



## **Alberta Aviation Museum Association – Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at 2:00 pm, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Alberta Aviation Museum, 11410 Kingsway, Edmonton.

Purpose of the meeting:

- To provide reports to the General Membership
- To review the Annual Financial Statement with the General Membership
- To elect the Board of Directors of the Alberta Aviation Museum Association 2013/2014
- To discuss the current status and future of the Alberta Aviation Museum
- To answer questions from the General Membership

All memberships expire December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, so please ensure yours has been renewed. To vote at the Annual General Meeting you must be a member prior to the meeting. Memberships will not be sold the day of the Annual General Meeting. With the pending closure of the Edmonton City Centre Airport, it is important that you have a voice in the future direction of the museum.

### **Who shares the hangar? EAHS Member Organizations**

Air Cadet museum & archives  
Civil Air Search & Rescue Association  
Edmonton Homebuilt Aircraft Association  
Ex-(RCAF) Air Alliance  
504 Blatchford Field Royal Canadian Air Cadets  
180-20<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Royal Canadian Army Cadets  
700 (Edmonton) Wing Air Force Association of Canada

Alberta Aviation Museum  
Edmonton Balloon Club  
Edmonton Soaring Club  
Ex-RCAF Women's Association  
418 RCAF Squadron Association  
Ventura Memorial Flight Association



# Alberta Aviation Museum Update

The Board and Administration of the Alberta Aviation Museum have been very active in recent months positioning the Museum for the future. At this time, I would like to update you on those activities.

## Phase One

### Inside the building:

Currently all of our displays and display cases are being revised and moved into new locations in preparation for our major floor change this spring...a massive undertaking. Exhibit updates and other changes have been in progress since last year as part of our efforts to adapt to the upcoming changes at the Edmonton City Centre Airport. The floor change is a huge deal as all aircraft have to be removed from the building then moved back in accordance with the new layout. The classroom area will be relocated and all aircraft currently suspended overhead will also come down.

As the floor change takes place we will also lose a number of aircraft including the DC-3 that will be flying back to Buffalo Airways (the Ice Pilots). We may also lose the de Havilland Vampire and R-22 helicopter currently on display courtesy of Joe McBryan of Buffalo Airways. We have already lost the loaned 1928 Cirrus Moth (one of the original aircraft of the Edmonton Flying Club) due to uncertainties going forward.

Our B-25 will be added to the display floor at the time of the floor change.

While the new layout will be more open enabling easier photography and viewing it will also restrict what can be on interior display.

### Outside the building:

- The CF-104 Starfighter will arrive March 26 according to the latest shipping update and once restored will be added to our jet fighter collection on the East side of the building
- We will be losing a Beech 18 that has been on loan and displayed by our 737. It will be flying out before the airport is closed
- We are also working on loaning one of our two T-33's (we have a 1950's version and a 1980's version) to another museum to gain room
- We also need to add temporary facilities to protect and house our Bell Jet Ranger, Robson R-22 (if it stays) and Bell 47 helicopter in outdoor display areas.

We have to move a number of aircraft to an offsite location in an effort to gain space for display and operations.

- The Spirit of Edmonton is going to have to fly out
- Our Ercoupe will need to fly out when completed this spring/summer
- Our Piper Super Cub will need to fly out when completed this spring/summer
- Several aircraft and major artifacts awaiting restoration will also have to be moved

Some of these moves may be temporary depending on how the Museum fits in with the proposed City Centre redevelopment and if additional space becomes available.

The end result of all these moves will be improved sight lines for viewing and touring within the Museum but a reduction in the number of exhibits and aircraft on interior display. Unlike an art gallery or typical broad based museum, each aircraft or display removed removes a piece of the Edmonton and Alberta story and a piece of history.

At this time we have no confirmation as to how we fit in to the new development or any commitment to additional space so we are making short/mid term plans based on the space we currently occupy.

## **Phase Two**

### Restructured acquisition list:

The Museum's acquisition list has had to be radically cut and re-focused. We are now looking at only acquiring an additional **14** aircraft in total for our site.

### Interior display:

1. Curtis Model D headless pusher constructed for internal hanging display
2. Curtis Canuck constructed for internal floor display
3. de Havilland Cirrus Moth constructed for internal floor display
4. AVRO Avian constructed for internal floor display
5. Hawker Hurricane or representation for internal floor display
6. Bell P-39 or representation for internal floor display
7. Vampire TG 372 acquired from National Museum, restored for internal floor display

When these acquisitions are completed, the Beech 18 currently on inside display with public access to the interior will be moved to a closed external display on the North ramp.

### Exterior display:

1. Curtis Canuck look-alike for external display, replacing Bomarc missile on mount
2. Bristol Freighter, arrival 2013, restored for external display mounted above West yard
3. DC-3 to be acquired and restored for external display
4. Vampire to be acquired and restored for external display (currently on loan)
5. Canadair Sabre (any Mark) to be acquired and restored for external display
6. CF-5 to be acquired and restored for external display
7. CF-18 to be acquired and restored for external display

This will create a minimalist collection covering the City of Edmonton specifically and Canada's only complete display of RCAF jet fighters.

Additionally we are looking at mounting our 737 above the front parking lot over the Memorial walk way.

At the end of the acquisition process there will be a total of **20** aircraft/major sections/artifacts/training aircraft assets that will have to be moved from the current site. These aircraft and artifacts tell the broader history of Greater Edmonton and Northern Alberta or stories that we have had to choose not to present at this time due to space restriction issues.

The total collection on our current site will, upon completion of the outlined changes, drop from **61** (3<sup>rd</sup> largest in Canada) with the arrival of the Starfighter to **49** (approximately 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> largest in Canada).

Again note: At this time we have no confirmation as to how we fit in to the new development or any commitment to additional space so we are making short/mid term plans based on the space we currently occupy.

**Phase Three** and **Phase Four** should be ready for presentation by our March 17<sup>th</sup> AGM if the ongoing planning meetings go well.

Thomas Hinderks  
Executive Director, Alberta Aviation Museum

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## Know Your Museum – Boeing 737-275

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the third in a series of articles focusing on the facilities and aircraft that make up the Alberta Aviation Museum.*

Tipping the scales at a maximum take-off weight of 117,000 lb., the Alberta Aviation Museum's Boeing 737-275 is the largest airplane in the Museum's collection. Acquired from Air Canada in June 2005, this plane (C-GIPW) filled one of the biggest holes on the Museum's acquisition list.



**Figure 1 - Boeing 737-275 (C-GIPW) in the outdoor display area at the Alberta Aviation Museum (Alberta Aviation Museum Collection)**

C-GIPW had its origins in 1979 rolling off the assembly line at the large Boeing plant at Seattle. Powered by two Pratt and Whitney JT8D-9A jet engines and carrying serial number 21712, the aircraft was sold to Pacific Western Airlines in Vancouver and delivered to PWA on February 28, 1979 where it was assigned fleet number 745.

The Boeing 737, one of the most successful commercial aircraft in history, had its start in the 1960's. The initial 737 flew in April 1967 and was a short-range, twinjet that complemented the existing 707 and 727 series of the time.

The Boeing 737 faced stiff competition from the DC-9 and BAC-111 but had the advantage of six abreast seating. The 737 later adopted the 727's cargo convertible features, which enabled the interior to be changed from passenger to cargo use in the 737-200 series.

C-GIPW, aircraft #745, was assigned to the Airbus route between the Edmonton Municipal and Calgary International airports. Over the years it flew not only that route but nearly every route operated by Pacific Western Airlines. In 1987, Pacific Western



**Figure 2 - C-GIPW on approach to Lester B. Pearson International Airport, March 1999 (Andy Vanderheyden Collection)**

Airlines bought Canadian Pacific Airlines and the new merged airline was called Canadian Airlines International. C-GIPW was transferred to Canadian Airlines International on April 26, 1987.

In 1999, the Canadian government implemented partial deregulation of the Canadian airline industry. This led American Airlines to launch a takeover bid for Canadian Airlines, in turn prompting Air Canada to submit its own bid for Canadian. This bid was accepted and the Canadian Airlines / Air Canada merger took place in 2000.

On April 1, 2001, C-GIPW became part of the Air Canada fleet. Then little more than a year later, in August 2002, C-GIPW was transferred to Tango, Air Canada's low fare service operating on many Canadian and several U.S. routes. The airplane was repainted in Tango colors for further short haul operations. On April 7, 2003, C-GIPW was withdrawn from service and stored at the Edmonton International Airport awaiting its fate.



**Figure 3 - C-GIPW at Montreal Dorval Airport, Dec. 2000**  
Note the combined Canadian/Air Canada colors  
(Pierre Lacombe Collection)



**Figure 4 - C-GIPW in Tango Colors at YEG, April 12, 2004**  
(Richard Barsby Collection)

Edmonton and a deal was struck to transfer the stored aircraft to the Alberta Aviation Museum. Air Canada even agreed to repaint C-GIPW in full PWA livery.

A welcome ceremony was staged for C-GIPW on June 17, 2005. Since then the aircraft has had a busy life even though it is not flying. It has been used by the RCMP and Edmonton City Police for training purposes. It has also been used by students in the avionics program at NAIT.

Our 737-275 has also served as a prop for the TV

About this time, the Board of the Alberta Aviation Museum was reviewing its acquisition list and questioning whether it would be possible to obtain a Boeing 737.

Through the efforts of Tom Hinderks and other volunteers, C-GIPW was located and talks were initiated with Air Canada. Assistance was provided by the Air Canada Pilots Association to get senior Air Canada management to visit



**Figure 5 - C-GIPW at Alberta Aviation Museum after the Welcoming Ceremony, June 17, 2005**  
(Dale Provo Collection)

movie “For the Love of a Child”, a pair of travelogues, scenes for the TV series “May Contain Nuts”, over a hundred photo shoots, and recently the wedding of two air traffic controllers.

There is a dedicated team of volunteers at the Museum who keep C-GIPW in excellent condition and help stage tours on Saturdays during the summer. For C-GIPW (nickname Sole Survivor) this is a fitting end to a lengthy flying career.

**Photo Sources:**

Lech Lebiedowski, Curator, Alta. Aviation Museum

Andy Vanderheyden

Pierre Lacombe, Ste. Therese, Quebec

Richard Barsby, Spruce Grove – former security officer and aircraft re-fueler at Edmonton International Airport

Dale Provo – former mechanic and shop foreman for PWA, Canadian and Air Canada

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## Protecting Alberta’s Forests – Aerial Fire Patrols of the 1920’s

At the end of World War One, most of the wartime infrastructure in Canada was disbanded and the men who served in the armed forces returned to civil life. In federal government circles there was recognition that the airplane was here to stay and that aviation could make a significant contribution to servicing the vast tracts of land in Western and Northern Canada. However, funds were tight and use would have to be made of surplus WW1 aircraft.

In February 1919, the Overseas Club and Patriotic League in England gifted 16 airplanes to Canada followed by an Imperial Gift of another 101 airplanes, dismantled hangars and other equipment. Also that year, the Canadian Government established the Air Board to oversee military and civil aviation.

The Forestry Branch of the federal Department of the Interior was concerned with the threat of forest fires in remote areas beyond the surveillance of existing lookout towers. It entered into an arrangement with the Air Board to establish an air station at Morley, Alberta where standing aerial patrols of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains could be mounted. In the fall of 1920, No. 2 (Operations) Squadron of the Canadian Air Force took up residence at Morley, and two canvas Bessoneau hangars were erected to house the three de Havilland DH4’s committed to forest patrols. Unfortunately excessive winds at the Morley air station prompted a move to High River in 1921.

Work at the new High River air station commenced in January 1921 and through the spring of 1921 construction of three hangars, a wireless tower, workshops and other facilities proceeded quickly. Initially two de Havilland DH4’s and four Avro 504K’s were assembled at the air station but eventually they were joined by a further four de Havilland DH4’s.



**Figure 6 - First Aerodrome (High River Air Station) 1923  
(Museum of the Highwood Collection)**

Flying patrols began in May 1921 and that year over 700 hours of flying time were committed to fire detection and prevention patrols leading to the discovery of 44 fires. These daily fire patrols generally followed two routes: the northern route extended to a sub base at Eckville, while the southern route ran to Pincher Creek and back. Occasionally patrols flew into Banff National Park but the risk of poor weather and the lack of suitable landing areas discouraged such patrols.

Lloyd Van Camp was one of the first airmen involved in these open-cockpit patrols and in an interview conducted for the book *Alberta's Forest Service 1930 – 2005* he spoke about the problems involved in reporting fires by radio once discovered.



**Figure 7 - de Havilland aircraft at High River Airport, c. 1921  
(Alberta Forest History Photographic Collection)**

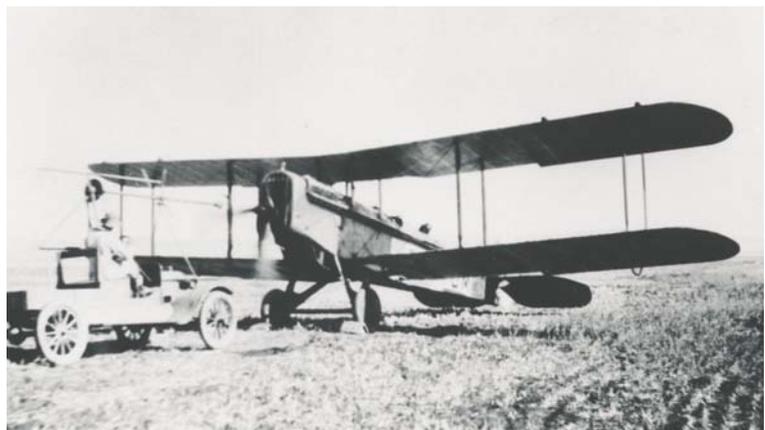
was first necessary to unwind a 100 foot copper aerial with a heavy lead weight to keep it trailing below the plane. This had to be done after takeoff, and we lost several aerials by having someone forget to reel them in before landing. To send you had to remove the heavy outer gloves, and your hands soon became numb with only the thin silk gloves on the icy key. The pilots, all fighter veterans, most without any experience of Morse Code, were very slow or even resentful of learning. It soon became obvious that the idea of pilots sending back fire reports by code was not workable.”

In 1923, the Department of National Defence was formed and the Canadian Air Force assumed responsibility for military and civilian air services although air station operations were not affected.

Forestry patrols continued at High River as well as aerial photography and in 1923 flying time reached 510 hours, the highest recorded among any air station that year.

Lloyd noted, “The sending set in the plane ran from a small electric motor, powered by a small wooden propeller under the top wing. To make Morse Code signals, the operator in the plane pressed a key that changed the tone. Sending Morse Code this way was an awkward chore. First of all, we were muffled in very heavy flying clothes for the sub-zero 130-mile an hour gale at 13,000 feet in an open cockpit. Sheepskin, leather pants and jacket, lined helmet and goggles, plus silk

inner and sheepskin outer gloves were necessary. To send a radio signal, it



**Figure 8 - DH4 fire patrol plane at High River with vehicle-powered starting device, c.1922  
(Dominion Forestry photo via the Museum of the Highwood Collection)**

Between 1924 and 1927 flying hours on forestry patrol never exceeded 500 hours owing to heavy snowpack and wet weather at different times during these years. In 1928 eight forest fires were detected and 706 hours of forestry patrol were flown with part of this increase due to the expansion of operations into the Peace River District. 1929, however, was a much worse year for forest fires – patrols began in March utilizing planes fitted with skis and continued through the year. Forty-three fires were detected and 1300 hours of flying time logged.

1931 marked the end of the air force forestry patrols as the Canadian Government transferred responsibility for natural resources to the provinces. The Alberta Government installed lookout towers throughout the Crowsnest and Bow River Forest Districts and the airborne forestry patrols were no longer required. By April 1931, the station was placed on a care and maintenance basis only to arise Phoenix-like during World War Two when it became the home of No. 5 Elementary Flying Training School of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.



**Figure 9 - DH4 probably out of High River flying over the Rocky Mountains, early 1920s  
(Directorate of History & Heritage Collection at DND)**

**Sources:**

- P. J. Murphy, R. E. Stevenson, D. Quintillo and S. Ferdinand, *The Alberta Forest Service, 1930 – 2005*, (Edmonton: Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Government of Alberta, 2006)
- Patricia A. Myers, *Sky Riders: An Illustrated History of Aviation in Alberta 1906 – 1945*, (Saskatoon: Fifth House Ltd., 1995)
- Dan Smith, “Those Magnificent Men and Their Flying Machines: Aerial Reconnaissance in the Alberta Rocky Mountains During the 1920s” in *Western Geography*, 7 (1997).
- Chris Weicht, *Alberta Skies: An Aviation History*, (Roberts Creek, B.C.: Creekside Publications, 2009)

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## **Another Diamond Jubilee Medal Recipient**

In the January-February 2013 issue of *In Formation*, I mentioned five Edmontonians who had received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal because of their long association with aviation in this country and the Alberta Aviation Museum. Those individuals were Tom Hinderks, Art Maskell, Denny May, Tom Sand and John (Jack) Van Norman

Since then, another individual who received the Diamond Jubilee Medal has been brought to my attention. I would like to offer my congratulations and add his name to the list of recipients:

- Mr. Willy Williams

## In Memoriam



**Glen William Delaney**  
March 7, 1941 – December 20, 2012

On December 20, 2012 Glen Delaney passed away at the age of 71 years.

Glen worked as a commercial airline pilot for Pacific Western Airlines and then Canadian Airlines for 34 years.

Upon his retirement, his passion for aviation continued in the form of volunteer work for the Alberta Aviation Museum. Glen sat on the Board of the Alberta Aviation Museum through the 1990s and into the early 2000s.

Together with Joe McGoldrick, he was instrumental in developing and launching the Museum's educational programs. He was a great Grade 6 instructor, always ready for any question thrown at him by visiting schoolchildren. He provided this instruction for many years until his health began to give out.

Glen is remembered as a quiet, thoughtful man but someone always willing to help. His many contributions to the Alberta Aviation Museum will long be remembered.



**Ferguson Milne "Chuck" MacLaren**  
July 23, 1917 – January 13, 2013

Chuck MacLaren was a fixture at the Alberta Aviation Museum and his passing on January 13, 2013 at the age of 95 represented a terrible loss for the Museum.

Chuck loved airplanes, working on them from the age of 13 until just a few months ago. During his career from 1939 to 1981, he worked at the Edmonton Municipal Airport for a variety of companies, including Gunnar Nesbitt Aviation and Eldorado Aviation.

Upon retiring he offered his welding and fabrication skills to the Alberta Aviation Museum, and he was heavily involved in restoration projects such as the Norseman, Fairchild 71, Mosquito, Anson and Mitchell.

He was a great welder and could fabricate anything, one example being a hoop system that enabled wings to be easily turned over for painting. He also possessed an unbelievable memory knowing exactly which rivet was needed for each section of every airplane. A founding member of the Alberta Aviation Museum, Chuck will be sorely missed.

## **Alberta Aviation Museum Celebrates Women – March 10<sup>th</sup>**

Women and girls get in **FREE** to the Alberta Aviation Museum on Sunday, March 10th as part of Women in Aviation week. Doors open at 11 a.m.

Come learn a little history and get inspired to become a part of Canada's aviation future through these speakers and tours!

**11 a.m.** Women in Aviation (Polaris chapter) member will speak about getting her private pilot's licence and her experiences in the sky

**Noon:** Author and historian Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail will share highlights of Canadian women's achievements in the air and on the ground

**1:30 p.m.** Tour of Edmonton Flying Club

**2:45 p.m.** Rayanne Hoffman, WestJet Captain, will speak about her journey to the pilot's seat

**3:00-4:00 p.m.** The museum's 737 will be open for public tours (and women get priority!)

### **From the start, women have been a part of Alberta's aviation industry:**

- Since Katherine Stinson's first Edmonton aerobatic demonstrations in 1916 through to today's women pilots flying as airline pilots and instructors around the world, women in Alberta have played a leading role in aviation
- Beyond the cockpit women have been the maintenance engineers, the builders and servicers of aircraft throughout Alberta's aviation history with many holding key high technology positions
- Celebrate the achievements of Alberta's women aviators flying uncharted skies and those other Alberta women who kept them there, women like:
  - Eileen Vollick: Canada's first woman pilot
  - Vi Milstead: First woman bush pilot
  - Rosella Bjornson: First female jet captain in Canada and first female pilot hired by a Canadian airline
  - Vera Dowling, Margaret Littlewood, Marie Wright and other women leaders who helped shape Alberta's aviation past and future.

In recognition of all female aviators who have served both in the air and on the ground in military and commercial aviation, please join us in celebration at the Alberta Aviation Museum.

Admission for female aviators and female would-be aviators (of all ages) is free! Sorry guys ....

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## Rapid Progress in Aircraft Engine Development – 1920s Edmonton

In Edmonton, the years between the two world wars were marked by a tremendous increase in the popularity and number of aircraft operating from or passing through the city. Over the course of this decade, tremendous strides were made in aircraft and aircraft engine development and Edmontonians got to see first hand some of the major advances in aviation technology. The following graph outlines just how rapidly the size and power of engines grew among some of the aircraft spotted in Edmonton during the 1920s.

1919 – Curtiss JN-4D Canuck (G-CAAI) - operated by May Airplanes Ltd.

Engine: Curtiss OX5 (8-cylinder, water-cooled 90 degree Vee)

 90 hp @ 1,400 RPM

1920 – Avro 504K (G-CABP) - operated by Edmonton Aircraft Co. Ltd.

Engine: Le Rhone 9J (9-cylinder, air-cooled single row rotary engine)

 110 hp

1920 – Standard J-1 (G-CAEN) – operated by Harry Adair

Engine: Hispano-Suiza 8A variant (8-cylinder, water-cooled 90 degree Vee)

 180 hp

1920 – Junkers-Larsen 6 (G-CADP) – operated by Imperial Oil Ltd.

Engine: BMW IIIA (6-cylinder, water-cooled in-line engine)

 185 hp

1928 – Fairchild FC-2 (G-CARA) - operated by Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration

Engine: Wright J-5 Whirlwind (9-cylinder, air-cooled radial engine)

 200 hp

1929 – Bellanca CH300 Pacemaker (CF-AKI) - operated by Commercial Airways

Engine: Wright J-6 Whirlwind 300 (9-cylinder, supercharged air-cooled radial engine)

 300 hp

1929 – Fokker Super Universal (G-CASK) - operated by Western Canada Airways

Engine: Pratt and Whitney Wasp (9-cylinder, air-cooled radial engine)

 400 hp

1930 – Fokker F-14 (CF-AIG) - operated by Western Canada Airways

Engine: Pratt and Whitney R-1690 Hornet (9-cylinder, air-cooled radial engine)

 525 hp

### Sources:

Tony Cashman, *Gateway to the North*, (Edmonton:

Duval House Publishing, 2002)

Various Wikipedia pages on the Internet

### Comments/Feedback

Readers are welcome to send in comments on articles they have read or to suggest articles for future issues. Comments may be sent to:

[aama.admin@shawbiz.ca](mailto:aama.admin@shawbiz.ca)

## Lest We Forget – Broncs World Tour – Ponoka

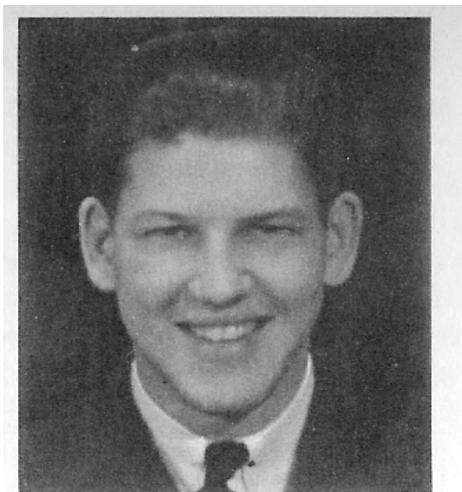
For Ron Labrie, remembering the sacrifices made by Canadian servicemen in the call of duty has long been a passion of his and now it is something he shares with his students. A social studies teacher at Ponoka Composite High School, in Ponoka, Alberta, Ron took his first “battlefield tour” in 2005 when he joined a trip sponsored by Historica and the Canadian Battlefields Foundation. As part of their preparation for the tour, participants had to research a serviceman from their community.

This research led Ron to devise a longer-term initiative called the Ponoka Cenotaph Project, later to become the Broncs World Tour. The project mission is to have each of his students research one of the servicemen memorialized on the Ponoka Cenotaph and to then orate the personal biography of that serviceman at their gravesite or memorial and to honour their sacrifice.

Initiated in 2009, the course has run “unscheduled” (after normal school hours) and culminates each year in a trip to some of the Canadian battlefields and cemeteries in Europe.

The Broncs World Tour has resulted in many unbelievable discoveries and the students have been able to share uncovered documents, pictures and grave rubbings with the families of the servicemen being researched. These events have been extremely emotional yet highly rewarding as friendships are created and connections are made with soldiers long lost.

One prime example from 2012 is the case of Pilot Officer George Cameron from Ponoka. George was a member of a Lancaster bomber crew in 630 Squadron of the Royal Air Force. On a mission over France, August 18, 1944, George’s plane was shot down and he was one of two RCAF crew members who perished. When Ron Labrie’s class journeyed to France in 2012, they were privileged to meet Adrien Jobin, 87, a former member of the French Resistance who at the age of 19 hid the surviving crew members of that Lancaster bomber. There was deep emotional connection between the students and Monsieur Jobin, his brother and wife, and they were overwhelmed with gratitude at the visit by these Canadian students.



Sgt. Gordon C. Waldern,  
Ponoka, Alta.

Another Alberta military aviator commemorated through the Broncs World Tour is Gordon Waldern, born June 25, 1920 in Lacombe. Gordon enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940. His flight training took place at Lethbridge, ending January 23, 1941.



**Figure 10 - Ron Labrie at grave of WO J.G. Brady, Air Gunner, RCAF in Bergen-Op-zoom British Cemetery in the Netherlands - the first serviceman researched by Ron (Ron Labrie Collection)**

Gordon joined RAF 92 Squadron stationed at Biggin Hill, which was flying Spitfire Mk. Vs at the time, and immediately became embroiled in operations. He was often involved in bomber escort duty and during one such mission on July 10, 1941, his plane was hit and he was forced to eject and parachute into the English Channel. He had to wait in the sea for five hours before being rescued and returned to base. But during these dangerous times, there was no chance for a breather and nine days later, on July 19, he was involved in a sweep over France targeting German fortifications at Lille. At least 70 RAF fighters participated but during the action his plane was shot down and this time he was not so lucky. Sergeant Pilot Gordon Waldern did not return and he has no known grave. His name is inscribed on the Runnymede War Memorial.

These are just two of the personal stories unearthed by Ron Labrie’s students. He has found that the more his students get involved in the project, the more its importance becomes magnified each year. “The mission at the end of the day is to get through everybody. You don’t want to forget anyone. You don’t want to disappoint anyone,” Labrie says.

Ron’s efforts have not gone unnoticed. In 2012, he received the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal after being nominated by the Ponoka Legion. While he was humbled by receipt of the award, to him the real honour is ensuring that the unselfish sacrifice made by all these former Ponoka and region veterans is never forgotten.

## A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS



Alberta Lottery Fund



“In Formation” is a joint publication of the Alberta Aviation Museum & the Edmonton Aviation Heritage Society

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