

Reel C12,329

**Number 2 Air Observer School, Edmonton, Alberta**

July 1, 1940 - July 26, 1944

May 30, 1940

Organization Order Number 24

Formation of No 2 Air Observer School

Information: Under the Joint Air Training Plan Organization, ten Air Observer Schools are to be established for the training of air observers. These schools will be operated by civilian companies using aircraft supplied by the RCAF. In addition to the civilian staff there will be an RCAF supervisory and instructional staff.

Execution: No 2 Air Observer School is to open at Edmonton on August 5, 1940 and will be operated by Canadian Airways Training Ltd under the supervision of an RCAF supervisory officer.

July 1, 1940

S/L J Laxdal C488, F/L M G Malcolmson C515, F/O R H Batty C940 arrived for duty.

July 2, 1940

Contact was made with Canadian Airways.

July 19, 1940

F/O Batty tried some flying tests at the aero club. General routine, organization and supervision.

July 29, 1940

Took over hospital, airmen's mess, NCO mess.

July 30, 1940

Took over hangars and garage.

August 2, 1940

G/C Howsam paid us an official visit and inspected the personnel. Later in the evening we had a visit from the premier of the province, Mr Aberhart, the Lt Governor and General Giesbrecht who awaited the arrival of nine planes by air. Afterward the officers were the guests of Wop May of the Edmonton club.

August 4, 1940

Seven Anson planes arrived from Trenton in the afternoon and all roads leading to the airdrome were more or less jammed with pedestrians and automobiles. The planes arrived in formation.

August 12, 1940

Ground classes and flying as usual. A severe wind and dust storm came up about 1930. Practically the whole personnel were called out to fight a small brush fire and stand by the planes which are anchored outside the hangars. The storm lasted one hour, no damage reported.

August 14, 1940

The personnel were invited in the afternoon to the Empire Theatre to listen to a program given by Gracie Fields which was greatly appreciated by all.

September 10, 1940

Flying and ground instruction as usual. On instructions from OC No 4 Training Command three planes left this Station at 0815 hours and flew over Red Deer, Calgary and landed at Lethbridge at 1050 hours. The flight was resumed after refueling at 1249 hours. Course was set over Medicine hat, Drumheller, Wetaskiwin and Edmonton. Landed at Edmonton at 1546 hours. War loan leaflets were dropped on Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

September 11, 1940

Flying and ground instruction as usual. On instructions from OC No 4 Training Command, three planes left the aerodrome at 1715 hours to drop war loan leaflets over Edmonton and returned at 1810. Many favorable comments were heard on the flying formation of the machines.

September 27, 1940

The officers accepted an invitation by Col Brown to mess dinner at the Prince of Wales Armouries and a very enjoyable time was provided.

October 10, 1940

A party of officers and airmen attended the funeral of LAC Barr who was killed at Camp Borden.

October 20, 1940

Two Canadian Airways men belonging to the parachute section made a parachute leap at 3,000

feet from an Anson to raise funds for the Edmonton Spitfire Fund. Amount raised \$782.17.

October 24, 1940

A presentation was made by the Honourable J C Bowen, Lt Governor of the province of Alberta of the James A Richardson Trophy to LAC J B Ruston, the most proficient student in the first graduation class from this school.

December 17, 1940

Ground instruction and flying. Class 8 having graduated without any failures left on 48 hours leave before reporting to No 4 Bombing and Gunnery School, Fingal, Ontario. Before leaving at 1630 hours R62235 LAC Shea E L was presented with the Canadian Airways (Training) Trophy by Col H Strachan VC MC ADC (Gov Gen) for being the most proficient student in his class.

December 24, 1940

A party of Australian trainees arrived in Edmonton at 2245 hours and before settling for the night each trainee had an invitation handed to him for Christmas dinner at an Edmonton home.

January 31, 1941

Strength of unit: officers 15; airmen 145; civilians 2.

February 10, 1941

Two Ansons and two Boeings started on an unsuccessful search for a missing Curtis Robin plane in the Athabasca region belonging to MacIntosh Fish Company. The planes left at 1300 hours and returned 1600 hours.

February 20, 1941

One of our aeroplanes, an Anson, 6180 had a forced landing on Alice Lake about 18 miles south of Innisfree when both engines failed simultaneously. No damage to the aircraft and none of the crew injured.

March 2, 1941

Units of the army, navy and air force took part in a war savings campaign parade at 1400 hours. Approximately 10,000 people watched. Taking the salute were His Honour The Lt Gov J C Bowen; Maj Gen W A Griesbach CB CMG SSO VD KC, inspector general for Western Command; Lt Col E Brown MMED, area commandant; Hon W A Fallow, Minister of Public Works; and Mayor John W Fry. This school was represented by one flight of Australians and No 16 EFTS by one flight of Canadians. All were under the charge of F/O J T Taylor and F/O G

Laroux and P/O D A Freeze as flight commanders.

March 7, 1941

Our genial medical officer, Capt H J D Jay, has now been transferred to the RCAF as Flight Lieutenant.

March 11, 1941

F/O J Sumner, recently married, has now settled down at 10130-116 Street Edmonton. We wonder who will be the next victim.

March 15, 1941

C Flight left for the bombing and gunnery school MacDonald, Manitoba at 2105 hours by Canadian National Railways. The boys enjoyed their stay here and many of them voiced their regrets at leaving and they hoped the next school would be as good as No 2 AOS.

March 21, 1941

The Hudson Bay have decorated the officers mess sitting room with wall paper gratis which gives it a very tidy appearance with the two air force blue carpets which are now in use on the floor and some new furniture. We are very proud of our home away from home.

March 24, 1941

Our commanding officer proposes to form a guard of honour principally composed of Australian trainees to greet the governor general when he visits the Station on March 26. The boys are keen and it won't be difficult to whip them into shape.

March 26, 1941

The Governor General, the Earl of Athlone, and Princess Alice, countess of Athlone, arrived in Edmonton this morning. His Excellency proceeded to the memorial hall where a reception was held for dignitaries and representatives of patriotic organizations. Meanwhile, Princess Alice was receiving an enthusiastic welcome in soldiers and children's wards of the University Hospital. His Excellency arrived at this Station about 1530 hours accompanied by the Honorable J C Bowen, Lt Gov of the province of Alberta; Major General W A Griesbach CBE CMG DSO VD Inspector General for Western Canada; Lt Col Stuart Dunn, ADC to the governor general; Sir Shouldham Redfern; Major Gorth Morse, ADC to Maj Gen W A Griesbach; Captain Wop May. Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd entertained the guests and great credit is due to Captain Wop May for the way he attended to all details of the tea and he must also be congratulated for the neat appearance of our Station grounds during the visit.

March 28, 1941

Spring must be in the air again. It was noticed that a number of the trainees are having football practice before taking up their studies in the evening. Since the 24<sup>th</sup> March there have been three flights scheduled each day starting at 0700 hours due to a number of planes having been taken to the repair depot for overhaul.

March 31, 1941

Total flying hours in March 1,770.30. Strength and type of aircraft in use: two Boeing 247D, two Lockheed 10A, 13 Avro Ansons.

April 1, 1941

Air Commodore R Leckie DSO DSC DFC arrived on the Station during the day. His time was fully taken up with our commanding officer looking in to the many problems confronting the operation of the school. He left for Calgary the following morning.

April 6, 1941

Sunday. Day flying exercises 21.25 hours. It is interesting to watch the crowds of people and automobiles which pass this Station on Kingsway watching the planes take off and land each Sunday.

April 20, 1941

Sunday. Church parade at 1000 hours for both Protestant and Roman Catholics made up from both No 2 AOS and No 16 EFTS headed by a pipe band. Officers and airmen marched to Jasper Avenue where the Roman Catholics paraded to the Cathedral and the Protestants continued to Robertson Memorial Church. Many favorable comments were made regarding the smartness of the men. After divine service the officers and men paraded back to camp making a five-mile march before lunch.

April 28, 1941

F/Os J T Taylor, D B Wurtelle and P/O E M Conrad had an interesting time today interviewing two farmers from Killam, Alberta who were caught photographing planes on the aerodrome. When questioned it was learned that they had sold some furs and used part of the money to buy a camera. They thought of going to the zoo to take some photographs but decided to go to this Station and take some snaps of the aircraft. When apprehended they seemed to be quite surprised to know that this was not done. It was explained to them that they were liable to a number of years in jail under the Defense of Canada regulations. Being satisfied that the men were ignorant of regulations they were released and the film confiscated.

May 7, 1941

The Edmonton Fusileers left this morning on two special trains for New Westminster, BC. Three officers accompanied by our commanding officer said "goodbye" at the train to the senior officers of the battalion. The officers of this school were on very friendly terms with the officers of the Edmonton Fusileers especially their commanding officer, Lt Col Strachan VC MC ADC to the governor general. We lost the services of a good photographer LAC Baines J M who was discharged from the services on account of ill health. He left today for his home in Toronto, Ontario.

May 9, 1941

At 1645 hours a Station parade was called by the commanding officer for two purposes: first, to hand the Station over to F/L R H Batty, second in command, and secondly to present the Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd trophy, a gold filled identification disc, to the most proficient student in course 18. Three cheers were given to F/L Batty, the new temporary commanding officer and then three cheers were given for S/L J Laxdal. S/L J Laxdal presented the Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd trophy to AUS404263 LAC Rowland H B, the most proficient student in course 18 having attained an average of 89 percent in all subjects. This airman was born in Warwick, Queensland and worked as a clerk in the Queensland Trustees Ltd. He is 21 ½ years old and left school in 1936.

May 27, 1941

Completing a new lap on schedule in its flight across the Dominion, on its way to Great Britain, the Victory Torch arrived in Edmonton today at 0700 hours from Calgary. Officials of the government and the city were present at the airport to receive the torch in Edmonton and a ceremony took place at number 1 Hangar where Mayor John W Fry welcomed the plane's officers. In the welcoming party at the airport Tuesday morning were Lt Gov J C Bowen, Premier William Aberhart, Mayor John W Fry, a military escort and the torch committee. The torch was handed to Mayor Fry who in turn handed it to four guards who unpacked it and placed it on a float. The guards were represented by the navy, army, air force and Mounted Police. LAC Armstrong, Robert of the RAAF was the airforce guard. The Hudson bomber plane carrying the torch is piloted by S/L D W Galloway and F/O C M Black of the RCAF.

June 17, 1941

We are pleased to advise that authority has been received from No 4 Training Command Headquarters that F/L R H Batty assumed command of No 2 Air Observer School, Edmonton, Alberta.

June 27, 1941

A Flight held their graduating dinner and dance this evening. All officers of the Station were

invited together with the chief supervisory officer and adjutant of No 16 EFTS and John Michaels of Edmonton. Our command officer F/L R H Batty replied to the toast "to the officers" proposed by LAC Laughton C P. These graduating dinners and dances help to create a spirit of fellowship between the trainees and officers without losing sight of the proper respect for rank and authority.

July 1, 1941

AUS401375 LAC Hadley F W, born in Melbourne, Victoria 21 June, 1914, a school teacher who had been cycling for nine years won A grade 25 mile championship gold medal at the Edmonton Dominion Day sports.

July 4, 1941

The officers and airmen of No 2 AOS and No 16 EFTS had both stations in readiness today for a visit of Prime Minister W L MacKenzie King and his party. At 1445 hours the official party arrived on the Station. The Prime Minister inspected the guard of honor which was made up of Australian trainees of A Flight, the graduating class. After the inspection the Prime Minister presented the Canadian Airways (Training) trophy, a gold identification disc, to AUS401085 LAC De Boos W W M for being the most proficient student in course 22. LAC De Boos who is 23 years of age who was born in Wakefield, England and was raised in Australia. He worked for the Shell Oil Company studying engineering. The Prime Minister and his party walked over to No 16 EFTS where the aircraft, consisting of Tiger Moths, were lined up with their crews in front. The Prime Minister chatted with several of the mechanics and instructors. He appeared to be very interested in the operation of both schools.

July 14, 1941

The 1941 Edmonton Exhibition was formally opened tonight by the Honorable J A MacKinnon. This will be the last exhibition while the war is on as the grounds have been taken over by the RCAF for the duration. The site will be used as a manning depot.

July 17, 1941

The Station these days is a hive of industry, carpenters everywhere. There are six buildings under construction at the present time. Barracks to house 140 men, extension to classroom, bomb teacher building, explosive store type D, explosive store type E and an addition to No 16 hangar. Congratulations are the order of the day to F/O G H McGee, our genial chief instructor who has been promoted to F/L effective 1/7/41.

July 25, 1941

A feeling of gloom spread over the Station when it was learned that P/O R C A Hunter of St Andrew, Jamaica was reported missing and believed killed on an operational flight overseas.

This officer was the most proficient student in course 6 leaving here 24/11/40 for No 2 Bombing and Gunnery School, Mossbank, Saskatchewan.

August 23, 1941

A party named C C Wikstrom was picked up in Edmonton for being improperly dressed as an airman and lodged in the guardhouse. Through investigation it was discovered the boy had been discharged from the RCAF the latter part of June at the manning depot in Brandon. He informed us he was recalled to the service and was returning to Winnipeg. We confiscated his RCAF cap leaving him with drab trousers and khaki shirt as he was without clothes and released him after he had received a stern warning not to wear any badges creating the impression he was still in the service. He gave us the impression he was slightly unbalanced.

August 24, 1941

A long distance navigation flight consisting of nine planes with 36 officers, pilots and airmen aboard for Prince Albert, Saskatchewan by way of Medicine Hat, Alberta took off at 0730 hours. Due to low clouds and rain five planes arrived at Medicine Hat and continued their trip to Prince Albert. Of the remaining four planes, three returned to Edmonton, refueled, and started on a non-stop flight to Prince Albert arriving 1330 hours, ahead of those which had landed at Medicine Hat. The return trip to Edmonton got underway at 1515 hours, the last plane landing at Edmonton 1805 hours. The trip was both instructional and enjoyed by all who were privileged to make it. The staff at Prince Albert, both RCAF and civilians, were good hosts.

September 5, 1941

At 1430 hours a large United States Army transport plane number 38535 flown from the Sacramento Air Depot, McClellan Field California, proceeding to the Ladd Field, Fairbanks, Alaska arrived on the Station. At 1700 hours United States Army medium bomber 37-5-49 from Elmendorf Field Anchorage, Alaska also arrived on the Station. The flight is for the purpose of checking up landing fields and gas and fuel facilities from the United States to Alaska over Canadian territory. The officers and staff are visitors at both the officers and NCOs messes.

September 11, 1941

Forty five airmen of United States nationality reported from No 3 Manning Depot, Edmonton being posted here until openings are found for them in the different training units.

October 29, 1941

Two United States Army aeroplanes numbers 4 and 7 IPH Beechcraft arrived today at 1530 hours in charge of Lt Stevens and one officer and four NCOs. They remained on the Station overnight in order to have the machines checked over. We regret to advise that our commanding officer F/L R H Batty has been moved to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. His place will be filled by S/L

W C Kent. The posting of F/L Batty now leaves here only two of the original officers who opened this school.

November 4, 1941

Congratulations are extended to F/O and Mrs W C Clements on the birth of their twins (boy and girl). "Slim" as he is affectionately called, has a very worried look these days trying to budget for the new arrivals.

November 12, 1941

F/L R H Batty left today to report to No 119 BK Squadron, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Mrs Batty will go to the opposite direction, as she will make her home in Salmon Arm, B C for the time being.

December 5, 1941

A new "wings club" was opened this evening in the presence of 300 people under the direction of the air force Mothers' Auxiliary. The club on 102 Street Edmonton will furnish men of the air force with facilities for relaxation and entertainment. Billiard and ping-pong tables and all that makes a properly furnished club is at the service of any of the boys in blue. There was an officer present representing each RCAF unit in the Edmonton district. The club was officially opened by Mayor Fry. W/Cs J C Malone and J C Hutchinson spoke.

December 23, 1941

Christmas dinner was served in the airmen's mess to both NCOs and airmen at 1200 hours today. The officers donned white coats and acted as waiters. The spirit of Christmas was very prevalent as most of the boys were about to start on five days leave. Before sitting down to a dinner with all the trimmings the boys were served with light refreshments donated by Deliveries Ltd and the officers mess. One thing we found out is that the Australians are good singers and the Canadian winter does not affect their voices.

December 30, 1941

Twenty one graduates of course 34 left on four days leave before reporting to No 8 Bombing and Gunnery School Lethbridge. Before leaving the Station they were paraded on the drill square and the Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd trophy was presented by Mr Wop May, the manager of the school to R102419 LAC Robinson G C the most proficient student in his class. This airman was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 27 years ago, graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, worked for the North American Life at Regina, Saskatchewan before enlisting.

January 4, 1942

Three United States Army Martin bombers arrived today at 1700 hours from Spokane, Washington on route to Alaska. There were 10 officers and 14 ratings in the party with Lt Meals in charge. Lt Meals and one of his officers were given lodging in the officers quarters and the 14 ratings supplied with mattresses and given quarters in the new airmen's barracks which is ready for occupation. Lt Meals wished to have the ratings on the Station to look after the servicing of their aircraft.

January 5, 1942

Four P-40E United States pursuit planes and one C-53 transport plane arrived at 1130 hours. Three pursuit planes and transport left at 1500 hours for Grande Prairie on route to Alaska.

January 24, 1942

A number of officers of this school who are ardent curlers have formed four rinks which they call the Kittyhawks, the Hurricanes, the Airacobras and the Spitfires. A number of games have been arranged at the Edmonton Curling Club which are being played on Sundays and Wednesdays. From the experience obtained in sweeping rocks it won't be a hardship for the officers to help their good wives in house cleaning.

February 15, 1942

City officials cooperating with the army, navy and air force staged a five minute blackout starting at 2130 hours. Four Ansons from this Station were in the air during the test. It was reported by those in the air that the cooperation of the citizens was practically 100 percent, a few neon signs were overlooked.

February 16, 1942

The second Victory Loan Campaign opened today. The City of Edmonton started their drive for subscriptions with a "Ladies day." The three services patrolled the streets and any lady wishing to buy a bond could call on a member of the armed forces to escort her to loan headquarters. The results for the day were an overwhelming success. 850 ladies purchased bonds amounting to \$105,000.

March 30, 1942

Twenty six RAF trainees arrived by CNR at 1500 hours from RCAF Station Trenton. The train was held up 32 hours in a snow storm near Portage la Prairie. At 1800 hours today United States Army transport C-53 landed here in charge of Lt Stevens with four crew members. This transport will ferry from Edmonton to Whitehorse and Fairbanks twice weekly leaving Wednesday and Sunday and returning Monday and Thursday.

April 11, 1942

A record was made by course 41 which graduated 100 percent. F/L R K Fraser presented the Canadian Airways (Training) trophy at 1000 hours today to R121902 LAC S J Woodman who was born in Edmonton, Alberta 19 years ago. He left school in 1939 obtaining his senior matriculation. Before his enlistment in the RCAF he was employed by the Imperial Bank of Canada.

April 13, 1942

It is a common sight now to see United States Army aircraft sitting in the aprons of our hangars overnight either going or coming from Alaska. Three Beechcraft arrived from Spokane today on their way north.

April 21, 1942

Blowing dust. The shortage of suitable houses and suites in Edmonton has become very acute and unless something is planned in the near future by the city officials RCAF married personnel will have a serious problem on their hands getting living accommodation for their families.

April 22, 1942

Mr Dobbin, chief aircraft engineer at No 2 AOS informed us that he is shipping our Anson 8649X with the plastic fuselage to Montreal. Its principle use here was for compass swinging.

May 31, 1942

Four United States Flying Fortresses landed this evening at 1930 hours. One of them had the misfortune of having its front wheels go over the edge of the runway. Due to the softness of the ground from recent rains the wheels got bogged down to the hubs. With an efficient staff on hand, the big ship was soon back on the runway with no damage to her undercarriage.

June 1, 1942

An operational flight left for Prince Albert today at 1330 hours. There were 13 planes and the crew consisted of instructors and the graduates of course 45. The following United States aircraft arrived at different times today remaining overnight for refueling and check: two D-67, 24 P-38, 19 P-39, 4 DC-3, 6 B-17E, one P-40 a total of 56 machines.

June 2, 1942

At 0820 hours this morning a P-39 belonging to the United States Army piloted by Lt Rogers crashed approximately 20 miles west northwest of Edmonton. From a resident of the area came

the information that a flight of planes passed over when one turned back and smoke was seen to be trailing behind. Suddenly it went into a dive but straightened out later and something was seen to fall from it which later turned out to be the auxiliary gas tank which appeared to have been jettisoned. The plane again went into a dive and was lost sight of on account of the area being wooded. A flash was seen over the trees accompanied by a loud explosion and when the resident reached the scene the wreckage was scattered around and heavy smoke was coming from a hole in the ground but he could see no sign of the body of the pilot.

June 8, 1942

Thunderstorm, rain. Four B-24 Liberators from the United States arrived at 1350 hours. These large bombers created some excitement on arrival, their sizes made our Ansons look like Tiger Moths.

June 17, 1942

This Station is more American than RCAF at the present time. Since 1125 hours, United States planes of all descriptions, fighters, bombers and transports, have been landing here for practically one hour. Scattered around the hangar aprons and on the taxi strips there are 11 DC-3, 26 P-39, one C-48B3 and one P-43A. Also the 118<sup>th</sup> (F) Canadian Fighter Squadron is still with us awaiting for good weather. (Ed-no trace of this squadron, however, there is a 118 B Sqd)

June 22, 1942

All trainees at No 16 EFTS left for No 5 EFTS High River, Alberta today. There were 33 students in the party together with some members of the Edmonton Flying Training School. No 16 EFTS will be officially closed on 17<sup>th</sup> July next. The chief supervisory officer and adjutant and orderly room staff are still here.

July 4, 1942

Due to the number of United States Army aircraft arriving and departing from this Station it was deemed necessary to place a guard consisting of airmen around the hangars and taxiing strips. The guards are supplied by the manning depot. Nursing sister A E Dixon C10473 attached here on temporary duty from No 3 Manning Depot proceeded to No 32 EFTS Moose Jaw today.

July 18, 1942

The United States Army Air Force has transferred their office from our small hangar to Aircraft Repair which is located on the opposite side of the aerodrome. We are sorry to see them leave us as their aircraft were a familiar sight on our hangar aprons. Their officers impressed us with their efficiency.

August 2, 1942

The female sex appear to be able to take a man's place in nearly all ground jobs at this school. Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd are gradually increasing their staff in the hangars with women and according to reports they are performing their work in a satisfactory manner.

September 11, 1942

A tumultuous welcome was extended to the aircrew of the RCAF aircraft which bombed Saarbrücken and arrived in Canada within 24 hours of the bombing. The crew arrived at the airport at 1700 hours and were met and welcomed to Edmonton by government and civic officials and representatives of the armed forces. The premier of Alberta, the Honorable William Aberhart, presented a gift to each airman. The officials and their guests then proceeded to 104 Avenue where a parade headed by No 4 Initial Training School band was formed. Five military cars were placed in a lineup each carrying one of the air bomber crew and a number of the welcoming delegation. A civic banquet was held the same evening at the MacDonal Hotel with about 150 guests present representing government officers, business men and the armed forces. Mayor John Fry of Edmonton was chairman at the banquet. The names of the five members of the air Moose Squadron bomber crew were P/O J B Higham, F/S's K Svernson, D Morrison, S C Lee, Sgt A Loach.

September 20, 1942

The enlargement of the school is now in full swing. The foundations of new buildings are being constructed on both sides of Kingsway. The United States Army Air Force have constructed a number of buildings to be used as quarters for their airmen. They are also building a large hangar and store houses.

September 30, 1942

The strength of the unit at today's date: RCAF officers staff 37; RCAF airmen staff 72; wireless air gunners 72; trainees 279; civilians 4 (2 meteorologists); CDC other ranks 2. Aircraft strength: 38 Ansons, serviceable 32, unserviceable 6 (three needing engines, three needing minor repairs) 1 Vidal Anson and 1 Stinson. Total flying time for the month 3,624.45 hours.

October 9, 1942

A graduation wings parade was held this afternoon when course 53 (navigators) and course 58 (air bombers) received their wings. This was the first class of air bombers to graduate from this school. The wings were presented by Col T M Bolen of the United States Army Air Corps who spoke briefly on the excellent spirit of cooperation which existed between Canada and the USA.

February 10, 1943

Five aircraft from this school left today to aid in a search for American transport planes reported to be down somewhere in the vicinity of Ft St John. The following instructors from this unit are assisting in the search: F/L Chislett, P/O Gilbert, P/O Kowal, WO1 Ford, WO1 Hewson.

From the Edmonton Journal

#### North Plane Crash

Pilot Co-pilot found dead as missing cargo aircraft located through hunt by air

One of two big US Army transport planes missing in the north since February 5 has been found and two of the four persons aboard are alive, US Army officials in Edmonton announced Thursday. The missing cargo ship was located by an RCAF plane from No 2 Air Observer School on Tuesday and the two survivors were found Wednesday. Though injured they are not in critical condition and apparently survived the 19 days in the wild north country without great difficulty. A report said the two men were found two miles from the scene of the crash. It also was stated that both had suffered broken legs. The pilot, John Hart of Minneapolis and the copilot Kenneth W Jones of Elira, Ohio are dead, the announcement said. Surviving are passenger Rupert W Alexander, address unknown, and Staff Sergeant S Wilczynski of Nekossa, Wisconsin. Still missing is a transport plane with eleven persons aboard piloted by Lt Col A R Mensing Jr, a veteran flyer formerly of Northwest Industries. The RCAF plane which located the missing ship was dispatched to the area immediately after the planes were missing under the direction of Captain W R (Wop) May OBE DFC. Planes of the Northwest Staging Route under the command of W/C W J "Packie" McFarlane also took part in the search. The missing airplane was spotted first by a search airplane piloted by Cliff Renfrew. Aboard were engineer C McPherson, wireless operator W O Ford all of No 2 AOS.

April 1, 1943

Article from an Edmonton newspaper (cut line)

When airmen from No 2 AOS tackled the job of searching for missing US Transport Command aircraft in the north some weeks ago, they were successful in rescuing two American survivors lost in the wilderness for 19 days. It was a long hard and dangerous search that the boys from No 2 carried out in the face of terrible weather. So grateful was the US Army Air Force that a handsome trophy commemorating the assistance of this school personnel was presented to Captain W R Wop May OBE DFC. Presentation took place at No 3 M Depot Thursday night during a wings parade. Above is shown Captain May receiving the trophy from Colonel T L Mosley, officer commanding the Alaskan Wing of the US Army Air Force Transport Command.

April 8, 1943

Captain McIntyre, dental officer, left this morning on temporary duty to carry out dental work on

the Northwest Staging Route.

May 8, 1943

Anson 6329 crashed six miles southwest of Edmonton due to engine failure. The aircraft was badly damaged and considered a complete write off. R121283 Sgt Fletcher J M pilot, R172024 LAC Jackson G B and R70298 Cpl Landridge J F navigators, all uninjured.

May 29, 1943

The Station cricket team played No 36 SFTS Penhold and won 8 wickets for 134, not out to 10 wickets for 104 runs. A Station team competed in Edmonton Highland Games under F/O Waddington and secured second place. Final standing No 3 M Depot 27 points, No 2 AOS 21 points, No 4 ITS 14 points, army Camrose 13 points, navy 9 points, US Air force 5 points.

May 30, 1943

S/L R K Fraser, as Station representative, attended a memorial service for the late Premier William Aberhart in McDougal Church sponsored by the Edmonton Ministerial Association.

June 30, 1943

The chief instructor and most of GIS staff have completed moving into new location in new GIS south of Kingsway.

July 2, 1943

Visit of S/L Hamilton from No 4 Training Command on the subject of accommodation in barrack blocks and the possibilities of bedding down more men from the Northwest Staging Route. Unfortunately due to our own very cramped quarters it was agreed that this was not possible so it was recommended that NWSR have their own quarters which will be much more satisfactory for both.

July 12, 1943

S/L Sparling, command padre, (P) arrived and postponed F/L McLellan's flip to Watson Lake for him. It seems our souls are in safe hands. We understand there is an early possibility of F/L McLellan being relieved of his work with the Northwest Staging Route thus giving all his time to this unit which will certainly be appreciated.

July 13, 1943

S/L Opie, chief supervisory officer, flew to Lethbridge via Macleod with F/L J Smith as navigator and F/O Alex Wright as ballast. The trip down was uneventful but S/L Opie had an

opportunity of meeting the new CO of No 8 B&G School that supplies so many of our air bombers.

July 16, 1943

The weather smiled (or chuckled) at us today long enough to hold the COs inspection on the tarmac (courtesy Department of Transport). All the various commanders are hoarse from shouting Bostons and DC-3s (courtesy USAAF). F/L Downy who was visiting NWSR couldn't resist the sight of a wing on parade so came over to see how we were faring.

July 19, 1943

The parade scheduled in connection with the naval exhibition for 2030 hours was all arranged and the squadron detail from No 2 AOS under F/L Wilson was just getting into the MT when the CSO ordered them to wait for further orders. The cold front anticipated for after the parade arrived about 1900 hours and when the CSO watched a lumber pile disappear a board at a time in the high wind he held the squadron here and phoned the naval people in charge and they agreed to cancel the parade altogether. Fortunately very few got wet in the deluge that followed.

July 28, 1943

F/L Bennell (armament officer) left for Alix, Alberta to install a ventilator in a camera obscura there and also pay the boys. It is hoped they will both breathe and spend freely now.

August 2, 1943

About 1900 hours a terrific dust and wind storm blew in which later turned to a driving rain. The tents up at the Northwest Staging Route "Circus Stand" stood up well from all appearances.

August 16, 1943

The ballots and other paraphernalia arrived today for the Australian election. P/O Brian Filewood will act as returning officer to make sure Aussies get their X's in the right squares. The August edition of the "Observer" is out. Everybody buys an "Observer", we hope.

August 20, 1943

The leading student for course number 73 navigators was R172385 Sgt Wallace E C L. Sgt Wallace lives in Vancouver, British Columbia where his wife is residing. Prior to enlisting in the RCAF Sgt Wallace was a pharmacist in Vancouver. The most proficient student for course number 80 bombers was AUS419713 Sgt Peterson R A. Sgt Peterson's home is at Pennant Hills, New South Wales, Australia where his wife resides. Prior to enlisting in the RAAF, Sgt Peterson was a chain store manager.

September 8, 1943

At 1600 hours a signal was received from No 4 TC and in consequence a blanket 0200 hour pass and special evening menu in all messes marked the victory over the Italians. Courses scheduled to fly carried on but no other studies continued.

October 6, 1943

A/V/M A A L Cuffe C23, the deputy inspector general gave the Station a once over lightly. All personnel not actually engaged in flying were on the inspection parade held at 1400 hours. G/C Flinn of No 4 Training Command acted as his 2IC and boots and haircuts came in for very close scrutiny. The Station barber and the clothing section will be able to hang the "sold right out" sign for the next two days at least. The No 4 ITS band was in attendance and acquitted itself in the usual capable manner. The parade square has had a very spare coating of new gravel spread hither and yon which is quite loose and chalky.

October 9, 1943

Grand weather continues and smoke haze has lifted a great deal. At 1030 hours a grass fire was noticed at the bombing range at Yokau Lake. A crew of men from No 3 M Depot was dispatched under F/L Benell (arm. Officer). They controlled the fire and in such a way that the range area was burned over before the fire was extinguished to reduce the fire hazard in future. They returned to the Station at 1600 hours tired, happy and very smudgy after having a picnic lunch on the job.

October 18, 1943

Rain, fog, low cloud continuous light rain all day. Commando training for jungle swamp duty would be quite possible on the roads on the new part. Everything is in a very liquid state again. Australia, New Zealand and RAF trainees, while interested in the Victory Loan drive are hesitant about purchasing and have asked many definite questions regarding their position as undoubtedly practically all will be posted overseas before the installment payments are completed.

October 30, 1943

Anson aircraft number 6269 was reported as missing off the night flight and word arrived at the Station that an Anson had crashed into Cooking Lake during the night. On investigating it proved to be the missing aircraft. S/L Opie, chief supervisory officer, left immediately for Cooking Lake with representatives of Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd. The aircraft was located about 400 yards from shore about three miles northeast of Cooking Lake Airport in about eight feet of water. The bodies of the four occupants R157276 Sgt Ralph Percy Gibson, pilot on leave to Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd; AUS429801 Sgt Leonard Alfred Easter WAG; AUS432249 LAC Oakes Leslie Williams navigator; and LAC Hennessy James Glen NZ42715 bomber were located and brought to shore.

December 17, 1943

The armament section under F/L Benell are busy installing armament equipment in Mk V Ansons. The dance in the drill hall sponsored by the IODE was very well attended. The draw for the winner of a \$6,000 bungalow was held at 2230 hours and was a big attraction. The bungalow was won by Mrs F Shaker of 118 Avenue.

January 13, 1944

F/L D I Crossley and F/L G Wynn attended the meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society at the University of Alberta where F/L Crossley presented a paper on astronomical navigation.

January 21, 1944

The mild weather continues and the southern stations in No 4 Training Command better take note of the newest competitor for the banana belt laurels. The new operating theatre was opened today. First operation at midnight - appendectomy, patient making satisfactory progress.

January 24, 1944

The medical section moved into the new medical inspection rooms and orderly room in the southwest corner of building number 11, the old GIS. Penicillin was used for the first time on the Station at 1145 hours.

February 2, 1944

Two emergency appendectomies and another shipment of penicillin received at the Station hospital. USAAF defeated No 2 AOS at basketball by a score of 30 to 21 in the Station drill hall. Northwest Staging Route defeated course 94 air bombers at hockey.

February 6, 1944

R182419 LAC Green A G, an air bomber trainee who had been in the Station hospital for some weeks died yesterday afternoon of a punctured bowel. All modern methods including the use of penicillin were used but were of no avail.

February 15, 1944

A/V/M G R Howsam MC arrived on the Station at 1050 hours to present the Efficiency Pennant to the school. A ceremonial parade of three squadrons in close column was formed up. Speeches were given by A/V/M G R Howsam, air officer commanding No 4 Training Command, Mr W R May, general manager of No 2 AOS and Mr Punch Dickens, Western Superintendent of Canadian Pacific Airlines. The ceremony came to a close with a march past, A/V/M G R

Howsam taking the salute.

February 29, 1944

Summary: Recreation notes for month of February, 1944. The number of persons using the Knights of Columbus hut at No 2 AOS was 39,550. During this time 25,000 sheets of writing paper were used and also 14,000 envelopes. In door activities included badminton, basketball, table tennis, billiards, in which approximately 4,000 personnel participated. There were also four concerts with an attendance of 300, 20 movies with an attendance of 8,800 and the Station library which was used by most of the personnel. The library has 1,000 books and 10, 200 magazines at the disposal of the airmen. Outdoor sports included hockey, skiing and skating in which 8,800 participated and there were approximately 2,000 spectators.

March 6, 1944

An Airacobra from the USAAF crashed about one mile north of the Station. The pilot was killed and the aircraft a complete loss by fire. "Spitfire" was shown at the theatre and was attended by 600. Leslie Howard and David Niven were the stars.

March 11, 1944

A block buster landed on the Station in the form of a rumor that the Station was to close as an AOS. The rumor department immediately got busy and postings are now scheduled to Trinidad and the island of Pago Pago and intermediate points. However, the news changes hourly.

March 13, 1944

Confirmation of the closing of the unit came over the radio with the announcement that 28 schools were closing across Canada. The rumor department continues to function at top production.

March 24, 1944

Organization Order Number 344  
Disbandment of No 2 Air Observer School

In order to provide additional accommodation for WHO purposes and also to relieve a heavy traffic condition at the Edmonton Aerodrome, it has become expedient to disband No 2 AOS. No 2 AOS Edmonton is to be disbanded effective 14 July 1944. The establishment of No 2 AOS is to be canceled effective 14 July 1944. Training: course number 97 scheduled to intake 13 March 1944 and all subsequent courses are canceled. Air bombers courses number 98, 100, 101, 103, and all subsequent courses are canceled. Course number 99 and 102 are to intake as scheduled. With the graduation of course 96 navigators on 14 July, 1944 all training at No 2 AOS is to cease. AMP is to post all subsequent intakes of No 2 AOS to No 9 AOS St Johns,

Province of Quebec.

May 1, 1944

Prior to the use of the swimming pool, a parade of all personnel to the SMO is being carried out to assure that no one will be allowed to use the pool that has any skin diseases.

May 28, 1944

A cricket team made up of Australian trainees played a team from the Edmonton cricket club at the municipal course during the afternoon but the attraction in the evening was "Up in Mabel's Room" at the Station theatre starring Gail Patrick and John Hubbard.

May 30, 1944

There are many strangers around the officers' mess these days, apparently officers who are here in connection with the formation of the new Northwest Air Command.

June 1, 1944

It would appear that the invasion of No 2 AOS has started judging from the number of strange faces in the officers' mess and the demand for room in the officers' quarters. A/V/M Lawrence and his party arrived by air at 1800 hours regarding the formation of Northwest Air Command. Heavy rain early in the evening caused the orderly officer considerable trouble. A number of rain coats disappeared from the canteen. Apparently the WD section thinking the age of chivalry had passed borrowed the coats to go to their barracks. The mystery was cleared up when the coats arrived back by taxi.

June 3, 1944

Saturday was a rather quiet day on the Station with the ordinary daily routine. However, some excitement was caused when the flash that the invasion had started was received. This flash was canceled a few minutes later.

June 6, 1944

Excitement runs high on the Station today as flashes of the invasion come through. A special prayer service was called by the padre F/L Cowper-Smith at 0930 hours. Officers and personnel of the Station turned out and a large number of civilians from Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd also attended.

June 7, 1944

A meeting of the airmen's mess was held at 1830 hours in the Knights of Columbus library and complaints and suggestions were heard from the representatives of the various courses. S/L E

Cohen C6460 was chairman and F/O K J Hawkins C12117 acted as secretary. In perusing the minutes of former mess meetings since the school opened it would appear that many problems have come up and been surmounted and the catering company R Smith and Company are to be congratulated on their efforts. With trainees from Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Canada, many different tastes have been catered to. The Canadians like their bacon crisp, the English and Australians want it soft and under done. The Australians and New Zealanders want more green, the English never seem to get as much fruit as they wish. They also have weird ideas as to sweets, such abominations as macaroni and treacle finding favor. The commanding officers parade was formed up at 0815 with all personnel on parade for inspection.

June 15, 1944

Eighteen officers returned from Calgary where they attended demonstrations of new secret equipment set up in a Short Stirling aircraft that had been flown from England via Iceland and Greenland and is making a tour of many of the stations in Canada. Lectures were attended by approximately 125 officers from No 4 Training Command and proved both interesting and instructional.

June 18, 1944

A Short Stirling aircraft arrived from Patricia Bay during the afternoon with G/C Niblett, S/L MacLure, S/L MacKinley, S/L Potter, F/L Davies, F/L Creamer, F/O Bray, F/O Stringer and four noncommissioned maintenance crew. The officers were the guests at the officers' mess and spent the night on the Station. A great number of civilians came out on Kingsway Avenue to get a peek at the aircraft but were not allowed on the Station. An armed guard was supplied by No 3 Manning Depot.

June 19, 1944

At 1400 hours a Station parade was held and A/C Johnson presented the Minister of Defense Efficiency Award to Captain W R May of Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd and F/L F J Edwards C6779 acting chief supervisory officer.

June 25, 1944

Captain Parker, Captain Lunsden and Lt Anderson arrived on the Station from Wainwright to accompany a flight on army cooperation over the anti-aircraft batteries of the RCA 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division at Wainwright on Monday. Several Australians from the school visited the City of Edmonton Club cricket pitch at the municipal golf course.

July 5, 1944

No record kept of flying time. Posting notices were received today for five officers including the Station padre F/L Cowper-Smith who was posted to Claresholm. In the evening there was a

gathering in the lounge and presentation of a fountain pen desk set was made by the officers of No 2 AOS to Captain "Wop" W R May, general manager of the Canadian Airways (Training) Ltd. S/L D I Crossley C3791 made the presentation speech. A buffet supper was served following the presentation.

July 12, 1944

No ground instruction and no flying exercises. The hospital staff is being transferred as a unit to Northwest Air Command, which will leave them in the same location as before. The civilian operating company is selling off uniforms, trousers and overalls which they had on hand for sale to employees at greatly reduced prices.

July 14, 1944

No ground instruction and no flying exercises. The last day of existence for No 2 Air Observer School. Many farewells and much confusion getting clearances and arranging transport to the railway depots. Graduation wings parade was held today for course number 96 navigators. As both the bands from No 4 ITS and No 3 Manning Depot are in Calgary at the Stampede the PA system and records had to be used. A/V/M T A Lawrence, Air Officer Commanding Northwest Air Command, presented the wings to the graduates and Mr W R Wop May presented the trophy to the leading navigation student GB1661262 Sgt Humphreys B T whose home is at Swansea, South Wales. The graduates entertained their friends and relatives to the usual tea after the ceremony in the Knights of Columbus lounge room in the drill hall.