

Moisie, QC

1963 - The Stations History - Deanna Gilbert

The Stations History

1963 - 1967

Commanding Officers:

S/L JR Beaudet, DFC, CD August 1963 to August 1965

W/C Hubert Brooks, MC August 1965 to July 1967

W/C JW Santarelli July 1967 to July 1969

Operations

This was a busy period for the station which saw many equipment and operational changes.. On the 24 January 1963, the unit was visited by the Brigadier-General Neale, for the official ceremonies of the completed FPS-27 and the beginning of the end of the manual system.

Shortly, thereafter, in June, the FPS-26 was completed to the east of the FPS-27 and the old number four tower was moved to the west of the 27 to eventually house the FPS-6B. The FPS-26 served the unit faithfully until the summer of 1977 when after more than fourteen years of service it was removed from the tower and the FPS-6B moved in to replace it. At the present time (1978) the station has only two radars, the FPS-27A and to the east the FPS-6B.

In June 1963 as well, the AN/FPS-2 SAGE computer was installed and accepted although Burroughs Corporation retained the responsibility for maintenance of the equipment during systems testing.

In August 1963, SAGE sub-system testing commenced and in September the installation of the Ground Air Transmit Receive (GATR) facility was completed. On the 31 October, 1963 Burroughs ceased maintenance of the Data Processing Equipment and maintenance became the responsibility of the RCAF.

The step to the world of computers was rapidly approaching until finally at 1200 hrs local time on the 1st of November 1963, all radar equipment was cut into the SAGE system reporting to Bangor, Maine. NORAD Sector and RCAF Station Moisie commenced operations as a NORAD Surveillance Station. The responsibility for Manual Control and Identification was cancelled. At the same time Moisie became 211 Radar Squadron vice 211 AC&W Squadron and the position of Chief Technical Services Officer was deleted and replaced by the Chief Ground Environment Officer (CGEO). A proposal was also put forward to establish the present position of Station Logistics Officer (SLogO).

In November of 1964 a vertical plotting board was constructed and installed in the DMCC where it remained until 1977 when it was donated to the RCAF Officers' Mess on Gloucester Street in Ottawa. It now forms part of that mess' collection of RCAF souvenirs.

Electronically the new radars performed well but there were many problems on the mechanical side including: frozen heat exchanges, and antenna rotation and calibration difficulties on all three radars. To top this off during the winter of 1964, one hundred mile an hour winds destroyed the bubble on one radar as well as seriously damaging the roof of the combined mess.

In October 1965, the present system of single-shift maintenance commenced and it is interesting to note that the unit looked forward to this concept to ease their workload. They obviously couldn't foretell the future very well (what with OSMET and under manning) or their enthusiasm might have been somewhat dampened.

Community and Other Events

In October 1963, Station Moisie's personnel lost their isolation allowance (for the second time) and at the same time medical coverage for their dependents ceased to be the responsibility of the RCAF. It is probable that this unhappy state of affairs (remember there was no Medicare in those days) came as a result of the growth of Sept-Iles and its facilities.

Sometime during 1964 the Station Credit Union was established, this facility exists to this time and is greatly appreciated by the Station personnel since banking in Sept-Iles is inconvenient and time consuming. So, whoever it was who put the bug in the CO's ear - thank you from the succeeding generations of "Moisieites". Not so appreciated by some people in 1964, I am sure, was the rather quaint regulation at the Station Theatre that if you left the theatre to go to the washroom a second entry fee was required for disrupting the other patrons. With some families, even at twenty-five cents admission, an evening out would have become a major budget item.

Does anyone remember Moisie's one and only radio station, CFRM? Yessiree we had it then, but we ain't got it no more (the radio station that is). The station was licensed to operate at 1340 on the dial with 10 watts of power. It could be picked up by anyone in the village or station, but beyond the first hill towards Sept-Iles, forget it. The manager during 1964, Cpl. Boileau, was very well organized, and even had courses scheduled for young disc-jockeys and station operators. One of these, LAC Jean-Marc Harvey, (now Lt. Harvey, and he's back here again) ran a weekly show with another fellow - a "Newfie" - which was billed as "Music Variety". Of the show, Lt. Harvey said, "even if the music wasn't varied, we sure were". Imagine: a young Quebecois whose English wasn't perfect, and a Newfie, straight off the boat, coming over the radio waves to a predominantly English audience. Now that's variety".

The fish and game club then as now, was popular and in 1964, CFS Moisie won the Molson Trophy for catching the first salmon, a 31 lb. 2 ½ oz. Beauty caught by LAC R Colpitts.

Here's an interesting item from the official history. The unit received its present telephone exchange and switchboard in 1966, new, from the Quebec Telephone Company. Sgt. Gagnon, the NCO i/c DMCC at the time of writing (1978) believes that the Americans gave it to us shortly after Davy Crockett had used it for the last time at the Alamo. It's hard to believe that it's only 13 years old.

The 31 December 1966 saw the official opening of the combined Corporals and Aircraftmen's Club in its present location. The event was celebrated by a New Year's Eve party of exceptional length and conviviality. The new year brought with it two changes in the Station's name; first from RCAF Station Moisie to 211 Radar Squadron Moisie and then on the 10 August 1967 it assumed the name it holds now (1978), Canadian Forces Station Moisie.

This detail was obtained from Section Three of the 1953-1978 Moisie Anniversary - 25 Years of Service Book. A copy of the 1953-1978 Moisie book was loaned to us by Deanna Gilbert and the material has been typed for use on the Pinetree Line web site in December 1998.