



# Spotlight on ACL Female Volunteer & Former Cadet



## **Grounded in Service, Lifted By Flight!**

You would be hard pressed to find a local or provincial position that Rhonda Barraclough, Alberta's past chair, has not held. Beginning her Cadet career in 1975 at 24 Squadron in Red Deer Alberta, the first year females were officially included in the program, Rhonda advanced quickly through the ranks and became one of the very first female Chief Warrant Officers of an Air Cadet squadron.

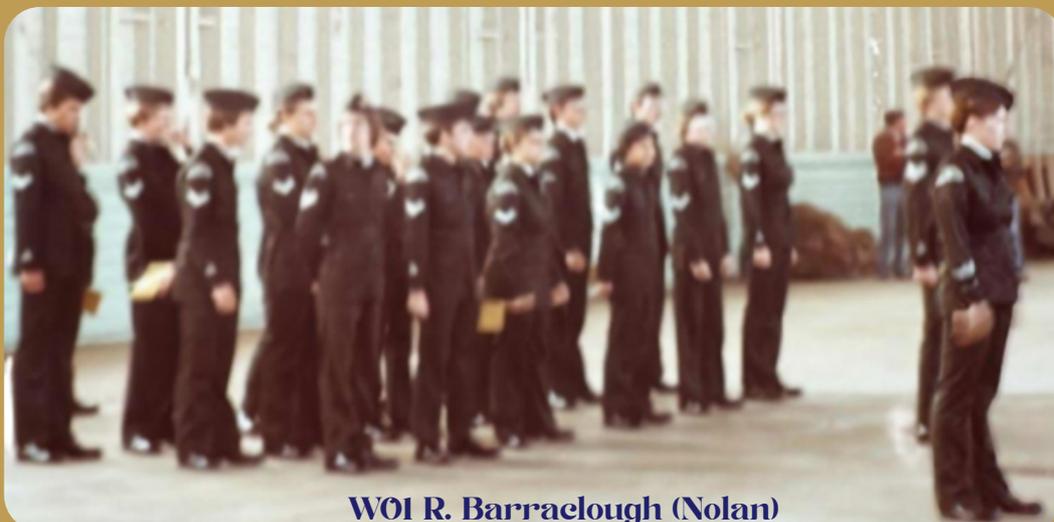
Adventure was Rhonda's "jam" and she took advantage of many opportunities, including participating in Tattoo's, a Cadet exchange to Cape Breton and a familiarization trip to Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington. Her annual summer training began at CFB Penhold with leadership training, technical training and later earning her flying scholarship and pilot's license in Brandon, MB.

Upon graduating from the Cadet program in 1980, and during her time in university, Rhonda immediately transitioned to the Cadet Instructor List (CIL) as an Officer Cadet and spent several summers working at Penhold and the balance of the year as an officer at 24 Red Deer Squadron, where she progressed to the rank of Captain. She also joined the Central Alberta Gliding Team, earned her Glider Pilot license and worked weekends at the gliding centre training Cadets. Moving to Calgary in 1985, Rhonda spent two years as an Officer at 781 Squadron while completing her Bachelor's degree in Social Work.

As happens with many Cadets, Rhonda met many lifelong friends while in the program who she continues to be close to. She also met and married, Bob Barraclough, who remained in the program from his Cadet days and was a long-time volunteer for the Air Cadet League. Rhonda continued to develop her career working closely with government and child welfare programs, including almost 38 years in the not-for-profit sector, where she continues to consult.

From 1987 to 2007, life and career priorities led Rhonda and Bob to British Columbia, after Bob suffered a life changing accident. Although this period temporarily paused their direct involvement in the Cadet program, they remained connected to the cadet community through enduring friendships. During this time, they also welcomed their son, Jonathan, to their life.

BC did not feel like home, and in 2007, Rhonda moved back to Edmonton for both family and career opportunities. It was no surprise that having observed the profound influence Air Cadets had on both his parents, Jonathan began his Cadet career at 810 Grant McConachie Squadron in Edmonton. In no time at all, both Rhonda and Bob joined the SSC and quickly became very active in the program on the League side. Rhonda gave her time developing the squadron's effective speaking program, coaching cadets for scholarship boards, supporting fundraising, and any other needs at the squadron.



**WO1 R. Barraclough (Nolan)**



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Jonathan became a second-generation Air Cadet, graduating from the squadron as chief, and moving on to being a Civilian Instructor, CIC officer, and later joining the Canadian Armed Forces where he currently serves as a Signal Officer.

Refusing to “graduate” when Jonathan did, Rhonda’s involvement expanded provincially through the Alberta Provincial Committee where she served as Wing Director, Aviation Director, Vice-Chairperson, Chairperson (2019–2023), and continues to serve as Past Chairperson. Rhonda’s commitment and contributions to the Air Cadet Program continues over 50 years! This includes her generous annual sponsorship of a scholarship in Alberta dedicated to Leadership, that she and Jonathan implemented in Bob’s name following his passing.

When asked about the Air Cadet experience and what it meant to her, Rhonda said: “I am deeply grateful for everything I have learned and experienced in the program, my lifelong friendships and incredible opportunities. I firmly believe the Air Cadet program is the finest youth organization available for Canadian teens today.”

Rhonda listed the following five key impacts of her experience with the program, which are common with so many other Cadet alumni:

- Adventure and travel
- Friends for life
- Confidence
- Leadership and citizenship
- Compassion and inclusion

Thank you, Rhonda, for your commitment and contributions to the Cadet program!

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