

# Old Guard Gazette



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## Welcome to the Old Guard!

Welcome to the launch of our new 779 Alumni Newsletter, The Old Guard Gazette. It is our goal to keep our alumni informed and to make them feel a part of the 779 family. Please feel free to share information with us about important events in your life like new jobs, engagements, marriages, children, grandchildren, trips... you get the picture.

If you'd like to submit a story or information relating to air cadets, we'd love to hear from you; send us an email to [oldguardnews@gmail.com](mailto:oldguardnews@gmail.com)!

## MEMORIES IN THE MAKING: Summer Training 2019!

### Staffing at Trenton

This summer spent as a staff cadet for the Basic Aviation Technology and Aerospace course (BATA) was a tremendous experience. Over the course of the summer, I was presented with unique opportunities for my leadership skills to flourish, and to put my resourcefulness, and problem-solving skills to the test. This coupled with the camaraderie and professional development I underwent during my six weeks with my flights, as well as, the week of pre-course, or in-service training (IST) as Trenton calls it, made for a tremendous experience. ~ **WOII Drake Morris**



Click to watch!

### International Air Cadet Exchange

The International Air Cadet Exchange was an experience I will never forget. Our tour started with a few days in London, followed by a trip to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, finishing with a tour of York and Lincoln. It was a phenomenal trip that took us all across England. Some of my favourite activities during the trip were kayaking in the English Channel, watching *A Midsummers Night Dream* in Shakespeare's Globe theatre, and seeing the other flying Lancaster. Not only did I have the trip of a lifetime, but I also made friends for life with people from across the world. Our tour group included cadets from Hong Kong, Australia, Belgium, Turkey, Ukraine, and South Korea. While we all came from drastically different places, we all had one thing to bond over - our shared love of aviation and our new shared experiences. IACE was a once in a lifetime trip I won't forget.

~ **WOI Madeline Coleman**





The barracks block building at the Mount Hope airport served as squadron headquarters for 20 years. until June 30. 1992.

## THEN AND NOW: Squadron Building

There have been a couple different moves as we have grown into the incredible squadron that we are today, having just celebrated our 50th anniversary.

On January 21, 1969 the Minister of National Defense approved the creation of the 779 squadron. By March of that year we had grown to 21 cadets and with enrolment climbing, we were quickly outgrowing our original space within the Barton Community Centre on Upper James. Thanks to the support of our generous sponsors at the 447 Wing however, we were able to relocate to the Mount Hope airport.

There, the Barracks Block building was our proud home for twenty years serving as our headquarters. In the early 90's however, development plans were underway at the Mount Hope airport, meaning that the barracks would no longer be a viable option for our weekly training nights. Per the notice received in December of 1991, the land had to be made available for development no later than June 30, 1992. We had to act fast and begin a fundraising drive.

In January of 1992 a proposal was put forward to the township of Glanbrook for the construction of a new building. The proposal included how it would benefit the community, as well as current and future cadets. With the full support of the 447 Wing, the SSC, the local MPP, and the funding committee, CO Captain Begley drafted a fundraising request letter. The letter advised the reader about the proposed expansion of the airport, as well as the cost of a new building (\$75K) and the pending location at the Lions Youth Centre in Mount Hope.

We were able to raise \$45K due to the generous fundraising efforts of cadets and squadron members. (In fact, one of the cadets who was part of that original fundraising effort all those years ago, Cheryl Jackson-Checkley, has returned to 779 where she currently serves on our Squadron Sponsoring Committee!). On top of the substantial fundraising dollars that were raised at the time, the Township of Glanbrook applied for, and secured, a \$25K grant from the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, on behalf of the cadets. Graciously, the Township also agreed to provide free land next to the Lions Youth Centre.

Ground-breaking for the new 2,000 square foot building began July 20, 1992 and was completed by October. One can only imagine the bittersweet emotions that would have been experienced as the airport barracks building was packed up and torn down. It's been nearly 30 years since we celebrated the opening of our building on at the Lions Youth Centre, behind what is now the Mount Hope Library, and the squadron is still going strong.

As each year passes, we grow as a squadron even more. Only the Black Knight knows what our next generation of cadets will achieve. We do know that as each person enters the squadron, they are truly formed into a better person whose future is only restricted by their own dreams.



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# WHERE ARE THEY NOW:

## Cheryl Jackson-Checkley

When we think of 1986, we remember “Top Gun” crushing it at the box office while across the airwaves, Madonna’s star was on the rise. After the Space Shuttle Challenger and Chernobyl tragedies earlier in the year, the “Hands Across America” project and the launch of The Oprah Winfrey Show were timely beacons of optimism. Exciting things were happening locally in Hamilton, too: the Sheraton Hotel and Copps Coliseum had just been built the year before, and construction was finishing on the first CIBC skyscraper at King & James. It was in the Fall of that year, that 13-year-old Cheryl Jackson joined the 779 Black Knight Air Cadet Squadron.

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*By the time Cheryl aged out of the air cadet program at the rank of Flight Sergeant, she enjoyed the distinction of being the first female cadet at the squadron to lead the colour party.*

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A friend had introduced her to the program, and she was immediately hooked. Cheryl went on to spend the following five years at 779, under the leadership of CO Captain Aidan Finn. She was enthusiastically involved in the cadet life, as were her mom and dad who participated on the parents committee. Cheryl embraced every opportunity the squadron could give her. She particularly recalls fundraising her little heart out to raise money for the chance to go on the squadron trip to the U.K. in 1990, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. The trip was well worth it; she still enjoys sharing memories of the experiences, souvenirs, and friendships she’s carried with her ever since. By the time Cheryl aged out of the air cadet program at the rank of Flight Sergeant, she enjoyed the distinction of being the first female cadet at the squadron to lead the colour party.

In the years that followed, Cheryl graduated from Mohawk College’s Law & Security program and spent several years working in Hamilton’s correctional centre. When injuries from an accident precluded her from continuing in that capacity, she took on more administrative/client-facing roles. Through all of this, Cheryl kept doing what she’d always been doing — volunteering. Since her peer tutoring days at Orchard Park High School, she’s given countless hours in service to her community, all of it illustrating that she is, at her core, driven to help others. On top of participating on various health initiatives like pain management programs, and developing a suicide prevention video for the Week of the Child, her list of volunteerism is extensive, including: Ronald McDonald Children’s Charities, the Hamilton Wentworth Regional Police Identi-Kid campaign, Corrections Canada Work Release programs, and the Salvation Army breakfast programs. Most recently (and to our great fortune!), Cheryl has taken on another volunteer position as our newest member of the Squadron Sponsoring Committee! She feels this is a perfect way to give back to the squadron that guided her through the teenaged years and helped to shape the person she’s become.

Part of the Air Cadet League of Canada’s vision is to encourage and enhance the development of well adjusted, civic minded youth. Well, nothing says “civic minded” quite like volunteerism, so it’s clear that Cheryl Jackson-Checkley embodies the very qualities that the cadet program tries to foster.



FSgt. Cheryl Jackson, 1991



Cheryl Jackson-Checkley,  
2019



# Events

## Corner

A cadet that hasn't had to tag is a rare one indeed! Tagging is still one of the primary ways in which the squadron fundraises. The money raised through tagging, funds activities and purchases that are not paid for by the DND such as March Break Trips, band equipment, and other activities. This fall's tagging will take place Thursday, October 24th to Saturday, October 26th. Look for 779 cadets here:

## TAGGING



### HAMILTON

Walmart..... Rymal, near Upper Centennial  
Denninger's ..... Upper James  
Shoppers Drug Mart ..... Stonechurch & Upper Sherman  
Shoppers Drug Mart ..... Rymal & Upper James

### ANCASTER

Sobeys..... Meadowlands  
Shoppers Drug Mart..... Golf Links Rd.  
Canadian Tire ..... Wilson & Shaver

### CALEDONIA

Canadian Tire..... Argyle & Braemar  
Zehrs..... Argyle & Celtic Dr.

### HAGERSVILLE

No Frills ..... Hwy.6 (Plank Rd.)

If we don't happen to be in your area, consider making a small donation on our website: [779aircadets.com](http://779aircadets.com)



## OPC LOTTERY TICKETS

OPC Lottery tickets are now on sale. For \$5.00/ticket you could win:

- a 2020 Subaru WRX (worth \$50,000),
- a 2020 Subaru KV 180 (worth \$32,000),
- a 1 hour flight on the Lancaster for 4 people (worth \$14,000)
- or cash prizes

Contact the Squadron office (905-679-6485) to purchase tickets. Tickets will also be sold at the 779 Booth at the Binbrook Fair Sept 15-18th.

## POPPY CAMPAIGN

From the last Friday in October to Remembrance Day, millions of Canadians wear a Poppy as a visual pledge to never forget those who sacrificed for our freedom. We invite everyone to show their recognition by proudly wearing this symbol of Remembrance and taking a moment to reflect. Some of our cadets will be helping both the Caledonia and Lynden Legions sell poppies.

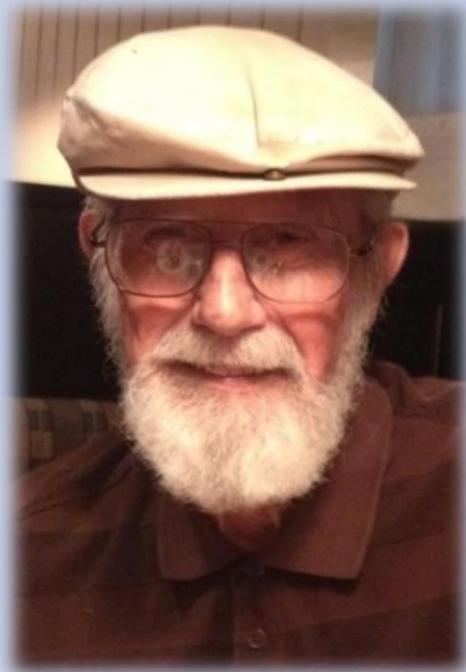


## REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Look for some of the 779 cadets participating in the following Remembrance Day Services:

Sunday November 3, 2019 – 2:00pm  
**Memorial Service at Glanbrook Arena**  
4300 Binbrook Road, Binbrook  
*Followed by light refreshments at the 447 Wing;  
Reconnect with old friends and meet new ones!*

Monday November 11, 2019 – 10:30am  
**Remembrance Day Service at Canadian Warplane**  
9280 Airport Road, Mount Hope  
*Free parking & admission – donations appreciated*



## IN MEMORIAM:

### *Russel David McCrory*

*May 12, 1935 – August 16, 2019*

Peacefully on August 16, 2019 in his 85<sup>th</sup> year. Beloved husband to Muriel for 62 years. Loving father to Susan Andrikopoulos (Gus), Lisa McCrory and Ken McCrory (Angela). Cherished grandpa to James, Steven, Kyle and Ben. Predeceased by his sister Alice McCaig and brother Thomas McCrory.

Russ was very active in the community serving as the last Chartered Member of the RCAF, 447 Wing, an active volunteer with the Black Knight Air Cadets, Librarian of the Brantford Lapidary Club and enjoyed his career as a Special Ed. Teacher with the Hamilton Board of Education.



Announcements

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

### *Jon and Emilia Visca (nee Tinebra)*

*Married May 4, 2018*



Alumni, Emelia (nee Tinebra) and Jonathan Visca met when they were 12 and 13 years old, as cadets at 779. Originally competitive with one another, they participated in many of the squadron teams/events together; eventually dating and retiring from their cadet careers.

Jonathan went on to graduate from the Royal Military College with an Honours B.A in military psychology and is now training as a pilot in the Canadian Forces.

Emelia went on to finish an Honours B.A in social psychology, mental health and addictions at McMaster University and now works full time in social justice. Having recently celebrated their first wedding anniversary, the two now live and work in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan with their puppy.

