



# FLIGHT PLAN



## NEWSLETTER OF THE AIRCREW ASSOCIATION

*EDITOR: Major John R. Scott, CD, MR AeS*

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### President Pearson's Pondering's.

Well, we are in to another Fall season, where Mother Nature opens her palette of brilliant colours and paints the foliage with her spirit lifting artistry. I hope you and your families had an enjoyable Thanksgiving,

At our last General meeting, September 8, for those who couldn't attend, I had the great pleasure to announce that two of our long serving executive members, Jack Cahan and Jack Lumley, had been awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal. The presentation of these medals was greatly enhanced by having them presented to the two winners by our Honourary President, Russell Bannock. Other members of our association have received the Jubilee medal but from different groups to which they belong.

I regret to inform you that, for personal reasons, I will be stepping down as your president January 1<sup>st</sup>., and handing over the gavel to our Vice-President Chuck Casson. who will serve you well. It has been an honour and a privilege to be your president this Anniversary year.



#### MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership dues for the period January 2013 - December 2013 are payable as of 1 January 2013 Your \$25.00 may be paid at the **November 10, 2012 Meeting.**

Make your cheque payable to:

THE AIRCREW ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO.

If mailing your cheque please send to :

FRED STEPHENS, TREASURER

42 DELAIR CRES. THORNHILL, ON L3T 2M4

#### SPEAKER

Major Bernard Thorne will be our speaker on 10 November. "I'm from Newfoundland originally but have been told that I am remarkably comprehensible despite that handicap. A Navigator (still not ACSO to me) from the CP-140 Aurora background, I have over 3500 hours starting near the end of the cold war and finishing only 4 years ago. I have seen the gamut of operations on the maritime patrol side with operations mostly around the North Atlantic. I also had a tour enforcing maritime interdiction when the former Republic of Yugoslavia was breaking apart and also one to Kandahar- HQ only I'm afraid. Apparently he speaks and understands English.

#### AIRCREW ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

**FRIDAY NOV 16, 2012**

**AT 1:00 PM**

#### ANNUAL FESTIVE LUNCHEON

**BAYVIEW GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB**

**25 FAIRWAY HEIGHTS DR**

**THORNHILL, ON**

**MUSIC BY**

**MEL TULK QUINTET**

**COST: \$55.00 PER PERSON**

**TABLES FOR EIGHT**

**CASH BAR OPEN AT 12:00**

**EARLY BIRD DRAW**

**GO TO BACK PAGE FOR REGISTRATION FORM**

# 70<sup>th</sup> Reunion - 426 Thunderbird Squadron

by Hu Filleul

From August 23 to 26, 8 Wing, CFB Trenton was the site of the 70th reunion of the largest Squadron Association in the



RCAF. One hundred and twenty people gathered for a busy four days. Those attending included old timers from when the squadron flew Wellington, Lancaster, and Halifax bombers during World War 2.

*WW II Statistics: operational 27 months, 268 missions, 3240 sorties, 579 casualties, 426 aircrew members killed (112 no known grave, 314 buried in 49 cemeteries in seven countries) 91 aircraft lost (20 Wellingtons, 33 Lancasters, 38 Halifaxes) 191 personnel were awarded 198 decorations.*

The largest delegation at the reunion was from the era when the squadron flew North Stars on the Korean Airlift in the early 1950's, (photo below).

*Korean Airlift Statistics: The statistics for the Squadron on the Korean airlift are impressive. In just under four years, 599 round trips were made to the Far East. This entailed a total of 34,000 flying hours without loss of cargo*

*or a single passenger. No one was injured on flight operations which was a miracle when one considers the numerous incidents and "near misses."*

Present squadron members provide training for both aircrew and ground crew on CC-130J, CC-130H Hercules and and CC-150 Polaris (Airbus) aircraft.

Reunion events included a "Meet and Greet" with steak dinner, a Cabaret Night with buffet and a super Banquet held in the museum hangar containing the restored Halifax bomber.

On the educational side there were tours of the high tech training facilities for both maintenance personnel and aircrew operating the new CC-130J Hercules. This \$40 million building and its equipment was a far cry from the days when training aids consisted of instructor-manufactured display boards and a cut away Rolls Royce Merlin engine done by the flight engineers. We also had a tour of the training facility for the CC-130H models, which is located on the north side of the airfield at the old 6 Repair Depot site.

The training mock-ups for ground crew consisted of actual fuselages from time expired aircraft converted to working systems simulators for both the H and J models. The warrant officer instructors were more than willing to answer questions from we ancient and out-of-date fliers. We also got to stand behind a pilot instructor for a simulated

takeoff, circuit and landing of a CC-130. Although our simulator was the old unmovable one, it was realistic enough to make you think you were flying. In place, next to our demonstration, were two new movable tactical crew training simulators for the J model aircraft with one already operational.

## Station Standing Orders

### Future General Meetings

**Saturday November 10, 2012**

**Friday November 16, 2012**

**(Festive Luncheon)**

**March 9 2013**

**June 8 2013**

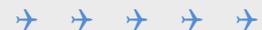
General Meetings are held at Toronto Police Association, 180 Yorkland Blvd.

North York

Meetings start at **1000 Hours**

**Dress:** Generally accepted dress is jacket, tie and trousers.

Ladies are always welcome. Meeting and lunch only \$10



**Luncheons** are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month at 1100 Hours Join us at the Pickle Barrel Restaurant, Centre Point Mall, Yonge and Steeles.

**Dress:** Casual

### EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

Oct 15, 2012 Feb 4, 2013

May 13, 2013

## The Totem – a story

By John R. Scott (Major ret'd)  
MRAeS

This tale begins back in the early 1950s. The RCAF had undertaken an air defence role in France and Germany in support of NATO. Squadrons of F-86 Sabres were created to form 1 Air Division with Headquarters at Metz, and Wings at Marville (1 Wing), Grostouin (2 Wing), Zweibrücken (3 Wing) and Baden-Söllingen (4 Wing).

Fast forward sixteen years to 1969. France had made the determination to go nuclear resulting in her bowing out of NATO and withdrawing her Forces from bases in Germany, specifically Lahr. The Canadian government was determined to maintain its position with NATO but had to shut down the Air Division Head Quarters in Metz, France and re-locate in Lahr, Germany. Squadrons at 1, 2 and 3 Wings were reduced or closed down and moved to CFB Baden. On Saturday, the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1967 the Canadians belonging to 1 Fighter Wing living in Longuyon near Marville held a departure ceremony and a large totem pole was placed as a memorial of their presence at that location.

It has been difficult to trace the genesis of the Totem Pole project. However, the story goes that the MacMillan/Bloedel Company based in Vancouver,

gifted a number of red cedar logs, as a token of support for RCAF personnel overseas. MacB had the logs delivered to the Haida, resident in the Queen Charlotte Islands to carve highly stylized robust Totem poles. The poles would serve as both a memorial and recognition of the close association in this specific case, with the people of Zweibrücken.



George Mitchell stands beside the 'new totem pole'

Canadians had enjoyed their association with the residents of Zweibrücken and wished to leave a symbol of remembrance to the City, which would also recognize the servicemen who had lost their lives in the defence of Freedom while serving in Zweibrücken.

The carving and decoration completed, the two Totem Poles were transported by the RCAF to 3 (F) Wing Zweibrücken. The larger of the two poles was approximately 10 meters in

height and the second about 5 meters. At the top of the pole is the Thunderbird, which, in the Haida culture, represents the god who watches over all creation. Below it was a double headed sea monster, the warrior's symbol; the third figure was of a little man who had grown from boyhood to become a warrior, and the fourth figure was that of the same warrior, grown to maturity as a tribal chief.

In a ceremony in May 1969, on the closing of the RCAF portion of the field the larger of the two totems was presented to the City complete with the official signing of a document giving 'ownership' of the two totems to the City. Totem 1 still stands today in the city center rose garden in perpetual recognition of the Canadians who became a part of the fabric of Zweibrücken. Totem 2 was placed at a primary location at the entrance to the airfield. However, Totem 2 is there no longer. What happened to the Totem 2?

The story continues. After the Canadians departed for Baden and the Zweibrücken airfield came under operational command of the US Air Force. Totem 2 remained at the airfield until the US Air Force ceased operations in 1991. Unbeknownst to the City of Zweibrücken (the 'owners'), the Americans, thinking it was Canadian 'property' shipped it to CFB

Baden. Here it remained in storage until such time as both CFB Baden and Lahr were closed down in 1993. Then along with everything else at the two bases, Totem 2 was shipped to Trenton where it came under the 'ownership' of the RCAF Museum. Throughout this time, the search for the Totem Pole continued and was pursued largely through the efforts of Mr. Armin Karcher of Zweibrücken.

In the meantime, in 1997 the two cities of Barrie and Zweibrücken became twinned. This is in itself an incredible story of perseverance. It has something to do with a sit-in by a Canadian in the Ober Burgermeister's office. Over the ensuing 15 years, people of the two cities have enjoyed many visits and mutual exchanges. But, once again the subject of Totem 2 continues to be raised.

In 2007 the question arose from the City of Zweibrücken as to Totem 2 being returned, as it was clear on their standpoint that the Totem had been 'gifted' to their city. It was proposed that the Totem Pole be restored and put on permanent display in the City of Barrie, Zweibrücken Canadian twin city. This proposal met with the

approval of the city of Zweibrücken and as a result plans were made to ship the Totem Pole to the Base Borden Military Museum. The Totem pole arrived in Borden and was placed in storage out of the elements. It was clear that the Totem Pole was a vestige of its former self. The Borden Museum was a logical location partially because Borden after all was the birthplace of the RCAF.

Over the last 40 plus years Totem 2 has 'lived its life' out of doors and been subjected to the wrath of Mother Nature resulting in a rather disheveled state. If the Totem was to regain its self-esteem, who was going to pay for the work? The Canadian Government declined the opportunity to refurbish the pole. Some funds were donated through the RCAF Heritage and History Foundation of Winnipeg. Through the efforts of Rob Warman and Major Jean-Maurice Pigeon, a fund raising campaign was established and a number of private donations were collected from across the nation as well as funds provided by the RCAF Heritage and History Foundation of Winnipeg. Once these funding

arrangements had been secured it was time to take the next step.

Mr. Randall King and his wife Lyla King of the Beausoleil First Nation on Christian Island in Georgian Bay were engaged to carry out the restoration of the Totem Pole. Totem 2 was transported to the Christian Island on Georgian Bay, Ontario where these two very accomplished carvers 'rejuvenated' Totem 2 to its original beauty. The work began in 2011 and required nearly nine months to complete.

The question now became "How could Totem 2 become ensconced in a place of honour in Barrie? That was the basic purpose of the ceremony of Presentation and re-dedication held at the Barrie Armouries on 8 September 2012.

At precisely 1100 on the day, MC HCol Rob Warman (who had participated in the original ceremonies at RCAF Station Zweibrücken in 1969) took to the stage inviting the dignitaries to come forward. The Hall was then flooded with the strains of O Canada and the German National Anthem. The audience of about 100 were then given the opportunity to recognize the dignitaries including of

course the pre-eminent<sup>2</sup> carvers Lyla and Randall King, the Mayor (Burgermeister) of Zweibrucken Herr Rolf Franzen, Mayor Jeff Lehman of Barrie, LCol Peter Earle, 16 Wing Borden Commander, LCol (Ret'd) Stuart Beaton, Elder Hector Copegog and Padre Arek Skwarek. Then under the direction of Pipe Major Eobhann Bruce the Grey & Simcoe Foresters Pipes and Drums played several pieces to the delight of the audience.

The first part of the process of who gives what to whom began. Since Zweibrucken had gifted Totem 2 to the Borden Museum it was only appropriate that the Director, LCol Stuart Beaton provide some of the background and story as to how it came into his responsibility. Totem 2 was 'transferred' to the 16 Wing Borden Commander by the signing of documents. LCol Earle took the opportunity to cover much of the history of not only the Totem but emphasized the values of association the Canadian servicemen and families enjoyed with their German hosts. He also emphasized that the Totem was a marker of Remembrance to those who had died in the service.

LCol Earle 'transferred' Totem 2 to Burgermeister Franzen who smiled happily at the

return of 'his' Totem pole. Herr Franzen reiterated the importance of the RCAF to his city of some 600 years of history and the pride that they have as evidenced by Totem 1 that remains today in the City's central rose garden. Herr Franzen signed the official acceptance certificates. It was now Herr Franzen's opportunity to finally present Totem 2 to Mayor Jeff Lehman and the citizens of Barrie. Mayor Lehman gra



ciously accepted after a short speech specifically mentioning the new indoor home of Totem 2 in the central foyer of Barrie City Hall. He finalized the transaction by the signing of documents between himself and Burgermeister Franzen.

Burgermeister Franzen was presented with an exact duplicate of the Totem that stands about 60 cm high. When he returns to Zweibrucken the mini Totem will be placed in the Rathaus for all visitors to enjoy.



The official signing completed, Elder Hector Copegog carried out the traditional Smudging Ceremony. This ceremony and teaching relates to the 'passing of tobacco' so the sacred item, the totem pole' will be cared for properly. It closed with Elder Copegog signing an Ojibwa song of honour to represent the re-dedication. On completion of the ceremony, gifts were exchanged amongst all parties followed by the final blessing by Padre Skwarek.

The crowd extended their appreciation for the auspicious event and all enjoyed the strains of the RCAF March Past. This was followed by a reception and an opportunity to exchange great stories of friendship between the Museums, the RCAF personnel and the Mayors of Barrie and Zweibrucken. .

## Roll of Honour

CW Lovatt – “*Chuck Lovatt lives in the tiny hamlet of Carroll, MB. His story, “Roll of Honour”, was short listed in the 2011 John Kenneth Galbraith Literary Award. The story won in the Lest We Forget category of the 2012 Canadian Stories Contest.*

There are voices. In a land of dreams, beyond the realm of beating hearts, they linger, waiting to be heard. It is to this place that I am compelled to venture.

All is darkness. I cannot see, but I can feel the silence echo from far distant boundaries. Every nerve is an antenna, receiving signals on the pregnant air.

I am not alone.

To the air I say, “I am listening.”

From close by there comes a voice – a man’s - young, but so too is it old; it is transfixed with fear, but a fear so embedded that it lies nestled in the hidden regions of the mind – acknowledged, but otherwise dismissed. I soon understand that he is not speaking to me, but is reciting a memory that has become as deeply entrenched as his fear – that has become so intricately entwined with it that it is difficult to tell one from the other.

*“Machineguns everywhere! The bastards! They’re concentrating on our frontline, scything us down like so many stalks of wheat! I can see the flashes winking from their muzzles! I can hear the slugs ripping past my head. The sound is sickening as they tear into my comrades! I can hear their cries as they tumble and drown in rain-filled shell holes, already polluted with mustard gas and other comrades from previous blunders. “I lower my head against the storm and struggle forward, but*

*one of them has finally found me! Bullets tear into my chest like sledgehammers, and I’m screaming like the others, falling into the mud...falling into darkness.”*

He finishes, and at last my vision comes into play. He appears in a pale ghostly light, his uniform is ground-in with clay; but his face is calm, the fear banished when he tells me, “I often have this dream.”

His sudden tranquility is unexpected. I feel a cold chill sweep over me when I gasp, “It must have been horrible!”

The waste offends me: all who have died in our wars – everyone on the frontline a volunteer. I need to understand what drove so many to throw away their lives with such disregard, so I ask, “But why? You didn’t have to go! What was it for?”

For a moment he seems lost in his memories, his eyes far away. Then, without raising his head, he says, “You’re asking, ‘Why did we go?’”

I am struck by his calm, although it does not infuse me. Still agitated, I reply, “Yes!”

He considers the question, the



lines on his face etched in shadow.

Then he begins: “They say that the war came about because of this or that, but the real reason was that the Hun was threatening the Empire, acting aggressive as hell, and saw that we were standing in

the way.” His eyes flash. “We were, too – four-square! We couldn’t allow them to destroy what had taken centuries to build. The Kaiser had to be stopped, and it fell on us to do it!”

He becomes more reflective: his tired features wreath into a weary smile. The sense of calm deepens.

“Well, that was the face of it, anyway.

“Me? Well, I was just a lad when I joined up, and all I’d seen of the world was a few miles outside the family homestead. Back then, I didn’t know anything about what I just mentioned. Damn few of us did. We were young, thirsting for adventure, and the Old Country needed us. What more can I tell you?”

He shakes his head, at the same time transforming the smile into a boyish grin. For reasons unknown, it wrenches my heart.

“Now I laugh when I think of that poor, deluded fool,” he says, still grinning. “If I’d known that ‘adventure’ meant slogging through mud, day after day, freezing in one water-logged trench after the other, fighting foot-rot, rats, snipers, pig-headed generals and the Hun – all in that order - I might have hesitated before signing on, but there’s no question that I would have gone anyway. It would have been unthinkable not to.”

Now the grin fades.

“Years of fighting make you tough, and we were the toughest of all. I say that without prejudice: others - including the Germans - said it too. My word! You should have seen us, all those thousands of fine young Canadians! We were the cream of the Empire, tough before we ever saw a trench, and years spent living in that hell only made us tougher still!”

“They say that we forged a nation over there, that we first came to terms with ourselves in the mud of Flanders, and I suppose that it’s true.” The tone saddens, “But even the toughest of men isn’t immune to a bullet. All those thousands of fine young lads filled too many cemeteries, proving to the world that we were the best.”

He pauses, as if remembering something unshared, yet I lack the courage to inquire as to what it is. The moment passes; he shakes it from his mind, and says, “So, you want to know what I died for.”

I have no words. My reply is a single, silent nod.

Now those shining eyes burn into my own.

“Well, I’ll tell you.

“I died because I was more afraid of letting down my comrades than I was of the enemy - because I found that it was possible to love an idea more than life itself. I was proud of who we were, of what we had accomplished, but most of all, of what we stood for: something good in the midst of a world gone mad. All else was darkness,” His certainty is implacable when he adds, “And we were the light!”

On impulse, I reach out to grasp his arm, but my hand passes through his body as if he no longer exists. Soon, he does not. His story told, he is fading, returning to shadow, with his voice still warm in my ears. After the briefest of moments, he is gone.

Others are waiting.

Soon, one begins.

*“A searchlight’s found us! Why us? Out of all the hundreds of aeroplanes over Europe on this unholy night, why is ours singled out?”*

He resembles the first young man - prematurely old from facing death too many times. His uniform is different - a flight suit and leather helmet, with goggles strapped to his forehead - but the haggard look is the same. The fear is the same too: I

can hear it in his voice, reaching out, seeking to control him.

*“I kick the rudder and edge the wheel, sending the Halifax into a shallow dive, but more lights latch onto us from below. I give the column a desperate twist, a voice insanely screaming in my head, “Why us!”*

*It’s not a charitable voice. In that moment of pure panic - knowing what’s to come - that voice doesn’t care which of the others lumbering along in formation are singled out, only that it be allowed a reprieve. It’s the voice of reason gone mad - of my desire to live!*

*“The kite shudders as the first round of flak explodes off our port wingtip, and again as another explodes somewhere behind us! Moments later, the sky lights up when we’re bracketed from nose to tail!*

*“The windscreen shatters; something hot sears into my right arm, another into my neck; my headset is filled with the screams of my crew! Just for an instant, I see flames curling around the cowling of number three engine, and the entire world bursts into light!”*

Once more the fear has vanished; his expression is peaceful when he looks at me and says, “I never heard the explosion.”

I think that he resembles my father, only younger - impossibly younger. I feel what he felt at that moment - not pain, but unspeakable loss. I shudder, trying to chase the sensation away, but it clings to me, pulling my soul from my body.

I manage to ask, “Why? Why did you go? What drove you to venture into all that madness?”

With a ghost of a smile, he allows, “‘Madness’, that’s a good word for it, all right.”

I persist, “Then why?”

He pauses to consider.

“Well, we were all young, of course, and the young are immortal,” he actually laughs, “or so we thought! Adventure was churning in our

blood, even though we had no idea what the word actually meant.”

Gradually, his expression turns serious.

“So yeah, that was a big part of it, but not all. I won’t say that there was any burning desire to go and fight for King and Empire. Those ideas still existed, but they’d become tempered, knowing what the last war had cost, and how it needed to be done over again. That can take the luster out of even the finest idea.

“What did exist in our minds, though, was that Hitler needed to be stopped, and it was us who would have to do it.”

He becomes more philosophical, subtly turning the subject onto a different plain.

“Fate can be precocious that way: one generation is allowed to live in peace, never really knowing or understanding what it means to have to fight for what it believes. Then the wind shifts just a little - a madman comes to power - and the next generation is led to the slaughter, with the knowledge forced on them that it’s not possible to turn away.”

He levels his gaze on me; at the same moment his features begin to dim. “That’s what happened. That’s why we went.” There is a terrible firmness to his voice even as he fades. “The darkness was coming, and there was no one else to hold it back!”

Then he, too, is gone.

There is a moment, but too brief to reflect on a matter so profound. Reflection must wait; there is an impatience to fill the void.

A new voice begins.

*“There’s thousands of them!”*

“Who?” I ask, “Thousands of who?”

“Chinese!” He replies, tense with that ever-present fear. “Somebody’s sent up a star shell, and the night’s all in shadows! My eyes are playing tricks on me! The entire face of the hill is shape-changing, transforming

*and re-transforming, as if it's made of liquid instead of solid earth! But it isn't that at all. It's the commies coming at us again – like I said, thousands of the bastards - and this time they mean business!*

Breathless, he continues.

*"Terror stings me into action, and I'm hauling back on the bolt of my rifle. Then it's bucking against my shoulder, again and again, but there's so many of them – so goddamned many!*

*"I see the tracer a moment too late, stitching up the ground toward me, zeroing in on my muzzle flashes! I try to duck behind the sandbags, but something slams into my shoulder, spinning me against the back of the foxhole! Then I hear a thud on the ground beside me, and see the grenade!"*

I sense a shudder - a memory too often revisited.

"I close my eyes before it explodes."

He says it with relief, as if it is a victory. I stare into his face; it is young and handsome like the others. Again, I am captured by the moment. It is impossible to phrase my question, but he seems to understand.

"It's a hell of a thing, dying," he says, in a voice so soft that I have to lean forward to hear, "but the fear of dying's a helluva lot worse. When you see it coming, part of you leaves, a part you never get back, even if by some miracle you survive." His smile is accepting when he tells me, "Well, I didn't survive: miracles weren't in the cards for me that night."

I am finally able to gather enough of myself to ask, "What was worth so much for you to go – to risk your life, and..." I force myself to continue, "...and to lose it? What could possibly be worth such a sacrifice?"

His laughter is disconcerting when he replies, "It's like this: I was too young to get into the big war, but I wanted to do my part. I mean, back then it was pretty glamorous, seeing all those older guys returning from overseas. The way the dames flocked all over them was the bee's knees to a kid of fifteen! So I suppose that when the call came for Korea, it was as much the memory of all those men, just off the train, struggling through the crowd with their mouths and cheeks already smeared over with lipstick, that decided it for me as anything." He chuckles, "I wanted to get some of that, too!" Then, seriously:

"Of course the Reds were a threat. They had to be stopped. Who else was going to do that if not us?"

His brow wrinkles pensively, although the smile never leaves, even as he begins to lose substance.

"There's a thousand ways to die, but few have a reason. We wanted a better world, something that was a beacon in the darkness. An idea like that's worth a lot."

He dissipates like the others, but there is still no time to reflect. My heart continues to sink, for I know there is one more story, from one last generation, remaining to be told.

It comes riven with adrenaline and something else: perhaps it is panic. Of course it is, I know it is – how could it be otherwise?

*"My legs! Where the hell are my legs? Oh god, they're gone! But why?"*

*"So tired, I need to think, get my head on straight, but I'm so tired!"*

*"Fight it off soldier, you're going into shock, stay alert!"*

*"Oh good, here's Sammy – Sam-the-Man - a geek with the ladies, but still the best medic in the company!"*

*"Hey Sammy! Help me figure this out, okay? Like, I seem to have misplaced my legs, ain't that a scream? Oh god! I really do feel like screaming!"*

*"What the....? He's acting like he can't hear me! Never mind, let him do his thing. Go to it, Sammy, get it done, man!"*

*"So tired..."*

*"Wonder what happened? Everything was fine, then there's this loud bang, and I'm tossed out of the LAV, somehow, and sprawled here by the side of the road."*

*"Tired...really, really tired..."*

*"Ow! What was that, Sammy? Morphine? Good deal, man, things were starting to get a little too real there for a while. Hey! Take it easy, can't you? No need to rip my shirt open like that, it's got buttons, you know?"*

*"Stop... hitting... my... chest! Wanna... break... a... freakin'... rib?"*

*"Oh lord! He's giving me CPR! That must mean...!"*

*"Oh no! No! NO! NO! NO!"*

*"My legs! Where the hell are my legs!"*

*"So tired... sleep... just for a moment..."*

Then, like the others, the recitation ends, and he speaks directly to me.

"I've been sleeping ever since."

He could have been my son – so beautiful, so full of youth. I cringe away from this thought, and he states, "You want to know what I died for?"

I reply, "Yes," even though there is a great lump in my throat. My eyes brim with tears. "I need to know."

Soberly, he nods. There is something terrible in the gesture; it is far too mature in someone so young.

"It's not like I planned on it or anything, but that's how it goes sometimes, when you feel that

your life has to stand for something. My buddies and me, we counted the cost, and went anyway.”

His tone changes as he reflects further.

“We had to go, there was no one else. There were bullies that needed to be stood up to,” his grin makes him look ridiculously young, “and we’re real good at standing up to bullies!”

I wait, knowing what is to come. He is fading even as I hear it.

“Someone had to step up and shine.”

When he is gone, I am alone, filled with a sense of loss. The silence stretches on as I struggle with all that I have been told. Soon the waking world will find me, and everything will disperse. This cannot happen. Not yet.

Each of these men had confessed to the folly of youth, yet each had alluded to a higher calling when faced with the peril of his time. But their time really *has* no time; the beginning is lost in the shadows of yesterday, and the end disappears into the mists of an uncertain tomorrow. So many sacrificed to preserve who we are - to preserve what constantly changes.

I knew none by name, but all are set in bronze, in every church, in every town hall or cenotaph across this land – names of those who have paid the price so that what we believe can continue to have meaning. They once walked among us; now most lie in forgotten graves, far from their homeland. Does this help me to understand? Can anything? The appalling waste still offends me, as it should offend anyone. What if they had survived? What measure of genius has been taken from us because they went too soon? Yet, to counter, it must be said that when the need had been greatest, they did not rest, and for that there can only be gratitude.

And still they do not rest. Perhaps they never will.

Their spirits are a flame, casting illumination on a path far different from the one they were faced with when they lived. They once walked among us; they are among us still – reciting their stories, over and over, on the chance that, one day, the world will finally listen.

Can you see them?

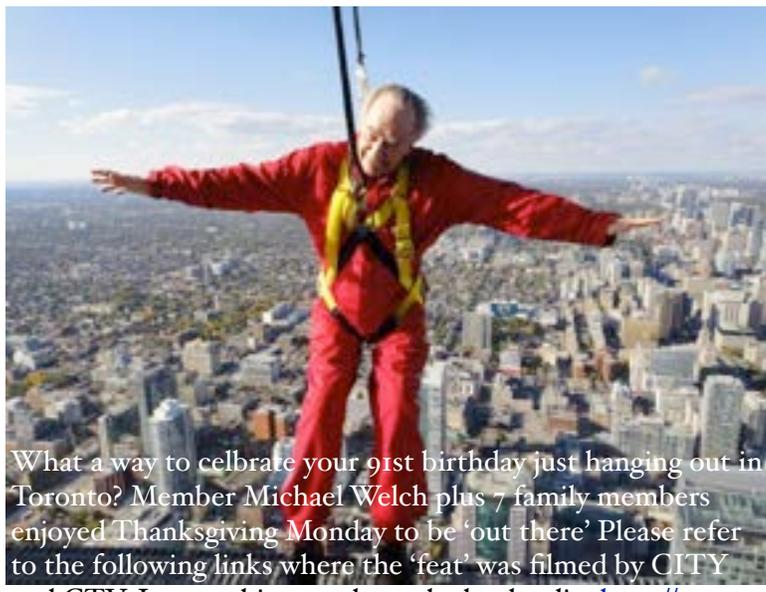
They shine with a light all their own.



Member Jack Cahan receives the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal and certificate presented by ACA Honourary President Russ Bannock.



Member Jack Lumley receives Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal and certificate presented by Honourary President Russ Bannock



What a way to celebrate your 91st birthday just hanging out in Toronto? Member Michael Welch plus 7 family members enjoyed Thanksgiving Monday to be ‘out there’ Please refer to the following links where the ‘feat’ was filmed by CITY and CTV. I guess this completes the bucket list.<http://www.citytv.com/toronto/citynews/life/video/230054-90-year-old-man-takes-on-the-edgewalk> <http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/thrill-seeking-wwii-veteran-walks-the-edge-of-toronto-s-cn-tower-1.987999>

[www.citytv.com/toronto/citynews/life/video/230054-90-year-old-man-takes-on-the-edgewalk](http://www.citytv.com/toronto/citynews/life/video/230054-90-year-old-man-takes-on-the-edgewalk) <http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/thrill-seeking-wwii-veteran-walks-the-edge-of-toronto-s-cn-tower-1.987999>

## THE OLD PHONE ON THE WALL.

When I was a young boy, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighborhood.. I remember the polished, old case fastened to the wall. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I was too little to reach the telephone, but used to listen with fascination when my mother talked to it. Then I discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device lived an amazing person. Her name was "Information Please" and there was nothing she did not know. Information Please could supply anyone's number and the correct time.

My personal experience with the genie-in-a-bottle came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor.

Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer, the pain was terrible, but there seemed no point in crying because there was no one home to give sympathy.

I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the parlor and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver in the parlor and held it to my ear.

"Information, please" I said into the mouthpiece just above my head. A click or two and a small clear voice spoke into my ear, "Information."

"I hurt my finger..." I wailed into the phone, the tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.

"Isn't your mother home?" came the question.

"Nobody's home but me," I blubbered.

"Are you bleeding?" the voice asked.

"No," I replied. "I hit my finger with the hammer and it hurts."

"Can you open the icebox?" she asked. I said I could.

"Then chip off a little bit of ice and hold it to your finger," said the voice.. After that, I called "Information Please" for everything.. I asked her for help with my geography, and she told me where Philadelphia was. She helped me with my math. She told me my pet chipmunk that I had caught in the park just the day before, would eat fruit and nuts. Then, there was the time Petey, our pet canary, died. I called, "Information Please," and told her the sad story. She listened, and then said things grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was not consoled. I asked her, "Why is it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to all families, only to end up as a heap of feathers on the bottom of a cage?"

She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, "Wayne, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in." Somehow I felt better.

Another day I was on the telephone, "Information

Please." "Information," said in the now familiar voice.

"How do I spell fix?" I asked. All this took place in a small town in the Pacific Northwest. When I was nine years old, we moved across the country to Boston. I missed my friend very much.

"Information Please" belonged in that old wooden box back home and I Somehow never thought of trying the shiny new phone that sat on the table in the hall. As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me. Often, in moments of doubt and perplexity I would recall the serene sense of security I had then. I appreciated now how patient, understanding, and kind she was to have spent her time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down in Seattle. I had about a half-hour or so between planes. I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now. Then without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, "Information Please."

Miraculously, I heard the small, clear voice I knew so well..

"Information." I hadn't planned this, but I heard myself saying,

"Could you please tell me how to spell fix?"

There was a long pause. Then came the soft spoken answer, "I guess your finger must have healed by now."

I laughed, "So it's really you," I said. "I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time?"

I wonder," she said, "if you know how much your call meant to me. I never had any children and I used to look forward to your calls." I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister.

"Please do", she said. "Just ask for Sally." Three months later I was back in Seattle. A different voice answered, "Information." I asked for Sally.

"Are you a friend?" she said.

"Yes, a very old friend," I answered.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you this," She said. "Sally had been working part time the last few years because she was sick. She died five weeks ago."

Before I could hang up, she said, "Wait a minute, is your name Wayne?"

"Yes." I answered.

"Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down in case you called. Let me read it to you."

The note said, "Tell him there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean." I thanked her and hung up. I knew what Sally meant. Never underestimate the impression you may make on others....

## Thank you for your Support

We hope you might contribute to a very worthy RCAF cause. The mandate of the RCAF Association Trust Fund is to inform new generations of Canadians about the importance of their country's air force. The tremendous accomplishments of and valour demonstrated by strategic bombing campaign veterans is but one of those air force missions about which we choose to inform Canadians. Earlier this year, your association was approached by the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Minister of National Defence. The Canadian government needed our help; our ability to connect to bomber command veterans was important to the government's efforts to send a contingent of 25 bomber command veterans to England, for the unveiling of the Bomber Command Memorial by our patron Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, on 28 June 2012. We were so successful that we helped raise to 42 the number of veterans that eventually traveled to England. Wings like 408-437 (Toronto), 428 (Peterborough), 403 (Sarnia), 410 (Ottawa), 600 (Regina), 441 (Barrie), 302 (Quebec City), 394 (Montreal), 783 (Calgary) and 801 (Vancouver) all helped to identify veterans eligible for the journey. Your association succeeded, and hundreds of bomber command veterans throughout Canada are grateful. Now, however, the new memorial in London, England - dedicated to the 55,573 men who never came home, including 10,000 Canadians - is in serious need of financial support. Another £500,000 is needed for maintenance and upkeep of the memorial. To help raise funds a set of very special, signed prints of the Lancaster bomber and one of the Tornado aircraft that flew overhead the 28 June ceremony, have been commissioned for sale. Please give your serious consideration to [viewing this link](#) to learn more about the prints and the memorial itself. Perhaps there is a bomber command veteran in your Wing or your community who would appreciate this gesture, or might even like receiving a very special Lancaster bomber print. Thank you.

[To see many of our Canadian bomber command veterans at the Memorial unveiling, visit this web-site for the official photograph presentations.](#)

Dean C. Black, CD, CAE, Secretary, for Grant E. "Ted" Mahood, Chairman, RCAF Association Trust Fund Board of Trustees RCAF Association Trust Fund, PO Box 2460 Stn D, Ottawa, ON, K1P 5W6



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Michael Welch and his family 'Hanging Out' at Thanksgiving towering over Toronto on his 91st birthday and showing how family ties are important. All for one and one for all???

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**PAST PRESIDENTS**

**JACK CLARKE (deceased) BOB GURNEY REN HENDERSON MIKE LEWIS (deceased) GRANT MCRAE KEN FULTON (deceased) GEORGE GEORGAS (deceased) JACK CAHAN JACK LUMLEY JOHN KING MORT LIGHTSTONE JIM MCGUFFIN**



2012 FESTIVE LUNCHEON FRIDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2012  
REGISTRATION FORM

I /WE WILL ATTEND THE AIRCREW ASSOCIATION FESTIVE LUNCHEON TO BE HELD AT BAYVIEW GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB 25 Fairway Heights Drive • Thornhill, 905 889 4833.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GUEST \_\_\_\_\_

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

I/WE WISH TO BE SEATED WITH \_\_\_\_\_

BRING THIS COMPLETED REGISTRATION AND YOUR CHEQUE PAYABLE TO "AIRCREW ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO" IN THE AMOUNT OF \$55.00 PER PERSON TO THE NOVEMBER 10, 2012 MEETING.

IF YOU ARE NOT ATTENDING THE MEETING AND STILL DESIRE TO ATTEND THE LUNCHEON **MAIL YOUR CHEQUE TO ARRIVE BEFORE 8th NOVEMBER TO:**

**CHUCK CASSON, 24 HERNSHAW CRES, TORONTO, ON M9C 3M4**