

The London Link

July – August 2013

Volume 50, Issue 1



427 (LONDON) WING
Air Force Association of Canada
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Click on website: www.427wing.com

427 (London) Wing Awards – During the Ontario Group Annual Meeting, on May 19th 2013, the following awards were given to 427 Wing Members. Since you, collectively, are the contributors to this newsletter, the Bulletin Award belongs to all of you.

CONGRATULATIONS EVERYONE!!!

Award of Distinction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frank and Hilda Smeltzer	Bulletin Award over 75 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second 2012 / 2013	Award of Merit <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diana Cuthbert• Judy and Armin Grunwald• Rick Holland• Reg Lownie
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Air Force Association of Canada (AFAC) Mission Statement – The AFAC 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 2013 – June 30th 2014

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London Link Editor	Tammy Newman, CD		tammy.simon@sympatico.ca
CF Liaison Officer	Capt Ali Ullah		ali.ullah@forces.gc.ca

250 Feet² 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.

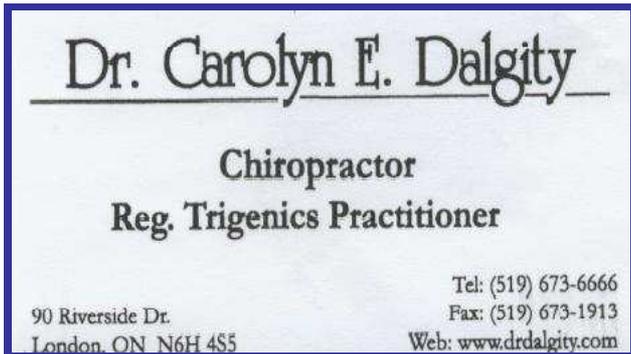
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Message from the President, by Rene McKinnon

Back on July 20, 1969, a NASA Apollo lunar landing mission blasted off and landed on the lunar surface. President Kennedy's message regarding a man on the moon was given May 25, 1961. In the space of eight years, the project went from nothing to a lunar landing. My point is that, in less than two years, the London Link has gone from almost nothing to achieve second place in the Ontario Group Bulletin Awards... a most significant improvement. This is due in no small part to the incredible contribution of our Link Editor, Tammy Newman. She is always among the contributing members of the Wing for each edition. Please read down and read Tammy's message to all of us. At this time, it is my great pleasure to bestow upon Tammy Newman the Honour of London Link Editor Emeritus.

(Editor's note: this humbles me; thanks President Rene, thanks very much.)



Per Ardua, by 1st VP Reg Lownie, CD

When WWII ended in 1945, many ex-airmen returned home to continue their interest in aviation, both as flyers and as friends. In London, this interest led to the incorporation of the London Airforce Association on April 2, 1947. Across Canada, other ex-airmen also gathered, including some very senior officers who, after a petition to the government for financial assistance, began to organize these Airforce clubs into what became the RCAF Association. In a very short time, the new Association could boast of 58 Wings having 5068 members plus 3391 members at large (MAL's), a total of 8,459 in the two groups. One lingering question remains: why didn't they assign the MAL's to the Wings? Among the answers given were that some MAL's lived too far away from a Wing, yet they could have continued to live in peaceful isolation while keeping current with Wing newsletters and Association publications. Another answer is that a few post-war military clubs enjoyed a raucous lifestyle, much to the consternation of family members. That situation may still exist somewhere today, but Wing members are free to choose not to attend meetings or parties. In my opinion, the lack of foresight in not forming one cohesive group back in the 1950's, and the failure to correct it in subsequent years, has created a great deal of discontent and aggravation between the Wings and the National Executive Council (NEC). I also believe that in recent years, the NEC has chosen to exploit that discontent with the aim of creating one cohesive unit consisting only of MAL's.

For example, in a May 2013 article of Airforce magazine, beginning in the second paragraph, Association President Terry Chester makes reference to the past expansion of membership classes: Associates, who were approved for membership status in 1968; Dual (both spouses;) and army and maritime aviators who entered through integration and unification in the 1970's. He then goes on to complain that "some of these membership experiments" now threaten the Association's continued existence. But experience tells us it is only the Associate members that have been targeted by the NEC for "causing a decline in the influence and importance of the numbered Wings." Further on, a claim is made that these "membership experiments" (read: Associate members) have caused "an inward-looking attitude in some Wings, where survival of the Wing trumps all else," along with a "we/they" mentality. This then leads to an isolationist attitude which questions "why do we send our

money to National anyway?” because Associate members (not to exclude Regular members as well,) have lost any understanding of the “Association goals, objectives and very purpose.”

To these absurdities I can only reply, and many would agree, that one of the obvious NEC goals and objectives is to eliminate the Associate classification altogether, and by various ways and means to eliminate provincial Groups, so that eventually Wings, with or without Associate members, will be left to wither on the vine. What Mr. Chester forgets is that the Association’s Membership Campaign in 2005 stated that, “The Wing is the principal unit in the Association’s organized structure,” and further, “The role of the National Headquarters is to support Group and Wing membership initiatives to the maximum extent possible.” We might expect that such initiatives would include recruiting Associate members, not excluding them. As recently as the Association News of August/September of 2011, Mr. Chester also wrote, “Our strategic plan, our roadmap, our renewal and pruning, all point to changes designed to fortify our Wings, raise the performance of the NEC, address important functions of our Groups, engage our MAL’s and enhance our governance processes.” How will eliminating the Associate members and the Group structure “fortify” the Wings?

Mr. Chester admits he is “perplexed” when a Regular Wing member asks, “What has National done for us?” Apparently a MAL has never asked the same question. I suggest that most MAL’s would answer that, apart from the Association Trust and the NEC’s promotional activities, it is “to sell us regalia and the Airforce magazine,” whereas Wing members would likely add that the magazine, while well produced, usually contains little or no information about the “grass roots” membership, as is the case with the May 2013 issue. Mr. Chester then claims that to even ask the question is proof that the member has lost his or her “national (i.e., Association) identity.” I think not, since the very question presupposes the realization of belonging to a national Association. Further, I believe the question is rhetorical. It is not about what “National” has done but what the NEC is doing, or will do. The author simply avoids the answer by cloaking the NEC behind the “National” label.

Echoing the empty promises given in 2011, we are now assured that in the next issue of Airforce, “we will outline where it is we think we need to go and how to get there.” In the meantime, “we welcome your input and suggestions regarding the challenges facing us.” I presume that suggestions have been put forward – and rejected – in the past face-to-face meetings between the NEC and the Group presidents, who represent and are responsible to their provincial memberships. One example would be the discussion over the \$5000 spent on the on-line membership registration and renewal project, now coming into operation. It will almost certainly result in a sharp reduction in monies going to the Wings, since there is neither any direction on the on-line form that refers to the higher fees for Wing membership, nor any ironclad assurance that the higher portion will ever be forwarded to the Wing. In fact, on the back of the mailing label of the May issue of Airforce magazine there was a mail-in form for membership renewal which lists no information whatsoever on Wing fees.

To paraphrase the quotation above: when will survival of the Wing trump all else?

The Happy Gang – We need help moving kitchen pots on Thursdays (9:30 – 11:00) and Fridays (10:30 – 12:30.) Also, help is needed in the kitchen for Friday lunches from 10:30 to 1:00. This includes making coffee, setting up self-serve tables, serving lunches and clean up. No cooking or dishwashing required. For info or to volunteer, please look at the Happy Gang sign-up sheet at the entrance to the kitchen. Donated items are always welcome to help make our lunches a success.

Terry’s Tiffer Bits, by Terry Rushton, Treasurer

In a hard-fought acclamation, Chuck Hardy won the position as our new Secretary and Note-Taker and I became Treasurer. In this new role, I will be tutored by Chuck. He has set an excellent example of thoroughness and openness. The most important thing to know is that there will be “No Change.”

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State of the Secretary, by Chuck Hardy, CD

Please welcome Terry Rushton as your new Treasurer. He will chart a new financial course and has some good fundraising ideas. After six years at the helm, both the Wing and I need a change. So, down the table I go, like a bartender sliding a glass of Scottish whiskey in the old Wild West. (That is Bourbon, for you American readers.)

Sam Newman, as the Wing note taker, is leaving some big shoes to fill. Won't be able to beat Sam for accuracy, timeliness, brevity and yes clarity in the minutes of meetings. He brought fun to the job and kept us focused on the mission. Sam could crack a whip when he wanted to and, in so doing, prevented a ninety-minute meeting from becoming a three-hour meeting. I've given up trying to beat Sam, if even by a stroke, on the golf course. He knows the Air Force Association of Canada inside out and keeps us informed of happenings at National, Group and Regional levels. How he finds time to fill in as temporary Wellness person, I do not know. Must not forget his dedication to Air Cadets and how he has been instrumental in attracting instructors and other Air Cadet officials to visit and join 427 (London) Wing. He leads the Spooner Committee effectively. I don't frankly know how he finds time to play euchre at the Wing, golf when he can and travel to many Air Force Association events both far and near – he must work on fewer hours of sleep a night than President Kennedy did.

We see new interest in the Wing. More people are visiting and joining, with new members now doing committee work. The grounds are in great shape thanks to Don Clarke and Diana Cuthbert. With your help, fellow members and potential new members, we can continue to be a fraternity and still run a non-profit business. Please visit the website often and come to the Wing when you can. I am preparing this article on Victoria Day, May 20th, to stay in Tammy's good books although the deadline is not until June 10th for the July and August edition. Enjoy the summer folks.

To end on a historical note – some of you will remember the incorrect November 1948 newspaper headline – "Dewey Beats Truman" in The Chicago Tribune on election night when, of course, Truman won a second term as President of the United States. So ...with this column now going to Tammy, I

may not be Secretary and Terry may not be Treasurer after the elections at the GM and AGM on May 24th. If that occurs, please help me welcome back the ever busy Sam Newman as your note-taker.

The Yard – Craft – Bake Sale, by Diana Cuthbert, 2nd VP

The Yard – Craft – Bake Sale was well attended and made over \$400 for the Wing. I want to thank everyone who donated items for the Sale and, in particular, I want to thank all the volunteers who helped. I cannot name you all for fear I might miss someone, but you know who you are and I hope you know how much your help was appreciated. The helpers had a lovely time between sales and agreed it was well worth it to dig in, do a job and get to know people. KUDOS HELPERS!!

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My Two Cents Worth, by London Link editor, Tammy Newman, CD

To all my friends at 427 (London) Wing, I have certainly enjoyed my (almost) two years as editor of the London Link. It has been interesting, challenging and dynamic. I am proud that we are now found on-line and am prouder yet of our 2nd place finish at the latest Ontario AGM. As most of you know, I have more than my share of health issues. At this time and because of these concerns, both my husband and I feel that it is best for me to step down as editor. I am going to miss the e-mail banter that I had with all of you. I'm sure, though, that your next editor will lead you on to a first place finish!! Thank you for the opportunity to work on this fine newsletter. I am grateful to everyone for all the help you have given me over the last couple of years. I wish you nothing but the very best.

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A WW II B17 Survival Story – B-17 "All American" Fortress Crew (414th Squadron, 97BG) – Pilot: Ken Bragg Jr. – Co-pilot: G. Boyd Jr – Navigator: Harry C. Nuessle – Bombardier: Ralph Burbridge – Engineer: Joe C. James – Radio Operator: Paul A. Galloway – Ball Turret Gunner: Elton Conda – Waist Gunner: Michael Zuk – Tail Gunner: Sam T. Sarpolus – Ground Crew Chief: Hank Hyland

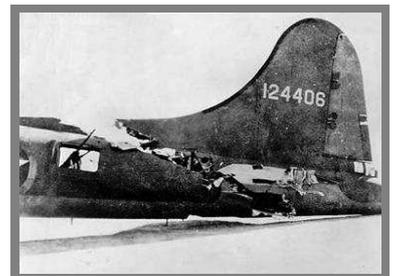
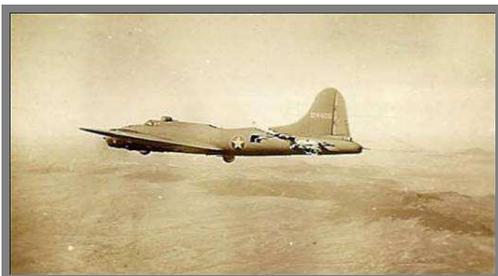
A mid-air collision on February 1, 1943, between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area, became the subject of some of the most famous photographs of WWII. An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot and then

continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of the All American Fortress. When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through, connected only at two small parts and the electrical and oxygen systems were damaged. There was also a hole in the top that was over sixteen feet long and four feet wide at its widest and the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret.

The tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the plane turned. All the control cables were severed, except for one single elevator cable that still worked and the aircraft still flew – miraculously! The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart. While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target. When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him forward. When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost seventy miles to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the All American. Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.

Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the plane as it crossed over the Channel and took some pictures. They also radioed to the base describing that the empennage was waving like a fish tail and that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out. The fighters stayed with the Fortress taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base. Lt. Bragg signalled that five parachutes and the spare had been used so five of the crew could not bail out. He decided that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane and land it. Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over forty miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear. When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured. No one could believe the aircraft could still fly. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section collapsed onto the ground. The rugged old bird had done its job.



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Book Review of “Honour Restored,” written by Squadron Leader (S/Ldr) Peter Brown, AFC and reviewed by Terry Rushton, Treasurer

Like many who joined Air Cadets in the late '50's, although I didn't realize it at the time, I was probably interested more in being an RAF Spitfire pilot than in any other part of the program. Our uniforms were surplus WWII battledress and we felt we had stepped into a long tradition; any doubts were removed when we saw the regard our seniors had for us on Remembrance Day parades. Yet today, you see cadets on parade who seem puzzled by the looks of nostalgia from our elders.

Many of us lapped up books such as *Reach for the Sky*, by Douglas Bader or *Wing Leader*, by the famous ace Johnnie Johnson. The old war movies of that era were pretty shabby, but we loved them for their depictions of air action. The interest in the ones made much later is due to the deficiencies of the old ones, as well as the marvellous filming by the time *The Battle of Britain* came out in 1969.

One of the interesting aspects of the Battle of Britain, a minor sub-plot really, was the depiction of Air Chief Marshall, Sir Hugh Dowding, and the seemingly minor conflict he had with senior Air Ministry officials. What this book shows, more clearly than others have done previously, was that he was embroiled in some very serious office politics and that he basically suffered character assassination. If you have read this story or have seen this movie, you have surely wondered, since Dowding was so clearly the author of the victory (the forestalling of defeat, really, and with it invasion,) why he quietly disappeared and was never heard of again after that fall. This book very ably describes why. Brown flew in both 11 and 12 Groups during the battle, part of the time in 242 Sqn, led by S/Ldr Bader. He has direct experience, but reflecting the common observation of veterans that it was hard to know at the time what was happening in the broader picture, he relies on extensive material for his description and criticism of certain strategies employed. Although I had previously read comments that questioned the leadership of Bader, one can't read this volume without gaining quite a different perspective than the largely arrogant myths that were common in the post-war years. For those who realize how important this early battle was, this tome is a valuable addition to our understanding of it.

P.S. My uncle also flew a Spitfire in 242 Sqn, joining a few months after the Battle. He flew top cover for Dieppe. A month later, over the same area, he was shot down and is buried near a small village.



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Edward V. Rickenbacker – World War I – Army Service

When, in 1917, the United States declared war on Germany, Rickenbacker had enlisted in the United States Army and was soon training in France with some of the first American troops. He arrived in France on June 26, 1917 as a Sergeant First Class. Those chosen for pilot training had college degrees and Rickenbacker had to struggle to gain permission to fly because of his perceived lack of academic qualifications. Due to his mechanical abilities, Rickenbacker was assigned as engineering officer at the 3rd Aviation Instruction Center at Issoudun, the US Air Service's pursuit training facility, where he practiced flying during his free time. He learned to fly well but, because his mechanical skills were highly valued, his superiors tried to prevent him from attaining his wings with the others.

Rickenbacker demonstrated that he had a qualified replacement and the military awarded him a place in one of America's air combat units, the 94th Aero Squadron, informally known as the "Hat-in-the-Ring" Squadron after its insignia. Originally he flew the Nieuport 28, at first without armament. On April 29, 1918, Rickenbacker shot down his first plane. On May 28, he claimed his fifth to become an ace. Rickenbacker was awarded the French Croix de Guerre that month for his five victories. On May 30, he scored his sixth victory. It would be his last for three and a half months. He developed an ear infection in July which almost ended his flying career and grounded him for several weeks. He shot down Germany's hottest new fighter, the Fokker D.VII, on September 14 and again the next day.

On September 24, 1918, now a captain, he was named Squadron Commander and the following day, he claimed two more German planes, for which he was awarded the Medal of Honour in 1931 by President Hoover. After claiming another Fokker on September 27, he became a balloon buster by downing observation balloons. More wins followed which brought his total to thirteen Fokkers, four German fighters, five observation balloons and four of the two-seated reconnaissance planes.

The military determined ace status by verifying combat claims by a pilot, but confirmation, too, was needed from ground witnesses, affirmations of other pilots or observation of the wreckage of the opposing enemy aircraft. If no witnesses could be found, a reported kill was not counted. It was an imperfect system, dependent on the frailties of human observation, as well as vagaries of weather and terrain. Most aces' records are thus 'best estimates' not 'exact counts'. Nevertheless, Rickenbacker's twenty-six victories remained the American record until World War II. Rickenbacker flew a total of three hundred combat hours, reportedly more than any other US pilot in the war. When Rickenbacker learned of the Armistice, he flew an airplane above the western front to observe the ceasefire and the displays of joy and comradeship, as the formerly warring troops crossed the front lines and joined in the celebrations. More to come in the next few issues!

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Sunday Morning Golf, gratefully reproduced from 702 (Lethbridge) Wing Vapour Trails Newsletter
 Father Norton woke up Sunday morning and, realizing it was an exceptionally beautiful and sunny early spring day, decided he just had to play golf. So... he told the Associate Pastor that he was feeling sick and persuaded him to say Mass for him that day. As soon as the Associate Pastor left the room, Father Norton headed out of town to a golf course about forty kilometres away. This way, he knew he wouldn't accidentally meet anyone he knew from his parish. Setting up on the first tee, he was alone. After all, it was Sunday morning and everyone else was in church!

St Peter leaned over to the Lord and said, "Are you going to let him get away with this?" The Lord said, "Of course not." Just then, Father Norton hit the ball and it shot straight towards the pin, came up just short of it and fell into the hole. It was a 420-metre hole-in-one! St. Peter was astonished. He asked the Lord, "Why did you let him do that?" The Lord smiled and replied, "Who's he going to tell?"



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Empty Ink Cartridge Fundraiser for 1947 Aeronca Chief Aircraft Project – There's a box at the Wing to deposit all empty cartridges. For each one, the Project will receive a donation of up to \$2.50 to sponsor the Air Cadets. For more info, contact LCol (ret'd) Armin or Judy Grunwald.

- In 2008, we began the rebuilding of vintage aircraft, which was donated to the Air Cadet Program;
- The Air Cadet League of Canada has approved the sponsorship of this project to enhance skills in Aviation Technology and Maintenance; the Project will continue for a number of years;
- This exciting opportunity, where cadets can earn a high school credit, has been organized to help train Air Cadets, which, undoubtedly, will benefit the Community.

July

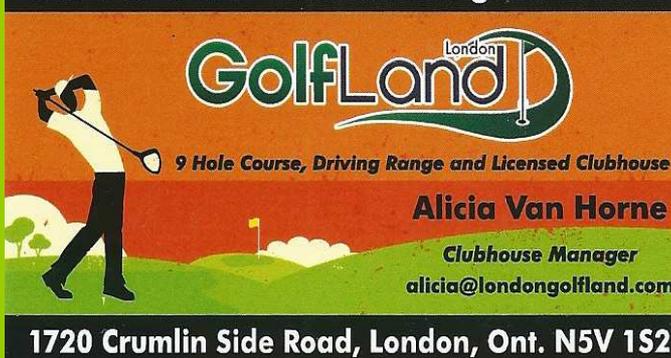
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July 2013 – the Wing is closed.
Golf is available on Tuesdays. July 1st is Canada Day and July 27th is Korean War Vets Day.

August 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Civic Holiday	6 RAA Golf	7	8 WT	9 WEC Lunch	10
11	12	13 MAC Golf	14 BCC	15 LCA	16 Lunch Movie	17
18	19	20 Golf	21	22	23 Lunch Movie	24
25	26	27 FO Golf	28	29	30 Lunch Movie	31

- **BCC** – British Car Club meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- **FO** – Fanshawe Optimist’s Club meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- **Golf** – Starting at 9:00 a.m. at Crumlin Creek Golf Course on Crumlin Side Road. Green fees – \$10.00 plus HST; Power Cart – \$10.00 plus HST; Pull Carts are available.
- **LCA** – London Commissionaires Association
- **MAC** – Model Aircraft Club meeting at 7:30 p.m.

- **RAA** – Recreational Aircraft Association meeting at 7:30 p.m.
 - **WT** – Wood Turners meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- **** **Future event notice:** Saturday, September 14th – Battle of Britain Dinner ****

Heritage and History, by David Smith

Until September this year, there will be engine run-ups done on the Lancaster bomber that is located at the [Bomber Command Museum](#) of Canada in Nanton, Alberta, one hour south of Calgary along Highway #2. A West Jet plane leaves London International Airport at 0700 most mornings destined for Calgary, so it is possible to be in Nanton by noon. Another point of interest two hours further on the route is [Waterton Lakes National Park](#), tucked away in the south-western corner of AB.

- For Bomber Command newsletters: www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/newsletters/current.pdf

Date	Time	Special Event, if any
* Engine run-ups are subject to the aircraft being serviceable and other factors. *		
* Please confirm by visiting the website immediately prior to the date. *		
Saturday, July 6 th	11:00 and 2:00	
Monday, August 5 th	2:00	Nanton Parade Day
Saturday, August 24 th	11:00 & 2:30	Salute to the Royal Canadian Legion
Saturday, September 21 st	11:00 and 2:00	Last Engine Run of the Year



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Membership Update, by Cathy Newman

A big thank-you to all the members who have already paid their membership renewal; however, there are still a number of renewals outstanding. Hopefully, many renewals will be received between the time I write this article and the time you receive the Link. The only down side of my volunteer work is that I don't like to be chasing members for payment. Remember – if you are late, it will cost you an extra \$5 and time is quickly running out. If you have misplaced your renewal notice or are unsure of the amount you owe, give me a call at 519-452-1886 and I can help. Please make cheque payable to **427 (London) Wing** and mail to **2155 Crumlin Road, London, N5V 3Z9**.



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.

Remembrance Speech in Colchester England, read on April 25th, 2013 by David Smith, Committee Chairperson for War Graves, Poppy Fund, Heritage/ History and Veterans' Memorial Greetings from everyone at 427 (London) Wing and thank you to my Colchester friends who have hosted me. Special thanks go out to Chris Stanfield for making me feel part of the team of both family and researchers who helped build the stories of the seven young airmen we are remembering today.

My journey here today began fourteen years ago when my Aunt, now deceased, asked me to do research on her husband – Earl Clifford Parker – who was MIA outside of Rimini, Italy on September 21st, 1944. This sparked my interest in researching information about our Canadian Forces who served during WWI and WWII. As my interest and curiosity grew, I spoke to other relatives and discovered another Aunt lost her boyfriend – Kenneth McDonald Stuart – August 19th, 1942 on the beaches of Dieppe, France. My cousin's wife had lost her uncle – Lionel Way – in the battle of the Rhineland February 28th, 1945 and a veteran friend of mine lost his best friend – Freddy Parker – flying a Bolingbroke reconnaissance bomber out of Sydney, Cape Breton Island on June 3rd, 1941. No doubt the families of these young men grieved deeply at the loss of a son, a grandson, a brother, a husband, a father, a nephew and a friend.

I visited the Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries and Memorials in Italy, France, Holland and Canada where these young men are buried or their names inscribed on a memorial wall if they were MIA. Upon entering these cemeteries the words of the poet John Oxenham came to mind:

Tread softly here! Go reverently and slow. Let your soul go down upon its knees and, with bowed head and heart abased, strive hard to grasp the future gain in this sore loss! For not one foot of this dank sod but drank its share of the blood of gallant men. Who for their faith, their hope – for life and liberty, here made the sacrifice – here gave their lives and gave right willingly – for you and me.

We are standing on hallowed ground this morning and it is wonderful to see so many family members present to remember the seven young airmen who lost their lives on this day, sixty-nine years ago, flying Lancaster UM K2 serial #DV177 of 626 Squadron Royal Air Force. Warrant Officer Robert Edgar Hall Cameron, Sergeant Dennis Randle, Sergeant Ernest John Fancy, Sergeant John Landar Shell, Pilot Officer Francis Winburn Gunn, Pilot Officer Murray Langtry McPherson and Flight Sergeant, James Douglas Mayger – your courage, your valour, your sacrifice are remembered here today by your families and friends. In closing, I would like to recite the last two lines of a poem entitled “Thank You” written by a thirteen year old school girl, Laurie Near, for Remembrance Day Services on November 11th, 1984 at McKeough Public School, Chatham ON, Canada. “I open my eyes to the present world, the poppies in my hand and whisper a silent thank you, to those who saved this land.”



A British Lancaster made three passes at the end of the commemoration ceremony.

The project took two years of planning. Relatives came from as far away as Canada and Australia.



Eight large display boards with photos and docs about the deceased airmen – very interesting!

This cane has a carved Lancaster Bomber on the handle.



Foot Note: Unbeknownst to David Smith, we received the following from Chris Stanfield, Colchester, Essex, England... I just wanted to let you know what a pleasure it has been to meet David who, as I

write this, is on his way back to Canada. It is obvious that David is very passionate about honouring fallen Canadian servicemen. His attendance at the Lancaster Crew Memorial Unveiling Ceremony was greatly appreciated and he contributed to this by actively taking part. We had a least thirty relatives of the crew attend and they were provided with a very professional ceremony honouring their lost relatives. David was an important element to the overall day and spoke with several Canadians who had managed to come to England. I'm sure David will update you all when he arrives home. I am truly grateful for the amount of personal effort he put into the project and it has been uplifting to know that some people really do care about their Nation's and family's history. I know for certainty what we accomplished together will be held with tremendous affection by the families who attended and even those who couldn't make the journey to Colchester. It was a memorable achievement. Our goal to build the memorial was accomplished, and a great deal more. Kind regards...



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Diana's Details, by Diana Cuthbert, 2nd VP

The Spooner Candlelight Service went extremely well and we welcomed many guests. Apart from the Colour Party and the Piper, we had even more cadets and their parents in the audience. There were twenty-five choir members, fifteen Wing members and another, approximately, forty spectators that enjoyed the evening. The weather cooperated and the trees perfumed the air for the audience sitting beneath them. A Cadet Piper led members of the Executive and Dignitaries to the Memorial Stone where Rev. Frank Mantz stood to conduct the service. Dr. Joel Lamoire, our guest speaker, gave a thoughtful and pertinent talk; audience members were given candles, wreaths were laid and, I think, everyone there felt how fortunate we are to remember that young people do wonderful things. At the end of our service, the weather turned a little bit cool. That resulted in a mad rush for hot coffee immediately after. The delicious desserts went quickly and we were all on our separate ways by 9 pm. Bravo Zulu to Reg for his planning and execution. (**Editors note:** if you are not certain what Bravo Zulu means, ask around. It is an important phrase to learn about.)

Roundel Buttons – A large quantity of buttons denoting 427 Wing (London) on the RCAF roundel have been ordered, and will soon be available for \$2.00 each. If anyone would like one or more, they will be available from the Wing Executive Committee or the regalia display.



Volunteers are unpaid, not because they are worthless,
but because they are priceless!