

HERITAGE MISSISSAUGA



Research. Remember. Record. Relate.

BULLETS, BOMBS & BOMB GIRLS



Revisiting the Arsenal Lands

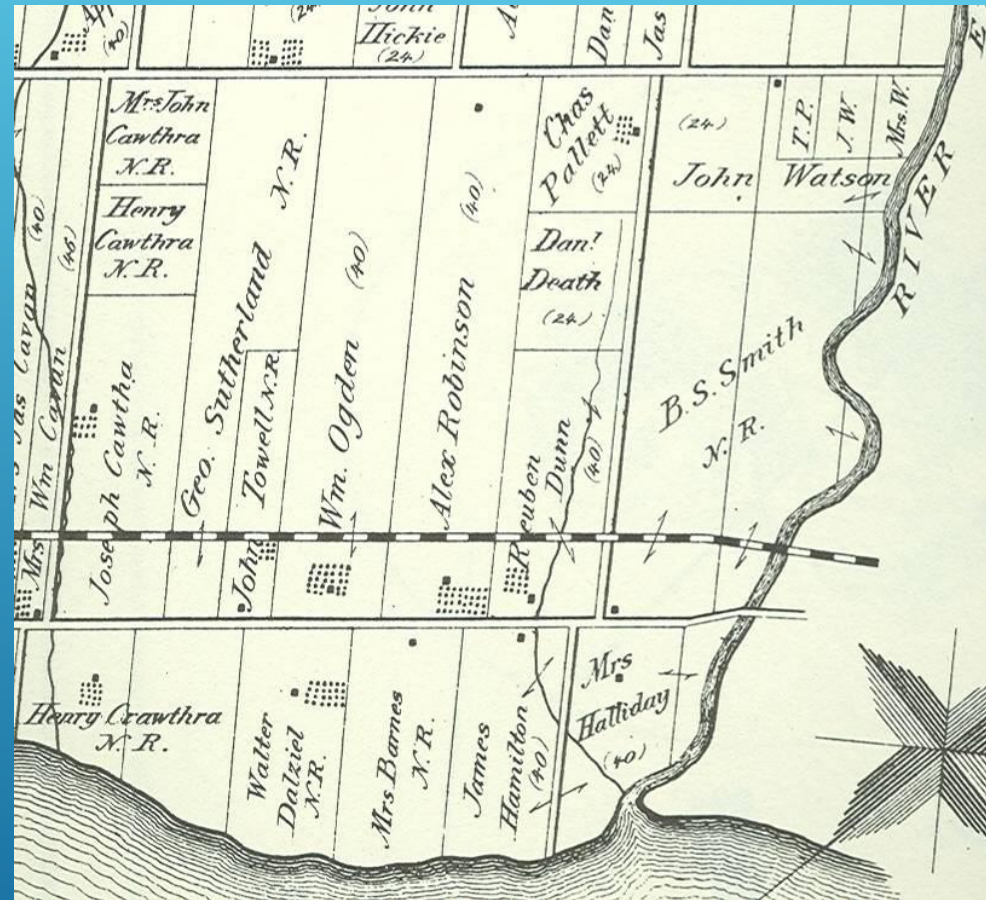
- Lakeview (not Long Branch!)
- Rifle Ranges, Aerodrome & Small Arms Ltd.

PART 1: THE PLACE



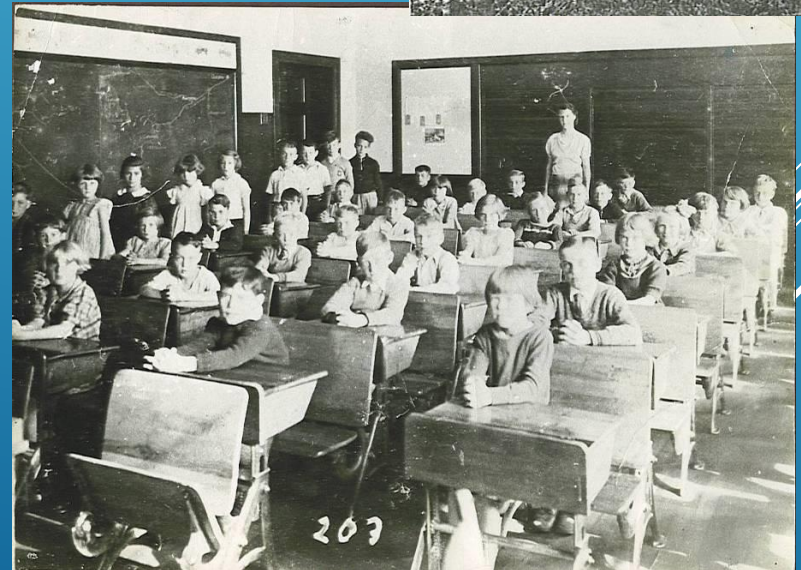
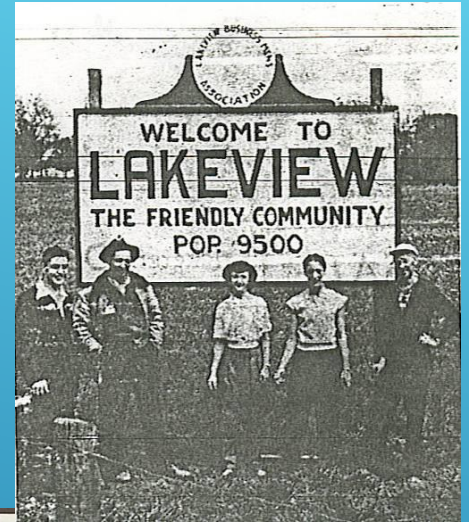
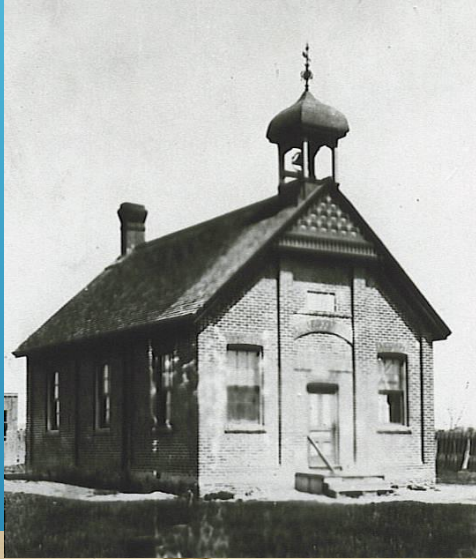
EARLY HISTORY

- The majority of the Colonel Smith Tract was sold by the family between 1865 and 1872
- By 1877, Lots 5 & 6, Con. 3, SDS came to be owned by the Halliday and Hamilton families
- Utilized for farming



- Lakeview area from 1877

EMERGENCE OF LAKEVIEW





989-31

1945

Toronto Twps

1954





1958



MODERN ERA

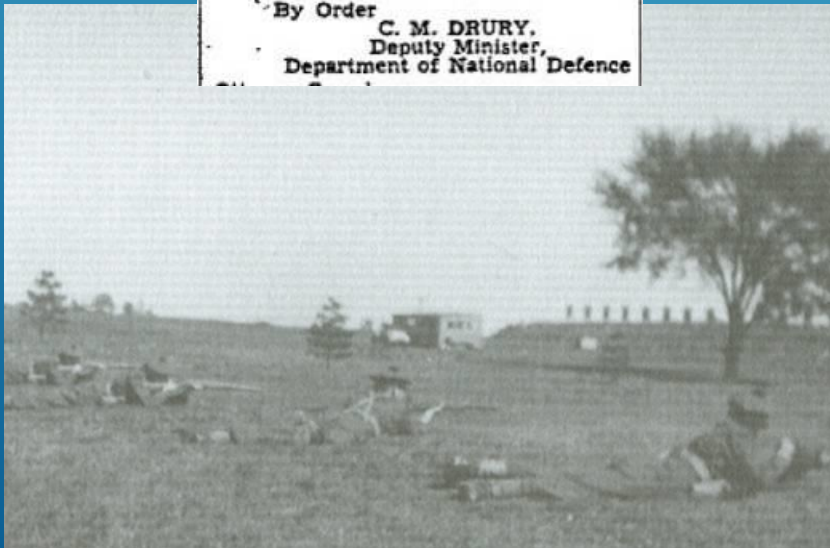
PART 2: THE RIFLE RANGES



RIFLE RANGES: THE BEGINNING



- Ontario Rifle Association formed in 1868 for Militia Training
- Used Garrison Common in Toronto
- City of Toronto requested they relocate in 1881
- Property secured in Lakeview (Lot 5, Con. 3, SDS) in 1891
- Named the Long Branch Rifle Ranges



LONG BRANCH RIFLE RANGES



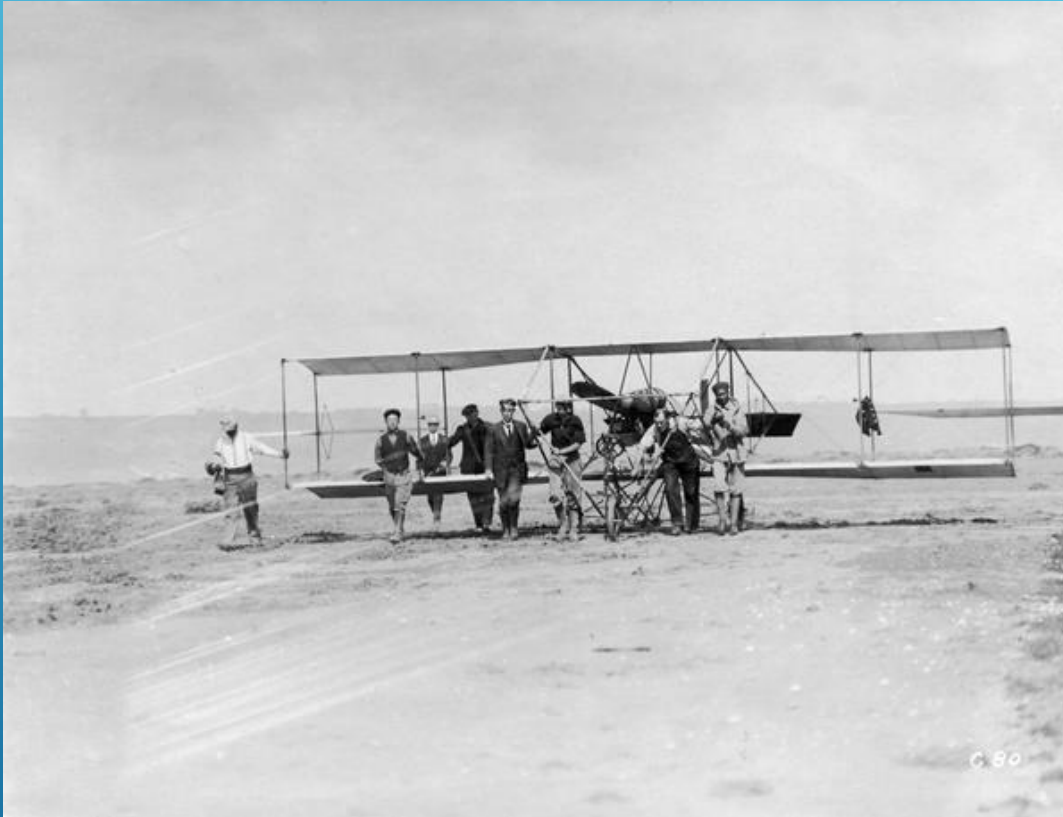
- Offshore target bombing in WWII
- “Long Branch Camp”
- Decline
- Fire in 1944
- Tragedy in 1945: Raymond McGinnis
- Ranges closed in 1957
- Short range utilized for a period of time by Small Arms Ltd.



Major Robson, Col. R. V. Conover, W. Col.
P. L. Kennedy, V. A., Lt. Col. C. M. Corbett, Capt.
West McMaster, Lt. Col. B. A. Bull.
Long Branch Camp 1932.

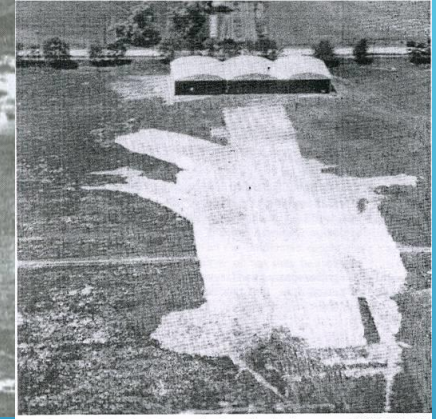


PART 3: THE AERODROME



- Aerodrome as defined by Aeronautics Act: “an area of land or water used, designed, prepared, equipped or set apart for the arrival, departure, movement or servicing of aircrafts including any buildings, installations, and equipment situated thereon or associated therewith.”

CANADA'S FIRST AERODROME



The Long Branch flying field photographed from the air in the summer of 1915. The white marks of the runway have not been retouched by an artist, but show the scarring which took place when the field was roughly levelled.

Figure 5

Source: Dodds, 1974

- Curtiss Aeroplanes and Motors Ltd. Registered on April 12th, 1915 (McCurdy appointed Managing Director)
- Agreement signed that Canadian-trained pilots for the Royal Navy Air Service (RNAS) to be trained here
- Recruitment: 19 to 23 years of age, had to be British subjects of “pure European descent”, had to pass interview and medical examination, training was at their own expense

CURTISS AVIATION SCHOOL



Curtiss JN-3 with JN-2 rudder, probably the first Buffalo-built aircraft to be sent to Long Branch, early June 1915
Figure 6

Source: Fuller, 1995

- John Alexander Douglas McCurdy, Canada's first aviator
- Flew the "Silver Dart" in Nova Scotia in 1909
- Long Branch Aerodrome
- Chief Instructor Theodore Macauley with flying assistants Bert Acosta and Guy Gilpatric
- First flight: June 22, 1915

ONE OF THE least known stories of World War I began in a small group of buildings on the western outskirts of Toronto.

The war, that broke out in Europe in the summer of 1914 became the world's first "air war," and for more than a half century after it ended the only stories that most Canadians heard about Canada's part in the Allies' air forces were the legends told about "Billy" Bishop and a few other Canadian "flying aces." But the full story is an almost incredible tale.

More than 20,000 young Canadians joined Britain's air force, and within a few months of Britain's declaration of war on Germany, the first airfield of any kind to be built in Canada was built a few miles west of Toronto in a field in Long Branch.

And the story of the flying school at that airfield is part of one of the greatest stories in aviation history. For the man who headed it was the legendary John McCurdy. He was not only the first Canadian to fly a plane in Canada — he was the first to fly a plane anywhere in the British Empire!

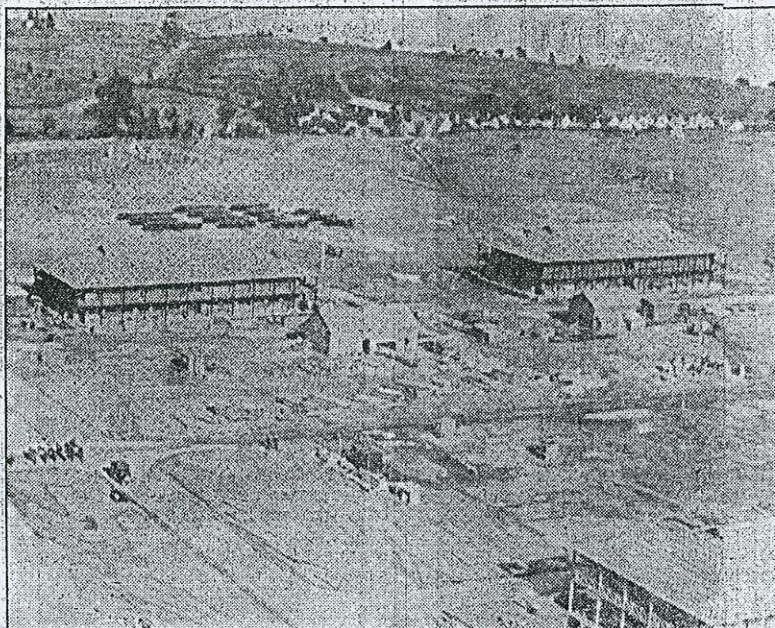
During World War I, few Canadians knew anything about the thousands of Canadians who flew with the English pilots, and their story remained virtually untold until as recently as the 1980s, when the Royal Canadian Air Force began publishing its official history.

It will require four huge volumes to complete the work. Volume One, *The Canadian Airmen And The First World War* (University of Toronto Press, 1980) has been written by S. F. Wise, the former director of history of the National Defence Headquarters, and in its opening pages he recounts the story of the young 23-year-old John A. D. McCurdy.

The field where McCurdy made his historic flight was outside the Nova Scotian village of Beddeck where he had been born on Aug. 2, 1886. In his teens, he came to Toronto to study engineering at the University of Toronto, and then returned to his home in the Maritimes.

In the early 1900s, the village of Beddeck had become famous as the home of the most celebrated

**HISTORICAL
TORONTO**



COURTESY OF CANADIAN AIRMEN AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

HISTORIC: This 1915 photo shows Canada's first airfield in west Toronto at Long Branch. A plaque now marks the spot at Lakeshore Blvd.

Learning to fly high from our first airfield

tened the "Silver Dart."

From a field outside Beddeck, he soared into the air to a height of 30 feet and flew for more than a half mile, and when he landed he became the first man to suc-

cessfully fly a plane in the British Empire. With Bell's encouragement, McCurdy and Curtiss tried to interest the government in their plan to build an aviation industry in Canada. But

qualified training school. On April 1, 1915, a Canadian branch of Glen Curtiss' American company was established on Strachan Ave. in Toronto to build planes. The new "flying boats" could be flown from a base in the waters off the Toronto Island, near Hanlan's Point, but an airfield was needed for wheeled aircraft.

In the spring of that year, on a farmer's field at Long Branch, three large hangars and a flying strip were built and, in the words of the official history of the

early years of World War I, the only way Canadians would serve in Britain's air force was to pay for their own pilot-training course and then sail to England and apply to the Royal Flying Corps. Or they could join the army and hope for a transfer to the f... But eventually a Royal Flying Corps was established.

DURING the war, the Royal Canadian Air Force had two Corps and a Canadian Air Force in 1917 with 10,000 men to become a pilot.

In World War I, the Royal Canadian Air Force was established on Sept. 9, 20, 1917, as a pilot school for the defence of Canada. Arrived in Canada, the Royal Canadian Air Force was established.

**AEROPLANE FACTORY
TO BE LOCATED HERE**

J. A. D. McCURDY, CHIEF

**Pilots to Be Trained Here for the
Canadian Contingent of
British Army.**

Pilots To Be Trained.

Both the military and naval types will be constructed, and as soon as a number are ready they will be tested on the bay or out on the lake. Along with the construction arrangements will be made to train pilots to handle the machines, and when the pilots are considered competent they will be licensed and will then be ready to undertake military duties.

**The Toronto Star, Friday February 12, 1915
Figure 2**

With the war on, the Canadian Air Force was established on Sept. 9, 20, 1917, as a pilot school for the defence of Canada. Arrived in Canada, the Royal Canadian Air Force was established.

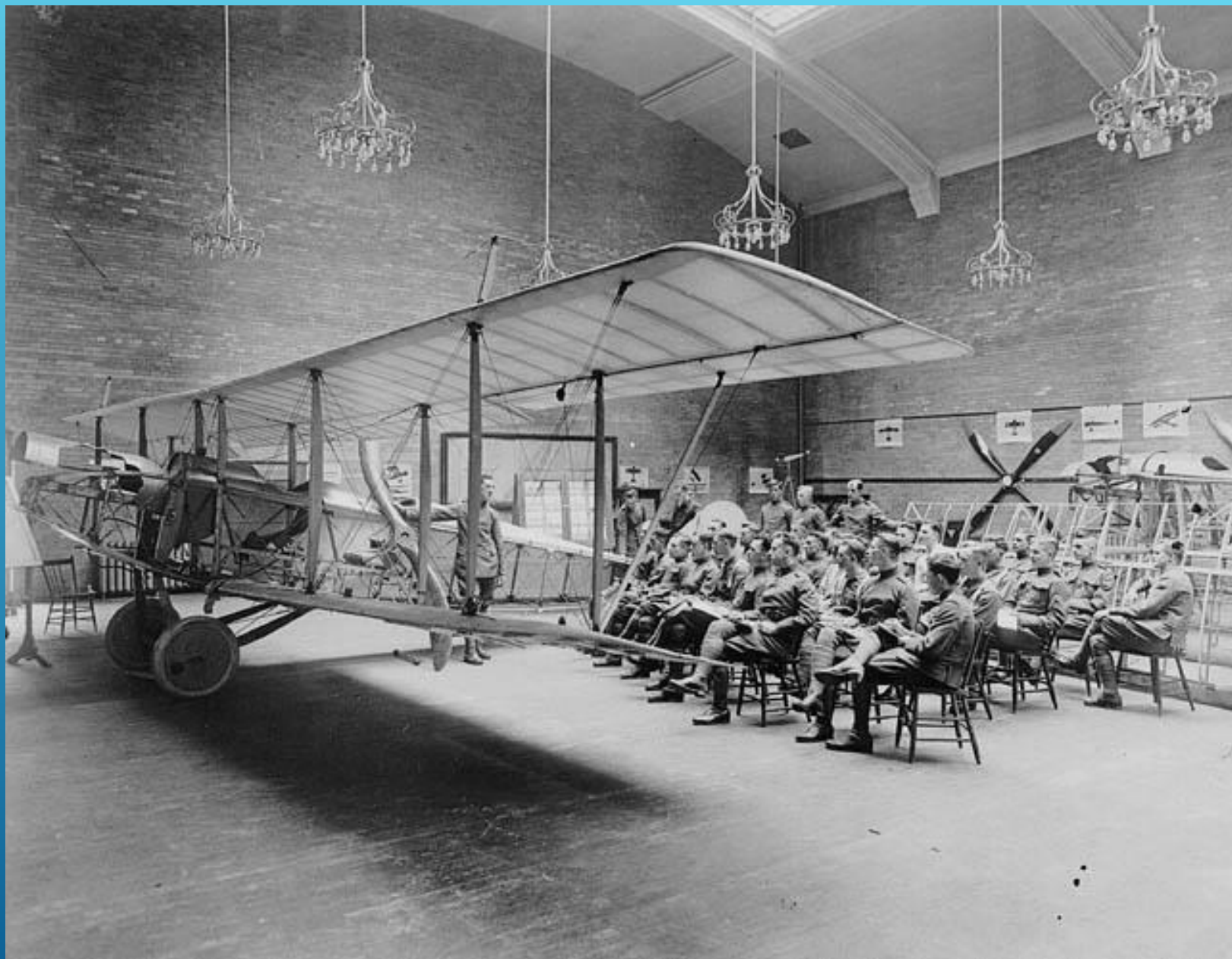
And, following the end of that war, in recognition of his service to his country, he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia and, in 1947, returned to his native province as a hero.

By the 1960s all traces of the historic airfield in Long Branch had disappeared;

CURTISS AVIATION SCHOOL

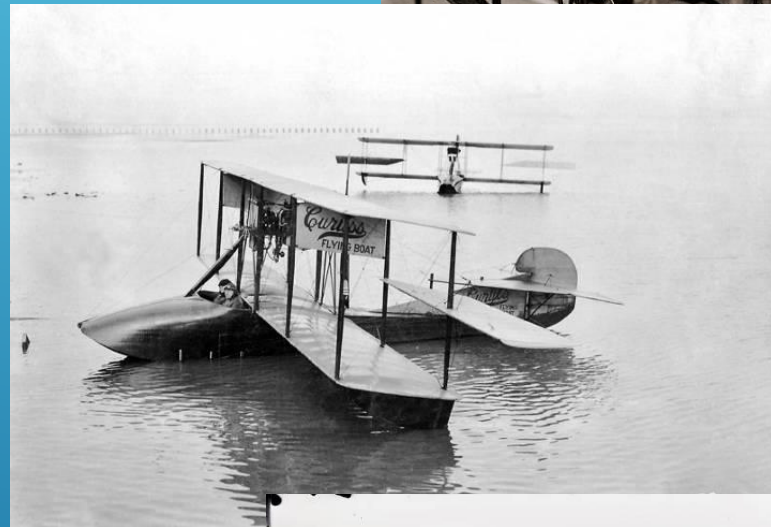
- 400 minutes, \$400
- At their own expense
- Flying school closed in December of 1916
- 261 graduates in 2 years
(108 served with RNAS, 21 with RFC)
- Later became the air and ground training school for cadets
- Theory & practical





TRAINING

- Initial training was in the Curtiss Model “F” Flying Boat
- Training was then transferred to the Curtiss JN-3 “Jenny” tandem control
- Instruction: 5:30am to noon, 2:20pm to 8 pm, weather permitting
- Students had to complete 3 solo flights, multiple skills
- Trained pilots for both the RCAF and RFC



FIRST GRADUATES



FIRST TEN GRADUATES OF THE CURTISS AVIATION SCHOOL, TORONTO

Left to right, standing: Douglas Hay, Eric McLachlin, Homer Smith, Jimmy Day (mechanic), Claire MacLaurin, Innes Van Nostrand, and Douglas Joy
Seated: Grant Gooderham, Strachan Ince, Victor Carlstrom (Pilot Instructor), Charles Geale, and Warner Peberdy

Figure 7

Source: Ellis, 1954

AVIATORS GO TO BRITAIN

They Will Get Back Pay, and 150 Will Go in Batches of Twelve.

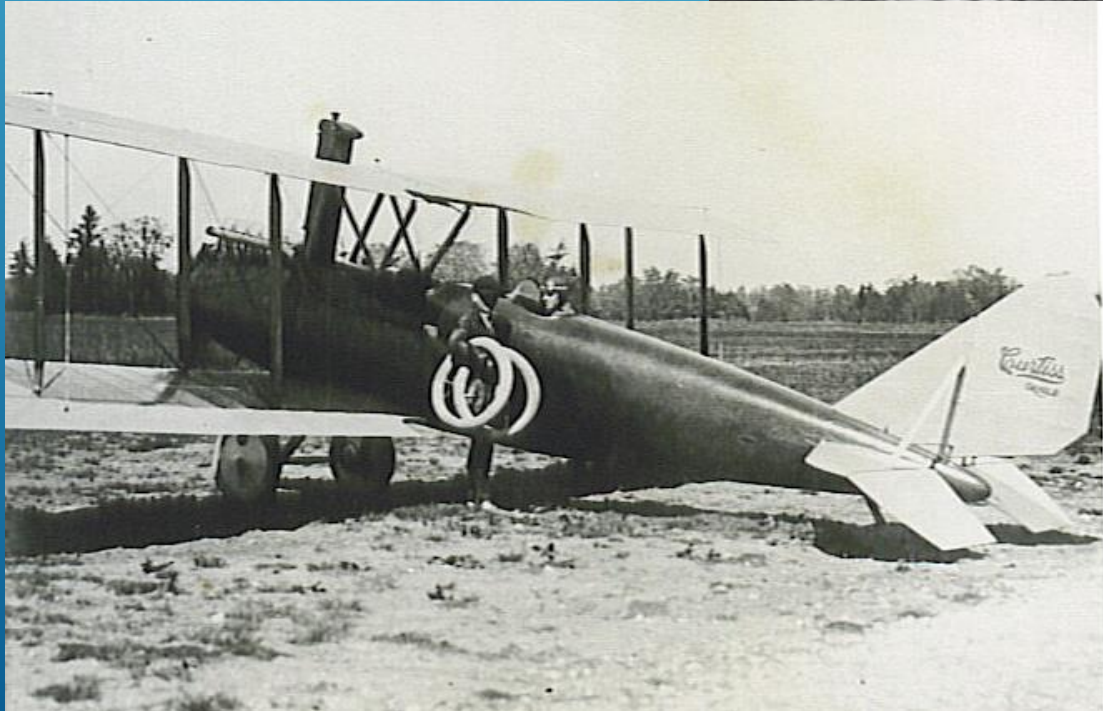
The announcement of Admiral Kingsmill was that the 150 men will be taken to England to complete their training, in drafts of twelve, 48 to be taken before the New Year. At this rate, it is estimated that all who have signed on will be in England by the middle of March, after which the listing of Canadians for service in the Royal Naval Service will be a thing of the past. No more men are wanted now.

The first twelve, it is expected, will leave within two weeks, but the date is uncertain owing to the fact that seven men are still flying with the Curtiss school.

The Toronto Star. Thursday
 November 18, 1915

Figure 8

➤ July 11th, 1915



TARGET PRACTICE



- British Commonwealth Air Training Program

- *Image courtesy of Dave Cook, "Fading History: Volume 1"*

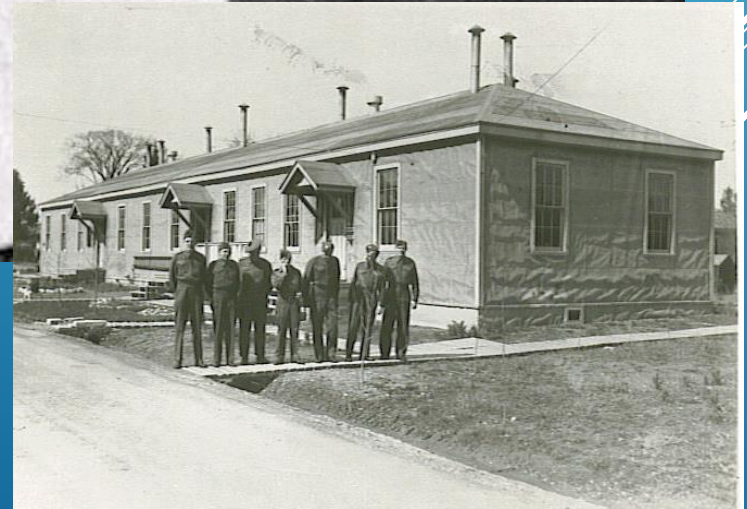
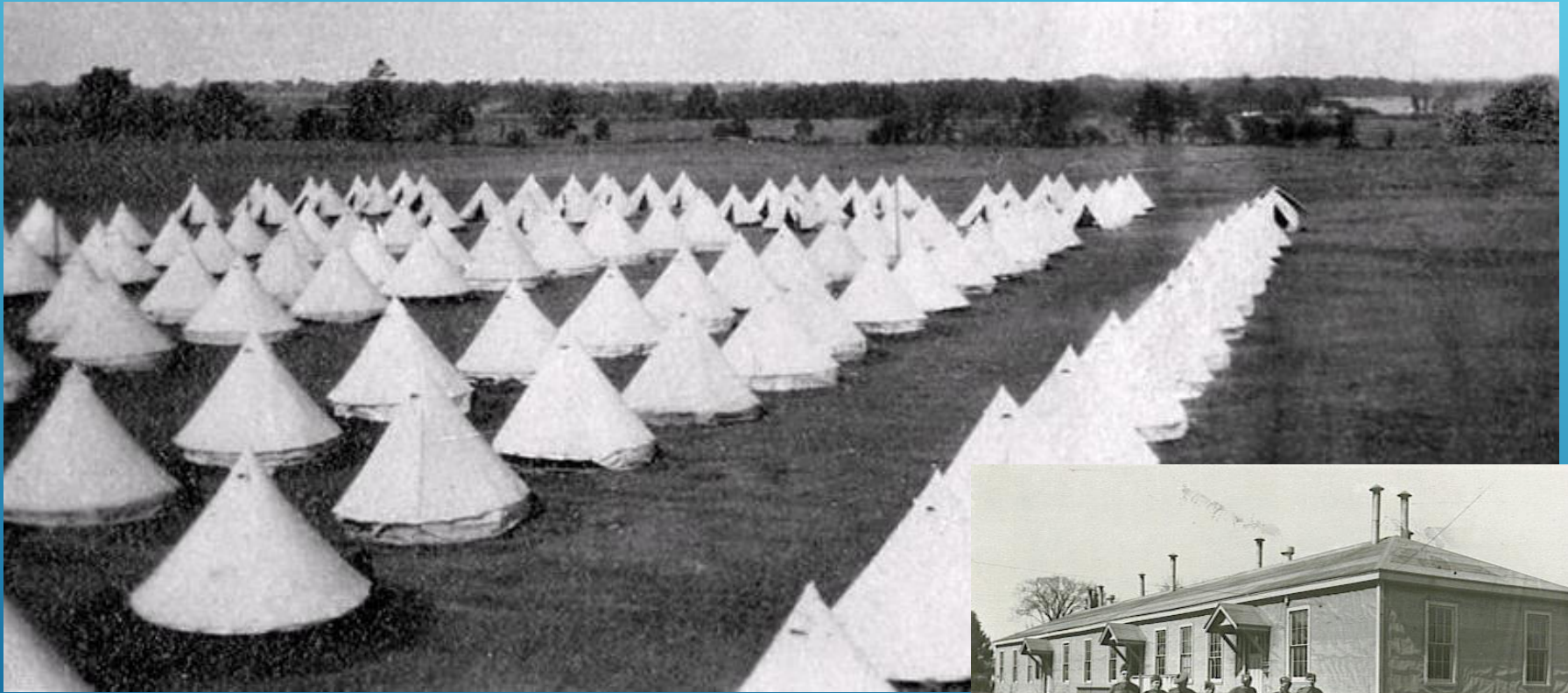


X & Y SQUADRONS – LONG BRANCH CADET WING, ROYAL FLYING CORPS

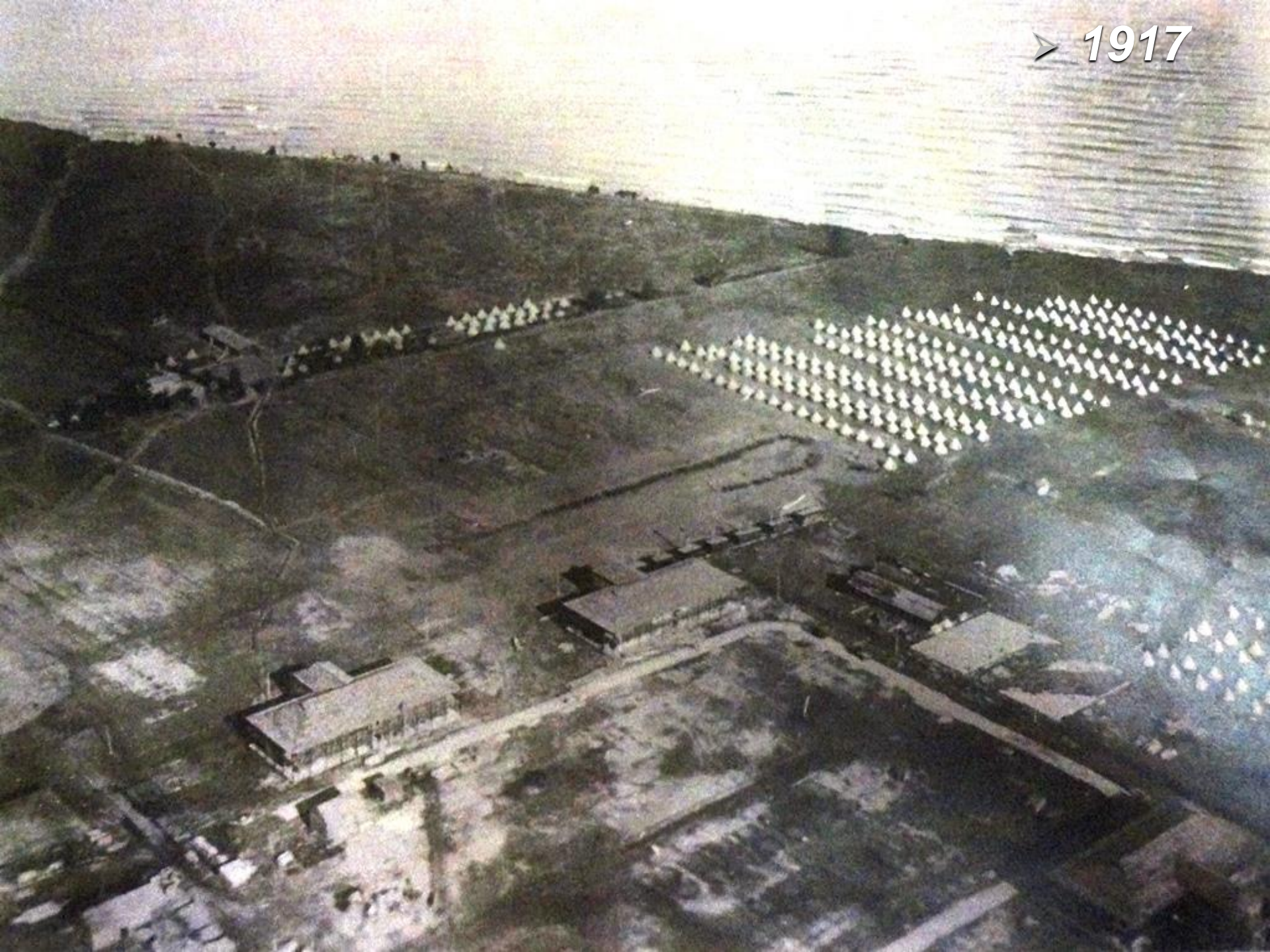
- Curtiss Aviation School closed on December 20th, 1916
- Airfield taken over by the Imperial Munitions Board
- Long Branch airfield became home to the Royal Flying Corp Cadet Wing training program
- Established January 22nd, 1917



CADET ACCOMMODATIONS



➤ 1917



➤ 1917



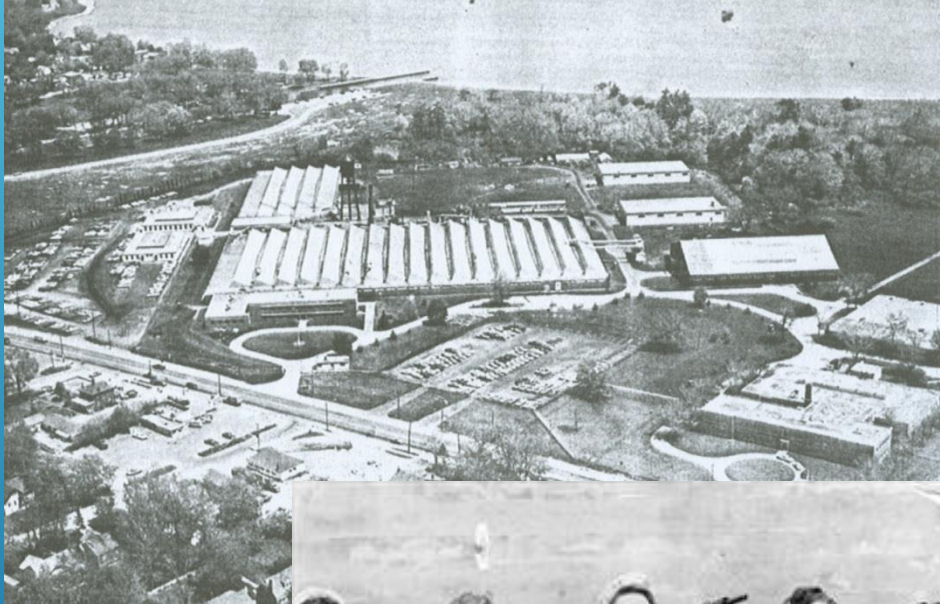
COMMEMORATION IN 1969



Figure 10: Canada's First Aerodrome Historical Plaque

Source: Dodds, 1974

PART 4: DOMINION SMALL ARMS LTD.



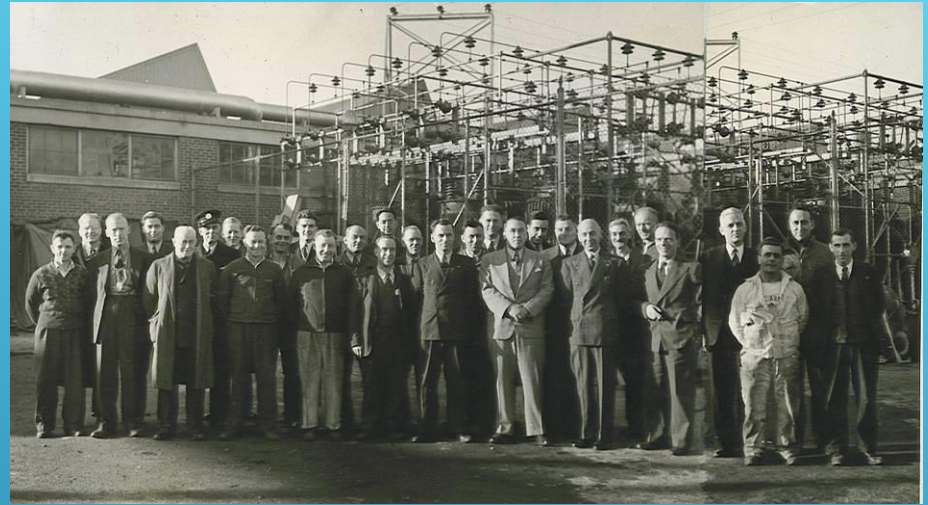
SMALL ARMS LIMITED

- Lots 4-9, Con 3, SDS purchased by the Department of National Defence from the Ontario Militia Department in 1935
- A Crown Corporation, Small Arms Ltd., was created on August 7, 1940
- The intention was to build an arms manufacturing facility



SMALL ARMS LIMITED

- Production of the facility cost \$8 million
- By June 1941, the first weapons were produced at this facility
- General Manager was Colonel Malcolm Jolley
- By the end of 1941, Small Arms Ltd. Employed 1200 people and had produced 7589 rifles



SMALL ARMS LIMITED



- By 1943, the plant had over 5500 employees, working in 3 shifts, and produced over 30,000 units each month
- Women from all over Canada were employed in the company
- In 1942, 200 prefabricated homes and a women's dormitory were built to house workers in the Lakeview and Long Branch area



SMALL ARMS LTD.

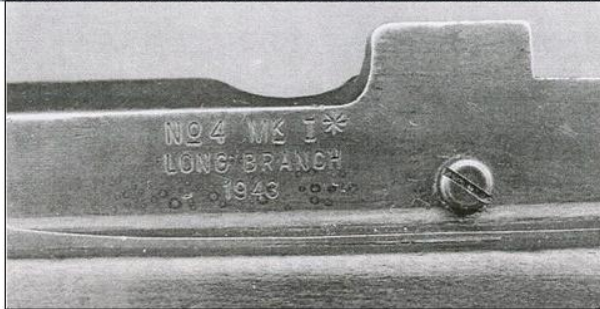
- Wartime production ceased on December 31st, 1945
- The plant had employed some 14,000 workers
- Produced over 900,000 Lee Enfield Rifles and over 126,000 Mark II Sten machine guns, as well as many other weapons and ammunition needed to support the war effort




WAR-TIME PRODUCTION

TOTAL SMALL ARMS PRODUCTION

Description	Volume (units)							Value (millions of dollars)						
	1939-40	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total	1939-40	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total
Rifles and Pistols		6,847	220,240	394,349	391,228	190,500	1,203,164	....	....	12	20	17	11	60
Machine Guns 1,391	1,391	17,860	93,102	159,507	105,916	18,102	395,878	1	7	30	60	45	8	151
All Others		1,032	72,234	55,420	34,075	5,589	168,350	....	....	2	10	27	1	40
Magazines, Spare Barrels, Tripods		9,742	43,885	3,581,235	2,604,920	15,075	6,254,857							



Exclusive Connection with WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH CO. Cable Service to all the World. Money Transferred by Telegraph	CANADIAN NATIONAL  TELEGRAPHS D. E. GALLOWAY, Assistant Vice-President, Toronto, Ont.		CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED <input type="checkbox"/> FULL-RATE MESSAGE <input type="checkbox"/> DAY LETTER <input type="checkbox"/> NIGHT MESSAGE <input type="checkbox"/> NIGHT LETTER <small>PATRONS SHOULD MARK AN X OPPOSITE THE CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED. OTHERWISE THE MESSAGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FULL-RATE TELEGRAM</small>
	RECEIVER'S NO.	TIME FILED	CHECK
	Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to		
	6th November, 1942. Colonel M. P. Jolley, Small Arms Limited, Long Branch, Ontario. I HAVE JUST SEEN THE FIGURES OF YOUR PRODUCTION OF RIFLES FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER. THIS OUTSTANDING PRODUCTION IS MUCH APPRECIATED BY ALL OF US HERE IN OTTAWA. WE EXTEND OUR SINCERE THANKS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WORKERS AND STAFF AT LONG BRANCH FOR MAKING SUCH A MAGNIFICENT SHOWING. E. J. Brunning, Director General, Ammunition and Gun Production Branch, Department of Munitions and Supply, Ottawa, Ontario.		

CANADIAN ARSENALS

SMALL ARMS DIVISION

- In 1946, the site became home to Canadian Arsenals production facilities
- Produced engine components, vehicle parts and engine shafts, as well as arms, for the Canadian Army
- Production ceased at the facility in 1974



BUILDING 12



- Over time, all of the buildings have been removed from the site, with the exception of Building #12 – formerly the Rifle Inspection Facility
- Located at 1352 Lakeshore Road E.
- Utilized as a Regional Training Facility by Ontario Power Generation (owned by TRCA)

THE SMALL ARMS SITE



1966



2006

“RONNIE” THE BREN-GUN GIRL



➤ Veronica Foster

Girls Wanted Aged 18 to 35

Single or Married without Children
And with a Soldier Husband

Those engaged in Agriculture or
Wartime Industries not Accepted

We Arrange for your Room and Board
Finest Working Conditions in a Modern Plant
Good Food at Low Prices
Special Girls Club in Separate Building with a
Variety of Athletic and Lounging Rooms

We Train You to do the Work
at

Small Arms Limited

SMALL ARMS WAR WORK ADS

NEEDS
GIRLS

FOR
WAR WORK
TO
TRAIN
AS
MACHINE
OPERATORS

18-30 YEARS
SINGLE
BRITISH SUBJECTS

FINEST CONDITIONS
EXCELLENT WAGES

WOMEN'S NIMBLE FINGERS

Many more women may be needed in war industries, says a recent survey by the Canadian Press. Of 180,000 Canadians which new war material factories and expanding munitions plants are expected to absorb this year, thousands of them likely will be women, said an official of the department of munitions and supply. They will be engaged in shell filling, making fuses, working on **small arms**, on radio tubes, electrical and precision instruments.

83 Help Wanted, Female

GIRL OPERATORS
SINGLE
18 TO 35

To be trained as tool technical
schools for those women in
munitions work.

Employment Guaranteed at
Completion of Training
APPLY

SMALL ARMS LTD.
LONG BRANCH, ONT.

220 TO 2

EARNINGS BY APPROPRIATE

APPLICATIONS NOT CONSIDERED FROM
THOSE ALREADY ENGAGED IN WAR
WORK.

GIRLS
AND
WOMEN
OPERATORS
18 AND OVER

Experienced Preferred
But Not Essential
Apply In Person

SMALL ARMS LTD.

Long Branch, Ont.

APPLICATIONS FROM THOSE
ENGAGED IN WAR WORK
NOT CONSIDERED

MUNITIONS
OPPORTUNITY
WOMEN -
18 TO 45
BRITISH SUBJECTS

WANTED

STENOGRAPHERS

AND

TYPISTS

APPLY

SMALL ARMS LTD.

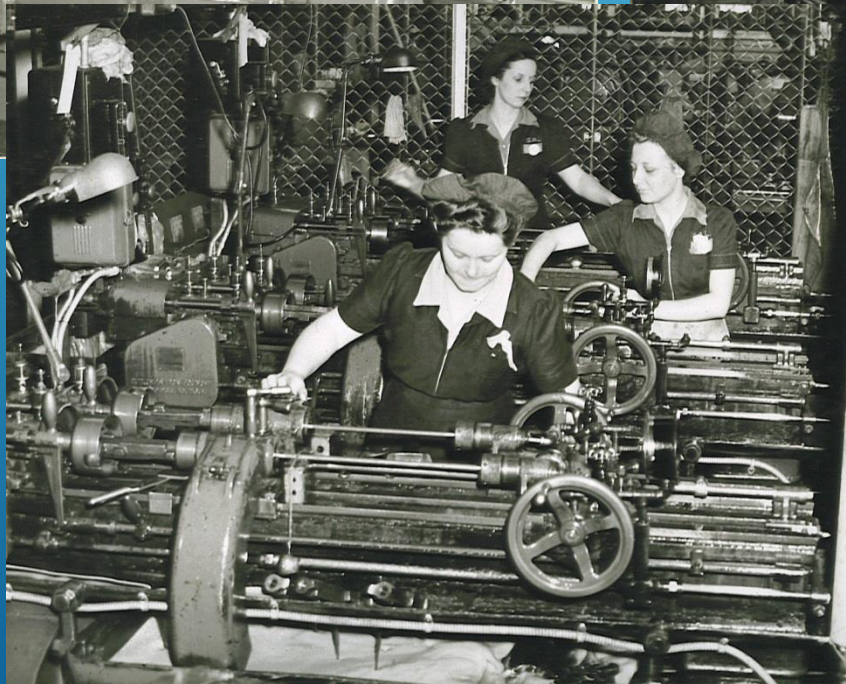
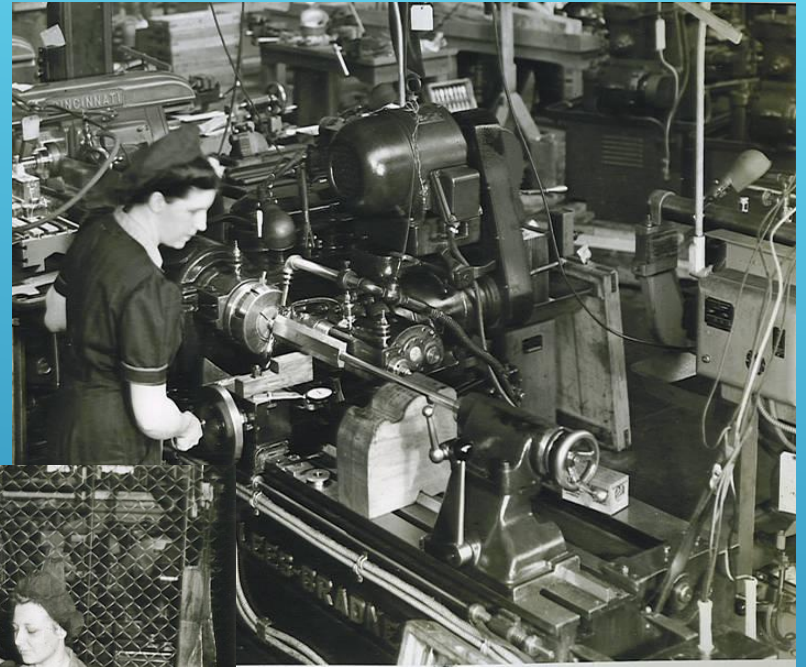
LONG BRANCH

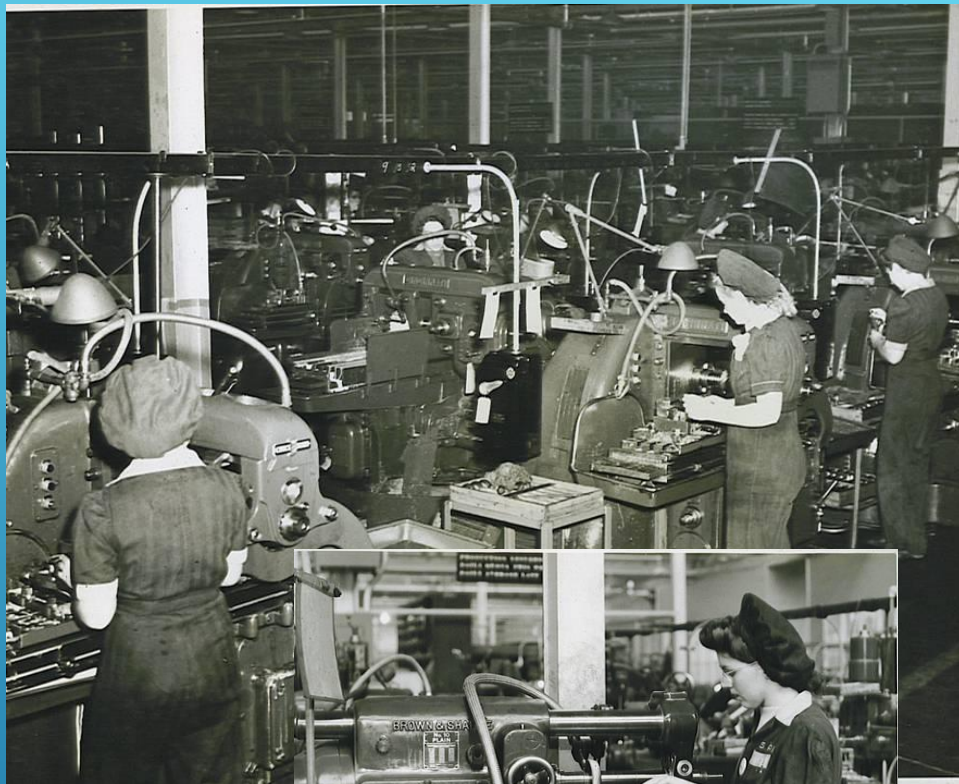
WANTED
FOR
VITAL WAR WORK
TOOL
AND
GAUGE-MAKERS
SURFACE
CYLINDRICAL
AND
CUTTER
GRINDERS
AND
EXPERIENCED
TOOL ROOM
MACHINE HANDS
APPLY

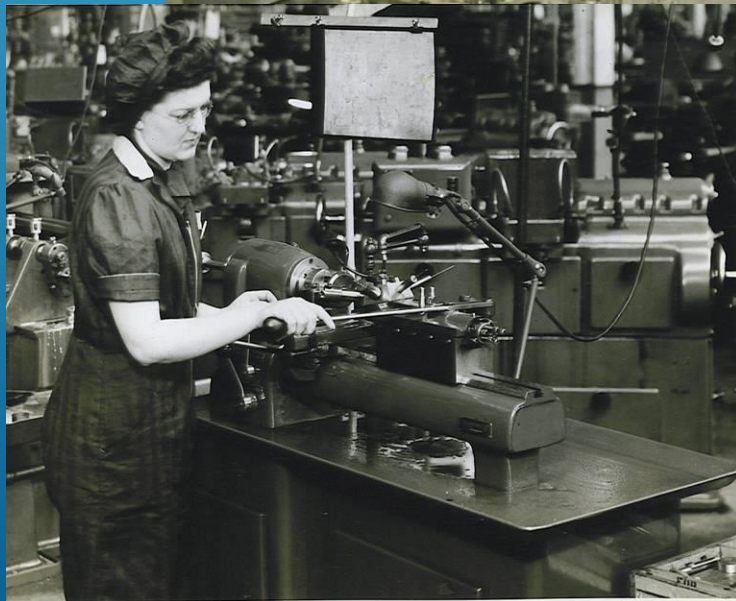
SMALL ARMS LTD.
LONG BRANCH, ONT.
APPLICATIONS NOT CONSIDERED FROM
THOSE ALREADY ENGAGED IN WAR
WORK.

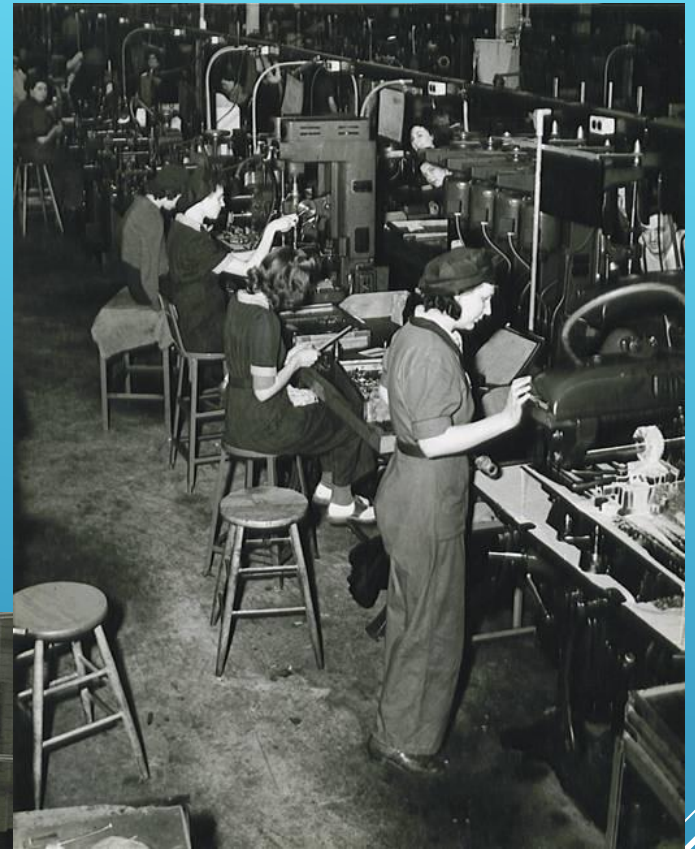
DORMITORY, BARRACKS & HOUSING





















THANK YOU



Heritage Mississauga

“The Grange” Robinson-Adamson House

1921 Dundas Street W., Mississauga

905-828-8411

www.heritagemississauga.com