

Playing in the snow in wartime Gander

I was extremely happy to be able to recently get this rare crest from wartime Gander. The colours are really bright, as though it was hardly used. But when one comes to think of it, there is no reason for it to be worn and used! This is clearly indicated as 1944-45 and since the Second World War ended in the summer of 1945, pretty much all those people susceptible to wear it would probably have been long gone before the following winter.



The badge was made by "Crest Craft" in Saskatoon and it is interesting to note that the name was added with an inked rubber stamp – though I imagine that with computerization, some people today probably might not even know what a rubber stamp is!

In correspondence and reviews of Gander from the 1940s, winter was not necessarily the favourite season for many people, especially the Americans who came from the deep south. But skiing from what would now be the Trans-Canada highway down the slopes towards Gander Lake was highly popular. Here is a photo from the inside cover of the RCAF magazine "Gander" dated mid-winter 1945:



In the photo below, from page 22 of the same magazine, here is a photo of someone who may have found the winter a bit more cumbersome.



Because the crest is RCAF, I included only photos from an RCAF magazine. It is interesting to note however that it is evident from USAAF magazines that even though the Americans regularly complained about Gander's winter weather, they literally owned the slopes down to the lake.

Just before the war, some civilians were adepts of cross-country skiing as can be seen below. The names are given as Radcliffe and wife, Mataffart Goung and Hal Pattison, Gander's first airport manager.

