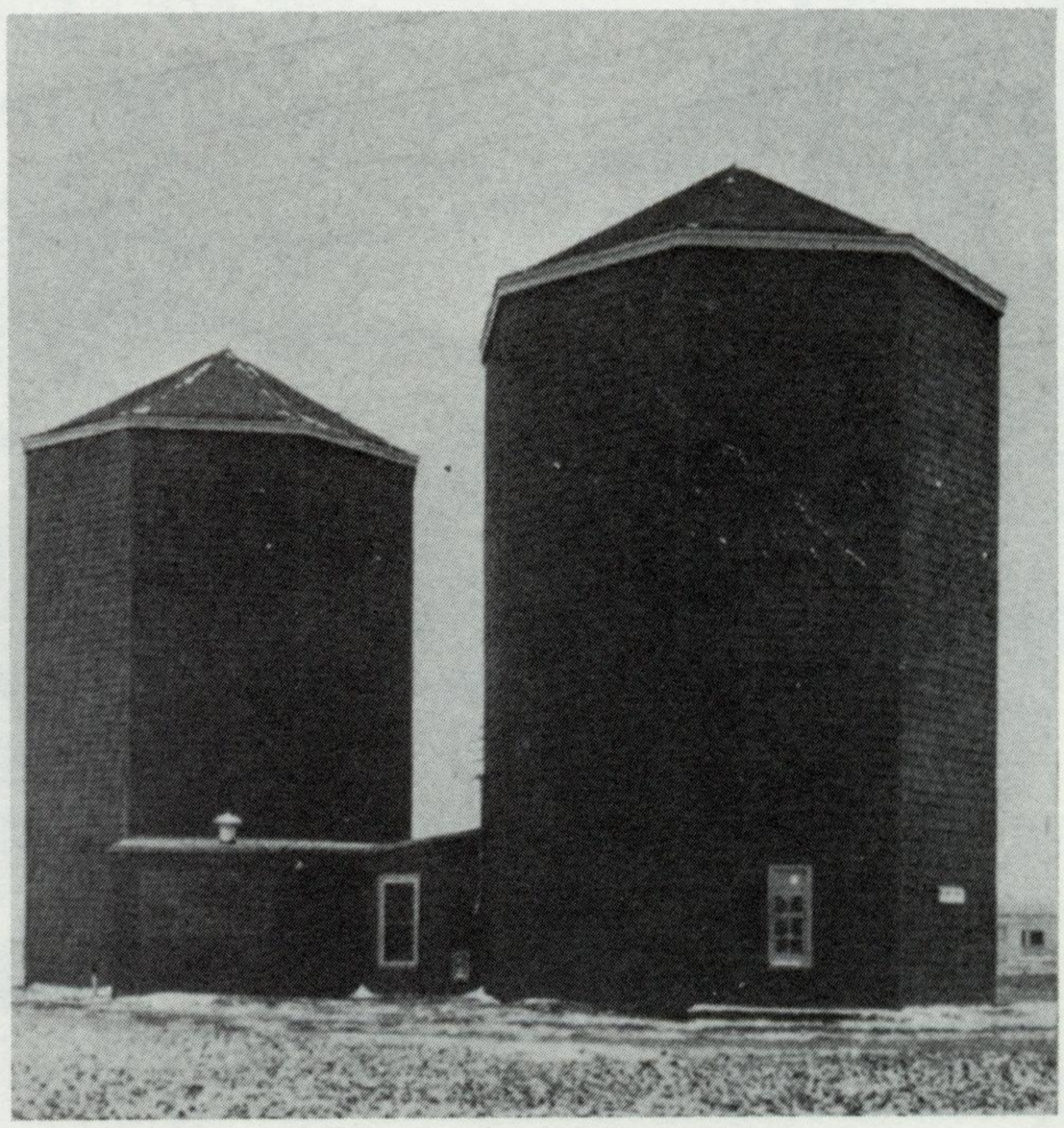
The candidates were chosen for their mathematical aptitude and precision plus their apparent sense of responsibility. The twelve week course included instruction in air navigation, aerial photography and reconnaissance. With this latter goal in mind, the candidate underwent special training to improve his powers of observation and to be able to accurately sketch or describe enemy movements and positions which he might have observed during the course of operational flight. In the word of a 1941 account taken from "The Record":

> "map, chart, compass, bombsight and camera become the student's tools. He learns how to read maps and charts, how to read instruments and correct compasses, how to know what to look for, and how to report it to his crew or his station. He must also learn Morse well enough to receive or send eight words a minute on the buzzer and six on the lamp; learn photography to be able to record bomb destruction, troop placements, railway networks."

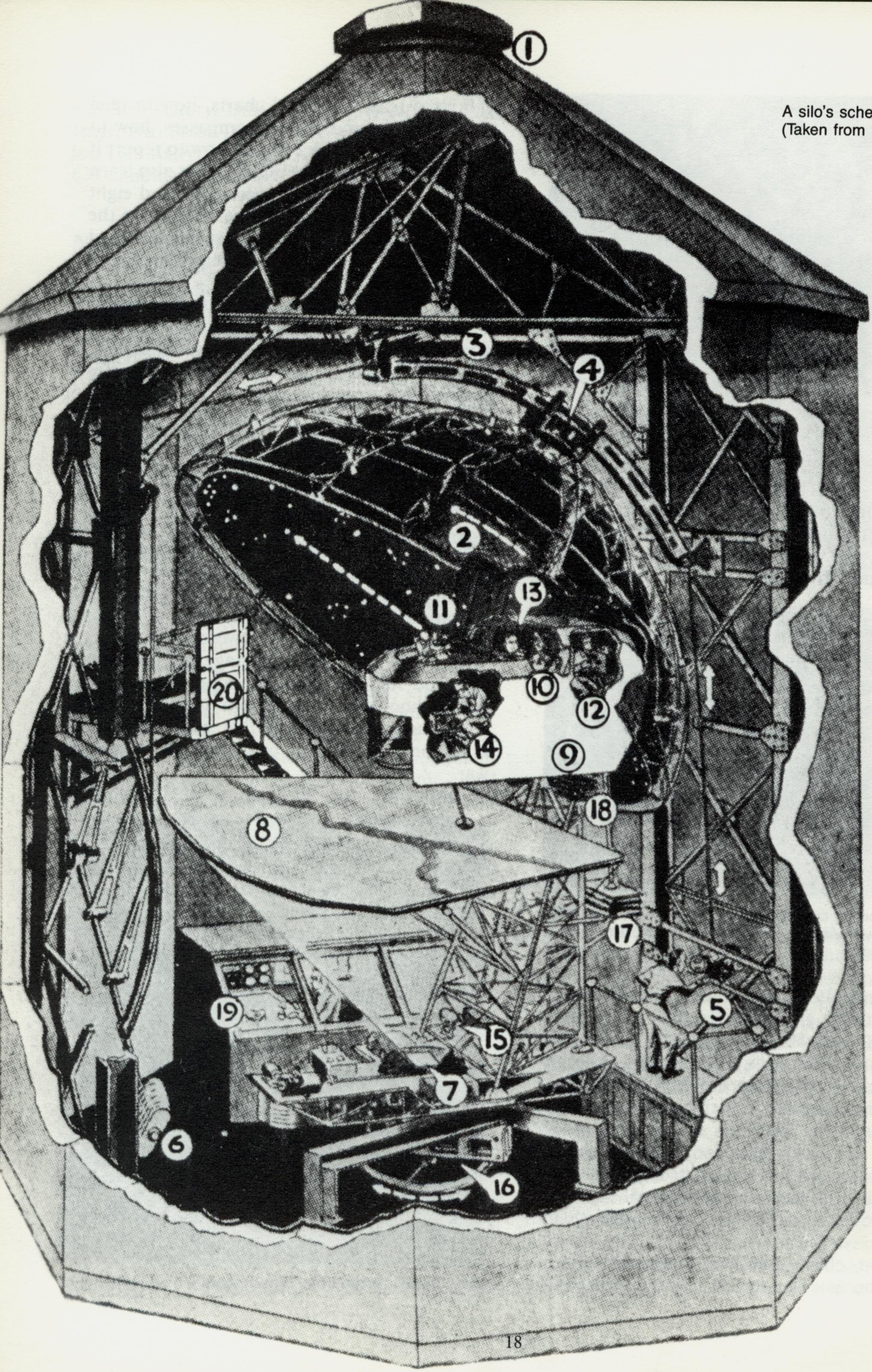
The School was to fly the British designed Avro Anson (Mark I), a twin-engined mono-plane with a top speed of 180 miles per hour and ceiling of 7,000 feet. It carried a crew of three, all enclosed together in a glass-covered cabin. While the School was supposed to have eighteen Ansons, when it commenced operations on April 28, it had a fleet of only twelve airplanes. However, more aircraft, flying teachers and support personnel and other equipment were arriving every day.

One of the first items of business was the establishment of a good working relationship with other BCATP schools and military units in the local area. To accomplish this, besides the usual operational agreements and joint social events, a softball league was set up between No. 7 AOS, the local Army Garrison in Portage la Prairie manning the 100th Military Training Centre, No. 3 B&G School and, of course, No. 14 EFTS. A hockey league was established that winter and inter-unit sports competitions continued throughout the war.

Following the completion of their initial



The "Silos". (Taken from "The Record")



A silo's schematic diagram.
(Taken from "The Record")

1 Ventilator excludes daylight.

2 Lights in dome represent navigating stars.

3 Heavy, curved steel rail supports dome.

4 Gear box moves axis, motor rotates dome.

5 Motor winch and cable move dome along rail.

6 Weight counterbalances load of dome.

7 Projector throws image of terrain on screen.

8 Terrain plate receives projected image.

9 Fuselage mounted on universal joint.

10 Pilot uses standard instruments, controls.

11 Navigator takes bearings from "stars."

12 Radio man sends and receives messages.

13 Copilot or other crew member.

14 Bombardier uses sight. Hits are shown.

15 Smoke blower produces cloud effects.

16 Turntable revolves as pilot uses rudder.

17 Bellows tip fuselage for dive or climb.

18 Bellows bank fuselage as ailerons are used.

19 Operator rules sky, earth, and radio.

20 Crew enters fuselage via loading bridge.

ground school training, the first AOS students, members of Course 23, flew their first airborne exercise, commencing with a launch of ten Ansons at 1330 hrs on May 9, 1941. The following day, May 10, at 0830 hrs, another launch, this one consisting of eleven Ansons, took another batch of air observer students on their first airborne mission. The training for this first AOS Course continued uneventfully and, on July 16, 1941, Flight Lieutenant McDonald presided over the graduation dinner for Course No. 23. It was held at the Mayfair Hotel in Portage la Prairie.

Courses continued to arrive at No. 7 AOS for training as scheduled. The first full course of non-Canadians arrived in Portage la Prairie on June 15, 1941. It was labelled Course No. 27 and consisted of 42 trainees of the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) who had just travelled overland from Vancouver. They were gratified to find out that amongst the improvements to the facilities had been the installation of modern plumbing, showers and a large hot water tank. Since they had not had the opportunity to bathe in the previous 21 days, these New Zealanders put the new system to a real test. Unfortunately, the hot water tank proved to be most inadequate. Course No. 27 held its graduation dinner at the Marlborough Hotel in Winnipeg on September 12, 1941. Group Captain Isitt and the Honourable Frank Langstone, the Minister of Mines for the Dominion of New Zealand, attended the dinner. Three days earlier, on September 9, these guests had officially visited No. 7 AOS.

Where No. 14 EFTS had experienced severe winter weather conditions during the previous winter, now both schools had to cope with the extremes of prairie summers. On June 17, 1941, a sudden and terrific thunderstorm occurred. This deluge almost inundated the Station, causing drains, sewers and ditches to block, back-up and overflow. During the storm a warning siren was hit by lightning. It short-circuited and sounded continuously for many minutes. This caused all personnel to think that there was a fire somewhere. Everybody rushed to the airfield to help fight the fire, only to be drenched by the rain. The weather struck again on June 26, when an intense summer heat wave caused both schools to alter their hours of operation. For the next several days, reveille was 0430 hours and the day's work ceased at 1230 hours.

Added to the bad weather upstairs was the discomfort on the ground. Since the camp area was newly broken, ungrassed ground, in the hot, dry weather the mud of the spring turned to fine powdery dust. Nothing could keep it out of the hangars and offices, not to mention the barracks. In these quarters, the dust piled up in gritty layers on the pillows, bedclothes and floors.

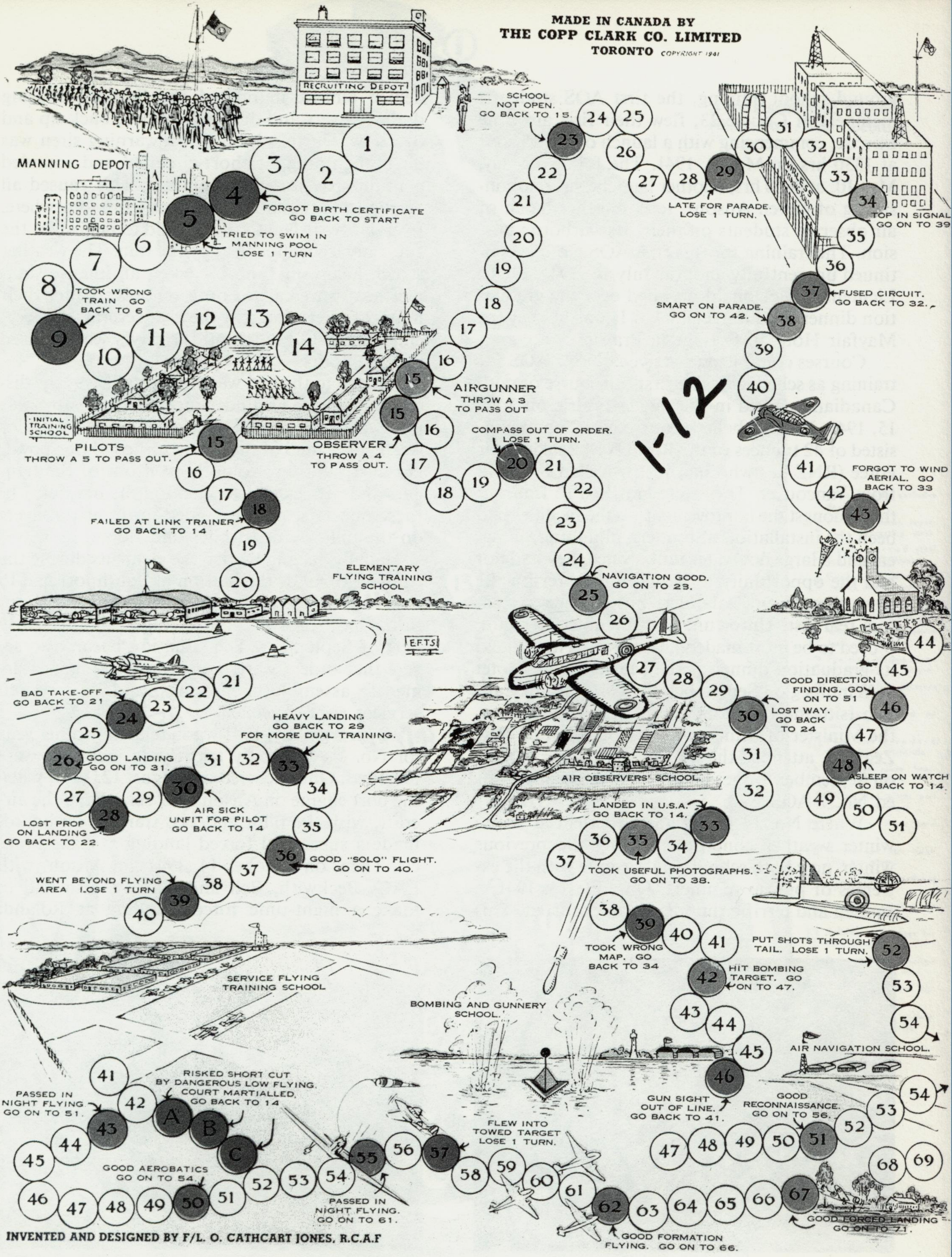
Finally, having battled the elements during the summer of 1941, the Station at Southport had to deal with a series of epidemics which swept through the province in late August and the early part of September. The situation became so severe that orders were issued prohibiting the airmen to assemble in meetings, and even church services were cancelled.

Operationally, 1941 was a relatively quiet year for No. 7 AOS; only two flying incidents were recorded. One occurred on August 12, 1941, when the port engine on Anson 6502 seized and the aircraft, with the pilot and two trainees on board, made a successful forced landing at Lake Francis. Then, on October 14, 1941, an Anson, with LACs Beckwith, Bell and Garrity, also had to make a night-time forced landing at Roland,





Weather extremes at Portage la Prairie - hot summers and cold winters. (Taken from "The Record")



This is a reproduction of a board game first produced in 1941, called "Be An Airman". The game was invented and designed by Flying Officer O. Cathcart-Jones, RCAF, and approved by the Air Council and Air Marshal W.A. Bishop, VC, DSO, MC, DFC.

ITIRE ROYALTIES DONATED TO R.C.A.F. BENEVOLENT FUND

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PPROVED BY AIR MARSHAL
W. A. BISHOP
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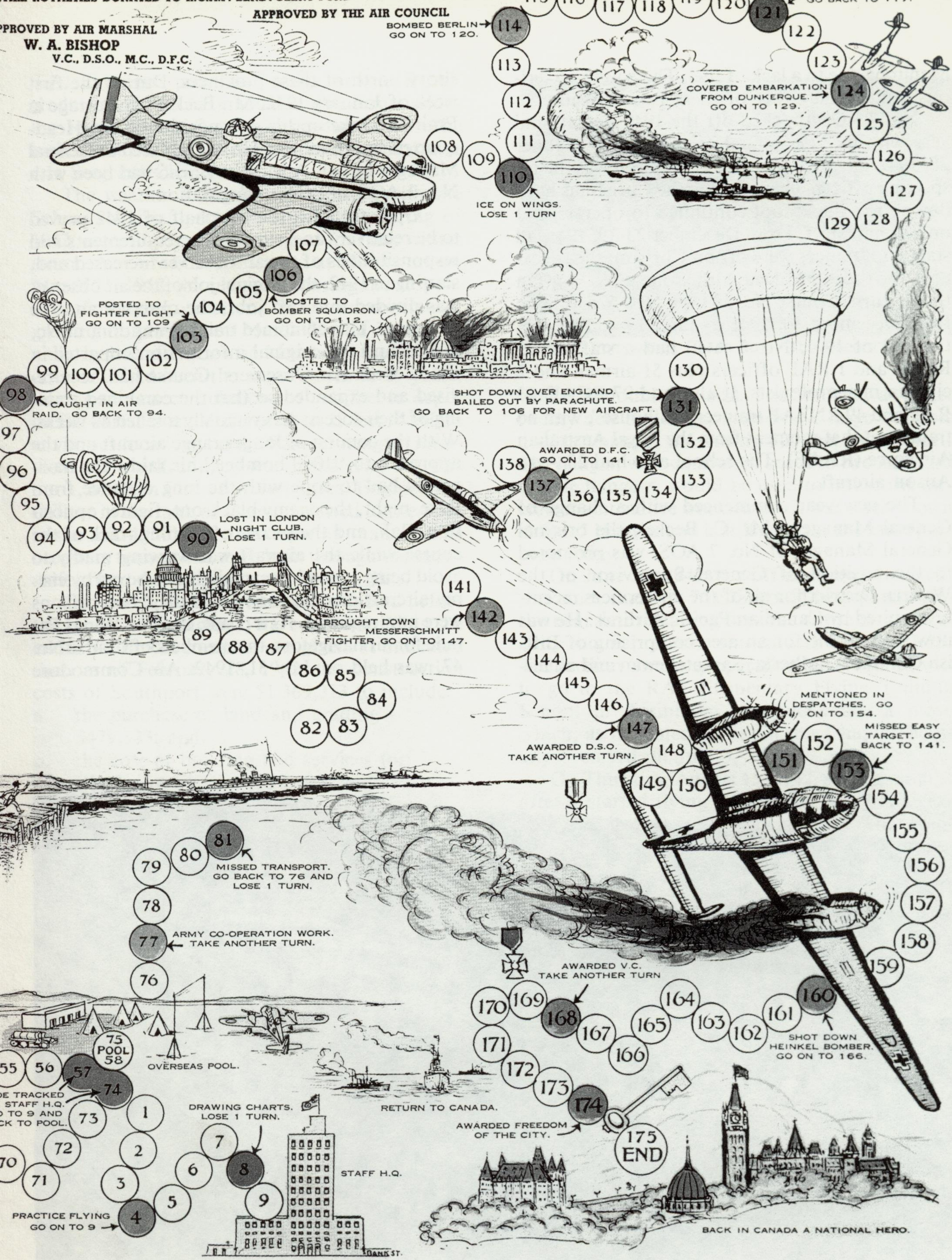


The game was a favorite pastime activity of aircrew in training, including those who learned their skills at Portage la Prairie, with the entire royalties acquired from its sales being donated to the RCAF Benevolent Fund. (Courtesy of Captain D. Dudgeon)

Manitoba due to a lack of fuel. There were no serious injuries on either of these two occasions.

No. 7 AOS finished off the 1941 operational year with its first annual inspection on October 28, 1941. Air Vice Marshal G.M. Croll was the inspecting officer. Then, during the Christmas holiday period the school continued to operate, but only at half staff. From December 23-29, 1941, all staff and trainees were off on Christmas leave except for those involved with Course No. 34. On their return, Course No. 34 took New Year's leave from December 30, 1941 to January 4, 1942. By the end of 1941, No. 7 AOS had a staff of 15 RCAF and 1 RAF officers plus 51 airmen and 2 civilian meteorologists. It also had 97 RCAF, 23 RAF and 49 RNZAF trainees "in-house", with no trainees at that moment from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). The school also had 23 Avro Anson aircraft.

The new year commenced with a change of General Managers. Mr. C. Becker, the original General Manager of No. 7 AOS, was promoted to the position of General Supervisor of the Western District for all of the air services recently acquired by Canadian Pacific Airlines. He was now responsible for an area comprising of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and all territory north of these provinces. During the first week of January 1942, Mr. Becker left Portage la Prairie to take up his new position at the Headquarters in Edmonton. He was replaced as General Manager by Mr. A.M. Berry, who had been with No. 7 AOS since its inauguration.

Operationally, the first half of 1942 proved to be relatively uneventful. The requirements and responsibilities of the air observer increased and, starting in 1942, the original job of the air observer was divided into two jobs, the observer and the navigator. This combined training was done at No. 7 AOS and the original information imparted in the 22 week Air Observers' Course had been revised and expanded so that the combined training of their successors eventually totalled 40 weeks. With the coming of longer range aircraft and the approach to "1000 bomber" air raids, the navigators had to cope with the long distance from Base, night, the enemy black-out, fighter opposition, flak, and the puzzle of keeping track of the course while the aircraft was weaving madly to avoid being coned by searchlights or boxed by enemy aircraft or detectors. Obviously, two persons were now required. As a result, the first Wings Parade for air navigators, the members of Course No. 47, was held on July 31, 1942. Air Commodore



An aerial view of the Station in 1943. (Courtesy of Mr. H.H. Gething)

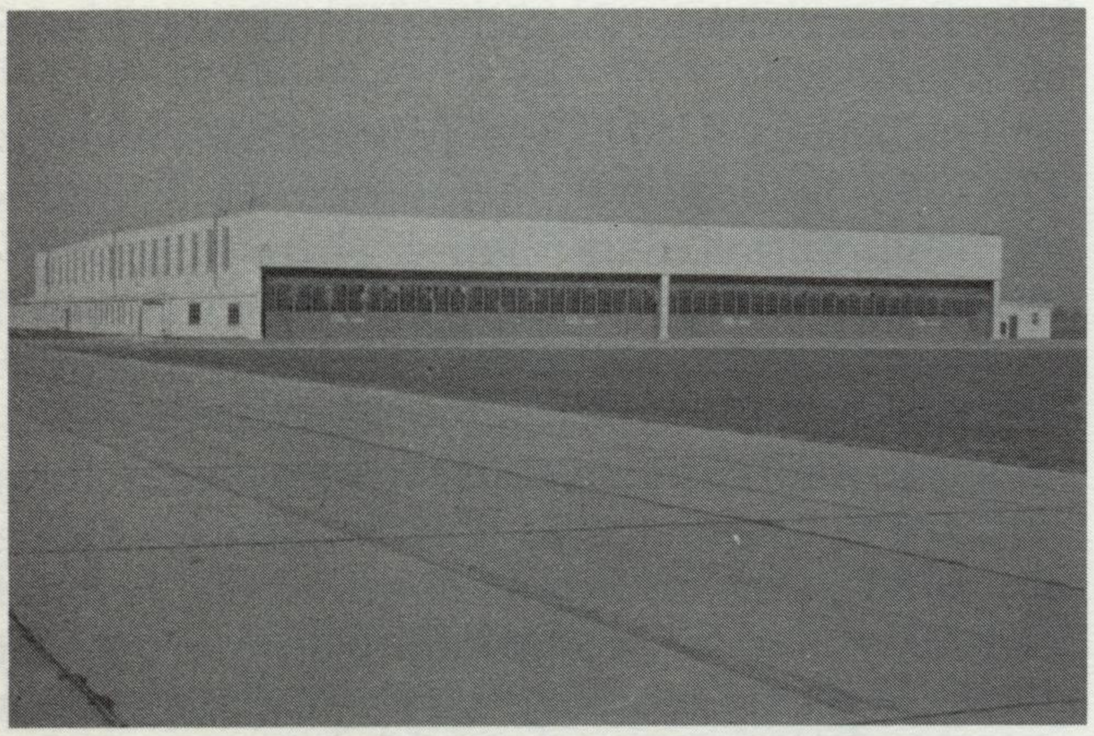
T.A. Lawrence presented wings to one RCAF graduate and 18 RAF graduates, plus commissioning scrolls to the first eight graduates with the highest marks. The honour graduate for the course was Sergeant Clements.

The weather generally co-operated with the School's flying operations during the spring of 1942, except for one concentrated four day winter storm. A severe blizzard started at 1100 hours on March 25, 1942, immediately causing the suspension of all flying operations. The storm continued, growing in intensity on March 26 and 27 and finally, by late afternoon on March 28, the blizzard ceased. It had been the worst storm in 25 years, leaving snow accumulations of two feet in depth on flat surfaces and drifts of 10 to 15 feet in height at various locations on the Base. During an interview while collecting research material for this book, Mr. Ken Pirt, an Aeronautical Engineering Officer in the rank of Captain posted to the Base in the mid-1970's, recalled hearing that, on this occasion, tunnels had to be built through the snowdrifts from the messes to the hangar line.

On March 10, 1945, in a return tabled before the House of Commons, the cost of building the entire Southport complex was given. It indicated that, as of February 28, 1942, the construction costs of Southport were $1,369,313 to include:

a. the purchase of land and grading - $479,823; and
b. the cost of building and services for:
   (1) No. 14 EFTS - $330,496, and
   (2) No. 7 AOS - $558,992.

Later, in an announcement on August 7, 1942 dealing with over $4,000,000 worth of new Air School expansion and construction, it was revealed that the air training facility at Portage la Prairie



Hangar 5, the double-double maintenance hangar from the outside. (Courtesy of Mr. R.M. Vail)



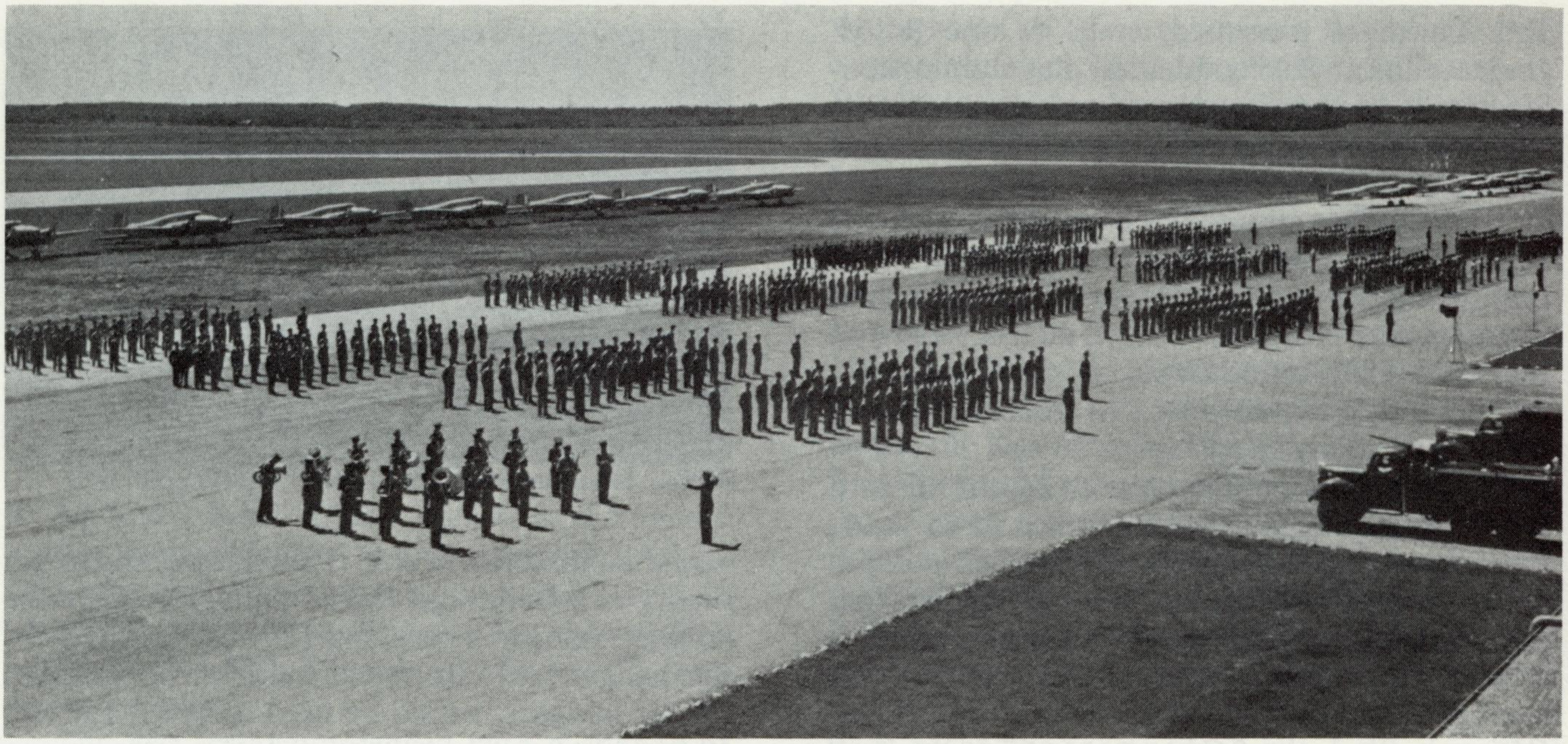
Hangar 5 from within. (Taken from "The Record")

would be doubled in size. The Station was to get twenty new buildings, including a large "double double" hangar measuring 320 feet by 265 feet. The hangar, with equivalent space to two standard double hangars, would be used to house the aircraft maintenance workshops. It was later known as No. 5 Hangar and is still used for the same purpose today.

On June 24, 1942, the official announcement was made that No. 7 AOS would be expanding in the near future, taking over the entire Station facility that it presently shared with No. 14 EFTS. The civilian company operating No. 14 EFTS was to go to the RAF Elementary Flying Training School in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, a move which, as indicated earlier in this Chapter, actually occurred on July 3, 1942.

On Thursday, August 13, 1942, sixteen months after it started flying operations, No. 7 AOS experienced its first fatal flying accident. That evening, while returning from a routine night training mission, Anson No. 6077 crashed one and one half miles north of the aerodrome. All four occupants of the aircraft were killed. They were the civilian pilot, Mr. J.L. Kosloff, and the wireless operator and navigator trainees, Sergeant E.C. Raison, LAC C.K.G Bowery and LAC R. Jones.

There were two other fatal Anson crashes before the end of 1942. The first one occurred on Friday, October 9, at about 0900 hours when Anson No. 6533 went down about three miles southeast of Darlingford, Manitoba, killing Sergeant Pilot T.A. Botteril, Sergeant Pilot D.A. Cameron (co-pilot) and two navigator trainees, LAC E. Hartland and LAC C.H. White. The second fatal accident occurred on December 21, when Anson No. 6234 was immediately demolished by fire when it hit the ground about three and a half miles west of the aerodrome at 2141 hours. The civilian pilot, C.B. Barber, Ser-



No. 7 AOS "on parade" for the AOC's inspection in 1944. (Taken from "The Record")

geant P.D. McIntyre, LAC W.S. Croft and LAC W.E. Weatherley were all killed.

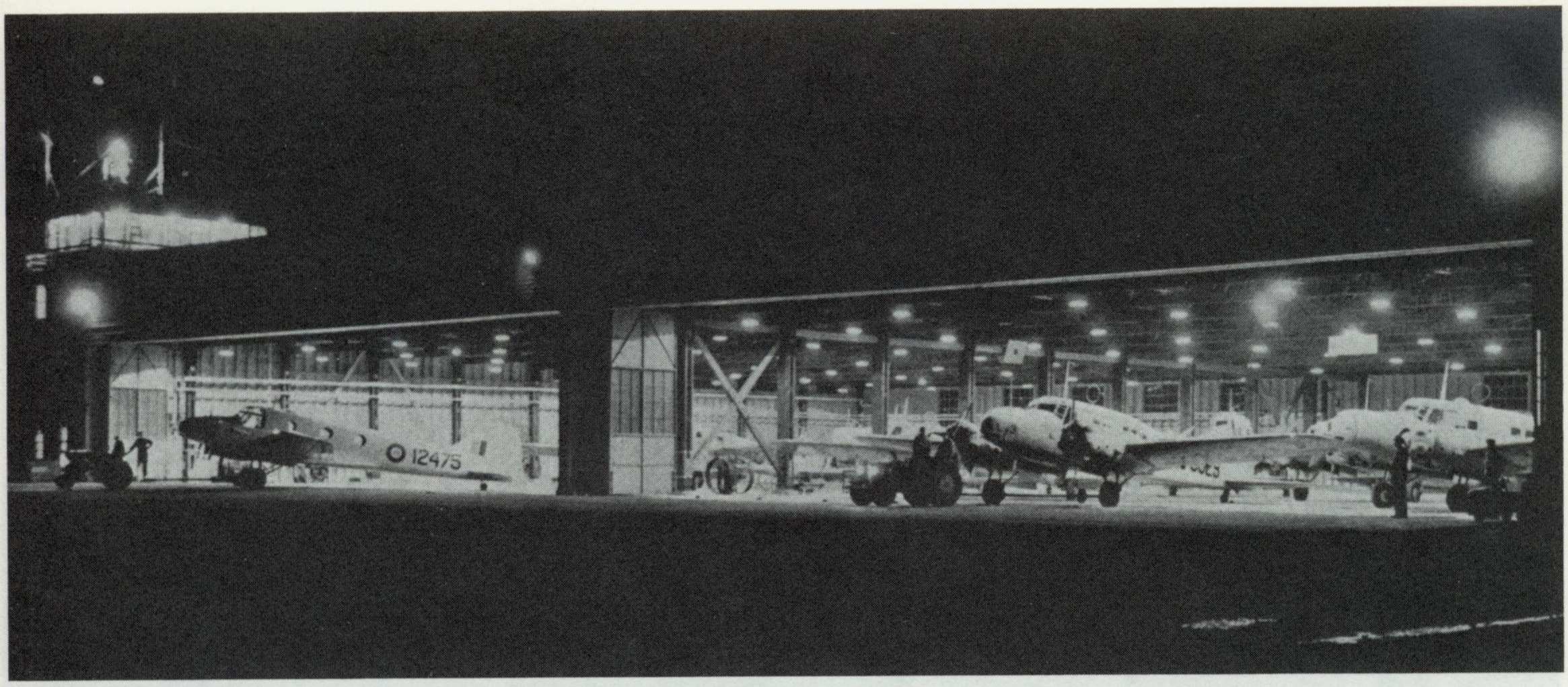
Many of the funerals for these fatalities which occurred at Southport were held at McKillop's Funeral Parlour, and the deceased were interred in military plots in the Hillside Cemetary at Portage la Prairie.

The latter part of 1942 had a number of high points. For example, on September 9 a new increase in the School establishment was announced whereby the staff was increased to 262 and accommodations available for 676 trainees at any one time. Furthermore, on November 15, the School became a self-accounting entity with respect to pay and clothing authority. Also, at a Wings Graduation Parade on November 19, the Reviewing Officer, Air Vice Marshal A.B. Shearer, the Commander of No. 2 Training Command in Winnipeg, of which No. 7 AOS was a part, presented the Efficiency Pennant to No. 7 AOS. Initially presented by Air Minister C.G. Power, the Pennant was won by the Portage School in competition with all other Air Observer Schools across Canada. It was presented for the months of July, August and September 1942. The next day, November 20, Air Commodore A.D.T. Nerielle (C.B.M.), the Deputy Chief of the RNZAF, and Group Captain T.W. White, the Chief Liaison Officer for the RNZAF in Canada, visited the Station.

By the close of 1942, No. 7 AOS had officer complement of 43, mostly RCAF officers, 130 airmen of which 115 were RCAF, and 12 civilian pilots. The school also had 272 trainees "in-house", including 95 RCAF, 111 RAF, 24 RAAF and 42 RNZAF candidates and 38 Avro Anson I aircraft.

Also in 1942, the school experienced a number of changes to its executive staff. Mr. Berry's appointment in January 1942, as the General Manager replacing Mr. Becker proved to be only an interim measure. In March 1942, Mr. Berry was, in turn, replaced as General Manager by Mr. W.L. Parr, who remained in that capacity until the School closed in 1945. Changes also occurred on the military side in 1942, when Squadron Leader McDonald was replaced by Squadron Leader L.E. Ellis, DFC, as the Chief Supervisory Officer on May 25, 1942. Likewise, Squadron Leader Ellis was replaced by Wing Commander G.H. Malcolmson on November 19, 1942. Wing Commander Malcolmson arrived at the School from No. 5 AOS in Winnipeg.

On January 4, 1943, two Ansons, 6664 and AX 472, crash landed on the aerodrome while returning from routine night flights. There were no injuries. On February 10, another Anson was forced down at Manitou, Manitoba. There were no injuries amongst the crew and no damage was sustained to the airplane. Inclement weather from January 17 to January 31 greatly restricted flying operations, with the School able to fly on five and a half days and two and a half nights during that period. Also, on February 8, 1943, the Station was visited by Major-General, the Honourable Sir William Glasglow from Australia and Mr. G.J. Bridg-



Removing the aircraft from Hangar 2 in preparation for night flying. (Taken from "The Record")

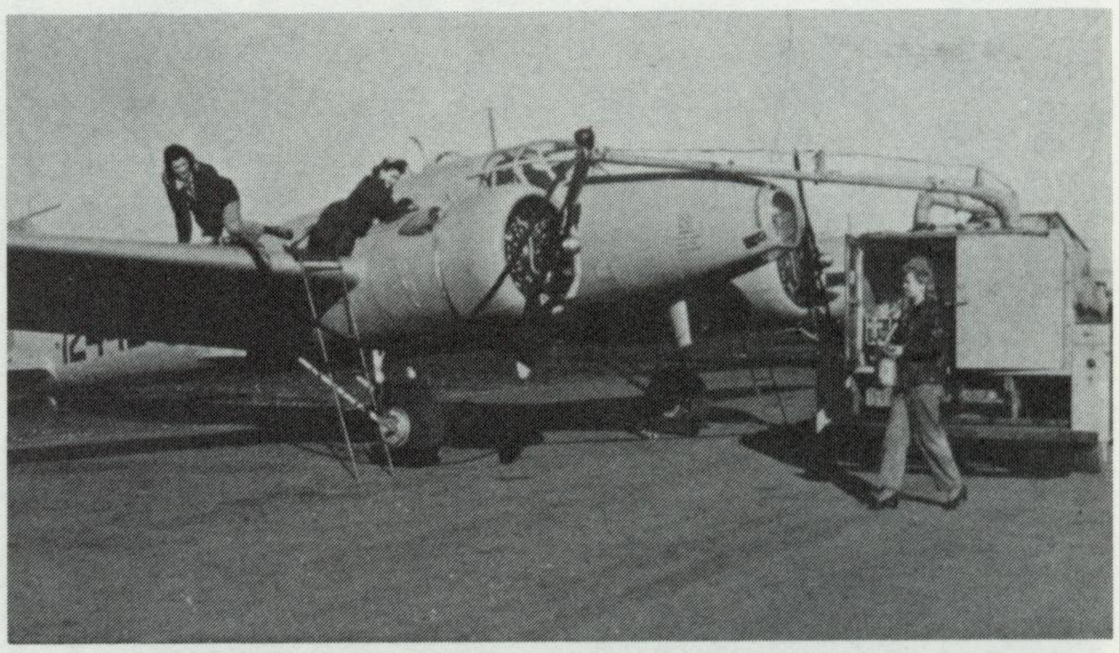
eland, the Assistant Secretary to the High Commissioner for Australia.

The first fatal crash of 1943 occurred on March 1, when Anson 6503 crashed six miles south of Birtle, Manitoba while on a routine night training mission. The crew of Mr. Anderson, the civilian pilot, and three New Zealanders, Flight Sergeant D.J. Opie, LAC A.B. Spence and LAC A.D. Marshall, were all killed in the accident. Later that month, an epidemic of scarlet fever, mumps and measles ravaged the School. During the period March 7 to April 14, there were nine patients hospitalized with scarlet fever, four patients with mumps and one with the measles. On May 11, the final case of scarlet fever for this epidemic was reported.

There were three more flying accidents during the remainder of 1943. The first one occurred on September 30 at approximately 0100 hours when Anson 6570 crashed on take-off from No. 17 Service Flying Training School at Souris, Manitoba where it had landed to refuel. Just having gotten airborne at about 100 feet above ground, both engines failed and the airplane was forced to land in a rough field, folding up its undercarriage. There were no injuries. Then, on October 24 at 2340 hours, Anson 6181 crashed three miles west of Austin, Manitoba when the pilot was trying to land at night in fog and simply flew the airplane into the ground. Miraculously, while the aircraft was destroyed, the crew escaped with only very



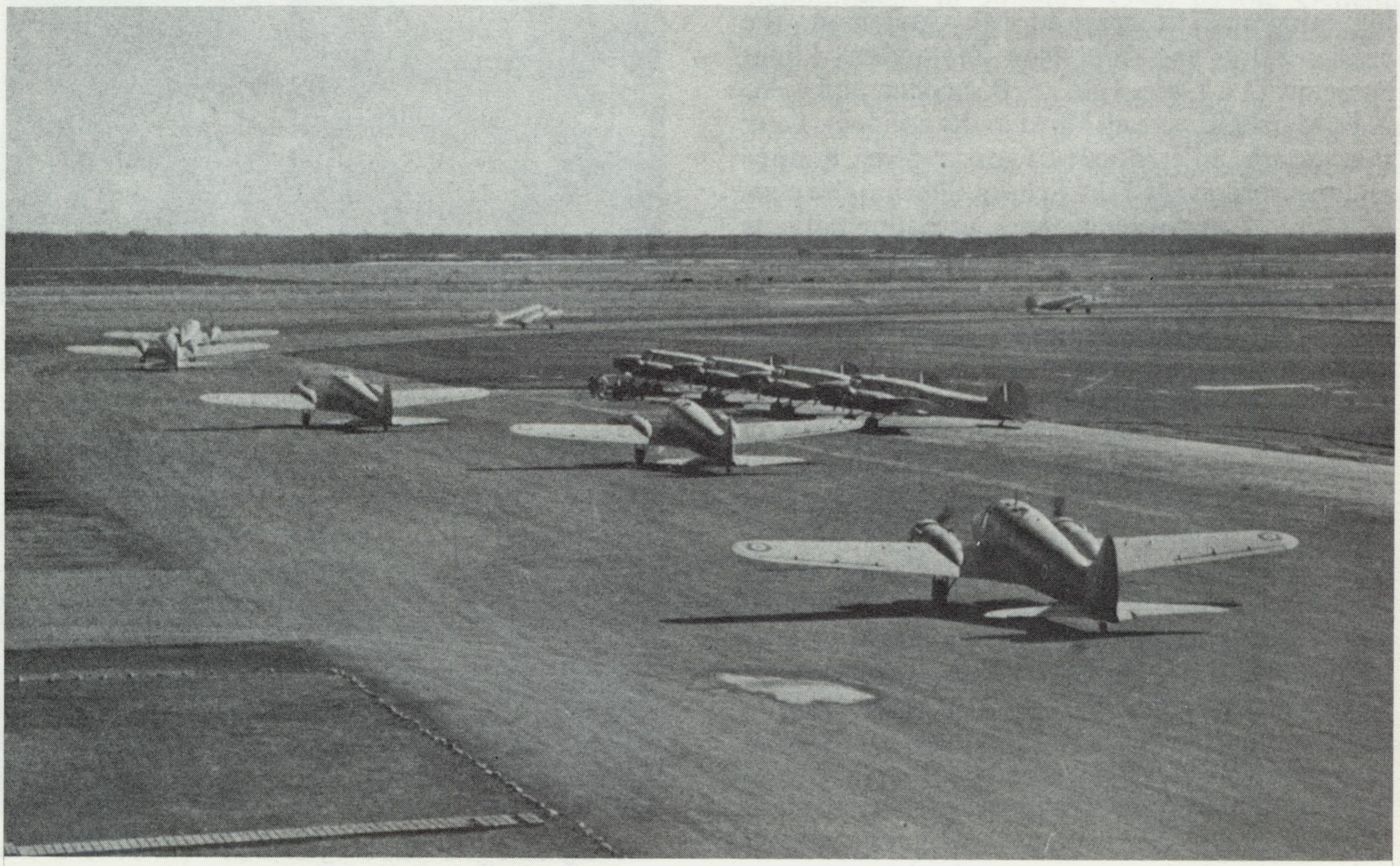
A Mission Briefing. (Taken from "The Record")



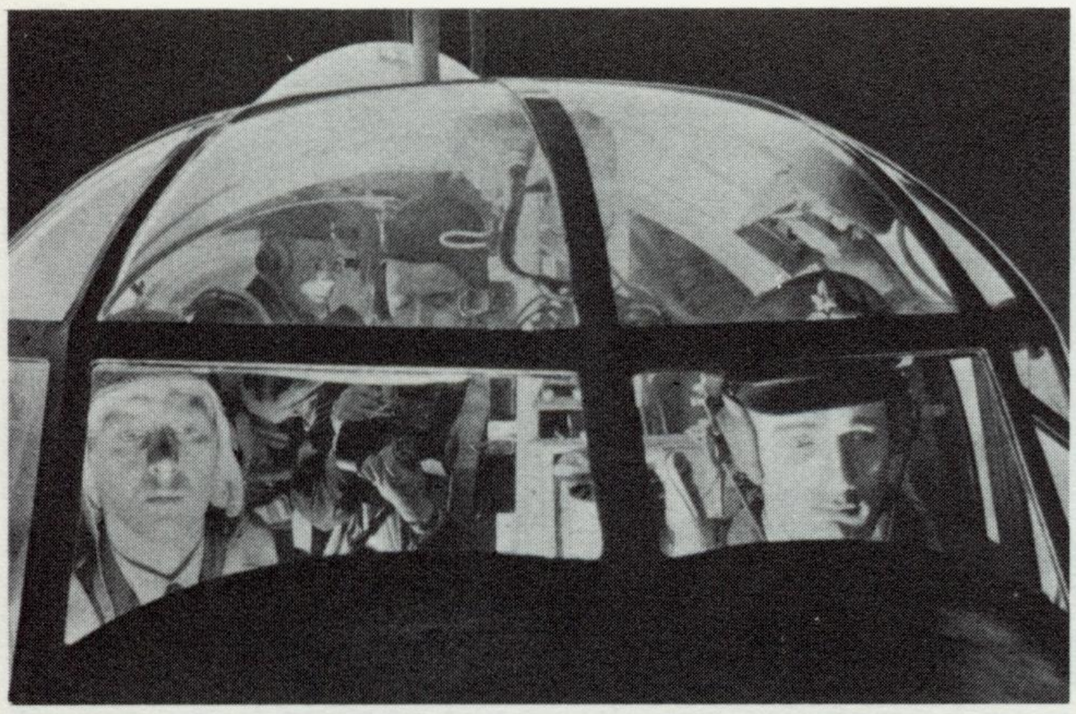
The "flight line girls" refuelling an aircraft. (Taken from "The Record")



Finding your airplane, "That's ours, over there." (Taken from "The Record")



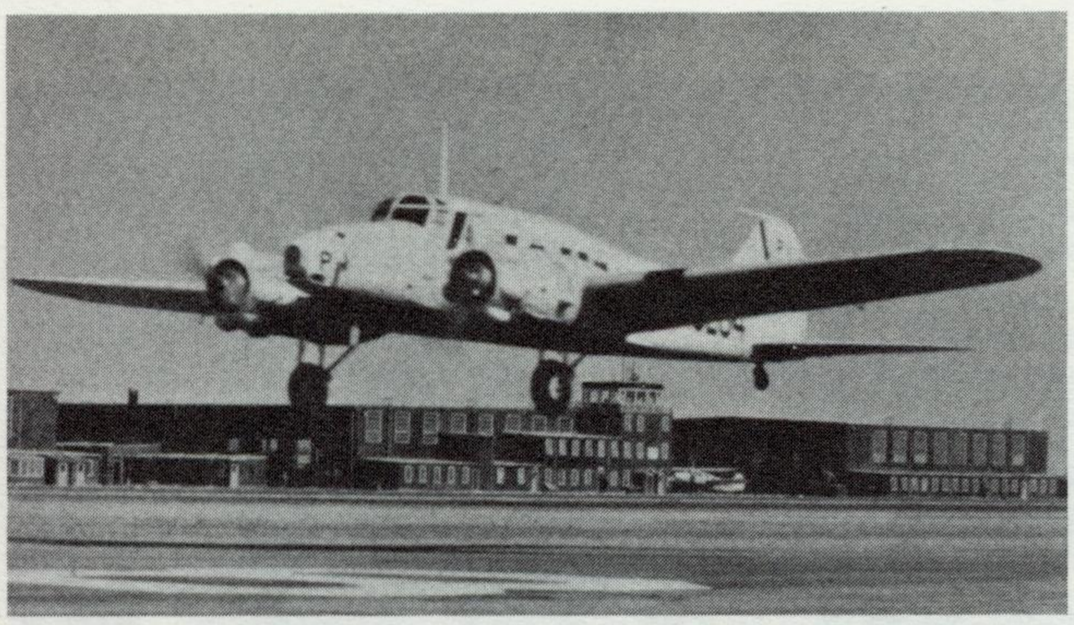
Taxiing out to the runway. (Taken from "The Record")



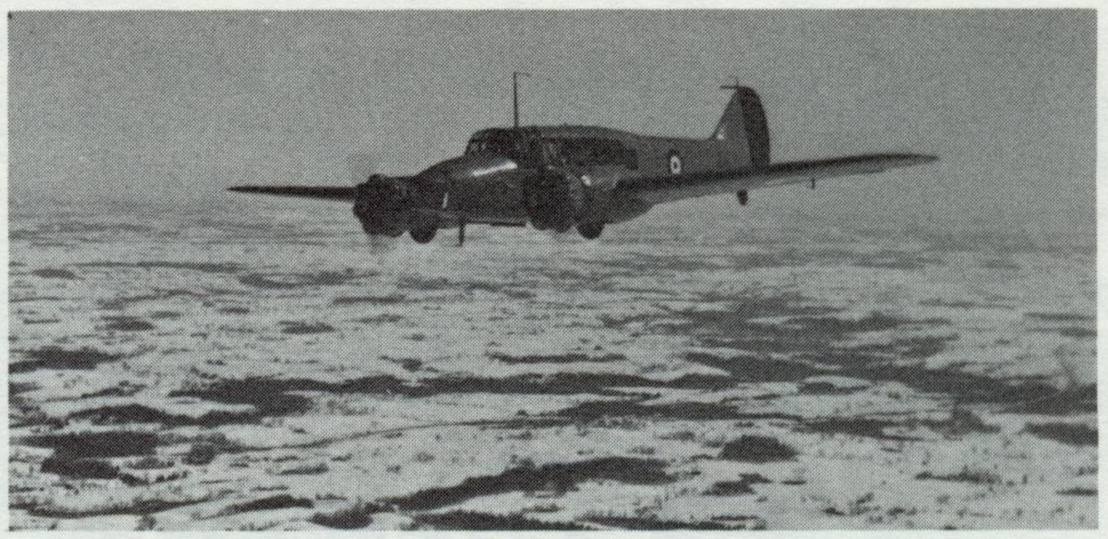
Ready for take-off. ''Fasten your safety belts!'' (Taken from ''The Record'')



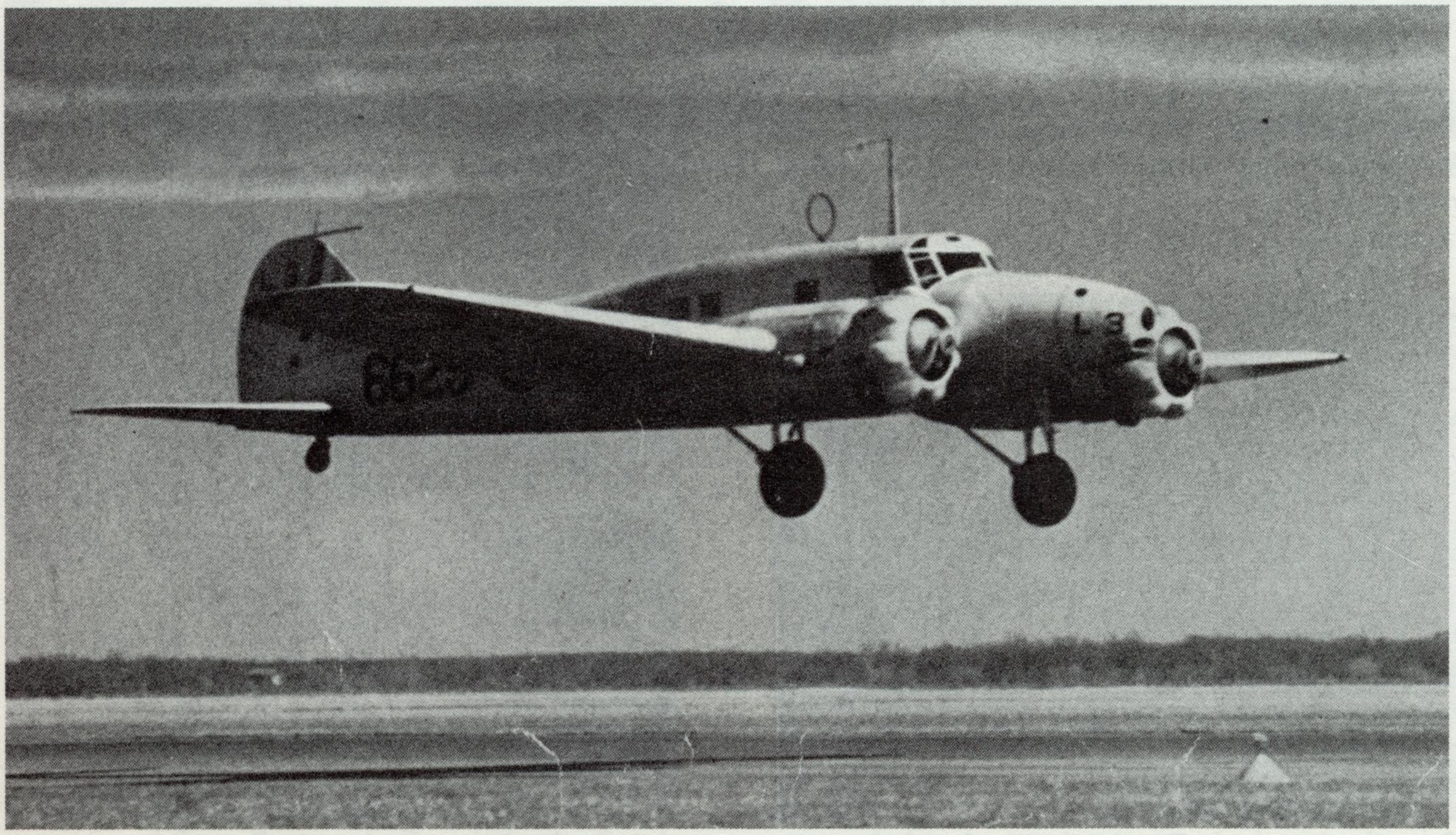
MacLean Turner clears the aircraft for take-off. (Taken from ''The Record'')



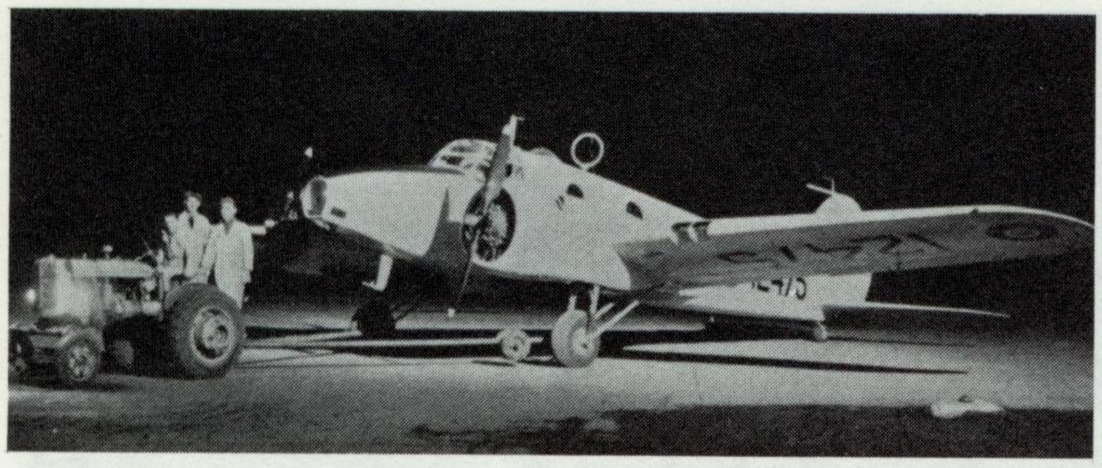
Airborne. (Taken from ''The Record'')



In flight.



Coming in - cleared to land. (Taken from ''The Record'')



Putting away an aircraft after a night flight. (Taken from ''The Record'')



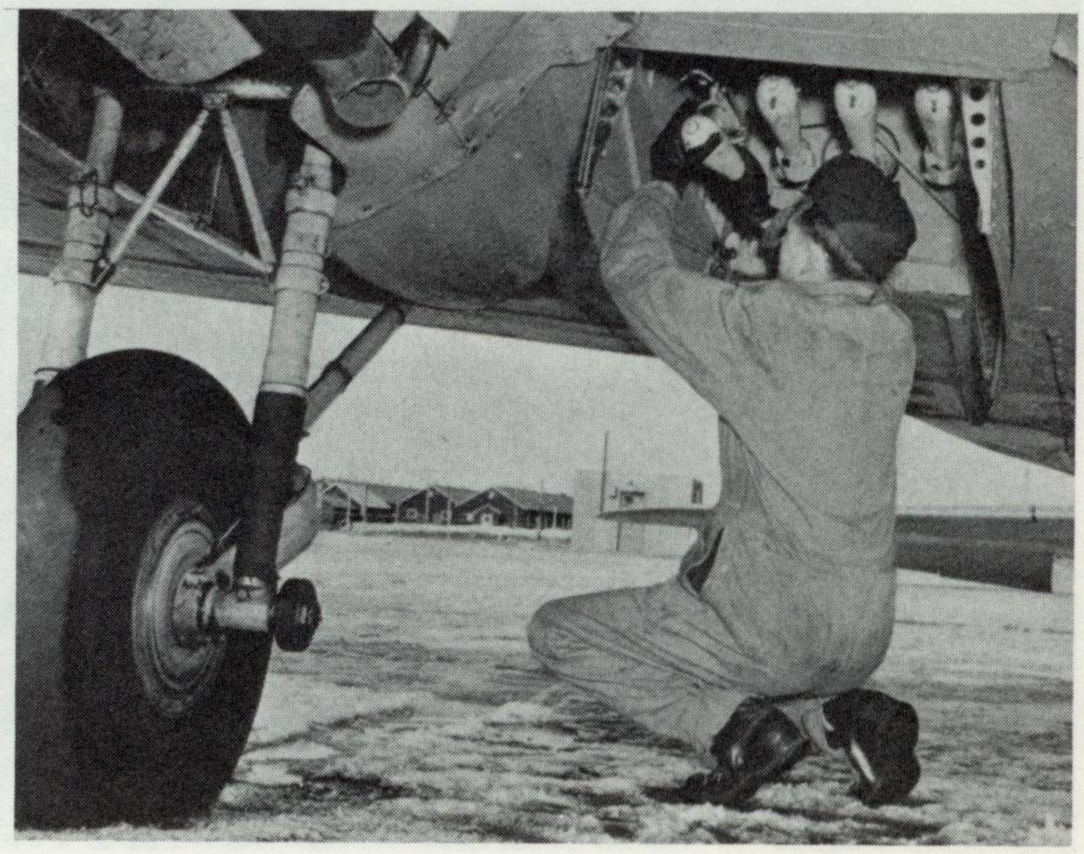
Dining in the Airmen's Mess Hall. (Taken from ''The Record'')



Motor transport and aerodrome maintenance ''on parade''. (Taken from ''The Record'')



Sweeping the tarmac. (Taken from ''The Record'')



''Bombing up'' an Avro Anson. (Taken from ''The Record'')

minor injuries. Finally, on November 19, two new Sergeant pilots were arrested when they returned to Base after tearing a wing tip off of an Anson while low flying. A subsequent Summary Trial settled that affair.

On October 26, at 0330 hours, another ground-related accident occurred. Two airmen were injured in the armament bay when one of the airmen who was working on the fusing point accidentally let the bomb roll off the cupboard at which he was working. The ensuing explosion blew the doors off the shack and permanently bulged the walls. The two injured airmen received very severe and painful cuts and were immediately flown to Deer Lodge Hospital in Winnipeg since the Station Hospital was not equipped to care for such cases.

In 1943 as well, several significant events occurred at No. 7 AOS. Besides the February visit by representatives from Australia, on June 24 the Honourable Frederick Jones, New Zealand's Minister of Defence, and its Acting High Commissioner to Canada, Mr. R.M. Firth, visited the School. Then, on November 4 the Inspector General, Air Vice Marshal Croll, accompanied by Group Captain Ashton, inspected the Station.



Members of a 1943 No. 7 AOS Course: Front row - left to right: Don McCabe, Crawford Williams, Roy Bennett, Gordon Kerr, Back row - left to right: Joe Richards, George Dron, Charlie Hawgood, Doug Horan, Tony Usselman, Lincoln Alexander (presently Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Ontario), Gerry Comartin. (Courtesy of Mr. J. Richards)

The Second Anniversary Banquet and Dance was held at No. 7 AOS on Saturday, May 1. Over 400 people attended the dinner and 700 went to the dance. The School's Civilian General Manager, Mr. W.L. Parr, hosted this event and a week later, on Saturday, May 8, he also hosted a gathering at the opening of the new Officers' Mess.

Also, on August 10, 1943, a project to build a new road from Portage la Prairie to the Southport aerodrome was announced. It was estimated to cost $17,500 with 40% of this total coming each from the Federal and Provincial Governments, with the remaining 20% being made up by the Portage la Prairie community. As mentioned earlier, the road leading to the airport had always been a problem. It was originally built during the winter of 1940/41 when the ground was still frozen. The road grades had been heaped up with lumps of frozen clay, with gravel piled on top. When the ground thawed or there were heavy rains, it became a quagmire. It was so bad at times that even caterpillar tractors occasionally became mired in the mud. As explained in "The Record", road conditions on the Station were equally as poor:

> "To move along Administration Road between the two Administration buildings was to have to leave the road and pick the dry spots along the building walls. There was nothing but a sea of mud."

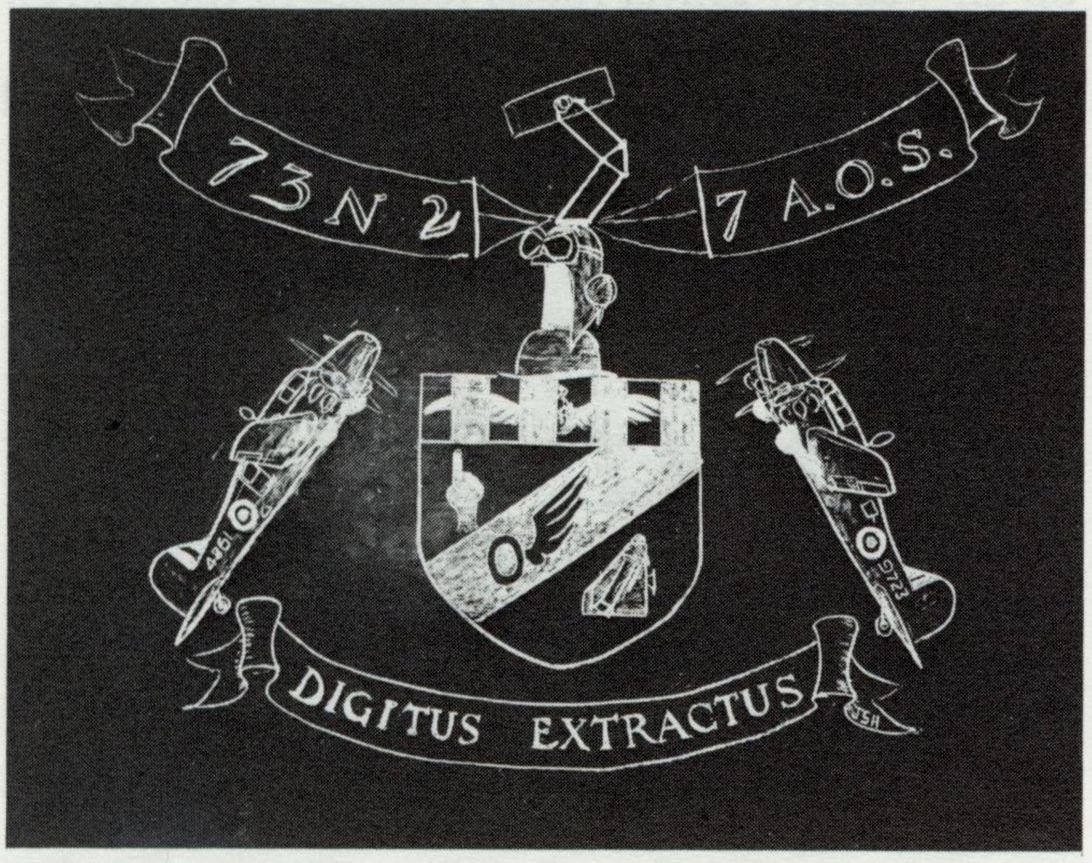
The problem had been under discussion at the highest levels since November 1941, when the local Member of Parliament, Mr. Harry Leader, addressed the concerns in a letter to the Minister of Defence, demanding action to improve the road to the airport. Unfortunately, such matters had already been considered at the War Committee of the Federal Cabinet on May 13, 1941. At that time, the Committee had decided that roads were a provincial responsibility and that the Dominion Government should not undertake to repair or maintain any provincial or municipal roads. The Dominion Government would only take action to repair roadways where the provincial or municipal governments were unable or unwilling to act, and then the Dominion Government would work only on all-weather gravel roads leading to the nearest highway or railway.

When Rayner Construction was contracted during the summer of 1941 to construct permanent runways at the aerodrome, Mayor H.A. Ireland pressed both governments to take advantage of its presence and extend the contract to include reconstructing the road leading from the city to the aerodrome. Unfortunately, his plea was unsuccessful. However, Rayner Construction was still forced to do minor, temporary patchwork improvements simply to get the road in shape for its trucks hauling heavy loads of gravel and asphalt to the Base. Although not a permanent solution, these repairs did lead to somewhat improved road conditions.

All of the people interviewed during the research for the book who worked at the Station

Main Street or "Administration Road" in 1943, now known as Portage Road. (Taken from "The Record")

during its early days commented on the poor condition of the road. In an interview with Mr. Ken Holland, an RCAF pilot holding the rank of Squadron Leader and posted to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie from January to September 1945, he jokingly stated that the road was actually ballasted by rubber boots since so many people lost them attempting to walk in to work. He further explained that, frequently, ordinary vehicles and buses were unable to make it down the road, so the personnel were transported by tractors and, when these also became stuck, they walked.

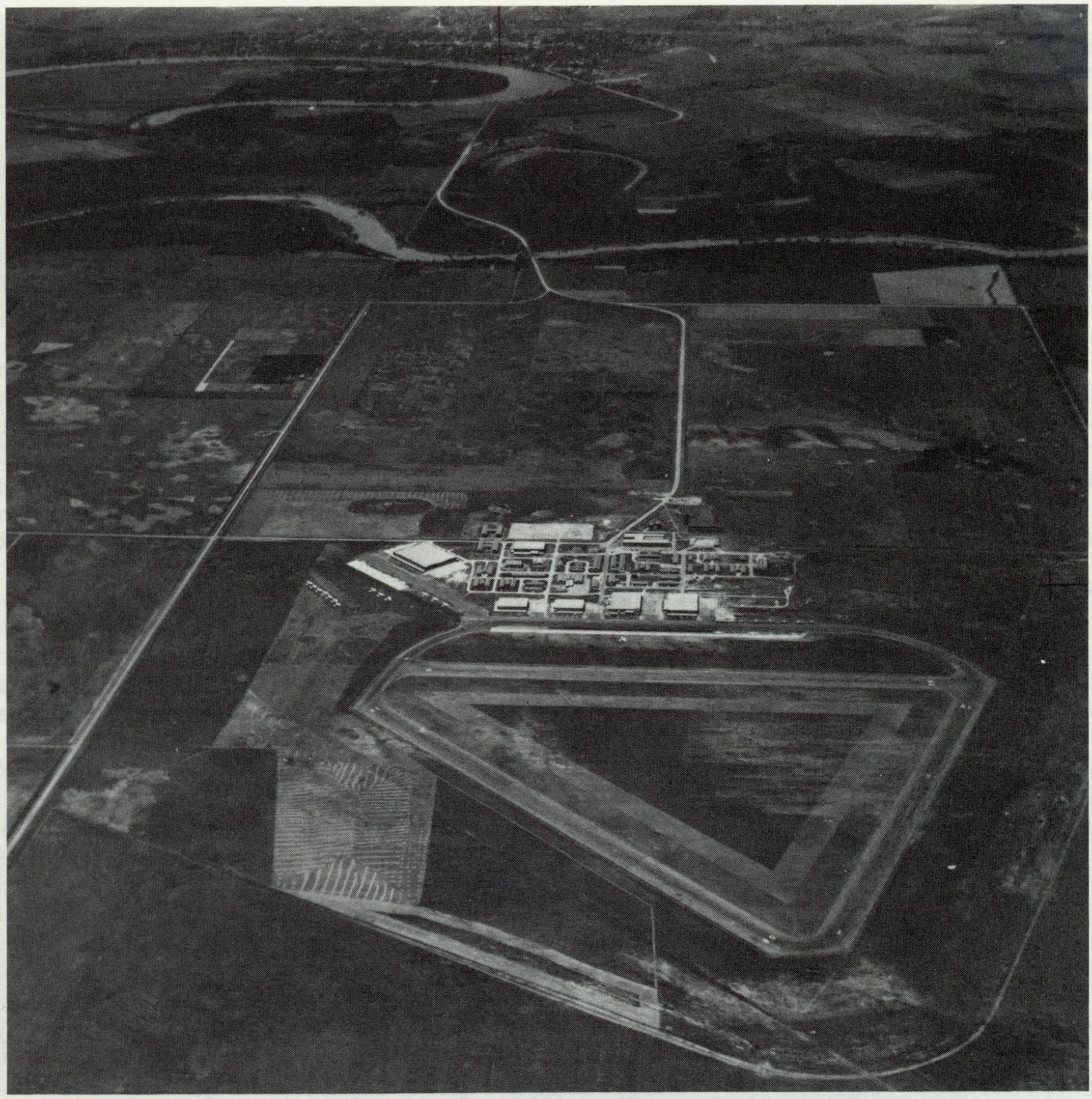


A June 1943 student blackboard drawing proposing a No. 7 AOS crest. (Courtesy of P.E. Laforet)

No. 7 AOS started its final full year of operations with a strength of 82 officers, 206 airmen, 31 service personnel other than RCAF and 24 civilians on staff, 665 trainees and 86 Avron Anson airplanes. As early as February 17, 1944, the gradual winding down of aircrew training was being considered when Air Minister Powell announced that, under the long term war plans, reductions in air training entrants and the subsequent closing of training units and schools would be forthcoming. The School also celebrated its Third Anniversary with a large sit down banquet in No. 4 Hangar, followed by a dance held in the Drill Hall, situated on the site of the present Officers' Mess. Approximately 1200 people were in attendance. A giant banner on the west wall of the Drill Hall proclaimed, "Third Anniversary #7 AOS - We Keep Them Flying Until Victory".

Another executive staff change occurred on July 28, 1944, when Squadron Leader R.H. Batty replaced Wing Commander Malcolmson as the Chief Supervisory Officer.

On August 10, 1944, No. 7 AOS, for the second time in its history, won the Efficiency Pennant for the second quarter of 1944. Group Captain Scott, the Senior Air Officer at No. 2 Training Command, made the presentation to the School during its Graduation Parade that day. Then, on August 13, the Station entertained some unusual visitors when a Lockheed aircraft from



Aerial view of the Portage la Prairie aerodrome taken from the south looking northward at 1431 hours on July 16, 1944, from an altitude of 5000 feet (MSL). (Courtesy of the Canadian Forces Photo Unit Central Negative Library)

Ottawa force-landed at the aerodrome. On board were a Norwegian Major-General and a Lieutenant, Czechoslovakian Staff Captain, a Russian Lieutenant-Colonel and a Major, a Free French Air Force Commandant, and an officer of the Moroccan Camel Corps.

There were three incidents involving the Ansons in 1944. The first one occurred at approximately 2230 hours on February 20 to Anson No. 6596. It was situated on the parking strip adjacent to Hangars 1 and 2 being prepared for a regular navigation training flight when, presumably by accident, a bomb fell from its starboard bay. The small bomb exploded when it hit the ground, causing considerable damage to the main spar of the starboard wing. Fortunately, there were no crewmen aboard at the time and no one was injured in the mishap. Then, at 0815 hours on May 16, Anson 6570 crashed on the airfield. The airplane had been taking off when the aileron control locked, causing it to crash. The pilot, Sergeant R.W.P. Tate, was seriously injured as was one of the trainees, LAC Richard Cyril Jones of Morris, Manitoba. LAC Jones died of his injuries later that

day in the Deer Lodge Hospital in Winnipeg. Also on board the airplane when it crashed was LAC W.H. Gerow, but he escaped with only minor injuries. The final incident of the year resulted in the death of Mr. Gordon Lee, an 18 year old civilian aircraft mechanic employed at No. 7 AOS. Shortly after lunch on August 3, while working on the flight line, he apparently walked into a revolving propeller. He died later that evening of severe head injuries.

At the peak of its performance, the BCATP was training three thousand graduates per month from ninety-seven different Aircrew Training Schools. However, by mid-1944, it had become evident that the supply was beginning to exceed the demand and training operations began to slow down.

On October 6, 1944, the Air Minister, the Honourable C.G. Power, announced the immediate demobilization of 4200 potential airmen recruits, unless they wished to volunteer to transfer to the Army or the Navy. He also indicated an end to Air Force recruiting since the Force strength was 204,000. This announcement was followed up on November 17 by W.L. Parr, when he officially informed the civilian personnel at No. 7 AOS that, commencing in the new year, staff reductions would take place. Furthermore, he indicated that it was expected that by March 31, 1945, the releases would be completed, the military personnel redeployed, and the School would be closed.

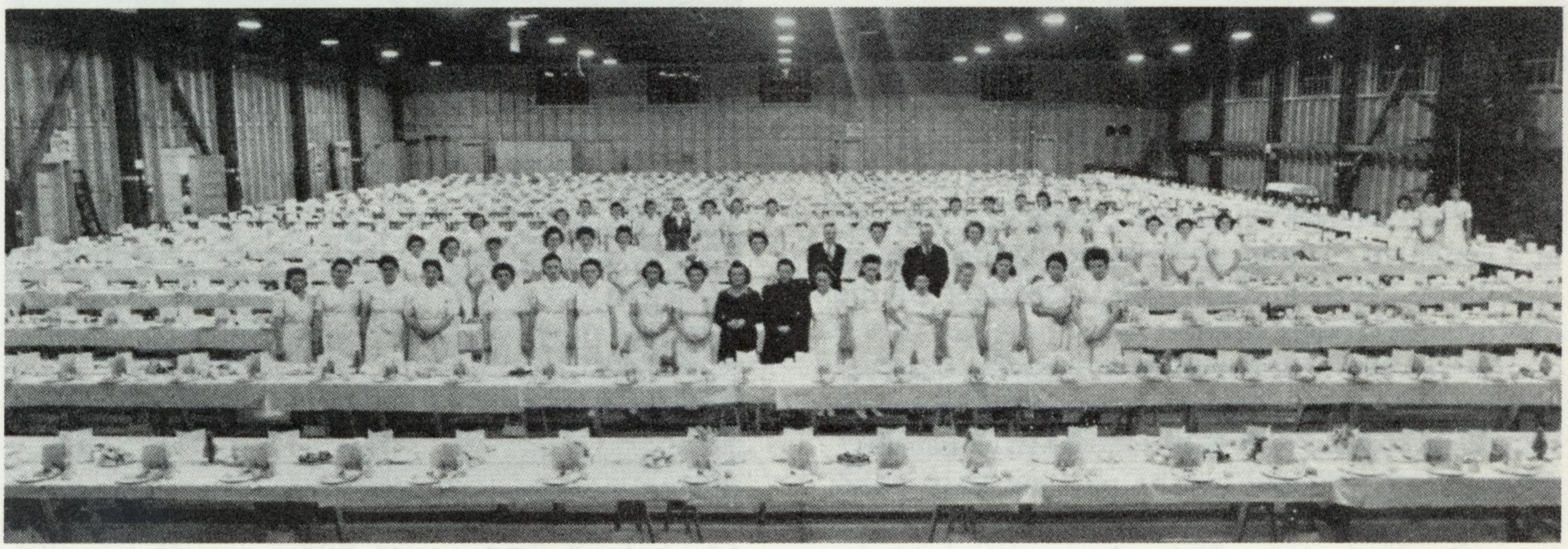
It was interesting to note that, at its peak of operation in January 1944, there were 918 civilian staff employed at the School. Likewise, the greatest number of students in the Station's history was on strength in January and February 1944 - a total of 775. Finally, on November 30, 1944, No. 7 AOS had its greatest flying day when 389 hours and 30 minutes were flown by the fleet of Ansons.

Despite this announcement, flying training continued. By the year's end of 1944, there were 87 officers, 232 airmen and 17 civilian instructors on staff at No. 7 AOS, with 300 trainees inhouse. The School was equipped with 52 Avro Anson I's, 40 Avro Anson V's (these new aircraft had started to arrive at No. 7 AOS in August 1944) and 1 Menasco Moth (taken on strength on March 1, 1944), for a total of 93 airplanes in its fleet. By mid-December 1944, the Anson V's were in full service. This early Christmas present was a great comfort to the pilots and crews, who were delighted in the tighter, warmer cabins and better heaters, and in the hydraulic undercarriages which did away with the 165 turns of the hand-crank that had wearied the muscles of countless observer trainees whenever the undercart of the Mark I's had to be raised or lowered.

In anticipation of the closing, the citizens of Portage la Prairie held a special banquet at the Portage Hotel on January 31, 1945 to honour the military personnel of the School. Approximately 160 military guests were in attendance. An earlier Combined Christmas and Farewell Banquet and Dance had been held at No. 7 AOS on December 17, 1944.

Also around this same time, No. 7 AOS experienced another change in Chief Supervisory Officer when, on January 28, 1945, Squadron Leader M.S. Layton, DSO, replaced Squadron Leader Batty. Squadron Leader Layton remained with the school until it closed in March 1945.

The last full day of flying operations at No. 7 AOS occurred on March 23, 1945 and all flying ceased the following day. The final Graduation Parade occurred on Thursday, March 29, 1945. The



The serving staff prepare for the No. 7 AOS Farewell Party.

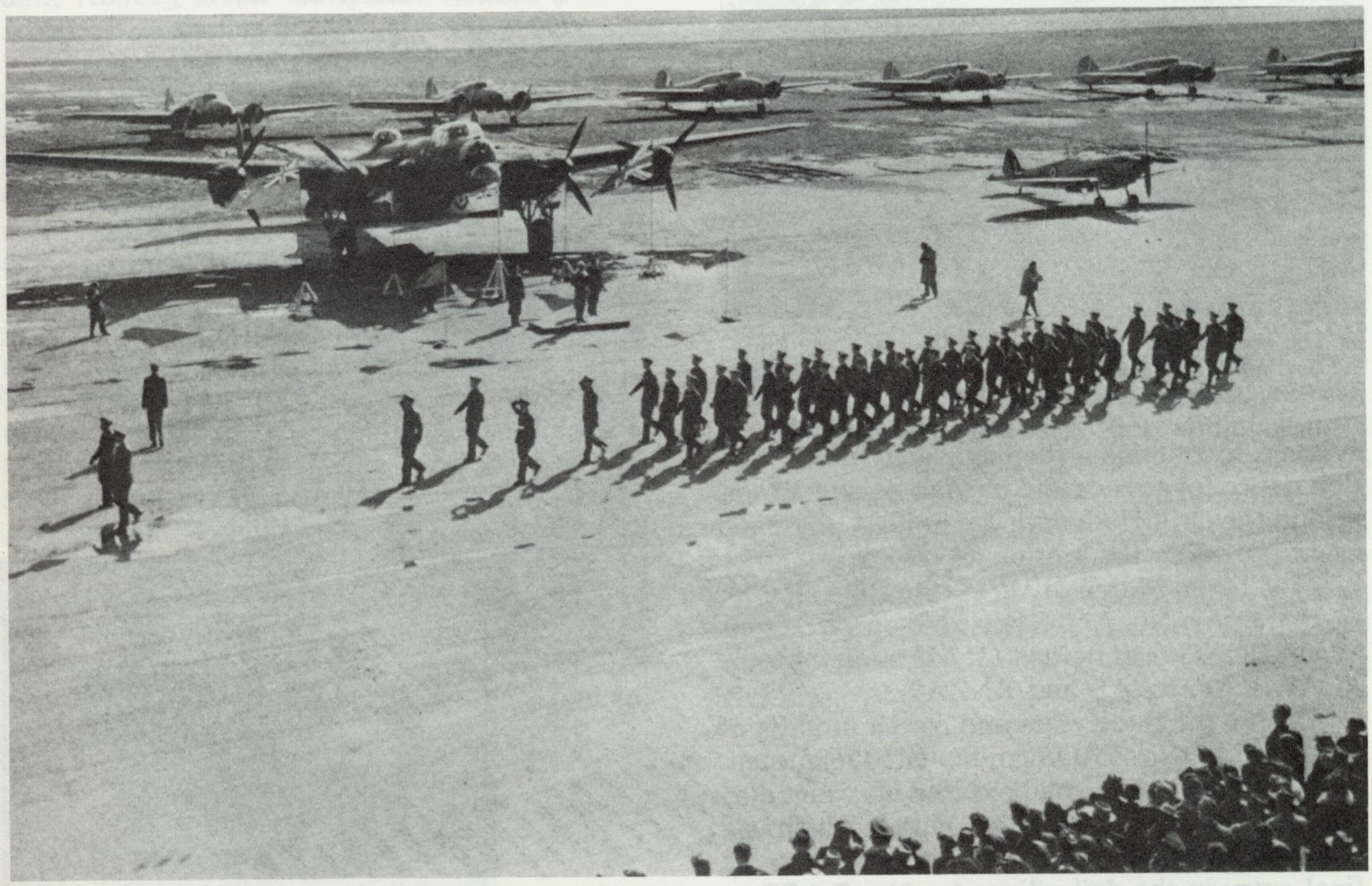


Members of Course 114-N4, the last course to graduate from No. 7 AOS on March 22, 1945, dressed ready to fly in March 1945. The graduates included W.S. Bailey, H.H. Gething, J.W. Harris, C.A. Herriot, A.C. Luebke, W.B. MacKenzie, J.E. Miltimore, E. Morton, R.E. Orr, J.E.R. Ostrom, H.V. Rankin, E.F. Ritz, R.R. Ross, D.G. Ross, R.G. Smith, E.A. Stauth, and W.W. Stewart. (Courtesy of Mr. H.H. Gething)

Guest of Honour for this event was the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, R.F. McWilliams, K.C. He was accompanied by his wife and Air Vice Marshal and Mrs. Guthrie. The guests arrived from Winnipeg by airplane at noon and were hosted by key civilian and service personnel of No. 7 AOS at a small dinner party in the Officers' Mess. While this was going on, two formations, one consisting of nine Ansons from No. 7 AOS and another of three Harvards from North Battleford, roared over the city, but the low ceiling that day would not permit any aerobatic displays. A Spitfire and a Lancaster from Gimli also put in appearances.

To mark the event and permit the citizens to attend the ceremony, the stores in Portage la Prairie were closed for the afternoon. Some 2,000 local civilians toured the Station and attended the Graduation Parade in No. 2 Hangar. In his address to the parade, Air Vice Marshal Guthrie told those assembled for the last No. 7 AOS Wings Parade that:

> "You have done a marvellous job. Number Seven AOS was one of the earliest schools in the Air Training Plan. And it has had an extraordinary high record. The record of the Station is second to none in the prevention of accidents, for with so many graduates you have had so very few accidents. And the training received by the graduates has been second to none.



The closing parade held on March 29, 1945. The Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, R.F. McWilliams, K.C., was the Reviewing Officer. (Taken from "The Record")

The people of No. 7 have been known as people easy to work with. And the staff have been tops. I wish you all the very best of - Good Luck!''

After the Wings Presentation, the squadron of graduates (totalling nearly 200 servicemen) formed up outside with three other Squadrons, comprising the entire Station strength, for a march past down the runway in front of the hangar. Standing on the saluting base with the Lancaster in the background, Lieutenant-Governor McWilliams took the salute while the Army Band from Shilo provided the marching music. By this time, the ceiling had lifted and the three Harvards put on an excellent display of aerobatics.

Following the parade, tea was served in the Airmen's Mess while the visitors toured the Station and viewed the Ansons, Tiger Moth, Ventura, Cornell, Bolingbroke, Spitfire and Lancaster which were on display. Then, following a reception in the Officers' Mess, a buffet supper was served. In the



Mr. Len Moores, the Head Chef, and Mrs. Margaret Smith, the Serving Staff Supervisor, in front of the No. 7 AOS Farewell Party decorated food table.

evening, to culminate the day's activities, a Station dance for service and civilian personnel was held in the Drill Hall, with the Shilo Army Band again providing the music.

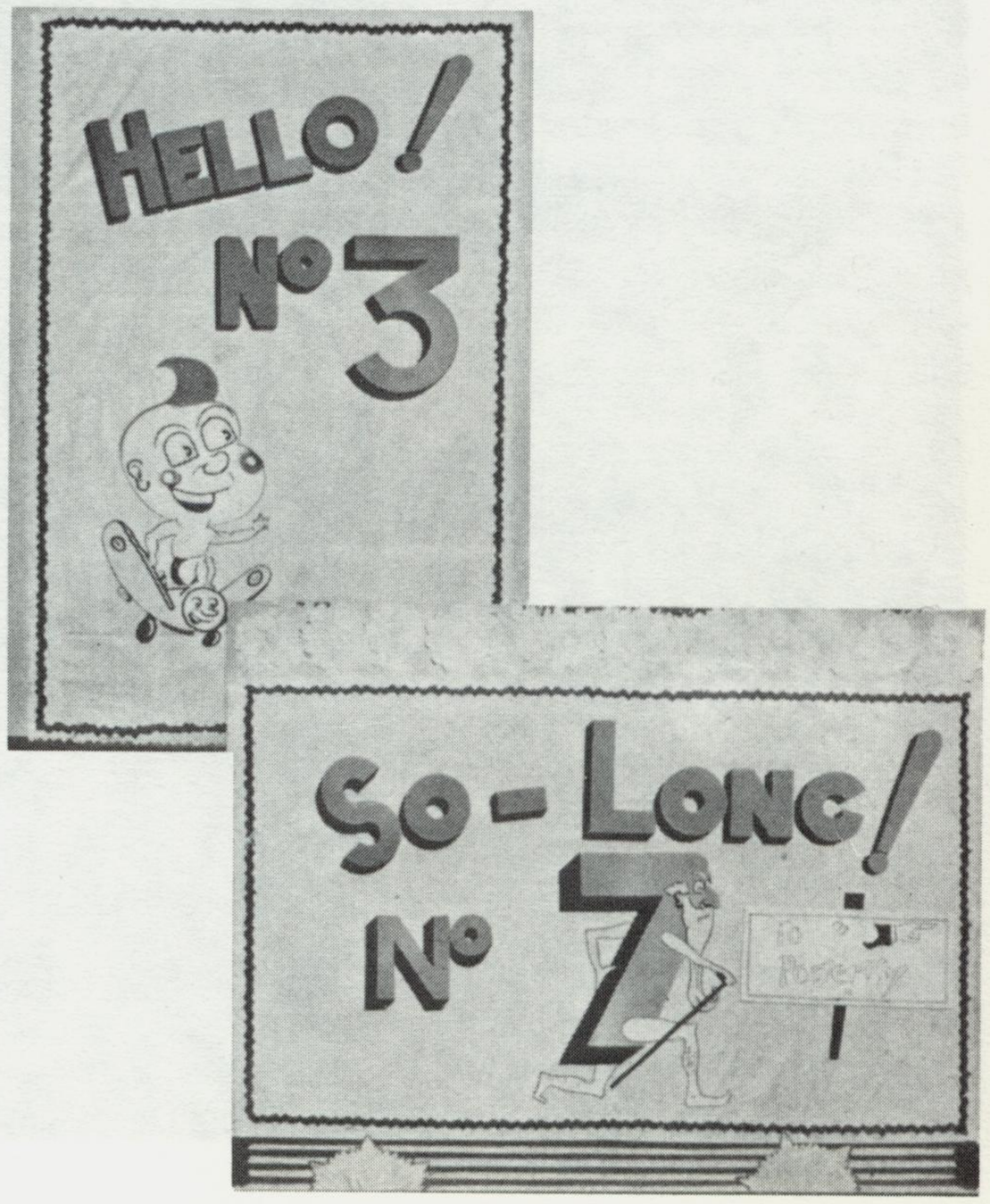
Finally, on March 31, 1945, the BCATP ended, and with it No. 7 AOS ceased to operate. Overall, the BCATP had trained 131,533 aircrew for the RCAF, RAF, RAAF and RNZAF.

During the three years and eleven months of its operation, No. 7 AOS graduated 5176 airmen. (The 5,000th graduate had received his wings during the second last Graduation Parade which had occurred on March 15, 1945.) To quote from the final entry in the daily diary for No. 7 AOS:

''31/Mar/45 - This day ended the history of No. 7 AOS. Without any false modesty we can say it was a good school with a fine record. This product of the school has measured up and the friendly association of staff, civilians and trainees, has been noteworthy.''

In conclusion, Mr. David Stevenson summarized the success of No. 7 AOS by providing this statistical data regarding its operations:

a. period of operation - 3 years, 11 months
b. crew graduated - 5,176
c. hours flown (approximately one-third being night flying) - 201,536
d. approximate miles flown - 24,184,320
e. average training flight (hours) - 3 hour 15 minutes
f. average training flight (miles) - 350 miles
g. fatal crashes - 5
h. maximum number of aircraft - 95 on charge to the school
j. buildings maintained - 45
k. Supplies consumed:
   (1) aviation gasoline - 5,495,163 gallons
   (2) motor vehicle gasoline - 105,065 gallons
   (3) aviation oil - 161,382 gallons
   (4) motor vehicle oil - 2,410 gallons
   (5) water - 73,079,150 gallons
   (6) coal 27,158 tons
   (7) electricity - 4,380,800 kilowatts



m. meals served to Air Force personnel - 2,514,186
n. civilian employees (maximum including messing staff) - 904
p. operating budget for the peak year of operations - 1944 - $2,220,000.00
q. savings on operations 1941-1945 returned to the Dominion Treasury - $644,306.89

Number 3 Air Navigation School

When discussions about ceasing the BCATP started in March 1945, it was realized that, even with the war effort winding down, aircrew training requirements would still exist before the end of the war and afterwards. Consequently, an agreement was reached between Canada and the United Kingdom to provide training at schools operated by the RCAF in Canada for RAF aircrew personnel on a limited contract basis.

It was decided that one of these new RCAF Aircrew Training Schools would be located at Portage la Prairie. Consequently, when No. 7 AOS ceased operations on March 31, 1945, all of its equipment and aircraft were transferred to the new unit, Number 3 Air Navigation School (No. 3 ANS).

This new unit was authorized to form by Organization Order No. 541, dated March 14, 1945, and became effective on April 1, 1945. Although the establishment document indicated that the Commanding Officer was to be an air navigator at the rank of Group Captain, Wing Commander G.F. Jacobsen, DFC, the former Chief Supervisory Officer at No. 5 AOS in Winnipeg, was posted in on April 1 as the Chief Instructor for No. 3 ANS and he also temporarily assumed command of the Station. Subsequently, on May 15, 1945, permanent command of No. 3 ANS was assumed by Group Captain R.C. Mair. The rest of the School's staff was set at 132 RCAF officers, 1385 RCAF Airmen and 54 civilians.

From No. 7 AOS, the new school inherited seventy Avro Anson Mark V trainer aircraft plus one Menasco Moth and one Stimson 105 to act as elementary training airplanes. However, because of the reduced scope of its flying operations in comparison to those of No. 7 AOS, by the end of April, No. 3 ANS's fleet of aircraft had been reduced to 41 Avro Ansons and one Menasco Moth. It also received a total of thirty-one ground support vehicles of all types, two Link-Trainers and the two Celestial Navigation Towers, plus all the buildings and infrastructure which remained at Southport following the demise of No. 7 AOS.

The role of No. 3 ANS was to train RCAF and RAF navigators. The course length was set at twenty weeks duration with a new course comprised of twenty-six students scheduled to commence every two weeks. This meant that the School had 520 students or twenty courses in-house running concurrently at any one time. Finally, No. 3 ANS was assigned as a unit under No. 2 Training Command in Winnipeg and had a sister Air Navigation School at Estevan, Saskatchewan, established at the same time and operating under identical guidelines.

After taking over the buildings, equipment and aircraft from the civilian company which had operated No. 7 AOS, this new RCAF School began training on April 10, 1945. The first course of 48 navigators graduated on June 21 and training continued until August 26. During its five and a half months of operation, the School completed five courses, graduating a total of 228 navigators, virtually all of whom were RAF candidates. In addition to navigation training, the School held camp for three groups of air cadets during June and July 1945.

With the termination of the war effort in Europe and in the Far East against Japan, there was no longer a need for such Aircrew Training Schools. Accordingly, Organization Order No. 618 was issued authorizing the disbandment of No. 3 ANS effective September 15, 1945.

The unit has a relatively short and uneventful life. In fact, training officially ceased at No. 3 ANS on Friday, August 31, 1945 and its training obligations were absorbed by the Central Navigation School at Rivers, Manitoba. No. 3 ANS formally disbanded on Saturday, September 15, 1945 and, except for a skeleton maintenance staff, its personnel were reassigned to the few remaining Stations.

Chapter Two

The Jet School Decade

Number One RCAF Manning Depot

Following the closure of No. 3 ANS in September 1945, the aerodrome at Southport lay dormant for only five months, while the RCAF demobilized its wartime strength. By the end of January 1946, work parties were already being employed to refurbish the airport facilities in preparation for a new role. RCAF Organization Order 192-10-11/2, issued on February 5, 1946, authorized the formation of the Number One RCAF Manning Depot (No. 1 "M" Depot) at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. It specifically stated that:

> "In conformity with the planned organization of the RCAF on a peace time basis, the site of the ex-3ANS, Portage la Prairie, has been selected as the location for No. 1 Manning Depot."

The primary function of this new unit was to provide reception, outfitting as necessary, and basic training for RCAF officer and airmen recruits of the Interim and Regular Force. The unit was to form effective February 15, 1946 and commence operation on March 4, 1946. The Depot belonged to the Number 2 Air Command headquartered in Winnipeg.

The No. 1 "M" Depot was actually being reactivated. It had originally commenced operations on September 18, 1939, in the Coliseum Building at the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds in Toronto. The recruiting training unit continued to operate at this location throughout the war until disbanded on October 31, 1945 as a part of the scale-down of recruiting and training requirements as the successful conclusion of the Second World War became obvious. Another branch of the history of this unit can be traced to the Number One Temporary Air Manning Depot (No. 1 "A" Manning Depot - Temporary) which operated at Picton, Ontario from November 29, 1940 to March 21, 1941. This unit provided special flying and service experience for direct entry pilot officers during a 30 hour, four week flying course on Harvard and Battle aircraft. Upon graduation, these pilots then proceeded to Bombing and Gunnery Schools as staff pilots.

An advance party of approximately thirty RCAF personnel, under the command of Squadron Leader C.H. Clark, arrived at Portage la Prairie on February 1, 1946, to oversee the preparation for the reopening of the Station. Then on February 15, Group Captain W.G. Webber arrived to assume command of the Station. By the end of February, No. 1 "M" Depot already had thirteen officers, 209 airmen and twenty-two civilian (all firemen) of its planned overall staff of 300 servicemen and civilian support personnel.

The No. 1 "M" Depot commenced operations as planned on March 4, 1946, when thirty-six recruits reported to the station for basic training. This first intake of approximately 300 recruits continued to arrive over the next few months. By the end of March 1946, the unit had a strength of twenty-three officers, 247 airmen on staff, 110 civilian employees and seventy-six trainees. The basic training course offered at the Depot was of eight weeks duration, with the first Graduation Parade of 107 graduates occurring on Saturday, June 23, 1946.

Also within its first two days of operation, the Station had two important visitors. On March 6, 1946, Air Vice Marshal K.M. Guthrie, CBE, the Air Officer Commanding (AOC) No. 2 Air Command visited to inspect the facilities and view the first day's activities as the Depot's Training Wing commenced operations. That same day, due to poor weather conditions, a Trans Canada Airline (TCA) plane, carrying the Honourable D.C. Abbott, the Minister of National Defence, made an unscheduled landing at the Portage la Prairie Airfield. Mr. Abbott remained on the Station for a

few hours until the weather cleared and he resumed his flight. Then on March 22, 1946, Air Commodore J.E. Hurley, OBE, the Headquarters Chief Staff Officer at No. 2 Air Command, conducted another inspection visit of the unit. Two other visits of note occurred during the Depot's short operational life. On May 15, 1946, Air Vice Marshal Middleton, the ACO of No. 1 Air Command, flew in for a brief visit. Then on July 13, 1946, Air Commodore Hurley returned, accompanied by Group Captain R.C. Mair, both from No. 2 Air Command. The objective of their visit was to select a site suitable for the operation of the Portage Flying Club. (*Although the Club wished to have No. 1 Hangar from which to fly its two Tiger Moth aircraft, it was initially given No. 2 Hangar and then later, on July 2, 1947, assigned No. 4 Hangar as its home.*)

At the peak of its operations in September 1946, the No. 1 "M" Depot had twenty-three RCAF Officers, 225 airmen, 110 civilian employees and 765 recruit trainees. During its existence, only one death was reported. On November 9, 1946, LAC J.T. Wells, a tractor operator on attached duty from the Number Two Construction and Maintenance Unit (No. 2 CMU) in Calgary, passed away suddenly from natural causes. His funeral was held a few days later in Carberry, Manitoba.

Another point of interest around this time period concerns the status of No. 5 Hangar. Originally, when No. 3 ANS ceased operation, this maintenance hangar was declared to be surplus to any further Station requirements. However, on May 21, 1946, before it could be reassigned, removed or demolished, No. 5 Hangar was deleted from the surplus list. It was redesignated as a storage facility for surplus aircraft from 435 Squadron in Winnipeg and for Construction Engineering and Aerdrome Maintenance Equipment used on site by No. 2 CMU.

On March 8, 1946, an RCAF Organization Order was issued disbanding No. 1 "M" Depot at Portage la Prairie effective March 31, 1947, because "RCAF Plan 'E' does not provide for the retention of Manning Depots in the RCAF." With this closure of No. 1 "M" Depot, the entire Station facility was transferred to the RCAF Air Maintenance Command (AMC) with headquarters in Ottawa. Subsequently, on August 9, 1946 the Dominion Department of Transport (DOT) accepted responsibility for the aerodrome portion of the facility only. The RCAF retained control of the buildings. At that time, the value of the Stations' facilities was stated to be:

a. cost of land comprising the entire Station area $33,523.00
b. cost of the airfield/aerodrome development $564,489.00
c. cost of the buildings and infrastructure $1,496,050.75

Number Two Radio Wave Propagation Unit

The Number Two Radio Wave Propagation Unit (No. 2 RWPU) was originally formed at RCAF Station Torbay, just north of St. John's, Newfoundland on February 20, 1945. Its objective was to investigate radio wave propagation by means of issuing ionospheric measurements. It was manned by a staff of one officer and twelve airmen.

After the war, this unit was relocated to Portage la Prairie on April 1, 1946, when Torbay disbanded, and was collocated on the aerodrome site at Southport with No. 1 "M" Depot. No. 2 RWPU was scheduled to again reorganize and relocate to Rivers, Manitoba, a year later on April 1, 1947. However, due to difficulties with securing suitable facilities there, No. 2 RWPU remained located at Portage la Prairie, although it operated as a component detachment of RCAF Winnipeg from July 15, 1947. No. 2 RWPU finally disbanded on April 1, 1949, when DOT assumed responsibility for the operations of this unit.

Preparations For Reactivation

DOT retained control of the airfield until February 1, 1949, when it was again handed over to the RCAF. No training program or squadron operations were initially planned to make use of the airfield. The site was designated in the RCAF mobilization plan as an Air Navigation School. It was transferred to the North West Air Command (NWAC) with headquarters located in Edmonton.

In the interim, until a decision was concluded concerning the future use of the Station, the RCAF merely retained the site on a caretaker basis and manned the facility with only a skeleton staff. In fact, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie lay dormant for three years, 1949-1952, under the care of Air Material Command. However, under an agreement with DOT, the airport continued to act as a public airport. In this regard, it was granted a temporary licencing certificate on Friday, October 21, 1949, thereby making the aerodrome an official air harbour for either civilian or military airplanes.



An aerial view of the Portage la Prairie aerodrome taken on January 9, 1951, prior to the start of reactivation preparations. Following several years of neglect, the facility had a very dilapidated appearance.

A new lease on life for the airport to once again operate as a military training aerodrome started early the following year after the St. James (Winnipeg) Council protested the use of Stevenson Airfield by military jet aircraft. In view of this protest, the announcement was made on Tuesday, March 13, 1951, that the RCAF Air Schools at both Southport and MacDonald were slated to reopen in the near future.

Following a meeting between the Minister of Defence, Brooke Claxton, and Mayor Henderson in Ottawa on Thursday, April 5, 1951, it was officially announced that $10,000,000 was to be spent upgrading the RCAF Stations at Southport and MacDonald. Approximately $4.5 million of this amount was earmarked for improvements at Southport. Here, the RCAF was to take over total control from the Department of Transport and an advanced flying training school was to be established. The school would be used to provide advanced flying training to pilots, not only from Canada, but also from other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries.

These student pilots were scheduled to arrive, and the school to commence operations, by the end of June 1952. During the interim period, a major construction project occurred. Besides refurbishing most of the existing sixty structures, a contract was awarded to a local firm, Malcom Construction, to erect four new permanent buildings. These buildings were to be separate Officers and NCO living quarters, an automatic very hi-frequency (VHF) and direction finder (DF) transmitter building and a unit supply and warehouse depot. Two other cartage companies, Plains City Electric and H.G. Hay Interior Decorators, also received Station refurbishment contracts.

In addition to these construction projects, it became necessary to consider the building of suitable married quarters for the RCAF personnel. With the severe housing shortage in Portage la Prairie caused by the demand for family accommodation as a result of the reopening of the two area aerodromes, Air Force personnel were paying as much as $80.00 a month to rent a four room house in the city. Consequently, on Wednesday, October 3, 1951, the announcement was made of a $1,000,000 contract to construct 250 prefabricated, steelox housing units for RCAF personnel in the Portage la Prairie area. Each unit was to

cost $5,000. The project was divided into two phases. The first phase called for the construction of 80 houses or 150 units (70 duplexes and ten single units) to the northwest of the main gate at Southport. The second phase would see the construction of the remaining 170 units at MacDonald. It was planned to undertake both phases of the construction project concurrently.

Actual construction at Southport did not start on these Married Quarters until Tuesday, June 3, 1952 when the first sod was turned. Despite an attempt by the Portage la Prairie City Council at the end of April 1952, to negotiate to have fifty of these new houses built within the city, all 150 units were constructed at the Station. The steelox construction of these Married Quarters meant that they could be quickly and easily erected, easily converted into barracks should the need arise, or knocked down and carted to new sites if that option should become necessary.

Due to the ease with which these steelox buildings could be erected, by the end of August 1952, they were being mass produced at a rate of three buildings per day, using a construction crew of 130 men. At that rate, it was predicted that the first Married Quarter could be ready for occupancy as early as December 1952, with the entire project being completed by the end of January 1953.

In December 1951, it was announced that the Number Two Advanced Flying School (No. 2 AFS) would be coming to Portage la Prairie. However, first it commenced operations at MacDonald on a temporary basis effective January 1, 1952 and, subsequently, transferred to its permanent location at Southport when construction and other operational preparations were completed in late 1952. While at MacDonald, No. 2 AFS was actually a sub-unit of the larger combined Air Gunnery and Advanced Flying School under the command of Wing Commander P.M. Hale. This sub-unit was lead by Squadron Leader Joe Edwards. It flew the single-engine Harvard trainer and provided advanced flying training to pilots destined for jet fighter squadron duties.

On February 6, 1952, during a presentation to the Portage Rotary Club, Mr. W.G. Weir, the Member of Parliament for Portage-Neepawa, outlined some of the ongoing and future plans for the Southport RCAF Station. Some of these plans included the construction of a school for RCAF dependent children and a new modern 25-30 patient hospital. The old hospital, formerly situated in Building No. 7 located immediately in front of No. 2 Hangar, had been given to the Department of Health and Welfare for the Province of Manitoba and removed from the site on August 4, 1949. Besides the married quarters and the other four new buildings under construction, Mr. Weir indicated that contracts had also already been let for the rehabilitation and extension of two concrete runways of 7,000 feet by 200 feet and 5,000 feet by 200 feet respectively, four 200,000 gallon bulk fuel storage tanks, a heating plant, a power subplant of 1500 KVA capacity, a 200,000 gallon water reservoir, the extension of the Station's water, sewage and power works and an engineering building.

Under the authority of RCAF Organization Order 17/52, issued on March 27, 1952, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie was to be reactivated effective September 15, 1952, with its establishment to be effective September 1. The rationale for this move was stated in the Order as:

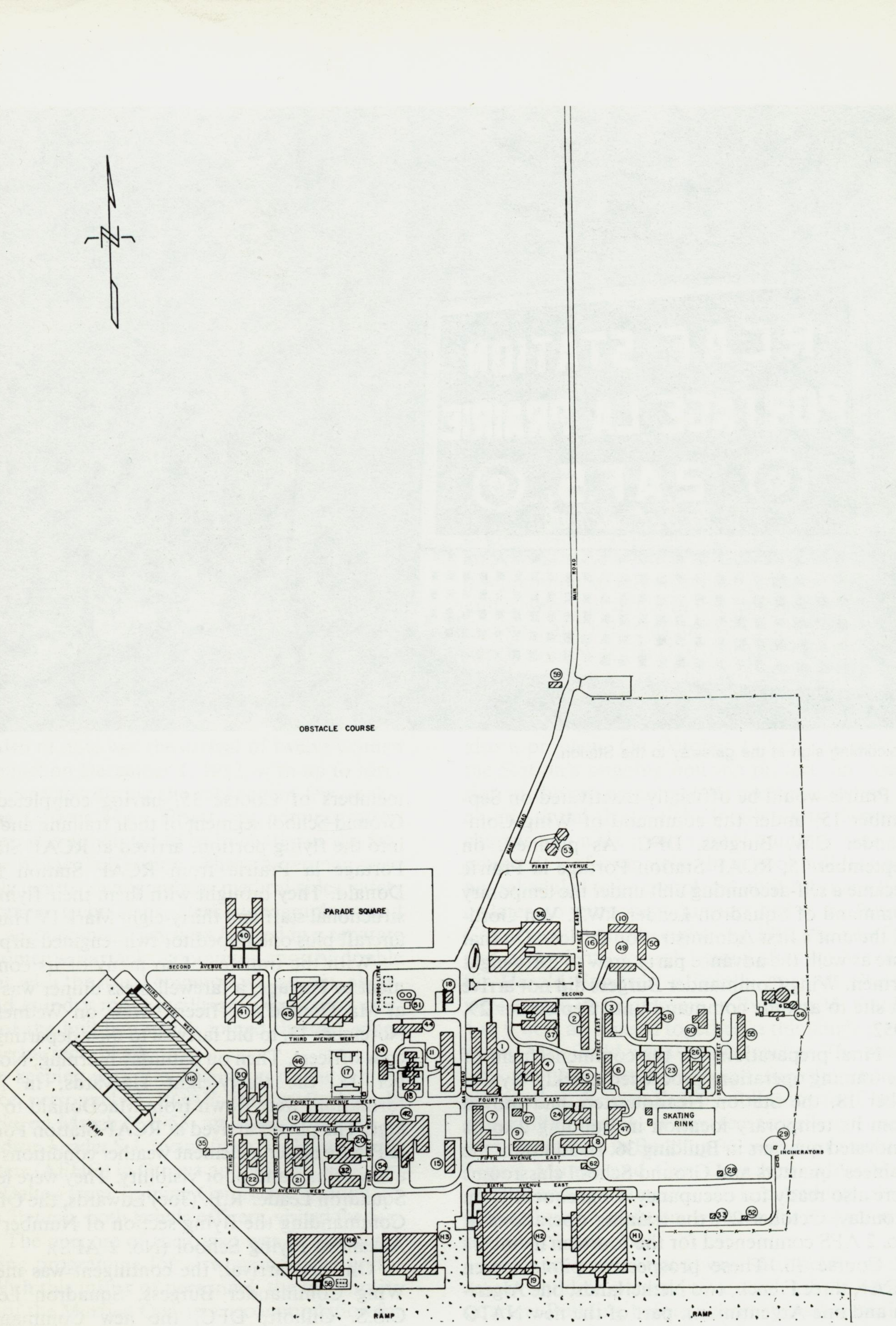
> "The RCAF Programme of Activities for 1952-53 requires the expansion of flying training facilities. RCAF Station Portage la Prairie is to be reactivated to meet this requirement."

Furthermore, to enable the twelve member RCAF advance party to function effectively and efficiently, and to provide continuity in the maintenance and provision of services, the Order also authorized the hiring of civilian personnel effective April 1, 1952. They were hired against the establishment of both the Station (4720 PTGL) and the School (4682 2AFT) as required. The Station and the School were units of Number Fourteen Training Group (No. 14 Training Group) which had its headquarters in Winnipeg.

Of the twelve airmen in the original contingent, six were fire-fighters and the other six were support staff. One of these was Sergeant Mel Dagg and, during an interview for this book, he described the situation at the Station. For example, when they arrived, the place was absolutely deserted and they only opened up two buildings; the Fire Hall and Hangar 2. Everyone slept in the Fire Hall, with the administrative staff operating out of the hangar while they completed their inventory of the Station. There was heavy vandalism and the Station had basically been stripped of everything worthwhile. All of the motors were missing from the furnaces, all the fences had been knocked down and cattle were grazing on the runways.

Number Two Advanced Flying School

On Friday, August 22, 1952, the RCAF finally announced that the new RCAF Station Portage



A schematic diagram of the Station in 1952.



Welcoming sign at the gateway to the Station.

la Prairie would be officially reactivated on September 15, under the command of Wing Commander C.W. Burgess, DFC. As planned, on September 15, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie became a self-accounting unit under the temporary command of Squadron Leader J.W.T. Van Gorder, the unit's first Administration Officer. On that date as well, the advance party grew to forty-eight airmen. Wing Commander Burgess did not arrive on site to assume command until September 29, 1952.

Final preparations for the commencement of the training operations proceeded quickly. By October 18, the Station Headquarters had moved from its temporary location in Building 2 to its renovated quarters in Building 36. In addition, the trainees' quarters and Ground School classrooms were also ready for occupancy. Consequently, on Monday, October 27, the training operations at No. 2 AFS commenced for the fourteen members of Course 36. These prospective pilots (seven RCAF, three French, two Netherlands, one Algerian and one Argentinian), part of the new NATO training plan, had arrived at the Station during the previous weekend. Then, on November 15, the members of Course 35, having completed the Ground School segment of their training and now into the flying portion, arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie from RCAF Station MacDonald. They brought with them their flying instructional staff and thirty-eight Mark IV Harvard aircraft plus one Expeditor twin-engined airplane.

With the transfer of so many of its complement to Portage, a farewell mess dinner was held at MacDonald's Officers' Mess on Wednesday, November 13, to bid farewell to their departing aircrew officers. Then on Saturday morning, November 15, the thirty-eight Harvards, in flight formation, were flown from MacDonald to Portage. The planes arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie under inclement weather conditions with a low ceiling and poor visibility. They were led by Squadron Leader R.B. (Joe) Edwards, the Officer Commanding the flying section of Number Two Advanced Flying School (No. 2 AFS).

On their arrival, the contingent was met by Wing Commander Burgess, Squadron Leader C.S.S. Gilliott, DFC, the new Commanding Officer of No. 2 AFS, the ground crew and maintenance personnel and the student pilots, all of

whom had arrived from MacDonald by bus the previous day. Also there to greet them was a group of officers from the MacDonald Pilot Gunnery School who were rigged out in large hats labelled "PRESS", "PRAVDA" and "UNIVERSAL PICTURES" and equipped with apparatus such as a strainer attached to the end of a cord to serve as a microphone and a meat grinder to act as their camera. They then proceeded to interview the new arrivals, amongst many other pranks, thereby initiating the spirit of friendly rivalry between these two neighbouring RCAF Stations.

On Monday morning, November 17, the flying operations of No. 2 AFS commenced. Course 35 continued its flying training and Course 36, which had arrived in Portage la Prairie three weeks earlier, had completed Ground School and was now also on the flight line.

Following completion of this nine week AFS course, the successful candidate would then proceed on another nine week training course at the Pilot Gunnery School in MacDonald. In addition to this standard AFS Course, pilots arriving in Portage from Basic Flying Training Schools were given a course consisting of advanced flying instruction on formation, aerobatic and instrument flying and navigation.

Also of note was the arrival of twelve women personnel on December 1, 1952, with up to forty more expected during the subsequent few weeks. Flying Officer Mary Priest, an administration officer, was appointed to be in charge of the Station's Women's Division. These airwomen were mainly typists, stenographers, medical aides, safety equipment technicians, clerk stenographers and clerk accountants. They were housed in a separate Airwomen's Barracks containing mostly double rooms with the usual common washroom, shower and laundry room facilities in the centre portion of the building which joined the two wings of the barrack block.

In keeping with the discussion of the female service personnel at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, on March 5, 1953, an inspection team of Squadron Leader S.J. Evans from Air Force Headquarters (AFHQ) in Ottawa and Flight Lieutenant E.L. Dalton from Training Command Headquarters in Trenton, both female officers, visited the Station. The purpose of their visit was to review the training programme for airwomen at the unit.

With this influx of personnel, the incomplete state of the Married Quarters accommodation for the married servicemen was a big problem. Besides the twenty-six Emergency Married Quarters set up in spare buildings and barrack blocks on the Station, the Army, Navy and Air Force Auxiliary and the Royal Canadian Legion Auxiliary conducted an emergency housing bureau from an office at City Hall. This urgency for housing remained throughout the winter until the Married Quarters were completed and ready for occupancy at the Station. In the first two months since its opening on September 15, the military population of the Station had grown to almost 500 servicemen.

Sergeant Bill Eaton was an administration clerk at the Station from September 1952 until September 1955. When he arrived with his family he received six rooms in the Emergency Married Quarters. The number of rooms allocated depended upon the size of the family. In this case, Sergeant Eaton's six rooms all opened onto a common hallway. Three rooms were used as bedrooms, one for storage, one as a livingroom and the last one acted as the kitchen, even though it was equipped only with a hotplate. Since the families were still living in the Emergency Married Quarters at Christmas and did not have ovens in which to cook the turkey, the Head Cook at the Sergeants' Mess agreed to cook all of the turkeys and supplied buckets of gravy for everyone.

Schooling for the new dependent children was also a problem. On October 1, 1952, as part of the Station's ongoing housing project, an extension of the project to include the construction of an additional thirty-eight family units, two new chapels and a six room school building, was announced. Unfortunately, the school building was not scheduled to be completed until February 1953 or later, so temporary quarters had to be found. Consequently, on November 10, 1952, the new Station dependents' school, named after Air Marshal Sir Harold Edwards, officially opened. Classes were held in one classroom in Building 36. Grades 1 to 9 were all housed together in this single classroom. Mrs. Judd was the sole teacher. The situation for the school improved slightly when it reopened on January 5, 1953, following the Christmas Holiday break. It now temporarily occupied four classrooms in Building 36, with four teachers, Misses Minnie and Oga Onyschuk, Mrs. Alma Norton and Mr. James G. Dark, a graduate of the University of Manitoba, who taught and acted as the school principal.

This set-up was not always satisfactory as the school children played just outside of the Headquarters Building before classes started or during recess, occasionally disturbing the other occupants. Bill Eaton recounts an occasion when the

Commanding Officer was being bothered by the "thump, thump" noise of some of the children throwing a ball against the outside of his office wall. Wing Commander Burgess ordered Eaton to "go out there and stop it immediately and get me their names." Unfortunately, when Eaton went outside, he found that there were two boys making the noise and one of them was his son. Luckily, Wing Commander Burgess took it well when Eaton informed him of this fact.



The opening of the new Harold Edwards School on March 6, 1953.

This arrangement continued until Friday, March 6, 1953, when the new school building was officially opened. The school building, which still exists today, was an "H" type construction. It contained six classrooms and two playrooms. Its two wings were of steelox material and the connecting centre corridor was of a frame construction. Each classroom, in turn, was 32 feet by 32 feet. When the dependent school closed for the summer on June 30, 1953, following its first year of operation, it had an enrolment of 113 students and four full-time and one part-time kindergarten teacher. When it reopened for another year on August 30, these figures had increased to an enrolment of 149 students and five full-time and two part-time kindergarten teachers. Then, as a final change in its operation, in the fall of 1954, the Harold Edwards School started to accept pupils from the overtaxed rural school system. Consequently, by December 1954, the military dependent school at Southport had absorbed 45 non-dependent students who lived nearby but not in the Curtis Park Married Quarters community.

Construction continued on the Married Quarters basically as planned and, on January 28, 1953, Wing Commander Burgess presented the keys to the first two-bedroom Married Quarter ready for occupancy to Corporal and Mrs. Senft and their fifteen month old daughter. The Senft's had been living in one of the twenty-six Emergency Married Quarters within the single personnel's barrack blocks since they had arrived on posting from No. 3 AFS in Gimli, Manitoba on November 1, 1952. On February 15, 1953, eight more families moved into new Married Quarters, with another seventeen units becoming available on March 12, a further fourteen units on March 19 and at least ten more units every week thereafter until April 28, when the first batch of 150 units was completed and construction ceased.

The Senft's new home had four rooms, a kitchen, a front room, two bedrooms, one four piece bathroom plus a utility room located right next to the kitchen, which housed the hot water heater and oil furnace. Since these single storey buildings did not have basements, everything was situated on the same floor. When it was completed, the RCAF Station Portage la Prairie Married Quarters area had eight-nine homes the same as the Senft's, all duplexed with eighty-nine other adjoining homes containing three bedrooms, Also, there were ten additional detached single dwelling, four bedroom Married Quarters, each containing a large combined living-room and dining-room area with only a galley kitchen. Besides the addition of a twenty-four pad trailer court at the northwest end of the Married Quarters, this community remains virtually unchanged today.

When interviewed, Mel Dagg told the story of the first arrival of the service police at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. They arrived without weapons. Fortunately, Sergeant Dagg had a double-barrelled shot-gun with him which he used to shoot gophers and other critters on the runways. The Military Police Sergeant had to borrow it whenever he or his staff had to guard the payroll pick-up in Portage la Prairie. Apparently, some citizens of the City were somewhat disturbed by a Military Police Sergeant running around town carrying a double-barrelled shot-gun.

Mel Dagg also recounts another interesting story about law enforcement on the Station. This one involved Wing Commander Burgess. Apparently he was driving around the Station one Sunday morning when he noticed a car parked by the Headquarters Building with two young LACs in it. Burgess stopped to ask them how things were going and what they were doing. As it turned out, the two airmen had just robbed a jewellry store in town and were parked counting their loot. The end result of the incident was, of course, that the Commanding Officer apprehended the culprits be-



Married Quarters under construction at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. (Courtesy of Mr. Wm. Eaton and Mr. Mel Dagg).

fore anyone even knew that there had been a robbery.

On the operational side, No. 2 AFS experienced its first fatal crash on Tuesday, March 17, 1953. French Air Force NATO pilot trainee, from the Bourdeaux region, Sgt. Rene Marc Victor Fisse, a member of Course 36 and the sole occupant of the aircraft, died when his Harvard crash landed into the farmland of area resident Peter Boyachuk, about two miles southeast of the aerodrome. Heavy fog had hung over the Portage la Prairie countryside all day and might have been a contributing factor in the accident. The extensive fog at Portage la Prairie had already caused a number of No. 2 AFS aircraft to land at MacDonald and Rivers.

No. 2 AFS held its first Pilot's Wings Graduation Parade on Thursday, March 19, 1953. Air Commodore J.G. Bryan, the Commander of No. 14 Training Group, presented pilot's wings to all of the graduates except for the sole French Air Force graduate, Sergeant M. St. Suprey of Bordeaux, France. He received his French Air Force Pilot's Wings from Capt. B.M. Fraisse, a representative from the Consulate of France. Hundreds of spectators filled No. 5 Hangar for the ceremony which included the first public performance of the Station's twenty-two member band under the direction of Sergeant Sercherie. Wing Commander Gilliott acted as the Parade Commander and Squadron Leader A. L. Flamme, DFC, CD, the No. 2 AFS Chief Instructor, was the Parade's Second-in-Command. The Colour Party was made up of four sections, the United Kingdom colours, the RCAF colours, the Canadian flag and the flag of France. While at Portage, Air Commodore Bryan also officially opened the new dependents' school.

The second Wings Graduation Parade for the first full length course at No. 2 AFS, Course 36, was held on Friday, April 10, 1953. Air Vice Marshal H.B. Godwin, AOC Air Material Command in Rockcliffe presented pilot's wings to thirty-two graduates including one Spanish, one Danish, one RAF and twenty-nine RCAF and FAF pilots. Count Serge De Fleury, the French Consul in Winnipeg, presented the pilot's wings of the French Air Force to the eight French graduates. These students then proceeded to RCAF Station MacDonald for their nine week instructional course on Air Gunnery and Rocket Weaponry, after which they were posted to an Operational Training Unit (OTU). This usually meant a posting to Chatham, New Brunswick on fighter aircraft or to North Bay, Ontario on the new all-weather jet interceptor, the CF-100 "Canuck". As part of this second Graduation Parade Ceremony, the official opening of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie occurred.

The Station took its first step into "the Jet Age" on Monday, April 27, 1953, with the arrival of the first non-flight T-33 Silver Star mobile training unit. This unit, from the CANADAIR Limited in Montreal, was flown to Portage la Prairie in a Fairchild Flying Boxcar. Two trips were required to get all of the equipment to the Station. Arriving with the first load were replicas of the electrical system, instrument display plan and flight controls, the main landing gear and nosewheel landing gear, the air conditioning and pressurization system, and finally the hydraulic system. In the second load was the fuel system, the engine starting trainer, seat and canopy ejection system and the aircraft communications system. Mr. Bernard Ryan of Canadair, the unit's designer and senior engineer, accompanied it to Portage la Prairie. Canadair constructed four units in total, at the total cost of approximately $1,000,000 or $250,000 per unit; about the same pricetag as an actual T-33 airplane. Gimli and MacDonald were scheduled to receive the next two units.

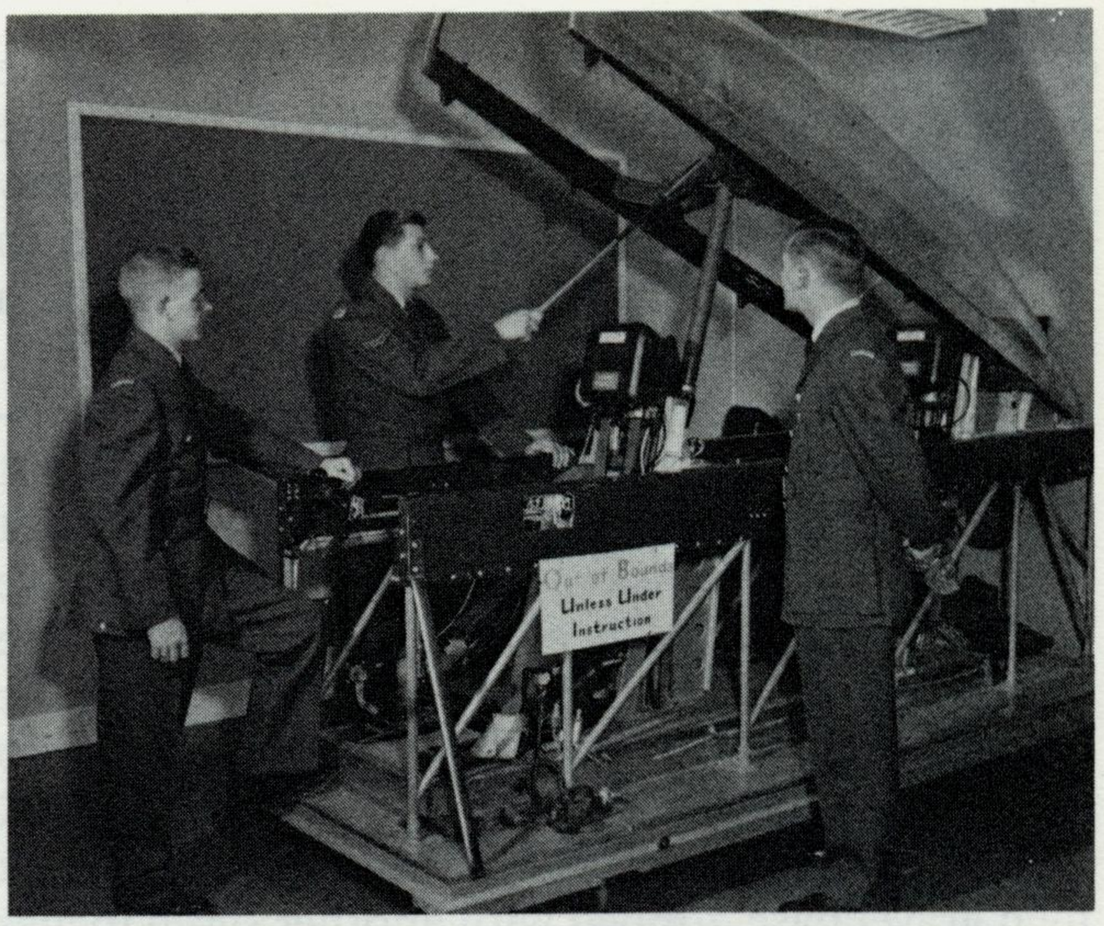
These training units were used to instruct both pilots and groundcrew in preliminary training before actually using a T-33. The control panel and hydraulic systems in this training unit duplicated almost any situation which the pilot or technician would actually find in the real jet aircraft. With this T-33 non-flight mobile training unit, student pilots were able to see, feel and hear the effects of a trip in a T-33 jet aircraft.

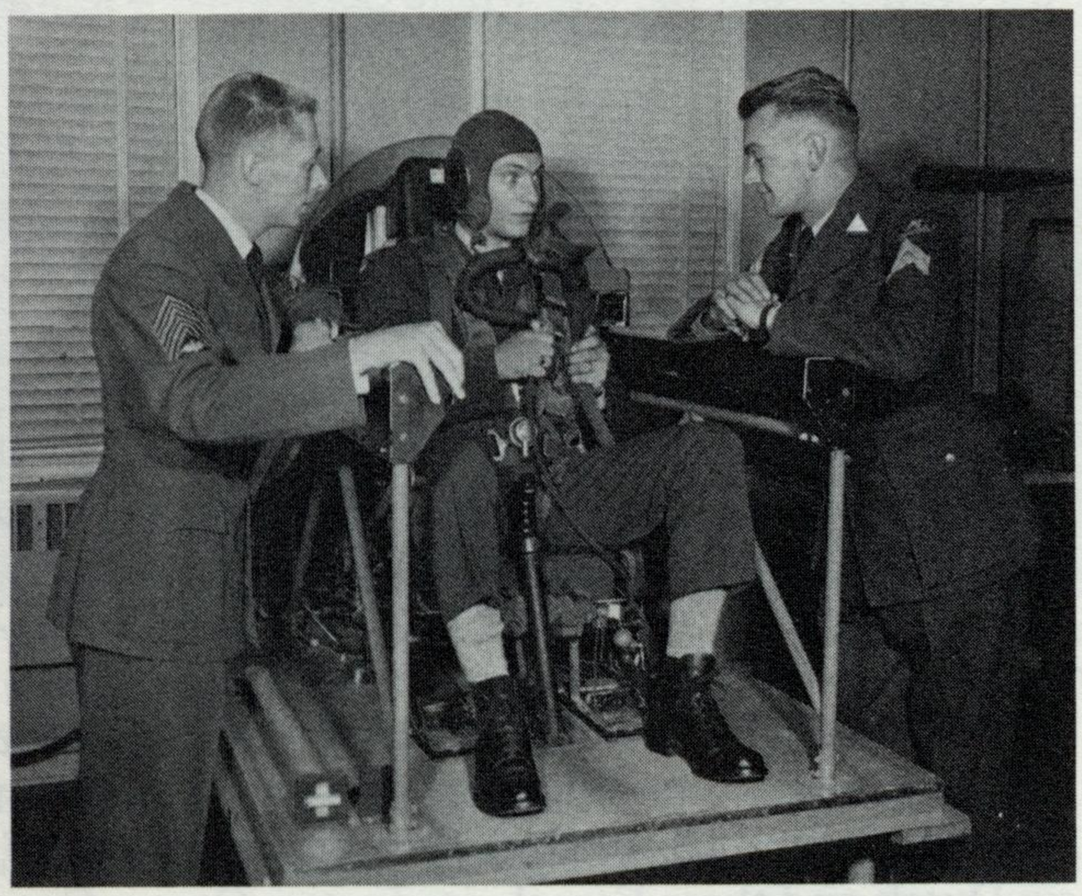
This mobile training equipment was quickly housed in three large rooms on the flight line and the training commenced almost immediately. A special training unit known as the Number Two Field Technical Training Unit (No. 2 FTTU), under the command of Flying Officer B.T. (Bert) Walsh, was created to conduct this training. Flying Officer Walsh, who had transferred to Portage from the Personnel Selection Unit at the St. John's Air Station in Quebec, had already taken special courses on the mobile training unit at the Canadair plant in Montreal and the Rolls Royce Nene jet aircraft engine plant in England.

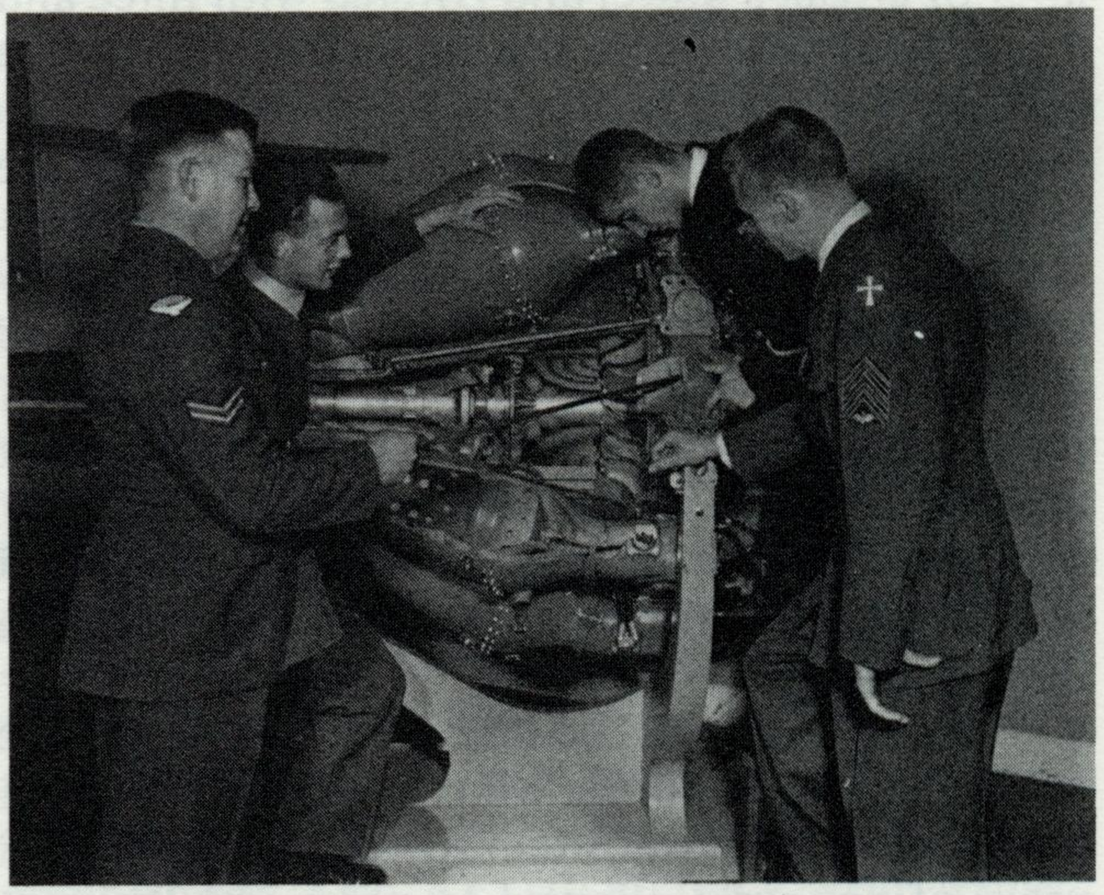
No. 2 FTTU was officially opened on June 8, 1953, with a staff of ten instructors and one clerk, besides its Commanding Officer, Flying Officer Walsh. The unit's role was stated as being:

a. to provide specialty training as required to all T-33 aircraft tradesmen;
b. to provide follow-up training on major









Pieces of training equipment belonging to the T-33 Mobile Training Unit which arrived at the RCAF Station during the spring of 1953.

modifications and equipment changes which occurred on the T-33; and finally;

c. to provide familiarization training for all T-33 aircrew.

As expected, by the time the T-33 airplanes had started to arrive at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie late in the summer of 1953, all of the students and maintenance staff had completed training on the mobile training unit. This feat was accomplished by running eighty students through a training course every two weeks. With the pending arrival and conversion to the T-33, the Station's military establishment was increased to more than 700 positions. The additional positions were required to provide the extra support services needed to fly and maintain the new jet aircraft.

In May 1953, several events of interest occurred. On Friday, May 1, the School held its third Wings Graduation Parade for thirty-two pilots, seventeen RCAF, nine French and six Dutch graduates. Wing Commander Burgess and Colonel M.P. Favre, the Air Attach for France at the Embassy in Ottawa, presented the wings.



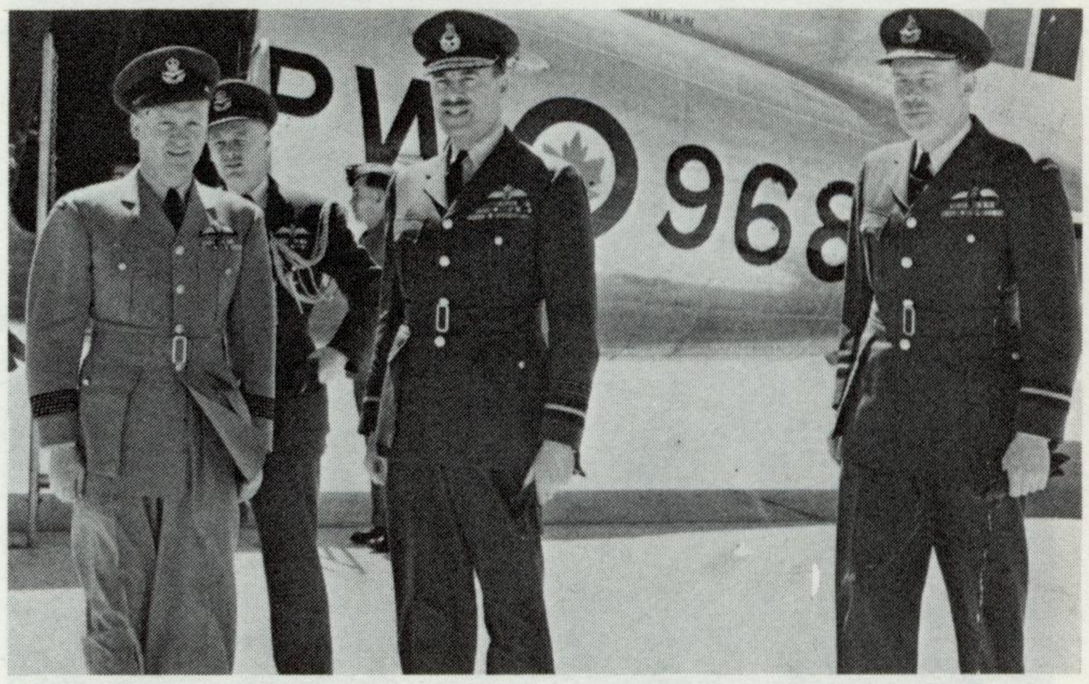
The Officers' Mess under construction in January 1953. It is situated on the site of the former drill hall.

This event was followed up on May 7, by the Station's first Officers' Mess Dinner. That same day, RCAF officials also announced that a new runway repair and construction contract worth $1,750,000 had been awarded to the A.M. Tallman Construction Company of Winnipeg. Mr. F.V. Stein, the Company's Assistant Manager, indicated that some of the work had already started, but emphasized that the main work would have to wait until the ground was completely free of frost. He further explained that close to 1,000,000 square yards of dirt would have to be removed before the actual runway construction could commence. Into these two holes, 200 feet wide by 7,800 feet and 3,550 feet long respectively, would be placed a six inch gravel base, topped with another seven inches layer of crushed gravel and covered with three and a half inches of black top surfacing. One was a new runway and the other a 3,300 feet extension to an existing runway. The turning buttons at the end of each runway would be of similar initial construction with ten inches of concrete on top instead of the asphalt. In addition, a one mile and a one and a half mile taxi-way strip, consisting of the same aggregates as the runway, would be built and five miles of drainage tile was to be laid. At the same time, the Tallman Company would build two baseball diamonds and two tennis courts on the Station.

Then on May 20, the first elections for the five Ward Aldermen on the Married Quarters Community Council occurred. All residents over 18 years of age were allowed to vote, and Warrant Officer Second Class M.F. Rogers was elected as the first Mayor. The role of this council was to look after the playgrounds and Recreation Centre, as well as organize sports activities, churches, Sunday School, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.

Next, on May 21, Air Marshal C.R. Slemon CB, CBE CD, the RCAF Chief of Staff, paid an unofficial two hour visit to the Station. The Commander's Dakota aircraft was met over MacDonald by four Harvard from No. 2 AFS and was escorted to Portage la Prairie. Following lunch and a tour of No. 2 FTTU and the new Married Quarters, Air Marshal Slemon continued on his way.

Finally, on Saturday, May 23, the same day that the Spring Ball was held in the Officers' Mess, two student pilots were killed instantly when their Harvard crashed into a farmer's field six miles southeast of the Station. They were Pilot Officer T.H. Moseley of Toronto and Pilot Officer R.W. Moody of London, Ontario. The crash occurred at 0935 hours on the farm of R.G. Tickle and only



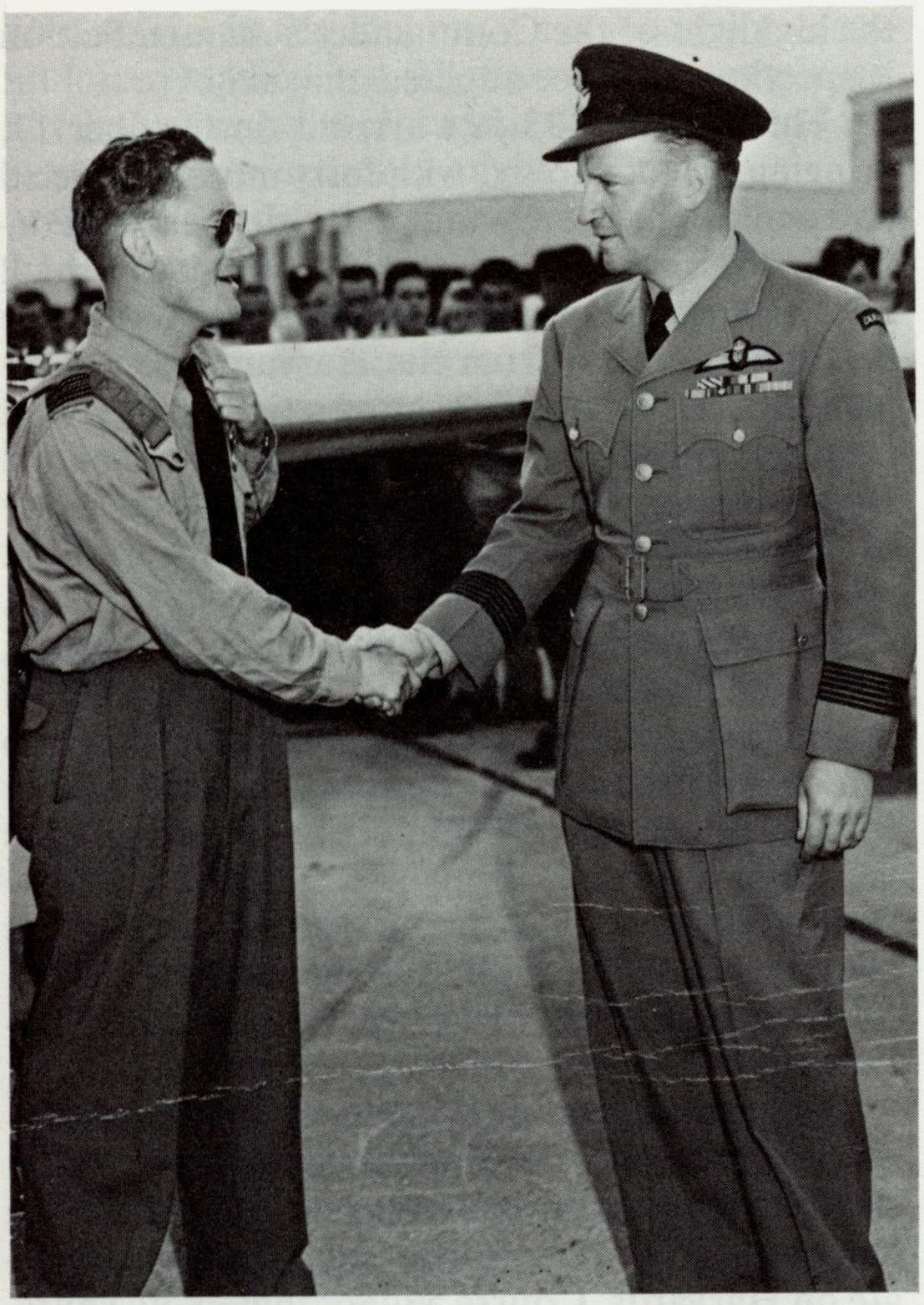
Air Marshal Slemon, accompanied by Air Commodore Bryans, being welcomed to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie by Wing Commander Burgess on May 21, 1953.

three miles from the site where Sergeant Fisse was killed on March 17.

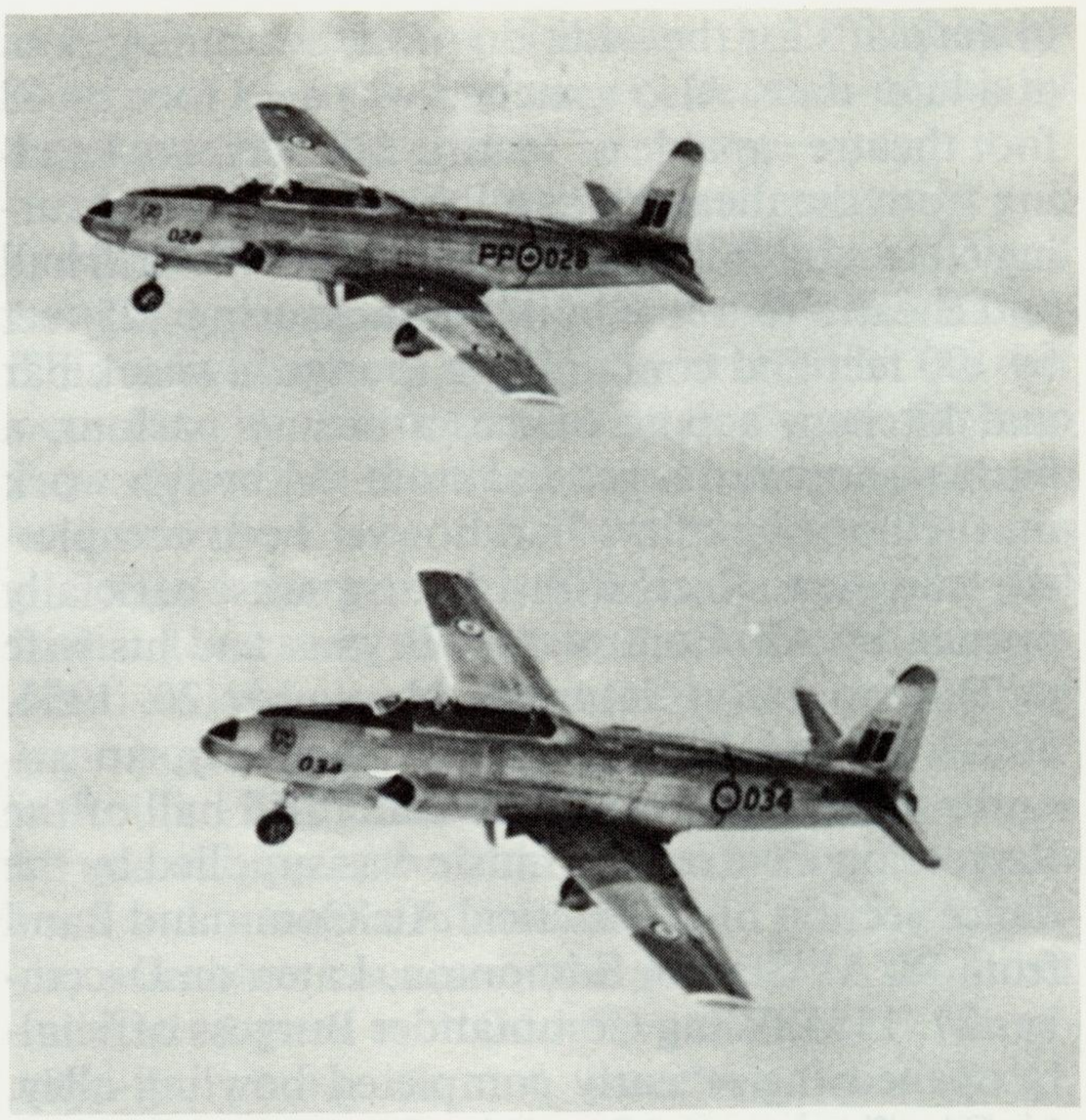
In an earlier flying incident on May 14, at 0900 hours a No. 2 AFS Harvard had made an emergency landing in a farmer's field three miles south of the aerodrome. On that occasion, neither of the occupants, Pilot Officer McBraith, RCAF, and Corporal Hesgedhad, Royal Netherland Air Force, were injured and the airplane sustained only slight damage. Since an engine fire was suspected and the tower had been notified before the landing occurred, Station firefighting personnel and equipment were on hand at the landing site.

Another Wings Graduation Parade, the School's sixth one since opening, was held on Thursday, June 12, 1953, for twenty-three RCAF, six Dutch and three French graduates. Group Captain R.O.P. Blagrove, the Commanding Officer of RCAF Station MacDonald, made the wings presentations to the Canadians, Major E.T. Van Iterson, the Air and Naval Military Attach at the Netherlands Embassy in Ottawa, made the wings presentation to the Dutch and Captain B. Fraise of the French Air Force to the graduates from France.

No. 2 AFS took its first faultering steps into the Jet Age on Tuesday, June 23, 1953, when the first T-33 Silver Star jet aircraft arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie late that afternoon. It was piloted by Squadron Leader J.T. (Tiger) Mullen, CD, who, following a brief session of aerobatics, landed the airplane on the partially completed outer runway. This jet was to be used for ground training purposes only, to help acquaint the personnel with the working of such a fast moving aircraft. In addition, a number of instructors from No. 2 AFS had already been sent east for T-33 Conversion Courses.



Wing Commander Burgess welcomes Squadron Leader Mullen to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie upon his arrival on June 23, 1953, with the Station's first T-33 jet aircraft.



Two T-33 jets performing at the Station's first Air Force Day on September 21, 1953.

The remainder of that summer at Portage la Prairie was relatively uneventful. On Friday, August 14, 1953, the School's seventh Wings Graduation Parade was held for eight RCAF, one RCN, two Dutch and two French graduates. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) graduate, Lieutenant Allan, was the first RCN pilot to receive his wings at Portage la Prairie. Next, the eighth Wings Graduation Ceremonies for nineteen RCAF and nine French graduates occurred on Friday, September 4, 1953. Group Captain F.R. Sharp, the Commanding Officer of RCAF Station North Bay, presented these pilot's wings.

On September 10, the new maintenance unit started its operation at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. Commanded by Squadron Leader H.W. Winter, this unit was initially staffed by sixty airmen, with more to follow. It was housed in No. 5 Hangar and was assigned to service jet aircraft from Portage la Prairie, Gimli and MacDonald.

RCAF Station Portage la Prairie held its first Air Force Day on Saturday, September 21. The programme commenced at 1300 hours with an address by Wing Commander Burgess. The CF-100 put on a display of manoeuvrability and versatility. It flew close to the speed of sound on one pass over the field and then at only 150 miles per hour on the next pass, however, it did not land at Portage la Prairie. Two T-33 jets also made several passes during the air demonstration along with a formation of Harvards doing some aerobatic manoeuvres. Also, a C-119 Flying Boxcar arrived, put on a brief demonstration and then landed. It was subsequently placed on static display to allow spectators to tour it. Probably, the highlight of the day for many of the local Portage area residents who had come out to the event was the Expeditor. It carried passengers on familiarization flights all afternoon. The dance in the Recreation Centre that evening ended the first of many successful Air Force Days at the Station.

When mentioning the Recreation Centre, do not envision that as meaning the Recreation Centre as you know it today. In fact, construction on the new Recreation Centre, or Drill Hall as it was originally called, actually started on September 17, just a few days before the Air Force Day was held. When initially completed in the fall of 1954, the present Recreation Centre was similar to its current appearance. It measured 125 feet by 100 feet, with a rifle range, games room and six bowling-alleys in the basement. The first floor had a combined drill hall and gymnasium, with room left

in the plans for the addition of the swimming pool at a later date. Also attached was a 78 foot by 48 foot theatre capable of seating 212 persons. Leading from the theatre was a lobby or foyer measuring 60 feet by 36 feet which connected the drill hall and theatre to a low building measuring 125 feet by 100 feet and containing a lounge, a snack bar and kitchen, a post office, a beauty parlour, a barber-shop and a general store. Although work on the bowling-alleys had not yet been completed, the new Recreation Centre was officially opened by Air Commodore Bryans and his wife at 2100 hours on Saturday, November 20, 1954. Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, an all-ranks dance was held in the main drill hall of the Recreation Centre. The music was supplied by the dance section of the Tactical Air Command Band from RCAF Station Edmonton. Later, on December 27, 1954, Wing Commander Burgess officially opened the recently completed bowling-alley.

The final event of note for September 1953 was the School's ninth Wings Graduation Ceremony held on September 23 for twenty-two RCAF, one RCN, two Dutch and seven French pilots. While Group Captain Mitchell presented the wings, the International Service of CBC Radio recorded the event and later transmitted it by short wave to Holland and France.

On October 1, 1953, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie became the first RCAF Station west of Winnipeg, and one of the first anywhere in Canada, for that matter, to receive a newly invented facsimile system in its meteorological office. This "Weather Fax" machine, owned and operated by the CN/CP Telegraph Company, was the largest system of its kind in the world. It provided DOT and RCAF weather bureaus with a faster and more economical means of producing weather information. For example, the "Weather Fax" could produce a large detailed weather chart in only thirty-five minutes, as opposed to the previous two and a half hours for each individual weather office to produce its own weather map.

While several more T-33 jets (of the over 100 aircraft expected for the Station) had arrived since June, the first T-33 Silver Star was flown from RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on a test flight on October 9, 1953. It was flown by Wing Commander Gilliott and Squadron Leader Edwards, both of No. 2 AFS. The next T-33 flight occurred four days later on October 13, when Wing Commander Gilliott took Air Commodore J.G. Bryan, CBE, Commander of No. 14 Training Group, on a familiarization flight. The flight proved to be the highlight of the Commander's Annual Station Inspection being conducted that day.

Three more T-33 jets arrived on October 17, bringing the total to six, with forty more completed and waiting at the Canadair for delivery to Portage la Prairie over the next month. With this small fleet of aircraft, conversion training and practice on the jet aircraft from the Harvards now commenced. One airplane was used strictly for ground training and the other five were used for actual flying. By early November, No. 2 AFS was ready to commence training on the T-33, with the first sixteen NATO jet course students from Canada, France and the Netherlands arriving at Portage la Prairie on November 9, 1953. Their training started immediately and on November 26, the first two student pilots on the course soloed in a T-33. They were Sergeant F.J. A'Campo of the Netherlands and Pilot Officer G. Brown of the RCAF. Unfortunately, Pilot Officer Brown had to force land his aircraft during the flight, but he was not injured. By December 9, all of the students had successfully soloed on the T-33.

Meanwhile, training at No. 2 AFS also continued on the Harvards with a course of twenty-six Canadian and three French pilots graduating on Friday, November 6. The final course to graduate on Harvards, Course 53, graduated on Thursday, December 17, 1953. The thirty-one pilots received their wings from the School's Chief Flying Instructor, Squadron Leader Edwards. As the first interim Commanding Officer, he had been with the school since its inception, at a time when it had only fifteen instructors and a few borrowed Harvards. As the school had grown, he had assumed his present position and had led the introduction and conversion training at the school from the Harvards to the T-33. With No. 2 AFS no longer requiring Harvards to conduct its training, these aircraft were transferred to RCAF Station Moose Jaw. The last of the School's forty-seven Harvards left Portage on January 13, 1954.

During the last half of 1953, only two flying incidents occurred on the Harvards. The first one had happened on Wednesday, August 12, when a student pilot undershot his approach while landing and struck a hydro pole on the farm of John Verwey, five miles to the southeast of the aerodrome. While the airplane was not damaged nor the pilot injured, the hydro wires and transformers were knocked from the pole. The second incident occurred on Tuesday, November 17, when two student pilots on an instrument flying exercise no-

ticed smoke in the cockpit. They made a successful forced landing in a field twenty miles southwest of Gladstone. Neither student was injured and the airplane sustained only slight damage.

Another operational first for the jets from No. 2 AFS occurred on November 29, 1953, when three of its T-33 were involved in an air search. These three jets, on a weekend cross-country navigation trip, were on the runway at RCAF Station Downsview in Toronto about to take-off when the word was passed that an RCAF Vampire jet was missing. Naturally, these three Portage jets were the first search planes to get airborne and, after two hours of searching, one of the planes, piloted by Flight Lieutenant A. Harper in the front seat and Flying Officer J.F. Fitzgerald in the back, spotted an oil slick in Lake Ontario near Whitby. This location later proved to be the spot where the missing jet had gone down.

Finally, another first occurred on November 5, when a CF-100, piloted by Flight Lieutenant Kobrieski with Flight Lieutenant Turner as his navigator, landed at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. They were two and a half hours out of RCAF Station Uplands in Ottawa, enroute cross-country to Vancouver, when they stopped in Portage to refuel. This was the first CF-100 landing to occur at the Station.

On the non-operational side, the last two months of 1953 saw several notable events occur. First of all, the Station celebrated its first anniversary on Friday, November 13. Then, on November 17, Air Vice Marshal J.C. Kerr, CBE, AFC, CD, AOC Training Command, visited the Station to present fourteen Coronation Medals to Station personnel, including one to Wing Commander Burgess. He was accompanied on this trip by Air Commodore Bryans and their Dakota aircraft was escorted from Winnipeg by four T-33 Silver Star jets from No. 2 AFS.

Then on December 2, another presentation ceremony took place. Colonel M.P. Favre, the Air Attaché at the French Embassy in Ottawa, in recognition of the contributions that his Air Force received from the NATO pilot training programme at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, presented "Honourary" French Air Force pilot's wings to four Station Officers, again including Wing Commander Burgess.

Finally, on November 19, the last of the 188 new Married Quarters at Portage la Prairie were turned over to the RCAF by the Central Mortage and Housing Corporation, thus ending the Station's only Married Quarters construction contract in its history. Effective December 1, 1953, the new Married Quarters community became officially known as "Curtis Park".

As a final humorous note to conclude the events of 1953, Mel Dagg and Bill Eaton explained how one young airman beat an AWOL charge. This individual was constantly in trouble. On this occasion, he did not show up for work for two days. When, on the third day, he did come in; he was marched into the Commanding Officer's office and charged with AWOL. However, he had such a good story that Wing Commander Burgess dismissed the charge. Apparently, the airman had gone home to spend the weekend with his family in Roblin, Manitoba. That Sunday afternoon, as he was waiting at the train station to catch the train back to Portage la Prairie, the band playing a Sunday afternoon concert in the park across the street suddenly struck up "God Save the King." Naturally, the young airman, travelling in uniform, snapped to attention and, as he was standing rigidly at attention, saluting the King, the train pulled out of the station. Since there was not another train until two days later, on Tuesday, and having no other means of transportation, the airman was two days late at getting back to work.

The Station lost its first T-33 jet on February 2, 1954, when an aircraft, piloted by Flying Officer Brown, the instructor, and Pilot Officer Wellan, the student, crash landed at the end of Runway 30 and burned. Both occupants ejected safely. These were the first T-33 ejections to occur at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. That same day saw the start of the installation of the Decompression Chamber on the Station. It was completed



The Station's new decompression chamber in action in March 1954.

and officially opened for operation on February 15. Then on April 6, another section, the Link Trainer Section, containing two C11B Link Trainers, officially opened.

On February 4, 1954, the first pilot course to receive all of their training at Portage la Prarie on the T-33 jet graduated. Air Commodore J.G. Bryans, CBE, CD, was on hand to pin the wings onto the seven RCAF, seven RAF, four French and one Dutch graduates.

Two more flying mishaps occurred during the next few months. While on a cross-country navigation trip from Portage to North Bay, a T-33, flown by Flying Officers N.L. Harrison and MacLeod, landed instead in St. Louis, Missouri. They blamed their error on the failure of navigation instruments in their airplane. These No. 2 AFS pilots received special medals from their fellow pilots on their return to the Station a few days later in recognition of their unique navigational skill.

However, on March 19, 1954, tragedy stuck No. 2 AFS when Flying Officer Cadegan was killed during another cross-country navigation trip when his T-33 crashed during take-off at Windsor, Ontario. Another accident occurred on May 29, when a P-51 Mustang fighter from the City of Winnipeg Squadron crashed on the runway at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. The pilot, Flying Officer Thompson, survived the crash and was taken to the Deer Lodge Hospital in Winnipeg. Then, on July 17, Flying Officer J.A. Marshall of No. 2 AFS was killed in a T-33 jet accident.

The summer started with a familiarization tour of the Station by Air Commodore A.D. Ross, GC, OBE, on June 1. He was touring all Western Canada Air Training Schools prior to assuming his new post as the Air Member for the Canadian Joint Staffs in London, England. Another important visitor, Air Marshal C.R. Slemon, Chief of the Air Staff, and his wife toured the Station on June 15. Then, on July 24, the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable R.J. Campney, briefly visited the Station. The highlight of his visit was a luncheon in the Officers' Mess with the Minister and his staff dining with senior Base and local city officials. Another first occurred as a direct result of Mr. Campney's visit, since the North Star aircraft carrying him successfully landed and departed RCAF Station Portage la Prairie without incident. Up to this time, it was uncertain if the new runways, taxiways and refurbished ramp would actually be able to support a heavy aircraft of this type.

The second annual Air Force Day occurred on June 12. The air display portion of the day featured a twelve plane formation of the new T-33 jets. Another first for the Jet School occurred on August 20. This time a record formation of thirty-five T-33 jets left RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, flew in formation over the RCAF Stations at MacDonald, Gimli and Winnipeg. Then, following two successful low passes over the Station, all of the airplanes recovered at Portage without incident.

September 1954 started off with the death of another NATO student pilot in a T-33 jet crash. On September 3, funeral services were held in Portage la Prairie for this victim, French Air Force Sergeant R.L. Prourt. It was also the day of another No. 2 AFS student graduation ceremony. Air Vice Marshal Frank S. McGill, CB, famous for his contributions to the BCATP during the Second World War was the guest of honour. He presented the pilot's wings to his son and the other fifty-four RCAF graduates, all former university students receiving their training under the RCAF's University Training Plan.

On Wednesday, September 22, while on a routine training flight, two more pilots completed successful ejections from a T-33 jet. In this incident, Flying Officer Daniel Grummett, the No. 2 AFS instructor, and his student, Private K. Scharer, bailed out of their jet when it went out of control. Private Scharer blew off the canopy ejected at 8,500 feet and Flying Officer Grummett followed him at 7,000 feet. Both seat ejection systems worked perfectly and the pilots landed safely in a field on the Simmons' farm about eight miles southwest of the Portage aerodrome. The plane, however, beat the pilots to the ground, crashing in the same field, tearing a hole ten feet deep.

Another jet was lost three days later on Saturday, September 25, when Lyden Arne Borthern, a Norwegian trainee, successfully ejected from his T-33 and landed near Grafton, North Dakota. While on a navigation training flight, he had become lost and finally ran out of fuel. Being unable to safely recover the aircraft, he set the controls to guide the unmanned plane to an open area and then bailed out at 16,000 feet. The wreckage of Borthern's plane was later found near Warson, North Dakota.

In another incident just a few days later, on September 30, RCAF trainee, Pilot Officer Neil Joyes, while practicing emergency landings at Carberry, Manitoba and Estevan, Saskatchewan, actually had to make a real one at Estevan on its 2,180 foot runway. Since the normal runway length

for the T-33 is generally accepted to be 7,000 feet, he was landing on a runway only one third the length normally required for the jet trainer. He burned all of the tread off of the airplane's tires as he pumped its brakes to stop. Once the tires had been replaced, an instructor succeeded in getting the T-33 off the ground and back to Portage la Prairie.

Once again, in the spring of 1954, with the revival of flying operations at the Station, constant complaints about the road's sad condition were received. When the thaw occurred, the dirt road proceeding to the Station from Portage la Prairie turned into a sea of mud. Consequently, acting on these complaints, Mr. Weir, the Member of Parliament for Portage-Neepawa, attempted to get a grant from the Department of National Defence to help defray the cost of paving this stretch of roadway. On Tuesday, September 14, he announced that Ottawa had refused to lend any financial assistance to the proposed paving project.

Also, during the spring of 1954, there was very severe flooding. In fact, the water came right up to the doors of the Married Quarters and apparently, Wing Commander Burgess had all of the Station's aircraft placed on standby, ready to evacuate all Station personnel and their dependents to RCAF Station MacDonald. Fortunately, the waters receded before this drastic measure had to be implemented.

The second annual AOC's inspection occurred on Thursday, October 14, 1954. Once again, Air Commodore Bryans, the Commander of No. 14 Training Group, subjected the Station and its staff to a rigid inspection. Obviously satisfied with the results, he stated that, "There has been considerable improvement and progress at Portage la Prairie since our last inspection." At the time of this inspection, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, including the personnel at No. 2 AFS, had a military personnel strength of 1041. The following day another thirty member NATO pilot course graduated and Wing Commander Burgess presented them with their wings.

Four more important visits occurred during the remainder of 1954. On October 22, Colonel S.E. Winnerstrom, the Swedish Air Attaché in Canada, briefly visited the Station. This was followed the next day, October 23, by another brief one and one half hour visit to the Station by the Secretary for Air from the United Kingdom, the Right Honourable Lord De L'Isle and Dudley, VC. Next, on November 7, Archbishop Pocock of Winnipeg officiated at the opening of the just completed Ro-



A new flag-pole is erected in front of the Station Headquarters Building on October 3, 1954.

man Catholic Chapel. It was officially named the "Holy Cross Chapel". Then, finally, another British visitor, Air Commodore Mead, the Director of Flying Training at the Air Ministry in London, toured the Station's training facilities on November 12.

The flying activities of No. 2 AFS encountered two more tragic accidents before 1954 ended. On Sunday, November 22, pilot Officer Joseph Douglas Watson of Woodstock, Ontario, was killed instantly when his T-33 jet crashed in a field about four miles north of Popular Point at approximately 0525 hours. Then, at 1715 hours on Tuesday, December 14, Pilot Officer Dennis L. Graham of Edmonton reported that he was in trouble and running out of fuel and planned to eject. His T-33 crashed minutes later in the hills and shrubs of G.A. Penner's farm six miles north of Morden, Manitoba, a community about 50 miles south of

Portage la Prairie. Since he was not found near the wreckage, a massive search ensued for Pilot Officer Graham.

Two Dakotas, an Expeditor and an Otter aircraft were sent immediately from Winnipeg to help in the search. They were joined by a Beechcraft from Portage la Prairie and a helicopter plus two more Otter airplanes from Rivers. Three trucks from the 38th Field Battery and RCMP radio-equipped cars from Winnipeg, Carman, Portage la Prairie and Morden were all sent to scour the area. This initial action on the first day did not produce results. The following morning, Wednesday, the search area was expanded and divided into four regions of forty-eight square miles each. Ground search teams were also added. One hundred men from RCAF Station Portage la Prairie and 100 men from RCAF Station Winnipeg started searching the most probable parachute touchdown sites in two of these regions. At the same time, the airplanes returned to fly low search patterns over the other two areas, but to no avail.

The following day, Thursday, the ground search contingent was expanded to include 500 airmen, soldiers and farmers. Also, nine planes took part in the search that day, flying 54 hours and 35 minutes in total, but all of this effort was still not successful. When Friday's search still turned up nothing, despite having already searched over 1750 square miles of the most probable landing area, it became obvious that Flying Officer Graham had probably not survived the accident.

However, RCAF officials could not explain his disappearance since the jet's canopy had been ejected and was found in a field five miles northwest of Carman, Manitoba, but the ejection seat was found, unused, in the T-33 wreckage many miles away. On Saturday, the fifth day of the search, over 700 people conducted ground searches and discovered the pilot's helmet five miles west of the crash site. The search on Sunday also proved to be fruitless. However, on Monday, December 20, Pilot Officer Graham's body was finally found only one mile from the crash site. His parachute was unopened.

The new year, 1955, started on a bright note with Wing Commander Burgess, the Station Commander of RCAF Portage la Prairie, being promoted to Group Captain effective January 1, 1955. It was followed by another highlight on January 18, when 100 Mayors and Reeves from all of rural Manitoba, visited the Station. They had come to gain a closer insight into the training methods, technical procedures and problems involved in running the Jet School.

Unfortunately, at No. 2 AFS the flying accidents continued in what was to be a very bad year for student fatalities. First, on Tuesday, January 4, 1955, a T33 crashed on take-off. Fortunately, the student pilot, Flying Officer Joseph Arthur Milford, escaped with only lacerations. Next, at around 0900 hours on Tuesday, February 1, while on a routine training flight, Flight Lieutenant Al Harper and NATO French student, Sergeant Jacques Labrousse, were both killed when their T-33 crashed into a farmer's field near Roland, Manitoba. Then two days later, on Thursday, February 3, another NATO Dutch student, Sergeant Jensen, was killed when his T-33 crashed into a field of brush near St. Claude at approximately 1600 hours. He was on a routine solo training mission when the plane went down shortly after take-off. Then on Wednesday, February 16, another NATO student pilot died when his T-33 crashed into a farmer's field near Carman, Manitoba at about 1545 hours, while on a routine training flight.

Since April 1954, all of the area flying school accidents, including the No. 2 AFS incidents, totalled nineteen crashes of RCAF aircraft flying in Manitoba, resulting in twenty aircrew deaths. Being concerned and having ordered a thorough investigation into these numerous accidents, Defence Minister Campney, released the results to the news media on Thursday, April 21. He said that the pilots of fourteen of the nineteen T33 jet trainers which had crashed in Manitoba had not radioed that they were in any trouble. Further, he said that only four of the crashes had been due to a failure of the aircraft or any of its components. He also emphasized that the RCAF accident investigations showed no pattern which would lead to suspicions regarding the airworthiness of the T-33.

Following the Minister's statement, a Station spokesman identified Sergeant Michel Rene Gerard Villette as being the NATO French pilot trainee who had been killed on Tuesday, April 19, when his T-33 crashed near High Bluff, Manitoba. Sergeant Villette had reported to the tower that the electronic system powering the jet's controls had failed. Just before crashing, he indicated that he had attempted to bail out but that he was unable to open the airplane's canopy.

On Wednesday, May 11, NATO French student pilot, Second Lieutenant Tourcault was killed around midnight when his T-33 crashed near the aerodrome while practicing night landings. Then,

on Thursday afternoon, June 16, another NATO French student pilot, Second Lieutenant Y.M.A. LaFountaine, died when his T-33 crashed following its involvement in a mid-air collision with another T-33 about eight miles west of Miami, in southern Manitoba. The crew of the second jet, Flying Officer Russel Kain, RCAF, and Second Lieutenant Michael Collier of France, safely ejected from their airplane. While Kain was not injured, Collier suffered a broken ankle. Flying Officer Kain's aircraft was the second in a straight line formation of three T-33's on a training flight at 15,000 feet when the fourth jet came out of nowhere and collided with his airplane. This accident marked the fortieth crash of a T-33 in Canada and its thirty-fourth fatality.

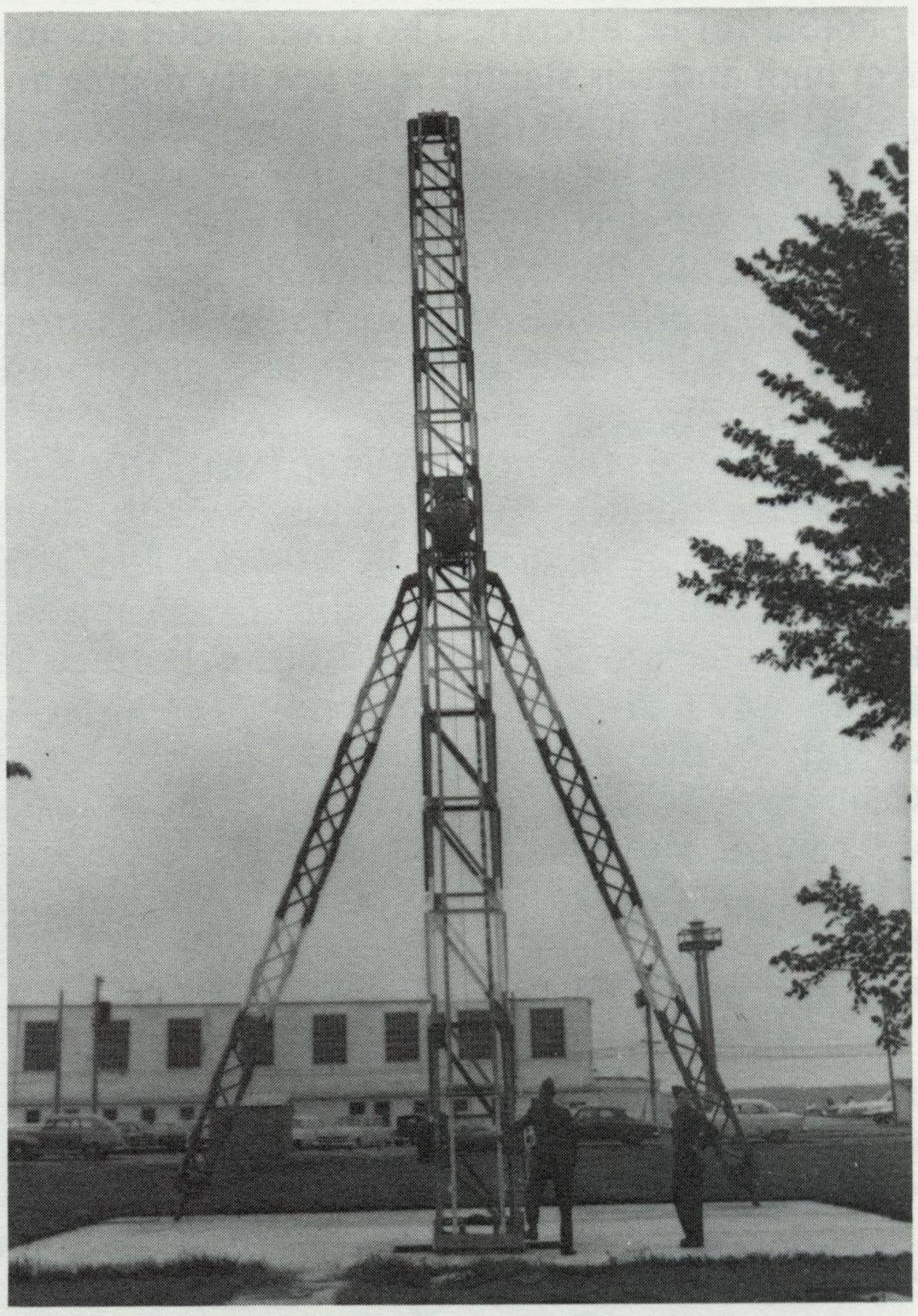
The first half of the 1955 flying year finished with one final fatality. Pilot Officer J. Sutton, RAF, was killed at midnight on Wednesday, June 29, when his T-33 crashed five miles southwest of Rothwell, Manitoba, while he was on a routine night training flight.

The flying accident and fatality state improved substantially during the second half of 1955 with only one accident and death. This accident occurred at approximately 1400 hours on Friday, November 25, when RCAF student, Pilot Officer George William Dale Jackson, died when his T-33 exploded in mid-air before crashing into a field near Swan Lake, Manitoba. Still, 1955 had been an accident prone year with this accident marking the sixteenth T-33 lost in Manitoba that year. In fact, during the first seven months, there had been twelve T-33 jet crashes in Manitoba claiming fourteen lives.

On the non-flying side, a number of interesting events occurred in 1955. On March 28, acting on a request from RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, Training Command in Trenton asked Air Force Headquarters (AFHQ) for an increase in the number of Air Traffic Control (ATC) Officers. This request asked for a change in establishment from five to six ATC officer positions in the tower to accommodate increased flying activities resulting from the conversion to the T-33 jet trainer. The request was denied on June 30, but AFHQ offered a solution to the dilemma. They suggested that the officer in the combined Operations



Preparing for a practice ejection using the Station's new ejection tower.



The ejection tower in action.

Room/Flight Planning Centre (FPC) be removed and placed in the Tower. He was to be replaced in the FPC by an experienced airman or a Junior NCO.

On April 16, Wing Commander Burgess officially opened the new Airmen's Social Centre. Next, on Monday, April 18, the dedication ceremony for the new Protestant Chapel, "The Church of the Three Crosses," occurred. Group Captain, the Reverend F.W. MacLean, the RCAF Director of Religious Administration (Protestant), presided over the ceremony with Air Commodore J.G. Bryans, Wing Commander J. Dunn, the Training Command Chaplain, Squadron Leader McIver, No. 14 Training Group Chaplain and Flight Lieutenant Howson, the Station's Protestant Chaplain, all in attendance, along with many Station personnel. The new Chapel was of a standard RCAF size and design, capable of seating approximately three hundred parishioners.

The RCAF Station Portage la Prairie ejection tower, the first of its kind in Canada, came into offical use on April 21, 1955. The new piece of training equipment gave the user some sensation of being ejected from a T-33, CF-100 or F-86(Sabre) jet aircraft. The tower stood seventy feet high and was slanted at a seventy degree angle. The pilots using the trainer were subjected to 12-14 G forces for the 6/10th of a second that is taken for the ejection seat to make its ascent up the rails of the tower. Until such trainers became common at other RCAF stations, jet pilots from across Canada came to Portage la Prairie to use its ejection tower.

On June 6, the new civilian Post Office attached to the Recreation Centre was officially opened. Shortly thereafter, on August 8, 1955, the term "Southport" became officially recognized as the name of the RCAF Station Portage la Prairie and Curtis Park Community area. Next, on July 5, the recently renovated former Social Centre was officially opened as the new airmen's wet canteen known as "the Tiger's Den". On July 15, the new social centre was officially opened and finally, on October 7, the new ME Section and building was officially opened.

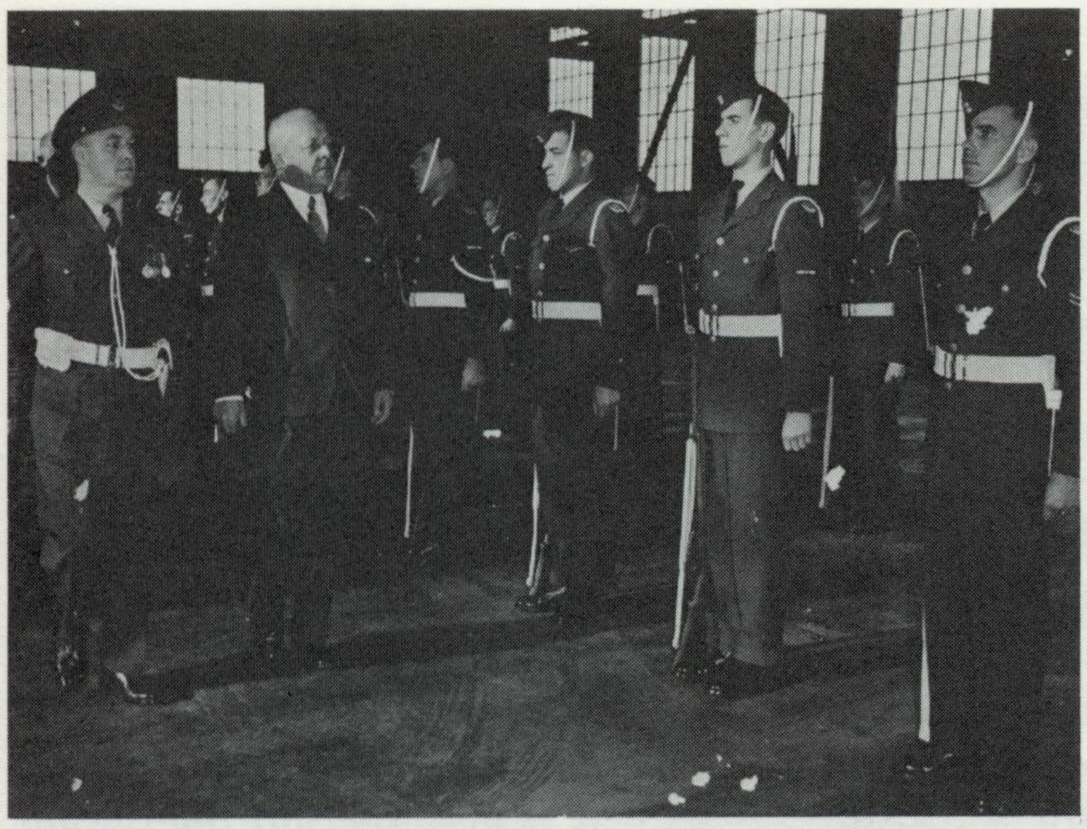
The first Change of Command Ceremony at the post-war RCAF Station Portage la Prairie occurred on Friday, July 29, 1955, between Group Captain Burgess and Group Captain G.A. Hiltz, AFC. Group Captain Burgess left the Station for Staff College in Toronto. The new Station Commanding Officer, Group Captain Hiltz, of Milltown, New Brunswick, arrived in Portage la



Group Captain Burgess signing over command of the Station to Group Captain Hiltz on July 29, 1955.

Prairie having just completed the National Defence College Course in Kingston, Ontario. The highlight of the handover ceremony was a nine plane formation flypast of T-33 jets. Also replaced that summer were Squadron Leader A. La Flamme, the No. 2 AFS Chief Ground School Instructor, by Squadron Leader Bell and then Squadron Leader J.T. Mullen, the Station's Chief Technical Officer, by Squadron Leader Petrin.

The newly appointed Commander of No. 14 Training Group, Air Commodore H.A.C. Rutledge, visited the Station on September 19. The visit was part of the last leg of a familiarization tour which he was conducting of all the units in his new command. He returned on October 11 to conduct the AOC's annual Station Inspection. Later, on November 24, Air Commodore Rutledge accompanied Mr. Cornelius Staff, the Minister of War for the Netherlands, Mr. Lovink, the Netherlands Ambassador to Canada and Lieutenant-Colonel R.W. Wittert Von Hoogland, the Military Attaché for the Netherlands to Canada, on an official visit to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. While at the Station, Mr. Staff presented pilot's wings to the graduates of No. 2 AFS Course 5413. The

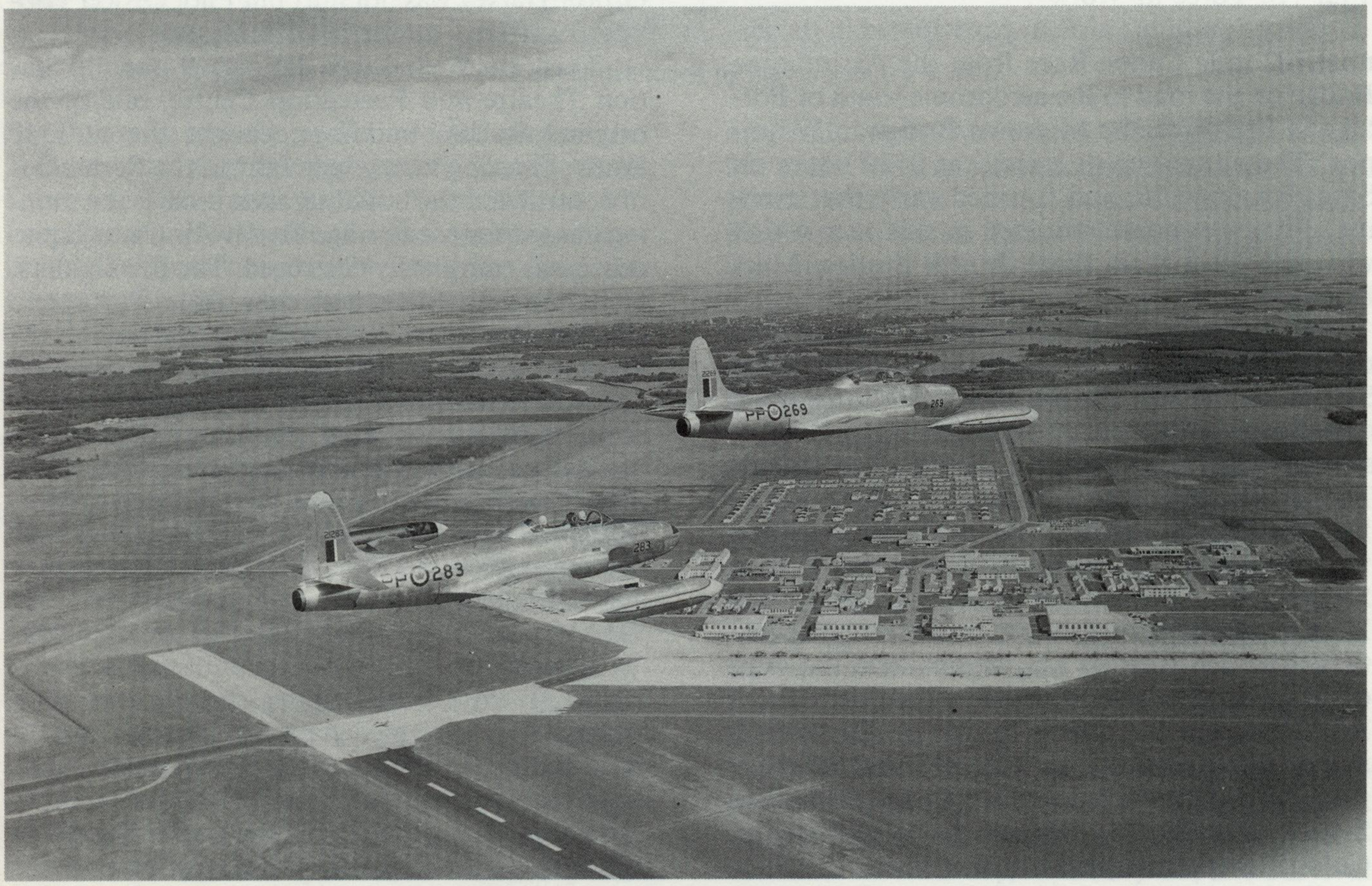


His Excellency Mr. Cornelius Staff, the Netherlands War Minister, inspects the Guard of Honour upon his arrival at the Station on November 24, 1955.

final visit of the year occurred on Thursday, December 15, when Lieutenant-Colonel Andre Depevois, the Naval and Air Military Attaché for the French Embassy in Ottawa, and Lieutenant-Colonel P.E.R. Thorendahl, the Norwegian Air Attaché from Washington, toured the Station.

While 1955 had been an extremely busy year from all aspects, 1956 was much less hectic. The visits started on Friday, January 13, when Major-General Rockingham returned to Portage la Prairie to officiate at a No. 2 AFS Wings Parade for forty-seven NATO pilot course graduates. Then on February 16, Lieutenant-General Firm Lambrecht, the Norwegian Chief of the Defence Staff, visited RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. He was followed a few days later, on Tuesday, February 21, by Air Commodore D.N. Roberts and Squadron Leader P.D.J. Woods, both from the United Kingdom service liaison staff in Ottawa. The purpose of their visit was to informally talk to the RAF students at the Station who were undergoing NATO pilot training at No. 2 AFS.

On Friday, April 6, forty-three student pilots received their wings. They were presented to the twelve Canadians and remaining graduates from Denmark, France, Norway and England by Group Captain G.H. Sellars, Commanding Officer of the RCAF Reserve Squadron in Winnipeg. The next Graduation Parade for another forty-three pilots, five Canadian refresher pilots, five new Canadian pilots, ten Danes, ten British, seven Dutch and eleven Norwegian candidates occurred on Friday,



Two No. 2 AFS T-33 jets in formation over the Portage la Prairie aerodrome in 1956.

May 18. Air Commodore Rutledge presented the wings.

The Station Commanding Officer, Group Captain C.A. Hiltz presented pilot's wings to forty-two NATO students on Friday, June 29. Then, on Friday, September 21, another thirty-eight students graduated from No. 2 AFS. Lieutenant-Colonel Wittert Von Hoogland returned to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie for the second time that year to present the wings to these new pilots, including his son. Earlier, on Thursday, May 17, Lieutenant-Colonel Wittert Von Hoogland had visited with the Netherlands trainers on course at the School.

Air Force Day at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie occurred on Saturday, June 9, 1956. Thousands of local residents visited the Station and viewed an air display which included up to fifty T-33 jets flying in various formations and low passes, a helicopter demonstrating its manoeuvrability, and a small army reconnaissance plane from Rivers which demonstrated a parachute drop of supplies. Besides a performance by the Station Band, a number of static displays, including a Link Trainer demonstration, helped to display to the visitors the theme for that year's Air Force Day, "See Your Air Force at Work".

Forty Southport airmen participated in the annual 102 mile Canoe Race from the Assiniboine Bridge on the road to the aerodrome south of Portage la Prairie to the Midtown Bridge in Winnipeg. The annual event started at 0330 hours on Saturday, June 16, and finished early that evening. Fifteen canoes competed in this race which was won by a team from RCAF Station MacDonald.

In September 1956, Air Commodore Rutledge concluded another AOC Annual Inspection of the Station on the 8th. During a mass Station parade of officers and airmen, he presented five Station airmen with the Canadian Forces Decoration. Then on the 28th, Air Commodore I.D. McLachlan, the Director of Training at AFHQ in Ottawa, accompanied Wing Commander C.L.W. Stewart, the Assistant Air Adviser to the British High Commission in Ottawa, on a visit to the Station. Air Vice Marshal J.G. Bryans, now the AOC of Training Command, paid a routine visit to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on October 22 and on November 14, Air Vice Marshal J.C. Kerr from AFHQ conducted a general inspection of the Station. Finally, on November 21, Lieutenant-Colonel Deperrois paid another visit.

During the research for this book, no air related incidents, accidents or deaths were discovered for 1956; a miraculous change over the situation of the previous year. However, several positive items were found. On June 15, the 1,000 Jet Hour Club was formed, with twenty-two pilots from No. 2 AFS qualifying as charter members. Although this was a national club, only a total of forty pilots, including those from Portage, were chartered members. Also, on December 14, at a Graduation Parade of thirty-four students, the first eleven Greek NATO pilot trainees won their wings. Air Commodore J.B. Harvey, AFC, CD officiated at this ceremony.

The only new piece of equipment acquired by the Station in 1956 was a new second telephone switchboard. This new piece of equipment went into operation on January 17, requiring the hiring of an additional switchboard operator. Finally, on September 30, a team from RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, won the Manitoba Provincial Skeet Shooting Championship.

The following year, 1957, proved to be a little more active. Things started to happen on January 3, when Flying Officer K. Harvey and Pilot Officer Popworth were forced to land their T-33 jet in a field three miles east of Southport. Flying Officer Harvey was not hurt but Pilot Officer Popworth suffered minor head injuries.

Then, on Wednesday, January 9, the old Station Theatre and Recreation Centre, one of the original Station buildings, caught fire at 1540 hours. Freezing west winds fanned the flames out of control and the building, then used as the training hangar for the Portage Terrier Air Cadet Squadron, was completely destroyed. The fire-fighters, including one truck and crew from Portage la Prairie, concentrated their efforts on saving the nearby buildings. All equipment was removed from the armourer's section and explosives were removed from a nearby munitions depot as a precaution. All but one of the twenty-five Silver Star jets airborne at the time were diverted to MacDonald. That one aircraft, due to a low fuel situation, was allowed to recover at the Station. Losses due to the blaze, including band equipment and "HAM" radio equipment, totalled over $20,000.

Students from ten NATO countries were learning to fly in Canada under the pilot training scheme which formed part of Canada's NATO contribution. In 1957, this agreement was expanded to include candidates from the West German Air Force. The training for the more than three hundred German aircrew began with basic training and followed through the normal RCAF train-



The old Station Theatre and Recreation Centre being destroyed by fire on January 9, 1957.

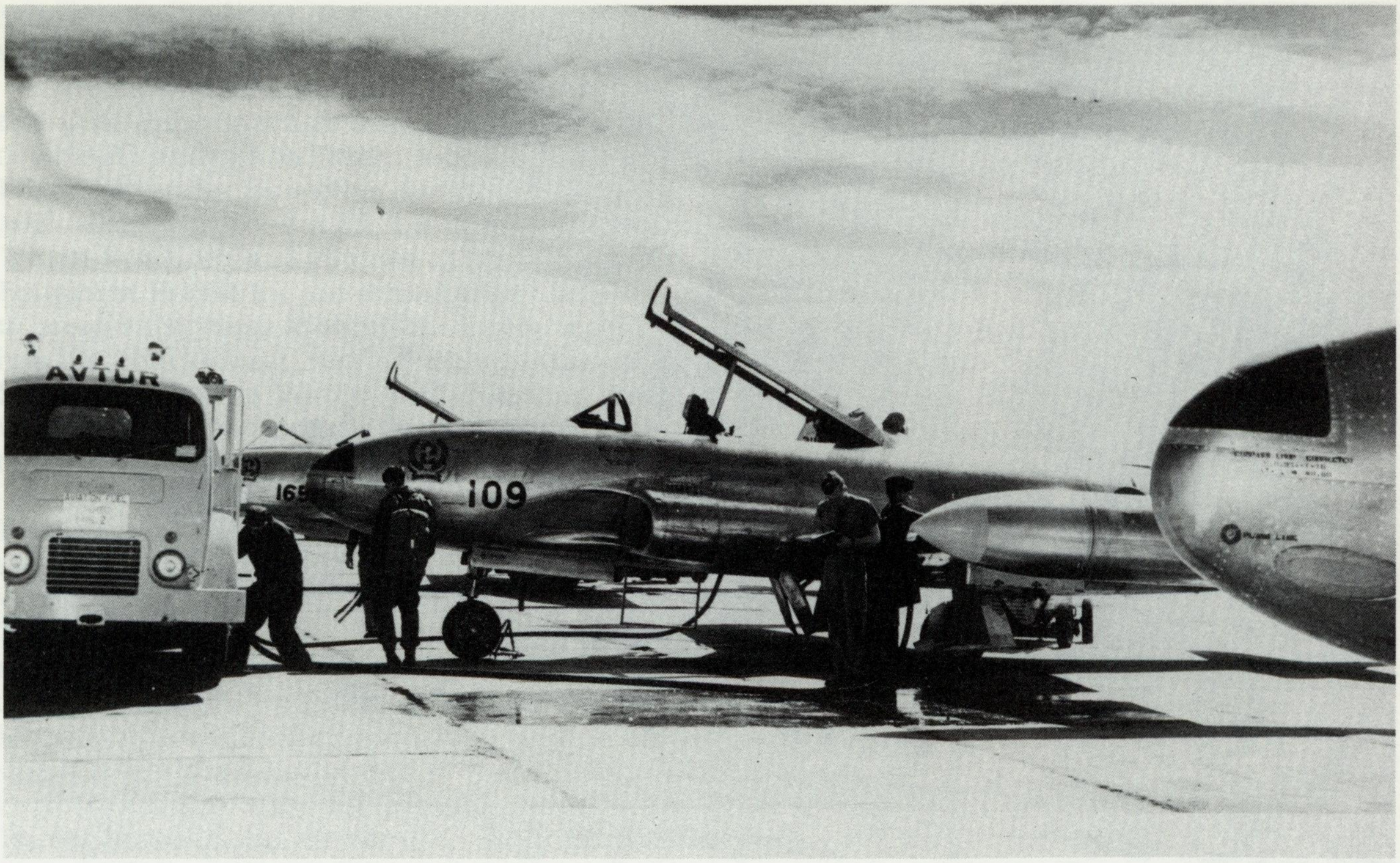
ing channels, including advanced training on the T-33 jet, until they became qualified on the F-86 Sabre jet. This training of the West German Air Force personnel was part of a package deal whereby the Germans bought 225 Sabre jets from the Canadair Limited of Montreal, worth more than $75 million. An additional seventy-five Sabre aircraft were given to West Germany under the neutral aid program for the NATO forces in Europe.

In this vane, three West German Air Force training officers, including two officers who had fought against the Allies during the Second World War, arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on Tuesday, January 15, 1957, by air from Moose Jaw. They were touring RCAF training units to study the type of training given to Canadian and NATO aircrews. When asked what he thought of the quality of training to be received by the West German pilot candidates, one of the visiting officers responded that he was "convinced they will receive the best training in the world here."

The jet pilot training at Portage la Prairie continued with another graduation ceremony for thirty-four NATO students occurring on Thursday, January 31. Mr. Walter Dinsdale, the Member of Parliament for Brandon-Souris, presented pilot's wings to twenty-three Canadian, eight French, two British and one Norwegian graduate. This ceremony also reunited two wartime aircrew mates, since Mr. Dinsdale and Group Captain Hiltz had served together on 410 (Cougar) Squadron, a night flying bomber squadron based in England.

On Friday, February 22, 1957, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie suffered its first flying fatality in over a year. Two No. 2 AFS T-33 jets departed Portage la Prairie for the weekend, at approximately 1430 hours that afternoon, on long distance training flights. One of the two T-33's, flown solo by Flying Officer Gilbert Russell, vanished in a snowstorm over the coast of British Columbia. The airplane was believed to have gone down in the Georgia Strait.

On Sunday, during an extensive search of the area which included the use of six aircraft, the jet's oxygen bottle was found ten miles west of Vancouver. The next day, February 25, the survival sleeping bag, believed to have been aboard the



T-33 jets being refuelled on the Portage la Prairie flight line.

missing jet, was washed ashore near Powell River, B.C. and an RCAF officer's cap was found on the beach of Bowen Island, ten miles from Vancouver. Finally, on Thursday, March 7, the wreckage of the Portage T-33 jet was discovered in the mouth of the Fraser River, less then one minute's flying time from the Vancouver Airport. The body of Flying Officer Russell was not found.

Almost two years to the day from when the first nineteen graduates received their wings on the T-33, No. 2 AFS graduated the RCAF Training Command's 1,000th jet pilot. Pilot Officer T.A. Williams and the thirty-nine other Canadian, Belgian, and Dutch graduates received their wings from Air Commodore K.L.B. Hodson, OBE, DFC.

A three year extension to Canada's involvement in NATO's Air Training Plan was announced on Thursday, April 18. This was a reversal of an earlier announcement in 1957 that Canada would soon be starting a phasing-out of its NATO training commitment for candidates from the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Turkey and Belgium. Under the new arrangement, Canada could be required to train annually 155 airmen including fifty-five Danes, thirty Dutch, sixty-five pilot and five navigator students from Norway, plus an additional thirty trainees from West Germany.

A week later, on Monday, April 22, it was also announced that the RCAF was considering "all jet" training for its student pilots. This would mean that the candidate would commence his training on a jet, something simpler than a T-33, and proceed to wings qualification. The RCAF was looking into four possible initial jet trainers, but as yet had not made a decision as to which one to buy.

On Saturday, April 27, Wing Commander R.T.P. Davidson, DFC, CD, succeeded Wing Commander Middleton as the Officer Commanding No. 2 AFS. A twenty year veteran, Wing Commander Davidson had joined the RCAF in 1937 and had flown over 800 operational missions in eighty different aircraft during both the Second World War and the Korean Conflict. He had just arrived back in Canada having spent the previous three years overseas, first with French Air Force's Air Division Air Firing Detachment at Rabat, Morocco and then with the USAF and RAF in Gibraltor.

The visits and graduations continued with a three day visit by seven officers from the Air Advisory Training Group of the Supreme Headquart-

ers Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Brussels. The visit commenced on May 14, with the purpose of observing and evaluating the training methods used by No. 2 AFS. They also gave a comprehensive Airmanship Exam to the next Graduating Course 5603 and to a number of the No. 2 AFS pilot instructors. Then on Friday, July 19, Wing Commander P.L. Davis, the Technical Services Officer at Portage, officiated at the No. 2 AFS Graduation Parade for Course 5603.

The first West German pilot candidate to receive wings from the Canadian NATO jet pilot training course graduated in an impromptu ceremony at Southport on Friday, August 16. He had received his initial training in West Germany and had only completed the jet portion of the training in Canada. He had been due to graduate with the rest of his course on August 30, however, due to the serious illness of a relative at home in West Germany, he was sent home early. His coursemates from seven NATO countries, including two more West Germans, did graduate as planned two weeks later. Group Captain E.B. Hale, the Senior Air Staff Officer at No. 14 Training Group Headquarters in Winnipeg, presented the wings. The senior West German officer present at the ceremony was Captain Carl Heinz Kech who had been a prisoner-of-war in Canada for five years after his Stuka dive-bomber had been shot down during a raid over Britain in 1940.

Air Commodore Rutledge conducted his annual inspection of the Station on September 17 and stayed over to officiate at another Wings Graduation Parade held the following day. Then, on October 4, His Excellency, the French Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Lacoste, and the French Consul in Winnipeg, Mr. Defleury, paid an informal visit to the Station. On October 24, Wittert Von Hoogland, recently promoted to the rank of Colonel, again returned to visit the Station.



Air Commodore Rutledge inspecting the Station parade during his annual inspection on September 17, 1957.

At a Graduation Parade for forty-one student pilots on Friday, October 11, 1957, the first four Royal Canadian Navy midshipmen to graduate from Portage la Prairie received their wings from Wing Commander Davidson, the Officer Commanding No. 2 AFS. Then on Friday, November 1, Group Captain Hale, from No. 14 Training Group Headquarters returned to present wings to twenty-seven pilot graduates. Finally, in the last Wings Graduation Ceremony of 1957, Major-General M.J. Megill, DSO, CD, the General Officer Commanding Prairie Command, came to the Station from his headquarters in Winnipeg to present wings to another forty-three NATO pilot graduates.

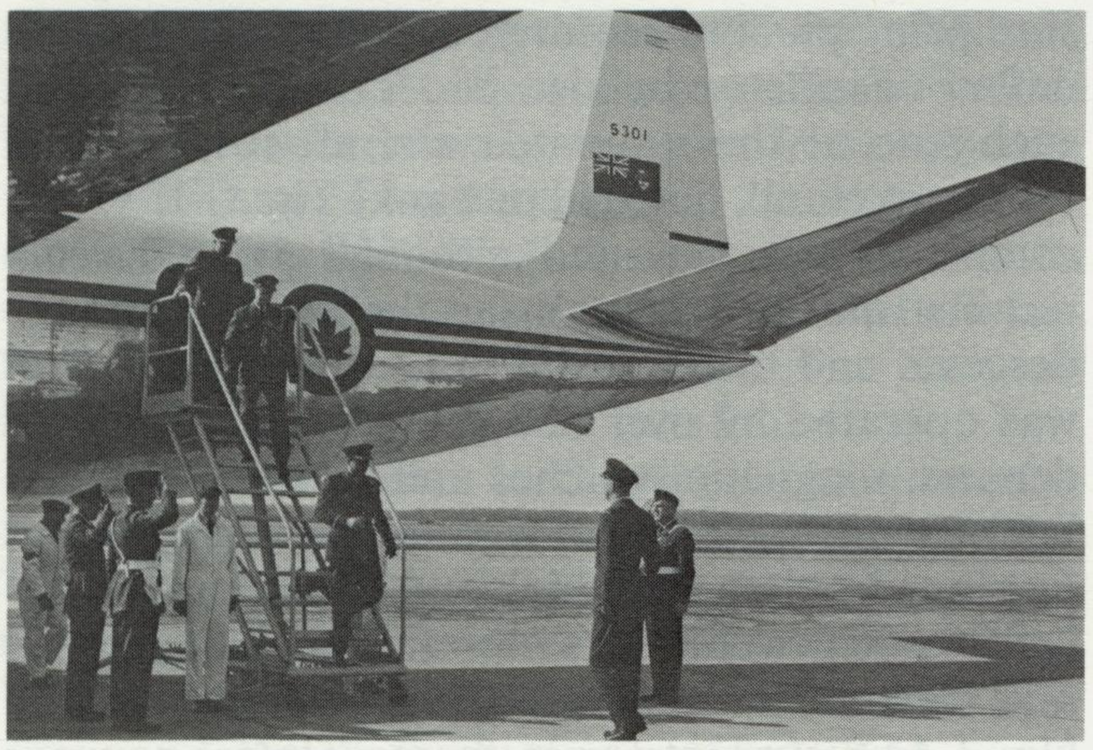
The Station's Link Trainer was replaced on October 31, by the C-11-C Modified Instrument Procedure Trainer. This new piece of training equipment was used to instruct the AFS pilot student in instrument flying rules and procedures. Although their purpose is generally the same, there was no similarity in outward appearance or mechanical make-up between the C-11-C and the Link Trainer. "The Link" worked on the air pressure principle and required a motor and tank to deflate or inflate a bellows under the nose, tail and each side of the simulated aircraft to allow the trainer to climb, descend or bank. The C-11-C was completely electronic and, although giving the correct instrument indications to the pilot for climbs, descents and turns, it did not move. The C-11-C was operated by over 300 tubes, numerous condensers, magnetic switches and fuses. It weighed 7,400 pounds, measured eight feet wide by sixteen feet long by eleven feet high and cost approximately $110,000 per unit. The objective in obtaining this new piece of equipment was to better prepare the No. 2 AFS student for instrument cross-country flying in the T-33 and, by so doing, to graduate as many pilots as possible with an instrument rating for the School.

The year ended with two tragic deaths. On November 23, Flying Officer M.E. Vaesin died in an automobile accident near Portage la Prairie. Then on December 30, a T-33 jet, flown by Flying Cadet Earl Newton Brown of Toronto, disappeared on the first leg of a routine, early morning, cross-country navigation from Portage la Prairie to The Pas, Manitoba. He had put out a distress call at 1040 hours. That afternoon, a T-33 flown by Flying Officer R. Clayton and Flying Officer

J. Currie spotted the wreckage of the missing T-33 about half a mile from Birch Island. However, divers did not locate the body of Flying Cadet Brown until the next day.

On a brighter note, 1957 also saw the special recognition of one particular Station personnel, Sergeant Reginald J. Shrimpton, the NCO in charge of the Aircraft Maintenance Workshops. On Thursday, May 30, 1957, he was the winner of a Suggestion Award for his modification of the T-33 gas tank cap. He had designed a roll-type gas cap which would not bind or break on removal. Spurred on by this special recognition, two years later, on Friday, May 29, 1959, Sergeant Shrimpton received his second Suggestion Award. This time he had suggested the changing of the adaptor assemblies used to obtain an effective seal in the fuel caps in the wing-tip of the T-33 aircraft.

The first important visitor to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie in 1958 was the West German Air Attaché to Canada, Colonel Schlichling. He visited on February 13, 1958. This was followed by an informal visit from Air Vice Marshal J.G. Bryans, AOC Training Command, on March 5. Then on Thursday, March 27, Air Marshal H.I. Campbell, CBE, CD, the newly appointed RCAF



Air Marshal Campbell embarking from his Comet jetliner upon his arrival at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on March 27, 1958. This was the first Comet to land at the aerodrome.

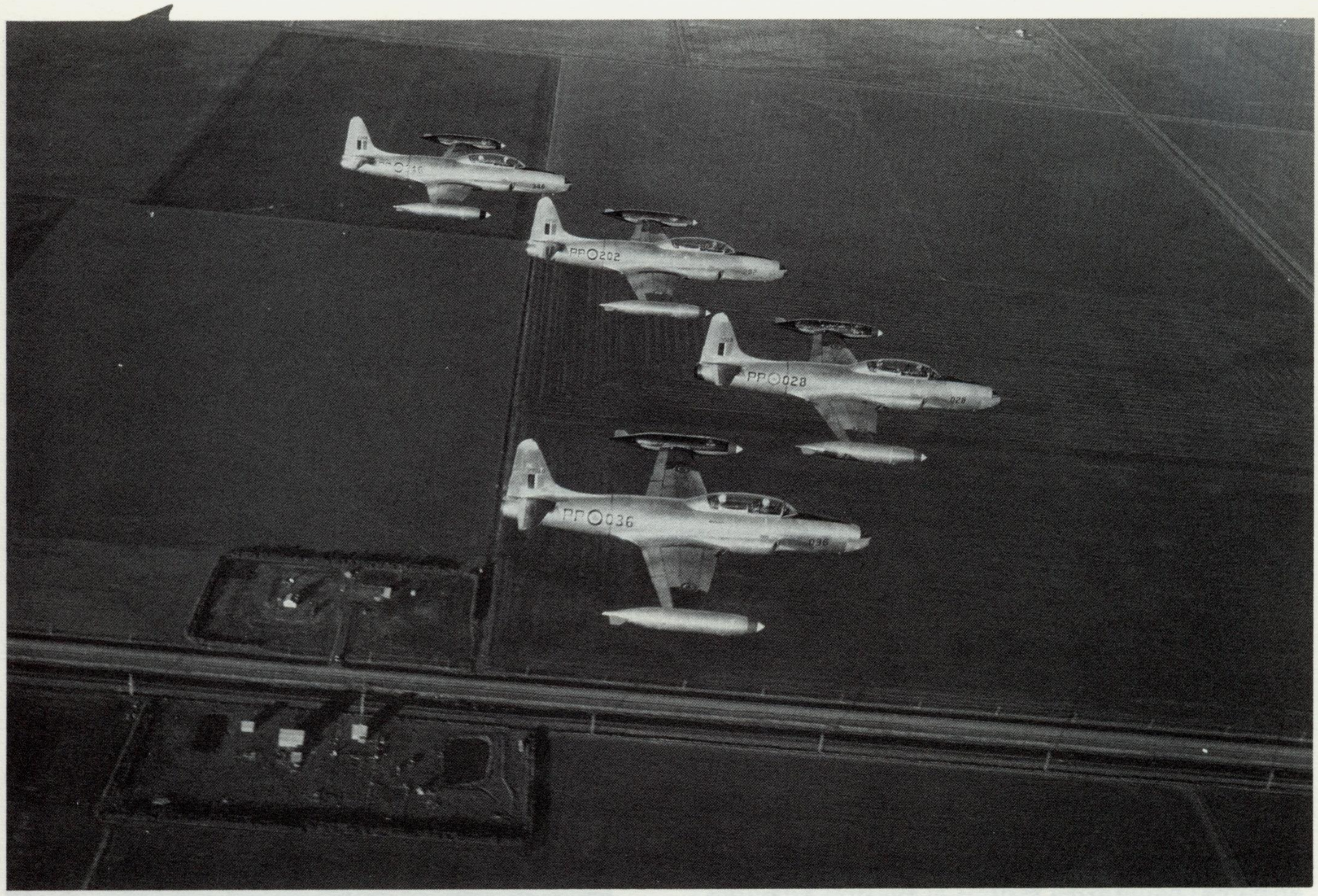
Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), paid his first, brief visit to the Station. Besides the importance of the CAS's visit, his arrival in a Comet passenger jet also created a lot of excitement. This was the first Comet to land at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie.

The first Pilot Graduation Ceremony for thirty-four student pilots occurred on Friday, February 22, 1958. Wing Commander Davidson, Officer Commanding No. 2 AFS, presented the wings to the twenty-seven Canadians and seven Norwegians. In particular, he congratulated the top course member, RCAF medical officer Flight Lieutenant A.J. Berry, for his success during this training. Group Captain Hiltz presided over the next graduation ceremonies for thirty-six pilots held on Thursday, April 5. Then on Monday, June 30, Air Commodore B.J.R. Roberts, the senior RAF officer at the United Kingdom Service Liaison Staff (Air) in Ottawa, presented wings to twenty-seven graduates, including seven RAF course members. These RAF graduates were the last ones to receive their pilot's wings at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie.

Friday, February 14, 1958, was an important day for the sporting community at the Station. The Southport Curling Club was officially opened when Group Captain Hiltz threw the first stone. Built by volunteer labour and using Non-Public Funding raised by over 900 Station personnel to purchase the supplies, construction on this building started in November 1957 and was completed by mid-January 1958. It took only one more month to put the finishing touches to the interior of the structure before it was ready to open up as a Curling Club.

Two other changes helped to improve life at the Station during the first half of 1958. On April 21, the Station's Education Centre and Library moved into its new renovated location at the former Dry Canteen. The old Education Centre had been vacated, renovated and turned over to the West German Liaison Staff to act as their Headquarters at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. Then, commencing May 22, the Bank of Montreal opened a part-time branch at the Station. It was open for four hours on two days each week and proved to be a great success and convenience for service personnel and their dependents.

RCAF Station Portage la Prairie held its annual Air Force Day event on Saturday, June 14, 1958. Over 5,000 spectators were treated to a flying display which included a perfectly executed flypast of thirty-six No. 2 AFS T-33 jet trainers. Several CF-100's, a Harvard and an F-86 Sabre from RCAF Station MacDonald also staged aerobatic demonstrations. The crowd was particularily impressed by the F-86 performance when it twice broke the sound barrier during its aerobatic sequence. Another impressive feature was a Jet Assisted Take-off (JATO) which lifted a Dakota aircraft into the air in a remarkably short distance. The event also had a number of static displays, including fifty demonstrations of the operation of the ejection tower. The RCAF Station Portage la



Four T-33 jets in formation near the Portage la Prairie aerodrome.

Prairie Band played at various points throughout the day and a special program by the Station's Dance Club provided entertainment at the new Station theatre. The event, a co-ordinated affair run jointly with RCAF Station MacDonald, was a great success.

On July 14, Course 5710 arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie with sixteen RCAF and seventeen German Air Force (GAF) students. This was the first course with German students who had started all of their pilot training in the RCAF system in Canada. Also, that same day marked the arrival of the German Liaison Staff in Portage la Prairie to administer and control all of the West German student aircrew being trained at schools within 14 Training Group. This Liaison Staff was relocated from its former location in RCAF Station Centralia. Course 5710 graduated on October 30, with Group Captain Hiltz presenting wings to the full course, including all seventeen of these first all-Canadian trained GAF graduates. The only other graduation of interest in 1958 occurred on August 8, when Wing Commander Hiltz again presented wings to the graduates of Course 5706, including the first thirteen Turkish students to be trained in Canada.

A landmark event occurred on July 19, 1958, when the NATO Cessation Ceremony was held at RCAF Station Winnipeg. It marked the end of the original agreement for the training of aircrew from NATO countries in Canada. However, under a separate new agreement, aircrew from Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and Turkey still continued to train in Canada for another year. RCAF Station Portage la Prairie sent an Honour Guard of fifty airmen with two officers in charge, plus eighteen NATO students (six Turkish, six Dutch and six Norwegian pilot candidates). The ceremony culminated with two fly-pasts by T-33 jets, one twenty-four plane formation from Station Gimli and a thirty-six plane formation from Station Portage.

Air Vice Marshal J.G. Bryans visited the Station on July 17-18, where he underwent aeromedical training, including a ride in the Decompression Chamber. Then, on July 28, Air Commodore Rutledge accompanied Herr Doctor Lanwer, the German Consul in Winnipeg, on a



No. 2 AFS T-33 jets ready for action on the flight line at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie.

brief tour of the Station. The visit was to acquaint him with the jet training that was being carried out at No. 2 AFS.

On August 26-27, recently promoted Air Vice Marshal Rutledge and his team returned to conduct their annual inspection. Finally, on September 4, Lieutenant-General A.G. Ljungdahl, the Chief of Staff of the Royal Swedish Air Force (RSAF) visited RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. He was accompanied by Brigadier-General B. Lindskog, the Swedish Air Attaché in Ottawa, and Brigadier-General S. Noren, RSAF. The General and his group were briefed on the syllabus of training for an RCAF pilot and then given a tour of the Station followed by an informal luncheon.

On July 22, the Station suffered its only fatality of 1958. Corporal J.G. Van Goor, Royal Netherlands Air Force, was killed in a crash of his T-33 jet trainer.

A traditional fund-raising activity, the annual Timmy Dance, started in 1958. The idea was formed when a group of Warrant Officers and Senior NCO's were watching television in their Mess one quiet evening. They viewed a program which had an incredible impact on them. In it, the well-known, late Canadian wrestler, Whipper Billy Watson, was interviewed concerning his devoting of much of his spare time to helping crippled children. As a result of this program, Warrant Officer Tommy Robinson and Sergeant Tony Rothwell became very interested in helping out crippled children as well. They conceived the Timmy Dance idea, which was held in the Warrants and Sergeants Mess in 1958 and raised $600.00. For the following thirty-one years through to 1989, the Timmy Dance was held as an annual fund-raising event sponsored by the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, with the help of the Junior Ranks Mess. Details of the Timmy/Tammy Dance (so named because the disabled child guest of honour could be either a boy or a girl or both) are contained in Appendix G.



Pilot Officers Murfitt and Kitching review map reading and navigation with their instructor, Flying Officer Ross Swan.

Finally, the last Wings Graduation Ceremony for 1958 took place on Friday, December 19. Group Commander G.A. Hiltz presented pilot's wings to twenty Turkish, ten Canadian, three Dutch and two Danish students. With this graduation ceremony, another successful training year at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie was completed. To conduct and support this training, roughly 1,000 personnel were then employed at Southport, including some 300 civilians. The Station had eighty-five aircraft worth an estimated $20,000,000 and burned in excess of ten million gallons of jet fuel annually. These airplanes took-off and landed at the aerodrome more than 168,000 times each year during the 37,000 yearly flying hours flown by the instructors and students. At the end of 1958, the monthly take-home pay for all personnel employed at the Station was calculated at $300,000.

The first event of note in 1959 was another Graduation Parade on Friday, January 30. Group Captain Hiltz again presided over the ceremony, presenting thirty-three NATO students with their wings. Next came the tragic death of a Station pilot on Thursday, March 3. He was killed when his T-33 crashed and exploded near Riverton, Manitoba, seventy miles north of the Station.

Changes to occur in the RCAF flying operations in the Portage la Prairie area were outlined in RCAF Operations Order 5.16 issued on April 1, 1959. The disbandment of 14 Training Group Headquarters, the move from Trenton to Winnipeg of Training Command Headquarters (TCHQ) and the disbandment of 4 AFS and the closure of RCAF Station MacDonald effective May 31, 1959, were all authorized. Most of these moves occurred as a result of the termination of the NATO aircrew training agreement. Training Command's training programme was substantially reduced and 4 AFS became surplus to the training needs of the RCAF.

Furthermore, on April 9, it was announced that:

> "to facilitate relocation of 1 Flying Instructors School (1 FIS), effective September 4, 1959, in conjunction with the relocation of TCHQ, it has been decided to detach the advanced portion of 1 FIS to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, effective June 8, 1959."

As a result, in order to authorize RCAF Station Portage la Prairie's responsibility for providing support services to RCAF Station MacDonald and 1 FIS Detachment Portage la Prairie, its Organization Order was amended effective September 12, 1959, to read:

> "The role of this Station shall be to:
> a. control and/or provide administrative services for the units comprising RCAF Station Portage la Prairie in accordance with their individual Organization Orders; and
> b. control the RCAF Station MacDonald site."

RCAF Station Portage la Prairie was further directed "to provide services as required in support of AMC storage activities at the MacDonald site and Medical and Dental services for the service personnel there." This occurred because the hangars at the MacDonald site were transferred to Air Maintenance Command (AMC was still headquartered at RCAF Station Rockcliffe in Ottawa) as a storage site for jet aircraft and associated support equipment when No. 4 AFS disbanded.

Also, with the pending closure of RCAF Station MacDonald to be effective May 31, 1959, an initiative was started to permit RCAF Station Portage la Prairie to take advantage of some of the new surplus facilities located there.

On the operational side, Air Vice Marshal J.C. Bryans recommended in a letter to AFHQ dated August 11, 1958, that it was desirable to man the tower and retain the aerodrome itself as a satellite airfield for AFS operational requirements at Gimli and Portage la Prairie. He argued that such a facility would provide Station Portage la Prairie with greater safety and flexibility in the choice of locations for touch and go landing. It would also facilitate the ferrying of jet aircraft to and from storage at MacDonald for AMC. Also, with Central Flying School moving to Winnipeg, he could foresee an air traffic flow problem there. However, reduction in the anticipated total traffic flow of both jet and piston-driven aircraft at Winnipeg would occur if MacDonald could be used as an optional aerodrome. Unfortunately, AMC did not agree with the need to man the Tower at MacDonald and, in a response letter from AFHQ on March 5, 1959, TCHQ was advised that:

> "on the basis of existing flying training commitments, the establishing of personnel for the purpose of providing restricted flying facilities at Station MacDonald cannot be justified."

Any further discussion of this suggestion ceased.

The second proposal was to make use of many of the 190 Married Quarters located at MacDonald. The original plan was to move 167 of these houses to Station Portage la Prairie. Unfortunately, the idea was rejected by the Treasury Board on November 20, 1959, which suggested in-

stead that "the personnel of Station Portage la Prairie might occupy the Married Quarters in their present location". While pursuing this option, it was decided that any personnel from RCAF Station Portage la Prairie occupying a Married Quarter at MacDonald should be provided with normal amenities such as schooling, churches, a recreation centre and transportation to and from their parent unit. To accomplish this requirement, a total of forty-five extra personnel (nine for transportation, twenty-six for Married Quarters and facility upkeep and ten to conduct school, church and recreation centre operations) were needed at an annual cost of $162,000 in pay and allowances alone. Consequently, the Treasury Board responded on December 22, 1959, that "because of the additional personnel required, it is considered that Portage la Prairie personnel should not occupy PMQs at the MacDonald site". In addition to rejecting the proposals to move some or all of the MacDonald Married Quarters to Station Portage la Prairie and to move Station Portage la Prairie families into on-site Married Quarters at MacDonald, on January 27, 1960, the Treasury Board also rejected a programme to build new Married Quarters at Station Portage la Prairie.

The RCAF still viewed the housing shortage in Portage la Prairie for its personnel as being critical and again, on October 13, 1960, approached the Treasury Board asking for authority to move approximately 100 of the MacDonald housing units to Station Portage la Prairie at an estimated cost of $600,000. Once more, neither the Deputy Minister nor the Treasury Board agreed to this final proposal and, on November 10, 1960, closed the discussion concerning RCAF accommodation in the Portage la Prairie area by suggesting that, "additional housing for Portage be sought through a rental housing scheme". However, on a positive note, the RCAF was given permission by the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie Council on Thursday, March 12, 1959, to move buildings from RCAF Station MacDonald to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on condition that the RCAF would be responsible for any damage to roads, bridges, culverts or personal property. One building, a large metal storage shed, was moved from MacDonald to Portage la Prairie and now acts as the Base's natural ice, covered skating rink.

Number One Flying Instructors School Detachment - Portage la Prairie

On Monday, June 8, 1959, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie became host to another flying unit when the advanced flying detachment of the Number One Flying Instructors School Detachment - Portage la Prairie (1 FIS Det Portage) arrived from Trenton. The new unit was housed in No. 4 Hangar and its blister changed from the haunted home of the 2 AFS D ("Demons") Flight "to a new shrine dedicated to the production of QFIs (Qualified Flying Instructors) for the jet schools." 1 FIS Det Portage consisted of fifteen officers, headed by Squadron Leader G.C. MacDonald and an establishment of fourteen T-33 Silver Star jets and one C-45 Expeditor aircraft. The first eight candidates (the normal succeeding course student strength was fourteen) for 1 FIS Det Portage arrived on July 6, 1959 for a twelve week course. The flying instructor trainee was given fifty hours of Ground School and eighty hours of flying. At the end of this course, the candidates emerged as QFIs, complete with an instrument rating, and proceeded to an AFS as a staff instructor.

In July 1959, two more members of No. 2 AFS became eligible for membership in the world famous Caterpillar Club when they successfully ejected from their tumbling T-33. Flying Officer Gordon Hipkin, RCAF, and Sergeant March, RDAF, were not seriously injured. When interviewed after his return to the Station, Flying Officer Hipkin said that "he was glad to be back but didn't think that the nylon descent would ever prove as popular as the normal beacon letdown." In a second incident on Thursday, October 29, a Portage la Prairie jet crew emerged unhurt from a crash when their T-33 blew a tire on take-off from the Fort William, Ontario airport.

The second Station Change of Command Ceremony occurred on Wednesday, August 5, 1959. Group Captain J.R. Frizzle, CD, replaced Group Captain Hiltz who departed Portage la Prairie on a posting with NORAD at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Group Captain Frizzle, from Berwich, Nova Scotia, had flown more than fourteen different aircraft during his twenty-two years of RCAF service. In fact, on Tuesday, September 22, 1959, he received the bar to his CD from Air Vice Marshal John B. Bryans, AOC Training Command.

RCAF Station Portage la Prairie had its annual Air Force Day event on Thursday, 23 July 1959. A large group of spectators turned out for the annual event and, in particular, to view the highlight of the day, the air display and manoeuvres of the RCAF "Golden Hawks" precision aerobatic team. The team was touring Cana-

da that summer to commemorate the RCAF's 35th Anniversary and the Golden Anniversary of powered flight in Canada. Along with a number of aircraft from the Station, the Golden Hawks also performed in a special Aviation Day celebration at RCAF Station Winnipeg on August 8, 1959.

The jet training curriculum at 2 AFS was also extended from sixteen to twenty-four weeks in June 1959. This change meant that the students were flying 126 hours instead of the former eighty-five hours, as well as receiving additional academic and officer training. When the advanced course had been fully implemented, there were four courses in residence at any one time, with an intake and graduation occurring every six weeks. Also in 1959, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie was chosen to be the location for the filming of "You Have Control." This was a leadership training film produced by the National Film Board of Canada. Filming commenced on Monday, December 21. This filming, combined with a very successful Christmas Party held in the new Recreation Centre gymnasium, attended by over 1,000 dependent children, ended a year of several significant changes at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie.



"On the set" during the filming of the National Film Board of Canada production, "You Have Control", in late December 1959.

The "Sixties" started off with some interesting events. First of all, on January 15, 1960, Flight Sergeant W. Smith was presented with a Suggestion Award for his modification to the T-33 Instrumentation System. Then, on January 19, Group Captain Frizzle was asked to attended the opening ceremony of the Manitoba Legislature in Winnipeg. Next, on February 16, a CBC Televsion Show with a theme based on RCAF jets entitled "How About That" featured RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. Jim Michell, a Winnipeg commentator, produced and narrated the show. It featured Station personalities, Flight Lieutenants Morrice and Greidanus, in action shots of a T-33 flight and the shock of ejection (including an ejection tower demonstration), and Flying Officer Longard, the Aeromedical Training Officer, running through a decompression chamber run.

Next, on February 22, Air Commodore M.P. Martyn, the Chief Staff Officer at Training Command Headquarters, visited the Station to review its general administrative procedures and to discuss the NPF programme for 1960-61. One of these NPF plans discussed during the review was the donation of a television to the Deer Lodge (DVA) Hospital in Winnipeg. This presentation occurred on March 16, 1960.

On April 8, 1960, the awarding of a special "Queen's Commendation" to Flight Sergeant R.M. Cameron of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie was announced. The commendation scroll outlined the actions for which it was received and read:

> "Flight Sergeant Cameron was a passenger in a T-33 jet aircraft carrying out a cross-country flight at 37,000 feet on 11 October 1959. The eyesight of the pilot became very seriously impaired, and Flight Sergeant Cameron, a GCA Controller with limited flying experience, took over control of the aircraft for approximately 15 minutes during which time he "homed" on a radio beacon, descended through cloud, performed aircraft checks, worked the radio and expressed a willingness to land the aircraft. By this time the pilot had sufficiently regained his eyesight to land, but Flight Sergeant Cameron provided considerable aid during the approach and landing operation. His resourcefulness and skill saved a valuable aircraft and possibly prevented the loss of two lives."

Flight Sergeant Cameron, the Chief GCA Controller at the Station, achieved another milestone in his military career on June 10, 1960, when he completed his 10,000th GCA run. The aircraft which he guided into a landing was flown by Squardron Leader R.G. Moir.

The following month, on May 19, 1960, the members of the NATO Air Training Advisory Group stationed in France visited the Station. These officers from Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and escorted by Canadian officers were evaluating Canadian training methods with the aim of improving the training

systems used in their own countries. Group Captain Frizzle briefed the group members on the flying training methods employed at No. 2 AFS. These officers were particularily impressed with the great number of monthly hours accumulated by the School. For example, during the six month period between December 1, 1959 and May 31, 1960, No. 2 AFS flew 14,942 hours and 25 minutes.

Air Commodore Martyn, CD, conducted his annual tour and inspection of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on June 7, 1960.



Air Commodore Martyn, accompanied by Group Captain Frizzle, inspects the Station parade during his annual inspection on June 7, 1960.

Wing Commander Davidson, DFC, CD, completed his tour as the Officer Commanding No. 2 AFS, on June 24, 1960. He was an officer with an enviable record of achievement in both the Second World War and the Korean Conflict. He left Portage la Prairie to assume the position of the Operations and Plans Staff Officer at the 26th NORAD Regional Headquarters at Hancock Field in Syracuse, New York. Two months later, on August 18, 1960, Wing Commander Lee, CD, was transferred in from the AWU in Decimomannu, Sardinia to assume command of No. 2 AFS.

In 1960, aircraft accidents continued to plague RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. The first one occurred on Thursday, February 25, when a student pilot, Flying Cadet E.H. Miklossy of Calgary, Alberta, flying a routine solo mission encountered a mishap while landing his T-33. He was not injured and the aircraft suffered only minor damage.

The next accident occurred at 1424 hours on July 7, 1960, when two FIS T-33's flying a formation session at 12,000 feet at 400 miles per hour collided over Miami, Manitoba. Both planes crashed near Miami, one about two miles to the northwest and the other about a half mile to the east of the town. Fortunately, in this accident all four aircraft occupants ejected safely, adding four more names to the Caterpillar Club. They were Flight Lieutenant A.S. Nichol and Flying Officer D.C. Turgeon, the instructors, with their students Pilot Officers B.A. Nelson and P.R.P. Whitney. A Miami couple, Mr. and Mrs. R.L. Hunt, who lived near the site where the collision occurred, were hosted at the Station in appreciation for the assistance they provided to the downed pilots and the medical and technical members of the rescue team.

The third accident, a fatal T-33 crash, occurred on September 19, 1960, near Baldur, Manitoba. The aircraft (No. 21522) was on a routine training flight when it went down. Killed were Flight Lieutenant David Rea of Whitley, Ontario, an instructor who had recently transferred to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie from RCAF Station MacDonald, and Pilot Officer R.G. Robson of Belleville, Ontario, an ROTP student. Both bodies were found in the cockpit of the aircraft, but the aircraft engine and other parts of the plane were found on the crash scene buried fifteen feet into the soft ground.

A number of visits occurred in 1960. On July 18, thirty-two Officer Cadets from Collège Militaire Royale de Saint Jean toured the Station. They got to try the ejection tower and "fly" in one of the C11B simulators. A week later, on July 26, Group Captain Rattagan of the Indian Air Force visited the unit.

The Annual Station Inspection, conducted by Air Commodore M.P. Martyn, the Chief Staff Officer at Training Command Headquarters, was held on Tuesday, June 7.

Finally, on October 26, Air Vice Marshal J.G. Bryans, CBE, CD, the Air Officer Commanding Training Command Headquarters in Winnipeg, visited RCAF Station Portage la Prairie for the final time before his retirement in December 1960. He inspected the Station and then spent an informal evening in the Officers' Mess with forty Station Officers.

The graduation ceremonies continued to occur at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, with a parade being held on Friday, August 19, 1960. Sixteen student pilots from Canada, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands were presented with their wings by Major I.H. Jensen, the Danish Liaison Officer from Training Command Headquarters in Winnipeg. With this course graduation, the fly-

ing training commitment for Dutch students was completed. Only Norwegian, Danish and Canadian pilots were trained at No. 2 AFS from that date on.

Three more graduation ceremonies occurred in 1960. On Friday, September 9, Group Captain D.E. Galloway was the Reviewing Officer for nine pilots who graduated as instructors from 1 FIS. Then, on September 30, Lieutenant-Colonel W. Burton, ED, CD, the Commanding Officer of the 26th Field Battery, visited the Station. As part of his visit, he presented pilot's wings to the graduates of Course 5906. Finally, on Wednesday, December 21, five Danes and two Canadian pilot graduates were presented with their wings by Lieutenant-Colonel T.H.K. Wichman, the Royal Danish Air Force Attaché to Ottawa.

Three other noteworthy events occurred in 1960. Two of them happened on October 21. That day, the Butler Building arrived at Portage la



The Butler Building, with its new "lean-to", was officially opened for use on December 15, 1961.

Prairie from MacDonald. It was to act as a covered winter skating area, featuring a natural ice surface, for Station personnel and their dependents. An addition, in the form of a "lean-to", was subsequently built onto the original structure. It contained a snack bar, a lobby, change rooms and washrooms. Consequently, that evening over five hundred people attended the Autumn Ball held in the Social Centre. The proceeds from this event went toward assembling the new arena building and constructing its lean-to addition, and the remaining funds were used to cover the cost of renovations to the new Social Centre. The arena and the new addition were completed and officially opened on December 15, 1961.

The flying instructors from RCAF Stations Portage la Prairie and Gimli combined their talents twice in 1960 to fly air formation demonstrations. First of all, on June 6, twenty-two T-33's from Portage la Prairie and twenty-two from Gimli flew a formation reading "RCAF" at the Ottawa Airshow. The Portage la Prairie pilots formed the "RC" while the ones from Gimli did the "AF". They repeated the formation demonstration later on that summer in Toronto at the Canadian National Exhibition.

The last event, another first for RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, occurred on November 14, 1960. Following a two hour flight from its home unit in Edmonton, the first RCAF Hercules turbo-propeller transport airplane landed at the Station. It was piloted by Wing Commander C.C.W. Marshall, the Officer Commanding of 435 Transportation Squadron.

The new Air Officer Commanding Training Command, Air Vice Marshal H.M. Carscallen, DFC, CD, visited RCAF Station Portage la Prairie



Air Vice Marshal Carscallen, the new AOC Training Command, is greeted by Group Captain Frizzle upon his arrival at the Station on January 20, 1961.

on January 20, 1961. He returned later that year, on September 6, to conduct his Annual Station Inspection. Other visitors to the Station were Air Commodore Gray, the officer in charge of Organization and Maintenance at AFHQ, and Group Captain F.E. Baker. They were accompanied by Air Commodore Martyn from Training Command Headquarters and had come to the Station to discuss the RCAF Maintenance Management Project.

On the administrative and social side, 1961 was a busy year. One of the events occurred on April 21, when twenty-one Station airwomen attended a special banquet as part of the Airwomen's An-

niversary Celebrations being held to mark the twentieth anniversary of their inauguration into the RCAF. Flight Lieutenant Pope, the Personnel Officer of the Airwomen at Training Command Headquarters, was the guest of honor.

The Station newspaper, "The Jet Air", ceased publication on August 31, 1961. It was replaced by a weekly newsletter publication known as "Chatterings". It is still being produced, but now only on a monthly basis.

While on the subject of methods of communication, it is interesting to note that, on October 2, 1961, the Manitoba Telephone System agreed to provide dial telephone services to the entire Base. This task was completed in two segments. The first one providing direct dialing service to the Married Quarters was completed by June 1962. The provision of this service to the operational side of the Station was installed by November 1962. A new twenty-three by twenty-three foot square building was constructed on the Station to house this new telephone equipment. The exchange was capable of handling 500 phones. The final administrative note for 1961, is that, on November 1, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie assumed the responsibility for providing MSE support and Construction Engineering services at the RCAF Station MacDonald Detachment.

Two significant Base development moves occurred in 1961. On June 13, 1961, telecom ground and the tower staff moved into the newly constructed control tower. Along with the new tower, a new, modern transmitter site, a necessary adjunct to the new tower, was also activated. All of the new equipment in both structures was installed by the Station's Telecom Section. At the time of this transfer, the Portage la Prairie Tower was one of the busiest air traffic control facilities in the country.

Next, on September 7, the new Social Centre in Building 12, formerly known as the Airmen's Wet Canteen, was opened by Group Captain Frizzle. With this move necessitated other accommodation changes. Specifically, the Airmen's Wet Canteen was relocated into Building 44, formerly the Band Room. It was opened for business the same day under the name "The Wagon Wheel". Finally, the Station Band moved from Building 44 into Building 5 which had formerly been the Social Centre.

The Station's annual Open House was held on July 21, 1961. It was planned in conjunction with the graduation ceremonies for Course 6003 and featured flying demonstrations by the Golden Hawks and the Red Knight. Over 5000 attended the festivities and airshow. Then, on September 4, twenty-one T-33 aircraft from RCAF Station Portage la Prairie participated as a formation team at another annual airshow at the Canadian National Exhibition (C.N.E.) in Toronto.

Several more air accidents occurred in 1961. The first one happened on May 30, when a T-33 (aircraft No. 21551) crashed at Carman, Manitoba, while on a routine training mission. The pilot, Flying Cadet Gerry Colombo, of Cumberland, British Columbia, bailed out of the aircraft but died shortly afterwards in the hospital in Carman from injuries he suffered while ejecting. He was posthumously awarded the rank of Flying Officer and presented with the RCAF pilot's wings, both effective May 30, 1961. His aircraft plowed into the ground two miles south of Carman and exploded.

Then, on September 7, a mid-air collision involving two T-33's occurred in the circuit during routine training missions. The two T-33's involved were aircraft No. 21278, piloted by Flying Officer Malone, and aircraft No. 21244, piloted by Flying Officer Cepuck. Both pilots managed to safely land their respective airplanes and neither pilot was injured.

Of the final two flying incidents of the year, the first one occurred on October 2, 1961. While attempting a night instrument landing at RCAF Station Saskatoon, No. 2 AFS T-33 No. 21308, carrying Flying Officer H.J. Adair, the instructor, and Flying Officer D.R. Martin, the student, crashed and burned. Both officers successfully escaped from the aircraft. Then, on November 8, student pilot Flying Officer D.B. Yake of Portage la Prairie, while on a clearhood solo flying exercise, became another member of the Caterpillar Club. About forty-one minutes after take-off, his T33 aircraft (No. 21568) went out of control near Swan Lake, Manitoba. Flying Officer Yake successfully ejected, receiving only minor injuries but his airplane crashed and was destroyed.

RCAF Station Portage la Prairie assumed a new function on Monday, October 2, 1961, when an interim Target Area Headquarters was established and commenced operations in one of the Station's two storey wartime buildings. This headquarters was to plan and practice re-entry operations into Winnipeg in the event of a nuclear attack. Its peacetime staff was to consist of sixteen officers and airmen, plus one civilian typist. The senior staff officer on site, Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Innes, arrived in Portage la Prairie on Oc-

tober 16, having completed a special two week training course conducted at the Canadian Civil Defence College in Arnprior, Ontario.

As a final note for 1961, on August 9, letters were sent out to local area residents along five new low-level T-33 flight training routes. The routes were to be flown at a height of 800 feet above ground at airspeeds of between 300-400 miles per hour. This new low-level flying requirement was implemented to prepare the pilots who were being sent to the new CF-104 Starfighter jet.

On January 31, 1962, the first operational accident, a ground incident, occurred. While refuelling a T-33 aircraft (No. 21327) from RCAF Station Gimli, one of the tip tanks exploded. LAC Grant, the Portage la Prairie technician performing the duty, received extensive burns. Then, on March 5, 1962, the Station lost another aircraft, T-33 No. 23315. It was being flown by Flying Officer R.K. Heard, the instructor, and Flying Cadet W.R. Carlson, the student, on an air training exercise of circuits and landings at the aerodrome. During an overshoot, the aircrew heard an explosion and, while advising the tower of the emergency, Flying Officer Heard attempted to relight and started a climbing turn away from the Station to convert airspeed to altitude. Almost immediately, smoke appeared in the cockpit and the fire warning light appeared on the instrument panel. Heard ordered his student to eject and then safely ejected himself as the aircraft approached a height of 400 feet and approached stall speed. The pilots survived, but the plane was lost.

Another T-33 aircraft, No. 21516, was lost on April 6, 1962. It crashed at approximately 1430 hours, five miles south of Notre Dame, Manitoba. Both instructor aircrew, Flight Lieutenant Ross and Flying Officer Schnepf, ejected safely and were picked up by Station rescue personnel shortly afterwards.

Then, on June 1, 1962, Flying Officer Gene Lukan, in a T-33 from RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, saved another RCAF aircraft when he guided a CF-100 with radio and cabin pressure failure back to Winnipeg. The incident occurred just one hour after the CF-100 had left Portage la Prairie on the second leg of a cross-country flight from Comox, British Columbia to St. Hubert, Quebec. The jet had lost its radio and cabin pressue while flying at 33,000 feet. The pilot immediately descended to 1800 feet and then flew the distress pattern until Department of Transportation Air Traffic Controllers were able to form up Flying Officer Lukan with the disabled CF-100, then approximately eighty miles to the east of Winnipeg. The T-33 then acted as "the Shepherd" for the CF-100 aircraft and a successful recovery was accomplished.

One serviceman posted to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie died in 1962. On December 21, the Station's Christmas activities were marred by the death of Sergeant Lorne C. Gordon. He was killed in an automobile accident which occurred on the Trans Canada Highway, about seven miles east of Portage la Prairie.

Over 3000 people attended the annual Air Force Day activities held on June 30. The festivities commenced at 1300 hours with a RCAF Station Portage la Prairie Band Concert. The Red Knight and Golden Hawks again highlighted the air demonstrations, with the "Smokers" aerobatic team from Gimli and the "Goldilocks" team of Harvards from Saskatoon also participating. Static aircraft, the ejection tower demonstrations and a Search and Rescue display rounded out the ground displays.

Once again, for the second year in a row, pilots from Portage la Prairie participated in the C.N.E. Airshow in Toronto. On this occasion, Squadron Leader P.L. Gibbs, DFC, AFC, CD, the Chief Flying Instructor at No. 2 AFS, led a fifty-two plane T-33 formation. All of the aircraft were from two Training Command units, with twenty-six jets belonging to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie and the other twenty-six jets from RCAF Station Gimli. For its fly-past of the spectators, the formation was formed up in the letters "RCAF".

Several important visitors came to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie in 1962. The first of these was Air Commodore J.A. Verner, the Chief Staff Officer at Training Command Headquarters. He visited and conducted an inspection of the Station on March 14. Then, on June 11, Air Vice Marshal D.H. Holder, DSO, DFM, the RAF Assistant Chief of Training, accompanied by Air Commodore Boxer, the Senior Liaison Officer on the United Kingdom Liaison Staff in Ottawa, visited Portage la Prairie. Finally, two days later, on June 13, Air Vice Marshal Carscellan carried out his annual inspection of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie.

During the second half of 1962, two Station staff members were singled out for special recognition. First of all, on August 11, Flying Officer Bob Pitcairn received a congratulatory letter from the Chief of the Air Staff, commending him on winning the Governor General's Rifle and Pistol

Match for 1962. His success marked the first time that a member of the RCAF had won this coveted small arms shooting award.

Next, on October 15, a unique ceremony was performed at the Station. It marked one of the few occasions that a Senior Canadian Officer was able to present an award to a USAF officer. In this instance, USAF Exchange Officer, Captain Richard A. Burpee was awarded the USAF Commendation Medal in recognition of his meritorious service performed with the USAF from June 20, 1958 to May 26, 1962.

In April 1962, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie assumed responsibility for providing security services to the RCAF Station Lincoln Park (later renamed RCAF Station Calgary on July 18, 1962) Detachment at MacDonald. Then, on July 25, 1962, a new unit, Number 5 Manpower Standards Unit (No. 5 MPSU), which was originally planned to be located at Station Saskatoon, was relocated instead to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie.

The final graduation ceremony of the year occurred on Thursday, December 6, 1962. Air Commodore Diamond, CD, AFC, the Chief of Personnel Services at AFHQ in Ottawa, presented pilot's wings to the fifteen graduates of ROTP Course 6105.

A number of dignitaries visited RCAF Station Portage la Prairie during 1963. The first of these visitors was USAF Colonel James A. Gunn III, the Commanding Officer of Reese Air Force Base. He presented wings to the first group of pilot graduates of 1963 on Friday, January 18. Next, Air Marshal C.R. Dunlap, CBE, CD, accompanied by Air Marshal Carscellan, inspected the Station on February 20. Then, on May 17, Air Commodore Martyn paid an informal visit to the Base.

This was followed a few days later, on May 24, with Major-General P. Zigler, the Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief of the Royal Danish Air Force (RDAF), as the guest of honour at the graduation ceremony for Course 6109. This course consisted of ten RCAF and eight RDAF. The visitors also viewed ground displays and air demonstrations flown by the Red Knight, and a large multi-jet formation team completed two fly-pasts, one formation read "RCAF" and the second read "RDAF".

Air Vice Marshal Carscellan paid a last pre-retirement visit to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on June 21, 1963. Group Captain Frizzle, the Station's Commanding Officer, who hosted his boss during this visit, was himself honoured at a Mess Dinner on June 26. The purpose of the event was to honour Group Captain J.R. Frizzle and Squadron Leader C.G. MacDonald on the occasion of their retirement. Just prior to the start of the dinner, both Red Knights put on an air demonstration and two formations of T-33's, spelling out the letters "JR" and "CG" were flown. Also at the dinner, suitable presentations were made to Major Jensen, a Danish Air Force Liaison Officer, who was also retiring and to Wing Commander A.B. Howell who was being transferred from Training Command Headquarters in Winnipeg to Air Force Headquarters in Ottawa.

Another retirement occurred before 1963 ended. On Tuesday, December 10, Wing Commander Lee, the Commanding Officer of No. 2 AFS, retired after twenty-three years of service with the RCAF. This was followed by one last salute from Station personnel at a Formal Retirement Ball on June 29 to bid farewell to their boss. On July 5,



Congratulating the new Commanding Officer of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, Group Captain B.E.I. Christmas (left), on July 20, 1963, is Wing Commander C.C. Lee. Wing Commander Lee had been the Acting Commanding Officer during the interim period since Group Captain Frizzle's retirement and departure three weeks earlier.

Group Captain Frizzle departed Portage la Prairie for Halifax, Nova Scotia, to commence his retirement. Since his replacement, Group Captain B.E.I. Christmas, had not yet arrived from his previous posting at the Spokane NORAD Sector at Larson Air Force Base in Washington to take over command of the Station, Wing Commander C.C. Lee assumed the position of Acting Commanding Officer during the interim period.

During his brief stint as the Acting Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Lee oversaw the Annual Air Force Day held on July 12. It featured the Golden Hawks and the Red Knight Air Demonstration Teams, plus a number of ground displays. That evening, a Station Dance was held in the Recreation Centre. It was open to the general public and was well-attended.

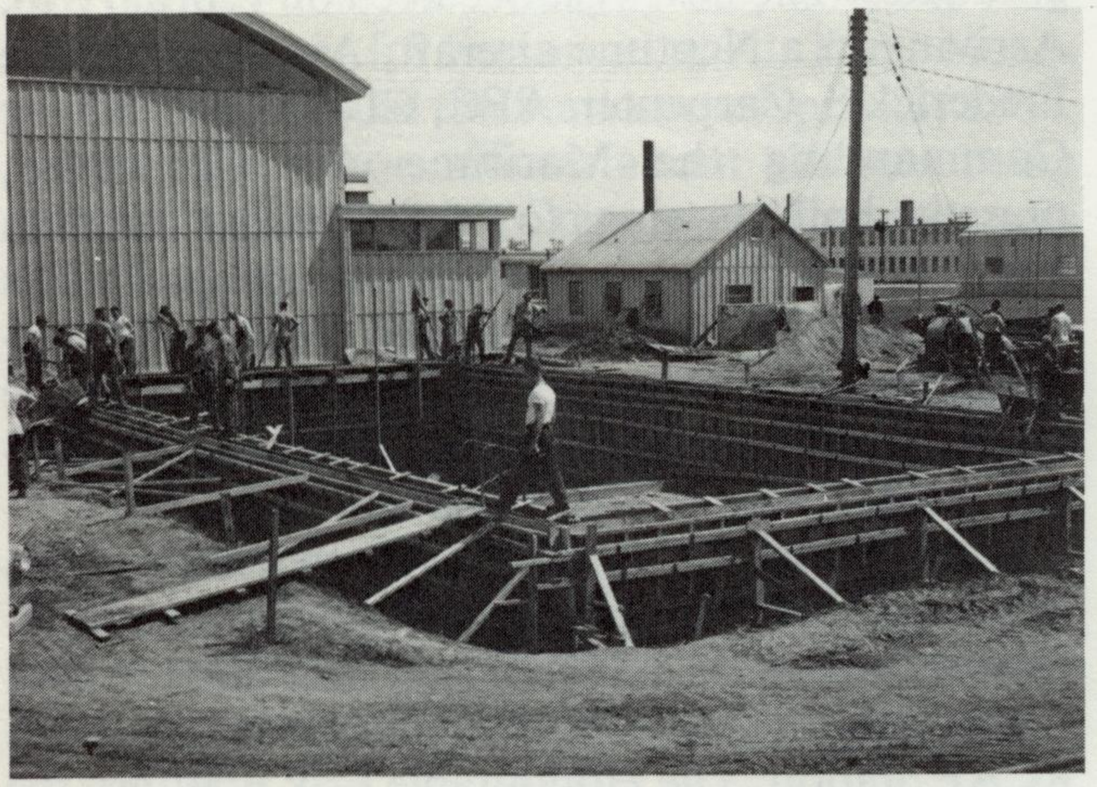
On September 23, 1963, the new Air Officer Commanding Training Command, Air Vice Marshal C.H. Greenway, paid his first informal visit to the Station. He returned on November 1 to attend a briefing at the Training Area Headquarters (Army) in Portage la Prairie on National Survival Operations. A similar briefing was presented at Portage la Prairie to Major-Generals Rockingham and Allard on December 11.

Then, on August 7, Group Captain Christmas performed one of his first formal acts as the Station Commanding Officer when he officially opened the new swimming pool. This new recreation facility was attached to the west end of the Recreation Centre. Also in 1963, on June 21, the Station's Air Traffic Control capabilities were further enhanced when the newly constructed RATCON installation was transferred to the Station and became an operational supplement to the new tower.

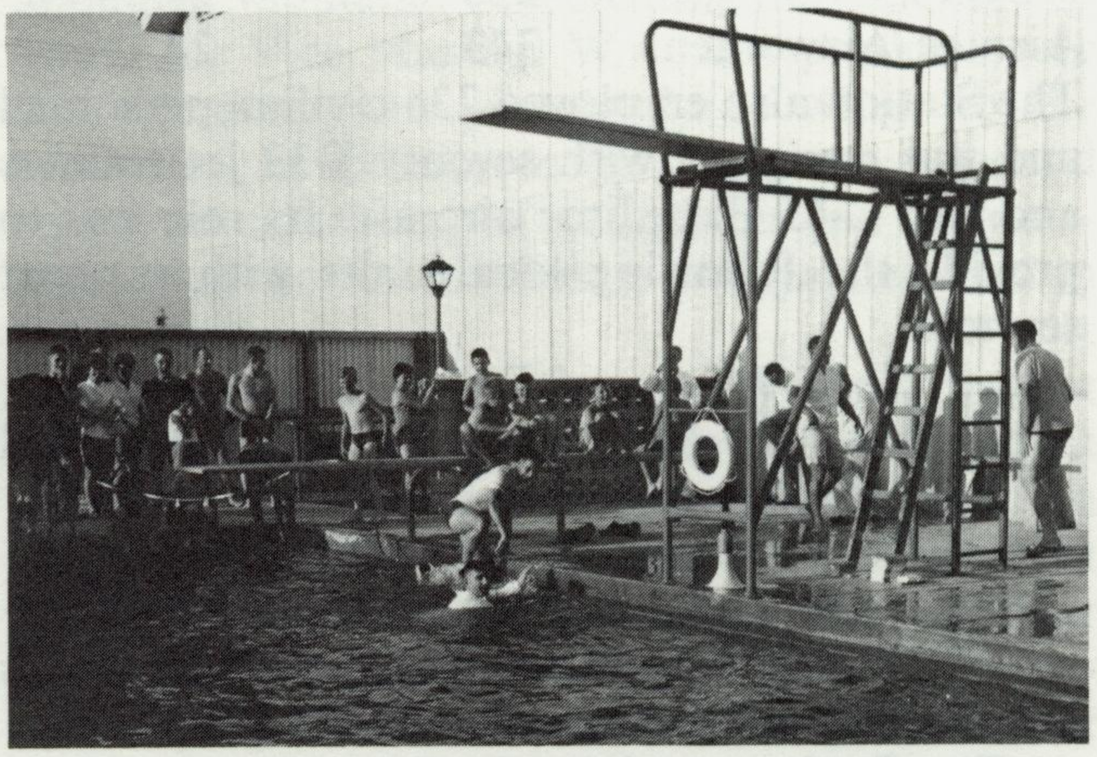
Two flying firsts occurred at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie in 1963. First of all, on April 10, an Argus multi-engine aircraft from RCAF Station Greenwood paid the first visit by this type of airplane to the Station. The Argus, piloted by Group Captain R.A. Gordon, the Commanding Officer of RCAF Station Greenwood, put on a brief air display before landing, and was then open for ground tours. Then, on October 3, the first Tutor arrived at Portage la Prairie. It was flown by Group Captain H. Everard and Mr. D. Freeborn, an employee of the jet's manufacturer, CANADAIR of Montreal. The purpose of their visit was to display the new CL41 Tutor Jet Trainer and give briefings on its merits to the Station aircrew and maintenance personnel. Several familiarization flights in the local training area were also given to senior Station officers.

Continuing with flying, on the training side, only one significant flying incident was recorded to have occurred in 1963. This mishap occurred at approximately 1545 hours on August 8, near Baldur, Manitoba, approximately forty miles southwest of Portage la Prairie. Flying Officer H.J. Adair from Barrhead, Alberta and his student, Officer Cadet J.O.A. Olson from Dryden, Ontario, both RCAF officers, successfully ejected from their crippled T-33 jet, suffering only minor injuries.

The only death recorded at the Station in 1963 occurred on September 27. While driving home following the graduation ceremonies for Course 6203, a No. 2 AFS flying instructor, Flying Officer D. Hansen, was killed in an automobile accident which occurred at the bend in the road leading from the Station to the City, about one mile north of the aerodrome.



The swimming pool under construction to the west of the Recreation Centre in June 1963.



The new swimming pool was "opened for business" by Group Captain Christmas on August 7, 1963, as an open-air pool. It has since been enclosed for year-round use.

The continuing saga of the closure of the RCAF site MacDonald culminated with the June 10, 1963 announcement that, "it has been decided to evacuate and disband the RCAF Storage Site at MacDonald, Manitoba". This closure was to occur effective November 30, 1963. At that time, the MacDonald site was turned over to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation for disposal. Until this was accomplished, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie relinquished all responsibility for the site, except for providing security in the form of three commissionaires.

Finally, two more visits of note occurred in 1963. The first of these occurred on Monday, July 29. A five man team, headed by Squadron Leader J. Coyne, arrived from the Institute of Aviation Medicine to conduct some experimental research using the Station's ejection tower. Accompanying the team as a medical officer, on a one year attached tour of duty with the RCAF, was Squadron Leader Dharmaraj of the Indian Air Force.

Lastly, on Thursday, November 7, 1963, Air Vice Marshal C.H. Greenway, the AOC of Training Command, arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie to visit the Canadian Army Target Area Headquarters. He was met by Group Captain Christmas and Lieutenant-Colonel D.K. Brown, the Commanding Officer of the Target Area Headquarters.

At the end of 1963, the Station's Annual Historical Report indicated the Station manpower strength as being 824 military personnel divided as follows:

Rank	Male	Female
Officers	216	4
Warrant Officers	9	0
NCOs	226	2
Airmen/Airwomen	343	22

The Station also employed 235 civilian personnel and was equipped with seventy T-33 jet trainers and two C-45 Expeditor aircraft. Its role was to provide the following local units with support services:

a. No. 2 Advanced Flying Training School;
b. No. 1 Flying Instructors School Detachment;
c. No. 5 Manpower Standards Unit;
d. Army Training Area Headquarters; and
e. No. 575 Royal Canadian Air Cadet Corps (Terriers) Squadron.

The final year of the Jet School's operations at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie commenced with a Wings Graduation Ceremony held on Friday, February 7, 1964. Air Vice Marshal Greenway returned to the Station to present pilot's wings to the twenty-one Canadian and three Danish graduates. The next visit occurred on February 16. Arriving in a Neptune aircraft, Air Commodore Frederick S. Carpenter, AFC, CD, the Air Officer Commanding the Maritime Air Command, presented pilot's wings to twenty-seven Canadian and five NATO graduates. One of the graduates was his son. This was followed by a visit and briefings conducted by Group Captain A.B. Searle, the Director of Flight Safety at Air Force Headquarters, on March 11.



The Reviewing Officer for the Wings Graduation Parade of Course 6206, Air Vice Marshal C.H. Greenway, AOC Training Command, arrives at the Station's Recreation Centre on February 7, 1964, accompanied by Group Captain Christmas.

On Wednesday, April 1, 1964, the Station held a special Mess Dinner to mark the 40th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the 20th Anniversary of the Station at Southport as an RCAF Station. The Honourable Erik F. Willis, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, was the guest speaker at the dinner.



The Honourable Erik F. Willis, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, cuts the anniversary cake during the RCAF's 40th Anniversary celebrations held at the Station on April 1, 1964.

Then, on March 31, all single airwomen were transferred to other units in Training Command. The barrack block formerly used by these women was then converted to Single Officers' Quarters. Meanwhile, on the domestic side, life improved in the Married Quarters with the installation of new furnaces in each house. The project was completed on February 28, 1964.

No. 2 AFS lost its last T-33 jet aircraft flying out of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on Tuesday, April 28, 1964. While flying a routine solo training mission about eleven miles to the southeast of the Station, a 23 year old Royal Norwegian Air Force pilot trainee, Officer Cadet Oystein Dahl, experienced problems with his airplane. He was forced to eject, suffering only minor injuries. He subsequently received his Golden Caterpillar Club Award on Tuesday, May 26.

Air Vice Marshal Greenway, accompanied by Air Commodore M. Martyn, CD, now the Acting Air Member for Personnel at Air Force Headquarters, arrived at the Station on April 23, 1964, to brief the senior officers about changes being planned within Training Command. These changes included a plan to move No. 2 AFS to RCAF Station Moose Jaw, to relocate the twin-engine training unit, No. 1 AFS, from the Canadian Joint Air Training Camp (CJATC) at Rivers, Manitoba to Portage la Prairie, and finally to amalgamate FIS "B" in Moose Jaw with FIS "A" to form No. 1 Flying Instructor School (No. 1 FIS). RCAF Organization Order Number 5.16, issued on June 15, 1964, confirmed that these changes would occur by stating:

> "It has been decided to reorganize Training Command's flying schools as follows: Central Flying School (CFS) shall be relocated from RCAF Station Gimli to RCAF Station Winnipeg; 2 Advanced Flying School (2 AFS) shall be relocated from RCAF Station Portage la Prairie to RCAF Station Moose Jaw and shall combine with 2 Flying Training School; 1 Flying Instructor School (1 FIS) shall be relocated from RCAF Station Moose Jaw to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, 1 Advanced Flying School (1 AFS) shall be relocated from CJATC Rivers to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie."

These changes were to be in place by August 31, 1964.

In preparation for its new role, a new Tactical Air Navigation Unit (TACAN) facility was to be installed. Construction on the new TACAN building, to be located between the two main runways, commenced on June 2, 1964. The new TACAN facility was complete, and the Station Telecommunications Officer accepted the installation from representatives of Air Materiel Command on November 10, 1964. With the installation and use of the TACAN being adopted by the RCAF, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie maintenance personnel were assigned the task of installing the airborne TACAN devices on seventy-one T-33 jets from the fleets at RCAF Stations Portage la Prairie and Gimli. The project was completed on May 12, 1964.

On June 4, 1964, Air Vice Marshal Greenway conducted his annual inspection of the Station. Then, on June 13, 1964, a joint ceremonial parade was held at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. The parade acted as a Wings Graduation Ceremony for Portage la Prairie Course 6301 and it also marked the acceptance of the Tutor jet aircraft by Training Command. Representing the Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal W.A. Orr presided over the ceremony and presented the wings to the graduates. In addition to the graduates, a second squadron, consisting of one officer and forty airmen, plus the Station Band, also participated in the parade.

The next Wings Graduation Ceremony, the last one involving No. 2 AFS personnel trained at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, took place on August 28, 1964, for Course 6303. The eight RCAF and five RDAF graduates received their wings from Air Vice Marshal (Retired) I.F. Stevenson. Flying Officer Crobb received the Honour Scroll. Air Vice Marshal and Mrs. Greenway were also present at the ceremony which was not only a Wings Graduation, but also marked the termi-

nation of NATO student training at Portage la Prairie. Air displays for the occasion were flown by the Red Knight and the new FIS "Vikings" formation team.

Two Wide Awake Awards were presented by Group Captain Christmas in 1964. The first one was presented to Corporal H.M. Myers on Monday, July 13, for his quick action in extinguishing a fire under a T-33, thereby preventing a serious aircraft fire. Then, on Thursday, September 3, Sergeant J. Degelman, a Radar Controller, received the award for his cool, quick thinking in directing a T-33 aircraft to a safe place to land after the pilot became lost in heavy rain and thunderstorms and was critically low on fuel.

Changes to the Portage la Prairie aircraft fleet started to occur on July 26, 1964, when the first two Chipmunk aircraft arrived from RCAF Station Gimli. Later, on August 2, C-45 Expeditors from RCAF Station Moose Jaw and CJATC Rivers started to arrive, and the ferrying of the RCAF Station Portage la Prairie T-33 jets to Moose Jaw commenced.

Finally, on August 31, 1964, this history of No. 2 AFS at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie was completed. No. 2 AFS was relocated to RCAF Moose Jaw and became part of the No. 2 Flying Training School (No. 2 FTS). That same day the entire No. 2 AFS staff and the students of Course 6304 were also transferred to Moose Jaw. Many of them flew there in the remaining thirty-five T-33 jets which were also deployed to Moose Jaw, with one T-33 being sent to RCAF Station Gimli.

The Jet School Decade had ended and RCAF Station Portage la Prairie was now ready to commence the next phase in its history of training military aircew.

Chapter Three

The Multi-Engine Training Period

A new period of aircrew training at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie commenced on September 1, 1964. The move of No. 1 Advanced Flying School (No. 1 AFS) was completed with the arrival of the School's staff, plus the final twenty-one expeditors from Rivers and two from Moose Jaw. Squadron Leader R.H. Janzen moved with No. 1 AFS and continued as the School's Commanding Officer. The role of this School was to conduct twin engine advanced flying and conversion training and to provide refresher training to pilots returning to flying tours upon completion of administrative duties. The School commenced its flying operations on September 6.

September 1, 1964, also marked the relocation date for the Flying Instructors School "B" Detachment from RCAF Station Moose Jaw, where it had been located since FIS was split up on its move out of Trenton in June 1959. It was amalgamated with the Flying Instructors School "A" Detachment located at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, also since June 1959. This reunited unit was named the No. 1 Flying Instructor School (No. 1 FIS), with the role of training flying instructors for the RCAF. The new school was commanded by Acting Wing Commander J.W. Whitely.

Two senior officers visited RCAF Station Portage la Prairie during the early fall of 1964. On September 23, Lieutenant-General G.F. Walsh, CBE, DSO, CD, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, arrived to address all Station officers on the integration process being implemented at the Canadian Forces Headquarters (CFHQ) in Ottawa. He was accompanied by Army Captain A.J.G.D. de Chastelain (presently the Canadian Forces Chief of the Defence Staff), his Aide-de-Camp. Then, on October 16, Air Vice Marshal Greenway accompanied a number of USAF Training Command officers, led by Major-General Van Sickle, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the USAF Flying Training Command at Randolph Air Force Base, on a tour of the Station. The visitors received a briefing on the Station's new training role and they also participated in the annual seasonal small arms shoot.

November 6, 1964 was a very busy day. It started off with a visit by Vice Admiral K.L. Dyer, DSC, CD, the Chief of Personnel at CFHQ. He briefed Station officers on the progress of the integration process as it affected the members. He also took part in the first Wings Graduation for the students of the new unit, No. 1 AFS. Course 64-1 consisted of thirteen Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and two RCAF graduates. That same day, the Army Manitoba Area Headquarters conducted a civil defence exercise. It was supervised by Brigadier H.W. Steme, the Manitoba Area Commander, and involved over five hundred Army personnel. Finally, fifteen USAF B-57's were deployed to, and launched out of, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on November 6, as part of a NORAD exercise.

Air Commodore C.W. Burgess, the former Station Commander, and at that time, the Chief of Staff Officers at Training Command, returned to Portage la Prairie on November 20. He was the guest speaker at a Mess Dinner. A week later, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, the Prime Minister, arrived at the Station in a Department of Transport aircraft to participate in a local Chamber of Commerce event in Portage la Prairie. Finally, in 1964, the project to replace the concrete floors in Hangars 1 and 3 was completed on December 31.

Besides being a year of change after a decade of relative stability, 1964 was also a very busy operational year for RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. By year-end, a total of 146,299 air movements were reported for the year. In its Annual Historical Report, the Station was reported to have had a

military strength of 692, a reduction of 130 military staff personnel from the previous year. They were distributed as follows:

Rank	Male	Female
Officers	137	4
Warrant Officers	10	0
NCOs	232	1
Airmen/Airwomen	305	4

The civilian employees on staff had also decreased by two to 233. The aircraft fleets had changed as well and were reported as being ten T-33's, thirteen Tutors, three Chipmunks and thirty-one Expeditors. At the end of 1964, the Station supported these units:

a. No. 1 Flying Instructors School;
b. No. 1 Advanced Flying School;
c. No. 5 Manpower Standards Unit; and
d. No. 575 Royal Canadian Air Cadet Corps (Terriers) Squadron.

The first event of 1965 was an official change of name for one of the units at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. On January 15, No. 1 AFS was redesignated No. 3 Flying Training School (3 FTS). The role of this school was to conduct a thirty week Advanced Pilot Training Course to wings standard for RCAF and RCN students. It also provided a twelve week Dual Stream Course for RCAF Tutor pilots and Canadian Army pilots, to bring them up to the same wings standard on the C-45 Expeditor aircraft.

The next significant event occurred one month later. In a noonhour ceremony held in front of the Station Headquarters Building on Monday, February 15, the outgoing Canadian flag, the Red Ensign, was lowered for the last time. It was replaced by the new Canadian Maple Leaf flag which was officially raised for the first time. The new Canadian flag has been raised daily ever since. Also, during this same ceremony, the RCAF Ensign was lowered for the last time.

A few days later, on Friday, February 20, Air Marshal Clare L. Annis, OBE, CD, conducted an inspection tour of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. During his visit he was accompanied by Air Vice Marshal Greenway, the Air Officer Commanding Training Command, and these senior officers were hosted by the Station's Commanding Officer B.E. Christmas. The only other significant visitor to the Station was Air Vice Marshal F.R. Sharp, DFC, CD. During a tour of the Training Command units, they passed through Southport on Wednesday, November 24.

During the period April 15-20, the Assiniboine River flooded, overflowing its banks, thereby making the main road from Southport to the City of Portage la Prairie impassable. The only real problem on the Station which was a result of the flooding occurred on April 17 in Hangar 5. Due to a blockage of the hangars drainage system, the water backed up, raising to a height of five inches throughout the hangar.

Also in early 1965, the RCAF, concerned about the physical fitness level of its personnel, encouraged the inclusion of mandatory physical fitness testing and training. This requirement led to the imposition of a compulsory noonhour physical education programme for all Station personnel. It proved to be successful since a physical fitness evaluation of 464 of the 632 male personnel on the Station, conducted later in the year, saw 327 or 70% of them achieving a satisfactory fitness level result.

Later, in the spring of 1965, the Station received the trophy for winning the annual RCAF Stations Portage la Prairie-Rivers Sports Day. Six separate sporting events were part of this friendly competition. During the three summer months, the pool was opened almost continuously for the use of all Station personnel and their dependents. As a result, more than 230 dependents received swimming and life-saving instruction at the pool.

Also in 1965, the Stations' Maintenance Section was assigned the responsibility for conducting a Tutor undercarriage modification programme. Work commenced on September 1 and, by year-end, sixty-three Tutor jet aircraft had been modified. At the same time, Bristol Aerospace Limited in Winnipeg performed a Tactical Air Navigation Unit (TACAN) installation project on the C-45 Expeditors. Improvements to the airfield occurred on October 22, when the installation of the Visual Approach Slope Indicator System (VASIS) on Runways 30L-30R and 12L-12R was completed and declared operational. Then, on November 1, the Avionics Section was created as a separate group of the Aircraft Maintenance Section.

Operationally, in 1965, 3 FTS graduated fifty-seven pilots on the C-45 Expeditor on nine Dual Stream Courses. The loss rate for failures on these courses averaged only 1.7%. There were also three Wings Graduation Parades for the thirty-one graduates of the thirty week course. The failure rate on these courses averaged only 9.7%.

The first one of these Graduation Parades occurred on Friday, May 7, when Captain J.W. Dangerfield, CD, the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve

Commanding Officer of HMCS Chippawa in Winnipeg, presented Royal Canadian Navy pilot's wings to twelve RCN pilot graduates. Brigadier Anthony J.B. Baily, DSO, OBE, ED, CD, presided over the presentation of pilot's wings to the next graduating class of thirteen Naval graduates on Friday, October 24. Finally, the last graduation parade of the year was held on Friday, December 17. The Honourable R. Malacela, the Tanzanian Ambassador to the United States and the High Commissioner to Canada, presided over the event when he presented pilot's wings to the six Tanzanian graduates of Special Tanzanian Course No. 1.

During the year, several Station personnel distinguished themselves. Probably the most significant of these were the return of the Bisley Grand Aggregate Challenge Shield, originally presented by the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association in 1877, to Canada for the first time in thirty years. It was won by Flight Lieutenant Robert Pitcairn who achieved 576 points out of a possible 605 in the premier rifle events. Also honoured in November 1965 were Flight Sergeant T.W. O'Bee who received a cash award for a suggestion bound to save the government money. Flight Sergeant C.J. Grimsen (and Corporal E.J. Tyers of RCAF Moose Jaw) also received special recognition when they suggested the removal of carbon seals from the engines of the Tutor jet. Then, in December, Corporal A.E. Gill, who designed a sling used to help with the installation of the engine into the airframe following a major overhaul on the Tutor jet, also received a Suggestion Award.

Finally, a Change of Command Ceremony occurred on September 3, 1965, when Group Captain Victor C.H. Stuart assumed command of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. He replaced Group Captain B.E. Christmas who was transferred to RCAF Station Winnipeg.

By the end of the year, Wing Commander J.W. Whitely still commanded No. 1 FIS, Wing Commander R.H. Janzen commanded 3 FTS, and Flight Lieutenant R.D. Kirkley commanded No. 5 MSU. The staff consisted of 708 military personnel, all ranks, and 189 permanent and 37 casual civilian employees. The Station had a fleet of eleven T-33's, fourteen Tutors, four Chipmunks and thirty-two C-45 Expeditors.

In 1966, the effects of integration were really starting to be felt. For example, on April 1, as part of the integration of the Canadian Armed Forces, RCAF Station Portage la Prairie was redesignated as Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Portage la Prairie, and the Commanding Officer was now known as the Base Commander. Also in 1966, on October 13, responsibility for No. 1 FIS was transferred to the Central Flying School (CFS) in Winnipeg. It continued to operate at Portage la Prairie under the designation Central Flying School Detachment (CFS Det) Portage la Prairie.

Prior to its name change, No. 1 FIS experienced two changes of command. On January 24, 1966, Squadron Leader J.A. McNeill replaced Wing Commander Whitely as the Officer Commanding No. 1 FIS. He was subsequently promoted to the rank of Acting Wing Commander on February 1. The future Unit Commander, Squadron Leader R.A. Crouch, arrived at No. 1 FIS to assume the role of the unit's Chief Flying Instructor. He later replaced Wing Commander McNeill as the Officer Commanding of No. 1 FIS on August 1. Wing Commander McNeill was posted to Duluth, Minnesota.

Throughout the year, 3 FTS graduated fifty-four pilots on conversion to the Expeditor, and thirty-nine candidates received their wings. The first Wings Graduation Parade was held on Friday, February 4. Commodore R.W. Trimbell, DSC, CD, RCN, presented graduation scrolls and pilot's wings to twenty-two members of the RCN and RCAF. Then, on Wednesday, March 30, Group Captain James A. Arnott, the Base Commander at CFB Gimli, made the pilot's wings presentations at the next parade.

This graduation parade was followed by another on Friday, April 29. Air Vice Marshal Frederick R. Sharp made the wings presentations to the graduates of Course 6501. This parade marked the first time that the City of Portage la Prairie Flying Award Trophy was presented. Mayor H. Lloyd Henderson presented it to Flying Officer J.G. Graham in recognition of his receiving the highest flying marks in the class.

On June 24, His Excellency Mr. Gosbert M. Ratabanzilbwa, the High Commissioner to Canada from the United Republic of Tanzania, presented wings to six pilot graduates, including two Tanzanian officers of Special Tanzanian Course No. 2. Alderman A.R. Barrett presented the City of Portage la Prairie Trophy to Flying Officer Brown and the T.W. Clark Memorial Trophy for achieving the highest overall standing on the course went to Captain R. Suma.

Then, on Thursday, August 11, Group Captain V.C.H. Stuart, the Base Commander of CFB Portage la Prairie, presented five graduating students with their scrolls and wings. Flying Officer J.D. Wagner received the Scroll of Honour for academ-

ic achievement, and Alderman Barrett again presented the City of Portage la Prairie Trophy to Flying Officer G. Van Boeschoten. Next, on September 20, twelve students from Malaysia, who had arrived at 3 FTS on January 25, graduated with their pilot's wings. A month later, Captain J.B. Fotheringham made wings presentations to fifteen Naval and five Air Force pilot graduates on Tuesday, October 18. Flying Officer S.M. Crutcher received the T.W. Clark Memorial Trophy on this course.

On Friday, November 25, during the last wings graduation parade of 1966, Mayor H.L. Henderson of Portage la Prairie presented the four new pilot graduates with their wings. He also presented Flying Officer Snyder with the City of Portage la Prairie trophy. This course graduation was also significant in that one of the graduating students was the 8000th aircrew to graduate from the Base since its opening in December 1940.

During the first half of 1966, the Base personnel were involved in two acts of "aid to the civil power". During the period March 14 through to April 26, approximately 100 servicemen were assigned to assist with the fighting of the flooding of the Red River south of Winnipeg. Then in June, thirty-five trained members of the CFB Portage la Prairie Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) team spent several days participating in a search for a nine year old girl lost in the vicinity of Big Whiteshell Lake.

Three groups of visitors were hosted by the Base in 1966. A group of twenty-six German Air Force Command and Staff College students visited CFB Portage la Prairie on May 26. The main point of interest during the visit was the Tutor Jet Trainer. Then on Wednesday, October 19, thirteen naval, army and air attachs from Argentina, Britain, Chile, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States toured the Base. Finally, ten days later on Wednesday, October 26, CFB Portage la Prairie hosted an exchange visit by four USAF officers from Craig Air Force Base in Alabama. Also, on Wednesday, November 30, 1966, the Associate Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Leo Cadieux, visited Portage la Prairie and, to quell rumours concerning the possible demise of the Base, reassured the city that CFB Portage la Prairie would not be closing; at least not in the near future.



Students of the German Air Force Command and Staff College inspect an FIS Tutor during their visit to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie on May 26, 1966.

The only aircraft incident in 1966 occurred on February 15, when at approximately 2100 hours, the fuel tank on T-33 jet No. 21346 caught fire. LAC A.A. Labrie, LAC R.E. Johnson, Corporal J.T. Lafenvre and Sergeant A. Pottaruk took quick action to contain the fire and hauled the aircraft outside onto the tarmac. The four servicemen later received a Wide Awake Award for their quick action in extinguishing the aircraft fire and effectively saving the hangar and its full complement of airplanes.

As a result of another incident later on in the year, LAC J.C. Dreidiger was presented with a Wide Awake Award for preventing extensive fire damage to a barrack block and its personnel. He had noticed smoke emanating from a room in the barracks and had proceeded to remove the occupant of the room and then extinguished the fire. Finally on Wednesday, September 14, Group Captain Stuart presented Flight Lieutenant L.P. Lawie with the 1000 Hour Flight Safety Award.

Also in 1966, on June 9, a Voyager Helicopter from CFB Rivers airlifted a T-33 Silver Star jet aircraft from the Base to the Island Park mounting site in Portage la Prairie. Two days later on June 11, the City of Portage la Prairie held a special Air Force Appreciation Day during which the Base presented the mounted T-33 jet to the city.

At the end of 1966, the Base had a total of 791 military personnel and 188 civilian employees. It had a fleet of thirty-nine Expeditors, twenty-four Tutors, nine T-33's, four Chipmunks and one AVRO 504K-1 (G-CYCK). This fleet of airplanes had used 1,883,000 gallons of Turbo and 504,000 gallons of AVGAS fuel.

Canada's Centennial Year 1967, was probably one of the most exiciting years in the history of CFB Portage la Prairie, from a flying viewpoint. This was due to the location of an aerobatic show team, consiting of the Golden Centennaires and the Red Knight, at the Base. The details of these air display teams will be covered in the next chapter of this book. Consequently, no further discussion of the operations of these units will be presented at this time.

Other events in 1967 included the graduation of 147 pilots from 3 FTS, including twenty Tanzanians and two Jamacians. Also, CFS Det Portage la Prairie, renamed in 1967 the Central Flying and Navigation School Detachment (CFNS Det)



Group Captain V.C.H. Stuart presenting the T-33 monument at Island Park to Mayor Henderson of Portage la Prairie during the Dedication Ceremonies on June 11, 1966.

Portage la Prairie, graduated 117 students including two Tanzanians. The Base Commander, Group Captain Stuart made the first wings presentations of the year to four graduates on Thursday, January 19. Mayor Henderson presented the City of Portage la Prairie Trophy to Flying Officer J.E. Corbett. This graduating class was considered to be the "Centennial Graduates", because they were the first class to graduate in 1967 - our Centennial year. Group Captain Stuart again made wings presentations to four graduates on Friday, September 15.

Captain R.W. Edwards, CD, RCN was the Reviewing Officer at the next graduation for twelve student pilots. Sub-Lieutenant J.J. Doyle was the recipient of both the Scroll of Honour and the T.W. Clark Memorial Trophy. Seven more pilots graduated on Friday, March 10 and were presented their wings by Group Captain R.T.P. Davidson. Air Marshal F.R. Sharp returned to Southport on Thursday, April 6 to present wings to thirty-two pilot graduates, ten of whom were Tanzanians.

At the next graduation ten new pilots received their wings from Wing Commander R.H. Janzen. Mayor Henderson presented the City of Portage la Prairie Trophy to Flying Officer W. Miller. He also presented the trophy to Flying Officer W.D. Mott at the next graduation ceremony held on Friday, August 12. On this occasion, the twenty graduates received their wings from Group Captain G.R.M. Hunt, CD, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Air Training and Operations. Sub-Lieutenant P.G. Baldwin won the T.W. Clark Memorial Trophy. Honour Scrolls for academic, officer development and flying achievements went to two graduates, Flying Officer, J.L. Doyle and Sub-Lieutenant L. Streitel.

There were three more wings graduation ceremonies in 1967. On Thursday, November 2, twenty-one graduates received their wings. Nine Tanzanian pilots graduated on Friday, December 1. Lieutenant Mboma received the Scroll of Honour. Finally, on Friday, December 15, seven more graduates received their wings.

Several aircraft accidents occurred in 1967. The first one occurred on January 10 when two Tanzanian candidates flying a mutual clearhood mission in an Expeditor lost control of their aircraft during a landing. The airplane left the runway and nosed over onto its back when it came into contact with the deep snow. The aircraft was lost and the two students were seriously injured. Then on Thursday, February 16, while flying a dual clearhood mission, Expeditor No. 1549 crashed while practicing "touch-and-go" landings. Just as the airplane became airborne on take-off following one of the "touch-and-go's", it stalled and one of its wings dropped, coming into contact with the snow. The aircraft cartwheeled, came to rest on its back and was destroyed during the ensuing fire. Both the instructor and student died in the crash. The last accident of the year occurred on August 17, when two pilot instructors flying an Expeditor in the local area practicing mutual short field landings swerved out of control during one of the landings and struck the VASIS. The airplane received major damage to the tail and rear fuselage sections, but neither occupant was injured.

The Centennial year was noted for several award presentations. First of all, on Thursday, January 26, 1967 in recognition of his "spirit of good citizenship, backed up with action", Group Captain Stuart, the Base Commander, received the "Better Portage Award" from Mr. Gordon Snider, the President of the Portage la Prairie Chamber of Commerce. In turn, Group Captain Stuart presented a Suggestion Award to Corporal J.S. Greene, on Friday, October 7, for his designing of a tool which made it easier to remove circuit boards from telecommunications equipment. It was Corporal Greene's second such award. Then two weeks later, Friday, October 21, Group Captain Stuart presented a "Good Show" award to Corporal D.K. Frederick for his alertness in correcting a fault in an Expeditor. Upon starting the aircraft, he had noticed a fuel leak. Following further investigation, he discovered that two fluid lines had been interchanged and corrected the problem. Finally, on Friday, March 18, the Acting Base Commander, Wing Commander R.H. Janzen, presented a "Suggestion Award" to Corporal J.H. Hanson for his suggested improvement to the plastic guards which prevent inadvertent transmissions of emergency radio signals from the Tutor Jet Trainer.

Also is 1967, 3 FTS underwent a change of command when Wing Commander R. Found replaced Wing Commander R.H. Janzen as its Commanding Officer.

One other major visit occurred in 1967, and that happened on Friday, September 22. On that date Brigadier General Louis LeClerf, the Commandant of France's L'Ecole de l'Air, (the equivalent of the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario), and 110 members from his school toured CFB Portage la Prairie.

The final event of note occurred on Saturday, July 22, 1967. This was a special CFB Portage la

Prairie "open house". Some 6000 local area residents visited the Base and viewed the Centennial Military Caravan. It consisted of three open air and two interior van displays. Unfortunately, a sudden deluge of rain forced the cancellation of much of the air display planned for the afternoon featuring the Portage based Golden Centennaires and the Red Knight.

Major T.D. (Terry) Spraggs, a student at 3FTS in 1967 and presently the Chief Flying Instructor at the Primary Flying School of 3CFFTS, recalls this incident:

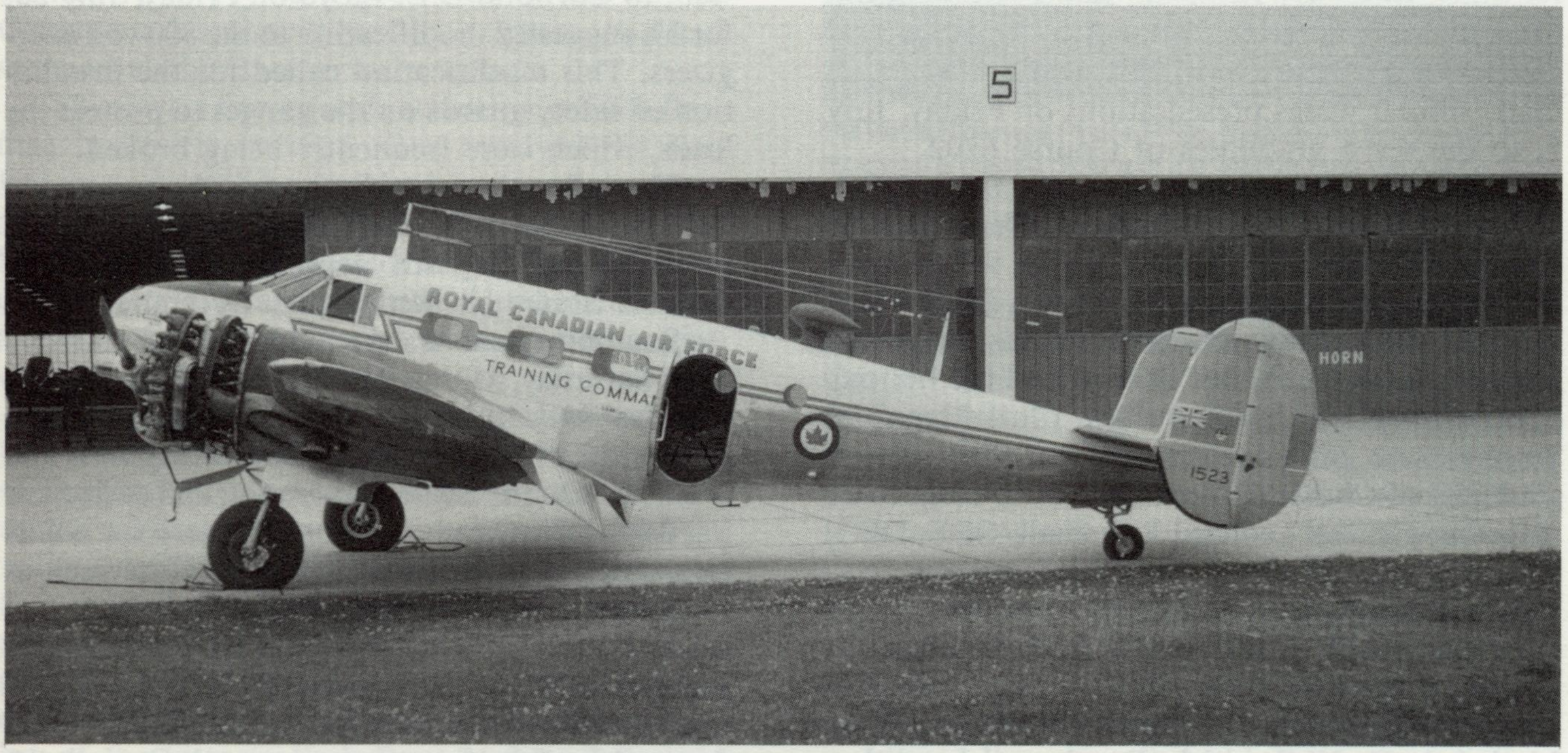
> "There was a sudden cloudburst and about half an inch of rain fell in a very short time; probably about thirty minutes. All of the souvenir booths were destroyed by the deluge, but the Officer-Cadets who had been assigned to run them showed extraordinary initiative. They grabbed everything in the booth and ran inside the hangars and in true entreprenerial spirit continued to sell their wares to crowds of spectators who had also sought refuge inside them."

It is interesting to note that, at the time, Major Spraggs' roommate and a fellow pilot trainee was Peter Mansbridge, presently the Chief Correspondent for the CBC TV National News.

The foreign aid programme to train military pilots which was begun in 1966, ended in 1968 with the graduation of Special Malaysian Course No. 2 with ten students completing the C-13 Advanced Twin Engine cirriculum and Special Tanzanian Course No. 5 with five students completing the C-13 Modified Advanced Twin Engine cirriculum. One Norweigian candidate was also a successful graduate of this latter course as well. Finally, a number of Ugandans also underwent training at CFB Portage la Prairie from 1967 to 1970.

Officially on January 31, 1968, the term Royal Canadian Air Force was laid to rest. On that day, the Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy and RCAF merged under the terms of integration and unified to became one entity - the Canadian Armed Forces. A few days later on Saturday, February 10, the Southport Corporals Club held a symbolic funeral, including a casket, flags and wreaths, to mark the passing of the RCAF. Corporal Doug Geddes sounded the last post and reveille as the members of the Corporal's Club, decked out in their full RCAF mess dress, filed past the funeral brier to pay their last respects.

A number of dignitaries and groups visited CFB Portage la Prairie in 1968, starting with a tour of the Base by T.G. Morry, the Assistant Deputy Minister of National Defence. He was on a familiarization tour of the western bases. Then on Friday, February 2, a team of senior RAF officers, lead by Air Commodore F.L. Dodd, the Commandant of the Royal Air Force's Central Flying School, toured the flying training facilities at the Base. They were hosted by the Acting Base Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel W. Found. The next day, Saturday, February 3, Lieutenant-Colonel Found greeted the Portage la Prairie Rotary Club. The Rotarians were given a guided tour of the Base including the control tower and flight line. Thirty



An Expeditor being serviced in front of Hangar 5.

members of the Elk's Club received a similar tour during their visit to the Base on April 8.

The Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Leo Cadieux, visited the Base on Wednesday, February 14. He was on a quick fifty hour tour of the four Manitoba military installations. During his brief visit to Southport and despite his positive statement about its future only a year and a half earlier, Mr. Cadieux was not prepared to "hazard a guess" as to the future of CFB Portage la Prairie. Then, on June 11, Prime Minister Trudeau visited the Base and dined at the Officers' Mess.

Major-General William K. Carr, DFC, CD, the Commander of Training Command in Winnipeg, visited Southport. He inspected a Guard of Honour upon his arrival at the flight line. This was followed by a tour of Hangar 2. He then proceeded to the Base Headquarters to present the monthly series of Base awards. After this ceremony, Major-General Carr attended two short briefings concerning the Base's flying units, 3 FTS and the CFNS Det, before returning to Winnipeg.

A number of other special guests visited the Base in 1968, to participate in the various wings presentation ceremonies. The first of these ceremonies occurred on Friday, February 23. Mayor W.A. Linden, of Portage la Prairie, presented the pilot's wings to the eleven graduates of Course 6607. The next group, Course 6608, with seven candidates graduated on Friday, April 19.

The Honourable Richard S. Bowles, Q.C., LLD, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, presented wings to ten aircrew trainees of the Royal Malaysian Air Force on Friday, May 17. Brigadier-General C.H. Mussells, DSO, DFC, OBE, CD, made similar wings presentations on Friday, July 5, to the seven graduates of Course 6702.

Brigadier-General R.A. Gordon, DSO, DFC, CD, presided over the graduation ceremonies for Course 6703 held on Friday, August 9. Not only did he have the pleasure of pinning pilot's wings onto the eight graduates, including his son, Lieutenant L.C. Gordon, but he also had the honour of presenting his son with the T.W. Clark Memorial Trophy. Next, on Friday, September 5, the eleven graduates of Course 6704 received their wings from Brigadier-General Leonard J. Birchall, OBE, DFC, CD, ADC.

On Friday, October 18, the Tanzanian High Commissioner to Canada, Mr. G.M. Rutabanzibwa, was present to grant pilot's wings to the five Tanzanian graduates of Course 5. Mayor W.A. Linden then presented Mr. Rutabanzibwa with a scroll proclaiming him as an honourary citizen of Portage la Prairie.

The final graduation ceremony occurred on Friday, December 13. Vice Admiral John C. O'Brien, CD, was the reviewing officer and presented wings to the eleven graduates of Course 6706, five Naval and six Air Force pilots. This visit to CFB Portage la Prairie gave Vice Admiral O'Brien the opportunity to take his first flight in a Tutor jet.

A number of Suggestion Awards were presented to CFB Portage la Prairie personnel. The first two were presented by Colonel Stuart on Friday, March 23. Corporal J.A. Donovan was a winner for his recommendation to remove flare pistols and flares from the Expeditor. Lieutenant R.H.J. Peterat was recognized for his creation and subsequent permanent installation of an instrument blind flying hood for use in the left hand seat of the Expeditor aircraft. This new design of hood permitted a maximum lookout for safety purposes by the pilot sitting in the right hand seat, while effectively blocking the outside view for the other pilot flying on instruments.

On Friday, May 30, two more Suggestion Awards were presented. Corporal G.V. Harding had suggested a modification to the Tutor jet to provide for a more secure storage of the ejection seat safety pins while the aircraft was in flight. Meanwhile Corporal D.A. Connolly had suggested a design for a test apparatus for Direct Current Control Systems in the Tutor.

The final Suggestion Award presented in 1968 went to Corporal D.E. Lloyd on Friday, July 26, for his suggested modification to the 500 volt energizers. This modification called for the installation of safety guards on the gauges to protect the leads, which were frequently being broken.

The only other significant award presented in 1968 was the 1000 hour Flight Safety Award presented to Captain Juergen H. Peterat by Colonel Stuart on Wednesday, December 18.

Southport held its first annual Winter Carnival from Saturday, March 9 to Friday, March 15. The Carnival kick-off included a Parade through the Base with floats from the five competing units and branches. On the Sunday afternoon and each evening during the Carnival teams competed for points in a series of indoor and outdoor sports such as log-sawing, spike driving, snowshoe racing and smoosh racing. At the wind-up dance on Friday night, March 16, the judging of the beard growing contest and a competition of singing quartets from each of the five teams occurred. Overall, the

first Base Winter Carnival proved to be a great success, with the 648 military personnel, their civilian counterparts and the dependents all having an enjoyable week.

Later on in the year, on Saturday, June 1, another combined Base-wide event was held. For the third consecutive year, the two Chapel Committees at Southport collaborated to organize a joint family picnic at the Norquay Bearch. The picnic was for all Base personnel, both military and civilian, and their guests. It was also a great success.

Then a week later, on Sunday, June 9, CFB Portage la Prairie held its annual Armed Forces Day. Over 14,200 spectators attended the event which featured a demonstration of a simulated rescue by an air-rescue helicopter, a visit by the anti-submarine tracker, the Argus (people were permitted a close-up look at both the interior and exterior of the airplane) and a shortened version of the Red Knight flying display. Due to low cloud cover, the full air demonstration could not be performed. This event proved to be the largest Armed Forces Day event anywhere in Western Canada in 1968.

The Maritime based anti-submarine Argus returned to CFB Portage la Prairie on Friday, August 23. The purpose of this visit was to give future maritime aircrew at 3 FTS orientation lectures and familiarization flights. Later on in the year, on Friday, November 29, 1968, a Second World War P-40E fighter dropped in from the sky and taxied to a halt in front of Transient Aircraft Servicing. The "Flying Tiger" was on its way to Chicago to be rehabilitated by its owner and had stopped at the Base to be refueled.

There were two aircraft accidents at CFB Portage la Prairie in 1968. One involved the Red Knight and it will be discussed later and the other accident occurred early in the year on January 16. During a landing, Expeditor aircraft No. 5187 ran off of the runway and overturned in the snow. The aircraft was lost but the aircrew occupants escaped without injury.

On the domestic side two events are noteworthy. The first one was the creation in May 1968 of the Base Recreation Council; a committee of service personnel assigned to oversee and fund the majority of Base Recreational Clubs. It was hoped that through the formation of this Council, better facilities and recreational services would be provided to the Base personnel and their dependents. The second event was the official launching of the historic York Boat at Island Park in Portage la Prairie on July 28. Following its inaugural trip, the boat was placed on permanent display in the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie's Museum. Under the supervision of Major W.P. Pearson, the boat had been built by the Base Aircraft Maintenance and Engineering personnel during the previous winter.

As a final note to 1968, on September 13, the Base Sports Day, the last flight of the remaining T-33 aircraft occurred. It made a low flight passing over the Base and then over the city. It was flanked by the two new Red Knight Tutor jets.

A brush with the past happened at CFB Portage la Prairie on February 3, 1969, when Group Captain K.J. McDonald, the first military supervisory officer at No. 7 AOS returned to visit the Base. The only other significant visitor during the year was a brief stopover on Thursday, October 23, 1969, by His Royal Highness, Prince Philip.



His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, K.C., receiving a framed picture of the Station from the Acting Base Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel R.W. Found, as a memento of his visit on October 23, 1969.

The Prince spent about forty-five minutes at Southport during a refuelling stop on his way to Calgary. He was on a fifteen day, eleven city tour of Canada designed to promote his Youth Award Programme. Prince Philip, insisting on foregoing most of the normal formalities which would usually accompany a Royal visit to a military installation, and went instead to the Harold Edwards School on Base to visit with its students. He then proceeded to the Officers' Mess where he conducted a brief news conference and received a framed picture of the Base from the Acting Base Commander Lieutenant-Colonel R.W. Found as a

memento of his short Southport visit, before departing for Calgary.

A number of other dignitaries visited the Base in 1969, but all of these visits occurred in conjunction with Wings Graduation Ceremonies. The first one of these was held on Friday, February 14, when Colonel J.E. Hanna presented pilot's wings to the eleven student graduates of Course 6707. Next, on Thursday, April 3, Rear-Admiral A.H.G. Storrs presented wings to the thirteen graduates of Course 6708. The Scroll of Honour was awarded to his son Lieutenant A.A.T. Storrs.

The local Portage la Prairie area Member of Parliament, Mr. Gerald Cobbe, presented pilot's wings to the sixteen graduates of Course 6801 on Friday, May 16. At the next graduation on Friday, June 20, Major-General W.R. Carr, DFC, CD, the Commander of the Canadian Forces Training Command, performed the same function by pinning pilot's wings onto the nine graduates of Course 6802.

At the final three graduation parades held at CFB Portage la Prairie in 1969, military officers officiated at the ceremonies. The outgoing Base Commander, Colonel V.C.H. Stuart was the Reviewing Officer at the graduation ceremonies on Friday, August 8, for the nine graduates of Course 6803. Then, on Friday, September 19, the new Base Commander, Colonel D.S. McKechnie, DFC, CD presented the fifteen Course 6804 graduates with their pilot's wings. Later, on Friday, December 12, the ten graduate pilots of Course 6806 received their wings from Colonel A.J. Bauer.

There was only one aircraft accident at CFB Portage la Prairie in 1969. It occurred on February 7, when a twin engine USAF B-57 bomber lost one of its engines over Dauphin, Manitoba. It diverted to Portage la Prairie to attempt an emergency landing, but crashed four miles short of the aerodrome at thirty-six minutes after midnight.

The second annual Winter Carnival was held from February 15 to 21. This time the competitions were based on teams representing the messes. The Carnival commenced with a "best float" competition during the Winter Carnival Parade on February 15. The traditional competition events were held such as beardgrowing, curling, tug-o-wars, log-sawing, snowshoe races, broomball games, spike driving, with indoor events including volleyball, shuffleboard, darts and a bridge tournament. This Winter Carnival introduced a new event, ski-doo racing.

Over 20,700 people attended the Base's other annual event, its Armed Forces Day Open House. It was held on Sunday, June 15, and featured Portage's Red Knight. Some of the static displays were a Second World War P-51 Mustang with four seats and its nemesis a rebuilt Japanese Zero fighter. Several other homemade aircraft were on display as was a Chipmunk, a Tutor, a T-33, a C-45 Expeditor, a Dakota, an L-19 Cessna light observation airplane (nicknamed "Birddogs") and an Anti-Submarine Tracker.

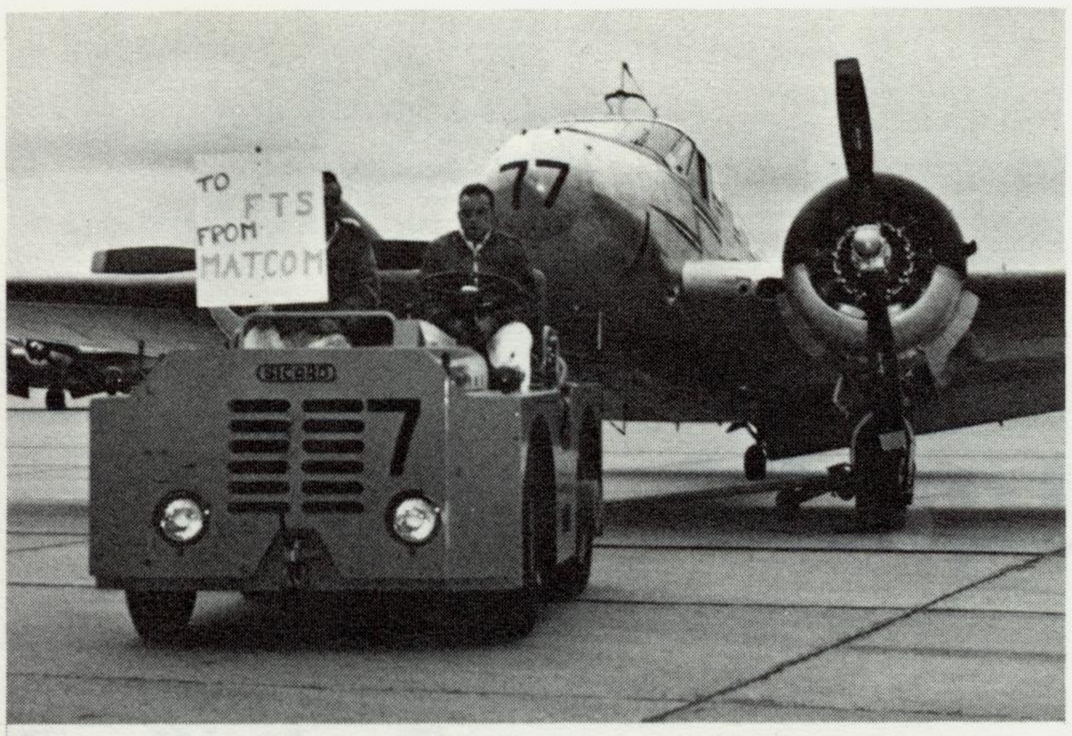
The Base raised over $5,000 later in 1969, during its first United Way Campaign. This new charity fundraising organization came into being on March 26, 1969, when the Portage Plains United Way (PPUW) was created to spearhead this joint fundraising within the Portage la Prairie and Central Plains regions of Manitoba. Being such an important employer and residential community within the Portage la Prairie area, the Base was granted one position on the twenty-five member Board of Directors to represent the Base's 606 military personnel. Major Crouch was the Base's first representative on the Board. A few years later, the Base was granted a second position on the Board of Directors and, from then on, the Base Administration Officer and the Base Comptroller held these two positions. Finally, twenty years after its inception, one of these officers, Major G.E.I. Greavette, the Base Administration Officer, was elected to be the President of the PPUW. He held this position from March 1, 1989 to February 28, 1990.

Only one Suggestion Award was presented in 1969. On Wednesday, February 5, Private G.I. Black received the award for suggesting improvements to the lubrication technique used on the bomb racks of the CF-104 Starfighter jet.

With the retirement of Colonel V.C.H. Stuart in mid-September 1969, the Base conducted a Change of Command Ceremony on September 10. On that day, Colonel Donald S. McKechnie, who had received his promotion to that rank on August 18, assumed command of CFB Portage la Prairie, taking over from Colonel Stuart. In an earlier Change of Command event, Lieutenant-Colonel G.A. McDonald had assumed command of CFFIS effective June 1, 1969.

Also during the fall of 1969, a new sixteen member Base Ground Search and Rescue Team was officially established. Then, on November 15, the new Base CANEX facility was officially opened.

A few days later, on November 19, the multi-engine advanced pilot training at Portage la Prairie ceased and, on December 3, the C-45 Expeditor



One of the Expeditors enroute to retirement and disposal.

fleet was reduced from thirty-two to twenty airplanes. An earlier fleet reduction of Tutor aircraft, from sixteen to eight jets, had occurred on May 7, as CFFIS changed its instructor training role.

With the pending cessation of the multi-engine training and the continuing departure of the C-45 Expeditor airplanes, by the end of 1969 the multi-engine training period at CFB Portage la Prairie was rapidly coming to an end. The eight officers of Course 6807 received their pilot's wings on Friday, 20 February 1970. This marked the last Course Graduation Ceremony held at Southport for pilots being trained to wings standard at 3 FTS on the C-45 Expeditors. With the completion of this final multi-engine course, CFB Portage la Prairie was ready to commence a new period in its history.

Chapter Four

The Display Teams

History of RCAF Aerobatics

Aircraft displays and flying exhibitions are as old as aviation itself. The ascension of balloons in the 19th century and the pioneer flights of the Wright brothers and of Baldwin and McCurdy were watched with breathless interest. Thousands applauded the efforts of airmen to conquer the English Channel and millions in the old and new world were thrilled by the exploits of the men who crossed the Atlantic between 1919 and the early 30's.

In Canada, the RCAF created lasting interest in aviation in 1931 when its first aerobatic team, The Siskins, performed in the Trans-Canada Air Pageant at 26 airshows from Vancouver, British Columbia to Sydney, Nova Scotia. The team disbanded after the tour and, although other displays were staged in the mid-thirties, none approached the scale of this original effort.

During the years of World War II, many thousands of RCAF fliers engaged in a different, and deadly serious, pageant. Their story stands as history on its own, and subsequent aerial displays have been tributes to their efforts.

Though flight demonstrations were a part of Air Force Day displays following 1945, it was not until 1949 that a team was organized to perform nationally and internationally. The Air Defence Group Aerobatic Team, flying Vampire jets, demonstrated their skill in Chicago, Boston, Toronto, Ottawa, and other North American centres.

The RCAF's most famous and durable aerobatic team, the Golden Hawks, consisting of seven Canadair-built F-86 Sabres, was activated in 1959. Until they gave their 317th and final performance in 1963, tens of millions in Canada and the United States thrilled to their demonstations. Countless other millions saw them on television.

Other RCAF and Canadian Forces aerobatic teams have performed on a national or semi-national scale over the years. The Gimli Smokers and the Chipmunk Synchronized Aerobatic Team were two such teams which flew on the prairies. In 1962, the "Goldilocks", a team piloting seven Harvard trainers, was formed at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. This group appeared at many centres, including the Canadian National Exhibition, but was disbanded in 1964 when the CL-41 Tutor jet replaced the Harvard as a trainer.

Today, with this same Tutor jet trainer, the tradition of these earlier air demonstration teams continues with the 431 Canadian Forces Air Demonstration Squadron, The Snowbirds. The predecessor to the now famous Snowbirds which fly out of CFB Moose Jaw, was the Golden Centennaires and their accompanying act, the Red Knight, both stationed in Portage la Prairie.

Throughout the history of the many units which flew out of the Southport aerodrome, a number of air display teams were formed. Most of these teams were unofficial groups, sanctioned by local Base authorities to train and fly at specific events. In most instances, they were disbanded following the one or two air demonstrations for which they had been formed. Then, for the next event, a new selection process occurred and the new team practiced, performed and again disbanded. This sequence was repeated whenever the need arose.

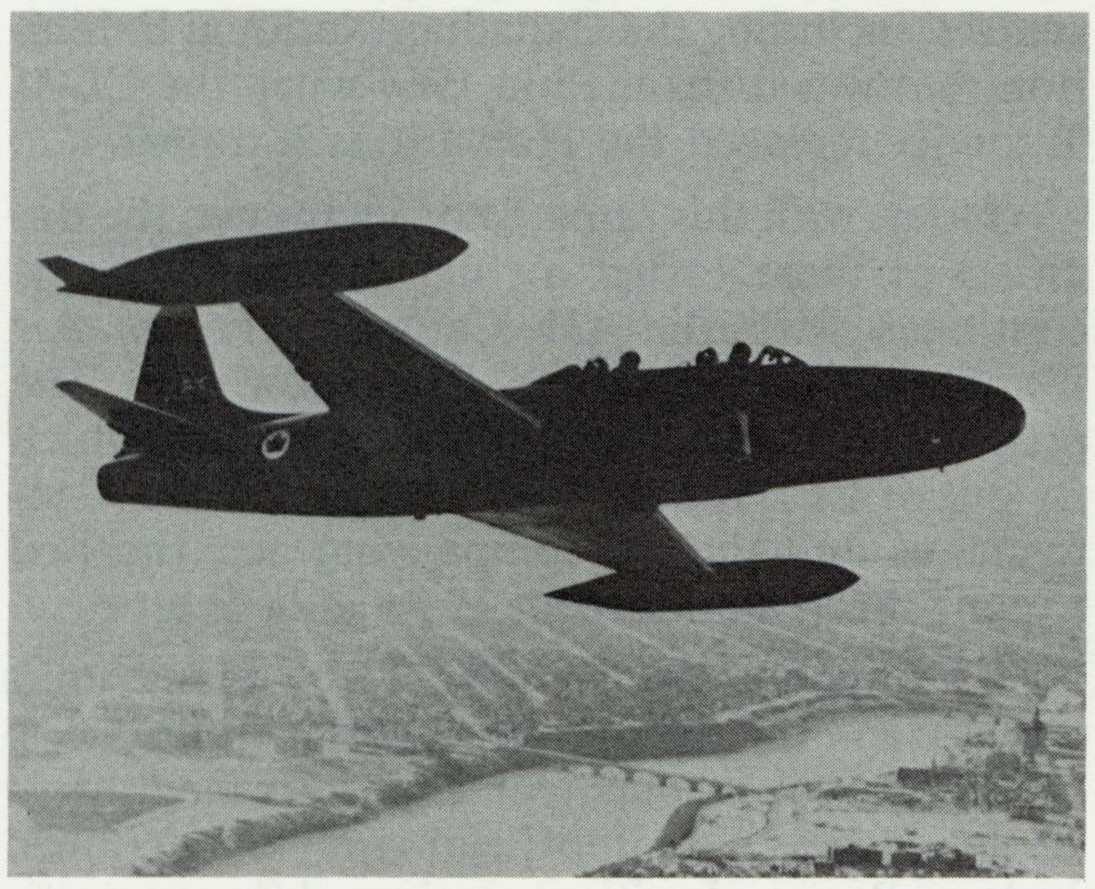
However, throughout the years the Base has been the home of four officially sanctioned air demonstration teams; the Red Knight, the Golden Centennaires, the Musket Golds and the Dragonflies. What follows is a short description and history of each of these teams. Also included in this Chapter is a brief section on the two Base bands because they too were display teams which represented CFB Portage la Prairie and thrilled a

multitude of spectators all across Canada and internationally as well.

The Red Knight

The RCAF's solo jet aerobatic display pilot, the Red Knight, originated at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie in 1959 and continued to operate from this aerodrome for the full period of his existence. The Red Knight was Training Command's contribution to mark the 50th Anniversary of powered flight in Canada as well as the 35th Anniversary of the formation of the RCAF.

The Red Knight's name came from the German First World War flying ace, Baron Manfred von Richthofen, whose daring air exploits in his famous red tri-plane had earned him the title "The Red Knight of Germany". For ten years the Canadian Red Knight thrilled millions of spectators with his own version of aerobatic exploits.



The Red Knight over Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in November 1960.

One of the outstanding aspects of the aerial demonstrations was the ability of the Red Knight to confine his flying routine within the confines of an airfield. With white smoke trailing from a special canister located under his airplane, providing easier visibility of his act to the spectators on the ground, the Red Knight etched a high speed pattern of intricate aerobatic manoeuvres across the sky during his fifteen minute show.

While flying one aerobatic manoeuvre approximately every minute, a commentator explained to the spectators what was happening throughout the show. In order of their occurrence, the fifteen aerobatic manoeuvres of the fifteen minute Red Knight show consisted of:

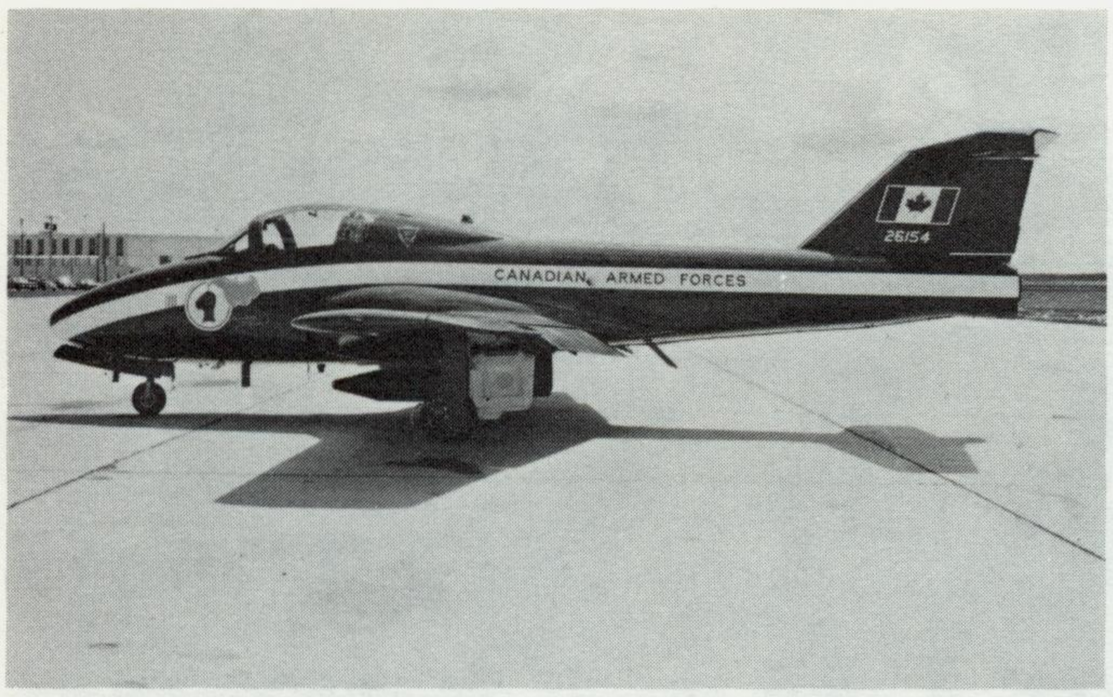
a. the Short Field Take-Off;
b. a tight 360 degree turn cleaning up the aircraft;
c. a slow roll;
d. a loop;
e. an inverted pass;
f. a cuban eight;
g. a four point roll;
h. a landing loop; immediately followed by
i. a reversing landing and take-off;
j. a dirty roll (flap and wheels down);
k. an outside cuban eight;
l. a series of rolls into a 360 degree turn;
m. a vertical eight;
n. a vertical roll; and finally,
o. the Red Knight ditch (or landing).



The Assistant Red Knight, Flying Officer D.J. Barker, debriefing a mission immediately after a flight with the Red Knight, Flight Lieutenant R.J. Goeres, on May 12, 1961. (Photo courtesy of the Canadian Forces Photographic Unit Central Negative Library)

From its formation in 1959 until the 1968 season, the Red Knight flew a T-33 jet aircraft. Actually, two T-33 jets were painted in the brilliant red colour and markings of the Red Knight. One aircraft was flown by the actual Red Knight and the second belonged to his back-up alternate pilot. Then, following a fatal crash, a switch of aircraft from the T-33 to the Tutor jet trainer was made. On July 15, 1968, painting was completed on two of the former Golden Centennaire Tutor jets and they were transferred to the Red Knight.

Finally, as a closing note on the aircraft used by the Red Knight, on May 29, 1964, T-33 No.



The Red Knight Tutor on the ramp at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie in July 1968.

21574, which had at that point been flown by the Red Knight, was removed from the inventory. It was transferred to the No. 6 Repair Depot at RCAF Station Rockcliffe and prepared for static display at that Station's 1964 National Air Force Day. Ultimately, the airframe was transferred to the National Air Museum collocated at Rockcliffe in Ottawa.

Also, during his formative years, the Red Knight frequently travelled and performed as a separate act as part of the RCAF's "Golden Hawk's" show. Then, in 1967, the Red Knight often accompanied the "Golden Centennaires" across Canada and performed as a separate section of their air display. During our Centennial Year, the Red Knight flew over one hundred shows, including a number of performances at smaller airshows which the Golden Centennaires were unable to fit into their busy six month summer schedule.

The Red Knight was not just one person, but actually part of a team of four airmen. The team consisted of two pilots, the actual Red Knight and his alternate, plus two crewmen. The team members were usually chosen early in the spring of each year during a special selection process held at Portage la Prairie. Consequently, the Red Knights who dazzled millions with their display of solo aerobatics throughout the years were:

a. 1959 - Flight Lieutenant Ray Windover;
b. 1960 - Flight Lieutenant Bob Hallowell;
c. 1961 - Flight Lieutenant R.J. (Ray) Goeres;
d. 1961 - Flying Officer Dave Barker (alternate);
e. 1962 - Flight Lieutenant Dave Barker;
f. 1962 - Flying Officer W.C. (Bill) Frazer (alternate);
g. 1963 - Flight Lieutenant W.C. "Bill" Frazer (January to June);
h. 1963 - Flight Lieutenant Bud Morin (June to August);
i. 1963 - Flight Lieutenant Wayne McLellan (August to March 1964);
j. 1964 - Flying Officer Bill Slaughter;
k. 1964 Flying Officer Tex Deagon (alternate);
l. 1965 - Flying Officer Tex Deagon;
m. 1966 - Flight Lieutenant Terry Hallett;
n. 1967 - Flight Lieutenant Jack Waters;
o. 1967 - Flying Officer E.R.M. "Rod" Ellis (alternate);
p. 1968 - Captain Dave Curran;
q. 1968 - Captain John Reid (alternate);
r. 1969 - Lieutenant Bryan Alston; and
s. 1969 - Captain Bob Cran (alternate).

During its history, the Red Knight suffered three fatal air crashes. The first incident occurred on August 21, 1963, when Flight Lieutenant Bud Morin was killed in a crash of his Red Knight T-33 during an airshow being performed at RCAF Station Gimli. The next incident occurred at Portage la Prairie during a practice flying session on May 21, 1968. The alternate Red Knight, Captain John Reid, in his T-33 No. 21620, failed to complete the loop manoeuvre and crashed on the airfield. The airplane was destroyed and Captain Reid was killed. Then, on July 13, 1969, the youngest pilot to be selected as the Red Knight, Lieutenant Bryan Alston, age 23, was killed when his Tutor No. 26154, crashed during an airshow being performed at CFB Moose Jaw for a group of visiting Italian Air Force officers. The Tutor jet burst into flames on impact with the runway. Following a review of this accident, the Red Knight programme was ceased.

The Golden Centennaires

As with the Red Knight, the Golden Centennaires and their other supporting air display acts, had CFB Portage la Prairie as their home aerodrome. The Golden Centennaires were the featured act in the Canadian Armed Forces aerial salute to Canada's Centennial Year, 1967. This aerobatic display team of eight CL-41 Tutor jets performed a spectacular and intricate repertoire of over twenty precision formation manoeuvres, including eight plane take-offs and landings, loops and rolls, and in-flight formation changes. At various stages of the performance, one or two of the aircraft would break off from the main formation and perform breath-taking low-level solo displays and inverted upright or flip-flop formations.



The Golden Centennaires - 1967.

Supporting roles in this aerial extravaganza were filled by the Red Knight in his scarlet T-33 jet, and by two First World War AVRO 504K biplane trainers. Rounding out the show and contrasting the vintage biplanes was a supersonic tactical strike CF-104 Starfighter and the all-weather CF-101 Voodoo jet interceptor.

Wing Commander O.B. Philp, DFC, CD, was appointed as the Commanding Officer of the Golden Centennaires. The 44 year old native of Sidney, British Columbia was also the prime organizer for the team, with the many details of administration, personnel, maintenance, supply and transportation coming under his direction. Wing Commander Philp was a veteran of the Second World War, having served in both the European and Pacific theatres, and he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for gallantry.

Squadron Leader C.B. Lang, a native of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, was selected to assume the position of the team leader of the Golden Centennaires. While airborne, his radio call sign was "Gold One". Having flown the difficult slot position with the RCAF's Golden Hawks from 1962 until its disbandment in 1964, Squadron Leader Lang was no stranger to the world of aerobatic display teams.

Rounding out the Golden Centennaires flying formation team were:

a. Right Wing - Flight Lieutenant T.P. (Tom) Hinton of Montreal, Quebec. Besides several operational tours of duty, he had piloted the Tutor on flight demonstrations at International Air Salon, Paris, France and at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, both during 1965;

b. Left Wing - Flight Lieutenant J.M. (John) Swallow from Drumheller, Alberta. While posted to Zweibruken, West Germany with Canada's No. 3 Fighter Wing of F-86 Sabres, he was a member of the winning Aerial Gunnery Team in both the 1961 and 1962 Guynemer Trophy competitions;

c. Outer Right Wing - Flight Lieutenant B.K. Doyle, CD, a native of Richmond, British Columbia, had been a member of the Chipmunk Synchronized Aerobatic Team in 1961 and 1962;

d. Lead Solo - Flight Lieutenant R.W. (Bill) Slaughter of Winnipeg, Manitoba had flown as the Red Knight in 1963 and 1964. While not participating in the larger formation flights of the Golden Centennaires,

he gave a repeat performance as the lead solo pilot; and

e. Solo - Flying Officer J.M. McKay of Brant, Alberta had no previous aerobatic formation team experience before being selected as a member of the Golden Centennaires.

Also involved with the Golden Centennaires were:

a. Public Information Officer and Commentator - Squadron Leader L.J. Hubbard, CD, of Delia, Alberta was known as the dean of Canadian aerobatics. From 1961, as left wingman, through 1962 and 1963 when he led the RCAF's Golden Hawks, Squadron Leader Hubbard was probably the most publicized airman in Canada. In 1967, he used his experience to act as the Team's English Commentator.

b. Commentator and Personnel Officer - Flight Lieutenant J.L.D. Gauthier of Wotten, Quebec acted as the Team's Personnel Administration Officer as well as its French Commentator;

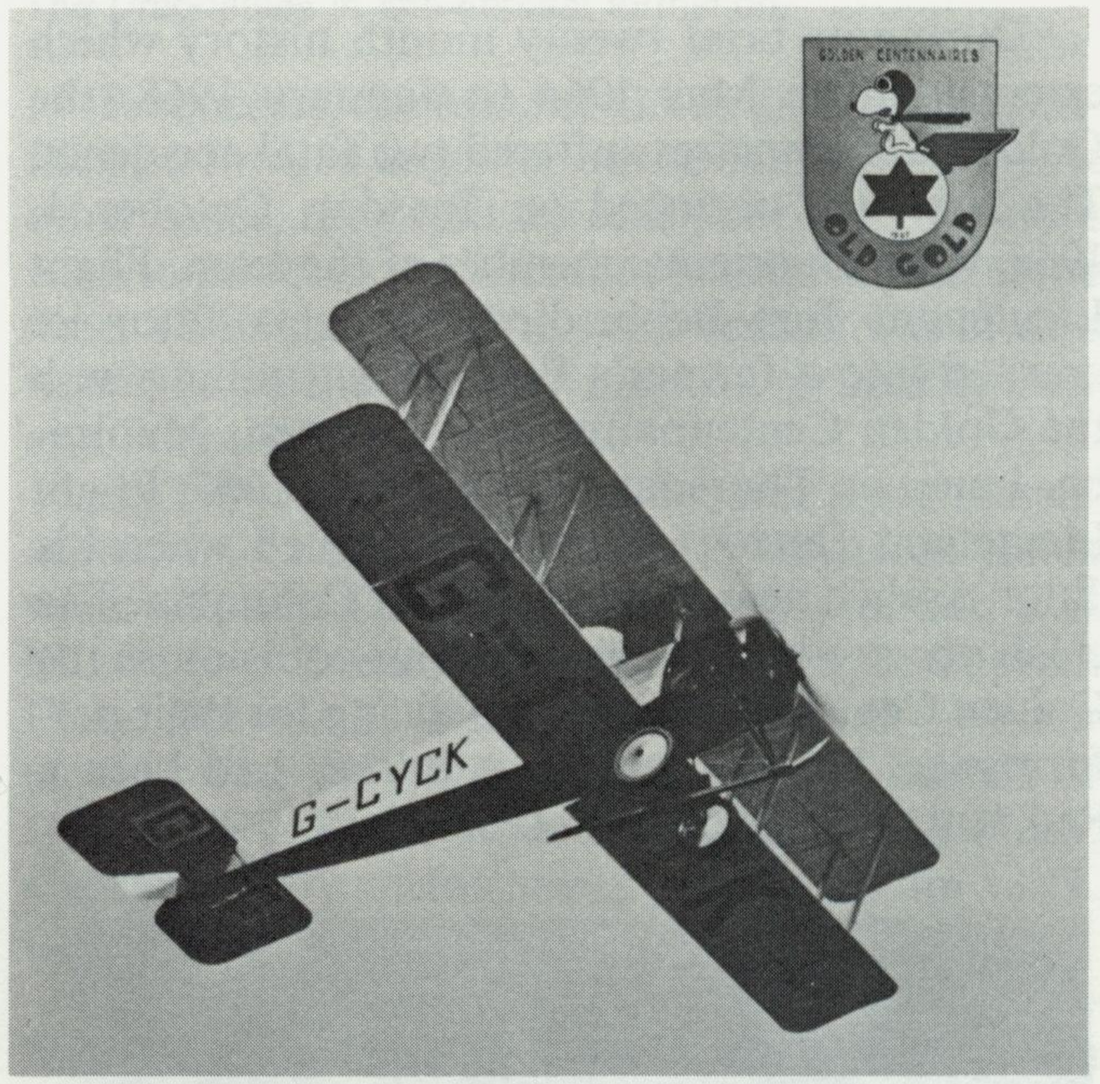
c. Engineering Officer - Flight Lieutenant D.M. Grant of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan co-ordinated and directed the efforts of the forty-two skilled technicians who travelled with the Golden Centennaires and on whose efficiency the flying portion of the team depended; and finally

d. Canadair Representative - Mr. Richard Armour of Debec, New Brunswick was the Field Service Representative for the manufacturer of the CL-41 Tutor jet trainer, Canadair Limited. He travelled with the team on all legs of its tour, providing technical advice in any area of the aircraft's performance.



Flight Lieutenant C.D. Grant and his Golden Centennaire technicians.

One of the more unusual features of the Golden Centennaires Airshow was the participation of the two fifty year old First World War bi-plane trainers, the AVRO 504. Pieces of the old planes



The Avro 504K "Old Gold".

assembled and flown in the show were found in Peterborough, Ontario and on the estate of the Hollywood stunt flyer, Paul Manz. The rest of the parts of these planes were made in Trenton, Ontario. Actually, three AVRO 504 vintage airplanes were built. Two were flown by the Golden Centennaires and the other one became a museum piece.

Some of Canada's hottest pilots took a crack at learning to fly the AVRO 504's, however, only two were successful. They were Flight Lieutenants George Greff, CD, and G.A. (Gord) Brown. Where the radio call sign of the Golden Centennaires was

"Gold", it was appropriate that the AVRO 504K's were designated as "Old Gold".

Finally, a CF-101 and a CF-104 were part of the Golden Centennaires Airshow. These high performance jets were flown by:

a. CF-101 Pilot - Flight Lieutenant J.E. (Jake) Miller, a native of Kelvington, Saskatchewan, piloted the special supersonic all weather CF-101 Voodoo in the low-level flight demonstrations during the Golden Centennaires aerial display;
b. CF-101 Navigator - Flying Officer R.M. (Rod) McGimpsey of Recliffe, Alberta, flew in the CF-101 as the navigator; and
c. CF-104 Pilot - Flight Lieutenant D.R. (Rene) Serrao, a native of Port of Spain, Trinidad, piloted the supersonic CF-104 Starfighter jet during the shows.

During its brief twenty month history which extended from May 1966 to January 1968, the Golden Centennaires suffered two fatal accidents. The first one occurred on Tuesday, October 4, 1966, when an original member of the team, Flight Lieutenant Tom Bebb, died when his Tutor jet crashed into a farmer's field while training with the Golden Centennaires near Carmen, Manitoba. Later, on Thursday, February 16, 1967, Flight Lieutenant David J. Barker was killed when his Tutor crashed near Comox, British Columbia. The crash occurred following a mid-air collision as the Golden Centennaires were practicing for their performance. Flight Lieutenant Barker had been a Red Knight in 1961 and 1962.



The Golden Centennaires over the Canadian Rockies.

The Golden Centennaires started their flying season on April 15, 1967, with a show in Portage la Prairie. During the following six months, the team performed 101 shows before a national audience of more than 4,000,000 spectators. Eight of those shows were performed in major locations in the United States. The team criss-crossed Canada three times, logging more than 34,000 miles in air transit alone. This team, flying its four types of aircraft ranging from the 80 mile per hour biplanes to aircraft capable of flying at twice the speed of sound, was one of the most memorable Canadian displays commemorating the country's 1967 Centennial Year.

In addition to its inaugural performance at Portage la Prairie, the team returned to the Air Base twice to put on performances. Unfortunately, the first of these, as part of the CFB Portage la Prairie Open House on July 22, had to be cancelled due to inclement weather conditions. The team returned October 1, and this time put on an excellent show for the more than 10,000 spectators. The Golden Centennaires completed their flying season on October 27, with a final performance at Expo '67 in Montreal.

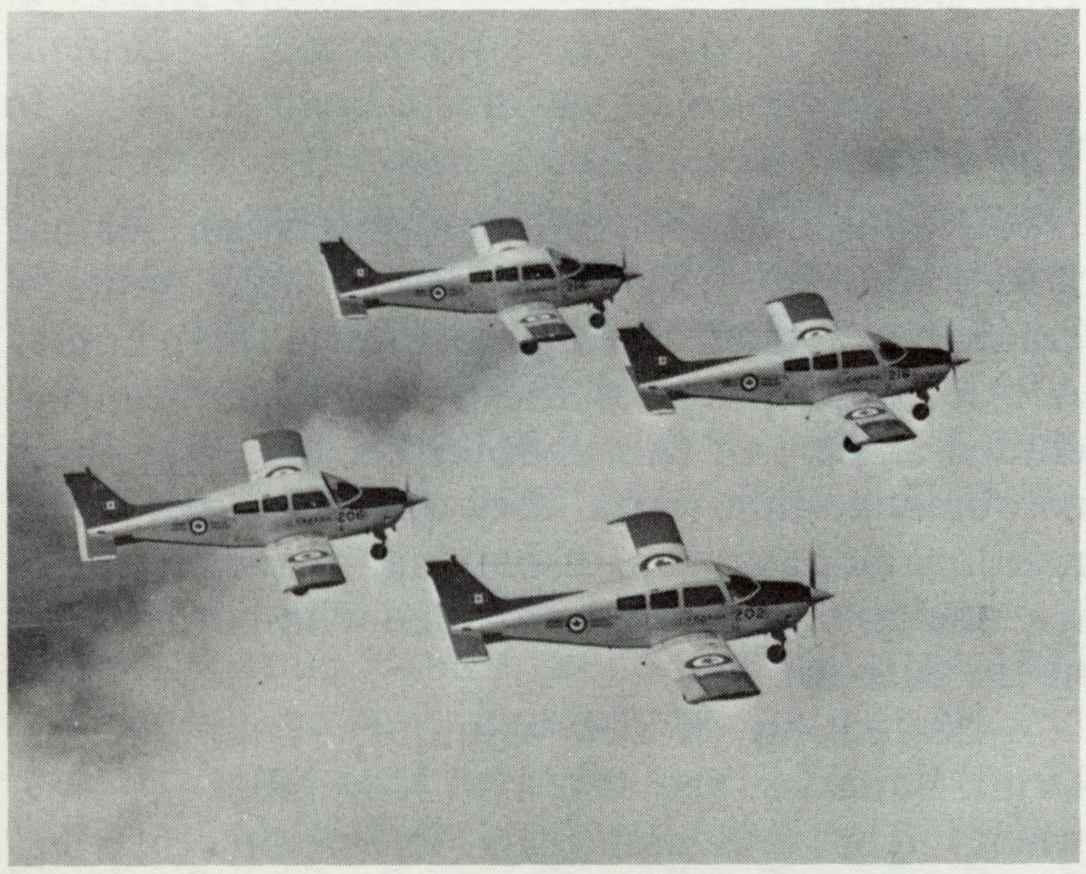


The Golden Centennaires in double delta formation.

The Golden Centennaires Team was officially formed on May 1, 1966 and disbanded effective December 31, 1967, although the actual disbandment parade and farewell dinner did not occur at CFB Portage la Prairie until Friday, January 12, 1968. That is the day that the Golden Centennaires are considered to have folded their wings. On that day as well, Squadron Leader C.B. Lang, the leader of the Centennaires team, received a Centennial Medal from Air Vice Marshal R.C. Stovel.

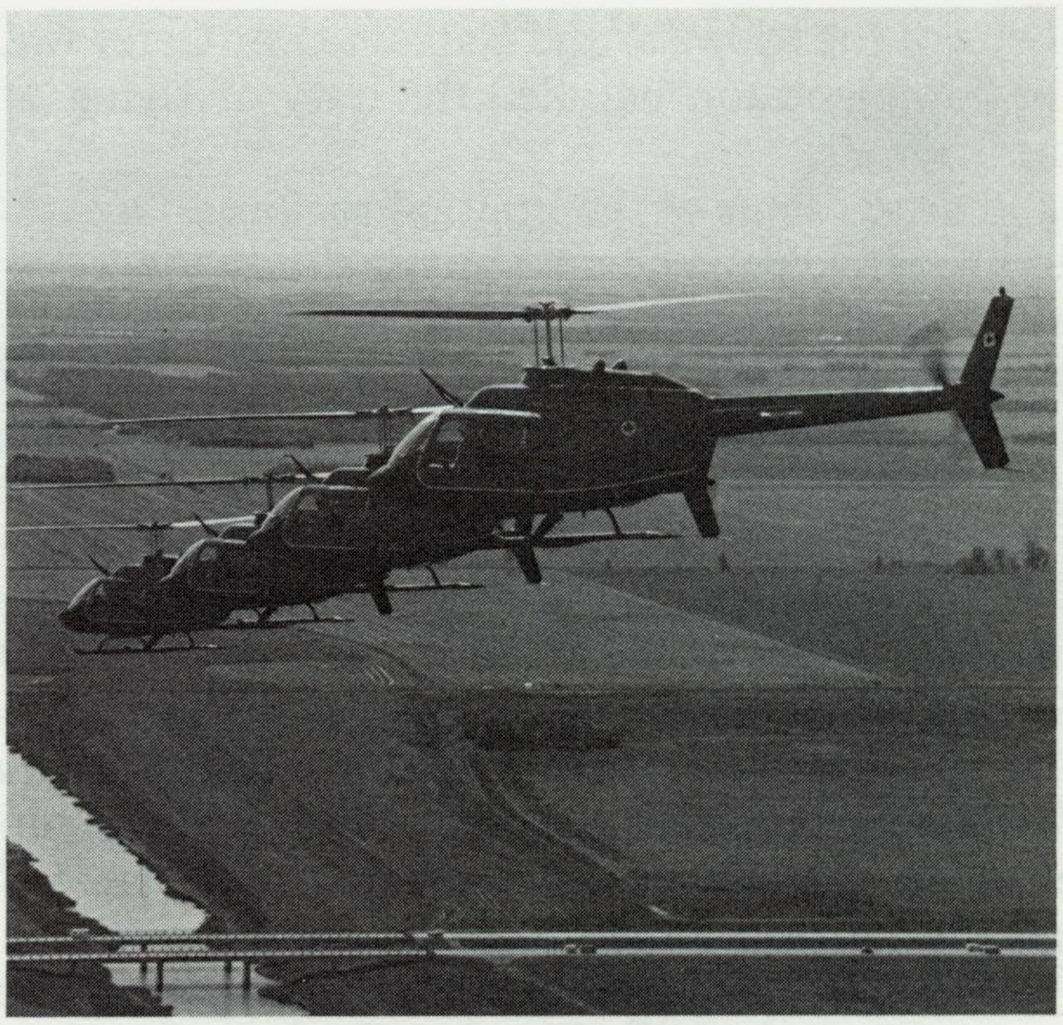
Musket Golds - Dragonflies and Vikings

During the 1970's, two air display teams were formed by members of No. 3 Canadian Forces Flying Training School located at CFB Portage la Prairie. The first of these teams, "the Musket Golds," consisted of four pilots in the Primary Flying School section. They flew the original CT-134 Beechcraft Musketeer propeller driven, single engine airplane. The team was formed in 1972, and its members volunteered their free time to practice and perform at various airshows in western Canada and the northwestern United States as representatives of CFB Portage la Prairie and the Canadian Armed Forces.



The Musket Golds in diamond formation.

Prior to 1974, there was no formal team from CFB Portage la Prairie flying air demonstrations in helicopters. Consequently, four instructors volunteered to form a helicopter demonstration team known as "the Dragonflies". They flew the CH-136 Kiowa helicopter and soon became a favorite attraction at the many airshows at which they performed across the Prairie regions of both Canada and the United States.



The Dragonflies in line-abreast formation.

Frequently, the Musket Golds and the Dragonflies performed together at the same airshow. At other times, they split up and went their separate ways to perform in different locations at the same time. Their yearly flying show season was always restricted to the summer months, primarily July and August.

By 1974, both teams had become a permanent attraction. The members of the 1974 Musket Golds were: Captain D.A. McLeod (lead), Captain R.R Mould (No. 2 lead), Captain J.L. Belzil, Captain D.A. Bosworth and Lieutenant A.G. Walker (spare). The 1974 Dragonflies team consisted of Captain F.J. Kardoll (lead), Captain G.L. Flath, Captain W.A. Matthews, and Captain J.H. Carnegie.

In 1976, the two 3CFFTS formation teams, using a widely expanded program, flew in such diverse military airshows as Cold Lake, Moose Jaw, and at home in Portage la Prairie, as well as in civilian displays in Minto, North Dakota; Dryden, Ontario; and in Manitoba at the Morden airport opening and other small shows and fairs across the province. When the teams displayed their skills in a similar format in 1977, the team members for the Musket Golds were; Captain P.S. Francis, Lieutenant M. Hollman, Lieutenant J.A. Valade (presently holding the rank of Major and filling the Chief Standards Officer position with 3CFFTS), Captain R.T. Crosby, and Captain G.E. Buchanan, who acted as the team's commentator. For the Dragonflies, Captain F.D. Holtslag, Captain M.A. Wansink, Captain W.A. Matthews, Captain T.J. Zuurbier (RNLAF) handled the duty of

flying of the Kiowa's, and Captain D.A. Carey was the commentator, handled the duty of flying of the Kiowa's.

The residents of the Prairie Provinces, Ontario and North Dakota again witnessed the aerial skills of the two demonstration teams in 1979. An estimated 150,000 people were in attendance for the sixteen shows of the Musket Golds and 80,000 for the fourteen shows of the Dragonflies. Then in 1980, in completing another highly successful season, an estimated 195,000 people attended the nineteen shows of the Musket Golds and 196,000 for the fifteen shows performed by the Dragonflies. This was followed in 1981 by fourteen performances by the Musket Golds before an estimated 103,650 spectators with 287,450 attending the thirteen Dragonflies air demonstrations.

In 1982, the Musket Golds were; Captain W.W. Norris (lead), Captain J.D. Panneton (No. 2), Captain G.A. Reiser (No. 3), Captain J.D. Shank (No. 4) and Captain P.T. Campbell (commentator). The formation team had a very successful, accident-free season flying a total of 315.3 hours in fourteen shows before an estimated 420,000 people. Also that year, the Dragonflies team, flew a total of 307.0 hours before approximately 390,000 spectators who attended their sixteen shows.

In 1983, the Musket Golds flew 317.6 hours and performed in ten air demonstrations whereas the Dragonflies flew only 139.4 hours and only eight shows. During their last season of operation, the Musket Golds, consisted of Captain D.A. Jagat (lead), Captain D.G. Griffiths (deputy-lead), Captain R.K. Ladalm, Captain S.W. Hole, Captain J.D. Fontaine (spare), Lieutenant K. Stewart (spare) and Captain J.B. Haazen (commentator). They performed thirteen times. The Dragonflies, also in their final year, flew only nine shows, including one in Abbottsford, British Columbia. The team members were: Captain G.A. Reiser, Captain K.A. Jamieson, Captain S.B. Metcalfe, Captain P.G. McKeage, Captain J.R. Faguy and an Air Traffic Controller at CFB Portage la Prairie, Captain R.J. Payette, who acted as the team's commentator.

When the Flying Instructors School moved from CFB Moose Jaw to CFB Portage la Prairie as a detachment of the Central Flying School (CFS) located in Winnipeg, the staff brought with them a tradition of an air formation team called "The Viking". The Viking were a formation team of four Tutor aircraft and were flown by the FIS instructors. Due to the unique training role of the unit, the instructors were readily interchanged as



The Vikings in line-abreast formation.

needed to form the team. As with the Musket Golds and the Dragonflies, the Vikings air demonstration team also ceased to exist following the 1984 season.

The Bands

Although not flying demonstration teams, throughout its fifty year history, two military bands have called Portage la Prairie their home. A brief description of these bands has been included as part of this chapter because, like their aerobatic counterparts, they too have been international ambassadors displaying the varied expertise and excellence of the airmen who have served at the airbase.

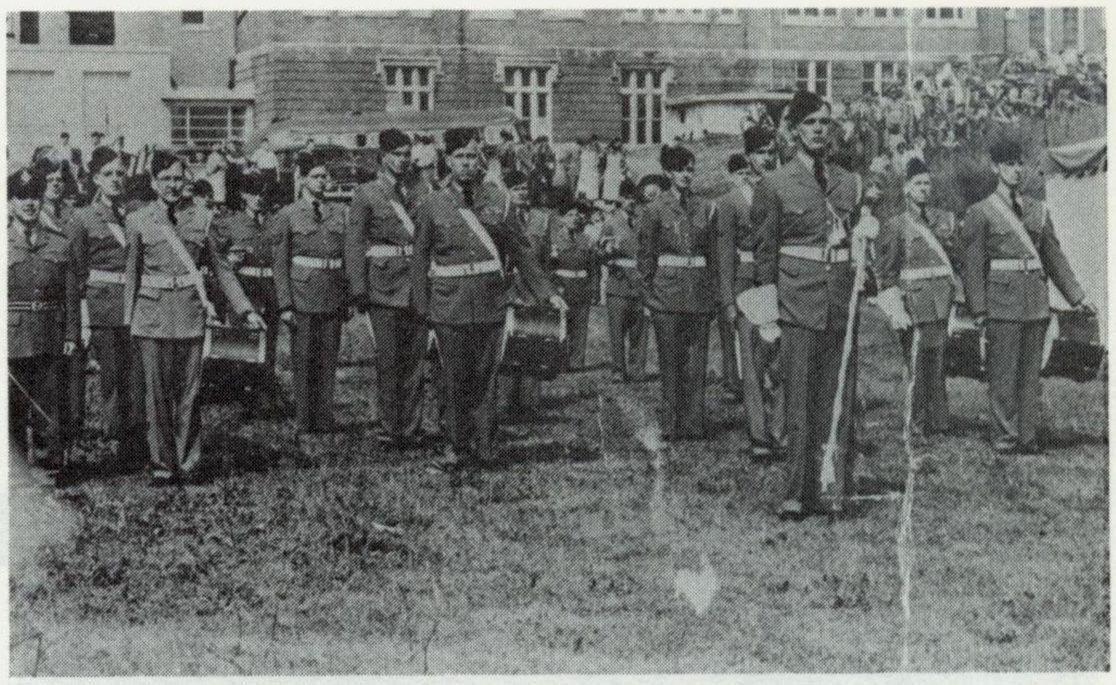
Formation of the voluntary Trumpet and Drum Band was requested on November 18, 1952 when Flight Lieutenant E.D. Herbertson sent a letter to Ottawa on behalf of the Air Officer Commanding Training Command in Trenton. A few week later, on December 9, in a letter signed by Wing Commander W.H. Schroeder, on behalf of the Chief of the Air Staff stated "volunteer trumpet and drum bands are authorized for RCAF Station Portage la Prairie and Penhold, effective this date." The letter continued, "the main functions of the bands will be to play for Station parades and on ceremonial occasions as required."

The band had actually formed on October 15, 1952, prior to the receipt of this approval. It started

its practices on borrowed instruments and did not receive its public instruments until January 2, 1953. The band, consisting of twenty-five members; first played in public at a Commanding Officers parade held on February 13, 1953. It grew quickly and by April 27, 1953, the band had thirty-one members, yet it was only authorized a size of 28 pieces. As interest in the band continued to grow, the membership increased to over fifty qualified and partially qualified personnel. Consequently, on December 14, 1953, the Station requested an expansion of its band to forty pieces.

On April 7, 1954, interest started to turn towards a Pipe and Drum Band when it requested transfer of the bagpipes being disposed of by the pipe band of 400 Squadron. Within a week, new Piston Bugle band equipment arrived at Portage la Prairie and the band was authorized to expand to thirty-six pieces. The band then continued to exist and performed in this format into the 1960's.

Besides performing at the numerous graduation parades throughout the years, the band also participated in many parades and community fairs in the local area. However, it was at band competitions that this group of RCAF Station Portage la Prairie ambassadors really made a name for themselves. For example, as early as the summer of 1954, the band journeyed to Waterloo, Ontario to compete in the annual band festival held in that city. In this their first competition, the band placed second in the novice band competition. Then, on May 17, 1955, the Station Band was flown to Yorkton, Saskatchewan, to play for a visit to the community by the Candian Governor-General, the Right Honourable Vincent Massey and his party, who were touring Western Canada. A few days later, on May 27, the band placed first in the 14 Training Group Band Competion held at RCAF Station Moose Jaw. This meant that the RCAF Station Portage la Prairie band was again sent to Waterloo, Ontario as representatives of 14 Training Group in the Senior Canadian Trumpet Band Championships at the Waterloo Music Festival. On June 27, 1955, the band competed and placed sixth overall, the best showing by any RCAF band and a phenomenal improvement over its previous years' effort. The following year, 1956, saw the Band again win the 14 Training Group Competition held in May at RCAF Station Moose Jaw. However this time, on June 30, 1956 the RCAF Station Portage la Prairie Band placed second in the Trumpet and Drum Competition at the Canadian Championships, again held in Waterloo. Finally, on May 23,



The RCAF Station Portage la Prairie Trumpet and Drum Band at the Senior Canadian Trumpet and Drum Band Championships in Waterloo, Ontario, in June 1955. (Photo courtesy of Mr. G. Thorne)

1959, at the RCAF Championships held at RCAF Moose Jaw, the Band took first place.

While the Trumpet and Drum Band was highly successful for a number of years, interest in it did wane. This fact gave way to the formation of the CFB Portage la Prairie Pipes and Drums Band in 1975. This band was established as a Regular Force Volunteer Pipe Band under the direction of Pipe Major H.D. MacPherson from the Second Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment Pipes and Drums.

Pipe Major MacPherson and his family arrived at CFB Portage la Prairie in May 1975, and he immediately began the task of recruiting and building a Pipe Band. Along with the help of his wife Susan and a small group of Pipes and Drummers, the task of acquiring the necessary equipment, obtained through garage sales and borrowed from other pipe bands, commenced. Countless hours were spent by Susan MacPherson tailoring and repairing parts of uniforms donated by other bands.

During the first year following its formation, it was not uncommon to see the members of the CFB Portage la Prairie Pipes and Drums missing part or all of their highland uniforms. At one of its first performances, on October 3, 1975, during a Base Commander's Inspection and Parade, the pipers wore Queen's Own Cameron hair sporrans and the three drummers were dressed in the Canadian Forces green uniforms. At the time of this parade, the Base Pipes and Drums had a repertoire of two tunes, "Scotland the Brave", and "Amazing Grace". While this may seem trivial to some, it was actually a major accomplishment for a Pipe Band which did not exist five months earlier.



Pipe Major MacPherson with his first students in August 1975.

Amongst the Band's first volunteer members were Captain Jim Skinner, now a major serving at CFB Summerside and Master-Corporal Dave Tack, now serving at CFB Trenton. Non-military volunteers included Trevor Lambert, Zane Matiation (the Principal of the Base's Harold Edwards School) and Bob MacFarlane. Both Trevor and Zane are still playing with the Pipe Band. Today, the Band wears the full highland ceremonial dress including the Royal Canadian Air Force tartan.

During the summer of 1977, Pipe Major MacPherson was posted and replaced by Pipe Major J.C. Briand from the Canadian Guards. Subsequent Pipe Majors have been:

a. 1981-1982 Pipe Major Alderman, CD (Canadian Guard)
b. 1982-1985 Pipe Major H.D. MacPherson, CD (2nd Bn RCR)
c. 1985-Present Pipe Major E.F. Fox, CD (2nd Bn RCR)

Throughout its history, the CFB Portage la Prairie Pipes and Drums have performed for audiences throughout North America as well as in Europe. Some of its more memorable performances includes shows at the 1984 and 1987 Halifax Tattoos, the 1986 Royal Danish Tattoo in Copenhagen, Denmark, and finally, in 1989 several performances at the Plant City (the twin city of Portage la Prairie) Strawberry Festival and Walt Disney World's Epcot Centre both in Florida.

The CFB Portage la Prairie Pipe and Drums have established the reputation of being one of the premier Regular Forces Volunteer Pipe Bands in the Canadian Forces.



The CFB Portage la Prairie Pipes and Drums Band with the Base Commander, Colonel B.C. McKenzie, and the Base Band Officer, Chief Warrant Officer J.L. Tremblay, in 1989.

Chapter Five

Primary Flying Returns

Manitoba's Centennial

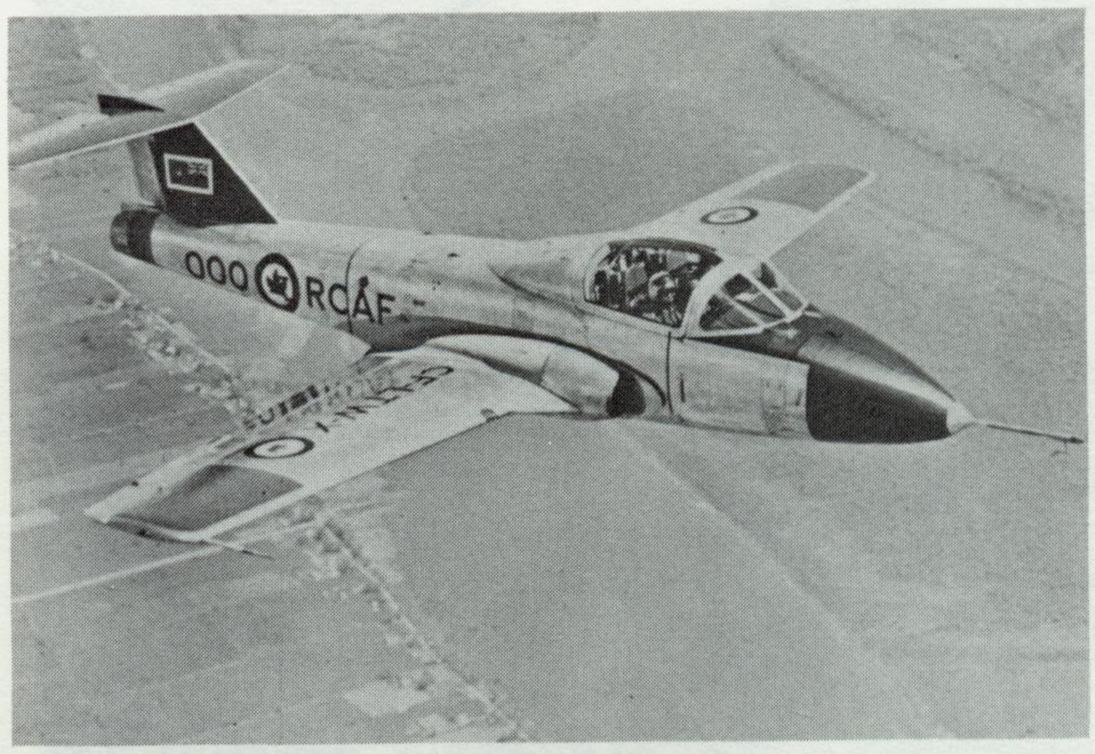
In 1970, Manitoba celebrated its Centennial; one hundred years since it had joined Canada as a separate province. The Manitoba Centennial spawned a number of special projects in communities throughout the province. In the Portage la Prairie area, the construction, just east of the City of Portage la Prairie, of a replica of Fort la Reine, an early Manitoba Trading Post, was chosen as its project. Construction on this new museum commenced on July 15, 1969. The Base supported this project by providing manpower and technical expertise under the guidance of Lieutenant-Colonel Sullivan. Work continued on the construction of the fort throughout the year. Finally, on Thursday, November 19, 1970, CFB Portage la Prairie officially transferred Fort la Reine to the municipality.

The Base also had a secondary project involving the construction of a traditional Red River Cart. Warrant Officer Bratton and Corporal Jamieson were in charge of this project and started working on the cart during the summer of 1969. It was completed on December 3, 1969 and then, on March 23, 1970, it was flown to Joliette, Quebec to participate in an historical event being held there. Upon its return to Manitoba, the cart was placed in the new Fort la Reine Museum.

On the Base itself, as its own Manitoba Centennial project, CFB Portage la Prairie decided to construct a new park at the entrance to the Base. In the park, to the left of the guardhouse, a Tutor, painted in the colours of the Golden Centennaires, was placed on a pedestal. This prototype Tutor aircraft (CF-LTW-X) was donated to CFB Portage la Prairie by its manufacturer, the

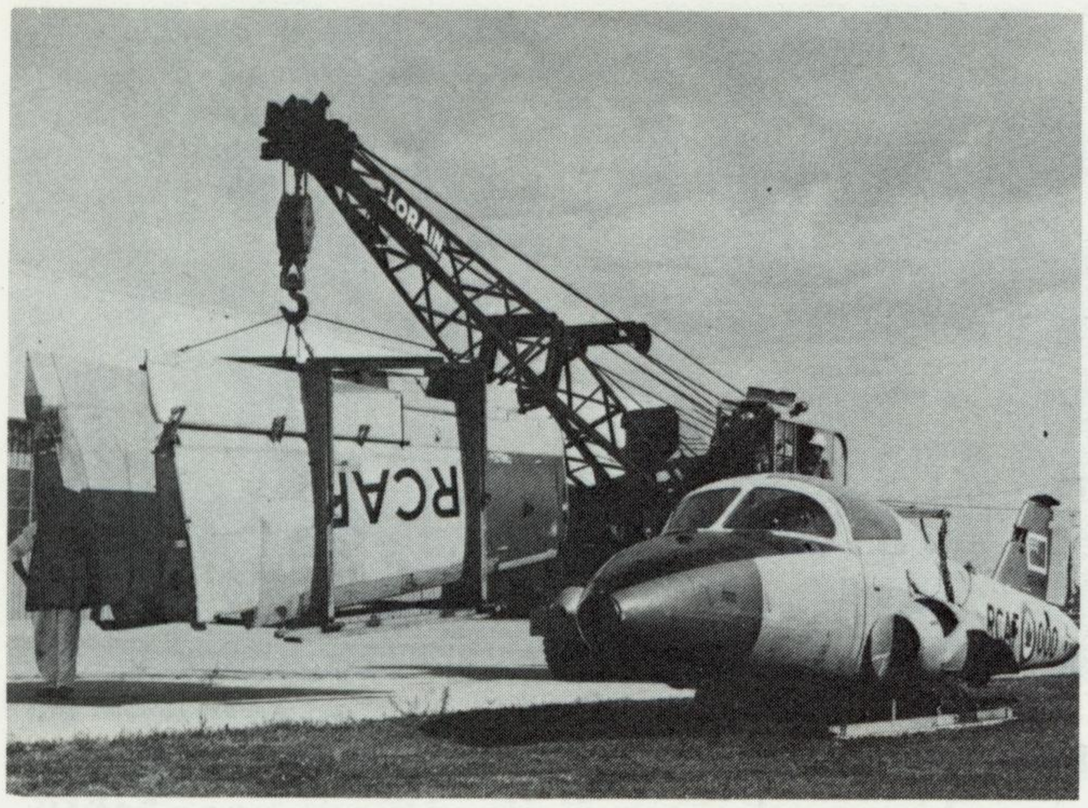


The CFB Portage la Prairie's Centennial Project, the Red River Cart, proved to be of interest to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Portage la Prairie in 1970.



The original prototype Tutor jet in flight. Note the additional pitot tube on the nose as well as on the wing.

Canadair Limited of Montreal. It was initially flown on January 13, 1960, by Mr. Ian McTavish who, in addition to being a Canadian test pilot, was also a member of the design team responsible for the side by side cockpit layout. Following the completion of a European sales tour, and with 533 flights totalling 1168 hours, the airplane, by then modified to the Tutor's standards of 1970, was retired.



The original prototype Tutor jet's arrival at CFB Portage la Prairie in 1970.

During the summer of 1970, it was dismantled and flown to the Base in a Hercules transport aircraft. By the end of November 1970, it had been reassembled and mounted in the new park. However, the park itself was not officially dedicated until almost a year later, on Thursday, October 7, 1971. On that day, during a memorial dedication service, the new Centennaire Park was commemorated to the memory of Flight Lieutenant Tom Bebb and Flight Lieutenant Dave Barker, both of whom died while serving with the Golden Centennaires. The park was also to serve as a memorial to the air display team itself, the Golden Centennaires. During the dedication ceremony, two Tutors did a fly-past in memory of Flight Lieutenants Bebb and Barker, and seven more Tutors completed a flypast in memory of the Golden Centennaires team.



Colonel Casselman unveils the Tutor monument during the Dedication Ceremony and Official Opening of "Centennaire Park" on October 7, 1971.

The Year of Change: 1970

Manitoba's Centennial Year, 1970, was a year of upheaval and change for CFB Portage la Prairie. Following a period of speculation as to its future, on Friday, February 20, the Honourable Leo Cadieux, the Minister of National Defence, announced that CFB Portage la Prairie would remain open. He indicated that the Primary Flying School at CFB Borden in Ontario would be moved to CFB Portage la Prairie. Approximately ninety military personnel would be transferred from Borden along with the school, which would funnel up to 235 pilot trainees through its training mill each year.

Unfortunately, the personnel of the existing 3 FTS at CFB Portage la Prairie were not as elated with the news, since they assumed that the school in Borden would be transferred intact as a separate unit. So certain was the School Commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Found, that his school was closing once again, that a 3 FTS Abandonment Party was held on April 10, 1970. A scant four days later, on April 14, another official announcement concerning the future of CFB Portage la Prairie and 3 FTS was made. It stated that, effective July 1, 1970, 4 FTS, located at CFB Rivers, would be transferred to CFB Portage la Prairie. This would involve the move of the School's twelve helicopters and four Cessna L-19 and L-182D forward observation aircraft, plus eighty-five military personnel. The following day, April 15, a follow-up announcement gave 3 FTS a reprieve. It said that, effective July 31, 1970, 3 FTS and 4 FTS were to amalgamate into one new training school at CFB Portage la Prairie to be known as the Number Three Canadian Forces Flying Training School (3 CFFTS). Lieutenant-Colonel Found was to remain on as Commandant of this new dual purpose school. The role of 3

CFFTS, with its fifty-nine officers and four other ranks, was to provide flight selection testing and basic flying training at its Primary Flying School (PFS), plus advanced pilot conversion to rotary wing flying at its Helicopter School. The Base was rocked by one more move in 1970. That event occurred on Wednesday, July 8, when 1 FIS "The Vikings" left CFB Portage la Prairie on redeployment to CFB Gimli and CFB Moose Jaw.

With all of these announcements, the changes and moves started to occur in rapid succession.



The Chipmunk aircraft arrived at CFB Portage la Prairie from CFB Borden on April 1, 1970.

First of all, on April 1, the first of the twenty-seven de Havilland Chipmunk aircraft arrived at CFB Portage la Prairie from CFB Borden aboard a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. The remainder of the fleet of light primary training aircraft had arrived by mid-May. The second fleet of aircraft started to arrive at CFB Portage la Prairie from CFB Rivers on Tuesday, June 30. These eight



The Hiller helicopter arrived at CFB Portage la Prairie from CFB Rivers on June 30, 1970. (Courtesy of the Canadian Forces Photograhic Unit Central Negative Library)

helicopters, the CH-112 "Nomad" Hiller helicopters brought the first contingent of 4 FTS equipment and personnel to their new home. The first helicopter to touch down at CFB Portage la Prairie that day was piloted by Captain W. Morris. The flying era of these two fleets of older training aircraft at CFB Portage la Prairie was relatively short-lived, as modern flying machines were sent in to replace them the following year, 1971.

Of course, with the arrival of these new aircraft fleets from CFB Borden and CFB Rivers in 1970, the existing fleets at CFB Portage la Prairie departed. First, on July 27, the last of six remaining T-33 jets flew off to CFB Gimli. The next day, July 28, the last Expeditor (No. 2362) left for its disposal site in Saskatoon. It was flown by Lieutenant-Colonel R.W. Found and Captain Andy Lussier. Throughout its years of service with 3 FTS, the C-45 Expeditor had provided thousands of hours of flying to hundreds of student pilots and their instructors.

On Monday, May 11, 3 FTS commenced primary flying training using the Chipmunk. Officer Cadet Mike Hiller was the first PFS student to solo at CFB Portage la Prairie in a Chipmunk. He did so on Friday, June 11. On the helicopter side, the first basic helicopter course at CFB Portage la Prairie using the Hiller started on August 19, with a staff of eighteen instructors and eleven students.

Despite the change in its role during 1970, CFB Portage la Prairie also had an active year in other areas. From April 29 to May 27, up to one hundred Base personnel were involved for various periods with the flood control efforts in Carman, Manitoba. Then, commencing on October 20, four 3 CFFTS helicopters and six staff pilots were sent to Quebec in support of the Canadian Armed Forces efforts under the War Measures Act. They were attached to 403 Squadron based at St. Hubert. The deployment ended on November 27, with the four helicopters having flown an average of 1.9 hours per day for a total of 116.5 hours during the entire period.

CFB Portage la Prairie personnel were involved with two special visits to the Portage la Prairie area in 1970. First, on April 29, the Governor-General, Roland Michner, passed through the city. Then, on July 13, a Royal Visit by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, occurred.

The annual Armed Forces Day, on July 9, included a number of aircraft on static display, and aerial displays. The highlight of the activities, however, was a farewell ceremony for 1 FIS, fol-

lowed by the City of Portage la Prairie's official welcoming of 3 CFFTS.

The final significant event of 1970 occurred on Friday, October 13. On that day, CFB Portage la Prairie finally received its Base crest. The process of acquiring the crest had actually started in the late 1950's, when Group Captain Frizzle had tried to obtain a Station crest. Unfortunately, all of the crest designs submitted at that time had been unacceptable since they did not conform with the high heraldry standards. Some years later, Colonel V.C.H. Stuart had re-initiated the quest for a Base crest. A prize of $150.00 was offered to the individual who submitted the winning design. Eventually, Corporal L.V. Bunn submitted the winning design of a voyageur dressed in gold buckskin and carrying a white canoe. The maple leaves on the outline were also in red. Again heraldry standards dictated that minor changes in colours and design were still required. This was done and the crest was resubmitted. Finally, on August 13, 1970, the acceptable design was sent to Governor-General Michner for approval by the Queen. She approved the crest in late August.

Before closing out the year, another interesting points should be noted. On Wednesday, August 19, CFB Portage la Prairie won the annual Canadian Forces Fire Prevention award. The Portage Fire Hall, under the direction of Master Warrant Officer T.E. Wright, the Base Fire Chief, had surpassed over twenty-five other Canadian Forces Bases in Canada and overseas to clinch the award.

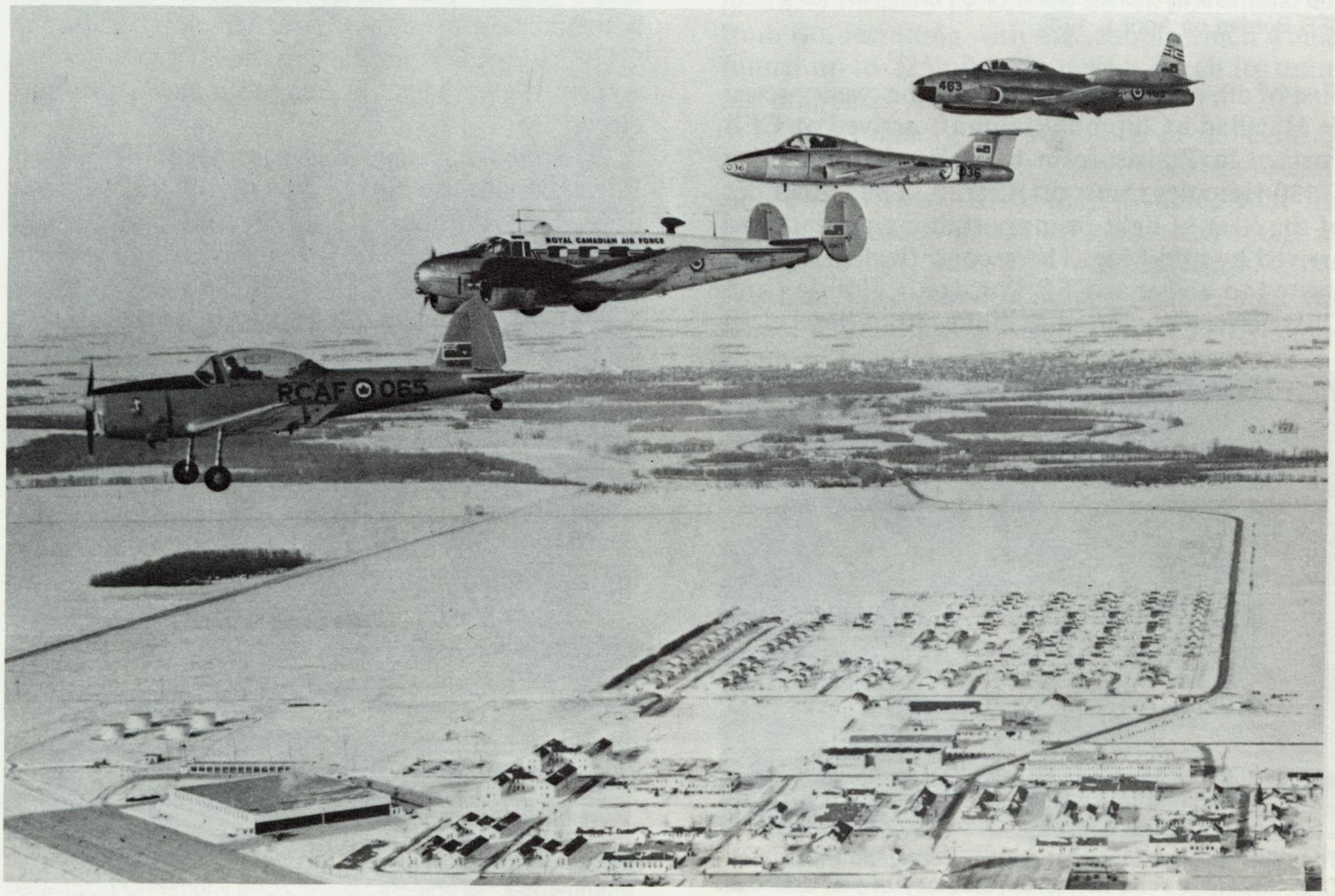
By the end of 1970, after all of the changes in units and their staff, CFB Portage la Prairie had a strength of 656 service personnel. They were divided by rank as follows:

Officers (all ranks)	92
Chief Warrant Officers	2
Master Warrant Officers	13
Warrant Officers	15
Sergeants	62
Corporals	374
Privates	98
TOTAL	656

Truly 1970, was a very significant year in the life of CFB Portage la Prairie.

New Fixed-Wing and Rotor-Wing Aircraft

The following year, 1971, also had a number of highlights. To start with, on Friday, February



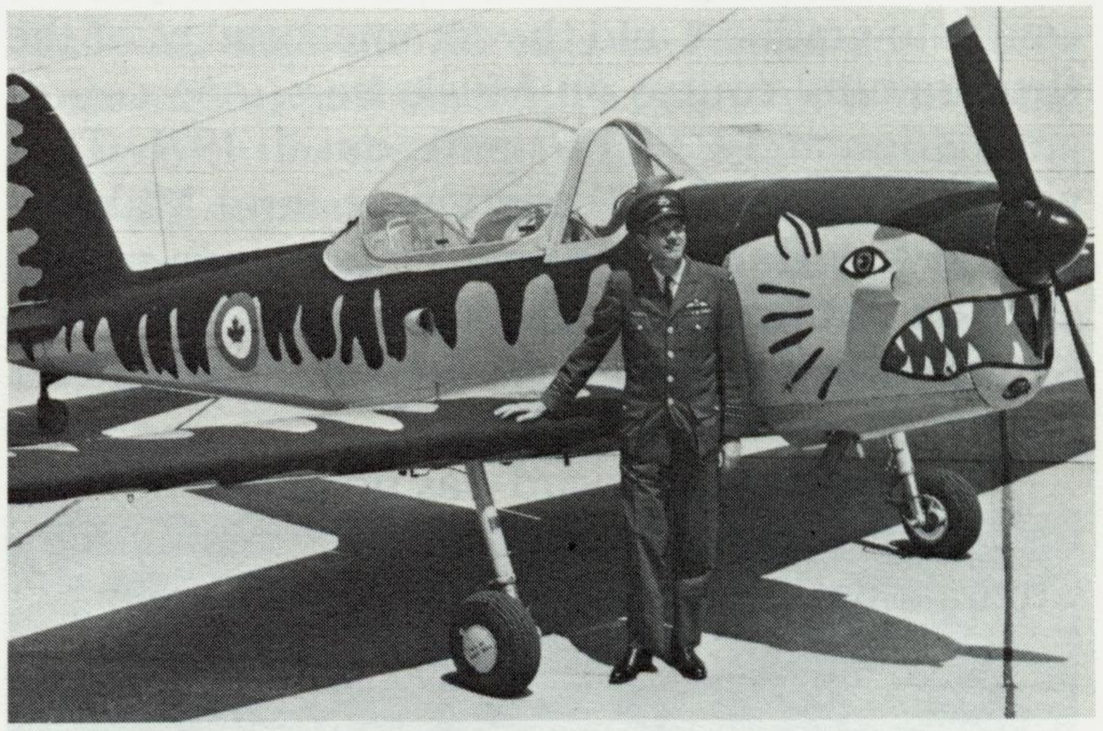
Fixed wing aircraft, using the CFB Portage la Prairie aerodrome, in formation over the Base during the winter of 1970-1971.

2, during his annual visit to the Base, the Director of Flight Safety, Colonel R.D. Shultz, presented the Transient Servicing Award which had been earned by CFB Portage la Prairie between July 1 and December 31, 1970. Colonel McKechnie accompanied by Warrant Officer Bob Fortune from Radar, Captain Steve Allen from Transient Servicing, Captain Len Dykes from Terminal Control and Captain Graham Gorling from Tower Control, accepted the award on behalf of the Base.

There were a number of other visitors to CFB Portage la Prairie in 1971. Major-General J. Barr, the Canadian Forces Surgeon General visited on Friday, September 3, as part of his first official visit tour to western bases. Then, on September 14-15, Major-General W. Milroy, who had replaced Major-General Carr as the Commander of Training Command earlier in the summer, stopped overnight at Southport during his familiarization tour of Training Command Bases. While at CFB Portage la Prairie he presented the retiring Base Sergeant Major, Chief Warrant Officer Tom Ellis, with the Canadian Forces Meritorious Service Award.

As with the previous year, a change of aircraft fleets was also in the cards for 1971. On Saturday, February 3, the announcement was made that the Chipmunk pilot trainer aircraft was to be replaced by the Beechcraft "Musketeer" Custom III single-engine, low-wing monoplane. With the arrival of Musketeer No. 134201, the first of twenty-five such aircraft, on March 30, a new way of flying for PFS had arrived. The new airplane resulted in more efficient and economical flying training.

The instructors started conversion training from the obsolete Chipmunk to the new Musketeer on April 15, with the first course commencing its flying training on May 20. The first student to solo on the Musketeer was Captain L.J. Cox. He did so on June 29. Similarily, the last PFS course to train on the Chipmunk had commenced on March 1, with a student load of twenty-three candidates. Then finally, on July 7, the last of the Chipmunk aircraft departed CFB Portage la Prairie for storage and subsequent disposal by 402 CFTSD Saskatoon.



The last Chipmunk prior to its departure from CFB Portage la Prairie on retirement in July 1971.

Before the end of 1971, the announcement was made concerning the replacement aircraft for the CH-112 "Nomad" Hiller Helicopter. It would be a new single-engine, jet turbine powered helicopter, the Bell CH-136 "Kiowa". The first two of a planned eighteen Kiowa to be used for helicopter conversion training arrived on December 19. Captain W. Morris was again at the controls of the first Kiowa to land at CFB Portage la Prairie that day.

Other notable events which occurred in 1971, included a Change of Command ceremony on Fri-



The new Musketeer aircraft "on the line" at CFB Portage la Prairie in May 1971.



During the Change of Command Parade on July 9, 1971, the departing Base Commander, Colonel D.S. McKechnie, conducts his final inspection of the Base personnel.

day, July 9, when Colonel A.K. Casselman became the new Base Commander replacing Colonel D.S. McKechnie. He retired from the Canadian Forces after serving two years as the Base Commander at CFB Portage la Prairie. Major-General W.K. Carr, the departing Commander of Training Command, presided over the event. It was also his farewell visit to the Base.

Besides the significance of the last Chipmunk course to graduate and the commencement of the first training course on Musketeers, one course graduation at 3 CFFTS stands out in 1971. That was PFS Course 7107, containing three Malaysian and five Danish student pilots, which graduated on February 19. In addition, at FIS, two Kenyan officers graduated from an FIS Musketeer instructor course on October 27.

One Suggestion Award was presented in 1971. Lieutenant-Colonel R.W. Found, the acting Base Commander, presented it to Corporal John W. Collier on Friday, April 16, for his suggestion about the re-routing of fire detector cables in the Tutor jet trainer. Later, on Friday, September 18, the CFB Portage la Prairie Transportation Section won the Training Command Motor Safety Award for passenger and cargo vehicles.



The Honourable Donald S. MacDonald, the Minister of National Defence, is welcomed to the Base in August 1971 by Colonel Casselman.



The Honourable John Turner, the Minister of Justice and future Prime Minister of Canada, is welcomed to the Officers' Mess by Colonel Casselman on October 19, 1971.

The final visit of note occurred on Friday, November 27, 1971, when a group of selected Dutch news media personnel visited Southport. They were accompanied by the Netherlands Air Attaché from Ottawa. The visit was co-ordinated locally by Lieutenant Hank Reijis of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, who had arrived at CFB Portage la Prairie in August 1971. He assumed the position of the Netherlands Liaison Officer with the Canadian Forces overseeing the basic pilot training programme at 3 CFFTS. The newsmen were visiting Training Command units in Canada at which Dutch pilots were being trained. They were briefed on the training procedures in use and were then given an opportunity to interview the

students, especially the Dutch candidates, and their instructors.

Recognition for special achievements highlighted the start of the new year, 1972. On January 10, Warrant Officer Art Knightly was presented with a Good Show Award for detecting a mechanical fault on an aircraft being prepared for flight. If the fault had not been detected, the aircraft could not have been flown safely and a serious in-flight emergency could have developed.



The Honourable Mitchell Sharpe, the Minister of External Affairs, signs the guest book in the Officers' Mess on January 18, 1972.

Three more Good Show Awards were presented to CFB Portage la Prairie personnel in 1972, all on Friday, October 13, during the familiarization of the newly appointed Commander of Training Command, Rear-Admiral R.S. Stephens. Corporal Vrooman received his award for following through on his intuitive feeling that a set of brakes installed in a Musketeer were not "quite right". As a result of his subsequent investigation, it was discovered that the brakes had not been assembled correctly.

Corporal Forsey received his award as a result of his primary inspection of another Musketeer. During his inspection, he noticed an unusual sound when the underside of the aircraft was tapped in the area near the left mainplane. Corporal Forsey had some of the skin surface removed and, on inspection, it was revealed that a Kleco fastener used to hold metal surfaces in place before riveting, had been left inside the airplane during its manufacturing. If the fastener had been left in the aircraft, it could have resulted in a potentially serious flight safety hazard.

Finally, Lieutenant Higgins received his award for his quick thinking, thus avoiding a possible crash landing in a Musketeer. He was in the circuit on the downwind leg when he realized that he did not have control over the throttle control. With his engine running at full power, he positioned his aircraft at high key for the runway in use, shut down the engine, and made a perfect forced landing. On investigation, it was discovered that the throttle control rod had disconnected from the carburetor.

The Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, used the Portage la Prairie aerodrome as an arrival and departure point for a speaking engagement in the City. When he arrived on October 13, he was met by Colonel Casselman. Before heading to Portage la Prairie, he inspected a Guard of Honour and acknowledged the presence of a number of other Base personnel on hand to greet him.



Prime Minister Trudeau inspecting the Guard of Honour during his visit to the Base on October 13, 1972.

Later in the fall, on Friday, November 24, the new Chief of Staff at Training Command Headquarters, Brigadier-General K.C. Lett, visited the Base. Colonel Casselman briefed him on its role and Lieutenant-Colonel G. Brennand briefed him on the pilot selection and training procedures. A similar briefing was given a few days later, on November 27, to Major-General J.G. Knopp, the Vice Chief of Air Staff for the Royal Netherlands Air Force, when he stopped at CFB Portage la Prairie during a tour of Canadian pilot training bases.

Operationally in 1972, the final acceptance by the Canadian Forces of the Bell Kiowa helicopter occurred on March 24. That day, during a ceremony at CFB Portage la Prairie, the new helicopter was also formally introduced to the news media. However, the last three Kiowas were not taken on strength until June 29. As for the CH-112 "Nomad" Hiller helicopter, the first two aircraft

left the Base for storage and disposal at 402 CFTSD Saskatoon on March 29. The last Hiller departed for Saskatoon on May 17, with Captain W. Madder and Captain T. Thompson at the controls.

Then, on Friday, November 24, 1972, Captain Roy Wansink was forced to land his Musketeer in a field eight miles from the Base. While making a radar approach to the Base during a training flight, he developed carburetor icing, forcing him down. Fortunately, there were no injuries as a result of the incident.

As a result of all of the changes at the Base during the previous two years, it was decided to conduct an On-Site Manpower Evaluation Review (OSMER) at CFB Portage la Prairie. Headed by Brigadier-General Graham, the OSMER Team commenced on May 23, 1972. In its final report, the OSMER Team recommended a Base establishment of:

Rank	Actual	Recommended
Officers	39	42
Other Ranks	371	376
Civilian	166	177
Total	576	595

This evaluation was of the Base's manpower only and did not include the staff at 3 CFFTS.

As a final note to 1972, bilingual training became a reality at CFB Portage la Prairie. Miss M. Ouellette was hired as the instructor and she started French classes for Base personnel on September 14.

Normal Operations

The period of upheaval and change was now over and CFB Portage la Prairie settled into normal operations for the remainder of the 1970's. In March 1973, Sergeant J.F. Alexander received a certificate from the Federal Government for a constructive suggestion for improving the efficiency of public service operations.

A number of other awards were presented to Base personnel in 1973. In April, Corporal G.L. Sandersons received a Suggestion Award for his suggestion about the use of helicopter spare parts which would normally be discarded when no longer required or useful. In May, Sergeant T.A. Marshall received a Good Show Award as a result of his thoroughness and persistence in investigat-



Canadian Armed Forces helicopters, including the Hiller and Kiowa, in formation over CFB Portage la Prairie in the spring of 1972. (Courtesy of the Canadian Forces Photographic Unit Central Negative Library)

ing a suspected aircraft problem. His efforts resulted in the discovery and correction of the problem. Then, in September, he received a second award, a Suggestion Award, for his suggestions concerning the improvement to specific technical parts of the Kiowa helicopter. These changes resulted in the saving of many manhours for technical maintenance.

In late October, Captain J.F. Mann, a member of FIS, received a Good Show Award for his quick response and sound judgement under actual emergency conditions when he demonstrated a high degree of airmanship to overcome the problem. The emergency had occurred when Captain Mann was acting as student for an FIS instructor trainee. Another Good Show Award was presented to Captain Bob Johnson, a USAF Exchange Officer, on Friday, October 27. Captain Johnson, who had arrived at CFB Portage la Prairie as an Exchange Flying Instructor in September 1971, was recognized for his quick response to an airborne emergency. Due to his alertness, damage to the aircraft was kept to a minimum and possible injury to himself and his student was avoided. Finally, a month later, in November 1973, Master Corporal G.L. Sandersons received a second award for the year in recognition of his thoroughness in pursuing a small situation which had the potential of becoming a serious technical problem. Through his persistence, the problem was eliminated.

In June 1973, the announcement was made of a $1.6 million budgeted project to upgrade the aerodrome runways, drainage and airfield lighting. The project, under the direction of the Defence Construction Limited, commenced on July 3. Work continued throughout the summer and was over fifty percent completed when work ceased for the winter on October 31. Work commenced again in the spring, with the remainder of the airfield restoration work being completed in July 1974.

The Base lost three Kiowa helicopters in 1973, but this was not as a result of any accidents. Effective April 1, two of its fleet of Kiowa's were transferred to 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron at CFB Namao in Edmonton and one Kiowa was sent to the Aerospace Engineering Test Establishment (AETE) at CFB Cold Lake. On June 2, a severe summer storm ripped through the Base, causing $249,000 in damage to various Base buildings and structures. As Major Spraggs, a Kiowa instructor with 3 CFFTS at the time, recounted, this sudden freak windstorm, with winds in excess of ninety mile per hour, started to tear the roof off of Hangar 4. Parts of the hangar roof loosened and dropped inside the hangar. Luckily, despite the many aircraft in the hangar, only three received minor damage as a result of the falling debris.

On June 4, 1973, the command of 3 CFFTS was handed over to Lieutenant-Colonel G.E. McArthur from Lieutenant-Colonel G. Brennand. Lieutenant-Colonel McArthur was posted to Portage la Prairie from the Canadian Forces Staff College in Toronto.

Several important visits occurred in 1973. On August 9, Brigadier-General D. Gagnon, from the Canadian Forces Language Training Detachment in Quebec City, visited Southport. Accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Laviolette, his Senior Staff Officer for Language Programmes and his aide, Major Filiatrault, the visitors were at CFB Portage la Prairie to discuss the Base's francophone training of Officer Cadets.

Continuing with its good relationship with the civilian community, CFB Portage la Prairie received the "Freedom of the City" of Portage la Prairie on September 15. This honour was granted in recognition of the spirit of co-operation which had existed between the City and the Base



The Minister of National Defence, the Honourable James Richardson, examines the Base map during his visit in June 1973.



Personnel from CFB Portage la Prairie march down Saskatchewan Avenue in downtown Portage la Prairie on September 15, 1973, during the Freedom of the City Ceremony.

throughout the years. Historically, this proclamation confers the right of the military unit upon whom it is bestowed to march throughout the city with "bayonets fixed and colours flyings." On behalf of CFB Portage la Prairie, the Base Commander, Colonel A.K. Casselman, accepted the traditional honour from Mayor H.L. Henderson. This occurred during a parade and with a flypast of Musketeer aircraft and Kiowa helicopters.

A Guard of Honour, Colour Party and marching troops representing an armed column were symbolically challenged by the City's chief constable and halted at City Hall. Colonel Casselman presented his compliments to Mayor Henderson, who subsequently read a proclamation declaring the city open to the airmen from CFB Portage la Prairie.

Then, on October 10, Air Marshal Sir Neville Stack, the Air Officer Commanding the RAF Training Command, visited the Base as part of a Training Command familiarization visit. During his brief stay, he and his aides were given a Base briefing by Colonel Casselman and a pilot selection and training briefing by Lieutenant-Colonel McArthur.

A graduation of interest occurred on Friday, June 29, when Course 7302, containing ten Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAF) and two Canadian Forces graduates, completed their course. On



Air Marshal Sir Neville Stack inspecting the Base Band during his visit on October 10, 1973.

the occasion, the Scroll of Honour went to Officer Cadet Romijn (RNLAF). The Base also experienced an air incident on March 7, when Kiowa No. 13606 received minor structural damage. There were no injuries as a result of the mishap. Then, in late October, Base personnel participat-

CITY OF PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE · MANITOBA ·

PROGRESS
1880

TO THE
OFFICERS AND MEN
CANADIAN FORCES BASE PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

The Mayor and Council and the Citizens of the Corporation of the City of Portage la Prairie in Manitoba, in appreciation of the close spirit of cooperation between the City and Canadian Forces Base Portage La Prairie, and in gratitude for this close association,

Do hereby, on this the Fifteenth Day of September, Ninteen Hundred and Seventy Three, confer upon the Officers and Men of Canadian Forces Base Portage La Prairie full freedom to march through the City of Portage La Prairie on this date at any time between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M., with bayonets fixed and colours flying.

Harold Lloyd Henderson
Mayor

S. P. Rodgers
City Clerk

15th of September, 1973

The Freedom of the City Proclamation issued to the Base by the residents of Portage la Prairie on September 15, 1973.

ed in two Search and Rescue operations for missing persons. Both searches were successfully concluded. Lastly, on November 30, the Tower and RATCON accepted the recently installed Digital Altimeter Display System which provided readouts to the operators in both locations.

At the year-end, the Base had a strength of 457 personnel, forty officers and 417 other ranks. This total was augmented by an additional staff of sixty-four at 3 CFFTS, including four exchange officers; Captain A. Kappers (RNLAF), Captain A.M. Kuipjers (RNLAF), Captain R.S. Reijs (RNLAF), and Captain R.L. Johnson (USAF).

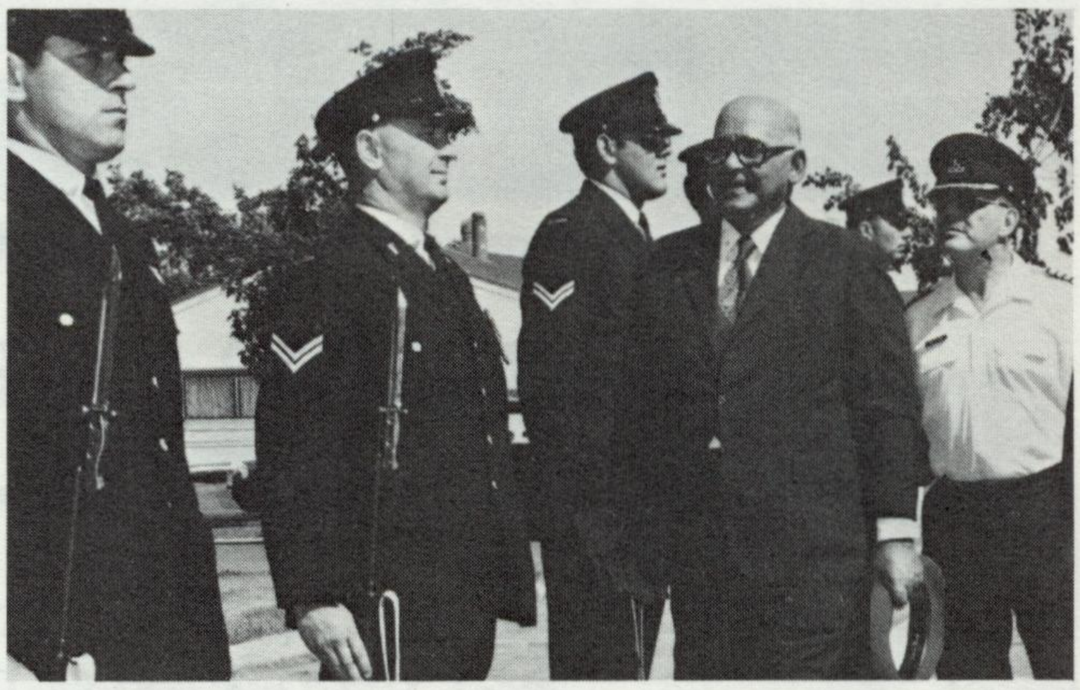
The following year, 1974, started out on a positive note when, on January 23, Corporal A.E. Hanricks received a Suggestion Award in recognition of his work in developing a new tow bar for use during the ground handling of the CH-136 Kiowa helicopter. He had worked closely with Sergeant Samure and Corporal Wells during the development phase of this new piece of equipment. Later, in June, Sergeant J.W. McKendry also received a Suggestion Award for a similar development. He had redesigned and improved the Musketeer tow bar. Then, on April 26, Master Corporal T.W. Adams received a Wide Awake Award as a result of his instantaneous response to an extremely hazardous situation, thereby preventing a major disaster.

A number of noteworthy visitors passed through Southport in 1974, commencing with Air Commodore John Severne, the Commandant of the Royal Air Force Central Flying School. He and four members of his staff visited the Base on March 12 and 13. During their two day stay, they toured the facilities and attended briefing sessions presented by the Base Commander and Commandant of 3 CFFTS.

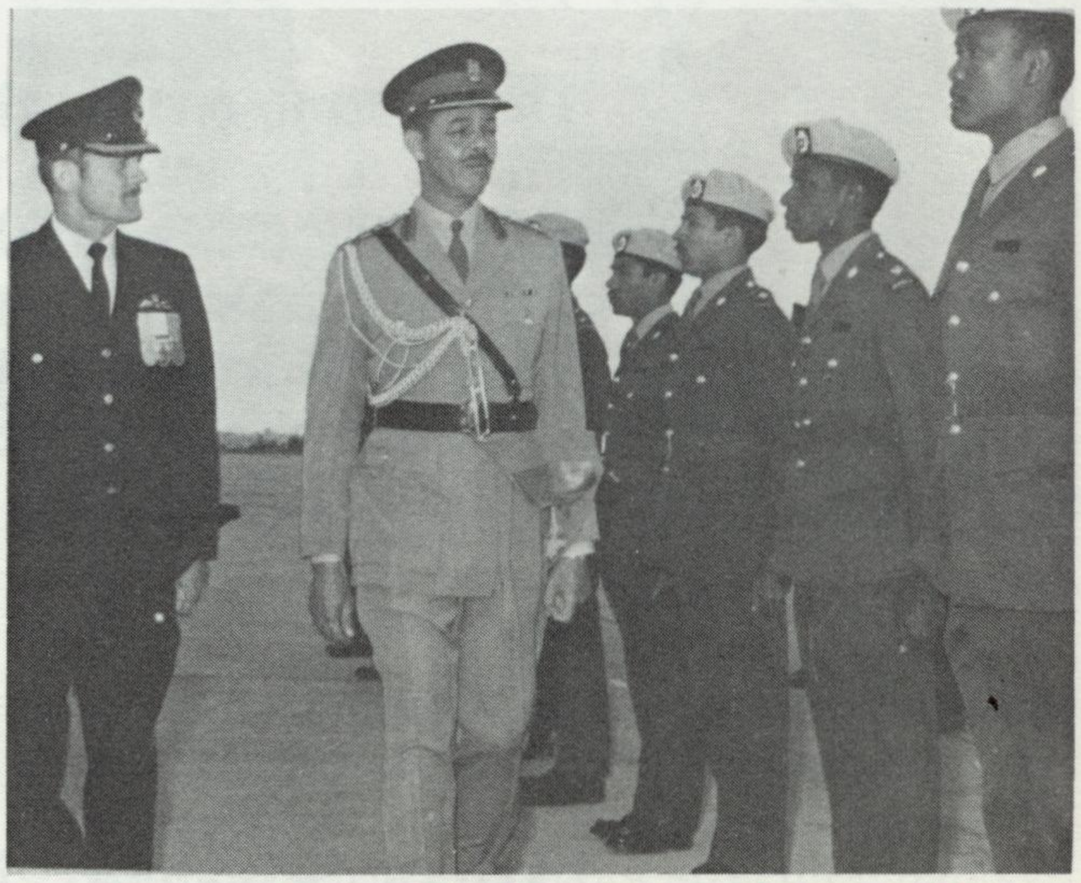
Then, on Wednesday, March 28, Rear-Admiral R.S. Stephens, the Commander of Training Command, conducted his annual inspection of CFB Portage la Prairie. This inspection entailed a close look at all Base facilities and operational units. He returned to Southport on July 15, for an informal visit and then came back again on Friday, September 20, to complete his inspection. In the interim, on Tuesday, July 9, Brigadier-General Johnson, the new Chief of Staff at Training Command Headquarters, toured the Base and was briefed on Base and 3 CFFTS operations. Also, Brigadier-General Wylie from Communications Command conducted a communications detachment inspection and Base liaison visit on April 19.

Brigadier-General W.W. Turner, the Commandant of the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) in Kingston, paid a two day visit to CFB Portage la Prairie commencing on June 11. He was the Guest of Honour at a RMC pilot course graduation party that evening. Then, during his second day on Base, he received the Base and 3 CFFTS briefing and tours and formally met with the RMC student pilots who were undergoing their summer military occupational training. During the same period, Mr. Tjaardstra, the Netherlands Consul General, conducted a Dutch Pilot Training Liaison Visit. This visit was followed up on July 25 by another liaison visit, this time by Major-General Geschiere, the Vice-Chief of the Air Staff of the Royal Netherlands Air Force.

The next visit took place on June 26, when His



Honour Guard inspection during the visit of the Jamaican High Commissioner, the Honourable Wills Ogilvie Isaacs, on June 26, 1974.



The Jamaican Chief of the Defence Staff, Brigadier-General Green, inspects the Jamaican students during his visit to the Base on August 26, 1974.

Excellency, the Honourable Wills Ogilvie Isaacs, the High Commissioner for Jamaica, visited the Base. He also stayed for two days, presenting Queen's Commissioning Scrolls to six Jamaican Defence Force (JDF) subalterns on Course 7306A, as part of his activities on the second day of the visit. These six JDF members had graduated from PFS along with seven Canadian pilot candidates in late May, and had immediately proceeded into helicopter training on the Kiowa. Brigadier-General R.E. Green, OD, ADC, PSC, the Chief of Staff of the Jamaican Defense Force (JDF) presented these same six officers with their pilots wings on August 26. This graduation parade was also attended by Brigadier-General Johnson, the Chief of Staff at Training Command Headquarters.

A brief halt to all of the visits occurred at the end of July. During this breathing space, the Base changed Commanding Officers. On July 26, during a Change of Command Parade consisting of over 338 Base service personnel, Colonel R.G. Litt, having just arrived from FMC Headquarters in Montreal, assumed command of the Base from Colonel Casselman.

Also in 1974, the Base Fire Hall again won the National Fire Prevention Award for the second time in three years. This was quite a feat since all Canadian military establishments, for a total of sixty-one entrants, participated in the competition.

During April, two Kiowa's from 3 CFFTS were tasked to assist the Province of Manitoba with flood control duties necessitated by the severe flooding of the Assiniboine River. Later, in July 1974, the aircrew in several Kiowa's from 3 CFFTS acted as forest fire observers in the Bisset region of Manitoba.

The OSMER Team arrived back at CFB Portage la Prairie on April 22 to 25, 1974, but their target on this occasion was 3 CFFTS. This manpower review was conducted to evaluate the military and civilian manpower requirements and organizational structure required to support the increased pilot training programme. This OSMER Study recommended that 3 CFFTS be established with a total of seventy-three positions, representing an increase of ten staff members. However, due to a subsequent statement by the Minister of National Defense the following year concerning a Forces reduction programme, the proposed increase to the School's establishment was cancelled.

On the domestic side, a major project to lower the ceilings in all Married Quarters commenced on June 13. This project was followed in December, by the announcement of a major maintenance project to replace the roofing on Buildings 36 and 36H (the Base Headquarters and attached Base Hospital), both Chapels (Buildings 80 and 81) and the lean-tos of Hangars 2, 3 and 5.

On a note of personal achievement, during the second week of August 1974, Captain R.W. Thompson logged his 1000th hour on the Kiowa helicopter. He became the first Canadian Forces pilot to amass that much flying time on the Kiowa since it was first accepted by the Canadian Forces in January 1972.

At the end of 1974, the Base military strength had dropped to 410 personnel; forty-three officers and 367 other ranks. Meanwhile, the staff strength of 3 CFFTS had risen to seventy-five, including five exchange officers First Lieutenants, G.E. Jacobs, A.M. Kuijpers, A. Van der Poest Clement and Captain L.G.C.A. Van de Reijt all of the RNLAF, plus USAF Captain J.S. Barfield.

The new year, 1975, started with the presentation of a number of awards; the first two being suggestion awards presented on Friday, January, 3. Master-Corporal Abbors received his award for a suggestion which dealt with the repairs required by the auxilliary power unit on the Buffalo aircraft. At the same time, Warrant Officer K.N. Bechman received his award for developing a fiber glass fairing which changed the airflow pattern into the cockpit of the Musketeer, thus eliminating the carbon monoxide problem.

Later that year, in mid-March, Master-Corporal Rollie Abbors and Corporal Bob Hawes both received suggestion awards for their redesign of the fuel selector knob on the CT-134 Musketeer. This presentation was Master-Corporal Abbors third such award and Corporal Hawes first.

Later in the year, in August 1975, Captain Houlahan, Master-Corporal Gunn, Captain Kuijpers and Major Van de Reijt received Good Show Awards for the efficient and professional way they worked together to ensure a happy ending to an emergency situation. An aircraft had become lost in the Brandon area and the duty controller, Captain Houlahan, steered this aircraft toward Portage until Master-Corporal Gunn was able to pick up the aircraft on his radar. Master-Corporal Gunn then vectored a Musketeer piloted by Captain Kuijpers and Major Van de Reijt to intercept this aircraft. The aircraft was then guided to a landing at Portage. When it touched down it had only five gallons of fuel remaining in its tanks.

On Friday, October 10, 1975, Corporal Jerry

Fulton also received a Good Show Award. While performing an inspection on a Musketeer aircraft, a grounding cable was accidentally kicked away from the aircraft. When the cable was replaced, a spark was emitted. As a result, a thorough inspection of the hangar's grounding rods and electrical conduit was done. A potential difference was discovered and a dangerous, explosive situation avoided when the ground crew called the construction engineering electricians in to investigate the problem.

Also in 1975, a number of changes occurred to the Base and to the aircraft that were flown there. In January, the aircraft power plant aluminum fittings were declared a fire hazard and the whole fleet was refitted with metal fittings. In addition, other CT-134 Musketeer modifications included the installation of a duel fuel pump, a door locking mechanism and a DAL emergency beacon. Then in April, improved door locking pins were installed in all Musketeer aircraft.

To further assist the Air Traffic Controllers on the Base, the RATCON, the tower and the weather office were equipped with wind speed indicators which could be read in knots as opposed to the former miles per hour. This change occurred on February 28. A month later, on March 31, all thermometers received a temperature change conversion from Fahrenheit to Celsius degrees.

Finally in August, new x-ray equipment was installed in the Base Hospital and an x-ray technician became part of the Base Hospital staff. It was hoped that these modifications to the Musketeer and improvements to the ATC and medical equipment would provide better service to the CFB Portage la Prairie flying community.

A number of operational events occurred in 1975. First of all, on February 13, a CH-136 Kiowa was sent to Shilo to transport an eighteen month old poison victim to the Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre. As a result of this quick action, the infant survived. Then, on March 18, at approximately 0400 hours, three Portage la Prairie aircraft responded to a Winnipeg Ministry of Transport request to check out the apparent downing of a light aircraft between Manitou and Darlingford, Manitoba. Despite a number of hours searching, nothing was spotted.

Later, on May 29, the Base underwent an Operational Evaluation. The primary focus of the evaluation team was to examine the functioning of the Base Defence Force. It was called out at 1330 hours and, after being put through a series of rigorous testing scenarios, it was stood down at approximately 2030 hours. It passed this test.

Finally, on September 20, 1975, the BDF was once again exercised, but this time for a real emergency. On this occasion Base assistance was provided to the flood victims in the Dauphin area.

A number of visits occured in 1975. They commenced with a visit from the Surgeon General, Rear-Admiral R.H. Roberts, who conducted an official tour of the Base on January 23. Next, on Friday, April 25, CFB Portage la Prairie again welcomed the High Commissioner for Jamaica, his Excellency, the Honourable Wills Ogilvy Isaacs. A mess dinner was held both in his honour and to allow him the opportunity to present commissioning scrolls to the Jamaican Air Force Officers on Base. This ceremony was followed by a Wings Parade for the Jamaican Defence Force Course 7501 on their graduation from the Basic Helicopter Course. For this event, the Chief of Staff of the Jamaican Defence Force, Brigadier-General R.E. Green, OD, ADC, PSC, presented wings to the four graduates. Then, on August 30, recently promoted Major-General R.E. Green again returned to Portage to present pilot's wings to another group of graduating Jamaican students.

On September 11 and 12, Major-General Elkerbout, the Chief of the Air Staff, Royal Netherlands Air Force, and Colonel A.C. Haers, the RNLAF Military Attaché to Canada, both visited Southport. Accompanying them was Major H.J.J. Van Soest, the RNLAF Liason Officer at Air Command in Winnipeg. Major-General Elkerbout was in Canada for a Wings Parade in Moose Jaw.

The final visit of 1975 occurred on October 24, when Brigadier-General D.J. Gagnon, the Director General for Training visited Southport. He was visiting the Base to discuss the progress of the provision of bilingual tutorial assistance to the francophone pilot trainees.

Before ending the discussion on 1975, three more items should be noted. The first one occurred on May 30, when the Transient Service Award was presented to the Base Commander, Colonel Litt. That same day safe driving awards were presented to the Construction Engineering section, the BAMEO, Base Security and the SPV section.

Also in May, the Canadian Forces Reduction Program was announced. As a result of a review of Training Command establishments, it was decided to decrease the Base BAMEO by sixteen positions. These positions were placed in a restrict-

ed category effective April 15, 1975, with the aim of eliminating them entirely by September 1975.

The final event of interest occurred on June 6, when a Change of Command Parade occurred at 3 CFFTS. Lieutenant-Colonel P.G. Harle, CD, became the Commandant replacing Lieutenant-Colonel G.E.C. McArthur, CD.

At the end of 1975, the Base had a total strength of 419 service personnel, including forty-three officers and 376 other ranks. 3 CFFTS augmented this Base strength with an additional sixty-five personnel including six exchange officers; Captain Barfield, USAF, and Major Van de Reijt, First Lieutenant Zuurbier, First Lieutenant Jacobs and First Lieutenant Van der Poest Clement, all RNLAF officers.

A number of interesting visitors came to CFB Portage la Prairie in 1976. Some of them were:

a. on January 27, Colonel D.A. Cidd, CD, the Deputy Commander for Canadian Forces Communications Command, to visit the 733 Communications Squadron Detachment;
b. on February 5, Commodore D.E.N. Mainguy, the Director General of Personnel Careers for Officers at NDHQ, for a familiarization tour of the Base and 3 CFFTS;
c. on February 8, Colonel H.B. Coffee, USAF Defence and Air Attaché at the American Embassy in Ottawa, for a familarization tour of the Base and 3 CFFTS;
d. on February 17, Lieutenant-General W.K. Carr, the Commander of Air Command, was received by a fifty man Guard of Honour;
e. on May 19, the Honourable Keble Munn, the Jamaican Minister of National Security and Justice, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Stein of the JDF, was the Wings Graduation Reviewing Officer and presented pilot's wings to five Jamaican officers;
f. on June 1, Colonel R.C.A. Van Voorst Vader, the Chief Chaplain (Protestant) of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, accompanied by Major Van Soest, the Air Command RNLAF Liaison Officer, for a familiarization tour of the Base and 3 CFFTS;
g. on August 6, Brigadier-General R.R. Barbar, the Chief of Staff for Air Operations at Air Command;
h. on September 24, the Honourable James Richardson, the Canadian Minister of National Defence; and finally
i. on October 22, a Royal Air Force team from Britain's Central Flying School, headed by Air Commodore J.M.D. Sutton visited 3 CFFTS to observe and compare the methodology being used to instruct Canadian pilot trainees.



Lieutenant-General Carr, the Commander of Air Command, inspects one of the Bandsmen, Captain Skinner, during his visit to the Base on February 17, 1976.

In June, the new twenty-five yard shooting range was opened. It had been a self-help project constructed by interested Base personnel. In addition, during the summer renovation projects to No. 4 Hangar worth $224,000 and to the Base Headquarters Building worth $249,800 were undertaken. Hanson Construction from Winnipeg was awarded both of these contracts. Furthermore, a Hangar steamline installation project worth $25,400 was awarded to Western Asbestos of Winnipeg, and a contract to remove the runway paint markings was awarded to the Prince George Hydro and Mechanical Ltd. It was worth $69,800. Finally, a $225,000 renovation project to Barrack Block No. 1 commenced.

In addition to its flying training commitments, CFB Portage la Prairie and 3 CFFTS also took on a number of community relations taskings in 1976. First, on April 9, Good Neighbour Day was held in an effort to thank the local farmers for their patience during the year and their kindness in allowing the Kiowa helicopters to use their fields during training. In addition, on October 23, De-

pendents' Day occurred in which staff pilot officers were permitted to fly their families in order to give them a better understanding of 3 CFFTS responsibilities and training dimensions.

On April 23, CFB Portage la Prairie celebrated Armed Forces Day with an open house in the afternoon. This open house included display booths from various Base sections, a band concert, tours of the Base, and films. All of these features were held in No. 1 Hangar. Static aircraft displays were also set up along the ramp just outside the hangar. The highlight of the day was a ninety minute air display featuring the Musketeer and Kiowa formation teams and climaxed with a demonstration by the Canadian Forces Air Demonstration Team, "The Snowbirds". Considering this was a weekday display, an excellent crowd of 6,000 people turned up to participate in this event.

Also during 1976, on September 11, CFB Portage la Prairie was honoured to host the Wartime Aircrew Reunion. On that day, over 2,000 Wartime Aircrew from many nations, who had gathered at a reunion in Winnipeg, travelled to the Base. They were treated to an airshow and to the hospitality of Canadian Forces Base Portage la Prairie. This was the first of several subsequent occasions during which these wartime aircrew personnel formally visited Portage la Prairie as part of their reunions. More about this unique group of visitors is contained in Appendix C.

Aide to the civil power was also very noticeable at CFB Portage la Prairie during 1976. As one of its unusual taskings, CFB Portage la Prairie was asked to provide assistance during the Winnipeg bus strike from January 26 to February 20. Kiowa helicopters from 3 CFFTS assisted police in traffic surveillance during the rush hour periods.



Base personnel on sandbag duty as part of the flood control efforts in April 1976.

Later, on April 12, CFB Portage la Prairie was tasked to provide assistance to the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization to assist with the flood control of the Assiniboine River. To meet this initial tasking, the Base Defence Force was mobilized. As the magnitude of the operation increased, CFB Portage la Prairie was required to substantially increase the size of its commitment, which reached a maximum of three shifts of eighty people each by April 21. With these large shifts requiring feeding, clothing and transportation, the entire Base was involved in either an active or supporting role. Assistance from many of the other Canadian Forces units in Manitoba was also required. The total man days spent by CFB Portage la Prairie personnel when this operation was completed amounted to 2,546. The cost of rations alone for the operation was $6,590. The total mileage recorded on CFB Portage la Prairie vehicles during the operation was 9,878 miles and, finally, the aircraft taskings totalled 95.8 hours for the Kiowa helicopters.

Finally in 1976, during an unusually dry summer, staff pilots from the rotary wing squadron were called on to do forest fire-fighting duties in the Lac du Bonnet area from July 5 to July 11. Four Base helicopters were involved in this operation. It is interesting to note that, in addition to all of these extra taskings, 3 CFFTS logged 13,613 Musketeer hours and 8,937 Kiowa hours in 1976, in pursuit of its main objective - pilot training.

The Base Fire Hall was also very busy in 1976. First of all, on October 23, the Base Fire Hall provided assistance to the City of Portage la Prairie Fire Department when a Manitoba Wheat Pool elevator was destroyed by fire. Base Transportation provided a road ambulance and the Military Police assisted with traffic control during the fighting of this fire.

Then, three days later, on October 26, the City of Portage la Prairie was once again struck by fire. On this occasion, the fire had the potential to be a great disaster as it struck at the Portage General Hospital. CFB Portage la Prairie was asked to assist in any way possible. The Base responded by sending two fire trucks with crews to help battle a fire, while hospital personnel evacuated the Extended Care Ward. Base Transportation provided vehicles and drivers to move approximately 100 patients to a nearby elementary school and Food Services personnel provided these patients with a hot meal. The Military Police assisted with on-

scene security and traffic control. A number of the patients from the Extended Care Ward were also admitted to the Base Hospital. Twenty of these patients did not return to the Portage General Hospital until November 21.

The next fire occurred on base on November 27, when the garage at 32-34 Delta was destroyed. The damage in this fire was $11,800. Finally on Christmas Day, December 25, the Fire Hall once again provided assistance to the City of Portage la Prairie Fire Department to fight a fire at the Fairlaine Hotel. This time, two fire trucks and ten men provided assistance to their counter parts in the City. With all this activity, it is interesting to note that in November 1976, the Base Fire Department received a plaque and a scroll for achieving first place in B Division of the 1975 Fire Prevention Association's annual Fire Prevention contest.

There was one aircraft incident in 1976, it occurred on December 10, when a Musketeer aircraft (NO. 134210) force landed following an engine failure. There was no damage to the aircraft and its sole occupant was not injured. He was First Lieutenant A. Van der Poest Clement, RNLAF. The accident had occurred while on a routine student training mission.

The following year, 1977, 3 CFFTS flew 12,245 Musketeer hours and 8,467 Kiowa hours. This flying was done primarily to fulfill its training role. However, 3 CFFTS did have a number of other taskings to perform during 1977. For example, on February 23, a helicopter from 3 CFFTS was assigned to airlift the Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Eugene Whelan, from Portage la Prairie to Shilo and return. A little over a week later, on March 2, two Kiowa's were assigned to transport the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) on a range inspection at Shilo. The following day, March 3, these same two helicopters transported the CDS back to Winnipeg. Enroute the CDS stopped briefly at CFB Portage la Prairie. He was greeted by the Base Commander, Colonel Litt, and a fifty man Guard of Honour. Later, on April 30 one Kiowa was sent from CFB Portage la Prairie to CFB Shilo to conduct a Shilo range recognizance due to a severe fire situation in that area.



General Dextrase, the Chief of the Defence Staff, signs the Officers' Mess guest book during his visit to the Base on March 2, 1977.

On August 5, another CH-136 Kiowa was sent to the Rivers area of Manitoba to photograph scenes of an aircraft crash. Then, on September 30, the Base held its annual Farmers Appreciation Day. Eight Kiowa's were used to give these farmers familiarization flights of the local area.

There were no aircraft accidents suffered in either the Kiowas or the Musketeer operations in 1977. However, both aircraft did undergo some mechanical changes. For example, the fleet of twelve CH-136 Kiowa helicopters received new paint jobs. The painting commenced on January 17, at Field Aviation in Calgary and was completed by April 18. As well, later in September PFS discovered equipment problems with their Musketeers. A wing debonding problem was discovered and limitations were placed upon the aircraft operation until a cure was found. The cure used to solve the problem was to drill the debonded area of the wing and fill the holes with an epoxy agent, then insert knurled rivots to act as hold-downs.

In addition to those already mentioned earlier, there were a number of other visitors who visited CFB Portage la Prairie. January 26, the Deputy Minister of National Defence, Mr. Nixon, was greeted on his arrival at Portage la Prairie by a fifty man Guard of Honour. Colonel R.T. Grogan, the Director of Security for the Canadian Forces, visited on March 18. Then, Brigadier-General R.N. Senior, the Commander of Communication Command, toured the Communications Detachment at Southport on Tuesday, April 5. Finally, on Friday, May 13, the Base Surgeon, Major R.M. Goede, hosted the Command Surgeon at Air Command, Colonel C.J. Knight, during a routine familiarization tour of the Base Hospital facilities.

On September 23, Major-General R. Green, the Chief of Staff of the Jamaican Defence Force, presented pilot's wings to Second Lieutenant B. Haddad and Second Lieutenant M.A. Thwaites. A month earlier on, July 12, twenty-three Foreign Service Attachés to Canada, visited the base. They

represented West Germany, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Pakistan, India, Austria, Sweden, United States, Poland, Venezuela, Indonesia, Britain, New Zealand, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Cameroon, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, USSR, and Switzerland. Then, on October 18, at an FIS course graduation a fifty man Guard of Honour welcomed the Chief of the Air Staff of the Royal Netherlands Air Force.

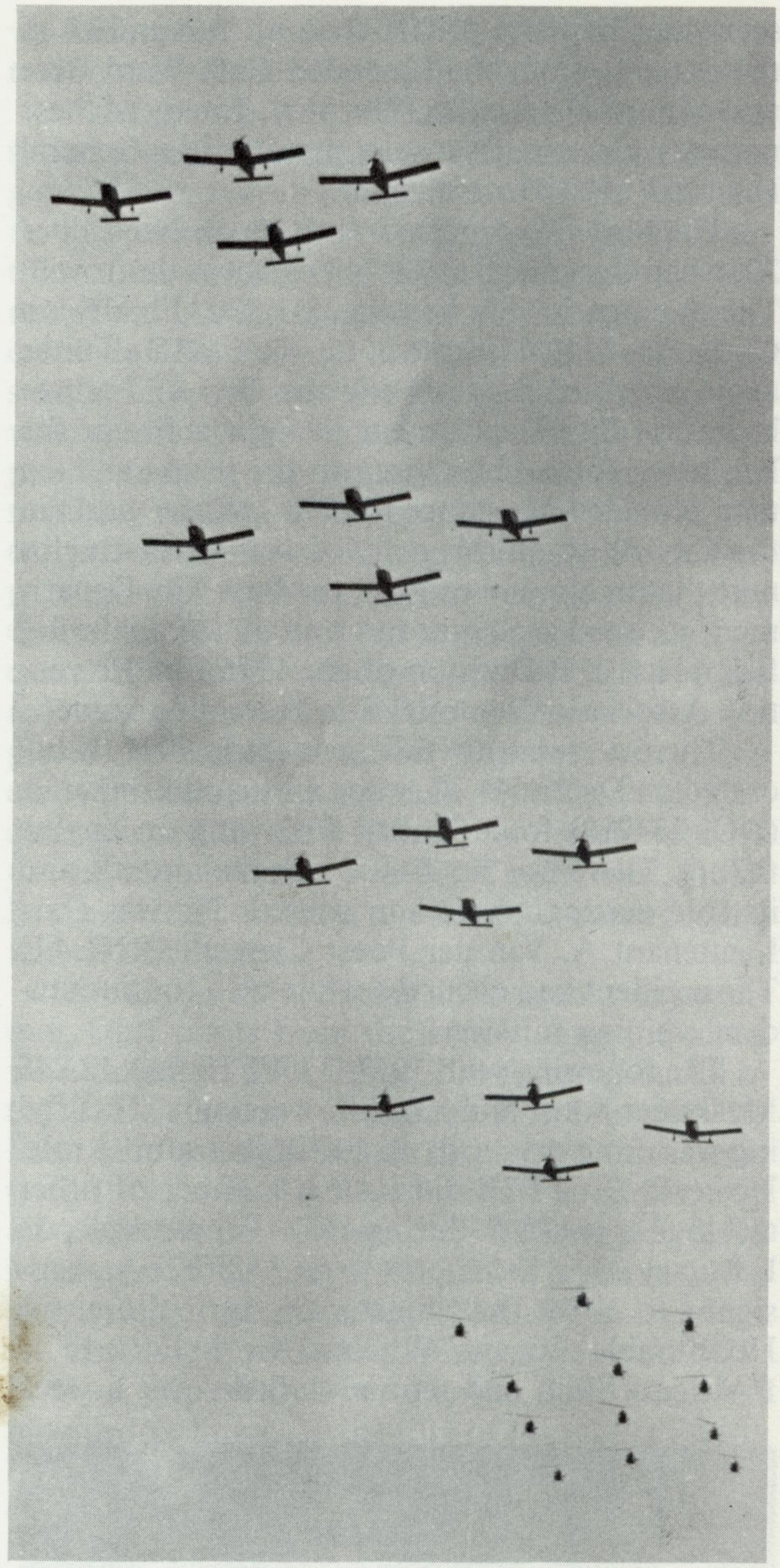
For 3 CFFTS, 1977 heralded a change of command. On June 17, Lieutenant-Colonel P.G. Harle turned over command of the school to Lieutenant-Colonel M.C. Randall. This ceremony was conducted in No. 2 Hangar. Lieutenant-Colonel Harle was posted to SHAPE Headquarters in Belgium.

In addition, 1977 was a year of other significant changes in personnel at 3 CFFTS. For example, that summer with the posting of Major A.R. Neilsen, Major B.C. McKenzie (the present Base Commander of CFB Portage la Prairie) became the Commander of the Standards Section at PFS. In addition, Major J.M. Hannah, the current Deputy Commander of 14 Training Group, moved into the position of the Primary Flying School Commander.

On the Base itself, a number of major construction engineering projects were undertaken in 1977. For example, in April, a new lab in the upstairs of the Base Hospital was opened up for bacteriology. Also, the phased project for water replacement distribution mains and the water supply main was completed. The total expenditure for this project was $400,000. A security project to replace the perimiter fence was also completed at a cost of $470,000.

Renovation to two barrack blocks to upgrade the accommodation standards also occurred. The interior and exterior of Barrack Block No. 1 was renovated at a cost of $310,000. Finally renovations to Barrack Block No. 4 commenced in November and were completed in April 1977, at a cost of $240,000.

Some 15,000 people attended the annual Armed Forces Day event at CFB Portage la Prairie on Saturday, May 29. Among the aircraft on display and open to the public were: a Dakota, a Hercules, a Tutor, a Musketeer, a Kiowa, a Twin Otter and a Buffalo. From the jet world, a CF-104 Starfighter and a CF-5 Freedom Fighter were also on display. The highlight of the day was the airshow, featuring the Skyhawks Parachute Team, the CF-104 Zips, the Musket Golds, the Dragonflies, a Hercules performing a LAPES (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System) and finally, a superlative performance by the Snowbirds.



Musketeers and Kiowas in formation near CFB Portage la Prairie.

The new 3 CFFTS Learning Centre was officially opened by Colonel Litt on Monday, September 12. He was assisted by Colonel G. Younghusband, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Air Training at Air Command Headquarters. The Centre provided students with continuous access to the latest audio-visual equipment, including a colour video cassette player and sound and slide training packages.

Finally in 1977, the announcement was made

that three Base officers, twenty-six other ranks and one civilian had been selected as recipients of the Queen's Silver Jubilee medal. This presentation was actually made on the April 3, 1978, by Colonel R.G. Litt, the Base Commander.

The following year, 1978, was another year with many visits. On Friday, February 3, Major-General Neatby, the Deputy Commander of Mobile Command, visited Southport for discussions with the Base Commander and senior Militia officers of the 13th Field Battery in the City of Portage la Prairie. Then, on Tuesday, March 7, the Chief of Staff of Operations at Air Command Headquarters, Brigadier-General Veronneau, along with the Deputy Chief of Staff of Training Command, Colonel Younghusband, visited Southport. On Friday, June 30, Lieutenant-General G.A. MacKenzie, the new Commander of Air Command, visited CFB Portage la Prairie. He was given an extensive Base tour and briefings about the Base and 3 CFFTS. On Friday, August 11, Colonel A.R. Koning, the Netherlands Defence Attaché at NDHQ, visited the Base. Colonel Koning spent his time visiting with 3 CFFTS staff and discussing aspects of pilot training with Canadian and RNLAF exchange personnel. Finally, from October 31 to November 6, members of the 433 Bluenose Squadron from Cold Lake visited the Base and flew missions from CFB Portage la Prairie in support of exercise Rover Fire.

Changes at 3 CFFTS occurred when a new syllabus was introduced for the Primary Flying School. Commencing with Course 7806 the course loading was increased from thirty-five to forty-four students. The new syllabus consisted of twenty-seven flying hours for each student, as had the previous syllabus. However now after 11.4 hours, an initial clearhood test (ICHT) and solo check was conducted. The students had to meet all proficiency levels set for this time period before being considered safe to fly solo. The students first solo was usually done after ICHT. After 25.4 hours the student was given his final clearhood test (FCHT) in which he had to meet all proficiency levels required to pass. Under this new syllabus, the student had to show progress throughout the entire course by obtaining the required levels of proficiency. The student could be "ceased trained" at any time for unsatisfactory progress by going before a review board. The new syllabus gave all students 4.5 hours of solo time, in which two hours could be flown outside of the circuit. He was also given more exposure to aerobatics and unusual attitudes.

The main objective of 3 CFFTS in 1978, continued to be pilot selection, primary flying training, including refresher and instructor training, and initial helicopter flying, including refresher and instructor training. While carrying out these tasks 11,368.8 hours were flown on the Musketeer and 8,009.9 hours were flown on the Kiowa.

The Rotary Wing School was also involved in other taskings. For example, on April 19, one Kiowa was tasked to conduct an air medical evacuation of a patient from Carberry to Winnipeg. Then on May 19, another Kiowa was selected to conduct a Search and Rescue mission for a missing person in the Carberry area. This was followed in June by a tasking conducted by Captain J.R. Purdy, who was assigned to pick up the downed pilot from an aircraft that had crashed fifteen miles north east of Dauphin. Subsequently, on June 19, Captain M.A. Wansink, was involved in a search for a small boy from the Carberry area near CFB Shilo. The boy was found in the woods and returned to his home. Finally, the third week of August, Major D.A. Purich, was sent to look for a small girl lost in the Austin area of Manitoba. She and her dog were subsequently found in a swampy area near the town and also returned to their home.

The Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral R.H. Falls, CMM, CD, and his party were in CFB Shilo from August 23 to 25 for a range inspection. Transportation during this visit was provided by several Kiowa's from 3 CFFTS. Then, on November 16, again at Shilo, an elk count was made on its firing range. This was a spin off from the Riding Mountain elk count just to the north of the Base, which was also carried by the Kiowa's from 3 CFFTS.

In conducting its primary role in 1978, which included flying activities associated with the Dependents' Day on May 26, and Farmers Appreciation Day on September 22, 3 CFFTS logged 12,439.7 hours on the Musketeer and 8,883.9 hours on the Kiowa.

During all of this flying activity, there were only two aircraft accidents experienced by 3 CFFTS in 1978. The first one occurred on February 17, when a CT-134 Musketeer was damaged as a result of a forced landing conducted on Runway 26. Then on March 30, a CH-136 Kiowa was damaged while doing a practice auto-rotation. Fortunately, there were no injuries to any personnel as a result of either accident.

On the Base, several changes occurred in 1978. For example, in February, the Canex and Library

interchanged their areas of operation. Then in March, the Canadian Weather Service Office was reorganized, resulting in a July 1 reorganization of the Base Weather Office. In May, restoration was completed on the C-45 Expeditor and it was made ready for mounting. This ceremony took place in June in front of the Recreation Centre. In July, six Base personnel were tasked in support of the Commonwealth Games being held in Edmonton.

Also, on July 24, the Base had a Change of Command Parade. The command of CFB Portage



Colonel Litt bids farewell to Base personnel during the Change of Command Parade on July 24, 1978, as the new Base Commander, Colonel Brennand, looks on.

la Prairie was handed over from Colonel R.G. Litt to Colonel G. Brennand. In September, three CT-134 Musketeers were found to have cracks in their horizontal stabilators. They were subsequently replaced and the aircraft returned to operations.

Finally, on Friday, November 10, 1978, Sergeant Vic Lambert received a Suggestion Award for his recommendation regarding the conversion of a liquid oxygen filter valve to a liquid nitrogen filter valve. This was Sergeant Lambert's second Suggestion Award. He had received one early in January 1977, for his sugggestion for the conserving of liquid nitrogen which was used in the Boeing 707.

The awards continued to be presented in 1979. They started on January 5, with the presentation of a Good Show Award to Captain Elson for his swift and knowledgeable reaction to a engine failure in a CH-136 Kiowa. Because of his quick response, no damage occurred to the aircraft or any of its passengers. Later in the month, on Friday, January 26, Corporal J.R. Houle received a Wide Awake Award for his outstanding application of technical knowledge in diagnosing and correcting a persistent and difficult unservicability on the CT-134 Musketeer aircraft. Later, on April 9, another Good Show Award was presented Corporal Luc Coté for his timely observation of an oil leakage on an aircraft getting ready to commence a flight.

Master-Corporal Barry Strong received a Good Show Award on Friday, March 11. This presentation was made as a result of his discovery of a crack in a CT-134 Musketeer wing attachment bracket during a routine inspection. The same problem was found on a number of other Musketeers and thus had to be rectified by replacing the bracket on the entire fleet of Musketeers. The discovery had been made in March and, while making the repairs, major defects were also found on the CT-134 cable actuator assembly on the majority of the fleet. Also the CT-134 horizontal stabilator was again discovered to require major reworking.

In 1979, however, a new syllabus was introduced for the rotary wings training commending with Course 7901. Students now destined for helicopter training left 2 CFFTS in Moose Jaw after 140 hours on the Tutor and received their pilot's wings upon completion of the Basic Helicopter Course conducted at 3 CFFTS. The Basic Helicopter Course syllabus was increased to eighty-five hours, an increase of nine hours over the previous syllabus. This change was made to accommodate six additional cross-country instrument flights, plus the student instrument rating, clearhood and night navigation tests.

On July 26, Course 7901 graduated. These were the first Canadian Forces pilots to earn their wings on the helicopters. On hand as a Reviewing Officer for the occasion was Lieutenant-General G.A. MacKenzie, the Commander of Air Command. A Wings Graduation Parade later took place on October 4 and December 19. Brigadier-General R. Sturgess, the Chief of Staff Operations at Air Command, and Major-General K.J. Thorneycroft, the Deputy Commander of Air Command were the Reviewing Officers for Course 7902 and 7903 respectively. In addition, two members of the Jamaican Defence Force also received their wings from Brigadier-General J.A. Veronneau, the former Chief of Staff for Operations at Air Command.

This occurred in a ceremony on May 17. Another first occurred with Course 7907 of the Primary Flying School, which included, for the first time, four women pilot trainees.

Besides those who attended Wings Graduations, several other important individuals visited CFB Portage la Prairie in 1979. First of all, as part of his pastoral visits to Canadian Forces Bases, Bishop Francis Spence, the Auxilliary Military Vicar (RC), visited Portage la Prairie on Friday, May 11. Then, on Friday, August 19, the new Defence Attaché for the Netherlands, Colonel J.C. Van der Broke, visited the Base. The purpose of his visit was to meet with senior Base officers and to be informed about the flying training program conducted at 3 CFFTS.

Operationally, the Kiowa's were again busy in 1979. The month of May was an active one for eleven Kiowa helicopter pilots who participated in the spring flood response called Operation Bolster. Eight helicopters in all were used, flying a total of 209.4 hours. In June 1979, Captain P. Bouchard and Captain G. Dessereau participated in Operation Collective Challenge held at CFB Borden in Ontario. This was a competition between all Canadian Forces Tactical Helicopter Squadrons and was designed to test the crews ability during different operation taskings.

In June, four Kiowa's participated in a Search and Rescue mission involving a missing sixty-four year old man in the Whiteshell area. During this search the only major aircraft accident experienced by 3 CFFTS in 1979 occurred. On June 16, a CH-136 Kiowa participating in the search in the Whiteshell area experienced a loss of power at a low altitude and crashed into the trees. The pilot, Captain B. Crozier, suffered a broken wrist in the accident and the aircraft was significantly damaged. The cause of the accident was identified as an engine malfunction.

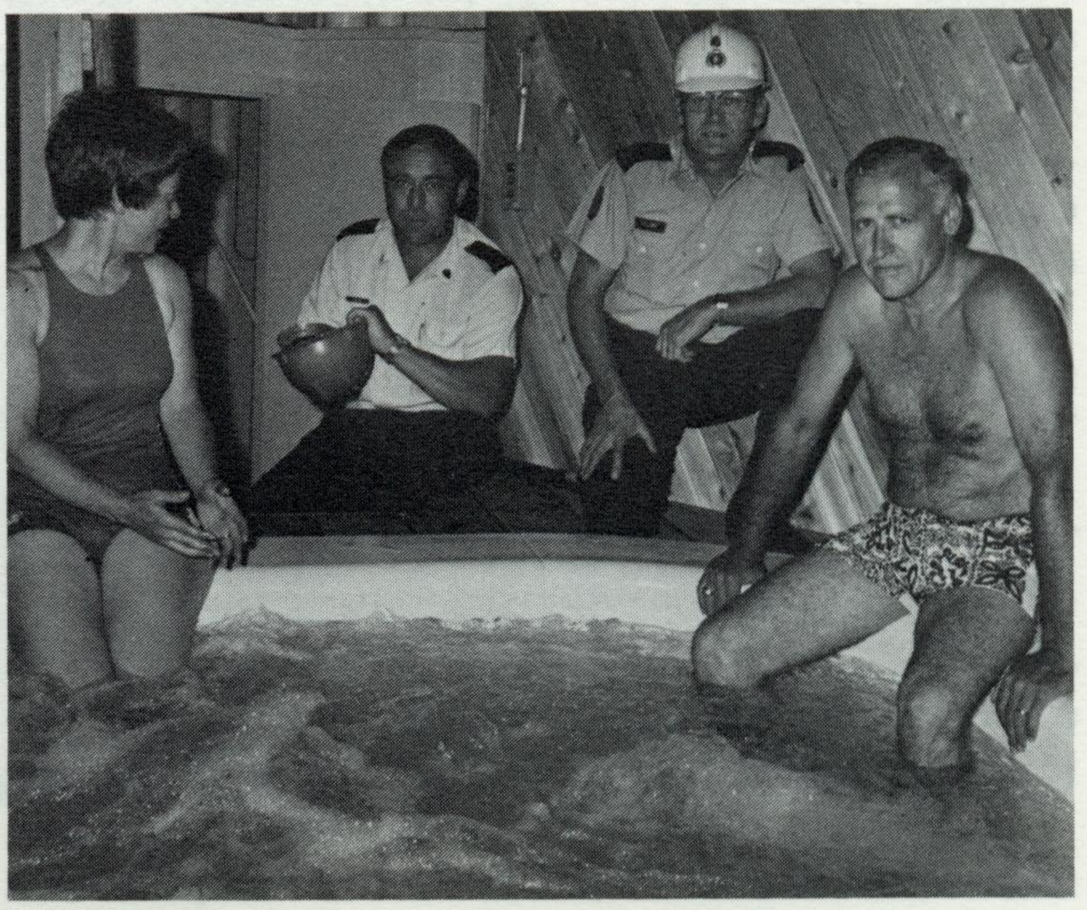
In October, a Kiowa was involved in a search for a missing man in the Swan Lake area. Later that month, another Kiowa was dispatched on a search for three men missing in a canoe in the Delta marsh area just north of the Base.

On June 19, Dependents' Day was held at CFB Portage la Prairie and as part of the program the staff of 3 CFFTS again flew the dependents of Base personnel. Local area farmers attended Farmers Appreciation Day held on October 12. Along with a tour of CFB Portage la Prairie, 3 CFFTS provided rides in the CH-136 Kiowa's to 110 farm owners and their families.

In 1979, 3 CFFTS underwent another Change of Command. On June 28, Lieutenant-Colonel M.A. Matthews assumed command of 3 CFFTS from the outgoing incumbent Lieutenant-Colonel M.C. Randall. Lieutenant-Colonel Matthews came to 3 CFFTS from Air Command in Winnipeg and Lieutenant-Colonel Randall was posted to NDHQ in Ottawa as the Executive Assistant to the Vice Chief of Defence Staff.



The Mayor of Portage la Prairie, Her Worship Karen Devine, tries her hand at flying a Kiowa helicopter during the Farmers' Appreciation Day activities in October 1979.



Colonel Brennand participates in the official opening of the Base whirlpool in August 1979.

Also in 1979, commencing on September 4, the installation of the Cable Television Service within the MQ area was accomplished by the Manitoba Telephone System (MTS). Finally, in December, renovations to the Navigation Aids Workshop and the RATCON office space were completed.

In 1980, five Wings Graduations from the Basic Helicopter Course took place. Course 7904 graduated on March 11, Colonel W.R. Dobson, the Deputy Commander of 10 Tactical Air Group in Montreal, presided. Course 7905 graduated on



Major-General Thorneycroft inspects Base personnel during the Wings Graduation Ceremony on May 22, 1980.

May 22, the Major-General K.J. Thorneycroft, the Deputy Commander of Air Command, presenting the wings to the graduates, including one member of the Jamaican Defence Force. Course 8001 graduated on July 30, with Major-General L. Skaalen, the Commander of Air Transport Group, as the Guest of Honour. Major-General W.G. Paisely, the Chief of Staff for Operations at Air Command, presided over the graduation of Course 8002 held on October 7. Finally, on December 7, 8003 graduated. Major-General R.H. Rohmer, the Chief of the Canadian Forces Reserves, was the Guest of Honour at this event.

Operationally 3 CFFTS flew 12,755 hours on the Musketeer and 8,773 hours on the Kiowa. There were no aircraft accidents on either the Musketeer or Kiowa operations during the year. The only significant problem was a rash of cylinder cracks in the CT-134 Musketeer aircraft. However, after a decision to no longer recondition these cylinders an immediate improvement in the serviceability rate was noticed.

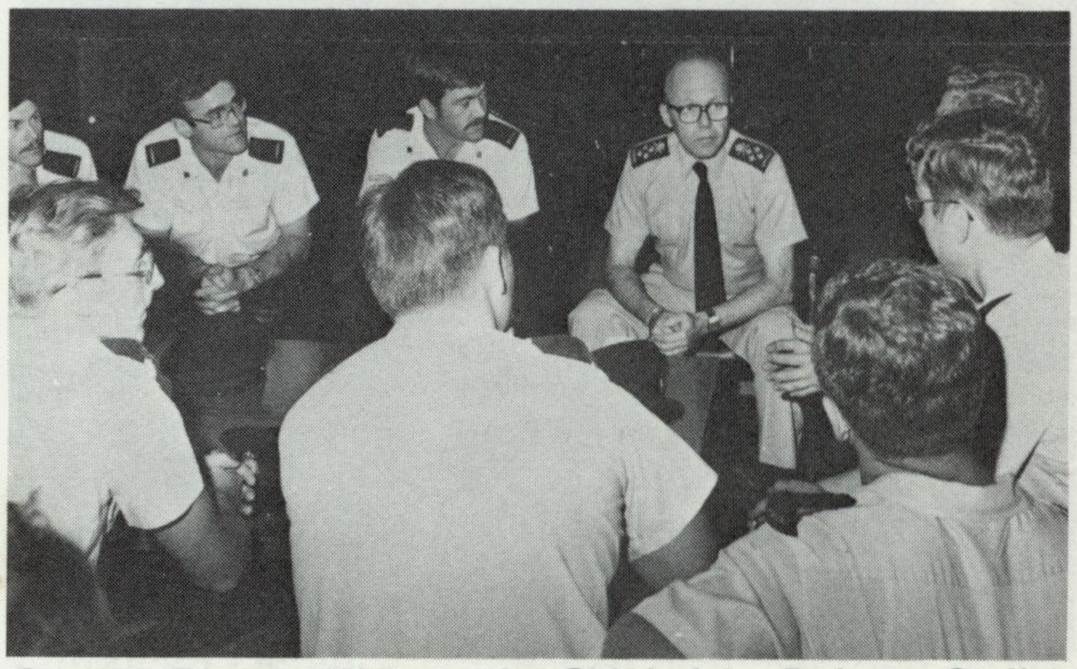
The Basic Helicopter School was called upon to assist in several Search and Rescue operations in 1980. One of the five taskings involved a search for a young boy with a medical problem in the Winnipeg area. Another one was a mission to the Carberry area to help search for a stolen vehicle. Fire assistance was also provided by the Kiowa's on several occasions throughout the summer. They aided in combatting fires at the CFB Shilo ranges and in the Porcupine Hill region, north of Swan River. The Kiowa's had also been tasked again in January for two more elk counts along the ranges at CFB Shilo.

On July 19, CFB Portage la Prairie hosted the annual Armed Forces Day activities and on September 20, the Third Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion Airshow was held at CFB Portage la Prairie. Dependents' Day and Farmer Appreciation Day were held respectively in June and October. In November the school sent a number of selected aircrew to visit the US Army Pilot Training Base at Fort Rucker, Alabama and the US Navy Pilot Training Base at Pensacola, Florida.

A number of awards were presented to Base personnel in 1980. The first one was presented to Master-Corporal M.L. Moore. He received a Wide Awake Award for the part which he had played during the discovery of the broken brackets on the Musketeer, which caused the major overhaul on the Musketeer the previous year. This award was made in March. Later, on April 4, Warrant Officer D.C. Sanderson received a Suggestion Award for his recommendation concerning the installation of eight access panels on the C-130 Hercules aircraft.

Lieutenant J.A.P.A. Deschamps received a Good Show Award for the successfully forced landing of a CT-134 aircraft that ran into problems while flying in the United States. Captain J.E. Pilon and Captain W.H. Lozie experienced engine failure on their CH-136 Kiowa helicopters during separate instructional missions. Their successful handlings of these situations earned them each an "Award for Professionalism". Finally, Captain R. Payne was awarded the Order of Military Merit (OMM) for his significant contribution towards the establishing of the Learning Centre in the Ground Training School at 3 CFFTS.

Two other visits in 1980 should be mentioned. The first one occurred on July 11, when the



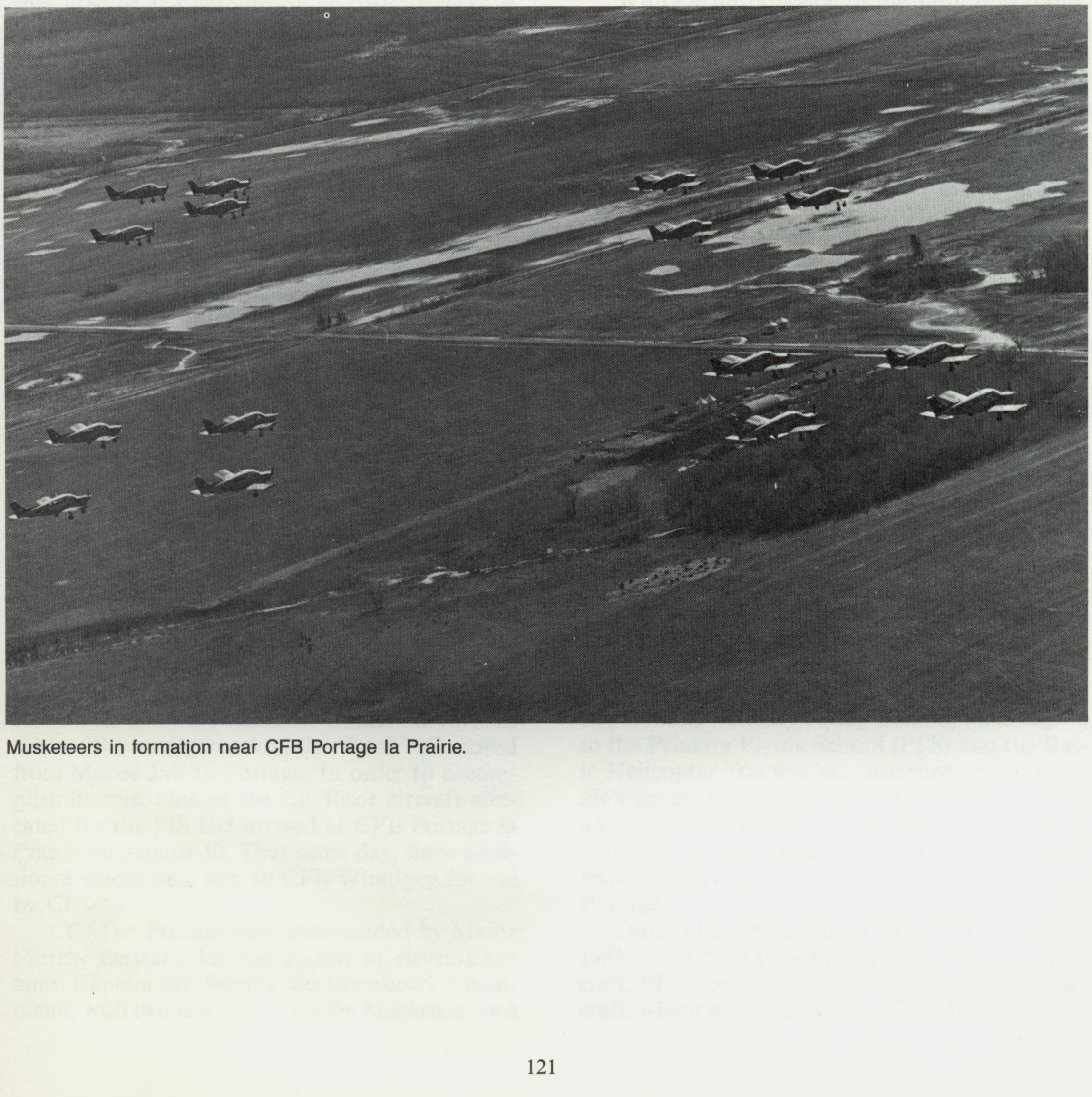
General Ramsay-Withers, the Chief of the Defence Staff, in discussion with Base Junior Ranks personnel during his visit on July 11, 1980.

Chief of Defence Staff, General Ramsay-Withers, paid a visit to the Base. Later in August, the new Commander of Air Command, Lieutenant-General K.E. Lewis, arrived at the base for a two day visit to Southport to get "hands on" helicopter flying.

Several changes occurred to the infrastructure at CFB Portage la Prairie in 1980. In March, the contract was tendered to construct a new Guard House. The construction was completed in December and it was officially opened on January 16, 1981. Also in August, the installation of superimposed taxi-way lights for Runways 08-26 and 12L-30R were undertaken. Then, on November 3, the Communications Detachment at CFB Portage la Prairie cut over to the new SAMSON message system. Finally on July 5, the QUAD Radar was commissioned.

The Base was involved in the evacuation of the Manitoba Development School on July 26, due to a fire at that facility. Many of the residents were temporarily housed in Hanger No. 1. The Military Police augmented the RCMP in traffic control and the patrolling of the evacuated area of Portage la Prairie during the fighting of this fire.

As a final point in 1980, the construction commenced on a new building to house the Basic Flying Training Operations. During 1980 the base had experienced the greatest surge of new building construction since it had reopened in the early 1950's.



Musketeers in formation near CFB Portage la Prairie.

Chapter Six

FIS and the Eighties

From 1970 through to 1981, 3 CFFTS was the sole user of the aerodrome at CFB Portage la Prairie. This changed in 1981, when, under the authority of Canadian Forces Organization Order (CFOO) 2.12.3, the Central Flying School (CFS) was reformed at CFB Winnipeg on August 1, 1981. It included a CFS detachment (CFS Det Portage) located at CFB Portage la Prairie. At the same time, 14 Training Group also reformed in Winnipeg and CFB Portage la Prairie was assigned to this new Group.

The role of the CFS was to develop and maintain flying training standards at the flying training units of 14 Training Group. The unit consisted of a standards flight responsible for monitoring the standard of pilot and air navigator training in 14 Training Group, an Instrument Check Pilot School responsible for training check pilots for all of Air Command and a CFS Detachment at Portage, which was responsible for training flying instructors for 14 Training Group Flying Training Schools. The CFS aircrew flew the Tutor, the Dakota and the CC-130 NT Hercules located at CFB Winnipeg. As well, the CFB Portage Det flew the Musketeer and the Jet Ranger.

The CFS Detachment Portage formed effective August 1, 1981 to incorporate the three flying instructor schools on the Tutor, the Bell Jet Ranger Helicopter and the Musketeer trainer aircraft. To achieve the amalgamation, the Tutor FIS moved from Moose Jaw to Portage. In order to accomplish its role, nine of the ten Tutor aircraft allocated for the FIS Det arrived at CFB Portage la Prairie on August 10. That same day, three additional Tutors were sent to CFB Winnipeg for use by CFS.

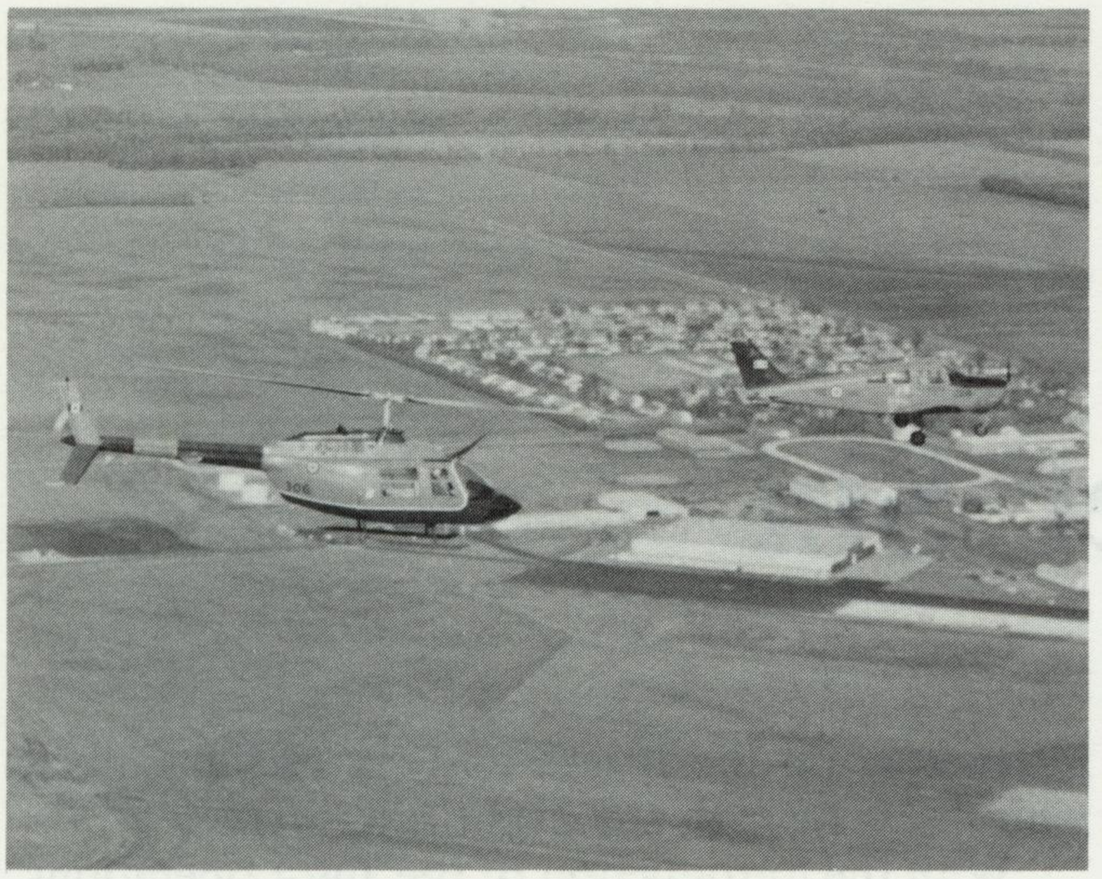
CFS Det Portage was commanded by Major Murray Bertram. He had a staff of eleven Captains. Captain Mel Warren was the second in command, with two instructors on the Musketeer, two instructors on the Kiowa and six staff members who instructed on the Tutor aircraft.

With the introduction of the Tutor operations, the Air Traffic Control operations at CFB Portage la Prairie had to be conducted independently on two dual runways, and this necessitated a complete overhaul of the existing IFR and VFR operating procedures. Naturally, manning shortages in the Control Tower resulted and, until this problem was addressed, operational flying hours at both schools were restricted.

CFS Det experienced a particularly international start to its career at CFB Portage la Prairie. For example, from August until October 1981, two Turkish instructor pilots; Captain Cevat Akman and Captain Hussein Kargi, who were in Canada to study Canadian instructional techniques, completed their specially adapted FIS course. During that time as well, two French Air Force pilots arrived. They were Captain Alain Haennig, destined to be an exchange instructor in Moose Jaw, and Captain Yvon Schaeffer, who was to fulfill exchange duties with 434 Squadron in Bagotville.

During 1981, considerable change also occurred at 3 CFFTS. On August 1, 3 CFFTS relinquished nine positions to the newly established 14 Training Group's Central Flying School and Central Flying Detachment at Portage. As a result, 3 CFFTS reorganized. The school was divided into two sections: Primary Flying Training was assigned to the Primary Flying School (PFS) and the Basic Helicopter Training was assigned to the Basic Helicopter School (BHS). Meanwhile, refresher and conversion training, flying instructor training and reserve officer flying assessments became the responsibility of the new CFS Detachment Portage.

Other changes occurred at 3 CFFTS during 1981, when both PFS and BHS required new aircraft. PFS received the Beechcraft Sundowner aircraft, which was renamed the CT-134A Musketeer



The two new training aircraft in formation over the Base in 1981.

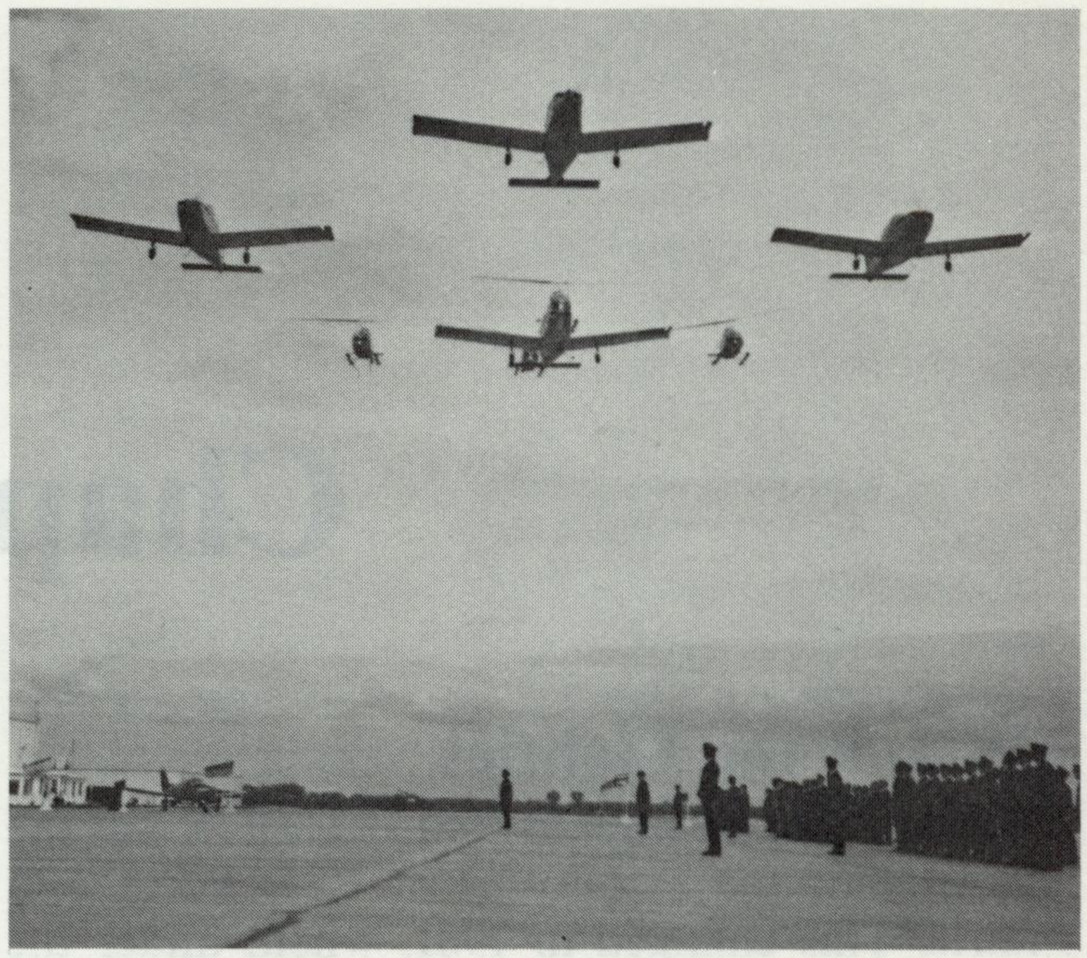
II. Meanwhile, BHS was to receive the new Bell 206 Jet Ranger Helicopter, which was designated CH-139 Jet Ranger III.

For PFS, the arrival of these new aircraft in 1981 came just in time. As early as March, the Musketeer wing main spar special inspection and wing rear attachment bushing replacement program was completed. While conducting this program, four Musketeer aircraft were permanently grounded due to excessive rear wing attachment fitting wear. In addition, on May 15 Musketeer No. 134203 reached its life expectancy of 5,000 hours. The other original Musketeers were rapidly approaching the end of their operational life-span as well. With the arrival of the new Musketeer II aircraft, the aircraft of the original fleet were retired.

The situation was not as critical for the Kiowa helicopter. With the arrival of the new Jet Ranger III helicopters, the sixteen Kiowa's, which made up the fleet at BHS, were turned over to the Air Reserves in Montreal and Toronto.

The official acceptance for both of these aircraft took place on May 27, 1981. By August 15, the complete CH-139 fleet of fourteen helicopters had arrived at Portage la Prairie and were operational. The last of the twenty-one CT-134A Musketeer II aircraft arrived at CFB Portage la Prairie on September 14. Following some minor modifications, they too became operational before the end of the year.

The CFB Portage la Prairie flight line underwent many changes in 1981, including the construction of the Barker Building for PFS and a refurbishing of the Hangar 3 lean-to to house the



The CT-134A Sundowners (Musketeer II) followed by the CH-139 Jet Ranger helicopters conduct a "fly-past" during their Arrival and Acceptance Ceremony on May 27, 1981.



Lieutenant-Colonel William George Barker.

Tutor operations. The construction of the new PFS flying school building was completed in the fall of 1981. The building was named the Barker Building in honour of Lieutenant-Colonel William George Barker, VC, DSO and bar, MC with two bars, Croix de Guerre, and the Silver Medal for Military Valour. This new building was officially opened by Brigadier-General R.P. Pattee, the Commander of 14 Training Group, at a ceremony held on October 27. Brigadier-General Pattee was assisted in the opening ceremonies by Mr. Orval Barker of Ochre River, Manitoba, the brother of Lieutenant-Colonel Barker. This new PFS training facility was completed at a cost of $1,100,000.

Renovations to the self lean-to of Hangar 3 were completed on November 27, at a cost of $500,000. It turned out that these renovations were only suitable to house the Tutor portion of FIS. The Jet Ranger and Musketeer sections of FIS were moved more than once before settling into their new facilities in Hangar 2.

Also in November 1981, renovations were done in the blister of Hangar 2. At a cost of $315,000, renovations were done to provide more space for the 3 CFFTS Orderly Room and Commandant's office and also to enhance the Base Operations and Meteorological area upstairs.



Mr. Orville Barker reviews the dedication plaque, in the presence of Brigadier-General Pattee, Colonel De Smedt and Lieutenant-Colonel Macht, on October 27, 1981, during the official opening of the Barker Building, the Primary Flying School Training Centre dedicated to his brother, Lieutenant-Colonel W.G. Barker.



A contrasting photographic comparison showing the difference that forty years had made to flying training at the Base.

In performing its primary role, 3 CFFTS logged 11,984.1 Musketeer hours and 8,784.2 Helicopter hours in 1981. There were four Wings Graduations from the Basic Helicopter Course during that year. They were:

a. Course 8004 graduated on March 12, with Brigadier-General B.A. Oxholm, the Commander of Canadian Forces Training System at CFB Trenton, as a Reviewing Officer;
b. Course 8005 graduated May 27, with Lieutenant-General K.E. Lewis, the Commander of Air Command, as the Reviewing Officer;
c. Course 8101 graduated July 30, with Colonel G. Brennand, the Base Commander of CFB Portage la Prairie, as the Reviewing Officer; and
d. Course 8102 graduated October 8, with Brigadier-General J.H. Roddick, the Base Commander of CFB Borden, as the Reviewing Officer.

The Basic Helicopter School was called upon to assist in several Search and Rescue operations during 1981. One of these taskings involved searching for a man and his son who were stranded in Riding Mountain National Park, north of Brandon. Another mission was to the Winnipeg area to help search for a missing serviceman. Again, for the third year in a row, the helicopters were tasked in January to conduct two elk surveys in the artillery ranges of CFB Shilo. As in the past, 3 CFFTS was also involved with the Dependents' Day held in May and the Farmers' Appreciation Day held in October.

In 1981, a number of important events also occurred on the Base. For example, on April 1, the Base was awarded the Canadian Safety Council Plaque for the lowest accident rate in general purpose vehicles, the Chief of Defence Staff Trophy for the lowest accident rate in SPV and GPV vehicles, and the Air Command Trophy for the lowest overall MSE accident rate for any Air Command Base. The following day, the Vice-Chief of Defence Staff visited CFB Portage la Prairie and on Thursday, September 17, Lieutenant-General Lewis returned to CFB Portage la Prairie to conduct a pre-opening inspection of the new PFS building.

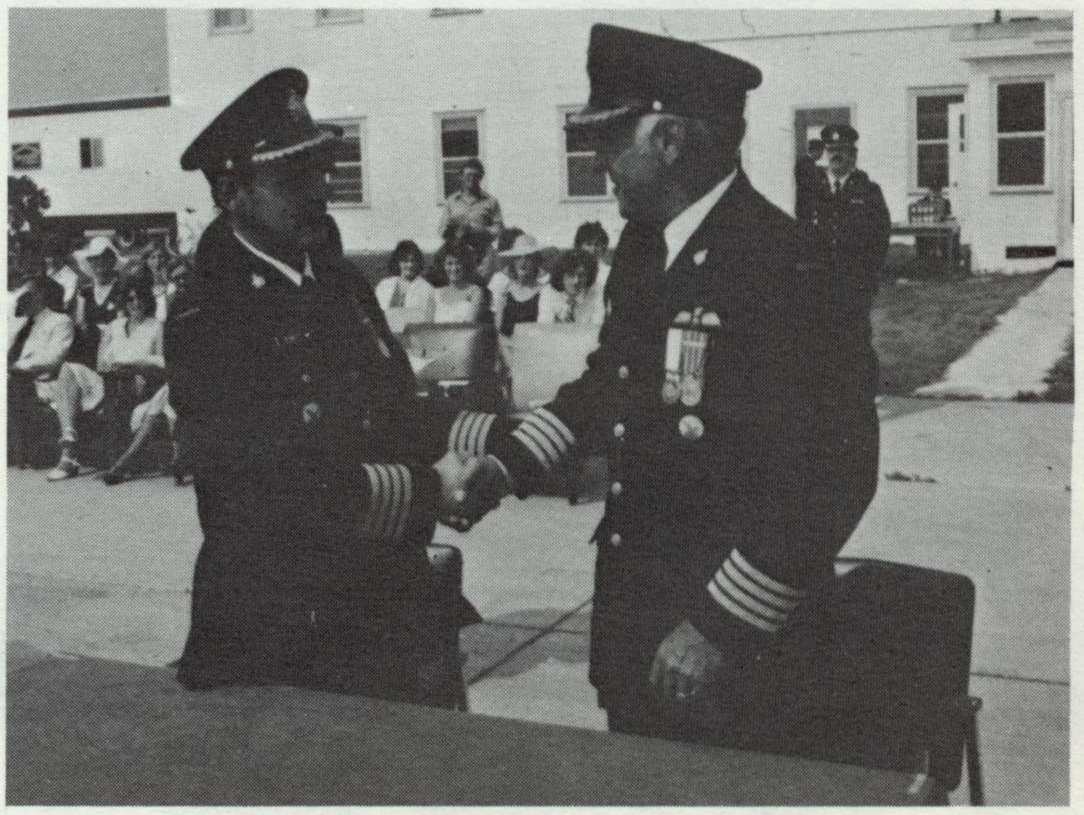
In ATC, the Terminal Control Unit was provided with extra personnel to fill the position of Terminal Assistant. The Control Tower now had to be manned to provide two controllers available



General C. De Jager, the Dutch Chief of the Defence Staff, accepts a Base plaque from Colonel Brennand as a memento of his 1981 visit to the Base.

during the day flying periods. This change was a result of the addition of the Tutor aircraft flying at the aerodrome. Also, a new rotating beacon was placed on top of the tower. One additional communication console and one additional meteorological console were installed in the Control Tower. One communication control unit was installed in the Terminal Control Unit. In addition, new variable high intensity approach lights were installed in the west end of the outer runway at a cost of $187,000.

Finally, for 1981, it must be mentioned that there were two Change of Command Parades. On April 16, Lieutenant-Colonel B.J. Macht assumed command of 3 CFFTS on the retirement of Lieutenant-Colonel M.A. Matthews. Then on August 25, Colonel P.L. De Smedt was appointed as



Colonel De Smedt accepts command of CFB Portage la Prairie from Colonel Brennand on August 25, 1981.

the new Base Commander, replacing Colonel Brennand, who was posted to Air Command Headquarters in Winnipeg as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.

At the end of 1981, the Base had a strength of forty officers and 362 other ranks for a total of 402 personnel. 3 CFFTS had fifty-five officers and three other ranks, for a total of fifty-eight personnel, and CFS Det Portage had a total of twelve personnel, all instructors.

As a final note to 1981, while the Base had achieved another accident-free year of flying, it did experience the tragic death of one of its officers. Captain E.T.J. Conde, a Flying Instructor at 3 CFFTS, was killed in a civilian helicopter accident near Chetwynd, British Columbia on September 12. He was buried with full military honours at the Oceanview Memorial Gardens in Saint John, New Brunswick on September 18.

Following a year of significant turmoil and change, 1982, witnessed the return to a standard mode of operation. On January 6, the Control Tower Communications Control Unit (CCU) was added. The following week, January 7 to 15, the CT-134 Muskteer aircraft were retired following the graduation of PFS Course 8107. Nine of the original Musketeers were assigned to Reserve Squadrons and Training Units and the remaining eight were placed in storage pending reassignment elsewhere. Four of these eight Musketeer were subsequently converted to act as static trainers. This conversion occurred on May 13. PFS Course 8201 was the first course to fly the new CT-134A Musketeer II aircraft.

There were five Wings Graduations during 1982. All the graduates received their wings on completion of the Basic Helicopter Courses. The Reviewing Officers for these course graduations were:

a. Course 8103 held on January 12, Brigadier-General Pattee, the Commander of 14 Training Group;
b. Course 8104 held on April 6, Brigadier-General Pickering, Commander of Maritime Air Group;
c. Course 8105 held on June 24, Colonel Younghusband, the Base Commander of CFB Cold Lake;
d. Course 8201 held on August 26, Brigadier-General Price, from NORAD Headquarters in Colorado Springs; and
e. Course 8202 held on November 8, with the Honourable Pearl McGonigal, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba.

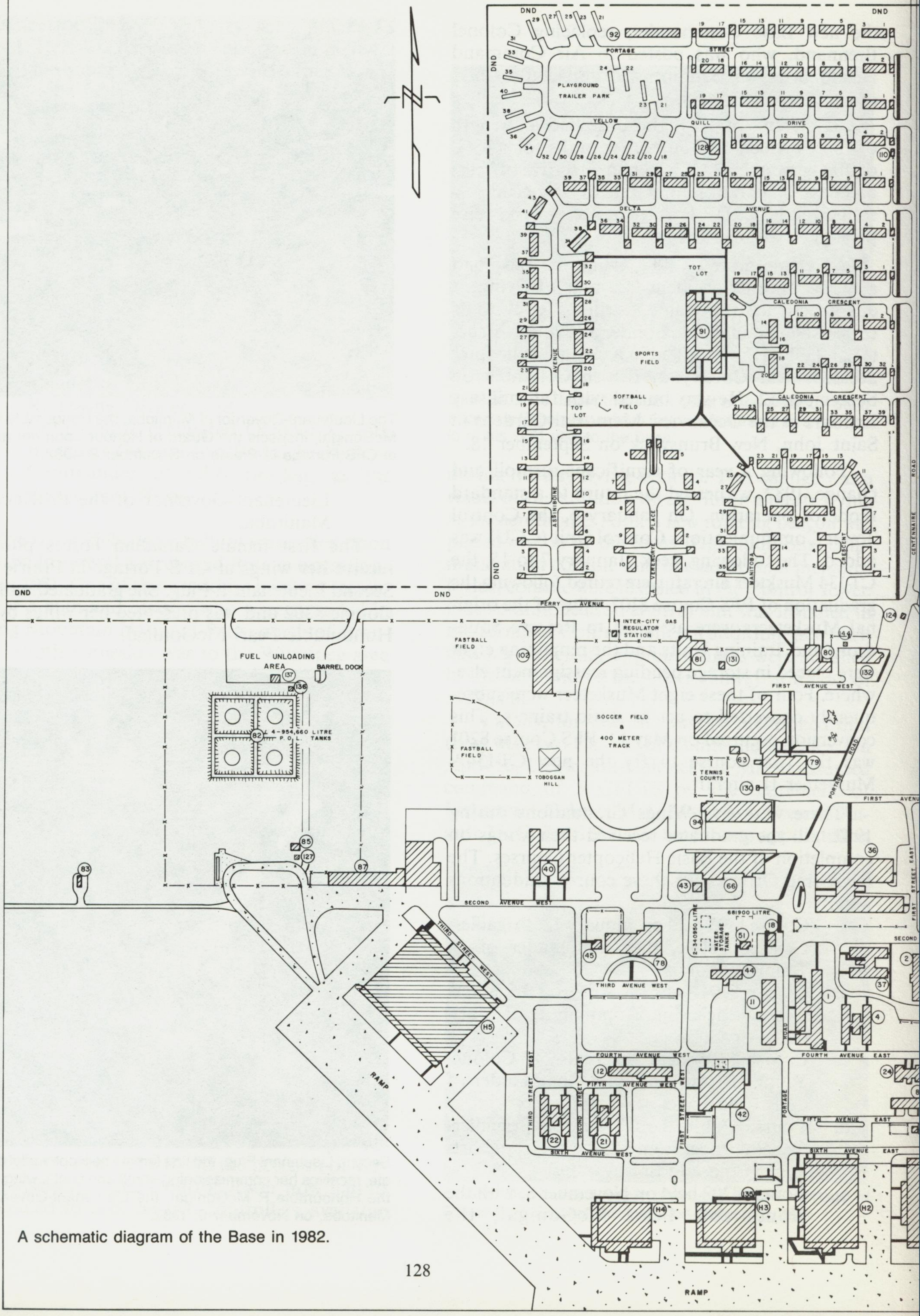


The Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, the Honourable Pearl McGonigal, inspects the Guard of Honour upon her arrival at CFB Portage la Prairie on November 8, 1982.

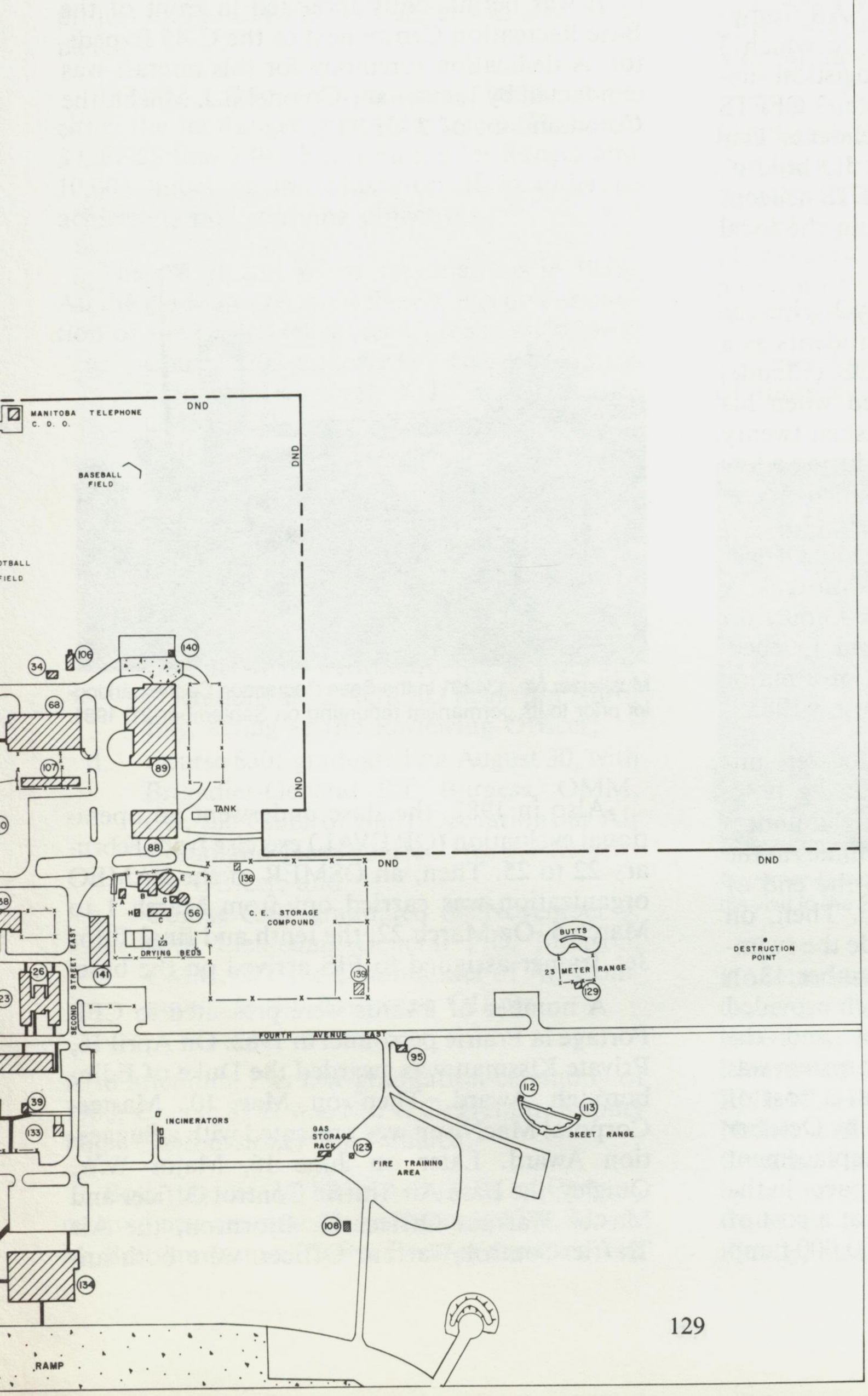
The first female Canadian Forces pilot to receive her wings at CFB Portage la Prairie was Second Lieutenant I. Plug. She graduated on BHS Course 8202 and was presented her wings by the Honourable Pearl McGonigal.



Second Lieutenant Plug, the first female helicopter pilot graduate, receives her commissioning scroll and pilot's wings from the Honourable P. McGonigal, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, on November 8, 1982.



A schematic diagram of the Base in 1982.



DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE
MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE NATIONALE

BASE CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING SECTION

PROJECT & LOCATION — PROJET ET EMPLACEMENT

CFB PORTAGE MANITOBA

TRADE — MÉTIER: SITING

SUBJECT — SUJET

SITE PLAN

PRODUCTION	CONCURRENCE — ASSENTIMENT	
DESIGNED BY ÉTUDIÉ PAR		
DRAWN BY DESSINÉ PAR *RJG*		
CHECKED BY VÉRIFIÉ PAR		
DATE JAN 82	APPROVED BY - APPROUVÉ PAR	
SCALE — ÉCHELLE 1 : 2000	DWG. NO. — DESSIN NO. L-P176-8420-201	

CF1394(10-77)7530-21-877-1314

Operationally, 3 CCFTS flew 10,418.3 hours on the Musketeer and 8,243.9 hours on the Jet Ranger helicopters in pursuit of its pilot training objectives and other taskings. The last group of six Dutch (RNLAF) students graduated on PFS on Course 8205. Additionally, the first group of Italian students also graduated as members of this same PFS course.

BHS participated in two Search and Rescue (SAR) taskings in 1982. One of these searches for two missing fishermen occurred over the partly frozen surface of Lake Manitoba. The search proved to be fruitless. The other was SAR Campbell, which occurred near Brandon, to which 3 CFFTS provided two helicopters for logistical support. Due to operational requirements, 3 CFFTS and CFB Portage did not hold a Dependents' Day in 1982. However, on October 22, it did hold its Farmers' Appreciation Day and 3 CFFTS helicopters provided familiarization flights in the local area.

Tragedy struck on March 19, 1982 with the death of a PFS instructor and two students as a result of a fatal crash. Lieutenant J.R.C. (Claude) Cormier, 24, of Laval, Quebec, died when his Musketeer II aircraft No. 134234 crashed twenty miles west of CFB Portage la Prairie during a low level flying training mission. Also killed in the crash were Second Lieutenant J.A.J. (Joseph) LaLonde, 22, of Donnacona, Quebec, and Officer Cadet J.J.M. (Michel) Jean, 19, of Montreal. A military funeral mass was held at 1000 hours on March 24 at l'Eglise St. Claude in Laval, Quebec. There were no other flying incidents of a major nature at CFB Portage la Prairie during 1982.

A number of construction projects were undertaken at CFB Portage la Prairie during 1982. The first project, the replacement of the underground steamlines with overhead steamlines at the flight hangar, was completed before the end of February at a total cost of $160,000. Then, on April 15, an $80,000 project to upgrade the swimming pool was completed. On September 13, a Metro Radio 344.6 was installed, which provided communications between the pilot and the Meteorological Forecaster. A sprinkler system was installed in Hangars 1, 2, 4, and 5 at a cost of $375,000. This project was completed by October 15, as was a $70,000 gym floor replacement project. By October 30, all the crawl spaces in the Married Quarters had been insulated at a cost of $200,000 and the following day a $1,100,000 ramp repair project was completed. The aim of this project was to remove and replace a 200 foot by 2,000 foot strip of concrete and also to construct a run-up area.

Finally, on November 20, the installation of twelve new flag-poles at the main gate to the Base was completed. The ten provincial and two territorial flags were to be flown from these new flag-poles.

In conjunction with the Battle of Britain Parade on September 21, an original Musketeer aircraft was permanently mounted in front of the Base Recreation Centre next to the C-45 Expeditor. A dedication ceremony for this aircraft was conducted by Lieutenant-Colonel B.J. Macht, the Commandant of 3 CFFTS.



Musketeer No. 134201 in the Base Recreation Centre parking-lot prior to its permanent mounting on September 21, 1981.

Also in 1982, the Base underwent an operational evaluation (OP EVAL) exercise from February 22 to 25. Then, an OSMER of the BAMEO organization was carried out from March 1 to March 5. On March 22, the tenth and final Tutor Jet Trainer assigned to FIS arrived on the base.

A number of awards were presented to CFB Portage la Prairie personnel in 1982. On April 16, Private Kissman was awarded the Duke of Edinborough Award. Then on May 10, Master-Corporal MacNiven was presented with a Suggestion Award. Later on June 16, Major W.W. Quigley, the Base Air Traffic Control Officer and Master Warrant Officer H. Bjornson, the Air Traffic Control Warrant Officer, were both an-

nounced as members of the Order of Military Merit.

In 1983, several modifications to the CT-134A Musketeer occurred. On January 25, the project to modify the air intake baffle was completed. The Musketeer aircraft also suffered a series of radio and navigation aid failures in 1983 and this resulted in the restriction of the Musketeer flying through any areas of precipitation. Finally, on October 6, the Musketeer fleet windshield replacement project was completed on all aircraft. Earlier on September 30, the fuel valve switch guard installation project on the CH-139 Jet Ranger was also completed.

In 1983, there were no major incidents on either the Jet Ranger or the Musketeer. That year 3 CFFTS flew 7,083 hours on the Jet Ranger and 10,003 hours on the Musketeer II in order to achieve its pilot training objectives.

There were five Wings Graduations in 1983. All the graduates received their wings on completion of the Basic Helicopter Courses as follows:

a. Course 8203 graduated on February 3, with Lieutenant-General K.J. Thorneycroft, CMM, CD, the Deputy Commander in Chief of NORAD, as the Reviewing Officer;
b. Course 8204 graduated on April 14, with Major-General D.M. McNaughton, CD, the Deputy Commander of Air Command Winnipeg, as the Reviewing Officer;
c. Course 8205 graduated on June 29, with Colonel R.W. Fentiman, the Deputy for Operations at 22 NORAD Region in North Bay, acting as the Reviewing Officer;
d. Course 8301 graduated on August 30, with Brigadier-General B.T. Burgess, OMM, CD, the Chief of Staff Operations at Air Command Headquarters, as the Reviewing Officer; and
e. Course 8302 graduated on November 9, with Lieutenant-General P.D. Manson, CMM, CD, the Commander of Air Command, as the Reviewing Officer.

Also attending this last graduation ceremony of 1983, Course 8302 was Mr. C.G. Hewan, Deputy High Commissioner for Jamaica.

Both schools, 3 CFFTS and CFS Det Portage, received new commanding officers in 1983. Major M. Bertram from CFS Det Portage departed FIS in mid-October. He was posted to Australia where he was to attend the year long Australian Staff College course. He had relinquished command of FIS earlier on September 30, during a Change of Command Ceremony held in the Officers' Mess of CFB Portage la Prairie. Lieutenant-Colonel McCullough, the Commandant of CFS presided over the ceremony as Major Bertram handed over command of CFS Det to Major K.H. Carr. Major Carr had arrived in Portage on July 10, after having just completed the year long course at the Canadian Forces Staff College in Toronto. Colonel P. de Smedt and all Section and Branch Heads from CFB Portage la Prairie were in attendance, along with all members of FIS and their wives.

The new Commandant of 3 CFFTS, Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Hannah, was posted to Portage la Prairie from National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa and assumed command of the School on July 18. The outgoing Commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel E.J. Macht, left to assume the position of the Senior Staff Officer for Training at 14 Training Group Headquarters in Winnipeg.

Several major visits occurred in 1983. The first of these occurred on July 7 and 8 when the Honourable Edward Schreyer, the Canadian Governor General, visited the Base. This was followed, on August 25 and 26, by a visit from Lieutenant-General Baas, Commander of the RNLAF. His visit marked the end of the Royal Netherlands Air Force Pilot Training Program in Canada. This visit was followed, on September 14, by a tour from Lieutenant-General Eimler, the Chief of Staff for the Republic of Germany. Finally, on December 16, CFB Portage la Prairie



Governor-General Edward Schreyer accepts a memento of his visit to the Base from Colonel De Smedt on July 8, 1983.

was the host to the Deputy Minister of National Defence, Mr. D.B. Dewar.

The construction engineering projects also continued in 1983. On March 25, the $117,000 Senior NCO Mess renovation project was completed. On May 20, the cable TV installation in the barrack blocks, the mess and some other locations on the Base commenced. Then, on September 16, the project to refurbish some MQs and the School Annex at a cost of $135,000 was also completed. Finally, on November 16, a new flag-pole was erected at the Base Headquarters Building. Its purpose was to fly the recently authorized Air Command Flag.

CFB Portage la Prairie held its annual Armed Forces Day Airshow on June 18. The annual Farmers' Appreciation Day was held on October 28, with 144 local area civilian farmers attending this function.

The Sixtieth Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) occurred in 1984. To celebrate this event, a wing-size parade was held on April 1. During the parade, the dedication and raising of the new Air Command Flag occurred. In addition, selected Base personnel also participated in the Halifax Tatoo on March 26.



The new Air Command flag being raised for the first time at CFB Portage la Prairie during the RCAF's 60th Anniversary celebration on April 1, 1984.

The Silver Jubilee of the Canadian Forces Medical Services was also celebrated in 1984. To mark this event, Base Medical Personnel transported a portion of the CFMS crest from Portage to Winnipeg by canoe during the period June 9 to June 13.

Normal flying operations continued at CFB Portage la Prairie during 1984. At 3 CFFTS, it was a successful year with no Jet Ranger or Musketeer flying incidents. However, FIS was not so fortunate. On June 2, Tutor No. CT-114106 made a forced landing on the Trans Canada Highway near Portage la Prairie, just two miles west of the Yellowhead Highway cut-off. This measure was required when an engine compressor failed, causing the jet to lose all power. Fortunately there was no damage to the aircraft or injury to the aircrew. Captain Geoff Graham, the CFFIS instructor, described the highway as a perfect runway. After the Tutor had coasted to a stop, he and his student, Captain Duane Kennedy, both from Vancouver, started to direct the vehicular traffic around their disabled airplane. The Tutor was subsequently dismantled into two sections and taken back to CFB Portage la Prairie. Then, on December 19, another Tutor CT-114113 sustained severe damage while sitting on the ramp, when it was struck by an aircraft towing tractor.

Several improvements occurred to the base in 1984. On April 2, the new SL1 telephone system installation was completed. This was followed on May 15, by the completion of the $130,000 CANEX renovation project. Subsequently, on September 10, the $400,000 project to replace the water mains in the Married Quarters area was also completed, along with the completion of a $417,000 Married Quarter reroofing project. In addition, fifteen Married Quarters received exterior upgrading at a cost of $329,000. This project was completed on November 15. Finally, on October 9, the dismantling of Barrack Block 30 was completed.

CFB Portage la Prairie had a change of Base Commanders on August 10, 1984. During a Change of Command Parade, Colonel de Smedt turned over the reins of Base Commander to Colonel D. Simmons.

The fourth Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion visited CFB Portage la Prairie on September 8. Along with 10,000 spectators from the



Colonel Simmons accompanies the departing Base Commander, Colonel De Smedt, during his inspection of Base personnel during their Change of Command Ceremony on August 10, 1984.



Lieutenant-General Manson, the Commander of Air Command, is surrounded by some of the 2,500 Second World War veterans, all members of the Fourth Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion, who attended an airshow in their honour at CFB Portage la Prairie on September 8, 1984.

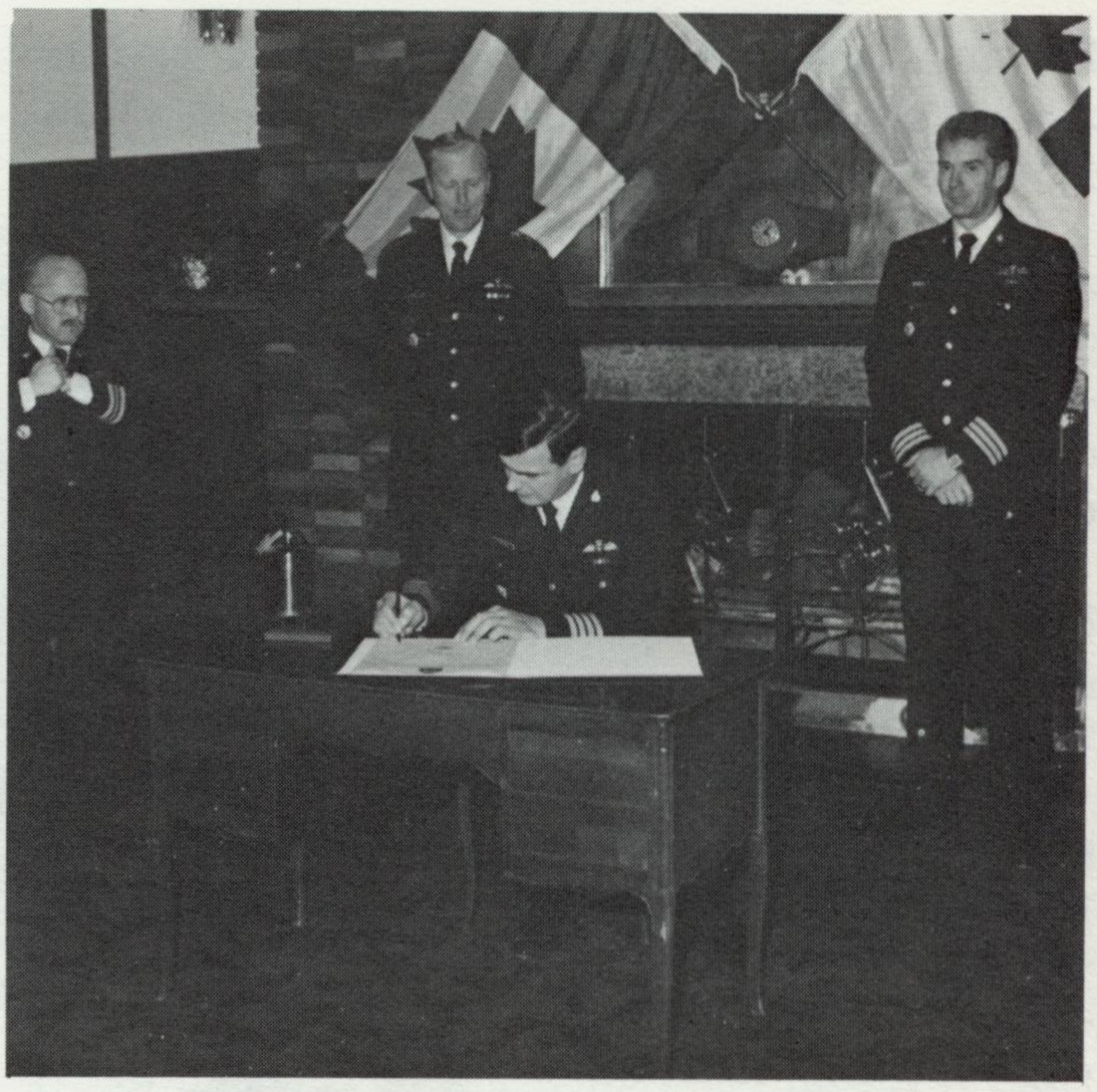
local Portage area, the 2,500 Second World War Veterans viewed the airshow put on in their honour. CFB Portage la Prairie also provided manpower support for the Pope's visit to Winnipeg on September 16. Additional manpower was also provided between the period October 4 to October 7, in support of the Royal visit to Canada.

During 1984, 3 CFFTS graduated 155 prospective pilots in seven primary flying school courses. In addition, four members of the Jamaican Defence Force and two members of the Belizian Defence Force began training at 3 CFFTS in 1984.

At BHS, there were five Wings Graduations with a total of fifty-eight graduates. Four members of the Jamaican Defence Force (JDF) were included in the BHS training, of which three successfully completed the course. A total of thirteen of these graduates were Francophone, with the sole female student at BHS in 1984 being a member of the JDF. She did not successfully complete the training.

By the end of 1984, CFB Portage la Prairie had a strength of 433 military personnel including forty officers and 393 other ranks. 3 CFFTS had a staff of fifty-three members consisting of fifty officers and three other ranks. Meanwhile, CFS Det Portage (FIS) had a staff of fourteen officers, all flying instructors.

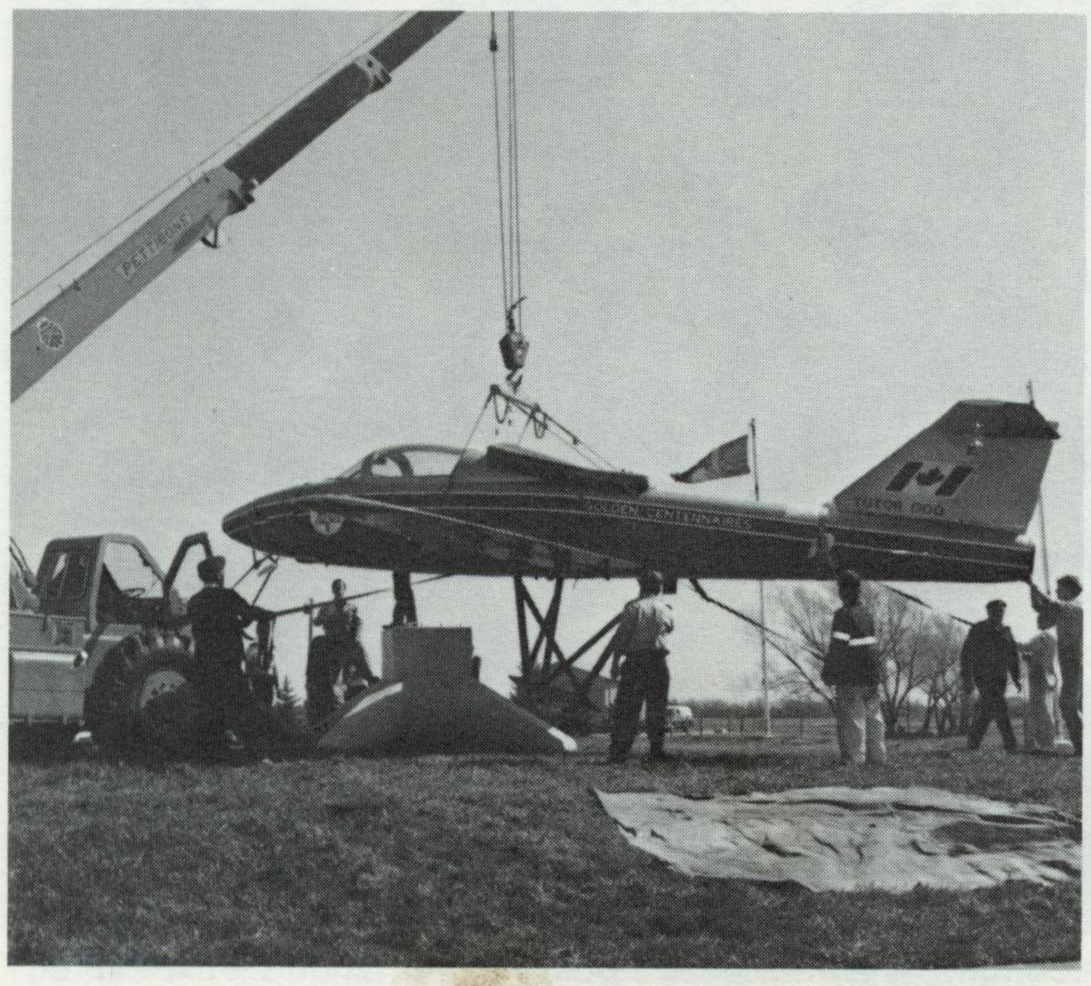
Two major ceremonies occurred at CFB Portage la Prairie in 1985. The first one, a rededication ceremony of the Golden Centennaire Monument at the entrance to the Base, occurred on May 14. It was conducted by Major-General McNaughton, the Deputy Commander of Air



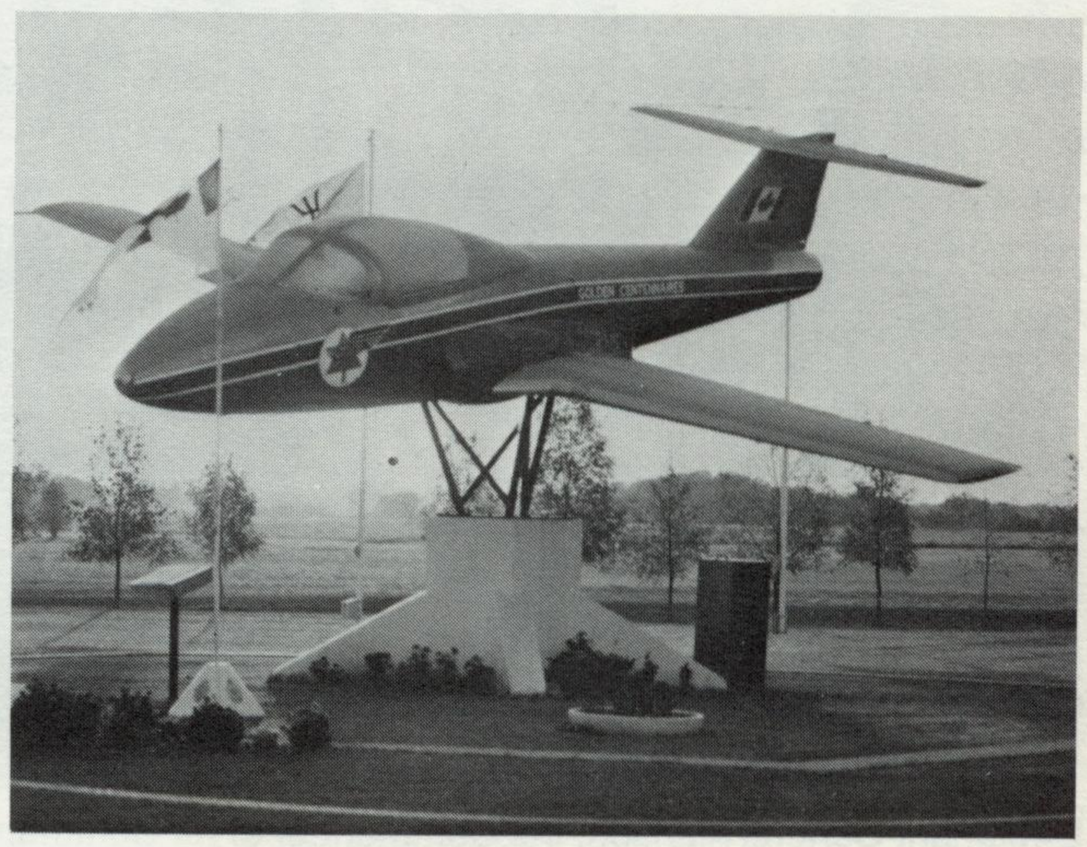
Colonel Simmons signs the document recognizing the official change of status of the Instructors School from a Detachment of the Central Flying School to an independent unit known as the Canadian Forces Flying Instructors School. Brigadier-General Price, Lieutenant-Colonel McKenzie and Major Carr look on.

Command. The second ceremony was held in the Officers' Mess on December 12. This ceremony occurred to mark the reformation of an independant flying instructors school unit. On that day, CFS Det Portage was disbanded and reformed immediately as the Candian Forces Flying Instructor School (CFFIS).

During 1985, seven PFS courses were held at 3 CFFTS, graduating 149 student pilots. There were also three members of the Jamaican Defence Force and three from the Barbados Defence Force who began their training at PFS in 1985. Mean-



The Tutor memorial was returned to its pedestal in Centennaire Park in May 1985, following refurbishment.



The Rededication of the Golden Centennaire Tutor Monument occurred on May 14, 1985.

while, at BHS there were five Wings Graduations on helicopters. These course graduations were:

a. Course 8405 with eight pilots, graduated on February 1, with Brigadier-General J.R. Chisholm, CD, the Commander of 10 Tactical Air Group, as the Reviewing Officer;
b. Course 8501 with ten graduates occurred on Friday, April 26, with Brigadier-General F.R. Sutherland from the Privy Council Office in Ottawa, as the Reviewing Officer;
c. Course 8502 with five graduates receiving their wings on June 28, from Reviewing Officer, Colonel I.H. Firth, the Deputy Commander of 14 Training Group;
d. Course 8503 graduated ten pilots on August 29. Brigadier-General M.T. Dodd, Commander of Northern Region Headquarters in Yellowknife, was the Reviewing Officer; and
e. Course 8504 with ten pilots graduated on 8 November. Brigadier-General K.O. Simonson, CD, Commander of Air Transport Group was the Reviewing Officer.

A number of visitors came to CFB Portage la Prairie in 1985. The first one was Steve Fonyo. He visited the Base on February 2, as part of his "Journey for Lives" run across Canada. Then, on April 16, the Canadian Forces Chief Warrant Officer, CWO Turgeon, and the Air Command Chief Warrant Officer, CWO Ouellet, visited the Base. Finally, the year closed on December 15 and 16, with an orientation visit of the pilot training system by Lieutenant-General J.E. Vance, the Vice Chief of Defence Staff and Major-General L.A. Ashley, the Chief of Air Doctrine and Operations at NDHQ.

Other events to occur at CFB Portage la Prairie in 1985, included the annual Timmy Dance which was held on April 26. Then, on June 8, the only aircraft incident of the year occurred when American Civil Aviation Aircraft PA28N74LR attempted a landing at the Portage la Prairie aerodrome due to fuel starvation. Unfortunately, the aircraft touched down with its gear up 200 feet short of runway 31R. Miraculously, there were no injuries in the incident and the aircraft sustained only minor damage. Finally, the Base held its annual Armed Forces Day airshow on September 7. In addition to the performance by the SNOWBIRDS, an added treat was the CF-18 aircraft, Canada's newest jet fighter.

Several construction projects took place during 1985. The first one, the replacement of the Married Quarter water mains with a price tag of $400,000 was completed on June 19. Then on November 14, the construction of two new facilities commenced; one being the special purpose vehicle garage (SPV) at a cost of $872,000 and secondly, a construction engineering cold storage building at a cost of $178,600. Two Change of Command Parades, occurring during the summer of 1986. In the first one held on June 20 in the Officers' Mess, Major K.H. Carr, CD, handed over CFFIS to Major D.C. McLennan, CD. Presiding over this Change of Command was Brigadier-General Eichel, the Commander of 14 Training Group. This was followed, on July 11, by a Change of Command Parade for 3 CFFTS. On this occasion, Lieutenant-Colonel John Hannah handed over command of the School to Lieutenant-Colonel T.R. (Tom) Bryne.

In addition to the five graduation parades in support of 3 CFFTS, CFB Portage la Prairie personnel participated in three other parades; the Decoration Day Parade with Army, Navy, Air Force and Legion personnel held in Portage la Prairie on June 1; the annual Battle of Britain Parade held at the Base on September 15; and the annual Remembrance Day Parade held on November 11. Another special ceremony was held on April 3, when the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess celebrated the RCAF's formation by holding a formal Mess Dinner with Colonel I.H. "Sam" Firth, OMM, CD, the Deputy Commander of 14 Training Group as guest of honour.

During 1985, 132,000 take-offs and landings were carried out at CFB Portage la Prairie, making it the second busiest military airport in Canada behind CFB Moose Jaw. In order to modernize its Air Traffic Control system, the Visual Approach Slope Indicator System (VASIS) was decommissioned in September. It was replaced by a new $80,000 system known as the Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) system. Also, new radar display scopes were installed in October, thus replacing the old equipment. The new consoles were larger and easier to use than their predecessors.

During 1986, the POL dikes at the Base were repaired at a cost of $168,000. A $414,000 upgrading of the windows and installation of insulation and the siding on more of the Married Quarters occurred. Additionally, a $775,000 ramp replacement project between 4 Hangar and 5 Hangar was completed as was the renovation of the No. 5 Hangar Metal Shop at a cost of $336,000.

In June, plans were made to remove the T-33

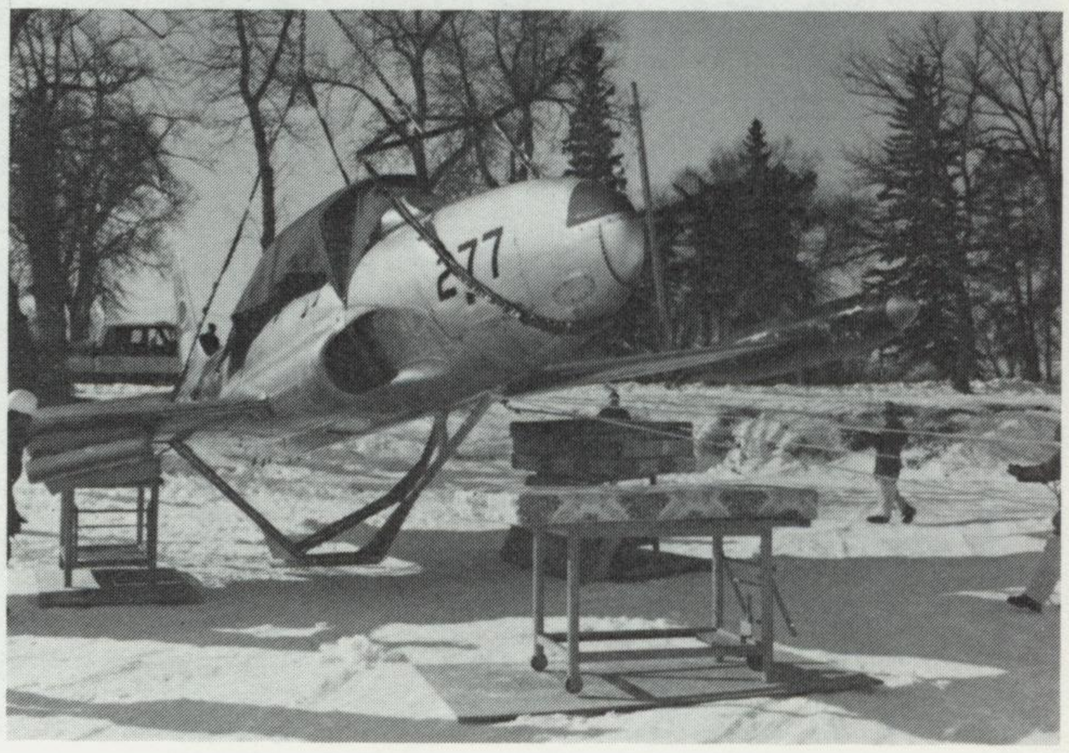


The Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, the Honourable Pearl McGonigal, assisted by Lieutenant-General McNaughton, throws the first rock at the opening of the annual Lieutenant-Governor's Bonspiel in February 1986, held at the Southport Curling Club.



Colonel Simmons tries out the new CH-139 Jet Ranger simulator (HIPT) in April 1986.

monument at Island Park in Portage la Prairie. This actually occurred on Monday, March 9, 1987, when it was lifted from its mounting at Island Park by a Chinook helicopter and transported to CFB Portage la Prairie for refurbishment. This T-33 had originally been made available in June 1966, following an accident when the nose wheel collapsed causing structural damage to the aircraft such that it was no longer safe to fly. It was finally replaced



The aircraft from the T-33 monument in Island Park, Portage la Prairie, being removed from its pedestal on March 9, 1987, to be returned to the Base for refurbishment.



The refurbished T-33 aircraft being returned to its pedestal in Island Park on June 22, 1987.

on Monday, June 22, 1987, when a Chinook again airlifted the T-33 from the Base back to its pedestal at Island Park. Subsequently, on Wednesday, November 2, 1988, officials from CFB Portage la Prairie took part in the rededication ceremony of this T-33 Silver Star aircraft monument.

At CFFIS, which had reformed on December 12, the previous year under the authority of CFOO 2.16.2, 151 students completed various refresher and flying instructor courses. A total of 4,547.7 hours were flown on the CT-144 Tutor, 1,150 hours on the CT-134A Musketeer and 1,218.3 hours on the CH-139 Jet Ranger. There was one JDF graduate on the CH-139 Jet Ranger and one JDF graduate on the refresher conversion course on the Musketeer. Also, on the Musketeer, one member of the Trinidad Defence Force graduated in 1986.

CFFIS continued to be busy the following year, 1987. There were 147 students loaded on the various courses throughout the year, with 6,821.9 hours being flown on all three aircraft.

As the result of the runway resurfacing at CFB Portage la Prairie during the summer months of 1987, the eleven CT-114 Tutor aircraft were deployed during the period June 16 to July 29. Three of these aircraft conducted their operations from CFB Winnipeg and the remaining eight operated from CFB Moose Jaw. Finally, in 1987, in support of the Central Flying School Symposium held in September, the CFFIS presented briefings and provided familiarization flights to their counterparts from Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Also, during the year, there was one graduate from the JDF on the helicopter course. There were also two distinguished course members who attended helicopter refresher training. They were Major-General Fassold, the Surgeon General, and Colonel J.M. Hannah, the Deputy Commander of 14 Training Group.

Lieutenant-General L.A. Ashley, CMM, CD, visited Portage on two occasions during 1987. First of all, on Friday, March 12, he presented wings to the BHS Course 8605 graduates. He later returned on June 8 to present a briefing to Base personnel on the Defence White Paper which had been tabled in the House of Commons on June 5. Other visitors to CFB Portage la Prairie in 1987 included:

a. Major-General (Retired) D.P. Wightman, CMM, CD, as the Guest of Honour at the annual Officers Air Force Mess Dinner on March 25;
b. Brigadier-General C.M. Curleigh, OMM, CD, the Commander of Maritime Air Group, as the Reviewing Officer for the graduation of BHS Course 8701 on May 22;
c. Brigadier-General E.I. Patrick, CD, the Chief of Staff for Operations at Air Command, as the Reviewing Officer for the graduation of BHS Course 8702 on July 24;
d. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney on August 2, during a visit to the City of Portage la Prairie;



The new Base Commander, Colonel McKenzie, welcomes Prime Minister and Mrs. Mulroney to CFB Portage la Prairie on August 2, 1987.

e. Major-General F.R. Sutherland, OMM, CD, the Chief of Personnel Development at NDHQ, as the Reviewing Officer for the graduation of BHS Course 8703 on September 18, Major-General Neish, the Chief of the Jamaican Defence Force, and his wife, also attended this ceremony;
f. Mr. Wally Schirra, the former NASA astronaut (one of the original seven), during a familiarization tour of the Portage area on October 9; and finally
g. Major-General J.R. Chisholm, CD, the Deputy Commander of Air Command, as the Reviewing Officer for the graduation of Course 8704 on December 4.

A Change of Command parade occurred on July 9, 1987. On that date, Colonel B.C. (Brian) McKenzie assumed command of CFB Portage la Prairie from Colonel D. (Dave) Simmons who



The Manitoba Airshow 1988 (MAS 88) poster. This two day event, attended by over 55,000 spectators, was held in honour of the 5,000 veterans who were attending the Fifth Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion in September 1988.

departed the Base to undertake language training at the Canadian Forces Language School in Ottawa.

The most significant single event to occur at CFB Portage la Prairie in 1988 was the Manitoba Airshow held on September 17 and 18. This event coincided with the Fifth Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion. As well as providing an airshow for this group of verterans, it provided an opportunity for the public of Manitoba to view military aerial and static displays, which it would otherwise seldom see. In excess of 50,000 Manitobans turned out to view this event.

This occasion provided an opportunity for 3 CFFTS, not only to show its aircraft to the spectators and guests, but also to display the high level of flying proficiency obtained by the pilots of this Unit. The school provided two of the formation teams which put on an aerial display at the air show. In addition, a three plane Tutor formation demonstration team from CFFIS also participated in the airshow. Other flying participants included the SNOWBIRDS, an American B1 Bomber, fire bombing demonstrations, F-4 Fantoms, CF-5s and the CF-18, plus a civilian aerobatic act.

A Change of Command ceremony occurred at 3 CFFTS on Friday, May 27, when Lieutenant-Colonel H. Henwood took over command of the school from Lieutenant-Colonel T. Bryne. Shortly thereafter, Lieutenant-Colonel Bryne departed Portage to attend a six month Australian staff college course.

3 CFFTS also had several Wings' graduations in 1988, including:

a. the first one for Course 8705, on Friday, March 18, when General Paul Manson, CMM, CD, the Chief of the Defence Staff, made the wing's presentations;
b. then on May 20, Brigadier-General S.E. McGowan, CD, the Commander of 10 Tactical Air Group, acted as the Reviewing Officer for Course 8801;
c. Course 8802 graduated on July 18, with Brigadier-General W.R. Dobson, OMM, CD, the Director-General for Force Development at NDHQ, as the Reviewing Officer;
d. Brigadier-General D.N. Kinsman, CD, the Commander of 14 Training Group presented pilot's wings to the graduates of Course 8803 on October 7; and finally
e. Brigadier-General G.R. King, CD, the Air Command Chief of Staff for Operations, presented pilot's wings to the graduates of Course 8804.



General Manson, the Chief of the Defence Staff, takes "the Salute" during the BHS Wings Graduation Parade on March 18, 1988.

Several other visitors also toured Portage in 1988 including Major-General Woods on May 12, during a reunion for military engineers being held on the Base; Brigadier-General W.H. Batt, the Commander of CFCC, on June 7, to visit his 733 Communications Squadron Detachment; and finally, the Director-General of Dental Services,



Colonel Fryer, the Air Command Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Engineering, cuts the ribbons during the opening ceremony for the renovated Base Hospital and Dental Clinic on February 5, 1988. Colonel McKenzie, the Base Commander, Colonel Clay, the Command Surgeon at Air Command, and Colonel Lanctis, the Commanding Officer of 14 Dental Unit, also attended this event.

Brigadier-General Begin, toured the Dental Detachment facilities in the recently renovated Dental Clinic on November 16.

Earlier in the year, on Friday, February 5, Colonel Fryer, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Engineering at Air Command Headquarters presided over the ribbon cutting ceremony which marked the reopening of the newly renovated Base Hospital. Finally, on June 7, 1988, General T. Yonekawa, the Chief of Staff of the Japanese Air Self Defence Force, and two of his staff officers, Major-General Y. Itonaga and Colonel Y. Morimoto visited the Base. These guests were escorted by Brigadier-General Eichel, the Commander of 14 Training Group.

Prior to discussing the major event at CFB Portage la Prairie, in 1989, the announcement of the Base closure on April 27, by Finance Minister Michael Wilson during the presentation of his annual budget speech, a quick review of some of the other events that occurred at the Base will be undertaken. At 3 CFFTS, the aircraft inventory remained at twenty Beechcraft Musketeer CT-134A aircraft, nine Jet Ranger CH-139 helicopters and nine Kiowa CH-136 helicopters. A total of 14,702.9 hours were flown at the school, of which 8,865.3 hours were on the Musketeer, 5,817.6 on the Jet Ranger and approximately twenty hours on the Kiowa. The reason for the return of the Kiowa helicopter was the announcement that half of the fleet of Jet Rangers were to be taken off the line and placed on duty in Central America to complement the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces involved with Operation Sultan.

Despite this upheaval, in 1989, there were no failures on any of the BHS helicopter courses. In fact, forty-nine students completed the course, including forty-two Canadians and four Jamaican graduates, plus three refresher conversion course graduates. Of course, due to the loss of the Jet Rangers, the training syllabus had to be modified to accommodate the flying training. Consequently, by the end of the year, the whole BHS flying training syllabus was flown on the Kiowa, except for the advanced portion of the instrument flying which was still conducted on the remaining Jet Rangers.

Again, in 1989, PFS had a very busy and successful year, graduating 172 students on seven courses. Included in this total were six Jamaican students, two Turkish students and one student from Belize. There were also fifteen female students in 1989, twelve of whom successfully completed the PFS training.



Colonel McKenzie cuts the ribbon officially opening the Air Reserve Augmentation Flight (ARAF) facilities located in the Base Headquarters Building on February 16, 1989. The ARAF Commander, Captain Graves (a former Base Chief Warrant Officer), and Colonel Bartley, representing Air Reserve Group Headquarters in Winnipeg, assisted in this ceremony.

Furthermore, some significant changes were introduced to the flying syllabus at PFS during 1989. Due to problems with the aircraft life-span potential, all aerobatics were removed from the syllabus to ensure the life of the Musketeer into the 1990's. A number of non-training activities were also conducted by the staff at 3 CFFTS. For example, on July 23, four CH-139 Jet Rangers helicopters were deployed to Northern Manitoba to act as platforms for infra-red scanning equipment in support of fire fighting operations. A total of fifty-eight sorties, and 86.6 hours were flown to accomplish this mission. The flight crews returned to CFB Portage la Prairie on July 30, following a very successful deployment.

3 CFFTS aircraft also actively participated in the Community Day held at the end of August. Over 200 Base personnel and their dependants experienced a demonstration flight in either the Musketeer or the Jet Ranger aircraft. In addition, the Farmers' Appreciation Day was held in October and a number of these individuals were given demonstration familiarization flights in the Jet Ranger helicopter.

At CFFIS, a Change of Command ceremony was held on July 14, 1989, with Major H.R. Paul

assuming command from Major D.C. McLennan. Major McLennan departed Portage a few days later to attend the Canadian Forces Staff College in Toronto. The presiding officer at this ceremony was Brigadier-General D.N. Kinsman, the Commander of 14 Training Group.

All of CFFIS had a very busy year, but it was downright hectic during the period November 20 to December 20 for the Rotary Wing Flight. As a result of the decision for Canadian troops to be involved in Operation Sultan in Central America, nine pilots from 427 Squadron were converted from the CH-136 Kiowa helicopter to the CH-139 Jet Ranger helicopter. In turn, conversion training from the Jet Ranger to the Kiowa was also given to the instructors at 3 CFFTS BHS and the Base aircraft maintenance staff.

Once again, in 1989, BHS succeeded in completing five courses. The graduation ceremonies occurred as follows:

a. Course 8805 graduated on March 16, with eight students receiving their wings from Major-General J.R. Chisholm, CD, Deputy Commander of Air Command;
b. Course 8901 graduated on May 26, with eight graduates again receiving wings, this time from Brigadier-General O'Blennis, CD, the Deputy Commander of Fighter Group;
c. Course 8902 graduated on July 28, with the eleven graduates receiving their wings from Air Commodore (retired) Birchall;
d. Course 8903 graduated on September 29, with the nine graduates receiving their wings from Brigadier-General Diamond, CD, Commander Air Transport Group;
e. Course 8904 graduated on December 13, with Lieutenant-General Sutherland, CMM, CD, the Commander of Air Command presenting wings to the eleven graduates.

There were four Jamaican students who graduated on Course 8903. Also, in 1989, two female students successfully completed the BHS training and received their wings.

The twenty-seven members of the Canadian Military Colleges Advisory visited the Base on July 20, 1989, escorted by Lieutenant-General Sutherland. CFB Portage la Prairie also hosted a number of foreign military dignitaries in 1989. They included a visit on October 23, from members of the Swedish Air Force and then on November 3, a contingent from the Brazilian Air Force toured the Base. This last group included Lieutenant-General Monteira, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Brazilian Air Force and two of his staff officers Major-General Rebello and Colonel Seinas. Also, in 1989, the Base held its Community Day on August 25 and its annual Farmers' Appreciation Day on October 13.

However, by far the largest single event in 1989 was the announcement of the proposed closure of CFB Portage la Prairie during the summer of 1992, combined with the proposal to civilianize the Primary Flying Training. As a result of this announcement, the whole focus for the future planning of CFB Portage la Prairie changed; as indeed did the future of pilot training in the Canadian Armed Forces. In addition, being a major fixture and employer within the Portage la Prairie area, the announced demise of the Base created quite a stir in the local community.

What follows is a capsule summary of the events surrounding the Base closure announcement as they were reported in the Portage la Prairie Daily Graghic newspaper. In a special section called "The Year in Review" published on Saturday, January 20, 1990, Brenda Suderman, the Daily Graphic staff reporter assigned to cover the Base closure story wrote an article entitled "Closure of Base Was Top Headline in '89". In this article, she wrote:

> "It was undisputably the biggest story of the year, if not the decade, for Portage la Prairie.
>
> It began quietly enough with a leaked budget document and grew into an uproar residents hoped could be heard all the way to Ottawa.
>
> On April 26, 1989 the federal government announced Canadian Forces Base Portage la Prairie would close as a cost-cutting measure and the story has been on the front page ever since.
>
> The closure of the base would mean 493 military personnel would be transferred out of Portage and an additional 173 civilians would be out of work, at an estimated savings of $434 million over 14 years, government sources said.
>
> Here are excerpts and highlights of the response by civic, business, and residents to the announcement, and the resulting fight to save the base, as covered by *The Daily Graphic* in 1989.
>
> **April 27:** The community is in shock over the

government's decision, with government and business leaders calling it a disastrous blow.

"I think it would be unbelievable that they would close this base," said Mayor Bill McMillan. "It's the second busiest in Canada."

April 28: After a day of shock, the community arms itself for a tough battle with the federal government by forming an ad hoc citizens lobby group, circulating a petition, and making plans for a public forum.

"We as a community, I don't feel, should accept this decision without clearly voicing our concerns." said businessman Hugh Moran.

April 30: Conservative MP Felix Holtmann faces the boos and jeers of angry citizens demanding to know why their base is being closed. Some speakers suggest Portage la Prairie is paying the price for Manitoba's opposition to the Meech Lake accord.

"In my opinion, making cuts by spite is not responsible government and that's the message I want to go back to Ottawa, that we will not put up with that," resident Nancy Painter told Holtmann at the rally attended by about 700 residents.

"If I find out this decision is East against West, Quebec against Manitoba, Mulroney against Manitoba, yes I will vote against the budget," Holtmann assures his constituents.

May 1: The month begins with a visit to Portage by Premier Gary Filmon, who says he'll go to Ottawa to convince the federal government the decision to change their decision to close the base.

Mayor Bill McMillan agreed it is important to keep up the fight to tell Ottawa how hard hit the city would be if the base closed.

"I have every confidence if we don't try it, it certainly won't work," said McMillan.

May 3: Provincial Liberal leader Sharon Carstairs meets with civic and municipal officials and pledges her party's support to the lobby to save the base.

Opposition members charge Holtmann is hiding after saying he will vote against the budget.

May 4-10: Defence Minister Bill McKnight keeps them guessing about whether he will visit CFB Portage to explain the reason for the closure in person. McKnight doesn't come, but a delegation from Portage and Winnipeg makes plans to meet with him, and Holtmann insists he's not hiding anything, but he's having problems getting information.

The Portage in Motion committee, formed to lobby the government to save the base, opens a local office and starts preparing a brief to argue why the base should stay open.

Construction on the overpass to Provincial Road 240, dubbed the bridge to nowhere, is stopped by the provincial highways minister and resumed a week later.

May 12: Citing military statistics, Holtmann says the rationale to close the base is sound. He says the base could remain open even after the military pulls out.

"The fact that the military may pull out of the base doesn't mean the base may have to close as an operational unit or as a training centre."

Western Diversification Minister Charlie Mayer vows to provide some compensation for the city through his department.

May 13: About 800 rally to Island Park to buy a dog and save the base and send the delegation off to Ottawa.

May 15: Holtmann abstains from the budget vote, saying it wasn't his role as a government member to vote against it.

"It's probably the strongest way I could show my disapproval with what happened."

May 16: Defence Minister Bill McKnight tells a Portage delegation visiting Ottawa he won't change his mind to close the base, but city representatives are still optimistic.

"It looks like we lost the battle, but the war is not over. I'm sure we're going to continue the fight," said Mayor Bill McMillan.

May 29: Holtmann says it is time to find new industry for the city or alternative uses for the base instead of fighting to keep it open, but a save the base spokesman says the MP isn't representing his constituents.

"Felix is paid to say what his party is doing," said Jack Wilson. "He's got to decide what side of the fence he's going to stand on."

June: McKnight rejects opposition suggestions to close a Toronto base and keep Portage open, and rumors fly that Germans might use the base to train.

July 6: Angry defence workers surround Holtmann's car and demand a meeting with him and Defence Minister Bill McKnight.

"Everyone in the country had a chance to talk and now the people here are directly

affected by this closure. We want some guarantees,'' union president Harry Aitkenhead told Holtmann at the demonstration outside the base.

July 11: Holtmann meets with Aitkenhead and promises he'll try to find jobs for the 170 civilian workers affected by the base closure.

July: Saving the base takes a vacation, as the Portage in Motion office shuts down for the summer months.

July 20: Secret military documents show the pilot and helicopter training school is being closed for financial reasons.

August: Portage in Motion group gets back from holidays and begins work on second brief explaining why the base should be expanded, not closed.

September: Several government-sponsored committees are struck to study the effect of the base closure on the local economy, and Holtmann announces a new government office to deal with the effects of the base closure will open soon.

September 13: Alderman Darlene Hamm said Portage has been taking the wrong approach in fighting the government's decision.

''I think we've been all looking to different governmental bodies to come up with the directions and answers for Portage la Prairie,'' she said. ''The community must take ownership and the community must look for the answers they want.''

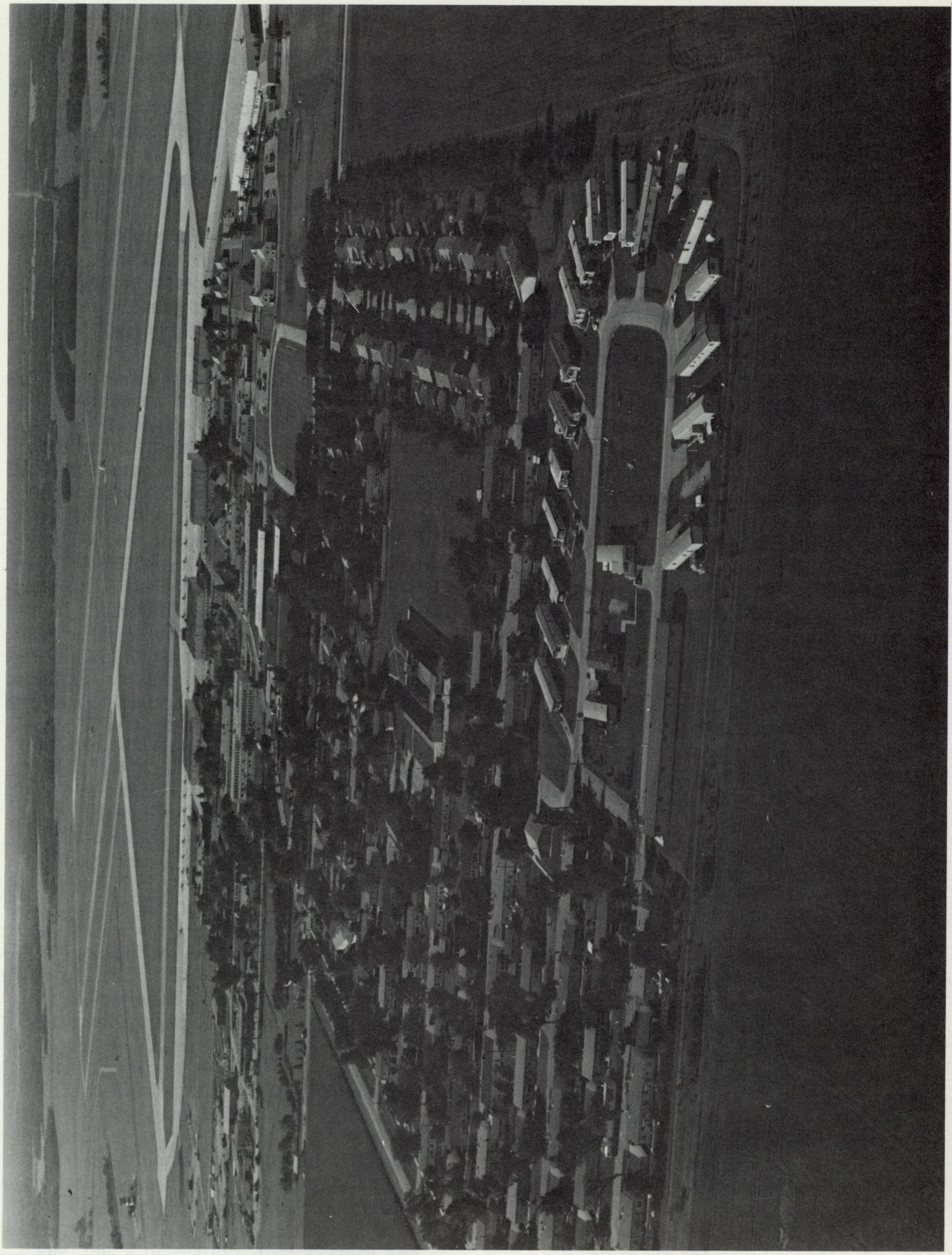
September 29: Defence officials says plans to privatize CFB Portage are on track and the base will close by August 1992 if arrangements to train pilots through private industry are in place.

October 23: Portage in Motion announces it will ask Premier Filmon to take their cause to the first ministers' conference next month, but Holtmann said the community should fight instead to keep privatized flight training in the city.

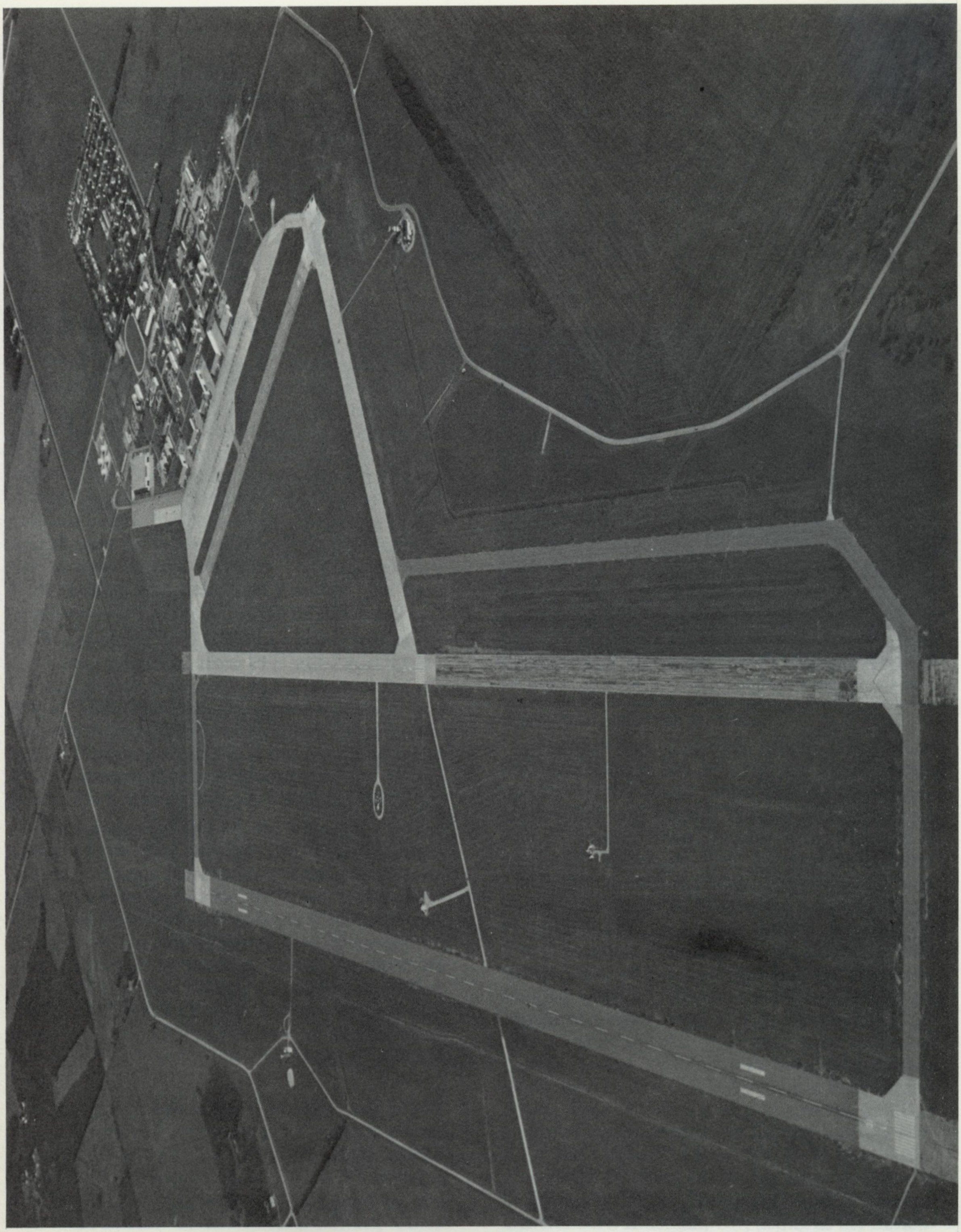
December 10: A government office to help the city overcome the loss of the base opens its doors, and a Western Diversification official says good things will come for Portage.

''I always think of Portage as one of the places in the province with the most potential,'' said Bob Simpson.''

Despite the closure announcement, CFB Portage la Prairie and its two schools, 3 CFFTS and CFFIS, continued to conduct their flying training program virtually unaltered. Despite the uncertainty of what will be happening in the future both to the Base and to pilot training, CFB Portage la Prairie launched into the new decade of the 1990's determined to fill its training mandate for at least another two years.



This view of CFB Portage la Prairie, taken from the north during the summer of 1989, emphasizes the Married Quarters and operational buildings.



This view of CFB Portage la Prairie, taken from the south during the summer of 1989, emphasizes the aerodrome's runways.

EPILOGUE

1990 AND BEYOND

With the announcement of the closure of CFB Portage la Prairie possibly as early as 1992, the future use of the aerodrome and its facilties has yet to be determined. Despite this uncertainty, the personnel of CFB Portage la Prairie commenced "the Nineties" by continuing to perform their day-to-day functions of conducting pilot training. Until a determination has been made concerning the future process to be used as an alternative method for the training performed by 3 CFFTS, primary pilot training and helicopter training, the Base operations will continue virtually unaltered.

For example, 3 CFFTS has already had several course graduations from PFS and a normal flying training programme is being planned for the rest of 1990. The Base also experienced a major fire, which occurred in the Military Police building on February 17, 1990. It has also hosted the Prairie Region Curling Championships at the Southport Curling Club from January 22 to 26.

On January 30 and 31, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Vice Admiral C.M. Thomas toured the Base. He was accompanied during his visit by Major-General S. Eichel, the Chief of Air Doctrine and Operations at National Defence Headquarters and Brigadier-General D.N. Kinsman, the Commander of 14 Training Group. At the same time, January 30 to February 1, Bishop A. Vallee, the Roman Catholic Bishop Ordinary to the Canadian Forces, also visited the Base to conduct Confirmation Ceremonies in the Roman Catholic Chapel.

During the remainder of the first half of the year, a number of events occurred. First of all, on Wednesday, March 21, 1990, the Chief of the Defence Staff, General A.J.G.D. de Chastelain, OMM, CD, and his wife, accompanied by the Canadian Forces Chief Warrant Officer, Chief Warrant Officer J.J. Marr, toured the Base.



General A.J.G.D. de Chastelain, the Chief of the Defence Staff, inspecting the Guard of Honour during his visit to CFB Portage la Prairie on March 21, 1990.

The next day, Thursday, March 22, the Base provided Hangar No. 1 as the site for the wrap-up party of the World Junior Curling Championships which was held in Portage la Prairie from March 19 to 23. Then, on May 1, the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Wm. McKnight, toured the Base. Next, on May 6-8, Portage la Prairie was host to the Annual Western Premiers Conference. The aircraft carrying the four Canadian Premiers, the Honourable Wm. Vander Zalm of British Columbia, the Honourable Don Getty of Alberta, the Honourable Grant Devine of Saskatchewan and the Honourable Gary Filmon of Manitoba, plus their guest Governor George Sinner of North Dakota, arrived and departed from the C.F.B. Portage la Prairie aerodrome. Premier Filmon also hosted his guests at a special reception held on Sunday evening May 6, in the Officers' Mess. The first BHS wings graduation followed on Friday, May 11, with the Commander of 14 Training Group, Brigadier-General D.N. Kinsman, CD, acting as the Reviewing Officer.

Besides holding a possible All Ranks Mess Dinner to mark the Base's Golden Anniversary, the major Fiftieth Anniversary Event will be the two-day Manitoba Airshow 1990 (MAS 90), on July 14 and 15. The theme of this extravaganza was "Celebrating 50 Years of Flying Training - 1940-1990".

Finally, also in July, the Base and 3 CFFTS should be holding their final Change of Command Parades. Lieutenant-Colonel Hayden Henwood, the Commandant of 3 CFFTS, will be departing for 14 Training Groups Headquarters. He will be replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel K.H. Carr. The Base Commander, Colonel Brian McKenzie, will be assuming the post of Director Recruiting and selection at NDHQ in Ottawa. His replacement will be Colonel R.R.J. Henault. A number of other final postings are also expected during the 1990 summer posting season, as the Base prepares for its final few years of operation.

As for the future use of the aerodrome facility, a federal government announcement by the Western Economic Diversification Minister, Charles Mayer, on Monday, February 26, 1990, approved the formation of a locally controlled corporation to eventually take over the assets of the Base. As Mr. Mayer explained, this new non-profit corporation, known as the Southport Aerospace Centre Incorporated,

> "will be the vehicle by which new, viable alternative uses for Base will be sought out and developed. The Base facilities are in excellent condition and are well suited to house a variety of aviation and air transportation training and business enterprises. The new corporation will build on these strengths, and the advantages of climate and location, as it seeks out tenants and new uses for the base."

In detail then, the objectives of the Southport Aerospace Centre are to:

a. pursue opportunities to establish, at the base site, a flight training centre, training programs related to all aspects of aircraft construction, maintenance, operation and air transportation and development and operation of an aerospace training centre that will look at developing human resources for any aspect of aerospace industry,

b. develop, foster, encourage and facilitate all appropriate types of business, industry, research, technological development, education and training;

c. ensure maintenance and utilization of the assets obtained by the Corporation following closure of the Base to provide short and long term benefits and opportunities to the community as well as to the Manitoba economy; and

d. arrange for the purchase, lease or exchange of base property for the purposes of encouraging and fostering any and all kinds of appropriate business and industry development.

Portage la Prairie businessman, Mr. Orville Wagner, has been appointed as the Chairman of the Board of Directors and, on an interim basis, will act as the President of the Corporation.

While the fate of CFB Portage la Prairie was announced on April 27, 1989, the future of Southport now rests with the Southport Aerospace Centre Corporation. With its success, the airport could continue as an operational entity in the world of Canadian aviation.

Muriel Jean Scott, a technician in the aircraft maintenance section, summed up the feelings of all No. 7 AOS personnel when she wrote her poem "Remember?" in 1945. Now, in 1990, as we look back on fifty years of flying training at Portage la Prairie and then forward to the imminent closure of the Base facility as a military aerodrome, her words are still appropriate:

Remember? Of course we'll remember
The hours we all spent here!
Could we think back through life,
And not have Station memories appear?

Laugh? Of course we laughed!
It was fun on a job like this!
There's a lot of jobs we laughed at,
There's a lot of puns, we'll miss.

Fought? Of course we fought!
We squabbled and argued. But then,
When all the scrapping was over,
We were the best of friends again.

Sorry? Of course we're sorry!
With all of the fun we've had,
Could we think of the Station closing
And be anything else but sad?

Remember?
Of course we'll remember!
And when we're all far apart,
The work, the play, and good time we had
Will always live in the heart.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE HISTORY OF 3 FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL

(The following information is taken primarily from the 3 FTS Unit History Booklet that was compiled by Captain J.R. Reid, and from a historical precis prepared by Captain T. Spraggs, in 1974).



No. 3 Flying Training School (3 FTS) Crest

INTRODUCTION

3 Flying Training School (3 FTS) does not have a singular history, but rather it has many individual histories spanning half a century from 1940 to 1990 and also spanning half a continent from Alberta to Ontario. In fact, at times there were more than just one 3 FTS existing simultaneously. The training of these schools varied from very basic pilot training to the advanced twin-engine piston training through to the pure jet training.

3 ELEMENTARY FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL, LONDON

When the British Commonweath Air Training Plan was set up, rapid expansion of the RCAF took place and training schools of all types sprang up across the country. Recruits selected for pilot training proceeded to an Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) for basic instruction on light single-engine aircraft, such as the de Havilland Tiger Moth, the Fleet Finch and, later, the Fairchild Cornell. The EFTSs were operated by civilian companies under RCAF supervision and they gave a course of eight weeks duration which included fifty hours of flying. Later in the war, the courses were expanded by two weeks, with sixty hours of flying time.

3 Elementary Flying Training School (3 EFTS), operated by the London Elementary Flying Training School Limited, was opened at Crumlin Airport on June 24, 1940. This was the first of 26 elementary flying training schools formed by the RCAF during the course of the war. As was the case of most schools in those early days, 3 EFTS began pilot training before the contractors had finished their work. When Squadron Leader F.R. West, the first Chief Supervisory Officer, had arrived at Crumlin Airport to open the school, he found only bare walls standing. The buildings had no lights, no water and no furniture. Nevertheless, the school opened on the scheduled date with an intake of twenty-four student pilots and, eight weeks later, on August 28, 1940, the first course gradu-

ated. The new recruits arrived every fourth or fifth week, with the number of training candidates being increased from the initial twenty-four to thirty-five and then later to forty-two students per course. After two years of operation, during which time it produced 681 graduates, 3 EFTS was disbanded on July 3, 1942 to allow for the expansion of the Air Observers' School at the Crumlin Aerodrome in London.

3 SERVICE FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL, CALGARY

The formation of 3 Service Flying Training School (3 SFTS) was authorized by Organization Order No. 45, due to the increased commitments of the Joint Air Force Training Plan. Accordingly, on the appointed date, October 28, 1940, the school opened at Calgary's Currie Barracks with two flying training squadrons of four flights, each under the commands of Squadron Leader N.B. Petersen and Squadron Leader D.S. Blaine. The following day, the school's first student intake and formal training began, with this initial course being presented its wings on December 24, 1940.

The numerical strength of the School on January 1, 1941 was 731, comprised of fifty-four officers, 561 airmen and 116 civilians. At the end of October, after its first full year of operation, 3 SFTS had a total strength of seventy-seven officers, 1,005 airmen and 168 trainees, seven dental personnel and 134 civilians.

The first flying incident occurred on November 10, 1941. Two search parties were sent by air to locate a Tiger Moth aircraft operating from 3 SFTS which had reportedly crashed in the schoolyard of Big Springs School approximately twenty-five miles northwest of Calgary. Both aircraft carrying the two search parties landed about a mile from the scene of the crash. On their arrival, the Tiger Moth was still ablaze.

Prior to the arrival of the rescue party, a local schoolteacher of the Big Springs School, who had raced to the scene when the crash occurred, had dragged the student airman from the blazing wreckage. After dragging the airman from the aircraft, the teacher rolled him on the grass to extinguish the flames. In so doing, she risked personal injury and received some serious facial burns. The student airman then unsuccessfully endeavoured to pull the flying officer from the plane despite being badly burned and injured himself. The instructor perished.

With the arrival of the rescue party, the fire was extinguished and the medical aid rendered to the airman and the teacher. The injured airman was taken by ambulance to the Colonel Belcher Hospital where he died shortly afterwards. Subsequently, on June 10, the teacher, Mrs. Frances Walsh, was awarded the George Medal, the first to be presented to a Canadian woman. It was in recognition of her valorous rescue endeavours. The student airman, Lac K.M. Gravell, was awarded the George Cross posthumously for his efforts to try and rescue his flying instructor.

The next incident of note at 3 SFTS was the visit on May 24, 1943, of the Governor General, the Earl of Athlone. He was accompanied by his wife, Her Royal Highness Princess Alice. The Guard of Honour was composed of a graduating class of trainees and members of the Unit Women's Division. After the official wings presentation ceremony, Princess Alice inspected the Women's Division Barracks and the unit's recreation centre.

Another flying incident occurred on August 28, 1943. While carrying out a bombing exercise, a Cessna Crane aircraft from 3 SFTS collided in mid-air with a Harvard from 37 SFTS (RAF) Calgary, which was returning home after completing a formation flying practice. The collision took place at a height of approximately 5,000 feet, about two miles northwest of the Station's runways, right over the city of Calgary. This was the first time an aircraft accident had happened over the city. The collision was seen from the control tower of the Station, and the crash tender ambulance was immediately dispatched.

Following the collision, the Cessna apparently went into a spiral dive from which the pilot was unable to recover. The student airman was able to abandon the aircraft and parachute to safety. However, the instructor and a student pilot also on board were unable to escape. The Cessna spiralled into the ground and burned. A city milkman suffered second degree burns when the blazing aircraft crashed near his milk wagon. He was rushed to Colonel Belcher Hospital. The Harvard aircraft, after colliding with the Cessna, circled the stampede grounds in Calgary and crashed into the infield. The aircraft exploded as it hit the ground and the sole occupant of that aircraft was killed.

3 SFTS continued to operate at a fast pace, producing trained pilots until the end of the war in 1945. It was actually the last of 14 flying schools in the Province of Alberta to close, and its passing marked the end of flying training in Alberta until RCAF Station Claresholm was reactivated in 1951.

RCAF STATION CLARESHOLM, ALBERTA

On August 1, 1951, 3 Flying Training School (3 FTS) was reopened at RCAF Station Claresholm. It was given the responsibility of providing pilot training under the NATO Agreement. Students from Britain, France, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium and Italy, as well as Canada, were trained at 3 FTS Claresholm. Claresholm also had the distinction of being the only flying base in Canada that had a registered cow brand called the "O Triangle M". This brand was registered with the Cattlemen's Men's Association of Alberta. Training at 3 FTS continued unabated for the next seven years until 1958. During this time, the school flew some 3,500 to 5,000 hours monthly on the Harvard aircraft. With the completion of the NATO Agreement and the reduction of training requirements, the flying wound down and RCAF Station Claresholm was closed on August 15, 1958. 3 FTS did not, however, die out since its sister school at Gimli, Manitoba, was renamed 3 AFTS.

RCAF STATION GIMLI

The new NATO Training Plan was also chiefly responsible for the new look of RCAF Station Gimli. Although there wasn't the problem of starting from scratch as there was at other airfields participating in the programme, Gimli still had a major change to make from its former way of life. Prior to this change, 2 FTS, which had operated at Gimli, was moved to RCAF Station Moose Jaw. Then, the school at Gimli became known as 3 Advanced Flying School (3 AFS). Secondly, there was a marked increase in the student numbers and their nationalities. Finally, there was a new jet aircraft replacing the reciprocal piston engine Harvard. This was the very new, very sleek jet aircraft, the Lockheed T-33 Silver Star, manufactured in Canada by Canadair.

From the start, 3 AFS was a hive of activity. Equipment arrived at 3 AFS from the time of its inception on June 1, 1953, until its first student intake arrived on November 9, 1953. This student intake was comprised of servicemen from France, Italy, Holland, Turkey, Denmark, Norway and Great Britain. The School's new Chief Flying Instructor was an experienced Canadian fresh from exchange duties with the USAF as a jet instructor. He was Squadron Leader R.J. Hamilton.

When the first of the Station's ninety-five new T-33 aircraft arrived on August 21, 1953, both he and the new Station Commanding Officer, Wing Commander N. Burdon, flew that aircraft to Vancouver's Pacific National Exhibition. The purpose of the trip was to show off the new aircraft as dramatically as possible as a promotion policy for the public.

The T-33 was also supplied to other Bases soon after it arrived at Gimli. This meant an additional job for 3 AFS - training the instructors from the other schools. Two of these schools which sent instructors to Gimli for training were 1 AFS at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie and the Weaponry School at RCAF Station MacDonald. Another change in policy saw Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) pilots training on jet aircraft at 3 AFS. The first of the RCN pilots to graduate was Sub-Lieutenant G. Edwards who soloed on January 4, 1954.

Shortly afterwards, on February 5, 1954, the first NATO Graduation of Course 5301 occurred. This course consisted of French, British and Canadian pilots. Unfortunately, another first occurred shortly thereafter, on February 26, 1954, when Petty Officer C.V. Bell died in the crash of his T-33. Before the year was out, there were four more serious accidents, killing four more trainees. One of the these was a mid-air collision that killed two and injured a third pilot. In this crash, Flight Lieutenant C. Fletcher and Flying Officer T.D. Wheeler died and Sergeant C. Ciret (FAF) was injured. After Sergeant Ciret parachuted to safety, it took seven days to successfully rescue this French serviceman.

By the end of November 1954, the new 3 AFS was flying at a rapid rate. In the six previous months, 3 AFS graduated 175 students and logged some 17,560 flying training hours on ninety- five aircraft in its fleet.

In 1955, very little changed in the course loadings from the previous year. Two pilots, Flying Officer P.K. Bradley and Flying Officer J.L. Nelson, were lost on a cross-country flight in a T-33 on January 29, 1955. Then, on March 17, Sergeant Fredette of the French Air Force was slightly injured in a T-33 air crash. Scarcely twelve days later, Private T.R. Dressler from the Norwegian Air Force was killed in another T-33 crash.

Throughout the following year, 1956, there were even more graduations and even more crashes. Some of those who died included two RCAF Station Portage la Prairie pilots. They were Second-Lieutenant H.O. Stein Matheson of the Royal Norwegian Air Force and Pilot Officer H.F. Walsh, who both went missing on routine flights. Sergeant Genestre of the French Air Force was also killed on his first solo flight. 3 AFS was once again sad-

dened by the death of Second-Lieutenant O. Erman of the Turkish Air Force who died on August 27 in a crash of his T-33. Tragedy struck again on June 8, 1957. During the Air Force Day activities, while performing aerobatic manoeuvres in front of a crowd, one of the flying instructors, Flying Officer K.G. Brown, crashed on the aerodrome.

In 1957, on an upbeat note, the West German Air Force was beginning to rebuild after the Second World War. As a result, several of the former Luftwaffe pilots came to Gimli to receive training on the T-33. By November 1, the first course of West Germans had graduated. Course 5610 included four West Germans, one Turk, three Belgians, five Danes, four French, sixteen Italians and twelve Canadians.

By 1958, the NATO Training Plan had begun to run down. RCAF Station Clareholm was closing and the future of Gimli appeared uncertain. However, Gimli and 3 AFS received a new lease on life when many of the foreign countries that had been using the aerodrome decided to continue their pilot training there. Gimli continued in this mode until 1964. In 1964, the flying school, 3 AFS, was redesignated 1 FTS and the No. 3 was dormant until the new No. 3 was reborn at CFB Portage la Prairie the following year.



No. 3 Canadian Forces Flying Training School (3 CFFTS) Crest

3 FTS/3 CFFTS

After a period of rest, the No. 3 was once again reactivated to provide advanced flying training at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. On February 15, 1965, 1 AFS was redesignated 3 FTS. From that date to the present, 3 FTS has provided prospective pilot training at various levels and on various aircraft to Canadian Forces and foreign student pilots at Portage la Prairie.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

3 EFTS London, Ontario

Jun 40 - Aug 40	S/L F.R. West
Sep 40 - Feb 41	F/L C.W. Burgess
Mar 41 - Apr 41	F/L N.L. Durnen
May 41 - Aug 41	F/L E.B. Hale
Sep 41 - Jun 42	F/L V.W. Thompson

3 SFTS Calgary, Alberta

Oct 40 - Feb 42	G/C A.D. Ross, AFC, OBE
Mar 42 - Feb 43	G/C G.P Dunlop, AFC
Mar 43 - Apr 43	G/C R.D. Buers, AFC
May 43 - May 45	G/C W.R. Irwin, MBE, DFC & Bar
Jun 45 - Oct 45	W/C H.E. Walker

3 FTS Claresholm, Alberta

Aug 51 - 51	G/C F.A. Simpson
Aug 51 - 52	G/C D.G. Price
51 - 52	W/C W.W. Gilmour
53 - 54	G/C W.B. Hodgson
54 - 58	G/C J.P. McGarthy
58 - Aug 58	W/C H. Malkin

3 AFS Gimli, Manitoba

Jun 53 - 56	W/C N. Burdon
56 - 60	W/C D.G. Malloy
60 - 64	W/C L.J. Liggett

3 FTS Portage la Prairie, Manitoba

Feb 65 - 67	W/C R.H. Jantzen
67 - 71	W/C R.W. Found
71 - May 73	LCol G. Brennand
Jun 73 May 76	LCol G.E. McArthur
Jun 76 - Jun 77	LCol P.G. Harle
Jun 77 - Jul 79	LCol M.C. Randall
Jul 79 - Apr 81	LCol M.A. Matthews
Apr 81 - Jul 83	LCol B.J. Macht
Jul 83 - Jul 86	LCol J.M. Hannah
Jul 86 - Jul 88	LCol T.R. Byrne
Jul 88 - Aug 90	LCol H.J. Henwood
Aug 90 - disbandment	LCol K.H. Carr

APPENDIX B

THE HISTORY OF THE FLYING INSTRUCTORS' SCHOOL

(*The following information is taken primarily from a brief historical essay on the CFFIS, prepared by Captain W.H. Ballantyne.*)



Canadian Forces Flying Instructors School (CFFIS) Crest

The Canadian Forces Flying Instructors' School (CFFIS) is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1990, along with CFB Portage la Prairie. Historical records indicate that originally, the unit formed in Trenton on January 18, 1940. During the first five decades of its existence, the Flying Instructor School (FIS) has seen many changes in its organization, location and type of aircraft flown.

To briefly recount its history, the first item of note occurred on April 17, 1940, when FIS at Trenton, Ontario, was redesignated Central Flying School (CFS). Then on the August 3, FIS was actually divided up into three separate flying instructor schools. RCAF Organization Order 203 dated June 2, 1942, formally established as No. 1 FIS at Trenton. RCAF Organization Order 204, dated June 3, 1942, formed 2 FIS at Vulean, Alberta. As a result of Movement Order 5, dated March 4, 1943, 2 FIS moved to Pearce, Alberta, effective May 3, 1943. Subsequently, RCAF Organization Order 501 dated December 14, 1944, formally disbanded to FIS effective January 20, 1945. Finally, Organization Order 204 dated June 3, 1942, established 3 FIS at Arnprior, Ontario. This school continued to function until January 22, 1944, when it formally disbanded, in accordance with the instructions given in RCAF Organization Order 326, dated January 14, 1944.

Concerning 1 FIS in Trenton, it apparently combined with CFS in Trenton effective January 24, 1945, however FIS continued to be reflected in the RCAF Station Trenton diary. RCAF organization Order 009/51, dated February 26, 1951, authorized the reformation in Trenton of 1 FIS effective April 1, 1951. 1 FIS continued to function at Trenton until April 8, 1959, when in accordance with RCAF Order 5.17.2, dated April 8, 1959, it was relocated from Trenton to RCAF Station Moose Jaw, with a detachment for advance flying training relocating to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. The detachment at Portage provided advance instructor training on the T-33 and the C-45 Expeditor. During this time frame, basic instructor training was conducted at the main unit

of 1 FIS located at RCAF Station Moose Jaw which utilized the Harvard aircraft.

In 1964, a change occurred with the introduction of the CT-114 Tutor, which was to be the RCAF basic jet trainer. At this time, all Instructor training was consolidated at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie. This was accomplished through RCAF Order 5.16.3, dated June 18, 1964. The directive stated that the 1 FIS detachment in Portage was to be disbanded and amalgamated with 1 FIS, which was simultaneously transferred from RCAF Station Moose Jaw to RCAF Station Portage la Prairie.

The next change for FIS occurred on October 13, 1966, when 1 FIS, while remaining at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie, became a detachment of the Central Flying School (CFS). A year later, the name of the school was changed to the Central Flying and Navigation School (CFNS). This name change became effective through RCAF Organization Order 5.16, dated August 31, 1967 and was effective as of that date.

1 FIS had survived integration in the late Sixties and continued to provide Tutor instructor training, until it was disbanded as an independant unit in 1970. Since the need for qualified flying instructors still existed, the Tutor portion moved to CFB Moose Jaw and came under the command of 2 Canadian Forces Flying Training School (2 CFFTS), while the Musketeer and Kiowa sections remained at CFB Portage la Prairie as part of 3 CFFTS.

While operating in Moose Jaw, as a component of 2 CFFTS during the Seventies, FIS formed a flying demonstration team known as "THE VIKINGS". This formation team was comprised of FIS instructors. To the delight of thousands of spectators, it provided four plane formation demonstrations at airshows and other events throughout the Prairie provinces and the Northwestern United States.

FIS again returned to Portage on August 1, 1981. Earlier that year, a reorganization within Air Command had reintroduced 14 Training Group with its Headquarters in Winnipeg. The role of 14 Training Group was to command and coordinate the activities of all units with air training responsibilities (excluding operational training).

Shortly thereafter, Central Flying School (CFS) was also re-established in Winnipeg to oversee air training standards. At that time, the Flying Instructor School component of 2 CFFTS at CFB Moose Jaw was relocated to Portage la Prairie and became Central Flying School Detachment Portage (CFS Det Portage). The Detachment which was commanded by a Major, consisted of nine CT-114 Tutor instructors, two CT-134 Musketeer instructors and two CH-136 Kiowa helicopter instructors. Essentially, these instructors were transferred from the Instructor Training Flights at 2 CFFTS in Moose Jaw and 3 CFFTS in Portage. The role of this detachment was to train instructors for instructional duties at flying training schools with 14 Training Group.

This organizational set up has basically remained intact through to the present. However, during ceremonies, on December 12, 1985, FIS was once again transformed into an independant unit. In accordance with message AIG 1702, dated 1430 hours Zulu, November 13, 1985, the new unit was designated as the Canadian Forces Flying Instructor School (CFFIS).

The current mandate for CFFIS is to provide trained flight instructors for utilization by 2 CFFTS in Moose Jaw on the Tutor and by 3 CFFTS in Portage on the Musketeer and the Jet Ranger. With the recent re-introduction of the Kiowa into the aircraft fleet at Portage, CFFIS will once again soon be required to provide instructor training on that helicopter as well. As well, FIS provides instructor training for selected numbers of the Jamaican Defence Force. Additionally, refresher and conversion training is provided on all three types of aircraft. FIS currently trains upwards of 150 students per year, flying almost 7,000 hours annually in support of this flying training requirement of 14 Training Group.

APPENDIX C

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

A HISTORY OF THE WARTIME PILOTS AND OBSERVERS ASSOCIATION (WPOA)

(Since 1976, CFB Portage la Prairie has had a very close and active association with the Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunions which have been held every four years in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The information in this appendix was taken from a letter written by Mr. Hal Wishart, the Chairman of the Fifth Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion held in Winnipeg on September 14-18, 1988.)

In 1970, Manitoba was celebrating its 100th birthday and the Wartime Pilots and Observers Association decided to sponsor an aircrew reunion as its contribution to the festivities. Flying under the banner of the Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion, contact was made with the Manitoba Centennial Airshow so that both events coincided during the same weekend. Almost 800 aircrew registrants were bussed to St. Andrews Airfield.

When a second reunion was planned for 1976, arrangements were made with Lieutenant-General W.K. Carr, DFC, Commander of Air Command, to have our registrants visit CFB Portage la Prairie. Many of them had trained at RCAF Station Portage during the war years when it was then No. 7 AOS. Our Association guests were:

a. Group Captain Douglas Bader, CBE, DSO, DFC, the famed legless RAF fighter pilot with twenty-three victories;
b. Mr. G. Boak, General Secretary, RAF Association;
c. General Bob Dixon, USAF, Commander of Tactical Air Command, who was a graduate of the BCATP;
d. Lieutenant-General Jimmy Doolittle, DSM, Silver Star, DFC, Commander of United States 8th Air Force and who led the raid on Tokyo in 1942;
e. Air Commodore Johnny Fauquier, DSO with two bars, DFC, Canada's most decorated airman, having won the DSO three times. (He was dubbed "the man who saved London" after a raid on Peenemunde which destroyed the German V1 rocket sites);
f. Colonel F. Gabreski, USAAF's leading fighter pilot and later a jet ace in Korea;
g. General-Lieutenant Adolph Galland, Commander of the Wartime German Fighter Force;
h. Air Vice Marshal Johnnie Johnson, CB, CBE, DSO, DFC, the top RAF scoring ace;
i. Air Vice Marshal Sir Dennis Smallwood, DSO, DFC, representing the RAF;
j. Group Captain "Tiny" White, a Royal Flying Corps pilot who had later served as the New Zealand Air Attaché as a member of the BCATP; and
k. Arch Whitehouse, a Sopwith Camel veteran and an accredited war correspondent in World War II.



Reliving memories and examining the best of today's aviation.

Our guests and over 1400 aircrew were welcomed by the Base Commander, Colonel R.G. Litt.

In 1980, over 2200 aircrew attending our third reunion were bussed to Portage to again enjoy another fantastic airshow and ground display. Lieutenant-General K. Lewis, CCM, CD, Commander of Air Command, made this visit possible. Repeat guests were Group Captain Bader (now Sir Douglas), Air Vice Marshal J. Johnson and General-Lieutenant A. Galland. Other special guests were:

a. Air Vice Marshal D.Bennett, DSO, Commander of Bomber Command's Pathfinder Force;
b. Air Chief Marshal Sir David Evans, GCB, CBE, CBIM, a Canadian who graduated as a pilot at Dunnville, Ontario, was commissioned into the RAF in 1944 and subsequently retired as Commander-in-Chief, UK Forces in 1977;
c. Wing Commander "Popeye" Lucas, DFC with bar, who pioneered DC 3 transport routes in the Pacific with the RNZAF and later completed a third tour with 487(NZ) Mosquito Squadron, completing eighty-one sorties;
d. Wing Commander Don McLaren, DSO, MC, DSC, who received his wings at Camp Borden in 1917 and became the Royal Flying Corps' fifth ranking ace with fifty-four victories. After an outstanding career with TCA (now Air Canada) between the wars, he served in World War II as a senior officer in the RCAF;
e. Group Captain Willy Tait, DSO with three bars, DFC, the one-time Commander of 617 Squadron who had led a strike against the Tirpitz, the formidable German battleship discovered in Tromso Fiord where it was hit and capsized;
f. Group Captain Stan Turner, DSO, DFC with bar, one of the few Canadians to fly in so many theatres of war, the Battles of Britain, Malta and South Africa. He is a member of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame;
g. Group Captain John Waddy, representing the RAAF; and
h. Wing Commander Woody Woodward, DFC, saw early action in Greece flying Gloster Gladiators, and later Hurricanes, with the Desert Air Force. He had a final score of twentyone victories.



Attendees at the Fourth Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion on September 8, 1984, tour the static display aircraft.

Guests and registrants were greeted to the station by Colonel G. Brennand, CD, ADC.

With permission from Lieutenant-General Paul Manson, CMM, CD, the Commander of Air Command, the fourth reunion visited Portage; this time over 2600 aircrew and special guests enjoyed the hospitality of Colonel W.D. Simmons, CD, the Base Commander. New faces to our Special Guest List included:

a. Air Commodore Len Birchall, OBE, DFC, CD, who was commissioned into the RCAF at the outbreak of war, flew with Coastal Command from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and in the Shetland Islands before being posted to Ceylon. There, in 1942, he spotted the Japanese invasion fleet steaming towards Ceylon on another "Pearl Harbour" type of attack. His early warning before being shot down earned him the title of "Saviour of Ceylon". After being picked up by the Japanese, he was a POW until the end of the war;
b. Air Vice Marshal Sir Thomas Kennedy, KCB, AFC with bar, ADC, representing the RAF;
c. Group Captain Ivan Mitchell, OBE, DFC, representing the RNZAF;
d. Flight Lieutenant Bill Reid, VC, who was decorated after a Lancaster raid against Dusseldorf in November 1943. After being attacked by two night fighters, his navigator was killed, his wireless operator fatally wounded and his engineer suffered a broken arm. Though wounded in the head, arms and shoulders, and showered with glass and Perspex when his windshield was shot away, he carried on to bomb the target. Returning to Base, he belly-landed

when the undercarriage of his bomber collapsed; and

e. Group Captain Hamish Mahaddie, DSO, DFC, AFC with bar, who had joined the RAF in 1928 as a boy apprentice. As a Sergeant Pilot, he had taken part in a leaflet raid on the first night of the war on the Ruhr. He completed two tours with the Pathfinder Force.

In 1988, with permission from Lieutenant-General L. Ashley, CMM, CD, the Commander of Air Command, the largest contingent of wartime aircrew reunion personnel, visited Portage. Fifty-six City of Winnipeg Transit busses transported 3000 registrants to witness the first Manitoba Airshow, which was held in conjunction with the Fifth Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion. Representing sixteen countries, this large group was welcomed by Colonel B.C. McKenzie, CD, Base Commander. New names to the Special Guest List included:

a. Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, VC, OM, DSO with three bars, DFC with bar, who had started flying in 1937 and had an outstanding career in Bomber Command, including the closing of the Saumur railway tunnel two days after D-Day. He flew his 101st mission in one of the two American aircraft that bombed Nagaski;

b. Lieutenant-General D. Earp, SD, SM, and Lieutenant-General RHD Rogers, SM, DSO, DFC with bar, representing the South African Air Force;

c. the Right Honourable R.J. Tizard, Minister of Defence, representing the RNZAF;

d. Air Vice Marshal Leigh Stevenson, CB, who flew with the Royal Flying Corps and joined the RCAF in 1924. He was the first Air Officer Commanding the RCAF Overseas; and

e. Air Marshal Sir Lawrence Jones, KCB, AFC, representing the RAF.

Our visits to CFB Portage have played a very important part in our reunion activities. To many of the registrants who trained here, it has been a great nostalgic homecoming. To the others, it has been an opportunity to visit a typical wartime station.

Thanks for the memories.

PER ARDUA AD ASTRA

APPENDIX D

THE RCAF STATION/CFB PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE "CRASH BOOK" 1940-1990

Throughout the fifty years of flying operations at the Portage la Prairie aerodrome, some eighty-five crashes have been recorded involving Portage based aircraft or airplanes from other units using the Portage la Prairie airfield. The abbreviation F denotes a fatality and N a non-fatal accident. Flying incidents of a minor nature, involving only minor damage, have not been included.

Serial	Aircraft Type	Tail No.	Date	Crew
1	Tiger Moth		25 Mar 41	LAC F.F. Duff
	Remarks: Forced to land near Moose Lake in southeast corner of Manitoba. N			
2	Tiger Moth		4 Apr 41	LAC Jone
	Remarks: Forced to land 6 miles east of Portage la Prairie undercarriage and wings torn off and fuselage badly damaged during emergency descent. N			
3	Tiger Moth		21 May 41	LAC A.G. Hansen
	Remarks: Overshot on landing, crashed through the roof of 2 Hangar and caused a fire, destroying the hangar and 6 Anson aircraft. F			
4	Tiger Moth		3 Jul 41	LAC Robert J. Miln
	Remarks: Crash landed on aerodrome during a solo flight. F			
5	Anson	6502	12 Aug 41	Pilot and 2 Trainees
	Remarks: Made forced landing on Lake Francis, Manitoba. N			
6	Anson		14 Oct 41	LAC Beckwith LAC Bell LAC Garrity
	Remarks: Ran out of fuel and made a forced landing at Roland, Manitoba. N			
7	Tiger Moth		21 Oct 41	LAC F.S. Horan
	Remarks: Unable to recover from spin - pilot bailed out. N			
8	Tiger Moth		25 Oct 41	LAC Leslie J. Cane
	Remarks: Aircraft collided 2 miles southeast of Newton, Manitoba, 7 miles east of the aerodrome, during a solo mission. F			
9	Tiger Moth		25 Oct 41	LAC James R. Blackwood
	Remarks: Aircraft collided with the above aircraft 2 miles southeast of Newton, Manitoba, 7 miles east of the aerodrome, during a solo mission. F			

10 Tiger Moth 30 Oct 41 LAC Thomas G. Stevenson
Remarks: Collided near Newton, Manitoba, 7 miles east of the aerodrome. F

11 Tiger Moth 30 Oct 41 LAC Keith A. McPhadden
Remarks: Collided with the above aircraft near Newton, Manitoba, 7 miles east of the aerodrome. F

12 Anson 607713 Aug 42 Mr. J.L. Kosloff
Sgt E.C. Raison
LAC C.K. G. Bowery
LAC R. Jones
Remarks: Crashed 1½ miles north of the aerodrome. F

13 Anson 6533 9 Oct 42 Sgt T.A. Botteril
Sgt D.A. Cameron
LAC E. Hartland
LAC C.H. White
Remarks: Crashed 3 miles southeast of Darlington, Manitoba. F

14 Anson 623421 Dec 42 Mr. C.B. Barber
Sgt P.D. McIntyre
LAC W.S. Croft
LAC W.E. Weatherby
Remarks: Crashed and burnt 3 1/2 miles west of the aerodrome. F

15 Anson 6664 4 Jan 43 Unknown
Remarks: Crash landed returning from a routine night flight. N

16 Anson AX4724 Jan 43 Unknown
Remarks: Crash landed returning from a routine night flight. N

17 Anson 10 Feb 43 Unknown
Remarks: Forced landing at Manitou, Manitoba - no damage or injuries sustained. N

18 Anson 6503 1 Mar 43 Mr. Anderson
Flt Sgt D.J. Opie (RNZAF)
LAC A.B. Spence (RNZAF)
LAC A.D. Marshall (RNZAF)
Remarks: Crashed 6 miles south of Birtle, Manitoba during a routine night mission. F

19 Anson 657030 Sep 43 Unknown
Remarks: Crashed on take-off from No. 17 Service FTS, Souris, Manitoba - engine failure. N

20 Anson 618124 Oct 43 Unknown
Remarks: Crashed 3 miles west of Austin, Manitoba while night landing in fog. N

21 Anson 19 Nov 43 Unknown
Remarks: Wing-tip torn off while low flying. N

22 Anson 659620 Feb 44 Unknown
Remarks: While sitting on the parking strip, a bomb fell from its starboard bay, exploded and caused considerable damage to the starboard wing. N

23	Anson	657016	May 44	Sgt R.W.P. Tate LAC Richard Cyril Jones LAC W.H. Gerow
	Remarks:	Aileron control locked on take-off, causing aircraft to crash. One F		
24	Harvard		17 Mar 53	Sgt Rene Marc Victor Fisse (FAF)
	Remarks:	Crashed in heavy fog 2 miles southeast of the aerodrome. F		
25	Harvard		14 May 53	PO McBraith Cpl Hesgedhad (RNAF)
	Remarks:	Emergency landing 3 miles south of the aerodrome. N		
26	Harvard		23 May 53	PO T.H. Moseley PO R.W. Moody
	Remarks:	Crashed 6 miles southeast of the Station. F		
27	Harvard		12 Aug 53	Unknown
	Remarks:	Undershot approach while landing and struck a hydro pole. N		
28	Harvard		17 Nov 53	Unknown
	Remarks:	Forced landing 20 miles southwest of Gladstone, Manitoba due to smoke in the cockpit. N		
29	T-33		26 Nov 53	PO Brown
	Remarks:	Forced landing on solo flight. N		
30	T-33		2 Feb 54	FO Brown PO Wellan
	Remarks:	Crashed and burned at the end of Runway 30. N		
31	T-33		19 Mar 54	FO Cadegon
	Remarks:	Crashed during take-off at Windsor, Ontario during cross-country nav trip. F		
32	P-51 Mustang		29 May 54	FO Thompson (Winnipeg Sqn)
	Remarks:	Crashed on runway. N		
33	T-33		17 Jul 54	FO J.A. Marshall
	Remarks:	Crashed (no details). F		
34	T-33		Sep 54	Sgt R.L. Prout (FAF)
	Remarks:	Crashed (no details). F		
35	T-33		22 Sep 54	FO Daniel Grummett Pte K. Scharer (NAF)
	Remarks:	Pilots bailed out when aircraft went out of control at 8,000 feet - 8 miles south-west of the aerodrome. N		
36	T-33		25 Sep 54	Pte L.A. Borthern (NAF)
	Remarks:	Pilot became lost, ran out of fuel and ejected near Grafton, North Dakota. N		
37	T-33		30 Sep 54	PO Neil Joyes
	Remarks:	Emergency landing at Estevan, Saskatchewan. N		

38	T-33		22 Nov 54	PO Joseph Douglas Watson
	Remarks:	Crashed 4 miles north of Popular Point. F		
39	T-33		14 Dec 54	PO Dennis L. Graham
	Remarks:	Ran out of fuel and crashed 6 miles north of Morden, Manitoba. F		
40	T-33		4 Jan 55	FO Joseph Arthur Milford
	Remarks:	Crashed on take-off. N		
41	T-33		1 Feb 55	Flt Lt Al Harper Sgt Jacques Labrousse (FAF)
	Remarks:	Crashed near Roland, Manitoba. F		
42	T-33		3 Feb 55	Sgt Jensen (DAF)
	Remarks:	Crashed near St. Claude, Manitoba during a solo mission. F		
43	T-33		16 Feb 55	NATO Student Pilot
	Remarks:	Crashed near Carman, Manitoba. F		
44	T-33		19 Apr 55	Sgt Michel Rene Gerard Villette (FAF)
	Remarks:	Crashed near High Bluff, Manitoba - electronic system powering the controls failed. F		
45	T-33		11 May 55	2Lt Tourcault (FAF)
	Remarks:	Crashed near aerodrome while practicing night landings. F		
46	T-33		16 Jun 55	2Lt Y.M.A. LaFountaine (FAF)
	Remarks:	Mid-air collision with another T-33 8 miles north of Miami, Manitoba. F		
47	T-33		16 Jun 55	FO Russel Kain 2Lt Michael Collier (FAF)
	Remarks:	Mid-air collision with the above T-33 8 miles north of Miami, Manitoba. N		
48	T-33		29 Jun 55	PO J. Sutton (RAF)
	Remarks:	Crashed while on a night training flight 5 miles southwest of Rothwell, Manitoba. F		
49	T-33		25 Nov 55	PO George William Dale Jackson
	Remarks:	Exploded in mid-air and crashed near Swan Lake, Manitoba. F		
50	T-33		3 Jan 57	FO K. Harvey PO Popworth
	Remarks:	Forced landing 3 miles east of Southport. N		
51	T-33		22 Feb 57	FO Gilbert Russell
	Remarks:	Lost in snowstorm over British Columbia coast on a long distance training flight and crashed into water at the mouth of the Fraser River near Vancouver. F		
52	T-33		30 Dec 57	Flying Cadet Earl Newton Brown
	Remarks:	Crashed near Birch Island on cross-country to The Pas, Manitoba. F		

53 T-33 3 Mar 58 Unknown
Remarks: Crashed and exploded near Riverton, Manitoba. F

54 T-33 22 Jul 58 Cpl J. G. Van Goer (RNAF)
Remarks: Crashed (no details). F

55 T-33 Jul 59 FO Gordon Hipkin
Sgt March (RDAF)
Remarks: Pilots ejected from the tumbling aircraft. N

56 T-33 29 Oct 59 Unknown
Remarks: Aircraft blew a tire on take-off from Fort William, Ontario. N

57 T-33 25 Feb 60 Flying Cadet E.H. Miklossy
Remarks: Encountered a mishap while landing at Portage la Prairie - minor damage to aircraft. N

58 T-33 7 Jul 60 Flt Lt A.S. Nichol
FO D.C. Turgeon
Remarks: Collided with another aircraft and crashed near Miami, Manitoba. N

59 T-33 7 Jul 60 PO B.A. Nelson
PO P.R.P. Whitney
Remarks: Collided with the above aircraft and crashed near Miami, Manitoba. N

60 T-33 21522 19 Sep 60 Flt Lt David Ren
PO R.G. Robson
Remarks: Crashed near Baldur, Manitoba. F

61 T-33 21551 30 May 61 Flying Cadet Gerry Colombo
Remarks: Crashed at Carman, Manitoba. F

62 T-33 212787 Sep 61 FO Malone
Remarks: Mid-air collision with another T-33. N

63 T-33 212447 Sep 61 FO Cepuck
Remarks: Mid-air collision with the above T-33. N

64 T-33 213082 Oct 61 FO H.J. Adair
FO D.R. Martin
Remarks: Crashed and burned while attempting a night instrument landing at RCAF Station Saskatoon. N

65 T-33 215688 Nov 61 FO D.B. Yake
Remarks: Aircraft went out of control and crashed near Swan Lake, Manitoba - pilot ejected. N

66 T-33 21327 31 Jan 62 LAC Grant (Groundcrew)
Remarks: While refuelling on the ramp at Portage la Prairie, one tip tank exploded. N

67 T-33 233155 Mar 62 FO R.K. Heard
Flying Cadet W.R. Carlson
Remarks: During an overshoot at Portage la Prairie, an explosion was heard, smoke filled the cockpit and the fire warning light illuminated pilots ejected. N

68	T-33		215166	Apr 62	Flt Lt Ross FO Schnepf
	Remarks:	Crashed 5 miles south of Notre Dame, Manitoba. N			
69	T-33			8 Aug 63	FO H.J. Adair Cdt J.O.A. Olson
	Remarks:	Crashed near Baldur, Manitoba, 40 miles southwest of Portage la Prairie. N			
70	Red Knight T-33			21 Aug 63	Flt Lt Bud Morin
	Remarks:	Crashed during airshow at RCAF Station Gimli. F			
71	T-33			28 Apr 64	OCdt Oystein Dahl (RNORAF)
	Remarks:	Crashed on solo mission 11 miles southeast of Southport. N			
72	Golden Centennaire	Tutor		4 Oct 66	Flt Lt Tom Bebb
	Remarks:	Crashed near Carman, Manitoba while in training. F			
73	Expeditor			10 Jan 67	2 Tanzanian Students
	Remarks:	Lost control of the aircraft during landing at Portage la Prairie - left runway and nosed over on its back. N			
74	Golden Centennaire Tutor			16 Feb 67	Flt Lt David J. Barker
	Remarks:	Mid-air collision during Golden Centennaire practice near Comox, British Columbia. F			
75	Expeditor		154916	Feb 67	Unknown
	Remarks:	Stalled while practicing ''touch and go'' landings at Portage la Prairie - wing came in contact with ground, crashed and burnt. F			
76	Expeditor			17 Aug 67	Unknown
	Remarks:	Aircraft swerved out of control on landing at Portage la Prairie and struck the VASIS. N			
77	Expeditor			16 Jan 68	Unknown
	Remarks:	Aircraft ran off runway during landing at Portage la Prairie. N			
78	Red Knight T-33		21620	21 May 68	Capt John Reid
	Remarks:	Failed to complete loop manoeuvre and crashed on the Portage la Prairie air-field. F			
79	Red Knight Tutor		26154	13 Jul 69	Lt Bryan Alston
	Remarks:	Crashed during an airshow at CFB Moose Jaw. F			
80	Musketeer			24 Nov 72	Captain R. Wasink
	Remarks:	Force landed in a field eight miles from CFB Portage la Prairie when the engine quit due to carburetor icing. N			
81	Musketeer		13421010	Dec 76	1Lt A. Van der Poest Clement (RNLAF)
	Remarks:	Force landed off-Base following an engine failure. N			

82	Kiowa		16 Jun 79	Captain B. Crozier
	Remarks:	Helicopter significantly damaged when it experienced a power failure while flying at low altitude during a Search and Rescue mission in Manitoba's Whiteshell Provincial Park. It crashed into the trees. N		
83	Musketeer	13423419	Mar 82	Lt J.R.C. Cormier 2Lt J.A.J. LaLonde OCdt J.J.M. Jean
	Remarks:	Crashed while conducting low level flying training twenty miles west of Portage la Prairie. F		
84	Tutor	114106	2 Jun 84	Captain G. Graham Captain D. Kennedy
	Remarks:	Due to an engine compressor failure, the Tutor conducted a forced landing on the Trans-Canada Highway seven miles west of Portage la Prairie. N		
85	Tutor	11411319	Dec 84	Unknown
	Remarks:	Tutor sustained severe damage while sitting on the ramp at Portage la Prairie when struck by an aircraft towing tractor. N		

APPENDIX E

THE AIRPLANES

The Tiger Moth



The Tiger Moth

The de Havilland Tiger Moth biplane was built as a primary trainer for the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1931. It was designed by Sir Geoffry de Havilland, who named all of his single engine aircraft designs after species of the Moth family.

The Tiger Moth Model DH82 became the foremost "ab initio" aircraft flown by Commonwealth and civilian pilots during the following fifteen years. Due to its suitability as a primary military trainer for the RAF and the BCATP, over 9,000 aircraft were built. Of these, 1,784 DH82C's were produced in Canada under licence during the period 1937 to 1944.

This version of the Tiger Moth was flown by No. 14 EFTS at Portage la Prairie as the primary training aircraft from December 1940 to July 1942. The airplane's characteristics were:

a. Wing-span: 29 feet, 4 inches;
b. Length: 23 feet, 11 inches;
c. Power Plant: Gipsy Major 10;
d. Maximum Speed: 107 MPH; and
e. Horsepower: 140 HP.

The Avro Anson Mark I and Mark V



The Avro Anson Mark I

At the onset of the Second World War, the Avro Model 625A Anson was the standard general reconnaissance aircraft of the RAF Coastal Command. The Mark I Anson was nicknamed "the flying greenhouse" because of the large number of windows in the fuselage. The Anson had the distinction of being the first mono-plane in service with the RAF.

After being retired from combat duty in 1940, it obtained a second lease on life when it became the backbone of the BCATP, as a multi-engined trainer and light utility transport. Over 11,000 Ansons of all Marks were produced in England, Canada and Australia. Many post-war versions continued to be used for a number of years by the military and civilian companies in various roles around the world.

At Portage la Prairie, the Ansons were flown by No. 7 AOS. The Mark I version was the primary air observer training aircraft from the time that No. 7 AOS commenced operations in April 1941, until it was replaced by the Mark V version during the latter half of 1944. The Mark V's started arriving in Portage la Prairie in August 1944 and

by mid-December 1944, they were in fuli service at the School. When No. 7 AOS ceased its operation on March 31, 1945, the seventy Avro Anson Mark V's in its fleet were transferred to No. 3 ANS and were used by that school until its closure on August 31, 1945.

The specific characteristics of both the Avro Anson Mark I and Mark V aircraft were:

a. Wing-span: 56 feet, 6 inches;
b. Length: 42 feet, 3 inches;
c. Maximum Speed: 190 MPH;
d. Horsepower: 450 HP; and
e. Power Plant: Two Pratt and Whitney Wasp Junior R895's.



The Avro Anson Mark V

The Harvard

The Harvard (named after the American University bearing the same name) was produced as an export version of the AT-6 Texan advanced trainer. It became the standard advanced trainer for the BCATP in Canada and the RAF in Britain, where it was utilized to train thousands of Commonwealth pilots in preparation for combat flying in fighters and fighter bombers.

The Harvard was apparently well-suited for its training role, as it had enough bad habits to teach inexperienced pilots to respect their future high performance fighters. The RCAF actually kept the Harvard on strength as a trainer until 1966. The distinctive snarl of the Harvard engine had long been a familiar sound in the Canadian skies and was produced by its propeller tips approaching sonic speeds when in fine pitch at high RPM.

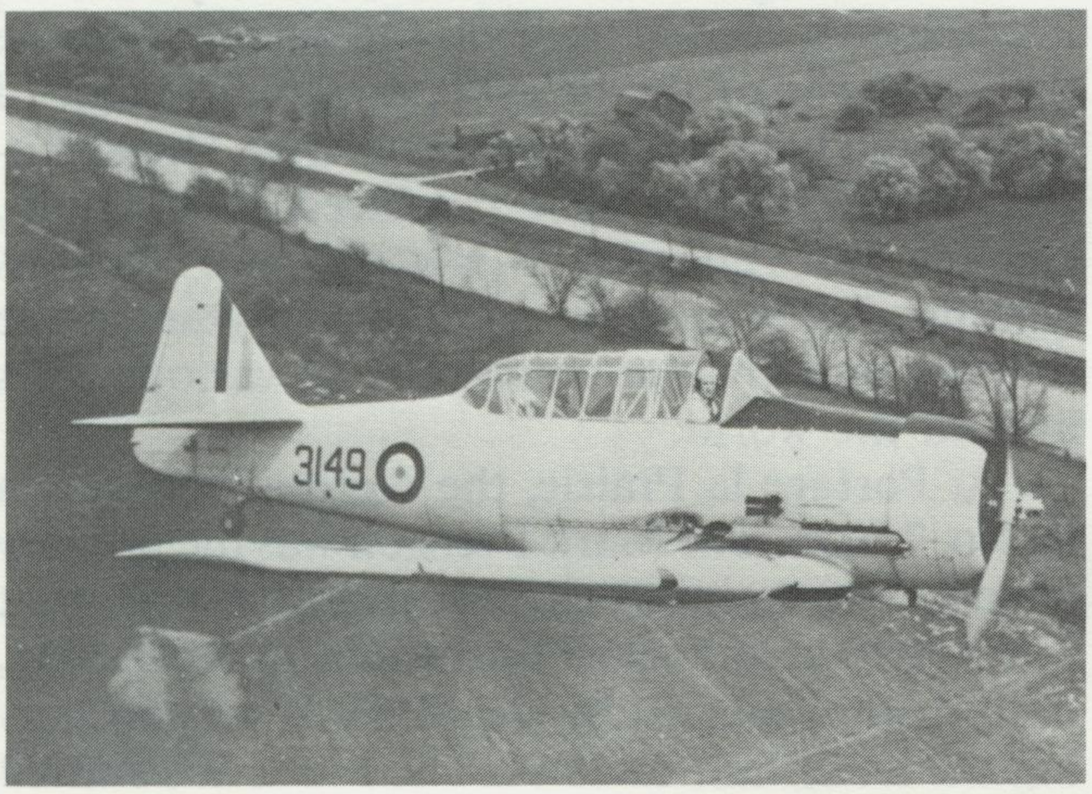
When RCAF Station Portage la Prairie reopened in the fall of 1952, No. 2 AFS commenced its advanced pilot training programme with thirty-eight Harvard Mark IV aircraft. The Harvard was only flown at Portage la Prairie from October 1952 until November 1953, when it was replaced by the new T-33 Silver Star jet trainer.

The Harvard's characteristics were:

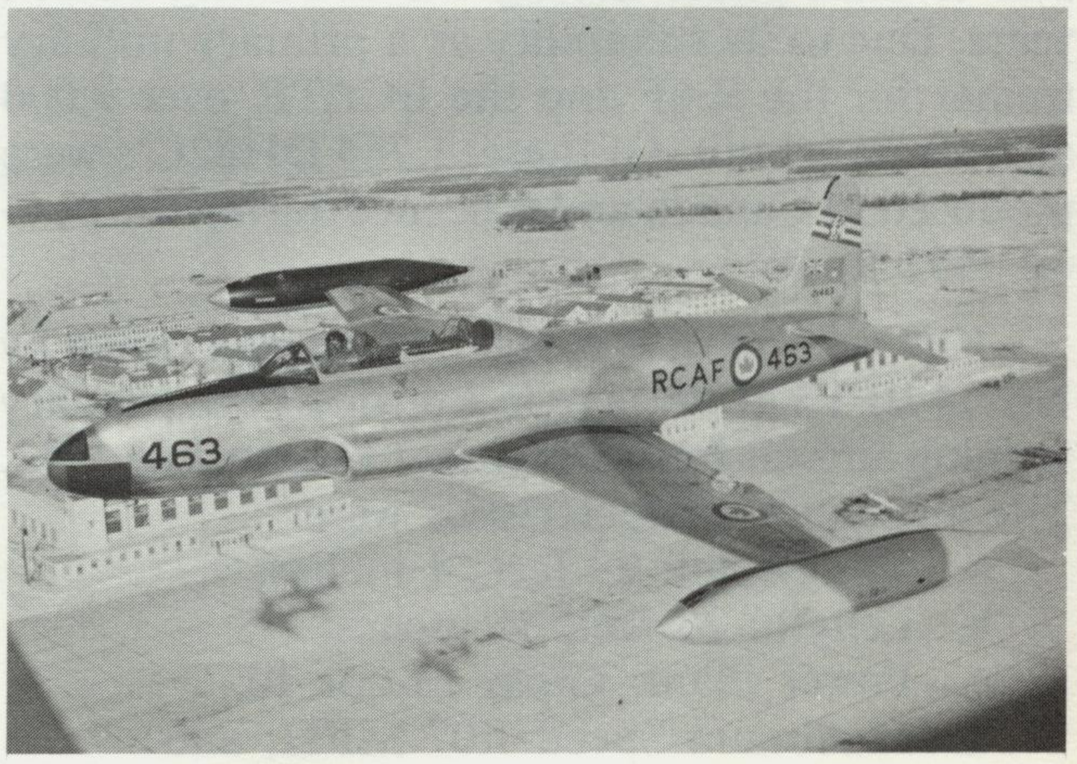
a. Wing-span: 42 feet, 0.25 inches;
b. Length: 28 feet, 11 inches;
c. Maximum Speed: 180 MPH;
d. Horsepower: 600 HP; and
e. Power Plant: Pratt and Whitney Wasp R-1340-AN-1.

The T-33 Silver Star

The Silver Star "T-33" aircraft is a two seat, all metal, low wing mono-plane powered by a single turbo-jet engine. It is equipped with dual controls for its pilot training role and has retractable tricycle landing gear, with a pressurized air-conditioned cockpit fitted with ejection seats and a pressurized breathing demand type oxygen system. The majority of the aircraft services are electrical, with the exception of the landing gear, wheel brakes, speed brakes and aileron boost system which are hydraulically operated.



The Harvard



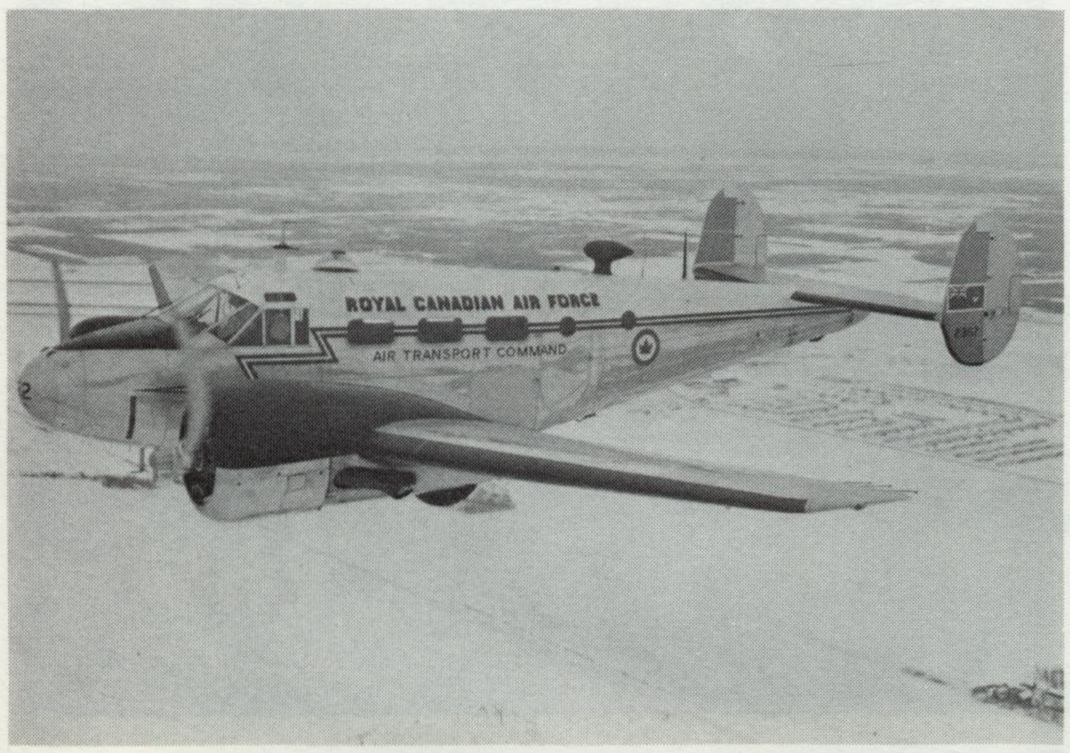
The "T-33" Silver Star

The T-33 was manufactured in Canada by the Canadair Limited of Montreal under a licence from the Lockheed Aircraft Company in the United States. As one of the first RCAF units to receive this new jet trainer, No. 2 AFS at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie took delivery of its first T-33 in June 1953, and by September 1953, sufficient numbers of the airplane had been received to permit the commencement of student training. The T-33 continued to be the primary aircraft flying out of CFB Portage la Prairie until August 1964, when No. 2 AFS amalgamated with 2 FTS at RCAF Station Moose Jaw and the airplanes and their flying crews were transferred to their new home.

The characteristics of the T-33 are:

a. Wing-span: without tip tanks - 37 feet, 7.5 inches, with tip tanks - 42 feet, 5 inches;
b. Length: 37 feet, 8.6 inches;
c. Maximum Take-Off Weight: 16,800 pounds;
d. Maximum Level Speed: 505 knots or 0.8 Mach, whichever is lower;
e. Service Ceiling: 45,000 feet; and
f. Power Plant: one Rolls Royce Nene 10 turbo-jet engine, delivering 5,100 pounds of static thrust at sea level at full throttle and approximately 12,500 RPM.

The C-45 Expeditor



The "C-45" Expeditor

The Beech Model 18 was originally produced in 1937 by Beechcraft of Wichita, Kansas, for the small feeder airline market. The military requirements of the Allied Forces and its continuing popularity stretched out its production over a period of thirty-two years. During this time, over 9,100 airplanes of various versions were built.

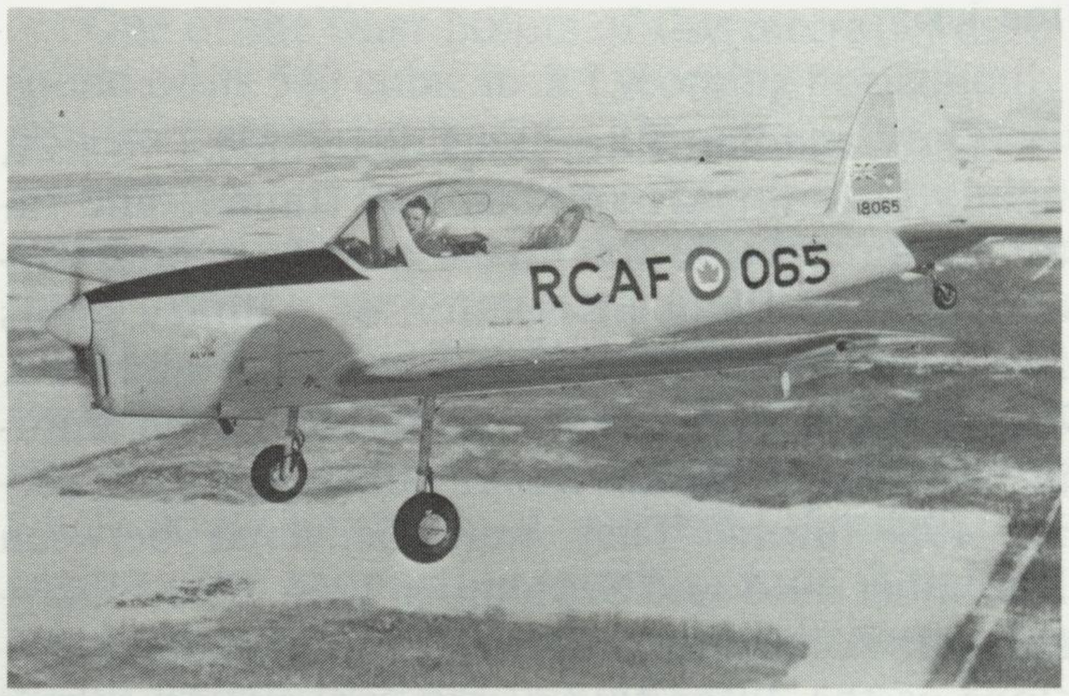
In the service of the RAF and the RCAF, the Beech 18 was named the C-45 Expeditor. It saw service in many roles such as light transport, bombing and weapons training, communications and photographic reconnaissance and advanced pilot training. The Expeditor was on RCAF strength from 1939 until its retirement in 1972.

The first Expeditor arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie along with Harvards in October 1952, and this single aircraft was flown by the instructors of No. 2 AFS. In August 1964, a complete fleet of thirty Expeditors arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie to join the original sole holdover C-45 from the No. 2 AFS days. This was a result of the change of training roles from jet to multi-engine and the change of schools from No. 2 AFS to No. 1 AFS (which was redesignated 3 FTS in January 1965). The C-45 Expeditor continued in operation at Portage la Prairie until February 1970, at which time it was replaced by the Chipmunk, as a result of another change in the training at CFB Portage la Prairie.

The characteristics of the Expeditor were:

a. Wing-span: 47 feet, 7 inches;
b. Length: 31 feet, 11.5 inches;
c. Maximum Speed: 225 MPH;
d. Horsepower: 450 HP; and
e. Power Plants: Two Pratt and Whitney Juniors R895's.

The Chipmunk



The Chipmunk

The Chipmunk was the first aircraft designed and built by de Havilland Canada in 1945-46, as a replacement for the legendary Tiger Moth. The first prototype flew on May 22, 1946.

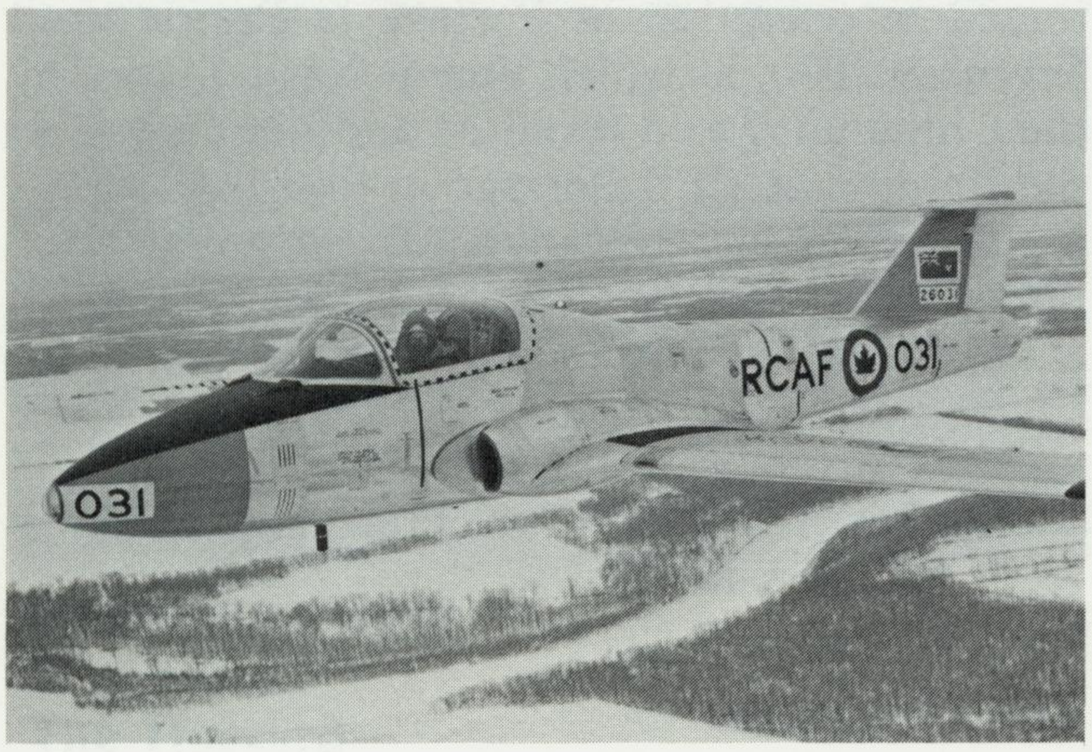
The Chipmunk was a very successful design, with 1000 being manufactured. One hundred of these aircraft were also produced in England for the RAF as a trainer for the RAF Volunteer Reserve, with sixty being built in Portugal as well.

The first Chipmunks arrived at RCAF Station Portage la Prairie in July 1969, with the remainder of the fleet being in place by mid-May 1970. The flying life of the Chipmunk at Portage la Prairie was short-lived as it was replaced the following spring by the Musketeer. The last of the Chipmunk aircraft flew out of CFB Portage la Prairie on July 7, 1971.

The characteristics of this airplane were:

a. Wing-span: 34 feet, 4 inches;
b. Length: 25 feet, 5 inches;
c. Maximum Speed: 120 MPH;
d. Horsepower: 145 HP; and
e. Power Plant: Gipsy Major 10.

The Tutor (CL-41/CT-114)



The Tutor

The Canadian Tutor is a side by side, two seat, light attack aircraft and basic jet trainer. The Tutor's primary role was to be an all-purpose aircraft for the flight instruction of military pilots from elementary jet training to wings standard. The first prototype of the airplane flew on January 13, 1960, with the RCAF subsequently ordering 190 Tutors. They were delivered between December 1963 and September 1966. The Malaysian Air Force also ordered twenty modified versions of the Tutor to be used for ground attack as well as pilot training. When carrying a maximum internal fuel load, this fighter aircraft version of the Tutor also could carry up to 3500 pounds of gun pods, bombs, rockets and air-to-air missiles.

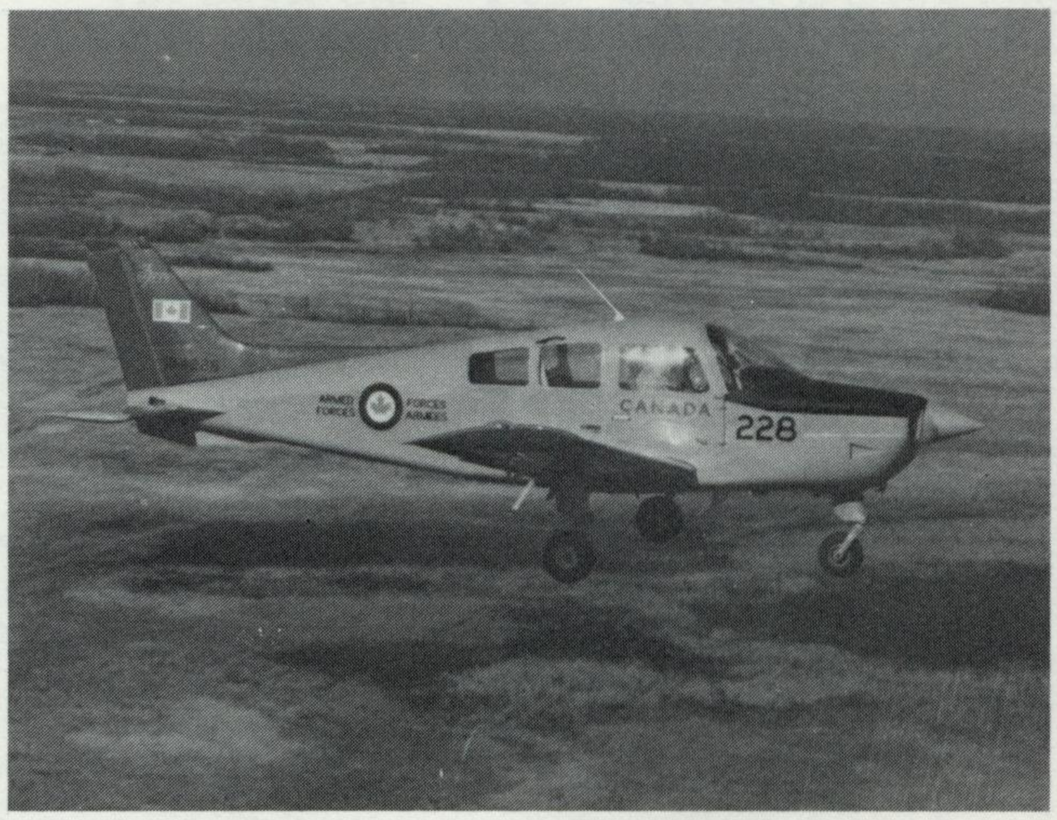
The RCAF/Canadian Forces have used their Tutors primarily for advanced pilot training to wings standard at 2 CFFTS at CFB Moose Jaw. The Tutor has also been used by CFFIS to train pilot instructors and by Canadian military air display teams such as the Golden Centennaires and the Snowbirds. The Tutor was flown at CFB Portage la Prairie during the period 1965 to 1970 and from 1981 to the present.

Characteristics of the Tutor jet aircraft are:

a. Wing-span: 36 feet, 5.9 inches;
b. Length: 32 feet, 0 inches;
c. Maximum Take-Off Weight: 11,288 pounds;
d. Maximum Level Speed: at 28,500 feet with 50% fuel and no external stores: 480 MPH;
e. Service Ceiling: 42,200 feet; and
f. Power Plant: One General Electric J85-CAN-40, axial flow turbo-jet engine, incorporating an eight stage compressor and two stage turbine. Built by the Orenda Engine Ltd, the engine developes approximately 2700 pounds of maximum continuous static thrust at sea level under standard atmospheric (ICAO) conditions.

The Musketeers

(*The following information concerning the two versions of the Musketeer aircraft flown by 3 CFFTS at Portage la Prairie was provided by Major Terry Spraggs, the current Chief Flying Instructor at 3 CFFTS.*)



The Musketeer

The Beechcraft Musketeer aircraft (CT-134) were purchased in 1970 to replace the capable, but increasingly difficult to service, Chipmunk. Although not the ideal aircraft for the job, the Musketeer served capably in the guise of a pilot selection vehicle and later as a primary flying trainer.

Derived from the civilian Beechcraft Musketeer aircraft which was initially flown in 1961, the ver-

sion of the Musketeer used by the Canadian Forces had a few changes to make it more suitable for military training. The major change to the airframe was the addition of a second access door.

In 1981, the original Musketeer was replaced by a new version, the Beechcraft Sundowner, known in the Canadian Forces as the Musketeer II (CT-134A). Basically, the Musketeer CT-134 and CT-134A are the same aircraft but have subtle differences to a less than casual observer:

a. the baggage compartment door was moved from the right side to the left;
b. the avionics and dash layout were modernized;
c. the throttle quadrant was modified from a venier push-pull throttle to a conventional lever operation; and
d. the voltage increased from 12 V to 24 V.

Although not a speedy aircraft, it possesses exceptional endurance of up to six hours on full tanks. As the Musketeer aircraft are coming close to the end of their life cycle, plans to replace them have been cancelled and the entire fleet will be retired. Instead, as part of the Base closure announcement, a plan to develop a civilian programme for primary flying training is being considered.

Some of the common characteristics of both aircraft are:

a. Wing-span: 32 feet, 9 inches;
b. Length: 25 feet, 9 inches;
c. Maximum Take-Off Weight: 2,450 pounds;
d. Maximum Level Speed: 136 kts;
e. Maximum Dive Speed: 152 kts;
f. 4 place accommodation;
g. Engine: Lycoming 0-360-A4K 360 cubic inch, 4 cyl 180 HP at 2700 RPM (MSL);
h. Fixed pitch prop;
i. Fixed undercarriage; and
j. Fuel: 50 imperial gals of 100 octane low lead.

The Helicopters

(*Major Terry Spraggs, who has also flown all three of the helicopters used by 3 CFFTS since 1970, describes these airplanes.*)

CH-112 Nomad, Hiller (UH-12/CH-112)

The Hiller helicopter served as a light reconnaissance helicopter with the Canadian Army and also as a helicopter trainer at Rivers, Manitoba. It became part of the RCAF Station Portage la Prairie aircraft fleet in 1970, when the Rivers Air Base was closed. The Hiller was a particularly difficult aircraft on which to learn to fly because of its peculiar cyclic actuation system. Two pedals were moved by the cyclic and these, in turn, tilted the rotor blades. Unfortunately, although a relatively trouble-free system, it also produced lag in actuation and this lag was the usual source of initial student handling problems. Its auto-rotation capability was typical of the era in which it was designed - low inertia blades which caused it to have a very high descent rate.



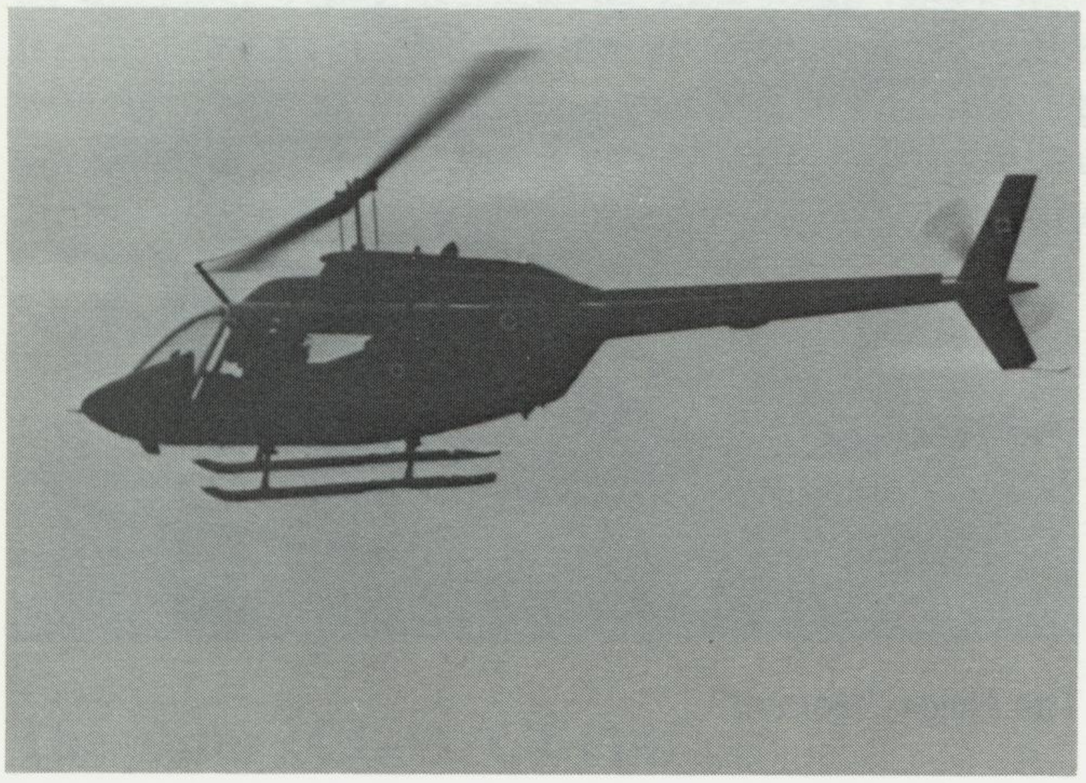
The Hiller "Nomad"

One of the finer points of this aircraft was the sound of its 540 cubic inch Lycoming horizontally-opposed, six piston engine. This engine produced a whopping 305 horsepower at mean sea level. Accommodation was loosely described as "room for three", but quarters were cramped for all but the smallest of aircrew. The Hiller was capable of carrying additional loads in its 125 pound baggage compartment and on two optional stretcher litters which could be strapped to either side of the aircraft on the supporting landing skids. Total carrying capacity was dependent upon the maximum all-up weight of 3300 pounds.

The Hiller was capable of operating from small confined areas due to its 10.8 metre rotor diameter and overall length of 12.46 metres. However, the very fragile tip caps were often smacked and damaged by an errant tree branch during student manoeuvring. Its top speed of 87 knots often became a handicap in strong winds.

In 1972, the Hiller was superseded by the newest light observation helicopter from Bell the Kiowa.

Kiowa (OH-58/CH-136)/Jet Ranger (CH-139)



The Kiowa

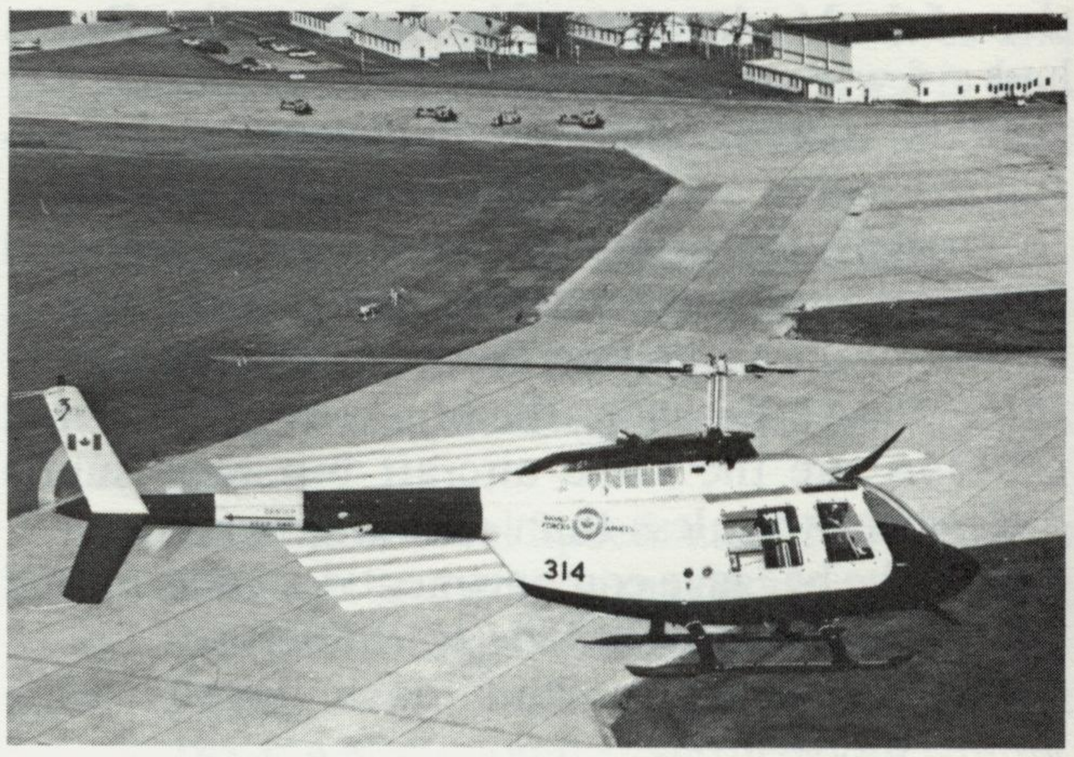
The Kiowa helicopter was a significant improvement over the older Hiller. There was room for four in relatively comfortable quarters. A high inertia rotor system and a light-weight turbine engine of 317 shaft horsepower (SPH) provided much needed modernization.

The Kiowa had excellent handling characteristics for both student training and operational use. Amongst the advantages experienced by the 3 CFFTS/BHS pilots were:

a. lower student transition;
b. low auto-rotation descent rates;
c. higher speed of 120 kts;
d. cyclic force trim;
e. an end to the twist grip throttle operation;
f. longer range; and most importantly,
g. rotor blades which did not lose their tips in tree branches.

Although the power-to-weight ratio was a vast improvement over the Hiller, very hot days made flying operations difficult due to the power-robbing, high density altitudes and the corresponding higher torque required to overcome the thinner air.

Eventually, it was decided to improve the margin for training and, in 1980-81, the essentially civilian Bell 206, the Jet Ranger III, was purchased. It had even better accommodation and another 100 SHP. This substantial power advantage greatly enhanced summer operations in high density altitudes. Among the changes to the aircraft was that the avionics suite was expanded significantly and improved, but, unfortunately, the force trim on the cyclic was deleted.



The Jet Ranger

Recently, in December 1989, the Kiowa helicopter returned to CFB Portage la Prairie as a consequence of requirements to use the Jet Ranger for the Canadian Forces United Nations peacekeeping role in Central America.

The characteristics of the:

a. Kiowa
   (1) 317 SHP gas turbine,
   (2) Rotor Diameter: 35 feet, 4 inches,
   (3) Overall Length: 41 feet,
   (4) Engine Model: Allison 250 C-18 A B C
   (5) All-up Weight: 3000 lbs,
   (6) Maximum Speed: 120 KIAS/110 with skis; and
b. Jet Ranger
   (1) 420 SHP gas turbine,
   (2) Rotor Diameter: 33 feet,
   (3) Overall Length: 39 feet, 1 inch,
   (4) Engine Model: Allison C250-20B,
   (5) All-up Weight: 3200 lbs, and
   (6) Maximum Speed: 120 KIAS/110 with skis.

The HIPT

While not an aircraft type per se, the HIPT, or Helicopter Instrument Procedures Trainer, was introduced to helicopter training at 3 CFFTS in 1986. This computerized machine has the capacity to simulate a number of significant helicopter operational emergencies, and has significantly improved the capability, and thus the calibre, of instrument instruction provided by BHS.

APPENDIX F

STATION AND BASE COMMANDERS

During the war years 1940 - 1945, the Portage la Prairie airfield was operated first by the Central Manitoba Flying Training School Limited, and then by Portage Air Observer School for the parent company, Canadian Pacific Airlines Limited. Both civilian companies were formed under the auspices of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. As such, the Station was not "commanded" by an RCAF officer, but was supervised by an RCAF Chief Supervisory Officer (CSO). It was not until April 1945, that the RCAF took charge of the aerodrome and one of its officers became known as the Commanding Officer and later, as the Base Commander.



Wing Commander K.G. McDonald - April 1941 to May 1942



Wing Commander G.H. Malcolmson - November 1942 to July 1944



Squadron Leader R.H. Batty - July 1944 to January 1945



Squadron Leader M.S. Layton - January 1945 to March 1945



Group Captain R.C. Mair - April 1945 to September 1945



Group Captain G.W. Webber - February 1946 to March 1947



Group Captain C.W. Burgess - September 1952 to August 1955



Group Captain G.A. Hiltz - August 1955 to August 1959



Group Captain J.R. Frizzle - August 1959 to June 1963.



Group Captain B.E.I. Christmas - July 1963 to August 1965



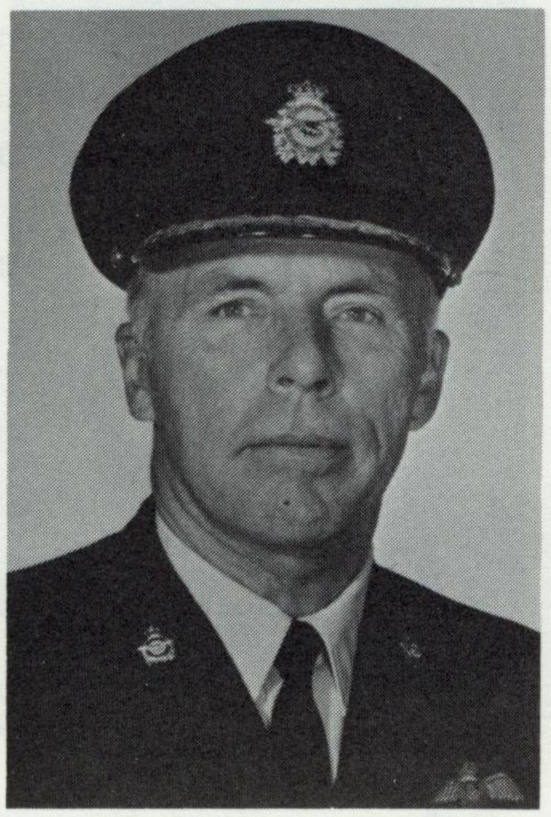
Group Captain V.C.H. Stuart - September 1965 to September 1969



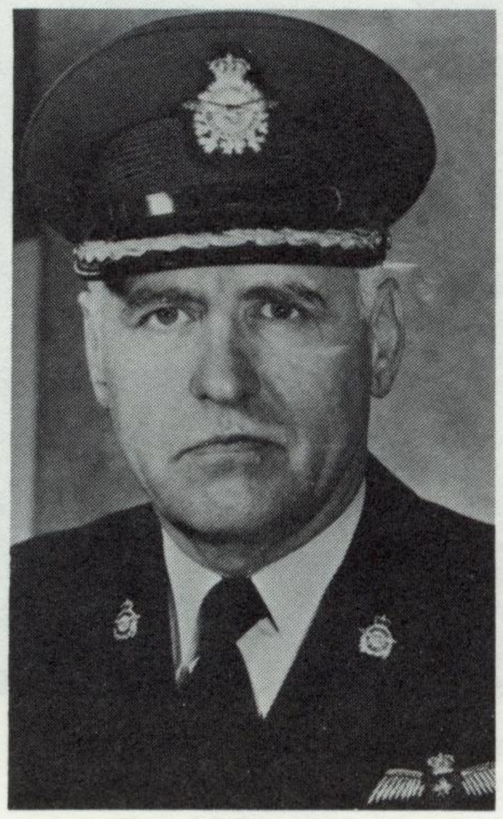
Colonel D.S. McKechnie - September 1969 to July 1971



Colonel A.K. Casselman - July 1971 to July 1974



Colonel R.G. Litt - July 1974 to July 1978



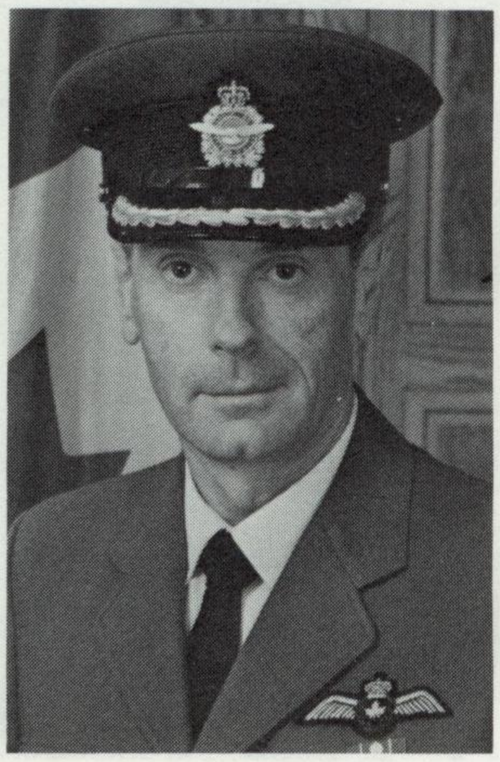
Colonel G. Brennand - July 1978 to August 1981



Colonel P.L. De Smedt - August 1981 to August 1984



Colonel W.D. Simmons - August 1984 to July 1987



Colonel B.C. McKenzie - July 1987 to July 1990

APPENDIX G

THE TIMMY/TAMMY DANCES

Serial	Date	Funds Raised	Comments
1	1958	$ 600	Warrant Officer T. Robinson and Sergeant T. Rothwell were the first organizers of the Dance and Kenneth Lesparance was the first ''Timmy''.
2	1959	Unknown	Eddie Fehr of Winnipeg was ''Timmy''.
3	19 Feb 60	$ 1,200	Cheque presented to Mr. Frank Mason on February 26. Eddie Fehr returned as ''Timmy''.
4	17 Feb 61	$ 1,500	Bonnie Blair from British Columbia was ''Tammy''.
5	19 Feb 62	$ 1,100	The Training Command Band from Winnipeg provided the music and Kirk Weir of Winnipeg was ''Timmy''.
6	1 Mar 63	Unknown	The Training Command Band again provided the music and Ernie Jesmer of Winnipeg was ''Timmy''.
7	20 Mar 64	$ 1,900	Shelley Saunders of Winnipeg was ''Tammy'' and the music was provided by the RCAF Training Command Orchestra.
8	2 Apr 65	$ 2,250	On May 1, Sergeant A. Andres presented $1125 cheque to Mr. F.W. Pelton, the President of the Portage la Prairie Kinsman Club, and Sergeant O. Thiessen presented an equal amount to R.N. Smith of the Royal Canadian Legion. Richard Wiebe of Winnipeg was ''Timmy''. Warrant Officer A.C. Craig was the Committee Chairman.
9	1 Apr 66	$ 2,800	$1400 was presented to the March of Dimes and $1400 to the Easter Seals Campaign by Warrant Officer First Class J. McCarten, the Dance Committee Chairman. Brian Stocks of Portage la Prairie was ''Timmy''.

Serial	Date	Funds Raised	Comments
10	31 Mar 67	$ 3,000	Warrant Officer First Class T.E. Ellis was the Dance Committee Chairman and Don Ackerley, whose father was Sergeant Ackerley from CFB Shilo, was "Timmy".
11	5 Apr 68	$ 5,000	Chief Warrant Officer T.E. Ellis was again the Chairman and Janet Chalmers of Winnipeg was "Tammy".
12	11 Apr 69	$ 5,500	Warrant Officer K.W. (Ken) Stephenson and Sergeant C.J. (Cal) Asmundson were co-chairmen of the Dance Committee. Jeffrey Mossey, whose father was Sergeant Mossey from the School of Artillery at CFB Shilo was "Timmy".
13	17 Apr 70	$ 5,000	Sergeant C.J. Asmundson and Master Warrant Officer Wilson were co-chairmen of the Dance Committee and Wendy Graham was "Tammy".
14	16 Apr 71	$ 5,000	Warrant Officer L. Erler was the Dance Committee Chairman and Alan Kelly was "Timmy".
15	28 Apr 72	$ 6,500	Warrant Officer E. Lozanski was the Dance Committee Chairman and Glenda Trinder, of Baldur, Manitoba, was "Tammy".
16	27 Apr 73	$ 6,600	During the Dance the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess received the "National Easter Seal Award" in recognition of the success of this Annual event which the Mess hosted. Master Warrant Officer J.A. Arsenault was the Dance Committee Chairman and Suzanne Franklin of Winnipeg was "Tammy".
17	26 Apr 74	$ 4,672	Master Warrant Officer R. Grant was the Dance Committee Chairman and Sandy Crait was "Tammy".
18	25 Apr 75	$ 8,607	Mr. Rory McLennan, the Chairman of the Easter Seal Campaign, received the cheque on June 13 from the Dance Committee Chairman, Master Warrant Officer J.C. Pardoe. Ivan Lavallee of Letellier, Manitoba was "Timmy".
19	30 Apr 76	$10,362	Mr. Rory McLennan again accepted the cheque from the Dance co-ordinator Sergeant Wayne Brooks and Master Steven Hammond was "Timmy".

Serial	Date	Funds Raised	Comments
20	29 Apr 77	$11,800	For the first time, two Kiowa's were used to transport the young, disabled child, Halldor Bjornason, ''Timmy'', and his family from Winnipeg to Portage la Prairie and return to attend the Dance as the Guest of Honour. Warrant Officer G.T. Beers was the Dance Committee Chairman.
21	28 Apr 78	$15,000	Crystal Koroscil of Oak Bank, Manitoba was ''Tammy''. Master Warrant Officer D. La Pointe was the Dance Committee Chairman.
22	27 Apr 79	$15,000	The head of the Dance's organizing committee, Master Warrant Officer D.A. (Don) Magee, presented the cheque to Mr. Kenny Pleon, the former Winnipeg Blue Bomber quarterback and that year's Easter Seal Chairman for Manitoba. Debbie Lofto of Winnipeg was ''Tammy''.
23	25 Apr 80	$14,250	Warrant Officer C.J. Asmundson was Chairman of the Dance Committee. Harold Kirby of Lundar, Manitoba was ''Timmy''.
24	24 Apr 81	$10,400	Master Warrant Officer P.A. Magee and Master-Corporal K.L. Godlien presented the cheque to the Manitoba Disabled Society on May 16. Brenda Prentice of Dauphin, Manitoba was ''Tammy''.
25	23 Apr 82	$18,600	Over its twenty-five year history, the annual Timmy/Tammy Dance events had raised $270,000 in total donations. Thirteen year old Carl Jones of Portage la Prairie was selected as the 1982 ''Timmy''. Master Warrant Officer D.A. Magee and Master-Corporal K.L. Godlien were co-chairmen of this event.
26	22 Apr 83	$16,175	Jordy Davis, a twelve year old cerebral palsy victim was the guest of Honour. Master Warrant Officer H.G.A. Bjornson and Master-Corporal W. Spencer were co-chairmen of this event.
27	27 Apr 84	$18,500	Sergeant R. Campbell and Master-Corporal W. Spencer were co-chairmen of this event and Serge Le Gal of Portage la Prairie was ''Timmy''.
28	26 Apr 85	$14,515	Warrant Officer W.F. Gutcher and Corporal J.N. King co-chaired the dance.

Serial	Date	Funds Raised	Comments
29	18 Apr 86	$16,000	Warrant Officer W.F. Gutsher returned as the Dance Committee Chairman with Lawrence Pepleski and Twyla Nadon, both of Portage la Prairie, as the "Timmy/Tammy" representatives.
30	10 Apr 87	$ 9,000	Warrant Office R.E. Pockett was the Committee Chairman. Chris Owens, of Portage la Prairie, Darren Friesen of Sanford, and Lockey Poitras of Winnipeg were the "Timmy's".
31	23 Apr 88	$ 5,000	Sergeant J.W. Sharpe was the Dance Committee Chairman with Glen Moar of Alonsa, Manitoba; and David MacDonald and Terri McCullough, both of Portage la Prairie were the "Timmy/Tammy" quests.
32	12 May 89	$ 3,000	Sergeant G.I. Murray was the Dance Committee Chairman, with Renee Harms of Roseisle, Manitoba and Ryan Elke of LaSalle, Manitoba as the "Timmy/Tammy" representatives.

NOTE: During this thirty-two year history, the Timmy/Tammy Dance has raised in excess of $340,000 for the Society for Manitoba with Disabilities. On June 2, 1987, the CFB Portage la Prairie Annual Timmy/Tammy Dance organization was awarded the Canadian Easter Seal Award, one of seven awards presented annually by the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled.



In the later years of the Timmy/Tammy Dance, the representative disabled child was given a familiarization flight in a helicopter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book was published under the authority of the Base Commander, CFB Portage la Prairie, and in co-operation with the History Book Division of D.W. Friesen and Sons Limited, Altona, Manitoba, printers. The raw material was drawn from: records held in the Base Central Registry; past files, historical reports and unit diaries held in the Department of National Defence Directorate of History and the National Archives of Canada, both in Ottawa; a number of personal papers and accounts of many past and present members of staff; articles contained in the former Base newspaper, "The Jet Air" and its present-day newsletter, "The Chatterings"; and, probably most importantly, the back-issues of "the Daily Graphic" newspaper of Portage la Prairie. Most of the photographs were provided by: the Base Photo Section, the Canadian Forces Photographic Unit's Control Negative Library in Ottawa; the Base photographic history scrapbooks; and the personal collections of a great many individuals who volunteered to share these treasured prints with me.

I wish to express special thanks to the following individuals who took the time to share their memories and memorabilia with me: Air Commodore L.J. Birchall, Mr. H. Wishart, Mrs. A. Rogers, Mr. C. Torontow, Mr. I.G. Van Dusen, Mr. A.J. Burnett, Mr. R. Proudfoot, Mr. L. Milbery, Mr. M.G. Thorne, Mr. C.R.G. Elston, Captain V.T. Polichek, Mr. P.E. Laforet, Mr. M. Dagg, Mr. L.W. Eaton, Mr. K.A. Mace, Mr. W.R. McRae, Mr. J. Richards, Mr. K.W. Vail, Mr. N. Malayney, Dr. J.W. Chalmers, Mr. D.A. Walrod, Mr. R. McDonald, Mr. H.H. Gething, Mr. Z. Matiation, Mr. E. Smith, Mr. D. Stevenson, Mr. K. Holland, Mr. K. Pirt, Mr. K.W. Goodall, Major T.D. Spraggs, Captain W.H. Ballantyne, Captain D. Dudgeon and Captain B.J. Luebke. Also, I appreciated the assistance provided by: Mrs. Helen Danichuk, archivist, and Brenda Suderman, reporter, at the Daily Graphic newspaper; Ms. Lillian Grantham at the Directorate of History; Mrs. Janet Dimock at the Central Negative Library; the entire staff of the Base Photo Section, Master-Corporal E.J. Choptain, Corporal P.J. Heald, Corporal M.M. Orien and Corporal M.F.C. Morrissette; and finally, the Base Graphic Artists staff; Mr. G. McDermit and Mrs. G. Snedden.

A number of people also assisted me with researching and preparing this book. They were: Ms. Pam Friesen, who reviewed almost twenty-five years of back-issues of the Daily Graphic and who also typed much of the original manuscript; Lieutenant Joan Spraggs, who reviewed the other twenty-five years of back-issues of the Daily Graphic and who prepared the Crash Book appendix; Lieutenant Jane Adams-Roy who conducted many of the personal interviews; Mrs. Wanda Graves and Mrs. Karen Porrier both of whom helped with the preparation of the manuscript; and my secretary, Mrs. Grace Giard who worked tirelessly through many long hours typing letters, the manuscript and painstakingly proof-reading and correcting numerous drafts; finally and most importantly, my wife, Marguerite, who has not only lived this project with me for the past year, but who also advised and assisted with almost every aspect of the production of the book. To these ladies, my sincerest thank-you for your dedication and fine effort. Without your assistance, the project could not have been completed.

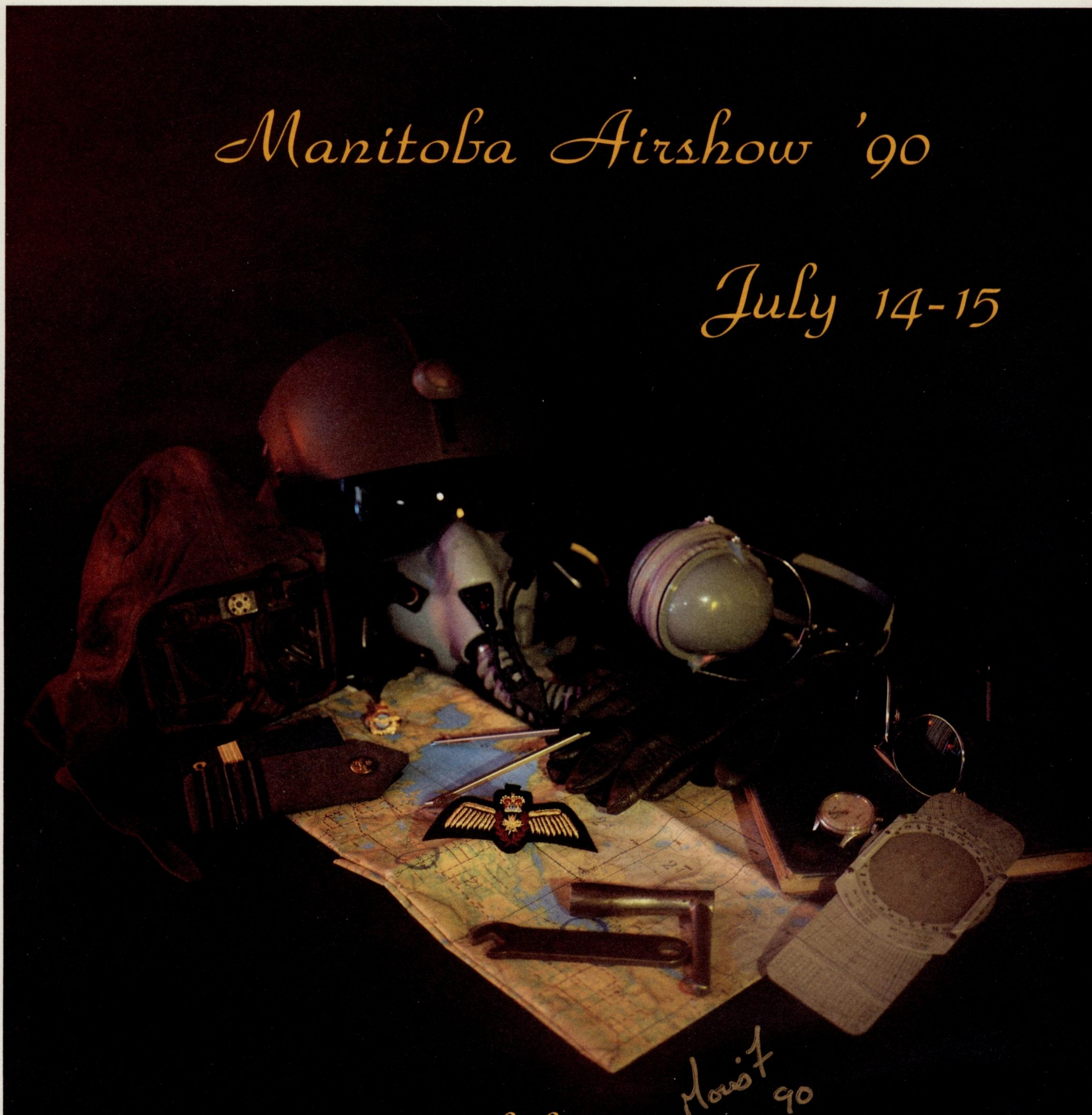
While I have tried to present a lengthly and detailed chronicle of the historical record of CFB Portage la Prairie's activities, some errors and omissions have undoubtedly occurred. To those readers who actually lived the experiences recounted in this book and believe that some of the information is incorrect, I apologize. From the information which I had at my disposal, this historical account of the first fifty years of military flying training at Portage la Prairie is as accurate as I could make it.

"Such is the Path to the Stars"

Major Gordon Greavette

Manitoba Airshow '90

July 14-15



Mani 7 90

celebrating

50 Years of Flying Training

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



MAJOR G.E.I. GREAVETTE, CD

Major Gordon Greavette was born in Val d'Or, Quebec in 1953 and enrolled in the Canadian Forces in 1972 under the University Training Plan (ROTP). He graduated from the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston in 1977 with an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in History. Having undergone Basic Pilot Training at Canadian Forces Base Portage la Prairie, Manitoba during the summers of 1974 and 1975, he immediately proceeded to Canadian Forces Base Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, for Advanced Pilot Training before reclassifying to become an Air Weapons Controller. He was then employed with the 22 North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD) Command Region in the underground complex at Canadian Forces Base North Bay from 1978 to 1980, whereupon he again reclassified to his present occupation as a Personnel Administration Officer. He was subsequently employed as the Base Personnel Administration Officer at Canadian Forces Base North Bay from 1980 to 1983. In 1983 Major Greavette completed a six month tour as the Senior Staff Officer for Personnel at the Headquarters of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Damascus, Syria. On his return to Canada he was posted to Canadian Forces Station St. John's, Newfoundland as the Station Administration Officer. From August 1986 to June 1987 he attended the Continuous French Language Course at Ottawa and, following this training, he was posted to his present position of Base Administration Officer at Canadian Forces Base Portage la Prairie in July 1987.

Major Greavette was presented with a Chief of the Defence Staff Commendation as a result of an incident that occurred during his posting in Newfoundland where he helped to rescue an accident victim from a burning vehicle.