

# INITIAL TRAINING IS IMPORTANT PHASE OF AIRMAN'S CAREER



Wing Commander Ewart G. Macpherson, Commanding Officer, No. 4 Initial Training School, R.C.A.F., Edmonton.

## Commanding Officer No. 4 I.T.S. Has a Successful Career

Wing Commander Ewart G. Macpherson, Commanding Officer of No. 4 Initial Training School since April 26, 1943, when he succeeded Group Captain J. A. Hutchison, O.B.E., has a very successful and distinguished military career. Born in Orangeville, Ontario, on April 18th, 1898, he was one of six brothers, four of whom served overseas in the last war.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 he was 15 years old and held the rank of Sergeant in the militia but not until he was 17 years old could he convince the recruiting officials of his ability to do a man's job and they sanctioned his enlistment in the 164th Battalion. He became Company Sergeant Major at the ripe age of 18. In 1917 he celebrated his 19th birthday while enroute overseas and in the fall of that same year he transferred to what was then the Royal Flying Corps and served with No. 201 Camel Squadron in France.

In the years following the war Wing Commander Macpherson maintained his interest in aviation and held Canada's No. 12 Commercial Pilot's license. In the fall of 1936 he became interested in No. 120 (BR) Auxiliary Squadron then being formed at Regina where he was vice-president and Saskatchewan manager of the J. J. Gibbons Advertising Agency and he joined with the rank of Flight Lieutenant and trained in his spare time.

At the outbreak of the present war he was called up for full time duty and was posted to Jericho Beach, Vancouver. On March 24th, 1941, after serving at various stations in varying capacities he was posted to No. 1 I.T.S., Toronto, as Commanding Officer and subsequently was Commanding Officer at No. 2 I.T.S. Regina until being posted to No. 4 I.T.S. in Edmonton last year.

## Team Work Stressed and Trainees Given Opportunity To Show Ability

The important part taken by Initial Training Schools in the steady development of the new airman toward his ultimate goal of being the finest fighting aircrewman in the world can hardly be over stressed. It is during this phase the embryo airman has his first opportunity to study the cultural aspect of life in the air force. To this end active sports and hard work are balanced by keen study.

During the short period an airman is a student at I.T.S. he is given an intensive course of ground training in aviation which includes Theory of Flight, Engines, Navigation, Meteorology, Aircraft Recognition, Armament, Anti-Gas, Law, Administration, Organization and

Discipline. In addition, he is, of course, given a careful physical check and he undergoes a complete program of Duty Fitness designed to assist him to attain the maximum peak of physical perfection.

Important also on the syllabus of the I.T.S. is the problem of inculcating the high spirit of Esprit de Corps and essentially the knowledge that team-work is paramount to produce the efficient fighting teams of the air. In this regard no effort is spared from the first day a trainee arrives on the station until he receives his "Props" to teach and demonstrate that this high standard of individual character, morale and devotion to the great Cause, must keep pace with his progressive academic efficiency.

## MESSAGE TO NO. 4 I.T.S., EDMONTON ON THEIR THIRD ANNIVERSARY



Air Vice-Marshal G. R. Howsam, M.C., Air Officer Commanding No. 4 Training Command, Royal Canadian Air Force

It is significant that No. 4 I.T.S. observes its third anniversary in the month that will go down in history as "Invasion Month."

It is significant for these reasons. The many thousands of graduates who have received their initial training at No. 4 I.T.S., Edmonton, are among the valiant aircrew who have constantly over many months pressed home the attack on the enemy. Were it not for these Air Force graduates, and graduates of other such schools, the Allied invasion and advance would be lacking the full effectiveness it is now demonstrating.

True it is that the war progress has been ably supported by the graduates of No. 4 I.T.S., and it is also true that battles are won or lost in accordance with the degree of training displayed by the combatants.

It is a keen pleasure to me as Air Officer Commanding No. 4 Training Command to extend to Wing Commander E. G. Macpherson, officers, airwomen and airmen of No. 4 I.T.S. and all who are connected with this school, heartfelt congratulations on their third anniversary.

G. R. HOWSAM,  
Air Vice-Marshal,  
Air Officer Commanding,  
No. 4 Training Command.

## DUTY FITNESS

In this war of machines, the strength and weaknesses of the human being seem relatively unimportant. However, it has been proven time and time again that the best machine is only as good as its operator.

Airmen who undertake long, arduous missions which call upon their utmost in stamina, strength, keenness of eyes and nerves, have proven that it is a duty to their country and to themselves to keep physically fit—hence the name for this training in the Airforce—"Duty Fitness."

On enlistment in the R.C.A.F. a large percentage of aircrew material were found to be "soft" and at the same time it was recognized that at different stages of training, for example, I.T.S., which is comparable to a concentrated University course, regular periods of supervised exercise were necessary to keep the boys as close to the peak of physical fitness as possible.

Much research and experimentation has gone into the present Duty Fitness program. Much time and care has gone into training of the Instructional staff. The results, however, speak for themselves.

At No. 4 Initial Training School, under the supervision of keen, conscientious non-commissioned officers, the trainees have one-hour period each day from Monday to Friday of Duty Fitness. This period is planned to follow a pattern—10 minutes for "warming up"—10 minutes for conditioning drills—20 minutes for games which involve mostly running and bodily contact and 20 minutes to shower and change.

In order to determine the degree of physical fitness which has been attained by each airman, the Harvard Step Test was adopted by the R.C.A.F. This test, like other physical fitness tests, is not infallible. Nevertheless it is a simple test and in the great majority of cases it gives a clear picture of an individual's physical condition. A bench, 20 inches high, 18 inches across, a stop watch and a metronome are necessary for the test which is supervised by a Medical Officer.

On a signal from the supervisor, the airman being tested step up on to and down off the bench at the rate of thirty times a minute for five minutes or one hundred and fifty times. On completion he is given a one minute rest and a half minute pulse reading is then taken. Then he has two more half minute rests with two more half minute pulse readings following each. The pulse readings are added together and by means of a correlated table, mathematically established, a percentage score of physical fitness is established. Every airman must attain a certain score on this test before he leaves I.T.S. If he fails in the first test which is given in the seventh week of his course, he is given special attention and extra hours of duty fitness until he can



Wing Commander R. Clare, President of the Medical Selection Board at No. 4 Initial Training School.

## Medical Research Important Part of Aircrew Selection

### Doctors Probe Secrets of Who Can Fly and Fight . . .

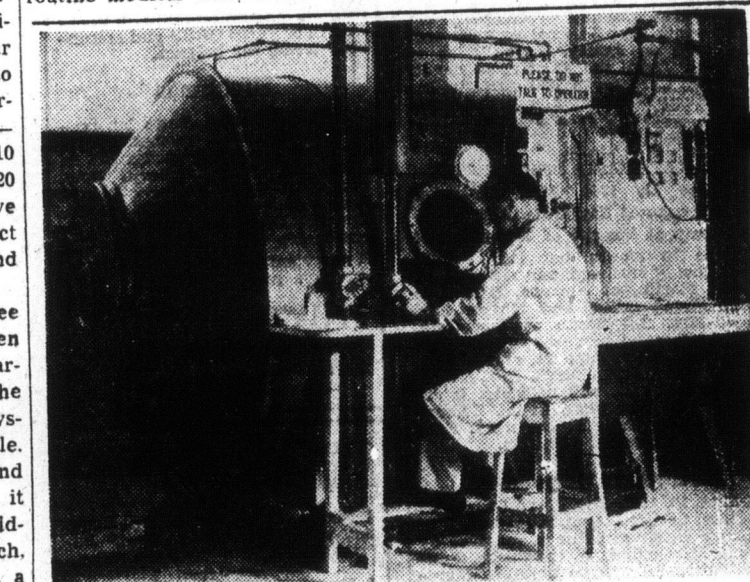
Sparked by the same ingenuity that caused Archytas of the ancient myth to build a wooden pigeon and sail off into space, medical officers of the air force are making history every day in their quest for superior air crews.

Behind the headlines in the scientific laboratory and the medical clinic, they daily battle the Luftwaffe in their quest to select air crew members who can stand the strain of higher speeds and altitudes better than the crews of the German Messerschmitt or Stuka.

Kept out of the limelight, this work is progressing silently in Edmonton at No. 4 Initial Training School where a group of research doctors and hearing, vision, heart, nerves and psychology specialists provide a finer mesh for prospective aircrew to pass through than routine medical examinations.

Because brilliant Joe Smith brawny and has a build like Archilles and is an A1 recruit for the Army, these factors alone do not prove that he can take a big bomber to high altitudes without passing out cold. His ability or inability to withstand lack of oxygen at high altitudes can't be assessed from outward appearance.

Delicate instruments to test heart conditions, eye and nerve efficiency, low pressure chambers and many other exacting tests are the weapons of the Medical Selection Board in their constant efforts to produce only the finest of air crew material for the Royal Canadian Air Force. Their task is of all importance and the results are headlined in the press of the country every day in the valorous deeds of our intrepid Canadian aircrew.



The Low Pressure Chamber in action. In this device trainees are taken to various altitudes and their reactions carefully noted. The low pressure chamber duplicates conditions that would be encountered in actual flight.

## Careful Selection Assures Proper Classification to Aircrew Duties

Ninety per cent of Aircrew Trainees who arrive at an Initial Training School express an immediate preference for Pilot Training. However, when trainees are posted to I.T.S. they are classified as Aircrew Standard and when they have completed their full syllabus of training they are then selected for the particular job in aircrew for which they are considered most qualified.

There is no distinction made as to the relative importance of an Air Gunner, Navigator or Pilot. Every position in Aircrew is of equal importance—it is team work that has gained the Royal Canadian Air Force its enviable record in the air—and team work above all else is stressed in initial training. The pilot of an aircraft, the navigator, wireless operator, air bomber, flight engineer and air gunner must be a co-ordinated team—each man fully conversant with his job and fully reliant on each other as to their aircrew duties and abilities. For this reason a most careful system of selection is used because confidence in each other's ability to perform his allotted tasks is the basis of successful aircrew.

One of the first assignments a trainee receives on arrival at I.T.S. is the filling out of what is known as a Personal History Sheet. This is quite a lengthy series of questions to obtain information relative to the trainee's educational, cultural and family background. Also his marital status, religious tendencies, childhood history and other facts pertinent to the individual. When this form has been completed it is then supplemented by personal interviews. During his first two weeks on course the student is interviewed by his Flight Commander who completes an Initial Interview form on which is recorded the Flight Commander's first impression and the trainee's

allot him but that his own choice is given every consideration.

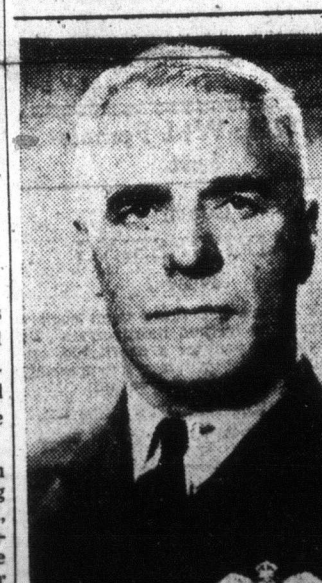
Many trainees who have never before studied navigation feel that they would not qualify as navigator and consequently are reluctant in making that as their first choice. However, it is not unusual to have students who have made Pilot as their first choice request that it be changed to navigator after two or three weeks on course. In nearly all cases it is because they find navigation one of the most interesting subjects on the syllabus.

The Medical Selection Board gives each trainee a thorough physical check-up the first few days they are on course. Here many of the trainees emerge with restricted categories. That is they may be limited to certain positions in aircrew owing to eye defects, weight, height or other reasons. An airman may be restricted from being an airgunner due to the fact that he is considered too large to efficiently operate a gun turret or fails to pass his Night Vision Test. Some are washed-out completely from aircrew duties by their inability to withstand the Low Pressure Chamber Test. However, early on their course the Flight Commander receives a record of the medical categories of his men and from then on it is a matter of getting to know each individual. He is carefully watched by his instructor, Squadron Commander, N.C.O. and

other officials with whom he comes in contact. Every effort is made to obtain an accurate estimate of the man's abilities, his qualifications academically, physically and mentally.

Final decision as to the trainee's aircrew category is made at the Selection Board Meeting which is held at the completion of his course. The Board consists of the Commanding Officer, the President of the Medical Selection Board, the Chief Ground Instructor, Chief Navigation Instructor, the Squadron Commander and the Flight Commander. Each individual is discussed and his qualifications examined in detail before he is assigned to a place in aircrew.

Not all selections meet with the approval of the trainee and in many cases he is allowed before the Board to plead his case. However there are bound to be disappointments but after two or three days these miraculously disappear as the airman sets out for further training determined to be "tops" in whatever career of aircrew he is now launched.



## 68 Graduates of No. 4 I.T.S. Receive Awards

Bringing honor to themselves and to their Initial Training School is the impressive list of No. 4 I.T.S. graduates who have distinguished themselves in action against the enemy.

The list of these gallant airmen includes 45 Distinguished Flying Crosses and one Bar to the D.F.C., sixteen Distinguished Flying Medals, two Air Force Crosses, one British Empire Medal and four

## 'Props' Parade Feature of Graduation Exercises

While it naturally cannot compete in importance with a Wings parade, the "Props" parade held as a feature of graduation exercises at No. 4 I.T.S., nevertheless does give recognition to the young members of aircrew who have successfully completed their first hurdle.

Props parades were instituted by Wing Commander E. G. Macpherson when he was commanding officer of No. 2 I.T.S. in Regina and he made them a regular feature of the graduation exercises at No. 4 I.T.S. For this ceremony aircrew

clasp from the Commanding Officer.

An honor student is named from each course and an award, usually a gold identification bracelet, is made to him on the parade. At the conclusion of the presentations, the training squadrons form up as a wing in line facing the ensign and the Commanding Officer takes the salute as the graduating flights march past.

This form of giving recognition to graduates at Initial Training Schools is considered a real incentive for personnel of junior

