



# *Royal Canadian Air Force Association*

## *RCAF 441 (Huron) Wing Inc.*

### *June 2022 Newsletter*

Vol 6 Edition 3



#### 1. RCAF Association Mission Statement:

The Association is a national not-for-profit aerospace and community- service organization composed of aviation-minded citizens established to remind Canadians of their country's rich aeronautical tradition and history, to support Canada's Air Force, and to support and encourage the civil aviation component within the country.

#### 2. Chairman's Message:

Thank you to the many Wing members who have been actively organized the activities that our members have enjoyed recently, such as the Charter and Awards Dinner, or that have benefitted the less fortunate such the Ukrainian Refugee Assistance Committee (URAC) donation to the three Ukrainian students at Georgian College. More can be read about both of these activities in this Newsletter. Per Ardua Ad Astra.

#### 3. Last Flight:



The Celebration of Life for **Robert George "Bob" Coxon** will be held at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 63 in Collingwood on Sat, September 3, 2022 from 1-3 pm. Bob was a proud member and a past president of RCAF 441 Huronia Wing RCAFA and the Edenvale Classic Aircraft Foundation. He also enjoyed model railroading and was an avid and passionate umpire for local slow pitch and fastball associations. He had a distinguished career in the insurance business and was well known throughout the region. He was a kind man with a great sense of humour. He will be deeply missed.

#### 4. Honours and Awards:

The Wing's Charter and Awards Dinner took place on Friday, 27 May at the Royal Canadian Legion Br #147 Barrie. We had 40 members and their guests our 64th Charter and Awards Dinner on Saturday, 27 May at the Barrie Legion. Our H&A Chair Andrew Galton started the evening off with the presentation of long time membership pins to our members as well as other well-deserved awards. Following a delicious Ukrainian style dinner put on by the Legion Ladies Auxiliary, our guest speaker, Dr. Garry Lee Willard, MD gave a captivating speech about his experiences as a front-line combat surgeon during the Vietnam War as a Red Cross volunteer. Many thanks to Michael O'Shea, Murray Conley, Andrew Galton, Andrea Sloan, Joep Diening, and Wally Capsticks for helping to

make this evening a wonderful success.

The following pictures depict the members who were present to receive their membership pins, Member of the Year award, Awards of Merit, and Certificates of Appreciation. In addition, there are various pictures that were taken that evening as our members and their guests enjoyed themselves.

Honours and Awards Chair Andrew Galton presented the following members with their Long Service Membership Pins:



Lorraine Carney – 5 Years



Sandy and Cooky Ellis – 5 Years



Greg Merrill – 5 Years



Joep Diening – 5 Years



Andrew Galton – 5 Years



Randolph Rice – 5 Years



Steve Wallace – 10 Years



Bill Sergeant – 15 Years



Major Andrea Sloan – 15 Years



Jane Coxon – 20 Years



Ferguson Mobbs – 20 Years



Art Cameron – 25 Years



Normand Marion – 25 Years



Raywin Raaflaub – 60 Years – Seen here with Andrew Galton & MP Adam Chambers

The following membership pin recipients for 2020 and 2021 were unable to attend and will have their pins sent or presented to them at a later date: 10 years — Jim Sproul; 20 years — Carole Hartzell, Jean-Maurice Pigeon, and Joan Kell; 30 years – Les Ball; and 55 years — Donald Daley.

The prestigious “Member of the Year” award was presented by our RCAFA Central Region Director, Brenda Lynn Rice Wilson, to Murray Conley. He was recognized for his creation of 441 Wing’s Colour Guard, which has paraded at the annual Battle of Britain Flag Raising and Remembrance ceremonies, the November 11th wreath laying ceremony at the City of Barrie’s cenotaph and the Stanley Peacock Remembrance ceremony in Orillia. Murray has organized the Wing’s annual Battle of Britain ceremonies in Barrie and liaised with the 16 Wing staff to coordinate this well-attended event. It received coverage from the local CTV News Barrie television station. He also worked with the Edenvale

Classic Aircraft Foundation (ECAAF) where he provided them with RCAF artefacts and arranged their displays, and with the Edenvale Aviation Heritage Foundation (EAHF) where he researched the airport's history and is in the process of constructing a diorama of the aerodrome during the 1940's.



There were four 'Awards of Merit' presented to Wing Members for their notable contributions, which are summarized with their pictures below.



Randolf Rice – Award of Merit for his contributions as the Wing's Veterans Liaison Director, a member of the Wing's Colour Guard, and his support of fellow Wing members with respect to VAC assistance or contributions to the Legion's MSRB.



Normand Marion – Award of Merit for his contributions as the Wing's Public Relations Director, writing up articles about RCAF history, and spearheading a project to have an "Armistice 100" plaque made to add the names of the 23 soldiers to the Coldwater Cenotaph.



Michael O'Shea – Award of Merit for his contributions to the Wing as its Deputy Treasurer, for his annual fund-raising activities, and for increasing Wing morale by designing Wing golf shirts and jackets for members to purchase and wear.



Andrew Galton – Award of Merit for his contributions as the Wing Secretary, a member of Wing Colour Guard, and as the Chair of the Honours & Awards Committee

There were four 'Certificates of Appreciation' presented to Wing Members by H&A Chair Andrew Galton for their significant contributions, which are summarized with their pictures below.



Jane Coxon, Lorraine Carney and Cooky Ellis - Certificate of Appreciation for organizing the ever-popular Wing Christmas Social in Dec 2021. This was the first one to be held in two years due to the Covid pandemic restrictions.



Peter Levedag - Certificate of Appreciation for the outstanding job that he has done at the Wing's Sick and Visiting Officer.



Wing Chair Bill Sergeant thanking the Ladies Auxiliary for the wonderful Ukrainian meal that they served us for dinner.



Wing members enjoying the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Charter and Awards Dinner.



The 441 (Huron) Wing Colour party and Air Cadets from 714 Wasaga Beach Sqn.

5. Wing Fund Raisers:

The winners of the draws for the “**\$100-a-Month Draw**” for 2022 were:

January – Michael O’Shea #242;      April – Peter Shaver #141;  
February – Mark Tobin #237;      May – Robert Rice #109.  
March – Michael O’Shea #265;

6. 441 Wing Makes Generous Donation to Support Ukrainian Students:

The Wing’s “Ukrainian Refugee Assistance Committee (URAC)”, under the Chairmanship of Art Cameron, researched the best way to support Ukrainians who were impacted by the Russian invasion. Our Wing voted to donate funds for a bursary that would pay the tuition of the final semester for three Ukrainian students in the Aviation Management Program at Georgian College. On Tuesday, 31 May 2022, Art Cameron, along with Peter Levedag, Gerry Pepler, Murray Conley, and Bill Sergeant, presented Leslie Palson, the Dean of Georgian’s International Education & Development with the cheque for \$25,970.22. Michael O’Shea had liaised with Christina Luksa, Georgian’s Senior Development Officer for Major Gifts and Sponsor-ships to set up the presentation, which was covered by CTV News Barrie for the 6 o’clock news. The news clip can be viewed by clicking on this link.

<https://barrie.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2454493>



L-R: Peter Levedag, Murray Conley, Committee Chair Art Cameron, Leslie Palson, Bill Sergeant, Christina Luska and Gerry Pepler. (Picture credit: Georgian College Social Media Team).

7. Upcoming Wing Activities:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>
5 June	VE-Day Parade at RCL #147 Barrie with medals	1045 hrs
14 June	714 (Wasaga Beach) Air Cadet Squadron that the annual year-end cadet review ceremony. Location TBC. If you plan to attend, please RSVP with Steve Wallace < <a href="mailto:steve.wallace@rogers.com">steve.wallace@rogers.com</a> >	1845 hrs
14 June	714 (Wasaga Beach) Air Cadet Squadron Change of Command from Capt Serge Pleau to Capt Paul Ardan at the Annual Review.	1845 hrs
14 June	Wing Directors' Meeting – In person at the Legion	1800 hrs
14 June	Wing Members Meeting – In person – Swearing of new Wing Board of Directors members	1900 hrs
18-19 Jun	CFB Borden Armed Forces Day and Air Show	9 – 5 p.m.
23 June	Veterans' Club of Barrie Mixed Dinner at RCL 147	1700 hrs
13 Aug	Edenvale - Gathering of the Classics	All day
20 Aug	The 2022 Warriors' Day Parade at the Canadian National Exhibition in commemoration of its 100th Anniversary	1030 hrs
14 Sept	Wing Directors' Meeting – In person at the Legion	1800 hrs
14 Sept	Wing Members Meeting – In person – Swearing of new Wing Board of Directors members	1900 hrs
13 Oct	Ceremony Honouring AC2 Stanley Peacock at St. James' Anglican Cemetery, Orillia	1100 hrs

8. Volunteers Needed for 441 Wing Booth at the CFB Borden Air Show:

Our Wing has been offered a booth at the CFB Borden Armed Forces Day and Air Show so that we can advertise our Wing, recruit new members and sell some of the RCAF Anniversary lapel pins. Our booth will have a table and two chairs, so we need volunteers to man four x 4-hour shifts during weekend. The booth will be in the Stedman bldg, (A-171). If you are interested in volunteering for a shift during the weekend of 18 – 19 June, you will be given a pass for free admission to the Air Show as well as a voucher for some food. The shifts run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., both days. So far, Raywin Raaflaub and Norm Marion have volunteered to spend some time at the booth. If you would like to volunteer for this, please let Bill Sergeant know either via email or at 705-252-3129. Thank you.

9. RCAF 98th Anniversary Lapel Pins:

Following a well-established Borden tradition, commemorative pins were produced again this year to mark the anniversary of the birth of the Royal Canadian Air Force on April 1st, 1924. The tradition of producing buttons or pins featuring a different theme aircraft each year goes back more than three decades in Borden, “Birthplace of the RCAF.” Today, the tradition is kept alive through the efforts of 441 (Huron) Wing, RCAF Association - Barrie.



As this year marks the 40th anniversary of the CF-18 Hornet being brought into service with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), we are paying tribute to those who flew, maintained, and served on-board this aircraft. Since 1982 the McDonnell Douglas CF-18 Hornet (CAF designation CF-188) was used as multi-role fighter aircraft in support of CAF operations. This included taking part at home in NORAD air sovereignty patrols, and participating in combat operations abroad during the 1991 Gulf War, the Kosovo Air Campaign in the late 1990s, and as part of the Canadian contribution to the international Libyan no-fly zone in 2011. CF-18s were also part of the Canadian contribution to the military intervention against ISIL – Operation Impact.

RCAF 98th Anniversary pins are now for sale at \$5.00 each (+ shipping) through 441 Wing RCAFA. Note that a small selection of previous years' pins is also available. Contact Norm Marion, (705) 686-3941, <norm.marion@amtelecom.net>

10. RCAF 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee - Update:

Members of the Wing's planning committee for the RCAF's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary have been in touch with Maj Justin Jeffries, the OPI for 16 Wing, and with Colonel Maggie Jacula, the national Campaign Manager - RCAF 2024. The ideas that our Wing are looking at for the RCAF centennial are:

1. Official presentation of the 441 Wing's Standard. The old one could be formerly retired and laid up and the current one officially presented to the Wing. This could be done during the lead up to the 100th Anniversary;
2. planting specially bred RCAF tulips at Ad Astral place and in Barrie's Military Heritage Park;
3. production of a '100th Anniversary of the RCAF' pin which could be done in conjunction with the national staff – OPI Norm Marion;
4. a Freedom of the City parade in Barrie done in conjunction with the Battle of Britain parade in 2024. Murray Conley will look be the OPI for the Wing;
5. Conduct special tours of the BBMM Air Annex that highlight 100 years of the RCAF during the 2024 Air Show at CFB Borden; and
6. Write articles for local magazines that generate interest in the 100th Anniversary as well as the 'Birthplace of the RCAF' – Jean Maurice and

Norm Marion were asked to develop a list of topics that we could write articles about;

11. TIME CAPSULE: "The Great Escape" - March 1944: By Randolph Rice

2022 marks the 78th anniversary of "Operation 200" better known as the Great Escape. The operation involved over six hundred allied air personnel and the simultaneous construction of three tunnels Tom, Dick, and Harry. Only Harry was used. The night of March 24/25, 1944, was used for the escape because there was no moon.

Most every boy of my generation saw the 1963 film and was memorized by Steve McQueen's motorcycle escape, not to mention an incredible cast of characters and their hijinks. The actual escape on that cold March evening was true. The film was a combination of fact and fiction. It had two purposes, to bring to light an event that, for the most part, was unknown to the world and to pay tribute to the fifty allied Airman who made the ultimate sacrifice. The actual event also had two purposes, one to enable 200 allied airmen to escape and second to disrupt the German war effort by engaging maximum German resources to track down the escapees.

The leader of the Great Escape was Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, known as "Big X". He had been shot down over France in 1940 and was well known to the Germans, particularly the Gestapo for organizing many escapes. He hated the Nazis with a vengeance and spoke fluent German, which he used to his advantage at every opportunity. He had been recaptured by the Gestapo while making his way through Czechoslovakia in the wake of Reinhardt Heydrich's assassination and its sweep of resistance fighters during the spring of 1942. Upon his arrival at Stalag Luft III, he immediately suspended all escape activities and assumed COMMAND and control by forming one unified escape committee. Why he was not sent to Colditz, a forlorn mountain Castle for dangerous troublesome allied POW' s remains a mystery.

What is little known is that members of the RCAF played significant roles in the Great Escape, for example Flying Officer W.D.J. "Wally" MacCaw, by earning Big X's trust he was appointed security head of Hut 104, where tunnel Harry was used in the escape. Wally, known as Little S, had earned an early position in the escape lineup, however at the last minute he had a premonition and withdrew giving his spot to another Canadian James Wernham, later one of the fifty murdered by the Gestapo.

Another key member of the escape committee was Flight Lieutenant Wally Floody shot down over France while flying a Spitfire on 27 October 1941. With Wally's background as a miner in Sudbury and over 40 tunnels dug in previous camps, Roger appointed him in charge of tunneling operations for the Great Escape. Just weeks before the escape, the Germans got wind something was up and

Wally along with nineteen other POWs were transferred to another camp. He was replaced by digger Robert Ker-Ramsey who took over completion of Harry. In the film, James Garner played the scrounger. In real life Pilot Officer Barry Davidson was the "Scrounger". He specialized in bribing and blackmailing the "Goons" and "Ferrets" as prisoners called the guards and hut searchers. He acquired everything needed for the escape to succeed. Anything from paper and ink to railway time schedules and travel papers even a camera on loan and everything in between. He used the contents of Red Cross parcels to bribe the guards in a calm, controlled way while at the same time making clear the Russian front awaited them if they reported anything.

Constantly under threat of being exposed, the guards were willing participants in the Great Escape.

In the end, Roger Bushell achieved his goal, but the cost was severe. Of the 76 who made it out before the tunnel was discovered, 50 were captured and executed under orders of Hitler and his minions, three were successful and the remainder recaptured and returned to camp. Of the fifty murdered, six were Canadians as follows:

- \*Flying Officer Henry (Hank) Birkland
- \*Flying Officer Gordon Kidder
- \*Flight Lieutenant Patrick Langford
- \*Flight Lieutenant George McGill
- \*Flight Lieutenant James Wernham
- \*Flight Lieutenant George Wiley

The senior Allied Officer in the camp held a parade and the names of the 50 were read out in public in front of the camp staff. The Germans claimed they had been shot while trying to escape.

Today a memorial exists in Sagan, Lower Silesia, in then Germany, on the site of Stalag Luft III (now Żagań, Poland), to honour their memory.

Lest We Forget.

12. 441 (Huron) Wing – Installation of the New Board of Directors:

The last Wing elections took place in May 2020. In 2021, due to the pandemic, the Wing members agreed that the Board of Directors could agree to stay on for a second year since we were not holding 'in person' meetings. Eleven nominations were submitted to the Wing Returning Officer Jane Coxon prior to the May meeting. Since the number of nominations aligns with the number of Board members, there was not requirement to have a vote to elect them. The new Board will be installed at the June 2022 meeting.

13. 82<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain:

The Battle of Britain Flag Raising is planned to take place at Barrie City Hall on Monday, 12 Sept, 2022. We are planning to commemorate the 82<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary

of the Battle of Britain with a parade in downtown Barrie on Sunday, 18 Sept 2022. The ceremony is being organized by Murray Conley and will feature the Wing Colour Guard consisting of Murray, Randy Rice, Les Ball, Andrew Galton, and Wally Capsticks along with participation by military personnel from 16 Wing, the RCL #147 Barrie, and local Cadet organizations.

14. Tentative Approval of Monument in Orillia to Honour Hunter Boatyard, Firefighters, and AC1 Stanley Peacock:

Article from Orillia Matters by Greg McGrath-Goudie, May 10, 2022 7:30 AM

City councillors have given tentative approval to the Orillia Royal Canadian Legion's request to build a monument commemorating the 1943 explosion of a Fairmile boat on the city's shore. At council committee Monday evening, council approved, in principle, the Legion's request for the monument and directed staff — in consultation with the Art in Public Places Committee — to work with the Legion to prepare a budget request.

The Legion's request for funding, as well as staff costs for the project, will still need to be approved in the 2023 capital budget by the next term of council. Orillia Legion president Rick Purcell previously argued the explosion and heroism that ensued were worthy of commemoration for various reasons, as the Fairmiles built by Hunter Boats were used in service through the Second World War, and the explosion marked both the tragic loss of an air cadet and the medal-winning work of the Orillia Fire Department.

On Oct. 13, 1943, Hunter Boats workers discovered that gas was leaking from the Fairmile boat they had been working on. Within minutes, the ensuing explosion killed 16-year-old electrician's assistant and air cadet Stanley Peacock, while also seriously injuring six others.

441 Wing has been asked to be involved with the unveiling ceremony. Anyone who is interested in making a donation to fund the memorial may do so by making a pledge. To do so, contact Michael O'Shea <moshea808@rogers.com>

15. CFB Borden Armed Forces Day and Air Show 2022:

CFB Borden has confirmed that its Canadian Armed Forces Day and Air Show will take place on 18 – 19 June 2022. The open house and air show will include several military and civilian demonstration teams and numerous ground displays. <https://bordenairshow.ca/>

16. Contact Information:

Wing Mailing Address: 401-200 Collier St, Barrie, ON, L4M 1H7

Wing E-Mail Address: [441wing.rcafa@airforce.ca](mailto:441wing.rcafa@airforce.ca)

Telephone: 705-481-1453 (messages only)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/441Wing/>

Website: <https://www.rcaf441wing.com/>

17. 441 Wing Board of Directors (BoD)/ Executive for FY 2020-2022:

POSITION	NAME	PORTFOLIO(S)
Chairman	Bill Sergeant	Newsletter, H&A Committee Member
Deputy Chair	Wally Capsticks	Special Events, H&A Committee Member
Treasurer	Andrea Sloan	Membership Chair / 16 Wing Liaison O
Secretary	Andrew Galton	Honours and Awards Committee Chair
Deputy Treas	Michael O'Shea	Fund Raising/Special Projects
Director	Gerry Pepler	RCAFA Ad Astral Project Board Chair
Director	Art Cameron	RCAFA Ad Astral Project BoD Member
Director	Murray Conley	Director of Ceremonies
Director	Joep Dening	Wing Web Master
Director	Norm Marion	Public Relations / FaceBook
Director	Randy Rice	Veterans Groups Liaison
Wing Padre	Rev Doug Crocker	Wing Padre