

Reel C12,350

Number 15 Service Flying Training School, Claresholm, Alberta

May 26, 1941 - May 15, 1945

April 12, 1941

Organization Order No 116

Formation of No 15 Service Flying Training School

In order to provide further flying training for the output of pilots from elementary flying training schools now in operation it has become necessary to open No 15 Service Flying Training School. As St Hubert will not be ready by the date contemplated it has become necessary to open No 15 Service Flying Training School ahead of numbers 13 and 14 Service Flying Training Schools. It is intended to form No 15 Service Flying Training School at Claresholm, Alberta. No 15 SFTS is to open at Claresholm, Alberta on June 9, 1941 on which date it will receive its first intake of pupils.

May 26, 1941

Normal work day for the advance party - S/L G D MacAllister, chief instructor, F/L W E Robinson arrived on the Station.

June 2, 1941

Sixty men, officers and the MT section were in the Victory Loan parade with the school children at Claresholm District. As the rain held off for the day the parade was a success. Electric lights in headquarters, officers quarters and barrack blocks.

June 3, 1941

Sewer pipes along the whole line of hangars had to be all dug up on account of heavy rain and not cemented.

June 6, 1941

F/L M Brown, F/L S Y Broadbent, F/O A W Robinson of the advance party left for Ottawa and Aylmer, Ontario. Four NCOs and 40 airmen arrived from Macleod, 33 airmen arrived from Calgary, 13 also from the east.

June 10, 1941

Commanding Officer and medical officer inspected the swimming hole west of here and found it very satisfactory. In the evening, commanding officer and F/O R M Paterson were out looking for suitable stone for our fireplace

June 13, 1941

Fiscal training instructor from No 4 Training Command J H Passmore P/O and F/O Stevenson of Macleod both looking over our Station and thought we had the makings of a fine setup here.

June 19, 1941

Mr J H Hunter, government inspector, arrived 1000 hours re visit to Mr Shearer who has tendered for the garbage at this Station.

June 23, 1941

The first seven Ansons arrived 1750 hours to 1805 hours, the first aircraft to land at Claresholm ferried from Macleod. So far number 1 runway is sufficiently completed to land aeroplanes.

June 24, 1941

Mr W A Wheten of Works and Buildings from Macleod was here re conditioning Granum relief aerodrome. Mr Wheten discussed the dust problem for maintenance of Link trainers. He suggests some kind of air conditioning as the dust problem is very difficult to handle. Seven Avro Anson aircraft arrived by ferry flight from Calgary.

June 25, 1941

Instructional flying carried on at Granum in the morning but washed out in the afternoon. Eight more Avro Ansons arrived by ferry flight from Macleod at 1030 hours.

July 7, 1941

Normal flying day 0800 hours until 1830 hours. Solo and cross country flying at this aerodrome and also at Granum. Six more aircraft arrived from Macleod. No 1 Squadron challenged No 2 Squadron to a game of softball to be played at 2000 hours Wednesday.

July 13, 1941

F/O Godfrey and pupil made a forced landing in a wheat field three miles east of Claresholm on account of a small fire caused by overheated wires in aircraft. Anson number 1986. No damage was done to aircraft or occupants (aircraft was flown back). Officers fireplace progressing very well. W/C H L Campbell and F/L W E Robinson inspected the Town of Claresholm's water supply on Willow Creek which is also our supply. The dam is very poor, no water reservoir at all other than a few feet just above the dam.

July 16, 1941

Dr P J Carroll, Claresholm, discussed civil personnel being treated in the town hospital, also the town's and our water supply - Willow Creek, emphasizing the necessity for a proper cement control dam.

July 21, 1941

Flying started 0800 hours to 1700 hours. Night flying Granum field 2100 hours to 0330 hours.

July 22, 1941

F/O R O L'Ami (press liaison officer) from No 4 Training Command discussing our opening day, also Mr R L King, newspaper man of Claresholm. The stonework was finished today on the officers' fireplace. It improves the room very much.

July 23, 1941

Several visitors from Claresholm - Mr A Laurie, Bank of Commerce; Mr M Jenkins, interested in movie for Station; Mr R L King, newsprint; and J W Ringrose, Mayor.

July 31, 1941

Total flying time for the month: 4,127.45 hours. 64 Avro Anson aircraft on charge. RCAF officers 56, airmen 595; CDC 2; CDC officer 1; RCASC NCOs 1, airmen 3; trainees 117; civilians 58 men, 11 women.

August 6, 1941

P/O Hanbidge and LAC Muir while on an instrument flight at 1400 hours in Anson number 6587 over Stavely flew into a hail storm damaging the wings and tail of the aircraft. They were able to fly the aircraft safely back to the Station without further injury to the aircraft or occupants.

August 16, 1941

No 15 SFTS first wings parade and official opening. Opened by Lt Governor J C Bowen of Alberta. Speeches were made by the Lt Governor, the mayor of Claresholm, George W Ringrose, A/C A T N Cowley and W/C H L Campbell. Wings were presented by A/C Cowley. The Macleod band very ably assisted us all through the proceedings. The spectators were very generous with their applause on the march past. The weather looked very threatening all morning and afternoon. Half an hour after the parade was over it started to rain scattering the people all over the Station but as most of them had automobiles outside the gate they were able to keep dry. The towns people of Claresholm very kindly invited the graduating class to dinner and a dance after. The officers and sergeants each held a dance in their respective messes.

September 14, 1941

First Sunday tea to which ladies were admitted held in officers' mess. Station visited by W/C W A Jones, B&G School Lethbridge.

September 17, 1941

Two students LAC Warbritten J D pilot and LAC Kelly T D navigator became lost on a routine cross country in Anson 6059 and bailed out near Highwood, Montana. Both were uninjured, the aircraft was a complete writeoff.

October 5, 1941

H R H the Duke of Windsor and the Duchess of Windsor arrived on the Station by car and were met by A/C A T N Cowley and Mrs Cowley and W/C and Mrs H L Campbell. HRH inspected the guard of honour commanded by F/L J M Godfrey and party inspected headquarters building, barrack block 20, GIS and number 1 hangar after which HRH received the royal salute from the paraded Station personnel under W/C G D MacAllister on the parade square. Following this HRH made a short speech and then presented wings to graduating members of course 34. An estimated crowd of 5,500 attended including officers from No 4 ATC HQ, No 7 SFTS, No 3 SFTS. A tea was held in the officers' mess and officers and their wives were presented to the Duke and Duchess. The Duke and Duchess departed for High River. Concert held in recreation hall by Patriotic Society. 258 civilians attended.

October 6, 1941

The new bus service to Claresholm operated by Rolly's Taxi started operating.

October 15, 1941

1530 hours Anson 6590 flown by P/O C Bryson J5116 and R95090 LAC Cawker student crashed near Stavely. Both occupants brought to Station hospital by ambulance. P/O Bryson suffered extensive facial cuts and a fracture of the left forearm. LAC Cawker was slightly cut about the face, hands and legs. Aircraft an "A" category crash. Construction of sentry boxes on hangar roofs commenced. Second issue of No 15 SFTS "Review."

October 17, 1941

1700 hours night flying for number one squadron washed out because the instructors had completed their allotted flying time.

October 27, 1941

Meeting of unit commanders to discuss WAGs, duty watch parades, circulation of files, drill

lectures for officers and marking of drill hall floor for sports. Incoming draft of 200 students quarantined because of three cases of rubella (measles).

November 4, 1941

Disposition of course 36: 11 to CFS Trenton; 9 to GRS Charlottetown; 20 to No 1 Y Depot, Halifax; 4 to OTS Patricia Bay; 5 transferred to course 38; 4 training discontinued.

November 20, 1941

F/L Reis of No 4 TC and Mr Summerville of Department of Transport visited Station to inspect runways and run of ditch to west of aerodrome. (Ed: Summerville later became Lethbridge city manager).

November 24, 1941

Flying washed out all day on account of high winds and dust storm. W/C W E Kennedy, our new CO, reported at 0900 hours. Wind reached velocity of 75 miles per hour. Power lines down, hose reel house blown down, extensive damage to hangars. Power came on at 1755 hours. Possible flying time nil.

December 1, 1941

Flying washed out on account of high wind and dust storm. Aircraft had difficulty in landing. Two aircraft landed at High River, two at Macleod, returned later in day safe. Flying commenced until 1645. Chock blew away from in front of a/c 6585 allowing it to swing. Starboard air screw hit on air compressor splitting airscrew.

December 8, 1941

Flying ceased on account of W/C J N H Whitworth DSO DFC AFC lectured to officers and student pilots on his experience as bomber pilot over seas and how a bomber squadron operates. Questions were taken at the end of the lecture.

December 18, 1941

Anson a/c number 6256 instructor F/O R A Carey and R113102 LAC Curry G H had accident seven miles northeast of the Station. LAC Curry had complete a single engine forced landing about 50 feet from ground, was instructed to climb opening throttle, port engine did not respond. F/O Carey took over in an attempt to land. Due to tongue of starboard engine and slight draft left wing struck a straw stack caused a/c to swing around and strike ground causing considerable damage to a/c. Neither occupants were hurt.

December 22, 1941

Ten Cessna a/c arrived to be used at this Station for instructional purposes.

January 27, 1942

Crane 8685 pilot LAC Wark A M R118247 while practicing a precautionary landing at Woodhouse right side of undercarriage washed out and airscrew starboard completely destroyed, engine nacelle tubes warped, student uninjured. Basketball game with Barons High School, No 15 SFTS won 65 to 59.

February 3, 1942

Crash: Crane 8717 R94986 LAC Moyer J D and Crane 8729 RAF 1386869 LAC Rowe G W. Visibility was poor. LAC Rowe approached number one runway. He received a red Very signal from the control tower and as he leveled out to fly off, Cessna 8717 piloted by LAC Moyer caught his port wing, the two planes colliding. LAC Rowe made a pancake landing and escaped unhurt. The other plane Cessna 8717 climbed steeply, turned over and nose dived to the ground, wrecking the machine and injuring pilot LAC Moyer.

February 12, 1942

Accident: Crane 8661 forced landing by R92303 LAC Anderson A E two and a half miles northeast Stavely. Pilot uninjured, aircraft badly damaged. Collided with Tiger Moth from High River. Tiger Moth crashed to ground and burned about a half mile south of Stavely. Pilot (unknown) killed, passenger (unknown) killed. Investigation and court of inquiry being held.

February 20, 1942

CO's parade held in drill hall. CO gave a brief address on the need for purchasing war bonds. Also asked for full cooperation at hockey game on Saturday night.

February 23, 1942

Accident: LAC Rodgers S M R109115 killed. Rodgers crashed one and one half miles north of Parkland at approximately 1530 hours. Rodgers flying solo formation in aircraft number 8747 - Crane, broke formation without apparent reason, circled down and crashed. Reported to control tower at approximately 1620 hours by LAC Gladwin who had been flying formation with LAC Rodgers in a/c 8736. Aircraft 8747 port 8255 starboard 8256 completely wrecked. Sixty AW2's, two corporals and one officer of RCAF (WD) arrived on the Station from Guelph and Toronto.

February 24, 1942

Uniform of LAC Rodgers prepared for his burial. Wing issued posthumously. Sixteen more WD's.

March 4, 1942

Visitors Dragon Fly 7624, S/L Byers one passenger arrived from Calgary at 1330 hours departing 1345 hours. Five Cessna Crane arrived on Station and remained, FJ117, 119, 121, 123, 124.

April 10, 1942

Moved new Link trainer machines into new Link trainer building. Cessna 8724 piloted by P/O J A L Shirley, while formation flying on return trip from Medicine Hat, one engine seized about 1115 hours, flew back rest of trip on single engine.

April 15, 1942

Accident Crane a/c 8750 suffered broken port airscrew tips and starboard airscrew was cracked. At about 0915 hours R110436 LAC Robinson W F was practicing a precautionary landing on aerodrome. As he made a dummy run over the field with wheels up the airscrews touched some telephone wires thereby damaging them. F/Sgt Atkins was the instructor in aircraft at this time. Neither occupant's hurt. Damage to a/c Crane 8721: Crane 8721 made a belly landing at Woodhouse R1 airfield at approximately 1402 hours. F/O G McMurdy was demonstrating a precautionary landing and had a passenger R110225 LAC Martin J R S. F/O McMurdy neglected to make a dummy run and failed to lower undercarriage. No one was injured but the propellers of the aircraft were damaged.

April 16, 1942

Stearman FO991, F/S Shaw, one passenger from Pearce, departing 1735 hours.

April 19, 1942

Stearman 55, S/L Watt from Pearce departing 1730 hours. (Editor's note: Watts commanded at De Winton later on) Accident: an accident occurred to Cessna 8669 at approximately 1415 hours about one and one half miles west of Clear Lake at the practice forced landing field. R188547 LAC Bush W K was making a practice forced landing under instruction of F/O C B Mark. He overshot the field and then F/O Mark took over the controls. The instructor then opened the throttles but the engines failed to catch immediately. The aircraft touched the up wind boundary fence but continued flying and returned safely to regain aerodrome. No one was injured but the port propeller was nicked. There was a hole in the fuselage under the cockpit and the hydraulic brake line on port wheel was broken.

April 22, 1942

Wings were presented to the graduates of course 46 in the drill hall commencing about 1530 hours by W/C W E Kennedy. An interesting event of the afternoon was the presenting of wings to F/L MacLachlan, chief ground instructor.

April 27, 1942

Lectures commencing for CFS (Central Flying School) students. No 2 FIS course commenced 27/4/42. Time: 8 weeks, finished 22/6/42, flying hours 60. No 2 FIS, called number one squadron, comprised A and B flights, temporary arrangement only. C, D, E, F flights designated as number 2 squadron. Familiarization flights and instructors' practice flights. Visitors: G/C Flynn arrived by air from No 4 TC to discuss details concerning No 2 FIS with S/L Harvey and F/L Jacox.

(Editor's note: No 2 FIS was eventually established at Vulcan and later transferred to Pearce. It had its beginning here at Claresholm as a squadron of No 15 SFTS)

April 29, 1942

Accident: Tiger Moth 4196 (A Flight No 2 FIS) crashed at 1040 hours seven miles northeast of Claresholm. Sgt Holt K C GB1313761 pilot was fatally injured and P/O Jameson J GB658208 received severe facial injuries and possible skull fracture. Machine was badly wrecked. Cause of accident obscure, probably stall off climb with resultant spin at about 300 feet.

May 4, 1942

1415 accident: After practicing southeast approach in main aerodrome, the pilot opened up the throttles to go around again. Cessna FJ112 crashed at 1050 hours diving nose first into roof of barrack block 11 east which is occupied by the security guard. The a/c was badly damaged (A crash category). The following were injured: occupants of a/c GB656359 P/O Atkinson B first pilot seriously, GB1332678 Sgt Mickleborough L W second pilot very slightly. Occupants of No 11 barrack block R137979 AC1 Currie W E, R137960 AC1 Cameron A J, R151790 AC2 Hay H A, R50471 Cpl Robinson N O, R137962 AC2 MacMullin G D, R51331 Cpl Pesto R S (cuts and bruises), R149857 Cpl Fahlman W A (chest injuries).

May 9, 1948

Accident: 1540 hours on forced landing field (Ed: Clear Lake) nine miles east of Stavely to Crane 8680 damaging port airscrew. Pilot P/O W Thompson J9136 and LAC Grand G B R121439 pupil pilot. The instructor cut one engine not knowing that pupil had retracted undercarriage, a/c made belly landing with wheels up. No injuries.

May 18, 1942

The officers of No 2 FIS were entertained by No 15 SFTS at a buffet supper served in the mess at 2000 hours preceded by a friendly soccer game between officers of No 2 FIS and No 15 SFTS, score zero zero.

May 20, 1942

Wings parade: a very colorful ceremony was held in the drill square, wings parade for course 48. The graduates were presented with their wings by the commanding officer W/C W E Kennedy. A large gathering was on hand to witness the presentation. The squadrons (No 15 SFTS and No 2 FIS) marched into the parade square at 1600 hours, formed a hollow square with the graduating class lined up in front. The weather was quite sultry and two persons were overcome by the heat.

May 31, 1942

Total flying time for the month: No 15 SFTS 4,193 hours 55 minutes; No 2 FIS 2,153 hours five minutes. Crane I - 76, Crane IA - 24, Tiger Moth - 20, Anson - 8.

June 17, 1942

No 2 Squadron had afternoon off to attend the Claresholm Rodeo. Commanding Officer W E Kennedy W/C acted a judge of the various racing events. A large gathering representing No 15 SFTS was in attendance and a very interesting program was presented: horse racing, bronco busting, calf roping, etc. S/L D D Atkinson acted as Steward of the Claresholm Racing and Stampede Association.

June 18, 1942

Seventy three air cadets arrived attached No 15 SFTS from No 57 (Vancouver High Schools) Wing.

June 19, 1942

Wet, cloudy, low ceiling 900 - 1600 feet, very little student flying except for tests in A and B flight. Instructors carried out practice flying checking each other out on patten and demonstration. Course number 1 graduated. Course number 1, No 2 Flying Instructor School. Course commenced 27/4/42 with 60 pupils. Wastage: washed out 24, killed in crash 1, transferred course 2. Course graduated 19/6/42 33 pupils. Disposition of course: 4 to No 31 EFTS De Winton; 4 to No 32 EFTS Bowden; 3 to No 34 EFTS Assiniboia; 2 to No 33 SFTS Carberry; 5 to No 34 SFTS Medicine Hat; 4 to No 35 SFTS North Battleford; 3 to No 36 SFTS Penhold; 4 to No 37 SFTS Calgary; 3 to No 41 SFTS Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

June 21, 1942

Accident: notified at 1620 hours of crash involving a private auto owned by Mr Crane of Champion and Moth a/c 5801 piloted by P/O L P Pitt, passenger P/O J Potter. Slight injuries sustained by P/O Pitt. Moth was a washout, "A" category crash.

June 30, 1942

Accident: Crane FJ109 pilot F/O J C Marshall. Forced landing, soggy field, turned over on back, dry lake forced landing field.

July 8, 1942

Accident: Crane 8743 and Crane 8669 collided 17 miles east of Carmangay while formation flying. The following comprising all the occupants of the two a/c were killed. In 8743, R131519 LAC Stearns C M pilot; R121768 LAC MacDonald W C navigator. In 8669, R122066 LAC Johnston R G navigator; R121025 LAC Gutteridge E E pilot. Cause of the accident was obscure, both aircraft are totally damaged.

July 15, 1942

Visitors: Oxford 418, pilot Sgt Fielden, one passenger, from Medicine Hat departing 1315 hours. Cornell 654, 655, 656 ferried here from Calgary for No 2 FIS.

July 18, 1942

Almost fatal accident occurred at approximately 1035 hours. Two workmen of General Construction, excavating for water and sewer lines to hangars six and seven, were buried in ditch by heavy cave-in of bank. First workman dug out 1105 hours, second 1117 hours. Doctor and ambulance in attendance, no serious damage done.

July 31, 1942

Strength: Headquarters officers 4; instructors officers 25; instructors airmen 8; trainees officers 85; trainees other ranks 52.

August 15, 1942

No flying all day with the exception of a few flights. A sports field day was held celebrating the first anniversary of the opening of No 15 SFTS. A large crowd of visitors was on hand to witness a display of formation flying and aerobatics by Cranes, Cornells flown by RAF pilots of No 2 FIS, and three Hurricanes from Lethbridge. A tug-of-war team was flown to Calgary for a competition and won the event there. The anniversary issue of the Station paper "Windy Wings" was published and proved very successful.

September 13, 1942

No 2 FIS possible flying time 24 hours. Flying commenced until 1530. Showers, gusty winds. No 2 Flying Instructors' School complete flying at Claresholm and cease to be attached to No 15 SFTS on removal to school at Vulcan, Alberta. No 2 FIS at Vulcan now in complete operation.

September 30, 1942

Accident: aircraft Crane 8121, time 0400 hours 1/10/42. Aircraft was completely destroyed by fire caused by accidental discharge of reconnaissance flare at approximately 0400 hours 1/10/42. This aircraft left main aerodrome at 2000 hours 30/9/42 with Sgt Cook D H taking two pupils, R120614 LAC Hatch A E and GB1433270 LAC Turner D S on a night cross country flight via Olds, Drumheller and return. They ran into strong winds near Arrowwood and the fuel ran low so Sgt Cook made a forced landing without damage to machine. About 0400 hours LAC Turner accidentally released a reconnaissance flare. Sgt Cook endeavored to put flare out with his tunic, which he did, but was unable to stop port wing from burning and as a result the whole aircraft became ablaze and was entirely destroyed. Sgt Cook was severely burned about his hands and showed great courage in fighting the flames.

October 26, 1942

P/O A E Hore J13473 was awarded the Air Force Cross effective 26/10/42 by His Majesty the King for devotion to duty.

November 1, 1942

F/O Dallas Wilbur Schmidt J7336, graduate of course 32 this school, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on 5/10/42 for great gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations.

November 11, 1942

Station parade at 1100 hours in observance of Armistice Day on the drill square. The Last Post was sounded and the Ensign raised and two minutes silence observed. Personnel also paraded to the Claresholm Cemetery with wreaths for graves of RAF airmen killed in crash at this school. The sale of poppies on the Station amounted to \$89.86.

December 7, 1942

Course number 70 commenced 7/12/42, intake 59. Fifty eight Australian pilots from No 3 M Depot Edmonton, one Canadian pilot from No 5 EFTS High River.

December 14, 1942

Accident: R182765 AC2 Berglund John Roger, potential air gunner, was killed in an m/t accident west of the Station in the foothills while returning with a detail from cutting Christmas trees. On the return trip at approximately 1645 hours the truck skidded from the narrow icy road and rolled down a hill five or six times. AC2 Berglund was trapped in the back of the truck and died about two hours later as a result of skull fracture and fractured jaw. The other occupants of the truck were R94607 LAC Robertson D G driver, uninjured; R192633 AC2 Harms H J, uninjured; 5529 Sgt Texmo W A, broken finger; R189474 AC2 Cartwright J, uninjured; R189382 AC2 Darnbrough R V, uninjured. A Court of Inquiry was held.

December 24, 1942

Accident: weather cloudy. Crane 8762 piloted by R146059 LAC Monroe S T course 64 signed out for review of sequences. Accident occurred at approximately 1500 hours one mile south of Monarch, Alberta. Pilot was low flying along the Old Man River when he touched his wing and propeller on a high tension wire. Parts of wing and propeller were strewn from the wire to spot where plane crashed. The pilot lost control of his aircraft after hitting the wire and crashed about a quarter mile further on. The aircraft burst into flames and was a total loss. Residents of that section saw the aircraft low flying and saw it hit the ground and burst into flames. LAC Monroe, a US citizen from Seattle, Washington, was instantly killed and his body was badly burned. He was due to graduate December 28, 1942. The remains were forwarded to his home in Washington.

December 26, 1942

LAC Watson of course 64 was presented with his wings in the officers mess by S/L Atkinson. He was detailed to escort the body of LAC Monroe to the United States, both being US citizens.

December 28, 1942

Wings parade held at 1500 hours for graduates of course 64. Pilots flying badge was presented to graduates by W/C W E Kennedy the commanding officer. The usual wings party was not held, the money being presented to Mrs S T Monroe, widow of LAC Monroe of course 64 who was killed in a crash two days prior to the graduation.

January 2, 1943

Accident: Anson II FP838 site nine miles east two miles north of Stavely. Occupants P/O C L Scott J20119 pilot, AUS425637 LAC Gissing F W passenger, AUS421843 LAC Calov second pilot. P/O Scott was giving LAC Calov instructions on low flying in the low flying area. Due to an error in judgement he struck a rise in the ground shattering both propellers. He then landed in a stubble field with wheels down. LAC Calov's judgement was rather poor and P/O Scott came down lower to point out to Calov how important it was to maintain a constant height and in so

doing struck a rise in the ground. No one was injured.

January 3, 1943

Accident: time 0130 hours, site one mile west of main aerodrome. Occupant AUS421250 LAC Cowin pupil pilot uninjured. LAC Cowin was doing solo night circuits and landings. He had carried out four circuits and was starting out on the fifth and found the aircraft would not gain altitude. He switched on landing lights and landed with wheels down. The aircraft ran through a fence, across a ditch, over a road and another ditch then broke off a telephone pole, went through a second fence and came to rest in the middle of a field.

January 13, 1943

The Station basketball team played their first game of the season against the Raymond Union Jacks, Alberta champions, at Raymond, Alberta and were defeated by a score of 51 to 27. A schedule was drawn up with games between No 15 SFTS, 7 SFTS, 8 B&G, Pearce, No 2 FIS and Raymond.

January 31, 1943

Number 284 WO1 Marriott R W was awarded a membership in the military division of the Most Honorable Order of the British Empire. Authorization AFRO number 55 D/15 Jan/43.

March 6, 1943

Standing in the bowling league is as follows: maintenance 54, headquarters 42, No 1 Squadron 42, No 2 Squadron 42.

Editor's note: as about the middle of 1942, Woodhouse comes on as the relief field for Claresholm, relieving Granum of its traffic.

March 11, 1943

Accident category C-14, site Woodhouse R1, aircraft Anson FP979. Occupant AUS423370 LAC Wells C E pupil uninjured, P/O V Heath J12048 captain of a/c. LAC Wells had turned off end of runway after completing normal landing. He then stomped the aircraft and raised undercarriage selector instead of turning off interconnecting cock. Realizing mistake, he returned selector to down position but was too late as starboard wheel had retracted causing damage as above: starboard propeller broken, damaged main plane.

March 24, 1943

Weather cloudy, air rough in afternoon, gusty winds at night. Basketball: Station teams played in Barons, the men's team easily winning by a score of 45 to 20. The WDs team was badly

defeated by a fast, sharp-shooting team from Barons High School 64 to 22.

April 26, 1943

Victory Loan drive got off to a good start exceeding the quota of \$50,000 by \$8,000 on Monday evening. Pennant was presented to G/C Kennedy at Calgary by Mr Ilesley, Minister of Finance for the Dominion. P/O C R Henning, Cpl T L Adkins and Sgt J Inglis each purchased \$1,000 bonds.

May 11, 1943

Piano and violin recital presented in recreation hall by Miss Jean Gilbert and Miss Mary Tierney of Calgary assisted by LAC Wilkinson, RAF student of course 74. Track and field practice is organized to be held on the sports field twice weekly in preparation for competition with other units in the command.

Editor's note: list after list of airplanes coming and going are recorded in this diary. Not very compelling reading.

May 19, 1943

Sgt Cook attempted to show LAC Fleming how difficult it was to judge height over water and in showing him struck the water with propeller tips and shattered them. Starboard fuselage member distorted, assembly pressure lead group damaged, bomb aimer floor damaged. Both occupants were uninjured.

May 25, 1943

Wings parade 1400 to 1500 hours for graduates of course 74 on the tarmac. Pilots flying badges were presented to graduates by His Excellency the Earl of Athlone, governor General of Canada. Flying was washed out in morning and the tarmac was cleared for the guard of honor to form up for inspection by the Governor General and Princess Alice. A large crowd of visitors were present including relatives and friends of the graduating class. An official luncheon was held for the Governor General and his party in the officers mess.

July 12, 1943

July 12, Orangeman's Day, passed unnoticed as such on this Station. An exciting fastball game was played this evening, the home team playing No 2 FIS from Pearce. It was a fast and close game tied at one all until the 10th inning when the Pearce team broke the hearts of the home team by bringing in five runs for a score of six to one. The Women's Division held open house this afternoon for representatives of various women's organizations in Claresholm and the district and for any of the lady citizens of Claresholm. The visitors arrived at the school at approximately 1300 hours. They were divided into groups of approximately one dozen and were

escorted by specially chosen WD guides to various parts of the school where WD personnel are employed. Keen interest was expressed without exception by the visitors and the section which seemed to interest the visitors the most was the parachute section and this subject was on the tongues of all during tea time. Unfortunately the storm broke before the last of the visitors had entirely completed their itinerary of the Station and they were obliged to make a hasty retreat. It is estimated that 150 guests and children were shown around the Station.

July 22, 1943

A great deal of dissatisfaction is being voiced among the personnel of this unit as a result of the action taken by the businessmen of Claresholm in closing all places of business including restaurants at 2000 hours on weekdays and 2230 hours on Saturdays. This Station is sufficiently isolated as it is without the further inconvenience of there being no place for personnel of the School to go after 2000 hours in the evening except Saturday.

July 23, 1943

A farewell party was held in the mess at 1730 hours tonight for F/L R C Waring J8398 (SR) (GL) who has been on strength of this unit since 31/1/42 on the occasion of his posting to No 1 FIS Trenton. F/L Waring was given as a souvenir the last of the pewter steins from the officers mess. These steins cannot be replaced and emphasis was placed on the fact of it being the "last mug." This unit has completed arrangements for a school mascot in the person of one "Prunes Junior," an all black burro presented to the school by the citizens of the town of Fairplay, Colorado. In view of the well known RAF character "P/O Prune," it is proposed to change the name of the mascot to that of "P/O Fairplay" as a recognition of the town of his origin. P/O Fairplay is expected to arrive in Claresholm in the next few days but will not be permitted entry to the school premises until the occasion of the second anniversary celebration on the 14th August, 1943. Prunes Junior is making this trip to the Canadian west as a result of a written enquiry from G/C W E Kennedy, commanding officer of number 15 to the "Rocky Mountain News" at Denver.

July 26, 1943

A good burlesque fastball game was staged this evening between the Women's Division and the "Bomber's Section" of the officers mess. Following the usual practice, batteries were switched and the pitcher, P/O Hebert, found himself obliged to don a skirt and sweater to pitch for the WDs while F/Sgt Piette, catching for the WD team, costumed himself in a bathing suit of the vintage of the late 1920's. Score WD six, bombers five.

July 29, 1943

The Women's Division fastball team accepted a challenge from the Air Cadets of Number 52 Calgary Squadron Calgary Squadron, now on course at this unit. The WDs reinforced their team by the inclusion of three of the men's Station fastball team and after a tough struggle they won

out with a score of 11 to 9.

July 31, 1943

Word was received this morning of an accident near Pincher Creek to P/O R J Holmes J21676. P/O Holmes was just starting his leave and was proceeding by motor bike to the mountains when he met with the accident which resulted in a broken leg. The Station ambulance proceeded to Pincher Creek today to bring P/O Holmes back to the Station hospital. The WD officers report that fishermen from the officers mess are not upholding their reputation as anglers. The WD officers quarters are strategically situated so that disappointed anglers surreptitiously entering the back door of the mess with fish of barely legal length are easily observed.

August 1, 1943

Donald Vroom, the rancher from Pincher Creek who has been pasturing a string of saddle ponies for the use of personnel of this unit reported that all the horses were let out for hire this afternoon.

August 3, 1943

Personnel employed in the three messes had a picnic at Willow Creek, north of Claresholm, departing the Station in two buses just ahead of a violent storm. After a grand evening's fun and lots of good things to eat, everyone was sorry to see the buses arriving to take them home at 2330 hours and on their return to the Station the picnickers rounded out the evening by attending the sports dance in progress in the recreation hall.

August 4, 1943

Claresholm's week of summer has departed. Sleet and snow fell at approximately 0300 hours. A new applicant for direct entry appointment reported to the Station this afternoon in the person of one Prunes Junior, a native of Fairplay, Colorado. Prunes Junior is a black burro who has been approximately 14 days making the journey from Fairplay to Claresholm. He was definitely travel worn when he reported and his hide gave ample evidence of this. His application papers gave his temperament as being one of friendliness but his nerves were decidedly ragged when he detrained in Claresholm. Norman Robinson, our barrack officer, took charge of him and Mr Robinson's dog showed the poor judgment to get within range of Prune Junior's business end and will carry several sore ribs for some time to come. Prunes Junior, pending receipt of his appointment, is quartered in the south forty and his rations will be augmented with oats until his coat regains the sleekness required of Air Force personnel.

August 5, 1943

Eight aircraft from this unit joined the search for a Fleet Fort aircraft reported from Calgary to be unaccounted for.

August 6, 1943

The Fleet Fort aircraft which was unreported for over 24 hours from No 2 Wireless School was found today approximately 80 miles west of Wetaskiwin. The announcement was made over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation noon news broadcast and which advised also that the occupants were safe and unhurt. Nine general duties WD personnel departed today for Gander and F/O W V Rantoul C10848 (SR) AERENG also departed the unit today for an "unnamed Eastern port."

August 8, 1943

The first of the Air Cadet officers reporting for the August Air Cadet Officer Qualifying Course arrived to the number of three on the bus at 1100 hours from Calgary. One of the Air Cadet officers reported complete with wife but gave as explanation that he had homesteaded in this district to 1914 and had brought his wife to Claresholm for a holiday to renew acquaintances with old friends.

August 11, 1943

It was announced today in daily routine orders that a drum head memorial service will be held at 1300 hours Sunday, 15 August on the occasion of the second anniversary of this unit in commemoration of those who have trained or been on the strength of the school who have given their lives in the service of their country.

August 12, 1943

The commanding officer, W&B officer, and one of the administrative officers from this unit made an inspection of relief landing field No 2 Champion this afternoon. The buildings are almost completed and the work on the water pump is progressing favorably. The flow of water in the well is somewhat disappointing but it is believed with a strength of only 20 to be maintained at Champion that the water supply will be ample. W&B have been very busy making maintenance changes in the ponding area in preparation for the winter. It is hoped that the work that the ponding area in these nice warm days will not tempt any of the W&B personnel to the point of emulating a couple of the airmen who did not recognize the area and went swimming the other night.

August 14, 1943

A riot call was turned in shortly before 0700 hours this morning as a result of the disappearance of P/O Prunes. A message came by telephone that he had been located one mile north and one mile west of the school and service police and several officers departed decidedly hastily to try and round him up. Fortunately he had been given shelter by a farmer who, to ensure that he would not escape, had taken him into his house. P/O Prunes backed into a hot stove and escaped but was rounded up and was patiently waiting in a corral when two motor vehicles and eight

service personnel took him into custody. He did not like entering the panel wagon but was finally prevailed upon after having been given a chew of tobacco and was back in the tender care of Cpl Sparrow before 0800 hours. This episode, together with the quick trip to town of Mike the DAPM's bulldog last week, appear to be posers for our service police. The anniversary celebrations commenced at 1000 hours and from then until 1230 hours field events were run off. Special buses commenced running at 1230 hours and by 1330 hours quite a large crowd was collected outside of the barrier awaiting the opening of the gate at 1330 hours. A highlight was a vehicle arranged for P/O Prunes but used by a troupe of clowns until it was needed for him. The clowns' efforts were generally appreciated but in a few isolated instances their enthusiasm somewhat overran their entire discretion. A marvelous flying display was put on during the afternoon consisting of formation flying by nine aircraft from this school, an aerobatic display of three Cornell aircraft piloted by instructors from No 2 FIS Pearce, and a display of formation flying by three Bolingbroke aircraft piloted by officers from No 8 B&G School, Lethbridge.

August 15, 1943

Station routine did not commence today with the exception of a skeleton staff until 1130 hours when a combination breakfast luncheon was served in all the messes. The day was perfect such as only southern Alberta can give at its best. At 1245 hours a volunteer parade fell in on the tarmac to do honor to casualties who have at any time been carried on the strength of this school. It was felt that the celebration of the second anniversary would be incomplete if all thought was for only celebration and good times and the note of seriousness injected into the anniversary period was felt to be not only entirely fitting but an infinitesimal gesture to former comrades who have been called to give up their lives in the service of their country. The parade dismissed at 1345 hours and the Station as a whole lapsed into a somnolent afternoon.

August 18, 1943

The usual commanding officers parade at 0730 hours was washed out in favor of a wings parade at 1430 hours. Captain Curry RCN commanding officer of the Esquimalt dry dock at Esquimalt, BC presented the wings to the graduating class, his son R175970 LAC Curry A N being one of the graduating members. Number 2333 F/Sgt Olson W F, another graduate of the class, had his pilot's badge pinned on by his father WO2 Olson from No 7 SFTS Macleod. P/O Prunes appeared on his first ceremonial parade today on the occasion of the wings presentation and again left himself open to censure in that he disobeyed an order and refused to march behind the band. A very dim view is taken of this episode and the grapevine has it that application has been made to the Air Officer Commanding for the commanding officer to deal summarily with the case.

August 19, 1943

The YWCA hostess house is closed and in complete confusion. W&B have sent their best "confusers" into the hut with paint brushes and quantities of the ever popular CTE dark green, green and brown. The YWCA hostesses "died hard" on the subject of color scheme but finally

fell in line with the rest of the Station and the Air Force from Halifax to Vancouver.

August 23, 1943

The security guard officers' British bulldog "Mike" again makes the headlines in that he came off a poor second in an encounter with P/O Prunes. No blame is attached to Mike in that P/O Prunes put his head down on sight and charged the amiable beast. At this time, Prunes should know that Mike belongs here and is not merely a visitor from 7 SFTS Macleod.

August 24, 1943

Headquarters orderly room is busily engaged these days in certifying liquor permits of personnel on this school. The new regulations require that each permit should bear the orderly room stamp before it will be honored by the liquor control board.

Calgary Herald, Monday, August 30, 1943

"Waste"

No 15 SFTS has a donkey with the rank of Pilot Officer as a mascot. This gave the public relations officer of No 4 Air Command an opportunity to spend his time in having typed three foolscap pages to send to newspapers. If ever there is a waste of time and money it is in the reams of publicity material sent out by various public relations offices of the services which is never used. Economy is urged by the government but is not practiced in so many of its departments. In this instance over a thousand words were written when a hundred would have been plenty.

September 4, 1943

Visitors: at Woodhouse, Crane 8187 pilot S/L Pearce (AVM Cuffe) from Calgary, departed 1345 for Claesholm. Crane 8187 pilot S/L Pearce departed 1755 for Calgary via High River. Today started out as a quiet Saturday with a reasonably nice morning. The first disturbance was a grapevine rumor that the DIG AVM Cuffe had landed at R1 Woodhouse. All week, rumors and canceled rumors of an impending visit have been going the rounds so the actual visit brought relief and satisfaction all around. W/C W E Kennedy C174 (GL) (PF) and one of the administrative officers from Claesholm met A/V/M Cuff on his arrival and formed part of the inspection party, being joined in Woodhouse by S/L J M Dobson C929 (AGL) OC of the Woodhouse detachment.

September 8, 1943

Today started out chilly and quiet with COs parade and nothing to suggest the day would be an unusual one. However, around 1000 hours word spread of the capitulation of Italy and everyone knew today was different. The CO suggested the fitness of celebrating the latest step forward the war had taken in our favor. In short order an evening's free entertainment of show, dance and

lunch was arranged and everyone got busy doing the little things that are so necessary to the success of a program of this kind.

September 15, 1943

Course 82 received their pilots flying badge today at a wings parade held at 1430 hours. The order of dress for the day was blues and groans arose up to the blue sky and brightly shining sun. The groans must have been heard because a cooling wind blew all afternoon making the parade comfortable. One of the graduates 2261 F/S Pearce had as his guests his brothers, W/C Pearce C1011 (photo) of Air force Headquarters and S/L Pearce C1589 of No 4 Training Command Headquarters. W/C Pearce presented the flying badge to his brother. F/S Pearce has the distinction of being one of the very few but not the only member of the RCAF to have qualified for three flying badges. He has the air gunners badge and also wore the flight engineers badge on operations before realizing his ambition to go aircrew and has now qualified for his wings as a pilot.

September 17, 1943

Disposition of course number 82: postings - 3 Canadians posted to No 3 FIS Arnprior; 4 Canadians posted to 2 FIS Pearce; 3 Australians, 2 Canadians posted to 3 GRS Charlottetown; 2 Australians, 3 Canadians, 4 New Zealanders posted to 1 GRS Summerside; 2 Australians, 4 Canadians, 7 New Zealanders posted to No 1 Y Depot Halifax; 4 New Zealanders, 5 Britons posted to No 31 PD Moncton; 1 Australian retained at this unit (hospitalized).

September 25, 1943

Macleod Gazette: Macleod Air Station names its streets

Street name sign posts have recently sprung up all over the grounds at No 7 SFTS at Macleod. Hitherto nameless roadways now bear such aeronautically flavored labels as "Crane Crescent," "Hurricane Highway," "Lancaster Lane," "Anson Avenue," "Whirlwind Way," "Typhoon Terrace," "Defiant Detour." The road along side the buildings where members of the RCAF Women's Division are quartered bears the significant title "Spitfire Street."

September 29, 1943

It was dark this morning when the Station awoke, conscious of the fact that it was COs parade. The sky was unusually beautiful and the warm rosy hues kept minds from becoming aware of the nip of frost in the air. The usual drill period following COs inspection was utilized for a route march with the CO, G/C W E Kennedy C174GL at the head of the parade around the runways.

October 2, 1943

The officers mess held a "box lunch special" as a variation of their usual Saturday evening dance. As far as can be ascertained, no one was poisoned so it must have been a success. While

the \$100 was realized by the officers wives auxiliary and the proceeds are to be expended by the purchase of Red Cross boxes for RCAF prisoners of war.

October 4, 1943

A notice appeared in the DRO today referring to premiums being offered by personnel to landlords in the town of Claresholm in excess of the rental laid down by the rental control board. Personnel were warned of the severe penalties imposed for infractions of the regulations. The housing situation is critical but practices such as these do not help the already difficult situation.

October 5, 1943

F/L G M Stephens C13906 (MED) command psychiatric consultant arrived for a brief visit. He traveled by air and departed for Macleod less than two hours after his arrival here. We have no official verification for our assumption that the mental health of the personnel on this Station must be exceptionally good, but it is the only conclusion we can come to - he stayed such a very short time.

October 6, 1943

A visitor on the Station today was Captain Stephen of the CPC who arrived at about 1100 hours from Macleod. He left shortly after lunch for Vulcan. Incidentally, the driver of his car, a very charming "WAC" caused considerable comment in the airmen's mess at lunch time. The airmen probably enjoyed the general effect of the WD's who were openly envious of her smart uniform and the comments on material, style and cut were reminiscent of civilian tea parties.

October 9, 1943

A notice in DRO today reminds personnel of the facilities for education available in the Air Force. The unit educational officer moved from his office in GIS to more spacious surroundings in number one hangar where there is a classroom and a place for quiet study. Here personnel who are taking Canadian Legion courses may receive help and supervision in their studies. The rooms are open for more than ten hours a day so that all shifts and trades have equal opportunities to exercise their brains.

October 20, 1943

The executive of the Station paper "Windy Wings" has been changed owing to postings and the executive now consists of F/O J Bill as the managing editor, Cpl Parry J A as general editor, and associate editors Cpl Tuson G L and Cpl Kennedy T L. The friendly enemies, Claresholm and Macleod Stations, played the second of the home-home soccer games here. The home team Claresholm proved more than a match for Macleod when the game ended with a four zero score. This makes Claresholm Southern Alberta Air Force League champion with a total score of seven to one. F/Sgt Comack was the guiding light of the soccer team, ably supported by Mr Sullivan,

auxiliary services representative.

October 26, 1943

Our burro mascot P/O Fairplay Prunes Jr was turned into more pretentious quarters today. The quarters are nicely decorated and have special accommodation for the real cold winter weather. In other words, he has been turned loose in the Station grounds and a stable is being provided. P/O Prunes comes from the sunny south so will need some protection from the northern elements.

November 10, 1943

Never has the sunrise been so breathtakingly beautiful as it was this morning. Daylight was lightening the blue of the sky but heavy dark clouds hung to the east. The sun rose in a blaze of scarlet with the scarlet shot through the dark clouds in an intricate design of beauty.

November 19, 1943

An innovation on the Station is the marking of the saluting area by the Ensign in front of the administration building. A white line has been drawn on either side of the Ensign to indicate the point of beginning and ending a salute. Three members of the service who trained on this Station have been awarded the DFC thus adding to the list of names which has brought honor to their Station. The officers are F/O John Archibald Muir J23085 of course 32, P/O Edward Garth Dundas CAN J17017 who was in course 44, and P/O William James White CAN J16419 who graduated with course 40.

November 30, 1943

The sun seems later than ever in climbing over the hilltops these mornings but with the wind telling of snow in the near vicinity it is realized that this Station is indeed fortunately situated so far as weather is concerned. It is cold but clear and it is dry under foot.

December 11, 1943

The hospital is a good place to keep away from these days as the staff there are making every effort to handle more than is possible. An incoming class of trainees had several very sick members among them. The sickness was "flu" and Station personnel prone to the germ immediately picked it up and passed it on filling the hospital to overflowing.

December 18, 1943

The Woodhouse R1 volleyball team is full of pride today because last night they caused the COs "Setter Uppers" to take their first defeat. The games were close but COs Setter Uppers noticeably lacked the will to win.

December 22, 1943

The rink is almost ready for use and the day when skating starts is eagerly looked forward to by skaters and non-skaters alike. The Australians especially are anxious to get skates on and already talk is going around about a hockey game between the Australians and the WD. Last year's game is still hilariously remembered by those who could see it through laughter tears.

December 28, 1943

Personnel have been warned through DROs of a restriction on applications for permission to visit the USA. As quite a number of personnel on this Station are Australians and they especially seem to enjoy visiting the USA the notice was of particular interest to this Station. To make things easier both for personnel and railway officials, arrangements have been made to have two agents present at pay parade to sell railway tickets. This saves congestion in the depot and at the last minute. The same arrangements were made for those proceeding on Christmas leave and proved very satisfactory.

January 1, 1944

The first day of a new year and everything is so very quiet that the old adage of the calm before the storm comes to mind in reverse because as everywhere else, last night was a storm of celebration. The quietness of the Station is due to the fact that only "duty Joes" are on the Station since everyone else scampered off to town as soon as the noon day dinner was served.

January 3, 1944

Monday, the first working day of the new year and everyone is willing and ready to settle down to work again. Perhaps this will be the first working day of the year that will hold the last working day in the fight against Hitler. Certainly everyone hopes so.

January 7, 1944

The news of the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal is being debated all over camp and between medals, chevrons and colors the debaters have lots of scope.

January 18, 1944

Not much sign of the weather changing today. All night long the wind blew as though trying to pull things apart but the worst it did was to rattle windows, doors and blinds until sleep was almost impossible. Since moisture has been a negligible quantity this winter dust joined the frolic of the wind and without resistance went through every convenient opening in buildings to make cleaning up more drawn out in the morning. Command mobile identification unit arrived today and the list of personnel requiring the attention of this unit was so long that the unit operator realized at once that he would have to extend the time he had intended spending here.

January 21, 1941

Friday brought COs parade in its wake as usual but this time the parade took a slightly different turn. The march past which is usually done with flights in line was taken with squadrons in line. This innovation was sprung subtly but the personnel in No 1 Squadron were on their toes and reacted perfectly. Naturally the other squadrons would not err when they had the advantage of the example of number one squadron to go by.

January 23, 1944

Church services are the first duty that calls personnel on Sunday mornings and those are voluntary parades to which everyone does not subscribe. Our present Station administrative officer, S/L Laubach, has improved the tone of the Protestant service by giving of his talent as an organist. The difference well played music makes to a service is surprising.

February 5, 1944

It looks as if we will have to enlarge our rifle club accommodation and equipment. Last night's shoot was not able to accommodate all those who turned up and arrangements are being made to increase hours to let everyone have a crack at the targets. The contest in which the WD challenged the RNZAF was run off with the result WD 250 out of 300, 292 out of 300. The latter can do some fine and fancy shooting but the girls are no slouches and put on a remarkably fine show.

February 11, 1944

Today's DROs are noteworthy in that it lists the promotion of no less than 20 officers from pilot to flying officer, all deserving cases for boys that are doing an excellent instructional job at this unit.

February 12, 1944

The weather has been so variable as it can be in this part of Alberta with 40 and 50 degrees temperature fluctuations in a matter of hours, that it has been necessary to resort to the flag signal to control wearing of overcoats. One can hardly blame the boys getting around the Station without overcoats when the temperature is at 50 above. Nevertheless colds are becoming more prevalent and orders are out to wear overcoats.

February 17, 1944

This unit becomes more cosmopolitan from day to day. Recently 10 RAAF and RNZAF officers have been posted with the prospect of more to come. As is well recognized, they are a fine, bright bunch of lads, quickly adaptable to Canadian ways and always contribute much to the general life of the Station. With these in-postings we have at the same time lost a number of our

own good fellows posted to Y Depot and various stations. Their goings are always suitably marked in the mess in this unit's own particular style.

February 24, 1944

Today is the second anniversary of the arrival of WD personnel at this unit, two years of good and useful service in which we have seen them fit themselves into the scheme with a minimum of upset and an ever increasing usefulness. Looking back we are amused to think of the fear and trepidation which greeted their first arrival. Now we realize that the plan was well laid out and well carried through. The girls of this unit, some 200 of them, are a bright and cheery lot, generally a good sense of responsibility as if they had been born to it.

February 27, 1944

The Station wakes up this morning to find a ten inch snowfall has transformed the whole area including the hills and mountains beyond. There has been no wind whatever so no traffic tie up complications are looked for. The day is very clear and bright and the strain on the eyes is severe without dark glasses. The moisture in this one fall (approximately one inch of rain) will be very welcome to the farming community here about. Apron, tarmac and all runways were cleared for flying operations by noon.

February 28, 1944

Storm warnings issued from Calgary last night ushered in a blizzard of major proportions which hit this area early this morning. A 50 mile per hour northwest gale driving a fairly heavy snowfall is piling up drifts of considerable proportions causing some concern as to road traffic. The temperature remains reasonable, approximately 10 above at noon, but if the wind persists in this quarter it is expected it will skid to sub-zero temperatures. The recreation hall was jammed last night to enjoy the "Victory Varieties" concert party from Calgary.

March 7, 1944

Daily diary is relieved of further hockey reports. No 15 SFTS was beaten in the finals by the Pearce Professors (No 2 FIS) last night writing "finis" on a very successful and entertaining hockey season.

March 11, 1944

From the Calgary Herald
Air Veterans Get Gold Wings

F/O J Donahue of Inverness, NS who has had 28 operational flights overseas was presented with a gold operational wing at the graduation ceremony Friday at No 3 SFTS by W/C W R Irwin MBE DFC and Bar, officer commanding the Station. Former wireless air gunner Donahue is

training for a pilot. At the graduation ceremony at No 15 SFTS Claresholm G/C W E Kennedy, officer commanding, presented similar wings to F/O T H Reeves DFC New Westminster, BC who has 23 ops and F/O D A MacLeod Edmonton with 31 ops. Both are graduates of No 2 Wireless School, Calgary.

March 13, 1944

Station personnel enjoyed a thoroughly good program put on last night by Eaton's Review from Calgary, a very fine show and well received. The bus bringing the party from Calgary broke down eight miles north of here and the show was delayed a bit as a result. It was necessary to bring a second bus from Calgary and provide the party with a large number of blankets to get them back home through the blizzard.

March 19, 1944

Last night a party of 19 New Zealand officers arrived for inclusion in course 104. Officer accommodation at this unit being already a bit of a problem is now at the definitely crowded stage. The officers in question are in each case transfers from New Zealand Army and very keen on their new prospects.

April 2, 1944

A number of pigeons were taken over the Calgary area for release. They had all returned without mishap by the early afternoon.

April 6, 1944

In the evening the Kinsmen Club of Lethbridge presented their "Victory Review," a special concert party organized to tour the southern part of the province in aid of the Milk for Britain Fund. Part of their cast was made up from one or two selected personnel from each of the five RCAF Stations. The show was highly successful and was considered by the personnel to be the best production shown on this Station to date.

April 17, 1944

Last night the officers' wives guild put on a program of three one act comedies for the benefit of Station personnel. The producer and director is Mrs D D Atkinson, wife of the chief instructor and her experience and ability is clearly proved by the very excellent performances.

April 26, 1944

Another very successful model aircraft competition was held this evening advertised as the ROG battle royal. Many excellent models were entered in keen competition for special prizes and a good display put on for a large turnout of spectators. The model aircraft club is a flourishing

institution under the enthusiastic guidance of S/L L H Pilling.

April 28, 1944

Last night the Station glee club put on their first performance. The club consists of approximately 40 airwomen and airmen conducted by Sergeant C D Coates. This particular activity has special blessing of the commanding officer G/C W E Kennedy who was instrumental in its formation some time ago. The concert was excellently presented and staged. It may be considered a bit of an innovation in RCAF Stations and its progress will be watched with interest. Today the club goes to Lethbridge to give a half hour program over CJOC in aid of Victory Loan campaign.

May 3, 1944

R130794 Cpl Hunka T, Royal Canadian Humane Association medal in recognition of the gallant act he performed on May 12, 1943 near Egremont, Alberta in rescuing from drowning a four year old boy who had fallen into an old well.

June 6, 1944

D Day. Long awaited but nonetheless sudden. An undercurrent of excitement was evident on the Station throughout the day. It is likely that personnel will adopt a new attitude towards their work with now a definite and active design towards victory.

June 20, 1944

Once a year for three years now the sergeants' mess has challenged the officers mess to a fastball game. The efforts of the two messes to outdo the other in fun making and glamour has developed to the point where this event is one of the outstanding annual events. Suitable or unsuitable costumes are worn and a great deal of ballyhoo precedes the game. The winners entertain.

June 28, 1944

Work ceased at noon today to allow personnel to attend the Claresholm Rodeo. Claresholm is in the centre of the Alberta ranching country, is an enterprising community and can put on a really good show. Beside the stampede events a number of horse races were run off with para-mutual betting. One of the races was for local horses ridden by men of the armed services with eight entries. First and third winners were owned and ridden by officers of this unit. Altogether a very successful day and taken advantage of 100% by all personnel not required to remain on duty.

July 20, 1944

Anson II FP930 crashed 3/4 of a mile north of Arrowwood, Alberta at approximately 1100 hours. The cause of the accident is unknown. Personnel in the aircraft were AUS432869 F/S McKittrick J C (instructor pilot) killed, AUS439559 LAC Bennett L H B under instruction killed. AUS439637 LAC Baker A R passenger killed. The crash was type A and the damage totally. Investigation of the accident was made by F/O H F Anderson C28443 AIB from No 4 Training Command.

July 26, 1944

His Majesty the King has graciously approved the undermentioned badge and motto for this unit and it may now be taken into use as laid down in AFAO/S dated 31 March 1944. Unit number 15 SFTS description: a hawk, wings elevated, rising from a gauntlet. Motto and translation: Patients Vincence (Through patience we shall conquer).

July 29, 1944

Station water supply changed from the town of Claresholm supply to the new permanent well located near Willow Creek 12,770 feet southwest from the Station. Capacity of well 100 gallons per minute pumping at rate of 75 gallons per minute.

August 16, 1944

This was the day of the gala third anniversary. Sports events began at 1000 hours and carried on throughout the afternoon. The air officer commanding No 4 Training Command arrived at 1600 hours to receive the general salute from a guard of honor of 150 airmen and airwomen. The AOC then presented G/C Kennedy, the commanding officer, the official badge of the Station. This crest bears the signed approval of His Majesty King George VI. Mrs Howsam, wife of the AOC, presented many prizes to successful competitors and was in turn presented a bouquet by Mrs Kennedy, wife of the commanding officer. On this day, the Station mascot P/O Fairplay Prunes (American citizen) was promoted to the rank of Flying Officer.

August 26, 1944

Many posting overseas have come and are still coming. To the present moment they number 71 persons. This will be the largest draft to be posted from this unit for some considerable time.

August 28, 1944

Harvard IIB FH128 crashed six miles east of Stavely. The pilot, F/O L W A Bauer AUS437347 and his passenger P/O W A Sparks J44567 were both killed instantly.

August 31, 1944

Full military honors were paid P/O Bauer who died in the crash on 28 August. Fastball between Claresholm and Vulcan was won by Claresholm seven to one. This is the first game of the playoffs.

September 5, 1944

A case of poliomyelitis broke out at the Station at R1 Woodhouse. All personnel employed at the aerodrome at Woodhouse have been isolated along with any officers and airmen who have visited within the past two weeks. It is hoped that this one case will be the only one to develop but all precautions possible are being taken to preclude a recurrence of the outbreak.

September 7, 1944

Ten instructors have arrived on temporary duty from No 7 SFTS Macleod to replace the instructors who have been placed in quarantine in R1 Woodhouse.

September 10, 1944

The commanding officer of this unit G/C W E Kennedy is posted to No 7 SFTS to assume temporary command. The Group Captain is expected to reassume command of this unit when No 7 SFTS is closed.

September 19, 1944

There has been no further outbreak of polio on this unit so R1 Woodhouse has been released from quarantine.

October 4, 1944

A game of Australian rules football was held tonight. This is a game that has never before been seen at this unit. It was in answer to a challenge put forward by Pearce to this unit. The game is played with 18 players on each team and it combines the roughest features of lacrosse, Canadian rugby and buck buck. The Claresholm boys proved themselves the tougher team by defeating Pearce No 2 FIS with a score of 44 to 37.

October 20, 1944

This Station went over the quota in the Victory Loan at 1645 hours today. The fire siren was blown and all personnel possible witnessed the ceremony of "blowing the top off the thermometer." We hope we are the first in the command to go over the top.

November 29, 1944

Fourteen of our married WD's received notice of their discharge from the service. This was the first posting of such considerable numbers and expressions of regret were heard on all sides that the time had come.

December 6, 1944

A very strong wind reaching 87 miles per hour blew layers of dust into tidy barracks last night, tossed off an occasional door and caused fast moving tumble weed to race night flying planes into the shelter of the hangars. When the dust had settled comfortably inside on window ledges and barrack floors a welcome rain packed down the little drifts accumulated outside.

December 8, 1944

One of the jolliest of Station dances was held in the drill hall tonight under the guidance of Australian and New Zealand personnel, with F/O Bryers as master of ceremonies. The hall was beautifully decorated and clever black and white posters depicting typical scenes from "down under" added much to the general effect. A little floor show during intermission provided great amusement. At the end of a very pleasant evening, everyone agreed that there could be no better hosts than the "Aussies" and "Newsies."

January 7, 1945

The cold snap continues. It commenced snowing around noon and many planes landed at neighboring airports. They were able to come in later in the afternoon. 591 personnel filled the recreation hall to pay homage to Bob Hope and his latest feat on the screen in "The Princess and the Pirate," a real blues chaser.

January 9, 1945

A cloudless, mild sunny day. Furniture from closed Stations has been coming in and our canteens and lounges look well with the added touches.

January 11, 1945

Eleven instructors formerly at No 2 FIS Pearce reported in today. Anson aircraft FP937 force landed at 2130 hours at R2 due to a single engine failure.

January 12, 1945

A mild day with heavy winds reaching 78 miles per hour. It was very difficult to maneuver during the COs parade but we came through not too badly beaten up.

January 18, 1945

A real wintry day. Strong winds and driving snow, flying is washed out completely.

January 20, 1945

A mild, almost summerish day, no need for greatcoats today. A normal flying and working day. Nothing out of the ordinary happened.

January 21, 1945

Our first fatal accident since last August occurred this afternoon when R166793 F/Sgt Tame L J, GB1587049 Sgt Sutton K L and AUS118598 LAC Vidlir were killed in a low flying exercise ten miles east of Bassano, Alberta. F/Sgt Tame was president of the sergeants' mess and also leader of our glee club. He was a link trainer instructor. Cause of accident: aircraft striking ferry cable extending over river ice 10 miles south of Bassano, Alberta.

January 24, 1945

Services were held this morning for R16793 F/Sgt Tame L J prior to forwarding his body to Vancouver for burial. Services for GB1587049 Sgt Sutton K L and AUS118598 LAC Vidlir were held this afternoon. Both airmen were buried in the Claresholm cemetery.

January 26, 1945

The handing over ceremony took place this afternoon on COs parade. S/L C V Mark, the chief instructor, has taken over temporarily. G/C W E Kennedy has received an overseas posting.

January 31, 1945

Aircraft strength: Anson II 78, 12 unserviceable; Harvard IIB 3, 1 unserviceable; Menasco Moth 1. Total number of hours flown during the month of January, 1945 is 9,247.30 hours.

February 7, 1945

Dance contests were held and a competition in naming our Station orchestra met with great success. The name "The Sophisticates" won the prize. Anson Mk II aircraft FP845 caught fire and crashed this morning at 0900 hours. The two occupants were killed. The names are RAF188945 P/O A J Goldie (instructor) and CAN.R.62035 WO1 Archibald V G H (student).

February 8, 1945

G/C T W White, Honorable David Wilson and Mr L Middlemass of the New Zealand Air Mission arrived on the Station today to attend to matters concerning the New Zealand personnel.

February 13, 1945

For the first time in the history of No 15 SFTS Claresholm a passenger in an aircraft that caught fire bailed out northwest of the Station. The pilot managed eventually to put the fire out and landed safely. A caterpillar with flaming eyes was presented to the officer who had been instructed to bail out.

February 15, 1945

Course number 115 graduated today. Following is the distribution of the trainees of this course: 2 RCAF to No 2 Relief Center, Lachine PQ; 3 RCAF to No 3 Release Center, Rockcliffe, Ontario; 7 RCAF No 4 Release Center, Toronto, Ontario; 2 RCAF No 5 Release Center, Winnipeg, Manitoba; 7 RCAF No 7 Relief Center, Calgary, Alberta; 17 RCAF No 8 Release Center, Vancouver, BC; 4 RAAF No 7 Relief Center, Calgary, Alberta; 2 RAF No 1 RNNS Summerside, PEI; 3 RAF No 5 OTU, Boundary Bay, BC; 12 RAF No 1 Y Depot, Moncton, New Brunswick.

February 18, 1945

A valentine formal was held in the officers mess last evening and was one of the most delightful formals ever held on this Station. A quiet day except for F/O Prunes, our burro mascot who insisted several times during the day on letting everyone know he was around by his loud and raucous braying.

February 22, 1945

The airmen's wives held their usual monthly meeting in the hostess house this afternoon. Two showings of the picture "Here Come the Waves" starring Bing Crosby were received with great interest by the Station personnel in the evening.

February 28, 1945

Spiritual Welfare: There is a fine, friendly, healthy spirit existing among the personnel of the Station. Morale is high and in spite of the fact that there is considerable talk of our Station closing there has been no let down in the activities of the Station.

Discipline: Discipline on the Station for the month of February was above normal due to a healthy state of morale which is exceptional owing to the fact that the Station is soon to close. One theft was reported for the month, that of the sergeants mess canteen which was broken into, and \$122 cash was stolen. Seventeen articles were reported lost and 28 articles were listed as found. Personnel checked for dress 27; personnel checked for deportment 3; personnel checked for conduct 6. No arrests were made by service police on the Station during the month.

Trainees: RCAF 13 officers, 38 airmen or other ranks; RAF 8 officers and 14 airmen or other ranks; RNZAF 1 other rank; RAAF 2 officers, 106 other ranks. Hours flown in February 4,640.20.

March 1, 1945

A new month and probably the last full one No 15 SFTS will see. Cloudy and cool but flying continued throughout the day. The Canadian premier of "The Gay Cabalero," Walt Disney's Technicolor film, was shown to the Station personnel this evening. The airmen and airwomen of No 15 SFTS are becoming "first nighters."

March 5, 1945

Personnel from disbanded stations are arriving daily pushing our total strength higher and higher.

March 11, 1945

The usual Saturday night dance for corporals and below was held in the recreation hall last evening. A large crowd danced to the music of our excellent little Station orchestra "The Sophisto-Cats." Course 120 which graduates on March 15 have placed a particularly well laid out course booklet on sale. It is one of the best assembled booklets yet seen on this Station.

March 13, 1945

The weekly section commanders meeting was held this morning and sections were warned that all vehicles leaving the Station would be checked for Station equipment. All drivers into town must show their MT5s to the service police. In this way it is hoped that thefts may be avoided.

March 14, 1945

A WD farewell dinner was held in the airmen's mess last evening attended by 161 WD remaining on the Station and the commanding officer and his wife. Later everyone went on to the dance in the recreation hall.

March 14, 1945

Organization Order No 550
Reformation of 15 SFTS Claresholm, Alberta

In accordance with the policy to continue flying training on a reduced scale after the cessation of training carried on under the BCATP and as already advised through SOWO9 dated 26 Jan/45, certain schools are to continue to operate and others are to be held in a state of readiness as reserve. Therefore it is intended to reform 15 SFTS as a unit of the Shadow Organization (reserve). 15 SFTS is to become inactive as a unit of the BCATP effective 30 March, 1945 and is to reform as a unit of the Shadow Organization (reserve) effective 31 March 45 at Claresholm, Alberta. Immediately upon reformation this unit is to be placed on a scale of care and maintenance both as to buildings, aerodrome and equipment sufficient to enable it to come into full operation on three months notice by AFHQ.

March 15, 1945

Course 120 which consisted of 2/3 officers who have already seen overseas service in both RAF and RCAF, 1/3 remusters and direct entries, graduated this afternoon. Bad weather skirted the horizon during the whole ceremony and then broke about five minutes after the last squadron had been dismissed. The final washout dance for Station personnel was held in the drill hall last evening. It was a huge success.

March 17, 1945

Today is the day all good Irishmen come to the fore. A bright sunny day for the Auld Sod's Sons. The officers mess is, for the last time, taking on an air of gaiety in its emerald green and white dress for tonight's final formal dance.

March 23, 1945

V300 W/O W Taylor and S/O J Laidlaw paid a visit to the WD on this unit today. The minds of the WD were made easy by the announcement that WD's will be needed until the end of the war with Japan. It is apparent that the WD on this Station are anxious to stay in.

March 27, 1945

Commencing this morning all ranks are eating in the airmen's mess. The officers and senior NCO and warrant officers are on one side with corporals and below on the opposite side. Sgt F D Sparrow, the caretaker of F/O Prunes (our mascot) has been presented with this queer bit of animal life.

March 30, 1945

Over 700 civilians poured into the Station yesterday afternoon and were witnesses to a most appropriate wind up of the BCATP. At 1500 hours the two graduating classes formed a V formation in the hollow square and in groups of threes were presented their wings by C151 G/C W M Murray of No 2 Air Command, S/L B R Walker J2305 and J6798 F/L F W Flowers, a staff instructor on this Station who graduated in 1941 with the first class of graduates at this school. After an impressive march past the attention of our guests was directed to the exhibits in number 2 hangar where a Ventura, a Menasco Moth, a Cessna Crane and Anson and a Harvard and the synthetic trainer were ringed by ramps to enable everyone to see the interior of these ships. At the same time the pyrotechnic display, accompanied by Harvard formations and aerobatics, gave the crowd a thrill. In a few moments a formation of five Ansons in the form of a cross flew beautifully across the field later breaking off and each carried out a few maneuvers. At 1630 hours the doors of the airmen's mess were thrown open and by 1800 hours the last tired youngster had left to look for greener fields to vent his mischievous wiles on. Everyone felt today was a grand effort in paying final tribute to a plan that proved a job such as that could be and was well done.

March 31, 1945

We wakened this morning to find a heavy snow fall had blanketed everything during the night and still snowing. Fortunately it has not lasted long. The last two courses number 121 and 122 are leaving today. The last of the intricate paper work for their leaving is done. "Thus, as a newspaperman would say, this is "30" to a plan that has supplied the Allies with a great army splendidly trained which has fought hard and is now winning the war in the air."

April 1, 1945

Today No 15 SFTS becomes a part of the Shadow Plan.

April 2, 1945

The picture "Hangover Square" was shown last night. At 0900 hours this morning an ensign raising parade was held to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the formation of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Our mascot, F/O Prunes added his congratulations during the speech of S/L Bushell, the commanding officer, by loud braying.

April 12, 1945

Permission is being requested from No 2 AC to keep four Harvards, five Ansons and the Menasco Moth serviceable for the use of the few instructors left.

April 19, 1945

F/O Prunes, our burro mascot, has finally retired to a well-earned rest on a pasture near Rosebud. Perhaps now our stunted bushes and so called trees will get a chance to prove they really can overcome their near annihilation by His Nibs.

April 25, 1945

42 officers and 8 NCOs all general list instructors and staff pilots were posted to various points throughout Canada today leaving only three flying instructors on the Station.

April 30, 1945

Month end review: Venereal diseases - one new case VDS, two new cases VDG, one new case NSU. This is much higher than our usual rates considering the reduction in personnel on the Station. It is believed that it may be partly accounted for by present state of uncertainty on this unit and many personnel not being fully employed in useful production.

May 4, 1945

Organization Order 571

This order cancels OO 550

The retention of 15 SFTS Claresholm, Alberta as a reserve SFTS is not now considered necessary. It is intended to disband 15 SFTS Claresholm, Alberta. 15 SFTS Claresholm, Alberta is to disband effective May 15, 1945. AOC 2AC is to ascertain if the continued employment of any civilian employees such as engineers, pump men, etc is considered necessary to ensure proper care and maintenance of the buildings and property at 15 SFTS Claresholm pending instructions re their disposition.

May 7, 1945

The show "Bring on the Girls" provided much entertainment for Station personnel tonight. A muster parade was called at 1630 hours this afternoon at which time S/L Binning of No 11 ED (Protestant Chaplain) led in a prayer of thanksgiving for VE Day. 90 personnel were posted today to various isolated units.

May 14, 1945

A farewell dinner was held in the airmen's mess at 1800 hours for "Mom" Staples and "Marge" Walton, our two YWCA hostesses who are being transferred to Nanaimo, BC.

May 15, 1945

Today No 15 SFTS disbanded. Most of the personnel have left with much regret. It has indeed been a pleasure to be part of the Station.