

971 RCAF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING

Air Force Association Newsletter March 2009



Hawk One, fresh from a new paint job in Cold Lake, arrives home to Vintage Wings, Gatineau, Quebec, 14 Jan 09. (From Bob Johnson)

www.971WingAFAC.com

Social Calendar

- Feb 22** The 971 Wingers hockey game, 1730 at the AFA and dinner 1900 at the Overtime Sports Bar. \$10 per person. (update)With a win today, our 971 Wingers stand first with 13 wins, 2 losses and 2 ties with 3 games still to go. Nine Wing members attended the dinner at the Overtime Bar and Grill.
- Mar 14** Dinner at "The Airplane Restaurant" (formerly Solo's) On Fountain, one block east of Powers. 5:00 pm. Regular menu. Individual checks. Cash bar. No Wing charges.
- May 25** Memorial Day: 1100 in Memorial Park. Blazers, stetsons, medals. If you have grown out of any of these, just come as you are. Inclement weather: Retired Enlisted Club on Emory Circle, east off Murray.
- July 25** At the Nancy and Peter Rallis residence.

See message on page 8 from President regarding format amendments for Wing Socials.

EXCHANGE RATE: For those of you have not yet filed your income tax return, those friendly people at Revenue Canada advise that the average 2008 exchange rate was 1.066 or 93.8 depending on which way you are going.

NEWSLETTER CONTENT: Every newsletter editor I know complains that a major frustration is cajoling members to contribute inputs which implies a minuscule interest in newsletters. My attempts, since naively accepting the role of Ye Olde Scribe in 1988, have had little success. In order to fill 8 pages, the maximum for the lowest postage rate, I do book reviews and comment on world affairs but without the benefit of the wide diversity of views that is such a blessing to our species and that you can provide. The bravest thing a human can do is to think, so it has been your scribe's goal to spark discussions and an awareness of the universe around us. Whether you agree or differ with your scribe, it is your duty, especially as military veterans, to contribute your assessments and recommendations for others to ponder. Yes, some of you do forward on e-mail articles that are written by remote others, usually from the far right, but we need views that are uniquely yours. We are all products of our experiences so you should have no reluctance in sharing or fear of offending friends. At the moment there are only two of you out there who disagree with my views and take the time to argue in writing, providing facts and figures. This is done without malice or infringing on our friendships and is appreciated as it keeps me on my toes. Several claim they enjoy the newsletters but never offer any thoughts of their own. The majority of you never mention the newsletter so I infer the postman steals your copies. Producing a newsletter is a very time-consuming chore. A little help would help: Your travels, How to handle Tar Sands, Global Warming, Afghanistan, How best to help the less fortunate, A choice recipe, Assessing world leaders, A good joke, Your grandmother's legacy, Why we should pay more taxes, How to improve the newsletter, and Whatever?????

DUES: Yes, it is that time again! Please get your renewals to Susan Lynch, 30 Polo Drive, Colorado Springs, 80906, before 01 Apr 09. We risk costly late penalties if we have to wait for tardy members to send our \$44 per member remittances to AFAC, Ottawa. This remittance includes subscriptions to Airforce Magazine. Dues are \$60 for local members and \$45 for out-of-area members who are residents of the USA, and will cover membership until 30 Jun 2010. Continuing to cherish our out-of-area members we have, in previous years, kept their dues to \$36 which is an \$8-per-member subsidy we regret we can no longer afford. Due to the fluctuations and complexities of exchange rates, members resident in Canada have been advised separately via e-mail.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Best: Larrydebbiebest@yahoo.com



The Editor's Corner



The Misuse of Power

Over a span of 67 years we veterans of Bomber Command have been increasingly vilified (see page 6 "Fire & Fury") for our misuse of power. We did have adequate provocation; we did have enemies that had scant concern for humanity; but we did pride ourselves with a higher code of ethics. It goes back to March 1942 when we selected for destruction two old, historic, lightly-defended seaside cities, Lubeck and Rostock. On Lubeck 60 aircrew perished along with 320 civilians, 130 seriously injured and 15,000 left homeless. The Heinkel factory recovered in about a month. The people fared less well. We went on to win that war by, as many argue today, unnecessarily pulverizing Germany, Japan, and occupied countries, culminating in the totally unnecessary destruction of places like Dresden and Nagasaki.

Now, we are frightened by the excessive use of power in Lebanon and Gaza, not to mention Darfur, Congo, Tibet, East Timor, Sri Lanka, etc. Why such inhumanity? Complexities demand volumes, so this is just a partial look:

In an area 72% the size of British Columbia or 98% the size of Texas we have 5 small entities: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria. All of these were, for 400 years, part of the large Ottoman Empire which was divided up by the victors of WWI into nations much too feeble to ever go it alone as major players. Victors of WWII then allowed the injection of the new state of Israel, displacing about a million people who, naturally, fought back. All this in an area that is 17.7% arable and that should be one country with equal rights and opportunities for all of its residents.

The area can certainly use the Jews with their great expertise in archaeology, education, engineering, medicine, science, even myth-making, and, above all, wealth and goodwill from much of the world. They also have overwhelming military force, initially stolen from the British against whom they used many terrorists including Ben Gurion. Then modern weapons flowed in, donated mainly by the USA whose aid they accept while declining its advice, thus leaving Uncle Sam with blood on his hands. Not content with defeating the initial opposition to their new nation, they kept and occupied most of the land they conquered in violation of scores of UN resolutions. Not learning from German mistakes in Poland and the Ukraine, or from their own history, they failed to grant liberties and improve the standards of living of the displaced Palestinians, arguing it was an Arab problem, and sparking unrest in Jordan and Lebanon which they tried to solve with military force, using such illegal weapons as cluster bombs and white phosphorus, inflicting great suffering among civilians.

Having little more than stones to oppose tanks, artillery, and aircraft, the Palestinians did revert to what we call "terrorist" activities. Strange how we have forgotten that the Israelis used similar tactics against the British who were trying to be fair to both Arabs and Jews. Hezbollah in 1982 and Hamas in 1988 were late comers in this struggle.

In the latest Gaza slaughter, we say Hamas started it with thousands of rocket which actually were ineffective fire-crackers, killing 3 people in trying to tell the world, "*We are starving.*" We overlook the 04 Nov 08 Israeli incursion into Gaza that killed six people and the Israeli failure to live up to the truce in not lifting its crippling land, sea, and air blockade of Gaza, leaving only tunnels as a lifeline for supplies. A ridiculous accusation is that Hamas hides behind women and children. In the world's most crowded area, Hamas is hard pressed to find an empty field where they can all stand to be mowed down by vastly-superior Israeli firepower. Meanwhile, 500 new homes are added to illegal settlements.

Recently in Gaza the Israelis lost 14 killed, the Palestinians 1,400 killed, 5,500 wounded, and 50,000 homeless as well as severe damage to schools, hospitals, mosques, infrastructure, farm lands and buildings, and even graveyards. Amazingly, we go along with denying democratically-elected Hamas a voice or access to any arms while continuing the flow of dangerous weaponry to Israel. Hamas is not blameless, but it is popular, being corruption-free and having spent 90% of its work on social, welfare, cultural, and educational activities. Our criticisms of Israeli excesses have been muted, even though the lack of Fair Play could easily lead to its demise. Israel is a nuclear power, having defied, along with India and Pakistan, the non-proliferation goal. It, like Iraq, has been a rogue nation, aggressively attacking Iraq's nuclear facilities and suspected nuclear facilities in Syria while paying scant attention to the roots of the problem - continued occupation and apartheid. It has revealed a lack of willingness to stay within the bounds of what it was granted by the UN.

We are obsessed with the fear that Iran, that has never attacked any other country, might use some of its enriched uranium to make a nuclear bomb to threaten the 10,000 Russia and the US have and the large, never-admitted, Israeli arsenal. Rightfully, we worry about Pakistan's arsenal in an unstable country, forgetting it was sparked by India breaking an agreement with Canada not to divert supplied nuclear facilities to create bombs. India owes its current world status to the UK uniting it, leaving it a democracy with the best railway system in Asia and with a solid infrastructure. Unfortunately, with the devastating losses of WWII, the UK moved too quickly to cut its losses east of Suez and reluctantly went along with the partition of India that resulted in the murder, and displacement, of millions of Hindus and Muslims, 3 wars over Kashmir, and the current dangerous situation that permits minorities in both countries to be mistreated, to say nothing about the rise of the Taliban. Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh should be one country.

Likewise, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria would serve the world better by being one country - or at least a European-style common market with one currency, one passport, and equal rights and opportunities for all with safe guards preventing any one group from dominating the others. Perhaps we could call it Natufia after the peaceful matrilineal society that first farmed the area 15,000 years ago.

NEXT DEADLINE: 15 April. Send inputs to georgesweanor@comcast.net First come, first served.

THE KISSINGER YEAR: Our most active Wing couple in 2008 were Walter and Genie who proved that they are still young and active by chasing off to Palm Desert for the winter, then cruising around New Zealand before dropping in for a performance of La Boheme in the Sydney Opera House and heading back to New Hampshire for the Class of 1953 Harvard Business School reunion. Not stopping there, they continued on to a summer of horses and grandchildren at their ranch in Divide, topping it off by a cruise down the Rhine, Main, and Danube from Amsterdam to Budapest.

THE McNAUGHTON YEAR: We oldtimers well remember Fran and Don who, while DCINC #12, 1986-89 here, were members of, and took an active interest in, our Wing. Although 2008 gave them a record amount of snow and rain, they are still enjoying life on their Glen Eyrie Farm, near Perth, Ontario. Regretfully, they found good homes for the last of their horses which left them free to travel, but the furthest they got was to Quebec City for a Sabre Pilot Reunion. Their children are doing well. Mike and Jean remain in Kingston where they take off in opposite directions for work, Jean to Gananoque to teach and Mike to Trenton where he commands the Aerospace Warfare Centre. Ian and Kim remain in Stittsville, commuting to Ottawa to work. Three of their six grandchildren are now in university.

This newsletter is coming to you free of charge to the Wing because of a generous donation from the McNaughtons.

VERNON WHITE died of kidney failure 29 Dec 08, in Oakville, Ontario. A valued friend of 72 years, Vern contributed articles over the years to this newsletter. He flew with 427 Squadron and was a POW for two years. He published a book on his WWII experiences entitled *Four Years and a Bit*. His post-war career was with the Bell Telephone Company and he was the editor of the 427 Squadron Association newsletter. Miss you, Vern.

THE CONTINUED SEARCH FOR INTELLIGENCE: Not finding too much of it here, groups have been searching the heavens with increasing sophistication. Launched in 1999 the SETI-at-home project now has 5.2 million participants in 210 countries (US, UK, Canada, Japan, Germany leading). Arecibo, Puerto Rico, that can see 30% of the sky, using the Serendip IV system, sends daily by post 35 GB of data to the University of California where it is divided into .25 MB packages to send to home computers that automatically process the data as screensavers, a process that averages 40 hours per packet.

In Argentina scientists will soon start using the new Serendip V system that can track 128 million channels simultaneously over an 80-megahertz-wide band. From this location the centre of our galaxy, not seen in the northern hemisphere, can be scanned.

All of this exciting work is privately funded with no government support. Major contributors have been The Planetary Society, Microsoft executives, and Hollywood studios. When some US banks, handling risky mortgages, offered to contribute, the heavens were strangely quiet - proof of intelligent life out there?

While our capabilities sound impressive, the sky is an immense place and our observations can be described as looking at the Heavens through a straw. Ten years of searching to date have produced no positive finds although we have a few hundred tantalizing indications that merit further study. **Per Ardua Ad Astra.**

Our Wing astronomer, Peter Rallis, adds: SETI dates back to the early 60s. I participated in the first version of SETI-at-home in the mid 90s. The most significant hit, the 1977 WOW Signal, can be found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wow_signal.jpg

Not repeated, it could not be verified, but considering the size of the universe this is neither surprising nor discouraging. Sooner or later we are bound to stumble on intelligence somewhere in the universe because, as Monty Python proclaims, "There's bugger all down here on Earth."

GODERICH AIRCRAFT INC.: Having established its excellence in refurbishing luxury aircraft on the international market, this company has moved from Brampton to a new 43,000 sq ft hangar at the Goderich, Ontario, airport, adding 80 new jobs. The hangar also includes a customer lounge, executive suites, and conference facilities.

CANADA'S BANKS: Amid the world's floundering banks, Canada's Big Five are sturdy and could pluck off weakened foreign banks. They are all national banks with branches all across the vast country. They maintained close scrutiny and avoided the greed that led to the current US-led world crisis. Some of the credit could go to Paul Martin who, as finance minister in 1998, refused a request for further mergers to permit Canada to match in size the world's largest banks. Actually the current Big 5 is down from 8. The Royal Bank is the largest, and the one I worked for with a starting salary in 1938 of \$400 per year. The Bank of Nova Scotia and the Bank of Montreal also remain with their original names whereas CIBC is a previous merger of The Bank of Commerce and the Imperial Bank of Canada. TDCanada Trust is a merger of The Bank of Toronto, The Dominion Bank, and Canada Trust.

Deposits in \$billions are: Royal 365, BNS 288, TD 276, CIBC and Montreal 232 each.

VESTUR ISLANDINGUR (WEST ICELAND): Gimli, Manitoba, was named after a Norse paradise. Since 1888 it has been the home of Icelandic immigrants. Now, with the current downturn in the Icelandic economy, there is renewed interest in Iceland to join relatives in Gimli.

KOTLARCHUK; Steve, Kristi, and Charlotte will return from Belgium to Colorado Springs in July. LCol Kristi will be teaching History and Political Science at the AFA. Great to have you back!

THE DAHLA DAM, AFGHANISTAN: Canada has awarded SNC-Lavalin a \$50 million contract to repair, by 2011, this dam, the second largest in Afghanistan, disabled by years of war. It will provide needed irrigation to 10,000 hectares of agricultural land and thousands of seasonal jobs. The Canadian Forward Operating Base, Frontenac, is within eyesight of the dam on the Arghandab River in Kandahar City.

GENEALOGICAL TRUTHS: While researching her ancestry, Judy Wallman in California discovered that both she and Congressman Harry Reid shared a common relative - Remus Reid who was imprisoned as a horse thief in 1885, escaped in 1887, robbed the Montana Flyer six times, was caught by Pinkerton detectives and hanged in 1889. Requesting any data he might have on Remus, Judy wrote to Harry Reid. His staff replied:

Remus Reid was a famous cowboy in Montana. His business empire grew to include valuable equestrian assets and intimate dealings with the Montana railroad. Beginning in 1885 he devoted several years to government service, finally taking leave to resume his dealings with the railroad. He was a key player in investigations by the renowned Pinkerton Detective Agency. In 1889 Remus passed away during an important civic function held in his honor when the platform on which he was standing collapsed.

OUR FIRST CATHEDRAL: In SE Turkey near the Syrian border in the Fertile Crescent, German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt is leading a team excavating **Gobelke Tepe**, a large shrine built 11,500 years ago - at least 6,000 years before Stonehenge - by a large group of well-organized hunters and gatherers before horticulture and the domestication of animals. Only 5% of the site has been excavated so far. Some 36 3-metre-high T-shaped stones weighing 7 tons each and carved with stylized birds, lions, scorpions, boars, spiders, and foxes, have been unearthed arranged in circles leading down the slope. There appears to have been no habitations on the site but the bones of wild animals indicate feasting. Faceless goddesses with arms and legs hint at a human longing to know what life was all about and why are we here. We are still wondering.

WOMEN: Whatever you give a woman, she will make greater. If you give her sperm, she will give you a baby. If you give her a house, she will give you a home. If you give her groceries, she will give you a meal. If you give her a smile, she will give you her heart. She multiplies and enlarges what is given to her. So, if you give her crap, be ready to receive a ton of it back!

CLEAN (?) COAL: The world's first plant opened in Sep 08 in Spremberg, Germany, liquifying the CO2 and pumping it 1,000 metres underground.

IRAQ REFUGEES: In 2009 Canada will admit 3,900 compared to 2,000 in 2008.

A PLUMBER HAS JUST BEEN LAID TO REST in his 81st year in Greenock. PA. Glenn Rojohn was an unassuming father of a son and daughter, but back on 31 Dec 1944 he was Captain Rojohn, piloting a B-17G on a raid on Hamburg. At 22,000 feet, on the way home, his formation was greeted by a squadron of Me-109s. The B-17 in front of him burst into flames and plunged earthwards. Glenn moved up to fill the gap. As he did so another B-17 beneath him, piloted by Bill McNab, with the same intent, collided with him. They were joined like two mating insects. McNab's top turret intruded into the belly of Rojohn's B-17 while his ball turret was now inside McNab's fuselage, one aircraft precisely on top of the other. Most engines were still working but level flight could not be maintained. The lower aircraft began to burn with its ammunition exploding. Gunners on the ground stopped firing to watch the spectacle. Rojohn and his co-pilot, Bill Leek, fought the plunge to provide time to cut free the turret gunner. There was no time left for them to get out so they rode the mated pair to the ground, ending in a crash that destroyed everything but incredibly left the cockpit intact with a gaping hole permitting both men to get out. From the two aircraft ten men survived to be taken prisoner. Ten had baled out, but only 8 survived.

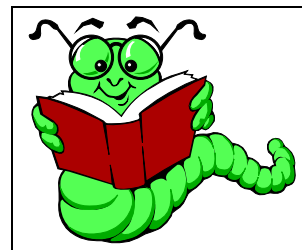
After the war Rojohn tried to locate Leek. It took him 40 years to find him living in California. They were reunited in 1987 at a 100th Bomb Group reunion. Bill Leek died in 1988. (Condensed from a 5-page article provided by Bob Johnson)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS: In 2008 the US spent \$52.4 billion on nuclear weapons = twice that spent on science, space, and technology, and 14 times that spent on energy research. That effectively kills any argument we might have to persuade Iran not to join the Nuclear Club.

I HAVE LONG BEEN SUSPICIOUS that all you people out there are just holograms. Now, scientists in Germany and the USA tell me it is so. Detectors of the GEO600 experiment that stretch 600 metres near Hannover have, it is argued by Craig Horton of the Fermilab particle physics lab, stumbled across the limit of space-time by receiving microscopic quantum convulsions of space-time. In an explanation too lengthy for this newsletter he describes how a 2D projector at the edge of the universe can project a 3D image, creating all that we are and know. In other words, you, me, and this newsletter are cosmic illusions. To top it all off, Dr. Owen Flanagan of Duke University, tells us that our minds are not in our brains but rather in a haze that surrounds us.

CANADA'S STONEHENGE: After 28 years of studying the 26 sq km site, 70 km east of Calgary, Dr. Gordon Freeman, retired U of Alberta professor, claims he has deciphered a 5,000 year-old astronomical calendar.

Book Reviews



AVIATION IN CANADA - THE PIONEER DECADES
by Larry Milberry, Canav Books, Toronto, 2008, 176 pages

Born in Haileybury, Ontario, in 1943, Larry began his writing career at age 17. With his CANAV Books he has published 21 books. In this, his latest book, there are 352 black and white and 47 colour photographs.

Larry starts with the balloon era. The first human to see Canada from the air was Louis Anslem Lauriat in his balloon, *The Star of the East*, from Saint John, NB, on 10 Aug 1840. He goes on to describe the 01 Oct 1907 meet in Halifax headed by Alexander Graham Bell and the founding of the Aerial Experimental Association, the work carried out in Baddeck, NS, his collaboration with Glenn Hammond Curtiss, and the flight of the Silver Dart 06 Dec 1908.

Numerous air shows and meets are well covered as is the founding of military aviation in Canada at Petawawa on 02 Aug 1909 with the following bumblebings and successes of WWI. When recruiting started in Canada for the RNAS volunteers had to pay \$1 per minute of flight instruction but were reimbursed - if they graduated after 400 minutes. On 14 Dec 1915 an observer in a Nieuport became the first Canadian to shoot down a German aircraft. After training 3,135 pilots and 137 observers for the RFC, most flying stations in Canada abruptly closed immediately after the armistice. Camp Borden is one of the few survivors.

About 113 pages are devoted, with numerous pictures, to Canada's aerial contributions in the UK, France, Italy, and Russia. About 6 pages deal with post-war activities to 1922. With eight of the 45 world's top air aces with 35 or more victories, Canada's contribution, out of a population of only 6 million at the time, does merit remembrance - and Larry Milberry has done a good job in reminding us.

NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN
by Rob Davis, www.lulu.com/content/667647
(\$22.19 paperback including postage, \$4.95 for download copy)

It really got to me. I had 13 books lined up from which to choose two to read and review for this newsletter, but then my friend, Rob, sent me, via e-mail, all 227 pages of his new, and first, book. I thought downloading and printing all those pages a monumental task, what with Christmas and family reunions coming up. I much prefer to read the printed word on paper rather than a computer screen. Perhaps, for now, I would just download a few pages and get back to the rest later - after Christmas.

A few pages and I was immediately hooked. I kept sneaking back, whenever I had a spare moment, to print out more pages, finally finishing on Christmas day.

I have mentioned Rob, of Telford, Shropshire, several times in these newsletters as he has been a great help to me with details of old friends, even to sending me a bottle of sand from my "Great Escape" compound that he collected during a motorcycle tour of that part of the globe.

Rob, a youngster born in 1954, has taken a great interest in Bomber Command. He has used his computer-programming skills to create, over the years, an immense data base with particulars of 13,266 Bomber Command losses. He has visited all the old airfields, actually spending 17 complete nights amid the crumbling ruins as the darkness, often with fog, aroused emotions and the eerie feeling of not being alone - a feeling I have experienced myself as I tramped around what was left of some of my old bases. Some ten years ago, on one of these old bases, I was swamped by emotion as I could feel thousands of aircrew boys around me, 58% of whom never returned from operations - and tears streamed down my face, some of which I realized were for all those others killed in wars caused by our flawed human species.

The next time this happened to me was this past Christmas day. I had slipped away from a house full of happy family to download Rob's last dozen pages. Suddenly, these emotions returned with a vengeance and I had to sneak off to the bedroom for an uncontrollable cry. Rob, you hit a nerve!

Rob claims his book is fiction. He starts out with a post-war motorcyclist (actually himself under a fictitious name) exploring the remains of RAF Station Swaldsholme, home of 696 Squadron (actually Elsham Wolds, north Lincolnshire, that was the home of 103 and 576 Squadrons). This base was built in 1916, demolished in 1919, rebuilt in 1938, and finally closed in 1947 to decay before being bulldozed recently into an industrial estate. During WWII it lost 28 Wellingtons, 12 Halifaxes, and 208 Lancasters - almost 1,700 boys. Who knows how many still haunt the place, but 3 of Rob's characters were to encounter several of them. Ghosts? Time warp? Probing imagination? In wartime Britain all

of our outside nightly experiences were in darkness, rain, and fog, alleviated only, some nights, by moon and star light. It was a ghostly setting we lived in and got used to. At best it was good for courting.

Rob's main character, besides himself and his most attractive and talented girlfriend, is a young chef who accidentally gets involved with smugglers who take him from Jersey, Channel Islands under German occupation, and dump him in England where he has trials and tribulations until he ends up as a sergeant wireless operator on a Lancaster crew of 696 Squadron, survives numerous hazardous-but-well-described bombing operations, gets involved with a pretty WAAF corporal, German agents, and - but do not let me spoil the story for you. For someone who was not there, Rob has done an amazing job of research and telling it the way it was. His descriptions of people, aerial combat, the girls of the time, squadron life, and the mysteries of existence are all too real.

Thank you, Rob. I needed to unleash those tears.

FIRE AND FURY - THE ALLIED BOMBING OF GERMANY 1942-45
by Randall Hansen, Doubleday Canada, 2008, 351 pages

This is a difficult book for veterans of Bomber Command to read. It re-ignites too many qualms. He describes in gory detail, using surviving Germans, the horrors of bombing including some of the raids in which I contributed bombs and incendiaries. It is well researched with good insights into the personalities of the Luftwaffe, RAF, and USAAF. A major flaw is that, like most books on the subject, it practically ignores the massive, and effective, contributions of the RCAF, even though being a Canadian book. I recall the demoralizing effects on Canadian crews of the massive UK news coverage of the first USAAF raids in 1943 after Canadian crews had been in the thick of the fray since Sep 1939 without fanfare. The cause was that we, like the Australians, New Zealanders, Rhodesians, Jamaicans, and so on, were considered family so no need to mention us individually. Likewise, of course, the poor British Tommy never got the credit he deserved. Nor did the German, Italian, Soviet, Chinese, or other boys forced into a conflict not of their own making.

While describing the Luftwaffe bombings of Rotterdam and many cities in England, the book concentrates on our night bombing of cities, contrasting it with USAAF precision daylight bombings which he continuously praises. He also dwells on a callous disregard of casualties both for German civilians and for our aircrew, such as Harris's insistence we were out to kill workers and Gen. Fred Anderson's remark that he would sacrifice 7,000 USAAF aircrew to destroy the Luftwaffe. (He actually lost 41,450 compared to 73,741 for Bomber Command). Hansen does include numerous examples of precision Bomber Command work and 8th Air Force area bombings. While praising Harris with the odd sentence and emphasizing the loyalty he had for his men and they for him, he berates Harris for being stubborn in concentrating on area bombing to the neglect of precision work, even though continually prodded by his boss, Sir Charles Portal.

Hansen describes the horror of bombings, but keeps emphasizing they had little influence on the outcome of the war. He relates the continued amazing resilience of the German war effort in recovering from massive and never-ending bombings - just like today's Taliban. I cannot fully agree, having been on the delivery end 17 times and the receiving end over 30 times. Yes, there is the strong human drive for revenge that can produce miracles, but I believe that no one, who was not there, can feel the utter despair and hopelessness of being in the ruins of once-vibrant cities, amid the dead and dying without shelter, water, food, electricity and with the certainty that more raids are coming. The ability to emerge as a fully-productive worker is greatly diminished. It is a miracle that anyone escapes without Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, that we used to call shell shock. Your soul cries out for an immediate end to this madness, and this carries well into the post-war period. Witness the difference in attitudes towards post-war adventures between Europeans who had endured bombings to North Americans who escaped it. It leaves me with a sense of oneness with the people of Bosnia, Lebanon, Congo, Gaza, and the like and a deep hatred of the perpetrators. Watching on TV the slaughter in Gaza, for instance, from a comfortable chair in a warm room and with a full stomach in no way catches the smell, the hopelessness, and the shame of belonging to such a cruel, and mindless, species.

Speaking of revenge, consider one incident, minor compared to the numerous 4000-pound "cookies" that Bomber Command blasted us with in Nürnberg. I was among 500 POWs packed into boxcars for transportation to Moosburg. Large red crosses were painted on the roofs of the cars. Near Regensburg nine USAAF Thunderbolts made 3 low-level passes at us, shredding many POWs racing from the cars seeking protective ditches. One of these was a South African who hit the ground beside me. There was immense rage among the USAAF POWs against their fellow airmen in the Thunderbolts and had one of them baled out into their midst he could have been beaten to death.

Hansen explores the careers of many UK, German, Russian, and US politicians and airmen and shows how Bert Harris, Ira Eaker, Carl Spaatz, and Albert Speer were, by Feb 1942, set to be major players in the conduct of the air war. He also describes German defences, like the Kamhubber Line of co-ordinated flak-searchlight-fighter death traps, a knowledge of which at the time would have made us even more apprehensive. He does justify area bombing until the end of 1943 but condemns it thereafter when we had improved navigational aids. He criticizes Portal, Harris's boss, for not being more assertive when Harris continued to sideline directives to hit oil, transportation, ballbearing, etc facilities, to carry on with his obsession for obliterating cities. One thing Hansen fails to mention is that, unlike the 8th AF that dropped in unison, we in Bomber Command were individual crews. The bomb aimer in each aircraft was guided by his own conscience. He could drop immediately on reaching the target and get the hell out of there or he could risk his crew further to search for industrial targets, no easy task. Many good crews were lost in this search.

Bomber Command Aircrew Sep 1939 - May 1945

The terrible cost of war: For major units that served in WWII, Bomber Command is second only to the Kriegsmarine U-Boat Service that lost 75% of its crews at sea. All told, Bomber Command suffered 73,741 casualties. For every 100 airmen who were fed into Bomber Command

60 were killed, 51 on operations, 9 in training

12 became prisoners of war (Kriegies)

03 were seriously wounded

25 survived with slight wounds or unscathed (at least physically)

I never saw Harris but my friend since High School days, and 971 Wing member, Wilfred "Mike" Lewis, DFC, was invited, along with John Boothman, AFC, of Schneider Trophy fame to Christmas 1939 dinner by Bert Harris and his beautiful and gracious wife at RAF Station Waddington where Mike had joined 44 Squadron in August, so he was on the first bomber raid of the war in September. Mike liked Harris, although disagreeing with him at times on targets, and claims Harris cared very much for his crews. Mike's views deserve more room, so, perhaps, next issue.

Our Balmey Arctic

Further to the Jan 09 article on our Arctic and the current push to assert our sovereignty a few more remarks are warranted. For as long as I can remember, glowing rhetoric about Canada's True North has been followed by actions that bear little resemblance to the promises. It is true that, among the two-score countries in America, Canada has used the least force against its indigenous population, but the overall shabby treatment provides no bragging rights. We have been most lenient towards the Inuit, overlooking even murder when there seems just cause, but only recently have we started to make amends for past mistakes. While claiming to be The True North Strong and Free, we clung to our southern climes, allowing a few brave missionaries to sally forth to tear the heathens from their animistic religion in tune with their environment and thrust upon them a Christianity divided between Catholic and Protestant interpretations. We flew Inuit children to central locations to be given an Alberta-type curriculum, letting them return on graduation fit for neither world as we provided few jobs to match the education. We did go in with numerous mining and military establishments that provided some employment but which we abandoned when the resources ran out or the military need faded, leaving the Arctic littered with our rubbish.

Many times, we got all hot and bothered when we thought our sovereignty was threatened. The Arctic is ours, right up to the Pole! Perhaps, but it was given to us by the British whose claim was based on British and Scandinavian explorations. Yes, we did finance the epic explorations of Canadian-born Vilhjalmur Stefansson's (1879-1962) who claimed the Arctic as Canada's Mediterranean.

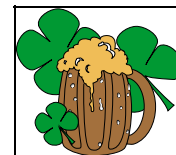
US interest in the Arctic has been primarily military. We RCAF members of USAF B-29 crews that needed to use Point Barrow, Alaska, a USN base, during our 1946-49 test flying of the Arctic LF Loran chain, watched in surprised amusement the rivalry, bordering on hostility, between the USN and USAF. We RCAF were more welcomed than the USAF who, really, were a good easy-going bunch. Embarrassing.

The major threat to Canadian sovereignty today is the NW Passage that Canada insists is internal pristine waters subject to Canadian environmental standards, The US, in particular, claims it is an international strait, open to all and, therefore, much more likely to become polluted. This could be a passing quarrel as the Russian Arctic, a shorter route, is opening much faster and, as the ice recedes further, a route north of the archipelago could escape Canadian controls.

Canada can be congratulated for its current enlightenment. It has returned huge areas to Inuit control while providing large-scale construction, equipment, finances, and other help. Even with rapid global warming, it will be a while before the Arctic can boast an agricultural base, even though its caribou economy is declining. So a stable, 21st century economy, will require for some time to come help from taxpayers in the south. This is expensive but it is the price of nationhood. Canada must wake up to the fact that it is a 3-ocean nation and to actually fulfill all those campaign promises Harper made.

My mingling with Inuit has been limited to 1946-49 and 1962-63. I found them intelligent and very adaptive. I made many Inuit friends when I was CO at Cape Parry as there was a village nearby and as we employed several Inuit men. A particular friend was 82-year-old Jessie who spoke perfect English. One day, when I was hosting a group of university professors and took them to Jessie's shack, she spoke in her native tongue and one of the professors chided her for not speaking in English. She retorted in English: "If I were an English woman I would speak in English. I am an Eskimo woman." I was proud of Jessie that day. I would urge my Inuit friends to accept us as partners and not as a ruling class. I am very pleased that this is now happening and that one of the young girls, who would call me Squadron Leader George and look forward to the oranges that I would bring her and others on my daily visits to the village, became a leading Canadian environmentalist.

As for all those grandiose political promises of ice breakers, research centres, deep sea ports, outpost enlargements, and so on, my old eyes fail to see any action. I hope yours have. We could at least match the efforts that Norway and Russia have made in their Arctics.



A message from President Joan Peterson:

HOUSE SOCIAL PROGRAM

We are adding a Second Option to our House Social Program. We hope to make it easier for members to host a Wing Social event at their home, yet continue to provide an enjoyable get-together for all those attending.

Option One- "The Dinner Social" will continue with the current scenario:

- 1) Host to choose the day and time of the social.
- 2) Host selects and provides the main course/entree.
- 3) Host provides beverages to include liquor, mix, beer, wine, tea, coffee and ice.
- 4) Host provides paper products, such as napkins, paper/plastic plates, cups, and glasses.
- 5) Host provides small table and chair at entrance for collecting money and handing out name tags.
- 6) Host provides space for a business meeting.
- 7) Host provides map/directions to your home to Social Rep.
- 8) Attending members to confirm attendance through Social Rep.
- 9) Attending members to bring a dish (appetizer, salad, hot vegetable, or dessert) coordinated through Social Rep.
- 10) Attending members to pay \$15.00 per couple or \$8.00 for a single at the door.
- 11) Members needing to cancel are to notify the Wing Social Rep or the Host, so the Host may adjust for your absence. **THIS MEANS A LOT TO THE HOST.**

Option Two--"The Cocktail Social" This new scenario is similar but with the following changes:

- 1) NO main course/entree will be served.
- 2) Host provides beverages to include liquor, mix, beer, wine, tea, coffee and ice.
- 3) Host provides paper products, such as napkins, paper/plastic plates, cups, and glasses.
- 4) Host provides small table and chair at entrance for collecting money and handing out name tags.
- 5) Host provides space for a business meeting.
- 6) Host provides map/directions to your home to Social Rep.
- 7) Attending members to confirm attendance through Social Rep.
- 8) Attending members to bring either an appetizer or dessert, coordinated through Social Rep.
- 9) Attending members to pay \$10.00 per couple or \$5.00 for a single at the door. Since alcohol is a costly item, this is very reasonable.
- 10) Members needing to cancel are to notify the Social Rep or Host. Hosts appreciate this consideration.