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CHOCKS AWAY
August - September 2013

President's Message



As summer draws to a close we look back on the many events which have happened during this warm period. For instance It has certainly been an exciting summer at our house. I had an unfortunate thing happen when I was knocked off a ladder by an errant tree branch and flew through the air to a crash landing on my gravel driveway .This flight happened on the 14th of July and I can, as of August 12, now walk without a cane .The positive part of this story is that I was able to check out the outstanding Picton medical response team featuring the Ambulance and the Emergency Room at the local Hospital. From what I can remember, all went well and no bones were broken. I just needed some staples in my head. A former friend of mine commented that it was good that I landed on my head or I could have been seriously hurt.

On a more positive note I enjoyed meeting with 3 Air Cadets assisting with the No. 851 Squadron fund raising BBQ. The new 851 Squadron CO was present and it was a pleasure to meet him as well. Of course the Air Cadets always impress me in their smart blue uniforms .What a great program for our young people. As noted in the following article by Dave Edward, this was the best 415 Wing sponsored Air Cadet fund raising BBQ ever! Sobeys customers who were not hungry for Hot Dogs and Hamburgers were asked to donate instead .The donation option was very successful and helped to increase the previous receipts years by over 50%.

The 8 Wing Change of Command Parade was held on the 7th of August and according to Alex Chambers, who attended in my place, was excellent. Alex said he had never been on a parade before where 6 Squadrons' had their colors marched on.

We welcome the new 8 Wing Commander Colonel D. W. Lowthian and wish the outgoing 8 Wing Commander Colonel Sean Friday every success as he continues with his military career.

Finally on August 11th along with my friend John Strickland, I visited the RCAF Museum at 8 Wing .The changes that have occurred since my last visit were incredible. Congratulations to all who have been involved in creating and maintaining this collection of aircraft plus other items reflecting our proud Air Force history. I was met by Chuck Flower and directed to the magnificent Halifax Bomber. From there we spent some time with Clay Smith in the Hercules simulator. Clay entertained us with some of his many experiences on the CC130 as a Loadmaster. We also visited the aircraft restoration area in the rear of the museum where a Hudson Mark 6 is being restored along with an Anson.

All in all it turned out to be a very impressive experience and I encourage all of you who have not had the pleasure of a visit for some time to drop in to the museum and see the many enhancements and new exhibits.

Our next meeting is the Battle of Britain Dinner Meeting in Picton; details to follow. Looking forward to seeing you all at this special event.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Your 415 Wing President ... Bob

WING NEWS

Submitted by Dave Edward

Once again, many thanks are due to the dedicated members who helped make this year's fundraiser BBQ 'the best yet'.

Mal and I got set up by 09:30 and the BBQs were lit at 10:20. Stocking the food and drink items took a little bit longer this year due to Jamie Yeo requesting that we use Sobeys brands exclusively. We actually had better quality items for the public

Serving started at 10:45 with Chuck Flower, Ted Cullin, Stan Rolski, Ben Tinsley and Bob Bird cooking. Clay Smith collected the money.

Cadets Kaleigh Bowerman.....Brooke Deal and Peter Globe were a great help in serving the public.....under the watchful eye of Capt. Lewis Jenkins, the incoming CO of # 851 Squadron.

It started off slowly but due to the efforts of Bob Bird acting as our barker, the tempo picked up and a steady stream of customers kept us going until 13:50. It was the first time that we actually ran out of items at closing time. The only left overs were some cola and bottled water.

Chuck Flower worked his BBQ straight through and Clay Smith did a great job collecting the cash which included over \$100.00 in donations. The final tally of \$634.00 sets a record for this event.

Congratulations and Thanks to all of you for the cleanup and shutdown. Another great team effort!



MEMBERSHIP

Membership numbers as of this writing are 76 single, 1 dual. One member has demitted and 6 people have yet to renew.

PROGRAMS & SOCIAL

The 3rd Annual Glenwood Cemetery Veterans Day will be held on 21 September 2013. This service honours the 6 RAF members who died while participating in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan at RAF Station Picton, and the over 200 other veterans who are interred in Glenwood.

415 Wing Battle of Britain Dinner Meeting will take place on Tuesday, 10 September 2013 at Branch 78 Royal Canadian Legion in Picton. Housing Officer, Don Bengert will send out the details as to menu etc. closer to the event.

PADRE'S CORNER

Your editor was just talking to Padre Stan Whitehouse (5 August) and he reports that he continues to be "a work in progress". He is still undergoing physiotherapy at Belleville General Hospital which includes walking on a treadmill. As with all people who have led an active life style, he gets impatient

with his rate of progress. He is starting to walk around the house and even out into his yard unassisted i.e. without the aid of his cane or walker. He expects to be part of our Battle of Britain Dinner meeting, and I am sure that I speak for all wing members when I say I am looking forward to seeing him "out and about".

PICKED UP IN PASSING

Submitted by Dave Edward

This is an important piece of history that not many remember and that all young people should read and older (American) people really should remember. READ!!

When asked to identify the base from which they flew, President Franklin Roosevelt replied, "Shangri-La."

On Tuesday, in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, the surviving Doolittle Raiders gathered publicly for the last time.



They once were among the most universally admired and revered men in the United States. There were 80 of the Raiders who, in April of 1942, just four months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, embarked on one of the most courageous and heart-stirring military operations in the history of the USA. The mere mention of their unit's name, in those years, would bring tears to the eyes of grateful Americans. Now only four remain.

After Japan's sneak attack on Hawaii, and with the United States still licking its wounds, something dramatic was needed to turn the war effort around.

Even though there were no friendly airfields close enough to Japan for the United States to retaliate, a daring plan was devised. Sixteen North American B-25s, twin-engined "Billy Mitchells," were modified so that they could take off from the deck of an aircraft carrier. This had never before been tried -- sending Army Air Corps medium bombers from the deck of a ship at sea.

The 16 five-man crews, under the command of then Lt. Col. James Doolittle, (he retired as a brigadier general) who himself flew the lead plane off *USS Hornet*, knew that they would not be able to return to the carrier. They would have to hit Japan and then hope to make it to China for a safe landing. On the day of the raid, the Japanese military caught wind of the plan. The Raiders were told that they would have to take off from much farther out in the Pacific Ocean (more than 600 miles) than they had counted on. They were told that because of this they would not have enough fuel to make it to safety. They went anyway.

They bombed Tokyo, and then flew as far as they could. Four planes crash-landed in China; 11 crews bailed out, and three of the Raiders died. Eight more were captured; three were executed. Another died of starvation in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. One crew made it to Russia.

The Doolittle Raid sent a message from the United States to its enemies, and to the rest of the world: We will fight. And, no matter what it takes, we will win.

Of the 80 Raiders, 62 survived the war. They were celebrated as national heroes, models of bravery. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer produced a motion picture based on the raid; *"Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo,"* starring Spencer Tracy and Van Johnson, was a patriotic and emotional box-office hit, and the phrase became part of the national lexicon. In the movie-theater previews for the film, MGM proclaimed that it was presenting the story "with supreme pride."

Beginning in 1946, the surviving Raiders have held a reunion each April, to commemorate the mission. The reunion is in a different city each year. In 1959, the city of Tucson, Arizona, as a gesture of respect and gratitude, presented the Doolittle Raiders with a set of 80 silver goblets. Each goblet was engraved with the name of a Raider.



Every year, a wooden display case bearing all 80 goblets is transported to the reunion city. Each time a Raider passes away his goblet is turned upside down in the case at the next reunion, as his old friends bear solemn witness.

Also in the wooden case is a bottle of 1896 Hennessy Very Special cognac. The year is not happenstance: It was Jimmy Doolittle's birth year.

There has always been a plan: When there are only two surviving Raiders, they would open the bottle, at last drink from it, and toast their comrades who preceded them in death. As 2013 began, there were five living Raiders. Then, in February, Tom Griffin passed away at age 96. What a man he was. After bailing out of his plane over a mountainous Chinese forest after the Tokyo raid, he became ill with malaria and almost died. When he recovered, he was sent to Europe to fly more combat missions. He was shot down, captured, and spent 22 months in a German prisoner of war camp.

The selflessness of these men, the sheer guts ... there was a passage in the Cincinnati Enquirer obituary for Mr. Griffin that, on the surface, had nothing to do with the war but that, nonetheless, punctuates the depth of his sense of duty and devotion: *"When his wife became ill and needed to go into a nursing home, he visited her every day. He walked from his house to the nursing home, fed his wife and at the end of the day brought home her clothes. At night, he washed and ironed her clothes. Then he walked them up to her room the next morning. He did that for three years until her death in 2005."*

So now, out of the original 80, only four Raiders remain: Dick Cole (Doolittle's co-pilot on the raid), Robert Hite, Edward Saylor, and David Thatcher. All are in their 90s. They have decided that there are too few of them for the public reunions to continue.

The events in Fort Walton Beach this week will mark the end. It has come full circle; Florida's nearby Eglin Field was where the Raiders trained in secrecy for the Tokyo mission. The town is planning to do all it can to honor the men: a six-day celebration of their valor, including luncheons, a dinner and a parade.

Do the men ever wonder if those of us for whom they helped save the country have tended to it in a way that is worthy of their sacrifice? They don't talk about that, at least not around other people. But if you find yourself near Fort Walton Beach this week, and if you should encounter any of the Raiders,

you might want to offer them a word of thanks. I can tell you from first hand observation that they appreciate hearing that they are remembered.

The men have decided that after this final public reunion they will wait until a later date -- some time this year -- to get together once more, informally and in absolute privacy. That is when they will open the bottle of brandy. The years are flowing by too swiftly now; they are not going to wait until there are only two of them. They will fill the four remaining upturned goblets, and raise them in a toast to those who are gone.

Submitted by Dennis Earl (Retired Hatchery Manager Sault Ste Marie Fish Culture Station)

A boat docked in a tiny Mexican fishing village.

A tourist complimented the local fishermen on the quality of their fish and asked how long it took him to catch them.

"Not very long." they answered in unison.

"Why didn't you stay out longer and catch more?"

The fishermen explained that their small catches were sufficient to meet their needs and those of their families.

"But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

"We sleep late, fish a little, play with our children, and take siestas with our wives. In the evenings, we go into the village to see our friends, have a few drinks, play the guitar, and sing a few songs. We have a full life."

The tourist interrupted, "I have an MBA from Harvard and I can help you! You should start by fishing longer every day. You can then sell the extra fish you catch. With the extra revenue, you can buy a bigger boat."

"And after that?"

"With the extra money the larger boat will bring, you can buy a second one and a third one and so on until you have an entire fleet of trawlers. Instead of selling your fish to a middle man, you can then negotiate directly with the processing plants, and maybe even open your own plant. You can then leave this little village and move to Mexico City, Los Angeles, or even New York City! From there you can direct your huge new enterprise."

"How long would that take?"

"Twenty, perhaps twenty-five years." replied the tourist.

"And after that?"

"Afterwards? Well my friend, that's when it gets really interesting, "answered the tourist, laughing. "When your business gets really big, you can start buying and selling stocks and make millions!"

"Millions? Really? And after that?" asked the fishermen.

"After that you'll be able to retire, live in a tiny village near the coast, sleep late, play with your children, catch a few fish, take a siesta with your wife, and spend your evenings drinking and enjoying your friends."

"With all due respect sir, but that's exactly what we are doing now. So what's the point wasting twenty-five years?" asked the Mexicans.

And the moral of this story is: Know where you're going in life.... You may already be there!!

And finally for our ex-airline pilots!

Taxiing down the tarmac, a DC-10 abruptly stopped, turned around and returned to the gate. After an hour-long wait, it finally took off. A concerned passenger asked the flight attendant, "What, exactly, was the problem?"

"The pilot was bothered by a noise he heard in the engine," explained the flight attendant. "It took us a while to find a new pilot."

Submitted by Bob Bird



For all you aircraft experts, whoever can be the first to guess what type of aircraft this flight engineers panel is from, wins a free beer.

Wing Executive – 2012/13

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