



<http://www.cahs.ca/torontochapter>

**Canadian Aviation Historical Society
Toronto Chapter Meeting
September 16, 2006**

Meeting starts at 1 PM

-Under the Glider-

Toronto Aerospace Museum, 65 Carl Hall Road, Toronto



Speaker - We are pleased to have **Mr. Charley Fox** as the speaker for this meeting.

“Recollections of WWII”

This meeting is jointly sponsored by CAHS Toronto Chapter and the Toronto Aerospace Museum- All members, guests and the public (museum admission payable) are welcome to attend.

Refreshments will be served

Information: www.torontoaerospacemuseum.com/news/events

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A “Landing Fee” of \$2.00 will be charged to cover meeting expenses

Next Meeting October 21, 2006

Last Month's Meeting

June 2006

'Airborne Assault --- Under the Glider'

Speaker: Bruce E. Cox

Reporter: Gord McNulty

Toronto Chapter President Howard Malone introduced Bruce E. Cox, of Baillieboro, Ont., an ex-sergeant representing the British Airborne Forces Association Canada. An active jumper and sky diver for many years, Bruce served in the Second World War as a paratrooper with the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment, of the 1st British Airborne Division. He served in campaigns in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and finally Holland, where he participated with the waves of paratroopers who made the ill-fated jump into the German-occupied Netherlands at Arnhem on Sept. 17, 1944. During the Battle of Arnhem, Bruce was taken as a prisoner of war and spent the next nine months as a guest of the Germans. Bruce is well-known in the Northumberland area of Ontario for his participation in the Royal Canadian Legion and contributions to the Dominion Institute's Memory Project. He has spoken at schools, service clubs, historical associations and so on. He is an inspiration to young and old alike. In fact, he celebrated his 81st birthday on Sept. 18, 2004, by jumping once again into Arnhem. It was his fourth jump into the Arnhem drop zone over the years. Bruce has also jumped into the D-Day landing zones three times. All of these jumps have been made in honour of his fallen comrades, and were made possible with the help of Pathfinders, a re-enactment unit headquartered in the U.K. The jumps are done just as they were in 1944, with authentic

parachutes and equipment, and are made from DC-3/Dakotas that are still flying more than 60 years after the war.

Bruce began his compelling, lively presentation by reciting the Airborne Prayer, as used in Canada and the United States. It's slightly different than the British one, but as Bruce noted it says a lot about how the paratroopers feel: "Almighty God, who has brought together in this association to uphold the ideals of the airborne trooper, keep us faithful and true to the finest things in life. Sear in our memories our wartime experiences, so that they may be an inspiration for our peacetime activities. Strengthen and protect the armed forces of our nation, that they may be a safeguard against those who would overthrow our way of life...Help us to use our freedoms for the maintenance of justice among men and nations. Grant that we do this and all other things in memory of our departed comrades, whose presence is among us and never to be forgotten...We ask this in the name of our Lord, amen."

Bruce asked the audience to imagine no fewer than 35,000 soldiers going to one destination, Holland, in September, 1944 in the largest airborne operation ever mounted. Operation Market Garden, as it was known, was an attempt to take bridges over the main rivers of the German-occupied Netherlands, enabling the Allies to advance into Germany without any remaining major obstacles. An American general led the four airborne divisions, including the 1st British. Bruce recalled that it was a veteran army, well-trained, with experience in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. Some of the men in his platoon had been in the Northwest Europe frontier, and had fought in Spain, Finland, Norway, and elsewhere. Bruce

recalled that he was glad to be among soldiers who knew combat and knew what the 'orchestration' of combat was. He explained the term 'orchestration' in the sense that soldiers learned, from the individual sounds of guns, to distinguish whether the gunfire came from friendly sources or from the enemy. Paratroopers were trained in all types of weapons, and they learned to look for the flashes, the cone of fire on the ground, and the spur which told them the angle from where the fire came from. "It was essential. You had to learn it quick," Bruce said. They had to know the difference between a Spandau 34, a 42, and a Bren gun, and between the Schmeisser, and the Sten gun. They also to learn the plop of the mortars, which were "an infantryman's horror." The Germans used the nine barrel, and they also had a three-inch mortar and a two-inch as well. "You had to listen to the bomb going down the barrel with a plop, and you knew you had about eight seconds to get under cover," Bruce said.

A battle on the scale of this operation had never been attempted before. Bruce recalled there was a time when the Allies were rolling back the German Army through the north of France into Belgium. Hitler, however, in his peculiar way, sent four German generals with orders that no one would go through the line in Belgium "unless they were in a body bag." The Germans did manage to stop the rout at that point. Bruce said that was the time the paratroopers were first briefed to go to Arnhem. The 1st Airborne Division was assigned to the task of taking bridges over the three main rivers to facilitate an Allied sweep into northwest Germany. Also, the ports of Holland needed to be secured to improve the supply lines for the whole Allied invasion force. The plan was for the airborne to be the 'carpet layers' at Arnhem, following the

pattern in Sicily, where the airborne dropped 80 miles beyond the army and held the bridges until the army got there. "They were late there and we had no expectation that it would be any different at Arnhem," Bruce said. "In Sicily, they said they would be there in 48 hours, but it was 72. In Arnhem, after 48 hours, they never got there." As Bruce recalled, anyone who has ever seen the 1977 movie, *A Bridge Too Far*, directed by Richard Attenborough, is familiar with the story of this raid. It was initially successful, but considered a failure overall as the final Rhine bridge was not held when the Germans staged a counter-offensive.

In preparation for Arnhem, Bruce said, 16 airborne operations were cancelled from D-Day on, including Caen, the Falaise Gap, Paris --- where Hitler's orders to burn the city had fortunately been disregarded by the German generals --- and more. After the cancellations, the airborne forces were glad to be getting into action. At D-Day, the paratroop operations were done by two American divisions and the British 6th Airborne Division, including the Canadian 1st Parachute Battalion, with the 1st Airborne Division on standby. Bruce recalled seeing the drop zone where the Canadian paratroopers landed on D-Day. At one area, where there was a garrison of about 200 German soldiers, the plan was for 300 paratroopers of the 9th Battalion to attack. However, due to the scattering of the forces and the anti-aircraft fire, only 150 men could be mobilized for the attack and 75 were killed. As Bruce noted, "You always have to have more troops on the attack than in defence."

The 6th Airborne Division flew to Arnhem in Dakotas, leaving from one of the big American bases in Lincolnshire. The sight of all of the Dakotas, "as far as the eye could see," was a

sight Bruce will never forget. "There were 1,300 troop-carrying aircraft in the air just for Arnhem," and another 1,200 for Grave and Nijmegen. Bruce recalled that it was tense as they flew over the North Sea, with some men trying to sleep while others cracked jokes. Then they flew over Holland soon came the words, "Hook up!" The paratroopers hooked a static line onto a wire running the length of the Dakota. It was noisy and windy on the aircraft, with the door open. The troopers would watch green and red traffic lights, with the first man standing in the doorway waiting to go. Bruce recalled that as he stood there, the man in front of him asked him to change positions because he was number 13. Bruce shrugged it off and agreed to change positions. "The outcome of that was that on the first day down he got through two through the ankles . . . Irish luck." The noise and the excitement, Bruce noted, were something to behold as the men were suddenly told to "Go! Go! Go!" and they flew out the door, a procedure dramatically demonstrated by our speaker. They awaited the sight of the "beautiful green beast," the parachute opening above them safely. "You just thank your lucky stars," Bruce said. After landing, the paratroopers would look for the red smoke used by each battalion to denote the land yard and facilitate a rendezvous. It wasn't very long before they were on the road to Arnhem. The RAF, in its wisdom, decided not to drop right at Arnhem because the German defenses were strong --- they had too much anti-aircraft fire guarding the approaches to the bridge. Bruce, however, questioned this line of reasoning. He noted that in one episode at Normandy, three gliders with paratroopers, in an exceptional piece of navigation in the dark, crash-landed only 45 feet from a bridge. They had control of the

bridge in only five minutes. Bruce noted that "the element of surprise is one thing the airborne trooper has going for him." Unlike a conventional battleground, where opposing sides know where the enemy is, the airborne trooper drops into a hostile situation where he is surrounded immediately by the enemy.

The drop zone at Arnhem was eight miles outside of town and the bridge. Unfortunately, the surprise element was gone and the Germans had two SS Panzer divisions within about 10 miles of the airborne forces. Bruce noted: "You can't fight a Panzer division with light airborne troops." In any case the airborne went down the road to Arnhem, where they soon encountered the grisly sight of a German staff car with a general lying out one side, dead, with a woman driver, also dead, beside him. The troopers pushed on until they came under Spandau fire. They ignored it, pushing on further until the fire intensified and they had to wheel around go into the woods to sweep through and overrun the German positions.

Two German prisoners were taken. Bruce recalled taking them down to the company headquarters with a lance corporal friend. Then they came under heavy mortar fire and Bruce took cover. It was too late for the other soldiers --- one sergeant was hit shrapnel in the face, another was hit in the leg. When Bruce's friend was also hit, Bruce grabbed him and ran him across the road into a ditch. Three-quarters of the way there, his friend collapsed. Bruce looked to see where he had been hit, but couldn't find where, so he began to cut the soldier's equipment with a knife. Bruce eventually found he had been hit in the base of the neck and his jugular vein had been cut. He died within a minute. While Bruce was sitting there with him, a platoon sergeant came by to

ask how the fallen soldier was. When Bruce told him he was dead, the sergeant simply said: "Take his tag. Move out." Bruce said it was actually "the right thing to say," so he took his tag and handed it in. "That's how it's got to be," he said solemnly. "There's no time to grieve. You just have to keep moving."

After a pause, Bruce outlined how the airborne pressed on, until they were in the thick of the woods en route into Arnhem and they came under heavy mortar fire. They lost about 20 per cent of the company in about 20 minutes. Bruce recalled that just before Bruce went to Arnhem, he was best man at a wedding. "A little cockney guy." The man's spouse told him, "Bruce, bring him back." "I said, "Honey, I'll do my best,"" Bruce replied. Unfortunately, his friend was the first soldier to be hit. He had shrapnel all along his back. Bruce crawled over to help him, cut his equipment off, dressed his wounds and gave him his morphine shot. A few seconds later, another friend of Bruce's, a fellow from Jamaica who paid his way over to Britain and volunteered for the paratroopers, was hit by shrapnel. Bruce helped him the same way. When the mortar fire let up, Bruce and his fellow paratroopers carried each of the men, with full equipment, out of the firing area into a first aid station. While he was leaving the first aid, Bruce saw another man, the captain of the airborne boxing team, who was completely blinded. That was his sacrifice. However, Bruce noted there is a good side in that the man has overcome his disability and is still jumping, in tandem jumps, after all of these years. The surgeon ordered Bruce back to the fighting --- there wasn't even time for a cigarette --- and they pushed on until they came under heavy fire from some fortified houses. One man, who audaciously took it upon himself to lead the unit in attack, was hit in the arm and as he fell he

knocked Bruce back. He was six foot four. That was a good thing because Bruce was the next man in the line of fire.

By now, Bruce had run out of ammunition. Looking around for some weapons, he found a Spandau 34 that had been left by the Germans. The airborne had to go across an open field to reach houses on the other side, where they expected to face heavy fire. As soon as the fire started, Bruce was to start blasting with the Spandau and his comrades would cover him in the attack. Good luck! Anyway, the strategy worked. Sure enough, when someone opened up on the troopers, Bruce unleashed all of the 100 rounds from the Spandau. When they got to the houses, they were about half a mile from the bridge. They went down to the river, where they came to a brick factory, with massive piles of brick. As soon as they got there, they heard the Panzer tanks. The first of the tanks opened fire, sending bricks and shrapnel flying everywhere. The troopers went to one side of the brick pile and threw three smoke grenades and they exited the other way. They were moving along quite well along the river bank, to within 400 yards of the bridge, when much to their dismay, German anti-aircraft crews on the opposite side spotted them and lowered their guns to open fire. The airborne tried to set up a Vickers gun, but it was knocked out with the loss of five soldiers. The troopers couldn't show themselves from the south side, so they had to fight their way through the houses.

Told to go on patrol, at dusk, Bruce was given a Sten gun ... a weapon that he truly hated. When he came between two houses, his gun ready, a German stepped out and he had his Schmeisser down. "He knew I had him. I could see the look on his face," Bruce recalled. "And I pulled the trigger." Lo and behold, the Sten

misfired. "Faster than a speeding bullet," Bruce got behind the wall and ran two houses down to grab his Canadian 9 mm automatic, waiting for the enemy to come again. "The German must have thanked his lucky stars, crossed himself and said hallelujah," Bruce said. "I often wonder whether he made it through the war. I hope he did. I hope he had the luck that I had." The next day, the airborne were told to defend their position, facing tanks and infantry. Unfortunately, the airborne weren't able to secure the north end of the bridge and it was lost to the Germans. The Polish Airborne Brigade, meanwhile, had made a drop nearby and it was hoped they could link up. By this point, Arnhem was on fire. "The river was like a stream of red, reflecting," Bruce recalled. He and his fellow troopers set off towards the unoccupied anti-aircraft areas, which they quickly booby-trapped with grenades, plastic explosives and mines. About 15 minutes later, as daylight started to come up, they could hear the sound of explosions from the booby-trapped area. "We were under no illusions. They were going to come looking for us," Bruce recalled.

The airborne tried to camouflage themselves as best they could in a ditch in a field. The Germans swept the area in a straight line, but didn't check the corners. They passed within eight feet of three very frightened troopers. "I don't think they would have taken us prisoners at that stage of the game," Bruce said. That night, Bruce used his compass to get a bearing on a star. From then, they would change positions every hour, moving south. About 4:30 a.m. they crossed a dike, got into a ditch, and enjoyed the first real sleep they had had in about five days. Bruce awoke about 9 a.m. "with the runs." The troopers, having exhausted their 48-hour pack and their water, had resorted to using ditch

water. Shortly afterward, they heard a German soldier going by, only about five feet. Bruce woke up the other two guys and asked what they wanted to do. Bruce had three or four full rounds of ammunition left. He asked if they wanted to do "a John Wayne sort of thing," but after a democratic vote, the Nos won. They buried their weapons. When the German was returning, Bruce stood up and surprised the soldier, who dropped his coffee and his rifle as well. When he tried to use his rifle, it was soaking wet with coffee. The German then called his sergeant, who was attached to a German marine battalion. He had traveled widely and spoke good English. He was amazed at how the troopers were able to get past the German platoon position without being detected. Soon after, he lambasted the German forces for overlooking the paratroopers. He came back and to Bruce's relief he proved to be friendly, and very professional. In fact, he made a point of not taking his captives to the Waffen SS, who were in force at Arnhem. Instead, he took the paratroopers in his personal Volkswagen jeep through the other side of Arnhem to a PoW camp. "As we went through Arnhem, I could see all of those Waffen SS, the same outfit that shot 150 Canadians in Germany," Bruce recalled. That same night, Bruce met his brother, who was also a trooper. The PoW experience was the start of another whole set of adventures, but Bruce decided to leave that story to another time.

Bruce answered a number of questions from the audience. It was noted that the Allies used rubber dummies as paratroops in a number of places, and they gave the Germans "quite a scare ... for a while." Bruce recalled that his jump at Arnhem in 2004, he jumped at about 600 feet. It takes 100 to 200 feet for the chute

to develop, leaving a margin of 400 feet. He recalled that he had twists in his rigging lines, and he had to kick to get the twists out. “By the time I got the twists out, I was 150 feet further down,” he said. “And now I had to get the Canadian flag out of a pouch. The damn thing got stuck and I was tugging on it, and I looked down and I was about 15 feet off the deck.” He landed heavily and was quickly assisted by the ground crew. He also recalled one unnerving experience volunteering to fly in a Horsa glider, saying he had never been so terrified in all of his life as the aircraft headed for the ground. “Just about three feet from the ground, it flattened out and skidded to a landing. I walked out of there swearing to never get in a glider again,” he said. Asked how many jumps he’s made, Bruce replied: “More than 50, less than 100.” Howard Malone, on behalf of the chapter, thanked Bruce for his fascinating, inspirational story. He presented Bruce with a copy of *The Amazing Gooney Bird: The Saga of the Legendary DC-3/C-47* in appreciation.



Bruce Cox, speaking to CAHS and TAM, June 10, 2006. CAHS Staff Photo.

Folded Wings

ALAN WINGATE

Over the summer we learned of the passing of long-time Chapter Member Alan Wingate (#2466) on July 1 in North York General Hospital. Al was a wartime employee of deHavilland Canada building MK II Ansons and briefly Mosquitoes. Al learned to fly at Toronto’s Barker field during 1941/42 on his own time and money. He subsequently applied for work as an instructor at Dominion Skyways, a civilian contractor to the BCATP. He was hired and assigned to No. 9 Air Observer School (AOS) in St. Jean, Quebec. Al quickly checked out on the school’s Ansons

and began the task of piloting trainee Wireless Air Gunners, Navigators and their instructors on endless training flights night and day. After the war Al flew as a charter pilot and instructor at Leavens Bros. Air Service. He was also later employed by Avro and Orenda . Al contributed many articles to the CAHS Journal and will be very much missed by all at CAHS who had the pleasure to know him.

DON ROGERS, JET-AGE PIONEER

26 November 1916 to 19 July 2006.



Donald Howard Rogers, CAHS Toronto Chapter member 0935, was born in Hamilton. He learned to fly Tiger Moths at the Hamilton Aero Club, earning his Pilot's Licence in 1936, his Commercial Licence in 1938, and Instructor's Rating in 1939. He completed, as a civilian, the Royal Canadian Air Force instructor course at Camp Borden, in September 1939, and subsequently instructed RCAF inductees and civilian students at the Hamilton Aero Club to October 1940. He then served as Assistant Chief Flying Instructor at No. 10 Elementary Flying Training Flying School, Mount Hope until December 1941.

In January 1942, Rogers transferred to the aircraft division of National Steel Car Co. at

Malton Airport. NSC was part of a three-company consortium, under the name of Federal Aircraft. NSC licence-built Westland Lysanders and Avro Ansons, which Rogers flight tested to April 1943. On November 5, 1942 NSC Malton was taken over by the Canadian government and renamed Victory Aircraft.

During the tooling-up for Avro Lancaster production at Victory Aircraft (April-August 1943), Rogers joined the Royal Air Force Ferry Command flight test unit at Dorval, Quebec, where he tested Lockheed Hudson and Ventura maritime patrol bombers, B-24 Liberators and B-25 Mitchell bombers; he delivered a Hudson and a B-24 to Britain; and he spent five days at the A.V.Roe (Avro U.K.) Woodford airfield familiarizing himself with the Lancaster. The first Canadian-built Lancaster B.Mk.X (RAF serial KB700) rolled out at Victory Aircraft on August 6, 1943. Rogers did production flight testing on Lancasters to September 1945.

That December Victory Aircraft became Avro Canada Ltd. Rogers became chief test pilot, flying overhauled and modified Venturas, Mitchells, Douglas Dakotas, and Lancasters for the RCAF, and Hawker Sea Fury carrier fighters for the Royal Canadian Navy.

Avro Canada, strengthened by James C. Floyd from Avro U.K., took up the design of the 30-seat C.102 jet airliner and the CF-100 twin-jet two-seat interceptor. Four years from founding, company had designed and prototyped both aircraft, plus the Orenda engine to power the CF-100. Rogers was co-pilot to Avro U.K. test pilot Jimmy Orrell (and flight engineer Bill Baker) on the Avro jetliner's first flight August 10, 1949. The following November 22, Rogers took the Jetliner past 500 mph with Mile Cooper-Slipper

as co-pilot, Baker as engineer, and Jim Floyd and Mario Pesando as observers. On April 18, 1950, the Jetliner flew the first jet airmail, Toronto to New York, with Rogers at the controls. He flew 440 hours in the Jetliner, during most of its flight and development testing, until the program was halted during the Korean War. The Orenda jet engine for the CF-100 first flew on July 13, 1950, when two Orendas replaced Lancaster FM209's outboard Merlins, with Rogers as pilot and Bill Wildfong and Walter Bellian as flight engineers. He piloted the first flight of the CF-100 Mk.2, 18103 (third prototype and first CF-100 with Orenda powerplants), on October 5, 1950. Rogers flew hundreds of hours in each CF-100 variant, including dangerous tests proving the CF-100's anti-icing systems.

In 1958 Rogers was named flight operations manager for Avro as the supersonic CF-105 Arrow project approached first flight. With the Arrow cancellation and the Avro shutdown in 1959, Rogers joined de Havilland of Canada, where he was employed as test, demonstration, and training pilot on all of DHC's Short Takeoff and Landing (STOL) types. A partial list of places in which he showed what DHC's STOL aircraft could do includes Central and South America (Turbo Beaver); Alaska (Caribou); Brazil and Argentina (Buffalo); Morocco - Middle East - India, England - Scandinavia - Greenland - Iceland (Twin Otter). He delivered aircraft to Togo, Chile, Panama, Switzerland, and Nepal, often training the customers' pilots on site.

Following retirement from DHC flight operations in 1980 at 63, Rogers continued part-time training of customers' aircrews for seven years, and finished with 12,000 hours on 30 types. He won Canada's foremost aviation

award, the 1983 Trans-Canada (McKee) Trophy and was inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame in 1998.

Don Rogers will be sorely missed by his many friends in the CAHS.

G. Georgas

Source: CAHS gratefully acknowledges The Chosen Ones, by Sean Rossiter.

No price Increase!

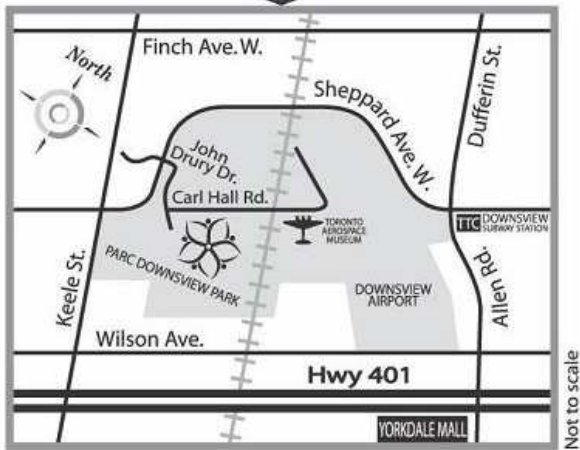
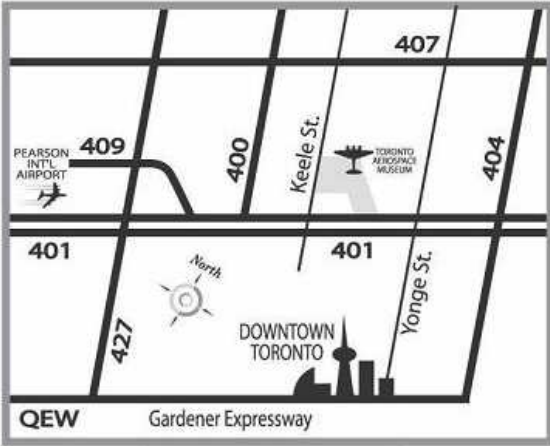
The Chapter Executive Committee has reviewed the annual membership fee and decided to leave it unchanged at \$20.00 for the 2007 renewal year.

June Meeting

Our June 10th. meeting was poorly attended in spite of having an exceptional speaker in the person of Bruce E. Cox. The Executive Committee realize that the fine weather of the day and several conflicting events probably influenced the turn-out and will now have to consider if the format of the June meeting should be changed or the meeting be cancelled for 2007. For the chapter to maintain the speaker program at a reasonably high quality level all able chapter members within commuting distance should set aside at least some of the meeting dates in the year to attend the meetings in person. If you have an opinion or suggestion on this topic please contact Chapter President Howard Malone.

2007 CAHS Convention

The CAHS Toronto Chapter has been chosen to act as host for the 2007 CAHS National Convention. Planning has commenced for this event and members will be provided with further details as they are available.



By Taxi: Take the TTC Subway to the Downsview Station and take a taxi from there. It will cost around \$8 one way, but it is by far the most convenient option for tourists, because the cab will take you right to our front door, whereas the TTC - unfortunately - doesn't!

By Car: From the 401 East or West, exit at Keele Street North. Turn right on Sheppard Ave, and follow Sheppard the entrance to Downsview Park. Turn right into the park (onto John Drury Road) until you reach Carl Hall Road. Turn left at Carl Hall and continue east over the railway tracks to the Museum, which is on your right hand side.

By TTC: From the Downsview TTC station take the 108 Downsview, the 86 Sheppard West, Westbound or the 84 Sheppard West, Westbound bus and ask the driver to let you off at the Downsview Park entrance (it is well past the DRDC and Idomo buildings). Walk into the park entrance and follow John Drury Road until you reach Carl Hall Road. Turn left at Carl Hall Road and continue east over the railway tracks to the Museum, which is on your right hand side. Approximate walking distance is 0.7 km.

TORONTO CHAPTER
CANADIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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CAHS National Website : www.cahs.com

Meetings and news from all the chapters, journal back issues, and more!

Toronto Chapter Meetings - 2nd or 3rd Saturday of the month 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm.

Toronto Aerospace Museum, 65 Carl Hall Road
TAM is in the former deHaviland building in Downsview Park
Near Downsview TTC Station

All Welcome