

# **SPIRIT**

***783 (Calgary) Wing Newsletter***

***ROYAL CANADIAN  
AIR FORCE  
ASSOCIATION***

[www.783afacwingcalgary.ca](http://www.783afacwingcalgary.ca)



***Wing Meets every  
4<sup>th</sup> Monday at 7pm  
285 Legion Horton Road  
(on hold due to COVID)***



## MEET THE TEAM

<http://783afacwingcalgary.ca/>

Chairperson	Rob Caswell
Honorary Chairperson	Col (Retd) Don Matthews
Immediate Past Chairperson	Randy Fisher
First Vice Chairperson	Michelle Gerwing
Second Vice Chairperson	Scott Deederly
Treasurer	Kenn Nixon
Secretary	Cecilia Brugma
Past Chairs Advisory Council	Pat Sulek
Casino Chairperson	Darlene Laroche
Friends of Col Belcher	Pat Sulek
Membership	Anna Lewis
Newsletter	Bev Spielman/Michelle Gerwing
Health and Wellness	Michele Henderson
Sergeant at Arms	Art Hill
Entertainment Chair	Muriel Mymko
Public Relations	Bob Wade
Military Museum Liaison	Bob Wade
Cadet Liaison	Kevin Knight
Advocacy	Scott Deederly
Historian	Grant Whitson
Webmaster/Social Media	Kent Anderson







## Message from the Chairperson



How the world can shift in such a short time since our last meeting in January. Nearly 1.6 million Canadians have Ukrainian heritage across the Prairies alone, with many historical settlements and history of cooperation with nations now under Treaty 6 in northern Alberta. The West seems uniformly united, if not unsure, of the next steps to take forward. Many of our Wing members may have vestiges of the Cold War as they read the headlines in a never ending news cycle. Our Advocacy Director will be providing us a primer to the current situation in our February (and I am sure subsequent) meetings as Canada adds to our NATO commitments in Latvia, Romania, and the Baltic Sea. For those who share the sentiment as the world enters a tense stand-off, I say to you *Slava Ukraini* and wish all of our CAF members and Allies safely home.

In other areas of Wing business, we look forward to hearing soon on our various grant applications for legacy projects. The Past President's have been busy discussing honours and awards, as well as continuing to seek an alternative venue for Wing meetings – along with discussion on how we want them to be structured. The Alberta Group meeting this past weekend was fairly lively and I know we will all look forward to the report from those in attendance.

Air Cadet Flying Boards will be underway soon, and I am confident for an ask for our membership to participate with those – an exciting opportunity for us, and for the Air Cadets and a view to returning to summer flying training.

A number of events are coming up that our Wing members will be interested in, including an EUSI symposium in Edmonton on March 5, the RCAF Mess Dinner on March 25, and the Alberta Aviation Conference in April.

As for the Wing itself, we have some exciting speakers lined-up and will be looking to how we navigate our social events post-restrictions with respect and dignity for all who wish to participate.

With the days getting longer and brighter, I look forward to another exceptional year for our Wing under exceptional circumstances.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Rob Caswell CD, AdeC  
Chairman

783 (Calgary) Wing  
Royal Canadian Air Force Association



## *Happy Birthday to you (Jan/Feb)*

Bryndis Whitson	6 Mar
Keith Mann	8 Mar
Scott Deederly	10 Mar
Muriel Mymko	10 Mar
Mary Lou Nikolaisen	11 Mar
Kent Anderson	13 Mar
Carol Ann Neale	13 Mar
Darlene Laroche	16 Mar
James Third	22 Mar
Allan Collins	27 Mar
Maurice Balych	1 Apr
Norman Harvey	1 Apr
James Bristowe	5 Apr
Robert Ross	6 Apr
Biran Lewis	7 Apr
Gerry Morrison	11 Apr
Helen Hill	12 Apr
Randy Fisher	17 Apr
David Downs	23 Apr



If you see a crowdfunding campaign promising help to Ukraine, check it out carefully to see whether it's legitimate. Look for an association with a registered charity that will have the means to distribute funds, as well as verification in place. Here are some resources Canadian and Ukrainian organizations are sharing:

Canadian Red Cross: the local wing of an international emergency-relief organization. The federal government says it will match individual donations by Canadians.

Médecins sans frontières (Doctors Without Borders): a humanitarian group that's been supporting Ukraine's COVID-19 response.

Canada-Ukraine Foundation: a Toronto-based group that co-ordinates Canadian charitable aid to Ukraine.

Save the Children: an international NGO delivering emergency aid to Ukrainian families.

Voices of Children: offers psychological support to children affected by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

Come Back Alive Foundation: a Ukrainian NGO that supports veterans and co-organizes the Invictus Games in Ukraine.

Phoenix Wings: a charitable foundation that supplies the Ukrainian army with medical treatment and defensive equipment such as vests and helmets.

Revived Soldiers Ukraine: a non-profit that funds medical rehabilitation for Ukrainian soldiers.

Razom for Ukraine: a pro-democracy group that's fundraising for medical supplies in Ukraine.

Kyiv Independent: a Ukraine-based, English-language independent news media outlet.

And if you are so inclined to support the Ukrainian Army directly you can transfer money to the following accounts:



<https://bank.gov.ua/en/news/all/natsionalniy-bank-vidkriv-spetsrahunok-dlya-zboru-koshtiv-na-potrebi-armiyi>



<https://savelife.in.ua/en/donate/>

# ***Bomber Command Museum—Nanton***

Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) & SCSC – Swedish Coast and Sea Center PRESS RELEASE – June 24, 2019

Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) and the Bomber Command Museum of Canada (BCMC), in partnership with the Swedish Coast and Sea Center (SCSC), are pleased and excited to announce the start of the underwater recovery of a WWII Royal Canadian Air Force Halifax bomber HR871 off the coast of Sweden. The first operations for the recovery will take place from July 1-7 south of Falsterbo, Sweden with recovery crews and vessels based at the Port of Trelleborg, Sweden.

The History of RCAF Halifax HR871

Handley Page Halifax heavy bomber HR871 was assigned new in 1943 to the elite Canadian RCAF 405 “Pathfinder” Squadron whose job was marking the Nazi targets in Germany for the main force bombers of RAF Bomber Command.

Halifax HR871 was badly damaged, losing two engines and having only marginal flight controls, on the Hamburg, Germany raid of Aug. 3, 1943. With little hope of returning to England the crew, led by pilot Flt. Sgt. John Phillips, diverted to neutral Sweden. All the crew of seven bailed out successfully just inland along the south coast of Sweden. (John Alwyn Phillips, the pilot, lives in the UK and is very keen on the recovery).

The bomber continued flying until it crashed into the Baltic Sea 15 kilometres off the Swedish coast and sank into 60 feet (20 metres) of brackish (slightly salty) water. Since that time it has been inundated and covered by sand although three engines and small portions of the aircraft are visible, which indicates her final resting place.

Our diving teams and a sonar vessel has already done intensive reconnaissance of the Halifax HR871 site in 2017 and 2018.

## **WHY RECOVER A HALIFAX BOMBER**

The Halifax bomber was one of the top two bombers used by RAF Bomber Command in WW2.

During WWII the RCAF (Canadian Air Force) had 15 bomber squadrons in action in Bomber Command.

For the last (five months) of the war the RCAF was using mainly the Lancaster bomber.

BUT during 1941, 1942, 1943, and 1944, 48 months, the RCAF Canadians did NOT use this Lancaster bomber type. They used the HALIFAX bomber for those 48 months when some of the greatest air battles took place!

In fact, 70 percent of all bomber combat done by the Canadian RCAF was on the Halifax and therefore, 70 percent of the 10,659 Canadians killed-in-action in bombers were killed in the HALIFAX type. So, which type of bomber is most symbolic to represent this huge sacrifice of Canadians!? Halifax 57 Rescue and SCSC know the answer and are determined, as a joint team, to save this historic Halifax.

Not only this, 405 Squadron is a truly international squadron, the nations and numbers of those courageous airmen (shown below) who were killed-in-action fighting together in this special squadron from 1941 -1945 are:

- RCAF Canadian airmen – 527
- RAF British airmen – 197
- RCAF American airmen – 22
- RAAF Australian airmen – 4

RCAF 405 Squadron suffered the greatest combat losses of any of our Canadian squadrons in the entire air force!



Flt. Sgt. John Alwyn "PeeWee" Phillips (far left) and his crew – in front of Halifax HR871 in June 1943

## History of Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) – H57RC

Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) is dedicated to preserving the Handley Page Halifax bomber aircraft and its international heritage earned during the critical and victorious bomber air combat operations of World War II.

Special Halifax HR871 crowdfund site <https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/417498>

The Halifax 57 Rescue group, led by Karl Kjarsgaard, was started in 1994 by Karl in Canada and Ian Foster of Scotland with the goal to save Halifax bomber aircraft while preserving the combat history and heritage of this famous heavy bomber of WW2.

Karl Kjarsgaard was the Canadian project manager to recover RAF Halifax NA337 from Norway in 1995 from 750 feet (240 meters) of water. It is now fully restored and displayed at the National Air Force Museum of Canada in Trenton, Ontario.

H57RC also recovered RCAF Halifax LW682 from 20 feet of mud in a Belgium swamp in 1997, to recover the three missing airmen entombed inside. These Canadian heroes were successfully found and returned to their families with a full military funeral and honours for their sacrifice.

H57RC has embarked on a world-wide quest to recover another Halifax example for the Bomber Command Museum of Canada in Nanton, Alberta. We have already acquired 30% of another Halifax from a scrapyard on the island of Malta, south of Italy.

All the Halifax sections are being restored by Knox Tech. Inc., a rebuild shop in Ottawa, Ontario.

See our REBUILDSHOP here: <https://www.facebook.com/Rebuildshop-1533756926866315/>

Now we wish to recover Halifax HR871 with our Swedish partners, sharing our joint history and artifacts. We are excited to start recovery of this aircraft, our third Halifax.





## ***We will remember them***



### ***Charles Weeks***

Born September 7th 1919

Passed away December 31 2021

Survived by Daughter Gail Howarth (Husband Glenn Howarth, Two grandsons Brian Howarth and Paul Kenytl, Wife Kate and Great grandson Evander). Predeceased by his wife Eileen Weeks (2006), And Daughter Laura (1994), and all his brothers and sisters, as well as numerous Nieces and Nephews.

Charles grew up in North Sydney during the great depression, In 1938 when he was 19 he worked his way over on a steam ship to England, He wanted to become a pilot. He started as a mechanic and was promoted to pilot during WWII. Due to an airplane crash he was scalped, which ended his flying career and he ended up becoming an air traffic controller.

After the war he came back to Nova Scotia and started University, At Acadia in Wolfville Nova Scotia. He graduated with a BSC in Geology. He then joined the Exploration Department of Sun Oil Company in 1952, Later Named Suncor Energy. When he started with Sun Oils Land Department he and two other gentlemen surveyed all of Alberta from Milkriver to Fort Mac, He signed the first Land Lease for the Oil Sands and that started the oil industry for Suncor in Alberta. He Retired after 30 years of service in 1982.

While working at Sun Oil he met the love of his life Eileen. They were married in Nov 1954 they had two daughters (1955, Laura and daughter Gail 1964). Two Grandsons, one Great grandson, and another on the way. Charles and Eileen bought a house in Wildwood in 1957, and he lived there until his passing in 2021.

Charles loved to go camping with his wife Eileen; they would take their motorhome down to Arizona and Mexico for 6 months out of the year. And in the summers, they would go out to B.C. to visit their friends and family.

He was an amazing man, loved by all, a great husband and father. He will be dearly missed.

At his request, there will be a family only graveside service, at Eden Brook Memorial Gardens, and a celebration of his life June 11, 2022 at 2pm - 5pm. No flowers please, but rather donations made to the Heart Fund or a charity of your choice.



## *Your laugh for the day...*

A sweet grandmother telephoned St. Joseph's Hospital. She timidly asked, "Is it possible to speak to someone who can tell me how a patient is doing?" The operator said, "I'll be glad to help, dear. What's the name and room number of the patient?"

The grandmother in her weak, tremulous voice said, Norma Findlay, Room 302." The operator replied, "Let me put you on hold while I check with the nurse's station for that room."

After a few minutes, the operator returned to the phone and said,

"I have good news. Her nurse just told me that Norma is doing well. Her blood pressure is fine; her blood work just came back normal and her Physician, Dr. Cohen, has scheduled her to be discharged tomorrow."

The grandmother said, "Thank you. That's wonderful. I was so worried. God bless you for the good News."

The operator replied, "You're more than welcome. Is Norma your daughter?"

The grandmother said, "No, I'm Norma Findlay in Room 302. No one tells me anything."

The local news station was interviewing an 80-year-old lady because she had just gotten married for the fourth time.

The interviewer asked her questions about her life, about what it felt like to be marrying again at 80, and then about her new husband's occupation.. "He's a funeral director," she answered.

"Interesting," the newsman thought... He then asked her if she wouldn't mind telling him a little about her first three husbands and what they did for a living.

She paused for a few moments, needing time to reflect on all those years. After a short time, a smile came to her face and she answered proudly, explaining that she had first married a banker when she was in her 20's, then a circus ringmaster when in her 40's, and a preacher when in her 60's, and now - in her 80's - a funeral director.

The interviewer looked at her, quite astonished, and asked why she had married four men with such diverse careers.

She smiled and explained, "I married one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go."



# reminder

***From your Membership Director:***

*Please contact Anna Lewis, our Director of Membership, if you change any contact info at [bandalewis@shaw.ca](mailto:bandalewis@shaw.ca)*

***From your Health and Wellness Director***

*All Wing members already receive birthday cards. Do you know of anyone in our membership who would appreciate receiving a card of congratulations, or perhaps a card to raise their spirits? Greetings could be sent for many reasons, such as:*

- *a “milestone” birthday*
- *best wishes for someone in hospital or convalescing at home*
- *bereavement on the passing of a Wing member*
- *retirement*
- *graduation*
- *marriage*
- *a special wedding anniversary*
- *receiving recognition and/or winning an award*

*All members are encouraged to contact Michèle Henderson at [michlorr@shaw.ca](mailto:michlorr@shaw.ca) at any time during the year with the person’s name, the event, and the date on which it is to be recognized.*