

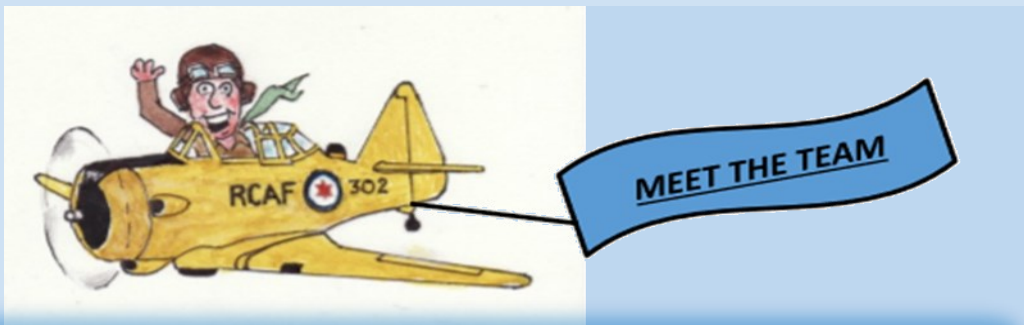
SPIRIT

783 (Calgary) Wing Newsletter

**ROYAL CANADIAN
AIR FORCE
ASSOCIATION**



*The Wing meets the last
Tuesday of the month at
7pm in 285 Legion Horton
Road (virtually as well)*



Chairperson	Michelle Gerwing
Honorary Chairperson	Col (Retd) Don Matthews
Immediate Past Chairperson	Rob Caswell
First Vice Chairperson	Scott Deederly
Second Vice Chairperson	Adriano Fisco
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	Kevin Knight
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
Directors at Large	Norm Harvey and Brian Lewis





Message from the Chairperson

Summer flew past yet again with everything from heatwaves to smoke to hail. It is Calgary!

I attended the Peacekeeper Day celebration on the 13th Aug and laid a wreath at Buffalo Park on behalf of the Wing. It was very well attended despite the heat. A number of folks had to find shade as the sun was intense! I will also be attending the Change of Command Parade for 83 Sqn on the 12th Sep. The command will be changing from Major Vargyas to Captain Krebs.

We are now into fall and the planning of our events. Scott is diligently working on the Battle of Britain Ceremony to be held Sunday, 17th Sep at The Military Museums 2pm with refreshments to follow.

We are also starting the planning for Remembrance Day. If you wish to help, please reach out to either Scott or me. The ceremony will be held on Sat, 11 Nov at 1030 in the Genesis Centre in Calgary.

We are also working on the 783 Wing Christmas party. It is always a great way to end our year. It will be held at the Blackfoot Inn on 17 Nov. If you wish to assist in the planning, please contact Michele Henderson. Tickets will be available from Kenn again this year.

I will miss our first meeting of the year and I apologize. I will be on the Camino Santiago in Spain. If you have not heard of it, check it out! I look forward to seeing you in Oct.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Michelle Gerwing
Chairman
783 (Calgary) Wing
Royal Canadian Air Force Association



Happy Birthday to you (Jul/Aug)

Nathan Krebs	5 Sep
Bernard Hayden	8 Sep
Norma Cooke	10 Sep
Glenn Harrington	12 Sep
Bob Wade	21 Sep
Ken Duff	27 Sep
Betty Watson	27 Sep
Neil Holmen	2 Oct
Lois Maxwell	5 Oct
Jane MacDonnell	6 Oct
Elizabeth Bertram	21 Oct
Beverley Burke	22 Oct
Charlene MacLean	24 Oct
Kenneth Clark	25 Oct
Heather McKeague	25 Oct
Mark Levesque	27 Oct
Ian Morgan	27 Oct
Maurice Hanberg	28 Oct
David McCarthy	28 Oct

Member Profile

Anna and Brian Lewis have been married 43 years July 2023 with 3 children, 2 granddaughters and one grandson. They have been heavily involved with the Royal Canadian Air Force Association and the Cadet program for over 18 years.

Starting with Navy league in 2004 with their 9-year-old son, they both worked at doing what was needed to help the cadet program. Brian was an air cadet in the early 70's which encouraged our youngest to become one as well. That transferred our efforts to work with the Alberta Air Cadet program in 2007 where they held directorship positions over the years. Brian as PR Director and Anna as the Director of Finance. It was at a 52 SSC parent meeting where we met Keith Mann and R.J. Roe who were giving a presentation about the Air Force Association. They invited parents to become members of 783 wing, which we did in September of 2007. They could not just sit around and dove in to roles that needed assistance at 783. Anna was the Air Force Association Newsletter editor from 2008 till 2011, then Membership Chair 2012 to current, Brian Wing PR Director 2008-2013, Cadet Liaison 2013 – 2014, Board Member at large 2014 to current (basically Jack of all trades to help where needed, mostly electronics/sound, hauling stuff everywhere). Over the years at 783, they have been a part of numerous committees helping where they can and have received a variety of awards to acknowledge their commitment to help others.

Anna and Brian's greatest joy is working with our grandchildren, cadet program and our 783 Wing.

Anna would spend her life at the NICU with the babies if she could. Before Covid she had little Kingston (preemie baby) to care for to help their oldest son and family when they were foster parents. Anna worked for decades as a newspaper controller in Kelowna BC, then at the Calgary Sun and now enjoys working as a contractor for a US software firm. In her spare time.... (oops, what spare time?) she enjoys friends & family, crafting/cross-stitch, and her puppy Spec.

As for Brian his work at a local High School has provided ample opportunity to have hands on with hundreds of teenagers as their woodworking shop instructor. Teaching students to build furniture that will last a life time and taking pride in the projects they build is the best reward. In 2023 Brian starts his 6th year in this role but prior to that he enjoyed driving a school bus and working in the construction industry. In his spare time, he is an avid gardener.

Both Anna and Brian were born and raised in the Peace River district of northern Alberta. Anna on a farm near Fairview later to move to Grande Prairie. Brian was raised on a farm 7 miles from Grande Prairie, attended the county school till high school. It was there that they met, married in 1980 and then moved to Peachland B.C. for work and education. They moved to Calgary in 2000 and have loved every minute and every friend that they have made since moving here.

A gem in space: Canada's Sapphire satellite continues to shine

24 February, 2023

Emily Lindahl, D Air PA

What was planned as a five-year mission in space has become a decade of contribution to Space Domain Awareness. This month as it celebrates its tenth anniversary Sapphire, Canada's first dedicated military space surveillance satellite, continues to track man-made objects orbiting the Earth.

The Space Surveillance Project officially began in 2001-2002, with the implementation eventually being contracted to MDA (formerly MacDonald, Dettwiler & Associates). MDA's relatively small, but dedicated team worked closely with the team at the Department of National Defence. "The integration between the primary contactor and the Sapphire team at DND was outstanding and played a key role in the success of the project," states former Operational Requirements Manager, Colonel Paul Maskell.

A passive optical sensor, Sapphire relies on light reflected from the sun to capture images of objects in space. These images are recorded as dots of light which are processed into precise measurements of positions in orbit and then used to update orbit information as a part of the Space Surveillance Network (referred to as the "SSN"), overseen by the United States Space Command.

Col Maskell noted that the satellite exceeded its minimum design specifications, "seeing" beyond the original requirements, with an optical range far exceeding that of the human eye – into the near-infrared spectrum. This capability allows Canada to contribute high-quality data in support of our allies and partners.

Sapphire continues to capture images of man-made objects up to 40 000 kilometres above the Earth's surface (and often beyond) using an electro-optical sensor system. "Even after ten years, we have not seen significant degradation of the sensor's capabilities," Col Maskell says. He notes that "Sapphire is a highly reliable sensor system, a workhorse if you will, supplying very accurate data to the SSN."

With no propulsion component of its own Sapphire will remain in orbit and, barring any catastrophic impacts with another man-made or natural object, could continue its tracking for many years to come.

A few facts about Sapphire:

- Sapphire is approximately 1 m³ in size and weighs 148 kilograms (326 pounds).
- It is one of approximately 5 000 active satellites currently in orbit around the Earth.
- Sapphire's original project budget sat at 96.5 million Canadian dollars – and of that, approximately \$10 million was returned at project end – primarily due to cost savings related to keeping the project team small and optimized.
- The satellite was launched on 25 February 2013 aboard India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle contracted through ISRO's Antrix Corporation Ltd.
- Sapphire serves as a contributing, deep space sensor in USSPACECOM's Space Surveillance Network of radar and optical systems for monitoring the heavens.
- Canada is the only ally of the United States to own and operate its own dedicated space surveillance satellite tracking man-made objects in Earth's orbit.
- In addition to active satellites, there are more than approximately 23 000 additional pieces of space debris larger than 10 centimetres orbiting the Earth.

Retrieved from: [A gem in space: Canada's Sapphire satellite continues to shine - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/department-of-national-defence/news/2023/02/a-gem-in-space-canada-s-sapphire-satellite-continues-to-shine.html)

Ken Brown, Guy Gibson and RFA Scampton



RAF Scampton, the Lincolnshire airfield that was home to 617 Squadron, the famous ‘Dambusters’ squadron, was in the news this Spring and Summer. The airfield was home to the RAF’s Red Arrows aerobatic team however due to the aging facilities the Ministry of Defence announced RAF Scampton would close in 2022 and the Red Arrows relocated to RAF Waddington.

The local county council, the West Lindsey District Council, made plans to redevelop the surplus site as mix-use commercial and residential community with an aviation industry component. Lincolnshire is one of the poorest regions in the UK and the \$300 million redevelopment plan was seen as a game-changing economic development opportunity for the region. The redevelopment plans also included preserving the many heritage buildings on the airfield. 617 Squadron Commander Guy Gibson’s office was already preserved as a small museum, but further plans were developed to restore the mess hall, control tower and other key WWII era buildings.

However, in March the Home Office announced that it would not be transferring the site to the County, but due to the growing migrant crisis they would convert the now surplus airfield into an asylum seeker detention centre and use the facility for migrant housing. In March Ministry of Defence removed all of Guy Gibson’s artefacts (his desk, chair) to another site. This unexpected move by the national government to repurpose the surplus airfield for their own purposes suddenly ended the economic redevelopment and heritage conservation plans. This has resulted in legal action from the County and a petition to stop the move signed by 70,000 people.

The controversy got me thinking of Canadian Dambuster pilot Ken Brown, and the stories he told about Guy Gibson and his time at RAF Scampton during the war.

In 1993, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Dambuster Raid and raise funds for what was then known as the Lancaster Bomber Museum in Nanton (now the Bomber Command Museum of Canada), Dambuster pilot Ken Brown and his wife Beryl came to Nanton for a commemoration which culminated in a banquet for 300 people where Ken was the keynote speaker.

As a young teenager in Fort Macleod I remember seeing the ads for the event in the local paper and wishing I could go. A few years later when visiting the museum, I was able to watch the recording of speech and was spell-bound. Ken talks about his service in Bomber Command and because of their skills at low-level flying how he and his crew were selected to join 617 Squadron. Ken describes the training, the raid, the post-raid and what kind of leader and man Guy Gibson was.

Guy Gibson was demanding, expecting a high level of expertise and performance from his air crews. ¼ of the Canadians assigned to 617 Squadron didn’t make the cut through the training program. On several occasions Ken incurred Guy’s wrath and Ken often found himself in Guy’s office at RAF Scampton. Ken describes the 617 Squadron’s training and just how exacting and tough Guy was...

Ken Brown: We got to the squadron. I’d never meet Wing Commander Gibson before. So this was a new experience.

We were all sitting out on the lawn in front of the briefing room when someone said, “Briefing’s ready, come on in.”

So we marched into the briefing room which was right down on the flight line. I wasn't last in, but I did close the door. When I did so, he (Gibson) said, "Brown, report to me office after briefing." Sounded familiar.

However, I couldn't believe it when I reported to his office. The adjutant met me, marched me in, and he (Gibson) had me on charge for being late for a briefing. I thought he was kidding, but he wasn't. So he then read out the charge for being late for an operational briefing, and he asked me, "Whether I'd take a court marshal or his punishment."

I said, "I'll take your punishment, sir."

So he said, "Fine. You'll wash all the windows on the outside of the briefing room and the inside of the briefing room. All after duty hours."

As we were flying about eighteen hours a day, that was really something. I wasn't going to let this really stump me. So I did it. And I did it night after night. It was one of those things.

Wing Commander Gibson had a very high standard for everyone and you had to meet it, and meet it on his terms. He was really a strong and staunch disciplinarian. He had been brought up in a boy's school as a head prefect. And I still think he handled things in that way. At least I thought that way after then ninety-ninth window.

At this time we started our low-flying and you've heard various stories about how we started at sixty feet. It really wasn't so. We started our low-flying cross-countries over England at about two hundred feet. That lasted about three days. Then we were down to one hundred and fifty feet.

I did a cross-country one day and I came across a new aerodrome that was being built with an awful lot of people around it. There I was headed straight for the hangar and I thought, "Well, I'd better pull-up. There's no point in trying to go through it." So I pulled up and over the hanger.

Let me explain that the Royal Observer Corps kept track of us all the time so Guy got our altitudes no matter where we were and had a report on them the next morning.

So at briefing the next day he said, "Brown, what were you doing going over the hangar?"

I said, "I thought it was a good idea." And he said, "Two hundred feet! Hardly, you'll do that one again."

It wasn't a bad cross-country anyhow so I did it the next day.

When I came to the hangar -same thing, all these men were working on top of the hangar and this side of it and so forth. So I put it (the aircraft) down on grass level and then came over the top of the hanger and there were people sliding off it and running in all directions. So next day at briefing, he (Gibson) looked in my direction and said, "Brown, I said low, but not that low."

I encourage everyone to go read the [transcript of Ken's 1993 speech](#) which can be found at the Nanton Bomber Command Museum webpage and learn about how the rest of Dams Raid training went and of Ken and his Lancaster air crew's experience in the raid. His was one of the last Lancasters to arrive back to RAF Scampton the next morning, a harrowing effort that won him the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. However, the story that I remember most and that stands out when I see photos of RAF Scampton is an incident that Ken had post-raid on base and just off base, and how Guy handled the situation...

Ken Brown: Well, the big day came. My stock in trade with Guy Gibson improved tremendously after the Dams Raid. I was commissioned and I was assigned a married quarter, which was really an officer's married quarters. We had one room and every room was filled with another officer. In this particular place, I was on the ground floor and every night or evening when I came back there was a huge rabbit that was bounding around out the field at the back. And I figured that the rabbit would look better on my plate than in that field. So I borrowed a shotgun from the armory and a few shells and stashed them in my closet.

I came home one night and sure enough there was that rabbit. So I took off with the shotgun across the field. The old rabbit was well ahead of me avoiding my flak. He crossed the highway on the other side and went into a field. So I followed him in and went down a hole by a big tree. I thought, "That's fine, I'll just wait him out."

So with my shotgun at my side, here I was waiting for this damn rabbit. And what happens? Down the road came a constable with a training officer. And he stops and he hollers, "I say. Do you know your trespassing?" And I said, "Go on, I'm waiting for a rabbit," which didn't go over very well.

So immediately the two dismounted and come over, and he said, "Do you know you're on private property?" And I said, "Well, the rabbit was over on our property and he ran over to this side and I'm claiming him."

"I demand to see your identification," he said.

And at that I realized that I'd taken my ID out (of my pocket) and put shotgun shells in. So I said, "I'm sorry, I can't disclose my identification." That was as quick as I could think of, being on a secret squadron.

And he said, "In that case, you'll have to come down to the station."

So I said, "Well I'm sorry, I'll have to decline your invitation."

And he said, "I demand to know why."

And I said, "Because I've got a double barreled loaded shotgun in my hand and you've got nothing."

Boy did their faces change.

However, two days later we took a trip. We had to do a mission into Italy. We did a bombing trip to Italy and then cut across to North Africa and landed. So I was away for about seven days.

When I came back the Adj. (Adjutant) said to me, "You know, there were a couple of constables out here with a warrant. They were looking for a tall blonde Canadian and as you were the only one who fitted the description we gave them your name."

"How kind of you," I said.

Low and behold he said, "I think the C/O might like to see you too."

Now this is the point in the whole story. Guy Gibson took that warrant and went before the court. I don't know what he said but he never mentioned that to me. That was his way of letting you know you were accepted. It took a long time.

I just keep seeing in my mind's eye Ken Brown sitting across that desk from Guy Gibson, fresh back from Italy and North Africa, chatting about future mission details and training feedback. Ken nervous and wondering as the meeting goes on when the proverbial disciplinary shoe would drop with Guy about the incident the other week with the shotgun, the rabbit and the police... and it never coming up. I would love to be able to see that dawning realization come over Ken as the meeting went on that he was in the clear and had truly earned Guy's respect and acceptance. If those walls in that office in Scrampton could talk.

Guy Gibson would later tour Canada and visit the British Commonwealth Air Training Program schools and along the way visit the families of Canadian aircrew that served with him on the raid, including Ken's mother. As Ken says "That was the kind of man Guy Gibson was."





We will remember them



Robert (Bob) Edwin Walker, aged 94, of Calgary, AB died on 17 July 2023 in Regina, SK. He was born in Calgary to Edwin and Winnifred Walker on 13 July 1929. He joined the Fire Department and became Deputy Chief in Calgary, before becoming Chief in Dist. of North Vancouver and then Chief of the Edmonton Fire Departments. After a brief retirement in Penticton, BC he moved back to Calgary then spent his final years near his grandson and great granddaughters in Regina.

Bob is preceded in death by his wife of 58 years Geraldine Elizabeth (Sullivan) Walker. He is survived by his only child Christine Hegi (Tom), his beloved grandson Colin Hegi, great granddaughters Chloe and Sadie and special friend Jean Peterson.





Battle of Britain:

Sunday, 17 Sep at 1400 to be held at The Military Museum. Refreshments to follow

From your Membership Director:

Please contact Anna Lewis, our Director of Membership, if you change any contact info at 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*

2023 783 Wing Annual Christmas Celebration

Where: Blackfoot Inn

When: November 17th

What time: cocktails at 5:50pm, dinner at 6:30pm

Planning for this special and enjoyable event will be underway soon. If you would like to help, you are most welcome! The more ideas we have, the better the event! Please contact Michèle Henderson at (403) 605-0368 or at michlorr@shaw.ca for more information.

Tickets will be available from Kenn Nixon. You can reserve tickets by emailing him at kbnixon@shaw.ca. Tickets are \$25.00.