



# Wing Drift

March 2025

## *Message from the 447 Wing Chair*

Since our last issue in December much has happened and yet much remains the same.

Our Wing membership remains fairly steady although we recently lost a dear friend to The Wing when Jack Finan and one hundred and five year young veteran passed away on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025. R.I.P. Jack. You will be missed.

The Wing has had some very interesting events which for the most part have been well attended. There have been some misses, but they are few and far between.

Aggies basket, the full Christmas turkey dinner and New Years eve all brought people together for fun and friendship and while not creating large capital reserves, they were not money losers and as such had a positive effect on the day to day operations of our business enterprise, "The Wing".

Special thanks and mention must be made to Bev Cuffe, Mike Cuffe and Linda Daniels-Smith who spearheaded and actively worked hard to ensure success. The planning and execution of the events was well orchestrated, and the end result was an enjoyable time by the many participants who were able to attend.

The new year brought several challenges that had not been anticipated.

Exceptionally cold weather set in and caused plumbing issues in January and February which required major repairs on the part of the landlord. While the executive board worked with the landlord, we made sure that he or his subordinates took a hands-on approach as we, as tenants, are not responsible for doing his work for him.

Our flag room once again suffered flood damage which is just brutal as we have repaired and painted several times only to have more damage done. The last major flood occurred one Thursday night causing the shut down of The Wing at nine o'clock in the evening. The resultant loss of income has not been appreciated and will be mentioned to the landlord. The water was pouring in like a spigot had been turned on which caused paint damage and ceiling damage. To make matters worse, the landlord has been overseas for a prolonged period of time, however, repairs and action on the latest episode were efficient and quick.

Exceptional snowfall has added expenses as well as the parking lot needed to be plowed and maintained.

With spring approaching this should let up but I am sure winter will have a last push so we can all remember and plan for late 2025.

Our Vice-Chairman, Jim Hooton, has returned to fairly decent health after a fall late in 2024. He is now able to attend board meetings and engage in visiting on Tuesdays as he always did prior to his fall. We wish him well as he continues his progress to full mobility and once again being able to drive his vehicle.

On the Board of Directors side, Al Daniels, a former second and first vice president of The Wing was invited and accepted an invitation to rejoin the board of directors. Al was sworn into office at the January board meeting; his past experience will be of value to operations. Welcome aboard Al.

Rob Wilson has been diligent in his procurement of cleaning products for the building we occupy and has been completing fire inspections as mandated to ensure our premise is operating correctly. Thanks, Rob.

Tom and Jim Hooton with assistance from Bev and Mike are running our monthly meat draws which do well but bad weather has diminished crowds.

Steady work on making our daily entrepreneurial operations more professional and policy driven continues and CFIB is assisting in helping to formulate clear and concise policy for our employees to work with. In the long run, proper policy and procedure will allow for almost seamless transitions to new executives in the future.

## *Message from the 447 Wing Chair (Continued)*

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 the formal portrait of our late Sovereign, Elizabeth II, was retired and a new portrait of our current Sovereign Charles III was hung in place. Thanks to our federal member of parliament for securing the portrait for our framing and installation in the Wing building.

The Wing Chairman's New Years Levee was a success and well attended. The "Moose Milk" was appreciated by all. Thanks to Mike Cuffe for sharing the recipe.

On May 23-25, 2025 will see the RCAFA Ontario Group AGM being held in Ottawa. Several 447 Wing members and executives will be in attendance.

Since our last edition, we have been advised that at National, Dean Black and Wendy Sung have retired. Brook Bangsboll (410 Wing Ottawa) is now the Executive Director effective February 1, 2025. Terry Chester is Chair and has taken over from Chuck Lovallo. Other Board Members include David Farnsworth (411 Wing), Walter Peckham (413 Wing) and Jim Donnelly (427 Wing). A series of Town Hall zoom meetings will take place in March/April. A new National Website is available at <https://rcafassociation.site-ym.com>.

To all who regularly support The 447 Wing, thank you. We could not operate without your continued support.

Have a great and welcome spring and a better summer. We all deserve it.

Respectfully submitted

Dan Welsh

Chairman

447 Wing

Royal Canadian Air Force Association

March 2025

### **The 447 Wing is OPEN**

<b>Sunday &amp; Monday</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>Tuesday &amp; Wednesday</b>	<b>11:30am to 10:00pm</b>
<b>Thursday &amp; Friday</b>	<b>11:30am to 11:00pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>11:30am to 8:00pm</b>
<u><b>Kitchen Hours</b></u>	
<b>Tuesday &amp; Wednesday</b>	<b>11:30 am to 8:00pm</b>
<b>Thursday &amp; Friday</b>	<b>11:30am to 9:00pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>11:30am to 7:00pm</b>

## Fond farewell for Jack Finan Decorated Lancaster pilot

Report and photos by Gord McNulty

The death of highly respected wartime RCAF Lancaster pilot and longtime 447 Wing RCAFA member Jack Finan on February 8 merited extensive media coverage in tribute to his valiant service to Canada.

Jack passed away at his home at age 105, one year after he received France's highest military honour in a ceremony hosted by the French ambassador to Canada at the 447 Wing.

Family and friends gathered on February 19 at Jack's church, Incarnation of Our Blessed Lord Parish in Hamilton, for his funeral service. His pastor, Father Joseph Akanbi, shared warm memories and a bagpipe salute was provided by Michael Cuffe, Jack's 447 Wing colleague. A burial took place at the Woodland Cemetery Field of Honour in Burlington.

The ceremonies then concluded with a well-attended Celebration of Life for family and friends at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum (CWHM). 447 Wing Past President Bill Grahlman, a close friend of Jack's, was among those who paid tribute along with family members. An inspirational poem, "I flew!", was read.

David Rohrer, CWHM President and CEO, described Jack as a Hamilton treasure who served his country proudly in war and in peace.

Recalling that Jack greatly enjoyed his final flight in the museum's Mynarski Memorial Lancaster in 2015, Dave said with a smile: "He even volunteered to show me a corkscrew. I didn't take him up on that."

Eric Cervania, a Sheridan College and filmmaker, was also among the speakers. He was inspired as a keen history enthusiast to produce a documentary about Jack's service. The six-minute feature, "Worthy of Honour," was screened at the Hamilton Film Festival and also aired on Hamilton community television.

Eric was moved by his interview with Jack and the experience clearly resonated with him.

As described in a front-page feature by reporter Jon Wells in *The Hamilton Spectator* on February 14, Jack was "a living monument to an era when Canadians played an important role in the fight to vanquish Hitler."

A Hamilton native, Jack joined the RCAF, trained as a pilot in Calgary and rose to the rank of flight lieutenant. He learned to fly in a Tiger Moth. Jack, with his lifelong good sense of humour, recalled once landing a Tiger Moth so hard that the biplane bounced into the air.

The incident prompted his instructor, Albert Horn (also from Hamilton) to quip: "Now that we know where the Earth is, let's land on it."

Jack recalled another episode in an Avro Anson, coming in low over top of a pack of wild horses "galloping like hell across the prairies in winter."

Arriving in England, he survived the shelling of a mess hall in Bournemouth, in southern England. He hit the deck under the table during lunch: "I said, this is no place for a good Canadian and I ran like hell."



Jack went on to fly 23 different aircraft, with operations in the Lancaster bomber over occupied Europe the most harrowing. He often told family members that his service in the Lancaster was marked by “hours and hours of sheer boredom, followed by moments of stark terror.”

Upon his return to Hamilton, Jack worked for two years in a steel mill before returning to the RCAF. There, he continued flying, based in B.C. and P.E.I., and piloting ice patrols in the Arctic. He retired from duty in 1965, then wrote training programs for Mohawk College.

Jack met his future wife of 71 years, Eileen, at a dance hall in Dumfries, Scotland, during the war. She worked at a parachute-manufacturing facility. They raised six daughters. Eileen passed away in August, 2015, one month after he enjoyed that final Lancaster flight in the Mynarski Memorial Lancaster.

Jack’s fifth daughter, Kerry-Anne, attended Remembrance Day events with her father, at the CWHM and elsewhere. He was generally reluctant to share bad memories of the war but Kerry-Anne encouraged him to talk about his experiences.

As Jack put it, “I only think about the good times now. That’s easier than remembering all of the people who didn’t come back.”

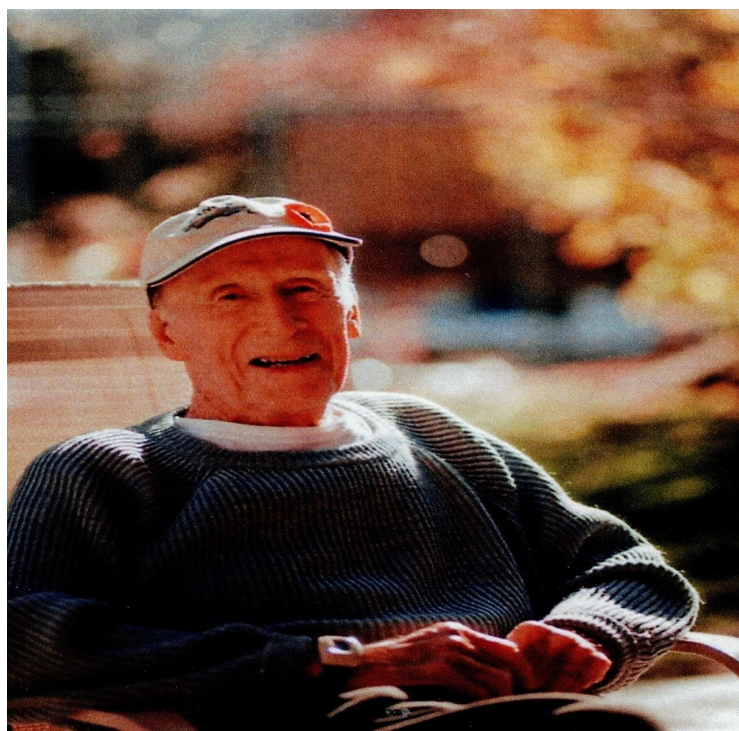
Enjoying a glass of Scotch was a ritual that he enjoyed every night of the week. He claimed it was one of the reasons he lived so long. Or rather, he always said, two Scotches, “because you can’t fly on one wing.”

As the family obituary stated, Jack was kind and compassionate. He was very grateful and humbled to be acknowledged for his military service. France’s highest military honour, the Insignia of Knight in the National Order of the Legion of Honour, was a special tribute.

Jack was indeed a true “Officer and a Gentleman” whose service will always be remembered.



Front page coverage of Jack Finan in The Hamilton Spectator, February 14, 2025



John 'Jack' Frederick Finan Dec. 10, 1919 - February 8, 2025

This inspirational "I flew" poem was read at the Celebration of Life for Jack Finan on February 20.

When the last checklist's run and the bag drag done,  
 I'll reminisce on the days I once knew,  
 I won't remember the oh-three-hundred alerts,  
 But only that I flew!

I will not remember the crew rest in tents,  
 Nor recall how cold Artic winds blew,  
 And I'll try not to remember the times I got sick,  
 But only that I flew!

I will never forget when nature became angry,  
 To challenge my intrepid crew,  
 I'll always remember the fear I felt,  
 And the pride in knowing I flew.

I'll remember the sights my mortal eyes saw,  
 All coloured in multiple hues,  
 Those beautiful lights on cold winter nights,  
 Seen only by those who flew.

God was extremely good to me,  
 He let me touch his face,  
 He saw my crew through war and peace,  
 And blessed us with His grace.

So when I stand at St. Peter's Gate,  
 And tell him that I'm new,  
 I know he'll smile and welcome me,  
 Because he knows I FLEW!

--Brad Baker



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



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](mailto:447winghamilton@gmail.com)).

## **447(City of Hamilton) Board of Directors 2024— 2026**

Chairperson	Dan Welsh	(905) 679-6175
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chairperson	Jim Hooton	(905) 383-3962
Secretary/Membership	Linda Daniels-Smith	(905) 966-2709
Treasurer	Bev Cuffe	(905) 517-6146
Directors	Thomas Hooton	(905) 807-9503
	Rob Wilson	(905) 745-2097
	Al Daniels	(905) 577-2605

## **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**

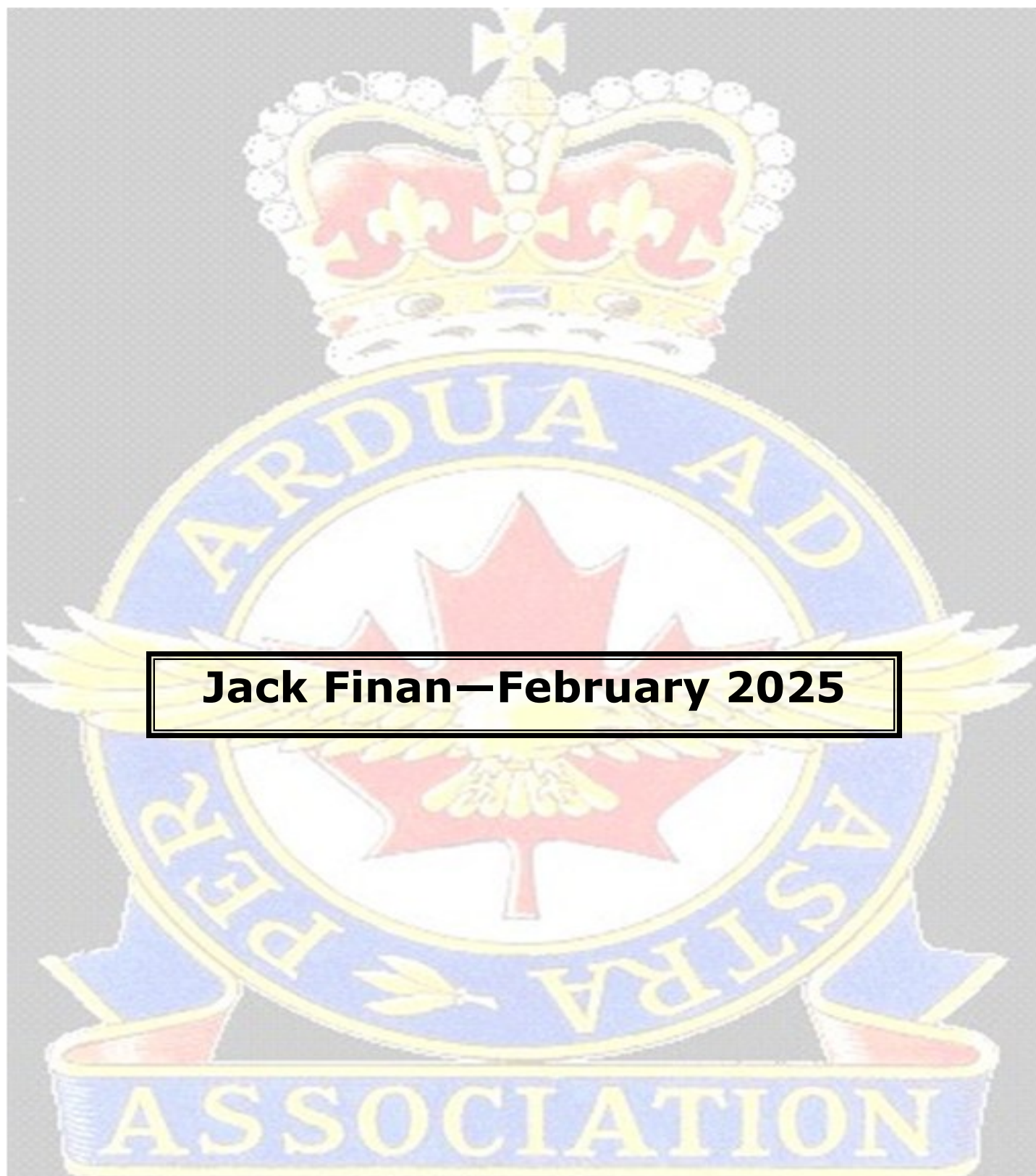
### ***Past Presidents***

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



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

# IN MEMORIAM



**Jack Finan—February 2025**



### **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.