

69 YEARS



408 “Goose” Squadron

Association

Newsletter 2009/2010

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Air force, Navy and Army



From the Chairman

The 2009 Newsletter has arrived, but “what” you say, this is already 2010! How can that be? I can answer that real easy. We all went to war and there was nobody left at home. Not really, but close folks! Last year was definitely one the busiest times 408 Sqn has seen in its history. With the manning of the Canadian Helicopter Force Afghanistan and training the next rotation for deployment in late summer 2010, there was absolutely no time to produce and publish the 2009 Newsletter on schedule. When we sat down to finalize the publication, the earthquake in Haiti hit and again priorities within the unit changed dramatically. Oh, I would be remiss if I didn’t throw in our full-scale commitment and support for the Winter Olympics as well! Anyway, enough whining and I hope you all enjoy last year’s Newsletter with wishes of health and happiness for 2010.

An old proverb says that “life is a journey” and I can think of no better sentiment to describe my time with the Canadian Forces. I will leave the Air Force officially this Oct with more than 42 years of service, 18 of which I have spent with 408 Sqn. As “part of the furniture” here, I have seen numerous changes to not only the different aircraft types flown, but also the way the people of all ranks have fulfilled their duties with pride and accomplishment. 408 Sqn has led the entire Air Force with “first-in deployments” in the support of international and domestic operations. Not once has this fine squadron said “no” and we have always accepted and excelled at any tasking set before us. We are known throughout the forces as the vanguard of tactical aviation and will remain so for many years to come.

So it is with sadness I depart from such an honoured and historic organization. I will look back fondly at my tenure with overwhelming pride. My time here is over, however, the journey continues. Since 2001 it has been a privilege to serve you as National Chairman and I wish each and every member of this great 408 “Goose” Squadron Association, Bon Voyage.

For Freedom

Rod Fader
Master Warrant Officer

Squadron Activities

TAKING A GANDER AT WHAT HAPPENED THIS PAST YEAR, 2009

**By Captain Rod Dietzmann
Air Reserve Public Affairs Officer**

It was another action-packed and exciting year for 408 “Goose” Tactical Helicopter Squadron (THS). Whether it was operating in Afghanistan or Canada, day or night flying, supporting troops or proficiency training, connecting with Canadians at air shows or The Calgary Stampede, or ground training, Goose Squadron was extremely active and was able to show its professionalism as it lived through what would become an historical year.

If there was a highlight for 2009 it was 408 THS’ continued efforts in support of Operation ATHENA in Afghanistan. Goose Squadron was the first squadron to deploy in the tactical aviation role, which is known as Canadian Helicopter Force – Afghanistan (CHF-A). The squadron had eight CH-146 Griffon and six CH-147 Chinook helicopters operational by February – only two months after heading out the door to set up operations.



The amount of training, preparation and dedication that was needed for this deployment was duly recognized when CHF-A/1 Wing (the larger tactical helicopter community) received the Billy Bishop Trophy from the Air Force Association of Canada. This trophy is given once per year to recognize outstanding efforts in the Canadian aviation community. This award was well-received by those 408 Squadron members who served overseas and those who supported them from the rear party efforts in Edmonton.

As members redeployed from Afghanistan in May, others were already training in preparation to deploy to Afghanistan in November. All totalled, over 200 Goose Squadron members have served or are currently serving in Afghanistan with several dozen more preparing to deploy again in 2010.

Of course, our role in Afghanistan is to support the ground forces. With that in mind, it was also a busy year exercising with our Army comrades. 408 THS participated in Exercise Maple Guardian at CFB Wainwright last spring. We also took part in Exercises Desert Ram (Suffield), Total Ram (Suffield), Final Drive (Kingston), Desert Gander (a dust-ball flying training exercise in Yuma, Arizona), the Olympic security exercise Spartan Rings (Squamish) and hosted a digital exercise Winged Warrior.

Of course, supporting our good comrades on the ground comes in more ways than during exercises. Whether at home or south of the line, 408 THS was also able to support such tasks as rappelling training, Forward Air Controller training in Fort Sill, advanced first aid training as well as other support roles in Edmonton and across western Canada.

Beyond training, the Squadron was also involved in operations which included VIP transport, assistance to civil authorities and Olympic security preparations. /continued



In order to support the mission in Afghanistan along with domestic operations 408 THS aircrew must continually train and keep proficient.



Much of this is done on a day-to-day basis, but we also took the opportunity to have large-scale training opportunities throughout the year. The training included much ground training – including shooting, first aid and operations briefings. There was also flying training; advanced day and night (Night Vision Goggle) formation

flying, Close Combat Support (CCA) door-gun training and regular door-gun training were included.

A unique opportunity to train in heat and dust came in 408 Squadron's excursion to Yuma, AZ. The U.S. Marine Corps Air Station played



host to crews preparing for the elements of Afghanistan. Day and night flying allowed for CCA and dust training. The heat (at times over 45 degrees

Celsius) also helped simulate the Griffon helicopter's response in these extremities which will be encountered in Afghanistan.

Of course all of this flying training would not be possible without the continued superb efforts by our maintainers, logistic, admin and other support personnel.

The "final frontier" that engulfed maintainers, flight engineers and pilots was training on the Chinook helicopter. With the six Chinook's in Afghanistan, several dozens of members had to be trained to fly and fix this new asset. Most of the training takes place in the U.S.A. and requires even more time away from home by a dedicated few willing to make the switch from the Griffon helicopter.

Although the operational requirements were extremely demanding, there was still time for some members to take part in personal development and once-in-a-lifetime type events. One such event was when two of our female reservists attended the annual NATO Reserve Shooting Competition in Edinburgh, Scotland. Along with a rigorous competition, these two "Geese" were treated to royalty (literally) and an opportunity to meet many other reservists from around the world.

Two Second Lieutenants and our Honorary Colonel, Bart West, also travelled to Holland to take part in the Four Days' March. Much training went into preparing for this 160 kilometre (km) foot march. Everyone had fun and experienced so much in such a short time.



Physical fitness continued to be a top priority. 408 THS members participated in regular physical training including runs, sports and “ruck” marches all in an effort to prepare for the challenging Battle Fitness Test – a 13 km march with full rucksack, rifle and helmet followed by a firemen’s carry and a trench dig.



408 Squadron continued to have a strong showing in the public arena with both air and ground presence. Being able to support community relations events, squadron visits and volunteering in our community is something that makes 408 THS the top-notch unit that it is.

Some of this past year's events included: several members working ground and air displays at The Calgary Stampede, Edmonton's Capital Ex parade, air shows, CF Appreciation Day at the Calgary Stampeders Labour Day football game as well as an Edmonton Eskimos game, serving breakfast at the Kipnes Centre for Veterans. We also hosted several visits by cadets, daycares and scouts. All of this rounded off an active year in our community.

June 24, 2009 marked 408 THS' 68th Anniversary. 408 “Goose” Squadron was not able to celebrate this mark with much pomp and ceremony as so many personnel were either training, on leave or deployed. Nonetheless, *For Freedom!*

With all of this work, some fun is in order. To that effect, 408 Squadron once again had its annual Chiefs versus Indians hockey game, many other seasonal activities prior to Christmas (including the annual children's Christmas party which sees Santa arrive in a Griffon helicopter), a well-attended Family Day and a few other sports and bar-be-que events.

From the air to the ground, from work to play, the 408 THS family enjoyed a year that pushed our unit to a level perhaps not seen since World War Two. This squadron has worked extremely hard and, as you have read, it has accomplished much with the intention to carry on with pride and determination that comes with being a “Goose.”

COMMANDING OFFICER 408 TACTICAL HELICOPTER SQUADRON

Lieutenant Colonel J.D. Smyth, CD

LCol Smyth joined the Canadian Forces in 1989 as an Officer Cadet. He graduated from the Royal Military College of Canada in 1993 with a Bachelor of Engineering and a commission in the rank of Second Lieutenant. Upon completion of pilot training, he received his wings and a promotion to Lieutenant in Dec 1994. Posted to 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in Petawawa, Ontario, he completed his training on the CH135 Twin Huey.

Soon thereafter he deployed to Haiti from Aug 1995 to Mar 1996 as part of the United Nations Mission in Haiti. He was promoted to Captain in 1997 and completed conversion to

the CH146 Griffon helicopter. In 1999, he completed Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College. In August of 2000, he deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina as the Deputy Operations Officer of the Canadian Helicopter Detachment. Upon his return to Canada in March 2001, he was promoted to Major and posted to a staff position in 1 Wing Headquarters in Kingston, Ontario. In June of 2004, he was posted back to 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron as Officer Commanding C Flt. In Feb 2006, the squadron was re-rolled as 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron, and Maj Smyth was appointed Deputy Commanding Officer. In Dec 2007, he was promoted to his present rank and attended the Australian Command and Staff College in Canberra, Australia. Upon his return from Australia, in Feb 2009, he was appointed Commanding Officer of 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in Edmonton, Alberta.

LCol Smyth has over 2800 flying hours, mainly in the CH135 Twin Huey and CH146 Griffon helicopters. LCol Smyth, known to his friends, acquaintances and relatives as “Smytty”, is an avid mountain biker.



Hitchhikers' Guide to KAF

By Capt JW Gordy

It was 3 am when we landed at Kandahar Airfield and my flashlight was nowhere to be found. By 4 am I had received a pistol, rifle, and ballistic plates, and had given my passport up for “safekeeping”. I was officially a KAFite for the next 300-odd days. There was no where to go now but breakfast. It would be days before I purchased my mini-LED flashlight to hang upon my lapel, signalling to all that I was a KAF veteran. Below is my version of a KAF survival guide.

Food at KAF is provided by a civilian company and they do an okay job. The food at the FOBs, Forward Operating Bases, however, is always fantastic. If you must eat somewhere in RC(S), Regional Command (South), try to get a few meals “outside the wire”. In fact, there’s this little FOB I know where the Spaghetti Bolognese is to die for. I can’t tell you where, operational security being what it is.

If you do find yourself at KAF having a meal, and there is a rocket attack, you have to move to the floor. My only suggestion is to remember to bring your food tray with you, don’t let the insurgency interfere with your eating habits.

When one is spending several months working in KAF, it’s important to use that time effectively. It’s an excellent time to start a workout routine, and there are several gyms around camp for that purpose. The NATO gym is open 24/7 so when that need to run at “oh-dark-hundred” strikes, you have to go there. Night running outside is forbidden. Further to that, after the sun goes down you must wear your reflective belt outside. If you didn’t bring a reflective belt, don’t worry, one will be provided.

There are several group activities to help pass the time in KAF. There is even a fencing club on Tuesday nights. Before joining such a club, however, ensure that it is a CF mandated activity. Losing a thumb during an unsuccessful parry may not be covered under our pension plan. I suggest the Floor Hockey League. We’re looking for a few good power forwards as the CANCAP Scorpions keep killing us.

All in all, not a bad place; the unemployment rate here hovers around zero, housing costs are dirt cheap, and we all focus on safety. Everyone drives to work at 20km/h. If KAF had any children running around, then a Canadian-style school zone would represent an increase in the local speed limit. It would be a nice place to live if the jets would stop screaming over the camp at all hours and they upgraded the open sewage system. The smell is pretty bad when the wind blows over the pond.

Emails and letters are great, care packages even better. On that note, Griffon Flight would like to send a special thanks to the students of Erskine School who supplied us with so many gifts, especially those Tim Hortons gift cards.

How can one sum up an experience like this? For the most part, we miss our families, try to keep as many troops off the highways as possible, and count down the days to the end of our deployment.



Mess Hall at KAF



Accommodations

Pictures from Afghanistan









Dust storm in KAF





Rain storm during month of Feb in KAF

VISIT FROM NEW ZEALAND TO THE TOMB OF THEIR UNCLE IN WEST- KERKE.



November 9, 1941, the Second World War was in full swing. At Roksem a plane of the Canadian air power crashed . The four occupants were killed, and were buried by the Germans with military honours at the cemetery in Westkerke.

The four young men were:

- Douglas Victor Markall, England, 21 years
- Evan Bertram Te Makahi Robertson, Nieuw Zealand, 29 jaar Bertram For

Makahī Evan Robertson, New Zealand, 29 years

- Douglas Frederick William Norton, England, 19 years
- John Cayley Wilson, Canada, 27 years

It was not until 1993 that the Robertson family from New Zealand finally knew where Evan Robertson was buried. In 1997, a first cousin came here to visit the grave at Westkerke.

In 1941, in New Zealand three weeks after the crash, the brother of Evan Robertson, Alexander William (Bill) Robertson, had a son, named Peter Robertson.

After 67 years, in 2008, Peter Robertson has finally come to the grave to visit his uncle.

Contacts were sought through the local department of Westkerke NSB. They obviously wanted to know more about what happened than what they could find through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

This was a very emotional experience as the father of Peter Robertson, died a few years back, wishing he had visited the grave of his brother.

After 6 years of dreaming of visiting the grave , he visited on October 3,

2008 along with his son Alan and daughter Amanda.



Flowers were brought by
Amanda Robertson

They were on the square behind the church of Westkerke, where the graves, waiting by Peter Velle Ships, and Ships Isabelle Capelle, as delegation of City Oudenburg. Co-Chairman John Depauw, Edmond Moyaert veteran standard bearer, and Dirk Jonckheere board, all of NSB Westkerke.

From the City Alderman Peter Velle Oudenburg with NSB Chairman John Depauw pay their respect with the laying of a wreath.

Of the crash, crew, memorial, the aircraft, airport lot of data were collected. These were translated into English, and issued as a memento to Peter Robertson.



To thank them for the recurrent presence of schoolchildren at the memorial they visited the school in Westkerke. A book with considerable information about New Zealand was presented, and some gifts

At the request of the family they visited the site of the crash. The farm along the Seaway to Roksem now has a different view given by the new buildings, but they wanted to visit the site here.



At City Hall, beside the national flag - surprisingly - was the flag of New Zealand, was doing a proper cup of coffee.

Since they were a garment of a crew of view. Poignant, as it possibly the jacket or flight suit could have killed their family. Westkerke they say will never be forgotten. Even in New Zealand one of the family farms is called "Westkerke".

As the day draws to close, they could not correct the Ypres Last Post attend. Disbelief that since 1928 the completion of the Menin Gate every evening at 20.00 hours ahead.

That the Robertson family is not spared from war, misery we could all find. Three of the eight children the horrors experienced during the two world burn. In 1914, the eldest brother Bob called to participate in the First World War, where he after the gruesome battle of the Somme war invalid and returned to New Zealand.

Also Alan, the brother of Evan Bertram For Makahi Robertson died on February 8, 1944 during World War II. He found his final resting place at the military cemetery of Alamein in Egypt.

Contacts are made in the past with the family of Sergeant Frederick William Douglas Norton. They took also long been visiting the grave of their cousin, but without prior notice. The family of Sergeant Douglas Victor Markall from England and the Canadian Pilot Officer John Cayley Wilson have hitherto no contacts.

Europe's Smallest War Cemetery

AIRCRAFT CRASH IN ROKSEM.

CONTENT:

The Crash

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The Crew

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The Aeroplane

The Quest of the Family

The Jacket

The History of the Commemoration

THE CRASH

"The fighters are our salvation but the bombers alone provide the means of victory."

Quote from Sir Winston Churchill, September 1940

The bombing campaign was the only way by which Britain could hit back at an aggressive enemy who had invaded most of Europe. Bomber Command airmen flew operations on almost every day or night of the war. All Bomber Command aircrews were volunteers. In total, 55,000 members of Bomber Command lost their lives. Most were very young - the average age of aircrew was 22 years old. They sacrificed their futures to help free Europe from Nazism. They are remembered at the memorial at Runnymede and by the statue of Bomber Harris outside the RAF church of St Clement Dane's in the Strand, London. They are also remembered in Europe's smallest war cemetery located in Westkerke, Belgium.

Since the war ended, a lot of books have been written and published about the war events in Belgium in the period 1940-1945. However, we would like to focus our attention on a local war event that caused some commotion in the usually peaceful Roksem. On November 9th, 1941, a bomber of the Royal Canadian air Force crashed not far West of the historical "Zeeweg" at the cost of the life of a crew of four.

We will briefly reconstruct that event based mainly on existing verbal information. At the same time we hope to be able to remember the young men

who were killed far from their homes, in a small village in an foreign country. With their sacrifice, they contributed to the regaining of our well beloved freedom.

This is the story of Flight AE 438.

It was a cold day in November, that Sunday the 9th 1941. In the mess of the Air Force Base "Syerston" which stationed the 408th "Goose" Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force, the barely 19 year old Englishman Sgt Douglas Fréderick William Norton (R.A.F.), a tail gunner of the Hampden bomber EQNE (AE 438) wrote a letter. Fate would make this his last one. (2)

My beloved Dad and Mom,

I am sorry that it took so long before I had the opportunity to write to you but we have been extremely busy lately. Last night I flew a raid, also the night before and Wednesday night. You see we have been busy. I woke up an hour ago and I just finished my lunch. Last night I flew to Ostend in Belgium and we have dropped our bombs straight into the docks. So I bed that it is mass there now. Everything goes well with me. However, I should admit that I feel very tired last time. I do not believe that I will be ordered to fly tonight and so I will be able to rest somewhat.. Last night the other boys bombed Cologne and they have to fly again tonight. Thus I do not believe that it is so tough for me. Yet that is the reason we joined the war and we may not complain.

Well, that is it for today again and I hope you are all well and healthy. 'Cherio' take care, God bless you all with love and happiness.. Doug"

However, Douglas Norton did not receive much time to rest. During the time that he was busy writing this letter to his parents, his crew was listed for a mission on the squadron operations blackboard. Indeed, the very same Sunday evening of November 5th, the Command had planned a raid on Ostend. (3).

At dark, 17.55 local time a formation of nine aircraft took off. One of the planes was the Hampton-bomber [AE438].

During the night of November 9th 1941, executing their mission above our coastal region, that aircraft was cached in the beam of a searchlight (4). A German FLAK-battery (Fliegzeug Abwehr Kanone.) (5) immediately engaged the aircraft with heavy shell fire. One of the wings and a part of the tail of the aircraft received a direct hit. Those pieces fell on the field owned by farmer Vandamme, which was located South of the Aernoudstraat at Roksem. During the fatal seconds that followed witnesses reported that the bomber lost completely control, took a dive producing enormously noise, and finally crashed a couple of hun-

dred meters further away at 22.00 hours. The remains of the plane were situated nearby the stables and house of Valère Vandekerckhove and Irma Vanthuyne, located 16 Zeeweg at Roksem. (6)

August Baeckeland from the adjacent Roksem, recalled the following events:

"It should have been around 3 o'clock in the morning when Valère Vandekerckhove knocked on my door. He asked assistance with fear and terror. He told me that an aircraft was crashed close by his farm located at the Zeeweg. Arriving together with Valère at his farm we encountered a terrifying scene. Only twenty meters away from his farm I noticed an English bomber buried with his nose in the ground and with his tail straight up. In the orchard nearby I saw a parachute hanging with lifeless body of a crew member. It was difficult to distinguish everything in the dark and soon more people from the neighborhood joined us and slowly everything became clear."

In the morning a large German guard was posted by the aircraft and nobody was authorized nearby the wreckage. Although there was still a lot of ammunition present in the wreck including two light bombs, several clips and bullets for the machine guns, the crash caused little or no damage to the surrounding infrastructure and buildings. The main reason for this was the fact that the wrecked aircraft did not explode or catch fire. The wreckage was loaded on trucks. The Germans recovered also four bodies. In Roksem and the nearby surroundings the story persisted that one crewmember had survived the crash and went into hiding, but this was later formally denied. Nevertheless, the German's occupier apparently believed that this was true, because during the next days and weeks following the crash many intensive searches and controls in the neighborhood were executed.

The casualty's were transported to the nearby pub 'De Welkom' (later renamed as "Rust der Brikkenbakkers") run by the couple Filip "Fluppe" Bultynck – Titeca. There the bodies were placed upon a bier. This pub was located at the junction between the Zeeweg and the Oude Brugseweg, opposite the old little church of Rokem. A couple of days thereafter the crew were buried with military honors at the communal cemetery of Westkerke. (7)

THE CEMETARY

Killed in Roksem but buried in Westkerke?

In spite of the fact that Roksem is considered as one of the oldest parishes in Flanders (8) it regained for several reasons the status of an independent parish again in 1965. Prior to that date all church services including religious burials were organized in Westkerke. This explains why the four victims of the aircraft crash were buried in Westkerke.



Location where the “Hampden” bomber crashed on November 9th 1941
[detail military map]

In spite of the fact that Roksem is considered as one of the oldest parishes in Flandres (8) it regained for several reasons the status of an independent parish again in 1965. Prior to that date all church services including religious burials were organized in Westkerke. This explains why the four victims of the aircraft crash were buried in Westkerke.

Little wooden crosses were used to mark the graves. The records of the Commonwealth Graves Commission confirm that in 1948 the graves were still marked with these original crosses when the responsibility for the graves was handed over to the “Commission of the Army Graves Service”. Some reports of the Commission list a later date, but this is not confirmed by any files in the archives. (9)

In 1992 the area around the church and the nearby road crossing were reconstructed. As a direct consequence the cemetery was cleared with the exception of the graves of the four military who received a place of honor under a weeping willow. Thus creating the smallest military cemetery of Europe (10)

THE CREW

-Douglas Victor Markall, - England – sergeant, gunner, navigator
1167721- 408 Sqdn, Royal Air Force volunteer reservist, 21 years of age, grave 1.

-Evan Bertram Te Makahi Robertson – New Zealand – sergeant, observer 404556- 408 Sqdn, Royal New Zealand Air Force, 29 years of



The Pub "De Welkom" renamed "Rust der Brikkebakkers" owned by "Fluppe" Bultinck (photo Andre van Poucke)

age, grave 2.

-**Douglas Frederick William Norton** – England – sergeant, gunner, radio-operator 1280431 – 408 Sqdn, Royal Air Force volunteer reservist, 19 years of age, grave 3.

-**John Cayley Wilson** – Canada – pilot Officer J/5224 – 408 Sqdn, Royal Canadian Air Force, 27 years of age, grave 4.

The tail gunner Sgt Douglas Fréderick William Norton, was only 19 years old. From

Sergeant Norton was born in Ipswich. He was a member of the local Melody makers Club



his childhood

up, he appeared to be a musical talent. He was able to play by ear different instruments and as a teenager he played in a little band in Ipswich

(The Melody Makers).

Furthermore he was often amusing family and friends when demonstrating his conjuring tricks. Douglas worked in a tobacco factory where he met a young girl named Majorie.

Through the radio broadcasting he learned that the RAF was recruiting radio operators. On July 16th 1940 he joined the Royal Air Force. One year later he started his operational career in the 50th Sqn, but very soon he was transferred to the Canadian 408th Sqn, This was against his will, he preferred to stay in a British Squadron but he realised that a sergeant-volunteer has little to say in this decision. He had the intention to marry Marjorie during his leave period but Douglas' mother opposed and prevented this from happening. She realized that her son's future and the young couple were very uncertain in the given circumstances. Maybe it was the intuition of a mother, but she was right since Douglas would not return. He and the fellow members of his crew ended their ninth mission at Westkerke. He still rests there together with his Canadian pilot P/O John Wilson (RCAF - 27 years old). The Wilson family would lose a second son during the war a gunner/navigator.

Sgt Douglas Markall (21 year) (no details on him are available) and the gunner/observer from New Zealand Evan Bertram Te Makahi Robertson. The last-named was born in 1912 being the youngest child in a family of eight. Evan received the name 'Te Makahi' which indicates that his ancestors were descendants of the Maori-tribe of New Zealand. Indeed, his grandmother was a Maori and she married a 'Pakeha', a white man. 'Te Makahi' was the name of Evan's grand grandfather's father. The Robertson's lived at the foot of the Mount Cook, the highest mountain, on the North Island.

One year after his birth, his mother died. One year later his oldest brother Bob was drafted and served during the First World War. After participating in the atrocious battle at the Somme he returned to New Zealand as a disabled veteran. Meanwhile Evan Te Makahi became a sheep-farmer and finally he was appointed meat inspector in Oamaru. The two youngest brothers, Evan and Allan joined the armed forces during the Second World War. Neither came back.



The airfield of Syerston is located ten miles North East of Nottingham, close to the A46 Nottingham-Newark motorway and the river Trent. From this base the "Hampden's" took off. They executed bombing missions on Ostend. The Hampden that crashed in Westkerke was the only one of a group of nine that was lost. The exact cause of the loss remains un clear. However, it is known that the aircraft crashed nine kilometers South East of Ostend, in the night of November the 9th 1941. [9]

SYERSTON AIRFIELD

At the outbreak of the war Syerston an airfield. was under construction. The airfield is located at about ten kilometers North East of the A46 Nottingham-Newark motorway and the river Trent.

The construction had been started already in 1938, but the base was only completed in late 1940.

Initially, the air station was built with the typical standard specifications of that time. Amongst the permanent buildings were two type J hangars for reparations and maintenance of the aircraft. Later on three T2 and one B1 hangar were built at the site. The air station was dedicated to Group Nr1 and received in December 1940 the Squadrons 304 and 305, mainly manned with Polish crews that were transferred from Bramcote. Both squadrons were commissioned in August and were flying on Wellington bombers. Their first main operation from Syerston was a raid on the oil-terminal in Rotterdam in the night 25/26 Apr 1941. The squadrons of



The tail gunner is pictured below in flight suit [picture to right] and during his Hampden gunner training period [previous page – third row – second from the left] The picture on the left is Sgt Evan Te Makahi Robertson gunner/observer from New Zealand.[Pictures Mrs. Karen Norton – Airs Vivienne Saunders/ Sally Throp] Unfortunately there are no pictures by hand from Sgt Douglas Markall and Pilot-Officer John Wilson.



Group 1 were transferred in July to Lindholme and Group 5 was stationed in Syerston in their place.

When the crews of 408th Sqn of the Royal Canadian Air Force arrived on their turn from Bramcote they were, like the Polish crews before them, not fully operational. Their first attack, like for the Polish Squadrons, were directed on the docks of Rotterdam in the night of

August 11/12th 1941. In December in the same year the Hampdens were relocated to Balderton.

THE AIRCRAFT

The crew that was killed at Westkerke flew a “Hampden Page Handley” with code letters EQ-N (AE438). The aircraft belonged to the 408th Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

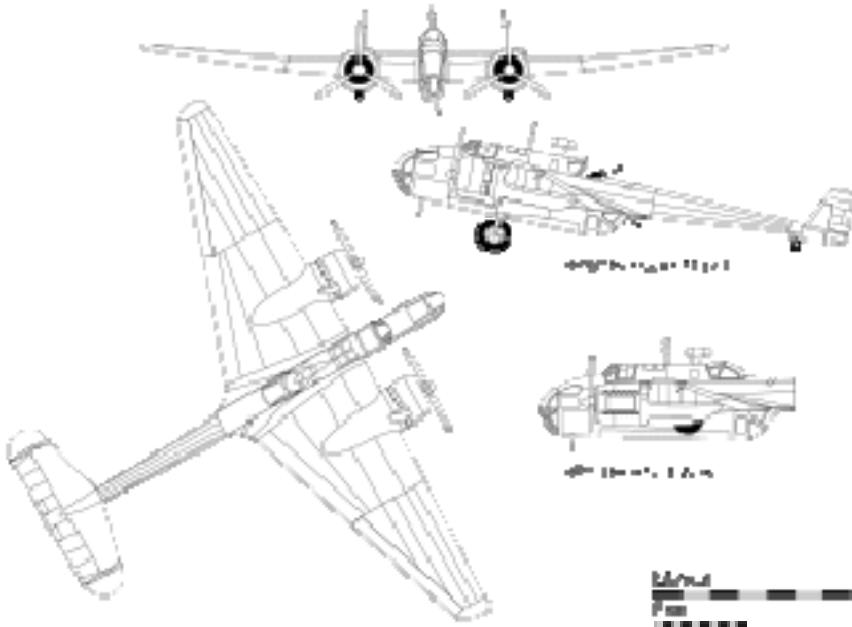
The nickname of the aircraft was “Flying Panhandle”. The crest of the



squadron was picturing the Canadian goose and carries the motto
“FOR FREEDOM”



SPECIFICATIONS HANDLEY PAGE H.P 52 HAMPDEN:



General characteristics

- **Crew:** 4 seat
- **Length:** 53 ft 7 in (16.33 m)
- **Wingspan:** 69 ft 2 in (21.08 m)
- **Height:** 14 ft 4 in (4.37 m)
- **Wing area:** 688 ft² (63.9 m²)
- **Empty weight:** 11,780 lb (5,344 kg)
- **Loaded weight:** 18,756 lb (8,508 kg)
- **Powerplant:** 2× Bristol Pegasus XVIII 9-cylinder radial engine, 980 hp (730 kW) each

Performance

- Maximum speed: 265 mph at 15,500 ft (410 km/h at 4,724 m)
- Range: 1,095 miles (1,762 km)
- Service ceiling 19,000 ft (5,790 m)
- Rate of climb: 980 ft/min (300 m/min)
- Wing loading: 27.3 lb/ft² (133 kg/m²)
- Power/mass: 0.104 hp/lb (0.172 kW/kg)

Armament

4 to 6 x .303 in (7.7 mm) Vickers K machine guns. one flexible and one fixed in the nose, one or two each in dorsal and ventral positions

4,000 lb (1,814 kg) bombs or 1 x 18 in torpedo or mines

THE QUEST OF THE FAMILY

In spite of an intensive quest it was only in 1993 that the family of Sgt Robertson of New Zealand found the location of his grave. His niece Vivienne Saunders – Robertson came in 1997 for the first time to the European continent in order to visit the tomb of her nephew.

At this occasion the former pastor of Westkerke, E.H. Philippe Vindevogel visited with them the surroundings of Ypres. They were able to collect some ‘poppy’s’ from Flanders fields were some of their relatives have been fighting during the First World War.

Also the family of Douglas Frederick William Norton (Enland) brings sporadically a visit to Westkerke.

JACKET:

The aircraft did not explode and was not destroyed by fire when it crashed. The Germans were only alerted in the early morning hours. As a direct consequence some local residents and members of the resistance could secure some material and possibly also some clothing of the crew.

A white silk parachute reappeared after a couple of years and was donated to convent of Gistel where the sisters used it to produce some clothing for the Procession of Godelieve. Today's inquiries to the committee of the procession did not reveal any details.

In 2007 a jacket of one of the crew appeared. It was discovered when after the death of a former member of the resistance [unknown and not living in the area] the attic of his house was emptied and cleaned up.

On the jacket the nickname “DOUGIE” appeared and apparently this was the nick name of Douglas Norton from Ipswich.



THE HISTORY OF THE COMMEMORATION

In 2004 an appeal was launched to the patriotic associations with the question what their intentions were to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Belgium.

Having in Westkerke the graves of military killed in action during the

Second World War, we (the local national veteran association of Westkerke - N.S.B. [Nationale Strijders Bond]) decided to organize a commemoration ceremony.

Until then (2004) the four allied service men killed in action were never commemorated in any ceremony or memorial service.

In 2006, 65 years have been passed since they were killed, representatives of the embassies of Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom participated in the commemoration of their fellow-countrymen killed in the air crash of 1941. The Province Governor was also present during the ceremony.

We intend and hope to be able to repeat this commemoration every year. Westkerke will honor their little military cemetery. A cemetery that will be recognized by history as one of the smallest military cemeteries of the Second World War.

This remembrance and tribute is a organization from N.S.B. Westkerke, (National Veterans Organization, department Westkerke) in a co-operation with the city of Oudenburg.

EXHORTATION

They shall grow not old,
as that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning,
We will remember them.

From L. Binyon's "For the fallen

The Ode – in Maori

E kore ratou, e koro heketia
Penei tatou, e ora nei
E te wa, e whakaruruhi
Nga tau ranei, e whakakore I a ratou
I te urunga mai o te ra
A tae noa ki toa ngaro tanga
Ka maumahara tonu tatou ki a ratou
Ka maumahara tonu tatou ki a ratou

References:

- 1: Onze regio werd bevrijd op 8 september 1944. - Zie hierover: Omer Titeca - "Gestella Krantje" Jaargang 17, 1 & 2
- 2: Extract of the book : België in oorlog 5 "Luchtgevechten boven België 1941-1942" - Cynrik De Decker en Jean Louis Roba. Uitgeverij De Krijger
- 3: According to "THE BOMBER COMMAND WAR DIARIES" other raids were executed in the same night on the city of Hamburg. 103 Aircraft of different types were tasked. Five Hampden bombers were tasked to drop mines in the estuaries of the Elbe and the Weser. Seven aircraft executed a raid on Dunkirk.
- 4: Kriegstagebuch Höheres Kommando XXXVI - 306 Infanterie Division :
Am 9-11-1941 um 22.00 Uhr stürzte bei Roksem (9 km südostwärts Ostende) ein zweimotoriger Englischer Bomber ab. Die Besatzung von 4 Mann ist tot, das Flugzeug zerstört.
Bomben auf Snaeskerke, Ravarsijde (See) Ostdunkerke. Kein Personenschaden. 3 herser
Verslag uit rapportboek Clausing L. B. Oostende :
"Afweergeschut om 21.46 uur. Er vielen bommen op de Groene dijk - Opex.
Het is mij niet bekend of het toestel door luchtafweer of door Duitse jagers werd neergeschoten".
Uit: "Oostende onder de Nazis 1940 - 44", deel 1. - André Asseloos, Oostende.
- 5: Fliegzeug Abwehr Kanone. Volgens onbevestigde informatie stond deze batterij, samen met een stel zoeklichten, in Ettelgem.
- 6: Valeer Jozef Vandekerckhove " Ettelgem 4 mei 1904.
- x Roksem 10 oktober 1928 met Irma Vanthuyne ° Westkerke 12-11-1906.
- 7: In 1941 the Germans buried the crews of crashed aircrafts with military honors. A honor rifle salute was executed during the burial.
- 8: Oorsprong van 't Prioraat of Parochie van Roxem 1908
- 9: Data by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- 10: Verslag via Fernand Dejonghe uit Zevekote

Memorial Service 2009 Westkerke, Belgium

Note: more pictures can be found at: <http://users.skynet.be/ra039627/album/>









Blast From the Past

Articles from Past Flight Comment Magazine

In the past, 408 Sqn gained much notoriety for its historic survey work in the North - including the Mid-Canada Line as well as the Dew Line. Pioneering in Shoran, 408 Sqn helped Canada win world recognition in both photo mapping and polar navigation . As early as 1949 the squadron began providing close support for the army but not until 1962 was the Tactical Fighter Flight born with eight T33s.

In 1964 the squadron moved to its present home at CFB Rivers, Manitoba . The C119 Boxcar joined the squadron and the role was designated Tactical Support and Aerial Recce. In 1965 the Boxcars were replaced with another workhorse - the C130B Hercules .

The following year Mobile Command took over and very shortly thereafter the Hercules were given to Transport Command . !n 1961 the squadron began building its T33 strength to 18 as it prepared to assist in the organization of the new CF5 Operational Training Squadron . In the past year the nucleus of the CF 5 instructors stopped off in Rivers for training in the ground attack role before heading to the SA for initial checkouts .

The squadron's role still includes tactical support; some T-birds are fitted with machine guns and bomb racks . To maintain proficiency the pilots strafe, high angle bomb with up to 500 pound weapons, skip -bomb, and drop napalm . Other aircraft are fitted for photo recce. The squadron flies low-level navigation routes covering over 62 ,000 square miles of Manitoba and Saskatchewan with more than 300 targets plotted to date.

Deployment is the big word around 408. Every few weeks the Hercs comeback and load up men and equipment and as they takeoff, the jets are right behind them.



408 in mock ground attack at CFB Rivers.

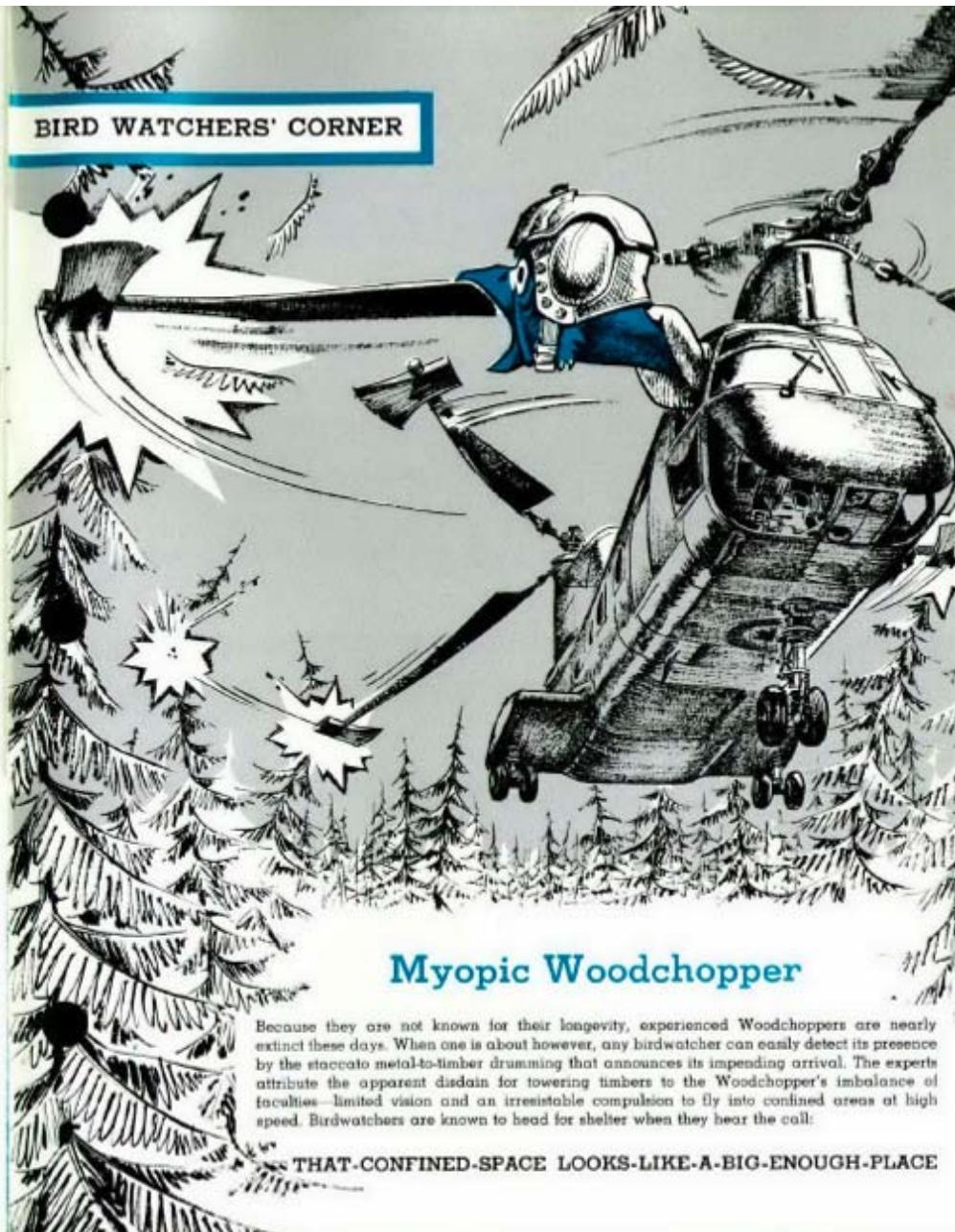
A 408 T-Bird over Duck Mountain, Manitoba on a low-level recce mission.



Their destination? Anywhere in Canada wherever there happens to be a mock war. Intelligence, servicing, photo, armament—everybody gets into the act. Talk to the people who have used air support and let them tell you how effective it is! 408 is training for combat and waiting for the CFS and with its arrival, the opportunity to flex its muscles with Mobile Command.

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BIRD WATCHERS' CORNER



Myopic Woodchopper

Because they are not known for their longevity, experienced Woodchoppers are nearly extinct these days. When one is about however, any birdwatcher can easily detect its presence by the staccato metal-to-timber drumming that announces its impending arrival. The experts attribute the apparent disdain for towering timbers to the Woodchopper's imbalance of faculties—limited vision and an irresistible compulsion to fly into confined areas at high speed. Birdwatchers are known to head for shelter when they hear the call:

THAT-CONFINED-SPACE LOOKS-LIKE-A-BIG-ENOUGH-PLACE

Pictures donated by Mr Ron Blessin



Rockcliffe



Lancs 839 and 212 (which is now in Windsor)



Gen Fit for the Home Front

by Gary R. Tetzlaff

RCAF Public Relations provided the 'copy' transcribed below for consumption 'on the home front' several months after each of the events described. Small town newspapers would reprint the copy as a way of keeping support for the war, recruitment and sale of War Bonds, etc. The following were printed in Kingsville Ontario during the period 1942 – 1945, revealing personal information that may be of historical importance to researchers. Veterans may enjoy hearing the names familiar to them long ago.

//Researched and transcribed in 2000-2001 by Gary R. Tetzlaff

//special thanks to Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS),
Harrow (Essex) Ontario for access to their microfilm library and equipment

From Early 1942 (before the Kingsville adoption)

12 March 1942 Essex County Reporter

"Local man in famous squadron

KINGSVILLE- Six Canadians lead in Timmerman's outfit somewhere in England, with many Ontario men who have collected in "gongs", the air force term for decorations. The bomber squadron is led by Wing Commander Nelles W. Timmerman, of Kingston, Ont., an airman who crossed to England in a cattle boat to join the Royal Air Force before the war, while Sergeant Garfield Kelly , son of Mr. and Mrs. Garfield Kelly, Sr. of Kingsville, is the squadron disciplinarian. Timmerman, in the R.A.F. since 1936, holds the D.S.O. and D.F.C., besides the coronation medal.

Squadron Leader A.C. Pitt Clayton of Vancouver, one of his flight commanders has the D.F.C. and bar, and Flight Lieut. Leroy H. Campbell also of Vancouver, recently was awarded the D.F.C. Flight Sergeant W.T. Reinhart of Stratford, Ont., was the first non-commissioned officer of the squadron to win the D.F.C. The other awards were won by two English airmen and a New Zealander serving with the Canadian squadron. Pilot Officer Alan Davidson of Toronto is studying flying control at this station. A fellow student is Pilot Officer Leslie Fox of Victoria. Pte. James Horsbrugh, of Toronto is serving with the R.C.A.S.C. His 18 year-old son, James F. is an orderly clerk in the flight office of the R.C.A.F. squadron. He is an AC2.

Working in the same office with AC2 Horsbrugh are LAC Earl Ingram of Walsley, Sask. A.C. Don Corley of Lindsay, Ont., and AC M.O. Mallette of Kirkland Lake, Ont. All these are under Sergeant Garfield Kelly formerly of Kingsville."

From 1944 (after the Kingsville adoption)

21 September 1944 Essex County Reporter

"Goose Squad. Celebrates 3rd Anniversary

WITH R.C.A.F. BOMBER GROUP OVERSEAS.-The Goose Squadron, oldest in point of service in the group, celebrated its third anniversary recently when the Royal family visited the Beaver base. Goose squadron air-men were among those receiving awards from the King. As birthday parties go, it was unique.

History of the squadron, which has been adopted by the town of Kingsville, Ont., goes back to the night of August 11, 1941, when five Hampdens set out on the first operational trip. Rotterdam was the target and Sergeants Bradley, pilot; McMilland, navigator; Clark and Lercer, wireless air gunners, had the honor of being the first crew airborne. It's a far cry from those days three years ago to the present fleet of Lancasters and Halifaxes that take off from the station to hammer the targets in Germany and France. Three years ago the initial sortie meant 10,000 pounds of bombs, four 500-pounders in each aircraft. Now the heaviest tote a much greater load. They didn't have present-day equipment then and the squadron log book tells of two bombers bringing their load back because of cloud conditions over the target. Now cloud is something to be brushed aside and the bombs find their mark with scientific precision.

Thousands of pounds of bombs have been dropped by Goose aircraft in its three years of service. Every major target in Germany has been visited. One of its veteran crews recently had the honor of flying the squadron's 3,000th sortie, an all-time high for the Canadian Bomber Group.

Honor of piloting "N-Nan", the Lancaster that made the 3,000th sortie, fell to Flying Officer Bob Clotheir (sic. Clothier) of Vancouver, B.C. (1979 Waterloo Rd.), and the navigator was Flying Officer S.J. "Sandy" DeZorzi of Toronto, Ont. (60 Taunton Rd.). Both have done all of their operational flying with the Goose squadron and are on second tours.

Veteran ground crew personnel who have been with the squadron since its inception are: Sergeants S.S. McCracken, Toronto, Ont.; R.E. MacDonald, Edmonton, Alberta; Art Lee, of Uxbridge, Ont.; Bill Hatton, Rhode Island, New York, U.S.A.; Eric Worth, Winnipeg, Man.; Corporals J.J. Bontheir (sic.), Mascouch, Que.; W.L. Robinson, Montreal, Que.; F. Rheaume, Riviere du Loop, Que.; J.E. Riche, Trois Rivieres, Que.; Larry Lemeine (sic.), Ottawa Ont.; and LAC'S F.L. Batten, Brandon, Man.; Stan Jenkins, Winnipeg, Man.; G.A. Roste, Sturgis, Sask.; George McKillop, Winnipeg, Man.; G.A. Quarrie, Coleman, Ata.; Al LeBlanc, Moncton,

N.B.; Ed Lawrence, Edmonton, Alta.; J.M.Green, Oakville, Ont.; John Gianetto, Midland, Ont.; Don Corley, Lindsay, Ont; Don Munro, St. Thomas, Ont.

At present under the command of Wing Commander Roy McLernon, DFC, of Montreal, Que., the squadron has won 60 decorations, 45 DFC's and 15 DFM's."

GRT – The 408 Squadron's third anniversary was 24 June 1944; that raid on Stuttgart — 408's 3000th operational sortie— took place 24 July 1944

From Early 1945

1 March 1945 Essex County Reporter

"Kingsville's Goose Squadron Bombs Huns 4,000 Times

WITH THE R.C.A.F. BOMBER GROUP IN BRITAIN. - The Hun felt the full fury of the Goose Squadron for the 4,000th time one night recently. A Halifax bomber, captained by F.O. David Wylie of Winnipeg Man., suite 4, Milan Apts., McMillen Ave.) made the historic run-in over Saarbrucken. All aircraft of the Goose Squadron, participating in what was regarded as the most successful raid of the new year, returning safely.

Less than 24 hours later the same crew raided Crevenbroich with the same success. It was the last chapter in the town tours of F.O. J. Hayes, Toronto. (56 Badgerow Ave.) mid upper gunner, and F.O. G.A. Hubbard, Chiliwack, B.C. wireless operator.

Since that night in August 1941 when five Hampden bombers took off on their first operation as the Goose Squadron, the Goslings have flown in fair and in foul weather. From bomb loads that were reckoned in pounds, this second oldest R.C.A.F. bomber squadron in Great Britain has steadily piled up an enviable record of total raids, bomb tonnage, daring exploits and gallantry awards.

Berlin has felt the power of the Goose no less than a dozen and a half times. Other major targets have been plenty, while the Ruhr Valley has become a familiar indentation on the landscape to Goose navigators. In the language of the R.C.A.F. the Goose is a "Gen" Squadron. There are no better squadrons than "Gen" Squadrons.

At the time of the 4,000th sortie, aircrew of the Goose had been awarded 85 decorations for gallantry. These include 68 D.F.C.'s and 17 D.F.M.'s During her career aircrews of the Goose have flown Hampdens,

Lancasters and Halifaxes.

Presently under the command of W.C. F.R. Sharp, Trenton, Ont., and Moosomin, Sask., the Goose Squadron, which has been adopted by the town of Kingsville, Ont., has been commanded by outstanding fliers.

Two of the former Goose commanding officers are still at the base. They are G.C. Roy McLernon, D.F.C., of Montreal, a station commander, and W.C. Jack Easton, D.F.C., of Timmins, Ont., awaiting posting as a senior administration officer at an R.C.A.F. overseas unit. The present adjutant's is F.L. O. B. N. Farrell, Winnipeg, Man.

GRT – the 408 Squadron's 4000th operational sortie took place on 13 Jan 1945

The last operational sortie was numbered 4610.

For Freedom



F/O L. Corbeil Bomb Aimer, Sgt J. McCart F/E, F/Lt B. Austen W/Op,
F/O S. DeZorzi Nav, F/Lt Robert Clothier Pilot,
F/Lt T. Murdoch M/U gunner, F/O B. Fitzgerald Rear gunner;
No. 408 Squadron Royal Canadian Air Force

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP DUES

408 "Goose" Squadron Association is run entirely on the funds generated from membership dues and donations. The administrative costs for office materials and the annual printing of the newsletter use a considerable amount of the total yearly membership dues collected. It is very important that all members pay their yearly dues so that we can continue with the important principles of the Association. As Association Chairman it is my responsibility to manage the operating budget on your behalf. Date membership dues paid till can be found on the address label in the upper right corner.

When you receive your newsletter please remit your dues quickly. Dues are \$10.00 yearly.

Please send your dues to: National Chairman

**408 "Goose" Squadron Association
PO Box 10500 Stn Forces
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4J5**



408 Squadron Association Website

Please note the association website address is:

www.forfreedom.ca

If you have ideas of what you would like to see on this website
please let the National Chairman know.





It is with deep regret that the Association wishes to inform its membership of the passing of the following Squadron Association members

Orval Smith
Bill Muise
Howard Copeman
Wilfred Truchon
Ted Hackett
Don Snider
Andrew Seath
James Alfred Savage
Mike Cwihun
Joseph Huspeka

Letters and Requests

Name: Jimmie Dunn
E-mail: jal.dunn@sympatico.ca
Location: Lindsay, ON Canada

I am doing research on P/O (AG) Douglas D. Skingle, age 21, from Humber Bay, ON, KIA June 44 with crew members, RH Rolfe, JA Inverarity, RW Griggs, H Hugill, & RW Lowrey. Lancaster LL643 was lost on a raid over Achares, France. He has no known grave but his name is engraved on the Humber Bay Cenotaph.

The Skingle family were our next door neighbours and are now all deceased. I was very young but I remember the day Doug came to say "Goodbye" to my parents when he left of overseas with the RCAF. My parents named their 3rd born son after him in 1946. Mr & Mrs Skingle received a very impressive photo of Doug standing in front of a Lancaster with two other airman from 408 Squadron sometime after Doug was killed. I saw a copy of the photo in a brochure pertaining to a Squadron reunion at the RCAF Museum, Trenton in 1999.

I am a retired member of the CAF and am presently endeavouring to ensure that Doug will not be forgotten by my family by including what I know of his story in my memoirs.

Should someone read this who has some memory of Douglas Skingle, I would appreciate hearing from them.

Thank you

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Name: Jodie Butchart-Bell
E-mail: jonjod@bmts.com
Location: Wiarton Ontario CANADA

Affiliation with unit
408 flying goose Squadron

Comment:

Looking for any pictures or information on Dad G.E.R. Butchart who was stationed at Linton-On-Ouse, mom was a war bride from Northallerton.

Husbands grandfather was Mike Spratt who was stationed over in Africa anyone with info on him would also be greatly appreciated

Name: Stu Tait
E-mail: stu_tait42@yahoo.com
Location: Ottawa, Ontario

Affiliation with unit
Father with 408 from 1949-1954 as Lancaster Flight Engineer

I have just found out the T.S.N. "Tinny" Constance died May 2008. He was one of the 408 pilots that not only sighted the 3 German ships in the English Channel, Feb 12, 1942, but unsuccessfully attacked them and received severe damage to his aircraft.

As a postscript I am downsizing my collections at home prior to moving to an apartment and , if you are interested, I have an original Don Connally painting of the Channel Dash featuring Tinny's aircraft. This painting is also signed by Tinny when he was in Ottawa in 1987. I will consider donating this painting to the 408 Mess for a tax credit but I am not sure how to get it out to you if you accept. I am only 3 hours from Trenton so this might be an option,by CAF transport.

Please advise so that we may set in motion the transfer.

• •

Name: gord
E-mail: gordgiza@gmail.com
Location: st.thomas ontario

Hello im here trying to find anyone that knew my great great uncle or his crew, or pics or stories of my great great uncle Chris norman Chalken/chalklen also know as Bud , he was killed in action on aug 29/42 in a hampden , his crew was

p/o k.pellett
sgt.m.s brighouse(raaf)
f/o l.g lyons

anything would be good i just got his metals from my grandfather and would like any info or pics or stories to go with them and to show my granddad as it was his uncle bud

gord giza

Name: Bernard F Baker (Bernie)
E-mail: bbaker2000@sympatico.ca
Found: Found using a search engine.
Location: Whitby ON

Affiliation with unit
408 (P) Sqn Orderly Room (LAC/Cpl) 1951 - 1953)

Served on SHORAN Detachments - Yellowknife, Churchill, Goose Bay and Frobisher Bay. Interested in contacting anyone who served with the Sqn at Rockliffe, particularly the members of the Hoot-en-nanny Club - i.e. Stretch MacNeil and other operators. Retired from the Cdn Forces in 1984 as a CFR Capt.

.....

Subject: L.A.C. Jennings
From: PETER MCCARTHY <petermccarthy45@sympatico.ca>
Date: Sat, December 12, 2009 9:03 am

Sir,

I am a philatelist and to be more specific, a postal historian. I collect envelopes of interest. My primary field is Railway Post Office Cancellations. However, when something interesting comes along I like to research it.

Recently I purchased several envelopes addressed to a Miss Marie Saugstad from a L.A.C. jennings R70229. part of 408 squadron. I am trying to find some information about him. Was he ground crew. Did he marry Marie Saugstad. I have done some of this sort of thing for Naval envelopes purchased and I would like to do the same for these envelopes. Tell the story of one person in 408 squadron. I have enclosed a couple of photocopies.

These are going into an exhibit which I have entitled "Humanities of Postal History"

thank you for your time

Peter McCarthy

London, ON

Subject: Honouring F/L Weis' crew downed in Normandy 1944
From: <laurent.viton@neuf.fr>
Date: Thu, December 10, 2009 8:15 am

Dear Sir ,

I have a memorial project to honour F/L Bill Weis and his crew lost in Normandy on 7/8 June 1944. Their bomber Lancaster LL643 EQ-Q was shot down by a Luftwaffe night fighter and crashed in a wooded area some 20 miles south-east Dieppe , near the village of Bailleul-Neuville.

For an unknown reason their bodies were never recovered by german or french people, so they have no grave here in Normandy .

With Mrs Guyant , the mayor of Bailleul-Neuville , we would like to raise a memorial to that brave crew of eight " lost without trace " . They will have their names inscribed , date of death and motto of 408 Squadron " For Freedom " . The memorial is supposed to be raised by the road at the closest place to the crash-site located deeper in the forest. However we are looking for fund for that project , as the village is quite poor. Maybe Canadian veterans could help ?

On the other side I've been able to trace most relatives of the eight crew members , they are moved and eager to see what will develop about the memorial here. We would like the ceremony and unveiling taking place in 2010 , but we still have to make a date.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon ,
Laurent Viton

• •

Name: Jill Smith
E-mail: jillsmith2001@yahoo.co.uk
Location: Cramlington, UK

Affiliation with unit
Great Uncle

Comment:

I'm trying to find out any information about my great uncle James William Taylor Mason Smith of Bedlington , Northumberland who was killed 5th April 1943.

I know he received the DFM in that year but have no idea of the circumstances in which he was killed .

I would appreciate any information.

Subject: request for informations and pictures
From:Andreas.Metzmacher@mdr.de
Date: Fri, October 23, 2009 5:25 am

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Andreas Metzmacher and I live in Gotha, Germany. In my free time, purely as a hobby, I write historical articles for the German aeronautical magazine Flugzeug Clas-sic.

I am currently preparing an article dealing with Canadian and American aeronautical operations in the Arctic during the "Cold War" for the period from 1945 until the end of the 1950's. I am especially interested in the opera-tions flown by aircraft of No.408 Squadron during this time period.

Were there any particular incidents of forced-landings and/or rescue operations involving the Russians, or inci-dents of the Russians overflying Canadian aircraft at the North Pole? How close was the operational relationship between the Canadians and the Americans; was there for exam-ple, an exchange of reconnaissance information?

For the article which I am currently writing, I am in-terested in obtaining pictures of the aircraft belonging to all of the parties involved in Arctic flying for the period 1945 until the end of the 1950's. It would be deeply appre-ciated if you could help me with my research by providing as much of the information requested as possible.

I am, yours truly,

Andreas Metzmacher

Uelleber Str. 9s
D-99867 Gotha
Tel: +49/3621 704847
Andreas.Metzmacher@mdr.de

Subject: Information on a former member of 408
From: Jonny McQuitty <jonny.mcquitty@worc.ox.ac.uk>
Date: Thu, October 1, 2009 3:56 pm

Hi there,

My name is Jonny McQuitty, and my grandfather, Alexander McClure served with 408 Squadron in the latter years of the war when it was based at Linton on Ouse, including the period where it transitioned from using the Lancaster to the Halifax.

I'm currently in the RAF VR as part of the Oxford University Air Squadron, and I'd love to get in contact with anyone who might have served with him. He died about ten years ago.

I couldn't find a section on the website for posting notices for old comrades, but if you have any way of listing this information, I'd be really grateful. I'm looking to find out as much as possible - at least beyond official documents which are rather dry.

Many thanks,

Jonny McQuitty

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Subject: Article & Photo re Former 408 Sqn WW2 Airman
From:smbg@kiersteads.freeserve.co.uk

Date: Wed, November 18, 2009 9:10 am

Hello;

Thought you might be interested in seeing this photo of Ken Stentiford from the Western Gazette in Yeovil, Somerset, UK. It caught my eye as my uncle, Jack Murray, who was an aero-engine mechanic, and his brother, Stewart, both served in 408 Sqn at RAF Leeming during WW2. Jack is now living at Kings Kourt (Yes, with a "K"!) at 157 Church St, Sussex, NB, E4E 1Z2. I don't know if he is in touch with your association now, but he did attend reunions in the 1970's and 80's. I'm sure he would enjoy hearing from the Association if you have a newsletter ... I believe Stewart is still living in the Sussex area as well.

Kind Regards;

Sterling Kierstead

Sherborne, Dorset, UK

Subject: RCAF Lancaster KB882
From: Avro Lancaster KB882 <info@lancasterkb882.com>
Date: Sun, August 9, 2009 3:44 pm

Sir,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and announce the restoration of former WW2 428 Sqn and RCAF 408 Sqn Avro Lancaster KB882 located in Edmundston, NB.

For the past eight years I have dedicated a great deal of my personal resources to preserve and protect one of Canada's National Treasures.

We are actively conducting preservation and restoration projects on this important aircraft. Having served overseas during WW2 and logging several operational bombing missions on her record, KB882 and her crews then went on during the Cold War to serve an additional twelve years with 408 Squadron, Rockcliffe, ON.

Is it possible to contact your membership on our behalf with a request for former KB882 crews to contact us with their stories and photographs to be included on our new website and small museum located at the Edmundston airport?

Without your assistance, we are missing a very important part of our aircraft's history. I encourage any former 408 Sqn Lancaster crew members and specifically those who flew on or worked on KB882 to contact us to ensure their story is told for future generations

FOR FREEDOM.

Sincerely,
Troy R. Kirkby
KB882 Restoration Team
<http://www.lancasterkb882.com>

Subject: Researching a 408 Sq WWII member
From: lisa Russ <lisa_j_3@msn.com>

Dear Chairman,

My name is Lisa Russ.

In doing some family research I came across a relative, Robert George Alfred Burt (my father's cousin), who served in the 408 Squadron during WWII.

I found many interesting links pertaining to the crew online, made contact with a relative of the pilot and became so interested in the story that I am researching the whole crew of LL637 EQ-P who died on 15/16 March 1944 with the hope that one day I may have enough information to write a memorial book about them from their youth, beginnings in the 408 Squadron and their final resting place in Hilsenheim Communal Cemetery, Bas-Rhin, France.

I am hoping that you may be able to suggest some possible links to more information about these men with regard to the following:

how to find out if anyone still alive from the WWII 408 Squadron knew these men (e.g. is there a way of passing the word along to WWII members that I am looking for help with info on these men?... I know the chance of finding such people are quickly dwindling... and thus the urgency of my research.)

any info that may be available through 408 Squadron on the plane or the crew or any other info you may know of that I may find of use

If you are able to help, here are the following details of the crew:

Sgt. Robert George Alfred Burt: R/206418 RCAF (Air Gnr - Tail Gunner)

Sgt. Douglas Cruickshank: 620947 RAF (Flt. Engr)

Pilot Offr. William Lawrence Doran: J/86233 RCAF (W.Op/Air Gnr)

Sgt. Robert Henry Hudson: 3050164 RAFVR (Air Gnr)

Pilot Offr. Norman Andrew Lumgair: J/86440 RCAF (Pilot)

Pilot Offr. George Parker: J/85528 RCAF (Nav)

Pilot Offr. William Taylor: J/89913 RCAF (Air Bomber)

Kind Regards,

Lisa Russ

