

Royal Flying Corps Training in Canada 1917-18

This exhibit is showing the story of the Royal Flying Corps training in Canada. With the Royal Flying Corps of Canada formed at the end of 1916, pilot training began in earnest at select airfields in Canada by February 1917. The Curtiss JN-4 Canuck was the plane of choice for training.

The period shown in this exhibit is from 1917 through 1918. With the end of the war in 1918 many of these training bases were quickly closed. In the winter of 1917 with cold weather making pilot training more difficult, some training moved down to Texas for the winter. Examples of these various training bases is shown via postcards, letters and postmarks.

When the war ended in 1918 many of these bases were closed including Camp Rathbun and Long Branch in 1918-19 and Armour Heights by 1921.

The most significant items are highlighted in Green

Plan

Frame 1

- Title Page
- Long Branch
- Camp Borden
- Armour Heights

Frame 2

- Leaside
- Camp Mohawk and Rathbun
- Beamsville
- Texas

For the Flying Corps to operate, it needed more than just pilots. On the recruiting poster many trades are shown that are required to allow the pilots to fly successfully.

IMPERIAL ROYAL FLYING CORPS



MEN URGENTLY NEEDED *Skilled Tradesmen and Unskilled Men*

TO ASSIST IN TRAINING PILOTS IN CANADA

Terms of Enlistment — Duration of War — Age 19 to 45 —

RATES—\$1.10 (UNSKILLED LABOR), \$1.35 (SKILLED LABOR), WITH OPPORTUNITIES OF PROMOTION TO \$2.80 PER DAY.

FULL CANADIAN SEPARATION ALLOWANCE.

Wages, Allowances, and Maintenance for a man with three children equal to \$125.00 per month.

DETAILS OF RATES:

3rd Class (unskilled men)	\$1.10 per day	Corporals	\$1.70 per day
2nd Class, Air Mechanics	1.35 per day	Sergeants	2.00 per day
1st Class, Air Mechanics	1.60 per day	Flight Sergeants	2.30 per day
Warrant Officers			\$2.80 per day

Occupations of Men Required

Acetylene Welders	Electricians	Motor Fitters	Painters
Blacksmiths	Engine Fitters	Millwrights	Tinsmiths
Carpenters	Motor Cycle Fitters	Sailmakers (Tailors)	Cabinet Makers
Motor Cyclists	Engineers' Storemen	Milling Machinists	Vulcanizers
Coppersmiths	Male Clerks	Metal Turners	Cooks
Motor Drivers			Officers' Servants

ALSO UNSKILLED MEN AS LEARNERS.

Apply to—

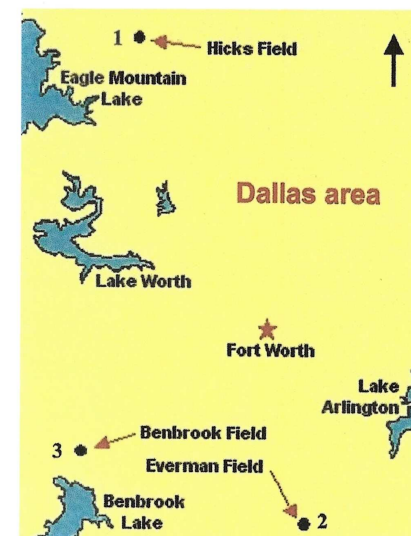
Recruiting Officer

Or Write to— **298 Main Street, WINNIPEG**



There are 8 training bases which were used. Camp Mohawk and Camp Rathbun (sometimes referred to as Desoronto), Leaside, Long Branch and Camp Borden were for pilot flight training. Armour Heights was a school. There were also stores located at Dufferin St in Toronto, and in Hamilton (not shown on map). Beamsville was the air weapons gunnery training.

Below are the locations in Texas where pilots were trained in the winter of 1917-1918 using airfields at Hicks, Benbrook and Everman.



Camp Long Branch, the First Canadian Aerodrome

Camp Long Branch was situated on a 100 acre property on Lakeshore Road, just west of the current Dixie Road, in Toronto Township. The aerodrome was officially opened on 20 May 1915 by Curtiss Aeroplanes and Motors Company as a flying training school.

In January 1917, the newly designated Royal Flying Corps, Canada, the forerunner to the Royal Canadian Air Force, opened the RFC Training Centre at Camp Long Branch.

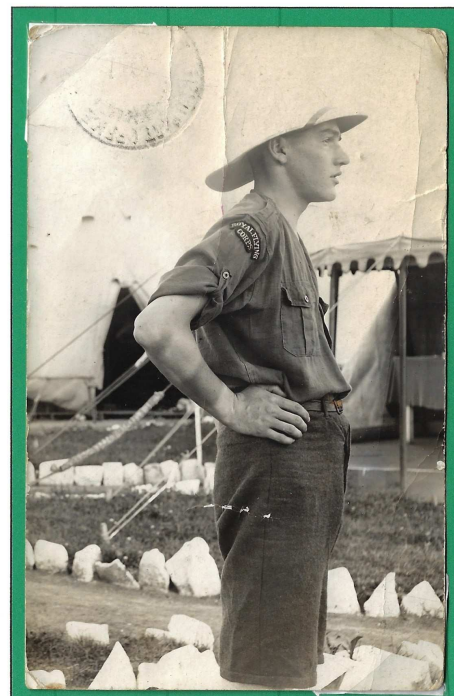


Registered cover from Long Branch June 22, 1918 to Pittsburgh. On June 22 there were no Registration facilities at Long Branch so it got a Toronto postmark.



Image
80%

Incoming cover to Long Branch flown on the Ottawa to Toronto flight on 27 August 1918 by the Royal Flying Corps. Label is tied on back.



Card show image of a Royal Flying Corp cadet (as can be seen on the shoulder flash).



Image
80%

Long Branch cancel in use from June to September 1918. Postcard sent Aug 19, 1918 from Toronto directed to Barriefield Camp in Kingston. Redirected to Long Branch, cancelled at Long Branch and forwarded to Jesse Ketchum School at Armour Heights.



Long Branch Aerodrome



Cover mailed by Cadet Kidd from Long Branch with the FPO postmark Oct 29, 1918 to the US. This cancel was just used from May to November 1918. The RFCC (RAF) crest is on the reverse of the envelop...

Real Photo postcard showing physical training of cadets at the Long Branch aerodrome.



Real Photo postcard with a view of Kew Beach from a plane from Long Branch. Aerial photography was one of the training items for flight crews. This plane is identified by the alternating black markings on the ailerons which was a pattern used at Long Branch.



Cover mailed with FPO postmark 28 Oct 1918 in Long Branch backstamped Paradise 31 October.. An RAF crest is on the reverse.

Cover mailed from Long Branch July 19, 1918 to Alberta. The Long Branch split ring cancel is not a common cancel on RFC covers. The RAF insignia is on the back of the envelop.



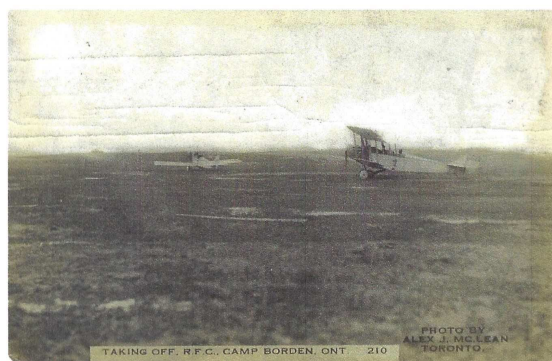
Camp Borden Aerodrome

Camp Borden was used for pilot training and aerial gunnery and is located 70 miles north of Toronto – it is still an active base today but not an airfield. The base was constructed in 1916 and became an airfield in January 1917 when hangars were built. Flight training was conducted between March 1917 and November 1918. By January 1919 the flight personnel left the base.



Two JN4 aircraft at the Camp Borden hangars. Tail C128 and C136 around 1917.

Aerial view of Camp Borden hangars from the air in the spring 1918.



A crash of an aircraft from the No 1 Sqdn School of Aerial Gunnery at Camp Borden in 1917.



RPPC of aircraft C552 preparing to take off at Borden in summer 1917. Card is canceled with the Camp Borden machine cancel Sept 3, 1917. The writer is sending the card to Toronto and indicates they will be breaking camp on 25 September which is possibly when the training squadrons headed to Texas to fly through the winter..

RPPC showing soldiers marching at Borden with an early plane flying overhead postmarked with the Borden machine cancel dated Aug 6 1916. The card was written by a Private in the 133 BN CEF who was training to go overseas.

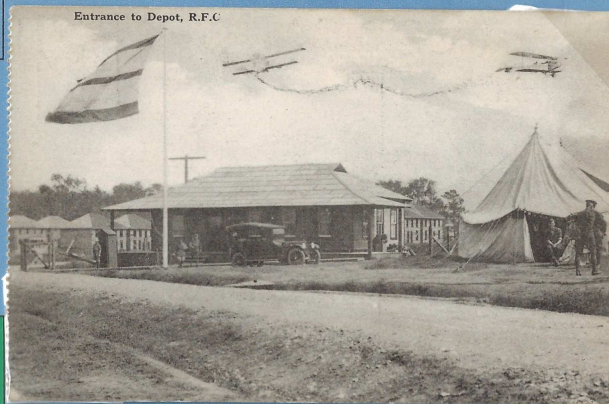
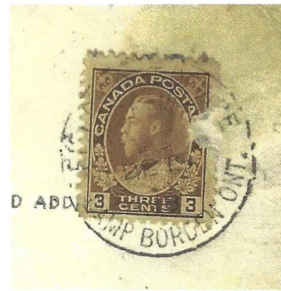


Camp Borden Aerodrome

The various aerodromes had Canadian Training Squadrons (CTS). Squadrons 78 (27 Mar-15 Nov 1917), 79 (16 Mar-15 Nov 1917), 80 (19 Mar-15 Nov 1917), 81 (21 Mar-15 Nov 1917), 82 (19 Mar-15 Nov 1917), 86 (June-19 Dec 1918) and 87 (17 Apr-19 Dec 1918) were at times located at Camp Borden.. Squadrons arriving in March 1917 were being transferred from England. Squadrons leaving in Dec 1919 was due to the disbanding of training after the war.



Christmas card from Camp Borden for 1918. The view of Camp Borden. Card mailed 15 Dec 1918 with the FPO cancel shown above.



Camp Borden Orderly room and camp police. It is likely the two planes on the card were not in the original image. This card comes from a book of cards which depicted the camp.



RPPC of a JN4 tail C115 at Alliston which is a town just outside Camp Borden. The aircraft was assigned to No 87 CTS based on the shamrock on the fuselage..

RPPC showing the crash of tail C130 with another unidentified aircraft in 1917. The aircraft was part of 78 CTS.

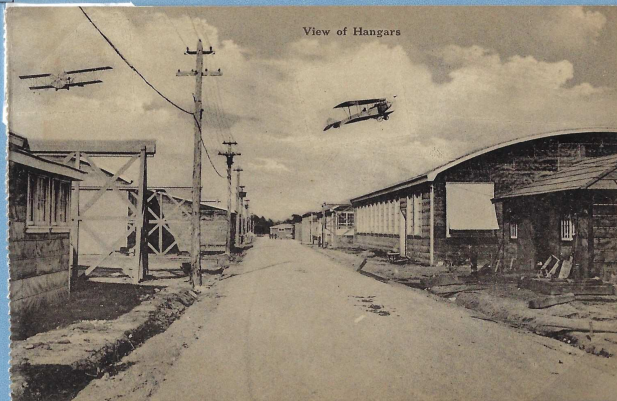


An unidentified tail crashed at Camp Borden in 1917. Some aircraft were rebuilt when not severely damaged, however this one may never fly again.

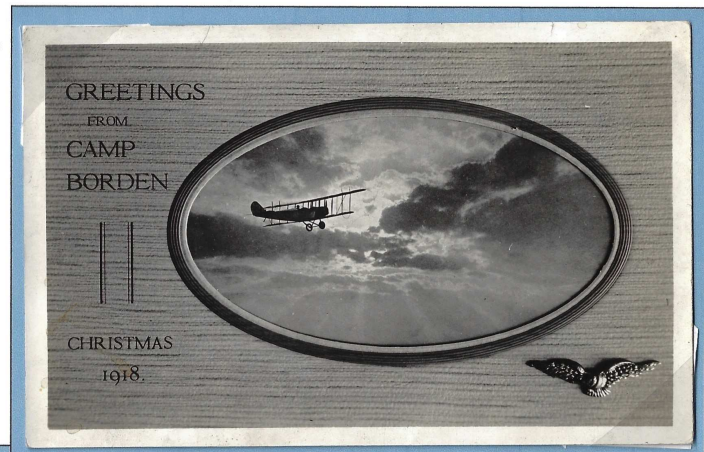
Camp Borden Aerodrome



Cadets in front of unidentified aircraft and hangar



Camp Borden view of hangar with plane flying above..



Christmas card from Camp Borden for 1918. The unused card shows a JN4 aircraft flying in the evening sky..

Card mailed inbound from the wife of Fred Brittain in the 87 CTS at Camp Borden on June 29, 1918.

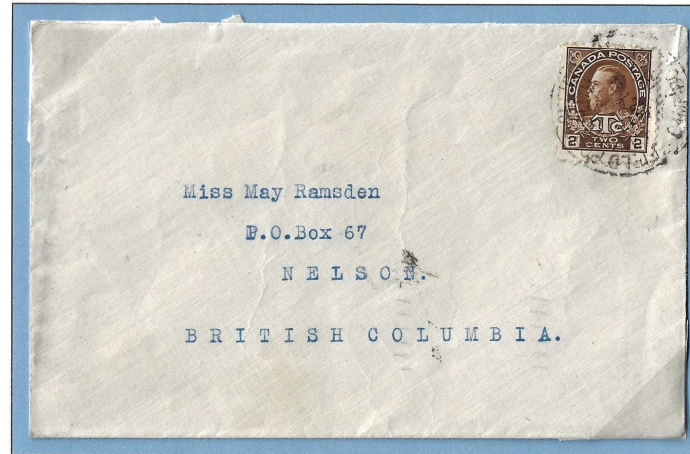


Aircraft C202 crashed into a building in Camp Borden killing the pilot Cdt J.H. Talbot

Camp Borden Aerodrome



Card showing crews and pilots in row of planes on tarmac. The card was mailed from Camp Borden July 1, 1917 can cancelled with the Field Post Office machine cancel..



Letter mailed from Camp Borden with the FPO cancel July 1918 to Nelson BC received July 22 1918

While most of the aerodromes from the RFC training closed at the end of 1918 and 1919, at the Peace Convention in Paris, France, Canada was obligated to the International Convention for Air Navigation to control air navigation within its borders. The Air Board was setup on June 6 1919 to do this. The British offered over 100 surplus WW1 aircraft and in 1920 a training establishment was created at Camp Borden aerodrome and became the Canadian Air Force (CAF) and provided refresher training for former wartime pilots.

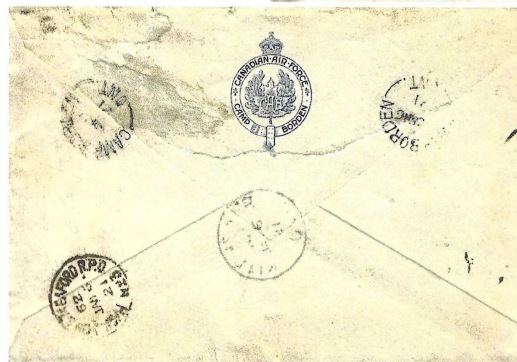
The original Borden MPO closed Jan 6, 1919. On Dec 21, 1920 a new post mark was issued – a "Split ring" which was used until WW2. This cover is amongst the earliest known examples of this cancel with it being mailed to Kitchener Ontario on 6 Jan 1921 and received the same day..

Also this envelop has the crest of the Canadian Air Force Camp Borden. This is the only known copy.

Unused postcard showing a crash in a field near Camp Borden.



Enlarged CAF crest 250% and reduced back at 75% showing backstamps and crest.



Armour Heights

Armour Heights was used for pilot and flying instructor training. It was located near Avenue Road and where the 401 is today. It is still a military facility used for training. Hangars at the base was used from July 1917 to 14 November 1918. CTS 88, 89, 90 and 92 were there from June 1917,



Aircraft C256 from CTS 91 at Armour Heights. While the squadrons from Leaside, Borden flew to Texas for the winter training, the Armour Heights squadron in some cases put skis on their aircraft and trained through the winter in Canada.

A plane crash just outside the hangars. Note that there are actually 2 airplanes in this crash. Tail C478 is underneath a second aircraft while cadets pose for the picture.



Royal Flying Corps insignia on a Silk postcard. The card is unmailed.



On April 22 1918, tail C526 was crashed into the side of the Dominion Bank Building in Oshawa Ontario, Cadet Weiss was flying out of Armour Heights and had been trying to land on the street below.

A crash of tail C1024 flown by Lt Stephen and Cadet Somerville. Crashes had regular occurrences when dealing with pilot training and the fragility of aircraft.

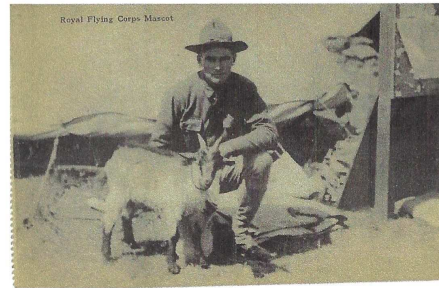


Leaside Aerodrome

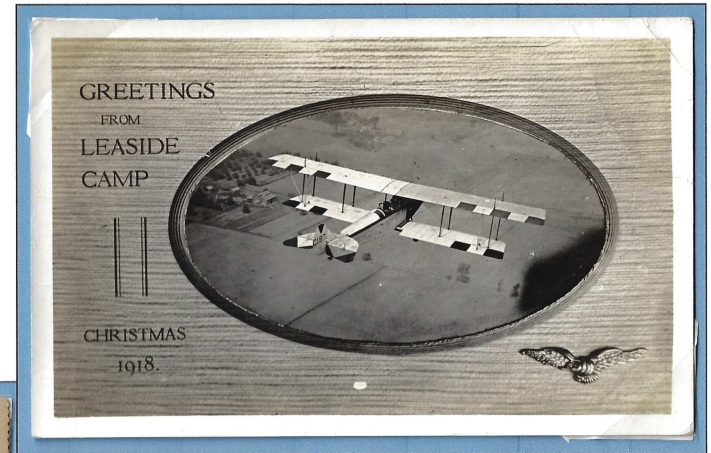
Leaside was used for Pilot, Aerial reconnaissance and mechanics training and was in operation from 14 July 1917 to 14 Nov 1918. It was located 5 miles north of Toronto near Eglinton Ave.. After the war the airfield was used up to 1944. The various aerodromes had Canadian Training Squadrons (CTS). Squadrons 78 (17 Apr – 19 Sep 1918), 83 (17 Apr – 19 Dec 1918), and 84 (1 Jul-19 Dec 1918) were at times located at Camp Leaside.. Squadrons arriving in March 1917 were being transferred from England. Squadrons leaving in Dec 1918 was due to the disbanding of training after the war.



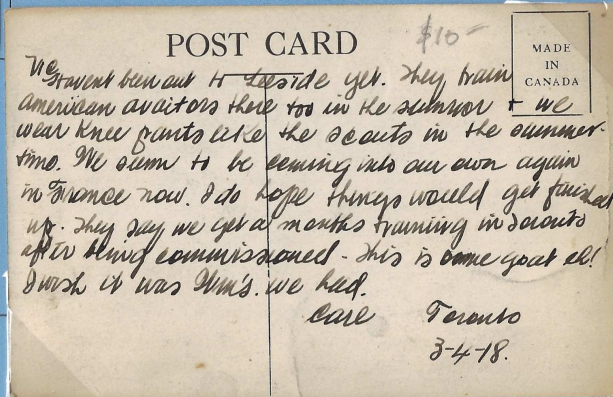
Plane crash of tail C478 and a second unidentified aircraft



A postcard showing the camp mascot at Leaside. The text on the back is below written



Christmas card from Leaside for 1918. The view is of aircraft C197.

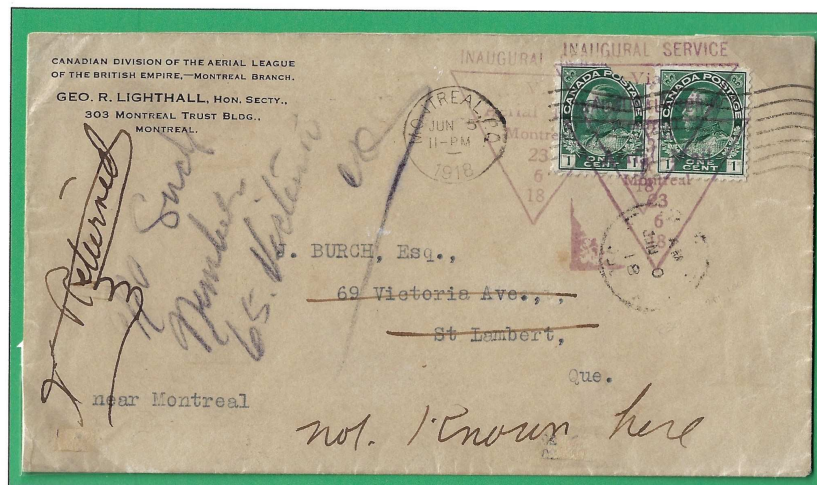


Letter mailed from Camp Leaside postmark August 22, 1918 to Hamilton Mountain Sanitarium, The envelop is stationary with the RAF wings on the back.

RPPC mailed into Leaside July 25, 1918



Camp Leaside Aerodrome



On June 24, 1918 the first air mail flight in Canada was made from Montreal to Toronto by Captain Brian Peck from the Leaside training school. He had gone to Montreal to promote wartime recruitment.. Of the 124 letters known to be carried, only about 27 are known today. They are canceled by a special triangular cancel. This cover is from the Canadian Aerial League of the British Empire Montreal Branch. The cancel is dated 23 June, however due to bad weather the flight to Leaside was postponed to 24 June.



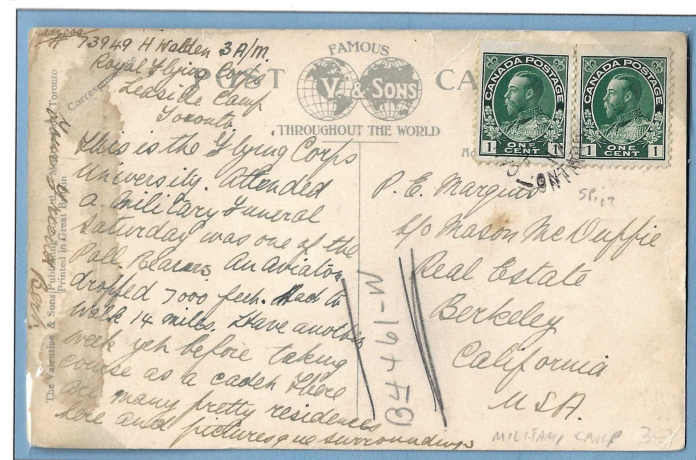
Card mailed to Trois Riviere from Leaside May 31, 1918.



The Royal Flying Corps Arf Monogram "Toronto" Wing, issued in 1918.



Card mailed from Leaside with the scarce Camp Leaside postmark dated 17 Sept 1917 to Massachusetts. The text describes life at the camp.



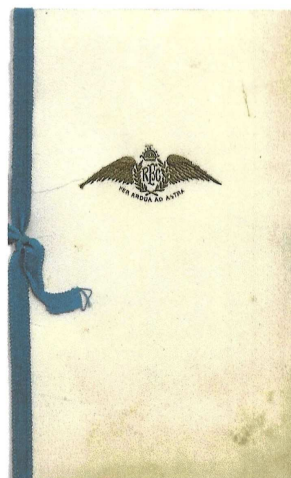
Letter mailed from Camp Leaside
postmark Sept 22, 1917 to Berkeley,
California. H Holden describes
happenings at Leaside (funeral etc).

Camp Leaside Aerodrome

Photographic views of RFC Leaside mailed Sept 26, 1917 to Sapperton BC. There are 16 photos folded accordion style printed on the Front and back.



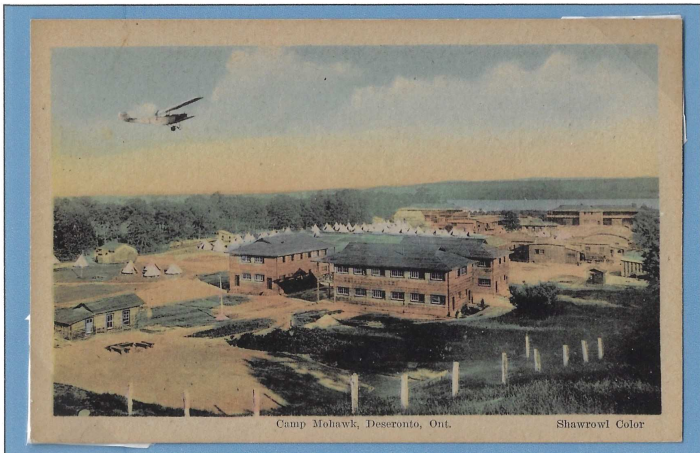
Two of the images from the 16 photos in the envelop.



RFC 1917 Christmas card with pictures of tail C305. Crest on card would be a British RFC crest. Image at 75%

Desoronto – Camp Mohawk and Camp Rathbun

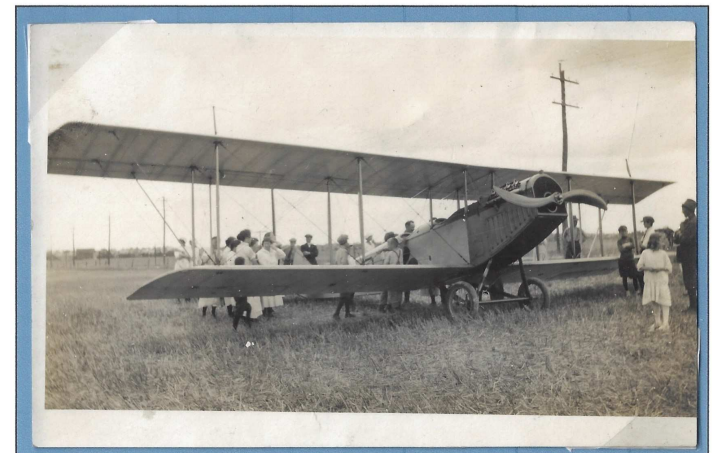
Desoronto is located 130 miles east of Toronto on the Bay of Quinte. Two airfields were constructed in the area, Camp Rathbun just north of Desoronto was constructed in the spring of 1917 with training of pilots running from 1 May 1917 – 14 November 1918. Camp Mohawk was a few miles west of Desoronto with the same construction and use dates. It was used in WW2 and is an airport today. Training squadrons at Camp Rathbun 79 and 81 (17 Apr – 19 Dec 1918), 85 and 86 (May– 15 Nov 1917), 88 (May 1917). Camp Mohawk had CTS 82 (17 Apr-19 Dec 1918), 83 (May-15 Nov 1917), 84 (19 May-15 Nov 1917 and 17 Apr 1918), 85 (17 Apr-19 Dec 1918), 87 (May-15 Nov 1917), 89 (April-19 Dec 1918). Squadrons arriving in March 1917 were being transferred from England. Squadrons leaving in Dec 1918 was due to the disbanding of training after the war.



Plane flying over Camp Mohawk in a colorized card.



Silk badge. Perardua as Astra ("Through adversity to the stars").

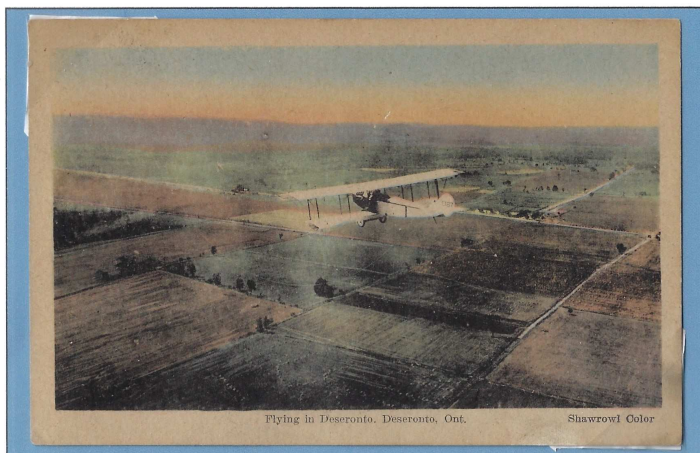


Aircraft in 1917 at Camp Mohawk from CTS 87.



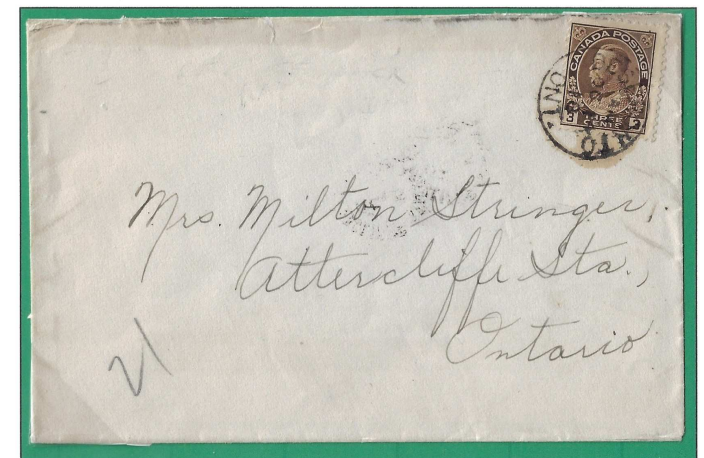
Photo of aircraft from Rathbun CTS 86 in 1917 crashed in Bay of Quinte..

Tail C187 flying over Desoronto in 1917 based at Camp Rathbun.

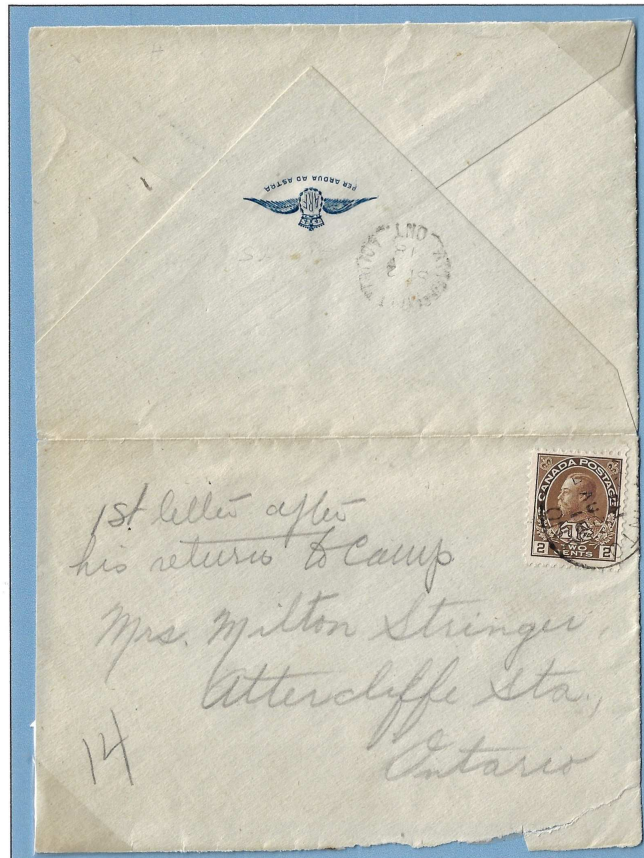


Early stationery has ARF which was replaced by RFC

Letter mailed from Desoronto to Attercliffe Station (a few miles away) on Oct 14 1918. This was the closest post office to the camp. The back of the envelop has the RFC crest.



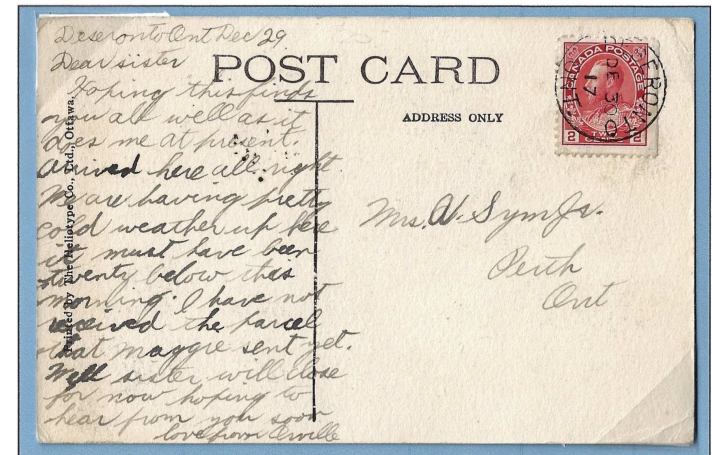
Desoronto – Camp Mohawk and Camp Rathbun



Envelop from letter mailed Aug 31, 1918 from Desoronto and received 2 Sep 1918. The ARF insignia is on the back of the envelop.



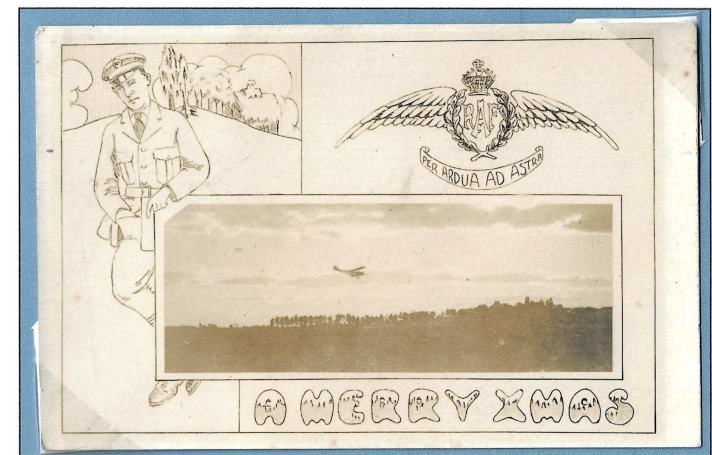
Photo of pilots at a plane in Camp Rathbun. The planes marked with the black cat were from Rathbun.



Postcard mailed 30 Dec 1917 from Desoronto to Perth Ontario..



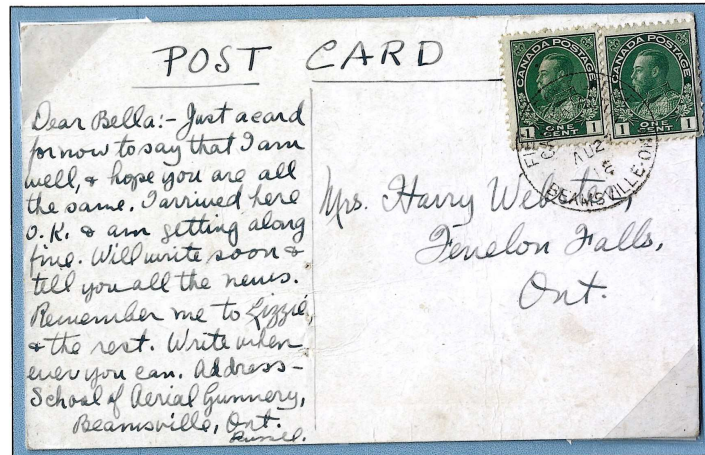
Photo of plane crash into camp buildings.



An unused postcard wishing a Merry Christmas. It shows the RAF insignia, a photo view of a Jenny flying over the countryside and a soldier to the left of the photo.

Beamsville

Beamsville was the school for Aerial Fighting and Gunnery training. It was located just north of the town closer to Lake Ontario. Constructed in 1917-1918 with training in April 1918 when the squadrons returned from Texas.



Card mailed Aug 27, 1918 to Fenelon Falls. The writer had just arrived at the training camp and requests the addressee write to them. They then say to address letters to School of Aerial Gunnery, Beamsville, Ont. The cancel is the scarce Beamsville FPO.

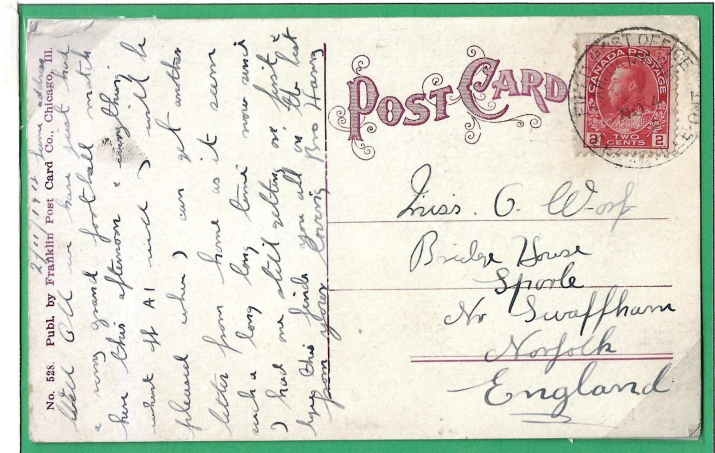
Letterhead Stationery for Beamsville

Royal Flying Corp Leave Pass

ROYAL FLYING CORPS, CANADA R.F.C. (Can.) 1015

IF A GENERAL MOBILIZATION IS ORDERED EVERY SOLDIER ON PASS MUST RETURN IMMEDIATELY TO HIS UNIT WITHOUT WAITING FOR INSTRUCTIONS

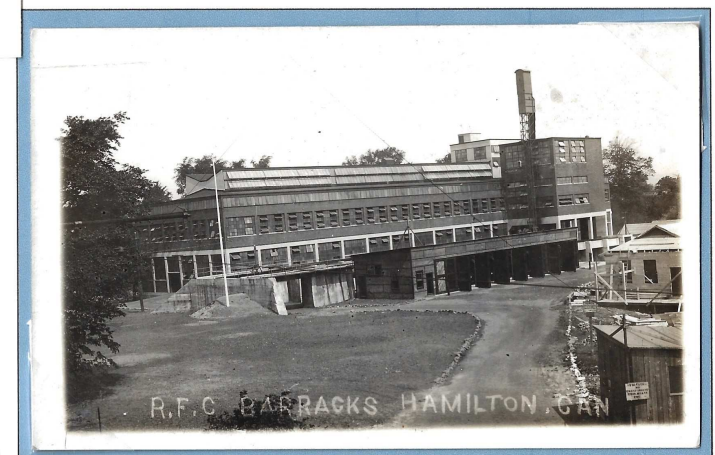
Unit.....	Unit.....	Army Form B. 295.
Regtl. No.....		
Rank.....		
Name.....	PASS	
Date from.....	No..... (Rank)..... (Name).....	
to.....	has permission to be absent from his quarters, from.....	
	to.....	
Commanding.....	for the purpose of proceeding to.....	
Station.....	(Station).....	Commanding.....
Date.....	Date.....	



RPPC mailed with the FPO postmark for Beamsville Nov 4, 1918 just before the closure of the facility.



The RFC had Barracks in Hamilton using this building. It is possible that some cadets resided here while training in Beamsville which was a few miles east of Hamilton.



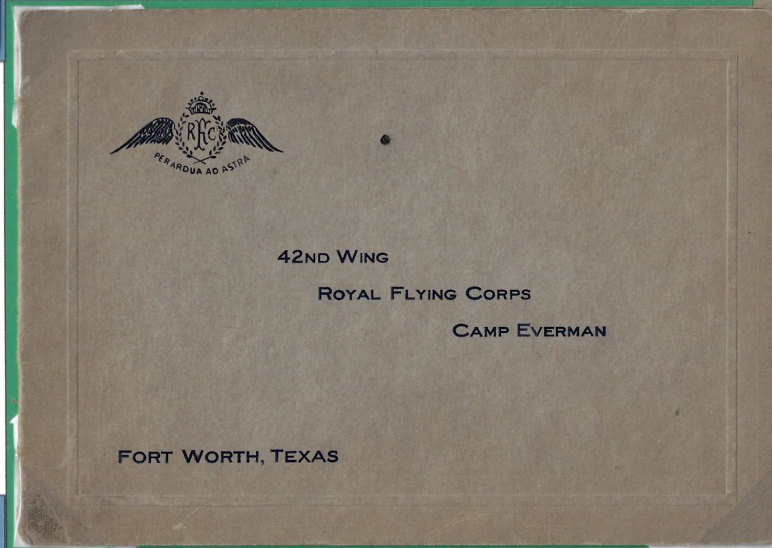
Texas, Winter 1917-1918

Winter was a difficult time to train in Canada – it was generally cold and often snowy. The airplanes did not work that well in the very cold weather. To enhance training, the RFC sent training squadrons down to Texas in early November 1917 and returned to Canada in April 1918. Shortly after arriving in Texas when the squadrons expected warm weather there was a snowstorm which blanketed the Texas airfields.

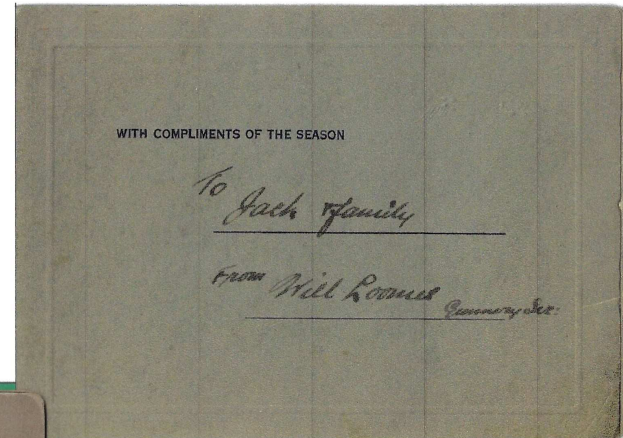
There were 3 airfields used in Texas in the Fort Worth area – Hicks Field, Benbrook Field and Everman Field.



This original photo postcard shows a Curtiss JN-4 aircraft flown by training squadrons in Texas. The cards show a photo of the planes flying and have the Royal Flying Corp crest at the bottom right.



Christmas card from Camp Everman near Fort Worth Texas. The 42nd Wing came from Camp Borden and trained at both Hicks Field and Everman field.



Inside front cover. Card from Will Loomes from the Gunnery Section.. Image at 75%.



Inside back cover. Original photo of Will Loomes inside the cockpit.. Image at 75%.

Epilogue

With the end of the war in late 1918, there were no longer requirements for pilot training and most of the training bases and facilities were closed. At the same time the men who served in various jobs within the Flying Corp were demobilized. A Certificate of Service for Archibald McFarlane who had been a Carpenter in the RFC, showing his service record is to the left, and on the right side is a list of payments the demobilized troops were entitled to when discharged.

F.S. Form 280,
Formerly Form 1

R.A.F. Can. 125.

ROYAL AIR FORCE CERTIFICATE OF THE SERVICE OF

NAME Mr. Archibald (SURNAME FIRST) OFFICIAL No. 70660

DATE OF BIRTH Dec 13 1881 AGE ON ENTRY INTO R.A.F. 36 years 85 days.

PLACE OF BIRTH (Parish) West Parish (Town and County) Glenrock Parish, Scot.

OCCUPATION IN CIVIL LIFE Carpenter

TRADE IN ROYAL AIR FORCE Carpenter

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION Presbyterian

SIGNATURE ON DISCHARGE A. McFarlane

CURRENT ENGAGEMENT IN H.M. FORCES:—

(a) State whether in Navy, Army or R.A.F. R.A.F.

(b) Period Date current engagement commenced Age at that date Duration of Period of Engagement
Boy Service — — —
Man Service 5-3-17 35 3/4 2.10

(c) Date of actual entry into.....
R.N.A.S. —
R.F.C. 5-3-17
R.A.F. 1-4-18

(d) Period engagement extended for —

(e) Period re-engaged for —

PRIOR ENGAGEMENT IN H.M. FORCES.

Unit	Period		Rank on Discharge
	From	To	
<u>1st Can. High.</u>	<u>28.6.17</u>		

DATE TRANSFERRED TO ROYAL AIR FORCE RESERVE.
(Period not to count for Pension)

DATE RECALLED FROM ROYAL AIR FORCE RESERVE.

NIL

NAME, ADDRESS and RELATIONSHIP of person to be informed of casualties.

Mrs. Mary E. McFarlane, 105 Graham St. Hamilton, Ont. (wife)

PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE.

Full Christian Names and Surname of Woman, and whether Spinster or Widow	Place and Date of Marriage	Present Address of Wife	Whether with permission	Initials of Officer verifying entry
<u>Mary Elizabeth (spinster)</u>	<u>Glenrock, Scotland</u> <u>14-4-1905</u>	<u>as above</u>		<u>W. M.</u>

Allowances for W.O's., N.C.O's. and Airmen on Discharge upon Demobilization who have Completed More than Six Calendar Months' Service.

	Pay	28 days' Pay	28 days' Rations	Clothing Allowance	Minimum War Gratuity	Total
A.M., 3rd Class.....	\$ 1.10	\$ 30.80	\$ 16.80	\$ 35.00	\$ 24.10	\$ 106.70
Clerk, 3rd Class.....	1.10					
Private, 2nd Class.....	1.10					
Cadet (Pte. 2nd Cl.).....	1.10					
A.M., 2nd Class.....	1.35	37.80	16.80	35.00	24.10	113.70
Clerk, 2nd Class.....	1.35					
Private, 1st Class.....	1.35					
A.M., 1st Class.....	1.60	44.80	16.80	35.00	24.10	120.70
Clerk, 1st Class.....	1.60					
Corporal.....	1.70	47.60	16.80	35.00	28.92	128.32
Sergeant.....	2.00	56.00	16.80	35.00	38.56	146.36
Sergeant Pupil.....	2.00					
Flight-Sergeant.....	2.30	64.40	16.80	35.00	48.20	164.40
S. Major, 2nd Class.....	2.80	78.40	16.80	35.00	57.84	188.04
S.-Major, 1st Class.....	2.80	78.40	16.80	35.00	72.30	202.50
Flight Cadet.....	1.78	49.84	16.80	35.00	72.30	173.94

\$1.20 will be added to War Gratuity for each month's service or part of a month after completing first 12 months' service.

The rate for a Cadet will be determined by his rank in the Royal Air Force.

For Cadets and Airmen with under six months' service, who were on the Strength on November 11th, 1918, the allowances are as above, except that the War Gratuity is, in their case, \$7.21.

The amounts shown are subject to any deduction for loss of kit, etc., and any debtor balance on the pay accounts of Cadets and Airmen at the time they left their Units for dispersal to their homes, and also subject to deductions for any periods of service which have been forfeited for periods of absence without leave, or detention exceeding 28 days and all service prior to conviction on desertion.