

# ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE JOURNAL



SPRING 2017 • VOL.6, NO.2



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The *ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE JOURNAL* is an official publication of the Commander Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and is published quarterly. It is a forum for discussing concepts, issues and ideas that are both crucial and central to air and space power. The *Journal* is dedicated to disseminating the ideas and opinions of not only RCAF personnel, but also those civilians who have an interest in issues of air and space power. Articles may cover the scope of air-force doctrine, training, leadership, lessons learned and air-force operations: past, present or future. Submissions on related subjects such as ethics, technology and air-force history are also invited. This journal is therefore dedicated to the expression of mature professional thought on the art and science of air warfare and is central to the intellectual health of the RCAF. It serves as a vehicle for the continuing education and professional development of all ranks and personnel in the RCAF as well as members from other environments, employees of government agencies and academia concerned with air-force affairs.

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Published by Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre

ISSN 1927-7601

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# ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE JOURNAL



COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE



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The *ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE JOURNAL (RCAFJ)* welcomes the submission of articles, book reviews and shorter pieces (which will be published in the Letters to the Editor, Points of Interest, Pushing the Envelope and Point/Counterpoint sections) that cover the scope of air-force doctrine, training, leadership, lessons learned and air-force operations: past, present or future. Submissions on related subjects such as ethics, technology and air-force history are also invited.

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ITEM	WORD LIMIT*	DETAILS
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- The Senior Editor may select images or have graphics created to accompany submissions.
- Authors should use *Oxford English* spelling. When required, reference notes should be endnotes rather than footnotes and formatted in Chicago style. For assistance refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style, 16<sup>th</sup> Edition* or CFAWC Production Section at CFAWCProd@forces.gc.ca
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For the Spring issue: **30 January**

For the Summer issue: **30 April**

For the Fall issue: **30 July**

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# COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

## THE CONTINUED IMPORTANCE OF AVIATION IN THE GREAT WAR

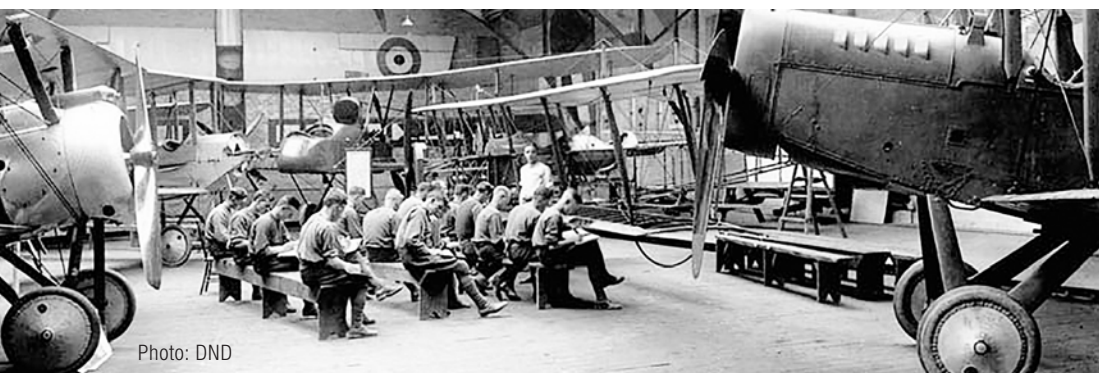


Photo: DND

Canada's first air unit, the Canadian Aviation Corps (CAC), consisted of an unqualified captain and lieutenant with questionable flying experience, a staff sergeant and one aircraft. The aircraft was severely damaged while tied to the deck of a ship travelling overseas in 1914 to bring this pathetically small force to England to partake in the Great War.<sup>1</sup> Upon arrival in England, the CAC—never authorized by the Canadian government in the first place—was disbanded and forgotten for the remainder of the war, as Canadian aviators joined the British Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). We certainly have come a very long way since that uninspired beginning.

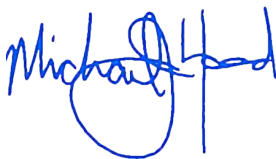
The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) has little relation to the CAC, but it owes everything to the Canadian aviators who went on to participate in British flying organizations throughout the Great War. Even a century later, we remember names such as William Avery Bishop, Raymond Collishaw, William George Barker, Wilfrid Reid “Wop” May, Alan McLeod and Arthur Roy Brown. These Canadian flyers sparked the imagination of everyone back home at the time, and they inspired the enduring myth surrounding these knights of the air. The myth, the novelty of flight and the fact that 22,812 Canadians enlisted in the British flying services make it clear that Canada became an air-minded nation during the Great War, keen to retain aviation expertise for the challenges of the future.

In the wake of the Canadian sacrifice at Vimy Ridge in 1917, discussion of a Canadian Flying Corps started in earnest, and some form of Canadian air service was simply a matter of time. A short-lived Royal Canadian Naval Air Service was formed to defend Canadian coasts but never saw active service. In Europe, a Canadian Air Force—established at the end of the Great War and disbanded in 1919—was resurrected as the basis of a non-permanent force in 1920; it then became the RCAF on 1 April 1924. These early efforts at creating an aviation organization showed that Canada was determined not to serve under an imperial power without an ability to distinguish Canadian military efforts from other nationalities, including the new realm of air combat. As you

read about history and aviation in the First World War, it is important to note that this is the era that created Canada's desire to have a separate identity: one that is visibly distinct on the battlefield. A separate and proud identity for the RCAF remains critically important and guides our actions today, even as we work within North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and United Nations constructs all over the world.

There is one other major contribution from the First World War that remains applicable today, and that is the training of allied aviators in our country. The RFC (which became the Royal Air Force) on 1 April 1918, established a training organization in Canada under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Cuthbert Gurney Hoare. This remarkable British officer and his organization worked with Canadians on our home soil to train 3,135 Commonwealth pilots, 456 American pilots, 137 observers and 7,453 ground crew.<sup>2</sup> In addition, several hundred women were trained in various aspects of airplane servicing and repair, all in less than two years. The success of this programme was repeated in the Second World War with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP)<sup>3</sup> and continues to this day with the NATO Flying Training in Canada programme.

There is a direct link from Hoare's programme to the current one, and understanding the history behind these linkages helps us understand the RCAF's contribution to the modern world. As I look at the early days of aviation in Canada, I see themes of determination, leadership and resilience that echo still. We must never forget the contributions of Canada's role in air combat during the First World War and the creation of air-mindedness in our nation that endures to this day. 🇨🇦



Lieutenant-General M. J. Hood, CD, MA  
Commander, Royal Canadian Air Force

## Abbreviations

<b>BCATP</b>	British Commonwealth Air Training Plan
<b>CAC</b>	Canadian Aviation Corps
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>RCAF</b>	Royal Canadian Air Force
<b>RFC</b>	Royal Flying Corps

## Notes

1. A good place to start with additional readings on this era is S. F. Wise, *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, vol. 1, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press and Government of Canada, 1980), accessed February 22, 2017, <http://w08-ttn-vmweb01/cfawc/en/awelibrary-our-holdings.asp>. Another excellent and entertaining read is C. W. Hunt, *Dancing in the Sky: The Royal Flying Corps in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009).

2. Hunt, *Dancing in the Sky*, 289.

3. See *Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* (Spring 2016), <http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/cf-aero-space-warfare-centre/elibrary/journal/2015-vol4-iss2-spring.page> and <http://w08-ttn-vmweb01/CFAWC/en/elibrary/journal/issue.asp?ID=24>, both accessed February 22, 2017, for articles on the BCATP.

# EXAMPLES OF JN-4 UNIT MARKINGS

BY TERRY HIGGINS



**JN-4A “Jenny” C562** (port), The Aerial Gunnery Sqn, School of Aerial Fighting, Beamsville, Summer 1917 – the airborne JN-4 depicted in the Robert Bradford painting.

**JN-4A “Jenny” C591** (stbd), No 85 CRS, Camp Rathbun, circa Summer 1917, with this squadron’s popular Black Cat insignia.



**JN-4A / (Can) “Buffalo” C594** (port), No 2 Squadron, School of Aerial Fighting, Beamsville, Summer 1917, with camera gun device on Scarff ring installed on a modified rear cockpit. The “black coffin” insignia present also believed to have been used by No 91 CTS at some point.

**JN-4A / (Can) “Buffalo” C576** (stbd), School of Aerial Fighting, Beamsville, Summer 1917. Another gunnery trainer at the Beamsville school, possibly No 3 or No 4 Sqn within the school. The Buffaloes were hybrid airframes consisting of Curtiss (Buffalo, NY plant) fuselage and tail assemblies mated to Canadian JN-4 (Can) wings after shipment to Canada.



**JN-4 (Can) “Canuck” C1311** (port), No 1 Sqn, School of Aerial Fighting, Beamsville, Summer 1917 – the other JN-4 depicted in the Robert Bradford painting.

**JN-4 (Can) “Canuck” C1313**

(stbd), C Flight, 92 CTS, Camp Borden, 1918. This late production Canuck was used as an aerial photography trainer. What appears to be a partial (or smaller than usual) camera is mounted beneath a modified rear cockpit coaming. It is unusual that the wing-tip skids are not installed.



**JN-4 (Can) “Canuck” C122**

(stbd), No 78 CTS, Camp Borden, 1917. A production Canuck used as a wireless (i.e., serial telegraphy) trainer with the trailing wire aerial and reel mounted outside the rear cockpit and the radio equipment under a hatch on the rear decking.

**JN-4 (Can) “Canuck” C760**

(stbd), No 79 CTS, Rathbun, 1918. Believed to have been photographed on a visit to Deseronto (Camp Mohawk) – a typical 1918-service Canuck with No 79 CTS after they returned from Texas in 1918.



**JN-4 (Can) “Canuck” C332**

(port), No 88 CTS, Armour Heights, 1918. This aircraft was featured in a series of aerial photos wherein one of its occupants participated in unauthorized “wing walking.” The squadron’s tail chequers, usually black, were apparently red or blue on this particular example.

**JN-4 (Can) “Canuck” C696 (port),**

No 84 CRS / CTS, Camp Mohawk (Deseronto) and Taliaferro, TX, 1917–1918. This was the personal aircraft of Captain Vernon Castle. Castle was killed in the crash of a different Canuck (C683?) in Texas on 15 February 1918. Meanwhile, C696 was heavily damaged in an accident while flown by a trainee after the “Castle” emblem on the tail had been overpainted.





**JN-4 (Can) “Canuck” C1009**  
(port), No 92 CRS / CTS, Long Branch and Armour Heights, 1917. This unit was originally known as “Y” Squadron, hence the marking. The “Ontario” inscription indicates a gift aircraft funded by the province.

**JN-4 (Can) “Canuck” C460**  
(stbd), No 87 CRS / CTS, Rathbun, 1917. The Green Shamrock marking originated when this unit was part of 43 Wing in Canada and went with them to Texas. After returning in 1918 and in 44 Wing at Camp Borden, the marking disappeared in favour of a system of stripes and Flight letters.




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Ontario-based designer, illustrator, and writer Terry Higgins is a native of Norris Arm, Newfoundland, who has had a lifelong fascination with all things aviation-history related. Terry’s firm, SkyGrid Studio, specializes in aviation-history-focused research, illustration, design, and editorial work for clients ranging from aviation-specialty publishers and scale-model manufacturers to museums and aircraft restorers. Produced under the Aviaeology imprint, SkyGrid Studio’s own range of books, prints, and model-decal sets are well known to enthusiasts worldwide for their historical accuracy. Terry has been the graphics editor of the flagship publication of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society (CAHS), the *CAHS Journal*, since 2010. He also assumed the role of managing editor in 2012. His series of articles “The Last of the Buffalo Beaux”—an account detailing the final 404 Squadron combat operation of the Second World War—received the *CAHS Journal*’s C. Don Long Best Article Award for 2015.

# THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS AND ROYAL AIR FORCE IN CANADA



BY MAJOR BILL MARCH, CD, MA

By the end of 1916, the aircraft had proven itself as a key instrument of modern warfare. The bloody battles of the Somme (July to November 1916) and Verdun (February to December 1916) demonstrated the utility of air power for reconnaissance, cooperation with the artillery and infantry as well as bombing. In addition, there was a need for more and more fighters, or “scouts,” to deny these capabilities to the enemy. And, as with any crucial “piece of kit,” there was never enough to meet ongoing, and future, demands. As the British Expeditionary Force, of which the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) was part, prepared for yet another year of war, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) undertook a massive expansion, both to meet the demands of new offensives and to replace past losses.<sup>1</sup> The flight training organization in England had reached its limit in terms of available space and resources, so hopeful eyes turned to the Dominion of Canada, anticipating large untapped pools of budding young airmen supported by the industrial strength of the Dominion and United States (US). On 21 December 1916, after months of discussions between Imperial and Dominion authorities, the decision was made to establish a flying-training operation in Canada, and the Royal Flying Corps in Canada (RFCC) was born.<sup>2</sup>

There had been a trickle of Canadians who made their way into the Imperial flying services, either through direct recruitment or via private endeavours, such as the Curtiss flight training school in Toronto. However, it was believed that there was a large, untapped pool of potential young aviators in the Dominion, and perhaps the neighbouring US, who would be useful to support RFC growth. Although Canadian weather did cause some concern, it was offset by an established industrial base and mature transportation infrastructure. When financial support to establish the necessary physical plant for a training establishment was forthcoming from the Dominion government, British authorities pressed ahead with the endeavour.<sup>3</sup> All that was needed was the right officer to head the enterprise.

The individual chosen was Lieutenant-Colonel Cuthbert C. Hoare, a cavalry officer who had learned to fly in 1911. He was an experienced commander—having led both a squadron and wing in France—and had the rare gift of exceptional executive abilities and diplomatic skills. Virtually given a free hand in North America, Hoare—who would be a brigadier-general by the end of the war—built the RFCC literally from the ground up. Successfully navigating the quagmire of Dominion politics, he seems never to have run afoul of either politicians or senior bureaucrats within the Department of Militia and Defence. Hoare also took creative liberties in dealing with the US, thereby ensuring a steady flow of American recruits and negotiating bilateral training agreements in support of the RFCC’s mission.<sup>4</sup>

Indicative of Hoare’s ability was that with the Armistice on 11 November 1918, Royal Air Force in Canada (RAFC)—as the training establishment was now called with the creation of the Royal Air Force (RAF) on 1 April—had enlisted 9,200 cadets, of whom 3,135 had completed their pilot training. Approximately 2,500 had gone overseas, with another 300 ready to depart when fighting ended. Added to this number were 137 observers who had completed their training, of which 85 had been sent to Europe. Had the war dragged on into 1919, as most expected it would, Hoare’s organization alone would have accounted for about one-fifth of the aircrew reinforcements needed for both the Western and Italian fronts.<sup>5</sup>

This was an impressive achievement to be sure, when it is remembered that when Hoare stepped off the ship in New Brunswick on 19 January 1917, virtually no aviation infrastructure existed in Canada. A mere nine days later, contracts were let to build a major aerodrome at Camp Borden (flying would begin there in March) and a new factory, Canadian Aeroplanes Limited (CAL), to build the necessary training aircraft.<sup>6</sup> Although not his first choice, Hoare settled on

the JN-4 (Canadian), or Jenny, a two-seat biplane, as the RFCC's training aircraft. Eventually, CAL would construct an estimated 1,210 airplanes and manufacture spare parts equivalent to a further 1,600 airplanes.<sup>7</sup>

Industrial and governmental support was provided by the Aviation Department of the Imperial Munitions Board (IMB). The Public Works and Government Services Canada of its day, the IMB oversaw the construction of suitable airfields and facilities to house 15 Canadian Training Squadrons and a host of specialized schools and agencies. Grouped together into 42 Wing (Borden), 43 Wing (Deseronto) and 44 Wing (North Toronto), the training organization was centred in southern Ontario for logistical and administrative reasons. By November 1918, manning these facilities reached almost 12,000 uniformed personnel, broken down into 600 officers, 4,777 cadets under instruction as pilots or observers, and 6,158 other ranks.<sup>8</sup>

Although Hoare had the dedicated and efficient support of a host of individuals, there is no doubt that his single-minded focus and force of will shaped the organization. Not enough recruits from Canadian sources? No problem—he recruits Americans.<sup>9</sup> The training capacity of the RFCC will outstrip the number of trainees? No problem—he instituted longer advanced courses in gunnery and aerial combat, providing a better product.<sup>10</sup> Upon the formation of the RAF, individuals in the RFC could choose not to serve in the new service? No problem—Hoare stops the hemorrhage of air personnel by arranging for their immediate induction into the CEF if they chose to leave.<sup>11</sup> Even cultural norms seem to have not stood in his way.

Almost from the beginning, Canadian women had been employed by the RFCC, albeit almost entirely in clerical positions. However, by 1918, manpower shortages were such that, despite local objections, the scope of their employment was expanded to include transport driving. Just under 1,200 women were recruited and given technical training. By November 1918, there were an estimated 600 women working as mechanics at the various aerodromes with a further 135 overhauling engines at repair facilities. In May 1918, Hoare had even gone so far as to obtain agreement from London to form a Dominion branch of the Women's Royal Air Force. However, ever conscious of costs involved, English bureaucracy balked at the added expense of housing women in uniform, \$430 per woman as compared to \$235 per man, and the initiative came to naught.<sup>12</sup>

When the First World War came to a close on 11 November 1918, so too did the *raison d'être* of the RAFC. Within days, the discharge of staff and cadets had begun, and facilities were either disposed of or, as at Borden, placed on caretaker status. Although vestiges of the organization remained until December 1919, by the following year, military aviation in Canada had, for all practicable purposes, ceased to exist. So why is it important for Canadians, in and out of uniform, to remember and commemorate what was a British military establishment?

First and foremost, we need to do so because of the estimated 22,000 Canadian and American volunteers who served in the Imperial flying services and the over 1,500 who gave their lives. Most of these individuals served in, or were trained by, the RFCC/RAFC. Included in this last number are over 130 officers, cadets and other ranks accidentally killed while undergoing or supporting training.<sup>13</sup> Their record of service was second to none, bringing great credit to Canada and forming the basis of Canada's aviation culture.

Secondly, although initially an all-British undertaking, by the end of the war, it was Canadian in all but name. Canadians commanded two of the three wings and 12 of the 16 training squadrons. As well, the School of Aerial Gunnery and each of its four flying units were commanded by Canadians. It is estimated that 70 per cent of all flying positions were manned by Canadians.<sup>14</sup> If one

adds in the ground crew, support personnel and the cadets, the RAFC was very much a home-grown undertaking. Furthermore, by November 1918, virtually all of the aircraft produced by CAL were, from rudder to propeller, built utilizing Canadian, or North American, supplied components.<sup>15</sup>

Thirdly, the legacy of the RFCC/RAFC strongly influenced the next generation of senior air personnel and politicians who rose to prominence prior to the onset of the Second World War. The advocates of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), arguably Canada’s most important contribution to the war, not only pointed to the previous training scheme but also protected national interests, as this organization would be developed, administered and commanded by Canadians. Furthermore, where possible, any industrial and regional benefits stemming from the BCATP, unlike the RFCC/RAFC, would serve the needs of the country beyond the cessation of hostilities.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, the RFCC/RAFC had let the “aviation genie” out of the bottle in Canada. The Dominion had demonstrated that it was capable on industrial and organizational levels of undertaking a complex aviation project. And although the training activity was located in southern Ontario, instructors and trainees came from throughout the Dominion which, when combined with individuals who flew exclusively overseas, ensured a wide-spread “airmindedness” across the country. Not only would the remnant facilities of the RFCC/RAFC serve to nurture a nascent Canadian Air Force and Air Board, surplus Jenny aircraft would make their presence known in countless barnstorming and business ventures for years to come. As historian and author of the first volume of *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Syd Wise, wrote, “It is hardly too much to say that RFC/RAF Canada was the single most powerful influence in bringing the air age to Canada.”<sup>16</sup>

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Major Bill March, a maritime air combat systems officer, has spent over 39 years in uniform. He is currently a member of the Air Reserve, serving as the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Historian within the Directorate of RCAF History and Heritage.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>BCATP</b>	British Commonwealth Air Training Plan
<b>CAL</b>	Canadian Aeroplanes Limited
<b>CEF</b>	Canadian Expeditionary Force
<b>IMB</b>	Imperial Munitions Board
<b>RAF</b>	Royal Air Force
<b>RAFC</b>	Royal Air Force in Canada
<b>RCAF</b>	Royal Canadian Air Force
<b>RFC</b>	Royal Flying Corps
<b>RFCC</b>	Royal Flying Corps in Canada
<b>US</b>	United States

## NOTES

1. In November 1916, approval had been obtained to expand the RFC in the field to 56 squadrons. Two months later, in January 1917, the demand for extra squadrons had grown to 106 front-line squadrons and 97 reserve, or training, squadrons. It was a massive increase in personnel and equipment. H. A. Jones, *The War in the Air: Being the Story of the Part Played in the Great War by the Royal Air Force*, vol. 5 (Uckfield, United Kingdom: Naval & Military Press, reprint of the 1935 original), 424.

2. S. F. Wise, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War*, vol. 1, *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 75.

3. Jones, *War in the Air*, 458–61; and Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 69–75.

4. For an excellent look at Hoare, see C. W. Hunt, *Dancing in the Sky: The Royal Flying Corps in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009), 35–49.

5. Ibid., 289–90; and Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 117.

6. For a brief overview of CAL, see Alan Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada, 1917–1918* (Toronto: Rous and Mann, 1919), 44–56. Although published in 1919, this book is still the single most comprehensive overview of the RFCC/RAFC.

7. K. M. Molson and H. A. Taylor, *Canadian Aircraft since 1909* (London: Putnum, 1982), 227.

8. Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 114.

9. Ibid., 88–93; and Hunt, *Dancing in the Sky*, 182–207. Eventually, Hoare would be too successful in his efforts to recruit Americans and would be “shut down” by the US Department of State.

10. Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 85–86.

11. Hunt, *Dancing in the Sky*, 61–64.

12. Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, Note, 114.

13. For a list of these fatalities, see Hunt, *Dancing in the Sky*, 312–18.

14. Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 113.

15. Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 44–56.

16. Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 120.

## A CANADIAN TIMELINE

BY MAJOR BILL MARCH, CD, MA

### 1909

#### 23 February

J. A. D. McCurdy pilots the *Silver Dart* biplane, one-half mile [804 metres] over ice-covered Baddeck Bay, Nova Scotia. This is the first airplane flight in Canada.

*Baddeck No. 1 undergoing military trials at Camp Borden, August 1909. Photo: LAC*



*A replica of the Silver Dart at Mountainview, Ontario. Photo: DND*

#### June-August

McCurdy and F. W. Baldwin demonstrate the military potential of the *Silver Dart* and *Baddeck No. 1* to senior officers and members of the Militia Council at Camp Petawawa, Ontario. Cabinet refuses to authorize expenditures on aviation.

### 1914

#### 4 August

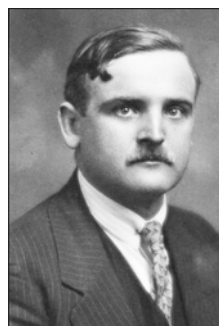
Britain declares war on Germany; the Dominion of Canada is automatically in a state of war.



*Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Ottawa, August 1914, on its way to Valcartier, Quebec. Photo: LAC*

#### 16 September

Hughes authorizes the formation of the Canadian Aviation Corps (CAC), consisting of provisional commander Captain E. L. Janney, Lieutenant W. F. N. Sharpe and Staff Sergeant Harry A. Farr as mechanic. Neither of the officers was qualified to fly; although, Sharpe had taken lessons. The CAC was equipped with a Burgess-Dunne floatplane purchased from the United States.



*E. L. Janney in civilian attire. Photo: DND*

#### 25 August

In response to a query from the Minister of Militia and Defence, Colonel Sam Hughes, the British reply that up to six expert aviators could be taken into the Imperial Flying Services at once and perhaps more later. None exist in Canada at that time.



*General Sir Sam Hughes, Canadian Minister of Militia and Defence. Photo: LAC*

#### 30 September

The CAC sails with the First Contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) to England. Neglected, and its Burgess-Dunne aircraft slowly rotting away, the CAC ceased to exist by May 1915.

1915

**4 February**

Lieutenant W. F. N. Sharpe is killed at Shoreham, England, while flying a Maurice Farman biplane. He attempted a sharp, climbing left-hand turn and stalled the aircraft at a height of approximately 1000 feet [305 metres], and the aircraft nosedived into the earth. Sharpe is the first Canadian aviator killed in the First World War.



*Maurice Farman Longhorn training aircraft. Photo: DND*

**7 February**

The British War Office asks the Canadian government's permission to actively recruit candidates for the Royal Flying Corps (RFC).



*A group of RFC airmen in England undergoing further training. Photo: DND*

**April**

The British Admiralty follows suit and requests permission from the Canadian Department of Naval Service to enlist applicants in the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). Candidates for both the RFC and RNAS are required to secure pilot's certificates at their own expense.

**10 May**

Managed by J. A. D. McCurdy, Curtiss Aeroplanes and Motors Limited opens an aviation school at Toronto Island and Long Branch, Ontario.



*A group of RNAS flight cadets undergoing training in England. Photo: DND*



*Instructor and students,  
Toronto Harbour, 1915.  
Photo: DND*

## 1916

### 15 December

Canadian Aeroplanes Limited (CAL) is incorporated and takes over the former Curtiss Aeroplanes and Motors Company building on Strachan Avenue, Toronto.



*RFC Roundel*

### 21 December

Numerous discussions occur between the War Office, Imperial Munitions Board and the Canadian government concerning the establishment of a military flight training organization in Canada that will be supported by an aircraft manufacturing capability.

### 23 December

The Canadian High Commissioner is officially notified that an Imperial Flying Services training organization will be set up in the New Year.



*RFC Badge*

## 1917

### 1 January

At an Air Board meeting in London, it is decided to send out an advance party, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Cuthbert G. Hoare, as soon as possible. They would be followed periodically by small teams of specialists to form the nuclei of the anticipated 20 training squadrons and supporting units.

The prototype JN-4 Canuck, a modified Curtiss JN-3, is completed at CAL. It will be the primary training aircraft of the Royal Flying Corps in Canada (RFCC).

### 19 January

Hoare and the advance party arrive at Saint John, New Brunswick.



*The first JN-4 Canuck built by CAL, January 1917. Photo: LAC*



*Portrait of Brigadier-General C. G. Hoare, 1918. Photo: DND*

1917

**23 January**

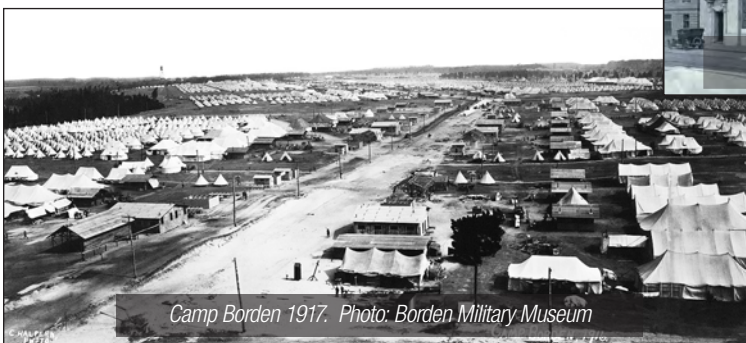
After a meeting with Hoare in Ottawa, Sir Willoughby Gwatkin, the Chief of the Canadian General Staff, orders commanders of military districts to render all assistance possible to the RFCC.

**25 January**

Headquarters space at the Imperial Oil Building, 56 Church Street, Toronto, is occupied. The RFCC is established.



Headquarters RFCC.



Camp Borden 1917. Photo: Borden Military Museum

**26 January**

After a brief visit to the snow-covered fields, Hoare selects space within the militia training area at Camp Borden, Ontario, as the site of the first major RFCC aerodrome.

A contract is signed to construct new plant facilities for CAL.

**27 January**

Contract let to commence construction of the aerodrome at Camp Borden. Gangs of labourers, such as these, started as soon as weather permitted.

By the end of January, arrangements had been made for the RFCC to take possession of the buildings and small landing field operated by the Curtiss Aviation School at Long Branch, Ontario.



Construction gang at work. Photo: Borden Military Museum

1917



*Cadet Course No. 9a, August 1917. Photo: LAC*

## 5 February

A recruit depot is opened at the Givens Street School, Toronto. Its location would change periodically, due to the large numbers of cadets passing through its doors. The depot provided accommodation, conducted testing and medical examinations, issued kit and provided basic military training. Approximately 16,000 recruits passed through the depot during its existence.

## Mid- February

Hoare, concerned that training capacity will outstrip student supply, gains approval for the RFCC to undertake advanced, as well as basic, flight training.

Two RFC officers travel to British Columbia to look for suitable fields for summer training. Although properties are leased at Stevenson on Lulu Island and Ladner on the south arm of the Fraser River and construction started, the project halts due to the training agreement with the United States (US).

## 24 February

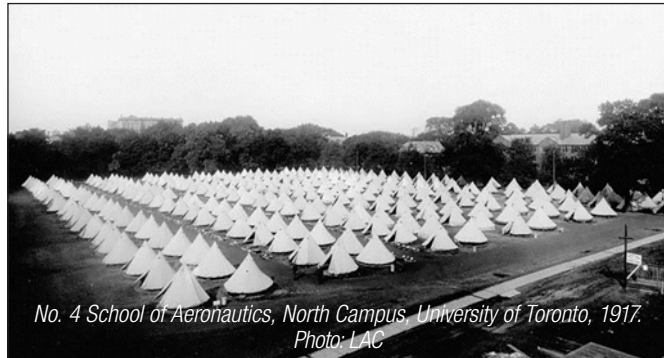
Over a quiet Saturday lunch, Hoare announces to his staff, "We have two machines at Long Branch. We have enlisted some cadets and airmen. Why the hell are we not flying? I want flying training started by Monday!"

## 27 February

The Cadet Wing is established. Operating primarily out of University of Toronto facilities, the wing will provide basic training and introduce cadets to subjects such as artillery observation, aircraft rigging and aero-engines.

## 2 March

RFCC officially takes over the aerodrome at Camp Borden.



*No. 4 School of Aeronautics, North Campus, University of Toronto, 1917. Photo: LAC*

## 28 February

"X" Squadron begins flight training at Long Branch using a JN-4 aircraft.

## 16 March

No. 79 Canadian Training Squadron (CTS) formed at Camp Borden.



*79 Squadron JN-4 in flight over Southern Ontario. Photo: DND*

1917

**28 March**

First cadets arrive at Borden.

**30 March**

Flight training begins at Camp Borden.

**8 April**

RFCC has its first fatality when Cadet J. C. Talbot is killed in a flying accident at Borden.

**10 April**

Nos. 78, 79, 80, 81 and 82 Squadrons are now operating at Borden, albeit at considerably less than full strength. Nos. 78 and 82 Squadrons would specialize in wireless and artillery observation, while Nos. 79 and 81 Squadrons would deal with aerial photography and cross-country flying. No. 80 Squadron would be designated as an aerial gunnery squadron.



*Cadet J. C. Talbot, from  
Dorchester, Ontario.  
Photo: Borden Military Museum*

**1 May**

With the assistance of the Aero Club of Canada, a volunteer civilian organization, a major recruiting effort commences throughout the Dominion.

School of Aerial Gunnery established at Camp Borden with No. 80 Squadron as its flying unit.



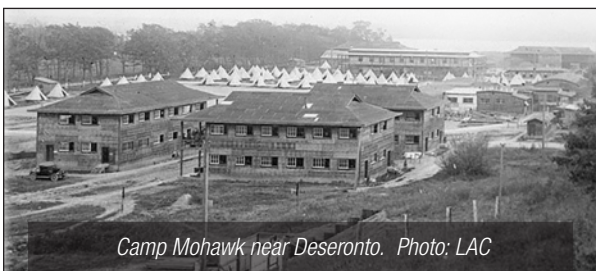
*RFCC Recruiting Poster.  
Photo: DND*



*82 CTS Borden, May 1917. Photo: Borden Military Museum*

**20 April**

Construction begins on two airfields at Deseronto, Ontario. They would be known as Camp Rathburn and Camp Mohawk.



*Camp Mohawk near Deseronto. Photo: LAC*



*Aerial target, School of Aerial Gunnery,  
Borden, 1917. Photo: DND*

1917

## 2 May

The RFCC formally takes over its new aerodrome at Camp Borden.

## Mid-May

“X” and No. 86 Squadrons are operating from Camp Rathburn, and Nos. 83, 84 and 87 Squadrons are operating from Camp Mohawk.

## 31 May

Construction begins on the 222 acre [90 hectare] aerodrome at Leaside, Ontario, just north of Toronto. By the end of hostilities, in addition to the hangars, there was accommodation for 89 officers, 230 cadets, 83 warrant officers and sergeants as well as 600 rank and file.



*Aircraft and hangars, Camp Borden, 1917. Photo: LAC*



*Aircraft and hangars, Camp Mohawk. Photo: LAC*



*Camp Leaside from the air. Photo: LAC*



*Staff and students on parade, Armament School, 1918. Photo: LAC*

## 16 June

First 16 graduate trainees are sent to England and commissioned as second lieutenants. By August, a total of 167 pilots had graduated, of which 50 were retained in Canada to instruct. Those who survived further training in England would eventually make their way to front-line units such as No. 45 Squadron on the Italian Front.

## 20 June

Although providing training since May 1917, the Armament School moves to permanent quarters in a former factory belonging to Canadian Westinghouse Limited, in Hamilton, Ontario. Training was provided on machine guns, ammunition, gunnery, synchronizing gear, bombs, bomb sights and bombing.



*Sopwith Camels belonging to No. 45 Squadron. Photo: DND*

1917

22 June

A training agreement is signed between the RFCC and the US Signal Corps, whereby 10 American squadrons will be training in Canada over the summer and fall in return for the use of fields in Texas for instruction over the winter.

June

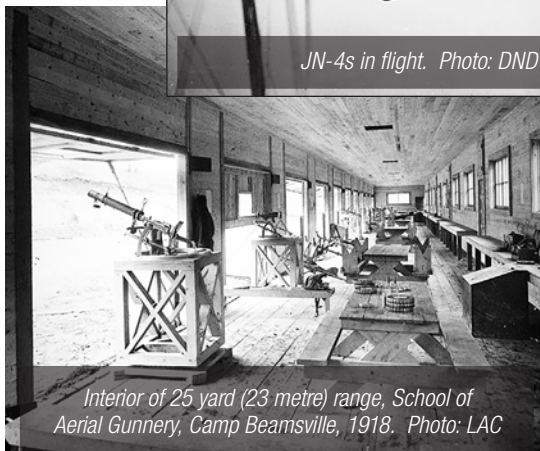
Construction begins on the aerodrome at Beamsville, Ontario, where the School of Aerial Gunnery will be located upon the return of the wing from Texas. Along with the hangars, a number of firing ranges (from 25 to 200 yards [23–183 metres]) were built, and arrangements were made for the use of raft-borne targets on Lake Ontario. As well, an armoured boat served as a moving target for students. By the end of the war, 122 officers, 400 cadets, 96 warrant officers and sergeants as well as 768 rank and file were housed here.

End-July

CAL has produced a total of 150 JN-4s for the RFCC.



*JN-4s in flight. Photo: DND*



*Interior of 25 yard (23 metre) range, School of Aerial Gunnery, Camp Beamsville, 1918. Photo: LAC*

1 July

Housed at the University of Toronto, No. 4 School of Military Aeronautics is formed. Over a four-week period, cadets were instructed on engines, rigging, wireless, artillery observation, machine guns, instruments and bombs. The Cadet Wing moves to Long Branch under canvas.

9 July

The first of an eventual 1,400 personnel from the US Signal Corps and United States Navy arrive in Canada.



*Classroom instruction, No. 4 School of Aeronautics, University of Toronto. Photo: LAC*



*US Army and Navy cadets, Toronto, July 1917. Photo: LAC*

1917

## 24 September

An advance party consisting of 4 US officers and 50 personnel, plus 4 RFCC officers and 34 men depart for Texas. They will form the nucleus of a wing headquarters.

## 26 September

The advance party arrives at Fort Worth, Texas, and finds that they have been assigned three flying fields located to the north (Hicks), south (Benbrook) and west (Everman) of the city. To the US Signal Corps, they will be known collectively as Camp Taliaferro, Fields 1, 2 and 3.



Headline, Fort Worth newspaper, 1917.

## 15 November

The staff and students from 42 Wing (Borden) and 43 Wing (Deseronto) depart for Texas on-board six special trains. 44 Wing will remain in North Toronto to experiment with winter flying.

## 12 October

American cadets in Canada leave for Texas to complete their training.

## 2 November

The School of Aerial Gunnery departs Borden and arrives in Texas on 4 November. The first student is airborne the following day.



Experimenting with landing skis, Toronto, 1918. Photo: DND



RFC personnel en route to Texas, 1917. Photo: DND

## 17 November

The RFCC wings arrive, and 42 Wing is assigned to Everman Field, 43 Wing is at Benbrook Field, and the School of Aerial Gunnery shares Hicks Field with US Air Service squadrons.



Aircraft belonging to No. 81 Squadron coming to grief in Texas. Photo: DND

1918

## 6 February

Pressure from the US State Department halts “official” recruiting of American citizens for the RFC.

## Spring

The transfer of large numbers of men to the CEF resulted in a labour shortage and the active recruiting of women to serve as “civilian subordinates.” Initially employed primarily as clerks, by the end of the war, women would serve in a variety of occupations, ranging from drivers to engine mechanics. It is estimated that 1196 were employed at various locations throughout the training organization.

## 27 March

Second Lieutenant Alan McLeod, an RFCC graduate, and his observer, Second Lieutenant Arthur Hammond, are involved in an action in France for which McLeod will be awarded the Victoria Cross and Hammond his second Military Cross.



2Lt Alan McLeod, VC. Photo: DND



Aero-engine repair section, Camp Mohawk.  
Photo: LAC

## 1 April

The School of Special Flying is established at Armour Heights to focus on training instructors.

The RNAS and RFC amalgamate to form the Royal Air Force (RAF). Henceforth, the training organization in Canada is known as the Royal Air Force in Canada (RAFC).



Royal Air Force Badge



Aircraft coming in to land,  
Armour Heights. Photo: LAC

## Mid-April

RAFC squadrons return from Texas. However, they leave behind a number of comrades at a cemetery in Fort Worth.



Commonwealth War Graves site, Fort Worth,  
Texas. Photo: DND

## 1918

### May

Armament School opens in Hamilton and provides elementary weapons instruction after pupils had already learned to fly.

### 29 May

The Secretary of State for the RAF agrees to the formation of “Canadian” squadrons within the RAF.

### June

The School of Aerial Gunnery in Borden commences instruction for observers.

### 24 June

RAFC instructor Captain B. A. Peck pilots a JN-4 (Canada) from Montreal to Toronto and carries 124 letters: the first official airmail flight in Canada.



Captain B. A. Peck. Photo: DND

### July

The School of Aerial Gunnery changes its name to School of Aerial Fighting and places an increased emphasis on combat tactics.



Nos. 1 and 2 Squadrons, CAF, 1919. Photo: LAC

### 22 August

A Canadian Air Force (CAF) detachment forms at the School of Technical Training, Halton, United Kingdom, to train Canadian mechanics for the two proposed “Canadian” squadrons in the RAF.



Commanding Officer, Adjutant and men of No. 1 Fighter Squadron, CAF, 1919. Photo: LAC

### 5 September

The Royal Canadian Naval Air Service (RCNAS) is formed and authorized to operate two patrol stations in Nova Scotia.



RCNAS cadets undergoing training in the US.

### 11 November

The Armistice ends the First World War. Virtually overnight, operations of the RAFC cease. During its existence, 16,663 cadets, mechanics and support personnel had been recruited; 3,135 pilots graduated (2,539 had gone overseas) along with 137 observers (85 sent overseas). During the conflict, some 20,000 Canadians served in the Imperial Flying Services. Approximately 1,500 lost their lives.

Major Bill March, a maritime air combat systems officer, has spent over 39 years in uniform. He is currently a member of the Air Reserve, serving as the RCAF Historian within the Directorate of RCAF History and Heritage.

### Abbreviations

<b>CAC</b>	Canadian Aviation Corps
<b>CAF</b>	Canadian Air Force
<b>CAL</b>	Canadian Aeroplanes Limited
<b>CEF</b>	Canadian Expeditionary Force
<b>CTS</b>	Canadian Training Squadron
<b>RAF</b>	Royal Air Force
<b>RAFC</b>	Royal Air Force in Canada
<b>RCNAS</b>	Royal Canadian Naval Air Service
<b>RFC</b>	Royal Flying Corps
<b>RFCC</b>	Royal Flying Corps in Canada
<b>RNAS</b>	Royal Naval Air Service
<b>US</b>	United States

### Notes

1. S. F. Wise, *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, vol. 1, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 80, accessed January 31, 2017, <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/pub/boo-bro/can-ww1/index-eng.asp>.

2. For more information on Second Lieutenant Alan McLeod, see Chief Warrant Officer J. W. (Bill) Dalke, "Valour Remembered: The Story of Alan Arnett McLeod, VC," *The Canadian Air Force Journal* 3, no. 4 (Fall 2010), accessed January 31, 2017, [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2010/forces/D12-13-3-4-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/forces/D12-13-3-4-eng.pdf).

# BEAMSVILLE STORY

The Story of Aerial Fighting,  
Beamsville, Ontario

— By Hugh Halliday —



Editor's note: Reprint from *Canadian Aviation Historical Society Journal* Fall 1969. The author's spelling and punctuation conventions have been maintained.

One mile [1.6 kilometres] east of the village of Beamsville, just off Highway 8 which runs from Hamilton to Niagara Falls, an old hangar squats amid the orchards. Today it houses road maintenance equipment belonging to Lincoln County. It is the last physical trace of the School of Aerial Fighting which, in 1918, turned a sleepy corner of the Niagara Peninsula into a buzzing, pulsating centre.

The school was originally formed at Camp Borden as the School of Aerial Gunnery. That was in May 1917, when the Royal Flying Corps [RFC] was developing an ambitious training scheme in Canada in co-operation with the Imperial Munitions Board. As the program expanded and spilled over to other stations around Toronto, it became apparent that the Camp Borden site was overcrowded. Some new location for the School of Aerial Gunnery was needed. The problem was solved temporarily during the winter of 1917–18 when most of the training organization moved to Texas, but as the number of graduates increased the need for a new location became urgent. The staff of the RFC began looking about for such a site and in mid-October Brigadier-General C. G. Hoare, the RFC commander in Canada, visited Beamsville to examine the possibility of establishing the school there. The local paper, the Beamsville EXPRESS, caught a whiff of these activities and promptly ran a short item under the headline “Beamsville to Have an Aerodrome – All Depends on Landowners”. The story mentioned Hoare’s visit and concluded by saying: “One can easily imagine what this would mean to our community in more ways than one, and it is hoped that the property owners concerned will be reasonable in their demands”.<sup>1</sup>

The canny, business-like folk were not disappointed. Hoare selected the Beamsville site for the School of Aerial Gunnery and the RFC immediately obtained options on 347 acres [140 hectares] of land. In the 24 October 1917 edition of the EXPRESS the Imperial Munitions Board advertised for “teams with harrows, discs, or plows ... for surface work on new aerodrome”. While RFC headquarters staff moved into the Gibson estate (now Great Lakes Christian College) construction began, the first sod being turned on 25 October and blasting commencing a week later. In November some 300 carpenters arrived to raise the hangars and offices which would constitute the school itself.<sup>2</sup>

The main field just off Highway 8 comprised 282 acres [114 hectares]. Here the hangars, nine initially, later increased to 12, were erected, each 110 by 66 feet [33.5 by 20 metres]. In addition a garage, quartermaster’s stores, blacksmith shop, coal and wood storage building, ice house, gunnery office, photo building, guard house, latrines, offices, and fuel and oil storage depots were built. At the same time the Grand Trunk Railway ran a spur line from the village to the camp. A ravine near the base was turned into a gunnery range. The main range, however, was on Lake Ontario, two miles [3.2 kilometres] to the north, where the students would practice aerial gunnery and bomb dropping over the lake. The initial establishment called for about 60 officers, 200 NCOs, 500 mechanics and 300 cadets. The EXPRESS, while describing these events, was still very much alive to the commercial impact of the base and wrote that:

There is an excellent opportunity for a good hotel, if some energetic man who has had hotel experience would take hold of it. Two applications, we are informed, have been made for moving picture licences, and one application for a pool room. In addition to the many workmen engaged and the men in training, many visitors will be brought to this district and bright days should be in store for this village.<sup>3</sup>



Roadmaking in Beamsville, 3 April 1918.



Tents, 3 April 1918.

The work proceeded rapidly and, by the third week in January 1918, the number of carpenters was reduced to about half the previous total. At the same time the local papers began running detailed articles about RFC training, obviously preparing the populace for what they might see. As no barracks or officers' quarters had been built, a request went out for accommodation in private homes for officers.<sup>4</sup> The cadets, NCOs, and other ranks were to be housed in tents at least until the early fall.

At last the RFC began to occupy the base. In the second week of March 1918 a Captain Reynell arrived with a section of transport and a company of 50 men of the quartermaster's department.<sup>5</sup> Late in the month the camp equipment (tents, etc.) was delivered and a trickle of officers and men flowed in. Some 20 cadets arrived on 30 March and the same day the first flights took place. The first JN-4 circled Beamsville and broadcast to the community that the operation was under way, but a second flight ended ignominiously when engine failure forced the plane to land in an orchard.<sup>6</sup> The fruit trees in the area were to take a dreadful beating that year!

The main body of the School of Aerial Gunnery arrived on 8 April when a special train brought hundreds of cadets, officers, and men. The RFC was now returning its two exiled wings from Texas and all the regular Canadian bases were again operating at peak strength. Beamsville's base had, by mid-April, three squadrons with an establishment of 54 aircraft and an expanding population of close to 1000, the whole being commanded by Major F. M. Ballard, a British officer who had been flying since 1911.<sup>7</sup>

The school was the last stage in training for an RFC cadet prior to being commissioned and going overseas. The trainee was given instruction on both the Vickers and Lewis guns, firing at a variety of moving and disappearing targets at ranges of from 25 to 200 yards [23 to 183 metres]. Once that was done the cadet took to the air. Six square miles [15.5 square kilometres] of Lake Ontario had been marked off with buoys and there the cadets straffed [sic] silhouette targets, a dummy submarine, and even a fast, armoured launch. The water spurts enabled the trainee to correct his fire. Along with this the cadets were trained in aerial tactics, doing vertical banks, rolls, Immelmann turns, and dogfighting with camera guns. Even the possibility of gun stoppages was covered in the curriculum.<sup>8</sup>

The first cadets graduated on 10 April, and that month a total of 243 trainees completed the course.<sup>9</sup> The town which had been so anxious to greet the airmen, however, was initially denied the opportunity, for during the period of 2–16 April the base was quarantined due to an outbreak of measles!<sup>10</sup>

The aircraft soon had the whole peninsula agog. On 20 April a JN-4 buzzed Smithville at 7 o'clock in the morning.<sup>11</sup> The same day an unidentified pilot performed an amazing feat which was described in detail by the EXPRESS:

Some eight months ago an aviator was visiting friends in St. Catharines before leaving for Texas. He was in Marshall's jewellery store and happened to speak about coming back to Beamsville aviation camp in the Spring. Mr. Shonbeck, a clerk, casually remarked "when passing over drop off a wrench to show how you are on location". The aviator went out into the back alley, sized up the buildings, and said, "I'm on". Saturday noon when the planes were circling over the city a wrench was neatly landed in the alley in the rear of Marshall's store, demonstrating that the aviator has a good memory of location and accuracy at dropping.<sup>12</sup>

Not all was going smoothly, however. Late in April the remaining carpenters on the site walked off the job, demanding the same pay as that given their counterparts in Toronto—a princely 60 cents per day.<sup>13</sup>

Flying inevitably entailed accidents. The first day of operations had involved a forced landing and more were to follow. One JN-4 came down in a vineyard on 15 April<sup>14</sup> and two days later the first fatality occurred when Cadet Edward B. Donynge and a Lieutenant Grant crashed. The latter survived but Donynge, an American from New Jersey, died instantly. He had been due to leave for overseas within a week.<sup>15</sup> Two more crashes occurred on 29 April, one when a "Jenny" turned over on landing, fortunately without injuring anyone, and the second when the aircraft knifed through telephone wires and hit some fence posts. This time the cadet in the front seat suffered severe head and facial injuries.<sup>16</sup>

On 2 May 1918 the school experienced the worst crash in its history. One JN-4 had taken off and another was approaching the field to land just as the sun was rising. At least one crew was apparently blinded by the sun and the two machines collided in mid-air. One instructor was shaken up; the other, a Lieutenant Burne, suffered a fractured hip. The two trainees in the front seats took the full force of the impact; Cadets R. W. R. Litchfield, of Victoria, and James T. Eunson, from the Orkneys, were killed outright.<sup>17</sup>

This was not the end of the misfortunes for the school. On 17 May 1918, the fourth fatality occurred when a JN-4 piloted by Second Lieutenant W. Ewart Clemens, of Kitchener, went into a spin at 400 feet [122 metres] altitude and crashed on a farm two miles [3.2 kilometres] south of the camp. Clemens died in the wreckage but a cadet in the back seat escaped unharmed.<sup>18</sup> On 3 June still another crash took the life of Cadet R. C. Hamer of Hillcrest, Wales.<sup>19</sup>

With this accident the run of fatal crashes ended for a time and the next tragedy was not to occur for six weeks. There were numerous other minor "prangs", however, and each one attracted crowds of farmers, townspeople, and children. Indeed, the school was proving to be a major tourist attraction, and on Sunday afternoons the roads were often choked by automobiles and buggys as people flocked to see the airmen practising over the lake or on the gun ranges.

The instructors and students had their share of thrills. The steel arch bridges over the Niagara River presented a particular challenge. In June 1911 the American pioneer, Lincoln Beachy, had flown over the Falls and under one of the bridges, thereby earning a measure of fame and a prize of \$1,000. The Beamsville fliers were willing to duplicate the feat for nothing. The first of these



Civilians mill around an upside down biplane.

Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Public Library

daredevils dived under the upper steel arch bridge on 10 May 1918, almost hitting the water as he did so.<sup>20</sup> Another pilot repeated the stunt on 18 June, this time capping the performance with a loop over the bridge.<sup>21</sup> On 16 July two “Jenny” biplanes, one of them named “Winnipeg”, flew under two of the Niagara bridges. Unlike their predecessors they entered the great gorge near the whirlpool and flew towards the falls, a much more hazardous way of doing things.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile the normal work of the school went on. In May 1918 the course was modified to accommodate the latest RAF [Royal Air Force] instructional techniques. The most elementary forms of gunnery instruction was [sic] transferred to the Armament School, newly founded in nearby Hamilton, leaving the Beamsville establishment free to concentrate on deflection shooting and aerial work. In June a fourth squadron was added to the school to train observers. All the while construction was going on, for although the bulk of the men were [sic] still in tents, permanent winter quarters were being built.<sup>23</sup>

Occasionally a ceremonial visit interrupted the routine. On 1 June 1918 a party which included the Duke of Devonshire (the Governor-General), General Hoare (RAF Commander in Canada) and Sir William Hearst (Premier of Ontario) inspected the camp. While they were there 11 aircraft, all of which had been donated to the RAF by various groups and individuals, flew from Leaside to Beamsville.<sup>24</sup>

At other times the camp supplied entertainment for the region. The RAF band was a popular attraction, and on 24 May the school provided three aircraft for stunting over the Beamsville Fair Grounds as part of Victoria Day celebrations.<sup>25</sup> Some stunting was quite unauthorized, as when four aircraft put on such a wild exhibition over Stamford (now part of Niagara Falls) that one woman threw her apron over her eyes certain that she was about to witness a catastrophe.<sup>26</sup>



Members of the RAF band sitting with their instruments. Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Public Library

Plane number C202 has crashed into the roof of a hangar. A unit of airmen march past.

Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Public Library



Some spectacular crashes did occur without anyone being hurt. On 5 June a JN-4 went out of control and crashed in Lake Ontario about midway between St. Catharines and Beamsville. The water was only four feet [1.5 metres] deep and the plane stuck firmly, nose down, in the mud. The pilot climbed onto the upper wing and some campers quickly arrived and rescued him. Another JN-4 landed in a tomato patch nearby, but by the time the pilot had reached the scene of the original crash his friend was in good hands.<sup>27</sup> It was a much nearer thing on 13 July when a lieutenant and a cadet narrowly escaped drowning. On that occasion their “Jenny” crashed and sank in the lake and the patrol boat had unspecified difficulties in picking them up.<sup>28</sup>

Major Ballard, the camp commander, himself experienced a crash on 19 June 1918. He had flown to Detroit earlier and was on his way back to base when he found gas running low. Near Talbotville he circled to attract attention, and when a small crowd had gathered he dropped a note explaining his problem and asking that a fence be taken down to open up a landing field. This done, he alighted, secured some gas, and began taxiing for take-off. At that moment an elderly farmer walked directly into the path of the “Jenny”. At 5 miles per hour [8 kilometres per hour] Ballard swerved into two fences. The aircraft was wrecked but neither Ballard or the farmer were [sic] injured.<sup>29</sup>

The school graduated 182 students in June and 262 in July. In the latter month the name was changed to the School of Aerial Fighting, a name which reflected the greater stress now laid upon actual flying rather than machine gun practice at the butts.<sup>30</sup> Other changes were afoot. On 1 August 1918 General Hoare announced while visiting the camp that Avro 504s would soon be replacing the “Jenny” trainers. This did not happen due to the rapid conclusion of the war, but at least one of the two Canadian-built Avro 504s did find its way to Beamsville before the Armistice.<sup>31</sup>

Flying still took its toll. On the evening of 17 July Lieutenant Stanley Hill Glendinning, a veteran of the Western Front, crashed and his aircraft caught fire. Glendinning a native of Sunderland, Ontario, died two days later.<sup>32</sup> On 27 July Cadet Talbot C. Dunbar, of Haileybury, went into a spin and crashed one mile [1.6 kilometres] south of the camp. He, too, was killed, the seventh fatality since the School of Aerial Fighting had opened at Beamsville.<sup>33</sup>

New faces kept appearing among the camp personnel as cadets came and went and new staff members replaced old ones. Many of them were experienced “vets” from France. At least one, Captain Reginald G. Malcolm, was a local boy. He had been a clerk in nearby Grimsby before enlisting and on the Western Front he had destroyed four enemy aircraft and won the Military Cross [MC]. Now he was home, looking at the peninsula from the cockpit of a “Jenny”.<sup>34</sup>



Base Commander Captain Earl Godfrey stands in front of a biplane with Lieutenant George Trimm.

Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Public Library

Probably no man on the base had as much combat experience as Captain Albert E. Godfrey, MC, a former Nieuport pilot with No. 40 Squadron, who had a dozen enemy aircraft and two balloons to his credit. During August Godfrey achieved a “first” for the Niagara peninsula by flying Captain J. R. Reilly to Welland, the first time that an aircraft had visited that city. Because the Fair Grounds were studded with poles Godfrey opted to land in a field of buckwheat.

Distinguished visitors again arrived on 13 August when His Royal Highness Field Marshall the Prince Arthur of Connaught, a former Governor-General of Canada, arrived to inspect the camp, then left for Toronto by speedboat.<sup>35</sup> The cadets were presumably impressed, but they probably enjoyed 17 August much more. On that day a sports day was held in Toronto with all the training bases being represented. Practically the whole of Beamsville camp attended and a Beamsville O.R. [other rank], Private E. J. Thompson, carried off the honours as the most outstanding single athlete, capturing the Individual Challenge Cup and the Wing Challenge Cup.<sup>36</sup> The School of Aerial Fighting was less successful in football. In a short season which was curtailed by the influenza epidemic, the camp’s team failed to win a game.<sup>37</sup>

A new figure arrived in mid-August. Major Ballard was being posted overseas and the new commander was Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Huskinson, MC. Huskinson was young, energetic, and brilliant. His name might well have faded into the long list of able, courageous officers but for an ironic twist of fate which befell him in 1941. At that time he was an Air Commodore in Britain involved in the design of British bombs. He himself was blinded by a German bomb but he refused to admit defeat and was soon back at his desk, working to avenge himself. His dramatic story is told in the book *VISION AHEAD*.<sup>38</sup>

Huskinson arrived at a time when crashes were on the upswing again. On 16 August an instructor and cadet were injured when they hit some wires while stunting.<sup>39</sup> A few days later Lieutenant James T. Mogan plunged 2,000 feet [610 metres] out of control and crashed. By some miracle he escaped with only minor injuries.<sup>40</sup> Then, on 22 August, Cadet Norman S. Frizell of Toronto was killed. Frizell was out over the lake firing at targets when he either misjudged his height or lost control changing an ammunition drum. He hit the water and the JN-4 broke up. Another pilot ditched in the lake in an effort to render assistance and was himself injured. Nothing could help Frizell, however, for his skull had been fractured in the crash.<sup>41</sup>

Tragedy struck again on 11 September, this time with another mid-air collision three miles [4.8 kilometres] west of the base. Second Lieutenant Robert L. Jacks, of Los Angeles, and Cadet H. W. Bousfield, of McGregor, Manitoba, were in the same airplane and both were killed. The lone cadet in the other machine was injured.<sup>42</sup> The melancholy list grew longer when, on 23 September 1918,

Cadet A. M. Fromm, of Regina, crashed into Lake Ontario and was killed.<sup>43</sup> The next day Cadet Sylvester J. Nightingale, of Toronto, was drowned in almost identical circumstances—the 12<sup>th</sup> fatality at the camp.<sup>44</sup>

These casualties did not diminish the achievements of the School of Aerial Fighting. In August, 246 cadets graduated and in September the number rose to 270. In October 1918 the peak was reached with 281 students completing the course.<sup>45</sup>

Some of the students were indeed unusual. In October the Beamsville EXPRESS published an enigmatic item which read: “A number of Russian aviators of the former Russian Imperial army are at the camp taking the gunnery course. These officers escaped the Bolsheviki and came to Canada to join the RAF. The majority of them are skilled flyers.”<sup>46</sup>

The new winter quarters were now ready for occupancy and, on 5 October, the cadets, NCOs, and other ranks moved in. By now, however, influenza was sweeping through the area. Hamilton was declared off limits on the 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>47</sup> The camp hospital was filled to capacity and on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, mechanics S. S. Perry and M. R. Hunnan died, the first men to die of natural causes at the base.<sup>48</sup> One barrack block had to become a hospital and on 17 October an RAF band concert was cancelled on orders from the Board of Health.<sup>49</sup> The last days of Beamsville aviation camp were not to be happy ones.

Not all events were as grim as this. On 7 September six JN-4s flew over the village of Thorold. One was piloted by Lieutenant Leonard Battle, a native of the town, who took pictures of the place.<sup>50</sup> On 26 October another JN-4 circled Thorold and dropped a letter which some soldiers picked up. It was addressed to a Mrs. Church of that village and was from her son Max—a curious, informal air mail delivery.<sup>51</sup>

And action went on apace. Indoor machine gun galleries, fated never to be used, were being built so that cadets might practice when bad weather set in.<sup>52</sup> Early in November four American aircraft visited the camp.<sup>53</sup> Beamsville, it seemed, was ready to go on producing trained combat fliers as long as the war went on.

The Armistice on 11 November spelled the end of the School of Aerial Fighting. Flying was cancelled, then reinstated. On 22 November 1918, however, Cadet Harry Hortop crashed near St. Catharines, breaking both legs. The same day Lieutenant Thomas E. Logan, of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, crashed after his engine failed. He was instantly killed. The two accidents, coming as they did after the armistice, made further flying pointless and no more flights were authorized.<sup>54</sup>

Interior of 25 yd range shelter,  
SAG, 1918.

Photo: DND



The process of folding up the camp now began. Forty cadets were discharged on 29 November and more followed on 3 December. The ever-watchful EXPRESS wrote:

It goes without saying that the citizens of Beamsville will regret the departure of the boys. They will be missed both financially and socially. The mechanical forces will be missed the most, as the most of them have been here since the establishment of the camp, homes have been opened to them, and they have become part of the community.<sup>55</sup>

The camp itself was soon deserted and in February 1919 the offices in the Gibson estate were abandoned.<sup>56</sup> The last vestiges of activity came in the last two weeks of March when the JN-4s which had been stored there were flown to Toronto.<sup>57</sup>

But what was to happen to the camp itself? The EXPRESS suggested that the town secure the base as an industrial site, but did not specify what sort of industry might be attracted.<sup>58</sup> Someone else suggested that the camp hospital be maintained as a war memorial.<sup>59</sup> Nothing came of these ideas. The Imperial Munitions Board offered the town the whole sewage and water system which had been built up, but the town council considered the price (\$5,000) to be preposterous. The Council finally took a fire siren, a couple of sheds, and a few feet [approximately a metre] of hose.<sup>60</sup> The remainder of the base was dismantled and the orchards soon bloomed where once the “Jennies” had buzzed. The School of Aerial Gunnery vanished. Today only a few senior citizens of Beamsville recall the rattle of the machine guns and the crunch of breaking trees.

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## Abbreviations


<b>MC</b>	Military Cross
<b>RAF</b>	Royal Air Force
<b>RFC</b>	Royal Flying Corps

## Notes

1. Beamsville EXPRESS, October 17, 1917
2. Ibid., October 24 and 31, 1917
3. Ibid., November 14, 1917
4. Ibid., January 23, 1918
5. Ibid., March 13, 1918
6. Ibid., April 3, 1918
7. Ibid., April 10, 1918

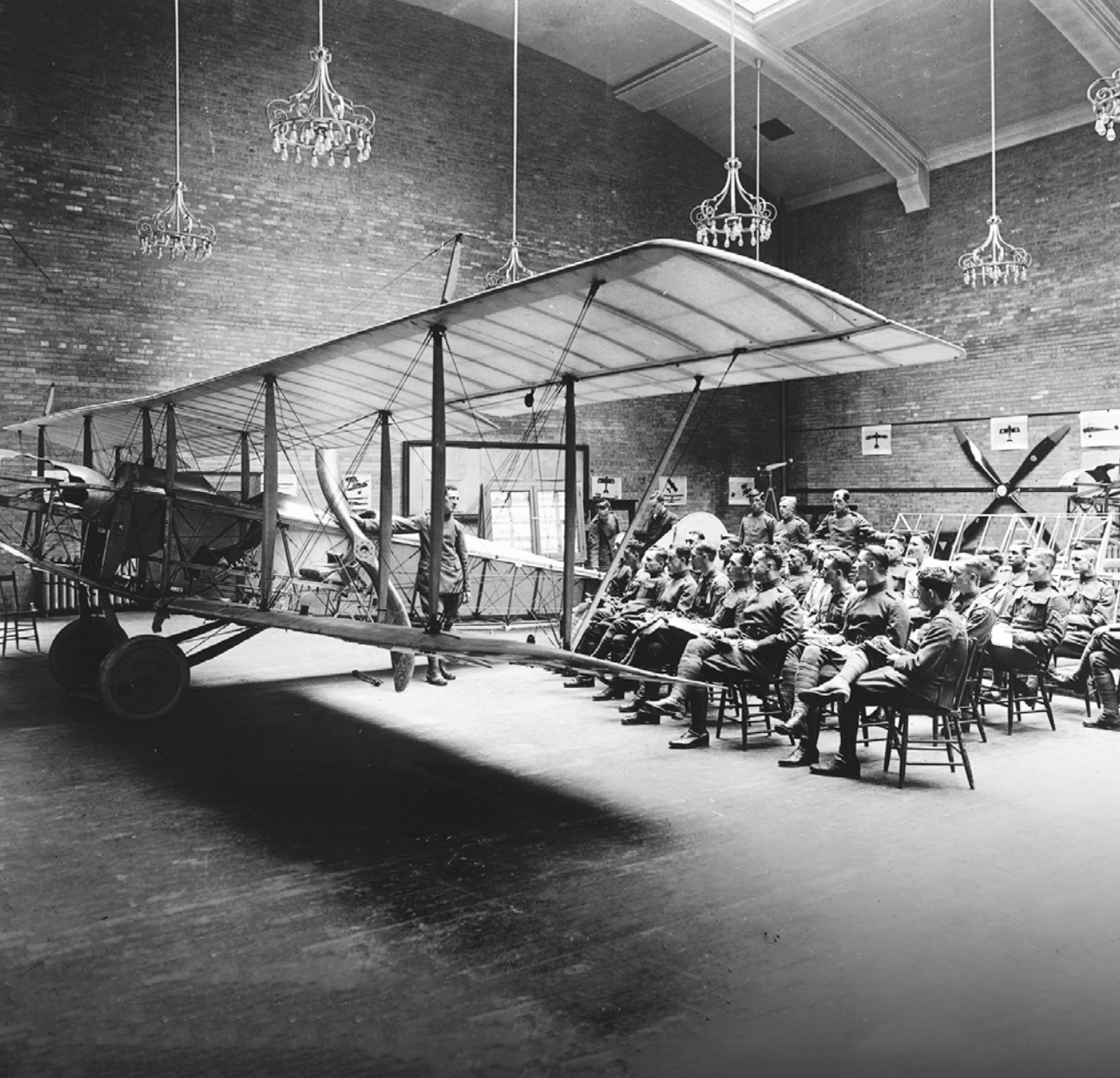
8. Alan Sullivan, AVIATION IN CANADA 1917–18
9. Ibid., see also Beamsville EXPRESS, April 10, 1918
10. Beamsville EXPRESS, April 3, 1918
11. THE PEOPLE’S PRESS (Welland), April 23, 1918
12. Beamsville EXPRESS, April 17, 1918
13. Ibid., May 1, 1918
14. Ibid., April 17, 1918
15. Ibid., see also THE PEOPLE’S PRESS, April 23, 1918 and St. Catharines STANDARD, April 18, 1918
16. Beamsville EXPRESS, May 1, 1918
17. Ibid., May 8, 1918
18. Ibid., May 22, 1918
19. Ibid., June 5, 1918
20. THE PEOPLE’S PRESS, May 14, 1918
21. Welland TRIBUNE, June 20, 1918
22. Beamsville EXPRESS, July 24, 1918. See also St. Catharines STANDARD, July 17, 1918
23. Sullivan, op. cit.
24. Beamsville EXPRESS, June 5, 1918
25. Ibid., May 29, 1918
26. Ibid., June 19, 1918. See also Welland TRIBUNE, June 20, 1918
27. St. Catharines STANDARD, June 6, 1918
28. Beamsville EXPRESS, July 17, 1918
29. Ibid., June 26, 1918
30. Sullivan, op. cit.
31. Beamsville EXPRESS, August 7, 1918
32. Ibid., July 24, 1918
33. Ibid., July 31, 1918
34. Ibid., August 7, 1918. See also RAF personnel cards, Directorate of History, Ottawa and RAF communiques.

35. Beamsville EXPRESS, August 14, 1918
36. Ibid., August 21, 1918
37. Ibid., September 25, 1918
38. Ibid., August 28, 1918 and P. Huskinson, VISION AHEAD
39. Beamsville EXPRESS, August 21, 1918
40. Ibid., August 28, 1918
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., September 18, 1918
43. Ibid., September 25, 1918
44. Ibid.
45. Sullivan, op. cit.
46. Beamsville EXPRESS, October 9, 1918
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., October 16, 1918
49. Ibid., October 23, 1918
50. Ibid., September 11, 1918
51. Ibid., October 30, 1918
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., November 6, 1918
54. Ibid., November 27, 1918
55. Ibid., December 4, 1918
56. Ibid., February 26, 1919
57. Ibid., March 19 and 26, 1919
58. Ibid., December 18, 1918
59. Ibid., April 23, 1919
60. Ibid., Centennial Edition, 1967



The men had to live in tents between April and October 1918, before the permanent barracks were complete.

Photo courtesy of the  
Lincoln Public Library



# TRAINING IN CANADA, 1917

BY LAWRENCE L. SMART

Editor's note: Reprint from *Canadian Aviation Historical Society Journal*, Winter 1972. The author's spelling and punctuation conventions have been maintained.

There is nothing like bored students to stir up some new excitement that will bring a fresh adventure into their lives; and the students at the University of Delaware in Newark, in the spring of 1916, were no exception. Company E of the 1<sup>st</sup> Delaware Infantry was located in Newark and it was rumored that it was about to be called to the Mexican border to do guard duty and so prevent Pancho Villa from crossing into U.S. [United States] territory. Everyone thought General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing would capture the bandit in a couple of months; so what could be more attractive to a bunch of restless students than to enlist, with not a doubt among them that they would have an exciting time serving their country and to be back on campus by September? Nobody, apparently, took into account that "signing up" with the U.S. Army meant a three-year enlistment.

But the Army wasn't exactly as we had anticipated. It was anything but an adventure! It appeared that Villa by now was as safe as if he was roaming the Gobi Desert. Pershing was hot on the bandit's tail, but all the pursuit was doing thus far was to scorch a few hairs.

In the meantime, Company E was loaded on a troop train and the next thing the students knew they were hiking and sweating and bitching their way across the sandy wastes of New Mexico. The only interesting sight for days on end was the landing of two Curtiss *Jenny* airplanes. They landed right along side us as we were marching across the God-awful desert, and looked like angels from heaven as they dropped out of the blue.

Everyone was asking questions at once. There was a woeful inadequacy of the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps, as it was then called. There were exactly six planes in the entire Corps, and on that particular day four of them were out of service; and there were less than twenty-five pilots.

I, for one (and there were others), looked lovingly at those airplanes. What a beautiful way to go to war; no sand, no sore feet; a barracks to sleep in instead of a pup tent or an 8-man tent. And the pilots: gloves, helmets, goggles and a leather coat for warmth at higher altitudes—what a contrast with the foot-sore, sweating infantry! I determined then and there that if I was going to war it would be sitting down in some measure of comfort, and not slogging in sand and mud.

The next problem was to accomplish my purpose, and that wasn't easy. Our stay at the border ended not in September or October as we had planned, but in February. It was too late to enter college, so I returned to my home. But I was more determined than ever to be a pilot. I remembered my father taking me when I was very young to see the Wright brothers fly; and at another time I watched Hubert Latham, a Frenchman, flying his graceful monoplane, the *Marie Antoinette*, over our house. These memories all came back to me as I had watched those two *Jennies* take off in a cloud of dust from the New Mexico desert floor. Their speed was about 60 miles per hour [97 kilometres per hour], but a doughboy's marching speed was about three miles per hour [4.8 kilometres per hour].

War with Germany was declared in April 1917, and applications for Officers Training Camp at Ft. [Fort] Meyers, Virginia, were immediately available. I applied and was accepted and went to Ft. Meyers on 14 May 1917. I was on my way.

## OFFICERS' TRAINING CAMPS

The potential officers in Uncle Sam's army were only a couple of months at Ft. Meyers, Virginia, when a funny thing happened—not so funny at the time, but funny in retrospect.

A British general and his staff arrived in camp to choose men to train with the Royal Flying Corps and eventually become pilots. Orders came out for all volunteers to report at headquarters at exactly 11:00 am the following morning to be questioned. Naturally I was there, shining from head to toe; but at the tailend of about 100 volunteers. It didn't look very promising as the general moved down the line; only 15 were to be selected. I got by the first question all right; "Had I ever attended college?" But most of the boys had. More 16- and 17-year-olds had gone to Yale and Harvard than the deans of those universities knew about. One alert youth had even attended Fordham—which he had never seen!

Twelve had already been chosen when the general reached me; and I was the 13<sup>th</sup>. That was my lucky number, on this day at least.

The next day the 15 chosen volunteers were sent to Washington, D.C. [District of Columbia] for their physical, which everyone passed, and on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July we boarded a train for Toronto, Canada. We pulled into Toronto the next morning expecting to be met by an officer, a sergeant, or someone to tell us where to go, but no one was there. Not having any further orders, we decided to put up at a hotel and await developments.

We grabbed some taxis and were taken to the King Edward, the best hotel in town at that time. Not knowing Toronto or anything about it, we did what most soldiers would do when they have idle time on their hands. We started a couple of crap games and some poker games on a 24-hour basis—only sneaking out to eat or grab a few winks.

These games were noisy and the other guests of the hotel didn't like it and neither did the management. After several complaints, the games would quiet down until someone filled an inside straight or when one would make five or six straight passes rolling the bones. Finally after two hectic days, the management called the Royal Flying Corps [RFC] Headquarters and asked them to come and get this gang of wild men out of their hotel.

In 15 minutes a Canadian RFC officer and two American sergeants arrived with two lorries. None of them was very happy to see us under the circumstances. They wanted to know when we had arrived, and why we hadn't contacted them? They asked a lot of other questions, too. They said that they knew we were coming, but hadn't been notified when to expect us. We loaded our kits in the lorries, settled up our bills and bade farewell to the hotel manager who heaved a huge sigh of relief as we piled into the waiting lorries.

In a few minutes we disembarked at the University of Toronto—a beautiful campus right in the city which was to be our new home and where we would take our ground school classes. From now on we would be known as Flying Cadets and were under the direct command and discipline of British officers and non-coms [non-commissioned officers]. Our quarters were temporary barracks, consisting of a long narrow building with showers and toilets at one end and a separate room at the other end for the sergeant who was to be our guardian, guard and disciplinarian. We slept on cots lined up along the outer walls on either side, leaving an aisle down the middle. By the end of the week several more groups of cadets arrived from various other training camps all over the country.

It was here that I was to meet one of the most unforgettable characters I ever knew—a British sergeant-major. He and a half-dozen other lesser British sergeants and corporals were in charge of all the cadets and were responsible for our conduct and discipline. A British sergeant-major is omnipotent, the supreme-being over all enlisted men. In fact, he is the colonel's right hand. Even junior officers listened with deep respect when he barked, and enlisted men showed him the same respect they would give to a colonel. He ruled the enlisted men with military might; woe betide the sergeant or any others who questioned his command or authority. He could bawl out junior officers with his peculiar command of the English language that was beautiful to hear and at the same time do it without insulting the officer; making him feel like crawling in a hole in the ground. We accepted the sergeant and all his strange mannerisms. We didn't like it, but we endured it for the time being. Sergeant-Major Bissop was indeed our lord and master.

One morning when our group had grown to 50 cadets, Sergeant-Major Bissop packed all of us into a small room where the only thing you could do was to stand. The sergeant, due to his physical make-up, had to stand on a soap box so that he could see over our heads. He stood about five feet, four inches [1.6 metres].

He called the cadets to attention while he stood there—erect, straight as an arrow, heavy set and very formidable-looking. His left arm was half bent at the elbow and in his left hand he carried his ever-present swagger stick, the other end of it under his armpit. On his face was a deep scowl; his penetrating eyes swept every face in the room. On his upper lip reposed his pride and joy—his waxed moustache twisted fastidiously to perfection. It stuck out like two small antennas. There he stood in all his glory, the personification, the ultimate of the British Army. He made the Prussian Guards look like Boy Scouts.

On his barrel-like chest reposed, row upon row, a galaxy of ribbons. Many were for bravery; he had every one except the Victoria Cross. His campaign ribbons were too many to count and on his sleeves he wore service and wound stripes. His father had been a soldier, also; in fact, he had been born and raised in the army and didn't know anything else. To him civilians were a necessary nuisance. Sergeant-Major Bissop was by all standards a soldier's soldier. He had served in India, in Africa, in the Boer War and had been wounded with the "Old Contemptibles" at Mons.

Suddenly, he thundered out in his bull-like voice, "In the words of a common Canadian, I'm an S.O.B. and I live up to my reputation!" Someone in the rear shouted back, "Balls!" This exhibition of arrogance and disrespect to his authority must have shaken him up, but if it did, he didn't show it. His face reddened but his expression never changed. In a few moments he gathered his composure and proceeded to tell us, in no uncertain words, just what he expected from us and what punishment we could expect for any infraction of the rules and regulations.

Such a transition from carefree civilian life to that of rigid British discipline represented by Sergeant-Major Bissop was a little too much to expect from this bunch of innocents. We were not interested in the British drill which we were required to do.

We would awake each morning with shouts of, "On parade! On parade!" Then it was roll call.

Every time the sergeant got to my name he would shout out, "Double hell, Smart!" Then it was time for breakfast and then close order drill; Form fours! Form two deep! Quick march! Right turn! etc., etc." As far as we were concerned, all we were interested in was getting to a flying field.

In a short time the cadets were split up into small groups and started in ground school right there at the University. We had classes in camera, Constantinesco machine gun mechanism, that enabled the gun to fire through the path of the propeller without hitting the revolving propellers. We also had classes in the operation and maintenance of both the Vickers and Lewis machine guns, artillery observation, panneau strips and wireless sending and receiving; and theory of flight, engines, photography and map reading.

All instructors were either officers or sergeants who had seen service in France and had been incapacitated in action. They were a fine bunch, especially the commanding officer, Colonel Harcourt, who had lost a leg in combat but could still fly with his wooden leg. We liked them all except Sergeant-Major Bissop who was constantly exercising his authority even for the most trivial infraction of regulations or rules. He and his British close order drill were a headache. He even had the boys doing that stiff knee drill used by the British in their ceremonies. We called it “Bissop’s Goose Step”, which it closely resembled and this we really hated.

Some of our cadets had trouble sending and receiving Morse code. Why we had to take it, I never found out. I do know that we never used it after we got out of flight training. Everyone was required to pass a final test in what they called wireless, which consisted of so many words per minute sending and so many words receiving. After a few had flunked the test, they discovered that by quietly slipping the sergeant instructor a five-dollar bill, all the requirements for passing were satisfied. In addition, it helped improve International Relations between our two countries.



Photo: DND

Tape reading, 1917.

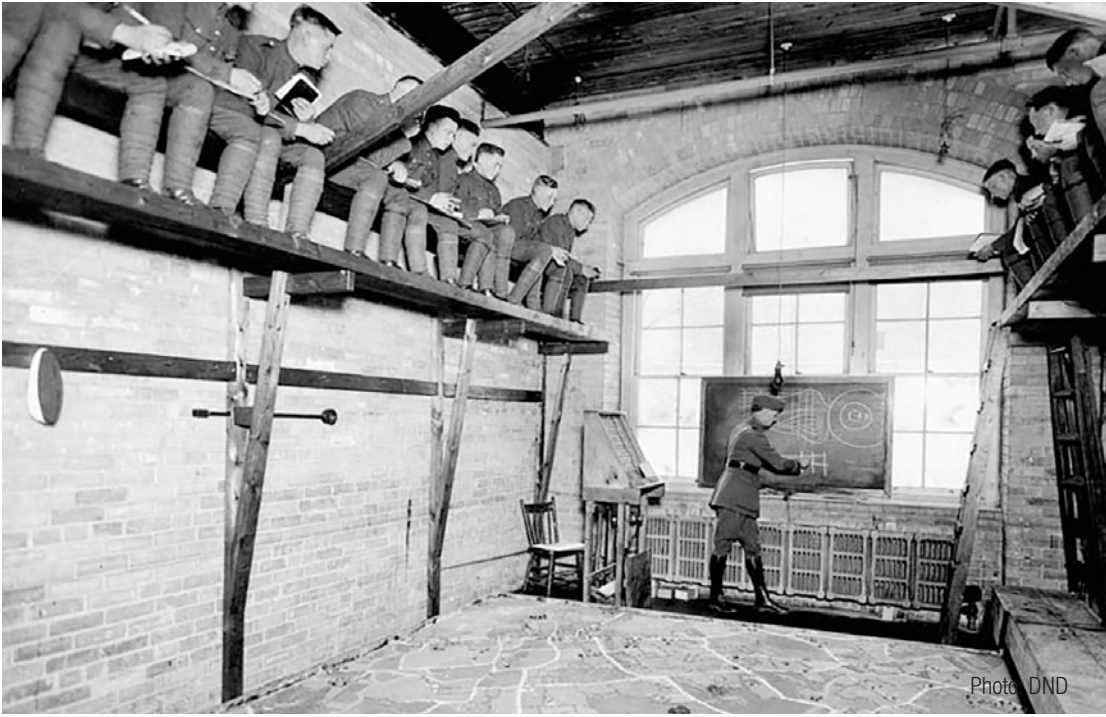


Photo: DND

No 4 School of Aeronautics, University of Toronto, Artillery Observations training - sand target.



Photo: DND

No 4 School of Aeronautics, Lecture Room, University of Toronto.

Sergeant-Major Bissop seemed to take a vindictive pleasure in dealing out punishment for the least infractions of rules and regulations. One day someone asked him if he had ever been in the States and he said “No”, but that he would like to go. So we invited him to go along with us to Buffalo the next Saturday. We took him to a show, stopped in a few bars where he was properly wined and dined and by the time we started back, he was pretty well plastered. He drank some more on the way back and when we arrived at the barracks, he was out like a light.

We carried him into his private room in our barracks and laid him out gently on his cot. What a contrast to his ordinary “dishing it out” routine, as he lay snoring in a drunken stupor and dead to the world, harmless as a lamb. Everyone crowded around making wise cracks and then Le Roy Prinz had a brilliant idea. “Let’s shave off that gorgeous moustache!” We agreed and someone produced a razor. Without benefit of lather, Prinz proceeded to shave off one half of that embellishment of grandeur on the sergeant’s upper lip. The whole barracks roared with laughter. This was it! Leave the other half on—nothing could be more ridiculous. What a spectacle! Here was our “spit ‘n’ polish” Sergeant-Major Bissop changed into a musical comedy buffoon.

We retired to our cots, turned out the lights and went to bed. Everything became quiet and serene; the only sound that stirred in the stillness was a muffled snoring as the cadets ranged all over the musical scale in a wonderful display of sour notes.

While it was still dark, the serenity of the barracks was broken by the sergeant-major charging down the aisle like a mad bull, kicking cots over, and poking cadets with his swagger stick. His bellowing voice pierced the night, “On parade! On parade!”

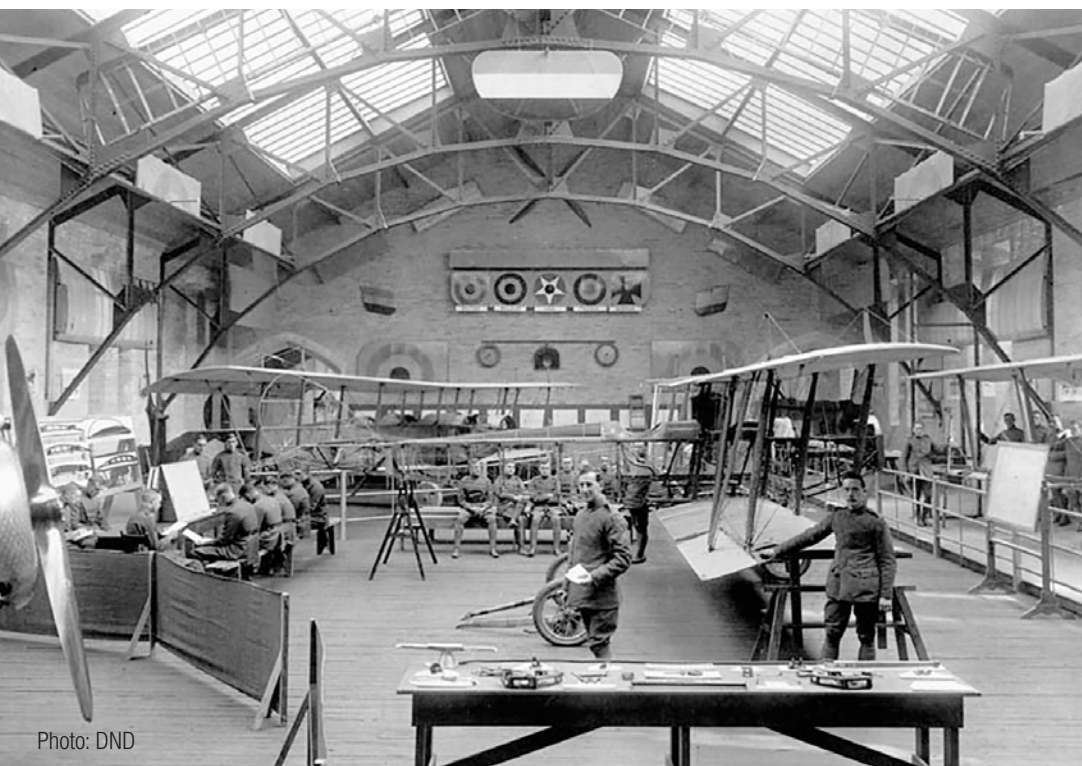


Photo: DND

No 4 School of Aeronautics, University of Toronto, Class in rigging using a Curtiss JN-4 aircraft. Hart House.

Most of us knew the cause of his behavior. He was acting like a sore-head bear. One half of his pride and joy was gone and he intended to castigate every cadet in the barracks. We filed out and lined up in front of our barracks in our night shirts and pajamas. He stood in front of us giving forth with menacing threats; stretching his vocabulary to its absolute limits. He denounced the whole corps in a long, heated tirade. He woke up everyone in the adjacent barrack, and they were leaning out of their windows wondering what all the commotion was about. He even awakened Colonel Harcourt whose quarters were close by. The colonel came hobbling over in his pajamas to see what was causing such a racket.

The sergeant stopped, faced the colonel, stiffened and saluted. The colonel took one look at the sergeant, suppressed a smile, and ordered him to his quarters. The colonel then turned to us and gave us a dressing down we well deserved. He ended by cancelling all weekend passes for a month. We felt extremely guilty and realized we had not been funny. Certainly the sergeant didn't deserve to be humiliated to this degree by us. He left the university that morning and we never saw nor heard from him again.

## COW PASTURES CALLED FLYING FIELDS

In July, the cadets were split up into groups and sent to various flying fields in the vicinity of Toronto. My group was sent to Ridley Park; the "field" was nothing more than a pasture, a cow pasture that had been leveled off and sodded. The airplanes in which we were to learn to fly were in three hangars to one side of the barracks. Concrete landing strips, field lighting or control towers had not come into existence. The aircraft were Curtiss JN-4D's, the best training plane of the time. My immediate instructor was Captain Sharron, a Canadian who had been injured in combat and had been returned to Canada to rest and recovery [sic] and for the time being was an instructor. I started training on the morning of 27 July 1917.

I was supplied with a crash helmet (larger and heavier than a football helmet) and a pair of goggles. Captain Sharron asked me a few questions and told me he would take the plane 1500 feet [457 metres] up and fly over to a straight road close by the field. Then he would turn over the controls to me and all I had to do was follow that road and keep the plane straight and level.

He must have taken for granted that I knew the functions of the various controls and, although I did have a vague idea, I certainly was not familiar with the technique of manually controlling the rudder, ailerons or elevator. Our ground school instructor had told us somewhat vaguely about these controls, but that was all.

He put me in the front seat, and briefly told me how the movement of the joy stick moved the ailerons and the elevator; how the rudder bar moved the rudder; where the spark, throttle, and choke controls were and pointed out the altimeter, tachometer, air speed indicator and the oil pressure gauge; these were the only instruments we had. He told me to keep my hand off everything until he turned the plane over to me.

We taxied out, headed into the wind and took off. The moment for which I had hoped and dreamed for had arrived. I sat there absorbing every movement, my spirit rising with every foot of altitude we gained; yet I was anxious as I wondered what I would do when it came time for me to take over those controls.

The moment of truth arrived. Captain Sharron throttled back and yelled, "Can you see that road below us?" I answered, "Yes." He replied, "Take over." I grabbed the joy stick in a vice-like grip with both hands and planted my big feet heavily on the rudder bar. One wing dipped and we

slid sideways away from the road. I heaved on the stick to bring the plane back over and the other wing dropped. I kicked the rudder bar in the opposite direction and we slid over to the other side of the road. I had no idea that you could control the movement of an airplane with a light but firm touch on the stick or rudder.

Suddenly, I felt a blow on the back of my king-size helmet which knocked it completely over my eyes and my goggles down over my chin.

The captain had throttled back and yelled, "Damn you black heart, I told you to fly straight down the road!"

As I turned my head to show him what had happened to me, he realized that I could not see a thing. When I turned my head toward him, he burst out laughing, took over and flew back and landed at the field.

We got out of the plane and when he had finished laughing we sat down on the grass and then he patiently told me what he expected me to do and how the controls functioned. He explained how to coordinate the several controls when flying level, turning, climbing or gliding. I was to be the master of the plane at all times, with a smooth firm touch and never any violent, jerky motions. He seemed to be more concerned as to whether I had been frightened for any reason. I assured him that I had not been frightened, but that I felt rather stupid with my heavy-fisted performance. He smiled and said, "Forget it! Everyone goes through this experience. We'll try it again right now."

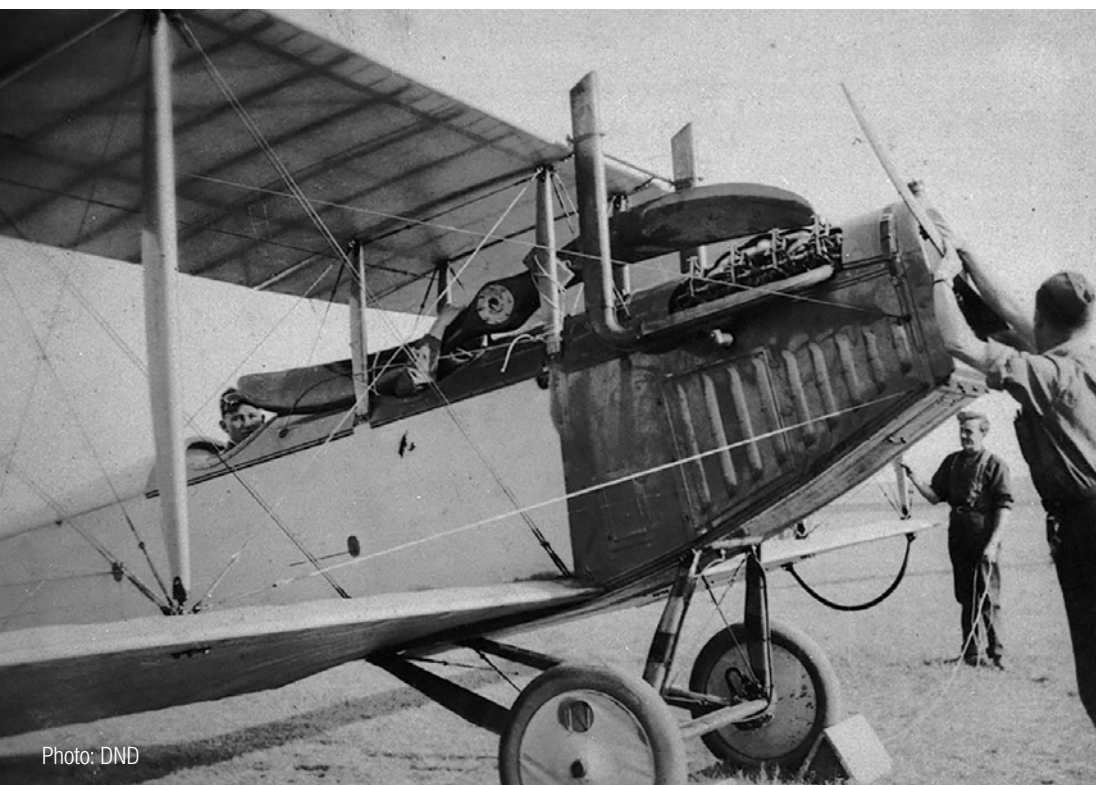


Photo: DND

JN-4 9 April 1918.

We went up for 20 minutes and I finally was able to fly straight and level down that road. Every day I would fly with the captain for 10 or 15 minutes. He taught me how to make turns; first with a little bank and later with vertical banks; take offs; how to avoid falling into spins and how to recover; and the most difficult of all phases of flying—landing the plane safely and smoothly.

One day, after a total of three hours and 35 minutes of dual instruction, and after making a couple of good landings with the captain's help, he said, "Well, do you think you can fly it alone?" I was afraid to say anything but, "Sure, I can." He said, "OK, you are on your own."

I taxied out to the end of the field, headed into the wind, looked all around, and gave it the gun, gathering speed as I raced down the field, until I could feel the elevators take hold. I lifted the nose of the plane gently. Soon I was airborne, and before I realized it I was 1500 feet [457 metres] high. My feelings were mixed. I was confident that I could fly this thing and make it act the way I wanted it to, but at the same time, I had a mighty lonely feeling. Here I was alone, 1500 feet [457 metres] in the air, with the world below beautiful to look at. My engine was purring along and there was nothing to worry about, although in the back of my mind I had some doubts. With the controls in my hands I became aware of a new power at my command. It was overwhelming; a sense of sudden release from the uncertainty of endless training. Alone in the air and with confidence in my freedom, I fixed my attention on the new challenge. It was right on [sic] front of me. This awesome and intricate art of flying. Gazing out beyond the controls I sensed something about the problem. But from this moment I knew that nothing—*absolutely nothing*—could stand in my way. I would master this uncanny adventure of flight.

One day in the early part of August, I took off about 7:15 pm. It was [a] peaceful evening with a few clouds hanging around the sun low on the horizon. Early morning and late evening, as a rule, were the best time of the day to fly because the air was usually calmer. I flew around enjoying every moment, but not realizing that at my height of 3000 feet [914 metres] I could see the sun lower on the horizon than if I had been on the ground, where it had already dropped below the horizon and, in fact, it was dark on the ground but I didn't know that.

Finally, I cut the gun and started down for a landing. As I dropped lower and lower, the darkness increased more and more. I came down through the darkness and realized that I was still about 20 feet [6 meters] above the ground, I gave it the gun and went around and circled the field five times and then someone threw gasoline on the field, lighting it up to assist me in finding the ground. On the next pass, with the aid of the burning gasoline, I made the landing safe and sound.

All of my friends and fellow cadets were on the field waiting for me to land and placing bets on whether or not I would make it or crack up. The first one to greet me was Georgie Glenn, a boy from Georgia, who grabbed me and said, "My God, Smart, we were ready to shoot you down to keep you from starving to death." Captain Sharron was there and he said, "What in the hell do you think you are, a night owl?" George Glenn was later killed in England, flying a Sopwith Camel.

Later that same week my engine failed on a take off when I was about 50 feet above the ground. I did exactly what the captain told me to do under those circumstances. "If you have engine failure on a take off, under no circumstances try to turn back to the field, go straight ahead regardless of what is in front of you. If you try to turn you will lose flying speed, stall and the plane will become just so much dead weight. You will have no control and you will fall like a brick."

I was beyond the limits of the field and over a field that had been cleared of timber except for the stumps that were still there. I followed my instructions: switched off the ignition and went

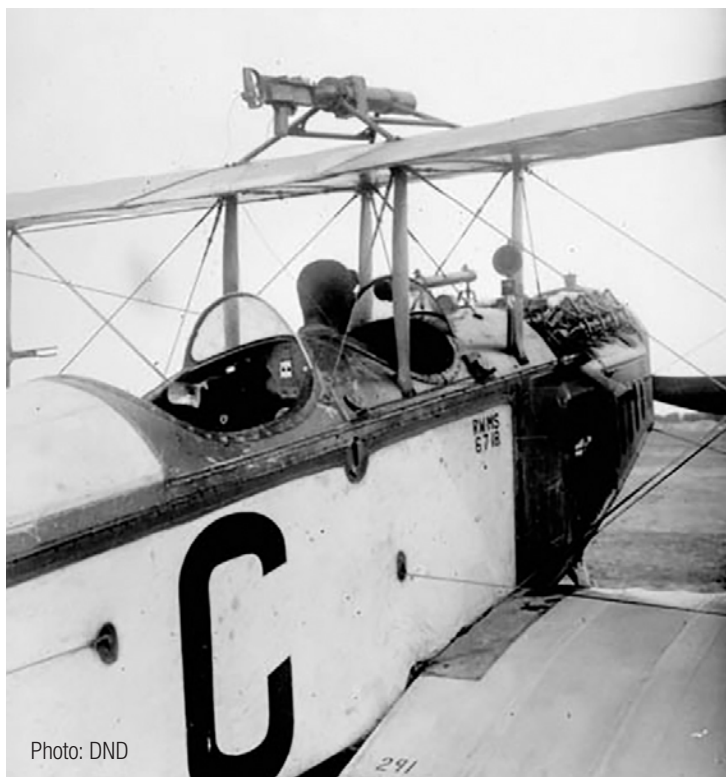
straight ahead; I glided down. The first thing to hit was the propeller, then the undercarriage, and then both lower wings went crashing into the stumps and a couple came through the fuselage.

The plane was a complete wreck except for the upper wings and the empennage. I was not injured in any way and was thankful that I had been taught what to do in such a situation. The captain even gave me a pat on the back. Within an hour I was flying again.

Unfortunately, some cadets were not so lucky. In the future, I was to witness three different crashes under similar circumstances where they tried to turn back at low altitude after an engine failure, had stalled and crashed into the ground. They were killed.

At all flying fields in Canada, there was always an ambulance parked on the line with a medic and driver in attendance, ready for any emergency that might occur. Some wit in our outfit had named the ambulance, "Hungry Liz". The medic and his charges were the object of our humorous raillery, but we were glad to have them around.

When waiting for a plane to fly, the cadets would sit around on the grass with the instructors and talk about how to do such manoeuvres as loops, stalls, spins, sideslips, etc. The instructor would go over each manoeuvre, explaining just how the movements of the controls would force the plane into the different altitudes necessary for each manoeuvre. If you wanted to do a loop you would nose down to get some extra speed and then pull back on the stick steadily, leaving the engine on if you wanted to go over quickly or cut the gun, after you had gained sufficient speed, if you wanted to make a slow, gentle loop.



Camera Gun on Curtiss JN-4 aircraft, School of Aerial Gunnery,  
Camp Beamsville, Ontario, 1918.

We would discuss the manoeuvres very carefully on the ground, and then we would go up and try them solo. Our instructors would caution us to go up at least 1500 feet [457 metres] before trying any manoeuvres, so that we would have room enough to recover if we got into any difficulty.

To do a whip stall, we were told to nose down with the engine on and get a lot of extra speed, then pull the stick back quickly into our stomach and when the airplane was standing on its tail, cut the motor, all the time keeping the rudder neutral. The airplane would seemingly stand on its tail momentarily and then whip down nose first. While it was falling the stick was pushed forward causing the nose to whip back of the vertical. This was the point at which many stomachs became turbulent.

As the plane gained flying speed, the stick was eased back, the throttle opened slowly, raising the nose until you were back in normal flying position. The manoeuvre that confused many cadets, and in fact killed too many, was spinning. We were told to nose down to get plenty of speed, pull back quickly on the stick, cut the engine when we were in a stall position, kick on right or left rudder—depending on whether you wanted to spin to the left or right. The nose would drop and the wings would start whipping about the longitudinal axis of the airplane.

Our instructors were particularly insistent on how to sideslip and how to use it to our advantage when making a forced landing with nothing but a small field to get into. The plane was put into a vertical bank and then given top rudder. It would then drop sideways, killing most of your forward speed. Then just before the tip of your wings would touch the ground you would bring the wing up to a level position and land with very little roll. Many pilots and planes were saved by this manoeuvre; in fact, to sideslip was a big factor in saving me from a couple of crashes later. We all tried these manoeuvres; in fact, we could do anything with these wonderful old *Jennies* except outside loops or barrel rolls.

All of our training in the United States and Canada had been on Curtiss *Jennies*. We never flew any actual combat planes until we arrived in England. The Curtiss *Jenny* and the Curtiss *Canuck* (practically the same airplane) were used exclusively at all the training fields I ever attended. It handled nicely and took plenty of punishment and abuse. It was not an airplane you could fly “hands off”; you flew it—it didn’t fly you.

One of my instructors said, “You handle this airplane like you would a spirited horse, firmly but not abusively.” It had no adjustable stabilizers, automatic pilot, artificial horizon, or any of the modern blind flying instruments found on today’s airplanes. You literally “flew by the seat of your pants.”

We loved them. At that time it was probably as good as any training plane in existence. It had a wing span of 43 [feet] ft 7 [inches] in [13.3 metres], length of 27 ft 4 in [8.3 metres], height of 9 ft 10 in [3 metres] and was powered by a Curtiss V-8 engine of 90 [horsepower] hp [67 kilowatts], known as an OX-5. Its top speed was 80 miles per hour [129 kilometres per hour]. The airplane was constructed of all-wood members, well braced both internally and externally with steel fittings tied together with solid steel wire and steel cables. It was covered with a doped cotton fabric.

There were two cockpits containing interconnected joy sticks and rudder bars, so that the airplane could be controlled from either cockpit. The only instruments it carried were an altimeter, a tachometer, a fuel gauge, an ammeter and a not-too-dependable magnetic compass.

No *Jennies* were ever in actual combat. The nearest they ever came to combat action was in 1916 on the Mexican Border as a part of General Pershing’s expeditionary force chasing Pancho Villa. Villa, of course, had no airplanes, and we might just as well have had none. Their

performance was a dismal failure. It was this sad performance, I believe, that left a bad impression in the General's mind, and he never had much use for the airplane as a weapon until later in France, in 1917–18, when he was awakened to its potentialities.

Just before leaving Ridley Park, George Squires and Steve Dorr had a tragic accident right on our field. In our reckless days we thought it great sport to go up on a beautiful day when the blue sky was full of cumulus, wool-pack clouds. We would climb up above them and pick out a nice big snow cloud and dive through it. George was having great fun diving through the clouds this day. He picked out one and dove into it. He did not know nor could he see, Steve was in another plane flying just below the cloud level. As George emerged from the cloud his propeller cut into the tail of Steve's aircraft, sending it straight down to destruction and death. George managed to land safely with his badly damaged plane. The whole camp was greatly saddened by this tragic occurrence. This was our first fatality.

On the first of September, 1917, we were transferred from Ridley Park to Leaside Aerodrome, one of the other flying fields near Toronto. This was a larger field and had more airplanes, and like most cadets we thought we knew all about flying. I had logged 18 hours solo by now. At Leaside we started practicing formation and cross-country flying. Our restrictions were very loose and we did just about everything we chose to do except to fly over the States, which we all wanted to do.

By the middle of September we were sent to Camp Borden, about 100 miles [161 kilometres] north of Toronto up in the wild country. Here we were attached to the Canadian Training Squadron for aerial gunnery practice and practiced dog fights. The planes were also equipped with camera guns that would take a picture when the trigger was pulled instead of firing a bullet.

Using all of the maneuvers we had practiced during the past months, we would go up in pairs, dive on each other, pull up under the other plane and simulate as best we knew how the actual maneuvers to be used in combat, striving to get in a hit on the other plane.

On other occasions we would ride in the rear cockpit of a plane which carried a Lewis gun with real ammunition. Another pilot would fly target plane; towing on a long rope an elongated windsock. The pilot of the plane in which I was riding would try and place our plane in such a position that I could hit the towed target without hitting the plane, or the pilot.

No one liked the assignment of flying the target plane as we were all new at this and the target plane's pilot didn't have too much confidence in the aim of those eager-beaver pilots. He never thought the tow rope was long enough. We would make several passes at the target, firing several bursts each time. When our ammunition ran out, we would land and another pilot would go up and try his aim.

After about an hour-and-a-half of this, the target plane would come in low over the field, drop his target, and then land himself—thankful that none of us had hit him instead of the target.

As soon as the target was down, all who had been firing at it would rush over expecting to see a target looking like a sieve. Much to our disappointment we never found more than three or four bullet holes in the target.



Photo: DND

Wreckage of Lundy's Lane C130.



Photo: DND

Wreck of JN-4 – C764 with US personnel in picture, 1917.

One day while at Borden one of our pilots landed clear across the field from the hangars and as he started to taxi across the field his engine quit. Being about a half-mile [800 metres] away from the hangars and not desiring to push the plane that distance, he decided to swing the prop and start the engine himself.

He set the throttle at a little better than idle, retarded his spark and climbed out and swung his own prop. The engine, being hot, started right up—to his surprise it started to move. He was quick enough to jump out of the way and managed to grab the wingtip as it started to go faster. He grabbed the hand hole in the wingtip, dug his heels into the ground and grimly held on. By now the plane was revolving around him in fast-moving circles.

We all saw his predicament and everyone started running to his aid. The plane kept circling ‘round and ‘round as the cadet dug his heels deeper and deeper into the ground, hanging on with grim determination, never for one moment relinquishing his bulldog grip on the wingtip.

Finally we reached the circling plane. One after another, officers, cadets or mechanics would make a dive for the wing, forgetting the tail was coming around to hit them on their rear ends and down they would go.

After a period of this knocking-down and dragging-out performance, someone had brains enough to run in beside the tenacious cadet, and work himself toward the fuselage by holding onto the trailing edge of the wing. He reached into the cockpit and cut the ignition switch. This stopped the plane’s action and the cadet fell over from sheer exhaustion.

In October 1917, we were assigned to 22<sup>nd</sup> Aero Squadron at Taliaferro Field, at Hicks, Texas, and I became an instructor since I had 40 hours and 25 minutes solo time.

Curtiss JN-4s Flown by Cadet L. L. Smart

**No. Y. C.T.S.\* – North Toronto, Ontario**

(27 July 17 – 29 Aug 17) C-134, -161, -162, -184, -198, -208, -217, -224, -226, -251.

\*Canadian Training Squadron

**89<sup>th</sup> C.T.S. – Leaside, Ontario**

(2 Sept 17 – 4 Sept 17) C-252, -307, -309.

**90<sup>th</sup> C.T.S. – Leaside, Ontario**

(5 Sept 17 – 8 Sept 17) C-182, -262.

**91<sup>st</sup> C.T.S. – Leaside, Ontario**

(9 Sept 17 – 19 Sept 17) C-164, -172, -243, -246, -247, -256, -260, -269, -290, -292, -318.

**Aerial Gunnery Squadron – Camp Borden, Ontario**

(25 Oct 17 – 27 Oct 17) C-117, -330.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Aero Squadron, S.C. [Signal Corps] – Texas**

(6 Nov 17 – 9 Jan 18) C-343, -345, -351, -354, -356, -362, -383, -388, -394, -408, -443, -449, -452, -816.

**148<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron, S.C. – Texas**

(26 Jan 18 – 10 Feb 18) C-356, -360, -362, -383, -395, -403, -816.

This story of a cadet's life in the RFC Canada during 1917 has been extracted from the book *The Hawks that Guided the Guns* with the kind permission of the author, Mr. L. L. Smart.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>C.T.S.</b>	Canadian Training Squadron
<b>ft</b>	feet
<b>Ft.</b>	fort
<b>in</b>	inches
<b>RFC</b>	Royal Flying Corps
<b>S.C.</b>	Signal Corps
<b>U.S.</b>	United States



Photo: DND

Tow Target, School of Aerial Gunnery, 1917.

# “Pay No Attention to Sero”

**Imperial Flying Training at Tyendinaga, 1917–18**

By P. Whitney Lackenbauer



Editor's note: Reprint from *Battle Grounds: The Canadian Military and Aboriginal Lands* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007). The author's spelling and punctuation conventions have been maintained.

*Indian agent's office, Deseronto, Ontario, 14 May 1918:* G. M. Campbell drafted another letter to J. D. McLean, assistant deputy superintendent general at Indian Affairs in Ottawa, regarding the Royal Flying Corps camp on the Tyendinaga Indian reserve. He had just investigated yet more complaints by Nelson Sero, a member of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte band.<sup>1</sup> The previous summer, Sero had informed him, the Corps had cut "20 trees which he valued at \$5.00 each, besides a number of small ones that he did not count." Then in November soldiers had left open a gate, allowing his cattle to wander onto the camp grounds. One died from drinking a pail of lye. When an airplane had crashed into a fellow band member's fence that same month, the pilot wrote down a bill of damages and reassured the owner he would be reimbursed. The matter was still outstanding six months later, as were reparations for the crop of William J. Scero. "The [Imperial Munitions Board] or the Flying Core [sic]," agent Campbell reflected, "should be given to understand that they will have to settle the damages when they are done so as to save a lot of bother looking up the man a year after it is done."<sup>2</sup>

When McLean passed this information to the Aviation Department at the Imperial Munitions Board, he recommended compensation. "They are for the most part small matters," he noted, "but loom large in the Indian mind and it would seem desirable to avoid antagonizing the Indians as at present they are greatly worried by their losses."<sup>3</sup> In many respects the Seros had grounds for concern. Duncan Campbell Scott, the hard-nosed deputy superintendent general of Indian affairs in Ottawa, tended to dismiss their grievances out of hand, compounding the disruptive and frustrating influence that Corps activities had had on their lives in the past year.



The Six Nations Iroquois have a long and proud history of alliance with the British Crown. Their traditional territories did not lie in present-day southern Ontario, but in the Finger Lakes region of upper New York State, where they subsisted on horticulture, hunting, fishing, and gathering. The Six Nations' sophisticated sociopolitical organization, military prowess, and finely honed diplomatic skills placed them in an advantageous position as European rivalries engulfed the St. Lawrence watershed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In recognition of "their spirited and zealous exertions and by the bravery of their conduct" during the American Revolution, King George III offered them two territories.<sup>4</sup> The largest segment of the Six Nations, led by Joseph Brant, occupied land along the Grand River at Ohsweken, while another group of Mohawks settled on a site fronting the Bay of Quinte, some fifty kilometres west of Cataraqui (Kingston), in 1784. In 1793 the Crown formally transferred more than 90,000 acres [36,422 hectares] to their control. This "Mohawk Tract" later became known as the Tyendinaga Indian reserve.<sup>5</sup>

The Six Nations' tradition of loyal service as "His Majesty's Indian Allies" continued through the War of 1812 and Rebellions of 1837, but shifting geopolitical realities diminished their military relevance after 1815. By contrast, the Euro-Canadian influence in Upper Canada grew dramatically during the nineteenth century. Like other Indian communities, the Mohawks faced pressures to sell sections of reserve land for non-Native settlement, and by the 1840s the Tyendinaga reserve was less than 20 percent of its original size.<sup>6</sup> The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte also underwent political and social changes, and chose to manage their political affairs outside of the traditional Six Nations League. In 1870 they became the first band to adopt an elective system, and their reserve developed in scattered settlements along familial and factional lines connected by roads and pathways. Individual Mohawks obtained location tickets from the

band council, which gave them a form of title to specific allotments on which they adopted modern mixed farming techniques.<sup>7</sup> Agriculture remained the chief occupation on the reserve into the early 1900s, and the Mohawk farms closely resembled those of their Euro-Canadian neighbours.<sup>8</sup>

The Mohawks and their non-Native neighbours had other common ground. In particular, many remained fiercely proud of their shared identities as United Empire Loyalists. By the late nineteenth century, the Loyalist tradition had assumed a privileged place in Ontarians' historical consciousness, and the Six Nations were central to that tradition. During the 1884 centennial celebrations, for example, Mohawk chiefs played a public role and their speeches "echoed the Loyalist and imperialist rhetoric uttered by non-Native speakers." In 1898 the United Empire Loyalist Association made Chief Sampson Green from Tyendinaga an honorary vice-president. Mohawk spokesmen stressed their continued alliance with the Crown (denying that they were mere subjects) and used Loyalist occasions to draw attention to Native political issues. Land was central to the Loyalist tradition, as it was to the Six Nations, but so too was a militia spirit that embodied the Loyalists' loyal and patriotic stand during the War of 1812.<sup>9</sup> This latter theme resonated in the late Victorian age, after Canada assumed greater self-defence responsibilities. In eastern Ontario, a hotbed of Loyalism, the military had been a constant presence since the eighteenth century, and boasted a major base and educational facility at Kingston.<sup>10</sup> As the imperative for military preparedness grew, its officers called upon their historical Mohawk allies and Loyalist associates to support the cause by sharing their lands.

The military first used the Tyendinaga reserve for training in the late 1890s. Despite its impressive installation at Kingston, the militia could not conduct operational manoeuvres or fire artillery in the midst of a population centre. Therefore, during the summer 1897, the local commander of the Royal Canadian Artillery approached W. G. Egar, the Indian agent, about holding annual drill on a "barren strip of land" on the reserve. The two men found only one Indian resident on the one-by-five-mile [1.6 by 8 kilometre] parcel known locally as "the Plains," used for the communal pasturing of cattle and horses. Chief Sampson Green and two other band leaders granted the military use of the land for a field artillery camp (see Figure 1).<sup>11</sup> After negotiating rent, the Mohawk Council approved a ten-year leasing agreement for short-term annual practice under which the band was paid until 1904. After that time, the big guns stopped firing at Tyendinaga, and young band members, with the support of the chiefs, established a rifle range on the Plains that served the community and the local rifle association in the decade before the Great War.<sup>12</sup>

Although a groundswell of popular support greeted the declaration of war in August 1914, official policy did not encourage Indians to fight overseas, lest the Germans deny them the privileges of civilized warfare. Many enlisted regardless, even before the government faced manpower shortages and reversed its position. Rates among the Six Nations in Ontario were particularly high: eighty-two Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte enlisted, representing 23 percent of the adult male population. As the tempo of the conflict increased, those who remained home were called upon to support their fellows at the front. Indian contributions took many forms, from knitting socks to generously supporting patriotic funds and sharing reserve lands.<sup>13</sup>

By early 1916, senior military officials were struggling to find a solution to the debilitating deadlock on the Western Front. The airplane offered one possibility. Aircraft photographed opposing positions, supported infantry attacks, spotted for the artillery and navy, and fended off the enemy in air-to-air combat. Numerous Canadians served with the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service, but until 1916 the only flying school in Canada was operated privately in Toronto. Lt.-Col. [Lieutenant-Colonel] William Hamilton Merritt, chief lobbyist for the Canadian Defence League and honorary secretary of the Canadian Aviation Fund, sought

to change this. Merritt was also an honorary chief of the Six Nations of the Grand River, and he turned “to his Indian friends for help,” requesting that a school of aviation be established on Tyendinaga reserve lands.<sup>14</sup> In March 1916 the Mohawk Council passed a resolution allowing the “Canadian Aviation School” to use the Plains until the end of the war.<sup>15</sup> The Dominion government was reluctant, however, to create a distinct air force, and Merritt’s proposal did not advance beyond the planning stage.

As the war in Europe dragged on, the British Expeditionary Force demanded greater air support. The Royal Flying Corps called for thirty-five additional training squadrons, but the growing scarcity of space for airfields and factories in Britain required that some would have to be located in the colonies.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the Imperial War Office in London authorized the creation of the Royal Flying Corps, Canada, an imperial unit commanded by Britain, late in 1916. The British Treasury authorized payment for twenty reserve squadrons so that training could begin in Canada in early 1917. The War Office asked officials to identify aerodrome sites in Ontario, which for climatic and demographic reasons seemed the most suitable province.<sup>17</sup>

The Imperial Munitions Board (IMB), established in 1915 and headed by Joseph Flavelle, handled the administrative details associated with this plan, such as site selection and construction. Following a hasty inspection on 26 January 1917, two engineering officers with the IMB Aviation Department decided to build the first aerodrome at Camp Borden. The next day they let the construction contract. Later that week they secured a second site at Long Branch and signed the contract to build a large airplane factory in Toronto.<sup>18</sup> Four more locations were needed. The Tyendinaga Plains were an attractive option, as Merritt had previously indicated. They were large and level, expansive enough to accommodate the training, and surrounded by “fairly open” countryside. Rail access, close proximity to the St. Lawrence River, and ample farmland just outside the reserve all fit the IMB criteria.<sup>19</sup> In March 1917 C. C. Parker, the inspector of Indian agencies, met representatives of the Flying Corps and the Munitions Board at Deseronto to select a suitable parcel of land. Though Parker tried to keep the choice secret, the proposal soon became widely known throughout the Indian community. The band council supported the project, but some members “expressed decided antagonism to allowing the use of some individual holdings.” Inspector Parker dismissed their objections. Their plots of land were “barely cultivated” and, to his eyes, barren. “I understand that the Militia Dept. [Department] has the power to take land wanted for military purposes,” the inspector noted, “and it will probably be necessary to proceed in this way for some of the individual owners.”<sup>20</sup>

Parker called the dissidents the “Thunderwater element.” The early twentieth century had witnessed the rise of various Aboriginal organizations opposing DIA’s [Department of Indian Affairs’s] policies. During the war, Indian Affairs officials believed that the Council of the Tribes, also known popularly as the Indian Rights Association and headed by Chief Thunderwater, was among the most pernicious. Thunderwater hailed from Cleveland, and when he had first appeared in Canada in late 1914, he carried the message that “the white man had demoralized and defrauded the Indians.” He sought to create a pan-Indian movement to challenge the American and Canadian governments, pledging to improve living conditions, curb the sale of alcohol, and improve education in Native communities. Thunderwater also strongly opposed the sale of reserve lands. Using Tyendinaga as a home base, he garnered wide support early in the war within the largest Indian bands in southern Ontario and Quebec. In 1915 Thunderwater candidates were elected at Tyendinaga “by large majorities,” despite attempts by Indian Affairs and the local agent to defeat them.<sup>21</sup>

“In April 1917, as the school neared completion, three squadrons moved into Camp Mohawk.”



D. C. Scott, the deputy superintendent general of Indian affairs, initially ignored Thunderwater when he carried his protests to Ottawa. When several elected band councils complained that Thunderwater was undermining their authority and newspaper accounts sympathized with his political activities, Scott reacted. He characterized Thunderwater's supporters as "unprogressive, shiftless and complaining Indians," adding that the "better class of Indians" rejected his subversive activities. No doubt Scott feared, as Brian Titley explains, "that the success of the Council of the Tribes would weaken, if not destroy, Indian subservience to officialdom."<sup>22</sup> Thunderwater's messages of autonomy and cultural revival encouraged pride in Indian status, and thus challenged the assimilationist mission of Indian Affairs. In 1916 the chief even claimed that Indian Affairs and Inspector Parker were on his side.<sup>23</sup> In wartime, the threat of political agitation took on heightened salience. Thunderwater's supporters at Deseronto opposed any aid to the war effort, and the chief himself cast the British cause as a fight "for gold," adding that the real reason the "white men" were enlisting Natives was to "steal their lands while the quarrel was going on." His emphasis on Native rights, loyalty to his organization, social distance from non-Indian society, and self-reliance inspired some of his followers to oppose the air force's leasing proposal. Only a faction at Tyendinaga supported Thunderwater, however. Others, who remained loyal to the Crown, urged Indian Affairs to ignore those who opposed the war and the airfield leasing plan.<sup>24</sup>

In 1917 Inspector Parker was quick to dismiss the Thunderwater supporters' claims, and he expedited the Imperial Munitions Board's acquisition of the Plains. He estimated that \$2,000 would adequately compensate individual landholders for lost crops and the cost to move their animals. George A. Morrow, assistant to the director of aviation at the IMB, whom Flavelle trusted as a "commonsense administrator," reported that Parker had "been very good in giving us considerable time in investigating the best way of handling the local situation so far as the Indians are concerned." Flavelle consulted Scott, then reassured his officials that they would encounter only a "temporary delay" due to "objecting Indians" and could take possession whenever they required.<sup>25</sup>

In early April the IMB confirmed that it wanted to use the reserve. Lt.-Col. C. G. Hoare, commander of the Flying Corps in Canada, had already received a letter from "the Indian Chief" granting the Corps permission to use the Plains. Officials at the IMB, however, assumed that they still required "proper permission" from Indian Affairs. To formalize the arrangements, Inspector Parker placed the proposal before the Mohawk band at its regular monthly meeting. After "considerable discussion and explanation," the elected council permitted the aviation school to use the Plains, providing it was responsible for all damage to livestock, paid a band member to herd the cattle on the land, and gave reserve residents first preference for jobs. Scott passed along this official consent to the IMB, informing its directors that "the Indians have made this concession purely from patriotic motives and ask no remuneration," apart from \$500 to pay the herder. He hoped that the school would occupy the property at once, "as it is desirable in dealing with the Indians to have prompt action."<sup>26</sup>

The Aviation Department expressed "warm appreciation" for the Indians' "patriotic and generous action" and for Scott's "personal energetic assistance." It began work on the 350-acre [141.6 hectare] site later that month, and soon five hundred men laboured around the clock. "It proved an excellent site, all grass, and smooth, and involved very little work" noted one observer; the soil offered a stable foundation for buildings. Rather than fencing in the Plains, which could pose a safety hazard to pilots, the Munitions Board posted notices to prohibit civilian traffic on the training area. In April 1917, as the school neared completion, three squadrons moved into Camp Mohawk.<sup>27</sup>

Operations were delayed, however, until a headquarters facility could be built on lands adjacent to the Plains. After exploring several sites, the Corps decided on a rise of ground called Eagle Hill just south of the Canadian Northern Railroad track. With preliminary arrangements concluded, Inspector Parker returned to Ottawa, and Indian agent Campbell was left to conduct interviews and secure leases. He immediately ran into problems. "The thunderwaters are raising kane over the Aviation School coming on the plains," Campbell reported, "and says their is something crooked going on [sic]." This faction planned a general council for the following week, and invited Campbell. "There is no reason to be apprehensive with reference to the action of certain Indians regarding the Aviation School," Scott counselled Campbell, because the elected band council had already granted the Plains for that purpose. Furthermore, Scott noted, military officials "could have expropriated it under the Act with the consent of the Governor in Council." He urged Campbell to be more forceful: "Give the Indians to understand that the Aviation School is there to stay and if they interfere in any way with any of the men and their work they will do so at their own peril."<sup>28</sup>

Despite this firm direction, Campbell's task remained daunting. The eight-and-a-half-acre [3.4 hectare] lot selected for headquarters was on the farm of Nelson Sero, an elder practitioner of traditional healing and a Thunderwater supporter. Born in 1850, he had inherited the land from his father and lived there with his wife and adopted son. Four times Campbell visited Sero to set a rental price, informing him that if he did not settle, authorities would probably expropriate his land under "the Act." He meant either the Indian Act or the War Measures Act, both of which would have been equally threatening to an Indian in 1917. Each time Sero was approached, he told the agent that he would consider it, after talking to the council. But he never showed up to scheduled band meetings. Faced with obvious delay and avoidance tactics, Campbell became convinced that "someone" had advised Sero to avoid making an agreement.<sup>29</sup> He tried to enlist the services of Chief William J. Scero, a councillor and Thunderwater supporter, to intervene with his uncle Nelson. The younger Scero also failed to respond to Campbell.<sup>30</sup>

Aviation Department officials were not apprised of Sero's resistance until after they had begun to erect buildings on his lot. They had proceeded with construction under the assumption that Sero would "become reasonable and talk business," and wanted to avoid expropriating the property for fear of alienating the rest of the band. To keep the chief and council supportive, they asked Campbell to ascertain the official band position and to report back. Consequently, even though the camp was sufficiently advanced to allow the first airplanes to take to the skies on 7 May 1917, the disagreement with Nelson Sero remained unresolved. The secretary at the Aviation Department, George E. Wishart, found the situation unfortunate, but felt "that the obstinacy of the Indian concerned will be abated if we just leave him alone for a little while." Scott agreed. "It is usually a successful plan not to pay too much attention to Indian objectors," he told Wishart.<sup>31</sup>

On the reserve, however, pressure was building for a more decisive resolution. Nelson's nephew William wrote to Scott: "Just a few lines to notify you that those people that has the planes is going contrary to the resolutions that has been passed in council by the chiefs, they was not to do any damage but they are going contrary to those words they are taking down fences and trespassing, they are building on this man's farm where they have no right, they want to take his barn down, they have part of his farm destroyed. I inform you to take action on this question." Agent Campbell's repeated efforts to deal with Nelson Sero having proved futile, Scott again dispatched Inspector Parker to secure an agreement. Parker went over the ground with two IMB members and a Royal Flying Corps officer to determine specific land requirements, then met with Nelson Sero, William Scero, and several other Thunderwater followers. They settled on a lease for ten acres [4 hectare] at \$200 per year.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to Campbell's ineffectiveness, Parker's resolve carried the day.

Air training now began in earnest. A Mohawk was hired as a mounted herdsman, and his pay from the RFC [Royal Flying Corps] was topped up by Indian Affairs. Each morning, after receiving orders from the officer in charge at the camp, he cleared the cattle from the Plains as fledgling pilots flew their Curtiss JN-4s overhead. During the early summer of 1917, when 43<sup>rd</sup> Wing occupied the camp, training was confined to aerial work. Twelve flight sheds—enough to house four squadrons—were erected, and soon facilities expanded to provide for airplane repair, as well as ground and gunnery instruction. An excellent range was constructed near the barrack buildings, close to where the local militia had fired their rifles at the turn of the century. Water and electricity were plentiful, and the camp buildings that “crowned” Eagle Hill, a “beautiful site” between the aerodrome and the Bay of Quinte, “commanded an excellent view of the adjacent country” (see Figure 2). With fifty-four aircraft and hundreds of Royal Flying Corps cadets and instructors under canvas, Camp Mohawk was evolving into a fine training establishment.<sup>33</sup> By the end of 1917, the expanded Canadian program was producing almost as many pilots as its counterpart in Britain, thereby greatly increasing the Canadian contribution to the air war in Europe.

Histories of the First World War aviation program in Canada stress the regional benefits of camps such as Mohawk. IMB historian Alan Sullivan notes that the Royal Flying Corps “considerably improved” roads in the camps’ vicinity. There is no mention of the damage done to the York Road, which led the Mohawk Council to pass a resolution reminding the IMB of its promise to restore it to its previous state of good repair.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, training for the air war was a dangerous undertaking. Crashes were commonplace, and while they proved most perilous for the cadets and instructors involved, they could also involve neighbouring civilians. On 11 November 1917 an airplane fell on the house of Michael Scero, smashing the roof and chimney. Agent Campbell asked the air authorities to repair the house or cover the cost of damages, but the matter was not settled for nearly two months. Scero and his family, with only canvas covering the gaping hole in their roof, could barely stand the temperature in their home. Chiefs J. M. Barnhart and J. A. Maracle initiated council resolutions to have Indian Affairs investigate claims of other damages to reserve residents, from smashed fences to crop losses caused by crashing planes.<sup>35</sup> Although such matters seemed minor during a global conflict, they nevertheless had tangible impacts on families.

As young grass began to push through remaining snow on Camp Mohawk in April 1918, the Canadian squadrons returned from Texas, where they had trained during the winter months, bearing a new name, the Royal Air Force (RAF).<sup>36</sup> Their training duties remained the same, and they encountered new problems with familiar people. In 1918 Nelson Sero opened a canteen in a small tent on his remaining property near the road that ran from the airplane hangars to the camp headquarters. There, “largely at the request of some of the boys at the camp,” Inspector Parker explained, he sold home-cooked pastries and soft drinks. These delicacies were not available at the camp canteen, and town was a fair distance away. Demand and supply thus dovetailed nicely, and Sero made some money. But RAF officials objected to their troops visiting canteens over which officials had no control. The commanding officer declared Sero’s canteen “out of bounds.” Sero, as well as the fliers, considered this an injustice and he threatened to deny them use of the lakeshore for bathing, as well as access to a small pier and boathouse. This worried officers, who wanted to build a proper boathouse linked by a trail to their Eagle Hill headquarters.<sup>37</sup>

On 2 May, Nelson Sero sent a letter to Scott, probably penned by his nephew, detailing his various grievances: the canteen, the cow poisoned by lye, trespassing, destruction of crops and trees, and even a dock built in front of his house, all of which Sero also reported to Campbell. In addition, even though Sero had an agreement whereby RAF guards on the road leading to his house would allow visitors to pass. Air Force officials, upset that this roadway was being “considerably abused by the general public” and thus a safety hazard, had been preventing people from visiting Sero’s home.

This interfered with his practice of traditional healing, a once-thriving business that served Mohawks and non-Natives alike.<sup>38</sup> Also on 2 May, Sero had given orders to the commanding officer:

I want all Officers and men in your charge ... to stay off my premises, and want all rubbish and lumber, and the docks which have been built on my property, to be removed at once. According to the Indian Act, you and your men have no right whatever to trespass on any property of mine other than what your lease calls for, without my permission. Hereafter all Officers and men in your charge must keep off all property of mine which is not leased to the Government. If not Officers and men will be prosecuted according to the Indian Act.<sup>39</sup>

The Indian Act not only constrained Indian behaviour, but could also be construed to assert the government's obligation to protect band members from outside encroachment.

Despite this confrontation, Scott had advised the Aviation Department that the matter was in hand. He had already instructed Inspector Parker to visit Camp Mohawk and clear up the mess. "We will not of course allow Sero to interfere with the proposed arrangements of the Royal Flying Corps," he told Parker, "and while it is possible that you may, as you did in the past, arrange the difficulty, it may finally have to be dealt with on that basis."<sup>40</sup> The basis was left unspoken, but the tone of the correspondence suggested that the inspector was entitled to use whatever means necessary. In the meantime Sero had turned to Indian agent Campbell, whom he had earlier ignored. Campbell, always more sympathetic than his superiors at Indian Affairs headquarters, took up the alleged trespassing with the local air force commander. The Aviation Department found itself in an "awkward position" and, given Campbell's support of Sero, also requested Inspector Parker's presence. With bathing season approaching, and the boathouse necessary in order to rescue aviators who plummeted into the bay, they considered the matter urgent.<sup>41</sup>

Once again, Scott dismissed Sero's concerns, advising the Munitions Board "to pay no attention to Sero." In the opinion of the deputy superintendent general of Indian affairs, Sero had no rights to the foreshore, and he ordered Campbell to "absolutely prevent his interference with its use by the Force." Scott appeared increasingly frustrated with what he saw as Campbell's lack of resolve. Nevertheless, Campbell investigated further and passed along his findings in the 14 May letter discussed in the [opening to this article], which seemed to substantiate Sero's grievances. Scott had his secretary, J. D. McLean, update the Aviation Branch, and while McLean's letter placed some responsibility on the Munitions Board, it also belittled the problems as "small matters" that "loom[ed] large in the Indian mind."<sup>42</sup>

When Inspector Parker visited Tyendinaga, his investigation uncovered a web of informal arrangements. The previous summer Capt. [Captain] Vernon Castle had built the boat landing on the waterfront of Sero's property for his own motorboat. Sero had agreed, on the understanding that when the boating season was over, the landing would become his property. Castle was later killed in a training accident. Therefore, when the camp opened in 1918, the camp commandant had no one to correct his misapprehension that the boat landing was on camp property. Not realizing that it fell outside the boundaries of the lease, he took steps to have it enlarged to accommodate more boats. This scenario became inextricably linked to the matter of Sero's canteen. Parker saw nothing wrong with it, so long as it was open to random health inspections. Competition was certainly not a factor: prices at the official camp canteen for items like tobacco and chocolate were far lower than Sero could offer. At the same time, Parker questioned agent Campbell's support for Sero's demands and suggested that "he could easily have settled the matter at the time by going out to the camp and taking the difficulty up."<sup>43</sup>

Had arrangements been made to reopen the canteen to camp personnel, air authorities could probably have secured a right-of-way to the boat landing. But the senior RAF officer in Canada, Brig.-General [Brigadier-General] Hoare, refused to reverse his decision. The medical officers at Deseronto were “already fully employed,” he told Scott, and had no time to inspect Sero’s canteen, which, he maintained, “serve[d] no useful purpose.” He neglected to mention that most of the patients treated in the Ongwanada Military Hospital suffered from venereal disease, not indigestion. Sero’s canteen thus remained off-limits to camp personnel, and so too did the boat launch near his house.<sup>44</sup>

In June 1918 the RAF began to enlarge the camp and erect more headquarters buildings on Eagle Hill. The site leased from Nelson Sero the year before was no longer sufficient, so the IMB asked to lease three more blocks of land totalling just over twenty-four acres [9.7 hectares]. Typically, it wanted to begin construction immediately.<sup>45</sup> There was a problem, however. Just two months before, a general council of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte had resolved that they would “allow no more land on this Reserve to be used by the Military Department than what they now occupy.” The council was “composed of 90% Thunder Waters and they talked in Mohawk,” agent Campbell (who did not speak the language) reported. Their message was clear: they did not want any more of their lands taken.<sup>46</sup>

The band’s strategy of containment did not work. Without consulting the Mohawks, Scott immediately approved the Munitions Board’s application. Campbell and the Aviation Department were told to arrange fair and reasonable compensation. According to Indian Affairs land registries, two of the blocks that the Air Force requested belonged to the band. John Scero, another of Nelson’s nephews, held the location ticket to the third. Since this was his best farmland, he was reluctant to lease the five acres [2 hectares] when the crops on the reserve were heavy and “equal to any to be found in Ontario.” Without conferring further with John Scero, Campbell valued this parcel at \$100 rent per year. On 9 July, Scott signed the lease, which permitted the Aviation Department to level the ground, take down fences, cut down trees, install drainage and sanitation systems, sow grass, and construct roads, buildings, and railroads.<sup>47</sup> These destructive activities upset Scero, who had never consented to the use of his land.

In the early fall, Scero sought legal advice in Belleville. The Munitions Board told his lawyers that it had obtained a lease, and thus was not liable. When the lawyers raised the question of consent, Indian Affairs informed them that the lease had been issued under the War Measures Act and therefore consent was not required.<sup>48</sup> What neither Scero nor his lawyers knew was that the actual lease made no mention of the act. Furthermore, Scott had never sought cabinet approval, as required under the act’s provisions. This irregularity remained safely concealed in government files, however, because Indian Affairs never sent a copy to either Scero or his lawyers. The perceived legitimacy of the unseen lease—based on the daunting power of the War Measures Act—was sufficient to compel Scero to abandon any active opposition to the camp’s expansion onto his lands.

After the Canadian Corps shattered the German lines at Amiens on 8 August 1918, the “shock army of the British Empire” began its hundred-day fight to victory. But the imminent end of the war was invisible to decision makers during the autumn of 1918, and the RAF’s appetite for land continued insatiable. It decided not to send the training squadrons south to Texas that year, and the only block of land available to build winter quarters for the brigade belonged to Nelson Sero. In late October the Munitions Board requested more of his land, even though he had begun his autumn ploughing.<sup>49</sup> Sero was unimpressed. His farm had already shrunk by at least a quarter and, quite understandably, he “refuse[d] to come to an amiable agreement.” Parker threatened to take his land with or without his consent and “explained the present laws” to the Mohawk resident, who “did not think that they could supersede the old treaties.” Sero’s challenge posed no dilemma for Scott.

Without consulting anyone, he accepted the Air Force's offer of \$25 per acre [per 0.4 hectare] rent, plus \$128 compensation for the ploughing, and on 8 November he granted the RAF immediate possession. Presumably he used the powers of the War Measures Act, but again there are no indications that he sought cabinet approval or that he consulted with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.<sup>50</sup>

Three days later, the Great War ended, obviating the ambitious plans of the previous weeks. More than 20,000 Canadians had served as pilots, observers, and ground support staff with the imperial air services, in every theatre of war. More than 2,500 graduates of the Royal Flying Corps, Canada program had flown overseas, and the air training scheme was another feather in the well-decorated national cap. Camp Mohawk had dramatically expanded in less than two years to accommodate 71 officers, 320 cadets, 69 warrant officers and sergeants, and 450 rank and file. Now it was time to wind down operations.<sup>51</sup> Joseph Flavelle thanked Scott "for the uniform courtesy shown to the officers of the Board by yourself and the officials of your Department in connection with the occupation of [the Mohawk] property."<sup>52</sup> There were no official thanks for the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

Faced with the massive task of dismantling the Munitions Board and disposing of vast quantities of surplus matériel and equipment, Flavelle and George Edwards, the IMB's chief accountant, had to deal with an overburdened federal government lacking a coherent postwar aviation policy. By war's end, two small Canadian air services had been created, and Britain handed over Royal Flying Corps planes and equipment to support them. But a war-weary cabinet soon decided to disband both fledgling forces for financial reasons.<sup>53</sup> In early 1919 the government decided to close the Royal Air Force camps and to arrange final compensation for damages. The IMB wanted to hand over a paved road in lieu of compensation for the Mohawk Plains, but this compromise was unacceptable to Indian Affairs officials, who insisted that the Board fulfill the terms of the leases and remove all the buildings, level the ground, rebuild fences, and leave the road in place—paying the Indians compensation for its deterioration. The full settlement was estimated at \$2,000. The IMB agreed to the terms, anticipating that the books would be finally closed.<sup>54</sup>

The individuals affected by Camp Mohawk had little faith that Indian Affairs would guarantee their interests. In January 1919, John Scero wrote to the superintendent general in Ottawa:

The IMB in 1918 entered upon and took from me 5 acres [2 hectares] of my land ... cut down apple and shade trees, built roads and ditches, built sewers and erected buildings on the lands and destroyed my oat and hay fields, doing me at least \$1000 damages. All this was done without my permission or consent. I have claimed damages from them and they refer me to you saying they had all their dealings with you and that they would only settle through you. Now, my loss is serious, yet they only offered me \$20 acre [per 0.4 hectare] or \$100 in all, and that will not half clean up the state they have left it in, let alone my loss of use of the land, loss of crops, fruit trees &c [sic]. I want this damage settled upon a fair and proper basis and I do not want you to allow them to rob me. Will you kindly take the matter up and see that justice is done. No use leaving it to agent Campbell as I will not get a fair deal through him.<sup>55</sup>

Indian Affairs assured him that he would get appropriate compensation for his hardships, but he remained sceptical. After two weeks, Scero wanted some sort of security that the Munitions Board would not simply walk away without paying him. Once again, Campbell urged his superiors to seek damages from the Board. As days passed, Scero's concern grew. He had planned to seize the buildings until paid, but they were torn down. "I don't see why us Indian[s] do not get Justice," he wrote to Scott, while "the rest of the white people are all paid long ago." He wanted his \$1,000,

“Camp Mohawk had dramatically expanded in less than two years to accommodate 71 officers, 320 cadets, 69 warrant officers and sergeants, and 450 rank and file.”



Photo: DND

and he threatened to enter his complaints in the House of Commons. “Will you kindly write to me and tell me if you are going to let them rob me,” he asked Scott, “or will you look after it for me as I am very uneasy about it?”<sup>56</sup>

It took time, but in the end the Mohawks received respectable compensation packages from the Munitions Board. Tensions abated. John Sero agreed to settle for \$250. Nelson Sero received \$1,000, a huge amount of money in an era when the average annual income for a status Indian in Ontario was less than \$100. Nelson may have felt battered by federal officials during the war, but he seemed satisfied with this postwar compensation. The Mohawk farmers had lost the use of their fields for longer than expected, so Indian Affairs secured for them an additional six months’ rent. In the early autumn of 1919, with these provisions in hand, the IMB formally closed its books on Camp Mohawk.<sup>57</sup>



With the war over and the decision to concentrate Canadian air force training at Camp Borden, the Plains reverted to pasture lands. Nearly all of the Camp Mohawk buildings were demolished, and an early postwar initiative to begin a private air service at Tyendinaga fell through. Although the Department of National Defence expressed renewed interest in the site during the 1920s, and actually received band and locatee consent to rebuild an aerodrome there, budgetary constraints forced officials to abandon these plans. Rumours of re-establishment surfaced from time to time, and air force planes did use the Plains as an occasional landing field between the wars, but these activities were sporadic and limited.<sup>58</sup>

Canadian contributions to the war effort overseas—on the ground and in the skies—bolstered the Dominion’s case for an independent voice in imperial councils and a separate signature on the Versailles Treaty. The war served, for most English Canadians at least, to develop a stronger sense of national identity and pride. For Aboriginal soldiers who served overseas, wartime experiences raised awareness of their plight at home. In the wake of the war, D. C. Scott anticipated that the return of the Indian soldiers from the front will doubtless bring about great changes on the reserves. These men who have been broadened by contact with the outside world and its affairs ... will not be content to return to their old Indian mode of life. Each one of them will be a missionary of the spirit of progress ... Thus the war will have hastened that day ... when all the quaint old customs, their weird and picturesque ceremonies ... shall be as obsolete as the buffalo and the tomahawk, and the last tepee of the Northern wilds give place to a model farmhouse.<sup>59</sup>

Of course, Scott envisioned developments that would confirm his overarching assimilationist mission. Although it was the second decade of the twentieth century, Aboriginal veterans returned to a country that still adhered to nineteenth-century Indian policies.<sup>60</sup>

Aboriginal contributions to the war effort were not completely forgotten. Jonathan Vance finds that popular accounts produced during the interwar years were incomplete without “a salutary reference to the gallantry of Canada’s ‘braves at war.’”<sup>61</sup> Little attention, however, was devoted to patriotic contributions or sacrifices on the home front. In his study of the IMB’s contributions to aviation in Canada, written in 1919, Alan Sullivan explained that the use of the Tyendinaga reserve had been “secured through the agency of the Department of Indian Affairs at Ottawa.”<sup>62</sup> The author failed to mention the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, who had granted their reserve lands for training. To the administrative mind, the bureaucratic process seemed a more efficient component of the corporate memory than the band’s generosity and sacrifice. The stories of men like Nelson Sero were conveniently expunged from memories that instead celebrated the wartime successes of state and organizational bodies like the IMB.

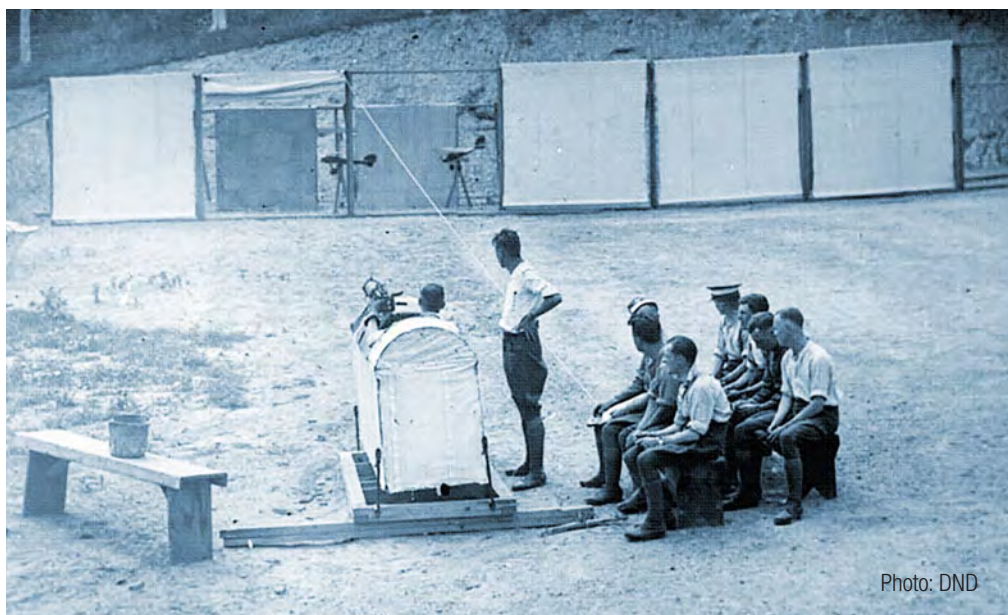


Photo: DND

Deflection shooting, target practice, using rocker nacelle, Camp Mohawk, Deseronto, 1917.

Although the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte had established relationships with the Canadian militia before the First World War, the creation of Camp Mohawk and influx of air trainees entailed an unprecedented commitment. The original agreement to lease the Plains reflected a patriotic spirit within the elected band council, but the escalating demands of the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force placed pressure on the community. Not all band members supported the camp and some, like Nelson Sero, opposed expansion onto their properties and lobbied for compensation to cover damages. The resulting interactions between Mohawk landholders and Indian Affairs question the prevailing depiction of all-powerful Indian agents who struck terror in the hearts of reserve residents.<sup>63</sup> Chief Thunderwater proclaimed in meetings that his name “was a power at Deseronto, that the Indian Agent trembles whenever he hears the name.” Even though he was later discovered to be a fraud, his words bore an element of truth.<sup>64</sup> Agent G. M. Campbell’s willingness to compromise, taken by Scott and perhaps the Thunderwaters as a sign of indecision, seemed to prove Thunderwater’s claim.

These observations support J. R. Miller’s observations that Indians were active agents who adopted strategies of “resistance, evasion and defiance to counter attempts to control their lives and eradicate their traditions,” and that Indian Affairs bureaucrats recognized the weakness of their position and were reluctant to provoke confrontation.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, officials could still impose their will on community members. The hierarchical structure of Indian Affairs ensured that if the local agent lacked the confidence, predilection, or resolve to act coercively, the deputy superintendent general or his senior staff could still act in the government’s perceived interests. The discussions over Camp Mohawk’s expansion also reveal the intolerant attitudes and rhetoric that headquarters officials adopted when faced with divergent opinions. D. C. Scott, in particular, callously dismissed grievances and proved hostile towards individual Indians, and even towards an Indian agent, when issues complicated decision making.

The historiography on Indian Affairs under Scott paints a compelling picture of draconian paternalism and strict control over band activities. Indian policy continued to be repressive and its broad thrust remained focused on assimilation. The Indian reserve base across Canada continued to shrink. “The department acted as the defender of Indian lands only in exceptional cases,” Brian Titley concludes in his study of Scott’s policies and administration. Hugh Shewell has cast Scott as the “archetypal organizational man” singularly devoted to “engineer[ing] Indian consent” and intolerant of “any hint of Indian resistance.”<sup>66</sup> Indeed, when dealing with the S(c)eros, he was dismissive and overbearing. Of course, his actions in this case must be situated in the context of the first modern global war, with its uncertain outcome and its demands for national sacrifice. When faced with Mohawk attempts to constrain military expansion, Ottawa bureaucrats could call upon the War Measures Act to acquire access to lands without consent. Whether the tool was legally employed had little bearing at the time. The individual power that Scott could exercise in his dealings with Indian communities, in the name of the state, could be decisive.

Chief Thunderwater’s growing influence also plays a role in any assessment of this case. His movement was a response to a history of indifferent and even duplicitous behaviour exemplified by Scott’s decisions in 1917 and 1918. In order to protect their interests, the S(c)eros were strong supporters of Thunderwater. Their unwillingness to yield to external pressures proves that they strived to influence outcomes in concerted and creative ways. Their ultimate inability to impede development plans, however, reveals that strength through “Union, Protection, Publicity,” the motto of the Council of the Tribes, remained an elusive ideal.

Camp Mohawk, one of seven flying schools established in Canada during the Great War, was a resounding success. The imperial training scheme represented “the single most powerful influence in bringing the air age to Canada,” historian Syd Wise has concluded.<sup>67</sup> The Second World War renewed military interest in the Tyendinaga reserve and other Aboriginal lands, which were called upon to support the rapid development of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte once more agreed to permit air force authorities to build training facilities on their reserve, and the Sero family again found its parcel occupied.

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## Abbreviations

<b>Capt.</b>	captain
<b>CD-ROM</b>	Compact Disc Read-Only Memory
<b>DHH</b>	Directorate of History and Heritage
<b>DIA</b>	Department of Indian Affairs
<b>IMB</b>	Imperial Munitions Board

<b>LAC</b>	Library and Archives Canada
<b>Lt.-Col.</b>	lieutenant-colonel
<b>MG</b>	Manuscript Group
<b>OC</b>	officer commanding
<b>RAF</b>	Royal Air Force
<b>RG</b>	Record Group

## Notes

1. The surname is spelled as both “Sero” and “Scero” by different individuals, and families on the reserve. The spellings used in this chapter are consistent with band member signatures and not necessarily with government correspondence (which tends to be irregular).

2. Campbell to Secretary, DIA, 14 May 1918, LAC [Library and Archives Canada], RG [Record Group] 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.

3. McLean to Wishart, 18 May 1918, *ibid.*

4. See Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1962); and Robert S. Allen, *His Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defence of Canada, 1774–1815* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993). For an introduction to the Six Nations, see C. M. Johnston, “The Six Nations in the Grand River Valley, 1784–1847,” S. M. Weaver, “The Iroquois,” and Charles Hamori-Torok, “Iroquois,” all in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 167–272; Daniel K. Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); and Bruce Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, v. 15: *Northeast* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1978).

5. E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), 110; Charles Hamori-Torok, “The Acculturation of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1966), 22, 24, 32, 39; “Treaty 3½,” 1 April 1793, in Canada, *Indian Treaties and Surrenders*, v. 1 (1891; reprint, Toronto: Coles, 1971), 7.

6. “Treaty 3½”; Deborah J. Doxtator, “Tyendinaga Land Surrenders: 1820–1840” (MA research essay, Carleton University, 1982); N. Mika and H. Mika, *Belleville* (Belleville, ON: privately printed, 1973). See also Allen, *His Majesty's Indian Allies*.

7. The holder of the location ticket to a particular parcel was known as the “locatee.”

8. Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1848–1930*, rev. ed. (Vancouver: New Star, 1996), 269–70; Charles Hamori-Torok, “Acculturation,” 32, 34–6, 39–40, 47, 49–52, 130, 132–2b, 134; *Indian Act*, R.S.C. 1906, c. 81, ss. 7–8; DIA *Annual Report* for year ended 31 March 1918, 70, table 6 – “Sources at Value of Income.” Nearly all reserve residents had a garden or subsistence farm, and some worked in wage labour.

9. Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 86–8, 116–25, 147–50. On Loyalism, see also Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 78–108. On the community, see Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, *Christ Church: Her Majesty's Royal Chapel of the Mohawks*, pamphlet (2002); and Enos T. Montour, *The Feathered U.E.L.'s* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1973). Chief R. Donald Maracle carefully explained that the Mohawks had been loyal allies of the Crown since the 1770s, and thus they were undoubtedly “Loyalists,” but they had always maintained a nation-to-nation relationship and never considered themselves “obedient servants.” Interview by author, 4 December 2002, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

10. Brenda M. Hudson, *Pride of Place: A Story of the Settlement of Prince Edward County* (Belleville, ON: Mika Publishing, 1982), 26, 28.

11. McLean to Egar, 20 and 30 July 1897, 3 August 1897; Egar to McLean, 31 July 1897; Green, Maracle, and Claus to Egan, 31 July 1897, LAC, RG 10, v. 2922, file 189,244. Patricia Rae, interview by author, 16 January 2003, Oakville. On Green's Loyalism, see Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 147–8.

12. See LAC, RG 10, v. 2922, file 189,244. For more details see P. Whitney Lackenbauer, “Vanishing Indian, Vanishing Military: Military Training and Aboriginal Lands in Twentieth Century Canada” (PhD diss., University of Calgary, 2003), 103–6.

13. Barbara Wilson, ed., *Ontario and the First World War, 1914–1918: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1977), cx–cxiii; D. C. Scott, “The Canadian Indians and the Great World War,” in *Canada in the Great War*, v. 3: *Guarding the Channel Ports* (Toronto: Untitled Publishing, 1919), 285–328; LAC, RG 10, v. 6770, file 452-29. For an overview of wartime policies, see James W. St. G. Walker, “Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force,” *Canadian Historical Review* 70, 1 (1989): 1–26.

14. Paul Maroney and Stephen John Harris, “Merritt, William Hamilton,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, v. 14: 1911–1920 (CD-ROM [Compact Disc Read-Only Memory], Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Berger, *Sense of Power*, 237, 246. Early in the war, Merritt had offered to raise and equip two Indian companies for overseas service. This initiative failed, partly due to the Six Nations Council's insistence that they owed their allegiance to the British Crown but not to the Dominion government. See Wilson, *Ontario*, cxiii.

15. Mohawk Council Minutes, 3 May 1916, LAC, RG 10, v. 1758, file 63-34, pt. 3.

16. Hugh A. Halliday and Laura Brandon, “Into the Blue: Pilot Training in Canada, 1917–1918,” *Canadian Military History* 8, 1 (1999): 59; Branckner to Director of Movements, 30 June 1916, LAC, MG [Manuscript Group] 40-D1, Air 2, v. 35, file 2/127/B12062, pt. 1. British Air Council Minutes, 22 November 1916, LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 36, file 6/3.

17. DHH [Directorate of History and Heritage] 77/10. Ker to Branckner, 21 December 1916, LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 2, v. 35, file 2/127/B12062, pt. 2. LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 15, file 1/721/48/4. LAC, MG 30-A16, v. 55, file “History of the Imperial Munitions Board 1919.”

18. A. Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada, 1917–1918* (Toronto: Rous and Mann, 1919), 16–22; Michael Bliss, *A Canadian Millionaire: The Life and Times of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart, 1858–1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 304, 310–11.

19. "Memorandum on Development of the Royal Flying Corps in Canada," [November 1917], LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 15, file 1/721/48/4. Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 289.

20. Parker to Scott, 19 March 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.

21. Titley, *Narrow Vision*, 97–101; Campbell to McLean, 28 December 1915, LAC, RG 10, v. 7932, file 32-34, pt. 1; S. Postal, "Hoax Nativism at Caughnawaga," *Ethnology* 4, 3 (July 1965): 268; Thunderwater to Scott, 8 June 1915; summary of Chief Thunderwater's speech at Ohsweken 2 October 1916; clipping, "Indians Held a Monster Convention," *Utica Observer*, 21 November 1914, LAC, RG 10, v. 3184, file 458,168, pt. 1.

22. Titley, *Narrow Vision*, 99; Loft to Scott, 3 November 1915, LAC, RG 10, v. 6762, file 452-2, pt. 1. Scott to Rowe, 14 May 1915, LAC, RG 10, v. 3184, file 458,168, pt. 1.

23. Parker to Scott, 14 October 1915; summary of Chief Thunderwater's speech at Ohsweken, 2 October 1916, LAC, RG 10, v. 3184, file 458,168, pt. 1.

24. Summary of Chief Thunderwater's speech at Ohsweken, 2 October 1916, LAC, RG 10, v. 3184, file 458,168, pt. 1; Postal, "Hoax Nativism," 270; Loft to Scott, 3 November 1915, LAC, RG 10, v. 6762, file 452-2, pt. 1.

25. Parker to Scott, 19 March 1917; Morrow to Flavelle, 29 and 30 March 1917; Flavelle to Morrow, 3 April 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1; Bliss, *Canadian Millionaire*, 311.

26. D. L. Allen, "Royal Flying Corps, Canada," 3–4, DHH 76/199. Morrow to Flavelle, 30 March 1917, 3 April 1917; Flavelle to Scott, 4 April 1917; Parkin to Scott, 10 April 1917; Scott to Flavelle, 11 April 1917; Morrow to Scott, 24 April 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. Mohawk Council Minutes, 8 April 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 1758, file 63-34, pt. 3.

27. *The Globe* (Toronto), 20 April 1917, 12. Morrow to Scott, 24 April 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. "Memorandum on Development of the Royal Flying Corps in Canada," [November 1917], LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 15, file 1/721/48/4; S. F. Wise, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War*, Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, v. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 86.

28. Campbell to Secretary, DIA, 21 April 1917; Scott to Campbell, 24 April 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 3184, file 458,168, pt. 1.

29. Estate file – Nelson & Lucy Ann Sero, LAC, RG 10, file 482/37-2-2-228, pt. 1; 1895 land registry file, courtesy of Patricia Rae; "Nelson & Lucy Ann (nee Brant) Moses," Tyendinaga Research Department, Deseronto, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte Family History Records (hereafter "Family History Records"). In the official band membership Nelson is listed as a Moses, a family closely related to the Seros, but Nelson signed everything "Sero." The exact acreage of Nelson's farm is difficult to determine, owing to irregularities in the 1895 land registry and the complex transfer from his father's estate.

30. Campbell to McLean, 5 May 1917; Wishart to Campbell, 7 May 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. Campbell to McLean, 28 December 1915, LAC, RG 10, v. 7932, file 32-34, pt. 1; Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 25; Lisa Maracle, interview by author, 4 December 2002, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. William Scero was the son of Alexander Moses, Nelson's brother. "Alexander Moses," Family History Records. William "Secro" [sic] is listed as an "Inner Councillor" with the Council of the Tribes on letterhead used for a band member's will in 1910. Thanks to Patricia Rae for this document.

31. Wishart to Scott, 7 and 14 May 1917, and reply 9 May 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. As secretary, Wishart was responsible for expenditures and “executive transactions.” Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 25.

32. Sero to DIA, 16 May 1917; Parker to Scott, 23 March 1917; McLean to Morrow, 23 May 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. “Memorandum on Development of the Royal Flying Corps in Canada” [November 1917], LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 15, file 1/721/48/4.

33. Scott to Campbell, 30 April 1917, 7 May 1917; Campbell to Scott, 3 and 29 May 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. Quotation on site description from Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 289–93. “Memorandum on Development of the Royal Flying Corps in Canada,” appendix A [November 1917], LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 15, file 1/721/48/4.

34. Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 293; Mohawk Council Minutes, 4 July 1917; Campbell to Secretary, DIA, July 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 1758, file 63-34, pt. 3.

35. Barnhart, handwritten note to file, November 1917; Campbell to Secretary, DIA, 26 September 1917, 17 October 1917, 3 January 1918, 5 and 26 September 1918; Campbell to McLean, 4 January 1918; Mohawk Council Minutes, 4 September 1918; Orr to Campbell, 7 September 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1; Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 229. For casualty statistics at Camp Mohawk, see LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 1, files 10/15/1/37-1917 and 10/15/1/37-1918.

36. Allen, “Royal Flying Corps, Canada,” 7; Air Council Minutes, 21 November 1917, LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 36, file 6/11.

37. Wishart to Scott, 27 April 1918; Parker to Scott, 10 May 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.

38. Sero to Scott, 2 May 1918; Wishart to Scott, 24 October 1918; Scott to Wishart, 26 October 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. Rae, interview.

39. Sero to OC [Officer Commanding] Flying Squadron, Camp Mohawk, 2 May 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.

40. Scott to Parker, 26 April 1918; Scott to Wishart, 29 April 1918, *ibid.* Prime Minister’s Office to Meighen, 29 October 1917, LAC, RG 10, v. 3134, file 458,168, pt. 1.

41. Campbell to OC Camp Mohawk, 2 May 1918; Wishart to Scott, 8 May 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.

42. Scott to Campbell, 8 May 1918; Scott to Wishart, 8 May 1918; McLean to Wishart, 18 May 1918, *ibid.*

43. Wishart to Scott, 11 and 15 May 1918; Parker to Scott, 10 May 1918, *ibid.*; Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, photo section, Capt. Castle; No. 84 Canadian Training Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, Casualty Return, 15 February 1918, LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 1, file 10/15/1/37-1918. Vernon Castle was half of the famous prewar dance team immortalized in the 1939 film *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle*, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

44. Scott to Wishart, 16 May 1918; Wishart to Scott, 29 May 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. LAC, RG 24, v. 4441, file 26-6-146-6.

45. Wishart to Scott, 13 June 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.
46. Mohawk Council Minutes, 17 April 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 2923, file 189-244-1A. Campbell to Secretary, DIA, 19 April 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 1758, file 63-34, pt. 3.
47. Scott to Campbell, 18 June 1918, 26 September 1918; Scott to Wishart, 18 and 26 June 1918; Wishart to Scott, 19 June 1918, 2 and 18 July 1918; Campbell to Secretary, DIA, 19 June 1918; Orr to Campbell, 17 July 1918, LAC, RG 10 v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1; quotation on crops from DIA *Annual Report* for year ended 31 March 1918, 11; INAC [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada], ILR [Indian Lands Registry], Lease no. 424, 9 July 1918; "James Sero Sr.," Family History Records. John Sero received the land from his father, James Sero, Sr., another of Nelson's brothers.
48. Porter, Butler, and Payne to DIA, 16 September 1918; Orr to Porter, Butler, and Payne, 25 September 1918; Campbell to McLean, 26 September 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.
49. Wishart to Scott, 24 October 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1; Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 57.
50. Parker to Scott, 31 October 1918, 2 November 1918; Scott to Wishart, 5 and 6 November 1918; Wishart to Scott, 5 and 8 November 1918, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1, Shane Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire: The Canadian Corps in the Last 100 Days of the Great War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997).
51. Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 593; J. A. Wilson, *Development of Aviation in Canada 1879–1948*, 7, DHH 75/114.
52. Flavelle to Scott, 11 December 1916, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1. By November 1917, 2.3 miles [3.7 kilometres] of asphalt roads were built, 1.69 miles [2.7 kilometres] of water mains, 2,500 feet [762 metres] of sewers, and 1.2 miles [1.9 kilometres] of railway siding, telephone, electric light and power systems, as well as underground gas tanks and latrines. "Memorandum on Development of the Royal Flying Corps in Canada," appendix A, [November 1917], LAC, MG 40-D1, Air 1, v. 15, file 1/721/48/4.
53. Bliss, *Canadian Millionaire*, 306–7, 385–7. The Royal Canadian Naval Air Service was created for coastal defence, and the Canadian Air Force was created to work with the Canadian Expeditionary Force on the Western Front. See Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 602–19; Brereton Greenhous and Hugh Halliday, *Canada's Air Forces 1914–1999* (Montreal: Art Global, 1999), 24.
54. Carswell to Scott, 16 January 1919; Carswell to McLean, 29 January 1919; McLean to Carswell, 24 January 1919; Mewburn to Flavelle, 21 January 1919, LAC, MG 30-A16, v. 17, file 176.
55. John Sero to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 27 January 1919; see also McLean to Sero, 29 January 1919, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.
56. Sero to McLean, 11 February 1919; Sero to Scott, 21 February 1919; McLean to Sero, 20 February 1919; Campbell to McLean, 19 February 1919; McLean to Campbell, 20 February 1919, LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 1.
57. Mohawk Council Minutes, 4 June 1919; Campbell to McLean, 3 July 1919, 29 July 1919, 31 July 1919; McLean to Campbell, 31 July 1919; Indian Trust Fund, Account No. 22, N. Sero and J. Sero, 7 August 1919; Dramsfield to McLean, 5 August 1919; Sero to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 29 March 1920, *ibid.*; DIA, *Annual Report*, 31 March 1918, 23.

58. See LAC, RG 10, v. 7615, file 13034-375, pt. 2.

59. Scott, "Canadian Indians," 327–8.

60. John L. Taylor, "Canadian Indian Policy during the Interwar Years, 1918–1939" (research paper, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1984), 15–31.

61. Jonathan F. Vance, *Death, So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 247.

62. Sullivan, *Aviation in Canada*, 289. See also Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 80.

63. See, for example, Robin Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918–1939* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003); Noel Dyck, *What Is the Indian "Problem": Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration* (St. John's: ISER, 1991); and Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, v. 1, *Looking Forward, Looking Back*, in *For Seven Generations: An Information Legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (CD-ROM, Ottawa, 1997).

64. Summary of Chief Thunderwater's speech at Ohsweken, 2 October 1916, LAC, RG 10, v. 3184, file 458,168, pt. 1. Chief Thunderwater proved to be a deceitful outsider and "snake oil salesman." Indian Affairs compiled evidence that the so-called chief was an impostor of African American descent. Faced with these allegations, Thunderwater vanished from Canada in 1920, taking with him up to \$50,000 in dues from the Council of the Tribes. See Titley, *Narrow Vision*, 99–101; LAC, RG 10, v. 3184, file 458,168; Postal, "Hoax Nativism," 267; Gerald R. Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawks Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1995), 72.

65. J. R. Miller, "Owen Glendower, Hotspur, and Canadian Indian Policy," *Ethnohistory* 37, 4 (1990): 386, 391.

66. Titley, *Narrow Vision*, 47; Hugh Shewell, "Origins of Contemporary Indian Social Welfare in the Canadian Liberal State: An Historical Case Study in Social Policy, 1873–1965" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1995), 265–7.

67. Cited in Halliday and Brandon, "Into the Blue," 63.