

TO LEARN – TO SERVE – TO ADVANCE

AIR CADET LEAGUE OF CANADA

Issue 32 – Summer 2022

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Many of us are just recently back from the 81st Annual General Meeting of the Air Cadet League held in Saskatoon. It was great to see so many of you in person and face to face. There was time for frank and open discussions, as well as just time to catch up with colleagues and friends. Nice also to welcome and meet some of our first time AGM attendees – looking forward to seeing you again next year. In attendance at the AGM, we had special guests: the Commander of the CJCR BGen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet and MGen Edward Phelka of the US Civil Air Patrol. For the Banquet, our guest of honour was His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, and Her Honour Donna Mirasty.

A big thank you to the Saskatchewan organizing committee and their supporters for the tremendous warmth and hospitality we all enjoyed. From the arrival, to planned tours, dinner at the museum, the hospitality suite, to getting the last guest out, you worked tirelessly to make everyone feel so welcome. Much appreciated! A very special thank you goes out to Pierre and the National ACL staff; Josée, Krystel and Laura. You made it all look effortless; executing the workshops, running the AGM, presenting the awards and the final banquet, but we know it took weeks of preparation and working through the details. Bravo Zulu!

As a past Air Cadet and CIC Officer, it is my honour and privilege to continue to serve as the President of the Air Cadet League of Canada for 2022-2023.





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT (Continued)

We have lots going on in the year ahead. We have a new Strategy Plan for 2023-2025 to prepare, with some great input provided by the members attending the Governance Workshops at the AGM. In support of the Consultative Framework, we have ACL members engaged with the CAF on three difference working groups; League Costing which is already in progress, and two new ones which have just started – Fundraising and Program Rescope.

Recovery from the pandemic continues to be top of mind and being ready for September. We have seen a drop in the Cadet population, but am confident that through focus and perseverance, we can be ready to support the squadrons across the country and regain our cadet strength.

As we head into the summer months, I am hoping you will have time to relax and enjoy it with loved ones. Wishing you a good and safe summer!

Hille Viita, CD
National President



YOUR NEW BOARD OF GOVERNORS AT YOUR SERVICE!

Each year, we have some Governors leaving, while new ones are appointed. This year is no exception. National Governors retiring this year are Mr. Russell Gallant (2016-2022) and Mr. Roch Leblanc (2019-2022). We thank them for their service.

This year we have four new members joining the Board of Governors: William Cahill, Terri Hinton, Arlo Speer and Vern Toews.

Here is the list of the Board of Governors for 2022-2023

Hille Viita, CD – President
Thomas Taborowski – 1st Vice-President
Sue Madden – Vice-President & Treasurer
Marc Lacroix, CD – Vice-President
Doug Slowski, CD – Vice-President
Jim Hunter, CD – Immediate Past President
Dee Davis
Jacquie Pepper-Journal, CD
Jerry Elias, CD
Kevin Robinson
Thomas Sand, CD
John Nolan
William Cahill
Terri Hinton
Arlo Speer
Vern Toews





POST-SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS 2022

THIS YEAR, THE GENEROSITY OF OUR DONORS ALLOWED US TO AWARD A POST-SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIP TO 14 OUTSTANDING CADETS!

CETTE ANNÉE, LA GÉNÉROSITÉ DE NOS DONATEURS NOUS A PERMIS DE REMETTRE UNE BOURSE D'ÉTUDES POSTSECONDAIRES À 14 CADETS EXCEPTIONNELS !

**List of the Recipients
2022**

Liste des récipiendaires

WO1	William	Qian	BC	Sqn 746
WO1	Likhitha	Tananki	QOV	Sqn 892
WO1	Helena	Goodey-Parfitt	NL	Sqn 511
Sgt S	Thomas	Dashaies	QOV	Esc 806
WO1	Marc Alex	Claran Whelan	ON	Sqn 121
WO1	Gerry	Chen	BC	Sqn 808
Adj1	Florian	Tinsley	QOV	Esc 564
WO2	Manjot	Sawhney	MB	Sqn 177
WO1	Darlene	Neil	QOV	Sqn 872
WO1	Wesley	Yiu	BC	Sqn 655
WO2	Owen	Boldt	ON	Sqn 540
WO2	Kaleb	Barnum	BC	Sqn 279
WO2	Daniel	Wen	ON	Sqn 779
Adj2	Julie	Rodier	QOV	Esc 500

On May 28, thanks to the generous support of our donors, the ACL proudly presented a total of fourteen post-secondary scholarships worth \$43,000 to our outstanding cadets across Canada.

This year, we received 129 applications for post-secondary scholarships. Almost all the recipients and donors attended the second edition of the virtual ceremony. It was a great success! This format gave donors the opportunity to present the scholarships to the recipients themselves. The recipients did not know in advance which scholarship they were being awarded.

If you would like to see who these exceptional cadets are, please visit our website:

<https://aircadetleague.com/2022-post-secondary-scholarships-recipients/>

Once again, we would like to thank all the donors who made this possible!

Gilles Cuerrier, CD
Chair, Scholarships and Awards Committee



HONOURS & AWARDS RECIPIENTS 2022



Again, this year, the Honours and Awards Committee, in collaboration with the National Cadet Scholarships and Awards Committee, held its second virtual award ceremony on May 28. The ACL was honoured to present 34 awards to individuals or groups that have made a difference, either at the local, regional, provincial, or national level of our youth organization. Some of the Awards were personally presented at the AGM to the people that were in attendance, June 11th. All awards were handed over to Provincial Chairs or their designate.

The booklet of the recipients can be seen at the following link:

[For Members & Volunteers - Air Cadet League of Canada](#)

The H&A Committee thanks all of you who have given their time and skills for the benefit of Air Cadets across Canada!

Guy Albert
Chair, Honours & Awards Committee



EFFECTIVE SPEAKING COMPETITION 2022 RESULTS

Speaking in public is not an easy task. Many people can relate to this. The Air Cadet League of Canada (ACL), in 1991, made possible a national cadet public speaking competition. This activity led to local, regional, provincial, and even coast-to-coast competitions.

The COVID-19 situation has somewhat disrupted many youth activities, including public speaking competitions. For a second year, the National Effective Speaking Competition organized by our League was virtual.

Our partnership with the Department of National Defense, under the leadership of Captain Andrea Matheson, has resulted in an effective online communications program. Training is available to cadets from all regions of Canada.

Local, regional, and provincial virtual competitions were held since the beginning of April 2022, culminating in the national event held on June 4th. The national competition was greatly supported by the Ontario Moose Association who loaned us their Zoom platform which could accommodate up to 500 people free of charge.

We must thank the regional, provincial, and national teams for their excellent support of this event that is so popular with many cadets. We cannot overlook the technical teams who worked to set up the events at each level as well as the judges and evaluators (who observed our competitors and gave them sound advice in their development as speakers and trainers. The 2022 National Public Speaking Competition saw three speakers crowned as bronze, silver, and gold medalists.

Congratulations to all the cadets who participated in these events and long live this important public speaking activity among our young Canadians!



Here is the list of the 2022 National participants:

Fsgt Karam Albatal - 607 Richelieu Laval

WO1 Jaeden Rossner - 223 Red Lions

Sgt Margaret (Alex) Harris - 101 Moncton

WO2 Sinnéad Barnes - 675 Bow Valley

Cpl Himani Bhatt - 199 St. Vital

Sgt Lindsay Hawley-Bourque – 508 Caribou

Cpl Zoya Jham – 540 Golden Hawks

Sgt Iraj Moutameni – 604 Moose

Sgt Nabh Samtaney – 342 Bedford Lions

Sgt Nathaniel Stuit – 60 Confederation

*André Mauger
 National Effective Speaking Committee Chair*



776 Rotary Squadron's demonstration glider looks great at the Lido Cinema for the release of the movie Top Gun

In 2020, the Air Cadet League of Canada donated a demonstration glider to our squadron. This aircraft



is identical to the glider model in which our cadets have the privilege of flying and for the most deserving, obtaining their glider pilot's license. Our first step was to revamp the exterior membrane of the glider to give it back all the beauty it deserves and to make all the control devices functional. Mr. Roch Messier and all of his members of the Neuville Airport Experimental Aircraft Builders Association proceeded with the restoration, and it was a great success.

This essential step of our project would not have been possible without all the

precious people who gave their time from the summer of 2020 to the winter of 2022. Next, we had to acquire a storage facility to optimally preserve our glider against all weather conditions. Thanks to Marco Lefebvre, we acquired a large shipping container at low cost.

Our objectives with this glider are to facilitate accessibility and maximize the availability of the aircraft throughout the year. Its more frequent use will allow us to concretely demonstrate and teach in "real mode" the principles of flight to our young aviation enthusiasts. It will thus become an authentic teaching aid and award-winning by our specialist instructors. A unique learning asset!

Our glider will also be the centerpiece of our visibility booths. Its very first exhibition at the release of the movie Top Gun was a great success and attracted the eyes of the crowd. It will also allow us to participate in public and school events in the region of Lévis and Quebec City and to discover the world of aeronautics. In addition to being able to sit in the cockpit, visitors will be able to practice their virtual piloting skills thanks to the flight simulator at their disposal and watch videos on aerospace. The ÉNA (École nationale d'aérotechnique) has also contributed to a great roll-up of the glider's axis of rotation maneuvers. Fun for the whole community, young and old!

At 776 Rotary Lévis Squadron, we have made it our mission to reach out to the population we serve and to open our doors even wider to all those young people who will become our future leaders of tomorrow. We want to share with the public the many opportunities we offer them that go far beyond the uniform and discipline. We want to go beyond the barrier of a well-kept secret and make ourselves known to everyone and this glider is a great asset.

On behalf of 776 Rotary Lévis Squadron

SAVIOUR OF CEYLON

By John Boileau
(Courtesy of *Legion Magazine*)



*DND/PL-133463 – Air-
commander-Len-Birchall*

It had been a long, uneventful flight. After 12 hours of scanning the vast Indian Ocean without luck, the pilot of the Royal Canadian Air Force Catalina flying boat decided to return to base. Suddenly, the navigator cried out; he had seen something on the horizon. The pilot banked and headed toward the sighting.

It was a Japanese raiding fleet heading for Ceylon (Sri Lanka). As the radio operator sent a warning message to alert the island, Japanese fighters swarmed the flying boat. Cannon shells tore through the aircraft and set it on fire, forcing the pilot to crash land. Six of the nine crewmen survived and were picked up by a Japanese ship. Their next three and a half years were spent in the horrors of prisoner of war camps. But had their warning message gotten through?

At the end of February 1942, No. 413 Squadron, RCAF, was told it was being sent from Scotland to Ceylon. The slow speed and immense endurance of the unit's Consolidated Catalina flying boats allowed them to stay airborne for 24 hours. The crew consisted of two pilots, flight engineer, navigator, four to six wireless operators/air gunners and maintenance personnel.

The Catalina's armament included four to six depth charges on wing mounts (enough for one attack) and four .303 machine guns: one in the nose, one in each of two side "blisters" and a fixed one in the tail. Detection of enemy vessels depended mainly on the time-proven "Mark I eyeball."

On March 28, the first aircraft reached the squadron's base at Koggala on Ceylon's south coast, where a large lake served as a runway and base for the flying boats. The military situation was tense. British forces were in full retreat in Burma. Attacks on India, Ceylon or the British Eastern Fleet could be next. That was exactly what the Japanese were planning: they had dispatched a large fleet to attack Ceylon.

Admiral James Somerville, commander-in-chief of the British Eastern Fleet, wisely withdrew most of his ships from Ceylon on March 30. They sailed to a new secret anchorage in the Maldives, southwest of Ceylon. With all Royal Navy warships and many fighter aircraft far from Ceylon, it left the responsibility for reconnaissance and visual early warning of a potential Japanese attack to a few RAF Catalinas and the four flying boats of 413 Squadron.

Before dawn on April 4, Catalina A rose into the air and made history. Under the command of Canadian Squadron Leader Leonard Birchall, among its eight crewmen was another Canadian, Warrant Officer Bart Onyette, the aircraft's navigator.

Birchall, a 26-year-old native of St. Catharines, Ont., had graduated from Kingston's Royal Military College in 1937 and then trained to be an RCAF pilot. He first served in Dartmouth, N.S., on anti-submarine patrols. By the time he was posted to 413 Squadron in 1942, he was an experienced pilot.

Birchall's assigned patrol sector was the southernmost one, some 560 kilometers south and east of Koggala. After a dozen unproductive hours of scanning the vast waters stretching in all directions, Birchall was just about to return to base at 4 p.m. when Onyette spotted "specks" on the southern horizon. Birchall immediately headed toward them. They were Japanese vessels.

Birchall flew directly toward the ships to count and identify them, fully realizing the closer he got, the less chance he had of escape. Slowly, Japan's 1st Air Fleet came into view. The fleet consisted of five aircraft carriers, plus battleships, cruisers and destroyers. The carriers had more than 300 modern combat aircraft embarked, including several first-rate Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighters, which could outperform any Allied fighter in Asia at the time.

The enemy's primary aim was to neutralize British naval and air resources in the Indian Ocean to secure Japan's western flank. Birchall's radio operator immediately began sending a coded transmission to Ceylon, containing details of the fleet. But by then, with no clouds in which to hide, Birchall had been seen. As many as 12 Zeros swarmed in for the kill. Birchall later noted, "All we could do was to put the nose down and go full out, about 150 knots."

When the operator was partway through his required third transmission, enemy cannon shells destroyed the radio, blew the operator's leg off and set the aircraft on fire. The Catalina began to break up. It was too low for the crew to bail out, but Birchall managed to crash land safely on the water—just before the aircraft's tail fell off.

Everyone but the operator evacuated the aircraft, although two crewmen were seriously wounded. Because they were unconscious, they were floating on the surface and unable to dive when Japanese fighters continued to strafe the Catalina and the airmen struggling in the water. As the other survivors swam away from burning gasoline and the potential for exploding depth charges, the fighters strafed them and the Catalina, sinking it and killing the unconscious crewmen. Just as sharks began to approach the remaining six airmen, including the two Canadians, a Japanese destroyer finally fished them out of the water.

Three of the survivors were badly wounded and Birchall himself had shrapnel in a leg. In response to questions from a Japanese officer, who "spoke perfect English," Birchall identified himself as the senior officer. He was immediately beaten to the deck. Every time he got up, he was beaten down again. The Japanese wanted to know if the Catalina's crew had sent a report about their warships. But Birchall maintained only the wireless operator would know—and he had been killed. In fact, the operator was one of the badly wounded airmen.

"He immediately became an air gunner," Birchall later related, "and stayed that way for the entire war." Just as he thought the Japanese were starting to believe him, they produced a radio intercept from Colombo asking Birchall's Catalina to repeat its message. The crew were all beaten and locked up.

The message from Birchall's aircraft had been garbled, but its meaning was clear: a Japanese attack was coming. When Somerville received this news, he ordered Colombo's large harbour cleared of all shipping. Unfortunately, the British had grossly underestimated the capabilities of Japanese aircraft—especially the range—and when 91 enemy bombers and 36 escort fighters appeared on the morning of April 5, RAF aircraft were still on the ground. Forty-two fighters, mostly Hurricanes, scrambled to intercept them. The Japanese lost only seven aircraft to the RAF's 19, but the aerial dogfights distracted the Japanese attackers from their primary mission and the port was only lightly damaged. Although the Japanese had sunk some warships and merchant ships at a cost of 17 aircraft, they cancelled further major forays toward the west. The fleet sailed back to the Pacific.

Birchall spent the next three and a half years as a prisoner of war in Japan and moved through four camps. Solitary confinement and daily beatings were routine; limited rations constituted a starvation diet. All prisoners, including sick ones, were forced to work. Birchall's natural leadership emerged, and he quickly earned the respect of other prisoners. When it came to food—the most essential commodity of all—he insisted that officers' meals be displayed for all to see. If anyone thought an officer had been given more or better food, that individual had the right to exchange his ration for the officer's. Cigarettes were a valuable commodity, bringing momentary relief to the PoWs. Birchall gave up smoking and convinced the other officers to do the same and donate their cigarette rations to the men.

Birchall was almost tortured to death for attacking a guard who was beating a prisoner, but he did not stop looking after his men. He led them in a sit-down strike and refused to work until the guards agreed not to beat or otherwise mistreat the very sick. Birchall's captors could not break his spirit and he was an inspiration to his comrades.

American troops freed Birchall after Japan surrendered. The diaries he kept while a prisoner and his testimony were used as evidence in war crimes trials of Japanese soldiers. On Feb. 2, 1946, newly promoted Wing Commander Birchall was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. His citation noted that as senior Allied officer in PoW camps, he “continually displayed the utmost concern for the welfare of his fellow prisoners.... Birchall continually endeavoured to improve the lot of his fellow prisoners.... The consistent gallantry and glowing devotion to his fellow prisoners of war that this officer displayed throughout his lengthy period of imprisonment are in keeping with the finest traditions of the [RCAF].”

Birchall also received the Distinguished Flying Cross for warning about the Japanese fleet. Prime Minister Winston Churchill later called Birchall's exploit “one of the most important single contributions to victory” and the courageous pilot became known as the “Saviour of Ceylon.” It was a term that Birchall never used.

Photo Credits:



Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame



Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame



Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame



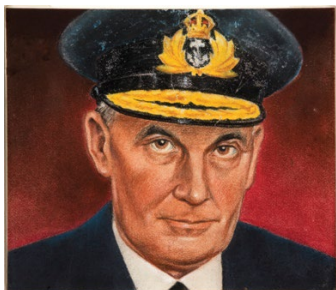
DND/PL-7404



DND/PL-18358



LAC/4009293



Wikimedia – Admiral Sir James Somerville

SQUADRON ANNIVERSARIES



The following Squadrons have celebrated or will celebrate their anniversary between **April 1st and June 30th, 2022**

5 Years

338 Junior Wildcats Brossard Optimist

30 Years

921 Optimiste Ancienne-Lorette

50 Years

818 Falcon

820 Chris Hadfield

821 Richelieu

55 Years

769 Centennaires

772 Vanier

773 Richibucto

60 Years

608 Duke of Edinburgh

719 Stora

65 Years

533 St. Albert

70 Years

555 Maple Leaf

80 Years

111 Pegasus

124 Peace River

126 Flying Lancers

128 Thorold

135 Bell-Irving

154 Aherst Anson

PRESIDENTS CLUB

Producing young leaders and outstanding Canadian citizens from coast to coast to coast is no small challenge.

By becoming a member of the Presidents Club, you will be at the center of positive change – fostering the same leadership qualities that have always made the Air Cadet program great.

The **President's Club** is about building Legacies! **Legacies for our youth. Legacies for our movement. Legacies for leaders like you.**

Continue the strong tradition of giving back to our youth. Your commitment will be commemorated **in perpetuity** as a key contributor to our future success. Like those before us, we invite you to play a part in ensuring that our valuable, national youth movement will succeed and prosper in the coming years.

It takes resources, vision, and leadership! For over 80 years, we have been fortunate to have pioneers and leaders who capture the vision and took on the challenge to build the Air Cadet program – **supporting more than 1 million youth who have participated in our program.**

The time is now to create new visions and to attract the leaders who will help build the program for the future.

The Presidents' Club has been established to help build and shape the future of the Air Cadet program and our League.

As leaders, we are focusing on new, national initiatives to support young people and our organization – from new training and employment streams, renewing and enhancing our fleet, expanding Cadet programs across the country, and working towards a new Centre of Excellence!

For further details and to discuss a Presidents Club membership package that is right for you, please contact our Presidents Club Coordinator, Krystel Blanchard at presidentsclub@aircadetleague.com



FRANKLIN PRINT



'Mountain View Morning'. High quality print depicting our 233 Glider, paper size 24"x 33"

Take advantage of this **Limited-Edition, high-quality print** that has been signed and numbered by artist Barry Franklin, a skilled artist and former Air Cadet.

'Mountain View Morning' portrays one of the most prestigious parts of the Air Cadet program as the youth of Canada pursue their glider wings!

Order your limited edition signed print today!

Visit:

<https://aircadetleague.com/store/>

AIR CADET LEAGUE OF CANADA KIT SHOP



Les entreprises Denis Ringuettes are able to offer you items such as plaques, wine or beer glasses, a kitchen apron, a wooden cutting board, an insulated coffee mug, a gift set of steak knives, an umbrella, a key ring, a backpack, a briefcase. The possibilities are great and you can even personalize some items on request. We now even have our own tartan.

Here are some examples of what you can purchase.



Contact Mathieu by phone 819-568-6669 or by email mathieu@denisringuette.com to order your items. You can also visit their website for **other items available**.
<https://denisringuette.com/boutique/>