

ployed before the rule change. New fixed wing pilots are posted to "training" detachments, where they are employed as co-pilots until they have obtained the required advanced endorsements and are certified to fly the aircraft to which they are assigned. Fixed-wing pilots are also expected to obtain multi-engine instrument and float endorsements, and to qualify as senior commercial or airline transport pilots when they have the requisite experience. Helicopter pilots are appointed aircraft commanders after a short indoctrination course, and are not required to obtain the two advanced licences.

Air Services as it is known today became a Directorate on April 1, 1973. It has three divisions: Eastern, Western and Helicopter, each under the supervision of an Air Services Officer. The Eastern Division, with headquarters in Ottawa, consists of 10 detachments and a staff of 21. The Western Division, with headquarters and a staff of 6 in Edmonton, Alberta, has 11 detachments. The Helicopter Division has 7 detachments. Victoria, British Columbia, has both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters in service. Air Services has 60 pilots, including supervisory staff, 46 engineers and 8 administrative and support staff, together with 28 aircraft and helicopters in service.

Air Safety Record and Fatalities

Air Services has had an enviable safety record during its 50-year history, which is notable, considering approximately 20,000 hours of flying are logged annually by RCMP pilots. While equipment failures and age of aircraft have contributed to several crashes through the years, the

Directorate has fortunately had only five fatal crashes since its inception.

The first crash, on August 6, 1958, involving a Beaver aircraft, CF-FHW, resulted in the loss of two crew members and a regular member near Skaha Lake, south of Penticton, B.C. A second Beaver, CF-MPO, crashed on July 13, 1963, at Carmacks, Yukon, resulting in the deaths of the pilot, three regular members and a prisoner who was being transported. On September 4, 1977, the crash of a Cessna 182 at Salt Spring Island, B.C. resulted in the death of the Special Constable pilot. The only fatal helicopter accident, C-GDXB, to date occurred on December 14, 1983, near Ucluelet, B.C., resulting in the deaths of the pilot and the member in charge of Ucluelet Detachment. A third Beaver aircraft, CF-MPQ, crashed and the pilot, pilot trainee and two passengers died in an accident at Wollaston Lake, Sask., on January 8, 1986.

During Air Services' first half-century, the Directorate has been at the forefront of transportation and air policing for the RCMP. Personnel have performed such diverse duties as searching for escaped prisoners or lost persons and escorting the Royal Family on a tour of the Northwest Territories, in July, 1970, which was a proud moment for the flight crew and the RCMP. Force aircraft and crews have flown rescue missions and mercy missions to various points in Canada. Pilots and crews perform exemplary roles each time they climb behind the controls of their aircraft or helicopters, whether embarking on serious missions or transporting members on court duty. Air Services has a 50-year record of service and dedication to the RCMP and the Canadian public. ■