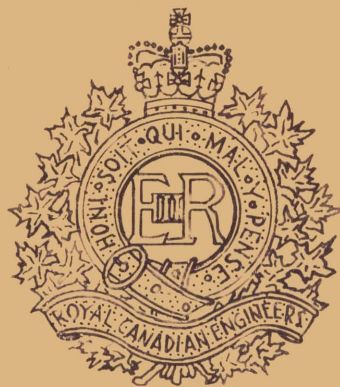




17 E S & W Coy R C E
1946 -- 1947



17 Works Coy R C E
1947 -- 1964

THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964

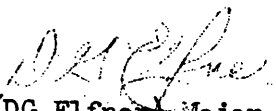
MR JIM QUONG

17 WORKS COY RCE
NORTHWEST HIGHWAY SYSTEM
WHITEHORSE, YT / APR 64

Mr. Jim Quong,
NWH Maintenance Establishment,
Camp Takhini,
WHITEHORSE, Y.T.

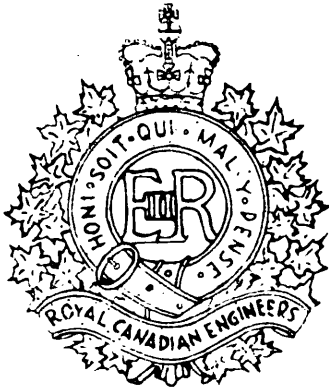
Unit History
17 Works Coy RCE

1. Herewith is a copy of the History of 17 Works Coy covering the period of its operation from 1946 to 1964, for your retention.
2. The present members of this unit wish to acknowledge the many suggestions and assistance provided by all former members in the preparation of this account.
3. It is hoped that this history will help to recall events and incidents to all who have been associated with 17 Works Coy over the eighteen years of its service on the Northwest Highway System, and to permanently record the unit's contribution in the development of the Yukon and Northeastern British Columbia.


(DG Elfner) Major
Commanding Officer
17 Works Coy RCE

I N D E X

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CHAPTER II	<u>PERSONNEL ESTABLISHMENTS</u> <u>AND</u> <u>FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES</u>
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**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The story of 17 Works Coy RCE over the eighteen years of its existence is part of the larger story of the contribution made by the Canadian Army during its operation of the Northwest Highway System in the development of Northeastern British Columbia and the Yukon. Although the Army's role essentially has been that of a caretaker of the Alaska Highway, from the date of its takeover from the US Army until the time that a civilian agency could assume this responsibility, nevertheless its impact on the local economy and its ability to provide a reliable all-weather link between Alaska and the Outside is an achievement which deserves a place in the history of Canada.

By casting back eighteen years in his memory, the reader can recall those early post war days when the Canadian Army was demobilizing rapidly after the conclusion of hostilities in Europe and the Far East. The task of re-establishing the country's industries on a peacetime footing, rehousing returned servicemen and improving their academic education to fit them for new occupations were the major aims of the government in 1946.

The easing of tensions in 1944 and 1945 as a result of the evacuation of Japanese troops from the Aleutians had left the Yukon as a backwater in the war effort. The road pushed through with the energy and dispatch so typical of American methods was still a considerable challenge to military convoys and anything but a reasonable proposition for civilian traffic. Outside of hastily constructed road camps and minor settlements along the highway, the amenities and accommodation to cater to the traveller were almost non-existent.. At that time, only the organization and direction of military engineers supported by the resources

and experience of able service troops could meet the challenge of maintaining and improving this vital link between isolated communities where natural disasters such as forest fires, floods, slides and sub-artic winter conditions could strike without warning.

17 Works Coy which was present at the commencement of this unique and challenging task as No. 17 Engineer Services and Works Coy, has been concerned over the years with a variety of tasks in the support of the Highway Maintenance Establishment. Although its paramount purpose has always been in the field of providing and maintaining accommodation for the headquarters of the Highway System, the maintenance teams on the road, and for the supporting service units to a standard equivalent to that of the more civilized parts of the country, the absence of the normal municipal services usually provided to most military establishments by other agencies has increased the work load of the unit greatly in the utility operation field.

A unit, whose operation extends over 1,200 miles of road, the equivalent of the distance between Vancouver and Regina, with three major and sixteen minor camps to maintain, separated successively from each other by from fifty to one hundred miles of road, has a major problem of transportation in the movement of stores, tradesmen and equipment to carry out its tasks. Under such circumstances, the value of up-to-date property records, site and building plans for the preplanning of the annual construction and maintenance work can be easily seen. To achieve this, field trips for extended periods by property surveyors obtaining and forwarding data to the company's draughting office has been a continuing requirement.

Distances from the nearest major supply centres, Edmonton, 1,300 miles away and Vancouver over 1,600 miles from Whitehorse, have required heavy stores holdings in addition to early requisitioning of replacement stores to meet the exigencies of a short working season.

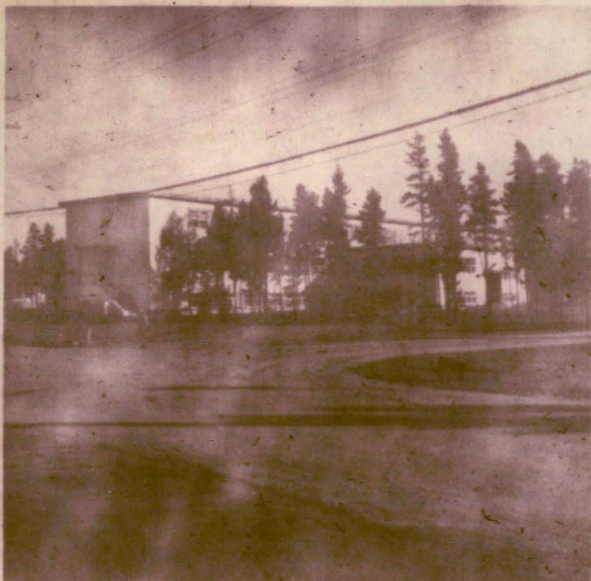
With most NWHS camps along the Highway of wood frame construction, having limited water storage for fire fighting and an obligation, usually unwritten, to assist local communities through a pooling of fire fighting services, a vigorous and conscientious drive to reduce fire hazards has been pursued by all members of the Highway System. 17 Works Coy, responsible for fire prevention, has actively directed this most important programme over the years.

A number of joint Canadian-US Army defence exercises have made use of the road facilities of the Alaska Highway to reach the rugged terrain of the Yukon and have required logistic support by local service units of the NWHS. In the forefront of this assistance, 17 Works Coy has played a vital role in the provision of accommodation, water supply, and other engineer services.

The relative isolation of the communities along the Highway has no doubt been responsible for the very evident attitude of friendliness known so well throughout the NORTH. This spirit has fostered many sports competitions, both in summer and winter. Not only have all service units been active in inter-unit leagues, but the military units at all locations have completely integrated with the civilian community to work and compete together. In this respect, 17 Works Coy has played a

vigorous part as it has also done when local disasters have created human hardship in the area.

It is hoped that by taking each of the major functions carried out over the years by I7 Works Coy, by examining each in detail in relation to a particular year or period, to thus illustrate the growth of the works organization in meeting its commitments and in improving the standard of accommodation throughout the Northwest Highway System. Each then will be covered in turn in succeeding chapters.



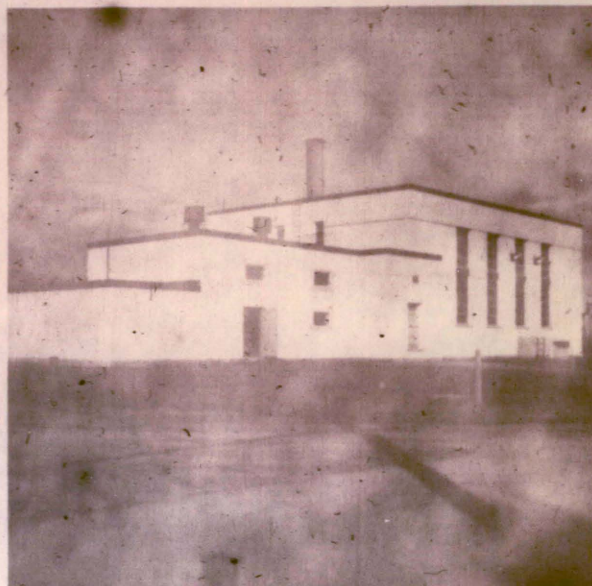
Offices and Quarters
Camp Takhini



HQ NWHS
Camp Takhini



500 Man Mess
Camp Takhini



Central Heating Plant
Camp Takhini



**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

CHAPTER 2

**PERSONNEL ESTABLISHMENTS
AND
FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES**

CHAPTER II

1946 - 1964

ESTABLISHMENT

1. On 1st April 1946 the American Army handed over to the Canadian Army the responsibility of maintaining the "Alaska Highway", from Mile Post 0 at Dawson Creek, B.C., to Mile Post 1221.4, at the Yukon-Alaska border.
2. At this time the Works Coy RCE was formed and was known as No. 17 Engineer Services and Works Coy RCE.
3. The first establishment for the "Works Coy" consisted of two officers and seventy-six other ranks, including the Dawson Creek Detachment, B.C. (formerly located at Fort Nelson, B.C.).
4. From the period 1946 to 1952 the establishment was amended three times to cope with the increase workload of the unit. In 1952 the establishment stood at 199 all ranks (military and civilian)..
5. In 1956 the establishment was amended again and increased to 316 all ranks (military and civilian).
6. One amendment which took place in 1958 was the Technician 3 Stores Officer position, which was converted from civilian to military and replaced by a Warrant Officer Class II.
7. In June 1959 the Dawson Creek Detachment (17 Works Coy RCE) was relocated from MP 0 Dawson Creek to MP 300, Fort Nelson, B.C., because the workload had shifted after the first 83 miles of the Highway had been paved.
8. In November 1959 the establishment was reduced from 316 to 259 because of a reduction in workload in the utilities section and a reduction in the "Sapper" trades.
9. Mr George Underwood, who was the Unit's Administration Officer for seven years (1953-1960), left the unit in

October 1960. This position was then converted to a military Lieutenant Admin position.

10. During the period 1958 to 1962, the establishments of the Highway were constantly being reviewed. It was the intention of the "Commander" of the Highway to amalgamate several functions into one operation.

11. In 1962 the establishment of 17 Works Coy RCE was reduced from 259 to 208. The transport section was completely deleted, with 19 Coy RCASC controlling all vehicles and HME controlling all heavy equipment. 17 Works Coy took over HME Stores and 16 Coy RCEME all mechanics. The units QM Stores (Ordnance) was transferred to 14 Coy RCOC. There was also a reduction in civilian tradesmen.

12. The present establishment consists of 33 military and 175 civilian personnel. Attached at Annex "A" is the list of military and officer status civilian personnel.

13. Attached at Annex "B" are the following lists:-

- a. Commanding Officers from 1946 to 1964.
- b. Civilian personnel of officer status previously employed.
- c. Civilian employees continuously employed from 1946 to 1964.
- d. Civilians employed for more than ten years.

FINANCIAL

14. The financial records from 1946 to 1959 are very few and no accurate records can be found, except that in the fiscal year 1949/50 the Works Coy spent approximately \$2,500,000.00 in all Primaries.

In the 1962/63 fiscal year, the Works Coy spent approximately \$1,120,941.00 and in the 1963/64 fiscal year the Works Coy spent \$1,000,000.00 in carrying out its role of providing and maintaining accommodation and related services.

.../7

On April 1st, 1961, the Works Coy assumed the responsibilities from RCASC of Primary 19, which included water services, fire protection and fire fighting services, electricity, non-resident school fees, etc, without an increase to the establishment.

17 WORKS COY RCE
NOMINAL ROLL JAN 64

WHITEHORSE, YT

ZM 3543	Major	ELFNER	DG	CD	CO
ZC 6473	Capt	BARRIGAR	CJ		2IC
ZM 9488	Lt	HAMMOND	HWJ	CD	Projects Officer
SP 10755	SM(WO1)	GARNETT	CF	CD & CLASP	Adm Officer
SC 5594	QMS(WO2)	BONE	AG		Mech "E" QMS
SP 10494	QMS (WO2)	HAIRE	FN	CD & CLASP	Engr Acct QMS
SC 72438	QMS(WO2)	SHAW	ADS	CD	F of Works QMS
SC 124153	QMS(WO2)	WYATT	SG	CD	Dtmn QMS
SB 153160	S Sgt	BEREZOWSKI	E	CD	F of Works S Sgt
SG 6940	Sgt	BROWN	BE	CD	Sgt Engr Acct
SC 124855	A/Sgt	GLOSS	JC	CD	Sgt Engr Acct
SF 90402	L Sgt	DUNPHY	JF		Cpl Plumber
SC 136517	A/Sgt	HALLIWELL	JW		Sgt Dtmn A&E
SM 9797	Sgt	KRANTZ	A	CD	F of Works Sgt
SA 5458	A/Sgt	STEWART	GM		Sgt Dtmn A&E
SH 62249	A/Cpl	CHRISTENSEN	JL		Cpl Electn
SC 7369	A/Cpl	EASTER	WER		Cpl Clk Adm
SG 800345	Cpl	MACALPINE	AE	CD	Cpl Cptr
SA 126542	Cpl	ROBERTSON	WA		Cpl Dtmn A&E
SL 508	Cpl	WELSH	F	CD	Cpl Mech RCE
SM 109627	Spr	BAWSON	AP		Cptr
SH 59386	Spr	STOVER	RA		Op SEE
SD 26224	Spr	TURNBULL	RH		Electrn
SF 59386	Spr	JORDAN	AM	CD	Plumber

FORT NELSON DETACHMENT

ZK 4499	Capt	STONER	GA	CD	CC
SC 34711	QMS(WO2)	PAGE	RA	CD	Engr Acct QMS
SB 161593	QMS(WO2)	HARE	RW	CD	F of Works QMS
SK 66719	Sgt	MILLER	HGJ	CD	Sgt Engr Acct

SK 100612	Sgt	COBBETT	JA		F of Works Sgt
SF 43817	Sgt	CIAMP	E		F of Works Sgt
SC 9105	Cpl	HREHORIAK	L	CD	Cpl Clk Adm

DAWSON CREEK

SF 77925	Cpl	PAULEY	HT	CD	Cpl Cptr
----------	-----	--------	----	----	----------

CIVILIANS OF OFFICER STATUS:

Mr RE FAIREY	- Senior Works Officer	- 4 years
Mr J PORTER	- Supervisor of Utilities	- 1½ years
Mr GLO LOW	- Estimator	- 2 years
Mr GS SWANSON	- Fire Officer III	- 14 years

COMMANDING OFFICERS
17 WORKS COY RCE
1946 - 1964

- a.
- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|------|-----------|
| Capt RG Gillespie | 1 Apr 1946 | to - | Mar 1948 |
| Capt GW Graham | Apr 1948 | to | Dec 1950 |
| Major RC Paris | Jan 1951 | to | Apr 1954 |
| Major G Coulombe | Mar 1954 | to | Dec 1956 |
| Major DG McClellan | Dec 1956 | to | Nov 1957 |
| Major WW Osborne | Nov 1957 | to | Aug 1958 |
| Major JP Wiebe | Aug 1958 | to | June 1961 |
| Major JA Nicklom | Jun 1961 | to | Jul 1963 |
| Major DG Elfner | Jul 1963 | to | Present |
- b. Civilians of Officer Status employed in previous years:
- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Mr B Yates | - Senior Works Officer | - 1953-1959 |
| Mr T Rogers | - Supervisor of Utilities | - 1955-1961 |
| Mr R Dunlop | - Fire Chief | - 1946-1961 |
| Mr R Foster | - Supervisor of Utilities | - 1946-1955 |
| Mr S Burr | - Estimator | - 1956-1959 |
| Mr G Davies | - Estimator | - 1959-1962 |
- c. The following civilian employees have been continuously employed by the unit from 1946 to date:
- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Mr D MacDonald | Firefighter (Now FO 1) |
| Mr FD Tromans | Electrician (Now Foreman Electrtn) |
- d. Civilians employed for more than ten years:
- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Mr WC Matkea | Firefighter (16 Years) |
| Mr G Swanson | FO III (14 Years) |
| Mr G Webber | Plumber (16 Years) |
| Mr G Gaensbauer | Stat Engr I (16 Years) |
| Mr G Pettifor | Firefighter (16 Years) |
| Mr V Thomas | Stat Engr II (14 Years) |
| Mr G Wallden | Firefighter (14 Years) |
| Mr S Wilcox | Firefighter (FO I) (15 Years) |
| Mr JO Hunter | Electrician (15 Years) |

Mr S Thurston	Carpenter (14 Years)
Mr E Keenan	PPSO I (14 Years)
Mr DE Beaudoin	Instrument Man (11 Years)
Mr WCE Harrison	MC I, Fort Nelson Det (14 Years)
Mr JA Richerby	Stat Engr II, Fort Nelson Det (15 Years)



**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

CHAPTER 3

CONSTRUCTION

AND

MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

CHAPTER III

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

INTRODUCTION

1. With the assumption of responsibility for the Northwest Highway System in 1946 by the Canadian Army, a formidable task lay ahead for 17 Works Coy RCE in the maintenance of accommodation facilities. Both buildings and utilities were built to US Army requirements, in quantity and quality. They met the functional roles of a crash construction programme and were of a type that had a life expectancy of five to ten years.
2. All work carried out on these buildings and utility systems, at first, were directed to meet the needs of the Canadian Army and mainly consisted of adaptation and maintenance.
3. As long range requirements became evident, work was started on accommodation plans for station development programmes in Whitehorse, Muskwa and maintenance camps.

BACKGROUND

1. Following is a brief summary of the property that became the unit's responsibility upon handover:-
 - a. Dawson Creek Railhead Camp
 - b. Eighteen maintenance camps each consisting of a garage to house heavy equipment, a utility building or buildings which contained electrical generators and water supply pumping systems. There were also five to seven married quarters in each camp plus single men's quarters.
 - c. Thirty-one construction camps totalling approximately 300 buildings. These were handed over in an abandoned condition.

- d. Thirteen air strips.
- e. Eighteen emergency shelters.
- f. The HQ NWHS complex in Lower Whitehorse consisting of Commander's Residence, HQ offices, Whitehorse Military Hospital, 7 PMQs, several EMQs, single quarters, Messes, Central Heating Plant, RCASC Transport Pool, Theatre and Canteen.
- g. The Dowell Area, Lower Whitehorse, housed HQ 17 Works Coy RCE offices, stores, workshops, garage; RCEME Workshop; RCASC supply depot, bakery, POL station, offices and garage; RCOC offices and stores buildings; HME and No. 1 Road heavy equipment areas, garage and stores; High School (now Yukon Regt Armoury); Army Fire Hall.
- h. Power House - located on 4th Avenue adjacent to west side of the Dowell Area.
- j. Upper Whitehorse (now Camp Takhini).
This was the main married quarters area for NWHS personnel in Whitehorse, the buildings consisting of one story frame construction and pre-fab Cemestos.
- k. Refinery Area - this was a complete oil refinery erected by the US Army during the war. At the time of handover, it was not in use.

2. The amount of buildings and property available for HQ NWHS use in the Whitehorse area were excessive and disposal action commenced fairly quickly. Early decisions were made to relocate HQ NWHS in Upper

Whitehorse (Camp Takhini) in new permanent standard buildings. The service units were to be moved from the Dowell Area to the Refinery Area (Services Area).

3. In the Fort Nelson Area a secondary Headquarters was developed for the Southern Area at MP 295 and designated Muskwa Garrison.

CONSTRUCTION PHASING

1. Early projects undertaken, modified existing structures but by 1949 a number of buildings were functioning as they are today. These included a Grocery Store in Camp Takhini, which was converted in the Spring of 1948; the old US Army Rec Hall in Camp Takhini, was used as a Signal Center, Radio Station and Rec Hall; a building was converted into the Sgts' Mess in Camp Takhini in 1948; 219 Workshop RCEME was created from the old US Army Workshop in the Refinery Area in 1949; 6 new PMQs completed in the maintenance camp at MP 1202, and a start on the first group of PMQs in Camp Takhini.

2. In the early 1950's, many buildings started to appear. These were the results of early planning and were carried out by either day labour or by contract. Many contract projects had to be supervised by Works Coy personnel because of the non-availability of inspectors of the Government supervising agencies. This inspection service was used for projects other than DND, such as the RCMP HQ building in Whitehorse and the Indian School at Lower Post, B.C. Those buildings completed included:-

a. Three PMQ contracts of 30 units completed
in 1950,

100 units completed
in 1951,

.../14

and 44 units completed in 1952 in Camp Takhini.

- b. At Dawson Creek, B.C. the railhead camp servicing the Highway had 30 PMQ units completed in 1952.
- c. At MP 295 Muskwa, 30 PMQs were completed in 1952.
- d. At Camp Takhini, the barrack block Building 200 was completed in 1952. This later became the HQ NWHS building.
- e. At MP 295 Muskwa, the combined men's and barrack block, Building 106 was completed in 1952.
- f. At Camp Takhini a standard 500 men's mess was completed in 1952.
- g. At Camp Takhini a standard CHP was completed in 1953, while at Muskwa MP 295 the CHP was finished in 1952.
- h. A new standard RCEME Workshop was finished at MP 295 Muskwa in 1953, which had a number of construction problems arising from the contractor being unfamiliar with its type of design.
- j. A new diesel electric power plant was completed in the Services Area, Whitehorse, in 1951 and operated for a number of years but was later converted into a Heavy Equipment garage in 1962.

3. In the latter part of 1950's, construction ranged from the addition of a smaller number of buildings, to support of the Highway Maintenance Establishment at The

Peace River Bridge. These projects included:-

- a. Locally designed and day labour constructed barrack blocks Nos. 203 and 204 for the permanent single women and men, military and civilian employees. These were completed in 1955.
- b. A fire hall was provided at MP 295 Muskwa in 1957. The Army Fire Hall in Whitehorse continued to occupy accommodation in the Dowell Area of the City of Whitehorse until 1962.
- c. A local designed metal type building was built for 19 Coy RCASC Transport Section and completed in 1959.
- d. The Junior Ranks Club was moved from Lower Whitehorse to Camp Takhini in 1957.
- e. Over the years from 1954 until 1958, a number of buildings were relocated into a single building, No. 60, which contained a snack bar, bowling alley, 4 sheets of curling ice (originally natural until an artificial plant was installed in 1960).
- f. A programme to provide some recreational facilities in the maintenance camps to supplement the curling rinks which had been built by self help labour took the form of recreational buildings for parties, movies, group meetings and the like. Those at MP 733 Swift River and MP 1083 Destruction Bay were completed in 1957, and at MP 456 Trutch in 1959.

4. In the 1960's, the emphasis on replacement of the US Army buildings continued to influence planning. These buildings as mentioned, were designed for a short life expectancy, but with much effort and cost, had been maintained. However, in respect to married quarters and some other buildings, it was becoming almost impossible to maintain these buildings any longer. Planning was also influenced by the possibility that the camps in B.C. particularly, those south of MP 300 Fort Nelson, excluding MP 295 Muskwa, would be turned over to the B.C. Government, as the proposed paving programme continued up the Highway. Accordingly, no new construction took place in this section of the Highway. Buildings constructed in this period consisted of:-

- a. Completion of the Rec Hall programme with those at MP 392 Summit, MP 543 Coal River and MP 635 Watson Lake being completed in 1960.
- b. Married quarters constructed of G.P. Hutting and modified by local design were erected at MP 1016 Haines Jct, MP 1083 Destruction Bay, MP 635 Watson Lake and completed by 1960. This project also included major rehabilitation of utilities systems in these camps. All work was done by day labour.
- c. Married quarters consisting of trailer units, somewhat modified, were completed in 1963 at MP 733 Swift River and MP 543 Coal River. The site adaptation and utilities were done by day labour construction.

d. Locally designed maintenance camp garages of Butler buildings (metal) were constructed by day labour at MP 635 Watson Lake and MP 1016 Haines Jct. The building at Watson Lake was undertaken as winter work which proved a great challenge for the Staff Sgt Foreman of Works.

When?

e. A large contract was awarded in 1961 for four buildings in the Whitehorse Area. These were the modification of the power plant building to a heavy equipment garage, a Fire Hall for Camp Takhini, a large warehouse for both 14 Coy RCOC and the DID function of 19 Coy RCASC and a large bulk POL building for 19 Coy RCASC. All buildings were completed by 1962. Work was done under DCL supervision.

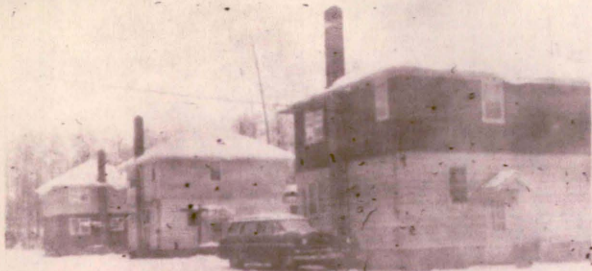
f. At Muskwa MP 295, a number of projects were undertaken during this period. Because of excessive prices obtained by tender call, work was carried out by day labour. This included relocating large truss type buildings from the Airbase, some 15 miles away and then erecting and finishing at Muskwa Garrison. The buildings were a new Officers/Sgts combined mess, enlargement of the mens canteen using the old Officers/Sgts Mess, the provision of a large Rec Hall and the new AWS Stores and Workshop. All projects will be completed by early 1964.

g. The relocation of 17 Works Coy from the Dowell Area, City of Whitehorse, to the Services Area is now complete as a day labour project. This project removes nearly all functions of the Canadian Army from the City proper. The only exceptions being buildings now surplused and the Officer's Mess. A proposal for a new Officer's Mess located in Camp Takhini was pending when all Army planning ceased for the NWHS.

5. At the time of the announcement of the handover to the Department of Public Works, many plans had been developed to complete the renewal of permanent buildings, along the Highway of quarters, garages, utility buildings, transient quarters, utility systems, etc.

6. The brief description of the major construction projects in this chapter indicates the type, number and size of the problems faced by 17 Works Coy RCE over the years. In actuality, there were far more problems encountered in freeze-ups, maintenance of old buildings and old utility systems etc, that are not mentioned. In many cases some events are lost beyond recall of those now remaining on the Highway who were originally here in 1946, and are still with this Works Company. Many projects of a minor nature supplemented the major construction projects and the fact that reasonable accommodation has been provided and improved for units of the NWHS is a tribute to all those who served with this unit.

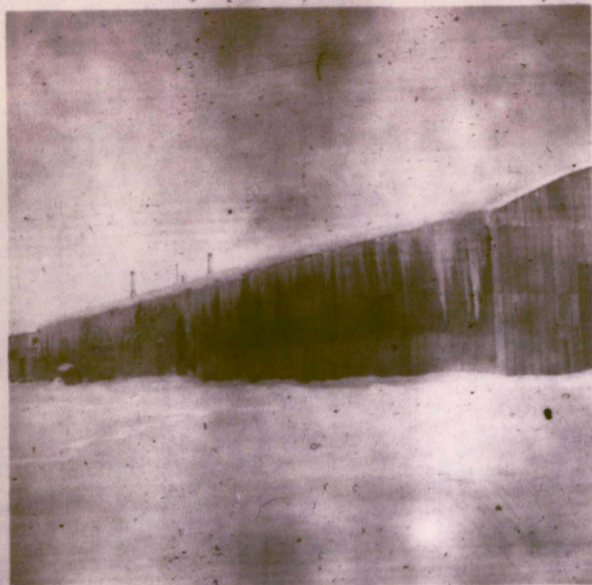
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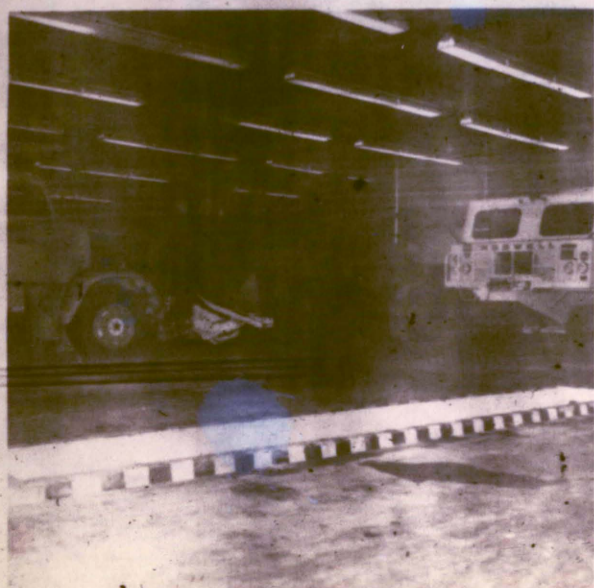
PMQ's Beaver Creek
MP 1202



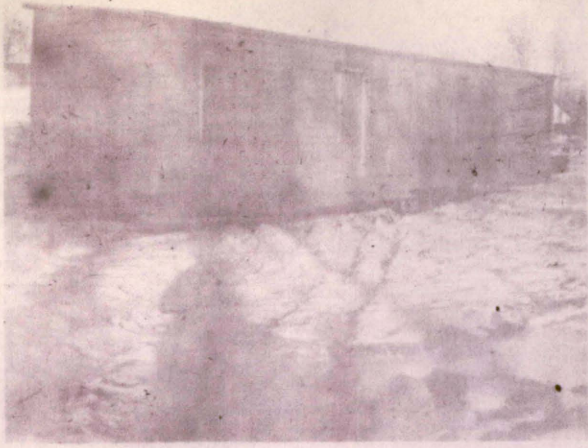
TMQ's Destruction Bay
MP 1083



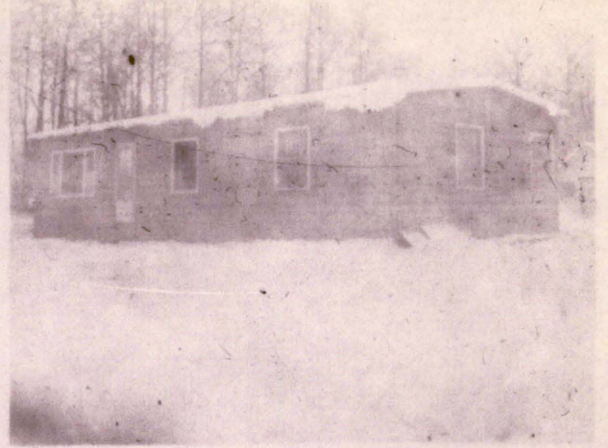
RCE Offices, Workshop, Stores Building
Muskwa, B.C.; MP 295



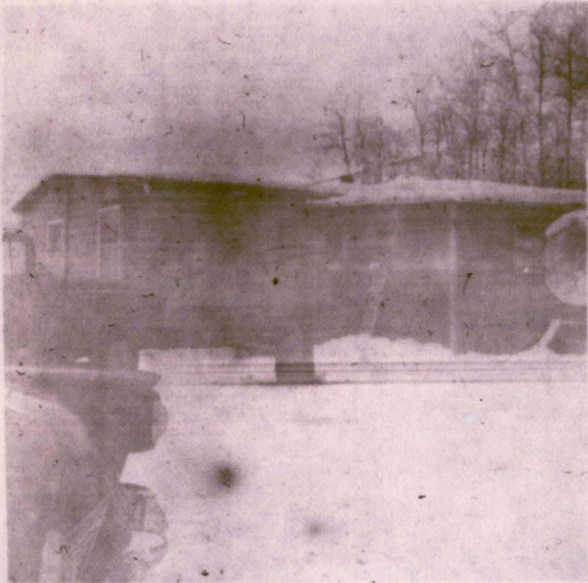
HME Garage - Haines Junction
MP 1016



Trailer on wheels



Front view



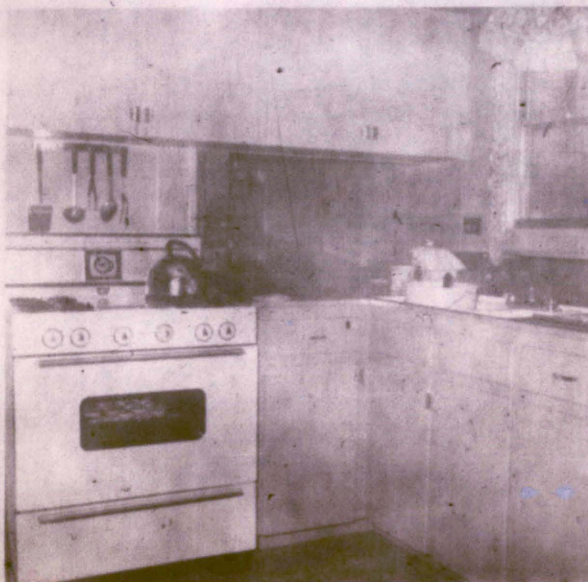
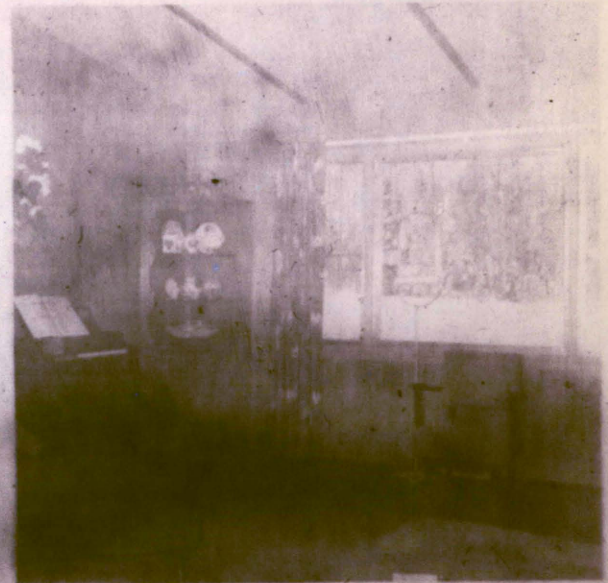
Rear view showing utility room



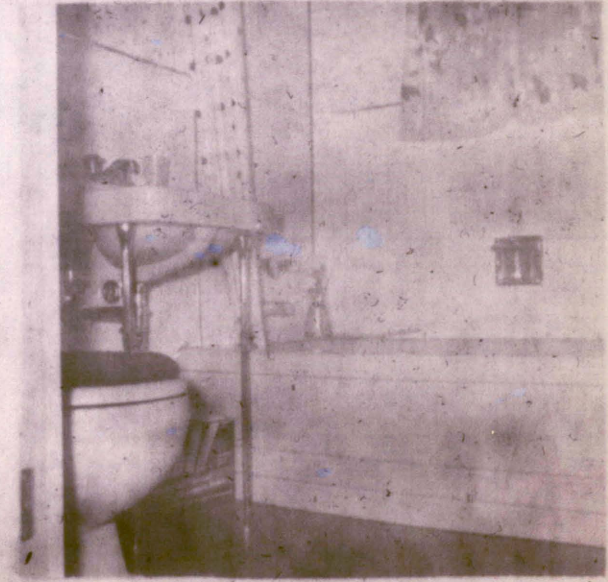
End view



Living Room



Kitchen



Bath Room



HQ - 17 WKS COY RCE
1946-1962



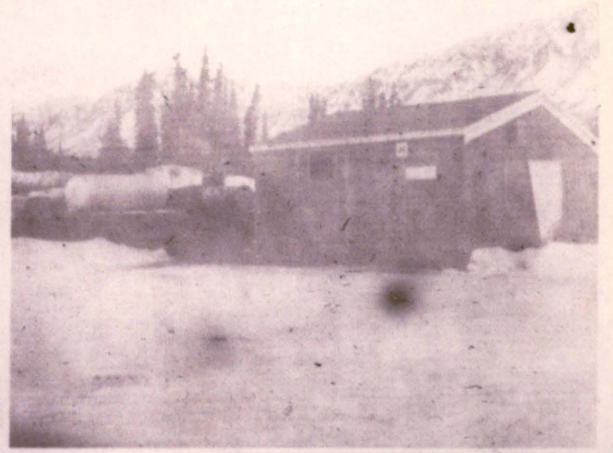
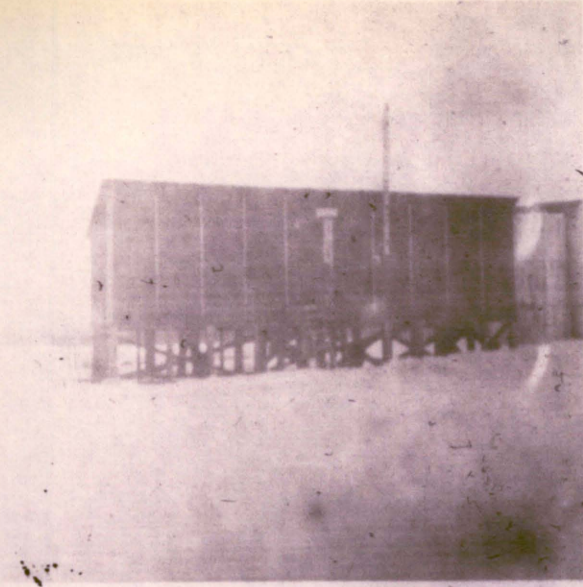
Loxstave Building
Semi-Prefab



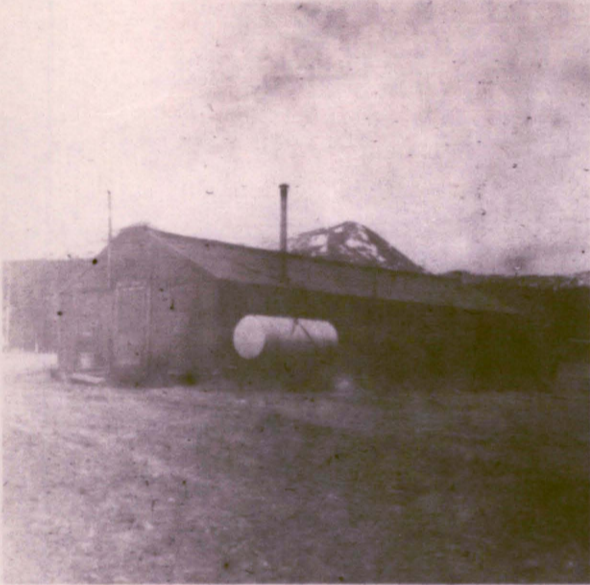
Wood Frame and Wallboard
Shops & Storage Buildings



TYPICAL MAINTENANCE CAMP LAYOUT

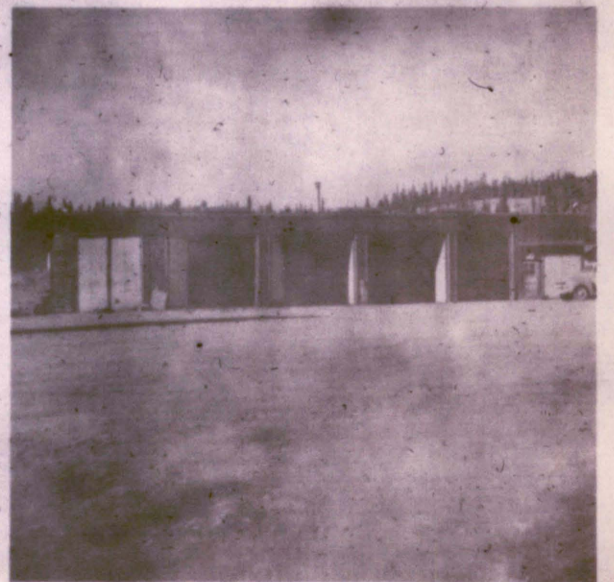
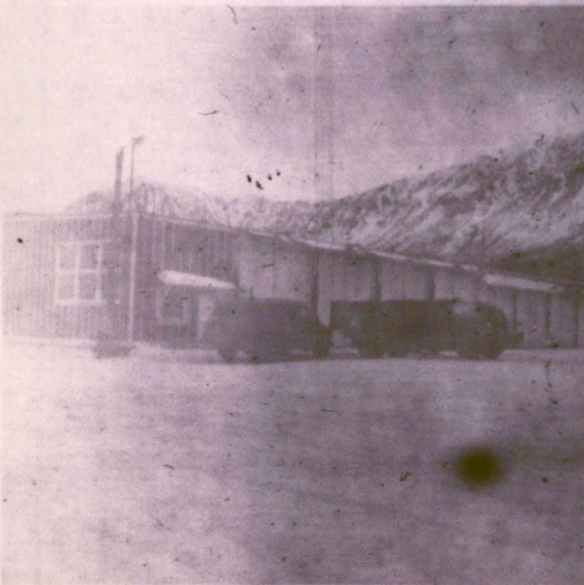


FRAME STORAGE BUILDINGS - EXTERIOR, BUILDING PAPER



CCC Type Prefab

Frame Construction
Married Quarters



Frame Construction
RCME Workshop

Frame Construction
Garage



THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964

CHAPTER 4

UTILITIES OPERATIONS

CHAPTER IV

UTILITIES OPERATIONS - ELECTRICAL

1. Upper Whitehorse (Camp Takhini)
 - a. Electrical power generation was originally produced by the Yukon Electric Company Limited from a small plant. An increased demand in the Whitehorse Area for power was met by the construction of a hydro-electric producing system on the McIntyre Creek and Porter Creek watersheds.
 - b. The heavy demand imposed on the area with the arrival of the US Army in 1942 for the construction of the Alaska Highway could not be handled from these sources and the US Army constructed power plants to meet their own requirements.
 - c. With the assumption of maintenance of the Northwest Highway System by the Canadian Army in 1946, the same plants were utilized until their replacement became economically necessary. A large power plant located in the present Services Area was constructed and the old US Army built plants were closed down. This plant met DND power requirements in Lower Whitehorse, the Services Area and Upper Whitehorse. Yukon Electric Company Limited continued to serve the general community.
 - d. Other considerations in the Whitehorse Area indicated that for a steady growth of the community, the hydro-electric development of the Whitehorse Rapids by the Northern Canada Power Commission (NCPC) should be

carried out. To make this project economically sound, electric heating of the Whitehorse General Hospital complex and purchase of power from this new source by DND was necessary. With reduced DND interests in Lower Whitehorse and with the construction of Camp Takhini in Upper Whitehorse, it was decided that the distribution system should be administered by the Yukon Electric Company when power became available from NCPC. An agreement between DND and Yukon Electric was accordingly signed on 10 Apr 59 to meet these conditions.

2. Muskwa Garrison, B.C. (MP 295)

- a. The power house at Muskwa Garrison, MP 295, is of standard DND Army design, a permanent building built in 1952 at a cost of \$180,000.00.
- b. Generating equipment in this building consists of three 85 KW diesel driven generators, one 375 KW diesel driven generator and one 300 KW diesel driven generator, portable, along side of the power house all complete with the necessary panels and controls.
- c. Distribution of power is for the Central Heating Plant, Water Treatment Plant, PMQs, barracks, kitchen, recreation hall, theatre, REME workshops and offices and street lighting.

- d. Fuel oil used per year is estimated from monthly return logs as 123,973 gals.
- e. These generators have given good service over the years but major and minor overhaul costs are getting more frequent which consequently has led to negotiations with the BC Hydro authorities over the last several years for the buying of power at a reasonable rate to both parties.
- f. After numerous discussions and plans it was agreed by both DND Army and BC Hydro authorities that hydro power could be brought into Muskwa Garrison and money has been made available for the building of a substation of three 200 KVA transformers and metered services to PMQs.
- g. A design for a transformer bank and sub-station has been drawn up and submitted to AHQ Ottawa, for approval for work to begin as soon as possible on the aforementioned project.

3. Dawson Creek, B.C. (MP 0)

Power is supplied to this location under an agreement between DND and the BC Power Commission dated 1 Aug 59.

4. Watson Lake, Yukon (MP 635)

Power is supplied to this location under an agreement between DND and the Yukon Electric Company dated 15 Dec 60.

5. Destruction Bay (MP 1083) and Beaver Creek (MP 1206)

An agreement for the supply of electrical power

to DND by Yukon Electric Company was signed on 27 Feb 63 and the supply of power commenced on 1 Oct 63, at both these locations.

6. The remaining camps on the Highway generate their own power using two diesel generators per camp.

UTILITIES OPERATIONS - HEATING PLANTS

CENTRAL HEATING PLANT - CAMP TAKHINI

1. This utility is of standard DND Army design, a permanent building, built in the year 1953 at a cost of \$458,028.00.
2. Housed in this building are two "John Inglis" water-tube boilers of 250 HP each, oil fired by using "Iron Fire-man Rotary burners" and are capable of producing 30,000 lbs of steam per hour at 100 lbs per square inch.
3. Both boilers are equipped with forced and induced draft fans, Bailey meter automatic combustion controls and meters, the operation of the boilers is designed to be automatic but can also be operated manually.
4. Fuel oil is taken from two 10,000 gallon underground tanks.
5. The boiler feed-water pumps are dual "Darling" centrifugal pumps electrically driven.
6. A standby steam turbine driven feed pump is also installed in case of emergencies arising from electric failure or unforeseen repairs, these in turn are controlled by the required high and low safety water controls on each boiler in accordance with Provincial and A.S.M.E. codes.
7. The steam is delivered from the Central Heating

Plant at boiler pressure to permanent buildings such as Single Women's Quarters, 500 Man Mess-Hall, Men's Barrack Block, NWHS Headquarters Building, temporary buildings such as Curling Rink, Bldg #207 men's temporary barrack block. Steam is also supplied to the Territorial school on a customer agreement, through an underground Ric-wil steam distribution system.

8. Each building supplied with high pressure steam is equipped with one or more pressure reducing stations to 5, 15 and 25 PSI. This low pressure steam is utilized for steam pressure cookers, space heating and supplies of domestic hot water. Condensate is collected in each building for return back to the Central Heating Plant.

9. The system is designed to return a minimum of 90% of condensate to the boilers.

10. Average fuel consumption per year is 242,000 gals of #2 furnace oil for an efficiency of 80%-82% per boiler.

11. There is no foreseen major repairs or maintenance required to the steam producing or distribution equipment at this time.

SATELITE PLANTS

1. Satelite plants in the immediate area to Camp Takhini are Mile Post 918, housing a locomotive type boiler installed by the US Army and the Fire Hall with an automatic 60 HP Cleaver Brooks package unit generator.

BIDG #R-4 - SERVICES AREA

1. This building is of framed steel pipe, welded, covered with wooden siding and roof. It was originally designed for a cracking plant for the oil refinery, now

abandoned, and was purchased with a boiler and some equipment for the sum of \$6,600.00 in the year 1946.

2. The present steam producing equipment consists of a locomotive type boiler of 200 HP capable of producing 10,500 lbs of steam per hour at 15% rating at 80 lbs PSI. This unit is oil fired with a "Ray" oil burner.

3. This boiler is equipped with automatic controls to burner for stop and start, high and low pressure relays, stack relay and high and low water cut outs. The unit can also be operated manually.

4. Two feed-pumps of the centrifugal type electric driven, feed water into the boiler which in turn are controlled by the low and high demand controls from the boiler water column.

5. The steam is delivered from the heating plant at boiler pressure to Bldgs R-1 and R-6 by an overhead distribution system. Each building supplied with high pressure steam is equipped with one or more pressure reducing stations to 30 lbs PSI and is utilized for space heating and supply of hot water. Condensate is collected in each building for return back to the heating plant.

6. The system is designed to return a minimum of 80% of condensate to the boilers.

7. Average fuel consumption per year is 58,400 gals of #2 furnace oil.

8. Some repairs are foreseen to the electrical circuits and boiler controls in the near future. These controls can be replaced by using similar equipment from the Dowell Area boiler room which is presently being closed down.

9. It may be noted at this time that this boiler was built in the year 1900.

BIDG. #R-13 - SERVICES AREA

1. The heating plant is located in an area in the main garage. This utility for heating of this building only, consists of two "Enterprize", fire-box type boilers of 20 HP each, capable of producing 2,000 lbs of steam per hour at 150 lbs PSI.

2. Both boilers are equipped with induced draft fans, automatic controls to "Enterprize" rotary cup oil burners for stop and start, high and low pressure relays, stack relays and high and low water cut outs. This unit can also be operated manually.

3. Being a low pressure boiler, the feed water makeup is supplied from the main water line distribution system.

4. The steam delivered from the boilers is used for space heating at boiler pressure. Condensate is collected in two parts of the building and is returned to the boiler.

5. The system is designed to return a minimum of 90% condensate to the boilers.

6. Average fuel consumption is estimated at 27,000 gals per year of #2 furnace oil.

CENTRAL HEATING PLANT - MUSKWA GARRISON, B.C.

1. This utility is of standard DND Army design, a permanent building built in the year 1954 for a cost of \$456,000.00. Housed in this building are two "John Inglis" water-tube boilers of 250 HP each, coal fired using "Iron Fireman" over-feed stokers and are capable of producing 30,000 lbs of steam per hour at 100 PSI.

2. Both boilers are equipped with forced and induced draft fans, Bailey meter automatic combustion controls and meters. The operation of the boilers is designed to be automatic but can be operated by hand firing and manual control.

3. The boiler feed pumps are dual "Darling" centrifugal pumps electrically driven. A standby steam turbine driven feed pump is also installed in case of emergencies arising from electric failures or unforeseen repairs. These pumps in turn are controlled by the required high and low safety water controls on each boiler in accordance with Provincial and ASME codes.

4. The steam is delivered from the Central Heating Plant at boiler pressure to permanent buildings such as, RCEME workshop and offices, water treatment plant, combined kitchen and quarters through an underground Ric-wil steam distribution system.

5. Each building supplied with high pressure steam is equipped with one or more pressure reducing stations to 5, 15 and 25 PSI. This low pressure steam is used for aeration in the water treatment plant, space heating and supplies of domestic hot water.

6. Condensate is collected in each building for return back to the Central Heating Plant. The system is designed to return a minimum of 90% of condensate to the boilers.

7. Average fuel consumption per year is 1,350 tons for a designed boiler efficiency of 72%-76% per boiler.

8. At the present time a number of repairs are

being carried out to bring this plant into an efficient steam production unit.

WATER PUMPING AND DISTRIBUTION

MCINTYRE CREEK, WHITEHORSE, YT

1. This utility was installed by the US Army in 1942 to supply water to their dependents and the City of Whitehorse with a population at that time of about 5,300 people.
2. It has since been reduced in distribution to take in Camp Takhini, Services Area, DOT, RCAF Station Whitehorse and one private customer making a total of 2,400 people.
3. The present total cost of installed equipment is estimated at \$330,000.00.
4. The pumping plant has a total output of 275,000,000 gals of water per year. This capacity is obtained from 2 "Layne" vertical centrifugal pumps, one at 40 HP, one at 60 HP electrically driven, with a standby gas driven engine to the 40 HP pump should any emergencies arise from electric failures.
5. The supply of water is unlimited from McIntyre Creek which is picked up through an intake gate, flows through a series of concrete chambers, screened at regular intervals to a wet well below the pumps then overflows over a tail gate at a reduced velocity allowing a settling period before being pumped into steel water tanks, one at Camp Takhini and one at RCAF Station Whitehorse. Each has a capacity of 250,000 gals.
6. Sterilization of the water supply is done by

chlorination fed into the discharge side of the pumps by two automatically operated hypochlorinators with amounts injected as per Army and department of hygiene regulations.

7. It should be noted at this time that a proposed redesign of water producing facilities has been studied and agreed on. It consists of forming an artificial lake in the immediate area to McIntyre Creek complete with rapid sand filters and coagulation process at a cost of \$100,000.00. Automation of present pumping equipment and gas chlorination is estimated at \$12,000.00.

8. It should also be noted that although there is unlimited water supplies from McIntyre Creek, DND Army do not own the water rights, and a possibility of contamination of the water shed therefore exists.

MUSKWA GARRISON, B.C.

1. This utility was installed in 1953 at a cost of \$79,190.00.

2. The building is of a permanent standard DND Army design housing an aerator, lime slacker, precipitator coagulation tank, hypochlorinating pumps and a water tower.

3. Water is pumped from a well by a 15 HP electrically driven pump located close to the Muskwa River and has an output of 15,000,000 gals per year.

4. The water is pumped to the water tower for aeration, passes through lime treatment, pumped through a sludge blanket in the precipitation tank, overflows to an underground reservoir and is chlorinated while being discharged for storage, then to the distribution system.

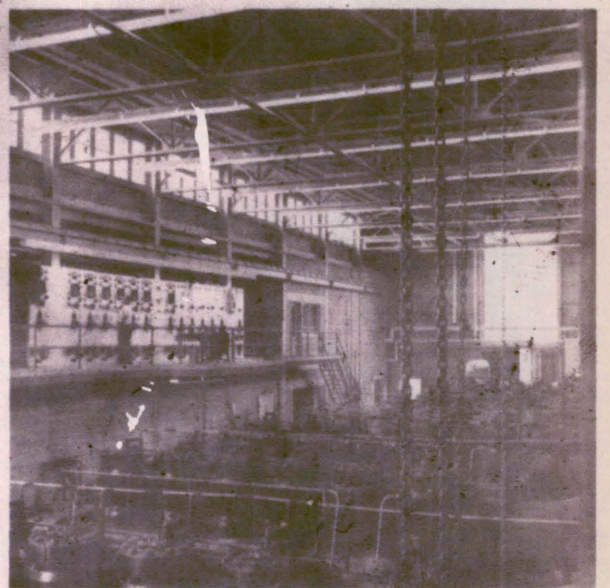
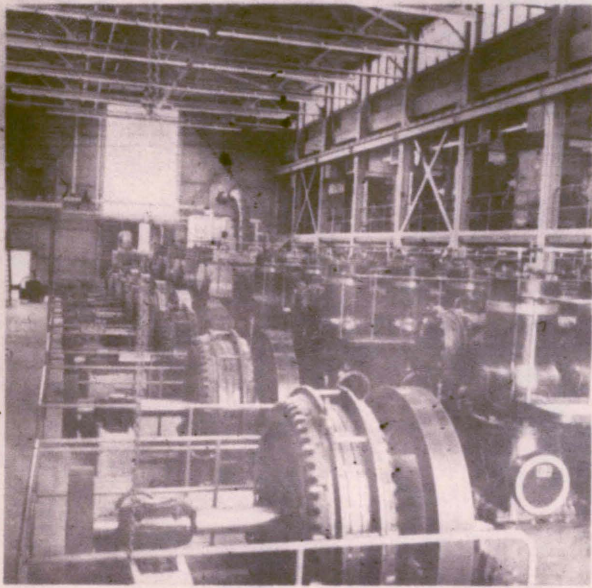
5. Owing to the high iron content of the water in this area, haulage of treated water from Muskwa to Fort Nelson is necessary for HME use.

6. Constant maintenance and repairs to this system has proved a costly item over the years and it has been proposed that an alternate plan for water from the Muskwa River be used in the future.

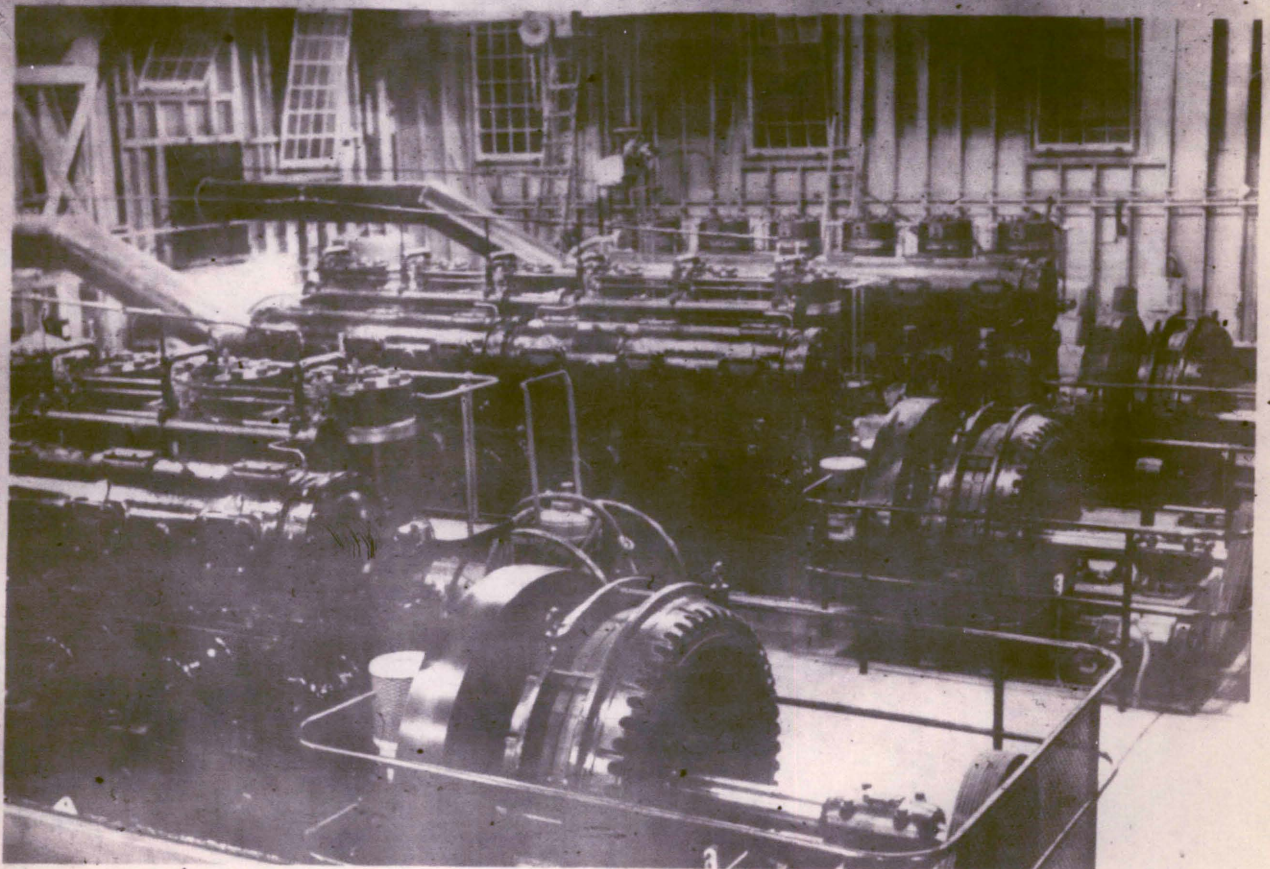
7. This would consist of a large enough reservoir to contain at least a year's supply with large enough pumps to fill it over a period of two months because the Muskwa River is only clear for use during that period.

MAINTENANCE CAMPS - WATER SUPPLY

There are fourteen maintenance camps, normally containing forty to fifty persons each. These camps derive their water supply from wells. The water is distributed throughout each camp by a pressure system, the piping being of sufficient size to allow for water required by fire fighting apparatus. The water temperature, particularly in the Yukon portion of the Highway, is never very much above freezing, generally measuring about 33°-35° F. It is interesting to note that most of the wells in use to date were originally drilled by the US Army.



Power House
Refinery Area
1952-1959



Power House
Lower Whitehorse
1946-1952



**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

CHAPTER 5

DRAUGHTING

AND

PROPERTY RECORDS

CHAPTER V

DRAUGHTING AND PROPERTY RECORDS

1. Due to the great haste with which the Alaska Highway was built, little or no thought was given to the keeping of up-to-date records for buildings, utilities, or the land on which they stood. When the Highway was handed over in 1946 by the US Army to the Canadian Army it included:-

- a. The Railhead Camp at Dawson Creek, B.C.
- b. Eighteen Maintenance Camps along the Highway.
- c. Thirteen Airstrips.
- d. The Whitehorse Area.
- e. Numerous miscellaneous sites including 30 construction camps (abandoned) and 18 sites of emergency shelters.

2. For much of this property there were no plans in existence, necessitating the following tasks for the draughting office:-

- a. To carry out a survey of the boundaries of all camps of a permanent nature, so that formal reservations could be made for these sites.
- b. It was necessary to produce site plans of all active camps and buildings being used by the NWHS along the Highway.
- c. To make a survey of all camp sites along the Highway that were not required by the Canadian Army so that land and buildings could be declared surplus.

3. The initial survey of abandoned camps turned up more than 125 sites of buildings along the Highway, some with as few as one or two buildings, some with many buildings. It was also found that many abandoned buildings

had been pilfered; indeed, at some sites it had been so complete a job that only the foundations were left. Between 1946 and 1956 most of these buildings were taken on charge so that they could be disposed of, as they were creating a hazard to curious tourists travelling the Highway.

Some difficulty was encountered in the early days when these buildings were sold, as many purchasers took only that part of the building which was of use to them, leaving the rest to rot on the site. It was found that as the buildings were no longer DND, and in most cases on public land, DND could do nothing to correct this. The policing of buildings declared surplus to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation, is now strictly routine, and this situation is no longer encountered.

In many cases it was found impossible to sell the buildings, and the Army had to destroy them and clear the site. This was generally done by controlled burning during the winter months.

4. The boundaries of most permanent camp sites were fixed and permanent reservations for those located in B.C. were given in 1951, and those located in the Yukon Territory, in 1955. A notable exception to this is Camp Takhini in Whitehorse, where the request for a permanent reservation is still pending, awaiting the completion of a DLS survey.

5. The production of site, outside service and buildings plans for the camps are still in progress. The absence of plans and records when the Highway was turned over, the great distances that have to be travelled to secure information, and the short length of summer each

year for field work, has made this a most formidable task.

This work is, in fact, still in progress, with constant updating and revisions being made to existing plans. Site and service plans for all maintenance camps and other sites with DND owned buildings (some 30 sites), also floor plans for the 723 buildings in these camps have been produced.

6. In addition to producing existing building and site plans, the draughting staff produces drawings for proposed projects, the largest being two civilian single personnel quarters, one male, one female, which were completed in Camp Takhini in 1955.

7. When the Alaska Highway was handed over in 1946 to the Canadian Army, the electrical distribution system and the water and sewer lines for all the camps along the Highway and the City of Whitehorse, were handed over also. This unit found itself not only responsible for the maintenance and distribution of utilities to NWHS and other government agencies, but also, in many cases, to civilian agencies and many individual civilians. This required the preparation of many individual agreements by the Property Records Section, under the supervision of the Chief Draughtsman. In 1959, the electrical generating and distribution system was sold to the Yukon Electrical Company Limited, who now service the Whitehorse Area.

Utilities distribution for most maintenance camps is still the responsibility of 17 Works Coy RCE. At various locations on the Highway, utilities (water and electrical power) are supplied to other government agencies and civilians. These agreements are prepared by

the Property Records Section. In 1946, a ledger system was used to record all properties and agreements administered by DND (Army). This was followed by a cardex system which was introduced about 1951. This system is now used for all Army installations in Canada, and has proven to be most efficient.

8. In 1962, all draughting and property records functions of the Fort Nelson Detachment were moved to the main draughting office at Whitehorse.

9. The following personnel have been in charge of the Draughting Office and Property Records Section since its inception:-

Sgt	HAMMOND	HWJ	1946 to 1949
Sgt	OLLIVER	GR	1949 to 1952
Sgt	WYATT	SG	1952 to 1953
WO 2	CASSELMAN	MJ	1953 to 1956
WO2	SMITH	EE	1956 to 1959
WO2	BROWN	RW	1959 to 1963
WO 2	WYATT	SG	1963 to 1964



**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

**CHAPTER 6
ENGINEER
AND
RCOC STORES**

CHAPTER VI

ENGINEER AND RCCC STORES

1. At the time of handover in 1946 large quantities of stores were received from the U.S. Army in bulk form. The stores were an accumulation of construction materials used to construct the Alcan Highway which stretches 1,800 miles from Dawson Creek, BC, to Gulkana and Fairbanks, Alaska. The stores had been brought in by road from Dawson Creek, BC, Gulkana, Alaska and by rail from Skagway, Alaska to Whitehorse, YT.
2. 17 Works Company RCE took over the stores for maintenance of buildings, grounds, and utilities along the Highway. The bulk of these stores were at Whitehorse, YT, but minor quantities were scattered at various camps along the 1,221.4 miles of highway from Dawson Creek, BC to the Alaskan border.
3. These engineer stores, made up of some 10,000 items, were not completely brought to charge until about 1954 due to lack of storage space and trained personnel.
4. The value of these stores at today's prices could be estimated at \$3,000,000.00. They were located in three main areas, the Dowell Area in the City of Whitehorse, YT, Upper Whitehorse, about two miles away, and the third, twelve miles away at MacRea. These areas included three compounds and twenty-eight separate buildings. Most of the buildings were small, widely separated, and without light or heat, unsuited for storage purposes since most of the working days in winter are dark and cold.
5. As personnel became better trained and needs became clearer, the stores for which there was no foreseeable use were sold through Crown Assets Disposal Corporation. Stores which were in excess of requirements were shipped to the Engineer Stores Depot in Wainwright, Alberta. Remaining stores were incorporated into works.
6. Although the stores were received in bulk, at scattered locations, there was no evidence of pilfering.

7. During the period of re-organization after 1952, a self accounting detachment of 17 Works Company RCE was formed at Fort Nelson, BC, Mile 300 which relieved the RCE at Whitehorse, YT, Mile 918 of the duty of purchasing stores for what was becoming known as the Southern Area. In 1958 the stores section changed over supervision from a civilian technical officer grade 3 to supervision by a WO2 Engineer Accountant Stores Officer.

8. Stores section duties included the purchase of stores by requisition to Department of Defence Production at Edmonton and Vancouver. Stores of a bulky or heavy nature are requisitioned from Vancouver to take advantage of the lower water freight rates. Because of the restricted variety of stores held by merchants in Whitehorse much use is made of Local Purchase Orders through 13 Works Company RCE in Edmonton for small or urgent requirements.

9. The stores are operated the same as stores in a more populated area except that higher stock levels are maintained due to the long lapse between ordering and receipt of stores. Fast moving stores require a nine month level to ensure stores are available for issue when required. In 1952 there was as much as six to nine months time lapse between ordering and receipt. Now two months seems to be about normal.

10. The most harassing problem of operating in an isolated area is getting an error corrected. An example of this was a fairly urgent order for four sinks 18" x 30" x 8". The firm sent in 18" x 30" x 5". The firm was advised to please ship in the correct size and the incorrect size would be returned but the order was duplicated with four more 18" x 30" x 5". In the meantime, three more sinks 18" x 30" x 8" were ordered, along came three more 18" x 30" x 5". By this time the plumbers

and receiver were becoming frantic. The firm was written again and came back with the reply that they were sorry but sinks 18" x 30" x 8" were no longer manufactured. The eleven sinks 18" x 30" x 5" were returned and finally 18" x 24" x 8" delivered instead. The operation lengthened out to months.

11. During this period of handover since 1946 there was another engineer unit operating on the Highway, the Highway Maintenance Establishment. It operated independently except that 17 Works Company provided it with buildings, grounds, and utility services. Many of the stores used by both units are similar, lumber is an example. The first indication that Highway Maintenance Establishment and 17 Works Company were to become amalgamated was in 1957 when some items of stores were consigned to Highway Maintenance Establishment Camps for preventive and emergency maintenance.

12. By the winter of 1962-63 it was evident that the alignment of the stores section of the two units was necessary to prevent waste through duplication of purchasing, transportation, storage facilities, and use of personnel. The austerity programme of 1962 helped to hasten the process. The amalgamation although it did not go through any formal ceremony was completed in August 1963 on the completion of a stocktaking of all Highway Maintenance Stores. At this point Highway Maintenance Establishment stores were absorbed by 17 Works Company RCE.

13. With the continued re-organization of procedures and improvement in key personnel, the stores section is increasing its efficiency in its functions. At the time of announcement of handover of the Alcan Highway to the Department of Public Works, 18 years after it was taken over from the United States Army, the combined Highway Maintenance Establishment and

17 Works Company stores section consists of slightly less than \$500,000.00 worth of stores and the following:

- a. The main warehouse (Bldg R-6) in the Services Area. A heated and lighted building with adequate office space.
- b. An old engine shed (Bldg R-72) unheated for storage of rough lumber, and non-perishable stores.
- c. A small three stall garage (Bldg R-9) for storage of surplus stores.
- d. A building at Mile 918 to take the overflow of material requiring protection from the weather.
- e. An outside storage area near Bldg R-6.
- f. An outside storage area at Mile 918 for Highway Maintenance Establishment culverting, and heavy timber.

14. The staff consists of the following personnel:

- a. 2 storemen grade 2
- b. 5 storemen grade 1
- c. 6 packer and helpers
- d. 1 clerk grade 3
- e. 3 clerks grade 1
- f. 1 typist
- g. 1 WO2 Engineer Accountant
- h. 1 Sgt Engineer Accountant



**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

CHAPTER 7

TRANSPORT

AND

PLANT

CHAPTER VII
TRANSPORT AND PLANT

1. Information concerning resources of equipment and vehicles during the early days of 17 ES & W Coy and 17 Works Coy is nebulous. Initially any vehicles required were supplied to the tradesmen by DND. Service drivers in the unit were non-existent so foremen and tradesmen were required to contribute their talents as chauffeurs, and presumably, as amateur mechanics. There apparently were some compensations for this contributory service as individuals could borrow DND vehicles for recreational purposes (plus a tank of gas) for week-ends with a "ration" of 200 miles.

2. The only current knowledge of the unit's capabilities in 1946 with regard to plant and equipment, reveals that any pieces available were inherited from our predecessors - the U.S. Army Engineers. Records indicate that during the last few days of the 1949-50 fiscal year the "Plant Section" of 17 Works Coy was placed on Part V of the Establishment, seemingly an admission that times had changed and the heavy equipment was here to stay.

3. In February 1953, it was noted by Major RC Paris, that the following equipment was in usage (although not for long) in Whitehorse:

Dozer (D8) - 1, Dozer (D6) - 1,
Construction truck - 1, 5 ton oil spray truck - 1,
Truck mounted air compressor - 1,
Truck with sludge pump - 1, Motor grader - 1,
Backhoe ($\frac{3}{4}$ yd) - 1, Concrete mixers - 4,
40 ton pull trailer - 1, Well drill rig - 1,
Trailers with transformers - 2,
Trailer with steam jenny - 1.

4. Five of these items were annotated as being surplus to entitlement, thus implying that the Works Coy was going "all out". Altogether the unit holdings totalled some 60 vehicles and pieces of equipment between Whitehorse and Dawson Creek. The administrative support provided on the Establishment at that time was limited to 3 mechanics (2 in Whitehorse, 1 in Dawson Creek).

5. In the further evolution of 17 Works Coy, such niceties as civilian drivers, military mechanics, and administrative staff were added to the MT and Plant section. Finally in 1962 a final reorganization resulted in an "RCE Garage" being set up under the jurisdiction of NWHME to administer all engineer plant and equipment including that for 17 Works Coy. Vehicles and drivers were placed under the control of 19 Coy RCASC at the same time, thus dispensing with 17 Works Coy responsibilities in the field of transport and equipment.



**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

CHAPTER 8

FIRE SERVICES

CHAPTER VIII

FIRE SERVICES

History of the Northwest Highway System Fire
Department of the Department of National
Defence (Army), in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

By GS Swanson, Fire Officer 3 1964

The Fire Department was first organized under the direction of Mr RJ Dunlop, who was assigned the duties of Fire Chief, on the 16 of May, 1946.

Mr Dunlop had been previously employed as Fire Chief with the US Army Air Force, at the Airbase in Whitehorse, Yukon.

In accordance with the policy of the Department of National Defence, the Fire Department was manned with a complete civilian staff.

Operations were commenced in an existing Firehall, building F-33 located in the area known as the Dowell or "F" Area, which had been turned over to the Canadian Army, by the Americans.

At this time, Rear Headquarters, NWHS, in Edmonton, were hiring personnel for the Highway System. Personnel to fill the firefighter vacancies were selected by commandeering men arriving in Whitehorse with the DND and placing them on duty at the Firehall. Within two or three days, the Fire Department strength consisted of, Fire Chief Dunlop, two Fire Lieutenants and twelve Firefighters, divided into two shifts.

In addition, the Fire prevention branch was organized in the same period. Two men were employed on this work, one on Highway inspections and one in the extinguisher shop. The total strength of the Department becoming seventeen men.

Because of the lack of trained firefighters, a very intensive training programme was necessary in order to cope with the ever present danger of fire. The first weeks of operation were devoted to pumper operation, hose, ladder, and hydrant hookup drills, rescue practice, forcible entry and many other required subjects such as sprinkler systems, water supplies and so on. Other problems during organization to be considered were liaison with units in fire reporting procedure, ensuring adequacy of fire extinguishers and protective equipment in buildings becoming occupied. Personnel matters and related subjects were immense. For a time, due to establishment problems within the works unit, the additional duty of running the MT section was handled by the Fire Department.

On formation of another Fire Department in 1951 at Muskwa Garrison, the Fire Chief of this Department was responsible for the overall supervision of both firehalls and fire equipment and fire prevention measures over the entire Highway.

Since its inception in 1946, the Fire Department has been carried on the establishment of 17 Works Coy RCE for the purposes of technical supervision, training and personnel matters, the commanding officer of the works. Coy having the additional duty of being the Fire Marshall of the NWHS. The officers who have served in this capacity are, in order of succession:-

Capt Gillespie	Apr 1946 to Mar 1948
Capt Graham	Apr 1948 to Dec 1950
Major Paris	Jan 1951 to Apr 1954
Major Couloumbe	Mar 1954 to Dec 1956
Major McLellan	Dec 1956 to Nov 1957

Major Osborne	Nov 1957 to Aug 1958
Major Weibe	Aug 1958 to Jun 1961
Major Nicklom	Jun 1961 to Jul 1963
Major Elfner	Jul 1963 to Present

FIREFIGHTING APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT

On terminating their tenure on the Alaska Highway, the Americans turned over large amounts of up to date firefighting equipment, tools and fire trucks.

Available for fire department use were four fire trucks, all triple combination pumpers of 1942 design. All pumps were of the centrifugal type. These vehicles were:-

DND No 79-411, Ward LaFrance, 3 ton, 750 GPM midship mount
DND No 79-410, International, 2 ton, 500 GPM midship mount
DND No 79-409, Ford 2 ton, 500 GPM front mount
DND No 79-592, Chevrolet 2 ton, 500 GPM front mount

Two of these vehicles are still in use on the Highway System and are DND No 79-411 Ward LaFrance, which has been based in the NWHS Firehall since takeover and DND No 79-592 currently at MP 1083.

Fire trucks presently held by this Department are all triple combination pumpers and the pumps are of the centrifugal type, these are:-

DND No 51-94985, International, 5 ton, 750 GPM midship mount
DND No 54-01909, Pierre Thibault, 5 ton, 840 GPM midship mount
DND No 79-411

HOURS OF WORK

With the exception of the Fire Chief and the two men assigned to fire prevention work, the tour of duty for firefighters at the beginning was 24 hours on duty and 24 hours off. This system continued until 1954 when a

three shift system designed to facilitate a 56 hour work week was employed. This was initially worked on a ten and fourteen hour shift basis and was followed for about one year. Due to other complications involving the manning of a second Firehall in Camp Takhini, this method was found impracticable and a three shift system of 24 hours on and 48 hours off duty was adopted and continued ever since. With the advent of the three shift system, additional men were necessary to provide adequate crews, the latest establishment, including fire department officers being 27 men.

FUNCTIONS

Fire Control

The need for an organized fire department was immediately recognized by the Canadian Army, on taking over the operation of the Alaska Highway. All buildings received from the Americans were wooden frame structures with the exception of the odd tin Quonset hut. DND buildings, such as an extremely large hospital, barracks, warehouses and buildings selected for Headquarters occupancy were situated within the boundaries of Whitehorse. To further complicate matters, these areas were interspersed with civilian structures. Space heaters of the oil burning type and oil burners were used in the majority of heated buildings. Because of the condition of this equipment, there was a continual danger of fire.

The first duty was and is the fire protection of all units and holdings of the DND Army, in Whitehorse. Due to the inter-relationship of the DND and Whitehorse areas, fire protection was extended to the town with the stipulation that firefighting action in progress could be

terminated at any time, in the event that Army installations required the full resources of the NWHS Fire Department to contain a fire.

Firefighting assistance on a first call basis was extended to the City of Whitehorse from the commencement date in 1946 to November 1962, when the NWHS Fire Department moved to its present location in Camp Takhini. Assistance is still being provided to the City on a second call, or, direct request basis.

Fire Prevention

As previously mentioned, firefighter technicians were trained in the duties of fire inspections and extinguisher recharging, throughout the Highway System. This function was commenced in the same period that the Fire Department was being organized. Fire safety inspections were carried out in all maintenance camps from Mile 0, Dawson Creek, B.C. to Camp 1206 near the Alaska border. Part of the work performed consisted of fire safety lectures and demonstrations of extinguisher operation.

Reports of fire hazards found, were directed from 17 Works Coy RCE to the applicable unit, or, action was taken by the works coy to correct conditions which came within their scope.

Extinguisher Maintenance

A rather unique function was performed by the works coy within the organization of the fire department. This was the testing, repair and recharging of all types of fire extinguishers.

So far as it is known, no other fire department in Canada has ever performed this type of work. Excessive

delays in the return of discharged extinguishers, transportation costs and so on, were contributing factors in the requirement of this function. It was necessary that the works coo procure many items of tools and equipment for which there were no tables or issue scales, and was further complicated because of the lack of identification or listings in Ordnance catalogues. This Department was able to charge CO2 extinguishers and dry chemical cartridges. Hydrostatic testing devices were provided and many other pieces of equipment to do the work.

On annual recharging trips over the Highway, reconditioned extinguishers were carried which resulted in any defective FAFFE found being exchanged on the spot, the defective or discharged FAFFE then being returned to the fire department for servicing.

AREAS

At the takeover period in 1946, the areas requiring fire protection services were, for the main part located in or near the Town of Whitehorse. These were:- "A" - "B" - "F" Areas situated in the town site. Refinery area, now the Services Area, Standard Oil EMQs which is now part of Camp Takhini, American Pipeline area which is now Camp 918. Upper and Lower Tank Farms and the McCrae warehousing area which was used up to 1963 and the Town of Whitehorse.

During the period of 1946 to 1964 under the Canadian Army, some changes have occurred in the areas of responsibility of the fire department. A and B areas were gradually vacated, but other areas such as Camp 918 and the Refinery Area were expanded. EMQs were constructed in

Camp Takhini along with permanent buildings such as headquarters and warehouses etc, in the Services Area.

Over the years the growth of the civilian population in the Whitehorse area has resulted in new subdivisions being formed along the Highway to the North and South of Camp Takhini. The areas to the North, known as Porter Creek and Crestview, were extended fire protection by the Commander NWHS and this arrangement was formalized in 1963 by an agreement between the Minister of National Defence and the Yukon Government.

Due to the delay encountered in responding to fire calls in Camp Takhini, a second firehall was opened in the Yukon Forestry Building in Apr 1953. This was later moved to Building 21 in Camp Takhini.

A new firehall was completed in October, 1962 on the original site of Building 21, Camp Takhini and was officially opened on the 13 of November 1962 by the GOC Western Command. The original firehall, Building F-33 was vacated at this time.

On 16 Nov 63, a Pierre Thibault pumper was transferred from the Department of Transport to the Canadian Army. At this time, DND became responsible for the fire protection of DOT and RCAF installations at the Airbase and the Vallyview housing area.

Areas of responsibility of this Fire Department as of 1964 are:-

Services Area - Camp Takhini - Camp 918 - Porter Creek - Crestview - Vallyview - DOT & RCAF at Airbase - Upper and Lower Tank Farms - Marwell Area - "F" Area - McCrae - Assistance on Aircraft crash firefighting.

Request for assistance by City of Whitehorse.

ADDITIONAL FIREFIGHTING FORCES

One of the original fire trucks, No 79-592 was based in the HME garage in Fort Nelson, B.C. in 1946. It was later moved to the Loran Camp in Dawson Creek in 1949, having been replaced by truck 79-125, in Fort Nelson.

In June 1953, a fire department was opened in the newly completed Muskwa Garrison, Mile 295. Truck No 79-409 was the first vehicle used by this department. The fire officers who have been in charge of the Muskwa Fire Department, are in order of succession:-

Mr CF Jensen	1953 to 1955
Mr N Smith	1955 to 1959
Mr E Armstrong	1961 to 1964

In May, 1960, as a result of negotiations between DND and the Yukon Government, a fire department was organized in Watson Lake, Yukon, MP 635. The Fire Chief selected to head this Department was a Ssgt in RCNME. The preliminary organization and personnel matters were arranged by headquarters staff. The crew consisted of HME employees and civilian volunteers and were trained by Fire Officer G Swanson and Firefighter W Weigand.

The fire truck provided to this department was No 79-592, recovered from the Loran Camp, later replaced by truck No 52-92019 from the NWHS Fire Department in 1963.

Preliminary planning to base truck No 79-592 and form a fire department at Destruction Bay, MP 1083 began in Jan 1964.

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

In the early period of operations, the reporting of fires was mainly dependent on telephone and verbal reports. An annunciator panel was installed in 1946

covering such occupancies as the army power plant, military hospital and similar structures. The exact number of buildings or areas hooked to this system is not known, but believed to be about twelve.

This system was replaced in 1949 by a Northern Electric Gamewell Type B municipal board with 2 box circuits.

Fire alarm boxes connected to this system were installed in strategic locations through the Town and Army Areas. As PMQs were built in Camp Takhini, boxes were added to cover these. RCAF boxes were also hooked to the army system until they installed their own equipment. In 1952, 51 boxes were on the line. On takeover, of firefighting duties from DOT and RCAF in 1962, their boxes were again connected to the army system. The total boxes now on the line are 67.

A notable example of the attention given to fire safety by DND, is the inclusion of internal alarm systems in all recent medium to high value permanent buildings constructed since 1946. Provision was also made over the years to provide master boxes with internal alarm systems to such buildings as the military hospital, RCME Workshop, Ordnance warehouse.

The end result is a modern and up to date alarm system. During the years it has been in service, the Gamewell System has constantly received normal maintenance and has never required major repairs.

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Action was taken in 1953 to equip the fire department with radios. This has proven to be one of the most valuable tools for fire control ever obtained

by the unit.

Two base stations and four mobile units were installed, providing net between all trucks and firehalls.

They were found invaluable during firefighting operations, in that second and third trucks could be called to the fire instantly or even before the first truck arrived at the fire.

In many instances, due to the radio net, the fire trucks were either withdrawn from one fire to proceed directly to another fire or were directed to a second fire while returning from a first call. In some cases, trucks were alerted and dispatched to fires while away from the firehall on training or other duties. These units are of the Motorola type and have never required replacement.

HYDRANT AND WATER SUPPLIES

In the early days of operation, the only hydrant system for fire protection services were those owned by the Army. Hydrants were located in A, B and F Areas within the town and at the present site of Camp Takhini. In many cases, the use of the Army hydrant system was the only reason that fires of conflagration proportions were avoided. Hose lays were made from Army hydrants as long as 4000 feet at some Whitehorse fires.

Hydrant water supply was obtained by gravity feed from two reservoirs in the Army water system, one reservoir being located in Upper Whitehorse, the other in the vicinity of the Airbase.

The only source of water for firefighting purposes in the Town of Whitehorse for a number of

years was an electrically driven centrifugal pump in the Yukon Electric power plant at First Avenue and Main Street.

COURSES

In 1954, a course in firefighting methods and tactics was extended by the Defence Research Board Fire Department in Suffield, Alberta. The following personnel of this Department attended the course:- Fire Chief RJ Dunlop, Fire Officers G Swanson, S Wilcox, N Smith, D MacDonald.

From 1961 to 1963, the DND-NWHS arranged to provide candidates to the RCAF Automatic Fire Protection and Detection Systems course in Camp Borden, Ontario. This course was attended by the Fire Chief RJ Dunlop, now Fire Chief GS Swanson, and Fire Officers R Reber, and D MacDonald.

Complete courses in First Aid were given in 1956 and again in 1963. On both occasions, all firefighters were successful in obtaining certificates.

Under the direction of the Fire Marshall, NWHS, Major DG Elfner, a Fire Safety course of one week's duration, was arranged within the NWHS. The purpose of the course was to provide the necessary knowledge of inspections, fire prevention, extinguisher recharging, firefighting and related subjects, to comply with DND instructions.

Military and civilian employees from all Camps and Units of the Highway System attended this course. The first course was held in the first week of Dec 1963 with the second course to be held in Feb 1964.

Instructors on the first course were:-

Capt CJ Barrigar, Fire Chief GS Swanson and Fire Officer R Reber.

AWARDS

The NWHS Fire Department submitted three entries to the National Fire Protection Association, Fire Prevention Contest, for military establishments with a medium class fire department. The following awards were won:-

1959 Entry	Honourable Mention
1960 Entry	First place
1961 Entry	Third place

FIRES

It is thought that a history of the fire department would not be complete without describing some of the more notable fires which have occurred over the years. Some of these are:-

In July 1947, a fire broke out in the RCEME Workshop located in the Dowell Area and adjacent to the 17 Works Coy Engineer Stores. All the fire trucks and men of the department were needed to fight this fire. The intense heat was radiated across the road to the Engineer Stores and it was necessary to direct hose streams on the front of the building which was beginning to smoke. Although the RCEME building was lost, most of the machinery was saved and the fire was prevented from spreading to other buildings.

An all-out alarm was sounded at 0209 hours on 13 Feb 54. Involved in this fire was an EMQ, Building A-13, which contained three apartments. Fire had broken out in the center apartment which was occupied by a member of the fire department, Fire Lieutenant A McDonell. Prior to the

arrival of the fire trucks, and, as accurately as it can be reconstructed, Mr McDonell had directed his wife and son from the burning premises, and apparently had delayed to obtain some clothing. As the wife and child ran from the building, it is thought that the opening of the door allowed an inrush of fresh air which may have caused a smoke explosion. Mr McDonell perished in the fire. The rapidity with which the fire spread was unbelievable. The occupants of the other two apartments were assisted to safety by firefighters as smoke and flames burst into their quarters. The building and all contents were a total loss.

On two separate occasions, interruption of power supply was avoided when power plants caught fire.

The first incident involved the Army power plant on Fourth Avenue. The alarm was received from Box 213 at 0243 hours, 6 Jan 51. On arriving at the power plant, the fire was found inside the building. Large sheets of flame were spreading over the ceiling but did not involve the walls. As firefighting proceeded, tarpaulins were draped over the generators to keep off falling water and debris. Power was maintained during the entire period of operations which lasted nine hours.

The second incident occurred at the new power plant in the Services Area. This fire involved the fuel supply tanks for the Diesel generators, oil soaked ground and some fuel drums. The fire was put out in about 25 minutes, but required the use of two trucks and off-duty firemen. A large portion of the aluminum siding

of the building was burnt away.

An alarm was received by telephone on the 12 Sep 58 at 1959 hours, reporting a fire at PMQ 24 Cassino, Camp Takhini. Fire trucks from both firehalls answered this call. The fire had originated in the living room and involved the furnishings. The building was heavily charged with flame, smoke and heat. Three children were rescued from the upper story of the PMQ and the fire quickly brought under control and extinguished.

During June and July, 1958, an extremely large forest fire threatened the camp areas and the city. The fire approached the Whitehorse area from the West along the Alaska Highway and from the North along the Mayo Road. Extensive use of men, bulldozers, vehicles and other equipment was provided by all Army units in this area. Personnel of the works coy were engaged in all manner of work in attempts to stop the advance of the fire. Heavy duty equipment was used in clearing fire breaks. Soldiers patrolled the fire lines and constant reports of the advance of the fire was maintained. A constant watch was maintained on the water tower by firefighters to report on the condition of the fire and to watch for spot fires in the camp and services areas due to the constant rain of hot ashes descending on them.

While the fires described were all directly associated with Army installations, fires of a similiar nature were encountered in the City of Whitehorse and the surrounding area. This Department has also been involved in numerous rescues ranging from cats up trees

to men trapped in cave-ins, heart attacks, and searches for drowning victims. The unit provided the fire department with two Stevenson Minutman Resuscitators, which have been employed on many occasions.

INJURIES

In the course of the years of firefighting, the incidence of injury incurred while firefighting has been relatively low. No men have been lost while firefighting, but, it should be mentioned that at times, this has been narrowly avoided. Some firefighters have required medical treatment after having been overcome with smoke and many were made ineffective at fires due to smoke inhalation.

Injuries from electrical shock, cuts, nails and falling objects have been extremely low. Frostbite due to the extreme low temperatures has been a constant hazard, but only one case required medical attention.

FIRE STATISTICS

During eighteen years of operation, the NWHS Fire Department has responded to a total of 2,192 fire calls. This averages out to slightly better than one call every third day.

Of these calls, 32 have been major army fires, 700 have been minor army fires, 42 have been major city fires and 929 have been minor. Remaining calls include false alarms, rescue and other emergencies.

Muskwa Garrison Fire Department have answered a total of 106 fire calls since its inception in June '53.

Records of fires occurring in Highway Maintenance Camps are not held by this department, however, entries found in log books show a total of nine.

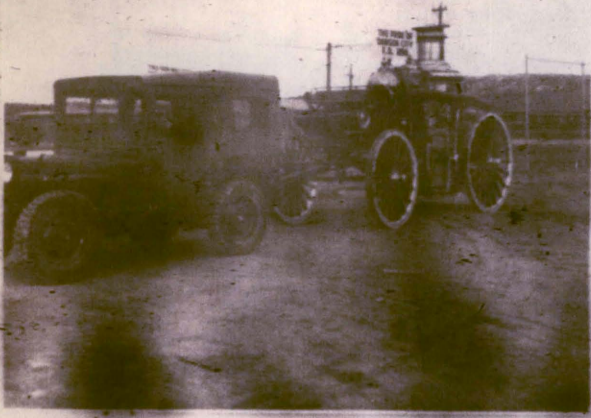
HISTORY OF THE MUSKWA FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Muskwa Fire Department was formed in January 1953 with Mr GE Jenson as Fire Chief. He had one small fire truck and a crew of four men, all stationed at MP 300, five miles away from Muskwa Garrison. HME also had two fire trucks at this location, manned by voluntary firemen.

This system proved to be inadequate after a fire in the sleeping quarters at Muskwa on the 4 Mar 1953. The pumper froze en route to the fire, and as a result, three lives were lost.

A temporary fire alarm system was installed at Muskwa in Sep 1953, consisting of eight alarm stations that sounded a horn at the new firehall. This system did not indicate the location of the fire call, and has now been replaced by a "Vitagard System" installed in Sep 1963.

The fire department now has two trucks, one stationed at MP 295 and one at MP 300. The staff consists on one fire chief and seven firefighters. It is the only paid, full time fire department in the Fort Nelson area, and provides mutual aid and training to three volunteer fire departments, "Fort Nelson, HME, and Airbase".



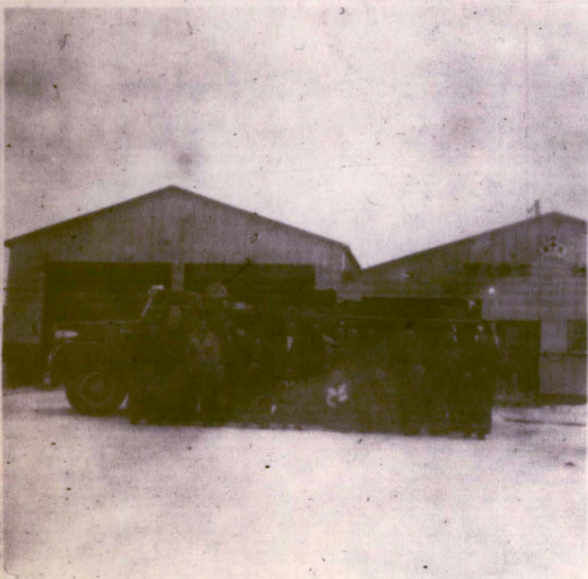
1000 GPM Horse drawn Steamer
Used during Fire Prevention
Week 1960



Hand operated fire pump.
Used during Fire Prevention
Week 1960



RCEME Workshop Fire - 1947



Fire Safety School - December 1963



No. 2 Firehall - Bldg. 21
Declared Surplus 1962



No. 1 Firehall - Bldg. F33
Declared Surplus 1962



Fire Inspection Panel Truck -
a familiar sight on the
Highway for many years.



Muskwa Garr. Firehall
Constructed 1957



Fire Department pumpers in service - 1964



**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

CHAPTER 9

**HISTORICAL DATA MILITARY EXERCISES
SPORTS AND EXTRA CURRICULAR SUPPORT**

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Numerous exercises by Canadian and American armed forces have been held on the Highway, and 17 Works Coy RCE has supported all exercises both large and small. Following is an outline of the type of support provided for two exercises:-

a. EXERCISE NORTH III - 1948 or 1949

The group of buildings known as the Western Command Buildings in Upper Whitehorse were fitted up for occupation by Exercise personnel engaged in Exercise North III. It had been intended to carry out this work by Contract but it was found that the bid from the Contractor was quadruple over what it was calculated by #17 Works Coy to carry out the task.

b. EXERCISE SWEETBRIAR

From the end of August/49 until approximately the middle of March/50 the main effort of the unit was concentrated on fitting up accommodation for 1300 troops for Exercise Sweetbriar. In carrying out this task, 18 "Huts Prefabricated General Purpose" were used. In addition to this, all of the Western Command buildings in Upper Whitehorse, and the long warehouse and "H" Hut in the Refinery were utilized. These huts were equipped with ablution rooms - one Prefab in Upper Whitehorse, 2 Prefabs in the Refinery and in addition

three lean-two's were built on the long warehouse in the Refinery in which were housed ablution benches. Outside bucket latrines were provided for all accommodation erected especially for Exercise Sweetbriar. South of Whitehorse, #17 Works Coy responsibility, insafar as Exercise Sweetbriar was concerned, merely involved the installation of an oil stove at Mile Post 201 and Mile Post 308, with regular camp maintenance. North of Whitehorse, at Mile 1056, an existing camp, which had become dilapidated, was refitted for the use of Exercise personnel on their return trip from Northways. This conversion included sheeting the outside of upright log buildings with tar paper and the inside with Vancouver Board, the installation of a well and water supply system, the installation of three ranges and adequate water storage space and modifying each living hut by the attaching to their ends of shelters housing pit latrines. At Mile Post 1156, there existed an abandoned camp which belonged to Mr. Kenneth O'Hara. This camp was rented from Mr. O'Hara by Western Command and turned over to #17 Works Coy to fit up the buildings for occupation. This camp was designed only to be a lunch stop for returning Exercise personnel and therefore a minimum of

sleeping accommodation was required. A 400 Man Mess Hall was set up in a large garage at the site and VIP quarters were prepared for the Deputy Maneouver Commander's Headquarters. In addition to the foregoing seven Jamesway Shelters were set up to house permanent camp personnel.

At Northways Alaska, #17 Works Coy was given the task of installing in a large hangar, three oil ranges, from which all Canadian Exercise personnel were to be fed.

2. When the Peace River Bridge collapsed in 1957, this unit provided accommodation for the work crews at Fort St John; installed and maintained the traffic light system, and in general supported HME during the emergency work on the PGE Bridge.

3. In Camp Takhini the following community projects were completed using voluntary labour, mainly from this unit:-

Construction of RC Chapel - 1954-55

Construction of a two sheet curling rink - 1954

Construction of three children's playgrounds - 1956

4. During June and July 1958, the unit was called on by the Civil Power to assist in the combatting of an extremely large forest fire which threatened the City of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Listed below are the main actions taken by this unit to aid the Civil Power on the dates as shown:-

a. 19 June 58 - Protection of an oil tank farm, Whitehorse, Y.T.

Two fire trucks and ten men, laid and used 1,500 feet of $2\frac{1}{2}$ " fire hose.

- b. 23 Jun - Combatting a forest fire a few miles north of Camp Takhini.

One fire truck and twelve men laid and used 2,500 feet of $2\frac{1}{2}$ " fire hose and 1,500 feet of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " fire hose. All off-duty personnel were called in to protect the main water supply area of the Department of National Defence, Whitehorse located at McIntyre Creek.

- c. 24 Jun - One fire truck and a crew of seven men were put on a river barge and transported about four miles down the Yukon River from Whitehorse. From the anchored barge, they fought river edge forest fires, pumping approximately 3,000,000 gallons of water from the river for a period of seven hours. This operation required 2,500 feet of $2\frac{1}{2}$ " fire hose and 3,000 feet of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " forestry hose. Two other vehicles were used to maintain radio contact.

- d. 30 Jun - One fire truck and a crew of seven men were sent to protect the Department of Transport Fan Marker building on the Mayo Road. From a pump positioned on Lake LeBarge, they used 3,000 feet of $2\frac{1}{2}$ " fire hose.

- e. 1 Jul - One fire truck and a crew of five men fought and extinguished a bad bush

fire at MP 931, Alaska Highway.

- f. 9-13 Jul - One fire truck and a crew of five men were sent to MP 951 on the Alaska Highway and with water pumped from the Takhini River, kept the wooden bridge crossing this river wet, while the forest fire burned around it. This action prevented the bridge from being destroyed.
- g. 11 Jul - One fire truck and a crew of five men were sent to the HME Camp at MP 956, to fight a forest fire that had all but encircled the camp buildings. These were kept wet by the use of 2,000 feet of 2½" fire hose and 800 feet of 1½" fire hose. No buildings were lost.
- h. A continuous fire watch was maintained in Camp Takhini by unit personnel during the period 19 Jun 58 to 15 Jul 58 and during the same period, personnel of this unit kept a constant check of the fire along its 55-mile front.
- j. Following is an incident narrated by Major WW Osborne, DFC, CD, Commanding Officer of 17 Works Coy RCE at the time:

"One major event that occurred was the forest fire which threatened Whitehorse in 58. It had a humorous aspect. The fire had enveloped the Takhini Hot Springs area and swept toward Whitehorse on the south side of the river. If we were to cut the fire

off, the line of defence was downstream from Camp Takhini near the dump area. However, we were unable to get fire fighting equipment into an area where water was available. A firm was in the process of repairing the old flat bottom scows in Lower Whitehorse and they had available several large outboards (approx 300 HP). Brigadier Jones concurred in our proposal to mount a fire pumper on a scow and transport it downstream to a point where we could fight the fire from the river. At the time it seemed such a logical solution. The firm which owned the scows agreed to assist, and we mounted said pumper on the scow and with about 20 personnel equipped with life jackets, we shoved off. I was indeed surprised to find that the outboard could not maintain the desired control and we "rotated" downstream. We were unable to keep in the deep water channel and headed for the sand bar which I think is known as "Petticoat Bar". However, the draft of the scow was small and the momentum carried us across the bar safely, otherwise we would have been marooned in the middle of the river. The scow continued in a rotating fashion and by sheer luck we were caught in a backwater current which permitted us to make a landing in the neighbourhood that we had previously reced. We were able to

.../63

successfully combat the fire, but unfortunately the fire had skipped the river and caused havoc on the north shore. I was subsequently appointed Admiral of the fire department when they presented me with the traditional dog-sled tie clip when I left 17 Wks."

5. Winterization of Glacier Camp, MP 75 Haines Road -
Dec 63.

- a. In mid November 1963 a decision was reached that the Department of Public Works on an experimental basis would attempt to keep open the B.C. section of the Haines Road from Mile 48 on the B.C./Alaska boundary to Mile 94 on the B.C./Yukon boundary. Mid-way between is situated a seasonal maintenance camp at MP 75. The Department of Public Works negotiated with the Government of Alaska to provide a winter maintenance crew which would require accommodation at this seasonal camp throughout the winter.
- b. Immediately after the decision was made, 17 Works Coy was given a high priority task to condition the camp for winter living at minimum cost. Originally it was felt that trailer units, the Mess Hall and the garage would suffice. However, studies indicated that all of the existing accommodation could be renovated at a more reasonable cost rather than by the use of trailers. A preliminary survey on the site showed.

that a new water line with a heating cable and a new pump were necessary to provide water throughout the winter. Storm windows for the sleeping accommodation and the Mess Hall and covered passages between the various buildings making up the living accommodation would be required in addition. The garage which lacked sufficient heat and offered little resistance to the prevailing high winds in the area needed extensive repair. The installation of two large oil furnaces and the lining of the interior walls and the ceiling with an aluminum reflective paper to retain the heat were considered an adequate solution for vehicle maintenance and storage. A boost in the power output of the generators for the added winter load was a further requirement,

c. By salvaging surplus equipment and by obtaining building materials from local sources in the Whitehorse Area, a small crew under the command of Sgt A Krantz moved into the camp in extremely cold weather prior to 1 Dec 63. On 17 Dec the camp was completely snug for a long winter's stay and the maintenance team was withdrawn to Whitehorse.

6. 17 Works Coy RCE, Fort Nelson, B.C., Detachment.

a. This is a self accounting detachment, except for finances, and is responsible for works services in the Southern Area from Dawson Creek MP 0 to Muncho Lake MP 456. The present OC is Capt George Stoner, who took over the detachment in 1961 on his return from Egypt.

Other OC were:-

Lt AL Slater 1953-54

Capt AL Ricketts 1954-58

Capt Bob Allen 1958-61

- b. The detachment was originally located in Fort Nelson, B.C. MP 300, in 1946 and moved to Dawson Creek, B.C. in 1949-50.
- c. Due to subsequent paving of the southern end of the Highway, the workload shifted North and the detachment was returned to Fort Nelson about 1958. A new camp was being constructed at Muskwa MP 295. During 1963 a company size Engineer Offices, Workshop and Stores were built for the detachment. In Dec 63, the detachment moved into its new quarters at Muskwa Garrison from Fort Nelson (MP 300).

7. The present Services Area, Whitehorse, was originally occupied by an oil refinery. This was not in use at the time of handover and during 1947-48 was dismantled by Barnes Construction Company, and shipped to Edmonton, Alberta via the Alaska Highway and the White Pass and Yukon Railroad. 17 Works Coy supplied a large number of personnel, during off-duty hours, to assist Barnes Construction Company with the project. Heavy equipment operators, construction tradesmen, mechanics and storemen were in demand and a great deal of knowledge was obtained by all in lifting and transporting heavy items such as cracking towers and associated refinery equipment.

8. In 1947, 1948 and 1949, 17 Works Coy RCE entered a unit float in the "Days of '98" Carnival

(forerunner of the present Sourdough Rendezvous). In 1949 one of our stenos, Miss Peggy Slee won the title of Carnival Queen.

9. The unit has taken part in all parades held since 1946, both in the AWS role before and after parades and as a unit on the parade square during parades.

Parades normally consisted of:-

Annual GOC's Inspection

Annual Commander's Inspection

Visits of Royalty

Armistice Day Parades

Annual Drumhead Services

10. Sports activities.

a. Sports have played an important role in the Highway since 1946. There have been annual leagues for softball, baseball, hockey, curling, bowling, etc, with Army, RCAF and civilian teams competing together for championship honours. 17 Wks Coy RCE has been active in all sports throughout the years. Some of the more notable unit successes in this field were:-

NWHS Garrison Softball League Champs - 1955,1956,1960

Winners of NWHS Annual Sports Meet Trophy 1954,1955

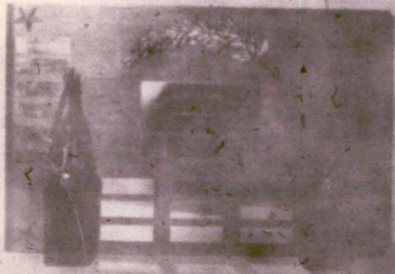
NWHS Annual Rifle Competition - Highest aggregate individual score, won by S sgt (now WO2) Bud Evans in 1960, 1961.

b. For many years, the unit has held an annual "Father and Son Fishing Derby", at Tagish Lake. Prizes were presented for the first fish caught, the largest fish, next largest, etc.

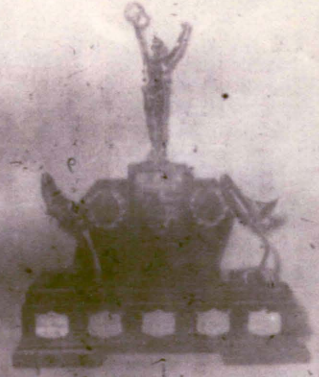
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For boys not getting into the main prize class, a ruby-eye spinner, Yukon lake trout size, was presented. This function was one of the major summer activities and members of HME were always present as guests, as well as civilian employees of both units. The organizers of this event for several years were Mr Jim Conn, Labour Foreman, Mr Wally Henderson, Clerk of Works, Mr George Lawrence, Carpenter Foreman. The 1963 derby was organized by QMS (W02) Al Bone. Mr Conn, who had been on the Highway in various capacities since 1942, and our labour foreman for many years, passed away suddenly on 11 Jun 1962. To his memory, all ranks of the unit contributed towards a suitable memorial. A "Jim Conn Memorial Trophy" was then obtained, and was presented to the boy winning the annual fishing derby. This trophy is to be presented to RCSME, where it will be perpetuated in their annual Steelhead Derby.

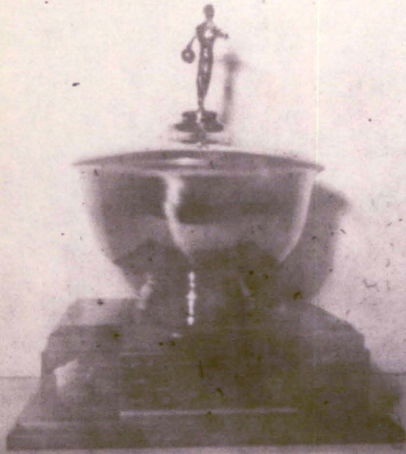
11. In closing this chapter, it is interesting to recall that in March 1954 the NWHS was informed that DFW would take-over in the near future and that only the essential and minimum maintenance work was to be done. Little did anyone realize that the "near future" would encompass the next ten years.



Annual Rifle Competition
Highest Aggregate Score



Jim Conn Memorial Trophy
Presented by "ALL"
17 WKS COY RCE



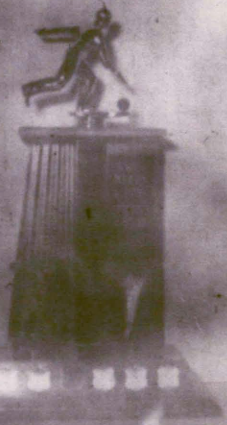
Carling's Trophy
Men's Bowling



NWHS Annual Sports Meet



Carling's Award
Bonspiel 1961-62



NWHS Mixed 5 Pin
Bowling Trophy



**THE HISTORY OF 17 WORKS COY RCE
1 APRIL 1946 — 31 MARCH 1964**

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the reader of this brief History of 17 Works Coy will accept the apologies of those who have been charged with the responsibility of writing it for any shortcomings and lack of detail in certain sections of which he may be more familiar.

The grateful thanks of the unit are extended to all the previous commanding officers who provided considerable detail during their tenure of office. Most helpful too, were a number of civilian employees, whose service with the unit dates back in some cases to its commencement and who have been able to cast light on long forgotten episodes of interest.

It should be recorded that on the unit strength at its conclusion were three military members who served on the Highway during the very early stages of the Canadian Army takeover. Two of these are: Sapper "Smokey" Stover, who was originally with No 1 Road Maintenance Coy, and Sapper "Moose" Jordan. The third, Lieutenant "Bert" Hammond, a gunner of World War II vintage, joined the unit as a civilian draughtsman in 1946 and while on the Highway, returned to uniform in the rank of sergeant. He was commissioned in the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers in 1961 immediately prior to his second posting to 17 Works Coy from HQ Quebec Command. It comes with considerable regret, to not only these three, but also to all who have served with the unit, either in a military or civilian capacity to see the end of the unit's operation.

Still, this is not entirely true nor the real end of the story. Although another government department is taking over the operation of the Highway, the

requirement for maintenance of accommodation and the operation of camp utilities must continue. Many old hands, with their valuable knowledge of the North, will remain on to contribute their skills in the support of the Property and Building Management Division of the Department of Public Works in the continued successful operation of the Northwest Highway System.

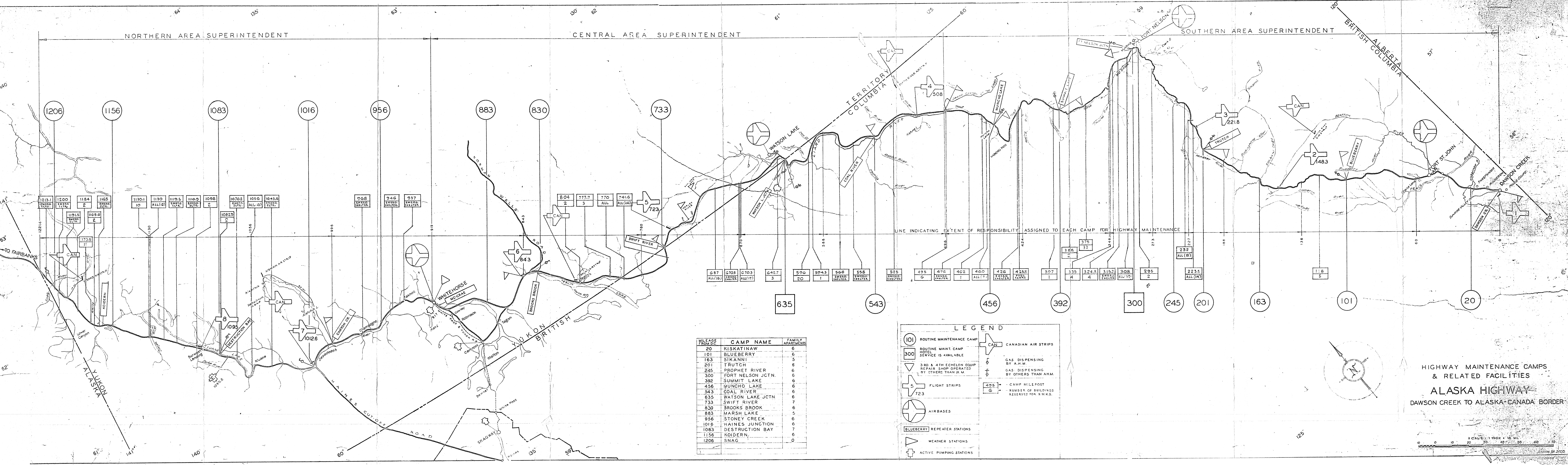
To the new management, we offer our best wishes in their future endeavor and trust that they will integrate early into the community and come to love the spirit of the Yukon as much as we who must leave for other assignments have in our turn.

NORTHERN AREA SUPERINTENDENT

CENTRAL AREA SUPERINTENDENT

SOUTHERN AREA SUPERINTENDENT

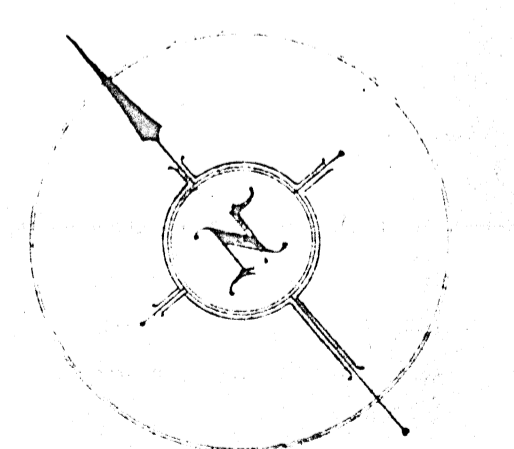
BRITISH COLUMBIA



MILEAGE FROM D.C.	CAMP NAME	FAMILY APARTMENTS
20	KISKATINAW	6
101	BLUEBERRY	6
163	SIKANNI	5
201	TRUTCH	6
245	PROPHET RIVER	6
300	FORT NELSON JCTN.	6
392	SUMMIT LAKE	6
456	MUNCHO LAKE	6
543	COAL RIVER	6
635	WATSON LAKE JCTN	6
733	SWIFT RIVER	7
830	BROOKS BROOK	6
883	MARSH LAKE	5
956	STONEY CREEK	6
1016	HAINES JUNCTION	6
1083	DESTRUCTION BAY	7
1156	KOIDERN	6
1206	SNAG	0

LEGEND

- (101) ROUTINE MAINTENANCE CAMP
- (300) ROUTINE MAINT. CAMP HOTEL SERVICE IS AVAILABLE
- ▽ 3 RD. & 4TH ECHELON EQUIP REPAIR SHOP OPERATED BY OTHERS THAN A.H.M.
- ✈ 5 FLIGHT STRIPS
- ✈ 723 FLIGHT STRIPS
- ✈ AIRBASES
- BLUEBERRY REPEATER STATIONS
- △ WEATHER STATIONS
- ⊕ ACTIVE PUMPING STATIONS
- CAN CANADIAN AIR STRIPS
- ⊕ GAS DISPENSING BY A.H.M.
- ⊕ GAS DISPENSING BY OTHERS THAN A.H.M.
- 495 CAMP MILEPOST NUMBER OF BUILDINGS RESERVED FOR N.W.S.



HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CAMPS & RELATED FACILITIES
ALASKA HIGHWAY
DAWSON CREEK TO ALASKA-CANADA BORDER

