

RECORD OF DISCUSSION SWORDFISH ASSOCIATION MEETING HELD AT THE GREENWOOD AVIATION MUSEUM 1330 ON 12 MARCH 2020

Chairperson Chris Henneberry (President)
Jack Backstrom (Vice-President)
Bill Brown (Treasurer) regrets – report filed
Jeff McBean (Membership)
Al Harvey (Museum Liaison)
Bert Campbell (Web Manager)
Reid McBride (Kit Shop) regrets – report filed
Rick Anscomb (VPI Liaison) regrets
Dwight Estey (Social Media) regrets – report filed
Jim Lambie (Member)
Bernie Thorne (Member)
Ross Freeman (Sqn CO)

1. The Chairman welcomed all participants and noted that it had been over a year since the last Association meeting. He stated that it was wonderful to see such a good turnout for the meeting and that he had received reports from all Executive members, who were unable to attend the deliberations. He also thanked the Squadron's CO for taking the time to attend the meeting.
2. It was reported that over the past twelve months a number of articles had been written, a significant number of queries had been answered concerning former Squadron members and the website had been updated regularly. Bert Campbell's efforts as webmaster were once again recognized. It is clear that the Website is the lynch pin in the Association's connectivity with both members and the public at large. For the third report in a row, the number of website visits exceeds 50,000. It is clear to all Executive Members that keeping the website updated with new articles, photos and enhanced historical reports is vital and appreciated by many.
3. The proposed Agenda for the meeting was reviewed and accepted as presented.
4. The Record of Discussion of the 23 January 2019 meeting was reviewed and accepted as promulgated. There were a number of concerns with respect to initiatives which had not yet been completed. These will be discussed in detail later in this report.
5. **Membership Report.** The Membership Coordinator filed a report and provided an updated Alumni List, which now includes 137 members. He noted that there were two new memberships in 2019 however he had removed five members who had passed away in recent years.
6. **Treasurer Report.** Subsequent to the meeting, the Treasurer provided a written report on recent account activity. He noted that as of 31 December 2018 the account balance was \$2,917.18. The running account balance has been reduced by approximately \$400.00. Major expenses for 2019 included the bi-annual renewal of the Association website (\$240), the refurbishment and framing of a Bennett painting (\$162) and the production of 20 additional 415 Squadron History CDs (\$48). It is also noted that the gift of \$100 to the Veteran's Wing had not yet been processed (see Item 7).
7. **Charitable Affiliation.** Al Harvey stated that despite prodding the Squadron had not organized a pre-Christmas visit to the Veteran's Wing at Soldier's Memorial Hospital. Chris Henneberry noted that he had discussed this issue with the CO in January. LCol Ross Freeman stated that he will

ensure a coordinated visit occurs as soon as the current COVID-19 health crisis is over. Al Harvey agreed to reach out to the Social Coordinator, Alexis Hannah, to determine how a combined gift of \$200 could be used to support the quality of life of the resident veterans.

8. **Kit Shop Report.** The Chairman noted that the Coordinator, Reid McBride, had forwarded a report, which stated that \$195.00 in sales was realized in 2019. He noted that he sold the last History CD in stock last fall. Additional Squadron Coins and Squadron History CDs were sent to the Kit Shop in January 2020.

There was discussion concerning the feasibility of developing a new Kit Shop item in time for the 80th Anniversary. Ideally any new item would be a joint development, which could be purchased through the Squadron or Association Kit Shops. One example could be a new golf shirt. Apparently the Squadron introduced a new shirt in 2019. Chris Henneberry will contact the Squadron Fund Coordinator to learn more about the golf shirt.

9. **East Moor 2019.** Bernie Thorne reported that he had attended the Annual East Moor Ceremony with two other Swordfish. He noted that both 415 and 429 Squadrons had sent contingents of three. Once again the contingents had visited the local primary school and had been hosted at a pre-Ceremony gathering at the local pub. The ceremony was well attended and there was a reception held at the Village Hall. Bernie stated that an article with photos would be forthcoming.

NTF: The East Moor 2019 article was placed on the Squadron Association website on 01 April 2020. Also it has now been confirmed that the 2020 East Moor Ceremony has been cancelled due to COVID-19.

10. **Thorney Island 2019.** The Association did not receive any reports concerning the annual ceremony held on Battle of Britain Sunday. This year the event was held on 15 September 2019.

11. **Website Update.** Once again it is readily apparent that keeping the website up to date and introducing new material has a very positive effect on the number of views. Bert Campbell reported that there were over 53,500 visits in 2019. He noted that the Domain Name renewal and the website management fee of \$239.88 for two years had been paid. The CO 415 confirmed that the Squadron Fund will continue to offer \$100 every two years to help defray the cost of these renewals.

Bert Campbell would like to bow out gracefully as the website coordinator. His work has been key to the overall success of the Association and this volunteer position cannot go unfilled. The Association is seeking out a capable volunteer to take Bert's place no later than the end of 2020. Anyone in the Association willing to take on this role should submit their name to the Association Executive prior to that date.

12. **Social Media Coordination.** Dwight Estey has reported that there are now 121 members of the "415 Swordfish" FACEBOOK Group. There were two new members added in 2019 and three requests to join were declined (did not meet membership guidelines).

13. **Status Report on 2017 Projects:**

(1) Squadron Historical Reports, OPI Squadron Historian, Status: **60%** (no change)

Update: For various reasons there was no action taken in 2019 to acquire the annual reports for the period 1970 to 1985. As previously reported, these Historical Reports are still classified and must be parsed and redacted before parts of the reports can be distributed openly. To move this project along, a member of the Association with a valid security clearance will need to take a specialist

course to declassify portions of the Reports in question. Al Harvey has agreed to study this matter and to try and find a way to have copies of these documents forwarded to 415 Squadron.

(3) Argus Crews 1971-1981, OPI Chris Henneberry, Status: 50% (slight increase)

Update: An initial list of crew information for the period 1971-1981 has been posted on the Association website. Complete information for five crews has been posted. Partial information for another ten crews is being assembled. Unfortunately the lack of historical reports for this period is greatly hampering this initiative.

14. Status Report on 2018 Projects:

(1) Swordfish Tales, OPI Jack Backstrom, Status: 30% (progress being made)

Update: Jack Backstrom reported that he had recently completed a review of past issues of the Aurora newspaper held at the publishing office at 14 Wing. He is acquiring past copies of Swordfish Tales and articles which specifically pertain to 415 Squadron. He will be working with Bert Campbell to develop a section in the Association website to post these articles. It is hoped that by June 2020 an initial input can be posted.

Bert Campbell advised that he had come across a significant number of past Aurora Newspapers in an unused building on base. Bernie Thorne offered to scan any 415 article or Swordfish Tale contained in these papers.

NTF: Bernie has begun scanning and will provide a summary of his collection and the dates of the newspapers reviewed to Jack Backstrom.

(2) Refurbishment of Bennett Painting – Argus 737, OPI Chris Henneberry, Status: 100%

Update: The painting was refurbished and framed at a cost of \$161.71. It was presented to the Squadron on 19 June 2019.

NTF: An article concerning this painting was posted to the Association website on 01 April 2020.

15. Proposed Projects for 2019:

(1) Squadron History Edition #3, OPI Chris Henneberry, Status 40%

Update: Work on the 3rd Edition is progressing. The goal is to have the 3rd Edition ready for sale in time for the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of the Squadron.

The 3rd Edition will include the years from 2005 to 2019 in three sections: (1) 2005-2011 Establishment of the 415 Squadron Association; (2) 2011-2015 Growing the Historical Record; and (3) Re-Activation of 415 Squadron. Drafts of the first two sections are now complete. Approximately 50% of the third section has been written. It is expected that a full draft will be ready by May 2020. The completed draft will be forwarded to the past three Commanding Officers and to a minimum of two members of the Association Executive for review by the end of June 2020. Following a period of revision it is planned to forward the final draft to Chris Larsen who will complete an editorial review and produce Edition #3.

Executive members Jeff McBean, Al Harvey, Jack Backstrom and Jim Lambie have all offered to complete a review of the initial draft.

In due course an updated CD cover will be required. Modification of existing artwork will be necessary. This work must be completed by April 2021.

(3) 415 Squadron Roll of Honour, Bill Brown, Status **0%**.

Scope: At the last Association meeting it was noted that 405 Squadron had recently published a refurbished Roll of Honour. It was agreed that our Association should take on a similar project. In the past Chris Larsen advised that the Honour Roll published in the Squadron History book contained many errors – misspelled names, missing initials, incorrect rank, etc. While preparing the second edition an amended Honour Roll was developed and subsequently published. This revision did not include the Swordfish who were lost in the crash of Argus 737.

Update: Bill Brown agreed to act as OPI for this project. Unfortunately due to a period of extended illness and a heavy work load he has been unable to progress this project and no longer believes he can act as the OPI. While all agreed that this is an important project, no one stepped forward to take Bill's place. It was agreed that one way or another this project should be completed prior to the 80th Anniversary. Hopefully over the next six-months someone will be identified as the new OPI.

16. Proposed Projects for 2020:

It was agreed by all that the 80th Anniversary of the Squadron's formation should be celebrated. Ideally the Association would play a supporting role to the Squadron. Unfortunately, to date, there has been no substantive discussion of this important historical milestone either at the Squadron or Wing level. Following an extensive discussion it was determined that there were three possible ways to mark this event. In order of preference these are:

1. Wing level event. Each of four Squadrons to act as an OPI for a major event. The Association would support 415 Squadron as required.
2. 415 Squadron to independently host a special event. The Association to assist by coordinating one or more activities.
3. The Association prepare a special event.

Based on past experiences (2011 and 2016), it was highly recommended that no funds be expended on infrastructure. Likewise a caterer should be sourced to provide service at the main event. Also in the absence of higher direction, for planning purposes the event date is proposed as follows: Friday 04 June and Saturday 05 June 2021.

The CO 415 Squadron will bring this issue forward with his colleagues at 404, 405 and 413 Squadrons. Chris Henneberry will reach out to the Wing Commander, Brendan Cook, to get a feeling for his thoughts on this matter. Ideally the CO and Chris Henneberry will meet in the May/June timeframe to determine how the anniversary can best be celebrated. Immediately following this discussion the Association will determine how best to proceed. Soon thereafter a firm date will be set so that the event can be advertised. It can be expected that an Association planning meeting will take place in early Fall 2020.

17. Other.

- (1) Commanding Officer's Remarks – LCol Ross Freeman thanked the Association for its work to preserve, enhance and showcase the historical record of 415 Squadron. He noted that there have been a few activities that the Squadron has been slow to adopt under his command. He stated that as he becomes more familiar with the Association and related events this situation will improve. He thanked Chris Henneberry for his efforts to share information and meet with Squadron personnel. He confirmed his desire to lead a visit to the Veteran's Wing as soon as current restrictions are rescinded. He agreed that a decision on how and when to celebrate the 80th Anniversary is needed and that he will work to get answers to these questions. He also promised to forward an article on Block IV introduction that can be placed on the Association website.
- (2) The CO also stated that an invitation to Association members can be expected for the next Squadron Ground Training Day and a potential Industry Day BBQ/Dinner May or June. He also reminded Association members that they can have their name placed on the Squadron's Social List by contacting MCpl Kim Mira at Mira.kim@forces.gc.ca or by calling 902-765-1494 ext 3196. By doing so they will receive alerting messages to special events and open social activities.
- (3) Welcome Message – Chris Henneberry agreed to update the Welcome Message on the Association Website.
- (4) Atlantic International Airshow – Jack Backstrom advised that the 2020 event would be held on 29/30 August at the Debert Airfield. A number of vintage aircraft will be showcased including 2 x Spitfires, 1 x Corsair, 1 x Mustang and 1 x Vampire. He stated that arrangements are being made to have Summerside host the 2021 Airshow.
- (5) Jack Backstrom advised that John Preston had acquired a copy of the CF Photo Unit searchable photo database. Apparently photo titles can be searched. He intends to ask John to complete a search using 415 as the identifier. It is hoped that a list of available photos can be identified. Once a list is available, it can be compared with the photos held by the Association. In time this could lead to the recovery of many more squadron photos.
- (6) Bert Campbell shared a couple of photos showing Chris Johnson and few assistants repainting Sidney on Argus 10742 at the Canadian Aviation Museum in Ottawa. If contact with Chris Johnson can be made, Chris Henneberry will produce an article on this activity.
- (7) Chris Henneberry stated that he had recently visited with Arnold Blenkhorn, WWII Veteran, who resides in his family home in Athol, NS. Arnold, who still lives on his own, will celebrate his 99th birthday on the 18th of July.

18. **Closing.** All agreed that this had been a most worthwhile meeting. Members agreed to stay in contact and work on various projects outlined in this report. The next meeting will most probably take place in the fall of 2020 and focus on 80th Anniversary Planning. All proposed dates mentioned in this ROD are of course subject to the ongoing COVID 19 situation.

AD METAM

Chris Henneberry
President
03 April 2020