

## Farewell Stars and Stripes: US Base Closings in Newfoundland, 1961–1994

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*Steven High*

Despite a chilly wind off of Placentia Bay, thousands of people gathered in Argentia to watch the controlled implosion of the 10-storey Combined Bachelor Quarters, known affectionately as the “Q” on 6 November 1999. Cars lined up bumper to bumper for eight kilometres on the only road leading to the former US Navy base on Newfoundland’s Avalon Peninsula. In anticipation, the organizers had prepared a designated viewing area, a bandstand, a first aid station, and concession stands where visitors could purchase their “Implosion ’99” t-shirts. Sponsors had hung their “bright flags across the old building’s time-weary frame.”<sup>1</sup> But that Saturday morning was so cold that many people stayed comfortably in their cars and watched the spectacle from there. At precisely 3:25 p.m., seven-year-old Mark Flynn of St. John’s pushed the detonator button triggering 1,400 pounds of dynamite drilled into the building’s structure and the “mighty ‘Q’ came down” in yellow and red sheets of flame and pyrotechnics.<sup>2</sup>

Watching the implosion, Lorne Collins of nearby Placentia had mixed feelings about what he had just witnessed. “I saw an awful lot of history go in a very short period of time,” he said.<sup>3</sup> A tearful Clem O’Keefe observed that he had started working at the US Navy base in 1941, when it first opened.<sup>4</sup> He had worked in the Q’s boiler room, after having helped construct the building in the 1950s. In time, the building had become his second home: “No one likes seeing your home destroyed.”<sup>5</sup> O’Keefe recalled its past occupants with real fondness:

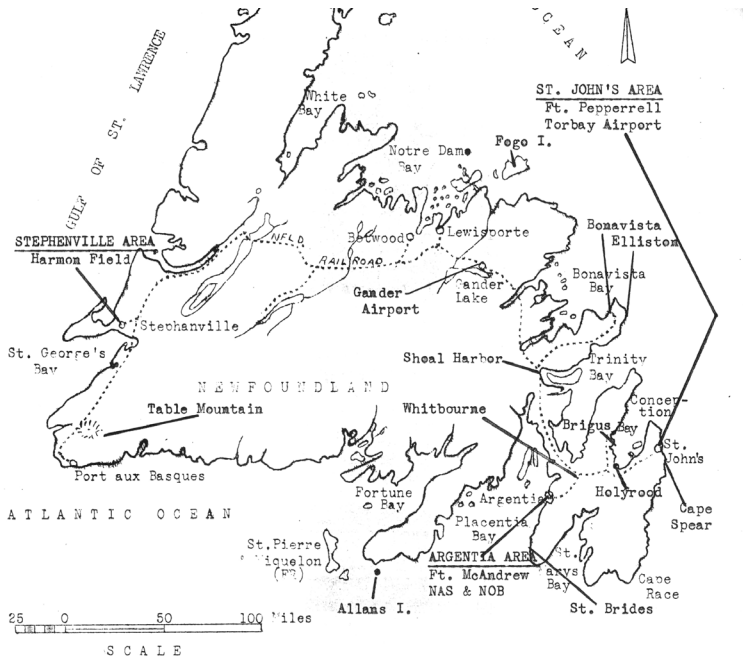
“it’s almost like there’s a part of me [that’s] gone.” Even little Mark Flynn, who got to press the button because his name was drawn, had a family connection to the base, as two of his grandparents once worked there. For the mayor of Placentia, the spectacle “looks like the last nail in the coffin of a long association with the Americans.”<sup>6</sup> And so it was.

The US Navy had come to Argentia as part of the Anglo-American “destroyers-for-bases” deal, sealed in an exchange of notes on 2 September 1940, that saw 50 surplus destroyers and other war materials traded to Great Britain in exchange for 99-year leases on strategically located base areas in Newfoundland, Bermuda, and the British Caribbean.<sup>7</sup> France had just fallen and the United States and Canada were scrambling to shore up the Atlantic approaches to North America. Newfoundland’s proximity to North Atlantic shipping lanes and its emerging place in the Great Circle Route in transatlantic aviation made it vital to the war effort and the defence of the western hemisphere. Should Britain be occupied, and the Royal Navy fall into the hands of Hitler’s Germany, many in North America feared that the Atlantic moat would not be sufficient protection. In 1940, the US Navy was still a one-ocean navy, with its warships concentrated in the Pacific.<sup>8</sup>

The urgency of the historical moment was felt at the highest levels of the US government. In his message to Congress announcing the destroyers-for-bases deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt suggested that it was an “epochal and far-reaching act of preparation for continental defence in face of grave danger.”<sup>9</sup> For good measure, Roosevelt added that the deal represented the most important event in the defence of the United States since Thomas Jefferson’s purchase of Louisiana in 1803.<sup>10</sup> Air and sea bases like the one at Argentia would be North America’s first line of defence against German aggression. “The world had narrowed,” wrote journalist Hanson W. Baldwin in the *New York Times* a few months earlier. “Airplanes span oceans and continents, leap the seas that once were barriers.”<sup>11</sup>

The United States appointed Rear Admiral John W. Greenslade to head a Board of Experts to determine the precise base locations in all the host territories. The British wanted the bases to be located as far

away as possible from capital cities or major population centres, so as to limit the expected political influence of the US. In the case of Newfoundland, the Canadians also wanted to steer the Americans away from Conception Bay and the vital iron mines of Bell Island. Greenslade arrived in Newfoundland waters on the cruiser USS *St. Louis* days after the exchange of notes, inquiring into local weather conditions and local maps. After aerial reconnaissance and some negotiation, the base locations were quickly agreed to and he departed for the Caribbean. A second agreement, the Leased Bases Agreement, signed in London in March 1941, set out the legal status of all the leased areas in terms of criminal jurisdiction, customs duties, and other important matters.



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Figure 1: Newfoundland Base Command map of bases and strategic points. Source: RG 338, Box 79, File 319: FG-3 Reports (1945), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, DC.

In short order, the United States built four sprawling bases in Newfoundland. Fort Pepperrell was located on the northern outskirts of St. John's on the shores of Quidi Vidi Lake; a second army post, Fort McAndrew, was built across the Avalon Peninsula at Argentia alongside the US Navy's operating base also being built there; and Harmon Field, an Army air base, was located on the west coast of Newfoundland at Stephenville. At the height of base construction, 20,000 Newfoundlanders were employed, prompting many to remember this as the "friendly invasion."<sup>12</sup> The base building boom brought employment and higher wages to an area that was desperately poor during the 1930s. It also brought dislocation, as hundreds of people had to be relocated to make way for the leased bases. Entire communities were uprooted in some instances, and in others only part. New communities sprouted up near the US bases at Argentia and Stephenville to house those working at the bases or to serve the needs and desires of enlisted personnel and civilian workers.<sup>13</sup>

As these were still peacetime bases, as the US did not enter the war until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, they were built with all of the modern conveniences: indoor plumbing, cinemas, golf courses, social clubs, recreational facilities, hospitals, and radio stations. They were self-contained, even plush, at least compared to the more rudimentary facilities being erected by the Canadians who were already at war. Many have suggested that by war's end, the US bases influenced Newfoundland building styles and popular culture. Newfoundland Governor Humphrey Walwyn reported that the permanent buildings erected by the US were "admirably built" and "attractive in appearance."<sup>14</sup> He thought that, while they "are built on a scale and of materials beyond the reach of the average citizen, they do present models at first hand for him to aspire and copy." For many, the US bases symbolized modernity — an association that continued into the 1950s with the building of large modern apartment blocks like Argentia's "Q."<sup>15</sup> Suffice it to say here that, almost overnight, the US bases became one of the four pillars of Newfoundland's economy with fish, forests, and mines.<sup>16</sup>

While the wartime influx of US and Canadian servicemen into Newfoundland has generated considerable scholarship, there has been relatively little attention paid to what happened next.<sup>17</sup> The bases continued to be an integral part of continental defence in the face of the threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Technological change, however, meant that the threat shifted from Soviet bombers to intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarines by the 1960s. One by one, the air bases at Pepperrell (1961) and Harmon (1966) closed, as did the naval complex at Argentia over an extended period (1969–1994). As the nature of modern warfare changed, these base closures were part of a global realignment of the US armed forces that followed the Korean and Vietnam wars, as well as during the brief thaw in the Cold War that occurred in the mid-1960s. One source estimated that the US shuttered 1,400 military facilities, large and small, between 1961 and 1976.<sup>18</sup> The closure of the US bases in Newfoundland was therefore part of a much wider story of military realignment and socio-economic, political, and environmental upheaval. “Military bases, like installations or facilities of any major corporation, sometimes grow obsolete,” explained William J. Sheehan, Director of the Office of Economic Adjustment of the US Department of Defense.<sup>19</sup> These properties then became available for private or public-sector redevelopment.

This paper examines the underlying reasons for the US base closures and explores what happened next as the Newfoundland and Canadian governments jockeyed for position in the leased areas. Whereas the more distant federal government viewed the bases through the political lens of sovereignty, the Newfoundland government of Premier Joseph (Joey) Smallwood saw the bases primarily in economic terms. Post-closure redevelopment efforts were influenced by the fact that the 1960s closures came at the height of the activist state and Newfoundland’s modernization drive. The subsequent (and gradual) closure of Argentia came at a time when these attempts at state-induced industrialization were largely discredited. In the end, while Fort Pepperrell was largely reoccupied by the expanding

provincial and federal states, the economic hole left by the departing Americans was not so easily filled in rural Newfoundland.

## **Newfoundland and Continental Defence**

During the early years of the Cold War, Newfoundland was often recognized in the Canadian media as “one of the most vital links in the chain of defense for the North American continent.”<sup>20</sup> The prospect of Soviet bombers flying over the North Pole to deliver their nuclear payloads over North American cities led the United States and Canada to build three lines of early-warning radar stations across the North to detect and track them.<sup>21</sup> Incoming Soviet bombers would then be met by interceptors based at Harmon, Goose Bay, and elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> These air bases would also support US Strategic Air Command (SAC) bombers as they flew northward to deliver their own deadly cargoes. On routine missions or special exercises, SAC regularly flew its B47 and B52 bombers over Canada.<sup>23</sup> In 1950, the United States Air Force (USAF) unified its bases in Newfoundland and Greenland within North Eastern Air Command (NEAC), which had its headquarters at Pepperrell. Unusually for an air force base, Pepperrell itself did not have an airfield, but it did have an arrangement with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) to use nearby Torbay airport.<sup>24</sup>

In 1963, soon after the Cuban Missile Crisis<sup>25</sup> brought the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation, the US asked to deploy eight more squadrons of nuclear-armed interceptors in Canada. The request embarrassed the Liberal government of Lester Pearson, when word of it was leaked, as it raised discomfiting questions about Canadian sovereignty in the Cold War.<sup>26</sup> According to the *New York Times*, the Conservative opposition declared that the Liberals were now the stooges of the United States.<sup>27</sup>

Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King had “jealously guarded Canadian sovereignty against American encroachment” during the war, but with mixed success.<sup>28</sup> Thereafter, Canada “resisted any military activity carried out on Canadian soil by US

authorities alone.”<sup>29</sup> But then, on 31 March 1949, Canada inherited the US bases when Newfoundland, formerly a Dominion but placed under an appointed Commission of Government in the 1930s, joined the country.<sup>30</sup> A series of embarrassing incidents followed that raised questions about Canadian sovereignty, most notably when a Newfoundland civilian was shot by a military policeman at Harmon in July 1949.<sup>31</sup> Then Blair Fraser wrote an inflammatory article in *Maclean's Magazine* that November entitled, “Where the Yanks rule a part of Canada,” increasing public pressure to revisit the 1941 Leased Bases Agreement that limited Canadian criminal jurisdiction over US nationals on- and off-base as well as Canadians on-base. Privately, American diplomats feared that all the negative publicity would “induce the Air Force to stand pat and say ‘nuts’ to the Canadians.”<sup>32</sup> There was some question, however, about the legal status of the Anglo-American agreement now that Newfoundland was part of Canada. Ultimately, the matter was referred to the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD) and a compromise was hammered out. In exchange for offering the US a new 20-year lease on its Goose Bay, Labrador, base, which was considered essential to the global air strategy of the USAF — one senior Air Force officer said that it was “the most valuable single piece of strategic real estate in the world”<sup>33</sup> — Canada won certain modifications.<sup>34</sup> Most importantly, the US agreed to surrender its jurisdiction over Canadian citizens and suspended its on-base jurisdiction over US civilians.

In the years that followed, the Canadian government approved overflights of US aircraft carrying nuclear weapons and transiting them through Harmon and Goose Bay, “subject to the usual conditions, i.e., that no publicity be given these overflights.”<sup>35</sup> For example, up to 36 C-124 aircraft landed at the two bases between 7 and 18 March 1960 as the US moved nuclear weapons to Europe for the NATO stockpile.<sup>36</sup> The Canadian government also set out its conditions for the storage of air-to-air defensive weapons at Goose Bay and Harmon. In 1965, this understanding was amended to allow the US to patrol with these weapons. At the time, the federal cabinet feared what

would happen if news of this deal leaked out.<sup>37</sup> Nuclear depth charges were also stockpiled at Argentina.<sup>38</sup>

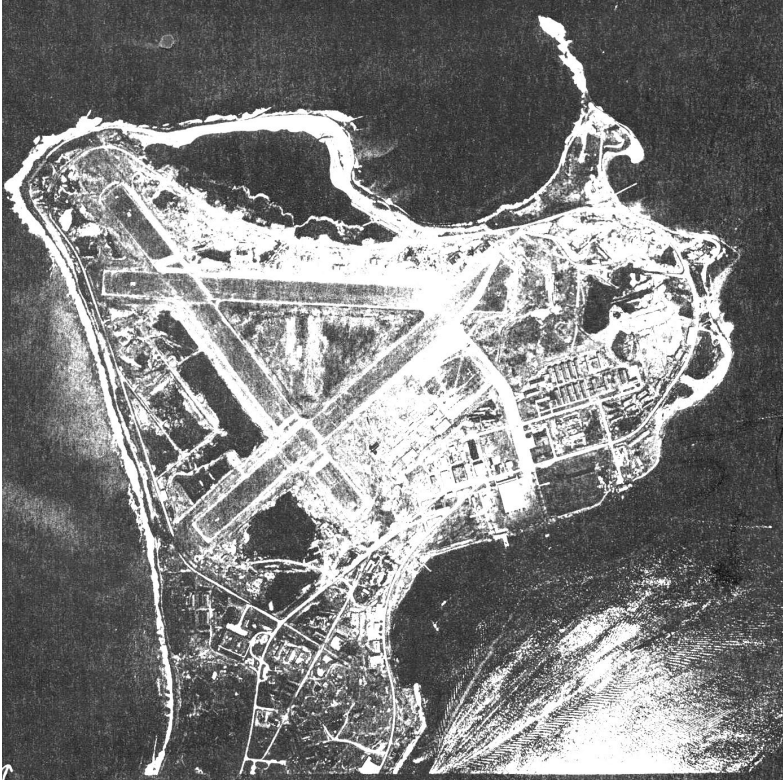


Figure 2: Aerial photograph of Argentina by RCAF, 3 May 1943.  
Source: File 321/004 (D20), Naval Historical Centre, Washington Navy Yard.

For much of the Cold War, Argentina was the headquarters of the Atlantic Barrier of air and sea patrols, but was also in the right “geographic position to control the Atlantic shipping lanes.”<sup>39</sup> At war’s end, operations at Argentina had been downsized, and Fort McAndrew was folded into the naval base (as the South Side), and the complex was reduced to the status of a US naval station. In 1959, its commanding officer reported that the “magnitude of operations have been greatly reduced since the end of the European war in May 1945, but have been steadily increasing during the past few years.”<sup>40</sup> The



Commander of Airborne Early Warning Wing Atlantic established his headquarters at Argentia and a top-secret listening station (the SOSUS system), which conducted oceanographic observation and collected acoustic data, was built there.<sup>41</sup> It was during this period of Cold War expansion that the 10-storey “Q” was constructed as a combined bachelor quarters.

The United States invested tens of millions of dollars to modernize and expand its Newfoundland bases in the 1950s. The expansion of Harmon Air Force Base in Stephenville, for example, aimed to meet its new mission requirement as a base for MB tanker squadrons and B-36 reconnaissance aircraft as well as interceptors. The airfield had initially been built to serve B-17 and C-54 aircraft, which now proved “totally inadequate” for “modern high-performance aircraft.”<sup>42</sup> In justifying the massive expenditure and resulting cost overruns to expand the runway to the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services, Colonel Stanley T. Wray, Assistant Deputy Director of the Directorate of Installations, insisted that the need for a 10,000-foot-long and 300-foot-wide runway was urgent: “In the event of war a base in this area figures prominently in the capability of the Strategic Air Command to execute a retaliatory strike, in the air defense of the Northeast Area, and the approaches to the United States, and also as an important link in the line of communications by MATS [Military Air Transport Service] on the northern route.”<sup>43</sup> Colonel Wray went on to note that the USAF had no alternative sites given the rugged terrain, weather, and cost.<sup>44</sup>

In Newfoundland, the US military was big business. Thousands of civilians found employment at the bases, either as permanent employees or as construction workers during periods of base expansion. In 1952, Major General L.P. Whitten, Commander of NEAC, told Newfoundland Premier Joseph R. Smallwood that there were 3,000 Newfoundlanders employed on the air bases along with 2,000 construction workers.<sup>45</sup> Another 1,900 civilian personnel worked at Argentia.<sup>46</sup> The overall civilian payroll in 1954 was more than \$22 million (US).<sup>47</sup> About 25 per cent of these base workers

were women, employed to work in base offices, messes, telephone exchanges, laundries, clinics, schools, and as cleaning staff. Quite likely, taken together, the bases represented one of the largest employers of female labour in the province at the time. The bases also purchased millions of dollars in local goods and services each year. “For good or ill,” wrote Premier Smallwood to the USAF, “our economic destiny is tied almost inextricably to your bases, their maintenance and expansion.”<sup>48</sup> What is interesting here is how differently the federal and provincial governments viewed the US bases. For Ottawa, the bases were viewed through the political lens of Canadian sovereignty. The bases were therefore approached as an inherited problem that needed to be contained. For St. John’s, however, the bases were viewed as important employers of Newfoundland labour and purchasers of Newfoundland goods and services. The two governments therefore worked at cross-purposes as the Canadian government sought to minimize base expansion, or even accelerate their closure, and the Newfoundland government encouraged their expansion.

**Table 1: Investment in USAF Bases in Newfoundland, 1940–1954 (US \$)**

Base	To 1944	1949–52	1953*	1954*	Total
Harmon	15,842,000	73,413,000	15,815,000	27,000,000	132,070,000
McAndrew	24,075,000	—	—	—	24,075,000
Pepperrell	25,608,000	4,889,000	2,049,000	5,400,000	37,946,000
Goose Bay	554,000	63,305,000	35,901,000	40,000,000	139,760,000
*Planned expenditures as of 1 December 1952. <sup>49</sup>					

Joseph Smallwood’s government was committed to the industrial modernization of Newfoundland.<sup>50</sup> The promotion of industrial megaprojects was combined with road-building and rural electrification in the 1950s and 1960s, along with the more controversial resettlement of isolated coastal communities. As Sean Cadigan has written, Smallwood promised Newfoundlanders “better lives.”<sup>51</sup> Smallwood’s goal was therefore nothing short of transforming “the province into a modern urban and industrial society dominated by

consumerism.”<sup>52</sup> These efforts to industrialize Newfoundland had a chequered history.<sup>53</sup> But, as Cadigan concluded, the promise of milk and honey eventually soured as the benefits of modernization were, at best, uncertain. By the 1960s, there were growing questions about these costly megaprojects, “sowing the seeds” for his own electoral demise in 1972.<sup>54</sup> The new Progressive Conservative government of Frank Moores sought to distance itself from Smallwood’s modernization efforts. The US base closings, when they happened, therefore unfolded in this politically charged environment.

### **Pepperrell Air Force Base and Reversionary Rights**

Perched on the outskirts of St. John’s, not far from the provincial legislature, the Pepperrell base — a “tidy collection of dull white buildings set on a rolling hill”<sup>55</sup> — comprised 1,635 acres of land, of which 250 acres was considered developed.<sup>56</sup> The initial decision to phase-down Pepperrell came in April 1958, only to be reversed in January 1959, and then actualized in 1961.<sup>57</sup> As we shall see, this hesitancy was due to a rapidly changing strategic situation and US frustration at Canadian refusal to let them secure rights to the nearby Torbay airport. Oddly for an air force base, Pepperrell had a naval dock but no airfield. The base was officially signed over to Canada in an exchange of notes in a ceremony in July 1961 in the office of the US Consul General in St. John’s, and the Stars and Stripes flag was lowered for the last time at Pepperrell a month later.

The decision to close the base originated in the Canadian government’s desire to redirect US military activity to more remote areas of the province. Writing in 1951 about US interest in a long-term lease of Torbay airport, A.D.P. Heeney, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs in Ottawa, admitted that he was “increasingly worried by the possible consequences to Canadian sovereignty.”<sup>58</sup> The Canadians no doubt understood that US legislation prevented their armed forces from building on foreign soil without first securing the provision of a long-term lease of at least 20 years, so the Canadian

cabinet agreed to the US request for additional space at Torbay but the proposed one-year agreement was terminable with only 30 days notification.<sup>59</sup> The Canadian rejection of a long-term lease at Torbay ensured that the US Air Force directed its resources to far-off Goose Bay and Harmon.<sup>60</sup>

Evidence of this political pressure can also be found in the archival records of the USAF, which reveal that the Canadians “consistently stated that they would not consider concluding any new long term arrangements and that they would not approve any substantial increase in the troop numbers in the vicinity of St. John’s.”<sup>61</sup> In April 1949, just a month after Newfoundland joined Canada, Major General S.E. Anderson, Director of Planning and Operations for the USAF, suggested that “Torbay had been his first choice for the new Very Heavy Bomber (VHB) base but that he had agreed to place it elsewhere for political reasons, Torbay being too near the capital city of St. John’s.”<sup>62</sup> The new VHB base went to Goose Bay instead. Further, Colonel Reuben Kyle Jr, Vice Commander of NEAC, reported in 1952 that recent conversation “indicates reluctance on the part of the Canadians to negotiate for expansion of the Torbay lease facilities. This necessitates consideration of an alternate location.”<sup>63</sup>

It is therefore hardly surprising that Pepperrell was the first leased base to close and be returned, but to whom? Under the Commission of Government, Newfoundland had been a British colony when the leased bases agreement was signed in 1940, so did the reversionary interest belong to the federal or provincial government? This became a point of some political contention between the two, so Newfoundland asked that the matter be referred to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1961 and the federal cabinet agreed.<sup>64</sup> But before the Supreme Court could give its opinion, the Premier of Newfoundland contacted Douglas Harkness, the federal Minister of National Defence, and proposed a joint and simultaneous takeover of Pepperrell.<sup>65</sup> Harkness was not initially enamoured by the idea,<sup>66</sup> but an out-of-court agreement was reached that divided the area, using the stream running through the leased area to demarcate the provincial and federal zones.<sup>67</sup>

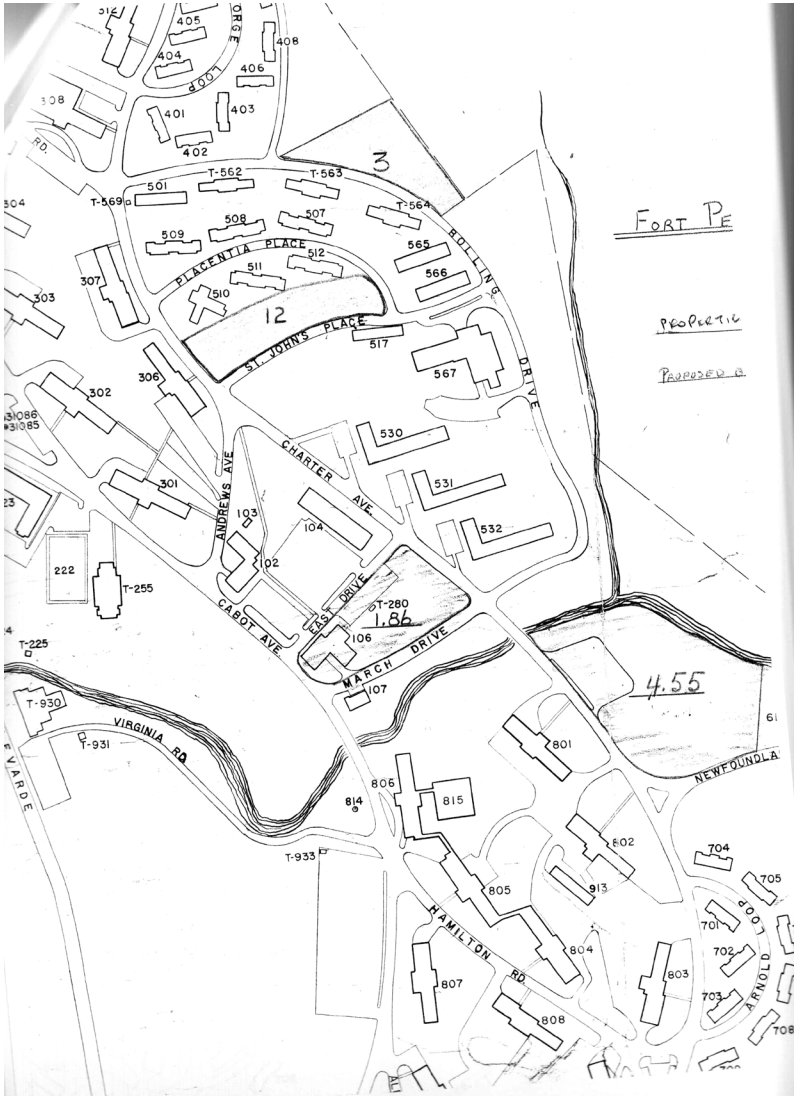


Figure 3: Fort Pepperell: division of jurisdiction. The stream runs through the centre of this plan into Quidi Vidi Lake with the federal zone above and the provincial area below it. Fort Pepperell. 21 March 1963. Annex "A" to Major General R.W. Moncel, Commanding Officer to Eastern Command to Army Headquarters, File: C-5022-5260/10 Part 2, Volume 5504, C8384/167, RG 24, Library and Archives Canada.

Given its modern facilities and local prestige, the Canadian armed forces coveted Pepperrell. As Christopher A. Sharpe and Jo Shawyer have shown, Canadian military facilities erected in St. John's during the war were built hurriedly and cheaply.<sup>68</sup> They were also scattered throughout the city. Pepperrell was far too big for Canada's reduced defence establishment in the city, but it would allow the various services to consolidate. In anticipation, a delegation of Canadian officers, representing all of the armed services, visited Pepperrell in October 1960. The main purpose of the visit was to become familiar with the installations, "form general opinions and to make a fair and reasonable assessment and computation of costs of maintenance and operation of the facility and to compare this estimate with the known current annual costs of operating Buckmaster's Field."<sup>69</sup> The Canadian government's inspection report found that the buildings at Pepperrell were in generally good shape, as they had been maintained to a "high standard" by the USAF.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the "buildings were in such a clean condition that one gained the impression that the previous tenant intended to return at an early date. Walls and woodwork have been well painted, are not broken or disfigured and show only the soiling of normal usage."<sup>71</sup> Instead of its strategic importance, Pepperrell's value was now calculated in terms of its urban infrastructure, including its impressive road network (8.2 miles of concrete asphalt and 8.81 miles of gravel), sidewalks (3,400 square yards), and water mains (9.3 miles).

That said, the delegation concluded that it "is obvious after even a cursory examination of the camp that more than sufficient space exists to meet DND [Department of National Defence] and DPW [Department of Public Works] needs." Buildings deemed essential to the operation of the armed forces were identified, as were those deemed suitable and desirable. Pepperrell's old Combined Ops Centre (Building 815) was reported to be intact "and contains maximum security vaults, elaborate operations room, full facilities are available in this building, it is reported to be connected by every conceivable means of cable communications with the mainland and has a direct link with Trans-Atlantic telephone cable."<sup>72</sup> Other special buildings included a

150-bed hospital. However, the report's principal author, F.D. Miller, Superintendent of Properties for the DND, felt it would be unethical for the Canadian government to convert it to other uses:

With the reported shortage of hospital accommodation it would appear reprehensible to use this building for other than a hospital, to raze it, or permit it to stand idle. Perhaps in a flight of sociological fantasy one might visualize this hospital under the joint custodial administration of the Federal and Provincial Departments of Health serving the people of Newfoundland's outports as a base hospital when coupled with a helicopter-type flying doctor ambulance service and Provincial health scheme.<sup>73</sup>

Various ideas were also in circulation about possible uses of former base buildings, ranging from hotel/motel accommodation, a minimum security jail, a manufacturing complex, or even a small experimental farm (as the USAF had maintained a dairy herd to supply the base). None of these came to fruition, at least in the short term.

Looking back, one can appreciate why the Canadian military yearned to move into modern Pepperrell. While orderly in appearance, Buckmaster's Field consisted of 30 acres of temporary wartime buildings that were increasingly inadequate. For their part, existing RCN facilities were reported to be in "serious disrepair." One of the navy's wharves was even "slipping into the harbour."<sup>74</sup> By contrast, the US Army Wharf in St. John's harbour, which, when built, had required the partial destruction of Battery Village, featured a modern 1,000-foot dock, two cranes, and four oil tanks. Pepperrell therefore offered the Canadian military a significant upgrade from its existing situation.

Initial federal planning for its zone abruptly changed in December 1963, however, when the Canadian cabinet decided to roll back defence spending, resulting in the closure of RCAF Torbay Station, largely terminating the Royal Canadian Navy's operations in St. John's, and reducing the ranks of the Reserves significantly.<sup>75</sup> This was

the beginning of major cuts in defence spending over the coming decade. Management of the former Pepperrell leased area, initially given to the RCN, was then transferred to the federal Department of Public Works.<sup>76</sup> These sudden changes raised doubts about the army units still stationed in St. John's: "If the other services withdraw, the primary reason for most Regular Army units in Newfoundland Area ceases."<sup>77</sup> The dream of a major combined military base in St. John's had come crashing down.<sup>78</sup>

The Newfoundland government, for its part, took over its sector on 1 March 1963. The provincial state moved a number of department operations into Pepperrell, including those for highways, fisheries, public works, civil defence, health, and education.<sup>79</sup> Other buildings were sold, or rented, for commercial or community use. In the next six months, a meat-processing plant was opened there, and eight barracks were handed over to the St. John's Housing Corporation.<sup>80</sup> The resolution of the federal-provincial conflict led to a flurry of requests for space or housing from business people and community groups like the Newfoundland Society for the Care of Crippled Children.

We get a strong sense from the archival records of the reorganization of space required in converting it back to civilian usage. Pepperrell AFB had been largely self-contained from the rest of the city, a place apart. Access to the base had been strictly controlled at its four gates. This had to change. "All gates have been removed from entrances, which are four in all, so the public can enter and leave as in any other part of the city," noted the *Daily News*.<sup>81</sup> All the buildings on the base were formerly heated by a central heating plant, and hot water was heated from steam from that plant. Electricity, water, sewerage, and telephone services had to be adapted and metres installed to measure individual usage. The limits of the City of St. John's were also extended to include the former base area.<sup>82</sup> There were limits, however, to the normalization of the area. The proposed location of an Unemployment Insurance Commission office in the federal zone, for example, raised security questions in the minds of DND representatives: "If this interest will involve entry



into the establishment by large numbers of unemployed persons, it is considered undesirable from a security aspect, or at least until the DND areas have been fenced.”<sup>83</sup>

Another matter raised in the reversion of Pepperrell to Canadian/Newfoundland control was its name. Newfoundland’s Premier urged the federal government to rename the area “Pleasantville,” its historic name. In correspondence with the federal government, Smallwood noted that the area had “always been known as ‘Pleasantville.’”<sup>84</sup> He went on to note that the province was actively engaged in restoring the historic association. For example, the 168 apartments to be built on the 700 and 800 blocks of the base (by the province) would be known as the “Pleasantville Apartments.”<sup>85</sup> Smallwood raised these points after E.B. Armstrong, the Deputy Minister of Defence, had subtly tried to dissuade him from a name-change, writing:

You will recall mentioning that the name “Fort Pepperrell” be changed to “Pleasantville” to perpetuate local references. This department takes no particular stand on this matter, although we feel any change in name would undoubtedly give rise to some difficulties as all our records and references are designated Fort Pepperrell. . . . It may be that by common usage of a name by the people of St. John’s the area will once again be known as Pleasantville, particularly if the playing field and park along Quidi Vidi Lake were referred to as “Pleasantville Park.”<sup>86</sup>

Since then, Pleasantville has firmly taken hold in the public’s imagination. The local Royal Canadian Legion branch adopted the name and much of the federal zone has been redeveloped by the Canada Lands Company, a federal Crown corporation responsible for disposing of surplus federal lands and properties, such as the “Pleasantville” residential neighbourhood of single-family homes and townhouses. The subsequent consolidation and modernization of the Canadian Forces Station, including the erection of a large new defence building, has meant the

demolition of many of the original US base buildings. Every time that the contractors dug a hole, they seemed to run into buried concrete and other surprises. According to the construction manager: "Finding one huge tank was fine. We could deal with it. But then we found a bunch of things all at once, including foundations and concreted-encased storm and sanitary sewers. As soon as we'd conquered one, we'd find another. It never seemed to end."<sup>87</sup> While surprises complicated new construction and inflated costs, they were hardly obstacles. Far more serious environmental issues eventually surfaced at Harmon and Argentia.

### **Community Survival after the Closure of Harmon**

The next US base to close was Harmon Air Force Base, on 31 December 1966. While the loss of more than 1,000 jobs in St. John's dealt an economic blow, it did not threaten the survival of Newfoundland's largest city. Not so Stephenville. The town had been a thriving agricultural centre before the Americans arrived, with a mainly French-speaking population of 1,000. As I showed in an earlier article on wartime Stephenville published in this journal, the base did not displace the community altogether.<sup>88</sup> Thereafter, the town and the base grew together. The loss of 3,000 military personnel and 500 dependants, not to mention 1,186 civilian jobs, dealt a shattering blow to the town of 8,000.<sup>89</sup> With "no economic base but the military," Stephenville had effectively been "stamped 'Made in USA.'"<sup>90</sup> Years later, Mayor Kevin Walsh recalled that this was the "hardest year in office because of the uncertainty and economic chaos that followed."<sup>91</sup> While the reversionary rights issue had not been resolved, the federal government had no desire to take over the former base. So, it agreed to a "quit claim" — a legal instrument used to transfer property interest — in favour of Newfoundland.<sup>92</sup>

Once again, the Newfoundland government responded energetically to the closure. Premier Smallwood held a cabinet meeting in Stephenville, reportedly the first one ever to be held outside of St. John's. His government intended to redevelop the area as an industrial

and commercial hub and quickly established an agency to manage its industrial future. From 1967 until 1987, the Harmon Corporation, a provincial Crown corporation, managed the former base.<sup>93</sup> It had comparable powers to a local improvement district and a workforce of 280, almost all of whom had previously worked for the Americans.<sup>94</sup> If the surrounding localities were “to survive as economically sound municipal entities, direct primary employment of approximately 3,500 in number must be provided in the next three or four years.”<sup>95</sup> Job creation was therefore an urgent goal. Having learned from the experience at Pepperrell, the consultants insisted that any government demands for space (explicitly mentioning the Canadian Armed Forces) should be kept to the “absolute minimum.”<sup>96</sup> Instead, they proposed a variety of possible industrial futures for Stephenville, ranging from a new fish-processing plant to a fertilizer plant, a small shipyard to repair fishing boats, a poultry hatchery, a bottling plant, and even an auto assembly plant. A hospital, junior college, and provincial government rental housing were also floated as ideas.



Figure 4: One of the homes expropriated to make way for Harmon Field.  
Source: Box 17-16S, GN 4-3, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador.

At Harmon, the Newfoundland government used the base facilities and the massive 10,000-foot runway (one of the longest in Canada) as “bait” to entice new business. These efforts largely failed for many reasons, especially Stephenville’s remote geographic location. However, the existence of underground oil tanks, contaminated soil, and toxic landfill made it difficult to redevelop parts of the former base. Remediation turned into a costly exercise. In all, 109 abandoned underground fuel storage tanks were found and the underground tanks and piping then had to be drained and contaminated soil removed. The Americans also buried household domestic waste, appliances, even cars and jeeps on the former base.<sup>97</sup> However, the full extent of the environmental mess left by the Americans only became apparent to residents 30 years after the base closed. An “environmental time bomb” is how Stephenville’s mayor described the situation.<sup>98</sup> But, at least, said one Environment Canada official: “We’re lucky — it’s not an Argentina.”<sup>99</sup> There, as we shall see shortly, the extent of the contamination problem was far larger.

In 1983, it was announced that the Harmon Complex would become an international trade zone, Canada’s first. Foreign goods would enter free from normal customs duties, facilitating re-exporting.<sup>100</sup> In the first year, however, no businesses were attracted to the zone.<sup>101</sup> Many of the companies that did come forward were angling for massive handouts such as a Florida-based company that proposed to build a plant in Stephenville for assembling and refurbishing planes in exchange for \$60 million from Newfoundland taxpayers.<sup>102</sup> While many hoped-for initiatives did not materialize “at a rate, and in the magnitude, that was promised in the days before the base closed,” there were some notable achievements.<sup>103</sup>

After the base closed, for example, Smallwood announced that Stephenville would be home to Newfoundland’s third paper mill, a linerboard mill, joining Corner Brook and Grand Falls. Smallwood had a long-standing relationship with John C. Doyle, an entrepreneur who had developed rights to develop iron ore in Labrador in the 1950s.<sup>104</sup> Smallwood and Doyle agreed to build the Labrador

linerboard operation in Stephenville with wood chips being shipped in from across the Strait of Belle Isle. Actual construction was delayed until 1971, however, and the mill only went into operation in 1973 with 400 local employees. Rising costs led the Newfoundland government to take it over as a Crown corporation, but it proved to be a financial disaster. As historian Sean Cadigan shows, there were allegations that Doyle defrauded the linerboard project, so he fled to Panama.<sup>105</sup> The mill ceased production in 1977, causing many to criticize Smallwood (who was no longer in politics). It could have ended there, but with the infusion of another \$200 million in tax benefits and the promise of a wood supply on the island itself, Abitibi Price purchased the shuttered plant, converting it to newsprint production; it operated for another 24 years.<sup>106</sup> Its final closure came at a time of industrial restructuring in Canada's forestry industry, which saw the Grand Falls mill also close.

The US base is still present in other ways, too. For example, 2016 was the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of Harmon Air Force Base and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the commissioning of the 99-year leased bases across Newfoundland. To mark the occasion, Stephenville organized a big celebration. This was nothing new. Starting in 1986, on the twentieth anniversary of the base's closing, the town has organized regular Harmon Field Days and has appealed for former US servicemen and families to "come home."<sup>107</sup> Most who do return have a family connection to Newfoundland.<sup>108</sup> Despite the continued demolition of old base buildings, much of the town still feels like a former US military base with its wartime base architecture. "Even now people refer to the base as the base," noted Deborah Coughlin, and its streets are named after US states. "Harmon" is everywhere: there is a Harmon car repair shop, theatre, convenience store, and golf club.

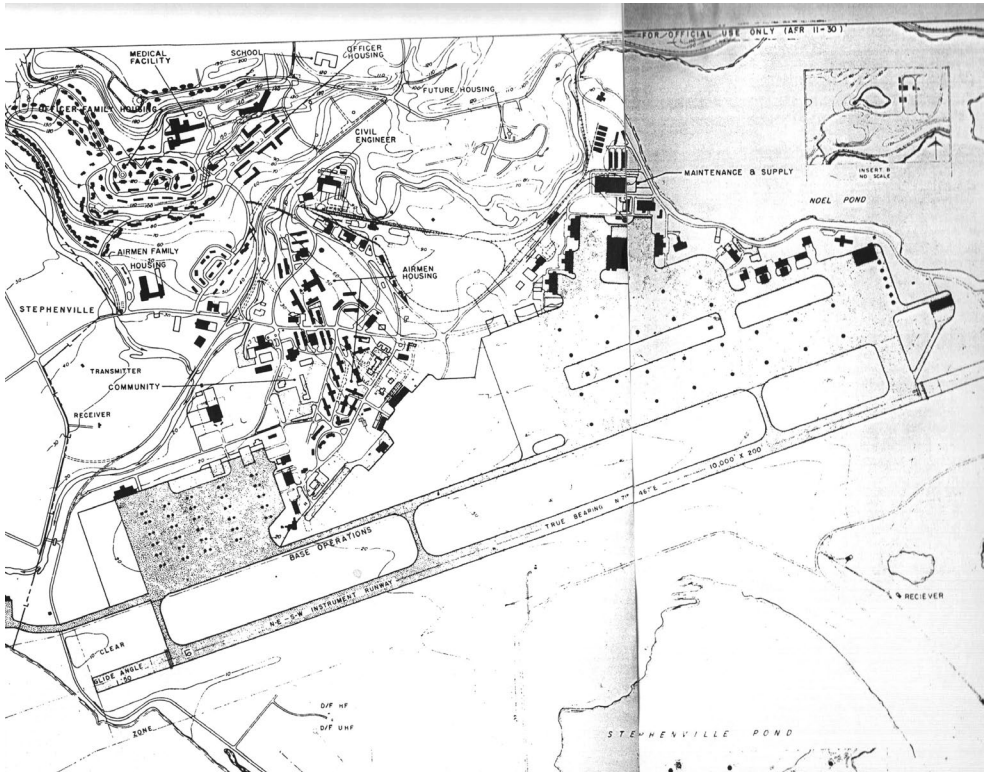


Figure 5: Harmon Air Force Base.

Source: Walter J. Schoefer, Managing Director, Bond Engineering Ltd, 1 March 1967, 3.08.041, Smallwood Papers, Centre for Newfoundland Studies.

## **The Ruination of the Argentia Naval Base**

Unlike the other US bases in Newfoundland, Argentia closed gradually between 1969 and 1994. The US Naval Station at Argentia was unusual insofar as few ships were posted there after World War II: “its role was a base for the Navy’s air arm to patrol the northwest Atlantic.” During the 1950s, four Argentia-based reconnaissance aircraft were constantly on picket duty between Newfoundland and the Azores.<sup>109</sup> By the 1970s, however, satellites were able to do a lot of this monitoring, rendering much of the base’s work redundant.<sup>110</sup> The final aviation squadron was withdrawn in 1969, and the three runways and control

tower were officially closed in 1975. Most base workers were laid off in 1970, when employment dropped from 935 to just 370.<sup>111</sup> The remaining operations were then consolidated in the relatively newer buildings on the South Side (originally the US Army's Fort McAndrew). And the North Side (the original Naval Operating Base that once occupied the entire Argentia Peninsula) was simply abandoned.

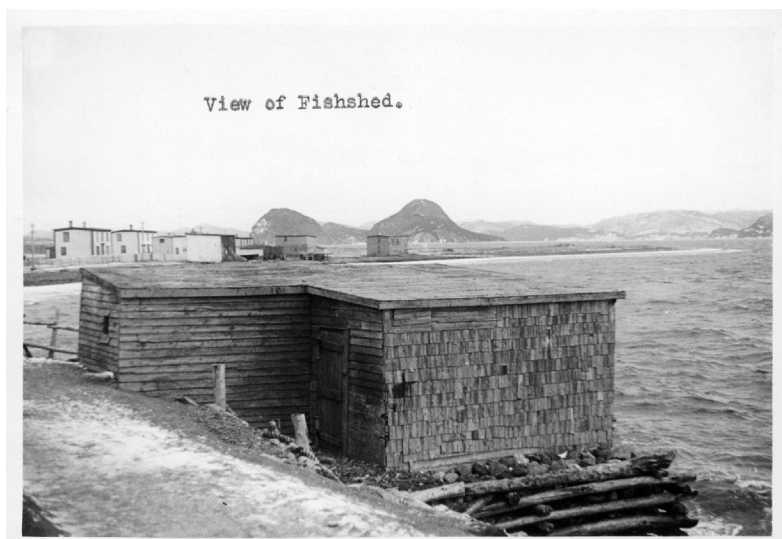


Figure 6: Argentia before the building of the US Naval Operating Base. Photograph taken as part of the expropriation process in 1941.

Source: GN 4-3, Box 3-1, Public Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The ruination of this military ghost town both horrified and fascinated the Newfoundland public. It had become a place where “barren fields are pock-marked by crumbling foundations and a graveyard of twisted scrap metal.”<sup>112</sup> The docks were in a state of disrepair, buildings in “tatters,” and grass had pushed its way through the runway asphalt.<sup>113</sup> Everywhere there were now “roads that lead to nowhere, or the concrete foundations of demolished buildings.”<sup>114</sup> For people from the area, the ruination of the North Side represented a betrayal. “Today the north side is a wasteland,” lamented the mayor of Placentia.<sup>115</sup> The North Side once had “tremendous facilities, much like Stephenville,” such as schools, recreational facilities,

laundries, a heating plant, housing, stores, and office buildings. But they were allowed to fall into ruin.<sup>116</sup>

So what happened? Why was the base allowed to waste? Initially, the expectation had been that the North Side would be transferred, “such as was the case with Harmon, Pepperrell, and Goose Bay.”<sup>117</sup> However, the United States insisted on the right to re-enter the property with 30-day notice.<sup>118</sup> The United States also wanted to exclude Eastern Bloc shipping from the area, confirming rumours that the US “strongly objected to Canada’s open port policy for East Bloc countries” and did not want enemy vessels to come “dangerously close to the sensitive Argentinia base.”<sup>119</sup> But it was the insistence on the right to rapid re-entry that thwarted redevelopment efforts. As Newfoundland’s Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, John Crosbie, noted: “Obviously, it is impossible to entice anyone to make an investment in that area or to establish a business or industry there under such a condition.”<sup>120</sup> Negotiations to reopen the area fully to redevelopment dragged on for years. The conversion of Harmon and Pepperrell had cost a great deal, so Newfoundland was ambivalent about taking on yet another former US military base. Not surprisingly, people in the area were furious and frustrated — but who to blame? The Naval Historical Centre at the Washington Navy Yard in the District of Columbia yielded an interesting January 1972 memorandum from US Consul General, Richard Straus, confirming that Canadian efforts to revitalize the North Side had failed miserably. Under constant attack, the Canadian chair of the ineffectual Argentinia Task Force wanted to wind things up quickly. According to the Consul General, it had “used a lot of money with little results; agricultural projects have so far all come to naught.”<sup>121</sup> Despite this failure, the diplomat insisted that the Argentinia Task Force still served the interests of the United States as it “has given us a very convenient ‘lightning rod’ in relation to the local media and public.”<sup>122</sup> Everyone was so busy blaming the Argentinia Task Force that nobody paid much attention to the departing Americans.

The ruination of the North Side represented a clear warning about what might happen to the South Side when the final closure was



announced. “We do not want a repeat of history” became a constant refrain.<sup>123</sup> In September 1993, more than 500 people gathered for a public meeting in Placentia on the future of Argentia. The loss of another 220 jobs would devastate the area. The Argentia base closure came at the worst of times for the area. Newfoundland’s cod moratorium of 1992 was having a devastating effect on coastal communities, including those in Placentia Bay where two local fish plants closed with the loss of 350 on-shore jobs. Four years earlier, a phosphorous plant closed in nearby Long Harbour, devastating that community. With the closing of the US Naval Station at Argentia, the area now faced an unemployment rate of nearly 75 per cent.<sup>124</sup> Of course, what the US Navy’s moral and legal obligations were to civilian workers is a matter of some debate. This is likewise true when other major employers close down.

Area newspapers were filled with stories about angry civilian base workers fighting to get a decent severance package. The US offered laid-off employees two weeks’ pay for the first year of service and one week for each year thereafter to a maximum of 30 weeks or \$25,000 per person.<sup>125</sup> By contrast, the US gave American civilians displaced by base closures one week per year for the first 10 years of service, two weeks’ pay for each additional year, plus a bonus of 10 per cent of the total amount.<sup>126</sup> US workers were also eligible for relocation assistance, job retraining, and so on.<sup>127</sup> “They can take their flag and shove it where the sun doesn’t shine,” snapped Ken Browne, chair of the Argentia Civilian Workers association.<sup>128</sup>

In protest, two dozen civilian workers drove to St. John’s to demonstrate outside the gates of Government House during the visit of the US ambassador. The workers’ committee also paid for a full-page advertisement in the local newspaper, addressed directly to the ambassador. “We are citizens of Canada,” it began.<sup>129</sup> The advertisement then noted that the US had recently approved a generous program of support for base communities facing dislocation in the United States: “Sir, we were not occupied in World War II, however, were forced from our land to assist the war effort. . . . We have done our part

and now demand you do your part and treat us with no less respect and consideration as you would afford a domestic US Base. In the words of President Clinton, make sure the 'Base closes right.'<sup>130</sup>

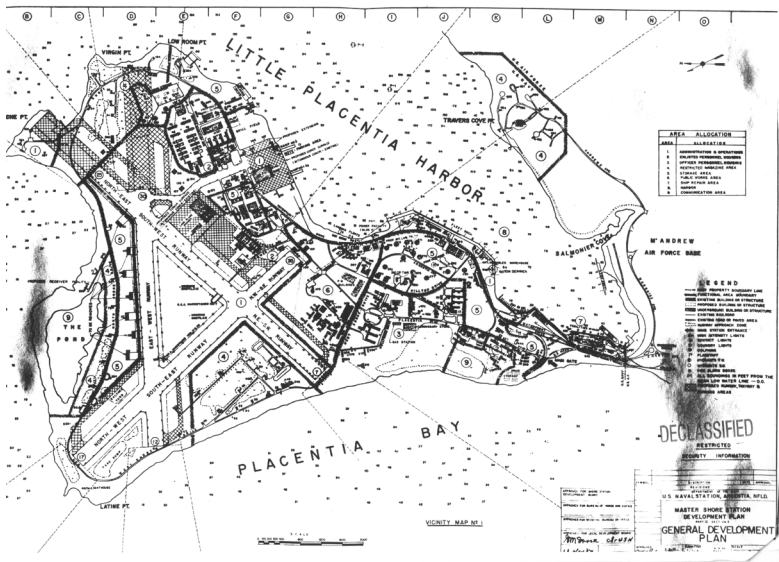


Figure 7: Master Shore Station Development Plan, US Naval Station, Argentina.  
Source: Naval History Centre, Washington Navy Yard.

As happened earlier with the Argentina Task Force, the Argentina Management Authority (AMA), created to revitalize the local economy after the 1994 base closure, found itself subject to considerable public criticism for the lack of progress. Few jobs had been created and rumours circulated about how the \$5 million that the AMA received from the Canadian government was being spent.<sup>131</sup> The issue had heated up in the municipal election when the incumbent mayor — who was also chair of the AMA — was defeated. A variety of studies and considerable market research had been undertaken. The committee had also given a \$40,000 loan to a glove factory, but it went bust soon thereafter. Other projects similarly didn't pan out. "We just went through 54 years as a one-industry town (the naval base), so now our emphasis is on diversification," noted AMA general manager Ken Browne.<sup>132</sup> While the directors of the AMA put their cards on the

table at a big public meeting in October 1996, diffusing some of the anger, dissatisfaction persisted.<sup>133</sup>

Making matters worse, the US Navy had left a “witch’s brew of toxic wastes.”<sup>134</sup> As soon as the Stars and Stripes came down for good at Argentia, local media speculated about the dangers that lurked beneath the soil. When asked, departing US Navy CO, Captain Scott Thompson, dismissed the rumours, saying: “There is a lot of folklore and mythology about the environment problems here.”<sup>135</sup> There had been a lot of rumours in circulation about toxic chemicals going back to the 1970s, when some health-care workers suggested that the cancer rate was higher in the area than elsewhere.<sup>136</sup> One source even suggested that some medical people used to informally call Argentia “cancer town.”<sup>137</sup>

A preliminary environmental assessment of former base lands, conducted in 1994, found that nearby residents were not in immediate risk. That said, it did find heavy metals, as well as PCBs, in landfill sites.<sup>138</sup> Underground oil tanks had been leaking and PCBs from buried electrical equipment and transformers had been seeping into Placentia Bay. Landfills were filled with disposed machinery of all kinds. “Large chunks of the Argentia military base are an environment mess,” editorialized the St. John’s *Evening Telegram* in September 1994.<sup>139</sup> The map produced by the resulting environmental assessment of the former base lands was “alive with a rainbow of colours.” Indeed, “[c]anary yellow, the most prevalent, represents concentrations of heavy metals such as lead and mercury. Blood red depicts PCBs at elevated levels” and so on.<sup>140</sup> Pollution had therefore quickly emerged as a significant issue at Argentia, clouding its future redevelopment.<sup>141</sup> “Not exactly a wonderland,” concluded one front-page story.<sup>142</sup>

Yet Argentia’s status as a “brownfield” site was one of the things that made it suitable for a new smelter to process nickel from the proposed mine at Voisey’s Bay, Labrador.<sup>143</sup> It won the “smelter sweepstakes” in 1996 when the Voisey’s Bay Nickel Company (a subsidiary of Inco) announced that its new smelter would be located there.<sup>144</sup> Construction was delayed, however, until Aboriginal land claims and royalty issues could be settled.<sup>145</sup> As time dragged on,

doubt and fear took hold. If it wasn't built, whispered one local business woman, "there's going to be nothing here."<sup>146</sup> In June 2002, the company announced that an agreement had been reached with the provincial government on a plan to develop the nickel deposit and build a demonstration plant at Argentia. That demonstration plant was only the first step. Ultimately however, the location of the larger smelter had to be moved to nearby Long Harbour, as Argentia turned out to be ill-suited for handling the chemical waste produced.

While the naval base itself has largely vanished, Argentia/Placentia has sought to generate tourist revenue with the "Festival of the Flags" that memorializes the Atlantic Charter of August 1941, when US President Franklin Roosevelt met British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in Placentia Bay — making the area a "sacred spot."<sup>147</sup> A Museum of the Atlantic Allies was also developed in the 1990s. The global significance of the Argentia base was "irrefutable," according to John E. Tunbridge, who wrote a 2004 article on the heritage potential of the 99-year leased bases.<sup>148</sup> That Argentia is also a major ferry terminal to the Canadian mainland (Sydney, Cape Breton), which brings thousands of people through the area each year, made heritage development especially attractive. Bernie O'Reilly, a civilian employee at the Argentia Naval Station, was therefore premature when he lamented that "We'll no longer see the Stars and Stripes or hear the Star Spangled Banner."<sup>149</sup> As yet, these efforts have created few jobs or contributed much to the preservation of the base infrastructure.

## **Conclusion**

The Newfoundland base closings occurred from 1961 until 1994, a period that saw considerable change in how Canadians viewed their economy and the role of the state. When Pepperrell and Harmon closed in 1961 and 1966, respectively, the activist state was at its apex. Because of its geographic location on the outskirts of the Newfoundland capital of St. John's, Pepperrell was quickly occupied by the expanding public service and the remnants of the Canadian defence

establishment in the city. The only delay was the legal tussle between the federal and provincial governments over reversionary rights, with agreement in the end dividing the US base between them. While the growing public sector reoccupied parts of Harmon in Stephenville, converting base buildings into public housing and a college, for example, much of the base was underused or left abandoned. The principal concern, however, was the urgent need to find jobs to replace some of the thousands laid off as a direct or indirect result of the base closing. Joey Smallwood's efforts to industrialize the area were of mixed success, with the Labrador linerboard fiasco eventually turning into a success story with Abitibi Price making newsprint.<sup>150</sup>

Writing in 1994, Peter Fenwick reflected on life in Stephenville without the United States military. "It was a desperate time," he recalled.<sup>151</sup> But the timing of the 1966 closure proved lucky for the town as the 1960s was a period of state expansion and activism: "the Smallwood government had an activist, job-creating mindset that helped the Bay St. George area get on its feet in short order." While the Smallwood government has been criticized for its modernization schemes, it did not hesitate to use the power of the provincial state to promote the redevelopment of former base lands. The failure to otherwise redevelop the Stephenville base after the Americans had left was not for a want of trying. The residents of the Argentia area were not so lucky. Optimism in state intervention in the economy had waned generally, and the huge financial cost of redeveloping Pepperrell and Harmon worked against similar action in Argentia. "There won't be any wholesale government rescue operation this time," Fenwick concluded in 1994.<sup>152</sup> Fenwick was proved right, as the Argentia base fell into ruin.

Christopher Pratt, one of Canada's premier painters, produced a series of paintings on the ruined naval base. Inspired in part by a summer job he had at the base in the 1950s, Pratt ended the series with *Argentia: The Ruins of Fort McAndrew: After the Cold War*. Painted in 2013, the ruined control tower at Argentia is now part of the National Gallery of Canada's permanent collection. Geometrically the painting

is typical of his work, evoking the end of the Cold War and its haunting afterlife in today's Newfoundland.<sup>153</sup>



Figure 8: Christopher Pratt's *Argentina: The Ruins of Fort McAndrew: After the Cold War* is part of the National Gallery of Canada collection.

## Notes

- 1 Janice Stuckless, "Blast to the Past," *Downbomber* 12, 7 (Dec. 1999), 1; John Cheeseman, "Goodbye to the Q," *Evening Telegraph*, 7 Nov. 1999.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 1.
- 3 Quoted in Cheeseman, "Goodbye to the Q."
- 4 John Cheeseman, "The 'Q': One Man's Memories," in Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), newspaper clipping file for Argentina (n.d., 1999).
- 5 Bob Benson, "Down She Comes," *Telegram*, 7 Nov. 1999, 1.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 To help Britain at this critical juncture, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt needed to sidestep the American neutrality laws and the power of the US Congress. The "exchange" of surplus materials provided him with political cover. The British, however, were concerned that a too one-sided deal would hurt British public opinion in wartime. This, and the racially infused desire of Newfoundland and Bermuda not to be associated with the black colonies

of the Caribbean, led to a last-minute discursive distinction. The leased areas in Newfoundland and Bermuda were to be “freely” given and so technically not part of the “trade.” That said, they were all part of the same diplomatic exchange of notes, dated 2 September 1940, and the subsequent US Leased Bases Agreement made no distinction whatsoever between “traded” and “gifted” leased bases. It made no difference. Nor did any of the correspondence consulted in the US or British Archives reveal any tangible difference. And yet, in conversation, some continue to insist that Newfoundland had no part in the destroyers-for-bases deal. This, too, I would argue, is a legacy of race and empire: the racial hierarchy of white Dominions and black Crown colonies. See Steven High, *Base Colonies in the Western Hemisphere* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), especially the introduction and first chapter. For more on the bases agreement itself, see Peter Neary, “Newfoundland and the Anglo-American Leased Bases Agreement of 27 March 1941,” *Canadian Historical Review* 67, 4 (1986); Charlie Whitham, “On Dealing with Gangsters: The Limits of British ‘Generosity’ in the Leasing of Bases to the United States, 1940–1941,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 7, 3 (1996), 589–630.

- 8 On hemispheric defence in World War II, see High, *Base Colonies in the Western Hemisphere*, chapter 1.
- 9 “The Big Deal,” *Time Magazine* (16 Sept. 1940).
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Hanson W. Baldwin, “Problems of Defending Hemisphere Are Many,” *New York Times*, 2 Jan. 1940, 70.
- 12 High, *Base Colonies in the Western Hemisphere*; Steven High, ed., *Occupied St. John’s: A Social History of a City at War* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010).
- 13 See, for example, Steven High, “From Outport to Outport Base: The American Occupation of Stephenville, 1940–1945,” *Newfoundland Studies* 18, 1 (2002), 84–113.
- 14 Humphrey Walwyn, Governor of Newfoundland, to Secretary of State Viscount Addison (Dominion Office). 15 Oct. 1945, CO 971/21/7, File 81868, British National Archives.
- 15 The degree to which the US bases influenced Newfoundland culture

- may be overstated, according to Jeff Webb, as Newfoundlanders had a long association with the United States. Jeff Webb, "Gate Keeping and Newfoundland Popular Culture," in High, ed., *Occupied St. John's*, 191–219. For more on the cultural influence of the US bases, see Jeff Webb, "VOUS — Voice of the United States: The Armed Forces Radio Service in Newfoundland," *Journal of Radio Studies* 2, 1 (2004), 87–99; David Mackenzie, "A North Atlantic Outpost: The American Military in Newfoundland, 1941–1945," *War and Society* 22, 2 (2004), 51–74.
- 16 J.R. Smallwood quoted in Adelaide Leitch, "Business on the US Base," *Canadian Business* 26 (May 1953), 44.
- 17 For more on the influx of Canadian service personnel during the war, see High, ed., *Occupied St. John's*, especially the chapters from Christopher A. Sharpe and A.J. Shawyer, Paul Collins, and my own; Paul Collins, "'First Line of Defence': The Establishment and Development of St. John's, Newfoundland as the Royal Canadian Navy's Premier Escort Base in the Second World War," *Northern Mariner* 16, 3 (2006), 15–32.
- 18 "Latest Batch of Base Closings Brings Prime Sites to Industry," *Industrial Development* (Sept./Oct. 1976), 2–4. For the politics of US base closures, see David S. Sorenson, *Shutting Down the Cold War: The Politics of Military Base Closure* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); Lily J. Goren, *The Politics of Military Base Closings: Not In My District* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003). For more on the contemporary procedures for military base closures within the US itself, see David S. Sorenson, *Military Base Closure: A Reference Handbook* (New York: Praeger, 2006). For a wider discussion of military geographies, see Rachel Woodward, *Military Geographies* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004). There is a relatively small scholarship on military base closures in Canada. See, for example, Lily J. Goren and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "The Comparative Politics of Military Base Closure," *Canadian-American Public Policy* 43 (2000).
- 19 William J. Sheehan, Director of the Office of Economic Adjustment of the US Department of Defense, *Industrial Development* (May/June 1980), 19–20.
- 20 "Newfoundland Bases: US Forces Big Help to Economy," *Globe and Mail*, 26 Feb. 1958.



- 21 Ken S. Coates and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North* (Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers, 2008); P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert, *The Canadian Forces and Arctic Sovereignty: Debating Roles and Requirements, 1968–1974* (Brantford, Ont.: Laurier Centre, 2010); Timothy Barney, *Mapping the Cold War: Cartography and the Framing of the America's International Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); David J. Bercuson, "SAC vs Sovereignty: The Origins of the Goose Bay Lease, 1946–1952," *Canadian Historical Review* 70, 2 (1989); Sean Maloney, "The Missing Essential Part Emergency Provision of Nuclear Weapons for RCAF Air Defence Command, 1961–1964," *Canadian Military History* 23, 1 (2014), 33–70.
- 22 USAF fighter interceptors were assigned to Goose Bay in late 1952. C.F. Dreyer, Colonel, to Director of Installations, File: Labrador 1952, Classified, Box 375, RG 341, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
- 23 George Hees, Minister of Transport, to George R. Pearkes, Minister of National Defence, 3 Oct. 1960, File S0195-40, Vol. 5911, RG 25, Library and Archives Canada (LAC); Paper of Understanding between Department of Transport and Department of National Defence — Routine Strategic Air Command High Level Flights Over Canada [1960], File S0195-40 (pt. 4.2), Vol. 5911, RG 25, LAC.
- 24 The mission of NEAC was to: (1) defend the region, especially US facilities and the northeastern approaches to North America; (2) provide air base logistics and communications support to Strategic Air Command units operating from or staging through NEAC bases; (3) provide air base transient services as well as logistical support to air transport operations; (4) support the movement of USAF units and replacement personnel heading overseas; (5) support Allied forces in the area; and (6) assist in the anti-submarine operations being directed out of Argentina. G. F. McGuire, Colonel, USAF, Executive, Directorate of Operations to Commanding General Northeast Air Command, NYC, "Organization and Mission of the Northeast Air Command," 19 Dec. 1950, File 9060-112/528, Vol. 2, Vol. 4054, RG 24, LAC.

- 25 The Cuban Missile Crisis was triggered when Cuba invited the Soviet Union to locate medium-range nuclear weapons on its soil. This was unacceptable to the United States, which blockaded the island to stop the transfer. War was only averted when a Soviet convoy turned back.
- 26 Homer Bigart, "US Asks Build-Up of Jets in Canada," *New York Times*, 30 May 1963, 1.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Raymond B. Blake, "The Old Problem in a New Province: Canadian Sovereignty and the American Bases in Newfoundland, 1948–1952," *American Review of Canadian Studies* (1993), 183–201.
- 29 Vol. 21,052, RG 24, LAC.
- 30 Peter Neary, "Newfoundland and the Anglo-American Leased Bases Agreement of 27 March 1941," *Canadian Historical Review* 67, 4 (1986); Steven High, "The Racial Politics of Criminal Jurisdiction in the Aftermath of the Anglo-American 'Destroyers-for-Bases' Deal, 1940–1950," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 32, 3 (2004), 77–105.
- 31 7 July 1949, McGrath and Furlong (lawyers) to American Consul W. Garland Richardson. Secretary of State, PJBD, Base Files 1946–52, File Newfoundland Bases — Jurisdiction (1949), Box 23, RG 59, NARA; see also "MP Wounds Newfoundlander in Leg," *Evening Telegram*, 13 July 1949.
- 32 Julian F. Harrington, American Minister, to William Snow, Division of British Commonwealth Affairs, Department of State, Washington, 14 Oct. 1949, Secretary of State, PJBD Base File, 1942–52, File: Newfoundland Bases (Oct./Dec. 1949), Box 22, RG 59, NARA.
- 33 2 Mar. 1950, Mr. Labouisse, BNA, to Mr. Perkins, IUR, Secretary of State, PJBD — Base File, 1946–52, File Newfoundland Bases (Jan./June 1950), Box 23, RG 59, NARA.
- 34 2 Aug. 1950, Memorandum on "Newfoundland Bases," Secretary of State, PJBD — Base File, 1946–52, File Newfoundland Bases (Jan./June 1950), Box 23, RG 59, NARA.
- 35 External Affairs Telegram to Canadian Embassy in Washington, DC, 5 Mar. 1960, File S0193-40 pt. 4.1, Vol. 5911, RG 25, LAC.
- 36 The US assured Canada that, while on the ground, the "cargoes of complete nuclear weapons packed for shipment in storage containers

- will be under the constant surveillance of highly skilled and experienced loadmaster,” and that they will not be off-loaded in Canada. Canadian Embassy, Washington, to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 7 Mar. 1960, File S0193-40 pt 4.1, Vol. 5911, RG 25, LAC.
- 37 John Clearwater’s *US Nuclear Weapons in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1999) notes that the US stockpiled MK-57 nuclear depth charges at Argentia, to be used by naval patrol aircraft against Soviet submarines. See also John Cheeseman, “Argentia in the atomic age,” *Charter* (31 Jan. 2000), 1.
- 38 Rob Antle, “Nukes in Newfoundland,” *Express*, 15 Apr. 1998, 1; 22 Mar. 1960; 31 Jan. 1961. Pepperrell Air Force Base, Vol. 6176, RG 2, LAC.
- 39 Raymond Daniel, “US Troop Moves Upset St. John’s,” *New York Times*, 15 June 1958, 6.
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