

Ground Observers End Service

Disbandment of the RCAF's Ground Observers Corps in the more densely populated areas of Canada south of the 55th parallel marks the end of nine years of volunteer work by nearly 35,000 civilians.

It was an organization formed of necessity in 1951 to provide a filler between the construction of the early warning radar lines in Canada and the time it would become operational.

This volunteer group formed the "eyes and ears" of the Air Force and was responsible for the detection and recording of aircraft movements over Canadian soil.

The GOBC blossomed into an organization that manned more than 6,000 observation posts across the country.

Many were in strange places, on fishing boats and lighthouses, on city skyscrapers and on urban farms, and in one instance in the tower of a monastery.

When the call for volunteers went out to man these posts, an enthusiastic response from the public was received.

A small group of officers from Air Defence Command Headquarters at St. Hubert - - under the direction of Wing Commander J. A. Wiseman, AFC. (now retired) - - was charged with the responsibility of organizing and training the observers.

An effective reporting organization. The organization rapidly expanded to take in all the land mass in the Arctic as far north as Ellesmere Island.

As the Corps flourished, construction work on the Mid-Canada and Distant Early Warning Lines progressed to the point where the "Lines" became operational.

Modern electronic radar devices with a rapid communications network took over as the "eyes" of the RCAF.

South of the Mid-Canada Line - - which roughly follows the 55th parallel - - the role of the GOBC of giving early warning of aircraft was becoming outdated.

High-flying aircraft flying at near sonic speeds were almost impossible to spot from the ground - - but they were clearly visible on a radar scope.

Although the GOBC had been doing an excellent job, it was overtaken by progress and after careful consideration the decision to disband the southern section of the Corps was made.

A secondary, yet very important function of the GOBC was its participation in search and rescue operations.

In many instances, observers, through their training, were able to recognize aircraft as being friendly and instead of passing the information to the various filtration was soon in operation and the manner in which an "aircraft flash" report was to be made was established.

As soon as an aircraft was spotted by an observer, its direction, height and type were flashed to the nearest regional filter center. There were nine established across Canada.

The filter centers would plot and filter all aircraft flash messages received from volunteers and subsequently report necessary information to the radar networks across Canada and the USA.

While the greater proportion of the GOBC strength was in the more densely populated areas south of the 55th parallel, a large percentage was responsible for reporting aircraft movement in the Arctic.

Organizing the GOBC in the northern areas presented a greater task due to communications. With no telephones to report aircrafts, RCAF officers who organized the northern Corps enlisted volunteer personnel from various government agencies and private companies where radio facilities were already established.

Besides enlisting the aid of Indians and Eskimos, employees of the Department of Transport, Hudson Bay Company, and missionaries and RCMP personnel volunteered their services. Filter centers would simply record it in a log.

On many occasions when aircraft were reported missing, this information was of vital import-

ance to search and rescue operations.

In the sparsely populated areas north of the 55th parallel reporting of all aircraft movements will continue to be made and about 2,000 GOBC personnel will remain active in the organization.

These observers will continue to function in their supplementary role to the early warning system in the defence of North America, and in their secondary function of providing information on search and rescue operations.

More than 24,000 aircraft messages in a 72-hour period was the heaviest volume of traffic carried by the Ground Observer Corps in its nine years history, Squadron Leader J. L. Renaud, staff officer in charge of the GOBC at Air Defence Command Headquarters, St. Hubert said today.

The aircraft flash calls were received during an exercise to test the reporting capability of the GOBC and involved seven of the nine filter centres across Canada.

The filter centres south of the 55th parallel are standing down following nearly nine years of operation.

S/L Renaud is the only Air Force officer still in the service who served with the GOBC since its inception in 1951. At that time he was on the planning staff at Air Force Headquarters in Ottawa.

He was commanding officer of No. 5 Ground Observer Corps Unit at North Bay, Ont., for five years

Bridal Shower For Judy Slaght

COBALT — Miss Judy Slaght was thoroughly surprised on Wednesday, April 20, when she arrived at the Legion Lounge to attend what she thought was to be a bowling executive meeting and found a group of her friends gathered there instead.

The hall had been very attractively decorated for the occasion with dainty pastel flowers and streamers. Judy was escorted to the head table where she was presented with a lovely corsage of pink and white baby mums.

Bingo provided entertainment during the evening and then the guest of honor unwrapped her gifts, assisted by Miss Lois LaBelle and Miss Jackie Lemoine. Judy thanked her friends for the lovely gifts she had received.

Lunch was served by the hostesses who were Patsy Giroux, Aline Audette, Diane Morin, Lois LaBelle, Jackie Lemoine, Patsy Taylor, Linda Speck, Lise LeBlanc and Cecile Oudette.

There were more than 50 friends at the party.



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Splake Popular As Fighting Fish

Suppose you take a speckled trout and "cross" it with a lake trout. What would you get?

The answer, according to research officials of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, is the "splake", a fish with the fighting qualities of the speckled trout, and the size of the lake trout.

Now, suppose you go further with the experiment and cross lake trout with splake, and speckled trout with splake? What will be the end result of these crosses, of the further hybridization of two of Ontario's favourite fish?

It may take years to find out, but such experiments are now in progress at the Research Laboratory of the Department at Maple, 20 miles north of Toronto.

And, government officials feel, if the results are half as good as they have been from the splake (sometimes known as the wendigo or ghost fish) fishermen of the future will have something to look forward to.

Actually, one of the biggest questions facing the researchers was whether the hybrid fish would reproduce naturally.

Now, they know, splake will spawn naturally over rocky shoals, similar to the spawning grounds of lake trout, in 1½ to eight feet of water. Observation has shown spawning took place in Jack Lake, Algonquin Park, between October 14 and November 10, in 1959.

"These observations showed that two age classes of splake constituted the spawning population; three-year-olds about 16 inches long and six-year-olds about 22 inches in length. Viable splake eggs were taken off the spawning grounds."

Now the scientists are going further. They are experimenting with the selective breeding of the splake, involving three generations of the fish. These include not only the cross of lake trout with speckled trout, but also the back crosses of lake trout with splake, and speckled trout with splake.

Perfect Hand

Spending a quiet evening at the New Liskeard Fire Department this week, Cec Bond dealt opponent Fred Carr a perfect cribbage hand.

Just when he needed it most Fred was dealt three fives and the Jack of spades. The five of spades was the turnup.

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