



**71 YEARS**



# 408 “Goose” Squadron Association Newsletter SPRING 2012

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## From the Association

Good day to all from CFB Edmonton and 408 THS. It is my pleasure to finally be able to say that the 408 Sqn Association Newsletter is finally back up and running.

Now I know it has been a very long time since a newsletter has been produced and sent out to everyone, but there have been many (and I do mean many) reasons we haven't been able to. Let's take a look back at how things have been going here at 408.

Of course everyone knows about our deployments to Afghanistan and how busy that has kept us overseas for the last number of years, but I am glad to say that all members of 408 have now safely returned home.

Along with deploying overseas, we have been extremely busy here at home. With limited personnel and resources we still had to support numerous operations here in Canada.

With our usual supporting tasks for the army during various exercises we have also been deployed to help fight the floods in Manitoba, help evacuate those threatened by wild fires in northern Saskatchewan, provide transport and support for the Royal Visit.

Also there was the Calgary Stampede and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for 408 Sqn, which I must say was a fantastic event that I was glad I could attend. We returned to Nakusp, BC after a few years absence to help commemorate Remembrance Day.

We also had a Change of Command take place with LCol Jeff Smyth passing the torch to LCol John Casey in July 2011.

Needless to say we have been busy! But with everyone now back home, we are reconstituting ourselves to prepare for the next mission that is passed down our way.

In early 2012, we moved up to Yellowknife, NWT to support the army and to reassert ourselves in the Great White North. We have numerous exercises planned that will surely keep us as busy as we have been.

I am extremely pleased to say we are back, and with the help of numerous individuals around me and abroad, bring you a newsletter and help build a strong Association we can all be proud of!

**For Freedom!**

Capt Damon Werny  
Secretary

# **Commanding Officer 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron Lieutenant Colonel J.R. Casey, CD**

LCol Casey joined the Canadian Forces in 1989 as an Officer Cadet. He graduated from College militaire royal du Canada in 1994 with a Bachelor of Military and Strategic Studies. Upon completion of pilot training, he received his wings and a promotion to Lieutenant in Nov 1995.

Posted to 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in Edmonton, Alberta, he flew both the CH135 Twin Huey and the CH146 Griffon while serving as a Standards Officer and Night Visions (NVG) Goggle Specialist. In 2001 he was posted to 403 Helicopter Operational Training Squadron where his duties included Instructor Pilot, Course Director, Standards instructor and Deputy Officer Commanding Aviation Tactics Flight while OPI for development and execution of the Advanced Tactical Aviation Course.

Promoted to Major in 2005, he was posted back to 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron serving as Air Command's first Officer Commanding the Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle on OP ARCHER. Upon returning from Afghanistan, he assumed the role of Squadron Operations Officer until 2008. In 2009 LCol Casey was promoted to his current rank, and posted to Canadian Forces Expeditionary Command HQ where he served as Deputy Chief of Staff – Air Operations.

LCol Casey has served on operational deployments to Haiti in 1995, Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1998 and again 2000, and Afghanistan in 2006.

A graduate of the Army Operations Course and the Joint Command and Staff Program, LCol Casey also holds a Masters of Defence Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada. LCol Casey is married to Christa Greer who is the Director of Operations of the National Institute of Nanotechnology (NINT) within the National Research Council.



# **More 408 Squadron members return home**

By Capt Rod Dietzmann

408 THS PAO

CFB EDMONTON – On a sunny August 26<sup>th</sup> morning, 36 members of 408 “Goose” Tactical Helicopter Squadron (THS) returned home from their five-month tour to Afghanistan. After some flight delays, these airmen and airwomen completed the day-and-a-half journey from theatre to the welcome of dignitaries and the Edmonton Salutes Committee at the Edmonton International Airport’s Shell Aero centre.

The returning group soon loaded on a CF bus and started the now-familiar police-escorted one-hour drive to their hangar located on the Edmonton Garrison. Being mid-morning, there were plenty of honking cars and well-wishers who joined the Edmonton Emergency Services saluting the redeployed airmen and women along the way.

Members of 408 THS joined family and friends to greet the smiling group as they disembarked the bus at the Air Commodore Nelles Woods Timmerman Hangar. A special group of veterans from the Capital Care Kipnes Centre for Veterans were also present. These same veterans had seen off the first soldiers deploying to Afghanistan for the CF’s combat operations, and wanted to be present to welcome the last of the returning combat troops, airmen and airwomen home.

“This was my second tour to Afghanistan,” said Master Corporal Dale Warren, a Chinook flight engineer with Canadian Helicopter Force (Afghanistan) Roto 11 and a Griffon flight engineer at 408 THS. “The whole welcome home from the Shell Aero centre up to seeing our families at the hangar is quite emotional – even the second time around. Having the veterans there for us at the hangar was a very memorable added touch. It’s great to have the support of so many to help us know that what we do is appreciated by those back home.”

408 THS has deployed hundreds of personnel to Afghanistan since first operating the Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in 2006. The squadron was the first to deploy helicopters to Afghanistan in 2008 and has completed three rotations in that role. The last personnel and helicopters will redeploy from Afghanistan by the end of September.

Master Corporal Norm Campbell (right), a Reservist and aircraft mechanic with Edmonton-based 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron (THS), is greeted by Mr. Roy Pritchard, a Second World War veteran with The Royal Winnipeg Rifles.



36 members of 408 THS were welcomed home from Afghanistan by residents of the Capital Care Kipnes Centre for Veterans on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

This was MCpl Campbell's second tour to Afghanistan as part of Canadian Helicopter Force (Afghanistan) [CHF(A)]. Several hundred members of 408 THS, including dozens of Reservists, have deployed to Afghanistan since 2006 – first as part of the Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle operations, and then in 2008 as part of CHF(A).

For many years 408 THS has enjoyed a growing relationship with the Kipnes Centre. Squadron members visit residents, put on an annual breakfast for the residents as well as a beer garden, and participate in events throughout the year.

# A Royal Task

By 2Lt Catie Keyser 408 THS

CALGARY – Four CH-146 Griffon Helicopters from 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron (THS) flew the Royal Couple, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and their entourage during their visit to Alberta July 5-7th 2011.

408 THS was tasked with flying the Royal Couple through the majestic Rocky Mountains, transporting them to and from a secret lodging location for their private day away from the public. The following day, the Griffons flew them into Calgary for the start of the Stampede.

The task was led by Major Drew Gagne, one of the Flight Commanders at 408 THS. He spent months in preparation with many other military members from around Canada. Two recce's and run-through's on location were completed prior to the Royal visit. However, the exact details, such as the secret destination on the 6th of July, were kept under the radar from the rest of the squadron.

Many at the squadron began speculating where this secret location was – Lake O'Hara, Château Lake Louise, or Emerald Lake Lodge. The following day, media discovered and exposed the secret location to be Skoki Lodge, a secluded cabin near the Lake Louise Ski Hill. The rustic lodge is a popular cross country ski and summer hiking destination, affording the Royal Couple a private day off.

The task was a great success. The Duke and Duchess took the time after landing in Calgary to shake the hands of Maj Gagne, and the aircrew that had personally flown them: Aircraft Captain Capt Mayfield, Flight Officer Capt Parker, and Flight Engineer MCpl Myles. They thanked all task members for their support and professionalism. Capt Steve Pellerin, a 408 THS pilot assigned to one of the other helicopters, stated, "I was honoured to have the opportunity to support the Royal Visit. It felt surreal when all of the crewmembers lined up beside our aircraft in two ranks to be thanked by the Royal Couple."

one of the other helicopters, stated, “I was honoured to have the opportunity to support the Royal Visit. It felt surreal when all of the crewmembers lined up beside our aircraft in two ranks to be thanked by the Royal Couple.”



At the conclusion of their Canadian visit, Prince William praised our country and stated that Canada had exceeded his expectations. 408 THS was very proud to be given the opportunity to take part in this historic visit.

# A Gaggle of Geese celebrate 70 years

By Capt Rod Dietzmann

408 THS PAO

CFB EDMONTON – What happens when over 300 Geese gather together for a weekend? No, it's not a big mess. In the case of 408 "Goose" Squadron's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion, they have an incredibly fun time.

Former and current members of 408 "Goose" Squadron, and their guests, gathered in Edmonton June 24-26 to celebrate 70 years of 408 Squadron history. The three days were filled with a meet and greet, squadron open house, gala dinner with Premier Ed Stelmach as guest of honour, and a memorial service.

Major Keith McQuarrie, the 408 Squadron Air Reserve Flight Commander, was the Reunion Coordinator. He shared, "Organizing a large event such as this is always a challenge but, with the help of a fantastic organizing committee and the efforts of many hands to set up and clean up, it ended up being a tremendous success."

Pretty much all generations of squadron members were in attendance, including veterans from the Second World War (408 Squadron started as Canada's second bomber squadron during the War, and has been a Tactical Helicopter Squadron since 1971).

As she has for every other reunion "Mother Goose", aka Henrietta Rayner, was front and centre once again. The 92-year-old former 408 Squadron cook enjoyed the weekend in fine form. Mother Goose has become the squadron's unofficial senior figure-head, who so many look to for anecdotes and just a good chuckle as she shares her memories.

The weekend was filled with many anecdotes and made for several new memories. As members bid farewell to one-another after Sunday's memorial service, you could feel the Gander pride. Many returned home, others prepared to head back to work, while almost 100 members had to miss it all as they were still deployed in Afghanistan.

For a brief history of 408 Squadron, please visit

<http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/1w-1e/sqns-escs/page-eng.asp?id=390>



Former Commanding Officer of 408 Squadron Lieutenant-Colonel Jeff Smyth, left, shares in one of many conversations he had with former members of Goose Squadron. LCol Smyth relinquished command of 408 Squadron on July 7<sup>th</sup>.

Photo: Cpl Carole Beggs, CFB Edmonton Base Imaging

# Bad Night At Goose House

By Wally Kasper

As most of you readers will know the Goose Squadron nested in for some time at a place called Linton-on-Ouse. They were the last squadron in Bomber Command to fly the twin engine Hampden, then they converted to the four engine heavies. They were one of three squadron's in Bomber Command to fly the Mark 2 Lancaster.

The Brits had two main production lines for engines and two for airframes, the Halifax and the Lancaster and the in line Merlin 1200 horses engine and the air-cooled 1600 horses job. The Lancs air-frame performed well with the Merlins but the Hali did not get the height so the decision was made to put the air cooled 1600 horse-power Hercules engines into the Halls and the Merlins into the Lancs. Both worked very well.

But we had the Lancs with the 1600 horses and she was the queen of the sky. A lovely well behaved lady that every pilot fell in love with at first flight. There was just one thing about her landings, she tended to deliver an unwanted bounce from time to time in spite of my perfection in calculating distances from the runway. I knew that she had entered into a conspiracy with the rest of the crew because a bounce always cost me a round of beer the next time we were in the mess. I could never get any evidence of this conspiracy so I just paid up. But I digress.

We had a Squadron Commander named Dave Jacobs, Wing Commander David Sinclair Jacob, DFC, to be precise, and this was one of those really great ones, who seem to rise, like cream on milk. No noise, ego, or bluster, just high intelligence enormous competence and a huge awareness of others as human beings.

I did the "Hello sir" thing the day we checked into the squadron and then, about three or four days later we were scheduled to do a cross country trip as a part of our introduction to the Mark 2. I had gone out to check out the aircraft and was sitting in the cockpit with the window open when I saw the little three quarter ton truck that Wing Commanders had in those days. He had pulled up in front of the aircraft and walked over to one of the ground crew who

were doing their magical things for pre flight check. and then I heard the Wing Commander say to one of the Lac’,” Good Morning, George, how is that child of yours that has the mumps’ They chatted for a moment or two and then the Wing Commander drove away.

All of your readers will know, Squadron Commanders have a lot of staff under their command, and this man knowing this ground crew man and where to find him and taking the time to come out to the dispersal to see him about his child, indicates a degree of humanity which is rarely found. But I was to get these glimpses of this humanity in this man from time to time. If you will forgive me repeating myself he was one of the great ones.

Now a bit of background for the end of this story. Dave Jacobs had done a first tour with 408 Squadron on the Hampdens, and then after a lapse of some months had gathered up his first tour crew, added the necessary new people four engines required and started his second tour. They need twenty trips for the second tour and they find themselves back in the aerial trenches during what is known as the Battle of Berlin.

The Germans have built up the defense system over the 1942-43 years as Bomber Command was growing in numbers and strength and as we used to say the “chop rate” was becoming frightening. Leipzig-69 bombers, Nuremberg—97 bombers and so on. The Kammlhuber Line is very efficient.

By the next spring, 1944, the Battle of Berlin has the Germans focusing all the resources they can on the defense of Germany against Bomber Command attacks. They have to maintain, as best they can, the Italian front, the Soviet front.

Into this situation Bomber Command advises the squadrons of their “targets for tonight”, 408 will send 18 aircraft out to join other squadrons for a total of 375 aircraft attacking Dortmund.

As the main stream approaches the target the action heats up. There is a light cloud cover, just enough to be a real nuisance as the searchlights stay unmoving below so that the bombers are silhouetted against the clouds and the fighters have a multiplicity

**Continued next page**

of targets to choose from. Talk about fish in a barrel And we all have to do our bomb runs through this situation. George Mason is about a thousand feet above and behind another 408 aircraft going in-he sees the EQ.O identifiers quite clearly, just before a flak burst hits O for orange right in the bomb bay and the explosion is clearly felt by George's crew as they go into drop their bombs.

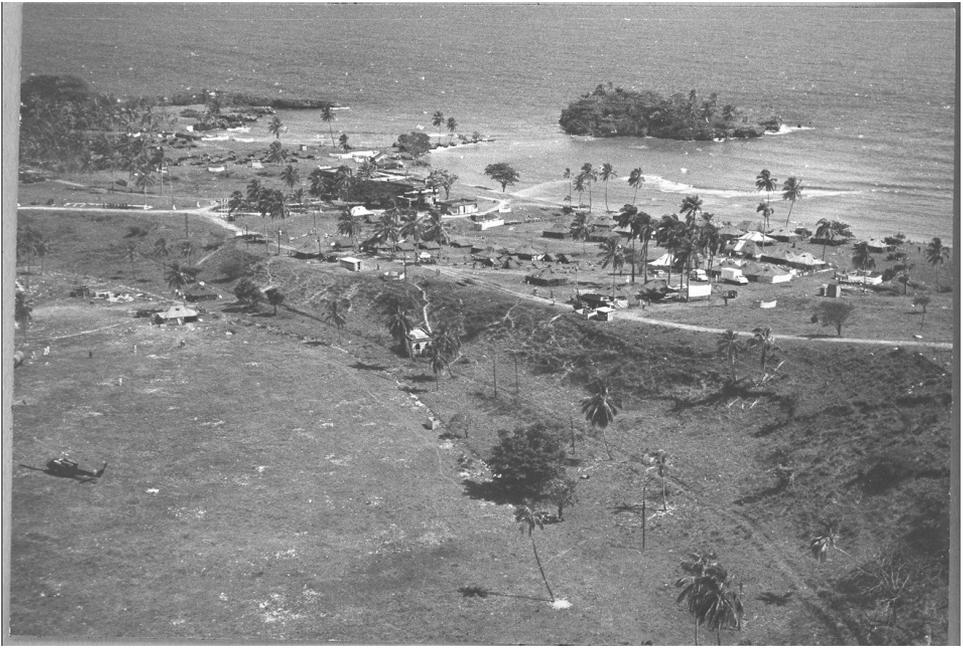
It's not until they get home and look at the status board that they realize that the Wing Commander was flying O for Orange that night. His crew was made up of the section leaders and we all know that they would have had two more trips to do to finish their second tour.

We are all standing around in the de-briefing room. George tells us what he has seen with O for Orange and then it starts to sink in. We have all seen lots of empty spaces on the status board before this night but I could not ever know how many dry eyes there were because my eyes were too full of tears to see. This was a man among men and we would not see his like again.

RIP David Sinclair Jacobs, DFC.



# 408 Squadron In Jamaica





# **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](http://www.forfreedom.ca)**

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

# Letters and Requests

This is just a sample of people requesting assistance with information. More requests can be found at [www.forfreedom.ca](http://www.forfreedom.ca)

Name: Ted SUMNER  
E-mail: TSumner37@aol.com

I am an ex-RAF Sqn Ldr of 38 years service and volunteer history researcher for the British National Trust at Beningbrough Hall near York, England. Beningbrough Hall was used by SNCO Aircrew of No 408 Sqn RCAF during WW2 as a billet. A Room was opened this year as a Memorial to those SNCO aircrew of No 35 and 76 Sqn RAF and No 408 Sqn RCAF who resided in the Hall between April 1941 and VE-DAY 1945. In 2013 a special exhibition is being mounted to celebrate the 70th anniversary of members of No 408 Sqn RCAF taking up occupation Beningbrough Hall from their base at nearby RAF Linton on Ouse. I have had fantastic assistance from sqn veterans such as Ron Butcher, Wally Kasper, George McKillop and Larry Motiuk. However, I would appreciate any assistance from ex-Sqn Members [aircrew or ground crew] and NOK in order to enhance the information available so that full justice can be given to those who aided my country in the grim days of WW2.



Name: Mary Halbert  
E-mail: [eeeyore1968@eastlink.ca](mailto:eeeyore1968@eastlink.ca)

Comment:

My grandfather was Sergeant Garfield Kelly Squadron Disciplinarian of the 408 Goose Squadron from Kingsville, ON Canada. I would appreciate it if anyone has any information or stories of what it was like to serve with my grandfather during the war to please e-mail me. He has long passed on so only his children will know of these stories. With much thanks,  
Mary Halbert.

Name: Douglas Smith  
E-mail: douglasesmith@sympatico.ca

My Dad, Allan James Smith was stationed at Rockcliffe in the 50's. I have log books of his flights to and from 408 with crew members listed as well. I would love to share the knowledge and find out more about what my dad did during his time with the 408. Perhaps someone here knew or worked with him. I would love to hear from you. Thank you.

Respectfully, Doug Smith



Name: Ken Hicks  
E-mail: ken@workplacesafetygroup.com

my name is Ken Hicks, and I served as a flight engineer on huey's from 1978 to 1980. I would like to connect with anyone who I worked with during those years.



Name: Dan Olenick  
E-mail: dolenick@telus.net

Anyone knowing F/L Peter Olenick during the Rivers year please send along a note of any interest.



Name: Gord Cole  
E-mail: gordcole@rogers.com

My dad, Henry John Cole, served with the 408 during WWII. I don't know his service dates, but assume he was in the UK in the 1941 - 1945 time period. If anybody knows any details of his time with the 408, I would love to know. Unfortunately he is no longer with us, and I would like to gather as much information as possible.

Kind regards. Gord

Name: Debbie  
Email: donkeykickasstoo@hotmail.com

Hello, I a looking for any information for my Mother, who lost her brother, William George Gittings, 408 Squadron on August 12, 1942. He was from Hamilton, Ontario. He was listed as missing. Any information would be much appreciated. Thank you



Name: Anne Clayson  
Email: aclayson@frkl.wnyric.org

Hello,  
I am in search of any info I can find concerning my uncle Donal C. Tonkin who served with the 408 during WWII. He was a pilot of- ficer and his Halifax was shot down in the night of Dec. 24, 1944. He is buried on Holland. I would very much appreciate any thing you could tell me and I do have some photos I would be happy to share of him and his crew.

Anne Clayson



Name: B.Hutton  
Email: onelove\_africa@hotmail.com

My grandfather was a Senior Medical Officer in the Goose Squadron. HUTTON, W/C Douglas Verity (C4088)  
He died before I was born and I would greatly appreciate any infor- mation or photos anyone may have of him.  
Thank you so much in advance.

