

Chapter News

Folded Wings

The Chapter was saddened to learn of the recent passing of two fine and heroic aviators, namely **Philip Gray** and **Ross Lennox**.

Philip Gray (CAHS # 5153) passed away suddenly on October 16, 2013 at his home in Etobicoke, Ontario. He was born in Ladybank, Fife, Scotland. He attended Kirkcaldy High School to 4th year, where he was the Junior Sports Champion in 1936. Philip joined the RAF in 1942 after walking into a recruiting centre in Dundee. After extensive flight training over the period of a year at Falcon Field, Arizona, USA he returned to the UK.

Upon returning he was posted to 186 Heavy Bomber Squadron at Stradishall where he assembled his “Clueless” crew. At the age of 21 he was now the pilot of a Lancaster Bomber and responsible for a crew of 7. He flew 16 combat missions deep into the heart of Germany, dodging deadly night fighters and the ever present anti-aircraft guns. Philip was later posted to 622 Squadron Mildenhall where his duties included dropping food to the people of The Netherlands under “Operation Manna” and flying back prisoners of war from France to England under “Operation Exodus”.



*Philip Gray At Canadian Air & Space Museum in front of the Lancaster FM104 Restoration Project
Photo Credit – John Chalmers*

Following the war, Philip operated a retail business for a period of time, later returning to active flying duties in 1953/54. He was assigned to the 2nd Tactical Air Force in Germany as a target tow pilot on the RAF firing ranges off the coast of the Island of Sylt, Northern Germany. He flew the Tempest, Mosquito and the Meteor jet as tow planes in a highly risky assignment. He married in 1952 and he and his wife later emigrated to New Zealand in 1971. Philip stayed active in flying and held several positions with different government ministries. His wife passed away in 1982 and he then started to script a book, “Ghosts of Targets Past”, about his wartime experiences. He had the book finely honed when he emigrated to Canada in 1990. He became a member of the Canadian Air and Space Museum in 2000 where he was very well respected. He sold many of his books at the museum, always donating a portion of his receipts back to the museum. Philip spoke to the CAHS Toronto Chapter in 2001 and his talk is recorded in the March 2001 Volume 35 issue of “Flypast”.

On Saturday, November 9, 2013 a “Celebration of Life” for Philip was held at St. James United Church on Burnhamthorpe Road in Etobicoke. The church was filled to capacity with friends, members and executive of the Canadian Air & Space Museum (CASM), members and executive of the CAHS Toronto Chapter and members of the church congregation. Philip had worshipped at the church for 23 years and was an active volunteer. An outstanding feature of the celebration was a live Skype broadcast from Plymouth, England by Ivor Foster, the Mid-Upper Gunner on Philip’s wartime crew. Ivor is now the last surviving member of that crew. *Files from The Toronto Star, CASM & Chapter files.*

Ross Lennox (CAHS # 3690) was born Christmas day 1922 and passed away peacefully on November 1, 2013. Ross’ aviation career spanned over six decades starting in 1941 as a WWII flight instructor. Ross made several significant contributions to Canadian aviation history. He was the only pilot to fly all of Canada’s Sea King helicopter fleet and he completed the first unescorted trans-Atlantic helicopter crossing in 1965. He retired from Pratt & Whitney Canada (PWC) in 1982 as Chief Test Pilot. He was a sports enthusiast, an avid curler and at 85, went skydiving. Ross generously supported many charities but latterly focussed on the Alzheimer’s Society in loving memory of his wife Gladys. A gift to the Toronto Alzheimer’s Society (www.alzheimertoronto.org) would be greatly appreciated by the family. Ross was an inspiration to everyone that he met and will be dearly missed by all. *Files from the Ottawa Citizen, Chapter files.*