

The Sky Sentinel



FINAL ISSUE

July, 1960

NO. 7 RCAF GOBC UNIT

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Views expressed in the Sky Sentinel are those of the writers expressing them and do not necessarily reflect the official opinions of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

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THE MAIL-STAR

HALIFAX, CANADA, MONDAY, MAY 9, 1960

Ground Observer Corps Stands Down

THE announcement by Defence Minister Pearkes that, as of June 1 of this year, ground observer posts in Canada south of the fifty-fifth parallel of latitude will be discontinued, not only marks the end of a fine record of voluntary service but also reveals, once again, the developing picture of war in the air.

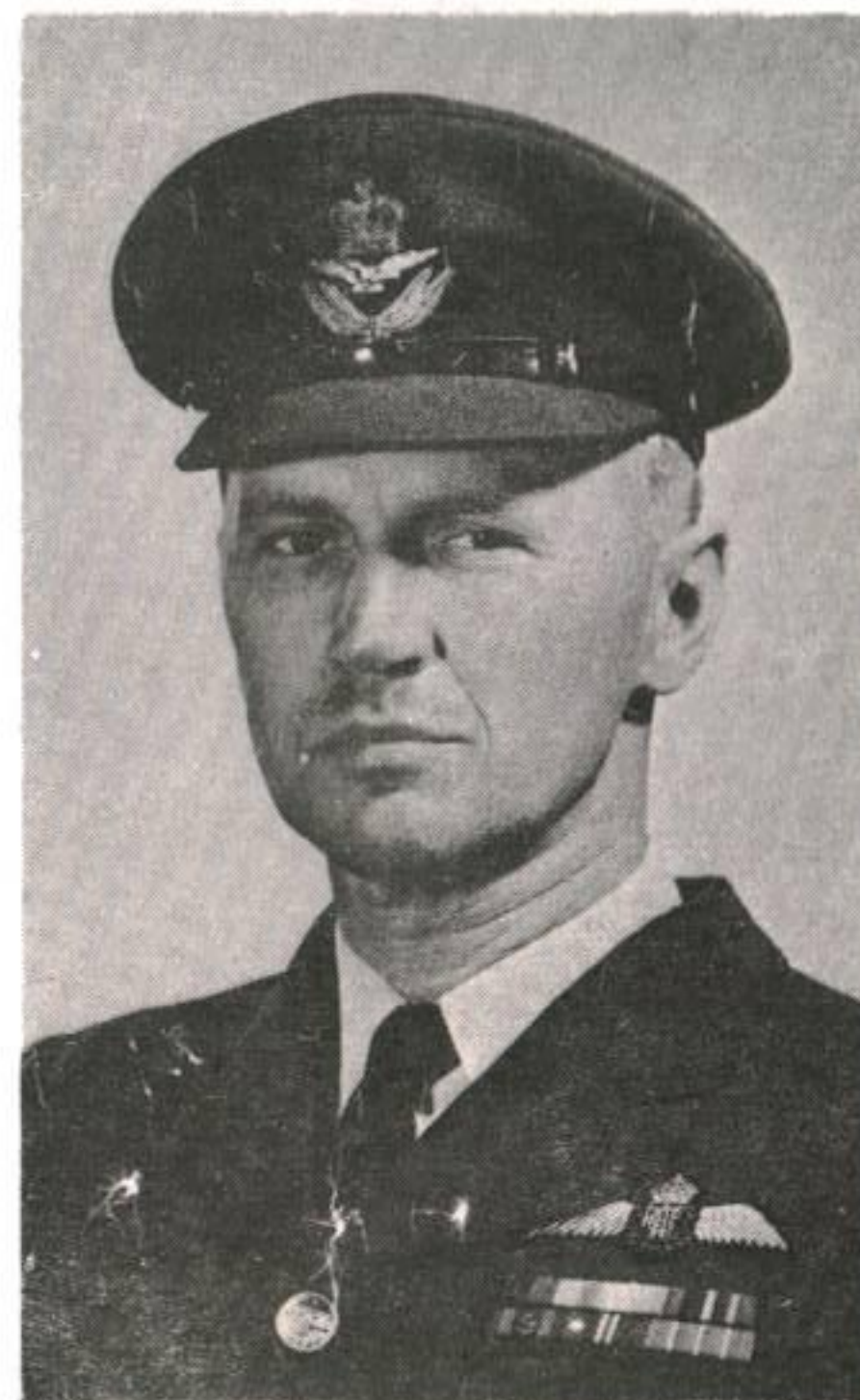
Initiated in Nova Scotia towards the end of 1951, the auxiliary Air Force unit grew until it embraced about three hundred and twenty-five posts manned by approximately three thousand civilian volunteers. Following a short training course, the observers quickly adapted themselves to their role, demonstrating through the various exercises their enthusiasm and aptitudes. Not infrequently, Air Force officials commented favorably on the calibre of the work of Nova Scotians in the Corps.

The voluntary nature of this work will endure as one of the commendable features. It has been a service to the nation, freely given despite the fact that,

at times, it made exacting demands upon the time of those concerned. Too often, these days, one hears the claim that people will not do anything any more unless they are paid. The Ground Observer Corps makes a lie of such assertions, and indicates anew that voluntary service still appeals to people when, coupled with it, there is a worthy challenge and an adequate reason.

The changing nature of defence has rendered the organization no longer necessary, although its members still may be available to assist in such emergency operations as search and rescue. Improved radar equipment and techniques is one factor in the change. During the years when this was lacking, the Corps provided the channel of information so essential in national protection. In other words, the volunteers filled a serious gap in the defence picture. Now it is being demobilized at the end of a successful campaign. With a host of others, we offer a hearty "well done" as the Corps stands down.

THE VIEW FROM THE FORE-PEAK



In this the final issue of the Sky Sentinel, we try to express to the loyal volunteers of the Ground Observer Corps our appreciation of their unselfish efforts over the past years in bridging the gap in our defenses, giving time to the Air Defence Team of North America to complete the radar screen and afford the citizens of this hemisphere perhaps the best security that is possible in these troubled times.

It has always been the wish of the Air Officer Commanding, Air Defence Command, that the vigil maintained by the Ground Observer Corps should not be continued any longer than the time required to provide effective radar watch. This has now been accomplished, and the disbandment of the Southern Division of the Ground Observer Corps is to take effect May 31st, 1960. It is his view, shared by all RCAF personnel who have been privileged to work with the Ground Observer Corps, that this date marks the successful ending of a very vital and necessary operation. The Ground Observer Corps has waged a successful campaign.

It may never be known how effective our organization was in maintaining peace in the past decade. As you know, we have not been called upon to give warning of enemy attack. Our continent has remained inviolate, although aggression has taken place elsewhere in the world. We must also realize that the majority of our citizens were not aware of the nature of our organization and of the debt of gratitude they owe to the Ground Observer Corps.

May I, therefore, both as a military person, and also as a citizen of this land, convey to all members of the Ground Observer Corps my sincere and heart-felt thanks for providing vital assistance in the Air Defence of North America which could not have been done in any other way.

For the future, I commend to you any other tasks in public service to which your patriotic spirit may lead you. In particular, I request your co-operation in the continued reporting of aircraft and ships in distress to the Search and Rescue Centre nearest you, knowing that you will bring to this task the same spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice that has been the keystone of success of the Ground Observer Corps.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely the name of the author, positioned at the end of the text.



CANADA

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

No 000-12(AOC)

Department of National Defence

Royal Canadian Air Force

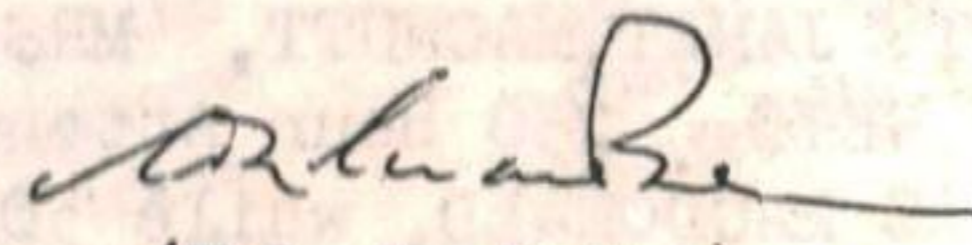
St Hubert, Quebec,
1 June, 1960.

Dear Volunteer:

As a result of the advance of technology it is now evident that the Southern Division of the RCAF Ground Observer Corps is no longer required. The fine relationship which has grown up between the military and this portion of its civil arm must now be terminated. The patriotic citizens who have formed the Southern Division during the nine years of its existence have played a vital role in our air defence during a period of vulnerability. We of the RCAF are most grateful for their efforts: there can be no doubt but that they supported their country nobly.

To you, as an individual member of the Southern Division of the Corps, I now extend the thanks of the whole RCAF for a job well done, and regretfully say "farewell". You can be sure that our relationship will not be forgotten and that what you accomplished has been indeed worthwhile.

Sincerely,


(W.R. MacBrien)
Air Vice-Marshal
Air Officer Commanding
Air Defence Command

OFFICIAL CLOSING



On Wednesday May 25th, 1960, the official closing ceremonies of the Truro Filter Centre was held, thus bringing to a close seven years of active participation in Canada's Air Defence by the civilian population of Nova Scotia.

The ceremony was attended by Regional Supervisors from all parts of Nova Scotia; by local dignitaries, headed by His Worship, The Mayor of Truro, Hector Hill; and by a large number of military personnel.

Officiating at the ceremony and representing the Air Officer Commanding, Air Defence Command, was Group Captain N. W. Timmerman, DSO, DFC, CD, Commanding Officer RCAF Station Chatham, N. B. Also present were Wing Commander R. E. Porter, AFC, CD, Maritime Air Command, Halifax; Squadron Leader F. P. Boychuk, RCAF Station Beaverbank; Squadron Leader R. H. Morris, CD, Commanding Officer 7 GOBC Unit, Halifax, and Flight Lieutenant R. G. Hussey, CD, Detachment Commander 71 GOBC Detachment, Moncton, N. B.

The Chairman for the occasion was Flight Lieutenant G. W. Hynes, CD, the Officer Commanding, Truro Filter Centre. After welcoming the guests, he reviewed some of the highlights of the GOBC in Nova Scotia, and paid high tribute to the thousands of civilian volunteers who had served in the Corps since its inception in 1952. He spoke of the pleasant associations between RCAF staff members and the people of Truro, during the years, and told Mayor Hill that he could be proud of the contributions which residents of Truro had made to the Air Defence of our Country.

Mayor Hill expressed regret at the closing of the Filter Centre, and thanked both the staff and civilian members for their work.

Squadron Leader R. H. Morris suggested that former civilian members of the Corps could possibly assist their communities by participating in some other worthwhile projects, and mentioned Civil Defence as being most important.

The Guest Speaker, Group Captain N. W. Timmerman, explained the reasons why the Corps was disbanding, stating that with the ever increasing capabilities of the Early Warning Radar Lines, an organization such as the GOBC must "regretfully be disbanded". On behalf of the Air Officer Commanding, Air Defence Command, he expressed sincere thanks to all civilian members of the Corps for their loyal assistance for almost eight years.

G/C Timmerman then presented GOBC Wings and Long Service Bars to those Filter Centre volunteers who had qualified. Receiving GOBC Wings were: JOYCE MACNUTT, JANET MACNUTT, MRS HELEN TUMILTY, MRS GLADYS CORNELL and MRS CAROLINE REID. 250 Hour Attendance Bars were presented to: MYRTLE KENT, and MRS HATTIE MACDONALD, while 500 Hour Bars were presented to: MRS. FRANCES GILLESPIE, MRS MATTIE TOTTEN and HENRY R. REDDEN.

Following the ceremony, a reception was held in the Filter Centre lounge and was attended by over a hundred guests.

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THE MAIL-STAR

MAY 10, 1960

A Dedicated Corps

THE feeling of dismay evidenced in a letter appearing in our Voice of the People column today concerning the scheduled disbandment of most of the RCAF Ground Observer Corps doubtless is held by many in this nation-wide volunteer force who have been advised their services will not be required after June 1.

This body of thirty-five thousand sky watchers has been truly one of the most dedicated unpaid groups to operate in this country in peacetime since its pioneering days.

It is composed of men and women and children in all walks of life and in all sorts of locations—lightkeepers on lonely rocks, fishermen at sea, farmers in their fields, fire watchers in their forest towers, businessmen in their skyscraper offices, monks in their quiet monasteries, housewives, aircraft pilots, missionaries, trappers, and many others. They had been organized in 1951 to serve as supplementary eyes and ears for the RCAF until the electronic network of the early warning lines became fully operational. Three thousand of these have been in Nova Scotia alone and, through their zealous training plus the co-operation of the Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company Limited, the time of transmission of the average signal from the field through to the filter centre at

Truro and into the Pine Tree radar net station at Beaverbank near Halifax has been reduced to one minute. The volunteers have long been at a high peak of efficiency. No enemy aircraft have been spotted by them, but many innocent planes which have gone off course the Russian submarines reported off Newfoundland in the last few years were first spotted by observers stationed along its coast. Some of the corps have even gone in for such extracurricular activities as first aid training, as correspondent Cholmondeley with his Trenton unit.

It is unfortunate that such an eager and well-schooled force must now be broken up. But its signal transmission record of one minute has now been reduced to a split second by the magic of electronics in the Pinetree, Mid-Canada and Dew lines. The United States corps gave way to the more effective detection system fifteen months ago.

Science rushes on, leaving that which is efficient today outmoded tomorrow. As with the fighter plane and the bomber, the Ground Observer Corps passes by in this parade of progress. But, as it puts away its binoculars, its spy-glasses and its recognition charts, we salute it proudly and gratefully.

Dans cette édition finale de Sky Sentinel, nous désirons exprimer notre appréciation aux volontaires civils du Corps des Observateurs, Terrestres, pour la loyauté et la générosité qu'ils ont toujours démontrés durant les dernières années.

Vos efforts soutenus ont contribué à augmenter l'efficacité de notre système de Défense Aérienne et ont permis en même temps que notre système de détection par radar se complète. Votre contribution a peut être ainsi fourni aux citoyens de cet hémisphère, la meilleure protection possible pendant cette période d'insécurité.

Les autorités du Commandement de la Défense d'Air avaient toujours prévu que la vigile maintenue par les observateurs devrait se terminer aussitôt que le système de détection par radar serait complété et pourrait assurer une protection efficace et adéquate. Ceci est maintenant un fait accompli et le démembrement du Corps des Observateurs Terrestres dans la partie Sud, soit au sud du 55ème parallèle, est effectif à compter du 31 May 1960.

Du point de vue du Commandant de la Défense Aérienne, lequel est partagé par tout le personnel de l'aviation qui ont eu le privilège d'être associés aux observateurs terrestres, cette date marque la fin d'une opération vitale et nécessaire qui a été couronnée de succès.

On ne connaîtra peut être jamais la réelle valeur de notre organisation dans le maintien de la paix durant les dernières dix années; comme vous le savez nous n'avons pas été appelés à donner l'alerte d'une attaque ennemie et la paix a continué de régner sur notre continent malgré les agressions répétées qui ont eu lieu à d'autres endroits à travers le monde.

Nous devons aussi réaliser que la majorité des citoyens du pays n'étaient pas conscients de la nature de notre organisation et ne réalisent pas la dette de gratitude qu'ils doivent aux observateurs.

À titre de militaire et de citoyen, permettez moi d'exprimer mes plus sincères remerciements à tous les membres du Corps des Observateurs Terrestres pour avoir fourni cette assistance si précieuse à tout le système de Défense Aérienne de l'Amérique du Nord, laquelle n'aurait pu être obtenue d'aucune autre façon.

Pour l'avenir, je vous recommande de vous joindre à l'organisme de service public vers lequel votre esprit patriotique sera le plus porté. En particulier, je vous demande votre coopération pour continuer à rapporter les avions et les navires présumés en détresse, au centre de Recherche et de Sauvetage le plus près de chez-vous. Je suis assuré à l'avance que vous apporterez à cette tâche le même esprit de loyauté et de renoncement qui a été la clef du succès du Corps des Observateurs Terrestres.

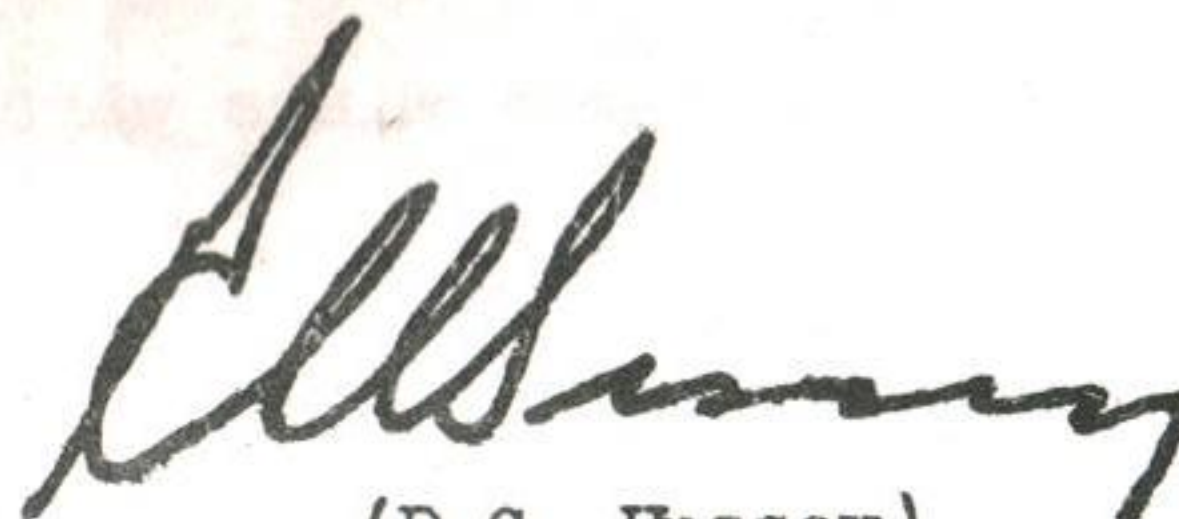


GOOD-BYE

In this the final printing of the "Sky Sentinel", it is with a great deal of regret that we take the opportunity to say "good-bye" to all our volunteer friends of the Ground Observer Corps throughout the Atlantic Provinces and in particular New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

Coupled with the regrets at saying goodbye, however, there is a feeling of pride and accomplishment in a "job well done"; an achievement which you, as volunteers giving freely of your time and efforts, made possible. We have been assured by higher authority that this time and effort has, over the past years, filled a vital gap in Canada's Air Defence and this fact alone should be one of lasting satisfaction to all of us.

Speaking for all the RCAF Staff at 71 Detachment, Moncton, we want to thank you for your friendship and your co-operation over the past seven years. We will miss "dropping in" to say "Hello" but wish you all "Godspeed" in your many and varied activities.



(R.C. Hussey)
Flight Lieutenant
Detachment Commander
71 GOBC Detachment.

OFFICIAL CLOSING



"The Ground Observer Corps volunteers have done a tremendous job in the Air Defence of Canada, but it is necessary to economize on our air defence structure. We must progress and spend our defence dollar in the best way possible. The work of the Ground Observer Corps will now be carried out by the Pinetree Radar Line and other devices".

Thus commented G/C N. W. Timmerman, D.S.O., D.F.C., C.D., Commanding Officer of the Chatham Air Force Base, at the closing of 71 Ground Observer Corps Detachment, Moncton, on Saturday the 28th of May.

Special guests at the closing ceremonies included: G/C F.E. Baker, C.D., Commanding Officer of No. 5 Supply Depot, Moncton, who presented wings and hour bars to 25 volunteers; W/C R. G. Elliott, C.D., Senior Supply Officer, No. 5 Supply Depot, Moncton; S/L R. H. Morris, C. D., Commanding Officer of 7 GOBC Unit Halifax; F/L G. E. Murray, D.F.C., C.D., St. Hubert, Quebec; F/L G. W. Hynes, C.D., Officer Commanding of Truro Filter Centre; F/L R. C. Hussey, C.D., Officer Commanding Moncton Filter Centre; Jack Lutes, former Officer Commanding Moncton Filter Centre; F/L D. L. Giggey, D.F.C., C.D., Three Rivers, Quebec.

The closing ceremonies were attended by the Filter Centre staff and volunteer workers of the Filter Centre, as well as a representation from the field.

Those receiving their wings were as follows:

LEO-PAUL BASTARACHE
LINDA FISHER
JUNE SEARS
CLARK WILCOX
BARRY RODY
PAUL BREAU
FERNANDE CAISSIE
ALONZO LEBLANC

LEIGH EATON
FRANK GILLESPIE
DAVE STRUGNELL
DOROTHY MENZIES
PETER WESTELL
BETTY WARREN
BRUCE DIXON
DOLLARD LEBLANC

Those receiving bars signifying 250 hours of service in the Filter Centre were as follows:

YVONNE HEBERT
CAROL MACARTHUR
EVELYN PERKINS
JEANNETTE CHISHOLM

THERESA LEBLANC
LILLIAN MURRAY
JAMES SMITH
MURIEL HAZEL

LEONARD DOUCETTE

.....



RECEIVING 250 HOUR BARS

From left to right: Jeannette Chisholm, James Smith, Evelyn Perkins, Carol MacArthur, Lillian Murray, Theresa LeBlanc, Group Captain F. E. Baker, Muriel Hazel and Yvonne Hebert.



RECEIVING PLOTTERS' WINGS

From left to right: Dollard LeBlanc, Bruce Dixon, Fernande Caissie, Betty Warren, Group Captain F. E. Baker and Paul Breau.



From left to right: Group Captain N. W. Timmerman, Group Captain F. E. Baker, Flight Lieutenant G. E. Murray, Flight Lieutenant G. W. Hynes, Flight Lieutenant R. C. Hussey and standing Squadron Leader R. H. Morris.



Ministère de la Défense Nationale

Corps d'Aviation Royal Canadien

St-Hubert, Québec,
1 juin, 1960.

Cher volontaire,

Il est maintenant évident qu'avec le progrès de la technologie, la division sud du Corps d'observateurs terrestres de l'Aviation royale canadienne, n'est plus requise. La bonne entente qui a toujours existée entre le militaire et le volontaire de cet important élément civil de la défense aérienne, doit se terminer.

Les citoyens patriotes qui ont formé la division du sud durant les années de son existence ont participé à un rôle vital dans la défense de l'air pendant une période de vulnérabilité.

Nous de l'Aviation, sommes reconnaissants pour leurs efforts. Sans doute ils ont supporté leur pays noblement.

A vous, membre individuel de la division du sud de l'organisation, je désire exprimer pour toute l'Aviation royale canadienne, mes sincères remerciements pour une tâche bien réalisée et c'est avec regret que je dis "Aurevoir". Vous pouvez être assuré que notre alliance ne sera pas oubliée et ce que vous avez accompli a été en vérité très utile.

Votre très obligé,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W.R. MacBrien'.

(W.R. MacBrien)
Vice-Maréchal de l'Air
Officier Commandant l'Aviation
Commandement de la Défense aérienne.



R.C.A.F. Ground Observer Corps

The Eyes and Ears of the R.C.A.F.



Gander Nfld.
6 June 60.

To All Volunteers:

Upon looking back over our years service in the RCAF, we can in all honesty say that the years spent with the Ground Observer Corps have been most rewarding.

We have been impressed by the self sacrifice and good citizenship displayed by each and every one of the thousands of volunteers in the Gander area of responsibility. Your enthusiasm and loyalty in furthering the cause of National Defence has contributed in no small way to the peace which we and our families enjoy today. Your devotion to the fulfilment of your duties as members of the GOBc has set an example in good citizenship to Canadians everywhere.

Saying goodbye is always a sad occasion; however, we would like you to know that we carry many pleasant memories with us. To all the civilian volunteers with whom we have been privileged to work in the GOBc, we say "a sincere and heartfelt thank you" for your loyal and continuous support.

The Staff
72 GOBc Detachment
Gander, Newfoundland.

OFFICIAL CLOSING



Saturday, the 4th of June ranked as the darkest day in the history of 72 Detachment in Gander. On this day, the formal closing ceremonies before disbandment took place. W/C Higgin, Staff Officer Ground Environment at Air Defence Command Headquarters was the guest speaker for the occasion. Other honored guests were S/L R. H. Morris, Commanding Officer 7 GOBC Unit, Halifax, Mayor Jack Robertson of the Town of Gander, F/L Stan Higgins representing Commanding Officer of RCAF Station Gander. Approximately 60 volunteers and friends were in attendance to hear the interesting remarks of W/C Higgin and enjoy the sumptuous buffet luncheon afterward.

Introducing the guests and chairman was F/L Bill Wood, Officer Commanding 72 Detachment. F/L Wood thanked the volunteers one and all for their fine cooperation and expressed regret at leaving so many new friends in Gander. The popular Mayor, Jack Robertson, was then asked to say a few words on behalf of the Town. Jack stated that the town felt a sincere loss in the departure of new friends and citizens. He left a standing invitation to return to Gander at any time and feel an honoured guest. F/L Higgins of Station Gander reflected the loss that would be felt at the Station by the reduction in personnel. The staff at 72 had contributed in many ways to the betterment of the Station.

S/L Morris, who needed no introduction to the Gander volunteers, presented the guest speaker. In his few well chosen words, S/L Morris spoke of the "TEAM" which would now be broken up and of the loyalty and unselfish spirit of these fine people in Newfoundland. On this his final visit to Newfoundland, he recalled with admiration the many highlights of his association here.

W/C Higgin, in his opening remarks, spoke of feeling like an intruder into a close-knit family group and of being out of place with such a sad task to perform. He outlined to the volunteers the reasons for disbandment of the Corps and regretted the disassociation which would follow between the RCAF and many fine Canadian citizens. He thanked the volunteers sincerely on behalf of the Air Officer Commanding, Air Defence Command, for their part in the air defence system.

The final official function was the presentation of wings and certificates to a number of Filter Centre volunteers.

The social hour which followed was enjoyed by all and goodbyes were said to friends both old and new. Another milestone had been passed on the road to permanent peace.

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PHOTOS TAKEN DURING THE OFFICIAL CLOSING OF 72 DETACHMENT FILTER CENTRE



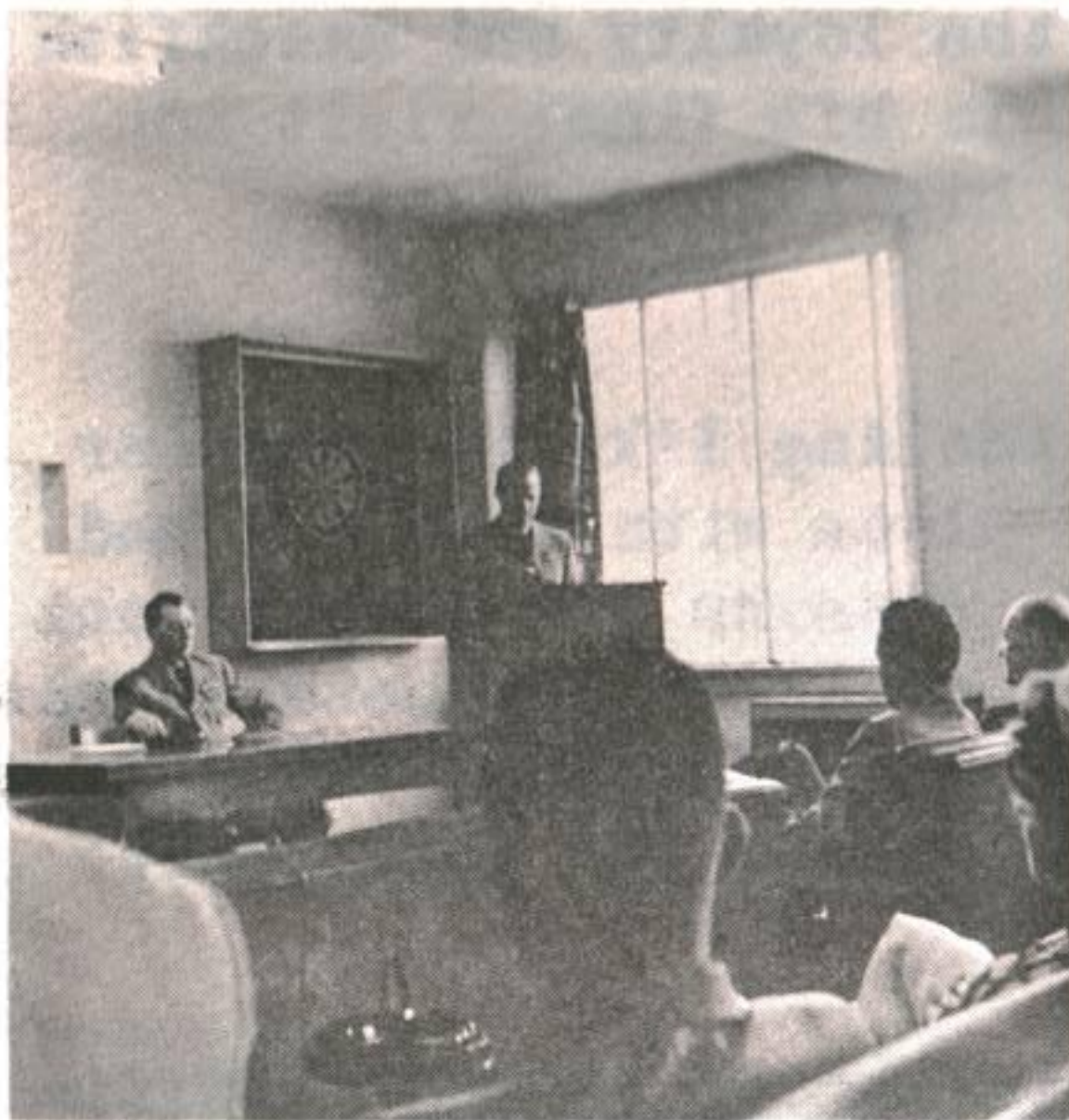
W/C Higgin presenting Wings to
WALTER MILLEY



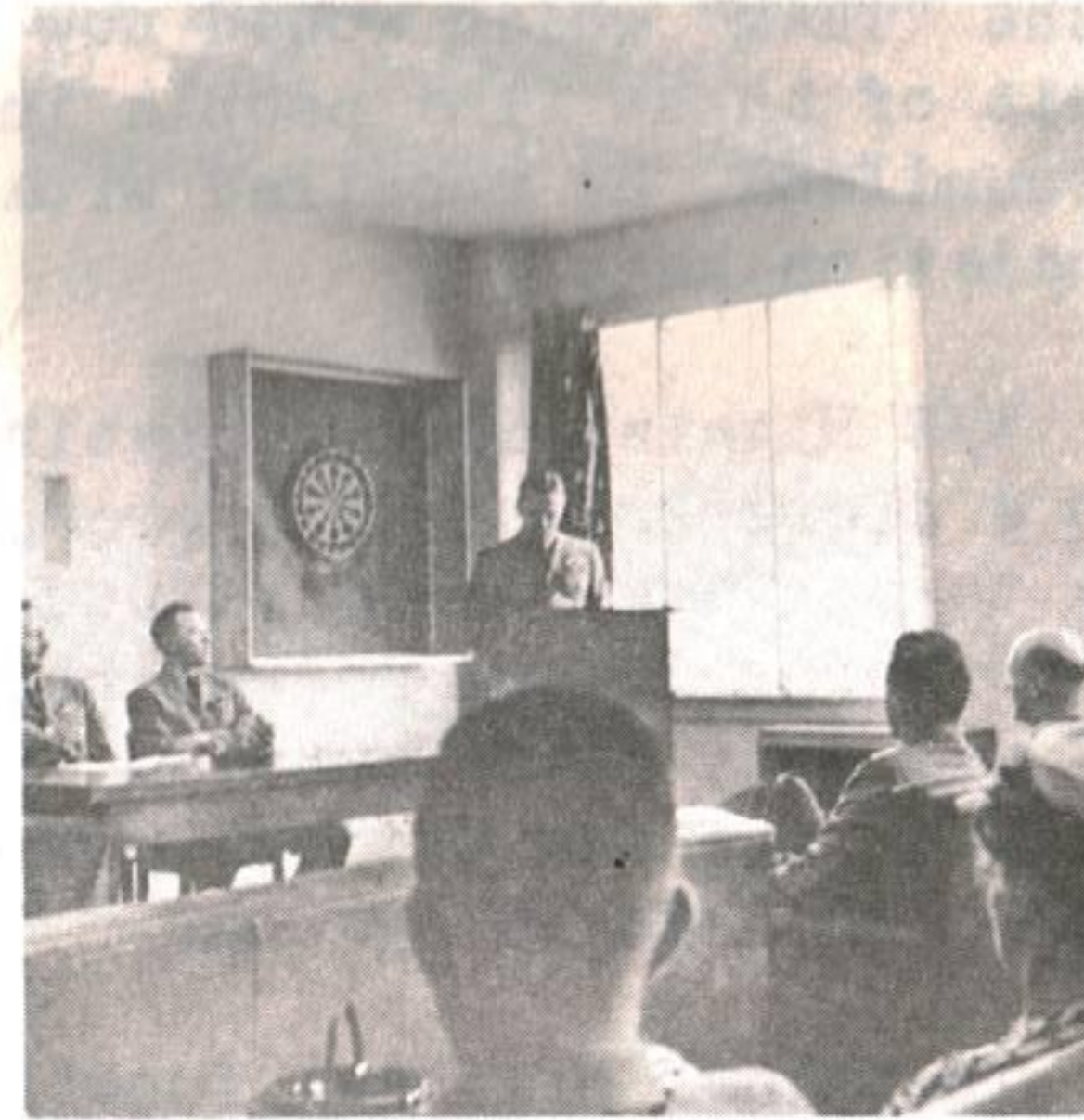
W/C Higgin presenting Wings to
BEVERLY PINSENT



The above photo shows some of the volunteers
who attended the Official Closing Ceremonies



W/C Higgin addressing the Group.



S/L Morris addressing the group.

MARITIMES

EMERGENCIES

IN THE CASE OF AN AIRCRAFT OR SURFACE
VESSEL IN DISTRESS CONTACT RCAF RESCUE
CO-ORDINATION CENTRE COLLECT AT THIS
PHONE NUMBER - HALIFAX 2-9311 LOCAL 68

NEWFOUNDLAND

EMERGENCIES

IN THE CASE OF AN AIRCRAFT OR SURFACE
VESSEL IN DISTRESS CONTACT RCAF RESCUE
CO-ORDINATION CENTRE COLLECT AT THE
FOLLOWING PHONE NUMBERS - ST. JOHN'S
9-1181 9-1182 or 9-1183

FOR COASTAL POSTS

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU REPORT ALL SIGHTINGS OF
SUBMARINES AND OTHER SUSPICIOUS VESSEL MOVEMENTS
TO THE APPROPRIATE RESCUE CO-ORDINATION CENTRE

AS ABOVE

Office of
CANADIAN MARITIME COMMANDER ATLANTIC
Fleet Mail Office
Halifax, N. S.

9 June, 1960

Dear Sir:

Reports of submarine sightings and movements of suspicious vessels made by the Ground Observer Corps in the past have been greatly appreciated by the Maritime Commander Atlantic. The disbanding of the Ground Observer Corps is viewed with real regret. I sincerely hope that former members of the Corps who in the past have displayed the most genuine and useful form of patriotism by literally lending their own good eyes for the protection of Canada will continue to do so, although it is no longer in an officially organized capacity.

Even today, our exercises prove that the human eye is one of the best submarine detection devices and certainly the most reliable.

I would be most grateful if former members of the Ground Observer Corps living by the sea would continue to keep a sharp lookout and report any suspicious sightings to the Maritime Commander Atlantic.

Again I wish to thank you for your patriotic vigilance in the past and I hope you will circulate this letter to your former members.

Yours truly,



(H.F. Pullen)
REAR ADMIRAL

CANADIAN MARITIME COMMANDER ATLANTIC

Squadron Leader R.H. Morris, RCAF,
No. 7 Ground Observer Corps Unit,
Anderson Square,
Halifax, Nova Scotia.

GOBC AUTOGRAPHS

Ken Jay 3/12
John W. Wargh

W. H. Hines

E. A. Rice F/O
Tom G. Mitchell

W. H. Hines

Wm E Wood.

W. H. Smith F/O

M. E. Vince F/O

W. H. Stewart

B. B. Masland F/O

W. H. Buckley

W. H. Morris

Janhutes F/O

Switzer F/O

Myles F. Curtis F/O

JM Casey F/O

Albussey F/O

Donald Perkins F/O

SBHick F/O

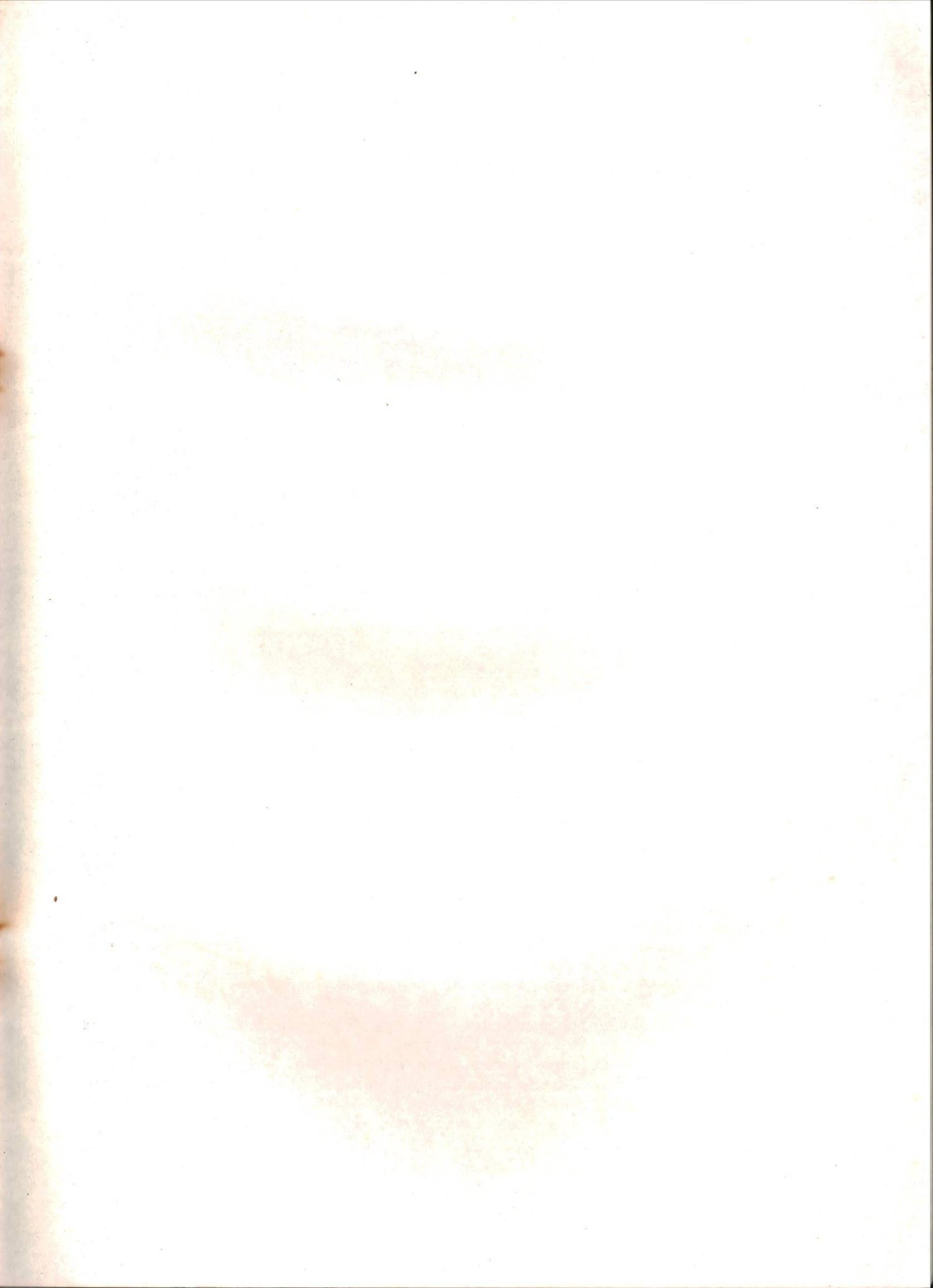
R. E. Beaton F/O

eps

Scumway

Dr. Duggan

Chas. H. Grant



FROM:

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TO:

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Canadian RCAF Ground Observer
Corps Sky Sentinel Magazine
Final Issue July 1960

\$15 NW

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