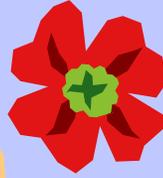


Rab Reid

*Story of a Royal Canadian
Air Force Veteran*

*of
World War II*





Lest We Forget

Rab Reid

On his way into Toronto to sign up to join the Royal Canadian Air Force, Rab stopped to visit his Grandmother and to tell her what he was going to do. His father found out he was planning to sign up and knew Rab would need his permission as he was only 17 ½ years old. To Rab's disappointment, his father said no.

Rab wasn't about to give up. On his second trip into Toronto to sign up, he avoided going to his Grandmother's place and signed up.

Mountain View, near Trenton, and Lachine, Quebec, were two of the bases where he trained. Summerside, PEI was the next stop in his training. The winter weather didn't allow for many clear flying days. In order to get his flying time in, he was sent to Portage La Prairie, Alberta where he earned his wings.

Rab also trained as a rear gunner and flew twelve missions on a Lancaster bomber. He flew on many different airplanes: the Dakota, Ferry Battle, and the Wellington just to name a few.

Rab was sent to Montreal University and McGill University for some special training. He learned Morse Code, wireless operation for the air crew and Aldis, a signaling device for optical communication.

He was posted to Honeybum, an RAF Base in Scotland, to be part of the Operations Training Unit. On his first day there, one of their Wellington Planes crashed on take off. This scared the heck out of him.

Rab's next posting was with the 428 Ghost Squadron in Yorkshire, England.



Rab likes to share the following stories:

When he was in PEI during those stormy winter days, two soldiers from their Unit were chosen to go down the long snowy road to pick up the mail. This was a job everyone tried to avoid even though they liked reading the letters from home.

He remembers the train trip to Portage La Prairie when the RCAF personnel got to travel 1st Class which didn't go over too well with the rest of the troops.

His favourite story is about a car. One of his friends dated a girl from the area and it seemed her family was well to do. They had an extra car which they loaned to the young man. He willingly shared his good fortune with the crew of six. Each was assigned a day that they could use the car. Of course, gas was rationed making it very hard to get. You know young men will always find a way to get what they need. So, Rab being resourceful, found a way to buy gas from a construction crew which had gas for their large equipment on the base.

Word spread quickly and he became the go between for gas. One day, the CO of the base called Rab into a meeting. Of course, he thought he was in trouble. The CO said he had heard the rumour that Rab was able to get gas for their car. Rab played innocent replying he had heard the same rumour. The CO went on to say he would be leaving for the South of England and would need gas for the trip and made sure Rab knew his car. The CO said he expected the tank to be filled and a few extra gerry cans full of gas would make his trip much more enjoyable. Rab just said "Yes Sir" and it happened.

Through heavy seas in the North Atlantic, Rab returned to Canada in March 1946. He was transported to Lachine, Quebec where he was discharged from the RCAF.

Thank you, Rab, for sharing your stories and thank you for protecting us.