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Air Training Plan on Saskatchewan

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**SASKATCHEWAN IN WAR:
THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AIR
TRAINING PLAN ON SASKATCHEWAN**

*Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History.*

by

Peter Christopher Conrad

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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ABSTRACT

Over 131,000 aircrew were trained by the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Saskatchewan air schools trained twenty percent of the pilots and thirty percent of some categories of aircrew. The numbers were impressive. There were many social ramifications with the coming of the Air Training Plan. Saskatchewan had suffered more than any other province of Canada during the Great Depression. The air schools brought economic recovery, as well as the stress of housing shortages and tension brought by large numbers of personnel arriving in the small communities. In spite of these strains, the population responded with warm acceptance. Patriotism was important in the good relations between the air schools and the host communities. The people of the province opened their homes to the airmen at Christmas. The airmen, in turn, acted to help with the harvests across the province.

In the early years of the war Saskatchewan found her population greatly decreased because of enlistments and the migration of people out of the province to the industrial centres of Canada. This lower population of the province created a need for the air personnel to participate in cultural and sporting events in the communities. The schools provided bands where the local community had lost their band or never had one. Civilians brought the schools

stage shows and concerts. Schools and communities united to produce fairs and carnivals. Air personnel and civilians danced together. Airmen and airwomen became the central figures in local sports. In the hockey season of 1942-43, the airmen took over the senior hockey league in the province. In cultural and sporting events, the airmen, airwomen and the local civilians united as one community.

Only the Service Flying Training School at Moose Jaw reported friction between civilians and airmen. The violence at Moose Jaw in 1944 was the result of poor morale and discipline among a group of airmen. The disturbances were important because they demonstrated the potential for friction between civilians and air personnel.

Patriotism, economic recovery and the unity of air schools and host communities for the war effort brought a significant and lasting change to the province. The Second World War was an important chapter in Saskatchewan history that cannot be ignored.

PREFACE

"... NATURAL FODDER FOR A THESIS."

In the spring of 1981 the Saskatoon Star Phoenix reported a new study by the two historians Greenhous and Hillmer about the social impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.¹ The paper presented to the Western Canadian Studies Conference in Banff, Alberta by the two historians, was special to the Saskatoon newspaper because the study included communities in Saskatchewan. Although the study they presented was important,

Greenhous and Hillmer readily admit their paper does not give much more than an overview of what the BCATP meant to the province, easily the most devastated part of the country in the Dirty 30s. In fact, they suggest it would be natural fodder for a thesis.²

During my studies, I have been supported by funds provided by the College of Graduate Studies and Research and the Department of History. As well, research at the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa was made possible by a grant from the J.S. Ewart Memorial Fund, University of Manitoba. I would like to express my gratitude to those who read this thesis and assisted in the research and

preparation of it. My thanks to the members of my committee: R.S. Ridgway, J.R. Miller and T.D. Regehr, and especially to my supervisor Professor W.A. Waiser for his patient guidance, encouragement and support.

I am grateful for the efforts of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, especially Darcy Hande who always found time to assist. I am grateful to Shelly Sweeny of the University of Regina Archives for searching the Regina College Records for material on the use of the facilities during the Second World War. I am also indebted to Warren Clubb at the Saskatoon Western Development Museum for his assistance in making the interviews of the BCATP Project available.

To all those who wrote me letters offering assistance and advice, I am very grateful. I was fortunate in receiving many letters from Brerton Greenhous from the Directorate of History, Department of National Defence. He encouraged the research and gave invaluable advice. I would also like to express my gratitude to Ray Crone, who also gave the study guidance. I am also grateful to those who invited me into their homes. A special thanks must go to Bill and Dorothy Minor and Stan Frith who volunteered time and advice to the project. A special thank you to Jim Kirk who wrote letters, agreed to an interview and took late night phone calls.

A special thanks to my wife Marilyn for proofreading the thesis, typing, reading, and editing. Thank you for your encouragement and support.

Notes:

1. Ray Guay, "Saskatchewan's Wartime Effort," Saskatoon, Star Phoenix, (Accent supplement), April 11, 1981, p. 2. The historical article was: Brerton Greenhous and Norman Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada: Some Saskatchewan Case Studies," Journal of Canadian Studies, Volume 16, (Fall-Winter, 1981).

2. Ray Guay, "Saskatchewan's Wartime Effort."

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to
Marilyn Simone

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AIR TRAINING PLAN

Canada's air training experience did not originate with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan [BCATP]. Canada had been an important centre for air training during the Great War. Canada was selected in the Second World War as the home of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan because of its previous experience and because Canada was on the North Atlantic Trading route. Canada was believed to have both the expertise and the self-confidence to establish the Air Training facilities that would be needed during the war. In the years that followed the Great War, Britain had allowed her armed forces to deteriorate. Canadian efforts to train large numbers of aircrew were central to development of the strong air force needed in the war against Germany.

William Lyon Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister of Canada, was aware of the United Kingdom's needs. The Prime Minister exploited the desperate need of the United Kingdom to achieve an advantageous position for Canada in the war.

King was not prepared to allow British control of the Air Training Plan as they had had during the Great War. Canada would administer and control the BCATP. The Prime Minister would avoid the mistakes of the Great War. The risk of conscription also had to be avoided. King could not allow the United Kingdom to control any part of Canada's war effort directly. More important than the issue of control was the unity of the country. King forced the United Kingdom to accept the principle that the BCATP would be Canada's central contribution to the war. By achieving this, King was able to avoid the responsibility of supplying large numbers of land forces. With the reduced expeditionary forces, the risk of resorting to conscription was greatly reduced. In reducing the risk of conscription, King effectively reduced the risk of tensions between the French and English of Canada. At the same time King maximized the economic benefit that the war effort would bring to Canada. By bringing economic benefits to Canada, and in particular to the prairie west, no region could claim that it was not sharing in the prosperity. The Air Training Plan brought economic recovery from the Depression to Saskatchewan. Added to the economic benefit that shaped western Canada's attitude to the Plan was a widespread feeling of patriotism. The feeling of alienation in the West quickly dissipated during the war.

When the Great War began in 1914, many believed that aviation was not important in the serious business of war. Flying was for the light-hearted. Over time however, the airplane proved itself as a weapon. With the airplane the barriers of trenches and walls were removed. The airplane could deliver bombs where artillery never could before. The British responded by expanding their flying services and Canada became a major source of new recruits. Canadians for their part responded. Increasing numbers joined the British air services.¹

Money, government support and organization of recruiting and training for the Canadian aircrew in the Great War began in 1917 with the arrival of the Royal Flying Corps in Canada. The Canadian establishment was known as RFC Canada or the "Imperial Royal Flying Corps".² The RFC also established a smaller air training school in Egypt. The Canadian government gave full support to the new aviation establishment. Appropriate Canadian officials were kept informed of the activities of RFC Canada, but the Commander in Charge was responsible only to the War Office, then later the Air Ministry, in London.³

The purpose of RFC Canada was to recruit and train Canadian aircrew for the Royal Flying Corps in Britain. RFC Canada was in competition for recruits across Canada with the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the Royal Naval Air Service. This competition became less significant as

district militia recruiting stations cooperated with RFC Canada to recruit pilot candidates.⁴

Canada's air training efforts during the Great War were generally successful. About 9,200 cadets had enlisted and 3,135 had completed their pilot training. Over 2,500 pilots went overseas; the remainder were either instructors or waiting transport. As well, 137 observers had been trained and eighty-five had been sent overseas. It was clear that the training operations of RFC/RAF Canada were just reaching a peak in late 1918. Although there was some criticism of the Canadian efforts, the Canadian training scheme was more successful than that of Egypt. The Canadian success was due to the enthusiastic Canadian volunteers in the Air Corps and the strong leadership of Hoare. The success of the Canadian scheme was indicated by the plans for expansion in 1919 that were made before the war ended.⁵

At the end of the war, there was a short-lived Canadian Air Force, the "Royal Canadian Naval Air Service" that patrolled the Atlantic coast of Canada.⁶ The Force had no link with the Canadian Corps overseas nor the Departments of Militia and Defence in Canada. The force was dissolved after the Armistice. Canadians remembered their aviation contribution to the Great War and called for the establishments of a Canadian air force. In 1924, the Royal Canadian Air Force was established even though there was no external threat to Canada.⁷

The different military offices in Canada were unified into the Department of National Defence in 1922-23. The Royal Canadian Air Force emerged from this organization as a permanent force which remained in the control of the army. Finally, in 1938, the RCAF gained its full independence.⁸

During the early years, the RCAF carried out civilian and military roles. The work of the Air Force included forest patrolling, forest fire fighting, aerial surveying, exploratory flights, medical rescue, aerial policing, crop dusting and forest dusting. As well, the Air Force found itself responsible for civilian aviation. The force registered civilian aircraft, controlled Canadian air space and supervised the design and construction of machines to stimulate the domestic air industry.

The civilian role of the RCAF ended in 1936 with the formation of the Department of Transport. The responsibilities of the RCAF were reduced, as was the funding the Air Force received because of the depression. Funding for the RCAF dropped in 1932 from \$5,442,000 to \$1,750,000.⁹

Meanwhile, in the 1930s the British government desired an improved air force. The British were eager to improve their air force because of increasing German air forces. Britain found that she had out-dated military equipment. As well there were not enough trained pilots and ground crew. The British government realized the importance of air

warfare from the reports of the Spanish civil war was in the late 1930s. Improvement of the British Air Force was needed. The British government, like the Canadian government, wanted to minimize the cost of the improved Air Force. Any air training scheme that would train airmen in the Commonwealth for the United Kingdom was encouraged. One scheme that had been arranged with Australia in 1923 was seen as a model for the other dominions of the Commonwealth. Few dominions wanted to be committed to an air training plan for the RAF when there was no war. The United Kingdom was pursuing policies that would commit all the dominions of the Commonwealth to the defence decisions made by Britain. With the commitment from the Commonwealth Britain would avoid the full cost of expanding her military forces. Mackenzie King was aware of the motivations of the United Kingdom and resisted the repeated requests in order to protect Canadian unity. Mackenzie King avoided any decision as long as he could. When the pressure to act became intense, King used the need of the United Kingdom for his own advantage.¹⁰

In 1935 the King government agreed in principle to a "Trained in Canada Scheme," because the pressure on King had become intense and there was little commitment on the part of the Canadian government. The Trained in Canada Scheme called for the selection and training of fifteen Canadian pilots for the Royal Air Force annually. The candidates were trained with the RCAF. Final approval for

the Trained in Canada Scheme came in 1937. The delay was caused by slow construction of the air training facilities at Trenton, Ontario. Delays in fulfilling the commitment to Britain were caused by Canada's increased air force requirements and the cautious approach of King.¹¹ From the group of fifteen, thirteen successfully completed their training at Trenton, Ontario in 1938.¹² The second group began their training for the RAF in January 1939 and completed the course in September of the same year. However, this group was retained in Canada.¹³

The training schemes of the Commonwealth provided few pilots to the RAF. More pilots had to be trained. Britain acted on this need by approving the construction of seven new air training schools within her own borders. As the schools were established in Britain, it was noted that there was not enough land. What little land was available was bought at a premium. As well, the English weather was unpredictable. The need for schools outside of Britain became paramount.¹⁴

A Canadian member of the RAF, Group Captain Robert Leckie, DSO, ASC, DFC, was the first to suggest the advantages of training schools in Canada in the early summer of 1936. Leckie was in a good position to make the proposal for a Canadian air training plan. After a long career in the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Air Force, Leckie had become the Superintendent of RAF Reserves from 1933 to 1936. The RAF Reserves formed an important

part of the Training Branch that was commanded by Group Captain Arthur Tedder (later he became Marshal of the RAF, Lord Tedder).¹⁵ Leckie drew up a memorandum that demonstrated the strategic advantage of Canada as a training centre for the RAF. The memorandum pointed out the closeness of Canada to the United Kingdom and the immediate location of the USA. Another attractive point emphasized in the memorandum was that the Training Plan on Canadian soil would attract many more Canadians to the RAF.¹⁶ In addition Leckie submitted his memorandum to those who remembered well the training efforts of Canada during the Great War.¹⁷

Leckie's memorandum struck a sympathetic chord in the Air Ministry. In August 1936, Tedder and the British Secretary of State for Air, Lord Swinton, approached Ian Mackenzie, the Canada Minister of National Defense, about the possibility for a scheme of air training in Canada. The federal cabinet rejected the proposal. With this decision by the federal cabinet the issue of a British Air Training in Canada remained dormant for almost two years.

The question was opened again in May, 1938 when the government of the United Kingdom sent a mission to Ottawa, headed by the British industrialist, J.G. Weir. Weir was to assess the Canadian aircraft industry for the British government. When the opportunity arose, he was to put forward the air training question. The opportunity came in a meeting between Sir Frances Floud, the British High Commissioner in Ottawa, Weir and Prime Minister King.¹⁸

King made it clear that he was opposed to British schools being established in Canada. In an account by Prime Minister King of the meeting he told the British visitors that, "... we would agree to cooperate to the extent of all the [air training] space they might wish but that was not what was wanted."¹⁹ As well, the memorandum stated the reasons why there could not be British control. Making a decision that committed Canada to enter an European war on the side of Britain when there was no war was seen as dangerous to King. French Canada would have rejected a commitment to England.

Although King warned the British delegation that disclosing the content of their meetings to the media would do more harm than good, the information was leaked.²⁰ This disclosure of information led to criticism by Arthur Meighen, Conservative leader in the Senate²¹ and by R.B. Bennett, the leader of the Opposition, in the House of Commons. The attitude of the King government, according to the Opposition, was unacceptable. After being hard-pressed in the House of Commons, King replied that:

We ... are prepared to have our own establishment here and to give in those establishments facilities [opportunities] to British pilots to come and train here. But they must come and train in establishments which are under the control of the government of Canada and for which the Minister of National Defense

will be able to answer in this Parliament with respect to everything concerning them.²²

This statement by King ended the issue and became the basis for discussions on the air training question. Four days later, on July 5, a proposal was drafted and sent to the United Kingdom by Mackenzie King. The proposal included an invitation to the British government to send officials to Canada to work out an acceptable proposal for the air training scheme.²³

Mackenzie King's statement in the House of Commons and the offer that followed brought an expression of gratitude from the United Kingdom. Sir Kingsly Wood, the new Secretary of State for Air, stated on July 7 in the British House of Commons that a reply had already been sent, "... expressing warm appreciation for the offer," and that arrangements had been made, "... for an officer to be sent immediately to Canada to explore ... the possibility of working out such a scheme for training facilities in Canada."²⁴ It was soon to be found, however, that British expectations were too high and that the officials of the United Kingdom had misinterpreted King's offer.

The same number of pilots to be trained and the same structure was used in the report that Croil submitted to the Deputy Minister of National Defense on July 5. This plan would include fifteen pilots who had been a part of the earlier Trained-in-Canada Scheme plus one hundred and

twenty direct entries. Included were as many candidates that could be recruited in Canada. If the recruitment numbers were not high enough to achieve the three-hundred-man goal for one year, recruits could be supplied by the United Kingdom to make up any shortfall. To carry out this training, three new schools would be needed in addition to Camp Borden and Trenton.²⁵

The training plan made sense in that it would train Canadians for the Royal Air Force. There would not be the expense of transporting British trainees to Canada and then back to the United Kingdom. As well, the plan fit the pattern of the earlier Trained-in-Canada Scheme. But the political implications of the plan were not acceptable to Mackenzie King. King needed to keep Canada united and protect Canadian sovereignty.²⁶ There was no need at this point to submit Canada to a binding policy of training air crew for Britain. There was no war and therefore no reason to commit Canada to any air training scheme. The United Kingdom, for her part, was very interested in winning an edge in the negotiations. Even if a Trained-in-Canada Scheme had been expensive, Britain was willing to pay the price to draw a commitment from Canada to support every effort of the United Kingdom. Mackenzie King's concern for national unity and autonomy from Britain, on the other hand, were so important that Canada declared war, after the United Kingdom, on September 10, 1939.²⁷

King replied to the proposed Air Training Plan in a letter on September 6, 1938 to the British High Commissioner to Canada. King stalled the process by asking for more detailed information and concluded: "... upon receiving the information I shall communicate it to the Minister of National Defense, in order that he may present the whole situation to Council [Cabinet] as expeditiously as possible."²⁸ This letter was the end of the issue until December 9. The British government moved to make the Air Training Plan more acceptable by simply scaling the plan down. The new plan called for one hundred and thirty-five Canadian pilots. There was no mention of sending any British recruits.²⁹

Prime Minister King's reply of December 31, 1938 made three points clear that had not yet been included in the plan. The first was that only British pilots were to be trained. The second issue was that the numbers were too large. If the plan was implemented more Canadians would be going into the RAF than the RCAF and this would undermine the autonomy of the RCAF. The Trained-in-Canada scheme was already providing a flow of Canadians to the RAF. Finally, it was important that the schools in Canada be under the control of the Canadian Department of National Defense.³⁰

The letter by Mackenzie King of December 31, 1938 rejected the plan as it had been presented by the British government. The negotiations that followed were difficult but an agreement was worked out two months later. The new

plan would allow fifty British candidates to be trained with another seventy-five Canadians to be trained for the RCAF.³¹ In April 1939 this plan was accepted because it trained British airmen and not Canadians for the RAF. Most importantly the plan did not commit Canada to support any British military initiative. The plan appeared to be a simple exchange of personnel for air training than a commitment to Britain.

Fifty British pupils were to arrive in Canada after they had their elementary training. The group was withheld in the United Kingdom however because the war was so immediate. The result was that the initial training agreement was never fully implemented. The benefit of the agreement was that it brought a realization of the inadequate training facilities in Canada. Expansion and upgrading of facilities for the eventual British Commonwealth Air Training Plan were already underway. Most importantly the negotiations that began in July 1938 and continued until April 1939 had brought about an understanding between the RAF and the RCAF on training issues. As well, the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada had developed a better understanding of the other's needs and problems.³²

When the war broke out plans were soon underway. On September 10 there was a meeting at the Air Ministry with Wing Commander H.V. Hickes, the Canadian Air Liaison Officer in London, and Group Captain A.F. Godfrey, member

of the RCAF. At this meeting practical matters were discussed such as winter flying, promotions for flying instructors, the enlistment of Americans, and aircraft and the availability of airfields in Canada. No far reaching decisions were made, but it was stressed by the British that air training should be the top priority to Canada even to the extent of delaying the preparations of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces for movement to Britain. It was decided to send a large British Air Mission to Canada to convince the Canadian government to cooperate. Finally, it was confirmed that the control over the air training plans would remain with the RCAF.³³

A message from Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of Britain, to King demonstrated the urgency and importance the British government placed on the Plan:

I am sure that you will agree that the scheme outlined in the following message is of first importance. For this reason, and because it invites cooperation with Canada to a very special degree, I want to make a special personal appeal to you about it. I feel that so far reaching a project will strike your imagination particularly as it concerns an all important field of war activity in which Canada has already made so striking and gallant an individual contribution. May I therefore ask that the matter should receive very urgent attention.³⁴

The main point of the message was a call for assistance "... to counter German air strength and, in combination with other military measures and economic pressure to bring ultimate victory."³⁵ The numbers the British called for were a minimum of 50,000 aircrew annually. The closing statement made clear the dramatic need of the training plan:

We hope that you will agree as to the immense influence which the development and realization of such a great project as that outlined in this telegram may have upon the whole course of the war; it might even prove decisive. We trust therefore that this co-operation method of approach to the problem will appeal to your Government. The knowledge that a vast air potential was being built up in the Dominion where no German air activity could interfere with expansion, might well have a psychological effect on the German equal to that produced by the intervention of the United States in the last war with its vast resources.³⁶

William Lyon Mackenzie King received the message after dinner on September 26, 1939. The Prime Minister was impressed with the magnitude and importance that Chamberlain attached to the Plan. More important, King

observed that, "... with concentration of Canadian energies on air training and air power and therefore less pressure for a large army, there would also be less risk of agitation for conscription."³⁷ The Air Training Plan in Canada, as the nation's major contribution to the war effort, would minimize the risks of conscription because the Canadians in the RCAF would be volunteers. Further, the development of the facilities would bring economic prosperity to Canada. Canada appeared to be the most appropriate place for the Air Training Plan because of the experience of the Great War.

The proposal came before the Cabinet on September 28, 1939. The result of the Cabinet meeting was agreement in principle with the Air Training Plan and a call for more information and negotiations.³⁸ This view was outlined in the telegram sent the same day to the Prime Minister of Britain.³⁹ King remained concerned that the British would take large numbers of Canadians into the Royal Air Force as well as contracting Canada's air effort. The Prime Minister would not allow that same control the RAF had had during the Great War.⁴⁰

Cost became a major issue. The Chiefs of Staff estimated that Canadian defense would cost \$491,689,000 and \$150,364,000 would be the cost for air defense.⁴¹ Canada had agreed to give the United Kingdom unlimited credit due to the imbalance of trade that had developed with the USA. The costs would be too high with the large expenditures on

air training. As a result the other Dominions of the Commonwealth would have to pay their share. The financing of the Plan became an issue because the leaders of the Dominions had become conditioned by the Great Depression. Few understood or were prepared for the massive expenditures of modern warfare. The Canadian Cabinet War Committee felt they were doing enough; the figures for cost put them in a defensive state of mind when the British negotiator, Lord Riversdale, an industrialist and advisor on the purchase of war materials, arrived in Ottawa on October 14, 1939.⁴²

Two days after Riversdale's arrival, a preliminary meeting was held during which the basic proposal was outlined. The Plan called for 850 pilots, 510 air observers and 850 wireless operators (air gunners) trained every four weeks. About 29,000 aircrew a year would be trained. The elementary flying was to be carried out in the three dominions. The airmen would be transferred to Canada for advanced flying training. The entire course of training for air observers, wireless operators and air gunners would be carried out in Canada. The Plan proposed twelve elementary flying training schools, twenty-five advanced or service flying training schools, fifteen air observer schools, fifteen bombing and gunnery schools, three air navigation schools, and one large wireless school. To operate the plan 54,000 air force personnel would be required. The training operation would also require five thousand aircraft.⁴³

The figures for the Plan were higher than many had imagined. Air Commodore E.W. Stedman, who was head of the Engineering and Supply Branch of the Royal Air Force, wrote in his diary that the proposal "... was so far ahead of anything that we had thought of that everyone who had not heard of the details before was quite taken aback at its magnitude. Then the question arose, 'How much is it going to cost?'"⁴⁴

Stedman was appointed to come up with an estimate of the cost for the Plan for a three-year period. His estimate was \$989,859,904. Riversdale adjusted the figures. The estimate presented to the members of the war committee of the Canadian Cabinet was, 888,500,000. This total was further reduced when Riversdale explained that the United Kingdom would supply aircraft, engines, spare parts and accessories at a value of \$140,000,000. The total then stood at \$748,500,000. This total would be split among the three countries participating. Canada was expected to supply one-half the trainees and one-half the cost which would be \$374,230,000. Australia and New Zealand would supply the rest.⁴⁵

Prime Minister King believed Canada's share was far too high. He argued that it was "... a scheme suggested by the British government and for which the British must be mainly responsible."⁴⁶ King was not alone in his belief. J.L. Ralston, the Minister of Finance, agreed that the British

contribution had to be higher. Unless the United Kingdom contributed more, Canada would be bled to death.⁴⁷

The talks became more complicated. The talks included issues of Commonwealth trade. Canada laid down two essential conditions to financing the Training Plan. One was that Britain had to buy more Canadian wheat. Second, the amount of Canadian credit to the United Kingdom had to be restricted. The decision was made that the Air Training Plan was important enough to grant Canada the two conditions. With this decision, Britain requested that the Air Training Plan receive top priority in Canada.⁴⁸

Australia and New Zealand set three conditions for their participation. First, the United Kingdom had to underwrite the monthly payments to Canada. Second, the dominion aircrew ratio that was set by Britain as forty percent for Canada, forty percent for Australia and twelve percent for New Zealand should be set according to population. The result was that Canada would supply fifty-seven percent, Australia would supply thirty-five percent, and New Zealand would supply twenty-eight percent of the aircrew. The third condition was that in addition to the elementary training, seven-ninths of all Australian pilot recruits and a similar proposition of observers, wireless operations and air gunners, must be fully trained at home.⁴⁹

The cost of the Plan was reduced to \$607,271,210 with an agreed termination date of March 3, 1943. The United

Kingdom would pay \$185,000,000. Canada would pay for initial and elementary training at a cost of \$66,146,048. The pooled expenditures of the three dominions would be \$356,125,162: 80.64 percent for Canada, 11.28 percent for Australia, and 8.08 percent for New Zealand. Canada would pay \$287,179,331, Australia \$40,170,918, and New Zealand \$28,774,913.⁵⁰

The negotiations were completed by the end of November. The selection of air fields was already underway. The British government wanted to proceed immediately with the initialing of the agreement "... so that we may ... take this essential step forward in our joint war effort."⁵¹ Prime Minister King, however, refused to initial the agreement until the earlier Canadian conditions were answered. These conditions included British purchases of Canadian wheat and the agreement that the Air Training Plan had priority over all other military commitments by Canada. The British Prime Minister agreed with the trade condition, but remained silent on the priority statement.⁵² King remained firm on his request for the priority statement because it would help minimize the risks of conscription in Canada. King wanted a statement that suggested that "... participation in the Air Training Scheme would provide more effective assistance than any other form of co-operation which Canada could give."⁵³

After negotiations between Canada and British about the statement King wanted, a reply arrived on December 1, 1939:

The United Kingdom Government have informed us that, considering present and future requirements, they feel that participation in the Air Training Scheme would provide for more effective assistance toward our ultimate victory than any other form of cooperation which Canada can give. At the same time they would wish it to be clearly understood that they would welcome no less heartily the presence of Canadian land forces in the theater of war.⁵⁴

Mackenzie King accepted the statement but edited it for his own purpose. The passage was used in King's broadcast of December 17 that announced the creation of the Training Plan:

The United Kingdom Government has informed us that ... the Plan ... would provide for the more effective assistance ... than any other form of military cooperation which Canada can give. At the same time the United Kingdom Government wished it to be clearly understood that it would welcome no less heartily the presence of Canadian land forces in the theater of war at the earliest possible moment.⁵⁵

The timing of the announcement and the addition of the last sentiment were very significant. At the same time that the

broadcast was taking place, Canada's first division was on its way to Britain. The statement suggested that Canada was fulfilling its obligations for land forces at that moment. The statement suggested that the fast arrival of troops instead of large numbers of troops was what mattered the most.⁵⁶

It was late on December 16, 1939 when all the issues had finally been settled. By manipulating Britain's desperate need for airmen Mackenzie King had the assurance that the Air Training Plan would be viewed as the dominion's central role. With this King reduced the risk of conscription that would result if large numbers of Canadian land forces were called upon. At midnight, the small group that had gathered in King's office to sign the "Agreement Relating to the Training of Pilots and Aircraft Crews in Canada and Their Subsequent Service," were stalled by another issue. A discussion developed around the date that would be placed on the agreement. The final wording of the agreement had been complete on December 16. King pointed out that at that moment it was December 17 which was also his birthday. To Mackenzie King the signing of the agreement on his birthday would bring good luck. Following a round of birthday greetings, the agreement was signed and dated December 17, 1939. Lord Riversdale signed for the United Kingdom and King for Canada. The officials who had represented Australia and New Zealand had already departed

for home before the details had been negotiated. Both dominions added their signatures later.⁵⁷

With this simple signing ceremony the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was brought into being. The Air Training Plan was costly, but it had significant economic benefits for the prairies. The economic benefit would be even more significant to Saskatchewan because the province had suffered to a greater extent than any other province in Canada during the Great Depression. Unlike the Great War, the Air Training Plan would bring a good deal of benefit to the prairies. The people of Saskatchewan accepted the strain of constructing airports and supporting services to them later. Those of the province accepted their role with the same patriotic sentiment that had characterized their contribution during the Great War.

At the end of the Second World War the BCATP had produced over 131,000 trained aircrew. Saskatchewan had contributed one-fifth of the pilots as high as thirty percent of some types of aircrew. With the massive influx of air personnel and money, the society on the prairies was changed. The host communities invited the air personnel into their social activities. Airmen were invited into the homes of the civilians at Christmas and helped on farms during the harvests. The aircrew played hockey and baseball in the host communities.

FOOTNOTES FOR
CHAPTER I

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2. Ibid., p. 26.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 88.
5. Ibid., p. 117 - 118.
6. Fred J. Hatch, "The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan 1939 - 1945," (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1969), p. 5.
7. W.A.B. Douglas, The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Vol. II (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 35.
8. Ibid., pp. 35-36; Hatch, "The BCATP 1939-1945," pp. 16-17.
9. Hatch, "The BCATP 1939-1945," pp. 15-16.
10. Douglas The Creation of a National Air Force, p. 36; see also, F.J. Hatch, The Aerodrome of Democracy: Canada and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, 1939-1945, (Ottawa: Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, Occasional Paper No. 1, 1983), p. 2; F.M. Cutlack, The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theaters of War, 1914 - 1918, (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1923), en passim; Douglas Gillison, Australia in the War of 1939 - 1945: Royal Australian Air Force (Adelaide: Griffin Press, 1962), p. 40; J.L. Granatstein, Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 46; Rene Kraus, Winston Churchill: A Biography, (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1940), pp. 334-348; Patrick Cosgrave, Churchill at War: Alone 1939-40, (London: Collins, 1974), pp. 17 - 93.
11. Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, Vol. 6, 1936 - 1939, (hereafter DCER), (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1972), pp. 179 - 180, Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary, March 25, 1937; Hatch, Aerodrome of Democracy, p. 3. The delays in construction of the air training facilities at Trenton were due to the Depression and restricted funds for the project.
12. Hatch, The Aerodrome of Democracy, p. 6.

13. F.H. Hitchens, Air Board, Canadian Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force, (Ottawa: Canadian War Museum, National Museum of Man, Mercury Series Paper No. 2, 1972), p. 249; 363.
14. Hatch The Aerodrome of Democracy, p. 6.
15. Ibid., p. 7.
16. "Notes on the Proposal to Establish a Flying Training School in Canada," signed by Robert Leckie, (nd), Roundel, II, (December, 1949), pp. 14 - 15, cited in Hatch The Aerodrome of Democracy p. 7.
17. Hatch The Aerodrome of Democracy. p. 7.
18. Hatch The Aerodrome of Democracy p. 8.
19. DCER, Vol. 6, 1936 - 1939, p. 208. Memorandum by the Prime Minister to O.D. Skelton.
20. Ibid., p 208.
21. Canada, Senate, Debates, June 14, 1938, col. 521.
22. Canada, House of Commons, Debates, July, 1, 1938, cols. 4523 - 4532. See also, Douglas The Creation of a National Air Force, p. 194.
23. DCER, Vol. 6, 1936 - 1939, p. 218. British High Commissioner to Prime Minister, July 7, 1938.
24. The United Kingdom, House of Commons, Debates, July 7, 1938, Col. 595.
25. Ibid., pp. 226-228. Prime Minister to British High Commissioner, September 6, 1938; Memorandum by O.D. Skelton, September 9, 1938.
26. Ibid., Memorandum of the Prime Minister to O. D. Skelton, pp. 223 - 224.
27. Granatstein, Canada's War pp. 42-43.
28. DCER, Vol. 6, 1936 - 1939, p. 225. Prime Minister to British High Commissioner, September 6, 1938, p. 225.
29. Ibid., pp. 227-230. British High Commissioner to Prime Minister, December 9, 1938, and Memorandum by British Government, December 9, 1938, pp. 227 - 230.
30. Ibid., pp. 230-232. Prime Minister to British High Commissioner, December 31, 1938.

31. Public Archives of Canada, Records of the RCAF, RG 24, Volume 3531, file HQ 898-6-41, "Memorandum of Agreement: Training of Short Service Commissioned Officers (General Duties Branch)." cited in Hatch, "The BCATP 1939-1945," p. 56.
32. Hatch The Aerodrome of Democracy, pp. 11 - 12.
33. Hatch The Aerodrome of Democracy p. 13.
34. DCER, Vol. 7, Part I, 1939 - 1941, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1972), p. 549. Dominions Secretary to Secretary for External Affairs, September 26, 1939. See also, Norman Ward, ed., A Party Politician: The Memoirs of Chubby Power, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1966), pp. 196 - 204.
35. DCER, Vol. 7, Part I, 1939 - 1941, p. 551.
36. J.W. Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, Vol I, 1939 - 1944, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 40.
37. DCER, Vol. 7, Part I, 1939 - 1941, pp. 552-555. Minutes of Emergency Council (Committee on General Policy) of Cabinet, September 28, 1939.
38. Ibid., pp. 556-557. Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary, September 28, 1939.
39. Ibid., pp. 557-559. Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Prime Minister, September 29, 1939. See also, Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 1, pp. 41 - 44.
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41. Ibid.
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45. Hatch The Aerodrome of Democracy, p. 17.
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47. R. S. Sayers, Financial Policy: 1939 - 45, (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1956), pp. 324 - 333.

48. Sayers, Financial Policy, pp. 324-333; see also, Canada, Agreement Relating to Training of Pilots and Aircraft Crews in Canada and Their Subsequent Service between the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand Signed at Ottawa, December 17, 1939, Printed in full in C.P. Stacey, Arms, Men and Government: The War Policies of Canada, 1939 - 1945, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), Appendix "J", pp. 565 - 578. (Cited as BCATP Agreement after this point).
49. BCATP Agreement.
50. DCER, Vol. 7, Part I, 1939 - 1941, pp. 620-621, Rogers to Balfour, November, 27, 1939.
51. Ibid., pp. 635-636, Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary, November 28, 1939; Douglas The Creation of a National Air Force, p. 212 - 213.
52. DCER, Vol. 7, Part I, 1939 - 1941, p. 636, Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary, November 28, 1939.
53. Ibid., p. 637, Dominions Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary, December 1, 1939.
54. W.L.M. King, The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan Broadcast by Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, M.P., Prime Minister of Canada, Sunday, December 17, 1939, (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, 1939), p. 16. The emphasis is by the author.
55. Stacey, Arms, Men and Governments, p. 25.
56. DCER, Vol. 7, Part I, 1939 - 1941, p. 635. Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominion Secretary, November 28, 1939. See Douglas The Creation of a National Air Force, pp. 216 - 217. The issue of the status of RCAF airmen overseas was resolved. See the following: DCER, Vol. 7, Part I, 1939 - 1941, pp. 639-642. Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Prime Minister, December 4, 1939; Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary, December 5, 1939; Dominions Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs, December 7, 1939; Minister of National Defence to Chairmen, Air Mission of Great Britain, December 8, 1939; Chairman, Air Mission of Great Britain, to Minister of National Defence, December 8, 1939; and Memorandum by Principle Secretary to Prime Minister, December 11, 1939; Memorandum by Principle Secretary to Prime Minister, December 11, 1939. p. 343; note the description of RCAF personnel overseas in W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 176 - 179, 184, 241 - 243; DCER, Vol. 7, Part I, 1939 - 1941, pp. 649-652, Minutes of Cabinet War Committee, December 14, 1939; Secretary of State for External Affairs to Dominions Secretary, December 16, 1939, pp. 656 - 659; Pickersgill The Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 1, pp. 54 - 56; DCER, Vol. 7, Part

I, 1939 - 1941, p. 648, Memorandum from Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to Prime Minister, December 13, 1939.

57. Hatch The Aerodrome of Democracy, p. 1.

CHAPTER II

"... CHEERED IN THE STREETS."

One Canadian airman remembered that when the Air Training Plan was established, "Men who had to stand like beggars in bread lines in those years, [the Great Depression] were now cheered in the streets."¹ The expectation that the Air Training Plan would bring economic recovery to western Canada was very important. In Saskatchewan, the drought and the Great Depression lasted until 1938. The West had felt alienated in the Depression. Radical political action had not brought solutions to its problems. Western Canada felt it was a hinterland which was supplying the primary resources for the rest of Canada. The announcement of the Air Training Plan appeared to be the means by which western Canada would recover economically. The west could also become an important part of the national war effort. Self-interest, however, was not the only motivation for western Canada to accept the air training scheme. Patriotic duty was central to the acceptance of the air schools across the province. Because

of their deep sense of patriotism, the people of Saskatchewan accepted the burdens of a housing shortage, the costs of servicing the schools, and the stresses of being invaded by thousands of air personnel. Throughout the early years, as the schools were getting underway, goodwill prevailed between the air personnel and the civilians.

The development of the widely dispersed air training organization that was expected to consist of 33,000 service personnel and 6,000 civilians demanded a large commitment on the part of the administrators of the Royal Canadian Air Force.² At the start of the Second World War, the Royal Canadian Air Force had only five aerodromes and six more under construction. For matters of construction, the Royal Canadian Air Force had developed a partnership with the Department of Transport in the inter-war period. This partnership was extended on October 3, 1939 when Air Vice-Marshal G.M. Croil and J.A. Wilson, the controller of civil aviation, reached an agreement with the Department of Transport for the rapid expansion of air training facilities. The Department of Transport would select sites and then after the approval of the Air Force, develop the landing fields. The Air Force would design and build the buildings.

The sites for the fields had been selected and survey work had begun even before the Agreement for the Air Training Plan was signed. Already in the summer and autumn

of 1939 work was underway to expand the existing RCAF schools. This expansion was stimulated by the realization that Canadian training facilities were inadequate even for the pre-war training work of the RCAF. This early work would allow as much work as possible to be done before the winter. An accelerated pace of construction followed the formal agreement which brought about the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.³

The Air Training Plan called for the rapid expansion of the RCAF facilities. To administer the new facilities, major reorganization was needed. It was soon obvious that the responsibilities of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Air Training Plan were too large for the Department of National Defence to administer. The three services of the navy, army and air force would have to be separated with expanded administrations. K. S. Maclachan held the post of Acting Associate Deputy Minister for the navy and air from September 8, 1939 until April 11, 1940, when James S. Duncan, who had been the senior executive of Massey Harris Company Ltd., was appointed to the office of Associate Acting Deputy Minister for Air.

At the same time, German successes in Denmark and Norway in the spring of 1940 made it obvious to the cabinet that even more expansion of the Canadian military forces was required. The result was the creation of new ministries for air and the navy. The former postmaster general, C.G. ("Chubby") Power, was appointed the Minister of National

Defence for Air on May 23, 1940. In July, a similar ministry was created for the navy.⁴

With the Royal Canadian Air Force administering Canada's major contribution to the war, the service was quickly developing a high profile in Ottawa. However, at the same time, the RCAF remained committed to goals which were established elsewhere. The RCAF administered the operation of the Air Training Plan, but officials in London dictated the number and type of aircrew needed. The Air Training Plan was growing to meet the role set for it.

The Empire Air Training Committee met every two weeks in London, England, to consider the overall progress of the air training in the British Commonwealth. Another supervisory board was established in Ottawa to regulate the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. This board implemented the requirements defined by the Standing Committee of the British Air Council. The board, which consisted of representatives of all four countries that were part of the original group, was under the chairmanship of the Minister of National Defence, as well as the ministers of Defence for Air, Finance, Transport, and the Chief of Air Staff. The three overseas partners established liaison offices in Ottawa. The liaison office of the United Kingdom acted as the office that communicated changes in requirements and plans. The members of the liaison missions had the right to inspect any schools they wished and to

make recommendations or observations directly to the Chief of Air Staff or to the Supervisory Board.⁵

The Air Training Plan was made up of several types of schools. The one aim of high production of trained aircrew was the only element they had in common. The Initial Training Schools were small and located in buildings that were rented by the Department of National Defence.⁶ The Elementary Flying Training schools were the most varied of all the schools because they were run by civilian flying clubs. These schools often had only one airfield. The largest schools were the Service Flying Training Schools and the Bombing and Gunnery schools.⁷

The first step in air training for the new pilot recruits was the Initial Flying Training School. There was no flying carried out at the Initial schools. The novice pilot was trained in a flight simulator and went through the basics of ground school. The second step for the trainee was an Elementary Flying Training School, an eight-week course that taught the pilot candidate how to fly a single engine aircraft. The final step in the candidate's flying training came in the Service Flying Training Schools. Aircrew that were not pilots completed their training at the Bombing and Gunnery Schools. The student refined his skills and specialized in either the piloting of single engine fighters or multi-engine aircraft. The Service schools had one main airfield and two satellite landing strips. They were often three to four

miles from urban centres. The course at the service schools lasted twelve weeks. There were graduating classes every four weeks.⁸

Civil aviation played an important role in the Air Training Plan. The Canadian Flying Clubs Association obtained the role of administrating Elementary Flying Training School for its member clubs. The role of administrating the elementary schools was not unexpected because eight flying clubs had been training pilots since June 1939. As well, fourteen more clubs obtained contracts at the outbreak of the war.⁹ To qualify, the clubs had to raise \$35,000 working capital to demonstrate financial stability. The clubs also had to demonstrate that there was community support. In addition, they had to prove that they had the resources to provide adequate instructional, administrative, and technical staff for each proposed school. Once the clubs demonstrated their financial stability and technical ability, they were given a contract and were known as flying training companies. The contracts allowed for monthly managerial fees, an allowance for operation and maintenance, a set payment per flying hour, and a ration allowance. These payments, which allowed for a five percent profit, were subject to periodic revision. Any balance over five percent profit was placed in a government-controlled fund. Major equipment like aircraft was supplied by the government. The flying training

companies were responsible for daily maintenance of the equipment.¹⁰

Canadian Pacific Airlines and its affiliates, as well as a number of independent firms managed the ten Air Observer Schools. These schools gave instruction in flight navigation. The contracts for the Air Observer Schools closely resembled the agreements that established the Elementary Flying Training Schools. However, the agreements that established the Air Observer Schools did not make allowances for the five percent profit to the operating companies. The payments to the operating companies were adjusted to pay for the actual costs of the training only. All the air observer training was provided by Air Force personnel. Civilian pilots were provided by the companies to fly the students and their instructors on their exercises. Often the civilian pilots were called "taxi drivers" or "air chauffeurs", and often would guide home student navigators who had directed the pilot off course during the navigational exercises.¹¹

Not all the Air Training schools in the BCATP were run by the Royal Canadian Air Force personnel. There were a number of schools in the Air Training Plan that were run by the Royal Air Force personnel. During the negotiations that led to the BCATP, the British government suggested that at some point during the war it might prove necessary to transfer service schools from Britain to Canada. Nothing more was said about this idea until the war became worse

for the Allied cause in the spring of 1940. With the fall of Norway, Denmark, and France, all British airfields and airspace were needed for operations. Air training activities could no longer be sustained in Britain. The Canadian government was informed that the United Kingdom wished to transfer four RAF Service Flying Training Schools to Canada.¹²

Canada responded positively to this request. It was agreed that the costs for the schools would be covered by the British government.¹³ With the acceptance of this request, the RAF revised the request to include eight Service Flying Training Schools, two Air Observer Schools, one Bombing and Gunnery School, one Air Navigation School, one General Reconnaissance School, and one Torpedo Bombing School.¹⁴ Facilities were quickly established. RAF personnel arrived to begin training in partly completed schools. In March 1941, the burden was increased again when the RAF requested an additional nine Service Flying Training Schools, fifteen Elementary Flying Training Schools, ten Air Observer Schools and four Operational Training Units. Canada accepted these schools because Britain was paying for them. With no increased expense to Canada, the expansion was readily accepted.¹⁵ With these new developments, many more facilities had to be established. The prairie provinces received the largest number of new schools. Alberta received six, Saskatchewan received seven, and Manitoba was host to two RAF schools.¹⁶

The legal status of the British schools in Canada was defined by the Visiting Forces Acts of Canada and Britain. Both countries passed the Acts in 1933. These acts allowed the easy transfer of service personnel from one country to the next. When the RAF schools were established in Canada they were declared by the governments as "acting in combination." This meant that they mutually agreed to work together. As long as the RAF personnel were in Canada they were to follow RCAF administrative and operational control. The British fully cooperated with the RCAF in all programmes while they were in Canada. The RAF were given access to supplies and the medical services of the RCAF. The RCAF also supplied maintenance facilities to the RAF schools. Each service kept their national identity and were commanded by their own officers. The air personnel could follow their own customs and traditions. The RAF followed its own routines and rules on its schools, which differed very little from those of the RCAF.¹⁷

The Air Training Plan was administered by the RCAF. The instructors and officers who made up the permanent staff of the air training schools were RCAF and RAF personnel. The Air Training Plan was established to train the majority of the aircrew for the Allies of the war. The result was that trainees arrived from Australia, New Zealand, India, and other countries of the Commonwealth. Polish and the Free French who had joined the Allies after the fall of their countries were also trained in the Plan. The majority of

Distribution of Air Training Stations in Saskatchewan

Part I

Station or Unit	Location	Air Force (RAF or RCAF)	Date opened closed
No. 2 ITS	Regina	RCAF	June 1940 November 1944
No. 7 ITS	Saskatoon	RCAF	November 1941 June 1944
No. 6 AOS	Prince Albert	RCAF	March 1941 September 1942
No. 2 B&GS	Mossbank	RCAF	October 1940 December 1944
No. 5 B&GS	Dafoe	RCAF	May 1941 February 1945
No. 6 EFTS	Prince Albert	RCAF	July 1940 November 1944
No. 15 EFTS	Regina	RCAF	November 1940 August 1944
No. 23 EFTS	Davidson and Yorkton	RCAF	October 1942 September 1945
No. 25 EFTS	Assiniboia	RCAF	February 1944 July 1944
No. 32 EFTS	Swift Current Bowden, Alberta	RAF	May 1941 September 1944

Distribution of Air Training Stations in Saskatchewan
Part II

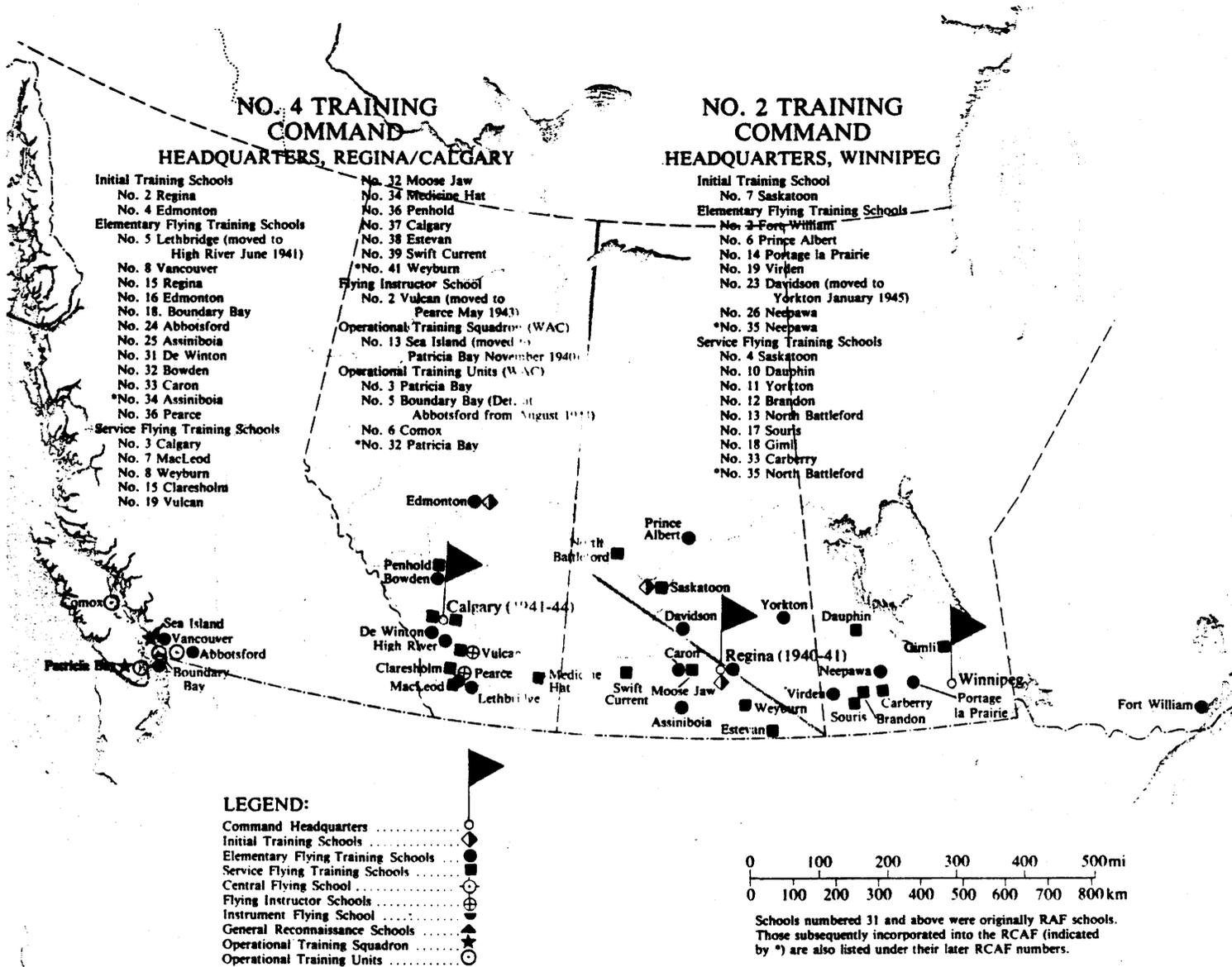
Station or Unit	Location	Air Force (RAF or RCAF)	Date opened closed
No. 33 EFTS	Caron	RAF	December 1941 February 1944
No. 34 EFTS	Assiniboia	RAF	December 1941 January 1944
No. 4 SFTS	Saskatoon	RCAF	October 1940 June 1945
No. 8 SFTS	Moncton Weyburn	RCAF	March 1941 June 1944
No. 11 SFTS	Yorkton	RCAF	March 1941 November 1944
No. 13 SFTS	Yorkton North Battleford	RAF	September 1941 May 1945
No. 32 SFTS	Moose Jaw	RAF	January 1941 September 1944
No. 35 SFTS	North Battleford	RAF	July 1941 April 1944
No. 38 SFTS	Estevan	RAF	April 1942 February 1944
No. 39 SFTS	Swift Current	RAF	October 1941 May 1944
No. 41 SFTS	Weyburn	RAF	February 1942 January 1944

NOTE:

ITS: Initial Training School
AOS: Air Observer School
B&GS: Bombing and Gunnery School
EFTS: Elementary Flying Training School
SFTS: Service Flying Training School

PILOT TRAINING FACILITIES

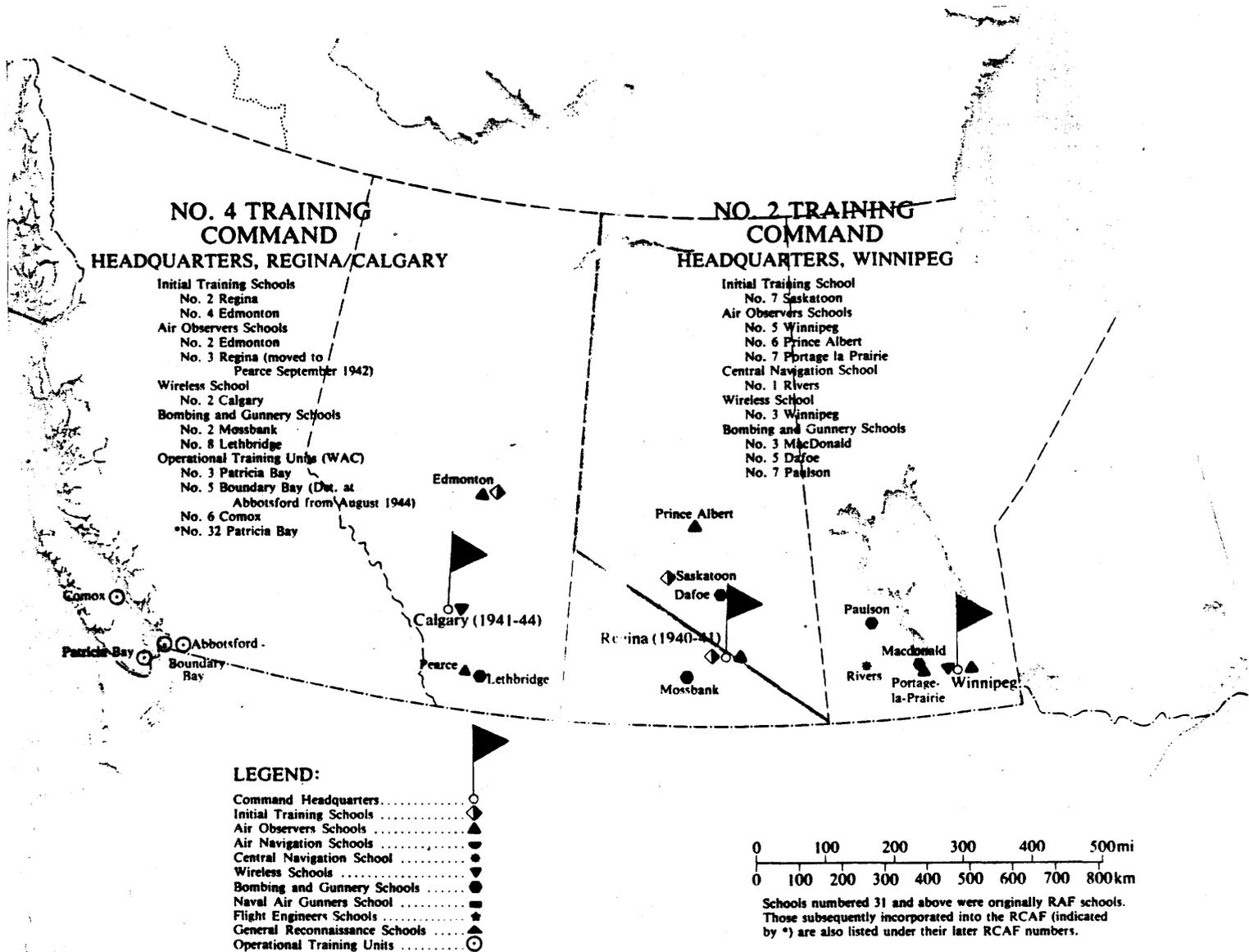
1940 - 1945



Source: W.A.B. Douglas, The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Vol. II (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), pp. 236 - 237. Note that half the air training stations were administered by Training Command Number Two in Winnipeg, and the other half were in the jurisdiction of Training Command Number Four in Regina/Calgary.

AIRCREW (OTHER THAN PILOT) TRAINING FACILITIES

1940 - 1945



Source: W.A.B. Douglas, The Creation of a National Air Force, PP. 236-237.

the trainees were British and Canadian. The proportion of New Zealand, Indian, Polish or French origin were small and they were not as regularly observed in the local media.

The schools located in Saskatchewan included Initial Training Schools, Elementary Flying Training, Service Flying Training, and one Air Observer School. As well, Number Four Training Command was located in Regina until 1941. Number Four Training Command was the administrative headquarters for Alberta and part of Saskatchewan. The prairies were attractive to those selecting air training sites because of the terrain and the good weather. The prairies provided open space with few obstacles like high hills that would make flying difficult. Saskatchewan had twenty-one schools during the war. Among the schools were two Initial Training Schools, one Air Observer School, two Bombing and Gunnery schools, seven Elementary Flying Training Schools and nine Service Flying Training Schools. These twenty-one schools were distributed among fourteen communities.

All these schools brought substantial changes to the host communities. In the large schools, the permanent staff numbered from five hundred to fifteen hundred. The number of permanent staff a school had was important because the staff were active in the local communities. The permanent air personnel participated in sporting and cultural activities throughout the war.

The smallest of the schools were the two Initial Training Schools. These schools had between seventy and one hundred permanent staff. Usually these schools held two-hundred and forty trainees. The single Air Observer School at Prince Albert was also small. The school housed one hundred and eighty trainees as well as thirty-five permanent staff. The Elementary Flying Training Schools varied in size the most. The Elementary Flying Training Schools were classified from Class A with ninety candidates and fifty permanent staff to Class D with two hundred and forty trainees and five hundred permanent staff. The Elementary Flying Training School at Davidson was a example of a Class D Elementary Flying Training School. The two Bombing and Gunnery Schools and the nine Service Flying Training Schools were the largest of the schools. The size of these schools varied from 1,100 to 1,500 permanent staff, two hundred and forty students and one hundred to one hundred and fifty civilian employees.

Although the size of the air training schools changed approximately 14,800 permanent staff were stationed in the province. As well, there were approximately two thousand trainees in Saskatchewan schools throughout the war. Further, twelve hundred Saskatchewan citizens found employment at the air training schools.

The coming of the Air Training Plan was very dramatic for Saskatchewan because it was just emerging from nearly one decade of depression. With the two unrelated phenomena

of the world wide economic depression and a prolonged drought, Saskatchewan suffered more than any other province in the Dominion during the 1930s. On average, the per capita income in Saskatchewan dropped by seventy-two percent. During the Depression more than half of the population of Saskatchewan was on relief. For most of the other provinces of Canada the worst of the depression was over by mid-1933. Saskatchewan had its worst years of the depression in 1937 and 1938. Approximately three billion dollars was spent on the Air Training Plan. Although there was no clear understanding of how much Saskatchewan would receive the expectation was that the province would benefit substantially.¹⁸ The recovery that the Air Training schools promised could not be ignored by any community with such vivid memories of the Great Depression.¹⁹

Communities which hoped to win an Air Training school had to demonstrate the ability to provide the services that the school would need. The services included roads, sewers, electric power, and water. Most communities could provide these services. Communities or sites that were in mountainous regions or within five miles of the United States boarder were counted out. The Bombing and Gunnery Schools needed very large areas to carry out the necessary operations. About one hundred miles square was required to avoid any danger to people or property. The navigation schools required areas to fly over that contained as many different types of geography as possible. Navigation

trainees also required bodies of water to fly over. When a site fulfilled the training requirements, the location's value as a post-war civil or military airport was considered. Those locations that appeared to have potential as an active airport after the war were preferred. The value of each site was considered in terms of what it would contribute to the Training Command it was associated with. Each of the four training commands was to be self-sufficient with its own recruiting organization, supply depots, repair depots, and training schools. Sites that contributed to any one of the Training Commands were given preference.²⁰

The large cities in the province of Saskatchewan had no fear that they would be ignored in the Air Training Plan. Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon had been given notification of the establishment of Air Training facilities as early as January, 1940. One early notification came in the form of a letter to the mayor of Saskatoon on January 22, 1940:

Under date of 22nd instant His Worship the Mayor received a letter from Mr. V.I. Smart, Deputy Minister of Transport, Ottawa, as follows:

"It will be necessary to use certain of the municipal airports as training bases in connection with the Empire air training scheme. The final location of the training schools rests with the

Department of National Defence but this Department is co-operating in regard to the use of the civil airports now available in the Dominion.

I enclose, for your information, copies, in duplicate, of an agreement setting forth the terms under which 'His Majesty' will take over airports for this purpose and would be obliged if this could be given immediate consideration and a reply sent by wire informing this Department whether your municipality would be prepared to co-operate with this Department of National Defence in the event of the latter Department desiring to use your airport."21

Prince Albert, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's constituency, was awarded Number Six Elementary Flying Training School in July, 1940. Regina had Number Four Training Command by April 1940, Number Two Initial Training School by June, and Number Fifteen Elementary Flying Training School by November 1940. The city of Saskatoon was host to Number Four Service Flying Training School in October, 1940. The cities were the obvious choice for air training facilities. They had a large population and the services needed. As well, they were centres which would benefit from the establishment of an airport or an upgraded airport. In the post-war period the airports in these centres would remain in operation by civilian air services.

Not all the larger communities across Saskatchewan were selected as sites for the first schools. A large number of the communities across the province the fact that they had not been included in the first list of communities were angered. What followed was lobbying for the facilities by Saskatchewan communities. The larger centres of Estevan (2,854), North Battleford (4,745), Yorkton (5,577), and Moose Jaw (20,753) all received major facilities. All of them had followed the same pattern of lobbying for these establishments. These communities acted by passing resolutions in their town councils requesting that their city be considered for future air training facilities. These requests were then carried to Ottawa by civic delegations. Local Members of Parliament pursued the same goals. The Mayor of Moose Jaw, on the other hand, wrote directly to the Minister of National Defence to win a facility for his city.²² But the decision to locate a school at Moose Jaw had already been made but was not announced because the Minister did not want it to appear that the allocation of facilities was being used to win support for the Liberal party in the federal election of March 1940.²³

In the case of the lobbying carried out by Yorkton, locals had to demonstrate that they could fulfill all the requirements of an air training school. Political pressure was not enough. With the establishment of the air school in Yorkton, the local newspaper, The Yorkton Enterprise

published an article that demonstrated that fulfillment of the requirements for a school was more important than political pressure:

A year ago this spring A.A. Chapmen, who played a leading part in securing the school for Yorkton told the members of the Yorkton Board of Trade at their annual banquet that there had been a change in the air plan that might bring an air station to Yorkton. This later proved to be the case.

The area was again inspected and an unfavourable report sent back. Then a delegation came to meet the representatives of the Council and the Board of Trade and these officials said there was no suitable land here.

But Yorkton was not satisfied in the least with this verdict and again took the matter up with the Ottawa authorities. Nothing came of this however and the city sent Engineer Ritchie and Mr. Chapmen to Saskatoon to inspect and investigate what was going on there.

After looking into this matter, it was ascertained that certain equipment being used at Saskatoon could be used in this district as well. The authorities were so advised. The city informed the authorities of what Yorkton was prepared to offer by way of assistance. ...

The City Council worked very quickly and efficiently whenever it came their time to move. One of the items to contend with was the matter of water supply and ... [he] ... promised the authorities an abundant supply of water and had another well located. ...²⁴

This article went on to describe the construction of the facilities at Yorkton.

Two communities which carried on unsuccessful campaigns to win an air training school were Rosetown and Melville. Both communities felt that they had a "just claim" for an air training facility in their communities. The result was the passing of resolutions calling on the federal government to place an airport in their communities. These calls for consideration were then carried to Ottawa by delegations. However, these towns did not stop there -- both took steps to locate more wells for a better guarantee of an adequate water supply and pledged to provide the assistance the government would need if a school was located at their centre.²⁵

Melville made a strong claim based on not only the facilities already in place because of the CNR but also on the town remaining in a poor condition when the railroad left the community. In the summer of 1940, Melville claimed that,

The Melville and District Board of Trade has no wish to embarrass the Government with extravagant demands on behalf of this community, but believing that it has an obligation to the town, has petitioned the authorities regarding the "just" claims in connection with war developments. The trade has pointed out that the town of Melville was developed as a railroad town and on the understanding that it would continue as a divisional point. The town has been one of the hardest hit by unemployment since the Canadian National Railways moved the superintendent's office staff to Saskatoon in 1934 and the car shops closed as well as other railway work curtailed. At peak, over 200 families were in receipt of relief in this town of 4,000 population. The car shops were reopened two years ago, though not to former capacity, and increase railway traffic lately has improved ... but there are still 100 families on relief. In view of these facts, the trade board believes that Melville should receive every consideration when the Government is allotting new airport etc. [sic] because the present unfavourable position of the towns is due primarily to the previous action of the nationally owned railway.²⁶

This somewhat emotional appeal for an air training school did not result in a positive reply. The community could

supply many of the services and support required. Although there were no stated reasons for the denial of facilities to these towns, the two communities did not have potential as post-war airports. Melville was too close to the facilities at Yorkton. Rosetown was too small and too close to Saskatoon.

In all the communities which were given an air training facility the reaction was very positive. The newspapers looked forward to the prosperity which would result from the establishment of the schools. For many communities, the air training school had been sought as an opportunity for development. The communities wanted to build for the future. The larger communities, such as Saskatoon and Regina, had the local contractors to carry out the construction of the airport facilities. In smaller centres like Yorkton, Estevan, and Weyburn, contractors were brought in to carry on the construction work and local contractors found that they were occupied with subcontracts.²⁷

The provincial highway agencies did the majority of the contour work for the airport sites. Saskatchewan Health co-operated in the analysis of water supplies. The municipalities acted before the allocation of the schools to find adequate water supplies. Others searched for water during construction of the schools. The work of the host communities in support of the local air training schools went far beyond supplying water. Saskatoon City Council

reported building and maintenance of water and sewage mains to the airport. Estevan and Wynyard reported that they were required to supply extra electrical power to the air training stations which were located nearby. Moose Jaw and Davidson maintained and constructed gravel roads. Services that were requested and delivered also included fire protection in Davidson and ambulance services in Saskatoon. In all cases, municipal and city councils made the necessary expenditures for the local schools.²⁸

Although the provincial and municipal governments were required to pay the costs for services for the local schools, the investment appeared to worth the expense -- the local economy was growing. From the earliest announcement of the location of a school in the community, the economic benefits were heralded in the media. Typical of the reports found in local newspapers about the construction of the airport facilities and what it meant to the local economy was the article, "700 Men on the Job Within Three Weeks," printed in The Estevan Mercury:

Construction of the building at Estevan's Service Flying Training School will commence within the next week. The Mercury was told on Thursday by W.J. Greenfield, general superintendent of the Bird Construction Co. of Winnipeg and Regina, the firm which has the contract. Total costs of the buildings will be about \$1,000,000, Mr. Greenfield said. This

added to the figures previously quoted for the construction of the runways indicates the total expenditure for the School will be between \$1,775,000 and \$2,000,000.

As soon as the ground is staked on the north east quarter of the main field opposite to the Koch farm four miles south of Estevan, construction of the buildings will be underway, Mr. Greenfield said.

Peak employment of 500 men will be reached within three weeks, he stated, and his company's monthly payroll would be in the neighborhood of \$50,000.

Carter-Halls-Aldinger, the firm holding the contract for building the runways, expects to have more than 200 men on the job within the next two weeks.²⁹

These reports were common in those communities that participated in the Air Training Plan. No urban centre was too large to note the benefits gained by local construction at its airport.³⁰

During the construction of the air stations, some towns moved to use construction equipment to do work that would otherwise be too expensive. One such case was reported in Weyburn, when equipment arrived to do the asphalt work at the air fields. The City Engineer reported that he was considering the use of the equipment to asphalt "several blocks in the downtown business-section of the city, the

finishing to be done by the company that is now carrying out similar work at Weyburn airport."³¹ As well, Weyburn used the opportunity to install for the first time name plates for all the streets.³²

High employment quickly became noted in the press as the construction continued. The Weyburn Review reported that:

High speed was the great factor in construction, Mr. Wells pointed out once an airport has been commenced. But the speed is determined by the number of men it is possible to hire. There was a day when real tradesmen were plentiful, he said, but if there ever was a surplus it has disappeared. As the months roll by the labor situation gets more and more acute and if we were to have another building campaign on the prairies like this fall construction companies would find it more difficult to get sufficient help. Delivery of material is also becoming more serious as the days go by.³³

Employment levels remained high throughout the war years for a number of reasons. An important factor which brought the sustained high employment in the province was that the population of Saskatchewan dropped by more than 61,000 between 1939 and 1941. The population continued to drop as the war proceeded.³⁴ Another reason for the drop in the number on relief was the high number of Saskatchewan

men and women who enlisted and migrated to other provinces. As a result, the cost of relief began to fall and continued to be lower than the years preceding the war. All the local newspapers mentioned the reduced relief costs.³⁵ The Saskatoon Star Phoenix reported in the autumn of 1940 that the costs of relief had dropped substantially:

From the peak year of 1937-38 when Saskatchewan was staggering under its heaviest burden of direct relief and agricultural aid, the Province has shown a marked improvement and relief this year will be less than nine percent of the all-time high.

Walter Dawson, director of relief, said the contributing factors to the improved relief conditions are good crop conditions last year, good crop conditions this year, which resulted in no agricultural aid problem for feed and seed, and increased employment due to war industries and for enlistments.³⁶

Added to the increased employment, the Swift Current Sun reported that the, "Average annual wage rate for male farm help in 1941 was \$352 compared with \$275 in 1940".³⁷

Communities that had benefited from the construction of air training facilities were positive about the reduction in relief. The communities also looked forward to what the new airport would bring after the war. After two years of

war-time prosperity, Weyburn received its contracts to construct an airport. The response of the Weyburn Review was to point out the future benefits:

In addition ... the airport will be there when the war ends. After this war aviation in the opinion of those who give thought to the future will take a tremendous place and any place without such facilities will have to take a back seat. Coast to coast air transportation will be in for a boost requiring feeder lines to supply it with business both passenger and freight and for a community to be without an airport will be as bad as being without a railroad.³⁸

This same sentiment was revealed in the Yorkton Enterprise when it reported that one could look at a

... map of Canada and see the ideal situation of Yorkton for a trans-Canada air Service after the war. ... While the accommodation for the airmen is of a temporary nature the hangers are of permanent construction.³⁹

The gains made during the war in these communities would be held onto as assurance against any future economic difficulties.

Economic recovery came to the service industries in the host communities. With the coming of the new air training schools, service industries that had closed down during the depression or had been closed due to bankruptcy recovered. All the businesses common to towns such as bus and taxi firms, drug stores, shoe repair shops, restaurants, beer parlours, movie houses, hotels, dance halls, clothing stores, laundries, barber shops, and even the churches benefited from the coming of the Plan.

One airman remembered that the service industry recovered with the airmen's patronage:

... I don't think that one restaurant opened in the city of Regina during the war. I know that not one restaurant opened in Weyburn during the war. ... Not one restaurant or hotel, not one opened in Macleod during the war. So the impact of say the pay of the trainees was not great it was certainly absorbed by the services that were already there. ... The beer parlours, the restaurants, the hotels, that sort did better in their area ...⁴⁰

Although the impact of the trainees may have been limited, the economic benefits of the air stations were significant. Local business had to supply the air schools with essential products. As one airman recalled, "... even farmers were selling fresh products to the stations."⁴¹ The coming of

the Plan was very significant in bringing economic recovery to Saskatchewan communities. Added to the economic benefit of the Air Training Plan was the general improvement in Canada's economy during the Second World War.

The village of Mossbank was an example of how service industries recovered but did not grow. The village of Mossbank had a Bombing and Gunnery School nearby. The only new business to be established was reported in the municipal records for 1940 when a "Rooming House Tobacco Store" was established. But in 1944 the municipal records reported that two businesses were closed. Regardless of the nearby school the community service industry did not expand.⁴²

The coming of the Plan also created housing problems.⁴³ On the prairies the huge influx of airmen and their families created a need for rental accommodations. At the same time there was a housing shortage because of the war restraints on building materials. The problem of housing could become acute as the air facilities were being established in the communities of Saskatchewan. The city of Saskatoon was not too large to express fear of a housing shortage. In the summer of 1940 the Saskatoon Star Phoenix warned its readers that the;

Completion of the large military airport here and consequent influx of hundreds of mechanics and permanent staff officers is likely to precipitate an

acute housing shortage by Christmas time, real estate men declared today, "It appears as if there will be a real housing crisis," was the way in which they summed up the situation. ...

The R.C.A.F. project here is expected to bring several hundred mechanics to the city, many of whom will be married and seeking quarters for their wives and families. It appears as if the accommodation here may be inadequate to the demand, agents said.⁴⁴

This problem soon disappeared in Saskatoon when it was announced in the Star Phoenix that,

There is considerable speculation on the part of the real estate agents and landlords here with regard to the possible effect on the rental situation of an influx of at least 1,000 men with the opening of the No. 4 Flying Training School at Saskatoon. North Battleford real estate agents are predicting an increase in rents and housing shortage when the flying school opens in that city. Investigations this morning revealed, however, that the opening of the Saskatoon school should have little effect on the rents in this city. It was learned that the central personnel of the school will be required to live in barracks at the airdrome and that the bringing of

families to the city or living out of barracks will not be encouraged.⁴⁵

The experience of the city of Saskatoon was not a typical one across Saskatchewan. In most other cases, the communities that were hosts to an air training facility did have severe housing shortages. The smaller communities had fewer houses and therefore space in the community for air personnel. One case was reported by The Estevan Mercury in the summer of 1942 with the opening of the Service Flying Training School in that community:

Plain ordinary hospitality is spurred by downright necessity in the matter of finding housing accommodation for the wives and families who are coming from England to Estevan in the near future. A solution must be reached if these war guests are not to discover they have traded bombs for blizzards.

An urgent appeal must be made to Ottawa for advice and assistance. It is noted that the City of Sudbury has recently found itself in a similar situation, which is being overcome by a federal government building program in which permanent dwellings are being constructed rather than temporary structures which are prey to wide variations in climate such as are found here. The cost of sewer and water installations is being borne by the government but

the responsibility of supervising and renting falls upon the municipality. A proportionate share of the return from renting the houses is to be worked out between the municipality and the government.

Similar assistance is badly needed in Estevan, but even if it could be obtained there would still be the question of what to do in the meantime. Accommodation will have to be provided somehow for about 25 small families within the next two or three months. It is one of the most difficult wartime assignments Estevan has yet had to undertake. Whoever assists in meeting it, either at personal inconvenience or by the investment of capital, will be performing a genuine service in the national emergency.⁴⁶

These sentiments were echoed across the prairies.⁴⁷ The solution was to build more houses or to increase the number of suites for rent. One plan was announced in the Weyburn Review in the fall of 1942 which was,

Of interest to great many home owners ... who have houses which are larger than they need for their own use is the announcement by Finance Minister last week that a home extension plan, designed to create new housing accommodation by means of loans to owners ... is now in operation.⁴⁸

This plan provided government loans for work on their home to create new suites for rent. One account of the housing shortage and the subsequent development of suites in houses said that:

There was also a sharp rise in the need for housing. There was a big rush to erect the "Wartime" houses. Also many houses were divided into apartments, or suites. Some of these were very substandard and there was a steady stream of couples moving into and out of these places every two weeks of the month. ... Of course there were a good number of landlords (ladies) who truly tried to supply the best for the tenants, but riding the depression for so many years and a lot of material now on ration to civilians, many improvements were not easy to come by.⁴⁹

Another solution that was found in the communities of Yorkton and Swift Current was to rent out tourist cabins during the winter. As fall approached in 1942, the families of the airmen living in the cabins requested that the cabins be "winterized" so that they could continue living in them through the winter months. Swift Current turned down the request, but The Yorkton Enterprise announced that,

As a result of the decision of the Auto Camp Committee of Yorkton and District Board of Trade to "winterize" the cabins in the camp on Laurier Avenue, accommodation for approximately 15 families will be made possible. Alderman R.C. Spice, a member of the Auto Camp Committee, made this announcement at the regular meeting of the City Council Tuesday evening. He stated further that the cost to make the change was small and that the rent coming from the families of airmen now residing in these cabins will soon pay for the necessary outlay.⁵⁰

Both communities continued to seek help from the federal government for loans to construct the needed houses. These loans were approved late in the autumn of 1942. As winter approached there was a rush of building.⁵¹ Although the housing problem was not completely removed, it was improved considerably.

Another solution to the housing shortage, reported at the remote Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery school, was a temporary village formed across the road from the station. The Daily Diary reported on August 12, 1942 that the,

Passengers on this aircraft [just arrived airplane] from Saskatoon were Mr. C.R. DeWare, Rental Administrators of Canada, and Mr. E. Gold representative for the Western Provinces on the War

Time Prices and Trade Board. These gentlemen paid a visit to "Boom Town" the mushroom village that has sprung up across the road from the Station, and where it has been felt the situation presented a considerable problem to Service personnel who wished to have their families living near the Station. After looking the situation over, Mr. DeMaro expressed himself as being of the opinion that urgent action is necessary in the matter and he, and Mr. Gold, then continued on to Yorkton by air at 1720 hours ...⁵²

No further mention of the "Boom Town" was made following this entry into the Diary. Another account of the "boom town" stated that,

A small village known locally as 'Boomtown' had mushroomed outside the station gates, and the cafe there vied with the station Y.M.C.A. as the social centre for the station personnel. I think there were about ten business premises of one sort or another in Boomtown.⁵³

As was foreseen in the local newspapers at the beginning of the war, rents for accommodation increased. The smaller communities had fewer houses and rooms to rent to air personnel and the result was increased rents. The response from the government was rent controls. In

Davidson, the Leader reported some examples of the new controls:

... a two-room light house-keeping suite renting for \$35 was lowered to \$27.50; two rooms in the back of a house were lowered from \$30 to \$20; a four roomed house rent was lowered from \$35 to \$22.50, and a five-roomed house from \$32.50 to \$22.50.

Mr. Wesaus [the government agent for rent controls] said he found the landlords were for the most part reasonable and were willing to co-operate as far as they could to avoid a rental spiral.⁵⁴

This report of the changes in rental rates across the province in 1943 was typical. There appeared to be little negative reaction to the rates in the local newspapers.

The coming of the Air Training Plan to Saskatchewan generated high levels of interest because the province wanted to play an important part. The same strong patriotic support the province had demonstrated in the Great War was again evident.⁵⁵ Men and women of the province enthusiastically enlisted in the Canadian armed forces. Saskatchewan men and women enlisted in the RCAF at the highest rate in Canada. The people of Saskatchewan were willing to endure the stress of housing shortages and to invite air personnel into their homes out of a sense of duty.

After the completion of the air training schools, the next step was the coming of the Air Force personnel and the air trainees. Both the arrival of these men and the opening ceremonies at the schools were significant events in the host communities. These events were well planned to show a warm welcome. One typical event was reported in the Weyburn Review on Christmas Day, 1941 when seventy-five British airmen arrived in town:

A hundred or more people headed by Mayor J.K. Brimacombe and J.H. Warren chairmen of the Weyburn War Auxiliary Services committee waited at the station for the train which was an hour and a half late to arrive. The airmen following roll call on the station platform were whisked in private cars to the Canadian Legion hall where they were warmly welcomed and served with steaming hot coffee sandwiches and doughnuts, with Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary members doing honors in the kitchen while Legionnaires served the newcomers and others who had assembled in the dining room of the hall. The hot coffee and lunch were greatly appreciated by the airmen who had spent many hours on the train trip to Weyburn.⁵⁶

The report went on to describe the speeches that were held and transportation of the airmen to the airport by private cars.⁵⁷

Upon their arrival, the British airmen found themselves in a very different environment and culture. The Swift Current Sun reported that upon the arrival of the British airmen in June one commented that, "'... this sure is a cold country,' ... A Currentite spoke up, 'Just wait till you've been here a winter.'"⁵⁸ The Moose Jaw Times-Herald commented in November, 1940, that,

There was a strange medley of clothing among the men, for some were dressed to meet the sub-zero weather that faced them in Moose Jaw while others were wearing summer 'shorts' and no underwear, though the latter had been issued to them and was packed away for the trip to Western Canada.⁵⁹

In the station publication at Moose Jaw, The Prairie Flyer, Corporal T.S.M. Guard admitted,

Many of us have come to dislike the Prairies because we find them dull and uninteresting. It is a bitter sight for us to travel by train, the land is like a vast pancake as we speed across it, and it is especially drab in winter when it is brown and white with no trees to break the monotony.⁶⁰

In one case, a Non-commissioned Officer from Ontario wrote a letter to his Aunt Helen which was published in the Picton Times:

Here I am away out in the muddy West typing you a letter when I should be in Cherry Valley spearing pike. ... This is a barren little town of about 5,000 people but the people are OK, nearly every one has been out for dinner or supper at some time and they converted their town hall into the loveliest hostess club you ever saw.⁶¹

Blackouts were complete in Britain from the beginning of the war. This was not the case in Canada. One British airman upon his arrival in Moose Jaw stated, "Blimey! Look at the lights." The Moose Jaw Times-Herald noted that, "To the British airmen the sight of bright lights on Main Streets had a particular attraction after the blackouts to which they are accustomed and comments on this were heard."⁶²

The North Battleford News reported a typical welcome of, "... a large crowd of enthusiastic citizens, who were entertained by the City Band ..." Added to this was an "Indian Welcome," that was led by

The head chief of the Battle River Cree extended a greeting as old as their tribal story to "the Thunder

Birds of Great White Chiefs." Journeyed many miles on foot under a blistering sun to be on hand when the personnel of the Royal Air Force arrived from Great Britain at No. 35 S.F.T.S. here, Chief Swimmer, whose band perpetuates the glorious memory of "Sweet Grass" the treaty haymaker, donned his ceremonial dress in honor of the arrival of the King's "braves." He passed through the ranks of the newly arrived R.A.F. personnel, welcoming each in turn to the land of his forefathers. With him, also in tribute dress, was George Poplar, a councillor of the Sweetgrass band.⁶³

This was the only case where there was a ceremony that included local Indians in ceremonial dress.

In most cases the opening ceremonies included an "open house" where the civilians of the host communities were shown the station's operations and the day often ended in a dance. The Saskatoon Star Phoenix presented an opening day of an air training school:

"This is the first training centre to be opened in the No. 2 Air Command and it is one of the greatest air training schools in Canada," said Air Commodore A.B. Shearer of Winnipeg, officer commanding the No. 2 Air Command as he officially opened the No. 4 Service Flying Training School at Saskatoon, Saturday. People of Saskatoon and district trekked

and rode by the thousands along the No. 12 highway from early afternoon and streamed over the airport area viewing the working of the school in actual operation.

At 3:30 o'clock after the short opening ceremonies, six of the fast, single-engine Harvard training planes and six of the big twin-engine Avro Ansons gave a demonstration of the aerobatics and formation flying, part of the daily training routine.⁶⁴

Other opening ceremonies had different activities. In Prince Albert there was an address by Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Yorkton held a baseball game on the opening day.⁶⁵

After the air training stations had been established both the local media and the representatives of the Royal Canadian Air Force carried on public relations activities. It was obvious there would be very high levels of exchange between host communities and the air training schools. The success of an air training station was dependent to a great extent on the cooperation of the host community. Vital supplies and labour had to be supplied by the communities. As well, many of the permanent staff sought housing, services and recreation in the communities. Good public relations were necessary. There were the formal public

**Commanding Officer and Personnel of
No. 23, E.F.T.S., R.C.A.F.
Davidson, Sask.**



◆ ◆ ◆
Wish you the Merriest kind of Christmas
and the Happiest of New Years



Source: The Davidson Leader, December 22, 1943, p. 3. This ad was a typical public relations publication by the RCAF.

relation articles which had been written by "... press liaison Department of National Defence for Air."⁶⁶ These public relations articles were presented as educational articles which described the working of the local air school. With the opening of the Service Flying Training School in Yorkton, the Yorkton Enterprise published twelve such articles in a single issue. These articles discussed all the steps in air training to life on the station. They described cooking for the airmen in the mess, the different elements of a pilot's training, and the maintenance of the aircraft. The July 5, 1942 issue even included an educational piece entitled, "Australian History Intriguing," which described briefly the history of Australia. This was in preparation for Australian airmen who would soon arrive.⁶⁷ Not all the releases from the air liaison in Ottawa were educational. There were many press releases that called for new recruits or described changes in the air training programmes.⁶⁸

As well, the Air Force acted to supply photographs to the local media. The Daily Diary at the Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery school noted that,

At the request of Headquarters ... a station photographic staff visited all sections of the Station where W.D.'s [Women's Division] were employed and photographed them at their duties. These pictures were for publicity purposes in aid of recruiting and

will be published in several of the local city newspapers.⁶⁹

The goodwill was illustrated when the local newspapers reported events and distinctions of the local stations. When the Service Flying Training School at Yorkton won second place for efficiency, the Yorkton Enterprise reported that, "Only one station was in front of Yorkton and that was the famous R.C.A.F. station at Uplands (Ottawa)."⁷⁰ Later that same year the Enterprise reported that the town's air school, "No. 11 Service Flying Training School ... has been awarded the quarterly pennant for the most efficient twin-engine school under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan."⁷¹ The tone of these reports was the same as the reports made about the local hockey team's achievements. The North Battleford Optimist reported a speech by the chaplain of the local air station. It was reported that, "Wing Commander Brown has crossed Canada from coast to coast nine times, and considered North Battleford one of the most popular stations in all Canada."⁷² The local newspapers reported the arrival of the Women's Division, (which often arrived after the schools were established) to changes of Commanding Officers.⁷³ The community identified with the local air training school. The schools became integrated into the community activities and remained in the daily news of the smaller communities.

Another approach to communications between the local newspaper and the host community was seen in the newspapers like The Davidson Leader and the Wynyard Advance. Each paper had a set column for the events which occurred on the local station. The column in the Wynyard Advance, "Bomb Splinters," was written by a member of the War Services Work staff at the Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery School. As a new writer of the column stated in the winter of 1942:

Since the last issue of the corner, the general ex-editor has departed to those far-away fields which always look greener. Yes, Frank Harwick has left us to take up War Services Work on the Pacific Coast, and as your humble correspondent has taken over Frank's work here at No. 5, it is supposed that he also falls heir to the pleasant (?) job of writing this corner.⁷⁴

The Davidson Leader's, "Searchlight Spots from the Airport," reported the events of the station. The newspaper continued to publish other articles about the station as well. The article, "Davidson Air School Wins Distinction," was one such case when the Elementary Flying Training School at Davidson won an award for efficiency as had the Yorkton Schools.⁷⁵ One airman later remembered the goodwill in the local media and the role it played. Dalton Deedrick wrote:

The media of course very rightly made every serviceman feel good about his duty -- we were told we were great -- and we began to believe it. We really weren't any different of course, but we had some self confidence which had been almost lost in the decade before the war during the Great Depression. Men who had to stand like beggars in bread lines in those years, were now cheered in the street.⁷⁶

Another form of communication was developed during the war -- the station publications, produced by many air training stations. One of the more professional station publications was produced by the school at Yorkton. The Yorkton Enterprise reported that,

The first issue of "Wings" published by No. 11 S.F.T.S., appeared in Yorkton Saturday and is now on sale at local newsstands. It is a smart tabloid-sized 16 page newspaper printed on book stock and is to be issued monthly. Timely illustrations and well-written stories of the activities of the Yorkton unit of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan make this a publication of interest to citizens generally while it has a special appeal for a member of the training school.⁷⁷

In addition press coverage all the communities with air schools across Saskatchewan reported the formation of "hostess clubs" to greet and serve the needs of the airmen. Local women organized and maintained the hostess clubs throughout the prairies. After one year of operation the Yorkton Enterprise described the local hostess club and its work. The description served well to demonstrate the typical hostess organization:

A Hostess Club performs a most necessary function in the lives of the men of the services. It is a place where they can always be sure of a very hearty welcome; where they are wanted; where they can relax and where there is enjoyment for every type of man -- In short, it is a home away from home. Everybody knows the difference between a home-cooked meal and a meal that has been turned out en masse for hundreds ... and the Hostess Club provides delicious home-cooked meals at a very nominal cost. On dance nights girls give up their otherwise leisure hours to act as dancing partners for the lads. These parties are carefully, though inconspicuously, chaperoned.

On Saturday nights there are concerts and sing songs. These are planned to fit in with the boys' routine at the Station.

As well as these there are ping pong tables, dart boards, card games, writing and magazines. There are washroom facilities, pressing rooms, button polishing and shoe shining equipment -- and always willing fingers to sew on a loose button or the latest decoration of merit onto a uniform.⁷⁸

These hostess clubs were usually volunteer organizations, that were established with donated furnishings and books for the libraries. Often municipal buildings were used to establish the clubs. The Yorkton club was established in the public auditorium, and the Weyburn club was placed in the basement of the commercial block of town. The voluntary nature of the clubs was made clear in an article that appeared in Swift Current's Sun:

The public generally will be interested in knowing just how the Hostess Hut made out in its period of operation, because many local people subscribed and assisted in making this establishment for servicemen possible. The balance sheet since opening date in March, 1942 until December 31, 1942 has been made available to The Sun, and we pass the main substance on to the public.

Largely due to the generosity of the city in providing free electric light, water and heat, the Hostess Hut from the profits of the canteen has been

able to do a little better than break even. These profits were to pay rent, cleaning, telephone, stationery, postage, laundry, provincial education tax and a replacement of sports equipment.⁷⁹

An exception to the community-based hostess clubs which were run by the women of the community occurred on the remote Bombing and Gunnery schools. The Bombing and Gunnery Schools were often removed from larger communities, near remote lakes, where they could carry out the necessary bombing training. On such stations, volunteer hostess clubs were established, often by the Young Women's Christian Association. Instead of acting to integrate the airmen into the community, these hostess clubs acted as a social service to the airmen on the stations. The establishment of one such hostess house was described in the Daily Diary at the Dafoe Bombing school:

The Hostess House is nearing completion and will be ready to be opened in the course of three weeks.

A committee of ladies headed by Mrs. Lewis of Saskatoon visited the Station today on behalf of the National Women's Y.W.C.A.

The party was shown over the Station by the Commanding Officer and arrangements were made for the selection of curtains and furnishing for the new building. A Hostess has already been selected for

this Station and is now under training at Dundurn [Army training facilities].⁸⁰

The Hostess clubs were important in the interaction of the civilians and the airmen. The women of the hostess clubs organized many of the activities such as band performances by the R.A.F. and activities for those on leave. One account that described some of the functions carried on by the Hostess Clubs was found in the Wynyard Advance:

During the meeting [of the Hostess Club] Miss Black welcomed the new members and several ladies from Watson and then extended to them all the use of the Hostess House library and many services, [which] included the establishment of a 'cleaning house' for the vacant living quarters in 'Boom Town' and a 'Recreation Bureau,' through which families who are posted to another station may obtain accommodation in advance at their new station.⁸¹

For many airmen on leave there was nowhere for them to go on the prairies. The aim of the hostess clubs was to supply the airmen with services and to be the means by which the airmen and airwomen could integrate into the community. Hostess clubs, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., or organizations like the University Women's Club organized visits of airmen

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Christmas Greetings To Those On Active Service

Hundreds of men from Yorkton and district are in the various branches of His Majesty's forces now on active duty in many parts of the far-flung British Empire. To one and all The Enterprise extends best wishes for a Merry Christmas.

It has been our privilege, since the outbreak of the war, to send you copies of your home town paper as a means of letting you know that the people back home have you always in their hearts. Now especially, as the time of friendship and Christmas cheer approaches, we wish you to know that our thoughts are with you in a very real way.

You are doing the job for which we are supplying the tools. You have left us with a sense of responsibility not only to our country but to each of you personally. The home folk are remembering you with gifts and letters this Christmas, and this little message is simply our way of saying the same thing.

"A very merry Christmas and the best of luck! May you soon be back with us to share another."

We Would Like to Entertain	
_____	(number) Airmen
at Dinner Christmas Day	
at _____	(time)
Name _____	
Address _____	
"Try and Invite Pairs if Possible"	

Source: Yorkton Enterprise, December 18, 1941, Section 2, page 1.

to local homes during the year. One such report of this occurring was found in the Davidson Leader:

During the past months many airmen from No. 23 E.F.T.S., R.C.A.F., Davidson have been received into homes in Davidson and the surrounding farming district, when on 48 hour leaves. They have come back to camp with glowing reports of the fine hospitality extended them, and enthused at seeing Saskatchewan rural life at first hand. It is felt however, that any other homes of the town and district would enjoy receiving airwomen and airmen on these short leaves, but not been able to make the necessary contacts. It would be greatly appreciated if any party in town or on the farm, who is interested in extending such hospitality to R.C.A.F. personnel would write or telephone Allan Bready, Y.M.C.A. supervisor, No. 23 E.F.T.S. In this way a list of homes can be compiled, and suitable arrangements made from time to time.⁸²

The organization around Christmas leave attracted the most attention. The leave campaign around Christmas was described in the Weyburn Review in 1941:

Christmas hospitality for "our thousands of men from every far corner of the globe" has been asked by

the R.C.A.F. in launching a Canada-wide "ask an airman" campaign.

"It may seem too early for Christmas or New Year's leave dinner plans," an official statement said, "but if invitations can be arranged now, the boys from Australia, New Zealand and other distant lands can write home the news that they'll spend their Christmas or New Year's leave as it should be spent -- in a family circle. You can imagine how welcome that news will be at the holiday season to mothers and fathers, wives and sweethearts so many thousands of miles away."

Plans for the campaign are being formulated by auxiliary officers at all command headquarters and stations of the far-flung British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and the affiliated Royal Air Force training schools. Where citizens committees exist, they will be asked to co-operate and at other points an effort will be made to form special committees for the purpose.⁸³

It followed that the local citizens responded to this call very well.

Across the province of Saskatchewan, the routine graduations (every second week) of the airmen remained an important event in the communities. In many of the town newspapers, the first graduation received first-page coverage. Although the coverage was reduced after the first

"Wings parade", the newspapers often continued to publish the names of the graduates. In the case of the Yorkton Enterprise, first-page coverage continued until 1943. In some cases, the newspapers used the event of the wings graduation to make the people of the host communities feel closer to the war effort. One such report was made in the Swift Current's Sun:

No. 52 Course which graduated at No. 32 S.F.T.S. on Friday afternoon was somewhat of an international affair. Included in those passing out were five Poles and a Free French. The graduates were also honored by receiving their wings from A.O.C. No. 4 Training Command, Calgary, Air Commander, O.R. Howsam, M.C. A large gathering watched the colorful ceremony in the sunshine of a beautiful summer afternoon.

The Air Commodore in asking the graduates to live up to the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force coined this stirring slogan; "Turn their Panzer divisions into Pansy divisions." He impressed on the graduating pilots that they had, and would still get training which made the R.A.F. men superior to any pilots in the world, and with the sound knowledge gained and keeping a sharp eye and a stout heart they would help retain the supremacy of the sky, so important in the war.⁸⁴

The reports of the wings parades identified graduates who were outstanding. The Yorkton Enterprise reported on Australian graduates. The Swift Current Sun reported a number of Canadian and Polish graduates from the local R.A.F. school.⁸⁵ The local media looked outward and emphasized the national cause. The sentiment that the West was a part of the nation was evident. There was no longer the feeling that the West was alienated from Canada.

The local newspapers contained positive reports about their local schools and presented Saskatchewan as contributing to the national cause. One article that was published in the Yorkton Enterprise, entitled "Aussie Airmen Like Yorkton Best," reported that,

Since April 22nd counting the flying we did at Yorkton we've covered about 25,000 miles, which represents a trip around the earth as far as distance goes. Naturally we've seen a great deal of the country and met many people, but we can sincerely say that nowhere have we found the people quite as hospitable and generally good to us as the people of Yorkton and when you go back home we want to tell them this for us. On leaving Yorkton we felt like we did on leaving our own homes in Australia.

Thus spoke a group of Australian Sergeant Pilots as we left them at the C.N.R. station in Montreal last Saturday evening. The fifty odd boys who graduated

from No. 11 S.F.T.S. Yorkton were all aboard a standard sleeper headed for Halifax from which point they embark at an early date for England. ...

Then he added this one "We've eaten in the Royal York and Murray's Restaurants in Toronto, The Chateau Laurier in Ottawa, the Mount Royal the Chicken Coop and Scott's Restaurant in Montreal and the General Brook Hotel at Niagara Falls and we can say most sincerely nowhere has the food been better than we were served in the Yorkton restaurant and hotel."

Possibly not many know just how good some Yorkton people were to these Aussies but had been present at the C.P.R. depot on the night of July 24th when most of the boys left here they won many warm friends while in our city. It was the first real demonstration put on by Yorktonites in the departure of troops in the present war. One Aussie told me he had collected so many gifts and souvenirs at Yorkton that he couldn't get them all stowed away in his bags. Some citizens gave the boys cash to enable them to enjoy their embarkation leave in the East.⁸⁶

When the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was announced, the province showed keen interest. Recovery from the despression appeared possible with the establishment of Air Training Schools in the province.

Although economic recovery was important to the communities, the same patriotic fervor that was evident across the prairies during the Great War was revived. In supporting an air training school, the communities felt they were making an important contribution to the war. The patriotism and goodwill were central in the acceptance of the burdens of constructing and supplying services to the schools. The stress of the air training facilities increased with the arrival of thousands of aircrew and trainees across the province. The goodwill continued despite the severe housing shortages.

The communities gave the new arrivals warm welcomes. Hostess clubs were established to serve the needs of the airmen. The local media reported the activities at the airport and made the airmen and airwomen feel important. Civilians offered their homes for airmen and airwomen to visit during Christmas and New Year. The air personnel responded with acceptance and compliments. There was goodwill on both sides.

FOOTNOTES FOR
CHAPTER II

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86. "Aussie Airmen Like Yorkton Best," Yorkton Enterprise, Aug. 7, 1941. See also, "Australian Mother Appreciates Kindness Shown Her Son Here," Yorkton Enterprise, March 25, 1943, p. 4.

CHAPTER III
"THE TIE THAT BINDS"

With the closing of Swift Current's air training school in March 1944, The Sun published a retrospective article that pointed out both the the economic benefits the local school had brought, as well as the goodwill that was evident between the communities and the air personnel.

There is no doubt the air school in Swift Current brought a lot of money directly and indirectly to the community: it helped to make business flourish in an already war-inflationary [sic] upsurge in which producers all round made more money and therefore had more to spend. It would be sheer hypocrisy to disguise the fact that people wanted the school to continue, for one thing, because it was good business. On the other hand the thousands of men from various parts of the Empire -- who came and went as the courses were trained and graduated -- brought something to Swift Current in the nature of "the tie that binds."¹

Swift Current, like the rest of the communities of Western Canada, felt it was contributing to the national cause. The alienation of the Great Depression had passed.

Morale was very important in keeping the work on the stations at a steady pace. The RCAF directed local stations to participate in recreational activities for this purpose. The communities, for their part, suffered from a loss of people because of enlistment and wartime migration. The needs of the communities and the training schools were complementary to each other. The servicemen and women were quickly integrated into the activities of the host communities. In spite of the strains that resulted because of housing shortages and labour conflicts, good will prevailed on both sides. Air personnel responded to the shortages in farm labour by volunteering their leaves to help in the harvest. The civilians responded with overwhelming support of Christmas leave programs. In some communities like Moose Jaw, taxi companies supplied unprofitable standard rates to and from the air training stations. In human terms the impact of the Plan was very significant.

The men on the stations interacted daily with the communities of Saskatchewan when travelling through and using the services found in these communities. The relations between the stations and the local civilians

resulted from a need within the host communities and a directed effort from within the headquarters of the R.C.A.F. in Ottawa. The aim of the Royal Canadian Air Force policy was to have a full range of cultural and recreational activities within the training schools and with the host communities to promote high levels of morale and therefore better discipline in the schools.

G.M. Croil, Inspector General of the Royal Canadian Air Force explained the RCAF policy on September, 1940, in the Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities:

In peace our Units and Stations are sited relatively close to settled centres where men can find recreation and diversions from the daily duty and thus [keep] their minds in a healthy state. Under war conditions many of the Stations have had to be sited many miles from a settlements of any size and at most of these Stations there is no suitable means of transportation to enable the men to reach the neighbouring towns. Under such conditions unless a substitute is provided the men will become dull and it is only a matter of time before propaganda of one kind or another take hold and undermine discipline and morale -- both qualities required in their highest form in any Air Force organization. A discontented personnel can unconsciously lower the productive capacity of a Unit so that its output in

quality and quantity is far below requirements. Further, the morale of the pupils turned out from such a school can be seriously lowered.²

This call for recreational activities within the stations was to increase morale among those airmen and airwomen.

Croil went on in his memorandum to point out that the staff on the Air Force Training Schools could not expect to receive the same number of transfers as those in the other services. The air force staff involved in the training plan had to "... look upon the condition they find as something more or less permanent and likely to be their lot for an indefinite period ..." Therefore, life had to be made as accommodating as possible at the stations. Promotion of a recreational program throughout the air training schools was necessary to achieve that.³

Simple interaction with a local community was not in itself enough. Both internal and external forms of recreation were needed according to Croil. His comments went on to state that,

There are several ways in which these troubles [of poor morale] can be corrected or alleviated. One is to promote the necessary transportation to a nearby town. It may be fully used after the novelty is worn off but the fact that it is possible to get away for

a few hours when desired removed that feeling of utter helplessness which magnifies every grievance.

If provision is made at frequent intervals for local entertainment either by organizing entertainment parties within the Unit, or providing them from without, a new topic of conversation is introduced which in itself is a tonic.⁴

The memorandum suggested the use of instructional film projectors on the stations for recreational films. Libraries and other forms of general recreation were to be encouraged. The main thrust of this call for recreation by Croil was to maintain a high level of morale and discipline among the personnel.⁵

This general memorandum by Croil was answered by another from Flying Officer C.L. Weldon, a colleague of Croil who was active at R.C.A.F. headquarters in Ottawa. Weldon's memorandum went on to describe in more detail what the proposed recreational plans of Croil would require. The basic facilities set out in this report were an auditorium, a lighted open air rink, and a library. The auditorium required a stage and a standard thirty-five millimetre movie projector. The projectors had to be new because the standard instructional projectors were sixteen millimetre. Weldon pointed out that, "This type of projector is recommended in order that films currently shown at 'second

run' theaters could be secured and shown." These films would be, "At least one entertainment per week."⁶

The stage that Weldon called for would be used by entertainment organizations that would be expected to provide shows once a month. Weldon hoped that, "... the majority of the personnel of this organization should be female entertainers in order to maintain the interest of the airmen." Further, "Boxing and wrestling put on by 'outsiders' might also be provided once a month in the same manner as the above entertainment."⁷

Other than Weldon's mention of the stage being for wrestling and boxing, the only other mention of sports was a call for a lighted hockey rink. This rink would allow recreational skating as well as an "inter-service" hockey league. These facilities appeared relatively inexpensive to construct in the Canadian winters and would provide a central form of recreation. Although Weldon's comments about recreation were more specific about what was needed for recreational activities on the stations, it was obvious that he and Croil had little idea of the significance of sports in the recreational priorities of the air training schools. Weldon placed as much emphasis on the establishment of the libraries as on the sporting events; later history revealed that the libraries were insignificant to the majority of servicemen involved with the air training stations.⁸

Weldon indicated the need for routine transportation of personnel of the air training units to and from nearby towns. He also called for the routine transfer of permanent staff from schools within the plan to increase morale. Weldon concluded by suggesting that a branch of recreation experts be established to administer these matters.⁹

The reply to the reports by Croil and Weldon came on September 24, 1940 from Group Captain Heaks, the Canadian Air Liaison Officer in London, who agreed with the need for recreational activities on the air training stations. Heaks suggested that an educational and recreational officer be appointed at each station to coordinate such activities with Auxiliary Services.¹⁰

The ideas in the Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities became a guide for the later recreational activities on the stations. Activities were directly administered by a local committee established on all air training stations across Canada.

The Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities was important because it demonstrated that the RCAF were very concerned about the relations between the stations and the host communities. The success of the air schools was very closely tied to the cooperation of the host communities. Recreational activities appeared to be an effective way of achieving good public relations.

Recreational activities on the Air Training Schools would maintain morale among the air personnel and good

public relations. The civilians in the host communities had to fulfill their own needs as well. Cultural activities in the host communities suffered from loss of important participants due to enlistments and wartime migrations. The Yorkton Enterprise reported one case in December, 1941:

One of the most entertaining concerts to be staged in Yorkton in quite some time was enacted Sunday in the Roxy Theatre in aid of the Enterprise Empty Stocking Fund and as a result \$40 was realized at the door in the way of silver collection.

The Canora Symphony under the baton of Egon Grams provided the backbone of the entertainment and when one considers how many of their orchestra they have lost through enlistments they presented a very fine show indeed and were full measure for the applause they received.¹¹

The population of Saskatchewan had dropped by more than 61,000 between 1939 and 1941.¹² Orchestras, bands, and dramatic groups in towns were ending their activities because the men and women that had been involved were no longer available. The airmen and airwomen were warmly welcomed when they pursued activities in the host communities. Both the communities and the Air Training Schools cooperated to fulfill their needs.

The amount of interaction between the host communities and the stations in the Plan varied across Saskatchewan. In general terms, the closer the station was to the host town or city the higher the level of interaction. This was made clear in the Daily Diary of the Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery School when the author stated that,

This being a somewhat isolated station, the social and recreation facilities have been developed to a very high degree within the station itself. In fact, it becomes very hard to find an evening that is not occupied with some social or recreational activity on the Station.¹³

The schools of the Air Training Plan that were the most isolated and therefore had the highest level of internal activity and a minimum of interaction with the nearest communities were the two Bombing and Gunnery schools. This was seen throughout the different facilities such as the libraries established for the use of the service men. Although the libraries were never a central activity for the majority of airmen and airwomen, they were provided. The Mossbank Bombing and Gunnery School boasted on April 9, 1941 of already attaining, "... a library of 1017 books and [the use of] over 50,000 magazines since opening last September." The entry in the Daily Diary went on to claim that, "Over 1,000 sheets of writing paper and envelopes are

used daily and about \$35.00 worth of stamps are sold daily." These claims may have been exaggerated but the importance of the library was asserted with the claim that it was used for

... both trade tests and studies as well as the correspondence course studies. There is also available on the station a musical library of over 250 orchestrations, 300 popular numbers, 1,000 standard numbers, 200 sketches and 12 complete plays.¹⁴

This library was large compared to most other stations. Even the Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery School did not have such a large commitment to its library.¹⁵ Other schools also had library facilities such as the R.A.F. Service Flying Training School at Estevan which was reported to have nearly 1000 volumes.¹⁶ The Elementary Flying Training Schools at Prince Albert and Davidson reported "excellent" libraries at their schools, and the use of those libraries for evening discussion groups.¹⁷ The establishment of libraries on these stations was important because they fulfilled the needs of some of the airmen and airwomen and contributed to the over-all morale on the stations.

In some communities like Yorkton, Swift Current, and Assiniboia, library facilities were provided in the community through the local Hostess clubs. In the library

in Swift Current, appeals were made for reading material for the reading rooms on the Service Flying Training School and the library in the Hostess club.¹⁸ Later the Swift Current Sun published, "Another appeal ... by the Victoria Chapter, I.O.D.E., who are campaigning to provide more books and magazines for the air station here ..."¹⁹ These appeals made the community more aware of the needs of the men on the air training stations. More important, the libraries in the communities brought the airmen and airwomen into contact with members of the communities. Libraries were an important element in the cultural activities of many servicemen and some communities, yet libraries never attained the prominent position that was expected in the Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities.²⁰

Fine arts was the personal preference of only a few individuals. There were a few travelling arts shows. It appeared that these exhibitions were not shown to the public.²¹ More important was the existence of different art classes held on the bases. The Mossbank Bombing and Gunnery School reported a drawing class, the Elementary School at Davidson held leather work classes, and the Yorkton Elementary Flying School reported a commercial art class.²² In the same pattern as the arts classes, hobby clubs were developed at the Service Flying Training Schools at North Battleford and Moose Jaw. Replica construction of aircraft was the goal of these clubs.²³ The participation in all

these arts activities appeared to be low. The significance was that it was obvious that recreational and cultural events on the stations were defined by those who participated in them.

As in the area of the fine arts and hobbies, there were large numbers of activities with little participation that fulfilled a need among the Air Force personnel. These activities included picnics, gardening competitions on the bases, bicycling, bingos, card games, and horse riding. The Bombing School at Mossbank, the Elementary school at Davidson and the Initial Training Schools of Regina and Saskatoon reported summer picnics as forms of recreation on their stations.²⁴ Two stations reported the use of gardening competitions as a form of recreation. It was surprising that only the Dafoe Bombing School and the Davidson Elementary Flying School saw the benefit of landscaping and gardening as a recreational activity.²⁵ The pattern of low participation was noted in card games (two schools reported the activity), horse riding (only noted at Moose Jaw, Caron and North Battleford), bingos (five schools involved), and bicycling (found to be of interest in six schools).²⁶

Parties were a form of recreation which was reported to a much greater extent. The party had three forms, the internal small event for the station personnel and at times small groups of civilians, the graduation event, and the external public relations event. The first two were

reported and had a clear recreational value for the airmen on the stations. The internal parties were often a simple "... party held in the Officer's Mess ..." or one of the other Messes.²⁷ These internal parties would often be reported as events which included a "... programme of sing-song, stories, games and moving pictures ..." ²⁸ The graduation parties were celebrations for the graduates and often ended with a formal dinner. These dinner parties, at times, were held in the host communities. The Elementary Flying Training School in Regina held a dinner at the Saskatchewan Hotel on September 30, 1943. The Air Observer School in Prince Albert held their graduating dinners routinely at the P.O. Cafe in the city.²⁹ In many other cases, however, the dinners were held on the station.³⁰ The most significant interaction between the stations and the communities as a result of parties occurred in the different public relations events held by the air training schools. These events were arranged to encourage interaction between the air personnel and the communities. Good public relations were important to the RCAF. The most common use of the party in public relations was to have the station open to the public to be entertained at a party which usually ended with a dance or a film. All these elements were reported on April 19, 1942 in the Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery school Daily Diary.

A Station Movie was shown in the Recreation Hall. A Sunday Evening Party was held in The Sergeant's Mess when its members entertained their wives and lady friends following the Picture Show. Refreshments were served and wist [sic] and dancing enjoyed.³¹

There were also a few novelty parties sponsored by different schools. One such party was reported in the Weyburn Review on December 31, 1942, when the members of the Service Flying Training School held a children's party:

About 80 children were present at a gala Christmas party held in the recreation hall of No. 41 S.F.T.S. on Boxing Day, as guests of the R.A.F. The youngsters were shown a grand time. Games, a visit from Santa, picture show and monster slide from the roof of one of the buildings rounded out a perfect afternoon.³²

Although most of the parties were informal and often part of other activities such as dances, they served an important role in stimulating morale of the personnel, as well as acting as a tool of communication between the Air Forces and their host communities.

There was goodwill on the part of the air personnel and the civilians in the winter carnivals and summer fairs. In the case of winter ice carnivals there was almost no involvement of the British personnel. The R.A.F. personnel

did not play a major role as in these events. The RCAF on the other hand did a great deal to support these activities. In Davidson, the Canadian air personnel went as far as organizing and hosting a full ice carnival in the winter of 1944. The Davidson Leader reported that,

No. 23 E.F.T.S., R.C.A.F. is arranging a very ambitious ice carnival to be held at the Davidson arena on Monday, Feb. 21.

An interesting program will be presented, including two exhibition skating acts provided by the Saskatoon fancy skating club.

There will be exciting finals and also contests in barrel jumping, puck shooting and goal tending.³³

The events included children's activities and an evening dance. In a similar carnival in 1944, held at Weyburn, the only R.A.F. involvement was an inter-squadron hockey game.³⁴ In many carnivals, there was not even this much participation by British permanent air personnel. New Zealand and Australian airmen were trainees who did not participate in carnivals because they had little time in their training schedules for recreation. On the few occasions when New Zealanders and Australians participated in these activities they were fully accepted as equals.

Canadian air training schools never organized summer fairs to the same extent as the Davidson school had

MON., FEB. 21



No. 23 E.F.T.S. R.C.A.F.

PRESENTS THE

ICE CARNIVAL

AND

Hill Billy Hard Time Hoe Down

: DAVIDSON ARENA :

FANCY SKATING

TWO ACTS BY THE SASKATOON FIGURE SKATING CLUB



Carnival Queen

SKATING RACES

GOAL TENDING COMPETITION

BARREL JUMPING

PUCK SHOOTING COMPETITION

CHILDRENS' RACES START AT 1:15 SHARP

PRIZES FOR COSTUMES

Hard Time DANCE

PRIZES FOR BEST HARD TIME COSTUMES

Canadian Air Ball Championship

R.C.A.F. vs. City of Davidson

Captain

Captain

Commanding Officer, No. 23, E.F.T.S.

His Worship the Mayor of Davidson

HOT DOGS :-

PRIZES FOR ALL COMPETITIONS

:- COFFEE

Adm.: Adults 50c. Children 25c

Carnival Manager, Flt. Lt. John Sankey

Source: Davidson Leader, February 16, 1944, p. 2.

FARMER'S DAY

Open House

at No. 23 E.F.T.S., R.C.A.F.

DAVIDSON

A Chance for the Whole Family to see

AN AIR SCHOOL IN ACTION

SEE THEM FLY

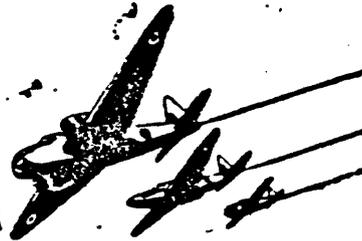
SEE THEM REPAIR PLANES

SEE THEM FIGHT FIRE

SEE A BOMBING RAID

SEE FORMATION FLYING

SEE AEROBATIC FLYING



See it all on . . .

WED., OCT. 13

2:00 p.m.—all afternoon and evening

No. 7 I.T.S. Saskatoon Band

Will be in Attendance

SUPPER SERVED

BIG DANCE AT NIGHT

Source: Davidson Leader, September 29, 1943, p. 1.

organized the 1944 winter carnival, yet it was clear that R.C.A.F. personnel were often closely involved in the community fairs. In the summer of 1943 it was reported that, "The members of No. 23 E.F.T.S., R.C.A.F. pitched in like old timers, taking charge of the concessions and midway which were a huge success."³⁵ Weyburn, on the other hand, was only able to report that the British personnel contributed an exhibition game of soccer at the local summer fair.³⁶ It was obvious that the participation of Canadian airmen and airwomen in the major events in their host communities was more significant than that of the British and was a factor in the continuing fraternal relations between the R.C.A.F. stations and local communities.

Not all activities held on the air training schools or in the host communities were as irregular and of such a low participation level as the events outlined. There was a high participation of the airmen and airwomen in the routine of the church parades. This did not mean that all of the personnel were required to attend the church parades. The 1941 inspection report of Number 32 Service Flying Training School in Moose Jaw stated that church attendance was "Compulsory for a fixed number which is limited owing to the size of the church."³⁷ In the case of another western Canadian Service Flying Training school, "... church attendance is not compulsory except for trainees of whom 50% attend."³⁸ The fact that training took

precedence over church parades was made clear when it was reported in the Daily Diary of the Mossbank Bombing and Gunnery School that, "This is Good Friday and an Air Force Holiday, but this Station decided to carry on as usual to make up for some of the time lost by reason of bad weather."³⁹ Often when training was on schedule or ahead of plans it was reported that, "No flying scheduled for the morning due to a scheduled Church Parade ..."⁴⁰

Interaction between station personnel and the civilians of host communities occurred when the personnel attended the church within the community. The Swift Current Sun reported one of first arrivals of Air Force personnel in the Metropolitan United church on December 9, 1941:

Last Sunday evening at regular services when Metropolitan United church pastor, Rev. H.D. Ranns, stepped into the pulpit he beheld as large a congregation as has been his privilege to preach to for quite a long time. The main auditorium was filled and there was a large overflow into the galleries upstairs.⁴¹

In cases where there was a chapel on the station the converse occurred. On September 28, 1941 it was reported in the Daily Diary of the number Two Bombing and Gunnery School that the church parade included, "Quite a goodly number of civilian visitors ..."⁴²

The institution of the church acted to bring together the civilians of the host communities and the air training school personnel. A common occurrence was the guest speaking of air personnel and padre from the school at public events in the host communities.⁴³ As well, there were cases where the local clergyman was appointed as padre on the air training station. One such case was reported in the Swift Current Sun:

With the rank of Honorary Flight Lieutenant each and doing part time duty, Rev. Canon E.A.C. Hackman will be padre for the Anglican and Rev. H.D. Ranns will be padre for other denominations. It is understood that Rev. Father Norman Gallagher, a Swift Current young man who was ordained last March, will receive appointment as padre for those of Roman Catholic faith. At the Rotary luncheon Monday H.F. James, club president, extended congratulations of fellow members to Rev. Ranns on his appointment.

These designations of local clergymen to chaplains of R.A.F. schools in Canada follows the intimation given out last August by Rev. J. Rossie-Brown, senior chaplain of [the] R.A.F. in Canada, when in Swift Current that those selected would be made from Canada.⁴⁴

The church parade was one of several routines at the stations. Routine films as described by the Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities became an integral part of the activities at the air training schools. The Mossbank Bombing and Gunnery School reported the acquisition of a movie projector as "... all to the good as there is real need for better entertainment at this station, being it is that we are somewhat isolated."⁴⁵ With the installation of the projecting equipment, films became a regular recreational event. The North Battleford Elementary Flying Training School reported that, "The Movie Show [sic] continues to operate five nights in each week ..."⁴⁶ Other schools, like the Bombing School at Dafoe, reported six evenings of film entertainment a week.⁴⁷ The use of films was an important recreational event on all the stations in the Plan.⁴⁸

The routine showing of films on the stations was important in promoting higher morale among the air personnel, but did little in terms of interaction between the host communities and the Units. Shows of another kind were important in the interaction of these two groups -- stage shows and concerts. There were three types of stage shows. The first were internal recreational shows, which had a minimum number of civilians in the audience. These shows were often produced by the personnel or by one of the service auxiliaries. The second group of stage productions were those that were performed by civilian groups for the

air training schools and other wings of the services. The final type of performances were those that were produced by the airmen and airwomen for audiences in the host communities.

The stage productions on the stations reflected the abilities and interests of those who were involved in them. The productions ranged from amateur to "professional" productions. On several occasions, the Bombing and Gunnery School at Mossbank reported that:

As part of the Station Entertainment programme a Hidden Talent programme was put on this evening with [the] dual purpose of providing Entertainment and trying to locate Local Talent [sic]. The C.O. kindly granted an extra 48 hour pass to the winner. The show was very successful, several good items turned out.⁴⁹

The Bombing and Gunnery School reported a more "professional" production on November 12, 1941;

A concert has been held this evening in the Large Canteen with the Australian 'Kangaroos' and Headquarters 'Drury Lane Players' were featured together with solos, orchestra, quiz and other surprise numbers. The efforts of Colin, the Australian magician, probably drew the largest hand in appreciation ...⁵⁰

Other schools like the the Elementary Flying Training School at Davidson reported stage productions that included vaudeville, singing, dancing, jokes, and skits.⁵¹ Plays were also provided, often by dramatic groups on the stations. These groups were active in producing plays for both station presentations and for public events.⁵²

There were several agencies within the armed services that provided dramatic productions at the air training stations. The Royal Canadian Air Force had their own shows which toured the stations. These shows, like those from the stations, included a variety of entertainment. One such event was reported in the North Battleford Optimist:

Brilliance was the keynote of "Blackouts of 1943" stage show put on at No. 35 S.F.T.S., Thursday afternoon and evening by a company of R.C.A.F. players who are touring R.C.A.F. and R.A.F. stations. Headed by Flying Officer Campbell the group comprises 35 talented artists, including 10 members of the Women's Division, R.C.A.F., and supported by a 12 piece orchestra.⁵³

The Air Force shows included plays, skits, dancing, singing, and "swing time" band sessions.⁵⁴ Further stage shows like these were provided by the War Auxiliary Services⁵⁵ and the Army Shows.⁵⁶ In some cases, groups from

one air training school entertained at another.⁵⁷ All these stage shows were held internally at the schools, with few if any civilians in the audience.⁵⁸

Beyond the internal armed services stage shows, there were large numbers of shows staged by civilians. The Davidson Elementary Flying Training School reported a typical civilian group of entertainers on March 10, 1944:

A dramatic group from the University of Saskatchewan arrived from Saskatoon in the evening and put on the play "The Male Animal" in the Recreation Hall. The play, a comedy, was a sensational hit, and the acting was extraordinary well done.⁵⁹

Another report of a civilian variety show was given in the Daily Diary of the Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery School;

A Concert Party from Regina, under the direction of Jack Colston and Hugh Havey, Y.M.C.A. ... performed here this evening. Many clever acts were heartily applauded by the capacity audience. A portion of the program was re-broadcast over C.J.R.K., Regina.⁶⁰

Another show reported at the Bombing and Gunnery School at Mossbank included entertainers from Moose Jaw and the local station C.H.A.B.⁶¹ Generally, the shows were either a play or a variety show by interested civilians.⁶²

The stage shows presented to the host communities by the airmen and airwomen had a greater and more immediate impact on public relations than the internal station entertainment. This was demonstrated by the large number of provincial papers that gave prominent coverage to the events. The Weyburn Review, The Yorkton Enterprise, The Assinibioa Times, The Estevan Mercury, Swift Current's Sun, and Davidson's Leader had continued coverage of the station's dramatic productions throughout the war. All these newspapers that reported the events were from smaller communities. This demonstrated that the smaller the community the more significant the events were to the civilians. The Yorkton Enterprise showed the community's enthusiasm and participation in its report about one stage show that which held on October 9, 1941:

Yorktonites turned out in full force Sunday evening to welcome the R.C.A.F. boys to the Roxy Theatre on Yorkton's Broadway. From a per capita point of view New York never gave warmer welcome to a cast on opening night on the Great White Way than Yorkton gave the airmen and it can also be said that no New York cast ever surprised or pleased their patrons more than "the lads in greyish-blue." Almost every seat in the vast auditorium was taken.⁶³

This same kind of enthusiasm and numbers in attendance continued throughout these papers until the air training schools closed. The entertainment offered by the schools was as varied as those at the stations. Stage shows were an important element in the relations between the air personnel on the stations and the host communities.⁶⁴

An article in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix announced the formation of a band in the local Service Flying Training School and indicated that it was official R.C.A.F. policy to have a band at every school in the Air Training Plan:

There will be a Royal Canadian Air Force band here next autumn, attached to No. 4 Flying Service Training School, under announced policy of the Commonwealth plan to establish a band at each training centre. However, the bandsmen will do their tooting and drumming as a sideline to their Air Force work.

Youths who can play a musical instrument and have experience in bands or other organizations are being enlisted as aircraftmen at the Saskatoon R.C.A.F. Recruiting Centre, but only if they can qualify in some trade. They must be willing to enlist, not specifically as bandmen, but as equipment assistance general duties men, disciplinarian or in some other branch.⁶⁵

As a result of this policy of the R.C.A.F., the bands associated with Air Training schools were located in communities that had no band of their own. This allowed for many opportunities for the station bands to offer their host communities a service that could not be attained from any other source. Swing sessions, concerts, Christmas music festivals, and community fund-raising events were centered on the performance of one of the R.C.A.F. or R.A.F. bands during the war period. A typical event that one of the Air Force bands were involved in was reported by the North Battleford Optimist:

Mr. Colburn gave the entire proceeds of the dance attendance and checkroom takings, which is greatly appreciated by the North Battleford Red Cross Society, which must keep "going on" to raise funds for the Red Cross war effort.

Snappy music was supplied by the Blue Aces orchestra, by permission of Group Captain A.P. Bett, of No. 35 S.F.T.S., R.A.F.⁶⁶

The statement in The Estevan Mercury that, "The station orchestra, whose good work is much in evidence on so many occasions at our dances, socials, concerts, etc., continues to move from one success to another," applied to the majority of Air Force bands in the province during the war years.⁶⁷

The Yorkton Service Flying Training School had a close relationship with the community that began with the creation of the station band. The city of Yorkton had the instruments and the Air Training School had the desire to form a band. The Yorkton Enterprise explained the event:

Mayor Peaker recently visited No. 11 Service Flying Training School and learned, among other things, that the boys of the R.C.A.F. wish to start a band. The city has a number of band instruments out on loan and those who have these are asked to return them to the city office. Mayor Peaker believes it would be well to see the airmen start a band and after the war an adult band might be continued in Yorkton. The Civic Service Club has some city instruments, but it is not the wish of the city to recall these as it wishes this fine organization to continue its good work.⁶⁸

The early co-operation was followed by a continued enthusiasm among Yorkton citizens for the public performances given by the R.C.A.F. band at the Roxy theatre.⁶⁹ The RCAF Bands were more significant to the smaller communities in the province. Many communities either had no band before the war or had lost their local band due to enlistments of the band members. The city newspapers in Saskatoon and Regina did not report as

regularly or as enthusiastically the band concerts of the RCAF.

Bands were also very significant to the station dances. The station dance became a routine event on the majority of air training schools. The participation of civilians was necessary for these events to be successful because of the need for females partners (the overall percentage of women in the Air Force remained low throughout the war). Even in the most isolated schools, the Bombing and Gunnery schools, significant effort was made to bring women to the dances. The Diary entry for May 1, 1942 at the Dafoe station demonstrated this:

The seventh Airmen's Dance was held in the Recreation Hall tonight with the usual large attendance present. Young ladies from the surrounding towns of Dafoe, Watson, Melfort and Humboldt were brought to the Station by private cars, and a very happy time was had by all. Music was supplied by the Station orchestra.⁷⁰

The entry went on to comment that, "The Wet canteen is always closed on the nights of Airmen's Dance and soft drinks and other refreshments were served in the Small Canteen."⁷¹ This form of caution, along with the statement that there was very extensive participation on the part of local ladies, was often repeated in the Daily Diaries of

the Air Force training stations and local newspapers.⁷² On the other hand the city newspapers in Regina and Saskatoon rarely reported the dances. It was obvious that in the smaller communities, the proportion of airmen was much higher than the cities. The result was that the smaller communities were more closely tied to the local air personnel.

The dance remained important for most of the war years to the airmen. However, in some schools, it was reported that by the end of the war,

Invitations to attend three dances to-night [sic.] indicate the interest taken by Regina people regarding airmen's welfare, the airmen's interest in the dances is disappointing -- only ten of the fifty individual invitations were snapped up.⁷³

Local girls danced and laughed with the air trainees and personnel at social events. Local men and women played ball, hockey and bingo with the trainees. One account of this interaction was recalled by Alexandria Miller:

... we used to dance six nights a week, Church on Sundays at the United Church and Bingo after Church at the Catholic Hall....

We were delighted to be invited to the Corporals dances, or at the Sergeants Mess, for these Social

Events compared to the Country dances we were used to. The Servicemen's dance were more relaxed to dance to English Ballroom style to the great Glen Miller Band sounds, to learn the Tango and Rhumba was a whole new experience for the girls and women of Weyburn. Partners were no problem -- the Men outnumbered the girls 10 to 1, so even the Henna-haired Widows came off their Rocking chairs to join the Dance circuit and had a ball doing it -- even though the gossips were kept busy....

We learnt a lot from the fraternization with the British R.A.F. We were basically Country bred kids that had not travelled far from home, while these [were] boys and men from a different Country, [with] different ways and customs. Most had experienced War and the effects of War, whereas for us, War was a word that meant Ration Books and watching for names on the "Missing in Action" list but not the devastating thing that these boys had experienced.⁷⁴

Another important result of the large number of air personnel involved in the host communities was the marriage of local women to the airmen. The obvious result of the marriage of local girls to airmen from Britain, Australia or New Zealand was that one spouse would have to leave their home countries to join the other. Some Canadians, like Mrs. Miller, travelled to England to live with their

husbands. Canadian women travelled to Australia, New Zealand or other countries of the Commonwealth. On the other side, there were many airmen who liked Saskatchewan so much that they returned after their service in the war. In a study by historians Greenhous and Hillmer, it was calculated that about twelve women from the Weyburn district married Royal Air Force men.⁷⁵ The two historians also calculated that a minimum of thirty-four airmen from the North Battleford district married local girls and returned to Canada.⁷⁶ It was also pointed out in the same study that in late 1980 fourteen remained in North Battleford. The historians noted that three of these men held the positions of Secretary-Treasurer of the Municipality, fire chief and head Engineer at the local hospital.⁷⁷

The concluding report of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan Supervisory Board stated, "... more than 3,750 members of the RAF, RAAF, RNZAF and Allied nationals under RAF quotas married Canadian girls."⁷⁸ The two historians calculated that about five hundred of these air personnel married Saskatchewan girls.⁷⁹ These high numbers of lasting relationships demonstrated that there were very good relations between the communities and the air schools.

The acceptance of the Air Training schools was made clear in an editorial that appeared in the Weyburn Review;

People in Weyburn who a few months ago found it difficult to sleep because of the unfamiliar drone of training planes overhead, are like the child accustomed to being rocked to sleep -- they now find it difficult to get to sleep without the familiar purr of engines in the sky.⁸⁰

The acceptance of the Air Training Plan in communities across Saskatchewan was suggested by the high level of enlistment by local men and women into the RCAF. For those local boys who were too young to enlist, there was a strong and growing cadet movement in the province. Interest among local citizens and widespread support for the cadet movement was in evidence among many of the Air Training Schools. In April 1944, The Davidson Leader noted the local enthusiasm for the Air Cadet movement and the extent of the cooperation between the local Air School and the community:

The air cadets of Canada are her future airmen, and No. 23 E.F.T.S., Davidson is going all out to help train these younger members of the great airforce family. For the month of April the Wednesday night dance held at the airport will turn over their total profits to the air cadet league of Canada.

This [is] part of a cross Canada drive to raise funds for the training materials needed to continue the work the league is doing from coast to coast. The

money raised in this drive will be used entirely for supplies and uniforms. The instructors and staff of the air cadet league are civilians, working in close relationship with the R.C.A.F., who assist in fitting materials for them. The league has more than proved its worth in its training plan for youngsters who are air-minded. Not only does it teach them a great deal of flying lore but trains them to be useful citizens.⁸¹

The same interest that was noted in the air cadet movement was seen in the the enlistment of Saskatchewan men and women. Statistics compiled by Greenhous and Hillmer showed that Saskatchewan men enlisted in the army at an average of two percent below the national average. The same statistics demonstrated that Saskatchewan men enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force at a rate that was proportionately higher than any other province in Canada. That rate was only slightly below fifty percent. See tables:

World War II Male Enlistments⁸²

<u>Province</u>	Males Aged 20-39 (1941 Census)	Army Enlistments (excluding NRMA)	Percent of Population	RCAF Enlistments	Percent of Population	RCAF Enlistments As percent of Army Enlistments
PEI	19,189	5,961	31.1	1,528	8 .0	25.6
NS	121,744	42,462	34.9	7,498	6 .2	17.7
NB	94,813	32,326	34.1	6,453	6 .8	20.0
PQ	696,548	94,446	13.6	24,768	3 .6	26.2
ONT	780,332	243,615	31.2	90,518	11 .6	37.2
MAN	155,028	42,627	27.5	20,120	13 .0	47.2
<u>SASK</u>	190,294	44,213	23.2	21,827	11 .5	49.4
ALTA	164,339	44,775	27.2	19,499	11 .9	43.5
BC	167,030	52,620	28.1	20,805	11 .1	39.5
<u>CANADA</u>	2,339,552	603,045	25.1	213,016	8 .9	35.3

World War II Female Enlistments⁸³

Province	Females Aged 20-34 (1941 Census)	CWAC Enlistments	Percent of Population	RCAF(WD) Enlistments	Percent of Population	RCAF(WD) Enlistments As percent of Army Enlistments
PEI	9,955	262	0.26	121	0.12	46.2
NS	69,816	1,619	0.31	879	0.17	54.3
NB	52,201	1,158	0.22	754	0.14	65.1
PQ	422,437	2,748	0.06	1,366	0.03	49.7
ONT	457,105	8,879	0.19	5,439	0.12	61.3
MAN	92,430	1,970	0.21	1,351	0.15	68.6
<u>SASK</u>	104,238	2,365	0.22	2,524	0.24	106.7
ALTA	94,673	2,089	0.22	1,898	0.20	90.9
BC	100,711	2,984	0.29	2,334	0.23	78.2
<u>CANADA</u>	1,405,375	24,074	0.17	16,666	0.12	69.2

When the historians Greenhous and Hillmer gathered the statistics for the enlistments across Canada they found that Royal Canadian Air Force was even more popular among the women of the province.

Saskatchewan was the only province in Canada that had more women enlisted in the Women's Division of the Air Force than those who enlisted in the Canadian Women's Army Corps. The two historians concluded that, "This last result seems most significant when it is remembered that recruiting for both women's services only began in the

summer of 1941, when the BCATP operation in the province was getting into top gear."⁸⁴

There was only one labour conflict reported on the air training stations. The Bombing and Gunnery school at Mossbank was important in establishing the policies of the employment for civilians after a threat of a walkout. On October 16, 1940, the Daily Diary of the Mossbank school reported that the civilians in the local area were very willing to accept employment on the school:

We are still besieged with Applications for Employment [sic] from Civilians [sic] -- most of them men of some standing in the community who have suffered Crop Failures [sic]. We have ceased to employ them for the moment as our Strength [sic] is back to 102 [civilian employees]."⁸⁵

The good labour relations at the Bombing and Gunnery school did not last when the rates of pay were lowered for the civilian employees. The station Diary reported on November 30, 1940 that

Civilian personnel, constituting in the main the cooking and messing staffs, as well as firemen and other key positions are greatly upset at the action of No. 4 Training Command in directing that they be paid at a lesser rate of pay than that stipulated at

the time they were engaged by an Officer from Command Headquarters, for employment on this Station. A \$10.00 per month disparity exists between rates payable under this ruling and that which prevails at Moose Jaw and Regina. It is feared that Civilian personnel will resign in masse which would leave the Station in a situation which would be difficult to contend with. The Commanding Officer has drawn the matter to the attention of Command Headquarters, and action is expected to correct the discrimination, and remedy the injustice worked on the Civilians by arbitrary departures from the agreements with them. It is extremely difficult to obtain cooks, clerks, and certain other categories at the rates of pay which are stipulated for this Station.⁸⁶

The solution to the labour difficulties at the Mossbank station was found in early December, when it was reported that a

Delegation of Civilian personnel waited on Commanding Officer in connection with Wage Dispute, threatening walk-out unless matter settled. No solution forthcoming from Command by 1700 hours when another delegation attended, but were persuaded to remain until Friday in the hope that the matter complained of would be corrected. Word received by telephone at

1930 hours from No. 4 Training Command, Regina, Sask., that Cooks and Messmen be restored to previous rate; Batmen and General Duties yet to be dealt with.⁸⁷

With this action on the part of Training Command, the dispute ended. The result was that one standard rate of pay would be instituted for all civilian workers across the prairies. The dispute demonstrated that although the people across the prairies were positive about receiving the wealth associated with the air training plan, they would not accept less than they thought they were entitled. It was also clear that the Air Force wished to minimize any possibility of discord between the host communities and the air schools. The schools were very close to the communities and very dependent on them.

In spite of this difficulty there was goodwill on both sides. One example was seen when the airmen volunteered their leave to assist farmers harvest. As the fall of 1942 approached, it became clear that there was a shortage of farm labour. Public appeals were made across the south of the province. The Assinibioa Times called on high schools students to consider helping in the harvest as their "... patriotic duty to assist in harvesting ..."⁸⁸ The Weyburn Review reported that, "An appeal is to be made to the authorities at both the mental hospital and R.A.F. 41

S.F.T.S. for whatever extra help may be possible to obtain from those two sources."⁸⁹

It was clear that an acute problem had developed in the area of farm labour. The response from the Air Force was not delayed. The Swift Current Sun in an article entitled, "Response from the air force has been gratifying," stated that;

About 50 English airmen have come to the national selective service office and offered to go on the farms. The majority of the men had only 48-hour leave. The secretary was able to place four of these lads who are on 7-day leave, but expected to place more. No men on short leaves have been placed as yet.⁹⁰

Although the service of the airmen remained on a volunteer basis, there was no lack of airmen to help.

In Moose Jaw, taxi firms were doing so well that they could afford to offer unprofitable services to airmen. As a result of the goodwill and patriotism, taxi firms in Moose Jaw decided,

To help the "War Effort," the taxi companies got together and decided to charge only one dollar for a trip to or from the airport of #32 [Service Flying Training School]. This would take up to a half hour

and the drivers could make more money driving within the city. Therefore there was always a friendly competition between the various drivers to see who could make the round trip the fastest. ... When any fellows from Caron missed the bus, we had to get permission from [the] R.C.M.P. to go more than twenty miles outside the city. Sometimes we even had a trip to Mossbank.⁹¹

The taxi companies in Moose Jaw were not the only business to gain extra revenue from the airmen of the air training plan,

... The Moose Jaw Transportation Co. found a bunch of old buses and run [sic] regular service to #32 [Service Flying Training School] and to #33 [Elementary Flying Training School] at Caron. The #32 run was quite frequent, as they carried civilian workers back and forth, as well as a steady flow of Airmen.⁹²

As the war continued, the air personnel and the civilians of the host communities became closely integrated. The Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities called for the introduction of recreational activities to keep morale high and encourage good public relations. Communities across the province, however, did not require

the efforts of the RCAF headquarters in Ottawa. Airmen and airwomen supplied bands in communities that never had bands before. The communities supplied the air personnel with books for the school's library. The airmen and airwomen became part of local church congregations and went to the same dances. Both groups exchanged stage productions. The goodwill was evident even when there were labour difficulties. Cordiality was shown when taxi companies supplied the air personnel with unprofitable rates. The gestures of kindness were returned when airmen volunteered their leaves to assist local farmers in the harvest. The smaller the host communities were, the greater the impact of the Air Training School. It was clear that the RCAF bases had a closer tie with their fellow Canadians in the host communities. The lasting effect of the integration of the air personnel in the communities was seen in the marriages after the war between local girls and airmen. Further, the air cadet movement flourished in Saskatchewan. More men joined the RCAF in Saskatchewan than in any other province in Canada. The province was also the only one to report that proportionately more men joined the RCAF than the Army. The extent of the positive sentiment in the province between the community and the air personnel was seen in the winter carnivals and summer fairs.

FOOTNOTES FOR
CHAPTER III

1. "Air School Closing," Swift Current Sun, March 14, 1944, p. 2.
2. PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24, Vol. 5176-1-271, Memorandum of G.M. Croil, Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities, Sept. 16, 1940, paragraph 2.
3. Ibid., paragraph 3.
4. Ibid., paragraphs 4 - 5.
5. Ibid., paragraphs 6 - 10. Croil did admit at the end of his memorandum that, "the idea is not new. The Auxiliary Service under Brigadier Foster was organized to provide for similar duties for the three fighting services. The activities although helpful are not sufficiently intimate and do not reach to the more domestic heart of this problem. It is suggested that in addition to the Auxiliary Services an organization of Air Force personnel is required whose duties it will be to organize and follow these matters closely and to be the medium through which the Auxiliary Service can be brought more closely in touch without requirements.
6. Ibid., Memorandum of C.L. Weldon, Sept. 20, 1940.
7. Ibid., Weldon suggested that the cost of this entertainment could be covered with the money made from admission and the canteen profits.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., Memorandum of F.V. Heakes. Sept. 24, 1940.
11. "Fine Concert Stage Sunday Evening," The Yorkton Enterprise, Dec. 2, 1941.
12. Canada, Canada Year Book 1942, p. 84.
13. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Aug. 16, 1942.
14. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, April 9, 1941.
15. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Sept. 1, 1941.
16. "First Year At No. 38 S.F.T.S.," Estevan Mercury, April 1, 1943.

17. PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24 microfilm reel C-12336-7, Prince Albert, No. 6, EFTS, Diary, Jan. 20, 1944; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, March 20, 1944.
18. "Appeal for Books Here," Swift Current Sun, Feb. 9, 1943.
19. "Appeals Made Re Servicemen," Swift Current Sun, Dec. 14, 1943.
20. PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24, Vol. 5176, File H.Q. C15-1-271, Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities, Memorandum of C.L. Weldon, Sept. 20, 1940.
21. North Battleford, No. 13 EFTS, Diary, April 5, 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Aug. 12, 1943; PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24 microfilm reel C-12347 Weyburn No. 8 SFTS, Diary, May 17, 1944.
22. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, March 18, 1943; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, May 1, 1944, May 8, 1944; Yorkton No. 23 EFTS, Diary, March 1, 1945.
23. North Battleford No. 13 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 28, 1945, Jan. 31, 1945, March 7, 1945, March 22, 1945; PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24 microfilm reel C-12353, Moose Jaw No 32 SFTS, Diary, Jan. 31, 1944; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 2, 9, 23, 1944, June 20, 29, 1944, July 3, 24, 1944, Sept. 22, 1944; North Battleford No. 35 SFTS, Diary, Sept. 30, 1943, Dec. 31, 1943, Jan. 31, 1944.
24. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, July 17, 1941, July 21, 1941; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, July 3, 1943; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, May 26, 1944; PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24 microfilm reel C-12343; Saskatoon ITS, Diary, Aug. 15, 1942; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, May 26, 1944, June 27, 1944; Saskatoon No. 4 SFTS, Diary, June 23, 1941, July 30, 1942.
25. Davidson, No. 23 EFTS, Diary, April 30, 1944, March 2, 1944, March 31, 1944; "Searchlight Spots From the Airport," The Davidson Leader, June 30, 1943, June 2, 1943, May 20, 1943, Sept. 1, 1943; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, May 15, 1942, March 31, 1943, April 30, 1943.
26. Card games: Davidson, No. 23 EFTS, Diary, May 29, 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Nov. 6, 1941. Horse Riding: Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, May, 31, 1944; PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24 microfilm reel C-12340 Caron No. 33 EFTS, Diary, Nov. 21 1942; North Battleford No. 35 SFTS, Diary, May 31, 1943, July 31, 1943, Sept. 30, 1943; Interview: WDM: Stan Moris, Oct. 7, 1981; Interview: Bill Minor with author, Oct. 3, 1987. Bingo: Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, Jan. 6, 1944, Jan. 13, 1944, Feb. 3, 1944, March 23, 1944, April 12, 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, May 11, 1943, Jan. 21, 1943, Aug. 26, 1943, Aug. 12, 1943; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Feb. 10, 1944. Bicycling: North Battleford No. 13, SFTS, Diary, April, 23, 1944; Dafoe No. 5

- B&GS, Diary, May 27, 1944; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, June 30, 1944.
27. Prince Albert No. 6 AOS, Diary, June 21, 1941; Regina No. 4 TC, Diary, June 19, 1941.
28. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, May 16, 1942. See also, April 4, 1942, Jan. 31, 1943, Aug. 3, 1942, Aug. 10, 1942, Nov. 30, 1941, Dec. 20, 1941, July 4, 1942, Feb. 25, 1944, March 3, 1944, Oct. 13, 1944, Jan. 1, 1942; Calgary No. 4 TC, Diary, Oct. 2, 1941; Prince Albert, No. 6, AOS, Diary, Dec. 25 1941; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Sept. 8, 1943.
29. Regina No. 15 EFTS, Diary, Sept. 30, 1943; Prince Albert No. 6 AOS, Diary, July 25, 1941, Oct. 18, 1941, Nov. 17, 1941.
30. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, July 3, 1942; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Nov. 24, 1943.
31. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, April 19, 1942; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Dec. 24, 1943; Swift Current, Sun, Dec. 8, 1942; Regina No. 15 EFTS, Diary, Sept. 13, 1943; The Estevan Mercury, Dec. 18, 1941; North Battleford No. 13 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 28, 1945.
32. "Children Guests of R.A.F. At Party," Weyburn Review, Dec. 31, 1942.
33. "R.C.A.F. Ice Carnival," The Davidson Leader, Feb. 9, 1944, and "The Carnival," May 19, 1943.
34. "Good Program for Rotary Ice Carnival," Weyburn Review, Feb. 10, 1944; "Kinsmen's Ice Carnival Pleasing Performance," The North Battleford Optimist, March 11, 1943; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, May 15, 1943, Feb. 21, 1944; Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, June 13, 1942, Sept. 30, 1942, April 17, 1943.
35. "July 1st Davidson," The Davidson Leader, July 7, 1943; "Davidson to Celebrate July 1st," May 26, 1943; "Davidson Sports Day, Thursday, July 1," June 16, 1943; Interview: WDM:BCATP, Stan Morris, Oct. 7, 1981.
36. "Weyburn Fair Successful Despite Wartime Handicap," Weyburn Review, July 9, 1942.
37. Calgary No. 4 TC, Diary, Dec., 1941, "Report: No. 32 S.F.T.S. Moose Jaw."

38. Calgary No. 4 TC, Diary, 1941, Appendix "A", "Report: Annual Inspection by Air Officer Commanding No. 4 Training Command, No. 34 SFTS, Medicine Hat, Alberta, 22nd Oct., 1941."
39. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, April 11, 1941.
40. Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Oct. 17, 1943.
41. "Elks Band Greets R.A.F. Concerts," Swift Current Sun, Dec. 9, 1941; Prince Albert No. 6 EFTS, Diary, July 4, 1943, Nov. 11, 1943.
42. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, Sept. 28, 1941.
43. "Padre Pleads For Canadian Unity," The Yorkton Enterprise, (Oct. 9, 1941, Section 2) p.11.
44. "Local Clergymen As Chaplains for R.A.F. School," Swift Current Sun, Oct., 21, 1941.
45. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, May 22, 1941; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Sept. 16, 1943.
46. North Battleford No. 13 SFTS, Diary, Appendix "C", Dec. 1944.
47. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Jan. 31, 1943; "First Year at No. 38 S.F.T.S.," The Estevan Mercury, April 1, 1943; Weyburn No. 41, SFTS, Diary, March 26, 31, 1942, July 29, 1943, Aug. 15, 1943; PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24 microfilm reel C-12357, Swift Current No. 39 SFTS, Diary, May 19, Oct. 4, 7, 16, 17, 23, 1943; Estevan No. 38 SFTS, Diary, May 16, 1943, Aug. 18, 21, 24, 26, 1943; North Battleford No. 35 SFTS, Diary, Jan. 27, 1943, Feb. 8, 1943; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, May 1, 1941, June 6, 1942, March 29, 1943, March 5, 22, 24, 29, 1944, April 1, 8, 14, 15, 19, 1944, Sept. 23, 1944, Oct. 15, 28, 1944, Nov. 4, 9, 11, 19, 21, 1944; Saskatoon No. 4 SFTS, Diary, April 3, 7, 10, 17, 28, 1941, July 8, 1943, Jan. 6, 1944; PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24 microfilm reel C-12340, Assinibioa No. 34 EFTS, Diary, June 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 1942, May 16, 19, 23, 26, 30, 1943, Jan. 6, 12, 16, 19, 1944; Caron No. 33 EFTS, Diary, Dec. 31, 1943; Saskatoon No. 7 ITS, Diary, March 17, 1942, April 24, 1942, May 1, 1942, Feb. 21, 1943, April 4, 1943, Sept. 26, 1943, April 23, 1944.
48. Some examples were: Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, March 10, 1941, May 11, 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Aug. 6, 1941, Aug. 2, 1942, Dec. 17, 1943, May 26, 1944; Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, Jan. 2, 1943; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, May 17, 1943, Feb. 12, 1944; Prince Albert No. 6 EFTS, Diary, Jan. 17, 1944; Calgary No. 4 TC, Diary, Oct. 24, 1941, June 29, 1942; PAC, Records of the RCAF, RG 24 microfilm reel C-12339, Assinibioa No. 25 EFTS, Diary, Feb. 6, 1944; North Battleford, No. 13 SFTS, Diary, Sept. 30, 1944, March 13, 1945.

49. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, July 22, 1942, Sept. 16, 1942, Dec. 7, 1941.
50. 48. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Nov. 12, 1941; Swift Current No. 32 EFTS, Diary, June 25, 1941; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, March 23, 1944; Caron No. 33 EFTS, Diary, April 21, 23, 1942, Aug. 25, 1943, Oct. 6, 1943; Saskatoon No. 7 ITS, Diary, March 29, 1944; Assiniboia No. 34 EFTS, Diary, Oct. 31, 1943; Saskatoon No. 4 SFTS, Diary, Nov. 14, 1944, Feb. 8, 1945, March 14, 1945; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Jan. 13, 1943; North Battleford No. 35 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 10, 1943, May 11, 1943, Nov. 30, 1943; Estevan No. 38 SFTS, Diary, March 2, 1943, April 24, 1943; Swift Current No. 39 SFTS, Diary, Jan. 11, 25, 26, 1943, June 8 1943, Jan. 18, 1944, Feb. 22, 1944, March 2, 1944; Weyburn No. 41 SFTS, Diary, July 29, 1942, Sept. 16, 1942, Oct. 7, 15, 1942, Nov. 25, 1942, Jan. 6, 1943, Feb. 2, 1943, June 2, 1943, Sept. 29, 1943.
51. Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, March 16, 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, June 15, 1941, Nov. 23, 1944; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, April, 20, 1944; "Searchlight Spots from the Airport," The Davidson Leader, Aug. 25, 1943; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, May 24, 1944, March 22, 1944; North Battleford No. 13, SFTS, Diary, Feb. 28, 1945, May 30, 1944.
52. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Feb. 2, 1942, March 25, 1942, June 15, 1941.
53. "Spectacular Show Produced By R.C.A.F. Players," North Battleford Optimist, May 13, 1943.
54. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, May 5, 1943; Moose Jaw No. 35 SFTS, Diary, Jan. 24, 1944; "Air Force Show Big At No. 11 S.F.T.S.," The Yorkton Enterprise, May 6, 1943, p. 15; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, May 11, 1944, June 18, 1943, July 15, 1943.
55. Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Feb. 5, 1944, May 19, 1943, Aug. 4, 1943, Aug. 18, 1943.
56. Prince Albert No. 6 EFTS, Diary, July 21, 1943; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Aug. 30, 1944; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, June 1, 1943.
57. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, Nov. 12, 1941. This entry into the diary reported the entertainment by twenty airmen from the Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS. See also: Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, May 10, 1944. This entry reported a stage show by the No. 2 ITS, from Regina; Swift Current No. 39 SFTS, Diary, June 22, 1943, Aug. 23, 1943; Assiniboia No. 34 EFTS, Diary, Dec. 1, 1943.
58. Prince Albert No. 6 EFTS, Diary, Feb. 23, 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, June 15, 1941.

59. Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, March 10, 1944; Weyburn No. 41 SFTS, Diary, April 26, 1943; Saskatoon No. 4 SFTS, Diary, March 3, 1941, Sept. 22, 1942; Caron No. 33 EFTS, Diary, May 9, 1942, Dec. 10, 26, 1942; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, March 20, 1943.
60. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Aug. 18, 1943.
61. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, Feb. 11, 1942.
62. Assinibioa No. 25 EFTS, Diary, April 21, 1944; North Battleford No. 13 EFTS, Diary, March 17, 1945, Feb. 28, 1945, Jan. 31, 1945; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Jan. 27, 1944, Dec. 15, 1943, May 12, 1943, April 13, 1942, Oct. 13, 1941, June 29, 1941, Oct. 11, 1942; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, June 9, 1943, Oct. 20, 1943, April 3, 1944; "Searchlight Spots from the Airport," The Davidson Leader, Aug. 25, 1943, May 26, 1943, June 2, 1943; "Variety Program for Fighting Men," Saskatoon, Star Phoenix, Dec. 7, 1940; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 17, 1944; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Dec. 20, 1942; Estevan No. 38 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 11, 28, 1943, Jan. 14, 1943, May 27, 1943, Oct. 25, 26, 1943, Nov. 1, 1943, Jan. 24, 27, 1944.
63. "R.C.A.F. Concert Hit at Roxy," The Yorkton Enterprise, Oct. 9, 1941.
64. "R.A.F. Portrays the R.A.F. in Play French Leave," Weyburn Review, Nov. 26, 1942; "Weybrites' Entertain in Legion Hall," Weyburn Review, Oct. 22, 1942, p. 12; "Fine Pantomime Presented by Men of R.A.F.," Weyburn Review, Dec. 31, 1942; "First Year At No. 38 S.F.T.S.," The Estevan Mercury, April 1, 1943; "Last Slice of 'Gopher Pie' Is Real Treat," The Estevan Mercury, Jan. 27, 1944; "Courtin Scores Again With Comedy Hit," Swift Current Sun, Jan. 26, 1943; "R.A.F. Artists Have Background," Swift Current Sun, July 27, 1943; "R.A.F. Show At The Hat," Swift Current Sun, July 27, 1943; "R.A.F. Score Again," Swift Current Sun, May 11, 1943; "R.A.F. Choir And Artists Perform Well," Swift Current Sun, Jan. 26, 1943; "First Year AT R.A.F. Theater," Swift Current Sun Jan. 19, 1943; "Revue Is Smash Hit!" Swift Current Sun, Sept. 8, 1942; "British Airmen Prove Splendid Entertainers," Swift Current Sun, June 15, 1941; "R.A.F. Players Bring Laughs In New Comedy," Swift Current Sun, Oct. 12, 1943; "Members of No. 34 E.F.T.S. Present Play," The Assiniboia Times, Feb. 17, 1943; "Civic Service Club Entertained by R.C.A.F. Concert Party," The Yorkton Enterprise, Feb. 5, 1942; "Full House Acclaims Air Force Show," The Yorkton Enterprise, Sept. 16, 1943; "Airmen Stage Fine Christmas Concert, Sunday," The Yorkton Enterprise, Dec. 24, 1942; "Sunday Concert At Roxy Theatre By No. 11 S.F.T.S.," The Yorkton Enterprise, Dec. 17, 1941; "R.C.A.F. Band Pleases Large Crowd With Fine Concert," The Yorkton Enterprise, July 30, 1942, p. 8; "No. 11 S.F.T.S. Presents Concert Sunday Night," The Yorkton Enterprise, Oct. 2, 1941; "Fine Concert Staged Sunday Evening," The Yorkton Enterprise, Dec. 2, 1941; "Davidson Young People Sponsor Program, Dance," The Davidson

- Leader, April 14, 1943; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, Aug. 31, 1944.
65. "Air Force Band to be Organized," Saskatoon, Star Phoenix, July 22, 1940.
66. "Dance held by Red Cross was Great Success," North Battleford Optimist, May 6, 1943; North Battleford No. 35 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 4, 1943, April 4, 1943, May 3, 1943, Sept. 8, 1943, April 22, 1944.
67. "First Year At No. 38 S.F.T.S.," The Estevan Mercury, April 1, 1943; "Rotarians Hear Christmas Music," The Estevan Mercury, Dec. 24, 1942; Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, May 24, 1942, July 5, 1943, July 6, 1943, July 8, 1941; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Sept 3, 1944; "'Weybrites' Entertain in Legion Hall," Weyburn Review, Oct. 22, 1942, p. 12; Calgary No. 4 TC, Diary, "Report: No. 32 S.F.T.S., Moose Jaw," Dec., 1941, and "Report: Annual Inspection: 34 S.F.T.S.," Dec., 1941; "Searchlight Spots From Airport," Davidson Leader, April 7, 1943, June 23, 1943; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Feb. 25, 1944, Feb. 26, 1944; Assinibioa No. 34 EFTS, Diary, Feb. 15, 1943, July 13, 1943; Saskatoon No. 7 ITS, Diary, April 1, 1942, May 27, 1942, Oct. 28, 1942, May 18, 1943, Nov. 2, 23, 30, 1943, Jan. 1, 1944, Feb. 1, 8, 22, 1944, May 10, 1944; Weyburn No. 8 SFTS, Diary, March 3, 1944; Feb. 18, 20, 1944; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Oct. 5, 1941, Feb. 23, 1942, May 2, 1943, June 22, 1943, May 3, 1944; North Battleford No. 35 SFTS, Diary, March 12, 1943, May 19, 1943; Estevan No. 38 SFTS, Diary, Jan. 27, 1943, Feb. 15, 17, 24, 1943, March 9, 23, 1943, May 21, 1943, Aug. 15, 1943, Oct. 21, 29, 1943; Swift Current No. 39 SFTS, Diary, Aug. 3, 1943, Sept. 22, 1943, Nov. 2, 1943; Weyburn No. 41 SFTS, Diary, July 2, 1943; Caron No. 33 EFTS, Diary, Dec. 12, 1942, Jan. 17, 1943, Feb. 9, 1943, March 21, 1943, April 5, 1943, Aug. 20, 1943; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, July 22, 29, 1942, Jan. 28, 1943, March 21, 1943, July 16, 1943, Oct. 28, 1943, Nov. 14, 16, 1943, Dec. 14, 21, 30, 1943; Jan. 16, 1944, Feb. 10, 1944, March 2, 12, 19, 1944, April 19, 1944, May 4, 1944, Aug. 13, 1944; "Men from R.A.F. School Will Give Concert at Legion," Moose Jaw Times-Herald, Nov. 14, 1940, p. 5.
68. "City Instruments For R.C.A.F. Band," The Yorkton Enterprise, May 1, 1941.
69. "Gala Carnival on March 10 and 11," The Yorkton Enterprise, March 5, 1942; "R.C.A.F. Band to be Heard In Concert Sunday Evening," July 9, 1942; "R.C.A.F. Band Concert On Saturday Night," Aug. 12, 1943; Greenhous and Hillmer, p. 137.
70. Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, May 1, 1941.
71. Ibid.

72. "Aimen Appreciate Gifts at Dances," Swift Current Sun, Dec. 8, 1942; "Girls, Plan to Come to Airport Dance," The Davidson Leader, Feb. 10, 1943; "'A Smash Show' Said Airmen of Big Dance," The Estevan Mercury, April 23, 1942; "Searchlight Spots From The Airport," The Davidson Leader, June 2, 1943, June 16, 1943, June 9, 1943, June 23, 1943; "Ask 2000 To Dance," The Estevan Mercury, July 3, 1942; "Give Dance for Men at Airport," The Estevan Mercury, Dec. 18, 1941; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, July 10, 1941, Aug. 20, 1943, Oct. 29, 1941; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Dec. 31, 1943, June 11, 1943, Feb. 16, 1944; Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, Nov. 5, 1943, Nov. 15, 1941, May 3, 1944; Prince Albert No. 6 EFTS, Diary, March 6, 1944; Prince Albert No. 6 AOS, Diary, Oct. 25, 1941, June 28, 1941, May 3, 1941; Assiniboia No. 25 EFTS, Diary, June 30, 1944, April 28, 1944; North Battleford No. 13 SFTS, Diary, April 5, 1944, Sept. 30, 1944; Calgary No. 4 TC, Diary, May 2, 1942 July 9, 1944, Sept. 13, 1943; Regina No. 15 EFTS, Diary, May 1, 1944; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 29, 1944, March 2, 1944, April 30, 1941, Feb 3, 1944; Yorkton No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Jan. 8, 1945; Estevan No. 38 SFTS, Diary, Sept. 21, 1942, Oct. 17, 1942, Dec. 1942, Jan. 21, 1943, Feb. 2, 1943, April 20, 1943, July 13, 1943, Oct. 5, 1943, Nov. 2, 1943; Swift Current No. 29 SFTS, Diary, June 9, 1942, Jan. 16, 1943, Feb. 16, 1943, March 9, 1943, May 15, 1943, Jan. 11, 1944; Weyburn No. 41 SFTS, Diary, March 19, 1942, April 17, 1942, June 17, 1942, Nov. 5, 1942, Dec. 2, 1942, Sept. 25, 1943, Oct. 23, 1943, Nov. 6, 1943; North Battleford No. 35 SFTS, Diary, Feb. 17, 19, 1942, April 17, 25, 1942, June 19, 1942, Dec. 22, 1942, Jan. 19, 26, 1943, Feb. 16, 1943, March 3, 28, 1943; Saskatoon No. 4 SFTS, Diary, April 4, 1941, June 20, 1941, July 19, 1941, April 17, 1942, May 1, 1942, July 23, 1942, Aug. 20, 1942, Sept. 23, 26, 1942, Dec. 21, 1942, Oct. 30, 1943, Jan. 14, 1944, April 20, 1944, June 1, 1944, Oct. 30, 1944, Nov. 25, 1944, Jan. 18, 27, 29, 1945, Feb. 2, 3, 1945; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, July 7, 1941, Nov. 8, 1941, Jan. 31, 1942, Feb. 14, 1942, April 18, 1942, May 23, 1942, June 24, 1942, July 11, 1942, Jan. 20, 1943, Feb. 24, 1943, April 28, 1943, May 19, 1943, Sept. 22, 1943, Nov. 2, 1943, Dec. 25, 28, 1943, Jan. 1, 3, 12, 1944, Sept. 19, 1944, Oct. 3, 4, 17, 24, 31, 1944, Nov. 7, 22, 29, 1944; Saskatoon No. 7 ITS, Diary, Jan. 28, 1942, Feb. 11, 1942, April 10, 1942, May 22, 1942, June 5, 1942, Oct. 21, 1942, Nov. 3, 1942, Dec. 2, 1942, March 17, 1943, May 15, 1943, June 9, 1943, Sept. 1, 1943; Assiniboia No 34 EFTS, Diary, June 16, 30, 1942, Oct. 30, 1942, Feb. 2, 4, 1943, March 4, 1943, May 3, 6, 14, 1943, May 28, 1943, June 11, 18, 1943; Swift Current No. 32 EFTS, Diary, Nov. 5, 1941; Caron No. 33 EFTS, Diary, April 15, 30, 1942, May 18, 20, 1942, Aug. 20, 1942, Sept. 30, 1942, Nov. 12, 1942; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, Jan. 29, 1943, Feb. 4, 6, 1943, March 19, 1943, Oct. 1, 8, 1943, Nov. 10, 1943, Dec. 4, 7, 1943, Janaury 26, 1944, April 27, 1944, June 9, 1944, June 20, 1944; Greenhous and Hillmer, p. 138.

73. Regina No. 15 EFTS, Diary, May 12, 1944.

74. Personal communication: Alexandria (Macdonald) Miller to Brereton Greenhous and Norman Hillmer, July 10, 1980. Copy supplied by Mrs. Miller to author. Personal communication: Yvonne S. Burgess to Author, Aug. 28, 1986; Mr. Daton Deedrick to Author, Oct. 14, 1986; A. H. Clarke to Author, Nov. 3, 1986.
75. Personal communication: Miller to Greenhous and Hillmer, (Copy forwarded to author by Miller); Interview: Dorothy Minor with author, Oct. 3, 1987.
76. Greenhous and Hillmer, p. 142; WDM:BCATP, John Watson Interview, March 8, 1982; Interview: Dorothy Minor with author, Oct. 3, 1987.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. "Editorials in Brief," Weyburn Review, June 18, 1942, p. 3; See also, A.M. Pennie, "Assiniboia remembers its wartime flying school," Canadian Geographic, Dec. 1986-Jan. 1987, pp. 86-87; WDM:BCATP, M. McDowall Interview, June 15, 1982; WDM:BCATP, E. Little Interview, Nov. 3, 1981; WDM:BCATP, Doug Langdon Interview, December 3, 1981; WDM:BCATP, M.R.C. Cuelenaere Interview, Dec. 15, 1981; Interview: Eva Frith with author, Oct. 4, 1987; Interview: Harold Marfell with author, Sept. 29, 1987.
81. "No. 23 E.F.T.S. to Assist Air Cadets," The Davidson Leader, April 5, 1944; "Yorkton Air Cadets Visit No. 11 S.F.T.S.," The Yorkton Enterprise, Oct. 23, 1941, section two, p. 1; "Air Cadets Enjoy Week at No. 11 SFTS," The Yorkton Enterprise, July 9, 1942, p. 2; "New R.A.F. Dance Band To Play At Air Cadet Dance," June 11, 1942, p. 4; "Airport Games Realize \$100 For Air Cadets," Weyburn Review, April 20, 1944; "Drive to Boost Air Cadets Plan," Sept. 16, 1941; "Officers Praise Local Air Cadets Inspection," Swift Current, Sun, May 12, 1942; Regina No. 4 TC Diary, June 19, 1941; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, July 2, 8, 1942, July 8, 9, 1943.
82. Total Population estimated to have decreased between 1941 and 1944, in Saskatchewan's case by 50,000. This would mean a reduction of eligible males of approximately 10,000, thus slightly increasing enlistment percentages. In the other provinces population increased, so that enlistment percentage would be reduced accordingly. Source: Canada Year Book and Department of National Statistics, compiled by Brereton Greenhous and Norman Hillmer, for their article, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada,"
- 83 The population of females in Saskatchewan was estimated to have decreased by approximately 7,500. The result was that the

percentage of enlistments appeared to increase in Saskatchewan compared to the other provinces. Chart was compiled by Greenhous and Hillmer.

84. Greenhous and Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada," p. 143.
85. Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, Oct. 16, 1941.
86. Ibid., Nov. 30, 1940.
87. Ibid., Dec. 3, 1940.
88. "Students Should Assist in Harvesting," The Assiniboia Times, Aug. 19, 1942.
89. "Harvest Labor Setup Will Help Farmer In Every Way Possible," Weyburn Review, Aug. 13, 1942.
90. "Co-operation In Need to Allot Harvest Help," Swift Current Sun, Aug. 31, 1943; Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, March 15, 1941; "Yorkton Citizen Impressed On Visit To No. 11 S.F.T.S.," The Yorkton Enterprise, Sept. 30, 1943; "Airmen From No. 11 Rally to Support of Yorkton Farmers," The Yorkton Enterprise, Sept. 17, 1942; "Still Shortage of Harvest Help In Southeastern Sask.," Weyburn Review, Sept. 3, 1942; "Problem of Men for the Farms," Weyburn Review, May 28, 1942, p. 3; "Harvest Help Will Be Short Around Weyburn," Weyburn Review, July 31, 1941; "Urgent Demand Now For Manpower and Machines In Harvest Operations," Swift Current Sun, Aug. 24, 1943; "Airmen May Assist With The Harvest," Swift Current Sun, Aug. 18, 1942; "Week-Ends On The Farms For Air Trainees," The Estevan Mercury, June 18, 1942; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Sept. 30, 1942; "Australian Airmen Respond To Call For Harvest Help," Regina, The Leader Post, Aug. 11, 1944.
91. Personal communication: Mr. W. Hemstreet to the author, Nov. 17, 1986.
92. Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

"... OUR BOYS ACTED THE PART OF THE PERFECT HOST ..."

In communities across the province, the airmen and airwomen took the place of local civilians who had participated in sports. The goodwill that had developed was demonstrated when local newspaper called the airmen, "our boys." The air personnel had been accepted into the communities as equals.

The need for civilians to find participants for their local events was answered by a need on the part of the permanent air personnel at the local stations to take part in recreational activities. The activities of the two groups were tempered by the sports that the air personnel were familiar with to a great extent. The sports that British airmen participated in were, at times, different from those that the Canadian host communities were familiar with. The two sports that the British knew well were cricket and soccer. Both were offered as exhibition sports in the host communities. With civilians on the side as spectators and the English airmen on the playing field

interaction between the two groups was limited. An opportunity to develop favourable relations between the two groups was missed.

The most important sports were those that allowed participation by both groups. The sports that were the most familiar to the civilians were hockey and baseball. In these sports, the air personnel could be easily integrated into a set structure in the communities. Those airmen and airwomen who were Canadian and familiar with these sports found they were quickly accepted in the host communities' activities. Although many airmen were unfamiliar with these sports, they did attempt them with different degrees of success.

The role that the airmen and airwomen played in sports of the host communities became more important as time passed. In the hockey season of 1942-43, the professional league was taken over by the armed forces. In subsequent seasons, inter-station games of hockey took the place of the collapsed professional league. The role of sports as a medium for interaction between air personnel and civilians was important because it had an effect on relations.

The recreational activities carried on at the air training schools were an important element in determining the impact of the Plan on the communities of Saskatchewan. Those schools with activities that did not appeal to the local communities brought strained relations between the

communities and the stations. The sharing of recreational activities was the means by which the communities and the stations interacted with each other. Where the airmen and the communities shared the same interest in a sport, the interaction was increased. On the other hand, in those stations that participated in sports alien to the surrounding communities, little or no interaction took place. The result was some degree of isolation of that air training school from the community.¹

The need of the community for air personnel to participate in local activities was illustrated by an article that appeared in the Saskatoon, Star Phoenix in July, 1940; after describing a departure of a large number of men from Sonningdale the columnist noted that,

The baseball team is facing difficulties since so many players have enlisted. Manager J. Atkins had his hands full rounding up substitutes to enable the team to play at Radisson on Dominion Day. However he succeeded so well that the Pats won first money. One former player, Chester Padget, who is home on leave from the navy, rejoined the team for the day and proved that he still knew how to play ball. Chester, who has been stationed at the Pacific Coast, leaves for service at Halifax after a short visit with his parents at Sonningdale.²

The comment came at the beginning of the war. As time passed and many more Saskatchewan men and women enlisted, the need for air personnel to participate in local social and sporting events became more pronounced. The activities initiated on the R.C.A.F. stations soon found their way into the surrounding communities.

Those sports that were held only for the airmen and airwomen on the stations were golf, competitive rifle, ping pong, bowling, horse shoes, and badminton. Golf competitions of one or more schools were reported.³ The only interaction that occurred as a result of these competitions and practices was the use of the host communities' golf courses and clubs. The use of the golf courses brought new members and extra revenue to the golf clubs. In the 1942 golf season The Estevan Mercury reported that,

Secretary Don Johaneson found a brisk sale for his books of golfing coupons available at 15 tickets for \$3.00 with each ticket good for nine holes of golf. This innovation, launched to entice new players to take up the game and also to bring within the reach of occasional players who otherwise would not take part, bids fair to be an extremely popular one. It will find particular favor among the divotdigger [sic] at No. 38 S.F.T.S. and should bring the Club some

badly needed extra revenue without which it will not be able to carry on.⁴

Few airmen and airwomen participated in competitive rifle clubs, ping pong, horse shoes, badminton, volley ball, and bowling. There was also no evidence that civilians from the host communities had any involvement in these sports.⁵ The sport of bowling required the use of the bowlerdromes found in the host communities, but like golf, no community involvement was reported.⁶

Although there were a limited number of swimming pools in Saskatchewan during the war, a keen interest was shown among the airmen and airwomen of the Training Plan in swimming. The swimming activities ranged from the basic learn-to-swim classes to a number of swimming competitions in the larger communities across the province. The Elementary Flying Training School in Regina enjoyed a close relationship with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was reported that,

The R.C.M.P. has given [the air training school] the use of their swimming pool and instructor two nights a week. Non-swimming R.C.A.F. personnel will be given instruction.⁷

This was one of the few learn-to-swim programmes reported. The most significant swimming activities were the summer

competitive swim meets in which R.C.A.F. personnel participated. These meets were both inter-station meets and those meets held with Saskatchewan communities. The two Bombing and Gunnery schools, located at Dafoe and Mossbank, had their own pools and hosted inter-station swimming competitions. One of these competitions was reported in The Davidson Leader in the summer of 1944:

At the recent swimming meet at No. 5 B & G school Dafoe, No. 23 [Elementary Flying Training School] was represented by some very able swimmers, but due to the lack of a pool here, our swimmers were outclassed in most of the events by swimmers conditioned by months of practice. We did, however, win the ladies diving championship and also the underwater swim, events being won by Col. Pat Collins and LAC. Cooney.⁸

The air station competitions were a part of a circuit sponsored by the R.C.A.F. that ended in finals at Winnipeg called the "Command Swimming Meet."⁹ Another highly competitive form of swimming competition that Air Force personnel participated in was the provincial summer circuit. The Mossbank Bombing and Gunnery school reported success at this level of competition in the summer of 1943: "The swimming team visited Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to take part in the Provincial Swimming Meet. In spite of a cold

raw day -- and colder water -- the boys made an excellent showing against ranking swimmers."¹⁰

Water polo was reported at the RAF Moose Jaw Service Flying Training School. This sport was not known in Saskatchewan. As a result, only one game was reported on the Bombing and Gunnery School at Mossbank.¹¹ More important to Air Force relations with civilians were the recreational events that allowed larger numbers of participants. One such event was staged in the Souris River by Estevan Saskatchewan. The Estevan Mercury presented the pending event with enthusiasm and an invitation for citizens of the city to participate:

Don't be surprised if the old Souris River turns into whipped cream or maybe butter along toward sundown next Sunday. The ancient stream is in for one of the biggest churnings of its career the afternoon when more than 100 swimmers and divers of all ages and sizes will take part in the annual Water Sports of Estevan Branch Canadian Legion at Woodlawn Park.

About 40 airmen from Wing Commander Nathan and Flying Officer Brown right down the line, have already filed their entries for the R.A.F. events and more are expected to come forward. Corresponding interest is being shown by aquatic stars of the town, and of course there will be a whole school of minnows in the youngster's contests. ...

A special feature will be an exhibition of diving by the young Edmonton star, LAC Allen Rudolph.¹²

The level of participation in swimming was not high. The amount of interaction between the airmen and the civilians of their host communities through swimming remained limited throughout the war years on the prairies.

Boxing and wrestling were widely participated in by the airmen. The bouts of boxing were often internal station affairs. Inter-station competitions as well as events with Canadian Army and Navy teams were also held. These events were open to spectators of the surrounding districts.¹³ Boxing, like the swimming, followed a circuit that ended at the finals in the "Command Boxing Championships."¹⁴ Wrestling was often associated with a boxing championship as entertainment during the intermission between the boxing events.¹⁵

The interest in boxing was illustrated by the media coverage it received throughout the war. A typical report of an boxing match was found in the Swift Current Sun:

Over a thousand fans enthusiastically acclaimed Thursday night's boxing card held in the spacious drill shed at No. 39 S.F.T.S. as a swell night's entertainment, right from start to finish. Pilot Officer Petty and Warrant Officer Short who were responsible for management of the affair did a grand

job [and] it was the best run affair of its kind seen here in three decades. There was enough silverware in trophies and medals to decorate a big banquet table. The air force boys fought clean, but hard and displayed grand sportsmanship.¹⁶

Track and field sports did not play as large a role at the air training stations as sports like boxing and swimming. Yet, track and field events were used to develop physical fitness among the air trainees. The Regina Elementary Flying Training School reported a "... weekly cross country run [was] held with a stop and then a race back to camp."¹⁷ In most cases, there were competitions with other stations and other services. As in the other sports, the civilians from the host communities were invited as spectators to the station events. In the summer of 1943, the Swift Current Sun reported that,

A large number of civilians accepted the invitations to take in the inter-squadron athletic meeting last Wednesday afternoon at Royal Air Force No. 39 S.F.T.S. Under a blazing hot sun and ... star athletes of the station completed in track and field events to garner points for the T. Eaton Challenge Cup, emblematic of inter-squadron supremacy. Entrants for No. 2 Squadron flashed their colors past the winning post and amassed most points to head the

field with 78, with Repair Squadron's blue colors second at 72 ...¹⁸

This was not the only time that the air personnel participated in track and field events. Sports days across the province were centred on track and field events. The result was that British, Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian airmen participated as equals on Sports days.

Often, the sports days were held at the airport and included more than just sporting events. One sports day held at the Swift Current airport reported in The Sun included an evening of social activities:

The first big public "splurge" [sic] since [the] opening of No. 39 S.F.T.S. of the Royal Air Force has been set for Wednesday, September 9th, and it promises to be a gala day to be remembered. There will be everything from a track meet to dancing, with festivities ending well after midnight. The public will be invited to enjoy this day of entertainment through invitation, as guests of officers, N.C.O.'s and airmen; so tell you friends at No. 39 that You'd like to attend.¹⁹

The airmen and airwomen who were Canadians had a closer fraternity with the host communities than was the case with those airmen who were British because the Canadians had

cultural and sporting interests in common. This fraternity was evident in the larger events like the winter carnivals and summer fairs that were sponsored by the communities or the air training stations.

Among all the major events that occurred between the host communities and the station, having an "open house" at the air school allowed the most opportunity for British, New Zealand, Australian, and Canadian personnel to participate as spectators. The civilians were given tours, exhibitions of formation flying and aerobatics as well as different sports. In such an atmosphere, cricket and baseball were easily integrated into the activities. An account from the Bombing and Gunnery School at Dafoe reported that

Davidson Sports

BASEBALL

Davidson RCAF. vs Dafoe RCAF.
(The 21 L.F.T.A.) (B. and G. School)
 Regina Red Sox vs Dundurn Camp
(1942 G. Champion) (1942)

\$150 \$100 \$50 \$50
B. TAVELLY, Manager MURRAY ARMSTRONG, Regina, Umpire GAMES START 1:00 p.m.

SOFTBALL

Men's OPEN TO ALL TEAMS Ladies'

\$7.00 a Win

A Bye is Not a Win

ALL ENTRIES TO BE IN THE HANDS OF E. A. BOLL AT 10:00 a.m. JULY 1st
to Play on The Teams Games Start at 1:00 p.m.

HORSE

Races

All entries to be in hands of W. A. Speedie at 10:00 a.m., July 1st.

Committee and Judges:
W. A. SPEEDIE MAX HOPKINS E. P. BELL

FREE FOR ALL	Prizes \$15—\$10—\$5
PONY RACE	\$12 \$8 \$4
<small>(10 heats, 400 yards)</small>	
WALK, TROT & RUN	\$8 \$4 \$2
POTATOE RACE	\$8 \$4 \$2
RELAY RACE	\$15 \$10 \$5
BARREL RACE	\$8 \$4 \$2
LADIES RACE (1 heat)	\$8 \$4 \$2

BABY CONTEST
\$5.00 PRIZE
 for Best Baby on Grounds

OLDEST RESIDENT
 on Grounds
\$5.00 PRIZE

LARGEST FAMILY IN ATTENDANCE
 on the Grounds
\$10.00 PRIZE

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM
 * * *

FREE PARKING FOR CARS
 ON THE GROUNDS

SATURDAY, JULY 1

Free Show For The Children in The Morning Only

SEE LARGER POSTERS FOR FURTHER DETAILS

School Sports
 * * *
 OPEN TO ALL SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT Starts 1:00 p.m.
 RUNNING, JUMPING and BICYCLE RACES
FRANK GASTON in Charge

Field Sports
 * * *
 OPEN TO ALL COMERS
 RUNNING, POLE VAULTING, ETC.
\$75.00 Prizes For Field and School Sports
FRANK GASTON in Charge

SEE LARGER POSTERS FOR FURTHER DETAILS

Grand Dance the Evening -- Town Hall

Source: Davidson Leader, June 21, 1944, p. 3.

Other entertainment were an international cricket match -- Australia Vs. Great Britain, a P.T. [Pilot Training] Display, both men's and girls softball matches, baseball, and soccer. The midway was complete with refreshment booths and animal show, was crowded throughout the day with visitors thronging [sic] to the games of skill."²⁰

Although there were sports like track and field that were common to Australian, Canadian, and British airmen, there were some sports that were not. British sports were at best spectator sports for the civilians in the host communities. The sports which fell into the category of "British" were: archery, body building, cricket, fencing, rugby, snooker, soccer, and tennis. Those sports that fell into the Canadian category were: baseball, basketball, curling, hockey, and volleyball.

Archery, body building, fencing, rugby, and snooker, remained the interest of small numbers of Royal Air Force personnel. None of these sports were ever demonstrated to the public. There were only two recorded games of rugby between the Moose Jaw Service Flying School and the Mossbank Bombing and Gunnery School.²¹ The remaining sports, tennis and soccer, appeared to arouse some limited interest in the host communities of Saskatchewan. Tennis allowed for some limited civilian participation and had some value as a demonstration sport. For those airmen and

airwomen who were interested in tennis, courts were often available on the air training stations. There was no need for the air personnel to seek tennis clubs in the communities. The passive nature with which the host communities viewed tennis was evident when Flight Lieutenant Campbell won the championship at the Yorkton Tennis Club. The story was placed on the eighteenth page of The Yorkton Enterprise: "Flight Lieut. Campbell is the men's champion and Miss N. Katelnikoff the ladies champion of the Yorkton Tennis Club as the result of a tournament played at the Tupper Avenue courts last weekend."²² This report was more recognition than tennis received in the majority of local newspapers across the province.

The participation in soccer occurred at two levels for the air personnel: inter-squadron games and competitions in the Southern Saskatchewan Services League. The Moose Jaw Service Flying School reported in the spring of 1944 that soccer was, "... by far the most popular sport in airmen and officers. Inter-Hut League with 22 teams playing weekly provides keen competition."²³ The games that were played for the Southern Saskatchewan Services League were also seen as demonstrations of the sport for the public. The Weyburn Review reported one typical soccer event in the summer of 1942;

The soccer team of No. 41 S.F.T.S. Weyburn, moved a further step in the ladder of the Southern

Saskatchewan Services League, on Saturday evening when they easily beat Moose Jaw Casuals team of the No. 32 S.F.T.S., Royal Air Force Training School, in a spectacular match on [the] Weyburn Exhibition grounds. They won 3-1.²⁴

One local team participated in a game of soccer during the summer of 1944 with a team of R.A.F. airmen played at the Prince Albert Elementary Flying School. The civilian team was not from the city of Prince Albert. Its members were Indians from the Duck Lake Reserve,

Soccer Tournament [was] held at Duck Lake. Our team [was] composed of airmen from the R.A.F. Storage Pool had no difficulty in winning the tournament against an all star team. Most of the Duck Lake players were Indians from a nearby reservation and the R.A.F. trainees were impressed with the fact that Indians even knew what Soccer was, let alone play it as well as they did.²⁵

Although soccer was not popular among the citizens of Saskatchewan, there was enough interest in the sport for the formation of the Southern Saskatchewan Services League and for exhibition games. This same support was never attained by those British airmen who pursued cricket. Few matches were held. There were even fewer exhibition games

given in the host communities. A cricket match was reported in the Swift Current Sun. It was clear that this sport was unknown on the Canadian prairies:

Besides the regular list of track and field events in the afternoon, the day will be climaxed with a cricket match between North of England and South of England in the evening. This will be an event of unusual interest for Canucks [sic] around these parts who have heard of but never saw a cricket match; it will bring a feeling of nostalgia to English-born folks living on these plains who have never seen this game since they left their homeland.²⁶

Attempts were made throughout the war to establish a formal cricket league, but only small station leagues were formed. Only occasional matches were arranged between stations. On one occasion, a game between the Mossbank Bombing and Gunnery school and the R.C.M.P. was arranged.²⁷ The most active station in cricket throughout the war years was the Moose Jaw Service Flying Training School. The R.A.F. school at Moose Jaw found that by the summer of 1944 there was no longer any interest in the community nor in the other air training schools. The team had to look to other more popular sports or look elsewhere for challenges. The members of the team chose the latter and travelled to Victoria and Vancouver for a series of matches.²⁸ Games

played in Vancouver did not enhance relations with the local community.

Those sports which were important to Western Canadian prairie towns and cities were basketball, curling, hockey, and baseball. Basketball teams played off within the stations. Teams of the best players were organized into station teams that participated against other stations. Informal station and inter-station basketball leagues were soon formed. The enthusiasm for this sport was reflected in the Daily Diary of the Bombing and Gunnery School at Mossbank: "Basketball has taken quite a grip on officers and men alike. Inter-Station games are scheduled to start on December 1st, and even officers with graying hair are developing considerable speed in the workouts."²⁹

In many sports, the members of the Women's Division of the Air Force had limited participation, and therefore limited notice was made of them in the station Diaries and the local media. This was not the case in the Women's Division's participation in basketball. The Davidson Leader reported that:

The W.D.'s from No. 23 E.F.T.S., Davidson defeated No. 4 S.F.T.S., Saskatoon, 15-12 in No. 2 command basketball championship semifinal in a rough, but good game. They are now eligible to travel to Winnipeg for finals on Saturday, Arp. [sic.]. 22, when at 2:00 o'clock they play No. 8 repair, Winnipeg. The

winners will play at 7:00 o'clock for the grand championship. ..."³⁰

The inter-station play of basketball allowed civilians to participate as spectators. However, there were many opportunities for locals to compete against the airmen. One series of games between air personnel and citizens of the host community was noted in The Yorkton Enterprise:

The Aircrew basketball team quite handily defeated the Collegiate boys in a two-game total-point series at No. 11 S.F.T.S. last week. The Aircrew squad have given local hoopsters tough opposition throughout the whole schedule, and seemed to reach the peak of their form in the recent play-off series.

The Collegiate defeated the R.C.M.P. entry in the semifinals in a sudden death game by the score of 29-10; the Collegiate boys having a decided edge throughout that game.

In the final play-off series the Aircrew defeated the Collegiate by scores of 25-14 and 41-29. The final game was much closer than the score would indicate, however, as both teams scored 25 points in the second half ... the Aircrew played a close-checking game, yet were able to take advantage of quick breaks to score. ³¹

Both R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. schools participated in basketball.³² Although there was some Royal Air Force participation in the sports of curling, hockey, and baseball, it was much more limited than basketball.

Among the three remaining Canadian sports of curling, hockey, and baseball, curling had the lowest level of participation of air personnel across the province. All those who participated in curling were Royal Canadian Air Force personnel. Unlike other sports, there was no prior practicing on the stations and no internal station curling as curling required the use of the host community's curling rink. One curling event was reported in the article, "Airport Curlers Visit Local Club," in the Wynyard Advance:

Two rinks of curlers from the Dafoe No. 5 Bombing and Gunnery school paid a friendly visit to the Wynyard Curling club on Saturday evening and participated in a curling game. Rinks from the airport were skipped by Pilot Officer Boyd and McGaskell, while Dr. Polec and Ed Sigfusson piloted the local rinks. The visitors were entertained to a lunch in the pink room at the Zenith Cafe following the game, and a social hour was spent.³³

There were no curling leagues or formal curling circuits established for the servicemen. Host communities extended invitations for airmen to participate in local bonspiels,

and the airmen accepted and attended these one time events.³⁴

Hockey had been the most important spectator sport in Canada before the Second World War and the war did not change that fact. The Report on R.C.A.F. Recreational Activities resulted in the creation of outdoor hockey rinks on all the stations. Widespread participation in hockey was the result. The station Diaries and numerous local newspapers reported squadron competitions and inter-station matches. The Davidson Leader often reported the schedule of games on the local Elementary Flying Training School and in the spring of 1944 reported the closing game of the station league:

Maintenance hockey won the final game last Wednesday night by a score of 7-4 against the hard-hitting "97" crew. Coveney and Sgt. McFarlane have every reason to be plenty proud of their team, in fact, after last Wednesday's game, the whole station should be proud of maintenance. They put up a tremendous fight and at times it looked like 97 would take laurels. However, in the final pinch the maintenance men did it again. They are now the undefeated champions of No. 23 E.F.T.S. for the 1943-44 season.³⁵

The hockey games between stations were widely reported in the local press. When the esteemed team from the Yorkton Service Flying Training School visited the Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery school and were victorious the Wynyard Advance wrote:

The hockey team from this station played hosts to a team from No. 11 S.F.T.S., Yorkton, Sask., on Saturday, February 7. The boys arrived from Yorkton on Saturday afternoon, the game being played that night, and our boys acted the part of the perfect host by being satisfied to take the smallest part of the score which was 4 to 1. Yorkton scored no goal in the first period and the battle was on. The local boys had difficulty in getting started but left Yorkton scoreless for the remainder of the first period and all the way through the second. In the second period A.C. Young of the locals made a very determined effort which was rewarded by a goal, leaving everything tied up at the end of the second frame.

Yorkton came out with a grim determination in the third period, and really went to work. ... From the face-off Trudell teamed up with his wing man and repeated the performance in a few seconds, just to show the local boys that it was no accident. ... Arrangements are under way for the Dafoe boys to pay

a return visit -- here's wishing them the best of luck.³⁶

These reports in the local media were common for hockey games between local stations and other stations or civilian teams. The Weyburn Review commented that the the local R.A.F. hockey team had won two games

... during the week, making a total of three wins out of three games played during the past two weeks. Wednesday the men from 41 S.F.T.S. played against a city team, winning by a score of 9 to 7, while on Friday night they defeated Grand Bend 4 to 2.³⁷

It was clear that there was a high level of participation in hockey by air personnel across the prairies and that the citizens of the local communities were looking to the service men to provide hockey entertainment where local teams no longer existed. The most significant contribution that the schools of the Air Training Plan and the Canadian Army made to Saskatchewan hockey occurred in the 1942-43 season when the Saskatchewan Senior Hockey League collapsed under the pressures of the war.

Yorkton was the centre of interest in the Saskatchewan Senior Hockey League because of the high standing of the Yorkton Terriers. In the fall of 1941, the Terriers were

having difficulties because of the loss of players due to enlistments and wartime migration of men. Under the title of "Hockey Matters Are Topsy-Turvy", the Yorkton Enterprise admitted that the make up of the Terriers was uncertain:

Just what kind of a Hockey team Yorkton will have this winter, I can't tell you and I'm sure no one else can either. Organizers of amateur teams to-day [sic] have no more chance to pick a winner than Mussolini will have with a new order.

There was a day when we could get a team together and know what we had and then after looking over their past performances have a kind of an idea how we'd make out with the rest of them but those days are all past. When I tell you Yorkton may not win more than five or six games this winter or they may have a Saskatchewan title I'm telling you just the right lay of the land.

Of one thing I am now certain hard and [sic] all as is for me to admit and that is if we survive this season winter it will be our last year in the "Big Time" unless the boys in the other centres change their procedure and that seems hardly likely.³⁸

The Yorkton Terriers made it to the finals only to be eliminated. The Yorkton Enterprise was quick to note that,

No sooner had the Yorkton Terriers been eliminated from the Saskatchewan Hockey League than they were confronted with a challenge from No. 11 S.F.T.S. hockey team for the right to the championship of Northeastern Saskatchewan.³⁹

The airmen from the local Service Flying Training School were defeated in two straight games in a series of three. The games received much attention. The players from the air training station had gained the respect of the community.⁴⁰

The collapse of the Saskatchewan Senior Hockey League that had been forecast in 1941 came in the fall of 1942. The Saskatchewan Senior Hockey League held a meeting in October and called for officials from the Canadian armed services to consider the formation of a Senior Services Hockey League to replace the collapsed Saskatchewan League.⁴¹ The R.C.A.F. from Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Yorkton and representatives of the Army in Regina and Moose Jaw, and Flin Flon's essential war industry agreed to supply teams.⁴²

In Yorkton, the best hockey players of Number Eleven Service Flying Training School and the remainder of the Terriers formed the new local team, the Yorkton Flyers.⁴³ The Bombing and Gunnery school at Mossbank attempted to form a team and enter the Saskatchewan Hockey League early in the season. After the first game, it was obvious that

the level of competition was too difficult to continue. The Diary entry for December 9, 1942 recorded that,

The Commanding Officer after reviewing the hockey situation decided that this Station would be unable to field a team of professional calibre and the entry was consequently withdrawn from the League. It is expected the team will engage in Intermediate Teams in Southern Saskatchewan and play hometown games in the town of Mossbank.⁴⁴

It would not help the morale of the station to have the team lose all their games.

The Yorkton Flyers went on to play their first game and were victorious over the Regina Army Team. The Flyers were accepted by Yorkton as their own.⁴⁵ After one season of play, the airmen went back to inter-station play. The airmen's participation in the Hockey League kept the league alive for one more year during the turbulence of the war. The fortunes of the Yorkton Terriers and the Saskatchewan Senior Hockey League did not improve after the 1942-43 hockey season. The fate of the league was clarified in The Yorkton Enterprise when it announced on December 2, 1943 that, "Shortly after noon to-day [sic] the Yorkton Terriers Hockey Club issued a statement announcing their retirement from the Saskatchewan Senior Hockey League." The article went on to tell what would replace the league in Yorkton:

"This does not mean that Yorkton will be without hockey, however, as No. 11 S.F.T.S. has entered a team in an inter-station league and will play all their home games at the Front Street Arena."⁴⁶ Hockey remained an important sport in the community and a significant activity that bound the civilians and the airmen of R.C.A.F. school closer together. Although airmen of British background participated in inter-station hockey, they never attained the acceptance that was achieved by the Canadian players who were familiar with the sport. The poor quality of the hockey and the irregular participation of the British lessened the significance of their efforts.

Baseball remained one of the most significant sports in community relations with the air training stations because it was a sport which allowed for high levels of participation as well as for spectators. There were no formal leagues established across Saskatchewan for softball or fastball as there had been for hockey; yet this was one factor which made the sport more easily integrated into the daily activities of the communities.

No other sport had more entries in the station's Daily Diaries than baseball. The sport began early in spring with practices and inter-squadron games. Soon, the reports were of inter-station games.⁴⁷ The teams that formed on the stations were soon involved with community games that went beyond the closest host communities. Some of these

communities were Bladworth, Dundurn, Humboldt, Imperial, Melfort, Naicam, Simpson, Wadena, and Watson.⁴⁸

Baseball, like basketball, allowed for a high level of participation by the Women's Division of the R.C.A.F. The Women's Division softball teams found a large number of opportunities to play against other women's teams. The Diary of the air school at Davidson recorded one of the numerous events in the summer of 1944:

Our 'Winkos' (W.D. softball) visited Eyebrow and ran into some very stiff opposition. They took Bridgeford 1-0 in the first game but were nosed out by Mawson in the final by a score of 6-5.⁴⁹

The press in the host communities was very active in reporting baseball regardless of whether the games were played between stations or between local teams and the station. In the summer of 1942, the Swift Current Sun reported that:

Softball fans are getting ... the RCAF team from Mossbank to meet No. 39 SFTS here in a double header at Westend park on Wednesday, with games starting at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. The local airforce team advanced into the second round by eliminating Caron EFTS on Saturday 11-5 and 6-1. It is three seasons since

local fans sat in on a softball playoff and a large crowd is expected to turn out."⁵⁰

In Davidson during the fall of that same year, The Leader reported a set of games that included the local team against a team from the air station:

The last two consecutive Sundays the members of the R.C.A.F. of Davidson defeated two pickup teams from town in two games of softball at the airport. The scores were high and in both instances about the same difference in runs were scored by both teams. The Flyer's battery of Sgt. Young and Gabriel received fairly steady support from the field, while the Davidson locals were found wanting in the field, owing to insufficient practice and teamwork.⁵¹

Although the sport of baseball was significant in the communities during the war, not all airmen participated. The British airmen of the Royal Air Force were not interested in the sport. In the spring of 1943 The Estevan Mercury reported that,

Facilities for the playing of Canadian summer sports will be maintained, with matches of baseball and softball throughout the coming season on, and we

are hoping that this will attract the mutual interests of R.A.F. personnel.⁵²

This hope of British airmen participating in baseball was never fulfilled to the extent hoped for by the host communities across the province. The Diary for the Service Flying Training School at Moose Jaw reported in the summer of 1944, under the heading of Fast Ball, that "This game holds very little interest for English boys ..."⁵³ The non-participation of British airmen in the sport of baseball was another example of cultural diversity that led to isolation of the RAF schools from the Canadian host communities.

Both service personnel and civilians participated in various sports because of the needs of both groups. Personnel and civilians chose to participate in sports that they were familiar with. There was a difference between the sports British airmen participated in and those which Canadians participated in. British cricket and soccer were exhibited to the Canadian civilians who remained spectators. Obviously there was less interaction between the two groups around events of this nature.

The sports which were the most important were those that allowed the participation of both civilians and service personnel. The two most significant sports in Saskatchewan communities were hockey and baseball. Canadian

air personnel who were familiar with these sports readily integrated into local sports. Those British personnel who were not familiar with these sports often attempted them.

The participation of the permanent air personnel became more important as time passed. In the hockey season of 1942-43, the armed forces took over the professional hockey league in Saskatchewan. After that season Inter-station hockey games took the place of the collapsed senior hockey league. Sports were clearly important in the interaction between the civilians and the air force personnel.

FOOTNOTES FOR
CHAPTER IV

1. Brereton Greenhous and Norman Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada," pp. 137 - 138, 140.
2. "Enlisted Lads of Strusm Get Gifts," Star Phoenix, Saskatoon, July 6, 1940, p. 18. See also: "Carlton Sportsman Joins Air Force," Star Phoenix, Sept. 21, 1940, p. 15; "Another Weyburn Teacher Called Up for Air Force Duty," Weyburn Review, May 29, 1941; "Joining Air Force," Weyburn Review, July 3, 1941.
3. North Battleford No. 13 SFTS, Diary, Appendix, "Golf," Prop Wash, [Station publication], Sept. and Oct. edition, 1944, p. 3; Regina No. 15 EFTS, Diary, Sept. 19, 1943; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, May 31, 1944, June 30, 1944, July 31, 1944; Yorkton No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Sept. 1, 1945, Aug. 27, 1945; Prince Albert No. 6 EFTS, Diary, June 10, 1944, July 30, 1944, Aug. 27, 1944, Sept. 21, 1944, Sept. 23, 1944; Regina No. 4 TC, Diary, Aug. 30, 1941; WDM:BCATP, Smoky Robson Interview, Oct. 15, 1981.
4. "Golf Coupons Prove Popular," The Estevan Mercury, June 11, 1942; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, Sept. 19, 1943; North Battlford No. 35 SFTS, May 31, 1943, July 31, 1943.
5. Competitive Rifle Clubs: Regina No. 15 EFTS, Diary, Appendix D, July 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, July 11, 1942; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, March 15, 1944, March 22, 1944; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Sept. 15, 1942; North Battleford, No. 35 SFTS, Diary, Sept. 30, 1943; Weyburn No. 41 SFTS, Diary, June 3, 1943; Ping Pong: Assiniboia No. 34 EFTS, Diary, Jan. 4, 1944; Saskatoon No. 7, ITS, Diary, June 27, 1942; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Sept. 21, 1942; Weyburn No. 41 SFTS, Diary, July 6, 1943, Nov. 23, 1943; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Nov. 1, 1941, Dec. 21, 1941, Feb. 4, 1942, March 4, 1942, April 22, 1942; Prince Albert No. 6 EFTS, Diary, Feb. 8, 1944, Jan. 18, 1944; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, May 31, 1944; Interview: Bill Minor with author, Oct. 3, 1987; Horse Shoes: Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, July 11, 1941; Saskatoon No. 7 ITS, Diary, June 13, 1942; WDM:BCATP, Ed Powell Interview, Dec. 15, 1981; WDM:BCATP, Bob Burrage Interview, Jan. 20, 1982; Interview: Bill Minor with author, Octoer 3, 1987. Badminton: "First Year At No. 38 S.F.T.S. The Estevan Mercury, April 1, 1943; North Battleford No. 13 SFTS, Diary, March 14, 15, 1945; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, April 7, 8, 11, 12, 1944, May 31, 1944, June 30, 1944, July 31, 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Jan. 4, 26, 1942, Jan. 31, 1943, Feb. 16, 1942; Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, April 13, 21, and 22, 1944; Yorkton No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Jan. 17, 1945; Assinibioa No. 25 EFTS, Diary, Feb. 28, 1944; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, Dec. 12, 1943, Jan. 23, 1944, March 19, 1944, March 23,

- 1944; Caron No. 33 EFTS, Diary, Aug. 31, 1942, Feb. 12, 1943, Nov. 25, 30, 1943, Dec. 11, 1943; Saskatoon No. 4 SFTS, Diary, Nov. 7, 27, 29, 1942, Dec. 1, 17, 1942, Jan. 18, 26, 1943, Feb. 3, 9, 11, 1943, April 22, 1944, Jan. 9, 1945; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, June 12, 1943; North Battleford No. 35 SFTS, Diary, July 31, 1941, Oct. 31, 1943, Dec. 31, 1943, Jan. 31, 1944; Estevan No. 38 SFTS, Diary, Oct. 1, 21, 1943; Weyburn No. 41 SFTS, Diary, April 20, 30, 1942; Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, Nov. 18, 1943, Dec. 2, 1943. Volleyball: Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Dec. 3, and 10, 1941; Saskatoon No. 7 ITS, Diary, July 25, 1942; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, April 11, 1944; Regina No. 15 EFTS, Diary, Appendix D, July 1944, Sept. 14, 1943; WDM:BCATP, W. Pierce Interview, Nov. 10, 1981.
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49. Davidson No. 23 EFTS, Diary, July 14, 1944, see also July 7, 1943, July 7, 1944, Aug. 10, 15, 1944, Sept. 3, 1944; July 11, 1943, Aug. 16, 1943, June 23, 1944; Dafoe No. 5 B&GS, Diary, Aug. 25, 1943, May 22, 1944, Aug. 4, 11, 18, 1944; Yorkton No. 23 EFTS, Diary, Aug. 6, 22, 30, 1945, Sept. 4, 1945; Mossbank No. 2 B&GS, Diary, June 22, 24, 1944, Aug. 13, 1944; North Battlford No. 13 SFTS, Diary, May 30, 1944, Aug. 1, 1944; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Aug. 21, 29, 1943, June 19, 1944, July 1, 19, 20, 1944; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, May 29, 1944; Saskatoon No. 4 SFTS, Diary, July 5, 16, 1944, Aug. 10, 24, 1944; Interview: WDM:BCATP, Mrs. Jessie Irons, July 9, 1982.

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51. "Air Force Boys Take Davidson Locals Twice," The Davidson Leader, Sept. 23, 1942; "Girvin Baseball Club Take First Money at Bladeworth Sports," July 28, 1943; "R.C.A.F. and Imperials win in Softball," The Yorkton Enterprise, July 24, 1941, p. 2; Saskatoon No. 7 ITS, Diary, May 19, 21, 25, 31, 1942, June 2, 7, 8, 25, 1942, July 19, 21, 24, 1942, Aug. 8, 15, 18, 1942, May 16, 1943, June 10, 13, 1943; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, Aug. 4, 11, 13, 1943, Sept. 1, 1943, May 31, 1944, June 10, 13, 24, 29, 1944, July 4, 20, 1944, Aug. 8, 10, 17, 1944; Saskatoon No. 4 SFTS, Diary, June 4, 8, 19, 1941, July 2, 3, 9, 17, 29, 1941, Aug. 5, 10, 19, 29, 1941, June 7, 1942, July 1, 1942, June 13, 1943, July 2, 8, 14, 24, 1943, Aug. 3, 1943, July 15, 1944, Aug. 8, 1941; Yorkton No. 11 SFTS, Diary, Aug. 12, 14, 1941, July 14, 28, 1943, May 30, 1944, June 26, 1944; Swift Current No. 39 SFTS, Diary, July 13, 16, 21, 26, 27, 28, 1943; "Airmen Stay In Title Hunt," Regina, The Leader Post, Aug. 11, 1944.
52. "First Year At No. 38 S.F.T.S.," Estevan Mercury, April 1, 1943.
53. Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, July 31, 1944; Assiniboia No. 34 EFTS, Diary, June 24, 1942; Caron No. 33 EFTS, Diary, Aug. 31, 1942; Regina No. 2 ITS, Diary, July 11, 1942; Weyburn No. 41 SFTS, Diary, Aug. 19, 1943, Sept. 8, 12, 1943.

CHAPTER V
"YELLOW BELLIED ENGLISH BASTARDS"

"Yellow bellied English bastards," was the reply that local youths had to the heckles of the airmen stationed at the Moose Jaw air school. There were several causes for the violence that erupted between the airmen and local youths. The most important cause was that the airmen had a long history of poor discipline and low morale. The station publication demonstrated that the airmen had a negative attitude toward the civilians of Moose Jaw. This problem was exacerbated by lower levels of interaction between the community and the air training personnel.

The disturbances at Moose Jaw demonstrated the potential for conflict. With the stress of the war and the movement of thousands of personnel through the communities, tension and conflict could have occurred. Patriotism and goodwill prevailed in the rest of the schools. Good relationships between the host communities and the schools were common. Only Moose Jaw reported any disturbances between the school and the community.

Throughout the war years, the number of crimes committed and reported in the press remained low. The number of criminal offenses committed by air force personnel was even lower. In the fall of 1940, the Saskatoon Star Phoenix reported the desertion of a Royal Air Force trainee. A similar case was reported in the Daily Diary of Training Command in Calgary and in the Diary of the Service Flying Training School at Moose Jaw in 1944.¹ In another case, Swift Current's Sun reported a story of "Hedge-Hopping Over Buildings,"

Last Tuesday morning about noon one instructor of No. 32 school got into a daredevilish mood, either because he was glad to leave or was disgruntled. Anyhow, at the controls, he did considerable hedge-hopping over buildings in town, sweeping down the vacant lot between The Sun and Imperial hotel, flew under the overhead pedestrian bridge across C.P.R. tracks, circled around the flour mill a few times on a steep bank and generally cavorted at low altitude. At a subsequent court martial at the camp, several citizens were called to testify as to what happened.²

The same newspaper reported another story in 1943:

Caught in the act of pilfering the Hostess Hut, Constable Stafford last Wednesday in nightly rounds of inspecting business places nabbed an airman who had broken in through a window. He had taken a number of pennies from the milk bottles and was also after some cigarettes.

Prior to that he had broken into Hunt's machine shop to steal a tool used for prying open a window in the Hostess Hut. Appearing before Magistrate A.B. Elliot on Thursday morning the culprit was sentenced to a year of hard labor on two charges of breaking and entering, sentences to run concurrently.³

Not too much should be made of these offenses. They were not common occurrences and appeared to have little or no effect on relations with the host communities. The acts which did have an impact on a host community and demonstrated long term tensions were the disturbances that occurred at Moose Jaw.

It was not long before the Service Flying Training School was not news in the Moose Jaw Times-Herald. Compared to other host community newspapers in Saskatchewan the Times-Herald had significantly less coverage of the local air school. It appeared that the air training school did not affect the city of Moose Jaw because little appeared in the Times-Herald columns about it. The impact of the school on the economy, however, could not be denied. The city had the benefit of the large school itself and also the Bombing

and Gunnery School at the nearby community of Mossbank. The city had one of the most significant British Commonwealth Air Training Plan repair depots in Western Canada, operated by Prairie Airways. The repair depot employed one thousand people,⁴ most of whom were citizens of Moose Jaw. The benefits of employment at the depot were very significant to Moose Jaw's local economy.

Unlike the schools in communities such as Weyburn, Yorkton, or even communities as large as Saskatoon, the Moose Jaw school participated in few sports activities and contributed less to the community's cultural life. The men's choir from the school performed often and the station band participated in some of the local "swing sessions." Yet, citizens of Moose Jaw were as likely to witness performances by the band from Number Two Initial Flying Training School from Regina, or the band from the Assinibioia school as performances from the Moose Jaw personnel. The Moose Jaw Service Flying School, like the North Battleford Flying School, sought games of cricket as far away as Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia. These games were an interest to the airmen on the Air School, but were of no benefit to the city of Moose Jaw. However, the North Battleford school participated in other sports and cultural activities / which allowed more interaction with the community. Although there were events like dances with airmen from the school in attendance, there was a lower number of cultural exchanges between the

school and the city when compared to other communities across the prairies.

The historians Brereton Greenhous and Norman Hillmer argue that unlike the Commanding Officer before him, Group Captain George of Moose Jaw lived on the station. This made him unsympathetic to the social needs of the host community and led to the further isolation of the school.⁵ After Group Captain George took over command of the station there remained a low level of participation by the R.A.F. personnel in the sporting and cultural life of Moose Jaw. This same kind of isolation was noted in a study by the American sociologist Ernest Barth. The study by Barth was carried out following the Second World War in the USA. Barth found that in cases where the Commanding Officer remained confined to the Air Force base, he had "... an inaccurate conception of the power structure of the host community and he felt isolated from the community."⁶ Barth went on to state that the isolation included the entire base. There was also associated friction between the air personnel and the civilians of the host community. Although, the Moose Jaw Air School could not be defined as one of Barth's "types" the station's isolation because of the attitude of the Commanding Officer applied to the Moose Jaw station.

Although the isolation of the school was important to the disturbances in Moose Jaw in 1944, the central factor was the poor discipline and attitude of the airmen. With

the arrival of the British airmen in 1940, it was apparent that they brought with them a poor attitude. A report issued about the arrival of the R.A.F. airmen in 1940 by personnel at Training Command in Regina warned that, "Few [of the British arrivals at Moose Jaw] appreciated fully the measure of co-operation that has prevailed between the R.A.F. and the R.C.A.F. in the provision of the S.F.T.S. at Moose Jaw, and expressed a desire to learn more about the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan."⁷

The poor attitude was illustrated in the pages of the air training school's publication, Prairie Flyer. The articles were typical of the airmen's condescending attitude toward the local citizens. In one article, Leading Aircraftsman J.H. Martin urged his fellow country men not to assume that the prairies were

... a cultural desert. That Moose Jaw is not intellectually benighted is suggested by its possession of seventeen educational establishments -- fifteen schools and two business colleges. Even if the curricula were bad, the teachers hopeless, and the pupils unteachable, we could at least acknowledge the nobility of the intention.⁸

In another article, he wrote, "Eating in the cafes to jukebox jive, we may fail to realize that there are people in the city who care deeply for the best in music."⁹

Added to the poor attitude that the British airmen had a disciplinary problem was noted among some personnel. Under the heading of Discipline in the 1941 report by Training Command on the Service Flying Training School at Moose Jaw, it was reported that, "Crime is not as prevalent on this Station now as it was in England."¹⁰ There were not extensive transfers of personnel from Moose Jaw to other schools.¹¹ The airmen with the disciplinary problems remained at Moose Jaw.

Added to the poor attitude and discipline was a problem with hygiene, low morale, low productivity and weak command on the station. Productivity was low in terms of aircraft serviceability, which was ten to fifteen percent below the average of similar schools across Saskatchewan.¹² Group Captain George arrived in 1943 at the Moose Jaw Station to find many instances of poor hygiene. One case of improper hygiene was found in the mess hall. The hall was infested with cockroaches and had to be closed two days so that cyanide gas could be used to kill the insects.¹³

Continued poor discipline, poor hygiene, and low productivity on the Moose Jaw school required action. The new Commanding Officer, Group Captain George, was brought to the school as a strict disciplinarian. He had the goal of establishing the standards which had never been realized at Moose Jaw.

Changes by George to correct the excesses that had occurred under the previous Commanding Officer resulted in

a mutiny. The orders the new commanding officer published on July 15, 1943 to correct the excesses included the following:

- (a) withdrawing sleeping out passes from all airmen other than those authorized to live off the station;
- (b) providing that duty to duty passes would not be granted to airmen below the rank of Sergeant; and
- (c) providing that plain clothes may not be kept on the station or worn on the station when proceeding from barracks to the main gate on leave or pass.¹⁴

These measures curtailed privileges that "... were not only in excess of those permitted under R.C.A.F. regulations but were in excess of those laid down for the R.A.F. under active service conditions in A.M.O. A. 114/40."¹⁵

The result of these changes to the air personnel's excessive privileges was seen the next day, July 16, 1943. On the morning of that day between one hundred and fifty and two hundred personnel of the maintenance wing "... failed to appear on the morning working parade and marched around the camp encouraging other airmen to come out of the barracks and join them."¹⁶ The station Warrant Officer approached the group and ordered them back to work. The maintenance personnel chose not to return to work. The acting Commanding Officer spoke to the men and they returned to work. When the Commanding Officer returned to

the station he decided to suspend his new orders until a decision on further action was made. The maintenance wing continued to work following this decision.¹⁷

Following the investigation, the Commanding Officer and his original orders remained at Moose Jaw. Those deemed the leaders of the mutiny were courtmartialed.¹⁸ The problem had been corrected, yet the issue of the isolation of the school, poor productivity, and low morale continued.

Another investigation reported that civilians had no knowledge of the mutiny. Hotel staff, employees, barber shop employees, restaurant employees, retail store employees, were interviewed. All benefited from the patronage of air training school. Most of these individuals told the investigator that relations were favourable.¹⁹ However, one civilian, an English immigrant who worked on the local air training station, reported that

... the Service personnel of the above unit were the most insufferable grumblers, at anything and everything in general, that he had ever had the misfortune to be associated with. He further went onto say there were times when their grumbling, discontented manner made him feel almost ashamed of them as his countrymen.²⁰

This informant also described a situation where the members of the station's officer staff tacitly allowed abuses of

the rules. The officers on the station appeared to be sympathetic or unable to act in opposition to the views of the leaders of the mutiny.²¹ Weak command, leading to a continuation of poor discipline, was evident.

The solution of courtmartialing the leaders and imposing strict rules on the air training station did not change the attitudes of those who remained. High productivity, high morale and positive attitudes could not be created by orders. The solution may have been extensive transfers of the airmen in the maintenance section of the school. More extensive recreation was another possible solution. The only response was strict rules that regulated conduct on the station as well as on leaves. This was not a solution for the men who were frustrated by the same rules. The men were given no reason to change their attitudes or their feelings about their position. The failure of the "solutions" to the 1943 mutiny was obvious one year later when violence erupted between the airmen and youths in Moose Jaw. The fact that the airmen were British was not important. Had these same conditions prevailed at a Canadian station the result would have been the same.

The violence between these two groups began on September 9, 1944 and continued for five nights. It was clear that the violence was serious and planned. It was reported that,

... two home-made "blackjacks" were found the next day ... and the next day, two more and a sawed-off baseball bat were found in one of the city motor buses which carried both Service personnel and civilians. Up to the time of leaving Moose Jaw, neither the origin or the ownership of these had been established by the police.²²

The fighting came to a climax on September 12, 1944 when three hundred and fifty airmen came to the city for a dance at the Temple Gardens. As the dance was taking place a small number of airmen were walking through Moose Jaw's Crescent Park where they met a group of approximately fifty youths, "... and were subjected to a beating," but "... fortunately without any serious injuries being sustained."²³ News of this event reached the dance hall and two hundred airmen left the Temple Gardens and paraded the streets, searching for the assailants of their companions. Soon large crowds gathered on Main street. Several fights took place in several different points of the city, but they were quickly subdued by the city police. Later, the Royal Air Force authorities ordered their personnel back to the station.²⁴ In the city, four youths were charged with "... taking part in the affray." All those who were charged with leading the youths or participating in the event were local boys between the ages of sixteen and eighteen.²⁵

The next evening, Royal Air Force personnel arrived in town wearing gloves, although it was a warm evening and, "... jostling local citizens and let[ting] it be known generally they were looking for trouble." It was reported by the city police that among the arrivals that evening was

... an Airforce [sic] truck [which] came to a stop at the North side of Manitoba Street West, about twenty-five Air Force Officers got out and proceeded North on the West side of Main Street taking the whole sidewalk. Pedestrians (civilians) were crowded off the curb and on to the road and also crowded into doorways. The Officers refused to make room for anyone else on the sidewalk until they reached River Street.²⁶

As the airmen continued, their actions

... were not curbed in any way by the Service Police as far as could be observed and the Service Police, according to members of the City Police, refused to render assistance in breaking up crowds on street corners.²⁷

Another City Police report stated that;

In front of the National Cafe the group was made up of officers, warrant officers, sergeants, corporals, and other airmen and S.P.'s [Service Police] at that time the S.P.'s put up as much argument as any of the other airmen, and absolutely refused to give any assistance in breaking up the crowd.²⁸

These groups of airmen were, "... accosting groups of civilian youths in a hostile manner and the general atmosphere appeared to be ominous."²⁹ No serious incidents occurred and most of the airmen returned to the station by midnight.

On September 14, 1944 a curfew had been imposed on the school by the commanding officer.³⁰ As well, the deputy mayor of Moose Jaw made a radio broadcast the night before to remind the citizens that the Royal Air Force personnel were the guests of the city.³¹ On September 14, the city authorities made a request to the Saskatchewan Attorney-General for assistance. A group of R.C.M.P. constables were transferred to the city, but they stayed in the police facilities to be called upon in case of trouble.³² Added to this force were twenty-seven R.C.A.F. service police who had arrived from the Command Pool, Mossbank, and Regina. These service police began immediate patrols, working in pairs, in the downtown area. These patrols continued until early Sunday morning.³³ No further

disturbances occurred after the placement of these police forces in the city.

The Royal Canadian Air Force investigator had an interest in minimizing the significance of the discord between the civilians and the Royal Air Force personnel. This effort to reduce the significance of the discord was important because there was a possibility that other communities might seriously question their role in supporting a local Air Training School. The fear of a reaction in other communities would certainly apply where there may have been some suppressed tensions. Morale and discipline at other schools had to be protected. He described the source of the animosity as one which was caused by local youths that were

... obliged to share the society of members of the fair sex around their own age, with service personnel, frequently to their disadvantage and this has apparently been the cause of frequent frictions in dance halls and such like, with the interaction of remarks which were more pointed than polite.³⁴

In another report submitted about the same event by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, it was admitted that,

The enmity is not organized, and apparently has no subversive foundation. For some time past, members of

the R.A.F. have monopolized local dances and allegedly have endeavored to monopolize the attention of local ladies. Over an extended period of time, this rivalry has increased and several fights have occurred in local halls and restaurants.³⁵

The report submitted by the R.C.A.F. investigator also suggested that those civilians who had been involved were delinquents. Those civilians who were involved shared some of the responsibility for the violence because they were,

... youths between the ages of 16 and 18 years, mostly residing in the south side of the city in lower class homes. These youths are of the street-corner, loafer variety mostly and affect a unique manner of dress which causes them to be referred to frequently as 'zoot-suiters'.³⁶

The Royal Air Force denied the problem and blamed the violence on "aliens" who had arrived in Moose Jaw to organize the violence.³⁷ The youths may have been "loafers", but they were not aliens.³⁸ Not only had the R.A.F. personnel monopolized the dances, they had been reported as pushing and shoving local youths, with questions about their patriotism. They asked if the youths had "flat feet or cold feet?" The majority of the youths that were under military age, replied with heckles of

"yellow-bellied English bastards." The results were fights in dances and restaurants.³⁹

Had the disturbances continued, they would have become much more violent. The airmen would have had to contend with the adults of the city. It was made clear that "... local adult citizens were going to join in the affray unless the R.A.F. personnel discontinued their aggressive-tactics." These same citizens said "... that they would join in with the youths if the R.A.F. didn't learn to behave themselves and that further they would from now on close their houses to members of the R.A.F."⁴⁰

Following September 14, 1944, there were no further disturbances. The Royal Air Force liaison in Ottawa and the Daily Diary of the Moose Jaw Service Flying Training School denied that there had been any problems.⁴¹ The responses to the disturbances were described in a letter to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on October 21, 1944:

From a perusal of the contents of the reports, I feel, however, that no useful purpose would be served in pursuing the matter any further, particularly since there has been no indication of any continuance of the trouble and that No. 32 S.F.T.S., R.A.F. has now been disbanded, I, therefore, hope that you will agree to the conclusion of the matter.⁴²

No action was taken against any of the airmen on the station. In early November, 1944, the station was closed.

Following the disbanding of the Service Flying Training School of the Royal Air Force in Moose Jaw, Number Four Training Command was transferred from Calgary to Moose Jaw. After the war, Moose Jaw became the host community of a permanent Royal Canadian Air Force Base. The disturbances of 1944 were not remembered to the detriment of the Canadian Forces and had no lasting consequences. The goodwill which marked the relations between the bases and the host communities in general was evident after the war at Moose Jaw when the new facilities were built.

The disturbances at Moose Jaw in 1944 were the result of the poor discipline, low morale, and bad attitude on the part of the airmen on the station. The mutiny in 1943 demonstrated how severe the problem was. Even after disciplinary rules had been imposed at the school, productivity remained low. The attitude of the airmen toward the civilians of Moose Jaw was very negative. The solution of courtmartialing the leaders of the mutiny of 1943 and the imposition of strict rules regulating conduct on the station was not a solution. Not high morale nor a good attitude could be imposed by the Commanding Officer. Little interaction between the airmen on the Moose Jaw Station and the civilians of the community exacerbated the

problem. Few transfers of the men from the school assured that the problem would remain.

The disturbances at Moose Jaw made it obvious that there were potential tensions between host communities and local air training schools. Thousands of airmen came to Canada for intense pilot training. The possibility of tension and conflict was significant. Yet, Moose Jaw was the only disturbance to occur between the community and an air school. The feeling of patriotic duty and goodwill on both sides and high level of interaction in all the other schools of the Air Training Plan resulted in no other examples like Moose Jaw.

FOOTNOTES FOR
CHAPTER V

1. "Deserter's Trail Ends: R.A.F. Man Who Came to Canada as Stowaway, Nabbed in City," Saskatoon, Star Phoenix, October 5, 1941. See also, Calgary, No. 4 TC, Diary, March 10, 1944, Appendix IX; Moose Jaw No. 32 SFTS, Diary, January 6, 1944.
2. "New Batch of Airmen Changes Type of School," Swift Current Sun, December 2, 1941.
3. [No title], Swift Current Sun, June 22, 1941.
4. "A Wise Decision Will Not Be Changed," Moose Jaw Times-Herald, October 14, 1944, p. 6; Brereton Greenhous and Norman Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada," p. 140; Interview: Riveire with the author, August 4, 1987.
5. Greenhous and Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan," p. 140.
6. Ernest A.T. Barth, "Air Force Base-Host Community Relations: A Study in Community Typology," Social Forces, XLI, (March 1963), p. 262.
7. Calgary No. 4 TC, Diary, Appendix I, November 1940.
8. The Prairie Flyer, March, 1944, p. 2.
9. Ibid.
10. Calgary No. 4 TC, Diary, December 1941, Appendix, "Report: SFTS No. 32 Moose Jaw."
11. Interview: The author with Mr. F. Hawkins, August 4, 1987; The author with Mr. J. Wing, August 3, 1987; the author with Mr. H. Riviere, August 4, 1987.
12. Greenhous and Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada," p. 140.
13. Ibid.
14. PAC, Records of the Royal Canadian Air Force, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3, No. 32 S.F.T.S. -- Disturbances --, Memorandum of L.S. Breder, Chief of the Air Staff to the Minister, August 4, 1943, paragraph 5.
15. Ibid., paragraph 6.
16. Ibid., paragraph 2.

17. Ibid., paragraphs 3-4.
18. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3, Copy of a Minute of Air Council on Wednesday, July 28, 1943, paragraphs 172 and 207. See also, PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3, Extract from Air Force Routine Orders Dated 11th June, 1943, paragraphs 1 - 6.
19. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3, Memorandum by L.W. Marlor, Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal, No. 4 Training Command, August 3, 1943, paragraph 2.
20. Ibid., paragraph 20.
21. Ibid., paragraphs 9 - 16.
22. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, City of Moos Jaw, Sask. -- Disturbances at --, Memorandum by L.W. Marlor, Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal, No. 4 Training Command, September 13th [18th?], 1944, paragraph 7.
23. Ibid., paragraph 6.
24. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by A. Woodward, Division "F" RCMP, September 14, 1944, paragraph 5.
25. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by L.W. Marlor, Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal, No. 4 Training Command, September 13th [18th?], 1944, paragraph 6.
26. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by Assistant Commissioner Commanding "F" Division RCMP, Regina to Commissioner of the RCMP, Ottawa, October 18, 1944, paragraph 4.
27. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by A. Woodward, Division "F" RCMP, September 14, 1944, paragraph 5.
28. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by Constable H.S. Hilts, Moose Jaw City Police to The Chief Constable, Moose Jaw City Police, September 14, 1944.
29. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by L.W. Marlor, Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal, No. 4 Training Command, September 13th [18th?], 1944, paragraph 8.
30. Ibid., paragraph 10.
31. "All Quiet on the Moose Jaw Front Wednesday Night," The Moose Jaw Times-Herald, September 14, 1944, p. 5.
32. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by Assistant Commissioner Commanding "F" Division RCMP, Regina to

- Commissioner of the RCMP, Ottawa, October 18, 1944, paragraph 5.
33. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by L.W. Marlor, Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal, No. 4 Training Command, September 13th [18th?], 1944, paragraphs 11 - 12.
34. Ibid., paragraph 5.
35. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by A. Woodward, Division "F" RCMP, September 14, 1944, paragraph 2.
36. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by L.W. Marlor, Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal, No. 4 Training Command, September 13th [18th?], 1944, paragraph 5.
37. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by Air Vice Marshal, RAF Liaison Officer, Ottawa, to The Deputy Commissioner RCMP, Ottawa, October 14, 1944, paragraph 2(a).
38. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by Assistant Commissioner Commanding "F" Division RCMP, Regina to Commissioner of the RCMP, Ottawa, October 18, 1944, paragraph 2.
39. Greenhous and Hillmer, p. 141; PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by A. Woodward, Division "F" RCMP, September 14, 1944, paragraphs 1 - 4.
40. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by Assistant Commissioner Commanding "F" Division RCMP, Regina to Commissioner of the RCMP, Ottawa, October 18, 1944, paragraph 6.
41. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by Air Vice Marshal, RAF Liaison Officer, Ottawa, to The Deputy Commissioner RCMP, Ottawa, October 14, 1944.
42. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 5265, File HQS 25-3-3A, Memorandum by H.F. Gordon, Deputy Minister to the Commissioner, RCMP, Ottawa October 21, 1944.

CHAPTER VI

"THERE WAS MANY A SAD FAREWELL ..."

As the war drew to a close fewer aircrew were required. The result was the closing of air training schools as the BCATP curtailed operations. "There was many a sad farewell on Friday night," the Estevan Mercury reported in February 1944.

... as friends bid adieu to some 460 members of the R.A.F. who left on a special train at 8.10 from the C.N.R. depot, Estevan, on the first lap of the journey that will eventually take them home to the United Kingdom. The night was cold and shivering couples and groups stood in the dimness saying their goodbyes in the hope that peace-time would bring re-unions [sic]

... As each transport arrived the men were handed a gift of cigarettes, fruit and a copy of "The Mercury" which officially bid them farewell with many messages expressing regret at their departure, Mayor H.

Nicholson and H.A. Westergaard canvassed the town to raise the necessary funds to pay for the gifts which were handed out by a ladies' committee. In addition magazines were placed on the train.

The Estevan Band under the direction of Bandmaster Johnston played in the depot waiting room, extreme cold preventing it from performing outside. Extra lights had been strung along to help illuminate the long string of fourteen cars which made up the train. On the outside of the centre was stretched a long streamer with the words "Bundles for Britain (priority)."

In spite of the extreme cold a crowd estimated at 500 thronged the full length of the train, and with cars honking, good-byes being shouted and people waving, the train pulled out into the darkness with its tall lights gradually dimming until they had disappeared in the murk of the R.A.F.¹

The fact that there was much enthusiasm among the civilian population for the airmen and airwomen as they left demonstrated that there was generally good relations between the air stations and the host communities. The warm relations resulted from a patriotic sentiment and feeling of goodwill among British, Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian airmen as well as Saskatchewan host communities.

Following the Great War, Britain allowed her armed services to erode. Later, the British government was faced with the military threat of Germany. Britain responded by attempting to commit the rest of the Commonwealth to British military aims. Canada was called upon to develop air training schemes. Mackenzie King resisted the British aims as long as he could. Prime Minister King negotiated the BCATP and made the Plan Canada's central contribution to the war effort. By achieving this role for Canada, King reduced the call for Canadian Expeditionary Forces. By limiting the number of Canadian infantrymen he avoided high numbers of Canadian casualties and reduced the risk of calls for conscription. Both the economic benefit of the Plan and patriotism in Saskatchewan brought a sentiment that the province was contributing to the national effort.

The economic benefit that the the Air Training Plan brought to Saskatchewan was more significant because of the intensity of the Great Depression in the province. Saskatchewan experienced the world economic depression and a prolonged drought. The Air Training Plan offered a significant opportunity to many communities in Saskatchewan to recover.

Before the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was established, there were few air fields in Saskatchewan. Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina had small airfields that had to be improved and expanded for the new air schools.

The establishment of an air training facility meant that the communities would economically recover. Yet, it was clear that the air training school had a price as well. Communities had to provide services, roads, electrical power, water, and sewage to the local air training schools before the schools could be established. As well there was the stress in one community due to a labour dispute. However, the communities that were hosts to the air training stations witnessed the recovery of their service industries. Businesses that had collapsed or were close to collapse because of the depression recovered. Relief costs fell across the province. The people in communities responded with a patriotic sentiment despite the stress at the time. The media gave the new schools a warm welcome. The communities volunteered with patriotic fervor their time to provide hostess clubs and to welcome airmen into their homes at Christmas.

For many communities the local air training schools became closely integrated with the community because of the size of the school. Estevan had a population of 2,854 when a school with 1,100 permanent personnel was established nearby. Estevan became closely tied to the Service Flying Training School. With the arrival of large numbers of air personnel the communities had to cooperate with the local air school.

The pressure of the war years challenged both the host communities and the service personnel. The crisis of

the housing shortage affected the civilians who had to supply housing to the permanent air staff of the local school. The wartime limitations did not allow the easy construction of new homes. Both sides had to be accommodating. Later, rent controls added to the stressful situation. The reaction was a showing of goodwill on both sides. Airmen volunteered their leave to assist local farmers harvest when there was a labour shortage during the war. Civilian taxi companies provided unprofitable rates to airmen and airwomen travelling to and from the air stations.

The air personnel became integrated into the host communities. Enlistments and wartime migrations created a need in the host communities for people to participate in the cultural activities. The air personnel of the air training schools needed recreational activities to keep their morale high. The two needs complemented each other. Airmen and airwomen joined the congregations of local churches, exchanged dramatic productions and brought dance bands to communities that did not have them. Airmen married local girls after the war. New Canadian wives moved to different parts of the Commonwealth to live with their husbands. Other airmen immigrated to Canada to start new lives with their wives. The air cadet movement flourished in the province. The Air Force had a great appeal to the people of Saskatchewan. More Saskatchewan men and women on a per capita basis joined the Air Force than any other

province in Canada. The Air Force had very wide support in Saskatchewan.

The interaction between civilians and air personnel was the same in sports as it had been in cultural activities. The most significant sports were those that allowed the greatest amount of interaction between the civilians and the air personnel. The sports that the individuals chose to participate in were those that they were familiar with. Some British personnel participated in soccer and cricket. These sports allowed most civilians to be spectators only. Those sports which were familiar to the civilians were baseball and hockey. It followed that those airmen that were Canadian readily integrated. They were familiar with Canadian sports and were very active in them. Airwomen and airmen participated in baseball games in the communities. The importance of the participation of airmen in local sports was seen in the hockey season of 1942-43. In the season of 1942-43 the Air Force personnel in several communities iced hockey teams to replace the Senior men's hockey League in the province. With the collapse of the professional hockey league, civilians of host communities cheered the airmen as their own local teams. The cordial relations around hockey continued after that season when the formal league ceased to operate. Inter-station hockey continued to be the centre of winter sport for many Saskatchewan communities until the end of the war.

The Airmen of the Royal Air Force did not always participate in sports that the local communities were accustomed to. Western Canadian communities found cricket and soccer alien. However, these sports allowed limited interaction between the community and the air school. The civilians were only spectators to these unfamiliar sports. Some stations, like those at Moose Jaw and North Battleford, travelled to Vancouver and Victoria to find games of cricket. These games did nothing to enhance communication between the airmen and the civilians.

Crime by the airmen and discord between civilians and service personnel was very rare. The 1943 mutiny at Moose Jaw and the 1944 violence in the city were the exceptions. The central cause of the discord was the poor attitude of the airmen on the station. It was known when the airmen arrived at Moose Jaw from England that they had a discipline problem. Weak command allowed the problem to continue on the Moose Jaw school. A mutiny occurred in 1943 with the arrival of a new Commanding Officer who took steps to impose standard rules and discipline. The mutiny was resolved with the court martial of the leaders and the imposition of the Commanding Officer's rules. The mutiny underlined the root cause of the later difficulties. Poor morale, low productivity, and a bad attitude among the airmen continued. Although the airmen participated in dances in the city, they did not have the same level of interaction as other schools had with their host

communities. The result of the poor attitude was violence between local youths and airmen in 1944.

The violence between the airmen and civilians in 1944 was the exception to the rule. The violence at Moose Jaw served to show that there was the possibility of tension between civilians and the air personnel. Had the same conditions existed on any RCAF station the same result would have been attained. The extent of patriotism and goodwill across the province was demonstrated by the fact that Moose Jaw was the only case of discord between the airmen and civilians. In spite of the violence of the airmen in Moose Jaw, the goodwill continued. After the war, the city became the home of the RCAF military flying training centre for Canada.

The newspapers across the province showed no signs of grievance at the closing of the schools. The reaction was to look to the future and make plans to consolidate the gains made during the war. The air training facilities were to be reconstructed for civilian use after the war. The North Battleford Optimist published a typical report about the local airport and the bright future if the population did not become complacent;

By indifference to its great importance it can peter out into a mere subsidiary of the transcontinental airlines which will crisscross the country. By concerted and aggressive action it can

not only be incorporated into the national and international air services but it can be developed into a primary base for northern air routes which are at present in their infancy.

What aviation has achieved in this war is something barely understood by the general public. Improved types of airplanes, radar control, radio beams, and broadened meteorological services spanning wide areas and distances, are but a few of the wonderful developments of the past few years.

Some idea of these scientific improvements can be gained from one reference -- Atlantic crossings. Before the war, the Atlantic was never flown during winter. Now crossings which began in 1940 are only part of a vast Atlantic service of a routine character, carrying passengers, mail and cargo. By May, 1944, 15,000 trans-Atlantic crossings had been made with the loss of under half of one percent, and that in spite of an enforced radio silence to avoid interception by the enemy.²

Although this was a common overstatement, the airports in many communities were used after the war. Although the numbers of aircraft in the skies of Saskatchewan decreased dramatically the main airfields became important for civilian use. Some of these airports acted as links in the peacetime as transcontinental air

travel spread across the country immediately after the war. Later, when jet aircraft services were established and travel by air was advanced, the importance of the many smaller air links was lost.³ Yet, local air services did continue, and there was a growing number of private aircraft because of the convenience of the airfields across Western Canada. The airport at Prince Albert remained important because it provided air services to the north. The airports at Weyburn, Yorkton, Swift Current, and North Battleford continued to service their communities. Other fields, like those at Mossbank and Davidson, "... have faded into the mists of history."⁴ The one community to have flawed relations with its air training school was Moose Jaw, yet, that city became the permanent home of the Royal Canadian Air Force military flying training station after the war.⁵

Following the disastrous decade of the Great Depression Saskatchewan responded to the announcement of the Air Training Plan. Economic recovery, patriotism and goodwill brought a warm response from the Saskatchewan host communities to the airmen and airwomen. The important role that Saskatchewan was given in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan made the province feel it was playing a significant part in the national war effort. The Air Training Plan in Saskatchewan became an unique and important social experience for the province. Regardless of

the stresses and demands that resulted from the Plan the communities and Air Training Schools survived the war together. The warm reception of the school and the unique social experience brought with it a bond that is remembered today. The social impact the Air Training Plan was so great that it is remembered in Saskatchewan communities forty years after it ended. Regular reunions and numerous local publications demonstrate the continuing fondness with which the people of Saskatchewan remember their war-time efforts.

FOOTNOTES FOR
CHAPTER VI

1. "R.A.F. Personnel Bid Farewell To Estevan," The Estevan Mercury, Feb. 17, 1944. See also, "Farwell No. 23," The Davidson Leader, Jan. 24, 1945; "No. 11, R.C.A.F. Has Splendid Record of Achievement," The Yorkton Enterprise, Nov. 23, 1944; "Officers of No. 11 Entertain Rotarians and Say Farewell," The Yorkton Enterprise, Nov. 23, 1944; "'We'll Be Back' Airmen Say As Special Train Takes British Lads Homeward," Swift Current Sun, March 28, 1944; "Air School Closing," Swift Current Sun, March 14, 1944, p. 2; "Wings," Swift Current Sun, Jan. 25, 1944; "E.F.T.S. Is Changing Over," The Assiniboia Times, Jan. 5, 1944; "15 E.F.T.S. Disbands," Regina, The Leader Post, Aug. 14, 1944, p. 3; Assinibioa No. 25 EFTS, Diary, July, 1944; "Estevan Expresses Regret At Departing of the R.A.F.," The Estevan Mercury, Feb. 10, 1944; "Airport Now Being Closed Many Of Personnel Posted," Weyburn Review, July 6, 1944; "Farewell to R.A.F.," The Estevan Mercury, Feb. 10, 1944; "Airport Station Being Vacated By R.A.F.," Weyburn Review, Jan. 20, 1944; "Airmen Welcomed at Civic Receptions," Weyburn Review, Feb. 10, 1944; "Citizens Entertain Departing Airmen," Weyburn Rview, Jan. 13, 1944; "Final Graduation Course At 41 S.F.T.S., R.A.F.," Weyburn Review, Jan. 20, 1944.
2. "Our Postwar Airport," The North Battleford Optimist, March 22, 1945. See also, "Mayor To Proclaim Half-Holiday For Final 'Wings' Parade Here Many Nations Take Part In Final Wings Parade," North Battleford Optimist, March 22, 1945; "Air School Here Closing: Official Word Received Today From Ottawa," Swift Current Sun, March 7, 1944; "To Call Meeting Re Hostess Club," The Yorkton Enterprise, Nov. 16, 1944; "Board of Trade Pledge Support For Reconstruction," The Wynyard Advance, Feb. 9, 1944; "Great Air Future for Saskatoon," Star Phoenix, Saskatoon, Sept. 18, 1940, p. 4; "Aviation To Have Important Place In Post-War Canada," The Yorkton Enterprise, Dec. 9, 1943; "RCAF Will Definitely Take Over Air School Here," Swift Current Sun, Dec. 7, 1943; "Saskatoon Stressed As Main Stop, 'Peg to Edmonton," Saskatoon, The Star Phoenix, June 1, 1945; "Post-War Power," The Estevan Mercury, Dec. 2, 1943.
3. Brereton Greenhous and Norman Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada," p. 143.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

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