

SPIRIT

783 (Calgary) Wing Newsletter

**ROYAL CANADIAN
AIR FORCE
ASSOCIATION**



***Wing Meets the last Tuesday
of each month at 7pm
285 Legion Horton Road
(virtual version also available)***



MEET THE TEAM

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
Webmaster/Social Media	Kent Anderson





Message from the Chairperson

Ready, set.....

The anniversary is about to begin! You will find the list of local events to celebrate this great anniversary later in the newsletter. Although most of you are far more knowledgeable about this than I am, I would like to share Calgary's links to the Air Force.

How it all started... It was expected that the Royal Air Force would be accommodating the Canadian pilots; however, the King asked that distinct Canadian squadrons be formed. As a result, during World War II, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) operated across Canada. Although the primary BCATP sites in Alberta were not located directly in Calgary, the program's impact on the region was significant, contributing to the development of military and civilian aviation in the area. Check out the number of memorials in the area to commemorate this and you will understand.

The construction of these airfields was enormous. Within months, farmland was levelled and paved for taxiways and tarmacs, and hangars and other necessary buildings were erected. For five years, airbases operated in Alberta, all Edmonton and south. It is said that as quickly as they were built up, they were abandoned. Calgary had two fields: #3 (Sheppard) and #37 (south of Currie Barracks) Service Flying Training Schools. Those lucky fellows who were chosen for pilot training were first sent to an Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) for 50 hours of basic pilot training. The aircraft were the Fleet Finches, de Havilland Tiger Moths, and later the Fairchild Cornells. Once they completed basic flying training, they were posted to a Service Flying Training School (SFTS) to better their navigation, instrument, night flying and formation flying skills. Fighter pilots were trained on the Harvard, the remainder on aircraft such as the Anson or Crane. Once they completed this phase of training, they were sent to an Operational Training Unit (OTU), quite often across the pond.

BCATP also provided training for Britons, Australians and New Zealanders, although more than half of the students were Canadians. I will include an interesting fact arising from this: 3750 Canadian girls married members of foreign forces who had been stationed in Canada. In addition to the BCATP fields, Calgary was also host to a command headquarters that was responsible for all the schools in Alberta.

Today, individuals from Calgary continue to serve in the RCAF, contributing to Canada's defense, search and rescue operations, and international peacekeeping efforts. The city commemorates its military heritage through various memorials and events, acknowledging the sacrifices and achievements of its service members.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Michelle Gerwing

Chairman

783 (Calgary) Wing

Royal Canadian Air Force Association

Member Profile: Cecelia Brugma and Kevin Knight

Kevin and Cecelia have been together for 12 years and together they share 4 children (Courtney, Taylor, Coral-Lynn and Jorden) and 2 amazing dogs (Tikka and Jaxx). Both have been very involved with the Air Cadet program and most recently the Royal Canadian Air Force Association over the last 12 years. Kevin started his cadet career in Winnipeg MB in Navy League at age 11 and moved on as a Sea Cadet with #49 JTCVC Corps and aged out as the CPO2 in the early 80's. After graduating High School, he moved out to Comox BC to work on the Petrel Project, which was a sail ship being built for Sea Cadets.

The project was stopped by DND in Spring of 1984. From there Kevin began his policing career in the fall of 1984 with The Canadian Pacific Railway Police, serving a year in Winnipeg before being transferred to Calgary in 1985. Kevin then joined the Calgary Police Service in February of 1990 and was promoted to Sergeant in 2004. As a Sergeant Kevin worked as an Operational Commander, Team Leader and Admin Sergeant. He then transitioned to working with a team that was responsible for implementing the new reporting system for the CPS. He then spent a year working with the Civilian Safety Unit, improving safety concerns throughout the Police Service. Kevin finished his career in the new Body Worn Camera team, finally retiring in June 2022. Kevin has been involved with 83 Juno Beach since its inception. He has taken on the rolls of SSC Director, Chairman and is currently the Squadron Advisor. With the Wing Kevin has taken on roles as a director, part of the Remembrance Day Committee, Cadet Liaison and is presently the Sgt at Arms.

Cecelia was born and raised in Calgary, and became involved with Cadets when her son and daughter decided they wanted to join as Air Cadets, first her daughter Coral in 2009 followed by her son Jorden in 2011. She has taken on rolls within 83 Juno Beach Squadron Sponsoring Committee as a director and Secretary. Cecelia was also the Membership Coordinator for the Alberta Provincial Committee.

Cecelia worked 25 years in Insurance Restoration as a field technician, field supervisor and Project Administrator, helping those who have suffered through fire, flood, and various other perils, most noted would be the Erlton Condominium Fires, 2009 flood in Okotoks and High River and the Great Flood of 2013 (she even had a hand in restoring the Saddledome). Now she currently works from home as a Virtual Real Estate Assistant for multiple Calgary Realtors. The commute is wonderful and she gets to spend plenty of time with her doggo's!. With the Wing Cecelia has taken on roles as director, part of the Remembrance Day Committee and is currently Secretary for the Wing.

In their spare time, Kevin and Cecelia enjoy Camping, spending time on the water at the lake, game nights with friends and family, riding their motorcycles, BBQ's in the back yard, chasing their new grand puppy Bruce around and loving their pooches.



Cadet Cash Calendars 2025

As many of you know, the Alberta Provincial Committee for the Air Cadet League runs a Cash Calendar Raffle each year to help support the AB SSC's. We have started the process for the 2025 edition already and are intending it to be a look back retrospect.

To achieve this we are looking for old pictures from air cadet alumni to help and are asking if you could ask your members to participate in this as I know many members who have been an air cadet. The pictures do not have to have them in uniform but must be an air cadet activity, etc. I need to know which Sqn and explain what the picture is (in case I can't figure it out), alumni name (unless they wish to be anonymous) and the approximate year of the picture.

The pictures do not have to be black and white but we would appreciate them to be scanned at the best quality they can. If you wish, Anna will scan them and mail them back to you. The address is:

Air Cadet League of Canada
Alberta Provincial Committee
PO Box #38120, RPO Country Hills Blvd NE
Calgary, AB T3K 5G9

This is one way to support the Air Cadets as the participating SSC's receive 75% of net proceeds for this raffle.

Please share this with your members. If you have any questions, please contact me at 403.730.8969 or finance@apcacl.ca.

I look forward to hearing from our air cadet alumni before April 1st.

PS If you have not purchased the 2024 Cash Calendar, its not too late. Its available online until Feb





Program for 2024

Air Force Museum Society of Alberta and 783(Calgary) Wing

Royal Canadian Air Force Association

Here is a summary of the events still under consideration for 2024:

Date	Event	Comments
Mar 22	Flight Jacket beer call Cold War Exhibit, TMM	Welcome RCAF attendees to the RCAF Mess Dinner
Mar 22	RCAF Mess Dinner, The Hangar Museum by invitation	This committee will not have in put unless asked by the RCAF Committee
Mar 24	Opening of Great Escape Display, TMM	
Apr 1	Opening of the Founders Gallery Air Force exhibit, TMM 1100 hrs	Lt Gov and RCAF VIP
Apr 1	City Hall flag raising and declaration and parade of cadets 14:00 hrs	Lt Gov and RCAF VIP
Jul 5	Happy Hour	Another fundraising opportunity
Jul 5 - 14	Calgary Stampede	CF-18 to kick off
	5 Jul 24 Flypast	
	Presence at the TMM display on the grounds	TBD
	Stampede Float in the parade	
Jul 6 and 7	Spruce Meadows display of the Tiger Moth	Possibly have the RCAF band for the military day. Possible flypast CF-18
Aug 24 and 25	TMM Summer Skirmish	Air Force Display
11 Aug	UN Peacekeeper Day at Peacekeeper and Buffalo Park	Possible flypast over the Buffalo Park during wreath laying
15 Sep 24	Battle of Britain at TMM	Possibly a fly past – 408 Sqn
Fall 24	Stampeders Game at McMahon Stadium	Fly past or kickoff
19 or 26 Oct 24	Mess Dinner at the Blackfoot Inn	Lt Gov, RCAF VIP and RCAF Band
11 Nov 24	Remembrance Day at Genesis Centre	RCAF VIP and British Counsel

Kenn Nixon receiving the
Minister of Veteran's Affairs
Commendation.



December cheque presentation
to the Veterans' Food Bank

The funnies....

I've reached the age where my brain went from "you probably shouldn't say that" to "what the heck, let's see what happens".



Now that I've gotten older, everything's finally starting to click for me. My knees, my back, my neck ...

I've decided: Whatever age I am is the new 30!

What goes up but never comes down?
Your age.

These are not gray hairs! They are wisdom highlights.

One benefit of old age is that your secrets are always safe with your friends ... because they can't remember them!

Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind getting older, then it really doesn't matter.

Stop thinking of them as "hot flashes." Think of them as your inner child playing with matches.

What is a prize old people can win for aging?
Atrophy.

I used to know a couple who grew fruit trees together. They lived to a ripe old age.

Friendly Reminders

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*

All members are encouraged to contact Michèle Henderson at 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.