



ROAR



427 LION SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

PATRONS

G.CAPT. DUDLEY BURNSIDE DSO OBE DFC & BAR

L.GEN. (RET) DONALD MCNAUGHTON CMM CD

M.GEN. (RET) ROBERT CHISHOLM CMM CD

Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 9

December 2000

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

427 Squadron is back in Bosnia again, doing their part to help bring back peace to that war torn country. Deployment began on August 25 with 2 Lions en route, then a further 22 on September 1, followed by 38 on September 5, and a final group of 36 on September 7. A grand total of 98 people are now on duty, including 16 augmentees from other bases. It's a tough grind for the families of these men and women, at home and overseas. This will be 427's third tour of six months over there. We wish them well.

On September 30, 2000, the RCAF Memorial Museum AirPark in Trenton was the scene of two very moving ceremonies. At 1000hrs fifteen wreaths, one per squadron, were laid on a new RCAF Six Group Memorial, bequeathed by Kenneth Duncan Urquhart (1917-1998) 432 Squadron. The monument is in recognition of the men and women who served in 6 Group, on the ground and in the air, and is in honour of those who made the supreme sacrifice for freedom during World War II. It is a beautiful monument, and I suggest you visit the site whenever you are in this vicinity. Your Honorary Colonel had the privilege of laying the 427 Squadron wreath.

At 1330hrs the same day, the Ad Astra Stone Dedication Ceremony took place in this park, with approximately 1500 in attendance. The purpose of this ceremony was to dedicate the over 4600 Ad Astra Stones that have been registered to date by person/s on behalf of others living or dead who served in any of Canada's

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Air Forces.

For more information about the Ad Astra Stones, write to:
RCAF Memorial Museum, CFB Trenton,
PO. Box 1000, Astra ON, K0K 3W0.

This year's Gathering of the Lions took place at Petawawa on the weekend of October 27, 28, and 29. Friday was a washout due to bad weather, but the Meet & Greet event did not dampen the "spirits" of those arriving. The wartime Lions present included: Jean Fontaine, Allan Todd, Weldy Moffatt & spouse, Jim Moffat, Stan Miller, Bob Graham, John Turnbull, & myself. We also had three Lions from the Sabre era: Arthur "Sask" Wilford, Bill Hind, & Wayne MacLellan. For the first time, the Military Mess Dinner (black tie) included all ranks and trades. It was an overwhelming success.

Visiting Lions included six former Commanding Officers who were present for the parade on Saturday. This was also a day for presentations of medals and awards, followed by the Children's Birthday Party, celebrating in their way, 427 Squadron's 58th Anniversary. There were lots of candles on three large Birthday Cakes baked by family members. The kids (and I) had a real 'blow-out'.

A special 'thank you' to Mira Quinn of MGM for sending us some very interesting items for door prizes. We are always pleased that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios remember their adopted LION Squadron.

427's Commanding Officer, LCol. Randy Meiklejohn has invited me to join him at the #1 Wing Commanders Training Session in Kingston in late November. Time and space permitting I will have more on that later.

It has been a busy year, and I foresee an even busier one coming up. Remember it is now time to renew your membership, and to encourage more of the post war Lions to come aboard. You seem to be enjoying this newsletter, so let's keep in touch. We need your input.

Season's Greetings to all.

A.L. d'Eon

Note: A photograph of the RCAF Six Group Memorial mentioned in the Chairman's report is shown on page 7 of this newsletter.

427 LION SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

427 Lion Squadron has a proud history. By organizing our members, past and present, into a formal Association in the Spring of 1996, the intent was to help to ensure that the achievements, traditions and memories of this famous squadron are maintained and perpetuated

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES

The membership still remains strong, although it was a disappointment that some Regular Members did not renew their cards. Welcome to those of the "one engine era" that came aboard.

As I made mention in a previous issue, for the regular members, your membership is due **01 January 2001**. This makes record keeping much easier, and less time is required for checking. I trust you fill my mailbox renewals in January!

Just a note on how the funds are holding up. It costs \$650 for each mailing of our quality newsletter (stamps, type setting, printing, and paper). We have enough funds to see us through the next year. Now, we have to think of the year after, and we are looking to you for ways that will keep this publication going. Ideas???

By the time this gets to the post office, the elections should be over, and allow you all to ease your thoughts to the next event ... the arrival of SC. And on that note, I hope you have had a good year, and wishing you a big airplane load of good things for the festive season.

Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year.
Stan Miller, Treasurer & Membership Chairman

PETAWAWA REPORT

Greetings to all Lions! The past few months at 427 Squadron have been exciting, and many changes have taken place. The first big adjustment is in the form of having fewer personnel in Squadron lines, since close to 100 members have been deployed for a six month tour of duty in Velika-Kladusa, Bosnia-Herzegovina. They are supporting ROTO 7 Operation PALLADIUM, with eight helicopters and are involved in a variety of tasks, such as command and liaison, reconnaissance, VIP trips and medical evacuation. They left Canada in late August /early September, and we expect to have them home by the end of April.

The remainder of the unit has been busy working with the RCMP and OPP on counter-drug operations, heavily supporting Land Force Central Area's Reserve Summer Exercise, and are now starting to support training for 3 RCR Battle Group's upcoming deployment in April 2001. Needless to say just when we think we are going to get a break, something else jumps into the forefront.

Another set of changes in staff positions: Maj. Rick MLaughlin is the acting DCO during the deployment; Capt. Frank Gadoury has taken over as Adjutant; and Capt. Cindy Gagnon has assumed the responsibilities as Administration Officer.

The final bit of news, especially for those who were unable to make it, was the Gathering of the Lions 2000. We had several wartime Lions and three SPAADS (RCAF Sabre Pilots Association of the Air Division Squadrons) grace us with their presence; also, former Commanding Officers LCol Guertin, Col (ret)Campbell; BGen(ret)Gosden; Col (ret)Foster; Maj (ret) Ireland; and past Hon. Cols LGen(McNaughten, and MGen(ret)Chisholm who were on hand to chat with past and present members of 427 Squadron.

A "Fly-In" Meet & Greet on Friday, October 27, in the hangar proved very successful, and it was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends. Saturday, October 28 was a perfect day for a parade with Honorary Colonel Al d'Eon as reviewing Officer, followed by a reception and Squadron Birthday Party for all the kids. The evening hours were taken up by a scrumptious all-ranks Mess Dinner (prepared by none other than 427 cooks PO2 Lohnes, MCpl Lefebvre, and Cpl Tucker) with the Honorary Colonel as Guest speaker. Overall, it was a lovely weekend with many fond memories for all. Many thanks to Capt. Sonoski, MCpl Clarke and their team of volunteers for coordinating this year's event.

Regardless of our day to day operations, we always want to stay in touch with the rest of the "Pride". Please feel free to contact Capt. Cindy Gagnon at (613) 687-5511 ext. 7712; SCWO Pat Moreau at (613) 687-5511 ext.7817.

Capt.Cindy Gagnon Personnel Admin. Officer

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USA	<i>Open</i>
Petawawa Liaison	Capt. Cindy Gagnon CWO Pat Moreau Capt. Frank Gadoury

We Will Remember Them

Jacques E. (Rocky) Durocher,

Ewart R. Forde,

Joseph Massicotte,

Clement Tousignant

Jacques E. (Rocky) Durocher,

We were saddened to learn of the recent death of Jacques. E. (Rocky) Durocher after a lengthy illness. Rocky was one of the original members of 427 Squadron and its first Gunnery Leader at Croft. He flew operationally with W/C Dudley Burnside and was wounded on the Le Creusot raid in June 1943. After a period in hospital he returned to the Squadron in his former capacity as Gunnery Leader and crewed up with W/C Bob Turnbull who was by then Commanding Officer. Rocky completed his tour and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Post war, Rocky attended McGill University and graduated as a professional engineer. Throughout the years his work carried him to many countries around the globe and he continued as a consultant after retirement.

Rocky was a strong supporter of the 427 Squadron Association and attended many of the Lion Gatherings at Petawawa and Allied Air Forces Reunions. Rocky Durocher will be sadly missed. We convey our sympathy to his wife Jacqueline and family.



In Memoriam

There is a mini-museum in the Olde Hide House, a former tannery and now a retail establishment, in the town of Acton, Ontario. Quite by chance, the writer spotted a collection of RCAF artifacts enclosed in a display case bearing the name of Pilot Officer

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David G. Wilson, 427 Squadron, who was killed on operations on the night of July 18, 1944. Along with his operational wing, medals and other memorabilia, is the letter from King George VI to the parents of the young air gunner.

This being the Season of Remembrance, it seems appropriate to publish the letter received by the Wilson family. It is typical of the thousands of such letters sent to next-of-kin.

Buckingham Palace

The Queen and I offer you our heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow.

We pray that your country's gratitude for a life so nobly given in its service may bring you some measure of consolation.

George R. I.

Contributed by Vern White

RCAF Six Group Memorial



This new Six Group Monument was dedicated on September 30, 2000 at the RCAF Memorial Museum AirPark, Trenton, Ontario. Fifteen wreaths, one per squadron, were laid in memory of those who did not return.

SALUTE TO GROUNDCREW

In previous issues we have tried to publish at least one groundcrew article contributed by one of our readers. So much has been written about aircrew, that this time around we've decided to salute the men and women of groundcrew (using material from a variety of sources.)

History of the Royal Air Force WW II

Sustaining in the fight the pilots and crews of the Royal Air Force and its Dominion and Allied elements was a vast and extremely skilful force on the ground, all of whom were determined never to fail the aircrews whose lives depended on the efficiency of their work.

Allied Air Forces Reunion 1988

Groundcrew were one of the honoured groups and this is an excerpt from the program.

Groundcrew formed the largest, the most vital and the most unsung portion of the Airforce. They served everywhere, and in every conceivable trade. Without the groundcrew, not an aircraft could have been flown, not a gun fired, not a bomb dropped, not a pound of cargo carried. It was their technical excellence that made the RCAF's good reputation what it was during the war. Groundcrew dedication is legend but they have really never received the proper respect and gratitude they deserve. We will so honour them at the '88 Reunion.

Petawawa Painting

In the early days of the Gathering of Lions at CFB Petawawa, G/Capt. Dudley Burnside was an honoured visitor. Being a member of the Guild of Aviation Artists he felt that he would like to present an original oil painting to 427 Squadron to mark the occasion. He arrived at the writer's home from Windsor, England with the painting carefully packaged. Having seen some of his other works e.g. the Red Arrows over Niagara Falls, we expected the painting would be an aircraft in flight. When the package was opened it revealed a Wellington bomber on the tarmac with the bomb-laden trolleys in the foreground and the crew of armourers and other trades hard at work preparing the aircraft for the night's operation. It was a beautiful piece of work and Dudley Burnside explained that he wanted the painting to be a tribute to groundcrew.

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The importance of groundcrew and support staff is no less today and we salute all the men and women who help to keep the Griffons, the Hercs and the CF 18's in the air.

Vern White

HALIFAX DEADLINE?

A General Meeting of the Board of Directors of the RCAF Memorial Museum in Trenton, Ontario, was held on September 20. Plans and progress of the new addition that will house the Halifax was discussed at length.

It appears that April 2003 will be the opening of the new structure. Bill Tytula, Project Manager of NA337's restoration hopes to have most of the aircraft completed and displayed by then. The inside installations may not be complete, but he is hopeful about the rest. There is still much to be done, but the progress is very encouraging. If you haven't seen the 'Hali' for a while, it's worth a trip to Trenton.

AIRCREW MEMORIAL PLANNED

During WW2 more than 25,000 RCAF Aircrew were sent overseas, and approximately 14,500 of those gave their lives in the cause of freedom. To recognize this great sacrifice by young Canadians, the Aircrew Memorial Association has commissioned a life size bronze statue in their memory. So far this group has raised \$7,000 toward the \$70,000 needed toward building this 1.8 metre statue. When completed it will be placed at the new Military Aviation Museum at CFB Greenwood, Nova Scotia. Dedication of this memorial is expected to take place in July 2002. The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency has granted them status as a registered charity.

Donations or requests for further information should be forwarded to:

Maj. (ret) C. J. Dunbar,
The Aircrew Memorial Association,
86 Hazelholme Dr., Halifax, NS. B3M 1N5.
Tel: (902) 443-0270. e-mail: cjdunbar@istar.ca.

BAD LUCK PHOTO - 1945

So many of us are superstitious, and develop strange habits. For instance, some baseball players won't walk between the catcher and the umpire; hotels and office buildings omit the 13th floor; pedestrians turn around at the sight of a black cat at night; and some people refuse to have their picture taken for fear of losing their souls. This Bad Luck Story is true.

On January 5, 1945, at 427 Squadron Leeming, Yorkshire, Squadron Leader B.B. "Jersey" Crew, DFC from Wawota, Saskatchewan, and his crew were preparing to take off for a bombing operation to Hanover, Germany. Since I was not on "ops" that night, I met them following briefing, camera in hand to wish them well, and promised to have breakfast with them when they returned. Only three of the seven-man crew stayed behind for the snap shot, the others had already boarded the van for the aircraft. However, at first the bomb-aimer, F/O Hugh Campbell of Cornwall, Ontario wanted no part of it. He simply refused to have his picture taken. The Wireless Operator, F/L Doug Johnston DFC of River Hebert, Nova Scotia, didn't object, nor did their skipper "Jersey" Crew. Campbell wasn't worried about losing his soul... "it's just bad luck to have your picture taken before an op!" he shouted. However, with a little persuasion but with an unforgiving grimace, the man we called "Soup" Campbell finally obliged.

That evening "Fifteen 427 Halifaxes took off for Hanover, Germany. One did not return. The official report states that a target assessment of the raid was impossible. Most crews heard the Master Bomber, and several large explosions were reported. Aircraft "Y" NR piloted by S/L S.G. Crew (second tour) "B" Flight Commander did not come back. " It was a long night, and a long day; waiting and hoping they would show up. They could have been forced down somewhere in the UK, or at sea. There is always hope. Eventually we surmised they might have been shot down, and taken prisoners of war.

When I finally got the prints from the film shot that day, I ordered an additional seven copies of that photo. If the crew survived, they would each get a memento of that terrible night. But it wasn't until the 1983 Allied Air Forces Reunion in Toronto that I finally located Hugh Campbell. It was he who told me where to find Doug Johnston. I then learned for the first time, that Jersey Crew had been killed, along with Kelway, Smith and Osler, the RAF members of the crew. The only other survivor was their navigator, Johnny Dodge, from Middleton, Nova Scotia. However, as luck would have it, Cort Crew, Jersey's brother who was a rigger on 427,

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was also attending the '83 Reunion, and he too was given a copy of this "Bad Luck Photo" taken 39 years earlier. What a reunion that was. Needless to say, we shared a mug or two.

To bring this story up to date, Hugh Campbell, and Cort Crew have since passed away. Doug Johnston is living in Toronto, and Johnny Dodge in Nova Scotia. Doug has written a book "From Air Gunner to Prisoner of War", published in 1994. Unfortunately Doug does not have any extra copies.

A.L.d'Eon



Bad Luck Photo -1945; 427 Squadron, Leeming, Yorkshire.

**(Left to right) Hugh Campbell, Bomb Aimer;
"Jersey" Crew, Pilot;
Doug Johnston, Wireless Operator.**



MAX ELLIS -- SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

This is a story about Max Ellis. The only connection with 427 Squadron is that the writer knew Max during WW II when we were guests at the Stalag Hilton.

I first met Max in June 1943 in a civilian jail in Amsterdam where we were awaiting transportation to Germany. When I first saw Max I couldn't believe he was air crew. He never revealed his age but his grizzled features and general appearance made him look like a man well on in his 40's. After attending Sandhurst Military College and service in the British Army, he became a soldier of fortune and toured the world. Most noteworthy was a five-year hitch in the French Foreign Legion which in those days was one tough outfit.

With the onset of war, Max found his way back to Britain and somehow talked his way into the RAF and eventually into air crew. Why not the army is a mystery. At any rate he became a top-notch air gunner on a Pathfinder Squadron but like so many others was shot down and became a POW.

In Stalag Luft 3 at Sagan, Max stayed pretty much to himself and in his own quiet way was always casing the joint with escape uppermost in his mind. After six months in Centre Compound we were transferred to a satellite camp at Belaria. Actually it was just a collection of huts situated on a hill a few miles from Sagan. We had been there only a short time when Max saw his chance. He noticed that the guards at Belaria did not always thoroughly search the horse-drawn wagons leaving the camp. Late on the afternoon of March 24, 1944, Max managed to crawl under a wagon and suspend himself as best he could. Luckily the guards at the gate made only a cursory check and waved the wagon through. At an opportune time Max dropped to the ground and rolled off to the side of the road.

When the wagon and driver were out of sight, Max took off across the fields and in the dusk found a barn where he could hide for the night. He slept fitfully and was awakened in the early morning hours by the barking of dogs and much guttural shouting. He peered through an opening in the barn siding and saw dozens of troops and civilian police milling about. I remember Max telling me later that his first thoughts were " by Jove, these Jerries don't fool around when a chap escapes".

Max was re-captured and taken to a jail in the town of Goerlitz some 40 miles to the south. The story doesn't end there. What Max didn't know was that on the same night he was hiding in the barn, 76 POW's were breaking out of the North Compound at Sagan a couple of miles away. Quite by accident he was caught up in the

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huge net of searchers combing the area.

The German authorities from the High Command went ballistic when they learned of the massive escape from Sagan. Consequently they gave Max a hard time in the belief that he was one of the "Great Escapers". Eventually the Germans chose to believe that Max was a lone escaper from Belaria and he was returned to Sagan to serve 28 days in the cooler.

The tragic events following the Great Escape are well known in which 50 of the 76 escaping POW's were murdered in the days following recapture. Post-war investigation revealed that more than a dozen of those murdered were incarcerated in the same prison at Goerlitz, and at the same time that Max Ellis was being held there. **He was lucky to escape from Belaria and luckier still to be returned to us alive!**

Vern White

THE DOC PAYNE STORY

This is a brief overview of the remarkable aviation career of a former Commanding Officer of 427 Squadron. The story begins in Leamington, Ontario where Donald M. Payne was born on April 11, 1925. There are many noteworthy events, the first being at Camp Borden in September 1943 when Doc received his wings. He was soon on his way overseas where he moved quickly through the usual training units. Doc was posted to No. 2 Squadron RAF, first flying Spits and then rocket-firing Typhoons. This was an exciting and hairy business in support of the ground forces in Northwest Europe. When Doc completed his tour on Tiffies he had barely reached the ripe old age of 19. Rather than return to Canada as he could have, he wangled a posting to train on twins. From this point he flew Oxfords and Wellingtons leading to conversion to Lancasters and a posting to 428 Squadron in 6 Group.

The former Typhoon pilot was now a full - fledged bomber captain who completed his first dozen operations successfully. It was on Friday the 13th in the month of April 1945 that his luck ran out. While target marking over Kiel, Doc's Lanc was clobbered and on the way home was hit again by ack-ack over Heligoland. Heavily damaged, they headed for Sweden but didn't make it. The aircraft started coming apart and Doc ditched in the North Sea under difficult circumstances. All but one of the seven - man crew managed to scramble into the dinghy. They were exposed to the

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elements for an incredible 12 days and finally drifted ashore at the mouth of the Elbe. Six emaciated airmen were rescued by a German naval vessel and taken ashore. They were in grim shape and extensive medical treatment and convalescence followed in German, Belgian and British hospitals. In recognition of outstanding skill, resolution and devotion to duty, F/L D.M. Payne was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Back in Canada Doc Payne spent seven weeks with a nutritionist who was trying to learn from the 12 day ordeal in the North Sea. In early 1946 Doc rejoined the RCAF as an LAC and in due course had his commission restored. He helped re-open St. Hubert and was later posted to Lachine where he joined 426 Squadron. By now it was 1951 and the Korean War was on. The Thunderbird Squadron was selected to be part of the Korean airlift. Doc Payne flew North Stars for more than a year on the long run across the North Pacific. On one occasion he managed to nurse his heavily-laden North Star to a safe landing after losing an engine hundreds of miles from base. For this he was awarded the Air Force Cross.

In the next few years there was work in Aircrew Selection, Staff appointments and pilot training where he learned to fly Sabres. In 1959 he was posted to Zweibrucken, Germany and was appointed Commanding Officer of 427 Squadron where he served for more than a year. He was the last C.O. of the Lion Squadron with the rank of Squadron Leader. He left 427 in June 1960 and for the next four years served in Operations at Air Division HQ. It was an exciting time in the Air Division when the squadrons took on a new role flying the CF-104 and while at Metz he logged time on the Starfighter. Doc left Europe in June 1964.

Back in Canada Doc served at Airforce bases at Winnipeg, Comox and Edmonton in a variety of capacities. During this period he learned to fly helicopters. While at Edmonton he made 93 parachute jumps. He reasoned that as C.O. of a squadron supporting the Airborne, he should know how it feels to be one of them. Doc retired from the Airforce in 1974 after 32 years of service. In the post service period he operated a helicopter business for more than 10 years. Taking a leaf from Stan Miller's book, Doc is still flying - at present it's DAKs and DC 6Bs. He resides on Vancouver Island and makes sure that he finds time to attend the SPAADS Reunions since he has especially fond memories of the Sabre era.

(This account of Doc Payne's remarkable career is all too brief but it is a beginning. --Notes prepared by Vern White)

RULES OF THE AIR

- Every takeoff is optional. Every landing is mandatory.
- Always try to keep the number of landings you make equal to the number of takeoffs you've made.
- If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is, unless you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then they get bigger again.
- Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing is what's dangerous.
- The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
- A "good" landing is one you can walk away from. A "great" landing is one after which they can use the plane again.
- Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another airplane going in the opposite direction.
- Remember, gravity is not just a good idea. It's the law. And it's not subject to repeal.

A DAY IN HISTORY

26/6/43

Nine aircraft were detailed for a bombing attack on Cologne.

P/O Morton returned to Chipping Warden after crossing the Dutch Coast due to his starboard outer engine failing. P/O Crew and Sgt. Henry, Sgt. Johnson, and F/Lt Tubman landed safely at Chipping Warden. Sgt. Schmitt landed wheels-up at Chipping Warden due to undercarriage control having been shot away by flak.

F/Lt Ganderton and his crew baled out over England. On crossing the coast on his way to the target his aircraft was shot up very badly by an enemy fighter, but he nursed it back to England. Not having enough controls left to effect a landing the whole crew baled out. Two members of the crew, P/O Soeder and F/S Newcombe were taken to hospital with slight injuries.

Sgt. Biggs landed at Wing, and P/O Arnot landed at Dunsdon, very badly shot up by flak.

Source: 427 Sqdn. War Diary



OOPS!

Corrections in ROAR July, 2000:

- Page 7, first line should read... *On August 1, 1952 the Lions were reactivated, etc...*
- Page 11 in photo caption, "the gentleman (?)", is S/L. Wayne Fisher, President of RCAF 800 Wing facilities in which the Aircrew Association Luncheon was held.

