

Honouring Our Local Veterans

2002

Charles Agnew

Birthdate: July 20, 1913

Rank / Branch: Pilot-Flying Officer, Royal Canadian Air Force

Unit: No. 45 Group Royal Air Force Transport Command, #113 South Atlantic Wing

Region: Canada (various locations for training and service), Bahamas, India, Africa, and North and South Atlantic Ocean

Served: 1941-1945

Community: Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- 1939-1945 Star
- North Atlantic Star
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Canadian Forces Decoration (12 years service)

Military Service

Tac enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force at a Toronto Recruiting Center on February 27, 1941. It was there in Toronto that he attended Basic Training at the Manning Pool in Malton, Ontario to become a pilot. The training was unsuccessful and so he was sent to Mountainview, Ontario to become an Armourer. He continued in this trade for quite some time and was stationed at Fingal, Ontario. Eventually he made his way back to aircrew.

Agnew graduated from Navigator training in St. Jean, Quebec in April 1944. He received his Pilot Officer and Navigator wing in 1944 and was transferred to Dorval, Quebec to serve with the Royal Air Force Transport Command. In June 1944, Tac was sent to the Bahamas with the 113 South Atlantic Wing to deliver planes to India and Africa. He traveled to India ten times in 18 months, stopping 14 to 16 times enroute for services and fuel. By 1945 Tac had earned the rank of Flying Officer and in September of that same year he was discharged from the Royal Canadian Air Force.



Robert Comber

Birthdate: December 23, 1920

Rank / Branch: Rifleman, Canadian Army

Unit: Queen's Own Rifles, 8th Platoon of Company A

Region: Canada (various locations for training and service), Great Britain, and France

Served: 1940-1946

Community: Holland Centre, Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- Battle of Britain Medal
- Operation Overlord Medal
- Normandy Freedom Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Bar
- Five-Year Good Conduct
- Queen's Own Rifles



Military Service

Although he originally wished to join the RCAF, Comber enlisted into the Royal Canadian Army and joined the Queen's Own Rifles. His regiment was soon sent to Camp Borden for training. Stationed in Newfoundland, he manned an aircraft Lewis gun, protecting aircraft coming in from Britain. Bob was sent home for a week's leave and upon his return to Camp he learned that his regiment was preparing to leave for overseas. He then became part of 8th Platoon of Company A. After six months of this service, Comber returned to Canada for further training.

Comber left for England aboard the SS Strathmore in 1941, and manned a .303 aircraft gun during the trip until they landed in Gourock, Scotland. Stationed on the south coast of England, mainly in the Brighton area, he guarded the coast against invasion and continued his training.

On June 6, 1944, Comber was involved in the D-Day Invasion as a driver of a Bren Gun Carrier. The carrier was nicknamed Isabelle, after his longtime childhood friend, Isabelle (Buchanan) Penner. This carrier pulled a six-pound anti-tank gun that Comber was responsible for firing when in action. In August 1944 he received a gun wound to the leg as a result of friendly fire.

He was discharged from the Royal Canadian Army in December 1946 despite the desire to remain in the military.

In the late 1960s Bob was able to rejoin the military on a part-time basis as a glider trainer for the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Frances Donovan (nee Ramage)

Birthdate: August 10, 1924

Rank / Branch: Leading Air Woman, Royal Canadian Air Force

Unit: RCAF Women's Division

Region: Ontario, Quebec

Served: 1943-1944

Community: Sullivan Township, Chatsworth, and Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal



Military Service

On her 19th birthday, August 10, 1943, Frances enlisted into the Royal Canadian Air Force - Women's Division out of Owen Sound. She received her basic training in Rockcliffe, Ontario and was trained to become a Wireless Operator. She was then promoted to Leading Air Woman.

Frances then spent 6 months in Montreal attending Number One Wireless School. Following this training, she was then sent to No. 5 Radio Station in Clinton, Ontario to become a canteen stewardess for a year and half. Near the end of 1944, Frances Ramage was discharged from the Royal Canadian Air Force - Women's Division with the honour of the Volunteer Service Medal.

Albert Keiller

Birthdate: September 8, 1919

Rank / Branch: Flying Officer, Royal Canadian Air Force

Unit:

Region: Canada (various locations for training), Great Britain, and Germany

Served: 1942-1946

Community: Owen Sound, Toronto, and Malton

Medals / Decorations:

- Defence Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
- RCAF Ribbon



Military Service

Bus received his Basic Training at the Manning Depot in Toronto, Ontario. After a lengthy holding period in which he kept himself busy with odd jobs, Keiller traveled to St. Eugene, Quebec. He then left for Moncton, New Brunswick to receive his Flight Training and later earn his wings as a pilot on April 30, 1943.

In May 1943, he went overseas to Bournemouth, England from Halifax to continue training. He was then sent to Shropshire and eventually stationed in Yorkshire. In February 1944, Bus was flying his Lancaster over Schweinfurt, a small German industrial center northwest of Nuremburg. On this, his third mission, his plane was shot down. He managed to bail out while other crewmembers unluckily went down with the plane. He was soon captured and transported to the Hydrekruog prisoner of war camp where Keiller was to remain for sixteen months until the end of the war. During that time, he was promoted to Flying Officer.

Barrett Lumley

Birthdate: October 11, 1922

Rank / Branch: Flight Sergeant - Pilot, Flight Lieutenant;
Royal Air Force, Royal Canadian Air Force

Unit: #273 Squadron, #436 Transport Squadron

Region: Great Britain, South Africa, Egypt, Ceylon, India,
Burma, and Canada (various locations for training and
service)

Served: 1941-1945; 1951-1969

Community: Owen Sound

Medals / Decorations:

- 1939 -1945 Star
- Burma Star
- Defence Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
- with Clasp
- War Medal 1939 -1945
- Operational Wings
- Pilots Flying Badge
- Canadian Forces Decoration



Military Service

Mr. Lumley intended to join the Royal Canadian Air Force in January 1941 but was rejected at the time for medical reasons. He then became a stoker aboard the Empress of Asia and worked his way from Vancouver to Liverpool. On May 1, 1941, Barrett enlisted with the Royal Air Force in the U.K. and received his ground training in England. Though he had applied to become an air gunner, Lumley was trained as a pilot in South Africa and then in Egypt from 1942 to 1943. He was stationed for 15 months with the 273rd Fighter Squadron flying Hurricanes and Spitfires in Ceylon, India, and Burma. In early 1945, he returned to Egypt to instruct at a Spitfire operational training unit.

Barrett was discharged from the RAF on May 1, 1945 but he immediately enlisted with the Royal Canadian Air Force as a Flight Sergeant in Cairo. Following a short leave, Lumley signed on for a tour with Tiger Force. However, the need for such service ended with the dawn of the atomic bomb. On October 17, 1945, Lumley was discharged from the Royal Canadian Air Force.

As if to prove his eagerness to fly, Mr. Lumley re-enlisted into the RCAF in Toronto on October 1, 1951. After undergoing refresher training in Calgary, Lumley served as a staff pilot with No. 2 Air Navigation School in Winnipeg. He spent three years in Rivers, Manitoba and three more years as a staff officer at the National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa.

In August 1960 he joined 436 Transport Squadron at the RCAF Station in Downsview, Ontario. The squadron transported troops and supplies for the military and also trained paratroopers. The squadron moved to Ottawa in 1965. After a year in Ottawa Lumley became Flight Safety Officer at Aerospace Engineering and Test Establishment. He retired from the RCAF for the second time as a Flight Lieutenant on December 15, 1969.

Percy Warrilow

Birthdate: October 24, 1924

Rank / Branch: Stoker Petty Officer, Royal Canadian Navy

Unit: HMS Nabob, HMCS Stormont

Region: Canada (various locations for training and service), Panama Canal, Great Britain, North Sea, and Russia

Served: 1943-1945

Community: Grey County, Derby Township, Owen Sound, Peterborough, and Sydenham

Medals / Decorations:

- Atlantic Star
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Murmansk Russian Medal

Military Service

Mr. Warrilow enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy in Kingston, Ontario on April 22, 1943 in an attempt to avoid conscription into the army. He trained to become a Stoker and was attached to a number of bases including Cornwallis in Nova Scotia.

On December 14, 1943, Percy joined the crew of the HMS Nabob in Vancouver. He worked in the engine room and was a member of the damage control team. The vessel traveled to Liverpool via the Panama Canal and then on to the North Sea with a convoy of approximately 80 ships on the Murmansk run. The convoy was on its way to Russia in September 1944 when it was attacked off the Norwegian coast. During the attack, several ships, including the HMS Nabob, were torpedoed but still managed to sail to safety.

On April 23, 1945, Warrilow graduated from a 4-month course in Halifax and was qualified as a Stoker Petty Officer. He was assigned to the HMCS Stormont, which was in the midst of preparations to join the fight in Japan. While Warrilow was at home on leave, Japan surrendered. He was discharged from the Royal Canadian Navy on September 20, 1945.

