FERTE MANUS CERTAS

ROAR

427 Squadron Association

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427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron

Commanding Officer - L/Col François Lavertu

Dear Fellow Lions,

It is difficult to believe that it has been already 18 months since the first time I reached out to you, and hard to believe that I will be handing over the Command of this outstanding unit to LCol Matt Snider in only a few months. It is therefore with mixed feelings that I write these lines as I come to the realisation that this adventure is swiftly coming to an end. I suppose that it is difficult to leave such a position without regrets. In this case, my biggest regret is to not have been able to share more of the amazing work that is being done by the Lions on a daily basis and although I have shared with you some of those accomplishments in the past, they are but a mere sample. Nonetheless, *Vertical Magazine* recently published a great article on 427 with outstanding shots and although it does not fully convey the professionalism, dedication and expertise of 427 SOAS members, it is a good glimpse into what 427 SOAS is all about. I hope you enjoy it.

Otherwise, the last six months have been marked by our continued support to Operation IMPACT and the

Honorary Colonel Lianne Ing

Fellow Lions

I am honoured to have the opportunity to connect with you again through ROAR. We have just passed the two year anniversary of the declaration of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Like many tumultuous periods, it has been filled with both challenge and change—we have experienced many difficulties and losses, but have also developed remarkable innovations and a new appreciation of the things that matter most.

As public health restrictions eased over the past few months, I welcomed the opportunity to begin meeting in person with the squadron again. The operational tempo remains high, with many proverbial irons in the fire, but the unit continues to execute its mission with professionalism and members are looking forward to regrouping over the summer.

It is hard to believe that we are already approaching the Change of Command at 427 in July. Due to continuing COVID protocols, the ceremony will be a low-key event; no parade is planned but members will have the opportunity to gather in person to witness

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Squadron has made some important steps towards irreversible cultural change, thanks to the buy-in of all Lions and the support of the newly created Unit Cultural Advisory Team. And although the pandemic has continued to present some challenges, 427 has also succeeded in achieving most if not all of its readiness objectives, which is probably more important than ever as we continue to monitor the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Europe and the world. As we all watch this crisis unfold with some anxiety, you can find some comfort in knowing that 427 SOAS is ready to answer the call when it comes.

Commanding 427 SOAS has easily been the greatest privilege and the most rewarding experience of my career and I am truly grateful to have had the opportunity to meet and serve with the aviators of 427 SOAS. Seeing these men and women in action day in and day out and pursuing excellence without compromise has been nothing short of inspiring. It will therefore be particularly hard to leave behind this amazing team to whom I owe so much. I will also miss the unconditional support from Honorary Colonel Ing, who has been so generous with her time over the past two years. I am particularly grateful for her mentorship through these tumultuous times and extend my most sincere thanks for her dedication to 427 SOAS and the CAF. We are lucky to have you.

I would also like to extend a special thanks to my command team partner, CWO Tim Riutta. I was truly blessed to be paired up with Tim two years ago and although I did not have a choice in the matter, I cannot think of a better partner or a finer airmen with whom I would have liked to share the trepidations of this unit. Although it can be lonely at the top, Tim has certainly made it less so and I will forever be grateful.

It has been an honour to care for 427 SOAS over the past two years and a pleasure to meet and exchange with you all. Thank you for your support and I sincerely hope to be able to meet most of you at the next Gathering of the Lions.

the handover. LCol Frank Lavertu has led the squadron since August 2020, taking command in the midst of the pandemic and navigating the many challenges that came with ensuring the squadron was mission-ready against a backdrop of continuously changing requirements driven by COVID. LCol Lavertu has done an admirable job of maintaining operational focus during these turbulent times, albeit with plenty of sacrifice on the personal front in order to address all of these demands.

Similarly, CWO Tim Riutta will also be departing the squadron this summer, after supporting many members through the combined stresses of work, family, and COVID over the past two years. I have enjoyed working with both of them and extend my sincerest thanks for their steady leadership and commendable service during this unusual period in the squadron's history.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we collectively hope to see the pandemic in our rear-view mirror. The Russian invasion of Ukraine will continue to drive a high-level of readiness across the CAF, as the resulting cascade of global geopolitical effects are assessed and responses are implemented. Culture change within the CAF will continue to be a priority, with 427's Unit Cultural Advisory Team (UCAT) supporting the development of best practices to ensure a safe and inclusive work environment for all.

I look forward to supporting the incoming leadership at 427 and its members in the upcoming year and sincerely hope that Lions from near and far will have the opportunity to gather and revive some long-standing traditions.

Ferte Manus Certas

Sergeant H.T. Winter
427 Squadron - September, 1941 to April, 1946

Harry joined the RAF in September, 1941 and was trained as a Sergeant Wireless Operator (Air). While he was serving with 427 Squadron his aircraft was shot down on the night of 22/23 October 1943 during an operation on Kassel. He was wounded and spent time recuperating before being sent to Bankau, Poland. In January, 1945 he and fellow POWs were force marched through Czechoslovakia to south of Berlin because of Russian advances. They were liberated by Russian troops in mid April 1945.

Harry turns 100 on May 21, 2022. To see more of Harry's birthday celebrations and how to wish him well go to Page 19.

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Membership Policy
427 Squadron Association

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

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

427 Squadron Association Web Site

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

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

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

All previous Volumes of ROAR from 1996 to the present are now available on the web site at:
http://www.427squadron.com/roar/roar.html

Moving ?

Please notify us of your new address and email if you move.
Email Dick at - richmark@telus.net
Or regular mail to:
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Apology

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

Flying Officer B.W. MacLellan

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

First Commanding Officer of 427 Squadron in the Helicopter Era

LtCol JP (Peter) Harrison RCASC

8 Jul 25-27 Nov 72

1. 1946 – RCIC, with RCAF Air Gunner wings
2. 1955 – RCASC. Promoted Capt 14 Jan 55, with Jump wings (at CJATC)
3. 1961 – RCASC, with Army Flying Badge
4. 1971 – RCASC, CF Greens. Promoted LCol and CO 427 Sqn

Peter Harrison was born in Kelowna, BC on July 8, 1925 and attended the University School in Victoria. In August 1943, he enrolled in the RCAF and trained during the war at various loctions across the prairie provinces as a airman and air gunnery officer. He began, but did not complete, pilot training on Cornell aircraft. Subsequently, he earned the Air Gunner's Badge and was commissioned to the rank of Pilot Officer. In 1945 he was released from active service and transferred to the Reserves, serving until July 24, 1946 as an officer in the Royal Canadian Infantry Corps.

For the next five years on civvy street, he used his time well. On December 18, 1946 he married Lorna Hodge in Vanouver, BC and they started a family which eventually became six children. In May 1951, Peter enrolled in the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (Service Number ZK9706). Posted initially to the RCA SC School in Camp Borden, Ontario, he qualified as a parachutist and on October 1951 became the first OC of 1 Airborne Platoon.

In 1953, Peter was posted to the Canadian Joint Air Training Centre at Rivers, Manitoba and so began his Army aviation experience. Ab initio flying training was conducted at the Brandon Flying Club (Cessna 140) followed by Advanced Flight Training course #15 at Rivers (Cessna L-19A) and in 1956, Helicopter Conversion Course #16 (Sikorsky 5-51).

These were the early years of Army aviation when storied names like "Bumps" Dancey, Bert Lake, Randy Mattocks, Joe Oakley, Ron Hall, Dan Stovel, Lorne Rodenbush and Fred Wagner were spreading their wings! It was back to Borden in 1956.

During the early US Vietnam war years a series, of Canadian Army aviators were posted to US Army flying training centres. In 1959, Peter with family in tow, attended the US Army Primary Helicopter School course flying a Hiller 23-D at Camp Wolters, Texas. Next, he transferred to Fort Rucker, Alabama for the H-34 "Choctaw" helicopter (Sikorsky S-58) conversion course. Finally, in 1960, it was off to the 4th Aviation Company in Fort Lewis, Washington where he flew the L-19/L-20 and H-13, H-19, H-21, HU-1A "Iroquois" helicopters. Upon his US departure, the Commanding General, 4th Infantry Division, awarded him with a Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Performance of Duty.

In June 1966, Major Harrison was posted to St. Hubert, P.Q. as CO of 1 Transport Helicopter Platoon, RCA SC (later 450 Transport Helicopter Squadron). The unit was equipped with Boeing Vertol CH-113A "Voyageur" helicopters. In Nov 1968, command of the squadron was passed to Major Lorne Rodenbush. On January 1, 1971, LCol Harrison assumed command of 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron at CFB Petawawa, Ontario. The unit was equipped with new UH-1N "Huey" helicopters and was one of four such new tactical squadrons in Canada (CFB's Edmonton, Petawawa, Valcartier, and Gagetown).

After a short illness, LCol JP Harrison died of cancer on November 26, 1972 at the age of 47 while serving as 427 CO. As was his wish, his ashes were scattered by his son on the Mattawa Plain, adjacent to the 427 Squadron heliport.

More Photos of LCol Peter Harrison

Thanks to the Canadian Army Aviation Website and BrigGen (Ret.) Joe Oakley

IMPORTANT NOTE

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

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Ken at kensorfleet@yahoo.com	Facebook
Wayne at macway01@gmail.com	Web Site/ROAR

Note:

The aim of ROAR continues to be a link between the operating squadron and past members. As one of our recently deceased WW II members, Ian Thomson, said “I will not be able to represent our glorious squadron much longer but it has been a supreme honour to be a Lion”. Many of us who served or “grew up” in the Squadron have wonderful memories of our time as a Lion. ROAR generally concentrates on historical stories/ articles from the different eras highlighting the challenges and yes, even shenanigans, that surfaced throughout the 78 year life of the squadron.

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

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

Bits and Bytes

Ed note: Eric Mold obviously liked my goat joke in ROAR, November 2021 and sent me this note.

Since you, in the latest ROAR, have started telling stories about goats… here is a picture of Flight Sergeant LEWIS Firkin. A pure white Billy Goat, our much loved mascot. (LEWIS…London, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland) with him is the #1 Wing Drums, Goat Boy…Gus Thorogood. They are ready to take part in the Victory Parade in London…in about 1945. LEWIS had an insatiable appetite for cigarettes, he ate them…he didn't actually smoke 'em. A fact that was well publicized, as he had been in the limelight many times before . When we stopped for a short rest on Oxford St., people in windows above saw him below and started showering 'fags' down from above. Most of us in the band, were in our 'beginning smoking years' then.…Enough said!

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

It will still be held at the Sheraton Centre Hotel Montreal. Reservations at the hotel can be made at the hotel now. Phone 1-800-471-1611 and identify as part of the SPAADS group for special rates. It's the last reunion. Bring your children, their children, friends and let then see what we have so proud of all these years.

Look forward to seeing you all in Montreal.

Points to Ponder

I picked up a hitchhiker. He asked if I wasn't afraid, he might be a serial killer? I told him the chances of two serial killers being in the same car together were extremely unlikely.

Do you ever get up in the morning, look in the mirror and think "That can't be accurate."

Intimidate your doctor by putting on rubber gloves at the same time he does.

Finally, remember to check out Ken Sorfleet's 427 Facebook page

CANADIAN ARMY AVIATION

An Early History of Military Helicopters

1947 - 1972

Studies of the post-war restructuring of the Canadian Army had recognized the value of using light aircraft to supplement the roles and tasks of land forces and that the helicopter had tremendous potential as an integral part of a modern army. The following is an outline of the evolution of Army Aviation in the twenty five years from the formation of an Air Observation Post Squadron in 1947 to the absorption of the last remaining army aviation units in 1972 following the unification of the Canadian Forces.

Wartime experience proved that artillery fire control could be more effective if it was controlled by army pilots using light aircraft instead of air force pilots flying larger observation aircraft that were requested through conventional air tasking procedures. As a result the RCAF had created three AOP Squadrons operating Taylorcraft Auster light aircraft during the war. The history of 664, 665 and 666 AOP squadrons validated the concept of retaining aviation within the army.

Operational research on the use of helicopters and light aircraft on a battlefield concluded that many tasks could be more effectively done by aviation units co-located with and under control of the army's ground elements. This would allow for timely anticipation and reaction to a changing tactical situation without requiring extensive tasking and briefing procedures. The army was not interested in duplicating any air force functions such as close air support or out-of-theatre transport but it identified the need for air observation, dedicated liaison aircraft, light helicopters in the reconnaissance role and utility and cargo helicopters for the immediate transport of troops and supplies as being a essential part of its organization.

The army considered that aircraft must be flown by experienced officers to avoid the problem of having to train pilots in army tactics and that the aircraft must be an integral part of the existing combat arms units to ensure their availability and tactical awareness. These factors affected the development of army aviation since it imposed limitations on selecting aircrew, that aircraft in small deployable detachments would have to be compatible with the army's supply and logistics system and the maintenance of these aircraft would increase the need for cross-trained army technicians to service them in dispersed locations.

The post-war reorganization of the Canadian Forces recognized the need to retain the ability to conduct airborne and airlift operations and this provided the basis of a Mobile Striking Force (MSF). This grouping of airborne troops and tactical aircraft was created in 1948 to counter any incursions to the Arctic or the northern regions.

The emphasis on Joint Air/Ground operations led to the establishment of the Joint Air School at RCAF Station Rivers in Rivers Manitoba in 1947. This School, which was later renamed in 1949 as the Canadian Joint Air Training Centre (CJATC), became responsible for developing the concepts and techniques for close air support, photo reconnaissance, air portability, land/air communications and the delivery of troops by parachute, air landing and towed gliders. CJATC also was responsible for the training of Army officers as light aircraft and helicopter pilots as well as qualifying a number of Army non-commissioned officers as glider pilots in 1948. The original aircraft complement for the Centre consisted of Dakota transports and Hadrian gliders of 112 (T) Flight, Mustang fighter bombers of 417 Sqn and Auster AOP aircraft of 444 AOP Sqn (RCAF).

Auster Mk6

444 Air Observation Post Squadron was formed at the CJATC in 1948 for artillery fire direction and the training of army pilots. The squadron was an RCAF unit equipped with the Taylorcraft Auster

Mk 6 aircraft, commanded by an army major, staffed by army instructor pilots, with an RCAF CFI and maintained by air force tradesmen. The Squadron included a detached flight under the control of the artillery school at Shilo and operated the first helicopters purchased by the army for evaluation purposes.

444 Sqn was absorbed by the Air Training Wing at CJATC in 1949 as the Light Aircraft School (LAS) and the Auster aircraft were replaced with the Cessna L-19 in 1955. The LAS continued to train the army officers who had completed basic flying training on civil light aircraft at the Brandon Flying Club by giving conversion to a service aircraft and further tactical flying to wings standard at Rivers. The contract with the civilian club ceased in 1959 when army student pilots were trained at the RCAF primary flying school at Centralia Ontario on the DHC Chipmunk aircraft before going on to the CJATC.

After the army's acquisition of twenty one Hiller CH-112 light observation helicopters in 1961, the initial conversion of all service pilots to the helicopter was the responsibility of the RCAF Basic Helicopter Training Unit (BHTU) at Rivers with the LAS conducting the tactical flying courses required to allow army pilots to operate in the low-level environment dictated by army operations.

The name of the Light Aircraft School was changed to the Army Aviation Tactical Training School (AATTS) in 1961 to emphasize a change of priorities. The school provided aircraft detachments and crews to support major army field exercises to demonstrate the value of Army Aviation as well as continuing to train army pilots on fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. The school was renamed as 4 FTS after unification in 1968 and ultimately moved to CFB Portage as 3 FTS.

The Artillery expanded its AOP capabilities in 1953 by forming 1 AOP Flight in Petawawa and 2 AOP Flight in Shilo, each with six Auster aircraft. These independent flights were re-equipped with Cessna L-19 aircraft in 1955 and were enlarged in 1960 into five troops of three aircraft each. These AOP troops became part of the individual Artillery Regiments stationed at Shilo, Petawawa, Gagetown , Valcartier and Germany. Many L-19 aircraft were transferred to the Air Cadet League of Canada in 1971 when the AOP troops were re-equipped with helicopters and absorbed into the Tactical Helicopter Squadrons on Unification.

The availability of the CH-112 helicopter allowed the Armoured Corps (RCAC) to achieve its aim of introducing the LOH into its traditional reconnaissance role. The RCAC had added an independent Recce Sqn of twenty -three Ferret scout cars to the NATO Brigade Group in northern Germany which included a troop of seven helicopters crewed by experienced armoured officers and NCOs to assist the scout cars in accomplishing their tasks. This RCAC helicopter troop was formed in Rivers in 1961 and served in Germany until it was combined with the 1 RCHA AOP Troop to become 444 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in 1972.

At the same time this Troop was added to the Brigade, an additional CH-112 was provided to the Brigade HQ to fill the essential aviation liaison function. This aircraft proved the value of being available to the commander and staff since it was located next to the HQ and flown by two pilots who also acted as the Brigade air staff officers. This function was expanded into a Command and Liaison flight which also became part of 444 Sqn.

Another example of the importance of having aircraft available for commanders and senior staff was the formation of the Army Headquarters Training and Liaison Flight in Ottawa in 1961 which was equipped with four Cessna 182 four-seat passenger aircraft. This unit was absorbed into 412 Transport Sqn at CFB Uplands after unification. A total of six of these aircraft was eventually purchased and brought into service.

The question of providing sufficient tradesmen to service the increasing number of army aircraft and to maintain them in the field was a challenge to the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME). Up until this time the maintenance of the army aircraft based at Rivers was done using base facilities and the independent AOP flights were serviced by RCAF aircraft mechanics on strength of these units. The expansion of army aviation required an extensive training programme which was met by the formation of the Army Aviation Maintenance Unit (AAMU) at Rivers and training army technicians with the RCAF, the US Army and attachments to RCN aviation units.

The mobility of a helicopter soon led to the concept of arming it. Although trials were conducted with arming the LOH with machine guns the potential for this role could only be realized when a helicopter with adequate performance combined with a long range optically guided missile became available. The army had always expressed a need for an armed helicopter in its equipment proposals and had incorporated its operational procedures in its tactical publications in anticipation of acquiring them. This included the use of helicopters in the anti-tank role in conjunction with armour and self-propelled anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM). Unfortunately, financial and other defence priorities during this period never allowed the requirement for these aircraft to be finalized.

https://www.digitalcombatsimulator.com/en/files/3313712/
CH-118 Iroquois

The reorganization of the Canadian Forces into a self-contained mobile force in 1965 included a requirement for a large number of helicopters. An interim purchase of ten CH-118 utility helicopters was made in 1967 to transition aircrew to turbine helicopters and develop operational procedures for the proposed new Tactical Helicopter Squadrons. This unit, commanded by an army officer and with the majority of its pilots being army aviators, was designated as 403 Helicopter Operational Training Squadron (HOTS). It was stationed in Petawawa from 1968 to 1971 and, in addition to qualifying pilots, took part in major exercises in the NW Territories, Norway, Denmark, Germany and Jamaica during that period. The Squadron was later moved to CFB Gagetown and re-equipped with CH-136 and CH-135 helicopters.

The Government's decision to reorganize and unify the Armed Forces in 1968 resulted in transforming the army into a joint Mobile Force with an integral air component. The air group of this new command included six helicopter squadrons equipped with 113 observation, utility and cargo helicopters as well as two fighter and one transport squadron. The placing of these resources under command of the land forces was the ultimate example of aviation support to the army. The expanded number of helicopters represented a logical evolution in aviation support since they utilized the procedures and expertise developed during this period by the previous army aviation units to meet this new mobile force concept.

The aviation component of the pre-unification army, although it never was designated as a branch, existed as a distinct function for twenty-five years and acquired 80 aircraft, formed nine separate aviation units and trained 200 pilots and numerous technicians, flight engineers, loadmasters and observers. After unification a considerable number of army pilots transferred into the air element as part of 10 Tactical Air Group and some of these pilots later commanded squadrons in 10 TAG and went on to senior appointments in the CF, including two who became commanders of the group. The conduct and reputation of this small organization could be construed as being a final endorsement of the concept of organic army aviation in the Canadian Armed Forces and it deserves to be remembered.

Used with permission of ***the Canadian Army Aviation website***

Recollections of a Nuclear Strike Pilot

By Eric Mold

Very few people remember, and many don't even know, that 45 years ago Canada was a nuclear power and a pretty potent nuclear power at that.

In the late 1950s the air threat to NATO was changing. The Soviets were thought to be relying more on missiles than on manned bombers. The bomber interceptor role, to which Canada's No. I Air Division in Europe had been committed for many years, was starting to diminish. The trustworthy and reliable F-86 Sabre, with which our air division squadrons were equipped, was past its prime and no further updates or modifications were practical to prolong its usefulness.

To maintain an effective contribution to NATO, a new aircraft was needed for the Royal Canadian Air Force. There was much speculation among my contemporaries as to what was the best plane to replace the Sabre. At the time I think most of us would have preferred the McDonnell F-4 Phantom because it seemed more able to continue in the interceptor role to which we had become accustomed. We were somewhat surprised when we learned that Canada was re-equipping No. 1 Air Div. with Lockheed Starfighters. hundred of these machines were to be built under licence from Lockheed by Canadair Ltd. in Montreal. Deliveries began in the very early 1960s.

I was an ex-Sabre pilot doing my ground tour as the station adjutant at RCAF Cold Lake in Alberta when the Starfighter entered service there with the Strike/Reconnaissance Operational Training Unit. Subsequently, I was posted to No. 3 Course and then to 427 Squadron in Germany where I flew the Starfighter for 6 years. We pilots knew that the Starfighter was a pretty "hot ship." In those days it held just about every record going, speed, altitude, time to height, etc. It was great fun to fly, but it had virtually no wings—just a seven-foot slab on either side of its 55-foot-long fuselage. Wings give aircraft the ability to manoeuvre and in those days manoeuvrability was absolutely essential for air fighting.

What we didn't know at first was that we were not going to use the aircraft as interceptor fighters but as nuclear bombers. Eventually, eight of Canada's air division squadrons were re-equipped with CF-104s—the official name of the Canadian-built Starfighters. Six squadrons were assigned to the nuclear strike role and two to the photo reconnaissance role. There are usually about 22 to 24 aircraft per squadron. The nuclear strike role was extremely interesting and exciting and not without its scary or white-knuckle moments. Almost all of the flying was done at low level. In peacetime that means about 250 feet above the ground, but in some places and times we flew as low as 50 feet. Training missions consisted of approximately 400-mile-long cross-country flights with dummy attacks at the end.

In some places, on simulated targets, we dropped 12-pound practice bombs which had similar fall characteristics to the real thing. These practice bombs were carried in a special dispenser beneath the aircraft, and releasing one required the pilot to perform a switching sequence similar to what was required to arm and release an actual nuclear bomb. These training flights were usually flown at a speed of approximately 600 miles per hour. The final run in to the target was done at almost the speed of sound.

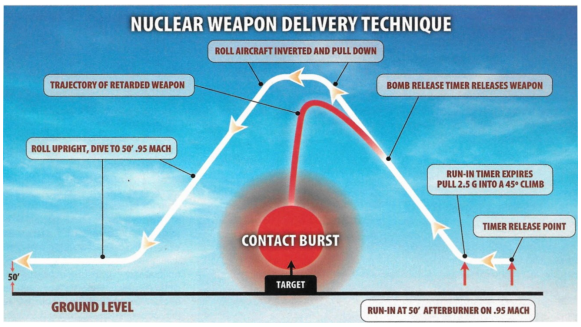
The Starfighter was equipped with the LN-3 inertial navigation set. As pilots and maintenance personnel became more experienced with the system, they were able to coax extremely accurate navigation information from it. The aircraft was also fitted with an advanced, forward-looking radar set that enabled the pilot to "see" the ground and avoid obstacles in bad weather and at night. One virtue of the aircraft's stubby wings was that it made it very stable to fly All in all, the machine was capable of delivering an extremely accurate navigation package. After training, it was quite normal for pilots to fly 400 to 500 miles and then deliver a practice bomb within 10 to 20 metres of the target, and within 10 seconds of time.

Accuracy and timing were very important because the aircraft was capable of carrying bombs many times more powerful than the ones dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Accuracy was key because we were not the only ones playing this game. Hundreds of other NATO planes and weapon systems were also expected to hit their respective targets at the same time. Time accuracy was vital because all of these flights in theory were supposed to have been co-ordinated by SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) to make sure one plane didn't run into another plane's exploding bomb. Fortunately, we were never called upon to test this theory for real. I should also point out that it is easier to navigate a plane from an altitude of two or three thousand feet from where the pilot can see a few miles ahead and to either side. But flying at that altitude would make you a sitting duck for enemy defences. Right "down on the deck" limits the aircraft's exposure to enemy radar, flak and surface-to-air missiles.

Low-level flying is exciting, but dangerous. We made every effort to avoid areas where things like gliding, parachuting and light-plane flying were taking place. You also had to be alert to avoid TV towers, hydro lines and tramway cables. Bird strikes, which have brought down many an aircraft, were difficult to avoid. During its long service from 1962 to 1986, the CF-104 Starfighter was involved in accidents in most of these categories. In the early days it experienced some engine reliability problems. Fortunately, the plane was fitted with a state-of-the-art ejection seat that saved the lives of many pilots.

Bomb delivery calculations were normally done before takeoff. They took into account such things as the size of weapon and type of burst. A ground burst is where the bomb actually hits and penetrates the ground before exploding. A contact burst is where the bomb goes off before it hits ground but the fireball touches the ground. An air burst is where the bomb detonates in the air and the fireball does not touch the ground. The size of weapon and type of burst is dictated by the targeting people after studying the target and the damage required.

Other items considered in the delivery calculations include such things as target elevation above sea level, ambient temperatures, reflectivity of the day, whether it is clear, hazy, foggy and of course, the target area wind speed and direction. All of these parameters are reduced to two simple timer settings; the run-in timer and the release timer. The timer interval is set in respect to some really solid and obvious landmark on the ground, a few miles back from the target.



The bomb delivery sequence goes something like this. You are on time and precisely on track a few miles back from the target. You light the afterburner on the engine, which greatly increases the thrust, you push down to 50 feet, and the speed rapidly increases to Mach .95. You head for the target either visually or with your radar cursor, allowing your pre-calculated offset for wind speed and direction. You pass the "can't miss it landmark" and then start your timers running. When the first timer runs out you hear a beep in your headphones and immediately pull back on the control stick to put the plane into a 2.5-G, 45-degree climb. You hold it steady and then the second timer beeps and the bomb comes off—going up at an angle of 45 degrees—just like you are. A small chute deploys on the bomb to slow it down. The pilot rolls the plane upside down, pulls the control stick again so that the plane is inverted and heading back down towards the ground. As the ground approaches the pilot rolls the right way up and gets right down on the deck again in order to put as much distance between himself and his about to-explode weapon. Somewhere during this manoeuvre the pilot, who is wearing a gold-reflective visor to protect him from flash blindness and retinal burns, pulls an additional protective hood over his head. This hood is to protect him from radiation. Consequently, at least the last part of this manoeuvre is done on instruments, without reference to the outside. Once clear of the target, the pilot heads for home, thinking about that cold beer he hopes is waiting for him.

The most important targets were often scheduled for multiple strikes and so these were held by other NATO forces as well. Targets were divided into primary targets and follow-on targets. Mission planning produced folders for each target which contained highly detailed route maps, calculations, tables, pictures, any other

details or intelligence about the target or route to it, including where enemy defences were likely to be encountered. These folders were always classified Top Secret. We were also frequently called upon to react to what were called "cut and paste" missions. These were targets of opportunity for which there were no preplanned mission folders. When assigned one of these missions, the pilot dashed over to the mission planning section where a team of assistants was waiting to help him cut out and paste up his route maps and start on his bomb and takeoff calculations. The mission planning people had the nasty little habit of calling snap examinations on every aspect of the job; not just our routes and targets but also nuclear safety, aircraft systems, safety and emergency procedures. The Americans, who actually owned our weapons, also insisted on regular exams on every aspect of each of the several devices available to us. When they figured we were proficient enough we received the dubious designation of Nuclear Bomb Commander.

Hardly a day passed without some sort of test or examination.The main feature of our weekly routine was QRA, or Quick Reaction Alert, to which several pilots were assigned every day. The Q, as it came to be known, was a barbed wire enclosure containing several loaded aircraft. Each plane was kept at constant readiness with its navigation systems continually running and aligned. These aircraft were guarded by Canadian and American military personnel and each plane sat within a white square painted on the ground. This was called the No Lone Zone. No one was allowed inside the zone alone; you had to have someone else with you at all times. If a pilot wanted to check something in his plane, he had to have a ground crew member accompany him. Pilots were assigned to the Q for 24-hour periods.We had the normal accommodation facilities plus a kitchen, and we watched movies when we weren't involved in target study or aircraft checks. I must have seen every movie ever made prior to about 1966. We were always at constant readiness—ready to scramble at a moment's notice. When the balloon went up pilots would run to their planes and jump in. The technicians would help you strap in and start up. Over the radio you would hear Wing Operations giving us the Canadian weapon enabling codes and an American Custodial Officer giving us the U.S. enabling codes. This would prove that the Canadian government had approved the launch and the American government had given us control of the weapons. We would scramble and the rest was up to us.

After QRA we usually had the day off so it was nice if your day in the Q turned out to be Thursday. When not in QRA most pilots flew one or two training missions a day. Each wing had several two-seat Starfighters which we used for training, testing and maintaining our instrument flying proficiency. Every few weeks we would have sessions of night flying where we flew the same missions as during the daytime but used a special map with radar predictions of the ground features below. Twice a year each pilot flew to southern Sardinia in the Mediterranean where NATO maintained a bombing range. We would fly three or four missions a day there, honing our bomb delivery skills.

Deployment to Sardinia was always popular since the RCAF allowed us to take family members with us. They flew in the support Hercules transport plane that followed us. Some enterprising locals had a couple of beachfront villas, which they rented to us by the week. Also, all of the pilots clubbed together and bought a Volkswagen camper which was fitted out with a barbecue, cooler, deck chairs, sun umbrellas and all of the other paraphernalia one needs at the beach. The deployment was particularly welcomed in winter when one escaped northwest Europe's fog, rain and snow for a few days of balmy sunshine.

ORIGINAL EUROPE BASING PLAN FOR CF-104 STARFIGHTERS

WING	SQUADRON NO.	SYMBOL	ACTIVATION DATE
NO. 1 MARVILLE, FRANCE.	439	SABRE TOOTH TIGER	MARCH 1964
	441	SILVER FOX	JANUARY 1964
NO. 2 GROSTENQUIN, FRANCE	421	RED INDIAN	DECEMBER 1963
	430	SILVER FALCON	SEPTEMBER 1963
NO. 3 ZWEIBRUCKEN, WEST GERMANY	427	LION	DECEMBER 1962
	434	BLUENOSE	APRIL 1963
NO. 4 BADEN-SOELLINGEN, WEST GERMANY	422	TOMAHAWK	JULY 1963
	444	COBRA	MAY 1963

SOURCE: DAVID L. BASHOW

The Cold War was a perfect war and our side prevailed. It was a model, which regrettably has not been replicated since. All of the personnel involved in Canada's Nuclear Strike program made a significant contribution to the deterrent and which prevented Soviet aggression in Europe.

Canadian Starfighters roamed the skies of Europe for nearly 25 years. During that time 37 of their pilots were killed in flying accidents of one kind or another. Their sacrifice in the name of our freedom is just as noble as if they had been killed by a sniper's bullet or roadside bomb. It is to their memory that I dedicate this article.

Our Move to Marville By Moe Morrison

An Excerpt from "My Sabre Days" published in the SPAADS Story book compiled and edited by Eric Mold. Used with permission.

In March 1955 Number 1 Fighter Wing moved in its entirety from North Luffenham, England to Marville, France. The base at Marville had just been built by the French as part of a NATO agreement. The runways, taxiways, ramps and buildings were all new but between paved areas and buildings it was all mud, so a lot of work was done initially to make the base livable. In spite of its flaws the time I spent in Marville was the most enjoyable of my career.

When 439 Squadron left North Luffenham they left the Mark 2 Sabres behind and at Marville the squadron was equipped with new Mark 5 Sabres fresh from Canada.

The Mark 5 Sabre was somewhat different than the Mark 2. It had the Orenda 10 engine in it which had 6,500 pounds of thrust. The wings on the Mark 5 were extended forward six inches at the fuselage and three inches at the tip, which made the wings a little more swept-back. To improve high altitude capabilities the Mark 5s were not equipped with leading edge wing slats. The solid wing was better at altitude but when they stalled, one wing might drop violently. This could happen when turning final, before coming in for a landing, and actually did much to the sorrow of a few pilots.

Flying on the Continent was different than flying in England. The weather was better. We did not have to contend so much with heavy cloud, poor visibility and crud that predominated in England. On the other hand, we missed the variety of antagonists that we had experienced in England. Although Marville base was in France we rarely saw any French aircraft and when we did, they wanted to have nothing to do with us. There were some USAF bases near us and now and then we mixed it up with them but our most frequent sparing partners in the air were aircraft from the other Canadian Sabre squadrons in Europe at that time.

About 66 miles (105 kms) east of Marville was Number 2 Fighter Wing Grostenquin, home to 416, 421 and 430 Squadrons. Further east about 35 miles (55kms) was Number 3 Fighter Wing located at Zweibrücken, Germany. This was the base for 413, 427 and 434 Squadrons. Further to the south east about 56 miles(90kms) was number 4 Fighter Wing Baden-Sollingen, Germany, which had 414, 422 and 444 Squadrons. All the squadrons were equipped with Sabres, and the Canadian Sabres dominated the skies over Europe from 1952 to 1963. Since the bases at Zweibrücken and Baden were only six or seven minutes flying time to the Iron Curtain a certain number of Sabres were kept on alert status with loaded guns to counter any Communist jet aircraft coming into the west which sometimes happened. This was called Zulu alert and it was something all the pilots did at one time or another. 439 Squadron did Zulu alert out of Zweibrücken.

Apart from Zulu and a few other organized exercises most days were spent doing High Level Battle. A typical trip was a climb out from Marville with a 4 plane formation. Head southeast and climb to 45,000 feet then turn north and watch for other Sabre formations from other wings. If we spotted another formation, preferably at a lower altitude, we would manoeuvre around to get in an advantageous position then attack trying to get in behind the other formation. If the other formation saw the attackers coming in from above or behind they would break into a tight turn left or right and then a battle would ensue. Sometimes other formations would appear and they would enter the fray. So it was pull G and turn this way and that in a scissors manoeuvre. It generally ended up in a one-on-one contest and all battles ended up at a lower altitude, sometimes real low. When fuel started to run low we would break off and try to get the formation back together, which did not always happen. Then we would return to base and land. A typical trip would last one hour or less.

There was one exercise that we participated in where Sabres from other squadrons were attackers and we were defenders. On one of these exercises, the formation I was with got scrambled, so up we went. The cloud base was about 8,000 feet but the cloud above was real thick and we seemed to climb forever , but finally came out

on top in bright sunlight at 30,000 feet. Immediately the sky was full of Sabres from other squadrons. I managed to get more or less behind a Sabre but with his equal capabilities we were pulling back and forth and crisscrossing over and under each other while glaring at each other through the top of our canaopies and then we both went down into cloud. I managed to hang onto him for a few more gyrations in the cloud and then I lost him.

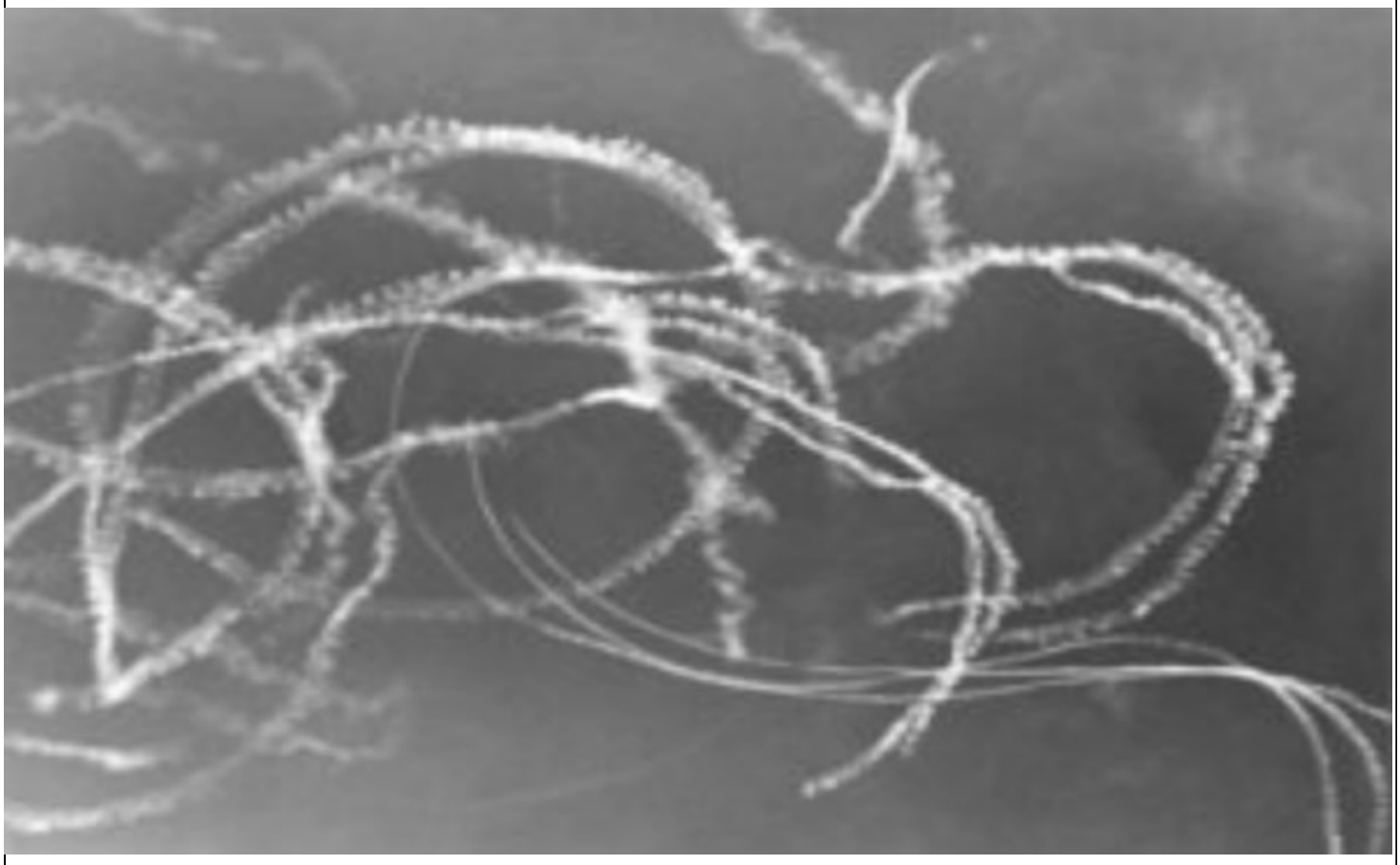
I was in thick cloud and had no idea which way was up or down. The instruments were all going in different directions except for the altimeter and it was going down fast. I was either in a spin or seriously out of control abd when I tried to recover, it seemed to make it worse. In the middle of all this I momentarily saw the other Sabre and from where I sat he looked like he was going backwards and straight up (try to figure that out). Both Sabres were obviously out of control and tumbling down through the same cloud.

Still totally out of control at 15,000 feet. I remembered we had been told that since the Sabre is inherently a stable aircraft, if in a spin, as a last resort centralize the controls and it will probably come out of the spin itself. So I centralized the controls and at the same time told myself that if this Sabre was not under control by 8,000 feet I would have to eject. After centralizing, the instruments gyrated around for a bit longer then started to settle down and at 9,000 feet came out of the bottom of the cloud in a nice descent with wings level.

After a quick look around to see where I was, I throttled up to 100% and climbed back up through the cloud to rejoin the battle. Five minutes later, when I came out on top, there were no aircraft in sight. They had all gone home, so I went home too.

The SPAADS Storybook was compiled and edited by Eric Mold

A Sunny Sky in Southern Germany—1958 ?



"Sir Flying Officer" ?

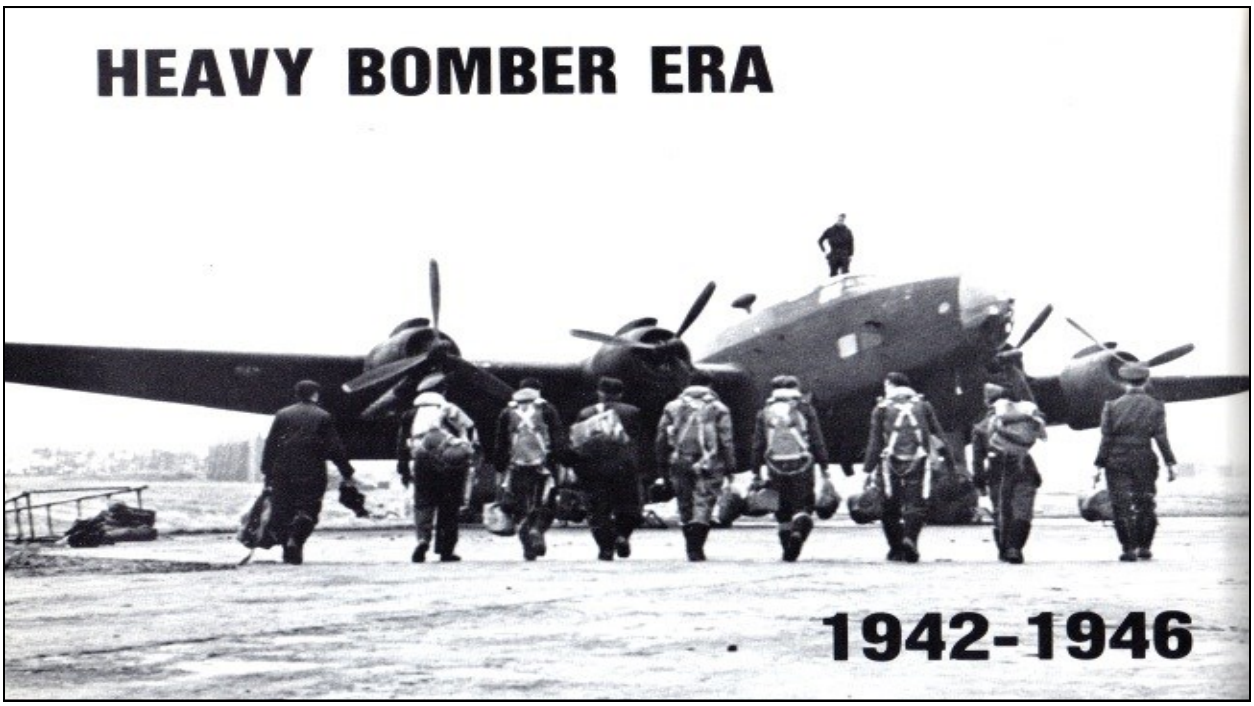
Who remembers the long stand-down in late 1954? My logbook shows no Sabre time between October 8 and November 5. We were experiencing flame-outs with no apparent explanation, so all aircraft were grounded until the cause was found. I was with 430 at 2 Wing, but I'm sure all Air Division was affected.

You all know what happens when a bunch of pilots whose two favorite things are flying and partying are deprived of flying. Over-compensation takes place. By the end of the first week, the Mess was a shambles, and the base CO, Willie Weiser, was at his wits end. Someone came up with the idea of getting us off base from time to time before it was completely destroyed. Various trips were arranged to amuse us. I vaguely recall a bus trip to some cathedral or another, but the outing that really sticks in my mind was a jaunt to England.

We flew to Birmingham in a Bristol Freighter, an ugly monstrosity with fixed U/C. We took a tour of the Lucas plant (boring...). Lucas built the fuel pump for the Sabre and were anxious to show us that their product could not possibly be responsible for our flame-outs. After the tour, we were somehow conveyed to Stratford-upon-Avon where we were billeted in a small country inn. We were welcomed to the town by the "Lord Mayor", whose chain of office consisted of a vast collection of beer bottle caps. After supper, the usual party broke out, and on learning it was my birthday, the Lord Mayor insisted that I should be "knighted". He assured us that he was authorized to carry out this ceremony, and commanded me to kneel before him. Now this was not the traditional placing of the sword on each shoulder. Oh no. Do you remember those wide-mouthed coal-scuttles in wide use back then? When inverted, they bore an uncanny resemblance to an old knight's visor. One of these was placed over my head, whereupon the Lord Mayor and all my squadron mates proceeded to pound on the pail with pokers, beer bottles, and anything else that came to hand. I never did get all the coal-dust out of my dress uniform, but no matter. After all, how many guys can say they were knighted by the Lord Mayor or Stratford-upon-Avon on their twenty-first birthday?

F/O John Koch, 430 Sqn - *John passed away recently, September 15, 2021, and although he served on 430 Sqn at 2 Fighter Wing, Grostenquin, France, his story jogged a memory of a truism my old commercial airline simulator Instructor believed in and used to chortle "busy hands are happy hands" while simultaneously initiating an engine fire, a generator failure and the Captain having a simulated heart attack. Thanks to his son Jim and SPAADS for passing this on.*

Owning a copy of the mini tapestry of the lion was mandatory for any of the 427 Single Men's Union (SMU). In our private barrick cubicles, it had a prominent place of honour on a wall. First trip to Sardinia after arriving on the Squadron meant a shopping trip into Cagliari. For some reason married personnel were unable to display their copy on their bedroom wall and had to keep it hidden.



Captain R.C. "Bob" Penrose DFC

Air Cadets, RCAF - 422-427-437 Squadrons, TCA, AC, TC, OWA
Lifetime flying hours - 32,000

RCAF World War II
Part II—427 Squadron, Leeming, Yorkshire, England

Bob and his crew arrived at Leeming, Yorkshire, the base of #427 and #429 squadrons on April first. Five other crews, all of whom had trained together with the RAF on Wellingtons and then Halifaxs, arrived with Bob's crew at the same time. They were led by pilots Pete Cronyn, Dave Perry, Max Strange, Mosely-Williams and Pete Kelly. The commanding officer was Bob Turnbull, who had risen from a sergeant pilot to Wing Commander in some fourteen months. Turnball looked at Bob and his crew and said, "They will send their mothers next".

Beginning life on #427 squadron was a time of mixed feelings. Bob and crew found the squadron in a depressed state. Operations were shut down for two weeks due to a shortage of crews and aircraft because of big losses on Nuremburg and Leipzig. The losses of A and B flight commanders and most of the green crews did not sound very good for future survival. It was an uncomforting start for Bob and crew.

Bob's first three trips were as second dicky where he accompanied experienced crews. His own crew stood by hoping he would return. The Dusseldorf trip with W/C Turnbull was an eye-opener for things to come lots of flak, searchlights and German fighters over the Rhur Valley, nicknamed Happy Valley. When arriving over targets, it was not unusual to find searchlights were everywhere. If one's aircraft was coned (that is, caught in the path of three searchlights), very few escaped because they could calculate your altitude. The anti-aircraft fire was concentrated and shells would burst horizontally and vertically. One could smell the cordite as the shells exploded with fragments hitting the aircraft. German fighters were off to one side or above us, and they could be seen because of the glare from the fires and searchlights. Bombing missions over Germany were always on dark nights with no moon, and the target time was usually between 10 p.m. and 1 a.m.

Some trips were unforgettable. On one, the target was a trainload of Tiger tanks at Arras, just north of Paris. Unfortunately, the RAF were doing likewise at Amiens some thirty miles away and bombing only thirty minutes before us. When all TIs (target indicators) went down over Arras, the Luftwaffe was already airborne at Amiens and moved over to Bob's target to greet them. They were bombing at 5000 feet and lost 22 out of 125 that night. Max Strange managed to crash land at Gamston, near Folkestone. He was well shot up, with no hydraulics or flaps, and the tail gunner had half his face shot up.

Another mission was a raid on Stuttgart, which had to be bombed from northeast to southwest. He was routed south of Paris and east toward Metz. Just before Paris, a Junkers 88 came up under Bob's aircraft and shot off the plastic nose section. The bomb aimer, Keith Caspel, navigator Ken Schmitz and wireless operator Ed Doan were-all in the area but not hit. The fighter's tracer shells seemed to envelope the aircraft. Before heading southwest over Germany, they were hit again and this time lost their starboard-outer engine. They dropped their bombs, and then were attacked again by a fighter. They corkscrewed and dived, turning sharp left and right and went down to a minimum safe altitude over France. Bob had trouble controlling the aircraft during the corkscrew maneuvers and limped back to base. Bob missed the first approach due to strong crosswinds, but finally landed, went to debriefing, got an ounce of rum, and then bacon and eggs for breakfast. After four hours sleep, Bob was called to the C.O.'s office.

The C.O. was ready to court martial him. When the Junkers 88 shot off the nose section, one of the shells hit the bomb-dropping timer. As a result, they had only dropped one bomb on Stuttgart and brought the rest back to base. In doing so, they had put the ground crew at risk with a load of live bombs. It also accounted for the trouble Bob had on rolling the aircraft during a subsequent fighter attack whilst on three engines. Bob was given a reprimand.

Hamburg on July 28, 1944, was a fireball of a target. The city was ablaze, but the mission was going after the submarine pens just west of the city. They saw a lot of strange things in the air like fireflies. Intelligence informed the crews later that they had seen the first German rocket planes, the M.E.163.

Hamburg was Bob's 30th mission, and 28 of those missions had been flown in their first love - L for London Halifax III. The aircraft was well patched up and the engines time had expired. The C.O. offered Bob and his crew the opportunity to fly Love to its final resting place. They flew it down to Hootin Park, near Liverpool and said farewell to their friend with a bottle of wine. Bob's call sign on final approach was love in the funnel. It was difficult to say goodbye to Love; it had saved their lives many times. Like so many it was scrapped for parts and metal. There were 6,750 Halifax's made, but all that remain are two planes that were recovered from Norwegian waters and one other constructed from the parts of many that had crashed in Yorkshire. One Halifax has been rebuilt and resides in Trenton, Ontario in the Air Force Museum.

August 12, 1944, was a nightmare. Bob and crew were bombing Brunswick, just west of Berlin, and using radar H2S plus P.P.I. (position indicator) because the target was under heavy cloud. Their route took them between Bremen and Hamburg and south towards Hanover. Fighters were everywhere and they had six attacks en route to the target. They dropped bombs on the P.P.I. on a navigator countdown. Bob was sure that as soon as Ken Schmitz had counted nine, eight, seven, Keith Caspell had let the bombs go because the aircraft seemed to feel much lighter. On the way out, they encountered seven more fighter attacks, and Bob's 131 pounds was exhausted from his gunners yelling corkscrew right or corkscrew left. They were chased right over Bremen, and ended up in searchlights. Bob couldn't see anything because of the glare. Ken Schmitz said, "keep turning". I'll tell you to stop when we are headed out to sea. Back at Leeming base by 3 a.m. they looked like ghosts at interrogation. The doctor prescribed double rums.

The war was a time of unparalleled adventure, camaraderie and sadness. In August 1944, returning overdue to base at 2 a.m., Bob found his buddy Mosley-Williams waiting for him on the tarmac. Bob asked, what are you doing up so late? He replied, what took you so long? Two months later, Mosley-Williams was killed in combat and never found. Unfortunately, along with Mosley-Williams, Dave Perry, Pete Cronyn, and Pete Kelley also did not survive and their bodies were never found. They were all very close. Bob thought of them, and all their crewmembers often throughout his life. Sixty years later, in October 2004, Bob was reunited with them in spirit when he visited the Commonwealth Air Memorial, near Runnymede, to touch his lost friend's names etched in stone.

In total, Bob flew 40 missions. Bob and Ken Schmitz were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) at Buckingham Palace by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. He and his crew were fortunate to survive. Most new crews on arrival figured seven missions as a hurdle to survive. Bob was a hero, but he maintained that the only heroes of war were his comrades and brothers who never came home.

MEMORIES OF A PRISONER OF WAR

by Sue White, told by Donald Keith Buckler

Donald Buckler enlisted in the RCAF on August 3, 1942, and received his wings while stationed in Quebec. He went overseas in June 1943. Sixty years later, the small village of Bear River in Nova Scotia seemed very far away from Germany and the horrors of World War II as I sat in the dining room of the Buckler home, surrounded by memorabilia, listening to a story straight out of a Hollywood movie, only this one was for real.

March 15, 1944 Buckler and the rest of the crew of seven of a 427 Squadron Halifax bomber were on their ninth mission, part of a force of 863 aircraft bombing Stuttgart, Germany. They were on the third and final wave. By the time they got there, the fires below had lit up the night sky making their plane an easy target for two German Luftwaffe night-fighters. As the bomber dropped its load on the factory city, the fighters came at them one at a time, raking them with bullets. They disabled the rear gun but Buckler who was the mid-upper gunner peppered both fighters even as their own plane burst into flames. "I was really putting the lead to them!" he said. The seven man crew was forced to bail out behind enemy lines. All survived, saved by their parachutes. Buckler broke his shoulder upon impact and was knocked unconscious. When he regained conciousness, he was a prisoner of war. The dreaded telegram arrived for his father who was stationed in Halifax, "Regret to advise that your son Sgt. Donald Keith Buckler is reported missing, after air operations overseas, March 16, 1944.

What followed in the next 13 months was a horrible life in the Stalags of East Prussia, Poland and Germany. The diet consisted of raw potatoes, turnip tops and black bread made with sawdust flour. Terribly weak and suffering from malnutrion, they were moved from one camp to another as the Allies closed in. Uppermost in the prisoners' minds was trying to escape.

After a long day march in Poland, they were to spend the night at the edge of a field near some woods. Buckler and his friend Paul (the rear gunner) saw their chance and hid under a pile of brush. " The German guards were looking for some other prisoners who had escaped, and they were standing so close to the pile of brush where I was hiding, I could look them right in the eye" Buckler laughed. "Paul and I ran away in the night to a nearby farm and hid in the barn. The next morning the farmer found us and turned us in. That was the first escape."

They were being held at an interrogation center near Frankfurt when they were caught in an Allied air raid. "The Americans bombed all day and the RAF/RCAF bombed all night. The Germans promised to come and get us to take us to the air raid shelter, but as the bombing got closer and closer we decided to make a run for it on our own. We had just reached the shelter and gone inside when there was a huge concussion and a terrible explosion. The next morning, we heard that an allied bomber with a full load of bombs had gone down into one of the buildings where we had originally been held. It obliterated an area about the size of two football fields. It was a plane from another base near our own; all members of the crew were killed. The Germans then dog trotted us 13 kilometres and put us on a train to another camp."

The next word that reached Bear River was a hand written note to Mrs. Buckler. "Please to advise you (RCAF quoting German Red Cross information) that your son Donald Buckler is a prisoner of war. Letter follows." The Germnas were on the move as the Allies were getting closer and once more Buckler and his friend Paul managed to escape. This time they made their way back and met the 15th Scottish Division who were rapidly closing in on the Germans. The two weary prisoners marched into Luneburg (near Hamburg) with the Allies.

April 27, 1945 another telegram to Buckler's father reads" Pleased to advise that your son WO class 1 Donald Keith Buckler has arrived safely in the United Kingdom." The 13 month ordeal for Donald Buckler and his family was over. Buckler was sent home immediately. The entire crew of their Halifax bomber not only survived being shot down and being held prisoners of war but all came home from the war.

From TAILWIND, newsletter of the Aircrew Association of Nova Scotia. Donald passed away July 25, 2012.

Sergeant H.T. Winter
427 Squadron - September, 1941 to April, 1946

Harry has been a long time supporter of the 427 Squadron Association and has generously shared information. Please see: https://427squadron.com/news_file/2018/2018_harry_winter/harrys_story_all.html He has also kept us up to date on some of the events he was able to attend in the UK with the help of his son and friends as well as fellow Masons. The above link contains all this information as well as numerous photos forwarded by Harry. A few months ago I was contacted by Nick Gras regarding a 100th birthday celebration for Harry and the most recent email, below, is self explanatory

I was delighted to speak with you earlier concerning Harry Winter. As discussed I am a senior Freemason in Surrey (see me with chain of office in photo) Harry and I have become good friends over the last ten years, I am helping him organise his birthday party lunch on 21st May.

Harry's wife Josie moved into a Masonic care home last September owing to the fact she kept falling over and Harry being her carer could no longer lift her up or deal with her requirements. After a few months fending for himself alone he decided the time was right to join Josie in the same Masonic care home and he became a permanent resident in January. They are both very happy there and are well looked after.

Harry has told everyone he does not want or need any birthday presents, however, hearing the local Croydon University Hospital were building a new children's unit and needed funds to pay for specialist equipment Harry said he would use his milestone birthday to help. Harry has asked anybody who might have considered buying him a present instead to make a small donation to the charity fund for the new unit. Local Freemasons have pledged to donate £20,000 out of the £200,000 required, at the photoshoot Harry announced to the Doctors and Nurses assembled he would start the birthday fund himself by donating £1000. The new unit has a dedicated wing with sterile conditions to treat children with cancer, we were given a tour of the facility which is currently undergoing final installations and testing prior to a formal opening at the end of the month.

I have launched an appeal to all 5000 Surrey Freemasons to send a 100th birthday card to Harry and to make a small donation in his name. We are currently advertising this appeal and it is gathering momentum, with luck the national TV networks who have been notified will cover his birthday and our PR team are doing all they can to publish Harry and Josie as a newsworthy story.

If you can assist with some information from Canada it will help generate further interest. As requested here are the specific details to send a birthday card and make a donation.

Please send a birthday card to:
Mr Harry Winter
Room 51
James Terry Court, Masonic Care Home
90 Haling Park Road, South Croydon, Surrey
CR2 6NF, UK

Donation to:

The Surrey Provincial Charity Fund
Bank sort code: 30-92-45 A/c No: 33643668
Reference: Harry Winter birthday appeal

Messages from Isolation

Your think it's bad now. In twenty years our country will be run by people home schooled by day drinkers.

Due to my isolation I finished three books yesterday. And believe me that's a lot of colouring.

Sierra Echo November Delta Tango Oscar India Lima Echo Tango Papa Alpha Papa Echo Romeo

My neighbour knocked on my door at 2:30am this morning. Can you believe that..... 2:30am ! Luckily for him I was still up playing my Bagpipes.

Re-reading the Flight Operations Manual - 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.

Guilty ???

Two little boys, Tom and Danny, are excessively mischievous. They are always getting into trouble and their Mom knew if any mischief occurs in their town, the two boys are probably involved.

The boys' mother heard that a preacher in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The preacher agreed, but he asked to see them individually. The mother sent Danny in the morning, with the older boy to see the preacher in the afternoon.

The preacher, a huge man with a deep booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Do you know where God is, son? The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there wide-eyed with his mouth hanging open.

So the preacher repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God?! Again, the boy made no attempt to answer.

The preacher raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "WHERE IS GOD?!"

The boy screamed & bolted from the room, ran directly home & dove into his closet, slamming the door behind him. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "What happened?"

The younger brother, still gasping for breath, replied, "We are in BIG trouble this time! GOD is missing, and they think WE did it!"