



FERTE MANUS CERTAS

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

Number 13

December 2002

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This issue of ROAR has been extended to 20 pages, and will contain special coverage of the celebrations of our 60th Anniversary. Can you believe it? There are still some of us around that served on this squadron at its beginning...1942, Croft, Yorkshire, flying Wellingtons. In fact there were 18 "bomber boys" at this Gathering of the Lions, sharing stories with the F86, CF104, and Helicopter jockeys. Some of those stories were dillies! So, read on.

Those that organized and worked at the Gathering did a magnificent job. To the scribes that contributed to this issue, Lt.Col Eddie Haskins, Capt.Cindy Gagnon, Col.(ret.) Phil Campbell, FO(ret.) Richard Dunn, Capt. Tyler Roberts, I say thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to write about this great weekend. All of us from wartime, fighter era, and post war years thoroughly enjoyed this entire Jubilee Year.

As you know there was a Change of Command at 427 Squadron Petawawa this past summer, with LtCol. Randy Meiklejohn handing over command to LtCol. Mike Dabros, and both of these men played a major role in the ultimate success of this Gathering. As one left the scene, the other took over. Very professional.

To everybody at 427 Squadron, many thanks for a great weekend.

Ferte Manus Certas

Al d'Eon



A LION IN HOLLYWOOD

If any of you were watching the OSCAR awards earlier this year, you might have seen Arthur Hiller picking up the Lifetime Achievement Award. Originally from Edmonton, AB, he joined the RCAF and became a Navigator, and joined the crew piloted by John Mulvihill of 427 Squadron. After the war Arthur joined the CBC, and later NBC, producing TV shows such as Alfred Hitchcock Presents, Gunsmoke, and The Careless Years. Among the 30 feature films he directed were Love Story, Man of La Mancha, W.C.Fields & Me, The Babe, and other great films. He later became president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He was also honoured in Toronto this year by being inducted into the Canada Walk Of Fame. His star shines brightly now in the sidewalks of this city's Theatre district. Arthur is a member of the 427 Lion Squadron Association, and enjoys reading ROAR. It brings back fond memories. He and his family live in Beverly Hills, California.

His famous quote: "What everyone says is true - you have to be lucky."

HALIFAX UPDATE

The restoration of Halifax NA 337 at the RCAF Memorial Museum, Trenton, Ontario, has a new look. This aircraft has just been turned 90 degrees in the repair hangar to gain enough width to allow the outer wing sections to be installed following restoration. These sections from the outer engine mounts to the wing tips have been in storage, and will soon be under restoration.

The plexiglas nose section is still at the Yorkshire Air Museum waiting installation of the new nose. "We are in our seventh year now, and it looks like we are going to be close to the original estimate of a 10 year project", says Bill Tytula, Project Manager.

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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Cartoons by 'Muff' Mills and Graphics by Michael Cleland

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

It has been reassuring to see a net gain in the Membership List this past year. It is encouraging to have the post WW2 Lions coming back into the den. There is lots of room for the many still homeless! It was great getting together at the last Gathering of the Lions, and sleep was not a high item on the "to do list"! Like old times.

This will be my last note to Roar as Membership Chairman. Even the PM is retiring?? It is with great pleasure to introduce Mr. A.W. "Sask" Wilford as the incoming Treasurer and Membership Chairman. "Sask" will serve us well. His address is RR #2, Hillsburgh, Ont. N0B 1Z0. Phone 519-855-6268,

A note on finances. Since it was last mentioned, there has been a number of donations to the Association. I thank you for that. Our new treasurer will no doubt have comments in the next publication of Roar.

Work (some call it that) for me will continue at Classic Wings Inc. Oshawa. With the onset of cooler weather, only the Harvards will be flying all winter. Going by Oshawa, drop in (off Taunton Road, north side) I would be pleased to take you flying, or even for a chat and coffee!

Wishing you all continuing good health, and have a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Stan Miller, Retiring Treasurer and membership Chairman

LIONS FIRST BIRTHDAY PARTY

Lion Squadron birthday parties had their origin at Leeming, Yorks in November 1943 and have been going strong ever since. It was an outstanding success as reported in the RCAF Overseas newspaper Wings Abroad by radarman Cpl. F.C. James.

There was a great turnout of former Lions including W/C Dudley Burnside adding immeasurably to the success of the party. At a full dress parade Air Vice-Marshal G. E. Brookes presented W/C Turnbull with the squadron crest, a lion rampant on a maple leaf background. The squadron's motto "Ferte Manus Certas" was inscribed below the crest. The A.V.M. congratulated the squadron in its fine record of operational sorties amassed in its first year of operation and noted that two C.G.Ms, 15 D.F.Cs and six D.F.Ms had been awarded to members of the squadron. Badges were presented to every member having two months' service with the squadron.

A visiting RAF entertainment troupe kicked off a superb variety show followed by a production titled "More Bombs on the Target". The actors consisting mainly of squadron NCO's were brilliantly entertaining in portraying the C.O., Flight Commanders, Gunnery Leader, Nav Leader and the rest of the brass. It was one great party and set the pattern for Lion Gatherings in the six decades to follow.



FROM GEORGE SWEANOR, COLORADO SPRINGS.

In the turmoil of 11 Sept 2001, Air Traffic Controllers in Canada did a superb job in handling and diverting to Canadian aerodrome hundreds of aircraft denied their US destinations. Well, there was also among us one BGen Eric Findley who as NORAD Director of Operations, so flawlessly organized and directed hundreds of aircraft and ships including four carrier battle groups that our Governor General presented him with the Meritorious Service Cross.

("Rick" Findley was 427 Tac Hel CO 1988-90)

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

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N. Ontario	Robert G. (Bob) Middlemiss 181 Collier St., Apt. 201 Barrie, ON. L4M 5L6 Tel: (705) 737-5435 (CF 104 era)
Ottawa	Allan Todd 568 David St., Buckingham, PQ. J8L 2A7 Tel: (819) 986-5865
Manitoba	Ian C. Thomson 1027-1630 Henderson Hwy. Winnipeg MB R2G 2B9 Tel: (204) 339-6883 Fax: same
Saskatchewan	Weldon (Weldy) Moffatt 1112 College Ave., Regina SK. S4P 1A8 Tel: (306) 522-9938 Fax: (306) 757-5599
Alberta	Open
B. C.	Rev. Derek S. Salter P. O. Box 433 Okanagan Falls, BC VOH 1R0 Tel: (205) 497-5172
USA	Open
Petawawa Liaison	Capt. Frank Gadoury Capt. Cindy Gagnon CWO Dennis Becker



WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM

Fred Birchall

John Stewart Gordon

Earl N. Jackson

Joseph Massicotte

W.E. Muirhead

Colin Sonoski

Thomas W. Van Scoy

The Air Force and civilian communities were saddened to learn of the sudden death of Captain Colin Sonoski on July 18, 2002 as a result of a helicopter crash at Goose Bay, Labrador. At the time, Colin was serving on 444 Squadron having been posted there from 427 Squadron in December 2000. Colin joined the Canadian Forces in 1988 and was posted to 427 Squadron in March 1991. During the next nine plus years Colin flew Kiowa, Huey and Griffon helicopters and was regarded by his peers and subordinates for his excellent piloting skills and his knowledge of Tactical Aviation. Colin was known for his great sense of humour and down to earth nature. Colin will be long remembered for his leadership role in being personally involved in the organization of several noteworthy Gatherings of the Lions. It is said that Colin hoped one day to return to Petawawa and to once again enjoy the fellowship of the Lions in proximity to his beloved Algonquin Park which was the site of the recent scattering of his ashes.

Colin is survived by his wife Sharon Singleton and children Jenna and Liam, and his father Frank who served in Bomber Command in WW II. To Colin's devoted family and his wide circle of comrades and friends we extend our sincere sympathy.



Group photo following Sat. ceremonies Hangar #3 Petawawa

LIONS CELEBRATE 60th ANNIVERSARY 1942 - 2002

The Lion's Den was warm and welcoming at this year's 60th Anniversary Gathering of the Lions. Over 120 Lions and guests joined the current members of 427 Squadron in celebrating this milestone anniversary on the weekend of October 25-27, 2002. Lions from the wartime, Sabre, Starfighter, and tactical aviation eras arrived in Petawawa from all over North America to



Friends meet & greet: Hank Siemens and Don Buchanan.

remember the past and connect with the present. The Gathering was all the more intimate owing to the participation of spouses, family, and friends of Lions, who have always contributed so much to the spirit of the squadron.

The Gathering commenced with the Friday evening Meet & Greet, hosted in 3 Hangar on the 427 Squadron flight line, where Honorary Colonel Al

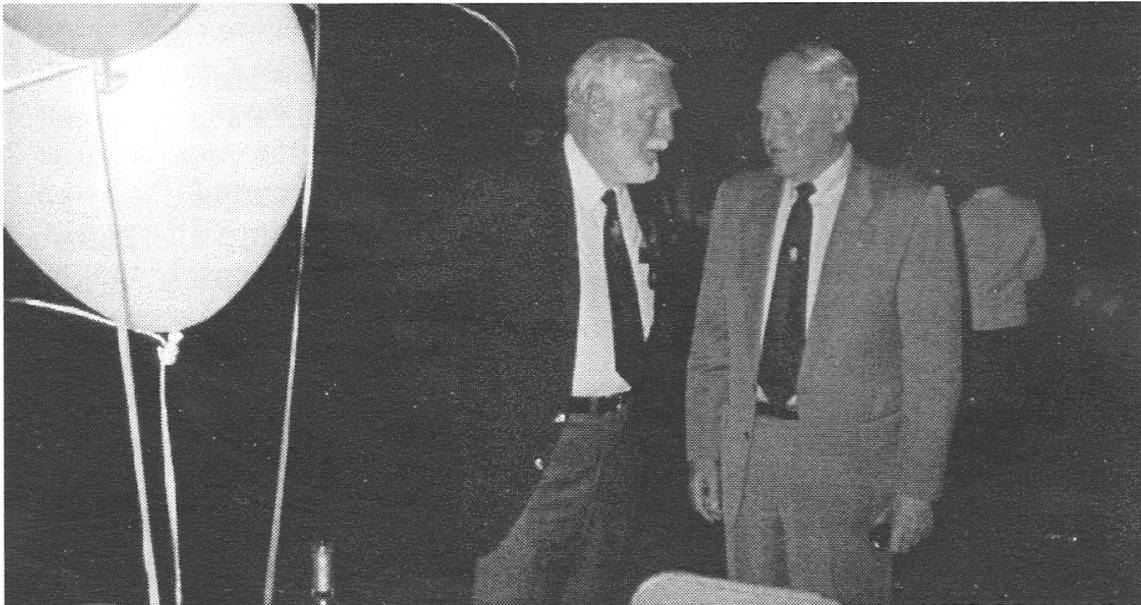
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d'Eon officially launched the weekend's festivities. Featured in the hangar was a CH-146 Griffon helicopter painted in a stunning anniversary livery with original WWII nose art and tail markings. Also on display were pieces of squadron memorabilia spanning the various eras, including vintage WWII uniforms worn by current members of 427 Squadron. The highlight, however, was the lively conversation and warm company of all those in attendance.



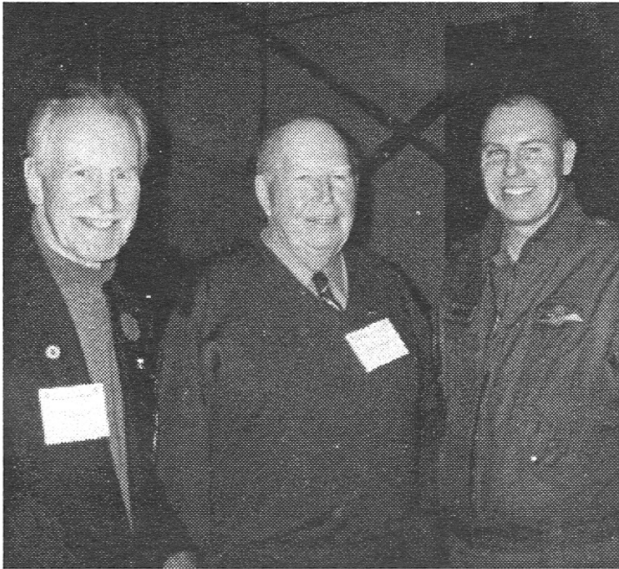
Two old friends meet again: Roy Inkster & Holger Magnusson.



Derek Salter and Bob Chisholm reminisce about their early days with 427 Squadron.

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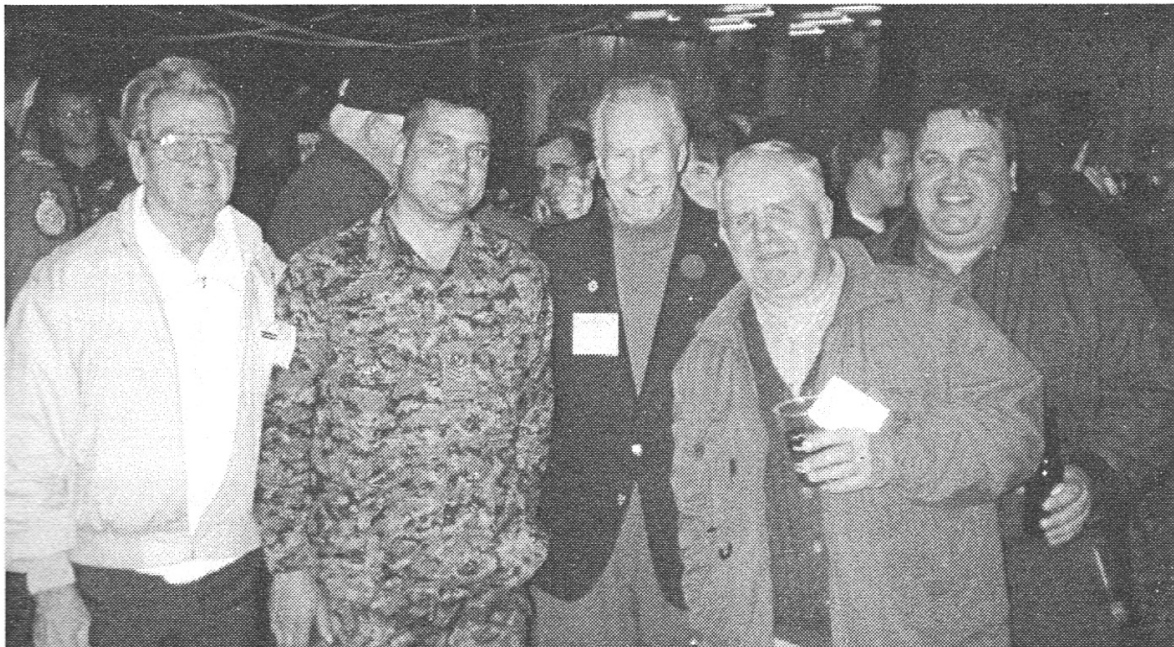
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Al d'Eon and Bob Graham get acquainted with 427 Squadron's new Commanding officer.

The official parade was held on Saturday morning inside 3 Hangar, with HCol d'Eon acting as the Reviewing Officer. The dedication of the Tactical Aviation Memorial at the Kiowa helicopter monument was quite moving, with the main address being delivered by Col (Ret'd) Phil Campbell. Unfortunately, the planned fly-past of two Canadian Griffons and two American Kiowas could not take place due to the weather, but the rain and snow added its own sense of solemnity to the proceedings.

Saturday evening's activities rekindled the air of celebration to the weekend with a Dinner & Dance. Reverend Salter, the 427 Sqn Association padre, delivered the blessing after which the 270 attendees were treated to a hot and delicious meal prepared by 427 Squadron's own cooks. The after-dinner speeches were inspired and inspiring, reinforcing the ties between all of the eras of 427 Squadron: wartime was given by Jim Moffat,



Holger Magnusson & Al d'Eon get reacquainted with Gerry Ireland & a couple of "heavies" of the Lion Squadron.

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Sabre by Sask Wilford (and the rest of his formation), Starfighter by Bob Middlemiss, early tactical aviation by Gerry Ireland, Griffon by Randy Meiklejohn, and the last words by HCol d'Eon and LCol Mike Dabros. Ready for a party, the well-fed Lions then danced into the wee hour to the fabulous 7-piece band imported from Kingston. The extra hour afforded by Daylight Saving Time was not wasted by the dedicated party-goers who stayed for the Disc Jockey and closed the bar.

Sunday Brunch was hosted at the Normandy Officers' Mess overlooking the Ottawa River and the Laurentian mountains. The sun finally emerged to bid the Lions farewell, which enabled the American Kiowa crews to fly by the Mess and do the same. HCol d'Eon closed the weekend's celebrations with a heartwarming speech reminding us all of just what a wonderful family is the squadron of Lions.

The 60th Anniversary Committee thanks all who attended for their patience and help, and hopes that everyone found the Gathering enjoyable. For those who could not attend, but who sent their good wishes (which were circulated as much as possible within the squadron), the Committee sends its warmest regards in return and hopes that you will keep in touch. For those who donated memorabilia to the 427 Squadron collection, please accept our deepest thanks and know that your legacy will be well-preserved.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the next Gathering.

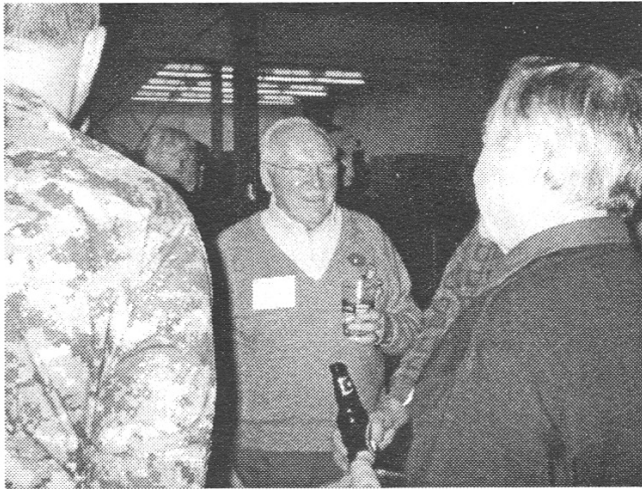
Capt. Tyler Brooks



AIRCREW MEMORIAL UNVEILED

Governor General Adrienne Clarkson joined several hundred people, including veterans and current members of the armed forces at 14 Wing Greenwood, NS recently to unveil the new Aircrew Memorial which was commissioned by a committee of the Western Nova Scotia Branch of the Aircrew Association. It was sculptured by Peter Bustin, who also created the sailor monument in Halifax. The \$70,000 cost of the project was met mainly through private donations.

THE GATHERING OF LIONS SABRE REPORT



Bob Middlemiss and “Sask” Wilford share a brew at the Meet & Greet.

The festivities commemorating the 60th anniversary of 427 Squadron commenced with the Friday afternoon “Meet-and-Greet” at the squadron hangar. Despite the duty roster being somewhat stretched with half the personnel deployed to Bosnia, the organization was thorough and efficient. Archives on display included many photos from the Sabre era.

There were at least a dozen Sabre Lions in attendance including Hank Siemens of 427 Maintenance and about 20 wartime Lions. Both groups were accompanied by a fine turnout of ladies. To help celebrate the 60th, no fewer than seven former Commanding Officers of 427 Squadron answered the call, including Don McNaughton (439 Sabre) and Bob Middlemiss, the first CO of the CF104 era. The enthusiastic response from Lions covering a span of nearly six decades was indeed gratifying.

Overnight the weather changed from blue sky, to low cloud with wet snow. Suitably attired for the inclement weather, we were pleasantly surprised to find the Saturday parade was inside. Al d'Eon, a founding member of the wartime squadron received the salute as Honourary Colonel.

Following the awards and a light lunch, we proceeded to the base entrance to dedicate the “Kiowa-on-a-stick,” or as the CO later called it, the “Benzene Budgie.” As the squadron is now equipped



Jim Moffat & Holger Magnusson check their log books.

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Al d'Eon presents medals and awards to serving Lions.

with Griffons, visiting American Kiowas were scheduled for a fly past, which regrettably, was canceled due to the low ceiling.

The evening all-ranks dinner included informative and amusing speakers from the four eras, the first being Jim Moffat with his harrowing tale of evasion during WW II. Ted Hessel followed with a moving recital of "Ode to the Sabre." On behalf of Jim Bridges, Sask Wilford proffered two rare Sabre photos and then, with theatrical flair, commanded "Stopgap Charlie, echelon right," whereupon the Sabre contingent assembled for presentation of a framed "Sabre Scissors."

In the recent issue of "Roar," Bob Middlemiss had chronicled his Spitfire flight from H.M.S. Eagle, across 1000 miles of Hun-infested skies to Malta. Presently he narrated his dispatch of a Bf109, shortly thereafter bobbing in his dingy as he was shot down in turn. His late 1950's high altitude evaluation flights led to the procurement of the CF104 for the low-level strike roll. Go figure!

Gerry Ireland delivered extremely entertaining anecdotes of bivouac and deployment from the early days of the tactical helicopter role, albeit with a typical "army" emphasis on toilet humour. The festivities continued late, with energetic dancing by old and young alike.

Perched on a bluff overlooking the Ottawa River, the Officer's Mess afforded a spectacular setting as the aforementioned American Kiowas



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departed Sunday morning. LCol Mike Dabros relayed comments of the American pilots who noted that while they have their own history of archived journals, diaries and photos, they were singularly impressed with 427's "living" history. To the best of Mike's knowledge, this "Gathering" tradition is unique among Canadian squadrons.

All Lions are encouraged to join the 427 Lion Squadron Association. Your modest subscription fees to "Roar" will help ensure that this commendable tradition carries on. A sincere thanks to LCol Mike Dabros and all squadron members for a most memorable "Gathering."

Dick Dunn (sprog forever)



Group photo with Minister of Defence-Bosnia

GATHERING, BOSNIA-STYLE:

There are 74 Canadian Forces personnel deployed to Velika Kladusa, Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) as the Task Force BH (TFBH) Hel Det. This week, 55 of those are serving Lions, but on 6 Nov 02, we received an extra eight Lions to

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increase our Lion strength to 63 of 82 present at the Hel Det. Since they were replacing the eight Lions rotating out on Thursday 7 Nov, we elected to have our Gathering at the time when the most Lions would be here to enjoy it, and to make sure that everyone still here who missed the bash in Petawawa would get to enjoy the famous Lion camaraderie.

The day did not start well, as there were still four crews, and a Command Post deployed away. One on a regular detachment, and the other three on an operation involving surprise arms control inspections. Although the operation MIGHT be concluded as early as noon, the UK Battle Group commander for whom we were working did not expect to be done until the next day. Halfway through the day, word came that the Dutch helicopters were grounded, and the Canadian Hel Det would have to accept the Medevac Standby Task until further notice. Amazingly, the surprises weren't just in the inspection, and by 1430 hrs, the task was completed, and the Lions began packing for the return trip. Additionally, the regular detachment needed to be repatriated, but how to arrange that? Simple....the officer in charge of air taskings for the Division was a Lion during the '80s himself (Maj Doug Shaw), and on the condition that we invite him to dinner, he was only too happy to arrange for transport for himself to the Gathering, ensuring that the last crew remaining absent from our dinner would have to be used to transport him to the 427 Sqn Gathering.

Not only were all 63 Lions in the Hel Det present, all 82 members of the Hel Det were present, as were three RAF guests from 33 Sqn (presently manning our sister Hel Det in Banja Luka), the Commander TFBH and the TFBH CWO, as well as ten other guests from the Task Force that the Lions wanted to make feel welcome at our new home. Notably, Scotte Macleod, the first Logistics Officer at 427 Tac Hel Sqn is now the civilian 2 i/c of the supply section for the Task Force, and we were pleased to invite a Lion, absent from us for so long.

Dress orders were quite specific: the best clothes, civil or military, that you have in theatre. Some members wore freshly washed flying suits and combat clothing. A few jackets and ties. Some sport shirts and sweaters. But the dinner guests assembled punctually at 1900 hrs were just a little shocked

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to see the Hel Det Commanding Officer, LCol Eddie Haskins arrive resplendently dressed in an Air Force Tartan kilt and a Bonnie Prince Charlie jacket with bow tie (as the only person in anything resembling a skirt that night, he graciously re-buffed all the propositions he received throughout the evening).

And still, the surprises weren't over.

Once the dinner guests took their places and the Vice PMC was about to report "all diners present" to the PMC, the CO interrupted the proceedings and called loudly "Capt Ireland. March in The Lion."



Not quite knowing whether or not it was a joke, the assembly fell silent for a moment until Capt Al Ireland, having arrived in Bosnia only hours before on the CC-150 Airbus, came into view carrying, indeed, the very same Lion presented to 427 Sqn on Victoria Day 1943 by Mr. Sam Eckman of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. A fantastic surprise for most everyone at the table, and a very tangible bond with our past history, spontaneous applause broke out as the Lion was placed at the head table with a very stern warning to the three guest RAF officers also sitting within fork's reach of the CO.

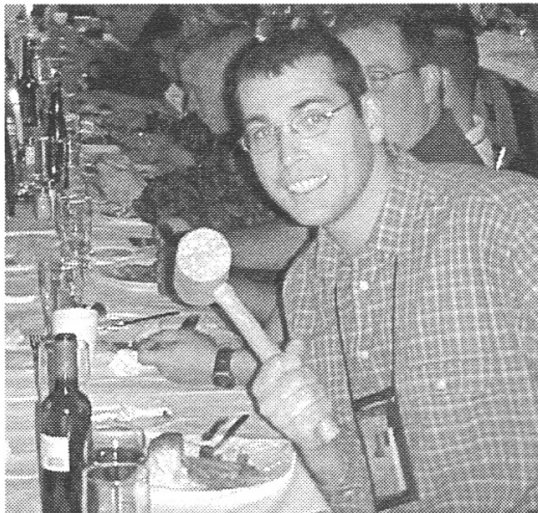


fetch their next courses. Using good teamwork and choreography skills, he had only one side of each of the tables moving at a time, collecting their own

The PMC, Maj Ash Mohtadi (Hel Det DCO, and previous SAMEO in Petawawa), banged the dinner in with a gavel which none too quickly disappeared from his hands. Nonetheless, he managed to overcome the tight quarters, and since there was no table service, had to sequence the diners getting up to both clear the tables and

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dishes and those of the person across from them, and delivering food back to the same two empty places.

As was done at the 2001 Gathering in Petawawa, the PMC also sprinkled little historic tidbits from the War Diary around the diners and called on them throughout the dinner to educate and edify other Lions. All the while, on the end wall of the dining hall, a powerpoint presentation created by the CO, showing a map of each mission flown by the Squadron from 7 Nov 42 until 8 May 45 clicked over, revealing the mounting toll that war left on the Squadron, and showing all present the breadth and the scope of this famous Squadron's contribution to Hitler's defeat. (That presentation is now available electronically from 427 Sqn, and CD-ROM copies are being mailed to Al d'Eon and Bob Middlemiss).

Given that the parade the next day would be full of more formal, but generic presentations, the CO chose the Mess Dinner as the place to present (to many cheers) 427 Squadron Coins to four recently minted Lions: Cpl Daniels, Cpl Martin, Cpl Park, and Sgt Doucette.

The dinner concluded with a very short address by Comd TFBH and the CO, and with notes of congratulations from a number of absent Lions, including DCINC NORAD, LGen Ken Pennie.

The dinner was a fantastic success, and in fine Lion tradition, in spite of the "two-beer" rule, we made the very best of our surroundings. For a few moments at least, we forgot where we were and enjoyed each others company, celebrated our heritage, and recalled fallen comrades.

Finally that night, the CO presented an anniversary plaque to the kitchen staff, most of whom are locally hired employees. They were so very flattered to receive anything at all from the diners that they have already mounted the anniversary plaque on a hardwood frame and installed it beside the door to the kitchen for everyone to see, at every meal.

On 7 November, our actual birthday, we held a medals parade, and presented five Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medals, 18 NATO medals for service in the Former Yugoslavia, two clasps to CDs, and two CDs. Wanting

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to keep the remarks short, following the Comd TFBH's address, the CO read one final greeting, as follows:

“From the Director of Operations, NORAD.

Congratulations on our 60th Anniversary to all my fellow Lions serving in BOSNIA. Having served with Lions in the SINAI, CENTRAL AMERICA and HAITI, I know you too are serving your nation with fierce determination and pride in mission accomplishment.

Well done to all of you - wear your medals in the knowledge that for 60 years, Lions have made a difference.

MGen Rick Findley , CO 427 1988-1990, sends”

Thank you again to all that went before us. We hope we live up to your example.

LCol Eddie Haskins



MORE BOSNIA

Just after the gathering, on 9 Nov, The Minister of National Defence, the Hon. John McCallum, visited TFBH, and of course, it was the Lions who met him first, picking him up at the Zagreb airport and bringing him to Velika Kladusa. We were also the last to see him, and I dropped him off in Zagreb this afternoon. During his walkaround on the camp, he turned a corner, and found the Hel Det ready for a group photo. He politely obliged, and for his trouble, was presented a 427 Sqn ball cap which he wore proudly for the rest of his trip around the camp. Fortunately, his escort for the walkabout, CO of the National Support Element, had been one of the non-Lion guests at the Gathering Mess Dinner, and he was able to brief the Minister on the significance of the Lion, our affiliation with MGM, and on the latin motto.

Yes, we are indeed the famous Lion Squadron!

Mr. David Pratt, the chairman of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs accompanied MND on this trip, and he too sports a magnificent new Lion ball cap.



A mini-Gathering of the Lions took place in Vancouver, September 25/02. Luncheon meeting at Crescent Beach brought out the following: L-R Bob Penrose, Bill Lowther, (Editor of GEN), Al d'Eon, Andy Anderson, Phil Dubois, Lloyd Palmer.

15 WING MOOSE JAW HONOURS AVM MIKE MCEWEN

As part of 15Wing Moose Jaw's 50th Anniversary of the commencement of RCAF Flight Operations (1953-2003), official sanction has been granted to rename this base Aerodrome Air Vice Marshall C.M. McEwen CB, MC, DFC Airfield. The unveiling will take place during the third week in June 2003. It is believed to be the first time that an active base will be named in honour of a Canadian military aviation hero.

A second unveiling will take place at a special display in the lobby of the 15 Wing HQ/NATO Flying Training in Canada Building, and be directly situated opposite the main entrance in full view of the new main entrance sign. This will be a stand alone illuminated wall, constructed of white tindle stone, containing the shield & number of the Wing.

On display will be an abundance of memorabilia relating to the life of AVM McEwen, including a large portrait of him, plus a complete replica set of his medals, and other items donated by his family, friends, and veterans who were associates of "Mike" McEwen. This display will be the first thing visitors, staff, and students see upon entry into this facility, and serve as a constant reminder to all of the high esteem AVM McEwen is held within the airforce community. Many of us will have served under "Black Mike" as Commander of 6 Group RCAF overseas.

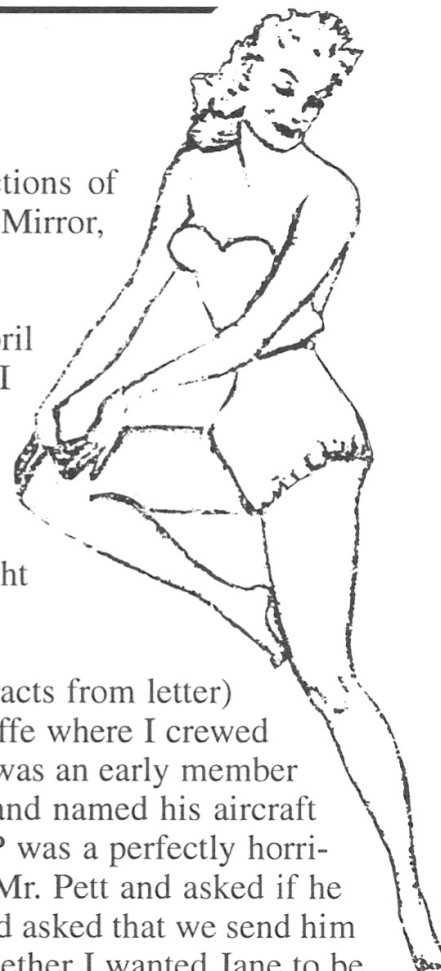
JANE REVISITED

Al d'Eon's article in the last issue with recollections of Jane, the curvaceous cutie featured in the Daily Mirror, generated a lot of interest.

Alan McCaskill of Victoria B.C. writes "On April 26, 1944 our crew received a brand new Halifax III which was promptly named 'Jane'. This gal looked after us for 30 of our 37 trips and was a great aircraft thanks to the efforts of the ground crew who took great care of their kite. Unfortunately Jane's luck ran out when she caught fire on take off on her 72nd trip.

Harry McLean from Prestatyn, UK writes (extracts from letter) "I was posted to 1659 Conversion Flight at Topcliffe where I crewed up with Billy Biggs on June 1, 1943. Billy Biggs was an early member of the squadron before MGM names were given and named his aircraft Piccadilly Princess. Painted on the nose of ZL - P was a perfectly horrible picture of a 'lady of the night', so I wrote to Mr. Pett and asked if he would draw a picture of Jane for us. He agreed and asked that we send him a piece of canvas of the size required and state whether I wanted Jane to be in evening dress, undies or nude. I opted for nude but the more staid members of the crew suggested that undies would be more exciting. In due course I received the drawing. The airframe fitters were not able to attach the canvas to the metal skin and so we were unable to have the picture on our kite. And so Jane hung in my room and was there when I did not return from the Munich raid on the night of September 6/7, 1943. I've often wondered who 'won' the Jane canvas when my effects were gathered. I thought it may have found its way into the Officers' Mess. Of course there was nothing on the picture to indicate my ownership. Wherever it went, it would be worth thousands of pounds today as a 'Pett' original."

Note to readers - The Biggs crew had to abandon Piccadilly Princess via parachute in an earlier raid in August '43 due to severe battle damage. It was Halifax LK628 bearing the name of movie star Judy Garland that P/O Biggs DFM was flying on the Munich raid September 6/7. Sadly he and four crew members were lost their lives. Harry McLean and Alf Richards were blown out and used their chutes once again. Jack Elliott, one of life's lucky one's, came to earth in the front section with nothing more than a head-ache.





60TH ANNIVERSARY GROUP PHOTOS

“Gathering of the Lions”

Now Available

An excellent group photo of those attending the Gathering of the Lions in Petawawa is now available for sale from the 427 Squadron Adjutant. This was taken by the Squadron photographer in the hangar after the ceremonies on Saturday October 26, with the specially painted Griffon in the background. The size of the prints are 5 X 10 and the cost is \$6.00 each. There are also group photos taken in Bosnia, and their prints are 8 X 10 for the same price. Make your cheque out to “Receiver General of Canada”, and send it in with your order to Capt. Frank Gadoury, Adjutant, 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, CFB Petawawa, P.O.Box 9999, Stn. Main, Petawawa, Ontario, K8H 2X3.