

Wing Mate

Royal Canadian Air Force Association of Canada
Newsletter 408-437 Wing



Fairey Swordfish



May  2024

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION of CANADA MISSION STATEMENT

The Air Force Association of Canada is a national aerospace and community service organization whose aim is to commemorate the noble achievements of the men and women who have served as members of Canada's Air Force since its inception, advocate for a proficient and well equipped Air Force and, support the Royal Canadian Air Cadets.

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110 Squadron.....	Cécile Thompson



Sick and Visiting

Be sure to advise Barbara Newman, Fellowship Chair, if you are aware of a Wing member who is ill or in distressed circumstances.

Barbara can be reached at 416-223-7840.



May

Nick Czernkovich.....	May 12
Paul Hayes.....	May 28
Eve Skalozub.....	May 29

General Meetings

Sheppard Ave. Legion Building

Monday 13 May

Speaker: Denis Thompson

“Starting Your Family Tree”

President's Report



On 07 April John Wreglesworth and I attended parade in Trenton for the 100th Anniversary RCAF. The event was hosted and organised by 413 Wing and Jo-Ann Peckham,. A job well done and not easy to co-ordinate the various elements taking part.



At our last (08 April) General Meeting, Cécile Thompson and her son Denis gave a presentation on genealogy. Very interesting, Denis is an avid genealogist and has some 5000 names on his family tree. Interesting advice on the accuracy using any of these DNA collection sites. Denis will return at our 13 May meeting and will bring information on how to start your own search since a number of people were interested. So, if you are interested please come out on the 13th. Thank you, Cécile, and Denis. I can't believe it's that time of year again . . . two more General Meetings: this one and the one in June. I will be mailing out the election ballots and the annual dues notice. Please return those as soon as you can.

IDLE THOUGHTS: The word **QUEUE** is ironic. It's just a 'Q' with a bunch of silent letters.

At the end of last month, I was "persuaded" to go to my wife's 170th year girls High School reunion dinner and dance. "Don't worry there will be husbands there as well." It was organised well, and well attended. About 160-180 people and about 8 -10 guys spread out looking like coral reefs in the deep blue. About an hour into the fest after some well-preserved alumni reminiscing about the old days: what school life was like in the 30's and 40's in a Catholic girls' school shepherded by Nuns through the formative years. Then the dance started!

The disc jockey must have been hired cheap from the Bob Rumball School for the deaf, given the volume of the music. The room was a medium sized ballroom with eight expensive ceiling mounted speakers. The theme for the reunion was 1984 as the organizers graduated in that year. The 'music' was mostly Euro music and dance-pop, occasional selections with vocals was so loud it was distorted to grunts and groans.

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Perhaps that explains 100 or so celebrants on the dance floor doing an energetic frenzied mating dance, making up for 1984. There was no pause, dance till you drop. On top of all this the escapee from the Rumball Centre was occasionally yelling something into the mike while gyrating on stage. So, what about us guys, well we sat in our foxholes staring at each other with resignation kind of like the resigned look just before a coming battle. According to Facebook, everyone had a great time; no harm done, my hearing is restored.

**Great News! We now have Halal Mortgages.
How about Vegan, I could go for Angus?**

Nick Czernkovich



Canadian W.W 1 ace, Freddie McCall, crash landed his stalled aircraft onto a carousel at the Calgary stampede in a perfect pancake landing in 1919. No one was injured!



McCall's postwar Canuck



Freddie McCall, Canadian Ace

110 Black Hawk Squadron
Royal Canadian Air Cadets



With Cécile Thompson



FUNDRAISING

In person and online tagging is ongoing until April 21. Goal is \$35,000.

FORESEEABLE EXPENSES

- a) portable repairs
 - windows
 - furnace maintenance
 - drywall in training area
 - storage space
 - checking the roof for possible damage



- b) band instruments
\$2,300. is to be allocated for purchase and/or repair of instruments

CONGRATULATIONS

to Sgt Y Zhang who has been selected to represent Wing 1 at the Ontario Provincial Effective Speaking competition on April 13 at

110 Squadron since 1973
Air Cadets since 1941



Fairey Swordfish



The Fairey Swordfish was a torpedo bomber biplane designed by the Fairey Aviation Company and used by the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy during the Second World War. Originating in the 1930s, the Swordfish, nicknamed "Stringbag", was an outdated design by the start of the war in 1939, but remained in front-line service for years, outliving several types intended to replace it. It was initially operated primarily as a fleet attack aircraft; during its later years it was used as an anti-submarine and training craft. In the anti-submarine role, the Swordfish pioneered the naval use of air to surface vessel (ASV) radar; the aircraft holds the distinction of being the first such implementation upon carrier-borne aircraft, allowing the Swordfish to effectively locate surface ships at night and through clouds.

The Swordfish achieved some spectacular successes, notably the sinking of one and damaging two battleships of the Regia Marina in the Battle of Taranto as well as the attack on the Bismarck which led to her eventual demise.

The first flight occurred in April of 1934 and the aircraft's retirement was in March 1945! 2,400 Swordfish were produced with Blackburn taking over much of the production by 1941.

The Swordfish employed a metal airframe covered in fabric. It had folding wings as a space-saving measure, which was useful onboard aircraft carriers and battleships.

The nickname *Stringbag* was not due to its biplane struts, spars, and braces, but a reference to the seemingly endless variety of stores and equipment that the type was cleared to carry. Crews likened the aircraft to a housewife's string shopping bag, common at the time and which could accommodate contents of any shape, and that a Swordfish, like the shopping bag, could carry anything.

The primary weapon of the Swordfish was the aerial torpedo, but the low speed of the biplane and the need

for a long straight approach made it difficult to deliver against well-defended targets. Swordfish torpedo doctrine called for an approach at 5,000 feet, followed by a dive to torpedo release altitude of 18 feet. Maximum range of the early Mark XII torpedo was 1,500 yards at 40 knots (46 mph) and 3,500 yards at 27 knots (31 mph). The torpedo travelled 200 feet forward from release to water impact, and required another 300 yards to stabilize at preset depth and arm itself. Ideal release distance was 1,000 yards from target if the Swordfish survived to that distance!

Swordfish on HMS Victorious 24 May 1941.
On the 25th, 9 attacked the Bismarck.



The Swordfish was soon redeployed successfully in an anti-submarine role, armed with depth charges or eight "60 lb" RP-3 rockets and flying from the smaller escort carriers, or even merchant aircraft carriers (MACs) when equipped for rocket-assisted takeoff (RATO). Its low stall speed and inherently tough design made it ideal for operation from the MACs in the often severe mid-Atlantic weather. Its takeoff and landing speeds were so low that, unlike most carrier-based aircraft, that it did not require the carrier to be steaming into the wind. On occasion, when the wind was right, Swordfish were flown from a carrier at anchor.









1941 to the present!





Canadian Aces



Frederick "Freddie" McCall

DSO, MC, DFC 1896-1949

Fred Robert Gordon McCall was born in Vernon, British Columbia, on December 4, 1895. His family moved to Calgary, Alberta, in 1906, and he completed his education there.

He joined the 175th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1916. He arrived in England as a Sergeant, was commissioned and transferred to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) as a Lieutenant pilot trainee in June 1917. By year's end he was brevetted a pilot and assigned to No. 13 Squadron, RFC, in France, flying reconnaissance and photographic missions.

Within a month McCall had scored his first aerial victory and the excellence of his artillery patrols brought his first decoration, the Military Cross in March 1918. The following week he downed three more enemy machines and by April 15 had raised his score to six confirmed during a major German offensive. He was awarded a Bar to his Military Cross.

Following a transfer to No. 41 Squadron, he was given a single-seater SE 5a fighter aircraft to fly. In May he destroyed four enemy aircraft and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. During the following five weeks of flying, after promotion to the rank of Captain, he brought down nine more enemy machines, raising his total victories to 24. For these actions he was awarded a fourth decoration for gallantry, the Distinguished Service Order with the following citation:

"A brilliant and gallant officer he has accounted for fourteen enemy machines (since his last decoration).



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On a recent date he destroyed four during a morning patrol and another in the evening, in each case closing to point-blank range with his opponent. His courage and offensive spirit have inspired all who serve with him."

On August 17, 1918, he was engaged in the deadliest aerial duel of his career when he and W.G. Claxton were attacked behind enemy lines by a German squadron numbering 40 aircraft. By skillful manoeuvring and aggressive action both he and Claxton shot down three enemy machines. Claxton's aircraft was disabled and he landed in enemy territory, to be cap-



tured. McCall landed safely at his own aerodrome. Within days he was taken ill and invalided back to England, with 30 enemy machines to his credit. His fifth citation for bravery came with a Mention in Despatches of his aerial action by Sir Douglas Haig in November 1918.

At war's end he established McCall Aero Company Limited at Calgary and together with Jock Palmer and W.R. 'Wop' May as an additional pilots, they flew commercial freight and passengers throughout the prairie provinces and barnstormed the prairie fairs circuit for three years. In 1928 McCall organized Great Western Airways Limited at Calgary, to operate commercial flights. Always ready to accept new aviation undertakings, he contracted in February, 1929 to transport by air, for the first time in Canada, 200 quarts of nitroglycerin from Shelby, Montana, to Calgary in his newly-acquired Stinson Detrioter.

Freddie died of a heart attack in 1953. In 1957, Calgary's airport was named McCall Field in his honour, although it was later changed to Calgary International.







ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE CENTENNIAL PANEL

Celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force with the Memory Project! Join us on **Zoom on Thursday, April 25th** for an online event with three retired members of the RCAF, moderated by the RCAF 2024 Campaign Manager, Colonel Margaret Jacula.



MODERATOR
Colonel Margaret Jacula



SPEAKER
Captain (ret'd)
Mort Lightstone



SPEAKER
Master Corporal (ret'd)
Woodrow French



SPEAKER
Captain (ret'd)
Brian Cotter

