



427 Squadron Association

Volume 5— Issue 7

www.427squadron.com

November 2022

[427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron](#)

Commanding Officer - L/Col Matt Snider

Dear Fellow Lions,



Welcome to ROAR! It is my honour to be able to address you on behalf of the Squadron.

It has been an eventful year for 427 in 2022. We withdrew from our continuous overseas commitment after more than four straight years of de-

ployed operations. Thanks to those operations, we have a strong force of Lions with plenty of direct operational experience – but we also had a force in need of some reconstitution. That has been the focus since the summer – regaining the energy, as well as the qualifications and currency, to maintain and fulfill our ongoing role as a crisis response force.

We have welcomed many new members over the summer, all of whom have now been introduced to the unique culture of CANSOFCOM and 427. All members of the Squadron had to apply to be here, and it shows through the incredible motivation of each member. It is a unique position for the Squadron Chief Warrant Officer and I where we tend to

Honorary Colonel Lianne Ing

Fellow Lions



It has been an eventful six months since the last edition of ROAR and I am fortunate to connect with you once again. With COVID restrictions eased, I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet many more squadron members face to face through a number of engagements over the past several months.

As you know, the Change of Command at 427 occurred in July and the squadron was able to gather in person to witness this important event. We had the opportunity to give thanks and bid farewell to LCol Frank Lavertu and CWO Tim Riutta and we were able to formally welcome incoming CO LCol Matthew Snider and CWO Mark Jones. LCol Snider knows the squadron well, with this being his third posting to 427; his education and extensive experience as a seasoned pilot and flight commander with multiple overseas deployments provides a substantial foundation for his successful command of the squadron. CWO Jones joins the squadron with a broad background, spanning numerous overseas deployments and relevant experience with both the RCAF and CANSOFCOM. I am look-

CO's remarks continued:

only need to provide a vector rather than a motivation – the Lions rally around our Squadron purpose and can achieve incredible things.

And our work continues every day. Every day we are preparing for the unknown. Who could have known a year ago that there would be a major ground war in Europe? Who knows what will be the next action in the Indo-Pacific region? How and when will violent extremist organizations next strike? Just as the generations of Lions that came before, we will be ready.

Ferte Manus Certas.

HonCol remarks continued:

to supporting both of them during their tenure over the next two years; with the busy tempo of the squadron and geopolitical instability in many parts of the world, we know that the time will go by in a flash.

It was heartwarming to return to a full parade in honour of Remembrance Day this year, following two years of COVID disruptions. 427 once again returned to support the service in Cobden, Ontario, hosted by Legion Branch 550 and attended by a large number of community members and school children. After the main parade and service at the Cobden cenotaph, a contingent of squadron members walked to the nearby 427 cenotaph to lay a wreath below the impressive bronze lion and pay their respects.

We were also fortunate to welcome the return of the annual Gathering of the Lions, which was last held in November 2019. This was a wonderful opportunity for Lions, past and present, to meet and reconnect through a common bond that clearly lasts well beyond one's years of active duty. I was honoured to speak with many current and former squadron members at the Meet & Greet event and was disappointed to miss the gala event. All reports indicate that the weekend was a great success.

I am looking forward to speaking at the upcoming 427 Leadership Symposium, which will be an opportunity to share and discuss different perspectives on the key qualities of leadership. These professional development activities within the squadron provide an important platform for guiding positive cultural change within the CAF and shaping strong and inclusive leadership through proactive discussions and critical thinking.

After two and a half years of unpredictable COVID conditions, I am thankful we've been able to gather once again and witness a return of some of the squadron's important traditions. With only a few short weeks left before the holidays, I hope that many of you will be able to safely gather with loved ones to restore some of our personal traditions as well.

Ferte Manus Certas

Ed. Note: This Issue's format has been changed. Historically, the focus was on stories and/or history from different eras of our Squadron. However, Eric Mold sent an interesting email to Dick Dunn, our Membership and Treasurer Chair, about multi aircraft flypasts. His memories were sparked "...while binge watching the coverage of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee". His email triggered other memories of massive aircraft flypasts and it was decided to make this issues focus on some memorable aircraft flypasts and the call went out for stories and photos. Hope you enjoy.

Although, there are no WW II specific mentions in the article on flypasts but we should not forget the massive 1000 aircraft plus night operations carried out by the RAF's bomber Groups of which the RCAF's 6th Group was a major contributor. All heading to the same target, delivering their payload on time and then returning home. That was a flypast !

I will apologize now for any errors you discover, especially grammatical. My partner of 62 years passed away recently and she had edited, proof read and corrected the ROAR articles I gave her. If you have seen past errors it is because I did not let her do her job due time constraints etc.. It may be appropriate to now cancel ROAR given Ken Sorfleet has the Facebook site viable and the website can continue to document 427 history. I would welcome your thoughts at macway01@gmail.com

Change of Command Ceremony—July 2022



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Membership Policy 427 Squadron Association

The following is a list of the current membership categories: Charter Membership, Life Membership, Annual Subscription Membership, Honorary Associate Membership, Associate Membership, Affiliate Membership and Association Partnership. For a complete definition of the categories please access the web site at: <http://www.427squadron.com>.

To apply for a 427 Lion Squadron Association membership or make a donation or bequest, please complete and mail or email the form which can found at <http://www.427squadron.com/membership.html>

427 Squadron Association Web Site

The web site contains much more information about 427 squadron history than could possibly be covered in ROAR newsletters. Have a look at it. All newsletters from 1996 on are posted there, Bios/Books/Stories has material from all eras that you may find interesting. Book and stories by former POWs give us a first hand look at that segment of their history. There is also a squadron diary from 1942 to 1970, The Green Book. Additionally in the history section LCol (Ret.) Eddie Haskins has put together a WW II 427 Squadron Ops pictorial history coordinated with the WW II diary and casualties. It's an amazing project. You may also be interested in the original MGM video of their presentation at Leeming to the squadron which is in on our site. Looking for the name of the CO in 1944 or 1976, its all there waiting for you to discover.

The links page is another trove of interesting information of military history. WW II databases, Canadian as well as worldwide, Luftwaffe records, aircraft crashes, including military, from 1905 forward, all can be linked to and searched

Last but definitely not least is our [Remember Page](#) where we honour our comrades who have come before us. All names on the 427 Squadron cenotaph are detailed there as well.

All previous Volumes of ROAR from 1996 to the present are now available on the web site at:

<http://www.427squadron.com/roar/roar.html>

Moving ?

Please notify us of your new address and email if you move.

Email Dick at - richmark@telus.net

Or regular mail to:

Richard Dunn

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Apology

We find it impossible to keep up with the changes in rank designation/salutations that may have changed during the passing years after you had first joined. We will continue to modify rank designations/salutations as we become aware of them or if you request a change otherwise the rank or salutations that you signed up with will remain.



Flying Officer B.W. MacLellan



We Will Remember Them

At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them - Laurence Binyon

<https://www.427squadron.com/remember.html>

There have been several members who have passed away during the last six months and very few have had a obituary that I was able to find for publishing. If you are aware of an obituary for any of the names below or others that you may be aware of, please forward them to me at macway01@gmail.com so they may be published.

William Brown WW II

Frank Denis WW II

Gary Louis Flath Helicopter ([Obituary here](#))

Willy Floyd F-86 and CF-104

Arnie Gardener WW II

Terry Hallett CF-104

Clary Hughes WW II

“Swede” Larsen F86 ([Obituary here](#))

Beth MacLellan - ROAR Editor ([Obituary here](#))

Jack K. Orr Helicopter

A. Papworth WW II

Chuck Page WW II ([Obituary here](#))



Last SPAADS Reunion—September 8, 9,10,11, 2022

The end of another era in the life of 427 Squadron was concluded at midnight on September 10, 2022, The SPAADS President Walt Pirie declared that no more reunions would be held due to declining numbers attending. He did mention that members in similar geographical locations may from time to time hold their own mini reunions. The birth of the 427 Squadron Association was hatched at the last reunion of the Allied Air Forces reunion in Toronto, 1996.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Any and all 427 Squadron veterans, Association members or not, deserve to have recognition of their service displayed on our website [Remember Page](#) as well as a notice appearing in ROAR when they pass on. We depend on you to notify us if one of your comrades dies. Military record information is requested if available, otherwise as many details as possible. Please help us and send any information you have to one of us.

Dick at richmark@telus.net
 Ken at kensorfleet@yahoo.com
 Wayne at macway01@gmail.com

Membership
 Facebook
 Web Site/ROAR

Note:

The aim of ROAR continues to be a link between the operating squadron and past members. As one of our recently deceased WW II members, Ian Thomson, said “I will not be able to represent our glorious squadron much longer but it has been a supreme honour to be a Lion”. Many of us who served or “grew up” in the Squadron have wonderful memories of our time as a Lion. ROAR generally concentrates on historical stories/ articles from the different eras highlighting the challenges and yes, even shenanigans, that surfaced throughout the 80 year life of the squadron.

Throughout the newsletter you will find highlighted text or web addresses. If you are receiving this via email or reading on the web site, you should be able to click on the highlight to open the web address. If you are receiving a hard copy through the post office you must copy and paste the address into the address bar on your browser to access the highlighted address.

Also please keep in mind that [Col \(Ret.\)Ken Sorfleet](#) has a Facebook site up and running. It contains topical information surrounding the Squadron.



The Big Flypasts

Ed Note: This issue will be a bit different than the era based stories we normally publish. We are going to cover some “gaggle” history. We were able to get photos from an F-86, CF-104 and a T-Bird flypast. We were unable to find any large helicopters flypasts although some members had been part of them. However the replies and comments from our members answering the request for photos are interesting and many are included here. An email from Eric Mold to Dick Dunn was the impetus for this article. Eric had been watching the Queens Platinum Jubilee and recalled some of his memorable flypasts when he was with 92 Squadron, RAF.

Helicopters



A US Army photo. Perhaps because of the number of aircraft the location was Vietnam.

We sent out a request to our members but although there were memories of large formation flypasts, no photos surfaced other than below.

A comment by Ken Sorfleet to his colleagues.

“I was quite happy to have an occasion to have all 12 CH135's up flying at the same time at the end of an exercise in Petawawa when I was CO, but it was serendipity and I can't recall getting a photo of all as we were really in a long daisy chain extraction at the end of an airmobile ex.

I did participate in the 10 TAG post Olympics flyby (not of any specific location, just because the gathering was a unique gathering of about 30 10 TAG helicopters) but again never got any pictures, but surely someone must have. As well, I figure Winged Warrior must have some big formation pictures, but do not have Brian Hologates email...if any addressee has it please forward this to him info me.

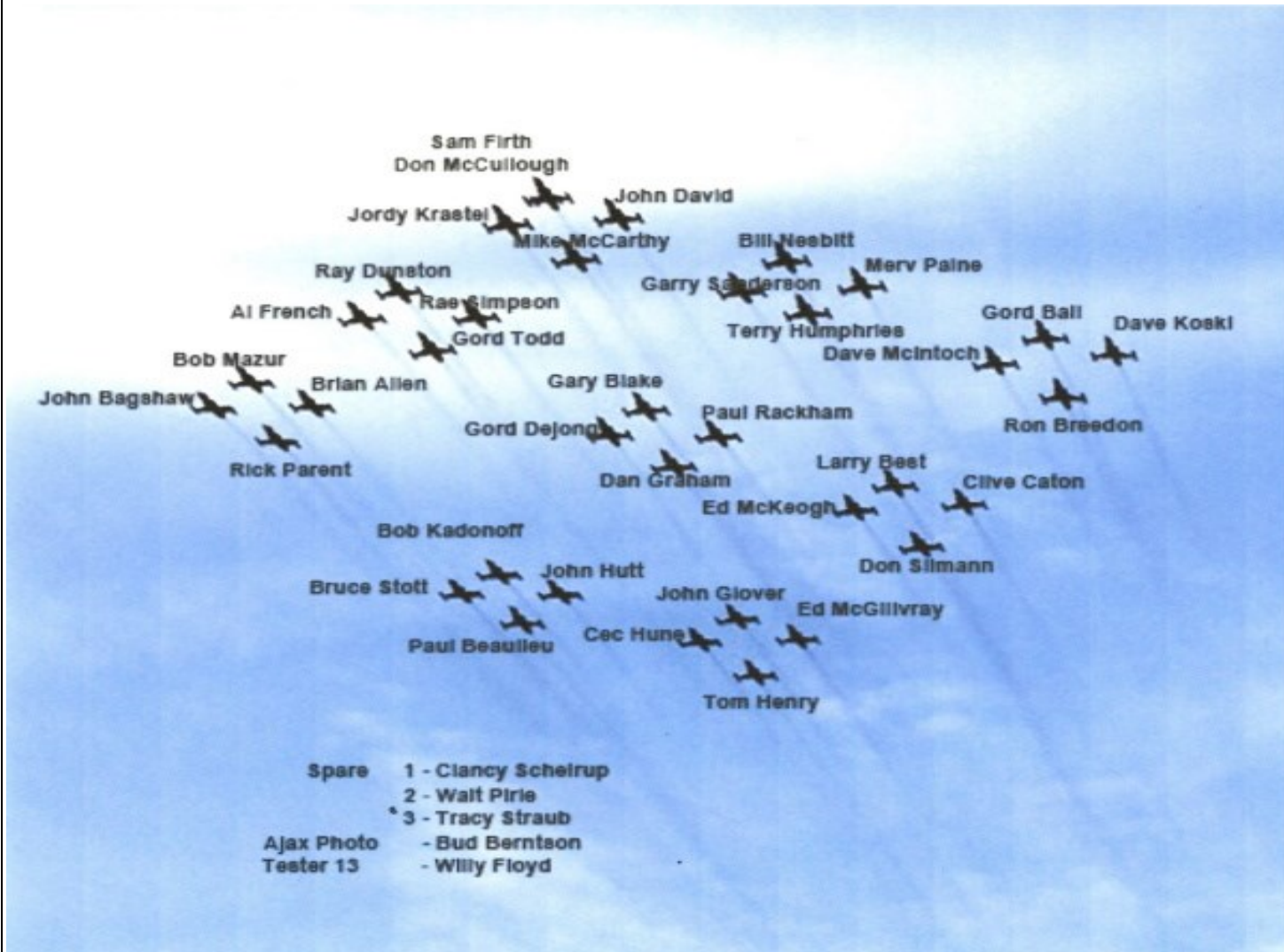
For all, do you recall any occasion where we might find a photo of a dozen or more helicopters in flight in the same frame....or failing that even a ramp photo?”



Thanks to Dean Black for supplying the above photos.

CF-104

The 36 plane "Gaggle" for the the Colours Presentation by Prince Philip - May 4, 1973



Memories from that day

This show and tell is getting better by the day! So some more trivia. I dug into my "I love me" trunk of souvenirs and found an old map of the flypast routing and it has been emaciated from water damage in the attic but I was able to figure out where we traversed enroute to the target. According to my log book we did 5 practices for the event. 26 April 1973 a 12 plane of Tigers, Check and Yogi's, 27 April & 30 April, 36 plane flypast, 2 May 24 plane Bad Wx practice, 3 May, 36 plane practice and 4 May the real thing! None of the practices had any Zig Zag workouts! On the evening of 4 May I ferried AC706 to Lahr (My shortest flight in a CF104--- .2 of an hour) in preparation for the big airshow day 5 May at 4 Wing where we opened the show with a 36 plane and 16 plane flypast. Only Arnie Bauer could come up with a show like this! I believe the show had at least two aerobatic teams (Red Arrows, the French team and maybe the Frecce Tricolori) . I got a ride with F/L Pete Day the Arrow solo in their show.

So where did we go in the 36 plane flypasts? We did a fairly exaggerated left race track pattern after take off for every one to get joined up and then proceeded to the A4 gap in the Voges mountains (Steinberg/Phalsbourg), to NE Metz and a turn point on a large tree pattern just past the 3 railway intersection of Bouzonville then a 30 degree right bank turn to intersect the run-in between Sarguemines and the Saarbrücken Airport to Bitche

descending over the Voges to the Haguenau Forest and Soufflenheim and the target. Unfortunately Sam turned on a similar tree pattern just before Bouzonville on the day getting a minute early and for the next 30 miles or more did some ZIG Zagging for the added enjoyment of everyone. It was pretty smooth from where I sat "Ha"! Sam told me the Nav said "turn now" and he just turned believing he was over the right tree pattern! I flew the same aircraft, AC 893, on all flights. Kristle was well informed about the aircraft in the Bitche area! I would argue those days were when we had a very operational Air Force with lots of flying. I logged 75 hours total in the months of April and May that year and 5 of the flights were less than .8 of an hour. A lot of flights (52) considering the down time with return travel to Cold Lake (16 days, obviously some stopover visits en-route). The 36 plane flypast with the extra 12 ship passes for the sqns were logged as 1.4 hours so I suspect Sam was pretty low on fuel (Dual A/C) at the end of those two flights.

John David

My recall of the event is it was indeed a "sporty" proposition. The run in with a fixed TOT was something in the neighbourhood of 10 minutes which with that great gaggle seemed a long time.

Getting the squadron pilots who were flying to the festivities in the Mess was also a challenge. We literally abandoned the aircraft in the south dispersal. The showers were running, uniforms hanging in the hallway and bus ready to take us to the Mess and arrive before His Royal Highness.

We formed up in semi circles by squadron to be reviewed by the Prince. As 441 was the highest number we were the last group and had sufficient time for someone to come up with a brilliant idea. Not sure who but someone said "top buttons". Recall the response was to quickly undo the top button.

As the CO approached escorting the Prince he noticed and we could see him mouth "you bastards". Close to, or perhaps first to be introduced was Larry Best. PP noticed and reached out to do up the button saying something about being out of uniform. When he saw everyone had an undone top button. He said "Oh I see, fighter pilots". and carried on as if nothing was amiss.

He further endeared himself at lunch with a put down of the Commander of CFE who styled himself a Black Watch officer. And with little mention of our great gaggle heaped praise on the ground crew who paraded as if that was what they did for a living.

John Glover

I have another story of that fabulous day when Prince Philip dragged his sword on the tarmac up and down the ranks as he inspected the troops. Being the youngest/newest member of the squadron I was the designated flag bearer for 441 Sqn so was on the parade square for the first rehearsal of the big event. The initial plan was for the "advance in review order" (the whole wing marching something like 13 steps forward) and then halt, Arnie Bauer then gave the command "Royal Salute" and the 36 plane passed overhead and the band struck up "God Save the Queen." It was a beautiful moment, the crescendo of 36 howling J79s directly overhead drowning out everything and as they flew off to the east the racket died down and the strains of "God Save the Queen" emerged. Absolutely magnificent, but the band said there was no bloody way we would do that again, they had a hell of a time keeping together. So on the big day the aircraft were gone before the Royal Salute. As I recall there were, at one time at least, 42 104's in the air to ensure 36 would make it to the finish line. And when the band played Amazing Grace there was hardly a dry eye in the crowd. Cheers to those glorious days past.

Ted Lee, Check 80, 72-75

It was a wonderful event to say the least!!! You also had to give Arnie Bauer full credit for spending two years of his time putting the show together, and not forgetting the smallest detail ie getting Prince Philip to attend. I also think of standing on the parade square during practices wishing I was going to be airborne in the gaggle with our squadron.!!! How about curtsy practice for the ladies, and pictures in the Mess with the Prince etc. Fond memories.

Larry Crabb

Dave sent in an update and was also part of the 4 May 73 Colours' Flypast. He thought the "run-in" was a bit less than 100 miles as John David remembers but confirms - it was "sporty" maintaining the formation. He pointed out that you can read Sam Firth's account on page 161 of Dave Bashow's excellent book, "Starfighter". The "navigator" in the back of Sam Firth's 104 was newly arrived 421 pilot Don McCullough (Course 43) .

Dave"Clive Caton (Course 39)

Like many who were not there I have been fascinated by these amazing stories. At the time I was on exchange in Zweir on the RF-4 and, when we heard about it ahead of time, my 'ready for anything' navigator and I briefly conspired as to how we might fit in as #37; however we restrained ourselves.

The story of the zig-zag reminds me of the story I often heard from my 'Sabre-jock' elders about a similar large gaggle which was engaged in a fly-past at 4 ATAF HQ which was in Trier in the '50s. Apparently the lead realized that he was early and made a speed-brake call, which resulted in total chaos. Perhaps we still have one among us who has a personal memory of that!

Dave Huddleston

I think it would be great to have the names of everyone that was in that flight. I was right wing in the very last four plane. John Glover was leading that section and Cec Hume was also in our section. I am not sure who else was in our particular 4 plane but I think it was Tom Henry. At the time it wasn't much fun because (being at the very end) I was in burner on the outside of the turn and full flaps on the inside.....thanks to Sammy Zig Zag Firth. However, in retrospect, I am glad I was part of it because it makes a terrific story. I will delve into my historical paperwork because I "think" I jotted down everyone that was in that famous flypast.

Ed McGillivray

I was part of the parade and not the gaggle and also have some good memories. Who could ever forget Arne Bauer leading off our quick march with his unique 'skip-hop' first step every time.

At the dinner, in reference to our green uniforms and General Leonards Black Watch background, the Prince commented that we marched so well that we should be referred to as the "Green Watch".

I was sitting on the side of the Prince's bodyguard, a Scotland yard Superintendent, and listened to his tales as Baggy had stated. The one story that sticks out was the time the Royal yacht was sailing into the Med from the Atlantic and the Prince had been sun bathing on deck. About 15 minutes prior to approaching Gibraltar the Prince went below to prepare for the Royal 21 gun salute as the yacht sailed through the straits. He then reappeared dressed in his naval tunic and stood up against the ships railing and took the salute but beneath the tunic he was still dressed in his swimsuit and flip flops.

The 421 Squadron photo that Evelyn forwarded show all of us with great smiles, in fact we were all laughing because just prior to the photo tech snapping the shot, the prince had pronounced loudly "that for photos in Britain we no longer say cheese, instead, we say "BITCH".

Frank Thorne

[British Pathe](#) has a very short video (1:23 min.) of the parade but only a 12 plane fly past.



F-86 By Eric Mold

I've been binging all day watching the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on TV. Particularly the RAF flypast, still wonderful but only 70 aircraft? Years ago, we did it with many more than that.

Looking through my old logbook, I notice that in April of 1954 I made several flights from Linton-on-Ouse to RAF Station North Luffenham; the home of No 1 Fighter Wing of the RCAF; who were also equipped with F-86 Sabres. It brought back memories of the huge Balbos we did together over Buckingham Palace to welcome the Queen home from her Commonwealth Tour in the Royal Yacht Britannia. I was on 92 Squadron on the Linton Wing, which was the first wing in the Royal Air Force to receive F86 Sabres. For these really big shows, we flew to North Luffenham and joined up with No 1 Wing of the RCAF. We would fly down to 'Luff' in the morning; have lunch and then the two wings would take off en-mass to join the fly past. The formation normally consisted of 'boxes' of four aircraft in V formation. This large mass of aircraft would fly at relatively low level out over the Thames estuary, where it would join the rest of the participating aircraft.

Normally, the weather was clear, but the visibility usually poor; the brownish gray of the sky merging with brownish gray of the sea, leaving us without much of a visual horizon reference. Timing was critical in these events because the organizers wanted to ensure that a steady procession of aircraft passed over the balcony at Buck House where Her Majesty and the royal party were watching the review. Complicating the matter was that the slower aircraft flew past first, followed by progressively faster and faster types until the jet fighters brought up the rear. This invariably led to a chaotic situation over the back yard of the palace, where everyone caught up everyone else. Formations of Chipmunks, Lancaster's, Mosquitoes and every other type in the inventory, mixing it up, wheeling this way and that, to avoid each other. A flying circus that would have scared Manfred von Richthofen as it did me.

The run-in over the palace started at a checkpoint on the River Thames, called Galleon's Reach. In order to be in the correct sequence and at the right spacing, it was essential to pass Galleons at an exact time. Thanks to their zeal, our wing and squadron leaders were not going to be late... which usually meant that they were early. There is nothing worse than leading a large formation of aircraft and having 20 or 30 seconds time on your hands prior getting to an important checkpoint. Often some very fancy flying is necessary to get back on time, particularly for pilots flying on the inside of the formation turns. Nothing is guaranteed to work up a sweat quicker, than being on the inside of a turn in a large formation when the leader decides to do a split-arse 360 degree turn (usually at Idle RPM) to kill off a few seconds of surplus time. I can assure you some creative flying techniques came out trying to overcome these situations such as wheels down, flaps down, speed breaks out, opposite rudder (to fly sideways a bit) usually at maximum power to prevent falling out of the sky. All this, with no visual horizon and usually radio silence. You have to have been there, to know what I am talking about. We did two or three practice runs before the final show.

The flying was a bit 'hairy' but we had a lot of fun. The Canadian guys at North Luff generously allowed us to use their commissary and I can tell you that several large crocks of whiskey, vodka, gin etc. found their way back to Linton. These exercises lead to a few exchange mess dinners which themselves were not without notoriety. What wonderful days they were when we had hundreds of good planes and lots of flying time for everyone.

I was not new to this type of exercise. I had participated in a similar fly-past celebrating the Queen's Coronation. At that time I was flying Vampires, with 67 Squadron based at Gutersloh in West Germany. For this review four wings of Vampires from Gutersloh, Celle, Wunsdorf, and Fassberg, each comprising of three squadrons of 24 aircraft took part. We climbed out over Holland in loose formation, coasted in over the Thames estuary where we tightened up to close formation and joined the other aircraft in the procession. Over Galleon's Reach once again and on to the palace. The plan was for us to recover to one of the fighter bases in southern England, refuel, have lunch, and then repeat the exercise once more but this time recovering back at our home bases in Germany.

On one practice fly-past things went as usual, after extricating ourselves from the melee behind Buck House we split off and each wing headed to its designated recovery base, which in our case was Biggin Hill. Because we were all a bit tight on fuel, the technique was for the wing to 'stream' as it approached the field and join the circuit directly on the downwind leg. In those days, we only had four channel VHF radio sets; just one of the channels was dedicated to General Aerodrome Control. Our wing leader gave the order for the wing to stream for landing as we approach Biggin Hill. We dropped back to leave about 100 yards spacing between us. Then he called us over to the Aerodrome Control frequency; immediately we heard "Mayday Mayday Mayday... Pan Pan Pan" from a lady pilot who was obviously in some sort of distress. After listening for a second, it appeared she was flying a little Chipmunk training plane, didn't know exactly where she was, and was just about out of fuel.

Our wing leader was trying to contact Biggin Hill control tower to tell them that he had 60 Vampires and was approaching the downwind leg of their circuit for landing, and that we were all short of fuel. However, the girl in distress was blocking the whole frequency. Biggin Hill was getting closer and closer, and still our leader could not get a word in to tell the control tower and get landing clearance for his big formation.

Finally, the wing leader pressed his radio transmit button and said. "Madam, this is Wing Commander Mike Le Bas. Put that aeroplane down in the first decent field you see, and get off this bloody radio." Silence followed immediately, just in sufficient time for Mike to tell the control tower that he was joining circuit on the downwind leg with 60 aircraft for landing.

As I was sitting on the downwind leg, 100 yard behind the plane in front of me, I'd completed my landing vital actions checks, and looked down at the airfield. What do you think I saw? A stationary Chipmunk, right in the middle of the duty runway! By this time our leader was on final approach, some of us were too pressed for fuel to make a 'go around'. At the very last moment, a vehicle raced across the infield to the runway, and two guys scrambled out, grabbed the little Chippy by its tail, and hauled it clear just seconds before Mike's wheels kissed the tarmac.

439 (F) Squadron "Fang" flyby Dick Dunn

Under the command of Wing Commander Pete St. Louis (The Boss,) 427 (F) Squadron was a happy squadron. Sited on a ridge overlooking the town of Zwiebrücken, near the French border, there was a multitude of bars to satisfy the personnel of the three squadrons operating at # 3 Fighter Wing.

During the lengthening of the Zwiebrücken runway in preparation for the arrival of the CF-104, early July 1962 the Squadron deployed to #1 Wing Marville, France, operating out of the 439 Zulu (alert) hangar. The Squadron disbanded December 1962, and W/C St. Louis handed command of 427 to W/C Bob Middlemiss, now in the "Strike" role with the newly arrived CF-104's; tasked to nuke Warsaw Pact targets in the event of hostilities.

Walt Pirie and myself were posted to 441 Squadron, also at Marville. It was somewhat of an uninspired squadron, but the Commander was fair, and Walt and I enjoyed a 10 day deployment to Denmark. In September 1963, 441 Squadron disbanded, and I was posted to 439 Squadron, again in a happy squadron commanded by "The Boss." Designated as a NATO Ace Mobile Squadron assigned to reinforce the Greek Air Force the event of confrontation, 439 (F) Squadron deployed four Sabres to a Greek airbase monthly. Despite my junior status, I enjoyed a deployment soon after my posting.

As the disbanding date of 439 (F) Squadron approached, the Boss decided to launch a 25 plane diamond flyby over the Canadian airbases and Metz headquarters. Following a comprehensive briefing detailing the join-up of flights of four, Pete led off with a climbing left turn, allowing the flights to slot into their respective positions. The Boss set course for the USAF base at Ramstein, facilitating a gentle turn to overfly Zweibrücken, with an onward straight course to #2 Wing Grostenquin.

As the formation passed Grostenquin, a pilot, nameless to protect the guilty, radioed "Bingo," indicating low fuel. He was either ham-fisted on the throttle, or he lied about his fuel state. The Boss gave permission to divert to Grostenquin, thereby disfiguring the "diamond."

Despite the "Bingo" call, it was only 12 minutes to Marville and he could have arrived with 700 lbs. of fuel, more than enough to make a priority landing.

Previously based at Grostenquin, he had a girlfriend to impress. Speculation was that he sought "glory" from being the last to land, and to take off at Grostenquin.

A shooting at dawn for desertion was the consensus at the post-flight briefing!



Flashback & Follow Up to 31 October 1963, #1 Fighter Wing, Marville, France.

The “Cold War” was simmering. Our Canadair F-86 Sabres were being replaced by gleaming new CF-104 Starfighters in the new roles of Reconnaissance and Nuclear Strike. As the eight Sabre squadrons of the Air Division stood down in succession, personnel whose NATO tour had expired were transferred back to Canada, whilst those with low time were transferred to the remaining Sabre squadrons. Appropriately, as the squadron emblem is a Sabre-tooth tiger, 439 Squadron endured as the sole Sabre squadron nearing the end of 1963. Although comprised of some original “Tigers,” the majority of pilots had seen service with other squadrons, including the Squadron Commander, Wing Commander Pete St. Louis, formerly of 427 “Lion” Squadron. Focused on the newly established Nuclear Strike role, the Staff at Air Division Headquarters desired only that the jaded, camouflaged Sabres just go quietly to their impending doom at the hands of the gnomes of Scottish Aviation. HQ did not anticipate a final Sabre fly past. Nevertheless, Wing Commander Pete St. Louis, “The Boss,” was determined to mark this proud chapter in the history of the RCAF, the end of the Sabre era.

Since long-range drop tanks were fitted for the final flight to Prestwick, standard procedures required a flight test to ensure the tanks would feed. “The Boss” proposed that the flight-testing could be done en-mass as a “Fang Flypast,” and prepared a plan. Next morning, November 1, 1963, we assembled in the squadron lounge for the briefing. “The Boss” strode to the blackboard, chalk in hand and said, “Ok, I’ll lead the first flight, and make a gradual climbing turn to the left.” Presently, the runway was ablaze as Sabre pairs rolled at two second intervals, the first pair lifting off, remaining low, whilst the second pair, accelerating from behind, lifted off, climbed above the preceding pair, and joined as a section-of-four by runway’s end. In a wide turn, the entire squadron of 25 Sabres assembled in a diamond formation, then set course for the USAF base at Ramstein, facilitating a gentle turn to overfly Zweibrücken, with an onward straight course to #2 Wing Grostenquin.

Approaching Grostenquin, the man known as “Mule” called “Bingo” indicating his low fuel state at 1,200 lbs. Reluctantly, W/C Pete St. Louis gave permission to depart the formation and “Mule” descended to land at Grostenquin. The formation continued to Air Division Headquarters, housed in the former bunkers of the Maginot Line at Metz. Alerted by Yellowjack Radar (the long range Canadian owned and operated radar) of a large formation approaching, the Air Division Staff emerged from their bunkers to observe the flypast, perhaps cursing, or perhaps shedding a tear. No advance warning had been given; hence there are no official photographs of the unique 25-plane diamond of the “Fang Flypast”. However, as the formation passed over Marville, the station photographer shot the legendary photo of the remaining 24 aircraft; regrettably, with the last slot a void.



I might add a note about the gaggle of T-Birds that flew over the CNE spelling out RCAF. 40 + birds were moved to Trenton from Portage La Prairie and Gimli with personal for one pass a day for all three days of the Air Show. I believe the CO at Trenton would give a sigh of relief and pleasure as he watched the gaggle of T-Birds depart his base after the CNE.

In those days the CIAS was one of North America's major air shows. As Eric noted in his write up, being on time to the second was paramount and the CIAS had aircraft departing show center on the second and arriving show center to the second. It was a two hour, non stop show. If you went to the toilet you missed an act. No one wanted the dreaded Horses Ass award although if all acts had the timing perfect I believe the show committee would make up a reason to award it. The award was given at the morning briefing at 0900. Not only were all the acts in attendance but military and civilian dignitaries were invited as well as press and sponsors, close to a hundred people. One memorable Horses Ass award went to the Snowbirds. They had staged out of St Catharines so there was a 30 mile run into the show site over the lake. The day was Toronto summer, visibility maybe a half mile, no horizon but the Snows were on time to the second. The award was given because it was impossible in that day and age for after a thirty mile run with no visibility to arrive on time. The rebuttal, which, was expected and allowed was politically incorrect and I am unable to print it but it involved the Snowbirds tap dancing on the stage after the lead posed a challenge. The place roared with laughter.

Practicing for the fly past was done after 1700, the Gimli contingent would fly down to our meeting spot to start the practice. The lead was in the leading T-Bird of the C. After airborne we had most of the prairies provinces to join up although I believe the join up was around Carmen, Manitoba. We would get into our positions there and head back to Portage using the base as the fake CNE waterfront. The most interesting spot in the formation was at the bottom of the C. A twitch by someone at the top of the C usually translated into a chain reaction which caused the man at the bottom to earn his free beer from the initial twitcher. Normally the practice was non eventful and only resulting in a loss of a few pounds of sweat. There is a photo surviving of the R and the C in the same vertical part of the sky due to an unannounced turn by the leader in the C as the formation passed over the Base. I have not been able to find the copy but I do remember the pilots of the R and C after changing their underwear were very open in their comments about that days practice in the Mess.

Gathering of Lions—November 25-26

It was truly a gala affair. After having been suspended for two years due to Covid everyone was ready for a get together of new and past Lions. Also able to attend this year were MGen Travis Morehen and BGen John Alexander. As usual the buffet was excellent and the only downside was missing the speeches due to the acoustics in the hangar. At our table (photo below) we were joined by Ken and Rosemary Sorfleet. Ken was CO from 1992 to 94, Yves Letourneau and spouse Lise. Yves was a 427 technician with 427 and now works with Bell helicopters at Mirabel and Wayne MacLellan and his daughter Janice Branigan. Wayne was a former Sabre pilot with 427 1n 1959 to 1961 and Janice who is presently an Air Canada Boeing 777 Captain.



AMAZING, SIMPLE HOME REMEDIES: (An excerpt from our free advice blog)

1. AVOID CUTTING YOURSELF WHEN SLICING VEGETABLES BY GETTING SOMEONE ELSE TO HOLD THE VEGETABLES WHILE YOU CHOP.
2. FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE SUFFERERS, SIMPLY CUT YOURSELF AND BLEED FOR A FEW MINUTES, THUS REDUCING THE PRESSURE ON YOUR VEINS. REMEMBER TO USE A TIMER.
3. A MOUSE TRAP PLACED ON TOP OF YOUR ALARM CLOCK WILL PREVENT YOU FROM ROLLING OVER AND GOING BACK TO SLEEP AFTER YOU HIT THE SNOOZE BUTTON.
4. IF YOU HAVE A BAD COUGH, TAKE A LARGE DOSE OF LAXATIVES. THEN YOU'LL BE AFRAID TO COUGH.
5. YOU NEED ONLY TWO TOOLS IN LIFE - WD-40 AND DUCT TAPE. IF IT DOESN'T MOVE AND SHOULD, USE THE WD-40. IF IT SHOULDN'T MOVE AND DOES, USE THE DUCT TAPE.
6. IF YOU CAN'T FIX IT WITH A HAMMER, YOU'VE GOT AN ELECTRICAL PROBLEM.

HEAVY BOMBER ERA



Captain R.C. “Bob” Penrose DFC

Air Cadets, RCAF - 422-427-437 Squadrons, TCA, AC, TC, OWA

Lifetime flying hours - 32,000



Part III— Post-Tour

Following his tour, Bob took a brief test pilot course with Hanley Page. They did first flights of new aircraft and deliveries to various squadrons. Later, he checked out on Lancasters and did similar deliveries to squadrons. There was also an Oxford aircraft at the base which he checked himself out on, and he did some trips with wounded to main hospital centers. In all, Bob tested and ferried some 50 Halifax and Lancasters out of Leeming base until August 15th, 1945.

On August 23rd, Bob and Max Strange volunteered for Far East duty and were posted to Bassingborn, south of Cambridge, to 422 Squadron. This base had been a U.S. 8th Air Force Base and home of the Memphis Belle, a much famed bomber. They formed new crews and started ground school and flight training on Liberator Mark V aircraft. While at Bassingborn, he was sent to an American base at Warton, near Blackpool. He took a course on the Minneapolis Honeywell autopilot. On completion, he hitched a ride to Borington base near London on a U.S. General's Liberator. On takeoff, the right undercarriage collapsed and the aircraft cartwheeled off the runway. They all got out after using a fire axe to open the escape door. After a few drinks, the General provided a DC3 for our trip to Borington. Ironically, it was on this base in 1943 on the same runway that a Liberator took off and crashed into a school in the village of Freckleton, killing some 39 children. The crash also took the lives of 10 airmen and 14 civilians. A new school was built by the G.I.'s and most people on-board the Liberator Bob was on were in fact U.S. army newsmen who had come for the opening of the new school.

Bob and Max Strange joined 437 Squadron. Originally based in India, 437 had become a DC3 transport squadron. After initial training at Odiham and Croydon bases, they were posted to Brussels on October 15th, 1945, where they stayed until June 3, 1946. Bob had a crew of four, navigator, co-pilot and radio operator. They flew army and VIPs to Copenhagen, Hamburg, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Naples and also to the Nuremberg trials. They witnessed two days of seeing the likes of Goering, Hess and other Nazis.

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At Odiham, their London base, and at various other bases, they could exchange ten to twenty pounds of foreign currency so they made frequent trips and could pick up coffee beans and cigarettes for barter on the continent. In Hamburg, at the Atlanta Hotel, they would leave cigarettes in their packs with the hat-check girl and get bottles of Mums champagne in return. In Copenhagen, they met Jan Faistor who had been an underground leader and who showed them his father's venetian blind shop with a secret arsenal of weapons in a loft. During the war, he sabotaged German ships in Hamburg harbour as a frogman. Nuremburg was interesting, but a dangerous city for walking at night in uniform so they walked down the center of streets.

On June 15th, 1946, Bob and others flew six DC3s from Odiham to Prestwick to Reykjavik, Iceland. Then on the 16th, the long trip to Goose Bay, Labrador, via Prince Christian, Greenland. They had four 100-gallon fibre tanks in the fuselage that were gravity-fed and used first. They all made it to Goose Bay with not much fuel to spare. The next day, they went on to Rockcliffe, Ottawa, where they shot the place up at 200 feet. The C.O. was not impressed but they couldn't care less. The C.O. finally relented and said thank you.

Post-War TCA, Air Canada & Family

Upon his return to Vancouver, Bob joined Western Air Command. The C.O., noting Bob's slender six-foot frame that weighed all of 129 pounds, asked Bob if he had been a prisoner of war. Bob replied, No, I was a prisoner of Brussels sprouts. Within three months, Bob was convinced that he could never be a peace-time warrior. Happily, while Bob was at the Vancouver airport with 50 air cadets, a Lancastrian landed from Prestwick. On board was Capt. George Lothian and navigator Pete Powell. Bob had picked Capt. Lothian up one day in 1945 in Prestwick because he had wanted to visit an engineering officer at Leeming Base. Pete Powell went to Vernon Preparatory School when Bob was there in the 1930s and had also been at Leeming after two tours on Pathfinder bombers, and had been a Wing Commander with DSO and DFC plus bar. They told Bob to join Trans Canada Airways (TCA). Two weeks later, Bob joined TCA on November 1st, 1946.

On graduation Bob chose to fly out of Vancouver, then transferred to Montreal and the Transatlantic Division a year later. In late 1947, Bob was first officer on a North Star M.I. en route to London via Sydney, N. S. when their undercarriage struck an unlighted rock obstruction at the runway approach. The aircraft up ended, and an engine and wing caught fire. All passengers and crew got out safely but the aircraft was consumed in flames. Bob returned to Vancouver in 1950 for two years, before returning to Montreal in 1952 and back on the Atlantic run. He was promoted to Captain in 1954 on DC3s. He also joined 401 Reserve Squadron in Montreal, which had Harvards and Vampires to play with. Wendy Reid was the commanding officer.

Bob's life changed forever when in August 1957, at the ripe age of 39, he became engaged to Mary Louise Weir, a stewardess with TCA. They married on November 9th, 1957. As Bob would say, it was the best decision I ever made in my life. In short order, Bob and Marylou had daughter Patricia in December 1958, built a home in Beaconsfield outside Montreal, and then son Robert in October 1960. Bob enjoyed his years in Montreal including happy times spent at the clubs (Montreal Badminton & Squash, Summerlea Golf, Lake Shore Ski) and with wonderful friends. The West beckoned and the family moved to Delta (Tsawwassen) in 1972. Bob and sister Betty enjoyed friendly competition to grow the best sweet peas and roses. As in Montreal, Bob and Marylou continued to host family and friends for countless days and dinners of conversation and celebration.

As a pilot, Bob's reputation was one of a superb pilot and instructor a pilot's pilot. Over his 33 years with TCA/Air Canada, Bob flew most of the aircraft types up to the B-747 in training. In his commercial career he flew the Lockheed 1415 and 1815, the DC-3, North Star, Viscount, DC-9, DC-8 and the B-707. His total commercial flying time was over 29,000 hours. Bob also instructed new pilots and captain conversions for four years, in which time he contributed to the standardization of flight training, both in the air and in the simulator. Bob enjoyed overseas flights to the European continent and the U.K., but some of the most enjoyable time was the nine years spent flying out of Montreal to the Maritimes and Newfoundland. The weather was always a challenge at certain seasons and instrument flying was at a high standard by all pilots who flew the eastern routes. Never to be forgotten were the layovers in Sydney, Cape Breton. In the 1950s and 1960s, nearly all flight crews were adopted by Ritchie and Hazel MacCoy, two wonderful people who welcomed them into their home on layovers. Their name became a legend amongst TCA and Air Canada DC3 and Viscount crews.

Bob was involved with IFALPA for five years and assigned to work on the All Weather Panel and blind landings. This involved work on CAT I, CAT II, and CAT III. At the time, the problem for the pilots was to cool the enthusiasm of industry salesmen and government officials who were eager to accept the inflated claims of manufacturers. During Bob's time with IFALPA, they also introduced a standard lighting system for all airports in the world after much international wrangling. Following Ross Stevenson, Bob was Chairman of the Air Canada Safety Committee for five years. He was responsible for getting amber taxi strip lights implemented. Along flying and IFALPA, Bob was active in CALPA for 15 years. Bob's commitment was never more evident when, as retirement approached, he understandably took a heightened interest in the Air Canada Pilot's Pension Plan. He uncovered a major deficiency that, if it were not addressed, would cost him and his fellow pilots a substantial loss in income in their retirement years. Bob climbed what seemed like an insurmountable mountain of bureaucracy and complacency. In 1977, after eight months of work, over two hundreds of letters, and countless calculations and graphs, he succeeded in having the graduated pension cap addressed and cap raised from \$44,000 to \$60,000.

In August 1978, Bob turned sixty and retired, reluctantly, from Air Canada. He enjoyed every flight and his loyalty to Air Canada never waned. Shortly after his retirement, Wendy Reid called to say that a new airline, Ontario World Air, was starting. This led to a two-month course at Boeing in Seattle on Boeing 707 aircraft. Ontario World Air flew charters over much of the world. It paid poorly but was a wonderful education. Most memorable were the flights out of Singapore, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. These were flights carrying poor and mostly young refugees who had fled Vietnam on boats via the China Seas. There were many wonderful and heartbreaking stories to be told by these people. These flights were staged through Athens, then Dubrovnik, and finally Bahrain. The two aircraft were in seventy-one countries in two years, and Bob was in sixty percent of these countries. Bob left the airline after two years because of poor maintenance standards, and the airline went bankrupt a few months after.

The fact is, Bob never retired. Throughout this life he remained on active duty. He had a lifelong passion for reading, knowledge, and business. Bob was involved in many enterprises, including start-up of a match company. His most important and cherished contribution to enterprise was his role as an active director for daughter Patricia's textile recycling company. Above all, Bob invested in people, and made a fortune in friendships. His life was lived with vigour, integrity, humour, and kindness. A consummate master of ceremonies, Bob engaged one and all with his quick wit and way with words. He was a confident, compassionate leader who always spoke his mind and took a genuine interest in all whom he knew. As his legion of lifelong friends can attest, with Bob in your corner, you knew you had a fierce and loyal advocate. Bob adored Marylou, his love of 48 years. They had a strong sense of identity, both as individuals and as a couple. They could disagree and still laugh about it. Once, when one of two baked potatoes exploded in the oven, Dad remarked, "look at your potato!"; Mum countered, "what makes you think that was mine?" Both broke out laughing. Bob was ever a proud and loving father, and he was Grandpa to cherished grandson William (Will) Robert Penrose, named after his brother Bill. Thinking back over his war years and his good fortune to have survived, Bob would say, I feel every day is a bonus and I am most fortunate to be here with my wonderful family and friends. Bob lived every day like it was a gift and carried with him throughout his life a can do attitude. His motto was "get on with it". Bob died on August 20, 2005, of pulmonary failure. He was 87. Upon learning of Bob's death, fellow pilots whom Bob had instructed 40 years earlier wrote that they had tried to emulate his confidence and professionalism during their careers.

To the very end, Bob was young at heart, reveling in play with grandson Will and talking about how much he wanted to travel into space. Not long before he died, Bob rose at 3 a.m. to watch the Shuttle Discovery land. I just wanted to see them home safely, he said. "Once a pilot, always a pilot".



Ed. Note: I received the following email (slightly shortened) from Robert Penrose, Bob's son, after I had published the first part of Bob's story. It makes an interesting addendum to his father's story.

"Of interest, Ken Schmitz was Dad's navigator. I believe they flew most, if not all, of their ~39 missions together. After my father passed away Aug 20 2005, I would call Ken every Remembrance Day. And whenever I was in Toronto, I'd try to meet with him. I think the last time I met with him at his home in Toronto was in 2009 (he then moved to a care home near Welland, where I also went to see him). In any case, I interviewed him and captured it on digital video. It's just me asking Ken questions and engaging with him for ~90 minutes. Unrehearsed but quite remarkable. Ken passed away some years ago, and I've been meaning to follow-up with his family to ensure they have a copy of the video. He was such an intelligent, thoughtful man (he was a philosophy professor at U of T). Perhaps there's some place where this video (edited) can find a home.

As for his story being submitted to the 427 Association, I'm thinking now that I was mistaken. As you indicate, you got it from RAPCAN. And I must have given it to RAPCAN. I had encouraged my Dad to capture his memories of his life, and he finally did. Then they wove in what my sister, Patricia, and I wrote for my Dad's obit (first and last few paragraphs, parts of which were published in the Globe & Mail, 'Lives Lived', a little more than 6 months after he died).

As I mentioned, the Lion Sqd keeps coming up in all sorts of ways. For example, I recently donated a number of my Dad's framed prints (Halifax, Lancasters), along with war-time books from a friend of Dad's (Spit pilot, Bill Maclean, 1918-2006) to the CFB Comox museum. Bill also had about 30 years of Airforce magazines! I gave these to another colleague (and former Sqd Commander at CFB Comox, Clint Mowbray). As I was packing them, I came upon (by pure chance) the story of Stuart Vallieres and his crew (I think he was at Leeming just ahead of Dad or they might have even overlapped) in the June 25, 2018, Vol 42 No 1 edition. And then I spotted the story in the Winter 2005/2006 Vol 29 No 4 edition about the restoration of the Hallie at RCAF Memorial Museum in Trenton (which my father/mother went to years ago, and my mother/sister/I visited in 2018. I pulled these two magazines aside for safe-keeping. "

Robert Penrose

The Murphy Twins

Two men were sitting next to each other at a bar. After a while, one looks at the other and says, 'I can't help but think, from listening to you, that you're from Ireland.' The other guy responds proudly, 'Yes, I sure am!'

The first one says, 'So am I! And where about in Ireland are ya from?' The other guy answers, 'I'm from Dublin, I am.'

The first one responds, 'So, am I!! And what street did you live on in Dublin?' The other guy says, 'A lovely little area. It was in the west end. I lived on Warbury Street in the old central part of town.' The first one says, 'Faith, and it's a small world. So did I! So did I! And what school did ya go to?'

The other guy answers, 'Well now, I went to Holy Heart of Mary, of course..' The first one gets really excited and says, 'And so did I! Tell me, what year did you graduate?' The other guy answers, 'Well, now, let's see. I graduated in 1964.'

The first man exclaims, 'The Good Lord must be smiling down upon us! I can hardly believe our good luck at winding up in the same pub tonight! Can you believe it? I graduated from Holy Heart of Mary in 1964 myself!'

About this time, Michael walks into the bar, sits down, and orders a beer. Brian, the bartender, walks over to Michael shaking his head and mutters, 'It's going to be a long night tonight.'

Michael asks, 'Why do you say that, Brian?'

Brian answers, 'The Murphy twins are drunk again.'