

WINGS



LOG OF THE R-C-A-F
OTTAWA CANADA

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THE LATE FLIGHT LIEUTENANT DAVID E. HORNELL, V.C.

See Page 3 for:

TALES from NORMANDY



New York also has a skyline but only an architect could rave about the structural lines of the Empire State building after a gander at what's to be seen on the Newfy horizon.



Looking for an outdoor gal who can catch dinner AND cook it? WDs Ev LaRoque and Kaye Huntington have all that plus.

ON THE ROCKS

PHOTOMAN FO GORD JARRETT PICKED THIS BEVY OF ROCKETTES TO BE CASTAWAY WITH. HE MERELY SUGGESTED A DAY'S FISHING TRIP AND THESE NEWFY WDs JUMPED AT THE BAIT.



The photog had to submerge to get this but it was worth it. Ann Knight, Kaye Huntington, Evelyn LaRoque, Gladys Harvey and Shelagh Stene make the most of a hot afternoon in Newfy.

The coinage is confusing, the language a puzzle, and the French kids put the bite on everybody

by FO STAN HELLEUR, PRO

WITH THE RCAF IN FRANCE—"Please can we have a story about the general set-up in France," requests the Editor of WINGS. That . . . can be answered briefly.

Generally, Mr. Editor, the set-up in France is shin-deep in mud. Either that or it's so dusty you navigate through ten-tenths cloud, on or off the ground.

About the only consolation an RCAF man enjoys is knowing he's not as badly off as Private Brown in the front line, the Canuck infantryman to whom a tent would be like a room in the Savoy. A leaky room, though, for there couldn't be a tent, anywhere, fibrous enough to withstand a Normandy downpour.

"All my tent can possibly do is strain the dirt out of the water," one Canadian Spitfire pilot said. "In fact, if it keeps up I'm going to have to wear my Mae West jacket in bed. I can't swim."

But, aside from extremes in weather, airfield life in France hasn't been much different than experienced in England. The pilots are still doing a lot of flying and groundmen continue to put in



Stan Helleur, ex-Montreal newsman, came to WINGS from Trenton "Contact", was commissioned a year ago and posted overseas as a PRO. Landing in France the day after D-Day, he was on hand to welcome first RCAF arrivals at new landing strip.

long hours keeping the kites in trim. Most of their spare time still is spent writing letters, reading, playing cards.

One novelty, a striking feature of the new war theatre, however, is the Normand's indifference to all the clatter and strange faces converging upon him since D-Day. Around the airfields, just off the perimeter tracks, the farmer goes on with his work as nonchalantly as if nothing more than a travelling fair had moved in on him for a brief stand.

An ideal example of this is one Canadian flier's description of the D-Day picture as Spitfire pilots saw it from above. Parachutes were dropping, he said, gliders were landing, Marauders were bombing, Typhoons were rocket-bombing and tanks were battling furiously in fields. It was all happening simultaneously. "And just about three fields away from the greatest tank battle of them all," the pilot related, "we could see a farmer placidly plowing his field. It was just as if he was saying, "Well there it is fellows. Fight over it. And may the best man win."

And so, when this peace-loving Normand, thoroughly saturated with anti-Ally propaganda, was startled from slumber one dull June morning by the sound of a shell removing his roof and innumerable others bashing down walls of his neighbors' houses it made him think.

As proven ultimately, the Normand, despite the loss of his roof, was glad to see the Allies for it meant his country might be liberated. But

Tales from Normandy

Sketches by Sgt W.J. Coucill



"Just about three fields away from the tank battle, a farmer was placidly plowing his fields..."

still, on the ledger's other side was the German claim that this would be "another Dieppe". "If I am too friendly with the Allies," reasoned the Normand, "and they are turned back, the Germans will return and take reprisals against me." He was confused, uncertain, and showed it.

With the passing weeks, however, with the establishment of airfields and arrival of squadrons; after watching the steady stream of men and supplies choking the narrow streets of his village, after witnessing a historic exhibition of the Allies' air mastery the evening of July 7 when hundreds of Lancasters and Halifaxes poured overhead and battered Caen while Spitfires flew an invulnerable cover, after seeing with his own eyes that not a German aircraft sought to break it up, the Normand is virtually convinced we are here to stay.

All this Normand has to do now, is bring down his prices. It is said that if you look closely at Bayeux price tags you can see them sneering at those in London.

Money is a problem to the average airman in a number of ways. Firstly, he seldom has enough to do any appreciable shopping in Bayeux, the only town within range that is still reasonably intact and above milk-stop category; secondly, there are too many shapes and sizes in currency, and thirdly, because there are too many shapes and sizes, crap and poker games are slowed drastically. And morale naturally is thus reduced in sympathy.

For example, a hundred franc note could range from a large-size postage stamp to a sheet big enough to paper the outhouse back home in Saskatchewan. Changing one of these is a confusing process, and takes time. Too, the denominations invariably are lost in varied colorful pictures of girls. More outside than inside their robes.

More than one airman, drawing change from a poker pot, has been bawled out for wasting time in looking at the pictures instead of the denominations.

To further complicate the monetary muddle, the Germans during their stay had also issued various coins of questionable worth, ranging in size from a small bit that parallels the old Canadian five-cent piece and reads "50 Centimes", to a larger one about the size of a Canadian 25-cent piece, valued at two francs.

Made of dural or aluminum and feather-like in weight, the coins leave you with the impression that whenever the Germans ran short of stamp money, they wheeled a punch-press up to some old Messerschmitt and thumped out bags full of the stuff.

Another problem is one of language. As one leading aircraftman from Alberta complained: "The trouble with this country is that too many people speak French."

His candid observation followed a vain attempt to order a bottle of wine in a small Bayeux cafe, where, with the Canadian Legion's "A Canuck Goes To The Continent" dictionary open on his knee, he sounded, phonetically, like this: "Appor-tezz noose oon boothed dew vinn blank, sill voose plate." He looked up triumphantly at the little waitress but she didn't have a clue, and so the boy from Alberta had to enlist the aid of a French

Canadian buddy who ordered the "Bouteille du vin blanc, s'il vous plait".

French Canadians are in their element and the fact that they can match confusing French verbs and tenses with the natives has done much to overcome any animosity towards the invaders. Many of these simple people were unaware that French was the basic language for so large a percentage of Canada's population. They like to see the "Canada" flash on your shoulder.

The writer always will remember a little old farm lady who allowed him to draw water at her age-old well the afternoon of D plus 1, when her little village still tottered confusedly in the slipstream of the Winnipeg and Regina Rifle Regiments advance. Wearing the customary shawl over her head and Dutch-like wooden shoes, she couldn't see any shoulder patches because of a topcoat and so she asked; "Etes vous un Canadien?" "Oui," was the reply. And the old woman inclined her head and smiled significantly, as if to say, "Good, we're glad to see you."

Recreation is becoming obsolete in Normandy, chiefly because there is little time for it and again because facilities are limited. Softball is played whenever 18 men are lucky enough not to be busy at the same time, while horseback riding provides exercise for a comparative handful at each airfield. The saddlenags in each case are fine-looking German cavalry horses, forced to muster to the Allies when their officer-owners went exclusively mobile the morning of June 6.

The problem of saddles still is acute but not nearly as drastically as when the horses first were corralled and intrepid airmen rode them bareback.

For awhile more than one pilot was walking out to his Spitfire with a Seabiscuit slant, as if the horse was still under him. Aside from an occasional sortie into Bayeux, the men seldom leave their airfields except on rare occasions when visits to the front lines are organized, when airman meets soldier and tries to bring back souvenirs of German equipment.

Souvenir hunting has been a rage since D-Day and it is conceded that some of the RCAF's super-scroungers have more Hun equipment than a Jerry paratroop platoon, including the latter's folding bicycles. One well-known Canadian fighter pilot, a wing commander, is grounded for medical reasons but still takes a crack at the Hun with a German anti-aircraft gun and ammunition he has commandeered and parked outside his tent.

Life on airfields themselves has been spiced considerably with the advent of movies two or three times weekly, canvas dining tents and repair hangars serving as theatres. Projected by 16-millimetre machines, the shows also provide entertainment for a portion of the native population, most of them youngsters who wander unconcernedly into the darkened tents and add their shrill laughter to the Canuck guffaw. That they don't understand the dialogue means nothing. They didn't know a thing Bob Hope said in "Let's Face It", but the guy panicked them just the same.

It's truthfully amusing the way the natives roam about the camps. At one airfield in particular, inhabitants of the nearest village take evening strolls, along the camp-site road and groups of them gather around the Signals tent whenever there's a French news broadcast. You can always tell when its nine a.m. for an old farmer with a brown handlebar moustache walks herd, regularly, on three cows along the same twisting route.

The younger fry are particularly nonchalant. They continually put the bite on officers and men for candy, chewing gum or cigarettes. It seems even the runtiest youngster smokes but he's never seeking a cigarette for himself. No he wants one for his father, he'll tell you. If he can't obtain one for father he'll tell you almost tearfully that mother hasn't had a fag since D-Day. Failing to procure any for members of his immediate family, he'll try to score one for his cousin in Trois Pistoles, Que.

Coincidentally, and as if to prove the preceding paragraph, three of these urchins walked into the tent a minute or so ago. They each smiled ingratiatingly and proudly displayed pieces of a broken mirror they had found. Their names were Pierre, aged six, and Georges and Douglas, both aged eight. The last two say they're twins but the only similarity is that they both have bare feet, runny noses and patches in the seats of their pants. The bite was not long in coming. First they pirated a roll of Rose Marie mints and then a box of chocolates which they divided on the spot. Then Pierre had to be coaxed out of appropriating a tommy-cooker. Fortunately, Georges decided the writer's tin hat was too big for him. And right now Douglas is eyeing the typewriter. Obviously, these kids will accept anything they can carry.

It's a good thing a Spitfire weighs as much as it does.



"The bite was not long in coming . . . First they pirated a roll of mints, then a box of chocolates".

THE grapevine got the story first, late in June. A flap in Iceland — the Canso squadron, not long since posted there from EAC. A fiery battle between one of the amphibians and one of those undersea-going destroyers that mount a deathly flak barrage.

The Canso got the sub . . . but the sub got the Canso, reported an officer back from Iceland. One motor plunged into the sea ahead of the twin depth charges which neatly straddled the Nazi and tore it to pieces. By that time the Canso was done and only the pilot's guts and skill had put her down without killing everybody. Three of the crew did get it, though, in the long, exhausting sea-beaten hours that followed before rescue. And . . .

But there the grapevine lost the details in a fog of rumor. Till a month later when the Minister for Air made an announcement and the headline clarified the story in every city, town and village across the country, "FIRST RCAF PILOT WINS VICTORIA CROSS".

And the name of Flight Lieutenant David "Bud" Hornell was sky-written into aery legend alongside the Barkers and the Bishops, beneath the simple, understated tribute, "For Valor".

This was the first award of the Victoria Cross to a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force in the present war. Certainly this has not been for any lack of heroes — eighteen DSOs bely that, and DFCs, DFMs and all the rest without number. But with Canucks in their thousands riding the seas of flak over Germany it becomes



THE RCAF'S FIRST V.C. AND HIS HEROIC CANSO CREW

BACK ROW (including insets): FO B. C. Denomy, DSO, Chatham, Ont.; FO S. E. Matheson, DFC, Nelson, B.C.; FL D. E. Hornell, VC, Mimico, Ont.; (deceased); FS S. R. Cole, DFM, Long Branch, Ont. **FRONT ROW:** Sgt F. St. Laurent, MID, Pointe au Père, Que. (deceased); Sgt D. S. Scott, MID, Almonte, Ont. (deceased); FO G. Campbell, DFC, Vancouver; FS I. J. Bodnoff, DFM, Ottawa.

FOR VALOR ON THE ARCTIC'S RIM

impossible to grade heroism, and too often enemy action wipes plane, hero and crew of witnesses from the record. And this first time that the Victoria Cross did come to a man of the RCAF it had to come posthumously, for though Dave Hornell lived long enough to help most of his crew to survive he died himself just as the rescue launch was sighted.

To his crew mates FL Hornell, VC, was "captain" or "skipper", or more often just "Dave". To the youngsters in Wesley Methodist Church Sunday School, where he used to teach in Mimico, Ont., and the gang with whom he played rugby and tennis at Mimico High, he was "Bud".

To the Minister of his church he was "a good Christian, one of the finest men I ever met . . ." To his wife he was the kind of a fellow who would have been pleased to know that the heroism of all seven of his Canso-mates had been recognized with immediate awards ranging from Mention in Despatches to the DSO. And to those other men with whom he flew he was "tops as a pilot and as a man. His men always came first with him. He was a regular guy."

Dave Hornell just made it under the wire for aircrew. Age 34 when he died, he left his work in a research lab to enlist on Jan. 7, 1940. His thirty-first birthday on the 26th of that month would have put him over the age-limit. Training at Victoriaville ITS and Goderich EFTS, he won his wings at 5 SFTS, Brantford, Ontario. Twice he seemed on his way to overseas action until a last-minute change of posting caught up with him. The first time, immediately after graduation and when he had gone as far as Y Depot, he found himself short-circuited to the GRS in P.E.I. Following a navigation course there he went to Coal Harbor, B.C. and in the station village built himself a cabin to which in January last year he took his bride for a bush-station honeymoon. Home to Toronto on leave, overseas was again in the books till the posting was changed to Labrador and later to Iceland.

The story of what Dave Hornell did on that June night where there was no night, up on the rim of the Arctic circle, is vividly told by Wireless Air Gunner Flight Sergeant Sydney R. Cole, DFM. The Flight was there, pounding out a triumphant "Attacking Submarine" on his key unaware that flak had already carried away the aerial. His account is a life-and-death page in the log of the RCAF:

FS Joe Bodnoff, DFM, wireless air gunner, and myself were in the blister (Syd Cole relates). He saw the submarine first. He pointed it out to me, then he called to Dave over the inter-com —

"Do you see the sub, Dave?"

"I sure do," called back Dave. Then he turned right into the attack, the same as he would whether it was a German sub or a fishing boat until we made sure what it was.

When we sighted the sub, it was five miles away at nine o'clock on our port quarter. I first of all went back for the camera, then went up to the radio to relieve Graham Campbell at the radio, so that he could go up to man the nose gun. That was our attack drill and we had it down pretty well.

Then the Klaxon signalled "action stations" and I knew that it was the real thing.

I started pounding out a flash, "Attacking submarine." At four miles away the German started throwing up flak. Dave Hornell went into evasive action, tossing that flying boat around like a fighter. In that first toss, I went right up to the ceiling, with the bilgewater swishing around my ears. Dave kept right on going for the sub and the sub kept right on sending up the flak.

By the time we were within 500 or 600 yards we were burning badly. Our starboard engine received a direct hit and was in flames. While Dave Hornell was wrestling with the controls, Denomy was handling the engines. Denomy had just succeeded in feathering the propeller when the whole engine fell off into the ocean. The leading and trailing edges of the starboard wing were flaming furiously and there were two big holes a couple of feet square in the wing. The flak was coming into the fuselage like hail, so thick you could see where it was punching holes in the metal.

"WE BOUNCED 150 FEET"

I could see that we were going to ditch.

We landed on waves 12 feet high and bounced 150 feet. With most of the controls shot away. Dave had to fight with every ounce of strength he had to bring us down safely at all. We bounced 50 feet the second time we hit the water, yet the skipper still had control. I believe we all owe our lives to his courage and skill.

We could only escape through the port blister. The starboard side was a mass of flames. The pilots went out through the escape hatches over their heads. Sgt St. Laurent had tossed one of our two rubber emergency dinghies overboard soon as we came to a stop and had gone in after it. Bodnoff and Scott launched the dinghy we kept in front of the aircraft. By that time the water in the fast-foundering aircraft was up to our knees and the smoke had us half-blind. I was the last to leave the aircraft and by that time we sighted St. Laurent, who had floated away clinging to his dinghy in the heavy waves.

There were seven of us and the dinghy was only built to seat four. Hornell, Flying Officer Ed Matheson, the navigator, and I can't remember who else, were in the water, clinging to the side. The other four, or maybe three, were in the dinghy.

Then I remembered we hadn't brought along the "Gibson Girl Radio" and clambered to my feet to jump in and go back for it. The boys grabbed me by the arms and pulled me back.

We wanted to get to St. Laurent, partly for his sake and partly for ours. Alone, he couldn't climb into the dinghy, and we needed it for our extra passengers. Dave Hornell took off his trousers so that he could kick better and we fought through the tumbling seas to reach St. Laurent.

Campbell got in first and helped Matheson aboard. Just as they were pulling in St. Laurent, the dinghy blew up, leaving the three struggling in the water. St. Laurent already had been immersed 15 minutes and he was a mighty cold boy when we pulled him aboard. Dave Hornell didn't put his trousers back on. He tied knots in the legs and used them to bail. He was that kind of a guy. When he saw a job to be done or when he could help his pals, he didn't worry about himself.

Sgt Scott, the engineer, and myself got into the water. I kept my legs kicking and although I was cold, I never became numb. Every once in a while I would pull my chest and shoulders out of the water to keep them as warm as I could.

An aircraft sighted us after five hours and stayed with us for the next 15. It flew over to investigate the oil patch and signalled us by Aldis lamp that it was obviously a kill. That cheered us up considerably, although we had previously figured it was almost a certainty.

The waves kept getting higher, until we were pitched about in a 40-foot swell lashed by a 50-mile-an-hour gale. We capsized a couple of times and had quite a time righting the dinghy, for some of the crew were getting weaker.

Half an hour after we capsized the first time, St. Laurent started to go. He didn't last long after that. We kept his body aboard for a time trying to resuscitate him but after he turned cold, we lied him overboard. It was a hard thing to do but we had to have the room.

An aircraft of Air-Sea Rescue Service swooped low and dropped an air-borne lifeboat. They are a swell idea but this one didn't help. The wind caught it and swept it out of our reach.

Shortly after, Scott died and we put him overboard. Hornell was sinking fast, too. I happened to be standing up when we spotted the rescue launch and let out a whoop you could have heard up in Ottawa.

By the time the boat drew alongside we were all pretty weak. Every one in the dinghy had to be hoisted aboard with the exception of FO Denomy and myself.

The sailors worked over Dave Hornell five hours before giving up hope, but he never regained consciousness. Denomy's feet were swollen from immersion and Matheson had some pieces of flak behind his left ear to be extracted but the other survivors were alright after a rest. From the Shetlands, we were flown to Northern Scotland and later to Iceland before being returned by air to Canada on leave.

ERKS MARK THE SPOT

by SGT ERIC NICOL

The first thing the guys in our section knew that there was something in the wind besides the smell from the airmen's mess was when Sgt Flogg visited the barracks during the evening. Sgt Flogg was in one of the bad moods he gets in if there's an AOC's inspection coming up, or if the flies are bothering him.

Being down on our knees at the time of his entrance, we joes salaamed the sergeant deeply and gravely, foreheads touching the floor, mouths murmuring solemn imprecations.

"All right wise guys!" boomed Sgt Flogg. "I know you was shootin' crap. Get up on your hind laigs!"

We rose with hurt expressions, this cruel accusation rankling in our breasts, except for Goonsbury, having picked up the dice with his teeth, could only look mumpishly indignant. Sgt. Flogg was not slow to note Goonsbury's unusual reticence.

"Spit out them dice, Goonsbury!" he snapped, in that brass-studded voice he uses for corporals and below.

Goonsbury rotated his jaws rapidly, swallowed big, and stared at the sergeant with wide, blue eyes.

"What dice have you in mind, sergeant?" he enquired softly, his tone dripping harps and flowers.

Flogg narrowed his piggies and we could tell from the blue exhaust floating out his nostrils that his brain was turning over.

"Ahha!" he ahhaed finally. "So that's where all them sugar cubes have been disappearin' from the officers' mess!"

Flogg then drew himself up and stated slowly and distinctly: "There will be an inspection by the AOC tomorrow morning at 0930 hours, following a parade through town — and I wanna see plenty of spit and polish, unnerstand?"

Goonsbury sprang to his feet. "I'm ready now, Sarg!" he shouted, spitting and grabbing a can of Brasso.

McGinty raised his hand to speak. "I am desolated to have to inform you, sergeant," he said, "that I shall be unavailable tomorrow morning."

"Yeah?"

"As you say, yeah," nodded McGinty with dignity. "I was informed today that Mrs. McGinty has just become a mother. Tomorrow I expect to go on six weeks leave."

"Six weeks?" blared Flogg. "I thought compassionate leave was for one week."

"This doesn't happen to be compassionate leave," sighed McGinty archly, dusting his fingernails. "My wife had triplets — I have asked for harvest leave."

Sgt Flogg snarled, turning to stalk out of the barracks. Goonsbury caught his sleeve, smiling sweetly.

"Don't go so soon, Sarg," he cooed. "Coil up and make yourself at home!"

Flogg whirled on him. "Are you inferrin' that I am a snake? Hah?" Goonsbury was horrified.

"Certainly not, Sarg!" he expostulated, waiting until Flogg had reached the door before adding the shout: "I say that if you change your skin once a month, that's your business!" The lion roared in the distance.

Following the sergeant's departure we got busy readying our summer issue for the morning inspection. One guy tried to press a crease in his

pants and, sure enough, about ten-thirty he suddenly yelled:

"Hey, fellas! Look quick! I got a crease in the left leg!"

We all rushed down to the ironing board to see, but Goonsbury and I were too far away. By the time we got there the crease was gone. Everybody said it was swell crease while it lasted, though.

I had a little trouble with my own summers, which I had just drawn from Stores. Mind you, I'm not actually saying this uniform was made over from a circus tent. For all I know maybe there are some tailors called "Ringling Bros." who make uniforms and put their label on the outside. And maybe they put sawdust and old peanut shells in the pockets just for a gag. But that hardly explains why they had to print "THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH!" across the seat of the pants. Not to me it don't.

I was, moreover, apathetic toward the idea of parading in my summer issue because it would mean buttoning the pants at the neck. Usually we fellows like to affect a nonchalant, careless air around the hangar by wearing our pants open at the neck, in accordance with Goonsbury's unwritten code for groundcrew erks, namely: one button undone means that the wearer works on fighter planes, two buttons undone mean he works on twin-motor aircraft, while all the buttons undone mean that he is absent-minded as hell.



"Come out, come out wherever you are!"

I retracted my head into my pants hastily, drooping back to my place in the rear rank. Sgt. Flogg was now prepared to move us off.

"Squaw, squaw-atten-Hup!" he erupted.

He fastened me with a steely glare again.

"Didn't you hear me say 'atten-HUP!'?" he demanded thickly.

"Yes, sergeant," I replied sympathetically.

"Have you ever thought of trying 'Tums'? They say they're wonderful for acid indigestion. Burps to you."

"And nuts to you!" screamed Flogg.

This remark was rather uncharitable of Sgt Flogg, I thought, seeing as it was common knowledge that all his commands sounded like symptoms of after-dinner distress. We heard he had been posted from Y Depot because he burped in front of his flight waiting to embark and it had quick-marched right off the end of the pier.

He was obliged to retire from action, however, as the officers marched to their posts. Eventually, after the squadron had been dressed and undressed more times than Gypsy Rose Lee, we moved off. Disaster struck at me almost immediately. Crossing a street car track in mid-town my foot caught in the rail and I was obliged to follow the car line to an east end car barn, where a near-sighted mechanic attempted to grease my bearings. I hardly enjoyed the whole thing at all.

LORD WHIFF OF GRAPESHOT

Gad, I mean, show that bounder Hitler...one doesn't muck about with Cricket!

by Ozie



Repair Depot Deluxe



Specially trained instructors give PT to leg and foot patients on the spacious lawns at No. 5 RCAF Convalescent Home, Vancouver. "Barracks" are in the city's swankiest residential section.

by SGT ERIC NICOL
WINGS Staff Writer

PERCHED precariously backwards on the handlebars of the bike and apparently held on by nothing but a broad grin, the young man with the broken back pedalled furiously around the colorful flower beds of the garden, zoomed up and down the broad, grassy embankment, and was churning madly off down the hedge-lined driveway, looping from side to side, when the film mercifully flapped off its reel and the lights of the billiard room went up. Squadron Leader Nash started rewinding his 16 mm. kodachrome, while the owner of the broken back, easily identifiable by the mighty grin, stood beside him watching his velocipedic antics being returned to their spool.

"John's back was still in the cast when I took these movies in the garden," SL Nash was saying. "You've been out of the cast for a month now, haven't you, John?"

The tanned young airman nodded happily.

"Naturally, we don't expect all patients with broken backs to ride bicycles backwards," continued the CO drily, shutting the projector. "LAC Wanke starred in this particular picture, but then, of course, he had a strong supporting cast."

LAC Wanke grinned even more broadly, climbing the basement stairs lithely beside the doctor. He had good reason to grin. For this was the same LAC John Wanke of Kingsville, Ont., who seven months before had been helping to erect a Works and Bricks chimney at a west coast station, when suddenly his scaffold snapped plunging him the 40 feet that should have meant a complete write-off of one airman. Luckily, he fell 41 feet, getting a rain-check on a Burton as his body embedded itself 12 inches in the soft muskeg. This was the only time in his service career that LAC Wanke had had any use for muskeg.

ERK'S DREAM POSTING

His back was fractured nevertheless, and there followed months of incarceration in a plaster girdle, with the threat of permanent incapacitation hovering over his recovery. Then one day they posted him to the most remarkable station he had ever seen. The barracks were a large, matronly home in Vancouver's swankiest residential section. The drill square was a green, undulating lawn rich with rosebeds and shaded by graceful willows. His uniform was grey flannels and blue jacket for dress, shorts and running shoes for duty.

Such was John Wanke's introduction to No. 5 Air Force Convalescent Home, Vancouver, one of a chain of homes spotted across the country. Organized by Wartime Convalescent Homes Incorporated, the homes are given over to the Air Force by private citizens, financed by civilian subscription, and operated by the RCAF. Every one of these establishments is the embodiment of an erk's dream of the ideal posting. And all the erk has to do to become eligible for an A.C.H. posting is break a leg in a couple of involved places, or whip up a convincing case of rheumatic fever or double pneumonia.

LAC Wanke, along with his 40-odd fellow

patients, is enjoying something new in the annals of military medicine. For them and their successors the chief bugaboo of hospitalization — the enervating period of convalescence — has been transformed into a piece of cake with icing.

There is no segregation of officers and men here. The artificial hierarchy of rank collapses in the mutual teetering efforts of learning to walk again, and a man with a game wing cannot salute worth a damn anyhow. Aircrew and groundcrew, repats and rookies, all rub shoulders in the spacious drawing rooms, take turns waiting on one another in the bright panelled dining room.

Swanky barracks with a drill square of willows and rosebeds is tonic for ailing aircrew and erks

Convalescence is no longer a static process, and the A.C.H. patients spend a good deal of their time with their PTIs. These PTIs, however, are like no other PTIs in the Service, in that close observation reveals them to be human, almost likable. Take Sgt Wal Zimich of New Westminster, for instance, who has on his charge all the muscles at No. 5 A.C.H. With his class of seven or eight patients seated in a circle of chairs on the sun-bathed lawn of the home, Sgt Zimich suggests rather than demands exercises, speaking in a low, well-modulated voice that makes oldtime airmen twiddle a forefinger in their ear and listen again more closely, frank disbelief in their eyes. He smiles encouragingly at unsuccessful attempts to perform exercises, the beatific smile of one whose mind is untroubled by thoughts of 20 push-ups.

The eccentric behavior of this PTI, like that of his fellow anomaly, Cpl Ken Robson of Regina, is the enchanting result of courses in special remedial exercises. These exercises constitute the basis of new methods of orthopaedic treatment pioneered in England. Their purpose is simply to exercise as much as possible the muscles around fractured bones while the bones are knitting.

Thus when LAC Wanke's cast was chipped away, John emerged from the shell like a butterfly from its chrysalis, if a butterfly can be pictured as whooping and joyfully scratching its stomach. Thanks to his biking and other vigorous activities he was almost ready to go.

To begin, the remedial exercises are elementary but far from simple for the patients. At times Sgt Zimich must cajole and dare a man into wiggling the fingers on a broken wrist, or raising a leg with a split femur. The patient must be persuaded to walk with confidence instead of a cane. Canes and crutches are thrown away in the presence of these miracle makers in gym pants.

Back from Malta, for example, came a fighter pilot, FO E. G. Booth, immobilized by the heavy plaster protecting a fractured spine and two

splintered thighs, sad souvenirs of action. Zimich and Robson went to work on him, starting with mere toe twiddlings, and in a few months Booth was back before the aircrew selection board, fit and full of more flying.

But the A.C.H. does more than accelerate the physical healing of its patients. It also provides new weapons against the insidious bug of boredom that gnaws at the morale of convalescents, particularly of fliers and others normally hyper-active.

"We try to treat the whole man," explains SL E. T. W. Nash, who is CO, MO, and, to his frequent dismay, also Works and Bricks officer and head of a number of other sections about the place, although he is usually referred to by his staff and patients as "the boss".

SATURDAY NIGHT HOE-DOWN

A bike rack full of gleaming blue C.C.M.'s a squash court, free movies, the exclusive golf course nearby — these are a few of the facilities placed at the disposal of the patients. Every Saturday night the lounge resounds with the sound of music and the thump of steel walking-irons, as the convalescents show off a week's improvement to lady friends in a bang-up hoe-down.

"The boss" demurely encourages his gang to amuse themselves, when they are not out wagging their parts for Sgt Zimich. This they do under the stern supervision of one of the elder patients, FS H. E. "Johnny" Johnston of Montreal. Johnny is a flight engineer and was aboard a Canso flying off the west coast when his aircraft pitched suddenly, throwing him off balance while his foot was caught in the inner ribbing of the hull. Things happened to his leg.

"Don't give 'em chance to mope," is the Flight's formula, which he prescribes for his fellow patients as soon as they are able to get about. Concrete and plyboard evidence of the efficacy of his foremanship is the self-constructed workshop, "The Sawdust Bin", in the basement of the home, where patients who never before touched a hammer are busy making things — some objets d'art, others just a hell of a lot of sawdust — with lathes and saws. Scattered throughout the gardens, too, are detachments of "engineers" engaged in building rustic railings for the maze of walks, and trellis houses looking out on the splendid view of the rich Fraser delta.

Recently, led by SL Nash, everybody trooped off to the North Shore mountains to hew trees for this project. When Capt and Mrs. Massey Goolden, who lent the home to W. C. H. Inc., return to the estate they will find it considerably improved by the labors of Johnston's informal CMU. Moreover, to spice life with further variety, on Sundays the patients are whisked off for steamship cruises up the coast, or away to lush private farms up the Valley.

With repairs completed in record time, therefore, SL Nash is able to rub off names on his "serviceability chart", as the owners drive out the high-hedged winding driveway, back to active duty. Others are always waiting to take their place.

ACQUIRE GOLF CLUBHOUSE

A second home, No. 6 A.C.H., even larger than No. 5, is rapidly whipping into shape its accommodation for 80 patients. Formerly the clubhouse of the Royal Colwood Golf Club on Vancouver Island, this Tudor-style residence promises to provide a still more idyllic background for recovery, amidst gentle moss-covered oaks and tall, straight pines. FL H. G. Cooper, MO and CO, along with his stout-hearted PTIs, FS Jack Prichard of Vancouver and New York's Sgt Bob Howie, pocketed pride and rolled up sleeves to dig septic tanks, decrate bicycles, paint walls, and contribute generally to the metamorphosis of clubhouse to convalescent home. Here the program of training is much the same as No. 5, although FS Prichard would be the last to admit that his soccer field, the archery range, or the 30-foot fishing launch beckoning on a nearby lake, are to be equalled anywhere when it comes to winning patients and influencing muscles.

As the repats start trickling back from hell and its environs, these and other homes will be ready to receive them and gently assist in righting minds and bodies to the vertical of health. On these quiet, green lawns, on these deep-carpeted floors, the war has been begun to ensure that, 10 to 20 years from now, the cripple selling pencils on the street corner will not have been so humbled by service in the RCAF.

It looks like a good fight to win.



Leg broken in three places fails to deter FS Johnny Johnston, Montreal, from head-stand. A flight engineer, he was injured in a flying accident.



Staff and patients get together. Segregation of officers and men is taboo. All rub shoulders and take turns waiting on one another in the dining room.

LAC John Wanke, Kingsville, Ont., broken spine cased in cast, recuperates the hard way by riding bike backwards. Over 40 patients are treated here.



Dr. Watson's Daughter

WEST COAST — A clerk operator at a west coast station is Pauline Bruce, who would be interesting even if she were not the daughter of British actor Nigel Bruce. The querulous huffing and puffing of Mr. Bruce as befuddled Dr. Watson is familiar to millions of screen and radio devotees of the mighty Sherlock Holmes.

Now, by honest coincidence, Pauline's station is serving as the set for a picture in which her father stars, MGM's "Son of Lassie", a doggy sequel to "Lassie Come Home", involving shots of an "RAF station" and countryside resembling Norway. This is merely incidental, however to the fact that pretty Pauline gave up a home in Beverly Hills and a career modelling clothes in New York to don Service issue and take up her WD duties in an isolated operations building carefully concealed amongst B.C. firs, where Holmes himself might conceivably have difficulty locating it.

All of which induces us to raise an admiring eyebrow and with Dr. Watson, murmur, "Amazing!"



Pauline Bruce

WD Portrait Painter of Pets

EAST COAST — It's quite a gap between painting the portraits of canine aristocrats on civic street and handling radio telephone apparatus in the Air Force but Cpl Jean Ramsay, a native of Penticton, B.C., has made the jump successfully.

Jean has been wearing blues for two years now and is at present stationed at a holding unit down here. In pre-war days she won modest fame in her home province as a painter and sketcher of animals and in her frequent trips to Hollywood "did" some of the pets of the movie stars including those of Bette Davis, Jane Withers, Boris Karloff and Norma Shearer.

She always makes it a point to paint a miniature duplicate of her work in an autograph album and alongside this miniature she secures the autograph of the person for whom the job was done.

Cpl Jean likes service life but is waiting for the day when she can get back to her painting as a full-time job. "I just want to paint and paint and paint," she says. (See photo, page 8).

Oldest Living Joe Strikes Out

OTTAWA — Discovered at last. The man they sang the song about in "All Clear" — "The oldest living airman in the world."

He's FS Joseph Bloor, chef at No. 17 Equipment Depot here, who is 65, and until proven otherwise he has been elected by his friends as the oldest man in the RCAF. However, it doesn't look like he will hold the title long because already his buddies are staging numerous parties for him as he prepares for his retirement in a few weeks.

He has had 50 years of service with British armed forces and audits are pouring into the Flight upon the successful conclusion of his colorful career, but he still hopes something will crop up to delay the retirement date. "I certainly don't want to retire," he told a WINGS correspondent, "especially when there's a war on. Why I don't even know how to wear civies properly."

Just why he doesn't know how to wear civies properly was unfolded in the story of his life. When he was a young lad in England, he was intrigued by horses and the colorful army uniforms, so at 15 he joined the Royal Horse Artillery. It was his start.

He spent 21 years with this unit from 1890 to 1911, and served in India and South Africa in the Boer War, where he received his first battle wound. He was stationed in Aldershot, England, at the time of Queen Victoria's death, and was a wheel driver on the gun carriage that bore her remains to the cemetery.

He was discharged from the artillery in 1911, but re-entered the service when the last war broke out. He went to France and was wounded at Mons and sent back to England. His riding days were over now, but he promptly joined the infantry, switching from the blue and gold of the artillery to the khaki of the Lancashire Regiment, in 1915.

After his discharge in 1919 he spent six years as a gunner instructor with the British Territorial Army, and then for a time his military career was discontinued. He staged a comeback in 1929 when on a visit to Calgary he enlisted with the RCAF as chef. Air Force life agreed with him, he never did get around to leaving it, and he never will "voluntarily," he says.

Flight Bloor has seen more of Canada than most Canadians and he states he likes every foot of it. Best of all he likes Calgary, which he considers home.



FS Joseph Bloor



FO Eddie Fraser, Claresholm, fresh off ops tried a new type of flying at Calgary rodeo. He woke up in hospital just after FS Slim Bent got this shot.



Robin Hood lives again at Centralia as archers draw a bead on 9 SFTS range. Two on left are LAW Elaine Litterman, Timmins, and LAC J. M. Chovinard, St. Jean Port Joli.



LAW Mary Truckair makes a WINGS sales tour at Centralia on battery-powered scooter. Built by maintenances joes, it's handy to deliver messages.



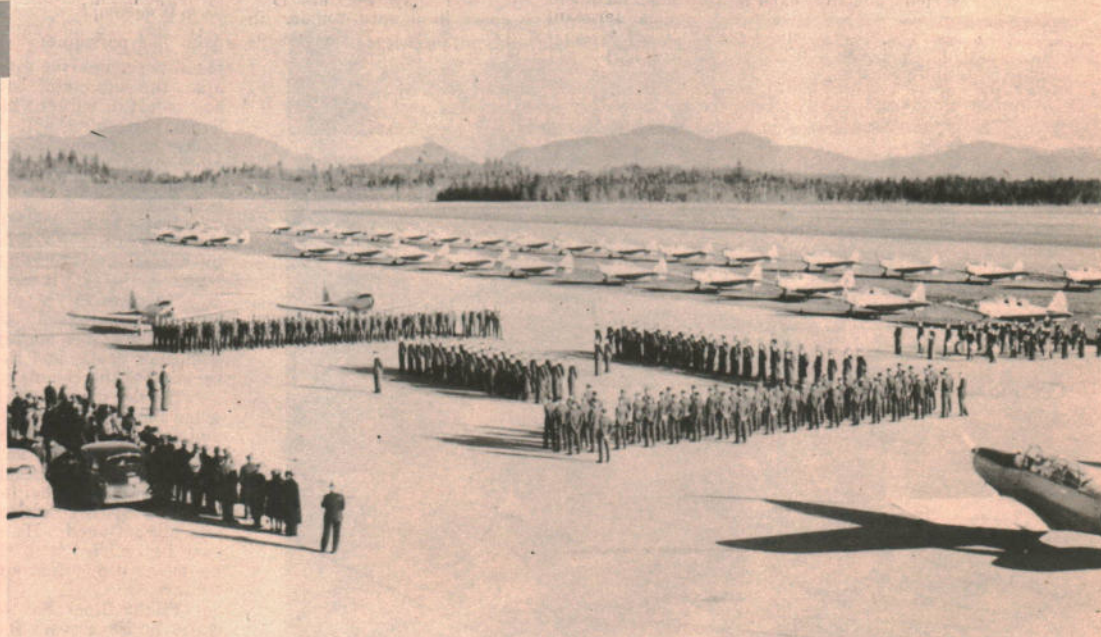
Confidentially . . . they sting. Sgt Al Byers started his "bee for victory" program at an RCAF east coast station with a \$25 donation from the canteen fund.



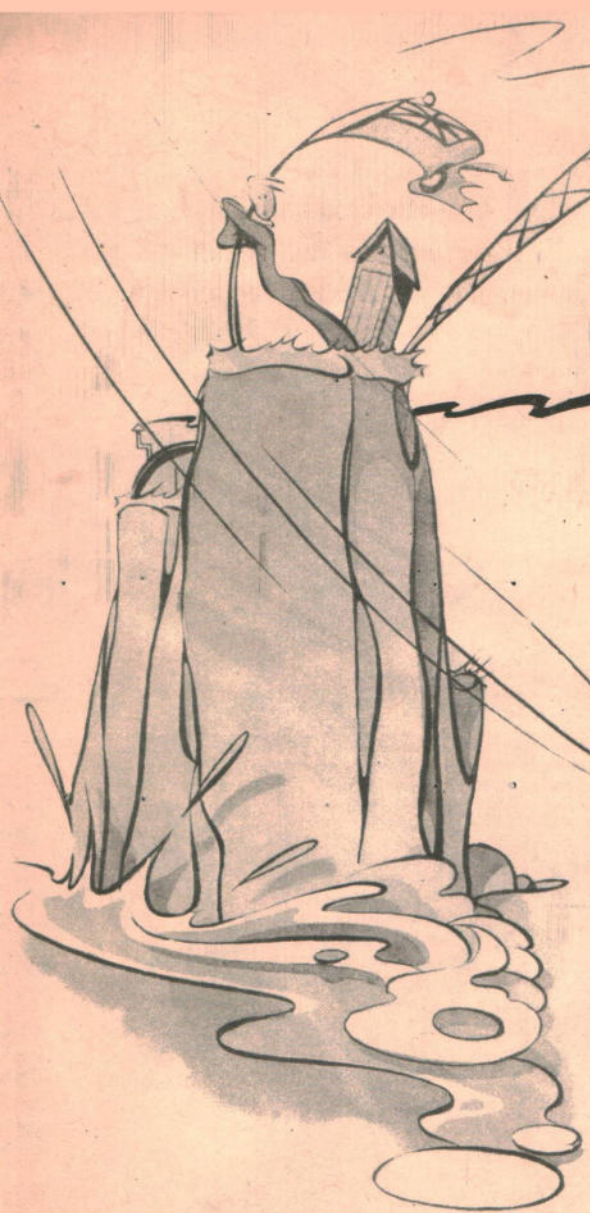
LAC W. D. Harding, Winnipeg, brings home the bacon on the hoof at Edmonton ITS' third anniversary. Greasy pig number was a highlight of sports meet.



Radio operator by trade but an artist at heart, Cpl Jean Ramsay does a crayon sketch of a pair of Pelmations owned by AVM G. O. Johnson, AOC of EAC



One of the final station parades at B.C.'s only EFTS before the school was converted into an OTU. Thundering medium bombers have replaced sleek Cornells and graduates fly straight into action.



**This is isolation —
fifty men on a lonely
rocky isle somewhere
north of Polaris**

Rose of No Man's Land

periencing the opposite. Pessimistic parties offer the opinion that vitamins depress them. Contrary souls say they give too much life — too much energy. Pains, pimples, and alcoholic hangovers are all attributed to the action of the vitamin pills. If a man were to report with mechanized dandruff he'd swear the vitamin pills produced the affliction.

We are housed in little semi-circular buildings called Nissen huts. The detachment is set on the only flat part of the island — a bed of peat. In winter, when the water in the peat freezes, the huts are heaved, throwing all the doors and windows out of kilter. When the doors and windows refuse to close, the procedure is, according to the construction hand, to saw off little chunks of wood until the door fits. Then when spring comes and the buildings settle down to normal, causing gaping holes in the framework, the little chunks of wood are hammered back on again.

For a year now, none of us have seen a movie, a soda, a tree, or a pair of silk stockings — full ones. Instead, we have learned to appreciate the more simple things in life — the more homey things. Consider our latrine, for instance. On big stations, the inside plumbing with its chromium fittings, the enamelware, and the mechanical devices, seems much too pretentious and self-sufficient to engender for itself a feeling of love in the hearts of the boys. But on this detachment we sport an outdoor accommodation and although it receives the brunt of many good-natured jests, the men think highly of the little institution with its four fur-lined places arranged in such a manner that you can play bridge while swinging the lead.

For entertainment we have a piano and several radios. We have been able to develop quite a taste for certain programs and will very much regret missing the daily instalment of "Life Can Be Beautiful" when our postings come through. At other times we play cards. Gambling is not supposed to be permitted, but you can't expect grown men to play cards all night for a box of chiclets. For the financial protection of the rookies, no man is allowed to draw more than ten dollars a month.

One may wonder how this detachment, set apart in a very remote, inaccessible district, receives mail from the outside world. The personnel of this unit also wonder about the same thing. In summer, mail arrives about once a month by boat. In winter, a plane will occasionally fly over and drop our mail from the air. We appreciate this gesture very much even though last Christmas one of the cannisters broke loose from the parachute and all that was left of the Christmas presents were a few corks. But waiting a month for mail makes mail day a big event in our lives. On that day, the feeling of goodwill couldn't be stronger if the men were all dead drunk together.

Outgoing mail is easily disposed of in summer, but in winter it has to travel several hundred miles by dog-sled before it reaches a post office. Furthermore, all outgoing mail must be censored before it leaves the detachment. This is awkward . . .

The letters are not read by ordinary censors, but by the two officers on the detachment who are human beings, or a reasonable facsimile thereof. We live with them and eat with them every day in the mess, and we have a sneaky feeling they know more about us than we know about them. This always puts a man in a mean position. Furthermore, what man is going to lay bare his sentiments to the scrutiny of another man? Young husbands and swains are forced to carry on their love-making by correspondence. In the eyes of other men the soldier is a mighty tough hombre. The little lady thinks he's an adorable old fuzzy-wuzzy — just too sweet for words. Well, that's okay too, I guess — but in military life no man wants the next guy to think he's sweet! More

than one perplexed little spouse has written: "Darling — your letters seem kind of formal. Is there anything the matter, dear? . . ."

Women get the idea that men in isolation think of nothing else but women — and how true! But the man around here who can find anything resembling a woman, living or dead, is lucky. I suppose that's the reason no pin-up pictures are allowed. In all the huts there is only one pin-up — a life-sized advertisement picture of a cold quart of beer. Unfortunately, owing to geographical hazards — during severe storms the meteorological observers record wind velocities of

over one hundred miles an hour, and less than a hundred yards from the detachment sheer cliffs fall 200 feet to the sea — alcohol is not permitted on the detachment. At Christmas, six bottles of rum were issued at our Christmas Eve smoker. But we had to drink the stuff under supervision which, of course, took all the fun out of it. The authorities probably thought six bottles weren't enough to make 50 men drunk, but one fellow was a little more than just lonesome for his wife when he leaned over and firmly planted a kiss on the wet nose of his dog.

Dogs we have aplenty; we use them in winter for transportation, and to haul our water from a pond half a mile from the camp. The scarcity of water, by the way, is another hardship. On a big station a fellow can look forward to Saturday night and a relaxing few hours curled up in a hot bath. But how can an old stiff like me curl up comfortably in a two-gallon pail.

All ranks live together and eat together in the same mess, happily throwing insults and dehydrated potatoes at each other. We have no digger; confined to barracks is a pointless punishment; and there's enough pack drill carrying the supplies from the warehouse without winning the award.

Nobody knows just how long our period of isolation is supposed to be. If you arrive at the point where you laugh at the OC's jokes because you really enjoy them, and not because you are looking for a promotion, you are then considered "bushed" and a boat comes to take you away.

Well, anyway, it was in this spot that I was placed more than a year ago. And it is in this place that I remain, away from the dust, the smoke, and the grime of cities. It is in this secluded haven, away from the greed, the selfishness, the cut-throat competition, and all the other evils of a commercial world that I rest, unexposed to the hazardous pitfalls of the flesh, to the thousand and one temptations that beset mankind, to the doubtful escapes and the material joys of wine, women and song. It is here that I lead a pure life, a healthy life, in a vast invigorating climate, in a beautiful isle of the north, where dazzling sunshine dashes the ice-covered hills into a sparkling panorama of titanic jewelry, which at eventide is wreathed in a setting of sunset colors that range from the most delicate pastel shades to the most ponderous hues of black. And at night, when all is at rest save the waking eyes of stars, I find myself in a delightful winter fairyland, under the whispering restlessness of the aurora borealis which creates in the northern sky a sight of wondrous beauty.

But what I want to know is: **WHEN THE HELL DO I GET OUT!**

(Copyright reserved by author, 1944)

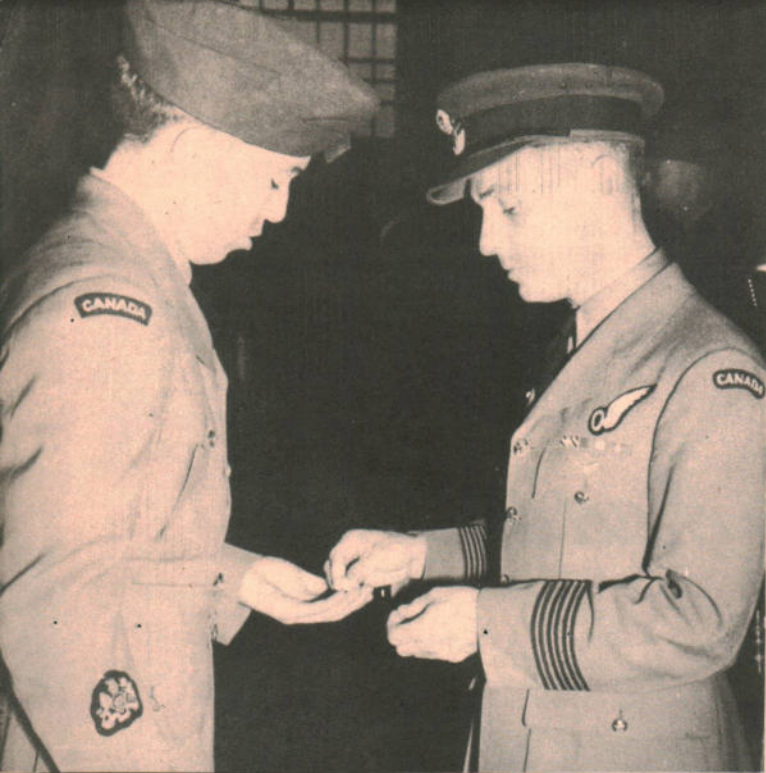


by SGT W. J. CROSS
I realize now that I shouldn't have enlisted into the medical section. When I made my first application, I figured I could encounter nothing more hazardous in this war than carrying a bedpan over a slippery floor of a ward during visiting hours. Instead, I find myself the hospital assistant, sergeant (paid) — the Rose of No Man's Land on the grimmest unit in the Command — a tiny detachment so far north in the Atlantic that we locate the Polar Star by looking to the south.

I won't say that I'm overworked. In fact, the most serious malady existing on a detachment such as this is the headache the medical sergeant gets from hearing the other fellows tell him what a soft job he has. But there are certain other hardships.

In the first place, this is isolation — real isolation. Our detachment is on an island having about the same size and general characteristics as Alcatraz. As nine months of the year is winter, all our provisions arrive at one time. If we happen to run out of anything before the year is up, that's our tough luck. For instance, right now our supply of fruit is almost gone and if you can find a raisin in the raisin bread you get a 48. But you have to give the raisin back to the cooks. The provisions, of course, are all preserved — the vegetables are dehydrated; the eggs are powdered; the milk, fruit and sundries are canned or dried; the meat is frozen. Our cooks, upon whom we practise "Dale Carnegie", have only 50 men to cater to and are therefore able to put art into their work. Although we eat well, it is considered inadvisable to mention the words "corned beef" to men who have been on a detachment — especially this detachment. Last summer our refrigerator broke down and before transportation would allow a supply of fresh meat to be brought in we consumed corned beef for two months.

The lack of fresh food is compensated for by a daily ration of one vitamin pill per man — another pain in the neck for the medical section. The pills are supposed to contain every vitamin known to man except Vitamin E. But not every man jumps at his pill each day with a glad cry. Some men claim the pills cause the same alimentary distress as cheese. Others confess ex-



WO1 Art Johns survived a bad crash on Labrador coast last winter. Repatriated to 9 AOS, he got his ops wing from WC A. Lambert, DFC and bar on wings parade. His commission came through the same day.



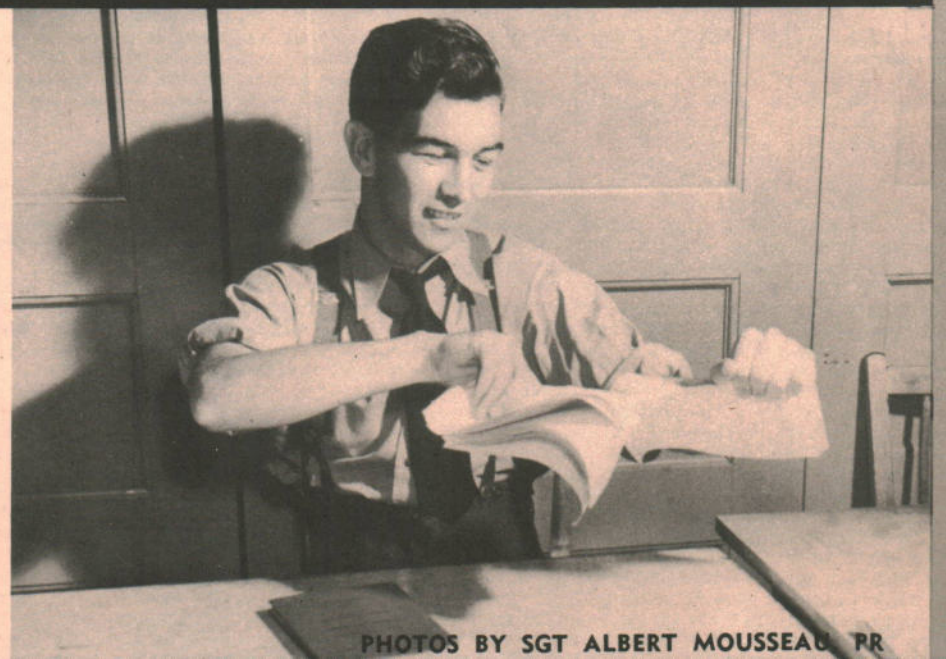
This 18-year-old Irish kid, Cecil "Paddy" Savage looked forward to going home to Belfast before swinging into action. Paddy stuck to his bunk the day before the ceremony, sewing hooks and wings on extra tunics, but it was work for nothing. He walked off parade a PO.



Top man of navigator grads, Steve Fletcher, Hamilton, gets proficiency award from C. R. Troup, O.B.E., C.P. Airlines official. E. E. Saunders, S. B. Rousell, PO J. H. Gough, a remuster, got similar awards.



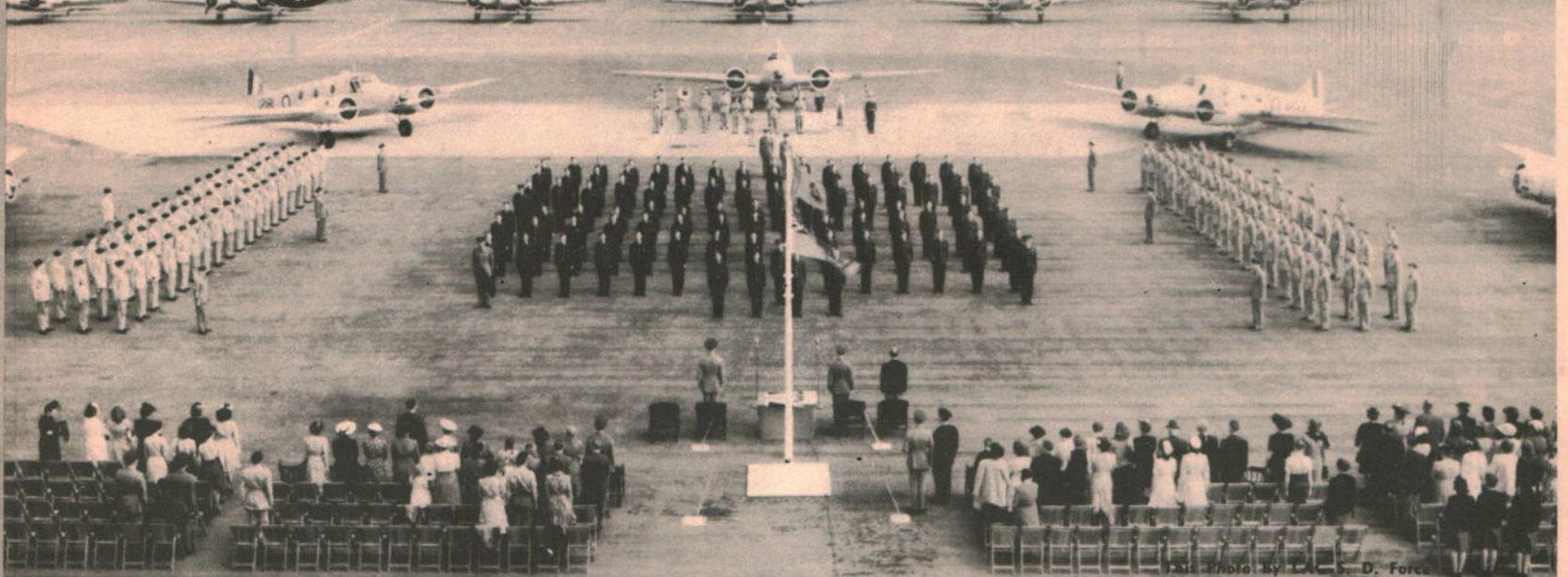
Bedlam reigned in the navigators hut just before the big event. Art Darling, Hilton, Ont., ran behind schedule so he got a hand from Steve Fletcher, Herb Benison and Jerry Coulter. Gabfests centred on speculation of war theatre postings, embarkation parties and pay parade.





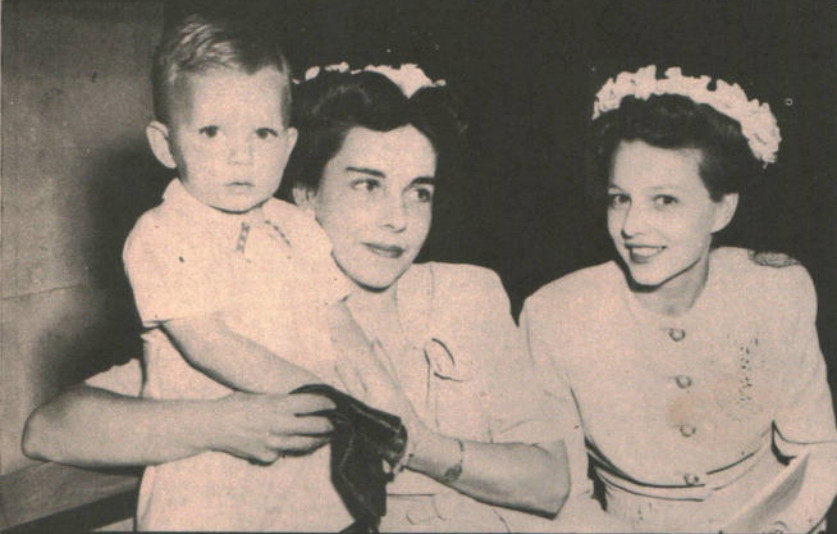
Wings Parade

The RCAF's most colorful ceremony has been repeated 2,500 times. These scenes were taken at St. Johns AQS



A typical summer wings parade at 9 AOS, St. Johns, Que. Chief supervisory officer Winco Lambert chalked up two tours as navigator, holds the DFC and bar, ops wing and bar and Pathfinder badge. In July, 1943, he was shot down

over enemy-occupied territory. Nearly six months later he was back on English soil with the rest of the crew. The 29-year old CO graduated from Rivers ANS in 1941. W. "Babe" Woollett, veteran flier, is general manager of the school.



Shrill cries of "daddy, daddy" had Bombarier Spencer Rousell's ears burning during wings parade after his two-year old son, Stephen, spotted him. An aunt, Mrs. M. A. Rousell, Montreal, holds the child; his mother looks on.



Proud parents, wives and friends gather in the mess hall for the reception. It was entirely an indoor show due to rain. Newly winged warriors couldn't leave for home till next day. Grads included Aussies, Norwegians, RAFmen.



Seven 18-year-olds graduated, three getting commissions. In this age bracket were Allan Leslie, Toronto; Carl Currie, Montague, P.E.I.; Norman McDermott, Montreal and Bill Etherington (at the piano), in the Canadian Legion lounge.



Three more 18-year-olds with Paula Bishop and Lorraine Leeman, flight clerks. On left John Desjardins, Hull. Bill MacCallum, St. Thomas (centre), reluctantly posed with girls. Reason: he was being married scon. Paddy Savage is on right.



Despite the lazy relaxing west coast climate, and the long war years of standing guard on the western defences, waiting for a crack at the Jap, pilots and navigators like these make the best of long, weary patrols, are always on the alert for the enemy.

by WINGS Staff Writer

THIS is a veteran operational base of the west coast. Staffed since Pearl Harbor with men constantly alerted against the fate that befell that stronghold, this is Canada's left-hand jab, cocked and waiting for the Jap to stick his chin out too far, ready, willing and able to lay him out like an oriental rug. Here the snouts of machine-guns projecting from aircraft are backed up by belts of bullets coiled ready to strike, and live bombs hang ripe in their racks, waiting for the pressure of a thumb to fulfill their deathly destiny.

There was a time, after the attempted assassination of American sea-power had blacked out the lights and darkened the fears of west coast people, when this station seemed a pitifully puny David to bear the responsibility of fending off possible attacks by the treacherous Goliath of the East, of guarding a long, jagged coast and the Dominion's third largest city with its great war industries. Grim reminders of those days are the remaining camouflaged buildings of the old camp, the stern brick headquarters, for instance, with its methodically mad paint job designed to make it blend perfectly with the countryside. Several of the hangars are similarly disguised, so well so, indeed, that some erks at first complained of being unable to find them in the mornings, an excuse for tardiness which the SWO has long since firmly disallowed.

Further visible and invisible evidence that the station is girded for action are the large yellow gas detector signs spotted at frequent intervals throughout the camp, the canary-colored disks turning red immediately upon contact with most gases; or the apparent paucity of aircraft, only a tour of the field revealing fighters and bombers tucked away between protective earthworks, parked to provide a minimum target for air attack.

A score of watch-towers, capped with search-light mounts and formerly manned by security guardsmen, survey the camp area with vacant windows. Bomb-proof shelters of stone and earth stand out like welts or fresh graves on the face of nearby fields, but the sods of their camouflage have grown into the brown grass of the meadows, and their only patrons are sheep, cropping placidly on the slopes of the grotesque hummocks.

For the nervousness of December, 1941, has been replaced by a feeling of confidence, a knowledge of strength, testified by big new double hangars, the added rows of barracks, two complete camps and a host of aircraft that add up to the fact that David has grown up fast and no longer has to depend on rocks and a sling. The station cannot camouflage her broad runways, or the flock of gull-white flying boats anchored in the bay, and she doesn't need to. She's ready now, husky enough to realign buck teeth and open slant eyes at a moment's notice.

The station is split into two camps — East and West — one an OTU for aircrew acquiring the science of flying a boat, the other housing a number of operational squadrons dedicated to welcoming warmly any visitors, by sea or by air, who should make the grievous error of presuming the west coast to be a quiet, suitable spot for retaliation of losses in the South Pacific.

The VIGILANTES

These squadrons are anxious to prove to the world of science that a Jap cruiser will sink as quickly in the North Pacific as in the South.

Yet despite the defensive strength which the station represents, there remains something unreal and monstrous in the possibility that this west coast and its waters should become a battleground. Its lazy, relaxing climate, its history unmarked by bloodshed since Drake and Juan de Fuca, do not suit the imminence of danger.

Tanned airmen and airwomen frisking in the sparkling waters of the bay and sunning themselves on the beach, the deep silence of the skirting forest of firs, deceive further anyone searching for the usual symptoms of war. There is not even the fairly continuous roar of the circuit-wheeling planes of an SFTS. Most of the day the station is as quiet as a summer resort for maiden ladies, and often evening calm is broken only by the crack of a bat and the shout of players on the softball diamond, or the blare of a radio down in the marine section, projecting Bing Crosby across the bay.

But there is war at this station. There is tension and vigilance, the readiness to meet danger. No chance of an enemy pulling off any sneak punch here. And if there is no great aerial activity evident, it should be remembered that the strength and cunning of the eagle cannot be known to one who watches only its nest. Here and at stations from the Aleutians to Panama, the ear of science listens, listens further than a man can see. And when aircraft rise from the long runways, they do not return for long hours, probing again and again into the Pacific, feeding on extra fuel carried in auxiliary tanks. But when they do wing in from the ocean they know at first-hand what is on that ocean within a radius of hundreds of miles, a radius interlocking with those of stations on either side.

Almost before his aircraft has stopped taxiing, the navigator is stepping into the office of the Intelligence Officer, seating himself across the desk and opening his log of flight. Accepting the I.O.'s cigarette, he starts to read, slowly enough for his hearer to jot down notes:

"... sighted three vessels ... first at 1000 hours ... number on bow W675 ... about 7000

These impatient western warriors are hungry for a plump Jap carrier to put above the mantle

tons ... answered code. Second ship small tanker ... sighted at 1020 hours ... about 1500 tons ..."

The I.O. flips quickly through a loose-leaf book, puts his finger on a name.

"The first vessel is the Anna Lee Walker, U.S. supply ship. She's only 5,000 tons, though. Now, about that tanker. Does this look like her?"

The navigator stretches his neck to see four photographs taken the previous evening by another patrol.

"That's her."

"Good. We were having a little trouble identifying her. Didn't answer the code last night. Probably one of those old Scottish captains that doesn't believe the airplane is here to stay."

The navigator nods, chuckling, and proceeds with a description of his third ship, as easily and speedily identified as the first. Meantime, in the photo section, pictures of ships mugged by the morning patrol are being developed and printed, to be rushed over to the I.O. for identification.

Routine? Of course. But it is a routine upon which may depend the lives of thousands of people. The complex organization responsible for knowing what ship is where at what time, the endless watch for suspicious strangers — a freighter that could be a Jap sub tender, the feather foam that would be the sub itself — these are the sensitive antennae, the vital sixth sense of coastal defence.

Commanding Officer of two camps encompassing the area and a population of a fair-sized town is GC B. D. Hobbs, DSO, DSC & Bar, who counters the heavy responsibilities of his job with experience gained in two wars. As a pilot of the Royal

Naval Air Service, GC Hobbs helped pioneer the technique of defence against new weapons of assault by sea and by air. The flaming destruction of Zeppelin L43, the sinking of three U-boats brought the young flier his high awards and three mentions in dispatches.

During the present war, he commanded an operation station on the east coast before assuming his command in the west.

Responsible for putting together the jigsaw puzzle of patrol reports is the intelligence officer, FL H. C. MacCallum of Victoria. When the integrated picture reveals the presence of an unexpected vessel moving into his area, he must decide whether her photograph reveals guileless friend or brazen foe. If a ship becomes suspect, it soon finds itself being escorted by a solicitous bomber to a terrier of the RCN, or to the nearest service policeman.

To provide this sort of protection requires the presence of a great variety of talents and trades: the operator of the massive railway crane which plucks 15 tons of flying boat up by the scruff of the fuselage and replaces it elsewhere on the crowded ramp with the delicate gentleness of a curator examining a vase; the girls in the operations room who nudge markers representing ships and planes on the large map before them, giving at a glance a man-in-the-moon's eye view of hundreds of square miles of coastal waters, and the position and course of everything moving through or above them; and, naturally, the statues decorating the headquarters lawn, erks leaning stolidly on rake handles and mowers, immobile yet, somehow, remotely alive, as though molded by a Phidias.

This station is known to airmen and airwomen as a good berth. The weather is just about ideal, the countryside resembles something out of a technicolor travelogue film. Nobody turns down any 48s, of course, but the natural advantages are there to be enjoyed. There is cycling and boating and, in the cool of the evening, down on the beach, a short erk may oft be seen digging for clams in the wet sand gleaming behind the ebbing tide. The sand is pocked with little holes emitting weak spits of water, as his spade turns up the clams by the dozens. The erk selects only a few of the largest, handling them with an expression of acute disdain.

"Don't see how anybody can eat these damn things," he says. "Make good bait for cod, though."

Yes the fishing is good on this coast. And the personnel of the station trust that the hunting will also improve before the war is over. In their opinion, a nice plump Jap carrier, or what's left of it after the bombers are finished, would look good above the mantelpiece in the canteen.

It remains to be seen whether the enemy will see its way clear to satisfying the lively appetite of GC Hobbs' souvenir hunters.



Top photos by William Kensit, Edmonton Journal

Johnny Caine, DFC and bar pitched in and helped his dad with fur farm chores when he landed home for a rest. Those cages hold 500⁺ mink.



Crack City of Edmonton Squadron ace handles pup foxes like a vet. He hasn't forgotten tricks of the trade taught to him by his father.



Johnny Caine destroyed nine enemy planes in the air, eight on the ground and damaged five others. After winding up his special leave he was posted to an Eastern Canadian OTU.

BACK ON THE FARM

EDMONTON — Whether it's handling prize mink and platinum foxes on civie street or fighter planes over enemy territory, FO Johnny Caine, DFC and bar, top-scoring pilot of the City of Edmonton Intruder Squadron, is right in there pitching.

Johnny, whose name has become a household word in Edmonton, was by coincidence the first pilot with his squadron to be decorated following the announcement of the adoption of the unit by his hometown.

One of the youngest members of the squadron, Johnny cleaned up on nine enemy aircraft in the air and eight on the ground and damaged five others. Recently home from overseas for 30 days leave, he paid tribute to several of his pals who are still over there raiding enemy territory, including SL Bob Kipp of Kamloops, B.C., with whom Caine made two sorties, and his navigator, FO E. A. Boal of Regina.

He first acquired an interest in flying while sweltering on the ground at his family's fox farm watching aircraft slide coolly by overhead. His 17-year-old brother, Jimmy, who is now subbing for him at home, told how Johnny used to look up in the sky and say "Those lucky devils up there."

However, he did more than just look. Because he didn't possess the educational qualifications demanded by the Air Force he took a Canadian Legion Education course. After 12 months of working on the farm and sweating it out over

text-books at night he picked up enough to qualify for Grade II, and was able to get through.

One of the Edmonton pilot's greatest admirers is his 12-year-old brother, Billy. The day Johnny arrived home unexpectedly he was swinging down the road at the end of the car line with his suitcase, bound for the farm three miles away when he met Billy going to school.

Billy decided he'd never have a better chance to play hookey so taking Johnny's suitcase he announced, "I'm not going to school, this is my day off."

He burst into the yard where his father and two brothers were busy feeding the mink and the fox, and yelled the good news. And for the rest of the day followed his brother around as devotedly as the most indefatigable movie fan.

But one member of the family turned up her nose at the returning flier — Johnny's dog Toosie, a Pomeranian who used to be constantly at his heels before he left fox breeding for fox hunting. As soon as Johnny appeared in his old familiar working clothes, however, she was ready to make friends all over again.

The youthful ace is looking forward to the end of the war when he can get back into harness again and eventually acquire a large fox farm all his own.

Meanwhile he obtained special leave to run in the Alberta provincial election; but this was one fight in which Johnny didn't score. He has since been posted to a Canadian OTU.

Yarmouth Vets Remember the Battle of Comeau Hill

by FS DON KENNEDY

YARMOUTH — Many Air Force stations stand gaunt and temporary in their surroundings, but not this maritime Canso roost presently commanded by GC M. C. Doyle. Old evergreens look down on weathered barracks and buildings framed by well cut lawns. The picket fence around the sergeants' quarters would look out of place except in Nova Scotia.

Only one man on the station has watched this operational unit gather shape and push its way out of the swamp into its present form. In March, 1939 FS Ed Lewis, now Works and Bricks carpenter, started as a civilian construction hand, and has had a hand in everything which has gone on since. He was there when hangars went up and sod went down, as the first CO, GC N. S. MacGregor, DFC, of Hamilton, Ont., now overseas, nursed his gangling station like a proud parent.

Born and bred in Yarmouth, Ed can remember when the camp was covered with what Nova Scotians call "swail" — waist-high alders growing in swamp. "This whole west hill was cut away to fill up the middle," explained Ed. "That's how they were able to build barracks on level terraces."

"Not many of the pilots who take off from here appreciate the fact we laid drainage tiles on the ground in 1939, and put 18 feet of earth on top of them to make solid runways. I can remember one day when a workman drove a tractor off the cement runways, and we had to get a chain around it in a hurry, because only the

driver's seat was still sticking out of the mud. We nearly lost it. That was right where No 3 hangar is standing."

(For a good evening's entertainment, get FS Lewis to tell about his last war experience when his posterior was filled with gramophone needles from a German hand grenade. "I could have made music at either end," he says.)

To be classified as a veteran here you must prove you campaigned with the valiant men who fought the Battle of Comeau Hill. Otherwise, to station oldsters, you're just a rookie. Many weird and wonderful tales of the cause of the Battle of Comeau Hill still float around the station. The yarn which is given the seal of authenticity by those in-the-know, hinges around a blueberry patch. The battle started — as have so many — with a harmless bit of propaganda warfare.

A farmer near Comeau Hill had a prize blueberry patch. To discourage would-be berry pickers, he started a rumor there were bears on his farm. The ruse worked successfully and he gathered his crop unmolested. That was in 1941. In August 1942, he stepped his story up a notch to further discourage scrounge pickers, and added, not only were there bears on his farm, but also Nazi spies. Unfortunately at the same time G-men picked up some German spies in Florida who had been landed from a sub, and shortly afterwards a mysterious dinghy floated into shore in Nova Scotia.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police were notified, and putting all the evidence together, they

decided the area should be searched, with the help of the RCAF station. The battle of Comeau Hill started August 18th, 1942, and lasted three days. Now Comeau Hill is a quiet little Nova Scotia village but as would happen in most Canadian villages the residents became properly wrathful and indignant at the thought of spies desecrating their fair countryside, and entered into the search with good Canadian enthusiasm.

Out of the RCAF station sped transports laden with armed-to-the-teeth airmen ready to shoot spies or anything else which crossed their path. All roads were blocked, all railways patrolled. Leading a gallant patrol, Station Sergeant Major WO2 Bob Leithen, former bantamweight champ of Montreal, scurried from island to island along the coast, examining deserted fishermen's houses. Other parties searched isolated cabins.

At the end of three days, the search parties were called in. The picnic was over. The result of the search — the farmer's precious blueberry patch was ravished by some 700 airmen, and it was rumored, the RCMP found some backwoods stills they had long been searching for. Back at base, lotion was applied liberally over mosquito bites and scratches while station life returned to normal. The farmer's reaction after his war of nerves turned into a blueberry rout, are not recorded.

Airmen here joke about their fog. "Got so thick, I had to land by the smell of the flare path . . ." "Even the pigeons are walking" . . . or "had to close the show in the Rec Hall . . . Audience couldn't see the stage." are favorite fog gags.

LOG OF WINGS THE RCAF

Blood and Gore

The Major Leagues means the bull ring to the folks in the Azores and RCAF radio mechs stationed in the islands have become enthusiastic spectators. One lad named Ted Ramsdale darn near joined the bullfighters, not to mention his ancestors, when he perched atop the wall of the bull ring to take an action snap of a hefty fire-breather charging head on. him right back!" swore the mech as Ramsdale leaped for safety, thoughtfully clicking the shutter as he fell. "If he'd poked me I'd have poked him right back!" swore the Mech as he regained his dignity and helped Cpl. Alex Merriam escape from a thornbush in which he had taken refuge from the assault.

Nip and Tuck

You read in the papers how Wingate's famous raiders showered down behind Jap lines in Burma to hack an airbase out of the jungle and give considerable discomfort to the enemy. A couple of Canucks fliers are hair-raising it around there, operating an unofficial rescue service for army types who get trapped in Jap territory. Neither FL Eric Loken of Kelowna, B.C. nor FL Dave Bockus



of Toronto lack for thrills, but Bockus really grabbed off a bit of excitement recently when he got himself properly isolated in a jungle full of Nips.

The Stinson he flies made a neat landing in no space at all to rescue some British Army men but perhaps because one Colonel weighed 250 pounds, the Stinson just wouldn't hold airspeed on the takeoff and crashed into a hill. A Yank plane came in just in time to make a safe getaway with the party, except for Bockus and a British major. Before the Yanks could return for them the Japs arrived at one end of the strip but Bockus nonchalantly sauntered towards a native village depending on his coat of tan to get away with the bluff — and it worked. There followed several nightmare days of Jap-dodging through the jungle, foodless, and armed only with a revolver. The Flight Looey and the Major flopped flat once when they came within ten feet of walking right into a Jap column; one Nip soldier seemed to stare right at them but the column kept on marching. Finally they reached a hideout of which they knew and lay low till the enemy left the area, when they were able to hike back to the main camp. And two days later Dave Bockus was back in the air dropping supplies to other isolated groups.

Hillbilly Stuff

"The Martins and the Coys, they wuz fightin' mountain boys . . ." And so, in a broader sense, are ACI Bill Chambers of New Westminster

and LAC Bill Tewkesbury of Chatham, Ontario.

This brace of Wills share a very exclusive barrack blockhouse atop a mountain somewhere on the west coast, the better to chaperon the giant transmitters linking remote stations with the world. All supplies and



furniture, including the kitten, had to be brought up the mountain or a packboard. The two wireless mechs go to a creek for their water avoiding the necessity of turning on a faucet.

Recently one of the lads, alone in the cabin, looked up from his evening letter to behold a whopping black bear peering in the front door window with an expression of hungry anticipation. It was to discourage the attentions of this bruin that the boys plugged him with a .303, and he now lies peacefully in front of the stove, in a degutted sort of way.

Dead End

One day recently the pigeon loftman on a west coast station returned from leave to learn that the previous night the officers had enjoyed a delicious mess dinner of roast squab. It wasn't until somebody pointed out that squab is the name for pigeon that has stopped caring, that the loftman hurried to his lofts to find that his feathered squadron had been depleted to a mere holding unit, and that most of his pigeons had paid the supreme sacrifice, with stuffed olives.

Investigation proved that Headquarters had ordered the write-off of his charges, which had been found too susceptible to their natural enemies — hawks and coast weather — and

too expensive to ship back to civilization.

This, in the opinion of the Editors of WINGS, should be warning enough to all other members of the RCAF likely to be affected by sharp cuts in establishments. If they send you to work in the kitchen, don't let the cook sweet-talk you into crawling into the oven for him.

You may find yourself remustered to a burp.

Chilly, Too

Among other places Donald Duck is proudly displayed as mascot in this war is on the fuselage of a Mosquito flown by FL Bill Marr of Fort Langley, B.C. Because the Mossie is attached to a nightfighter squadron Donald appropriately carries a candle, not to mention a menacing blunderbus. But FO Joe Carpenter, of Montreal, the Navigator, thought the Disney quacker should be properly attired for his after dark prowling and added a flowing white nighshirt and cap. Trouble was the paint didn't dry before that night's sortie and the wind snatched off the nightshirt leav-



ing PO Duck the victim of an aerial striptease. Back at base Carpenter decided to measure Donald for a red nightshirt. Red paint dries faster, he's been told.

No Vision

The Sage of the Wet Canteen put down his glass and, commanding the attention of all present, gave voice to a mighty thought:

"Gentlemen, do you realize there's a serious problem confronting the

Air Force, of which Ottawa is not even aware, but for which with my profound fund of knowledge, I already have a solution?"

He used his pipe stem to emphasize each word. "I've been doing a lot of thinking lately about jet-propulsion. Did it ever occur to you that these propellorless aircraft automatically wash-out the rank badge of the LAC?"

"We knew back in '39 that jet-propulsion was coming, and that's when this outfit should have modernized its ranks and trades. No vision...



"I worked it out the other night. For jet-propulsion squadrons, ace deucies should be zephyrs, second class; acey ones could be puffs, first class; LACs are to be leading puffs (paid); corporals will become breezes. Sergeants will be big winds."

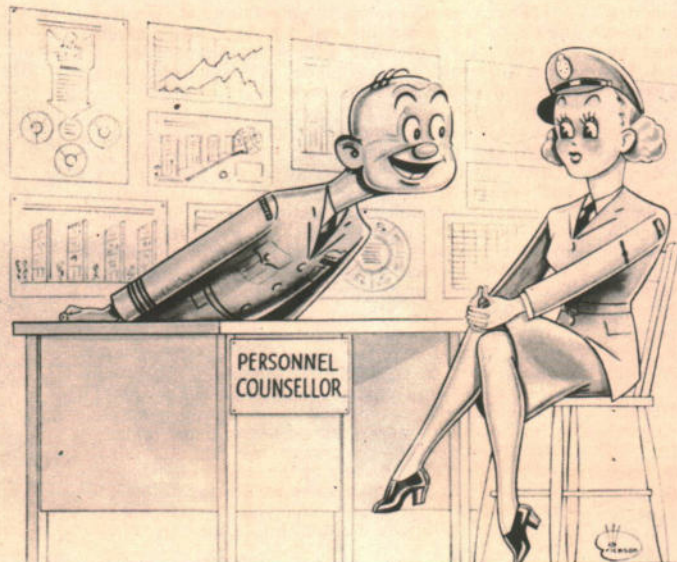
"What makes you think that would be different?" asked the LAC with a cigarette.

"Don't interrupt me, my friend," said the Sage, "This is serious. I have designed a new badge for leading puffs, and am submitting it as an original idea to Ottawa."

He passed his new badge around the admiring circle, and while picking up his glass again was heard muttering, "Can't understand why they didn't think of it before . . . no vision, that's the trouble, no vision . . ."

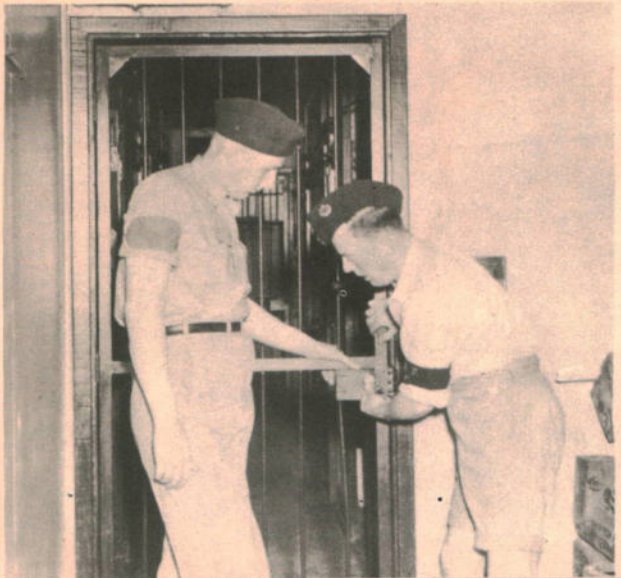
Flare Path

After nearly breaking his neck a couple times, stumbling through the strictly-enforced Normandy blackout to his tent, FO Richard St. Lawrence of Toronto came up with a simple but brilliant bit of improvisation. The fields were dotted with glow worms, a handful of which he quickly transplanted to roost on the bushes which barred the way to his domicile. After that it was a simple stunt to come weaving in on the beam. It's a cinch, says Dick, with "a light shining there in the window."



"Tell me your ambitions, your dreams . . . er, — your phone number."

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Sgt Fred Corbett, London, Ont., newcomer to Greenwood, is shown how the cooler keys work by Cpl Harold Wheeler who's going home.



Incoming clerk accountant, Sgt Herm Oliver, Montreal, formerly at 2 KTS, Toronto, and Hagersville, goes over books with RAF Sgt George Collingham who has a London ticket.

RAF planted a bit of England in Annapolis Valley — then the RCAF invaded

by FS DON KENNEDY
WINGS Staff Writer

GREENWOOD, N.S. — Everybody knew it was coming. Then one day, the British Air Ministry raised a beckoning finger, calling home the RAF of Greenwood. Home to most of the lads, but going away for some. In a few months, Greenwood had become home to many.

They had come with their accents, and tea customs. They brought a boyish enthusiasm and a friendly "hello." The Citizens of Greenwood, Kingston and Middleton opened their homes and these English lads found a place in the heart of the peoples of Annapolis Valley.

When the RAF arrived they planted a bit of England in Greenwood, while they were there, it flourished. When they left it died.

RCAF moved in and immediately a big rubber stamp bearing the words, "THIS IS RCAF" was firmly pressed on the station, and its message could be read in the far hangar-corners. Not that buildings, barracks, or even the face of the station changed, but the air of "THIS IS THE WAY WE DO IT IN THE RCAF" swept the station.

Zeeke's Creek still murmured blindly through station property, but in the library, "Time and Tide," "Punch" and "Sphere" were respectfully piled up, taking second place to "Life" and "Aviation Review". The trailer-size tea wagon quietly gathered dust in the motor transport yard, while sales of cokes jumped in canteens.

What RAFmen left behind surprised new-

Remuster for Greenwood

comers. It was no Rec Hall theatre that the RCAF took over, but a complete newly decorated building, with raised floor, large stage draw curtains, and 650 leather upholstered seats. RAF concerts, sport days, and dances paid for the modern theatre entrance and lobby.

New arrival FO M. J. Fitzpatrick, Willow Bunch, Sask., who left his duties as education officer of No 1 Instrument Flying School, Deseronto, when posted to this new unit, found a 2,000-book library at his disposal. He also found himself mess secretary 24 hours after he reached this reorganizing station.

Life for newcomers during the summer months will focus around the RAF dug and engineered "Swimmin Hole." RCAF will never know how many blisters were raised by digging this pond. Starting with a meandering stream, the lads dug down the banks, and dammed it, built the diving board and slide. The spill-way where water runs away fish-ladder style is just right for a scrub-down. RAF nicknamed the pool "Maguire's Beach", honoring affable senior administrative officer SL J. H. Maguire, who supervised the damnation.

Every RAFman who ever stayed at Greenwood will place a vile and awful curse on the head of any RCAFer who dares harm Greenwood's beaver which swim and breed unmolested in the deeper waters of Zeeke's Creek.

One of the first invaders FL W. F. Orr, MC, Toronto came in from Torbay to be Works and Bricks officer. He is still trying to figure out the laws of nature which govern his slaphappy wells. They are 21 feet apart. One, a 35-foot dug well gives 90,000 to 100,000 gallons of pure water daily. The other is 600 feet deep, is cased

down 200, and "All I can get out of the deep one is sand" he says.

WO1 Arn Gunter, maintenance control man, who has been at No 14 AID, Ottawa for the last two years, came in last February. He is busy organizing an archery club. He was interested in seeing the RCAF take over as he no longer has to supply a shop mule and a joe to pull the "RAF's blasted tea wagon around the station at the busiest times of the day."

WO2 Wilf Inman who will be remembered by PT&D lads who took their course at Trenton, and who was later senior warrant officer of Belleville's ITS, is making his presence felt around the station in his capacity as station sergeant major.

On moving into Greenwood, the RCAF is facing a new problem, a situation which will acid-test RCAF policies. Some stations have to overcome local opposition and tread softly to please nearby citizens. But in Greenwood the situation is reversed. The problem confronting RCAF Greenwood is maintaining the standard of deeply rooted goodwill which RAF sowed in surrounding countrysides. Station dances, concerts, sport days, to which general public were invited raised over \$5,000 in one year. Since this sum was collected from local citizens, RAF redistributed profits to local hospitals, schools, Red Cross and IODE societies.

Citizens of Annapolis Valley loved the RAF, were sorry to see them go. The trust and respect which peoples of the district held for the RAF presents a challenge to Commanding Officer, GC E. M. Reyno, AFC, and to all officers and men under him.

Gadgeteering is His Business

EAST COAST — LAC Johnny Prytula has so many ideas going around in his head he doesn't know how to get them all on paper. Whenever he mentions to erks that his civilian trade was inventor, they always follow up with the inevitable — "Oh yeah, what did you invent?"

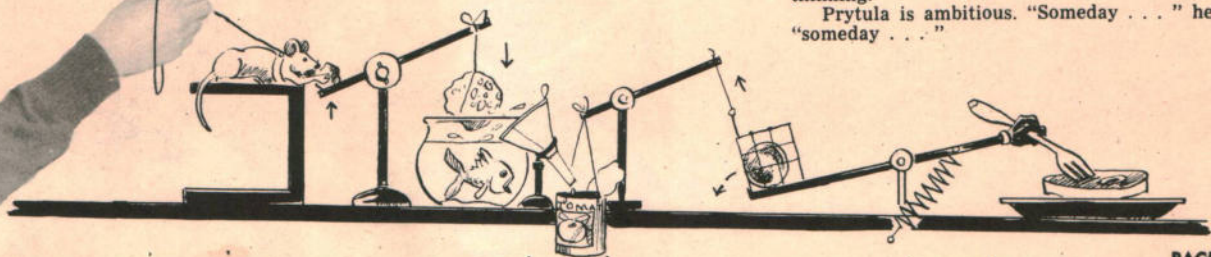
Gadeteer Prytula has an answer for that one. He holds patents on two machines which are doing war jobs in Canadian aircraft factories. His compact portable hack saw and circular filing machines eliminate manual work which was necessary in cramped aircraft interiors.

Now he is working on an improvement for the auxiliary gas tank release, and is applying for a

patent for a device which will start aircraft wheels spinning before the plane hits the runways. Tucked away in his file is a plan for a post-war carburetor, and a chemical formula using egg shell powder for aluminum pumice.

LAC Prytula comes from St. Catharines. Of Russian parents, he speaks Russian, Polish and Ukrainian fluently. After finding a vacant corner in the central warehouse at this east coast station, he wouldn't rest until they let him set up a workshop. Now that he has his workshop, he can't rest for working. When all the other lights are out at night, Johnny's shop is still bright. After a full day as a canteen GD, Prytula is sweating with his slide rule, sketching gears or sometimes just thinking.

Prytula is ambitious. "Someday . . ." he says, "someday . . ."



"EVERYBODY OUT!"

2 AOS goes for a Burton as the pennant-winning Edmonton school becomes HQ for a new Command

by CPL RON REWBURY
WINGS Staff Writer

"COME on you guys, you'll have to put a little pep into it if you're going to catch that train." The Sarge glared, and a handful of lowly erks doubled their gait and swung into barrack stores with their load of pillows. Soon the huge pile of pillows practically filled one room in stores, and the erks dashed madly off to find more.

In another direction a group of Joes frantically worked against time, toting mysterious looking boxes into equipment stores; and in yet another quarter a crowd in a much happier mood jostled about at the end of a lengthy pay line.

No 2 Air Observer School had had it. This was closing day at Edmonton's prize-winning, pennant-flying RCAF station which graduated its final class of navigators July 14, and then became the headquarters for the new North West Air Command.

Closing day, while a bustle of activity, was a sad one for many of the old timers who had been present at the birth of the station four years previous. A blow had been struck and they were feeling it keenly. Their sentiments however, were summed up by one old timer when he said: "We feel pretty bad, but actually we should be happy, knowing that the closing of the school indicates that our local objective has been reached, and that the end of the struggle is in sight."

No 2 was one of the first of the Commonwealth Air Training Schools to close in Canada, and for many weeks it had been tapering off for the final day. Most of the equipment had been dismantled, stored, or shipped to other schools. Most of the ground staff had been posted, and only the students of the last graduating class remained intact as a body. Class rooms were bare, and empty hallways echoed with each creak of a board.

On this final day, the school was officially brought to a close when Air Vice Marshal T. A. Lawrence, AOC of North West Air Command, pinned a navigator wing on the last man of the graduating class. This was the end, and yet it might be termed beginning for actually the station was merely passing from one phase to another.

No. 2 AOS was a Canadian Pacific Air Lines operated school, and on the last day there were two men, one a serviceman, and the other a civilian, who had cause to feel more keenly the march of time. They were SL D. I. Crossley, Chief Supervisory Officer of Training; and the General Manager of the school, Captain W. R. "Wop" May, famous Canadian bush pilot and ace of the last war. These men had worked together to make the school one of the finest in the Dominion. SL Crossley had been attached to the school for a



THE STUDENTS ALL GONE, SGT W. J. MACLEOD AT THE SALUTE: FL J. SUMNER (OO), SL D. I. CROSSLEY (CSO), FL F. J. EDWARDS (CI). LOWERS ENSIGN AT 2 AOS FOR LAST TIME.

little less than a year. "Wop" May however, had been General Manager of Maintenance since the school was opened, August 3, 1940.

C.P.A. supplied all the necessary personnel to operate the school. Many of them were hand-picked by "Wop" May himself who knows every phase of flying inside out. Thirteen officially shot down German aircraft and the DFC are some of the things "Wop" May brought home from the last war. But along with that he brought back to Canada a love for flying which has stayed with him through the years. Now 47, it had been rumored that he would retire from active flying with the closing of the school, but "Wop" has spiked this by announcing that he has accepted another post with C.P.A.

"Wop" has had more hair raising experiences in Canada's northland than perhaps any other flier. "May Airplanes Limited," a barnstorming company formed by "Wop" and his brother Court, saw the light of day early in 1919. They used the wartime J.N. 4's (Jennies) for passenger-carrying all through Alberta, and in the fall of 1919 made a trip to Grande Prairie and the Peace River country via Whitehorse. The May brothers opened the first airmail service from Edmonton to Acklavik in the Arctic, that same year.

In 1935 "Wop" was awarded the OBE for his work in developing the north country. Earlier he won the McKee Trophy, Canada's highest annual aviation award for a mercy flight in January in an open cockpit plane from Edmonton to Fort Vermilion. The temperature was 45 degrees below zero, but he and the well-known Captain Vic Horner, both badly frozen, got through with serum which prevented a serious outbreak of diphtheria among the Indian settlers of the region.

Knowing the north as he does, "Wop" was worried about the welfare of the students at the school. Some of the cross country trips took the trainees

over wild bush land north of Edmonton. In this region a number of American transports had crashed on their way with supplies to Alaska.

To offset the danger of men being stranded in the bush after a crash landing, "Wop" organized the first parachute rescue squad ever to be used in Canada.

The squad stationed at the school was made up of four Edmontonians. They were Owen Hargreaves, Larry Poulson, Wilfred Rivet and Mungo Thomson. Formerly engineers and radio maintenance men, they were sent to the United States for special training in bush rescue work, and returned to Canada ready to be dropped anywhere in the wilderness of the northland, to render first aid to crashed crews.

Since its inception, the squad has done thousands of miles of search work for lost American crews in the northwest, but has never had the chance to serve Canadian airmen, for No. 2 had no crashes in the northern bush.

With the turnover of the station, the squad volunteered to go with it to North West Command, and the four "jumpers" have since become an RCAF crew and are training more men for this type of work.

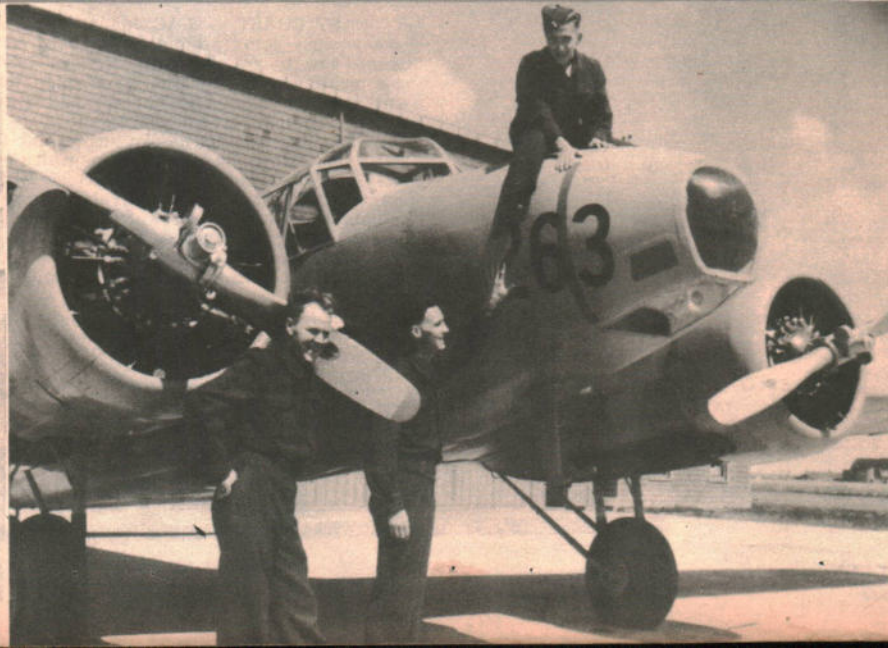
Five Canadian DFC winners were former students at No. 2. There is Winco P. G. Powell, winner of the DSO, DFC and bar; FL Mark Roach, DFC, DFM, first graduate of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan to be decorated; FO Harold Alan Taylor, DFC; FO Harold T. Legge, DFC, and then PO George Walter Kusier also a DFC winner.

No. 2 disbanded with one of the finest records of any school in Canada, having been twice a winner of the coveted efficiency pennant. But there was little time for reminiscing on closing day, everyone was too busy. There was no official handing-over ceremony. No. 2 without an outward display, merely graduated to another job.

EVERYBODY'S JOE ON CLOSING DAY. CPL JACK DIPPIE LUGS IN MATTRESSES FROM RIFLE RANGE TO STORES.



THE "OLD LADY" GETS A GOOD-BYE HUG FROM LAST THREE CANUCK NAV GRADS: SERGEANTS-TO-BE STEWART BOYD, DOUG SCRYMGEOUR, AND MURRAY MCKENNEY.



He's blazed sky trails in 2 wars; he's the RCAF's ace pilot of mercy; he's 'ungroundable'; the guy is Jimmy Westaway and 51

by FO RON GADSBY, PRO

IF you talk to flying people in Newfoundland for more than ten minutes the odds are that you will hear something about Jimmy Westaway. If you ask about the exploits of the kids who are flying the coastal patrols they don't tell you about the subs they have sunk, and they joke about the whales that have been blasted to — wherever whales are blasted. But when they really start to glow about the best pilot of them all the name of Westaway is universally accepted as being Mr. Number One. Not only do they say that

Mr. Mercy

he is the Daddy of them all but they speak of him with such affection that you automatically like the guy before you even meet him.

Picture, if you can, a fellow, with eyes that twinkle with good nature and with a pair of shoulders like Gargantua. Below average in height and slightly balding, there is a ruggedness about his features that chronicles a life of action which has been packed into 51 tempestuous years on this terrestrial globe. And there you have Flying Officer Jimmy Westaway — Canada's No. One Mercy Flier.

If you are wondering how a man of 51 years can still be flying in the RCAF listen to his story.

In 1916 Jimmy was slogging through the trenches in France. He wallowed in the mud and claims he didn't mind it, but he watched the RFC boys fly over on their daily sorties and the indefatigable urge to fly was born. Nineteen Seventeen found him remustered to the Flying Corps and if you had been around then you would have seen his stocky figure climbing into the antedeluvian kites of the day, with his gunner behind him, heading for the front lines on an artillery spotting job. It was a shaky business, he will tell you, and his gunners got three Jerries before the Archies — ack ack to you — got him. It is hard to get him to talk about his last flight in World War I, but he claims he is the luckiest guy alive.

SPUN INTO THE DECK

They were on a routine sortie when the anti-aircraft shells began to burst around him. With an unlucky hit, his gunner was killed and seconds later the aircraft took a direct hit on the starboard wing. "I figured the jig was up," says Jim, "but I guess I was just born lucky." We spun into the deck and exploded and I was thrown 40 feet from kite in the blast. I don't remember much about it but some infantry Joe came out and got me, and he got the Military Medal for doing it. You see, it was the custom in those days for Jerry to lay a barrage on any downed airplane but the infantry boy got me before the hun got his range."

The crash ended Jimmy's career as far as that war was concerned and he spent many months in hospital before he was walking again. It was his marvellous physique that saved him and after a few major repairs, he was back on his feet with none of his love for flying even slightly dimmed. He had whetted his appetite for life in the clouds and when they gave him a chance to stay in the service via a short term commission he jumped at it, providing they would let him see some of the sky that wasn't directly over England.

For the next ten years he flew with the RAF in India and Mesopotamia and this chapter in his life reads like a Milt Caniff epic. There were forced landings in the Egyptian desert and encounters with the uncivilized natives of the North West Frontier. He likes to tell about the time a rocker arm broke on his old Liberty motor and he was forced to jettison a bomb load somewhere in the backlands of Mesopotamia. He landed unscathed and it wasn't until three weeks later when he had practically forgotten the incident that he received a bill from a native chief for: Two cows, killed. Three cows, miscarriages.

In 1928 he decided that he had enough of service life. He was getting on, you know, and he should settle down into a job. Of course it had to be a flying job and the best he could find was with the forestry branch of the Ontario Government. He had never been to Canada and a "look-see" was in order, so he came across the ocean to help write one of the most glowing chapters in Canadian aviation history. His pals were Punch Dickens, Al Cheeseman, Jack Elliot, Len Tripp and the late Jack Leach, names that will be eternally linked with bush flying in Canada.

Those were happy days for Jimmy. He loved the clean northern air and some of the experiences he can recount are both humorous and amazing. There was the time one of the more prominent members of the fire patrol boys was asked to fly three cases of rum to an isolated camp. He took off in the face of threatening weather and disappeared into the horizon, and that was the last that was heard of him for three days until Jimmy spotted the missing aircraft near the shore of a tiny lake. As he taxied toward shore a figure loomed out of the bush waving a bottle and invited him in. One case of rum was completely

lungs, and stomach were like new so they let him in.

Eventually he found his way to Newfoundland and on this station he is fast becoming a tradition. He is Officer Commanding the Mercy Flight division of this station and that in itself is a bit of a laugh. He alone is Mr. Mercy. He has a Norseman for his personal use on this job and he has adapted it to house two stretchers and to accommodate a doctor and nurse. To the people of Newfoundland it has become a symbol of security and life and it is a familiar sight to every corner of this rugged island.

SAVED WOODSMAN'S LIFE

One day last winter an emergency call was put through to the hospital from an isolated outpost near a lake 100 miles away. A woodsman had severed an artery in his leg when his axe slipped and it was a matter of life and death that medical assistance get through to him. It was up to Jimmy. With the aid of the modern machinery used on this station the runways had been swept clean of snow and the snow had been banked up on either side of the wide tarmac. The job was so well done that Jimmy couldn't find enough snow from which to take off. It was of necessity a ski-plane job and it had to be done.

Surveying the situation Jimmy took a look at the high banks of snow on the runway edge. He tried it by walking on it and said he thought he could do it. They towed the aircraft to the snow banks, loaded in the doctor and the nurse and he gave it the power. The trusty Norseman



FO Jimmy Westaway's ruggedness chronicles a life of action packed into his 51 tempestuous years. Tagged No. 1 Mercy Flier he's fast becoming a Newfie tradition bucking weather that grounds ducks.

missing and there was a substantial dent in the second case.

"What in hell is the matter with you", roared Jim.

"Nishe country, this", came back the answer, "come on in and have a snort". Jimmy chuckles when he tells that one.

For 14 years he rode herd on the careless camper and the law-dodging trapper. He flew supplies in to snow-bound lumber camps. Once or twice he helped the Mounted Police bring in prospectors who had run amuck, but all the time he was enjoying his beloved flying, the sort of flying that would make many of the pilots of today say, "count me out."

Then came the war.

HE AMAZED MOS

Jimmy Westaway couldn't stay out of uniform any more than W.C. Fields could vote for the W.C.T.U. There was the little matter of his age, but he wouldn't consider a ground job. At first the RCAF shook their heads. He was much too old. In fact he probably couldn't pass the medical. A man in his late forties just couldn't compare with the young bucks who were beating their way to the recruiting offices. Bring on your doctors, said Jimmy and more to humor him than anything else, they let him have a try. He amazed the specialists by his physical condition. The mercury test which has weeded out many healthy kids of 21 didn't phase him for a minute. They practically took him apart, bit by bit, but they couldn't find anything that was even slightly worn. His heart,

mounted the bank and stood at the top of the long snow pile. Immediately to the right was a row of lend-lease aircraft with their expensive tails just a few feet from the edge of the bank but Jimmy didn't falter. Turning to the MO and with the twinkle in his eye that has endeared him to everyone in these parts he said: "If she cuts now, the lend-lease bill is sure going bouncing". But the motor didn't cut and they got through to the patient in time. The injured leg was dressed and another Newfoundlander's life was saved. Another day's work for Jimmy.

Flying Officer Westaway has a personal war on with the stork because he is often called to race the old fellow to the hospital here. So far he always won but he is seriously worried about photo-finishes. There are many little Newfoundlanders who can claim Jimmy for a Godfather and many of them owe their lives to his superior flying skill which enables him to come through in weather that grounds the ducks.

We asked Jimmy what he is going to do after the war. Frankly, he isn't sure. He and his family, like it here and if there is flying to be done, probably Jimmy will stay. On the other hand, South America has an appeal not to be ignored because he has never visited that continent. It seems you just don't outgrow an itchy foot. In the meantime there is a war to be won and the greatest sorrow of Jimmy's life is the fact that they won't let him take a personal crack at the Hun. And if they would, my money would be on the little guy with the great, big heart. He just couldn't miss.

Wingsgirl
SEPTEMBER

WARNER BROS. Marjorie Riordan



No. 1 ARMORER

Jock found the first 22 years were toughest

by WINGS Staff Writer

WO1 John A. Richardson, attached to a west coast station, is the senior armament warrant officer of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Now right around here is where a number of other armament warrant officers will sit down to write highly-colored letters to the Editor of WINGS to the effect that they are senior and who the hell does WO1 John A. Richardson think he is? This is to warn them that John, "Jock" to his friends, knows whereof he speaks when he describes himself as "Canada's No 1 Armorer".

WO1 Richardson, then, had to wait until he was of military age before joining the Royal Navy Air Service in June, 1915, but except for three years of enforced civilian life during the years 1919-1922 he has been with the Air Force consistently to the present, a total of 26 years according to the office mathematician. In the RNAS he served as an air mechanic first class aboard the "Campania", a ship with some obstetrical interest in that it has been called the mother of all aircraft carriers. It was Jock's job to haul the old Short seaplanes out of the sea with a derrick, a tricky business at which Jock is happy to say he never lost a seaplane.

In 1918 he graduated as an armorer from the original air armament school in Kent, thereafter working on a good many dirigibles before moving to France to minister 112-pound bombs to the de Havilland 9, grandpappy of the Mosquito and rated quite a kite in its time.

Jock was training as a pilot when rudely interrupted by the Armistice, which jettisoned him into the uncertain shadow-world of civilian life. He emigrated to Canada to farm with his brother-in-law in Saskatchewan, but every once in a while the smell of cordite would waft to his nostrils and he would want to be back with his bombs.

In 1922, a bad year for farming anyhow, he quit Saskatchewan and went to Ottawa to enlist as an armorer, or rather the armorer, in the Canadian Air Force. AC1 Richardson was in on the



WO1 John Richardson

ground floor therefore when two years later the Royal Canadian Air Force came into being. In recounting this part of his career, Jock produces a faded photo of the usual military type — rows of men sitting cross-legged on the ground, sitting in chairs, standing, and standing on chairs, about forty men in all, staring glumly at the camera as though they knew there was no film in it.

"There was a third of the RCAF present in that picture," he chuckles, and points out WC Barker, VC, standing in the front row. LAC Richardson may be seen on the end of the third row, already wearing the lean, hungry look that has since become the recognition feature for erks.

From 1923 to 1937 Richardson tended guns at Camp Borden, 15 years in which he mounted fixed Vickers guns on the first fighter plane sent to Canada, a Sisken biplane, and first fired a free gun from a crude turret. It is interesting to note that he was a corporal for five years, a sergeant for nine years, and the war had not yet started. Today's LAC, shivering in his frozen trade, may draw solace from the fact, that, with Jock, the first 22 years were the hardest. After that, what

with the war and one thing and another, his rise was comparatively meteoric, as he crowned his hooks in one year, zoomed to WO2 six months later, and for the past four years has lived in the rarified upper sphere frequented only by WO1s and half-fallen angels.

In his time, Jock says, he has served under nearly every high-ranking officer in the RCAF today, from Air Marshal Breadner down. He remembers the AOC of his Command, Air Vice-Marshal F. V. Heakes, CB, when the AVM was a flying officer at Borden. He doesn't say whether the AOC remembers him or not.

On his breast the major wears the wing of an air gunner, officially awarded him during this war on the grounds that he has had a part in the training of more AGs than any other man in the business.

"I'm something of a curio," Jock admits freely.

At his present station WO1 Richardson is senior armament warrant officer, in charge of all explosives, pyrotechnics, bombs and the station armoury, as well as the air-firing and bombing ranges. Despite the fact that he has been handling explosives for most of the past 26 years he has never had an accident (he raps vigorously on the nearest piece of wood when he mentions this) although he has been accidentally shot at a few times by people monkeying with his revolvers.

Now, in his 47th year, the portly, silver-haired armorer is threatened with retirement, a prospect which he regards with not inconsiderable disgust. He has been hoping to outlast rivals to become eventually the senior warrant officer for all the RCAF, especially as there have already been signs of some of the leaders flagging.

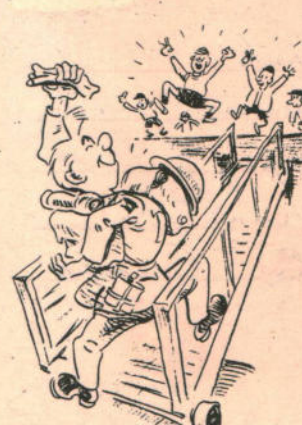
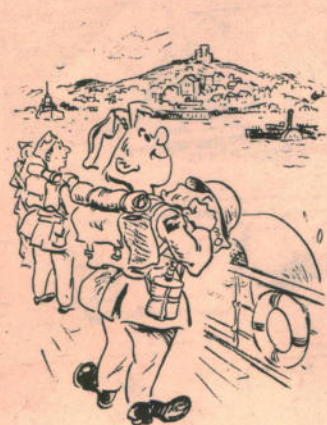
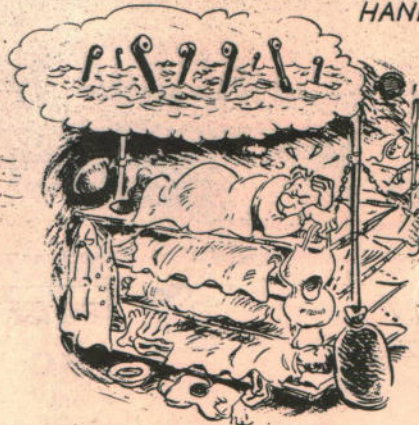
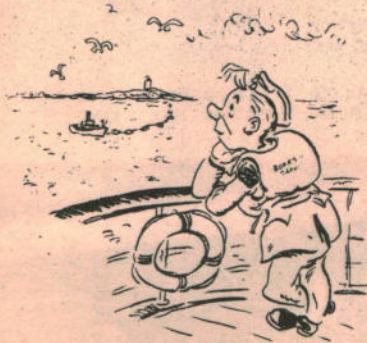
"One died just the other day," he remarks cheerfully, adding with a slightly aggressive tone. "I'm as fit as the day I joined up." It seems unwise to quibble on this point.

"The most amazing thing about me," says WO1 Richardson, summing up his career, "is that I'm not married."

If he is retired, Jock intends to return to his Scottish birth-place, Berwick-on-Tweed, and live on his pension. To the editors of WINGS, however there would seem to remain a very real role for him in the Air Force. Many a personnel counsellor these days is discussing with airmen and airwomen how to get along once they are out of the Service. We humbly suggest that here is a man qualified to tell them how to get along while they are still in the service. We can think of oodles of people who would be interested in that.

JOE ERK--

HANDS ACROSS THE SEA -



Ricky BRITAIN



"HE DIDN'T TURN OUT JUST THE WAY THE AIR FORCE EXPECTED"



"WHAT YOU NEED IS A GOOD REST DEAR — I KNOW A WONDERFUL SECLUDED PLACE IN THE MOUNTAINS"



"I'LL GO FIRST FELLOWS — IT MAY BE A BOOBY TRAP"



"'WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE' — NOW WHAT THE HECK WAS THE NEXT LINE?"

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"SINCE WE DONATED THE FIRE ESCAPE TO THE SCRAP METAL DRIVE WE CAN CLEAR THE HALL IN HALF THE TIME."