



# PRESS RELEASE

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
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It was announced simultaneously today in Ottawa and Washington that, with a view to expediting the movement across the international boundary of aircraft and air-crew engaged in emergency air search and rescue operations, the Canadian and United States Governments had agreed in an exchange of notes to give special customs and immigration clearance to such planes and crews of either country when entering the other's territory. As a result of the new arrangements, it will no longer be necessary for the crews of planes involved in air search and rescue operations to make their own arrangements with the Customs and Immigration authorities of the country which they are entering. Instead, completion of these formalities, by telephone or telegraph, has now become the responsibility of the Rescue Coordination Centre in charge of the rescue operation.

In Canada the R.C.A.F. is responsible for coordinating air search and rescue operations, which have been so often in the news since the war as a result of the many spectacular rescues effected. One of the mostly highly publicized of these was the dramatic "Operation Canon", in the autumn of 1947, when the R.C.A.F., assisted by an Army paratroop team, evacuated Canon John Turner, wounded Church of England missionary, by air from his home in Northern Baffin Land.

Rescue operations are conducted from five R.C.A.F. Coordination Centres at Halifax, Trenton, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver. In most cases flights are handled by aircraft specially designated for such work; some 25 of these planes are based at different points across Canada, immediately available for rescue missions. In addition the R.C.A.F. maintains a detachment of specially trained "para-rescue jumpers", ready to leap to the aid of those in distress in remote areas. There are also special marine craft available on the East and West Coasts for water rescues.

When the need arises, the combined facilities of the R.C.A.F., of the other two Services, and of other Government agencies can be called upon to assist in rescue operations. The R.C.A.F. maintains close co-operation with all Government departments and municipal agencies and, when the latter are unable to carry out the task with the facilities at their immediate disposal, the Air Search and Rescue organization is brought into play.

Normally, R.C.A.F. Air Search and Rescue planes are only employed in assisting distressed flyers. In exceptional cases, however, - particularly when it is a matter of life or death - "mercy flights" within Canadian territory are also handled. Some fifty operations of all kinds have been carried out during the past twelve months and in three cases the men responsible for effecting the rescues were awarded decorations.

The texts of exchange of notes on this subject are attached: