

447 Wing RCAFA



Wing Drift

June 2026

Message from the 447 Wing Chair

Greetings one and all,

Well, where did two years go?

At our last general meeting in May of this year a new board of directors for the 447 Wing of The Royal Canadian Airforce Association was elected by acclamation and now has seven members who will assume office on July 1st, 2026, and stay in office until June 30th, 2028. Your new board consists of the following members, Dan Welsh, Terri Welsh, Mike Pryor, Rob Wilson, Mike Cuffe, Bev Cuffe and Linda Daniels-Smith who will be sworn-in in the not-too-distant future. Once sworn in, the board will select a chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer and secretary as per our constitution.

Our National and Provincial Boards have been advised that HST is now to form a part of our dues structure. As a result, single dues rise to one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per year, and dual memberships rise to one hundred and sixty dollars (\$160.00) per year. Your donations are due by June 30th to avoid late fees which are automatically added at National Level. Our membership director has sent out e-mail notes to members with e-mail accounts and posted letters to those without.

Please consider paying your dues promptly.

There have been some significant changes that have resulted from direction received from National and Provincial Boards which will impact on how our Wing conducts business meetings almost immediately.

Our National and Provincial boards have instructed all Wings under their authority to separate R.C.A.F.A. affairs from any business endeavors which are run by Wings. In effect, the R.C.A.F.A. does not want business activities linked to the association's goals and objectives. Under this direction, businesses of an entrepreneurial nature are to be held separate and distinct from association business and operate at a distinct arm's length from R.C.A.F.A. under new directives.

All business matters related to our commercial activities will be reported only briefly, in keeping with the new directives. This approach ensures compliance with the guidance issued by the National and Provincial boards. The National and Provincial boards want to avoid involvement in matters that fall outside their mandates and that they are not authorized to sponsor.

Your new board of directors, commencing in July 2026, will be meeting to formulate how to comply with the directive issued by the two boards.

In terms of overall operations, nothing much will change except reporting will have to be done in a different format yet to be determined.

Since our last issue, there have been a continuation of events and services which enhance R.C.A.F.A. footprint in the community.

Recently your Wing was able to donate \$1,000.00 to 779 Black Knight Squadron of our sponsored Air Cadet program. This was done during the annual year-end review held at Warplane Heritage in Mount Hope on June 2nd, 2026.

Your Wing continues to partner with St. Paul's Anglican Church by maintaining active communication on events of mutual interest. Our members support their endeavors, and their parishioners also support our Wing from time to time. Recently, several parishioners attended a fund-raising euchre tournament held at our Wing on May 3rd, 2026. Your chair was privileged to be able to speak to an assemble congregation at a regular Sunday service to enhance our euchre tournament.

Ninety-two players well attended the euchre tournament; twenty-three tables and much fun was had by all. We ran the fundraiser under the auspices of our city license which we need to run our monthly meat draws.

Message from the 447 Wing Chair (Continued)

Your Wing continues to support seniors in our community. Every Tuesday afternoon a group of seniors play euchre and enjoy each other's company.

Your Wing continues to partner with R.H.L.I. as they host their meetings and get-togethers at The Wing as their facility had to be closed and sold.

At our last business meeting, we were once again very happy to welcome Marg and Bill Grahlman again. They are always mindful of the 447 Wing, having been dedicated for many years to running the events of The Wing.

Our landlord has been quiet of late, but your wing must negotiate a new lease agreement by the end of 2027. This promises to be an arduous task, and the outcome is far from certain.

However, even if negotiations are not as forthcoming as we would like, 447 Wing will continue.

At the recently concluded A.G.M. in Sault Ste. Marie, Gord McNulty was given a prestigious Merit Award for his many efforts in creating meaningful, inciteful and historical articles of interest with pictures for our quarterly Wing Drift magazine. The provincial award was well deserved. Congratulations Gord.



*Provincial Chair Brenda Wilson presents
Award of Merit to Gord McNulty*

Several work party events have been recently undertaken to reduce our footprint in our rented space. Specifically in the basement where much material and records were in damaged state and outdated papers were disposed of. Thanks to all who came out to help with this work.

There is still much to do and another work party session will be undertaken in the not-too-distant future.

Rob Wilson and Dan Welsh completed the task of dismantling the old stage used for many years at The Wing. It was old and damaged in spots, and the board decided it had to go rather than be repaired. The outcome is that our flag room is much more functional with about twenty percent additional floor space for chairs and tables as needed for various events. This provides for an infinitely easier set up for celebrations of life and community meetings.

Finally, the last two years have been a real eye opener. I have learned much and I thank all those who from time to time offered constructive advice and assistance in carrying out my duties as chair.

Have a safe summer and drop by The Wing when you have time.

Respectfully Submitted

Dan Welsh

Chair

447 Wing

R.C.A.F.A.

June 2026

74th Ontario Group AGM in Sault Ste. Marie successful gathering enjoyed by all

Report and photos by Gord McNulty

432 (Algoma) Wing of the RCAFA hosted a highly successful and memorable 74th Ontario Group AGM at Sault Ste. Marie May 15-17.

Attendees were delighted with the organization and hospitality of the Wing. The dedicated volunteer team of the Wing deserves full credit for staging this much-appreciated event. Activities took place at the Quality Inn & Suites and the adjacent Grand Gardens Downtown, both excellent venues.

A colourful, well-illustrated AGM booklet made a very positive impression with registrants from the start. Everyone enjoyed the opening ceremonies, the business sessions, the companions program, the gala dinner, optional tours and a lively 'wind down' dinner party with a pirate costume theme. Vintage RCAF photos from the booklet are attached.

A really encouraging report from David Farnsworth, Capt. (Ret'd) CD, RCAFA Director of Finance and Kit Shop Co-ordinator, was among the highlights of the business sessions. David reported the RCAFA Trust Fund is doing well financially. It received a bequest of \$6,000 and is now \$10,000 to \$15,000 in the black.

David noted the Association has been gifted rights to reproduce and sell the aviation logos of companies. It made \$2,000 to \$3,000 from the annual Air Force Day on the Hill in Ottawa this year. The RCAF Foundation contributed \$20,000 for the major transition of Airforce magazine from print to the cost-saving digital format, which will begin to break even.

The RCAFA is no longer paying rent, with closure of the former office in Ottawa. A free meeting space and boardroom for Board and Trustee meetings is now being provided on Queen Street in the capital by a corporation. The RCAFA is developing a new strategic business plan and David reported that the new Board is working better.

Brook Bangsboll, RCAFA Executive Director since January 31 2025, regretted that he was unable to attend in person. However, he sent best wishes in a message that reflected the accomplishments, initiatives, and "also the collective strength, resilience and forward momentum of our Association...honouring our heritage while building a vibrant and sustainable future for our membership."

For his part, David noted the Association has strengthened its ties with the RCAF, as it is now the only place to research the history of the air force and its huge data base. The kit shop is well worth checking out. New polo shirts, both attractive and comfortable, were a big hit at the AGM. David's contact information is:

RCAF Association
222 Queen, Suite 1502
Ottawa, ON K1P 5V9

Bravo572@gmail.com
Kitshop@airforce.ca
705-309-8609

David also mentioned the Association's planned hosting of an Auction, hoping to raise \$50,000 to offset operating costs and possibly deter any increase in membership dues in the near future. A number of business and corporate sponsors have come on board to date. Regular members who wish to make a voluntary donation of \$20. will be entered in a draw for RCAFA kit shop items.

Participants in the companions program enjoyed a nifty ride on the 'Big Ben' double decker bus. Activities began with a guided tour of the Art Gallery of Algoma, then lunch across the street at the Ermatinger Old Stone House, a national historic site, built between 1814 and 1823. Big Ben provided a good opportunity for sightseeing.

The gala dinner featured speaker, Rev. Phil Miller, is a prominent military and veterans historian in Sault Ste. Marie. He shared some poignant stories of fallen wartime RCAF members from the Sault.

Brenda Lynn Rice Wilson, Chair of Ontario Group RCAFA, presented the Ontario Group Awards at the dinner.

Following the closing ceremonies, attendees enjoyed opportunities for tours of the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 25, the Sault Armoury, the Old Stone House, Gateway Casinos, Sault Museum and the Parks Canada Heritage Locks.

Building on the Association's progress, we are now looking forward to the 2027 AGM to be hosted by 427 (London) Wing on May 28-30 in the Forest City of southwestern Ontario.

Vintage RCAF Photos from Sault Ste. Marie AGM



Canadair Sabres in formation.



The legendary Golden Hawks in action.



Big Ben Bus Sault Ste. Marie



Photo of the 'Big Ben' authentic English double decker bus which provided a ride for the companions program at the Sault Ste. Marie AGM. Photo by Angie McNulty.

Ermatinger Old Stone House for Lunch



Photo of the Ermatinger Old Stone House where companions tour participants enjoyed a lunch of sandwiches, scones, dessert and tea. Photo by Angie

Photo from Sault Ste, Marie AGM



DHC-2 Beaver of Killarney Air Services at BPHC May 17 2026. Photo by Gord McNulty, taken during an AGM tour of the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre at Sault Ste. Marie. It was an overcast day but the aircraft stood out on the dock along the St. Mary's River.

St.Pauls Anglican Church Palmer Window Ceremony Photos

The following photos, provided by 447 Wing Member Aiden Finn, were taken during the dedication of the Palmer Windows ceremony.





Have you renewed your membership?

Deadline is June 30, 2026

Renew now to support your Wing.

RCAC 779 Black Knight Squadron 57th Annual Ceremonial Review

Report and photos by Gord McNulty

More than 200 members of Royal Canadian Air Cadets 779 Black Knight Squadron impressed a large gathering at the 57th Annual Ceremonial Review on June 2.

The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum was an ideal venue for the Mount Hope squadron, led by Commanding Officer Captain Marilyn Coleman, CD.

The cadets marched with precision, with the band displaying considerable talent during the colourful ceremonies. Numerous awards, covering a remarkable range of achievements, were presented to cadets who earned high marks.



Talented band members at the 57th Annual Ceremonial Review of 779 Sqdn. June 2 2026

The Reviewing Officer, Ward 11 City Councillor Mark Tadeson who represents the Glanbrook area, commended the diverse skills and achievements of the squadron. He underlined the importance of character, initiative and self-discipline as reflected by the cadets, and spoke about making good choices.



City Councillor Mark Tadeson reviews the 779 Sqdn. at the 57th Annual Ceremonial Review.

Capt. Coleman, in her message for the Ceremonial Review, recalled how the very active 779 Squadron had lots of opportunities to learn, to serve and to advance this year.

The many people who contribute to the squadron's success were acknowledged by Capt. Coleman. She thanked the Squadron Sponsoring Committee, and especially Chair John Mayhew; Jim Hooton and the members of Air Cadet League of Canada; and the efforts of officers, staff and volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to training, mentoring, coaching and planning.

The inspiring event left no doubt that it is onward and upward for the 779 Black Knight Squadron



General Salute during the 779 Black Knight Sqdn. 57th Annual Ceremonial Review



779 Black Knight Sqdn. air cadets marching at the 57th Annual Ceremonial Review.

BCGT Norton Disney UK

Report and photos by Clive Moles

After an 8 year involvement on this project the official opening is May 15th 2026, as Vice Chair of Norton Disney Parish Council obviously for a number of reasons I will be in attendance, one most important item is the fact the full size Lancaster here at the village represents VN-N R5689 which sadly crashed on finals into RAF Swinderby close by in 18/19 the Sept. 1942,,one of the Crew whom lost his life was Air Gunner F/Sgt. James Reginald Gibbons RCAF,,I thought on this official opening occasion if you and The Wing felt I could on your behalf represent 447 Wing to simply add a small input to remember in particular this lost Crewman on that fateful flight,

I attach some photographs for information, the grouping of people which was taken last September was on the final day of constructing the Lancaster together onto the pedestals (that is me in the centre, the short one !!!!!), We have 7 specially made commemorative benches with all Crew members names on them which will be placed around the Lancaster.



Crew of Lancaster R5689 (VN-N) - 18/19 September 1942

- **Pilot:** Pilot Officer George William Marshall Harrison (RAAF) - Killed
- **Air Gunner:** F/Sgt James Reginald Gibbons (RCAF) - Killed
- **Flight Engineer:** F/Sgt Sidney Charles Garrett (RAF) - Killed
- **Air Gunner:** F/Sgt Harry Male (RAF) - Killed
- **Navigator:** F/Sgt J.W. Dalby (RAF) - Survived
- **Wireless Operator:** F/Sgt J. Fraser (RAF) - Survived
- **Bomb Aimer:** F/Sgt E.J. Morley (RAF) - Survived



Just a short update on the grand ceremony opening last Friday ,which was magnificent, I took a photo of the commemorative dedicated Bench to Flt.Sgt,Gibbons RCAF then showed the view of the Lancaster Memorial Sculpture from this Bench. We will be visiting the graveside very shortly of this 24 year old whom lost his life as he is laying to rest in Newark Nottinghamshire which is extremely close to where I live.



Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum Dedication of vintage Grumman Avenger

Report and photos by Gord McNulty

A milestone occasion for the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum was celebrated on May 31 with the dedication of a completely rebuilt Grumman TBM-3E Avenger.

The ceremony culminated an incredible 17-year restoration by dedicated museum volunteers. More than 50,000 hours of volunteer work was required to bring the aircraft to flying condition.

The Avenger is beautifully restored in the colours of the Royal Canadian Navy, which flew 125 Avengers for anti-submarine patrol from 1950 to 1956. Avengers saw much action as torpedo bombers with both the U.S. and Royal Navies in the Pacific and the Atlantic during the Second World War.

James Bradley, son of museum co-founder Dennis Bradley, successfully completed the test flight on May 1. He flew the Avenger at the dedication, shown in the photos. A throng of volunteers, staff, supporters and fans enjoyed the memorable event.

The event brought back personal memories. As a youngster, I watched Avengers from HMCS York's VC 920 Naval Reserve Squadron, flying from their base at Downsview to Mount Hope, heading for practice at what was then RCAF Station Hamilton. The navy's "weekend warriors" made a strong impression.

The CWHM Avenger first served with the U.S. Navy until the early 1950s. After its military years, it was converted to a water bomber for operations in California from 1963 to 1972. In 1976, it was purchased by Forest Protection Ltd. in New Brunswick and used for budworm spraying.

The Avenger was purchased by a French aircraft preservation group in 2000, but the organization couldn't arrange transport across the Atlantic. It remained in storage until 2009, when the CWHM acquired it for the ambitious and ultimately rewarding restoration.



Canadian Warplane Heritage Avenger fires up at the May 31, 2026 dedication.



The Avenger directly over the CWHM at the dedication on May 31, 2026.



A flypast by James Bradley in the Avenger after the dedication at the museum on May 31 2026.



James Bradley folded the wings of the Avenger to complete the dedication flight on May 31 2026.



RCN Avenger
53161 at Mount
Hope 2-7-55
Jack McNulty
photo.

3210 Homestead Drive, Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0

Telephone: 289.280.0157 Email: 447winghamilton@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/The-447-Wing-140212226825200/>

The 447 Wing is OPEN

Sunday & Monday	CLOSED
Tuesday & Wednesday	11:30am to 10:00pm
Thursday & Friday	11:30am to 11:00pm
Saturday	11:30am to 8:00pm

Kitchen Hours

Tuesday & Wednesday	11:30 am to 8:00pm
Thursday & Friday	11:30am to 9:00pm
Saturday	11:30am to 7:00pm

Remember

Membership renewals by

June 30, 2026

**Renew now to continue to
support your Wing.**

The Wing Drift is published quarterly. If you have any articles, suggestions, etc for future editions, they can be sent to the 447 Wing email address (447winghamilton@gmail.com).

447(City of Hamilton) Board of Directors 2026— 2028

Chairperson	Dan Welsh	(905) 679-6175
1 st Vice Chairperson	Mike Pryor	(905) 397-4192
Secretary/Membership	Linda Daniels-Smith	(905) 966-2709
Treasurer	Bev Cuffe	(905) 517-6146
Directors	Rob Wilson	(905) 745-2097
	Terri Welsh	(905) 679-6175
	Mike Cuffe	(647) 222-4879

779 Air Cadet Sponsoring Committee

Acting Chairman:	John Mayhew	
Vice Chairman:	(Position Vacant)	
Treasurer:	John Mayhew	(905) 388-4055
Secretary:	(Position Vacant)	
Coordinator Screening & Registration:		
Member: Risk Management:	Cheryl Jackson-Checkley	
Black Knight Squadron HQ:		(905) 679-6485
Alumni:	Chantelle Wark	(905) 975-0373
Commanding Officer:	Captain Marilyn Coleman	(905) 765-2414



447 (City of Hamilton) Wing

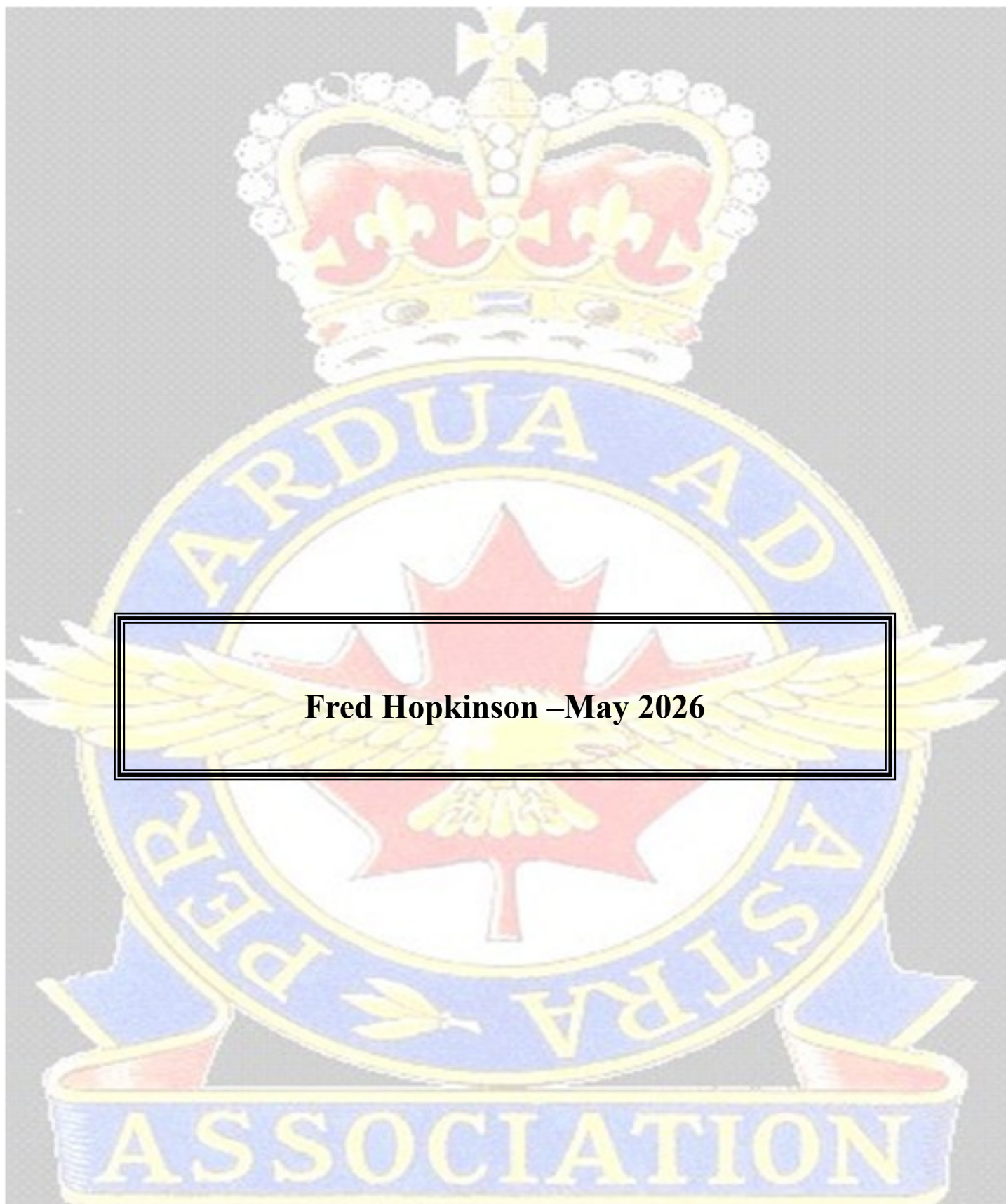
Past Presidents

Aiden Finn CD	(1983)
Gord Rowland	(1995—1998)
Judy Brown	(2000, 2008)
6 Presidents served during	(2003 & 2005)
Bill Grahman CD	(2008-2017)
Jim Hooton CD	(2017-2019)
Michael Cuffe	(2019-2024)



Bill Whiteside	(1962)
Russ Newton	(1963,81,91)
Jim Robbins CD	(1964-65)
Carl Whaley CMCD	(1966)
Sterling McAllister CD	(1967)
Doug Thornevell	(1968)
Ken Lenz	(1969, 1975)
Bill Carey	(1970)
Innes Anderson	(1971)
Sid George	(1972)
Ken Read	(1973)
Bob Hayes	(1974)
Bill Thompson	(1976)
Rob Gillies	(1977)
Nels Smith CD	(1978, 1984)
Jack Lightfoot	(1979)
Scott Lumsden	(1980)
Syd Buckles	(1982)
Alex Barrett DFC	(1985)
Clare Hansen	(1986, 1994)
Harry Rasmussen	(1988-89)
Bob Hide	(1990)
Bill Ryckman	(1992-93)
Arthur Young	(2004,2006)
Harry VanZeben	(1997-99,2001-02)
Frank A. Begley	(2007)

IN MEMORIAM



Fred Hopkinson – May 2026



MISSION STATEMENT

The Royal Canadian Air Force Association of Canada is a national aerospace and community service organization to: commemorate the noble achievements of the men and women who have served as members of Canada's air forces since its inception; advocate for a proficient and well equipped air force; and support the Royal Canadian Air Cadet programme.