In March 1939, the Royal Canadian Air Force had a total of 360 officers and 2797 airmen. During the course of the war, over 260,000 patriotic men and women enlisted in the RCAF.

Our Cover

Our cover this month comes from the CATPM Archives. This photograph was received in 2004 with a group of 10 others from a donor living in Ottawa, Ontario. The caption on the back stated: “Hostess House at the gate at No. 3 B&G (Bombing & Gunnery School), MacDonald MB.” The picture was resized to fit our cover. The actual picture is a landscape with additional hostesses featured.

Here we see eleven women taking a short break from their knitting to make this picture. A lucky young man stands beside his mother in an excellent kid-size reproduction of a Royal Canadian Air Force uniform tunic. He is a very young version of a Sergeant (Pilot) judging by his stripes and badge.

We assume there were many Hostess Houses at the schools of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and other Royal Canadian Air Force facilities where airmen and airwomen were able to find some civilian social interaction, a cup of tea and maybe a game of crib or checkers. We found Hostess Houses at only three Bombing & Gunnery Schools – Paulson and MacDonald Manitoba and Mossbank Saskatchewan. They were run mostly by patriotic local kind-hearted women who with this low-key but important work, did much to bolster the spirit of those in uniform.
CATPM Ladies’ Auxiliary
Comes Through with Major Donation

Early in March, the CATPM Ladies Auxiliary held their first meeting of 2018 at the museum. Among the topics discussed was what projects they could support at the museum. The Ladies decided to provide needed financial support for the installation of a large sign at the entrance to the museum grounds.

At a planning meeting in the fall of 2017, that committee decided to put up a sign at our front door with the look of a WWII RCAF station sign but with information related to our museum. A number of schools had these signs – generally about eight feet high and 12 feet or so wide, mounted about two or three feet off the ground. Typically, they included a RCAF roundel, the type of school, name and number of the school on the sign and a lattice decoration between the sign and the ground.

Based on revenues from last year, including their very successful Westjet ticket raffle, the ladies decided to donate $4000 to the construction of this sign – a sizable chunk of the full cost.

Once again, thank-you members of the Ladies’ Auxiliary. Your group, through its hard work, always comes up with much needed funding for various museum projects and we appreciate that!

We received the following email from Gordon Brennand, a charter member of the museum.

I read with interest the article describing AMERICANS WHO SERVED IN THE RCAF DURING THE WAR. The article was well written and I enjoyed the read. However you missed one American pilot who made a significant contribution during the war and in peacetime. Wing Commander Joe McCarthy from New York City joined our Airforce early in the war and trained as a pilot. He served as a bomber pilot and completed two tours. His last tour was with 617 Squadron, the famous Dambusters. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, The Distinguished Flying Cross and bar. One DFC was awarded for his part in the dams raid. He stayed in the RCAF after the war. I first met him at RCAF Station Chatham in N.B. in 1952 when I was a student pilot training on the F-86 Sabre jet. He served as a Wing Commander serving as Chief Administrative Officer, and I was a Flying Officer student, so had little, if any, social contact. I did, however got to know him much better in later years. He was the O.C. of the flying training school at Penhold when I lost track of Joe. If you would recognize his contribution, I am sure our members would be appreciative. Joe McCarthy deserves recognition.
Gordon is referring to the story "Canada’s Yanks: Air Force Part 16" by Hugh Halliday in the July 2004 Legion Magazine that we reprinted last summer. Joe McCarthy obviously was a distinguished member of the Royal Canadian Air Force and does deserve recognition for his service.

On May 1, 2018, Daniel Mellsop, the High Commissioner of New Zealand made a special visit to the CATP Museum to visit one of the sites where his grandfather trained while in the New Zealand Air Force during World War II. As most of our readers are aware, the CATP Museum is located on the former site of the No. 12 Service Flying Training School. It was a sentimental journey for Mr. Mellsop who toured the museum, had lunch with museum staff and dignitaries and took a long ride in our Harvard which included a flypast of the former BCATP Central Navigation School at Rivers, Manitoba. He also spent time visiting the museum’s RCAF memorial which includes the names of 84 RNZAF airmen killed in Canada while training. He was given a copy of the museum’s memorial book "They Shall Grow Not Old."

In a touching speech for staff and visitors, Mr. Mellsop talked about the generous welcome some 8500 New Zealand airmen received while in Canada and the friendships developed with Canadians by these affable New Zealanders.

Mr. Mellsop’s grandfather was Pilot Officer John Basil Bretherton, DFC, who undertook advanced pilot training in Brandon in 1942. Mr. Mellsop was presented with a photographic print of his grandfather while at No. 12. He said that his trip to the Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum will go down as one of his most memorable experiences in Canada while serving as High Commissioner.

On June 19 the CATP Museum was honored by a special presentation from a group from the Tanner’s Crossing School in Minnedosa Manitoba. The group included the two students, who built and donated the pedal-powered replica of a Harvard aircraft, along with a school supervisor and another youngster who took this kid-sized plane for a circuit in the hangar. This is the second replica in the museum’s pedal-plane fleet – the first being a kid-size Tiger Moth aircraft. We thank this group for this valued donation.

In June, the museum’s 1939 International Truck made the trek to Cruise Night in Brandon’s downtown to show-off for the city’s classic automobile aficionados. Not only was this good-looking truck on display at this monthly summer event, but a wrecked Avro Anson engine was loaded on its bed to represent what could have been a use made of this vehicle by the RCAF in World War II. Although we wonder whether the color is accurate for RCAF usage, it is representative of the hundreds of generic vehicles appropriated for the air force during the war.

This beautiful artifact came to us from the City of Brandon which for decades used the truck in its Parks Department. We are eternally grateful to the City of Brandon for its continuous and tremendous support to the museum.

Fans of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum will not want to miss our 2018 Air Display which is scheduled to occur at the museum on August 9, 2018. The gates will open at 4:00 pm and the air display, featuring our flying aircraft and others, will begin at 6:00. Visitors will be able to visit with the aircraft on the apron – close scrutiny and photographs are encouraged. Admission is $10 for adults while children 12 and under will be admitted free to this event. See the ad above for information.
Dependent’s Hospitalisation Scheme for 32’s Married Men

On August 14th, the Moose Jaw General Hospital Board signed an agreement on terms for hospitalisation of the dependents of R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. personnel. This provides for the care at considerably reduced rates compared with those normally charged, of the wife and also the children, up to the age of 16, of any subscriber.

Clearly, this is going to be very great help to all our married personnel, for one or two of whom at times things have been made a little difficult through the cost of nursing sick wives and children back to health; and bringing a child into the world is going to be a less expensive business for them, too. The whole scheme is an admirable one, and we cannot imagine any married man here failing to take advantage of the excellent terms granted by the agreement.

Membership dues are paid to a group leader and become smaller as the number of members under one leader grows larger. Thus the monthly payment for each member in a group under 50 strong is $1.00; in one over 50 but under 100, 85¢; over 100, but under 200, 80¢; over 200 members, 75¢. You will see that the stronger the support, the more advantageous it becomes for all concerned.

The realization of this long-projected scheme is due largely to the efforts of the Station Chaplain, S/L M.S. Flint, to whom the thanks of all who benefit by it will be given.

It is understood that a pamphlet, giving full details of the terms of the scheme and membership agreement, will shortly be available. We urge strongly that every married man in this camp join without delay; particularly as the benefits grow more extensive with length of membership.

Yes, No ‘Bus!
Sardine Canners Praise M.J.T.C.

It is understood that a noted sardine canner has offered the Moose Jaw Transportation Company a handsome fee to explain by what secret process they can get any given quantity of airmen into a space far too small to hold them. They feel that this information would give them a lead over all their competitors.

From our point of view, we would prefer that the company go into the sardine business altogether, while we are still alive and breathing; we don’t expect to live forever; but an early end by suffocation has, although we do not wish to appear unreasonable, no appeal whatsoever. Worse tragedy befell our little friend Herbert. He was the last man to get on
the 'bus; and although he was seen to board it, nobody saw him get off. He was, alas, only a little chap; it is not known whether he was squeezed out through a crack in the door, or flattened so completely against it that only chemical analysis could have shown if his remains were spread evenly all over the woodwork. In any case, he is no longer with us.

*Readers may recall a letter to the editor blasting the MJTC for its service in a previous issue of CONTACT – it would appear this organization was a favourite whipping boy for the Prairie Flyer.*

There are some airmen in this camp who appear to imagine that loyalty to their native land requires the depreciation of Canada and all things Canadian. They can't meet a local person without telling him or her that everything is better in the Old Country - or was before the war. This attitude of wilful depreciation often leads them into absurdities.

I am sure that when asked out to dinner they don't say to the host and hostess "This food is terrible" or "What a lousy room!" (though on second thoughts I'm not so sure).

The Canadians, let us remember, are our hosts, and there is such a thing as politeness.

**Looking at Life**
The news of the death of His Majesty’s youngest brother came as a shock to all of us, English and Canadians, here in the Dominion. Some of the personnel at this camp remember the occasion when the Duke (*of Kent*) came here on his tour of the Air Training Schools. The interest which he showed in every department of camp activity proved that his rank of Air Commodore meant more to him than just another honorary distinction. He felt himself to be a member of the Royal Air Force, and as such he died. It was his gift to inspire in the people an affection that outstretched the normal demands of loyalty. He was liked everywhere for his easy charm and informal manner.

Only the day before we heard of the tragedy, I received a letter from an old colleague who had had the privilege of accompanying him on a recent tour in England, and the impression I had from that account conforms with the impression I received from those who saw him or met him in this camp. He had that very human touch which has distinguished every member of the House of Windsor and has made royalty a popular institution in a democratic land. (We may, incidentally, recall that celebrated occasion when he was seen in a London street wearing a shoe on one foot and a sandal on the other.)

Of all the Royal Family he was the most intellectual. He cared for art, admired the music of Sibelius, and preferred the company of gifted people (note his friendship with Noel Coward) to that of titled nonentities.

Our sympathy goes out to the Duchess, of whom we still think as "Marina", to Queen Mary, who must now know the grief that visits a mother in this grim time, and to the King and Duke of Gloucester who will sorely miss their brother's companionship and support. We console also with the Duke of Windsor, for whom the news must have come as a terrible blow, and we may wonder if he will now be asked to return and take his place at the side of the King.

Some of us when we heard the news found our minds going back to that day - how long ago? - when George and Marina were married. None of us knew then that the Duke would be killed in the course of a second great war with Germany.

In August 1942, King George VI's younger brother, Prince George, Duke of Kent was killed at age 39 on active service with the Royal Air Force. He along with 13 others were killed when their Short Sunderland flying boat crashed in Scotland.
This is London...

A special archival item was included in a recent donation to the museum. It was a letter from the famous American radio journalist Edward R. Murrow with a typewritten transcript of his famous broadcast recounting his experience flying with a Royal Air Force bomber crew to bomb Berlin. It was addressed to a Group Captain J.A. Hutcheson who must have been impressed with the broadcast and wanted to pass its content to others who may have missed it on the radio.

We have copied the words of this broadcast to our newsletter. We found the broadcast itself, available online at a website called American Rhetoric – Online Speech Bank. It can be found at:

http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/edwardrmurroworchestratedhell.htm

We suggest you read the transcript and listen to the broadcast simultaneously. It is a thrilling recounting of that, and many other bomber missions.

This is London. Last night, some of the young gentlemen of the RAF took me to Berlin. The pilot was called Jock [Abercrombie]. The crew captains walked into the briefing room, looked at the maps and charts, and sat down with their big celluloid pads on their knees. The atmosphere was that of a school and a church. The weatherman gave us the weather. The pilots were reminded that Berlin is Germany’s greatest center of war production. The intelligence officer told us how many heavy and light ack-ack guns, how many searchlights we might expect to encounter. Then, Jock, the wing commander, explained the system of markings, the kind of flares that would be used by the pathfinders. He said that concentration was the secret of success in these raids; that as long as the aircraft stayed well-bunched, they would protect each other.

The captains of aircraft walked out. I noticed that the big Canadian with the slow, easy grin had printed "Berlin" at the top of his pad and then embellished it with a scroll. The red-headed English boy with the two-weeks'-old mustache was the last to leave the room. Late in the afternoon we went to the locker room to draw parachutes, Mae Wests and all the rest. As we dressed, a couple of the Australians were whistling.

Walking out to the bus that was to take us to the aircraft, I heard the station loudspeakers announcing that that evening all personnel would be able to see a film, Star Spangled Rhythm - free.

We went out and stood around the big, black four-motored Lancaster, "D for Dog." A small station wagon delivered a thermos bottle of coffee, chewing gum, an orange, and a bit of chocolate for each man. Up in that part of England the air hums and throbs with the sound of aircraft motors all day, but for half an hour before takeoff the skies are dead, silent, and expectant. A lone hawk hovered over the airfield, absolutely still as he faced into the wind. Jack, the tail gunner, said, "It'd be nice to
fly like that.” D-Dog eased around the perimeter track to the end of the runway. We sat there for a moment. The green light flashed and we were rolling - ten seconds ahead of schedule.

The takeoff was smooth as silk. The wheels came up, and D-Dog started the long climb. As we came up through the clouds, I looked right and left and counted fourteen black Lancasters climbing for the place where men must burn oxygen to live. The sun was going down and its red glow made rivers of lakes of fire on tops of the clouds. Down to the southward, the clouds piled up to form castles, battlements, and whole cities, all tinged with red.

Soon we were out over the North Sea. Dave, the navigator, asked Jock if he couldn't make a little more speed. We were nearly two minutes late. By this time, we were all using oxygen. The talk on the intercom was brief and crisp. Everyone sounded relaxed. For a while, the eight of us in our little world in exile moved over the sea. There was a quarter moon on the starboard beam and Jock's quiet voice came through the intercom, "That'll be flak ahead." We were approaching the enemy coast. The flak looked like a cigarette lighter in a dark room - one that won't light, sparks but no flame - the sparks crackling just above the level of the cloud tops. We flew steady and straight, and soon the flak was directly below us. D-Dog rocked a little from right to left, but that wasn't caused by the flak. We were in the slipstream of other Lancasters ahead, and we were over the enemy coast.

And then a strange thing happened. The aircraft seemed to grow smaller. Jack in the rear turret, Wally the mid-upper gunner, Titch the wireless operator, all seemed somehow to draw closer to Jock in the cockpit. It was as though each man's shoulder was against the others. The understanding was complete. The intercom came to life, and Jock said, "Two aircraft on the port beam." Jack in the tail said, "Okay, sir. They're Lancs." The whole crew was a unit and wasn't wasting words.

The cloud below was ten-tenths. The blue-green jet of the exhausts licked back along the leading edge, and there were other aircraft all around us. The whole great aerial armada was hurtling towards Berlin. We flew so for twenty minutes, when Jock looked up at a vapor trail curling across above us, remarking in a conversational tone that, from the look of it, he thought there was a fighter up there. Occasionally the angry red of ack-ack burst through the clouds, but it was far away, and we took only an academic interest. We were flying in the third wave.

Jock asked Wally in the mid-upper turret, and Jack in the rear turret, if they were cold. They said they were all right and thanked him for asking. He even asked how I was and I said, "All right so far." The cloud was beginning to thin out. Off to the north we could see lights, and the flak began to liven up ahead of us. Buzz, the bomb-aimer, crackled through on the intercom, "There's a battle going on the starboard beam." We couldn't see the aircraft, but we could see the jets of red tracer being exchanged. Suddenly, there was a burst of
yellow flame and Jock remarked, "That's a fighter going down. Note the position." The whole thing was interesting, but remote. Dave, the navigator, who was sitting back with his maps, charts, and compasses, said, "The attack ought to begin in exactly two minutes." We were still over the clouds.

But suddenly those dirty gray clouds turned white and we were over the outer searchlight defenses. The clouds below us were white, and we were black. D-Dog seemed like a black bug on a white sheet. The flak began coming up, but none of it close. We were still a long way from Berlin. I didn't realize just how far. Jock observed, "There's a kite on fire dead ahead." It was a great, golden, slow-moving meteor slanting toward the earth. By this time we were about thirty miles from our target area in Berlin. That thirty miles was the longest flight I have ever made.

Dead on time, Buzz the bomb-aimer reported, "Target indicators going down." At the same moment, the sky ahead was lit up by bright yellow flares. Off to starboard another kite went down in flames. The flares were sprouting all over the sky, reds and greens and yellows, and we were flying straight for the center of the fireworks. D-Dog seemed to be standing still, the four propellers thrashing the air, but we didn't seem to be closing in. The clouds had cleared, and off to the starboard a Lanc was caught by at least fourteen searchlight beams. We could see him twist and turn and finally break out. But still, the whole thing had a quality of unreality about it. No one seemed to be shooting at us, but it was getting lighter all the time. Suddenly, a tremendous big blob of yellow light appeared dead ahead; another to the right and another to the left. We were flying straight for them.

Jock pointed out to me the dummy fires and flares to right and left, but we kept going in. Dead ahead there was a whole chain of red flares looking like stoplights. Another Lanc was coned on our starboard beam. The lights seemed to be supporting it. Again we could see those little bubbles of colored lead driving at it from two sides. The German fighters were at him. And then, with no warning at all, D-Dog was filled with an unhealthy white light. I was standing just behind Jock and could see all the seams on the wings. His quiet Scots voice beat into my ears, "Steady lads, we've been coned." His slender body lifted half out of the seat as he jammed the control column forward and to the left. We were going down. Jock was wearing woolen gloves with the fingers cut off. I could see his fingernails turn white as he gripped the wheel. And then I was on my knees, flat on the deck, for he had whipped the Dog back into a climbing turn. The knees should have been strong enough to support me, but they weren't, and the stomach seemed in some danger of letting me down too. I picked myself up and looked out again. It seemed that one big searchlight, instead of being twenty thousand feet below, was mounted right on our wingtip. D-Dog was corkscrewing. As we rolled down on the other side, I began to see what was happening to Berlin.

The clouds were gone, and the sticks of incendiaries from the preceding waves made the place look like a badly laid-out city with the streetlights on. The small incendiaries were going down like a fistful of white rice thrown on a piece of black velvet. As Jock hauled the Dog up again, I was thrown to the other side of the cockpit. And there below were more incendiaries, glowing white and then turning red. The cookies, the four-thousand-pound high explosives, were bursting below like great sunflowers gone mad. And then, as we started down again, still held in the lights, I remembered that the Dog still had one of those cookies and a whole basket of incendiaries in his belly, and the lights still held us, and I was very frightened.

While Jock was flinging us about in the air, he suddenly flung over the intercom, "Two aircraft on the port beam." I looked astern and saw Wally, the mid-upper, whip his turret around to port, and then looked up to see a single-engine fighter slide just above us. The other aircraft was one of ours. Finally, we were out of the cone, flying level. I looked down, and the white fires had turned red. They were beginning to merge and spread, just like butter does on a hot plate. Jock and Buzz, the bomb-aimer, began to discuss the target. The smoke was getting thick down below. Buzz said he liked the two green flares on the ground almost dead ahead. He began calling his directions. And just then a new bunch of big flares went
down on the far side of the sea of flame and flare that seemed to be directly below us. He thought that would be a better aiming point. Jock agreed and we flew on.

The bomb doors were opened. Buzz called his directions: "Five left, five left." And then, there was a gentle, confident upward thrust under my feet and Buzz said, "Cookie gone." A few seconds later, the incendiaries went, and D-Dog seemed lighter and easier to handle. I thought I could make out the outline of streets below, but the bomb-aimer didn't agree, and he ought to know. By this time, all those patches of white on black had turned yellow and started to flow together. Another searchlight caught us but didn't hold us. Then, through the intercom came the word, "One can of incendiaries didn't clear. We're still carrying it." And Jock replied, "Is it a big one or a little one?" The word came back: "Little one, I think, but I'm not sure. I'll check." More of those yellow flares came down and hung about us. I haven't seen so much light since the war began.

Finally, the intercom announced that it was only a small container of incendiaries left, and Jock remarked, "Well, it's hardly worth going back and doing another run up for that." If there had been a good fat bundle left, he would have gone back through that stuff and done it all over again. I began to breathe, and to reflect again -- that all men would be brave if only they could leave their stomachs at home -- when there was a tremendous whoomph, an unintelligible shout from the tail gunner, and D-Dog shivered and lost altitude. I looked to the port side and there was a Lancaster that seemed close enough to touch. He had whipped straight under us -- missed us by twenty-five, fifty feet, no one knew how much.

The navigator sang out the new course and we were heading for home. And Jock was doing what I had heard him tell his pilots to do so often -- flying dead on course. He flew straight into a huge green searchlight, and as he rammed the throttles home remarked, "We'll have a little trouble getting away from this one." And again D-Dog dove, climbed, and twisted, and was finally free. We flew level then. I looked on the port beam at the target area. There was a red, sullen, obscene glare. The fires seemed to have found each other and we were heading home.

For a little while it was smooth sailing. We saw more battles. Then another plane in flames, but no one could tell whether it was ours or theirs. We were still near the target. Dave, the navigator said, "Hold her steady, skipper. I want to get an astral sight." And Jock held her steady. And the flak began coming up at us. It seemed to be very close. It was winking off both wings, but the Dog was steady. Finally, Dave said, "Okay, skipper. Thank you very much." And a great orange blob of flak smacked up straight in front of us, and Jock said "I think they're shooting at us." I'd thought so for some time. And he began to throw D for Dog up, around, and about again. When we were clear of the barrage, I asked him how close the bursts were and he said, "Not very close. When they're really near, you can smell 'em." That proved nothing for I'd been holding my breath.

Jack sang out from the rear turret, said his oxygen was getting low -- thought maybe the lead had frozen. Titch, the wireless operator, went scrambling back with a new mask and a bottle of oxygen. Dave, the navigator, said, "We're crossing the coast." My mind went back to the time I had crossed that
coast in 1938, in a plane that had taken off from Prague. Just ahead of me sat two refugees from Vienna -- an old man and his wife. The copilot came back and told them that we were outside German territory. The old man reached out and grasped his wife's hand. The work that was done last night was a massive blow of retribution, for all those who have fled from the sound of shots and blows on a stricken continent.

We began to lose height over the North Sea. We were over England's shores. The land was dark beneath us. Somewhere down there below, American boys were probably bombing up Fortresses and Liberators, getting ready for the day's work. We were over the home field. We called the control tower and the calm, clear voice of an English girl replied, "Greetings D-Dog. You are diverted to Mulebag." We swung round, contacted Mulebag, came in on the flare path, touched down very gently, ran along to the end of the runway and turned left. And Jock, the finest pilot in Bomber Command, said to the control tower, "D-Dog clear of runway."

When we went in for interrogation, I looked on the board and saw that the big, slow-smiling Canadian and the red-headed English boy with the two-weeks'-old moustache hadn't made it. They were missing.

There were four reporters on this operation. Two of them didn't come back. Two friends of mine, Norman Stockton of Australian Associated Newspapers, and Lowell Bennett, an American representing International News Service. There is something of a tradition amongst reporters, that those who are prevented by circumstances from filing their stories will be covered by their colleagues. This has been my effort to do so. In the aircraft in which I flew, the men who flew and fought it poured into my ears their comments on fighters, flak, and flares in the same tone that they would have used in reporting a host of daffodils. I have no doubt that Bennett and Stockton would have given you a better report of last night's activities.

Berlin was a kind of orchestrated hell -- a terrible symphony of light and flame. It isn't a pleasant kind of warfare. The men doing it speak of it as a job. Yesterday afternoon, when the tapes were stretched out on the big map all the way to Berlin and back again, a young pilot with old eyes said to me, "I see we're working again tonight." That's the frame of mind in which the job is being done. The job isn't pleasant; it's terribly tiring. Men die in the sky while others are roasted alive in their cellars. Berlin last night wasn't a pretty sight. In about thirty-five minutes it was hit with about three times the amount of stuff that ever came down on London in a night-long blitz. This is a calculated, remorseless campaign of destruction. Right now the mechanics are probably working on D-Dog, getting him ready to fly again. I return you now to CBS, New York.

CBS Announcer: You have been listening to Edward R. Murrow in an eyewitness report of his experiences in one of the bombers that raided Berlin last night. At 6:45pm, Eastern War Time, Mr. Murrow will again be heard over most of these stations with a report on the highlights of his story. This is the Columbia Broadcasting System.
Stray bomb silenced the fiddler

During the Second World War, summer evenings on the Prairies were often a time to relax with friends, and an outdoor dance was a particularly welcome diversion from worries about friends and relatives fighting in Europe.

On July 16, 1943, a Red Cross fund-raising dance organized by Irene Fletcher, the wife of an air force trainee, was held on her father's farm located southwest of Brandon (Manitoba). Neighbours arrived to the sight of a beautiful moon, the plaintive wail of a violin and the laughter of friends. No one could have imagined the tragedy that was about to take the life of one of their own.

Just before midnight, everyone was asked to form up for a square dance. Hugh Ferguson, a member of the band, had just turned to speak to the pianist when chaos broke out.

With a deafening roar and a blinding flash, a corner of the dance floor exploded. As panic swept over the crowd, Ferguson turned and saw Lloyd Shields lying over a gapping hole in the floor, a pool of blood spreading from his body.

Dropping his violin and kneeling beside his mortally wounded friend, Ferguson heard a weak, "Take my shoes off, Hugh." As Ferguson reached down, he saw that his friend's left foot had been completely blown away in the explosion.

Above the panic stricken crowd, a low-flying plane began a slow turn. Fearing it was about to make a second run over the dance floor, Ferguson shouted, "Put out the lights!" and except for a single lamp held over Shields everything went dark.

To those milling about, it was obvious that Shields was dying. As the closest friend of the victim, Ferguson was asked to fetch Shields' parents, who lived on a neighbouring farm, with the hope they could arrive while their son still drew breath. Unfortunately, they did not arrive in time.

While he was gone, others wounded in the attack were attended to. According to Isabelle Ferguson, Irene Fletcher's sister, when the panic that followed the explosion finally lifted, revellers quickly noticed that dozens of people had been injured by flying shrapnel. Since there was no ambulance service available, the injured helped each other into cars for the trip to the Brandon hospital.

At the inquest that followed, it was determined that the bomb that killed Shields was a 10-pound practice explosive dropped inadvertently by an Royal Canadian Air Force trainer on its way to a bombing range four miles west of the scene of the accident.

Lloyd Wesley Shields was 23 when he became the only Manitoban killed by a bomb dropped in Canada during the Second World War. He is buried in the Brandon cemetery.

The RAF Modular Practice Bomb weighed 11.5 pounds. It was loaded with one of two compounds – one to generate smoke for daytime bombing practice and another, to generate a flash for nighttime practice.

There is one of four BCATP Bombing & Gunnery Schools from which this aircraft and crew probably originated – No. 2 BGS Mossbank SK, No. 3 BGS Macdonald MB, No. 5 BGS Dafoe SK and No. BGS Paulson MB.

The Avro Anson, Fairey Battle, Bristol Bolingbroke, and Westland Lysander were the standard aircraft used at B&GS schools.

Listen to that Spitfire sing!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5rGyP6SSYM
It Takes 56 to Fly A Short Stirling on a Bombing Mission

This Short "Stirling" bomber, with its four Bristol "Merlin" engines giving it 6,400 b.h.p., has a wing span of 99 feet, length of 87 ft. 3 in., height of 22 ft. 9 in., gross wing area of 1,460 sq. ft., and a weight, loaded, of 70,000 pounds, has a maximum speed of nearly 300 m.p.h. at 14,000 feet. It can carry a bomb load of eight tons. It is manned by a crew of seven, carries two guns amidships in upper turret, four guns in tail turret. To operate this aircraft, a total of 56 personnel is necessary.

1. The air crew; captain, 2nd pilot, flight engineer, navigator (radiographer), wireless operator, air gunner, bomb aimer and two air gunners.
2. Meteorological officer.
4. Flying control officer.
5. Flight maintenance, numbering 12.
7. Bombing and aiming, numbering 11.
8. Bombing tractor crew.
9. The 26ft. battery is operated by No. 6 group.
10. Oil burner drivers.
11. Petrol bowser driven (or borrowed) with one A.C. 1.

Our Fall 2018 issue of CONTACT will be available in October 2018.
Thank you for supporting the Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum