

Richard J. Trevithick, 1938



Wing Mate

Newsletter of 408-437 Wing

May 2020

FAIRY

"BATTLE"

Royal Canadian Air Force Association of Canada

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION of CANADA MISSION STATEMENT

The Air Force Association of Canada is a national aerospace and community service organization whose aim is to commemorate the noble achievements of the men and women who have served as members of Canada's Air Force since its inception, advocate for a proficient and well equipped Air Force and, support the Royal Canadian Air Cadets.

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Sick and Visiting

Be sure to advise Barbara Newman, Fellowship Chair, if you are aware of a Wing member who is ill or in distressed circumstances.

Barbara can be reached at 416-223-7840.

Events Schedule 2020

May 11..... Meeting:, speaker John Wreglesworth
"Avro Arrow"

June 8..... Meeting with speaker Cécile
Thompson "Ancestry"

July 19..... BBQ @ AFOM

Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of the
month at Branch 527, RCL, 948 Sheppard Ave. ,
1 block east of the Allan

To be rescheduled

MAY Happy Birthday!

Kathleen Parker..... May 12th

Nick Czernkovich..... May 12th

Paul Hayes..... May 28th

Evelyn Skalozub..... May 29th



President's Report



Dear Members,

I certainly hope that all of us are doing well during this Wuhan virus predicament we find ourselves in, as we head into the second month of the lockdown. I have not heard otherwise. If you'd like to send a message to other members I will forward it. We all know this will end at some point and life will return to normal. When? At some point, I think sooner than later, we just have to have patience and deal with one day or week at a time...and follow the carrot on the end of the stick.

I'm really annoyed with the constant barrage on TV about, *'We're stronger together'*, *'Toronto Strong'*, *'Ontario Strong'* and *'We're here for you'* so on. We're not children. *'Just give me the facts.'* Give us the active number of cases daily or weekly then we can judge. Anyone who served in the military will understand that statement. Considering the wildly inaccurate predictions of last month. And that is my tirade.

Sometime early in May I will be mailing out the ballots for the annual Wing Executive elections. Please return it. Ever the optimist, I'm still hoping that the BBQ in July is still a go. Stop laughing; I know it's a pipe dream.

Funny thing about this 'social isolation' thing — in some ways it's not as onerous as one would think. At first it's hard to come to an almost full stop, as we are all conditioned to keep moving. To be doing something to be constantly occupied with something. This is guilt free relaxation if you have the right mindset.

First sign of real hope things on the Mend...while I was shopping the other day cauliflower was on sale for \$1.99 and there was no one in that aisle. As I headed that way a clerk informed me that I was going the wrong way in the aisle and there was more near the refrigerated section. Confusion. I never did understand what suddenly happened to all the TP. Now I know. It's along side all the PPE's in a warehouse in Wuhan that our government is no doubt hoarding for a real emergency.

I certainly hope that the closings will be lifted at least temporarily so my barber can be back in business. I'm starting to look like Boris Johnston.

Today I went to visit my dad at the cemetery. He is a permanent resident there. I suppose one could call it the ultimate retirement home. Imagine my surprise when the gates were closed in the middle of the day. The sign read in part *"Due to physical distancing restrictions necessary to slow the spread of Covid-19, we regrettably must close our gates indefinitely"*. I always felt his neighbours are just a little too close. I should call and demand the mandated 2-meter distancing.

As we go into the third month of monastic life, allow me to leave you with this little ditty ripped-off from an Elton John song

*"Don't you know I'm still standing better than I ever did
Looking like a true survivor, feeling like a little kid
I'm still standing after all this time
Picking up the pieces of my life...."*

You may hum this while waiting in line forever at the LCBO.

Nick Czernkovich



Veteran and Modern-Day Hero



Watch this video about the man that you have seen in the media: Click



Second World War vet raises millions for the U.K.'s NHS.url



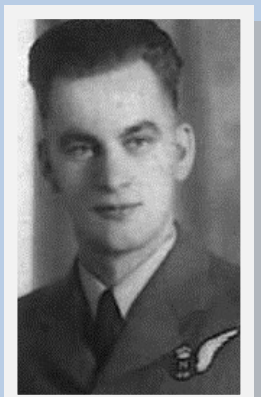
Helmet Returns After 70 Years

Lapsing in and out of consciousness as his parachute drifted downwards, airman Ed Beaton miraculously survived the crash of his Halifax bomber over France in the Second World War.

Seven decades later, fate delivered another surprise for the Regina man's family. The helmet he likely wore when the plane was shot down, claiming five of the seven-man crew, has also come home. The helmet journeyed from France to Ottawa, where Beaton's son Gerald, taking a flight from Regina, went to pick it up recently and bring it back home.

"The last 10 to 15 years, I'd always been interested in the story (of the crash), and haven't really been able to get much direct information," he says. "To me this was another piece in the puzzle that came right out of the blue."

What Gerald knows of the Bomber's crash comes largely from a letter his father once wrote to a historian in France. Beaton, himself, spoke very little about the war.



Ed Beaton

The only thing I recall him telling me was talking about his time in Stalag III, the prison camp ... He was always cold and he was always hungry," says Gerald.

The family always knew "there was some bad things that happened, particularly right after he was captured."

How Beaton ended up in the notorious Stalag Luft III — immortalized in the movie *The Great Escape* — begins with the crash. Moose-Jaw born, university-educated Beaton enlisted in 1943, joining 427 Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force. On June 13, 1944, his crew, piloted by Robert Pearson, was tasked with bombing the Arras railway marshalling yards.



"Once we crossed over the French coastline, it seemed to me that there was greater than usual defensive activity," Beaton recalled in his typed letter some 40 years later for the historian who was writing a book.

The Halifax Bomber was caught by searchlights. Pearson, a skilled pilot and instructor, initially managed to evade the lights. "But they kept catching us again, each time with a greater number of searchlights concentrating on us."

Like a hammer hitting the aircraft, Beaton heard a quick "bang-bang-bang," he wrote.

"The aircraft lurched, and at the same time, the pilot called over the intercom 'bail out, bail out.'"

The navigator's table, where Beaton sat, was directly over the front escape hatch in the floor. His job was to remove the door and move it out of the way, which Beaton did. Then, he jumped.

His next memory is of floating mid-air with his parachute. He could see what he suspected was the burning aircraft exploding — but no other parachutes. Beaton hit the ground and again passed out.

"I had no way of knowing how many other crew members, if any, had got out."

“Wounded and alone, the 25-year-old walked in stocking feet — his boots having been lost when he jumped — until he saw the lights of a home, knocked and loudly whispered “RAF.”

They helped briefly, but warned there were Germans in the area and it wasn't safe. He set off walking again, lying hurt in a grain field where he was found by some young farmers. A number of villagers, some likely part of the French Resistance, would help over the next few days. Beaton was given false identity papers, civilian clothes, and a quick French lesson. He and another British flier, not from his plane, tried to walk to Allied territory.



Their near non-existent French language skills proved their undoing. The Gestapo stopped them within a day's travel.

“So goes la guerre,” Beaton wrote good-naturedly so many years later.

He was interrogated, jailed and shipped off to Stalag Luft III, southeast of Berlin, mere months after the mass prisoner escape that ended in the executions of 50 recaptured POWs. Beaton would later learn the only other survivor of the crash was a Brit, who successfully made it back. The five others — Pearson, Laird Cartwright, Edward Dubeau, Edward Roy Duffin, and Gordon Parsons — were buried in a military cemetery at Foncquevillers, France. In time, villagers commemorated the deceased flight crew — the only Second World War soldiers in a cemetery filled with those who fought in the First World War — with a cairn and a memorial fashioned from a piece of the crashed bomber's engine.

Beaton somehow also survived Stalag Luft III and the forced marches until he was liberated at the end of the war. He settled in Regina, married his wife Sheila in 1947, raised a family of five, and became a long-time civil servant in the Saskatchewan government. On occasion, the quiet, academic with a passion for books and learning, penned a few Op-Ed pieces for the Regina Leader-Post on an array of topics, including elections, inflation and frugality.

Based on all the information we have and all the evidence we have, I think we can say beyond a reasonable doubt it's dad's.

He died in 2003 at the age of 84, almost 60 years after cheating fate over the skies of France.

Last year, a Toronto Star reporter called the Beaton family as she tried to piece together a story about the crash and a Second World War airman's helmet. Gerald explained how it had belonged to Henri Lemaire, a member of the French Resistance who died in 1996. That man's son, Dominique, went on a hunt for the rightful owner, knowing from his father that it belonged to one of the men in that 1944 plane crash.

The helmet has some faded lettering — an “E” and “A” and “N” — that initially led to speculation it belonged to Pearson. But the discovery of another “N,” likely for navigator, above the other letters and their spacing suggested it more likely belonged to Beaton.

“I don't think we'll ever know with 100 per cent certainty,” says Gerald. “But based on all the information we have and all the evidence we have, I think we can say beyond a reasonable doubt it's dad's.”

Dominique Lemaire passed the helmet on to Gilles Prilaux, a French archeologist who had a speaking engagement at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa on Jan. 23. That's where it was handed off to Gerald.

From Beaton's letter and Gerald's recollection, his father was always very grateful to the French people who assisted him, and he visited some of them when he travelled to France years later.

"It was always clear to me that they were helping me at great risk to themselves," Beaton once wrote.

Today, the son of that RCAF airman is equally thankful to the son of a French Resistance fighter.

Gerald and his siblings plan to present the helmet to their mother. □

Source: National Post, March 21/20

Click on this icon to view a
video
about a Fairey Battle recon-
struction.



FaireyBattle.mp4

My husband and I have decided
we don't want children. It will
be tough telling them at dinner
tonight.



JEWISH MOTHER

The year is 2024 and the United States has elected the first woman as well as the first Jewish president, Susan Goldstein.

She calls up her mother a few weeks after Election Day and says, "So, Mom, I assume you'll be coming to my inauguration?"

"I don't think so. It's a ten-hour drive, your father isn't as young as he used to be, and my arthritis is acting up again."

"Don't worry about it, Mom, I'll send Air Force One to pick you up and take you home. And a limousine will pick you up at your door."

"I don't know. Everybody will be so fancy-schmantzy; what on earth would I wear?"

Susan replies, "I'll make sure you have a wonderful gown, custom-made by the best designer in New York."

"Honey," Mom complains, "you know I can't eat those rich foods you and your friends like to eat."

The President-to-be responds, "Don't worry Mom. The entire affair is going to be handled by the best caterer in New York; kosher all the way. Mom, I really want you to come."

So Mom reluctantly agrees and on January 20, 2025, Susan Goldstein is being sworn in as President of the United States. In the front row sits the new President's mother, who leans over to a Senator sitting next to her and says, "You see that woman over there with her hand on the Torah, becoming President of the United States?"

The Senator whispers back, "Yes, I do."

Mom says proudly, "Her brother is a doctor."



The Fairey Battle

The prototype Fairey Day Bomber, as it was then known, was designed by Marcel Lobelle and first flew in 1937. Provision for a radio operator/air gunner was made later, to man a Lewis or Vickers 'K' dorsal machine-gun. The Battle had accommodation for a crew of three comprising pilot, bomb-aimer/observer, and radio operator/gunner. The first production aircraft was built, like the prototype, at Hayes and flew from the Great West Aerodrome (now part of Heathrow Airport), on 14 April 1937. In performance trials it achieved 243 mph at 16,200 feet. A range of 1,050 miles was flown with maximum bomb load.

The remainder of the first production run of 136 a/c had the 1,030 hp Merlin I engine.



The Air Ministry pointed out some limitations which spelled the Battle's unsuitability in the expected war against the re-emerging German forces. However, due to the pressure for a rapid production of the Battle to support the front-line combat aircraft strength of the RAF against the emerging Luftwaffe, the RAF embarked on a pre war expansion program with the production of the Battle being a priority. A total of 2,185 Battles were built by Fairey and Austin Motor Company from 1937 to 1940.

By the time the Battle had entered service, its features had been rendered entirely obsolete by the fast advancement in aircraft technology at the time. Its armament proved desperately inadequate, and it lacked other modern defensive features such as an armoured cockpit and self-sealing fuel tanks.

In 1940 the Battle, although obsolete, was retained on the front-lines due to the unavailability of replacements. They were deployed during the Phoney War to France, and during that period, the Fairey Battle, through gunner Sgt. F. Letchard, scored the RAF's first aerial combat victory after downing a German Messerschmitt Bf 109. This was likely due more to luck than anything, as the Battle was no match for the Luftwaffe fighters which were about 100 mph faster. Out of the three engagements that occurred the same day, the Battles lost two.

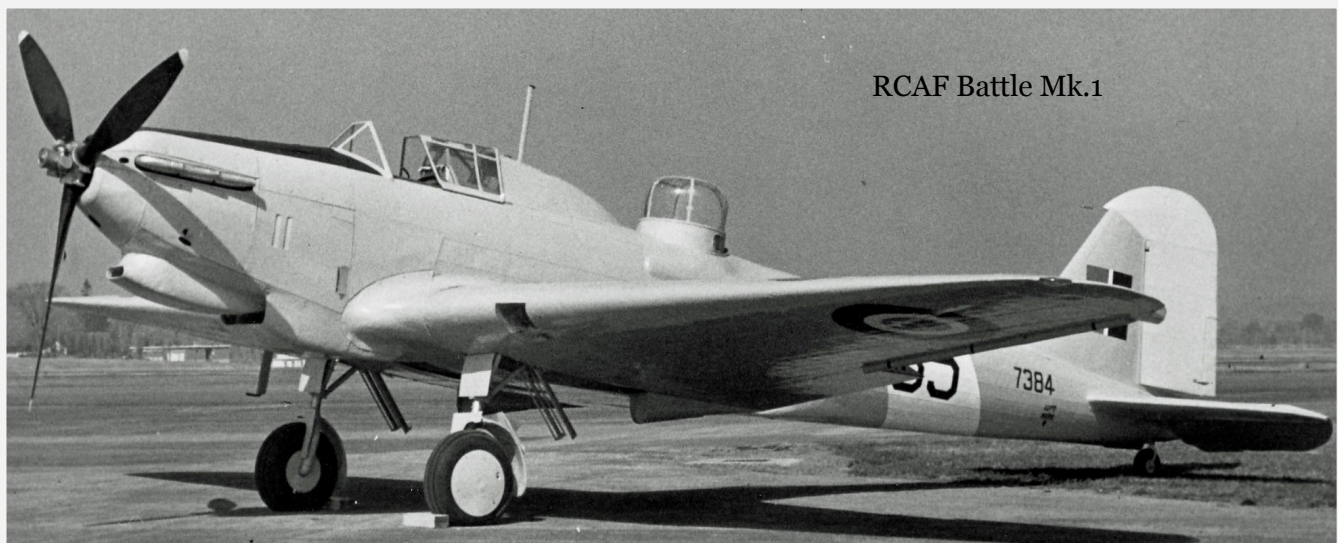
The following year, on May 1940, the Battles showed their flaws, suffering immense losses within a short time. 60 out of 118 Battles were lost within four days on four different occasions.

It was not long before the remaining Battles were ousted from the RAF. The squadrons were then re-equipped with the Vickers Wellington.

The Fairey Battle was relegated to other minor functions within the RAF and RCAF, such as target tugs, gunnery training, as well as flight and ground crew training. □

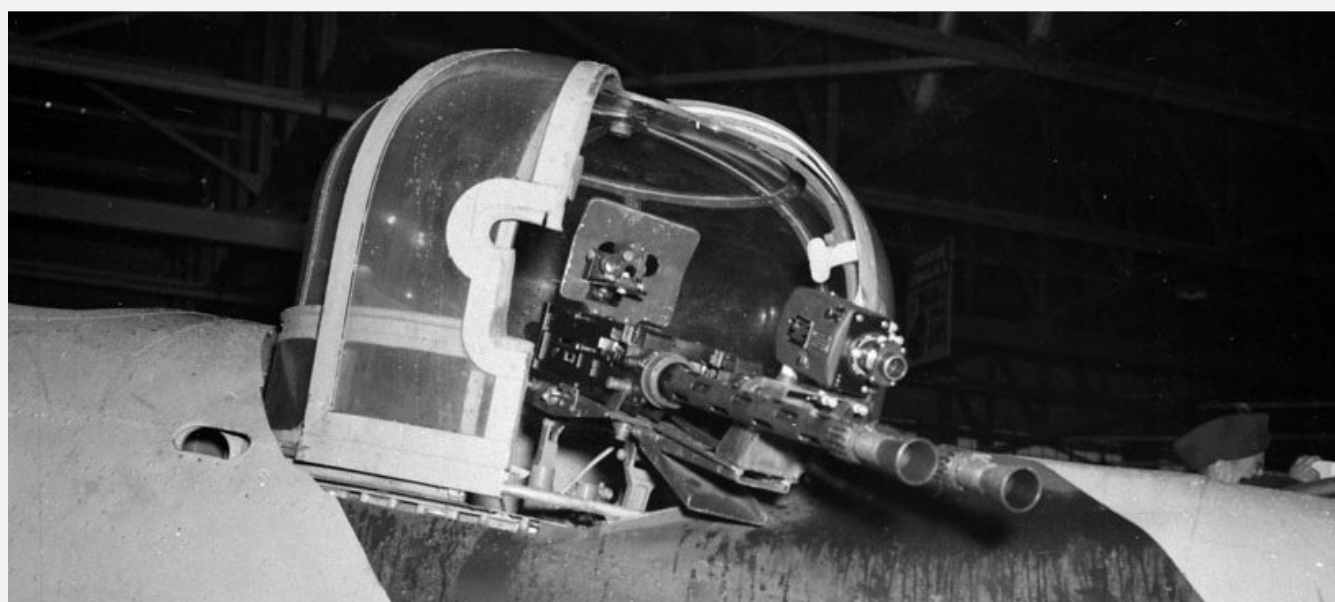


RCAF Battle Mk.1



RCAF Battle Mk.1

Battle Mk II T, RCAF, with Cyclone radial engine & gun turret



Lewis Gunner, Mk. I Battle



Airline Pilots Wanted!

OTTAWA — The Royal Canadian Air Force is hoping to address a critical shortage of experienced pilots by scooping up some of the hundreds of commercial pilots whose jobs have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

Commercial carriers across Canada furloughed hundreds of pilots, technicians and other staff last month as the airline industry struggled with plummeting demand due to travel restrictions and other fallout from the global pandemic.

Airlines such as Air Canada and WestJet have since been able to rehire the majority of their employees with help from federal wage subsidies, but there remains great uncertainty around when staff will actually return to work as most flights remain grounded.

That is where the military wants to make the most of a bad situation.

Even before COVID-19, the Air Force had been reaching out to former military pilots who had left for commercial gigs in recent years in the hopes of enticing them back into uniform as it faced a shortage of more than 200 experienced aviators.

The shortfall, which saw Air Force commanders walking a delicate line between keeping enough seasoned aviators available to train new recruits and lead missions in the air, coincided with significant growth in the global commercial airline sector.

Now, at a time when the commercial airline industry is facing uncertainty and disarray, the Air Force hopes that by highlighting the stability that comes with a career in the military, more former military pilots will decide to re-enrol.

The decision by airlines to hire staff doesn't help that effort, but Air Force spokesman Lt.-Col. Steve Neta said early indications have been encouraging as 26 former pilots have reached out in recent weeks to see about re-enrolling. Several have started formal applications.

"It's certainly encouraging to see former skilled RCAF members get in contact with our Air Force Intake and

Liaison Team," Neta said. "Each experienced person that we can bring back will add value as we continue our efforts to strengthen the depth of experience across the RCAF."

The federal auditor general first reported in late 2018 that the military didn't have enough pilots and mechanics to fly and maintain Canada's CF-18 fighter jets. The Air Force at the time was short 275 pilots



and needed more mechanics, sensor operators and other trained personnel.

Efforts had since been made to better retain experienced personnel, particularly by better supporting military families, tapping reservists to help with basic maintenance work and adjusting some positions to keep pilots in the air rather than flying desks.

The military has also been working on a contract for a new training program that will let the Air Force increase the number of new pilots trained in a given year when necessary. The current program allows only a fixed number.

It will be several months before the Air Force will see actual re-enrolments from the latest efforts, said Neta, as those interested must go through a screening process to ensure they still meet the required standards to serve.

"Nonetheless, the RCAF is committed to facilitating this process to further strengthen our numbers of skilled and experienced personnel." □

From Cécile Thompson Re: Cadets

In addition to direction delivered at refs D to H, Comd Natl CJCR Sp Gp has made the decision to cancel all in-person activities related to the Cadet and JCR programs through to 31 Aug 20. This includes, but is not limited to local training, corps and squadron trips, cadet summer training and activities, in-person training for Cadet Instructors Cadre officers, and, in coordination with the Canadian Army, the JCR enhanced training sessions.

By now many of you will have seen video or text updates from Brigadier General Cochrane, regarding the suspension of all in-person Cadet Activities until August 31, 2020. Decisions such as these are not taken lightly, and the OPC supports our DND partners in taking actions to ensure the safety of everyone affiliated with the program, as well as all Canadians.

In the coming days, weeks and months, OPC will continue to work alongside Lieutenant Colonel Barry Leonard and the team at RCSU-Central to support Squadrons and SSCs, and to plan for the return of Cadet in-person activities.

This week the OPC confirmed a subsequent delay for the 2020 Cash, Flight and Cars Lottery draw; the draw will now take place on July 16, 2020.

Please take note that [a full video](#) of the announcement can be viewed on the Cadets Canada YouTube Channel.

Sent on behalf of BGen D.B. Cochrane, Comd Natl CJCR Sp Gp // Envoyé au nom du Bgén D.B. Cochrane, Cmdt Gp S Nat CRJC



Unloading 250 pound bombs , France, 1940



RAF crews walk to their Battles, France 1940



Sadly for the crews, this was the end of so many of the Battles sent to France in 1939-1940. Thousands of RAF and RCAF men were trained on the Battle, whether they were air crew or ground crew, including my father at St. Thomas, Ontario, in 1940-41 before his being assigned to his squadron.



Low level attack by a Battle on a horse-drawn German column, France, 1940



Click on the icon to see a video that is reminiscent of the Berlin Airlift 1948-49, with an April 2020 twist.



Berlin TP Drop.mp4



Click on this icon to see “home” film footage of an American reconnaissance pilot who flew a PRU-blue Spitfire in WW II. Very interesting, especially for the pilot who viewed it for the first time many years later, as a veteran and senior citizen. (PRU=photo reconnaissance unit)



recon blue spit.mp4



The Spitfire was well-suited to reconnaissance as it was fast and handled well at high altitudes.

RCAF Purchase Prompted by COVID-19

The Canadian Forces is hoping to purchase what it is calling an aeromedical bio-containment evacuation system that can be outfitted on its C-17 or C-130J aircraft. The equipment, also known as ABES, will be capable of transporting highly infectious disease patients on the aircraft. The Royal Canadian Air Force is looking to have these delivered to 8 Wing Trenton, Ontario by Oct. 31, 2020, said Department of National Defence spokesman Dan LeBouthillier.

“This project is in support of federal efforts to assist civil authorities and non-governmental partners in responding to major international and domestic emergencies,” he explained. “As required, this acquisition will provide the whole of government approach with additional tools to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.”



He noted the Canadian military already has interim capabilities in this area as the RCAF can transport a patient with a highly infectious disease in a specialized isolation unit by aircraft.

“The ABES will enhance our ability to move more patients much more efficiently over a longer distance,” he noted.

The ABES must be able to accommodate a minimum of four patients, according to the industry notice the federal government put online. The RCAF is also interested in acquiring additional isolation units to supplement those that will be available through the ABES. The units will be able to be transported by the majority of RCAF aircraft and will consist of individual, hard-shell, durable isolation units that can be re-used by the Canadian military as well as lightweight, single-use isolation units. □

Postmedia Network Inc., 2020