

Lieutenant Colonel James Gale

Royal Canadian Air Force

Family Life:

James Robert Gale was born on January 20, 1945, to Marian (nee Puttick) and William. James takes much pride in the fact his father trained as a bomber pilot during the Second World War.

James was raised in Port Colborne, Leamington and Windsor, Ontario. After graduating from Port Colborne High School, James was admitted into Royal Roads Military College. He completed his post secondary education at Royal Military College where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Commerce.

After retiring from a 36 year military career, James lives with his partner Glenn in Tiverton. He currently serves as a volunteer Director with the Ontario Provincial Committee of the Air Cadet League of Canada.

Service History:

Lieutenant Colonel Gale signed up for military service in 1963 at the Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre in Hamilton with the intent to be a fighter pilot.

Lt. Col. Gale completed pilot training at Base Borden and Gimli, Manitoba, after which



Decorations:

- Canadian Forces Decoration, 1978, 88 & 98
- Canadian Special Service Medal (NATO), 1979.
- United Nations Medal (UNTSO), 1985.
- Multinational Force & Observers Medal, 1989.
- Canadian Peacekeeping Medal, 1991.
- Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal, 2012.

Service History continued:

he became an instructor on T-33 Jets. He was subsequently transferred overseas to RCAF 441 Squadron, CFB Baden-Soellingen, Germany, as a pilot and flight commander flying CF104s.

Lt. Col. Gale returned to Canada becoming the Executive Assistant to the Air Force Deputy Commander. He subsequently completed tactical helicopter training and was appointed the Deputy Commander of 427 Squadron. In 1984-5, Lt. Col. Gale was a Military Observer with the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization in Israel, Lebanon and Syria and later served as Director of Air Operations for the Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Egypt, in 1989.

Lt. Col. Gale has had a long affiliation with the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College becoming its Chief of Staff in 1991. He was also Deputy Wing Commander of the Tactical Helicopter Wing at CFB Downsview. In 2000, after an accomplished career, he retired from the military.

Interesting Stories: James spoke of the CF 104 Starfighters' preferred tactic to evade hostile Russian fighters if necessary: "We did a bit of air to air fighter pilot stuff, but the problem is the 104 was never intended to be a fighter... because the wings were so small it could not manoeuvre well... so our best defence as a 104 pilot... if a Russian fighter was coming after you... [was] don't try to fight him, just light the after burner, go as close as you can to the deck and away you go."

Lessons Learned: James offered these sage thoughts regarding leadership: "Leadership is about so much more than just giving orders. Good leaders must be able to provide clear, logical direction to all personnel within their chain of command while motivating and inspiring each one of them in order that they fully understand and appreciate the important role that they play as valued members of your team."