

50th Anniversary Souvenir Section — Pages 5 to 36



TOTEM TIMES



Canadian Forces Base Comox B.C.

VOL 35 NO 8

29 APRIL 1993

COST: PRICELESS

"Right from the Beginning"

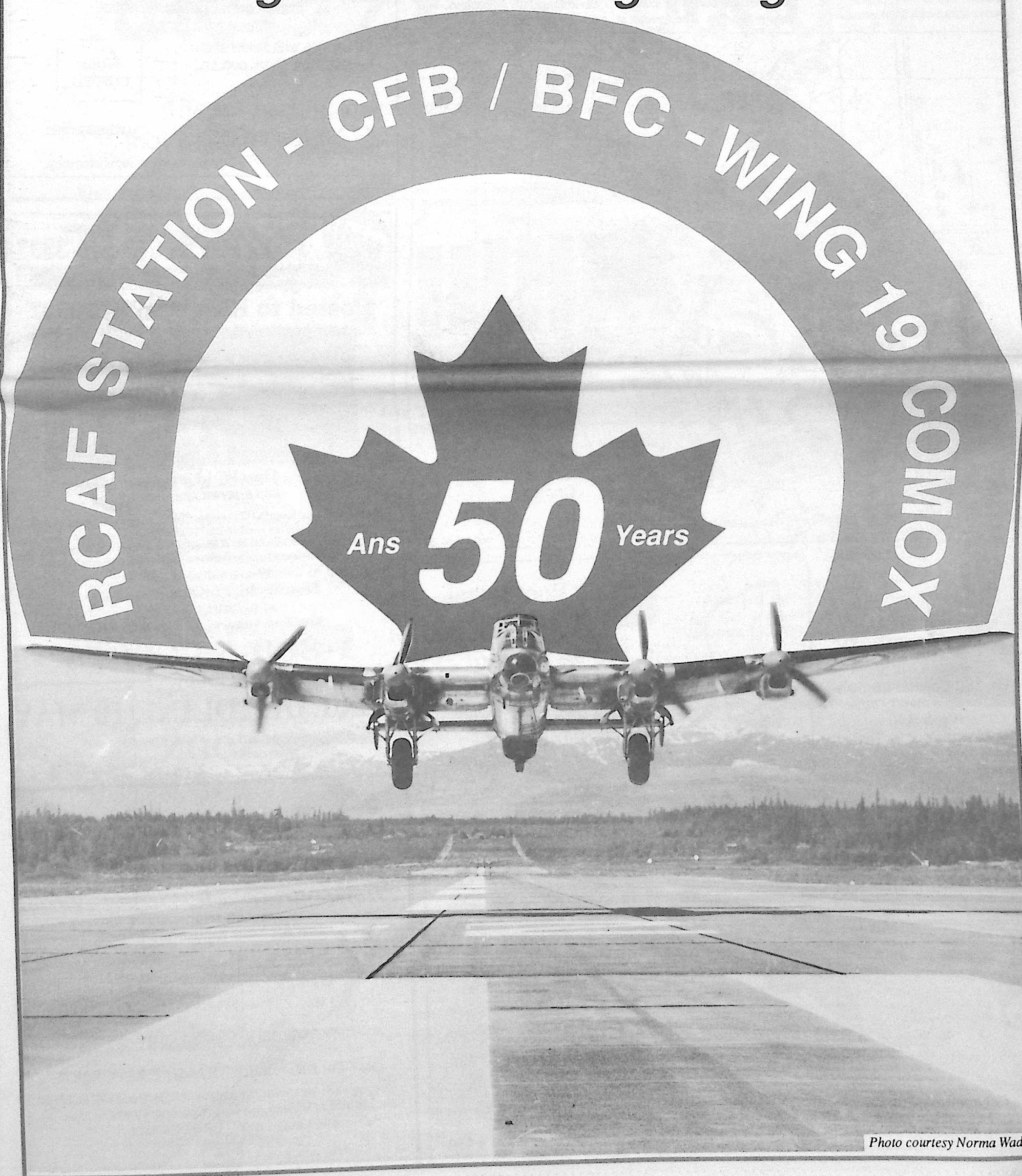


Photo courtesy Norma Wade

On & Off the Base

Natural Gas Arrives at CFB Comox

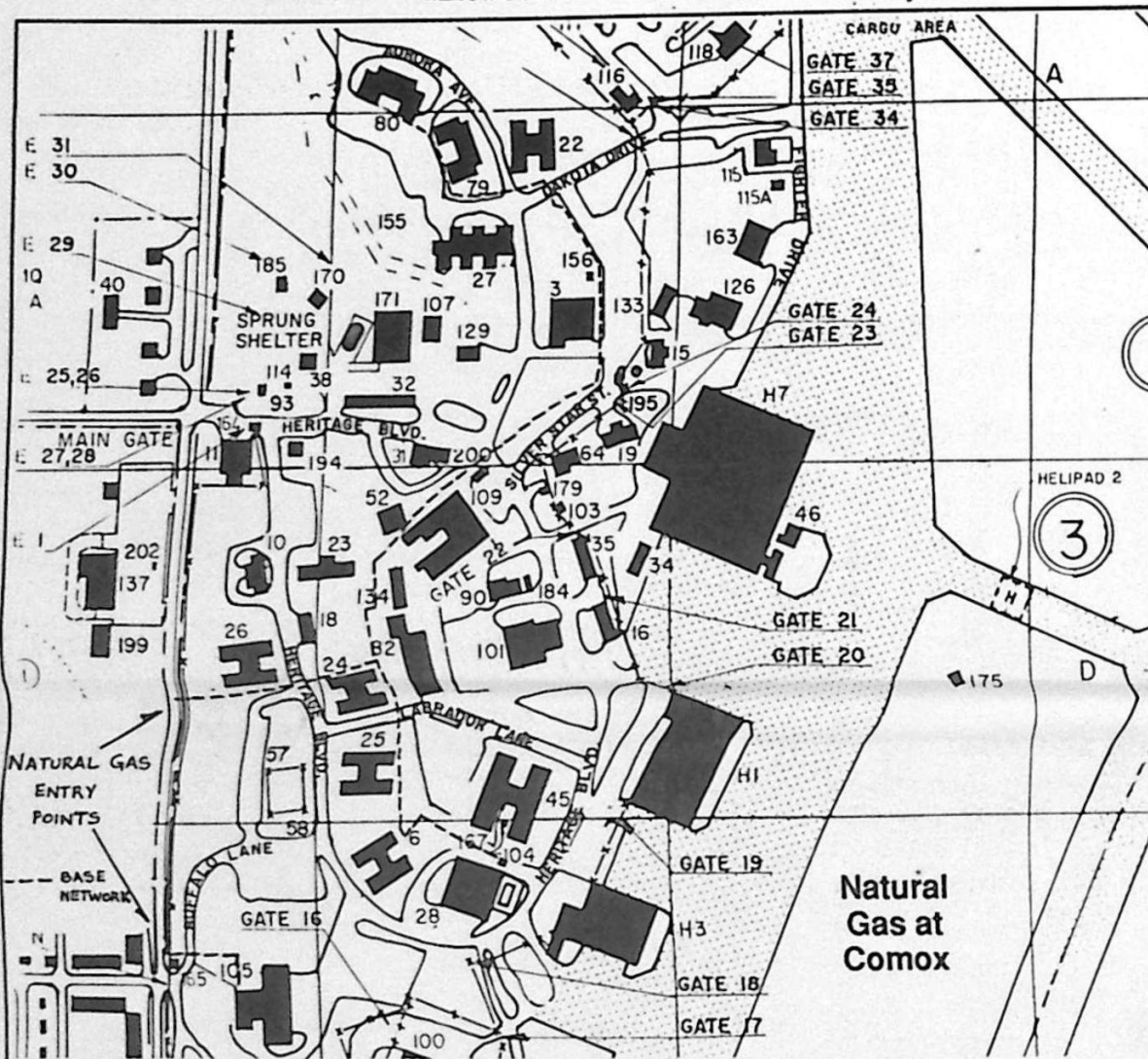
Where would we be without the Law of Supply and Demand? After 20 years (and I know it's been that long because I was born on the Island), enough demand has finally been generated to warrant the connection of natural gas from the mainland to Vancouver Island. Never to be left at the start line, DND has moved quickly to negotiate a natural gas contract with Centra Gas Ltd. for the provision of natural gas to CFBs Esquimalt and Comox.

Although it has taken a while, Centra Gas is now prepared to move ahead with the Base natural

gas distribution network. In order not to conflict with the major activities of MARCOT '93, Centra Gas will concentrate on the gas mains to be installed along Little River Road immediately outside the Base until the exercise is over. Commencing 26 Apr 93, the Centra Gas work crews will be installing natural gas lines throughout the technical and administrative support section of the Base. There should be very little disruption to Wing units or movement about the Base as the gas lines are buried in shallow, narrow trenches. The forecast at

this time is for Centra Gas to be complete on Base by 5 May 93.

The initial consumption of natural gas on Base will be in the production of hot water during the summer in a number of the barrack blocks, the Base Gym, and the messes. Once the new Central Heating Plant is constructed and on line in Sep 94, it too will be using natural gas as its primary fuel. It is our sincere hope that the use of natural gas will not only allow us to be more environmentally conscious, but save money too!!



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Some facts about the 1993 B.C. Budget

The budget includes new measures you should know about that benefit ordinary working people and middle income families.

The Home Owner Grant is increased for 95% of B.C. homeowners

FACT: The basic home owner grant is increased by \$20 per year to \$470 for homes assessed at up to \$400,000 in value.

FACT: The home owner grant for seniors is increased by \$25 per year to \$745.

FACT: To finance these increases the home owner grant is reduced or eliminated for the 5% of B.C. homes valued at over \$400,000.

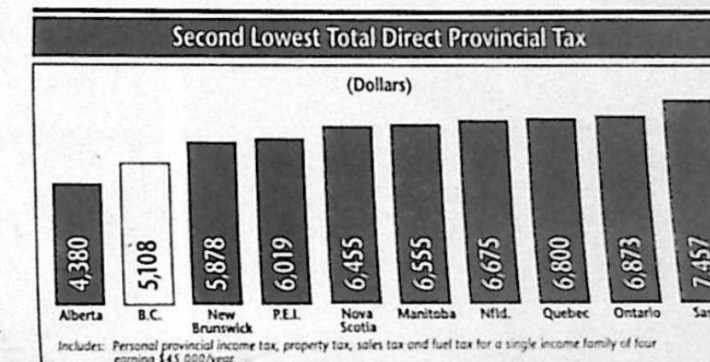
One in three households will receive a sales tax rebate

FACT: The B.C. sales tax rate remains the second-lowest in Canada, even with the one percent increase announced in the budget. To offset the impact of this increase, 600,000 B.C. households will receive a sales tax rebate.

FACT: On average, British Columbians pay the second-lowest direct provincial taxes in Canada.

FACT: There is no increase in the personal income tax rate this year for 92% of British Columbians - only the wealthiest 8% are being asked to contribute more through a higher income tax rate.

FACT: The net effect of all tax measures included in the budget is that 28% of British Columbians will benefit from an overall tax cut.



Taxes are cut for small businesses in British Columbia

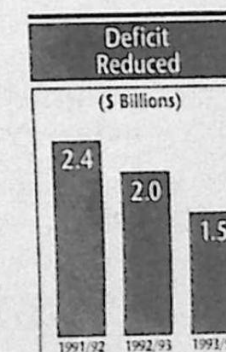
FACT: The corporate capital tax has been eliminated for 2,000 small B.C. businesses and has been reduced for a further 1,500 small businesses.

FACT: The small business provincial income tax rate has been frozen at last year's level.

The deficit has been cut by 35% in two years

FACT: The deficit for 1993/94 is projected at \$1.5 billion - a decrease of 35% from the \$2.4 billion annual deficit inherited two years ago.

FACT: The net provincial debt in British Columbia, as a proportion of GDP, is the lowest in Canada.



Government spending is under control

FACT: Government spending in 1992/93 is forecast to come in below budget.

FACT: The rate of growth in government spending has decreased from 12.1% two years ago to 5.7% in the coming year - the lowest rate of increase since 1987/88.

FACT: The salaries of the Premier and Cabinet have been cut and the freeze on MLAs' salaries has been extended to senior officials.

Medicare premiums are reduced or eliminated for 565,000 families

FACT: Medicare premiums are being eliminated for 430,000 lower-income families and seniors, and reduced for another 135,000.

FACT: Spending on health and education will increase by about 3% to keep up with population growth - an achievement other provinces have been unable to match.

FACT: The growth rate in the B.C. economy is projected at 3.2% in the coming year - allowing us to protect health care and education at a time when other provinces are cutting services.

For more information on how you can benefit from these initiatives, please write: Budget '93, 109 - 617 Government Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

British Columbia
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RELATIONS

Editorial



Colonel Terry Rogers

A Message from the Commander Wing 19

A 50th birthday is a very significant milestone in everybody's lifetime. For an institution or a base, it is also an achievement which deserves recognition. The recollection of past contributions by the many civilian and military personnel who served at CFB Comox are worthy of a quiet moment of reflection as the economic impact of the Base has played a significant role in the development and growth of this beautiful valley. In addition, it should also give us cause to project ahead over the next 50 years and wonder about the future of 19 Wing and what it holds in store for all of us. Throughout these many years, the one important constant has been the tremendous support of the local communities for our role and mission to provide operational crews and aircraft irrespective of the task at hand. This continuing support is and will be essential for

our success and we must strive to grow together and appreciate the many benefits available from this geographic co-location.

The selection of an official birth date has been interesting. CFB Comox was opened as an RAF base in 1942, officially constituted as an RCAF aerodrome on 1 May 1943 and commenced operations in May 1944. Many residents of the original RCAF contingent still reside in the local area and are quick to remind us of our history. However, in deference to our official records, we have decided to initiate our celebrations this year and conclude our birthday party dedicating our 1994 airshow to 50 years of military aviation. I hope everybody will be able to join in at least one of the many events planned during this period and help us celebrate our 50th.

Happy Birthday, CFB Comox!

Do Not Recycle!

Please return all unused copies of this newspaper to the Totem Times, or call 339-2541 for pick-up.

Letters to the Editor

A Message from the Mayor of Comox

It is my pleasure to acknowledge, on behalf of the people of Comox, the 50th Anniversary of Canadian Forces Base Comox.

The Base operation is the number one economic generator for our community. It is pleasing that CFB Comox, after 50 years, is continuing to grow and expand.

The greatest asset of CFB Comox to our community is the people who come from all over Canada, and indeed the world, to live here. We benefit greatly from the opportunity to learn and share experiences.

CFB Comox was included



Mayor Alicia Burns

within the Town of Comox boundaries a short time ago. This has assisted in building upon the strong relationship that already

existed between military and non-military people. Our community grows in depth as many ex-military families decide to live permanently in our community.

It is sincerely hoped that the next 50 years of CFB Comox will be as successful and mutually beneficial as the last 50 years have been.

To the military personnel, their families and friends, congratulations on 50 terrific years. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Alicia Burns,
Mayor

A Message from the Mayor of Courtenay

On behalf of the City of Courtenay, I would like to congratulate CFB Comox on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary!

The City of Courtenay is very fortunate indeed that the Base takes such an active role in our community, and we certainly appreciate the many contributions that CFB Comox and its person-



Mayor Ron Webber

nel make to the area for the betterment of our Valley.

Our best wishes to CFB Comox for many more years of service in the beautiful Comox Valley and we look forward to continuing good will and friendship with our communities!

Sincerely,
R.V. Webber,
Mayor

A Letter from 1961

Dear Editor

I hear around the hangar that you guys are starting a station paper and I thought maybe you'd stick this in "Letters to the Editor." Course you won't, but I'm writing it anyway.

What I'd like to know is why the devil a guy can't find no place to park his car around here. If they didn't use up all that room leaving airplanes lying around all over the place things would be OK. First they put them in a hangar, then they move them to the apron, then the tarmac or runway,

and every damned one has four or five different places to park, when one or two even ought to be enough. If each aircraft only had one or two different places to park then there would be plenty left for us guys to park our cars.

Yours truly,
LAC Austin Healy

Editor's Note: This was our very first letter to the editor, dated 17 March 1960. Thirtysomething years later, times haven't changed much...Ed.

50th Anniversary
Decal/Patch
on sale at Museum



TOTEM TIMES

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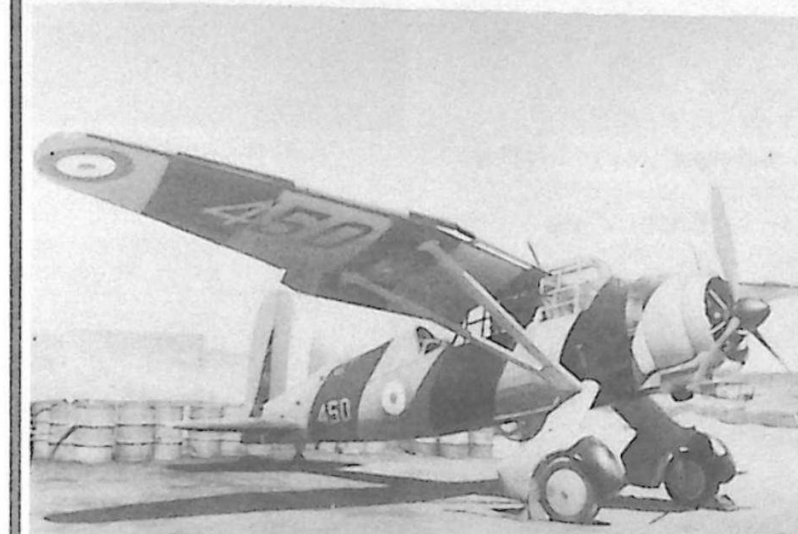
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"Right from the Beginning"

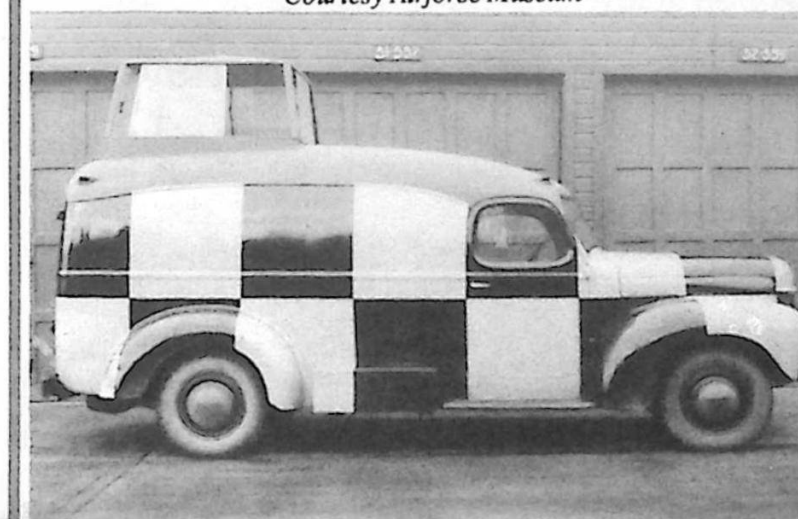


TOTEM TIMES

Canadian Forces Base Comox B.C.



Courtesy Airforce Museum



Special Section

From Bush to Base

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993



Aviation artist John Rutherford painted this fine portrait for the 50th Anniversary of RCAF Station/CFB/Wing 19 Comox. Limited Edition colour prints of this painting are now available at the Comox Air Force Museum.

Courtesy Base Photo

"Right from the Beginning"

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The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

Cape Lazo before CFB Comox

By Gordon Wagner
and Lloyd Bailey

The federal government appropriated seventy parcels of land for the Royal Air Force to build Comox Air Force Base in 1942. The first warplane landed on the tarmac in February of 1943. Of local interest is the nature of the Cape Lazo community at the time of the massive government takeover. Courtenay newspapers were silent on the supposedly secret development, but Vancouver contractor John Boyd of General Construction hired local workers so the community was well aware of the wartime project.

When the attack on Pearl Harbour devastated the American Navy, the Japanese Navy by sailing down the west coast of North America could easily have attacked San Diego's naval base. When a Japanese submarine shelled Estevan Point on Vancouver Island's west coast, Group Captain F.P. Mawdsley asked for an aircraft to protect Western Air Command, which was housed in Victoria's Belmont Building. He forgot to state the altitude. A sergeant pilot, proud of his new wings, did tight-turns over downtown Victoria at nought feet.

The RCAF No. 8 BR (Bomber Reconnaissance) Squadron had gone to protect Alaska. At Sea Island, crews were being trained to send a BR Squadron to Tofino and a Torpedo Squadron to Pat Bay. The Army had a gun on York Island. Civil Defense enforced a blackout. A couple of Mark I Bolingbroke, armed with armour-piercing bombs, sat on Sea Island's tarmac ready for take-off.

Near an abandoned mine in Sidney Inlet just north of Tofino, someone mistook a whale for a Japanese submarine. The first twin-engine plane managed to land on Tofino's half-completed runway and spent two days circling over the inlet while the crew listened to the World Series.

By August of 1942, the Commonwealth Air Training Plan had stations at Abbotsford, Boundary Bay and Pat Bay. From bases at Alliford Bay, Bella Bella, Ucluelet, Coal Harbour and Pat Bay, the RCAF patrolled our coastal water with Stranraers and Catalinas. These sheltered bays provided ready-made landing strips. Rumour said new land bases were slated for Tofino, Terrace, Port Hardy and Comox.

Why did Tofino, Port Hardy, and Terrace become operational before Comox? Because they were closer to their patrol areas and on the safer side of the Beaufort Mountains. Pilots hated clouds with hard centres.

Why was the Comox peninsula chosen? Its northwest-

southeast alignment suited the prevailing winds. The planes approached three runways over water. The Beaufort Mountains presented no problem and Comox had less fog. The flat terrain would make land clearing easy. But the land had to be purchased or expropriated.

Crown lands could be acquired by pre-emption. Any British subject could acquire 160 acres for agricultural purposes only. The settler had to live on the land for not less than five years, make permanent improvements to the value of ten dollars per acre, and have five acres of land under cultivation. Then the land was surveyed, and upon payment of a dollar per acre, a Crown Grant was issued and filed in the Land Titles Office in Victoria.

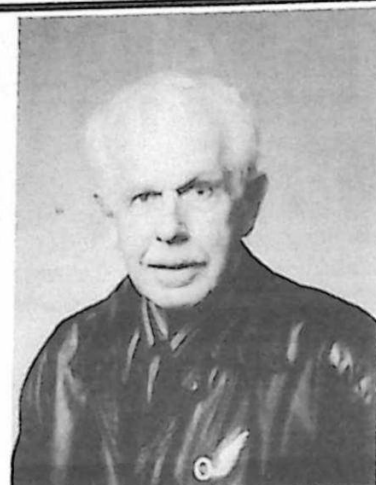
In the early 1860's the Valley's first settlers pre-empted lands along the Tsolum River and Portuguese Creek so they needed a boat or canoe for access to their new lands. William Ralph's survey lines ran northeast and northwest and all lots fronted on the river or creek. Ralph created Sections 1 to 56. In 1868, George Drabble, who became the Valley's resident land surveyor, did the remaining Sections 57 to 86 and the District Lots from the Railway Company.

Ships from Victoria brought supplies to the settlement and took Valley products to Victoria and Nanaimo. The ships had to anchor in the bay and were met by canoes and row boats. By 1875 ships docked at the Comox Wharf and farmers used the Back Road to get their produce to the Comox Wharf. The settlement grew and by 1893 all the lands in CFB Comox had been pre-empted.

In 1871, British Columbia joined the Dominion of Canada with the promise of a transcontinental railway terminating in Victoria. The route would go down Bute Inlet with bridges to join Stewart, Sonora, Quadra, Maude and Vancouver Islands. In 1882, when Burrard Inlet was chosen as the terminus, the people of Victoria threatened to secede from Canada. John A. Macdonald, Prime Minister and Member for Victoria, promised the irate citizens a railway for their Island.

In March 1884, Robert Dunsmuir, his son James, and son-in-law John Bryden, all of Vancouver Island, together with American railway giants Stanford, Crocker and Huntington, formed the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway Company. In exchange for building a railway to Campbell River they received a strip of land 20 miles wide, and

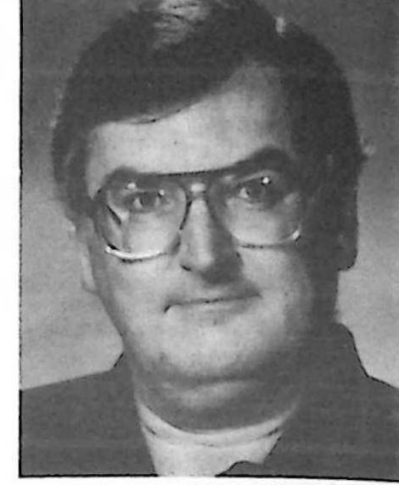
Continued on page 7



Author Gordon Wagner



Surveyor George Drabble

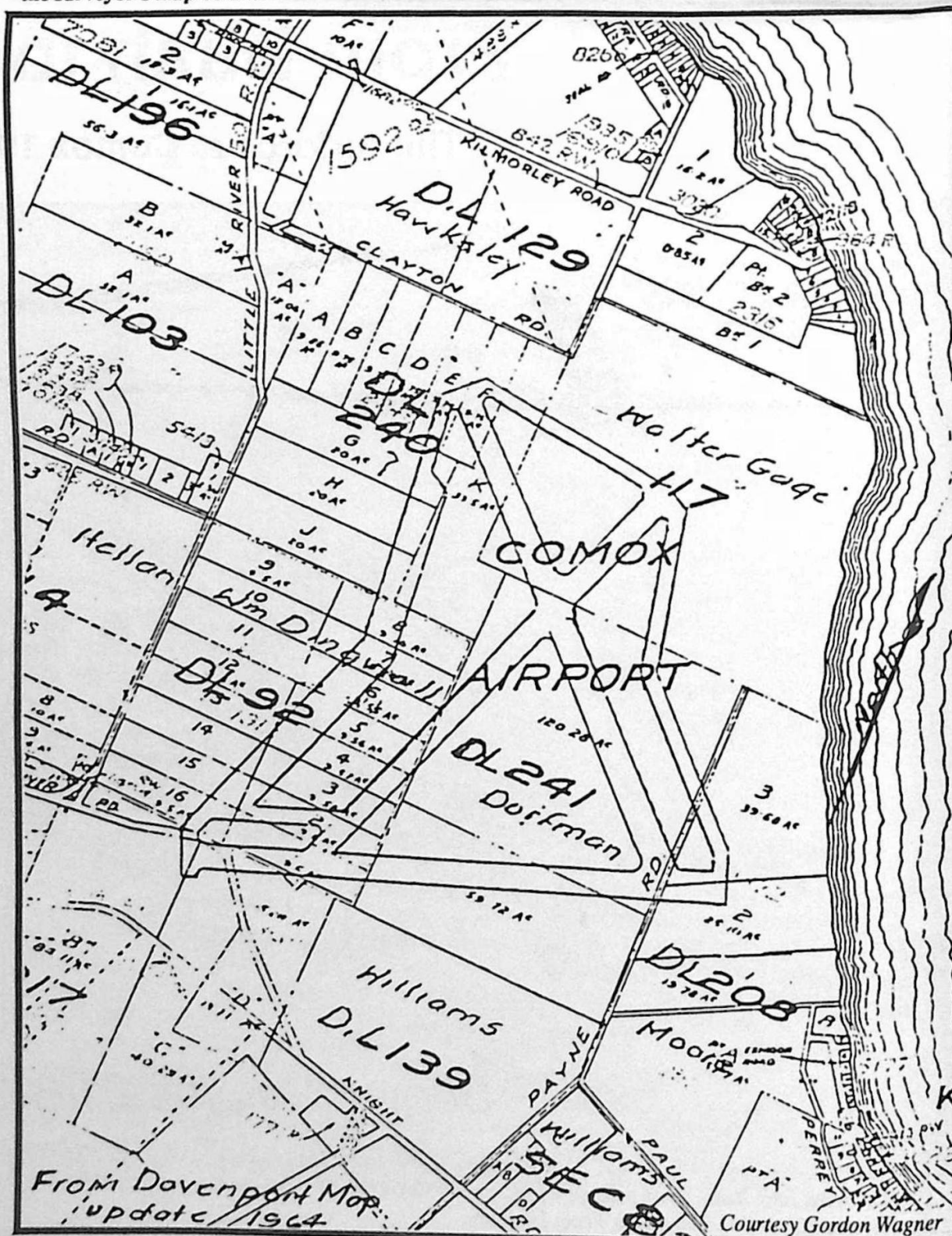


Author Lloyd Bailey

Early View



A 1944 photo of RCAF Station Comox shows completed runways and a few buildings. Compare it with the surveyor's map below.



Courtesy Airforce Museum

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 7

More Lazo

Continued from page 6

running north from Goldstream to the 50th parallel of latitude a mile south of Campbell River. In addition to these 2,000,000 acres of land, they received a \$750,000 subsidy from the federal government.

In 1884 Joseph Hunter surveyed the railway right of way from Victoria to Campbell River. The track reached Nanaimo in 1886 and finally got to Courtenay in 1914. The E&N Land Company still owns a 100-foot strip of land between Courtenay and Campbell River. The original plan called for a spur to the Comox Wharf but the line was never surveyed.

Land application made prior to the E&N Land Grant would be honoured by the new company but there would be no more pre-emptions. New settlers would have to buy the land from the E&N and at their price. No more land for a dollar an acre. In 1887, the Land Settlement Act reinstated pre-emption rights. Land pre-empted prior to 1878 received grants from the Crown and were called Sections. Land pre-empted after 1878 received a deed of land from the E&N Railway Company and were called District Lots.

Land Title records show the following: in 1873 and prior to the E&N Land Grant, David Williams and W.H. Thompson received Crown grants for Sec-

tions 82 and 83A. The remainder of the properties received a deed of land from the E&N Railway Company. In 1886 Michael Donahue got D.L. 93; in 1887 Andrew H. Hellan got D.L. 103; in 1888 William Dingwall got D.L. 92, and Walter Gage got D.L. 117; in 1889 D.L. 129 went to Wm. Hawksley; in 1893 D.L. 208 went to Joseph P. Moore, D.L. 205 to E.B. Bushell, and D.L. 217 to Frank Dorman. Jacob F. Dorfman also received his deed to District Lots 240 and 241 in 1893.

Barbara Dingwall subdivided D.L. 92 into sixteen ten-acre lots in 1914. By 1920 Dorfman's D.L. 240, then owned by Percival Good, had been divided into Lots A to K. In 1919, Hooper's D.L. 103 belonged to Charles H. Pigott and became part of Alfred Church's farm opposite the Base gate. In 1914, R. Bowman, as the administrator of the estate of W.H. Thompson, sold D.L. 93 to Helen Zittle. The Cliffe family owned part of David Williams' Section 82. In the 1950's Lloyd Smith cleared David Williams' D.L. 146 and developed one of the most productive potato farms in British Columbia.

Tracing the land transaction in the Land Titles Office revealed the names Birchall, Church, Fokett, Hamilton, Hudson, Kirby, Ployart, McPhee, Shopland, Wakefield, Whelan, and the

Knight brothers Arthur and Thomas.

In 1942, Bert Marriott owned the big gravel pit on the Cumberland Road. His wife, Barbara (nee Duncan), remembered when Jack Boyd, manager of General Construction, arrived in Comox. He had just finished the base in Port Hardy and was ready to start work on CFB Comox. Boyd needed Bert's gravel and his knowledge of the Comox Valley.

Cape Lazo presented contractor Boyd with a thick forest of second-growth with some old-growth on the Kye Bay ridge. Six farms produced mixed crops and livestock from natural and cleared meadows. A large swamp underlaid the present kangars. The Knight Road skirted the south side of the Base much as it does today. The Kye Bay Road cut across the southeast runway from the Lazo Women's Institute building to the top of Kye Bay Hill. Most of the homes in the Cape Lazo area were owned by loggers or fishermen, who farmed to augment their incomes.

Since 1942 CFB Comox has been surveyed and resurveyed by land surveyors, engineers, architects and appraisers. Mountains of plans and documents must rest in the catacombs of our archives. The Valley, the land and the people live in the memories of all who have passed this way.

In 1984, more than a hundred years after David Williams and Michael Donahue staked their claims at Point Holmes and Kye Bay, CFB Comox got a new description. The Land Titles Office in Victoria called it, Lot 1, Sections 82 and 83A, District Lots 93, 103, 114, 117, 129, 138, 139, 196, 208, 240 and 241, Comox District, Plan 33744, and containing 1339.7 acres.

We appreciate the help received from Mrs. Louise Wall and Roy Goldfinch of the Victoria Land Titles Office; from Darlene Cockle, David White and Thomas Jarvie of Department of Lands, Victoria; Gord Dodge of Comox-Strathcona Regional District; and Catherine Siba of the Courtenay District Museum for their exper-

tise; also Barbara Marriott, Owen Ellis, Dennis Newman and Donnie Knight, for the memories and local knowledge they provided. Without their help, a civilian contribution to the history of CFB Comox prior to 1942 could not have been written. We thank them all.

We offer sincere congratulations to all the members of the CFB community for a job well done! For fifty years CFB Comox has introduced thousands of Canadians to the service's best posting. Many took their retirement here, while others returned to spend their "civvie days" with the descendants of the district's early re-emptors. We are glad you came and hope you stay another fifty years.

GLACIER GREENS BAR AND GRILL

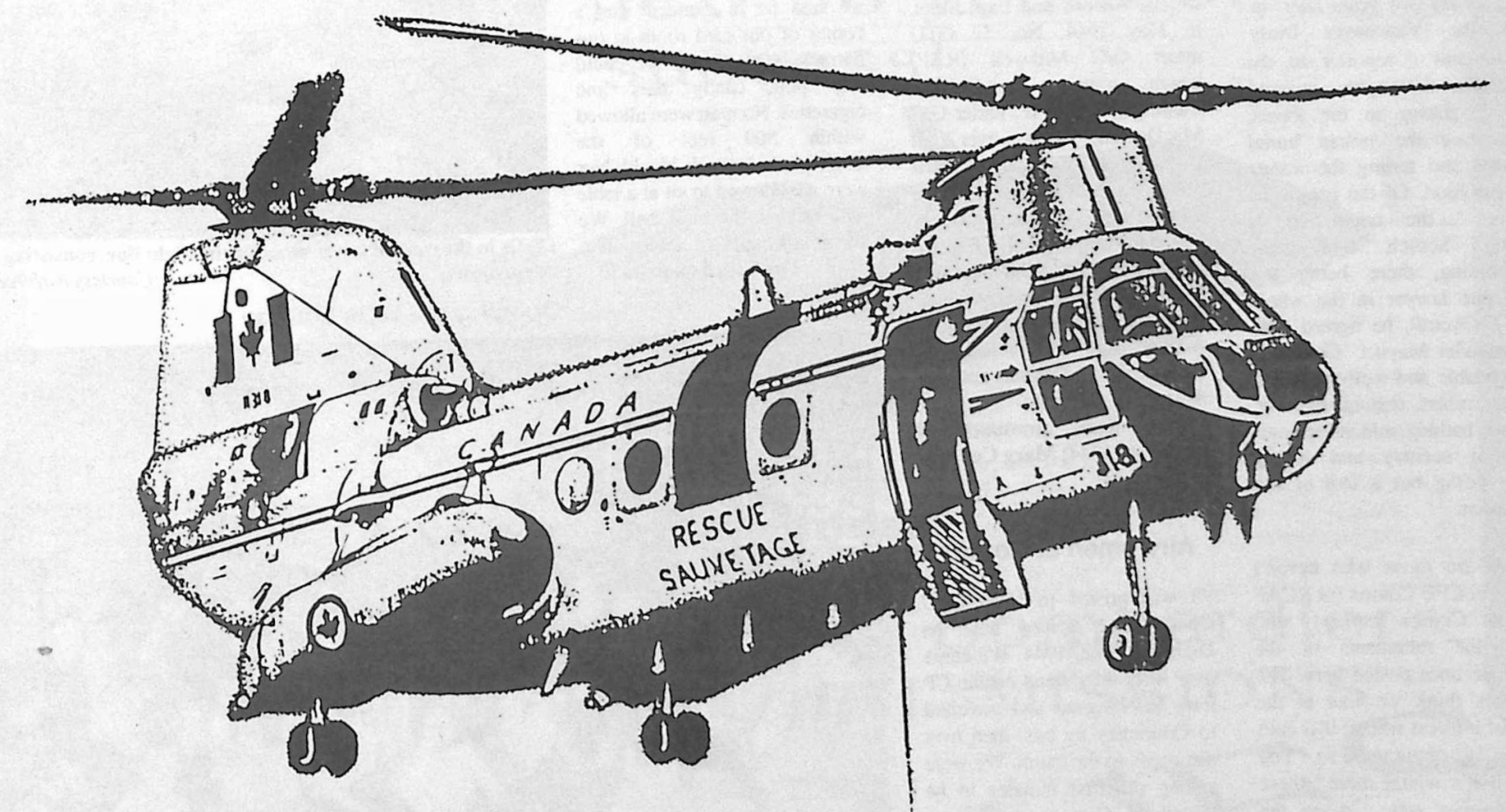
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Edited by
Norm Blondel

"Right from the Beginning"

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

Editor's note: The following encapsulated account of RCAF Station/CFB Comox was taken from a history compiled by Major Len Dodd in 1986, together with material from other contributors. Due to the passage of time and the fading of memories, some accounts may vary in detail but, as this is a story of RCAF Station Comox, rather than a definitive history of this unique place, we hope readers will tolerate such minor discrepancies as may occur. The title is taken from the first line in Major Dodd's prologue.

Prologue

Right from the beginning, it was a "Skookum" place. In the Eucalaw tongue of the local Indians, it was called Komuckway, meaning plenty, or abundance. Gradually, the name shortened to Comox.

In 1861, Commander Mayne, RN, explored the area. He stated, "The region of the Courtenay River, which empties itself into Augusta Bay, is perhaps the most promising spot for settlement yet found in the island. This district is called Comox and is said to contain not less than 30 square miles of good farming land."

He summed up the region: "Although we had been informed about some fine land there, the extent and beauty of what we saw quite surprised us!" The first settlers arrived from Victoria in 1862. Thirty-two years later, in 1894 the Vancouver Daily World sent a reporter to the area. He thoroughly enjoyed himself talking to the locals, desecrating the Indian burial grounds and testing the waters and the food. Of the people he wrote, "...the population is mostly Scotch and very law-abiding, there being not even one lawyer in the whole town." Overall, he agreed with Commander Mayne: "Comox is a hospitable and well-appointed holiday resort, fishing, hunting, boating, bathing, mineral springs, beautiful scenery and lovely drives being but a few of the attractions."

There are those who haven't served at CFB Comox (or RCAF Station Comox earlier) who decry the statements of the fortunate ones posted here. The doubters think we live at the edge of a forest where, if it isn't raining, it's about to do so. "You can tell it's winter there," these misanthropes state, "when the rain falls horizontally." Let them think it. For those who have served here, the decision to build an Air Force Station at Comox was, and still is, "Right from the beginning." Read on.

The RAF Connection

In mid-1942, the RAF's No. 31 OTU was converting aircrews to the anti-shipping role, flying Hampdens at Patricia Bay. But Pat Bay was getting crowded and a Transport OTU was needed. Comox was picked as the site. The "Official Date" of the formation of RCAF aerodrome Comox was 1 May 1943. The role was to provide facilities for 32 Transport Command OTU, then a RAF unit.

The big presence was the General Construction Company, who had the contracts to build the runways and station buildings. One runway had been partially completed, so visiting aircraft were serviced and refuelled. It is said the first aircraft to use Comox airstrip was a Grumman "Goose." By 14 August, service strength was 15 men. Achievements were small, but morale-building: a wind-sock was made and erected in two days; a table was built for the MPs; a Lysander arrived for "Combined Ops," followed by a stake truck and a coal truck.

Life was improving, but it had still been a tough year. The last day of the year saw no electricity available, as the construction company was off work, but a couple of turkeys and some extra rations were found for a New Year's dinner.

Aircraft movements increased: Bolingbroke, a DC-4, Harvards, DC-3s, Ansons and Expeditors. In May 1944, No. 32 OTU under G/C Maxwell (RAF) began transport operational training. (The RCAF, under G/C MacDonald, took over all Comox operations on 30 April 1945). 1451 personnel were serving at RCAF Station Comox by 31 May 1944. Shortly afterwards, 32 OTU became No. 6 OTU RCAF, and continued producing transport crews. By 31 August, 6 OTU had 36 Expeditors, 18 Dakotas and two Ansons on strength.

There were airwomen at Comox in 1944; Marg Copland remembers:

Airwomen at Comox

"I was posted to No. 6 OTU Comox and arrived here on D-Day, 6 June, 1944. We came over from Sea Island on the CP ferry to Nanaimo and travelled to Courtenay by bus, then over dirt roads to the camp. We were among the first females to be posted to Comox, as it was classed as a bush station until this time. They were still working on our barrack block when we arrived, so we had to set up bunk beds, carry in mattresses and bedding and so on. It was BB23, the

half-barracks now used by CF-18 detachments from Cold Lake. The fire escapes were metal slides and there were wooden boardwalks into the barracks. The only furniture in our barracks was one orange crate per person, which we covered in colourful chintz, at the foot of the bed, and, at the head of the bed were two small wooden lockers, one above the other, in which we kept our clothes and personal belongings. We had one bathtub and four showers. Our laundry room contained two washtubs and two scrub boards! The barracks were just large rooms housing 18-20 people per room in double bunks. I was a Wireless Operator Ground (WOG) so we worked three shifts over a 24 hour day. Since we were all on different shifts we had to learn to sleep with people coming and going at all hours. You would not think of turning a light on when you came in from the five-to-midnight shift.

In what is now the AFIS-Museum-Totem Times building, we had a gymnasium and the YMCA office. The buildings were all camouflage brown, and trees were only removed to make room for a building, so we had paths through wooded areas that we could use as short cuts to our sections. The junior ranks "wet canteen" was across from the female barrack block. The women were not allowed to drink on base. The only excuse we had for a canteen was a corner of our card room in our barrack block, where we could buy pop, candy bars and cigarettes. No men were allowed within 500 feet of the airwomen's barrack block! Nor were we allowed to sit at a table with men in the mess hall. We sat at a couple of tables in a

Continued on page 10

First RCAF Station Commander



Group Captain DCS MacDonald 27 Apr 45 - 15 Jan 46

Airladies at Work



WDs in the control tower monitor the flight line, consisting mostly of Expeditors. Courtesy Airforce Museum

Opening the WDs Lounge



Group Captain Maxwell (RAF), the first Station Commander, is shown in far right corner, surrounded by airladies. Nice Job! Courtesy Airforce Museum

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 9

The First Airman

By Jack Burke

My name is Jack Burke; I was a Corporal in the RCAF. My regimental number was R180846 and I was an AEM (Aero Engine Mechanic). I enlisted in the RCAF in August 1942, at eighteen years of age. After being posted to Lachine, Quebec for Manning Pool Training, I was sent to St. Thomas for the Technical School Training, and from there to Jericho Beach in Vancouver. After being in Jericho only a few days, eleven of us were posted to 32 OTU at Pat Bay. We were supposed to go to 3 OTU, a Canadian Station, but one of the WDs typing out the clearances mistook the word "two" for "also" and eleven of us ended up with the RAF at Pat Bay. About eleven months later the RAF went home and were replaced by Canadians, and we were transferred to Comox, 6 OTU.

I was the first Airman in Comox. I was sent up there to guard an aircraft that had over-shot the runway and was lobbed down near Kye Bay. I never did see the aircraft except from the air; you could not walk to it.

I was the only military person on the Base for about a week, if I remember correctly, when an advance party of a hundred men were brought in by boat from Sidney and were dropped off at the

Comox dock. They were supposed to march in, but the road was so thick with coarse gravel that it was impossible to walk on, so they stumbled through the ditches one hot day in May, 1943.

For the first week in Comox I lived and ate with the civvies as there was no other Airman or military presence at all. They were just finishing the barracks and whatever else had to be done. The roads were bad, there was an awful lot of mud, and there were no signs. For the first week I was alone and had no responsibilities; there was nothing I had to do and no one to report to.

I can't remember who the CO was when the Base finally got going. I do know the discipline was lax as this was considered a Bush Station. There wasn't as much spit and polish as there was on some other stations.

There were some advantages being posted to a bush station. You got three weeks leave instead of two which was normal at regular stations. The population of the Base was about 1000 airmen, and about 100 WDs, which made the WDs very popular.

There were plenty of things to do in and around Comox, and there were a lot of activities and dances in Cumberland and Courtenay. There was a place called

the Native Sons Hall, affectionately referred to as the "Naked Sons Hall." I was fortunate to have an old car, a 1927 Model T Ford, and I was able to get around pretty well. We would go up to Campbell River for fishing, and Elk Falls was a pretty place to go. We took trips over to Port Alberni and down to Qualicum Beach. We had a real busy time of it. We did a lot of swimming at Kye Bay.

I spent my bush leave working on the railroad for the Comox Railway. They gave us \$0.85 an hour, which was really good money back then. In order to buy Christmas presents for family back home, several of us worked on the railroad putting in ties - it was the hardest work I've ever done in my life.

We used to spend a lot of time on the Forbidden Plateau. In the summer, it was a great place for hikes; there were all kinds of trails up there. In the winter, we used to go skiing.

I remember the Bell Air Cafe, not far from the Base gate. It was always so busy, being within comfortable walking distance from the Base.

A great place to eat was Pook's Place on the main street in Comox. It was right across from

the Elks Hotel where the road ran right down to the dock. Everybody referred to the gentleman who ran it as "Pa Pook." He was awfully good to all the Airmen. It was known as a Bacon and Eggs place. Pa would keep feeding us bacon, eggs and toast until we couldn't eat any more, but it wouldn't cost more than the regular price.

A typical day in the life of an Airman at Comox in one of the Ground Trades was getting up at 7 o'clock, showering, going to the mess hall, being in the hangar by 8:00 and working until 4:00, with an hour for lunch. At that time we worked shift work, one week of 8:00 to 4:00, another of 4:00 to 12:00, and another of 12:00 to 8:00 in the morning. The only kind of aircraft at Comox were the DC3s and one Expeditor AT11. We did engine changing, minor engine repairs, scheduled inspections, oil leaks, etc. We didn't overhaul engines - they were taken out and shipped back to the civvies and rebuilt after so many hours.

There were other military personnel in the Comox and Courtenay area. There was a small Navy Group at the Spit just off Comox, and about three to four miles north of Courtenay towards Campbell River, there was a

military installation of Army Zombies. The Zombies were people who were drafted but wouldn't go overseas. An interesting thing happened in 1944 - MacKenzie King, the Prime Minister at that time, decided to send these people overseas, as public opinion was so negative because they wouldn't go. (They only wanted to defend Canada.) There were close to 1000 men, who decided they were going to go on strike and go into Courtenay and ravage the town. We were then all taken into Courtenay by trucks. We walked up and down one side of the street and the Zombies did the same on the other side. The store owners closed up their stores, thinking there would be trouble, but nothing happened. The headlines in the Vancouver Sun read "How the Air Force Saved Courtenay from Destruction." It was blown out of all proportion. Nobody hurt anybody and no one talked to anybody.

My recollection of the role that Comox played in the Commonwealth is that we were taking pilots who had completed their tour of Ops on single-engine aircraft and were being converted to twin-engine aircraft at Comox.

Continued on page 11

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"Right from the Beginning"

10 TOTEM TIMES

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

Continued from page 8

corner of the mess. At Christmas and New Year's we were served with one bottle of beer with our dinner; for those meals men and women were allowed to sit together.

Our CO was G/C Maxwell, RAF, and he was very strict with females. A 22:30 curfew was enforced, including a nightly bed check by a sergeant. After much complaining, we were allowed a midnight pass on Saturdays. If you were single you could not live off base, and if you attended a dance in Courtenay on Saturday nights you had to wear uniform. Being shift workers we could cheat at times, until some keen sergeant checked the shift roster.

A favourite pastime was to cheat "the enforcers" by padding our beds after bed check and sneak down the runway to Air Force Beach for a late night swim. We were often caught, and ended up with a week or two of CB. There was no Powell River ferry at that time, so if we sent a baseball team over they went by crash boat, arriving so seasick they didn't feel like playing ball!

Our planes were Dakotas and Beechcraft (Expeditors). We had a large number of Australian and British airmen who were sent here on refresher courses after they had completed a tour of operations in Europe.

Forest and Swamp!

Scott Hunter remembered those early days in a Totem Times article of 28 March, 1974: "Lo! these many years ago when Comox airfield was just hacked out of forest and swamp, I was posted back from the Med. and sent - attached to the RAF - to the training staff of this "bush" station. Some sources have said the base opened up as a RAF Coastal Command unit. As one who slept on the floor on a mattress before bunks were furnished to the officers' quarters, this is news to me. As soon as new runways were operational, RCAF Coastal Command out of Tofino and Sandspit may have used them as emergency strips. But RAF Coastal Command? Uh-Uh!

The RAF's role really originated at Patricia Bay, where No. 31 OTU flew whip-stall Hampdens in anti-shipping torpedo laying. A few old wrecks on the slopes of Salt Spring Mountain will testify to that. But, back to the initial days of Comox: A gaggle of advance parties (me included) flew in with Beechcraft AT-12s, sort of an early type twin-Expeditor in early April 1944. Then a regular stream of factory-fresh Dakota transports were soon flying in from the U.S. Much later, when the base became a total RCAF unit, ten 4-fan B24 Liberators were added. But in the summer of 1944? strictly RAF Transport Command OTU.

We were a polyglot outfit, both in training staff and trainees. The bulk of the ground crew and a most attractive group of WDs were transported up the Georgia Straits from Pat Bay on the "Princess Kathleen," an old CPR three-stacker. The CO of RAF (Custodians) No.6 OTU was an English bloke, G/C Maxwell. The CFI was WC Mickey DePrett, in civilian life known as Count Michael DePrett-Roos, of Belgium, and the Chief Ground Instructor was an Edmontonian, idolized by everyone on the station - WC Pete Oleinik, who had two tours of Ops in "Wimpies." (Vickers Wellingtons). Duke Schiller, now a Comox Valley Resident, was a top dog WO1 aircrew type. So, although the D.O.T. had turned the airfield over to the RCAF, on completion of construction, the first regime at No. 6 OTU was RAF, no less.

Flying was the name of the game, night and day. With over 70 airplanes to choose from a pile of hours was logged with pilots, navs and radio ops in 12-week conversion courses. Keep in mind the majority of these "trainee" crews had one or two tours of operations overseas with Bomber, Fighter or Coastal Commands. I recall feeling slightly abashed lecturing to mixed classes ranging from flight sergeants to wing commanders, all heavily laden with tunic fruit salad.

Aircraft losses were few, strangely enough for the immense number of hours logged in all sorts of foul weather. One fine afternoon in August 1944 a RAF trainee crew disappeared in a Dak just after reporting over the Tofino radio range. Something happened during letdown. A search was carried out in fine weather, but no trace was ever found. Then in late 1944 an Expeditor trainee crew got lost over the "rockpile" and ended up out of fuel up in the bush near Vanderhoof. They all bailed out successfully. Then there was a splendid prang one morning when one of the senior instructors, a S/L who shall remain nameless, tried taking off in a Dak with the outside wooden locks still in the elevators. The crew walked away.

However, there is the tragic memory of a Liberator on a milk-run around the various island bases with people going on weekend leave crashing on take-off at Tofino, killing all on board. In late August 1944 the RAF custodians departed Comox in their Daks and headed overseas. Most of them were in the troop and glider show at Arnhem - the "Bridge Too Far." The RCAF, under G/C Dan MacDonald of Vancouver took over all operational phases of OTU. On a number of occasions during the summers of 1944 and 1945, Japanese fire balloons came drifting in on the westerly jet streams at high altitude. A

few appeared over the base, but there was nothing flying on the coast that could reach them. (One landed on Denman Island; there's the remains of one in the Air Force Museum -Ed.) Even after the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, No.6 OTU continued to turn out trained transport crews, though

not in the previous numbers. Many of these flew in the famous Berlin Air-Lift. The station then gradually phased out, with its aircraft flying crosscountry to Greenwood NS. This writer left on the second-to-last aircraft to depart the RCAF OTU - a Dakota around 12 Feb 1946. In the

Greenwood shuttle, one Dakota was lost on a night flight across the rocks. The wreckage was found near the Crownsnest Pass with nine fatalities.

For about a year thereafter we were a RCAF holding unit with few personnel, commanded by a flying officer, who remained in

Continued on page 12

Early Construction (1)



Domestic area construction well under way in 1943. No. 1 Hangar (now housing 442 Sqn) had not been started. Courtesy Airforce Museum

Early Construction (2)



An early Barrack Block, No. 25. Ryan View. Courtesy Airforce Museum



Mud track out main gate is now Ryan Road. First two buildings on left (HQ is the one with two wings) were later demolished. Courtesy Airforce Museum

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 11

Frank Henderson

The First Padre

By Duke Warren



Frank Henderson, RCAF Station Comox's first Padre, was born in 1900 in Sussex, England. At the age of eight, Frank went to New Zealand where his father was director of an oil drilling firm. Returning to England in 1914, Frank entered Marlborough College, and the war in Europe started.

As the war went on, each day at morning prayers the headmaster would read the casualty list of all the "Old Boys" who had been lost. One can imagine the traumatic experience this must have been for the boys as each day more names were added to be read.

In March 1918, instead of going home, Frank and two other boys went to Chatham and enlisted, giving false names as they were underage and Frank knew his father would never approve. Frank joined the Royal Engineers as a despatch rider. In May 1918 he went to France and served with the BEF until 1919. He was "demobbed" and then "Frank Stewart" re-enlisted as Frank

Henderson and was sent to Russia in June 1919. He was in Constantinople in March 1920, where he purchased his release for 35 English pounds and enlisted in the RAF. He trained as a pilot and won his wings in 1922.

Sent to Karachi to assist in planning for airfields, the RAF group flew from Karachi to Calcutta, landing along the way and with many parties and adventures, the W/C in charge was court-martialed.

Frank stayed in the RAF for seven years and had fantastic stories to tell - flying the mail from Baghdad to Cairo, underpowered aircraft and desert heat. The pilot would have to take off before daylight at the coolest temperature, and as the sun came up and temperature rose, the aircraft would slowly lose height and one hoped it would not be "grounded" before reaching one's destination.

In 1924 Frank was with 30 Sqn, bombing natives in Kurdistan when he was shot, and although wounded, managed to get

his aircraft back to base. But because of this, he was invalided out of the RAF. Frank and his wife Lydia came to Canada in 1929 in time for the Depression.

In 1934 Frank felt the need for a higher calling, and went to UBC Theological College for four years. When ordained, his first parish was Abbotsford, then Kelowna, where in 1941 he joined the RCAF as Chaplain. After several other stations, he came to Comox when it opened, and after the closure he remained in the Comox Valley in several pastoral positions.

Frank was a very active member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 160 in Comox, and his briefings to school children about the significance of November 11th were inspiring.

More Airman

We got all kinds of Aussies, New Zealanders and people from all over the Commonwealth.

At Comox, the name of the game was to keep as many aircraft as possible serviceable so they could get in maximum hours. I think things worked out very well and it was a great place to be. There was not much anyone could complain about, as it was a remarkable experience.

One rather humorous experience I can recall: I was best man at a wedding in the little church on the road between Comox and Courtenay. After the wedding, I drove the wedding party in the Model T to the Comox dock so they could take the boat to Powell River for their honeymoon. I took the road a little too fast; the brakes weren't that good. When I got close to the boat I realized I couldn't stop and we ended up in the hold of the boat. The captain screamed at me to get the car out, but the ramp

was too steep and I couldn't get up, so all the people standing around came down and pushed us out. It was the cause of a few good laughs.

I would have to say the people of Courtenay and Comox were very favourable to the Air Force at Comox. I can only remember nice things about everyone and I can't remember one time when there was a rejection of the Air Force by the local population.

I left Comox in October of 1945. The war was over and everyone was being discharged. I was posted to Rockcliffe in Ottawa to receive my discharge. I still have friends I made in Comox. One is a retired RCMP officer living in Victoria, another in Pickering who was to be best man at my wedding.

All I would like to add to this documentary is my thanks for having had the opportunity to think about my experiences again and to write about them.

1943 Construction

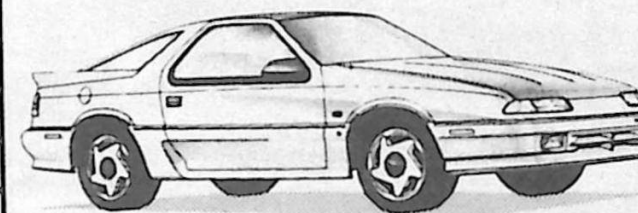


Another barrack block on the way. Courtesy Airforce Museum

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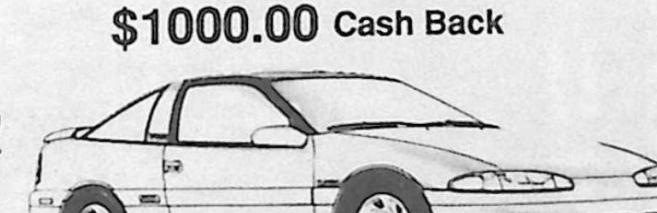
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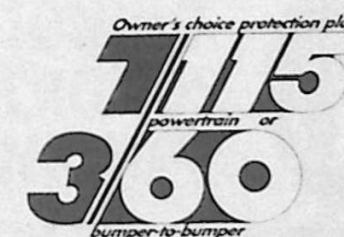
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"Right from the Beginning"

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The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

Mystery Towers

Continued from page 10

a caretaker situation at Comox airfield." Throughout the period described by Scott Hunter, base facilities, including a chapel and a theatre were added. The chapel was built from donated material supplied by the General Construction Company by volunteers, supervised by a company foreman on loan. A well-known Totem Times contributor writes about the first Padre on page 13 opposite:

Another retrospective is offered by Andy Felker, who arrived at Comox airfield on a hot dusty day at the end of May, 1944:

Marching to Comox

Sometime in late 1943 a decision was made to phase out the Royal Air Force Stations in Canada. For example, RAF North Battleford (Sask) was replaced in one operation. This was done by moving all the personnel from SFTS St. Hubert on a special train, which arrived on 4 Feb 1944, thus solving the problem of replacing the RAF, and improving flying time with the better weather conditions at North Battleford.

The RAF Station located on the East side of Patricia Bay Airport near Victoria B.C. was handled in a different way. At the end of February 1944, a large draft of personnel was organized. Instead of one Station being involved as at St. Hubert, many Stations across Canada were called on to send a few personnel to be processed at Jericho Beach Station in Vancouver B.C. This was mostly to get the paperwork in order, and they then were sent to No. 32 OTU at Patricia Bay RAF.

There were aircrew, instructors, mechanics and every type of trade or position in the Airforce. When things cleared it was realized they had assembled enough personnel for a whole station. My trade was aircraft servicing. The RAF had been using Hampden light bombers as their training aircraft. These planes had been used in war zones and had had many more flying hours than normal. Shortly before the Canadians arrived the Hampdens had been replaced by Dakota and Expeditor aircraft. Most of the RCAF from across Canada had been working with smaller types like Oxfords, Bolingbroke (Blenheims), Cessnas and Ansons. The sight and size of the new Dakotas in comparison was very impressive.

The RAF were to work with us until we were familiar with the new airplanes and the procedures of an operational training unit, i.e.: Fifteen planes doing circuits and bumps (take-off and landings) at night, being directed on the taxi strips by men with flashlights. It was an experience working on a RAF Station. They used different terms: Gasoline was Petrol, Trucks were Lorries, Ablutions on a door meant Washroom, Two-Six meant

Hurry! And a Bowser was a Petrol Tanker.

The messhall cooked meals day and night, as the Station operated 24 hours a day with some shifts lasting eleven hours! A meal of tomatoes and beans at 03:30 hours was new to us. The pies from the bakeshop in Sydney were very good. The English were good to work with, and their stories, jokes and ditties kept us laughing. Gradually we had the new situation under control, and in early May we said "goodbye" to our English friends. The RAF went back to England. The Canadians were on their own. On May 11, all leaves were cancelled; rumors that we would be moving got around. We were shown movies about people talking, and causing ships to be sunk, and so on, but we were not confined to the Station.

Moving to Comox

About the end of May orders came through for us to be fully packed for the next day. The whole Station was up at 5 a.m. and after breakfast we assembled down by the hangars. Kit bags were collected and we were ordered to put our shoulder bags on the ground. Then, "one pace, forward march!" The bags were thrown on a truck, some with the tinkle of broken glass, which caused sighs and protests from the group.

It was still early morning when we marched on board the Canadian Pacific Steamship "Princess Mary." Shortly afterward, the boat slipped away from the dock with most of No. 32 OTU on board. The Airforce was on its way. About seven hours later, the dock at Comox came into view. After waiting for everything to be loaded, we formed up and marched through town. People watched as the men went by. They'd also seen the Navy in town, but when the Airforce went through in such large numbers they knew something was happening.

The marchers looked pretty good until out of town; they were described in a letter: "Hundreds of men marching and kicking up dust for four miles was quite a sight. Some lagged behind, others had their coats off and all were hot and tired. The four miles seemed like ten." We finally arrived at the Station and after a lot of waiting and confusion a bunk was found for everyone.

Down at the motor section the kit bags were all in a pile with everybody trying to find theirs. Suddenly an alarm clock sounded in one of the bags, and an excited voice from the back exclaimed, "There's mine!" The next day we paraded at 09:00 with thoughts of a day's work ahead, however, the big boys were pleased with the move and our behaviour, so they gave us the rest of the day off. Advance

Continued on page 14



Trivia: Locate these buildings, and identify the towers

No Swimming Pool Yet



Base Rec Centre started out as a drill hall.

One Hangar's Up



Buildings at left are now occupied by Telecom, Wood Hobby Shop and Clothing Stores.

Old Station HQ



Station HQ (right) was later demolished. Check out the old car.

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 13

G O b C

By Jim Kirk

In every issue of the Totem Times we see BAMSO, MAR-PAC, SAR, etc., but is there anyone out there who remembers, or knows of, the GOBC?

The RCAF Ground Observer Corps was quite active during the '50s. That was the period when the Cold War was warming up. Russia was on one side of the North Pole and the USA was on the other side, with Canada directly in the middle. The US and Canada, probably to a lesser extent, wanted an early warning system to be set up, a more sophisticated electronic "Maginot Line." Following World War

I the French built the Maginot Line, a supposedly impenetrable barricade along the border of France, to keep out future invaders. On paper it seemed OK, but not many years later it turned out to be useless against the airborne Nazis.

During the early '50s the US and Canada began the construction of what became known as "The DEW Line" (Distant Early Warning), a chain of radar stations across the far reaches of the North American Arctic. A second line, called the Green Belt, was also built much farther south. Holberg, B.C. (now closed down)

Junior Ground Observers



Our own Jim Kirk is shown (background, second from left) with his junior observers, circa 1959.

west of Port Hardy, was the western terminus of the Green Belt Line. In the meantime, during this construction period, the RCAF and Civil Defence people organized the Ground Observer Corps. It involved both military and civilian volunteer personnel across Canada. Later on, a Junior GOBC was formed, a section of which I looked after, between Qualicum and Courtenay.

Reporting stations were set up in almost all communities where a direct phone line connection could be made to the RCAF plotting centre in Vancouver. Each and every aircraft that flew over a station was reported by following a regular procedure written on a standard reporting form. This included the reporting station's ID code, number of aircraft, single or multi-engine, jet or prop, approximate altitude, direction of travel, and known or unknown type. The information was recorded at the plotting centre onto an "info pip," a small rotatable plastic device with letters and numbers that could be indicated in the sequence that was reported. The pip was then placed at the location of the reporting station shown on a map. This was a large map spread out on a table around which plotters could walk with special push-pull

plotting rods. The pip was set pointing in the direction of travel of the reported aircraft. The pip was moved along the map according to following reports from other reporting stations. "Unknown" reports could be checked out with flight plans on file, or if necessary, with on duty aircraft from a nearby airforce base.

The whole procedure was based on the aircraft spotter programme used in Britain during WW2. Community volunteer members were organized to be on duty at the local reporting centre, usually two at a time for one or two hours. Many retired people took part, often husband and wife teams. After school and on weekends a number of teenagers reported in.

During this period the Comox Air Base was re-activated. Aircraft on duty included Lancasters, Sabres, Catalinas, PBYS, Cansos and Neptunes, followed



by Argus, CF-100s, T-Birds and Albatross.

From time to time, groups of spotters were invited to nearby air bases to view the different types of aircraft in operation to help with their aircraft identification. Group photos might be taken, particularly of the Junior Observers, and photos of some of the aircraft were given out to take back to their reporting stations.

In the spring of 1960 the GOBC was phased out after more than five years of operations. A few of the items used by the GOBC are on display at the Comox Airforce Museum. Check with the Curator.

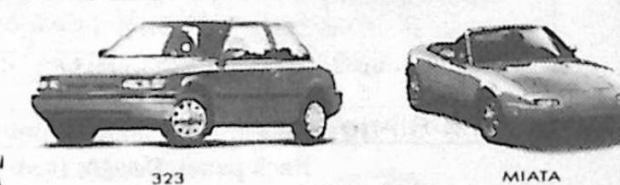
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"Right from the Beginning"

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THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

First Station Newspaper

Continued from page 12

personnel had prepared for our arrival and the arrival of equipment and aircraft etc., The Station at Comox was No. 6 OTU, and it was brand new.

Some of the buildings were not finished, the grounds were in upheaval and cement was still being poured on the tarmac East of the Hangar. To all of the guys and gals in blue and the civilians who were there in 1944, this bit of history is for you. The Station was open: The story of the occupation was just beginning.

The First Airshow

On November 1, 1944, the weather improved steadily throughout the day. During the afternoon, a Canso came and went back to Pat Bay, a Grumman Goose came and went back to Vancouver. Other turnarounds were for a B25 Mitchell, a Bolingbroke and a Liberator: for night flying, a Bolingbroke, a Westland Lysander and two P40 Kittyhawks stopped at Comox.

During the day, for the first time in its history, RCAF Station Comox opened its gates to the public: A Victory Loan campaign in the area brought out nearly 5,000 people to see the displays. Each section established a booth in the Station Recreation Hall, aircraft of every description filled the tarmac (each labelled with a sign giving its estimated cost) and aircraft parts and pieces were exhibited in a hangar. There was a demonstration of formation flying and a parachute supply drop. When evening came there was a dance in the Recreation Centre and a visiting dignitary, AVM Heakes, drew prize winners in the Victory Bond competitions. As a military version of a country fair, it was a great success.

Housing Shortage

By this time, the station had around 1200 service people on staff, almost all of whom were RCAF, and 350 student trainees. They flew 29 Expeditors and 19 Dakotas. The impact of a large air force station on the local economy was slow to be perceived, as the station was not quickly accessible to Courtenay, and few airmen could run cars. Courtenay also had a NMRA ("Zombie" army draftees) camp just up the Island Highway. Even the RCN had a detachment at Comox, HMCS "Givenchy III" a navy commando tactics station.

The predictable result was a severe housing shortage in the area. An article in the Comox Argus of 15 Feb 45 lauded the efforts of the Courtenay YMCA to find housing for families of RCAF personnel. As the article stated, many of the airmen had arrived after completing an overseas tour, having been separated from their families for up to five years!

For the students on 6 OTU, their three months transport course was thought to be only a hiatus before returning to action. Their desire to reunite with their families, however briefly, led to a tight rental situation and often cramped accommodations. The same edition noted another routine impact on the Valley: the wedding of a Courtenay girl and a pilot officer. After the honeymoon, the happy bride expected to accompany her husband to England.

Closing Down

The Department of Transport became responsible for maintenance after the station closed down its operation after 1946. There was little activity: Pan-American Airways made some use of Comox as a refuelling base and Queen Charlotte Airlines inaugurated a Comox-Vancouver schedule, but most of the station buildings slipped gradually into decay, peeling paint being the outward sign of a benign neglect of Comox aerodrome which lasted until the first of June, 1952, after the Cold War Heated up.

Reactivation

AF Organization Order 15/52 stated that the programme of RCAF activities called for an increase in the number of regular force squadrons. The impact of the Korean War and deteriorated relations between the NATO allies and the Soviet Union made such expansion inevitable.

RCAF Station Comox was directed to be formed 1 June 1952, under Air Defence Command. The designated CO was G/C Austin. There was much to be done with reactivation. New construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings was carried out by 2 CMU detachment.

By 1 June, few buildings were habitable, so units such as Stn HQ, Telecom, MIR and Central Warehouse operated out of makeshift, temporary accommodation. As the month progressed, living became easier. Single quarters, airmen's canteen, a temporary bar set-up in the theatre for SNCOs and Officers, and movies became available. Otherwise, facilities were few.

407 Activated

On 1 July, 407 Maritime Reconnaissance Squadron was activated at Comox, W/C McNeill as CO. In addition, an advance party from Vancouver's 3055 technical Training Unit, a RCAF (Aux) trades training school, set up shop and commenced operations on 28 June with 138 staff and students. The Auxiliary Airmen Summer training camp had a successful training period concluding 30 Aug, despite Comox's lack of

facilities. (The AASTC trained high school students during their summer break to become aircraft tradesmen for auxiliary squadrons.

The station had all the administrative problems of any newly reopened, poorly equipped air base. Personnel and equipment arrived faster than the capability to accommodate them. Typewriters and telephones were in short supply. Lack of warehouse space made it necessary to stockpile supplies anywhere space could be found. Key personnel were also arriving, among them W/C Harry Bryant, who still lectures at AFIS and keeps his eye on the Totem Times. The control tower began operation on 21 July. August featured a building workers' strike which slowed PMQ construction, and abnormally hot weather caused brush and grass fires, causing the Fire Section much extra work. G/C Austin formally took command as Station CO on September 15.

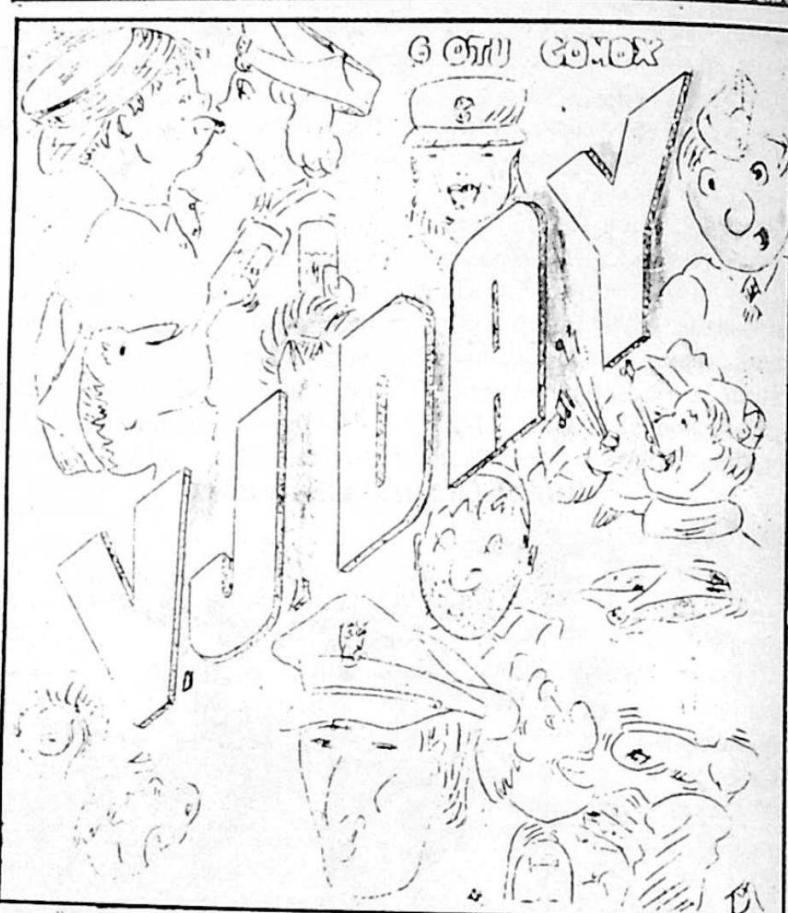
Battle Of Britain Commemorated

Another peacetime tradition commenced at Station Comox, the Battle of Britain parade. This was a church parade in Courtenay following the CO's parade of Friday Sep 19. Protestants went to St. George's United Church, and Catholics to Canadian Martyr's Church.

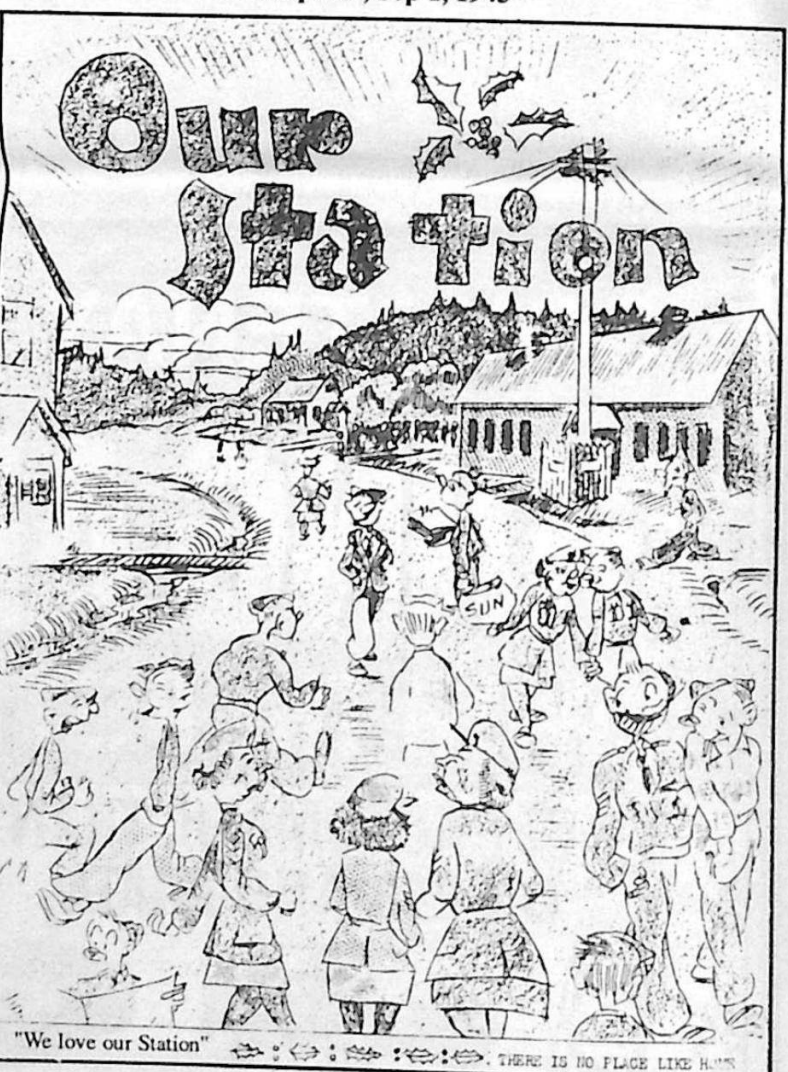
Remembrance Day, and Tragedy

Another parade, for Remembrance Day, was held on Nov 11, in Courtenay and Comox. Thirteen days later, the poignancy and the risks of military life were reconfirmed: Lancaster 940 of 407 Sqn crashed and burned on landing. Seven officers and airmen and a DOT meteorologist were killed, and two officers severely injured. A young local lad, Bobby Waters, later received the George medal for helping to remove the two injured pilots.

Continued on page 16



Front panel, Sep 1, 1945



Back panel, Dec 20, 1944

Benign neglect between the wars



Old theatre building showing decay. Others were in worse condition.

Courtesy Airforce Museum

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 15

No. 6 Fairway and Ladies Tee Block

Glacier Greens



Congratulations to Canadian Forces Base Comox on their 50th Anniversary.

Although Glacier Greens is a part of the Base, plans to build a golf course to accommodate military personnel were not put into place until 1969. The course was officially opened 1 May 1971.

In the early days of golfing at Glacier Greens, the recreation centre played a part in the organizing of some of the tournaments, as well as renting out golf clubs on a daily basis to military personnel and their dependents.

Fees in 1972 were	
Men	45.00 yr.
Women	30.00 yr.
Husband & Wife	70.00 yr.
Juniors	10.00 yr.
Family	85.00 yr.
Green Fees	1.50 per day

Glacier Greens was accepted into the British Columbia Golf Association in the fall of 1971. Many changes have taken place at Glacier Greens since those early days. The many improvements over the years have added to the enjoyment not only of the golfers but of all the people who are involved in the operation of the whole complex.

At the present time, work is underway to expand to an 18-hole course. The target date for the completion of the project is set for 1995/1996. Pictured is the present #6 fairway and the ladies' tee block. The new layout shows this as being the #12 green area. This par 3 of approximately 135 yards was designed to keep the pond in play and to take advantage of the fantastic view of Forbidden Plateau and the Comox Glacier, hence the name Glacier Greens. What better witness than this magnificent mountain for the lone golfer when he scores a hole-in-one here.

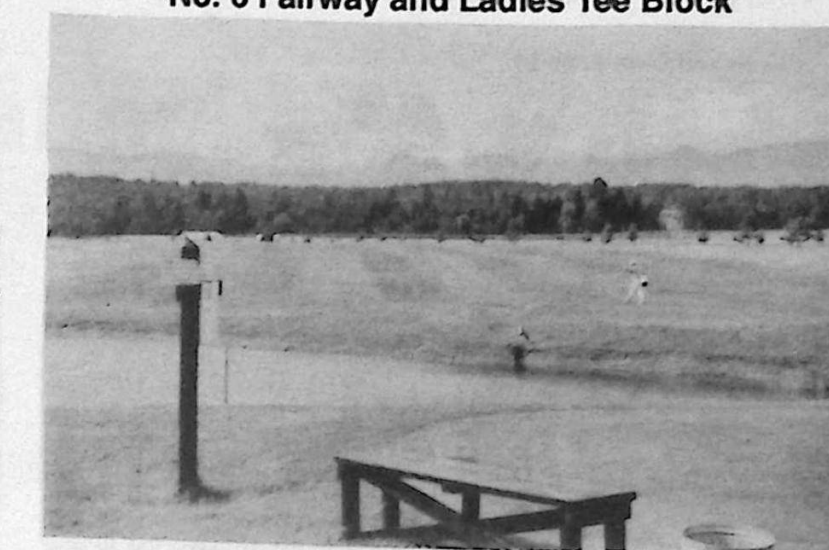
A tournament is being sponsored by the Base Commander of CFB Comox as part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations. CFB Comox will host civilian golfers of the Comox Valley in a fun tournament to celebrate 50 years of Military/Civilian co-operation and friendship.

In closing, I would like to thank the club president, the committee members, the bar staff, the pro shop staff, the grounds staff, and especially Norm Blondel and the staff at Totem Times for their support and kindness shown me during my years as Public Relations Director at Glacier Greens. I'm coming in every deadline date for my song!

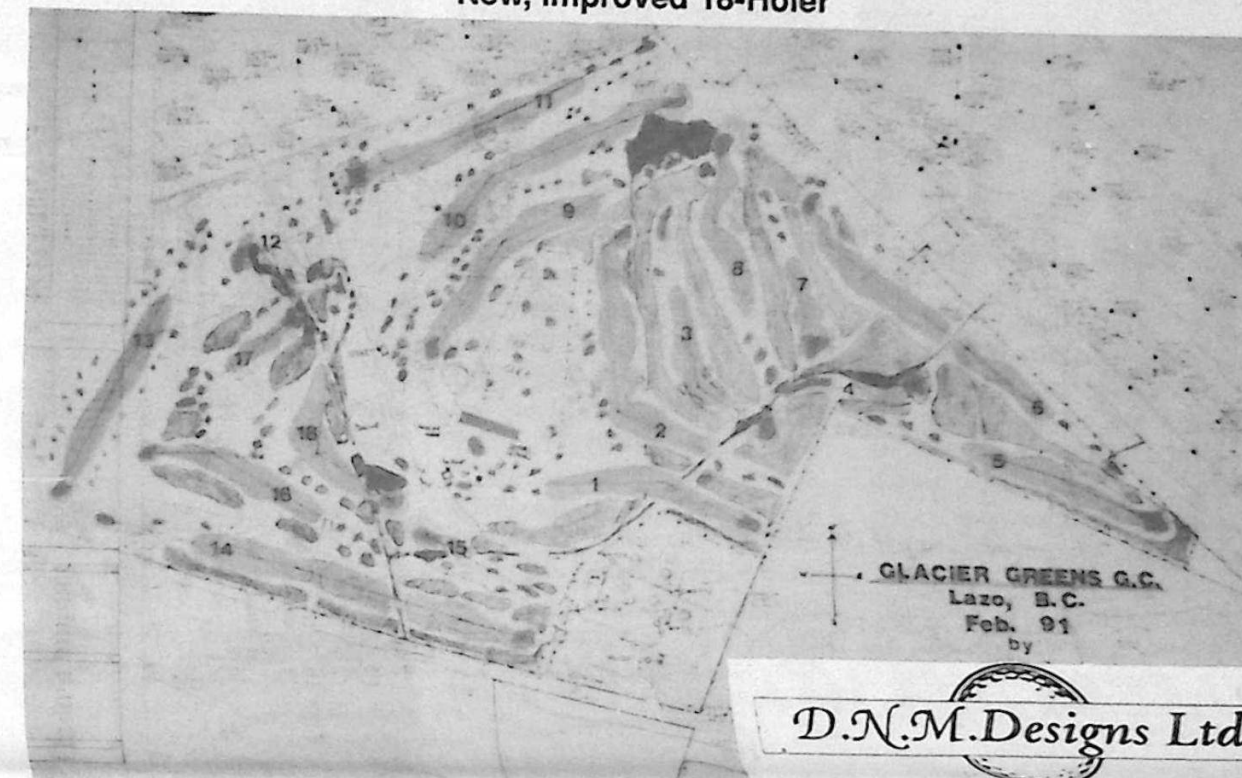
Good luck and good golfing.

Editor's Note: Rose has been coming in to the newsroom for three years with her golf material, to be greeted with the staff's rendition of "Rose, Rose we love you, flower of our hearts!" We'll miss her!

By Rose McCliesh



New, Improved 18-Holer



New golf course, that is, ready in '95/96.

D.N.M. Designs Ltd.



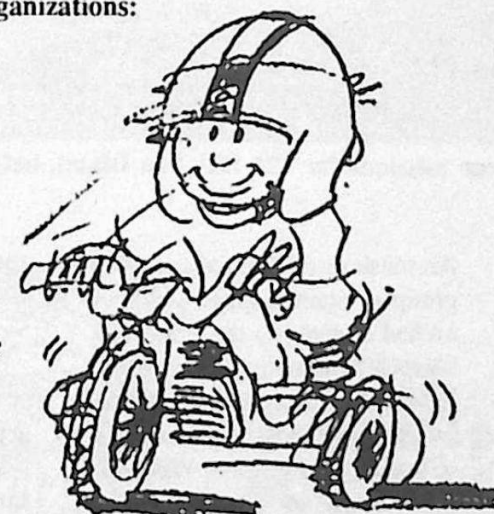
MAKES SENSE

KIDS SENSE IS COMING TO DRIFTWOOD MALL

Driftwood Mall will sponsor the all-Canadian Kids Sense public safety awareness program April 28 - May 2, 1993

Displays and information being provided by the following local organizations:

CounterAttack
Courtenay R.C.M.P.
Courtenay Fire Hall
Red Cross Society
Comox Valley Bicycle Safety Committee
Child Find
Ident-A-Kid
Poison Control Centre
Crime Stoppers
St. John Ambulance
Regional Childcare Support Program



Kids Sense encourages children ages 4 to 16 and their parents to familiarize themselves with everyday safety so their responses in any given situation are sensible and automatic.

The Driftwood Mall

management & staff offer

Congratulations

to our neighbours & friends at

CFB Comox

on the occasion of your 50th Anniversary

We thank you for your support over the years and look forward to serving you in the future

2751 Cliffe Avenue,
Courtenay, B.C.



"Right from the Beginning"

16 TOTEM TIMES

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

Not much change here

Continued from page 14

Base Hospital Designed

The station was fortunate in having two SMOs: S/L Dick Wynne arrived in 1952, and didn't want to leave when his replacement, Dr. Phil Power showed up, so the two worked side by side for a year. Their design of the Station Hospital still stands. Dr. Power recalls that the crash ambulance was armed with a shotgun, which were used to frighten off seabirds with a few badly-placed shots. The occasional silly goose might "accidentally" (my punctuation - Ed.) be shot, and hence had to be eaten. (sure...Ed.)

School Started

The focus of Station renovations and construction was on enhancing the operational and support facilities, but efforts to improve lifestyle were also in train. The federal government decided to build a school for air force children, but delayed construction. For the short term, a barrack block was converted for use as a school. This was a timely decision, as the first families had moved into PMQs in Feb 1952.

There were 150 new PMQs: 98 class 1 (AC2 to Sgt), 42 class 2 (F/Sgt to F/Lt) and 10 class 3 homes for S/L and up. Rents were by rank: Cpls and below, \$51/month, F/Ls \$84 and G/C Austin paid a hefty \$129, all found. (heat, light etc.)

Another Lanc Lost

In May 1943, Lancaster 995 went missing on a flight to San Diego. Its wreckage was discovered on Iron Mountain in Oregon. None of the crew of ten survived. 407 MR Squadron was much the largest single organization at Comox. The station had a total of 764 service and civilian personnel in late 1953. 355 of these were 407 servicemen. Due to the accidents, the Sqn was two short of its establishment of 18 Lancasters.

The summer of 1953 was exceptionally fine; the results was a very high level of aircraft movements and construction activity, including the massive cantilever hangar No. 7. The 150 married quarters were completed and bids put out for 50 more. 1953-54 The renovated Officers Mess was opened and Airport School construction began. A GCA unit was set up and tested just as the dreary weather began, weather which persisted through the winter of 1953-54.

Wallace Gardens Named

G/C Austin announced that the new married quarter area would be named in honour of the family of then B.C. Lieutenant-Governor, Clarence Wallace. The Wallaces had four sons in the RCAF during World

War 2. One was killed in the Battle of Britain, two others were shot down on operations and only one completed his service without at least being shot down.

First Air Force Day

The first Air Force Day for RCAF Station Comox was held 12 Jun 54. About 20,000 people showed up to see the flying display, the static exhibits and the not-quite-finished cantilever hangar, which cost \$4 million. "Open House" was held in each mess and institute. The day proved to be thoroughly successful.

The Comox District Free Press, in an editorial in its 16 June edition was pleased, if less than rhapsodic about the day: "The manner in which Air Force Day was marked at RCAF Station Comox should do a lot to improve the relationship between civilian and service personnel in this district. Visitors who attended the show Saturday, could not help but be impressed with the efficiency of the station and with the importance of the work it carries out. Service personnel attending the booths and displays showed great helpfulness and courtesy to the visitors who passed through the station asking innumerable questions and evincing keen interest in the work of the air force here."

There is always some suspicion existing wherever civilian and servicemen live side by side. The civilians tend to think that the members of the armed forces are parasites living off the taxpayers and this attitude naturally breeds in the servicemen ill feeling towards those who wear civilian clothing and are engaged in civilian occupations.

Both groups have their fair share of disreputable characters but the man in uniform stands out more because of his dress and it is so easy to point the finger of scorn and say "the air force again" whenever one of the number strays from the straight and narrow path, whereas when a civilian does the same thing, his misdemeanour raises no particular comment.

But, it should be hoped, Saturday's activities at the airport should help to bring about a better understanding between the two groups of people. From the manner in which the Air Force Day show was presented, it is clear that the station personnel are keenly interested in promoting better feeling between themselves and the civilians of the district.

It would be asking too much to expect the local residents to discard their suspicions and animosity without hesitation but a little more tolerance towards the men in uniform would go a long way towards bringing about a state of mutual goodwill which the airforce people here are so



Base Hospital was designed by the two SMOs in 1952.

Lancs over the Comox Valley



The durable Lancaster served the RCAF until 1964.

Canso over the Fraser Valley



The Canso performed many rescue missions for 121 KU, Sea Island, before its replacement by the Albatross.

anxious to engender."

New Station Commander

Only two days later, G/C Austin left the station for ADC HQ. His replacement was G/C Weston. The major social event of the year occurred on 10 September: "Wallace Day". On that date the Lieutenant-Governor formally opened "Wallace Gardens" married quarters area, and observed the dedication by the

Archbishop of Canterbury of a group of stained glass windows he had donated to the Protestant Chapel. For many of the lesser lights, there was brush-clearing on the south side of the airfield. Clearing and grading was also in progress to extend runway 11-29. In October, construction began on a new tower site. One of the major reasons for all this activity made its presence known on November 1. 409 All Weather Squadron, the "Nighthawks" was formed, to be

equipped with AVRO CF-100 all weather fighters. (see "409 Squadron")

By months end 409 had 54 personnel with S/L F.E. Haley as acting CO. W/C T.J. Evans took over in March 1956. On the same date, No. 51 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron also formed at Comox. 51 ACW was part of the CADIN-Pinetree line being built across Canada by USAF and Canadian resources as a defence against a

Continued on page 18

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 17



Chapel Chatter

By Padre Bob

50th for Rose & Bernie too



Rose and Bernie Woods have been together as long as CFB Comox has been an air base.

Padre Bob says:

In the last edition I told you about the suggestion that Jesus rode a bicycle into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. The rest of our celebrations for Easter were just as joyous. Good Friday interrupts our celebration as a commemoration of the world's worst day, but Easter Sunday was glorious! We started off with a 0700 hr Service at Airforce Beach. It was clear and calm and three seals watched with curiosity as we gathered at the beach. There was a bank of dark clouds over the mainland but that just served to allow the radiance of the sun to burst forth after our Service. As we drove back to the Combined Mess for breakfast the view of the Island mountains was spectacular - the sun glinting off the brilliant white of the new snow. At the Mess the coffee was hot and the fellowship very warm as we enjoyed their fine cooking.

Our 1100 hr Service was also a joyful occasion as we celebrated Communion and then had cakes at our coffee fellowship to help celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Rose and Bernie Woods. We were even able to

sneak in a surprise birthday cake for Marilyn Fairbrother. Congratulations to each; it is always fun to be able to celebrate such occasions with our Chapel family.

This coming weekend will be busy as our Chapel Guild will be hosting the Pacific Regional Guild Conference beginning Friday evening, and finishing off with our 50th Anniversary Commemorative Service of the Battle of Atlantic. As usual, special Naval guests have been invited including the parents, officers and cadets of the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps Port Augusta. Our Command Chaplain, Padre George Davidson, will also be with us for this special occasion. Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Atlantic will start off our week of celebrating the 50th Anniversary of CFB Comox.

See you in Chapel...

How Many?



Happy Birthday, Marilyn Fairbrother.

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FABRICLAND

"Right from the Beginning"

18 TOTEM TIMES

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

409 "Clunks"

Continued from page 16

bombing attack against North America.

Another organizational change took place on December 1: The CO of 407 Sqn took over his own administration, produced his own Daily Routine Orders and reported directly to Air Officer Commanding Maritime Air Command, rather than to CO Station Comox. One of the benefits to B.C. in having Regular Force activity in the province was the availability of air resources in emergencies. It was commonplace for 407 and 409 aircrews to report forest fires in locations the forest service was not likely to discover in the fires' early stages.

Also, RCAF crash boats were used to tow both float-equipped aircraft and civilian boats out of hazardous situations. 1957 began badly: a Comox C-45 Expeditor crashed on take-off from Westview, killing the pilot. However, there were no other crashes that year, and there was a slow improvement in the Station's operational, support and social facilities, and an equally perceptible acknowledgement of the permanent military fact by the Comox Valley civilian community.

An unusual event in March directed unwanted attention to 409 Sqn: a CF-100 dropped a rocket pod while overflying the base. On rocket ignited and drove itself into the Station firehall, but no one was injured and little damage was done. Later in the spring the main runway was closed to jet traffic while being resurfaced. 409 went to Cold Lake, but 407's Lanes continued to operate from Comox. New construction included two alert hangars, a refuelling tender garage and as main mobile equipment garage. The year closed with a record of sorts: 15 inches of rain fell on the Station in December.

Live Cougar Captured

A new station CO, G/C R.F. Miller, arrived in March, and live television and radio coverage recorded the capture and keeping of a live cougar by a local B.C. game warden, its care by Station personnel, and its presentation to 432 AW(F) Sqn in Bagotville, Quebec. F/L Bruce Inrig was custodian of the Cougar. Bruce is a founding member of 888 Wing RCAF.

The June Air Force Day was its usual fine success. As a publicity stunt, Station airplanes dropped leaflets over Vancouver Island Communities, advertising the day. For the first time, the public saw a flying display of a Neptune aircraft, but, on the flightline was an even larger, newer airplane, a MAC Argus on static display. In September, a Station airman, LAC H.W. McKay, won the Provincial Truck Driving Roadco in Vancouver but 409 Sqn came a

dismal seventh in the annual ADC rocket meet in Cold Lake.

The Station Flying club broke its 27 month accident-free record in October when a student pilot hit a GCA reflector with a wing. The student and reflector survived but the wing was damaged beyond repair. 409 lost a CF-100 in December. The aircrew elected and the pilot was picked up by the RCMP patrol boat, but, although his ejection seat and helmet were found, a week-long search failed to recover the observer, F/L J. McLaren.

Station "Bombed"

The changing requirements of Air Defence resulted in the disbandment of 51 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, also in December. The unit became part of Air Services on the Station with a change in role to RAPCON (Radar Approach Control). A GCA training programme was started.

Dismal dawned the New Year, 1959: Two-and-a-half inches of rain fell on January 7, the most ever for a day in January. To add to the dolor, 46 officers wrote the heartily disliked F/O qualifying exams. February brightened the environment, and March warmed it: rehabilitation of the Station Hospital, One Hangar and the Recreation Centre began in the Spring.

There seemed to be unusual enthusiasm around: The very active Protestant Chapel Choir was awarded the top mark (92) of any vocal entry in the Vancouver Island Music Festival. The Security Force (now BDF) was nonplussed when the Station Infiltration Team used a non-DND helicopter to "bomb" vital areas on the Station, and a unique renovation of the Officers Mess was in hand: the fireplace was left standing and a new mess built around it. Somehow, that was renovation, not new construction.

Summertime brought a Royal Visit, by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. 409 Sqn flew an "E" formation and the Station provided a Colour Party and Guard of Honour for ceremonies at Victoria. LAC G. Ninos from MSE was employed as chauffeur during the Queen's B.C. visit. Air Force Day brought out the usual 20,000. Stars of the show were the "Golden Hawks," but the Royal Guard and Colour Party impressed with a display of their marching and ceremonial skills. In September, renovations to the airmen's "Wet Canteen," renamed Totem Lounge, were completed.

The First Totem Times

The new decade began with the usual January wet weather. To add to the gloom, a CF-100



Courtesy Airforce Museum

"Nighthawks" and their Avro CF-100s.

Heroic Air(sea)men



Courtesy Airforce Museum

The marine rescue section was always busy, with service and civilian emergencies.

King Neptune



Photo courtesy Norma Wade

407 Squadron's intermediary between the Lancaster and the Argus.

flown by F/Os Brian Shaw and Gordon Davis crashed into the sea between Point Holmes and Tree Island. In spite of an intensive search, they were not found.

As winter progressed, minor highs and lows involving capabilities and Public Relations rippled Station morale. 409 Sqn won the Steinhardt Trophy, awarded for fighter squadron efficiency. A December editorial in the Comox District Free Press annoyed some personnel and

cost the Station Public Relations Officer considerable time.

St. Patrick's Day saw the first edition of the "Totem Times," successor to two previous Station newsletters, the "Thunderbird" of 1944-45, and a mimeographed "Fishwrapper," its presence confirmed only vaguely (perhaps a reader will recall).

The first "Totem Times" was a broadsheet, produced by F/L G.B. Wood and F/O R. Fielding.

Continued on page 22

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 19

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Chief Warrant Officer K. Edgett (Ret'd) - Trenton

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Master Warrant Officer Don Hunt (Ret'd) - Ottawa

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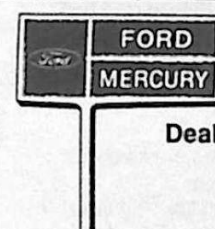
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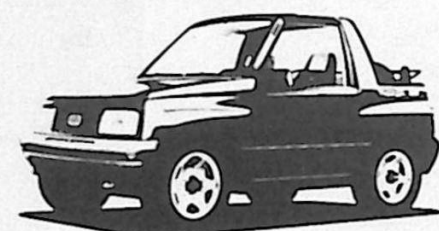
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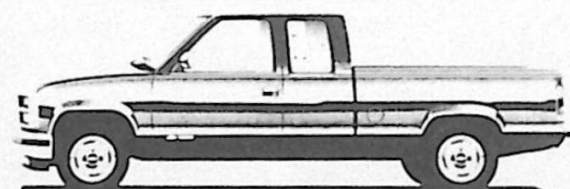
1992
Tracker 4x2
Soft-Top



- 1.6 litre 4 cyl. engine
- 5 speed
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- Daytime running lights
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\$9,593

Price Net of GM Rebate



- 5.0 L V8
- Rear wheel antilock
- Cloth seats with Scotchgard™
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- AM/FM stereo cassette
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1993 2 Wheel Drive
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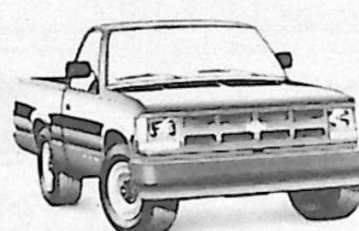
1993 4 Wheel Drive
Extended Cab



- 5.0 L V8
- Rear wheel antilock
- 5 speed transmission
- Cast aluminum wheels
- AM/FM stereo cassette

\$20,995

1993 Chevrolet
Reg. Cab P/U



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THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 21

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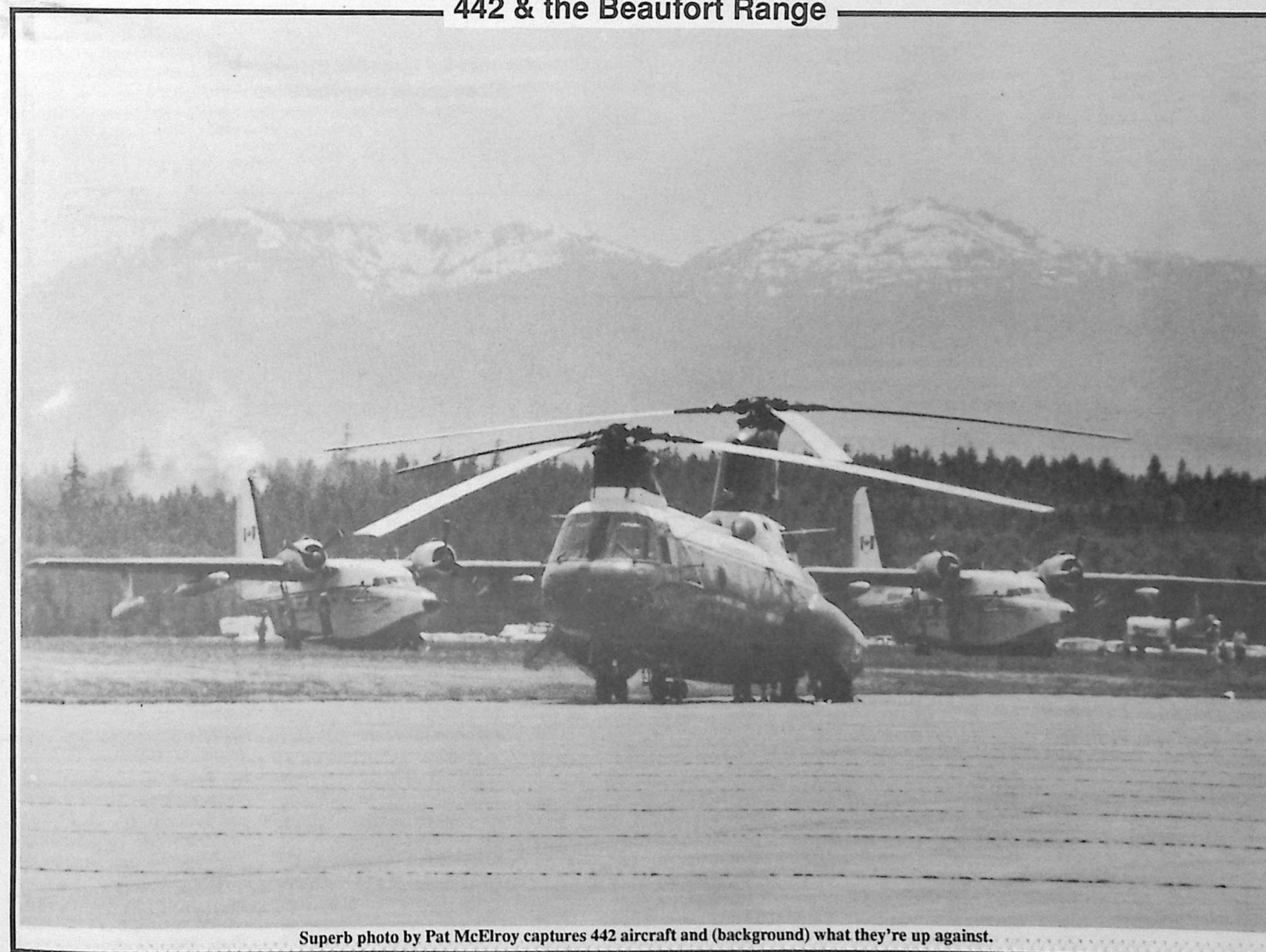
CFB Comox

on 50 years

of

military aviation

442 & the Beaufort Range



Superb photo by Pat McElroy captures 442 aircraft and (background) what they're up against.

"Right from the Beginning"

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Crash Boats Earn Their Keep

There were two minor emergencies in April: a CF-100 had a cocked nosewheel and had to land on half a mile of foam spread on the runway. The nose gear collapsed but the aircraft suffered only minor damage. The other incident saw the crash boat "Black Duck" tow a Powell River Airways Service "Seabee" off the beach at Royston.

On 1 May, RCAF Station Comox came under the direct control of Air Defence HQ at St. Hubert. The Station Flying Club lost CF-FKO in a crash at Powell River airport. Pilot and passenger escaped injury. The new married quarter sports field, 18 months a-building, opened with simultaneous softball games, and the crash boats continued to earn their keep: "Albatross" towed a civilian cabin cruiser out of danger after she lost her propeller. June was another good sunny month: 409's groundcrew picked up silverware in a Cold Lake rocket meet and came home to a rousing welcome.

407 sent aircrew and groundcrew (some by RCN ships) to Hawaii for combined exercises with the USN. "Black Duck" pulled a large pleasure boat off the beach at Kye Bay. July was Airforce Day month. The Golden Hawks flew in 4 July for practices. A RAF Valiant showed up on the 6th and a 20,000 crowd came to see all the action on July 9. Crash boat "Mallard" with a doctor and oxygen equipment on board took a sick passenger from the CPR steamer "Princess Louise" to Comox for medical attention. A 407 Neptune P2V crew lost an engine over the ocean and an emergency approach was made at Tofino - a first for that location. All went well.

A Hundred New PMQs!

One hundred new married quarters were taken over from the contractor in September and the sports field experienced its first soccer match. From October through March, Comox bore the soggy weather with its usual resignation. Noteworthy events included the first visit of a new C-130 Hercules from 435 Sqn at Namao, the opening by G/C Miller of the new Combined Mess on 3 December, and a "B.C. Union of the Unemployed" statement which accused airmen of "Moonlighting" and questioned the morality of airmen's wives working while local men were not.

Finally, spring came -- harbingered by the weather's growing clemency, the order to move into tropical worsted (sometimes called "Dress Pinks" after the sun got at the material) and the arrival of the Flight Cadets. The two squadrons flew hard through the summer and

autumn.

The maritime role of 407 Sqn once again required a command and control change for the Station: this iteration made the Station a Maritime Air Command unit and its ADC fighter squadron, 409, a lodger unit (which is what 407 had been until the October 15 changeover).

"Irish" Ireland Takes Command

By 1962, the Station was well established in the B.C. firmament as one of its brightest stars. There were changes of personality in those key jobs that bring subordinates better or worse times and there were minor changes to the Station's physical and personnel resources, but, overall, the Station Comox pattern was set: A MAC and ADC Squadron, a wet climate in winter and a dry one in Summer, an exurban, outdoors-focussed lifestyle with a high level of social entertaining and a peaceful coexistence with a Comox Valley citizenry who, if sometimes annoyed by RCAF engines overhead, were nevertheless content to have a military community at their periphery.

In July, G/C "Irish" Ireland took over as Station CO from G/C Miller. "Irish" was, until 1992, the reader of the poem "High Flight" at the annual Battle of Britain Parade in the CFB Comox Air Park. He is also a charter member of 888 Wing RCAF.

Also in 1962, an EW (Electronic Warfare) unit was set up as a detachment of 409 Sqn. The EWU had three CF-100s and 23 people. No. 11 Air Movements Unit and a Manpower Standards unit started business.

On Station strength at year's end there were 59 officers, 785 ORs and 200 civilians. 407 had 138 officers and 25 airmen, 409 had 55 officers and 291 airmen. The aircraft flown were 407's 12 P2V Neptunes, 409's 12 new CF101 Voodoos, EWU's three CF-100s and two T-33s and Station Flight's two C-45 Expeditors.

121 Composite Unit Arrives

As time passed, there were more organizational changes. As usual, 407 changed places with 409 as the Station's lodger unit, but by this time --1964-- another lodger had arrived: No. 121 Composite Unit. This unit brought 51 officers, 215 airmen and two civilians to the Station. 121 operated three C-37 Dakotas, two T-33s, two C-45 Expeditors, four Albatross triphibians and two CH-113 Voyageur helicopters, these last being the first ever to operate from Comox.

And there was that little USAF unit whose 41 personnel fished a lot but were generally MUM



An early production model Argus Mark 1.

Early Voodoos



Courtesy Airforce Museum

Note reversed Red Ensign flags on empennage.

Albatrosses over Nanaimo



Courtesy Airforce Museum

121 KU Albatrosses in flight over Galiano and adjacent islands.

about their activities: they were No. 5 Detachment of the 415th MUM Squadron. In June 1954 the runways, taxi strips and aprons needed repair, so 409 deployed to Paine AFB Washington, while 407 went to Patricia Bay, for three months. Instead of an Airforce Day, the Station combined efforts with the town of Comox. The Red Knight flew his lurid T-33 and Station aircraft flew past.

The Special Armament Storage (SAS) compound, that chain-linked, enclosed area of

earth-bermed buildings, was completed by Defence Construction Limited, and a high-power TACAN (a navigational aid) was installed and commissioned.

In Autumn, G/C Ireland led 50 airmen to Vancouver, where they represented the RCAF at a tree-planting ceremony in the Air Force Garden of Remembrance at Stanley Park.

And a little year's-end reminder of the weather at Comox: 88 inches of snow fell between 18 and 21 December.

Glacier Gardens Opens

1965 brought another First to the Comox Valley: Glacier Gardens, the only local ice arena, was opened by G/C Ireland on 20 January. In June, the Station was awarded the Mynarski Trophy for the second year in a row. The trophy was awarded for outstanding achievements in the development in youth recreation.

The next month, G/C Ireland left on posting to National

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Defence College, to be replaced as StnComd by G/C R.S. Turnbull. In November, W/C W.H. Vincent took over as OC 409. W/C Vincent had previously flown on 409 operations during WWII. Councillor "Bill" Vincent now serves the Town of Comox.

121 Composite Unit achieved national news coverage on 7 Jan 1966 when a Labrador helicopter, piloted by F/L Bob Hughes, evacuated over 200 stranded passengers from a CNR train trapped by slides in the Hope area. Not far away, 121 again made national news, this time tragically, when an Albatross crashed near Hope, killing five and seriously injuring one of the fliers. This was the only fatal crash for a Comox Albatross.

Again with 121, the Air Force Cross was awarded to F/L Daniel Campbell for a rescue operation which included hovering his helicopter on the side of a heavily wooded mountain to drop para-rescue personnel on a hoist. He then had to refuel at base and return to successfully locate the same mountain on a midnight return flight. In November, G/C K.C. Lett took command of Station Comox.

Centennial Year & the "Jolly Green"

1967, the Canadian Centennial Year, increased squadrons' activities considerably, as flypasts over many communities involved in their celebrations added to their normal operational and training duties. Much good PR was received, it was noted. Other good deeds included showing the Station and its facilities to over 1400 Sea, Army and (mostly) Air Cadets. Many other Station tours were given. The Station built a float for the PNE, based on a search and rescue theme. It toured most of B.C. first.

On the Station attention focussed on a Squadron Leader, a Sergeant and two corporals, who were wearing the new "Jolly Green" uniform, a.k.a. the "Unification Uni."

In January, nine Tutors and a Hercules arrived, for the "Centennaires" six-week work-up for the 100-plus airshows to which they were committed. Regrettably, F/L Dave Barker, Lead Solo, was killed during a practice over Forbidden Plateau. The team pressed on, however, and became the pride of the Airforce throughout the year.

June brought another Armed Forces (note the name change) Day with a crowd estimated at 8,000. The unintentional highlight of the day was the flight of the "Red Baron" whose aerobatic display in a Tiger Moth (or was it a "tigerschmidt?") ended in a stall and crash directly in front of the crowd. The horror of the crash

was thankfully alleviated when pilot F/L R. Steven (yes, the Totem Times' own Frank Steven!) arose from the wreckage and waved to the crowd!

He was only slightly injured in this spectacular accident, which, he informed this writer in 1993, was caused by faulty plywood in the empennage. "I could feel the tail end starting to go, so I had no choice but to flop in from 300 feet up. I was actually waving to my son to show him I was OK."

In August, Base (no longer Station) squadrons participated for the second year in a row, in the Abbotsford Air Show. 121 made news again when Sgt J.P.R.G. Lemieux and Cpl B.J. Fitzgerald were awarded the Queen's Commendation for brave conduct during search operations. The Base was at its largest. There were 1750 military and nearly 250 civilian personnel making their living at the unit: with a payroll well over a million dollars a month, CFB Comox had become the largest single industry in the area.

121 becomes 442

In 1968, 121 was renamed 442 Transport and Rescue Squadron, and CTV filmed a half-hour documentary on its search and rescue activities. CANEX came upon us as a consolidation of several non-public fund retail outlets on Base. Other NPF improvements included the new swimming pool, a boat ramp at Airforce Beach and automatic pinsetters in the bowling alley. The geneses of a golf course and a new service station were discussed.

407 received well-earned publicity for searches involving two downed civilian planes, the second was a downed Cessna 180 in which the occupants were found alive. The big news for CFB Comox, as everywhere else, was UNIFICATION.

Parties saying goodbye to the RCAF went on in all messes until midnight, when Canada replaced an Airforce with an "air element." A good idea occurred to someone just before midnight: A CF-101 was scrambled, to perform the last flight by an RCAF aircraft, just before midnight. The first pass over the base was deemed by critical onlookers as neither low enough nor fast enough. Accordingly, the next run was low and fast enough to break windows in the local area and engender reports of an earthquake as far south as Parksville, 40 miles away.

Base consensus concurred that it was, all in all, a good show. (And so did the Vancouver Sun, the next day, when it headlined the incident.)

Later in the month, Col Lett opened the newly refurbished Corporals Lounge, necessarily large to accommodate the large influx of "Hellyer Corporals." As the month closed, "TacEval"

came and the Base received its highest-ever assessment.

CF100s, Neptunes Depart

April saw the departure of the last three CF-100s from Comox, enroute to St. Hubert. 407's Argus aircraft need more space, so 442 moved to hangars 1 and 3, and 407 took over their space in 7 hangar.

The first Argus arrived on 17 May. In the same month 409 returned from CFB Bagotville with the MacBrien Trophy. Armed Forces Day brought 6000 visitors in cold and blustery weather to see an impressive air and ground display, which included the new 407 Argus.

Continuing the good news, the ADC Safe-Driving Award was presented to Comox for achieving an accident rate of only 1 per 2000,000 miles. The top driver was Cpl Bill McIntosh, who had a 20 years accident-free driving record. Col Lett turned out to be a top driver as well: to celebrate July 1, a go-cart race between several local dignitaries resulted in a win for Col Lett in a miniature CF101. However, all male contestants were disqualified and the single female driver was declared the winner, even though she had an accident which required hospital attention.

Later that month Col G. Nichols replaced Col Lett as Base Commander. August saw the departure of the last P2V Neptune from the local scene after 13 years of maritime operations with the RCAF and CF.

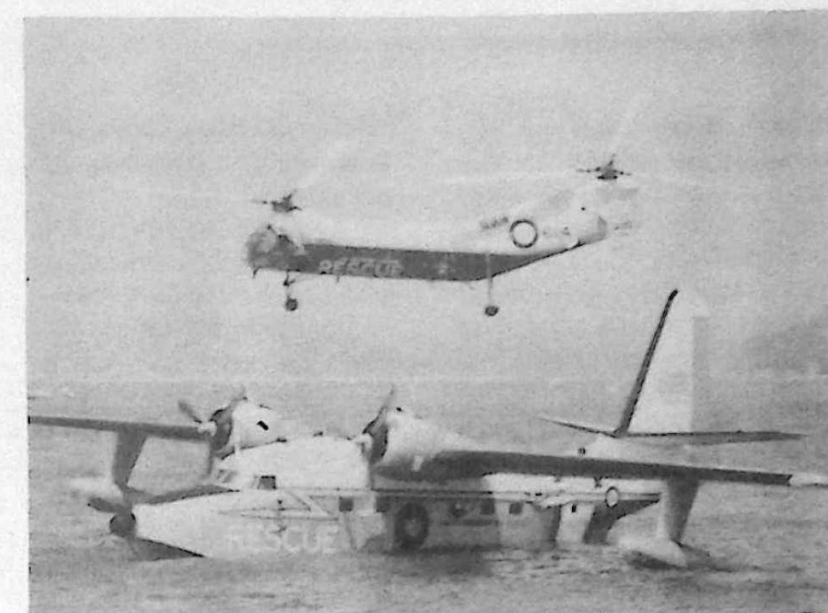
Restraint, Reduction, Reorganization

1970 was another year of challenge for the Canadian Forces: restraint, reduction and reorganization. Comox saw no major changes, but the CF was reduced to 82,000 personnel throughout the three elements. Some Comox service men and women started looking for civilian jobs.

Plan Restore sought to repair the imbalance in trades brought about by the reduction in CF strength. Nine of the 11 trades identified as having too many people were the 500-series aircraft trades. This was also the year for conversion to the green uniform and the substitution of Canadian Bravery decorations for those of the Commonwealth. The effects of inflation and PMQ rental increases were the subject of much complaint. Operationally, Comox service people continued to produce excellent results. For 407 the proof came in late October with a win in the tough annual ASW competition against the east coast. Another first came with the arrival of a MCpl, the first NCO Observer.

409 competed again in Exercise Callshot against the Chatham and Bagotville Sqs. Later in the

121 KU became 442 Sqn in 1968



"Banana" chopper and Albatross.

Floating Banana



Courtesy 442 Sqn.

442 choppers still practice in Comox Lake.

Wartime Badge



442 Sqn badge, war years

year 409 competed in William Tell at Tyndall AFB in Florida where they came in second in the F-101 category.

442 had an extremely taxing year, complicated by conversion from Albatross and Dakotas to Buffaloes. The famed "Kamikase" Dakota flight to Vancouver succumbed with the change. However, 442 were winners in 1970: their team won the Armstrong Trophy for the best overall efficiency in parachute jumping, para supply dropping and free bundle dropping.

For the Base, the new auto club opened, as did "Teepee Park" Campground, near the boat launch ramp, with 17 campsites. 1971 began, operationally, with the usual Base exercises which led up to TacEval of 409 and its Base support. As usual, the Squadron and Base did very well. Shortly after TacEval

KU Badge



121 Communications Unit became 442 Sqn in 1968.

however, 409 and 442 had another convincing demonstration of cooperation when a Voodoo piloted by Capt Wagar and Stuart exploded just after takeoff over the saltchuck near the Base. A 442 Labrador was enroute to Tree Island at the time and its crew saw the "streak of fire" followed by an explosion and immediately headed for it.

The crew anxiously scanned the sky for parachutes and finally spotted the 'chutes against the overcast at about 1,000 feet. Capt W.G. Charland orbited his helicopter over the first airman, Capt Stuart, and found him in good shape; however, Capt Wagar had been burned in the explosion and was being dragged face down over the water by his parachute.

The Lab crew elected to get to him first. By the time they got to him, Capt Wagar had rid

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himself of his chute but was obviously in trouble. In one quick scoop the Lab crew had him in their basket and hoisted him aboard. As the Lab flew back to Capt Stuart, Capt Wagar was given artificial respiration by the para-rescue team. The Labrador returned to Comox and the waiting ambulance. Total time from sighting the fireball to returning to the hangar -- ten minutes.

Later examination of the Voodoo wreck after it had been recovered with the aid of the submersible "Pisces" revealed a compressor blade failure had caused the accident. The introduction of Boeing 707 service to Comox improved service to eastern Canada for service personnel and reduced the scheduled flights to Vancouver for 442 Buffaloes. The Yukons, which the Boeings replaced, were retired at the end of March. The Glacier Greens golf course opened for business on May 1.

A Royal Visit

The highlight of the year's long list of visitors was that of HM the Queen, Prince Philip and Princess Anne in May. The Royal Family was in B.C. to celebrate its Centennial Year, and their yacht, the Britannia, was anchored in Comox harbour for a weekend.

Later in the month 442 and the Marine Section were involved with another ship, the cruise ship "Meteor" which had caught fire in nearby waters. 442 Labradors ferried fire fighting equipment and oxygen supplies to the stricken ship, while "Black Duck" towed lifeboats from the cruise ship to the coastal ferry "Malaspina" for transport ashore. All passengers were evacuated, but 32 crew members of the Meteor died in the tragedy.

An improved version of the CF101 (IIP, for Interceptor Improvement Programme), arrived at 409, replacing the F101s which had served since 1962. The new model had infra-red tracking capability and improved electronic counter-measures. The old Voodoos were sent to the U.S., where they were converted for use in Vietnam.

The new CANEX store was opened by Mrs Jeanne Geneau, who brought her eight children to the event. The government let a contract for a further 25 PMQs, and announced a pay raise of 11.5 percent, spread over two years.

Finally for 1971, two major events: the Base hosted the annual Fincastle trophy, the Canadian reps being 415 Sqn from Summerside. The result was a tie for first place between Canada and Australia. And the BTSO, LCol F.R. Anderson, participated in the B.C. Centennial celebrations in an unusual fashion: he entered medallion competitions for

running 100 miles, cycling 700, swimming 25 and walking 200 miles.

He was one of only two people in B.C. to get all four medallions within the time limit of 1 July-31 December. For its part, the Totem Times took smug note of the disappearance of our navy's rum ration: "And so the grog is gone," they concluded; "now they'll have to think of some other reason for running the ships aground."

Construction for the new post office and AMU additions were completed in 1972. The additions to hangar 3 added 2400 square feet of much-needed passenger accommodation and offices. A change of Command saw G/C McNicholl replace Col Nichol as Base Commander in July.

Pay Up, Rents Up Too

Base personnel were pleased in October to get the second half of the pay raise promised a year earlier. Married Quarters rents rose, natch. Military issues of the year were personnel. An announcement from DNDHQ that women's numbers in the CF would increase to 2,000 officers and 5,000 other ranks provided plenty of rhetoric to and from the Totem Times.

There was continuing concern about promotions for anglophones and francophones, and the eagerly-awaited but usually disappointing pay raise. Even the new leave policy, which provided 25 working days instead of 30 calendar days was minutely scrutinized. The troops were a touch fractious that year. A pair of popular Comox Officers retired: LCol Duke Warren (BOPsO) and LCol Sid Lloyd (BadO). Duke quickly established a journalistic presence in the Comox Valley in matters marine and Airforce, and the Totem Times is proud to have "The Duke" on its list of contributing writers.

442, Base Hospital and the Victoria Rescue Coordination Centre were hosted at a thank-you dinner by the Provincial government, at the Empress Hotel in Victoria on 22 October 1973. Just as satisfying in a different way, was the successful 442 search and rescue of a downed Cessna 180 pilot. The owner of the float plane had in 1971 accused 442 of "Glory Seeking" during searches for missing personnel. This result spoke amply for the Squadron.

VU33 Arrives

In 1974 the primary function of CFB Comox was to provide support for 407, 409 and 442 squadrons, and, in August, VU 33, transferred in from Pat Bay Victoria with their Trackers and T-33s. The move was made to consolidate flying operations on the West coast with accompanying savings and

manpower. VU 33's role involved patrols of breaches of Canadian Sovereignty in the form of foreign fishing violations and oil pollution, MARPAC fleet support and an augmentation search capability.

Col McNichol relinquished command of CFB Comox in September to Col R.L. Mortimer. The operation at HMCS Quadra was, as usual, busy. A new sea survival training unit was built. 442 was involved in 296 search and rescue missions, half mercy flights and half searches. Comox hosted three ASW competitions; 407 flew the best single flight of the meet, but finished third overall. It was a good year for CFB Comox: a lot of flying with no accidents, continued good relations with the civilian community and successfully passed evaluations.

In 1975, 407, 442 and VU 33 joined 409 Sqn as integral units at CFB Comox. The change coincided with the formation of Air Command, and put all Squadrons subordinate to the Base Commander. 409 Sqn and 442 Sqn received their Squadron Standards from B.C. Lt-Governor Walter H. Owen, and Cpl D.W. Armstrong was awarded a CDS Commendation for his help in fighting a fire at a Courtenay inflammable liquid bulk plant.

VU 'Birds



Courtesy Base Photo

The graceful T-33 served 409 Sqn, VU 33 and still serves with 414 Sqn at Comox.

VU Tracker



Courtesy Base Photo

A sturdy, carrier-borne workhorse, the Tracker still serves in civilian colours as a water-bomber.

409 Assembly



Courtesy Airforce Museum

An early photograph of 409 Sqn CF-101s and T-33s in 7 hangar.

CF101 Fleet Grounded

Flying operations continued to flow smoothly in 1976, despite numerous airfield repairs and renovations. The CF101 fleet was grounded briefly in April because of cracks found in some engine mounts. Workshops repaired the cracks in half the time it would have taken a contractor, and the Voodoos were soon back in operation. Unfortunately, a Voodoo was

lost in the Georgia Straits when Capt J. Cox and J.R. Smith crashed during airshow practice. Except for a mid-air collision in 1969 which killed two navigators, this was the only other fatal Voodoo accident suffered by 409 throughout its 22 years of operation as a frontline all-weather fighter. Comox Explosive Ordnance Team had a banner year: they safetied 2,750 sticks of dynamite, 1972 detonators, 350

feet of detonating cord, over 200 pounds of commercial bulk explosives, and they disposed of depth bombs, rockets, marine markers, naval shells, practice bombs, plastic explosives and old-time hand grenades. Where does it all come from?

The only major change in 1977 was of Base Commanders: Col B.T. Burgess took command of the Base. VU 33's CO Maj Arnold made an intentional

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TOTEMTIMES 25

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Civilian Air Terminal Rehab Starts

With the conclusion of negotiations between Transport Canada Airports Group and CFB Comox on behalf of the Department of National Defence, the way is open for the expansion and upgrading of the Comox Civilian Air Terminal. The project has been under active consideration for a number of years, but the ever-increasing passenger loads and attendant parking problems in the terminal area have finally resulted in the project being funded.

The Transport Canada project will see the existing terminal area expanded into space previously occupied by Coast Guard Canada. This expansion will provide a properly sized holding room as well as reduce the congestion in the reception area. Perhaps more importantly from the everyday use point of view, the existing parking area will be revamped and the parking capacity of the Terminal will now be a total of eighty spots. Critical

to the rehabilitation has been the amendment of an existing Memorandum of Understanding between TC and DND to allow for the transfer of 10 hectares of property for TC use. The parking expansion has required the removal of Building 158, former home of the CFB Comox Parachute Club and more recently the Dive Club, and the relocation of the CF-100 Canuck from the Heritage Air Park. TC has constructed replacement space for Building 158. The scope of the parking lot expansion includes provision of a new CF-100 platform immediately south of the CF-104 Starfighter.

The Comox Civilian Air Terminal rehabilitation project should commence in early May 1993 and be completed within two months. With a budget of approximately \$400,000, this project should accommodate the increased passenger load for the next ten years.

Plans will be published in the May 13 edition...Ed.

Congratulations on your 50th Anniversary

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"wheels up" landing in a Tracker, but there were no other aircraft accidents. Fourteen Comox personnel received the CDS Commendation.

ARAF Formed

The Air Reserve Augmentation Flight was formed on 26 October. The ARAF's purpose was to provide augmentation personnel to the regular force.

Exercise DEER-EX 77 was accounted some success this year: a programme to relocate several deer from the aerodrome was begun in the spring. The plethora of deer had caused some concern for years. The solution was involved: Deer were shot with muscle-relaxant drugs, placed in a "Deer Box" built by CE and transported to a new area well away from the Base and released. Results were said to be good.

The Base was busy in 1978: a virtually unheralded event was the arrival of the first Aurora spare parts, although the aircraft was not due at Comox until 1981. Less popular was the installation of electric meters in PMQs, permitting the occupants to be billed for the electricity they used. Tempering this was the installation of insulation in all 304 married quarter attics to help reduce heating bills.

One of the more colourful servicemen retired from Comox in 1978: Sgt Bill MacIntosh. By birth an Australian, "Mac" served in its merchant navy, its army as a commando, and, after emigrating to Canada, in the RCAF. He had his ship sunk twice as a sailor and was a POW of the Japanese, from whom he successfully escaped. On parade, his row of medals was unmatched by anyone.

888 Wing RCAFA Formed

1979 was another active year for CFB Comox, with more than 15000 flying hours flown by the four Squadrons. A Northwest Orient Boeing 747 arrived on three engines after an engine fire, with 381 people on board, including children. All were fed and housed until later that day, when another 747 flew in to pick them up and continue their flight to Japan. There was considerable media interest in Canada and the U.S.A. and several thank-you notes were received.

Most of the passengers on the 747 were USAF and their dependants, so it is pleasant to report that another branch of the U.S. military, the Coast Guard, was instrumental in finding and picking up Lt Andy Dobson and Capt Dave Taylor after they ejected into the saltchuck from their Voodoo on 29 November. They spent nearly an hour and a half in their dinghies and were therefore well pleased with this combined services operation. Both suffered only mild hypothermia. RCAF Association

888 Wing was formed and met at the Comox Legion. First President was G/C E.G. "Irish" Ireland.

The "Red Knight" - LCol Bob Hallowell - retired as BOpsO. He later turned up on the editorial staff of the Totem Times, and served as a President of 888 Wing RCAFA. The Base changed hands again in 1980: Col J.R. Chisholm took command.

AFIS Opens

A new organization opened in the summer of 1980, the Air Force Indoctrination School, AFIS, was established to teach Air Force customs, traditions and history, and familiarize new Air Force officers with the operations of an air base and its Squadrons. Close to 500 students each year began taking the two-week course.

Construction highlight for the year was a new IFR control centre, built next to the control tower. During the year 1981, a postal strike caused considerable reshuffling of mail procedures. Most interesting of these was the Comptroller branch turning to weekly hand-delivered vouchers to Supply and Services offices in Victoria, reducing transit time by up to three weeks, saving interest payments for that time on nearly \$250,000. The system has been retained.

Auroras Fly In

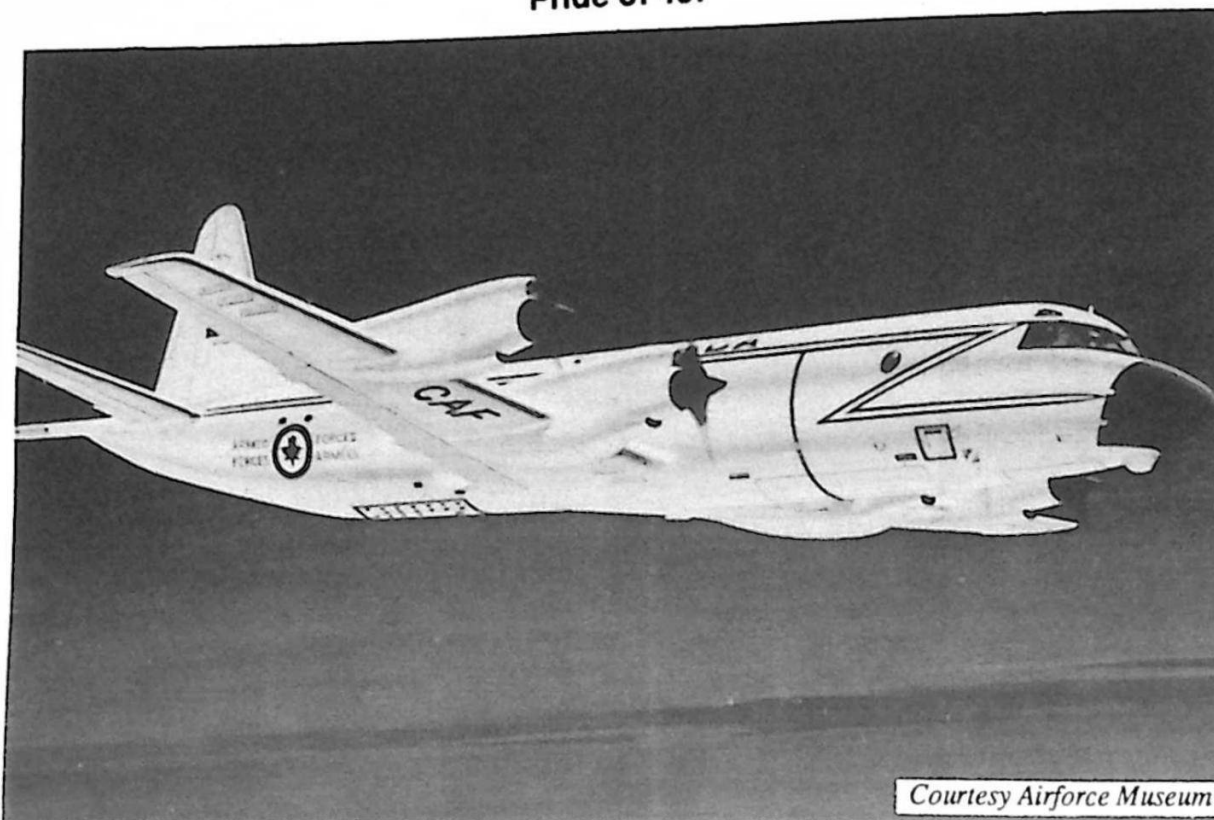
The biggest news of the year was the arrival of 407's Auroras, as the Argus replacement. The excellent capabilities of this new airplane meant changes in accommodation for avionics support and a host of new jobs. New acronyms appeared: DIAC, FLIR, ASR and so on. Literally hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent this year in support of the Aurora programme.

And more construction: The combined messes were extended to provide more social activity space, the RC Chapel was extended and its interior renovated and 51 PMQ kitchen and dining areas got a major renovation.

Most of 1982's operational activities, normal flying, exercises and competitions excepted, centered around the completion of the new IFR Control Centre complex, and working toward implementation of the new Terminal Radar and Control System (TRACS). All equipment was installed by August and testing and training continued until 1983, when TRACS became operational.

Change of Command: Col W.R. Dobson took over as BComd. Domestic improvements went on in PMQs: 66 more kitchens were renovated, new heating oil tanks were installed and all PMQs were upgraded to Canadian Electrical code. The new auto hobby shop opened and the Totem Annex, which

Pride of 407



Courtesy Airforce Museum

The Aurora, in a more attractive but less tactical paint scheme.

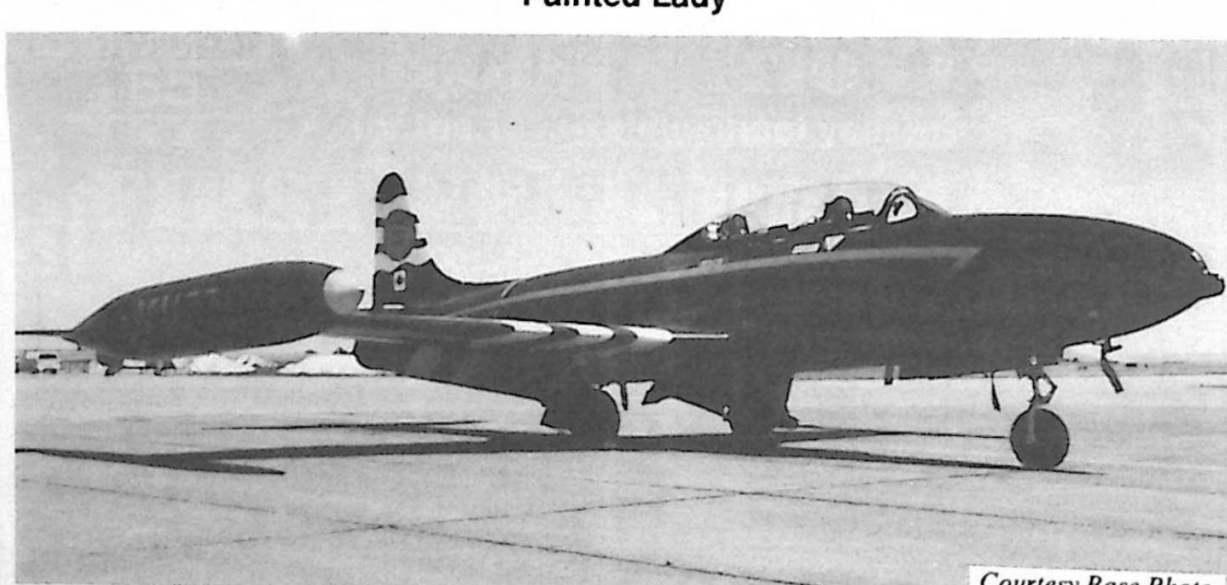
Checkerboard Hornet



Photo courtesy Pat McElroy

441 Sqn Hornets frequently deploy at Comox.

Painted Lady



Courtesy Base Photo

Special T-33 paint job marked VU 33 stand-down.

had been the old junior ranks mess ("Snake-Pit or Stag Lounge") was demolished. The short-lived Alternate Lifestyles Lounge, serving non-alcoholic beverages, was opened in November. It is now an exercise room, but the "Sally-Ann" now provides the same refreshment facilities. A flood (Oh, Comox weather!) in February 1983 brought out 150 volunteers to sandbag an area of Little River Road, on what would normally have been a TGIF evening.

VU 33 received its colours from B.C. Lt-Governor H. Bell-Irving

on April 9 and later in the year outgoing AFIS Commandant Maj J. Cratchley received an award of "Airman of the Year" status from the Royal Canadian Air Force Association. The original historian of this Totem Times retrospective, Maj Len Dodd, succeeded as Commandant AFIS.

Base Social Centre Opens

The Base Social Centre was built and opened this year. Together with the previously renovated Golf Club Lounge, the two became the Glacier Lounge,

where mixed ranks could meet and socialize.

409 Squadron Departs

The most significant event of 1984 for CFB Comox was the departure of 409 Squadron for CFB Cold Lake where it would be re-equipped with CF-18s, and, later, deploy to Europe. A corollary of their departure was cessation of deployment by the well-liked USAF 425 Munitions Squadron, detachment 5.

The period 25-28 June was declared "CFB Comox

Continued on page 28

"Right from the Beginning"

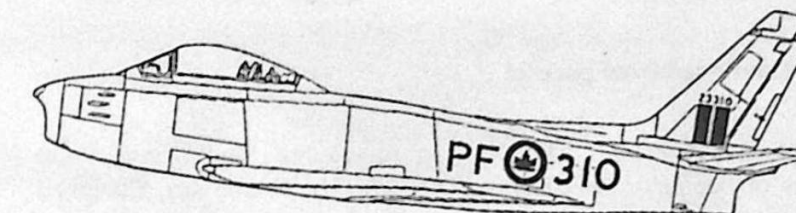
THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

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50th Anniversary Celebrations

- 1 May 93: Glacier Greens Golf Tournament
- 3 May 93: Celebration and Cake-cutting, all on-Base personnel, 7 Hangar Northside, 1030 hrs.
- 5 May 93: Freedom of the Town of Comox Parade, 1100 hrs, route Comox Avenue, Anderton Rd. to Comox Recreation Centre on Noel Avenue. Reception for parade participants.



443 City of New Westminster Sqn. 1951 - 1964

This article is the fourth of six leading up to HS 443 Squadron's 50th Anniversary celebrations this May. The last article saw the Squadron on the battlefield of Europe, disbanding for the first time in 1946. This article covers the period September 1951 to March 1964, affectionately known as the "Auxiliary Years."

As war clouds loomed in the Far East in 1951, the RCAF reactivated a number of former units as auxiliary units. In September 1951, No. 443 Sqn was reformed at Vancouver, B.C. Its purpose was to provide personnel trained in the fighter role to bring the RCAF up to wartime strength - if the need arose!

No. 443 Sqn was based at RCAF Station Sea Island with the already existing 442 Sqn (Aux) - now the Regional SAR Squadron in Comox. In order to ensure a strong nucleus of trained aircrew and ground crew, a large number of personnel were reassigned from 442 Sqn to 443 Sqn. Many RCAF squadrons made close ties with the communities with which

they were associated. On 3 September 1952, the Squadron altered its name to "443 City of New Westminster Fighter Squadron (Auxiliary) RCAF." This close affiliation was to last until the Squadron disbanded over a decade later.

The Harvard was still in existence and was used mainly for pilot proficiency; however, by the mid-50s it was being replaced by the T-33 Silver Star. The T-33 was used to convert 443 pilots from piston engines to jets in preparation for the arrival of the Canadair Sabre Mk. 5. The Sabre made 443 Sqn one of 16 front line jet fighter squadrons in Canada.

The war in Korea had been over for five years and the decision to assign a new role and revise the RCAF Auxiliary organization had been made. In 1958 the Squadron went through a major reorganization - its new role was to carry out air operations in support of military and civilian requirements as determined by higher authority. This meant aid to civil defense follow-

ing a nuclear attack - in those days a very predominant fear!

At the turn of the decade 443 Squadron had and was acquiring new types of aircraft. The C-45 Expeditor, known as the "Bug Smasher," and the DHC Otter were both used by the Squadron in its secondary role of air search and transport. Unfortunately, policy was again changing in 1963 and it was decided that the Squadron would be disbanded. On 31 March 1964, No. 443 Sqn ceased operations.

The "Auxiliary Years" were an exciting era for Squadron personnel as the changing roles and the "new" aircraft types provided numerous daily challenges for all involved. Should you wish to see a real F-86 Sabre jet from this era of flight, the Army-Navy-Air Force Veterans Unit 302 has one "perched" on a pedestal in downtown Sidney, B.C. Preparations for the 50th Anniversary celebrations are still "on-track" and everything is on schedule. Squadron alumni, keep those registration returns coming!!

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Continued from page 26

Appreciation Week." The four days of banquets, presentations and speeches were designed to pay tribute to the role the Base at Comox had played in the development of the Comox Valley. The town of Comox gave "Freedom of the Town" to the Base and Courtenay presented a plaque dedicated to all CFB Comox personnel, and the RCMP also unveiled a plaque at its detachment headquarters, commemorating the long-standing cooperation between the military and the RCMP.

Armed Forces Day brought out 20,000 people on April 4, a success helped in part by the arrival of the CF-18s. Unexpected visitors arrived at the end of June: the MV "Sundancer," with 787

passengers and crew, was severely holed near Campbell River.

She beached at an industrial dock, and her passengers were removed to CFB Comox, where they were housed, fed and their health monitored until chartered aircraft were flown in to take them back to Seattle. Since many of the passengers had left the ship very quickly, several issues of coveralls, socks and other clothing and medicines were provided to aid the passengers' comfort. The incident was a real and valid test of the Base Emergency Response Plan.

Col B. Kadanoff took Command of CFB Comox on 18 August. In the Fall of 1985, 407 won the Commonwealth Fincastle Trophy at a

competition in Scotland, first winning the national ASW competition earlier in the year.

At this point, in early 1986, Major Len Dodd ended his historical account of the Air Force at Comox. He concludes:

We look forward to a busy year: Expo 86 will tax the Base Resources and manpower, from 442 Sqn participation at SAR week to providing honour guards for VIPs Th1986 OPEVAL was successful and completed in April. Skiing went on until the end of that month, and the first of the Spring Salmon appeared. There's an Indian word for the kind of well-being life at Comox engenders:

Skookum.

Jack McGee succeeded Col Gibbon in 1989, and it was during his command that we at Comox were the first to say, "The Russians are Coming!" We welcomed the pilots of MiG-29 Fulcrum fighters and Antonov transports to Comox en route to a flying display at CFB Ottawa (South). A huge crowd attended the '92 airshow, and we changed Base Commanders.

Colonel Terry Rogers, a

former CO 407 Squadron and BOpsO at Comox, returned in July to take over the controls, so to speak, and soon Col Rogers earned the title of "Wing Commander," a puzzling dichotomy for old RCAF types, who naturally equate Colonel with Group Captain. The cause of this was a change in state from "Canadian Forces Base" to "Wing 19" on 1 Apr 1993.

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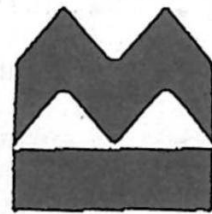
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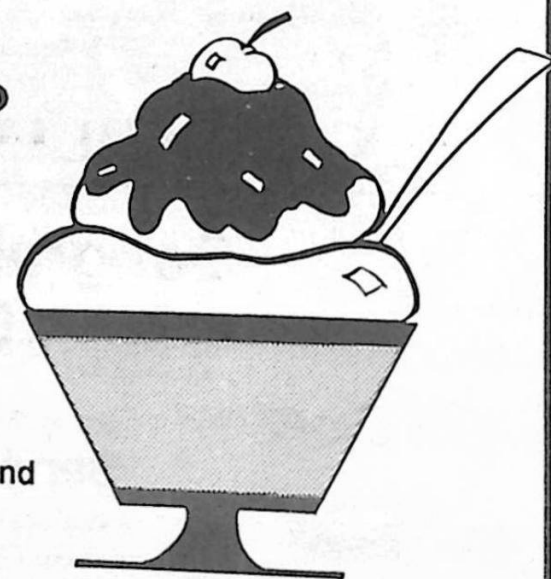
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THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

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407 Squadron

By Lt R. Tarzwell

407 Sqn RCAF was formed at Thorney Island, Hampshire, England on 8 May 1941 to serve with Coastal Command.

407's wartime history occurred in two distinct phases. From formation until January 1943, it served as a strike squadron, attacking enemy shipping at mast height. By January 1943, an estimated 500,000 tons of enemy shipping was destroyed or damaged. This ferocity in attack earned 407 the name "Demon Squadron" from the British press. In January 1943, the squadron's role shifted to anti-submarine warfare, a role that endures to this day. 407 Sqn was disbanded 4 June 1945 after service at ten different stations and flying Blenheim Mk. 4s, Hudsons (in shipping strike) and Wellingtons (in ASW).

The Squadron reformed at Comox 1 July 1952. The first post-war aircraft was the Lancaster Mk. 10, modified for ASW ops. In addition to ASW, the Squadron was often tasked with ice reconnaissance, photography missions, and Search and Rescue. A highlight during Lancaster days occurred in February 1958 when all 12 Lancasters went airborne at one time.

The next aircraft was the P2V-7 Neptune, accepted in May 1958, an aircraft specifically designed for ASW and loaded with electronic equipment. The last Neptune arrived in 1959, to coincide with 407 coming under the operational command of Commander Maritime Forces Pacific.

The Neptune was modified in 1959 and it became one of very few aircraft ever to be powered by propellers and jets. The Squadron's tensest moment of the new decade occurred when, in 1960, while en route to Hawaii for a combined ASW exercise, aircraft 114 lost an engine just

past the critical point. The crew flew the remaining 1070 nautical miles safely on a single engine. Anything not bolted down was jettisoned, with the important exception of personal gear.

May 1968 brought the Canadian-built Argus Mk. I with a corresponding increase in the Squadron's range and effectiveness. A new mission, the NORPAT (Northern Patrol), was introduced in 1969, and 407 commenced flights into Canada's Arctic. In September 1974 the Squadron set a speed record while on a NORPAT, circumnavigating the globe in a scant ten minutes. Earlier that year the Squadron also set an endurance record, keeping Argus 711 airborne for over 31 hours.

In recognition of 25 years of service, 407 received her Colours from the Honourable Walter Owen, QC, LL.D., Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, on 28 June 1975.

A highlight of Argus operations was SAR *Prinsendam* flown in October of 1980 in the Gulf of Alaska where 407 was instrumental in co-ordinating rescue operations during the sinking of a cruise ship.

Our current aircraft, the CP-140 Aurora, arrived 11 June 1981, and the interest generated by her arrival was international, since in August a Soviet task force sailed through Canadian maritime waters, the first to do so in over ten years. September of 1981 saw the first Aurora NORPAT, and the first Aurora SAR involvement was in the rescue of the crew of *Global Ambition* in July 1981.

Aurora operations continue, and current projections indicate that she will provide us faithful service into the next century, with an electronics upgrade slated for 2000. Our current roles include ASW, SAR, maritime patrols for

Lancs in the Rain



Courtesy Airforce Museum

The wet tarmac proves this photo was taken at Comox.

"A Thousand Eyes"



Argus painting postcard donated by Tom Procter, a 407 veteran.

The Newest



Courtesy Base Photo

State-of-the-art Aurora of 407 Sqn.

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442 Transport & Rescue Squadron

By MCpl Al Banky

For the past fifty years whenever a call for help has gone out, whether it was from a sinking boat, an aircraft in distress, a lost soul, or a country in need, 442 Squadron has been there to answer that call.

The first call for help was answered in January 1942, when the world was at war. 14 Fighter Squadron, 442's predecessor, was formed at Rockcliffe, Ontario. The Squadron was equipped with Harvard and Kittyhawk fighters. It gains its name, the City of Vancouver Squadron, from its initial base at RCAF Station Sea Island, B.C., present site of Vancouver International Airport. In early 1943 the Squadron deployed to Amak in the Aleutian Islands, from which it flew against Japanese positions on Kiska and other islands. In 1944, the Squadron sailed for England where it was renamed 442 Squadron and equipped with Spitfire IX fighters. As part of 144 Wing, 442 Squadron flew missions against the retreating Nazis, operating from bases in England and later from deployment sites on the European continent. Re-equipped in 1945 with Mustang fighters, the Squadron flew long-range escort for daylight bombing raids on Germany. 442 Squadron's last wartime mission, on 25 April 1945, was to escort Lancaster bombers in an attack on Hitler's chalet at Berchtesgaden. 442's Squadron Standard bears the following battle honours earned during the Second World War: Aleutians 1943; Normandy 1944; Fortress Europe 1944; France and Germany 1944-1945; Arnhem; and The Rhine.

The Squadron's post-war activities began in 1946 as an RCAF auxiliary fighter squadron, once again based at Sea Island, B.C. 442 Squadron flew Harvards, Vampire jets, F-86 Sabres, and finally T-33 Silver Stars in a continuation of its fighter role. In 1958, it was redesignated an auxiliary transport squadron and re-equipped with Expeditors and Single Otters. In 1964, it was disbanded.

442 Squadron finds its search and rescue roots in 123 Rescue Flight, also based at Sea Island, flying two lifeboat-carrying Hudson aircraft in the air/sea rescue role. In 1953, 123 Rescue Flight was merged with 121 Communications Flight to become 121 Composite Unit. In 1955,

121 Composite Unit was re-equipped with C-47 Dakotas and amphibious Canso aircraft, to perform the dual role of light transport and rescue. In 1957, the first rescue helicopters began operations on the West Coast with the introduction of the Vertol H21 "Flying Bananas." In 1961 Grumman Albatross flying boats replaced the Cansos.

In 1964, 121 Composite Unit relocated to RCAF Station Comox, on Vancouver Island, and shortly thereafter the H21 Helicopter was replaced with newer, Vertol CH113 Labradors. On 8 July 1966, 121 Composite Unit was redesignated 442 Transport and Rescue Squadron. The CH113 Labrador helicopters remain in service with the Squadron today; however the Albatross and Dakota aircraft were replaced with the DeHavilland Buffalo in 1970.

Currently, 442 Squadron operates four Labrador helicopters and six Buffalo aircraft. There are approximately 250 personnel involved in maintenance and flying activities. Unlike many squadrons which rely on other units to provide repair and maintenance personnel, 442 has the ability to carry out all but the most advanced factory-level repairs. The Squadron's ground crews enable the unit to carry out its roles without costly time delays.

The primary role of 442 Transport & Rescue Squadron is the provision of aviation resources in support of rescue operations throughout British Columbia. 442 Squadron maintains one Buffalo and one Labrador on continuous standby at CFB Comox. During normal working hours, Monday to Friday, crews maintain a 30-minute response posture at the Base; outside of working hours and on weekends, crews maintain a two-hour standby posture at home or on telephone pagers.

Over the years, 442 Squadron has participated in several thousand rescue operations and searches for missing aircraft, boats and lost personnel throughout British Columbia and over the adjacent Pacific Ocean. Perhaps the most famous operation in recent history was the rescue of the crew and passengers from the cruise ship *Princendam*, in October of 1980. The Squadron joined US Coast Guard and US Air Force personnel in the most successful marine rescue in modern times. In all, over 500 lives were saved without a single loss of life. For their part in the

operation, 442 Squadron was awarded the Chief of Defence Staff Commendation.

442's dangerous and demanding rescue role has not come without sacrifice; on 30 April 1992, tragedy struck. While engaged in rescue operations south of Bella Coola, B.C., one of the Squadron's Labrador helicopters crashed, killing a Search and Rescue Technician and injuring the rest of the crew.

The secondary role of 442 Squadron is that of light transport for the Canadian Forces. Squadron aircraft are often tasked to transport personnel or equipment in support of Canadian Forces or other government activities. When not engaged in transport or rescue activities, crews spend time honing the skills needed to maintain their reputation as one of the world's finest rescue squadrons, a reputation backed up by the trophies and awards presented to the Squadron and its members over the years.

In 1991, 442 Squadron flew over 4500 hours, 67 per cent of which involved operational search and rescue missions and transport duties, and 33 per cent of which were devoted to training. In 1992, there were 2392 Search and Rescue incidents in the Victoria Region, accounting for over 31 per cent of the national total.

442 Squadron's badge, approved in March 1957 by Her Majesty the Queen, features *Haietlik*, the Snake of Nootka Indian legend. It was selected because of the Squadron's West Coast roots. According to legend *Haietlik* was dispatched by the Thunderbird to kill whales, the major source of food. Once the victim was sighted the Lightning Snake attacked. With a head as sharp as a knife and a red tongue which shot fire, the Snake was able to inflict injuries sufficient to permit the prey to be carried off. The badge bears the motto "Un Dieu, Une Reine, Un Coeur" which translated to English means, "One God, One Queen, One Heart."

442 has a history equalled by few units; it is a history earned not by the passing of time, but by the exploits and heroism of its members. The people of British Columbia know, when they see one of the Squadron's distinctive yellow and red aircraft flying past, help is on its way to someone in need. For fifty years the Squadron has been answering the call for help and it will continue to answer it with the pride and determination it has always shown.

Early Rescue (1)



In a scene repeated many times since, a 442 chopper rescues seamen from a stricken freighter. Courtesy 442 Sqn.

Early Rescue (2)



442 para-rescue personnel unload a casualty, early '60s. Courtesy 442 Sqn.

Old 'Chute



Courtesy 442 Sqn.

Into the Void



Courtesy 442 Sqn.

New 'Chute



Courtesy 442 Sqn.

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414 Sqn

VU 33 moved to CFB Comox in August 1974 after a memorable 20 years at Patricia Bay in Victoria. VU 33 would spend 18 years operating T-33 and Tracker aircraft out of Comox on coastal patrol and Naval support missions.

In 1992, VU 33 and CFB Comox welcomed the arrival of 414 Composite Squadron formerly of North Bay, Ontario. VU 33 officially stood down in July 1992 and 414 Squadron simultaneously assumed VU 33's operational commitments.

414 Squadron comes to Comox with an operational history dating back to 1941 in Croyden, England. Prior to its operations in North Bay, ON, 414 operated out of Rockcliffe, ON; Bagotville, PQ; Baden-Soellingen, Germany; and St. Hubert, PQ. 414 Squadron's roles have evolved over the years from that

of aerial reconnaissance during the early stages of WW II, to survey work over the North, air superiority in Europe, to Electronic Warfare training and support in Canada. 414 Squadron's relocation to Comox brings to an end a 20-year operational tour in North Bay, Ontario.

Currently, 414 Squadron is responsible for all T-33 pilot conversion and refresher training in the CF as well as maintaining former VU 33 commitments regarding support to the CF Naval fleet on the West Coast. 414 Squadron will also continue to support Fighter Group through electronic warfare training.

In the future, 414 Squadron will be twinned with a reactivated 409 Squadron (Reserve) in Comox and in time anticipates the arrival of a coastal patrol aircraft, perhaps the Canadair Challenger.

414 Arrives



Challenger and T-33s overfly the 414 Sqn Stand-Up Parade in 1992.

An Early 414 Visitor



Photo courtesy Pat McElroy

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409 Sqn Nighthawks

By Len Dodd



409 Thunder



Courtesy Airforce Museum

The result of a bilateral defence agreement between Canada and the USA was an air defence organization, continent-wide, which ultimately became the NORAD (North American Air Defence) organization, headquartered in Colorado Springs. The air defence agreements were the reaction to the very large Soviet intercontinental bomber threat. For Comox, this meant the re-activation of 409 Squadron - as an all-weather fighter squadron equipped with CF-100 interceptors built by Avro Canada.

409 Night Fighter Squadron originally formed at Digby, Lincolnshire, England, on 17 June 1941. 409 was officially re-activated on 1 November 1954. The new squadron, one of nine new AW(F) squadrons in the air defence role, received its first active scramble in April when a B47 was intercepted and identified.

By March 1956, 409 had its full complement of 18 CF-100 Mk IVB Canucks and two T-33 Silver Star pilot trainers.

The CF-100 was a complicated airplane with a complex role. There were innumerable problems with fuel management and contamination, control problems, engine troubles and radar pressurization, which in hindsight seem readily resolvable but at the time were frustrating and frequently dangerous. The whole process of air defence and its equipment was operating on the very frontiers of technology. Despite this, 409's flight safety statistics in CF-100 operation were remarkable - only two navigators and one pilot were killed flying Canucks (although three more pilots died flying a T-33 and a C-45 during the CF-100 era).

Because of the very heated Cold War exchange, the threat of a surprise nuclear attack was taken very seriously, so scrambles were commonplace during the 1950s. One day in June 1956 set a Squadron record, never bested: 19 times the alert sounded. A review of procedures following that hectic month resulted in fewer klaxons and lower blood pressures at the QRA.

The first ADC Annual Rocket Shoot was held in Cold Lake in September 1956. The Nighthawks sent two crews but the aircrew team was unable to finish better than fifth out of nine.

A highlight of the year 1958 was the fly-past provided to HRH Princess Margaret during her visit to Victoria. Eleven CF-100s formed the letter "M."

Another high point for the Squadron occurred in 1960 when it was announced that 409 had won the Steinhardt trophy for its performance in 1959. The Stein-

hardt trophy was an annual award to the best overall interceptor squadron in ADC.

Also in 1960, the groundcrew won the Groundcrew Efficiency Trophy at the annual rocket meet in Cold Lake, setting a record for the highest overall score. The aircrew came fourth in the shoot. On the social scene, 409 held its first reunion since re-forming and Nighthawks from both wartime and peacetime met in May for the party.

For nearly eight years, 409 had intensively flown the CF-100, first the Mk. IVA, then the IVB with its more powerful engines, and finally, the Mk. V with its wing extensions which gave it better altitude and rate of climb performance. However, by 1961, the CF-100 was beginning to deserve her Sabre-pilot-inspired sobriquet: "Clunk." Fortunately, conversion to the CF-101 Voodoo was underway. For 409, this meant a trip to the OTU at Namao in early 1962. The Squadron held its first alert with the CF-101s on 2 March 1962. The last CF-100 was flown to Lethbridge on 19 April.

It didn't take the Squadron long to lose one of its new airplanes. F/Ls D. Broadbent and V. Barlett ejected from their CF-101 on 25 August after losing both engines. The US Coast Guard picked them up unhurt, some 90 miles north of Vancouver and brought them home.

The summer of 1964 saw runway repair at Comox, so 409 deployed to Paine Field near Seattle to continue operations and alert. This was the first time a Canadian squadron had operated from an American base since the NORAD agreement had been signed, and the experience proved to be a success for all concerned. The Squadron returned home to Comox in September.

The CF-101 could be airborne in less than five minutes; two minutes later it could be at 35,000 feet, and some Nighthawks had recovered from snap-up attack manoeuvres at altitudes approaching 70,000 feet. Everyone on 409, of course, had flown the aircraft as fast as it would go, about 1.8 Mach. However, the Voodoo had a few unique features which kept its crews focussed on the business at hand: the 101 didn't like to turn at low airspeeds and might roll-couple at high ones; it would pitch-up at high angles of attack and low airspeeds; and it had a fast approach speed. This latter feature gave one crew a long slide after their 101's undercarriage collapsed on landing. The Voodoo slid for close to a mile before stopping. Only the navigator, F/L J. Kuzyk, suffered minor injury.

Exercise Callshot, an inter-squadron competition, produced good results for the Nighthawks, as the 409 aircrew came in second in 1967 (with two crews winning the Vincent Trophy for perfect scores) and won it the following year. One of the Weapons Controllers from SAGE Centre at McChord, which provided radar control for 409's 1968 entry at Bagotville, achieved some fleeting fame when she acted as R/T spokesperson for the four-plane Nighthawk formation as it flew back to Comox. Not only did she fluster the enroute and approach controllers as she replied to their instructions and passed position reports, she also bedazzled her Voodoo pilot who ended up marrying her. In 1970, after a one-year hiatus in the competition, 409 won both the Callshot and the Vincent Trophy.

In May of 1969 a mid-air collision between two CF-101s resulted in the deaths of the two navigators. Both pilots ejected successfully.

409 had an established routine by this time. There were always a dozen or so exercises each year, which tested the resources of aircrew and groundcrew alike. There were the long hours spent in the QRA; there was an annual survival training exercise at Butte Lake; there were sea survival courses in Sardinia (regrettably moved to Comox in 1970) and there were groundschool and simulator training to be borne with resignation.

1971 brought the Peace Wings programme. Between August and November the Squadron's fleet of CF-101s were flown to the US and several improved versions ferried in. The new Voodoos had improved fire control systems and an infra-red detection and homing capability. To add to the lack of flying time brought about by Peace Wings, a serious fault was found in the J-57 engines which powered the Voodoos and the entire fleet was grounded until serviceable engines arrived. In addition, one CF-101 was lost to an engine explosion and fire (the crew safely ejected) and another was struck by lightning while flying (it got back to base minus a pitot boom, radome and radar antenna).

The Peace Wings trades were completed in 1972. The next year, the first of the IIP aircraft was lost when, during the Abbotsford airshow, the second aircraft in a four-plane high-speed pass broke up and burst into flame. The aircrew were burned as they ejected through the fireball; the aircraft crashed.

Yet another Voodoo was lost in 1975 when it pitched-up in the Comox circuit. This crew also ejected successfully. A third was lost in 1976 when, following an airshow practice, the aircraft flew into the waters of Georgia Strait, killing its crew.

Planning began in 1976 for the Squadron Colours presentation which took place in 1977. Also in 1976, 409 took control of its own groundcrew from the Base Maintenance organization.

As a highlight for the upcoming Colour Celebration, the Nighthawks decorated one of their CF-101s in a suitable motif for the event. After many hours of sanding, masking and painting by Squadron members, the result was "Hawk One" which was taken on a cross-Canada tour late in June. Before returning home she stopped in Ottawa and the Squadron Colours were taken on board for the trip to Comox.

On 16 July 1977, a formal ceremony was held at CFB Comox where the B.C. Lieutenant Governor, Walter D. Owen, presented the Squadron with its Colours.

In late July and early August, 409 was grounded again, as was the entire Canadian fleet of Voodoos, due to a fuel line problem. Projects testing afterburner, sensing lines, and fuel-line clamping arrangements were initiated. It took over two years before the problem was completely eliminated; however, due to the efforts of the technical and maintenance staff, the Squadron returned to normal operations within two weeks.

In September 1979, the Air Defence Group fighter competition (Callshot) was held for the first time since 1973. 409 placed second overall, while its groundcrew placed first in the maintenance category.

In June of 1981, a four-man weapons loading team was assembled to represent 409 at the Load Competition in Tyndall AFB, Florida. The competition was from 14 to 25 September. Seventeen teams in three different aircraft categories competed. The team emerged as the competition's overall winners, which also earned the 409 loaders the title of "NORAD Crew of the Year."

1982 was an extremely active year for 409 as it was the Squadron's last year with a full complement of ground and aircrew. The last Callshot Competition among CF-101 squadrons was hosted by CFB Comox from 12 to 17 February. The competition also served to determine who would represent the Canadian Forces at the USAF "William Tell" competition, the American sponsored international weapons meet. The 409 team, made up of aircrew, weapons controllers, maintainers and armourers won in all categories, including the "Top Gun" award, presented to the most proficient aircrew.

The last four-plane Voodoo air demonstration team from 409 performed eleven major airshows in Canada and the US during the 1982 season.

In October, 409 sent a team to Tyndall AFB, Florida, for the William Tell competition. Team Canada staged an impressive beginning by taking the arrival time award, credited to the competitors arriving at Tyndall nearest their designated time. The CF101s flew past the control tower a mere 0.36 seconds after their scheduled arrival time, beating out aircraft with sophisticated inertial navigation systems. The aircrew continued their winning streak by placing first in the Voodoo category. The 409 maintenance team won their division and the weapons controllers once again proved themselves the best in NORAD by claiming the overall best loaders in all aircraft categories.

Because of the impending phase-out of the CF-101 Voodoo, 1983 was a year of changes. As of 11 January, 409 no longer maintained the pooled T-33 fleet, relinquishing that responsibility to VU 33 Utility Squadron. June marked the last time CF-101s would participate in Combat Pike, a live firing exercise designed to test the aircraft's weapons systems.

1 July, 409 changed Air Defence Regions from 24th NORAD Region to Canadian West Region Operational Control Centre, located at CFB North Bay. This marked the first time since the advent of all-weather fighter aircraft that Canadian Air Defence was controlled entirely from Canadian soil.

As the Squadron entered 1984, it became apparent that flying

hours were at a premium as more and more time was spent preparing for the disbandment and reunion. To mark the disbandment of 409 Comox and subsequent retirement of the Voodoo, aircraft 101057 was painted in Squadron colours and became the second "Hawk One." All air and groundcrew helped to wash, sand, mask off and paint the aircraft. The result was breath-taking and received praise from all over North America.

Ever cantankerous, there was one final Voodoo accident. This old lady blew up over Texada Island when a left engine compressor disc failed. The crew ejected successfully.

At 0930 hours Friday 29 June 1984, 7 Hangar opened its doors to receive past and present Squadron members who came from all over North America and Europe to renew old friendships and bid farewell to both the retiring Voodoo and the classification

of AI Navigator.

On 30 June the Squadron Colours were handed over to be carried to their new home at CFB Baden-Soellingen, West Germany. And thus ended the 30-year association between the Comox Valley and 409 Squadron.

Editor's Note: 409 Sqn was disbanded at Baden-Soellingen in 1992, and is slated for re-activation as a reserve squadron, "twinning" with 414 Sqn at CFB Comox.

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 33

More 409 Sqn

Continued from page 32

Final Flight of HG101



In 1984, the Voodoo Flight Simulator (call-sign HG101) flew its final mission. Techs in front are L-R: Bob Collins, Jack Porter and a (younger) Editor. Nav is Bernie Hughes and the pilot is Terry Hunt, now serving at McChord AFB. LCol Hunt will be the first CO of 409 (Reserve) Sqn, when it is reactivated at Comox on 16 Jul 93. Former 409 members interested in attending the parade and attending a proposed mini-reunion are invited to contact Mel Ferraby at (604) 334-3124 or write him at 605 Crestview Drive, Comox, B.C. V9N 6J7.

The First Flight In

Courtesy Airforce Museum



The first aircraft to land at the new RCAF Station Comox was this Grumman Goose, piloted by F/L Howard A. MacDonald. F/L MacDonald was returning to Patricia Bay from a flight to Holberg when he decided to "drop in" for a visit. With F/L MacDonald is Mr. Mundy McRae who was supervising the airport construction.

888 (Komox) Wing Royal Canadian Air Force Association

Regular Membership: Who is eligible?

- *** All serving military personnel at CFB Comox ***
- *** All civilian employees (DND) at CFB Comox ***
- *** All retired military and DND employees who served or worked on a Canadian Forces Air Base ***
- *** All allied military personnel serving or retired from the Air Elements of their country ***
- *** All persons in civil aviation ***
- *** All ex-Air Cadets who have served two or more years and are of the age of majority ***

Associate Membership: Who is eligible?

- *** All persons interested in aviation who support the Aims and Objectives of the RCAFA ***

For more information contact either:
Cec Donovan - 339-7292 or
Alan Scott - 339-4035

OFFICERS' MESS APR & MAY 1993 CALENDAR

Friday 07 May	TGIF Fish 'n' Chips
Sunday 09 May	Mother's Day Brunch Moms No Charge, \$10.00 per adult, \$5.00 per child
Wednesday 12 May	Flowers for Mom Ladies Bridge Club
Friday 14 May	Mixed TGIF/Fighter Pilot Reunion BBQ Steaks \$5.75 per person

Beautiful Baby Portraits by SOOTER'S

19 Professional Colour Portraits only... \$14.98
3 Packages to Choose From
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BUY 2 PACKAGES GET 1 FREE
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For appointment, call your nearest Sooter Studio Now!
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NEXT DEADLINE 10 MAY
- NOON

Continued on page 33

Hamish Odds 'n' Sods

You in your small corner and me in mine if Ye Editor so allows.

The other day I was talking with Norm, yeah, the famous author who from time to time graces the pages of the Totem Times. He's at sea quite a bit but he keeps you in suspense. Which reminds me of the Knock Knock - Who's there? Pencil. Pencil who? If I don't wear my suspenders my pencil fall down!! (Say it aloud.)

Anyway, he was telling me how he was such a hit with the WDs when he was a dashing LAC, white flash in his wedge cap and all. Then he asked me if I still had an eye for the gals. I replied, "Well, I guess I do but I can't remember why!" He laughed and said, "Yeah, I know what you mean."

I then came up with this astute observation: we often hear of "dashing young men" but we don't hear of "dashing young women" what with Wimmens' Lib and all. Norm agreed but made no further comment. So I asked him if he, once being a dashing young airman, still chased after women? To which he quickly responded, "Who? Me? Chase after women?? If a dog chases after a car and catches it, what would he do with it?" At my age I understood! End of subject.

P.S. I just heard that Penthouse Magazine is now "covering up." Yes, leaving more to the imagination. Could be old age is also catching up with them? OK, More Mature, if you say so!

Smitty's
FAMILY RESTAURANT
Comox

YOU
(not just your lawn)
NEED SOME T.L.C.

DINNER SPECIALS Apr. 30-May 6

- Oysters Florentine
- Curried Chicken
- Ultimate Combination Platter
- Seafood Rollup
- Steak & Kidney Pie

\$7.95 TO \$9.95
includes soup or salad, your choice of potato or rice & our special house dessert

Watch for our Mother's Day Specials. Free carnation for every Mom.

across from the Comox Mall
339-3911
7:30-8, 7 days a week

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Please return all unused copies of this newspaper to the Totem Times, or call 339-2541 for pick-up.

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the Men & Women
of
C.F.B. COMOX



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#424 LEAGUE #1
May 12 - June 16

#425 LEAGUE #2
June 30 - August 4

#426 LEAGUE #3
August 11 - September 15

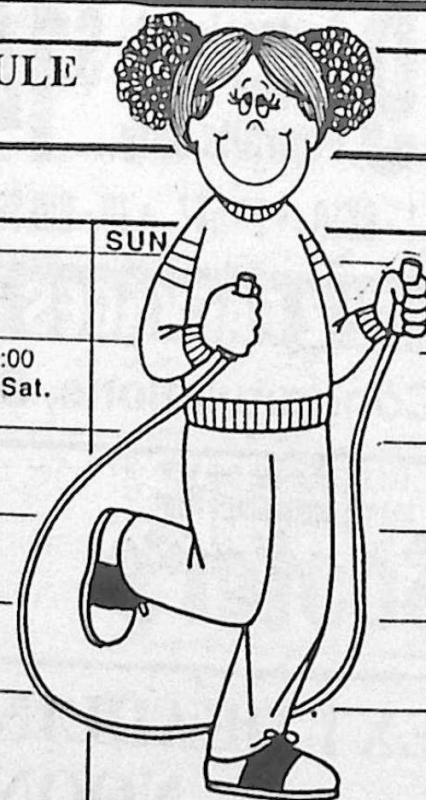
The results after fourteen weeks of squash round robin play at the new Community Centre involving forty-eight players has been decided. The Black Fin trophy was awarded to the "EELS" team, players on the winning team included: Tom Blackburn, Kaiva Cartin, Jim Simpson, Catherine Manson and Murray Rees.

Special thanks to the "Black Fin Pub" for the "Rad" shirts.

Final "Black Fin" standings:
EELS 150 FLOUNDERS 127
DEVILFISH 139 CATFISH 123
GROUPERS 132 HATCHETFISH 113
BLUEBACKS 129 ANGELFISH 110

YOUR FITNESS & STEP CLASS SCHEDULE April 5 - June 25

MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	7:00 - 7:45 Early Bird Kate		7:00 - 7:45 Early Bird Kate			
9:00 - 10:00 Slim&Trim Robin	9:00 - 10:00 Next Step Wendy K	9:00 - 10:00 Slim&Trim Jill	9:00 - 10:00 Next Step Wendy K	9:00 - 10:00 Slim&Trim Gal	9:30 - 11:00 Super Sat. Jill	
10:15-11:15 EZ Clse Wendy M	10:00-11:00 First Step Gal	10:15 - 11:15 EZ Clse Jill	10:00-11:00 First Step Gal	10:15 - 11:15 EZ Clse Gal		
	4:45 - 5:45 Big Step Robin		4:45 - 5:45 Big Step Robin			
6:30 - 7:30 Combo Lori		6:00 - 7:00 Combo Lorena	6:00 - 7:00 Combo Lori			



ONE NIGHT AFFAIRS

906 HANGING BASKETS
KNOW HOW
All Ages
Wednesday, May 5
7:00 - 9:00 pm
Comox Community Ctr
\$8.00

Discover the secret ingredients required to make the most beautiful baskets ever.

907 HERBS IN YOUR GARDEN
All Ages
Wednesday, May 12
7:00 - 9:00 pm
Comox Community Ctr
\$8.00

908 BICYCLE MAINTENANCE
All Ages
Wednesday, May 19
7:00 - 9:00 pm
Comox Community Ctr

If your tire wasn't true - would you know what to do? Learn basic bicycle "fix its" to keep you in the saddle.

909 VHF RADIO TELEPHONE OPERATORS
Monday & Wednesday
May 3 & 5
7:00 - 10:00 pm
Highland Secondary Sc.
\$11.00/person

"Right from the Beginning"

THURSDAY 29 APRIL 1993

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

TOTEM TIMES 35



LEGION LOG

BRANCH 17 COURTENAY
334-4322

ENTERTAINMENT

Fri 23 Apr.....Music by Frontiersmen
Fri 30 Apr.....Music by Frontiersmen
Fri 07 May.....Music by El Dorado

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

BINGOS.....Thursdays, Fridays & Sundays at 7:00 PM
MONDAY.....FUN EUCHRE
TUESDAY.....PUB DARTS
WEDNESDAY.....FUN CRIB
THURSDAY.....FUN DARTS
FRIDAY.....TGIF & MONEY DRAW AT 5:30 - 7:30 PM
SATURDAY.....FUN BRIDGE AT 11:00 AM

EVENTS

Saturday 29 May.....Charity Auction 1 p.m.
Proceeds to Cancer Fund
Donated Items Needed
Call 334-4322 for pick-up or drop off at office

SPORTS

Sunday 25 April.....Fun Crib Tournament
Open to all Crib players
Registration 12 - 1 p.m.

"MORE PLAYERS WELCOME"
Phone 334-4322 (days) for more information

NOW OPEN SUNDAYS.....12 - 7 PM

Dress Code in effect 8 PM Fri & Sat

Building is Handicapped Friendly

BRANCH 160 COMOX
339-2022

ENTERTAINMENT

Fri 23 Apr.....Music by Shaboom
Fri 30 Apr.....Music by Doug MacLean & Party Mix
Fri 07 May.....Music by Westwind

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

SUNDAYS.....Lounge Hours 12:00 Noon to 7:00 PM
MONDAYS.....L.A. Drop-In Bingo, Upper Hall, 7:00 PM
Men's Dart League, Recessed until Sept '93
TUESDAYS.....Ladies Crib League, Lounge, 7:30 PM
Mixed Dart League, Upper Hall, 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAYS.....Navy League Drop-In Bingo
Upper Hall, 7:00 PM
Comox Valley Men's Crib League, Recessed until Sept '93
THURSDAYS.....*1st Branch Exec. Mtg. Upper Hall, 8:00 PM
L.A. Executive Meeting (as required)
*2nd L.A. General Meeting, Upper Hall, 8:00 PM
*3rd Branch General Meeting, Upper Hall, 8:00 PM
FRIDAYS.....TGIF in Lounge
Meat Draws in Lounge, 2:00 to 6:00 PM
Dance (normally downstairs unless advised)
SATURDAYS.....Meat Draws in Lounge, 2:00 to 6:00 PM

FRIDAY KITCHEN SPECIALS

April 30.....Prime Rib Dinner \$8.00 or 2/\$15.00

EVENTS

Sunday 09 May.....Mother's Day
Music by the Alleycats 2 - 6 p.m. in the Lounge
Saturday 16 May.....Slow Pitch Ball Team Garage Sale
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. For info contact
Pat Chester at 339-7456 or Charlie Jones at 339-2906

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Neighbourhood Pub
and Cold Beer & Wine Store

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50th Anniversary of
CFB Comox*

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Argus Restoration Update

The Argus Restoration Committee has been busy swarming over the Goose's inner reaches seeking the elusive corrosion bug. With only an Easter break, members have been surveying the old girl with a fine tooth comb, noting that after 13 years she's held up well with the minimal attention received. The landing gear is still in question until a detailed examination can be carried out. Most evident was the corrosion found in the galley and flight station. Lots of corrosion was visible on the fuselage under the hand brushed paint used as a preservative technique over the years.

As the project gathers momentum, we have received numerous inquiries and support that now reaches nation wide. This reinforces our belief that what we are doing is worth the effort and the rewards will be enjoyed by all for years to come.

One immediate wish that the members have is for some sunny weather as all the work is done outside, and after eight hours they are miserable, wet and cold. It should be noted, however, that they had to be told to go home as they seemed to be having fun; can't have that now.

Along with the restoration, the committee has been gathering videos, pictures, stories and any literature associated with CP107s, and it is our intention to do some form of a book to highlight the career of 712, or the history of the fleet. Anyone wishing to contribute please write to the Comox Heritage Aircraft Society - Argus Committee, P.O. Box 485, Laxo, B.C. V0R 2K0

Whistler Fairways Hotel - Military Rates

The Whistler Fairways Hotel in Whistler, B.C., is offering military rates of \$60.00 based on double occupancy from 1 April to 15 Nov 93.

For further info contact Mil Sports Loc. 8542/8783.

Spring Specials

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For Your Vehicle

Free

"Right from the Beginning"

The Airforce at Comox 1943 - 1993

All twelve 407 Lancs on Parade



Flypast for G/C R.C. Weston, departing Station Commander. All twelve 407 Sqn Lancasters awaiting takeoff. 407 OC was W/C W.D. "Buzz" Foster. Photo courtesy Gord Fisher.



Labatt Blue

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Labatt Proudly Recognizes
CFB Comox
On the Celebration of Their
50th Anniversary

On & Off the Base

Family Resource Centre Events

STRESS SURVIVAL - A workshop that will look at different tools for reducing and coping with stress in one's life. Four sessions, Tuesday evenings, 11 May

1 June, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at FRC. No fee. Registration required. Call 339-8654 for registration and more information.

EMERGENCY FIRST AID CHILDCARE - Certified course will be held on 11, 12 & 13 May, 6:00 - 9:30 p.m. in Bldg. 22, NBC classroom. Fee \$37.50 per person and \$29.00 for spouse (if book is shared). Registration required. Deadline for registration 3 May 1993. Call FRC at 339-8654 for registration.

CONTEST - Name our new Childminding Group and win 9 hours free childcare. Entries can be made at the FRC or any of our childcare programs. Deadline for entries is 3 May. The winner will be selected on 14 May at the FRC.

TEEN BASEBALL LEAGUE - at the Airport Elementary sports field, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

WO & Sgt's Mess April & May 1993 Calendar

WEDNESDAYS, starting 28 April.....Weekly Steak BBQ
Steak, Baked Potato, Bun & Coleslaw for an incredible \$4.00
Call 8430 NLT the preceding Tuesday to reserve your steak

Thursday 29 Apr.....Associates Luncheon

Friday 30 Apr.....Sportsman's Bingo

Monday 03 May.....Wing CWO 50th Anniversary
19 Wing Comox Dinner

Friday 07 May.....Mother's Day Steak & Lobster Dinner
18:30 for 1900 hrs. DJ 21:00 - 01:00 hrs.
Steak & Atlantic Lobster, Corsage, Table Service
Cost: \$20.00 couple Members (Reg. & Assoc.) starting 22 Apr
\$30.00 couple Non Members starting May 3 if space available
Tickets & Seating Plan at Office 11:30 - 13:30 hrs. only

Tuesday 11 May.....Golf Day

Friday 14 May.....TGIF, Cheesburgers & Chips
Private Function in Lounge

Junior Ranks Mess April & May 1993 Calendar

Friday 30 Apr.....TGIF Darts, with food and DJ
Casino Night Cancelled

Friday 07 May.....TGIF Cribbage, with food and DJ

Friday 14 May.....Bosses' Night
With band "The Razors" More details in next edition

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ATTENTION HUNTERS!! We are looking for Potential Candidates for enrollment in our Guideschool 1993. Candidates must be enthusiastic, Physically Fit and Full of Hunt'n Blood. Phone: (403)633-3366.

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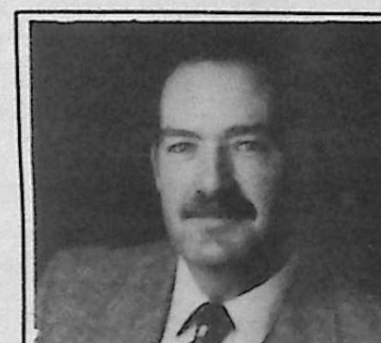
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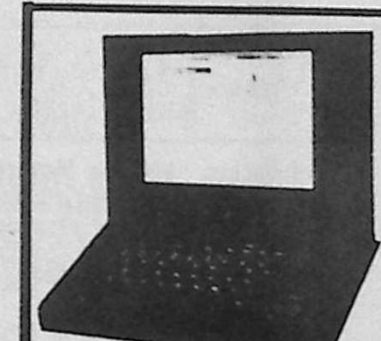
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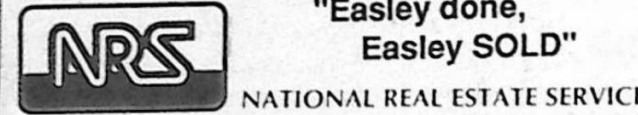
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