



## 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, ISSUE 17

DEC. '04

# A SALUTE to Al d'EON

1921—2004

## ALDERIC (Al) d'EON

Al d'Eon completed two operational tours in WW II on 427 Squadron and was awarded the DFC for his skill, fortitude and devotion to duty. On his second tour he served as Squadron Signals Officer and a trusted member of the Commanding Officer's crew - an outstanding record for sure.

Upon discharge from His Majesty's Service, Al proceeded to further his education, get a job, marry, and raise a family. On all counts he was eminently successful. Al and his beloved wife Helen raised three lovely daughters and his diversified work in the broadcasting field matched his talents and training perfectly.



In 1980 an invitation was extended to 427 Squadron by the Allied Air Forces Reunion Committee to be one of the Honoured Squadrons at the annual reunion at the Royal York in Toronto. Al volunteered to serve on the AAFR Committee and helped to organize the 1980 event. G/C Dudley Burnside was the keynote speaker and the Petawawa Lions as-

sembled a fine display of squadron memorabilia. The reunion was a resounding success and from that time forward, Al began to assume a leadership role as a 427 Squadron representative. He had capable associates but his enthusiasm, ability, and persuasive charm spread to those around him and a remarkable chain of events evolved. For the next twenty-four years there have been one or more annual Gatherings of the Lions in some form. There has been tremendous support from all ranks at Petawawa and Lions elsewhere -- but more and more it was Al d'Eon who made good things happen.

During this period Al was busy in other ways too. In 1993 he, along with 200 Canadian Air Force veterans, attended the dedication of a memorial cairn in the Village of Leeming in memory of those who lost their lives serving on 427 and other Canadian squadrons based at Leeming in WW II. Al chaired the Canadian committee and for more than a year worked diligently on the project with his British and Canadian counterparts to make the memorial a reality.

At the AAFR Reunion in 1995 it was suggested by some Lion attendees that an Association be formed. Al immediately took the bull by the horns and the 427 Lion Squadron Association was soon up and running with membership from the bomber, fighter and helicopter eras. He was our first and only Association Chairman and worked tirelessly to make the new organization a success. No task was too large or too small and he had his finger on all the buttons. Among his achievements he inaugurated our newsletter ROAR in December 1996, and since 2001 handled all the planning, production and mailing and much of the editorial work. We have always been fortunate in having a skilled graphics expert but it was Al who made ROAR roar.

In November 1999, Al d'Eon succeeded MGen Bob Chisholm(ret) as Honourary Colonel. This was a popular appointment and recognition of Al's outstanding contribution to the squadron and the association. He always had a quip and noted that he advanced from Flight Lieutenant to Group Captain in one day. Al carried out his duties and responsibilities with distinction and was asked to continue in office for one more year. In early 2003 Al journeyed to Bosnia to visit the Lions on deployment there. While he found the experience rewarding, and wouldn't have missed it for the world, he wasn't at all well at the time. The fact that he made the trip is yet another example of his grit and determination. In October 2003 Al turned over the reins of office to Bob Middlemiss after four great years as Honourary Colonel.

I spent several hours with Al a few days before his fatal attack. He was working on ROAR 17 and had plans for the issue well underway. Despite having been very ill he was determined to see the next issue “on the street”. You will note from his Chairman’s Report that ROAR 17 was to be his swan song. How prophetic indeed.

There is so much to say about Al d’ Eon. He was a good and loyal friend and will be sadly missed by his loving family and a host of friends near and far. The tributes to Al are many and perhaps the greatest was the magnificent assembly of the serving members of 427 Squadron in full dress uniform participating, or in attendance, at his funeral. For six decades Al had a special place in his heart for 427 Squadron and would have admired that sea of Air Force blue.

Rest in Peace old comrade.

*(Vern White – friend and associate)*

---

### **STAN MILLER RECALLS THE EARLY YEARS**

G/C Dudley Burnside (our first C/O) was at Petawawa for the handing over ceremony to the new H/Col in the summer of 1996 and during a lull in activities , the Squadron launched a houseboat on the Ottawa river so that the Lions could catch some fish ??? Al, the G/C, Vern and I fished, enjoyed refreshments and many stories. I remember Al and the G/C discussing the formation of an Association and when the topic came around to membership, the G/C handed Al \$50.00 and thus became our first paid-up Life Member.

That started the ball rolling but now the three of us had a lot of searching to do to get up and running as an Association. We checked mailing lists from the AAFA (Roy Inkster was a great help here) and gradually names were added to the list that Al was already compiling from memory and other sources.

We then went out with our first mailing to the “Lions”. It included an application form and an invitation to join. Progress was slow at first but we stuck with it and now we are thankful that we did. In the beginning there was no funds and so we paid for the paper, stamps and printing out of our own pockets. Thankfully , the applications started coming back (with cheques) and thus Al & I opened our first Association bank account which has never been in the red, thanks to new members and

donations from many "old" members.

Al and Vern did a great job putting ROAR together although keeping a publisher was quite trying in the early days. Al finally found Michael Cleland and all of those problems vanished. Roy Inkster won the "Name the Newsletter" contest over many other fine suggestions.

Eventually my own workload increased to the point where I was spending too much time as Secretary/Treas of the Assn. and not enough time at my own business and thus when "Sask" agreed to take over, I finally got back to normal. The transition was smooth and was closely monitored by Chairman Al.

At the end Al was having a lot of health problems, but the amazing thing about him was that whenever we went flying, a GOL was about to happen or an issue of ROAR was pending, Al became a new person, full of the "old magic" that drove him all his life.

I guess that sort of sums it up, ..... Al got us going, kept us focused and provided the leadership and drive so necessary for the success of a project such as this. Hopefully someone is willing to step into his shoes.

Farewell old Buddy ..... Stan

---

**Al wrote the following article just a few days prior to his passing.**

**FROM THE CHAIRMAN (issue #17)**

The big news this fall is that we, the 427 Lion Squadron Association, have opened a new page in our history. We have at last, joined the many Associations into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with a new Website.....

[www.lionsquadron.ca](http://www.lionsquadron.ca)

Now, the whole world can visit us here at their leisure, and update themselves about one of Canada's most famous Air Force Squadrons. Those of you who are not computer oriented will continue to receive your printed copy of ROAR, as will all our regular members. Our sincere thanks to "Sask" Wilford, our Membership Chairman, Richard Dunn, and others on this committee for putting it all together. We will have more about this new project, a bit later.

Stan Miller and I flew up to Petawawa in a "borrowed" Cessna on July 29 to attend the Change of Command to the new Commanding Officer, LCol Chris Coates. It was a beautiful day, although threatening in the early morning, but the flight was a joy to behold. We landed at the

Pembroke Airport, and a good friend picked us up on time for the parade. There was a bit of showmanship here of course, for we impressed everybody. Nobody but Stan Miller, our "senior" flyer, would gamble on the weather. The flight back was just as nice, and arrived back at Oshawa Airport at Sunset. A full day I will never forget.

My last look at the Halifax in Trenton took place the same day as the Ad Astra Stone ceremony. On this day September 25 members of the Allied Air Forces Reunion Committee were also there to present a cheque for \$7,000 to the RCAF Memorial Museum. This now closes the books of AAFR. Unfortunately I was unable to attend the "roll-out" of Halifax NA337 on October 16, (more about that further in this issue).

And finally, I'm sad to say that Vern White and I have decided to retire as editors and planners in publishing our newsletter ROAR. We are pleased that our readers have enjoyed our efforts in keeping our members informed of the activities of 427 Squadron, past and present, these past nine years. This does not mean that ROAR will stop coming to you as usual, it only means that we must now search for a new team to continue publishing our newsletter in printed form. We fully intend to continue with the printed pages of ROAR as well as the website.

So, this will be our final issue as editors and planners. It has been a great experience, and we are pleased that our members have enjoyed our efforts to fulfill our mandate by organizing our members, past and present, into a formal Association in the spring of 1996. Our intent was to help to ensure that the achievements, traditions and memories of this famous squadron are maintained and perpetuated.

I will remain as Chairman of the Association for the time being, and Vern will not be far away. We have asked Sask Wilford, to help us find a new team to work on the next issue of ROAR in June 2005. The method of preparing and printing the next issue will obviously depend on the editors and planners who follow.

FERTE MANUS CERTAS

A.L.d'Eon



**The following testimonials have been submitted voluntarily:**

**LCol MIKE DABROS , FORMER C/O OF THE SQUADRON**

It was with much sadness and what can only be described as a heavy heart that I celebrated the life of Al d'Eon last week in the company of his many family and friends. Al could never be just an acquaintance, but rather inevitably became a friend to all who had the good fortune to share time or interests with him over the years. By far his most burning interest was 427 Squadron, exposing for me the significance of the sacrifice made by the wartime Lions who fought and died in squadron aircraft. Al lived through it all, and brought that important perspective to being a Lion. His genuine love of 427 Squadron and his belief that a Squadron is truly about the sum of the contributions of its people over many generations, are certainly things that drew me personally to Al's friendship. His understanding of service and the value he placed on it remained with him his entire life, and represents one of his many gifts to later generations of Lions. Al took the same dedicated approach to everything that was important to him, and for the same selfless reasons. I look forward to the completion of the restoration of Halifax NA337 in Trenton as a physical testament to his determination in this regard.

By far Al's most important contribution to the Squadron was his example, the strength of which continued to grow over time. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to speak briefly with Al at the last Gathering in mid-November, and to see him rise to make a presentation to the current Commanding Officer. I will always remember his taking that opportunity to admonish the Keeper of the Lion as well as the Squadron's junior officers concerning their treatment of the Lion, to remind them exactly what it stands for, and of their responsibility for preserving it. No one was more aware of these things than Al, and he was never reluctant to remind us of the power of such symbols and traditions. His having been a Lion since the beginning, he could relate the oldest of Squadron customs to the people who originated them, and put an all important human face on the Squadron's history. I will miss his rare ability to remind us of exactly who we are, where we came from, and how important that can be.

I am also grateful for the four years of service he was able to give us as Honourary Colonel. As CO during part of this tenure, I was often an honoured recipient of his good advice, good company, and friendship. I was sometimes frustrated by his frequent refusal to claim any of his

expenses associated with his Honourary Colonel duties. After successfully insisting that he make a claim on one occasion, I later learned that he had turned around and donated an equal amount to an RESP fund for the children of former Lion Captain Colin Sonoski, lost in the crash of aircraft 420 in the summer of 2002. That for me was vintage Al d'Eon - a man for whom the sharing of a common heritage was reason enough to earn his caring friendship and respect.

That this friendship and respect was reciprocated by the Squadron at large was an inevitable result, a confirmation of the value and effectiveness of the Honourary Colonel programme and Al's contribution to it.

My sadness at Al's passing is only tempered somewhat by my recollection of all that he contributed to the Squadron's character over the years. There is no doubt that he honoured us with his life. Ours is a debt that we could never hope to repay. He was a dear friend, and will be sorely missed.

Ferte Manus Certas

---

### **LCol EDDIE HASKINS**

On Tuesday 28 January 2003, with Comd 1 Wing, HCol 1 Wing, and HCol 427 Sqn visiting us in Bosnia, the TFBH Hel Det downed tools to recognize members' service with a medals parade. During his remarks, Comd 1 Wing presciently brought everyone's attention to the fact that HCol Al d'Eon was deployed with his Squadron, overseas, to an operational theatre, for the first time since 1945. Col Duval then presented 25 serving members with NATO medals or numerals, ten more with CPSMs, and then by prior arrangement, he kindly took his seat.

As briefed, I called HCol d'Eon to the front of the dais to "assist" with the next presentation. This was actually going to be a presentation to him, and quite a surprise it was going to be. Al d'Eon had done so much for the Squadron since I first arrived there in 1995, and he was always finding some way to attract attention to someone else's good work. It was always easy to find Al, and all of our other treasured wartime Lions happy to explain to our new serving Lions what a great organization they had joined. I wanted to find an appropriate way to thank Al d'Eon for the years of Lion spirit that he'd promoted, and a plan was hatched when I discovered two things: first, that he had not

yet been presented his DFC on parade, and second, that it was possible to order good quality replica medals over the internet. A plan soon came together, and with the help of the Royal Mail and an RAF officer who would be joining his unit elsewhere in Bosnia prior to the visit of our Hon. Colonel, the medal was delivered in time for our parade.

"On parade today, there are members of 1 CAD HQ, 1 Wg HQ, 19 Wg Comox, members of 400, 403, 416 Squadrons, and fifty-seven members of 427 Squadron. I would ask that you indulge us for a moment while we take care of some unfinished Lion business."

"One of you on parade wears a medal that you have not yet been presented."

"I know you do, because I've seen it. You've even gone so far as to have it mounted in miniature for your Mess Kit."

"You are allowed to wear it, but you have never been presented with it. In fact, you received this medal in the mail." <pause>

"The owner of this medal will very modestly tell anyone who asks that 'it's nothing special', because 147 of them have been awarded to members of 427 Squadron....but they're not here."

<looking at HCol d'Eon> "R88017?"

"Wireless Operator, Flight Lieutenant Alderic d'Eon?"

"It gives the Lion Squadron immense pride...."

<slow down, it's getting hard to talk without my voice cracking>

"....to recognize that effective 6 November 1943, you have been entitled to wear .....the Distinguished Flying Cross." <pin medal to HCol>

Even after what had been a long parade, the applause was absolutely electric. I had him take the dais immediately after the noise died down, and the picture below is of him taking a general salute. He was an exceptional gentleman, and said a very very few kind words to the parade.

We dismissed the parade immediately after another salute for the WComd's departure, and Al was then mobbed by well-wishers. Following the parade, HCol d'Eon kicked off the town hall meeting by walking through the seated members of the Squadron, and



shaking every hand in the detachment.

Later that evening, while Al was relaxing in the Mess, we were able to show him the Powerpoint version of the 427 Squadron Wartime Ops Log and present him with three CD copies to take home to show the many other Lions who bravely fought the same war, flew the same flights, and found their way home night after night. It was a fascinating 90 minutes as Al reviewed the wartime missions and the routes that the Squadron flew and he would periodically recall and describe those missions that he had flown on, and added extraordinary commentary to the presentation, mission by mission. Once again, he was making the Squadron's story come alive for those of us lucky enough to share his company that evening.

I was one of those lucky enough to share Al d'Eon's company on that, and on many other evenings, and I know that for many years to come, when others mention his name, I will be pleased to say that I knew Al d'Eon. Indeed, I will remember that day, and Al d'Eon's visit as having given me the most poignant and memorable experience of my career. I am proud to have been one of Al d'Eon's Lions. "QSY" Al, your flight plan is open.

---

### **BOB MIDDLEMISS HON. COL 427 SQUADRON**

Last year I took over from Al d'Eon, a fine officer, a true gentleman, as your Honourary Colonel. He is a hard act to follow.

This year I lost a cherished friend.

I would like to share a few words which I feel takes-in the measure of Al d'Eon. A remarkable man is gone.

Now our world seems a little lessend somehow that he is not part of it - a little less wise and great - a little less kind and brave.

May it help to know that he will never be forgotten by those whose lives he touched.

To the family, may your own cherished memories bring you comfort and courage.

**The remainder of this issue of ROAR will include most of the articles that Al had planned. Although we have tried to keep the layout the same, regrettably, we have chosen to eliminate most of the pictures so that we might get this to you before Christmas.**

### **Lcol CHRISTOPHER COATES, C/O 427 TacHel Squadron**

Well, it has only been five months since the Change of Command parade and my appointment as the most recent Commanding Officer of the Lion Squadron. For the current Lions it may seem a bit longer than that as they have maintained an exceptional tempo in both operations and training. As described below, within this brief five months the Squadron has responded with dignity and compassion to the loss of several fellow Lions. Thus, in some cases the five months has virtually spanned a lifetime.

The recent loss of two serving Lions – MCpl Karen Keels and Cpl Serge Dupuis has reminded us that there are events beyond our control. They were both well-known members of the Lion's Den and will be missed by the Squadron. And time did stand still for the Lions in November as we received the news of the sudden passing of Al d'Eon, our previous Honourary Colonel. More than fifty volunteer Lions made the trip to Toronto (and only operational requirements prevented more from going) to honour the memory and spirit of a most distinguished member of the Den. The pallbearers, the guard of honour and the other Lions briefly shared in the sorrow as the bagpipes played and we saluted a fallen Lion. The grief will not pass so quickly.

As one of the original members of the Lion Squadron, Al d'Eon was a Lion for more than sixty years. His active and passionate involvement as our most recent Honourary Colonel endeared him to the Squadron, and this was obvious in the faces of those Squadron members present in Toronto for the funeral. Given the operational role of the Squadron we will move forward, but the Den will be a lesser place with Al's absence. We will continue to remember him and other fallen Lions. We offer Marianne, Michele and Jennifer and the other members of Al's family our most sincere condolences.

**FERTE MANUS CERTAS**



## WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM

Harry J. Blue

J. Douglas Cameron

W. Stu Deacon

Scotty Phoenix

MCpl Karen Keels

Cpl Serge Dupuis

Alderic (Al ) d'Eon D.F.C.

### Testimonial

#### LCol RANDY MEIKLEJOHN, FORMER C/O OF 427 SQDN.

I shall always remember Al d'Eon as the perfect gentleman, modest in nature and charming in every way. After meeting and getting to know him better, and learning of his wartime exploits and lifetime endeavours, I realized that I was truly fortunate to have gained the friendship of this very special person.

No matter the occasion - whether chatting with at the Gathering of the Lions or speaking so passionately about the Halifax restoration project - Al was always enthusiastic, always energetic, always on the go.

Whether climbing into a lumbering bomber as a Wireless Air Gunner well over half a century ago or a Griffon helicopter as our Honorary Colonel in a new millennium, Al always exuded an air of professionalism and took tremendous pride in his squadron. Al was not only the chairman of the 427 Lion Squadron Association, he *was* the association. He put his heart and soul into ensuring its viability, his enthusiasm evident with every word he wrote in *ROAR*. Al was exceptionally dedicated to the squadron and to ensuring that we remembered the sacrifices of those who went before us.

All of us should have the good fortune of living a life even half as well and as full as Al lived his. Al d'Eon was an exceptional gentleman, a true Lion, and we will miss him dearly.

Randy Meiklejohn, Lcol



Ferte Manus Certas

## **PETAWAWA CELEBRATES its 100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY in 2005**

On July 1, 2005, CFB Petawawa will commemorate its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Part of the celebration will include the opening and dedication of a newly renovated and expanded complex that houses both the Base and Airborne Museums.

The Department of National Defence supports the operations of the museums, but our assistance is urgently required to develop exciting exhibitions, programming, and to ensure the continued preservation of our heritage. If you have any airforce artifacts you wish to donate, or any skills you may wish to contribute, please contact our historian officer at 427 Squadron for further details.

Everyone is invited to be part of this historical event. You can become a "Founding Donor" with a donation of \$100, which will recognize you on a unique Saint Michael's Wall at the entrance to the museum. Please make your donation pledge before May 15, 2005 to ensure your name is included at the unveiling on July 1, 2005.

For more information please call (613) 687-5511, ex 6034, or 6238.



### **CHOPPER PILOT GETS NATO POST**

It was recently announced that Gen. Ray Henault, the Chief of Defence Staff has been named chairman of NATO's military committee. The three-year posting in Brussels is a prestigious appointment and shows that Gen. Henault, the former twin Huey helicopter commander is held in very high regard by the international military community.

Ray Henault originally from rural Manitoba, like his father, developed a love for flying from an early age. By the time he had finished high school he had a private pilot's license and embarked on a military career which now spans 36 years. Gen Henault trained as a fighter pilot and flew the CF-101 Voodoo. He later switched to the tactical element and flew helicopters for a time, later commanding 10 Tactical Air Group (427 was a member squadron). Gen Henault became well known to the Lions of that period and were glad to follow his meteoric rise

through a series of promotions leading to the top command in Canada -- Chief of Defence Staff. At the time of that appointment in 2002, he was described by a retired lieutenant – general as an “outstanding officer and a gentleman and no finer person to head up the services”.

We wish Gen Henault every success at NATO in what will surely be an interesting and challenging assignment.



## **THE HALIFAX UPDATE**

The pictures tell the story (next issue). The "roll -out" of Halifax NA337 from the restoration shop into it's new home got under way the week of October 11, 2004, and the final entry onto the "pad " on October 16. The team had been busy all week with wheels, tires, forklifts and tow vehicles at the ready. It was a "squeeze out" of the workshop with no room to spare, but a smooth entry into the new building. Cameras were clicking and the film crew was there for a documentary shoot.

However there is much work to do. NA337 is indoors, away from our winter weather, but the crew will not be able to finish the aircraft for a while. Phase 1 of the building contract should be completed by Mid December. No visitors will be allowed in the new building yet, but the restoration workshop will still be active in working on the sections left behind to complete.

For now all we can do is dream of the day this memorial Halifax will be completely restored and on display in its new and permanent home, the NEW RCAF MEMORIAL MUSEUM.



## MEMORIAL TO LEEMING AIRMEN

In ROAR 16 we reported on plans for a memorial dedicated to the crews of two Halifax aircraft that collided in the skies of Belgium in the early morning hours of May 28, 1944. We have now received confirmation from Nicolas Clinaz, that the memorial was unveiled at Longchamp (Bais-Thy) south of Brussels on September 5, 2004, the official date of 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Belgian Liberation.

Halifax MV 831 piloted by PO Frank Devereaux of 427 Squadron and Halifax MZ 295 piloted by PO Carman Ross of 429 Squadron were returning from attacking a military camp at Bourg-Leopold. It is believed that one of the Halifaxes was intercepted by a German night fighter and, in the ensuing evasive action, flew into the path of its Leeming neighbour, causing a tragic collision. All 14 airmen (11 RCAF and 3 RAF) lost their lives.

Three years ago at age 22, the young aviation enthusiast Nicolas Clinaz began to search for next-of-kin and to lay plans to construct a memorial in memory of the Leeming airmen. The rest is history. A handsome brick monument with a sloping tablet was erected bearing the names and squadron number of the airmen. Part of the inscription reads (translated). **LET US REMEMBER THEM.** *They gave their life for LIBERTY.* In the words of Nicolas, "We have done it"! The celebration was splendid before a large crowd under a sunny sky". The relatives of two 429 Squadron crew members attended from Canada along with Major Michael Rafter representing the Canadian Ambassador. Many local dignitaries were present headed by the Belgian Minister of Defense and the President of the Belgian War Veterans Association. Fourteen students read the names of the airmen and a pastor and a rabbi said a prayer. During the service two F16 's of the Belgian Air Force flew over the site at low altitude to pay homage to the fallen. The very moving service concluded with the singing of the national anthems of Canada, Great Britain and Belgium.

In addition to spearheading the memorial project, Nicolas produced a 57 page booklet commemorating the event. A bio on the 14 deceased airmen is included with a photo of each plus photos

of a Halifax aircraft, the German nightfighter pilot and so on. The memorial booklet is printed in French and is available for purchase at 10 euros. The overall quality is good and would be a valuable addition to any aviation library. I'll be glad to put you in touch with the author if you are interested.

We extend congratulations and the heartfelt thanks of Canadians to Nicholas Clinaz, a youthful historian and patriot, for leading the way in erecting and dedicating a permanent memorial to our Leeming comrades.

**Vern White**



### **ALLIED AIR FORCES REUNION CLOSES THE BOOKS**

Right after WWII a group of RCAF "Bomber Boys" literally waiting in the UK for disbandment in July 1945, proposed a 407 'Demon' Squadron Association be formed so they could meet regularly when back in Canada. They dug into their pockets to finance a mailing, and produced a booklet of names and address of current and former squadron members, which they sold at 3s-6d each. This was the start of what later became, with added squadrons, the Allied Air Forces Reunion.

This yearly event grew to become the largest ANNUAL Air Force Reunion in Canada gathering at the Royal York Hotel until 1997. Many of you reading this will certainly remember those wonderful days when many wartime friends would meet again for the first time since the war. They came from right across Canada, the USA, and the UK. During all those years, a committee of nearly 30 WWII RCAF men and women did all the work and produced one heck of a weekend.

Alas, it was time to "close the hangar doors". So, on June 15, 2004 a "Wind-down" meeting of the AAFR Committee was held to close the books, and plan how to dispose the money (\$7000.00) sitting in the bank. It was unanimously agreed that the RCAF Memorial Museum Building Fund should receive this closing balance, in memory to all those who paid the supreme sacrifice during WWII.

On September 25, 2004, Committee members of the Allied Air Forces Reunion presented a cheque for \$7000.00 to Col.(ret.) Joe Bourgeois,

Chairman of the Board for the RCAF Memorial Museum. The ceremony took place the same day as the Ad Astra Dedication Ceremonies, with over 1100 visitors attending.

The Allied Air Forces Reunions were for all trades, all ranks, men and women, and the committee felt that the RCAF Memorial Museum in Trenton, plus the restoration of the Halifax, was the ideal Foundation to receive this donation.

PER ARDUA AD ASTRA



### **THE GATHERING OF THE LIONS – 2004**

Reunions are a rare occasion nowadays. Busy schedules, distance from the location of the reunion, and simple lack of interest have lessened the popularity and regularity of reunions, which at one time were viewed as a time-honored event, a way of ‘remembering what once was’. However, the spirit of honouring and remembering has not waned in the slightest within the hangars of 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron. On November 13th, 2004, 427 THS celebrated its 62nd anniversary and commemorated the event with the annual ‘Gathering of the Lions’ weekend. Each year, 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron holds this event as a way of remembering past and current achievements, as well as to create a family atmosphere among current and former Lions. Once again, the weekend was a roaring success.

The event began with a parade on Saturday morning. With two CH-146 Griffon helicopters serving as a backdrop, current serving members of 427 THS stood proudly in three ranks, with medals and boots at their shiniest. The ranks were supplemented with six air cadets from the local air cadet squadron. The theme of the weekend was “past, present, future”, and thus the cadets filling out the ranks was very appropriate. Colonel Christopher Shelley, 1 Wing’s Commanding Officer, was the presiding officer for the parade, and was very impressed with the turnout of the parade. He then handed the parade over to 427 THS’s Hon-



## Membership and Finance

### THANK YOU – SERVING LIONS

You will see from the following membership summary, our serving Lions have stepped up to the plate this year with 21 new memberships. We thank you.

<u>Era</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Donations</u>	<u>2004 Total</u>
WWII	1	165	\$ 50.00	\$518.76	\$ 568.76
Sabre	1	76	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 100.00
CF-104	0	55	\$ 00.00	\$160.00	\$ 160.00
Heli	<u>21</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>\$1050.00</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>\$1150.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>\$1150.00</b>	<b>\$828.76</b>	<b>\$1978.76</b>

As I have mentioned in the past your association requires about \$1600.00 in revenue per year to cover the costs of ROAR, mailing and admin. Early next year, our new website will be on-line at [www.lionsquadron.ca](http://www.lionsquadron.ca), but that too will incur costs (approx. \$200.00).

The above summary provides a good graphical indication of where our revenue is generated and thus in order to stay airborne, we must continue to attract new members and at the same time solicit ongoing donations from current life members. To date, thanks to everyone, we have maintained a revenue neutral profile with a year over year bank balance of about \$2500.00.

As we move into the future we must develop “value added” aspects to the association so that membership will continue to be meaningful and attractive. To do this we need people with creative minds and a desire to serve. We have come this far (since 1996) on the backs of a few dedicated troops such as Al d'Eon, Stan Miller and Vern White and while their commitment remains steadfast, their energy levels are waning and thus:

**WE NEED VOLUNTEERS** – for the following positions: Chairman, Editor of ROAR and several Regional Directors. Please answer this call for help so that we can continue to live up to our mission statement “**to ensure that the achievements, traditions and memories of this famous squadron are maintained and perpetuated**”.

ourary Colonel, Hcol Bob Middlemiss, for the presentation of the Honourary Colonel's award, known as *The Lion of the Year* award. This year's fortunate recipient was Cpl Rick Donnelly, who enthusiastically, though somewhat nervously, marched to the dais for the presentation. He was also bestowed with a lifetime membership to the Lion Squadron Association by former 427 THS Honourary Colonel, Al d'Eon. Following an advance in review order, the parade was dismissed, a 'sociable' was enjoyed on behalf of Hcol Middlemiss, and an air display carried out by a Griffon helicopter was enjoyed by all in attendance.

To culminate the event, a mess dinner was held later that evening. CF's were swapped for mess kits and bow ties, and all attendees looked forward to an elegant night of fine dining and much reminiscing. They would not be disappointed. Pte Stephen Gallant, an aviation technician with the Squadron, was called on to recite 'High Flight', the timeless poem written by John Gillespie Magee, Jr. Following this, a number of current pilots recited their own renditions of the poem, each tailored to different operational levels of flying. Whether fighter command oriented, or with a flavour of tactical helicopter aviation, each received hearty 'here here's' and thunderous applause following the reading. The evening pinnacled with a presentation by the guest speaker for the evening, Squadron Leader Lloyd Wright. S/L Wright regaled the dinner with tales from his World War II flying days aboard the Halifax bomber, and you could have heard a pin drop in the room of 240 people, so intent were the attendees on his words. One portion of his presentation re-told of an evening following a bombing run in which S/L Wright nearly initiated a corkscrew manoeuvre to avoid a fast approaching contact. Just short of the word of command, he called the manoeuvre off, as the fast approaching contact was not a Messerschmitt ME-262, but rather, a sleigh being hauled by what looked like reindeer. It was an unforgettable night.

427 Squadron possesses a rich history, as we all know. It is encouraging that current serving members have realized the importance of remembering this history by holding 'The Gathering of the Lions' each year. I know I speak for most in attendance that the evening was a grand success, and I look forward to next year's rendition of 'The Gathering'.



---

### 427 LION SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

427 Lion Squadron has a proud history. In the spring of 1996, we organized our members, past and present, into a formal Association that would recognize the achievements and perpetuate the traditions and memories of this famous squadron.

#### CHAIRMAN

A.L. d'EON DFC  
(Deceased)

#### TREAS/MEMBERSHIP

A.W. "Sask" Wilford  
RR #2, Hillsburgh, ON  
N0B 1Z0  
519-855-6268  
wilsas@mgl.ca

#### NEWSLETTER

Vern White  
2170 Marine Dr  
Oakville, ON  
L6L 5V1  
905-465-3752  
vernwhite@sympatico.ca

---

## REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

<b>UK</b>	<b>Len Pratt</b> 3 Parkfield Rd. Taunton, Sommerset, England, TA1 4R3 Tel: 01823 252343	<b>Maritimes</b>	<b>Wayne MacLellan</b> Box 83, Riverport NS Canada, B0J 2W0 Tel: 902-766-4165
<b>Quebec</b>	<b>Jim Moffat</b> 810-49th Ave. Lachine, PQ Canada, H8T 2T2 Tel: 514-637-7700	<b>S.Ontario</b>	<b>Roy Inkster</b> 6850 Barker St. Niagara Falls, ON Canada, L2G 1Z3 Tel: 905-358-5531
<b>N.Ontario</b>	<b>Bob Middlemiss</b> 181 Collier St., #201 Barrie, ON Canada, L4M 5L6 Tel: 705-737-5435	<b>Ottawa</b>	<b>Allan Todd</b> 568 David St. Buckingham, PQ Canada, J8L 2A7 Tel: 819-986-5865
<b>Manitoba fatt</b>	<b>Ian C. Thomson</b> 1027-1630 Henderson Hwy, Winnipeg, MB Canada, R2G 2B9 Tel: 204-339-6883	<b>Saskatchewan</b>	<b>Weldon "Weldy" Mof-</b> 1112 College Ave., Regina, SK Canada, S4P 1A8 Tel: 306-522-9938
<b>B.C.</b>	<b>Rev. Derek Salter</b> P.O. Box 433 Okanagan Falls, BC Canada, V0H 1R0 Tel: 205-497-5172	<b>USA</b>	<b>Doug Nicholson</b> 373 Laurel Lane, Marysville, CA USA, 95901 Tel: 530-743-2301

Please put the attached membership form to good use in 2005.

Thank you all for making this another great year for the Association.

Sask Wilford (F-86 Era). E-mail: wilsas@mgl.ca



Please use the Membership application below to recruit new members,  
or e-mail me with some contacts at wilsas@mgl.ca. Thank you all.

---

To receive your 427 Lion Squadron Association Membership card, please  
complete and mail this form.

Name..... Spouse/Partner.....

Address.....

ZIP/PC.....

Tel..(     )......Fax.. (     ).....

e-mail.....

Service years on 427 (from-to)..... Bases.....

Rank .....Trade .....

Membership: Life Member ( ) \$50.00     Annual Renewal Member ( )  
\$10.00 per year.

Please make cheques payable to – 427 Lion Squadron Association

Mail this form and cheque to:

A.W. “Sask” Wilford  
427 Lion Squadron Association  
RR #2, Hillsburgh, ON, N0B 1Z0