

THE LONDON LINK



427 (LONDON) WING — ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
2155 CRUMLIN SIDE ROAD | LONDON, ON N5V 3Z9 | 519-455-0430 | WWW.427WING.COM



ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION (RCAFA) MISSION STATEMENT

The RCAFA is a national aerospace and community service organization to:

- Commemorate the noble achievements of the men and women who served as members of Canada's Air Forces since its inception;
- Advocate for a proficient and well equipped Air Force; and,
 - Support the Royal Canadian Air Cadet program.

427 (LONDON) WING EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (WEC) JULY 1ST 2015 – JUNE 30TH 2016

President	Rene McKinnon	519-471-8003	renemck@sympatico.ca
Past President	Jack Clark, CD	519-686-1303	jackjoanc@gmail.com
1 st Vice President	Reg Lownie, CD	519-667-1989	rlownie@yahoo.com
2 nd Vice President	Howard Johnston	519-657-2499	hjohnston@rogers.com
Secretary	Chuck Hardy, CD	519-452-1379	chuck.hardy@sympatico.ca
Treasurer	Liyuan Shi	226-977-6128	UPCSLY@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Vacant Positions – Food Services, Bar Officer, Entertainment, Sports and Sgt-at-Arms – call Wing for info

Web-Site	Edith Fraser	519-472-0729	thelondonwing@live.com
Housing	Don Clarke	519-455-9350	don.clarke@hotmail.com
Housing Back-Up	Chuck Hardy, CD	519-452-1379	chuck.hardy@sympatico.ca
Membership	Cathy Newman	519-452-1886	cathy.newman@rogers.com
Public Relations			
Wellness/Parkwood Liaison	Brent Elgie/Sam Newman Hilda Smeltzer	519-539-5956	lgair@execulink.com
Fundraising	Terry Rushton	519-472-0268	trushton71@bell.net
Kit Shop	Terry Rushton	519-472-0268	trushton71@bell.net
Euchre Club	Diana Cuthert, CD	519-455-1126	tdcuthbert@rogers.com
Museum	Howard Johnston	519-657-2499	hjohnston@rogers.com
Air Cadet Liaison	Jack Clark, CD	519-686-1303	jackjoanc@gmail.com
Lottery	Mike Ryan	519-455-1668	
Nominations	Jack Clark, CD	519-686-1303	jackjoanc@gmail.com
War Graves, Poppy Fund, Heritage/ History & Veterans' Memorial	David Smith Pablo Calcaterra	519-673-1515 519-318-9614	691s@rogers.com pablo.calcaterra@outlook.com
Tours	Armin Grunwald, COM, MSM	519-474-2194	wing427tours@rogers.com

CLUB SERVICES

Bar Officer			
Bar Steward/Rentals	Flo Douglas	519-455-0430	
Padre	Frank Mantz	for more info, ask a member of the Executive	
London Link Editor	Cathy Wood		cathyrwood@gmail.com
CF Liaison Officer			

Over 1,000sq ft for Rent at 427 (London) Wing – This includes two rooms with a bar, kitchen facilities and lots of parking. This clean, attractive setting is great for business meetings, small weddings, family gatherings, holiday events, musical concerts or any type of event you'd like to have. Holds 125.

- **Rental rates start at \$200 • Catering IS an option! Call Flo at 519-455-0430 for more information.**



Message from the President

I would like to begin the New Year by “wishing you a great day”. It is hoped that every day after that will also continue to bring each of you great days. At the beginning of each New Year we need to take a look at our vision of the future and see how we will make the Wing a stronger more vibrant and even an exciting place for all our members. To enhance this thought we are pleased to welcome the 15 new members who have joined us in the last few months.

A strong Wing needs to draw on the support and commitment of those who are able and willing to sustain our path in the years ahead. Opportunities for Chairpersons currently are Food Services, Bar Officer, Entertainment, Sports, and Public Relations. Please contact members of the Executive or current Chairpersons and we would be happy to answer your questions.

Check page 11 of this Link for coming events. And we currently have an RCAF Air Force flyers exhibit featuring Andy Gilpin a former Wing member now deceased. If you are a hockey fan this is an impressive display. We are currently working on cataloging an extensive aviation collection donated to our Spirit of Flight Aviation Museum. Work is currently in progress to make this former Navy side of the Wing into an active aviation museum open to the public.

2017 is a significant day for Canada - the 150th birthday. Many events will be held here in London we will be participating some of them. And this is also the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. A number of groups from London will be participating in events at Vimy. One of our members, Paul Gagnon, is escorting a group of Scouts, Guides, Air Cadets and First Nation youths to Vimy Ridge to plant trees as a commemoration marking this historic battle.

Paul along with another Wing member, Barry Sandler, were largely responsible for the creation of the Wings Vimy Commemorative Garden on our grounds on the north side of our building. If you have an interest in Vimy activities you could visit Vimy Flight on the website.

Speaking of websites, you may have noticed that ours has been under construction for some time. Good news is that we hope to have it up and running the week of January 23. We will keep you posted on this exciting advancement of our improving and enhancing our presence in the on line world.

We look forward to seeing you at one of the Wing lunches on Fridays, playing Euchre on Wednesdays and would love to have you dancing your hearts out on February 11 at the Valentines Dance. The DJ is a Wing favorite - “Dr Energy”.

Again, wishing you a great day.

*-Rene McKinnon
President*

Notes from the Secretary

Here is brief summary of main points of the last General Meeting on November 25, 2016:

Attendance was 26 with 5 new members inducted and 8 members receiving their long service pins.

Public Relations – Reg reviewed the well-attended event on November 4th with the presentation to Pete Schussler of the French Legion of Honour by Colonel Vadomme the deputy defence attaché for France.

New editor of the London Link – Cathy Wood. Welcome Cathy.

Poppy Campaign – David advised that \$25,000.00 was collected and thanked everyone who did shifts at Argyle Mall.

Next meeting is 1:00 pm Friday January 27, 2017. Please attend if you can.

The executive welcomes suggestions and comments in order to provide the best service we can for members and visitors alike.

See you in next issue.

*-Chuck Hardy
Secretary*



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The logo for Out of the Woods' Graphics, featuring the words "Out of the" in a cursive font above "WOOD'S" in large, bold, green letters with a stylized tree inside the letter 'O'. Below "WOOD'S" is the word "GRAPHICS" in a blue, blocky font. Underneath is a list of services: "Graphic Design • Copy Writing • Proofreading • Editing", "Newsletter Specialist • Print Project Management and more", and the website "www.outofthewoodsgraphics.ca".

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Per Ardua

The year 2016 will be remembered for many reasons, not the least of which will be the spotlight the world media cast on the American election. Closer to home and possibly more important however, is the fact that 2016 was also the 75th Anniversary Year of the Royal Canadian Air Cadet (RCAC) program and the Air Cadet League of Canada.

On April 9, 1941, seventeen years after the title “Royal” was granted to the Canadian Air Force, the Air Cadet League of Canada (ACLC) was established to train young men as aircrew for wartime service overseas with the Royal Air Force. The response from the public was nothing less than phenomenal. By the end of the year there were 79 squadrons affiliated across the country. By May, 1942, the number had grown to 135 squadrons and 10,000 cadets and a year later, 315 squadrons with 23,000 cadets. By September, 1944, the ACLC had grown to 374 squadrons and more than 29,000 cadets, plus nearly 1800 officers and instructors and 2,000 civilians who provided financial and other support. Another significant change was made on July 30, 1975 when Parliament approved the participation of females in Air Cadets. Today, females average about 30% of Air Cadet Squadron strength across Canada.

In 1969, a Directorate of Cadets was formed at National Defence Headquarters to set policy and coordinate the activities of the three cadet movements. This office now functions under the Director General Reserves and Cadets. The day-to-day control of Air Cadets is vested in six military regions affiliated with the functional Commands of the Canadian Forces with the functional commander also serving as Regional Commander: Atlantic Region – Maritime Atlantic; Eastern Region – Land Forces Quebec Area; Central Region – Canadian Forces Training System; Prairie Region – Canadian Air Division; Pacific Region – Maritime Pacific; and Northern Region Headquarters.

Today, the RCAF Association and Wings across Canada provide support for the thousands of air cadets across the country. Here in London, 427 (London) Wing provides support to the seven cadet squadrons in and around the city. The Wing has an Air Cadet Fund which is financed in part by donations from the membership and by 50-50 draws at every Friday luncheon. For several years one member of the Wing executive is appointed as Air Cadet Liaison Officer. For the past fourteen years and particularly since he became our Immediate Past President, that task has been carried out by Jack Clark. The seven squadrons are:

- 201 Squadron, Dorchester
- 614 Squadron, Forest City, London
- 27 Squadron, London
- 741 Squadron, Elgin, St. Thomas
- 3 Striker Squadron, Strathroy
- 862 Lightning Squadron, Lambeth
- 153 Squadron, Tillsonburg

Every year, usually in May or June, the squadrons have an Annual Review which gives them and the public the opportunity to show the improvement they have made over the previous year. If you or members of your family are interested in attending one or more of the Annual Reviews, the dates, times and locations are posted at the Wing, in the Link and on our website (www.427wing.com) as they become available. For more information or to make a donation, you can also email Jack Clark at jackjoanc@gmail.com or by telephone at 519-686-1393.

*-Reg Lownie
1st Vice President*

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Since 2008, our former RCAF WDs have met monthly at 427 (London) Wing. Most are veterans of the Cold War.

Front row left to right: Faye Timbers, Marie Vokey (guest), Betty Rose (WWII veteran).

Second row: M. Marlene Galloway, Glen Cole, Mary Dirk, Trudy Konopetsdki.

Third row: B. Meghan (Amy's granddaughter), Amy Pelletier, Shirley Askew, Luella Blakeney and Marilyn Chalk.

We're so pleased that our facility is available for groups such as this to enjoy getting together.

The RCAF has set aside a CF 18 which will be assigned to the 2017 Air Show circuit.

The demonstration Hornet will be painted to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the confederation of Canada, and will honour the history of the RCAF and Canadian Armed Forces, the RCAF noted.

The logo is composed of a series of diamonds, or "celebratory gems", arranged in the shape of the maple leaf. The four diamonds at the base represent the four original provinces that formed Confederation in 1867: Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Additional diamonds extend out from the base to create nine more points. In total they symbolize Canada's 13 provinces and territories.

On the left wing, the timespan of confederation is shown with the year of confederation, 1867, and the 150th anniversary year – 2017. The right wing bears the official name of the celebration – "Canada 150".



Admission to Canada's National Parks will be FREE throughout 2017 as part of Canada's 150th birthday celebration. Those closest to London are the Bruce Peninsula, Georgian Bay Islands, Point Pelee, Rouge, and Thousand Islands.



If you are receiving a pension as a result of your employment with the Federal government – military, RCMP or public service – the FSNA has something for you. Call 519-439-3762 or visit our website at www.fsnalondon.com It's that easy.



Robert Cross receives 20 year pin as a member of 427 Wing.

Submitted by Brent Elgie

Mr. Cross started as a navigation instructor in 1940 with Leavens Brothers at the EFTS in Crumlin.

In 1942 he was taken on permanent strength with the RCAF where he served as a navigation Instructor at Rivers Man.,- Portage la Prairie Man. , and Moncton NB. Mr Cross re enlisted after the war and served as a celestial photographer and instructor for navigation using sextants and the stars at Borden. He retired from the RCAF in 1965.

Congratulations Mr. Cross!

FUNDRAISING AUCTION

Many thanks to one of our members for contributing a nicely framed and matted print of the famous Spitfire painting by Barrie Clark. As a 427 Wing Fundraiser, sealed auction bids starting at \$90 are being accepted until 11:00am on March 3, 2017. There are bid forms and a sealed bid box at the Wing. Stop in for lunch on a Friday sometime soon and place a bid!



The legendary Spitfire was piloted by England’s Royal Air Force during World War II’s Battle of Britain.

Born in England on 18th September 1943, Barrie Clark’s first memories were of steam locomotives and model aircraft. His father had served as a pilot with the Royal Flying Corps. Although Barrie yearned to enter the RAF to fly, his parents persuaded him to follow a career in art.

Considered the backbone of the RAF Fighter Command, the Spitfire saw action in the European, Mediterranean, Pacific, and South-East Asian theatres. It served in several roles, including interceptor, photo-reconnaissance, fighter-bomber, carrier-based fighter, and trainer.



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EUCRE

We have about 15 members who come out with some non-members (up to 20 players on occasion).

We start at 1:15 most Wednesdays (check the calendar).

We have more non-experts than experts and everyone has a good (and sometimes loud) afternoon.

It only costs \$1 a week and there are weekly prizes given out and at Christmas and last game in Spring we have a lunch. Come out and join us.

Call Diana at 519-455-1126 for more information.

BIRTHDAY BRATS



JANUARY HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES

to

Natalie Davison, Brent Elgie, Paul Gagnon, Torban Haarbye and Garnet McDiarmid.

FEBRUARY HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES

go on their way to

Ralph Askew, Diana Cuthbert, Ed Dalgity, Edward Eglinton, Ray Hutt, Murray MacKay, Betty Rose, Bruce Tapp, Fay Timbewrs, John Tomlinson and Len Truant.

“The older the fiddler, the sweeter the tune.”

~English Proverb

Many times I am asked “what is the deadline for submissions to the Link?”. Most it seems do not remember. So to help resolve the matter, here is the schedule for the Links for 2017.

January/February: December 18th • March/April: February 15th.
May/June: April 17th • July/August: June 17th.
September/October: August 18th • November/December: October 18th.

That being said, please forward any articles that you consider of value to the Wing members and we will do our best to get it to print. Sometimes submissions are of such a size that we then make them a two, or three part series.

Looking forward to hearing from you and sharing your photos, stories etc with our members.s

Rene



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The next CAHS Convention and AGM will be held in London, Ontario, for the first time, on 8 - 11 June 2017. Most convention activities will take place at the Best Western Stoneridge Inn and Conference Centre. The hotel is located just off Highway 401 at Colonel Talbot Road, about a 20 minute drive from the London International Airport.

London is home to the Diamond Aircraft factory, the Secrets of Radar Museum, the Jet Aircraft Museum, and the International Test Pilot School. The Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association in Tillsonburg, the Canadian Historical Aircraft Association in Windsor, the Waterloo Warbirds in Kitchener, and the Canadian Warplane Heritage in Hamilton, are all within a couple of hours' drive. The amazing Henry Ford Museum and the Yankee Air Museum (Willow Run) are just across the US border. The area is rich in aviation heritage, with significant aeronautical activity by the RCAF, de Havilland Canada, and Air Ontario, amongst others.

Convention Registration and Hotel

Convention registration will open soon. You can register at the hotel now, using this link. You can also call the hotel directly at 519 652-6022 or toll free at 1-888-471-2378, and quote reservation code 5B0VB6B3. Our special convention rate is \$110 plus taxes, which is held for us until 7 May 2017. A breakfast buffet is included with your hotel registration.

Win your stay, courtesy of Best Western Stoneridge. **Attendees who register for the convention before 1 April 2017** will be entered into a draw to win a three night stay, which can be applied to your convention stay.

More information

Questions about sponsorship opportunities and general enquiries may be sent to organising committee chairperson Jim Bell at jbell320@gmail.com.



CONCERNS RAISED OVER FEDERAL PENSION LEGISLATION

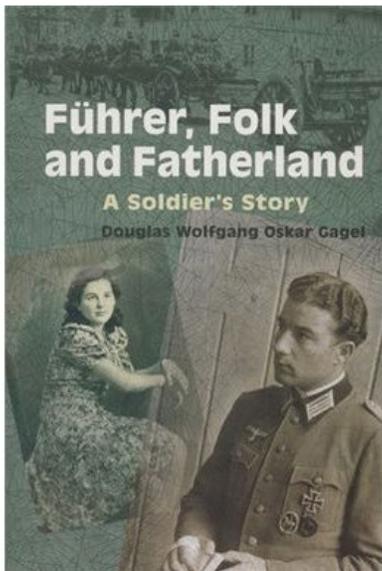
Current and former federal government employees are being warned that their defined benefit pension plan faces “severe implications” that will directly affect their present benefits.

The warning comes from documentation sent out in mid-January by the London Area Council of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). The Council hopes to contact as many federal employees and retirees from the federal public service, including serving and retired members of the military, and any others who fall under the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985. The legislation to amend that Act is called Bill C-27 and it was quietly introduced in the House of Commons on October 19, 2016 – so quietly in fact that there was no press release from the government, no advance notice given to unions, pension plan members or retirees, and no consultation with the public.

As it presently exists, the Pension Benefits Standards Act is one of a number of pension plans known as defined-benefit (DB) plans, of which there are over 300 such plans in the federal sector, covering 489,000 members and \$100 billion in assets. DB plans have been under pressure by employers for several years, as they are more generous and have more risk and legal obligations than the competing defined contribution (DC) plans. However, rather than moving to DC plans, the government has opted to introduce its own “target-benefit (TB)” plan, which, according to the PSAC, will undermine the DB plans and benefits and replace these with TB plans that carry much less risk, legal obligations and costs for employers, both in and outside of the federal sector, for example, provincial and private plans.

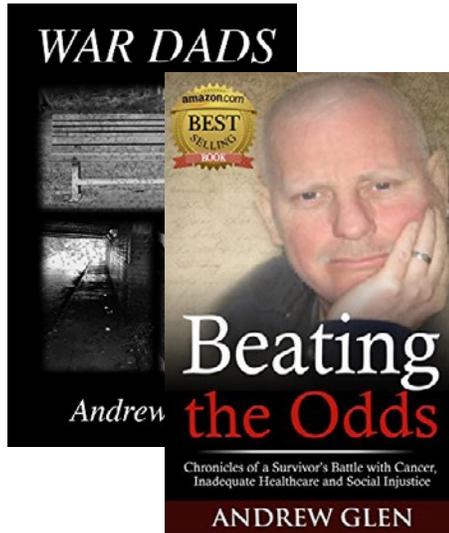
Although the benefits of DB plans are legally protected and cannot be retroactively reduced, the PSAC suggests that employees and retirees under DB plans will be encouraged to change from DB to TB plans by offering incentives such as lump-sum cash payments, one-time benefit improvements or salary adjustments, and/or improvements to non-pension benefits such as health, medical, dental or insurance coverage, wellness programs or increased discounts on employer products and services.

Next Saturday, January 28th, the PSAC will hold an information session from 10:00am to noon at their regional office at 480 Sovereign Road Plaza, located off Trafalgar Road East at Veterans Memorial Highway. A light lunch will be provided, but as seats are limited interested parties are asked to register by contacting their local representative or calling 519-659-1124 or 1-800-366-0539.



BOOKS:

A true story by London Ontario author **Douglas Gagel**, this is a first-hand account of his father's experiences as a soldier during the Third Reich. It offers an uncommon insight into what most Germans really thought about Hitler and his regime. Order through Chapters at <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca> or from Amazon at www.amazon.ca or contact the author directly at 519-870-3144.



London author **Andrew Glen** offers two great reads: *Beating the Odds* is a poignant look into his Stage IV metastatic cancer diagnosis and treatment and an impassioned call for improvements to our health care system.

Set in the United States, *War Dads* is a novel that explores the trials and tribulations facing the men and women who return home from war to a government system that is cold and indifferent to their plight.

Both books may be ordered on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.ca> (search for Andrew Glen).



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DID YOU KNOW...that our facility was built in 1939-40 as an Airmen's Canteen, a place where wartime personnel could be relaxed and refreshed, it is believed to be the last representative and still usable building of its kind in Southwestern Ontario.

REUNION NOTICE

The origins of No. 1 Air Division, Royal Canadian Air Force, trace to Paris, France on 1 October 1952.

In April of 1953 the Air Division headquarters was relocated to Metz, France and remained there until the Air Division was disbanded in 1967. The year 2017 will mark many anniversaries, of which the 50th anniversary of the end of a very significant era in the proud history of our Royal Canadian Air Force is but one.



In recognition of these milestones - 150th anniversary of Confederation - 100th Anniversary of Victory at Vimy Ridge - and our RCAF heritage in Metz, France - an enthusiastic group will journey to France in April of 2017. Would you like to join our trek down memory lane? Additional information is available at: <http://www.navereau.org/>

Illustration compliments of David Botton (www.agoodeye.ca)



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An Invitation to all 427 (London) Wing RCAF Association Members

DURING 2017, CANADA WILL CELEBRATE ITS 150TH BIRTHDAY. In addition, our country will also commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. The City of London has already commenced planning for these events. One of the Legion Branches here in London, the Vimy Branch 145, plans to celebrate the landmark Commemoration by sponsoring a VIMY Gala Dinner on 01 April, 2017 in the Grand Ballroom of the London Convention Centre. Some 800 – 1,000 attendees are expected.

The event is to be one of the largest undertakings of this kind in recent years. The evening is being organized in collaboration with the Vimy Foundation, and will involve not only the Legion, but the City of London, the London Area Military and Cadet Units, Police, Fire, Paramedics, Area Museums, Historical Societies, and the faculty members of Fanshawe Community College. All proceeds from the event will go to the Legion Poppy Fund, the purpose of which assists Veterans and their dependents, ex-Service personnel and their families in need of assistance.

We are awaiting confirmation of participation from the invited Distinguished Guests of Honour, His Excellency, David Johnston, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada; Her Excellency, Sharon Johnston; the Ambassador of France, Nicholas Chapuis and Madame Chapuis, and of course, other notables are expected to be in attendance as well.

This Commemorative Gala Dinner is being planned to be a most enjoyable and memorable evening for all, and hopefully it will be “The Social Event of the Year”. It will truly recognize the important anniversary through rich military and musical pageantry, exceptional speakers, impressive historical displays and a very moving Remembrance Ceremony. All of this, combined with a delicious meal and after dinner dancing, enhanced by the realization that your attendance is supporting our Veterans. Those attending will receive souvenir Vimy pins, a keepsake Gala Program and replica period documents and imagery located at their tables. Finally, the Gala will also host a Silent Auction where period pieces and related items will be available for bidding. I will tell you that this will truly be a Black Tie event with Tuxedos, Mess Dress, Blazers, Business Suits, long gowns, and, of course, Medals and Decorations abound.

You are likely asking “Why am I telling you all this?” Well, I (the undersigned) have been tasked with inviting interested attendees to commit to this Gala Event, and making the necessary seating arrangements. True, it is indeed, quite early in the planning phases, but for the Legion’s own planning numbers, it is also important (as you can understand), to ascertain a commitment from those wishing to attend, and to have their intentions recorded and included in the planning. Already some two-thirds of our tables are spoken for, and have been reserved. As I write this column, (4 April) and from verbal circulation of invitations thus far to our Wing members and their friends alone, we already have 14 seats committed. What I do need from newcomers is your firm support and intentions (preferably in writing) accompanied by a cheque in the full amount or a minimum amount (in cash) for one half the amount of your total levy. Tickets are available \$100 p.p. and they are now on sale to the public.

Should you be one who loves the Pomp and Ceremony of a formal affair, you won’t want to miss out on what will truly be a ‘Once in a Life Time’ experience. Our neighbour Veteran sponsors look forward to a good representation and support from our members, and moreover knowing you will be present for such an auspicious occasion, along with friends of a Military or Civilian connection. Should you be genuinely interested in obtaining tickets, I would ask that you please provide your intentions early, as I don’t want anyone to miss out on this momentous opportunity. Should you have friends that you would like to invite and sit with, please let me know. Arrangements can also be made for an entire table (10 people) to suit your own party needs, should that be your preference.

I can be reached, at sfn.afac@rogers.com or contacted at 519-452-1886, home address 989 Apache Rd, London, N5V 2V7. Cheques are to be made out to “VIMY BRANCH 145, RCL “ I can’t urge you strongly enough, in order to avoid disappointment, to kindly contact me soon. To be fair to all, it has to be on a ‘First Come, First Served’ basis!

-Sam Newman

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UPCOMING EVENTS



BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC – LEGACY GALA DINNER

Saturday April 29, 6:30pm

by the *Naval Association of Canada (London)* hmcsprevost.com/gala.html

VIMY GALA DINNER Saturday April 1, 2017 London Convention Centre.

sfn.afac@rogers.com or call 519-452-1886

RCAF Anniversary Saturday April 1 2017

92nd Commemoration of the Creation of Canada's Air Force

Air Force Day on Parliament Hill 2017 Tuesday May 09 2017

CDA CONFERENCE

<http://www.cdainstitute.ca/events/ottawa-conference>

427 (London) Wing VALENTINE'S DANCE

Saturday February 11. Call 519-455-0430 for tickets.



Anzacs Do Maori War Dance for Free Press Camera Man



When fire fighters from South Africa arrived in Alberta to assist with the fires last summer, they charmed airport visitors with traditional singing.

It was in the 1940s when these pilots who had taken 20 days to travel from New Zealand to London for flight training at what was known then as Crumlin Airport arrived and demonstrated a Maori Haka War Dance.



387 Burwell Street
London, ON N6B 2W3
519.435.1899
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- Are you concerned about your hearing?
- Do you or someone you know need help with hearing or hearing aids?
- London Audiology Consultants has been providing hearing care for over 27 years.
- We help Londoners to hear better.
- If you are unable to come in to us, we provide house calls.
- We are a VAC registered provider.
- Please call for an appointment.

427 (London) Wing cordially invites you to a



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11 • 7pm–midnight

2155 Crumlin Road (north of Oxford), London Ontario

Free Parking



**Music by Dr. Energy
(Nippy Watson)**



Tickets: \$15 per person or two for \$25

(includes light, late night snacks)

Tickets available at Friday lunch or call 519-455-0430

How a WW2 Combat Injury Led to a Treatment for Cataracts, 40 Years Later

WW2 ace Gordon Cleaver's doctor came up with a technique that has saved the sight of millions of people.

By Preston Lerner (Air & Space Magazine November 2016)

Submitted by Jack Pettit

Gordon "Mouse" Cleaver was one of the first Royal Air Force aces of World War II, but his most indelible mark on history was inadvertently inspiring a surgical procedure that has saved the sight of hundreds of millions of people.

Cataracts-natural clouding of the lens of the eye-are the most common cause of blindness. For thousands of years, the only treatment was an excruciating technique known as couching, in which a needle-like instrument was used to push the lens out of the line of sight. In 1747, French physician Jacques Davie I pioneered the practice of surgically removing clouded lenses – eliminating cataracts was better than nothing, but it was obviously an imperfect solution.

As a freshly minted physician in the 1930s, English ophthalmologist Harold Ridley first broached the possibility of replacing clouded natural lenses with clear artificial ones. But his mentor rebuked him, and after Germany invaded Poland, Ridley's thoughts turned to the fighting to come.

Mouse Cleaver was a member of the No. 601 Squadron, known informally as the Millionaires' Squadron because so many of its pilots were upper-crust British sportsmen. By the time World War II began in earnest, the 601 was flying Hawker Hurricanes. Cleaver was dispatched to France with the rest of his squadron in May 1940, a week after the German blitzkrieg commenced. Two days later, he scored his first victory, claiming a Dornier Do 17. Then it was back to



England, where Cleaver fought in the Battle of Britain. On the morning of August 15, 1940, Cleaver flew an uneventful sortie. During lunch the unit scrambled again. In his haste, Cleaver forgot his goggles. While lined up behind a Junkers Ju 88 over the city of Winchester, Cleaver's Hurricane was raked with machine-gun fire. His airplane burst into flames, and acrylic shards from the shattered canopy lodged in his eyes. Burned and bleeding, he flipped the airplane upside down and let himself fall out of the cockpit, then parachuted safely to the ground.

Cleaver's right eye was too badly damaged to save, but he underwent 18 operations to treat his facial wounds and restore some vision in his left eye. (His first comment, when he was visited by a squadron mate, was "Jack, tell them all to wear their goggles.") He was examined repeatedly by Dr. Ridley, who made a stunningly counterintuitive discovery. Other than damaging the lens, the plastic splinters in Cleaver's left eye had no effect on his sight, and his body made no attempt to reject them. This nudged Ridley into thinking about using a plastic lens to replace the natural one removed during cataract surgery.



On November 29, 1949, Ridley implanted the world's first IOL, or interocular lens. Lamentably, instead of embracing this immensely successful procedure, the medical establishment ridiculed Ridley and rejected IOLs. It wasn't until the 1980s that IOL implants became commonplace; nowadays, 20 million such operations are performed annually, and the number would be much higher if the surgery were more widely available.

In 1986, Ridley was belatedly elected to the Royal Society, the British version of the National Academy of Sciences. And in 1987, the story came full circle when Mouse Cleaver had cataract surgery and received an IOL made of a material remarkably similar to the acrylic that had lodged in his eye in 1940.

When a pilot suffered an eye injury while flying a Hawker Hurricane Mk. I, Harold Ridley treated him and made a discovery that would benefit people afflicted with cataracts. (NARA)

January 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day Levee 2:00pm - 4:00pm	2	3 RAA	4	5	6 Lunch	7 LVRC
8	9	10 MAC	11 Euchre, BCC	12 WT	13 WEC, Lunch	14
15	16	17	18 Euchre	19	20 Lunch	21
22 Knights Hockey	23	24 FO	25 Euchre	26	27 GM, Lunch	28
29	30	31	Notes:			

February 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Euchre	2	3 Lunch	4
5	6	7 RAA	8 Euchre, BCC	9 WT	10 WEC, Lunch	11 Valentine's Dance
12	13	14 MAC	15 Euchre	16	17 Lunch	18
19	20	21	22 Euchre	23	24 GM, Lunch	25
26	27	28 FO	Notes:			

LEGEND

- | | |
|---|---|
| AGM Annual General Meeting, 1pm | LVRC London Vintage Radio Club meeting at 11:00am |
| BBQ Bar-b-que lunch, last lunch until August | MAC Model Aircraft Club meeting |
| BCC British Car Club, meeting at 7:30pm | OAGM Ontario Group Annual General Meeting |
| COM Retired Commissionaires, 9am - 12pm | RAA Recreational Aircraft Association, meeting at 7:30pm |
| FO Fanshawe Optimist's Club, meeting at 7:30pm | WD The Women's Division join us the 4th Friday of each month for lunch |
| GM General Meeting at 1pm | WDP Wind Down Party for OAGM, at the Wing |
| GS Guest Speaker | WEC Wing Executive Council, 9:30am |
| LFC London Flying Club Reunion | WT Wood Turners, meeting at 7:30pm |