

RCAF 441 (HURONIA) WING RCAFA GENERAL MEETING – 10 JUNE 2025

On Tuesday June 10, 2025, RCAFA 441 (Huron) Wing held its monthly General Meeting at the Barrie Legion. The meeting was, once again, well attended by members and guests. During the meeting several presentations were made to members of the Wing, including an association Life Membership to Les Ball and the Ontario Group Member of the Year Award to Bill Sergeant. In addition to the regular committee reports, a presentation was made by Jesse Beauchamp, grandson of A.B Thompson, Second World War pilot and POW camp survivor.

Jesse told the audience that in the opening days of the war, his grandfather, Flight Lieutenant Thompson, was flying an Armstrong Whitworth Whitley bomber over Germany when they experienced communications and mechanical failures. The crew had to bail out, and the survivors were captured and taken in as POWs. They were the first RCAF POWs of the war. F/L Thompson spent five years in captivity, ending up at Stalag Luft III. He took part in the famous "Great Escape" – he was the 68th man to come out of the tunnel, but was recaptured and narrowly avoided execution. He was liberated by British troops in May 1945.

RCAF 441 (Huron) Wing of the RCAF Association normally meets on the second Tuesday of each month (except July and August), at 7 p.m., upstairs at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 147, 410 St. Vincent St, Barrie. Air Force past and present members and Air Force enthusiasts are welcome to attend. Our next General Meeting will be on Tuesday September 9.



Wing member Les Ball (left) was presented the plaque to his RCAF Association Life Membership Award by Wing Chair Bill Sergeant, "For outstanding, long and faithful service to the association."



Wing member Ferguson Mobbs (left) was presented an Award of Merit by Wing Chair Bill Sergeant. The citation reads: "Ferguson headed a committee that was created to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the RCAF in Bradford West-Gwillimbury, the week of 10 to 14 June 2024. The daily events required coordinating timing and locations between different organizations, Veterans, the 441 Wing Colour Guard and 441 Wing membership, a flypast of replica RCAF vintage aircraft, a parade and the city of Bradford West-Gwillimbury. Ferguson Mobbs played the lead role, ensuring the success of the week-long event and bring credit and praise to 441 (Huronion) Wing and the RCAF."



Wing member Jean Maurice Pigeon (left) was presented an Award of Merit by Wing Chair Bill Sergeant. The citation reads: "Jean Maurice was a major contributor to the success of the 441 (Huronion) Wing Banner Project created to celebrate the Centennial of the RCAF. Over a period of a year Jean Maurice canvassed for banner nominees, then approached families for permissions, photos and information relating to the nominees. He worked closely with Randy Rice to have booklets and the 40 banners produced, then liaised with Barrie City Staff to have the banners hung and dedicated in City Hall's Rotunda, all within the Centennial year. Jean-Maurice's efforts ensured that this major Centennial project was successfully completed on time."



Wing member Joep Diening (left) was presented his 10 Years' Service pin by Wing Chair Bill Sergeant.



Wing Chair Bill Sergeant (left) was presented the "Ed Walker Memorial Award" for the Ontario Group Member of the Year. Wing member Greg Merrill made the presentation.



A presentation was made by Jesse Beauchamp about his grandfather Flight Lieutenant A.B Thompson, Second World War RCAF pilot and POW camp survivor. He was the first RCAF aircrew to be taken in as POW.



The meeting was well attended by members and guests.



A few days after the General Meeting, on June 13, Wing Vice Chair Walter Capsticks (right) presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Fabricare Cleaning Services in Orillia. The citation reads: "Fabricare Cleaning Services is recognized for their support of 441 (Huron) Wing, and all other Military Veterans in the Barrie area. Annually, in the month of November, Fabricare provides all Veterans with free Dry Cleaning for jackets with permanent markers of military affiliation. Members of 441 (Huron) Wing are grateful and appreciative of this service."