



THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 005
THE LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS



NEWSLETTER RCL Branch 005 Nr. 2020-10

In this edition:

Veenendaal (Harold F. Wakeman)
Bergen op Zoom
Walcheren Causeway
Poppy Campaign
Editorial

Upcoming activities: (subject to COVID-19 measures)

Attention: programs subject to change

Nov. 4: Welberg commemoration ("De Klok") **cancelled**
Nov. 7. Beaumont-Hamel (Zone Europe) **cancelled**
Nov. 8. Vimy Ridge (Zone Europe) **cancelled**
Nov. 8. The Hague, commemoration CWGC **invitees only**
Nov. 8. Apeldoorn, Remembrance Sunday **invitees only**
Nov. 11. Groesbeek, Remembrance Day, (Zone) **cancelled**
Dec. 24. Candle evening, Groesbeek, Holten, Bergen op Zoom

For upcoming events: check our [agenda](#) and for the latest news: [Facebook](#).

There are far more photos of previous events on our website. To have a look click: [album](#)

October 1940 is widely regarded as the month in which the Battle of Britain ended. The German Luftwaffe carried out daily attacks on, predominantly, southeast England in preparation for a planned invasion. Initially mostly military goals, later also, deliberately, on civilian targets to break the morale of the English.

Although the Battle was fought from July to October 1940, September 15 is considered the day when a decisive battle was struck and the RAF inflicted losses on the Luftwaffe that they have not recovered. 630 fighters of the RAF had to compete that day against 1,120 German machines.

The blows to Herman Görings Luftwaffe hit so hard that Adolf Hitler postponed his invasion plans two days later. It is known that these have never become topical again.

In this edition some attention to the air war in general and specifically to a Canadian Spitfire pilot. One of the few to which so many owed so much to quote Winston Churchill.



Bus in bomb crater, Balham South London



Morally unbroken, flag out on the ruins

Veenendaal. 05.09.2020.

As every year, despite all the restrictions imposed on us, a memorial took place at the grave of Harold F. Wakeman at the General Cemetery.

This year it was a sober ceremony in a very small committee.

The foundation board was represented as well as the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005. Both delegations laid a wreath.



Photos: Pieter Vane

From the left:
Mr. Hans Wegen,
Hans does voluntary work and maintains
Wakeman's grave

Mrs. Elly van Wakeren - RCL
Mr. Nic van Wakeren - RCL
Mr. Peter Mensink - RCL



As the story tells:

„Harold, on loan to British Royal Air Force, was flying underneath another aircraft on his ill-fated last flight. The bomb of the top plane failed to deploy properly and struck the tail of Harold's plane, killing the 22-year-old Canadian. The other pilot wrote to Harold's mother to apologize for the tragedy”.

The passage quoted above is from an article on [the Toronto.com website](https://www.toronto.com).

Photos of the ceremony were shared with members of the Wakeman family. Several of them have already visited Veenendaal in recent years.

That all this is very much appreciated is evident from the email that comrade Elly van Wakeren received.

Hi Elly

Thank you for the photos. Nice that you could attend in the covid year!

I have attached some photos of a beautiful model of Harold's TYPHOON that my son in law James, built for me and surprised me on my birthday. It is a 1/24 scale and highly detailed. It has the correct Squadron markings and serial number. If you have difficulty opening the "zip" file, let me know, I can resize the photos and mail them another way.

Can you please forward to our friends in the Netherlands, as I do not have many of their emails?

I hope that everyone is well in these uncertain times.

Take care,

Glenn & Alison



Bergen op Zoom, 25.10.2020.

Forced By COVID-19 regulations a small-scale commemoration; invitees only. The small scale probably makes it even more impressive

Wreaths were laid by the Canadian Ambassador Her Excellency Ms. Lisa Helfand and the Mayors of the Brabantse Wal Municipalities.



The restrictions prompted Southwest Television to broadcast the entire ceremony.

In the broadcast: parts of a documentary about the Battle of the Scheldt; speeches by Mayor Petter of Bergen op Zoom and the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

You can also see some archive footage of the commemoration in 2019 and the Flypast of a Spitfire provided by the Royal Dutch Air Force Historical Flights.

Use the link below to switch to the video recording. Well worth viewing. (with English subtitles)

<https://www.zuidwesttv.nl/video/6705/memorial-day-of-canada>

Herman Sligman

Photos: stills from the broadcast video of Southwest Television

Walcheren Causeway, 31.10.2020.

No official commemorations, but wreaths have been laid.

This weekend in various places on Beveland and Walcheren it was that 76 years ago the Allied Forces liberated a large part of Zeeland. Normally this is done in the presence of veterans, representatives of the veterans that fought at the time, embassies and all others who consider it important to reflect on the end of the Second World War. But all official commemorations have been canceled due to the COVID19-virus.



Normally it is also busy on the Sloedam during the commemoration. But here too it is unreal quiet on Saturday morning. The flags of Canada, France and Scotland fly at half-masts. At the large monument there is already a wreath of the municipality of Middelburg. It was laid earlier that morning.

And while Don Paauwe and André Bogerman from The Royal Canadian Legion are standing guard at the monument to the Canadian soldiers, Marian Dellebeke from music association Euterpe from Heinkenszand is blowing The Last Post.



After a minute of silence, Paauwe and Bogerman lay the wreath at the monument.

"It's very different than usual", says Paauwe.

"It's great that we were able to do it", says Bogerman.

Gert Jan de Rooij of The Royal British Legion also lays a wreath.

(Thanks to - Text: Melita Lanting, translation Ruud Janssen;
Photos: Monique Bogerman)



POPPY CAMPAIGN 2020.

Zandvoort, 26.10.2020.

Due to all the limitations and the suffering that the COVID-19 virus has brought about and continues to cause, 2020 will be a year that will not be forgotten any time soon.

It should have been a year in which we should have celebrated and commemorated our freedom 75 years after the end of the Second World War.

Due to the Corona virus, the very elderly veterans, their families and relatives of the deceased comrades could not come to Europe or the Netherlands.



Mayor David Moolenburgh and Comrade Ruud Janssen

Many commemorations and events were cancelled or performed with a very limited number of guests. The annual Poppy Campaign is also affected by this. In the period from mid-October to November 11, called Remembrance Day, many people in the Anglo-Saxon countries wear a Poppy in memory of those who died for our freedom.

Spreading the Poppies in Zandvoort can unfortunately NOT take place this year due to the Corona virus. However, the moment of commemoration should not pass unnoticed. That is why a Poppy was handed over to Mayor David Moolenburgh in Zandvoort this year, to show that the municipality of Zandvoort wholeheartedly supports the Campaign. Because of the Corona provisions, the mayor of course pinned the Poppy himself this time. He also received the unique 75 years commemorative coin from The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005.

LEST WE FORGET!



Ruud Janssen

Bronckhorst, 29.10.2020.

Quite unique: the first Poppy in the Municipality Bronckhorst for Youth Mayor Anne Letink.

Comrade Gerrit Bruggink virtually handed out the first Poppy to her.

Out of necessity organized in an inventive way, thanks to the very positive efforts of both parties.



Comrade Gerrit Bruggink during his video speech



Anne Letink, Youth-Mayor of Bronckhorst

Anne Letink's response:

At the start of the Poppy campaign, I have just received the first Poppy, as Youth Mayor of Bronckhorst.

It is great to be able to live in freedom

Thanks to the people who made this possible.

Continue to deal consciously with your freedom, also during the COVID-19 crisis.

Take good care of each other and stay healthy.





Together with Royal Canadian Legion member Ginny Whitty, a number of poppy collection tins and such have been placed at various locations in Wassenaar and Soesterberg, The Netherlands, these past few days.



Even though the Dutch public is not accustomed to the Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Campaign we hope that they will not pass by our stand without picking up a poppy and reflecting on 'Remembrance'.

We deeply thank the owners of these locations for allowing us to do so and wish them all the best during these harder times.

Thank you:

Kelly's Expat Shopping in Wassenaar,

Big Bens Kids in Wassenaar,

Bagel Alley in Wassenaar,

The Public Library in Wassenaar,

Aerofit Health Club in Wassenaar

and Crew room of the Dutch National Military Museum in Soesterberg, The Netherlands.

Donations all go directly to The Poppy Campaign of The Royal Canadian Legion in Canada.

Philip van Leeuwen.



Editorial.

“WE NEVER FORGET”.

This year, 2020, should have been a year of commemorations and celebrations to mark 75 years of FREEDOM.
How different the reality has become. Plans and programs had to be cancelled, adjusted or postponed.

The cause is known: corona official: COVID-19. A factor that was impossible to take into account at the beginning of this year.

Despite the restrictions, there have been ceremonies. Small-scale and in compliance with the regulations. We have reported on this in our Newsletters.

Deliberately, to indicate that also, or rather precisely that reason, at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the phrase "we never forget" is kept alive. It is not without reason that the sub-name is: "the Liberation of the Netherlands".

Due to the cancellation of many ceremonies, the number of items has decreased.

This allows us to highlight items that otherwise might not have been addressed.

Our aim is to publish a maximum of twenty pages with the restriction that the information about the activities of Branch 005 take precedence.

In this edition we have opted for a column we had „in stock”.

Retrieved from: LEGION, Canada's Military History Magazine, October 2018; by Stephen J. Thorne.

It is from an interview with a Battle-of-Britain veteran of Canadian descent, as a fighter pilot he made many deployments in World War II, on multiple fronts. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and survived the war.

Inherited to the Battle-of-Britain, we highlight a part of the air war in general. We cannot ignore the crashes on Dutch territory and the crew members who lost their lives. Many of them are remembered „missing in action”.

A good thing, a matter of honour as well, is that recovery attempts have now started again since 2019.

Back to the Battle-of-Britain.

Since 1944, a memorial service has been held in London on the first Sunday after September 15 at Westminster Abbey. This year on September 20 on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the decisive battle.



Photo: Reuters



Photo: PA Media

Where normally about two thousand people participate, this time there were less than a hundred. The reason for this is not difficult to guess.

After the ceremony there was a Flypast with a Hurricane and three Spitfires.

Behind the photo on the left you will find a link to recordings of this Flypast, made from one of the aircrafts.

Some general information about the air war in advance. From the start of the war, Germany used planes and paratroopers to gain rapid ground. Paras to get behind enemy defenses, planes for bombing strategic targets and, to damage the enemy's morale, cities were also bombed.

Think of Warsaw and later also Rotterdam. London and other major cities in Great Britain were also targeted, for the time being bombarded by planes, later, notably London, also with the infamous V1s and V2s.

After the declaration of war by England and France on Germany, after the invasion of Poland, there were concerns in Germany about expected attacks on German industry, especially in the Ruhr area.

On August 9, 1939, Hermann Goering, Supreme Commander of the Luftwaffe, boasted: "If one English bomber comes as far as the Ruhr, my name will no longer be Hermann Goering, but you may call me Hermann Meier".

On August 25, 1940, the RAF bombed Berlin for the first time.

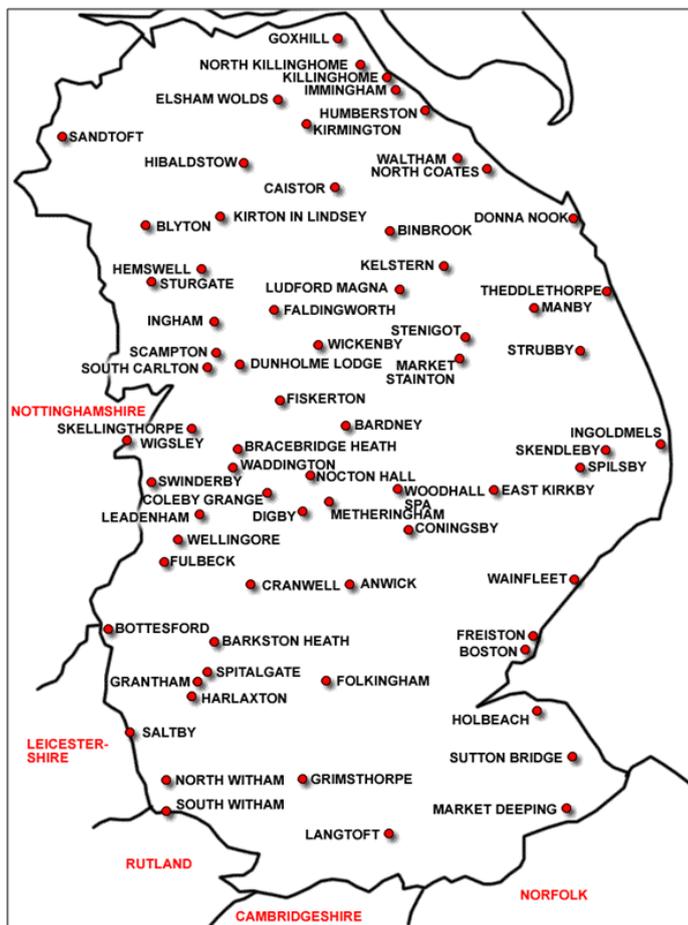
When the predominance in the air was back in Allied hands, retaliation came. The German industrial areas and cities were also bombed.

Together with the Americans, a huge fleet of bombers was built and crews were specially trained by all Commonwealth countries. (Australia, Canada and New Zealand). More than 100 airfields were built in southeast England to handle the immense air fleet.

Figures of the RAF Bomber Command:
(bombers only)

- nearly 365,000 operations, dropping more than 1 million tons of bombs.
- 8,325 aircraft were lost, 55,000 crew members (44% of the flying personnel) were killed. (KIA)
- 8,400 were wounded (WIA) and 9,800 were taken prisoner of war. (POW)
- 20,500 crew members have been reported missing. (MIA)

Their names are mentioned on the [Air Forces Memorial Runnymede in Egham, Surrey.](#)



RAF vliegvelden zuidoost Engeland - RAF bases southeast England





The RAF Fighter Command reported the following loss figures for the fighters.

4,800 fighters were lost, with 3,700 pilots killed, 1,200 wounded and 600 POWs.

Focus on the air war over the Netherlands, we automatically think of the machines, of which the Air Force people said: "They didn't make it home".



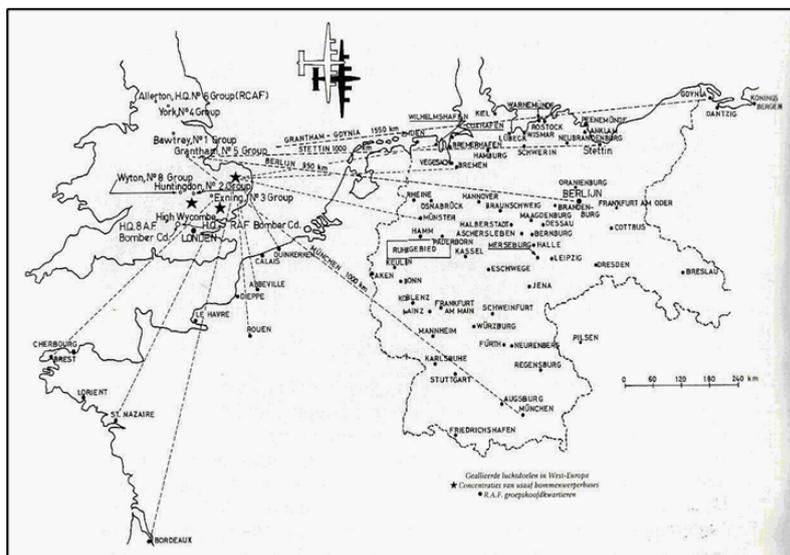
The Netherlands lay exactly below the approach routes between southeast England and the major German cities and industrial areas.

This is clearly visible on the map on the right.

In our country about 7,500 aircraft, Allied and German, have crashed.

Many wrecks have been salvaged. Not infrequently there were still human remains on board.

However, there are likely to be around 400 aircraft wrecks that have not been recovered, with nearly 1,100 crew members reported as "missing".



A large number of machines have crashed in the IJsselmeer or ended up in the water off the coast, which does make salvage difficult, if not impossible.

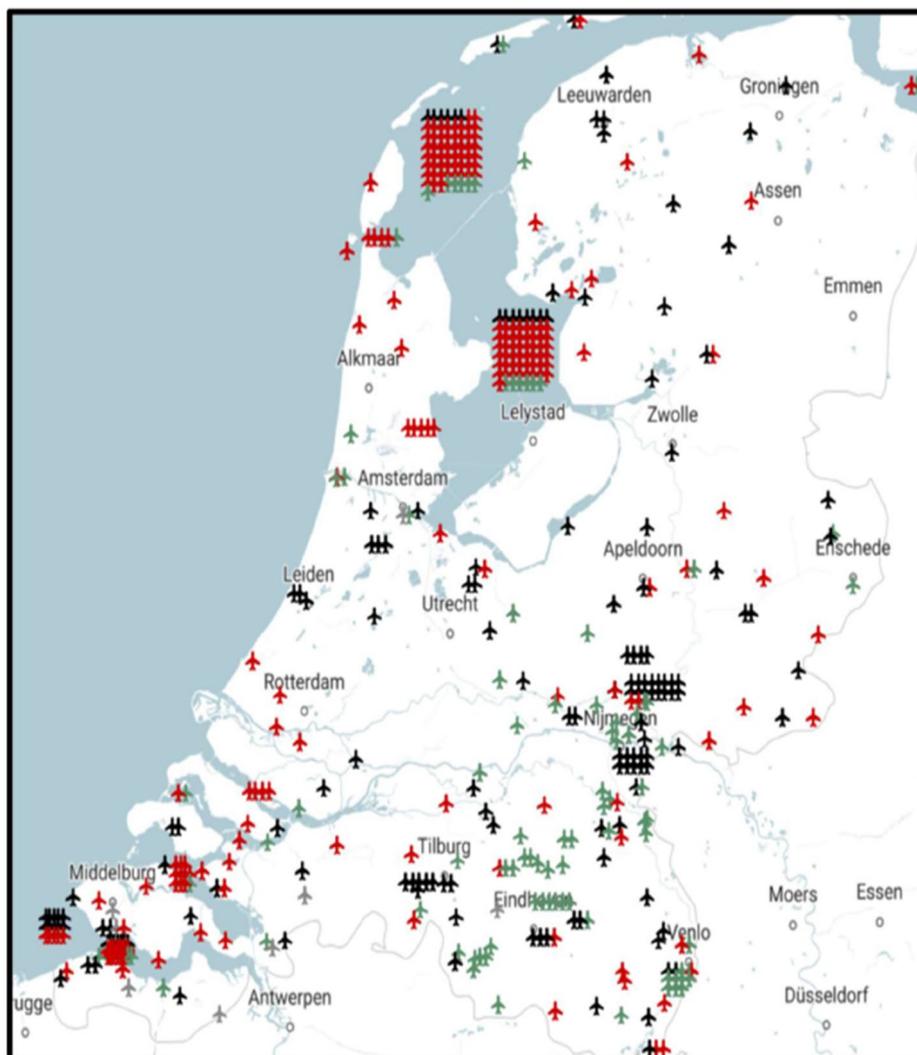
It is sad that in a number of cases, with reasonable salvage options, the cooperation of municipalities or landowners could not be obtained.

The overview map on the right is a publication of May 2016 following an analysis by the Dutch Broadcast Foundation in collaboration with the Study Group Air War 1939-1945, (SGLO).

The map shows crash sites where, probably, human remains can be found.

Red = British
Green = American
Black = German

Salvage operations started again in 2019 under the name "National Salvage Program".



What preceded.

On the initiative of the SGLO, the documentary "[Rather dead than missing](#)" was made". (behind the link you can watch the documentary, partly English spoken. Some images can be experienced as "shocking".)

On January 15, 2018 the documentary was broadcasted. Attention was paid to how it is possible that an airplane wreck is recovered in one municipality and not in another.

Government policy with regard to salvage is laid down in the circular "aircraft salvage". This offers room for different interpretations. In addition, the costs of a salvage also play a role in the decision whether to proceed or not with salvage.

The distribution key was 70% of the costs for the State and 30% for the Municipality. The latter can quickly become a significant expense for a municipality. A post that can amount to several hundred thousand euros.

Parliamentary questions.

As a result of the documentary, the Air War Study Group 1939-1945 (SGLO) had contact with various MPs and parliamentary questions were asked. On October 15, 2018, Minister Ollongren informed the Parliament by means of a letter to Parliament about the establishment of a national program for the salvage of aircraft wrecks with still missing pilots from the Second World War.

National Salvage Program Working Group.

The working group consists of representatives of the Dutch Municipality Association (VNG), the Staff Officer Aircraft Salvage of the Royal Dutch Air Force, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Service Defense (EODD), the Salvage and Identification Service Royal Dutch Army (BIDKL) and the Air War Study Group 1939-1945.

The role of the Study Group is to conduct historical archive research. On this basis, aircraft will or will not be added to the list of so-called „promising salvages“.

The salvage operations have started last year.

September 2019.

The first salvage operation: [Short Stirling W7360](#).

On Monday, September 16, 2019, the first salvage operation started as part of the National Salvage Program.

Some parts of the aircraft were found, but ultimately no human remains.



Photo: Koen Verheijden

September 2019.

The second salvage operation: [Hawker Typhoon MN582](#).

The second salvage operation started on Thursday, September 26, 2019.

William Robert Stephen Hurrell's Typhoon MN582. His plane crashed in Eefde near Zutphen on September 26, 1944.

Human remains were found during the salvage. DNA testing has shown that they were indeed from Hurrell.

On November 20, 2019, there was [a commemoration ceremony in the Church in Eefde](#).

Graeme Hurrell, son of the pilot's brother, was present accompanied by his daughter.



Photo: Henri Bruntink

August 2020.

The third salvage action: [Short Stirling BK716](#).

The third salvage started on 31 August 2020.

This operation was a very special one.

It was a major operation in the Markermeer, a few kilometers from the coast at Almere.

As already mentioned: salvage actions in the water are extra problematic.

Working in water meters deep in search of debris that may still contain explosives.

It concerns a Short Stirling, which was initially identified as BK710 and later as BK716.

An engine block was found during the first week of the salvage. The registration number on this part confirmed that it is the BK716.



Photo: Lex Beers

Various articles have appeared in the media about this salvage. [Flevoland's Local Broadcast has made a file](#) about this salvage, containing items they have made on this subject.

Human remains and personal belongings have been found. Relatives of the crew members have been informed about this. The Navigator and the Rear Gunner were RCAF men.

This salvage has now been completed. [More about this can be found behind this link.](#)



November 2020.

Fourth salvage operation: Messerschmitt Bf 109G.

The Netherlands pays for salvage of a German warplane.

The salvage of the German aircraft wreck near the hamlet of Millingen, in the municipality of Dalftsen, should have started in the spring of 2020. Due to COVID-19, the work has been postponed.

UPDATE: the operation started Monday, November 2, 2020.

SGLO (Study Group Air War 1939-1945) compiled a list of 400 cases of aircraft wrecks, which still may contain the remains of missing crew members. That list has been reduced to about 60 crashes. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) has recognized the need to actively track down and recover these missing people: the Dutch population regards this as a moral obligation.

The aforementioned Working Group has identified approximately 40 crash sites, which are believed to have a reasonable chance of a successful outcome.

The municipalities concerned will be extensively exempted. The Working Group will inform them in writing and they will also be informed by the SOVB (Staff Officer Aircraft Salvage).

Facts taken from SGLO's information bulletins:

Frequently asked questions about the salvage program:

How many allied planes have crashed in the Netherlands? **Between 5,500 and 6,000.**

How many aircrafts may still contain remains? **Approximately 400.**

How many aircrafts will be recovered as part of the National Salvage Program? **30-50.**

Why are not all planes with remains recovered? **Because not all aircrafts can be classified as promising salvage facilities. This has to do with the crash location or circumstances of the crash. Think of a crash in the sea or running water, a crash site with a building or an airplane wreck that has been burning for hours.**

Will German aircrafts also be recovered? **Yes, see above (Dalftsen).**

How many aircrafts will be salvaged per year? **About 3 per year.**

For those who want to read more about this:

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/tweede-wereldwezen/opgraven-vliegtuigwrakken>

This site of the National Government contains links to the various cases, also with many photos.

John Stewart Hart

* Sept. 11, 1916 – † June 18, 2019.

From: LEGION, Canada's Military History Magazine, October 2018, by Stephen J. Thorne.

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few".

Quote from a speech made by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on August 20, 1940. Referring to the ongoing efforts of the [Royal Air Force](#) crews who were at the time fighting the [Battle of Britain](#), the pivotal air battle with the German [Luftwaffe](#) with Britain expecting an [invasion](#).

This column is a tribute to one of these "few".

"The Spitfire every time".

Immediately, without batting an eye, comes the answer of John Stewart Hart in an interview on the occasion of his 102nd birthday.

He was asked which aircraft he preferred, the Supermarine Spitfire or the American P-51 Mustang.

J.S. Hart, born Sept. 11, 1916, was Canada's last-surviving Battle-of-Britain veteran. A squadron leader, who flew both machines during six years of combat. But he also had experience with the Hurricanes.

"The Spitfire was more responsive, easier to handle. They made you feel like you were one with the machine. You moved and the machine moved. It was a by-reflex sort of thing. Beautiful looking and beautiful to fly".

Hart, a dentist's son from Sackville N.B. was one of Churchill's "FEW". Pilot in No.602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron of the Royal Air Force. He flew two sorties a day through the summer and fall of 1940. Confirmed wins: two Messerschmitt Bf-109s and a Junkers Ju 88, along with another machine, probable a Ju 88.



John Stewart Hart on his 100th birthday



Hart, fourth from right with squadron mates and a Spitfire of 602 Squadron, Westhampnett 1940

No.602 was based at Westhampnett, near the RAF Tangmere air base. In the southeast corner of England was Tangmere an important focal point in the Battle of Britain. Operating in the frontline of the air war Flying Officer Hart took his share of fire too. With his style of attacking, pressing to within 50 meters or less – so close he could see the faces of his enemy – that could not fail to happen.

Several times his plane was heavily damaged and set ablaze once, he was never shot down. The air battles took place in the skies over Britain, the English Channel and the North Sea in the first months after the German troops had overrun Europe.

Hart was one of the 112 Canadians who, together with 2,353 British and 462 pilots of other nationalities, defended the airspace.

After the evacuation of the predominantly British troops from Dunkirk in June 1940, Hart was transferred to the fighters. After only a week of training on the Spitfire, he was qualified "ready" and assigned to No. 602 Squadron.

Hart did not immediately take action. His new squadron had already been thinned out to such an extent that it needed a reconstitute. The Luftwaffe prevailed and attacked the airfields, while the English made every effort to increase the production of aircraft and the training of pilots.

Speaking of proportions: when the air war started the Luftwaffe had 700-800 Me-Bf-109s. With the bombers, the dive bombers (so-called Stukas) added, approximately 2,500 machines were available in Belgium and the northwest of France. Fighter Command had 644 fighters operational and 1,259 airmen.

"The reason they brought in a Canadian was just because they had lost quite a few people and had to replace them with other nationalities," Hart said. Canadians, Poles, Czechs, Australians, New Zealanders and others joined the fray.

Most Canadians were assigned to No. 1 Squadron RCAF, later renamed No. 401.

Hart made one or two flights a day, relatively few, he said. Some made 3 or 4 actions a day, during the 114 days when the air war was at its worst.

Hart himself came out of the Battle of Britain unscathed. The number of times it was a "narrow escape" for him were really numerous. However, one is etched in his memory. The time that the gunner of a Ju 88 managed to hit the radiator of his machine, flying at an altitude of about 20,000 feet and making it to base in the nick of time.

"It was off Southampton, 20 miles out over the English Channel. I didn't notice at first that I had been hit until I noticed the glycol (antifreeze) was catching fire on the hot exhaust. The fire flared up considerably. I turned off the engine and headed for base. I barely made it to the airport in Westhampnett".

In general, the German pilots had much more experience than the Allies. Many had been active during the Spanish Civil War and the Blitzkrieg on the European mainland, especially on the Eastern Front. [Gerhard Barkhorn](#), number 2 on the German "aces" list, is the only fighter ace to ever exceed 300 claimed victories by the end of WW2. Although in the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain he did not claim any victory.

"Some German pilots flew very aggressively, others did not. But a few more HP's and a little bit of refinement made the difference", said Hart. Hart said about his own skills: *"Good enough to survive."*

The Balance of the Battle of Britain:

1,023 Allied machines were downed, 1,887 aircrafts of the Luftwaffe, according to the RAF.

544 air crew members of Fighter Command lost their lives, including 23 Canadians. Nearly 2,600 Luftwaffe pilots.

735 were wounded on the German sides and 925 were taken prisoner. The Luftwaffe thus lost a large number of experienced pilots, a blow from which the Luftwaffe would never fully recover.



Hurricanes in Chittagong, May 1943

After the Battle of Britain, Hart became an instructor for a time, until he was promoted to squadron leader and took command of No. 67 Squadron RAF in India and Burma. The Hawker Hurricanes had to compete here against the Japanese Zero.



Hart in India

After the Asian interlude, Hart was posted to No. 112 Squadron in Egypt. He arrived there at the end of February 1945. The squadron had just acquired the North American Mustang Mk IV. According to Hart's log, he was given two days to handle this machine. Then he flew his first mission in the new squadron: a bomb attack on a bridge.

Hart's log records that he flew a mission almost daily.

As the war drew to a close, No. 112 also often carried out "close air support" for tank units and carried out low-altitude attacks on trains, bridges and railway lines in Northern Italy, Yugoslavia and Austria.

After 1,452 hours in his logbook, most of it in combat, he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross.



No.112 Mustangs with 500-lbs bombs

The London Gazette quoted the nomination on June 15, 1945.

The first paragraph:

"This officer has participated in a large number of various sorties, including many attacks on heavily defended targets such as road and rail bridges, gun positions, strong points and mechanical transport. Throughout he has displayed skillful leadership, great determination and devotion to duty."

Indeed: one of the few to which very many, very much owed.

In 2016, on the 76th Battle of Britain Sunday, two RCAF CF-18s from CFB Cold Lake in Alberta, did a low-level flyby at his home. Then four generations of Harts took turns sitting in the cockpit of one of the 409 Squadron fighters at the Penticton Airport.

Hart himself did not partake. A week earlier, on his 100th birthday, he had made a tour in a Harvard.

We conclude with his statement: *"We had a job to do and we did it"*.

John Stewart Hart, one of "THE FEW".

John Stewart Hart passed away on June 18, 2019, aged 102. May he rest in peace.

Column: *Herman Szigman*

Source: LEGION, Canada's Military History Magazine, October 2018, by Stephen J. Thorne.

Photos: courtesy Hart Family

Wikipedia

