202 SQN

ALDERGROVE

1957-59

The Officer Commanding and Members
No. 202 Squadron
request the pleasure of the company of

on the occasion of
The Presentation of the Squadron Standard
by Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas C. S. Evill, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.C., A.F.C.
at Royal Air Force, Aldergrove
on
Friday, 6th September, 1957 at 1130 hours.

R.S.V.P.—Officer Commanding,
No. 202 Squadron,
Royal Air Force, Aldergrove,
Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland

Service Dress or Lounge Suits
Formal Lunch Officers' Mess.

Invitation Card for the Presentation of

The Squadron Standard.

FIRST AIR HUNT

THE squadron which attempted to intercept the first enemy aircraft ever to drop a bomb on British soil, is to receive its squadron standard next month.

It is 202 Squadron, Coastal Command, now based at Aldergrove, Northern Ireland.

The standard will be presented on September 6 by **Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Evill** (now retired) who commanded the squadron in 1916-17.

FIRST BOMB

The interception attempt took place on Christmas Eve, 1914. On December 21 a single German Albatross had dropped bombs in the sea off Dover, and it was decided to form a small air defence detachment there.

Two Bristol biplanes of Two Squadron, Royal Naval Air Service landed at Dover on December 24. Forty-five minutes earlier news had been received of an enemy aircraft aproaching.

One of the Bristols took off, but found no intruder. Meanwhile, the enemy aircraft dropped its bomb on Dover and flew home.

Today, commanded by **Squadron-Leader C. A. Sullings**, A.F.C., 202 Squadron flies four-engined Hastings, which patrol five days a week over the Atlantic reporting for the forecasters of the Meteorological Office.

The squadron was formed in October 1914 and operated from Eastchurch and Westgate as well as Dover. Among its aircraft was a 70-h.p. Short biplane, carrying serial number 1—the first British military aircraft registration of the series, which has run in an ordered sequence of several hundred thousand from 1912 to today.

BATTLE HONOURS

At the start of the last war, the squadron was equipped with London flying boats. In 1940, it moved to Gibraltar and for the next four years was guarding the approaches to the Straits.

In 1942 it carried out reconnaissance and escort work for the North African landings—Operation Torch.

The squadron supplied the Catalina which picked up **General Mark Clark** from a submarine after his secret visit to Algiers to meet French leaders.

Squadron standards were instituted by **King George VI** in 1943 to mark the 25th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force. The squadron's new standard carries the squadron badge—a mallard alighting—flanked by its battle honours.

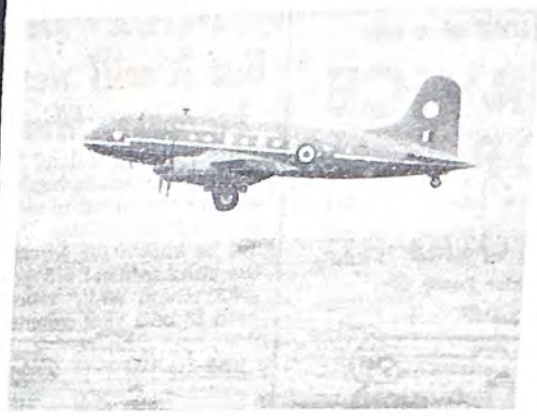
Extract from the "Daily Mail"

dated 16th August, 1957

YEARS OF SERVICE

"Where the weather is —we go"

HONOUR FOR "MET" FLYERS



Up aloft are airmen of No. 202 (Meteorological) Squadron, R.A.F., Aldergrove, which will be presented next month with a squadron standard on its having completed more than 25 years' operational service. Story in next column.

NO. 202 (Meteorological) Squadron, R.A.F., Aldergrove, which is the only R.A.F. squadron engaged in specialized long-range meteorological reconnaissance for weather forecasting in the British Isles, is to be honoured at a ceremony at Aldergrove on September 6, when a squadron standard, the award of which has been approved by the Queen, will be presented to it by Air Chief Marshal Sir Cecil Evill, who commanded the squadron from March, 1916 to April, 1917, and was its second commanding officer.

Squadron standards, to be awarded to operational squadrons of the R.A.F. on completion of 25 years' service, were introduced by the late King George VI, to mark the 25th anniversary of the R.A.F.

The No. 202 Squadron Standard will consist of a rectangular silk flag with the squadron badge centred on a light blue background. It will be fringed and tasselled, with scrolls, as necessary, for recording battle honours, and will be carried on a staff surmounted by a gold eagle. The squadron's battle honours appearing on the standard are: "Western Front, 1916-1918"; "Atlantic 1939-1945"; "Mediterranean 1940-1943"; "North Africa 1942-1943"; "Biscay 1942-1944."

To Fermanagh

During the last few months of the War the squadron moved to Castle Archdale, County Fermanagh, where they carried out anti-submarine duties over the Western Approaches. The second period of disbandment followed, but this did not last for long.

On October 1, 1946, No. 518 Squadron at Aldergrove was renumbered to No. 202 and with its reappearance the squadron added one more role—that of long-range meteorological reconnaissance—to the others in its varied career.

From 1946 to 1950 Halifax bombers were flown and during that period four aircraft and 32 crew members were lost. Since the Squadron was re-equipped in 1950 with modified Hastings transport aircraft, a 100-per-cent. safety record has been maintained.

No. 202 is proud of its part in the meteorological forecasting system of the British Isles, of which it is now an integral part. In meeting the requirements of the Central Forecasting Office, long flights into the area of the worst weather are called for, frequently involving many hours of "actual" under the most exacting conditions.

Indeed one captain of considerable experience has suggested that the squadron motto might well be amended to read: "Where the weather is — we go." It is certainly true that the daily meteorological flight code name "Bismuth"—does go with consistent regularity. And it is in the tradition of the squadron that the routes flown are usually far out into the Atlantic, thus preserving the Squadron's long association with the sea and maritime operations.

Formed in 1914

The squadron was first formed as No. 2 Squadron R.N.A.S. at Eastchurch in October, 1914, and taking into account two periods of disbandment following on the two World Wars, has completed 33 years' of service. Its outstanding characteristic throughout this period has been its close association with the maritime role.

During World War 1 the squadron served in home defence and later on the Continent, and with the formation of the R.A.F. in April, 1918, No. 2 became No. 202 Squadron, but, like many other squadrons, did not long survive after the War, being disbanded in May, 1921.

On January 1, 1929, No. 481 Coastal (Reconnaissance) Flight in Malta was redesignated No. 202 Squadron, whose task was Army and co-operation.

Early in 1939 the squadron, equipped with Saro London flying boats, moved to Gibraltar and on the outbreak of hostilities these were replaced by Catalinas and Sunderlands. The unit filled many important roles during five years in the Mediterranean campaign.

Extract from the "Northern Whig"

dated 17th August, 1957.

in fact, examination of the records of the television broadcasts showed that what might be taken as apologies were made on May 7, 9, 14, 16, 22 and 29. Certainly that is rather a large number. But included among them is the apology: "Eastern and central districts had rather more cloud than I suggested last night . . ." and that is an admission of a relatively minor error. To address an audience of millions and convey the impression it is desired to convey is a tricky business. The forecaster on television sets himself the task of putting his audience in the same position as himself as regards knowledge of current and expected weather. If his task were perfectly performed so that his audience envisaged the probabilities as he does himself there would be no need for apologies. However, nothing is more irritating to the intelligent listener when, and if, a gross forecasting error has been made than for the forecaster blandly to carry on as though no error had been made. It is a concession to the intelligence and interest of the audience that efforts are made from time to time to explain the causes of error. But this must be done very carefully in order to avoid confusing the audience. In assessing the merits of the television forecast it is essential to remember that an absolute time limit of three minutes is imposed on the forecaster. Obviously if too much of this very brief period were given up to explanations the audience tuned in to receive a forecast might well be confused.

The forecasts given on television are for all practical purposes identical with those broadcast by the B.B.C. on sound radio at 5.55 p.m. In principle the television forecasts cover the period from 8 a.m. to midnight tomorrow while the 5.55 p.m. sound broadcasts on the B.B.C. cover the period of 24 hours from 6 p.m. In fact, however, the television forecaster can hardly escape mentioning any important phenomenon, such as frost or fog, which may be expected during the night. It is reasonable then to suggest that any checking or verification of the 5.55 p.m. forecast broadcast by the B.B.C. would be equivalent to checking or verifying the television forecast broadcast in the early evening. For over two years, from November 1954 onwards, two subjective methods were used to obtain a general indication of user reaction. In the first a number of geographically representative schools, scattered throughout the British Isles, was asked to listen daily to the forecasts broadcast by the B.B.C. (sound only) in respect of their area and to assess them either as "mainly right" or "mainly wrong", on the basis of the actual weather subsequently experienced. Over the period from May 1956, inclusive, average figures for all schools show that out of 100 forecasts, 90 were "mainly right".

A parallel scheme of slightly more rigorous kind consisted of having assessments made on the same forecasts by meteorological offices distributed over the British Isles so that at least one was in each B.B.C. region. In other words, on each B.B.C. regional forecast broadcast at 5.55 p.m. there was at least one report by Meteorological Office staff in the appropriate region. The forecasts were checked under four headings: (i) wind, (ii) weather, (iii) state of sky and (iv) temperature, and certain criteria were agreed where checking was not merely a matter of comparing an actual with a forecast reading. The forecast of each element was assessed as good, indifferent, or bad with marks 2, 1, and 0 respectively. A good forecast of all four elements would thus earn the maximum mark of 8. For the fourteen months from November 1955 to December 1956 the average score was 6·1 or 76 per cent, the lowest being 5·7 or 71 per cent in September 1956 and the highest 6·4 or 80 per cent in November 1956.

R.A.F. "Met" Squadron awarded standard

The Queen has approved the award of a Squadron Standard to No. 202 (Meteorological) Squadron. The presentation ceremony will take place at the Royal Air Force Station, Aldergrove, on September 6. The presentation will be made by Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Evill, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.C., A.F.C., who commanded the squadron from March, 1916, to April, 1917, and was the squadron's second commanding officer.

Squadron standards, to be awarded to operational squadrons of the Royal Air Force on completion of 25 years' service, were introduced by King George VI, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Royal Air Force.

The squadron was first formed as No. 2 Squadron R.N.A.S. at Eastchurch in October, 1914, and taking into account two periods of disbandment following on the two world wars, it has completed 33 years of service. The outstanding characteristic of the squadron throughout its long history has been its close association with the maritime role.

An aircraft of No. 202 (Meteorlogical) Squadron, Aldergrove.

No. 202 Squadron was located at Gibraltar protecting the approaches for five years during the 1939-45 war, and sank three enemy submarines and shared in the sinking of three others, as well as damaging a further three. Members of the squadron gained the award of one D.S.O., two bars to D.F.C., 12 D.F.C.'s, seven D.F.M.'s and one G.M.

During the last few months of the war No. 202 Squadron moved to Castle Archdale, where they carried out anti-submarine duties over the Western approaches. Then followed their second period of disbandment, but this time it was to last for no more than a year.

On October 1, 1946, No. 518 Squadron at Aldergrove was renumbered No. 202 Squadron and with its re-appearance the squadron added one more role—long range meteorological reconnaissance — to the several others in its varied career. This new role has been maintained to the present, and No. 202 Squadron is the only Royal Air Force squadron engaged in this specialised and productive work. From 1946-1950 Halifax bombers were flown, and during that period four aircraft and 32 crew members were lost. Since the squadron re-equipped in 1950 with modified Hastings transport aircraft a 100 per cent. flying safety record has been maintained; in addition a secondary transport role has been possible.

The squadron is proud of its part in the meteorological forecasting system of the British Isles, of which it is now an integral part. In meeting the requirements of the Central Forecasting Office, long flights into the area of the worst weather are called for frequently involving many hours of "actual" under the most exacting conditions.

Extract from the "Belfast Newslatter"

dated 17th August, 1957.

No. 202 SQUADRON

ROYAL AIR FORCE

CONSECRATION

and

PRESENTATION

of the

SQUADRON STANDARD

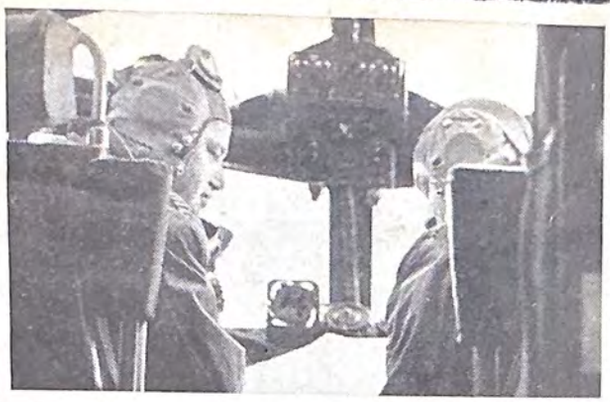
Reviewing Officer :

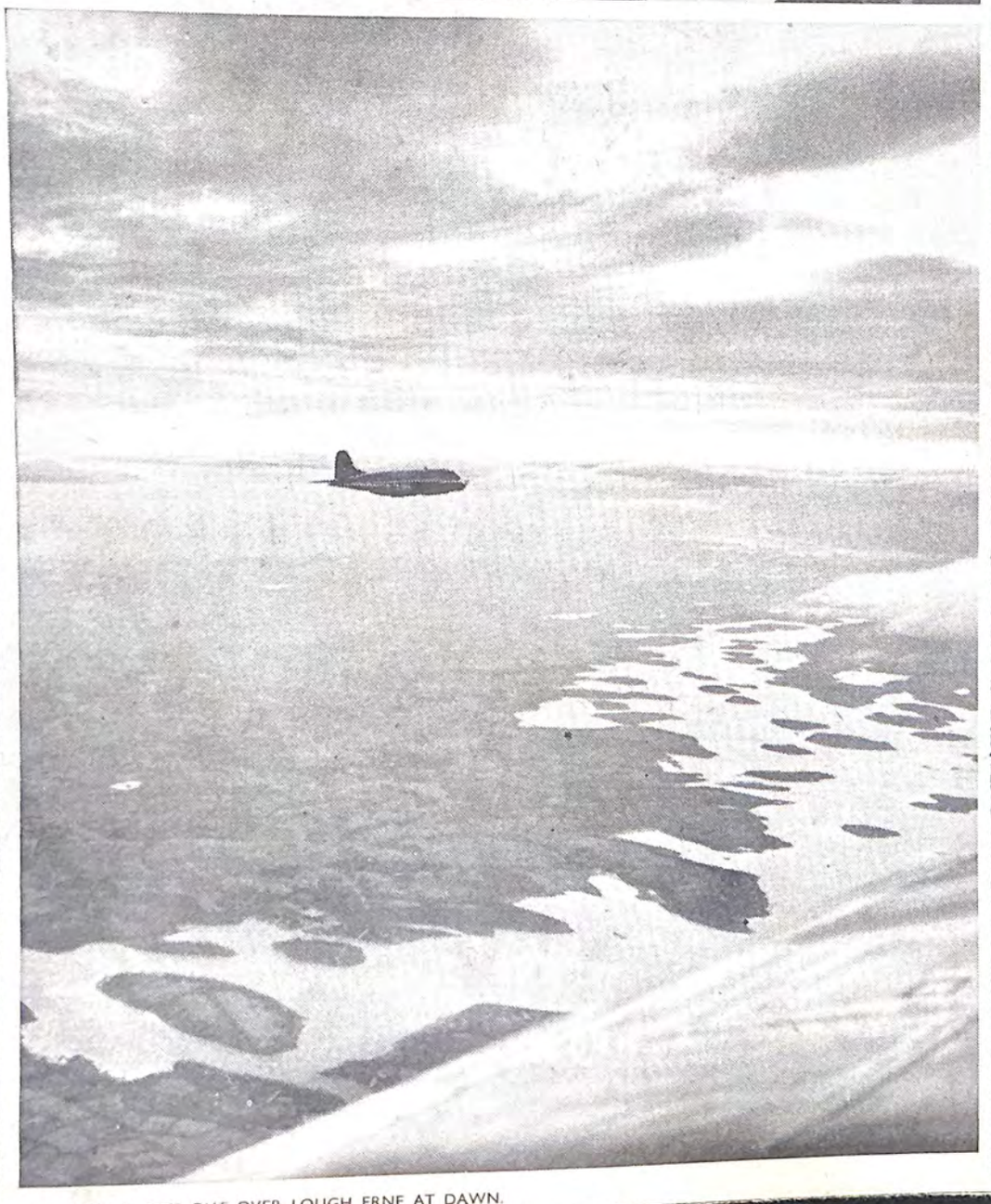
Air Chief Marshal Sir DOUGLAS C. S. EVILL,
G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.C., A.F.C.

ALDERGROVE 6th SEPTEMBER, 1957

WEATHER FLIGHT WITH COASTAL COMMAND

The Atlantic flights from Aldergrove in Northern Ireland take place four times a week, mostly over a distance of about 1,000 miles. Beside the pilot in the Hastings aircraft is a meteorological observer. Flights are made at approximately 1,500 feet, where the worst weather generally occurs.





A HASTINGS SETS OUT OVER LOUGH ERNE AT DAWN.

Extract from "The Times" dated 28th December, 1957.

The Captain on this flight was the Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader C.A. Sullings, A.F.C.,

O.C., No. 202 Squadron. (See p. 379).

M.O. 626

THE METEOROLOGICAL MAGAZINE

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Presentation of the Squadron Standard.

See page 379 and 2 Photographs in centre pages.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas C.S. Evill accompanied by the Station Commander Group Captain R.H.C. Burwell, O.B.E., D.F.C., and the Squadron Commander Squadron leader C.A. Sullings, A.F.C., inspecting the Parade before the Presentation.

Another view of the inspection. This photograph includes Flight Lieutenant W.J. Williams.

Pilot Officer R.J. Woodley receiving the Standard.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas C.S.Evill taking the salute.

Prior to the march-past. Photograph includes,No. 5 Regional Band, Royal Air Force, Flight Sergeant H. Walters, Pilot Officer R.J. Woodley, Sergeant B.D. Hunt, Flight Sergeant J.L. Franklin and Flight Lieutenant P.S. McGOWran.

The actual march-past.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas C.S. Evill taking the salute. Photograph includes, Rev. A Guthrie, Lt. General Sir Brian Kimmins, G.O.C., N.I.D., Squadron Leader R Kingsley-Brown and Flight Officer K.M. Jones.

General view of some of the Official Guests. Photograph includes Wing Commander & Mrs H.A. Pritchard, Major & Mrs G.B. MacKean, High Sheriff for County Antrim. The front row includes several past Squadron Commanders.

Standard presented to "Met" squadron at Aldergrove

IMPRESSIVE R.A.F. CEREMONY

Royal recognition of the achievements of No. 202 Squadron, the only squadron in the R.A.F. engaged almost exclusively on meteorological work, was given yesterday when, at an impressive ceremony in a vast hangar at Aldergrove Aerodrome, a new standard approved by the Queen, was presented to the squadron.

Several hundred guests, including Air Marshal Sir Brian Reynolds, C.-in-C. Coastal Command; Lieut.-General Sir Brian Kimmins, G.O.C., N.I.D.; Group Captain R. H. C. Burwell, station commander; Major G. B. MacKean, High Sheriff for Co. Antrim; representatives of the United States and Venezuela Air Forces, and many former commanders of the squadron, watched the ceremony.

33 years' service

In the strictly official sense, the presentation was eight years late, for squadron standards, first introduced by King George VI, are awarded for outstanding operations after 25 years' service. No. 202 Squadron has had 33 years' service, but the ceremony could not take place until this year because of the time required to design and make the beautifully hand-painted standard, and the number of squadrons which are becoming eligible to receive them.

Following a consecration service conducted by the Rev. Canon A. S. Giles, Chaplain-in-Chief to the R.A.F., the standard was formally presented to the squadron by Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Evill, who was its commanding officer in 1916, when it was No. 2 Squadron R.N.A.S. Although formed in 1914, the squadron has had only 33 years' service because of two periods of disbandment following the world wars. It was re-formed at Aldergrove in October, 1946, and added one more role—long range meteorological reconnaissance—to the several others in its varied career.

Yesterday's parade, at which the music was provided by the R.A.F. No. 5 Regional Band from England, was under the command of the squadron's commanding officer, Squadron Leader C. A. Sullings, and the standard was borne by Pilot Officer R. J. Woodley, who rejoined the R.A.F. in 1950 after serving from 1942 until the end of the war.

Colourful history

Addressing the 60 men and 20 officers of the squadron after the presentation ceremony, Sir Douglas Evill referred to its long and colourful history, particularly the part it played in the control of the Straits of Dover from 1916 until 1918, and again, significantly, in the control of the approaches to the Western Mediterranean in the 1939-45 war.

"The outstanding characteristic of the squadron has been its quiet, self-effacing devotion to duty, as well benefits a squadron of Coastal Command," Sir Douglas said. "It is comforting at this time, when devotion was never more important, to find that it is as much present in your work as ever."

The squadron's admirable record on meterological reconnaissance during the past 10 years was an essential contribution to a widely varied Service, he said, and called for a high degree of skill and endurance. The award of the standard set the seal on that distinguished record, for it was recognition by the Queen of services rendered in the past and an expression of her confidence in the future of the squadron.

At the conclusion of the parade the new standard was escorted to the officers' mess, where it will be housed.

Extract from the "Northern Whig"

dated 7th September, 1957.

Standard for Aldergrove Squadron

Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Evill speaking at the ceremony at Aldergrove yesterday when a new standard was presented to No. 202 Squadron, R.A.F. Also in the picture are (from left)—The Rev. G. S. M'Leer, Canon A. S. Giles, Chaplain-in-Chief (who dedicated the standard) and the Rev. A. Guthrie.

Pilot Officer R. J. Woodley receiving the new standard from the Air Chief Marshal.

STANDARD PRESENTATION.—Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas C. S. Evill, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.C., A.F.C., inspecting No. 202 Squadron (Sqn. Ldr. C. A. Sullings, A.F.C.) prior to presenting the Standard at R.A.F. Aldergrove on September 6. News of the presentation appeared in our issue of August 16.

An Aldergrove Ceremony

ON September 6 in weather similar to that into which it flies when engaged on its regular "Bismuth" flights over the Atlantic, No. 202 Squadron was presented with its Standard by Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Evill, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.C., A.F.C., at its parent station, Aldergrove. The ceremony took place before some 160 guests in one of the big hangars and the consecration service prior to the presentation was conducted by the Rev. Canon A. S. Giles, C.B.E., Chaplain-in-Chief of the Royal Air Force. No. 5 Regional Band of the R.A.F. was in attendance.

No. 202 Squadron was first formed as No. 2 Squadron R.N.A.S., at Eastchurch on October 17, 1914, and taking into account two periods of disbandment following on the two World Wars has completed 33 years of service. As Squadron Commander D. C. S. Evill, the Air Chief Marshal was its second commanding officer in March, 1916.

In his speech after the presentation he recalled the two main rôles carried out by the Squadron in the two wars, the first being the patrol of the Channel approaches, using aircraft ranging from the early Avros to the relatively advanced D.H.4s and 9s, and the second the Gibraltar approaches with Catalinas and Sunderlands and Swordfish.

Since October, 1946, the Squadron has added one more rôle to its varied career—long-range meteorological reconnaissance—and is at present the only R.A.F. squadron engaged in this specialized and productive work. It is now equipped with modified Hastings transport aircraft with which it is able to perform a secondary transport duty.

Commanded by Sqn. Ldr. C. A. Sullings, A.F.C., it is proud of its part in the meteorological forecasting system of the British Isles, in which it is now an integral link. In meeting the requirements of the Central Forecasting Office, long flights into the areas of the worst weather are called for, frequently involving many hours of "actual" under the most exacting conditions.

After the Parade the Squadron entertained its many guests to luncheon in the Officers' Mess, and the toast to the Squadron, with which was coupled the name of Sir Douglas Evill, was proposed by the A.O.C.-in-C. Coastal Command, Air Marshal Sir Bryan Reynolds, K.C.B., C.B.E., to which Sir Douglas replied.—R.C.P.

Extract from the "Aeroplane"

dated 20th September, 1957.

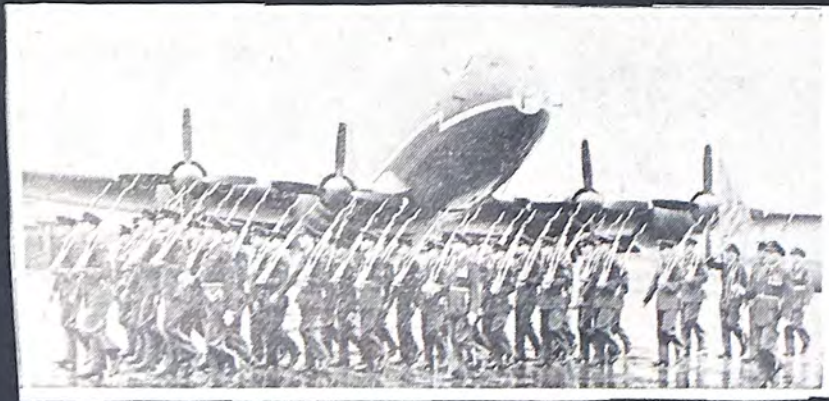
MARCH-PAST AFTER ALDERGROVE CEREMONY —CONSECRATION OF SQUADRON STANDARD

202 Squadron, Royal Air Force, marching past one of their Hastings aircraft after the consecration and presentation of the new squadron standard at Aldergrove. It marks outstanding operations during 25 years' service—Story Page Seven.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas C. S. Evill handing over the new standard to Pilot-Officer R. J. Woodley, 202 Squadron, R.A.F., during to-day's ceremony at Aldergrove.

Extracts from the "Northern Whig" and "Belfast Telegraph" dated 7th September, 1957.

Above — Pilot-Officer R. J. Woodley proudly bears the Standard of 202 Squadron which he received from Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Evill at the R.A.F. station at Aldergrove yesterday. The Standard marks outstanding operations during 25 years' service. Left—The Standard is paraded past one of the huge four-engined Hastings meteorological aircraft used at the station.



SQUADRON 202 GETS ITS STANDARD

25 years' service marked at colourful dedication ceremony at Aldergrove

A STANDARD marking outstanding operations during 25 years' service was presented to No. 202 Squadron, R.A.F. Coastal Command, during a colourful and impressive ceremony at Aldergrove to-day.

The squadron is actually 33 years old, but the presentation of the hand-woven standard was delayed for eight years because a number of other squadrons had also to be honoured, and work on the standard—it took 12 months to make it—was held up.

The presentation ceremony, carried out by Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Evill, who was squadron C.O. in 1916, was watched by the families of the 65 officers and men, representatives of other services, and also representatives of the United States and Venezuelan Air Forces.

A number of former commanding officers of the squadron were also present. Lieut.-General Sir Brian Kimmins, G.O.C. N.I.D., represented the Army, and Sir Brian Reynolds, C.-in-C. Coastal Command, was among the guests.

RECOGNITION

Sir Douglas Evill, addressing the parade—it was due to be held out of doors, but took place in a hangar because of bad weather—told the squadron members: "Presentation of this standard represents recognition by Her Majesty the Queen of services rendered by the squadron in the past, and an expression of confidence in your loyalty and endeavour in the future.

"It is in addition a memorial to those members of the squadron who have given their lives in the course of that service."

Sir Douglas said it was a proud day for all who had served in the squadron during its 33 years of existence. It was a proud day for him to have been invited by the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief to make the presentation.

"You who now comprise the squadron, who represent now all that has gone to its making in the past—the lives, the health, the effort that have been expended in its service—will feel, I know, a deep and very special sense of honour and responsibility at the award," he said.

FINE HISTORY

"Your squadron has a long and fine history. From its early days as part of the Royal Naval Air Service, and from the very inception of the R.A.F., No. 202 Squadron has set itself the highest standards.

"It has had its moments of great achievement—in particular the part played in the control of the Straits of Dover in 1916 to 1918, and significant again, the control of the sea approaches to the Western Mediterranean in 1939 to 1945.

"The battle honours of this standard pay tribute to those achievements, as do the individual decorations gained in the squadron during both wars.

"But it is at least as important and praiseworthy that the outstanding characteristic of the squadron throughout its service has been a quiet, enduring, and self-effacing devotion to duty which well befits a squadron of Costal Command."

SKILL

Sir Douglas spoke of the admirable record of the squadron over the past 10 years on meteorological reconnaissance, which, he said, was an essential contribution to a widely-needed service. It called for skill and endurance, in tune with the best traditions of the squadron.

The award now of the standard set the seal on a distinguished record, he said.

Sir Douglas inspected the squadron prior to presenting the standard. The standard was consecrated by Rev. Canon A. S. Giles, Chaplain-in-Chief to the R.A.F.

Afterwards, the squadron marched past the reviewing officer, under the Station Commander, Group Captain R. H. C. Burwell, and the O.C. 202 Squadron, Squadron-Leader C. A. Sullings. The No. 5 Regional Band, R.A.F., played the R.A.F. General Salute and the National Anthem.

Extract from the "Belfast Telegraph" dated 7th September, 1957.

The Officer Commanding and Officers
of No. 202 Squadron,
Royal Air Force, Aldergrove
request the pleasure of the company of

.....

to Cocktails in the Officers' Mess
on Friday 6th September, 1957.

R.S.V.P.
Squadron Adjutant

Invitation Card for the Squadron Cocktail Party.

Flyers will be Belfast Freemen

Ceremony climaxes a 'year of years' for the Aldergrove RAF Station

("Belfast Telegraph" Reporter).

IN the record books 1957 will go down as the "year of years" for Aldergrove R.A.F. station. Seldom, if ever, can one R.A.F. base have received so many honours in so short a time.

Its year of triumphs will be climaxed in Belfast on Saturday, when the station commander, Group Captain R. H. C. Burwell, will receive the Freedom of the City on behalf of the station from the Lord Mayor, Alderman W. Cecil McKee.

This will be the first time an R.A.F. station has received the Freedom of a capital city, and in honour of the event the Queen's Colour of the Royal Air Force will be paraded in front of the four Aldergrove squadrons.

It will be the Colour's second visit to the Province in recent months, for in June it was paraded with full ceremony at Aldergrove on the occasion of the Queen's birthday.

The station's third big event this year took place a month ago when a standard was presented to 202 (Meteorological) Reconnaissance Squadron in recognition of its outstanding services during the 33 years of its existence.

FIRST IN U.K.

These are not the only honours that have come the way of Aldergrove recently: 120 Squadron held the Aird-Whyte Trophy for bombing and gunnery proficiency in 1952-53 and in 1956, and this year it won the Dunning Trophy for efficiency in anti-submarine exercises.

In the latest Coastal Command Squadrons' Efficiency Competition 120 headed all the United Kingdom squadrons.

Last week Aldergrove aircraft played an important role in the N.A.T.O. exercise "Strikeback" and to-day Group Captain Burwell had this to say of their contribution:

"The whole station put on an effort second to none in Coastal Command, concentrating six weeks flying into nine days. Both 202 and 120 Squadrons flew night and day at very high pressure for the full duration of the exercise and 120 has claimed three submarines killed and two others sighted.

"Now we are concentrating on preparing for Saturday. We ourselves, as well as the whole R.A.F., are very conscious of the honour that is being conferred upon us by the city of Belfast."

SINCE 1918

Since it was first used as a flying field in 1918 Aldergrove has always had close links with Belfast and other neighbouring towns.

There have been tremendous changes during the 39 years of the station's existence. Wooden huts and grass take-offs have given way to huge steel hangars and broad tarmac runways capable of handling the most modern jets.

To-day it is one of the R.A.F.'s busiest stations and has a large number of local men on the staff.

Men like Flight-Lieut. "Paddy" Dinnes, a pilot attached to 202 Squadron, whose home is on the Cavehill Road, Belfast.

Ten days ago he earned official recognition through flying his four-engined Hastings aircraft right through the centre of the notorious hurricane "Carrie."

It is the job of the 202 Squadron pilots and their crews to bring back the latest weather data and Flt.-Lt. Dinnes considers his achievement to have been very much a matter of routine.

THE 'R.S.M.'

The flight through the 200-mile-wide hurricane area was made to collect information vital to the forecasters, and his only comment about it was: "It was very rough and the sea was completely white. In fact I have never seen anything like it."

There are few men at Aldergrove with a longer service record than Flt.-Sgt. John Purvis, from the Shankill Road, Belfast, who joined the R.A.F. in December, 1935, and who has more than 20 years' service despite the fact that he went back to "civvy street" for a short time after the war. Attached to 120 Squadron, he has been described as the "Squadron R.S.M."

At the other end of the service scale come the younger generation.

Typical of them is 23-year-old Met. Sgt. John Captain from nearby Crumlin, who joined the service only a year ago after working for some time as a civilian meteorologist at Aldergrove. He changed his civilian clothes for a uniform because he felt that the R.A.F. would provide him with more experience and better opportunities.

Everywhere I went there were Ulstermen. Not all of them were at their jobs for in recent weeks a number of extra practice parades has been added to the duties of nearly everyone, officers and men alike.

But there have been few complaints for they are all determined to make Saturday's ceremony an outstanding occasion.

Flt.-Lieut. "Paddy" Dinnes, of Belfast, who recently flew through the centre of hurricane "Carrie," checking his crews' Mae Wests with Met.-Sergeant John Captain, of Crumlin.

Extract from the "Belfast Telegraph" prior to the Freedom of the City of Belfast ceremony.

CITY AND COUNTY BOROUGH OF BELFAST

Conferment of the Freedom of the City on the Royal Air Force, Aldergrove

5th October, 1957.

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor and Corporation invite you to be present at the above-named Ceremony at the City Hall, on Saturday, 5th October, 1957, at 10-30 a.m.

THIS TICKET WILL ADMIT BEARER TO RESERVED AREA IN THE CITY HALL GROUNDS
GUESTS MUST BE SEATED NOT LATER THAN 10 A.M.
ENTRANCE BY DONEGALL SQUARE EAST.

Conferment of the Freedom of the City on

The Royal Air Force Aldergrove

Luncheon

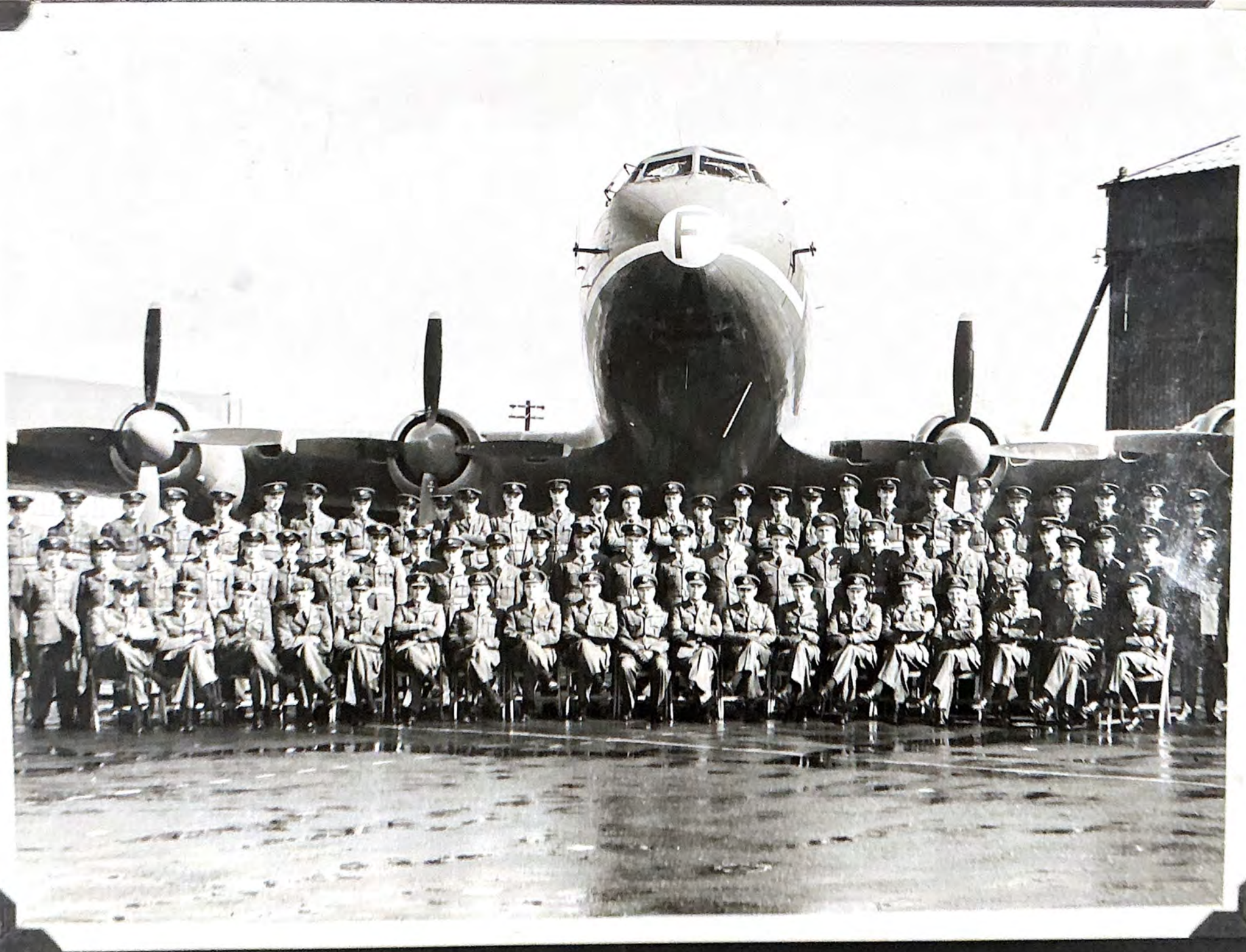
IN THE CITY HALL . BELFAST

BY INVITATION OF

THE RT. HON. THE LORD MAYOR
AND CORPORATION OF BELFAST

5TH OCTOBER, 1957

Invitation Card and Luncheon Menu used at the Freedom of the City of Belfast.



Squadron Photograph taken on the Station Parade Ground, on the 5th September, 1957 in front of one of the Hastings. The front row is comprised of:- M.E. Stanley, Plt.Off Woodley, Plt. Off Hepburn, Plt. Off Leathley, Fg.Off Jackson, Fg.Off Nicholas, Flt. Lt Pearson, Flt.Lt. Williams, Flt.Lt.Jackson, Sqdn.Ldr Sullings, Flt.Lt.McGowran, Flt.Lt. Dimes, Flt.Lt.Turner, Flt.Lt.Bartlett, Fg.Off Stephenson, Fg.Off.Sharp, Flt.Lt.Munoz, Fg.Off.Lawson and M.P. Radina.

Here is the weather forecast

A WHOLE DAY BEFORE IT HAPPENS . . .

Today's weather conditions in Scotland will be showery with bright intervals during the day—following a night of rain This was the picture built up last night by the R.A.F. met. sortie over the Atlantic. They saw an "occluded" front—that is a cold front which overtook a warm front.

EXPRESS PHOTO NEWS

By GORDON BEVERLEY

PHOTOGRAPHER Peter Macvean and I have seen today's weather 24 hours before it reached Scotland—250 miles out over the Atlantic.

We flew there in an R.A.F. four-engined Hastings manned by a seven-man crew of the only meteorological squadron in the service . . . some of the fliers who weekly log thousands of air miles to provide information for the B.B.C.'s radio and television weather broadcasts.

This is 202 Squadron and they fly on missions lasting up to nine hours, five days a week, in all weather conditions, from Aldergrove, Northern Ireland.

The Hastings go out as far as 1,500 miles on one of these sorties or "bismuths" as they are termed to radio back vital information at regular intervals.

This is passed from Aldergrove, which lies 15 miles west of Belfast, to Dunstable, Berkshire, where it is collated with similar information from other sources.

Into hurricane

And so to the television screen or the microphone and household terms like "A deep depression over sea area Rockall"—or "Gales imminent sea areas Lundy and Irish Sea."

At the request of the met experts, these aircraft are flown *deliberately* into sectors in which trouble is expected . . during the recent Hurricane Carrie which sank the German training ship Pamir. Hastings from Aldergrove spent five days flying into the storm area as it crept towards Britain. One actually flew straight into the heart of it.

Our trip was not so eventful in this direction, but it was completed on only three engines . . . and with air-sea rescue aircraft standing by (back at Aldergrove . . .

It started for us at 7.30 a.m. when we were briefed along with the crew, but two hours earlier the met. experts had decided that the sortie would be on Track Bravo—into the South-Western Approaches.

At 8 a.m. the Hastings took off with 35-year old Londoner Flight Lieutenant Eric Jackson at the controls. Beside him sat co-pilot Flight Lieutenant George ("Taffy") Turner, from Anglesey.

Behind them at their crew stations sat the navigator, Sergeant Roy Smith (28), of Oxford; the flight engineer, Sergeant John Huckle (32), St. Ives; the signallers, Flight-Sergeant Jack Franklin (34), Portsmouth, and Sergeant Mick Furness (21), Hayes.

Bounced

The seventh member—the one who would play the most prominent part in the operation—waited to take up his position. This was the met. observer, Sergeant John Captain, of Belfast.

As John Captain took over, his pencil started to flick over his charts as he picked up hints of the weather to come. The Hastings bounced around and "Skipper" Jackson coaxed the controls as we hit turbulence.

After eight hours and 1,500 miles flying behind us we landed without incident at Aldergrove and for the first time John Captain, like the rest of the crew, relaxed.

The seven-man crew outside their Hastings aircraft after landing on three engines (one failed earlier) at Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. They flew 1,500 miles on a met. sortie.

High over the Atlantic . . . over a sea of clouds that will be above your head today . . . observer John Captain looks at the weather to come.

Extract from "Scottish Daily Express" dated 31st October, 1957.

Honours & Awards

In the Queen's Birthday Honours List on the 12th June, 1958, Flying Officer R.J. STEPHENSON (650428) received the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Services in the Air.

R 121030A

FM HQ 18 GROUP

TO ALDERGROVE

BT

SIGNALS SECTION

12 JUN 1958

R.A.F. ALDERGROVE

Security Grade

UNCLASSIFIED

Precedence

ROUTINE

9/12

U N C L A S P.49 PERSONAL FOR FLYING OFFICER R STEPHENSON NO 242 SQUADRON FROM AIR OFFICER COMMANDING PD HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS ON AWARD OF YOUR QUEENS COMMENDATION PD

BT

A Flight to Spy out the Weather . . . BY SAM POLLOCK

EVERY day, and all round the clock, thousands of messages pour into the Meteorological Office's Central Forecasting Station at Dunstable in Bedfordshire. They come from 'lone watchers of the skies' in observation posts throughout Britain and in weather ships far at sea, as well as from other ships—and airliners—plying the ocean routes along which those warm and cold fronts, centres of high and low pressure, and the other climatic influences normally approach our shores.

Signals are received too from 'Radiosonde' balloons despatched far into the upper atmosphere—signals tapped out by no human hand, but by delicate instruments, carried by the balloons, which register temperature, humidity, and barometric pressure, and transmit the readings back to earth—roughly on the same principle as the 'bleeps' of the Sputnik. Finally, there are the special 'weather flights' carried out every weekday by the R.A.F. for the Met. men—by which, so to speak, the Met. Office, instead of waiting for the weather to come to us, or to our observers on land or sea, sends its own spies to search it out in its lair!

These flights began during the second world war, when Britain's weather, for the first time in our history, became a State secret, and when the same reasons of security which suspended the broadcasting of weather forecasts—and banned all topical jokes about our climate by radio comedians!—imposed silence on all Allied ships and 'planes crossing the Atlantic. Yet at that time reliable weather forecasts were more necessary than ever to the planners of our war effort—especially to our air forces. And so, often several times a day in those years, R.A.F. 'planes made sorties far out over the Atlantic, where most of our weather originates, to find out what we had coming to us in the immediate future—in rain or snow, sunshine or fog, from the Faroes to the Azores, from Biscay or beyond the Outer Hebrides—and to bring back warning before it got here.

These weather flights proved so helpful for accurate forecasting that they were continued, on a more modest scale, in peacetime. Five mornings a week an aircraft of Coastal Command flies on weather reconnaissance from Aldergrove in Northern Ireland, and it was on one of these flights that I was given the opportunity of watching our weather spies at work.

Just after seven a.m. I joined the aircraft crew in the Met. Office at Aldergrove for briefing. We stood before a large map of the British Isles and their Atlantic approaches. Something with interesting possibilities, it seemed, was happening in the Bay of Biscay—something marked on the map by an irregular circle. This we were to go and 'have a look at,' and send back word of its present position, extent, and behaviour. At other times our flight might have been towards Iceland or the Azores.

After briefing, we collected our equipment and stores, and climbed into the four-engined Hastings. Over the Isle of Man we turned south and flew at 1,500 feet until we were off St. David's Head. Here was the apex of the great triangle, whose base ran parallel to the north coast of Spain, and along whose thousand-mile perimeter we were to fly in search of our quarry—the weather that could be Britain's tomorrow.

Sometimes we flew almost at sea level, sometimes, with oxygen masks adjusted, at 18,000 feet; and at every level the readings and observations—of temperature, wind speed, cloud formations, humidity, pressure—were being passed by the Met. observer, in his seat beside the pilot, to the wireless operator, and by him radioed back to Aldergrove. The navigator, in addition to his normal duties, was busy with chart and compass and slide-rule making the calculations, such as wind-speed, which could not be read direct from any of the scores of dials and instruments which surrounded him on all sides. The flight engineer, in addition to his normal duties, plied us with coffee, sandwiches, and—somewhere off Finisterre—with an excellent chicken lunch. We were airborne 9¼ hours, and had covered over 1,500 miles by the time we returned to Aldergrove.

Five hundred miles out: the weather ship 'Weather'

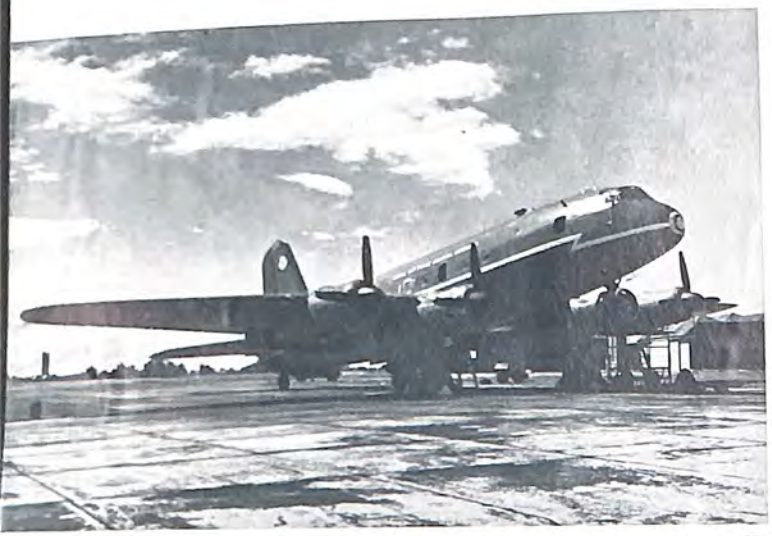
Back in the forecasting office there, I looked again at our triangular route on the map, but now every half-inch of it was covered with figures and symbols representing the information we had gathered, and on which (with reports from other observers) Dunstable would base the evening's forecast. The forecasters were able to deduce that the 'trouble spot' over the Bay of Biscay was sheering off to the east, and was now the concern of France.

That is not to say that the attitude of our weather men towards other countries is (as the Muir-Norden sheen) 'I should worry about your predicament, Jack—I'm all right.' Part of the story behind the weather forecasts is a heartening example of international co-operation, which bridges even the barrier of the Iron Curtain. Many of those thousands of messages received daily at Dunstable, which help our weather men to build up their complete picture, come from their opposite numbers in countries all over the world, and Dunstable sends them its information and observations in return.

EXTRACT from the"Radio Times" dated 5th August, 1958.

This flight was made on 31st March, 1958. It was a Bismuth "A" and the Captain was Flt.Lt. W.L. DINNES

Weather Watch IN THE Atlantic



R.A.F. Coastal Command Hastings, Weather Patrol Aircraft, is a four-engined machine, manned by a crew of seven. (Left) Flt. Lt. Paddy Dinnes and crew return from Atlantic Patrol. Often these men fly thousands of miles in search of rough weather. (Below) A Hastings crew is briefed by the met. officer at R.A.F. Aldergrove, some 15 miles from Belfast

The Weather Watcher *on her way to an Atlantic Station, where she may remain for 24 days, returning to spend from 11-21 days at Greenock. (Below) An Air-Sea Rescue practice*

(Below) The radio-sonde balloon goes over the Weather Watcher

SUCCESSFUL weather forecasting is not just a question of reading barometers and barographs in the comfort of a "met" office. A deal of life and limb is hazarded daily in the all-the-year-round build-up of information for the men and women with the charts and instruments at the Air Ministry's central weather forecasting office at Dunstable. The main sources of information are nine ocean weather bases—floating observatories—in the Atlantic, supplemented by reports from No. 202 Squadron of the Royal Air Force's Coastal Command, who fly four-engined Hastings aircraft from R.A.F. Aldergrove in Northern Ireland.

Five of the weather bases on our side of the Atlantic are maintained by the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands and Norway. The four others are the responsibility of the United States with Canada helping out at one station. The British fleet of four, *Weather Reporter, Weather Watcher, Weather Observer* and *Weather Recorder,* manned largely by Scots, look after Stations A, I, J and K, known as Alpha, India, Juliett and Kilo. They sail for a month at a time from the Air Ministry's weather ship base at the Great Harbour, Greenock.

These little ships are out in the roughest of weather all the year round. They have to contend with seas as high as 40-50 feet (very occasionally) and gales with gusts reaching 75 miles an hour. Yet Captain A. W. Ford, of Cardiff, master of *Weather Reporter,* has never missed one of the 83 voyages since the service began eleven years ago, and very few readings have been missed in that time by any of the seven meteorological experts in each ship, although they make no pretence to be men of the sea. In the wildest weather they take their readings and send out the radio-sonde balloons from the stern of the ship. These measure the pressure, temperature and humidity of the upper-air at all heights up to 60,000 feet every six hours. Sea temperatures and other surface observations are made every three hours. The readings are signalled back immediately to Dunstable.

A weather ship base is like a box, roughly 100 miles to each side. The vessel tries to keep as near the centre of the box as possible. Apart from signalling back meteorological readings, the ships provide various navigational aids by radio to aircraft in flight as well as air/sea rescue facilities. They also carry out certain oceanographical work for various U.K. authorities and have made many other experiments.

Met. Officer Mr Stroud with the radio unit for the met. balloon. Radio-sonde balloons are released every six hours

Calibration in progress on board the Weather Watcher. *Compass readings are then radioed to the calibration launch*

Fitting radar target to the met. balloon. Once in the upper air the balloon bursts, the radio-sonde equipment descends by parachute

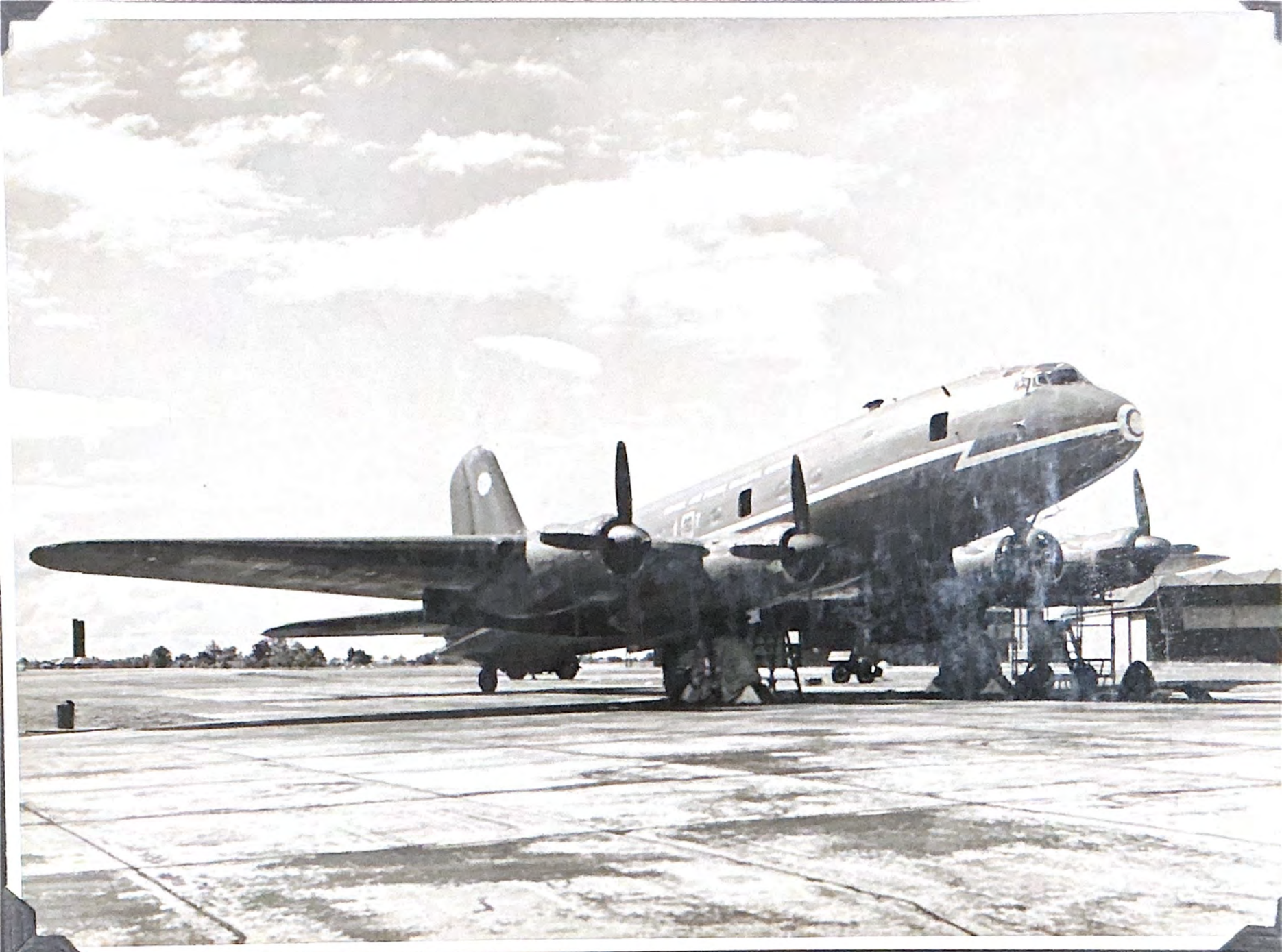
Met. Officers Flawn and Stroud plot winds in the met. office of the Weather Watcher. *Each ship in the weather fleet has a complement of over 50*

Weather information is not only radioed to ships and aircraft concerned with meteorology, but to others in the area

Readings are signalled back to the ship by the transmitter in the met. balloons, and are later signalled to land stations

Mr Flawn, senior met. officer, takes readings from the met screen on the Weather Watcher's *bridge. There are 7 met. experts on board*

The course of the radio-sonde balloon is followed by radar in order to provide wind direction and wind speed at various heights



Photograph from the "Scottish Field" August 1958

Hastings "C" having a propeller change

A photograph of Air Vice Marshal P.D. Craeroft, C.B., A.F.C., A.O.C. No 18 Group, taken at the controls of Hastings T.G. 622, on the occasion of his last visit (before retiring) to Gibraltar, 12th - 17th October, 1958. The captain of the aircraft was Squadron Leader C.A. Sullings, A.F.C.,

The Irish News

AND BELFAST MORNING NEWS (104th Year)

(No. 28,319 Estd. 1855 BELFAST, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1959 2d)

• AN "IRISH NEWS" REPORTER PAYS A VISIT TO THE "MET" OFFICE AND SAYS . . .

Weather Knows No Frontiers

• There is a lot more to the science of meteorology than meets the eye. Apart from advising the public on what the following day's weather will be like, there is also a lot of sound, solid and important work which never reaches the headlines.

I HAVE just seen at work an organisation which forms part of one of the world's greatest examples of international co-operation. And the experience was refreshing and stimulating. It is a true saying that weather knows no frontiers.

It is equally true that the men whose job it is to study the weather make no distinctions as to race, colour or creed in the dissemination of the knowledge they acquire through that study.

They are the meteorologists who, at stations all over the world, seven days of the week and every hour of the day, on land, on sea, and in the air, are engaged collecting information which saves mankind more than it realises in terms of life, money and inconvenience.

Yet as a target for jest the weather service is probably surpassed in popularity only by the subject of "the mother-in-law," and both are maligned.

The making of forecasts is a precise and highly technical job. The forecaster does not predict, nor does he endeavour to do so. From knowledge and experience he may only make a scientific assessment of future weather from available information, and there are gaps in his information because of the complex nature of his work.

Consequently there is a degree of uncertainty in a weather forecast, but it is constantly being reduced—by scientific advances in meteorology, by extension of observations, and by dint of constant research.

The weather is, and has always been, one of the greatest topics of conversation in the world. Directly or indirectly it affects the lives of all of us, and forecasts about it are important; of vital importance to many.

To find out how that news is collected, analysed and broadcast to those who require it, I visited the Meteorological Office at Aldergrove, Co. Antrim, which is the main "Met" Office for the Six Counties, and one of the biggest in these islands.

There, under the direction of Mr. R. Buchanan, the senior meteorological officer, a staff of over 40, including special air reconnaissance observers, are charged with the responsibility of collecting, plotting, analysing, recording and forecasting weather information which is important and available not only to the Six Counties, but through the Central Forecasting Office, at Dunstable, England, to the world.

I learned that the weather over an area like the Six Counties, or even the British Isles, is affected by the weather over a vast territory. And to make a satisfactory forecast for such areas for 24 hours ahead it is necessary to have reports on weather conditions at regular intervals from a network of stations over a large area of the Northern Hemisphere. To provide an "outlook" for the following 24 hours the area has to be extended even further. This is where the good neighbour policy is of such vital importance to the meteorological service. Without the help of its neighbours no country could provide a satisfactory weather service.

So the need for the exchange of weather reports between nations has long been recognised. This essential international co-operation is organised by the World Meteorological Organisation which has its headquarters in Geneva.

Own "Language"

To outlet this free exchange of reports the meteorologists have a "language" all of their own—an agreed figure code which is understood by weather men the world over, irrespective of the language they speak.

At Aldergrove "Met" office there are three assistants under engaged in the collection and analysis of weather information. They are the radio-sonde unit, the meteorological reconnaissance squadron and the forecast office.

In addition to the surface observations that have to be made upper air observations are of paramount importance to the weather man and it is in making the latter that the radio-sonde and air reconnaissance units are engaged.

By making it possible to observe temperature, humidity, pressure and the speed and direction of the wind at heights of up to 60 or 70 thousand feet, radio-sonde has made a tremendous contribution to the science of meteorology.

Weighing only about three lbs. this small radio transmitter (combining devices for measuring temperature, pressure and humidity) is made airborne on a free hydrogen-filled balloon.

Each minute as it moves aloft it automatically signals observations in the form of musical notes.

In addition a reflector of nylon mesh attached to the balloon is tracked by radar making it possible to calculate the speed and direction of the wind.

The balloon expands as it rises and generally reaches a height of 60,000 ft. before bursting. The instrument then floats earthwards attached to a parachute.

So, if you should happen to find a tiny instrument resembling a small satellite remember that it has not been lost by a careless Russian scientist, but is the property of the Air Ministry.

If in any doubt about it look for a small label which should be attached to the transmitter and which offers a reward to the finder for its safe return.

Mr. S. Pollock, radio-sonde officer at Aldergrove, told me that of the 93 radios launched each month from the station only about one is returned. The majority end up in the Irish Sea or some other inaccessible area.

Altogether there are nine radio-sonde units in the British Isles, including one at Valencia, in the 26 Counties. Two of the four British weather ships in the North Atlantic also operate the radio-sonde.

"Operation Bismuth"

So far the most romantic of the units at Aldergrove "Met." Station is the Meteorological Reconnaissance Squadron, which in foul or fine weather makes flights up to 1,600 miles on five days a week.

This hazardous task, known as "Operation Bismuth," is the responsibility of No. 202 Squadron, Coastal Command, the only squadron of its type in the R.A.F. In crews of six, including two trained observers, they fly their four-engined Hastings out over the Atlantic and North Sea to radio back reports on such things as stability, weather, and ice formations.

These daring men are themselves no respecters of weather conditions, and it is their boast that they have never yet been held up by the weather. They have even been known to take off on their weather missions in dense fog.

At the forecast office I saw the weather reports being received, plotted on weather charts, and studied by a team of forecasters. It is from this source that forecasts are sent out for all R.A.F. flights from Aldergrove.

Forecasts are also furnished to civil flights from Nutts Corner and to B.A.F. flights from Ballykelly.

Aldergrove, too, is the source of the forecast you hear on the North-of Ireland B.B.C. and T.V. and again on the G.P.O. dialling system. It is this office, too, that any member of the public can ring (Crumlin 338) for any help or advice they might require in their leisure or work as it is affected by the weather.

Observations made at a number of stations in the Six Counties, the radio-sonde measurements and the observations from the reconnaissance aircraft are sent from Aldergrove via teleprinter to the Central Forecasting Office at Dunstable. From there the information is distributed to all other forecasting offices in the British Isles.

It is also relayed to Paris for distribution throughout Europe and North America.

Similarly, in the give and take of meteorology, all observations from North America, Europe and the Mediterranean are received and used in the analysis of the weather situation by Aldergrove.

On the study of these observations the weather forecasts of the Six Counties is based.

Consultant Service

There is a lot more to the science of meteorology than meets the eye. Apart from advising the public on what the following days weather will be like there is also a lot of sound, solid and important work carried on which never reaches the headlines.

There is what might be described as the consultant services—a service which is carried on quietly and unobtrusively daily and which affects the life of the community and is available to individuals and organisations alike whose problems have the state of the weather as a factor.

Where climate is important to an industrial process the Meteorological can, and do, be asked to advise on the choice of site and design for a factory.

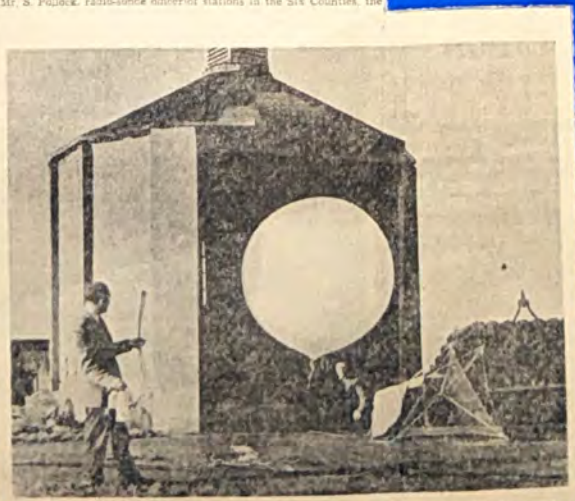
Similarly, architects, engineers, county surveyors, horticulturists, etc., can receive advice or guidance on those aspects of their work in which a knowledge of climatic conditions is important.

The importance of this branch of the service can be gauged from the fact that the study of climate in the Six Counties has resulted in an improvement in the yield from the forestry schemes and new ideas have been produced regarding the types of crops most suitable for particular areas.

That is your weather service, a service that was established just over 100 years ago for the purpose of issuing gale warnings. Since then it has expanded in size, importance and in the number of services it renders to the community. Meteorologists are forward looking men. They look to new horizons — to the day when they will be able to forecast accurately for periods of a week or a month in advance. Research aimed not only at improving the accuracy of short period forecasts but at extending the period for which forecasts can be issued is currently being carried on.

And, thanks to the international aspect of the service, the nations of the world will benefit from the fruit of this research.

Mr. R. Buchanan, senior Met. officer for N. Ireland, and Mr. S. Glassey, experimental officer, at work on a weather map.



Mr. J. H. Meeke (right) prepares to launch the hydrogen-filled weather balloon, equipped with paper parachute and radar screen and radio Sonde transmitter, held by Mr. S. Pollock, Radar Sonde officer (left).

IN SEARCH OF TO-MORROW'S WEATHER

By GEORGE A. HUNTER

"THERE should be a front of anti-cyclones, and the remains of a hurricane about here," said the meteorological officer, pointing to a map of the Atlantic. "Find out what it's all about."

The group of airmen around him nodded, filed out of the office to their four-engined Hastings aircraft, and began their flight. These eight men belong to No. 202 Squadron whose sole mission every day, with the exception of Wednesdays and Sundays, is to fly from Aldergrove, near Belfast, to find out what the weather is going to be like in Britain to-morrow.

The information they bring back is flashed to every weather office in Britain, and to every main meteorological station in the world, including Russia.

Aldergrove is the only R.A.F. station in the United Kingdom from which this weather flight is made, and I am privileged to be an extra crew member on this trip.

Our skipper is a Czech, Master Pilot Frank Radina, the only non-commissioned aircraft captain in Coastal Command. A flier with the Czech Air Force before the war, he joined the French Foreign Legion when his country was invaded by the Germans. When the Second World War came, he was transferred to the French Air Force. When France fell, he came to Britain and joined the R.A.F.

After the war he returned to Czechoslovakia and rejoined his own air force. With the Communist coup in 1948 he, along with every other Czech who had flown with the R.A.F., was purged.

He told me: "Eventually, with three others, we borrowed a private aeroplane, took off from near Prague and landed on a U.S. base at Frankfurt."

In his absence Master Pilot Radina has been sentenced to death by the Czech Communists—for the "crime" of fighting for his country. He wears two rows of medal ribbons, including the Czech D.F.C., and the French Croix de Guerre, and has about two more rows of ribbons which he does not wear.

The co-pilot is Flight Sergeant J. Powell, of Bristol, who until two years ago was flying Pioneers over the Malayan jungles. The navigator is Flight Lieutenant Pat McGowran, from Coventry, war-time Pathfinder, ex-B.O.A.C., and on his second three years tour with 202 Squadron. The engineer is Flight Sergeant Ben Hughes, from Manchester, and the signallers Flight Sergeants Jack Franklin, of Portsmouth, and Jack Costley, of Belfast.

The two most important crew members as far as the weather is concerned are Meteorological Sergeants Vic Markey, from Coventry, and the crew's only Scot, Norman Macleod, from Stornoway.

Now we are midway between Britain and Canada. The Atlantic looks like silk in the sunlight. We had breakfast some time ago—salmon sandwiches and coffee.

The "met" men are checking their instruments for humidity, turbulence, temperatures, cloud types and amounts, visibility, wind pressure. These checks are made every 60 miles, and are signalled straight back to Aldergrove, where they are checked and signalled to Britain's weather centre at Dunstable.

For long stretches there is nothing to be seen of the world outside—just the aircraft as it scythes its way through the clouds at 180 knots.

As I look out of the window now, I feel that if I put my feet outside, I would be paddling. For we are virtually skimming the Atlantic at 200 feet to get surface readings.

Soon we will spiral up to 18,000 feet for high altitude checks with the frost-point hygrometer. The Scot is busy crushing solid CO_2 with an axe to put with methylated spirits in the hygrometer.

Most of the instruments are outside the aircraft, giving it a "hedgehog" appearance.

An odd-instrument-out is a small tin can encased with wire mesh, stuck on the outside of the fuselage. It is a boffin's gadget, and when the flight is over it will be dispatched to Harwell. It measures radioactivity.

The meteorological crews are all volunteers. Chosen from meteorological offices throughout the United Kingdom, they do a 2½-year tour of duty and return to their civilian offices again. Most of them want to remain in the Service. But they are not allowed to, because there are plenty of volunteers to follow them.

It costs £2000 in fuel alone for just one meteorological flight over the Atlantic. The bill is paid by the Meteorological Office and is the biggest single item on its budget.

Sgt. Norman Macleod, from Stornoway, one of the two meteorological experts in the crew, operating a frost-point hygrometer during the flight. He wears an oxygen mask for use at high altitudes.

Master Pilot Frank Radina, the skipper, and Meteorological Sergeants Norman Macleod (left) and Victor Markey, being briefed by the senior meteorological officer at Aldergrove, near Belfast, before setting out on the weather flight.

An R.A.F. Hastings aircraft over the Atlantic on the flight from Belfast in search of to-morrow's weather.

Crew 4 on Ulster Television - 31st December, 1959

Flt.Lt. Nicholas, Flt.Lt. McGowran, Sgt. Piper, Sgt. Snow.
as seen in "Roundabout" 18.12 - 1816 hrs. in the Belfast studio.

Soldiers rescued from Belfast Lough

Ships, 'plane, life-boat in search for canoeists

A destroyer, two corvettes, a frigate, a Hasting aircraft from Aldergrove, Donaghadee life-boat and motor launches took part in a search yesterday for six soldiers of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment. The soldiers, who were in three canoes, were rescued from the rough waters of Belfast Lough.

"Toughening-up"

The soldiers were recruits to the Duke of Wellington's Regiment completing a three-week "toughing up" course at the regiment's Outward Bound School at Magheramorne, near Larne. One party had left Larne early yesterday morning on a cross-country hike towards Lough Neagh while the remainder set off in canoes to paddle from Larne Lough across Belfast Lough to Donaghadee.

They were about two miles off Whitehead when an Eden woman, Mrs. W. M'Cready, spotted two men clinging to an upturned canoe. She notified Whitehead police who contacted Aldergrove and Carrickfergus police.

Privates G. Chamberlain (left) and E. Simmons, who successfully completed the crossing from Kilroot to Groomsport.

James Logan, Larne Road, Carrickfergus, who had put out in his motor boat, picked up the two men — Lieut. C. Lamerton and Private William Taylor—who were clinging exhausted to the canoe. They told him that they had been holding on for more than an hour, and that there were other soldiers in canoes in the area.

Mr. Logan searched about and picked up two more men — Corporal James Wren and Private Swain whose canoe had also capsized — and the aircraft guided the destroyer, H.M.S. Carron, by means of flares, to the third canoe, and a boat from the naval vessel picked up two men.

Fourth canoe

The searching naval vessels were informed that there was a fourth canoe, and the search was resumed, but the men in this craft succeeded in reaching the other side of the lough. All eight soldiers required attention for exhaustion.

When he got back to Carrickfergus Mr. Logan said he and his crew had had a rough journey. "There were high winds and a heavy swell," he said.

When the police telephoned Aldergrove yesterday afternoon to ask for help they requested the aid of a helicopter as they were said that the spokesman said, but when the aircraft reached the area there was nothing to be seen.

Taking the wind speed and direction into consideration a new estimated position was worked that they had no helicopters on the station at the time, but a Hastings aircraft which was on an "air test" at the time was diverted to the area by radio telephone.

The estimated position of the boat and at 3-30 p.m. the canoe was finally sighted with the two men still clinging to it. It was approximately 3½ miles north-west of Donaghadee.

The spokesman said: "We 'homed' two ships on to it by firing red Very flares and circling over the top of them until they arrived."

Back safe and sound at Palace Barracks, Holywood, last night, the men talked of their experience. Captain Gilbert Smith, who was in charge of the exercise,

A photograph of the crew concerned in the Belfast Lough Rescue. From left to right:- F.S. Sheehy; Flt.Lt.Pearson(Capt.); Fg.Off.Cody; Sgt.Jones P.G.; Flt.Lt.Irwin; 8th June, 1959

Lord Wakehurst at Aldergrove

The Governor, Lord Wakehurst, leaving a Hastings aircraft at Aldergrove during his tour of Royal Air Force stations in Northern Ireland. Accompanying the Governor, who later flew to Ballykelly, are (from left):—Air Marshal Sir Edward Chilton, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief; Group Captain C. E. A. Garton, Station Commander, and Squadron Leader A. R. Mitchell, officer commanding Technical Wing.

Members of 202 Squadron, who carry out the meteorological flights over the Atlantic, line up in front of one of their four four-engined Hastings during the Governor's visit to Aldergrove.

The Officer Commanding and Members of

No. 202 Squadron

request the pleasure of the company of

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on the occasion of the

Final Parade of the Squadron Standard and Review

by the

Air Officer Commanding No. 18 Group, Air Vice-Marshal K. V. Garside

C.B., D.F.C., M.A.

at Royal Air Force, Aldergrove

on Friday, 14th August, 1964, at 11.30 hours

Service Dress or Lounge Suits.
Formal Lunch Officers' Mess.

R.S.V.P.—Officer Commanding, No. 202 Squadron,
Royal Air Force, Aldergrove.

ALDERGROVE DEATH DUST WATCH

Evangelical library

Mr. Robert J. Taylor, librarian, arranging some of the books in the new Belfast branch of the Evangelical Library, at 97 Botanic Avenue. It was officially opened by Mr. Godfrey Williams, Founder-Librarian.

'DON'T MISS SCHOOL TO SHOP WITH MUM'

Head on dangers of absenteeism

THE headmaster of Friends' School, Lisburn, Mr. Neville H. Newhouse, warned parents to-day about the dangers of letting their children stay off school.

Mr. Newhouse said: "Although there are times when absence is unavoidable, there should not be requests for absence for trivial reasons.

"Going shopping with mother, for example—a dubious pleasure at the best of times—is best done outside school hours.

"And I should like to think that the necessary routine visits to dentists could be made after four o'clock.

"If your child is not in class the main loser is your child.

EARLY START

"He may well find himself a week or two later sadly behind. The reason is that a missed lesson dealt with that small but vital step without the understanding of which he cannot go any further."

About getting children to school early he said: "It will help them learn that a delayed or slovenly or

the annual speech day at which the Attorney-General, Mr. Brian Maginess, presented the prizes.

rushed start to any job is a poor start."

Mr. Newhouse said the numbers at the school had risen from 290 to 568 in 10 years. Main reason was the growing number of pupils staying on after Junior Certificate.

He said 30 pupils were expected to enter for Advanced Senior Certificate from Friends next June.

They were now getting pupils who, not content with a first try at advanced level, were returning to attempt open awards at the university of their choice.

"One would like to know how much this reflects the natural wish for a better job and how much the dawning consciousness that the discipline of learning, like excellence in any field, is its own

Routine weather flights assume a key role in fall-out check

By "Belfast Telegraph" Reporter, GRAHAM McKENZIE.

I HAVE JUST FLOWN 1,500 MILES THROUGH THE FALL-OUT of the world's greatest bomb.

For a day I watched the collection of evidence from the skies around Ulster for Britain's atomic scientists.

The flight came only a few hours after the news that radioactivity in Northern Ireland had reached a peak.

With three fall-out catching filters attached to the belly of the plane we took off before dawn for a trip which covered 85,000 square miles.

The Coastal Command Hastings of 202 R.A.F. Squadron left from Aldergrove, now a key-point in the probe into the fall-out menace.

On board was a crew of eight doing "a routine job." For to these men of meterological reconnaissance this was a flight to look at weather conditions—a job they do nearly every day of the year.

But to the rest of the country their job has assumed a vital new significance.

The information they bring back is an important link in the "death dust" picture over which the Government is keeping a day-to-day watch.

It was 6-45 a.m. when we took off. A few minutes later, at 1,500 feet, the engineer, Flight-Sergeant Alan Brookes, switched on the low-level fall-out filter and slid under the nose of the craft the shutter plate was drawn back from the mouth of the filter.

Observer Sergeant Dick Bywater checked a special meter showing the speed at which air was passing through the filter.

This is of special interest to the scientists, as is the height at which the filter was opened.

For more than four hours we cruised on, 700 miles out over the Atlantic. Then the filter was closed, and we flew to 18,000 feet —more than three miles high.

Then a second filter opened and we flew on for nearly 200 miles along the second leg of the route the met. men call "Charlie."

A long, long spiral down to 1,500 feet and the low-level filter came back into service as we headed for home.

All day it was a westerly wind. The navigator, Flight-Lieutenant Kennedy-Finlayson, reckoned a northerly one would have given us more fall-out.

Samples are quickly on way to test lab.

No reaction to geiger counter

WITHIN MINUTES of landing at Aldergrove the fall-out filters were taken to Nutt's Corner airport.

From there they were flown to London and taken to the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell.

With them went all the information about the heights and speeds at which the samples were taken.

Immediately the plane touched down the two filters under the nose were taken off and so was another "simple" one which had been open all through the flight."

The filters—wire mesh cylinders about a foot long, lined with porous paper and open at one end —looked exactly the same as before.

"They always do," said the commanding officer, Squadron Ldr. M. P. Davies.

"They don't react to any normal tests: we've tried geiger counters on them with no effect."

AMUSED

To the R.A.F. men all this is commonplace. They seem just a little amused at the sudden interest in the weather-watching job they have been doing for years.

Just how much the weather-watchers are being used to check fall-out is not clear.

The route the Aldergrove men take is decided every day at a 5 a.m. conference with Met. H.Q. at Bracknell in England.

They have eight different "tracks" or routes radiating from the British Isles.

Last week they spent three days on the same "track"—into a northern area where scientists said fall-out was heavy.

Their avowed first interest is simply to watch the weather and bring back the information on which experts can base their weather forecasts.

"But we assume," said Squadron Ldr. Davies, "that our headquarters know what the national interest is and take it into account."

Radioactivity drops to last week's level

THE fall-out cloud from Russia's 50-megaton bomb is beginning to move away from Northern Ireland.

Radioactivity in last night's Belfast rainwater, monitored at Queen's University, showed a drop to the same level of activity as from the 30-megaton bomb last week.

Dr. Robert Magee of the university said that yesterday's air count showed that the higher radioactivity from the 50-megaton weapon was being maintained.

"It seems that it began to fall away during the night and that it will have largely disappeared by to-morrow."

Prof. Llubera —'No change'

CONDITION of Professor Ignacio Miguel Gonzalez Llubera, who was for 40 years on the academic staff of Queen's University, Belfast, until his retirement last year, was given at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, to-day as "slightly improved—but no real change."

He was admitted after being knocked down by a car in Victoria Avenue, Cambridge, suffering severe head injuries and a fractured right leg.

Barcelona-born Professor Llubera first came to Queen's as head of the Spanish department and from 1926 was Musgrave Professor of Spanish Language and Literature.

On retirement, he and his wife took up residence in Cambridge.

Christian scene at Christmas tree request

BANGOR Standing Conference of Women's Organisations in a letter to the Borough Council stated that the conference would like to see a representation of a Christian scene at the base of the Christmas tree, preferably one depicting the birth of Jesus.

The Council last night decided to inform the conference that the erection of the tree was subject to financial approval by the Ministry of Health and Local Government; that such approval had already been received; and that the amount would not be sufficient to cover the additional work requested by the conference.

A filter-ful of evidence is taken from the aircraft

Old people 'allowed to live in want'

THE NUMBER OF OLD PEOPLE who are allowed to live in squalor and want is an absolute disgrace to an affluent society, Lord Beveridge told a meeting of Belfast Council of Social Welfare.

Despite the advances of the Welfare State, he said it would be untrue to say that in any sense want had been abolished.

Lord Beveridge, who produced the Beveridge Report on social security in 1941, disclosed that his family connection with Belfast went back for more than 100 years. His great-grandfather, Henry Beveridge came to Belfast to edit "The Banner of Ulster."

Lord Beveridge told the meeting: "There is still want and squalor in plenty in this country to-day, but instead of the want and squalor that came through unemployment in the 1930s they have come through full employment producing inflation, pushing up prices and wages and destroying the value of old people's savings."

He said that undoubtedly modern society enjoyed a much higher standard of living. To-day, there was "no problem of unemployment to speak of."

Lord Beveridge added: "There is some unemployment in some places —but relatively little. For the most part there are more jobs than there are people looking for jobs.

GREATEST PROBLEM

"Without question the greatest problem of our time is the problem of old age. All over the country there are old people living in disgusting conditions . . . something of which we should all be thoroughly ashamed."

Lord Beveridge said that there were three reasons for the problem. One arose from the fact that the Labour Government which came into power in 1945 did not carry out the Beveridge Plan for pensions and subsequent Conservative Governments had not remedied the omission.

It was altogether wrong that one out of every four pensioners had to have National Assistance.

Second reason—and perhaps the more serious cause—was inflation. The continual driving up of prices and increasing wages had reduced the value of money.

Lord Beveridge said he considered it one of the essential duties of Government to keep the value of money stable.

He said that not all old people were miserable. Of the million who lived alone, a substantial proportion was perfectly content. Indeed many old people preferred to live alone.

'SQUALID'

What was deplorable was the number living in squalid conditions with no one to look after them.

Worst of all, he said, were those who lived in private homes which were run for profit. It was not uncommon [illegible] living [illegible]

comforts—not even the facilities for letter writing. He estimated that there were upwards of 100,000 old people living in these "distressing" conditions.

First essential was that all old people should have enough to live on without begging.

Apart from financial considerations, Lord Beveridge said there were material problems to be solved. Home help and regular medical attention should be assured. He claimed that many old people died simply because they did not receive medical attention soon enough.

These were problems that could be solved only by a combination of government and voluntary activity.

In the field of voluntary activity, Lord Beveridge said that the most valuable thing that had been done for old people was the formation of the Abbeyfield Society. Although he was its president, he had no share in its creation, but he considered it did solve the problem of loneliness and independence for old people.

Plan to increase town water supply

Because the use of water per head of the population is now estimated to be one-sixth greater than that in 1957—50 gallons per head per day, compared with 50 four years ago—Bangor Borough Council plans to accelerate a scheme for the development of catchments at its Ballysallagh reservoirs.

The waste detection programme [illegible] reviewed if