

# **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)***



## 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/Darlene Laroche
Public Relations	Bob Wade
Cadet Liaison	Kevin Knight
Advocacy	Scott Deederly
Webmaster/Social Media	Kent Anderson





## *Message from the Chairperson*

We are almost half way through the centenary and I think we have done a great job of celebrating it in addition to raising the awareness of the RCAF! We have a few more events planned including Battle of Britain, a mess dinner, our RCAF-oriented Remembrance Day service and our Christmas party. Wow, what a year of outings.

Thanks to everyone who assisted with the summer events. The Stampede Parade float showcased the Gipsy Moth which was a big hit as was it at Spruce Meadows. The beer call at the Cold War Exhibit was fun and a good chance to relax and visit. Thanks to TMM for hosting us. A big thanks to Bev Spielman for opening up your yard for the Stampede Breakfast. It was my first and I thoroughly enjoyed it. In addition to meeting some of her neighbours, it was great to see some of our Lethbridge members drive up to attend.

Thanks to all who were able to join at the Legion for Wings over Alberta wing night. It was great to see everyone after a summer break.

We handed out a number of awards at the AGM (pictures were included in the last edition); however, I wish to thank the Past Chairs (Presidents) for all their work in making this happen at a local level. Thanks to Anna for arranging for all the pins as well.

As we head into the fall, we have the Battle of Britain parade in Sep, Mess Dinner in Oct, and Remembrance Day and our Christmas party in Nov. It is a year of celebrations!

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Michelle Gerwing

Chairman

783 (Calgary) Wing

Royal Canadian Air Force Association





## *Happy Birthday to you (Sep/Oct)*

Nathan Krebs	5 Sep
Bernard Hayden	8 Sep
Norma Cooke	10 Sep
Glenn Harrington	12 Sep
Bob Wade	21 Sep
Wesley Dixon	26 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
Ian Morgan	27 Oct
Maurice Hanberg	28 Oct
David McCarthy	28 Oct

## How things are started.....

Several years ago, one of the 783 Wing members was retired National President of the RCAFA (served three terms) Wally Gryba. Wally passed away and at that time I was Wing President, (1988-89). After a discussion with his widow Ruth, it was decided that the wing would sponsor a scholarship for cadets in the Effective Speaking program. The National office wanted to take it across Canada, but under a different name. The wing decided that the scholarship would remain Alberta only. National declined to support the fund.

The idea was the top three winners would receive \$500 for first, \$300 for second and \$200 for third place. The wing put \$1000 in place for the first competition. After that members contributed monies over the year, through several methods. Most of the money raised was from gratuities earned from catering with members and other fund raisers (fashion show, craft sale, 50/50, and casino funds).

Thus the “Wally Gryba Memorial” was set up. After many years the name was changed to the “Jack Bennett Memorial” honouring long time, ardent supporter of Air Cadets, Jack Bennett Col (ret'd). As the Wing's finances improved, it became a natural that the money would be dispersed supporting the Provincial program.

This was the start of the Wing's participation supporting the Effective Speaking. Personally I am disappointed that the name has been changed.

Bev Spielman

Past 783 Wing President

Past Alberta Group President.

## HOW WE CAME TO BE 783 WING

For the newer members of 783 Wing, you might like to know how we became to be. In 1949 (yes, that long ago) ex members of the Air Force came together to form a wing (701) in Calgary, the second one in Alberta, with Edmonton becoming the first .

The group started meeting at the 403 Squadron at Base Calgary, then slowly migrated to Royal Canadian Legion Headquarters on 20 Ave and 15 St. NW. As the membership grew, they leased the Alexander School, in Inglewood for quite a few years. When the city decided to take the school back for community use, 701 went looking again. During this time, 767 Wing had formed and they had purchased the old Lone Pine Supper Club . Both wings were operating separately until 1974, when it was found to be of mutual benefit for both wings to amalgamate. 701 Wing had money, and 767 had the building. For a period of time, the wing operated as 701/767, but found there was still a division of members. In order to eliminate the problem, the wing reformed and got a new number- 783. There are hundreds of pictures of the old facilities and functions, which Helen Hill has faithfully kept, that are brought out at various times for members to peruse and enjoy. Brian Lewis has captured many more and Kenn Nixon has created “rolling pictorials” which highlight different activities.

Eventually it became too costly to keep the location so the building was sold, and the wing was fortunate enough to be able to use the RCLs recreation hall at the top of Center St. on 6 Ave. A committee was struck to look for a permanent home, and we finally settled in on Fisher Street SE. We spent quite a few happy years there but again, the costs of running the facility became too much. On the hunt again, we found space by the airport on 11 St. As the membership started sliding, it was felt we needed to find other ways to meet that would not tax our resources. Again, the RCL came to the fore and we started having our meetings at 285 Horton Road. This has been a satisfactory solution and we are able to meet and help support the Legion.

The wing has over many years, produced several National Presidents starting with Fred Way in 1973 (Wing president 1960-1962), Wally Gryba 1973-1976 (fore-runner to the Jack Bennett Effective Speaking Scholarship), John Melbourne 2007-2008 and lastly our own Steve MacDonnell 2017 to present. We also had National Directors Allen Spielman and Grant Whitson.

At Group level we have produced many presidents, including electing the first female Group President in 1988-1990, namely Bev Spielman. We have one of the most active Past President

Flight in all of Canada with nine members. This group advises the wing executive frequently and shares the expertise of many years . We are so fortunate to have had people like Grant Whitson, Gordon Hill, Vern McKeague, Art Hill, Don Matthews and Gerry Morrison to impart their own history and accomplishments to members so that we can all appreciate the service these men have given us. There are the ladies too, Edith McMinn, Muriel Mymko, Lois Maxwell, Glenys Goossens, Barb Clifford and Marion Mascaro who have done their part for their country.

The Wing continues to support and advocate for Air Cadets (assisting with funding, staff, speakers, judges etc.) for the history of the RCAF (museum docents, board members ) community events (Battle of Britain, Remembrance Day, Anzac ) and other charitable groups that require physical or financial aid.

We do not neglect our members either as we fund friendship trips (Rosebud for one) hold a Christmas Party, Charter Tea and other functions that are either funded or subsidized by the Wing so we may include as many members as possible.

With the talented people we have, we support the RCAFA Group and National initiatives and have the distinction of hosting three National AGM/BGM very successfully. Every time it is 783's turn to host Group (every five years) we set the bar very high.

We also have members who have been recipients of the most prestigious awards in the Association. The National member of the year has gone to Vern McKeague, Grant Whitson, Kenn



## *We will remember them*



### ERNEST "ERNIE" ANASTASIOU

June 20, 1925 – Winnipeg, Alberta

April 5, 2024 – Calgary, Alberta

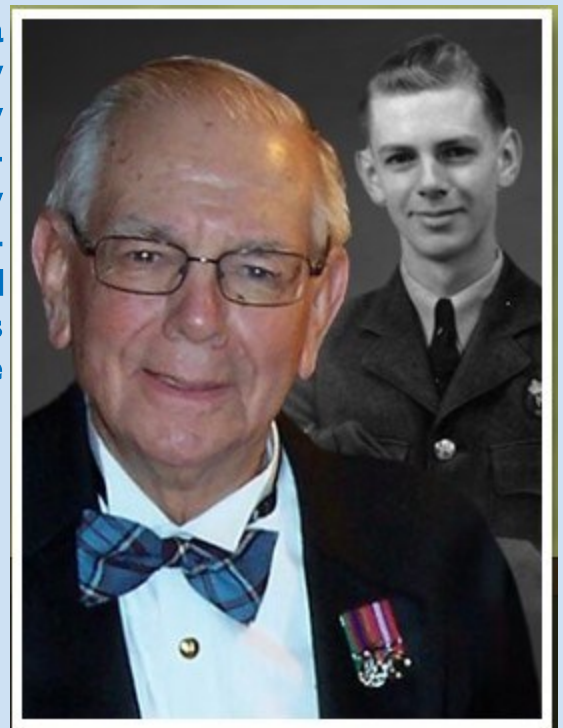
With heartfelt sadness, we announce the passing of Ernie Anastasiou on Friday, April 5, 2024, at the age of 98 years.

Ernie was born in Winnipeg, MB, but grew up in Victoria, BC. When Ernie was in high school, he joined the Air Cadets which started his passion for flying. He quit high school at seventeen to work in the shipyards, building a frigate for the navy. When he turned eighteen in June of 1943, Ernie promptly enlisted in the RCAF. He was interested in being a pilot, but they were in need of navigators at the time, so that's what he trained for. In 1945 when the war ended, he finished high school and earned a degree in Commerce from UBC in 1949. His long career with the Hudson's Bay Company took him from Victoria to Saskatoon and eventually to Calgary. Ernie married Claire Hannah in 1955 and they made Calgary their home.

Ernie was passionate about many things throughout his life, the number one being Claire and his family. He was an avid tennis player and then a golfer in his 70's. He loved gardening, travel, playing cards, trivia, cooking, and the Blue Jays. Ernie was dedicated to the Aircrew Association in Calgary and served as the president for many years. Later in life, he loved going to the elementary schools and talking to the children on Remembrance Day. He could recite the poem High Flight from memory at the age of 98. Later in life he was passionate about investing and managing his portfolio. Whatever he pursued, he did so with passion, optimism, and a sense of humour.

Ernie is lovingly remembered and mourned by his daughters Sandra (Brian) McLachlan and Victoria Tapic; grandchildren, Tanya, Kyle (Heidi), Kristy (James), and Brady (Rachel). He was especially proud of his great-grandchildren, Piper, Dallas, Jessie, Jade, Clara, and Colton. Ernie is also survived by his sisters Vivian (Bill) Bell and Mary Masters; sister-in-law Joan Anastasiou, and numerous nieces and nephews. He will be missed by his good friends John Tapic, Henk and Lenneke Ter Keurs, and Mike Mears.

Ernie was predeceased by his beloved wife Claire, his parents Lydia and John Anastasiou, his sister Violet Berrisford, his brother Clifford (Kip) Anastasiou, and his brothers-in-law, Jack Berrisford and Henry Masters.







## *We will remember them*



### Goossens, Glenys May (née Davies)

(May 31, 1928 – August 2, 2024)

The family is very sad to announce the death of Glenys on Friday, August 2, 2024 at the great age of 96 in Calgary, Alberta.

Glenys was the third child of William Edward and Jane Eira Davies, born May 31, 1928 on the farm in the Llewellyn District, Bangor, SK. Her older sisters were twins Megan and Eirlys and her younger sister was Nans. Glenys was a first-generation Canadian, as her father was Patagonian Welsh from Puerto Madryn, Argentina and her mother was from Dolgellau, North Wales. She was extremely proud of her Welsh heritage and enjoyed learning about her ancestry. She is survived by her sister Eirlys (late Garnet) Baird of Victoria, her daughter Michèle Henderson (Craig) of Calgary and her son Mark Goossens (Sharon Lyons) of Regina. She is survived by grandchildren Sarah Henderson of Vancouver, Dr. Amanda Henderson of Edmonton, Stephanie Kambeitz (Chris) of Weyburn, Cameron Hanover (Amber) of Regina and Kara Hanover (Collin Germann) of Regina, as well as five great-grandchildren: Chris, Alex and Emily Hanover of Regina and Andy and Abby Kambeitz of Weyburn. She is also survived by nieces Heather Robinson, Gwyneth Sestito and Dilys Baird and nephews Trevor, Cameron and James Baird, and François, Luc and Pierre Leblanc, and their spouses. Glenys was predeceased by her parents, her sister Megan (late Bill) Robinson, and her sister Dr. Nans Davies, her husband Gérard Goossens in 1976, as well as her sisters-in-law Janine and Pauline Goossens and Betsie Leblanc (late René).

Glenys did her schooling at Llewellyn School across from her grandparents' farm, which was a mile from the family home. Welsh was spoken at home. She did high school by correspondence and in her aunt's community of Imperial. After high school she took a commercial course and worked in Regina. She was immensely proud of her service in the RCAF as a Radio Operator from 1951 until 1954. She was well suited to military life due to her exceptional punctuality and attention to detail throughout her life. She was stationed in Comox where she met Flight Lieutenant Joseph Gérard Goossens. At the time, married women were not employed by the federal government and Glenys had to resign. Glenys and Gerry were married in 1954 and moved to Nova Scotia where Michèle was born in 1955. Mark followed in Montréal in 1961. They were transferred overseas to RAF North Cotes near Grimsby, Lincolnshire, England where Gerry worked on electronic warfare. They returned to North Bay, and again to Montréal. After Gerry's death Glenys and Mark moved to Regina in 1976 to be closer to family while Michèle attended Queen's University in Kingston. Glenys began to work at University of Regina in the Faculty of Education Counselling Office, where she stayed until her retirement in 1993. In 1998 she relocated to Calgary and was a member of the Legion, the Ex-Service Women's Group, the Calgary Welsh Society, 783 Wing of the Royal Canadian Air Force Association,

In Calgary, Glenys met Mel Crawford, a veteran, and they enjoyed nine years of companionship together until Mel's death in 2009. Glenys moved into Manor Village at Garrison Woods in 2012 and then to Trico LivingWell in 2023, where she enjoyed exercise classes and being a member of the choir, among other things. Still very mentally sharp at 96, she was still discussing current world events during her illness. She was a star at Trivia Night, she always remembered everyone's birthdays and anniversaries, she loved reading about military history and she continued to finish crossword puzzles even while in hospital.

Already a breast cancer survivor, Glenys was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in June of 2024 and spent time in Rockyview Hospital and in Chinook Hospice. She was a very kind and caring person, and will be sadly missed by everyone that had the good fortune of knowing her.

A Celebration of Life for Glenys will take place on Saturday, September 14, 2024, at 2:00 pm at South Calgary Funeral Centre and Crematorium, 12700 Macleod Trail SE, Calgary, AB, T2J 7E5. Flowers gratefully declined. Those wishing to do so may donate to a charity of their choice. Interment with her sister Nans, who died in March 2024, will take place next summer in Regina.





***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*