



2nd TACTICAL AIR FORCE MEDIUM BOMBERS ASSOCIATION

Incorporating
88, 98, 107, 180, 226, 305, 320, & 342 Squadrons
137 & 139 Wings, 2 Group RAF

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On our cover: A collection of 'Home Front' photos from www.homesweethomefront.co.uk
and Veterans Affairs Canada (Canada Remembers).



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES • FEBRUARY 2018

Happy New Year! I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas/Chanukah season with friends, family, food and drink; and the added celebratory pounds are now disappearing.

I recently did a presentation on 'The Home Front' and was taken aback by the audience reaction; many people had little idea of what went on at home while the men were away at war, or the huge part played by women.

The reaction convinced me to modify it and dedicate the article space of this issue to the Home Front. Those of you who attended the 2TAF MBA 2006 reunion in Ottawa, Canada will recognize much of it; I originally prepared the presentation for that event.

My sources for much of the information and many photos are:

www.homesweethomefront.co.uk • a wonderful website on the UK home front

'The Battle of the St Lawrence' by Nathan M. Greenfield • U-boat attacks in Canada

www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/second-world-war (Canada Remembers)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

UK1479

I found this photo of 'Grumpy' on the Australian War Museum website, thanks to an alert from Wim Nijenhuis, a B-25 researcher & author in The Netherlands

The crew are: F/O A.J. Venables RAAF (Croydon, NSW); F/L D.S. Gregory RAF; F/O J.W. Ingram RAAF (Ipswich, QLD); F/S I.A. McIntyre RAAF (Brisbane, QLD.)

Photo was taken at Dunsfold 11 June 44.

LAST POST

JOHN BOURCHIER • PILOT • 226 SQUADRON



John Wilson Bouchier died 10 June 2017 in Fingal Bay, NSW, Australia. He is survived by his wife June, daughters Jennie (John), Anne (Chris); sons Mark (Cathy) and David (Jennifer); six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

F/S John Bouchier RAAF was posted to 226 Squadron, based at Vitry-en-Artois, with crewmates Sgt J.B. Dring (O), Sgt J. Cardwell (Wo/AG) and Sgt A. Coventry (AG) in January of 1945. Their first operation was the 29th of that month, a planned Ramrod on Grevenbroich, Germany but the formation was unable to drop their bombs due to weather. The following day was a blizzard; the winter of 44/45 in Europe was the worst in recent memory to that point.

John would complete his RAAF service with the rank of Pilot Officer and a close friendship with Kelvin Williams RAAF, a pilot posted to 226 Sqn at the same time as John. Both returned to Australia and both were 2TAF MBA members; John was our last veteran member in Australia.

JOHN G. LIGHTOWLER • PILOT • 98 SQUADRON



John Lightowler died at home in Beverly, East Yorkshire 29 Jul 2017, aged 95 years.

John's first operation after being posted to 98 Squadron in Dunsfold was one of two raids on 08 Sep 44. John and crew: R. Barklay (O); E.G. Miller (AG); and Angus McConachie (Wo/AG) flew through "heavy fairly accurate flak" to bomb a strong point in France. This was the same day 98 Sqn Mitchell FW188 (B-Bear) exploded on touchdown at Dunsfold when a hung-up bomb dislodged and detonated.

During a 25 Sep 44 raid against a strongpoint at Arnhem, Angus McConchie was injured by flak; he was taken to 9th Canadian General Hospital, fully recovered, married his nurse, and returned to Australia.

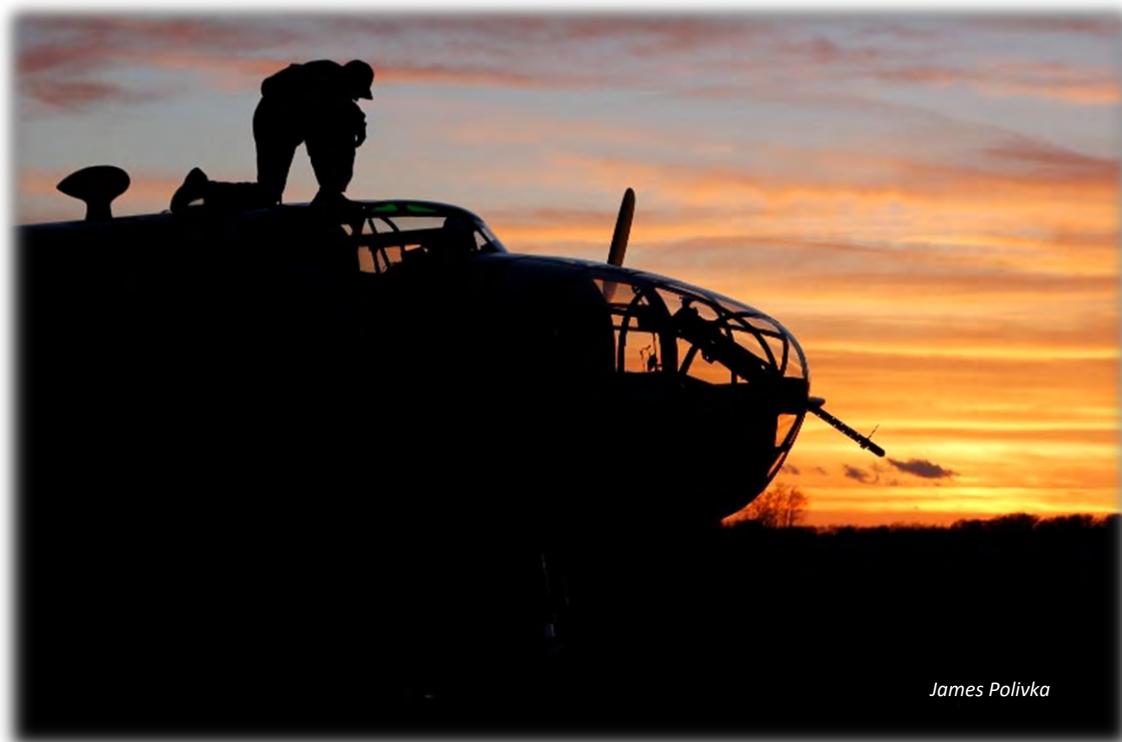
John, Barklay and Miller would complete their tours 08 Feb 45 at RAF B.58 Aerodrome, Melsbroek, Belgium. John was posted to Transport Command, flying across Asia to Australia and completed his RAF career as a Flight Lieutenant. He and Barbara had married on 29 Sep 44 and, in July of '46, returned home to Hull and to the family painting business, 'Lightowler.' Under John's later management, the company that began in 1850 grew from traditional painting to the well-respected company of today that also includes cleaning, maintenance and facilities service.



John was predeceased by Barbara and is survived by Erica (Geoffrey), Charles (Roz) and many beloved grand and great grandchildren.

Frank Perriam, 2TAF MBA UK Treasurer, adds: "I met with John a year or so ago, whilst passing through South Yorkshire on the way to God's Country [County Durham]. He was fascinating in his reminiscences, as is the case with all our vets, which makes their departures ever more poignant."

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



James Polivka

THE HOME FRONT

David Poissant

During World War II London was harder hit than any other British City, both in number of bomber attacks and number of casualties.

‘The Blitz’ began 7 Sept 40 and London was attacked at some time during the day or night, with the exception of just two 24-hour periods, for the whole of September, October and November of 1940.



Photos: homesweethomefront.co.uk

For anyone growing up in the London area during that time, one of the most enduring memories must be that of sandbags; they graced the fronts of government, many commercial and even some residential buildings. They were everywhere.

British citizens needed protection from the bombing and the government stepped in, supplying ‘Anderson Shelters’ free to those less well-off; those who earned more than five pounds per week could buy one for 7 pounds. They were mandatory for anyone with a garden, and were to be covered with 15” of earth on top, 30” on sides and back.

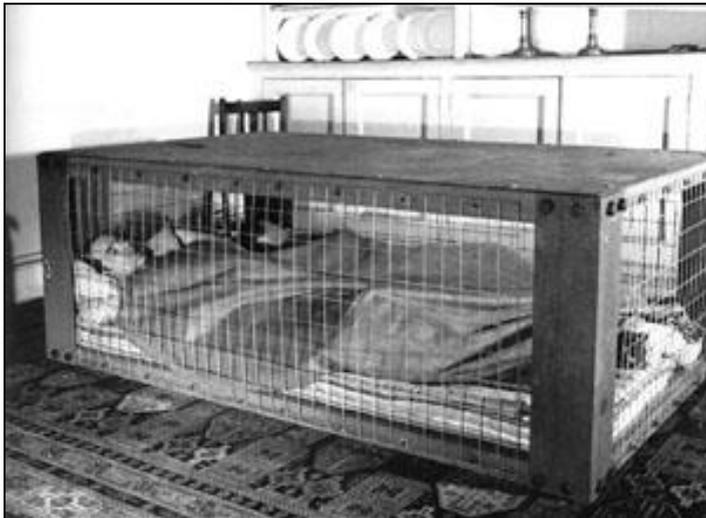
Anderson shelters could be assembled in various sizes; they prevented much loss of life and serious injury.



Left: Anderson Shelter being installed in a back garden. Right: assembled Anderson Shelter at the Tiverton Museum (Tiverton, Devon, England).

Soon after the outbreak of war, there were 2 million Anderson shelters installed; by the time of the Blitz, another 250,000 had been added.

Not everyone had sufficient garden space for an Anderson Shelter, so by 1941 a sturdy indoor shelter, named after Herbert Morrison, Minister of Home Security, had been made available. Known as 'table shelters', they also could be assembled in stacked modules.



Assembled standard Morrison Shelter (left) could also be used as a table. Two-tier version (right).
homesweethomefront.co.uk

There were many public air raid trenches dug and robust community shelter buildings erected. Thousands of Londoners sought their shelter in the underground subway stations where entire families would spend their nights.



Thousands of Londoners spent their nights in subway stations during The Blitz; hoping their homes were still there when they returned to them in the morning.

On 1 Sept 1939, two days before the outbreak of war, Britain was blacked out. The blackout imposed on all citizens in all cities was absolute. No chinks of light, no see-through curtains, no car headlights. Even the red glow of a cigarette was banned. Britain was plunged into complete darkness. By mid-October, 1939, after many people had been injured in falls, the onerous light restrictions were eased somewhat.

A corps of Air Raid Precaution (ARP) volunteers was established throughout Britain starting in 1938 -- Air Raid Wardens, Observers (plane spotters), Fire Watchers, Rescue Workers, Messengers, etc. A small percentage of the Air Raid Wardens were full-time and paid a small stipend.

In September 1944 the blackout restrictions were reduced to dim-out; full lighting of streets was reintroduced in April of 1945 and, on 30 April 1945, Big Ben in London was again illuminated; 5 years and 123 days after the Blackout began.



The evacuation of British cities at the start of the Second World War was the largest mass movement of people in Britain's history. In the first four days of September 1939, nearly three million people were transported from towns and cities in danger from enemy bombers to places of safety in the countryside. The majority were schoolchildren who had been labelled like pieces of luggage, separated from their parents and accompanied instead by 100,000 teachers.



Thousands of children, wearing luggage tags, separated from their parents; moved to safety

Although the adult gas masks came in a plain cardboard carry box with a string shoulder "strap", it wasn't long before people were buying and using plastic covers (sometimes with colourful designs) with wide carrying straps -- or cylindrical tins in which to carry them.



Initially everyone was required to carry their gas mask everywhere; you would be stopped by Policemen or Air Raid Wardens if they spotted you without one. As the war progressed a more relaxed attitude prevailed.

The British 'Carry on Regardless' attitude prevailed, as did their penchant for finding the humour.



homesweethomefront.co.uk

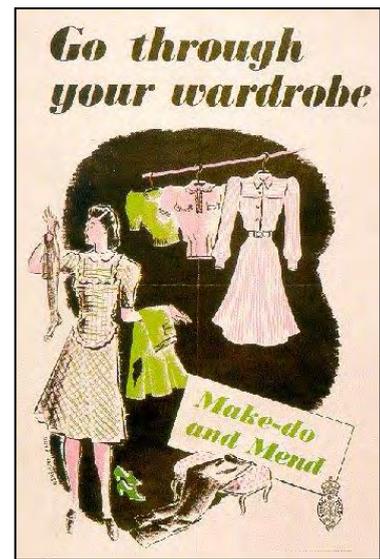
During the war, CONSERVE was the watchword in every activity. Government posters suggested ways to conserve nearly everything for the war effort. The Ministry of Agriculture launched one of the most memorable slogans of the war: 'Dig for Victory'

where private gardens, flowerbeds and parklands were dug up for the planting of vegetables, freeing up valuable space for war materials on merchant shipping convoys.

3 pints of milk, ¾-1lb meat, 1 egg or 1 packet of dried eggs every 2 months, 3-4 oz cheese, 4 oz bacon and ham, 2 oz tea, 8 oz sugar, 2 oz butter, 2 oz cooking fat

These weekly rations were stretched with the help of un-rationed extras like bread (not rationed until after the war), cereal, potatoes, offal (organ meats), fruit and vegetables.

Also rationed were other goods like furniture. People couldn't replace or repair their home furnishings, so they grew shabbier as the war went on. Utility furniture was designed to use as little wood and other raw materials as possible. It was available only to newlyweds and civilians who had lost everything as a direct result of bombings.



Homesweethomefront.co.uk

Designs of materials used in the production of plates, saucepans and umbrellas were also tightly controlled – as an example, new cups were white only and with no handles.

The Women's Land Army (WLA) was made up of British girls from every walk of life; they put up with grueling field work and monotony, in contrast to the sun-drenched recruiting posters. The girls stayed in private billets or local hostels and home sickness was common, as most had never been away from their parents for long periods. In spite of this, there was a great sense of camaraderie and most girls made lifelong friends.

The WLA was actually re-formed in June, 1939 from a WWI group, by first asking for volunteers and later by conscription; their numbers reached 80,000 by 1944.



Left: Women's Land Army recruiting poster. Right: WLA at work. homesweethomefront.co.uk

The Auxiliary Territorial Service, or ATS, for women filled non-combatant duties with military units so men could be released from day-to-day tasks (light lorry driving, clerical, aircraft spotting, and the like). ATS members were between 18 and 43 years of age and were paid, in keeping with the time, 66% of the pay of a man at the same rank.



Left: ATS recruiting poster. Right: ATS Aircraft Spotters. *D. Poissant collection*

At the end of 1943, there were 200,000 in the ATS, with 6,000 officers, in 80 military trades. Princess Elizabeth joined the ATS in 1944.

The Women's Volunteer Service had civilian women involved in salvage drives such as the removal of iron railings from public buildings, rubber and paper drives, collection of aluminum pots, pans, kettles and even artificial limbs. Old bones were gathered and processed for glue and garden fertilizer. WVs worked in evacuation services and collected clothing to assist those who lost everything in bombing raids. They worked everywhere.



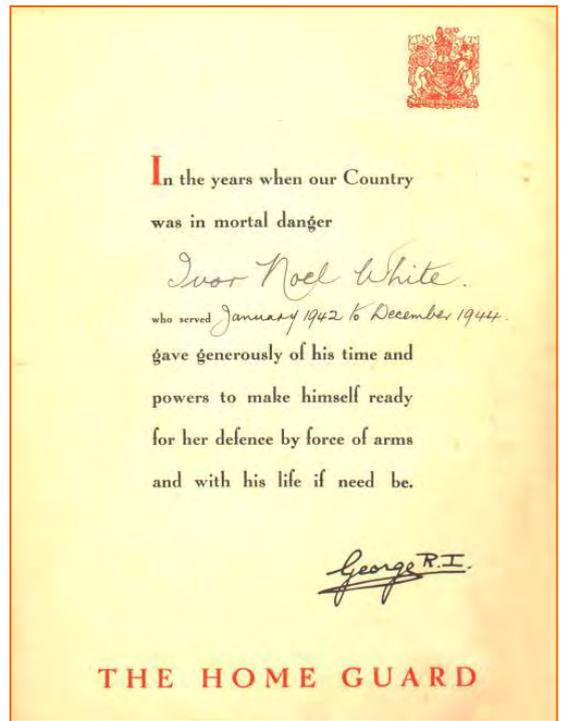
And British women went into the factories in thousands, taking the places of men who had left to go to war.

On the 14 May 1940, War Minister Anthony Eden gave an historic radio broadcast to the nation, warning of the threat of invasion by German parachutists. He urged all male civilians aged 17-65 who had (for whatever reason) not been drafted into the services, to put themselves forward for the sake of their country and help to form a new fighting force called 'The Local Defence Volunteers' or LDV, or (as some people later joked), 'Look, Duck and Vanish'!

A month and a half after its formation, Churchill renamed the LDV more appropriately as Home Guard. It was always known affectionately as 'Dad's Army' due to the age of many volunteers.

Although they trained and were ready to face the enemy, their duties became manning of AA batteries (142,000 men served in this duty; 1,000 were killed in it), patrolling waterways, railway stations, coastlines, factories, aerodromes, clearing of debris after air raids, searching rubble, constructing pill boxes, placement of obstacles in fields to prevent aircraft landings, and bomb disposal.

Guarding of Buckingham Palace was the duty of the 1st County of London (Westminster) Battalion of the Home Guard. King George VI would become Colonel in Chief of the Home Guard. The Home Guard enrolment never dropped below 1,000,000 volunteers; and after the war's end, each Home Guard volunteer received a written commendation from King George.



And in Canada, the Battle of the St. Lawrence saw 16 German U-boats penetrate the Cabot Strait and the Strait of Belle Isle to sink 23 ships between 1942 and 1944; it marked the only time since the War of 1812 that enemy warships inflicted death within Canada's inland waters. The battle advanced to within 300 kilometres of Québec City, when on 11 Sep 1942 the escort corvette HMCS *Charlottetown* was destroyed by U-517 within sight of horrified onlookers on the shores near Cap-Chat.



HMCS Charlottetown navy-marine.forces.gc.ca

The *SS Caribou* was a Newfoundland Railway passenger ferry that ran between Port aux Basques, Newfoundland and North Sydney, Nova Scotia. At 3:25am on 14 October 42, she was torpedoed by German U-boat U-69. That night the ferry's complement included 46 crew members from the Newfoundland Merchant Navy, 73 civilians and 118 Canadian, British and American military personnel. Only 101 survived the disaster. Of the crew, 31 perished. The civilian death toll included at least five mothers and ten children. Agnes Wilkie became the only Canadian Nursing Sister (CNS) to die due to enemy action during the war; the other CNS onboard, her good friend and travelling companion, Margaret Brooke, was named a Member of the Order of the British Empire for her gallant efforts to save Wilkie as they drifted through the night on a life raft.



Passenger ferry SS Caribou D. Poissant collection

More than any other event, the loss of the *Caribou* revealed to all Canadians our vulnerability to seaward attack and brought home the fact that the war wasn't just a European show.

Britain had entered the war with 80,000 military vehicles of all types; 75,000 were left behind in the evacuation of Dunkirk. Virtually defenceless on the ground, Britain turned to Canada – and particularly to the Canadian auto industry.

Canada not only replaced those losses, it did much more.

Under the direction of Clarence Decatur Howe, Minister of Munitions and Supply, Canadian industry produced over 800,000 military transport vehicles; 50,000 tanks; 40,000 field, naval and anti-aircraft guns and 1,700,000 small arms.

Of those 800,000 vehicles, 168,000 were issued to Canadian forces. 38% of the Canadian production went to the British. The remainder went to other allies. This meant that the Canadian Army in the field had a ratio of one vehicle for every three soldiers, making it the most mechanized field force in the war!



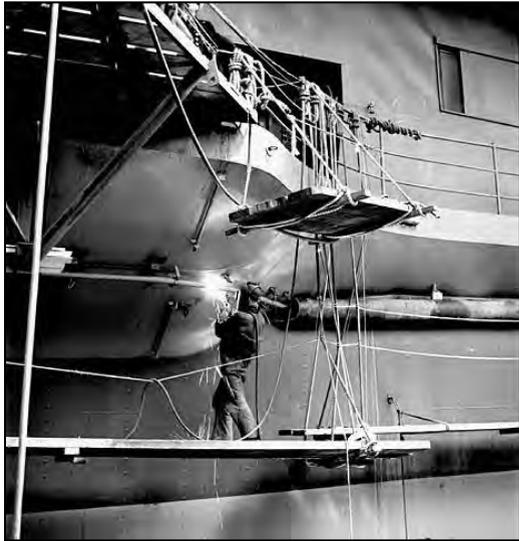
Left: C.D. Howe drives 500,000th military vehicle from a Canadian production line. Right: Building tanks at Montreal Locomotive Works. Veterans Affairs Canada (Canada Remembers)

Canadian Pacific Railway constructed 788 Valentine tanks in its Angus shop in Montreal; their engines were built by General Motors Canada. 5,200 tanks had been built at CP Angus and Montreal Locomotive Company shops by the end of the war. 2,500 twenty-five pounder “Sexton” self-propelled guns were built by Montreal Locomotive Works.

A heavy utility vehicle body was developed in Canada; 4,000 such vehicles were manufactured by GM in Oshawa, Ontario. They could be mounted on a 4x4 chassis and, with slight modifications, could be used as a personnel carrier, ambulance, light wireless truck or machinery truck.

There were 348 ten-thousand ton merchant ships built in Canada during the war. Large and relatively slow, but reliable and easily adapted to a variety of cargoes, these ships and those who sailed on them ensured the delivery of much of Canada’s war production.

57,000 individuals were employed in merchant shipbuilding and a further 27,000 worked in naval shipbuilding, which included building vessels like destroyers, frigates, corvettes and minesweepers.



Left: Mrs. A. Mackay in Pictou, NS Shipyard. Right: Burrard Dry Dock, Vancouver, BC Canada remembers

Canadian aviation industries manufactured parts for huge bombers and fighter aircraft like the Hawker Hurricane and de Havilland Mosquito whose laminated fuselage was made using wood from British Columbia.



Hawker Hurricanes built at Canadian Car & Foundry, Ft. William, Ontario Canada Remembers

Canada assembled a total of 16,000 military aircraft, 10,000 of which were shipped directly to Britain, and the remainder going to either the US or remained in Canada for use in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP).



KB799 – 100th Lancaster from Victory Aircraft (A.V. Roe) Malton, Ontario

Canadian industry pulled together in many different ways to produce war materials. As an example, the contract to produce 1,100 Mosquito fighter-bombers was awarded to deHavilland Canada, but they only did the final assembly. General Motors made the fuselages, Massey Harris made the wings, Boeing made the tailplane, the flaps were by the Canadian Power Boat Company and the undercarriages were built by Otaco.



Mosquito fuselage – by General Motors Canada

At the outbreak of war the Royal Canadian Air Force had only 4,000 personnel, less than a dozen airports of its own, and training facilities for only 400 ground crew per year.

Now it was expected to train thousands.

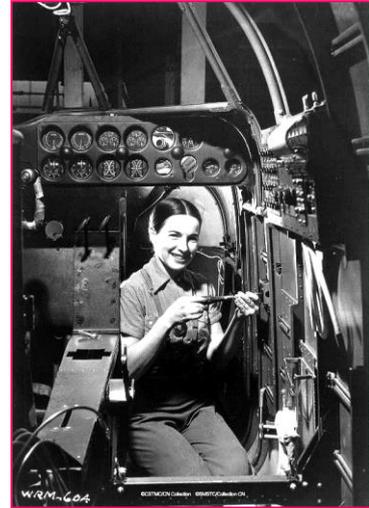
It recruited instructors, built air bases, acquired aircraft and developed training schools for the various specialties. By war's end, there were 151 training schools and every province had BCATP installations; they had trained 131,553 aircrew for Commonwealth Air Forces.



Canada was, in US President Roosevelt's words, "the aerodrome of democracy."

Thousands of Canadian women joined the military, becoming WACs, WDs and WRENs to fill non-combat roles; still others became Nursing Sisters, like Margaret Brooke, who was awarded the OBE for her life-saving work in the Gulf of St Lawrence.

At the peak of wartime employment in 1943-44, 439,000 women worked in the service sector, 373,000 in manufacturing and 4,000 in construction.



Women worked everywhere: services, manufacturing, construction... and still cared for their families

With their sons overseas, many farm women had to take on extra work. One Alberta mother of nine sons – all of them either in the army or away working in factories – drove the tractor, ploughed the fields, put up hay and hauled grain to the elevators, along with tending her garden, raising chickens, pigs and turkeys and canning hundreds of jars of fruits and vegetables.

Canadian Elsie Gregory McGill was the first woman in the world to graduate as an aeronautical engineer. She worked for Fairchild Aircraft Limited during the war. In 1940 her team's design and production methods were turning out 100 Hurricane combat aircraft per month.

Wartime Housing Limited, a new division of the Department of Munitions and Supply, provided two basic house models for workers who had to relocate in order to work in the new munitions plants and other industries:

2-bedroom model sold for \$1,982.00

4-bedroom for \$2,680.00

Weekly rations of food included 1-1/3 ounces of tea, 5-1/3 ounces of coffee, 1/2 pound of sugar and 1/2 pound of butter. Other rationed items included meat, whiskey and gasoline.



Elsie Gregory McGill



WWII Canadian ration book with stamps D. Poissant collection

To save fabric and buttons for uniforms, the government forbade many 'extras' on manufactured clothing, such as cuffs on pants, any hem in excess of 2 inches, double breasted jackets, flap pockets and more than 9 buttons on a dress.

Not everyone who put their lives on the line to serve Canada did so in a military uniform. Many civilian organizations worked closely with Allied Forces.

The Canadian Corps of Firefighters was organized in 1942 to help British firefighters combat the fires caused by bombing. 422 men volunteered for the corps. They had 11 casualties, including 3 deaths.

585 volunteers from the Canadian Legion, Knights of Columbus, Salvation Army and the YMCA set up canteens and reading rooms for soldiers. They suffered 71 casualties, including 3 dead.



Canadian Legion Canteen

Medical personnel with the Canadian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance acted as assistants to nurses and ambulance drivers.

Canadian men and women served ferrying aircraft to Britain. Overall, they suffered a casualty rate of 20%. Altogether, they piloted 10,000 planes overseas. Ferry pilots were paid between \$500 and \$1,000 for flying planes to Britain, but had to find their own way home.

Newfoundland Overseas Foresters sent 3,500 experienced loggers to Britain to help with the continuous need for lumber. Most worked harvesting trees in Scotland. 2,100 Newfoundland Foresters also served in the British Home Guard.

Young Warren 'Whitey' Bernard reaches out for one last goodbye to his dad, Jack Bernard, as the BC Regiment *Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles*, marches down 8th Street, in New Westminster, British Columbia 01 Oct 1940. Jack returned safely.

With most able-bodied men overseas, countless young people worked to harvest crops to ensure a steady food supply for Canadians and our allies.

To encourage students to help with the harvest, schools did not count attendance or introduce new material in class until after the crops were in.

The government lowered the minimum age for a driver's licence to 14 so children could legally operate farm trucks and other vehicles.

Children collected tons of scrap, some even donating their own toys for metal salvage drives. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides conducted many fund-raising activities. The 10th Toronto Scout Troop collected 510,000 pounds of salvage and used the money earned to buy a truck and an ambulance for the RCAF and Victory Bonds.

Of the \$5.5 billion raised in Canadian Victory Loan appeals, many millions were contributed by children



Warren Bernard "wait for me Daddy"
Vancouver Archives

Once back home, servicemen received 30 days leave followed by discharge from the military. Benefits after discharge included:

- \$100 to purchase civilian clothing
- War Service Gratuity of \$7.50 for each 30 days service, an additional 25 cents for each day overseas and one week's pay for each 6 months service outside Canada. The average War Service Gratuity was \$488.00 (about \$5,000 in today's dollars)
- Spouses of those who died in service received pensions of 75% of what a disabled vet received; children received additional benefits including financial support for higher education.
- Veterans Land Act helped vets buy land for homes or businesses.
- Department of Veterans Affairs provided vocational training.
- The Veterans Rehabilitation Act sent 54,000 veterans to University.
- The Veterans Business and Professional Loans Act granted 6,902 veterans loans totalling \$11 million.
- For Vets having trouble finding work, the War Veterans Allowance Program provided assistance of \$13/week for married vets and \$9/week for unmarried. The total cost of the program from 1941 to 1951 was \$51 million.



Perhaps most remarkably, Canadian industry, which had geared up for war, did not gear down greatly in its aftermath. Some jobs disappeared, certainly, but they were replaced by other employment.

C.D. Howe was again involved, this time in charge of the new Department of Reconstruction, which overcame a potential economic crisis by orchestrating the transition from a wartime economy to a peacetime one.

In 1948, unemployment was still at a minimum; steel mills were exceeding their wartime capacity and the demand for aluminum held.

Canada had become the third largest trading nation in the world! Best of all, the war seemed to have taught Canada the value of our 'human capital' and things would never again be the same for Canadian workers.

B-25 GRUMPY

to fly in Centenary of RAF

April 15-17



At the invitation of the **British Embassy**, B-25D 'Grumpy' of the Historic Flight Foundation in Mukilteo, Washington will cross the USA to fly in ceremonies marking the 100th anniversary of the Royal Air Force (April 15-17). Venues will include the Udvar-Hazy Centre at Dulles Airport and the Air and Space Museum on the Smithsonian Mall.

Grumpy will form up with Spitfires and a Lancaster bomber.

Current and prospective HHF B-25 members interested in this event should contact airborne@historicflight.org