

APRIL
2020



429 (Georgina) Wing
Royal Canadian Air Force Association

Pefferlaw Lion's Hall
Pete's Lane
Pefferlaw, Ontario

TAKE OFF



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Chair's Message

..... “ Off the Cuffe ”

Hello Everyone,

The month of March certainly has been full of surprises for all. I hope this finds all of you in good health and surviving the quarantine, social distancing, staying home and doing what we all have been told to do. I don't personally know anyone who has come down the this Covid-19 and hope I don't hear of anyone. I have long time friends and relatives who are having very serious issues just now and I haven't been able to visit any of them. With the latest updates news that the schools will be closed for another month if not more, parades, conferences, etc. cancelled, I think it will be awhile before our lives get back to what we would like.

If anyone has any questions or concerns, please feel free to phone or e-mail me at anytime.

With all of this happening, I wish everyone a Happy, Healthy, Sacred Easter. Keep well.

*God found some of the most
Beautiful Angels
And made them Nurses.*

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Ann





*** **W I N G N E W S** ***

Unfortunately the March meeting/excursion had to be cancelled.

The Central Region Meeting scheduled for March 21 was cancelled.

The Ontario Group AGM scheduled for May has been cancelled.

The BGM scheduled for October has been postponed.

Our Anniversary & Awards Dinner set for Sunday, April 28th also has been CANCELLED.

All further Wing Meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Hopefully, by September we will be able to start again.

MEMBERSHIP: That time is coming upon us to renew our membership for another year. Please send your money to **Vern Conklin** as soon as possible,

**10 Antiquary Rd.,
Kirkfield, Ont. K0M 2B0**

Single: - \$75.00

Dual: - \$100.00

“If you have a glass of wine in each hand, you can’t accidentally touch your face.”

“Someday we will look back on this moment and it will forever remind us to never take the little things for granted. It will remind us to hug with all our hearts, to pause to appreciate holding someone’s hand and to live in the moments that we are surrounded by others.”



On the next few pages are the copies from a letter from the son of Lt. J.A. Hawtin of tales of his time as a POW.

Three crew members did not survive:



- Pilot D. Beattie
- Pilot R.E. Hart
- Radio Operator S.B. Hawley

They are buried in the cemetery at Oud-Avereest

- Dad was held in jail in Balkbrug for one night
- The next morning, he was put in a car (as an officer, vs NCO's who were transported in a truck)
- When getting into the car, a crowd of townsfolk had gathered on the side of the road – Dad made a "V" sign with his fingers against his cheek, so that the townsfolk could see, but not the Germans
- He was taken to Amsterdam, then to Frankfurt for interrogation, and then to Germany
- He arrived at Stalag Luft III on May 20, 1943

Eyewitness Account - Jan Nijensikkens:

- He was 10 years old in 1943
- He was awakened by a dogfight. He went up on the roof of his house and watched the plane veer and spiral out of control, and crash
- His father was the first on the scene, as he was a firefighter
- "My mother said to me – "never forget that there are people in there who gave their lives for our freedom."
- The residents of Balkbrug were/are extremely grateful – that the pilot Beattie stayed in the plane and kept some control so that the plane did not crash in the town (landed about a km outside the village) and, he also missed a cluster of farm homes and buildings by about 50m. If he had bailed out, there would no doubt have been civilian casualties

Camp Life

- Camp was run by the POW's, much like an army base, with daily appels, etc
- Guards didn't care who slept where, and had no issues with Jews, Blacks, etc
- POW Officers were paid monthly, based on a German convention. Coupons were used as money and were increased according to rank. Used to purchase/trade for items ("Foodacco" – condensed milk = 100, egg powder = 50)
- 10 or 12 POW's were allowed to go to town with two guards, for a beer. Later, just used as therapy – just those suffering from depression, etc, were allowed this trip. Stopped altogether after the Great Escape
- POW's Worst Enemies were Cold, Hunger, Boredom
- POW's did things to get sent to the cooler - for peace, privacy and personal time (14 days – allowed to take a book, pillow & blanket)
- Boredom led to depression (Wire Sick), although there were only 6 or 7 funerals in Stalag Luft III
- German food rations were the same for POW's and Guards (soup and bread). That's why the guards were easily bribed with Red Cross items.
- Guards were bribed for tools, documents, & information. If a hut was to be searched, the POW's would know beforehand and were able to prepare.
- Red Cross parcels – one per week. They were stored in a grainery near the train station. An NCO was allowed to go each day, with a cart, to pick up the parcels
- Camps were visited by the Swiss (Protecting Power) to ensure that the Geneva Convention was being upheld
- A YMCA office was in Berlin until 1943, then moved to Sagan (they provided sports equipment, musical instruments, etc)
- Red Cross bulletins were sent to families
- Main Post Office was in Sagan for all 7 Luft camps – censored all incoming and outgoing mail. Clothing sent from home could be underwear only – no civilian clothes
- Officer POW's were not allowed to work, therefore they focused on sports, theatre, music, reading, escape efforts, etc to stay physically and mentally active
- A 300-seat theatre was in each compound. Costumes were rented from other theatres. The theatre also contained a chapel, library, & lecture room

Escapes / The Great Escape

- Stalag Luft III was billed as being "escape proof" and was a training facility for the Germans. However, most Guards were older or unfit for battle units
- 100 tunnels were discovered by the Germans in Stalag Luft III - found, fake, or abandoned
- Dick was abandoned due to: Tom being discovered, Dick would be longer, and, due to trees being cut down for the new West Compound
- The Great Escape
 - Curator found a reference to it being named "Operation 200"
 - Steve McQueen – he was not a star in the film, but due to his ego, he forced the director to put in the motorcycle escape scene
 - Delousing – if lice were found, POW's were taken to another compound for delousing. Two POW's, dressed as German guards, went through the main gates and escaped. They went to an airfield to fly to Sweden. Hence the scene in the film about the stolen plane.
 - July 4th festivities in film – actually happened
 - March 24, 1944 – The Great Escape - 76 escaped + 4 taken from tunnel = 80 attempted escapees



ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

MISSION STATEMENT

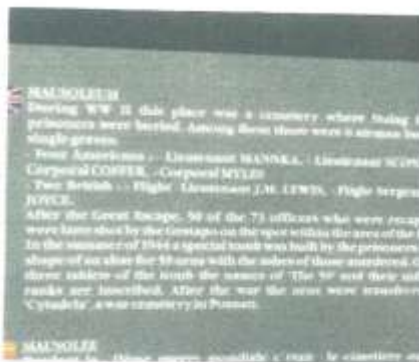
The Royal Canadian Air Force Association is a not-for-profit community service organization composed of aviation minded members, established to remind Canadians of their country's aeronautical tradition and history, to support Canada's Air Force, Royal Canadian Air Cadets and to support and encourage civil aviation.



659 Brock Air Cadet Squadron

***Meet every Thursday evening 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Pefferlaw Lion's Hall, Pefferlaw, Ont.***

Commanding Officer – Capt. Larry Umphrey



Forced March or Long March

- First March was January 28 – February 4, 1945. Stalag Luft III to Tarmstedt (Marlag und Milag Nord - a naval POW camp)
- Second March was April 10 – April 28, 1945.
- Several different routes were taken by the guards and POW's, as the Germans had no plan – just trying to keep ahead of the advancing Russians
- Dad – by foot to Spremberg train station (100 km); then by train/cattle cars to Tarmstedt; then to Hamburg. Liberated May 2, 1945

Miscellaneous information

- Stalin didn't sign the Geneva Convention, so Soviet POW's were treated very badly – almost like slave labour - no huts (tents only), no food. Russia considered their POW's as cowards and traitors; therefore, all Russian POW's were killed by fellow Russians at the end of the war.
- German prisoners were held in Stalag Luft III at the end of the war, until the Fall of 1945, then were moved to Russia.
- Stalag Luft III was dismantled after the war – the bricks and wood were sold and used to rebuild homes & towns. The site was used as a training field until the early '90's
- The site is still the property of the Polish Army and the National Forest
- Zagan – now is the biggest tank and training base in Poland. NATO forces train here too.