

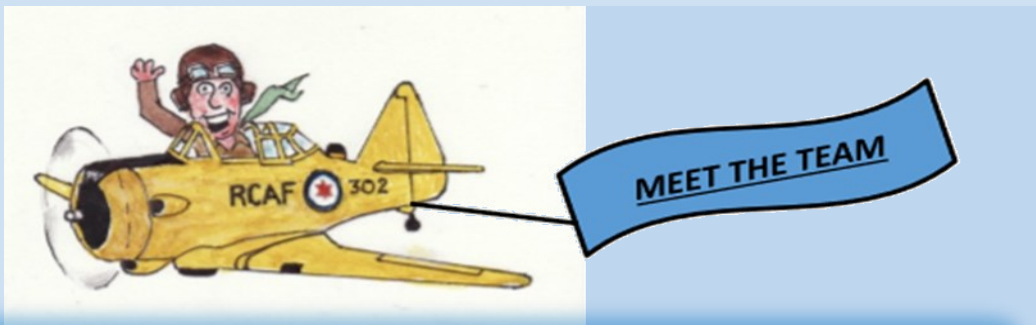
# **SPIRIT**

*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 Fisico
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



Downloaded from: Royal Canadian Air Force [Facebook](#) page



## *Message from the Chairperson*

Well, you have me for another year..... I am honoured to be able to represent such a active and fun-loving Wing. We are a quarter way through the 100th anniversary of the Air Force. I find that hard to believe. Our committee has had many an exciting events thus far with more right around the corner with Stampede and Spruce Meadows. From there, we have our usual events to plan: Peacekeeper Day, Battle of Britain, Remembrance Day and our Christmas party. So much fun to be had with this group!!

Our casino is planned providing us with funding to do what we do best—give money to those in need of it. It is on a weekend which will be easier to manage for those of us who work.

We have attended all the ACRs and some of the Change of Command parades. Thanks to those who step up every year to represent us at these events. It brings a tear to my eye every time I see how hard these young folks have worked and I imagine all the great things they will do in life with this experience behind them.

I wish you a safe, yet fun-filled break through the summer and look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Michelle Gerwing

Chairman

783 (Calgary) Wing

Royal Canadian Air Force Association



## *Happy Birthday to you (Jul/Aug)*

Barb Mann	2 Jul
Dorothy Allison	4 Jul
Rob Caswell	7 Jul
Robert Walker	13 Jul
Lesley Myles	14 Jul
Gordon Kelso	17 Jul
Lorie Gordon	27 Jul
Barry McDonald	29 Jul
Joanna Howard	1 Aug
Karen Spielman	12 Aug
Cecelia Brugma	14 Jul
Jim Laroche	14 Aug
Robert Lilja	14 Aug
Charles Swaney	18 Aug
Robert Clark	21 Aug
Mark Wilson	24 Aug
Richard Lemmon	25 Aug
Eric Gagne	28 Aug

## *Pictures from the AGM*



Above: Kenn Nixon National  
Member of the Year



Above: Scott Deederly Wing  
Member of the Year

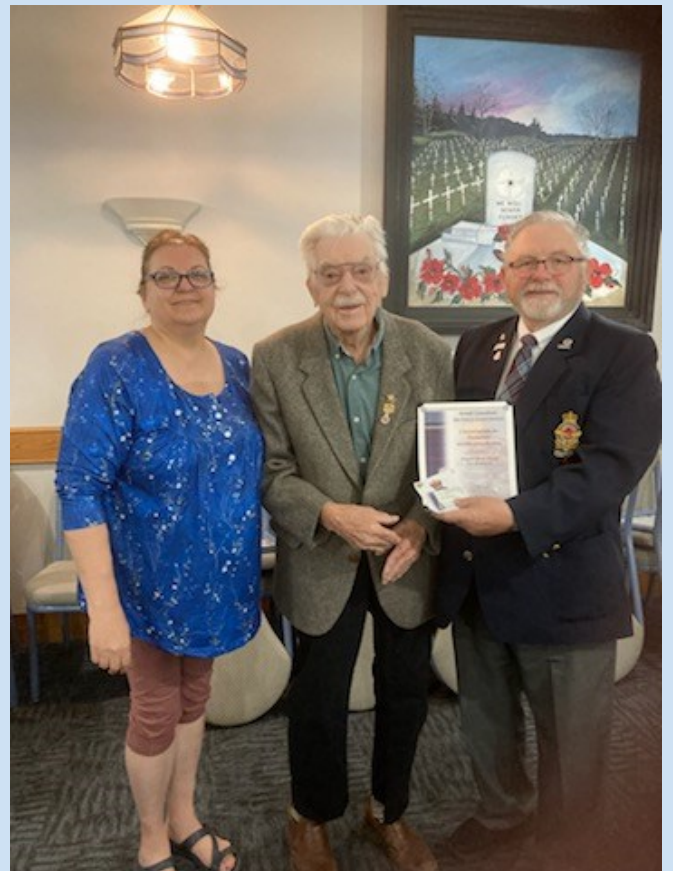
Below: Karen Spielman Christina Handler  
Award



Below: Pat Sulek National Life  
Member



Life membership presentations to Edgar Hemmings, Glenn Traub (who also received his 50 year pin!), Bob Roseneder, and Bryce Chase



# Pin Recipients

Pins were presented at the AGM in June to the following recipients:

## **5 year pin**

Cecelia Brugma

Kevin Knight

Michelle Gerwing

## **10 year pin**

James Bristowe

Gene Kushnir

## **15 year pin**

William Cook

Norma Cooke

David Downs

Lorne Fleming

Thom Gordon

Carney Henderson

Lois Maxwell

Edith McMinn

Muriel Mymko

Betty Wonnacott

## **20 year pin**

David Leggo

Robert Vanderlee

## **25 year pin**

Gord Todd

## **30 year pin**

Kirby Haines

Maurice Hanberg

## **35 year pin**

Donald Ward

## **45 year pin**

Gordon Kelso

Bev Spielman

## **50 year pin**

Glenn Traub

## Member Profile

### Robert (Bob) Lilja (Cpl Ret)

Bob was born in Provost in 1927 and grew up on the family farm at Hayter. He joined the Provost Air Cadet Squadron in 1943 at the age of 16.



Bob as an Air

Once he saw the poster for the RCAF which stated "Join the RCAF and see the world", Bob did just that and joined the RCAF on April 1, 1946. After signing up, he was sent to Manning Depot in Portage LaPrairie and then to Aylmer, Ontario for his Aero Engineer tech training.



Technical Training School in Aylmer,

Bob went on to postings at #10 Repair Depot Calgary (1947) where he worked on all types of aircraft from regular maintenance to recovery tasks. He then moved onto Flying Schools at Claresholm (1951) and Penhold (1953) and then finally to 425 Fighter Squadron at St. Hubert (1954). During his career, he obtained the nickname of "Swede". It seems the paymaster could not wrap his tongue around the difference of "J" and "Y" in the Swedish vernacular for his last name Lilja, so instead just called him Swede. That name stuck with him throughout his service time. Bob was discharged in September 1957 with the rank of Corporal.

Below: 425 Squadron (AWF)

Bob is front row, fourth from right

Right: First Flight





Following his military service Bob was employed by Canadian Pacific Airline Repair (CPAR) which operated the #10 Repair Depot for RCAF. During his time with the CPAR he worked out of Cold Lake, Alberta and Churchill, Manitoba on Lancaster and Mitchell aircraft which were involved with the Nike Missile project. In 1963 CPAR had a reduction in staff so he went to work for a track vehicle company, Nodwell, in the service department. Most of his time was spent in the high arctic working on projects for oil companies. In 1974 Bob wanted to ease up on the strenuous work in the arctic so he changed to working on farm equipment as a service technician for White Farm Equipment. In 1977 he became Service Manager for Western Canada. Bob finally retired in 1992 to spend more time with his family.



Snow machine on top of a glacier

During his service time with the RCAF it wasn't all work. Bob and his mates enjoyed activities like bowling at Gibson's Bowling Alley and especially the weekly dances at a club downtown. In 1949 he and his friend wanted to attend a dance, but said friend had a mishap leaving the barracks, broke his ankle and so Bob was left to go on his own. As Bob entered the dance they were setting up for a square dance and were short a spot. One of his buddies noticed him and called out "Hey Swede" come and join us. This encounter introduced Bob to Elsie. A few more dance nights and he decided that she was going to be his dance partner for the rest of his life, a dance that lasted over 70 years. Their family included two daughters, two sons and six grandchildren.



Family Portrait 2006

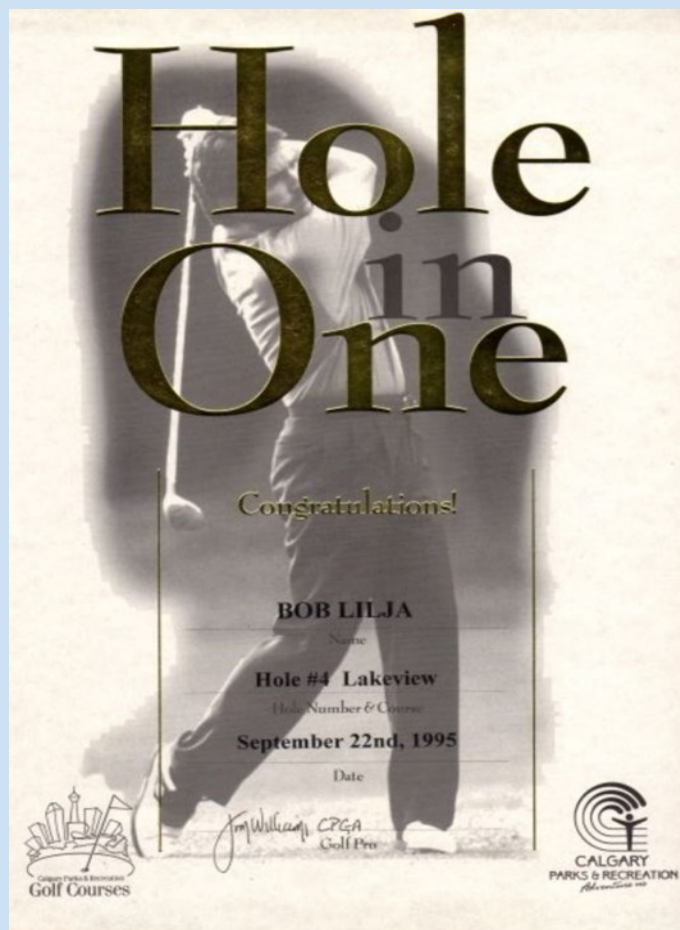
During his time with White Farm Equipment, he attended a trade show in Scottsdale, Arizona, highlighting farm machinery. The guest speaker was Neil Armstrong. As Bob was an early riser, he decided to go into the cafe for breakfast and found he and Armstrong were the only two in there. They had breakfast together and had a wonderful visit. How many members can say they ate with the “man on the moon”? According to Bob, Armstrong was “very down to earth”. (Sorry for that one folks).



In his leisure time after retirement he drove fishing groups to their favourite locales, along with five (5) other “Bob’s” (he was designated BOB 1). He also delivered RV’s for clients to the West Coast (making a couple of extra bucks on the side). Now he has weekly coffee get-togethers with those fellow drivers and enjoys meetings with friends and members at the Wing.



Bob was instrumental in spearheading the groundwork for the memorial commemorating the location of 10RD at what is now ATCO, on the site of the original depot. He continues to participate in Wing activities and meetings. An affable gentleman with a sly sense of humour and a great source of Air Force history, he is a very valuable member of the Wing.



And FINALLY, his hole in one!

# *National Awards*

The National Honours and Awards Committee will be comprised of a Chair (Honourary National President), members, National Chairperson, National Vice-Chairperson and an honest broker appointed by the National Board. Individuals are not permitted to sit on the committee during a year in which he or she is nominated. Nominations may be made by individuals, Wings, or groups. Submissions will be held in confidence until the selection process has been completed.

**Order of Excellence:** this is the highest award presented to members held in the highest esteem by their fellow members in recognition of their continuing outstanding service to the Association, their community and their country. Member will have normally received Meritorious or Distinguished Service awards to be considered for this award.

**Long Service Award:** this is awarded to deserving members in recognition and appreciation of outstanding, long (more than 20 continuous years) and faithful service to the Association. This is the second most prestigious award.

**Distinguished Service Award:** this is the third highest award of the Association and is awarded to individual in recognition and appreciation for distinguished service. Members would normally have received the Meritorious Service Award.

**Meritorious Service Award:** this is the fourth highest award and is presented in recognition and appreciation of outstanding service.

**Wing of the Year:** is presented to the Wing whose efforts have most enhanced the aims of the Association.

**Member of the Year:** honours the performance of an individual whose skill, enthusiasm, inspiration, direction or leadership has been well above ordinary has positively influenced the national body of the Association.

**Christina Handler Memorial Award:** is awarded to a member in a non-elected position who has worked tirelessly and unselfishly for the Association.

Taken from the RCAFA National Honours and Awards Booklet



***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*