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# Flypast



Newsletter of the CAHS Toronto Chapter  
A division of The Canadian Aviation Historical Society  
[www.cahs.ca/chapters/toronto](http://www.cahs.ca/chapters/toronto)

## CAHS Toronto Chapter Meeting

Saturday September 30, 2017

1:00 PM

### *CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE*

215 Yonge Blvd. at Wilson Avenue, Toronto  
(Lt. - Gen Guy Simonds Auditorium - Ground Floor)

**Speaker: Mr. Bill Long RCAF (Ret'd)**

**Topic: *My Postwar RCAF Experiences / Harvard to Boeing and on***



Boeing CC-137 Photo Courtesy - Bill Long

## Ninth Annual CAHS Toronto Chapter Dinner Meeting, May 7

**Topic:** 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 10/110/400 Squadron

**Speaker:** LCol Jillian Bishop CD, Commanding Officer,  
400 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, Canadian Armed Forces

**Reporter:** Gord McNulty



Speaker LCol Jillian Bishop CD,  
Commanding Officer, 400  
Tactical Helicopter Squadron,  
Canadian Armed Forces

The Toronto Chapter's Annual Dinner Meeting is always an enjoyable and special occasion. Our Ninth Annual Meeting at the Canadian Forces College Armour Heights Officers' Mess continued our tradition of excellence. Thirty-five guests attended. After informal socializing, Chapter Treasurer Brigadier-General Paul Hayes, OMM, CD (Ret'd) welcomed all and expressed thanks to Major-General Fraser Holman, CD, (Ret'd), Honorary Colonel of the CFC. Paul introduced the Head Table --- his wife, Wendy Austin; the guest speaker, LCol Jillian Bishop; former Chapter President Howard Malone and his wife, Pat; and Chapter President Sheldon Benner. Grace was said by Chapter Member Tom Nettleton. Everyone enjoyed a very good dinner of roast beef, chicken or vegetarian lasagna prepared by the College and Mess staff. Sheldon introduced the Chapter Executive to a round of applause. It was a pleasure for Paul, who spent nine years as the Honorary Colonel of 400 Squadron, to introduce our distinguished guest speaker.

LCol Bishop enrolled as an aerospace engineer in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1986. She obtained a Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) from Royal Military College in Kingston, ON. LCol Bishop has served her entire career in support of the tactical aviation community working with the Kiowa, Twin Huey and Griffon helicopters. She has served at 403 Helicopter Operational Training Squadron, 2 Tactical Aviation Support Squadron, the Land Aviation Test and Evaluation Flight (at 403 Squadron), the Directorate of Aerospace and Engineering Program Management (Transport and Helicopters), 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, 1 Wing Headquarters and 400 Tactical Helicopter Squadron. During her second posting at 403 Squadron she transferred from the regular force to the reserve force.

LCol Bishop's operational experience includes a Technical Assistance Visit to Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2008 followed by a tour in Kandahar as the Air Wing A4 Maintenance from March to November 2009. Currently the Commanding Officer of 400 Tactical Squadron, she is married to Colonel Timothy Bishop, an artillery officer currently commanding the Canadian Armed Forces Joint Counter Explosive Threat Task Force.

Speaking about her "favourite topic, 400 Squadron," LCol Bishop noted the squadron will turn 85 on 5 October this year. It has the proud title of being the oldest and longest-serving squadron in the RCAF. The story originated in the early 1920s when the RCAF was formed. Since then, and through the Great Depression, cutbacks in the permanent force enabled creation of a non-permanent active air force component.

### Formation & Pre-WWII

In October, 1932, authority was granted to form three non-permanent units: No. 10 in Toronto, No. 11 in Vancouver and No. 12 in Winnipeg. 10 Squadron was formed with a headquarters and three flights. The establishment included a squadron leader and six flight lieutenants, 13 flying officers and pilot officers, and 159 airmen, as well as a medical detachment and some permanent positions.

LCol Bishop said it's interesting to compare those early numbers to today's air force, which is very similar in actual strength. S/L G.S. O'Brian was appointed the first Commanding Officer, mandated to secure and furnish temporary quarters at 87 Richmond Street East in Toronto. He set up supply and communication lines with higher headquarters and interviewed prospective Squadron members.

The family of F/L Frank Trethewey owned de Lesseps Field at the intersection of what is now Jane St. and Trethewey Dr. in the Mount Dennis area. It was estimated this airfield would take 10 days of work to be suitable for operations. The property was leased and the Squadron moved there starting in August 1933. Hangars and office accommodations were prepared and painted by squadron members. Four Gipsy Moth aircraft arrived in October 1934, with tools and spare parts. The engines were in very poor condition, but the first air operation began in late October. It consisted of close reconnaissance and message dropping in support of a tactical exercise conducted by the Toronto Regiment and Mississauga Horse. The squadron borrowed two civilian aircraft for the exercise. That raised the eyebrows at higher headquarters, until it was learned the aircraft belonged to squadron members.

In the summer of 1934, Toronto City Council adopted No. 10 Squadron and granted it permission to use the title City of Toronto. In April 1935, with approval of the Chief of the General Staff, the squadron was officially designated as 10 City of Toronto Army Co-Operation Squadron. It became the first RCAF squadron honored with a city affiliation. Along with operational, training and technical duties came the inevitable ceremonial parades, such as the Toronto Garrison Church Parade, the King's Jubilee Celebration at the Ontario Legislature and Warrior's Day at the CNE.

The squadron next received the first of three Kinner-powered Fleet Fawns. Aircraft provided training during summer deployment at Camp Borden. In October, 1935, S/L Wilf Curtis assumed command of the squadron. Today, his grandson, Patrick, is Honorary Colonel of the squadron. The squadron, continuing to represent the RCAF operationally and ceremonially, sent a contingent to England in 1937 for the coronation ceremonies for King George VI. At home, it participated in coronation events in Toronto, including a flypast salute. The squadron received an Avro 621 Tutor and moved to a new facility, previously owned by the York Badminton Club.

When the non-permanent squadrons were formed, it was anticipated there would never be more than nine permanent squadrons. Therefore, the designation numbers for non-permanent squadrons started at 10. However, by late 1937, plans began to increase permanent squadrons beyond 10. Renumbering of non-permanent squadrons was required. As a result, 10 Squadron was named 110 Squadron.



110 Squadron Banner.  
*Photo Courtesy - Carl Mills*

In 1938, an Avro 626 Tutor arrived. Ground school training included artillery co-operation, air reconnaissance, map reading, armament and Morse code. With the deteriorating situation in Europe, training took a subtle change in direction and intensity. Training included parachute inspection and packing, army co-operation methods, photo, signals equipment and message pickup and dropping. A Tiger Moth arrived in May, 1938, bringing the squadron inventory to four different types of aircraft. That number was reduced to three when, shortly after, the Gipsy Moth was struck off unit strength. Another Tutor was added. At this time, the squadron suffered its first aircraft accident --- the crash of a Tiger Moth. The pilot was seriously injured.

## WWII

In November 1938, on the ceremonial side, 110 Squadron Pipes and Drums debuted during a church parade. This was the first pipe band in the RCAF. The Pipes and Drums remain part of 400 Squadron today. On 3 September, 1939, the unit was called on active service when Prime Minister Mackenzie King recommended to Parliament that Canada declare war on Germany. A total of 110 airmen volunteered for active service. On 10 September, 1939, Canada declared war on Germany. A parade was held the next day

when all personnel were advised of the mobilization order. 110 Squadron members were sworn in and the squadron war diary was officially opened.

Some squadron aircraft were sent elsewhere in Canada to support training at various flying clubs. Squadron pilots kept busy working with the Royal Canadian Artillery. They observed shots from the guns at Camp Borden and flew battery commanders over the batteries to help them appreciate the problems of concealment. For a few months, there had been a rumour about a new, modern aircraft for the squadron. Accordingly, in 1939, the Lysander arrived. The upgrade had not been officially announced, but became inevitable when a Squadron Leader arrived at de Lesseps Field to provide familiarization flights and lectures on performance and maintenance. Late in November, 1939, W/C Curtis arrived at de Lesseps Field. No one knew that Curtis' visit with the Squadron Leader would place 110 Squadron in the vanguard of Canada's participation in the Second World War. However, the Chief of the Air Staff, in a letter to the Minister of National Defence, had expressed concern over the prospect of the RCAF being limited to running training schools and home defence. If a couple of overseas squadrons were formed, Canadian airmen would be assigned to the RAF, as in the First World War. As the letter rightly stated, if Canadian airmen could serve in Canadian squadrons, they would bring credit to Canada and the nation, and build up traditions for the RCAF and their squadrons.



Lysanders of 400 Squadron at Odiham, UK C. 1941  
*Photo Courtesy - 400 Squadron Historical Society*

In December, 1939, Canada announced the dispatch of No. 110 Army Co-Operation Squadron to Europe. Intensive training was planned, but events unfolded so quickly that the plan was never really implemented. The squadron was ordered to move to Ottawa. Other permanent and non-permanent personnel were posted to 110 Squadron. Soon, after Christmas, Lysanders were delivered to the Squadron. In 1940, training on the Lysander included mastering firing, technical reconnaissance, aerial photography, wireless telegraphy and night flying. In late January, the squadron moved to Lansdowne Park in Ottawa. Accommodation was cold, damp and

dirty under the football field grandstand. A farewell dinner was given and on 31 January the squadron was inspected and addressed by Prime Minister King.

On 13 February, the squadron boarded trains for Halifax. The next day, the 430 airmen of the squadron formed up and marched aboard the Duchess of Bedford. As the squadron travelled across the Atlantic, it was escorted on the sea and on the air. One of the participating pilots was Leonard Birchall, who later would become a wartime hero as the "Saviour of Ceylon," rose to Air Commodore, and was also an Honorary Colonel of 400 Squadron. The cross-Atlantic trip took 10 days, stopping at Liverpool. When 110 Squadron arrived, it represented the entire RCAF. The arrival was reported with embellishment in the media. The group was described as being comprised of farmers, fur trappers, Mounties, and former cowboys. In short a rough, tough Wild Western mob!

The squadron served in locations in Britain, France and Germany. The first operating station was Old Sarum in Salisbury. Ground training commenced with RAF fighter squadrons. Two Lysanders came on strength, part of an eventual plan of 18. Flying training started in March. Formation of the Canadian Corps took longer than anticipated, so the squadron was assigned to the British Army's IV Corps. Plans to move the squadron to France were cancelled after the German invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg

and push into France. With many RAF squadrons returning from France, 110 Squadron assisted with maintenance and servicing of the returning aircraft. The Squadron then moved to Odiham in Hampshire due to overcrowding at Old Sarum. The first casualty occurred on 17 July. In support of a Canadian Army simulated dive bombing exercise, an aircraft pulled up too late. It impacted the ground and both crew members were killed. Air raids over Britain intensified but all units in training including 110 Squadron were ordered to remain on the ground. Their only operational flights consisted of observing damage to British facilities. Inactivity was difficult for squadron personnel. Some asked to be transferred to fighter squadrons.



Two 400 Squadron Tomahawks on patrol. The SP letters indicates squadron identification. *Photo Courtesy - Larry Milberry*

In 1941, it was announced that 110 Squadron would be equipped with Tomahawks. During the wait for these aircraft, Lysanders were upgraded with newer guns and pigeon-carrying canisters. In January, the second tragedy occurred when a Lysander impacted the ground shortly after takeoff, killing the pilot and his gunner. By this time, the squadron numbering system caused considerable confusion, with the RAF having its own 110 Squadron. To avoid the confusion, the suffix CAN was used to differentiate

RCAF and RAF squadrons, but the suffix wasn't often used in communications. As a result, Canadian squadrons were allocated the block of numbers from 400 to 450.

Effective 1 March, 1941, 110 Squadron was renamed 400 Squadron RCAF, in recognition of being the first RCAF squadron in Britain. April marked the arrival of the Tomahawk. The next tragedy involved the loss of both crew in a Lysander that crashed in bad weather during a search for a Tiger Moth. The following day, a pilot was killed in a Tomahawk crash. He experienced mechanical problems and tried to land in a plowed farmer's field, causing the aircraft to cartwheel across the field. Finally, the squadron was declared operational in October 1941. Its first operational mission against the enemy, involving reconnaissance of the French coast, took place in November.

The first operational loss occurred in December 1941, when an aircraft didn't return after completing a mission over France while under attack from enemy fighters. In February 1942, a mid-air collision between a Tomahawk and a Tiger Moth killed three officers. Apart from flying, squadron life involved trips into nearby towns and farther afield, interaction with local residents, and sports. The squadron's hockey team won the overseas championship, boosting morale. Despite increasing missions over enemy territory,



400 Squadron Mustang Is somewhere in England  
*Photo Courtesy - The History Hangar*

more casualties occurred during training than enemy action. Two more pilots died in Tomahawk crashes. Two Mustangs arrived in June 1942 to replace the Tomahawks. The first fatal Mustang crash occurred in bad weather shortly after July. 400 Squadron then deployed 12 aircraft, 17 pilots and groundcrews to Gatwick, to participate in air operations for the Dieppe Raid. Squadron pilots flew one third of the

reconnaissance sorties. One squadron aircraft was shot down during the raid. The squadron began to participate in more than recce ops, flying low-level intruder ops and engaging enemy targets. Its first aerial victory occurred in November, but another crash that month claimed the lives of two officers.

In December, S/L W.B. Woods received a DFC for his detachment support to the Coastal Command. In February 1943, the squadron was presented with its crest, signed by King George VI. The crest included an eagle's head. An eagle recognized the squadron's reconnaissance role and tomahawks represented the squadron's aircraft when the crest was applied for.

Later, in 1943, 400 Squadron suffered its first 'friendly fire' incident when a pilot was shot down by RAF aircraft. The Mustangs resembled some enemy aircraft. To avoid more tragedy, bands were painted around the wings and tail to improve identification by friendly aircraft. Flying over France meant more tragedies would occur. Three pilots survived after being shot down over France. Two became prisoners of war, but one avoided capture through France, Spain and then Gibraltar. He was finally reunited with his squadron almost one year after being shot down.

The squadron was dubbed "the train-busters" because of its ability in destroying enemy ground targets. Some enemy aircraft were downed as well and in November 1943 another pilot was awarded a DFC. The Mustang was ideally suited to low-level tactical recce and ground attack. However, there was growing emphasis on high-altitude, long range strategic recce. By the end of 1943, the squadron re-equipped with the Spitfire and the Mosquito. Both were unarmed and relied on altitude, speed and camouflage to evade interception.

By May 1944, the squadron was preparing for the invasion of continental Europe. On D-Day Minus One, 5 June, 400 Squadron completed about 15 photo sorties in preparation for the invasion, then supported the invasion throughout. On 1 July, a flight of aircraft moved to the continent, followed by groundcrew and admin staff. The full squadron joined a month later, almost four years after they originally planned to operate out of France.



(c) 1999 Rick Kent

400 Squadron Mustang MK I RCAF October 1942 Showing Identity White Band. *Graphic Courtesy - Rick Kent*



Spitfire PR.XI in wartime blue reconnaissance colours. *Photo Courtesy - USAF Museum*



An actual 400 Squadron Mosquito PR.XVI somewhere in England *Photo Courtesy - The History Hangar*

Late in 1944, Germany reserved their aircraft for an attack on Allied airfields in France. The attack, on New Year's Day, 1945, extensively damaged the squadron. Ten aircraft on the ground were destroyed. Five were in maintenance and only three operational aircraft were left. Luckily, no squadron personnel were injured. The Allies advanced rapidly toward Germany. 400 Squadron was an integral part of the advance. In April, the squadron followed the army across the Rhine and set up their operating location in Germany. As the war ended, the squadron conducted p.r. flights and monitored shipping before returning to Britain in

### August and disbandment.

During the war, the squadron carried out 3,000 sorties, flew 19,000 flying hours, destroyed 183 locomotives and countless other ground targets. However, 31 lives were lost. The "firsts" credited to 400 Squadron included the first auxiliary unit formed, the first pipe band, the first RCAF squadron overseas, the first squadron to move to Normandy after D-Day, and the first RCAF squadron to cross the Rhine.

### Postwar



400 Squadron Harvard II AH185. C.1950 The cowlings and rudders of 400 Squadron Harvards were painted in alternate blue & white stripes

Expeditor. In 1960, it upgraded with the versatile Otter, with a substantial increase in payload capability, room to move cargo loads of up to 2,000 pounds and space for nine people as well as the pilot and co-pilot. Support to the army increased and summer deployments moved to Petawawa.

With armed forces unification in 1968, 400 Squadron was renamed City of Toronto Air Reserve Squadron and reassigned from Air Transport Command to Mobile Command. On 10 June, 1961, the squadron was presented with its Squadron Standard in recognition of 25 years of continuous service. It was the first such presentation for an RCAF squadron. A thunderstorm arrived in the middle of the parade but it moved on quickly and ceremonies continued with a Sabre flypast. The Standard is proudly displayed and transferred from CO to CO during transfer of command every two years.

It was only fitting that 400 would be the first auxiliary squadron to fly after the war. In August 1946, it was equipped with the Harvard. In October of that year, it relocated to Downsview, redesignated 400 Fighter Squadron Auxiliary, and equipped with its first jet, the Vampire. It resumed summer deployments at Camp Borden with the Harvard and in 1949, with both aircraft, at RCAF Station Deseronto east of Trenton. It received its first Silver Star two-seat jet trainer in April 1955. In 1956, the squadron re-equipped with the Sabre Mk. 5. By 1958, Canada's role in the defence of North America was assigned to regular squadrons. 400 Squadron was then assigned to light transport and search and rescue, and equipped with the



400 Squadron at Downsview Mid - 1950's showing Harvard, Vampire and Sabrejet F-86 aircraft.



400 Squadron Otter 685 Photo - Canadian Air & Space Museum

400 Squadron began Northern operations, including supporting the Northwest Territories with aerial tracking of wildlife movements. Churchill, Manitoba, was an annual exercise location, with forward deployment farther into the North. The squadron was regularly tasked with SAR operations. In 1980, reserve units were reorganized and 400 Squadron was re-equipped with the CH 136 Kiowa, for training and light observation in direct support to the army. CFB Downsview was closed with military budget cuts in the 1990s.

With the CH 146 Griffon chosen to replace the Kiowa and the CH 135 Twin Huey fleets, 400 Squadron took on the Griffon in 1996. It absorbed 411 Squadron and moved to CFB Borden. The Griffon is currently flown in direct support of the army for reconnaissance and mobility roles. 400 Squadron retains its City of Toronto name and proud ties to the city. It has supported maintenance of the Early Warning System in the North during Exercise Hurricane, and completed VIP duties including the papal visit in 2002, and royal visits in 2009. In 2007, the RCAF bought five CC-177 Globemaster III heavy transports which among other things can hold three Griffons, extending the Griffon's reach to the North and around the world. In 2008, 400 Squadron took on a six-month unmanned aerial vehicle rotation in Kandahar, using an aircraft that is basically a flying camera and catapulted into the air for a subsequent soft landing and retrieval by squadron members.

The ops often didn't go as planned. In 2009, the regular Griffon squadrons deployed to Afghanistan. 400 Squadron supported those units in every rotation in Kandahar.

Flying a CH-147 Chinook helicopter on 5 August, 2010, 400 Squadron pilot Capt. William Fielding, was the first squadron pilot shot down since the Second World War. He landed the aircraft despite considerable fire, saving a full load of personnel who were soon rescued by ground forces. Capt. Fielding was awarded a Medal of Military Valour by the Governor General and flies with the squadron today. The squadron continues to fly in training and in support of operations in every reach of Canada. It was lead squadron for tactical helicopter support to both the Vancouver Winter Olympics and the G8 Summit in 2010. It also assisted in the Winnipeg floods in 2011 and supports fellow squadrons in any way it can, such as support of humanitarian disaster relief in the Philippines in 2012.

Afghanistan took a toll on the Griffons, so permanent force technicians were moved to the squadron to perform heavy maintenance and overhaul. While permanent members now greatly outnumber reservists, the reservists remain key in maintenance, test flying and ferrying aircraft to and from their home squadrons. 400 Squadron is also tasked with providing load teams, disassembling and loading Griffons on and off the CC-177s in support of operations in Iraq.

Here in Toronto, 400 Squadron annually fundraises and fly toys to Sick Children's Hospital in Operation Ho Ho Ho and participates in sports events. It sends a contingent to Sunnybrook Hospital every



Kiowa Helicopter on pylon at CFB Borden  
Photo - Special thanks to Eric Dumigan



Remembrance Day. As LCol Bishop observed, 400 Squadron maintains the highest standard of service on its 85th anniversary. Paul Hayes thanked our speaker for a superb presentation covering the rich history of a fine squadron. In appreciation, Paul presented LCol Bishop with a gift of \$500 from the Chapter for Operation Ho Ho Ho this year and a copy of Dr. Robert Galway's book, *The Early Airfields of Toronto*.



400 Squadron Griffons and Chinook in Afghanistan Artist - John Walmsley, Member CAAA. Courtesy of Carl Mills

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## Chapter News October 2017

### CHAA FlyDay among highlights of successful 54<sup>th</sup> Annual CAHS Convention in London

More than 60 CAHS members attended the first CAHS Convention and AGM ever held in London, Ontario, 8-11 June. The highly successful event featured a diversified agenda celebrating Canada's civil and military aviation heritage.

The highlight was undoubtedly a 10 June visit to Tillsonburg Airport, home of the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association. Sunny skies prevailed for a CHAA FlyDay, starting with a briefing on CHAA operations from Terry Scott and Bjarni Tryggvason. Several CAHS members, including the Toronto Chapter's own John Bertram, were thrilled to experience Harvard flights. A formation flight included John, Convention Chairperson Jim Bell, Marco Jonker and Jack Twells. Marco, and Hugh Halliday each had a separate flight, while Robert Orr had an aerobatic flight.

Check out John's excellent five-part photographic Convention post-mortem, including video clips, at <https://johnbertram.smugmug.com/Aviation/CAHSNational/2017Convention> Also check out Gus Curojo's spectacular images of the people and aircraft at [www.gusair.com](http://www.gusair.com) and the "website updates" link.

A special Convention visitor --- the Canadian Warplane Heritage Norseman Mk. V, piloted by Steve McIntosh --- flew in for more excitement before the group returned to the superb Convention venue, the Best Western Plus Stoneridge Inn. Carl Mills then presented on four-engined Canadian aircraft lost during the Korean War. He also distributed a fine pictorial chart celebrating 400 Squadron's 85 Years of Flight. Marilyn Dickson discussed Canadian women flying in the Second World War with the Air Transport Auxiliary.

The Convention opened 8 June with a tour of facilities at London International Airport. Attendees enjoyed a guided tour of Diamond Aircraft, known for its family of aircraft making innovative use of advanced composite materials. Visits to the Jet Aircraft Museum, the International Test Pilot School, the Fanshawe College aviation training facility and the airport group operations building were other highlights.

The day concluded with a Meet and Greet hosted by 427 (London) Wing, Air Force Association of Canada. Built in 1939-40 as an Airman's Canteen, the Wing is believed to be the last representative and still usable structure of its kind in southwestern Ontario. The M & G included presentations by representatives of the Waterloo Warbirds and by Maya Hirschman, Curator of the Secrets of Radar Museum, which is relocating to 427 Wing.

More excellent presentations took place on 9 June at the hotel. Don MacNeil described the four-decade aviation career of his father, the late John A. MacNeil, CD. Bernie Runstedler traced the colourful story of a de Havilland DH60G. Tony Nelson discussed the BCATP, with an overview of bases in southern Ontario and what remains today.

After lunch, Dr. Robert Galway provided an early 1920s pictorial history of "Early Days in the Bush" with the RCAF. James Winkel discussed Saskatchewan Government Airways. David Waechter provided insight on high-speed jet aircraft based on his father's research as an aeronautical engineer at Avro Canada. An overview of the Jet Aircraft Museum was given by Simon Pont, Director of Events and Public Relations. The day ended with another informative and positive AGM.

Everyone enjoyed a good awards banquet. Terry Higgins was presented with the C. Don Long Award for the best *Journal* article in the 2015 publishing year; Dr. Michael Deal received the Mac McIntyre Award for the best researched article; and Dr. George Topple, a former Toronto Chapter president, received the William Wheeler Volunteer Service Award. Congratulations to the honourees!

Much to her regret, scheduled guest speaker, well-known pilot and media personality Jacquie Perrin, couldn't attend on account of illness. In fact, it wasn't until well after the Convention that Jacquie was slowly able to recover. "Thanks again for your understanding," she wrote in an email. "My best to all at CAHS." John Bertram substituted with a spirited audio-visual show but, unfortunately, technical problems sidelined it. We thank John for a commendable effort.

On 11 June, closing presentations were made by Richard Mayne, on William Sharpe's role in the 1914 attempt to establish a national air force, and Richard Goette, on how the RCAF overseas worked with their British cohorts during the Second World War.

Full credit is due to the Convention Organizing Committee, led by Jim Bell. We thank our generous sponsors and partners: the Air Force Heritage Fund; CANAV Books; CanMilAir Decals; London International Airport; CAE Inc.; Best Western Plus Stoneridge Inn; the CHAA; 427 (London) Wing; Challenge Publications; Tourism London.

Plans are going well for the 2018 Convention, in Calgary, 30 May-3 June.

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### **CAHS Toronto Chapter Congratulates Dr. George Topple**



As noted in the report on the convention, Dr. George Topple was awarded the William Wheeler Volunteer Service Award. George's most notable achievement among many was the establishment of the Chapter's Annual Dinner Meeting of which the Chapter just celebrated the ninth year of the popular outing. George has retired from the Chapter Executive, but will continue as a volunteer.

Former Chapter President Dr. George Topple with wife Jean attending the 2011 CAHS Toronto Chapter Dinner

*Photo Credit - Neil McGavock*

**Flypast V. 52 No. 1**

## Trethewey Airfield Plaque Dedication July 15, 2017

Aviation enthusiasts and dignitaries celebrated the much-anticipated unveiling of a commemorative plaque recognizing the Trethewey Airfield, the historic location of Toronto's first airfield, on July 15. The Heritage Toronto dedication ceremony, on a sunny day, took place on what is now Harding Park at 59 Hearst Circle in the Mount Dennis neighbourhood, near Jane Street and Lawrence Avenue West. It was the culmination of several years of work. Toronto Chapter member Dr. Robert Galway, author of the *Early Airfields of Toronto*, spearheaded a successful fundraising initiative and was instrumental in organizing the event. The importance of the Trethewey Airfield is well described in the words of the plaque:

"In 1910, from July 8 to 16, the Ontario Motor League sponsored the first aviation show in the Toronto area, held in a grass field here on mining entrepreneur W.G. Trethewey's model farm. On July 13, thousands watched French pilot Jacques de Lesseps in his Bleriot XI Le Scarabee become the first to fly an airplane over the city of Toronto. Afterward, this site remained popular with early aviators and became a licensed airfield, often called the de Lesseps Aerodrome. Landing lights were installed for night flying, and mail service to Montreal and Detroit was established. In 1928, the de Havilland Aircraft Company of England opened its first Canadian assembly plant here. In the 1930s, the airfield was the base for the Royal Canadian Air Force No. 10 Squadron, later the No. 110 (City of Toronto) Squadron, now the 400 Squadron. The airfield was closed in the mid-1940s and homes were built for Second World War veterans and their families."

The participation of the 400 Tactical Helicopter Squadron Pipe Band added to the special occasion. Brig-Gen (Ret'd) Paul Hayes, Toronto Chapter Treasurer and a former Honorary Colonel of 400 Squadron, was master of ceremonies. Paul called numerous speakers, starting with Heritage Toronto Board Member Brent Pearlman; City of Toronto Ward 12 Councillor Frank Di Giorgio; Toronto Chapter President Sheldon Benner; and Col (Ret'd) Gerry Gilroy, on behalf of the 400 Squadron Historical Society.

Madeleine McDowell, a historian and founding member of the Heritage Toronto Board, read a letter from Sherry Trethewey Stewart of Maple Ridge, BC. She would have liked to attend but was in Peru. The letter expressed best wishes and thanks from the Trethewey family for the ceremony and plaque and their appreciation of Robert Galway's recent visit to Maple Ridge. Robert introduced Mr. and Mrs. David Trethewey of Muskoka who were in attendance.

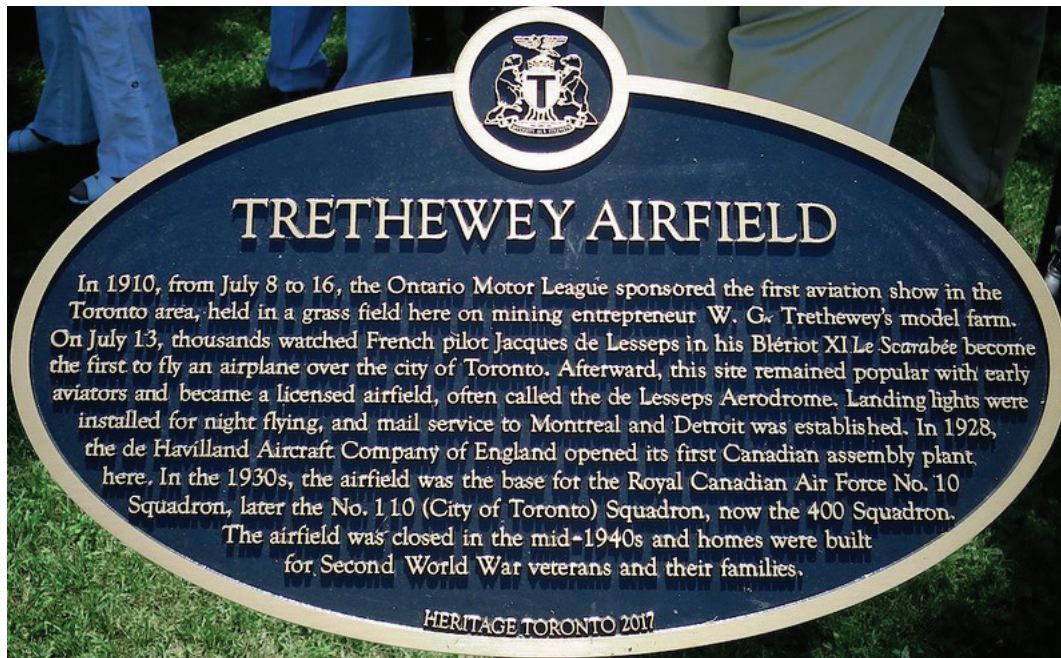
The next speaker was Russ Bannock, DSO, DFC, outstanding Second World War pilot who went on to become president of de Havilland Canada. Russ, who spent 25 years at DHC, noted it was the first time he had seen the original location of the company before it moved to Downsview. LCol Jillian Bishop, Commanding Officer of 400 Squadron, was the final speaker. She noted that F/L Frank Trethewey, one of the first squadron officers to come on strength, negotiated a lease of the property that became the original airfield of this distinguished squadron. Celebrating its 85th anniversary this year, 400 Squadron is the oldest and longest-serving squadron in the RCAF.

The ceremony continued with the squadron Padre reading High Flight, a Prayer for the Fallen, and the Piper's Lament. The plaque was then officially unveiled as the dignitaries went to work with three ceremonial shovels on the base of the monument. Everyone enjoyed a casual reception in the atrium of nearby 12 Division Police Station to conclude a remarkable day. Our thanks to the police and most especially to Robert Galway for all of his effort.

For extensive photo coverage, check out John Bertram's images at <https://johnbertram.smugmug.com/Aviation/CAHSToronto/TretheweyAirfield>.

Also check out a story by history writer Mike Filey in the July 9 issue of *The Sunday Sun* under the headline "Toronto's other airport". Please see the inserted "Photo Appendix" for images of the ceremony.

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The Trethewey Airfield Plaque was unveiled on July 15, 2017

*Photo Credit - Chapter 1<sup>st</sup> VP John Bertram*



## CAHS Toronto Chapter Executive 2017-2018

President & Membership Secretary: **Sheldon Benner**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President: **John Bertram**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President: **Geoff Pyne**

Secretary, Archivist & Historian: **Neil McGavock**

Treasurer: **Brigadier – General Paul A. Hayes**  
OMM, CD (Ret'd)

Director: **Gord McNulty**

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Website Support: [www.torontoaviationhistory.com](http://www.torontoaviationhistory.com)

Volunteers: **Bob Winson** – Website support  
**Ken Churm** – Liaison  
**George Toppie** – (At Large)

The Chapter is a proud sponsor of the “**Don Rogers Memorial Scholarship**” at Georgian College.

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Photo Appendix Trethewey Airfield Plaque Presentation - Page A



400 Tactical Helicopter Squadron Pipe Band and officers marching in to the ceremony.



Master of Ceremonies  
Brig. Gen.(Ret'd) Paul Hayes OMM CD



Heritage Toronto Board Member, Brent Pearlman, delivering a greeting to the assembled guests.



Speaker, City of Toronto Ward 12 Councillor  
Frank Di Giorgio, with B.Gen Hayes



Speaker, Sheldon Benner, President of the CAHS Toronto Chapter



Col Gerry Gilroy (Ret'd) 400 Squadron Historical Society

Photo Appendix Trethewey Airfield Plaque Presentation - Page B



Historian Madeleine McDowell reading a letter from the Trethewey family of BC. *Photo Credit - John Bertram*



Author, Historian and CAHS Toronto member, Dr. Robert Galway. *Photo Credit - John Bertram*



Russ Bannock, DSO, DFC, recalls de Havilland Canada memories. *Photo Credit - Gord McNulty*



LCol Jillian Bishop delivering her comments to the audience. *Photo Credit - John Bertram*



400 Squadron Padre reciting the Poem, High Flight. *Photo Credit - John Bertram*



LCol Jillian Bishop Commanding Officer of 400 Squadron and Squadron Honourary Colonel Patrick Curtis after completing the unveiling of the plaque. *Photo Credit - John Bertram*