



PROP WASH



CANADIAN MILITARY FLIGHT ENGINEERS NEWSLETTER

YEAR END BULLETIN

December 2017

Message from The President Greetings one an all.



As we approach the end of 2017, I thought it important to bring up some points of discussion to the membership. The first point to discuss and I'm sure noticed by everyone, is the lack of our thrice yearly Propwash news letter this year. That was a decision made by me after talking to Bruce Dyer. For the last few years, Bruce has been begging the membership to send in articles for the Propwash with very little or no success. It was to a point where Bruce was spending a considerable amount of time searching the web for articles that would be of interest to our membership, more time than I thought was fair to Bruce. With that in mind, and after some discussion with Bruce, I made the decision not to publish a Propwash in April to see what kind of reaction we would get. I must admit, I was disappointed with the reaction we did get. I had one member contact me and enquire about the lack of an April edition of the Propwash. At this point, the decision was made not to publish the August edition to see if we would elicit any more responses from the membership. I had one more enquiry and that was it. For me, the message is loud and clear, there is no real interest in the thrice yearly Propwash and it is not worth Bruce's time and effort to put an edition together three times a year.

That leads me to the next point which is the Web site. Perhaps it is time to make better use of the web site and save on the cost of printing and mailing the Propwash, which is our largest yearly expense. I realize that we currently have issues with access (Passwords) for parts of the web site, but I am currently trying to work out those issues with some help from the Base here in Trenton. I think it is time to move into the twenty first century as more of our members are on line than those who are not, and the numbers that are not on line are decreasing steadily. I don't want to appear cold hearted or uncaring, but many organizations have switched over to electronic communications out of necessity. For organizations that are national like the CMFEA, it is the easiest and quickest way to communicate with the membership in a timely fashion, and overall is a lot less labour intensive. If we want our organization to move forward into the 21st century and attract the younger guys, electronic is the way to go.

Another issue we need to look at is our current membership fees. Our current membership fees are \$10.00 a year or \$100 life membership, but we are not currently holding reunions every two years, the Propwash at this time is in limbo and likely won't return as we know it. I think if we move toward electronic communications, we could get by with a \$10.00 life membership. There is really no need to have large sums of money for what is essentially a social group. We need some money to maintain the web site, but other than that, we don't need much. We currently have a healthy account balance, and if any member wants to know the balance, I would be glad to provide the info on request. Just an interesting side note, the current serving flight engineers have done a little research through DHH in Ottawa on the early history the flight engineer in the RCAF and have come up with a date, in 1944, as a birthday for flight engineers. It is not the full story but it is a start and perhaps we could look at assisting in putting together a history of the trade for the 100th anniversary of the RCAF. Just a thought.

The last point I would like to discuss is the CMFEA Executive. Over the years, it has slowly shrunk to where we have on paper a President, me the Vice President / Secretary Knock Knockleby, and Treasurer, Doug Gauthier. Doug took over the Treasurers job from Ray McIntosh when Ray asked to step aside after several years in the job. At the time, Doug said he would do the job for three years, which he has, and he has now asked to step aside. Bruce Dyer has been the editor of the Propwash as long as I can remember, and I have been on the executive now since we took over from John Trethowen and the Ottawa group in 2004. I was the Vice President until late 2009 when I took over President from Geoff Brogden when he stepped down. Currently, as well as being President, I am also the web master, I do membership, I handle the kit shop and I am also the person who mails out the propwash. I would be a liar if I said that I was not a little bit tired after almost 14 years on the executive. In 2010, at our closing meeting of the Greenwood Reunion, I suggested a couple of ideas for the executive which was met by dead silence from the group in attendance, but I also indicated at that time I did not intend to be president for life. I feel it is very important for our group to have some fresh blood on the executive because new faces equate to new ideas, new approaches and ultimately, the sustainability of our organisation. None of the positions are particularly onerous on their own, but collectively, for one or two people it becomes more than you may want to do. I want to be very clear, I won't leave the CMFEA high and dry, but I think it is time for a change and the change may have to come from someone else. Having an executive in one location is certainly convenient, but not necessarily a requirement in this day and age of instant communication.

In closing, if anyone out there has any ideas, suggestions or comments on the points I have brought forward in this letter, or feels they would like to volunteer, please feel free to contact me. We have a great group across the country, and I think we enjoy keeping touch. The Canadian Military Flight Engineer Association is worth keeping but we can not stagnate. 🙏

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and everyone of you and your families a

Very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Sincerely

L.G. "Mac" MacGregor
President CMFEA



Flight Engineer Origin

Aim

The flight engineer trade is not aware of a date as to when the trade was officially created. In part this stems from the convoluted origin of the trade. This report will detail the research findings as to the origin and dates of the flight engineer trade.

Background

In the first half of the Second World War, flight engineers were not recognized as a trade. At the start of the war, the RCAF did not have any aircraft in which a flight engineer was required; however, in July 1941 the RCAF began to operate the Consolidated Catalina and then the Canso aircraft. The cockpit required the services of someone to monitor the engines and fuel gauges, among other duties. The squadrons using this aircraft took suitable aero engine mechanics (AEM), or in some cases air frame mechanics (AFM), provided training within the unit as to flight engineering duties and then inserted these individuals into a crew. These AEMs and AFMs were also trained within the squadrons to act as air gunners. They were not, however, formally known as flight engineers (FE).

In Great Britain the trade of flight engineer also developed slowly, starting with flying boats and the practice of bringing along flight mechanics on flights, but took on greater importance as four-engine bombers became operational. In March 1941, the trade of flight engineer was formally created in the RAF through Air Ministry Order A/190/41. Formal trade training took a little longer to establish. No. 4 School of Technical Training at RAF St. Athan was already training flight mechanics and in June 1942 began training flight engineers. The RCAF soon found that its four-engine bomber crews overseas had to have RAF flight engineers as the RCAF was not training any. With the effort to Canadianize RCAF squadrons, this created an issue – how could the RCAF create entirely Canadian aircrews – as well as an opportunity – the development of the flight engineer trade.

Initially the RCAF was not concerned about developments in the RAF. In an effort to create qualified flight engineers for use in Canada and possibly to ensure formal standards similar to those employed within the RAF, the RCAF issued standards for flight engineers, as well as AEM, AFM and wireless mechanics (WM) who had been given training as air gunners. At the same time, flight engineers were recognized as a specialty under the AEM trade.

In November 1942 the RCAF began formally training the AEMs who were serving as FEs. Units would send these individuals for a six week course in aerial gunnery at a bombing and gunnery school, followed by two weeks at the School of Aeronautical Engineering in Montreal and finally operational training at their unit. They would also receive a FE badge which was only formally approved in May 1943.

This direction and training did not go without its critics from squadrons and Eastern Air Command and Western Air Command. The big criticism was that these AEMs were flying regularly but were not receiving any of the benefits of aircrew. In June 1943 the Air Member for Personnel, Air Vice Marshal JA Sully examined the question of FEs and their pay and promotion. To that time, AEMs could only rise to the rank of flight sergeant. Sully recommended that FEs, as they were informally known, be considered as aircrew, which would raise the highest rank level to which AEM (FE)s could be promoted. On 24 June the Air Council decided that flight engineers could rise to the rank of warrant officer and be commissioned, and that their pay would be commensurate with that of aircrew; however, they were not authorized as aircrew at that time.

On 31 July 1943, the AFAOs were changed to indicate that AEM (FE)s could rise to the rank of warrant officer class I. A/V/M Sully's memo of 23 July initiated this change and also recommended, again, that AEM (FE)s be made aircrew. In early November 1943 the orders were finally issued to officially designate flight engineers as part of the aircrew category.

Commissioning also arose an issue. While AEM (FE)s were not being commissioned in Canada, RCAF FEs posted to RAF squadrons in the UK were being commissioned. The disparity between what was happening in Canada and what was happening in the UK was noticed and was a source of comment among AEM (FE)s in Canada that reached the ears of their squadron commanding officers. The only solution appeared to be the creation of a separate flight engineer trade, with its own officers, as commissioning was not possible within the trade of AEM or the specialty of AEM (FE).

A/V/M Sully would also not let the issue sit. In January 1944 he sent a memo to the chief of the air staff, which after staffing and commenting within the headquarters, finally created resolution. On 19 January 1944, Air Marshal Robert Leckie, newly-appointed to the position, wrote minute 4 that authorized the creation of a flight engineer trade.

Thereafter, the administrative work proceeded quickly to comply with A/M Leckie's order. By mid-February, most of the establishments of RCAF Home War squadrons employing AEM (FE)s were changed to read that they had "flight engineers" and one "engineering officer." RCAF documents now referred to a "flight engineer" trade. The RCAF also began formal training of flight engineers for service in the




RCAF overseas. In discussions between the RAF and RCAF of April and May 1944, the RAF agreed to send four Halifax bombers and extra engines to the RCAF for use at a new school. The first school was No. 1 Flight Engineers School, officially open in Arnprior, Ontario in February 1944 before closing in October, the second being the Flight Engineers School opening in Aylmer, Ontario on 1 July 1944 and operating until March 1945.

Discussion

The question of a date on which the flight engineer trade originated is complicated by the fact that flight engineers were originally a specialty of the AEM trade and the question of whether aircrew status confers any special qualifications. As a specialty within the AEM trade, any AEM (FE) was subject to the regulations governing the AEM trade. While special provisions could be and were made, such as allowing AEM (FE) to be promoted to warrant officer while AEM could only reach flight sergeant, individuals employed as FEs in Canada were still AEM. RCAF documents of the period are clear that FEs were part of the AEM trade, hence the date on which the specialty was created should not be considered as the date that the trade was created.

Of itself aircrew was one category into which trades could be placed. Aircrew status regulated promotion and conferred benefits and pay but did not confer the status of "trade" upon a specialty. Hence, the decision to include AEM (FE)s as aircrew only applied to a specialty within the AEM trade but did not of itself create the trade of flight engineer. RCAF documents from after the "aircrew" decision still called for the creation of a flight engineer trade and list FEs as being a specialty within the AEM trade.

The decision on 19 January 1944 by A/M Leckie should be considered the definitive date for the creation of the flight engineer trade. At this time A/M Leckie clearly stated that the specialty of flight engineer had to be divorced from the trade of AEM and be governed by its own regulations. RCAF documents after this date now show a new trade, that of flight engineer.

Prepared by: Maj M. Joost, Directorate of History and Heritage. Dated: 6 October 2014. 



A few of the world's scariest (real) in-flight announcements

A pilot, explained that "passengers will be told about any emergency or serious malfunction. And most nonserious ones too."

He added: "If you're informed about a landing gear issue, pressurization problem, engine trouble, or the need for a precautionary landing, do not construe this to be a life-or-death situation. It's virtually always something minor - though you'll be kept in the loop anyway. With even an outside chance of an evacuation in mind, you have to be kept in the loop."

Perhaps more eye-opening, however, were the comments left on the article by readers detailing the most worrying crew announcements they have heard on board a flight. Here are three of the best

Late flight from Perth to Singapore, about to take-off, but suddenly came to a halt and taxied off the runway. **'Ladies and gents, captain here. Just had a warning light there, probably a glitch so we'll just contact engineering'**. Fifteen minutes later off we went again only to come to another shuddering halt. The announcement starts: **'Errr, captain here, looks like it wasn't a glitch after all.'** Excellent. Once airborne, he came on to say **'Trust me, it's better being down there, wishing you were up here, than being up here, wishing you were down there!'** Love those Aussie pilots."

"I imagine a lot of people have heard EasyJet cabin crew's stock eye-opener (it must be in their manual). **'Ladies and Gentlemen, we would like to inform you that we have on board someone very special today. He's an 89-year-old gentleman making his very first flight. So on leaving the plane would you please shake hands with your pilot'**. There was one particular crew that used this announcement daily."

"I was flying to Nairobi sometime in the Seventies. We were somewhere over the Med when the plane seemed to hit a bump. The Captain came on the intercom and said: **'Ladies and gentlemen, if you would care to take a look at your in-flight magazine and check out our route on the large map in the centre pages, you will see that we have just crossed the fold in the middle...'**"





Fallen Eagles

We record with great sadness the passing of the following members of the Association

✱ FRANCESCONI "BEN" BENITO	December 31, 2016
✱ HAWKINS (JACK) JOHN	February 20, 2017
✱ CHARLES (CHUCK) JOHNSON	March 22, 2017
✱ Ennis, Gerry	June 15, 2017
✱ Ryan, Carl	July 06, 2017
✱ BRUNTON, Glenn Harold (Suds)	July 07, 2017
✱ Illingworth, Fred	July 21, 2017
✱ McBride, David William	September 07, 2017
✱ BAXTER, LOU	October 15, 2017
✱ Shae, J.A. "Al"	October 20, 2017
✱ Cameron R.E. "Bob"	December 08, 2017

Eternal rest grant them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Benito Francescone was stationed in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan as a crewman on Expeditors and Dakotas before he received his wings as a Flight Engineer on Iroquois helicopters. Later he was posted to Trenton Ontario where he flew on the C-130 Hercules with 436 Squadron and on the CC-137 Boeing 707s with 437 Squadron.

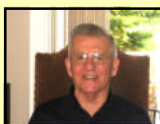


Ben left the military in 1985 and joined Worldways Canada where he flew the Boeing 707 and DC-8 as a Flight Engineer.

He remained with the airlines until its demise in 1989.

Jack Hawkins was a retired Flight Engineer retiring with the rank of a Chief Warrant Officer. He was a man who loved his family and in his spare time enjoyed curling and golfing. Jack was affiliated with the Royal Canadian Legion, 888 Wing and Glacier Green Golf Club.

Carl Ryan was a long serving flight engineer in the Maritime Patrol world on the east coast.



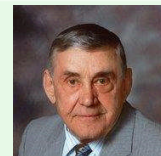
BRUNTON, Glenn Harold

Glenn was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, 413 Wing Association, Masonic Lodge, Halifax Restoration Team and the Airforce Museum for 10 years. He was in the Merchant Navy during World War II, he joined the Air Force afterwards and worked as a mechanic and then Flight Engineer. He followed that by working for the Department of Transportation in Ottawa. Before retiring Glenn flew commercially for WorldWays.



Frederick Thomas Illingworth, born in 1938, joined the RCN in Cornwallis in 1956 and retired as CWO Airborne Electronic Sensor Operator in 1992. Served at Shearwater 881 and 880 Squadrons, CFANS Winnipeg, Summerside 415 Squadron and Greenwood 405 and 404 Squadrons. Had the privilege of serving as Base Chief Warrant Officer 14 Wing Greenwood from 1982 to 1987. In 1986 served as the Executive Director of the Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre until his retirement in 2002.

David William McBride, He joined the military at 18 and served 25 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force, achieving the rank of Warrant



Officer before retiring. During his military career he travelled all over the world with UN Peace Keeping Missions (Congo, Europe, India, Cyprus) as an Aircraft Engineer and performed Search and Rescue missions. He was also proud of his work with The Snow Birds. After the military, he joined Northwest Territorial Airlines as the Chief of Maintenance. David loved working with aircraft and often told stories about the planes and the camaraderie of the mechanics.

After working for another 15 years, David retired in 1994 to Saskatoon with his wife and his constant companion, Squiggs. He was an active member of the Royal Canadian Legion for 25

PROPWASH WEBSITE

<<http://www.cmfea.ca>>

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Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year

