

Pivotal Events in Rivers and Daly/ Canadian Joint Air Training Centre

Documents

Excerpt from:

The UXO Hazard at Former RCAF Station Rivers - Rivers, Manitoba

<http://www.uxocanada.forces.gc.ca/ul-eu/uhfrsrrm-dmeeasra-eng.asp>

Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Station Rivers (Manitoba) was used by DND for training from the early 1940's to the early 1970s.

The Station originally opened in May 1942 under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) as No.1 Air Navigation School (No.1 ANS) and as the war progressed it became a training centre for Army pilots and parachutists as well as flying instructors from the Army, Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and the RCAF. In addition, the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and the Air Dispatch School made Rivers their home.

In 1942, No.1 ANS merged with No.2 ANS from Pennfeld Ridge (New Brunswick) to form No.1 Central Navigation School (No.1 CNS). By the time the school disbanded in August 1945, No.1 ANS and No.1 CNS had trained a combined total of 11,406 Commonwealth navigators.

In 1947 the Canadian Parachute Training Centre, established at Camp Shilo in 1942, merged with the Airborne School of the Canadian Joint Air Training Centre and moved to RCAF Station Rivers, making the station Canada's main para-training centre. Also in 1947, the Army Aviation Tactical Training School was established at Rivers to provide pilot training to Army aviators, as well as helicopter instructor training for the Army, RCN and RCAF. No.6 Signal Regiment, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and the Air Support Signals Unit provided communications duties at Camp Rivers. 444 Air Observation Post Squadron was formed on October 1st 1947, but disbanded on April 1st 1949.

In 1948, the Joint Air Photo Interpretation School opened at Rivers. The school closed in 1960 and its personnel merged with the Air Photo Interpretation Centre at RCAF Station Rockcliffe (Ontario) who became fully responsible for training photo-interpreters.

The Basic Helicopter Training Unit (BHTU) was established at Rivers in August 1953, initially to train RCAF pilots but, by 1956, Army helicopter pilots were also training at Rivers. After the closure of the helicopter school at RCN Air Station HMCS Shearwater, the Royal Canadian Navy began sending trainees to Rivers as well, making the BHTU the first tri-service flying training unit in Canada.

In December 1963, No.1 Transport Helicopter Platoon (No.1 THP), a unit of the Royal Canadian Army Services Corps, was established at Rivers, along with their fleet of CH-113A Voyageur transport helicopters and on CH-112 Nomad. The platoon's function was to support the Army on field exercises. No.1 THP moved to RCAF St.Hubert in 1966 and also established a detachment at RCAF Station Namao (Alberta).

408 Tactical Fighter Squadron, whose primary functions were reconnaissance and weapons delivery, moved to Rivers in 1964 from RCAF Station Rockcliffe (Ontario) and remained until disbanded on April 1st 1970.

As a result of the Unification, RCAF Station Rivers was re-named CFB Rivers. CFB Rivers closed in September 1971 and in September 1972 the land was turned over to the Department on

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Indian Affairs and Northern Development for use as an industrial training centre for Manitoba Indians. The training centre was known as the Oo-Za-We-Kwun Centre.

The Rivers Gliding School, a summer Air Cadet glider camp opened at the former base in 1974, remaining until 1984, when it re-located to Gimli. In 1980 the Centre closed and the land was declared surplus to the requirements of the Federal Government.