

THE LONDON LINK



427 (LONDON) WING — ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
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N Chenthivelnathan



D Crook



RP Van Namen



LSB Velasco



PA Ellison



NA Fernandes



JL Walkinshaw



BJ Wright



R Holstein



CL Lam



JC Lin



AW Madden

***Congratulations to the 2019 Power Pilot
Scholarship Cadets who trained this summer at
Diamond Flight Centre London***

**See
story on
page 8**

**Battle of
Britain Luncheon
Sept 20
PAGE 12**



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 2019 TO JUNE 30 2020.

Director - Chairperson	Barry Sandler	519-494-1053	bsandler@sympatico.ca
Director -	Reg Lownie	519-667-1989	rjlownie@gmail.com
Director -	Gus Cameron	519-457-3575	anc@bell.net
Director - Secretary	Tom Pillon	519-660-8099	ve3hor@gmail.com
Director -	Howard Johnston	519-657-2499	johnston.hojo@rogers.com
Executive Director			

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Vacant Positions – Food Services, Bar Officer, Entertainment, Sports – call Wing for info

Web-Site	www.427wing.com		
Sopwith Chairperson	Howard Johnston	519-657-2499	johnston.hojo@rogers.com
Housing	Tom Pillon	519 660-8099	v33hor@gmail.com
Treasurer	Chuck Hardy	519-452-1379	chuck.hardy@sympatico.ca
Public Relations and Museum	Reg Lownie	519-667-1989	rjlownie@gmail.com
Wellness/Parkwood Liaison	Brent Elgie, Hilda Smeltzer, Hazil Malone	519-657-5759	Fssmeltzer@rogers.com
Fundraising	B. Sandler, R. McKinnon, G. Cameron	519-457-3575	anc@bell.net
Kit Shop	Fred Pettit	519 451-0467	arrow105@sympatico.ca
Euchre Club	Don Clarke	519-455-9350	
Museum	Howard Johnston	519-657-2499	johnston.hojo@rogers.com
Air Cadet Liaison	Brent Elgie	519-539-5956	lgairs@gmail.com
Lottery	Tom Pillon	519-660-8099	ve3hor@gmail.com
Advisor	Rene McKinnon	519-471-8003	renemck@sympatico.ca
War Graves, Poppy Fund, Heritage/ History & Veterans' Memorial	David Smith Pablo Calcaterra	519-857-6468 Beating the heat at the Airshow	691s@rogers.com pablo.calcaterra@outlook.com
Tours	Armin Grunwald, COM, MSM	519-474-2194	wing427tours@rogers.com

CLUB SERVICES

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

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.

- **Call for rental rates • Catering IS an option! Call Flo at 519-455-0430 for more information.**



Director-Chairperson's Report

As you may have learned from the last issue of the Link, all of our Association Wings are required to conduct their governance under a new model, designed by some branch of the federal government for all not-for-profit organizations. Gone forever are the familiar titles of president, vice-president, secretary and so forth, replaced by a Board of five Directors from which group an Executive Director (ED) is chosen.

The ED will be the central figure whose responsibilities will extend over almost everything that comes and goes into and out of the Wing. In addition, the other members of the Board will each be responsible for certain activities and will form "teams" of individuals from the membership to help them in what issues or activities they may be charged to carry out.

It would seem that whatever federal body designed this method of governing had larger organizations in mind than the Wing structure, organizations with good sized memberships having significant human and financial resources to call on as required, and a governing body that is placed at some distance from the membership at large. Not the type of operation that is ideal for an organization like a Wing. But there are no other options, as the Oshawa members of 120 Wing found when their protests resulted in their Charter being rescinded by the National Office.

To date we have been successful in electing a new Board, assigning their individual duties and managing the continuing needs of the Wing while keeping on top of the old challenges and the new opportunities that are coming along. One of the most important ongoing challenges is the age of our building. Despite its age, it continues to function as home to two museums – one of which is in its infancy for lack of funding – as well as serving symbolically for what past citizens of London endured during the war years with rationing and personal sacrifice, while thousands of recruits from across Canada and the world trained at our airport and in surrounding communities, under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

It was a big challenge then, and it's a big challenge now. Quite simply, we need money, we need volunteers, and we need you, now.

Battle of Britain Ceremony - Canadian Aviation and Space Museum

Canada's national commemoration of the Battle of Britain will take place on Sunday 15 September 2019 at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum.

For those unable to participate in the Ottawa ceremony, please consult your fellow Wing or community members to learn of a ceremony near you. The national ceremony will begin at 10:20 am, at which time all guests are encouraged to be seated. "Markers" will be called at that time, followed by "Mounting of the Sentries" precisely at 10:23 am, and the "Fall In" command issued at 10:27 am. A vintage aircraft flypast will be done three times (weather permitting) at 10:45 am, 11:09 am, and 11:47 am. The parade formation is expected to be formally dismissed at 12:00 pm, at which time everyone will be invited to a reception inside the museum. Dress for RCAF Association members will be association regalia with medals. In an effort to contribute to the reduction of single-use plastics, guests are encouraged to bring a personal reusable water bottle. Cold and filtered water stations will be available on site.

The RCAF Association extends sincere gratitude to the Commander Royal Canadian Air Force - Lieutenant-General Al Meininger, CMM, MSM, CD, and the Battle of Britain Commemoration Team responsible for organizing this very special event - led by Major Roderick Short, CD

Visit the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum online at <https://ingeniumcanada.org/casm>



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Most members have renewed for 2019/2020. Several have moved or we could not contact them.

Under the new governance model, I have been appointed as Executive Director (ED) by the Board of Directors. In brief, the duties include implementation of Board decisions; manage day to day operations and be a Board advisor.

In order to manage the operations, it is necessary to form a team to perform many of the duties of the former Wing Executive Council (WEC).

Fred will continue with Kitshop and will need an assistant.

Hilda, Hazil, Charlene and Brent are the Wing Wellness Team.

David will remain as History leader and will need an assistant. Terry will run the Poppy Campaign this year and will need help at Argyle Mall. Please volunteer for a two-hour shift if you can.

I will continue as Membership chairperson for the 2019/2020 year and will seek a replacement next spring.

There is much more to do. Please contact me if you are willing to help or if any questions come to mind.

There are pencils and cards in the suggestion box at the Kitshop table. All suggestions and comments will be responded to.

Please invite a friend or neighbour to come to a Friday lunch and or play Euchre on Tuesdays at 1:15 pm starting on September 10th.

– *Chuck Hardy*



DID YOU KNOW... that you can download 1962 Air Force Association of Canada Handbook at RCAFA at: <http://rcafassociation.ca/uploads/airforce/2008/07/afac-handbook-nov08.pdf> ?



F/L Bury, F/L Munro, LAC Rasmussen, October 21, 1948

This is a picture taken from the back door of a Dakota/C47 with the freight doors open. This Dakota was used for training radar operators. Note the blackout curtains on the windows.

Western Archives Western University.

For the fallen

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Signs sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables at home;
They have no lot in our labour of the daytime;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a wellspring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars that are known to the Night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

Laurence Binyon
1869 - 1940



Gay Lea/Libro event August 2019



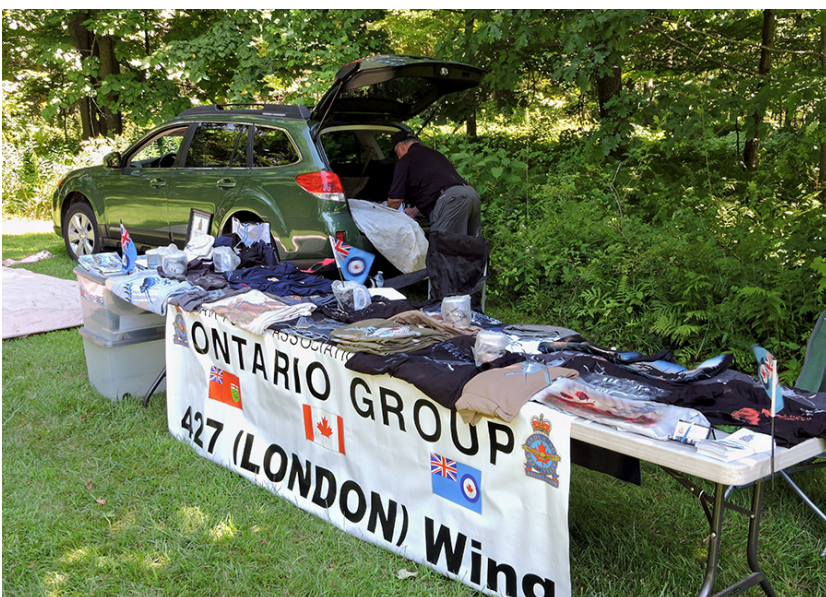
427 Wing On-Site for Libro Credit Union's Gay Lea Foods Appreciation Day

On a bright sunny day last August, 427 Wing Kitshop Chairperson Fred Pettit and several Wing members attended the Libro Credit Union's Appreciation Day for Gay Lea Foods held at the Gay Lea Heritage Museum in Alymer.

Gay Lea Foods is a leading Canadian co-operative which was organized in 1958 by a group of Ontario farmers with a common vision to build a better future for themselves and their communities. Their vision parallels that of the Libro Credit Union, which offers a number of options for business and agricultural interests and advice specific to cash crops, livestock or mixed farming enterprises.

Gay Lea Foods donates 5 cents for every sour cream or chip dip lid that is mailed to the Salvation Army and Gay Lea Foods members also visit Nepal to help build co-operative units there.

The photos show Fred Pettit at the Kitshop table, which featured a variety of items to catch the eyes of the party-goers and visitors to the Gay Lea Dairy Museum.



Power Pilot Cadets 2019 at 427 Wing

by Rene MacKinnon

Again this year 427 (London) Wing participated in the 2019 Power Pilot Scholarship program.

Diamond Flight Centre London at the London airport was tasked to train 18 air cadets with the goal of having each cadet earn his/her private pilot license over the summer. The OPC (Ontario Provincial Committee) is the air cadet organization over seeing this entire program in Ontario.

Bill Welsh, President of Diamond Flight Centre London had contacted the Wing requesting use of the Wing facility for Ground School training for the cadets for this 8 week course. We were also requested to, if possible, provide dinner for the cadets each Monday and Tuesday. 427 (London) Wing and DFC London were pleased to co-operative together for this venture for July and August.

The meals for the cadets and their staff were prepared by the Wing Manager Flo Douglas with assistance from Wing members.

Response from the cadets and their officers was very positive. The London graduation was most remarkable as PA Ellison was selected as the top cadet in the program for all of the Ontario Power Pilot Scholarship programs.

We are looking forward to the opportunity to be of service to this Air Cadet program in 2020.



TOP CADET

**Peter
Ellison**





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Benefits Payment Calendar 2019

Below are dates for recurring government of Canada benefit payments administered by Canada Revenue Agency. If you signed for direct deposit, payments will be made to your bank account.

Canada Pension Plan	Old Age Security	Veterans Affairs Disability Pension
September 26, 2019	September 25, 2019	September 27, 2019
October 29, 2019	October 29, 2019	October 30, 2019
November 27, 2019	November 27, 2019	November 28, 2019
December 20, 2019	December 20, 2019	December 21, 2019

Notes: Canada Pension Plan includes the CPP, retirement pension and disability, children's and survivor benefits. Old Age Security includes the OAS pension, Guaranteed Income Supplement Allowance and Allowance for the Survivor.

**VISIT <http://flylondon.ca/flag>
for a list and links to all the
great London International Airport attractions:
427 Wing
Secrets of Radar Museum
London Amateur Radio Club
Play Away Indoor Park
Jet Aircraft Museum
Katana Kafe
Crumlin Creek Golf**



Last Canadian Battle of Britain pilot “slips the surly bonds of earth”

From <http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca>

Squadron Leader (retired) John Stewart Hart “slipped the surly bonds of earth” on June 18, 2019, less than three months before his 103rd birthday. He was Canada’s last surviving Battle of Britain pilot.

On the third Sunday of each September, members of the Royal Canadian Air Force, as well as the Royal Air Force and other air forces that fought in the Battle of Britain, pause to remember pilots and groundcrew such as John Stewart Hart who risked everything during the summer of 1940 to fend off the German Luftwaffe.

Their valour and their sacrifices prevented Hitler’s planned invasion of Great Britain and placed the Allies on the path that would culminate, five years later, in Allied victory and the successful liberation of Europe.

John Hart recalls his role in the Battle of Britain By Holly Bridges

John Hart was born in Sackville, New Brunswick, on September 11, 1916, and learned to fly at the Halifax Flying Club in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In January 1939, he joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) on a short service commission and, in 1940, arrived at No. 7 Operational Training Unit in England, where the 24-year-old quickly found himself flying Westland Lysanders.

After a few postings in other parts of the country, including No. 614 Squadron and No. 613 Squadron, Flying Officer Hart was transferred from No. 54 Squadron to No. 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron in Scotland. No. 602 was a robust fighter squadron that soon moved to Westhampnett, an emergency landing strip built on a satellite airfield at RAF Tangmere in southeastern England to fend off the German Luftwaffe. The airfield was being prepared for the Battle of Britain.

Build-up to the Battle of Britain

To fully understand the contribution of Flying Officer Hart and other Battle of Britain aircrew and groundcrew, it is important to put the pending battle into context.

Hitler’s military machine had overrun Europe with shocking speed. The Battle of France, which included the invasion of the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium, began on May 10, 1940; Poland, Denmark and Norway had already fallen.

By June, France had fallen and the Allies had been forced off the continent. A few days later, Winston Churchill, the newly-elected Prime Minister of Great Britain, warned the British House of Commons about the dire situation facing the Allies:

“The Battle of France is over. The Battle of Britain is about to begin. . . . Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, ‘This was their finest hour’.”

Hitler now planned to launch a full-scale invasion of Great Britain. To succeed, he needed to dominate the airspace over the English Channel and southeast England; the Luftwaffe was given the task of eliminating the Royal Air Force “to such an extent that it [would] be incapable of putting up any sustained opposition to the invading troops”.

Flying Officer Hart braces himself for duty

In preparation for the momentous battle ahead, Flying Officer Hart moved from flying the Lysander to the Supermarine Spitfire at No. 54 Squadron, a conversion course that took only a week. By today’s standards, where military aircrews are given months to learn a new airframe, the course was a mere flash in time.

From the moment he finished his course, he was hooked on Spitfires.

“The Spitfire is a beautiful aircraft to fly,” he said. “It’s very responsive. You just have to think what you want to do, and it goes. You don’t have to fight it or pull it or yank

it around. It just moves with you. You become a part of it. Beautiful to look at. Beautiful to fly.”

What Flying Officer Hart perhaps did not realize is that the airfield he was posted to, Westhampnett at Royal Air Force Station Tangmere, and other airfields like it – Kenley, Croydon, Biggin Hill, West Malling, Horchurch, Hawkinge, Gravesend, Manston, Rochford, North Weald, Martlesham Heath, Stapleford Tawney, Debden and Northolt – would see the fiercest action during the Battle of Britain.

It was a dangerous posting, to say the least.

Many of the pilots, or “The Few” as Sir Winston Churchill would later call the fighter pilots who flew in the Battle of Britain, took the brunt of the Luftwaffe’s attacks in this vital airspace over the English Channel and southeast England. Many lost their lives in fiery crashes over the tranquil British countryside, including Flying Officer Hart’s fellow Canadian pilot and boyhood friend Alex Trueman, also from Sackville. Flying Officer Trueman, who served with the Royal Air Force’s 253 Squadron, was shot down and killed on September 4, 1940, but even the loss of his friend didn’t stop Flying Officer Hart from soldiering on. He never allowed fear to get the better of him.

“You didn’t have time to be scared,” he said. “You’re thinking about what’s going on.”

Despite being shot at over the English Channel by a twin-engine Junkers Ju 88 multirole aircraft on September 30, 1940, Flying Officer Hart managed to land his Spitfire safely. “I was only about 20 miles [32 kilometres] out at 20,000 feet [6,096 metres] when I got shot,” he recalled. On October 10, 1940, he shared in the probable destruction of a Junkers Ju88 and on October 29 he claimed a Messerschmitt Me109 (also known as the Bf109) destroyed. Shortly after the conclusion of the Battle of Britain, on November 13, he shared in the destruction of a Junkers Ju88.

By early 1941, he was serving with 91 Squadron at Hawkinge, England, but he returned to 602 “City of Glasgow” Squadron and then went to an operational training unit as an instructor. He commanded 67 Squadron in Burma from May to July 1943 and 112 Squadron in Italy from April to August 1945. He also served in No. 614 Squadron, No. 613 Squadron and No. 54 Squadron.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on June 22, 1945, while serving with 112 Squadron. His citation reads:

“This officer has participated in a large number of varied sorties, including many attacks on heavily defended targets such as road and rail bridges, gun positions, strong points and mechanical transport. Throughout he has displayed skillful leadership, great determination and devotion to duty. In April 1945, Squadron Leader Hart took part in an armed reconnaissance during which eleven locomotives were successfully attacked. Some days later Squadron Leader Hart participated in another sortie during which a number of locomotives and trucks were most effectively attacked. This officer has invariably displayed the greatest keenness and has set a fine example to all.”

It was a time when ordinary Canadians such as Flying Officer Hart and thousands of others were called upon to do extraordinary things to win their battles and help secure the peace and freedom we enjoy today. Yet, to hear him describe it, his role in helping Allied air forces beat back the Luftwaffe and win the Battle of Britain was nothing remarkable.

“I know I have it [the Battle of Britain medal] with a star on it, but I really didn’t have that much to do with it,” he said modestly. “You were posted to a squadron and you did your job.”

How many kills was he responsible for during the Battle?

“Not as many as I would have liked,” he said matter-of-factly.

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SEPTEMBER 13-15

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Peter McLeod

A-10C Thunderbolt II
Demonstration Team

CF18 Demonstration Team

Canadian Forces Snowbirds

Mike Tryggvason

BATTLE OF BRITAIN LUNCHEON



Friday, September 20, 2019

Guest Speaker: Jack Hurst, Air-to-Air Avro Photographer showing Avro Arrow Flying photos. Jack will also speak about the cancelled Avro Program.

Find out more about this Canadian Aviation event.

WING OPEN 11:00am • SERVING: 11:30

**TICKETS IN ADVANCE: \$25 pp
Purchase at the Wing or call 519-455-0430 to book**

Aviation enthusiast, skilled photographer and London resident Jack Hurst will be the guest speaker at the Wing's annual Battle of Britain Luncheon, scheduled for Friday, September 20th. Mr. Hurst recent spoke at the April meeting of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society in Toronto and drew the largest audience of the season, the Society's magazine recently reported.

As a young man, Mr. Hurst joined the photography department of Avro Canada to become an air-to-air photographer. Chasing high speed aircraft around the sky, he has to date logged more than 400 hours in the back seat of a CF-100. He also has his own flying suit, his own helmet and his own locker and was paid \$5 "danger pay" per hour for every hour he flew to take photographs, which he recalls as a "a lot of fun up there." His photographs include RL205, the last Arrow to fly. He is also involved in the "Raise the Arrow" project, which is an effort to recover the nine, one-eighth scale free-flight Arrow models launched over Lake Ontario from Point Petre in Price Edward Coounty on a Nike rocket booster, as part of the Arrow program, Although none of the models have been recovered so far, a Delta Test Vehicle, which pre-dated the Arrow model, has been found. New sonar imagery and underwater video footage is helping in the search, described as "like looking for a needle in a liquid haystack." .

You can expect a delicious meal and an interesting speaker at the Battle of Britain Luncheon on September 20. Order your tickets early.



**John Hart
1916-2019**

Last Surviving Canadian from Battle of Britain

NEW BRUNSWICK-BORN PILOT SERVED ON FOUR CONTINENTS, AWARDED DFC

Squadron leader John Hart, who has died aged 102, was the last surviving Canadian Battle of Britain pilot. He went on to serve on fighters in Burma and in Italy, where he won the DFC.

Hart arrived on No. 602 Squadron on Sept. 24, 1940, when it was flying from Westhampnett near Chichester. Although the intensity of the fighting had eased somewhat, Hart and his colleagues were scrambled on a daily basis to intercept raids approaching the south coast.

On Oct. 12, Hart's Spitfire was seriously damaged during an engagement with Messerschmitt Bf 109s in fighting over the English Channel, but he was able to return safely.

During the afternoon he was again on patrol when his formation of three aircraft attacked a Junkers 88 south of Beachy Head. Their combined attacks resulted in the German bomber crashing into the sea.

After a few days of reduced activity, the Luftwaffe mounted a large-scale operation at midday on Oct. 29. Five Spitfire and four Hurricane squadrons were scrambled. In the ensuing battle over Kent, 11 enemy fighters were shot down, one of them by Hart. This proved to be the last major action of the Battle of Britain.

John Stewart Hart was born on Sept. 11, 1916, in Sackville, N.B. He attended Mount Allison University, having learnt to fly at the Halifax Flying Club. Growing bored of working with the fishing fleets on the east coast of Canada, he travelled to Britain and obtained a short service commission in the RAF in June 1939.

His flying training completed, he was posted to an Army co-operation squadron, but a serious car crash interrupted his progress. After recovering he trained on fighters before joining No. 602 Squadron.

In November 1940 Hart shared in the destruction of a Junkers 88 bomber before joining No. 91 Squadron. In October he was rested and spent almost a year as a fighter instructor before he left for India. In February 1943 he joined No. 79 Squadron flying Hurricanes on ground attack operations in support of the Fourteenth Army.

Three months later he took command of No. 67 Squadron in Burma flying escort to bomber formations and transport aircraft parachuting supplies to the ground forces. Hart continued to fly on operations until September 1944, when he left for Egypt to command an air gunnery school. In March 1945 he joined No. 112 Squadron based in Italy. After just two familiarization sorties in the Mustang, he flew his first operation in the American-built fighter.

**“
SKILFUL
LEADERSHIP,
GREAT DETER-
MINATION
AND DEVOTION
TO DUTY.”**

On March 3 he led a formation to attack the Carsara rail bridge, which carried one of the principal railway lines into Italy from Yugoslavia. The raid was a success and the railway line was cut. A second attack in the afternoon hit the bridge.

In April Hart assumed command of the squadron and, during the final weeks of the war, he led many ground-attack sorties.

On April 9 he was strafing gun positions near Bolognese

when his aircraft was badly damaged. His wingman reported: “He flew home with a man-sized hole through the tailplane and a smack in the ammo bay.”

As the Germans retreated north of the River Po and towards the Austrian border, Hart and his pilots attacked their transport and the temporary pontoon ridges across the numerous river obstacles.

He led formations to attack the railway system and, on one sortie, 11 locomotives were successfully attacked. A few days later more were damaged. On May 2 he led an attack into Austria when five railway engines and three trucks were damaged.

The war in the Balkans continued into early May and Hart led patrols over the Istrian peninsula on the 3rd — two days later the squadron was stood down.

A few weeks later Hart was awarded the DFC, the citation highlighted his “skilful leadership, great determination and devotion to duty.”

Hart was released from the RAF in 1946 when he returned to Canada and settled in Vancouver where he became involved in real estate, specializing as an appraiser. He retired in 1976.

On his 100th birthday, the Royal Canadian Air Force celebrated his birthday with a flypast over his home. Later in the day he took off in a Harvard wartime training aircraft. When asked how it flew, he replied: “It handled like a logging truck - nothing like the nimble Spitfire.”

With the passing of John Hart there are now just four survivors of “The Few”.

John Hart married his Scottish wife Joan in 1942; she died in 1977. He was married to his second wife Bette for 35 years; she also predeceased him. His three children survive him.

London Daily Telegraph

My Memorable Moment

By Reg Lownie

On Monday morning, October 3, 1960, I was sitting as a crew member inside an Argus aircraft. The Argus, with its four turbo-compound Wright engines idling gently, was sitting on a runway pointing westward toward Canada, at RAF Station Kinloss, northern Scotland. We had flown to RAF Kinloss a week previously to take part in a joint anti-submarine exercise with the RAF, over the water between Scotland and Iceland, a corridor for submarines transiting southward into the Atlantic Ocean. But today we were heading home, the second last Argus to leave.

In the aircraft were fourteen regular crew members plus six ground crew. Beneath us, two large bomb bays were filled with baggage and spare aircraft parts, usually carried on all out-of-Canada exercises. The aircraft was fully fueled, the weather was perfect and we were waiting for the runway area to be cleared of flocks of seagulls. Our pilot, Ron "Aussie" Russell, had flown with the Australian air force before migrating to Canada and joining the RCAF. He had switched the intercom to "live mike" so everyone on board could hear the transmissions between the crew and the tower.

Finally, we were free to depart. Our acceleration was rapid and as the aircraft gained height I could see the land falling away and hear the last words exchanged with RAF Kinloss. Then, almost simultaneously, there was one ear-splitting 'bang' followed by a second one and the shrill sound of alarms and voices calling, "Fire Number One" and "Fire Number Three," and then another loud bang bringing with it a huge cloud of dirt and dust that travelled the length of the aircraft interior. A flock of gulls had smashed us head on, two into the inboard engines and one or more through the plexiglass nose covering.

While everyone on board was alarmed, there was no panic, thanks to past training and to our pilot who immediately took control. In rapid succession he ordered the first engineer to shut off the alarms and start the check list for feathering the engines, told the co-pilot to call a "Mayday" to Kinloss tower, issued orders to everyone to stay off the intercom unless we saw an immediate threat to the aircraft; asked any crew in the back to open a window to clear the dust, and told the second engineer to go down to the nose area and report on the damage there. Then a minute or two passed as he turned his full attention to flying the aircraft again, when he shouted, "I've lost control!" and then, "I can't move the rudder!" This brought another period of alarm until the engineer who was down in the nose area called out, "Captain, we've got seagulls jammed into the rudder cables. I'll get my screwdriver and try to dig them out!"

It then occurred to me that if the rudder couldn't be freed, we were going to fly in a straight line for about twelve hours to hopefully reach Canada, and then try to find a runway we could land on. As an alternative, did we have enough parachutes for everyone on board? Then the engineer announced that he had dug bits and pieces of the gulls out of the rudder controls and Aussie found that he had regained directional control.

For a minute everybody took sighs of relief, until the co-pilot's calm voice was heard to say, "Captain, we're losing altitude." The altimeter was slowly unwinding and I realized that two serviceable engines could not keep this heavy aircraft aloft for very much longer.

We were now a good distance over the Atlantic and our situation was daunting. But good training and a cool head prevailed as our pilot ordered new plans. The radar operator was told to scan around for surface ships; the co-pilot was to call out our altitude every one hundred feet and to try to raise the Kinloss tower on radio; navigators were asked to distribute inflatable life jackets; the engineer and navigator were asked to calculate fuel remaining and how much could be safely dumped if we decided to try to return to Kinloss; other navigators were to station themselves near doors and hatches in the event of a water landing; any unnecessary items on the equipment racks were to be identified and prepared to be jettisoned if required; navigator to be ready to pass aircraft position to Kinloss or any station within contact prior to water landing; and the radio operator was to be ready to broadcast on all emergency channels the aircraft's location and situation.

In a few minutes, Kinloss tower was reached by radio, discussions on returning were made, and after dumping fuel the aircraft was slowly turned around and headed back to RAF Kinloss. We landed there without further incident and stayed overnight while our baggage and spare parts were transferred to the last Argus. We took it safely back to Canada the next day. The crew of the damaged aircraft waited in Kinloss until repairs were made and they had an uneventful trip home.

I later learned that twenty years after our incident, an RAF Nimrod aircraft struck gulls on takeoff from Kinloss and crashed in woods to the east of the airfield. Two pilots were killed but the remainder of the crew survived.

In July, 2012, RAF Kinloss was closed.

Ronald Stanley Russell was born in New Zealand and served as a pilot in the Royal New Zealand Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force before emigrating to Canada and joining the RCAF in 1950. He retired with the rank of Squadron Leader in 1973. He was appointed as an Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel (Wing Commander) with 420 Air Reserve Squadron. He worked as a Duty Manager at Halifax International Airport and entered politics, serving on the Hants Municipal Council. In 1978 he was elected to the Nova Scotia Legislature as the member for West Hants, going on to win elections in 1981, 1984, 1988, 1993, 1998, 1999 and 2003, a total of eight consecutive election wins. He was elected Speaker of the House an unprecedented three times: 1978, 1993 and 1998, and was the first minority-party MLA ever elected as Speaker (1998). He was the government house leader for 14 years and the opposition house leader for five years. During his 18 years in Cabinet, he served as: Minister of Labor; Minister of Health; Minister of Transport; and many other portfolios and special assignments, including Deputy President of the Executive Council and Deputy Premier. After retirement he served in an informal advisory role. He died on Thursday, March 7, 2019 at the QEH Health Sciences Centre in Halifax, at age 92.

BIRTHDAY BRATS



SEPTEMBER HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES

Rene McKinnon, Mitch Mitchell, Dave O'Brien, Al Pageot, Brian Perry, Doug Rath, Barry Sandler, Charlene O'Donnell, Walter Schussler, Bill Sutherland, Claude Vigeant, Carolyn Dalgity, and John Webster.

OCTOBER HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES

Gus Cameron, Tanya Deaville, Flo Douglas, Armin Grunwald, Bette Hexter, Don Martin, Charles Rath, Ernie Regan, Thomas Taborbowski and Randy Warden



*"The older the fiddler, the sweeter the tune."
~English Proverb*



LONDON LINK SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

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

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.
(For good reproduction at reasonable size, photos should be fairly high resolution)



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September 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 EUCHRE RAA	4	5 LARC	6 LUNCH (Cold)	7 LVRC
8	9	10 EUCHRE MAC	11 BCC	12 WT EMS (Air Show)	13 WEC AIR SHOW EMS LUNCH	14
15	16	17 EUCHRE 1:15	18	19	20 BATTLE OF BRITAIN LUNCH	21
22	23	24 EUCHRE FO	25	26	27 LUNCH WDs	28
29	30					

October 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 RAA	2	3 LARC	4 LUNCH	5
6	7	8 MAC	9 BCC	10 WT	11 LUNCH WEC	12
13	14	15	16	17 RETIRED COM	18 LUNCH VETERANS CLASSIC	19 WT
20	21	22 FO	23	24	25 LUNCH WDs	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Note: every Tuesday Euchre at the Wing 1:15pm

AGM Annual General Meeting, 1pm
BBQ Bar-b-que lunch, last lunch until August
BCC British Car Club, meeting at 7:30pm
COM Retired Commissionaires, 9am - 12pm
FO Fanshawe Optimist's Club, meeting at 7:30pm
GM General Meeting at 1pm

GS Guest Speaker
LFC London Flying Club Reunion
LVRC London Vintage Radio Club meeting at 11:00am
MAC Model Aircraft Club meeting
OAGM Ontario Group Annual General Meeting

RAA Recreational Aircraft Association, meeting at 7:30pm
WD The Women's Division join us the 4th Friday of each month for lunch
WDP Wind Down Party for OAGM, at the Wing
WEC Wing Executive Council, 9:30am
WT Wood Turners, meeting at 7:30pm