



## 427 Squadron Association

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### 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron

**Commanding Officer - L/Col Christopher Bray  
Lions,**



427 SOAS continues to evolve and expand on our historic boundaries. Most recently, Special Operations Aviation (SOA) has taken its first step towards establishing itself as a fleet under 1 CAD in support of CANSOFCOM. On October 2024, the first SOA Capability Advisory Group (CAG) convened, chaired by Colonel Todd O'Malley. Much like other primary CAGs in the RCAF, SOA CAG will advise commanders on the capability, conduct personnel management, and advance the capability. A key function will be the succession planning for members in key positions both internal to 427 SOAS, and within the CAF. My intent as the Commanding Officer is to showcase key SOA CAG members conducting amazing work inside and outside of 427 SOAS.

To kick off this tradition, I would like to introduce a talented and emerging leader within the RCAF and CANSOFCOM, Captain Erin Edwards.

Capt Edwards was posted to 427 SOAS as a pilot from 2018 – 2023, serving as a Flight Safety Officer, Operations Officer, and the Space Liaison Officer. In 2023, Capt Edwards was selected as the first Canadian Astronaut Coordination Officer to provide operational support to the Canadian Astronaut Corps and engineering staff working at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. Shortly after arriving to her post, she was appointed as the Deputy Branch Chief for Crew Operations (astronaut corps Ops O), a role in which her and a small staff of three are responsible for the Space Flight Readiness Training, coordination, and scheduling of some 50 NASA, Canadian, Japanese, and European astronauts before they are assigned to a space flight mission. She is the first non-astronaut to occupy this position. Finally, while fulfilling her other duties, Capt Edwards also completed a difficult, engineering intensive year long training program as a CAPCOM (Capsule Communicator), working as call sign HOUSTON in Mission Control where she is responsible for timely, and effective communication between the other Flight Controllers and the Astronauts aboard the International Space Station. Capt Edwards was the first non American, non astronaut to qualify in this critical role. She credits her mentors and the time she spent developing as junior officer at 427 SOAS for much of her success in her myriad roles at NASA. Ad Astra!

427 SOAS is proud of the amazing work being conducted by members like Capt Edwards, as they demonstrate and represent the unique jointness between CANSOFCOM and the RCAF.



The next 12 months will see 427 SOAS operate in new and challenging operating environments and continue to adapt to evolving operational realities. Please stay tuned for the next new letter where we outline some of these details.

**Ferte Manus Certas**

**NOTE:**

That the HCol's article for ROAR is missing is on me. Unfortunately, I mistakenly used a wrong email to notify her twice during the month of November and did not pick up the phone when I received no acknowledgment of my emails. My apologies to the HCol and to you the reader.

## **The Transfer of Ownership of 427 Squadron Cenotaph**

The Project to initiate the ‘Memorial to the Fallen’ was initiated in 2016 by the CO and HCol at the time (LCol Orr and HCol Lippert) and the hope was to have the Memorial dedicated by the Squadron’s 75th Anniversary (Nov 2017). The Memorial was always intended to be owned by the Squadron and located on CFB Petawawa. Fundraising of all sorts was undertaken by them, assisted in part by the Association (Assn). However, by Mar 2017 while significant fundraising had occurred, in order to qualify for a Veterans Affairs grant of \$50,000 the ownership and location of the Memorial had to be changed. 427 Squadron, as a federal agency did not qualify for this grant, and the grant would only be possible if the Memorial was located in a readily accessible area to the general public (not on a Base). The Squadron requested the Assn take on the ownership of the Memorial, with their assurance that this would not entail any financial burden to the Assn. The end result was the establishment of this magnificent Memorial in Cobden’s Veterans Memorial Park and its dedication in Oct 2017...a most fitting way to honour those who had died on air operations since the Squadrons inception in Nov of 1942.

For the first few ensuing years, funds left over from those raised for its establishment were used to cover the annual costs of insuring the Memorial (an annual cost in excess of \$800). However, by 2020, it became apparent that these funds would not last much longer, and insurance costs would indeed pose the Assn significant annual costs. Many work-arounds were considered over the next few years, (mainly involving the Assn OPI Ken Sorfleet and the Sqn DCO at the time). Indeed, the Sqn did manage to get NPF approval for a one-time only expenditure of their NPF funds to cover the 2021 insurance Memorial costs. This proviso by NDHQ, though welcome, was not a permanent solution. By the fall of 2023, though the Squadron was very sympathetic, given their constraints, the provision of any further financial support to cover insurance costs proved impossible. As such, with the Squadron’s full support, the Assn proceeded to examine other options and given the location of the Memorial in the Cobden’s Veterans Park, a transfer of ownership to the Township of Whitewater Region (owners of this Park) was pursued and favourable resolved, with the ownership of the Memorial formally being accepted by the Mayor and Council via a Resolution on the 7 of Feb 2024.

Rest assured, the Memorial is in fine hands – the Township will make all efforts to ensure for the Memorial’s future care and custody, thus providing a most tangible link between the Township and 427 SOAS in perpetuity. For those seeking more information see the LINKS to documents provided below to further explain and confirm the successful outcome of those discussions.

Our Association thanks have to go to HCol Lippert and LCol Orr and Rook for their initiative and drive in creating this national calibre Memorial to the Fallen, and to their successors and respective DCOs and staffs for all the efforts taken in pursuit of resolving issues in respect to the financing of insurance costs. As well, of course, a big thank you to Mayor Nicolson and Council of the Township of Whitewater Region for taking on the responsibility of ownership and guardianship of the 427 ‘Memorial to the Fallen’

[Covering Letter—Association to Whitewater Township](#)

[Backgrounder for Whitewater Township Council](#)

[Photo Collage of the 427 Cenotaph](#)

[Whitewater Council Confirmation of Transfer](#)

***Our thanks go to Ken for the intensive time and efforts he devoted to ensure a long term outstanding conclusion for the Cenotaph.***



## We Will Remember Them

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

### Flying Officer (Ret'd) Dale Horley 27 July 1940—10 June 2024



Dale passed away peacefully on Monday, 10 June after a long battle with a succession of cancers. Born in Birch Hills, Saskatchewan, after high school he worked as a telephone lineman. A cousin encouraged him to get off the high pole and fly high with the Royal Canadian Air Force. He excelled in his new-found avocation, and after posting to the F-86 Sabre Operational Training Unit at Chatham, N.B., in 1960 he joined 427 (F) Squadron at Zweibrücken, West Germany. He quickly became a skilled fighter pilot and a valued member of the SMU (Single Men's Union).

The Squadron stood down as a fighter Squadron when the CF-104 was introduced to 3 (F) Wing in late 1962. Dale was then posted to 430 (F) Squadron at 2 Wing, Grostenquin, France. During a training flight to Norway, he met and later married Cecilie, a SAS Flight Attendant, who bore a son Ken, and twin daughters Ania and Tina.

430 (F) Squadron also stood down when they received CF-104s in 1963. He then returned to Canada, instructing on the T-33 at Gimli, Manitoba. As a team member of the Gimli Smokers, he performed air demonstrations at Air Shows across Canada. Assigned as the base test pilot, he also flew the newly arrived CT-114 Tutor trainer.

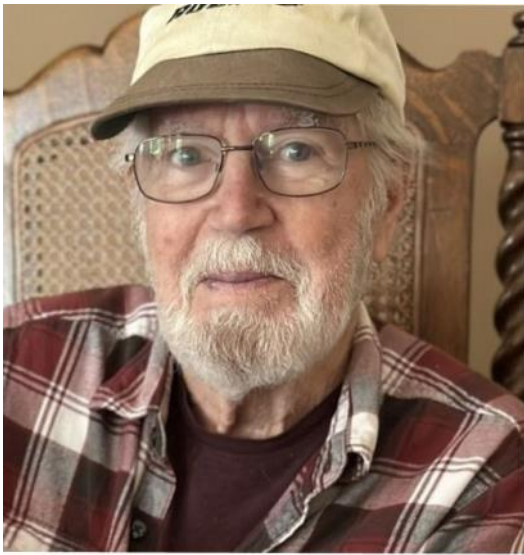
Mindful of the infamous release of 500 pilots and navigators, he quit the RCAF and joined Air Canada mid-1965. A long and illustrious career ensued, flying the Viscount, DC-9, DC-8, L1011 Tristar, and B-747-400, while based in Vancouver or Toronto.



*The remainder of Dale's obituary is posted on the website at [https://427squadron.com/remember\\_1.html#horley](https://427squadron.com/remember_1.html#horley)*

*His good friend Dick Dunn put together this Obituary and as well has added a two part video of Dale's life. A link to the Dropbox videos is available on the website obituary.*





### **Gordon Arthur Nicholas** **20 September, 2024**

It is with profound sadness that the family of Gordon Arthur Nicholas announce his peaceful passing on Friday, September 20, 2024 at the age of 86 years. He will be lovingly remembered by his wife of nearly 20 years Lyn Nicholas; daughters Karen Nicholas (Al), Sheila Pytel (John), Brenda Parker (Gary), grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Gord was predeceased by his first wife of 36 years, Ruth and his daughter Cathy. He was known as Gord but to many he was Gordie, Dad, or Pa. From 1955 to 1989, he proudly served his country in the Canadian Air Force and the Canadian Navy. He continued his love of helicopters while working at Boeing Canada, located in Arnprior from 1989 until he fully retired in 2003. Gord had a passion for woodworking and loved to teach his skills to many family and friends.

Gord's full obituary is found [https://www.427squadron.com/remember\\_2.html#gord](https://www.427squadron.com/remember_2.html#gord)

### **Flying Officer (Ret'd) Claude Gerald Dixon** **August 31, 1938—July 30, 2024**



It is with heartfelt sorrow, the family of Claude Gerald Dixon, husband of Evelyn (Long) Dixon, announce his passing on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, at Ridgewood Veteran's Wing.

Born on August 31, 1938, in Ottawa, ON, he was the son of the late Gerald and Gwendolyn (Cochrane) Dixon. Claude served his country during the Cold War; he was an Officer for 427 Squadron as a Pilot for several years. After his service, Claude was employed as a Regional Manager for London Life in Saint John until his retirement. Claude was an avid skier, with a competitive side towards all sports. He was also an avid sailor, later in life, he could be found sailing his boat the Cumulus on the Kennebecasis River. Claude and Evelyn enjoyed traveling and cruising to many destinations. He was a member of St. Paul's Anglican Church Rothsay NB



Besides his loving wife, Claude is survived by his daughters; Karen Cameron (Scott), and Kim Dixon (Kenny Guilmette), both of Ottawa, ON, stepdaughter Heather Bradley (Richard) of Bridgewater, NS, grandchildren; Ashley Boyle (Matthew), Amanda Maxwell (Tyler), Kayla Scott, and Jamie Scott, great grandchildren; June Maxwell, Chloe Portt, and Korbin Lewis, as well as many friends. He will be missed by all who knew him. Besides his parents, Claude was predeceased by grandson Daniel.

*Claude or "Dixie" as he was sometime known on the Squadron was a member of the Single Men's Union (SMU) in the 427 Squadron barracks at Zweibrücken. His comrades during that period in 1959-61 have many fond memories of shared air and ground experiences.*

Full obituary available: [https://427squadron.com/remember\\_1.html#dixie](https://427squadron.com/remember_1.html#dixie)

**Squadron Leader John Brailsford England**  
**RAF-RCAF -pilot F-86/CF104**  
**d:26 May 2024**

Squadron Leader John England RCAF Ret'd passed away peacefully 26 May 2024 at Qualicum Beach, British Columbia.

Born 1932 in Nottingham, England, John witnessed as a lad the German Blitzkrieg while living in London, and the massive allied bomber formations taking off from bases after he was evacuated to the countryside. He joined the Royal Air Force post World War II and was sent to Canada for pilot training. While serving in the RAF, he flew the world's first jet fighters, Meteors and Vampires, including some very high altitude experimental flights.

John completed his commitment to the RAF and then emigrated from England in 1953, joining the Royal Canadian Air Force, where he enjoyed an extraordinary career. He trained on F-86 Sabres at RCAF Chatham, New Brunswick. There he met his wife Arlene England, nee Doucette, who survives him. They were married 69 years.

John and Arlene were posted in 1954 to North Luffenham, England, on 439 Tiger Fighter Squadron flying F-86 Sabres, in support of NATO. The squadron was quickly moved to the continent to RCAF Station Marville, France. John and Arlene lived in swampy temporary trailers while the base was being constructed. Their first two children were born at the base hospital Marville, Paul and Jane. The latter was born while John's squadron was deployed to Decimomannu, Italy, for gunnery practice.

The next posting was to Gimli, Manitoba in 1957, where John flew as an instructor, training numerous Canadian and foreign military pilots. Two more children, Timothy and Michael, were born in Gimli. Several frigid winters later, John was posted to RCAF Station Zweibrücken, West Germany, flying the CF- 104 Starfighter aircraft in the nuclear strike role with 427 Lion Squadron from 1963-1967. Their fifth child, Christopher, was born in the base hospital Zweibrücken while John's squadron was attending a mandatory formal mess dinner. John surreptitiously escaped and evaded, almost in time, pocketing a bottle of high quality tax payer wine to celebrate the birth with Arlene.

A posting to RCAF Headquarters Ottawa in 1967 was next, where John performed various roles, including aide to a host of Generals. The ground postings were not to last. In 1971 John and Arlene were posted again to Europe to RCAF Baden-Soellingen, West Germany, flying the CF-104 in the conventional weapons role. John was the Deputy Commanding Officer of 421 Red Indian Squadron, and in 1975 he became the Commanding Officer of Air Operations, 1 Canadian Air Group, Baden.

John and Arlene returned to DND HQ Ottawa in 1976, and after a further ground tour decided to retire to Vancouver, B.C., to be nearer their five children. John flew various corporate business aircraft while in Vancouver, and also managed some stints in the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves. In 1990, John and Arlene retired again and decamped to Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island, where John excelled at growing world class Rhododendrons.

John was above all a devoted family man, and ensured his family experienced everything Europe had to offer, with many ski visits to Austria and Switzerland, beaches in the south of France, ruins and lidos in Italy and of course, the best cuisine available.

He was also dedicated to his beloved RCAF, and bristled when Canada's political miscreants extinguished the identity of the RCAF with military unification. But he was to be vindicated. He was overcome with joy when the RCAF's historic name was rightfully restored. It was a great moment in his life.

In addition to wife Arlene, he is survived by many descendants. His children, Paul England (Lynn), Jane England Abbott (Marty Abbott, ex-CF-104 pilot), Timothy England (Lindy), Michael England (Darlene), Christopher England (Kim), eleven grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren.







### TAC HEL GATHERING AT ARMY MESS



Last Wednesday there was a gathering of about 20 retired members of the Tac Hel community including a large number of Lions. In addition to the organizers, Lions Peter Krayner and Sean Murphy, were several other Lions (incl John Footitt, Dave Ross, Brian Hologate and Ken Sorfleet among others) and the two pictured here, Dennis Levesque (L) and Dave Lowden (R). The Comd 1 Wing, Col Forbes, took time away from an Army Council Meeting to bring us up to date on the plans to create a formal 'Tactical Aviation Association' which will complement Squadron Associations like our own. He also showed pictures of an L19 which is now owned by Vintage Wings but is intended to be for use by the Asso-

ciation as a visible reminder of our history and to be present at future major Tac Hel events including, for example, Change of Command ceremonies. We hope to publish more of these developments within the next month or two. For those particularly in the Ottawa vicinity future Tac Hel luncheon will be scheduled and posted on the 427 Facebook site.

*Ed. Note. Reprinted here due to the interest of many of our members. Ken Sorfleet and our Facebook page would be the vehicle for updated further information.*

## Change of Command July 19, 2024

*The following comments and photos were taken from Ken Sorfleet's Facebook site.*



Maj Gen, Commander of Special Operations Command and Col David Forbes, Commander of 1 Wing, RCAF and also a Lion since his first tour, witnessed the Change of Command between LCol Matt Snider and LCol Christopher Bray.

Thanks to Matt for his excellent leadership—all Lions wish him well in the future. We also welcome back Chris to lead the Lions and look forward to continuing great service to the Squadron, he previously having served in a variety of Squadron positions including DCO until last summer.

### THE LION LEGACY CONTINUES

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#### NOTE

[The Facebook site](#) has much more extensive and “breaking news” coverage and I urge you to check it out. Space restraints limit how much coverage can be provided to ROAR articles unless I am willing to write a book, however, you are in luck; most articles are posted to the web where space is not limited but it takes more time and Ken Sorfleet has excellent topical coverage on the Facebook site of most articles ( which I use ) posted here.

All previous Volumes of ROAR from Volume 1 on are available at:

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

ROARs from Volume 2 to the present are able to be searched with the search bar.





Also on July 19 the outgoing CO LCol Matt Snider is shown witnessing the Change of Appointment of the Squadron Chief Warrant Officer position from CWO Mark Jones who is retiring to CWO Jamie Lewis who has been the Squadron's DSM (Drill Sergeant Major). We wish Mark all the best in his retirement and Jamie the same in his well deserved new appointment.

Photos of other interested parties who attended the proceedings are below.



### **And After the Change of Command and Prior to the CoC Parade.**

MGen Hunter promotes Matt Snider to Colonel, with Matt's wife, Dr. Angela Snider, assisting and Col Forbes looking on. SCWO Jamie Lewis is assisted by his wife by ensuring he is properly dressed and appropriately wearing his new rank badge.

*Many thanks to Ken Sorfleet at Facebook for this information.*



## Remembrance Day Ceremonies—November 11, 2024 Cobden









## History of 427 Squadron Colours

Colours or Standards date back to early history when people were grouped into very primitive communities. In those days it was necessary, for many reasons, to devise a means whereby families, tribes and races would be readily distinguishable from one another. People therefore created distinctive signs or images which served as badges for families and tribes.

In times of war the need to distinguish families and tribes was made even more important since the quick identification of a friend or foe often meant the difference between victory and defeat. On the battlefield the badges or signs were carried aloft so they could be seen from far away. They formed a rallying point for troops when an army was hard pressed and for years were also used to indicate the position of a commander. These badges were the forerunners of our present day military Standards.

In the Middle Ages when knights went into battle fully armoured, battlefield mobility was increased and the need for quick identification of forces became even greater. This period of history saw the emergence of Coats of Arms, while flags called Colours or Standards began to be carried at the heads of regiments. The regimental Standard in time came to symbolize a unit's traditions and wartime successes, resulting in an historical, tangible object of pride to those who had fought as members of the unit.

During the more recent times, Standards have altered from their functional battlefield role to a purely traditional role. Regarded by many as a unit's most prized possession, a Standard is presented by the Sovereign or by his or her representative, a fact that testifies to the importance of the Standard in a unit's history.

### Air Squadron Standards

Although Standards or Colours originated in the Army (in infantry and cavalry units), Naval and Air Force units have been similarly honoured by the sovereign in this country. In 1943, his Majesty, the late King George VI, observed the 25th anniversary of the Royal Air Force by announcing that squadrons would now be entitled to be presented a Standard upon their 25th anniversary. This privilege was also extended to the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1958.

Apart from being of historical and traditional value, Standards in their handiwork and design are beautiful creations. Canadian Air Squadron Standards are of light blue silk, fringed and tasseled in gold and blue, with the



border composed of handworked floral emblems of the 10 provinces. They are rectangular in shape, measuring two feet eight inches on the staff and four feet on the fly. In the center is the squadron crest. On either side of the crest are scrolls, up to eight in number ( Although it now appears that a ninth can be added, centered under the crest; see 425 TAC Fighter Squadron) upon which are inscribed Battle Honours of the squadron. The staff on which the standard is flown is eight feet, one inch in length.

### The 427 Squadron Standard

427 Squadron completed 25 years of active service on 7 November, 1974, thereby becoming eligible to be presented a Standard. The Presentation of Standard took place at 427 Squadron's present base, the heliport at CFB Petawawa, Ontario on Sunday, 23 May, 1976. The Standard was presented by Her Honour, the Honourable Pauline M. McGibbon, OC, BA, LL.D, DU(OTT), BAA (Theatre), the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.

### BATTLE HONOURS

The 11 Battle Honours won by 427 Squadron are all pertaining to the Second World War. Of the 11, five are major honours and six are subsidiary honours. In accordance with the format for air squadron standards, a maximum of eight honours are inscribed on the Lion Squadron Standard. 427 Squadron's Battle Honours are listed below, those appearing on the Standard being marked with an asterisk.

#### Major Honours

English channel and North Sea 1943 – 1945\*  
 Baltic 1944—1945\*  
 Fortress Europe 1943—1944\*  
 France and Germany 1944—1945\*  
 Biscay 1944\*

#### Subsidiary Honours

Ruhr 1943—1945\*  
 Berlin 1943—1944\*  
 German Ports 1943—1945\*  
 Biscay Ports 1943—1944  
 Normandy 1944  
 Rhine 1945 (Note: Traditionally there is no date attached to the Rhine Battle Honour. This Honour pertains to the battle for the Rhine Crossing, Feb to 24 Mar 1



***Information is from a handout available at the 1976 Colours Presentation***

# HEAVY BOMBER ERA



*Several year ago, mid 90s, Ted Hessel conducted an interview with Allan Todd focused on questions about his experiences during bombing missions over Germany. The following are some of the questions and Allan's answers.*

Q. How many hours would you have by the time you flew your first bombing mission ?

A. 146 hours

Q. How many hours did you have when released for the Air Force ?

A. 463 hours

Q. Please comment on your Met briefing—that is winds and cloud cover and their accuracy.

A. Met was well detailed and usually fairly accurate. Halifax aircraft were sent out well west of Ireland to assess and report on incoming weather.

Q. How did you maintain route accuracy ?

A. Up to the European coast we used the GEE system. This was based on measuring the time period of radio signals from ground stations.

Over Europe we used H2S radar installed in the aircraft. This was operated by the Bomber Aimer as it required close and continuous observation.

Q. When you flew day operations, did you have fighter escorts ?

A. Yes, we would have fighter escorts unless it was a safe area in France



Q. What was your target making system ?

A. The Bomb Aimer was provided with a detailed map of the target. The Pathfinders would drop green and red flares and then the Master Bomber would advise the Bomb Aimers where the next bombs were required. In the case of unexpected cloud cover, markers with parachutes attached could be dropped above the cloud cover.

Q. Did you fly in Bomber streams ?

A. We called it a “shoebox” formation. The route, height, turning points and timing came from the office of the Air Marshal and each aircraft navigated on its own. We were expected to drop our bombs at +/- 30 seconds of the specified time we were allotted.

Q. Although you were never attacked by a night fighter were you aware that the ME110 carried two upward firing cannons and attacked from below ?

A. Yes, however, our Bomb Aimer had an instrument called Fishpond that worked off the H2S. With this he could observe and identify any aircraft not on our assigned course and speed allowing us to assess the threat and take any appropriate action.

Q. When you finished your bombing run, did you take “shortcuts” to get home faster ?

A. We adhered to the given route, which avoided known German gun locations and airfields.

If the weather closed in at Leeming, we would be diverted to another base in England or Scotland.

*Allan's wartime career with bombing photos and information is [documented here](#).*

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### **To My Darling Husband:**

Before you return from your business trip, I just want to let you know about the small accident I had with the Ford F-150 when I turned into the driveway. Fortunately, it was not too bad, and I really didn't get hurt .. so please don't worry too much about me.

I was coming home, and when I turned into the driveway, I accidentally pushed down on the accelerator instead of the brake, while I was talking on my cell phone.

The garage door is slightly bent, but the Ford F-150 fortunately came to a halt when it bumped into your Ferrari. It missed our bikes.

I am really sorry, but I know with your kind-hearted personality, you will forgive me. You know how much I love you, and care for you my sweetheart. I am enclosing a picture for you below.



P.S. Your girlfriend phoned - she is pregnant. Your loving wife

