

May Meeting

Sixth Annual CAHS Toronto Dinner Meeting

Topic: *Tactical Training of the Luftwaffe Postwar on the Canadair Sabre*

Speaker: Brigadier-General Paul A. Hayes, OMM, CD

Reporter: Gord McNulty

Thirty-five people, including 19 Chapter members joined by 16 guests, enjoyed the CAHS Toronto Chapter's sixth annual dinner meeting in the Armour Heights Officers Mess at Canadian Forces College. After the traditional social hour, proceedings began with Chapter President Dr. George Topple welcoming everyone and extending appreciation to the College and Mess Staff for their hospitality and assistance in planning the event. George introduced the head table: guest speaker Paul Hayes and his wife, Wendy Austin; Sheldon Benner; former Toronto Chapter President Howard Malone and his wife, Pat. Chapter member Tom Nettleton said grace and the attendees enjoyed an excellent meal with a choice of roast beef, chicken or vegetarian lasagna. Our guest speaker was introduced by Howard Malone, a long time colleague of Paul. Brigadier-General Hayes previously spoke to the Chapter in September, 1998, on the topic of Sabres for the post-war Luftwaffe (see *Flypast* Vol. 33, Number 2, October, 1998). Paul began his illustrious career in the air force when he joined the RCAF Auxiliary in 1951. He received his pilot's wings in 1953 and flew Vampire and F-86 jet fighters on defence of Canada operations with 411 "County of York" Squadron in Toronto until December, 1956, when he joined the RCAF Regular. He served in Europe from 1957 to 1963 as a pilot on the F-86 Sabre, first with 422 (Fighter) Squadron and then as Tactical Advisor to 73 Wing of the German Air Force. Upon his return to Canada, he held various flying and administrative positions until leaving the Regular Force in 1964 to continue his university studies. At that time, Paul rejoined 411 Air Reserve Squadron and eventually served as Commanding Officer from February 1976 to October 1978.

Paul was then appointed Chief Operations Officer and Deputy Commander of 2 Air Reserve Wing prior to his appointment as Commander of the Wing in September 1979. He served as Commander of 2 Air Reserve Wing until November 1982 when he was transferred to the staff of the Chief of Reserves and Cadets at National Defence Headquarters. He rejoined Air Reserve Group Headquarters in January 1984 with responsibility as Chief Staff Officer Training. He was then promoted to Brigadier-General in May 1988 and served as Commander of Air Reserve Group from May 1988 to May 1990. In October 2000, Paul was appointed Honorary Colonel of 400 "City of Toronto" Tactical Helicopter Squadron, based at CFB Borden. Over his military career, he has accumulated close to 8,000 flying hours in jet fighters, light tactical transport aircraft and helicopters. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto with his Bachelor of Arts (1956) and Master's Degree in Business Administration (1966). In civilian life he is employed as a management consultant and President of AeroCan Aviation Specialists Inc. in Toronto. He was also a licensed real estate sales representative for several years, specializing in commercial real estate. Paul is active as a Director with the Ontario Council of St. John Ambulance and with the Ontario Provincial Committee of the Air Cadet League of Canada and the Royal Canadian Military Institute. He is also the National Chair



Speaker Paul Hayes
Photo Credit - Neil McGavock

of the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA). He is a former director of the Toronto Port Authority, Past National President of the RCAFA, Past Chairman of the Toronto and Region Division of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, and is a member of the NATO Council of Canada. He formerly served as an Aide de Camp to the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and Senior Vice-Chairman of the Conference of Defence Associations.

In his presentation, Paul displayed many good slides of his service in Germany. He referenced an article that he wrote for Vintage Wings of Canada, "achtungsaberjetz!" Twelve RCAF Squadrons, based at four Canadian fighter wings in Europe, had flown the Canadair Sabre --- 300 in all --- for several years. They became widely renowned as the best air defense operation on the continent during the tension-filled days of the Cold War. The fledgling new Luftwaffe had chosen the superlative Sabre Mark 6, the ultimate version first flown in 1954, as their day fighter. West Germany ordered 225 in December, 1956. Canada agreed to set up an Operational Training Unit in northern Germany, where they trained 360 German pilots with some ground crew. For his part, Paul much enjoyed getting checked out on the Sabre Mk 5 at Chatham, New Brunswick while he was with 411 Squadron in the Auxiliary. He liked the Sabre so much that he chose to join the Regular Air Force rather than go into law school.



Luftwaffe Sabre Vs on the ramp at Renfrew, Scotland

Paul spent 3½ years with RCAF 422 (Tomahawk) Squadron at 4 (Fighter) Wing Baden-Soellingen before becoming Tactical Advisor to the new Luftwaffe. He described the Sabre 6 as "an absolutely magnificent airplane. It was effective. It was fast," he recalled. Everyone knew the unique call sign, "Tomahawk 28," used in the event of engine failure. The pressures of the Cold War era meant that pilots had to be constantly on high alert. Paul noted that rather than being lined up on the tarmac, the fighters at Baden-Soellingen were dispersed in the trees for protection against potential enemy attack. Paul liked the Germans and found them to be very welcoming. "One of the things that really impressed me right off the bat was that everybody spoke English," he recalled. A German pilot told Paul they made a fundamental decision after the war to become "citizens of the world economy" and to do that they learned how to speak English starting in primary school. In November, 1957, Paul had just arrived back from 422 Squadron's latest semi-annual live weapons shoot in Sardinia when he was posted to join the Canadian Advisory Group at WS 10 in Oldenburg, Germany.

Paul's introduction to the new German Air Force began with 75 Sabre 5s that had been retired by the RCAF and were parked at Renfrew in Scotland. When he arrived at Renfrew, Paul recalled the sight of Sabres with newly painted, large German iron cross insignia on the fuselage as "a bit of an eye opener." He and three other pilots from 422 Sqdn. flew four of the refurbished Sabres to Oldenburg, stopping en route for refueling and lunch at the famous RAF base at Manston in southeast England. Paul was then posted to join the Canadian Advisory Group at WS (Weapons School) 10 in Oldenburg. On arrival, Paul was told he would be assigned as a Tactical Advisor to JG (Jagdgeschwader or Fighter Wing 73), the final Sabre 6 German day fighter air defense wing to be formed. It was subsequently designated the Steinhoff Wing, named in honour of Johannes Steinhoff,

the famed World War II Luftwaffe fighter ace who went on to play a key role in the rebuilding of the West German Air Force. The Wing remained at “Oldy” until October, 1961. Then it moved to a new air base at Pferdsfeld/Sobenheim, located in the Eiffel Mountains. It wasn’t far from the three major USAF fighter bases at Bitburg, Hahn and Spangdahlem, near the beautiful German city of Bad Kreuznach. Paul was joined by Flight Lieutenant Alex Leslie, another Canadian Sabre pilot who had served with 421 Sqdn. at 2 (Fighter) Wing at Grostenquin, France. The two Canadians were tasked with the job of teaching Germans jet fighter tactics, air to air weapon operations, and element and section leads. About 50 German pilots, including approximately 12 World War II fighter combat veterans, were involved. The training was designed to bring the German pilots to NATO operational standards, enabling them to hold the same alert at the end of the runway with armed fighters ready to go.



Luftwaffe pilot Lieutenant Horst Fetzer in discussion with RCAF’s Paul A. Hayes - Photo - Paul Hayes

One photo showed Paul discussing flying operations with German Air Force pilot Lieutenant Horst Fetzer of JG 73. Interestingly, the blue-grey uniform worn by the Germans was very similar to the wartime Luftwaffe uniform. The Canadian squadrons went to Sardinia for three weeks every six months. Initially, the Germans were not set up for all of the facilities and support needed by the Canadians, so when one of the RCAF squadrons went away, Paul arranged to take several German Sabre pilots and aircrew to one of the Canadian wings where everything was up and running. The Germans learned in that

environment. “The Germans really liked the rapport with the Canadians,” Paul recalled. “What had we done? Why were we as good as we were?”

The Luftwaffe required a ground attack aircraft, which the Sabre wasn’t set up for. They converted 73 Wing to the Italian-built Fiat G. 91 for that role. But it wasn’t successful as a fighter bomber and 73 Wing was later equipped with the F-4 Phantom II. Paul happened to be on duty in Germany on Nov. 8, 1989, the day when the Berlin Wall came down. It marked the first critical step toward the dissolution of East Germany and official reunification of the German state along the lines of democratic West Germany. The Russians had left their military equipment behind. They didn’t care about the environment either, and that problem required a lot of expensive cleanup. After the reunification, 73 Wing took over MiG-29s that had served in the East German Air Force. Reconstituted with both the Phantom and the MiG-29, the Wing moved to the former East German base at Rostock/Laage. In 2000, the Wing became the first German Air Force unit to fly the new Eurofighter Typhoon. Its first squadron provided an air defense capability with the Typhoon. The second squadron, after retirement of the Phantom in 2004, became the German Air Force operational training unit for the Typhoon. In 2004, the remaining MiG-29s were sold to Poland.

The Canadian Sabre

	F-86E	Sabre 5	Sabre 6
Engine	GE J-47 5,200 Lbs.	Orenda 10 6,355 Lbs.	Orenda 14 7,440 Lbs.
T/O Run (50 ft.)	4,300 ft.	3,850 ft.	2,800 ft.
Time to 40,000'	12 mins.	7.5 mins.	6.0 mins.
Cruise Speed 40,000 ft.	480 kts.	525 kts.	540 kts.

Comparing Canadian and American models of the Sabre, Paul noted the more powerful Avro Orenda engine of the Canadair Sabre gave it a clear edge in performance over the General Electric J-47 in the U.S. version. The Orenda 14 in the Sabre 6 had a static thrust of 7,275 pounds compared to the GE J-47-27 with a static thrust of 5,910 pounds in the North American F-86F. Green & Pollinger's *The Aircraft of the World* lists the maximum speed of the Sabre 6 as 710 m.p.h. at sea level versus 678 m.p.h. for the F-86F. The Sabre 6 did 620 m.p.h. at 36,000 feet, versus 599 m.p.h. at 35,000 feet for the F-86F. Initial climb rate of the Sabre 6 was 11,800 feet per minute; time to 40,000 feet was 6 minutes. Initial climb rate of the F-86F was 9,800 feet per minute; time to 30,000 feet was 5.2 minutes. Paul noted Sabre pilots rarely flew a solo trip and were always in formation, looking for targets. Canada had the best air defence radar in Europe by far, working with the Americans, British and others. The NATO allies had a good idea of Russian technology, based on the knowledge gained from defections and captures involving the MiG-15 and later the MiG-17. The pilots faced many close encounters. They had to eject, or as Paul said, "step over the side, using the bang seat," and parachute from aircraft on numerous occasions. The four Canadian wings operated in busy airspace that Paul described as "crowded all the time." The Sabre's armament consisted of six .50 calibre machine guns. Ninety per cent of the rounds were targeted to strike within a four-foot circle at 1,000 feet back. "So you knew that if you got 400 feet behind a guy and your gunsight was working and you were tracking on radar, he was going to get a lot of lead," Paul said. Starting development of the Sabre late in World War II, the Americans wanted to ensure that the cockpit was so efficient that a fighter pilot could concentrate on the enemy. As a result, the Sabre cockpit was organized very well and it really worked from an ergonomic standpoint.

Paul closed with a shot of the final pass of the No. 1 Air Division Sabres, made by 439 Squadron at Marville, France. The halcyon days of the Sabre ended as the CF-104 Starfighter replaced the F-86, starting in 1962. Paul enjoys the camaraderie of SPAADS --- The Sabre Pilots Association of the Air Division --- which has a reunion every two years and typically draws 400 members. He has also been involved with Vintage Wings of Canada as a technical adviser on the Hawk One project. He checked out the first five pilots to fly the beautiful Sabre in Golden Hawks colours, a great symbol of our heritage. In addition, Paul has assisted 403 Wing, RCAFA and COPA in the restoration and repainting of a Golden Hawks Sabre in Sarnia. The 'sword' was removed in February, 2013 from its pylon in Germain Park, where it had stood since 1971. Good progress continued to be made this summer on the restoration and planned remounting of this landmark.

"I really feel very good about the time I had in the air force, serving Canada," Paul said proudly. Answering questions, he recalled many of the solid friendships and connections that he made in the air force. Chapter Volunteer Bob Winson thanked Paul on behalf of everyone for an outstanding presentation.



RCAF Squadron 422 Sabre Formation - Paul Hayes is piloting the second aircraft from the bottom, #727.

Photo - Paul Hayes