

The Tribute

Summer 2022

Chairman's update

By John Argue, Chair AFMSA

Welcome to the summer edition of The Tribute Air Force Museum Society of Alberta (AFMSA) quarterly magazine. As of this writing, long gone are the short, cold, windy, snowy days of a Calgary winter. We are now enjoying those long, sunny, hot and lazy days of summer, possibly with refreshment in hand. (Note, I did say "as of this writing," so a freak July or August snowstorm can never be totally ruled out.) In keeping with this theme of lazy (at least on my part), we decided to keep this edition somewhat lighter on the reading and writing side while focussing more on the picturesque and scenic aspects of volunteering at the museum. Whom, do you recognize?

Stuart Craig, our outstanding new facility scheduler, has added a fantastic short piece on why he volunteers with AFMSA and the enjoyment he has personally received from it. We may all have slightly varying reasons for doing what we do, but there is one common thread that I have routinely noticed:

I have yet to ever meet a guest to our facilities who was unhappy about visiting with us. Therefore, we are already starting from a very positive place, so it naturally will only get better.

Now, back to the light text and more visual version of this edition, which in keeping with what Kanye West (rapper turned author) said in the intro to his recent famous 52 page (some are blanks) long tome "cause books be wordy and...expletive!" so I hope you enjoy this more visual magazine entry and most importantly the rest of this fabulous summer. We promise that our fall edition, post AGM, will be more detailed and with no expletives.



Take care and cheers.

Satisfaction of being an AFMSA volunteer

By Stuart Craig

Retirement — all the stress of work but without salary and benefits. That is what Karen, in her forthright way, has suggested to me on numerous occasions. During our years overseas, busy work lives meant that we cherished time together, but when we retired back to Canada, we both had many more hours on hand. As we completed all the necessary items on our repatriation, resettlement and personal lists, it soon became obvious that we needed hobbies, projects and routines to help fill the days.

Serendipity has played a hand over the past four years; culminating in the words before you on what it means to be part of the Air Force Museum Society of Alberta (AFMSA). It is not often in life where good fortune mates passion with opportunity, and I feel very privileged to have been accepted as a volunteer within the Cold War Exhibit. There are three dimensions to my involvement which I feel should be told.



Firstly, not a shift passes for me without coming away feeling enriched, happy and inspired — a sentiment I can assuredly say is shared amongst our cadre of volunteers.

date	name	city/country	Comments
March 22, 2022	Richard Berry	Dublin, Ireland	Great exhibit! loved it.
March 29, 2022	Drana Campbell	Calgary, AB	Staff very informed and helpful.
"	Jena Haworth	Calgary, AB	Very Educational 😊
"	Pavia Drazd	Calgary, AB	We will definitely be back!
March 24, 2022	Puck Wagner	Edmonton, AB	Absolutely loved it!
March 9, 2022	Judith	Edmonton, AB	Great facilities!
March 29, 2022	Gina	Edmonton, AB	Excellent!
March 29, 2022	Karen Singh	Edmonton, AB	Awesome!
March 29, 2022	Michelle Kesteven	Edmonton, AB	Amazing!
July 2022	Margaret Gaudin	Edmonton, AB	Super!
30 Nov 2022	Liam Ryan	Edmonton, AB	Unique - we will be back.

Whether in the Air Force Gallery or CWE, these hours bring:

- immersion amidst remarkable history,
- engagement with visitors that brings them a memorable experience and, in some cases, opens dreams for the younger ones,
- satisfaction that each of us is contributing (importantly) to education of the public on the history and heritage of the RCAF.

Secondly, too often in life, stories are lost in time, stories important enough that they should be preserved. In equal measures this is for: family sake; the benefit of those curious, if not passionate, about a subject, and lastly; to capture history through the very eyes and voices of those who were part of it — be it harrowing, humorous or intriguing. For this very reason, and for the benefit of

Background photo: An F-18 in a 7G pull during this years Cold Lake airshow. Photo by Dave Lowery

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Satisfaction of being an AFMSA volunteer

contd.

the AFMSA, I am writing a book about life within RCAF fighter squadrons during the Cold War era. This opportunity is yet another dimension that makes me look forward to getting on with each day.

Lastly, I feel very honoured to manage the scheduling for the Air Force Gallery and Cold War Exhibit. It has given me the opportunity to, at the very least, speak with all of our volunteers and learn a bit about their lives. It is an extended family whom I care about.

It is a great honour to be part of the AFMSA and actually forms a big part of my life in retirement. I feel very proud to be a small part of this incredible group of people. And so we come to the conclusion of the story. I came back to Canada with a wife, a cat and 138 boxes of stuff and now life is filled with so much more. My wife also finds peace and quiet around the house when I am out going about the things that I do!

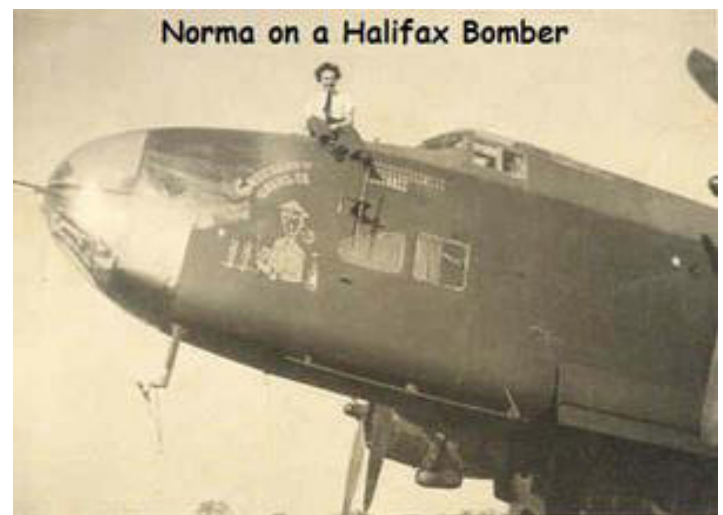


A Halifax — The story of MZ899

By David J. Bercuson

This is a summary of a great, but tragic, WWII RCAF story. If you would like to read the whole article, please download the PDF file from: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh/vol30/iss2/7/>

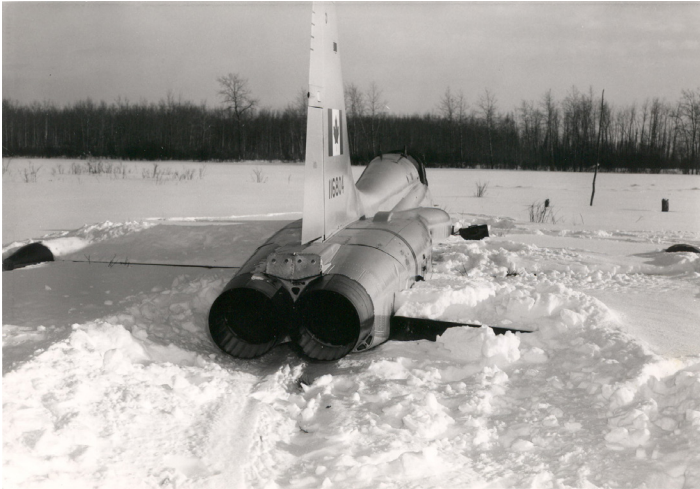
We know a great deal about the Royal Air Force's (RAF)'s bomber offensive. There is also an extensive library of autobiographies, memoirs and other primary sources telling the personal stories of a great many aircrew, some famous—such as Guy Gibson who led the Dam Busters Raid of 1943—and others not so famous—such as Howard Hewer's In For a Penny, In for a Pound, the story of a young man who flew in Nos. 148 and 218 Squadrons of the RAF. But few of those works have focused on the aircrew of individual aircraft because of the dearth of primary source material available to tell their stories. This is the saga of one such crew who flew a Halifax Mark III with No. 433 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and who did not survive the war. The heart of this story is based on the personnel records of these men, held at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa.



CF5 down!

*By Don Norrie, Dave Lowery and email comments from
LCol (Rtd and deceased) Ed Lowery*

CF-5, Ser. No. 116804 was the first CF-5 on strength at 434 Operational Training Unit (OTU) in Cold Lake in 1968. It was also the first CF-5 to have an accident. The pilots were Major Herb Karras and Major Jock Mackay.



“Jock Mackay was in the front seat, Herb Karras was in the back seat,” said Ed Lowery. “Jock was doing a checkout flight; Herb was being checked out as a back seat qualification prior to becoming a line instructor. Jock made a boo-boo on the engine(s) start procedure which led to the accident. The ground crew had connected an electrical auxiliary power unit (APU) cart and had left (intentionally or not, we will never know) the battery switch in the off position. That switch was not easy to see; it was located on the right console quite high up and difficult to see unless one bent over. Once the engines started the generators cut in and would power all electrical buses (circuits) without the battery being switched on. Jock obviously neglected to turn the battery switch on after the electrical cord from the APU was disconnected. He couldn’t honestly remember why, probably something distracted him at the time. In any case nothing would have happened throughout a normal flight UNLESS there was a double generator failure. Shortly after takeoff at high altitude (above 25,000 ft) with Herb at the controls in the back seat they intentionally pulled the aircraft into a straight up manoeuvre allowing the aircraft to stall. It would then recover on its own very slowly and smoothly. This was an exercise we did especially to demonstrate the excellent stall qualities of the CF-5. It contrasted drastically with the CF-104 which would go berserk if one tried that manoeuvre! In fact, it would go out of control, tumble and required at least 15,000 feet of recovery altitude. As happened occasionally when doing this manoeuvre in the CF-5, both engines flamed out likely due to interrupted air-flow to the air intakes. Engine restart was normally not a problem; one simply pushed the throttles fully forward (to the wall) which automatically energized the relight spark igniters in each engine. The engine would then spool up in a controlled and regulated manner. This was well known and I had it occur to me on at least 4-5 occasions during instructional flights with students. However, the igniters needed electrical power; it was usually obtained from the

electrical circuits on each engine. In this instance both generators (one on each engine) went offline as the engines spooled down due to the flame out condition. The backup system was from the single aircraft battery. In this case, Jock did not recognize that it was off and several attempted relights were obviously not successful. They glided the aircraft down until it became obvious that no engine start was going to occur. Intercom communication between the two pilots was impossible because, with no electrics, the radios were off. I believe Jock even wrote the command to eject on a piece of paper and held it up to order Herb to eject. And, of course, with no radios he was unable to broadcast his problem/intentions to anyone on the ground or to other aircraft airborne.”

Both pilots had their chutes fully deploy. MacKay was OK, but Karras was critically injured on bail out.

“Herb was knocked unconscious on ejection and woke up lying in the snow on his back with a girl looking at him,” said Ed Lowery. “Luckily for him his descent was observed by farm people. Jock really felt bad about all this and was especially frustrated as he should have realized what was not working as he was the ground school instructor responsible for teaching all about aircraft systems including emergency procedures.”

The aircraft went on to make a near perfect pilotless landing on a frozen slough in Northern Saskatchewan. It was retrieved by a USAAF helicopter doing cold weather trials at Cold Lake and went on to lead a full life as the trainer at 10 FTTU.

“I remember it well,” Dave Lowery recalls. “My mother cried the whole night as the Karasses were close family friends when dad was instructing on F5s. It was unclear if Herb would live through the first night post ejection. Though I don’t think it was conclusively proven, the theory was the seat had struck him in the back of the neck when it blew away. Dad and I visited Herb at a rehabilitation facility in England a few years later when dad was on exchange in Salisbury, Wiltshire. The week after the incident, Jock Mackay was a guest at our dinner table at 111 Martineau on the Cold Lake base and told the story to this wide-eyed 11-year-old about his ejection experience. I clearly remember him describing as he watched, while under chute, the pilotless F5 continue in flight, wings level and in a gradual descent – as if the aircraft was relieved the annoying humans had departed and it could continue flying as it was designed.”



The site of the initial impact.

We are the AFMSA!

Most photos by Stuart Craig, a few by Dave Lowery





