PERARDUA

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF RCAF, TORBAY
"The good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things which belong to adversity are to be admired."

This edition was sponsored by the station fund and produced by the staff of "Wings Overseas"—editor: Claude Hoodspeth, director: Frank Templeman, associates: Harmony Cardinell, Frances Halpeny, Larry Ranson, Barbara Mercer, Harry Simpson and Ian MacNeill.

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When in time of war, any group of countrymen have been united on a foreign premise and have worked together with a sameness of purpose, suffering common anxieties and overcoming common adversities, there develops a pride in their fraternity that is altogether justified.

A decade from now these people might well wish to remember the episode; and to this end the history of their Station has been recorded. This is the story of Torbay, dedicated to those who gave their lives, while serving their country at this outpost.
THREE YEARS AGO, when the Royal Canadian Air Force station at Torbay was planned and developed, the battle of the Atlantic was being waged with increasing intensity and there were signs that the U-boat threat would be extended to the very shores of Canada and Newfoundland. That this threat did materialize and was only defeated after a long and arduous campaign of vigilance and aggressive action on the part of our coastal squadrons is now a matter of history.

If the enemy expected to find on this side of the Atlantic a hunting ground in which Allied shipping could be attacked with impunity, he was doomed to disappointment. Nazi strength and cunning were met and in the end frustrated by the courage, skill and devotion of Canadian air and sea forces.

The personnel of RCAF station Torbay played a prominent part in this achievement, and to all of you equally, men and women—whether your duties are performed in the air or on the ground—I say thank you for a job well done. I hope that this pictorial record of the history of your station will serve as a proud memento of your service in the forward line of Canada’s defence.

—Air Marshal Robert Leckie, chief of the air staff.
"We will draw the curtain and show you the picture."
Torbay Genesis

"Do you fear the force of the wind, The slash of the rain? Go face them and fight them, Be savage again."
East Coast Needed Air Protection

During the latter months of 1940, North Atlantic convoys were becoming increasingly risky due to a scientific, and coldly calculated throttling of Britain's lifeline... a squeeze play engineered by Nazi specialists of tin fish tactics. "Alarming", and "Intense", were the superlatives frequently used by news analysts when describing the enemy's U-boat menace.

Air protection was vital; a base within easy range was a must.

After careful consideration as to weather, topography, and source of supply, a location was chosen in November, 1940. This was the inception of your station—Torbay.

Dressed in warm clothing and shod in high-topped logging boots, surveyors began laying out the station boundaries. After months of bog-slogging, hacking through heavy underbrush, and squinting through freezing transits and levels, the plans were completed. Headquarters then gave the go-ahead signal for runway construction.

On the heels of the surveyors, McNamara Construction Co. moved in. Small shacks... unpainted and unlined... mushroomed up together. In moved the workmen. Tractor and shovel operators, truck and grader drivers, rock drillers, carpenters, technicians and cooks, put on their winter togs and dug in. As typical of all construction camps, there was the ever-present boom-town atmosphere. Tradesmen flocked in to such an extent, that within three weeks' time all the shiplap shacks were bulging with more than 450 artisans.

All work was concentrated on runway construction. The enormity of this task can be appreciated when considering the equipment being used at the time. Not only were there eighteen tractors, seven power shovels, eight world-famous LeTourneau earth movers, but also six bull-dozers, two earth rippers, and a fleet of trucks.
Battle Against Time

Time was the chief concern. Night and day, men, hardened to rough work, forced themselves to a grueling pace. Solid rock ridges were blasted; oozing swamps were drained; 1,700,000 cubic yards of earth were moved.

Through weather, the equal of which is found only in the Aleutians, the job was kept ahead of schedule. There were exasperating moments ... moments of joy ... moments of failure ... moments of resignation. Yet, men with tired, ache-throbbing bodies laboured against many set-backs to create one of the finest sets of runways in the Western Hemisphere.

Following the surfacing, changes rapidly took place. Contractors, G. M. Cape Co., began construction of the first Air Force building. Installation of the water main was completed. And rumours began snow-balling about that the Air Force was to move in soon.

But another notable twinge to add to Torbay's many growing pains, was to take place before the sight of the blue wedge cap. It happened when the single runway suitable for use, received its first aircraft early on the morning of October 18, 1941. Bad weather over their home bases forced three American Fortresses and one Canadian Digby to make a diversion to Torbay. The forced landings were completed successfully.

It was a biting cold morning in November. Eye-watering blasts of wind whipped up the falling snowflakes into stinging pellets of ice. A two-ton Ford truck coughed its way laboriously through the frozen ruts and groaned to a stop in the centre of McNamara's shack camp. Twenty bundled-up airmen tumbled out the back of the truck.

"Here it is gang ... Torbay Station," one said in a tone of finality.

"My God," another shouted against the whining wind. "Do we have to sleep in them?"

The ground crew turned and focussed a critical eye on the fifteen by twenty feet shacks. Their expressions were the same ... a mixture of disappointment and disgust.

The First Aircraft Lands

That afternoon, four Hudsons landed. The aircraft crews together with the ground-crew ... forty men under Squadron Leader R. Martin ... rounded off Torbay's first day by eating a big meal and crawling into their sleeping bags for a well earned rest.

Life for the two score men was rough but healthy. Twelve airmen were allotted to a shanty, and it was their responsibility to keep it clean, warm and generally liveable. For busy tradesmen, this presented a task. Keeping a shell-like structure warm with one pot bellied stove meant fuelling hourly, but invariably the sleepers awakened in the morning to find the fire out, and ice on the inside of the window-pane. Often, after a bad night, the lads would awake to find the door to their shack completely blocked by a large drift. Until the "eager beavers" had cleared the passage, exit was by the
Deep snow and biting blizzards made construction difficult.

back window. Often repair on a blown-down chimney had to be completed before any cheery morning fire could be enjoyed.

The first man to arise and light the fire automatically became the driver of the truck for the day... and in the early freezing breezes, that was definitely a pleasure.

Toilet facilities for the Station were comprised of wash basins in one shack and two out-houses standing at a modest 300 feet to the rear of the camp. Until showers were installed, a month after the contingent’s arrival, the boys had to arrange a ride into St. John’s for their Saturday night baths.

The food was excellent, and the appetites were enormous. At first, everyone ate in the mess shack, but later the officers dined separately, but in the same hut... a curtain separating the messes. The civilian cooks put out such a delicious dinner, that many over ate, resulting in the constant demand for stomach powders.

No Time To Be Sick

Medical clerk, Sgt. Rodgers handled the few casualties and the still fewer sick men. There was no time for getting sick; everyone was healthy. As the station strength increased, Medical Officer, F/L “Doc” Mayo, moved into Torbay with his black satchel under one arm. His hospital, taking up part of the Detention barracks, boasted of three white cots, and a complete first aid outfit. Before this, serious cases were whipped down to Army’s Lester Field, St. John’s, for medical and dental care.

Following the meal, everyone rode the gas truck to the field. As small nose hangars were the only aircraft shelter provided, shovelling snow off the wings and fuselage was usually the first job during the winter days. After that the men would return to their particular duties.

Operational patrol flying began soon after the planes arrived and plenty of grief was experienced by the ten maintenance men. Each trade were given a drafty shack to use as a work shop and storing space. To work under conditions where the lighting was poor, where the temperatures were so cold that overcoats had to be worn indoors, and where servicing equipment was very limited, called for stamina, and patience.

There was no such thing as monotonous routine... or being “browned off.” Humour was one antidote for that popular ailment. Aching sides from hearty laughter were often felt at the expense of a Sergeant who had a phobia for darkness and man-eating wolves. Regularly one hour after supper the N.C.O. would gather his rifle before retiring to the out-house.

The recurrence of the unexpected also kept the morale high. Frequently, during the winter, at any hour of the day or night there would be an alarm. Warm, slumbering bodies were dragged out into the crystal-cold air amid vehement swearing. Any-
thing within reach was put on, rifle and ammo grabbed, followed by a hurried dog-trot up to the aircraft. Huddled like black stumps in the snow, all ranks guarded vital equipment faithfully, although grumbling constantly.

January saw the first non-fatality accident when S/L Pickard was forced to crash-land in bush country thirty miles from Gander. Rescue parties managed to reach them by dog team after the survivors had eked out three days on scant rations.

During the same month, postings began filtering in. Such old timers as Gordie Merrill, Eddie DeWitt, Jack Scott, Elmer Spinner, Morris Cavalier, Joe Favreau, O'Grady, Nicols and others helped mold the station's foundation.

**Lord Haw Haw Jibes Torbay**

It is obvious that the enemy thought highly of your Station, and kept it under constant observation. Often the infamous Lord Haw Haw, Germany's Eton-styled sleuth would remark on the Station's progress. One windy night, a nose-hangar collapsed damaging the aircraft slightly. And it gave everyone a feeling of uneasiness, when next morning, Lord Haw Haw, somewhere in Europe, poked fun at the R.C.A.F. and their poorly built hangars at Torbay. Immediately on hearing these jocular taunts, the camp was alive. Everyone was on the watch, a civilian Newfoundlander, who happened to be trapping on the environs of the station, was seen and fired upon. Terrified, the victim fled with half the camp on his heels. Trapping was then prohibited.

As winter melted into spring, Torbay put the cradle aside and donned kid's pants.

In May, a squadron of "Hurrybirds" nested on the Station.

In moved the Army, and with them an Army co-op. Lysander. For some time, the Army co-operation squadron consisted of pilot F/O Pettem. He had the unusual honour of being officially the Officer Commanding, the Adjutant and crew simultaneously.

Feeling of pride ran high with the formation of the first operation squadron . . . for bomber reconnaissance. This elated emotion was suddenly dampened, a week later, however, when one of the squadron's aircraft met disaster on take-off. Instant death resulted for the eight occupants.

T/Sgt. Bob Lennard of the United States Army Air Corps was the sole representative of the initial American Detachment to be stationed at Torbay. During June, the Yankee boys housed their ships and equipment in number two hangar along with the R.C.A.F.
PIX 1
Laying foundations often meant digging deep into frozen ground.

PIX 2
Every trade was represented — carpenters, plumbers, electricians, painters and bricklayers.

PIX 3
No. 1 hangar construction nearly completed.

PIX 4
Great iron girders provided the framework. Buildings had to be built to withstand high winds and insulated against severe cold.

PIX 5
Digging the foundation for one of the first buildings.
Three permanent buildings were completed; works and bricks section, housing the administration offices, equipment stores, and the barrack block across from the photo section. Following closely the Administration building and the Airmen's mess were completed.

Into the "chow hall" traipsed the men for their first meal, produced according to Air Force regulations. Due to the absence of the civilian chefs, and with no replacements, officers, non-coms, and airmen pitched in, to serve a meal that was reputed to be out of this world.

With an increasing strength of airmen, with an Adjutant, with a pay master—which did away with the customary payment by cheque—and with a respectable new fire-truck, your Station began taking its place along with other top-notch operational bases.

**The Station Grows Up**

The summer of 42 provided good weather for swimming. The favourite rendezvous was, out-of-bounds, Windsor Lake, St. John's city water supply. Nude swimming was the vogue during July, but suddenly it changed to the use of trunks. The reason for the rapid modification was obvious . . . more than thirty attractive ladies of the R.C.A.F. Women's Division had arrived on the station.

"Necessity is the mother of invention," is a trite saying but is pat here. With no accommodation for the women, number four barrack block was hastily divided with walls into two separate abodes. The senior N.C.O.'s occupied the other side of the "Walls of Jericho".

As days grew into weeks and weeks into months, expansion continued. More tinker-toy frameworks sprang up around the Station; and were boarded, painted, and named. The control tower was moved from number two hangar to its present roost. Runway three was completed.

Several separate units were also built. Twenty sub-detachment began operating, temporarily in St. John's and later moved to the camp in June of '43. From one building and a staff of thirty men, the equipment depot has grown to six store houses, an Administration building, and a working force of more than 150.

Later that summer, a radio outpost was built several miles from Torbay Station. This vital oasis of the Air Force, rose above the commonplace when it received the descriptive name of Flat Rock.

Adolescence for Torbay was over and the airport growth was tapering off. The latter part of '43 and all of 1944 has not been marked with anything outstanding in growth. It is no idle boast for a member of this air fort to say that the growth of his Station has been nothing short of a miracle. Besides executing the duties of war, by keeping many squadrons flying the personnel here have covered the 1347 acres of land with 62 comfortable buildings, four-five thousand feet runways, and the equivalent of 35 miles of paved roads.

Indeed Torbay Station has put on an adult' suit, and it fits well.
Atlantic Patrol

"In peace there is nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of a tiger."
PATROL aircraft, the nemesis of the much vaunted U-boat, were needed immediately for policing the seas off Newfoundland. Convoy shipping losses were increasing; escort vessels were inadequate protection.

Four crews stationed in Dartmouth were notified that they would be forming a detachment at a new station within the environs of St. John's. There was no official name given to the new location, but some of the airforce personnel, stationed in St. John's, called it after a nearby fishing village—Torbay.

As soon as Torbay airport had the first runway rushed to completion, four salmon-bodied Hudsons dropped through the overcast for their initial landing. The next day operational flying began.

Operations—the word is one of work and adventure.

"Gonged" and ops-winged pilots, wireless operators and navigators will recall the days at Torbay when operations consisted of a room, ten feet by ten feet, in a tar-paper shack. Later that year, operations, meteorology, and signals sections moved into the newly-built, number two hangar. Here they remained until October, when a building was erected to house the three sections.

To this crude nerve centre would come a phone call from Group Headquarters—any hour of the day or night—ordering the operations clerk to have an aircraft take off immediately. An enemy submarine had been sighted.

Until the first Intelligence Officer—Flying Officer H. G. Raney was posted to Torbay, March 1942—pilots of the Detachment took turns as Navigational Officer, Intelligence Officer and general "Joe" boy.

After the crew had been aroused, and had eaten, the pilot and navigator would...
rush in to operations, grab the few secret code books, get an idea of the weather forecast, and making humorous quips, would leave. That short visit constituted briefing. As compared with the present day, satiny-smooth set-up, one wonders that so few crews were lost.

Flying was hazardous. Such things as radio ranges, secret direction finding equipment, and naval beacons did not exist. Once the Captain had nursed his ship through the haze until the convoy was reached, the crew was happy. What type of patrol the pilot decided to do did not matter as long as he remained over the convoy, and as long as the crew kept a vigilant watch for signs of the enemy.

Although the navigator worked continually, the return leg to base caused him the greatest worry. If he was good, there was little fear of becoming lost. A sudden change in the weather with storms, however, resulted in the best navigator missing the base.

Then as now, Newfoundland weather—as changeable as a woman's mind—has played a vital part in operational flying. Crews about to go on a job, not only had meager, inaccurate, weather forecasts, but also had few diversion airports where one could land. Moreover, during those first few weeks, there was no such thing as a "met" man; instead, meteorological observers, who although tops at their trade, lacked the necessary knowledge required to make accurate weather observations and predictions.

After two weeks of "by-guess-and-by-God" flying, a general feeling of relief was felt among the crews, when Met-Man-Ferris moved in with his synoptic charts. Replacing him in April, balding Ted Wisack climbed into the responsible harness. Wisack, the patriarch of Torbay, is still with us giving what are considered the most accurate forecasts made on the east coast.

Up and down the coast, everyone aids the bomber reconnaissance aircraft. The following, which is an excerpt from operational diary, clearly shows the co-operation given to a patrolling Catalina that was forced to land in the North Atlantic.

Below—Sub is sighted.
0120 hrs.—weak signals picked up at St. John's Newfoundland.—Argentia receives distress message giving aircraft's call letters—two hours gas left.

0155 hrs.—T.C.A. Dartmouth trying to raise him (Catalina).

0155 hrs.—Sgt. Cunningham of United States Air Corps reports that N.B.C. (in New York) are trying to reach him.

0200 hrs.—N.B.C. contacts "Cat".

0205 hrs.—Catalina on water, no fuel, wants bearing; message picked up by Argentia.

0212 hrs.—Can't take off—Canadian Navy vessel going to him—putting out flares.

0230 hrs.—Ship reports, aircraft flares seen, everything under control.

Despite the relative hardships and lack of equipment, the huss boys of Torbay Station had chalked up a good score during their first year. More than ten U-boats were sighted and attacked, resulting in six possible sinkings—the first year alone!

Other squadrons—some with Venturas, others with Canso aircraft—have come to Torbay and have vigorously executed attacks and have given long hours of tiring but essential protection. At one time Torbay boasted of a line of trim, powerful Hurricanes which were used as fighter protection.

Mercy flights too have been the work of Torbay Station. When aircraft, built and designed to destroy the enemy, to shed blood and destruction, to bomb and to blast, have been sent on missions of mercy to isolated hamlets and fishing villages all around the rock-bound coastline; picked crews have been sent to bring back a patient to a medical centre. These flights have flown in doctors, nurses and medical equipment to little-known places where even the sight of a strange face was an event that would be conversation for weeks to come. The appearance of the big bird-like Canso flying over isolated parts of the island has been to Newfoundlanders a reassuring sight; and the knowledge that, if needed, help would be speeded to them, has done much to make these people look upon Canadian airmen as "our friends".

As war clouds are slowly and thoroughly erased before the golden glow of the rising sun of peace, men and women—the people of the Americas—will view in retrospect a job "well done" by crews of Torbay Station.
RIGHT

War knows no rest . . .
Around-the-clock schedule of operational flying is main­
tained by Torbay Squadrons.

Here an early morning patrol crew are hurrying through breakfast while flight engineers (below) are warming up their aircraft.

BELOW

The all important briefing.
Here the crew find out what their mission is to be. Perhaps convoy duty or search for a submarine believed to be in the vicinity. Just routine to the old timers.
LEFT
Before leaving operations, everyone takes his share of the secret and emergency equipment. The articles are of such a secret nature that each piece must be accounted for and signed for. A W.D. operations clerk is seen checking over the gear with some of the crew. More than twenty-two pieces of valuable equipment are taken from Operations for one trip. Everything is carried to the aircraft where it is loaded...

ABOVE
...To load an operational aircraft about to go on a long patrol, is no easy matter. Parachute bags, bulky ration cases, binoculars, personal travelling kits, extra warm clothing, boxes of pyrotechnics and other necessary extras, must be stowed so that the weight is distributed evenly to facilitate the best flying attitude. With the loading completed, the pilot and engineer start the engines while the rest of the crew give the ship a last-minute check.

LEFT
The ships kitchen department is cramped but adequate. After five hours of flying, the crew nominate a cook who prepares and serves a lunch. A two-plate electric burner provides the necessary heat for cooking. Rations include steaks, canned vegetables, soups, milk and fruit, coffee, bread and butter. Generally two members eat at a sitting while someone takes
It is an accepted belief that the Navigator is the busiest man on a patrol. Before take-off, throughout the trip, and after they have landed, the Navigator is hard at it.

Surrounded by the most modern radio equipment the Wireless Operator sits and monitors special frequencies for vital coded messages. He must be cognizant of the many types of procedures; he must have a practical knowledge of his transmitters and receivers for making any minor repairs; he must understand and operate the secret equipment for which he is responsible; he must know his guns and be a good shot.

Dog-tired and hungry, but glad to get back after hours of patrol, the men head for the Operations building. All the equipment must be returned and again checked off before the crew are at liberty.
Navigator, Wireless Operator and Pilots are interviewed by the Intelligence Officer. It is most important that weather details, convoy positions and other pertinent information is given the I.O. — it will help other crews who may be on patrol later that day. After a thorough questioning, the crew leave for a big meal in the aircrew kitchen—and then to bed.

Many of these little "out ports" dot the shores of Newfoundland. Isolated and often without medical facilities of any kind, the sight of the "great white bird" landing in their harbour is reassuring.

From an isolated fishing village, this sick woman and her child were taken to a modern hospital by one of Torbay's aircraft. Here the first aid party is seen accompanying the patient while being taken to the aircraft in a fishing dory. Left to right are: the patient, F/L T. Hill, Medical Officer, Nursing Sister A. Whittaker, and Pilot F/L Vern Prentice.
"One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture . . ."
In the fall of 1942 there were no barracks, no theatre, no drill hall, no canteen—in fact no station at all. Only one thing was shared by airmen of those days and airmen of Torbay today, and that was after duty hours. But the hours of that fall and winter passed, and pleasantly enough. There were long and numerous sessions with the cards and dice—the sixty veterans must have emerged bridge wizards except for that inevitable unfortunate few that will never, never learn to answer a demand bid. When the lumber and paint and girders were brought in, kind souls remembered to add cases of beer. You could always write letters and take a fiendish glee in piling up your agony so that the folks pityingly hurried up the next parcel; and when you had signed your name there was manifold opportunity for the sleep that no service person ever enjoys in enough measure.

The mess, a tar-paper shack half the size of the airmen's canteen, was the centre of the more organized social activities. There were bingo tournaments. About sixty books were borrowed from the public library in town and housed in Padre McNeill's office. And then there were the movies! These were shown to the waiting world about three times a week on a 16 millimetre projector, one of those independent types that takes untold delight in breaking down just as the hero reaches ten-derly for the heroine or the point of the gag is about to be spoken. One cannot say much for the type of pictures shown—Westerns, Republic products, the whole range of grades C and D. But at least they provided a glimpse of a different world still existing beyond the snow and rock.

The men managed visits, too, to the nearby spots of interest. On one well-remembered occasion a gang visited Liddy's in the Christmas season, forgot or did not bother to notice the weather outside and were marooned. We are told that the men used to travel about on anything moveable—trucks, tractors, even snowplows. The people of St. John's were very kind to these lads—Christmas, for instance, brought a good many invitations their way. And they took advantage of the Caribou Hut, and the K. of C. until the famous fire tragically destroyed the latter.

When the buildings of the station proper began to come into being in the spring of 1942, the east wing of the airmen's mess was the social focus. There on June 1st the sound of sweet and hot music proclaimed the first dance to be held on the station, made possible by the kind assistance of young ladies from town. When the Recreation Hall was built in the fall of 1942 it took over the social duties. It was the scene of weekly airmen's dances to the strains of Vern Duncan, 'Robin Hood and His Merry Men'; their music had a lift to it—they did a beautiful arrangement of 'The Anniversary Waltz'. In the Rec Hall, too, there was volleyball and badminton and basketball, and on show nights they would hoist the nets and set up the screen. The shows, even for free ones, were still pretty dreadful specimens—you could get as much fun from the remarks of the audience as from the bearded humour on the screen.

That autumn members of the Women's Division made their appearance on the station and they shared in these activities. Their presence in itself added a new element to life in Torbay. Before their coming the airmen wondered long how things would be, but they soon found that where there are girls there can be dates, and that it was rather good to hear a Canadian voice and see a Canadian face and to meet someone who could remember blossom time in the Okanagan, the prairie wheat-fields, and the lights of Montreal.

The Rec Hall and the meagre facilities of the airmen's canteen of those days were something—but they were in no sense adequate. It was as though you were living on something that was called a station, but really did not seem to be a true pattern of one at all. This dreary situation was improved when, in May of 1943, the Drill Hall was finally opened. The dance which celebrated the event was memorable for its colour and festivity and excitement. This was the first occasion on which the W.D.'s
were allowed to wear anything but uniform to a station function, and their barracks were in a ferment of activity and thrills and swishing silks for weeks beforehand. On the evening itself the windows of the airmen's barracks across the road were wide open to admit an array of heads whose eager eyes and lips, ready with whistles, took in the details of the swirling skirts of the formal gowns. After that evening, life on Torbay stations as we know it really began to take shape.

Dances are still the great occasions in the organized entertainment for the station. On the shining broad floor of the Drill Hall the couples have made a colourfully whirling picture while up to the flag-decorated rafters went singing the tunes of the Fort Pepperell 'Jive-Bombers,' the Navy orchestra, and especially Corporal Collis and his 'Melody Airmen.' There have been squadron dances and the special varieties for the station at Hallowe'en, for the benefit of the various Victory Loans, and then at New Year's with the brisk tooting of paper horns and the play of whirlgigs amid the shouting of good wishes and singing of 'Auld Lang Syne.' The officers' mess and the sergeants' mess have presented parties, too. In the summer of 1943 the sergeants sponsored one that was very memorable— for on that day a number of their company had received promotions, the surrender of Italy marked the start of progress to victory, and one of the newest crew captains had come home from patrol with a submarine to his credit. Spirits were merry that evening, hearts were happy, and life seemed very good and worth while.

The station also has presented us with what can now be called a real theatre. Since the spring 1943, when we acquired the new projector and began to purchase tickets for the performances, the quality of the films has gradually improved until now we can have such films as "Janie" and "Arsenic and Old Lace" not long after their general release in Canada. True, there are revivals, but the committees usually manages to see that they are pictures which reward seeing again. Those of us who remember the unattractive appearance of the old stage are still impressed on each visit by the new decoration of Greek scrollwork on a grey background around the proscenium, the wine trim of the walls, the sheen of coloured lights on the grey curtain concealing the screen, and the beat of the "March Past" background music as the feature presentation is announced. It is good to have these accompaniments to the movies, for most of us may be seen walking there at six and eight fifteen four nights a week. How did they manage without movies in the last war?

The theatre, too, has been made cheerful by the music and skits and dances of concerts presented by troops such as the USO entertainers, the Lifebuoy Follies and the Massey-Harris Combines. The best of these, and memory of it is still vivid, was the R.C.A.F. 'All Clear' show. People fought for tickets and a chance to see the pretty girls and their attractive, colourful costumes, hear the melodies, laugh at 'Slim' and his aides, follow the skilful dances, and generally enjoy the brisk pace, the good fun, the bright spirits of the whole production.

The sixty exceedingly miscellaneous books of the first station library are now scattered among the greatly expanded col-
Indoor skating rink provides popular Winter pastime.

Airmen’s Banquet.

The line-up.

The Commodore in Winter.

The trip home.
The "All Clear" show.

lection which continues to increase in fiction modern and classical, westerns, detective stories, biography, travel. Our library is indeed a very pleasant place. One can sit and read in quiet and comfort, and here, those letters we always owe seem to go easily and in better order. The room's atmosphere suits, too, such things as the eager words of the members of the Discussion Group who weekly debate with fact and opinion the problems of British Columbia, the post-war, femininity, cooperatives and foreign policy. It gives a restful and appropriate background to the Music Hour so that one can lean back easily in the chair, light up a cigarette and enjoy the Warsaw Concerto, Tchaikowsky, Gershwin, Beethoven, and Lily Pons.

All these forms of activity which we have been reviewing are planned for us, but there are also the amusements which we invent ourselves. St. John's has a place here. A trip to town used to be quite an adventure in the old days when the blackout made of every street a problem and of every doorway a gloomy mystery where menace might lurk. But then and now we have done much the same things there. Usually, it is dinner at the Newfoundland Hotel and the Sterling, or bacon and eggs and chocolate cake with whipped cream at the Blue Puttee, or a thick, juicy steak and French fried at the USO; then a show at the Capitol, the Star, in the queer-shaped Nickel, beneath the splendour of the Paramount, or with popcorn at the American Theatre; perhaps there is dancing beneath varicoloured lights at the USO, at the K of C, or on swish occasions at the Old Colony; perhaps it is skating; perhaps you are lucky enough to have civilian friends to visit. Always, however, an evening or a trip made during the day with the little blue bag ends with a long, weary haul up long flights of steps and steep hills to a famous corner where the one stop-light is directed by the long-coated, towering policeman crammed into the little white box on the corner and airmen and airwomen stand to wait, calling 'Torbay, bye!' with hope and purpose. From the Cross we rattle, clatter, bang home in a truck, whizz in a jeep outpacing the wind and leaping the holes, or bump along in a bus which, typical of the weirdness peculiar to itself alone, has an ability always to add the one more passenger.

Spring and summer are pleasant seasons here and, taking advantage of them, we have often hiked off on the trails through the woods to the quick-running, bubbled stream with a hopeful fishing-rod or to the tiny lakes—Virginia Lake, Sugarloaf Pond, and the many nameless ones—hidden among the fir trees to swim in their brown waters.

No account of the social life of Torbay would be accurate without mention of the 'Commodore' or the 'Bucket-of-Blood', the 'Commando', the 'Club' as it is familiarly labelled; the details of an evening there will stay in memory—the long walk down the road to the gate which the strongest winds always inhabit, the dancing, a fire on the hearth, Mickey Duggan, turkey sandwiches.

We have often packed up a lunch with tomato juice and Spam sandwiches and tinned fruit, walked with the gang far away over the hills and paths and rocks, built a fire in a likely pile of stones, and
Promotions Prompt P.M. "P-U".

watched the friendly flames while the
singing is low and the 'kittle blues'.

For we have all discovered the pleasure
and the interest that there is in observing
Newfoundland, in learning of a country
strange to us, but arresting, in knowing
its scenery and understanding its ways
of life.

We have tried to know the problems
of this land—the difficulties attending culture
and education, and that for the few there
are riches and power, but for too many a
hard life with poor financial reward and a
scarcity of the amenities such as proper
food. We have come to respect the people's
feeling for this strong land that is not
easily loved, their sturdy pride, which
makes them desire to create their salva-
tion themselves.

We have scrambled over the small flat
stones of Middle Cove, gray and blue and
wine, with the salt spray brisk in the air,
and rested atop its bare high cliffs swept
by the wind, with the low clouds racing
close overhead out to the freedom of the
sea, and a white-sailed fishing-boat making
for its harbour. We have seen the schoon-
ers moored at the busy docks of Water
Street, the hip-high rubber boots and oil-
skins and lined, rugged faces of men to
whom the sea is life. We have seen the
excitement of shipments appearing in a
burst in the stores—oranges, coal, onions
and vegetables, addressed from the U.S.A.
and wool from England. We have passed
the two-wheeled farm carts that move,
slow and lonely, along the roads to the
square frame farmhouses, set in the midst
of meagre pebbly fields with the rounded
haystacks netted down against the raging
winds. We have stood upon the road with
that interested look and when the ride
came have tried to follow the driver's
speeding 'my son' and 'he's to town' while
we were on our way to Brigus, Harbour
Grace, the waterfalls of Manuels, and the
tall cliffs and stony beach and the white
church upon a green hill of Topsail. We
have rambled down to Torbay past the
sturdy shell of the old stone church, the
many wooden fences enclosing yards
where goats scramble up the slopes, the
lanes curling among the houses that seem
to wander over the hills of the bay, the
spruce-lined racks on which lie the split
cod in ordered rows, and the caplin like
millions of silver shoehorns glinting in the
sun, the waters near the shore—blue and
grey and wine and the green of Chinese
Jade.

Beautiful though they are, these scenes
and the purple haze clinging to the hills
remind us that we are far from Canada
though the Ganderberry can set us down
in front of fresh fruit within five hours.
Away as we are from surroundings which
are familiar, cut off from the wide variety
of means of entertainment to which we
were accustomed, we are constrained to
depend very greatly upon comradeship one
with another. We have always had this
friendliness in Torbay. It gives pleasure
to the cup of coffee and the discussion of
Mackenzie King in the mess, to the grilled
cheese sandwich in the Snack Bar, to the
chant of the 'North Atlantic Squadron'
and 'Rowing in a Dory' in the wet can-
teen. It counts for much in the barracks
—when all the fellows in the room enjoy
some mother's peanut-butter cookies and
some lad's magazine subscription—when
they can listen to the radio to enjoy Bob
Hope, Biddy O'Toole, Jubilee, Command
Performance, Bing Crosby and Harry
James—when the cards are shuffled for the
nightly bridge games — when everyone
shoots the breeze over cigarettes and
cokes, and the Westerners kid the Eastern-
ers—when you enjoy the good parts of a
letter sent to the man in the next bunk.

Some one once said that it is not the
service life that counts, but the people
with whom you live it. Torbay has con-
tributed to the list of friends which we
have made in the war years—those we
will long remember.

—the end—

Station in Summer Dress.

Barracks neatly in a row.

PER ARDUA
Sport Life

“To set the cause above renown,
To love the game beyond the prize.”
The story of sport at Torbay has been one of progress ever since that first volley ball court alongside the "old" McNamara Construction shacks, to the present day variety of high class athletes and type of sporting activities that this station is capable of turning out.

The weather has been against an extensive schedule of the outdoor sports, and it did not help the opportunities to travel any great distances to compete in regional sporting meets.

When this station had only the runways and a few roughly put up shacks, sport had a primary showing early in December of 1942.
A huge schedule ensued between the Army and the RCAF, and at one time or another everybody on the station tried their skill at flipping the rapidly deteriorating volley ball over the net. Late in the summer some sport-minded enthusiastic thought of branching out and organizing a softball game. Finding a place where there was more than four or five spare feet of level ground was another story. But the undaunted true Torbay spirit shone through. Construction on a ball diamond began late in the summer of ’42. The chosen site lay between the tarmac and one of the runways—a little awkward when aircraft would “rev” up and down the runway, or a home-run ball was caught in the backwash of a prop and went foul. But the spirit was there; it was all in the game.

Meanwhile, Torbay was expanding rapidly. A baseball and a softball team were organized with practices and games held at Ayer’s Sports Field in St. Johns. The league comprised four teams: Navy, Army, U.S. Army and the RCAF. Despite wash-outs and a late play-off, Torbay was active to the last only to lose to Navy in softball. The U.S. Army won the baseball title.

One day in October, 1942, Torbay’s pride and newest rendezvous for young and old, the Drill Hall, was opened, boasting two badminton, two volley ball courts, and a basketball floor.

Without disturbing outside elements, the sections of the station began to show their prowess at volley ball. Shortly the Drill Hall became the scene of many gruelling battles over the volley ball net between such sections as the Firehall, 20 Sub and Headquarters.

An inter-service basketball league was formed. Hard fought games ensued with the Navy, Army and the U.S. Army. Once again the Americans showed their superiority and proved unbeatable in most of the games.

At the finale of Fall sport, hockey and skating became the day’s topic. The season opened in the old curling rink behind the Newfoundland hotel. The station team went into St. Johns twice weekly to practice at the almost impossible hour of 6.30 a.m. All games were played on the same ice. It was an inter-service league again. In the play-offs the Navy nosed out the RCAF, three games out of five, with Robbie Robinson starring.

When the hockey team found it difficult to reach town through high snowdrifts, many of the ski fans were “shoooshing” the nearby hills. Our own Bob Low of the “Y” had as many classes for instruction as the weather would allow, and the Sports Stores had all 50 pairs of skis loaned out to those rather strange individuals who get around on the “old boards”. The slopes of Middle Cove was the popular resort.

The spring of ’43 evidenced more new buildings. The latest and present sport stadium was the brand new Drill Hall. Word of a new P.T. officer was spread around. In May, the official opening of one of the finest drill halls in the RCAF was celebrated, and in the same month, F/O W. D. McMaster arrived to take up the duties of station sports officer.

Sport abandoned the Rec Hall for the new Drill Hall. Cpl. Ed Burton and his boys cleared the field just east of the Drill Hall to lay a baseball and softball diamond. A station inter-section league was formed and 128 “Flying Foxes” squadron emerged champs for the ’43 season.

There has been no mention of “scrounge” or “borrowing” or any other pleasant term used in this topic of sport, but it must come out. There was a small group on the station called, or hoped to be called, “Muscle Men,” “Charles Atlas the first, second or third,” or even “Superman,” so F/S Gouldstien and friends thought of a weight lifting class. Now not everybody carries a full set of weights around in their pockets. So the weights had to be “ob­tained” (yes, that’s a good word for it). “Goldie” Gouldstien had a well-attended class going in no time. As for the weights, who would have ever guessed those Mc­Namara boggie wheels would have served so admirably the purpose.

One of the best run swimming meets in Newfoundland was held in Bowering Park in the summer of ’43. The RCAF showed the RCN a good scrap all the way, with the team of Chuck Mackenzie, Roy La­Flave, Wilf Cosman and Sgt. Slim Parfitt proving one of the biggest threats to the Navy who took the meet honors.

In September ’43, “The Pioneer P.T. & D. Officer” was transferred, and in his place came F/O A. A. Star who took up where
F/O McMaster left off. As an eventful month there was no beating it. It was time to send a team to Moncton to enter in the Command Track and Field Championships. There were few who knew of Eddie Burton's past achievements in that sport on the station, but it appears that F/O Star's confidence that Burton would bring home top honors in that field ran high, and the entry was made.

This was one of the biggest events in Torbay's sporting history. Burton was one of two entries sent in from Torbay, only representative from Newfoundland. The day was spectacular for Torbay's entrant.

In three days time, Burton went through his routine in Halifax as part of the RCAF team against the Army and Navy. The Air Force emerged victorious, and Burton again had more records to his credit. The small team of two men returned to Newfoundland with all honors possible.

The Fall season arrived with a newly formed basketball team to represent the station in an Inter-Service league. The hoop schedule was packed full of games that were of the fast-passing calibre seen in the big leagues. The Air Force gave the Fort Pepperrell entry one of the closest chases in its career. It was only lack of experience that kept the Torbay team from taking the championship from the U.S. Army. The team of Joe Greenberg, Bill Martin, Slim McLester, Steve Pesklevy, Vern Traik, Johnny Hawkins, and Ken Kyle gave the fans a real show every time they hit the floor.

With a trophy to aim for in the intersection bowling league for the '43-'44 season, team competition was keen. 11 Squadron maintenance won the trophy.

Attempts were made to build a rink on the station but weather conditions curtailed skating and hockey activities. The station team tried the heavy hockey schedule as of the previous year, but when postings took their toll on the team, the boys were forced to drop from the league.

A badminton tournament was in progress in December of '43 in the spacious Drill Hall, but the absence of birds at the end of the year made further games impossible, and prevented the play-offs.

This summer in the station intersection softball league, there was no touching the team of the combined hospital, dental, postal staff. The team went through the play-offs to win the trophy most coveted on the station, the C.O.'s trophy.

Once again this Fall, Sgt. Ed. Burton made a trip to Halifax for the track and field meet. This time the team consisted of six entries, and in this Command Championship, Burton took the pole vault, hop-step-jump, the broad jump, and high jump, to again win the high individual score for the meet. Doug Leadbeater of Torbay, placed second in the pole vault, Waram chalked up a second in the 100 yards, and Jones ended up with points to his credit too. The Torbay entry was only a few points behind 31 P.D. Moncton in the final count.

Bowling is under way again this Fall, and Headquarters seem to have a high-scoring team that will bear watching.

The station basketball team has already matched one game with the U.S. Army, but they are still not able to out-shoot the Americans. The Inter-Service hoop league has an interesting schedule lined up, and basketball fans are assured of many an exciting moment this winter.

Until now there has been no mention of the fair sex in sport at Torbay. This is due to the fact that information has been at a minimum, but nevertheless in the last year, they have not been idle in the sporting field.

The softball schedule with the Wrens and Group this year was hindered in just about every game by the weather, so the girls had no chance at any championship. In basketball they can dish out defeats to all comers, and Cpl. Tommie Thompson is always willing to sing their praises. On the squash court, it's hard to determine who uses the courts more, the W.D.'s or the airmen.

It is quite apparent that Torbay's history of sport will be hard to beat.
Group Photos

“You’ll find us kindly on the whole, though queer;
Not ever quite so bad as we appear.”

FRONT ROW (left to right): Schrag, S. R., Jarvis, J. L. SECOND ROW (left to right): Sidenberg, S., Bressey, A. N., McKenzie, D. M. THIRD ROW (left to right): Wanamaker, R. R., Bender, H. W., LeBlanc, V.


ABOVE

LEFT
FRONT ROW: l. to r.:-Cpl White, C. L., LAW Gillis, B. SECOND ROW: l. to r.:-Sgt McAllister, C .. , Cpl Friesen, W. R., Pte Robinson, G. P. THIRD ROW: l. to r.:-La Palme, R., LAC Anderson, N. H.
ABOVE

RIGHT
ABOVE
FRONT ROW: l. to r.:-Lamothe, J. A. W., Thompson, T., Barclay, M. C., Jones, D., Clements, A. L.
SECOND ROW: l. to r.:--YMCA' Bob Low, Templeman, F., Gaudet, A., Rainville, P.
THIRD ROW: l. to r.:--Chyzik, W., Leger, F., Scolinik, J., Tonitzky, A., Campbell, J., Keegan, W., Geldner, R.

RIGHT
SECOND ROW: l. to r.:--AW1 Wall, A. E., LAW Grimsey, H. V., LAW McKinnon, O. M., Cpl West, H. E., AW1 Paterson, S. C., Cpl McVittle, P. M., AW1 Collins, G. E., LAW Colson, R. M., LAW Jenkinson, F.
BELOW

ABOVE
SECOND ROW: l. to r.:—Misses—B. Hillier, I., Pitts, Mary O'Brien, D., Williams, E., Moore, K., Maher, LAW Burrows.

LEFT
FRONT ROW: l. to r.:—Clement, J. L., Morrel, P., Woodward, K., Munro, G. B.
SECOND ROW: l. to r.:—Roach, P. C., Lindsay, J. S., Graham, G. L., Patterson, J., Marcoux, R., Davis, D. P., Brooks, R. E.
FIFTH ROW: l. to r.:—Martin, W. G., Passmore, M. F., Cunningham, G. D., Little, V. W., Vlasis, E.
BELOW


ABOVE


LEFT

ABOVE
FRONT ROW: l. to r.:—F/O Pelser, C. S.,
Sgt Brewes, H. P.,
F/O Bongard, W. L.
SECOND ROW: l. to r.:—Cpl Hawkins, W.
V., Cpl Kertson, F. J.,
Cpl Miles, N. J., LAC
Stevens, C. H., Cpl
Thorpe, J. W., Cpl
Mohms, L. W., LAC
Johnston, W. A.

RIGHT
SEATED: Fraser, F. R. STANDING:
l. to r.:—Bifford, E. C., MacCausland, V.
W., Cox, R. H., Nichols, G. T., Pye, B. M.