

BIG PEACETIME ROLE

Station S'side suffered many growing pains

With the end of World War Two the Commonwealth Air Training Plan came to a close and air stations throughout Canada came under scrutiny by the defence department, which had the big job of deciding which parts to close down.

For many of those that were to be kept operational it was obvious that some would have to be reclassified to play an entirely different role in the peacetime air force.

Subsequently in February 1946 it was announced that RCAF Station Summerside would become an Air Navigation School and would be the only "straight" navigation school in Canada. It was therefore organized as the counterpart of the Empire Navigation School at Shawbury, Eng-

land, operated by the RAF. Late in that same year, with the RCAF not yet up to its full peacetime strength, it was announced that during the winter of 1946-47 the base would operate on a reduced scale. A number of the buildings were closed down temporarily including the barracks quarters and the staff was boarded out in the town of Summerside.

In February 1947 it was further announced that the station would be fully reopened as an operational base.

In March Squadron Leader W. C. Langstaff, DFC and Bar took over command and that same month the station resumed as a navigational school and plans were made to extend the program to include Specialist Nav-

igation Courses in the coming fall.

The station was also given additional status as a Research and Development Section (Navigation) which was to work on the development of new techniques and methods of air navigation.

IMPROVEMENTS PLANNED

Early in 1948 the department decided that RCAF Station Summerside would undergo major improvement for which the sum of \$1,500,000 was allotted.

Under this scheme large areas of the asphalt bitumen were relayed with concrete in order to accommodate the jet aircraft whose intense engine heat had been found to melt asphalt.

During 1949 two of the Lancaster aircraft based at Summerside wrote a new chapter in the history of aviation by completing a non-stop flight to Washington and from there they flew to Sacramento, California.

The major feat carried out by these two aircraft and their crews was when they flew non-stop from Sacramento to Summerside a distance of 2,750 miles.

In December 1949 the first post-war class of navigators received their wings in a ceremony witnessed by Air Vice Marshal C.R. Slemmon, CB, CBE, Air Officer Commanding Training Command, and a number of other dignitaries including the



JOINT ANTI-SUBMARINE PATROL

Lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Following the wings parade all three dignitaries took part in the official opening of the first house of the permanent married quarters in what became known as Slemmon Park.

OTU MOVES TO P.E.I.

Late in 1953 RCAF Station Summerside was closed down as a navigation school and the base was taken over by Maritime Command and No. 2 (Maritime) Operational Training Unit was transferred to Summerside from Greenwood, N.S., where it had been organized in 1949. It was shortly before OTU

include a new giant hangar capable of housing the huge Argus aircraft, two smaller hangars, heating plane armanent depot, taxi-ways, fuel storage and a railway spur.

Late in 1958 it was announced that Summerside would eventually become an operation 1 squadron. But this change-over was not expected to be completed until sometime in 1960 dependent upon the delivery of Argus aircraft and the erection of hangar large enough to house them.

This change in status also meant that the number of air force personnel would be almost doubled, as Air Commodore William Clements pointed out, it takes a large number of men to keep an Argus flying.

SQUADRON REVIVED

In April 1961 it was announced that the famed wartime No. 415 Squadron would be revived and based at Summerside. During the war years the squadron was equipped with Hampden bombers but the newly activated unit was to be supplied with the giant Argus and the first of these arrived at the station in June of that year.

It was shortly after the formation of the squadron that one of its Argus aircraft established a new endurance record of 30 hours non-stop during an Arctic Reconnaissance Patrol. During that time the aircraft covered some 100,000 square miles.

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Pacifists at Bormarc base failed to arouse sympathy

LA MACAZA, Que. (CP)—Things changed for this Laurentian village when North American defence planners chose it as the site for a Bormarc missile base.

First came the base itself, with jobs as helpers for many local people.

Then came the pacifists. In the summer of 1964, after the missiles on the base were armed with United States nuclear warheads, about 50 demonstrators came north to protest. They had opposed nuclear weapons on Canadian soil during the 1963 general election, won by the Liberals, when accepting the warheads was a campaign issue.

They sat down in the middle of roads to the base and were repeatedly dragged away by guards. They spoke to the townspeople, but in the end had to pack up.

They were outsiders, from Montreal and farther away, and they were attacking an institution which had had time to establish itself as a boon to some local citizens before they arrived.

TRY DIFFERENT ROLE

But they failed to gain local backing.

"We shocked the people of La Macaza," said Andre Cardinal, 24, of Waterloo, Que., one of the few French-speaking peace demonstrators, in a post-mortem on the sit-downs of 1964.

So Andre and a group of fellow-pacifists decided to go back to La Macaza in 1965, not as demonstrators, but as students of what local people think of the base, the world and their future. Then they would propose the pacifist answers.

Three of them eventually undertook to do the work on the spot. They were Cardinal, Terry Moore, 22, of Winnipeg, a political science graduate of the University of Winnipeg, and Aline Desjardins, 21, of Kapuskasing, Ont., who became interested in the pacifist movement at McMaster University in Hamilton.

They rented rooms in the house of a Ukrainian farm couple and began travelling Labelle County in a car in search of occasions for speaking to residents of "disarmament, development and decolonization."

HAD STUDENT BACKING

The three-part slogan had sprung from talks between the pacifists, organized in the Student Union for Peace Action, and l'Union Generale des Etudiants du Quebec, the association of Quebec university and college students.

"Disarmament" was what the demonstrators originally came to La Macaza for; "development" was an attempt to link the missile base with the economic needs of Labelle County; and "decolonization" was an appeal to French-Canadian nationalist feeling among UGEGQ militants.

Then, one night last July, La Macaza became the scene of an incident that had nothing to do with missiles or pacifism.

Seven young men, armed with rifles and encamped in the La Macaza area, were confronted by Quebec Provincial Police, engaged in some gullyplay in which one of their number was wounded, and kidnapped a policeman.

Constable Ouil Bourdon was missing in the woods for 24 hours, then escaped unharmed. The seven have since been tried and several jailed for the kidnapping. It became evident as the case unfolded that their political ideas were separatist rather than pacifist.

"Every time we meet someone now," Terry Moore wrote shortly afterward, "we have to explain that the peace movement would never be involved in such activities."

Due to a combination of lack of money and advice from the three workers that it might renew ill-will, a demonstration for the end of last summer was called off.

What next?

To a conference of the Student Union for Peace Action in St. Catharines, Que., last fall—which heard from similar projects across Canada—Terry Moore had this to report:

"What can we hope to accomplish? We will leave behind a number of people sympathetic to the project and interested in development of the region, invigorating local politics, broadening political participation, improving social welfare, and ready to support removal of the base."

"Then in 1966, get up there about mid-May with a larger, better-prepared team."

Best Wishes

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at RCAF Station Summerside

on this happy occasion.

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