

# Fort York News

Fort York Branch 165 Royal Canadian Legion



Spring



2026

Fort York Legion Branch 165  
1421 Yonge Street  
P.O. Box 69009  
Toronto, ON M4T 1Y7

**Future Events**

**Garden Party**

**27 May: Donalda Club**

**AGM/Change of Command**

**24 June: RCMI**

**Newsletter Staff**

Writer/Publisher..... Terry Sleightholm  
Writer..... Capt Larry Rose  
Editor..... Ann Unger  
Photography..... Leonard Feldt  
Terry Sleightholm

All Fort York 165 members should have received a Legion lapel pin. If you need one, please contact us.

If you require a name tag or Legion lapel pin please contact the secretary and he will arrange to have one made for you. The cost is \$5.00. Indicate whether you prefer a magnet or pin closure for the name tag.

**Executive 2026**

President..... Bill Utton  
Immediate Past President..Col Geordie Elms  
1st Vice President..... HCol Barry Downs  
2nd Vice President..... Capt Sam Billich  
Secretary..... Col Fred McCague  
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Sergeant-at-Arms..... Malcolm Morrison  
Remembrancer..... Terry Sleightholm  
Branch Services Officer. Cdr Ed Sparling  
Assistant Br. Serv. Officer..... John Anderson  
Sunnybrook Rep..... LCdr D. Murakami  
RCMI Liaison..... Susan Cook  
Members-at-Large..... Glenn Carter  
Catherine Langley-Hope  
Tom Pam

If you wish to attend any of the Executive meetings, please contact the secretary so that everyone can be accommodated.





## Canada and Vimy Ridge

The Battle of Vimy Ridge (April 9–12, 1917), a part of the Battle of Arras, was a pivotal World War I battle where all four Canadian divisions fought together for the first time, seizing a heavily fortified German position in France. It is a defining moment for Canadian nationhood, often cited as the birth of national pride.

Vimy Ridge is an escarpment 5 miles northeast of Arras on the western edge of the Douai Plain. The ridge rises gradually on its western side and drops more quickly on the eastern side. At approximately 4.3 miles in length and culminating at an elevation of 200 feet above the Douai Plain, the ridge provides a natural unobstructed view for tens of miles in all directions. The ridge fell under German control in October 1914 during the Race to the Sea.

Previous unsuccessful French and British attacks had taken place. In early 1917, British High Command ordered the Canadian Corps to capture the position as part of a larger spring offensive in the Arras area. In the coming campaign, British forces to the south would have limited success, and the French would fail badly, with many of their units reduced to mutiny. The Canadian attack against Vimy Ridge would be spectacular by comparison.

Lieutenant-General Sir Julian Byng, the Canadian Corps commander, ordered new tactics for the coming assault. Having learned from the Battle of the Somme, intense training better prepared soldiers for what they might find on the battlefield, and helped them to make quick decisions on their own that were still in keeping with the overall plan. Small units and individual soldiers were given much more information about the battle, and were expected to exercise initiative in keeping the advance moving, even if their officers were killed or wounded.

A tremendous artillery barrage, which included improved techniques for counter-battery fire against enemy guns, would smash German positions and isolate enemy troops in their dugouts. At 5:30 a.m. on 9 April 1917, Easter Monday, nearly 1,000 guns opened fire on the German positions. An estimated 15,000 Cana-

dians rose from the trenches and advanced towards the ridge in the first wave, with thousands more behind them. Despite hard fighting all across the front, the Canadians captured most of the ridge on the 9th, and the remaining portions of it by the 12th.



## The Vimy Memorial

Situated on land granted by France to the Canadian people in 1922, the memorial towers over the scene of Canada's most recognizable First World War engagement, the Battle of Vimy Ridge, fought from 9 to 12 April 1917. The imposing structure was designed by Walter Allward, one of Canada's most famous sculptors, whose commissions included the national memorial commemorating Canada's participation in the South African War (1899-1902). The memorial was started in 1925 at a cost of 1.2 million dollars 11 years later.

Vimy Ridge in northern France is Canada's largest overseas national memorial. The Vimy Memorial was unveiled in July 1936 to a crowd of more than 100,000, including 6,000 Canadian Veterans who had traveled overseas for the ceremony. The Memorial survived the Second World War, despite fears that German forces would destroy it after France's surrender. Adolf Hitler visited and was photographed at the site in 1940. Since the Second World War, there have been several formal, and countless informal, Canadian pilgrimages to the Memorial and the 91-hectare park of Canadian trees and shrubs surrounding it.

In 2007, after several years of extensive restoration work, the Vimy Ridge Memorial was unveiled to dignitaries and several thousand Canadian visitors. It is the principal site of Canadian remembrance and commemoration overseas, and one of the most widely recognized symbols of Canada's military past.

It is adorned by 20 allegorical figures representing faith, justice, peace, honour, charity, truth, knowledge, and hope. A key figure, "Canada mourning her fallen sons," speaks to the country's wartime losses. The Vimy Memorial is inscribed with the names of 11,285 Canadians who were killed on French soil and have no known graves.

## Welcome to Our New Members!

2026

Stephen Adams

Ken Baillie

Audric St. Aubin Bent

Laura Brocklebank

Joshua Byer

Robert Clarke

Hind El Ouardi

Matan Fleishman

Jamie Gillies

Bernhardt Greitenevert

Dave Hardy

Jim Hossack

Perry Li

John Nanos

Larry Purchase

Jennifer Purves

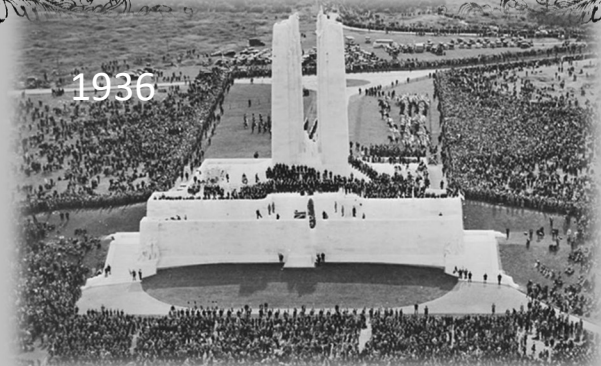
Rhunah Soriano

Dwayne Stevenson

Sasha Voznyuk

Tona Zheng

1936



### Canadian Machine Gun Crews in Craters on the Plateau above the Ridge



We will remember him . . .

B.Gen Paul A. Hayes

28 May 1933 – 29 March 2026



Fort York Branch No. 165



Past President of Fort York Branch in 2005, Paul was a regular attendee at our functions and arranged for the members of Lakeshore Mayfair Club to make an annual contribution to our Poppy Fund.

From Lyle Holbrook:

I was a member of 400 Sqn for the entirety of Gen Hayes' tenure as our HCol. In that time, I got to know him well and looked forward to chatting with him at all the social functions and his periodic visits. I very much looked forward to his stories and his perspectives on various RCAF issues. He was always very genuine, kind and encouraging. I have many fond memories of him and will miss his warm, welcoming smile and our chats. Blue Skies General!!

Sadly, the General has met his match in his years long fight with cognitive issues, attributable to many years of flying Sabre jets at supersonic speeds and high G-force, with the RCAF. A battle faced with tenacity and exceptional dignity. Born and raised in Toronto, Paul began his formal military training at age 17, being recruited by Gen. Richard Rohmer. He spent 7 years in Germany with 422 fighter squadron and as a tactical advisor to 73 wing, logging over 8000 hours of military flying. In the early 2000s, he proudly served 2 terms as HCol. with 400 Tactical Helicopter Sqd., Base Borden, and was instrumental in heading up the first annual Project HOHOHO for Sick Kids Hospital, piloting the helicopter carrying gifts for patients who were unable to be home for Xmas. Paul continued recreational flying until 2019, averaging 100 hours per year, on the Cessna 182 RG. Some of his happiest times were spent as President of the Buttonville Flying club, with friends Lee, Geoff and Phil, amongst many others. Predeceased by son Geoffrey (age 13) and forever to be missed by devoted wife Wendy Austin, son Jason (Kerri) and grand kids Aidan, Nate and Ellen. Heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Deering and the caring team at LGSE wing, Sunnybrook Veterans.

Paul's ashes will be scattered over a now unused tarmac, where his spirit will eternally "FLY SAFE".

"Thought you would live forever".

# Achtung Sabrejetz!

By BGen Paul Hayes

When the post-war Luftwaffe of the German Federal Republic was formed in September of 1956, plans called for the formation of several air defence day-fighter wings. The choice of a suitable aircraft was one of the lesser problems facing the new Luftwaffe. The best available type was clearly the Canadian-built Canadair Sabre 6, so 225 brand new examples of these great aircraft were ordered in December, 1956. These would be complemented by 75 Sabre 5s drawn from the Canadian Air Division as the RCAF upgraded its twelve Air Division squadrons to the Sabre 6.

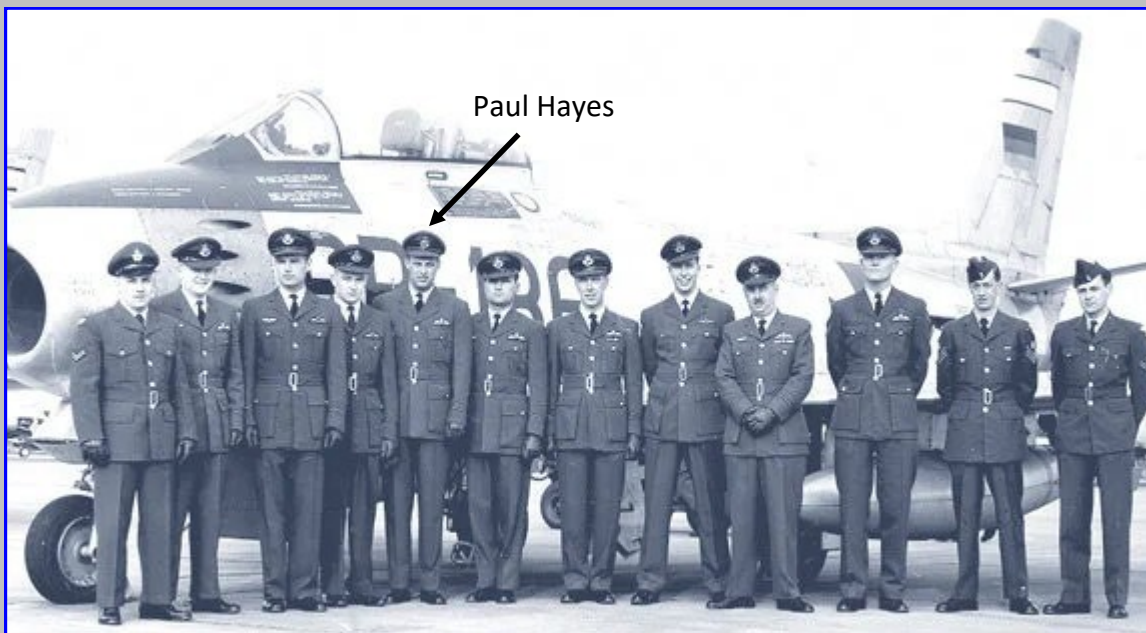
The Mark 5s were flown to Renfrew, Scotland, where they were overhauled by Scottish Aviation for the Luftwaffe and then were ferried by Canadian pilots to Waffenschule 10 (WS 10), the Sabre operational conversion unit at Oldenburg in Northern Germany. Under the terms of an intergovernmental agreement, Canada also undertook to train 360 pilots to jet fighter standards on the Sabre for the fledgling *New* Luftwaffe.

It must be noted that twelve RCAF squadrons, based at the four Canadian fighter wings in Europe, had been flying the Sabre for several years and had become widely renowned as the best air defense operation on existence at that time.

My first introduction to the new German Air Force was in late 1957, when four of us from 422 Squadron were tasked to ferry four of the refurbished Sabre 5s from Renfrew to Oldenburg for WS 10. It was quite a surprise to arrive at Renfrew in the early morning to see the four Mark 5s, newly painted with the iron cross insignia on the side ready for us to launch on the ferry flights. Enroute we stopped for refueling and lunch at the famous RAF air base at Manston in southeast England. What a surprise we turned out to be for the Wing Commander. After taxiing past the memorial Spitfire and Hurricane on our way to the parking ramp, we were greeted on shut down by the Wing Commander, who looked quite startled when who should jump out of these four German cockpits but four operationally-clad Canadian Sabre pilots who promptly gave very proper Canadian salutes. Later in the day, we continued on to deliver the four aircraft to WS 10.

My next introduction to the German Air Force did not come until March 1961. By that time I had been over three years at 4 (Fighter) Wing Baden with 422 Squadron and was wondering when my next posting would show up. We had just arrived back from 422 Squadron's latest semi-annual live weapons shoot in Sardinia when a message came in saying that I was posted to join the Canadian Advisory Group at WS 10 in Oldenburg.

I cleared quickly from 422 Squadron at 4 Wing and headed north for Oldenburg. On arrival, I was informed by the Canadian CO, Squadron Leader Walt Moore, that I was not to be joining the



Canadian instructional cadre at WS 10, but rather would be assigned as a Tactical Advisor to JG 73 (*Jagdgeschwader* or Fighter Wing 73), the final Sabre 6 German day fighter air defense wing to be formed. On this assignment, I was joined by Flight Lieutenant Alex Leslie, another Canadian Sabre pilot who had served with 421 Squadron at 2 (Fighter) Wing at Grostenquin, France.

Alex and I immediately set to work. JG 73, which was comprised of two *Staffels* or Squadrons, had been formed in 1959, but by 1961 when we arrived, progress had been gradual. It was still receiving brand new aircraft and pilots newly trained at WS 10. The Wing remained at “Oldy” until October 1961 and then we moved to its new permanent air base at Pferdsfeld/Sobernheim, located in the Eiffel Mountains, not far from the three major USAF fighter bases at Bitburg, Hahn and Spangdahlem, and near the beautiful German city of Bad Kreuznach.

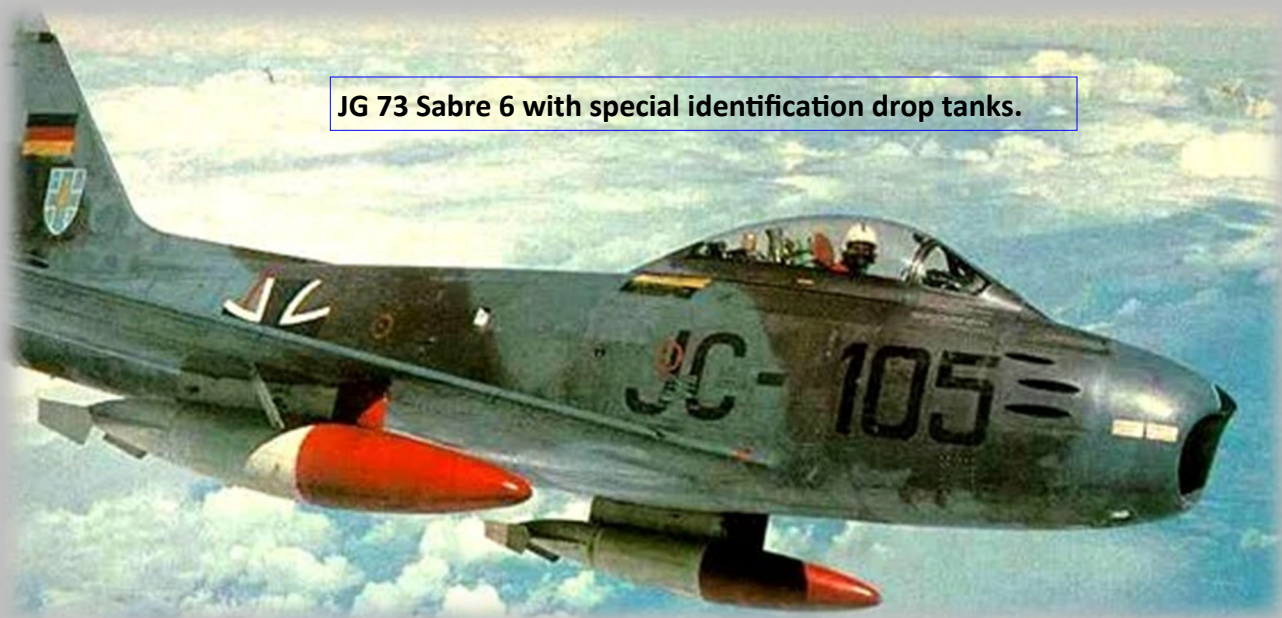
Our main task was to bring the Wing and the German pilots up to NATO operational status by training them as element and section leads, and in jet fighter tactics and in air to air weapon operations. At the new base, facilities were not fully completed and many aspects were quite limited, but thanks to the cooperation that we were able to arrange with the Canadian Air Division, we managed to set up periodic visits to the four Canadian air bases and to arrange intercept practice missions against Canadian Sabres under the control

of the Canadian heavy radar “Yellowjack” located at Metz, France.

The structure of 73 Wing was quite interesting. Under the command of Oberst (Colonel) Fritz Schroter, ably assisted by Oberstleutnant (Lieutenant Colonel) “Jolle” Josten, the Wing Operations Officer, both very experienced World War II fighter pilots, the Wing consisted of two *Staffels*. About 30 percent of the pilots were of officer rank, while the rest were of several non-commissioned ranks, the equivalent of our corporals, sergeants, and warrant officers. It was the non-commissioned pilots that did the majority of the flying, as many of the officers were encumbered with managing the numerous details of the administrative side of the operation.

A number of the pilots had Second World War experience, mainly on fighter operations, so this was a benefit in adding to the understanding among the pilots of achieving a high level of proficiency and the overall approach to training for potential combat operations.

On a typical mission, once the German pilots had reached a competent level as wingmen, Alex and I would take up the role as wingmen ourselves so we could work at training the pilots as two-ship element and four-ship section leads so as to bring the Wing up to the standard required for it to take up its NATO alert responsibility. This was accomplished in mid-1962 with the addition of two sidewinder



JG 73 Sabre 6 with special identification drop tanks.

heat-seeking missiles to augment the standard six 50 caliber machine guns. Although this added to some extent to the offensive fire power, the extra weight and drag did detract from the speed and turning performance of this marvellous aircraft.

One additional issue was that many of the young pilots and ground crew were serving on mandatory national military service. It meant that they were only with us for about two years. This had some adverse effect on the level of experience, on the time available to complete effective training and on the resources available for a high level of maintenance operations. On the plus side for the maintenance operation, the Wing was very ably assisted by two Canadian civilian technical representatives from Canadair and Orenda Engines – Jack Forbes and Terry Mottershead.

Overall, it was a great two or so years. Alex and I were able to train many of the pilots to be capable fighter leaders and had seen 73 Wing achieve its NATO qualification. We left JG 73 in 1963 fully gratified by their accomplishments and having the opportunity to work with a group of aviation people sincerely committed to achieving the operational goals set out for them.

Subsequently, in 1964, the Wing was converted to the fighter bomber role and was renamed to *JABO* (Fighter Bomber Wing) 42 and was re-equipped with the Fiat G91 aircraft. In 1971 the aircraft was changed again to the RF4E Phantom and the Wing re-designated *JABO* 35.

After the re-unification of Germany in 1991, the Wing took over the operation of the Russian MIG 29s, and JG 73 was re-formed at the former East German air base at Rostock/Laage with both RF4Es and MIG 29s. In 1997 the Wing was officially designated the “Steinhoff” Wing in recognition of one of Germany’s great World War II fighter aces.

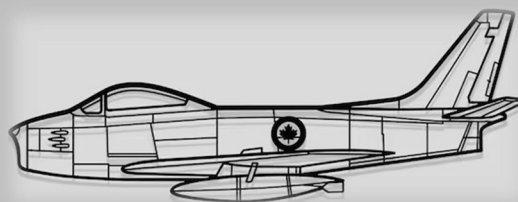
In 2000, the Wing became the first German Air Force unit to fly the new Eurofighter “Typhoon” aircraft. Its first Squadron provided an air defense capability with the Typhoon, while the second squadron, after retirement of the RF4Es in 2004, became the German Air Force operational training unit for the Typhoon. In 2004, the remaining MIG 29s were sold to Poland.

I have continued to follow the activities and development of 73 Wing, and really have to say how proud I am to have had the opportunity to fly with a great group of German aviators and to add to my Sabre flying experiences. Both made up a marvellous ride.

Source: Paul Hayes in *Vintage Wings of Canada*



Paul with BGen Garry Thompson  
Sunnybrook Luncheon, 2020



# RCAF COLD WAR NUCLEAR COMMITMENT

By Fred McCague

I was a Nuclear Strike pilot with the RCAF at the height of the Cold War in the 1960's. As everyone knows no nuclear weapons were ever used after the first two by the United States on Japan in August 1945.

After the Second World War, the tensions between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union-dominated countries led to the creation of NATO. Initially most NATO air forces were in a conventional weapons role; however, the increase in capability of the Soviet Union to wage small scale nuclear war required that NATO increase its nuclear capability in the 1960s. United States, England and France had nuclear weapons, but the remaining NATO air forces did not.

The American and Soviet nuclear capabilities during the Cold War (1950-1989) resulted in a standoff known as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).



The Diefenbaker government canceled the Avro Arrow and Canada decided to purchase the CF-104 Starfighter and the CF 101 Voodoo to replace the F-86 Sabre and the CF-100. The Voodoos were stationed in Canada as part of the NORAD defense system while the CF-104 (Starfighters) were sent to Europe. Kelly Johnson originally developed the Starfighter to be a fast-climbing fighter to but due to its high wing loading it

was not suited to "air fighting" or low level conventional bombing. As a result, the Liberal government under Pearson arranged for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. These weapons would be loaned to the RCAF by the USAF. While the RCAF had care and control of the weapons, the USAF maintained custody of them.



CF-104 Starfighter

By 1960 Canada's RCAF commitment to NATO consisted of 1 Air Division in Europe. The Air Division consisted of four Wings with two Wings in France and two in Germany. Each Wing had two CF-104 Squadrons. Initially all eight Squadrons were tasked as Nuclear Strike Squadrons but in 1963, France declared that any nuclear weapons on French territory had to be controlled by the French Air Force. This was completely unacceptable to the USAF and NATO, and, consequently, one of the Wings was disbanded and its Squadrons transferred to the German Wings while the Squadrons on the other French based Wing were converted to photo Reconnaissance

In 1964 I was posted to 4 Wing and 444 (Cobra) Squadron in Baden Soellingen West Germany. The three Squadrons at 4 Wing were 421 Squadron, 422 Squadron and 444 Squadron. Each Squadron had two fully armed Nuclear Strike aircraft on a 15 Minute alert in the Quick Reaction Alert area or QRA. Mostly it was referred to as the "Q".



In 1967 De Gaulle pulled France out of NATO at about the time that Canada was reducing its NATO commitment. As a result, 444 was disbanded and I was transferred to 422. This move also reduced the number of aircraft in the Q to four.

The CF-104 was ideally suited for its low-level nuclear delivery role as it had a very high wing loading which significantly reduced any buffeting during high-speed low level flight. Often referred to as a “Missile with a man in it” the F-104 was used by many of the other NATO Air Forces in the nuclear role. Its empty weight was 14,000 lbs but its max take off weight was 29,038 lbs. The aircraft was capable of Mach 2.0 at 35,000 ft. Due to its high wing loading the typical speeds for the CF-104 were significantly higher than other similar fighter aircraft. The max weight take of speed was 230 knots, final approach speeds were 170-190 Knots with a landing speed of 150 Knots. The nuclear weapons delivery speed was Mach 0.85 at 50 feet AGL.

### NO LONE ZONE (Nuclear Safety)

No one person ever is allowed to have access to a nuclear weapons system. Before loading, the weapons are kept in a fully guarded bomb dump with weapons custody maintained by USAF personnel. RCAF weapons technicians move the weapons into the Q for loading. Once loaded and accepted the aircraft becomes a nuclear weapon system. This system is contained in a zone delineated by a yellow line and is referred to as a “no lone zone”. In order to enter a no lone zone a minimum of three personnel are required: the assigned pilot, his weapons technician and the USAF custodial agent, an Air Force Military Policeman (MP). The MP must also enter the zone simultaneously with the pilot and weapons tech.

The aircraft alert area guarded by two military police officers, one RCAF and one USAF. The RCAF guard identifies the assigned pilot and controls access. The USAF guard assists with access control and maintains USAF custody of the weapon. The entire Quick Reaction Alert area is in a double fenced-off area with access through a gate house controlled by RCAF MPs and German Shepherd guard dogs. A Squadron pilot stays in the alert area for 24 hours and is usually relieved at 08:00 hours. The outgoing pilot introduces the incoming pilot to the RCAF guard and removes his personal gear. The incoming pilot will then set up the aircraft with the Armament Tech monitoring his every activity before returning to the waiting area. The pilot and armament tech then eat and sleep in the alert shack for the next 24 hours. The aircraft was required to be airborne in 10 minutes if war was ever declared and the nuclear weapons released by POTUS.

### TARGETING/MISSION PLANNING

Nuclear targets in the Warsaw Pact countries are assigned by SACEUR through 4 ATAF and were usually changed every six months. Once a new target was received, the Wing Operations Center assigned it to one of the Squadrons. The Squadron Navigation Officer and Weapons Officer would attend at Mission Planning where they would choose the weapon and routing, considering any Soviet defences. The route would be flown between 100 and 250 feet AGL at a speed of 450 knots in friendly territory and a push up 540 knots in East Bloc territory. The final run in was flown at 0.85 Mach and 50 feet AGL. In bad weather or at night the entire trip would be flown at 800 to 1500 feet AGL. The pilots and intelligence NCO's put together a Combat Profile Mission (CPM) booklet with track, headings, altitudes and timings on the left side and a radar prediction on the right side.

The Role required an all-weather commitment and, initially, the pilots had to use their experience to interpret the radar return at night or in cloud. The Canadian mission planning NCOs developed a Radar Prediction system that eased that burden.

### WEAPONS

We had three different weapons at various times during the period in question. The decision on which bomb to use was made by the weapons officer during the Mission planning phase. Each weapon had individual characteristics and yields. The Atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima had a yield of 15 kilotons while Nagasaki had a yield of 20 kilotons.

#### B28RE:

- \* 70 kilotons
- \* Low Altitude Drogue Delivery (LADD), using a retarder parachute.
- \* 2300 pounds.

#### B43RE:

- \* 1 megaton
- \* Not often used.
- \* 2100 pounds
- \* 70 kiloton version that we might have used
- \* Delivery mode was the same as the B28

B57

- \* Smaller, low yield weapon of 10 kiloton
- \* 500 pounds
- \* “laydown “ mode from 300 Feet AGL

### FINAL RUN IN AND DELIVERY

I have used generalizations to set up a sample attack pattern. Actual numbers would depend on weapon and target requirements which are found in mission pre-planning. I have assumed a day visual attack at 0.85 Mach and 50 feet AGL. We used a Low Altitude Droge Delivery or LADD manoeuvre. During the planning stage the pilots calculated a Run-in Timer and a Release Timer. The Release Timer was usually set for 10 seconds. These timers were preset while the aircraft was in the Alert Area.

At a specific and obvious geographic point, like a road or railway also called the “pickle point”, the pilot pressed and held the bomb release button on the control column. This started the run-in timer. When the run-in timer ended, the pilot heard a loud tone in his headset and at this time he pulled 3 1/2 g in 2 sec to enter a 45-degree climb. The release timer automatically started running at the tone and after ten seconds of the climb the weapon was released.

The distance from the pull up point to the target was usually about 7500 feet, so in the Mission Planning phase the Navigation Officer would measure back from them target the 7500 feet and then add the distance to the pull up point from the pickle point to calculate the run-in timer. 0.85

Mach is approximately 945 feet per second.

The weapon is attached to a centre line rack with two explosive bolts. When the Release Timer ends the explosive bolts blow the weapon away from the aircraft. Currently the weapon deploys a Retarder Parachute and begins its fall under the parachute to its design explosion height. Once the weapon is away the pilot rolls inverted and pulls into a 30 to 45 degree dive before rolling upright. The aircraft is now in full after-burner and accelerating beyond Mach 1 as it dives to 50 feet AGL. When the nuclear weapon explodes the aircraft must be beyond the Escape Distance Required (EDR). In the mission planning phase, the Weapons Office obtains the EDR from the Weapons Manual.

He also inputs the delivery parameters into the Weapons Manual to get the Escape Distance Actual (EDA). If the EDA is less than the EDR the team reworks the delivery parameters until the EDA is more than the EDR, usually about 35,000 feet.

There are several technical factors that prevent a nuclear explosion in the event of an aircraft crash or an inadvertent release. The weapon loaded aircraft was on alert status and was required to be airborne in 10 minutes once POTUS released nuclear weapons. First, the pilot needed a four-digit Peripheral Airborne Limiting (PAL) enabling code before starting. This code was only known to the President and possibly a few select personal. Besides the individual USAF guard on each aircraft, we had a USAF Duty Officer in the QRA. In the event of a true nuclear release, he would receive the code and would pass it to the pilot. The code was entered into the PAL box and the pilot would select enable. If the code was correct an amber light would come on indicating that the weapon was now enabled. We also had another box in the cockpit called a DCU-9A. This box was set and lock-wired to the Off/Safe position when the aircraft was on “Alert”. Only after the aircraft was safely airborne would the pilot move the selector to Safe/Ground/Air. He would later select either Ground or Air depending on the planned bomb burst height.

In a nuclear explosion a Ground burst occurs when the fireball touches the ground while it does not touch the ground in an air burst. Since a ground burst gathers up and radiates much of the soil it is considered to cause higher levels of radioactive fall out. An air burst causes more widespread damage but less radioactivity.

Finally, the bomb had two acceleration switches that were thrown forward by the deployment of the drogue chute on release to complete the circuit to what we were told was the “X” box?? Apparently, this was the Top-Secret inner workings of the final steps to cause a nuclear explosion. Thankfully all this planning and practice came to nought, or we would be in a different world today.

Col (Ret'd Fred McCague

During his visit to Toronto last fall, Prince Harry spent time at Sunnybrook Veterans Centre, meeting and having a laugh with some of the oldest Canadian Veterans in the country...

Remembrance Day is important to him and it's something he looks forward to, he said, because it's a reminder of his family's ties to service.

"It means a lot to me because my grandfather fought in both world wars, so it always brings back memories of what he did," said Reece. "I had a chance to be part



Veterans at Sunnybrook gathered Thursday to present their art therapy work to Prince Harry and share their stories ahead of Remembrance Day, as they reflected on the lasting impact of their sacrifices in service. The Duke of Sussex called it a highlight of his two-day visit to Toronto, which included several events in support of Canadian Veterans and military members.

Sitting in a woodworking studio at Sunnybrook Hospital's Veterans centre, a group of residents painted red poppies onto wood carvings. Among them was Ozzie Reece, 75, and member of Fort York 165, who served in the Canadian military for more than three decades.

of it, too. So it's very exciting for me."

Now his own daughter is serving in the military, he said. That legacy is part of why the community at the care centre is so special to him, he added, because his fellow residents also understand what it's like to serve and they often discuss their stories while creating art together. "It's beautiful because for us, we share our feelings and it's nice to see one another and remember the things we did in the past," he said with a smile. "We like each other, we look out for each other."

Moments later, Reece and other residents shared their work with Prince Harry.

The Duke of Sussex, who served in Afghanistan as a member of the British military, was visiting Sunnybrook at the invitation of the True Patriot Love Foundation, which supports Canadian military members, Veterans and their families.

The veterans centre is the largest of its kind in Canada, and it supports more than 300 veterans from the Second World War and the Korean War through specialized care, including art therapy.

At the centre's art studio, the duke met with more veterans including 97-year-old Richard Ratcliff, member of FY 165, who has tufted more than 50 custom rugs during his time at Sunnybrook, and 101-year-old former pilot Jim LaForce, whom the duke helped paint red poppies onto an army helmet. Several helmets painted by veterans were to be auctioned off that night to support the foundation.

But one was saved as a gift for Prince Harry and painted with a Canadian landscape, explained 101-year-old veteran Brenda Reid.

"We have a helmet, especially for you, and it represents the Invictus Games in Vancouver," she told the duke, noting that she'd painted mountains and trees onto the

helmet with the help of fellow residents. Prince Harry thanked the residents for their service before giving them each a medallion keepsake.

"Thank you for your stories, for your sense of humour, for your skilled artwork in every form," he told the group."

Prince Harry added that he hoped the residents have the opportunity to reflect on their service ahead of Remembrance Day, and Canadians at large do, too.

"I hope collectively, as a society, we can prevent ourselves from repeating some of the mistakes of the past," he said. "There's a lot to learn here around this table and in this building, so I hope that people can listen."



Jim Laforce



Brenda Reid with the Duke of Sussex

## Léo Major DCM & Bar

Léo Major was the only Canadian and one of only three soldiers in the British Commonwealth to receive the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) twice in separate wars, in this case, WW II and Korea.

Major earned his first DCM in World War II in 1945 after a successful reconnaissance mission during the liberation of the Dutch city of Zwolle. As he was sent to scout the city with one of his best friends, a firefight broke out in which his friend was killed. Major continued on to find that Zwolle was mostly deserted by the German occupational army. Thanks to his efforts, the city was spared the artillery fire that was planned the next day by the Allies. He received his second DCM during the Korean War for leading the capture of a key hill in 1951. Born on January 23, 1921, in New Bedford, Massachusetts, to French Canadian parents, Major moved with his family to Montreal before his first birthday. Due to a poor relationship with his father, he moved to live with an aunt at age 14. Major joined the Canadian army in 1940 to prove to his father that he was "somebody to be proud of."

Major was serving with the Régiment de la Chaudière, which landed on Juno beach in the Invasion of Normandy on D-Day June 6, 1944.<sup>[2]</sup> During a reconnaissance mission on D-Day, Major captured a German halftrack by himself, killing all of the halftrack soldiers. The vehicle contained German communication equipment and secret codes, whose possession was critical to Allied intelligence. Days later, during his first encounter with an SS patrol, he killed four soldiers. However, one of them managed to ignite a phosphorus grenade; in the resulting explosion, Major lost one eye but continued to fight. He continued his service as a scout and a sniper by insisting he needed only one eye to sight his weapon. According to him, he "looked like a pirate". Major single-handedly captured 93 German soldiers during the Battle of the Scheldt in Zeeland in the southern Netherlands.<sup>[5]</sup> According to the *Ottawa Citizen*, Major and his friend, Corporal Wilfrid Arsenault, were assigned to determine the fates of a company of recruits that had disappeared after being sent to capture a town; however, as Arsenault fell ill, Major went

alone. After finding the company's abandoned equipment and determining they had been captured, Major entered a house to find shelter from the rain and the cold, when he spotted two German soldiers walking along a dike. He captured the first German, used him as bait to capture the other, and brought his captives to their commanding officer; the officer and his company, totaling around 100 men, surrendered, though three of the soldiers were killed by Major. In a nearby group of houses, SS troops, witnessing the company surrender, opened fire on them, killing seven and injuring some others.

Major disregarded the enemy fire and continued escorting his prisoners to the Canadian lines, ordering a passing tank back to camp with the surviving 93 prisoners.

Allegedly, Major was chosen to receive a Distinguished Conduct Medal. However, he declined the offer as, according to him, General Montgomery (who was to present him with the award) was "incompetent" and in no position to be giving out medals. Whether he actually got this nomination and why he would not have received it is not clear; The National Archives only contains records of his later DCM recommendation from 1945. An article in *Trouw* claims he received seven days off instead, which he spent in Belgium, and that he was not present to receive his DCM because his car would not start.



Monument to Leo Major, Levis, P.Q.