

Air Force Women Lauded By Air Marshal Breadner

Diplomas Presented to Graduating Class

The experiment which was started a year ago when the first 150 recruits for the R.C.A.F., Women's Division, reported to No. 6 Manning Depot in this city, has been a decided success, even greater than was hoped for by its most ardent supporters in October, 1941, Air Marshal L. S. Breadner, D.S.C., Chief of the Air Staff, told the personnel of the depot yesterday afternoon. The Air Marshal's visit coincided with the first anniversary of the depot and he addressed his remarks not only to the graduating class of trades airwomen but to the members of the division scattered across Canada and in England and Newfoundland, and those who have yet to enlist.

The class of a year ago was part of the experiment—many of them referred to themselves as guinea pigs—and the experiment was to show that women could replace men in the R.C.A.F. in taking over duties which would release men to the duties that only they could perform.

"On them rested the responsibility of proving what every Canadian woman has always known in her heart—that in the armed forces she could share, just as her grandmother did in pioneer days, the battles and hardships of her men-folk," he said. "They came to show how women can take over the business of feeding a fighting force, of working at its office desks, driving its transports, rigging its parachutes and caring for the sick, and they have done it in a spectacular way."

While a year ago No. 6 was the only training school for airwomen in Canada there are now two Manning Depots as well as training courses at the School of Cookery, Guelph; the School of Technical Training, St. Thomas; the School of Equipment and Accounts, Trenton, and at one of the wireless schools.

"The experiment is over. You are guinea pigs no longer," he concluded. "In its first year the Women's Division has become an integral part of the R.C.A.F. and soon we shall wonder how the service ever got along without you. We want more women in this division, many more, for the months that lie ahead. There will be new work for women and greater responsibility.

Individually and collectively they have proved their worth. Today, at the commencement of a new year of service you are on your own. The R.C.A.F. counts on your firm purpose and devotion of duty to form an increasingly strong second line to their fighting service. With men you are sharing the fight. With them you will share the victory."

The chief of the air staff arrived at the depot accompanied by Squadron Officer K. Walker of Ottawa, in charge of the Women's Division at air force headquarters, and Air Vice-Marshal Johnson, air officer commanding No. 1 Command. They were met by Squadron Leader A.

Bevan, commanding officer of the depot, and his staff. The entire personnel of the depot, including the R.C.A.F. detachment, was drawn up on the parade ground under the command of Flight Officer W. M. Taylor, officer in charge of the training wing. After the general salute the air marshal made an inspection of the parade. Later he presented diplomas to the honor graduates in trades training and took the salute for the march-past on Jarvis Street.

The honor graduates were: P. E. B. Bailey, transport driver, Crofton, B.C.; M. I. Close, general clerk Berwyn, Alta.; N. Mills, general medical clerk, New Westminster; A. B. Mackie, telephone operator Nanaimo, B.C.; and A. Spencer fabric worker, Simcoe, Ont.

Ontario graduates were: C. R. Aldred, Newholme; N. T. M. Brenner and D. L. E. Schmidt, Kitchen-er; J. M. Barnhart, Fort Erie; D. G. Ferrell, Brantford; A. E. Conyou, London; O. N. Graham, J. I. D. Jilks and R. C. Kerr, Toronto; D. H. Furmidge, Corbyville; R. M. Ledrew and W. I. Norman, Hamilton; P. C. Mumbey, Delora; A. Spencer, Simcoe; E. F. Waide, Owen Sound; and B. C. Whiteley, Oshawa.

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