

# The Tribute

By John Argue, Chair AFMSA

Chairman's update

Summer 2024

Welcome, everyone, to the Air Force Museum Society of Alberta's (AFMSA) quarterly magazine, the Tribute – summer 2024 edition.

As I sit to write this opening there is a song streaming through my phone "The Boys of Summer" by Don Henley. The first couple of lines are:

*Nobody on the road, nobody on the beach,  
I can feel it in the air, the summer's out of reach.*

By the time you read this newsletter, you will have probably taken stock of the shorter days and cooler nights. Here is hoping that we have a long mild next few months . . . better for fall fly fishing in late September. However, another recent staple of September is our all-important AFMSA annual general meeting (AGM). This year's event will be held in the Cold War Exhibit at the Military Museum (TMM) commencing at 1630 hrs Friday, 13 September and will be followed with a TGIF featuring free pizza and pay as you go refreshments. We anticipate that this meeting will last one to one and a half hours. Then all our AFMSA members and volunteers can take this opportunity to get reacquainted, reflect on the past years' activities and discuss our way ahead. Notable items of discussion, and naturally in much greater detail than I can relay here, is the following major theme: The past, present and future, but key items contained within this agenda will be:

1. AFMSA constitution changes
2. CWE expansion
3. RCAF 2024
4. AFMSA board expansion and elections

The recommended constitution changes should have been received by everyone in the original AGM E-invite and I request that you have a look at the proposal in advance of the meeting. The main features, apart from several clerical fixes, are the board composition and capability to manage short notice and short fuse decision making via e-mail, versus calling on a full face-to-face board meeting.

The CWE expansion is awaiting the engineering proposal final details to be completed, phase one contract signing and then a potential fall ground breaking if we can achieve the necessary end state before the snow flies. Bottom line . . . the planning phase is now shifting into execution.

The RCAF 2024 team has managed a large slate of outstanding events throughout the spring and summer that will culminate with a mixed mess dinner on Saturday, 19 October 2024. Our guest speaker will be the DComd NORAD Colorado Springs RCAF Lieutenant General Blaise Frawley. Invites are due out any time now.

Our board expansion has been running in an interim state for approximately six months with two new directors whose functions are primarily geared to the expansion in the form of managing the day to day operations as seamlessly as possible. They are also providing the detailed quality control/assurance mechanisms for the physical phase one expansion.

As you can surmise, there are numerous issues to discuss with copious amounts of information to share, and we hope to see a large turnout for this AGM/ TGIF. I believe that you will be very encouraged with all of our volunteer teams' efforts this year and should be proud of all the good things that we have all accomplished together. There is more to do, and with several of the big ticket projects taking shape or now completed, a re-focussing on managing some of the smaller, but significant, details in our current facilities can now be addressed more fervently (i.e. IT issues and current exhibit repairs etc).

On a sombre note, I must regretfully pass on that in very recent weeks, we lost long time AFMSA volunteers Colin Catley, Glenys Goossens and Paul Tobolski. We hope that the information we passed regarding each service reached everyone in ample time and that each of you who knew Colin, Glenys, and Paul were able to attend or reach out to the family as you saw fit. RIP Colin, Glenys, and Paul.

Additionally, in May of this year, Major General Kenneth Lett passed away at the age of 100 years with funeral services being held in Victoria. Ken was a founding member of the AFMA, board member of the AFMSA, a member of 783 Wing RCAF and was well known to the Calgary community at large. An invite has been passed to all our AFMSA/783 Wing personnel with an opportunity for all who knew Ken to attend a celebration of life, memorial exhibit unveiling and luncheon for Ken Lett at 1100hrs, Sunday, 15 September in the CWE. Fittingly, given Kens WW II Spitfire history, the Battle of Britain ceremonies will be occurring at TMM commencing at 1400 hrs on that same day. Please take the time to attend all these events and RSVP (ASAP) to our AFMSA Admin Assistant Kyra Peters, [airforce.museum.ab@gmail.com](mailto:airforce.museum.ab@gmail.com) or Tel: (403) 714-7569.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the AGM/TGIF Friday, 13 Sept, and the celebration of life, luncheon, quilts of valor presentation, and the Battle of Britain ceremonies, Sunday, 15 Sept. Lastly, mark your calendars for the 19 October mixed mess dinner.

Per Ardua Ad Astra  
Sincerely, John



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**Don Matthews, Director (at large)**

**Michelle Gerwing, Secretary**

**Bob Parkinson, Treasurer**

**Ed McGillivray, Vice Chairman (fund raising)**

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**Gerry Morrison, Honourary Director**

**Kenn Nixon, Director (casino coordinator)**

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**Toby Prigione, Manager (facilities)**

**Jim Powell, Honourary Director**

**Lee Obst, Director (at large)**

**Stuart Craig, [sscraig@gmail.com](mailto:sscraig@gmail.com)**

**Tim Strocel, Deputy Ops and Scheduler [strosse@telus.net](mailto:strosse@telus.net)**

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## Exhibits

*By Bob Wade. Photos by Dave Lowery*

Continued progress is being made towards starting construction on the Cold War Expansion project. Ground preparations to start laying concrete for the new structure floor will begin the second week of September. It is hoped to have the funding in place to complete building the new structure next summer.

The fuselages of two CF100 aircraft arrived from Borden, Ontario on the 22 of July. We now have all the pieces from two aircraft at the museum as the tails and wing sections arrived several months ago. We want to use the concrete pad of the new Cold War Exhibit structure to assemble the best parts of both aircraft to create one complete airframe suitable for exhibit. Two years ago we acquired a flight simulator for the CF100 with complete front and rear cockpits. The two cockpits in the aircraft we just brought in don't have all the flight controls and instrumentation any longer so we will use the flight simulator cockpits to fully complete the CF100 aircraft we put on display.

During the summer we acquired new tires for our CF101 Voodoo aircraft and will start work soon to polish up the jet and prepare it for its new paint job next spring to summer. The T-33 we acquired last year from the Cold Lake museum will also be prepared for painting this winter. Since the rear cockpit had been removed when the aircraft was in active service due to its use as an ejection seat trial aircraft, we will also be rebuilding that cockpit to better reflect the T-33's role as a training and utility aircraft.

Work also continues on the aircraft we have on display in the current hangars. Our talented volunteer, Jim Parker, has modified the canopy operating system on the F86 to have it now opening and closing electronically. Toby Prigione is our volunteer facilities manager and has been actively seeking instrumentation to complete the cockpit of our CF18 Hornet and also looking for inert weapons to be displayed on both the CF101 and CF18 aircraft.

Exciting times as we look forward to major improvements in all our exhibits at the Air Force Museum of Alberta and we owe it all to the outstanding contributions from our dedicated volunteers.



Above: The CF100 tail and wing sections were on site already.

Below and next page: The Voodoo main tires get swapped out for new ones. (According to Gary Watson, at right sitting next page, these are historical photos depicting two pilots, Bob Wade and Gord Todd, getting dirty while the AME sits and watches!)





## Curator update - Ken Lett display

By Alison Mercer

On 15 September, a small but significant addition is getting unveiled at the AFMA. Replacing the CF-104 artefact case on the east side of the Starfighter will be a custom display showcasing Ken Lett's logbooks, medal group and significant awards. We are grateful to add these items to the AFMA collection and cannot think of a better home for them other than in the Ken and Roma Lett Cold War Exhibit, adjacent to the aircraft that bears his name.

From the curator's perspective, there are a variety of factors to consider when installing a display of this type; of these, light is one of the most important.

As anyone knows who's seen a faded out flag or a print that's been up in a sunny office way too long, light fades objects. Metal materials have very high light tolerance but materials like textiles and paper-based objects are extremely light sensitive. While we could simply put Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) Lett's logbooks and very nice medal group out in a case similar to the other cases in the exhibit, their colour and original condition would last about a month . . . tops.

Light levels are measured in lux and you can take those readings with a luxmeter. Knowing that the Cold War Exhibit has a partially opaque skylight and a generous amount of daylight throughout the gallery, getting a light reading in the intended space for this display was crucial.

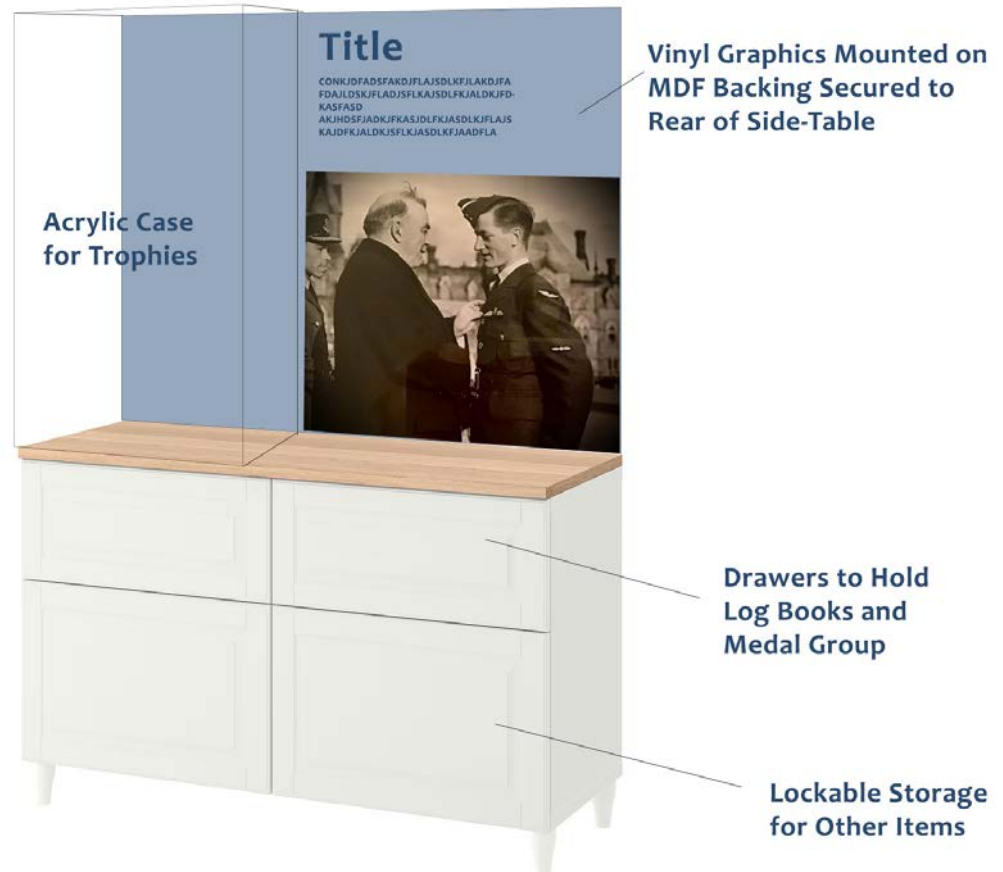
The recommended lux for textiles and paper-based objects is 50, provided you rotate the items out after three months and put them in zero-light storage conditions for five years. The light reading on the east side of Starfighter 846 was 250 on the low end and 475 on the higher end. So a standard case is not going to work here. Companies do exist that make very high-end museum cases (complete with interior climate-control and built-in security) and while one of those would be nice to have, there are simpler and much cheaper options at hand locally. (Footnote:

I approached one of these companies for a quote on their basic floor model case when I was brainstorming People of Canada's Air Force and it came to \$8000 for one case. I declined, they asked what our budget was, I told them about \$600 per case, and they wrote back: "Oh, so sorry, we don't make those kind of cases." So I slunk out the servants' door and went to Ikea.)

After looking at some light-blocking options like a curtain or a specialized, button-activated light-up case, I realized there was a much simpler option – drawers! Protected by sturdy sheets of acrylic attached with security screws, pull-out drawers would allow visitors a close look at Ken's items, while keeping out the light when closed. After braving the porridge of exasperated couples in Ikea's kitchen cabinet section, I had a custom cabinet designed and ready to order.

This project will be a nice finale for the new exhibits we have unveiled over this centennial year and we are very much looking forward to giving Lt. Gen. Lett his own space in the Cold War Exhibit.

**Below: This image gives a basic idea of the overall design - colours and imagery subject to change.**



## RCAF 2024 committee Story and photos by Stuart Craig

2024 has been a busy year for the Calgary RCAF 2024 committee with a rich event calendar and a few more yet to come. This article is not so much to speak of past and present events but more to express gratitude to all of those, and there have been many, who have dedicated endless hours to ensure each event's success. At year's end, we will be producing a chronicle complete with photos and the backstory to each. In the meantime, I would like to summarize how we came together and worked as a team.

I remember when we first spoke of RCAF 2024 in our board meeting – it was 2022 and it all seemed so far in the future. Our steadfast motivation was to ensure that City of Calgary citizens recognize and honour the RCAF role and contributions in peace preservation and global stability and the incalculable human costs that come with it. We began with concept discussions on how best to promote the RCAF and its 100th anniversary and agreed that the way forward was to form a working committee to liaise with the RCAF to establish budgets and align initiatives. As time would demonstrate, and due to budgetary constraints imposed on the RCAF, the hard reality came with the realization that initiative delivery fell exclusively on a few volunteers' shoulders to do the Calgary region proud.

Recognizing the horsepower necessary for planning and delivering events, we formalized our RCAF 2024 committee in 2023 and quickly set about determining our event calendar and responsibility assignments. The involved parties are many – but the key accountability rested with individuals from the Air Force Museum of Alberta, Bomber Command Museum in Nanton, Hangar Flight Museum, 783 (Calgary) Wing Air Force Association, Branch 285 Royal Canadian Legion and military aircraft owners who have graciously spared their time and equipment.

Meetings began in the bitterly cold winter months of 2023, with 285 Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion becoming our home. Every second Wednesday of each month was used to debate, create, revise and implement workplans. The work extended well beyond these meetings and continued into endless conversations and emails. And then there were the discussions and negotiations

with outside parties involved with event hosting – such as city hall flag raising, Stampede parade and float and the Spruce Meadows Gypsy Moth display. Throughout 2024 our committee planned for and, more importantly, successfully delivered 24 events. It will be interesting to tally all the hours committed by every stakeholder in these events once we find time to close out and reflect on our efforts. Proverbial mountains have been moved!

On 5th July, our RCAF 2024 committee chairman, Kenn Nixon, kindly organized (and generously funded through 783 RCAF Association Wing) an RCAF 2024 team and AFMA volunteer appreciation event at the Cold War Exhibit. John Argue, our AFMSA/AFMA chairman also spoke of the efforts and spirit needed to make such initiatives a success. I feel privileged to be involved with RCAF 2024 on a number of fronts and so thought I would also use the occasion to express my gratitude to the many people whose noteworthy contributions have made Calgary's activities a great success. In doing so, I took 'a road less travelled' approach and conveyed my thoughts by way of a quirky limerick. I apologize if it is a little less colourful than that much beloved classic "There once was a man from Nantucket!"

Here we are, RCAF 2024,  
A momentous centennial, and some days afore.

A few words to share I shall say,  
In deep appreciation of your efforts without pay.

Through my message, but with two stanzas more!  
-----  
Before this great group I stand,  
Whose efforts each I have scanned

For it is a great thing you do,  
To volunteer with a view.

Extolling the RCAF most grand.  
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One final stanza to await,  
Otherwise on very thin ice I shall skate!

There is beer to be drunk,  
Slices of pizza to be sunk.

To this end, heartfelt thanks, my friends, I state.

**Per Ardua Ad Astra**



Left: Stuart and Karen Craig



Above: John and Elisa Argue



Above: Ed McGillivray



Left: L to R Gary Watson and Bob Wade

Below: L to R Karen Craig, Alison Mercer and Elisa Argue



Below: Lee and Miriam Obst



## CF 100 arrival!

*Story and photos by Dave Lowery*

As part of its planned expansion, the Air Force Museum Society of Alberta (AFMSA) received two Avro CF-100 Canuck (in slang known as the Clunk) fuselages on Monday, 22 July.

Both fuselages originated at CFB Borden, Ontario and will be combined, along with the wings, tail, and controlling surfaces already on site to produce one CF-100 for our Cold War display.

Avro Canada designed the interceptor/fighter aircraft in response to an RCAF (Royal Canadian Air Force) request for a

Technical details CF-100 Mk 5 (Wikipedia)

General characteristics

- Crew: two
- Length: 54 ft 2 in (16.51 m)
- Wingspan: 57 ft 2 in (17.42 m)
- Height: 14 ft 6 in (4.42 m)
- Wing area: 591 sq ft (54.9 m<sup>2</sup>)
- Empty weight: 23,100 lb (10,478 kg)
- Gross weight: 33,450 lb (15,173 kg)
- Max takeoff weight: 36,000 lb (16,329 kg) [65]



new aircraft suitable for all-weather and long-distance operations. The result, in 1946, was the CF-100 Canuck and in 1952 began mass production as the only Canadian designed, developed and manufactured jet fighter. Although projected to have a life span of only 2000 flight hours, it was discovered during operations that the airframe was good for over 20,000 hours leading to a full withdrawal from service in 1981.

John MacNeil is an AFMSA volunteer who flew the CF 100 starting 48 years ago.

“I flew the CF-100 Mk 5 C and D a total of 650 hours from June 1976 until January 1980 on 414 (EW-electronic warfare) Squadron CFB North Bay, ON. I was the last pipeliner (first posting after pilot training and wings) to fly the CF-100 prior to its retirement from service in 1981,” MacNeil says. “It was a very powerful aircraft because of the Orenda engines and could reach 40,000 ft MSL in about 10 minutes but had British quirks such as a disorganized instrument panel and buttons for the landing gear. Crews often joked that adding people was an afterthought,” he says. “The aircraft could remain airborne for four hours when flown for range and five hours for endurance. The aircraft had very poor heating and the pilot froze at high altitude while the back seater was somewhat warm.”

- Powerplant: 2 × Avro Canada Orenda 11 turbojet engines, 7,300 lbf (32 kN) thrust each

Performance

- Maximum speed: 552 mph (888 km/h, 480 kn)
- Range: 2,000 mi (3,200 km, 1,700 nmi)
- Service ceiling: 45,000 ft (14,000 m)
- Rate of climb: 8,750 ft/min (44.5 m/s)
- Thrust/weight: 0.44



