

700 (City of Edmonton) Wing

Royal Canadian Air Force Association



JETSTREAM

Issue 22, August 2020



Wing Reflections

This issue of the 700 Wing Jetstream reflects on a Life Membership Award, COVID-19 implications, a story about 408 2nd WW by the Numbers, J.A.D. McCurdy Trophy, 412 Squadron VIP Story



Next Meeting – To Be Determined

We Continue to Move Forward, Part 2

We mentioned it before in our previous Jetstream issue, the world has been dramatically changed by the events of the day. The 700 Wing as with other organizations, businesses and governments are all impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As per orders from our Chief Medical Officers and the National Executive Council of the RCAF Association in Ottawa, our Wing has ceased all meetings and activities until further notice.

In dramatic fashion the events of the day, events, meetings, air travel, supplies, entertainment, education and social distancing even within family environments have an effect on all of us. Alberta has seen a spike in COVID cases over the last few weeks putting a delay to Phase 3 of the AHS plan.

Only one activity will take place during Aviation Week, September 13-20. The Battle of Britain Presentation on Thursday, September 17. We regret to say the Battle of Britain Parade, September 20, has been cancelled due to the implications of COVID-19 pandemic and no participation of air cadets at this parade.

We hope for brighter days on the horizon.

Calendar

Calendar of events for the 700 Wing - 2020 .02
(2020-2021 is yet to be determined)



Air Cadet Museum	.04
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VIP Ops with 412 Squadron	.12



Calendar 2020 - 2021

Tentative calendar for planning the upcoming year

700 Wing Calendar for 2020-2021

Wednesday	September 16, 2020	Stone Laying Ceremony, Wednesday, 7 PM AAMA Parking Lot, social after in museum (<i>Postponed to 2021</i>)
Thursday	September 17, 2020	Battle of Britain 80th Commemorative Dinner (<i>postponed to Sept 2021</i>) Battle of Britain Presentation, 7 PM AAMA Event Hall (<i>moved from Sept 15</i>)
Sunday	September 20, 2020	Battle of Britain Parade, Sunday, 10 AM AAM Parking Lot, (<i>cancelled</i>)
Saturday	September 26, 2020	AGM, Alberta Aviation Museum, EVENT HALL, 2:00 PM.
Wednesday	November 11, 2020	Remembrance Day (<i>yet to be determined</i>)
Regular Meeting dates: 2 p.m. Meeting; 4 p.m. Speaker; 5 p.m. Dinner		

700 Wing Executive 2019 - 2020

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson	David Jackson
Vice-Chairperson	Tom Sand
Treasurer	Nick Nimchuk
Membership	Sylvia Loewen
Secretary	Vacant
Communications	Brian Andrus
Director at Large	John King

APPOINTMENTS

Immediate Past Chair	Erwin Loewen
Chaplain	Ray Olsen
Aviation Memorial Chair	Sylvia Loewen
Casino Chair	Brian Andrus
Air Cadet Liaison	Dawna Morgan
408 Sqn Liaison	John King
Memorial Garden	Joe Twyman
GM Air Cadet Museum	Tom Sand
Kipnes/Veterans	Bob Whitley
EAHS/AAMA Liaison	Bart West
Battle of Britain Parade	vacant
Regalia	vacant

Website/
Memorial Database vacant

Contact information for Executive
found on Page 12

www.facebook.com/700wing
www.700wing.ca

Special Thanks to Our Editors
Sylvia and Erwin Loewen
Published by Brian Andrus

Due to COVID-19 the 700 Wing Calendar for
2020-2021 has yet to be determined.



Our members will be advised once the year events
have been finalized.



Next Regular 700 Wing Meeting

- Yet To Be Determined



AGM & Elections

The 700 Wing Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled for Saturday, September 26, 2020. We are planning to have this meeting in-person at 2:00 p.m. in the Event Hall. Voting of the Directors will take place at the AGM. The six Directors are allowing their names to stand for the coming year, however, we require one more Director to complete the board. If you are interested in running as a director, please contact Erwin Loewen at maxace@shaw.ca. or phone at 780 473-2406. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted.

Note: COVID Guidelines in effect: social distancing, masks required.

Battle of Britain Presentation Presented by John Chalmers

Thursday, September 17, 7:00 p.m. for 7:30 p.m.
Alberta Aviation Museum - Event Hall

Admission: by donation



“From the Link Trainer to Wartime Combat: A tribute to the RCAF”

Join us for an evening of adventure as we experience the Battle of Britain through the eyes of aviation historian,

John Chalmers. John examines the Hurricane and Spitfire and will highlight two Alberta pilots, Peter Blatchford (Edmonton) and Willie McKnight (Calgary), that flew these famous planes in the battle. John will also look behind the covers on how wartime history is preserved and kept alive in our Alberta aviation museums.

Note: COVID Guidelines in effect: limited seating (50 max), social distancing, masks required.

Sheppard, Wingrove & Winkler Award Fund

700 Wing member **Bernie Sheppard** and some of his colleagues have created a special scholarship award for an air cadet from 395 RCACS and 504 RCACS in support of their post-secondary education. Each award is \$1,000 and is determined through an application and interview process.



The Commanding Officers of each unit will select the successful winner and funds will be sent to the successful candidate through the Alberta Provincial Committee (APC). The APC has been designated by these fine gentlemen to distribute the scholarship funding on their behalf from the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF). ECF manages the fund on behalf of the three donors. Bernie, a long-time member of the Wing, was formerly involved with both 395 Squadron and 504 Squadron.

***Thank you, Bernie
For Supporting Our Youth!***

Battle of Britain Parade - Cancelled, But

The actual parade is cancelled. 700 Wing has no defined or alternate plans to acknowledge the Battle of Britain approved at this time. Wing members will be updated by email or phone regarding event changes and they will also be posted on the 700 Wing FaceBook page.

A Note from your Membership Chair

To the members of 700 Wing let me begin by expressing a sincere and heartfelt “Thank You” to each one of you for all that you do for 700 (City of Edmonton) Wing Royal Canadian Air Force Association! Your commitment to 700 Wing and to the Royal Canadian Air Force Association is admirable and is very much appreciated.

We may be a small group, but we are mighty! The success of our Wing is measured by the dedication, support, and contributions, big or small, made by ALL our members throughout the year. The key to our success rests in people like you. Whether it is helping one another to attend

our meetings or special events. Volunteering for a shift at our Casino, sharing a story or two with a veteran, Poppy Blitz, Remembrance Day, or the Airshow. Committee work, Wing meetings, reaching out to members in need. Contributing to our wonderful newsletter, designing, and creating our amazing brochures and posters.

However you choose to contribute, know that together we can make a difference. Together we continue to make our Wing mighty and strong and we will continue to fulfill the aims and objectives of the RCAFA.



Royal Canadian Air Cadet Museum of Canada

Air Cadet Museum Update – August 2020

by Tom Sand

Discussions are ongoing with the Alberta Aviation Museum (AAM) regarding the Air Cadet Museum footprint and physical location inside the AAM. Depending on how the AAM develops its display spaces there may be more than one move of the Air Cadet Exhibit and associated displays over the course of the next few years. Additionally, the size and make-up of the revitalized/reinterpreted displays is being explored. One possibility being explored is to have each Air Cadet Squadron in the city create a display that highlights their squadron's story or stories. The Museum is looking for artifacts so if you have or know someone who has artifacts that they wish to donate please contact Tom Sand at rcacm@shaw.ca.

While the exact footprint and location of the Air Cadet Exhibit discussion are taking place the space currently occupied by the Air Cadet Exhibit (museum) at the AAM is closed to the public and the artifacts are being temporarily relocated, inventoried and accessioned. The target date for reopening the display in its new location is fall 2021.

The removal work is approximately 75% complete and is on track to be completed by the end of August. The inventory and accessioning have just begun and should take three to four months or perhaps longer and

ultimately depends on the number of people conducting the inventory. To that end if you are interested in assisting please let Tom Sand know at rcacm@shaw.ca. The inventory work can be done in the comfort of your own home. A box of artifacts and



instructions will be delivered to your home. There delivery will be contactless (ring the bell and run) to keep al safe under the current circumstances. The Museum is looking for artifacts so if you have or know someone who has artifacts that they wish to donate please contact Tom Sand at rcacm@shaw.ca.

The Museum governance continues to develop. The initial structure will include a Museum Operations Committee made up of representatives from each Provincial and Pan Territorial Committees and potentially others who want to become involved. The Air Cadet League Provincial Committees are being asked to identify anyone in their Province who may wish to fill this role. Ideally the representative will be their historian, or an individual interested in history. This group will oversee the development of the exhibits and displays in aviation museums and historical sites across Canada. The representative from Alberta will be the point of contact for all the aviation museums in Alberta who have or wish to have an Air Cadet exhibit/display. Once the provincial members are identified they will be reaching out to Canada's aviation museums and historical sites to discuss establishing Air Cadet Exhibits in aviation museums that do not already have an exhibit and advancing the Air Cadet Exhibits in aviation museums that do have Air cadet Exhibits.

Looking into next year, there may be an opportunity for a "grand reopening" in the fall of 2021 which is the 80th anniversary of the start of the Air Cadet League of Canada.



**James (Jim) K. Leskewich
Honoured with
RCAF Association
“Life Membership” Award**

700 Wing Charter member Jim Leskewich was honoured to receive the Royal Canadian Air Force Association Life Membership Award this year. This highly prestigious award is only given to a maximum of four members across Canada each year. Jim’s story made him an obvious choice.



Jim has been an active member of the 700 Wing since it’s very first year, joining in 1949 when it began its Charter at the American quonset at the Edmonton City Centre Airport (Blatchford Field). This was after serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) during the Second World War from 1943 to 1945.

Jim’s RCAF Story

Jim enlisted in the Air Force in 1942. His calling, when it came, was not to be a pilot or an air gunner, but through the luck of the draw like thousands of others, an air force technician. His training began in Moose Jaw as part of the War Emergency Training Program. St. Thomas, Ontario was his next stop to finish his training as an airframe mechanic and then on to Calgary to No.3 Service and Training School.

From here he was posted to 1664 Heavy Conversion Unit in Dishforth, Yorkshire, England as part of Six Group, Bomber Command with the Royal Air Force (RAF). Six Group was comprised of exclusively RCAF squadrons and was the only Group in the RAF’s Bomber Command to be derived solely from a single separate Commonwealth nation. Fifteen squadrons were assigned to the Group by the end of the war.

Jim’s unit’s role was to provide conversion training for fighter pilots and crews for 6 Bomber Group RCAF. This upgraded crews to four engine bombers like the Halifax Mk III.



After returning home and taking leave in 1945, Jim was sent to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia to be posted to the Pacific Theatre. This was cancelled after the Japanese surrender and Jim was transferred to Class E of the General Section of the RCAF Reserve.

700 Wing

Jim says that in the beginning 700 Wing provided a meeting place for RCAF members and friends. The social aspect was very important as it gave postwar

veterans a chance to keep in touch and to provide help to new members that had not experienced war time service. Working out of town with the Northern Alberta Railway prevented him from working on the Executive but he always volunteered to help the Wing when he could.



Jim married his wife Joy, a schoolteacher with Edmonton Public Schools, in 1963 and they and their children made the Wing a part of their family

life. Joy and the children, Trudy and James, became members of the Wing in the early seventies when Family and Associate membership became available. Jim says the Wing was truly a family club at the time where the kids had swimming lessons, tennis lessons, and special events parties (Santa Claus Breakfasts etc.). They sponsored additional associate members during this time at the then new Wing building on Kingsway. “It was a very popular place for dinners, dances, club meetings and special celebrations,” Jim remembers. I had my Retirement Party and Dance at the Wing in 1985 when I retired from the city of Edmonton as a Senior Assessor A.M.A.A.

Throughout the years Jim and Joy have participated in November 11th ceremonies, Battle of Britain parades, Robbie Burns celebrations at Kipnes, social activities, and any events that they could help out with. Jim says that Joy and he have particularly enjoyed helping man the poppy table at West Edmonton Mall which they have done for many years right up to this past year. Jim concludes with “We are truly proud to have been long time members of the #700 Wing and have wonderful memories of special friendships and times over many years.”



Congratulations, Jim, we’re all very proud of you and thank you for your service to Canada and as well to our Wing and the Association! **Per Ardua Ad Astra!**

Side Hill Gouger with Bar Award Winner



The Alberta Group Annual General Meeting was cancelled this Spring due to COVID restrictions at the time. As a result, Group awards could not be presented at that time but they were announced to Wing Chairs over email from Group President Michael Roy. 700 Wing was pleased to find out that our Membership Chair, **Sylvia Loewen**, was awarded a Bar to the Side Hill Gouger award. Sylvia took on many jobs over the past year, managing much of the Wing paperwork, coordinating and updating all memberships

and membership files. She prepared several meals for TGIFs, Speaker Series and other Wing events and also bartended some of those events. And those were all the easier tasks. Sylvia was instrumental in organizing the Wing's 70th Anniversary celebrations including the Alberta Group AGM in 2019.



For all of that and more, she was recommended for and received her Side Hill Gouger with Bar.

Congratulations Sylvia, we can't wait to be able to present you the award!

Charter Night

Our 700 Wing Charter Night has been postponed until spring of 2021.



Battle of Britain Dinner

The Commemorative Dinner has been postponed until September 2021.



Remembering Keith Krueger

With regret, we announce the passing of a former 700 Wing member, **Keith Krueger**, on Friday, July 3, 2020 at the age of 72 years. Keith was the instructor aboard a Murphy Moose carrying three people that crashed into a field east of the Edmonton International Airport.

Keith had a diverse career. He started out by serving in the Canadian Armed Forces as a member of the Military Police. After leaving the forces Keith pursued his dream of becoming a pilot spending most of his career working extensively in the Canadian north as a bush pilot on wheels, skis, and floats. Keith's journey also had him flying around the world and from pole to pole. With over 42 years of flying experience, aircraft that he flew included the Lockheed Electra, Boeing 737, Aeronca, DC-3 and the Scout. He flew 17 years as the Captain on the civilian C130 Hercules. During his career he spent years flying the Hercules aircraft across the Northwest Territories, he was a long-time pilot for NWT Air, First Air, and for Buffalo Airways with "Buffalo Joe". Most recently Keith flew from Bremerhaven, Germany to Antarctica on the DC-3T Basler turbine conversion



on wheel skis, operated by Kenn Borek on lease to the Alfred Wagner polar institute.

In his spare time, Keith was involved with several organizations including the Leduc branch of the Royal Canadian Legion and 700 Wing. He was also a former CIC officer and eventually became the Commanding Officer for Leduc Air Cadets Squadron 831 Black Knights for three years. During the summer months, he was a tow pilot, towing gliders for the Air Cadet Gliding Program in Gimli, Manitoba.

Alberta Air Shows

All the airshows schedule for 2020 in Alberta have now been cancelled or postponed. The Edmonton Airshow will be re-scheduled for next August 2021 and may be rebranded for the next year's show. More details to follow.

[Link to details of postponed Edmonton Airshow 2020](#)

AGLC – and our Casino

As most of you are aware the slots are open at the casinos but the tables are not. Once the tables were opened, the 700 Wing Casino was scheduled to man the volunteer positions for July 25 & 26 this year. Because the conditions within our province did not dictate moving to Phase 3 of the AHS Pandemic Plan, the casino opening of the tables was postponed. We are hoping to have our casino in the 4th quarter of 2020 or the 1st quarter of 2021. Time will tell.

We would like to thank all those who volunteered for our postponed casino and look forward to your assistance at the next planned event.

Aviation Heritage Memorial

Due to Covid-19, the Aviation Memorial Stone Dedication ceremony has been postponed until 2021. It is our hope that next year we will be in a position that will allow us to proceed with our event in the manner our recipients deserve. To date we have seven inductees confirmed. If you or anyone you know is interested in having a Memorial Stone dedicated for themselves or for a loved one or would like more information, please contact our Aviation Memorial Chair, **Sylvia Loewen**.

The **Wing Secretary** is an appointed position and one that must be filled. As this position is currently vacant, we are reaching out to the membership in hopes of finding someone to step forward. If you are interested in filling this position, please contact our Chairperson, **David Jackson**, to get more information about the Secretary and put your name in for consideration.



Alberta Group Members

Chairperson of the Alberta Group,
Michael Roy



Member Wings:

700 Wing – Edmonton
702 Wing – Lethbridge
703 Wing - Red Deer
783 Wing - Calgary
784 Wing - Cold Lake



Victory in Europe - Coin

The RCAF Association has for sale, a limited edition commemorative coin to help mark the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe - remembering those who never came home, and those who did but forever injured. This coin won't last long - and a portion of funds raised can help support Air Cadets and more. Coins cost \$12.90 each or 10 coins or more at \$7.90 each, plus GST and shipping/handling. To order, please visit the VE-Day Commemorative Coin promotion page at <https://rcafassociation.ca/victory-europe-75th-anniversary-commemorative-coin> or call toll-free 1-866-361-2322



[LINK for More Information](#)

Board Member Resigns

After much thought and consideration, **Linda Forbes** has decided that she can no longer fulfil her obligations to the board and has resigned from her position as Wing Secretary effective immediately. Linda, your time on the board has been greatly appreciated and we would like to thank you very much for your service.



408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron

408 2nd WW by the Numbers

by Paul Nyznik (Edited By John King)



408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron

There is currently one Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) squadron operating in the Greater Edmonton area. Our editorial board thought it was long past due to refamiliarize ourselves with this great squadron that has served Canada so well since its inception in 1941. In our previous edition we learned about “Mother Goose,” the great matriarch of the squadron from its war years. In this edition we will walk through highlights of the squadron history during those war years, from 1941 until the war’s end in 1945. Buckle up!

Highlights of 408 Squadron 1941-1945

By June 1941, the air war over England and continental Europe had been raging for 21 months and Allied fortunes were at their lowest ebb. On the ground, Hitler’s forces, in an overwhelming series of Blitzkrieg operations, had laid waste to most of western Europe, while Nazi U-boats patrolled the North Atlantic shipping lanes with devastating effect on Allied convoys. In the Far East, Japan was preparing for its infamous assault on Pearl Harbor. This was the situation as the second RCAF bomber squadron to be formed during the Second World War made its appearance.

24 Jun 41 Formed at Lindeholme, Yorkshire, as part of 5 (RAF) Group; W/C Nelles TIMMERMAN, DFC, age 27, Commanding Officer. Aircraft: Handley-Page “Hampden” medium bomber. Timmerman is later to become the first member of 408 Sqn to attain “Air Rank”.

11 Aug 41 First operational sorties. Target: German shipping at Rotterdam docks. Tasks assigned to the Hampden included bombing; ‘gardening’ (mine laying); ‘nickelling’ (propaganda leaflet drops) and for a short time; ‘circus ops’ (daylight bombing missions, fully escorted by Spitfires of Fighter Command).

13 Nov 41 First of two visits to the squadron by King George VI.

15 Nov 41 First medal of gallantry – DFC awarded to F/O D.F.H GIBANNE, as a result of a successful attack against Kiel on 4 Nov 41.



408 Squadron Handley Page Hampden

700 Wing Jetstream August 2020

31 Dec 41 Six months after its formation, 408 had flown 343 operational sorties. The cost: six crews killed; eleven Hampdens lost.

12 Feb 42 Nine 408 Hampdens assigned, as part of a 242-aircraft bomber force, to attack German battleships Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen which were attempting to pass through the English Channel enroute from Brest to Kiel. Due to the murky weather, only 39 bombers found their target, including a section of three from 408, led by S/L ‘Tinny’ CONSTANCE. None of the 39 was able to score a direct hit. This was a low point in the fortunes of Bomber Command.



408 Squadron Halifax after crash-landing

Mar 42 W/C Timmerman completes his tour and is succeeded by W/C A.C. ‘Pitt’ CLAYTON, who himself is screened after three weeks as the squadron’s CO. He is followed by W/C J.D. TWIGG, who becomes 408’s first RCAF commanding officer. (Note: While Timmerman was also a Canadian, he had joined the RAF in 1936). Five months after his appointment, W/C Twigg would become the first of three squadron COs to be killed on operations. The others: W/C A.C. MAIR and his immediate successor, W/C D.S. JACOBS.

May 42 One twin-engine Manchester bomber is assigned to the squadron as part an evaluation program designed to determine if the aircraft, which was much heavier and larger than the Hampden, would be suitable for operations. Equipped as it was with the notoriously unreliable and under-powered Rolls Royce “Vulture” engines, the verdict was ‘no’ and the Manchester was withdrawn from service, modified to include four engines... and became the highly successful Lancaster.

30 May 42 The first ‘1000 Bomber Raid’, including 20 aircraft from 408, against Cologne. A second, similar effort followed on 1 Jun against Essen. 408 sent 21 aircraft.

26 Jul 42 In a raid on Hamburg, Sgt P.L. KEMP flew the squadron’s 1,000th operational sortie.

Sep 42 Conversion to the Handley-Page Halifax begins. By this time the squadron’s Hampdens had flown 1,217 sorties, with a loss of 40 aircraft.

Oct 42 Due almost entirely to the initiative and persistence of W/C Timmerman, the squadron badge, with the Canada goose as

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the centerpiece and “FOR FREEDOM” as the motto, was approved by King George VI.

1 Jan 43 With headquarters at Linton-on-Ouse, Yorkshire, the newly formed 6 (RCAF) Bomber Group is declared operational. 408, initially equipped with the Halifax (and later with the Avro Lancaster), are one of nine squadrons then under the control of 6 Group. The Commanding Officer: W/C W.D.S. ‘Tiny’ FERRIS.



The Officially approved 408 Squadron badge and motto

24 Jul 43 The ‘Battle of Hamburg’ begins. As part of four separate, massive raids on that city, 408 sent 53 Halifax II aircraft. One was lost.



Rear Gunner view of Halifax Bombers

18 Nov 43 The first Bomber Command sortie in what was to become known as the ‘Battle of Berlin’. By its end, on 31 Mar 44, the city would be visited sixteen times. Having flown on eleven of these missions, F/Sgt J. Douglas HARVEY was later cited as the 408 Squadron pilot with the most trips to Berlin – and was presented with a gold wristwatch to mark the achievement.

22 Nov 43 During the ‘Battle of Berlin’, a Lanc II flown by P/O BRAGER completed the squadron’s 2,000th operational sortie. A month later, Brager and his crew are lost over Frankfurt.

30 Mar 44 The end of the ‘Battle of Berlin’ period, with 408 having suffered the loss of 27 aircraft and crews – more than the full strength complement of any bomber squadron in 6 Group. On the same date, during an attack on Nuremburg, Bomber Command suffered its worst losses of the war when, out of the 782 aircraft dispatched a total of 95 aircraft and their crews failed to return. 6 Group lost 14 of the 118 aircraft it contributed – a loss rate of almost 12%, more than twice that normally expected on operations at that time. 408 Squadron itself lost one of the twelve aircraft it had dispatched to Nuremburg.

5 Jun 44 In support of the imminent invasion of France, 408 Lancasters attack the coastal battery at Longues. The following morning, D-Day, 408 breaks all previous records to put 21 aircraft into the air to attack the bridge at Coutances, France – a key crossing for the Germans, who are trying to bring up reserves in an attempt to repel the Allied invasion forces.

24 Jul 44 A raid on Stuttgart, flown by F/O R.A. CLOTHIER and his crew, marked the squadron’s 3,000th operational sortie. Just 5 ½ months later, F/O D.M. WYLIE logged 408’s 4,000th trip, striking Saarbrücken on 13 Jan 45.

26 Jul 44 Invasion support continues. For a raid on Hamburg, 6 Group send 239 aircraft. 22 are lost including 4 from 408.

13 Oct 44 In a rapid change of commanding officers, W/C A.R. MCLERNON is screened, is succeeded by W/C J.F. EASTON, who himself is screened five weeks later, and is followed by W/C F.R. SHARP, who turns out to be the squadron’s last wartime commander.

14 Oct 44 A superb effort on the part of the squadron groundcrews and aircrews alike enabled 17 aircraft to bomb Duisberg in daylight and 18 crews to bomb the same target that night – with no casualties. Amazing!

25 Apr 45 F/L G.H. GROSS and his crew record the squadron’s last operational sortie of the war: Number 4,610.

8 May 45 V.E. Day, 408 is promptly selected as one of the squadrons to join the ‘Tiger Force’ fighting against Japan in the Far East. Before their training and re-equipping to the Lancaster X is completed, American use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki bring a speedy end of the war.



408 Squadron Lancaster II

5 Sep 45 408 is officially disbanded. During its time on operations from 1941 to 1945, the squadron:

- Had flown 4,610 sorties
- Dropped 11,340 tons of bombs and mines
- Lost 170 aircraft, both in training and on operations
- 933 personnel were killed, missing or prisoners of war
- 200 decorations were won by squadron members, including 160 DFCs and 30 DFMs
- Eleven Battle Honours were awarded for its wartime operations

“For Freedom”

(Ed note: Paul Nyznik of Nepean in suburban Ottawa is a former navigator with 408 Sqn.)

Edmonton Airshow Producer Receives National Award

The National Awards Committee of the Royal Canadian Air Force Association, on behalf of its over 6,000 national members, has awarded the **J.A.D. McCurdy Trophy**, in recognition of outstanding and praiseworthy achievement by a Canadian in the field of civil aviation, to **Mr. Richard Skermer**, President and CEO of RWE Events and producer of the Edmonton Airshow. 700 Wing nominated Richard for this prestigious award based on his work and achievements supporting the aviation community in Alberta.

In 2015, Richard made a three-year commitment to produce a show each year. At that time, it would have been 17 years since an airshow graced the Capital Region's skies. The new venue would be the under-utilized Villeneuve Airport. Growing to become the second largest ticketed air show in Canada in 2017, the fourth show in 2018 was nearly cancelled due to forest fire smoke and regrettably the fifth show in 2019 was cancelled due to exceedingly wet weather and wet ground conditions. A potential show for 2020 is dependent on the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. "This national recognition is a testament to RWE Events high-quality airshow product in Alberta's Capital Region with the right airport, airspace, demographics, and investment climate to support and grow Canada's aerospace industry. I welcome new sponsors and exhibitors to help make future editions of the show a premier economic development attraction and tourism event in Alberta." – Richard Skermer

The sky really is the limit for airshow entertainment. Richard is always trying to make the show fresh and holds on going discussions to bring unique and inno-

vative acts and entertainment products to Edmonton. Richard is also keenly aware of the aerospace industry's past struggles with the global pilot and mechanic shortage, both civilian and military, and plans to provide the community with potential employment opportunities at the air show by incorporating a career fair.

The Royal Canadian Air Force Association (RCAFA) is a national aerospace and community service organization established to:

- Commemorate the noble achievements of the men and women who have served as members of Canada's air forces since its inception
- Advocate for a proficient and well-equipped air force
- Support the Royal Canadian Air Cadet program



Richard Skermer, left, receives the J.A.D. McCurdy Trophy from 700 Wing Board Chair, David Jackson. RCAFA Photo

We Receive National Recognition

A huge Congratulations goes to **David Jackson** and to 700 Wing for winning the 2019, **408/437 Wing Award**



700 Wing Jetstream August 2020

The 408/437 Wing Award was established in 1968 by 408/437 (Toronto-York) Wing and is presented annually to the Wing submitting the "best" Annual Wing Report. Wings from across Canada, are eligible as each Wing's Chairperson is responsible for preparing and submitting their wing's Annual report, the document used when selecting the winner. The National Honours and Awards Committee will select the winner based on Punctuality (report must be received within 5 days of the due date), Completeness and Conciseness.

Way to go David, awesome job and well done!!

Background: J.A.D. McCurdy Trophy

The J.A.D. McCurdy Trophy was created by the RCAF Association in 1994 to recognize outstanding and praiseworthy achievement by a Canadian in the field of civil aviation. Any Canadian citizen, group, unit or organization engaged in the various fields of civilian aviation or its support is eligible to be considered for this award. The Association has enlisted the assistance of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada (AIAC) to help identify appropriate candidates for this award.



The trophy is named for John Alexander Douglas McCurdy (August 2, 1886 – June 25, 1961), a Canadian aviation pioneer and the 20th Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia from 1947 to 1952. In 1907, he joined Alexander Graham Bell's Aerial Experiment Association. On February 23, 1909, McCurdy became the first British subject to fly an aircraft in the British Empire when he piloted the Aerial Experiment Association's Silver Dart off the ice of Bras d'Or Lake in Nova Scotia, Canada. In 1910, McCurdy was the first Canadian to be issued a pilot's license and the following year, he made the first flight from Florida to Cuba. For the next few years, he continued to set aviation records in Canada and North America, until 1916, when vision problems grounded him.

Last year the trophy was awarded to Top Aces of Montreal, owners of the largest worldwide footprint of privately-held operational fighter aircraft that provide advanced adversary, air-defense and Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) training services around the globe.



2019 - 2020
Officers



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Battle of Britain Parade		vacant
Regalia		vacant
Website/Memorial Database		vacant



VIP Ops with 412 Squadron, Ottawa

by BGen Bill Buckham (ret'd)

Canada's Air Force has had many an interesting and unique squadron in its establishment since it was formed in 1924. 412 (Transport) Squadron stands out. Indeed, its whole history has been one of change, challenge and coping with roles and responsibilities that required the utmost in flexibility, imagination and skill by air and groundcrew to meet the demands placed upon them.



Today's 412 (Transport) Squadron has a long and storied past. Its roots go back to #7 General Purpose (GP) Squadron when it was



formed in Ottawa (Rockcliffe) in 1935. It had two flights; "A" Flight, for flight testing and "B" Flight for general purpose communications. "A" Flight was probably the precursor to the Aeronautical Engineering and Test Establishment (AETE) Squadron and did test and acceptance on a wide variety of aircraft and equipment. In July, 1937, "B" Flight used one of its Fairchild

71's to fly the Governor-General on a one-month long distance trip to Aklivik. It was the beginning of a long and storied history of flying VIPs that continues to this day. Four years later at the start of WWII, #7 Squadron was disbanded. The General-Purpose Flight (B Flight) became #12 Air Force Headquarters Communications Flight on September 10, 1939 and subsequently the nucleus of #12 Communications Squadron in August, 1940.

In August, 1938, the squadron acquired a Grumman amphibian which was used extensively for transportation of distinguished personages across the country. Although small by today's standards, it was used to advantage. As an example,



between May and August, 1939, it flew the Minister of National Defense and Air Marshal Billy Bishop out to the West Coast twice and was used to examine sites such as Victoria, Prince Rupert, Bella Bella and Coal Bay where the RCAF was preparing air bases.

During the war, #12 Squadron used over 15 aircraft types to fulfill a multitude of taskings. These included the Flying Fortress for trans-Atlantic mail service, the Liberator, and the Lockheed Hudson for VIP service, the float-equipped Noorduyn Norseman and the Stinson 105 for Arctic and bush operations. #12 Squadron routinely transported VIPs across Canada and the United States, namely the Prime Minister, ranking senior officers of the three ser-

vices and countless military and government dignitaries from other countries.

With the post-war reorganization of the RCAF in 1947, #12 Squadron was redesignated #412 (Composite) Squadron. Two superb squadrons, each with its own pedigree and history; one, the WWII designated #412 Squadron, a Spitfire fighter squadron with an outstanding war record and the other, a squadron with a long and distinguished history as VIP transport squadron, were blended. Its story continues to this day.

While the primary role of 412 Squadron focussed on VVIPs, government officials, senior officers and foreign dignitaries, the squadron had broad transport responsibilities. There was a standby crew fulfilling a 24-hour rapid-response role for many an unforeseen event. These responses could involve medical evacuation, flying replacement parts and techs for a grounded SAR aircraft, transporting endangered whooping crane eggs and their biologist minders from the NWT to Andrews AFB in Washington, DC, to transporting sonobuoys, couriers and classified documents. Most of these taskings seemed to arise only in the middle of the night!

In the '50s and '60s, 412 had a world-wide reach with its VIP aircraft, including the Liberator, the C-5 (DC-4 North Star variant with PW2800 engines), the Comet, Yukons, and Dakotas. Life on squadron was exciting, demanding and very busy. Thank goodness families and wives were supportive. After Expo 67 when the squadron was extraordinarily busy with visiting heads of state and major national events, the Yukons were sent to 437 Squadron and 412 focussed largely on operations in North America. Two subsequent events then triggered a change in role in 1970.



In late 1969, the squadron received seven Falcon Fanjet business jets to compliment the five Convair 580 Cosmopolitans on strength. In early 1970, the hijacking of commercial passenger jets, previously a non-issue, highlighted the need for a total rethink about security for Canadian VIPs worldwide. Government policy changed dramatically and government officials and VIP parties were not permitted to fly commercially in high risk areas like Europe and the Middle East. As a result, 412 dispatched a Cosmo to Europe and a 412 detachment was formed in Lahr, Germany, to serve those areas. In addition, a Cosmo detachment was formed in Winnipeg to serve the Commander, Air Command. While there were changes in aircraft, the structure of the squadron remained basically unchanged until the early '90s when Lahr closed.



CC-106 'Yukon'

After almost seven years instructing in various roles in Training Command from 1963 through 1969, I was offered a short-notice transfer to 412 Transport Squadron in Ottawa. The shock was that to this point in my career, I'd flown primarily the Expeditor and Dakota – almost 3500 hours at 150 knots, and now I was moving to Canada's VIP squadron to fly the very new, Dassault 20, Falcon Fan-Jet business aircraft. It still smelled like a new car when I arrived in January, 1970. What a rush and I was not disappointed! The Falcon was the first of my two tours with 412. It was fast and could carry six to eight passengers in relative comfort. With two pilots and a crewman, trips ranged from the low Arctic to South America and occasionally, to Europe. On VIP missions, usually with the Chief of the Defense Staff or government ministers, a steward was added for service. Warm pre-prepared or partially prepared meals were finished in the very small galley on board.

The squadron had two of its five Cosmos configured for VVIP operations with heads of state. Each were identical with two compartments, one with two sofa beds and two tables and four captain chairs each, and the other, with five tables and captain chairs. The aircraft were very comfortable and most suitable for any passenger, including the Royal Family.

Flying the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, cabinet ministers, foreign heads of state and other distinguished personages was our "bread and butter" and was demanding and often times challenging. Personalities sometimes came to the fore, seldom from the ministers, but from their executive assistants who tried to wear their boss' rank.



CC-109 Cosmopolitan or "Cosmo"

In late 1983, I returned to 412 as CO and qualified on the Cosmo and later on the Challenger when it arrived on squadron. Over a three-year period, we had three Royal Visits. In 1984, we flew the Queen and Prince Phillip; in 1985, Prince Andrew; and in 1986, Charles and Diana.

Our priorities in flying VVIPs were: security, safety, comfort and

timeliness. While transporting VVIPs was routine, Royal Flights, by their nature, took on a totally different tenor. The RCAF was one of the few foreign air forces other than the Royal Flight or the RAF, permitted to fly the Royal Family. The security requirements and overall high visibility, nationally and internationally of Royal Visits, demanded attention to detail, very rigorous planning and extensive communication with outside agencies from Buckingham Palace to federal and provincial agencies.

Initial planning at the squadron involved selecting the pilots, the flight engineer, loadmaster and the stewards for each of the two aircraft involved. As CO, I could choose to be Aircraft Commander or Mission Commander. It was a matter of choice. After discussion with my pilots, I chose the Mission Commander role where I could maintain full contact with the cockpit and liaise with the Royal Party thus freeing the Aircraft Commander (AC) and front end crew from any interference from aides should there be an event or problem requiring a change in plans or itinerary. The system worked really well and I used it on the three Royal Flights during my time as CO.



LCol Buckham greeting Queen Elizabeth II

I'll highlight one event that confirmed its value. During the 1984 Royal Visit, on a 45-minute leg from Windsor to Brantford, the Queen's Private Secretary handed me a handwritten note from Queen Elizabeth for President Reagan who was flying on Air Force One somewhere in the US. I completed the transmission through high frequency radio to the Edmonton's Military Aeronautical Communications Site which went by landline to the White House then up to Air Force One. I got confirmation from Air Force One that the President had personally read the message just as we were about to land. Had I been in the cockpit, it would have been impossible. As it was, the Queen smiled and said, "Well done!" to me as she departed the aircraft. A sequel: Thirty minutes later while on standby at Brantford, a call came from Air Force One for the Mission Commander on Royal One, our call sign, asking if I would copy a message from the President to Her Majesty! She had departed by convoy but we got the message through.



412 Squadron fleet - left to right: CC-117 Falcon, CC-144 Challenger, CC-132 Dash 7, CC-109 Cosmo

Besides a good front end crew, the cabin crew, consisting of the loadmaster and stewards, play a critical role in ensuring the mission is a success. Their interpersonal skills, food preparation and service can make or break a successful mission even when it is an otherwise challenging trip due to weather or other circumstances. 412 had its own cooks and stewards. The stewards often came from the Navy to give them help with the Navy's sea-shore ratio and ensure they did not spend their entire time at sea. Cooks came from other units. Stewards would be taught how to do basic short order cooking and food prep on board aircraft while the cooks learned how to serve dignitaries in a most professional manner. The meals that were prepared and the presentations were absolutely outstanding on the crisp linen-covered tables. No plastic knives or forks here!! The squadron has a set of china which it holds exclusively for use on Royal flights.

For Royal Flights, once meal requirements were known, the stewards for the flight had to put together three menu options for each meal. These were forwarded through NDHQ and Foreign Affairs to Buckingham Palace for approval.

Meantime, the two VIP-configured Cosmos, while continuing to be tasked with other missions, had to be scheduled for routine maintenance and detailed to make them presentable as Head-of-State aircraft. Later, with 48 hours to departure, the aircraft would be quarantined under 24-hour police guard and would remain in that state until the mission was complete. As mentioned, each aircraft had identical layouts. While the Royal 2 aircraft was filled with organizers and security, it was fully understood that should Royal 1 become unserviceable for any reason, Royal 2 was the backup and the crew and folks in Royal 2 would have to wait for a fix or a replacement aircraft.

The crew for the mission is a team. The selected pilots and flight engineer worked out the flight planning details around routing, ground handling, servicing as well as a spares pack-

age, should it be needed. Alternate landing sites, in the event of weather or other circumstances, had to be carefully vetted considering the passengers on board. At one time, these were called "Egg Shell" operations due to their sensitivity. Timing details then had to be co-ordinated with the organizing federal departments involved. Timings were always based on "door closed" to "door opening" for planning purposes.

A unique element in the planning had to take into account the fact that while Royal 1 had to depart first ahead of Royal 2, Royal 2 had to arrive at destination before Royal 1. That was accomplished by having Royal 1 depart on a fixed route and at a higher altitude that would permit Royal 2 time to accelerate and land with organizers and security about 10 minutes ahead of the Royal Party.

Approximately one month prior to the actual mission, a trial flight was made with the federal and provincial organizers, security and crew to confirm final details with local community organizers and



Dassault CC-117 Falcon

to iron out any issues. One common problem at the local level was their programming schedule could often be so tight that there would be literally no time for a break of any kind for the Royal visitors. On our side of the house, such items as the positioning of flags on the ramp could be an issue. It was not uncommon to find out the local plan would have the flags positioned such they would be striking the wing as we taxied in!



Preparing the cabin for Prince Charles and Princess Diana

Typically, the crew and aircraft are fully prepared for departure 45 minutes before planned departure. While that seems like a long time, it paid off in Winnipeg. We were relaxed around the aircraft waiting to take the Queen to Dauphin on this leg of the mission. Because planning is tightly scripted, an early arrival of the

Royal Party for departure ahead of schedule never happens. Wrong! She arrived 20 minutes early and we were ready. The pilots coordinated quickly with Air Traffic Control and developed a routing that got us to Dauphin within one minute of planned arrival with the passengers none the wiser for the smooth change.

There are no “space available” (standby) passengers on these flights! Seating is all pre-arranged and each seat marked with the visitor’s name. In the very front seats, sit the Mission Commander (MC), the Queen’s Canadian Police Officer and a CF Military Police security officer. Behind them at their tables sit the Queen’s personal staff and key coordinators. The MC wears a headset and is in direct communication with the cockpit.

In the separate back compartment, the Queen and Prince Phillip can relax by themselves or with their hosts such as the premier and his wife and the Federal Minister accompanying the tour. Two stewards are used on Royal flights. While one serves the Queen’s compartment, and occupies a seat there for landings and take-offs and the other steward serves the 16 occupants of the front-end compartment, they work as a team, along with the loadmaster prepping and serving meals and drinks.

To ensure food safety of its distinguished visitors, the steward section holds a detailed list of likes and dislikes for each individual as well as any foods to which they may be

allergic. On the lighter side, there is also a list of their preferred drinks and libations, how they like them served. After 40 years, the lists are long and really quite historic.

The Royal Visit in 1984 covered two weeks. At enroute overnight stops, the entire crew pitched in to do general housekeeping and cleaning on the aircraft. Even the prop tips, painted with red and white markers would be taped off and touched up. At the hotel the crew would gather for a debriefing and a review for the next leg. For departure, all passengers are boarded and seated prior to the Queen’s arrival.

When the Queen arrives, she is greeted at the foot of the stairs. The MC and the military police member follow her up the stairs. As the MC follows the Queen, he flashes a ‘thumbs up!’ to the pilots to start the engines as he proceeds to the rear to brief the Queen and her party on the next leg of her journey. And thus it continued.

A good flight is one where the VVIP and passengers can relax or prepare their work without concern for any issues concerning the flight. A great flight is one where the VVIP, well experienced in the finest of professional, personable service, recognizes it as above and beyond their expectations.

412 Squadron, its personnel, its equipment and its roles have evolved and changed over the years and will continue to do so in the future. Regardless, its tradition of outstanding service will remain a standard for years to come.



LCol Buckham with the flight crew posing with Prince Charles and Princess Diana