



# WINGS & TAILS

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NO. 6 RCAF DUNNVILLE MUSEUM**

*Telling the stories of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, the No. 6 Service Flying Training School, and the RCAF Veterans, to the Communities of Canada.*



## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MEETING & SOCIAL

**Saturday, December 10  
10:00 a.m.**

***Spouses Welcome!***

**BEEF 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.**

## First Artifact from Harvard #2963 Arrives

On June 19, 1943, at 3:07 p.m., Leading Aircraftsman (LAC) William Charles Smith, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, was soloing in Harvard #2963 over Lake Erie. While buzzing a cruise ship traveling between Crystal Beach and Buffalo, he developed engine trouble and his aircraft dove into the Lake, exploded and sank. Smith, 17 years old, was a pilot trainee at the No. 6 SFTS. He was from Oxfordshire, England, and is buried in the Military Plot in Riverside Cemetery, Dunnville.

Harvard #2963 has remained at the bottom of Lake Erie for 73 years. The Canadian Harvard Aircraft Assn. Dive Team has located and surveyed the remains of the aircraft, and plans to recover as much as possible and donate the artifacts to the No.6 RCAF Dunnville Museum. The first artifact, the aircraft's fire extinguisher, has been recovered and was presented to the Museum at the 2016 Annual Open House on July 2.

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## First Artifact from Harvard #2963 Arrives

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Unlike the other parts of the aircraft, the approximately 1-foot high fire extinguisher escaped encrustation with zebra mussels, a fresh-water invasive species. The fire extinguisher is made of brass, an alloy of copper and zinc that is toxic to zebra mussels.

Since the presentation of the fire extinguisher to the Museum, other small parts of the aircraft have been retrieved. They are being cleaned of mussels in a laborious manual process. Curator, Peter Gay, says a scalpel works well...if you can stand the smell.



**Fire Extinguisher  
from Harvard #2963**

## Be In It To Win It!

Lottery Chair, Sandy Murphy, provides lots of opportunities to support the Museum by buying tickets for our raffles and draws. 2016 winners were:

### 50/50 Draws

April 9 - Sharon Godard won \$419.00

July 2 - Marlene Miller won \$434.50

### "Harvards Up Early" Limited Edition Print

Winner - John Tyrell (*Many thanks to John Hart, J. W. Hart Funeral Home, for donating the print.*)

### Elimination Draw Night

\$100 prize winners - John & Connie McKay, Jack Murphy, Jack Glaves, Jim Mattice, Bill & Marlene Topp, Leah Ramsey, Frank Collins, Lynne King, Tim Murphy

\$1,000 Grand Prize winners - Fred and Debbie Goit.

### 2015-2016 EXECUTIVE

#### Officers

Don Oatman, President	Tim Logan, Secretary
Peter Gay, 1st Vice Pres.	Joanne Villeneuve, Treasurer
Frank Phillips, 2nd Vice Pres.	

**Directors:** George Cowell, Ian Durand, Arnold Link,  
Don Messner, Jack Murphy, Paul Segui

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Building/Grounds - Jack Murphy	Merchandise - Lynne King
Fundscrip - Rick Pleasance	Museum - Peter Gay
Lottery - Sandy Murphy	Newsletter - April Cormaci
Membership - Joanne Villeneuve	

## Remembrance Day



Remembrance Day, originally called "Armistice Day", was inaugurated after World War I in 1919 throughout much of the British Empire. In 1931, the federal government renamed it "Remembrance Day" and decreed that it would always be observed on November 11. Remembrance Day has gone through periods of intense observation and declining interest. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II in 1995 was a watershed event; it stimulated a major increase in public interest that continues today.

The red poppy was a native plant along the Western Front during World War I. Its fame as a symbol owes much to Lt. Col. John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields" written on the battlefield during the Second Battle of Ypres on May 3, 1915. The poppy has become an enduring symbol in Canada, the Commonwealth nations, and the United States.

## Congratulations to Capt. Frank Phillips

On October 18, in a ceremony at the headquarters of 611 Harvard Squadron Air Cadets, Capt. Frank Phillips was presented with the third clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration (CD) by Admiral Sir Ian Dewar Adair (ret.) of Her Majesty's Royal Navy for 42 years of service in the Canadian Armed Forces. Capt. Phillips has been an officer in the Cadet Instructor's Cadre since he was 19 years old, followed by many other positions with the Cadets. He is a retired Police Officer with 33-1/2 years of service. Capt. Phillips is a past recipient of the Police Exemplary Service Medal with bar and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

## 'Tis the Season for Gift Cards!



Looking for welcome way to say "Merry Christmas", "Happy Holidays", or "Thank You"? How about the versatile Gift Card?

Gift Cards are perfect for family, friends, service providers and others. Need stocking stuffers? Look no further. Many charities can use them to buy needed items or provide them to clients. The Museum has Gift Cards available for **Sobeys, Food Basics, Giant Tiger, Canadian Tire**, and **Home Hardware**. For every one you buy, the Museum gets a rebate. Last year, the Museum made \$450 from their sale. Buy Gift Cards at monthly meetings or by calling Rick Pleasance (905-701-4833).

# The RCAF Women's Division Celebrates 75 Years

*The following summary of the history of the members of the RCAF Women's Division is an abridged excerpt from [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca).*

When Canada entered the Second World War on 10 September 1939, thousands of Canadian men flocked to the recruiting centres. Canadian women also wanted to serve their country, but the government was reluctant to enlist them in the armed forces, except in medical and nursing roles. By the second summer of the war, the initial flood of male recruits was slowing down at a time when demands on the services were increasing. For the first time, serious consideration was given to the possibility of women entering the service in non-combat and non-medical roles. On 2 April 1941, representatives from the Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy and RCAF decided that there was no requirement to recruit women. Three months later, the air force would change its mind.

**Auxiliary Air Force Created.** The RCAF was expanding rapidly, primarily due to the needs of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) in Canada. To meet the demand for instructors and support staff, more and more Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel were arriving in Canada, some of whom were members of the British Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). On 2 July 1941, the federal Cabinet authorized the formation of the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force (CWAAF), and the RCAF became the first Canadian military service to actively recruit women. Approximately 2,000 women responded to the initial call to join the Air Force, of which 150 were selected. Thousands more would follow.

**Training Begins.** Basic training first took place in Toronto at No. 6 Manning Depot. The new recruits started arriving in October 1941 and training began in earnest the following month. A few months later, the graduates from amongst the initial 150 women were selected to fill senior officer and non-commissioned positions within the CWAAF organization. In early 1942, legal concerns were raised about the applicability of military law and the granting of air force officer commissions to "auxiliary" (or non-regular air force) personnel. Therefore, on 3 February, the CWAAF became the RCAF (Women's Division)--a part of the permanent RCAF--and was placed on active service for the defence of Canada. As such, the "WDs", as the Women's Division was popularly called, were subject to the same laws, discipline and liabilities as the men. However, they were not paid the same. RCAF senior officers raised this inequity several times throughout the war, but the best that could be achieved was a raise in pay, in July 1943, to 80 per cent of a man's wage and acknowledgement that both sexes received the same specialist and duty allowances.

**Expansion.** At first, occupations for WDs were limited to trades similar to civilian occupations such as clerks, fabric workers and cooks. As WD numbers grew, the RCAF would eventually employ women in 69 of 102 trades, including occupations such as aircraft maintenance and air traffic control. By 1943 WDs were a fixture at RCAF stations and headquarters throughout Canada. The first WDs to serve overseas left Canada on 21 August 1942, and by December 1944, almost 1,500 could be found throughout Britain as part of the headquarters of the RCAF Overseas and No. 6 (RCAF) Group of RAF Bomber Command.



In total, 17,038 women served in the RCAF (WD) during the Second World War. At its peak, in January 1944, the Women's Division fielded 15,556 personnel at home and abroad. Thirty died while on active service. Many were decorated for their hard work and sacrifice. By December 1946, with the war over and the number of military personnel shrinking to peacetime levels, the last WD was discharged from the RCAF. The WDs demonstrated to the nation in general, and the RCAF in particular, that women could be an integral part of Canadian aviation. Five years later, when the RCAF began its Cold War expansion, so strong was the WD's record of service, that women were almost immediately sought after as air force recruits. There was one important change, however: the wartime motto, "We Serve that Men May Fly", was no longer used, just as the WD formation itself ceased to exist. Women simply joined the RCAF as any man would, and followed its motto: "Per Ardua ad Astra" ("Through Adversity to the Stars"). Women were in the air force to stay.

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## Women's Division at the No. 6 SFTS

By January 1, 1942, the No. 6 SFTS base personnel included 121 members of the CWAAF. Near the end of base closure in December 1944, the complement of officers and enlisted WDs numbered 159.

WDs became fully integrated into the life at the No.6. They had their military duties, which changed and grew during the duration of the base operation as they did for WDs all over. They also enthusiastically participated in (and often coordinated) social- and sports-related activities at the base.

*The Sky Writer*, the base newspaper, began publishing in October 1942. Almost every issue carried information on the activities of the WDs--arrivals, departures, congratulations, achievements, assignments and more. In that very first issue, the writer writes about the WDs: "...the fact is that this war simply could not be won without them, a fact they will remain silent about to the end of their days."



# Some Moments To Remember in 2016



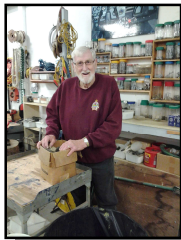
(L to R) Fred Cash, Joe Weir and Floyd Smelser at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Vet Dinner honouring our members who are veterans of WW II. Absent were Ed Carter-Edwards, Ken Bain, Don McKenzie and Les Wearne.

Americana/country singer Tia McGraff performed her "Concert in the Clouds" as a fundraiser for the Museum.



Clouds

Don Messner showed Rotary Club "Man Cave Event" ticket holders around the shop. Jack Murphy took visitors on tours of the Museum. Other volunteers escorted visitors around the vintage aircraft.



This year's Elimination Draw audience was entertained by the Free Spirit singers and Museum volunteers dressed in costumes representing the months of the year. Volunteers paraded onto the stage to the tune of Neil Sedaka's 1960s hit "Calendar Girl", and were persuaded to do an encore. Names have been withheld to preserve some dignity, but you know who they are...

2016 was a busy year for the Museum's work crew. Don Hart and Tim Logan were among the volunteers who tackled the task of repainting the hangar floor. Here George Cowell and Peter Gay "supervise".



Our Second Annual Hangar Sale on opening weekend, generated double last year's hangar sale income!



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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.