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# Great Air Training Plan Comes to End

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan which has turned out 125,000 fighting airmen on Canadian fields since 1940, brought its Dominion-wide operations to a close yesterday afternoon in a brilliant and impressive ceremony at Uplands airport.

In the presence of diplomats of the United Nations, heads of Canada's Armed Services, Government officials and a gathering of 2,500 Ottawa and district men and women, the Governor General pinned wings on the last group of United Nations flyers to pass through the 256 schools of the plan.

Closing of the Air Training Plan does not mean there will be no more airmen trained in Canada. It will continue to train men for the R.C.A.F. and also R.A.F. flyers in Canada.

International character and scope of the vast training project was manifest in the ranks of blue-clad airmen from England, Scotland, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Australia, New Zealand and Jamaica, who marched with their Canadian comrades-in-arms at the concluding wing parade.

The large hangar where the closing ceremonies were held was gay with flags of the United Nations and scores of R.C.A.F. banners with their red, white and blue circles.

Air Marshal Robert Leckie, Chief of the Air Staff, welcomed the Governor General and official guests, and paid tribute to the young men from foreign lands who took their training in

Canada and despite the language difficulty were highly successful.

Selection of Uplands Service Flying Training School for the closing ceremonies was for the two-fold reason of its proximity to Canada's Capital and also in recognition of the splendid achievements of graduates of the Uplands School in every section of the globe.

## Voices Sympathy.

In his opening address, His Excellency spoke movingly of the tragedy which took the lives of British Air Ministry officials, when the plane bearing them to Canada to conclude the affairs of the Training Plan, crashed in the Atlantic near the Azores.

"News of the loss of a plane bringing representatives of the United Kingdom Air Ministry to these shores has cast a gloom on the celebrations this afternoon.

"Among the passengers were men we had known well, friends of ours, some of whom had been intimately connected with the British training plans and had worked in Canada. We know that they were bringing us praise for our efforts and the thanks of the United Kingdom for the work that has been accomplished. May their souls rest in peace."

His Excellency recalled that with Prime Minister King and former Air Minister Power, he had officiated at the opening of Uplands School on August 5, 1940, and referred to Uplands as "one of the most successful centres of the combined training plan". Of the Dominion-wide training project, the Governor General said: "I must offer my very sincere congratulations to the government, and especially to the former Minister for Air.

"Fortunately, there were many Canadians who had shown their worth in the Royal Flying Corps, and the Royal Naval Air Service in the last war. As invariably happens, these men showed their patriotism by returning to the work they had carried out so well before."

The Governor General voiced special praise of the accomplishments of the young instructors in the Commonwealth Air Training schools whom he described as "the backbone of the scheme."

"Grew Up Like Mushrooms." Of the early months of the B.C. A.T.P., His Excellency said "air schools grew up like mushrooms thanks to the bull-dozers and other contraptions, and the work of the builders who inhaled the dust and wallowed in the mud".

Seated near His Excellency on the platform, Princess Alice wore the uniform of an honorary commodore of the Women's Division, R.C.A.F.

Hon. Ray Atherton, United States Ambassador expressed the sympathy of his government and the people of the United States in the tragic loss of "those officers who have given their lives in the service of their country in their attempt to be here today".

The ties between the United States and Canada, Mr. Atherton said, had been strengthened by the air training plan which had turned out Americans who had fought over all the continents. It had also contributed splendidly-trained airmen who are now in the United States Army Air Corps.

## Canada Merits Credit.

Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, said that while many peoples in the British family of nations helped to make the plan, the prime credit for its achievements belongs to Canada.

"Here on Canadian soil, young men from different parts of the British Commonwealth and Empire and from many Allied nations gathered in tens of thousands to prepare for their great task. Here they sprouted wings, and stretched and exercised them in this lovely clear blue sky, until they could fly across the ocean on broad, sure, strong pinions—and pounce upon and kill the enemies of mankind.

"This field of Uplands is one of the nests where those magnificent fledglings were reared. It is fitting that we acclaim the Commonwealth Air Training Plan here."

Speaking for Australia, Dr. Anstey Wynes, official secretary to the High Commissioner for Australia, expressed the thanks of the Commonwealth he represents for Canada's contribution to the training of Empire airmen. "We in Australia", he said, "are proud that we were privileged to be partners in that great plan." Dr. Wynes told the gathering that many Australians who came to Canada for their air training had married Canadian girls and "have forged even stronger that bond which lies between Canada and Australia".

## For Occupied Lands.

Chosen to speak for the United Nations which had been overrun by the Nazis, but whose young men found their way to Canada and trained in this country, Dr. Frantisek Pavlasek, Czechoslovakian Minister, voiced the satisfaction of these nations that Canada had aided them to fight the aggressor.

"The airmen of the occupied countries have found here in Canada an opportunity which otherwise would not have been available." He expressed the belief that the training they received in the Dominion will be invaluable to them in civil aviation after victory is won.

A review of the Air Training Plan since its inception on December 16, 1939, was given by Hon. Colin Gibson, Minister for Air.

"The plan", he explained, "provided for a long-range program; the patient accumulation of a huge force of airmen capable of securing superiority over the Luftwaffe. It is due to the strict devotion to this policy of long-range planning, that we are able today to mark the achievement of the objective of this phase of our training program."

The day's ceremony, the Min-

ister said, did not mean the end of the training project.

"The culmination—the realization of the vision through which the plan was born—will come only with complete and final victory over Germany and Japan."

While the Canadian Government was proud of the plan, Col. Gibson said, "we must never lose sight of the fact that the plan had the finest conceivable raw material to work with".

New Zealand was proud to be associated with Canada in the Commonwealth Air Training Plan, said Hon. David Wilson, High Commissioner for New Zealand. "Nothing in Canada's splendid war effort merits higher praise than the operation of the air training plan." He expressed thanks of his Government for the hospitality extended by Canada and Canadians to New Zealand air trainees.

During the ceremony of the wing parade, the R.C.A.F. band played a soft background of patriotic and military airs, and flyers from many nations were warmly applauded by the crowd.

A picket guard-of-honor from Uplands Airport was inspected by the Governor General who walked up and down the ranks, and occasionally stopped to chat with members of the detachment.

His Excellency also took the salute at the march past of personnel of the station, which was headed by a group of 20 officers, all decorated for gallantry, who were among the first graduating class of the flying school. They were followed in the parade by the new graduating class proudly wearing the wings pinned on their tunics by the Governor General, the guard of honor, a detachment of the Women's Division of the R.C.A.F., and staff personnel.

As the final bars of the National Anthem were played, a fleet of planes from Rockcliffe, from swift Hurricanes to mighty four-engined bombers, circled the airfield, dipping low over the hangars and headquarters buildings.

Detained by pressure of business in the House of Commons, Prime Minister King was unable to attend the closing ceremonies of the Plan.

While occupied by Service Flying Training School No. 2, Uplands airport is an achievement of the Department of Transport which built the airfield in the first place and has operated and managed it since its inception.

Among the 50 men of the United Nations receiving their wings six from Ottawa and district. They were Sgt. P. Kaluski, Ottawa; Sgt. J. E. F. Lafleur, Hull; Flt. Sgt. C. F. McCarthy, of Aylmer; Sgt. A. J. Bray, of Cornwall; Sgt. W. J. Dougue, of South Porcupine, and Sgt. H. V. Thorson, of Noranda.

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