

History of the RCAF



Its origins springing from Canadian air and ground crew who served with the RFC and RAF in the early days of the First World War, the Royal Canadian Air Force rose to become the fourth largest allied air force by the end of the Second World War.

RCAF personnel and aircraft served in all theatres of operation during the Second World War. Significant amongst the many contributions of the RCAF were the more than 131,000 Commonwealth troops who trained in Canada under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and the 40,000 who served in Bomber Command's RAF Squadrons - especially the Canadian-manned No. 6 Bomber Group.

The post war RCAF provided frontline support to NATO, NORAD and UN commitments and after its amalgamation with the other two services under the guise of Air Command, continues to serve with these organisations. Since the Second World War, Canadian Air Forces have served combat missions in Korea, Afghanistan and Bosnia, and assisted with humanitarian missions throughout the world. Today, Canada's Air Force continues the proud tradition established by the RCAF by contributing to essential combat operations in areas of conflict as well as supporting major international humanitarian and peacekeeping activities.



High Flight

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung
high in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air...

Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew -
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

- John Gillespie Magee, Jr



Royal Canadian Air Force Memorial Appeal



Two stations of the UK's Royal Air Force (RAF) have launched a fundraising project to create a lasting memorial to the Canadian airmen and women that came to Britain's aid during the Second World War.



Artist's impression of the Memorial



Royal Canadian Air Force Memorial Appeal



Michael Oliver commented: "It is very important that we remember the people who fought alongside Great Britain during the Second World War and a memorial to the Canadian Royal Air Force at the Arboretum is long overdue."

The Memorial

The central monolith is assembled from 3 individual granite blocks that, together, represent the red/white/red of the Canadian Flag as it would drape from a horizontal flag staff. The maple leaf has been an enduring symbol of Canada for over three centuries, most significantly with Canadian military units. From above, the monument will appear as a Roundel of the RCAF with the names of the 13 Provinces and Territories of Canada engraved in the outer circle. On 2 faces will be a short history of the Canadian Air Forces (one each in English and French languages) and the remaining 2 faces bear the poem "High Flight" written by John Gillespie Magee who fought with a Canadian Squadron until his death in 1941.



The Project

Two stations of the UK's Royal Air Force (RAF) have launched a fundraising project to create a lasting memorial to the Canadian airmen and women that came to Britain's aid during the Second World War. The stations, RAF Leeming and Linton on Ouse - both in the north of the UK - were home to Canadian airmen during the war.

The memorial will be located at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, the UK's year-round centre of Remembrance, and will be a stone monolith with granite information panels in English and French, topped by a stone maple leaf.

An RAF-led fundraising effort is now underway inviting individuals and businesses in Canada and the UK to join the campaign in an attempt to raise the funds needed to complete the work by Summer 2011. Michael Oliver, Chairman of Oliver Valves - a British manufacturing business that builds valves used by the world's biggest energy firms - has agreed to personally underwrite the project.

The RAF and Oliver Valves have also written to major Canadian banks asking for their support. Major Jason C Furlong of the Canadian Armed Forces said: "The Royal Canadian Air Force contributed more than 130,000 aircrew to the war effort - the fourth largest allied air force and over 10,000 lost their lives. The Arboretum already contains memorials to the Royal Australian Air Force and the Norwegian Navy, but a monument to the Canadian airmen is conspicuous by its absence. Fundraising for projects like these can be a long-drawn out process, but the generous offer we have received from Michael Oliver will allow us to quickly rectify the absence of a fitting memorial."



UK Donations

For donations from the UK, please send cheques to the Project President, Flight Lieutenant Hall.

Cheques should be addressed to **RAF Leeming Service Funds** and sent to:

**Flt Lt A Hall
609 (West Riding) Squadron
RAF Leeming
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 9NJ**

Canadian Donations

For individual donations from Canada, please make cheques payable to RCAFA Trust Fund and send to:

**RCAF Association Trust Fund
P.O. Box 2460 Station 'D'
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5W6**

Cheques should be annotated:
Service Funds RAF Leeming

The Trust Fund will issue tax receipts for amounts of \$10 or more. Unfortunately due to the accounting rules established by the RAF we cannot set up an online donation facility. We are currently investigating various ways to enable online donations.