

The Tribute

Winter 2023

Chairman's update

By John Argue, Chair AFMSA

Welcome to the 2023 winter "Holiday" edition of The Tribute Air Force Museum Society of Alberta (AFMSA) quarterly magazine.

On behalf of AFMSA I would like to extend a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Season's Greetings, as well as a new year of blessings filled with peace, love, health and prosperity for all in 2024.

Since our last edition of The Tribute in the summer of 2023, numerous activities have been occurring that bode well for our organization. As usual, at the forefront of the day to day operations, our volunteers have been providing the public and educational groups alike, the immense benefit of all their individual expertise and experience on the history and heritage of the RCAF within the Air Force Gallery and CWE. Numerous patrons and external agencies have commented to me personally on, not only the quality of our exhibits, but most importantly the significant interactions they have had with the docents on duty. The stories and information that all of you share with our visitors bring the exhibits to life and have left a lasting great impression about our mission. Thank you for all your efforts and I am proud of this great team we have assembled and volunteers who continue to provide their valuable time and energy supporting the RCAF. Of note, Stuart Craig has been an excellent scheduler for our volunteers, an information conduit and a superb ambassador with TMM regarding numerous volunteer issues. Thank you very much Stuart for all your efforts above and beyond the call of duty. Lastly, TMM council data regarding visitors to TMM were very positive and although exact Remembrance Day numbers were not yet tabulated the trends showed that we have almost recovered to near pre-pandemic era numbers and that this current trending aims to see us surpass 2023 and have a banner year in 2024.

Behind the scenes, AFMSA has witnessed a flurry of activity since the summer Tribute edition. Our annual AGM held in Sept 2023 and followed by a TGIF was very well attended and we are thankful to all our members who came out in support. Several items of information and business were passed along during this meeting. First, the RCAF 783 Wing donated over \$22,000 to AFMSA and our "Great Escape" Air Force Gallery exhibit project. Thank you to 783 Wing. Additionally, AGLC provided a cheque for over \$77,000 for our volunteer efforts during the most recent casino night. These, coupled together with Kenn Lett foundation annual donations and those of numerous businesses, organizations and private contributors have significantly improved our financial position and therefore the treasurer's report, as usual, was very positive and a joy to deliver. Thank you to our treasurer Bob Parkinson who has spent an enormous amount of time computerising our accounting systems to make them more compatible with CRA, AGLC and our day to day internal oversight. Well done Bob.

Annual board elections were also carried out at the AGM and we are blessed to have all of those board members up for election, not only agree to be nominated, but also be unanimously approved by the membership. Starting new, two year terms, are: Bob Wade, Michelle Gerwing, Gord Todd, Dave Lowery and Bob Parkinson. Thank you and congratulations to all the aforementioned re-elected members. Having such an experienced, knowledgeable and intelligent volunteer team who will provide the necessary continuity to this AFMSA board going forward is pivotal especially in this RCAF 2024 Centennial year and beyond.



I will also take this opportunity to briefly highlight several other major initiatives that are being accomplished at this time and pivotal to our operations going forward. However, I will avoid going into too much detail as further in this article, or in our very next edition, the SME's will be providing more exact info. In Sept 2023, after a long negotiation process with the Edmonton Alberta Aviation Museum (AAM), AFMSA secured a long term lease of the CF-101 which is now parked behind the CWE. Gord Todd, along with Capt Frank Dwyer and his expert team of technicians from 4 Wing Cold Lake, arranged the disassembly at AAM, transport and reassembly of the CF-101 on site at TMM. The work was carried out flawlessly and numerous AFMSA volunteers assisted with the delivery and media coordination. Thank you Gord and all your team for a job very well done (and under budget).

Not to be outdone, or to ever take time off, Gord is currently working on the delivery of not only one, but potentially two CF-100's from Borden (two to actually make one in reality), with arrival maybe as early as spring 2024. We anticipate putting together individual aircraft exhibit teams from our volunteer pool, which will then become ultimately responsible for the soup to nuts refurbishment (plan) and display of these aircraft. If you are interested in being part of a team, please reach out to Gord Todd, Bob Wade or myself.

Through a long arduous process from initial strategic planning to the current day, Bob Wade and I have been working diligently behind the scenes navigating the bureaucratic processes for acquiring CWE expansion land and facility approval. The official verbal approval has been achieved by the requisite authorities and the crafting of an MOU (memorandum of understanding), or what they call a logistical services agreement (LSA) will be written by TMM director and yours truly for the final signatories (completion mid Jan 2024, signing TBA). In the meantime, a letter of support intent for the commander of 3 CDSG is on his desk for signing as of this edition. This now allows us the

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Chairman's update Contd.

ability to contract an official engineering proposal for the facility. This is a very expensive \$300K outlay, but it is a prerequisite of any facility constructed on DND land and has always been in our initial cost estimates, only now, we have mitigated the risk of an external agency potentially cancelling the project for any reason beyond our control. In a nutshell: The CWE expansion project is a GO as far as the authorities are concerned, now the real work begins on executing the plans by AFMSA. Fund raising, project management, exhibit design and restoration are just a few of the items that we will need to tackle going forward; the ball is now in our court.

As all of you are aware, RCAF 2024 is just around the corner (01 April 2024 to be exact). Kenn Nixon and his team have crafted an extensive program in concert with the RCAF and local air cadets and in very short order; those plans will be succinctly detailed for everyone's benefit and planning. Additionally, the Air Force Gallery will be undergoing an RCAF 2024 refresh starting in Jan 2024 and it will be closed for approximately two and half months. During this closure period we invite all our Air Force Gallery volunteers to pair up and join our volunteers in the CWE. Stuart will provide more info shortly. The gallery refresh will consist of two main components. The flooring will be renovated and have aircraft silhouettes of RCAF operational aircraft emblazoned, making the flooring part of the overall exhibit. The gallery will also have a new interactive exhibit on the great escape incorporated into the refreshed facility. Lastly, our curator, Alison Mercer, will be building an RCAF 2024 founders gallery temporary exhibit from April to Sept 2024. This is no small undertaking and is a professional challenge that our curator has eagerly accepted. We thank Alison for meeting this significant tasking and we offer her our full encouragement and support as we push forward toward 01 April 2024.

Exciting changes and challenges await us all in the coming year(s) and we look forward to sharing this experience with all our AFMSA volunteers and members.

To all, enjoy the holidays and we look forward to a great 2024. And remember, to kick off the New Year, Cheryl Lowery is arranging our volunteer appreciation bowling event for Sunday, 07 January 2024 at the Glencoe Club from 5PM to 8PM. Stuart Craig is taking the RSVPs and please contact him at your earliest convenience.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Exhibits

By Bob Wade

Considerable activity has taken place at the Air Force Museum of Alberta since last summer's newsletter. The CF101 Voodoo we were coordinating to arrive last fall is now on display outside the Cold War Exhibit. We want to thank 4 Wing maintenance at Cold Lake, Alberta for their outstanding support during the disassembly and reassembly of the aircraft during the move from the Alberta Aviation Museum in Edmonton and express our sincere appreciation to Rangeland Trucking for their cooperation and professionalism in completing the move. The Voodoo will be refinished with a new paint scheme prior to being installed for display in the proposed Cold War Expansion facility.

The approval from the department of National Defence for use of the land with the Cold War Expansion has now been received and we anticipate the start of construction for the new facility to begin in the spring of 2024. Our team of volunteers are now actively seeking the remaining funding necessary to complete the project. It is anticipated that the new structure could be completed as early as September 2024. A CF100 Canuck aircraft in Ontario is being prepared for shipment to our museum in the spring of 2024. This Canuck will complete the planned number of aircraft to be put on display in the new extended Cold War facility.

Exciting times as we prepare to celebrate the Centennial Celebration of the RCAF in 2024.

Celebrating a Century of the RCAF

By Stuart Craig

The RCAF is rapidly approaching its centenary – 100 years come 01 April 2024. This is an important milestone, one which recognizes the remarkable contributions that Canada has brought to the preservation of peace and global stability. We must honour and celebrate our air force's role spanning World War II, the Cold War era, the Gulf Wars, a multitude of peacekeeping missions, all points in between, and with a look to the future. To often Canadians lose sight of how we came to live in one of the few countries where political, social and economic stability can be considered a near given. You need not scan much past the first page of any newspaper or opening moments of a newscast to see this.

Few countries can truly make this claim and Canadians should appreciate that the overall quality of life we enjoy is an exception and it has not come without great cost. The sense of national duty, of selflessness, of bravery – in the face of fear and mortality – is the commitment and sacrifice that we must always remember and pay tribute to. It is to those who took that bold step in the past, those in the present and those who will help protect us in the future that we must make full use of this 100th anniversary to pay our honours.

While nation-wide RCAF related events are obviously planned, it is equally important that focus also be given at local levels. To this end, an RCAF 2024 committee comprised of members of 783 (Calgary) Wing of the RCAF Association, the Air Force Museum Society of Alberta (AFMSA), the Hangar Flight Museum and Bomber Command members have come together to diligently develop and implement a broad range of initiatives across the city of Calgary.

Now that we have set our context, let us introduce you to the broad scope of events intended for the year. As many of these are still in the developmental stages, and in the interest of brevity, we will only provide you with a broad overview at this time.

As events are firmed up, we will obviously share timing and venue details. In the meantime:

January – March 2024

Flight Jacket Beer Call – This is the lead-in event to the RCAF mess dinner and so becomes the chance to share a drink and a story with RCAF vets.

RCAF Mess Dinner – While restricted to RCAF members, it is an important and formal event in which to bring together a special group of veterans.

Great Escape Display – March 2024 marks the 80th Anniversary of 'The Great Escape' from Stalag Luft III. A fully immersive experience of moving through the tunnel known as 'Harry' will be opened in March 24 within the Air Force Gallery.

Speaker Series Throughout 2024 – We are hoping that various pubs will sponsor and host various speaking events – a chance for the general public to hear stories of RCAF veterans followed by Q&A.

April – June 2024

Opening of the Founders Gallery – A significant refresh of The Military Museums' Founders Gallery, with a focus on the RCAF for 2024.

VIP Visits – VIP visits for the start of the centenary are presently being planned, including the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta and RCAF senior staff.

City Hall Flag Raising and Cadets Parade – The Royal Canadian Air Force Ensign is the official flag representing the Royal Canadian Air Force. It will be raised at city hall backed by a parade and what is hoped to be a flypast with vintage and current RCAF aircraft.

Happy Hour – A chance for Air Force Museum Society of Alberta volunteers and guests to get together in the Cold War Exhibit for conversation over nibbles and tipples.

Speaker Series Throughout 2024 – We are hoping that various pubs will sponsor and host various speaking events – a chance for the general public to hear stories of RCAF veterans followed by Q&A.

July – September 2024

Calgary Stampede Parade – 783 Wing, AFMSA, Hangar Flight Museum and Bomber Command are hoping to participate in the Calgary Stampede Parade with a dedicated float, capped off with hopefully a CF-18 RCAF flypast.

Community Outreach Activities – AFMSA will participate in several community market events (such as Marda Loop market days) to promote the RCAF, 783 Wing and the AFMA using exhibits, merchandise, etc.)

UN Peacekeeper Day – AFMA board members will lay a wreath honouring fallen Canadian peacekeepers who have participated in missions spanning from the 1950s to present day.

TMM Summer Skirmish – The AFMA will use the annual event to showcase its outdoor aircraft and build awareness of the CWE and AFG.

Spruce Meadows Masters Equestrian – This is the grand slam of international equestrian events, and it is hoped that the RCAF band will be present for military day. A CF-18 flypast is also being looked at.

Battle of Britain Day – Battle of Britain Day is celebrated 15th September every year. 783 (Calgary) Wing of the RCAF Association holds an event in commemoration. It is hoped that actual Spitfires will perform a flypast.



Calgary Sports and Entertainment Corporation (CSEC) – The RCAF 2024 Committee is in talks with the Stampede and Flames over the following initiatives – auctioning of merchandise

(autographed player shirts, pictures, etc.), RCAF promotion pre-game or between play and possible flypasts at early season outdoor events.

Speaker Series Throughout 2024 – We are hoping that various pubs will sponsor and host various speaking events – a chance for the general public to hear stories of RCAF veterans followed by Q&A.

October – December 2024

RCAF Mess Dinner – This would be a second mess dinner. While restricted to RCAF members more so from Calgary and neighbouring communities, it is an important and formal event in which to bring together a special group of veterans. This would likely be preceded by a Flight Jacket Beer Call.

Speaker Series Throughout 2024 – We are hoping that various pubs will sponsor and host various speaking events – a chance for the general public to hear stories of RCAF veterans followed by Q&A.

As these events and activities will involve public awareness, we will be working closely with our PR guru, Dave Lowery, AFMSA Director Public Affairs and Communications, to build a communications and media plan. Through Dave's hard work, insight and connections, the AFMSA has received frequent and very positive media exposure for all past events (such as arrival of our T-33 Silver Star and, more recently, CF-101 Voodoo). We know that this coming year's events will be well looked after.

A vast amount of work is required to bring the above projects to life and 2024 is fast approaching. If you wish to learn more about the above initiatives – and we highly encourage you to join one of the project working teams – please contact Kenn Nixon, Committee Chair (kbnixon@shaw.ca, 403-281-7037) or Stuart Craig (sscraig@gmail.com, 587-436-1302).

In addition to the above, we could not close this article without mentioning the marquis project – the large-scale expansion of our Cold War Exhibit to house our T-33 Silver Star and CF-101 Voodoo which are presently exposed to the elements. The facility will also contain the homegrown designed and manufactured CF-100 Canuck. We are also undertaking a significant refresh of the Air Force Gallery which will contain the discussed Great Escape exhibit and many new and more interactive exhibits.

Watch this space!



Ken Lett inducted into Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame

Kenneth (Ken) Lett, the AFMSA museum's most generous benefactor, was inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame during ceremonies held on September 14 at the Sunwest Aviation hangar. Born in July 1923, Lett joined the RCAF in 1941 and was immediately sent to the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan where he first flew an Avro Anson. October 1943 found him with 402 City of Winnipeg fighter squadron stationed in England where he first logged Spitfire hours during an escort mission on November 29.

Discharged after WWII, Lett signed up to the RCAF again in 1947 and was posted to St. Hubert flying Vampires with 410 squadron. Introducing the new F-86 Sabre fighter to Canadians was his next task which involved flying the Sabre over Ontario, Quebec and the maritimes. Next up was flying Sabres with 413 squadron and back to Europe based out of Zweibrücken, Germany. A



promotion to squadron leader followed and Lett was transferred to 416 squadron, again flying Sabres out of Grostenquin, France.

Fast forward to 1960, after a RCAF staff college posting in Toronto, a promotion to wing commander followed and an appointment to commander of 6 Strike/Reconnaissance Operational Training Unit at Cold Lake Alberta where he became the first to fly Canada's fastest fighter, the CF-104 Starfighter, introducing it to north central Alberta's clear blue skies in 1962. During the sixties, Lett found himself at various locations in Europe, Canada and the USA with accompanying promotions. In 1972 after a promotion to brigadier-general, Lett was chief of staff responsible for flight training at training command headquarters. His final promotion came a few years later to major-general and a transfer to Colorado Springs as deputy chief of staff operations at NORAD headquarters.

Retiring from the military in 1978, Lett entered the aviation business world first as a pilot and senior manager for a private aviation company, a commercial air charter service, a flying school and finally, Executive Flight Centre Fuel Services Ltd., a hugely successful company that grew from four employees to over 700 today.

Since that time, Lett has sat on numerous boards including the Air Force Association of Alberta, the Aerospace Museum of Calgary, the Colonel Belcher Society, Alberta Aviation Council, the Calgary Airport Business Association and the Calgary Transportation Authority. During that time, he was awarded the Aerospace Museum Lifetime Achievement Award, an Air Force Museum Society of Alberta lifetime membership and the RCA Association's Meritorious Service Award.

For over 20 years, the Ken and Roma Lett Charitable Foundation has donated millions of dollars to 23 charities and the Air Force Museum Society of Alberta continues to benefit from Lett's generous donations.

Another Cold War jet on display at the AFMSA

Photos and story by Dave Lowery

As part of its planned expansion to add three more cold war jet aircraft to its collection, the Air Force Museum Society of Alberta (AFMSA) received a CF-101 Voodoo on Friday, September 15 in the early afternoon. This aircraft is on loan from the Alberta Aviation Museum in Edmonton and was transported on two Rangeland Trucking commercial flatbed vehicles. Unloading occurred Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, 15 and 16 September.

CF-101 VOODOO

The Voodoo was one of Canada's cold war fighter jets and was designed to fly armed with nuclear weapons (although that never happened).

The 58 McDonnell CF-101 Voodoos, located at Air Force bases from Comox, British Columbia, to Chatham, New Brunswick, were the main defense fighter against any incoming Soviet attack.

The Voodoo was an all-weather interceptor aircraft operated by the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Canadian Forces between 1961 and 1984. They were manufactured by the McDonnell Aircraft Corporation of St. Louis, Missouri for the United States Air Force (as F-101s), and later sold to Canada. CF-101s replaced the obsolete Avro CF-100 Canuck in the RCAF's all-weather fighter squadrons. The Voodoo's primary armament was nuclear AIR-2A Genie unguided air-to-air rockets, and there was significant political controversy in Canada about their adoption. Although they never fired a weapon in wartime, the CF-101 served as Canada's primary means of air defence from quick reaction alert

facilities at Canadian airbases.

Voodoos were regularly dispatched to intercept unidentified NORAD radar contacts, usually off course airliners, although Soviet Tu-95 Bear bombers were occasionally intercepted flying along the Atlantic coast to Cuba. Fortunately, no situation arose in which a CF-101 pilot fired his weapons in anger.

Between 1970 and 1972, Canada traded 56 original CF-101s back to the USAF for 66 replacements under Operation Peace Wings.

Tim Strocel was a Canadian Air Force pilot between 1974 and 2008 and flew the CF-101 from March 1981 until July 1984 accumulating 653.4 hours on Voodoos and 5034 total hours during his military career.

"The CF-101 Voodoo was a remarkable all-weather, high-altitude, supersonic interceptor that was easy to fly with highly responsive flight controls and two powerful J-57 P-55 turbojet engines," Strocel said. "I don't recall the exact time it took to climb from take-off to intercept altitude (30,000 ft.) but it was extremely quick in all weather conditions and any time of day or night. I remember the very first time I exceeded Mach 1. The most striking characteristic was the sudden, absolute quiet as the aircraft broke through the sound barrier and out paced the sound from the aircraft engines."

Strocel has nothing but fond memories of the supersonic aircraft and recalls its impressive performance in all weather conditions. "Overall, the CF-101 Voodoo was a wonderful aircraft to fly," he said. "I had the opportunity to fly the Voodoo on numerous





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occasions at Tyndall AFB where we would fire inert AIM-4 missiles at drone targets (Convair F-106 Delta Dart) and the opportunity to participate in several exercises at Exercise Maple Flag. I was one of two Voodoo pilots who successfully completed the Fighter Weapons Instructor Course in Cold Lake.”

General characteristics

- Crew: Two
- Length: 67 ft 5 in (20.55 m)
- Wingspan: 39 ft 8 in (12.09 m)
- Height: 18 ft 0 in (5.49 m)
- Wing area: 368 sq ft (34.20 m2)
- Airfoil: NACA 65A007 mod root, 65A006 mod tip
- Empty weight: 28,495 lb (12,925 kg)
- Gross weight: 45,665 lb (20,715 kg)
- Max takeoff weight: 52,400 lb (23,770 kg)

- Powerplant: 2 × Pratt & Whitney J57-P-55 afterburning turbojets, 11,990 lbf (53.3 kN) thrust each dry, 16,900 lbf (75 kN) with afterburner

Performance

- Maximum speed: 1,134 mph (1,825 km/h, 985 kn) at 35,000 ft (10,500 m)
- Maximum speed: Mach 1.72
- Range: 1,520 mi (2,450 km, 1,320 nmi)
- Service ceiling: 54,800 ft (17,800 m)
- Rate of climb: 36,500 ft/min (185 m/s)
- Wing loading: 124 lb/sq ft (607 kg/m2)
- Thrust/weight: 0.74

Armament

- Rockets: two AIR-2A Genie unguided nuclear rockets with 1.5 Kt warhead
- Missiles: Two AIM-4D Falcon heat-seeking air-to-air

