

Time Capsule

October 2021

The Golden Centennaires



The year 1967, what Pierre Berton termed “ the last good year “, was a year like no other in Canada's 100 years. Every Canadian from school kid to senior participated in the celebration. The Canadian military was no exception.

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) assembled personnel from the three branches of the service and formed the Military Tattoo which travelled across the country, giving a spectacular show of pomp and ceremony depicting Canada's military heritage.

In addition to the CAF contribution, the Royal Canadian Airforce (RCAF) stood up the Golden Centennaires in 1967 an aerobatic display team in.

The Golden Centennaires had been preceded by the Golden Hawks display team noted for their distinctive gold paint scheme and flying the F-86 Sabre jet during the 1960's which was disbanded due to cuts in the defence budget.

The Golden Centennaires consisted of an eight-plane formation commanded by Wing Commander O.B. Philip, C.M.,DFC.CD. that flew the CT-114 Tutor aircraft, it featured a six-plane formation alternating with two solo aircraft. The CT-Tutor sported a blue and gold paint scheme along with the highly visible centennial symbol.

The team travelled across the country performing 103 shows including the opening and closing of Expo 67 in Montreal, seven shows in the United States, and believe it or not two shows in the Bahamas.

Accompanying the Golden Centennaires were an Avro 504, a CF-104 Starfighter, and a CF-101 Voodoo, all these aircraft performed at the airshows and really brought Canada's Airforce to the stage.

The teams makeup also included a highly trained ground crew who were responsible for maintaining all the aircraft while on their cross-country tour.

The team was disbanded after the last show of the season but the Tutors were used to form the Snowbirds a few years later thanks to the efforts of Wing Commander O.B. Philip and to this day they soar to entertain Canadians every year.

Wing Commander O.B. Philip 1923- 1995 was instrumental in the formation of the Snowbirds, made a member of the Order of Canada in October 1992 and was inducted into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame in 2015.

Photos courtesy of Raywin Raaflaub, 441RCAFA member.