

The Tribute

By John Argue, Chair AFMSA

Chairman's update

Summer 2025

"There is nothing permanent except change" - Heraclitus

Welcome to the summer edition of The Tribute - Air Force Museum Society of Alberta's (AFMSA) quarterly magazine for 2025. With winter now firmly behind us we hopefully may find ourselves spending more times in warm summer breezes having BBQ's and enjoying valuable time with family and friends.

And yet, as the seasons change, so do the aspects of our lives at home, with family, or even in the AFMSA. I sadly take this time to share with you that Dave and Cheryl Lowery will be relocating permanently to the Nanaimo area and starting a new chapter in their lives at the end of June 2025. Unfortunately, Dave will be stepping down from the AFMSA board effective 31 July 2025.

Dave and I have discussed this possibility over the last several months and it is with great sadness that we lose such a key contributor to our volunteer teams' overall success. Dave, over a decade of service to AFMSA, has covered numerous areas of our museum operation, most notably his contacts and liaisons with local Calgary and national media outlets that have provided very significant positive exposure to all that we do in support of RCAF history and heritage. Additionally, Dave's spearheading of the production of The Tribute has kept our members and volunteers apprised of all our activities with this truly professionally crafted quarterly journal.

Dave's thoughtful input at numerous board meetings have always been pivotal to our selection of the right courses of action that we have always inevitably pursued. I will also personally miss all our discussions on adherence (or my non-adherence) to CP journalistic style standards, motorcycles, and music. We always knew when Dave was "On Duty" in the CWE as his clean gleaming motorcycle was always parked just outside the door rain, snow, or shine. Okay, maybe not snow, but I wonder if that is why he looks forward to the west coast on Vancouver Island B.C. (Bring, Cash.)

Lastly, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Cheryl for her amazing contributions in coordinating our annual volunteer bowling events at the Glencoe Club amongst many other initiatives over the years. You will both be missed immensely.

I would also like to share Dave's E-mail to me earlier this month.

Good morning John,

After a great deal of thought, none which was negative, I have decided the last newsletter I produce will be the June edition and I will resign from the AFMSA board as of July 31. I leave on a high note as Cheryl and I close our Calgary chapter. I cannot express fully what an honour it has been to serve with such great individuals. I'm sure there will be someone interested in newsletter duties (and probably not a journalist so you won't have to put up with CP style

anymore!) but the media relations role may be slightly harder to fill. In that light, please know I will be available to consult when you need media exposure in the future.

I will be in Calgary until June 26 and for the last three weeks in July before we plan on basing ourselves (mostly) full time in Nanaimo. And my phone number will remain the same so please make the board aware I will still be available.

The past 12 years have been a true joy in my life and I wish you and the AFMSA nothing but a great future and continued success as you promote the museum and its activities.



Dave and Cheryl, on behalf of everyone at the AFMSA, we offer you a huge thank you for all that you have accomplished with us and we wish the both of you safe travels and a fulfilling retirement life in BC. Lastly, we know that you will be in Calgary to often visit your family, and we hope that you will always include your very many friends at the museum during your returns.

CWE expansion

In our last Tribute article, I erroneously said that phase one of the expansion project was 100% complete. Unfortunately, this was only 99% true as we still have some additional work to complete. To be precise, we still need to remove the large dirt pile to the east of our facilities, the new foundation requires additional supports placed under our original structures, insulation of the new concrete, and some end state grading/landscaping. Most likely, we will incorporate much of this work for completion just prior to commencing the phase two structure build circa spring 2026 (though the dirt pile must go now though).

We are still in the middle of this hiatus period – between phases one & two – during which we continue to do fund raising and exhibit planning/construction. However, as expected, we have enjoyed some concurrent activity along the exhibit lines. With thanks to Gord Todd's coordination acumen, we were again able to secure Major Frank Dwyer (newly promoted) and his outstanding maintenance team from 4 Wing Cold Lake. They arrived in Calgary in mid-May to cobble together the best pieces of the two CF-100 aircraft into what will inevitably become a museum quality CF-100. That airplane, along with the CF-101 Voodoo, and CT-33 T-Bird will be towed on to the new concrete pad this summer as a potential exhibit for the public's benefit.

Additionally, Gary Watson and his team are very busy planning the installation of both the cockpits of the CF-100 from the salvaged

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pieces of our CF-100 simulator. Thank you Gord, Frank, Gary and all your respective teams for the outstanding and impressive work accomplished so far.

Finally, congratulations to our new Doosan's qualified forklift teacher and operator, Bob Wade, and for the successful purchase of this item for the AFMSA. This forklift's utility should prove to be a valuable addition during the numerous projects we will need to complete over the coming years. Looking for potential students on the forklift please contact Bob Wade (B.C. lol).

TMM council

At our last TMM council meeting in early May 2025, the board approved the lease of the large metal clad building behind the CWE for AFMSA usage. It is a work in progress as this building is filled with numerous articles (tanks, trucks, etc.) that will need to find a new home before we can occupy it. A TMM lead committee has been tasked to remove the contents and draft an MOU with AFMSA so that we can use this space for storage and exhibit assembly for our new facilities ultimate use. Both Bob Wade and I will be on this TMM lead board to assist in a smooth transition.

In closing, I would like to thank all our volunteers for your continued support, daily efforts, and wish all of you a most enjoyable summer. As Heraclitus predicted, change for AFMSA appears permanent.

Per Ardua Ad Astra.

Sincerely, John Argue

Bob Wade, our new IFR (instrument forklift rated) operator! Dave Lowery photo.



Our aspiring pilots

Story and photo by Stuart Craig

I thought I would take a slightly different tack to past articles you may have read.

The Air Force Museum Society of Alberta's vision is to not only preserve the rich history and traditions of the men and women who have served, and continue to serve, in Canada's air force but to inspire and inform future generations of the vast array of opportunities that the field of aerospace offers. This article deals with the latter – following an afternoon and evening that John Argue and myself spent with five young men whose sights and hopes are set on a flying career within the RCAF. Bob Wade, unfortunately, was not available to join us and share his incredible range of experiences.

All five have successfully passed lead-in tests, interviews, medicals and the most difficult aspect of the selection process – the aircrew selection process – and now await their slots. For each of these gentlemen, their interest in aviation began at a young age – cliché to say perhaps but nevertheless true. They have dedicated their efforts with great focus and now await the start of what will be their greatest and likely most difficult journey.

John, as a true mentor (and I, along for little more than moral support and drinking buddy), took these gentlemen under our wings beginning with a brief tour of the Cold War Exhibit – including photo opportunities in the CF-104 cockpit – before adjourning to the Inn on Officer's Garden for drinks and dinner. It was fascinating listening to their hopes and dreams and for

them to hear first-hand experiences and insights of our chairman from the time he was a student to his days of operational deployments, foreign exchange tour, time as deputy commanding officer and CF-18 instructor on 410 "Cougar" Tactical Fighter Operational Training Squadron, Cold Lake.

Side note! John was one of the instructor pilots in Jetstream – a 2008, eight part, TV series documenting the journey of student pilots striving for their CF-18 qualifications. I recommend the series – to be found on YouTube – if you have not seen it.

Join us in wishing Ty, Brian, Nic, Brandon and Sebastian the greatest of successes in their efforts to become our next generation of RCAF pilots.



Major John Argue, deputy commanding officer.
(Still taken from Jetstream television series.)



Left to right: Stuart Craig, John Argue, Ty Irving, Brian Howarth, Nic Chymycz, Brandon Rutherford, Sebastian D'Onofrio.

Murray family aviation day

Photos and story by Stuart Craig

This was the second year that a few of us received an invitation to the Murray family's aviation day. Incredible generosity and hospitality on the part of Don and Robin Murray, along with their friends with all the fly-ins (a near mini-Oshkosh!) – which included our own Harv Wregget and his Glasair SH-2RG. A beautiful and pretty speedy machine.



Harv Wregget and his Glasair SH-2RG.

Aviation has a deep-rooted history in the Murray family dating back to 1952, when Don Murray Sr. got his PPL. Over the decades that followed, he bought and sold many aircraft. However, one aircraft that endured over the years to become central to the family's passion for planes is a Cessna 180 taildragger. All five sons' first forays in flight came through that aircraft – and now their children (the third generation of pilots) are carrying on the tradition.

It is impressive that the family has principally remained in the Strathmore area and each of Don Sr's sons have fascinating lives. In this article, however, we will focus on the two brothers with whom we are most familiar – Don and Robin.

Don obtained his pilot's license at age 17 and, since then, has acquired and sold a number of aircraft. Today, he retains an impressive stable of fixed wings including (but not limited to) a Cessna CJ2 jet, a Stearman biplane and the Cessna 180. He also has a helicopter license and maintains his currency with his Eurocopter EC-120. Perhaps his crown jewel is the Mk XIV Spitfire he acquired in 2022 - a very rare bird indeed. There could be no more apt adjective for a Spitfire than the observation of Dave O-Malley (comms manager, Vintage Wings of Canada), who described it as aristocratic countenance.

Robin made his first solo at age 14 in the family's Cessna 180 and then went on to complete his commercial license in 1984. During that time, he formed Early Bird Aviation (a crop-dusting company) with his brother Calvin. Robin then joined Bar XH Aviation in 1994 and became its chief pilot in 1998 – flying JetStream 31s/32s and King Air 200s. Robin then joined a burgeoning WestJet in Feb 1999 as a FO on the Boeing 737-200. Today, Robin is a captain on their 787-900 fleet. In his spare time, Robin has built quite the fleet of aircraft: a Pitts Special, four Douglas A26 Invaders and a Canadair T-33 Silver Star.



Spitfire Mk XIV.

Below, L to R: Ian Smith, Bob Wade, John Argue, Gary Watson, Phil Conroy, Ed McGillivray, Harv Wregget.



Restoring the Clunk, phase two

By Gary Watson

A team of nine techs from Cold Lake, under the auspices of L. Col Durand, of 1 AMS and led by Major Frank Dewar, arrived at the CWE to reassemble our best CF100. The plan required them to utilize parts of two clunks (100493 Mk 4 and 18752 Mk5D, the prime aircraft - 493 with the necessary spare parts. Both fuselages had been stored outside at the south end of the TMM property.

A large crane was used, relocating 752 on several Cold-Lake supplied trestles providing space to work. An examination of 752 showed it was in good condition but with no main gear. However, 493 had a set of main gear beneath its fuselage. After a day of crawling upside down under the fuselage removing 60-year-old hardware, the gear was removed by the team.

Next was to open the fuselage access panels on 752. And then the crew manhandled the large dual wheel main gear assembly into the small area and attached both main gear.

The landing gear on 752 was welded to ensure it would never

move. Both main - and nose gear wheels - were in good condition and a tech went through all the tires to ensure they would hold air.

Next came the aft section then installing the large tip tanks. Except for the main gear, everything external on 752 is original. 752 is on its legs supported by the PSP (perforated steel plating)

The interior is almost empty with the exception of both ejection seats and a few other items that will be replaced or cleaned up. Rusty Pothier already has one seat from the simulator restored and is working on the second. There are small items on the exterior of 752 requiring a lot of screws prior to opening the canopy on 752.

The next phase involves removing any items of use on 493.

Without a doubt, we didn't have the staff and tools for the work carried out by these skilled techs from Cold Lake. They are from a mixture of units at Cold Lake with a variety of skills.

They are highly motivated and over nearly three weeks turned a pile of parts and pieces into a great exhibit of Canadian history.



Clunk Crew L to R: Cpl Jerry Richard, Cpl Marc Deschamp.

Bottom L to R: Gary Watson lead CF100 program, Major Frank Dwyer, MCpl Corey Ryan, Avr Ethen Rice, Cpl Terry Noseworthy, Sgt Jason Park.



