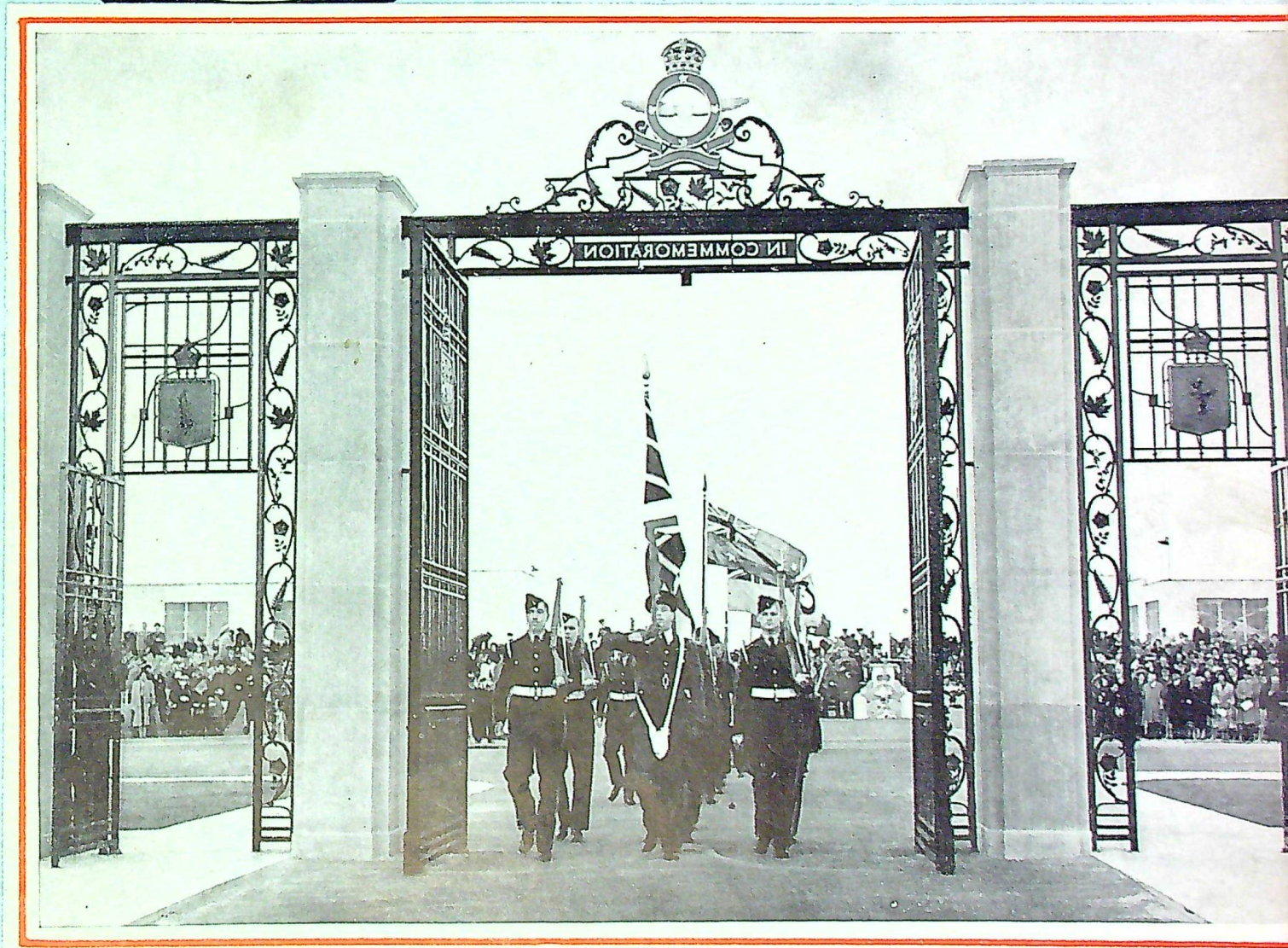


# The **ROUNDDEL**

VOL. II, No. 2  
DECEMBER 1949



## ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

*The Tenth Anniversary of The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan*

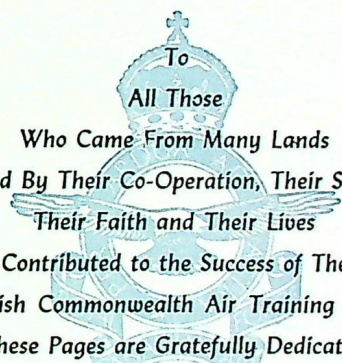
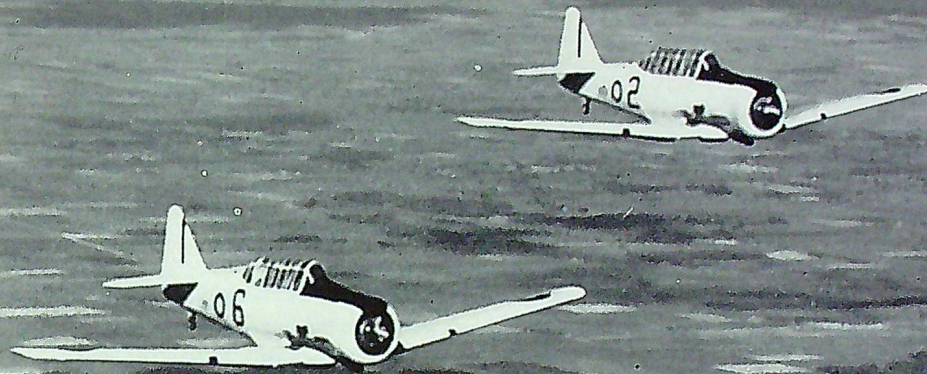
## PROLOGUE

*The 17th December, 1949 marks the tenth anniversary of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. This occasion is of considerable significance to the Royal Canadian Air Force and to its members, past and present, who participated in that remarkable undertaking. This issue of "The Roundel" has therefore been devoted exclusively to the commemoration of the B.C.A.T.P.*

*Although a brief, statistical summary of the Plan appears in the opening pages, our primary aim has been to present a personalized account of air training in Canada from 1939 to 1945, and to pay tribute to the many thousands of men and women who contributed to its success. It has obviously been impossible to cite all of the various phases of the B.C.A.T.P. and it can only be regretted that some aspects have been omitted.*

## THE COVER

Our cover picture was taken at R.C.A.F. Station Trenton, Ontario, during the Memorial Gates presentation ceremonies on 30 September, 1949. It shows one of the Plaque Parties entering the Gates after the plaques had been presented by Air Marshal Curtis.



To  
All Those  
Who Came From Many Lands  
And By Their Co-Operation, Their Skill,  
Their Faith and Their Lives  
Contributed to the Success of The  
British Commonwealth Air Training Plan  
These Pages are Gratefully Dedicated



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## THE RIGHT HONOURABLE W. L. MACKENZIE KING

P.C., O.M., C.M.G.

The 17th December, 1949, marks the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. In announcing, on 17th December, 1939, the agreement which had been reached between the Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, I said, "The aim, in short, is to achieve, by co-operative effort, air forces whose co-ordinated strength will be overwhelming". Before the war was ended, that aim was fulfilled. Today it may truly be said, as the inscription on the Memorial Gates at Trenton records:

"Their shoulders held the sky suspended.

They stood and earth's foundations stay."

Our free world will ever be in debt to all who shared in this great undertaking.



## THE HONOURABLE C. G. POWER, M.C., M.P.

Ten years is but a short space of time in the life of a nation, but with world events moving as swiftly as they do in this age and generation, occurrences, even of recent date, are apt to be forgotten unless attention is drawn to them in a special manner.

It is, therefore, appropriate for the Royal Canadian Air Force to devote these pages to the recollection of the beginnings of what was destined to become the most grandiose single enterprise upon which Canada had ever embarked—The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

That the undertaking was successful may be attributed to:

- (a) The boldness of its conception, which caught and held the imagination of the people concerned.
- (b) The close harmony and friendly co-operation of all the participating partners.
- (c) The loyalty, devotion and enthusiasm of all ranks who were engaged in it.

To my comrades of those days of trial, tribulation and final triumph I extend greetings and sincere best wishes.



## **AIR CHIEF MARSHAL L. S. BREADNER, C.B., D.S.C.**

It has unfortunately become almost a platitude to remark upon the tremendous success of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and to cite its far-reaching effect upon the course of the Second World War. Although such plaudits nevertheless bear repetition, particularly on this, the tenth anniversary of the Air Training Plan, I feel that it is just as appropriate to consider the challenge that the B.C.A.T.P. presents to us in these days of troubled peace.

The fact that four governments and a variety of races and nationalities, bound by common aims, were able to provide such an effective demonstration of international co-operation is of particular significance today. Although it is not always evident, people the world over are striving to find a similar solution to their quest for a true and lasting peace. Perhaps there is a greater lesson to be found in the results of the Air Training Plan than has hitherto been acknowledged by purely military men.

In this commemoration of the B.C.A.T.P., let us then look not only to the past but also to the future.

## **AIR MARSHAL R. LECKIE, C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C., D.F.C.**



On this, the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, I extend to those who participated, my warmest greetings. Nothing can take from us the memory of that very great adventure; although our tasks may have been unglamorous, at times monotonous, and perhaps, devoid of excitement, with the passage of time we can now view our efforts in better perspective and realize that in carrying out our humble duties in Canada, we enabled others, elsewhere, to win the war.



## **THE VISCOUNT PORTAL OF HUNGERFORD K.G., G.C.B., O.M., D.S.O., M.C., D.C.L., L.L.D.**

I am very glad to learn that a special number of "The Roundel" is to be issued to commemorate the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. It is no exaggeration to say that this great plan was the foundation upon which the achievements of the Royal Air Force in the latter part of the World War were based, and it gives me much pleasure to send you my best wishes on this occasion.



## AIR MARSHAL G. JONES, C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C.

*Chief of Air Staff—Royal Australian Air Force*

Ten years have now passed since the inauguration of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. This lapse of time enables us to see more clearly the soundness of its conception and execution and the tremendous effect it had on the course of the war. I recall with pleasure my associations with other members of the British Commonwealth Air Forces at Ottawa in 1939, when for twenty days we sat in conference in the House of Commons working out the plan in all its details. So far as Australia is concerned, the driving force was the late Minister for Air, The Honourable J. V. Fairbairn. The Australian aircrew who were trained in Canada still recall the very pleasant period they spent there and the hospitality of the Canadian people.



## GROUP CAPTAIN T. W. WHITE, C.B.E., E.D.

*New Zealand Air Liaison Officer—Royal New Zealand Air Force*

Air Chief Marshal Breadner once signalled: "We will turn everything on". The R.C.A.F. did exactly that. Throughout the life of the B.C.A.T.P. your organization, training and general liaison proved the truth of those words. All members of the N.Z.A.M. Staff and those New Zealanders who passed through the training plan remember with gratitude that the R.C.A.F. "turned everything on" for success.



# The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan

by Wing Commander F. H. HITCHINS, *Air Historian*

## Introduction

THE HANDS OF THE CLOCK in the Peace Tower had not long passed the midnight hour when a small group of officials gathered in the Prime Minister's office on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to affix their signatures to a document which, in the fullness of time, became one of the foundation stones of Allied Victory in the Second World War. One after the other, Lord Riverdale of the United Kingdom, W. L. MacKenzie King of Canada, S. M. Bruce of Australia and W. J. Jordan of New Zealand signified the approval of their Governments to an "Agreement relating to training of pilots and aircraft crews in Canada and their subsequent service". From this agreement, signed in the early moments of Sunday, 17 December, 1939, grew the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan which contributed over 131,000 trained aircrew to the Air Forces of the United Nations.

## Origin

The Plan had its genesis in a proposal made on 26 September, 1939 by the Government of the United Kingdom to the Governments of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Canada accepted the proposal, in principle, two days later, as did the other Dominions, and missions then assembled in Ottawa to work out the details of the scheme. Lord Riverdale, a distinguished British industrialist, headed the mission from the United Kingdom; the Hon. J. V. Fairbairn, the Australian Minister for Air, and Group Capt. H. W. L. Saunders, the New Zealand Chief of the Air Staff, led the delegations from their Dominions. Canada was represented by a Committee of Cabinet consisting of the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. W. L. MacKenzie King; the Minister of National Defence, the Hon. Norman Rogers; the Minister

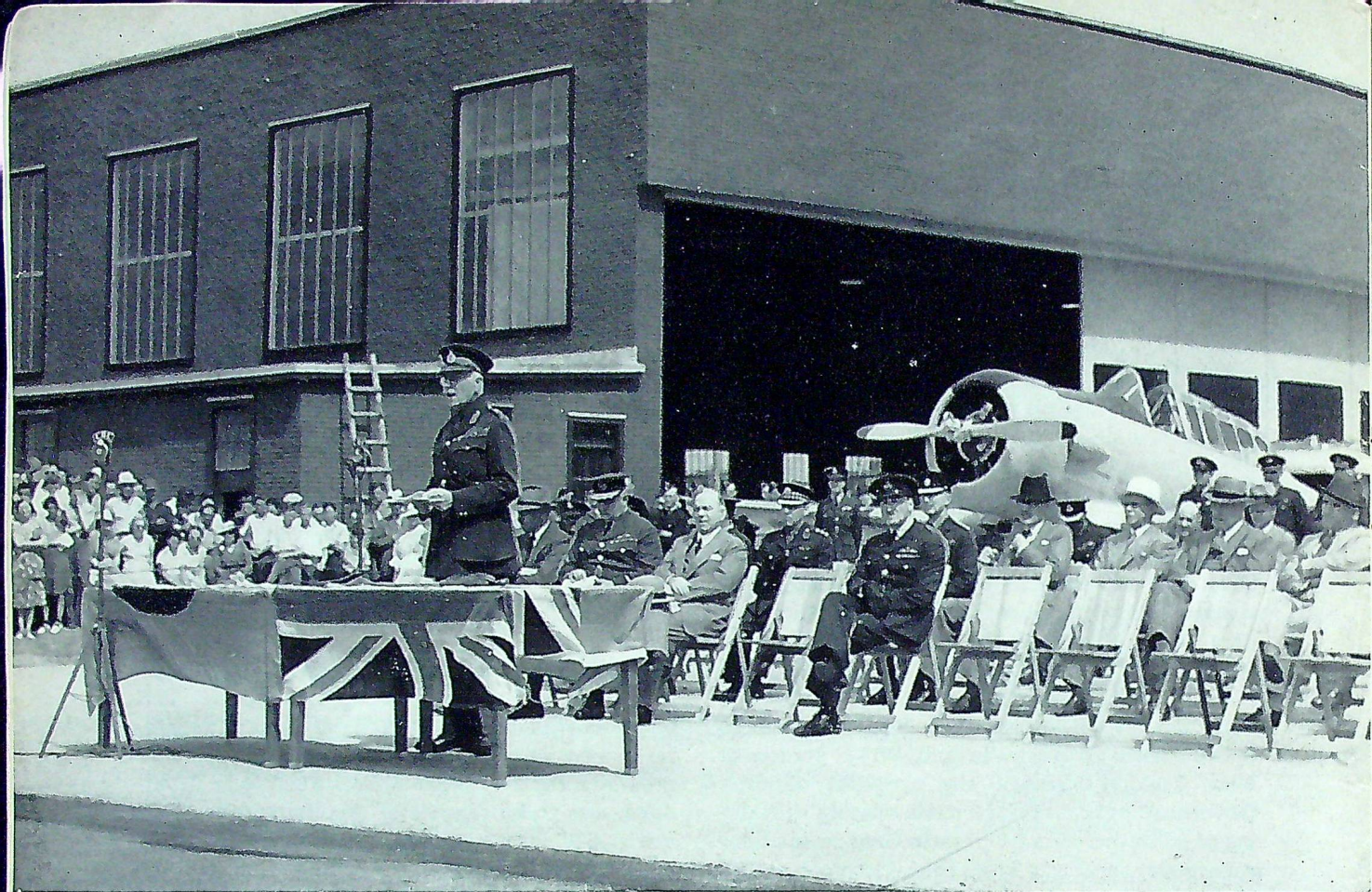
of Finance, Col. the Hon. J. L. Ralston; the Minister of Pensions and National Health, the Hon. Ian MacKenzie; and the Minister of Transport, the Hon. C. D. Howe.

## The Initial Agreement

Within a few weeks the missions had completed their task and the Agreement was signed. The Government of Canada was designated as administrator of a co-operative air training scheme to be set up in the Dominion which, when fully developed, was to be capable of producing every four weeks 520 Pilots with elementary training, 544 with service training, 340 Air Observers and 480 Wireless Operator-Air Gunners. To meet this objective, the Plan proposed to establish 3 Initial Training Schools, 13 Elementary Flying Training Schools, 16 Service Flying Training Schools, 10 Air Observer Schools, 10 Bombing and Gunnery Schools, 2 Air Navigation Schools and 4 Wireless Schools—a total of 58 training units. In addition, it would be necessary to form an appropriate command, recruiting, and maintenance organization, as well as schools for training instructors and administrative staffs. These made a grand total of 74 units, exclusive of the command organization.

It was estimated that almost 40,000 personnel would be required to staff this great structure—2,686 officers, 30,366 airmen and 5,951 civilians. Over 3500 aircraft and 6500 engines would be required for initial equipment and an immediate reserve of 50% for airframes and 100% for engines.

The probable cost of the initial Plan was estimated at \$600,000,000, of which Canada's share would be about \$350,000,000. The United Kingdom agreed to make its contribution "in kind" by supplying engines, airframes and spares,



*Canada's former Governor General, Lord Athlone, speaking at the opening of No. 2 S.F.T.S., Uplands, Ontario on the 5th August, 1940.*

and Australia and New Zealand were to pay shares corresponding to their quotas of pupils.

Such, in brief, was the training scheme agreed upon by the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in December 1939 when the war was barely three months old. Prime Minister King, in a radio address to the people of Canada on the day the agreement was signed, referred to the undertaking as "one of great magnitude" which had as its objective "to achieve, by co-operative effort, air forces whose co-ordinated strength will be overwhelming".

#### **Development**

It was truly a formidable task that confronted the Royal Canadian Air Force which, at the outbreak of war, numbered barely 4,000 officers and men. Now, in addition to other war commitments, it had to develop an organization which in staff alone, not counting trainees, would be ten times its pre-war strength.

Able assisted by the Department of Transport and other branches of the Government and by civilian flying clubs throughout the Dominion, the R.C.A.F. set to work. Schools were opened on schedule and the first intake of pilot trainees reported to No. 1 Initial Training School, Toronto, on 29 April, 1940. The first course of pupils, 38 observers, graduated in October, and by the end of September, 1941, seven months ahead of the target date, all units of the original programme were in operation, with the exception of three Bombing and Gunnery Schools. Eight E.F.T.S.'s had been established in addition to the thirteen originally proposed, and by the spring of 1942 the Plan was exceeding its scheduled output. Canada won from President Roosevelt the proud title "the Aerodrome of Democracy".

Before the objective was attained, however, the Plan had to face a crisis upon which its whole future depended. In April, 1940, when after four

months of hard work the first schools were preparing to open, the Nazis attacked Denmark and Norway. A month later the panzers struck at the Low Countries. Within a few weeks the Netherlands, Belgium and France had fallen, and Britain stood alone in the breach, facing the massed forces of the Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe only 27 miles across the Channel. There was a strong temptation to scrap the Training Plan and rush every available pilot and aircraft to meet the threatened invasion. The Plan was just beginning; it required time for development, time to make its effect felt in battle. Many feared, in the spring and summer of 1940, that there was no time to spare. Fortunately, the long-range view prevailed and, despite the extreme gravity of the situation in the United Kingdom, the bold decision was made to continue the Plan. History has recorded the verdict.

### The Second Agreement

By the end of May 1942 the B.C.A.T.P. schools had graduated 22,410 trained aircrew. The original agreement was due to run ten months longer, until the end of March 1943. But the course of the war—Japan had now joined the Axis powers—made it all too clear that the Training Plan must continue beyond that date and that many more aircrew than originally anticipated would be required. A new agreement was therefore signed at Ottawa on 5 June, 1942, to become effective on 1 July, under which the establishment of the B.C.A.T.P. was expanded and its term extended to 31 March, 1945.

The number of training schools was increased from 58 to 67 (including 21 double schools) with 10 additional schools for special training. In addition, Canada, as administrator of the Plan, assumed the administration and control of 27 R.A.F. units which had been transferred to, or established in the Dominion and which were now added to the combined training organization.

The new Plan also made some modifications in the financial details and in the allotment of pupil quotas. There was one significant proviso in the U.K. quota. The original agreement of 1939 had stipulated that this quota might include pupils from Newfoundland. Much had happened since



*Clearing the ground for the construction of runways at No. 10 E.F.T.S., Pendleton, Ontario.*



*The runways at Pendleton nearing completion.*

the days of the "phony war," and the new agreement provided that the U.K. quota might include, in addition to pupils from other parts of the Commonwealth except the three partner Dominions, pupils from Allied countries. As a result, many of the schools became miniature United Nations where in the recreation rooms could be heard half a dozen foreign tongues as well as a myriad variety of the King's English.

## Termination of the Plan

The Plan reached its peak at the close of 1943 when 73 B.C.A.T.P. and 24 R.A.F. flying schools and 184 other ancillary units were in operation, with a trained staff of 104,113 (91,289 service and 12,824 civilian). Over 15,000 more were in training for staff positions. Every month more than 3,000 trained aircrew were being added to the R.A.F., R.C.A.F., R.A.A.F., and R.N.Z.A.F.

Early in the following year, by the Power-Balfour Agreement of February, 1944, it was arranged, in view of the large reserve of aircrew already trained or under instruction, to begin gradual reduction of the schools and pupil intake. In October, 1944 the closing of schools was accelerated and by the end of the year the number of B.C.A.T.P. schools had been reduced to 50 and those of the R.A.F. to 2. On 29 March, 1945 the final "wings parades" were held across Canada and two days later the B.C.A.T.P. was officially terminated, as scheduled. Prime Minister Churchill, in a message to Prime Minister King, expressed congratulations "on the successful accomplishment of a spacious task imaginatively conceived and most faithfully carried out".

## Recapitulation

During the 59 months (May, 1940 to March, 1945) that the Plan was in operation, approximately 360 schools and ancillary units had been established on 231 sites across Canada. From the schools had come 131,553 aircrew, an average of 2,230 a month. The R.C.A.F. had contributed 72,835 (55.4%), the R.A.F. 42,110 (32%), the R.A.A.F. 9,606 (7.3%), and the R.N.Z.A.F. 7,002 (5.3%).

Behind this brief sketch and these simple

statistics lies a story of achievement unparalleled in Canadian history—a story written not only by instructors and pupils whose yellow-painted aircraft were so familiar a sight in Canadian skies, but also by service and civilian personnel in factories, offices and airfields, doing the multitude of tasks necessary to keep the air force flying.

## Construction

Before pupils could begin training it was necessary to select sites, build roads and runways, erect hangars and barracks, and procure aircraft, engines, clothing, equipment and all the other necessary supplies. As a result, the initial burden of getting the B.C.A.T.P. into operation fell most heavily upon the small construction and equipment branches of the R.C.A.F. Both were quickly expanded by recruiting engineers, designers, draftsmen and industrial experts from civilian life, and they received invaluable assistance from specialist officers of the R.A.F. whom the Air Ministry sent to Canada early in 1940.

When the Plan was initiated, no standard design existed for hangars, accommodation buildings, mess halls or other structures. Plans for these and many other buildings were developed chiefly at Air Force Headquarters in Ottawa, where 30,000 sketch plans and drawings were prepared and approximately 1,500,000 blueprints issued. The first construction contract was awarded in February 1940. By the late summer of that year over 500 had been signed, involving expenditures totalling about \$60,000,000. The peak was reached in 1942 when 1,000 contracts were placed for an aggregate expenditure of \$80,000,000.

Pre-war R.C.A.F. and civilian airfields, numbering about twenty, served as a starting point for

## Summary of Aircrew Graduates of the Plan

OCTOBER 1940—MARCH 1945

	Pilot	Nav. "B"	Nav. "W"	Nav.	Air Bomb.	W.O.A.G.	A.G.	Naval A.G.	Flt. Eng.	Total
R.C.A.F.	25,747	5,154	421	7,280	6,659	12,744	12,917	—	1,913	72,835
R.A.F.	17,796	3,113	3,847	6,922	7,581	755	1,392	704	—	42,110
R.A.A.F.	4,045	699	—	944	799	2,875	244	—	—	9,606
R.N.Z.A.F.	2,220	829	30	724	634	2,122	443	—	—	7,002
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,808</b>	<b>9,795</b>	<b>4,298</b>	<b>15,870</b>	<b>15,673</b>	<b>18,496</b>	<b>14,996</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>1,913</b>	<b>131,553</b>



*Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill inspecting No. 2 S.F.T.S., Uplands, Ontario in December 1941. With Mr. Churchill is Hon. C. G. Power (left) and Group Captain W. R. MacBrien, O.B.E., who was the Commanding Officer of No. 2 S.F.T.S.*

flying training, but it was necessary to enlarge them and construct many new ones, as well as the required satellites. The Department of Transport, which undertook the construction and extension of runways, laid 35,000,000 square yards of concrete or asphalt, equivalent to a 20-foot highway extending 2,700 miles, or from Ottawa to Vancouver.

Approximately 7,000 hangars, accommodation buildings and drill halls were designed and constructed with the requisite facilities for heat, water, sewage and fuel storage. On many isolated

sites it was necessary to design an electric power system, using diesel, steam or gasoline generator plants. The strain that this extensive programme placed upon the manufacturing facilities of Canada often necessitated control and restriction of material. Frequently improvisation was necessary, particularly in the early days of mushroom growth when, in many instances, "more ingenuity than engineering skill" was required from the mechanical and electrical engineering staffs.

#### Equipment

The task of equipping the vast B.C.A.T.P. organization was greatly complicated in the summer of 1940 by the inability of the United Kingdom to provide aircraft, engines and other material in

accordance with the original agreement. Even when the Battle of Britain ended and the menace of invasion receded, the German submarine campaign in the Atlantic at times made the flow of supplies from the United Kingdom uncertain.

A further complication when the Plan began was the shortage or total lack in Canada of every conceivable item from complete aircraft to the smallest detail of personal equipment. For example, the R.C.A.F. in September, 1939 had only 191 airframes and 267 engines suitable for training, and many of these were obsolescent. Since much of the equipment necessary for the Plan had to be obtained from British and American sources, R.C.A.F. liaison officers were established in the United Kingdom and the United States to handle supply matters and to facilitate deliveries. At the same time, through the Department of Munitions and Supply, the manufacture in Canada of all possible types of equipment was undertaken with such energy and zeal that, in the case of certain items, production exceeded Canadian requirements and it was possible to provide quantities for the United Kingdom.

### Aeronautical Engineering

When the war began the R.C.A.F. had only 24 aeronautical engineering officers and about 1,000 skilled tradesmen. These were augmented



*The R.C.A.F. experienced no shortage of aircrew recruits.*

by 12 experienced R.A.F. officers and a considerable number of professional engineers and technicians drawn from civilian life. Upon these men fell the initial burden of getting the Plan airborne and maintaining the aircraft in serviceable condition, despite lack of tools, ground equipment and spare parts.

As has been indicated above, the spare parts situation became critical in the late summer of 1940 when the Luftwaffe attacked Britain's industrial centres and U-boats began to prey upon Atlantic convoys. Steps were taken to manufacture tools and spare parts in Canada, but before these supplies came into production, engineering officers were forced to use many ingenious devices to maintain aircraft serviceability. Fortunately, their initiative and resourcefulness did not fail.

In 1943, the peak year of the Plan, aircraft flew 7,000,000 hours, setting a record of 677,000 hours in the month of July. Despite the pressure placed upon the maintenance staffs, immediate aircraft serviceability averaged 77% and 48-hour serviceability over 86% throughout the year. In 1944, when the situation had eased with gradual reduction of the Plan, serviceability figures continued their steady rise to an average of 87% in the fourth quarter of the year.

The B.C.A.T.P. repair depots played an important part in salvaging aircraft. In 1943 alone about 990 damaged aircraft were salvaged, many from isolated locations. Major repair and overhaul was done by civilian contractors with the repair depots assisting when the demand exceeded their capacity. When the Plan began, facilities for airframe and engine overhaul in Canada were virtually negligible; by 1943, however, there were 147 civilian firms handling contracts which totalled \$188,000,000.

### Personnel

The first imperative need in personnel was for flying instructors and ground staff to man the schools as they opened. R.C.A.F. pilots, Canadian "bush" pilots and United States civilian pilots supplied a nucleus of instructors, while veterans of 1914-18 filled many of the administrative posts. The R.A.F. also provided over 250 personnel for



*The design and development of suitable flying clothing was a major problem in equipping the B.C.A.T.P.*

staff positions in the first months of 1940. Further expansion in staff was met largely by graduates from Plan schools who were trained as instructors and retained for duty in Canada. This policy was followed by all four partners in agreed proportions. Members of the Women's Division of the R.C.A.F. which was organized in the summer of 1941 and which enrolled over 17,000 recruits played an active and important part in the expansion and success of the Plan.

The R.C.A.F. experienced no shortage of aircrew recruits except in the summer of 1943. Indeed, at times the rush of recruits was so great that surplus applicants, beyond the capacity of the Plan to accept for immediate training, were assigned to guard duty until required. The Air Cadet League of Canada and the War Emergency Training Programme were of great assistance in giving potential air and groundcrew personnel preliminary training under R.C.A.F. direction.

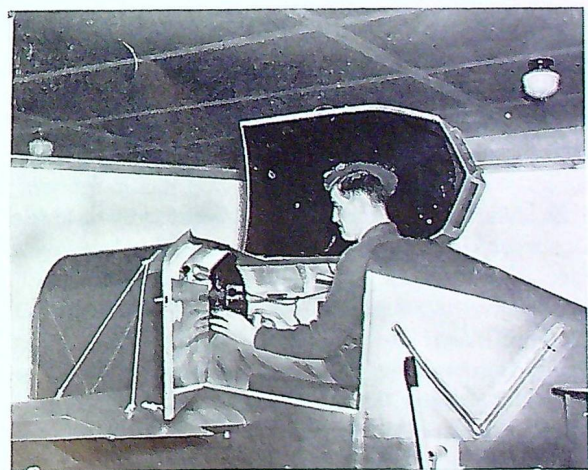
### Training

The original Plan provided for the training of three aircrew categories—Pilot, Observer, and Wireless Operator-Air Gunner. The several courses were constantly revised on the basis of operational experience and requirements and, in time, became more diversified as a result of the

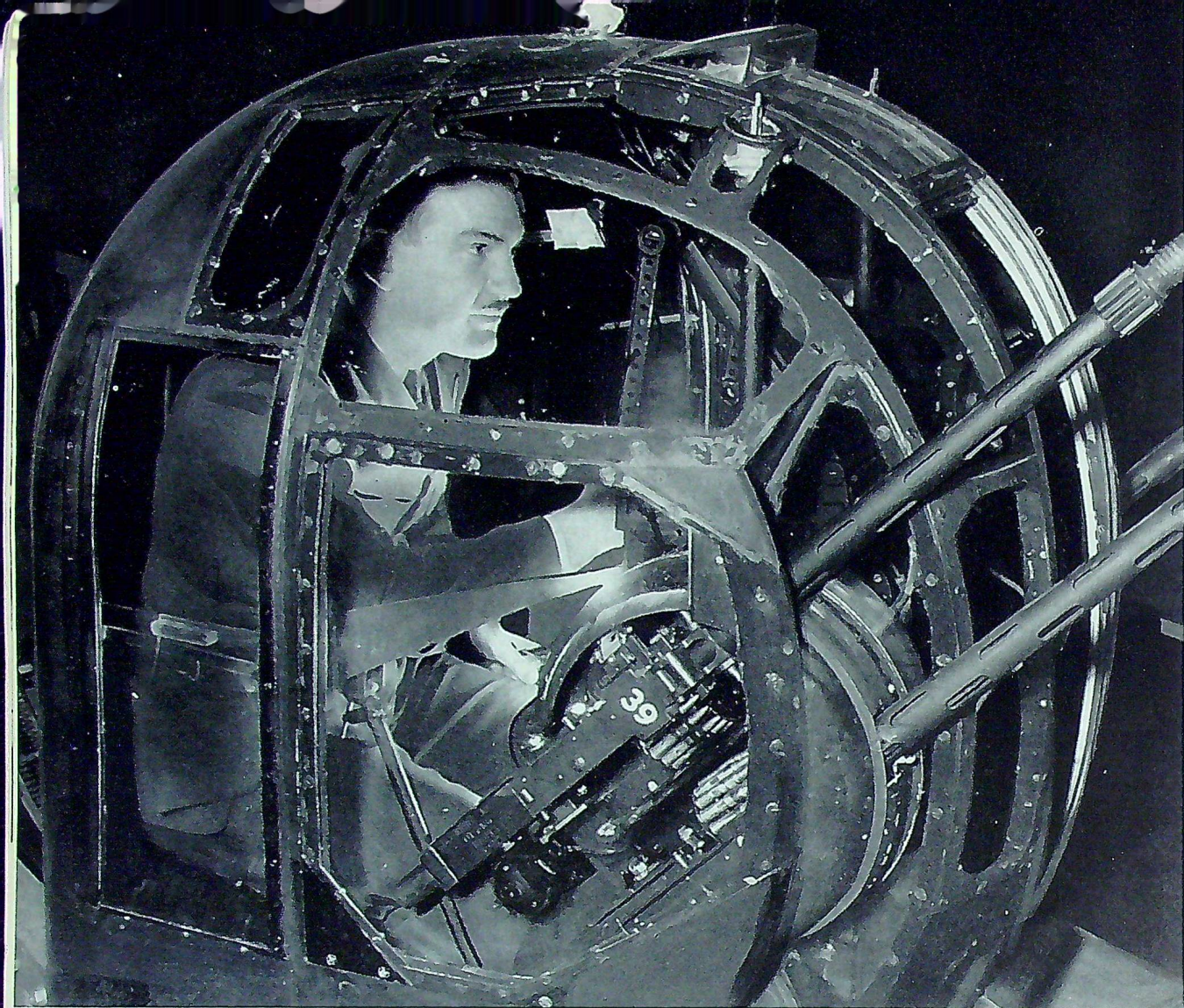
introduction of the four-engined heavy bomber. When the B.C.A.T.P. was terminated eight different categories of aircrew were being trained.

After a preliminary course at an Initial Training School, Pilots received *ab initio* instruction at Elementary Flying Training Schools which were operated under direct R.C.A.F. supervision by civilian flying clubs. Throughout the life-time of the Plan the basic E.F.T.S. syllabus underwent relatively little change, except for an extension of the course from eight to ten weeks. On completion of the E.F.T.S. stage the trainee proceeded to a Service Flying Training School for advanced instruction on heavier single-engined or twin-engined aircraft, at the end of which he received his wings.

After a preliminary four-week I.T.S. course in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia or New Zealand, Air Observers proceeded to Air Observer Schools which, like the E.F.T.S.'s, were operated by civilian companies under R.C.A.F. supervision. On conclusion of a 12-week course, devoted largely to dead-reckoning navigation and map reading, the trainees went to a Bombing and Gunnery School for a six-week course, followed by a special four-week course in astro-navigation at the Central Navigation School.



*The Link Trainer was perhaps the most important synthetic aid to pilot training.*



*In 1941, a limited number of flexible gun turrets became available which enabled air firing manipulation training to begin.*

In March 1942 the original category of Air Observer was abolished and replaced by four more specialized types—Navigator, Navigator “B,” Navigator “W” and Air Bomber. All four received a preliminary 10-week course at an I.T.S., plus navigation training and special training in wireless and air bombing, as required.

The Wireless Operator-Air Gunner pupil entered directly at Wireless School for an 18-week course that included elementary ground armament training as well as signals instruction. After Wireless

School, the pupil entered B. & G.S. for a course which was initially 4 and later 6 weeks.

Originally, W.O.A.G. trainees who failed the wireless course were remustered as air gunners and given a 4-week gunnery course at B. & G.S. Eventually, however, the demand for air gunners in heavy bombers led to the introduction, in 1942, of a special syllabus for air gunners covering a period of 12 weeks, equally divided between ground instruction and air firing. Of the total number of W.O.A.G.'s and A.G.'s graduated by the B.C.A.T.P., three-quarters were from the R.C.A.F. At the request of the Admiralty, 704 Telegraphist-Air Gunners were also trained at Plan schools in 1943-45 for the Fleet Air Arm.

In November 1943 training of Flight Engineers was instituted to meet another need in heavy-bomber expansion. All the Flight Engineers, 1913 in number, who graduated from the Plan were R.C.A.F. personnel.

In addition to the courses outlined above, operational training was also provided in Canada on six different types—single-engine fighter, twin-engine fighter-bomber, medium bomber, heavy bomber, flying boat, and medium range transport. Between 1 July, 1942 and 31 March, 1945, B.C.A.T.P. Operational Training Units and General Reconnaissance Schools graduated 22,431 aircrew, including 1,682 “matched crews” trained during the last year of the Plan.

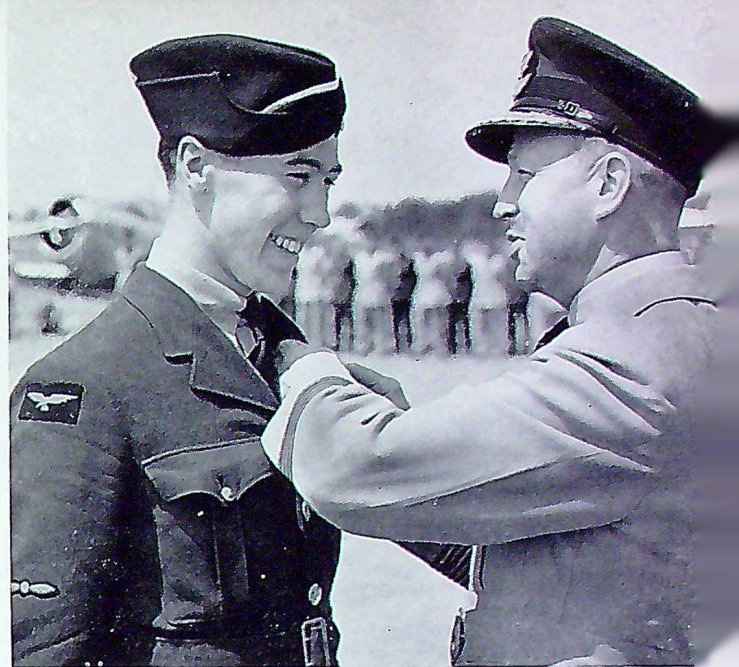
#### Accident Investigation and Prevention

In March, 1942 an Accidents Investigation Branch was established at Air Force Headquarters with a staff of specially qualified aeronautical engineers to serve as Inspectors of Accidents. Investigating officers were also stationed at each Command Headquarters. The Branch made a systematic analysis of all training accidents and used the information accumulated from this research to prepare modifications in flying regulations and training methods, and in aircraft design and equipment. As a result of the Branch's work there was a steady decrease in the accident rate.

The number of accidents (all types) per 1,000 hours flown dropped steadily from 1.363 in 1940-41 to 0.523 in 1944-45, while the number of hours flown per accident rose from 733 to 1,908 over the same period, an increase of more than 150%. The fatal accident rate per 1,000 hours flown declined from 0.089 to 0.044 during these years, while hours flown per fatal accident were doubled from 11,156 in 1940-41 to 22,388 in the last year of the Plan. In all, there were 856 fatal casualties in training; 469 were members of the R.C.A.F., 291 R.A.F., 65 R.A.A.F. and 31 R.N.Z.A.F.

#### Conclusion

In his radio address announcing the Plan on 17 December, 1939, Prime Minister King remarked: “When the Plan, in its broad outlines, was



*LAC J. W. Kinahan receiving his wings from Air Marshal Curtis who was then a Group Captain.*

proposed by the Government of the United Kingdom, it was stated that the immense influence which the development and realization of such a great project might have upon the whole course of the war, might even prove decisive.”

History has underlined his words. If the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, the historian of the Second World War may, with some justification, record that the air battle of Europe was won on the flying fields of the B.C.A.T.P.

The B.C.A.T.P. is now history—a brilliant and proud page in the annals of the peoples of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. But history, when rightly understood, speaks of the present and the future as well as of the past. Today, the history of the B.C.A.T.P. should appeal to us not merely as a great achievement but also as a challenge. For, in the words of the Hon. C. G. Power, M.C., M.P., who, as Canada's first Minister of National Defence for Air, was the guiding spirit and inspiration of the Plan, “the story of the creation and development of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan is perhaps the finest example of whole-hearted co-operation between partner nations in a common cause in our history as an association of free peoples”.

# A Background to History

(The remarkable document shown below is an exact reproduction of a memorandum which was prepared in 1936 by Air Marshal Robert Leckie, then a Group Captain in the Royal Air Force. In setting forth his intuitive proposals, Group Captain Leckie wrote the preface to a proud chapter in the history of the British Commonwealth of Nations, —Editor)

## NOTES ON THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL IN CANADA.

(The following notes are based on experience of Canada, which was my home pre-war, and to which country I was seconded from the Royal Air Force in 1920-1922 as Director of Flying Operations).

### CLIMATE.

The climate of Canada (that portion East of the Rocky Mountains) is severe. Winter temperatures down to 30° below zero are common, while 60° is not unknown. Shade temperatures in the Summer frequently reach 90°, and have reached 105°. Under those extreme conditions, however, flat cams prevail and it is rare in Canada for wind force to exceed 15 m.p.h. at any time. During the early Winter and cold the sky is clear. During the early Spring snow storms occur which make flying impossible. There is some rain in the early Spring, but none of these conditions are comparable to the adverse flying weather experienced in England, and flying can be continued with very few interruptions throughout the year. During the winter months training aircraft land on skis, an operation which is easier than landing on wheels.

### PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF TRAINING SCHOOLS IN CANADA.

During the war years the Imperial Government formed Flying Training Schools at Camp Borden, Ontario, and Beamsville, Ontario. These turned out a very large number of pilots and, so far as I am aware, were entirely successful. Records are no doubt available on this point.

### DISTANCE FROM ENGLAND.

Montreal is distant from Southampton some 3,000 miles, and with fast North Atlantic steamship services, can be reached in eight days. Time lost on the ocean, therefore, would be less than at present in sending to No. 4 F.T.S., Egypt.

### SECURITY.

A Flying Training School formed in Canada may be said to be practically immune from enemy action. (It is assumed that war with the United States is unthinkable). The presence of the United States as a neutral guarantees the security of Canada. I cannot visualise any circumstances under which the United States would tolerate the intrusion of a European Power into Canada.

### SOURCE OF SUPPLY.

In the event of a European war depriving us, even temporarily, of our sea communications, an F.T.S. in Canada would be able to maintain itself satisfactorily by obtaining its supplies of aircraft, engines, and war-like stores from American sources. (Unless this is precluded by recent American legislation on the subject of supplies during war to belligerents). In any event, ocean borne supplies on the North Atlantic are likely to be more easily maintained than in the Mediterranean or Southern hemisphere.

### FOREIGN RACES.

The attitude of the nationals in a crisis will give no cause for anxiety - racial difficulties are non-existent.

ROYAL CANADIAN  
AIR FORCE.

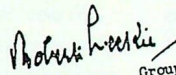
SOURCE OF  
SUPPLY FOR  
SHORT SERVICE  
ENTRY.

The advantages that would accrue from the operation of an F.T.S. cradled in a Dominion like Canada, which has its own Royal Canadian Air Force, and where esprit de corps is high, and where moreover there is a tradition among the middle-aged men of Canada sympathetic toward the R.A.F., are obvious and need not be laboured.

At the end of the war 1914-1918, 11,410 Canadians were commissioned or cadets under training for the R.A.F. Since the total number of R.A.F. Officers was approximately 30,000, and as these included Technical, Stores, and Medical, it will be seen that, in point of fact, a large portion of the pilots in the R.A.F. were Canadians. The athletic outdoor life led by the young Canadian makes flying the natural progression from his ordinary sport, and I believe is attributable to the fact that Canadians during the war took to it so naturally. There is in Canada an excellent source of supply for short service officers for the R.A.F. of a type better, in my considered opinion, than we are recruiting today, and the presence of an F.T.S. in their midst would crystallise interest in the R.A.F. and certainly produce excellent applicants if these are required.

APPROVAL OF  
DOMINION  
GOVERNMENT.

How the scheme would be received politically I am not in a position to say, but I am certain that it would be looked upon with great favour by the senior officers of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Department of the Ministry of Defence. Personally I am of the opinion that it is a most desirable scheme, and infinitely to be preferred to forming a further F.T.S. abroad.

  
Group Captain,  
Superintendent, R.A.F. Reserve.

-2-

I have already given my views on Cyprus from the training aspect. Egypt has the advantage of the continuous fine weather which allows of high totals of flying hours - offset, however, by lack of bad weather training and limited navigational training.

I have, however, considered the possibility of establishing a F.T.S. in Canada, and at 2A. I attach some notes on the subject set out by Group Captain Leckie, who has had experience of conditions in Canada. From the training point of view, Canada has advantages in weather, terrain, accessibility to U.K. etc. over any other overseas location. The only difficulty I can foresee is the modification of our aircraft to use skis during the winter months, but I imagine this is not an insuperable obstacle.

  
D. of T.

23.5.36

# From Sketches to Schools

by Group Captain E. C. LUKE, O.B.E.

*(Group Captain Luke has been associated with the R.C.A.F. almost from its inception. In 1939, he was posted to Air Force Headquarters as Deputy Director of Works and Buildings, just in time to gain a first-hand knowledge of the amazing construction programme of the B.C.A.T.P.—Editor)*

HOW VIVIDLY I RECALL the vital, strenuous days that followed the inauguration of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan! Those were anxious times, filled, so it seemed, with uncertainty and an everlasting pursuit of the impossible. As the months rolled by, desperation gave way to a tremendous impulse to create the greatest air training machinery that Canada had ever known.

Time and date were ignored. Headquarters personnel toiled from nine in the morning until twelve at night, seven days a week. In the "Works and Bricks" offices, the blue-printing machines ground on and on, while weary R.C.A.F. engineers and architects laboured at ever-increasing stacks of plans, specifications, estimates and contracts.

In the field, where the sweat poured, gangs of willing men bent to their work in rain or shine, around the clock, accompanied by the mingled roar of truck, tractor, and rock drill. While the rest of Canada looked on in astonishment, fields were levelled, runways were laid in great geometric patterns, buildings rose from the ground, and flying schools were opened in record-breaking time.

The story of the B.C.A.T.P. would not be complete without some account of the heterogeneous organization that built these schools. A group from the Department of Transport engineered and provided the aerodromes, power, access roads and water. Because they anticipated the need for a chain of training aerodromes, the D. of T. saved months of precious time by selecting and surveying possible sites even before the advent of the B.C.A.T.P. Our own R.C.A.F.

Works and Buildings organization designed the buildings, roads and ancillary systems, and undertook the field supervision. The Department of Munitions and Supply handled the contracting and purchasing, the Canadian contractors themselves provided the equipment and skill to turn the plans into reality.

It was a clumsy team at first, and there were some bad fumbles. Through 1940 and '41 the determination to succeed prevailed, however, and there was eventually no construction problem that could not be solved. In one instance, the keys to a finished school were handed to the R.C.A.F. opening party six weeks after the first truck had driven onto the farmer's ground.

From a modest and somewhat confused beginning in the Fall of 1939, there gradually emerged an engineering and construction organization which tackled, successfully, the largest undertaking of its kind in history. When the physical requirements of the Plan became known, their magnitude confounded every member of the construction staff. There must be some, even now, who will join the writer in a confession of the near hopelessness of those days.

The worst blow was still to come. Who can forget the staggering announcement from the C.A.S. in May, 1940, that opening dates had been drastically advanced, and that two years' construction was to be telescoped into one? This was sheer madness.

Madness or not, however, it had to be done, and slowly the pieces began to fit together. One by one the schools opened—some in deep mud, some with makeshift heating and water arrangements—and training was under way. The fact

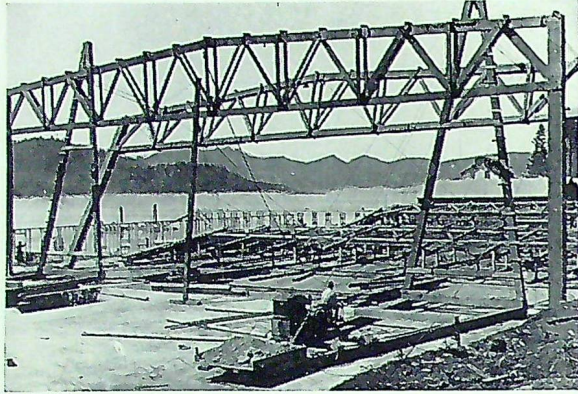


*A Works and Building Drafting Office at Air Force Headquarters in the Autumn of 1939.*

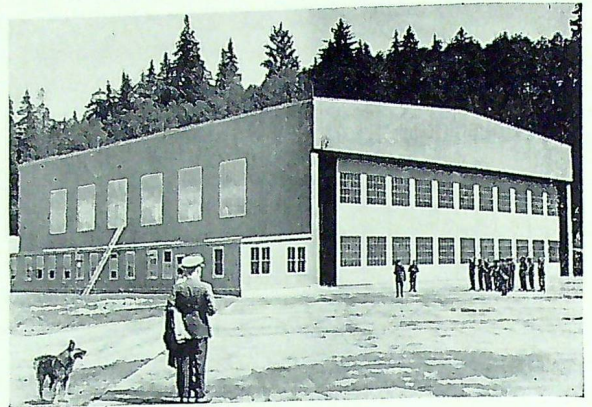
that training was possible under some of the local conditions is a tribute, not only to the Works and Buildings organization, but also to the courage and determination of the opening parties who suffered unbelievable discomfort and hardships.

An incident occurred during this period that I hope may now be told without causing any embarrassment. A party of V.I.P.'s made a tactical error in visiting a prairie school that had recently been opened in gumbo season. The inevitable happened. Their staff cars sank to the axles, and they were forced to carry on in high rubber boots, up to their knees in good old Manitoba mud. The next morning at 0901 hours an order emanated from a very high level to the effect that, at once, the very first thing to be done at every site was to pave the roads. It was a splendid but very impractical idea. A considerable period elapsed before peace was restored with all concerned.

A major problem arose in the early months which involved an immediate decision. Should hangar frames be built of steel or timber? The usual arguments were presented, pro and con. There were those who said that a wood truss with a span of one hundred feet or more was impractical. Because of the limited availability of steel under a mobilization economy, however, it was decided to use timber with a fire-resisting impregnation. A suitable design was produced, and the problem was then passed to the Timber Controller. The results were soon evident. Hangar skeletons began to appear against the skyline from coast to coast. How it was done, I may never know, but a tribute is due, in particular, to the B.C. fir industry. Hangars were erected where and when they were



*Erection of trusses for typical wooden hangars.*



*The same hangar completed.*

needed, and the steel was saved for other vital products. Cost too, was in our favour. It was only during the late years of the war that we were able to obtain steel frames on a comparable basis.

Mention must also be made of the important pioneer work done in Canada during the war years with such things as ply-wood and pre-fabrication. New ideas emerged, and many economies were achieved. The Department of Transport engineers can tell a tale of problems, solutions, and advances in the field of aerodrome construction.

I think the keynote to the ultimate success of

the Plan was expressed one day by Air Marshal Robert Leckie, during one of the many meetings of the Aerodrome Development Committee. Things had not been going too well. As the afternoon wore on, the problems were no nearer to solution, and tempers were fraying. He suddenly halted the discussions and said quietly: "Gentlemen, there is no problem that cannot be solved by men of good will who are gathered around a conference table determined to find a solution."

The meeting soon concluded its work. It was a sobering challenge that should go far beyond that smoky room. I have never forgotten it.



## A KICK IN TIME

LATE IN THE SUMMER of 1942 Group Captain J. G. Stephenson, who was O.C. Trenton's Flying Instructors' School, lost his bearings in a pea-souper while Captain of a Lockheed "12." To add to his difficulties, the R/T refused to function.

Fortunately for Group Captain Stephenson, one of his passengers was Air Vice Marshal R. E. McBurney, who was then a Group Captain and one of the Air Force's leading signals experts. Group Captain McBurney tackled the obstinate radio—a type which he had designed himself—in his best professional manner. After about five minutes' futile tinkering, he administered a resounding kick to the mute apparatus. It must have been a good remedy, for the radio suddenly began to percolate. Whether Air Vice Marshal McBurney, who is now the Air Officer Commanding, Air Materiel Command, still recommends this unorthodox method of servicing no one has been able to determine; nevertheless, it permitted Group Captain Stephenson to orient himself and return safely to base.

# Ground Training in the B.C.A.T.P.

*(The material for this article was prepared by Squadron Leader W. Skelding and Flight Lieutenant C. E. Elliott, both of whom have been closely connected with ground training in the R.C.A.F. for many years.—Editor)*

WHEN THE R.C.A.F. was placed on Active Service in 1939, the existing ground training facilities were capable of producing only 400 groundcrew per year. In addition, fully trained tradesmen in the R.C.A.F. numbered less than 1500 men. With the advent of the B.C.A.T.P. there was a consequent need for a school which could produce large numbers of skilled tradesmen in a minimum of time.

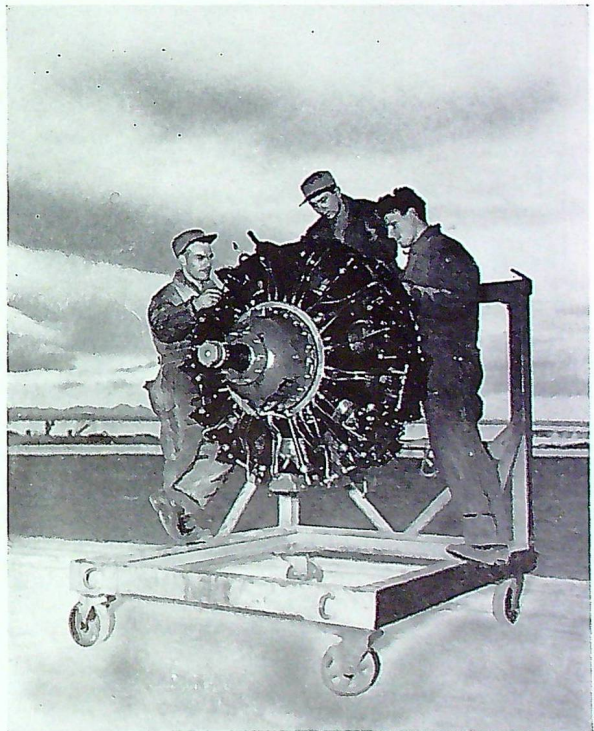
On 1st November, 1939 therefore, the Department of National Defence obtained from the Provincial Government a large group of modern buildings at St. Thomas, Ontario, which had originally been designed as a mental hospital. At this site was formed a Technical Training School which ultimately became the most important source of trained groundcrew in the R.C.A.F. The first class to arrive at the school, four in number, commenced training on the 4th of December 1939. At the same time a nucleus of skilled tradesmen from various R.C.A.F. units were arriving to begin the arduous task of assembling equipment, organizing lectures and gathering technical data.

With the R.C.A.F. in the throes of preparing for war, it was next to impossible to obtain the requisite instructional equipment. For many months, the School depended entirely upon supplies robbed from Camp Borden and Trenton, and the shortage of tools made it necessary for students to share tool-boxes and to train in two shifts.

In January, 1940, the staff was augmented by approximately 50 R.A.F. officers and N.C.O.'s, especially chosen to assist in organizing the Technical Training School. The exchange of views and ideas between the R.C.A.F. and R.A.F. personnel and the resultant teamwork paved the way to a smooth and efficient organization. Many obstacles were overcome, and eventually, through careful planning by both the technical and ad-

ministrative staff, training assumed the comparatively uneventful tenor so typical of a Technical School.

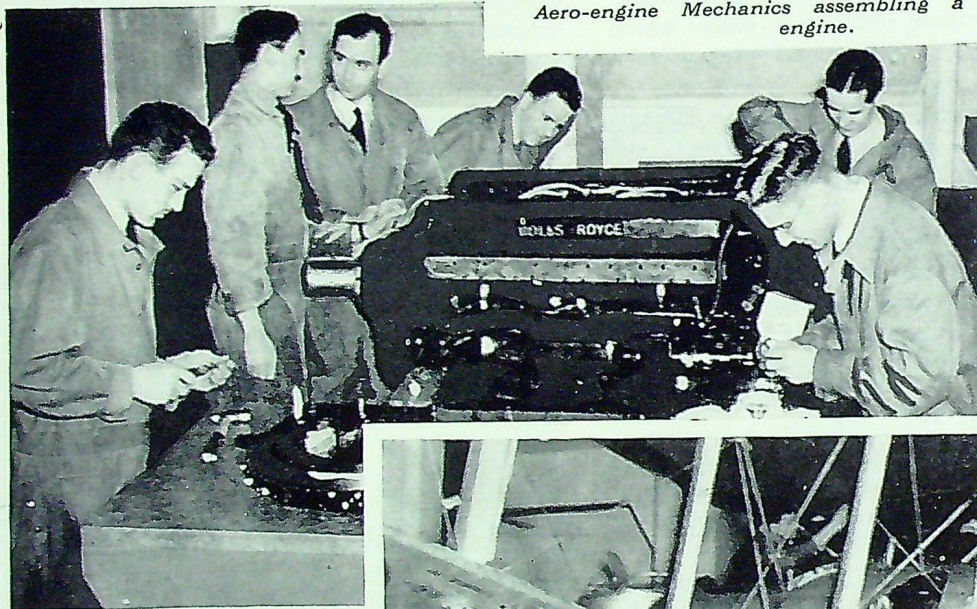
Within a year of its opening, the School had successfully trained over 10,000 men. By this time it had become difficult for the staff to grasp the magnitude of their accomplishment, and they were faced with their greatest enemy—the temptation to do less than their best. It is to their everlasting credit that they performed their duties with such courage and efficiency. In the end, "The Battle of St. Thomas", as it was often called, provided 50,000 fully trained groundcrew



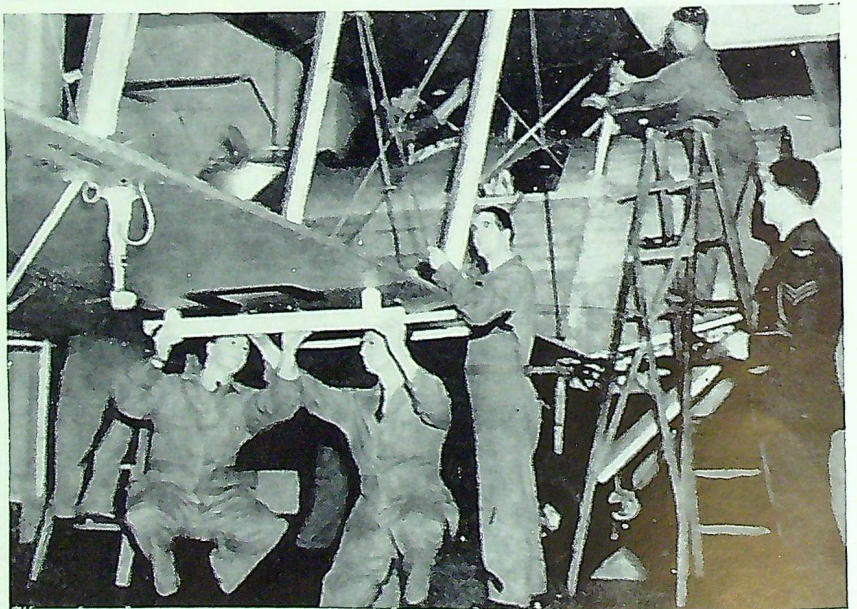
*Tradesmen of the B.C.A.T.P. preparing an aero-engine for a quick change.*



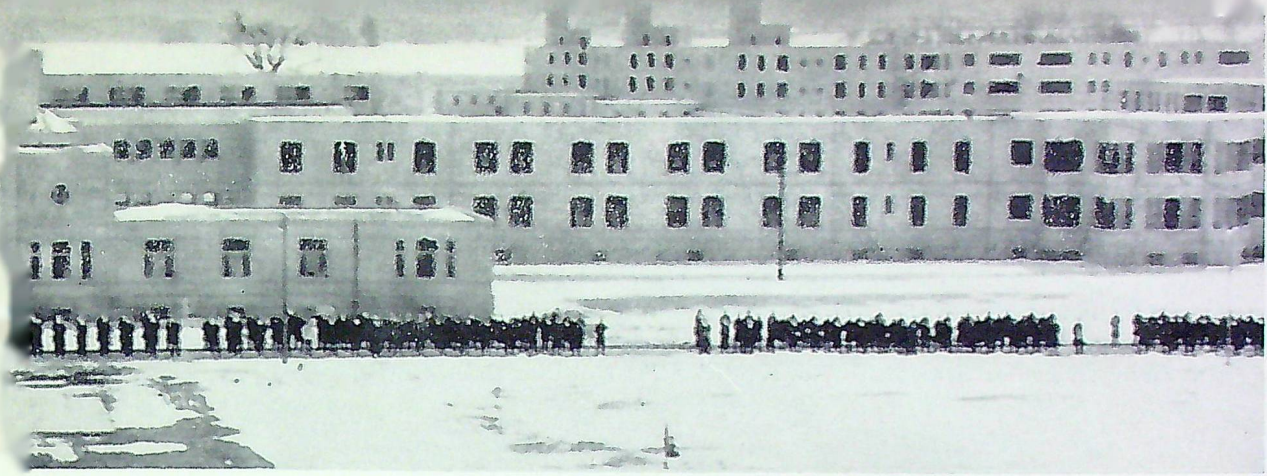
*The Technical Training School at St. Thomas, Ontario.*



*Aero-engine Mechanics assembling a Rolls-Royce engine.*



*Practical instruction on the fuselage of a "retired" aircraft at the School of Aeronautical Engineering in Montreal.*



who served at Flying Schools across Canada and in many other theatres as members of R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. Squadrons and Repair Units.

Great though it was, the Technical Training School at St. Thomas could not undertake the entire task of ground training in the R.C.A.F. There was, indeed, a considerable number and variety of other schools throughout Canada. The K.T.S. (Composite Training School) at Trenton, Ontario, provided training for Clerks, M.T. Mechanics, Service Police, Security Guards and Physical Training and Drill Instructors. In addition, the K.T.S. operated a Reselection Wing for aircrew who had ceased training in one category and were transferring to another. Early in 1942, more than 1800 aircrew passed through this Wing each month.

The Armament School at Mountain View, Ontario, the Wireless and Aeronautical Schools at Montreal and the Signals Training School at Clinton, Ontario, also contributed thousands of trained officers and men to the vast flow of graduates of the B.C.A.T.P. It is unfortunate that a more detailed account cannot be given of the effort and teamwork of the large administrative, technical and domestic staff that manned these units. Suffice it to say that everyone—airmen, airwomen, officers and civilians—who laboured so industriously and with such devotion to maintain the training programme, served their country just as truly as those who manned the actual battle fronts.



## BOOM TOWN

WHEN CANADA declared war in 1939, the R.C.A.F. Flying Instructors' School was located at Camp Borden, Ontario.

Because of the increasing demands for flying instructors, the school was transferred to R.C.A.F. Station Trenton, Ontario, in January, 1940.

Curious as it may seem, the move was carried out on a Saturday and the Flying Instructors' School was doing business at Trenton the following Monday.



# Per Ardua

by Group Captain J. B. MILLWARD, D.F.C.

*(Group Capt. Millward joined the R.C.A.F. in 1941, won his pilot's wings and flew two tours of operations with Bomber Command and the Pathfinder Force. Subsequently, he commanded a Heavy Bomber Station in No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Bomber Group.—Editor)*

THE RAPID GROWTH, effective organization and incalculable contribution of the B.C.A.T.P. towards the successful outcome of the Second World War have been the subject of frequent and well-deserved praise. In retrospect, however, there were many little incidents, of purely local significance or personal nature, which scarcely reflected the grandeur of that remarkable undertaking. To those of us who were privileged to be trained under the B.C.A.T.P. our memories are compounded of many experiences, both sad and gay, trivial and significant—incidents, in short, that comprise a rich “pot-pourri” of memory.

Surely no three-ring circus, for example, could possibly provide the unparalleled entertainment so lavishly displayed by a recruit class at an Elementary Flying Training School during their first two weeks of training. “Father Time” used to be the common enemy for all newcomers at these units, for it was not a question of whether you could eventually solo, but whether you could do so in a limited number of hours. Everyone experienced the gamut of human emotions from frustration, and sometimes defeat, to the glorious triumph on one's first shaky solo landing. The spectacle of downwind landings and take-offs, ground-loops and swings, were every day occurrences and must have provided the instructors, as it did the students, with an inexhaustible fund of wonderful stories.

Well do I recall the experience of a junior classmate at E.F.T.S. who had climbed into the front seat of a Fleet for his first flight, actually his first flight in an aeroplane of any type. The aircraft was parked directly in front of the Flight Office, the engine was ticking over, and for some reason best known to himself the instructor

decided to check in at the Flight Office before taking off. During the instructor's absence, our fledgling pilot dropped his glove on the cockpit floor. Reaching down to pick it up, he inadvertently pushed the throttle to take-off position and the Fleet promptly leaped through the glass window of the Flight Office and deposited itself squarely in the middle of that newly erected building. I need hardly describe the general consternation and the record-breaking evacuation of that office.

One incident, however, keeps recurring in my mind for no good reason whatsoever. It was in no way unique, but I shall recount it for whatever it's worth. It was New Year's 1942; in fact, to be downright accurate, it was 0100 hours, 1 January 1942. Together with five other defaulters, I surveyed with jaundiced eye the freshly mopped floor of the office of the Commanding Officer of No. 8 S.F.T.S., Moncton, then Group Captain W. W. Brown, and meditated on the uncertain ways of life. Even-handed justice had caused our regrettable plight. Before the august tribunal of our Squadron Commander we had pleaded in vain that a derailment of the passenger train from Saint John, New Brunswick, had caused us to be four hours late returning from Christmas leave, and what's more, we had written proof from the conductor. An act of God, however, went unrecognized in his lexicon of justice and we were sentenced abruptly to five days' C.B. with associated duties.

You may well have guessed the chief cause of our rancour. None of us had yet espoused the forces of prohibition, nor had our names been inscribed in the book of life of Alcoholics Anonymous. While our fellow LAC's were ushering in



*The Control Tower at No. 8 S.F.T.S. Moncton, N.B.*

the New Year in appropriate and lively manner in the wet canteen, we were industriously swilling it in on the floor of the Administration Building of 8 S.F.T.S. Over our stooped brigade towered a Flight Sergeant, who for sheer mental vacuity unquestionably had Sergeant Shatterproof out-pointed. This fantastic martinet was actually enjoying his New Year's Eve—the whims of war are mysterious indeed.

What is the moral, if any, of this trivial incident? Perhaps it may be found in the words of our revered poet—"Sweet are the uses of adversity." Early New Year's Day at Moncton saw a long line of grounded aircraft on the tarmac. Overhead, droning in fledgling formation, were six Harvard aircraft manned by the bucket brigade; no doubt the only men on the entire station who were not indisposed.

# Station Routine

To those who made a practice of reading Daily Routine Orders from day to day, the item which has been reproduced below will be readily recognizable as the cover page of a typical war-time D.R.O. To the great majority who religiously avoided station D.R.O.'s, the picture should prove to be an object of great curiosity.

Regardless of one's point of view, however, Daily Routine Orders are inevitable. Their unassuming pages, particularly Part I which outlines the "Station Routine", dictate the daily activities of officer and airman alike. Lest we forget, and with nostalgic intent, the accompanying photographs have been included to portray a day in the history of a B.C.A.T.P. training station.

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE  
DAILY ROUTINE ORDERS

Code No. 2 I C C C C I  
Serial No. 5 4  
Page 1  
March 3rd, 1944.

Issued by Group Captain F.C. Carling-Kelly,  
Commanding No. 1 S.F.T.S., Camp Borden, Ontario.

PART I - ADMINISTRATION

1. ROUTINE  
Saturday  
0630 hrs - Reveille  
0700 hrs - Breakfast  
0730 hrs - Working Parade (Aircrew for flying)  
0730 hrs - Working Parade (Hdqs. Repair Squadrons)  
0745 hrs - Working Parade (Airmen & Airwomen)  
0745 hrs - Sick Parade (Airmen & Airwomen)  
0800 hrs - Ensign raising Orderly Room  
0800 hrs - Unit Commanders Orderly Room  
1000 hrs - Commanding Officers Orderly Room  
1030 hrs - 1200 hrs - P.T. & Sports for Aircrew  
1100 hrs - Dinner  
1200 hrs - Working Parade (Aircrew - G.I.S.)  
1250 hrs - Working Parade (Hdqs. & Repair Sqns.)  
1315 hrs - Sick Parade (Airmen & Airwomen)  
1315 hrs - Sick Parade - Supper  
1600 hrs - 1830 hrs - Flying ceases  
1800 hrs - Flying ceases  
1900 hrs - Ensign lowering  
2200 hrs - Roll call in barracks  
2230 hrs - Lights out
2. DENTAL PARADE  
Emergency dental treatment will be given at 0900 hours, ONLY, Saturday, 4th March, 1944.
3. DUTY WATCH POSTINGS  
The w/s personnel are assigned to duty watches as shown, *on action*

cf. 1 Mar/44.	R118883	Cpl Haddy, W.F.	.....No. 2	Duty Watch
	R198099	AC1 McLaren, W.B.	.....No. 4	Duty Watch
	R131268	LAC Manary, S.H.	.....No. 3	Duty Watch
	R87386	Cpl Taylor, C.R.	.....No. 2	Duty Watch
	R257252	AC2 Eyre, W.	.....No. 2	Duty Watch
	R257212	AC2 Eyre, R.	.....No. 4	Duty Watch
	R219962	AC2 Ward, B.E.	.....No. 2	Duty Watch
	R257214	AC2 Angus, P.E.	.....No. 4	Duty Watch
			.....No. 3	Duty Watch



0630 hrs—Reveille



0500 hrs-0730 hrs—Breakfast



0715 hrs—Working Parade (Aircrew for flying)



0745 hrs—Sick Parade (Airmen and Airwomen)



0800 hrs—Ensign raising



1030 hrs—Commanding Officers  
Orderly Room

1800 hrs—Flying ceases



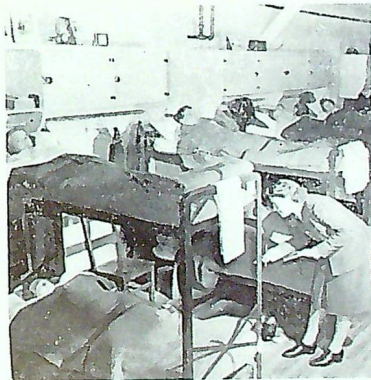
1200 hrs—Dinner



2230 hrs—Lights out



1250 hrs—Working Parade (Aircrew-G.I.S.)



2200 hrs—Roll call in barracks



# The Alumni

On the same day that the staff and students of No. 1 S.F.T.S. were busily involved in their routine of daily activities, the vast operational alumni of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan pursued a somewhat different routine in the various theatres of war throughout the world.



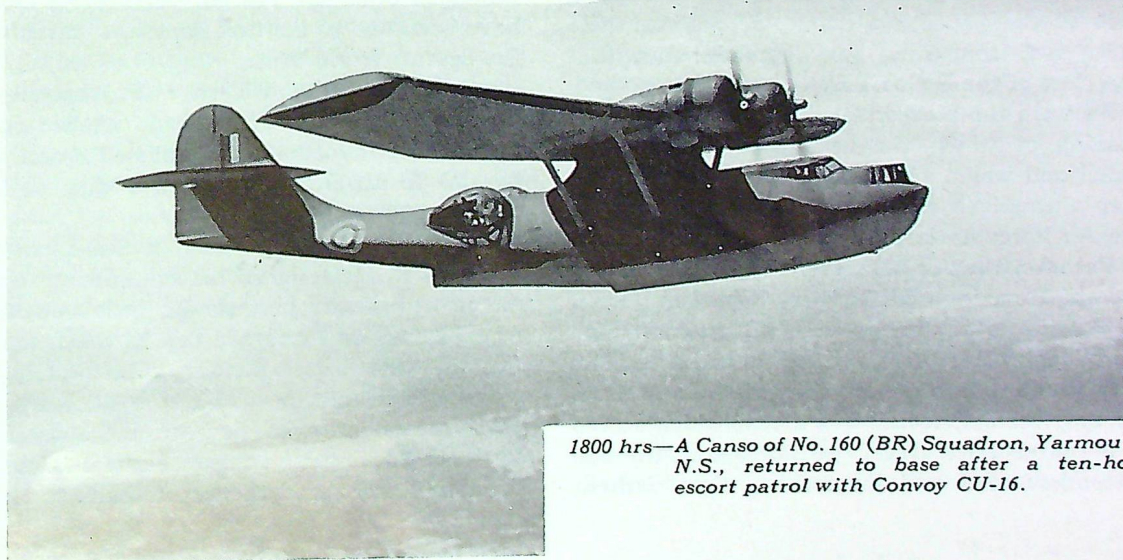
*0705 hrs—Halifax crews of Nos. 419, 428, 429, 431 and 434 Squadrons, No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Bomber Group, clambered from their aircraft after a highly successful attack on Meulan les Mureaux.*



*0830 hrs—Pilots of Nos. 401, 412, 403 and 416 (Fighter) Squadrons scrambled for a circus with R.A.F. Marauders which attacked Laon/Athies.*



1105 hrs—Wellington B for Baker of No. 203 Squadron, S.E.A.A.C., with a mixed crew of Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians and Englishmen, set course from Ratmalana aerodrome to carry out an anti-sub sea-lane patrol between Bombay and Colombo, Ceylon.



1800 hrs—A Canso of No. 160 (BR) Squadron, Yarmouth, N.S., returned to base after a ten-hour escort patrol with Convoy CU-16.

# The First of the Many

by Squadron Leader J. GELLNER, D.F.C.

*(Squadron Leader Gellner, a native of Czechoslovakia, was a Lieutenant in the Czechoslovakian Army Reserve prior to the war with Germany. He later escaped from his home-land via Yugoslavia, Italy and the United States, and enlisted in the R.C.A.F. in April, 1940. After graduating in the first class of the B.C.A.T.P., he proceeded overseas and completed a tour of operations in R.A.F. Bomber Command. He later returned to Canada, was trained as a pilot, and was finally posted overseas again to No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Bomber Group. In addition to the D.F.C., Squadron Leader Gellner wears the Czechoslovakian Military Cross and Gallantry Medal.—Editor)*

THE MEMORIAL GATES at R.C.A.F. Station Trenton, Ontario, look down upon the parade square where just nine years ago, on the 24th of October, 1940, the first products of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan received their wings. It was a small beginning for an undertaking which ultimately gave more than 130,000 trained aircrew to the Air Forces of the Commonwealth. On that memorable day there were only 38 of us; 38 Air Observers, the first of the many.

It may seem strange that I never again found that atmosphere in which we did our training; neither when I saw later classes of the B.C.A.T.P. as an instructor, nor when I again became a pupil while being re-trained as a Pilot. Perhaps it is because of the age-old human failing of looking back to the "good old days", or perhaps there really was something very special about that first class of the B.C.A.T.P.

We were the pioneers—pioneers of a course of training of which the usefulness was not yet tested and which was taught by instructors who were themselves pioneers. We were pioneers of new Air Force stations: the Initial Training School in Toronto, the Air Observer School at Malton and the Bombing and Gunnery School at Jarvis. In Toronto, our quarters were still fragrant with the odour, real or imagined, of the riding stables from which they had been converted. In Malton, our only recreation hall was a tent which served as a canteen. At Jarvis, we floundered through bottomless mud and lived for a time without

water facilities. Still, our morale did not suffer, whatever the discomfort. Any morale-boosting that may have been needed was provided by the urgency of our job. We were at A.O.S. when France fell. We were at B. & G.S. when the Battle of Britain reached its climax.

I often think of my classmates—

Of Scott, the youngest, big, gangling, blond, who perished in the famous torpedo attack on the "Gneisenau" in Brest Harbour. That was the attack for which the pilot of Scott's Beaufort, Flying Officer Campbell, was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously.

Of Jepson, the American, who as the flamboyant Southerner, stood out amongst all those simple Canadian boys. He too fell very early; he must have been one of the first American casualties of the Second World War.

Of Snell, who had been a Provisional Pilot Officer in the R.C.A.F. but had "washed out" as a Pilot. He immediately re-enlisted as an AC-2, became an Air Observer, and was killed in action early in 1941.

Of Acland, who had been a Sub-Lieutenant, R.C.N.V.R. He resigned his commission to enlist in the Air Force because he believed that he would see action sooner. In this he was frustrated. Acland was killed in a flying accident soon after reaching England.

Of Alexander, who flew on more than fifty sorties in Wellingtons in the see-saw battles of the Western Desert, and then came back to Canada

to re-train as a Pilot. He returned overseas and was shot down while towing a glider to Arnheim.

These are sad but proud memories. Two-thirds of the first class of the B.C.A.T.P. were killed within one year of graduation—during that intense year of 1941 when we were outnumbered but not outfought.

Thirty-seven of the original thirty-eight went overseas in November, 1940. We sailed on the "Duchess of Richmond," unescorted. Only a week before, Captain Fegan, V.C., had given his life while saving his convoy in a desperate and unequal battle of his auxiliary merchant-cruiser with a German pocket-battleship. The latter was still at large. The only armament of the "Duchess of Richmond" was an archaic, 4-inch gun on the poop, manned by naval ratings, and a puny Lewis .303-inch machine gun on the bridge. We manned the Lewis gun.

It was a tense journey. Everyone slept fully clothed, and the ship steamed far to the North at full speed.

After landing at Liverpool we saw the bombed houses and received our first taste of an air raid. The next day, in London, we were driven through streets of still-smoking rubble to the R.A.F. Depot at Uxbridge. One of my friends, a very young, ginger-topped westerner, turned to me, the only European in the class, and said, "John, we are getting hard."

And hard we had to be. I think that my experience in joining a bomber squadron in East Anglia must have been typical of what my classmates saw on other stations throughout England. I reported to the Adjutant, a thin and pale-faced Flight Lieutenant pilot. When he rose, I saw that he was hobbling on a stick. He told me that they had lost their Wing Commander on a recent raid but that one of the Flight Commanders would see me.

I then faced a tall, blond Squadron Leader who wore the D.F.C.—at that time still a very rare sight. "We're a bit down on our luck, just now," he said comfortably. "We have only half-a-dozen crews at present. But with you here we might put together a seventh. There are a few 'spares' around, and the Adjutant would also like to fly again . . ."



*Squadron Leader J. Gellner, D.F.C.*

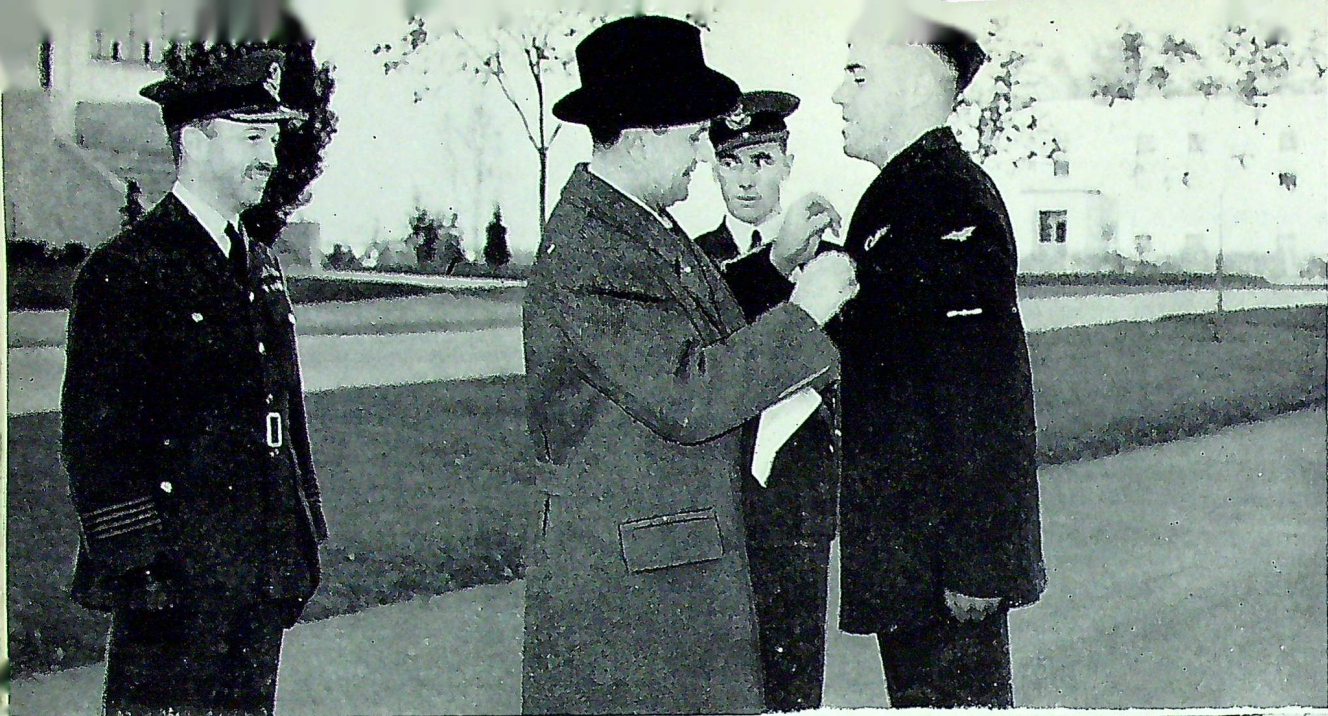
In those days one gained a good deal of respect for the Air Force.

Soon, letters began to arrive from class-mates: "Dear John: Dick did not come back from Stavanger yesterday . . ."; "Dear John: Bob is missing . . . Hamburg . . ."

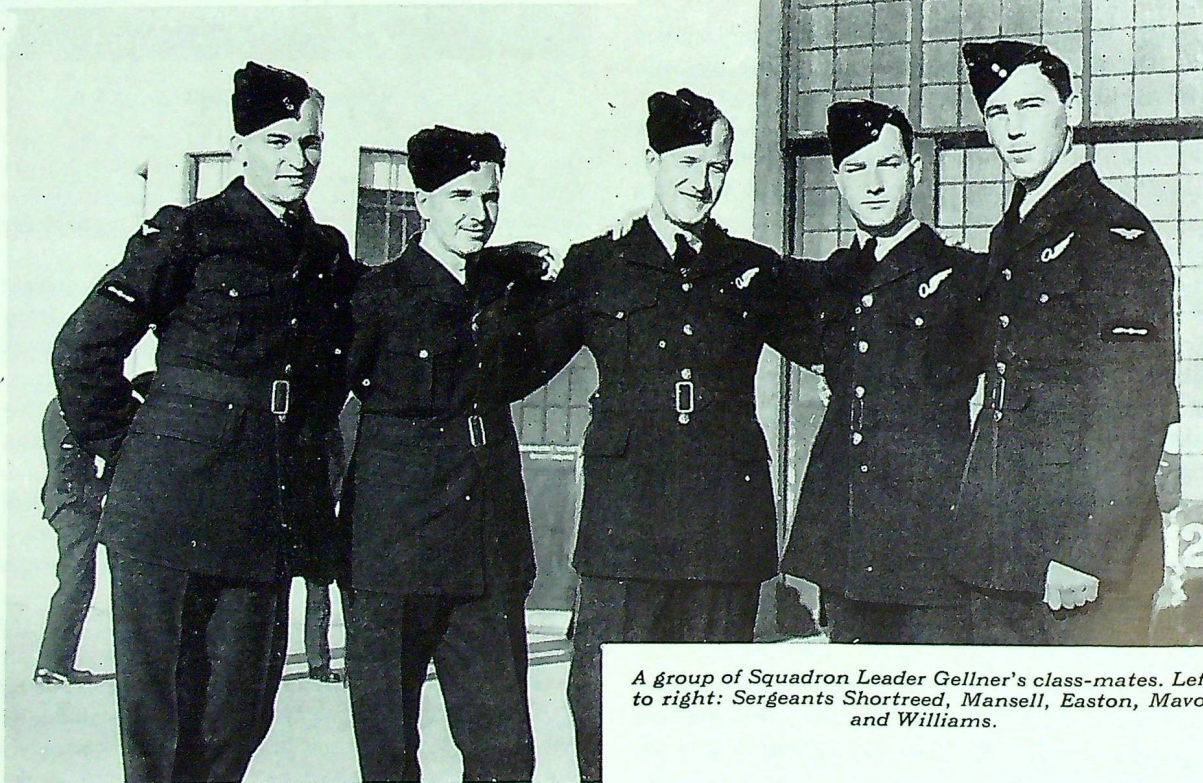
And so it went. "Torpedo attack off Norway"—"The Ruhr"—"The Invasion Force"—"Missing, Benghazi . . ."

The first class of the B.C.A.T.P. gave its full share of blood in those days of anguish which, in wars waged by democracies, seemingly always must precede the days of victory.

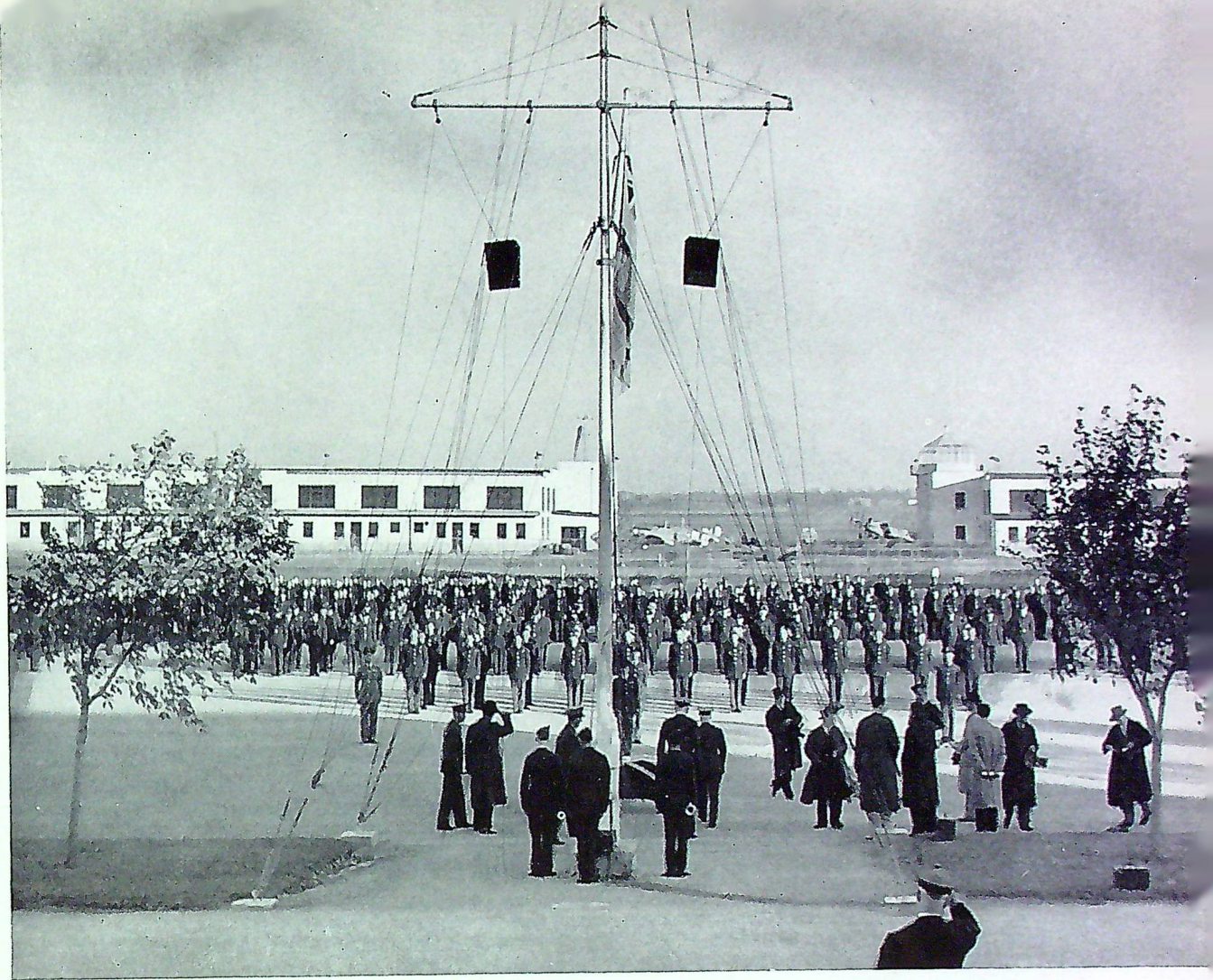
Those who are left of the first thirty-eight graduates of the B.C.A.T.P. are good friends. We are dispersed across Canada. One is an advertising artist in Montreal; another a market-gardener in Windsor; yet another a free-lance writer in Saskatchewan. Three of us have remained in the



*Squadron Leader Gellner receiving his Wings from former Acting Deputy Minister for Air, James S. Duncan. Standing at the left is the present Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal W. A. Curtis.*



*A group of Squadron Leader Gellner's class-mates. Left to right: Sergeants Shortreed, Mansell, Easton, Mavor and Williams.*



*A general view of the first Wings Parade*

Service: "Red," who was a P.O.W. in Germany and became one of the great escape-artists of the war, is engaged in some mysterious experiments in the Institute of Aviation Medicine; "Butch" is flying with one of the Photographic Squadrons; and I am poring over papers at the R.C.A.F. Staff College to acquire that crystal-clarity of written and oral expression which, we are told, is the hall-mark of a good staff officer.

Whenever we three meet—and at one time not so long ago we were all stationed at Trenton, from whence we sallied forth nine years ago—we

hark back to the days of our training and to our old friends. To have been members of the first class of the B.C.A.T.P. has been a powerful motive in choosing the R.C.A.F. as our vocation; it has remained the strongest impression in our almost ten years in the Service; it is our greatest pride.



# The Women's Division of the R.C.A.F.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

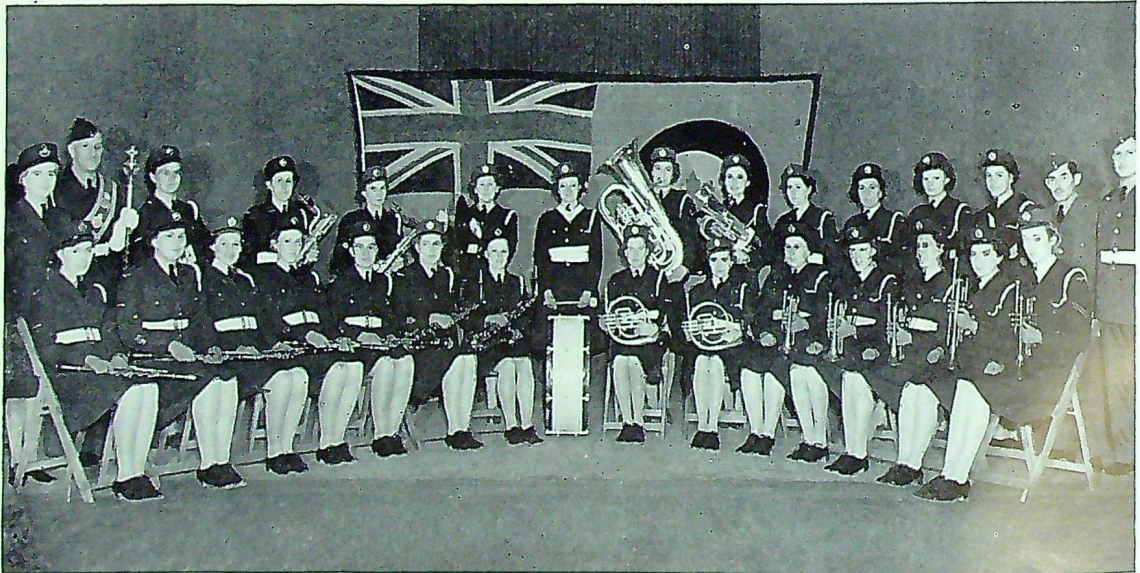
THE NEED for a women's component in the Royal Canadian Air Force was realized early in the history of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. In the late spring of 1941, Air Force Headquarters announced that "increased demand for man-power for combatant duties had resulted in a decision to replace airmen by airwomen in such non-combatant trades as might be decided from time to time". Order-in-Council 4798, dated 2nd July 1941, was literally the birth certificate of the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force (C.W.A.A.F.), or as it was later designated, the Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Once the Order-in-Council had been passed, the Air Force proceeded to organize this important component. Plans were immediately made to

appoint a Senior C.W.A.A.F. Officer; to find a building which would serve both as Manning Depot and Trade Training Centre, and to proceed with the enlistment of women.

A tremendous amount of organization was necessary. Some of the more pertinent matters to be decided were recruiting standards, pay and allowances, issue of kit, equipment, benefits, training, etc. To assist in this it was decided to request from Air Ministry the services of W.A.A.F. officers for approximately six months in order that they might give the benefit of their experience. Accordingly, several British W.A.A.F. officers arrived in Canada in July 1941, and assumed administrative and advisory positions with the C.W.A.A.F.

Selection Boards were set up and included one



*The W.D. Brass and Reed Band.*



*A W.D. Fabric Worker*

R.C.A.F. officer, one C.W.A.A.F. officer and one W.A.A.F. officer. These two boards selected prospective candidates for the "first 150" from which, at the successful conclusion of a five weeks' course, a percentage were to be commissioned and the balance given N.C.O. rank.

Recruiting was soon in effect across Canada, enlisting suitable candidates in the eight trades open at that time for women. The response was excellent and exceptionally high calibre women

made application. The number of trades very soon mushroomed into the 'teens and continued to expand as the value of the airwomen became known. In addition to the domestic and clerical trades more suitable to women, airwomen were soon serving in technical and operational trades equally as well as their male counterparts.

Recruiting continued in the W.D.'s until the summer of 1944 when the last squadron of airwomen graduated from No. 7 Manning Depot at



*Keeping house.*

Rockcliffe, in August of that year.

The total number of officers and other ranks in the W.D.'s was 17,038. Commissioned from the ranks were 612 officers. The peak strength of the W.D.'s was achieved in January, 1944, when there were 597 officers and 14,959 other ranks. At this time, there were 49 officers and 901 other ranks serving overseas in the United Kingdom. In December, 1944, however, the overseas contingent had been increased to 102 officers and 1,368 other ranks.

W.D.'s were used extensively for instructors in various trades, outstanding of which was the teaching of Aircraft Recognition to classes of aircrew. They also taught mathematics, and trained both airmen and airwomen as Wireless Operators Ground.

The first stations to receive W.D.'s were the sixteen Service Flying Training Schools. When they had been completely staffed, the W.D.'s were then posted to other Training Stations. In addition, airwomen were posted to such isolated

stations as Gander, Newfoundland, and Prince Rupert, B.C. In April, 1942, the first group of W.D.'s proceeded to the United Kingdom. There they were employed mainly at Overseas Headquarters, No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Group Headquarters and RCAF Station, Linton-on-Ouse. W.D. Officers in such specialist trades as Code and Cipher, Intelligence, and Photographic Interpretation, Messing, Accounts, etc., served at stations throughout No. 6 Group.

Early in 1942, direct entry Messing Officers were introduced. They served on all units in Canada, Newfoundland, Labrador and the United Kingdom. A total of 126 W.D. Messing Officers were enlisted and all had had previous practical experience in their profession.

A W.D. Brass and Reed Band was formed at No. 7 Manning Depot, Rockcliffe. This band officiated at the weekly graduations of airwomen, gave concerts on the stations, and on several occasions welcomed repatriated airmen. In addition, the W.D.'s trained three Precision Squads which were used for publicity and recruiting purposes.

The Women's Division of the R.C.A.F. was the first Canadian Women's Service to be formed and the last to be disbanded. Its members contributed immeasurably to the success of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and to the final victory itself. Through cheerfulness, enthusiasm, and at times by exercise of remarkable fortitude, the airwomen of Canada superbly fulfilled their motto "We serve that men may fly."

## THEY ALSO SERVED

A large variety of aircraft were employed in the training operations of the B.C.A.T.P. Among others, they included the:—

DeHaviland Tiger Moth  
Fleet Finch  
Cessna Crane  
North American Yale  
Lockheed "10"  
DeHaviland Mosquito  
Douglas Dakota  
Consolidated Liberator

Bristol Bolingbroke  
Beechcraft Expeditor  
Supermarine Stranraer  
Northrup Delta  
North American Harvard  
A. V. Roe Anson  
Fairchild Cornell  
Fairley Battle

Hawker Hurricane  
Lockheed Hudson  
Lockheed Ventura  
Consolidated Canso  
Lockheed "12"  
Westland Lysander  
Airspeed Oxford  
Douglas Digby

# The Civil Flying Schools

*(This brief history of civilian-operated training schools has been condensed from an article which appeared in "The Record," a souvenir booklet prepared by No. 7 A.O.S., Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, at the close of their B.C.A.T.P. operations in 1945.—Editor)*

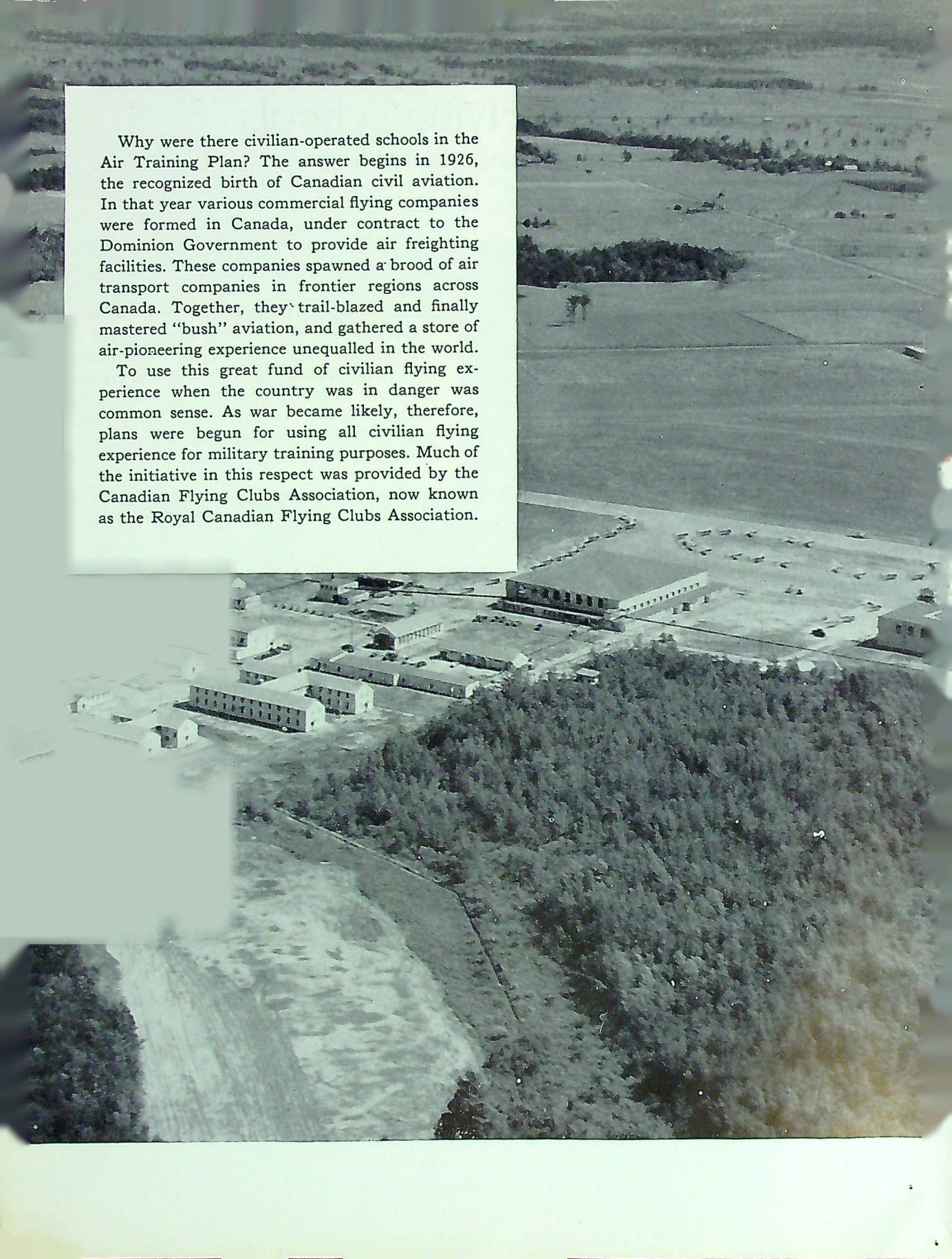
ONE OF THE MOST unique aspects of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was the provision of navigation and elementary pilot training by civilian organizations. Of the 131,553 graduates of the Air Training Plan, over 70% passed through civilian-operated A.O.S.'s, or E.F.T.S.'s. The results achieved by these schools were outstanding, both as to cost in lives, staff and money.

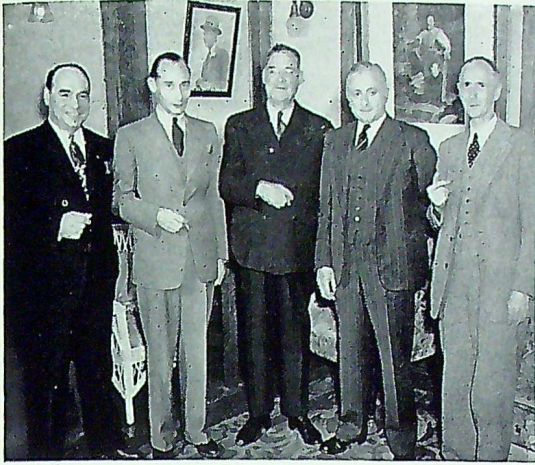


*Flight line at a civilian E.F.T.S.*

Why were there civilian-operated schools in the Air Training Plan? The answer begins in 1926, the recognized birth of Canadian civil aviation. In that year various commercial flying companies were formed in Canada, under contract to the Dominion Government to provide air freighting facilities. These companies spawned a brood of air transport companies in frontier regions across Canada. Together, they trail-blazed and finally mastered "bush" aviation, and gathered a store of air-pioneering experience unequalled in the world.

To use this great fund of civilian flying experience when the country was in danger was common sense. As war became likely, therefore, plans were begun for using all civilian flying experience for military training purposes. Much of the initiative in this respect was provided by the Canadian Flying Clubs Association, now known as the Royal Canadian Flying Clubs Association.





*E.F.T.S. Civilian Managers. Left to right: Mr. L. J. Martin, Mr. D. K. Yorath, Mr. G. C. Rooke, Mr. M. A. Alexander and Mr. C. W. Nichol.*

The rapidity with which these plans were carried out after the inauguration of the B.C.A.T.P. is breath-taking. The first Commonwealth agreement was signed in December 1939, and within six months the first civilian schools were in operation. They continued to expand at a rate far in excess of expectations, and in all 36 schools were formed.



*E.F.T.S. student pilots.*

Throughout the five years' operation of the B.C.A.T.P., two of the three main categories of aircrew thus received much of their training in civilian-operated schools. This unprecedented programme that linked the Servicemen so intimately with the civilian was an overwhelming success. In the words of Air Marshal Robert Leckie, "nothing could have been more valuable than the aid that civilian flying organizations brought to the Air Training Plan".



## I HAVE CONTROL, SIR

THE UNIQUE ORGANIZATION of civilian-operated B.C.A.T.P. schools was complicated, to say the least. A Civilian Manager, who had the status of a Group Captain, commanded the schools while a R.C.A.F. Chief Supervisory Officer was directly responsible for the quantity and quality of graduates. Most of the pilots and wireless operators were R.C.A.F. aircrew on leave without pay and in the employ of the civilian firm.

This framework often set the stage for amusing and unfortunate situations. In one instance, a Wing Commander arrived at an A.O.S. to assume the position of Chief Supervisory Officer. Unluckily, he had not been briefed on the terms of reference of the various offices, and he blithely assumed that he was in command of the Station.

Finding a surplus in the Non-Public Funds account but very few entertainment facilities, he proceeded to install a billiard room in space which was reserved for the civilians, a large, newly decorated library and a Pilot's Club. His inroads on the airmen's capital did not end there. To cap things off, he held a dance for all ranks at a cost of over \$1,500.

In the end, the new Chief Supervisory Officer even went so far as to suggest to Training Command that the Civilian Manager should be removed because he was not co-operating to the fullest. As a reward for his remarkable grasp of the A.O.S. organization, this officer was posted as Commanding Officer to an operational base that was soon scheduled to be closed.

# In Retrospect

by Wing Officer WILLA WALKER, M.B.E.

*(Wing Officer Walker was a member of the first class of women to be trained in the C.W.A.A.F. She was appointed to a commission in November, 1941, and after serving as a Training Command Staff Officer, became the Senior Staff Officer of the Women's Division in March, 1943.*

—Editor)

I FIND IT VERY REMARKABLE that after serving in the Women's Division of the R.C.A.F. for several intense years, I have only two salient personal recollections. As curiously unrelated as these impressions are, they signify to me the memory of a great and very worthwhile adventure.

During the early days, when the W.D.'s first emerged as a participating entity, I was a Training Command Staff Officer, responsible for indoctrinating Station Commanders in the reception of the first airwomen. I soon found that although most C.O.'s were enthusiastic about this innovation, many evidenced a frankly hesitant attitude.

Those who were in doubt seemed to regard us as a strange new Order which should be cloistered for the duration. They variously suggested the construction of high walls around our barracks, rigid partitioning in the mess halls, separate parades for airmen and airwomen, and a general programme of ascetic monasticism. It soon became obvious that this chary attitude stemmed from typical male uneasiness in the face of things feminine rather than from deliberate hostility. When the W.D.'s finally arrived on the Training Stations to participate in the affairs of men, I think they must all have been secretly amused by the wary male as he weighed this feminine turn of events.

By contrast, although almost equally as disastrous, were those Station Commanders who persisted in spoiling the W.D.'s. So anxious were they to welcome the women that they would have no hand in their discipline except to ensure that they suffered no undue hardships. W.D.'s were not permitted to parade too early in the morning for fear that they would catch cold; airmen's canteen funds were spent for W.D. canteens when



*The W.D. uniform at its best!*



*A W.D. Wireless Operator Ground.*

the airmen themselves had dreary canteens. Again, this portrait of the male losing his footing in new and rather strange terrain was a source of particular humour to the women in the Service.

This quaint dilemma which the W.D.'s created in the R.C.A.F. was also evidenced in the controversy over women's uniforms. The question became a bone of contention both in Air Force Headquarters and among the women themselves. Although the first caps were atrocious, we were properly womanlike and expressed our resentment when Headquarters wanted to change them. The first summer uniforms—little blue dresses with purple stockings—were so unpopular, however, that not even the contrary woman objected to their discard. The men at A.F.H.Q. became very upset over these problems. In the end, the W.D. uniform—except for the P.T. outfits which were never changed—emerged second to none in both

style and quality, although their evolution ironically involved the support and advice of men who ordinarily could never distinguish a Schiaparelli from a Daché.

In addition to these somewhat diverting memories of our reception in the Service, I recall with deep pride the way in which Canadian women proved themselves in so short a time and with such efficiency. The W.D.'s began with eight trade categories and soon were releasing men for flying duties in over forty trades. During my many visits to Training Stations of the B.C.A.T.P. as Senior Staff Officer of the Women's Division, I saw and heard ever increasing evidence of the tremendous value of women in the Service. This sure knowledge of the contribution of Canadian airwomen will always remain my most profound souvenir of the Second World War.

# Autobiography of a B.C.A.T.P. Graduate

*(The unusual and refreshing account which follows is a true story and, we feel, a typical one. For obvious reasons, the author shall remain anonymous.—Editor)*



THIS STORY OF MY BRIEF ASSOCIATION with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan has been written as an expression of gratitude to Canada and Canadians and to the Air Training Plan itself. My career as a pupil pilot was commonplace—if flying can be looked upon as commonplace—and would not bear recounting were it not for this other reason. There are those, I realize, who would have small regard for such a sentiment; with these people, it is probably as well.

I came to Canada in 1942 as an aimless, nondescript adolescent. I was half-starved and penniless and surprisingly shaken in confidence. This latter fact did not deter me, however, from immediately informing the R.C.A.F. Recruiting Officer that I aspired to a commission and pilot's wings in the R.C.A.F. I was such a derelict that it could only have been this abrupt attack which caused him to pay me any further consideration.

The medics were not so easily impressed. I was under-nourished, and fainted twice in rapid succession during my physical examination. By rights, I should have been immediately disqualified as an aircrew candidate. Perhaps the hard-luck story of my 2,000 mile hitch-hike to Canada saved me from this fate. The medics re-considered, and finally staked me to my first square meal in seven weeks. With such a stimulant, I passed the test with honours, only to collapse again a short while later. By then, however, I had been sworn to allegiance. To avoid further chaos, the Recruiting Officer advanced me two weeks' pay and sent me to Manning Depot.

There, in the cosmopolitan midst of French and English-speaking Canadians, Australians, English-

men, West Indians and New Zealanders, I began to learn my first lesson in harmony and tolerance—a lesson which, incidentally, was not included in the terms of reference of the B.C.A.T.P. While the repercussions of my immature nationalism thus gradually diminished, I set about the business of becoming an airman, the uncertain ways of Manning Depot corporals notwithstanding. I discovered that drill in the sub-zero Quebec winter was hardly an endurable occupation. Nor were my experiences with the Visual Link Trainer of any great comfort. I was soon in sympathy with the words of the immortal poem—"Dat Goldarn Bird De Link!"

It was fortunate indeed for me that those who framed the several agreements of the B.C.A.T.P. thought it best to provide an introductory training course for potential aircrew. Under the auspices of the War Emergency Training Programme, various gaps in my academic background were plugged. During this period, I attended a famous French-language university and became a virtual civilian again. I learned much French and other scholarly things, but gained a more priceless knowledge of this world of men. I might have known less, even after a lifetime, without this experience of the melting-pot that was the B.C.A.T.P.

Initial Training School seemed but an extension of the W.E.T.P., except that rigid militarism became the dominant theme. British "spit and polish" was more than a mere catch-phrase during those weeks. My acquaintance with the Visual Link was unfortunately renewed, but despite its contrary personality, it did not entirely disapprove of my fumbling—I eventually did become a pilot. It was at this time that my friendship began with

a R.A.F. West Indian, a man who is to-day a well-known Olympic athlete. Considering many things, I think this fact is significant of those aspects of the B.C.A.T.P. which transcended mere air training.

Elementary flying did not at the time seem particularly elementary. Later, when the problems of Service flying endowed a certain hindsight, I began to appreciate the simple luxury of those introductory months of actual flight training. My first solo was even more exhilarating than I had expected. Although thousands of pilots had preceded me, I felt, like most of them, that I was a pioneer.

Life at a B.C.A.T.P. Service Flying Training School was indeed a study in international co-operation. The prospect of co-ordinating the talents of such a myriad of races and nationalities would have proved a challenge even to a career diplomat. Because I never expect to witness such a unique spectacle again, my recollections of the S.F.T.S. canteens are particularly vivid. In the

W.D. lounge were generally to be found nationals of upwards of fifteen countries mingling casually with no sign of individual identity other than the mixed variety of dialects.

Within a year after enlistment, my brief association with the B.C.A.T.P. came to an end. Despite the Recruiting Officer's obvious doubts, my original aspirations had been fulfilled. Like so many others, I experienced a moment of never-to-be-forgotten pride, then looked ahead to more important things.

During those twelve months, I found the answers to many things. I gained a technical knowledge, for which I was awarded wings; of greater account was a standard of values—a new interpretation. Such things are intrinsic.

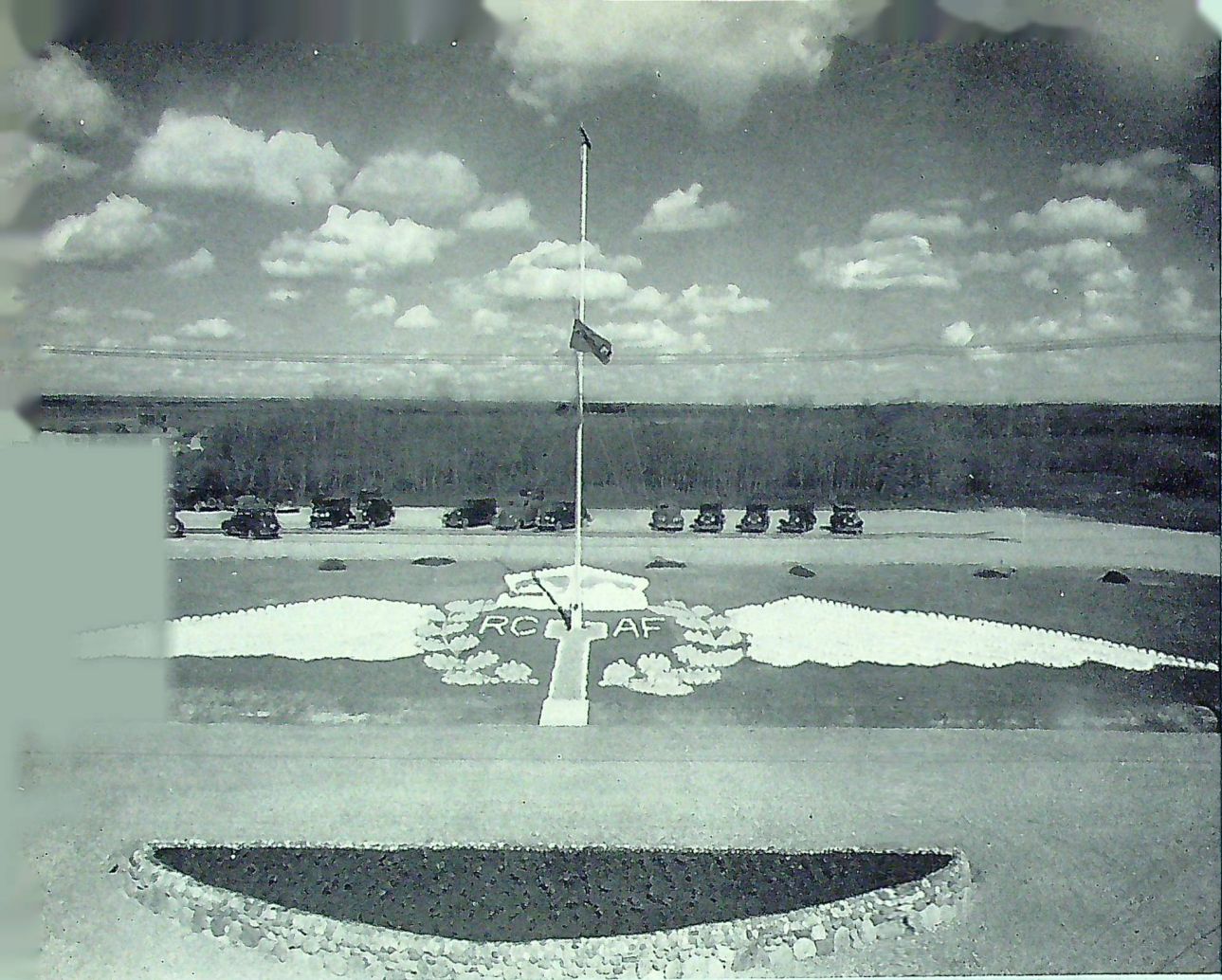
To complete this record, it may be appropriate to add that my stake in Canada did not end with the R.C.A.F. I have since acquired a Canadian wife and a Canadian-born son. As a matter of fact, I am now a Canadian myself.

## THE FACTS OF THE MATTER

In 1943, the peak year of the Air Training Plan, a total of 7,000,000 hours were flown. In July, 1943, the peak month, 677,000 hours were flown.

To expedite the training of urgently needed pilots, in December, 1940, the S.F.T.S. course was reduced to ten weeks and the minimum time per pilot to 75 hours.

To illustrate the progress made in Gunnery Training, the rounds fired per pupil per course increased from 1800 in 1941 to 5400 in 1944, and hours flown rose from 8 to 25.



## Wings at Yorkton

The scene in the accompanying photograph will be a familiar sight to those who were stationed at No. 11 S.F.T.S. Yorkton, Saskatchewan, during the war. The Wings were built during the Spring of 1941 under the personal supervision of Air Vice

Marshal]G. R. Howsam, the first Commanding Officer of No. 11 S.F.T.S. They were situated directly in front of the Administration Building and were finished in the same colours as R.C.A.F. Pilots' wings.



# UP, DOWN!

One of the most unholy innovations of the B.C.A.T.P. was the gruelling Harvard Step Test. Performed to the monotonous tick-tock of a metronome, it bore a disconcerting resemblance to the Chinese water treatment. Even worse was the agony of the Test's after effects, which often lingered for weeks.

The inquisitors who administered this five-

minute mortification claimed it to be a reliable gauge of physical condition. It also served to remind many B.C.A.T.P. personnel, in no uncertain terms, that the abstainer had something to be thankful for after all.

In the accompanying photograph may be seen some of the Step Test's victims perspiring at the sacrificial bench.





# The Trenton Memorial Gates

by Flt. Lt. T. J. MACKINNON, D.F.C.

THE RICH HARMONIES of the trumpeters' fanfare lingered momentarily, accentuating the sudden still. A sharp command split the silence, and rows of glistening bayonets swung forward, as one, to the "Present." The Viceregal Party, flanked by R.C.A.F. outriders, moved slowly down the avenue of English oaks to the dais.

It was no ordinary muster that occurred at R.C.A.F. Station Trenton, Ontario, that sunny afternoon of 30th September, 1949. The most distinguished company of Government and Service officials to assemble in Canada since the war were in attendance. They had come from many lands—the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and

the United States—to participate in a ceremony which paid fitting tribute to a proud accomplishment, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Among others, there were His Excellency Viscount Alexander, Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent, Right Honourable Arthur Henderson, Right Honourable F. M. Forde, Honourable James Thorn, Honourable Colin Gibson, Honourable Brooke Claxton, Honourable C. G. Power, Honourable Laurence Steinhardt, Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, Lord Tedder, Air Marshal W. A. Curtis, Lieutenant-General Lauris Norstad, Air Vice Marshal C. R. Slemmon, Air Commodore J. L. Findlay and Group Captain C. W. Pierce.

Before the dais in the foreground of the ceremonial area stood the Memorial Gates, a gift to Canada from her wartime partners in the Air Training Plan. The official presentation of these Gates by the representatives of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand was to take place as the highlight of the ceremonies which followed.

The Memorial Gates were designed and constructed in Britain. They are crowned by the R.C.A.F. insignia and have two main grills which bear the coat of arms of Canada and the United Kingdom. Two pedestrian gates at either side bear the coat of arms of Australia and New Zealand and are flanked by walls of Queenstown limestone carved with French and English inscriptions.

After the Governor General and his entourage had been greeted by the Chief of the Air Staff, they ascended the dais. Viscount Alexander then acknowledged the Royal Salute, and inspected the R.C.A.F. Guard of Honour.



*March Past of the United States colour party*



*Air Vice Marshal C. R. Slemon, Air Officer Commanding Training Command, greeting His Excellency Viscount Alexander prior to the ceremonies.*



*Air Marshal Curtis presenting the silver plaque to Lord Tedder.*



*Inspection of the Guard of Honour. Inspecting party (left to right): His Excellency the Governor General, Honourable Brooke Claxton (partly hidden), and Flt. Lt. R. S. Davis, the Guard Commander.*

The initial address of the afternoon was given by Honourable Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defence. Mr. Claxton welcomed the visitors to Trenton and paid tribute to the purpose of the commemoration ceremony. Of the Gates he said: "The symbol of the work we did together could take no better form. They will always represent the gates of freedom which we guarded together and the portals which will open on a new world of justice and peace". He spoke of the tribute due to the originators of the Plan and to the men who carried it out. Referring to Right Honourable MacKenzie King, former Prime

Minister, who was unable to be present, Mr. Claxton said: "His part in the Plan is one of his most notable contributions to Canada and the world in a long record which has been distinguished by many great achievements".

During the darkest days of the war, the responsibility of directing the Air Training Plan was borne by the wartime Minister of National Defence for Air, Honourable C. G. Power. Mr. Power was the second speaker of the afternoon.

Mr. Claxton then introduced the British Commonwealth representatives who were presenting the Memorial Gates. In turn, Right

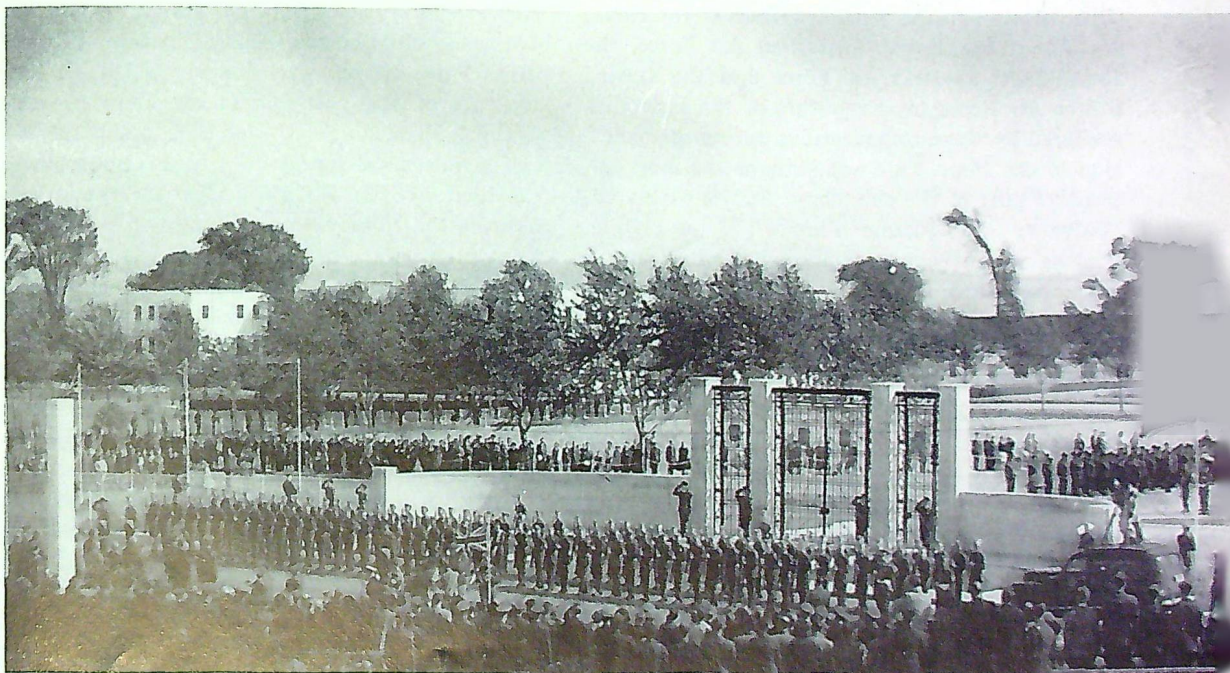
Honourable Arthur Henderson, British Secretary of State for Air, Right Honourable F. M. Forde, High Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Australia, and Honourable James Thorn, High Commissioner for the Commonwealth of New Zealand made appropriate presentation speeches.

Mr. Henderson, Mr. Forde and Mr. Thorn, each bearing a golden key, then officially unlocked the Memorial Gates. As the Gates were slowly opened by R.C.A.F. sentries, the party returned to the dais and presented the keys to Prime Minister St. Laurent.

In accepting the Gates on behalf of the Government and people of Canada, Mr. St. Laurent spoke briefly and observed that: "To many a family throughout the Commonwealth, this air contribution to victory brought tragedy. These Gates will remind us of the sacrifice of those who gave their lives that we may live in freedom."

*Viscount Alexander taking the Royal Salute*

*The presentation ceremonies*





*This ¾-size replica of the Memorial Gates was constructed in the Sports Hangar at R.C.A.F. Station Trenton by the personnel of No. 6 Repair Depot shown above. The miniature Gates were completed in less than five days, and were designed to serve as a substitute for the original Gates had it been necessary to hold the Commemoration Ceremonies indoors.*

Air Marshal Curtis then presented magnificent silver plaques to the representatives of the Royal Air Force, the Royal Australian Air Force, the Royal New Zealand Air Force and the United States Air Force in recognition of the assistance rendered by these organizations during the operation of the Plan. This was perhaps the most impressive part of the ceremony. At the command, "Advance the Plaque Parties", four plaque-bearing squads moved individually through the Memorial Gates in slow time, to the accompaniment of a massed R.C.A.F. band. After the presentation, the parties wheeled into quick time and marched off the ceremonial area.

At the conclusion of a brief but spectacular air display by R.C.A.F. Vampires piloted by veteran graduates of the B.C.A.T.P., Mr. Claxton presented Mr. Power with a golden key to the Memorial Gates as a special memento for his loyal wartime work on behalf of the Air Training Plan.

The ceremonies concluded with a March Past comprising more than 600 members of the R.C.A.F. and a flight of Air Cadets. As the last squadron

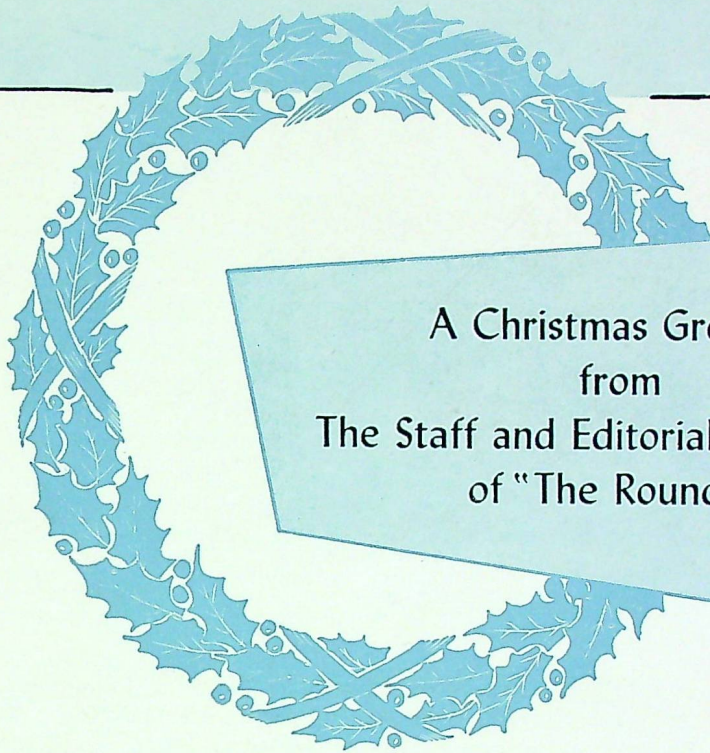
passed the Reviewing Stand, a formation of Harvard aircraft formed the letters "R.C.A.F." overhead, while others followed in formations of three. These aircraft were flown by Flight Cadets, students of the post-war successor to the Air Training Plan.

The musical background for the ceremonies was provided by the R.C.A.F. Central Band from Ottawa, the Northwest Air Command Band from Edmonton, and the Training Command Band from Trenton, which were amalgamated to form the largest mass band in the history of the R.C.A.F.

The dignity of that autumn afternoon reflected proud memories of the Air Training Plan. The Memorial Gates, which now form the main entrance to R.C.A.F. Station Trenton, will indeed "stand forever as a memorial of a great and fruitful friendship". The inscription carved into the flanking wall,

"Their shoulders held the sky suspended;

They stood, and earth's foundations stay." will be a constant reminder of the overwhelming success of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.



A Christmas Greeting  
from  
The Staff and Editorial Committee  
of "The Roundel"

Because of the unique nature of this commemorative issue of "The Roundel," it has been impossible to introduce any material with the customary flavour of the Christmas Season. It would be very remiss, however, if we did not take this opportunity to extend most sincere greetings to all ranks of the Royal Canadian Air Force and to wish you all a very Merry Christmas.



*The*  
**ROUNDDEL**