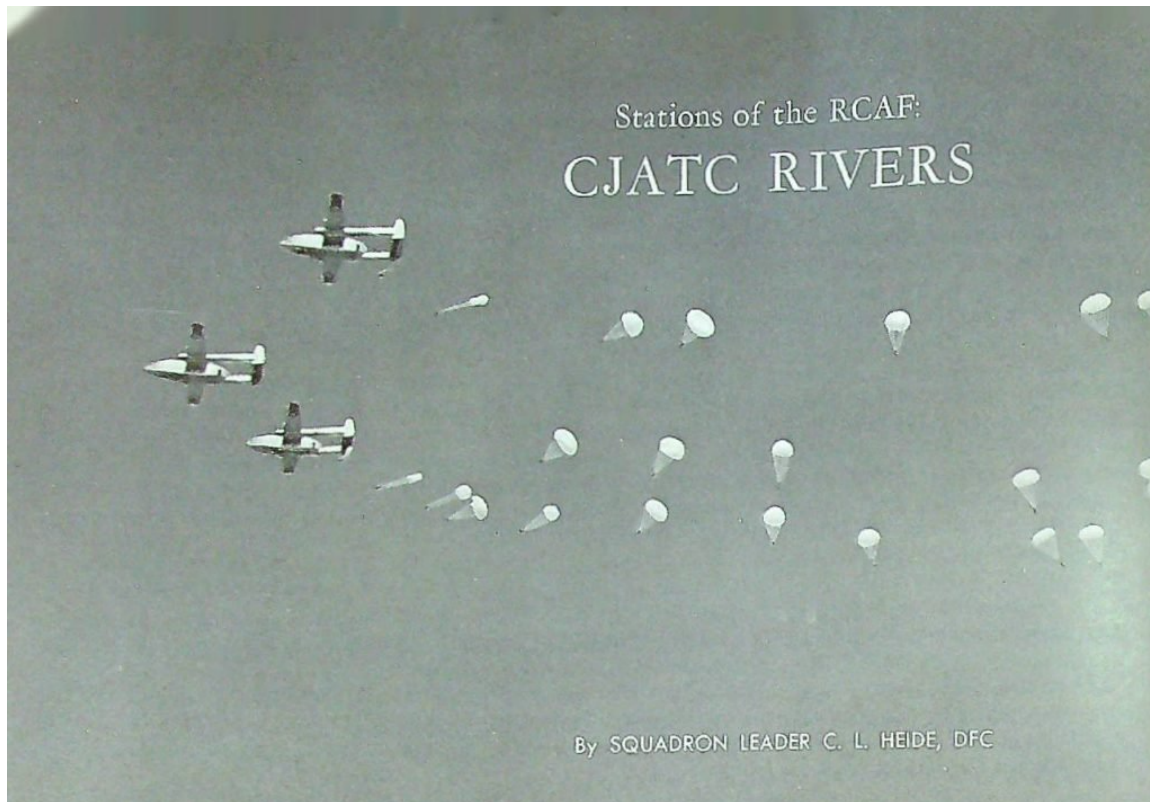


CJATC Rivers



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(reprinted from the October 1961 issue of The Roundel)

By Squadron Leader C.L. Heide, DFC

As a practical example of service integration, the Canadian Joint Air Training Centre at Rivers, Manitoba, is living proof that the colour of the uniform a man wears is really immaterial when it comes to getting the job done. Permanent strength of 800 servicemen at CJATC is about one-half RCAF and one-half Army. Except for two months each summer when naval jet squadrons come to Rivers for tactical exercises, RCN strength is only a token force — but “blue jobs” and “brown jobs” work and live together in complete harmony the year-round.*

During the war years RCAF Station Rivers was the home of No. 1 Air Navigation School and many fledgling navigators of the RAF and RCAF were trained here, sometimes under rather severe conditions. The author vividly remembers taking astro sights in mid-winter when one's fingers gradually lost their mobility and the sextant mechanism slowly froze in sub-zero temperatures. It was little better when airborne in the Anson aircraft, which seemed at the time to have small holes strategically placed for the bitter winter wind to have maximum effect.

Even in those early days, Rivers had an association with the Army because of the proximity of the large Camp Shilo training base. In fact, the first army parachutists to jump in Canada flew from Rivers in June 1943 in a Lodestar aircraft to "drop" at Camp Shilo. They had been trained in England and the United States.

After the Second World War the Air Navigation School was disbanded and Station Rivers was temporarily closed.

In October 1945 a plan for Army/ Air activities in Canada resulted in the formation of No. 1 Airborne Research and Development Centre located at Camp Shilo. By April 1947 sufficient progress had been made to permit the unit to be called the Joint Air School and it was moved from Camp Shilo to Rivers under the command of G/C M.G. Doyle. At this time No. 417 Fighter Reconnaissance Squadron was operating with Mustang aircraft, No. 112 Flight was co-operating with gliders, and No. 444 Army Squadron was being formed with light aircraft. The joint school's function was to meet all requirements of training and development for the Canadian forces in tactical support of land and airborne operations. Royal Canadian Navy personnel were added to the school in August 1948.

A change in organization in March 1949 created the Joint Air Training Centre out of the elements of the Joint Air School. This organization is substantially the same today with the station being divided into Air Training, Technical, Administrative and Land/Air Warfare Wings. The station is under the command of G/C C.M. Black with Lt. Col. A.B. Stewart as deputy commandant.

THE AIRBORNE SCHOOL

The Airborne School trains the "glamour boys" of the Army — the paratroopers. The training of the candidates is hard and vigorous and demands a high physical standard; in fact, a good portion of the course is devoted to their physical conditioning. After first learning how to roll on landing from elevated stands the students jump from the mock tower. From this 32 ft. high device the students are carried by sloping cables to the ground some distance away. Following this, the potential paratroopers jump from the 150 ft. high tower at Camp Shilo which is a very realistic comparison to an actual aircraft

jump. Ultimately, the paratroopers jump fully equipped from C-119 aircraft maintained at CJATC for this purpose.

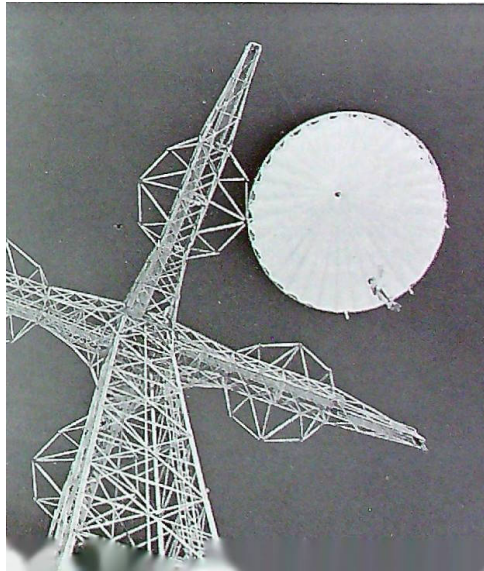
In spite of somewhat caustic remarks by the “blue jobs” on the sanity of people who jump out of a serviceable aircraft, more than 13,000 paratroopers have been qualified by the airborne school since 1947. Including those made on advanced and instructors’ courses, more than 100,000 jumps have been made at CJATC. A staff member, L/Sgt H. M. Allan, recently completed his 300th jump, which is believed to be a record for the Canadian Army.

A somewhat different record was set by a student jumping from the high tower at Camp Shilo. On his first descent he landed on top of a lecture room; on his second descent he became entangled in the high tower structure; and on his third descent landed in a somewhat thick bush. However, he was not easily discouraged and eventually descended in the proper manner and completed his airborne training successfully.

Soldiers jump from this 32 ft. “mock tower” at Rivers before graduating to...



... this 150 ft. metal mast at Camp Shilo, then to actual paraflrops from aircraft.



THE AIR SUPPLY SCHOOL

This school conducts a variety of courses designed to train army NCOs to supervise the loading of transport aircraft efficiently, to train both army and RCAF personnel in the basic aspects of air supply duties, and to train NCOs of all three services so that they may be employed as airportability instructors. Since the school was formed more than 5,500 students have been



C-119 Flying Boxcars from CJATC

The equipment being loaded and dropped from C-119 aircraft varies from small loads to large heavy platforms weighing 6,000 pounds. Small loads are dropped from a monorail running the length of the C-119 fuselage and they drop with startling speed and efficiency. Jeeps and medium-sized vehicles are easily loaded and dropped through the large clam-shell doors of the C-119.

While the Air Supply School is now using C-119 aircraft, they are hard at work studying the loading, lashing and dropping problems associated with the new aircraft being introduced into Air Transport Command. The weight and balance problems in such a task are formidable, and a complete structural mock-up of the Yukon is to be built in the school for test and training purposes.

TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL INVESTIGATION SECTION

In support of the training being conducted by the two schools just mentioned, the Technical and Tactical Investigation Section are testers and advisors on all matters concerning airborne techniques and aerial delivery equipment. Many new pieces of equipment are evaluated by this section and many of the techniques now used in the delivery of both supplies and paratroopers have resulted from their work. From such small items as a snow shoe strap to prevent a parachutist losing his snow shoes when jumping, to a method of delivering a RAT (rig articulated tractor), the projects vary in both size and complexity.

Some of the trials are conducted with startling realism. One item developed was a "hang-up" release kit designed to rescue a paratrooper "hung-up" behind an aircraft. After a 200-lb dummy was hurled from the door and towed behind a C-119 aircraft, it began to rotate in large circles, striking the tail boom a series of thunderous blows. The dispatcher was ordered to cut the anchor line cable and release the dummy, but since his assistant was attempting to connect the hang-up kit at this time, there was some doubt for a moment whether the dummy or the assistant dispatcher would be released from the aircraft. This item of safety equipment has since been approved for Canadian use and is being studied with interest by other NATO countries.

In their trials and testing program the TTIS personnel fly many hours in C-119 aircraft, having completed more than 1,000 para Jumps and many light and heavy equipment drops.

THE LAND/AIR WARFARE COMPONENT

Two separate but closely related schools form the Land/Air Warfare component, providing training in matters relating to the joint employment of naval, ground and air forces and to evolve techniques for the employment of such forces. In this task the schools are guided by the Land/Air Warfare Committee at AFHQ.

The Transport Air Support School trains officers and NCOs of the three services in duties associated with the air transport and aerial delivery of personnel, equipment and stores. Specifically they are concerned with the Canadian commitments in supplying, reinforcing and moving our forces overseas. Six different types and levels of courses are conducted to accomplish this end.

The Tactical Air Support School trains officers and NCOs of the three services in those duties associated with the air support of ground forces and in particular the role of our forces within the NATO organization. Courses conducted are for ground liaison officers, forward air controllers, and specialist tactical air support NCOs.

The schools join together in conducting both junior and senior land/ air warfare courses for officers of the three services. These courses are broad in scope and consider both tactical and transport requirements in support of all types of joint operations. In addition, both schools provide teams of lecturers to travel across the country, lecturing to both army and air force units and commands. Also, when large army concentrations are formed each summer for training purposes, officers from the Land/Air Warfare School will usually be found in some of the key positions with the Joint Operation Centres.

LIGHT AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTER TRAINING

Until quite recently, army pilots were trained to wings standard at the Light Aircraft School. Now they come here from Centralia to take operational training on the L-19 before returning to their Corps to fly light aircraft or converting to helicopters at CJATC.



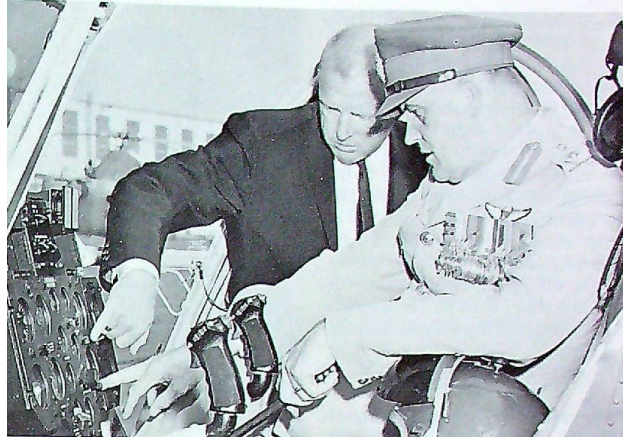
L-19 on floats for army pilots.

There are at the moment some 140 Canadian Army officers qualified as pilots. The majority of these are members of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery and of the Army Service Corps. Of this number, 115 have received their wings at CJATC. Units of the Canadian Army currently flying aircraft are three AOP Flights at Petawawa, Camp Shilo and one in Europe, with a fourth shortly to be added at Gagetown. They are all Royal Canadian Artillery Units.

The fully integrated Helicopter School has both RCAF and army instructors and students from all three services. The naval students have been few in the past but it is anticipated that their numbers will increase in the future. The primary task of the Helicopter School is the conversion of fixed wing pilots to rotary wing aircraft using the Sikorsky H-5 and Bell H-13. Courses of eight weeks duration are conducted primarily to teach the fundamental skills of helicopter flying, the specialist training for operational roles being left to the OTUs. Army pilots are predominantly newly-qualified, whereas the RCAF pilots have normally had a broader background of fixed wing experience. It is probably true to say that, over a period of the last ten years, this school has produced more helicopter pilots than any other organization in Canada, either service or civilian. Qualified army and air force helicopter pilots come to the Helicopter School for continuation training. These pilots are kept current using the Bell H-13 aircraft. Also, an instructor training course is conducted for helicopter flying instructors.

This fall the school is being re-equipped with Hiller CH-112 helicopters. This new and increased capability will add to the amount of helicopter training at CJATC, particularly for the Army. In addition to the conversion of students to rotary wing aircraft, a Light Helicopter OTU will be formed to train army pilots, many of whom will proceed as a complete unit to be attached to the ground forces operating in Europe under NATO control.

A variety of other tasks fall to the Helicopter School. Search and rescue missions have been conducted in the aid of civil authorities with some outstanding results. Each summer as the Army concentrates for field exercises, CJATC helicopters leave to provide the necessary aerial support.



Last month Maj. Gen. J.V. Allard accepted on behalf of Canadian Army first CH-112 helicopter to arrive at Rivers.



H-5 helicopters for conversion training.

NAVAL TRAINING

The yearly, or semi-yearly, arrival of a navy jet squadron is a welcome onslaught. In May 1961 VF-870 Squadron arrived from Shearwater, Nova Scotia, with six Banshee aircraft and one T-33 for a month of joint tactical training exercises.

In support of these aircraft, and of the 10 officers and 90 men concerned, a mass of material was airlifted into CJATC by the RCAF. The Banshee aircraft carried out live

bombing and strafing exercises with guns and rockets, often under Army control in simulated ground attack operations.

It is at these times that CJATC becomes fully a tri-service unit. The harmony and co-operation reflected at these times gives a feeling of satisfaction to all concerned and leaves no doubt that the colour of uniform makes no difference in the successful conduct of combined operations.

SUPPORTING UNITS

In support of tactical operational training the Tactical Fighter Flight flies six T-33 aircraft. Not only are these aircraft converted to carry full armament, but four of them have been converted to carry cameras for photograph reconnaissance work.

In support of the ground liaison officers' course the aircraft use a weapons firing range at Camp Shilo and in live firing demonstrations fire guns, rockets and drop napalm. The aircraft are also called upon by the Army during summer concentration exercises to provide tactical air support for forces in the field. In addition, the Tactical Fighter Flight has supported the Defence Research Board at their Suffield establishment on numerous occasions, carrying out a variety of tests.

With four C-119 aircraft the Transport Support Flight provides the aircraft necessary for both parachutist training and for air supply and air transportability training. Also, the Tactical and Technical Investigation Section use these aircraft for their project work and continuation training is carried out for both Army and RCAF personnel. When not fully committed at home, the aircraft are placed at the disposal of Air Transport Command and are used for special and routine transport flights.

The aircrew, therefore, must be fully conversant not only with the techniques involved in dropping paratroopers and heavy supply equipment but with the standard procedures required by all Air Transport Command crews who may be called upon to fly into the far northern areas of Canada, and indeed to anywhere in the world.

For example, one task which has often been given to CJATC C-119 aircraft is to fly on the re-supply of the Arctic weather stations from both Resolute Bay and Thule. The performance of these aircraft on the re-supply missions named Box Top II and III set an enviable record.

The Technical Wing is predominantly RCAF-manned. It provides maintenance for the aircraft, construction engineering, supply, telecommunications and armament and is analogous to similar organizations on most other RCAF stations. However, one exception is in the assistance being provided to army technicians in training them to

maintain their own light aircraft and helicopters. At the moment army technicians are carrying out this maintenance with the assistance and guidance of RCAF technicians and with the use of associated RCAF facilities such as workshops. Eventually the Army will take over maintenance of their own aircraft completely and army aircraft units in the field in both Canada and Europe will be maintained solely by army technicians.

The Administrative Wing is fully Army/RCAF integrated and whether to abide by AFROs or CAOs is sometimes a source of great discussion. The station hospital is an army detachment, but both padres are RCAF; light transportation is provided by an army detachment, but heavy vehicles are provided by the RCAF; separate personnel staffs are maintained by both services.

Being in a semi-isolated location, CJATC is faced with providing many of the community and recreation facilities that would normally be found in urban areas. Nearly all forms of sport and recreation are catered to. Summer activities include a swimming pool and a nine-hole golf course on the station. Winter activities feature all forms of indoor and outdoor sports including a four-sheet curling rink, to which it is anticipated artificial ice will be added this year.

In the Second World War a badge comprising an anchor, an eagle and a rifle signified joint operations. In peacetime, no such badge exists. Nevertheless, splendid co-operation does exist between Canada's three armed services in the field of aviation. To signify this union, the official crest of CJATC Rivers shows three links of a triangle coloured dark blue, red and light blue and the motto "Serving Together".

* All potential military aircrew today begin their flying careers by reporting to the Personnel Selection Unit at RCAF Stn Centralia for screening. The successful candidates then proceed to Primary Training School, also at Centralia, where they set Out on diverging courses. Formerly army fliers received a basic course of 60 hours on the Chipmunk prior to proceeding to advanced flying at CJATC on the L-19. Last month army trainees began a new course at Centralia, calling for over 130 flying hours including L-19 conversion, and will graduate from there with army wings before going to CJATC. The air force and navy trainees take the standard six-week course, then take the regular RCAF course to the end of Harvard training at Flying Training School and proceed to Expeditor training at Advanced Flying School in Saskatoon, Navy fliers receive their wings and instrument rating at AFS, then 20 to HMCS Shearwater for operational training.

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