CANADIAN ARMY paratroopers deplaning from de Havilland Canada Twin Otter during evaluation.

Military

Twin Otter with the army

De Havilland of Canada's Twin Otter appeared briefly in Canadian Army garb during an evaluation of the aircraft for the military tactical transport role recently. The trials, held at Rivers, Manitoba, indicated the Twin Otter's suitability for a variety of military duties. Paratroops were dropped from the aircraft, and it was used for the landing of troops and cargo into short improvised airstrips. Ten parachutists were dropped from 1,500 ft at 65 knots, from both rear doors, and a lift of nine men parachuted using the starboard door only. There were some minor problems, but the conclusion was that the Twin Otter was well suited for this role.

It was determined the aircraft can accommodate 13 battle-ready troops, using the nose and rear luggage compartments for equipment, and is compatible for ground handling, with all standard military vehicles. Other plus point observations included: (a) STOL characteristics very impressive. Experienced pilots would be able to accomplish take-off and landings in very restricted areas. (b) Aircraft very manoeuvrable at slow speeds. Radius of turn very small with fast response to ailerons. (c) Quiet running on ground, an asset in tactical area. (d) Excellent lift-weight ratio both in normal and one engine out. (e) Good visibility forward and down, both in cockpit and cabin. (f) Wide track undercarriage with light footprint, plus nosewheel and tail bumper, make it an excellent aircraft for operation from improvised strips. (g) A good instrument platform. In summing up, a very simple and basic aircraft, ideal for the military environment.

The Twin Otter is already in demand as a military transport in Latin America, the Caribbean and in Europe. It is in use by the army, air force and navy of Argentina, and is also in service in Norway, Jamaica, Chile, Paraguay and Peru. Demonstration programs are also in hand at a number of U.S. military bases, follow the recent military sales promotion agreement signed between DHC and the Grumman Corp.

Arrow rumor quashed again

The rumor that a secretly preserved Avro Arrow might still be around flared up again last month, only to be denied by Dr. David M. Baird, director of the National Museum of Science and Technology. However, he says that although none of the Arrow supersonic interceptors survived the cutting torch when then Prime Minister John Diefenbaker ordered them to be scrapped in 1959, he believes there may be enough surviving pieces scattered around the country to build a whole plane.

Airports

● Courtenay, British Columbia, now has its own 2,000 ft hard-packed gravel runway, and it is soon to be black-topped. The adjoining river provides a sheltered seaplane harbour, and mooring floats are next on the city councils agenda. The story could well inspire other small cities and towns in Canada.

Some of the Comox Flying Club members were hangar-flying one wet Saturday afternoon, bemoaning the fact that the "action" was curtailed because their clubhouse and the tower were on the property of a Canadian Forces Base. The proximity of jet trainers limited most flying to the weekends. They needed an airstrip of their own.

Eric Franklin and several club members scanned the nearby terrain with the idea of buying some farm land for the purpose, but this proved too expensive. Finally, the group of business-men-fliers approached the city of Courtenay and asked for a gift of some land, which they would clear themselves and build a strip to be turned over to the city. They persuaded the city council that the field would improve tourist trade as well as help local flying groups. From their own point of view, the proximity of the piece of land selected to the tower five miles away was ideal. The Comox Valley Airpark was born.

The club members formed work crews, and with chain saws, axes, and hours of work, hand-carved a 1,500 foot runway from the swampy and forested area. They borrowed money for the hire of a bulldozer, selling timber to help pay off the loan, and soon had their first fly-in, on a rough but useable field.

Impressed by their efforts, the city council of Courtenay voted the sum of $1,200 over a period of three years, to extend the airpark strip to its present 2,000 ft length, blacktop the tie-down area, and add refueling facilities.

Not all hangar-flying is this productive. But it shows what can be done for aviation in Canada when the smaller cities and flying clubs get together to change ideas into ideals. END

Kelowna airport modernized

Kelowna Airport, owned and operated by the City of Kelowna, B.C., with assistance from the federal Department of Transport, has been improved and modernized at a cost of about $755,000. The terminal complex consists of a $475,000 terminal building and maintenance serv-