

THE LONDON LINK



427 (LONDON) WING — ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
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WWII VETERAN RECEIVES FRANCE'S HIGHEST HONOUR



(photo courtesy of Fred Pettit)

ON MAY 29TH, 2015, WWII VETERAN, MICHAEL SYDORKO, was awarded the rank of Knight in the National Order of the Legion of Honour of the Republic of France. The medal was pinned to Mr. Sydorko by Consul General of France, Jean-Francois Casabonne Masonnave, on behalf of French President Francois Hollande. This momentous event took place at the 427 Wing and was celebrated by many guests - military dignitaries, family, friends, legion members, politicians and the media. Michael is one of less than 50 Canadians to have ever been bestowed this honour, though to receive it, he fought through something he calls “a living hell.” Sydorko was part of the Lake Superior Regiment 4th Armoured Division, the “Lake Sups” (pronounced soups) as they became known. Speakers got up to tell stories of his time in the war; once, he gave a German soldier who had his leg blown off a shot of morphine because he felt he had to help him. Another time he narrowly escaped
(cont'd pg. 3)

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.

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Over 1000sqft 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.

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(con'td from pg.1)

an observation post that the Germans were shelling with mortars.

One of Sydorko's claims to fame is that he's the only Canadian to have disarmed the famous US General George Patton.

"They put me on guard for a Canadian general and these two Americans came in, so my orders were to disarm these men, to leave their pistols on my desk. So I said, 'Your arms on the desk, please.' He (Patton) says, 'I don't give my arms to anybody,'" says Sydorko. "After I told him, 'Set your guns on the desk, that's an order,' he undid his belt and put it on the desk. He said, 'You know what, I'd like to have a man like you in my outfit, to give me orders like that.'"

It was also said that Sydorko joined the war jokingly with his cousin. They

had been walking past the recruitment office, and "an hour later, we were in the army," he says. "To have one of these, there isn't too many people that get those. I must've done something good, I guess," Sydorko chuckled.

New Democrat MP for London-Fanshawe Irene Mathysen was also on hand for the ceremony. She explains how her relationship with the veteran flourished.

"Here at the wing they have events, and I'd come to the wing and Mike would say, 'Where's my medal?' and I'd say, 'We're working on it, Mike, we're working on it.' He would say, 'Well I'll be long gone before it arrives!'"

Thankfully, the medal that has been bestowed upon First World War ace Billy Bishop was also in the mail for Sydorko.



"This is a national honour. This brings attention to the fact that in our midst, in London, Ontario, we have a hero of incredible proportion," says Mathysen. "He's a Canadian to the core, and he wants the very best for this country."

We're so very proud of you, Sir Michael! Congratulations!

Message from the President

THIS LINK IS ONE THAT HIGHLIGHTS A UNIQUE EVENT in the history of our Wing. We are one of the few Wings in Canada that have a member with the title of Knight of the Legion of Honour. We may now also address this esteemed member as Sir Michael Sydorko. We have more photographs of the event available if you were not able to attend and would like to view them.

We attended the Ontario Group AGM in Trenton this past May and it was, you might say, a "training ground" for our Wing. We will be hosting this event here in London next May 20, 21 & 22. It will be our opportunity to

put on an amazing event and impress Ontario Group with how we earn our wings every day. Other events on the horizon are the dance on August 22nd and the annual Battle of Britain Dinner September 12.

On July 1, the Wing was at Harris Park participating in the events of the day. At the opening ceremonies, just as the last note of Oh Canada sounded, there was the roar of four Harvard's flying in formation over the park with their smoke streams trailing. They disappeared and a short time later they came back for a second pass. To everyone's amazement they returned for a third fly-past. It seemed to me to

be a commemorative fly-pass for one of the Wing's members who just passed away. The member was Tom Hawkins, a long standing member and supporter of the Wing in many ways. You may have noticed Tom as a regular member of our Friday lunches, always sitting at our special "Harvard" table. The family advised that there was a cremation but no funeral service held for Tom. He was so pleased to have passed his flying medical just last year. His favourite aircraft was the Tiger Moth and we hope he is now free to enjoy his "High Flight". Tom, you will be missed.

*-Rene McKinnon
President*



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Letter from the Secretary

MOST LINK READERS ARE AWARE that the Royal Canadian Naval Association will be moving to Prevost Armoury this summer. They have been a good neighbour over the many years they have rented their section of the Wing building. President Gerry Coulter will hold a yard sale sometime in July. We will let you know the date and time when that becomes available. We wish the RCNA all the best for the future.

The Wing needs new members and volunteers to serve on committees. Will you please contact me and let me know who you think might be interested. Could that someone be your neighbour, a relative, a friend or yourself? Please give it some thought. No position is too difficult. The more people helping makes less work for those already doing more than their fair share.

Please remember that Tanya would like to include your articles in the Link. They can be emailed, given to her on a Friday or handed to anyone on the executive. A short item on any topic is most welcome.

To all readers, enjoy the fine weather.

*-Chuck Hardy
Secretary*

Regalia/Fundraising Report

JUST A REMINDER THAT, WHILE OUR INVENTORY IS GETTING A BIT LOW, we will be getting in more quite soon. If there is anything you are interested in that features the Air Force insignia or the Association's crest, have a look at the catalogue, which is featured on our website at www.427wing.com.

During the summer, look for us at various air shows and aviation-related events around the region.

*-Terry Rushton
Regalia and Fundraising*

Thank You from the Kitchen

THE STAFF IN THE KITCHEN would like to send out a tremendous "Thank You!" to all of the members who contributed their time preparing/serving meals and to those who dropped off food donations. Your continued support helps us to plan great meals on a fair budget. Best wishes for a great summer and we'll see you back at the Wing in August!



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Per Ardua

IT WAS CALLED “THE FORGOTTEN WAR” and the troops that fought it were called “the forgotten army.” It was a war that took place far away from the European battles of WW II so the media gave it little notice. But in April 2014 it drew new attention because of thoroughly detailed and meticulously researched thesis, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University of Wolverhampton, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The author of that thesis, Peter Norman Preston-Hough (M.A., B.A. Hons), described the “Forgotten War” as “the conflict in the Far East between 1941 and 1945,” and his thesis was titled, “A Critical Analysis of the Royal Air Force Air Superiority Campaign in India, Burma and Malaya, 1941-1945.”

Canadians are familiar with the name Leonard Birchall. Birchall was a Squadron Leader in the RCAF’s 413 Surveillance Squadron which flew Catalina flying boats from Scotland to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) during the war. In April 1942, Birchall spotted a Japanese fleet sailing toward Trincomalee, a major port city of eastern Ceylon - the objective was to inflict a ‘Pearl Harbor’ surprise on that city. The plan was foiled when Birchall’s radio operator sent a warning message, enabling the island’s forces to prepare an effective defence. Winston Churchill called the Japanese naval attack against Ceylon “the most dangerous moment of the war” and Birchall and his crew were dubbed “the Saviours of Ceylon.” But in his thesis, Dr. Peter Norman Preston-Hough described that event thus: “On April 9th the enemy was spotted by a patrolling Catalina flying boat, and the radar station at China Bay was able to direct British aircraft to engage the Japanese with an advantage.”

An article on the website of [Veterans Affairs Canada](#), titled “Canada and the War in the Far East,” states that “The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) was also involved in the war in the Far East from the beginning. In the early part of the war, many members of the quickly expanding RCAF were assigned to Royal Air Force (RAF) squadrons and went wherever those squadrons were sent. This resulted in several hundred Canadians serving with the British forces as they fought against the rapidly advancing Japanese forces in Malaya (now Malaysia), Singapore, Java (now Indonesia), Burma (now Myanmar) and India.” The article also refers to Canadian pilots from RAF Squadron 185 flying Hurricanes against Japanese bombers and fighters, and continues: “Included in this air armada were Canada’s 435 and 436 Transport Squadrons flying twin-engine Dakotas. The two squadrons flew right up to the edge of enemy territory carrying troops, ammunition and food. They were frequently fired at from the ground, and two Dakotas were shot down by Japanese fighters.”

Canadians were also needed in other roles. A March 28, 2014 article by Hugh A. Halliday in **Legion Magazine**, reported that “Eight Canadian radar personnel had arrived in Southeast Asia in 1940,” and “A report for May 1945 indicated there were 1,000 RCAF officers and aircrew in RAF squadrons alone, with some 700 more in assorted headquarters, radio and radar units, repair sites and bases.” The book “For Your Tomorrow” by Robert Farquharson, noted that “it is surprising how little the Burma Campaign is known in Canada and even more surprising how little is known of Canadians’ involvement in it . . . Canadians were awarded more than 150 decorations for merit and bravery in Burma, including one Victoria Cross.”

Perhaps it is not so surprising. In the glossary of his thesis that lists the units or groups that were involved as participants, Dr. Preston-Hough makes no reference to the RCAF or to any other Canadian army or navy personnel who took any part, although the RAAF and the RNZAF plus 48 others are mentioned. It seems that only Canadians have been forgotten in *his* Forgotten War.

*-Reg Lownie
1st Vice President*



Leonard Birchall.



A Consolidated “Catalina” flying boat undergoing repairs at the Royal Canadian Air Force base in Ceylon, India. It was a plane from this squadron which first spotted Japanese warships attempting to attack a strategic section of the Indian Empire.



Sai Wan Bay War Cemetery, Hong Kong, where 283 soldiers of the Canadian Army are buried, including 107 who are unidentified.

Yard Sale Results

CONGRATULATIONS MEMBERS! Once again our Yard Sale has raised a goodly return for 427 Wing. In total, \$668.40 was raised as a result of our Members contributions and hard work. I cannot list all of the people who helped enormously to make this happen because I'm afraid I might miss someone, but you know who you are and the Wing thanks you, many, many times over. The Friday before and the day of the sale took a tremendous effort and you came through. Kudos!

-Diana Cuthbert

Golf Tournament

TUESDAY, JUNE 16 TURNED OUT TO BE A PERFECT DAY FOR 20 GOLFERS from 427 Wing, Kitchener/Waterloo wing, Sarnia and Chatham. We had an enthusiastic round of 12 holes which was won by Mike Ryan (427 Wing), Norma Mouritsen (Chatham), Terry Rushton (427 Wing) and Ernie Dyck (Kitchener/Waterloo).

We retired to the Wing afterwards for a BBQ and prizes. Everyone seemed to have a good time. It was a great day, all in all. Team photos can be found below and on pg. 8.

-Diana Cuthbert



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Day Trip to Hamilton's Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum

IF YOU ARE PLANNING A DAY TRIP THIS SUMMER you might consider the Hamilton Warplane Heritage Museum. It is approximately an hour and a half drive from London to the museum. Follow the Hamilton Airport sign as you are approaching the city and it will take you to the Warplane Heritage Museum. From a distance you will see the Starfighter Aircraft mounted in a vertical climb marking the museum site.

The museum is a 108,000 square foot delta-wing shaped building housing around forty-five historic aircraft. Upon entering the museum a mural display features the early history of our "Winged Pioneers." Read about Victoria Cross winners Billy Bishop, Bill Barker and Alan McLeod. Also featured is information on the British Commonwealth Air Training Program (BCATP) from WW II.

As you enter the hangar where the heritage planes are displayed you will notice an area with planes under restoration, one of them being the Bristol Bolingbroke Mk IV. During WW II Bolingbrokes were used on anti-submarine patrols off both coasts of Canada. Former 427 Wing member Andy Gilpin lost his best friend Freddy Parker flying a Bolingbroke out of Cape Breton Island in the early stages of WW II. Bolingbrokes were also used as trainers with the bombing and gunnery schools of the BCATP.

Another plane featured in the collection is the CF-100 Canuck the first all weather fighter aircraft designed and built in large numbers in Canada. A total of 692 were built between 1950 and 1958. The CF-100 on display was one of the last built and is painted black to resemble the prototype CF-100 #18101.

During my recent visit to the Hamilton Warplane Heritage Museum, I was fortunate to view the B-25 Mitchell Bomber flying and then taxiing to the hangar (see photo below). B-25 Mitchells fought in every theatre of WW II and were involved in



tactical bombing, tank destruction and anti-shipping operations.

The Canadair Sabre Mark VI on display flew in Europe for six years and then with the Golden Hawks during their 1963 air show season. Clear panels down the left side of the fuselage show its interior construction.

The star attraction of the collection is the Mynarski Lancaster Bomber, one of only two that fly in the world. It is dedicated to Andrew Mynarski V.C. who flew with 419 Moose Squadron RCAF during WW II. His plane was badly shot up and on fire. Andrew Mynarski tried to free the trapped tail gunner without success. He parachuted out of the plane and died from severe

burns. The tail gunner survived the crash and told the story of Andrew Mynarski's heroism.

These are but a few of the airplanes on display. If you are looking for a day trip this summer please consider the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. Visit the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum website at www.warplane.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Celebrate Lancaster Day – July 11, 2015

Vintage Wheels and Wings – July 19, 2015

Hamilton Air Show – August 15/16, Limited to 1200 tickets/day

Exhibition - Fly-Boys and War Brides: Leaving Canada for Love – Now until August 28th

*-David Smith
War Graves, Poppy Fund, Heritage/ History & Veterans' Memorial*

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War Horses

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS LITTLE GLORY for the thousands of horses that participated in the First World War. Only two horses were brought back to Canada.

One horse being “Brock.” Brock is buried on Sir Arthur Currie’s brother’s farm just outside of Strathroy, Ontario.

The second horse was “Morning Glory.” Her owner was Lt. Colonel Harold Baker who died at the Battle of Ypres in France in 1916. His friend, Brigadier General Dennis Draper brought the horse back to Canada. The horse lived on Brigadier General Draper’s farm in Sutton Junction, Quebec. She lived 26 years.

A plaque honouring Morning Glory is placed on her grave near Baker Pond, Quebec, which was Lt. Col. Baker’s summer residence.

Horse contributions were tremendously important in the success of WW1, as they moved so much of the equipment and supplies during the actual battles.

*-Don Martin
Public Relations*



Sir Arthur Currie with ‘Brock’



‘Morning Glory’

Spotted on the Tarmac

Our resident photographer, Fred Pettit, snapped some pics of this CF-18 from 425 Squadron (Alouettes) Bagotville Q.C. arriving from training exercises in Alaska. Great snapshots, Fred!



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The Silver Dart (cont'd, part 3)

ON FEBRUARY 23, 1909 THE SILVER DART of Alexander Graham Bell and the Aerial Experiment Association lifted off the ice of Baddeck Bay to fly the first powered, controlled flight in Canada. This historic flight was also the first flight of a British subject in the British Empire.

The Silver Dart was the fourth in a series of aircraft constructed by the Aerial Experiment Association (A.E.A.). Each member of the A.E.A. was responsible for the design and supervision of an aircraft. J.A.D. McCurdy was in charge of the Silver Dart's design. The airplane was completed in Hammondsport, New York in the latter part of 1908. Engine difficulties delayed the first test flights until December 6, 1908 when three flights were made of approximately 180 metres each. After more tests and adjustments the craft was disassembled and shipped to Baddeck.

Although Canada Customs originally prevented the Silver Dart from entering the country, an urgent request from Baddeck convinced them to allow it duty-free entry with the condition that the aircraft not remain in the county more than two years.

The Silver Dart was a biplane patterned after the three previous A.E.A. planes: The Red Wing, The White Wing, and The June Bug.

The wings were designed with a single plane curvature, that is, they were concave on the bottom. The wingspan was 49 feet long and 4 feet wide at the centre tapering to a point at the wingtip aileron. This provided a total lifting surface of 420 sq. ft. or a flying weight of 2.04 pounds per sq. ft. The wings were separated at a distance of 6 feet at the central panel and curved inward to a distance of 4 feet at the wing tips. The angle of the wings was set at 9.25 degrees to the ground to provide better lift during take-off but this angle is inefficient during flight. To compensate for this the propeller angle was set at an

opposing 3.25 degree angle. In flight the angle of the wings to thrust was an efficient 6 degrees.

The wings were made of fabric stretched over spruce and steel ribs. (The steel ribs were located at the panel junctions and the spruce ribs slid into pockets in the fabric and attached to the framing.) The framing panels were made of aerodynamically-shaped spruce fitted into metal sockets. The wings were cross-braced by guy wires which were tightened by wing-nut turnbuckles.

The fabric was a rubber and graphite-sized silk used to make balloons. The graphite had a silvery appearance and provided the inspiration for the name, the Silver Dart. An important feature of the fabric was that it could be glued instead of stitched. It also had a low air resistance.

The Silver Dart maintained lateral stability while banking into a turn by the addition of hinged, wing-tip ailerons. Although this feature was previously employed on aircraft designed by the French, the A.E.A. came upon this idea independently and were the first to incorporate this design into an American-built airplane. These four triangular flaps at the wing tips consisted of 40 sq. ft. of surface area and were operated by a bar located at the aviator's feet. The front elevator was similar to the main wing structure in that it was a bi-wing assembly slightly tapered from centre. The elevator was 12 feet long and 28 inches wide and was located 15 feet forward of the wings. The elevator was operated by means of a cantilever attached to a bamboo pole which in turn was attached to the steering wheel. Pulling back on the steering wheel caused the plane to elevate and pushing forward on the steering wheel would cause it to descend. When the seat was positioned forward to allow room for a passenger behind the pilot, the bamboo pole connected to the steering wheel had to be shortened.

The tail rudder, located 11 feet behind

the wings, was operated by guy wires connecting the tiller to the front wheel of the tricycle undercarriage. Therefore, when the steering wheel was turned both the front wheel and the tiller moved simultaneously.

The Silver Dart was powered by a water-cooled V-8 engine designed by Glenn Curtiss. Although rated at 50 hp, the typical horsepower output was probably much lower at 35 hp each 1000 rpm. The engine was mounted in the central panel, directly behind the aviator. An 8 foot, pusher-type propeller of laminated wood was located just behind the wings. A chain driven transmission with a gear reduction of 4:3 was used. The chain drive allowed for a lower engine placement. This lowered the centre of gravity and accordingly increased the plane's stability. The cooling system was similar to that used by the Wright brothers in their aircraft. The radiators were made of vertical tubular shafts located behind the aviator. Gas and oil were stored in a single tank; 10 gallons of gas and 2 gallons of oil were separated into two compartments within the tank. The total weight of the Silver Dart complete with fuel and aviator was roughly 860 pounds.

The aircraft had arrived in Baddeck on January 6, 1909. However, it was not until February 19, 1909, when Glenn Curtiss arrived in Baddeck Nova Scotia from Hammondsport, New York that this aircraft was ready to begin the history of Canadian aviation. The engine was first fitted to Dr. Bell's tetrahedral kite, the Cygnet II, but when the Cygnet failed to fly, the engine was installed in the Silver Dart. The following day on February 23, 1909, Douglas McCurdy flew the Silver Dart one kilometre from the ice of Baddeck Bay. Following this historic flight everyone was invited to Beinn Bhreagh hall for sandwiches and raspberry vinegar, and to sign a register to record

(cont'd next page)

the event for posterity.

After the dissolution of the Aerial Experiment Association on March 31, 1909, the Silver Dart became the possession of Alexander Graham Bell. He gave the use of the machine to the Canadian Aerodrome Company formed by two former Aerial Experiment Association members, Douglas McCurdy and Casey Baldwin.

On June 7, 1909 the C.A.C. received an invitation from the Canadian Military to demonstrate their flying machines. They took the Silver Dart equipped with a 40 hp Kirkham automobile engine. The C.A.C.'s first aeroplane, the Baddeck I, patterned after the Silver Dart, was shipped later.

On August 2, 1909 at Petawawa, Ontario, Douglas McCurdy, in the Silver Dart, made 4 flights of approximately 1 km. each. On the final flight the setting sun impaired

McCurdy's vision. While attempting to land, the Silver Dart struck a knoll in the field and was wrecked in the resulting crash.

Both McCurdy and Baldwin, who was a passenger on this flight, were badly scraped and bruised. The Baddeck I arrived the same day and the Silver Dart was never repaired. A fitting epitaph for a pioneer aircraft which made over 30 successful flights, was recorded by the Toronto Globe and Mail, August 3, 1909, "It is of interest to note, as with many other flying machines, the Silver Dart came to grief while making a landing and not through any error of construction or handling while in the air."

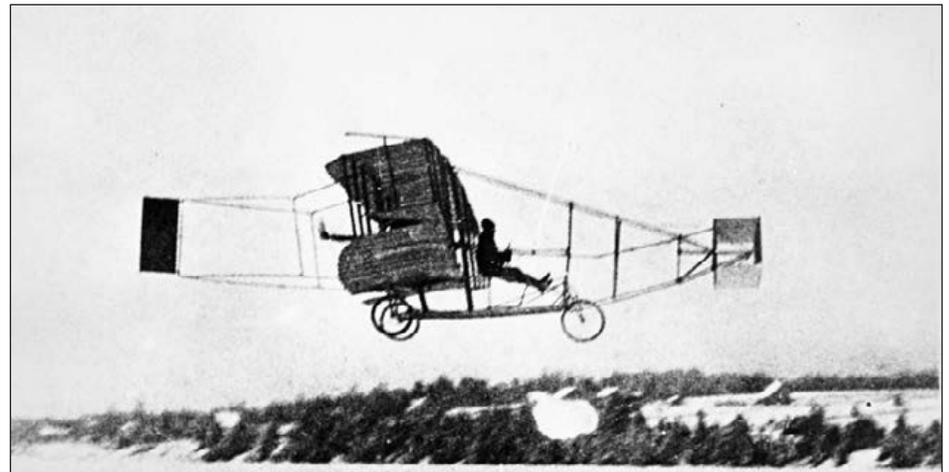
Courtesy of:

Baddeck Public Library
"Search for Yesterday"
April, 1981



above: The original 6-cylinder Curtiss engine that powered the Silver Dart is on display at the Canada Aviation Museum in Ottawa.

(photo courtesy of: www.vintagewings.ca)



above: Silver Dart being flown by John McCurdy



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“Let them eat cake.”

-Marie Antoinette

Riddles

Q: Take away my first letter, and I still sound the same. Take away my last letter, I still sound the same. Even take away my letter in the middle, I will still sound the same. I am a five letter word. What am I?

Q: If an electric train is travelling south, which way is the smoke going?

Q: If a blue house is made out of blue bricks, a yellow house is made out of yellow bricks and a pink house is made out of pink bricks, what is a green house made of?

Q: Mary's father has 5 daughters – Nana, Nene, Nini, Nono. What is the fifth daughters name?

Q: What occurs once in a minute, twice in a moment and never in one thousand years?

(answers on pg. 14)

Golf Jokes

A husband and wife are on the 9th green when suddenly she collapses from a heart attack! “Help me dear,” she groans to her husband. The husband calls 911 on his cell phone, talks for a few minutes, picks up his putter, and lines up his putt.

His wife raises her head off the green and stares at him, “I’m dying here and you’re putting?” she says.

“Don’t worry dear,” says the husband calmly, “they found a doctor on the second hole and he’s coming to help you. “Well, how long will it take for him to get here?” she asks feebly.

“No time at all,” says her husband. “Everybody’s already agreed to let him play through.”

A gushy reporter told Phil Mickelson, “You are spectacular; your name is synonymous with the game of golf. You really know your way around the course. What’s your secret?”

Mickelson replied, “The holes are numbered.”

A golfer teed up his ball on the first tee, took a mighty swing and hit his ball into a clump of trees. He found his ball and saw an opening between 2 trees he thought he could hit through.

Taking out his 3-wood, he took a mighty swing. The ball hit a tree, bounced back, hit him in the forehead and killed him.

As he approached the gates of Heaven, St. Peter asked, “Are you a good golfer?”

The man replied: “Got here in two, didn’t I?”

UPCOMING EVENTS



OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

427 (LONDON) WING

WILL BE HOSTING THE

67TH ONTARIO GROUP AGM

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION



MAY 20, 21, 22, 2016

**MORE INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM MEMBERS OF
THE WING EXECUTIVE. FIND OUT MORE AND JOIN THE TEAM**

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427 WING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>CLOSED</i>						

AUG 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7 Lunch	8
9	10	11	12 BCC	13	14 Lunch WEC	15
16	17	18	19	20 COM	21 Lunch	22 DANCE
23	24	25	26	27	28 Lunch	29
30	31					

Sunday, July 12, 2015 - Aeronca Air Cadet BBQ

Sunday, July 26, 2015 - Air Cadets

LEGEND

- BCC** British Car Club, meeting at 7:30 pm
- COM** Retired Commissionaires, 9am – 12pm
- DANCE** Details to come, with Dr. Energy Nippy Watson
- WEC** Wing Executive Council, 9:30am



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