

447 Wing RCAFA



Wing Drift

March 2026

Message from the 447 Wing Chair

Greetings one and all.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

As we move forward, there will be no General Meeting in March but there will be General Meetings in April, May and June as required by our constitution.

April and May meetings will be important as elections will be held at May General Meeting.

Written nominations for those interested in Board positions will be accepted as of this date, February 28th, 2026.

Nominations from the floor will be accepted at our April General Meeting and May General Meeting.

If nine candidates have not been nominated, then the nominations received shall be acclaimed, negating the need for a vote as per the constitution. The secretary will cast one vote only for posting results in June Minutes.

However, once nominations in May are called for and closed, a vote of members present will be convened if more than nine nominations have been received.

Written letters of intent are to be sent to our 447 Secretary Linda Daniels-Smith at the below e-mail address: 447winghamiltonsecretary@gmail.com

The new board will be sworn in at the June general meeting and take office as of July 1st, 2026, as per our constitution.

Please consider joining the board as new blood and talents are needed.

Ontario Group AGM

The Ontario Group AGM is being held May 15-17, 2026, at the 432 (Algoma) Wing in Sault St. Marie.

Registration is currently open through the 432 Algoma Wing website at: <https://saultagm2026.432algomawing.com/>.

Registration closes April 10, 2026. A block of rooms has been set aside at the Quality Inn for registrants.

The 447 Wing

Since our last Wing Drift issue in December 2025 much has happened, not the least of which was an exceptionally cold spell of time sprinkled with significant periods of snow. Such calamities are always costly to keep up with.

I will provide an overview of our activities over the past three months.

In December, events such as Breakfast with Santa, Turkey Roll, Aggies Basket, and New Year's Eve celebrations were held. These activities required significant time and effort but proved profitable. Photographs from these occasions were featured in the previous issue of Wing Drift.

Message from the 447 Wing Chair (Continued)

1. The Turkey Roll was not as well attended and not as profitable as in the past. There are a number of issues to look at for the cause:
 - The club presently consists of 72 members, with approximately 85% not actively engaged in club activities. Furthermore, ticket sales are not routinely conducted, and in some instances, certain members may choose not to purchase tickets.
 - Some active members are NOT sellers in their own rite and end up donating \$100.00 to help the cause by buying tickets themselves.
 - Frequency of turkey roll events such as Royal Canadian Legion Branch 163, Hamilton Police Association Turkey Roll and others are crowding the scene. Excessive abundance can lead to negative consequences for the 447.

The board should consider whether it makes sense to continue hosting these expensive, labor-intensive events, especially when ticket sales only just break even. While some may argue that any profit is beneficial, in this instance, fewer attendees would have resulted in a financial loss rather than the small profit achieved.

2. Aggies basket and New Year's Eve did make some money and were great events. New Years Eve festivities were great and fun for all at a modest price. The event was well attended.

Many thanks to Bev and Mike Cuffe for their work on getting groceries and supplies for events and for planning and executing menus.

3. We need to address our footprint in the basement. We have probably 1,000+pounds of paper to dispose of and it needs to be done in a confidential manner. We need to look into costing on a one-time basis for a shredding company to attend The Wing to remove material and shred same. This is a priority. This examination is happening and we anticipate action by May 2026.
4. The flood season has commenced, resulting in damage from recent warm weather melts. Goldberg Management maintains that tenants are responsible for these issues and frequently references the lease agreement. I have taken steps to ensure all downspouts are unobstructed; however, roof maintenance remains the landlord's responsibility. Despite the ongoing negotiations with management, there have been no major water concerns to date, even following a significant thaw.
5. Unresolved electrical issues with the handicap door and exit sign continue to present safety risks. Although the matter is under review, there has been no response from the landlord. Rob's electrician could not identify the issue, so we will need to find another electrician and negotiate payment terms if expenses are significant. The board is evaluating solutions, recognizing that resolving the problem may be expensive.
6. Kitchen repairs are required due to ongoing water damage. The Roundel Room needs work beyond our scope; we can replace tiles, but the unresolved roof issue remains the landlord's responsibility and has persisted for years.
7. Our Financial Secretary, Bev Cuffe, demonstrates proficiency in managing resource allocation to ensure all creditors' requirements are met. While financial obligations are consistently fulfilled, the process continues to present significant challenges.
8. The New Year's Day Levee was a resounding success, attracting around thirty-five members and guests who engaged in vibrant conversations and enjoyed "Moose Milk" along with other refreshments. The three-hour event provided entertainment and treats for everyone present.
9. The January meat draw was disappointing due to a shortage of attendees and absent members, making it impossible to continue. As a result, the event was cancelled, and those who were present purchased materials to prevent spoilage of foods that couldn't be frozen.

Message from the 447 Wing Chair (Continued)

10. Robbie Burns was celebrated in January with a proper celebration, pipers, address to “Haggis”, dancers and a great meal which was enjoyed by all who attended.



Haggis Parade at Robbie Burn's celebration

11. February proved to be a positive month, as our parking lot was utilized for film production. The Wing property is steadily gaining recognition within the production industry, and each additional source of income contributes to maintaining The Wing's financial stability.
12. February also saw a return of a General Meeting which was once again graced by Bill and Marg Grahlman who were assisted by various family members to attend and participate in the meat draw. It was good to see both of them again.
13. A water leak at Hamilton Armories provided an opportunity for our Wing. An individual who had intended to host a formal dinner at the Armories was required to make last-minute alternative arrangements. As a result, the event was held at our venue. Fifty-three guests attended this formal occasion, which featured an elegant setting and quality dining. According to all accounts, the event was highly successful.
14. The Black Knight Squadron (air cadets) has over 130 members and is thriving. Jim Hooton notes that while their current facility fits the cadets, additional space like the Mount Hope library is used for classroom activities.
15. I am happy to report that the stained-glass windows mentioned in previous communications have been installed at St. Paul's Anglican church with rededication scheduled for Sunday March 15th, 2026. Thanks to all affiliated with 447 Wing who made donations to help this worthwhile endeavor. The Windows were commissioned by the parents of a fallen Air-force member, their son Richard Blake PALMER.

Message from the 447 Wing Chair (Continued)



Installed Windows @ St. Paul's Anglican.

The Palmer Window

Richard Blake Palmer was a student at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph. While at the college he was enrolled in the Cadet program. He left his studies to answer the call to serve his country, enlisting on 14 May 1941. His interviewer wrote:

He is a very good type of Canadian; well-educated. Mannerly and should do well in training as a pilot. He is keen to serve and to fly. Considered suitable for commissioned rank.

Flight Lieutenant Palmer completed his training in October 1941. On 15 March 1944, Palmer and his Canadian crew were flying a mission for the Royal Air Force 357 Squadron, a "Special Duties" unit that focused on clandestine operations, supplying guerrilla forces, and transporting agents behind enemy lines. Their Hudson III Bomber was lost 85 miles east of Lashio, Burma. He along with five of his crew members died. Only the Navigator survived with serious injuries. The fallen were buried on the hillside at the site of the crash and the Navigator was evacuated.

These windows were commissioned in Flt. Lieut. Palmer's memory in his family's home church in Vineland Station, Ontario. When that building was sold the windows were not wanted. Since St. Paul's Church, Mount Hope is the site of a Commonwealth Graves Commission Cemetery, the windows were offered to St. Paul's. To ensure his memory will be preserved, the window has been restored and installed in St. Paul's and will be rededicated on March 15.

courtesy Rev. John Stephenson

Priest In Charge St. Paul's Anglican

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Welsh, Chairman

447 Wing

R.C.A.F.A.

March 2026

Aviation community loses Hannu Halminen

Report and Photos by Gord McNulty

Canada's aviation community lost a stalwart on February 24 when Hannu Halminen, of Orono, north of Oshawa, died suddenly at age 76. He was recovering from a stroke in November and was relieved to be at home after 86 days in the hospital.

Hannu, a well-known aviator, was the proud owner of a classic collection of aircraft. He frequently flew his beautifully polished P-51 Mustang, in the colours of RCAF Auxiliary 424 City of Hamilton (Tiger) Squadron, to the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum and various events. The squadron flew Mustangs out of Mount Hope from 1951 to 1956.

Hannu's collection also included multiple Harvard trainers, which he restored throughout his lifelong passion with aviation.

Hannu, a native of Finland, established Halminen Homes in 1973 with his brother and father. The family obituary stated that he left his mark "on the nearly 10,000 homes built --- not just bricks and mortar, but opportunities for employment that changed lives for countless people, and impacted the greater Clarington community as a whole."

Hannu is remembered by friends as a true gentleman and gifted pilot who cared about his community. I never met Hannu, unfortunately, but I well remember once attending the popular Barnyard Fly-in and corn roast that he held annually at Orono.

We extend our condolences to his wife Karen, "loving copilot of nearly 55 years," and the family. A celebration of life service will be held April 18 at the Embassy Church in Oshawa.

The attached photos of mine include:



Hannu in his Mustang leading aircraft, including the CWHM B-25 Mitchell, departing the celebration of life for renowned aviation photo-journalist Eric Dumigan at Tillsonburg in September 2023. Hannu is shown firing up the Mustang at CWHM with the late Greg Chapman of the CWHM and 447 Wing in the rear seat. The Mustang is also shown on display at the CWHM.



Hannu Halminen fires up the impressive P-51D Mustang in 424 Squadron markings



Beautifully restored P-51D Mustang in 424 (City of Hamilton) Squadron markings, NL951HB, at Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum Aug. 22, 2021 (Gord McNulty)

Canadian service in Sierra Leone Mission recalled

Report and Photos by Gord McNulty

A guest speaker at 447 Wing, CWO (Retired) Guy Suttanwood-Johnson, discussed his time in 2001 with the United Nations in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) on January 28.

The evening was presented by the RHLI Regimental Association. Guy is active in preserving the history and traditions of the RHLI as part of the “Old Guard” of the regiment.

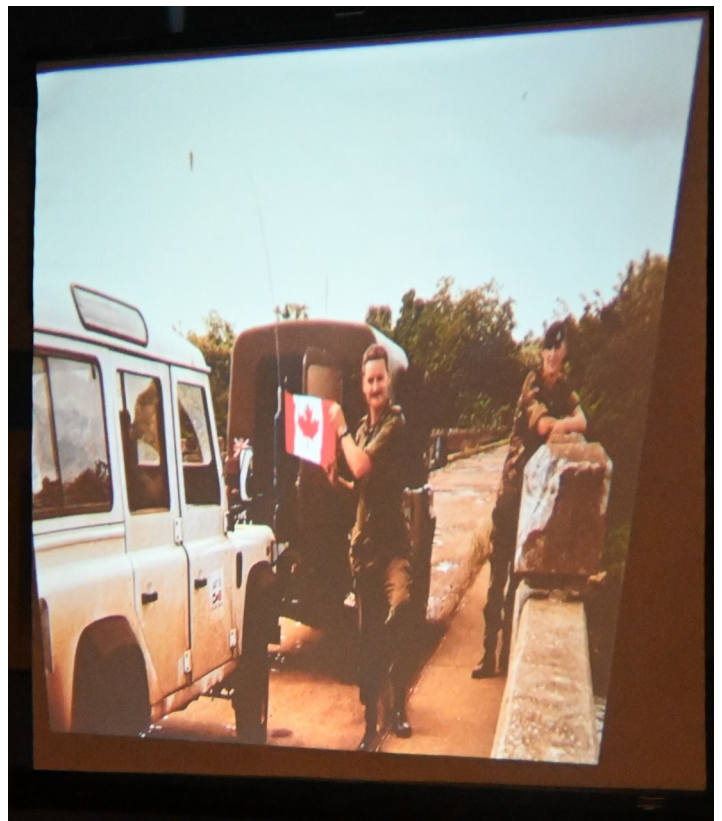
UNAMSIL was a peacekeeping operation active from 1999 to 2006. It was established after a brutal, decade-long civil war to help restore peace, disarm rebel forces including guerillas and child soldiers, and support democratic elections. More than 30 countries participated. Headquartered in Freetown, UNAMSIL successfully assisted in stabilizing the country and rebuilding government authority.

Overall, about 90 Canadian Forces personnel served with UNAMSIL. Guy spent seven months with the mission. He described a wide variety of tasks including training medical staff, finding children to prevent them from being forced into gangs, inspecting and strengthening defensive positions, reconnaissance and more.

It was especially challenging to deal with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which took thousands of children to become soldiers. Ten-year-old boys, with an AK-47 rifle and ‘RUF’ carved into the chest, exemplified how intimidating and ruthless the RUF could be until a peace agreement was achieved.

Forty-four Canadian Forces members were awarded a British Operational Service Medal (OSM) for service in Sierra Leone.

Guy’s informative presentation was appreciated and enjoyed by everyone in attendance.



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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



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 2024— 2026

Chairperson	Dan Welsh	(905) 679-6175
1 st Vice Chairperson	Jim Hooton	(905) 383-3962
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	Rob Wilson	(905) 745-2097
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779 Air Cadet Sponsoring Committee

Acting Chairman:	John Mayhew	
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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)



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.