

Calgary, Alberta, 16 Sept. 1940 – 14 March 1945

The Training of RCAF Wireless Air Gunners During WWII

Just before midnight on the 16 December 1939, a small group of V.I.P.'s joined Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King in the signing of an "Agreement Relating to the Training of Pilots and Aircraft Crews in Canada." Mackenzie King had dragged out the negotiations for days and in fact the delegates from United Kingdom and New Zealand had already departed for home, their signatures would be added later. Our Canadian Liberal Prime Minister wanted the document signed on 17 December, which was his birthday, as certain numbers, the things he saw in clouds, calendar dates, and even the straight line on the hands of the clock held special messages to Mackenzie King. On paper the

British Commonwealth Air Training Plan official began on 29 April 1940, but in fact it would take ten to twelve months to construct new airfields, train flying instructors and ground personnel, plus find all the necessary equipment including the required RCAF aircraft. The overall administration and control of the plan remained with the Canadian government, with special advisory boards from Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, who met monthly and had a voice in the total operation. The large scale of the B.C.A.T.P. provided hundreds of new challenges to both the RCAF, civilians aviation agencies, and many branches of the Canadian government. The Department of Transport picked 231 sites across Canada for the construction of 107 major training school airfields, while other municipal airports were leased, then modified to meet the demand for new training standards. While the BCATP training programme was constantly being adjusted, the overall general pattern remained the same. From the RCAF recruiting center the new trainee was sent to a manning depot where his skills for aircrew training were determined, then he was off to the initial training school or posted to an air force station ground school for trades training. The new RCAF would contain a large number of miscellaneous schools, Air Armament, School of Cookery, Repair Depots, Equipment Depots, Radio Direction Finding, etc. The RCAF conditions of aircrew training in the BCATP were patterned after RAF training in United Kingdom, where all trainees were enlisted with lowest rank of aircraftsmen class II. At the initial training school, the prospective pilot was given pre-flight instructions and a series of tests to determine his suitability as a pilot or observer [navigator]. The British placed the pilot and observer as the elite among the aircrew and they were the only two positions which advanced to rank of leading aircraftsmen during training and upon graduation promoted to sergeants. The RCAF amended this British training and by July 1940, all wireless/air gunners attained the rank of leading aircraftsmen during training and were promoted to sergeant on graduation. Elementary flying training began in June 1940, and the first class of 34 Canadian pilots graduated 5 November 1940. Four special aircrew Wireless Schools were selected in Canada, No. 1 at Montreal, Quebec, 16 February 1940, No. 2 at Calgary, Alberta, 16 September 1940, No. 3 at Winnipeg, Manitoba, 17 February 1941, and No. 4 at Guelph, Ontario, 7 July 1941. Following is the history of No. 2 Wireless School, Calgary, Alberta, formed officially on 16 September 1940.

FORMATION OF NO. 2 WIRELESS SCHOOL

APPENDIX "A":- Establishments - Aircraft, Mechanical Transport and Personnel.

INFORMATION

1. It has now become necessary to open the second Wireless School under the Joint Air Training Plan.

INTENTION

2. It is intended to form No. 2 Wireless School at Calgary, Alberta.

EXECUTION

Formation

3. No. 2 Wireless School is to open at Calgary on September 16th, 1940.

Personnel

4. A.M.P. is requested to post, by September 2nd, 1940, personnel in accordance with attached, marked Appendix "A".

Mechanical Transport

5. A.M.E.S. is requested to provide the Motor Transport as shown in Appendix "A" as soon after September 2nd, 1940, as possible.

Aircraft

6. A.M.E.S. is requested to arrange for aircraft to be delivered 50 per cent by the 1st of November, 1940, and 50 per cent by 1st December or as soon thereafter as the Unit is ready to receive them. All necessary modifications should be carried out before delivery of Aircraft.

ADMINISTRATION

Command

7. An Officer will shortly be appointed to command No. 2 Wireless School which will be under No. 4 Training Command for all purposes.

Accommodation

8. No. 2 Wireless School will be accommodated in the Institute of Technology, Calgary.

Secret Organization Order No. 43, dated 14 August 1940, with the first RCAF officers arriving in Calgary on 22 August. The Staff and students of the Institute of Technology had moved to the Stampede Grounds and training continued under the Calgary Stampede Grandstand Bleachers.



This is the Wireless Student Airmen's [wet] 1st Canteen constructed on the west side of the main campus admin. building. This building would be moved and extended to double size, with a second building constructed [Dry] canteen operated by the YMCA of Calgary. SAIT Archives.

DAILY DIARY

SECRET

STATION OR UNIT No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF, Calgary, Alberta

DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS
August 22	The Board of Officers, S/L A.H.K. Russell, F/Lt. G.E. McCormick and F/O L.H. Pilling arrived to take over the buildings. The other members of this Board of Officers Mr. H.G. Handelson was already on the station.
23	F/Lt. S.C. Black reported.
30	P/O A.W. Owen reported.
September 1	Nil
2	F/O A. Strugnell reported. NCO's and Airmen for the instructional staff reported. Fifty-eight.
3	Fourteen Airmen reported.
4	Nil
5	P/O M.P. Blackmore and three airmen reported.
6	Group Captain Stevenson arrived and made a tour of inspection of the station in company with S/L A.H.K. Russell. One NCO and one Airman reported.
7	One NCO reported.
8	Nil
9	Six Airmen reported.
10	Flt/Sgt. Kirkham and twenty-one Airmen participated in a Bond Selling Parade. One NCO reported.
11	F/O G.M.H. Brandon, F/O A.W. Roberts, F/O J.C. Steele, F/O C.W.K. Morrison, P/O A.E. Henderson, P/O H.A. Milne, P/O S.G. Cooper reported. One NCO reported.
12	S/L J.W. Lamb reported. F/Lt. E.H. Compton reported for Temporary Duty.
13	F/O G.W. Richardson, F/O G.H.L. Norman, F/O B.C. McCallum and F/O F.L. Cannon reported.
14	Nil
15	Nil
16	One hundred and seventy-seven WIO's reported and were paraded from the C.M.R. Station under F/O G.M.H. Brandon, ceremony....etc...band, Brig. Connolly The entire station went on service rations. Acting Mayor.

The first 177 RCAF Wireless Operator trainees arrived at Calgary on 16 September 1940, and this formation training was conducted totally in the classroom, as no flying squadron or trainer aircraft had been assigned. All personnel trained under the BCATP in 1940 were Canadians, except for thirty-seven Australian student pilots, who graduated Course No. 6 at No. 2 SFTS, Ottawa on 22 November 1940.

Many historians credit this group as the first Australians to arrive in Canada when their ship docked in Vancouver on 27 September 1940. They were in fact the first Australian student pilots to arrive in Canada and their official greeting made all the headlines in 1940.



RCAF promotional image of the first 40 Australian student pilots to arrived in Canada, 2 October 1940, PL1831. Making snow balls for the first time was possibly their last bit of fun before training and then fighting the air wars over Europe. Thirty-seven of these Australian students graduated and received their wings in Canada on 22 November, then departed Halifax for United Kingdom on 14 December 1940.

The BCATP would train 9,607 Australians and 7,002 New Zealand students in Canada during World War Two, with a large majority of Wireless Air Gunnery training taking place at No. 2 W.S. in Calgary, Alberta. Australian Wireless Air gunners trained in Canada reached 2,875, followed closely by 2,122 from New Zealand. Today hundreds of photo albums in New Zealand and Australia contain our Canadian RCAF Calgary, Alberta, forgotten past preserved in thousands of photos. On 26 September 1940, 71 Royal Australia Air Force and 70 Royal New Zealand Air Force Wireless Air Gunners stepped off a CPR train from Vancouver and marched three miles north to their new home at the Institute of Technology located on a ridge north of the city. This mixed group became the vanguard of hundreds of R.A.A.F. and R.N.Z.A.F. Wireless Air Gunner students to be trained at Calgary, Alberta. On 22 November 1940, 173 New Zealand and Australian W.A.G. students arrived by train, followed by 143 more students on 24 December 1940.

This SAIT image records a group of Wireless Air Gunners at the old CNR train station [St. Mary's Parish Hall, 141-18th Avenue, S.W. which survives today] in downtown Calgary. They arrived in groups of 70 to 140 students and after forming up, marched uphill three miles to their new training school.





After the long up-hill march from the Calgary train station, the new entry course was greeted by the main gate [south entrance] to No. 2 Wireless School. [Images Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Archives – Karly Sawatzky, BA, Archivist]



The new constructed RCAF buildings, wet [left] and dry [right] YMCA canteens front, Drill/Sports Hall behind, and Link Trainer/firing range far left. This image was taken looking directly north some date after March 1942. Home Sweet Home for the next twenty-eight weeks. SAIT Archives.

The first official [Red Cross] parade occurred on 29 October 1940, marching on the downtown streets of Calgary, comprising five squadron flights from No. 2 Wireless School containing 3,000 men, in which two flights [over 100] were from Australian and New Zealand.

29 - 10 - 40	Red Cross Parade under Squadron Leader J. S. Williams -- Two Royal Canadian Air Force Wireless Air Gunner Flights, one Royal Canadian Air Force Wireless Operator (Ground) Flight, one Royal New Zealand Air Force Wireless Air Gunner Flight, one Royal Australian Air Force Wireless Air Gunner Flight joined the other militia units for a 3000 strong parade through Calgary.
30 - 10 - 40	Nil.
31 - 10 - 40	Commanding Officer Parade held on new parade ground with all Station Personnel parading.

L. H. Pilling Jls
 (L.H. Pilling) Flying Officer,
 for C.O. No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF,
 Calgary, Alberta.

(UNIT OR FORMATION) # 2 Wireless School, Calgary

DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS	REFER VI APPEN
16-11-40		Major Bailly of Dental Corps.	
17-11-40		S/L T.O. McFarlane from Air Force Hdqrs. visited the station.	
18-11-40		Nil	
19-11-40		T/PO Mackie, G. B. promoted to T/Flying Officer T/O Henderson, A. E. and T/O Roberts, A.W. posted to # 4 T.C. Regina. T/O Lasalle, J. H. reported for duty.	
20-11-40		Commanding Officer's Parade held on station.	
21-11-40		T/Lt. Osborne, H.O. visited the station.	
22-11-40		Graduation of first class of W.O.O.'s held at Station Drill Square. Air Vice Marshal Goble, S.J., Australian Liaison Officer, took the general salute after which the graduating class was marched back where W/O Hughes, C.B. took the salute and inspected the class. Two hundred and fifty guests attended after which a short reception in the Officers' Mess was held. (see guest list) (Arrival of aircraft) First Norseman for training purposes arrived at Carrie Airport, Calgary. (#2464) 173 Australians and New Zealand airmen reported for training.	

P.H.P

The first course was laid out for RCAF Wireless Operators Gunners [Ground] which lasted eight weeks and these students never left the classroom or flew in any aircraft. Most of these Canadians completed training in U.K. and were absorbed into RAF Bomber squadrons overseas, where a high percentage were killed flying early active operations.

This first class of 185 RCAF Wireless Operators [Ground] graduated on 22 November 1940, the very same date the first Norseman #2464 arrived at No. 3 Service Flying Training School, which had just opened 28 October 1940. This BCATP No. 3 SFTS, RCAF, was called Currie Barracks Airport, which is today the campus of the University of Mount Royal, Calgary, Alberta. On 25 November 1940, an entry class of 185 Wireless [Ground] students boarded a train for Halifax on their overseas draft. They had never trained in any aircraft or received any gunnery training until they arrived in United Kingdom. On 4 December 1940, F/O G.V. Richardson RCAF, escorted 48 New Zealand and Australian trainees to No. 1 Wireless School in Montreal, Quebec, where they could finish their aircraft training. Calgary had no training aircraft or flying squadron. The first training aircraft began arriving from No. 1 Wireless School, Montreal in late November, with more Norseman and Fairchild training aircraft arriving at No. 2 SFTS Calgary on 6

January 1941, allowing the Wireless School Flying Squadron to be officially formed. The first W.A.G. student aircraft training began on 17 March 1941, using old and new Norseman trainers, class #8Q containing 43 trainees.

Norseman #2464 was taken on charge by the RCAF on 15 November 40, and became the first to arrive at No. 2 W.S. Calgary on 22 November 1940, followed by #2461, #2462, #2463, and #2465 on 24 December 1941. Norseman #2466 and #693 arrived 6 January 1941, followed by #2467 on 7 January and #698 on 17 January 41. Norseman #680 arrived on 24 March 1941, and the school now had ten trainers on strength. These aircraft were all ferried from No. 1 Wireless School located at Montreal, Quebec.



In February 1943, reporter Lawrence Earl interviewed Robert Noorduyn at his plant in Montreal, Quebec, and sections of this interview are now contained in the following history.



Robert Bernard Cornelius Noorduyn was born at Nijmegen, Holland, in 1893, and after receiving his formal education in his homeland, he learned of the Wright brothers' experiments and the history of flight coming from Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. He began experimenting with model airplanes and attended an engineering college in Germany in 1912, where he soon saw the coming world war, and got out of the country before he could complete his course. Noorduyn's mother was born in England, a distant relative of Winston Churchill, who first schooled her son in English, and now this nineteen-year-old decided to emigrate to United Kingdom. He fully understood that the answer to many aviation problems could be ironed out by building, flying, and studying tiny model aircraft in flight. At the Olympia Airplane Show of 1912, he ran into another Fellow-Dutchman Anthony Fokker, whose aviation career would parallel that of Noorduyn's in many ways. In 1913, he entered and won first prize in a British model airplane contest, topping a lad named Dick Fairey, who later became Sir Richard Fairey a most famous aircraft manufacturer of British aircraft. One year later he was employed by Sir W. G. Armstrong Whitworth and the British Aerial Transport Company Ltd, where he became associated with the design of commercial aircraft. His first airplane flight took place at Hendon, in a Caudron which was powered by a 35 horsepower engine, just enough to keep the flimsy craft from falling from the sky. In 1920, he learned to fly and soon had earned two-hundred hours of flight in ten different aircraft. In the fall of 1920, he was approached by friend "Tony" Fokker and ask if he would like to come to the United States to form a branch of the Fokker aircraft organization. "As a matter of fact, Noorduyn admits, these are the reasons he bothered to ask me in the first place. I'd been working for the Allies in WWI and he's been working for the [German] enemy. I was acceptable and he wasn't. Not only that, but I had learned English before I learned Dutch, because of my mother, and Fokker hardly spoke a word of English." For eight years, he ran the American Fokker company known as "Atlantic Aircraft Corporation" since the name Fokker [associated with German aircraft] was not well liked in the United States. This is where Noorduyn obtained his first aircraft design experience with the development of the trimotor transport aircraft, which was his brain-child. This gave American commercial aviation its first push in commercial aviation and Henry Ford, quick to see the new trend, developed a similar aircraft of his own. Historians today forget about Dutch/Canadian Bob Noorduyn.

In 1929, a rift cropped up between the two flying Dutchmen and Noorduyn left the Fokker Company, which folded just eight months later. In a few weeks, Noorduyn was offered the job of assistant manager of Bellanca Aircraft Corp. and three years later moved to Pitcairn Aircraft Inc.

"In 1933, he had a shot at designing auto-gyros for Pitcairn, but all the while he off-and-on kept thinking of air transportation in Canada. It was almost a virgin field and one filled with possibilities, he was sure. Noorduyn liked to tackle new adventures, so in 1934, he rented an office on the top floor of the Canada Cement Building in Montreal, Quebec. He then sat down at his desk and tried to figure out what kind of plane Canada needed most of all. He soon realized it would be no simple job to work out a type to fit the huge exacting Canadian conditions. There were the troubles of geography, the wild, often mountainous, almost always forest and lake country. Then came the problem of the intensely cold winter climate. He decided – his aircraft would have to be as tough as a rhino, plus adaptable as a duck."

The actual work on the aircraft began in the spring of 1935, at Carterville, Quebec, with forty men working on the new design. The first flight took place on 14 November 1935. The first Norseman Mk. I CF-AYO was delivered to Dominion Skyways Limited, Rouyn, Quebec, on 18 January 1936. The next three aircraft were constructed as Mk. IIs [CF-AZA, CFR-AZE, and CFAZS] all powered by a 420 h.p. Wright Whirlwind R-975-E3 engine. It now became uncomfortably clear that the new bush plane was under powered and a new engine must be found or the company would collapse. Fortunately, the new American powerful 550 h.p. Pratt and Whitney engine [Wasp SC1] was found and purchased from the U.S. company and the Noorduyn company survived. In 1937, Noorduyn offered the new plane to the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the answer was – "Sorry" said the brass hats, "The Norseman just isn't a military type aircraft."

[Noorduyn words in 1943] Noorduyn snapped back – “Not in the same way bombers and fighters are military types. But, every air force, if there’s a war, will need plenty of transport planes for behind-the-lines duty.” At the very same 1937 meeting, Noorduyn explained to the Canadian government officials that the RAF in England and the RCAF in Canada, were minus advanced training aircraft. He suggested that his company in Montreal could build advanced RCAF trainers and the answer was “No”, “we don’t need any today, thank you.” Noorduyn in 1943 – [I was resigned at their lack of political and aviation foresight and went ahead obtaining a license from United States North American to construct the Harvard trainer in Montreal. In January 1940, a contract to build the North American Harvard was awarded, and Noorduyn Aviation had 142 employees, with a monthly payroll of \$17,000. By December 1942, Noorduyn Aviation had 8,710 employees and a monthly payroll of \$1,258,198].

On 18 August 1938, the 16th constructed Norseman CF-MPE was delivered to the RCMP and this was followed by the first order of eight RCAF aircraft, the first four as bomber trainers. The full detailed history of the Norseman can be found on a number of websites and a few very good publications.

I now wish to give a brief overall history of the eighteen Norseman which were taken on strength No. 2 Wireless School Calgary, and flew at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, during WWII.

19	Mk. IV	✕	693	RCAF 1.4.40, Sub.Regist. CF-QAA
20	Mk. IV		678	" 25.5.38
21	Mk. IVW	✕	679	" 27.6.38, Sub.Regist. CF-SAH
22	Mk. IVW		680	" 30.6.38, " " CF-FJB
23	Mk. IV		681	" 23.7.38, " " CF-CRD
24	"		691	" 23.1.40, " " CF-EJB
25	"		692	" 19.2.40, " " CF-CRC
26	"		698	" 22.5.40, " " CF-CRE
27	"	CF-MPF		R.C.M.P. 28.6.40
28	"		2455	RCAF 12.8.40

The 19th constructed Norseman RCAF #693 – delivered to Hudson Bay Air Transport, Flin Flon, Manitoba, flew until February 1939. Taken over by RCAF 1 April 1940, operated at No. 1 Wireless School, Montreal, until January 1941. Taken On Strength No. 2 W.S. Calgary – 7 January 1941, Wireless Trainer, off strength 22 May 1941. Taken on strength at No. 8 Bombing and Gunnery School, Lethbridge, Alberta, flew until December 1944. Taken Off Strength by RCAF on 14 February 1946. It was still registered and flying in 2004 as CF-BFT.

The 21st constructed #679 – taken on strength RCAF 27 June 1938, RCAF MIKAN #3545910 photo.



Norseman

#679 taken at RCAF Station Trenton, Ontario, 27 June 1938, where she flew on floats until January 1941. Delivered from No. 1 Wireless School Montreal, assigned to Calgary on 6 January 1941. Off strength Calgary on 29 November 1943, delivered to No. 3 Wireless School Winnipeg, flew until April 1945. Sold 31 October 1945, postwar CF-SAH.

The 22nd constructed RCAF #680 – taken on strength RCAF 30 June 1938, assigned to No. 2 W.S. Calgary – 24 March 1941. Re-assigned to RCAF [Experimental Station] Suffield, Alberta, in early November 1943, based at R.A.F. No. 34 SFTS at Medicine Hat, Alberta. The RCAF were conducting secret spraying of “Mustard Gas” from 500 to 900 feet off the ground and Norseman #680 carried the five-man decontamination party. They flew to every experimental test which involved Canadian Army troops wearing gas masks. You can still find evidence that toxic accidents did occur at Suffield, recorded in Daily Diary. She flew three years at Suffield, and earned the nose art name “Memphis Belle” for all her dangerous toxic test flying. Flown to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, 27 October 1944, placed into storage. Taken Off Charge RCAF on 8 February 1947, sold and flew as CF-FJB.

Today RCAF Suffield is still being used as a British Army [leased] training ground, and live-firing is taking place day and night.



The 26th constructed RCAF #698 – Taken On Strength RCAF – 22 May 1940, taken on strength Calgary – 17 January 1941. Cat. "B" accident 8 March 1941, engine caught fire. This was the longest serving Norseman aircraft taken on strength at No. 2 W.S. Calgary, where she served for 51 months.



Norseman #698 landed at [No. 35 SFTS] TCA hangar, North Calgary, on 8 March 1941. Twenty minutes after landing the aircraft engine burst into flames, burning the complete port wing and fuselage skin. Disassembled and returned by truck to No. 10 Repair Depot on 17 March 1941.



Repaired, reskinned, and repainted #698 returned to No. 2 W.S. Flying Squadron on 16 June 1942, looking like a new Norseman. This photo with W.A.G. trainee LAC Clegg was possibly taken in early February 1945, and 698 was still at Shepard on 30 March 1945. [51 months] These wireless school wing red stripe markings were possibly used on all Shepard Norseman aircraft. Taken Off Strength RCAF 1 March 1946.

In total fourteen new Mk. IVW [Wireless] Norseman were taken on strength [recorded Daily Diary] at No. 2 W.S. Calgary, Alberta, production number #30, #34 to #41, [eight] followed by #50, #64, #65, #69, and #71.

Norseman RCAF #2457, Taken On Strength RCAF – 25 September 1940, assigned No. 3 Training Command, had Category “C” accident St. Hubert, Quebec, 6 June 1941. Repaired and assigned No. 4 Training Command 20 February 1943. Major overhaul at No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, 28 September 1943. Assigned and taken on strength No. 2 W.S. on 31 December 1943, flown at RCAF Shepard until she overshot landing 11 April 1944. Six wireless students were injured in this accident, and the propeller began to throw oil, forced landing at Lethbridge, Alberta. Repaired and assigned to North West Air Command 7 July 1944. In Reserve Storage on 9 December 1946, shipped to Norway on 5 August 1953, became R-AS. Fate unknown.

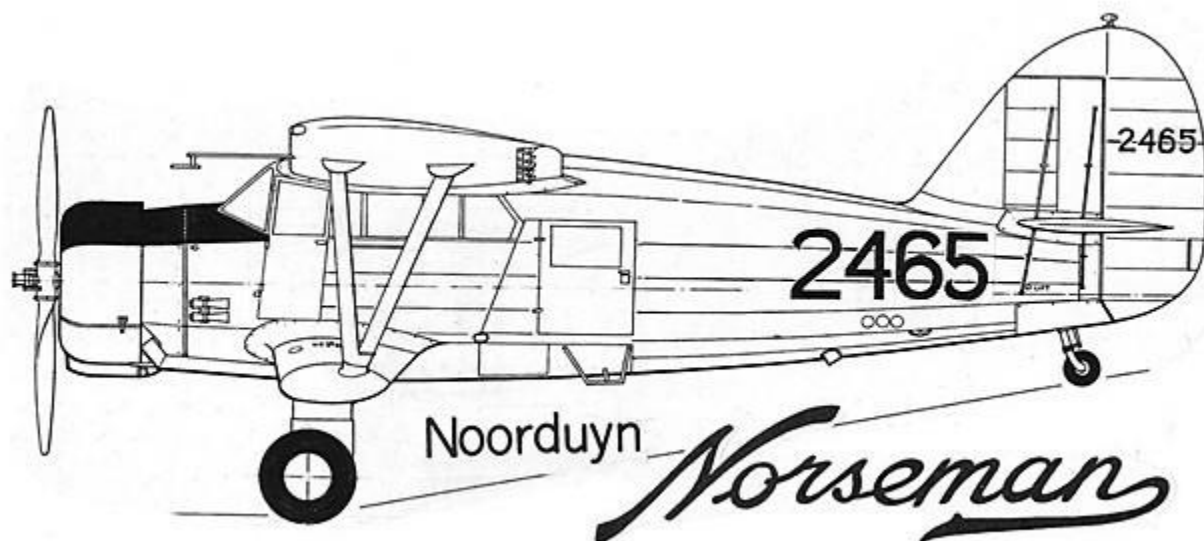
Norseman RCAF #2461, T.O.S. RCAF 26 October 1940, transferred to No. 4 Training Command 18 December 1940. Taken On Strength Calgary 6 January 1941 – to Winnipeg, No. 3 W.S. on 7 May 1941. Category “C” accident at No. 34 E.F.T.S. Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, 18 April 1942. Category “A” accident 24 May 1943, at No. 2 W.S. Calgary. 23 July 1943, Taken Off Strength. reduced to spare parts.

Norseman RCAF #2462, Taken On Strength RCAF – 26 October 1940, Taken On Strength at Calgary, 6 January 1941. Category “C” accident at Calgary on 28 July 1941. Overhauled at No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, 12 July 1943 and 16 November 1944. Storage 1 August 1945, sold and damaged in take-off Beaver Lake, Saskatchewan, 17 March 1947. While awaiting repairs, was lost in hangar fire 2 August 1947.

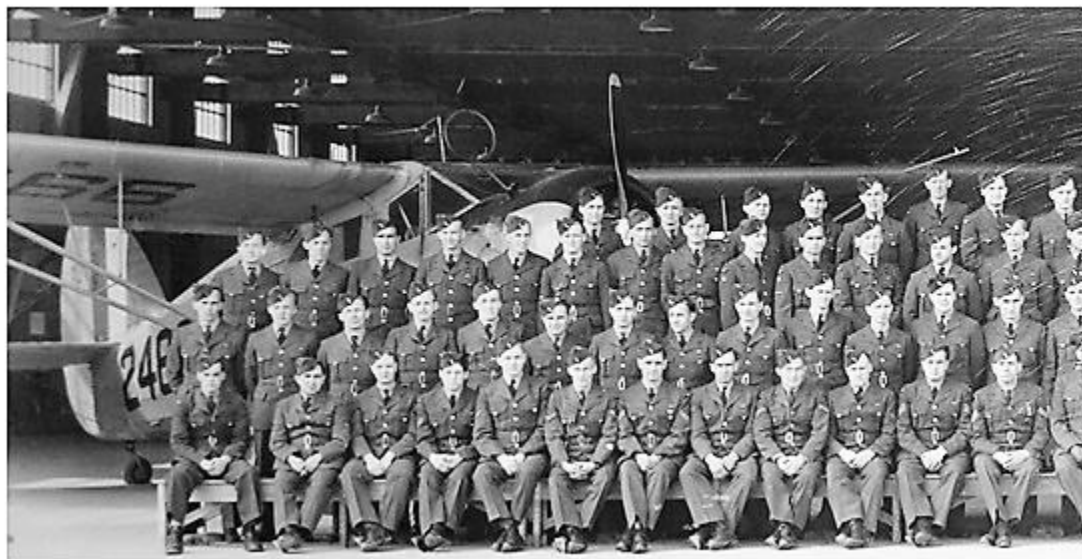
Norseman RCAF #2463, Taken On Strength RCAF – 7 November 1940, Taken On Strength at Calgary, 6 January 1941. Category C-1 accident on 11 November 1941, engine and nose section burnt, F/O J.M. Limpp. Category “B” accident Calgary, 29 April 1942. Overhauled at Edmonton 23 March to 17 June 1943. Returned to No. 2 W.S. Calgary on 26 January 1944. Assigned to No. 2 Bombing and Gunnery School, Mossbank, Saskatchewan. Off Strength RCAF 16 April 1945.

Norseman RCAF #2464, Taken On Strength RCAF – 15 November 1940, first Norseman aircraft delivered to No. 2 W.S. Calgary, Alberta, on 22 November 1940. Category “B” accident on 23 July 1941, repaired on 24 January 1942 and placed into storage 7 May 1942. Never flew at Calgary again, mostly in repair or storage until 1 March 1946. Registered at Sioux Lookout 29 August 1962, crashed and burned 4 January 1963.

Norseman RCAF #2465, Taken On Strength – RCAF 13 December 1940, assigned to No. 4 Training Command, Taken On Strength – Calgary 6 January 1941. Category “B” accident at Calgary on 9 June 1942, when pilot F/O C.H.H. Moss ground looped, port leg collapsed and major damage to port wing. Engine back fired, causing fire at Calgary 16 February 1943, aircraft destroyed [Cat. “A”] by ground fire. Taken off strength by RCAF – 9 April 1943, spare parts to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary.



Norseman RCAF #2466, T.O.S. RCAF 12 December 1940, Taken On Strength Calgary 6 January 1941. Norseman appears in Wireless graduation photo taken at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, in 1944, class number unknown. [SAIT Archives photo] Taken Off Strength at No. 2 W.S. Calgary on 30 May 1941, assigned to No. 2 Training Command – 11 June 1941. Returned to No. 2 W.S. Calgary on 5 November 1942, until December 1944. Flown to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, and modified with a D.D.T. tank for test spraying grasshoppers and gophers at her new posting in southern Alberta.



Norseman 2466 was next assigned to RCAF Experimental Station Suffield, Alberta, Taken On Strength – 18 January 1946, replacing old Norseman #680. Norseman 2466 received the nickname "Chuff Box." On the 23 May 1946, she was test spraying gophers at Suffield when her engine gave out, and the gophers got their revenge.

Daily Diary for RCAF Station [Experimental] Suffield, Alberta, 23 May 1946.

23 May/46 23:59

Weather - clear to partly cloudy. CAN J3995 S/L J.A. Spence DFC flew Anson 526 on an area recon trip this morning. Beech 1397 piloted by J36573 F/O D.R. MacKay made a return trip to Calgary. Officer's Mess Dinner held tonight. CAN J3995 S/L J.A. Spence DFC and CAN J15479 F/L V.J.J. Faurot DFC were wearing their luck charms early this evening shortly after completing a spray trial for gopher control. The trial was a huge success and the nose of the "Chuff Box" was pointed homeward after climbing a few hundred feet when suddenly the engine stopped. By using all possible tricks gained by hours of flying the two pilots managed to get the engine to catch once more but their joy was short lived as it once more out and it was found necessary to make an emergency landing in rough ground with a fixed under carriage aircraft. A good landing was made but owing to the rough terrain the port aileron leg snapped causing the aircraft finally to turn over on its back. Fortunately the engine fell away from the fuselage and also there was not any fire. The crew CAN J3995 S/L J.A. Spence DFC, CAN J15479 F/L V.J.J. Faurot DFC and D26243 WO1 Owen, F.E. miraculously escaped with minor cuts and bruises plus a good shaking up. The old "Chuff Box" seems to be a complete write-off due to the accident and the toxic load it was carrying. The crew was picked up by an Army vehicle and brought back to camp where they were treated by the Medical Officer on Duty.



Image in RCAF Experimental Station Suffield, Alberta, Daily Diary, 23 May 1946. Taken Off Strength by RCAF on 17 June 1946, used for spare parts.

Norseman RCAF #2467, Taken On Strength RCAF – 20 December 1940, Taken On Strength Calgary – 7 January 1941. Major overhaul at No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, 14 January to 19 April 1943. Category "B" accident 15 October 1943, sent to Edmonton for repairs, returned to Calgary 8 January 1944. Placed into storage 12 April 1945, sold Waite Fisheries, Big River, Saskatchewan 28 March 1946, registered as CF-DFF. Registered to Northern Air Lines, Big River, Saskatchewan 15 June 1949, crashed on take-off Cowan lake, Saskatchewan, 7 April 1951.



Photo taken at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, 1943-44, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Archives, archivist Karly Sawatzky BA.

Norseman RCAF #2491, Taken On Strength RCAF – 21 June 1941, flew at No. 2 Bombing and Gunnery School, Mossbank, Saskatchewan, until Category “B” accident on 15 October 1941. Repaired at Edmonton, Alberta, and assigned to No. 4 Training Command on 21 January 1943. Assigned to No. 2 Wireless School, Taken On Strength Calgary – 17 February 1944. Flown at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, until late March 1945, then storage at No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, Alberta. Placed into Reserve Storage 1 May 1947, then sent to North West Air Command July 1947. Struck Off Strength 23 April 1953, transferred to Royal Norwegian Air Force as R-AV. Today this Norseman survives in Norway painted in Royal Norwegian Air Force colors. Flying photo SAIT Archives – Karly Sawatzky, BA



Norseman RCAF #2492, Taken On Strength RCAF – 1 July 1941, assigned No. 2 Bombing and Gunnery School. Mossbank, Saskatchewan. On 23 July 1943, went for a major overhaul and returned to No. 4 Training Command, assigned to No. 2 W.S. Calgary, Alberta, 13 December 1943. Flew at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, for almost one full year, transferred to No. 2 Air Command on 1 December 1944. Reserve Storage 12 April 1945, reassigned North West Air Command, RCAF Station Edmonton, Alberta, 5 April 1950, off strength 31 July 1952. Norseman RCAF #3524, Taken On Strength RCAF – 25 October 1941, assigned RCAF Station Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Category “B” accident on 9 January 1943, shipped to Edmonton, Alberta, for repairs. Assigned to No. 2 W.S. Calgary, on 17 February 1944, along with Norseman #2491. Flew at RCAF Shepard until late March 1945, to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary. Off strength RCAF – 5 June 1953, transferred to Royal Norwegian Air Force as R-AW.

Norseman RCAF #3527, Taken On Strength RCAF – 17 December 1941. Assigned to RCAF Station Rockcliffe, Ontario, where it had a Category “B” accident on 29 May 1942. Shipped to Edmonton, Alberta, for repairs. Appears on No. 2 W.S. Flying Squadron RCAF Shepard Daily Diary for month of November 1944 until 30 March 1945.



SAIT Archives – Karly Sawatzky, BA

Norseman #3527 appears in this Wireless Air Gunners graduation photo at RCAF Shepard hangar, November 1944. Off strength RCAF Shepard 30 March 1945, flown to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, Alberta. Taken Off Strength RCAF – 13 April 1947. On 31 March 1945, all ten Norseman trainers were gone from RCAF Shepard, returned to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary.



C/N	MODEL	REGIST.	DELIVERED TO/NOTES
29	Mk. IV	2456	RCAF 13.9.40, Sub.Regist. CF-BTC
30	Mk. IVW	2457	" 25.9.40, " " R.Nor.A.F. R-AS 31 DEC. 43 - 11 APR. 1944.
31	Mk. IV	2458	" 2.10.40, " " CF-DFU
32	Mk. IVW	2459	" 9.10.40, " " CF-PAA
33	"	2460	" 15.10.40
34	"	2461	" 26.10.40 CALGARY - 6 JAN. 41 - 7 MAY 41 To WINNIPEG
35	Mk. IV	2462	" 26.10.40, Sub.Regist. CF-SAK CALGARY - 6 JAN 41.
36	Mk. IVW	2463	" 7.11.40 CALGARY - 6 JAN 41
37	"	2464	" 15.11.40, Sub.Regist. CF-CRF CALGARY - 22 NOV 1940
38	Mk. IV	2465	" 13.12.40 CALGARY - 6 JAN 41
39	"	2466	" 12.12.40 CALGARY 6 JAN. 41 - 30 MAY 41
40	Mk. IVW	2467	" 20.12.40, Sub.Regist. CF-DFP CALGARY 7 JAN 41
41	"	2468	" 7.1.41, " " CF-MAL
42	Mk. IV	2469	" 7.1.41, " " CF-DFV
43	"	2470	" 12.2.41
44	Mk. IVW	2471	" 18.2.41, Sub.Regist. R.Nor.AF R-AL
45	"	2472	" 17.2.41, " " CF-SAO
46	"	2473	" 17.2.41, " " CF-PFB
47	Mk. IV	2474	" 21.2.41, " " R.Nor.AF R-AT
48	Mk. IVW	2475	" 27.2.41, " " R.Nor.AF R-AM
49	"	2476	" 25.3.41
50	Mk. IV	2477	" 25.3.41, Sub.Regist. CF-PAB #2477 and #2468 Transferred from No. 3 W.S. Winnipeg To No. 2 W.S. Calgary 22 December 1944 Until end of March 1945.
51	"	2478	" 25.3.41
52	"	2479	" 2.5.41
53	"	2480	" 2.5.41, Sub.Regist. CF-CRS
54	"	2481	" 2.5.41
55	Mk. IVW	2482	" 2.5.41, Sub.Regist. RCAF #A596 & CF-JIN
56	Mk. IV	2483	" 2.5.41
57	Mk. IVW	2484	" 3.5.41, Sub.Regist. CF-DTL
58	"	2485	" 3.5.41
59	Mk. IV	2486	" 7.5.41, Sub.Regist. R.Nor.AF R-AN
60	Mk. IVW	2487	" 7.5.41 " " R.Nor.AF R-AU
61	"	2488	" 7.5.41 " " CF-GHH
62	"	2489	" 19.5.41
63	"	2490	" 21.6.41
64	"	2491	" 21.6.41, Sub.Regist. R.Nor.AF R-AV No. 2 W.S. CALGARY From EDMONTON
65	"	2492	" 1.7.41 CALGARY - 13 DEC. 1943 17 FEB. 1944.
66	"	3522	" 3.9.41
67	"	3523	" 25.10.41, Sub.Regist. R.Nor.AF R-AO
68	"	3525	" 21.11.41, " " CF-FLA
69	Mk. IVW	3524	" 25.10.41, " " R.Nor.AF R-AW CALGARY 17 FEB 44
70	"	3526	" 17.12.41 From EDMONTON
71	Mk. IV	3527	" 17.12.41 Nov. 44.
72	"	3528	" 17.12.41
73	"	3529	" 29.12.41
74	"	3530	" 6.1.42, Sub.Regist. CF-FUU
75	"	3531	" 8.1.42
76	YC-64	42-5044	USAAF (Ex RCAF 3532)
77	"	42-5045	" " 3533
78	"	42-5046	" " 3534, now in Smithsonian Collection) ✓ SAW 11

In total eighteen Noorduyn trainers were taken on strength and flew at No. 2 W.S. Flying Squadron RCAF Shepard, Alberta. #2477 and #2468 were transferred from Winnipeg, 22 December 1944, used for air experience training three months.

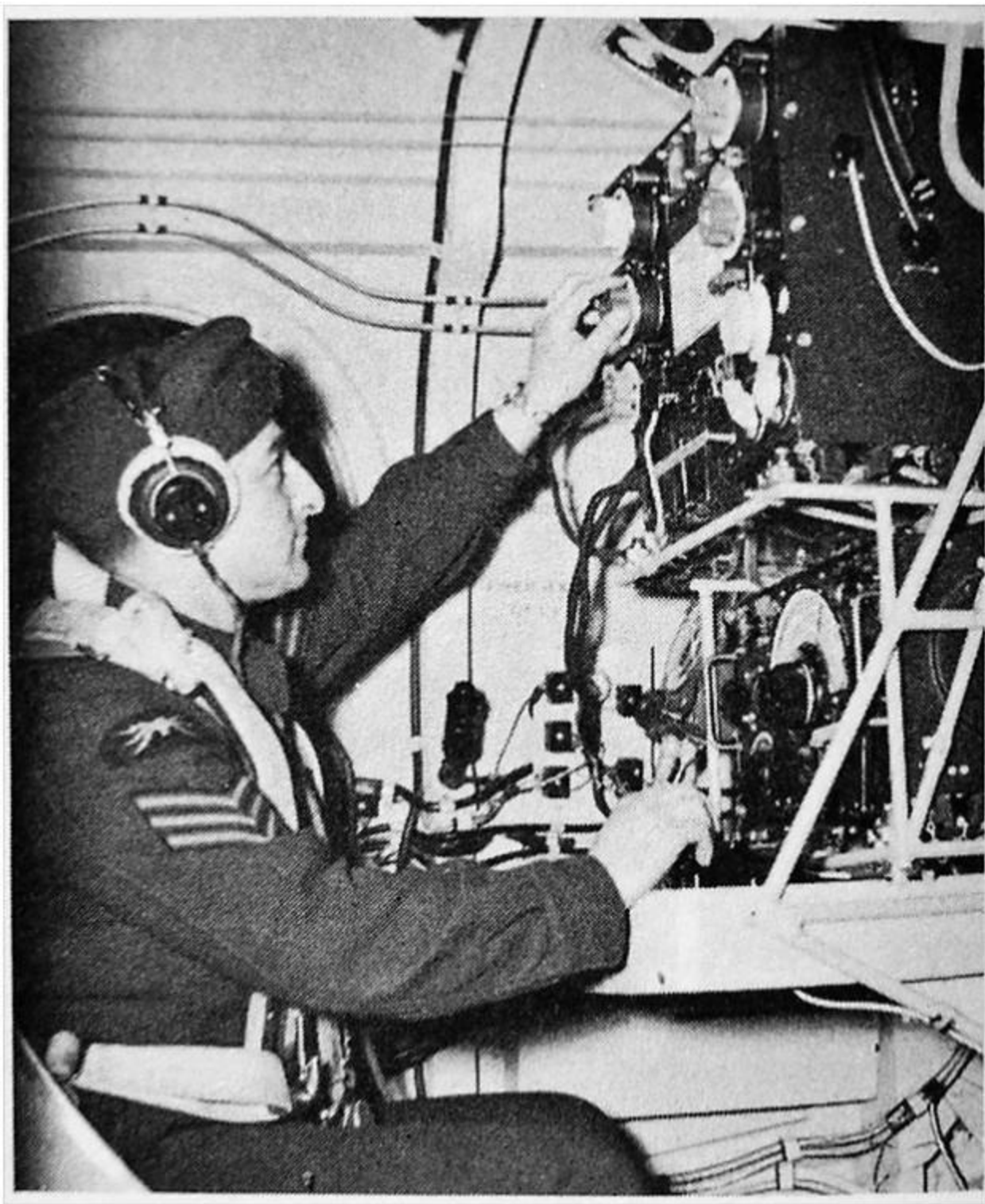
The service that never sleeps

All over the world, all round the clock, Marconi apparatus guides the coming and going of ships at sea and planes in transit. It's always on duty. First in the field for nearly 50 years—with the best team available for every new problem of wireless communications—Marconi's are looking ahead to still greater developments in post-war practice.

Marconi

MARCONI'S WIRELESS TELEGRAPH COMPANY LTD.
 THE MARCONI INTERNATIONAL MARINE COMMUNICATION COMPANY LTD.
 ELECTRA HOUSE, VICTORIA EMBANKMENT, LONDON, W.C.2

The Daily Diary records in August 1944, the Norseman radio installations were T1082/R1083, which were outdated and not used for wireless training. The Norseman was mainly used for navigation training and giving six students their first 'air experience' which lasted one-hour and was to determine if any became air-sick. This twist and turn flight test weeded out the weak stomachs [failure] before any classroom training began. This saved RCAF training time and money.



An RCAF Wireless Air Gunner flying instructor and his Marconi radio receiver and transmitter. These two radios were mounted side by side in the front of the rear cockpit in the DH 82C-4 Menasco Mk. II Tiger Moth aircraft.



On 6 January 1941, three additional obsolete Canadian built Fairchild RCAF FC-71 aircraft arrived at Calgary from Montreal. In 1929, American Fairchild [logo above] formed Canadian Fairchild Aircraft Ltd. at Longueuil, Quebec, where a more rugged style bush plane was constructed. In 1930, the RCAF ordered thirty-four of these FC-71 aircraft, and a few were operated by the air force until 1946. The No. 2 W.S. Daily Diary makes no mention of these aircraft ever being fitted with wireless equipment, however it is possible the FC-71 was part of the early training at Calgary, Alberta. Fairchild FC-71 serial 637, 643, and 646 were taken on charge 6 January 1941, and shown above is RCAF image of #643. The last and fourth Fairchild #640 was taken on charge at Calgary on 8 January 1941. The career of these four obsolete aircraft was very short [longest five months] at Calgary. Fairchild #637 was taken on charge by RCAF 5 April 1930, and off charge at Calgary, 28 April 1941. #643 on charge RCAF 12 April 1930, off charge Calgary, 5 May 1941. #646 on charge RCAF 25 June 1931, off charge Calgary 28 April 1941. #640 on charge RCAF 14 March 1930, off charge at Calgary, early February 1941. All four were sold to civilian airlines by October 1941, and remained flying in Canada for a number of years.



One of the FC-71 Fairchild aircraft at No. 2 W.S. Calgary, airmen unknown. This was possibly #643, the last to be taken off charge at Calgary on 5 May 1941.

DAILY DIARY

OF

(UNIT OR FORMATION) Flying Squadron, No. 2 Wireless School,
Calgary, Alberta.

DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS	
5-1-41	Flying Squadron was formed this date, and Flight Lieutenant A.C. Heaven, M.C. (C1313) was appointed Officer Commanding. Flying Officer W.E. Gower M.C. was appointed Administrative Officer. The following were appointed Flight Commanders: "A" Flight F/O J.W. Limpp, "B" Flight F/O C.V. Frith, "C" Flight F/O H.R. Montgomery. Operations were commenced at Currie Airport, Calgary, Alberta. Norseman Aircraft Nos. 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, and 2465 had previously arrived at the Aerodrome of No. 3 S.F.F.S., Currie Airport, Calgary, Alta., having been ferried from Montreal. During the day, the following additional aircraft arrived by Air from Montreal: Norseman 2466, and 679, Fairchild 637, 643, and 646.	
7-1-41	Norseman 2467, and 693 arrived by Air from Montreal	9:00
8-1-41	Fairchild 640 arrived by Air from Montreal	9:01
17-3-41	Norseman 698 transferred to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, Class W.A.G. SQ commenced training (43 trainees)	
18-3-41	8 Moth Menasco Aircraft received from No. 4 T.O. Nos. 4834-4835-4836-4837-4838-4840-4841	4842
19-3-41	Nil	4830
20-3-41	8 Moth Menasco Aircraft received from No. 4 T.O. Nos. 4833-4839-4843-4844-4845-4846-4847-	4844- 4848
21-3-41	Class W.A.G. SQ completed training. Norseman aircraft No. 693 piloted by F/O E.J. Roberts, taxied into gasoline tender due apparently to poor judgment on the part of the pilot.	13:05

On 18 and 20 March 1941, sixteen de Havilland Tiger Moth DH 82C-4 Menasco trainers arrived at Calgary, assigned to No. 2 Wireless School for student radio trainers. These had been selected in production and serial number order beginning with RCAF serial #4833 and ending with #4848. Eight were constructed 11 March 1941, one on 13 March 41, and remaining seven constructed on 17 March 1941. From the outside these aircraft looked the same as the RCAF primary pilot trainer D.H. 82C Mk. II, but they were under-powered and loaded down with the Marconi T-1154 transmitter, R-1155 receiver, 5J27 battery, radio loop antenna, and other radio training equipment. The Marconi radios were mounted side by side in the front of the rear open cockpit of the D.H. 82C-4 Menasco Moth Mk. II. This caused many problems for the wireless students in both learning and operating in very close cramped conditions.



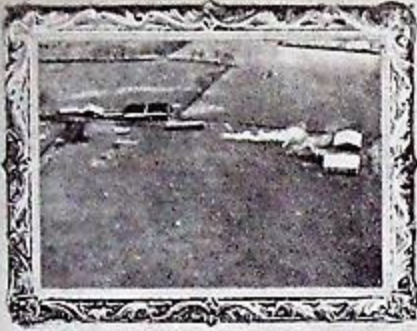
WAG Larry Dubois at No. 4 W.S. Guelph (collection Eddy Dubois via Pierre Lagacé)

Three of these aircraft would be lost in Cat. A crashes, #4833, [two killed] #4837, [two killed] and #4848. The following production list records the first sixteen D.H. Menasco Moth II trainers [yellow] to arrive with No. 2 Wireless School at Calgary, Alberta, 18 and 20 March 1941.



The MENASCO PIRATE AIRCRAFT ENGINE

Fairchild F-24R Argus	4809	3320	4.11.40	3.10.45	12 Comm Squad
DH Menasco Moth II	4810	1000	21.1.41	8.2.45	Loan to Ferry Command 8 mos.
DH Menasco Moth II	4811	1021	23.1.41	14.11.45	Cat C 20.10.42 1 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4812	1002	18.1.41	20.4.44	9 B&G
DH Menasco Moth II	4813	1003	18.1.41	9.2.45	Cat C 15.4.41 Richelieu Que
DH Menasco Moth II	4814	1004	18.1.41	20.4.44	9 B&G
DH Menasco Moth II	4815	1005	21.1.41	20.4.44	9 B&G
DH Menasco Moth II	4816	1006	31.12.40	8.2.45	8 AOS 948:55 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4817	1007	31.12.40	17.8.42	Cat B 29.5.42 1 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4818	1008	31.12.40	25.3.46	9 AOS 917:50 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4819	1009	31.12.40	9.2.45	Cat C 6.3.42 1 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4820	1010	31.12.40	8.2.45	3 TC 1065:10 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4821	1011	31.12.40	19.3.45	Cat B 10.5.42 1 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4822	1012	31.12.40	3.11.45	Cat B 21.12.42 3 FSI
DH Menasco Moth II	4823	1013	23.1.41	20.4.44	3 TC
DH Menasco Moth II	4824	1014	23.1.41	4.6.41	Cat A 7.4.41 1 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4825	1015	30.1.41	9.2.45	4 WS 1627:15 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4826	1016	29.1.41	20.4.44	8 SFTS (18.3.43)
DH Menasco Moth II	4827	1017	29.1.41	8.2.45	8 SFTS 888:45 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4828	1018	11.3.41	8.2.45	Rescue work 2.1.43-11.8.43
DH Menasco Moth II	4829	1019	11.3.41	9.2.45	4 WS 1958:30 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4830	1020	11.3.41	19.3.46	8 SFTS 960:15 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4831	1022	11.3.41	8.2.45	Cat C 16.2.42 1 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4832	1023	11.3.41	9.5.46	Cat C 20.6.42 1 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4833	1024	11.3.41	18.8.42	Cat A 10.11.41 3 SFTS
DH Menasco Moth II	4834	1025	11.3.41	19.2.45	Cat B 14.7.41 3 SFTS
DH Menasco Moth II	4835	1026	11.3.41	19.2.45	7 SFTS 451:00 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4836	1027	11.3.41	15.5.46	392:20 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4837	1028	11.3.41	18.8.42	Cat A 11.12.41 3 SFTS
DH Menasco Moth II	4838	1029	11.3.41	19.2.45	15 SFTS 613:55 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4839	1030	17.3.41	22.8.46	4 TC 558:45 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4840	1031	11.3.41	19.2.45	4 TC 333:20 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4841	1032	11.3.41	1.7.46	4 TC 731:00 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4842	1033	13.3.41	19.2.45	4 TC 824:45 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4843	1034	17.3.41	19.2.45	2 WS 763:05 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4844	1035	17.3.41	9.6.44	4 TC
DH Menasco Moth II	4845	1036	17.3.41	19.2.45	35 SFTS 779:15 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4846	1037	17.3.41	19.2.45	35 SFTS 831:45 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4847	1038	17.3.41	19.2.45	2 B&G 652:50 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4848	1039	17.3.41	19.7.43	Cat A 14.5.43 2 WS
DH Menasco Moth II	4849	1040	24.3.41	19.2.45	37 SFTS 671:20 hrs.
DH Menasco Moth II	4850	1041	24.3.41	19.2.45	Cat C 20.10.41 3 EFTS
DH Menasco Moth II	4851	1042	24.3.41	19.2.45	39 SFTS 553:00 hrs.



*Stag Lane 1920, the cradle of the de Havilland enterprise—
a hut, a few sheds, an order for two transport aircraft and
an unquenchable faith in the future of aviation*


From STAG LANE 1920 has grown the

DE HAVILLAND ENTERPRISE

of to-day, a world-wide organisation employing many thousands of engineers, scientists and workpeople in Great Britain and the Dominions, standing in the very forefront of progress and upholding British prestige in every branch of aeronautical development.

The de Havilland Aircraft Co. Ltd. was formed at Stag Lane, Edgware, Middlesex, England, in 1920, and their history until 3 September 1939, [war declared] was mostly the production of commercial type aircraft. In 1935, they designed a most notable aircraft, the D.H. 82A Tiger Moth which was powered by one British 130 h.p. D.H. Gipsy-Major Series I, four-cylinder in-line, inverted, air cooled engine. Maximum loaded weight was 1,825 lbs., with top speed of 107 m.p.h. at sea level. The full detailed history can be found in hundreds of magazines, books, and websites. This famous WWII trainer was also produced by six associated companies, including de Havilland Aircraft Canada Ltd, and today over 300 survive in museums around the world, with 43 located in Canada. The Canadian production of the Tiger Moth DH 82A began in 1937, with an order of 25 for the Royal Canadian Air Force. The first RCAF Tiger Moth #238 was a British D.H. 82, taken on strength 28 February 1928 and flew until 9 February 1944. The next 25 production aircraft were all designated D.H. 82A and ran from serial #239 to 258, and then serial #275 to #279. A few of these early Canadian built Tiger Moth trainer aircraft served in the RCAF until postwar 1947. These British open cockpit aircraft were not designed for Canadian weather conditions and new modifications were drafted in Toronto. The de Havilland Aircraft of Canada, Station "L" at Downsview, Ontario, [Toronto] redesigned this British primary trainer for Canadian winter conditions with heated cockpits and a large sliding canopy. They also moved the under carriage forward, [9 ¾ inches] to prevent nose over accidents, and installed a heavy duty main landing gear, plus a strong rear tail wheel. These Canadian manufactured aircraft were now officially called the D.H. 82C Tiger-Moth Mk. II Primary Trainer, used to train student pilots who would graduate to the much more powerful AT-6 North American Harvard [pilot maker] aircraft.

Fleet Fawn I	236	FAL 90	14.4.37	3.9.46	A 220		Cat B 13.10.39 Alliston
Fleet Fawn II	237	FAL 91	14.4.37	6.2.38			Cat A 20.11.37 Trenton
DH 82 Tiger Moth	238	1148	28.2.38	9.2.44	CF-AVG	CF-CGZ	At Vancouver 1939
DH 82A Tiger Moth	239	DHC 301	18.1.38	30.10.39			At Camp Borden 1939
DH 82A Tiger Moth	240	DHC 302	18.1.38	18.8.40	CF-CGP		
DH 82A Tiger Moth	241	DHC 303	23.1.38	23.1.45	CF-CGQ		110(AC) Squadron 1939
DH 82A Tiger Moth	242	DHC 304	22.1.38	8.3.41	CF-CGR		
DH 82A Tiger Moth	243	DHC 305	22.1.38			W/O	
DH 82A Tiger Moth	244	DHC 306	5.2.38	17.9.40	CF-CGS		Winnipeg Flying Club
DH 82A Tiger Moth	245	DHC 307	5.2.38	26.8.43	CF-CGT		Hamilton Aero Club
DH 82A Tiger Moth	246	DHC 308	5.2.38				
DH 82A Tiger Moth			9.2.38	27.8.40	CF-CGU		Montreal Light Aeroplane Club
DH 82A Tiger Moth			12.2.38	25.5.44	CF-CHD		At Moose Jaw 1940
DH 82A Tiger Moth			24.2.38	9.8.44			Converted 82C 17.10.42
DH 82A Tiger Moth	250	DHC 312	24.2.38	17.11.39	CF-CGV		At Halifax 1939
DH 82A Tiger Moth	251	DHC 313	21.2.38			W/O	
DH 82A Tiger Moth		DHC 314	24.2.38			W/O	
DH 82A Tiger Moth		DHC 315	3.3.38	10.8.43			Converted 82C 13.10.42
DH 82A Tiger Moth			2.3.38	8.5.42	CF-CGW		Toronto Flying Club
DH 82A Tiger Moth							
DH 82A Tiger Moth					CF-CGX		110(AC) Squadron
DH 82A Tiger Moth					CF-CGY		Converted
DH 82A Tiger Moth						W/O	



The new Canadian redesigned D.H. 82C, [Tiger Moth Mk. II] in fact evolved from the first 25 RCAF de Havilland D.H. 82A aircraft flown in all parts [and weather conditions] of Canada during the early months of WWII. The Toronto de Havilland Plant would manufacture 1,548 Tiger Moth aircraft in various designations, including 136 known as the D.H. 82C-4 Menasco Pirate Moth Mk. II Wireless Trainer. These are the rare forgotten Canadian constructed Moth II trainers which were equipped with an American manufactured engine and only flew at four RCAF Wireless Schools in Canada, No. 1 Montreal, Quebec, No. 2 Calgary, Alberta, No. 3 Winnipeg, Manitoba, and No. 4 Guelph, Ontario. Today their history is mostly forgotten, and many historians and websites just include them as a Tiger Moth. I feel some of this forgotten history is partly due to the embarrassment that Canada could not manufacture aircraft engines, and had to depend on the delivery of British Gipsy Moth engines from Great Britain. This flow of aircraft engines and spare parts from across the Atlantic was not as regular as the Ottawa Supply Branch planners had wished, and new [less horse-power] engines had to be purchased from the United States. The American name "Menasco Pirate" now took its place in Canadian World War Two Wireless School aviation history.



Trainer Planes

**This Canadian aircraft
factory is working night
and day, turning out
hundreds of light, pilot-
trainer planes**

THIS AIRCRAFT factory, somewhere in Ontario, is now producing fifty single-engine, two-seater training planes a month. It has been in production of this craft since early in April. Nobody enters the factory without an appointment, and a red cardboard pass tag upon which appears his name, his business, and the scope and extent of his visit. Passes have to be turned in when leaving. Armed guards, recruited from veterans of the first World War, and sworn in as special constables, patrol the plant inside and out. Employees check their working badges before they are permitted to report on shift.

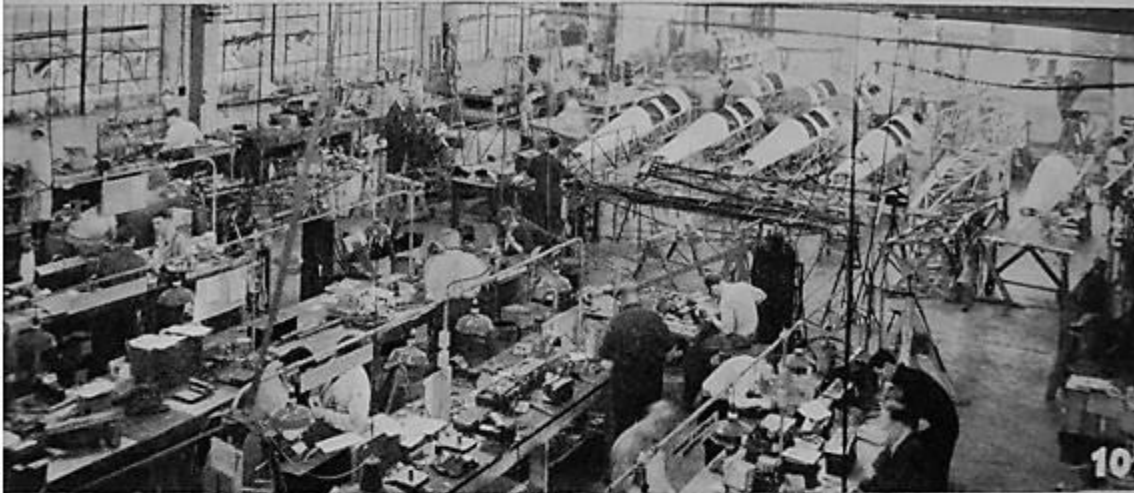
Manufacture of one of these planes begins with something like 1,200 engineering drawings, and the completed machine, including the engine, will contain as many as 12,000 parts. Ceiling-high bins in the raw material stores carry the spare parts, among them such rare and costly items as platinum-pointed spark plugs. Propellers are manufactured by Canadian woodworking firms, of laminated Canadian beech and Honduras mahogany, a marriage designed to combine lightness with strength.

The machine shop turns out parts of specially processed steel, duralumin, and alloys, from such complicated instruments as precision turret lathes, many of them imported, some of them costing as high as \$10,000 each. The engines are put together in the engine assembly shop, then they go to the engine test house, a thunderous place, where they run for two and three quarters hours at varying speeds. After that they are taken apart for a strip inspection by Royal Canadian Air Force experts, and returned to the engine test house for a run of one and a half hours on a nine-tenths throttle, the equivalent of the cruising speed of the plane. There follows a final inspection, and the engines move to the fuselage assembly line where they are hoisted into position for installation between steel brackets on the nose of the plane. Fitters work at their benches

Continued on page 22

On 1 August 1940, Maclean's Magazine featured a two-page article on the de Havilland plant in Toronto [censored] and the production of the RCAF elementary trainer DH 82C Tiger-Moth.

Maclean's Magazine, August 1, 1940

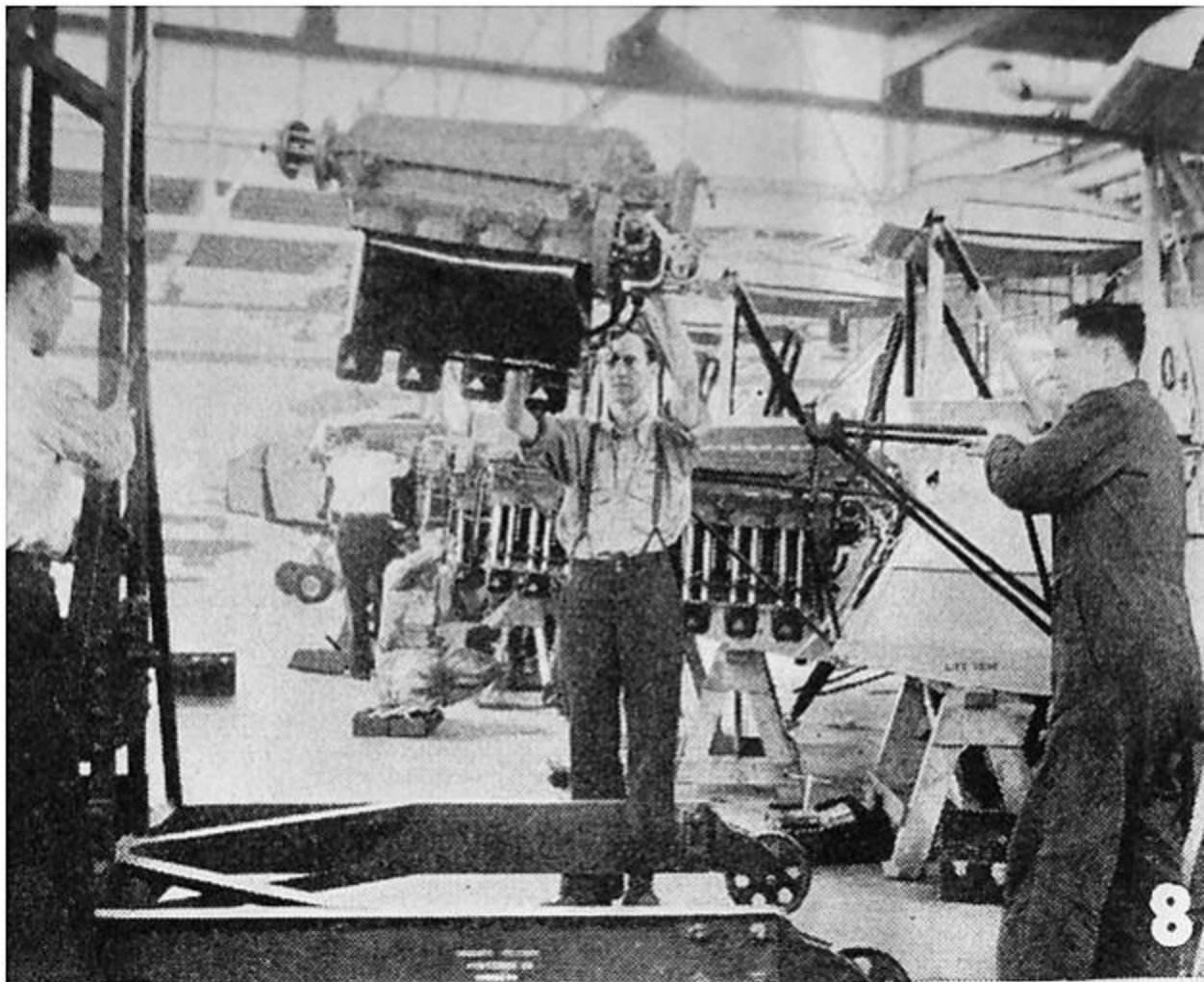


10. Fittings shop and assembly line make convenient neighbors. Here men and women are working twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, in eight-hour shifts.



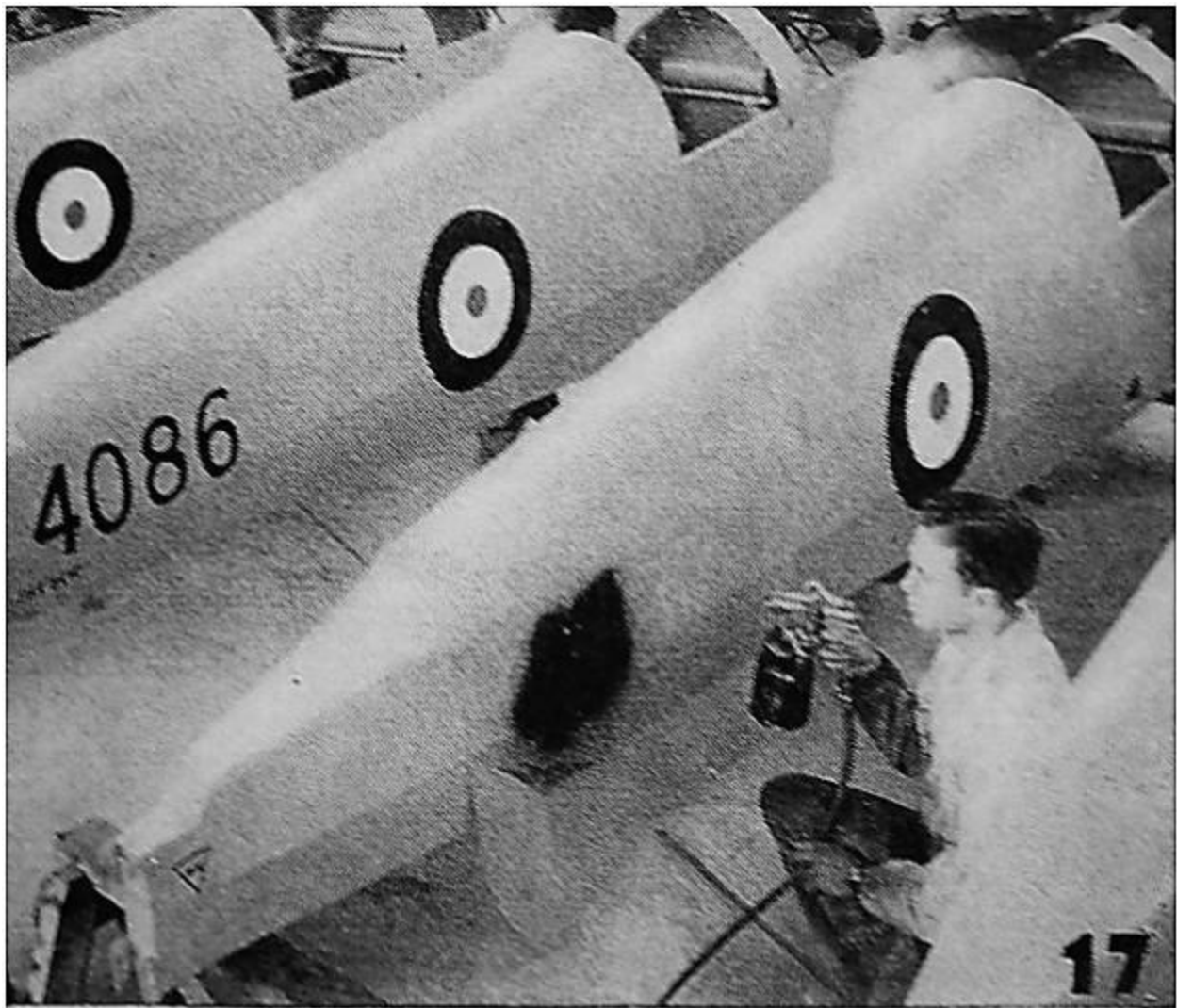
16. Step by step the machine goes down the fuselage assembly line. Hundreds of Canadian pilot fledglings will first take to the air in craft like these.

This Canadian production photo of fifteen D.H. 82C Tiger Moth Mk. II's were taken on strength by RCAF, serial 4065 to 4080 between 23-26 July 1940.



8. Hoisting engine into position
for installation in aircraft.

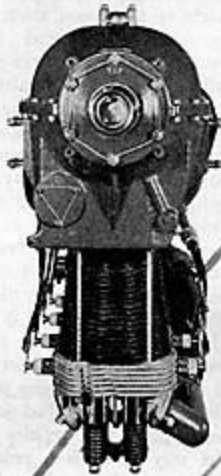
This image was possibly taken in mid-July 1940, showing the Canadian de Havilland workers installing a British 130 h.p. D.H. Gipsy-Major Series I engine into a Canadian manufactured Tiger-Moth Mk. II trainer aircraft. What this article did not explain, and what the wartime Canadian public would never learn, was the fact Canadian factories were equipped to construct training aircraft, but no aero-engines could be manufactured or produced in Canada. This would cause chronic shortages of aircraft, aero-engines, and spare parts, which had to be shipped across the Atlantic from United Kingdom, causing serious interruptions in the Toronto production lines. D.H. 82C Tiger Moth Mk. II production began at de Havilland [Toronto] in mid-March 1940, and the first Tiger Moth II, serial 4001 [manufactured #331] was taken on strength by the RCAF on 10 April 1940.



17. Paint spray guns and stencils
apply numbers and British roundels.

The Maclean's article contained 17 photos and the last image displayed the only Tiger Moth serial number 4086, taken on strength by RCAF 30 July 1940. These aircraft were all powered by the British manufactured 130 h.p. Gipsy-Major engine which was shipped from U.K. to Toronto. On 14 January 1941, DH 82C serial 4325 was fitted with the very last British built Gipsy-Moth engine and production ceased, they had no more British aircraft engines. This was the most widely used RCAF BCATP elementary trainer for pilots in WWII, and production must continue as soon as possible, so the RCAF [Canadian government] looked south to USA and purchased the American manufactured Menasco D-4 "Pirate" engine.

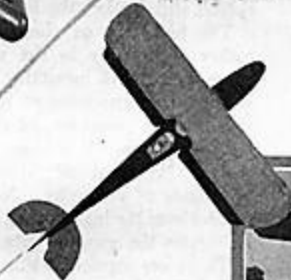
The
MENASCO
PIRATE
AIRCRAFT ENGINE



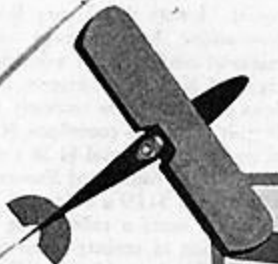
GREAT LAKES TRAINER
POWERED WITH the PIRATE
GIVES BETTER VISIBILITY



FLEET
POWERED WITH the PIRATE
NOTICE IMPROVED VISION



NEW STANDARD TRAINER
SHOWING SMALL FRONTAL AREA
OF PIRATE INSTALLATION



AVDO - AVIAN
POWERED WITH the PIRATE
NOTICE THE CLEAN LINES

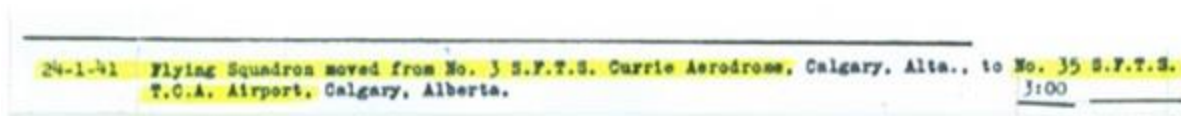
90 HP
1925
RPM

4 IN LINE AIR COOLED INVERTED
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE CERTIFICATE NO. FIFTY

The original 1930 Menasco A-4 Pirate 90 h.p. engine, which was modified and later became the D-4 Pirate with 125 h.p. which was purchased by the Canadian government in January 1941. The government purchased 136 American manufactured Menasco D-4 Super Pirate 125 h.p. engines and these were placed in the production line aircraft which became D.H. 82C-4 Menasco Moth II trainer aircraft. The first Menasco Moth II serial 4810 was taken on charge by the RCAF 21 January 1941. Testing revealed a reduction in engine power, opposite rotation of propeller, reversal of cowling openings and a reduced fuel capacity. Student pilots had enough to worry about and introducing a new RCAF Tiger Moth [American engine] trainer could possibly confuse and cause the loss of pilot lives. The 136 Menasco trainers, Moth I [10 built serial #4935 to 4944] Moth II [125 built serial #4810 to

#4945] and Moth III [1 built, serial 4934] were now assigned to Wireless schools as radio trainers. That's why No. 2 Wireless school Calgary received sixteen new aircraft beginning 18 March, which had their American engines installed at de Havilland, Toronto, between 11 – 17 March 1941.

On 24 January 1941, No. 2 Wireless Flying School [Calgary] and their first early training aircraft were moved from RCAF No. 3 SFTS [Currie Barracks] to the TCA operations hangar located at No. 35 SFTS which was under construction for the Royal Air Force coming to North Calgary.



No. 35 Royal Air Force Service Flying Training School was still under construction located at the original north Calgary municipal airport, and the Wireless Menasco aircraft would now commence wireless student training sharing the hangar used by Trans-Canada Airlines. On 4 September 1941, No. 35 was transferred [number only] to the RAF training school at North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and North Calgary became No. 37 SFTS until closure on 10 March 1944.



This image of R.A.F. No. 35 SFTS Calgary was taken at 5,500 feet on 4 April 1941. No. 2 Wireless School Flying Squadron are now based in the white hangar with black roof located in the center of this photo, the home base for Trans-Canada Airlines. Below is a 1940 close-up of TCA hangar.

Daily Diary recorded the date of each first flight. [above] The Menasco Tiger Moth aircraft continue to arrive at TCA hangar in north Calgary, and the first flight dates are recorded in the Daily Diary.


4	April	1941	—	#4840	assembled	and	first	flight.
6	April	41	—	#4841	assembled	and	first	flight.
6	April	41	—	#4842	assembled	and	first	flight.
8	April	41	—	#4843	assembled	and	first	flight.
10 April 41 — #4844 assembled and first flight.								



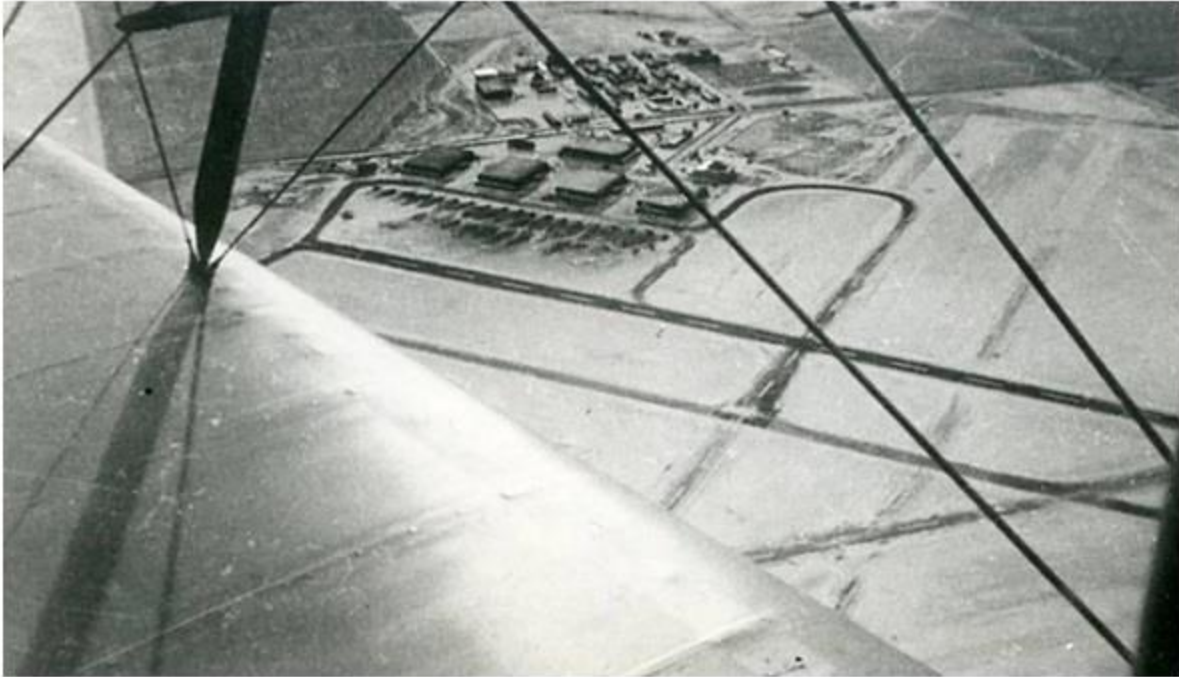
This image was taken at No. 35 SFTS [RAF] Calgary and marked on the back — “T-Moth Class # 1, Course #8, 1941.” [SAIT Archives, Calgary]

Eight Menasco Tiger Moth aircraft appear in this image and Course #8 became the first class of Wireless Operators to graduate in this new wireless trainer. Course Entry #8 completed training on 4 April 1941, and graduated on 25 April 41. This photo was taken after 5 April 1941, when the Flying Squadron had on charge eight Menasco Moth Mk. II trainers — serial #4833, #4834, #4835, #4836, #4837, #4838, #4840, #4841, and #4842.

Flying Squadron,
(UNIT OR FORMATION) No. 2 Wireless School

DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS
28-4-41	<p>Class W.A.G. 9 X commenced training (46 trainees).</p> <p>Wing Commander A.H.K. Russell, F/O Strugnell and crew left for Winnipeg at 0845 hours in Norseman aircraft No. 2463.</p> <p>Fairchild aircraft Nos. 637 and 646 transferred to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary and struck off strength.</p> <p>Total number of hours flown during the month:- 1333 hrs. 25 mins.</p> <p>Aircraft on strength 30-4-41:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Norseman 9, Fairchild 1, Moth 82C 2, Moth 82C4 - 24, total 36</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  (A.H.K. Russell) Wing Commander, Commanding Officer, No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF, Calgary, Alberta. </div>

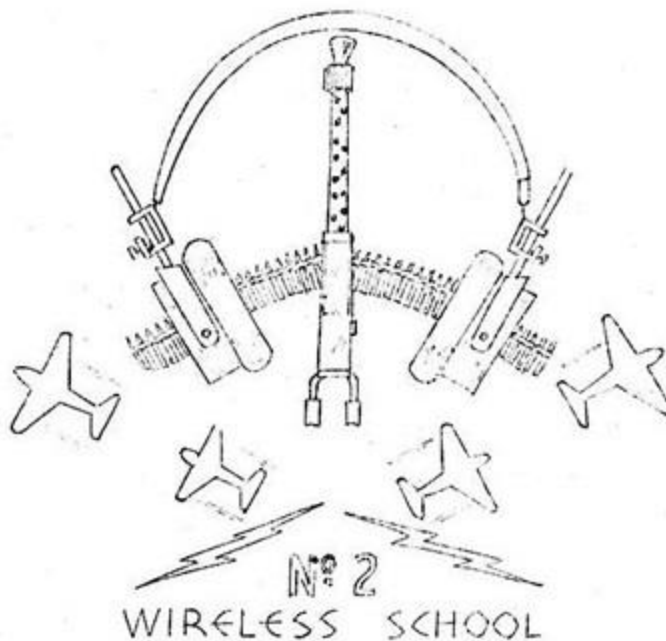
30 April 1941 - The Moth 82C [Mk. I] at Calgary were serial #4938 and #4939. On 12 May 1941, No. 2 W.S. Flying Squadron are ordered to return to No 3 SFTS at Currie Field, [Mount Royal University today]. The Royal Air Force officially open 're-numbered' No. 37 SFTS Calgary on 22 October 1941. This RAF flying image was taken a few days later showing the snow covered airfield, and the view as seen from a Tiger-Moth D.H. 82C Mk. II pilot trainer aircraft.



The top photo of No. 37 SFTS Calgary was taken by R.A.F. student pilot LAC Gafney [right] from a Canadian built D.H. 82C Tiger Moth Mk. II trainer being flown by his RAF Flight Instructor F/L Reg Eastwood [left]. They had flown from RAF Station De Winton, Alberta, and were making their first landing at the newly opened RAF school at North Calgary. For a short period of time No. 2 W.S. were loaned two of these D.H. 82C Tiger Moth aircraft, both returned to RAF #4304 on 6 June 41 and #4305 on 15 May 1941. That's D.H. 82C, Tiger Moth #4304 behind LAC Gafney.

Around the middle of May 1941, Mr. Dave Smith, the former Y.M.C.A. director in Calgary, began to publish a twice weekly news sheet, which he posted on the main bulletin board at the Institute of Technology, where the wireless classrooms were located. This sheet contained local RCAF wireless news, advertised special events at the base or in the City of Calgary, and also contained some air force humor. The news sheet was titled WAG Signal and this became the official unit newspaper on 9 September 1941, when 900 copies were published and distributed, Vol. 1, #1.

THE W.A.G. SIGNAL



PUBLISHED IN INTERESTS OF TRAINEES OF
NO. 2 WIRELESS SCHOOL, CANARY.
BY KIND PERMISSION OF GROUP CAPTAIN J.R. OWEN.

VOLUME 1

PRICE: -- 1000000

EDITORIAL BOARD

CONSULTING EDITOR:	Flying Officer W.A. Gower
ADVISORY STAFF:	Flt. Lt. Blackburn
	Flt. Lt. Lynch
	P/O Peasmore
DIRECTOR:	Graham Watt, MCA.
EDITORS:	Cpl. Drayton
	Cpl. Miller
	LtC J. Huber
	LtC H.J. Gowan
	AC2 W.H. Beck.

This front cover was designed in March 1941 by LAC Frank Raymond Scott, R80514, from Toronto, Ontario. Scott had arrived with the RCAF student WAG trainees of Entry Class 16, which would graduate in October 1941. His art combined the Wireless earphones with the Bren Gun they would later train with at a gunnery school. Two 'sparks' lightning flashes and four DH.82C-4 Menasco Tiger Moth II trainers complete his insignia artwork. Flight Sergeant Wireless Operator Air Gunner Frank Scott, 21 years old, was assigned to RAF Squadron No. 102 [Ceylon] and his Halifax bomber was shot down in action 5 October 1942. The crew of seven were all killed, RCAF pilot F/O Lynds McRae was from Westlock, Alberta, the remainder of the crew were RAF. Out of respect, his drawing symbol remained part of the spirit of No. 2 Wireless School until the end of the war. F/Sgt. Scott is buried with his crew in the Brussels Town Cemetery, Evere-les-Bruxelles, Belgium.



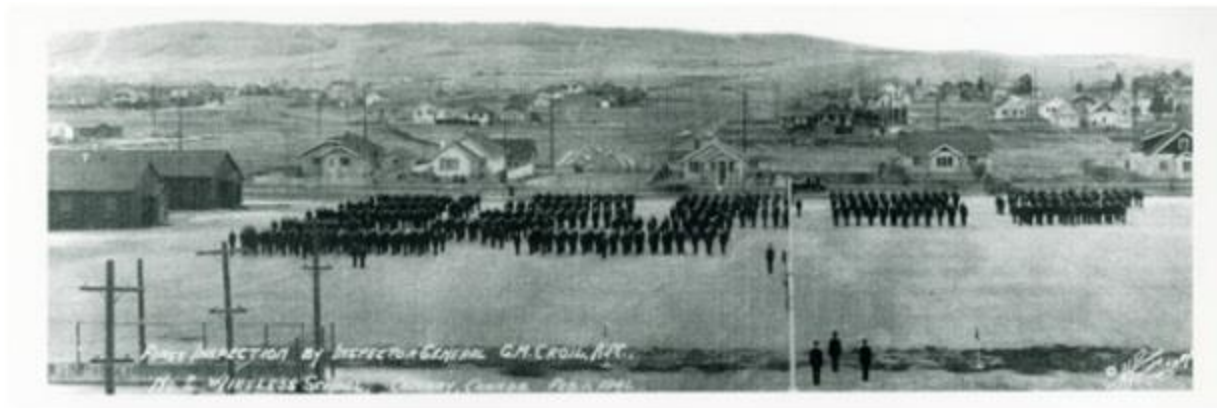
This first issue of WAG also contained three cartoons by F/Sgt. Frank Scott, one with a little horse named Midget, [or Midge] who became the official mascot of No. 2 Wireless School, Calgary, in early January 1941.

In November 1940, the Calgary Herald newspaper sponsored the Sunshine Club, helping down and out families during Christmas. The President of a Turner Valley oil field company donated his family pet, a Shetland pony named Midget, as an extra prize. LAC Lloyd Willigar was an RCAF trainee from Parrsboro, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, who walked downtown to enjoy a movie at the Palace Theatre. He purchased a single ticket from a pretty young Calgary lady in the lobby of the theatre, with the last 25 cents he had, then sat down to enjoy the movie. At the end of the movie, Midget appeared on stage and the ticket draw was made. LAC Willigar won and became the new owner of a female Shetland pony. Unable to ship his prize home to Nova Scotia, he asks his C.O. for help and "Midge" becomes the new official mascot of No. 2 Wireless School. I'm sorry but the Stampeder Football horse "Quick-six" was not the first famous mascot in [Cowtown] Calgary.



SAIT Archives

Midge is treated like one of the RCAF staff and must perform her official Wireless School duties, leading every Wireless Air Gunner graduation parade.



(UNIT OR FORMATION) No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF, Calgary, Alberta.

L.H. Paul

DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS
1-2-41		The Inspector-General, Air Vice Marshall G.W. Croil, (AFC), and party inspected the Station. The Inspector-General's Parade was held on the Parade Ground at 0930 hours. After completing inspection of the Unit, he proceeded to No. 35 S.F.T.S. and inspected the Flying Squadron.

Midge lead her first major V.I.P. parade on 1 February 1941, when the Inspector-General came to Calgary and there was no snow on the ground. That's 16th Avenue behind the troops, which today is six lanes at this location. Then spring arrives in Calgary and the 14 and 16 March 1941 graduation parades have plenty of wet white stuff.



Midge and her RCAF handler Corporal George Bury [above] lead both of the wintery March graduation parades, where 106 W.A.G. students graduated on 14 March, followed by another 70 on 16 March 1941.



LAC L.E. Willigar began training in Entry Class 14, December 1940, graduating on 15 August 1941. Midge proudly leads the parade where her owner F/Sgt. Willigar graduated.



After the graduation parade, F/Sgt. Willigar had his photo taken with Midge and the second station mascot a dog. After four weeks' air-gunners training, F/S Wireless Operator Air Gunner Lloyd Willigar, 20 years of age, is posted overseas to RAF No. 101 Squadron. On 18 April 1942, his Wellington bomber serial X3655 is shot down and all five aircrew members were killed in action. On 19 May 1942, just four weeks after her master's death over Germany, Midget gave birth to a stillborn colt, a double blow to the wireless school members. Images from SAIT Archives, Karly Sawatzky, BA.

In the spring of 1942, No. 2 Wireless School are given the honor of leading the world famous Calgary Stampede Parade, and right behind her commanding officer, Midget and her handler Corporal George Bury, will lead the marching troops. The aero technicians at No. 2 Wireless School construct a special Stampede "Aircraft" float which will follow the matching wireless student troops in downtown Calgary on 10 July 1941. The special guests of the Calgary Stampede featured acts will be American trick riders Monty Montana. On the eve of the Calgary Stampede famous parade, [9 July 1941] "Monty Montana" and his troupers attend the grounds of No. 2 Wireless School and give a special presentation of his act for the wireless students. A good time is had by all and many photos are taken with Monty and the wireless Stampede float. The young boy in the photo is one of the American trick riders, the wireless officer is unknown.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P08277.004

Above is the free domain image of No. 2 Wireless Air Gunners Calgary Stampede float and the forty Australian WAG trainees [Entry class 46B] who marched in the wild west parade.

This class wrote their final exams on 24 December, graduated on 30 December 1942, and were posted for gunnery training in the New Year. On 31 December 1942, 1,165 wireless students were in training at No. 2 W.S. Early in 1942, the standard of wireless air gunners had been increased to twenty-eight weeks and they had become specialists in

radio work. Next came six weeks of gunnery training which had been extended from the original four weeks. Next the class sailed to U.K. from Halifax, and over half of these lads would never return to Australia. I believe that most of these WAGs served with RAF bomber command, where the heaviest aircrew losses took place in 1943 and 1944.

On the evening of 10 July 1942, thirty members from the Blackfoot Nation entertained the wireless air gunners.



SAIT Archives – names unknown.



Evening of the 10 July 1942, the Blackfoot Nation entertains the wireless operator students. SAIT Archives.

DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS
5-7-42		<p>Squadron Leader A. Walsley assumed Temporary Command of the School during the absence of Group Captain H.E. Owen on temporary duty at Bowden, Alberta, as President of Court-Martial.</p> <p>Fleet Port Aircraft No.3552 was added to strength on delivery from No.10 Repair Depot.</p> <p>Extra instruction for all trainees was given from 1800 to 2025 hours to compensate in part for time lost by trainees visiting the Calgary Stampede.</p>
9-7-42		<p>Group Captain H.E. Owen resumed command of the School on return from Temporary Duty at Bowden, Alberta.</p> <p>The North American Champion Trick riders, Monty Montana and his troupers, who are a feature attraction at the Calgary Stampede, made a personal appearance on the station in the evening and gave a special show for the benefit of personnel. Our band were also in attendance.</p> <p>Wing Commander V.K. Gray of No.4 Training Command paid an official visit to the School in connection with Armament Instruction.</p>
10-7-42		<p>The Y.M.C.A. arranged for about 30 Indians of the Blackfoot Tribe, who are in Calgary for Stampede week, to visit the School. They arrived in their Native Costumes and war paint and entertained the airmen. At the conclusion of their performance they were given a special meal and suitable gifts.</p>

Airmen's Pony Mascot Listed Among Missing

It's more than two years now since Sgt. L. E. Willigar promised Midget, the No. 2 Wireless School Shetland pony mascot that he would come back from overseas and return to Calgary to claim her.

He was reported missing during air operations over France on April 18, 1942—several months after he won Midge or Midget, the Herald Sunshine pony, in a raffle here, and donated her to No. 2 Wireless School, R.C.A.F., as official mascot.

Midge was given her own little "barrack block" at the school; she had her own blanket appropriately decorated with the R.C.A.F. insignia, and she headed all the official parades

at the school, including the one in which her master received his wings before going overseas to join the 101st Bombing Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Maybe Midge became tired of waiting for Sgt. Willigar . . . maybe she decided to look for him herself . . . at any rate Midge left No. 2 Wireless school grounds Sunday night, and hasn't been seen since.

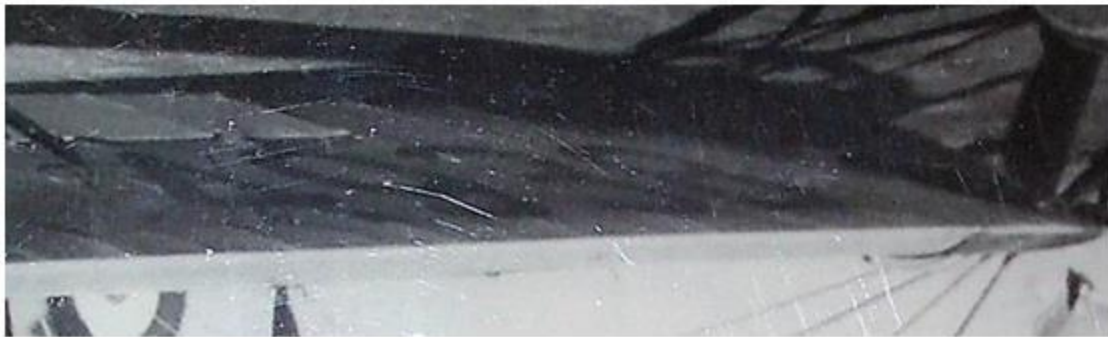
The boys at the school are anxious for the return of the pony. They've asked police to assist in locating her, and now they're asking that anyone seeing a little black pony, answering to the name of Midge and looking as if she was keeping an eye peeled for a sergeant wireless gunner, notify the guard room at No 2 Wireless School.

Extract from Calgary Albertan newspaper March 20th 1944

On 29 March 1944, Midget was reported "Missing" and a vast search was conducted to find the most loved mascot. She was located ten miles south of the institute buildings and returned home to continue her RCAF duties. For the complete well research history of Midget please read the online story – "A Pony Name Midget" by Timothy Allan Johnston.

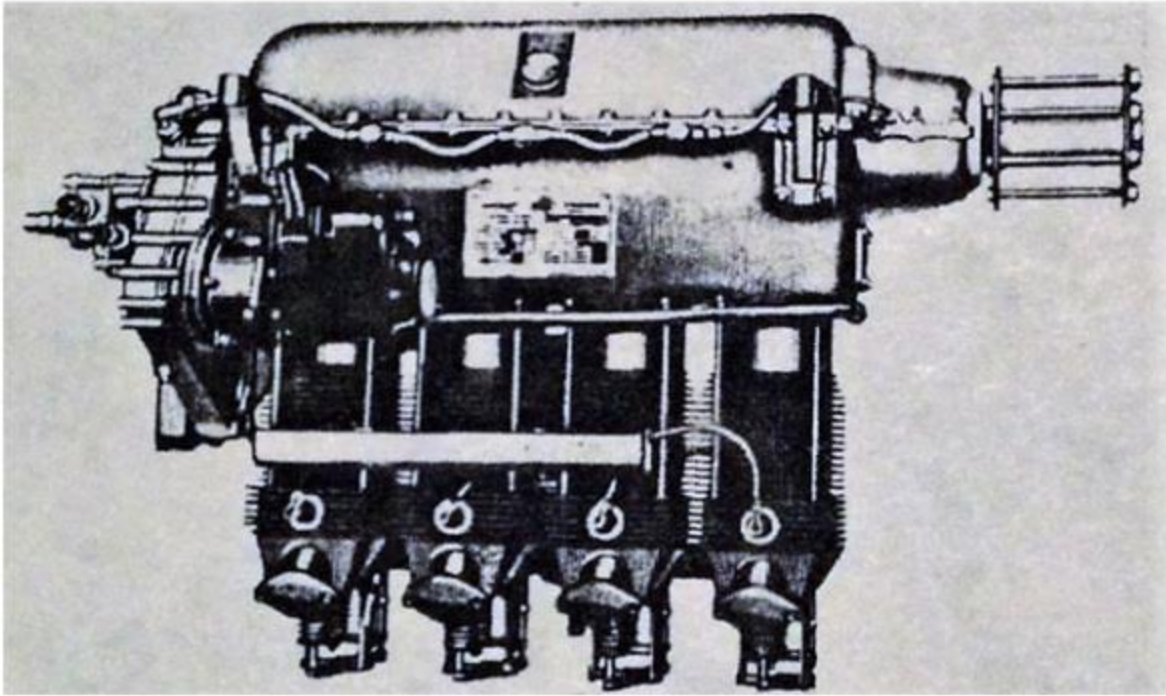
On 12 May 1941, No. 2 Wireless Flying Squadron was reorganized and moved back to RCAF No. 3 SFTS, [Mount Royal University today] where slowly the 24 new D.H. 82C-4 Menasco Moth II aircraft became the main wireless trainer. They also had one D.H. 82C-2 Menasco Moth Mk. I on strength, #4938. Total training personnel in No. 2

Wireless Flying Squadron was 19 Officers, 104 other ranks and 45 students [entry class 10A]. Training was delayed as the apron to the new hangar at Currie Barracks was not yet cemented.



D.H. 82C-2 Menasco Moth I, serial 4938, [under wing serial] taken on strength RCAF – 11 June 1941, LAC Eddie Dewitt. Only ten Menasco Moth Mk. I aircraft were constructed, RCAF serial numbers 4935 to 4944, which had a lower C-4 Pirate engine compression ratio. This rare trainer arrived at Calgary 14 June 1941, made a forced landing on 5 September 1941, pilot F/O H.T. Cain. The trainer was damaged Category “C” and had to be dismantled by No. 10 Repair Depot and transport by truck back to Calgary for repairs. Damaged in a Category “B” accident at No. 3 SFTS [Currie Barracks Airfield] on 6 January 1942, during test flight.

S/L F.R. Sharpe, the C.O. of No. 2 RCAF Squadron at No. 3 SFTS had borrowed this D.H. 82C-2 Menasco Tiger Moth Mk. I for test flying. [Possibly just wanted to get a D.H. 82C-2 Menasco Moth Mk. I aircraft in his log book.] On landing he nosed over causing damage to the port wing, engine cowling, and propeller. Another Category “C” accident occurred on 16 June 1942, repaired and returned to squadron. This old DH 82C-2 was still on strength at Shepard on 29 February 1944. All Menasco Moth aircraft were off strength by mid-March 1944.



The American Menasco Pirate C-4 [military designation L-365 engine] 125 h.p. weight 300 lbs. One rare Menasco aircraft [D.H. 82C-4 Tiger-Moth Mk. II #4861] survives today in the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa. [Most visitors just think it is a British Tiger Moth]

On 10 November 1941, [D.H. 82C-4 Menasco Moth II serial 4833] crashed while on a route wireless training flight from No. 3 SFTS Calgary with pilot and wireless student being killed. This crash has appeared in many publications and can be found on at least four websites. This is the Daily Diary for that date, with the original records for No. 2 Wireless School, Calgary, Alberta.

10-11-41

LAC Brubaker was presented with Honor Student Gold Medal from T.T.S. St. Thomas, Ontario.

Moth Aircraft No. 4833 crashed north of Bear Paw in flames. F/O J. Robinson (C10P1) was killed. H97644 LAC Gravell was seriously injured and died later the same day in the Colonel Belcher Hospital. No. 2 Wireless School arranged a Guard with rations, the Flying Squadron supplied forced landing equipment and S/L Heaven, F/O Anderson, and F/L Burbank visited the scene of the crash.

The following story of this Cat. "A" crash appeared in WAG Signal for November 1941.

RECOGNITION OF BRAVERY

In the awarding of the first George Medal to be won by a Canadian woman, Mrs. Frances Walsh of Calgary, and the posthumous award of the George Cross to the late L.A.C. K.L. Gravell of Vancouver, No. 2 Wireless School takes a deep sense of gratification, and feels indirectly honoured that one of its students should win this high award, and also in that our Commanding Officer has been largely responsible in bringing the courageous actions of these two young people to the attention of the King with the resultant recognition of their heroism and the inclusion of their names in the King's birthday honours list. No. 2 Wireless School is the first R.C.A.F. station in Canada to have one of its members honoured by the George Cross. The citation accompanying Mrs. Walsh's award which was announced in the King's birthday honours list described the crash of the aircraft in the yard of Big Springs school which killed the pilot and fatally injured a student flier.

The pilot was P/O J. Robinson of Jasper, and the student was LAC K.M. Gravell of Vancouver. Gravell is posthumously awarded the George Cross for his efforts to drag Robinson's body from the plane.

The student was attempting to pull the dead pilot from the burning wreckage when Mrs. Walsh rushed to his aid. She displayed personal courage and coolness in circumstances that were entirely strange to her, but she managed to get the pupil out of the plane, with some injury to herself and extinguish the flames on him.

The crash occurred on November 10, 1941, when Robinson's plane, on a routine training flight, crashed within a short distance of the school. Robinson was killed instantly. But, Gravell, not knowing the fate of the pilot, ignored the burning of his own clothing and tried to save his companion. Had he not considered his pilot before his own safety and had he immediately proceeded to extinguish his flames on his own clothing he would probably not have lost his life, said the official citation.

For risking her life to rescue an airman trainee of this School from a burning plane which crashed in the Big Springs school yard, west of Airdrie, last Nov. 10th, Mrs. Frances Walsh, 29-year-old Calgary school teacher has been awarded the first George Medal given to a Canadian woman.

The award was announced today in the list of King's birthday honors awarded in Canada on recommendation of the R.C.A.F. The George Cross was awarded posthumously to the trainee, LAC K.M. Gravell, of Vancouver who died from burns suffered in trying to rescue the pilot from the plane which crashed in the Big Springs school yard. It was Gravell whom Mrs. Walsh pulled away from the flaming wreckage. She rolled him on the ground and rendered first aid until medical help arrived. The pilot had been killed when the plane crashed. He was F.O. James Robinson, 44, of Jasper, Alta. But Gravell, not knowing the fate of the pilot, ignored the burning on his own clothing and tried to save his companion. "Had he not considered his pilot before his own safety and had he immediately proceeded to extinguish the flames on his own clothing he would probably not have lost his life," said the official citation. Mrs. Walsh, the citation said; "Displayed great personal courage and coolness under circumstances which were entirely strange to her and in the face of considerable danger from the gasoline fire, ran into the wreckage and dragged Gravell from the blazing wreckage and rolled him on the ground and extinguished the fire on his person. With the assistance of her pupils she then carried the injured airman to her school house, rendered first aid and sent for medical assistance. In carrying out this feat Mrs. Walsh suffered burns about the face and suffered from shock but made no comments whatsoever regarding her own injuries which were not noticed and unattended to until after medical officers who had arrived at scene of accident had cared for the injured airman."

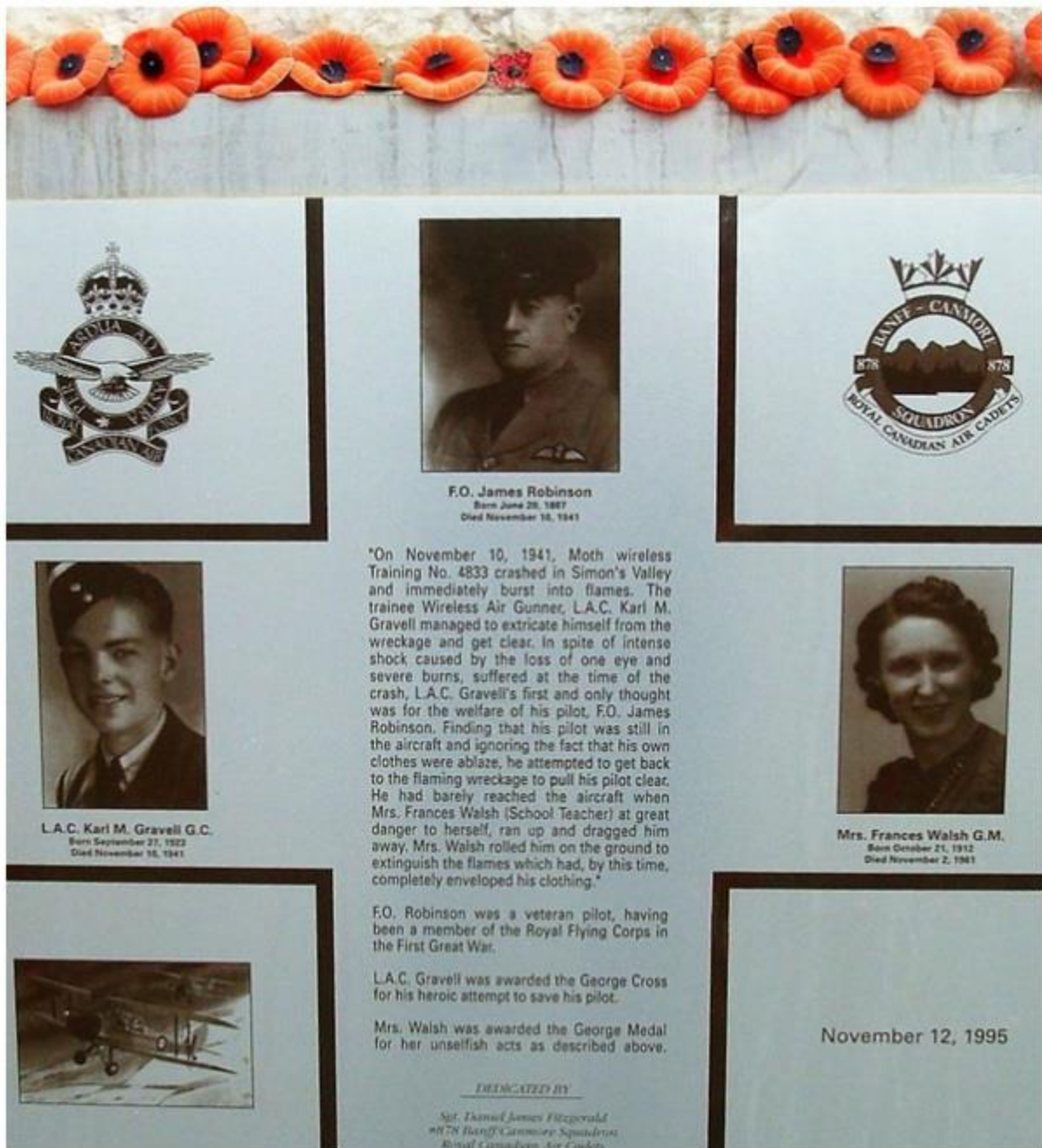
This is the first time since the awards were established during the Battle of Britain that the George Cross and the George Medal were awarded in Canada. This list is also remarkable because the honors are awarded on recommendation of the Canadian government directly to the King, instead of as before on recommendation of the United Kingdom air ministry.



Many Alberta school teachers joined the forces and served their country during WWII. For Mrs. Walsh the war came to her school door step, and she acted with great courage in attempting to save the life of the burning RCAF wireless operator student LAC Gravell.

Menasco Tiger Moth II serial 4833, crash site is not forgotten; and the original school house still survives as a private rural residence near Airdrie, Alberta. Memorial donated by Royal Canadian Air Cadets from No. 878 Squadron Banff/Canmore, Alberta. Dedication made on 12 November 1995 by Sgt. Daniel James Fitzgerald, preserving our RCAF Wireless School Calgary past. Author photo 28 September 2018.





The Canadian built Tiger Moth Mk. II, D.H. 82C was designed as a pilot trainer aircraft and this allowed for crew weight of two, pilot 160 lbs. and student 160 lbs. Engine was 300 lbs. combined with fuel and oil 166 lbs., two parachutes and harness of 46 lbs. The stall speed of the D.H. 82C Tiger-Moth was 43 m.p.h. [69 k/m]. The Wireless School D.H. 82C-4 "Menasco" aircraft were under powered and carried two Marconi [receiver/transmitter] radios, battery, plus radio equipment which added over 150 lbs. to the aircraft weight. It is believed this heavily loaded, under powered trainer, stalled and the pilot was attempting to regain control when they crashed and the trainer fuel tank burst into flames.

SECRET

DAILY DIARY

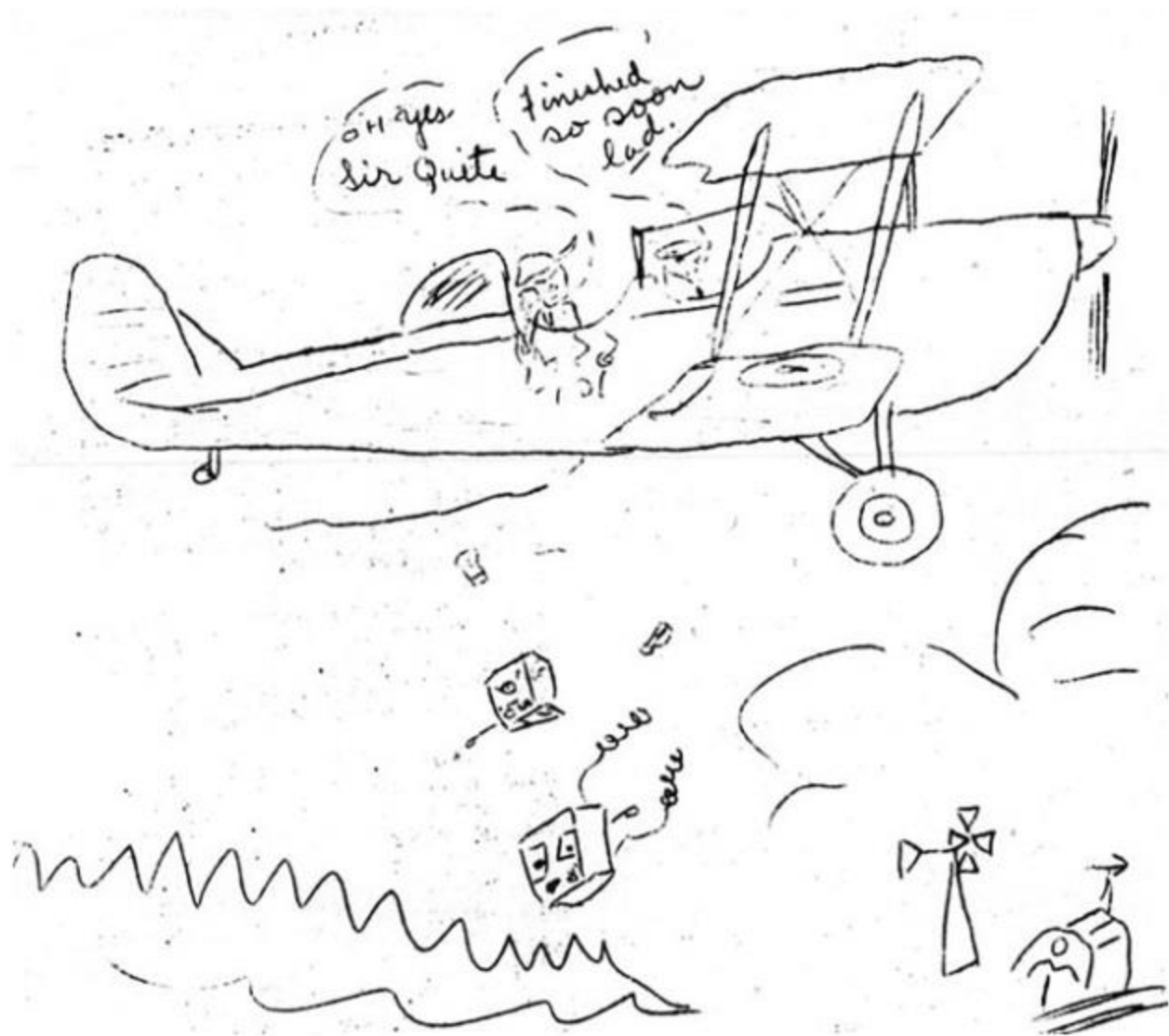
OF No. 2 Wireless School, R.C.A.F., Calgary, Alberta.

(UNIT OR FORMATION)



DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS												
1-6-42	<p>An order was issued for all Station personnel to wear Summer Dress 6A (Uniforms, Khaki, drill) commencing today.</p> <p>It has been found advisable to revise the Station Instructional Time Table. The duration of each period of instruction has been shortened from fifty-five minutes to forty-five minutes, and the number of instructional periods per day will be nine instead of seven. The advantages of this system are considered to be numerous, but two of the main reasons are that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Educationalists all agree that no lecture should be longer than forty-five minutes if maximum benefit is to be derived by the listener.(b) With the present seven periods of fifty-five minutes duration, three hours and twenty minutes of instructional time per week is lost by each trainee. <p>The periods will be as follows:-</p> <p><u>Monday through Friday</u></p> <table border="0"><tbody><tr><td>(1) 0815 to 0900 hrs.</td><td>(6) 1350 to 1435 hrs.</td></tr><tr><td>(2) 0905 to 0950 hrs.</td><td>(7) 1440 to 1525 hrs.</td></tr><tr><td>(3) 0955 to 1040 hrs.</td><td>Break</td></tr><tr><td>Break</td><td>(8) 1540 to 1625 hrs.</td></tr><tr><td>(4) 1055 to 1140 hrs.</td><td>(9) 1630 to 1715 hrs.</td></tr><tr><td>(5) 1145 to 1230 hrs.</td><td></td></tr></tbody></table> <p><u>Saturdays</u> Instruction will cease at the end of the fifth period.</p> <p>The electric-ball system worked from the School Master clock is arranged to ring at the commencement and end of each period.</p>	(1) 0815 to 0900 hrs.	(6) 1350 to 1435 hrs.	(2) 0905 to 0950 hrs.	(7) 1440 to 1525 hrs.	(3) 0955 to 1040 hrs.	Break	Break	(8) 1540 to 1625 hrs.	(4) 1055 to 1140 hrs.	(9) 1630 to 1715 hrs.	(5) 1145 to 1230 hrs.	
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(4) 1055 to 1140 hrs.	(9) 1630 to 1715 hrs.												
(5) 1145 to 1230 hrs.													

The year 1942 saw a number of profound changes in the training schools of the BCATP, including Calgary wireless classroom time instruction. [above] The first fifteen months [16 September 1940 to 1 January 1942] had stressed quantity and now this switched to quality in training, as the wireless operator air gunner had suffered from inadequately training instructors and lack of proper radio equipment. In June, the second part of the BCATP new agreement was signed and the termination date was now extended two years from March 1943 until March 1945. The twenty-six RAF schools operating in Canada [totally financed by United Kingdom] were now officially incorporated into the BCATP and many existing RCAF schools were enlarged for greater and better training. This included a second new hangar and H-hut construction for 40 personnel at RCAF Station Shepard, Alberta, where No. 2 Wireless School Flying Squadron would be officially moved to on 1 December 1943. [The move began by ground and air on 25 November 1942] By October 1942, the BCATP demand for a higher standard of trained wireless air gunners increased their programme to twenty-eight weeks, and the student failure rate suddenly increased to over seventeen per cent from five per cent average in June 1942. The following cartoon appeared in November 1942 issue of WAG Signal, artist LAC D.J. Smith, showing a wireless operator student throwing his Marconi radio from a D. H. 82C Menasco Tiger Moth Mk. II trainer, flying near Calgary, Alberta.



The wireless operator air gunners were increasingly becoming the aircraft specialist in radio work as well as a gunner in defending the aircraft from enemy attack. The total training in radio and gunnery now extended to thirty-four weeks and many students could not develop the adequate skills to pass the wireless course. This is again featured in a WAG Signal cartoon by LAC D.J. Smith one of the very students taking the course, and he fully understood the huge challenges facing all trainees. From 16 September 1940 until 23 July 1942, Calgary No. 2 Wireless School graduated 2,382 students with 503 failing the course. All student wireless air operators beginning with entry class #8, 4 April 1941 until March 1942, completed their air training in the D.H. 82C-4 Menasco Tiger Moth Mk. II trainer. The first Fleet fort arrived 8 January 42, and by April 1942, nine new Fleet Fort 60K trainers were on strength at Calgary and slowly the under-powered Menasco Tiger Moth Mk. I and Mk. IIs would be replaced.



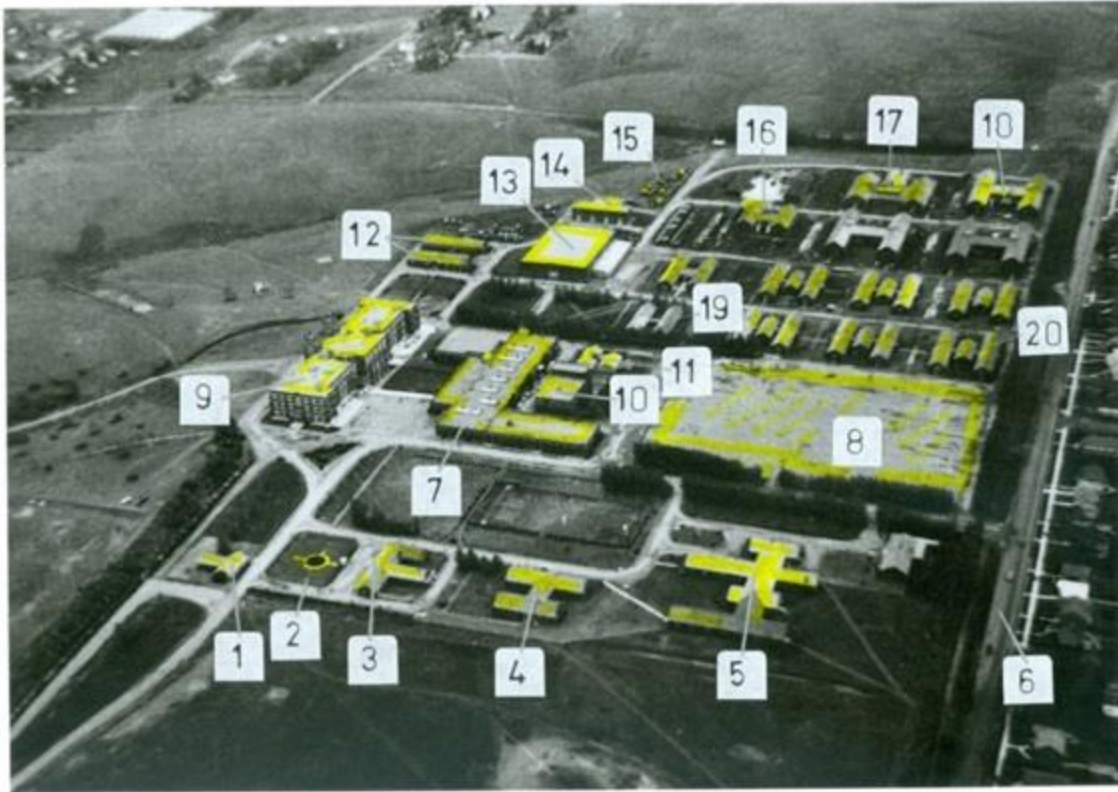
Yessiree---it was quite an event (to you) the day you arrived at No. 2. You were all eyes and ears! You gaped at all those industrious trainees dashing around with books under their arms, and bags under their eyes. 'Member how mystified you were at those mysterious phrases you heard in the mess hall! ("So I give the corp an IMI"--"My newtraliz-ing unit went haywire"--"George finished his GPI labs today.") And then your eyes bugged out like golfballs when you got a glimpse of all the labs!

Holly--you thought, I'll never learn all that! (You were right too)

In March 1942, the RCAF decided all Flying Squadron Wireless [Air] Training flying operations would move twelve miles south from No 3 SFTS [Currie Barracks] to RCAF Relief Field, Shepard, Alberta. Construction of a second hangar began, providing the wireless school aircraft a free training airspace which was not the case at north Calgary RAF No. 37 SFTS or RCAF No. 3 SFTS at Currie airport. The British were flying Airspeed Oxfords and Harvards at No. 37 SFTS, while RCAF No. 3 SFTS flew Cessna Cranes, Harvards, and Avro Ansons. To add to this air traffic training, the RAF operated an active bombing range at the Relief Field at Airdrie, Alberta, where hundreds of smoke bombs were being dropped every day by the Harvards which flew north from Calgary. RAF No. 37 SFTS Calgary was also a main emergency stop for over 8,000 American aircraft being ferried north on the Northwest Staging Route [Amber Highway No. 2] to Alaska which opened in fall of 1942. [7,926 U.S. aircraft were delivered [lend-lease] over Calgary to Russia by August 1945]



This August 1942 air image of No. 2 Wireless School, [Institute of Technology] was possibly taken from a Norseman aircraft as the Menasco Tiger Moth did not have the space to carry a large camera. The students were bused from this location to No. 3 SFTS [Currie Barracks Airfield] and then later [1 December 1942] to RCAF Shepard, Alberta, where they completed ten days to two weeks of wireless air operations training in Norseman, Menasco Tiger Moth, Yale, and finally in late 1944, the Harvard aircraft.



1. Main RCAF Guard House and Jail.
2. Flower bed entrance to school.
3. Officers Mess, location well removed from NCO's and student quarters.
4. Hospital annex building added in July 1942.
5. 16th Avenue, No. two lanes, "A" Trans-Canada Hospital.
6. Main Administration and Wireless Power main storage buildings.
7. Two RCAF canteens, [top] wet, beer and liquor, [bottom] dry, serving soft drinks, cigarettes, candy, and reading material, operated by Salvation Army, March 1942.
8. Drill Hall, Sports events, graduation, and special events like dancing.
9. Link trainer on west side, skeet range located on east side.
10. RCAF Motor NCO's [Pool] Compound.
11. Visiting Dental Officers Quarters.
12. Seven H-Huts for student Airmen's Quarters.
13. Mess.
14. Quarters.
15. building.
16. building.
17. building.
18. building.
19. building.
20. building.



The wireless YMCA lounge in building #12, dry canteen, bottom in photo – east side



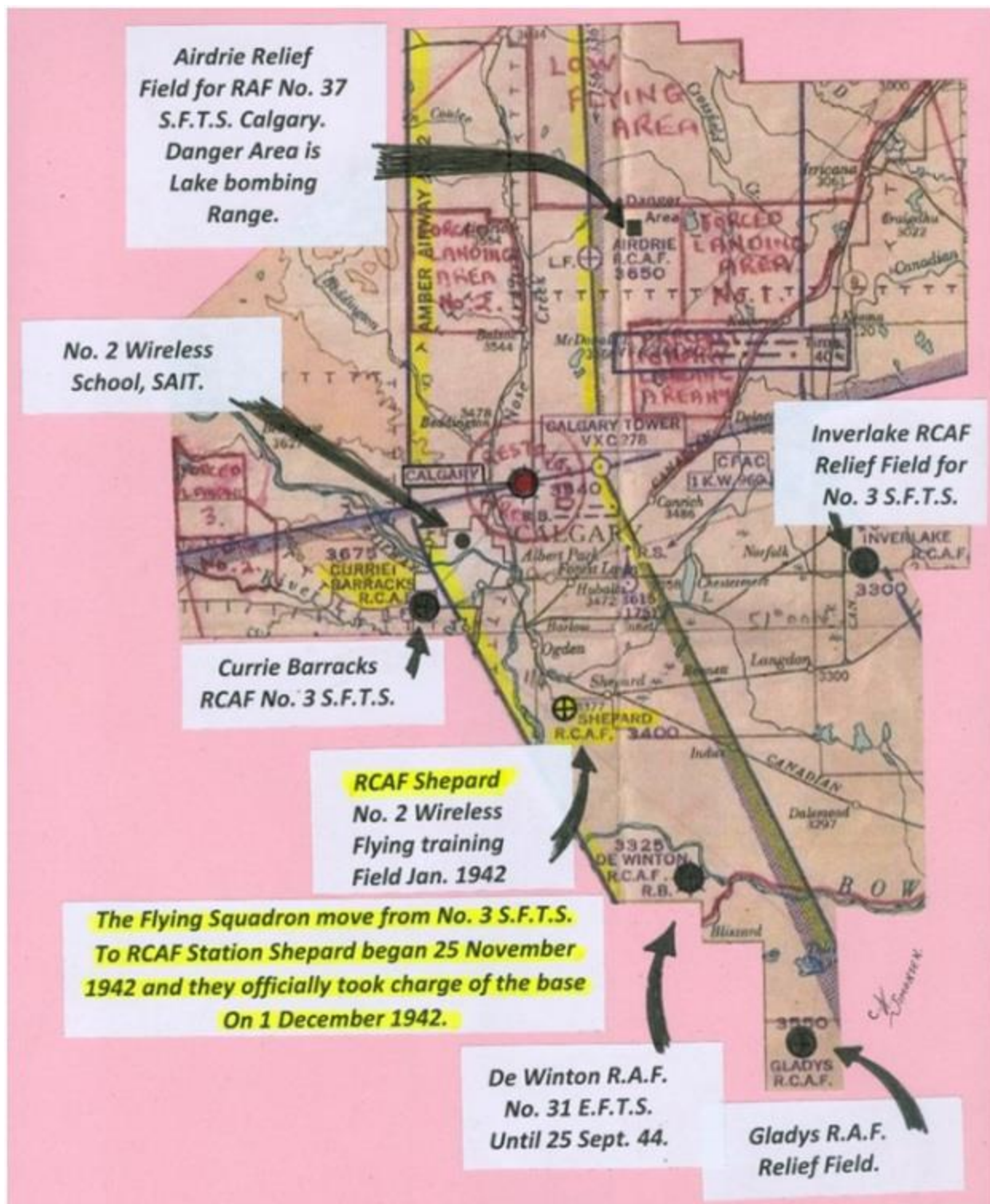
Number "A" workshops lunch and dinning area, building #7.



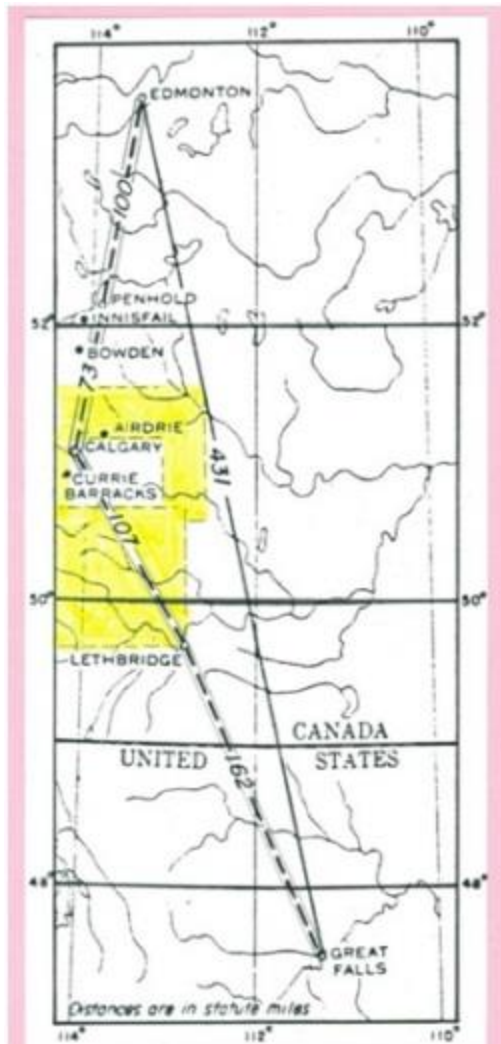
This free domain image was taken in 1968, [City of Calgary Planning] looking North-East to the old Calgary International Airport, ex-No. 37 S.F.T.S. used by the Royal Air Force from 1940-1944. The large area of the SAIT campus is shown [foreground] with the original castle style building used by No. 2 Wireless School from 16 September 1940 until March 1945. Each day hundreds of aircraft passed over Calgary from all directions, which presented an airspace problem for wireless aircraft training.

27-4-42

Sgt. Gregory, E.M. (R95162) Pilot, reported for duty and attached to the Flying Squadron, Fleete Fort No. 3591, piloted by Flying Officer J.M. Simpson (03673) with W.A.G. EAG Newell, H. (WZ414888), taking wireless instruction, collided at No. 3 S.F.T.S. with Crane aircraft over the aerodrome slightly west of the main control tower. Crane aircraft crashed and the occupants were killed. Flying Officer Simpson showed extreme presence of mind and control of the Fleete aircraft, bringing it in under perfect control. The complete star-board wing-tip section and aileron of the Fleete were taken off in the collision. A Court of Inquiry met immediately to investigate the accident.



This is an original 1943 RCAF issued map showing the seven training bases surrounding Calgary, Alberta. While all bases were RCAF property, four were constructed and used mostly by the Royal Air Force from 1940 until fall 1944, including the RAF Headquarters located at No. 37 S.F.T.S. Calgary. This was also home base to Trans Canada Airlines, plus the major flying route of all lend-lease American aircraft headed for Alaska and Russia. The U.S.A.A.F. 7th Ferrying Group, 383th Air Base Squadron [sub-detachment from Edmonton] began operations on the west side of Calgary airport 20 July 1942, the British R.A.F. had been located on the east side since 22 October 1941.



GREAT FALLS TO EDMONTON

All the major stops on this route are equipped with radio range stations and the route presents no major difficulties to flying.

From Great Falls to Lethbridge, the track is over sparsely settled, fairly low, rolling country averaging 4,000 feet in altitude and crossed by numerous streams. Lethbridge is located on the conspicuous Oldman River.

Flat plateau country between 3,000 and 3,500 feet in altitude, is typical between Lethbridge and Calgary. The Canadian Pacific Railroad runs between these two points and may be followed with little sacrifice in distance. Fifty-five miles out from Lethbridge, the course passes directly over Kirkcaldy. There are seven landing fields in the Calgary area, the best field lying to the northeast of the city. Calgary is located on the Bow River, which on the straight course is crossed 42 miles southeast of the airport. Most of these fields are training stations for the R.C.A.F. and due caution should be observed in this area because of the large number of planes in the air.

The railroad continues from Calgary to Edmonton, keeping to the west of the track for the first half of the distance, and to the east of the track for the latter half. Seventy-four miles from Calgary, Penhold Airport is 4 miles left abeam, and at 83 miles the large Red Deer River is crossed. The terrain is low, fairly level, and north of the Red Deer River a great many lakes are in evidence. Edmonton is very conspicuous from a distance and like the other large cities in this area, is situated on a large river, the Saskatchewan.

This Ferry Route Information card was issued to all American and Russian ferry pilots beginning October 1942, and continued under the new formed Alaska Wing Air Transport Command created 1 November 1942. The RAF and RCAF training areas are marked in yellow, the area south to Lethbridge was used by No. 2 W.S. Flying Squadron to train wireless students. The American ferry pilots were cautioned in regards to the large numbers of training aircraft flying around Calgary. Major deliveries of American lend-lease aircraft to Russia began on 12 October 1942, and by the end of the month the following aircraft had flown over Calgary to Edmonton, Alberta. Fifteen B-25s, fifty A-20s, sixty P-39s and twenty P-40s. Calgary was not a refueling stop and only used in case of emergency landing for repairs. The accidents of American aircraft in Alberta was censored and few Canadians had any idea what was occurring overhead. Two Bell P-63 King-cobra fighters crashed at Bow City, south of Calgary and one pilot was killed, while Lt. A. J. Neal force landed his A-20 on a farm south of Calgary airport. Forced landings were many in 1942-43, including American aircraft.



RCAF Station Shepard, Alberta, 1941 until 14 April 1945.

RCAF Station Shepard was originally constructed as a Relief Aircraft Training Field, to be used by No. 3 S.F.T.S. [Currie Barracks] Calgary. The original buildings were constructed for a Skelton staff of RCAF ground crew and mechanics. Two buildings at the entrance #1 were for motor vehicle storage, #2 was a single H-Hut living quarters, #3 power house, #4 was the combined Mess kitchen, Mess dining, and wet canteen with small lounge. #5 a single regular size hangar with control tower on south-east corner. No. 2 Wireless School Flying Squadron returned to No. 3 SFTS [Currie] on 12 May 1941, and air operations training at RCAF Shepard began in July 1941.

On 8 January 1942, a new trainer aircraft arrived at Calgary, Fleet Fort 60K, [Mk. II] serial 3575. In the next thirteen months, 56 Fleet Model 60K Fort training aircraft would arrive on charge at No. 2 Wireless School, Calgary, Alberta. Fleet Fort trainers on charge March 42 – nine, April 42 – twelve, May 42 – thirteen, June 42 – eighteen, July 42, – nineteen, August 42 – twenty-one, September 42 – twenty-three, October 42 – twenty-eight, November 42 – thirty-six, and May to June 1943 – forty-seven, the peak number on charge by any RCAF squadron.



The original prototype Fleet Fort 60K serial 3540, Al Mickeloff, Canadian Warplane Heritage.

Constructed by Fleet Aircraft of Canada at Fort Erie, Ontario, this became the only aircraft totally designed and constructed by Canadians during World War Two. The Fleet Fort became the first all-metal monoplane constructed by Fleet and unfortunately it had a very short career with the RCAF. This prototype first flew on 21 March 1940, by test pilot R.E. Young, at the plant in Fort Erie and then was flown by the RCAF to Trenton, Ontario, 20 May 1940, where more flying was conducted by air force pilots from Test and Development Establishment Rockcliffe, Ontario. Registered as civilian CF-BQP [18 May 1940] this never shows up on the RCAF Daily Diary records in Ottawa, and it appears the Fort remained at Trenton, [Central Flying School] where it was taken on charge by the RCAF on 7 June 1941, assigned serial number 3540. It was tested by the National Research Council beginning in July 41, then returned to No. 6 Repair Depot, Trenton, Ontario, on 27 May 1942. In July 42 it was disassembled, placed on a flatcar and shipped to No. 10 Repair Depot at Calgary, Alberta. On 20 August 1942, Fleet Fort #3540 was reassembled and equipped with radios by No. 10 Repair Depot, then used as a ground instructional airframe [A-182] at the flying school hangar located at No. 3 SFTS at Calgary. This was the first contact the new wireless air operator students had with the new Fleet Fort, before their flying air operations training began.



These SAIT Archive images were taken at No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, Alberta, around 20 August 1942. The man in the bottom image is George Ryning. [SAIT Archives]

Fleet Fort 3540 has been assembled and test flown, next delivered across the airfield to No. 3 S.F.T.S, where the Flying Squadron had their training hangar. Fleet Fort #3540 served as a ground wireless trainer, with radio equipment

installed in the rear cockpit, however it is unknown if it was ever flown at No. 3 SFTS or at RCAF Shepard, Alberta. On 25 November 1942, No 4 Training Command issued movement orders to No. 2 W.S. Flying Squadron, to effect they would move to a new training field at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, and air operations would officially begin on 1 December 1942. The advance party of 40 airmen began the move to Shepard on 26 November and the complete movement of aircraft, and equipment was completed on 29 November 1942. The ground airframe #3540 was no longer required and it was returned to No. 6 Repair Depot, Trenton, by rail flatcar. On 19 December 1942, Fort #3540 was Struck Off Strength by the RCAF and reduced to spare and produce.

In November 1979, Warplane Heritage acquired the airframe of #3540, one Jacob's engine, and three Fleet Fort wings from a private collector in Western Canada. A group of retired Fleet employees led by Bruce MacRitchie volunteered to restore this rare RCAF aircraft to flying.



On 16 June 1993, Fleet Fort #3540 was registered as C-FORT, and on 8 August 1993, with Bruce MacRithie at the controls, she took to the skies again. For the complete personal history of this Fleet Fort please visit the Canadian Warplane Heritage Website and better yet, stop in and view this rare gem of forgotten RCAF Western Canada [Winnipeg-Calgary] wireless training. The image is used with permission of Al Mickeloff, Warplane Heritage, Hamilton, Ontario. Records checked from C.W.H. researcher Larry J. Doyle and card data files from Chris Charland. This very small part of No. 2 W.S. Calgary, Alberta, ground trainer, flies in Ontario today, thanks to the efforts of many kind caring Canadians from Warplane Heritage.

Initially, the RCAF did not want the Fleet model 60K but for some reason 200 were ordered into production. Production of the RCAF Fleet Fort was delayed at Fort Erie, when the first constructed aircraft serial 3561 crashed on 5 June 1941. It would not be repaired and taken on strength by the RCAF until 28 March 1942.

The second production Fort # 3562 was completed on 3 June 1941, taken on charge by the RCAF, then flown to Rockcliffe Test and Development by S/L F.E.R. Briggs on 30 June 1941. Test pilot S/L Briggs and F/L W. Richards would later be killed in an aircraft test dive [Cessna Crane #7919] accident at Rockcliffe on 13 September 1941.

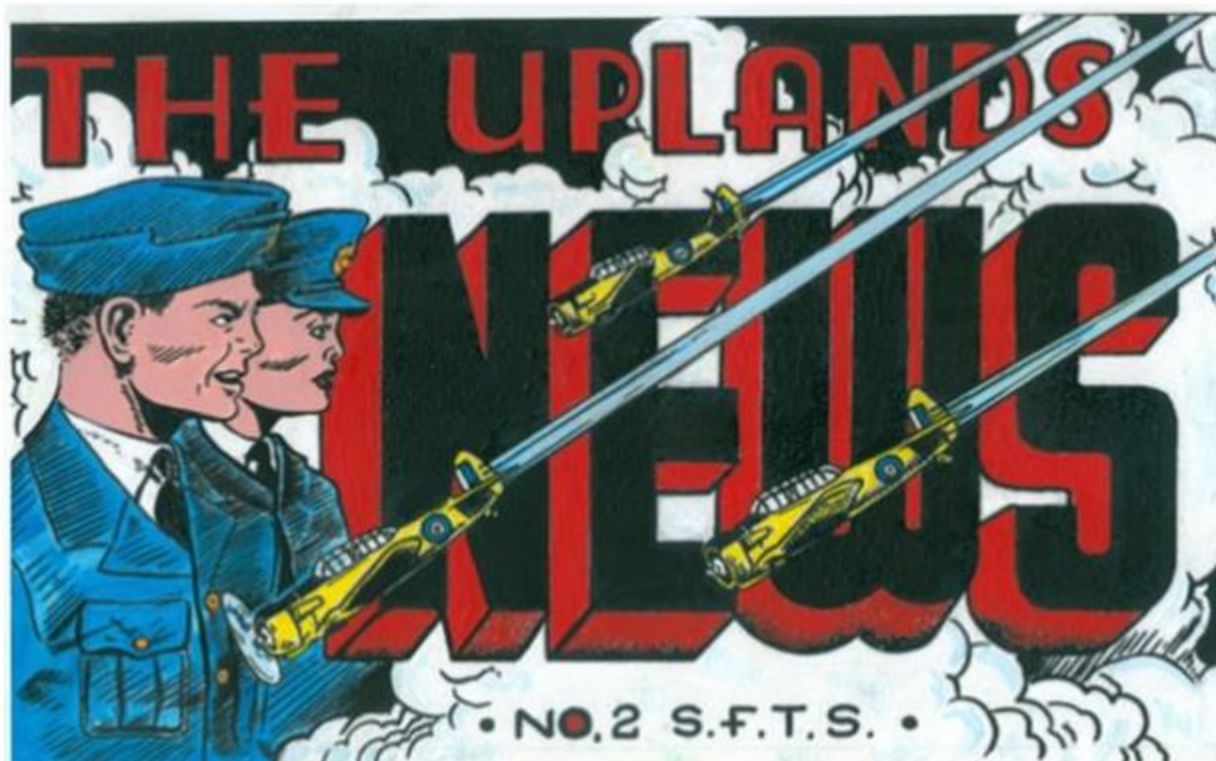


This RCAF official photo was taken at Rockcliffe, possibly 30 June 1941, where aircraft testing took place until 25 July 1941. Pilot testing at both Rockcliffe and RCAF Uplands, [August to October 1941] found the aircraft unsuitable for RCAF combat pilot training and the original contract was now cut back to 100 production aircraft.

(UNIT OR FORMATION) Test & Development Establishment		DAILY DIARY
DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS	
31-10-41	S/L. J. McLaughlin (RAF) returned from Mountain View where he had been employed on Tests re armament on Kitty Hawk aircraft - reference Operation Order 134/41.	
31-10-41	Officers (13), Airmen (115) Personnel other than RCAF - 1 (RAF) Officer & 1 (RAF) Airman, Civilians - NIL, Total - 130.	
	<u>Aircraft on Charge:</u>	
	Anson II(CAN) 7069, Hudson T9385, Anson III, Blenheim X7072, Bolingbroke 9010, Bolingbroke 710, Bolingbroke 9030, Crane 9762, Delta 677, Delta 684, Delta 671, Yale 3439, Battle 1628, Kitty Hawk 752, Fort 3562 , Lyander 459, Tiger Moth 4396,	
	Total Flying Time - 115 Hrs. - 30 minutes.	
	Fleet Fort 60K serial 3562 arrived at Test and Development, Rockcliffe, 30 June 1941. It remained on testing strength until 26 November 41, when it was replaced by Fort 3571, and Fort 3573 on 5 December 1941.	

Fort 3571 was used for redesign and intense flying testing to correct all "bugs" [Prototype Wireless Trainer] for wireless operator training. Testing completed 9 February 1942, departed for Calgary. Fort 3573 was used to redesign radio and battery fittings and air testing. Testing completed May 1942, lost in Rockcliffe hangar fire 21 August 1944.

For three months, [August to October 1941] pilot trainer testing was conducted at No. 2 S.F.T.S Uplands, [Ottawa] where the RCAF decided the 100 Fort aircraft would be modified for training of wireless operators and assigned to No. 2 Wireless School at Calgary, Alberta, and No. 3 at Winnipeg, Manitoba. Fleet Fort Mk. I, #3562 remained on charge at the Test and Development Est. at Rockcliffe until 15 November 1942. [Daily Diary] In early December 42, she was dismantled, loaded onto a flatcar and shipped by rail to No. 8 Repair Depot, arriving on 30 March 42. [Daily Diary] Assembled and taken on strength at No. 3 W. S. Winnipeg, [Tuxedo Park] 9 September 1942, where she flew 439:25 hrs training until 2 March 1945.



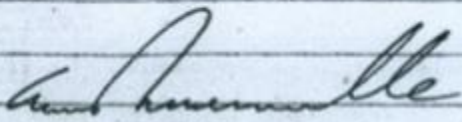
No. 2 SFTS Uplands Harvard training was interrupted from 13 July to 1 August 1941, while shooting of the film "Captains of the Clouds" took place. Only limited early morning pilot training took place, as the RCAF authorities felt the American movie publicity was well worth the wartime disruptions.

(UNIT OR FORMATION) <u>No. 2 S.F.T.S. Uplands, Ontario</u>																																						
DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS																																					
1-7-41	<p>Strength of No. 2 S.F.T.S., Uplands, as at 0001 hours, 1-7-41</p> <table> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Officers</th> <th>Airmen</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>R.C.A.F.</td> <td>71</td> <td>602</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>R.C.A.F. Trainees</td> <td></td> <td>102</td> <td rowspan="2">} 77</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R.A.A.F. & R.A.F. Trainees</td> <td></td> <td>77</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R.A.F.</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dental, Canadian Dental Corps</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Postal, Canadian Postal Corps</td> <td>—</td> <td>3</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Civilians</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>168</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>72</td> <td>788</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Strength of Aircraft on No. S.F.T.S. Establishment, as at 0001 hours, 1-7-41</p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Harvards</td> <td>82</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Weather cloudy - no cross country flying. 403392 LAC Yates (Aus) ground-looped Harvard 2508 on the aerodrome, a C-3 crash, and (will probably require three days for repairs) Pilot uninjured.</p> <p>Information was received that No. 2 S.F.T.S. is to be the scene for at least part of the movie "Captains of the Clouds", being produced by Warner Brothers, with Olivia DeHaviland and James Cagney in the leading roles, the Director being Michael Curtiz. Naturally, considerable excitement reigns here, especially as we understand that around one hundred technicians, etc., are to be quartered on the Station. Shooting of the various scenes is to begin in about two weeks.</p>		Officers	Airmen		R.C.A.F.	71	602		R.C.A.F. Trainees		102	} 77	R.A.A.F. & R.A.F. Trainees		77	R.A.F.		1		Dental, Canadian Dental Corps	1	3		Postal, Canadian Postal Corps	—	3		Civilians			168		72	788		Harvards	82
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On 1 July 1941, No. 2 S.F.T.S. at RCAF Uplands [Ottawa] had on strength eighty-two North American Harvard trainers. Many of these aircraft would star in the making of the Warner Brothers film "Captains of the Clouds" starring James Cagney.

(UNIT OR FORMATION) <u>No. 2 S.F.T.S. Uplands</u>	
DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS
1-8-41	Weather clear. Flying as usual excepting that in the late afternoon, as a final windup for Warner Bros. Pictures, formation flying with as high as thirty-six planes was carried out; considering lack of practice, the formations were excellent. His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent was spending a day in the Gatineau Hills and the Station was again credited with staging another fine show for His Royal Highness. P/O F.P. Boswell, J4871, was forced down due to engine failure and made a landing nine miles north of the aerodrome in Harvard 3067, which resulted in a "CS" crash. P/L H.M. Wilson became Examining Officer for No. 2 Squadron, replacing S/L Searle who had taken over command of No. 2 Squadron.
2-8-41	A bright clear day. Warner Bros. have left and the squadrons are concentrating on picking up their flying time and getting back on schedule.
Fleet Fort #3563, #3564, #3565, #3566, and # 3567 officially taken on charge by RCAF Station Uplands, however the date of arrival is not recorded. No information in regards to pilot training is recorded in the Daily Diary.	

The final thirty-six aircraft flying formation scene for Captains of the Clouds was shot on 1 August 1941. In the same month, five Fleet Fort 60K aircraft were taken on charge at RCAF Uplands, serial 3563, 3564, 3565, 3566, and 3567, however the date of aircraft arrival is not recorded in the Daily Diary. They were possibly flown by trainees of Course #33, 3 July to 25 September 1941.

Flying washed out in afternoon on account of heavy rain, which lasted all evening			
31-8-41	<u>STRENGTH OF UNIT</u>	<u>31-7-41</u>	<u>31-8-41</u>
	Officers (Staff)	77	84 (Includes 8 trainees)
	Airmen (Staff)	719	780
	Trainees	185	173
	Personnel other than R.C.A.F.	8	8
	Civilians	168	164
	<u>STRENGTH OF AIRCRAFT</u>		1721
	Harvards	80	Fort serial numbers 5363, 5364, 5365, 5366 and 5367.
	Fleet "Fort"	5	
	TOTAL	85	
	<u>NUMBER OF HOURS FLOWN DURING THE MONTH</u>		6722 hours
	 (A. de Niverville) Group Captain Commanding Officer No. 2 S.F.T.S. Uplands, Ontario		

These five Fleet Fort trainers remained on charge at RCAF Uplands until at least 9 October 1941, where #3565 had a Cat. B accident while training. Off charge RCAF 11 March 1942, #3565 was never assigned as a wireless trainer. While these Canadian designed aircraft flying characteristics were very good, the Uplands Flying Instructors thought a student pilot could not make the required transition from this intermediate trainer to a Hawker Hurricane fighter. The North American AT-6 Harvard, J-Bird, Texan, or what ever name you wish to describe it, proved to be the safest, most reliable, powerful, challenging, and best machine for transition from elementary trainer to front line fighters during and after WWII. This North American incredible trainer, soon earned the title, the greatest of all global "pilot makers" and it is still around today training pilots and thrilling crowds with the thunder drone of its engine. The poor old Canadian Fleet Fort did not stand a chance to replace the AT-6 Harvard, which Fleet originally designed it to do. The RCAF

wisely decided to convert all of the Forts to wireless operator trainers, and the prototype became Fort #3571, which arrived at Test and Development Est. Rockcliffe, Ontario, on 26 November 1941. Fort #3572 and #3573 followed to Rockcliffe where they were used for major design and installation of the radio equipment. The history of the first thirteen Fleet Fort 60K production aircraft records on where and how they were converted into a wireless operator training machine follows. Six of these Forts later served at Winnipeg, and one at Calgary Wireless training schools.

1. Fort #3561 – completed 2 June 1941, crashed during test flight at Fort Erie on 5 June 1941. Repaired and delivered to RCAF, taken on charge 28 March 1942. Placed on flatcar and arrived at No. 8 Repair Depot, Winnipeg, 6 April 1942. [Assigned No. 3 W.S.] Assigned to No. 17 SFTS [Souris, Manitoba] on 23 November 1942. Off charge 3 March 1945.

2. Fort #3562 – completed 3 June 1941, first aircraft allotted to Test and Development Est. at Rockcliffe, Ontario, 30 June 1941, test pilot S/L F.E. R. Briggs. Used for testing until mid-November 1942, then assigned to No. 3 Wireless School, Tuxedo Park, Winnipeg, Manitoba, arrived No. 8 Repair Depot, 30 March 1942. Assigned No. 3 Wireless School training on 9 September 1942. Off Strength 3 March 1945.

3. Fort #3563 – completed 15 July 1941, assigned to RCAF Uplands in August 1941, used for testing and to prepare pilot's notes for all Fleet Fort flying operations. Left Uplands 9 October 41, after only flying 57:45 hrs. Believed to have flown training at No. 3 W.S. Off Strength 5 February 1945.

4. Fort #3564 – completed 22 July 1941. Arrived RCAF Uplands in August 1941, flew until 9 October 41, shipped by rail to No. 8 Repair Depot, arrived 26 March 1942. Assigned No. 3 W.S. Winnipeg, 17 September 1942, flew training 1566:20 hrs. Off Strength 2 March 1945.

5. Fort #3565 – completed 2 August 1941, delivered RCAF Uplands August 1941, flew until 9 October 41, Cat. B accident 9 October 1941, No. 2 SFTS Uplands [Ottawa]. Off Strength 11 March 1942. Never flew wireless training.

6. Fort #3566 – completed 2 August 1941, delivered to RCAF Uplands August 41, until 9 October 41. Shipped by rail to No. 8 Repair Depot, arrived 26 February 1942. Assigned to No. 3 W.S. on 11 December 1942. Damaged 16 January 1943, during training. Off Strength 2 March 1945.

7. Fort #3567 – completed 13 August 1941, delivered to RCAF Uplands August 1941, until 9 October 41. Shipped by rail to No. 8 Repair Depot, arrived 26 February 1942. Assigned to No. 3 W.S. on 4 March 1942. Forced landing 9 May 1943. Off Strength 2 March 1945.

8. Fort #3568 – completed 20 August 1941, delivered by rail to No. 8 Repair Depot, arrived 26 February 1942. Assigned No. 3 W.S. on 9 March 1942. Transferred to No. 17 SFTS [Souris, Manitoba] on 9 November 1942. Off Strength RCAF 2 March 45.

9. Fort #3569 – completed 27 August 1941, delivered to No. 3 W.S. To No. 17 SFTS on 23 November 1942. Forced landing 2 April 1943. Off Strength 2 March 45.

10. Fort #3570 – completed 12 February 1942. Delivered by rail to No. 8 Repair Depot, arrived 4 March 1942. Assigned to No. 3 W.S. on 18 March 1942, flew 1117:40 hrs. Transferred to No. 17 SFTS [Souris, Manitoba] 9 November 1942. Off Strength RCAF 2 March 1945.

11. Fort #3571 – completed 17 November 1941. Allotted to Test and Development Est. at Rockcliffe, Ontario, transfer order 12277 – dated 26 November 1941. Prototype tested to discover and eliminate any 'bugs' in the design as an RCAF wireless trainer aircraft. Later used at both Calgary and Winnipeg for wireless training. On 9 February 1942, testing was completed at Rockcliffe, [Test & Devel.] and #3571 was dismantled and shipped by rail to No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, Alberta, where it arrived on 3 March 1942. Transferred to No. 3 W.S. Winnipeg, arriving at No. 8 Repair Depot, on 1 June 1942. Taken on strength No. 3 W.S. on 8 December 1942. Off strength RCAF 2 March 1945.

12. Fort #3572 – completed 17 November 1941, assigned to Test and Development Est. Rockcliffe in early January 1942. Used to design and construct the fitting of Marconi radio equipment T1154/R1155 wireless and fitting of battery 5J27. This was in report No. 574 dated 10 February 1942 and the aircraft left Ottawa in May 42. Testing time 32:35 hrs. Off Strength 13 February 1945.

13. Fort #3573 – completed 22 November 1941. Allotted Test and Development Est., transfer 12514 – dated 5 December 1941. Used for further design and fact gathering for wireless operator training. Prototype for medical kit storage on Fleet Fort trainer. Lost in hangar fire at RCAF Rockcliffe on 21 August 1944. Off Strength 21 September 1945.

The next 37 Fleet Fort 60K trainers were delivered to No. 2 Wireless School at Calgary, Alberta, beginning [8 January 1942] with serial number 3574 and ending with 3610. They were not delivered in order of serial number, but arrived at No. 10 Repair Depot at different dates, which were all recorded in the wireless flying squadron Daily Dairy. [This complete list follows]

The next block of 33 Fleet Fort 60K trainers were delivered to No. 3 Wireless School at Winnipeg, beginning on 3 March 1942, with serial number 3611 and ending with 3644. They were delivered by rail in a close order of serial number and arrived on different dates. The Daily Diary at No. 3 W.S. did not record all of the serial numbers or arrival date, causing some loss of important data. On 20 February 1942, Mr. Mackie [Fleet Aircraft, Fort Erie] and Mr. Lillick [American Jacobs Engines] arrived at No. 8 Repair Depot, awaiting the first delivery of Fort aircraft. First four trainers to arrived on 23 February 1942, Fleet Fort serial #3611, #3612, #3613, #3614. The first two assembled were #3611 and #3612, both taken on strength by No. 3 W.S. on 3 March 1942.

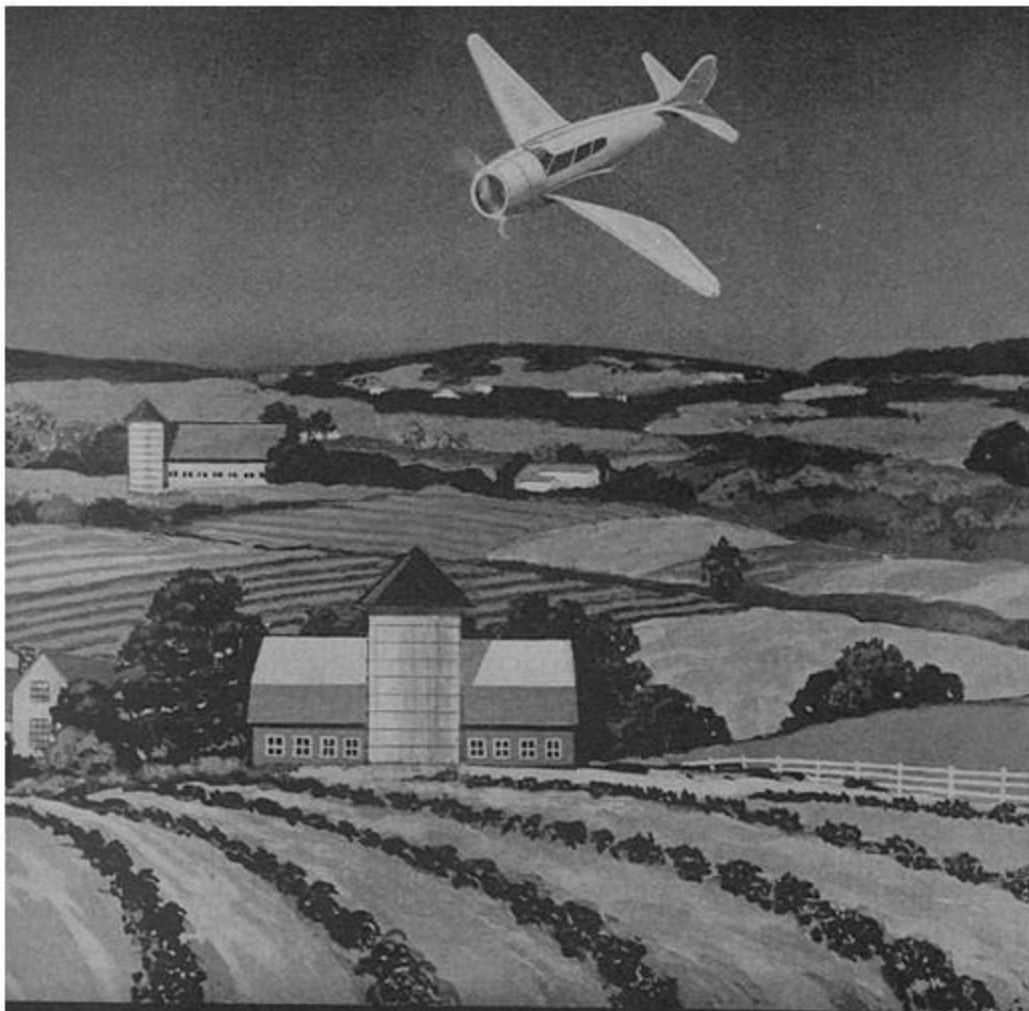
26	February	1942,	–	#3568,	#3615,	#3616,	#3566,	#3567,	and	#3619.
4	March	42,	–	#3570,	#3617,	#3618,			and	#3620.
9	March	42,	–		#3621				and	#3622.
10	March	42,	–		#3623				and	#3624.
11	March	42,	–		#3625				and	#3626.
16	March	42,	–		#3627				and	#3628.
23	March	42,	–		#3631				and	#3632.
26	March	42,	–		#3564				and	#3633.
27	March		42,		#3634				and	#3636.
30	March	42,		#3562,	#3635,	#3637,			and	#3638.
31	March	42,		#3637,	#3639,				and	#3640.
1	April		42,		#3641				and	#3642.
6	April		42,		#3561				and	#3643.

16 April 42, #3644.

My records indicate in total 42 Fleet Fort 60K aircraft were taken on strength at No. 3 Wireless School, Winnipeg, Manitoba, from early April 1942 until 14 July 1944, when all were ferried for storage. The peak month of operations was March 1944, when 34 Fleet Fort were on strength.

The last group of 16 Fleet Fort 60K [serial #3645 to #3660] were all delivered to No. 2 Wireless School at Calgary, and again arrived at different dates. All were recorded in the Daily Dairy with serial number and arrival date. [complete list follows]





HOME *Straight as an Arrow...*

With the unconditional surrender of our enemies,—which must be won by our blood, sweat and toil—, will come peace and the post-war period of reconstruction and development.

Aviation, now the No. 1 industry of America, will continue to lead the way. From the centers of our great cities to the vast expanses of our rural sections, Airplanes will play a leading part in our lives. Distances between home and place of business will be of much less importance, as the speed and efficiency of Aircraft will make commuting practical and economical. You can go home straight as an arrow, from wherever you are.

Advanced engineering and foresight will continue Jacobs leadership in the production of dependable and economical Aircraft Engines - *practical engines* for the private owner, the business concern and the "feeder" Airline.



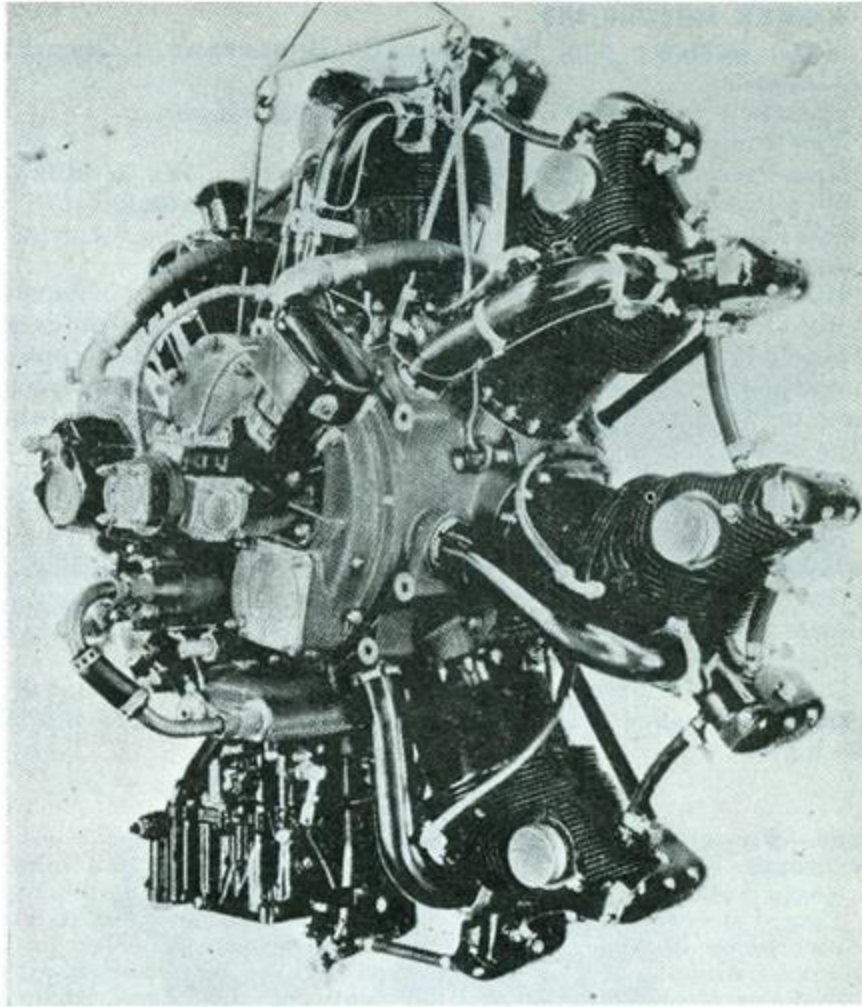
JACOBS AIRCRAFT
Engines



POTTSTOWN • PENNSYLVANIA

U • S • A •

This full page advertisement appeared in the 15 November 1943 issue of Maclean's Magazine, and the aircraft somewhat resembles a Fleet Fort. I'm sure the American artist had no idea what a Fort looked like, if that was in fact what he wished to illustrate.

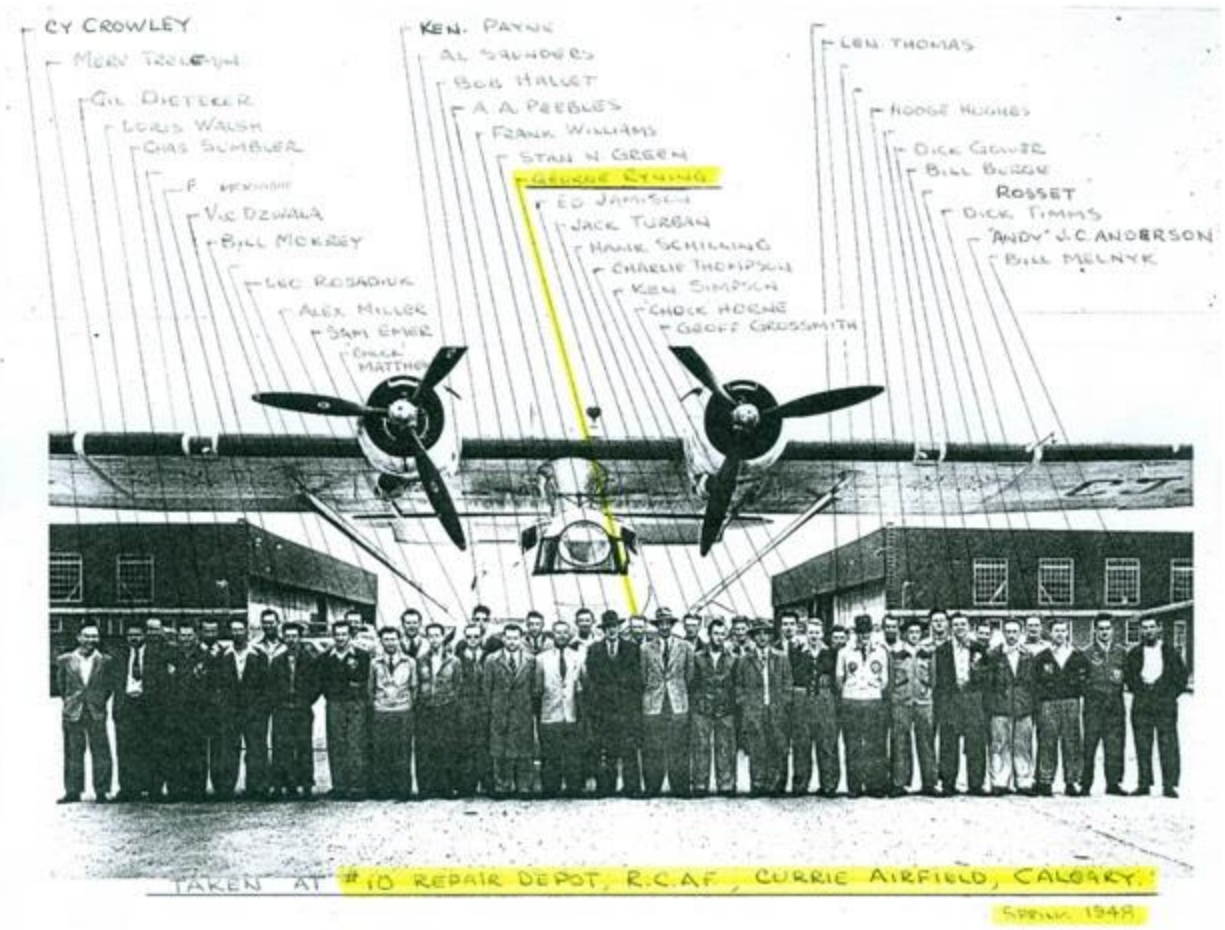


The 330 h.p. Jacobs R-915A1 (L-6MB) radial air-cooled engine.

The Jacobs Aircraft Engine company had been concentrating on the production of two basic aircraft engines, the R-755 and R-915 series. The 245 h.p. R-755A1 was fitted in the twin engine Cessna Crane aircraft produced for the R.C.A.F. and used in the BCATP. The second more powerful 330 h.p. R-915A1 seven-cylinder air-cooled radials were installed in the Canadian constructed twin-engine Avro Anson Mk. II trainers, which trained thousands of students in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

The Fleet Fort 60K aircraft were fitted with both series engines, the R-755A1 engine was named the Fort Mk. I and the more powerful 330 h.p. R-915A1 became the Fort Mk. II aircraft. Most of the 100 production Fleet Fort aircraft flew with the 330 h.p. engine which gave them a top speed of 193 m.p.h. [311 km/h].

The Fleet Fort aircraft were disassembled, placed on railway flat cars and the No. 2 W.S. assigned aircraft arrived at No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary, Alberta. The first two aircraft #3574 and 3575, arrived at No. 10 R.D. on 3 January 1942, were reassembled and test flown. The first to arrive at No. 2 W.S. was #3575, taken on strength 6 January 1942.



This 1948 reunion group photo includes many of the men who worked at No. 10 Repair Depot during the war, and possibly a good number of the ground crew who assembled the Fleet Fort 60K aircraft for test flying. No. 10 R.D. newsletter cover for March 1942, was possibly a Fleet Fort.





This photo [PMR 78-317 Ottawa] has been published many times but never with good research details. These two Fleet Fort 60K Mk. II are possibly proceeding from No. 3 SFTS at Calgary to the training area at RCAF Station Shepard, Alberta. The Fleet Fort aircraft from No. 2 Wireless School Flying Squadron were not based at RCAF Station Shepard, Alberta, until 25 November 1942, officially 1 December 1942. Fort 3609 was taken on strength by RCAF 3 February 1942, delivered to No. 2 W.S. Calgary on 9 October 1942. Fort 3610 was T.O.S. 6 February 1942, arrived Calgary 6 May 1942. Fort 3609 crashed 17 October 42, lost r.p.m. on take-off ground looped. Repaired turned over on nose 27 February 1943. Repaired, collided with control tender [truck] on 18 March 1943, repaired. Flew 1016:55 hrs at Calgary until 20 March 1944. Fort 3610 crashed 11 February 1943, repaired, force landed Beiseker 18 January 1944, then completed 1162:00 hrs. at Calgary until 18 March 1944.

Production of the Fleet Fort was initially slow, with delivery in quarterly periods beginning [1] April and [1] May 1941. After pilot testing at No. 2 SFTS Uplands, [August to October 1941] the RCAF original order of 200 aircraft was reduced to 100, and 56 [plus prototype #3540] of these would be taken on strength at No. 2 Wireless School, Calgary, Alberta. Following is my list of the dates the Fleet Fort 60K trainers were taken on charge at Calgary and RCAF Shepard, [6 January 1942 to 18 March 1944] containing 52 serial numbers which have been confirmed from the Wireless Flying Squadron Daily Diary record book.



The No. 10 Repair Depot Vol. 1, #1, Newsmagazine was published March 1942, and the cover was created by L.A.C. Sheldon-Williams, the art editor. February and March 1942, were very busy months for assembling and test-flying the new Fleet Fort 60K aircraft, and this was possibly reflected in his cover art. This original pen and ink drawing has been coloured by the author.

Fleet Fort 60K on strength at Calgary and Shepard.
 The letters D.D. confirm this Fort aircraft serial was recorded in the squadron Daily Diary for the date it arrived at
 Calgary from RCAF No. 10 Repair Depot, Calgary.
 3575 16th built, 1st to No. 2 W.S. 8 January 1942. Daily Diary

3574	1st	Dual	controls	20	Jan.	42.	D.D.
3581		23	Feb.		42.		D.D.
3583		23	Feb.		42.		D.D.
3584	Dual	control	11	Aug,	42.	23 Feb.	42. D.D.
3586	23	Feb.	42.	D.D. Cat.	A	10 May	42.
3595	945:45 hrs.	23 Feb.	42. Caught fire	No. 10	Repair depot.	Delivered 26 Feb.	1942. D.D.
3594		24		Feb.		42.	D.D.
3597		24		Feb.		42.	D.D.
3598		949:25	hrs.	25	Feb.	42.	D.D.
3576	951:35	hrs.	27 Feb.	42. 1st delivered	with	radio installed.	D.D.
3571		1031:25	hrs	3	March	42.	D.D.

This aircraft was taken on strength RCAF 17 November 1941, allotted to Rockcliffe Test and Development transfer order 12277, dated 26 Nov. 41. This was the Prototype Wireless Trainer and after testing was completed [9 Feb. 42] was dismantled and loaded onto a railway car for shipment to No. 10 Repair Depot Calgary, 23 February 1942. Arrived Calgary on 3 March 1942, transferred to No. 3 W.S. Winnipeg, 8 December 1942. Total training hours 1031:25, off strength

2	April	42,	–	RCAF radios	installed	in	3584,	3594,	3595,	3597,	and	3598.	D.D.
3585				13			April			42			D.D.
3589				13			April			42			D.D.
3592		1105:00	hrs.				13		April		42		D.D.

3579 14 April 42.

All	delivered	with	radios	from	this	date	onward.	D.D.
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This is the only Fleet Fort trainer from Calgary to survive and today it is in storage at the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

3591		14		April		42.		D.D.
3577		16		April		42.		D.D.
3578	D.D. 8		Jan		44	forced		landing.
3587		29		April		42.		D.D.
3602		29		April		42.		D.D.
Cat.	A		6		May	43.		Burnt.
3593	27 May	42.	D.D. Cat.	B 5	Jun	42,	Cat. A 1	Apr. 42.

3540 The original prototype Fleet Fort, ex-CF-BQP, is given RCAF serial #3540 on 18 May 1940. After testing it arrives at No. 6 Repair Depot, Trenton, Ontario, 27 May 1942. Disassembled and shipped by rail to No. 10 Repair Depot at Calgary, Alberta. Becomes ground instructional airframe RCAF #A182 on 20 August 1942. Returned by rail to No. 6 R.D., Trenton, Ontario, and Struck Off Strength by RCAF 12 December 1942.

3588		16		June		42.		D.D.
3590		18		June		42.		D.D.
3596	18	June	42.	D.D. Cat.	A	24	Sept.	42.
3582	From	Winnipeg.	8 July	42.	D.D. Cat.	C –	1 Feb.	1943.
3583		13		July		42		D.D.
3584		11	August		42.	D.D. Dual		controls.
3575		951:35	hrs.		28	Aug.	42.	D.D.
3580		28		Aug.		42.		D.D.
3600		4		September		42.		D.D.

3594 11 Sept. 42. D.D.

14 September 1942, all aircraft were grounded for special inspections and fifteen were found to be unserviceable for flying.

25	Sept.	1942	–	Fort	3595,	and	3598	taken	off	charge.
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3601		Mk.I		29		Sept.		42.		D.D.
3609		9		October				42.		D.D.
3599		10		Oct.				42.		D.D.
3658		29		Oct.				42.		D.D.
3660	29	Oct.	42.		D.D. crashed		6	Dec.		42.
3610		6		May				42.		D.D.
3607		14		October				42.		D.D.
3608		D.D. Cat.		A		7		July		43.
3659		3		November				42.		D.D.
3657		18		Nov.				42.		D.D.

3649	18	Nov.	42.	D.D.
3648	23	Nov.	42.	D.D.
3653	23	Nov.	42.	D.D.
3654	23	Nov.	42.	D.D.
3655	D.D. Burnt	Cat.	A	16 Dec.
3568	1	February	43.	D.D.
3645	D.D. Cat.	B.	19	Sept.
3646	2	Feb.	43.	D.D.
3651	2	Feb.	43.	D.D.
3647	6	Feb.	43.	D.D.
3605	9	Feb.	43.	D.D.
3552	22	Feb.	43.	D.D.
3652	3	March	1944.	D.D.
3656	22 Feb.	42.	D.D.	

The Flying Squadron move to RCAF Station Shepard began on 25 November 1942 and they officially took charge of their new base on 1 December 1942. They had thirty-six Fleet Fort 60K trainers on strength, which were beginning to set a bad wireless training example, with many catching fire and even exploding in flight.



25-11-42 The Movement Order was received from No.4 Training Command to effect the move of the Flying Squadron and Air Operating Section from its present location at No.3 S.F.T.S. to Shepard Aerodrome on December 1, 1942.

Eighteen pilots proceeded to No.10 Repair Depot for ferrying Tiger Moth Aircraft to Prince Albert, Sask.

A keenly contested basketball game between the Officers and Security Guards was held in the Stn.Auditorium.

26-11-42 An advance party of 40 airmen moved to Shepard, S.O.S. at No.3 S.F.T.S. for quarters and rations.

The Regular Monthly Mess Dinner was held in the Officers' Mess.

27-11-42 The move to Shepard commenced today. Stearman Aircraft being ferried by No.2 Wireless School pilots to No.10 Repair Depot. Flight Lieutenant D.J. Thomson and P.O. C.F. Osborne proceeded to Shepard to prepare for opening of Shepard. Switchboard set up and in operation at Shepard.

160 Trainees of the 54th Entry reported to the Flying Squadron for familiarization flights.

A Dry Canteen for airmen opened up at Shepard.

Recreational training included a hockey game between the Accounts Section and the Equipment Section.

28-11-42 Ten Pilots on Ferry Flight returned for Duty to Flying Squadron.

Y.M.C.A. movie "The Cat and the Canary" featuring Bob Hope was well attended.

29-11-42 Completed moving of equipment to Shepard. F.L. D.J. Thomson, F.L. R.D. Carter, F.O.C.E.H. Moss and P.O. C.F. Osborne proceeded to Shepard to set up equipment and arrange administration offices.

The Regular Weekly Church Services, R.C. and Protestant, were held, followed by Communion Services (Prot)

30-11-42 44th Entry ^{started} final Examinations in Radio Theory, Procedure and Morse, Armament, Aircraft Recognition, Signals Organisation.

Balance of Airmen at Flying Squadron not required for maintenance of aircraft remaining at Currie Barracks, proceeded to Shepard by bus. No flying was carried out.

2-6-42

A report from the Flying Squadron to the effect that the new Fleet Fort Mark II aircraft are not giving satisfaction was forwarded to higher authority. The faults reported as common to this type of aircraft include:- (a) Poor Visibility (b) Ground looping (c) Bumps in rough weather make it difficult for trainees to tune W/T Set and work. (d) Spinning (e) Poor design and workmanship (f) Not economical for work required of it. (g) High maintenance cost. (h) Installation of W/T equipment difficult.

Six months [6 June 42] earlier a special report had been sent to RCAF high command in regards to so many serious problems in flying the Fleet Fort trainer at No. 3 SFTS [Currie] Calgary, but no action was taken.

Now the same Fort II aircraft were catching fire, and blowing up in mid-air, while the same number of Forts [33] flying with No. 3 Wireless school in Winnipeg had no aircraft fire problems. Calgary Wireless Flying School had more force landings in one week than Winnipeg had in two months. What was the problem with No. 2 W.S. Flying Squadron Fleet Fort aircraft? On 1 January 1943, the flying squadron had on charge 36 Fleet Fort 60K aircraft [one Mk. I and 35 Mk. II] The accidents continued at their new base RCAF Shepard, Alberta. In May 1943, forty-seven Fleet Forts trainers were on strength at Shepard, Alberta, the most flown by any RCAF squadron to that date, and the most flown at Calgary.

3	Feb.	43	-	Fort	3604	crashed	on	landing.
11	Feb.	43	-	Fort	3606	nosed	over	Damaged.

11 Feb. 43 - Fort 3610 crashed on landing.

DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS
14-Feb-43	Church Services held in the Auditorium at 0800 hours for Roman Catholic Personnel. Protestant Church Service held at 1000 hours. Communion Service held in the Lounge Room after the regular service for Protestant personnel. Fleet Fort 3665 piloted by R125054 Flight Sergeant Keon, H.C. made a forced landing at Blackie, Alta. due to engine trouble. Fleet Fort 3575 piloted by R108462 Flight Sergeant Simpson, G.B. made a forced landing at Lethbridge due to engine trouble. Fleet Fort 3591 piloted by R96044 Flight Sergeant Ogins, M.J.R. made a forced landing at Strathmore due to engine trouble. None of the pilots were injured.
15-Feb-43	Course 502 returned to No.2 Wireless School on completion of Air Operating exercises.

1 March 43 - Fort 3582 caught fire mid-air when fuel cap came off, forced landing, no injuries.
2 March 43 - Fort 3591 forced landing engine trouble.
7 March 43 - Fort 3659 forced landing engine over heated.
25 March 43 - Fort 3588 clogged fuel lines, forced landing.
26 March 43 - Fort 3602 icing, forced landing, nosed over.
31 March 43 - Fort 3645 crashed and burnt, pilot and student killed.
30 April 43 - Fort 3587 forced landing engine.

The RCAF did not want the Fleet Fort Model 60K in the first place and now their concerns were being proven valid by all the forced landings and in-flight fires at No. 3 SFTS, which continued at RCAF Station Shepard, Alberta. When one aircraft crashed or burnt, it was just replaced by another Fleet Fort and training continued. Fleet Fort strength on 30 April 1943 was 45 aircraft, until another caught fire in the air on 6 May 1943.

April 30-43	
Sudden Ground Fog washed out Flying for a short period. Fleet Fort aircraft No. 3567 made forced landing near High River due to engine trouble. No damage to aircraft or injury to personnel.	
<u>STRENGTH OF UNIT AS AT 30-4-43</u>	<u>TOTAL HOURS FLOWN FOR MONTH ENDING 30-4-43</u>
(i) RCAF Officers (Staff) 58	4253 hours 20 minutes.
(ii) RCAF Officers (V.D.) 2	
(iii) RCAF Airman (Staff) 604	
(iv) RCAF Airwomen Nil	
(v) Trainees 1161	
(vi) Personnel other than RCAF	
CDC Officers 3	
CNO Other Ranks 9	
RCASO Officers Nil	
RCASO Other Ranks Nil	
(vii) Civilians 167	
(viii) RCAF Officers (Trainees) Nil	
(ix) Trainees (V.E.T.P.) 292	
	<u>AIRCRAFT ON STRENGTH AS AT 30-4-43</u>
	Fleet Fort MK 1 1
	Fleet Fort MK 2 44
	Menace Moth 2
	Horseman 7
	Total 54
	<i>E. R. Owen</i> (E. R. Owen) Group Captain, Commanding Officer, No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF, Calgary, Alberta.

May 6, 1943.

GROUNDED

Commanding Officer held a full parade with the hoisting of our Victory Pennant. Fleet Fort A/O #3602 took fire in the air and burned completely after a forced landing carried out 6 miles North-East of #37 S.F.T.S. Calgary. R50753 Sgt. G.E. Garbutt (pilot) was uninjured and R108462 LAC Margalee, H.E. received slight injury. All Fleet Forts were grounded pending the outcome of an investigation.
Weather clear & mild.

The RCAF investigation found nothing and Fleet Fort flying resumed on 20 May 43, with forced landings continuing around Alberta. I'm sure the local farmers became accustomed to a yellow Fort aircraft dropping out of the blue prairie sky, some engulfed in flames.

The peak number of Fleet Fort 60K trainers on strength at No. 2 W.S. Shepard, Alberta, had reached 47 for the month of March 1943.

May 24, 1943	Final Exams. for 56th Entry held today on Morse, Radio Theory, Procedure, Signals. Norseman A/C #2461 overturned on landing and was a completely washed out as category A crash. Sgt. Pilot R.A. Beeth R133310 pilot slightly injured as were all passengers. Cause obscure although indications are the breaks may have seized. Weather clear and mild.
May 25, 1943	Fleet Fort A/C #3678 made forced landing at High River due to oil trouble. No damage or injury to A/C or personnel. Returned to base after minor repairs. Weather overcast.
May 26, 1943	Fleet Fort A/C #3604 made a forced landing at Gleichen. Fleet Fort A/C #3678 made a forced landing at Strangclair. No damage to A/Cs or personnel in either cases. Weather Clear & Mild.
May 27, 1943	56th Entry Graduated today. S/O B.R. Owen presented the sparks and took the salute at the March Pass. Tea was served after in the Airmen's Lounge to guests of the graduates. Original Entry of Course 56, 179. Transfers into 68, Total 243. Transfers out 52, Ceased Training 49. Total 101. Total Graduates 142. Weather overcast.

No. 2 Wireless School Commanding Officer Group Captain Owen, next received secret orders, early June 43, a new "Examining Officer" would be posted to RCAF Shepard, a watch-dog flying instructor to keep his ears and eyes open for the problems existing with the Fleet Fort trainer's accidents. On 9 June 43, a new officer, S/L O.P. Gosling, took over all four squadrons of the training wing at RCAF Shepard, including the forty plus trainers.

June 14-43	
F/O D.J. Merryfield (J12221)(G.L.) arrived at Shepard on posting from No. 3 S.F.T.S. and will be employed as a Pilot Instructor.	
Weather - Fine.	15:15

F/O Jack Merryfield was a senior flying instructor who graduated from No. 2 F.I.S. at Claresholm and Vulcan in September 1942. His flying instructor course began at No. 15 SFTS Claresholm, and in mid-course his class was transferred to newly formed No. 2 F.I.S. Vulcan, Alberta. In June 1943, at age 27 years of age, he was still instructing at No. 3 SFTS Calgary, and... "properly pissed-off, to put it mildly, as I wanted to get overseas. When this special RCAF 'examining officer' position was offered, I volunteered, and arrived at RCAF Shepard 14 June 1943. The next morning, I met the Station Commander, Wing Commander Sam Irwin, and after a good morning greeting he stated: 'You were foolish to take this dangerous assignment, but you probably won't survive the next three months.'"

A most shocking introduction to RCAF Shepard by his new C.O., who made it clear Merryfield was not very welcome. The Wing Commander fully understood that F/O Merryfield was performing duties as a flying instructor but at the same time he was observing [spying] on the actions around 'his' training station. It is very understandable senior RCAF officers did not take kindly to this official form of "Examining Officer" snooping around their training airfield, but maybe there was more to this then the official RCAF historians have ever recorded? That's what F/O Merryfield believed, and it was called RCAF ground crew sabotage, as they just hated the Fleet Fort 60K trainer. No. 3 Wireless School, Winnipeg, operated a peak number of 33 Fleet Fort aircraft, with only one fuel cap coming loose, and no major fire problems. Why did such a large number of starboard fuel caps continue to come loose and a few good aircrew lives were lost at Shepard, Alberta? I leave that question for readers to decide.

This is the No. 2 W.S. Flying Instructors at RCAF Shepard from 15 June to 30 September 1943. From the collection of F/O Merryfield, located in top row number eight from the left.

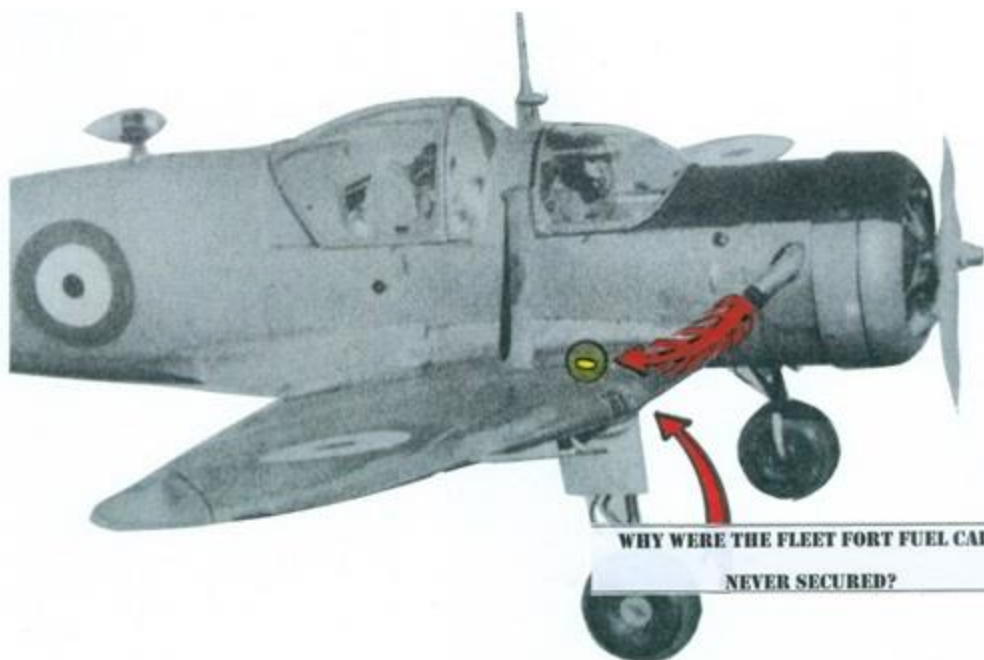


SAIT Archives, Calgary, Alberta, Karly Sawatzke, BA

AUGUST - met 24-43

Squadron Leader Wheeler transferred to Aircrew and posted to Trenton.
 Squadron Leader Goeling took over duties of the Senior Administrative Officer.
 Flight Lieutenant Lawrence took over duties of the O.C. Wing.
 Inspector General was at the Flying Squadron, Shepard.
 Fleet Fort Aircraft #3601 nosed up after landing piloted by Flying Officer D.J. Merryfield
 J 12221, with #131507 Sgt. Setterington, J.L. under instruction. No injury to personnel.
 Fleet Fort # 3581, piloted by #425181 Pilot officer R.A. Lambert and #3590 pilot #415365
 Sgt. Roberts, V.G., had forced landings in the same field near Crossfield. Aircraft #3581 -
 burst hydraulic line Aircraft #3590 - broken rocker arm. No injury to personnel or damage to
 either aircraft.
 Weather - Clear and Mild

On 24 August 1943, while flying Fleet Fort #3601, Merryfield noticed the starboard fuel tank, which was located in the strut supported wing, was slowly losing the tank cap, as it turned counter clockwise due to the vibration of the aircraft. If the cap came off the escaping fuel vapor would hit the wing support and be ignited by the flame from the Jacobs engine. Jack Merryfield made an emergency landing on the field at Shepard and nosed over. When a ground crew NCO checked the fuel cap, it had less than two degrees to move before it was free. Jack filed his report and recommended a cotter key locking device be placed on all the fuel caps of the Fleet Fort aircraft. Jack also believed that RCAF ground crew sabotage was taking place at Shepard to get rid of the hated Fort trainers, but as far as he knows no official conclusion was ever reached by No. 4 Training Command. [Nothing officially on paper] On 24 September 1943, Jack Merryfield gladly returned to his instruction duties at No. 3 SFTS [Currie] Alberta, and never piloted a Fleet Fort 60K again. It also appears strange his recommended locking device was never applied to the Fleet Fort starboard fuel caps and the fires continued.

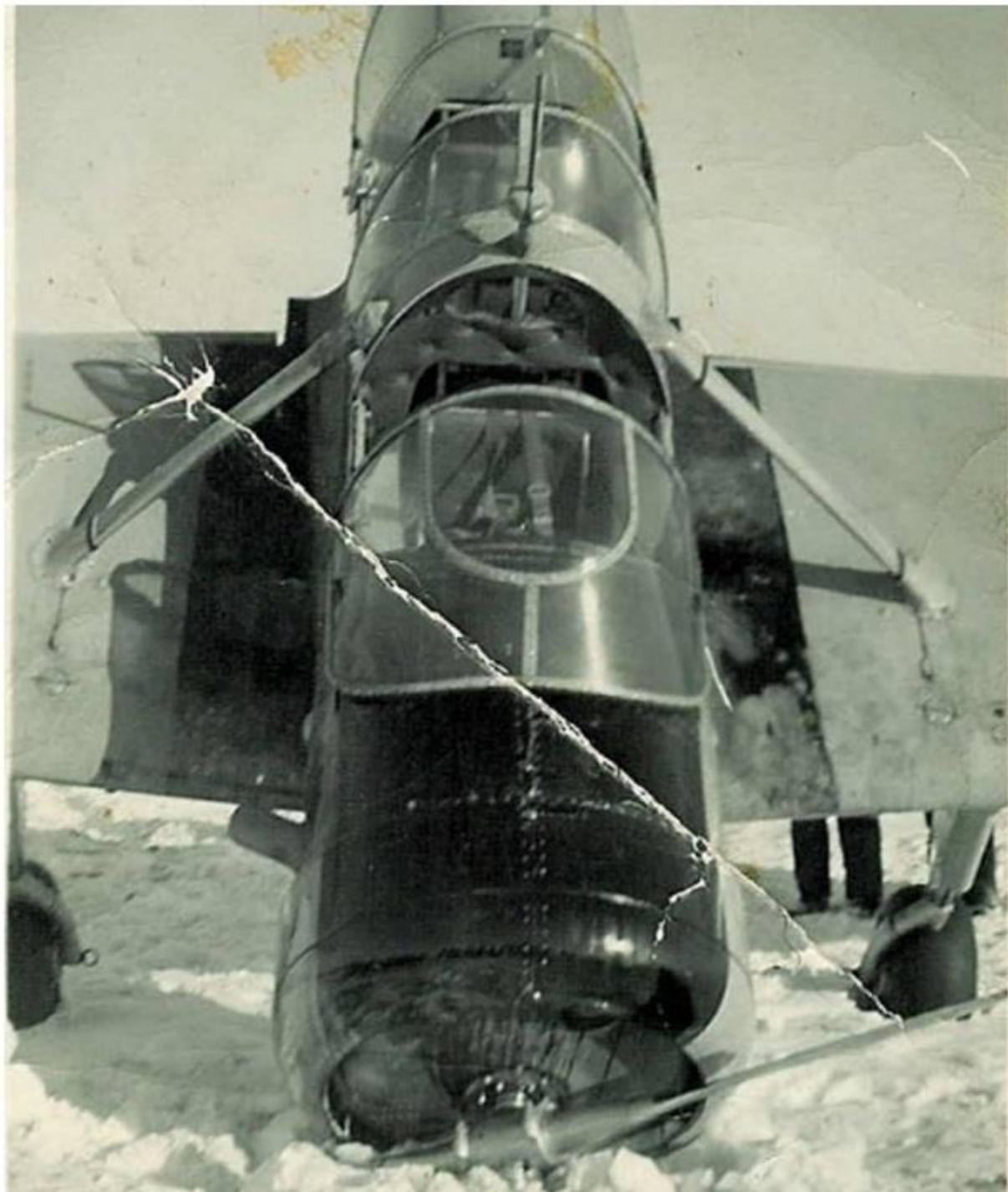


WHY WERE THE FLEET FORT FUEL CAPS
NEVER SECURED?



This image was sent by Norman Malayney from the collection of Dave Mawryk of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Fleet Fort #3622, was assigned to RCAF on 26 February 1942. Arrived by rail flatcar at No. 8 Repair Depot, Winnipeg, Manitoba, on 9 March 1942. After reassembly, it was assigned to No. 3 Wireless School Flying Squadron on 9 July 1942, and made this 'nose-over' landing in the snow in November 1943. Repaired it continued flying wireless training until it ground looped on 4 April 1944. Completed 1512:45 hrs training time and was taken off strength on 2 March 1945.



This close-up image of Fort #3622 captures the two fuel caps located in front of the two wing braces. The [left] starboard cap is the one that was in direct line of the aircraft engine exhaust, and what caused all the fires in Calgary. Possibly a major fuel cap design defect made by Fleet Aircraft but only two accidents occurred at No. 3 W.S. Winnipeg where they flew 33 aircraft. On 27 January 1942, Fort #3638 caught fire [mid-air] five miles west of Winnipeg, the student bailed out and the pilot luckily made it back to base. The second accident occurred on 10 January 1944, Fort

#3644 had the fuel cap fly off and gasoline streamed out, but the quick thinking pilot quickly made a forced landing before the fuel was ignited. The fires and other problems just continue at No. 2 W.S. flying squadron at Shepard, Alberta.

1 October 43 - Fort 3604 forced landing engine.
2 October 43 - Fort 3590 forced landing.
4 October 43 – All Fleet Fort aircraft grounded [second time] for one day.

OF NO. 2 WIRELESS SCHOOL, RCAF, CALGARY, ALBERTA					
APPENDIX "A"					
DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS			
		<u>ACCIDENTS, FORCED LANDINGS, ETC.</u>			
		Type of Aircraft or Equipment involved	Cause of Accident (If unknown say "Unknown")	Location of Accident	Extent of Damage to Aircraft or Equipment.
					Injury to personnel. If none write "None". But in either case quote no., rank, name & initials of personnel involved.
Dec.15-43		Fleet Fort Mk.11 3605	Engine Failure	7 miles East Rosebud, Alta.	Totally
					J29304 P/O Innes, J.H. - None R196694 LAC Doherty, R. - None
Dec.16-43		Fleet Fort Mk.11	Fire in Air	6 miles East of Calgary, Alta.	Totally
					R121320 Sgt. Foster, R.C. - None A474921 LAC Murray, A.I. - None

6 October 43 - Fort 3581 forced landing.
6 October 43 – Fort 3647 mid-air fire, pilot and his student bail out, no injuries.
7 October 43 – All Fleet Fort aircraft grounded again [third time] until 15 November 43.

It appears that RCAF high command [4 Training Command] at this point decided to replace all the Fleet Fort trainers and that would put an end to future accidents and loss of life. Twenty days later the first replacement Yale trainers begin to arrive at Calgary. On 27 and 28 October 43, eight old obsolete Yale trainers arrive at Shepard, serial 3353, 3364, 3375, and 3360 followed on 28th by 3367, 3378, 3398, and 3428. On 18 and 24 November 43, much needed Fleet Fort 60K spare parts arrived and operational flying training resumes, followed by more accidents. 18 November 43 – Fort 3577 brakes seized, nosed over. 26 November 43 – Fort 3681 and 3603 collided while taxiing.

16 December 43, another mid-air fire with pilot and student forced to bail out, no injuries. The Fleet Fort forced landings continue in the New Year with a monthly total of fourteen.

DAILY DIARY

OF No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF, Calgary, Alberta.


Appendix "A"

DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS				
		<u>ACCIDENTS, FORCED LANDINGS, ETC.</u>				
		Type of Aircraft or Equipment involved	Cause of Accident (If unknown say "Unknown")	Location of Accident	Extent of Damage to Aircraft or Equipment	Injury to personnel, if none write "None", but in either case quote no., rank, name & initials of personnel involved.
4 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. 11 3588	Hydraulic Fluid in Cockpit	Dalmenod, Alberta.	N I L	A421848 P/O R.A. Lambert A435047 LAC McKenna, E.J.
7 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk.11 3660	Smoke from engine	1 mile north of Gleichen, Alta.	N I L	R91726 Sgt Lee, E.V. R91675 Sgt McRadyen, C.E.
8 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. 11 3578	Loose Engine Cowling	High River Alberta	N I L	J27523 P/O Jones, M.B. A436596 LAC Kelly, F.J.
9 Jan /44		Fleet Fort Mk 11 3649	Smoke in cockpit	High River Aerodrome	N I L	J29547 P/O Ayscarr, P.B. R220540 LAC Lampard, I.M.
11 Jan/44		Norseman Mk IV	Smoke from engine	High River Aerodrome	N I L	J11587 P/O Pettley, B. R71045 Sgt McLacklan, E. R71008 Sgt.Douglas, A. R204991 LAC Quinney, J.F. A36216 LAC MacKenzie, D.C. G81623061 LAC Slight, W.O.
11 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk.11 3583	Overheated Engine	High River Aerodrome	N I L	R171357 Sgt. McLellan, G. R24213326 LAC Mason, M.A.

<u>ACCIDENTS, FORCED LANDINGS, ETC.</u>						
		Type of Aircraft or Equipment involved.	Cause of Accident (if unknown, write "Unknown")	Location of Accident	Extent of Damage to Aircraft or Equipment	Injury to personnel, if none write "None", but in either case give no., rank, name & initials of personnel involved.
13 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II 3606	Gasoline leaking into cockpit.	Near Hanton Alberta.	N I L	AUS421729 P/S Hill, D.V. R24214055 LAC Hume, R.J.K.
16 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II 3660	Smoke in cockpit	Hanton, Alberta.	N I L	J29308 P/O Ridley, T.H. AUS434334 LAC Soutter, E.L.
16 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II 3610	Overheated engine & smoke in cockpit	6 mi. N.E. of Becksner, Alta.	N I L	J27523 P/O Jones, M.B. R194533 LAC Brown, A.R.
24 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II 3609	Overheated engine	DeWinton Airport	N I L	J27085 P/O Graham, F. R208143 LAC Scott, D.E.
25 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II 3588	Partial engine failure	Near Chestermere lake	N I L	R162235 Sgt. Ramsay, A.D.H. R210813 LAC Grant, J.R.T.
26 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II 3609	Smoke in cockpit	High River Airport	N I L	J27523 P/O Jones, M.B. R24214053 LAC Hume, G.F.R.
27 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II 3606	Smoke in cockpit	High River Airport	N I L	R91726 Sgt. Lee, E.V. R24213285 LAC Scott, A.S.
26 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II	Engine throwing oil	Pierce Alberta.	N I L	J29547 P/O Ayscarr, P.B. R2427400 Cpl. Fernyhaugh, S.
28 Jan/44		Fleet Fort Mk. II 3590	Engine misfiring in air	DeWinton Airport	N I L	J28720 P/O Seales, W.H. R255544 LAC Baker, J.W.

The Fleet Fort trainers are slowly being replaced by Norseman, Harvard, and Yale trainer aircraft by early January 1944. The number of Fleet Fort forced landings drops to two, out of fourteen flying in February 1944.

Aircraft Strength as at January 31st, 1944.			
	Serviceable	Unserviceable	Total
Norseman	5	2	7
Harvard	1	1	2
Yale	11	6	17
Fleet Port	14	6	20
Menasce Moth	2	0	2
<hr/>			
TOTAL	33	15	48
Flying Hours:	Total number of hours flown during January 1944, 3593.30		



(E.R. Owen) G/O,
Commanding Officer,
No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF,
CALGARY, Alberta.

Aircraft strength as at February 29th, 1944			
	<u>Serviceable</u>	<u>Unserviceable</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fleet Fort	14	5	19
Harvard	9	4	13
Norseman	7	3	10
Yale	28	5	33
Moth	2	-	2
	60	17	77
Flying Hours:	Total number of hours flown during February, 1944 - 3251:20		
	<div>(E.R. Owen) G/O Commanding Officer No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF Calgary, Alberta.</div>		

OF No. 2 Wireless School, Calgary Alberta. (for month of February, 1944)

DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS				
		<u>ACCIDENTS, FORCED LANDINGS, ETC.</u>				
		Type of Aircraft or Equipment involved	Cause of Accident (If unknown say "Unknown")	Location of Accident	Extent of Damage to Aircraft or Equipment	Injury to personnel, if none write "None", but in either case quote no., rank, name & initials of personnel involved.
15 Feb/44		Fleet Fort Nr.11 3648	Overheated engine	Clareholm, Alta	Nil	A421789 Sgt. Hill, D.W. H2427244 LAC Baker, E.L.
22 Feb/44		Fleet Fort Nr.11 3609	U.S. Gasket, Gas leaking	High River, Alta	Nil	H51428 Sgt. Weldon, C.W. H213937 LAC Stefflar, C.E.
22 Feb/44		Harvard Nr.23 F8816	Prop. went into fine pitch in dive	Vulcan, Alta.	Nil	J11587 F/O Petley, B. J29547 F/O Ayres, F.B.
25 Feb/44		Yale W/T 3603	Engine backfired severely in air	Arrowood, Alta.	Nil	H146113 Sgt. Brewer, D.A. H255672 LAC Donald, F.A.

On 18 March 1944, all Fleet Fort 60K flying training came to an end and only six remained on strength by the end of March. In April 1944, all Fleet Fort had been flown to No. 10 Repair Depot at Calgary, Alberta, for storage and or disposal. On 30 April 44, No. 2 W.S.F.S. had 37 Harvard, 23 Yale, and 9 Norseman aircraft on strength at RCAF Shepard. The dark period at the base has come to an end, and so have the repeated accidents and forced landings. Eleven Fleet Fort trainers were lost in Cat. "A" accidents - #3586 - 10 May 42, #3596 - 24 September 42, #3593 - 14 April 43, #3602 - 6 May 43, #3608 - 6 July 43 - #3652, 20 August 43 - #3650 - 29 September 43, #3653 - 3 October 43, #3647 - 6 October 43, #3695 - 15 December 43, and #3655 16 December 1943.

DAILY DIARY

APPENDIX #3

OF No. 2 Wireless School, Calgary, Alberta. (For Month of August, 1944)

DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS					REF. TO APPENDICES									
	<u>ACCIDENTS, FORCED LANDINGS, ETC.</u>														
	Type of Aircraft or Equipment Involved	Cause of Accident (if unknown write "Unknown")	Location of Accident	Extent of Damage to Aircraft or Equipment	Injury to Personnel. If none write "None", but in either case give No., Rank, Name and Initials of personnel involved.										
24th Aug/44	Harvard IIB F816 Dual.	Taxing carelessness.	No. 2 Wireless School, Flying Squadron.	Serious.	R.176560 Sgt. McMullin, E. - None. R.183560 Sgt. Thatcher, R.T. - None.										
25th Aug/44	Harvard II AJ602 W/T.	Ruptured gasket on C/S Unit.	11 miles east, 1 mile south, Strathmore.	Serious.	J.42879 P/O Hephurn, J.P. - None. GB1802845 LAC Hamlin, G. - None										
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Aircraft Serviceability</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th><u>Serviceable</u></th> <th><u>Unserviceable</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Mussonian</td> <td>7</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Harvard</td> <td>53</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Total hours flown for month of August, 1944. - 6963:55.</p>								<u>Serviceable</u>	<u>Unserviceable</u>	Mussonian	7	2	Harvard	53	5
	<u>Serviceable</u>	<u>Unserviceable</u>													
Mussonian	7	2													
Harvard	53	5													

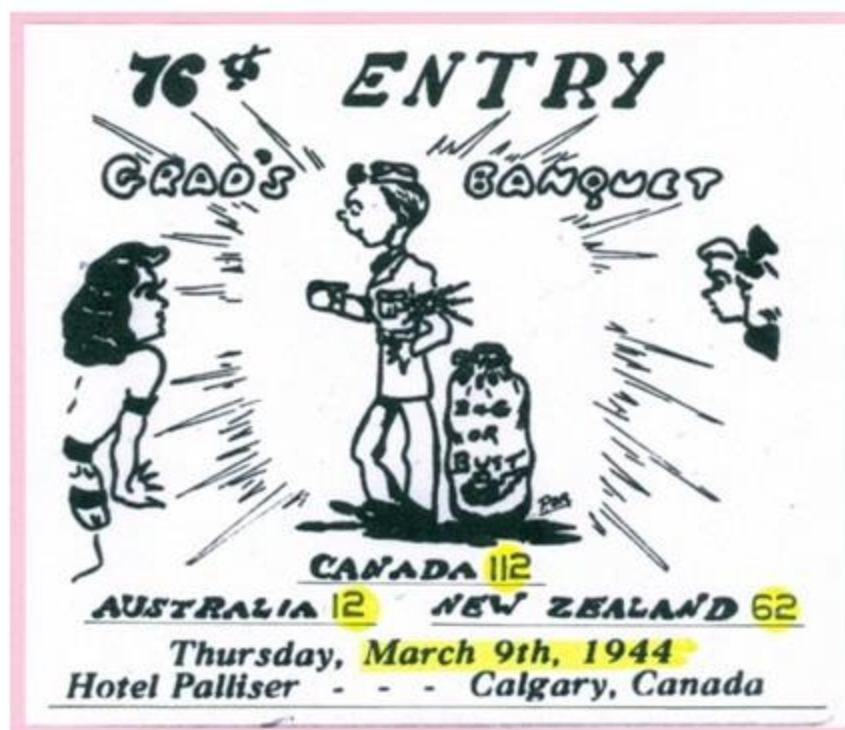
The records speak for themselves, 31 August 1944, the principal trainer has become the Harvard [58 on strength] and only two normal training accidents have occurred. Entry Course #76 began training 23 August 1943, completed 10 March 1944, [28 weeks] becoming the last class to train in the fire-trap Fleet Fort 60K at Shepard, Alberta.



The last production model serial 3660, taken on strength by RCAF 9 June 1942, assigned to No. 2 Wireless School Calgary, [Shepard, Alberta] 29 October 1942. Cat. B crash landing on 6 December 1942, repaired, forced landing Gleichen, Alberta, [smoke from engine], 7 January 1944. Completed 357:20 hrs training at RCAF Shepard.



On graduation day the W.A.G. students received their "Sparks" badge [above stripes] and promotion to Sergeant. Next came the graduation party at the Hotel Palliser [Paralyzer] in Calgary.



WAG

76th Entry Graduates

CANADA

Loan, W.,
 Nykyforuk, T. E.
 Donald, F. A.
 Ewald, R. A.
 Buchamer, F.
 Kosabuaki, J. T.
 Chenier, E. J.
 Pecknold, C. E. M.
 Grabowski, J.
 Bourgeois, A. E.
 Dilley, A. H.
 Vaughan, H. A.
 McManus, J. A.
 Chedore, L. A.
 McDermott, F. C.
 Pendleton, G. L.
 Emonds, M. B.
 Anderson, W. J.
 Brodeur, C. J.
 Mooney, J. S.
 Price, R. A.
 Mackie, C. D.
 Giffen, J. B.
 Tufts, R. M.
 O'Reilly, P. J.
 Wright, J. L.
 McElgunn, J. W.
 Vickery, C. H.
 Bishop, R. C.
 Mangin, P. E.
 Wolstenholme, J. R.

MacMillan, R. J.
 Guscott, H. W.
 Bartholomew, A. V.
 Read, J. E.
 McMullen, A. W.
 William, P. R.
 Dumanchuk, J.
 McInnes, G. B.
 McFaden, C.
 Robinson, M. S.
 Eyre, R. M.
 Jones, R. M.
 Stewart, E. C.
 Scoble, M. A.
 Roy, J. L.
 Stein, K. H.
 VanDusen, F. J.
 Sinclair, J. T.
 Smith, L. E.
 Boileau, G. F.
 Heatherington, C.
 Little, H. G.
 Cope, E. D.
 Ridley, F. G.
 Brown, B.
 Bennett, K. B.
 Knowles, R. G.
 Murphy, A. T.
 Rockwell, H. E.
 Black, D.
 Henry, J. F.
 Steinfinger, G. H.

McNamee, P. J.
 Brazier, C. F.
 Wright, J. A.
 Foulcault, G. W.
 Underhill, W. R.
 Steffler, C. D.
 AcAteer, R. K.
 Gallagher, V. E.
 Boigent, R. G.
 McRae, J. F.
 Matthews, G. C.
 Coghill, J.
 Lord, R. R.
 Morris, W. C.
 Derricott, E. O.
 Rita, A. N.
 Cameron, C. S.
 Savard, L. E.
 Opie, G. E.
 Miller, J. D.
 Bowman, B. H.

Sterling, R. G.
 Lalonde, R. P.
 Jenkinson, R. J.
 Butler, J.
 Reid, W. I.
 Fleming, C. A.
 Kopp, J. M.
 Riddell, W. G.
 Rampton, D.
 Hughes, J. E.
 Shier, W. A.
 Teasler, B. J.
 Dederick, R. H. C.
 Robinson, D. C.
 Craig, A. J.
 Middleton, A. R.
 Simpson, R. S.

Scott, T. H. A.
 McMullen, M. H.
 Moffatt, R. J.
 Nelson, L. R.
 Wilks, G. C.
 Warthe, G. L.
 Bate, C. H.

NEWFOUNDLAND

Cuff, R. G.

GREAT BRITAIN

Edwards, A.
 Featherstone, N.

AUSTRALIA

Miller, L. L. G.
 Grimshaw, J.
 Dent, S. L.
 Livingstone, R. B.
 Bryce, L. J.
 Smallbone, H. L.
 Downs, R. R.
 MacKay, J.
 Young, A. J. W.
 Gibson, J. W.
 Malady, J. F.
 Dickenson, T. R.

NEW ZEALAND

Ingles, R.
 Woolfield, R. P.

Osbaldiston, R. R.
 Cottrell, A. G. C.
 Hart, H. R.
 Groom, P.
 Bennetts, W. E.
 Bettes, J. A.
 Baker, H. I.

Entry Course # 76 began with 201 students and graduated 189, RCAF 112, Newfoundland 1, [British self-governing Colony, not part of Canada], RAF 2, Australia 12, and New Zealand 62.

No. 2 Wireless School, R.C.A.F.

Month ending March 31st., 1944

COURSE NO. 76

Course began 23rd August, 1943

No. of Trainees starting 201

Course ended March 10th, 1944

Transfers in	76
Transfers out	58
Retained	11

Reselection	19
-------------	----

Disposition

Posted to #3 R.D. Vancouver for Repat. to Australia	1
Posted to #3 R.D. Vancouver for Repat. to New Zealand	3
Posted to #2 M.D. Brandon (Ground Trade)	5
Posted to #1 M.D. Toronto	1
Posted to #5 M.D. Lachine (Ground Trade)	1
Posted to #4 W.S. Guelph, Ont.	1
Remustered to St. A.G. posted to #1 A.G.G.T.S.	3
Remustered to St. A.G. posted to #3 B&G McDonald	2
Remustered A.C.2 General Duties posted #19 S.F.T.S.	2

Wastage	19
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No. of Graduates	189
------------------	-----

No. granted commissions	nil
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Disposition of Graduates

#1 B.&G. Jarvis, Ont.	16
#4 B.&G. Fingal, Ont.	25
#5 B.&G. Dufos, Sask.	25
#6 B.&G. Mountain View, Ont.	25
#7 B.&G. Paulson, Man.	25
#8 B.&G. Lethbridge, Alta.	25
#8 A.O.S. Ancienne Lorette	15
#2 B.&G. Mossbank, Sask.	32

The graduating class were now posted [12 March 1944] to one of eight Bombing and Gunnery Schools for six weeks more training, then off to United Kingdom. On 23 March 44, two Calgary Albertan newspaper reporters visited the wireless school.

This original wireless school tour story appeared in the 27 March 1944 issue of "the Calgary Albertan" newspaper, today the Calgary Sun.

Crippled and falling, a Lancaster bomber glides swiftly towards the choppy waters of the Channel. Inside the doomed hulk, the crew members prepare to take crash posts, to brace themselves against the shock of contact. All but one man. That man is bent over his wireless key, tapping out the last of a series of numbers that will bring a rescue plane or crash-boat speeding to the crew's dinghy. For one wind-screaming moment the lives of eight men rest with that key, the key of escape from the gray prison of the sea. And in that moment the wireless operator calls upon the months of training necessary to enable him to send his detailed S.O.S. coolly, quickly and accurately. The training that is, and for three years has been, the job of Number 2 Wireless School, Calgary, the only Air Force school of its kind in Western Canada.

It was with this in mind that we requisitioned pencil and pad, and scaled Calgary's North Hill to gather material for a story on the latest residents of the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art.

Two pretty R.C.A.F. nursing sisters preceded us through the door of the dignified brick-and stone building, and we followed them down a corridor lined with glass cases of stuffed birds, lone and rather glum reminders of days when the Institute housed students of the sciences of peace. Having explained our mission to the Adjutant, he sent us to see the School Chief Instructor, Squadron Leader S.J. Balke, who in turn introduced us to our guide for the tour, Flight Lieutenant William Rice, a young, graying gentleman wearing the wing of a Wireless Operator Air Gunner, and "Canada" overseas badges on his shoulder.

"What would you like to know first?" asked F/L Rice.

He was unable to furnish the names or addresses of the two nursing sisters, so we asked if he would mind showing us some of the classrooms. He led the way down the hall, pausing momentarily before a couple of rooms, each occupied by trainees listening to lectures from sergeants, then passing on to a room that was not in use.

"This is a primary classroom," he said, waving at the benches and tables, "for instruction in Morse. Morse is the most important part of a WAG's training. It's like learning music—you can't swot it up the night before an exam. The trainees come here able to do about six words a minute. When they leave, they must be able to do twenty words a minute or better."

Suitably impressed, we stood considering the rows of wireless keys and earphones. We tapped one of the keys and earphones gingerly but nothing happened so we cut it out before we got blamed for breaking it.

"In this room," continued our guide, "we can receive seven different speeds of Morse simultaneously, fed from the central control room. That way we can give instruction to seven different sections of pupils, all in the same class. Would you like to see the central control room?"

We said we would, and walked back along a hall whose walls were covered with charts of examination results and cryptic posters such as:

"LIVE AND LEARN—Old adage.
"LEARN AND LIVE—New adage."

Flight Lieutenant Rice opened a door and we crowded into the central control room. Arranged in pairs on a bench, a series of spools were revolving slowly, passing a ticker-tape through a gadget which we gathered was pretty important from the way it kept jiggling up and down. One of the sergeants operating the machine told us it was a photo-electric cell.

"These machines can transmit Morse to every classroom in the building at any speed desired", explained our guide, picking up a pair of earphones. "You can hear it on these."

We placed an earphone to our ear and listened to the dots and dashes.

"That's twenty words a minute," he said. "Here's ten words a minute."

We listened to ten words a minute. It sounded just like twenty words a minute, but we nodded knowingly and said it was a dandy rig, all right.

Flight Lieutenant Rice next showed us a classroom of "out-stations", to which students proceed after reaching a speed of 18 w.p.m. These give the airmen a chance to operate back and forth with a diagram before them of an airplane's actual wireless equipment, and to become familiar with the procedure they would follow in an aircraft.



The Primary classrooms



The Signal Trainer

"One neat touch about these trainers," chuckled the Flight Lieutenant, "is that if the lad inside starts sleeping on the job and the monitors don't hear from him, they blow him up."

We were still mulling over the Spartan nature of this treatment when he signalled to one of the corporals, who promptly pressed a button. There was a loud explosion in the trainer before us. Blue powder smoke curled out of the "destroyed aircraft" and we laughed heartily as we crawled out from under the table.

"Very clever idea," we agreed, and led the way back to the corridor.

Flight Lieutenant Rice wound up the tour with a visit to the radio labs where the WAG trainees become acquainted with their equipment. The last couple of weeks of training, he said, are spent at Shepard airport receiving instruction in the "flying classrooms," planes fitted with the wireless equipment of an operational aircraft. If successful in his final examinations, the trainee parades with other graduates before the Commanding Officer, Group Captain E. R. Owen, to receive his arm badge of a sheaf of sparks, then proceeds to a school of bombing and gunnery to learn how to shoot.

We took our leave of the Flight Lieutenant to cross the brilliantly sun-lit quad and enter the Training Wing. Here we found Squadron Leader C. A. R. Lawrence, a genial gentleman and Officer Commanding. We asked him the difference between his Wing and the Technical.

"We're the parents," he replied. "We feed 'em, clothe 'em and send 'em to school."





SAIT Archives original document



These new trained Wireless Air Gunners would soon join a team of comrades of the skies and begin bomber operations around the world. Royal Air Force aircrew suffered a casualty rate of 46% during WWII. Out of 125,000 aircrew members, 55,500 would be killed on active operations, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of these young men have "No Known Grave." Air Gunners and Wireless Air Gunners were three in a crew of seven, and over 20,000 of these young men were killed on operations. When I look at a WWII class photo from No. 2 Wireless School at Calgary, Alberta, I know that half of these entry class young men will never return home.

November, 1944

11

SEA WOLF *with Fangs of Fire!*

OFFICIAL INSIGNE
OF ONE OF THE
CARRIER-BASED SQUADRONS
UNITED STATES NAVY

This insignie was specially created by
the Walt Disney Studios for the men
of the "Sea Wolf" Squadron. They
carry it on their planes, the famous
cannon-firing Curtiss Helldivers.



The November 1944 issue of American Saturday Evening Post magazine contained a full page advertisement featuring a Walt Disney insignia of a "Sea Wolf." This image would appear as nose art on a number of RCAF aircraft, two Halifax bombers in United Kingdom and No. 149 Squadron at Patricia Bay, B.C., plus it was also selected by No. 2 Wireless School at RCAF Shepard, Alberta. This "unofficial" art appeared without bomb in mouth, with words No. 2 W.S. "Shepard Wolves." It is possible this art appeared on the nose of some Harvard trainers but that has never been confirmed. The RCAF insignia was created as a cloth insignia by Crest Craft in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, but no image has been found. I'm positive at least one hundred were ordered, and I hope at least one has survived for preserving RCAF history of this forgotten base in Alberta. No. 2 W.S. and No. 2 W.S.F.S. closed on 14 April 1945.



Author painting of possible unofficial insignia [I saw an original badge in 1995, but the owner wanted \$350] used by No. 2 Wireless School Flying Squadron at Shepard, Alberta, after December 1944. It is possible this same insignia appeared as nose art on a few of the North American Harvard aircraft. Some of the known serial numbers as listed in the Squadron Daily Diary – AF827, AJ753, AJ802, AJ848, AJ914, AJ970, FE816, FE997, FF855, BF147, FH162, FH203, FS865, FT265, 2733, 2744, 2750, 2745, 2578, 2797, 2802, 3648, and 3833. The total serial numbers are not listed in the Daily Diary, only the aircraft involved in accidents. In January 1945, a total of 65 Harvard trainers were on charge at RCAF Shepard, and on 8 February 45, entry #99 and #100 graduated 258 wireless air gunners, the largest course to ever graduate in all of Canada's four Wireless Schools. The reason for this was due to the closing of No. 3 Wireless School at Winnipeg, Manitoba.

No. 3 W.S. at Winnipeg, Manitoba, graduated their last class [Entry #97] on 29 December 1944. This class began training on 19 June 1944, with 134 students and graduated 106 Wireless Air Gunners. The school had on charge 38 Yale, two Harvard's, and six Norseman trainer aircraft. The wireless school at Winnipeg officially closed on 20 January 1945. The majority of Entry class #99, #101, #103, and #105 was now posted to No. 2 W.S. at Calgary, Alberta, to finish their wireless training. Two-hundred and nine students arrived by train at 23:00 hrs. on 10 December 1944, increasing Calgary student wireless training by 50%. A large number of No. 3 wireless instructors and flying squadron members were also transferred to Calgary, along with two Norseman aircraft. P/O S.W. Duncan flew Norseman #2477 and F/O W.O.C. Slatter flew Norseman #2468 to RCAF Shepard, Alberta, on 22 December 1944, where both pilots and aircraft were taken on strength. On the 31 December 1944, the flying squadron had on strength ten Norseman and sixty-six Harvard aircraft for wireless training.

ORGANIZATION ORDER 505

COPY:
FILE: 192 10-20/3 (DOE)
DATE: 20 December/44

DISBANDMENT OF 3 WIRELESS SCHOOL, WINNIPEG, MAN.

(This Order cancels OO 87)

INFORMATION

Wireless School training commitments have been sufficiently reduced to permit the disbandment of 3 Wireless School.

INTENTION

It is the intention to disband 3 Wireless School, Winnipeg, Man.

EXECUTION

Effective Date

3 Wireless School, Winnipeg, is to become inactive effective 29 Dec/44, and is to disband effective 20 Jan/45.

Training

- (a) Course 97 will graduate as planned at Winnipeg, effective 29 Dec/44.
- (b) Courses 99, 101, 103 and 105 are to be transferred to 2 WS, Calgary, between 16 Dec/44 and 31 Dec/44.

Training Methods-
(Cont'd)

A Conference was held in the Commanding Officer's Office at this school on the 6th of the month. G/C Sellers (SASO), W/O Cross (SOO) and S/L Harris (CSO) of No. 2 A.C.H.Q. were present. The Chief Instructor (F/L A.G. Sheffield) submitted a suggested plan whereby a policy could be formulated in connection with this school taking on the increased commitments of four partially trained W.O.A.G. entries from No. 3 Wireless School. The plan and policy as approved reads as follows:

Commencing 28th December, 1944, this unit will train Course 99 (#3 W.S.) combined with our Course 100; Course 101 (#3 W.S.) with our 102; and 103 (#3 W.S.) combined with our Course 104. Course 105 (#3 W.S.) will train as a separate entry at this Unit. It is necessary to reorganize the entire training schedule in order to handle up to seven Classes per entry instead of five. The efficiency at the Flying Squadron will have to be increased to permit sufficient flying instruction to be given the increased number of trainees. To provide maximum possible air operating hours the policy of sending one third of the entry every ten days to the Air Operating Section will be followed. Each third of the entry will devote the whole ten days to flying exercises. Preliminary ground instruction and briefing previously given during the first day of air operating will be covered at the school prior to sending the classes out to Shepard. A slight increase of Technical personnel and equipment was considered necessary for the school. Additional wireless facilities, aircraft and experienced personnel in order to handle the approximate 50% increase in training, will be required for the air operating squadron.

Entry course #105A and B, became the last wireless class to train at Calgary and the last to fly air operations at RCAF Shepard, Alberta. They began training at No. 3 Winnipeg on 9 October 1944, with 110 students, graduated 83 students at Calgary on 29 March 1945. A few images from this class survive today in SAIT Archives, and now the best are being published.

[SAIT - Karly Sawatzky, BA]



This image was taken at No. 2 W.S. Calgary parade square in possibly mid-March 1945. On 10 December 1944, 209 airmen arrived by train from No. 3 W.S. Winnipeg, and training began at Calgary, officially on 28 December 1944. This class image came from the photo album of [W.A.G.] LAC William A. Campbell, from Toronto, Ontario, front row far right. [SAIT Archives]



Before training begins, the new arrivals from No. 3 W.S. Winnipeg had time to visit attractions in Calgary, including the local Zoo at St. George's Island. Images taken from 1944, RCAF No. 3 SFTS newsletter story on LAC Jack Kanerva.

John Kanerva, [Finnish-born] local sculptor and interior decorator, designed and constructed 42 life-sized cement models of the dinosaurs which roamed Calgary millions of years ago. With the help of the Calgary Zoological Society and Canada's ex-prime minister, Viscount Bennett, John began his creations in 1935 and completed his work as Canada went to war. During this time period, his two sons Jack and brother Bill assisted in mixing cement, and applying layers to the huge steel and stucco mesh frameworks. Jack Kanerva spent several days inside the stomach of the

huge 100-foot long brontosaurus, applying cement to the model, which Alley Oop rode in his comic strip, given the name "Dinny." In 1943, LAC Jack Kanerva was a 22-year-old airframe mechanic working at No. 3 SFTS, Calgary. Each year, Jack completed necessary repairs to his father's prehistoric collection and repainted damaged sections. In 1983, the City of Calgary decided to destroy the original collection, they were "too cheesy" looking. Somehow, Dinny the Calgary dinosaur survived, preserving the city past, and can still be seen today at the Calgary Zoo.



This RCAF image taken by Pollard Studios shows two members of 105A entry class enjoying the Calgary Dinosaur collection in February 1945. LAC L.M. Chrypko and LAC Len Barrbit will be two of the last wireless air gunners to fly at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, 23 March 1945. [SAIT]

REPORT ON W.O.(A.G.) TRAINING GENERALLY

Trainees

- Two Graduations took place this month. The combined 101st and 102nd Entries Graduated on March 9th; the combined 103rd and 104th and in addition the 105th Entry Graduated on March the 29th. This resulted in a total of 641 Graduates in the month which provides an impressive last month of operation for No. 2 Wireless School.
- The 101st Entry Graduated on March 9th, with 98 Graduates. 66.6% Of the Original Entry Graduated and the Index of Efficiency figure was 89.6%. This was indicative of a very good Entry.
- The 102nd Entry Graduated on March 9th with 162 Graduates. 63.3% Of the Original Entry Graduated and the Index of Efficiency figure was 84.9%. A very good Entry.
- The 103rd Entry Graduated on March 29th with 115 Graduates. 66.6% Of the Original Entry Graduated and the Index of Efficiency figure was 81.3%. This was a very good Entry.
- The 104th Entry Graduated on March 29th, with 183 Graduates. The percentage of Original Entry Graduating was 73.4% and the Index of Efficiency was 83.9%. Due to this Entry being a Junior Entry no transfers out were made; despite this the Reselection Rate of 30.9% indicates a very normal C.T. Rate. The Entry Graduated a week ahead of Schedule which gave 27 weeks on Course instead of the normal 28 weeks. In general the Entry was above average in all respects.
- The 105th Entry Graduated on the 29th March, with 33 Graduates. This Entry had only 24 1/2 weeks on Course instead of the normal 28 weeks. Despite this they obtained their required amount of flying training up to the Bombing and Gunnery phase of instruction. Despite, the reduced period of training, and the move from No. 3 Wireless School to this School in the middle of the Course, the overall assessment of training is comparable to any previous Entry. The figures of 68.2% for percentage of Original Entry Graduating, and 77.5% for Training Index of Efficiency are outstanding under the foregoing circumstances. In general the results achieved by this Entry are exceptionally outstanding. The application, general attitude and standard of discipline was exceedingly good.

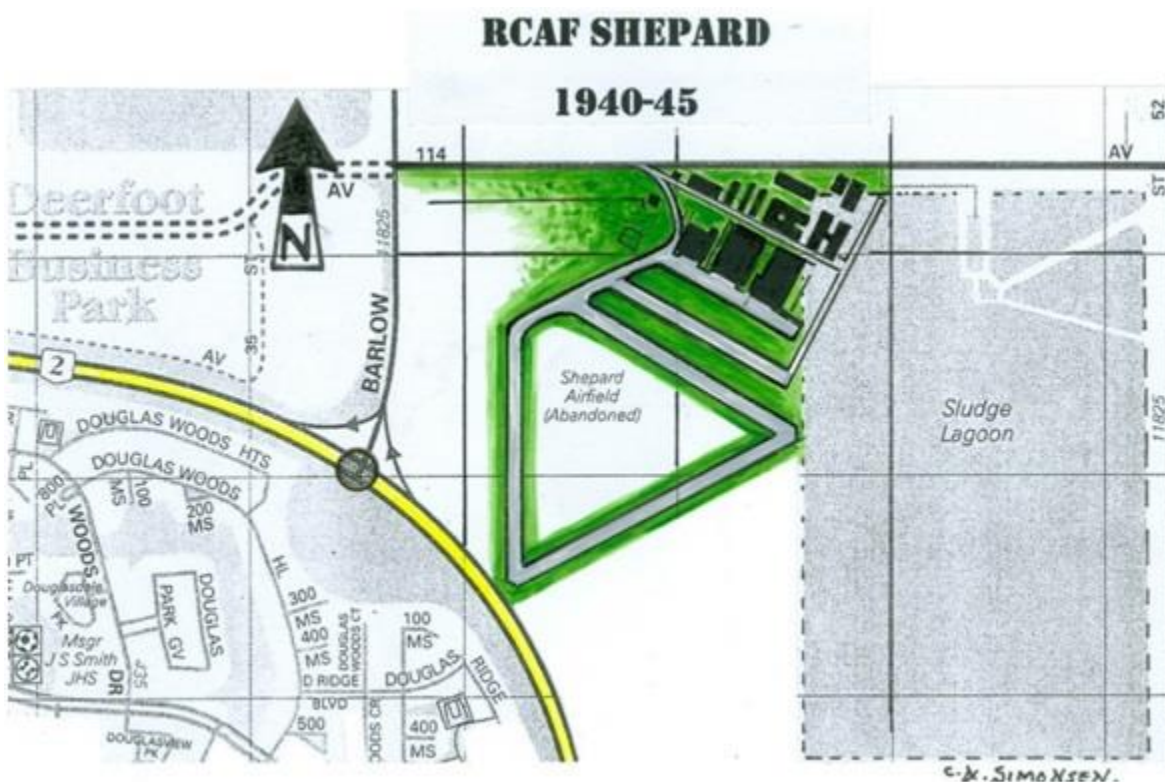
Entry course No. 105A and 105B became the last wireless course to be trained and they had just completed 24 weeks of their 28-week wireless course, when the school was notified of final closure. They wrote their final wireless exams on 26 March 1945, when a few of these photos were taken by Pollard Studios of Calgary. The Daily Diary records that Pollard Studios attended the wireless school and the flying school [22 March 45] taking photos of various locations. These students knew the war was coming to an end, and they would never see action over the deadly skies of Germany. This very same class received their air operations training at RCAF Shepard on 22 and 23 March 1945, the last class to take to the air at Shepard, Alberta. The following images were taken at RCAF Shepard on 23 March 1945.



This image was taken from the administration roof of hangar #1, [control tower on left] looking east, date would be 23 March 1945, and five Norseman aircraft can be seen in the photo. The known serial numbers are most likely – #698, #2457, #2467, #2468, #2477, #2491, #2492, #3524 or #3527. The wireless flying squadron have 65 North American Harvard trainers on strength in March 45, with ten Norseman aircraft, which are only being used for air sickness testing and air navigation [air experience] flights.

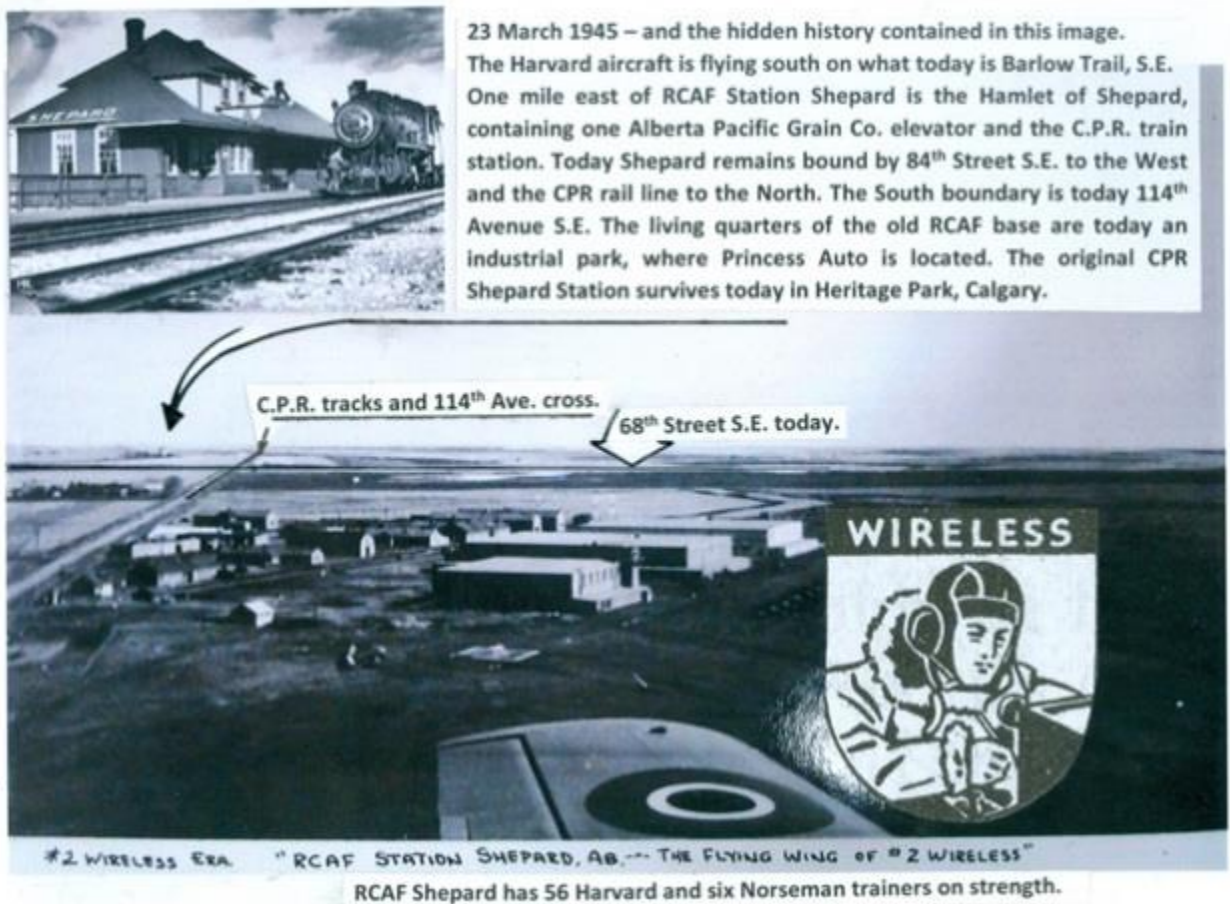


Air photo taken from Harvard aircraft flying due south over RCAF Shepard, 22-23 March 1945.



Author scale drawing of the original [forgotten] location of RCAF Shepard 1940-45.

The twenty smaller buildings [the Sgt's quarters burned down 6 October 1944] were possibly sold to local farmers and a few may still survive. The three RCAF hangars were later destroyed, but remained until around 1948, as surplus aircraft storage. If you look further east, you will see a low wet marshy area where all the surrounding water drained. RCAF Shepard training base runways were located at what is today Barlow Trail and Deerfoot Trail. Each month thousands of cars and trucks pass over the southern edge of the ghost base, and few have any knowledge of this WWII Calgary history. Beginning in the 1980s and 1990s the City of Calgary dumped tons of sludge in the lower wet lands, east of what was the original airfield, then covered part of it with clean dirt fill. All physical evidence of the RCAF field was erased and the complete area was turned into an industrial park by 2003, possibly to hide some of the unknown toxic sludge which remains in the soil today. The eastern sludge ponds are still in use today, and properly regulated by the city. The old Shepard Race City Speedway was located further east from the sludge lagoons, just south of the C.P.R. railway yards, again all has been erased from the race car era, covered by industrial buildings. The C.P.R. Shepard Station [Model #5] was the second constructed in 1910, and was donated to the City of Calgary in 1970, for \$15. It was located 24 kilometres [15 miles] from downtown Calgary main CPR station and used by many RCAF during the war. If you visit and ride the steam train at Heritage Park in Calgary, you will stop at the original Shepard Station, but only the pioneer history is given.





I estimate over 5,000 Wireless Air Gunners received their two weeks' air operations training at RCAF Shepard, officially from 1 December 1942 until closing 30 March 1945. The wireless air gunners formed a most important part of RAF WWII bomber crew fighting comrades of the skies. For some reason their history at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, has slipped through the cracks of time and is totally forgotten by historians. They took their training in obsolete hand-me-down aircraft which was not good enough for training pilots, and that cost a few young lives. The role played by the Canadian-designed and constructed Fleet Fort 60K, flown at Shepard, Alberta, for 25 months has also been totally forgotten. The best North American Harvard trainer did not arrive at Shepard until the war was almost over. LAC Bill Campbell, 23 March 1945, #105A Entry Class which moved from Winnipeg, graduated Calgary, 29 March 1945.



#2 WIRELESS ERA. "LAC Wm. CAMPBELL WITH LINEUP OF HARVARD AIRCRAFT - SHEPHERD."



Four students of the last Wireless #105A Air Operations class flown at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, 23 March 1945. The Second World War in Europe will end in just over five weeks. Their young lives will be spared, unlike so many other Wireless Air Gunners who trained at Shepard.



This was RCAF Headquarters Staff, No. 2 W.S. [Calgary] Flying Squadron, 22 March 1945. They will disband in 23 days, and many will be discharged or posted to other parts of Canada. [SAIT]

DATE: 21 March, 1946.

DISBANDMENT OF 2 WS, CALGARY, & 2 WSFS, SHEPARD, ALTA.
(This Order cancels OO 43)

INFORMATION

1. Wireless school training commitments have been sufficiently reduced to permit the disbandment of 2 WS, Calgary, Alta. It is intended to disband 2 WS, Calgary, and 2 WSFS, Shepard, Alta.

EXECUTION

Effective Date

2. 2 WS, Calgary, and 2 WSFS, Shepard, Alta., are to become inactive with the graduation of Courses 104 and 105 on 29 Mar/46, and are to disband effective 14 April/46.

Personnel

3. AOC, 2 AC, is to arrange the withdrawal of staff personnel on or before 14 April/46.

Personnel - MPO 1313

4. AMP (Postal Liaison) is to issue separate instructions regarding MPO personnel, funds and equipment (see AFAC A.33/11).

Establishments

5. The establishments for 2 WS and 2 WSFS are to be cancelled effective 14 April/46.

Temporary Establishment - Civilians

6. AOC, 2 AC, is to ascertain if the continued employment of any civilian employees such as engineers, pumpmen, etc., is necessary in order to ensure the proper care and maintenance of the properties at Calgary and Shepard until RCAF responsibility for them has terminated.
7. If such employment is considered necessary the AOC, 2 AC, by message, is to request AFHQ to transfer the specific positions from 2 WS and 2 WSFS establishments to 2 ACHQ AU. Positions for which approval of transfer is granted will be annotated "For duty at 2 WS or 2 WSFS pending termination of RCAF responsibility".

Disposal of Buildings and Property - Calgary

8. The buildings and property at Calgary, Alta., housing 2 WS, have been declared surplus to RCAF requirements, effective 15 April/46.
9. AOC, 2 AC, is to form a Board of Officers to take over the buildings and property on charge to the CO, 2 WS, at Calgary and is to be responsible for their care and maintenance pending termination of RCAF responsibility. The Board is to include in its proceedings a report on the condition of these buildings and property preparatory to their disposal.

OF No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF, Calgary, Alta. (Month of April 1-14/45)

THE W.A.G. SIGNAL



DATE
14 April/45

Wireless School (Cont'd)
Personnel have all been posted. Civilians have been put through the protracted National Selective Service routine. In a word, men, material and equipment, the basic factors in any work, have been dealt with. A rear party has been appointed and it and a few others will be the final odds and ends inseparable with the station's closing. Headed by the C.O., a group of officers attended a memorial service delivered by Bishop H.B. Ragg of Calgary in the Pro-Cathedral.

Shepard
H.F. cleared its inventory today and all vehicles returned to No. 2 Wireless School. Employment of civilians ceased today. Special bus arranged for 1400 hours to take civilians off station. Many sad farewells were noticed among civilians and personnel. The closing of a station is rather a sad business.

I. H. Walker
(I.H. Walker) S/L
C.O. Rear Party,
No. 2 W.S. RCAF
Calgary, Alberta.

No. 2 Wireless School Flying Squadron was created on 6 January 1941, operating from No. 3 S.F.T.S until 24 January 41, when they moved into the T.C.A. hangar at Calgary Airport. Moved back to No. 3 S.F.T.S. on 12 May 1942, took over operations in new constructed double-wide hangar #6. In March 1942, Flying training began at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, with aircraft then based in Calgary. Wireless operator students were transported by bus and CPR train from the training school Calgary to the base located some twenty-four miles south-east. Major base expansion construction began at Shepard in early 1942, a second double-wide hangar was built with two H-huts, wet canteen, and other buildings for permanent staff [240 personnel] living quarters. After the construction was completed, the move to RCAF Shepard began on 25 November 1942, and the new school was officially in full operation 1 December 1942. Runway lights were installed and the first night-flying took place 1 June 1943, and a third hangar was constructed for the Fleet Fort aircraft which grown to 47 on charge end of March to June 1943. No. 2 W. S. Flying Squadron took on charge a

total of 56 Fleet Fort trainers, the most by any RCAF unit, and they were all flown at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, for 25 months.

TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS	
	<u>STRENGTH OF UNIT AS 28-2-43</u>	<u>STRENGTH OF UNIT AS 31-3-43</u>
	(i) RCAF Officers (Staff) 57	(i) RCAF Officers (Staff) 57
	(ii) RCAF Officers (W.D.) 2	(ii) RCAF Officers (W.D.) 2
	(iii) RCAF Airman (Staff) 563	(iii) RCAF Airman (Staff) 568
	(iv) RCAF Airwomen Nil	(iv) RCAF Airwomen Nil
	(v) Trainees 1173	(v) Trainees 1171
	(vi) Personnel other than RCAF	(vi) Personnel other than RCAF
	CDO Officers 2	CDO Officers 3
	CDO Other Ranks 6	CDO Other Ranks 8
	RCASO Officers Nil	RCASO Officers Nil
	RCASO Other Ranks Nil	RCASO Other Ranks Nil
	(vii) Civilians 183	(vii) Civilians 153
	(viii) RCAF Officers (Trainee) 1	(viii) RCAF Officers (Trainee) Nil
	(ix) W.R.T.P. 293	(ix) W.R.T.P. 304
	2300	
	<u>TOTAL HOURS FLOWN FOR MONTH ENDING 31-3-43</u>	<u>AIRCRAFT ON STRENGTH AS AT 31-3-43</u>
	3894 hours 45 minutes	Beechman ME 4 8
		Fleet Fort ME 1 1
		Fleet Fort ME 2 46
		Monaco Moth 2
		Total 57
		<i>E. H. Owen</i>
		(E. H. Owen) Group Captain, Commanding Officer, No. 2 Wireless School, RCAF, Calgary, Alberta.

The total Daily Diary reported intake of W.A.G. students at No. 2 W.S. Calgary was 2,781 from 16 September 1940 until 23 July 1942, [twenty-one months] with graduation of 2,382, 503 failed and the remainder were reassigned. The student input total continues to climb and the monthly totals give some idea of the activity at RCAF Shepard. For two weeks, each W.A.G. student received ten training flights on average, lasting 1:30 hrs to 2:30 hrs per flight.

31 October 43 — 1,624 students in training.
 31 December 43 — 1,851 students training.
 31 January 44 — 1,872 training.

February 44 — 1,876 training, March 44 — 1,794 training, May 44 — 1,624 training, June 44 — 1,576 training, July 44 — 1,627 training, October 44, 1,993, December 1944, the all time high 2,153 students in training. February 1945, 1,677 students and the last month March 1945, 619 students in training.

The four Wireless Schools in Canada graduated 18,496 Wireless Air Gunners, 12,744 — RCAF, 2,875 — RAAF, 2,122 — RNZA, and 755 R.A.F. While I cannot find the final figures for No. 2 W.S. Calgary, it would be fair to guess over 5,000 W.A.G. students flight trained at RCAF Shepard, Alberta, from 12 May 1942 until 30 March 1945. [33 months]

28th./Feb/45

Wireless School

The 99th and 100th Entry graduated to-day, 256 strong. The largest course of W.A.O.s ever to graduate from any Wireless School in Canada. C/M, 883972 Kae, P.J. was presented with an engraved identification bracelet on the graduation parade for having attained the highest standing in Course 100. The usual tea, banquet and dance were held. The unit re-selection board interviewed nine trainees whose training had been discontinued. S/L G.L. Bryne and F/L M.D. Hogg from Western Air Command visited the station to-day. "Lifebuoy Pollies", a variety show, was held in the auditorium. Modification of stage setting and electrification was completed. Capt. Dick Regional Secretary, C.L.E.S. of Edmonton visited the station.

29th./Mar/45

Wireless School

The largest group (381) of any class of air-crew ever to graduate together in the Joint Air Training Plan received their wings and sparks to-day. The salute on the March Past was taken by Lieutenant Governor J.C. Bowen of Alberta. Major General W.W. Foster CMDR DSO VD (C97) Air Commodore R.F. Johnson, (C53) G/C D.A. Harding, (C373) G/C R.H. Yoss, the Commanding Officer and C/M, J15711 F/L Fiddes, P.A.C. (honour student of the first course graduated from this school), presented wings to the graduates. The ceremony lasted nearly two hours and was followed by a display of pursuit fighting and a demonstration of air to ground signals. Coffee, cake, sandwiches and doughnuts were served in the Airman's Mess and a graduation banquet was held later in the Palliser Hotel.

Shepard

Graduation day for 103, 104 and 105 Entries. Practice Formation in the morning and in the afternoon. The Graduation went off in good style. In the evening several members of Shepard with the Officer Commanding, attended the Graduation Banquet. In the evening Serenade to Spring was presented at Shepard. Over 2000 people attending. Air Commodore Johnston from No. 2 Air Command was present, also the Commanding Officer. A very good time was had by all and all entertainment was carried out successfully.

Time:

Flying Hours: Days: -
Possible Hours: Days: 13:43

30th./Mar/45

Wireless School

Good Friday, a statutory Air Force holiday was just another working day for service personnel at this station. Civilians had a day off. The necessity of clearing the graduating classes 104 and 105 kept everyone at work and the job was completed on schedule. There are now no trainees on the station.

The last five entry classes at RCAF Shepard graduated 609 students, which included 209 that begun their training at No. 3 W.S. in Winnipeg, entry class #99, #100, #101, #103 and #105.



Original large size photograph in SAIT collection.

The largest class to graduated from any Wireless School in Canada, 381 wireless students at Shepard, Alberta, 29 March 1945. Two-hundred and nine of these students began entry wireless training at No. 3 W.S. Winnipeg, Manitoba. Today the right side of this image is known as East Shepard Industrial and the left side is a huge City of Calgary

Sludge dumping lagoon. The RCAF Wireless Training historical part of this airfield during WWII, is totally unknown to 99% of the population of the City of Calgary.

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

AIR CREW



FIGHTING COMRADES OF THE SKIES

9th April/46

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Summary of Events

Shepard

Frosty, cold morning. Snowing in the morning and snowed all day. Cleared in late evening. Skeleton crews on duty.

Wireless School

Most of the balance of officer postings came in today. "Midge", the pony, Station Mascot since 1941 when she was won in a raffle by the late L.A.C. (later Sgt.) Willigar was shipped to his parents in Parrsboro, N.S. The usual week-end prank of taking down the fire hose was executed again. It will be dried by the fire department and re-hung.



Discharge 'Midge'

-but Honorably

CALGARY, ALBERTA
10 APRIL/46

Mascot's Service
Career to End in
Nova Scotia Pasture

Calgary will say goodbye to a gallant pony when "Midge", the mascot of No. 2 Wireless School, leaves this week for Nova Scotia.

Stationed at No. 2 from December 1943 to August 1941, LAC Willigar of Parrsboro, N.S., took a chance on a Sunshine Fund raffle and found himself the possessor of a Shetland pony. No establishment could be

She participated in the Commanding Officer's weekly station parade; she led Victory Loan and Stampede parades and was scheduled to be in the forefront of the Victory Day parade.

A year ago "Midge" managed to sneak past the guard at the school and wandered two days, undisturbed by Air Force blue. Found and returned to the school, a charge of being A.W.L. was dismissed for it was proved she had not had either annual leave or a "48" for more than two years.

LAC Willigar, owner of the pony, meanwhile completed his course and had proceeded to the Bombing and Gunnery school at Fingal, thence overseas to active operations. On a flight over enemy territory Sgt. Willigar was killed.

His mother, Mrs. E. M. Willigar of Parrsboro, N.S., has continued to take an active interest in "Midge".

Today Midge rests [wearing her blanket] in an unmarked grave at Parrsboro, Nova Scotia.

By 1948, all of RCAF buildings at Shepard had been sold or demolished, however the runways would once again feel the landing and take-off of aircraft. No. 403 [Auxiliary] "City of Calgary" Squadron was formed on 15 October 1948, flying North American Harvard Mk. II, North American Mustang Mk. IV, Canadair Silver Star Mk. 3 and after March 1958, the de Havilland Otter, reassigned for RCAF emergency rescue duties. No. 403 was based at RCAF ex-No. 3 S.F.T.S. [Currie Field] which was later renamed Lincoln Park on 1 September 1961. RCAF Shepard was used as a storage base for Mustang airframes, wings, propellers, and other parts which were placed on the ground unprotected from the weather. I have been told many of these parts remain buried in the ground today, forgotten by the passage of time, just as the Canadian Government intended. Young RCAF pilot Lynn Garrison, flew Otter aircraft in and out of Shepard on a weekly touch and go flight, or to pick up spare parts. This was also where Calgary lawyer Milt Harradence stored his own private P-51 Mustang, but that is another story from the 1965 era. In 1970, the City of Calgary obtained the property from the Federal Government and the old runways became the A.M.A. Driver Testing Venue, where thousands of teenagers took to the wheel. The same runways where thousands of WWII wireless teenagers once trained, flew, and died.



"I don't care if you were a cowboy ----
You REEL it out!"

Original 1943, Fleet Fort 60K cartoon by unknown WWII artist, coloured by author.

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[No. 2 Wireless School \(PDF Version\)](#)In "No. 2 Wireless School"

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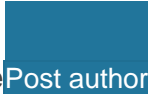
[Little Norway - Part One \(Text Version\)](#)In "Little Norway"

This entry was posted in [No. 2 Wireless School](#) on [September 28, 2019](#).

Post navigation

[← Preserving the Past – Fleet Forts](#)[Coming soon... →](#)

1 thought on “No. 2 Wireless School (Updated Text Version)”



1. **Pierre Lagacé** Post author [September 30, 2019 at 8:41 am](#)

Comment made by Chris Charland
G'day

Here's the gen on the photo of the turtled Fort.

The accident happened at 16:50 hours on the 18th of November, 1943 at Shepard. It flipped onto its back when the starboard brake seized on landing. The aircraft sustained Cat B damage. On the 8th of December, 1943, it was allotted to No. 10 Repair Depot (where it was designated War Reserve) for inspection. It was reduced to spares and produce on the 18th of March, 1944 and subsequently written off.

Pilot – R52246 Sergeant R. L. Armstrong

Wireless Operator Student – 4213282 LAC W. L. Pendergast, R.N.Z.A.F.

*There were no injuries

Cheers...Chris