

Nov. 1st Tentative Date

R.C.A.F. TO CLOSE BASE IN DUNNVILLE

The Dunnville airport, a former RCAF training base for British Commonwealth pilots will close.

This was reported in a telephone interview Tuesday with Group Captain C.R. Thompson, C.O. of No. 6 repair depot of Trenton. This station is property titled RCAF No. 6 RD detachment and is situated about 3 miles south of Dunnville, near Port Maitland.

The base was officially opened on October 31, 1940 and ceased training pilots on December 1, 1944. During this period 2436 British Commonwealth pilots were trained here and 35 Canadian and other commonwealth airmen were killed while serving in Dunnville.

Group Captain Thompson said that although a certain amount of repair was done at the depot since closing in 1944, its primary use was that of dead storage for obsolete aircraft. He said that the inventory of the numbers of aircraft in storage throughout Canada was decreasing and this was just one of the number of bases that will be closed.

BUDGET REDUCTION

Mr. Thompson also said that the reduction in the defense budget as well as deterioration of runways and buildings on the base also accounted for the decision.

He said that one base had already been closed out west and others are slated to close in London, ON and Picton, ON.

The RCAF certainly appreciates the co-operation of the people of Dunnville area since the base was situated there, he added.. The people have been kind to the personal on the base and it is regretted that the base has to be closed., he added.

When asked what will happen to the base after the November 1st date set for closing...Mr Thompson replied that it was up to Minister of National Defence and in the hands of Crown Assets Disposal at Ottawa.

PRIVATE AIRFIELD

Continuing, he said that he said the town might be interested in operating as a private airfield and he said that they should apply to the Department of National Defence in regards to this matter.

All told, there are about 76 aircraft in the four storage hangars and the one working hangar or service hangar. To look after them, 30 men work at the depot – four are men from RCAF the rest are civilians employed with Field Aviation who are under contract to the RCAF.

Group Captain Thompson said the service personel will be transferred to other units.