

WINGS



LOG OF THE
OTTAWA

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Merry Christmas

THIS WAY OUT

by SGT ERIC NICOL
WINGS Staff Writer

YOU shoulder through the heavy doors of Toronto's Union Station, pause outside long enough to glance hello to the Royal York, bulking sombrely grey in the morning half-light, then sling your duffle-bag onto the stake truck and vault up after it. Other airmen, various ranks, clamber aboard with you and you eye them briefly to guess why they are getting their discharges. Some of them look sick. You tell your eyes to mind their own business.

Last time you squatted on your haunches in a stake truck parked in front of Union Station you were on your way in. Two, three, four, five years ago you sat there on a suitcase, grinning at other recruits packed into the tumbrel. Now you don't have to grin, because you're not scared. You're on your way out. You can sit there smoking a cigarette, calmly wondering if your R-1 will be at the Release Center when you arrive. This time you don't have that feeling of running headlong into a dark room full of strange, sharp-edged objects, the feeling that made your hair stand on end just before they took it away from you. This time you're walking out.

The truck worms through traffic towards the Exhibition Grounds, past the vacant lot where they broke you off for a smoke during those training wing route marches, past the factories whose windows filled with faces when the squadron clomped past bawling "The Strip Polka" — "take it off, take it off, cried a voice . . ." Now they are taking you off. You've done your little piece in the play, this drama of ten million bit parts, and so — exit.

Past the Tip Top Tailors, a large hunk of irony when you drooped past it in that first, sad-sacked uniform, through the Exhibition Arch, up to the front doors of the Coliseum — back again. Pardon me, you think, hoisting your duffle-bag, but this is where I came in.

Funny, somehow, that in a tragedy that wrote itself, with the heavens for a proscenium and all hell for a pit, you should be permitted to walk off. That you should doff the worn blue costume to step into street clothes and walk out the stage door into the world of sunlit reality. You, instead of your brother, or the guy next door, or any one of those who would now never leave the theatre, who are now part of it.

You, of course, know why you're getting out. Maybe your body has had enough, maybe your mind. Or maybe somebody decided the war could be brought to a successful conclusion without you, and just as quickly. Or perhaps you wrote a nice letter to your old boss saying you had heard that carpet weaving was now an essential industry, and murmuring how sorry you were about throwing the swivel chair at him the day the Air Force accepted you. And the boss, having no one in the office but an idiot girl and an occasional janitor, wrote back saying the swivel chair hardly hurt at all and he'd be delighted to have you back weaving for him again.

ANYHOW, your application for discharge was approved and you're wandering through the Blue Room, bare and empty of its hundreds of bunks, through the Bull Pen which, after echoing for five years to the shouted advice of discip corporals, is once more ready to be turned back to the more pastoral type of bull. On into the Reception Wing that is no longer the Reception Wing but quarters for No. 4 Release Center. Sniffing the delicate scent of the Sheep Pen, you are reminded of the old gag about the character who divided his time as bootlegger and undertaker, so that "he got 'em coming and going."

You will have an elaborate exit. Your extraction from the Air Force will be as careful and meticulous as that of an abscessed tooth. It may take less than five days, it shouldn't take more than ten.

Before you arrived at the Release Center you completed a good part of your discharge procedure. At your own unit, (at present, Release centers will soon handle the examination themselves), they prodded and thumped you through a medical board even more thorough than the one they gave you when you enlisted. The RCAF, much as it has loved having you, makes no bones about its earnest desire not to see you back. It wants no encores in two or twenty years' time by former airmen and airwomen, returning with various ail-

ments for which they give full credit to their service in the Air Force. Every precaution is being taken to avoid the unnecessary misery which followed the last war. Rather than have to look at forests of outstretched palms later, the RCAF is taking a close gander at the whole body now. Not only the body, but at the mind as well — a psychiatrist verbally frisks you for hidden psychoses, before you can go out into the world and start telling people about how you've been on a bush station for two years and, psst! look, you're a chipmunk, chnk! chnk!

When the doctors and psychiatrist finished plumbing the depths of your works and bricks, your medical documents were sent, if considered necessary after screening by RCAF MOs, to the Department of Veterans' Affairs, where they were examined by the chief medical and pensions officers. For it is their job to note reports of ailments or disabilities and decide what can be done to help the dischargee, medically and financially. Your casual reference to the odd twinge of gout could have brought you up for a second examination by the DVA medicos, who would have decided whether your gout was a war-caused affliction or merely a full-time luxury. DVA adopts a pitcher's stance of leaning over backwards to assist every person who even remotely deserves assistance, for as long as he needs it.

YOUR other step before landing at No. 4 Release Center was to fill out a form stating that, on discharge, you intended to live in Toronto. That was why you were sent to No. 4. You might also have gone to No. 3 Release Center at Rockcliffe, which serves Ontario-homers as well. If you had declared your intention to live in the Maritimes, you would have been sent to No. 1 Release Center in Halifax, alias the old Y Depot. Another former Y Depot, veteran Lachine station, handles Quebec traffic as No. 2 R.C. For the westerner, (not the western-born, necessarily, but the western-bound), 8 RD Winnipeg houses No. 5 R.C. as the official egress for Manitobans, and the late 15 EFTS Regina lives again as No. 6 R.C. to which Saskatchewan-residents are freighted for disposal. If you had chosen to live in Alberta, you would have walked, not run, to the No. 7 R.C., which functions as a unit of No. 3 SFTS, Calgary, while B.C. types would have stayed on the train till Vancouver, to be sprung at No. 8 R.C., a unit at No. 3 RD, Jericho.

The Air Force has brought you as close to home, or wherever you have chosen to make your home, as it can without discharging you in your own living room. When the airman leaves the release center he should be within easy walking distance, a few hundred miles one way or the other, of his intended place of residence. Unless, of course, he elects to live at a place like Aklavik, in which case he probably wouldn't have got past the psychiatrist anyhow.

Here, at No. 4 R.C., Toronto, the discharge procedure is the same as at any of the other centers. Perhaps not the day you arrive, but soon afterwards, you are called in for the first of your interviews. The RCAF has prescribed that you will talk your way out of the Service. Talk along certain lines, that is. The initial interview is with an RCAF officer. His name, you observe, is FO W. S. Grieve, a young pilot who wears the Africa Star ribbon, a red wound stripe, and a disarming smile. Waved into a chair, you watch him open your document envelope to scan the contents, which you find difficulty reading upside down from where you are sitting.

"Let's dig into the dirt here and see what we can find," says FO Grieve cheerfully, and starts asking questions. He asks, amongst other things, why are you being discharged, when did you join up, what is your trade, how do you feel, what did you do in civilian life, what are your plans — and then looks for himself to see what your record gives as your character assessment. There is practically no point whatever in trying to impress FO Grieve with a beatific smile at this point, as your character was assessed before you left your own unit.

The interview rolls along quickly and pleasantly. FO Grieve was specially chosen for his job because aircrew dischargees can feel more at ease with a fellow flier with ops experience. As SL K. S. Gemmel, original OC of the Center, puts it, "He can talk their language without an interpreter." You might, however, have been inter-



Well-dressed vet sports GI carnation, inscribed with number to prevent frauds adopting the fad



Geared to meet demobilization, RCAF Release Centers whisk you through discharge quickly but thoroughly

viewed by any one of the battery of officers, each of whom would have proved equally considerate of your sensitivities.

The information collected by the RCAF officer is handed on to a civilian, the Veteran's Welfare Officer, who calls you in, you old veteran, you, to discuss your welfare. He tells you about the government's various rehab schemes — farm loans, educational courses, and the rest — in case you haven't caught up with the news of these opportunities.

You rejoin the huddle of guys sitting in the corridor at various stages of the gamut of interviews. Your name is called again, this time by the National Selective Service Officer. The NSSO gives you your national registration card, books you for unemployment insurance, and if you didn't have the carpet-weaving deal on, he would help you find a job. That's how motherly a release center can be.

You are now ready to glom onto your discharge papers, the interviewing process having required considerably more time than it takes to tell, but not enough to discourage you from waiting around for the finish. And you just can't help liking FS George Stroud of Toronto when he calls you in to hand you your discharge certificate and a silver "General Service" button to wear in your lapel and help dust off old ladies who want to know how come you're not in uniform like their John.

All that remains is for you to complete your clearance. Provided you have more than 90 days' service, you hand in a modicum of kit, being allowed to keep virtually all your issue, including a set of blues and a set of khaki, and everything from the comb to the kit-bag. Even your winter underwear, to add comfort to your dog's house back home. In case your double-breasted is delayed, you may wear the uniform for 30 days from the date of discharge, and thereafter with permission at official functions such as parades and celebrations when you feel like wrestling the old thing away from the moths and taking the holes out for an airing.

AS always, you complete your clearance with a visit to pay and accounts, your last pay parade for this war at least. On the date your discharge becomes effective, you pick up a nice head of Bank of Canada cabbage amounting to \$100 clothing allowance and whatever your rehabilitation grant of 30 days' pay and allowances amounts to. Your gratuity you receive later in monthly instalments, by cheque. After that there's the re-establishment credit to help you buy a house or some new carpet-weaving equipment. If you are curious as to how this bounty compares with the pay-off after World War I, you might note the sentiments of FS Tom McFeely of Vancouver, a recent

graduate of No. 4 R.C.

"The boys today are getting a better break," he says. "Although I had my commission, all I collected when I got out of the last war was about \$130." FS McFeely, a former Link Instructor, scooped up in excess of \$600 in benefits. "Yes, the boys are being taken care of this time. It's definitely a better set-up."

You are ready now to scam, if you remembered to pop up to see your padre for a moment. The chaplains inhabit a little heaven along the top of the main arena, their part in your discharge being to inform your minister at home that the RCAF padre is lateralling your spiritual needs to him in good shape. After you've seen him, you've got your discharge, body and soul.

You walk out the front door of old Manning Depot, and on the concrete of the attention area your light shoes sound small and alone, where once your feet shared the brave thud of squads of gleaming boots. Board the Fort car, and 6¼ cents takes you away from button-polishing, boiled potatoes, 48's, good friends, and the experience of war. You're out.

THE decision as to who, when and how many will be offered their discharges is at War Cabinet level as this is written. The number of those filling the release centers will naturally be proportionate to the proximity of the Allies to Berlin, and later to Tokyo. But to be ready when the times comes, the release centers are being geared to handle 10,000 discharges a month. And every precaution is being taken to assure that nobody gets hurt in the rush for the exits.

As is right and chivalrous, the WDs are leaving first, any that are so inclined. Discharge requirements for airmen will be revised in accordance with the developments of the war. At present, the RCAF does not notify the Army of men discharged with more than two years' service, or those over 39 years of age, those released on compassionate grounds, and those released to essential industries. They are draft-free.

On discharge, you are automatically placed on the RCAF Reserve, a largely legal distinction from complete freedom. But as you ride out of the Exhibition Grounds, or wherever your release center may be, you are perhaps consciously or subconsciously aware of membership in another Reserve. The Reserve of those who have turned in war's responsibilities to the living, and been issued with peace's responsibilities to the freshly dead, and to the still-dying, the guys who won't need a discharge, the guys who got out in a hurry, with no questions asked. The discharge certificate that means enlistment in another fight, the war against war, is yours. Your wallet feels pleasantly plump as you step off the street car, and enter the Reception Wing of the world.



Ghost walks for last time. LAC Albert Tyne, Hamilton, signs final clearance, scoops up plenty gravy from FO Harold McMorran, OC discharge pay. FS James Martin witnesses blessed event.

Cpl Enid Ward gets pass to civie street from FS Stroud, dispenser of discharge papers and buttons at Toronto.

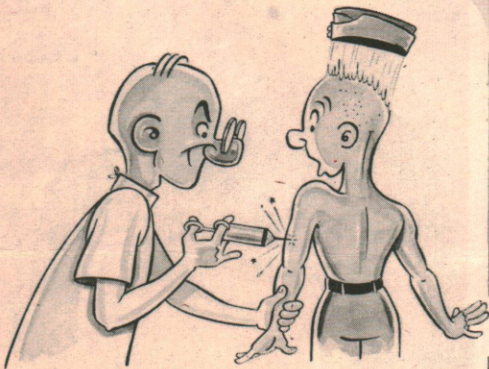


THINGS TO COME... Christmas 194?

Seasonal employment awaits talented Air Force types. WINGS reveals plenty of room for all behind post-war eightball



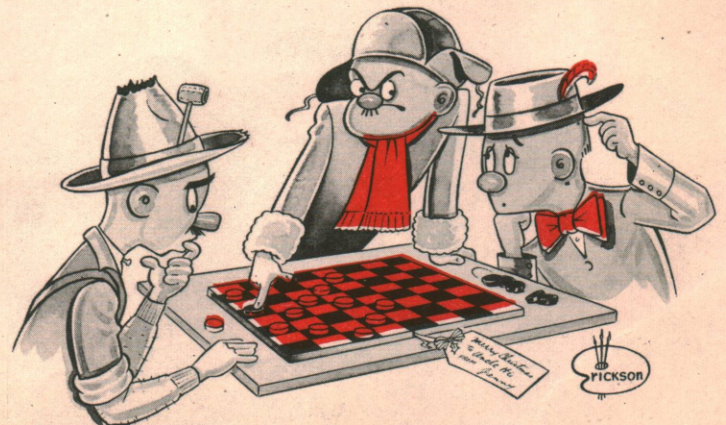
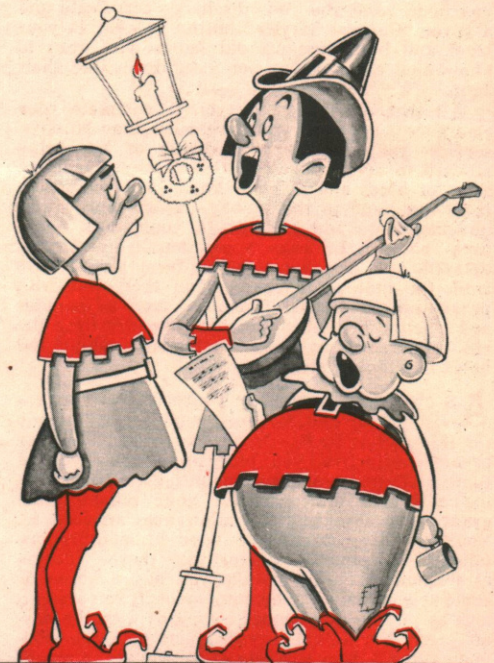
He's sure to do alright because He'll make a perfect Santa Claus



At Christmas time There'll be a job For those who've made Your left arm throb



The trio of the Wet Canteen Will have a job, it's clearly seen



And masters in the art of war, with men and kings may still keep score.

PICKSON



Vigil In England

by FL DON MacMILLAN, PRO

WITH RCAF BOMBER GROUP OVERSEAS — It's cold and damp. There's a light ground fog but stars glitter coldly in the night sky. In the distance search-light beams knife upward. Houses and station buildings loom in the darkness.

Inside the mess there's warmth and light and a radio blares forth the antics of two comedians. The young men in the mess listen tolerantly but are not much amused. The voices and the style of comedy are unfamiliar because these young men had come here from a land 3,000 miles away, where things were done a bit differently.

They laughed, they played, and they flew the big bombers out into the darkness and some didn't come back. There were seven, or fourteen, or twenty one, empty places in the mess. Then the young winco's eyes would become perhaps a bit harder and he wouldn't talk much. For these were his boys who were getting the chop.

After the missing boys' personal effects had been sent home, there'd be things of theirs like chocolate or button polish or cigarettes available at the Y.M.C.A. hut. You felt like a vulture picking it over but, by your purchase you made a contribution to the Prisoners of War Fund and thus sent comforts to other young men who were behind barbed wire in Germany.

In this war you rose late and had a leisurely breakfast. Then you loafed around in the afternoon; read a magazine or listened to the radio in the evening. Then, along about bedtime, you went out into the blackness in the big bomber. If you got back you slept late again and if there were no ops the next night you went to a show or perhaps took the girl friend to a dance. It was a swing-music-on-Monday-night-maybe, dead on Tuesday existence. You lived, as it were, at a gentleman's club. Then you went out and faced death with your well-polished boots on.

You thought of the kid you'd met in the mess. He came in and looked around at the gang by the radio — looked in on the Shove Ha'Penny game for a few minutes and then walked over to the magazine table where he had found a month-old edition of the paper from home and turned to the local news.

Twelve times he'd taken his big bomber out into the darkness. He'll go out again tonight. His hands are long and delicate. Soft brown hair tumbles down over a wide, high forehead, softening the tight little lines there. When you spoke to him he was friendly but didn't smile; no one had seen him smile since the second time he'd gone out in the big bomber. He'd be twenty next month.

Then you'd heard a hearty laugh as big Earl had walked in. Big Earl was a sort of composite of those young men from across the ocean. Big, lean, hard. As a kid he'd been the leader of the neighborhood gang and you could bet he'd been somewhere around the night the kids put the hay rack on top of the school house. At high school he'd been left half on the football team and done a bit of studying between football and basketball seasons. He'd studied engineering at university and then gone out to see his country.

He'd seen the big mountains of the west too and the rocky hills of the North East. He loved

the earth and the men who toiled to bring precious metal to the world's markets. He loved the earth but tonight he's going out into the sky again. He's twenty-seven and has a wife and kid at home.

Now it's about time for the takeoff so you go outside. The darkness is like a slap in the face. A thin drizzle seeps down under your collar.

You see crews standing about in their clumsy flying suits. You notice one or two quietly slip over to the padre and hand him a letter. You see no forced smiles and hear no forced laughter. This is it; the real thing, and nothing to laugh about.

And now the bombers are gone and you're going to catch a little sleep before going out to meet them on the return.

You lie on the bed and try to relax. Then it dawns on you that this bed belonged to one of the boys who went missing last night. You can't sleep so you light a cigarette. Later you get up, walk to the window, pull back the blackout curtains and look out. It's cold and clammy. You think of the term "One of our aircraft is missing" and this time it isn't just a phrase in the paper.

Just one; one aircraft! Seven boys, seven families, seven mothers, fathers, wives, sweet-hearts, brothers and sisters. You figure that for between twenty and fifty people that phrase is much more than a line in the paper. And that's only one aircraft. The kids themselves have a word for it: "It makes you think!"

Then it's time to meet the planes. You grope through the darkness and note that the weather has cleared. Up above the stars blink. It's cold and you stumble over roadways and damp lawns. You hear the drone of planes. A searchlight puts up its long blue finger.

Then you're in the interrogation hut. The intelligence officers are there and the winco. Some tired-looking LACs are bringing in cocoa and biscuits.

The door opens and a crew walks in. They look a little strained. They don't say much. They pick up cups of cocoa and lounge in easy chairs. Someone says "How did it go?" and the pilot answers "Bang On!" One of the crew says, "There was bags of flak and lots of searchlights." Another says, "Let's get the hell out of here and get some sleep!"

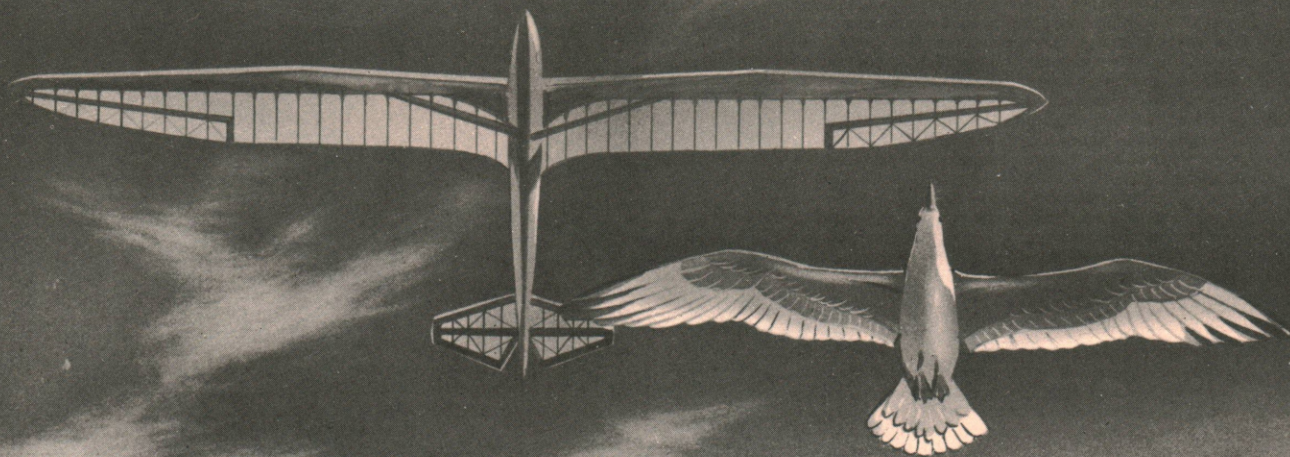
Another crew comes in; then another. You wait and wait. Suddenly the door bursts open and big Earl strides in shouting for cocoa. He's big, confident and unworried. "Beat 'em again," he yells.

They're all home except the kid. The other crews troop away to an operational breakfast and bed. Finally you and the winco are alone. It's grey dawn outside and the station buildings and hangars begin to take shape.

On the blackboard inside the hut there's a big question mark behind the kid's name. The winco remarks that maybe he landed somewhere else. You nod and say nothing. You don't think so and neither does the winco.

You start slowly back toward your quarters. You remember that the boys have rigged up a Christmas tree in the mess. It's Christmas with the boys of the Canadian Bomber Group in England.





W.G. Coucill

SURFBOARDS of the SKY

Gliding as a sport is easy, safe and cheap, surpassing power flying for skylarking thrills

by **FO BRUCE KEITH**

DOWN to the bare branch of a tree swooped a hawk, voicing anger in piercing tones. He had been chased by a huge bird.

As he circled lazily for altitude in an up-current of air, this great, silver-and-red creature swung in. Its wings were motionless, but it flew right behind him, turning and rising as he did.

Mr. Hawk did not know it, but the big bird was a sailplane. Inside, guiding the ship's movements, was a glider pilot. Noticing that the hawk was ascending, he had drifted over to take advantage of the same aerial elevator.

It would shake Mr. Hawk to learn that gliding interest has greatly increased in Canada, and that at the war's end, much greater numbers of man-carrying ships with silent wings will invade the serenity of his cloud regions.

Gliding is not new. In the 16th century Leonardo da Vinci boasted glider flight in a bat-like contraption. Otta Lilienthal scored a record with a 1,300-foot flight in 1891, and the

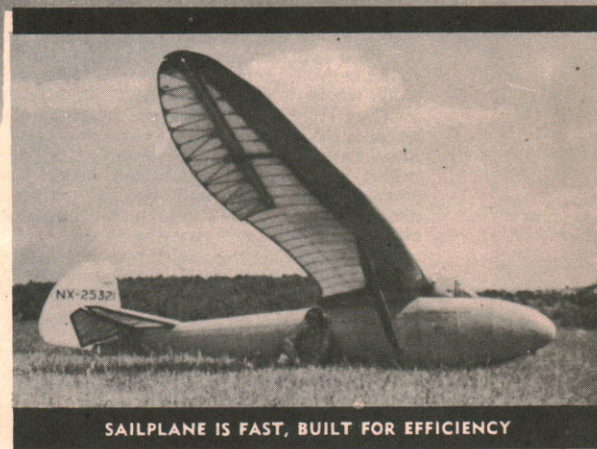
Wright Bros. broke it in the early 1900's with a 2,021-foot glider trip.

But sport gliding bears small resemblance to the military variety. Except for the short flight to its target when cut loose, the military glider's trip is more akin to power flying. It operates as a trailer hauled behind a sturdy tractor plane, rather than as a free machine. In contrast, the craft used in soaring are virtual surfboards of the sky. Like Hawaiian boys riding polished planks on the breakers of Waikiki, pilots in soaring ships careen about the sky on currents of air, sailing with the ebb and flow of invisible movement in the atmosphere.

Soaring as a sport is easy, safe and cheap. What's more, its adherents say, it can duplicate all power flying thrills, and add extras of its own.

In Canada, soaring is winning wide-spread popularity; so much so, that when peace comes it may well equal boating or skiing in its total of enthusiasts.

For Air Force personnel it has particular attraction, since air experience or aviation knowledge enables a person to pick up its skills with unusual rapidity. RCAFmen in England have become intrigued with the glider training for air cadets. In this country a local point for gliding emerged when the Soaring Association of Canada was formed. This national body, with headquarters in the Journal Bldg., Ottawa, hopes to arouse further interest in gliding and to promote the sport's development. The enthusiasm of Air Force personnel who are now members of the association



SAILPLANE IS FAST, BUILT FOR EFFICIENCY

is bound to spread throughout various units and help establish a vast, peacetime body of potential glider pilots.

Follow through the sequence of the training you would have if you were to take up gliding. A primary glider would be used first. It is a simple machine with a broad wing linked to the tail assembly by framework. Its movements are governed by a control column and rudder bar from an open seat just ahead of the wing's leading edge. A sturdy skid serves as undercarriage.

First come ground glides to familiarize you with the controls. Upwind, on the far side of the field from you, a motor-driven winch drum winds in a towing cable to which your primary glider is hooked. As the ground slide begins you are

A/C HUGH CAMPBELL GETS LAST-MINUTE HINTS BEFORE GLIDER FLIP



LOW-HOPPING TRIPS IN PRIMARY TYPE CONSTITUTE INITIAL TRAINING



dragged over the field, using the controls to keep the wings level and the machine going straight. Back to the starting place the primary is hauled behind a car. You try another slide.

After five or six such ground tows you graduate to the next stage. This consists of low hops. It would take, incidentally, a number of days or several weekends for your total training, although it can be described briefly. The low hops are controlled by the winch operator. He gives you a burst or two of speed which cause the primary to rise a few feet and settle back as it is hauled across the field. The hops bring your vertical control into use, and give you your first experience of being airborne. Nine or so low-hopping trips make the average person proficient enough to go on.

You are now ready for pulls-across. In these, the winch-driver speeds up his drum so that your glider takes off and crosses the field three or four feet above the ground. If you control the machine nicely at three feet, you will be pulled across at six, then 12, and so on, increasing the height each time until you are doing it at 80 feet.

Now comes your first flight free of the cable. The winch-driver launches you as before, but this time, when a good height is reached, the winch drum is slowed down thereby slackening the cable, which then drops off the open hook holding it to

eter. This shows how many feet per second you are rising or falling.

A "C" certificate is the badge of the soaring pilot. This requires a five-minute flight, including a gain in altitude and a normal landing.

After a total of about five hours in the secondary, you try out a sailplane. It is a faster ship, built for high efficiency in soaring flight. It corresponds to the Spitfire to which a war flier finally graduates after many weeks of using Moths and Harvards.

Kirby Kite sailplanes were imported from England before the war and probably will be again. Their cruising speed is 60 m. p. h.

Aloft in a sailplane, you congratulate yourself on being a soaring pilot. Now you can enter into a fellowship with the birds. You can seek out the air currents and cruise up and down streets of clouds, getting a boost in an aerial elevator beneath each puffy piece of cumulus. You have the wings and the skill that can open all the sky to you as a playground.

After further practice, you may try for your "Silver C". To win this, a pilot must achieve in soaring: a five-hour flight ending within 1,000 feet of the take-off point; a height of 3,100 feet; a distance of 31 miles.

The most coveted award is the "Golden C". For this, the soaring pilot must make a flight of 196 miles and attain an altitude of 10,000 feet.

a sound knowledge of flying and flying instruction already. They could become glider pilots, and hence glider instructors after a few flights.

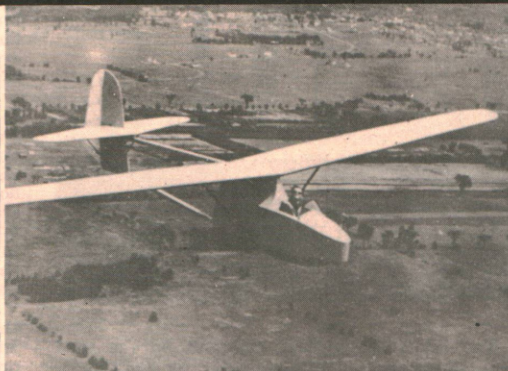
In this country there are now some 15 gliding clubs in varying stages of activity. Enthusiasts total about 500. Montreal has the large McGill club which started years ago and is no longer confined to the university. Ottawa has its Gatineau Club which sponsored a summer camp for gliding last season. In Toronto there are two gliding organizations. Other main centres include Victoria, Calgary, Lethbridge, Winnipeg, Regina, North Battleford, Amherst, Pictou, Halifax and Three Rivers.

In England, some measure of government subsidy was given, but the development was more independent. Large organizations grew up, much in the fashion of yacht clubs. Each would have its own site, with club-houses, work-shops, hangars, a restaurant, dormitories, and several dozen gliders and sail-planes. To these major clubs came glider enthusiasts from other parts of the country. When they returned to their homes, they were qualified to fly soaring machines.

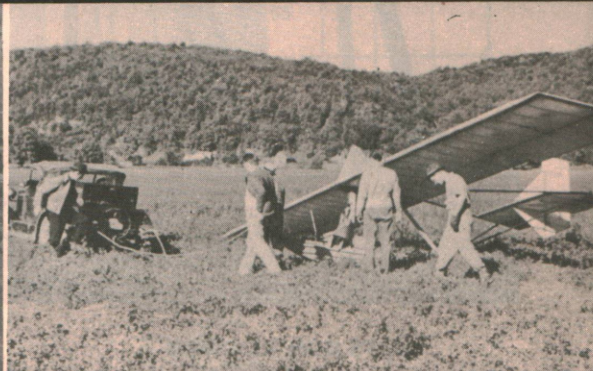
A similar pattern of growth is envisaged for Canadian gliding by the Soaring Association. As explained by President Jim Simpson, it would be best for the sport in this country if several large gliding centres were established. Only three or four cities could support such clubs with the nec-



HORSES HAUL GLIDER OVER LAURENTIAN HILLS



LONG DISTANCE SOARING RECORD IS 512 MILES



HOLIDAYING AT TRAINING FIELD NEAR OTTAWA

the glider. You are on your own.

The first independent flight is exhilarating. It makes you eager for more. And after several additional free flights, you are ready to try for your first documentary proof of achievement. It is an "A" certificate. The test sounds simple — "a flight of 30 seconds with a normal landing" — but it is an exciting hurdle to the tiro glider pilot.

When the "A" is nicely framed on your parlor wall, you try longer flights. You learn how to make right and left hand turns. Additional practice, including at least two flights of 45 seconds, make you ready to try for the "B" rating.

In this test, you must make a flight of a full minute, doing two curves in an "S" form, and execute a good landing. The "B" is granted to most pupils after they have flown a glider about 25 times.

With the "B" behind you, you are ready for soaring. You switch to a secondary glider. Enclosed in plywood, it is a neater looking job, and its lighter weight and slower sinking speed enable it to rise with ascending air currents.

Sinking speed is a machine's rate of vertical descent. If the sinking speed were three feet a second, and the pilot entered an air column rising at five feet a second, the machine would go skyward at two feet a second. Such is the basis of soaring. By drifting from one up current to the next, pilots can often stay aloft for hours.

The Kirby Kadet secondary glider will probably be common in Canada. Its sinking speed is 2½ f.p.s. Its gliding ratio is 1:16 which means it will go 16 feet forward for every one foot of drop. Its other characteristics are: span, 39 feet; chord, 4 feet 6 in.; aspect ratio, 9; wing area, 170 square feet; weight empty, 260 lbs; flying weight, 430 lbs.

In the secondary glider you are launched into the wind by the winch as before. This time you make for a nearby ridge which faces into the prevailing wind. Upon striking the slope, the wind becomes an up-flow of air in which your machine can stay aloft. You fly back and forth above the ridge doing elongated figure-eights, always careful to stay within the rising air. On the instrument panel of the cockpit is a variom-

eter. Soaring provides a variety of experiences. In hill soaring, the pilot takes advantage of the up-sweep of wind over a ridge and beats his way back and forth parallel to the slope. Or he may go aloft inside columns of warm air called thermals.

The more skilled and daring of soaring pilots undertake thunder-head and cold front flying. To do so they need a complete set of blind-flying instruments.

A cold front occurs when a mass of cold air moves over the land, ploughing up warm air ahead of it. The soaring pilot hitches a ride by flying back and forth in the warm air which is rising in advance of the movement. In so doing, he often encounters bad weather, but he is willing to risk rain, hail and turbulence for the thrills of flight.

Thunder-heads are the great, towering clouds which have an ominous, black appearance and bring lightning, thunder, hail, icing and violent up-drafts and down-rushings of air. Skilled soaring pilots know what part of a thunder-head will give them swift up-thrusts and sometimes fly into them for the sake of the altitude that may be obtained.

In normal times record-seeking is carried on continuously. For many months a Russian woman — Olga Klepikova — held the distance record with a flight of 466 miles. This was increased to 512 miles recently by another Russian, this time a man.

For continuous soaring, a German is unchallenged champion with 58 hours. Another German soared to 32,000 feet thereby gaining recognition for reaching the greatest altitude to date.

In Canada today there are about eight glider instructors with a Silver C rating or better. One of these is FL Don MacClement, RCAF. Still another is Jim Simpson of the National Research Council. Simpson, as president of the Gatineau Gliding Club and chairman of the S.A.C., has been a spark plug of gliding development for a long time.

To make up for the shortage of instructors, it is hoped numerous ex-RCAF flying instructors will take up the sport. These individuals have

essary ships. To these big clubs would come men and women to spend their summer holidays, learning to be glider pilots.

Suppose you were forming a club of the medium size with several machines. How would you proceed?

Getting an instructor is the first problem. Qualified men will undoubtedly be scarce, but the plan of quick training for ex-RCAF instructors is certain to ease the situation.

Next in importance is a site. This and the launching method are inter-dependent. The ideal site is a flat field at the top or bottom of a ridge which faces the prevailing wind.

In flat country, such as the prairie areas, cars or light airplanes may be used for launching. In this method, the glider is merely hooked on and pulled forward until it takes off. With the airplane, it can be taken to a great height before release.

In all types of launching, a car can be used to haul the glider back to its starting point.

Now equipment is needed. Training methods in Canada require three ships — a primary glider, secondary glider and a sailplane. It is estimated that post-war prices will be \$400 for a Dagling primary, \$600 for a Kirby Kadet secondary glider, and \$850 for a sailplane such as the Kirby Kite.

A workshop is needed since a club usually does its own maintenance and repairs. Finally, a building to serve as a hangar is needed at the field, and either an old car or a team of horses to retrieve the gliders.

Fees for a glider club are quite within reason. A sample of operating costs for a 30 member group is provided by the Gatineau club as follows: initiation fee, \$20; annual dues, \$15; primary flights, 20 cents each; secondary flights, up to 5 minutes, 30 cents each; soaring flights, \$1.20 an hour.

Like skiers and yachtsmen, the people engaged in gliding talk and think of little else, and seem to live only for the few hours a week when they can indulge in their pastime. Such are the joys of the sport that it is safe to expect soaring enthusiasts by the thousand to be floating about the Canadian skies in months to come.



VITAMIN HUNTERS

by **FS DON KENNEDY**
WINGS Staff Writer

IN a Montreal station, the engineer reins to a stop the night express from the Maritimes. Two airmen rushing along the endless cement ramp beside the still moving baggage car shout through the open door, "Can we get the lab box now — we're in a hurry for it."

The baggage man is not surprised, — he's seen this pair before. As the train stops, the two airmen start to lug away a locker-size wooden box. "Come on," says one. "There's a night's work to do on this yet."

"What have you got in that box, secret weapons?" quips the baggage man.

"That's right," replies the lab man, "vitamins". These men are from No. 3 Nutritional Laboratory, Montreal, whose job it is to make sure everybody gets enough vitamins, calories and minerals in their food. The RCAF set-up for vitamin-verifying, calorie-chasing and mineral-measuring is a hop, step and jump ahead of that of any other service in the world.

The lab keeps a field man out on the road at all times, just visiting stations. In addition to being a laboratory technician (nutritional) "A", he must also be a super scrounge artist. That's his main occupation. During the one week he's on a station, he collects food.

Taking advantage of such signs as "Yes, you may have a second helping", and "If you want a large portion — say so", the field man collects five helpings of every meal. Exercising a lot of will power in some cases, he resists the temptation to eat these meals. Like any other normal mad scientist, the lab tech man finds a quiet corner in the kitchen and weighs out each item.

From these weights, he knows what an average erk eats and collects a typical meal. Still playing the role of normally mad scientist, he doesn't eat, but puts this meal in a lab bottle, along with two other typical meals of the day.

Never was the corny expression "From soup to nuts" more applicable than when used to describe what goes into these lab bottles. After the supper portions have been added, the chef's nightmare is shipped off to the lab at Montreal via

fastest transport. By this time the absent-minded lab tech has lost all his appetite and it doesn't matter whether he eats or not, so he drinks his three-square balanced meals in the wet canteen.

This field man gets only one break. He gets a "48" every weekend, or at any rate he has no work Saturday and Sunday. Reason for that is the Montreal lab will not accept Saturday and Sunday meals as average. Even though cooks plead that Sunday chicken makes up for the bologna and sea biscuit of Saturday night, the lab is not interested.

The lab, which is situated in the biology building of McGill University, would make an excellent setting for a Hollywood super-thriller such as "Frankenstein's mother-in-law." The room is lined with test tubes, flasks, fine scales and twisted glass tubes with strange-colored gasses being intermittently released. The only drawbacks for a horror setting are the nutritional experts who work in the maze of gadgets. They are all salt-of-the-earth types — no long hair, no beards — just a bunch of erks who consider their work interesting but routine. Granted they look a little studious and academic sitting on high stools working with intricate analytical equipment, but when noon hour comes, they saunter out just erks.

The first step in analyzing the food is done through the courtesy of Fred Waring of Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians. When Fred took out a patent on a cocktail shaker with a little propeller in it like an inverted egg-beater, he accidentally made a great contribution to science. This machine, called, "Waring Blendor", is just right for simulating the action of masticating food. It pulverizes everything from morning porridge to evening hamburger into a chocolate-colored syrup of mudpie consistency.

This goo is then tested eight different ways, — four vitamins, three minerals and one caloric analysis. Cpl Ed Cahill of Brooklyn, N. Y. is the mineral prospector of the goo. Ed was a chemist with the Philadelphia Quartz Company and is now looking for more minute quantities of minerals in airmen's grub. He has a more pleasant job of testing fruit juices for the Air Force. These juices arrive in large cans, of which only a small portion is tested. It is needless to add that the unused portions are not thrown out.

Officer Commanding Riboflavin is Cpl Ray McCarthy, (pictured in the upper left corner), mighty hunter of the elusive B2 vitamin. In pre-enlistment days, he found there was more money in running his own scientific health laboratory than in teaching high school in Toronto. After washing out at EFTS, he became an instrument mech, sax player and a member of the boxing team of No. 8 SFTS, Hagersville. Now he's back at his own work, slugging it out with the bugs.

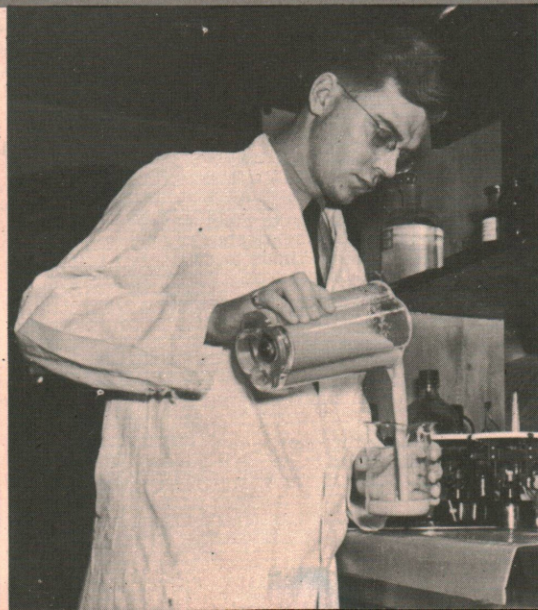
The results of the tests are compiled at the end of the week and verified by Officer Commanding FO H. E. Woodward, former chemist of D.P.&N.H. Food and Drug Laboratories, Toronto. From his desk, the data goes to Ottawa where messing and medical heads confab over the findings.

One potentially violent feature of the lab is that the whole outfit is sitting on a powder keg. It was only recently that the lads discovered that the experiments and tests for the new Canadian secret weapon, R.D.X., a super-explosive, were being carried out just one floor below them. They learned these facts in a hurry when a piece of shrapnel was, blown through the window and firmly imbedded in the wall of the lab.

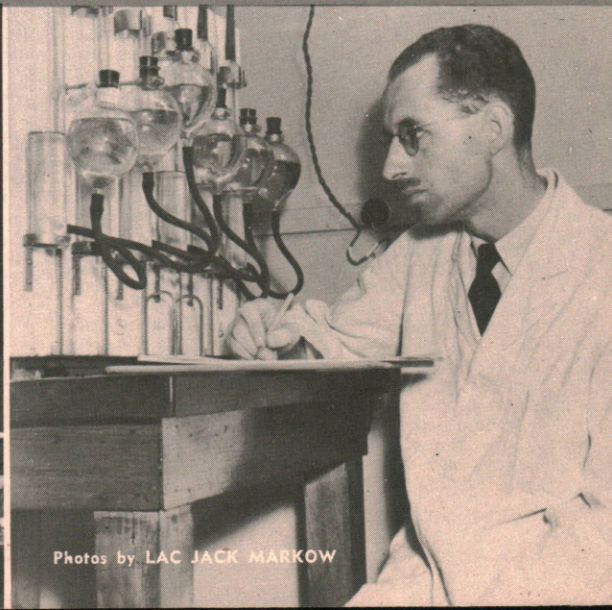
In RCAF Nutritional Lab, Montreal, LAC Jack Snyder, Delhi, cuts up raw pork for testing.



Liquid pork. Meat had acid added before chewed up in "Waring Blendor". Now it's ready for analyzing.



Sgt Chuck Tinsley measures amount of Vitamin B1 in food with this complicated lab apparatus.



Photos by LAC JACK MARKOW

NORTH-CUT to NIPPON

by CPL RON REWBURY
WINGS Staff Writer

THE RCAF has opened a new front. It is thousands of miles from flying bombs and screaming shells, but it is so vital to the Allied global strategy that hundreds of airmen have been shipped to this theatre of operations to insure the safety of Canada against Oriental aggression. It is North West Air Command.

The command is vast. The command is tough. And it's unique — unique inasmuch as its interpretation of the word operational greatly differs from that of Western or Eastern Air Commands. No giant Libs scan ocean highways for enemy subs or surface vessels. No Cats patrol isolated coastal waters. Rather this is a command where ops mean transportation. It means keeping open a route through which pour millions of dollars worth of war material to Russia. It means the maintenance of aerodromes in some of the wildest spots of our Canadian frontier. It means getting supplies and equipment to men on these airfields through fair weather and foul, winter or summer. And there can be no let-up.

If you are one of those joes who has a hankering to commune with nature to the full, can stand the itch of red flannels or their equivalent,

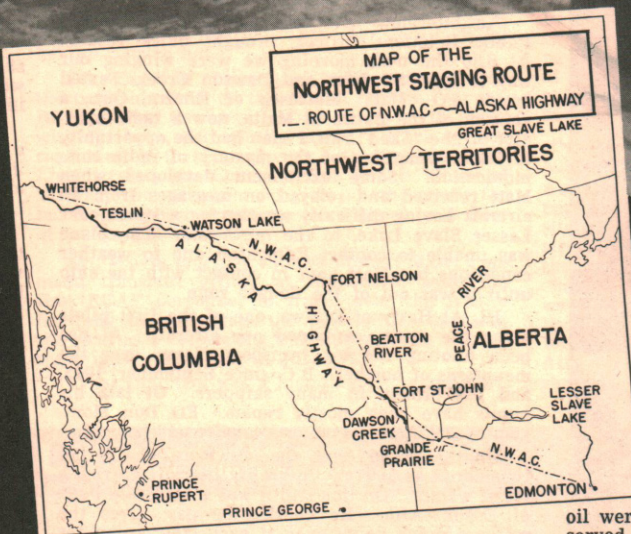


PHOTO BY CPL PAUL ROCKETT

EVERY hill a hazard on Alaska highway. RCAF trucks rumble over rough terrain, average more than 7,000 miles monthly.

now general manager of western lines for C.P.A., and Winco Stan McMillan of Edmonton, formerly with Mackenzie Airways, made the first flights over the staging route from Edmonton to Whitehorse.

Back in 1934 it took McConachie five days to fly to Whitehorse from Edmonton, with stops at far-between oases where barrels of gasoline and oil were cached. Rivers were runways and lakes served as tarmacs.

Under war's compelling pressures, the scope of operations on the staging route went through a continuous process of expansion, and today Air Force joes in ever-increasing numbers are slogging it out in the wilderness to complete a defence plan which will be carried on long after the present conflict.

North West Air Command is a complex organization, for within it there are units which operate very differently from similar units in any other command. One of the big jobs is communication, and it is in the "Com" flights that veteran bush pilots have their hey day, while sprogs learn what it takes to break trail with a Norseman.

Flying Control is another vital organization within the command. This unit has its nerve centre in Edmonton and officers here control all flying within the command, and pilots in every type of craft, whether RCAF or not, must rigidly obey their orders.

165th Transport Squadron under the Air Transport Command, with its daily schedule run between Edmonton and Whitehorse, plays a key role in the operation of command activities. It takes a DC-3 about six and a half hours to make the "Sked" run to Whitehorse, with brief stopovers.

Grinding over the route the hard way is the Freight-Transit Unit with headquarters at Dawson

and want to have affairs with bears, moose or wolves, to say nothing of the odd tiff with an indignant porcupine, NWAC has just the posting you have been dreaming about. It could be anywhere from Edmonton to Whitehorse in the Yukon, to Aklavik in the North West Territories. There are plenty of thrills and fun, but in common with other commands it has a job to do. In fact when you hit Edmonton, the first leg of your journey into the great beyond, you will probably be greeted with:

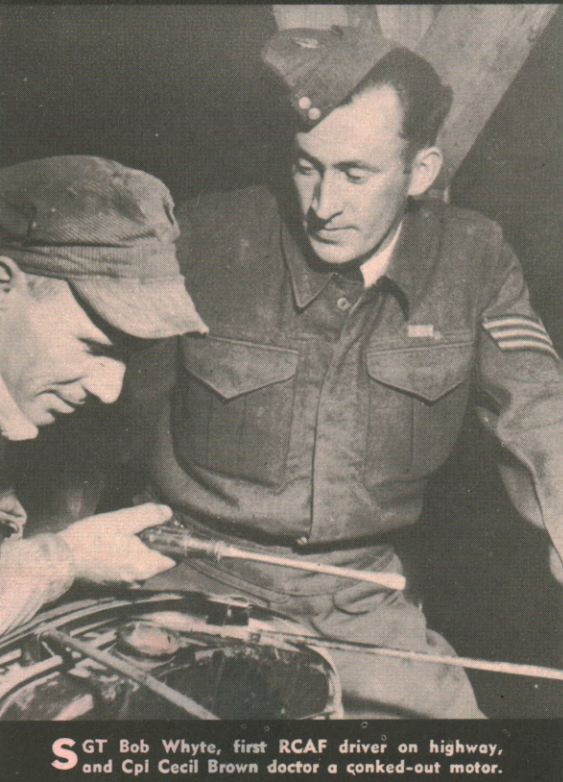
"Welcome, lad, you are now in the hardest working command of the entire Air Force."

But don't brush it aside as guff. It's a fact. Contrary to popular belief it was not the Americans who built the North West Staging Route. Long before the war became a reality, Canadian bush pilots led by Grant McConachie,

RCAF stage hands set the scene on Arctic's rocky rim for NWAC's key role in the war's grand finale



EVERY truck convoy carries calcium chloride, used extensively to combat ice on runways.



SGT Bob Whyte, first RCAF driver on highway, and Cpl Cecil Brown doctor a conked-out motor.

OFF in a cloud of dust, hell bent for the Yukon. Convoy knocks off 300 miles a day.

BOGGED down in a sleet storm. Drivers buck all kinds of weather, fair and foul, during the 1,000-mile trip.

Creek, B.C., whose truck jockeys plough through mud and snow and risk their lives every day hauling thousands of tons of freight and rations to isolated airfields along the Alaska Highway.

NWAC headquarters at Edmonton bustles like an over-turned ant hill. Here, there is no intimation of a war in its final stages, rather it has the atmosphere of a newly-opened Manning Depot. Airmen by the score await transportation up the route to begin a big job.

THOUGH the heart is in Edmonton, the vital blood stream flows through the northern hinterland, and I was anxious to get up the route to see what makes the command tick.

An interview with SL Basil Dean, Command Public Relations Officer, brought quick results. At 8.30 the next morning we were winging our way to Fort St. John and Dawson Creek. Seated beside PO "Matt" Matusch of Elmira, Ont., a veteran of the Battle of Malta, now a radio operator on the "Sked" run, I soon had the opportunity to learn something of the mystery of radio communication. Some excitement developed when Matt received and relayed on messages from an aircraft having difficulty weathering a storm over Lesser Slave Lake, to the north-east. The plane was unable to contact Edmonton due to weather conditions but Matt kept in contact with the ship until it was out of the danger zone.

FL Al Hasty of Ottawa, one of the first pilots along the route, captained our aircraft. Al has been piloting the big transport planes over the mountains of northern B.C. since September, 1943, and has broken in many skippers. Of late his pupils have been mostly repats. FO Don Montgomery, DFC, of Regina was co-pilot and navigator.

On the "Sked" run, the crewman, who is not considered as aircrew, in reality literally carries a lot of weight. On this trip it was LAC Ernie Page of Edson, Alta. He checks the gas; gives the motor a quick going over at each stop; computes the landing and take-off weight of the plane, and in general, is the handiman keeping everything in top notch running order.

Asked what it takes to be a crewman, Ernie let out a big grin.

"It's not as hard as it sounds, but occasionally it has its drawbacks. Once a ship landed at Whitehorse and picked up a stone in a tire. The crewman had to work all night to repair the tire and by the time he was ready to turn in, it was time to take off again."

The plane gave a sudden lurch.

"Oh, oh," Ernie remarked, "looks like we're going to run through a bit of stuff for a spell. I'll have to go aft and see if the passengers are okay."

He hadn't divulged that he also had to play the part of stewardess.

The big DC-3's of 165th Squadron which make the daily "Sked" runs up and down the Staging Route carry passengers and high priority freight. Ice cream is the most important perishable food aboard. Thus far the planes have never missed a trip, and have only had one accident and one real "scare." The accident occurred on a runway at Whitehorse when a plane made a belly landing after its undercarriage was damaged in an argument with a pile of earth not marked with a red light.

The "Sked" run, while one of the important phases of flying in the command, is fairly routine. When it comes to adventure, the "Com" flights snaffle practically all the excitement. They are joed to do the tough, often hazardous, jobs.

The story of one of their feats was related as we flew over the rugged bushland. The pilot involved was FO Joe Coombes of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, who flew FL R. W. Burnap, medical officer, and Nursing Sister H. M. Brown of the Edmonton medical staff into an isolated spot on a mercy mission.

An expectant mother was in urgent need of hospitalization. She lay in a lonely cabin near Shoal Creek, a three day journey from Edmonton by horse and wagon.

Medical aid was not to be had and even if she could have withstood the jolting ride in a wagon for three days, mud and rain made the trip impossible.

In answer to the distress call, NWAC dispatched a Norseman. FO Coombes made a difficult landing in a ploughed field at Shoal Creek, but the aircraft bogged down. There would be no take off from that field.

While the MO and nursing sister prepared the expectant mother for the flight, FO Coombes worked on the knotty problem of a take-off. He borrowed a tractor to tow it to an adjoining field. Scrub and brush covered the field but neighbors volunteered to clear a path wide enough for the plane to take off.

Meanwhile Time had taken over the leading role in the drama of life and death. Now dusk was darkening into night, multiplying the dangers of take off. The villagers worked swiftly to get a runway cleared in time, and as darkness closed in everything was ready for the flight. The patient had been made as comfortable as possible in the cramped quarters of the plane, and was told nothing of the possible dangers which lay ahead.

After a last-minute check-up, the pilot eased out the throttle for the hazardous take-off. The Norseman sped down the rough air strip bouncing fearfully, then lifted. At the end of the field it grazed tree tops. There was a momentary shudder and the plane was in the clear. As it came in for a landing at Edmonton at 11 o'clock that night, the pilot found that the throttle had jammed wide open. He had to switch off and land with a dead motor. A twig from one of the trees had found its way into the throttle valve, locking it tight. Another toss-up with death had been won.

ANOTHER "com" flight exploit was recounted about PO Johnny Nesbitt of No. 6 Flight at Norman Wells. This yarn actually began when an Eskimo plodding homeward on the lonely shore of the Beaufort Sea after a day's fishing stumbled over a bundle on the rocks. The bundle was a tiny babe, washed ashore by the northern currents.

The finding of the babe was the first intimation of a shipwreck in the vicinity, and was the beginning of a search for the schooner Cally which carried supplies for a reindeer herding station at Anderson River, and had not been heard from for several weeks. On a request from the RCMP, the Air Force sent Johnny to conduct an air search over the Beaufort Sea. He flew the bush pilots' favorite, a Norseman on floats, bucking icy gales for two days without success. On the third day out,



TIME out for a fog after 10 hours of gruelling driving through mountains. Convoy splits here for Watson Lake and Whitehorse.

TRANSPORT pilots are briefed by FL Kirby Herchmer at Edmonton before flying over the staging route "Sked" run, fast becoming a training school for freighter crews.

just as the ice fields began moving in, making a landing on the sea impossible, Johnny spotted a derelict in the ice near Baillie Island. He could see several bodies.

The search went on for an 18-foot native canoe which the rest of the crew might have used to escape the doomed ship. A few days later winter set in and the hunt had to be abandoned. But the mystery of the Cally's disappearance had been solved. The "Com" flight had done it again.

OUR aircraft landed at Fort St. John in time for dinner. It was not until the following morning that I sludged along a churned-up Dawson Creek street, which at the time was no place to make a crack like: "Here's mud in your eye." On the off chance that Dawson Creek has a Chamber of Commerce, the mud situation might better be left to the imagination. However, the town offers distinct advantages to the modern version of Sir Walter Raleigh, being one place where you don't have to be a wolf to pick up a girl on the street, literally. Discarding Sir Walter's method of spreading a cloak over the mud for the fair maiden to step on, airmen use the more direct approach of hoisting the young thing in their arms and striking out from there. And it works too.

At the entrance to the RCAF station operated by 10 CMU, the home of the Freight Transit Unit, a forlorn-looking joe was digging for all he was worth into the soft oozy road bed. An SP explained he was searching for his shoes. He lost them the night before when he tried to get through the gate.

Anyone who thinks driving a transport is duck

soup should cast their peepers on the Freight Transit Unit at Dawson Creek. Periodically a truck convoy starts out on a 918-mile grind up the Alaska Highway. Three days later, five or maybe six trucks splattered with mud, dust or snow, such as would send an MT driver at Rockcliffe or Trenton into a fit of despondency, roar through fog-laden canyons of northern B. C. Drivers with three days' growth and tired eyes fight with the vehicles, coddle them and coax them, to maintain adequate speed as slushy gravel and mud of the winding, treacherous highway churns beneath grinding wheels. This is no joy-ride. It is a mad dash for Watson Lake and Whitehorse; a mad dash to meet a deadline. Rations must get through on time. It's a mad dash by boys, who in spite of harrowing experiences, like their job, and whose battle cry of the road is: "Drive her, lads! Wind her up. Drive her!"

FO "Cam" M. Lipsett, of Melfort, Sask., runs the transport show on the Alaska Highway for the RCAF. He's the boss, but he works right along with the boys, periodically taking a truck up the road himself to keep abreast with conditions. FO Lipsett refers questioners to Sgt. Robert Whyte of Vivian, Man., to whom he gives all the credit for building the unit from one Ford panel to a fleet of trucks and vans.

Sgt. Whyte together with FL Robert Maze, command transport officer at Edmonton, were the first RCAF personnel to travel over the Alaska Highway to investigate the possibilities of using the road as a connecting link between the staging route units. That was in July 1943.

"That first trip was a humdinger," related Sgt.

Whyte, "We started out from Edmonton in a Ford panel, the round trip to Whitehorse covering more than 2,500 miles. It took us 17 days of the roughest, toughest driving I have ever experienced. Construction was underway at the time and the dust and mud were terrific.

"During the journey we had 22 flat tires, had to buy three new ones and procure another by the age old system of the scrounge. So many boots had to be put into the tires they looked like they had a bad case of the mumps.

"Six inches of dust covered the panel floor when we got back to Edmonton, and if it hadn't been for a case of beer we bumped into, we'd have died of thirst."

A month after the trip, Sgt. Whyte was sent to Dawson Creek with 11 men to form the transport unit, whose trucks now average 50,000 miles a month, with each truck grinding over 7,000 miles of road. At present the trucks haul approximately 325 tons a month up the highway, which includes 40 tons of rations every ten days.

CAME the next dawn and we were off in a cloud of dust, hell bent for the Yukon, in a five-truck convoy. FO Lipsett took to the road on this trip, and was in charge of the convoy which necessitated his driving the last truck to take care of stragglers. LAC Ray Poustie of Winnipeg was the convoy leader, chosen for No. 1 truck because "he can drive like a bat out of hell." Other drivers were, LACs Lloyd Kent, of Brandon; Beverly Hudson, London, Ont.; Herb Fitzpatrick, New Westminster, and Wilford Sieger, of Coronation, Alta. The convoy carried rations and runway supplies.

RUCUTE is too rugged for WDs. Like AW1 Mary Bell they work at the Edmonton nerve center.

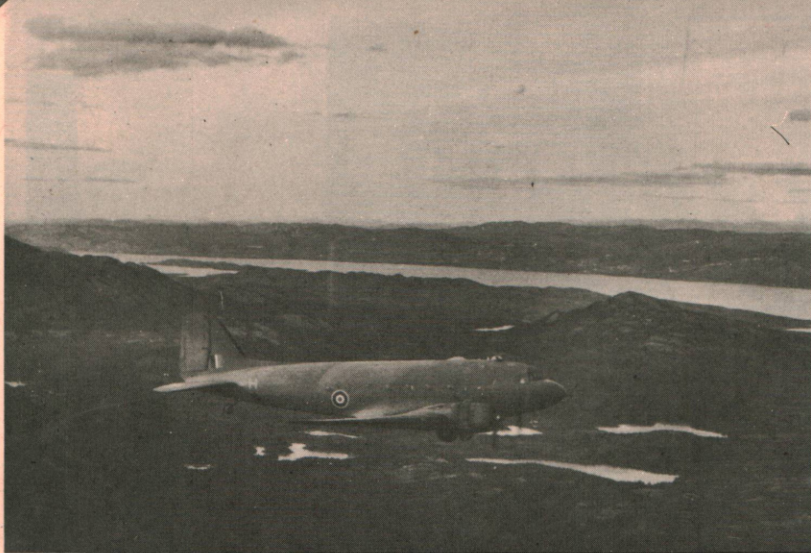


LOG-constructed buildings are common along the staging route. Here's a typical control tower.



EMERGENCY fields depend on the Com flight for supplies. FO Jack Donnelly helps fly them in.





F REIGHTERS of the sky, big DC-3's make daily "Sked" runs between Edmonton and Whitehorse. They play a key role in operation of command activities.



A LL signs point to a good time for these New Zealand joes stuck at Watson Lake chunking out timber before their flying training gets underway.

The first day we covered 233 miles. The road was good and seemed a cinch, but that was before it snaked in amongst the mountains. During the afternoon we passed a sign, "Beaton River Detachment." The detachment was actually 75 miles off into the bush from the main road.

"The boys in there know the meaning of isolation," remarked FO Lipsett.

Beaton is an emergency field and has an establishment of about 18 men. Sgt. Lloyd Moar is OC, and the boys must live very much to themselves. The country surrounding the field is so wild that the boys never venture off into the bush alone. One day a lad shot a brown bear near the camp and its carcass was hung outside the quarters. During the night timber wolves walked off with the booty and they have been hanging round the camp every night since.

About 8.30 that evening the convoy pulled into a roadside camp, with the cozy sounding name "Lum 'n Abner's", which didn't prove so cozy in the early hours of the morning. Snow and sleet began to fall and so did the temperature.

In three days drivers on the highway encounter many phases of weather from bright warm sunshine in the valleys to blizzards on the mountain tops. Everybody was thankful for his whiskers and his sleeping bag.

The next day the convoy bogged down for several hours in the mud created by the sudden snow storm, and driving became particularly hazardous as we rumbled hundreds of feet up mountain sides. If the Alaska Highway is ever to become a tourist drive something will have to be done about the roller coaster-like hills. Sunday drivers just won't be able to take the thrills. At many spots halfway up a mountain the trucks had to crawl with spinning wheels around cave-ins and landslides which put the wheels a bare two feet from 500-foot drops. There could be no slackening of the speed as the trucks whizzed down and

round the mountains. To apply the brakes with a four-ton load on would be futile. Brake linings would burn out in a few moments. Speed also had to be maintained so that the trucks could make the steep grades which came only a few moments after a downward plunge.

At one point a landslide blocked the entire road, and anxious minutes were spent edging around a bulldozer trying to clear away the rubble. A beautiful valley was far, far, below. Straight down.

We spent the second night at Muncho Lake, 456 miles from Dawson Creek. The third night saw us at Teslin Lake about 150 miles from Whitehorse. We made Whitehorse at noon the next day. It was Saturday afternoon but no half holiday for the drivers who had to pitch in and tune up their motors for the return trip.

ONE of the chief handicaps of the transport drivers is that stop-over points are so far apart on the highway. Anywhere from 100 to 150 miles, with no habitation in between. Drivers must hit one of these points at mealtime if they expect to eat, the cause of much gum beating.

Whitehorse is considered the end of the line as far as the staging route is concerned, but actually the frontier line stretches even farther northwest, and there is a handful of joes who know this only too well. They are the men stationed at Aishihik, half-way between Whitehorse and the Alaska border, and a small post aptly named Snag, right on the Alaska-Yukon boundary line.

Of the two posts the emergency field at Aishihik is perhaps the grimmest. Situated in the tangled bush and swampland near Lake Aishihik several miles from the Alaska Highway, it can be reached only by air during the summer months. A trail leads into the camp from the highway but the bottomless muskeg necessitates

its termination at the lake. The lads depend solely upon the Com flight for their rations and mail. During the winter when the snow is not too deep the Freight Transit Unit crosses the frozen lake with trucks, to lug in heavy equipment.

NWAC's average airman is a maintenance man. Most of our lads are connected with Works & Bricks, or No. 9 and 10 CMU. They are constructing runways, laying roadbeds, building barracks, mess halls and office buildings. They drive the trucks, the tractors, the bulldozers. They spend days in the bush hacking out clearings and chopping winter fuel. They work hard — often seven days a week. Until the command is fully developed, recreational facilities are on the grim side. Lucky are the lads who sport a man-sized rec hall. Most stations are so isolated that joes must depend on their own ingenuity for entertainment. Reading takes up much of the off-time hours, but at present libraries leave much to be desired. At Fort St. John the boys got a break recently when a bowling alley opened up in the village. Now 18 RCAF teams bowl twice a week. Canteens are few and far between, and in most cases the American PX serves both U.S. and Canadian personnel. But if an RCAF canteen is available, PX privileges are reduced for Canucks. This has caused much beefing because Canadian cigarettes are six times as expensive as American brands bought by the U.S. forces. And this is no small issue with the boys.

The little men of NWAC won't admit their job is important. To them it doesn't seem important, but it is, for these joes are seeing to it that the northwest passage will be a definite part of Canada's future. Without them — the truck drivers, the carpenters, the equipment assistants, the bush pilots — the scene would not be set, the play could not go on. That's Air Vice Marshal T. A. Lawrence's North West Air Command.

B IG sport at Whitehorse is hunting. FS Al Blattner, chef, goes after mountain goats.



A museum piece without a home. Sgts H. Lord, R. Bieber and LAC M. Smith discovered the old coach at Whitehorse.



M UD eliminates formal introduction for Cpl Howard Hazlett at Dawson Creek.



MAIL RUN

Clothing Controversy

With reference to the letter in your August, 1944, issue from the "Sunderland Billet" RCAF Overseas, and the answer supplied by you, frankly, it wasn't very satisfactory.

We Canadians overseas don't like to think that our government is being taken for a ride, and it certainly is if it is exchanging one RCAF uniform for one of the RAF . . .

We wouldn't mind this exchanging business if it saves time and shipping space, but certainly we want a fair deal. How come we are the ONLY branch of the Canadian soldiers overseas to whom this applies? Canadian soldiers overseas have a reputation for smartness of appearance, taking pride in their Canadian apparel. We too, would like to hold that reputation.

**Boys of an RCAF Unit,
Somewhere in Belgium.**

. . . So far as the boys over here are concerned it sounds like a lot of bunk. If shipping space is so precious why send WDs Canadian uniforms? Are they considered more important than erks? As far as your statement that our uniforms are identical to that of the RAF is concerned, try and tell that to the boys! Surely we can at least look Canadian.

**C.O.P.D.,
RCAF, Overseas.**

. . . I agree with most of the article but there is one part which I disagree with very much and also do many of the airmen I have talked with on this subject. They are alike in color and that's all — sometimes not even that. This is no insult to the RAF uniform but I notice on stations over here RAF try to get Canadian issue if possible. And some have succeeded while Canadians wear theirs . . .

**L. M. Hewitt,
RCAF, Overseas.**

. . . The so-called authorities state that the airman's uniforms are almost identical, whereas the WDs and WAAF's are very different. The latter we are happy to note, is quite true, but the other part of the statement is anything but . . .

Our own uniforms are not only differently styled, but of a definitely

superior material . . . Being from the American continent where we follow American clothing style and standards, we dislike, and we believe rightly so, being forced into wearing RAF issue when we should have and definitely deserve, our own distinctive style of uniform.

Though it seems a very small issue it means a great deal to all of us and is a hotly disputed subject here between ourselves, Americans and RAF. Here's hoping Canadians in Canada wake up.

**LAC N. R. Lake,
RCAF, Overseas.**

. . . After wearing a Canadian uniform you would, I'm sure, feel the same way we do if you had to wear the RAF issue. Believe me, they are not identical . . .

**LAC J. Wares,
RCAF, Overseas.**

The RCAF Clothing Committee replies, "... Uniforms for RAF and RCAF are almost identical, although RCAF uniforms are of better fabric and better made. Color varies greatly in both."

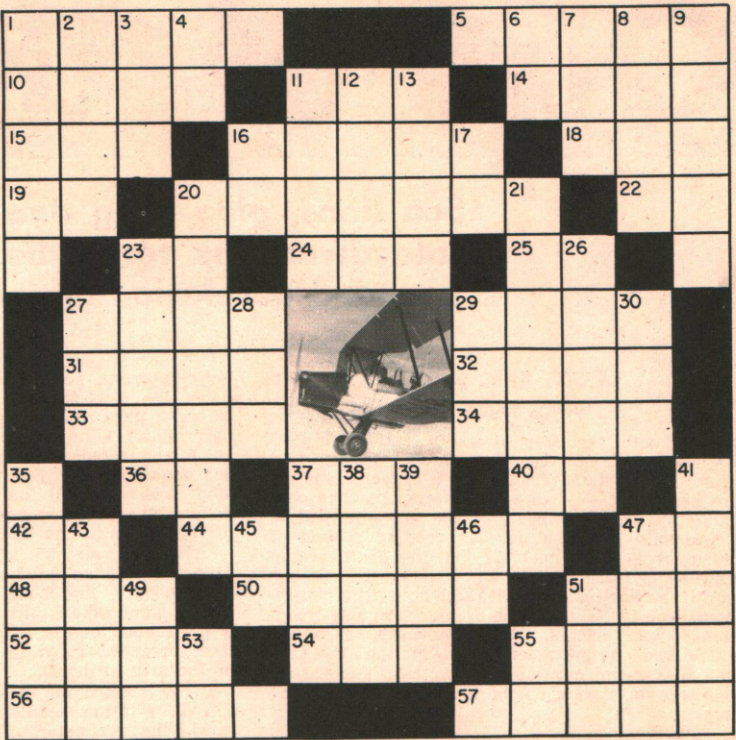
Unable to discover reason to hope for a change in policy regarding shipping of airmen's clothing, WINGS can only suggest that joes overseas swallow their sartorial pride and look forward to that snappy brown pin-stripe that is slowly but surely coming out of the dream department and back into Canadian men's ready-to-wear. — Ed.

Same Credits for Americans

Thanks for straightening out gratuities question in the October issue. Here's a \$64 question. I am an American intending to return to U.S.A. after the war. What chance have I of receiving re-establishment credit in the U.S.A.?

**Cpl Tex,
No. 9 B & G, Mont Joli**

Department of Pensions and National Health says: "Americans serving in RCAF returning to U.S.A. will receive full benefits of credit in U.S.A., equivalent to the credit they would receive if they remained in Canada." — Ed.



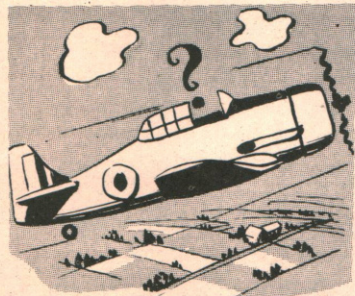
HORIZONTAL

- 1—Sky captain.
- 5—Bane of the airsick.
- 10—See.
- 11—Take away.
- 14—Take it to the MO.
- 15—Known to frequent pants & picnics.
- 16—Vertical sticks.
- 18—Maiden name.
- 19—Exists.
- 20—Aircraft control member.
- 22—South America. (Abbr.)
- 23—Spicy sauce.
- 24—Portion of ground.
- 25—Them (slang).
- 27—Head-gear. (pl.)
- 29—Perennial plant.
- 31—Tarmac jitney.
- 32—Always.
- 33—Station.
- 34—Observe.
- 36—A musical note.
- 37—Turf.
- 40—Southern neighbor.
- 42—Stateless radio.
- 44—"Dusk ---- into night."
- 47—You. (French)
- 48—Preposition.
- 50—Designs.
- 51—Unhappy.
- 52—English public school.
- 54—Winged insect.
- 55—Advised.
- 56—River in Germany.
- 57—Pick on.

VERTICAL

- 1—Unadorned.
- 2—Electrified particles.
- 3—Abraham's nephew.
- 4—Alright. (slang)
- 6—"Keep your nose....."
- 7—Woman's oldest career.
- 8—like Mother used to make.
- 9—Slink.
- 11—To rotate.
- 12—snock absorber strut.
- 13—Boy's name.
- 16—Greek letter.
- 17—Therefore.
- 20—Utilized.
- 21—Jittery.
- 23—Ghost trade.
- 26—Comes upon.
- 27—Construction & Maintenance Unit.
- 28—Determined.
- 29—Decimal Unit.
- 30—Before.
- 35—Make available.
- 37—Distinct personality.
- 38—Gem.
- 39—Withold.
- 41—Polite for bloody.
- 43—Picture in center.
- 45—Epistle. (Abbr.)
- 46—Nova Scotia. (Abbr.)
- 47—High.
- 49—King. (French)
- 51—Sun.
- 53—Double N.
- 55—You. (French)

PUZZLE SOLUTION ON OPPOSITE PAGE



Where's Joe?

LAC T. H. Craig at No. 5 OTU, Boundary Bay.

Note to LAC E. H. Camire, TTS, St. Thomas . . . yes her number is W315247 but she spells her name Findlay, and her initials are A. J. She's at AFHQ, Ottawa; c/o Princess Alice Barracks.

A tip for Cpl F. M. Chase of No. 1 GRS, Summerside. Your chum R 84779 Cpl H. J. Miller is at No. 202 Equipment Holding Unit, Weyburn, Sask.

LAC G. A. Eisler at MPO 503, Bagotville, Que., can contact R181720 LAC A. F. Nelson at 21 Repair Depot, RCAF, Moncton, N. B.

According to RCAF Records Office, LAC F. L. Kristensen, for whom LAC F. L. Beauer of 1 Repat Depot, Rockcliffe, enquires, is listed as "missing". His last posting was 1 Y Depot, Lachine.

This column gets around. From North Africa comes an appeal from R157435 LAC A. Opleta, Tent E2, 155 M.U., RCAF, who writes for the posting of R134307 LAC F. Ostafew. He's at 18 Repair Depot, Ottawa.

For LAC E. A. Dobson of Rockcliffe, LAC M. Boesch is located at 16 AID, Edmonton, Alta.

AC1 D. M. Clarke, of No. 14 SFTS, Kingston, can write his pals R154947 LAC D. E. Butchart at No. 4 T.C., Calgary, and R156567

WINGTIPS by PFC

THE FIRST RECORDED PARACHUTE WAS KNOWN AS A "FALL-BREAKER" BELIEVED USED AS EARLY AS 1595.

A MONTHS PAY OF A ROMAN WARRIOR WAS ONE 'SOLIDUS', A COIN FROM WHICH DEVELOPED THE WORD SOLDIER.

THE AUTHORIZED R.C.A.F. CREST IS LESS THAN 2 YEARS OLD, BEFORE ITS RATIFICATION BY THE CHESTER HERALD IN JAN. 1943 THE R.C.A.F. USED AN ADAPTATION OF THE R.A.F. CREST

Out of this World

Sea lions, ping-pong and a seafaring Y-man spell sole diversions for radio mechs manning Pacific-pounded desolation of coast's map-speck islands

by SGT ERIC NICOL
WINGS Staff Writer

RIFE with the sort of exotic implausibilities usually found on the drawing-board of a Ripley are certain remote RCAF detachments off the west coast — such as the station reached only by flying in by rowboat; or the one strapped to a seabound rock that is the breeding ground of puffin birds and ping-pong players; or the camp guarded by the largest and fiercest SP in the world, the Pacific. And all these rum little detachments constitute the beat of one sea-going good-humor man named Ollie Goldsmith, a broad-shouldered, bespectacled scion of the Y.M.C.A. who goes out of his way to prove that Y-men rush in where angels are out of their prescribed flying area.

Ollie's job as an itinerant ray of sunshine involves a red triangle tour of roughly 300 miles in a 65-foot supply vessel that is for each detachment the only reason to believe that there is still life on Earth. The first time he made the tour he was away three months, so now he takes his lunch. In the hold of the small boat that twice a month hoves into view of the several dozen men on each Pacific-battered island lie all their food, all their entertainment, all their mail, and Ollie. The tiny craft bobbing in the valleys of the giant swells cannot approach the rock-ribbed islands, but must stand off temptingly close until the sea has calmed enough to risk darting a rowboat between the chugging emissary of the world and a gang of airmen hungry for letters, hungry

for equipment, and sometimes just plain hungry. Often the rowboat must wait days, even weeks, before it dare run the gauntlet of churning foam. Last winter Ollie was stranded for a month on one of the islands, sharing emergency rations dropped from planes. Four attempts were made to land rowboats. All four boats washed in upside down, and two airmen were drowned. The Pacific's private wars are no place for men.

The only method of getting cargo and personnel ashore on one of the islands is to fly in by rowboat. The boat scoots in at high speed on the giant rollers, aiming for a tiny cove, where it is grabbed bodily in a large A-frame, or glorified breeches buoy, to complete the remainder of the trip air-borne.

The airmen on these pin-points of land are C.B.'d, or rather Sea-B'd, for months at a stretch inside the perimeter of their island, which may enclose an area smaller than that of the average SFTS. A letter mailed from the town least distant from their island can reach England in less time than it could be delivered to them. Their's is a station that makes Goose Bay look like a suburb of Times Square.

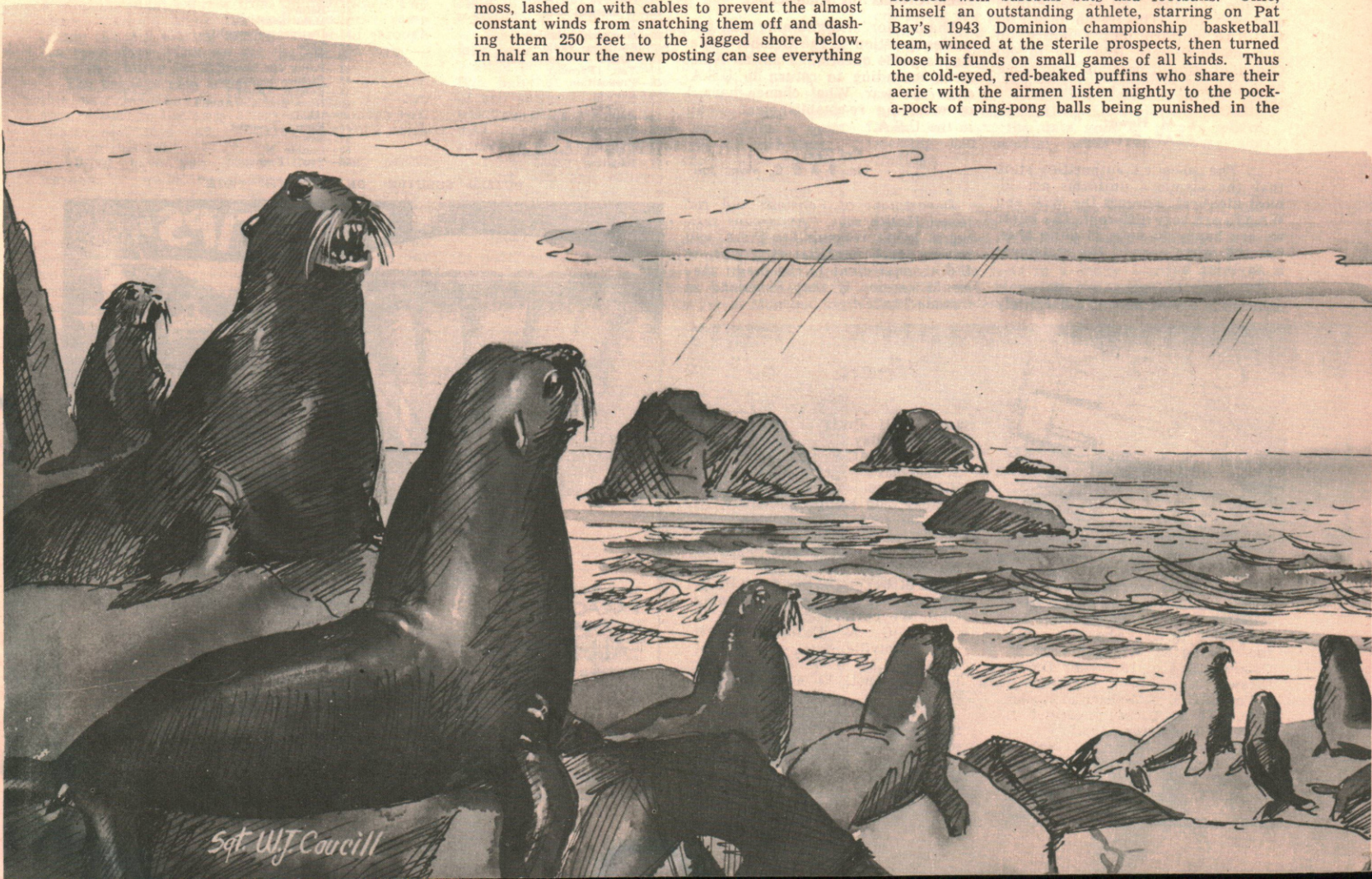
GRIMMEST of Ollie's ports of call is an eruption of rock dangling like an ugly fob on the end of a chain of islands arching down from Alaska. The officers and airmen inhabiting the rock refer to it wryly as "the Alcatraz of the RCAF", for nowhere does a posting more resemble a sentence. They not only have "had it" — they have regurgitated and had it again. Their barracks and buildings cling like barnacles to the stone and peat moss, lashed on with cables to prevent the almost constant winds from snatching them off and dashing them 250 feet to the jagged shore below. In half an hour the new posting can see everything

he is going to see in the way of scenery for months. And for the lad who has never before heard or felt the stinging violence of the naked ocean the war thus becomes an acutely personal experience.

BECAUSE the sea spray flings high to blend with the mists that linger around the Rock, even the collected rainwater is undrinkably salty. All the airmen's drinking water must be sucked up from the sea and the saline content removed, leaving a pure but prosaic product that accounts for the heavy addiction of all personnel to cokes. And, as might be expected, there is a place in this stern scheme of things for good malt brew.

In fact, Ollie once watched the touching spectacle of Christmas ale arriving under duress at one island, after a drought of several weeks. In one of the best-attended muster parades in Air Force history, the strength of the detachment clustered on the beach to assist the unloading of the precious cases from the rowboat. Ollie recalls that the cases never got past the outer ring of thirst. By the time the last full case had been unloaded the first case of empties was ready to be reloaded. The rowboat made only one round trip that day, and it was a very merry Christmas for those in a condition to crawl up with the tide.

Whenever Ollie visits the Rock the buoyancy of the supply ship is increased by a holdful of ping-pong balls. The Rock is too small and misshapen to afford any semblance of a sports field, barely grudging the men a horseshoe pitch, and creating a recreational dilemma for a Y-man stocked with baseball bats and footballs. Ollie, himself an outstanding athlete, starring on Pat Bay's 1943 Dominion championship basketball team, winced at the sterile prospects, then turned loose his funds on small games of all kinds. Thus the cold-eyed, red-beaked puffins who share their aerie with the airmen listen nightly to the pock-a-pock of ping-pong balls being punished in the



diminutive, blacked-out rec hall. The little celluloid pills have proved very effective against the mental mumps. Pool, cribbage and shuffleboard are played also, with a sort of concentrated fury, as though the enemy were hiding in a side-pocket, or skulking under a crib. Recently, too, the airmen dynamited and ash-filled an area 25 by 50 feet, on which to play volleyball.

Every ten days the station has a movie. High rental rates have so far frustrated Goldsmith's attempts to have the supply boat ship in several pictures at a time. Three movies a month are hardly exorbitant for lads who never see hide nor hair of any entertainment troupe, with the exception of WAC's Jo Boys, who just about had all the entertainment knocked out of them trying to get in and out of the place.

Despite the fact that they are receiving few astra per ardua per month, the Rock-dwellers manage to turn out a station paper, the *Alcatraz*. This journal has had probably the most flexible dead-line in the newspaper world, each edition requiring a month or more to send to press, the nearest Gestetner machine being a good hundred miles away. Until a short time ago even DROs were written in long hand, and airmen who failed to receive any regular mail sometimes read them. The acquisition of a typewriter has since removed this last human touch about the DROs. To encourage the *Alcatraz* to the extent of enabling it to reach its readers the same year as the events it describes, Ollie is currently negotiating for a duplicating machine. Another of the detachments produces a paper called *Bah, Wilderness*, which apparently sums up the editorial attitude of the publishers toward their environment. Dean of the detachment sheets is *The Isolationist*, sprightly valve for sentiments of a huddle of Air Force humanity situated on the northern tip of Vancouver Island.

ONE grizzled good which the prevailing ill wind has blown to the airmen on the Rock is the opportunity to observe some of the remarkable creatures that live in these parts by choice. Strangely enough, for instance, the only attacks from the air which the RCAF has suffered on the coast have been directed in part from bases on this self-same Rock. Operating from crannies in the pocked face of the island, and from similar islands spaced along the coast, fast-flying sea falcons have struck repeatedly at the carrier pigeons released by patrol bombers, intercepting and destroying up to 50 per cent of the luckless messengers. These fierce falcons, combining with violent winds and weather, have struck sorrow into the heart of the pigeon loftman, and have forced an abandonment of the carrier method until such time as experts have developed a pigeon with either heavier armament or greater speed.

Another natural phenomenon which will furnish the Rockmen with story material for future grandchildren is the spectacle of the great brown sea lions cavorting amorously about on one of their rare mating grounds, close by the Rock. For airmen who never see a woman of any kind for months at a time, this scene of unrestrained smooching is interesting but slightly depressive. The sea lions never miss a season, of course, with slick roly-polly youngsters and grey-faced old-timers strongly resembling sheep dogs all barking and slithering around on the rocks in a ribald display redolent of a sergeants' mess smoker. The sea lion, the lads find, is a pleasant novelty, though hardly likely to replace the old-fashioned blond.

STILL another rare sight for the islanders is the sun, whose appearance the joes not infrequently await as wistfully as that of the supply boat. Sea fogs swathe the Rock day after day, creating a ghostly, dissociate atmosphere. Worst of all, however, are the days when the Pacific boils with the awesome rage of the ocean storm, tossing the supply boat back to shelter. One such day last January Goldsmith boarded the Cape Canso to leave the rock and return to his headquarters along with FL Gilbert, the padre. FL Gilbert was attending the spiritual needs of the same detachments as Ollie serviced, thus representing God in one of the most rugged and dispersed parishes in existence.

Four hours of rowing were required to negotiate the short distance to the Cape Canso, and at 1200 hrs the supply ship started north. Twenty-seven hours later she limped into a tiny bay, having been blown clear to Alaska by a murderous gale that pounded the craft with thirty-foot waves,

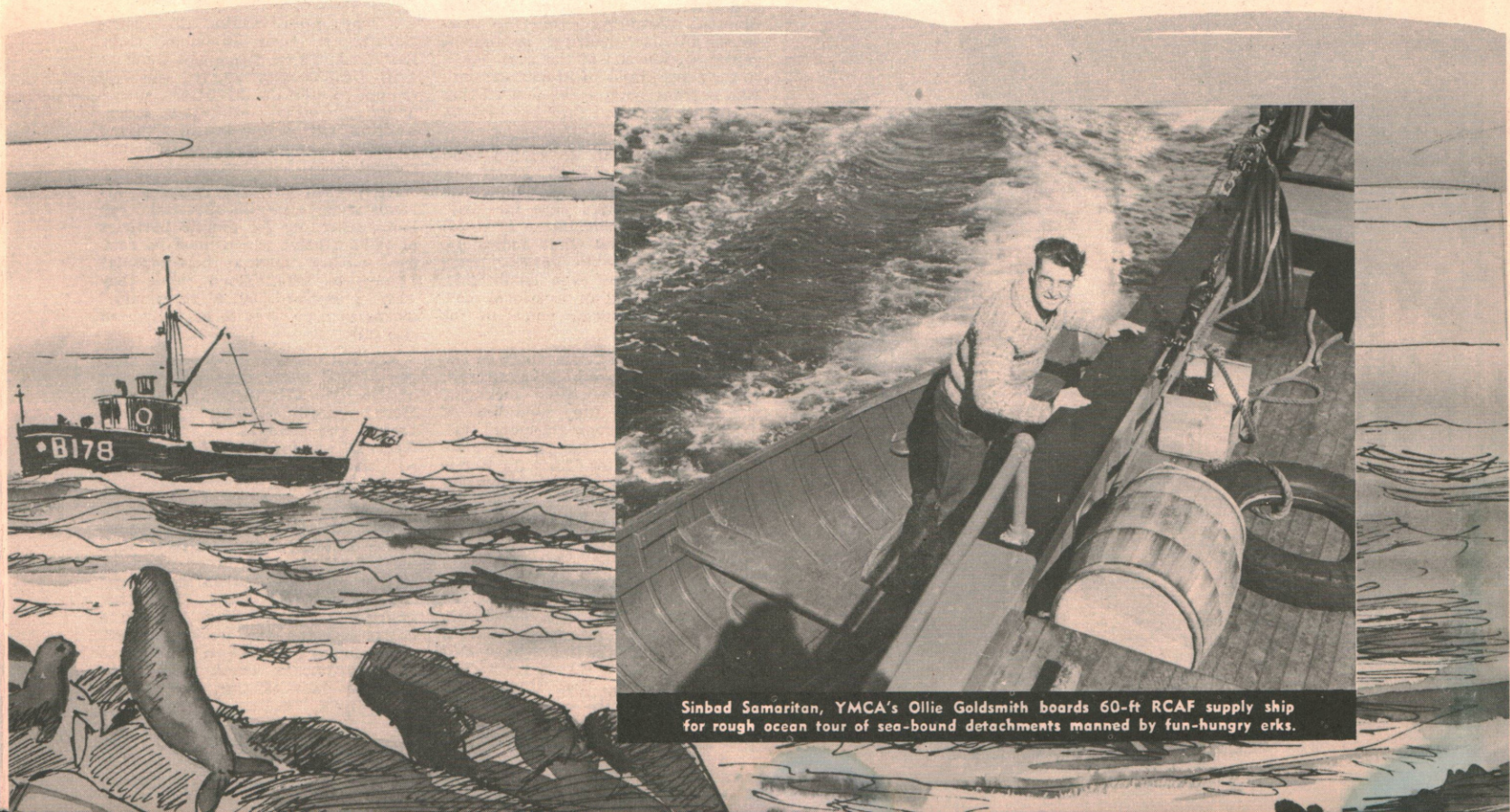


detachments must wait until the war is over before receiving their cut of the glory cake. Their work is too secret, their location too dangerously isolate and exposed, to be revealed to the garrulous public. Mercifully, the length of their stay is limited to between six months and a year. Recently an airman came off the Rock for the first time in eleven months, his face whipped red by salt breezes, his hair long and curly as a girl's. Nobody got in his way.

These airmen are qualified to say that the war can be a pretty sticky proposition five thousand miles from the nearest battle. The sea booming a never-ending cannonade, the desperate inaction of a war against wraiths, and against the insidious germ of gloom — these are the formidable, intangible enemies they must confront and lick. The erks and officers who face them deserve, and, it is to be hoped, will one day receive a proper paean of praise for a bad job well done.

smashing wireless communication and scooting her helplessly 130 miles north of her proposed anchorage. For cool seamanship that averted disaster, the crew of the Cape Canso was mentioned in despatches. Ollie and the padre plodded back to work with heightened respect for Old Man Pacific.

The officers and men who compose these



Sinbad Samaritan, YMCA's Ollie Goldsmith boards 60-ft RCAF supply ship for rough ocean tour of sea-bound detachments manned by fun-hungry erks.



Air bombers rely on the craftman hands of instrument mechanics. Here LAC Stanley Topping, Toronto, repairs a bombsight calibrated to one ten-thousandth of an inch.

Masters of motion and precision insure aircraft instruments are sensitive but not temperamental

by FS DON KENNEDY

WINGS Staff Writer

THE RCAF made a smart move when it changed the trade name of instrument makers and repairmen to instrument mechanics. It's a name worthy of their work. The new title credits the trade with ingenuity, steps it up to the category of craftsmen. An instrument mechanic is a master of motion and precision. The old names, repairmen and makers, had become synonymous with the trade's younger brother — watchmaking.

"Don't get the idea watchmakers don't make good instrument mechanics—they do. The best men in the

balance, but indicates the spot on the circumference which is heavy. Cy can balance a rotor in five minutes. It used to take a half day.

After reassembling, the instruments are rolled and tossed on a machine which simulates aircraft motion in flight. Air sick persons could probably get squeamish following the path of the instruments on this undulating contraption. Surviving this test, they go to Sgt Mert Lowan, Vancouver, nicknamed "The Caliber King". No "George" goes to the packing room without his O.K. on it.

The electrical instrument repair section is capably run by FS Mac MacGregor, former owner of "ham" radio station VE3VT, Ingersoll, Ontario. Lining the room are long series of black instrument panels, polka-dotted with dials, giving the overall effect of an efficient research laboratory. But hidden at the back of these sleek panels are Mac's homemade testing devices. Until recently, when the RCAF invested in a factory-made magnetizer, they used Mac's ingenious charger. "Guaranteed to magnetize any wrist watch within ten feet of it" claims Sgt Sid Woodall of Toronto.

FS Jack Fidler, Winnipeg, former engraver, enjoys the use of a private workshop. "Permanent force members with another ten years to go have got nothing on me . . . it looks as if I'm here for eternity," says Jack. The RCAF is changing all East Coast airspeed indicators from miles per hour to knots, and the work of recalibrating the dials was allotted to Fidler's nook.

Each dial is carefully measured and then the new calibrations are cut in with a router. "I hate to think how many there are in EAC to do yet. I'll bet even money that the Navy could have swung over to miles per hour easier than changing the Air Force over to knots," he claims.

Perhaps after reading this, when glancing at their luminous dials, East Coast Patrol fliers will think of LAC Len Carney, one of the few radium painters in the RCAF, sitting under his heavy protective apron, working with a fine brush, applying poisonous radium paint to fine instrument dials.

After each job, Len inspects his hands under a special ultra-violet ray lamp, searching for minute particles of radium paint which must be removed quickly. "Look at these capsules I have to take. You'd think they were prescribed by a veterinary," moans Len, pointing to his jelly-bean size pills.

All instruments leaving the shop get a final going over by the men of No. 17 AID Detachment, WO2 Herb Curotte, Montreal, known around the shop as the "Inspector General" was former instrument man for MacNab's squadron during the Battle of Britain.

Throughout the entire section there is an air of cheerful seriousness. These men know the part their work plays in the success of every flight. It's a pity that pilots never get acquainted with these mechanics. Instead they meet them through a mirror — for the work of these mechanics is reflected in the dials of the instruments which stare right into the face of the pilot during every flight.

BACK OF THE DIALS



Home-made magnetizer spreads its magnetic personality to any ferrous metal within ten feet. That's why LAC Al Fitzgerald, Newcastle, N.B., does not wear wrist watch.



The rotor is the brain of "George", automatic pilot. Correcting a rotor's balance is exclusive job of LAC Cy Harris, operating the only balancing machine in Canada.

shop were watchmakers. It's the finest basic training for the trade, but there's as much difference between a watchmaker and an instrument mechanic as there is between a motor mechanic and an aeroengine mechanic," explains WO2 Don Duston, St. Stephen, N. B., NCO in charge of the instrument repair section at No. 5 Equipment Depot, Moncton, N. B. "Watchmakers deal with fine instruments, mechanics work with precision instruments. Some of the parts we use weigh one or two pounds, yet are tooled to one ten-thousandth of an inch."

Men in this section have come in from all sorts of civilian trades. Sgt Dave Archer, Montreal, was a diamond setter; ex-cattle buyer LAC Earl Stanton, Arnprior, Ontario, who works in the electrical instrument repair section sits at the next bench to Cpl Gord Clarke of Brockville, Ont., who is going back to the undertaking business when the RCAF lets him go.

The nameplate "Repair Section" is an understatement. It should read "Instrument Rebuilding". Every instrument which sticks its dialed face in a cockpit arrives here for strip-down and re-assembling. Artificial horizons, bank and climb indicators, gyro pilots, pressure gauges, temperature indicators, even bombsights, oxygen masks and an occasional moving picture projector come in for overhaul.

Gyro pilots are taken apart to the last nut and bearing. Like aircrew, the instrument mechanic nickname them "George". The rebuilding of them moves along assembly line fashion except for the job of balancing the gyro rotor. LAC Cy Harris of Montreal has exclusive performing rights for this work. He is the only rotor balancing machine operator in Canada.

The RCAF sent LAC Harris to Bedford, Ohio, for a couple of weeks to learn how to operate the machine. Sitting at an apparatus which resembles a telephone switchboard in outline, Cy sets the rotor in clamps which revolve it at 12,000 r.p.m. The machine does the rest. It not only tells how much the rotor is out of

Photos by Sgt Ed Duke

Carols in the Wilderness



by SGT W. J. CROSS

CHRISTMAS day bloomed bright and clear but morale on the detachment was hitting an all-time low. A month of storms and bad weather had made it impossible to get mail out, and no one had received a word from home for more than six weeks. Christmas supplies hadn't arrived. There'd be no turkey with cranberry sauce, no plum pudding, no gaily colored crackers at the table, no mince tarts, no red wine and other essentials which mark a good Canadian festival. Instead, there'd be roast mutton, dehydrated vegetables, and pumpkin pie. A worthy meal, you might say. Well don't say it, brother, just don't say it.

Practically half the camp is composed of very young men; few are over the age of 25. A lot of the fellows hadn't spent a Christmas away from home before, and those around 19, 20, and 21 were feeling it more than the others. Their homesickness was beginning to get pathetic when one of the most heartwarming experiences I have ever known happened to this little group of men, 250 miles from civilization, the nearest movie house, street corner, the nearest bottle of beer. At 10 A.M. an aircraft flew low over the detachment and dropped a note.

"Merry Christmas to all at Rock Island," it read. "Stand by to pick up mail."

So we weren't forgotten after all. And the men at headquarters who were thoughtful enough to send us our mail in this fashion will never know just how much the gesture was appreciated. Eight bags of mail and six cannisters of parcels were lowered by parachute. One cannister broke loose from its parachute and crumpled as it struck the ice-covered rocks. But this wasn't serious enough to dampen our glowing spirits.

The goodwill concentrated on our little unit could have spread over the entire world and still held its potency. The men gathered in one of the huts to open their presents. Most of the

gifts were articles of wearing apparel, toilet articles, and general utility kits. Almost every man received a parcel containing groceries. Several bottles of good Canadian rye whiskey were gratefully received. Some of the presents were portraits of various members of the family — wives, sisters, or sweethearts.

Gifts contained in the damaged cannister offered a problem — nobody could tell to whom the presents belonged. The wrappers were torn and the goods contained therein scattered throughout the cannister. Those who had liquid provisions in it suffered a total loss — all except one man. His wife had sent him a quart of rye — in a hot water bottle.

THE cooks locked the kitchen door, but the grapevine laughs at locksmiths. Everyone knew that one of the cannisters didn't contain mail. "It's a surprise," said the OC. But the grape found out that the cannister contained four turkeys, Christmas puddings, a pail of mincemeat, and a gallon of wine. Unbeknownst to any of us the OC had been over to Marney's Bay a few days before Christmas and bought a sack of potatoes from the local residents. Our Christmas dinner, then, was a very pleasant surprise.

Four turkeys don't allow everyone to have a drumstick, but every man had a sizeable portion of the delicacy. Grace was said, the dinner vanished and the wine was poured. The customary toasts were made to the King, to Canada, and to Victory. The OC passed around the box of cigars inflicted on him by his wife. Speeches were made. Jokes were told and songs were sung.

We carried out the Air Force traditions of having the officers and senior NCOs serve as waiters at the dinner. But we went one better than that: we volunteered to relieve the mess staff of all duties. I naively volunteered to wash the dishes. For the benefit of newly-made NCOs may I point out that this is a mistake. Cooks know about this event; so does the mess staff. After the Christmas dinner there are more pots and pans than after any other meal of the year. Of course, it's a big meal and one might expect more than the ordinary amount of washing up. But that's not the reason. The cooks and mess staff have been saving pots and pans from the previous Christmas. Anything that has been too dirty, greasy, or gummy to wash during the year suddenly uncovers itself after the Christmas dinner.

I would have washed dishes until midnight if the OC hadn't stuck his head in the window and said: "Come on, Sarge, we want you in the rec room to play for our carol singing."

The carol singing business was a new one on me. It must have been something the men had organized during the afternoon while they sat around on their bunks and enjoyed Christmas day, and while I stewed around in the turkish bath and cursed every Christmas from the year nothing B. C.

THE first thing I noticed on entering the room was Hymie Schwartz holding down the front pew. Beside him sat Bennie Finklebaum. Our group of 50 men on this detachment represent a cross section of Canada as a whole. Every province in the Dominion is represented. We have the British element — the Scotch, English and Irish descendants. About the exact proportion of French is measured out in the group, and the Hebrew element is represented by the two Jewish boys, Hymie and Bennie. Canada's industries are represented by men from the logging camps, men from the pulp mills, miners, fishermen, farmers, businessmen, bankers, one politician, and last but not least, a young student minister. Would it be possible to observe Canada celebrating Christmas through the medium of this detachment?

We started off by singing all the familiar Christmas carols to be found in the Air Force Hymnary. We then sang two or three carols in French. I wanted to play a Jewish Hymn but the only Jewish song I know is "Bei Mir Bis du Schoen," and I don't think it's a hymn.

The quartet sang a Negro spiritual. They made a very good job of it; it sounded pleasant to the ear. But maybe I don't understand spirituals. This stuff about "All God's Chillun Got Shoes" just didn't seem to be in keeping with the occasion.

Then the young student minister got up to offer a prayer. We all wondered just how he was going to handle it with so many beliefs in the assembly...

"God the Creator," he began. "We on this detachment want to thank you. We didn't expect very much on this day and were pleasantly surprised. We also complain a lot about conditions here at Rock Island, but we could certainly be a lot worse off and we want to thank you for the comfort we have. We also want to thank you for keeping our folks at home comfortable, safe, and happy. As far as I can see it, we've got everything to be thankful for, and nothing to be unthankful for. So in that case, thanks a lot. Amen."

The young minister will probably need a couple of years more training to take some of the rough edges off his praying, but he had the right idea.

After the prayer the Administration Officer stepped up to the piano.

"You know 'Come All Ye Faithful,' eh?"

"Yea."

"Okay, you play it and I'll sing the Latin version."

"I can't play it in Latin."

"Sure you can. It's practically the same tune. Just play it slower."

"Okay."

THE men sat side by side on the benches. They looked like little boys in church: their faces sober; their hands unconsciously crossed in a pious fashion on their laps. It didn't strike them as unusual that the officer should volunteer a solo. I struggled through an introduction, then:

"Adeste fideles ...

A look of interest sprang into the eyes of the Catholics. This was something familiar.

"... lati triumphantes ...

The Protestant boys snuck quick bewildered glances at each other. A couple of nights ago they'd heard Bing Crosby do the same number.

"... venite, venite, in Bethlehem.

Kelly, at the back of the room, was feeling the heat. He mopped his face with his hand and ran his finger around the unaccustomed restriction of a collar.

"Natum videte ...

The boys sat quietly, feet crossed, hands crossed, sombre eyes fixed on the face of the singer whose baritone voice flowed richly into the stillness of the little room.

"... Regem angelorum ...



Kelly couldn't stand the heat any longer. He was sitting beside the stove. It glowed red. He got up and raised the window. Some of the men looked around slightly at the sound, then turned back and settled.

"... venite adoremus ...

A cool wave of air floated through the room. The night outside was clear, crisp, and northern Kelly put his head through the window and went "Pss-t".

"... venite adoremus ...

The Jewish boys looked at the singer questioning, absorbed in interest. The Protestants listened with polite reserve mingled with solemnity. A French lad placed his hand on a shoulder beside him and unconsciously chewed his thumbnail. A large husky thrust his head through the open window and quietly laid its chin on Kelly's arm resting on the sill; large reverent eyes turned to gaze into Kelly's face.

"... venite adoremus ...

The thoughts of each man were buried deep at the climax of the hymn. Bodies seemed tense, but with that nice kind of tenseness that comes of being absorbed in a vivid drama of thoughts of happy events in the past. Kelly stared vacantly at the back of the man in front of him. One hand lightly stroked the dog's head. All the men were home; all were at peace.

"... Dominum."

(This is a condensed chapter from Sgt Cross' book "Castor Oil Commando", now in preparation.)

Wingsgirl

December

M. G. M. Esther Williams



A Slight Touch of NEWFIE!

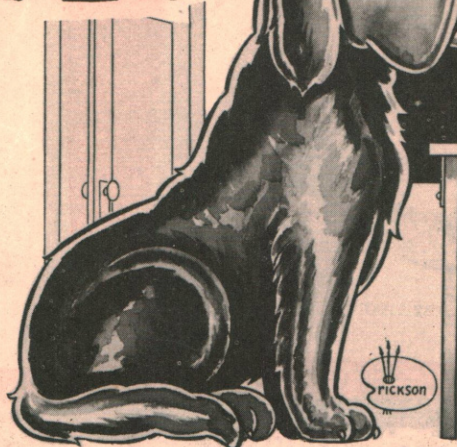
by CPL GEORGE MARTIN

IT was one of those Sundays when the whole world seemed to take on a rotogravure hue — a day fit for neither man nor beast nor SP. The previous day, the sergeant had attached his bony index finger to the end of my nose and said, "You, my little friend, are Joe tomorrow." Thus it happened that I had to arise from my Sunday morning stupor while my erstwhile fellow revelers of Saturday evening were still pounding their pillows, by numbers. I picked up my head from where it had fallen to the floor during the night, drained the old beer out of it, and replaced it on my shoulders.

Lurching gracefully to the washroom, I confronted myself in a mirror which bore the cheering message, "IF YOU TALK TOO MUCH, THIS MAN MAY DIE". This bright adage had never meant a great deal to me before, but after staring for a moment at the steam issuing from my pulsating eyeballs, I started talking, quietly at first, but gradually working up to a frenzied babble. It was no use — this man didn't die.

By shaving I managed to scrape off great portions of the mouldy green haggis that some prankster seemed to have substituted for my face while I slept. Stirred by the sight of my blood, with its exciting promise of my leaking to death, I accidentally spilled my "Eau de Gander" after-shave lotion down the drain, resulting in a slight explosion amongst the plumbing that brought up several floor boards and an annoyed person representing Works and Bricks.

On the return trip to my bunk I collided with a bed-post and incurred a volley of oaths like Mother used to make from the aroused occupant. Carefully removing his boot from the nape of my neck, I wended my way out to the mess hall. Hoping none of the patrons would notice the little men who were vigorously driving a three-foot spike through my skull, I crawled in on all fours and reached a trembling hand over the counter for



"... I had never seen a sadder face, save perhaps a certain WO2."

the daily issue of scrambled eggs and a bowl of oats, which we sardonically referred to as "the Chef's secret weapon". We always looked forward to the oats; however, because the cook had a delightful little way of hiding favors throughout, such as the odd bit of ground glass, or a few gristly chunks of old clerk general. One day he actually put a real egg in with the regular scrambled eggs, whereupon the hall was filled with the cry of "Something new has been added!"

"Want some coffee?" gabbled the much-too-bright erk behind the counter. "Ha ha, the reason it's so muddy is that it was ground this morning, ha ha!" He obviously had been saving this gem of wit for someone in a weak condition who could not strike back. Muttering curses, I trudged over to an uninhabited table, where I could be alone with my thoughts. I had just started my gruel, when there was a great shuffling of feet and Major,

the station's mammoth Newfie dog mascot paddled in past where I was sitting. It was always very comforting to see Major, while you were dining because it was only then that you could be sure that you weren't eating the old fellow. Although, even then there were always lewd remarks made about his having contributed towards the meal.

As was the custom, and for no good reason at all, I clicked my tongue and called the animal by its given name, all the time continuing my gastronomical adventure with the oatmeal.

"Well, what do you want?"

I looked up, startled, and beheld Major standing alongside the table, glaring at me with baleful eyes.

"Er," I stammered, "there must be some mistake." I edged down the bench a bit. "And besides, don't be foolish. Dog's can't talk."

"Well, I can." Major growled. "And as spokesman for Local 44 of the Brotherhood of Down-trodden Newfie Dogs, I have certain complaints to make. We Newfie dogs are tired of being pushed around. 'Man's best friend'... 'Great big, loveable fellows' Loveable, hell! We are merely smart enough to know which side our bread is buttered on, to use a rather corny expression. But I, for one, am putting my foot down on this nonsense. In other words, I am revolting!"

"Yes, you certainly are." I agreed affably, sniffing the air.

"We demand our rights" he continued. "The trouble is that nobody understands us. We... a tear trickled down his drooping jowls... 'we want to be pampered, not pushed around.'"

I must confess that I had never seen a sadder face, save perhaps that of a certain WO2 I had once known. Now Major's expression changed and a diabolical leer covered his countenance.

"Ah, but I'm biding my time. I have definite plans for your CO. Next time he refers to me as 'Old Flea Bait,' and tugs at my ears, I shall take great relish in embedding my molars in his big fat buttocks. And as for that sergeant in the mess who puts the pepper on my food for a laugh — some day soon I will amuse myself by grinding his bones to a powder in my jaws. Oh, yes," here he gave a hollow, mirthless chuckle, "I've got 'em on my list!"

Having said this, he slunk out the door and disappeared from sight, leaving me sitting there with a blank look, an expression I had picked up from my flight sergeant. I finished my breakfast which was now chilled in a melancholy sort of way, and started out. I stopped at a table near the door and questioned a lone airman who was sitting there gumming his bowl of brose.

"Did you hear Major speak to me just now?"

"Speak to you?"

"Yes, dammit, I said 'speak to me'. I had a conversation with him just now at that table over there in the corner."

This type, a very calm individual, was determined to take the whole affair rationally. He studied me for a long moment, then spoke.

"They must have spiked the coffee this morning."

There was absolutely nothing more to be said. So, I stalked out and made my way up the road towards the barracks. En route, I again encountered the Major. Stepping directly in front of the mutt and bending down to look him squarely in the left eye, I demanded:

"Did you, or did you not speak to me just now in the mess hall?"

I was immediately in front of the officers' mess at the time, and several of the officers who had witnessed my act had their dark glasses on, taking dim views of me.

"Come, now, old man... let's have a yes or no. You did speak to me, didn't you?"

I pleaded, nodding my head in the affirmative.

To which the beast made no reply, but only arched his eyebrows at me, querulously, and sauntered away.

A week later I was posted back to Canada.

JOURNEY OF THE ANSONITES

OR

With the Three Wise Men, It's Camels, 2 to 1

by SGT T. A. DUNNING

NOW it came to pass in those days that there were three airmen of the Navigator sort, and they ascended into the heavens even two miles in a wooden bird, the same being called Anson, flying swiftly until they came to the village called Charny. Now when they were come unto this place, he who is called Pilot said unto them "Give me I pray thee, a Course, that we may pass from hence even unto Ste Agathe." Then gave they unto the Pilot a Chit, whereon was written the direction and manner in which they should fly. And they did set Course.

Then the three young men betook themselves to their tasks. And one labored mightily and smote with his fist upon a key, but it profited him not. And another gazed upon a scroll whereon was writ the shape of the earth beneath, yet his heart was troubled, for though he looked oft upon the land below, it seemed passing strange — for he used that portion of the scroll which men call Megantic. And he who was 1st Nav cried out and said "Get thee into yon dome and shoot the sun, for I would fain know the altitude thereof." But he who gazed upon the map trembled and said "Master, truly we are undone for I have left the sextant in the chamber of briefing." Then the 1st Nav cried out in his wrath, saying "Thinkest thou of naught but the wenches of the kitchen?"

So they took hasty counsel, and cast lots among themselves as to where they might be. But one with evil in his heart said "Let us now take a good G.P. and cast about it the lines of position, that we may not be found wanting when the day of marking is at hand."

Then he of the Pilot sort spake, and said unto them "Let us return whence we came, for there is little gas." For he was sore afraid lest they might come even unto the land of the

people of Nip. And the 1st Nav gnashed his teeth, crying "Thou fool, verily thou hast ruined the trip." Yet took he counsel with himself, saying "In truth, I have used the 2000-foot wind."

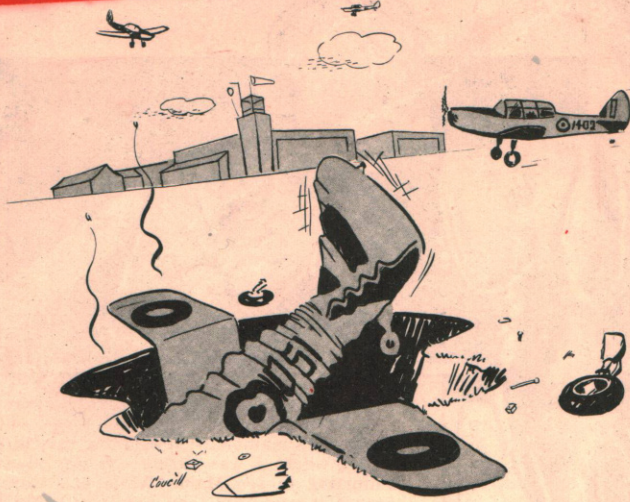
Now he who worked in wireless tempted them, saying "Behold, the daughters of Yank sing upon the air." And they hearkened unto the music of the damsels, Boogie Woogie is it called, and wondrous to hear.

But the Pilot labored upon his stick. And while the Navigators feasted, and drank wine which is called Coke, he brought them unto that place whence they had set forth. Base is its name, and passing fair to look upon, for he flew along a river so vast that even a Pilot may follow it. And as the night drew nigh, he called unto one who sitteth watchful in a high tower, saying, "Lo, I am over the Church." And it was so.

Then he who hearkened unto the set cried out in fear; for the wire of his aerial was yet out, and it had slain one who tilled the fields. Yet fortune favored them, and they came down safely upon the earth, which quaked at the violence of their descent. And after smiting another aircraft, and divers lamps which are set upon the earth, they came at last unto the place of parking. But passing unto the hall of the mess they called unto their fellow men saying "Marvellous was our flight and great our gen. For Lo, we are safely home, which is a wondrous thing." And they waxed boastful after the manner of their kind.

But when the morrow was come, the Lord of the Class seized them saying "Thou hast sinned." And he banished them unto a far city, even unto Guelph, where men are of mean estate, being but bashers of keys.

Hearken unto my words, O ye people, and beware.



"NO, YOU HAVEN'T QUITE GOT IT YET, PARKER."



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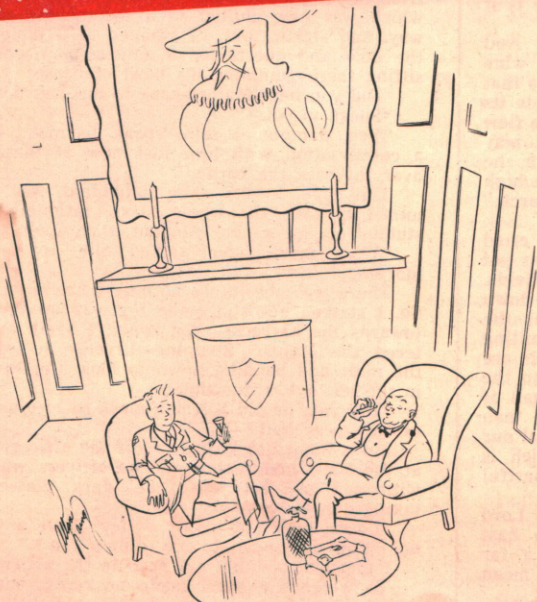
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