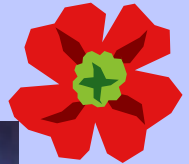


Ruddy Andrews

*Story of a Royal Canadian
Air Force Veteran*

of

World War II



Lest We Forget

Always
Forever



Harold Russell (Ruddy) Andrews

In Memorial

(as told by his family)

Harold Russell Andrews, nicknamed Ruddy, was born in Oshawa and worked as a Payroll Clerk at General Motors. He enlisted in the Army in October of 1942 at #2 Ordnance Depot, RCOC/CA, in Toronto.

After completing his Basic Training by January of 1943, he transferred to the Air Force in May of 1943.

While in Canada, he served at a number of stations: Mount Hope, Mountain View, Cartierville, and Mont-Joli. Later he was transferred to Topcliff, Yorkshire, UK, and various temporary airbases in Normandy. He eventually ended up at an airbase at Uetersen in Germany near Hamburg.

Ruddy served in the RCAF's 126 Wing, 416 Squadron (named City of Oshawa), a fighter squadron. When he was deployed to Yorkshire, he maintained fighters that acted as escorts for RCAF bombers. As a Leading Aircraftsman (LAC), his main responsibility was maintaining the weapons aboard Spitfires, Tempests and Typhoons, and re-arming these planes after operations.

He attended Gunnery School learning to be a gunner aboard a Fairey Battle, but did not reach the required standard apparently because his aim wasn't so good. Ruddy often said he was very fortunate serving where he did because he became aware of the casualty rate for flight crews, and especially bomber crews. He knew that had he been flight crew, the odds were against him surviving. Ruddy's most harrowing experience that he talked about was the emergency landing of a Fairey Battle with him in the gunner's position in the belly.



Ruddy witnessed a number of fighter take-offs in which the plane had barely taken off and then unexpectedly, nose-dived into the ground killing the pilot. These always left him shaken and searching for answers as to how this could happen. It was always difficult to accept that a pilot was so quickly taken from them.

When he returned home after being discharged in 1945, he was very involved in the formation of Royal Canadian Air Force Association Wing 420 at the Oshawa Airport. In retrospect, Ruddy's family feels this was an indication that, although he had seen enough tragedy in his service, he wanted to maintain the friendship and camaraderie of those with whom he served, and also provide a location to honour and remember those who did not return. The Wing still exists today.

Thank you, Ruddy, for helping to keep our pilots flying and sharing with your family the memories of those who came back from war as well as those who didn't.