



# WINGS & TAILS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NO. 6 RCAF DUNNVILLE MUSEUM

NOVEMBER 2015



## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MEETING & SOCIAL

**Saturday, December 12**

**10:00 a.m.**

***Spouses Welcome!***

**MEAT ON A BUN WILL BE PROVIDED.**

**Finger foods & desserts would be  
appreciated!**

**Please bring non-perishable food  
items for a donation to the  
Dunnville food bank.**

## World War II Educational Day

On November 10, 100 middle school children visited the No. 6 Museum as part of a project coordinated by the Haldimand Museum and Archives to expose school children to the history of World War I and World War II. The Museum was chosen as the site for the World War II Educational Day because of the major impact the No. 6 Service Flying Training School (SFTS) and the four other British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) sites in Haldimand County had on the war effort and on community life.

Museum volunteers gave presentations at six stations throughout the Museum, the hangar and the meeting room. The objective was to give students a well-rounded view of what it was like for young men who volunteered for flight training.

After a brief welcome and introduction to the BCATP, students visited each of the stations. At Station #1, the entrance to the Museum, students learned how the No. 6 SFTS fit into the BCATP and about the building

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## World War II Educational Day

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of the No. 6 SFTS in 1940. At this station, students also received a summary of the evaluation and training process volunteers followed.

Station #2 was our Link Trainer, used to evaluate potential aircrew at Initial Training Schools (ITS), and later to hone the flight skills of pilots.

Station #3 was the Fleet Finch, where students learned about Elementary Flying Training Schools (EFTS) and the role of the Fleet Finch and Tiger Moth in training at EFTS bases.

Station #4 was the Yale, one of the trainers used at the No. 6 SFTS. Students also heard about the Harvard, another plane used in training here.

Life was not all work at training bases. A Museum volunteer at Station #5 talked about the sports and social activities that were available to base personnel and how base personnel interacted with Dunnville residents.

Station #6 focused on our veterans and their experiences during World War II.

*Many thanks to the volunteers who staffed the stations—Ernie Admadio, Joan Laffier, Tim Logan, Don Messner, Jack Murphy, and Ross Watterworth. And special thanks to Peter Gay and Ian Durand who coordinated the event.*

## *A Letter from the President*

It has been a challenging year with losses of valuable Museum volunteers and members through death and absences due to serious illness. Fortunately, others responded to our needs. Many thanks to Peter Gay and the other volunteers who put in long hours to ensure a successful Annual Open House. For the first time, the annual Dunnville Agricultural Fair was held at the Dunnville Airport. Again, many thanks to Peter and other volunteers who handled the needs of the Fair and set up the Museum for visitors. 137 visitors signed the visitor register during the Fair.

In our efforts to expose more young people to the story of the No. 6 SFTS, we had Scouts overnight in April, and we hosted 100 middle school students for a World War II Educational Day on November 10.

Our "Tribute to Elvis and Rod Stewart" in September was our most successful fundraising event. Through our collaboration with the Dunnville Lioness, almost 500 tickets were sold.

Slightly more than 600 visitors signed the visitor register in 2015. The biggest visitor days were the Dunnville Fair, the Museum Opening Day, and the Annual Open House. More people visited outside of weekends during the summer and during the off season than during any other time except the Fair. Many thanks to the Tuesday Work Crew who took the time to show visitors around. Thanks to all who pitched in to make 2015 our best year ever.

Don Oatman

### **In Memoriam**

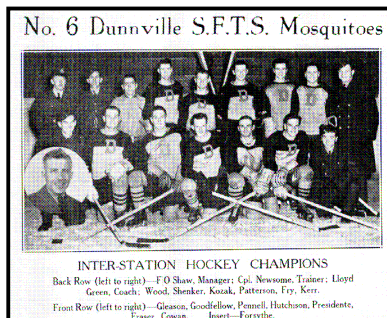
It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Patricia Logan in May 2015. For many Museum members near and far and for residents of Dunnville, Pat was the face of the Museum. She became a Museum volunteer in 2001, taking on the responsibility for membership that same year and continuing until her passing. In 2002, she took over the newsletter for a few years. Near the end of 2004, Pat took on the major responsibility of curator of the Museum. In later years, she also assumed responsibility for the memorial bricks and arranging sponsorships for the flags at the Memorial Garden and our vintage aircraft.

In her role as curator, she handled incoming donations, arranged the exhibits and maintained the Museum, organized and maintained the Museum library, and coordinated the volunteers who staffed the Museum during open hours. She also staffed the Museum if others were not available, and she arranged and led many private tours throughout the past 10 years. Pat will also be remembered for coordinating and enhancing the first major event at the Museum each year—the Annual Open House and Chicken Barbeque the first Saturday in July. Over the years this event grew and became a signature event for Dunnville.

The Museum was only one of the community groups for which Pat volunteered. In recognition of her community spirit and hard work, she was among the Canadians awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for significant contributions and achievements. She will be missed and her contributions to the Museum never forgotten.

# Recreation at the No. 6 SFTS

The theme for Doors Open Haldimand 2015 was Sports. As one of the Doors Open sites, this gave us an opportunity to look at the kinds of recreation that were available to the personnel at the No. 6 SFTS. The base newspaper, the Skywriter, and The Dunnville Chronicle provided a lot of information about social and sports activities, some of which is included below.



In the spring of 1943, the Dunnville Mosquitoes dominated hockey teams from other BCATP bases in Southern Ontario, to become the Inter-Station Hockey Champions. They also competed in the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) Intermediate Series. After disposing of the Port Colborne Sailors, the Mosquitoes had a shot at the Intermediate Hockey Championship of the OHA. The only hurdle was to defeat the Niagara Falls team. Even though their lack of ice for practices put them at a disadvantage, the Mosquitoes were ready to drub the Niagara Falls team... but mild weather in April turned Dunnville's ice into the Grand River!



In the spring of 1943, the No. 6 SFTS rented a large, lake-side summer home about 3/4 of a mile from the base for the use of the Women's

Division (WD) while on leave. The Beach House was open every weekday from 2-10 p.m., and every weekend from Friday night until Sunday night. There were bed accommodations for 20 women. It was a quiet, relaxed respite from the regulations and routine of the base for WDs at a very reasonable cost. The WDs prepared their own food and made their own beds. The Beach House was normally off limits for airmen, but they were occasionally invited for beach parties and corn and wiener roasts. Sports clothes were permitted from the base to the beach. The base provided transportation to and from the Beach House.

Sports activities at BCATP bases were officially encouraged by the RCAF. In 1942, the No. 1 Training Command established two inter-station leagues. Teams from No. 1 Bombing & Gunnery School, Jarvis; No. 16 SFTS, Hagersville; and the No. 6 SFTS competed in softball and soccer. Later, hockey and track meets were added. A second inter-station section consisted of No. 5 SFTS, Brantford; No. 33 Air Navigation School, Mount Hope; and No. 1 Wireless School, Guelph. At the end of a 3-month competitive schedule, play-offs were played between the winners of the two leagues.

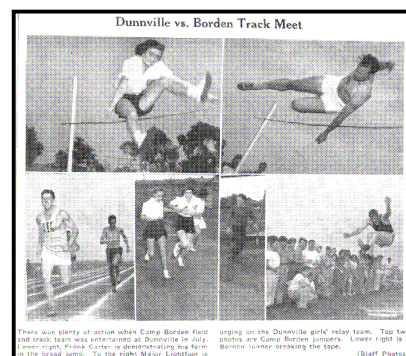
Commanding Officers at the No. 6 SFTS were personally involved. On August 1, 1941, Group Captain Hull officially announced that an Annual Station Sports Day would be held on Labor Day. Competition was held on an inter-unit basis with prizes to the contestants and squadrons with the greatest points. A 1/4-mile cinder track was built for the event. Sports Day was repeated the following two years, with large public crowds attending.

Sports at the base included archery, wrestling, hockey, softball for men and women, badminton, basketball, boxing, a rifle club, soccer, swimming, tennis, and touch rugby. Track and field events drew the largest number of participants. A unique feature of the No. 6 SFTS recreational activities was the Beach House on Lake Erie.

Competitions were held between units at the base, between teams from other BCATP bases, and against local civilian hockey, softball, badminton and tennis teams.



Men's softball teams were active throughout the life of the No. 6 SFTS. Once members of the Women's Division (WD) were posted to the base in 1942, the WD team became quite active, frequently outmatching the teams for Hagersville, Jarvis and Brantford Army. In October 1943, the WD team held the lead in the Niagara District Softball League. However, the team did not do as well in the summer of 1942 when they lost two games to the Dominion Fabrics Orioles.



The dominant track and field event was the Annual Sports Day that not only attracted most of the station personnel, but drew large public crowds. While Sports Days featured track and field events, they also included fun events such as obstacle races, pole wrestling, potato sack races, and three-legged races. There were also meets with track and field teams from other BCATP bases.

## 2015-2017 EXECUTIVE

### Officers

President - Don Oatman  
1st Vice President - Peter Gay  
2nd Vice President - Ian Durand  
Secretary - Tim Logan  
Treasurer - Joanne Villeneuve

### Directors

George Cowell  
Arnold Link  
Don Messner  
Jack Murphy  
Frank Phillips  
Paul Segui

# Some Moments to Remember in 2015

Left to right:  
Sherri Swayze,  
Joanne Villeneuve,  
Lynne King, and  
Joan Laffier at the  
Annual Open  
House on July 4.



"Country Croonin'" at the No. 6" on July 26  
provided an enjoyable Sunday afternoon of  
country music by the "Riders of the Western  
Stage" & the musical stylings of Randall Hill.



Sandy Murphy's  
stalwart amateurs  
strut their stuff at the  
Elimination Draw on  
August 15. Jack  
Murphy was the  
lucky winner of the  
\$1,000 prize!



Our "Tribute to Elvis and Rod Stewart" in  
September brought together World Champion  
Elvis impersonator, Roy LeBlanc, and the award-  
winning musician Doug Varty as Rod Stewart.  
Varty is shown with enthusiastic fan  
and Museum volunteer  
Carolyn Burrage.



Joe Weir, Fred Cash, Floyd Smelser and Ed Carter-  
Edwards at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Vet Dinner, October 17,  
honouring our members who are veterans of  
World War II. Absent are Ken Bain  
and Jim Bird.



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## VISIT THE NO. 6 RCAF DUNNVILLE MUSEUM

**Location:** 536 Port Maitland Rd., Dunnville  
(Former Dunnville Airport, Hangar 1)  
**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 232, Dunnville, ON N1A 2X5  
**Phone:** 905-701-7223  
**Website:** [www.rcafmuseum.org](http://www.rcafmuseum.org)

**Hours:** Victoria Day weekend through Labour Day weekend: Saturdays &  
Holidays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sundays 1-5 p.m. Tuesdays year round, 9  
a.m.-1 p.m. Remembrance Day, noon-4 p.m. To arrange for a tour,  
call 905-701-7223.