



JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL
Year 77 No. 282 April 2026



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TAS, NT, ACT, SA and New Zealand – Looking for volunteers.

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Are there others in your family, or circle of friends, who would like to receive a

copy by e-mail? Please advise the Editor–email Roland editor@458raafsquadron.org

Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter #283

are due to The Editor by 31st July, 2026.

Vale
Rick Michell.
Son of the Late Flying Officer Colin Michell.
South Australia Flight
FLIGHT REPORTS



Victoria Flight Report by Roland Orchard



Our sincere condolences go out to the Michell family after the passing of the South Australian Flight Correspondent Rick Michell. Rick's daughter, Ali, emailed me in January letting me know of the sad news. Rick had been ill for a few years and passed on the 7th December 2025 at Laurel Hospice (Flinders Medical Centre) aged 75 years old. Thank you, Rick, for all of your South Australian Flight reports and organising outings for the 458 Squadron Association Members. Rest in Peace mate.

Melbourne CBD 2026 ANZAC Day Preparations

As we find ourselves already a quarter of the way through 2026, preparations for ANZAC Day are progressing steadily. Members are actively involved in coordinating activities and finalising arrangements to ensure the commemoration is meaningful and well-organised. The spirit of ANZAC continues to unite us as we

approach this significant day on our calendar, reflecting on the service and sacrifice of those who came before us.

All members wishing to attend please form up on Flinders Street north side, east of Swanston Street. Look out for the 458 Squadron Banner. Form up time is 10am and step off time is slated for 10:50am. Click on the following link to RSL Victoria website for Order of March by Unit and Map of March Formation Area links.

[Commemoration March | RSL Victoria](#)

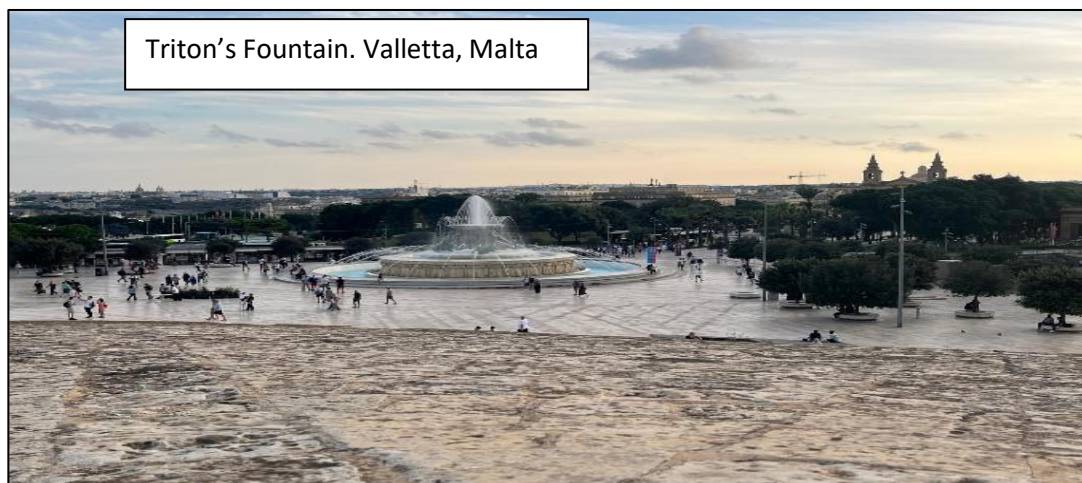
After the march we hope you can join us for lunch at The Observatory Cafe, a two minute walk from The Shrine.

Royal Botanic Gardens,
100 Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne VIC 3000

[Menu | All Day Dining & Patisserie](#)

Malta 2025 Reunion Reflections

The memories from the Malta 2025 Reunion remain vivid in my mind, though with time, the experience feels as if it is gently fading into the realm of ‘did I really do all those things, meet such wonderful people, and encounter moments that so many may never have the chance to experience?’ Even as the details begin to blur, the photos serve as a wonderful reminder that the event truly happened. Looking back, I have come across a few more photographs that did not make it into the last Edition, and I am pleased to share them here as a testament to the unforgettable moments we enjoyed together.



The streets of Valletta Malta near Osborne Hotel



Shoreline of Malta facing SSW towards Tunisia Note the rain showers over the Mediterranean





Flying Officer Colin Edgar Michell

enlisted in the RAAF at the age of 25 on the 4th January, 1941, at the No. 5 Recruiting Centre in Adelaide, South Australia.

After completing training as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner FO Michell was posted to the UK for further training. After more extensive training he was sent to the Middle East where he was eventually posted to 458 Squadron where he completed 24

Operational Sorties between 30th April and 15th September, 1943. He was Commissioned on the 15th October, 1943 to the rank of Pilot Officer and subsequently promoted to the rank of Flying Officer. After extensive duties as an instructor in the Middle East, FO Michell was posted back to Australia and was discharged from the RAAF 5th February, 1945 where he went back to his civilian job as a wool sorter.

For many years after the war Colin Michell was an active member of the 458 Squadron Association, South Australia Flight. Colin is pointed out in this photo taken on ANZAC Day 1949. Colin's son Rick eventually became the 458 Squadron Association South Australian Flight Correspondent until his recent passing. Rest in Peace Colin and Rick. Lest We Forget.





Queensland Flight Report by Brett Taylor

I think our association needs to take a bow, considering that ours is one of only 6 RAAF Associations producing regular/annual newsletters since WWII. According to Dr Google, 458 association has been the most active, while other RAAF squadron associations are 31, 24, 18, 3 and 2. There are some RAF squadron associations that have also kept this up.

Following the December newsletter that included a visit to the six 458 graves at the Commonwealth WWII Cemetery at Ancona, I received correspondence from Brad Reynolds, a relative of Warrant Officer Robert (Bob) Ellis buried in that cemetery. Bob was Great Uncle to Brad. Brad kindly sent me photographs and more information about Bob, his crew and the night of the accident, which I have included below.



Studio Portrait of Bob Ellis



Back row from left: Navigator 425388 W.O. John Hendry Maurice ('Doc') Watson; 427504 W.A.G Patrick John (Jack) Farrell; Captain and first pilot 416371 W.O. Gordon George (George) Simons.
Front row from left: 2nd pilot 419785 Flt Sgt Kenneth (Ken) James Leslie; 420068 W.A.G. Henry (Harry) Samuel Shying; 427457 W.A.G. Robert (Bob) Ellis.

There is some debate as to whether or not, Bob Ellis and Jack Farrell are named correctly in this photograph. The person who originally provided the names (and who was going from memory from 40 years previously) had them opposite to the way they are listed above but Bob's sister, Brad's grandmother, was sure that the bottom right is Bob.

Squadron Operation leading up to the accident:-

Armed reconnaissance by up to six Wellingtons on each night of favourable weather continued during December to scour the northern Adriatic for enemy naval or supply shipping, but without result. The Squadron Operations Record Book (A50) records the following "On the night of 13/14th December 1944 six Wellingtons from Foggia, Italy were detailed to carry out an armed reconnaissance from Maestro Point coastwise to Cape Salvere. No coastal sightings were made. Weather deteriorated during the patrols and three of the aircraft were diverted to Falconara. Two of these landed safely, but when NB864 arrived over Falconara they were unable to permit him to land and at 0210 hours the aircraft was diverted to Jesi the next aerodrome about 7 miles away. It appears that the aircraft overshot Jesi and crashed into a hillside. Later the aircraft was found burnt out some 10 to 12 miles south west of Jesi and all the crew members were killed."

Extract from Herington, J. (John) (406545) Air War Over Europe 1944-1945, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1963 – Page 335

On the night of 13th December an aircraft and its crew were lost near Falconara. Warrant Officer G. Simons was on recce with five other crews (captained by Warrant Officer Richards, Warrant Officer Cameron, Wing Commander Mackay, Warrant Officer McCann (RAF) and Warrant Officer Drinnan). There were no hostile sightings. The weather deteriorated during the operation and three of the Wellingtons were diverted to Falconara. Simons' crew was one of those diverted. Two crews landed safely at Falconara but Simons was not allowed to land. He was again diverted, this time to Jesi, seven miles away. It appears he overshot Jesi and crashed into a hillside. His radar cannot have been working properly, but he was heard speaking over his VHF transmitter up to what must have been the moment of impact.



Funeral of Warrant Officer Bob Ellis

Further details of each of the crew:-

Warrant Officer Robert ELLIS

Service No: 427457

Born: Plympton SA, 14 April 1914

Enlisted in the RAAF: 14 July 1942 (at Perth WA)

Son of John and Mabel Ellis, of Mt. Lawley, Western Australia.

Remembered: Panel 106, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Remembered: Cenotaph Undercroft, State War Memorial, Kings Park WA

Flight Sergeant Kenneth James LESLIE

Service No: 419785

Born: Coburg VIC, 1 May 1922

Enlisted in the RAAF: 30 October 1942

Son of John and Ethel Leslie, of East Brunswick, Victoria, Australia.
Remembered: Panel 106, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Warrant Officer John Hendry Maurice WATSON

Service No: 425388

Born: Brisbane QLD, 12 October 1920

Enlisted in the RAAF: 1 February 1942

Son of John Andrew and Minna Pauline Watson; husband of Margaret Joyce Watson, of Longreach, Queensland, Australia.

Remembered: Panel 106, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Warrant Officer Henry Samuel SHYING

Service No: 420068

Born: Redfern NSW, 20 January 1913

Enlisted in the RAAF: 10 October 1941

Son of Horace Edward and Charlotte Shying; husband of Brenda Florence Shying, of Strathfield, New South Wales, Australia.

Remembered: Panel 106, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Warrant Officer Gordon George SIMONS

Service No: 416371

Born: Findon SA, 6 April 1918

Enlisted in the RAAF: 24 May 1941

Son of Thomas Edward and Amelia Isobel M. Simons; husband of Margaret Simons, of Sandringham, Victoria, Australia.

Remembered: Panel 106, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Remembered: World War II Honour Roll, National War Memorial of SA, North Terrace, Adelaide

Warrant Officer Patrick John FARRELL

Service No: 427504

Born: Subiaco WA, 23 December 1915

Enlisted in the RAAF: 19 July 1942

Son of Patrick Joseph and Eileen Christina Farrell, of Kalgoorlie, Western Australia.

Remembered: Panel 106, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Remembered: Cenotaph Undercroft, State War Memorial, Kings Park WA

Wellington Mk XIV Model Kit 1/72

Brad is a keen aircraft kit modeller and he shared some photographs of his Wellington Mk XIV model with me, that already came with markings for 458 Squadron. He mounted it onto a squadron crest.





This has inspired me to order the same kit, maybe one of only a handful left.

Forward Gunner's Turret

In late February I visited Adelaide for a family reunion. While I had the opportunity, I delivered some WWII documents I inherited from my father to the South Australian Aviation Museum, as he had lived most of his life in Adelaide. While I was there, I was particularly interested in the Fraser Nash FN5 forward gunner's turret display that was used primarily in Wellington and Lancaster bombers. I noticed that the metal structure was considerable and necessary to support the armour protected turret, guns and plexiglass. Some panels of bullet proof glass were incorporated in front of the gunner's face. However, when looking through it from the gunner's position. I was staggered by the restricted view these men had to see ahead, let alone see enemy aircraft. Clearly it would have been a cramped and cold experience.







Frazier-Nash hydraulically powered front turret of the Vickers Wellington bomber, with it's two .303 caliber Browning machine guns.

Reconnaissance Aircraft Colours

I have always wondered why 458 Mk XIV Wellingtons operating in the Mediterranean area were painted white on their sides and undersides. Admittedly the white was often paired with grey or extra dark grey on top.

Apparently, the white paint used by Coastal Command for anti-submarine and marine strike roles, was meant to reduce the plane's silhouette against the sky, allowing it to surprise surfaced submarines.

Brad told me he read that U-boat sightings doubled once they changed to a white underside as they were harder to spot in the air with the glare of the ocean and clouds. During daytime that makes sense, but it seems strange to me that planes operating at night and painted white underneath would have been easier to see against a dark sky background. It makes me wonder what the aircrews thought when they went to pick up their newly painted aircraft.

On a side note, the reconnaissance Spitfires were painted a pale pink in order for them to blend in better with their cloudy surroundings particularly for low level flights.

I hope this record provides new information for 458 relatives and friends.

I can be contacted on **btaylorc6@gmail.com**



United Kingdom Flight Report by Keith Wilkinson

I start with the wonderful news that our squadron co-president Charles Humbles has celebrated his 104th birthday.

Relatives were at his home to sing happy birthday as he blew out the candles on his cake.

On behalf of the squadron association, I gave him some taster bottles of spirits. Charles is keeping alive a tradition of a tot a day to keep himself happy. It used to be gin but these days he's more of a whisky man - a tippie he takes with ginger ale.

Charles has never forgotten his time with the squadron and, from time to time, we still talk about the old days and the characters he remembers.

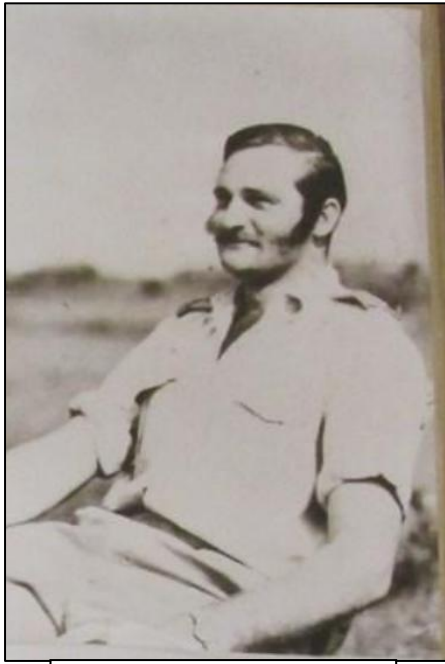




I've been speaking too with Bill Wake, our other squadron co-president who will also be 104 years old in a few weeks' time. Bill has been "under the weather" for a few months now but we still chat occasionally about one of our shared favourite topics - old movies and the true greats of the past like Charles Laughton. Talking of greats from the past.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

(Ed. A very Happy Birthday to Charlie and Bill from all 458 Squadron Members from around the world)



Lt. Col. Bruce McKenzie.
OC 458 Squadron RAAF.

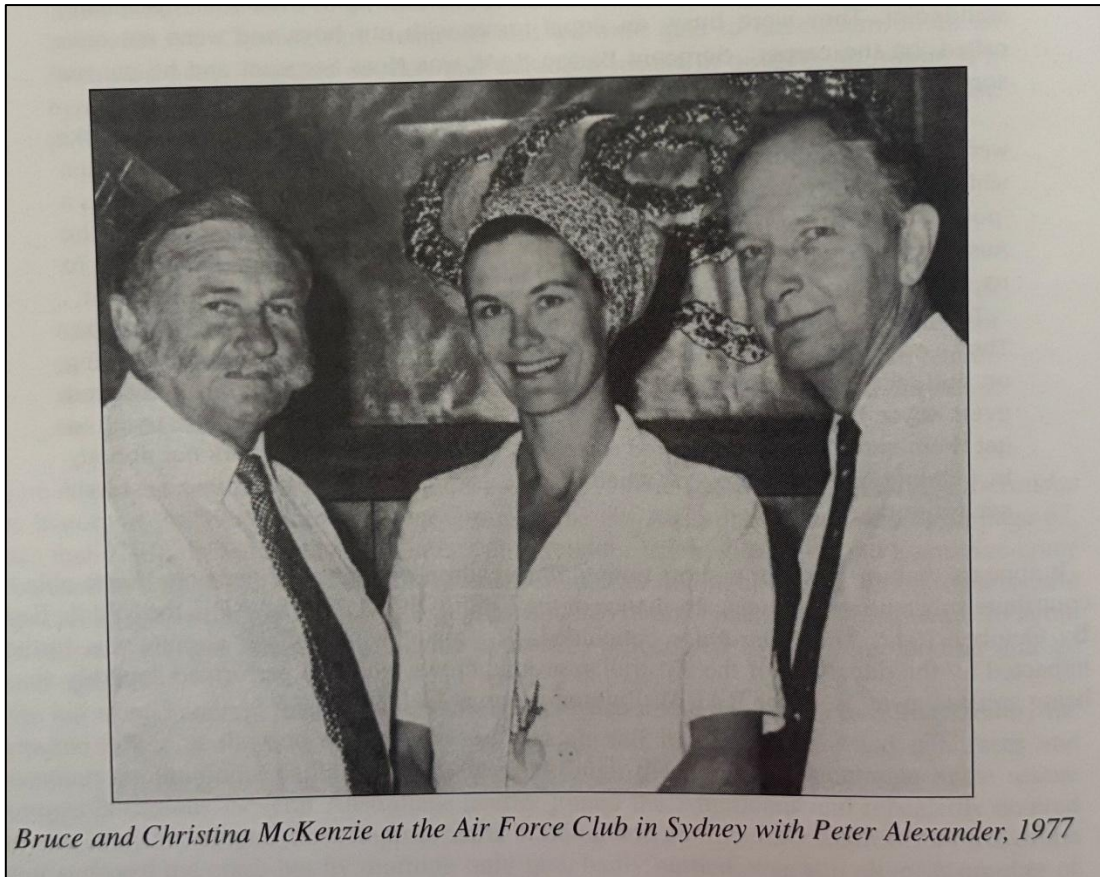
I have been chatting with the widow of Bruce McKenzie, the legendary Commanding Officer of 458. My most recent conversation with her was in March, the day after she flew back from Kenya where she'd been to visit family and friends for the New Year. Bruce – who was killed by a bomb in 1978 – was Minister of Agriculture in Kenya and he and his wife Christina had a house by the beach in Mombasa. I asked her how she and Bruce had met. And as with all stories about Bruce, it's like something you'd read in the heroic Boys Own Paper or a Biggles adventure story.

Bruce was sitting on a sofa. This was no ordinary sofa. It was the one in the office of David Stirling, the man who founded the SAS. Christina was working for Stirling at the time in London. "He was a good friend of Bruce," said Christina. "We met in July 1966 and I think he asked me to marry him in October and we married the following year."

The wedding was at St Mary's Cadogan and the joint best man was David Stirling along with Charles Njongo, Attorney General of Kenya.

Christina said Bruce spoke "very, very much" about his days with 458 Squadron. "The squadron meant so much to him."

Christina will soon be celebrating her 90th birthday with family in England.



New South Wales Flight Report by Stephen Bruce

Anzac Day 2026 fast approaching and it's now more than 6 months since our reunion in Malta, wow how time sure flies! Plans for our Sydney march are now finalised, and we expect a strong roll up for march with around 20 attendees at our annual meeting venue, The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. It certainly would be great to have more in attendance.

A few important updates for all namely, the commemorative quilt we had made by Aussie Hero Quilts for Lt. Colonel Nicholas Grech, Commander of Malta Air Wing has been despatched and received through diplomatic channels at Australian High Commission in Malta. A formal presentation will be made by His Excellency Matt Skelly to Lt. Colonel Grech in appreciation of his efforts in arranging such a moving and meaningful experience for all who

attended the Luqa Base visit and commemorative service at appropriate time in the not too distant future.

Earlier in March I was contacted by Malta Tourism Authority's Public Relations provider, GASBAGR, who are keen to run a story covering our reunion in Malta focusing on personal history of their family descendant's recollections of the events whilst deployed in Malta.

It is also important to acknowledge that the former Maltese High Commissioner, Mario Farrugia-Borg who I visited in Canberra assisted me with the initial contact details of Maltese Tourism Authority, historical site details and recommended hotel sites now heads up Maltese Tourism Authority in Melbourne.

Best Regards,

Stephen Bruce

Click on the following link for ANZAC DAY RSL NSW details of form up and step off times in the Sydney CBD

[Sydney CBD March | RSL NSW RSL NSW](#)

NOTE FROM ROB WILKINSON NSW FLIGHT

Greetings to everyone. Sending warm greetings and reminiscences to all those who made it to Malta.

One of the "items" I included on the USB stick, handed out to everyone, was a recording of "the three Padres - McNamara, Davies and McKay". My mother had given me the "cassette tape" years ago, but I had never listened to it – until now!

You probably know this, but I figured out it was done prior to the 50th Anniversary Reunion – held at the Gold Coast in 1993, and those three – giving their apologies for the Reunion – were sending a message to all those present.

Anyhow, I just thought there may be some out there who were wondering what it was that I had included on the USB stick.

Click on the link below to open the August 1970 Newsletter to read about the Jubilee (25 year) Squadron Reunion on the Gold Coast, Queensland, when and where the recording took place.

[1970-84-august.pdf](#)



Canada Flight Report by Adam & Cate Wagstaffe

The Determined Pilot and his Banjo

Not long after returning from Malta 2025 and following the Remembrance day showing of Johanna Wagstaffe's "Finding Michael" piece on CBC television, we received the following...

"Good Afternoon Adam and Cate,

I came across your story on the CBC regarding your Great Uncle Michael and it moved me in only a way that I am certain you understand. I have a family relative who was a Canadian and served with the RAAF 458 Squadron. His name is Russell Clare Scott, and he was a couple of days shy of his 24th birthday when their Wellington and crew went MIA.

Over the last couple of years and up until my father's passing in 2024 in Abbotsford, BC I had been working on finding Clare's service records and anything else pertinent to his time in Malta.

It took me a while, but I came across his complete service records and what had actually happened to the crew on their Wellington Bomber. My Father and I spent countless hours discussing what he knew or was told about Clare by other family relatives. I can offer my assistance and pass along what I know and what I have regarding Clare if you like.

Clare's story is very personal for me as I have his 4 string Tenor Banjo that was sent back to his family in Manitoba along with all of his personal possessions. When I got the Banjo from my Father it was in awful shape. I did a restoration on it a couple of years ago and it is once again proud and playable.

I sincerely hope to hear from you.

William Mark Turner"



F.O. Russell Clare Scott J 20438 was a pilot with 458th RAAF Squadron. He was killed in action, along with his crew, on the night of 24th August 1943. He and crew are memorialized on the Malta War Memorial Panel 10 Column 1.

In October 2025 we visited the memorial in Malta and paid our respects to him and his crew (we will cover the individual stories of the Canadians in the crew in future editions).

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tv3tG9RSBN5lHmEZ8HQchYe9CHpgm0z8/view?usp=drive_web

What follows is a brief recap of Clare's story with much of the information and insight from relative and Banjo restorer William **Mark** Turner.

Clare was the first child and son of John George and Ester Ellen Scott from the small Manitoba town of Minnedosa. 1919 the year that Clare was born, the town had a population of around 1500.



Minnedosa, C. 1918. Source" Wikipedia

Minnedosa; the name means “flowing water” in the indigenous Dakota language is fifty kilometers north of Brandon. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans the area was travelled and used by the nomadic Ojibway, Cree, Assiniboine and Sioux Nations.

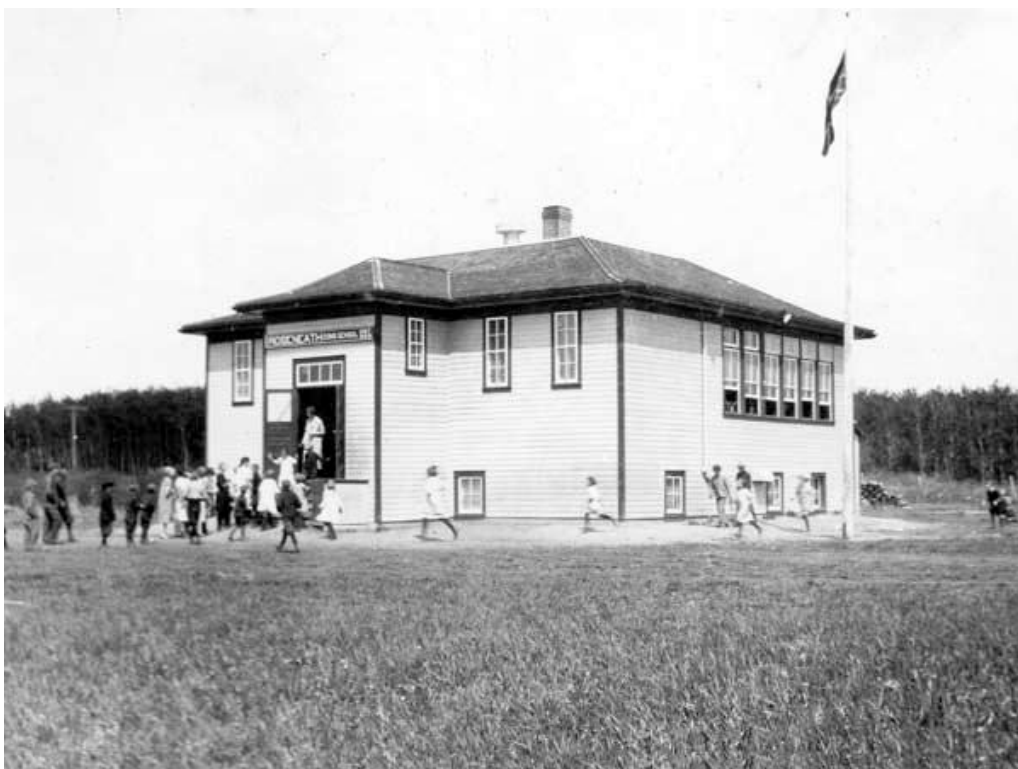
Settlers had pinned their hopes on the site becoming the Assiniboine River crossing for the Canadian Pacific Railway's transcontinental line. Instead, that role went to Brandon, now Manitoba's second-largest city, whose population grew from about 15,000 in 1919 to roughly 55,000 today.

The Scott's were a farming family. Clare went to primary school at the Rookhurst primary in the Rural Municipality of Minto-Odanah (which covered Minnedosa) from 1925-1934.



Source: Archives of Manitoba

He was not the best of students, struggled with Maths and had to finish his grade 9 level via a correspondence course over the winter of 1933-34.



Source: Manitoba Archives.

He briefly attended high school at Roseneath school again in the Rural Municipality of Minto-Odanah and left school at the age of 15 early in 1935. But had completed grade 10, part of grade 11 as well as a correspondence course through the local legion.

After leaving school he completed a six-month apprentice as a carpenter and began full time work with Bird Construction, a local contractor with interests in tractors and horses. Clearly Clare was restless and a teenager, as during this time he did a stint as a “High Climber” a job that requires the kind qualities of fearlessness and meticulous “steel” that one might also attribute to a wartime pilot...say.



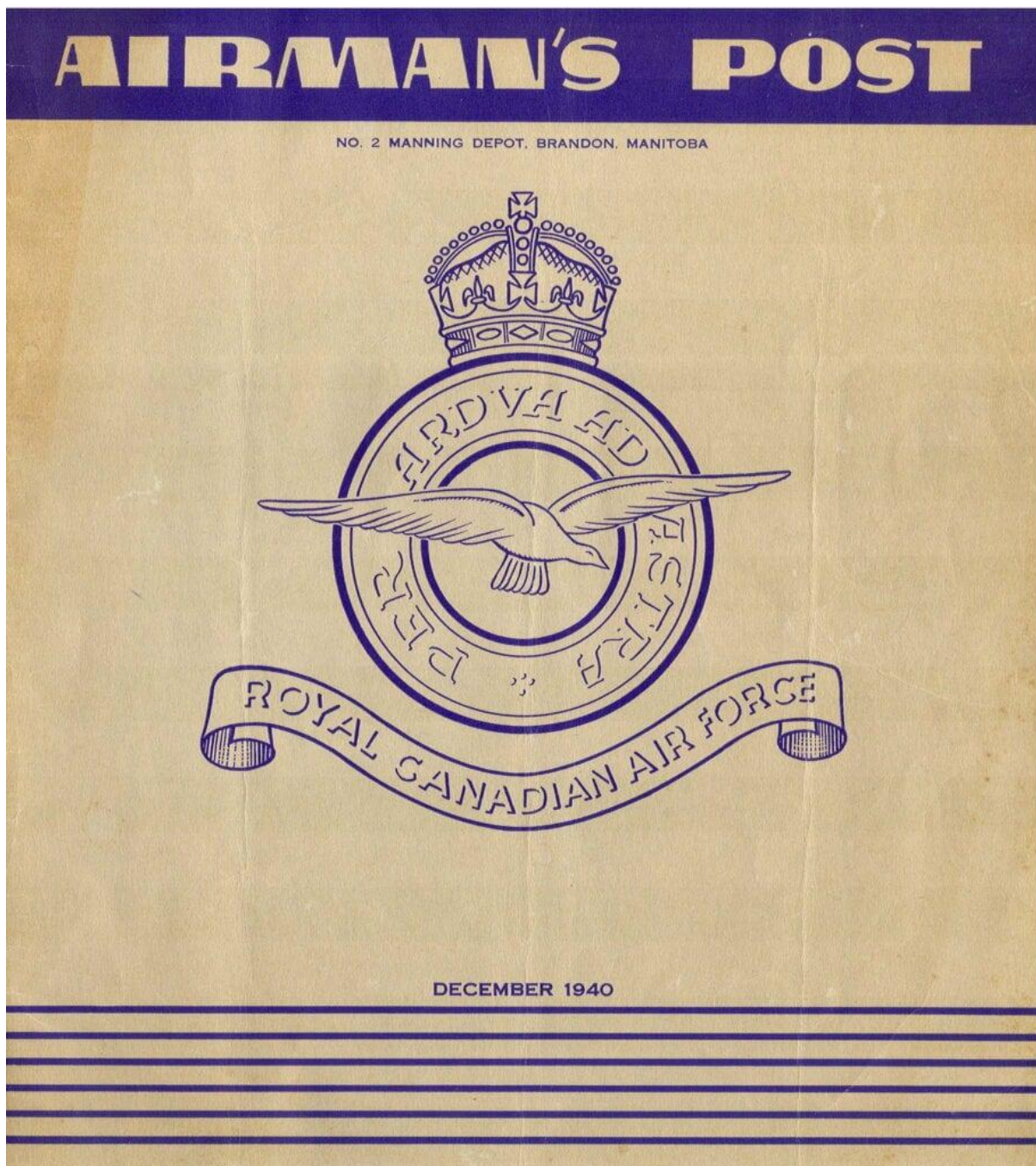
High Climber, 300 feet from the ground!

He listed hobbies that included boxing, football, softball and riding, as well as woodwork. At 6 feet and 195 lbs, flaming red hair and one pupil larger than the other (from a gun injury), Clare must have been a formidable and “determined” Manitoban teenager. Testing his limits as the war clouds gathered in Europe.

And then on September 10, 1939, Canada declared war on Germany. To say that Canada was unprepared for war was a gross understatement. At declaration, Canada had an army of 4500, less than 20 front line operational aircraft in the RCAF and a lowly 6 destroyers in the Navy. (Five years later by 1944, the

RCAF had over 1500 front line aircraft ~ 7000 trainers in the BCATP and was the fourth largest air force in the world)

Canada did not have conscription until 1942, prior to that the armed services were all volunteer. Clare Russell Scott aged 20, volunteered for service with the RCAF in December 1939. He received his “Attestation Paper” from the #2 Manning Depot, Brandon, Manitoba. In his enthusiasm he likely filled out the application requesting a preference for Flying Duties and Pilot in the “Air Force Duty you wish to apply for” and then waited....



Source: The Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum/RCAF.info

And waited.....and waited.

No word, nothing.

For our determined Clare Scott it was back to the recruitment centre in Brandon six months later and a new application filled out on July 30. 1940.

With his poor education background, he was likely told that his only chance of getting into the RCAF was to change his preference to Ground Duties, from flying and “General Duties” as a skill preference.

He was given a medical examination, where it was noted that he had in the past has measles, chicken pox, an appendectomy and broken hand bones. He had a “McBurney” scar from the appendectomy and a blond patch of hair on the right side of his red hair. Blue eyes, normal hearing and 20/30 uncorrected vision in both eyes. He was considered fit for category A. (Men perfectly fit, mentally, and physically, for all active service conditions of actual warfare in any climate.)

This time, progress. Not into the RCAF and training but confirmation that he was accepted into the RCAF Special Reserve.

The RCAF was ill-prepared for war but also was ill-prepared for the influx of Canadian youth volunteering for service at the beginning of the war. So, the Special Reserve was formed which essentially a pool of volunteers that could be called on at any time into the Airforce as needs and infrastructure allowed. A sort of voluntary conscription in a way.

So, Clare returned to farming and the tops of tall trees and waited... and waited.

He was finally recalled to the RCAF recruiting centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba with a reporting date of February 17, 1941. An application had been filled out for him on February 11, 1941, requesting assignment to General Ground duties and his first job was to sign.

He was assigned his service number, R95115, that day. He also met another recruit and became friends with him — a man whose service number was only fifty earlier than Clare’s, and whose name was similarly close: a first name beginning with C, and the surname Scott.

Clare Russell Scott R95115 meet Clarence Wilfred Scott R95065. Clarence was from Key West Saskatchewan. They were not relatives as it turns out, but we know they formed a bond, such that Clare chose Clarence as the named person

to be contacted in the event that Clare was a casualty. So, Clarence Scott (no relative) would have been the first to know.....

Clarence later served as a Radar Technician with 428 Squadron, RCAF, in England between 1941 and 1944, where he initially worked on Wellington bombers. He was awarded the British Empire Medal, survived the war, and died in Parksville, British Columbia, in 2003. We have since been in touch with his great-grandson Jonah in Oshawa, Ontario — proof, really, of the extraordinary directions these newsletters can take us.

So, Clare was in the RCAF and even though he had been summarily rejected for flying duties, his determination was not done. However, technically he was still in the Special Reserve Branch and had signed an agreement which stated, in part, that:

- I will be liable to be called upon to perform duties not directly or indirectly connected with the trade in which I have applied i.e., “General Duties.”
- I will be required to pass the prescribed examinations and tests before an RCAF Trade test Board before I will become eligible for re-mustering to a higher trade group.
- ETC.....

That second bullet, could “higher trade group” mean pilot? Could he take and pass prescribed examinations and tests to go from General Duties to Pilot? Well, why not, for someone who is determined, there was a way!

And so, Clare completed his six week basic training and then he joined the Service Police and he studied and policed and studied. On his first day he was given the lowest designation Air Cadet 2 (AC2). By May of 1941 he was AC1, briefly acting (unpaid) corporal in June of 1941.

That same month, having taken and passed the required exams and tests, Clare reapplied to be re-mustered in the RCAF and was accepted! It is interesting to note, following his time with the Service Police in the Special Reserve, Clare now listed a possible post war career with “The Mounted Police”.

Clare was promoted to Leading Air Cadet (LAC) on August 17 of 1941 and on September 25 of 1941, the now 22 year old Clare Russell Scott reported to the Initial Training School (ITS) in Regina Saskatchewan.



His determination was paying off, but what would they think of him being a high school dropout? He was demoted back to AC2 (every cadet was at the beginning of the ITS), but his designation, to start, was “Pilot or Observer”! The hard work was paying off.

The washout rates however, even at this first stage, was 10-15% of all Candidates were washed out at ITS for failing navigation, mathematics, theory of flight, or failing to meet medical/discipline standards. Those who passed ITS were streamed into pilot, observer, or gunner training, where wastage rates were significantly higher, especially for pilots.

Clare was in course 37 with 135 other students. The course ran from September 26 until October 26 of 1941. As well as the theoretical work including Maths, there was the Link Trainer for flying aptitude:

“Mounted on a turntable, the Link Trainer could turn and tilt, climb and descend in replicating aircraft movement to give the feel of flying. A panel with instruments found in an airplane cockpit helped to complete the simulated flight. Both calm and rough flights could be simulated, along with other realistic difficulties that could be experienced in flying. With the hood closed, the Trainer could be used to simulate flights in bad weather or instrument flying at night. Use of the Trainer in schools of the BCATP schools began in 1940 with an initial purchase of 200 units. Of more than 10,000 built for Allied forces, half were built in Canada at the Link plant in Gananoque, Ontario” ~ Alberta Aviation Museum



Source: Military Aviation Museum

The results for Clare in all areas were outstanding.
 An overall mark of 85% finishing 30 in a class of 135 and including individual marks of:

- Mathematics 78%.....Now that was determined
- Armament 84%.....No impact from eye injury
- Signals 99%.....
- Link 70%.....
- Drill 85%.....

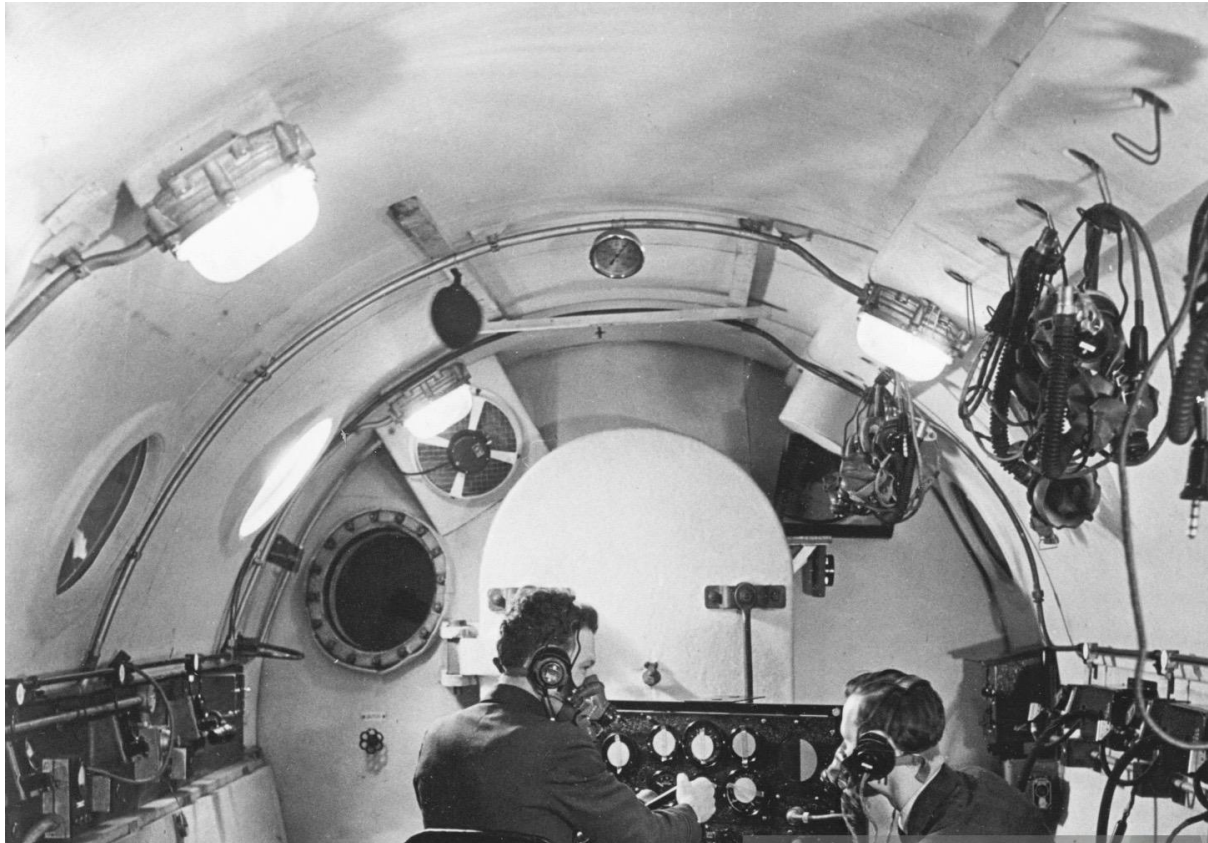
*Not recommended for Commissioned Rank (Ed. Tell that to determined Clare)
 Recommended for **PILOT** training

Remarks: *“Posted to No2 Elementary Flight Training School (EFTS) Fort William Ontario. This airman re-mustered from Service Police. He is dependable and stable with aggressive spirit. (Ed. Is that the same as determined?) He has a limited education but drove himself hard to make an above average course. He has good co-ordination, is confident and should make an excellent pilot”*

In addition, there was a further exhaustive medical examination and report. For Clare, his Medical Report was conducted October 15 of 1941, and after a full set of prodding, measuring and recording the consultant noted Clare’s education level, his job as a ‘Tree Climber’ and wrote:

“Strong, rugged, determined (Ed. There’s that word again) a bit slow mentally but level-headed and sensible. Keen to fly. Mature for 22. May be tense and heavy handed.” (Ed. Considering the extra work Clare was doing to “Make it” I think I would be “Tense”)

The eye examination noted that the 20/30 vision was correctable to 20/20 (a Pilot level). Clare did an Altitude Tolerance Test in a pressure chamber:



And had no symptoms and the full A: Recommendation for flying to 35,000 feet or more. The Observations and Findings by the President of the board noted:

“Good Interest, Keen to fly. Not highly intelligent, poor education, trouble with maths. Was General Duties until he took more studies and then re-mustered. Determined (Ed. That word!), tense, but would not think “windy”. Worked as “High Climber” (Ed. That job just gets everyone!) if he fails it will be because of slowness of mind and tension. Category A1B (A1B the highest standard).

Clare was posted to No. 2 EFTS effective November 11, 1941, with an accompanying promotion back to LAC.



415-072 #2 EFTS Fort William, Ontario

No. 2 EFTS Fort William, Ontario Source: National Defence/www.RCAF.info



Duke of Kent visiting N02 EFTS Fort William August 1941, in front of the school De Haviland Tiger Moths. Source: Frank Sorenson 403 squadron RCAF



Helldivers built at the Canadian Car Factory lined up at Fort William Airport in the background. ROW OF TIGER MOTHS WITH NO2 EFTS. Source: Gary Becotte

Clare was in Course No. 43 with 42 other potential pilots all posted from No. 2 ITS in Regina. Fort William (now Thunder Bay) is on the Northwest shores of Lake Superior, the largest of the Great Lakes and historically the end of the Rail Line, transporting grain from the Canadian Prairies to Europe via the great Lakes and the St Lawrence Seaway. In 1941, it had a population of 30,000. It

was also the home of a major factory of the Canadian Car and Foundry company. Over 3000 women, more than 40% of the workforce, worked at the factory in Fort William producing Hawker hurricane and Curtis Helldiver aircraft, many of them moved to Fort William specifically to work at the factory during the war.



Source:Rosiesofthenorth.ca

The first EFTS courses lasted 8 weeks. Students attended 126 hours of ground lectures and logged 50 hours of combined flying time under daytime and nighttime conditions. After 8 hours of flying with an instructor, students would start flying solo.

Men who did not pass their courses or flying tests would “washout” and be reassigned to another service in the Air Force, such as Air Navigation or Air Gunners. Men who successfully completed all components of the course graduated to Service Flying Training Schools located across the country.

~Huron County Museum

For Clare this was the place he had been working towards. All those extra hours warding off the slights from the educated city boys, the establishment that kept telling him he couldn't do it.

It was noted in the school diary, November 23, 1941: “Course 43, 42 Potential Pilots (Ed. Including Clare) all from #2 ITS Regina. In the afternoon course given first flying, a familiarization flight. It is expected they will spend tomorrow morning entirely in the hands of the RCAF in lectures by Commanding Officer, Medical Officer on general station procedure and familiarization.”

November 24, 1941: *“Students of course 43 had first introduction to local girls (Ed. Likely some of the 3000 working at Canadian Car and Foundry) during regular Monday night dance, which was considered quite successful.”*

November 26-27, 1941: *“Snow”*

December 08, 1941: *“A slight cold drizzle of rain was falling at dawn, later it turned into a mixture of sleet and snow and finally the seasons worst blizzard.”*

December 25, 1941: *“Students free from all duties. All personnel had been offered a Christmas day meal with local families”*

December 31, 1941: *“Three more students washed out after testing”*

January 02, 1942: *“Night Flying conducted with students”*

January 05, 1942: *“Two instructors committed acts of low flying. It was determined that it was premeditated in order to get dismissed with the idea to be returned to AirForce duty and then posted overseas.”* (Ed. At the EFTS the pilot instructors were all civilian. Even RCAF pilots were put on unpaid leave from service and rehired as civilian instructors, paid civilian wages. For those determined to see action the getting fired to be rehired was one way).

January 13, 1942: *“Course 43 (Ed. Clare) advised that training extended 2 weeks because of weather, until the end of January with graduates then reporting to a Service Flight Training School (SFTS).”*

January 28, 1942: *“Graduates of course 43 were clearing the station during the day for two weeks leave”*

Clare flew a total of 78 hours evenly split between Dual and Solo. He did a further 10 in a Link Trainer and....

Results of the flying test at the 20 hour mark.....60%

Results of the final test.....66%

Instrument Flying.....69.4%

Ability as a pilot.... A (on a Range from AAA through below Average to Poor.

Recommended for training on Single or Twin Engine.....**Yes Twin Engine**

Remarks on Flying progress

“An aggressive and determined (Ed. Yes!) type. This student is not blessed with an overabundance of air sense. His judgment and co-ordination are weak, and his chief difficulty is over- controlling (Ed. Ok a wellington not a Spitfire) He is weak in instrument flying, and he will require careful supervision.

Still his groundwork was also a pass. He was 13th out of 38 students, and although he was not recommended for Commissioned rank (Ed. You just wait), the chief ground instructor noted:

“Hard working and keen. Exceeds men of more ability by determination.”

(Ed.!!!!)

Clare did not receive his official “wings” on graduating from EFTS, as no cadet did at that stage of training. He remained a Leading Air Cadet (LAC) and would have to complete Service Flying Training School (SFTS) before earning them.

First, however, came a short return (one month) to the Manning Depot in Brandon — just 50 kilometres from his family in Minnedosa.

Clare was off back to Saskatchewan and the No. 11 SFTS based at Yorkton, to train on Twin Engine aircraft. But first he was granted two weeks of “Special Leave” from the 1st to the 15th of February 1942, likely to visit home as the train ride from Fort William would have stopped at Brandon, Manitoba and 50 kms north to the family farm.

Yorkton is 375kms northwest of Brandon and 175kms northeast of Regina Saskatchewan. For a Canadian these distances were an “afternoon stroll” so for Clare it was almost his home airport!



SFTS No. 11, first opened in June 1941, and by March of 1942, Yorkton Airport, surrounded by farmland and a few miles north of the city, was a hive of activity. The base featured three runways, five aircraft hangars, and

approximately 40 buildings, including a surgical hospital and living quarters and an impressive line-up of 99 Cessna Crane twin engine training aircraft. The Cessna Crane (Mk. I and Mk. IA) was the primary twin-engine trainer for No. 11 SFTS Yorkton in 1942. Known for its reliability and economical "wood and fabric" construction, it earned the affectionate nickname "Bamboo Bomber".



Source: Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum.

The picture above, showing a Cessna Crane 7862 (in front of and Avro Anson) served at N0. 11 SFTS Yorktown, and still flies with Canadian Heritage Warplane Museum. It is quite possible that Clare flew this actual aircraft!

Technical Specifications of the Cessna Crane:

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Specification</i>
<i>Crew / Capacity</i>	<i>2 pilots (instructor & student) + provisions for 3 passengers</i>
<i>Powerplant</i>	<i>2 × 245 hp Jacobs R-755-9 seven-cylinder radial engines</i>
<i>Maximum Speed</i>	<i>195 mph (314 km/h)</i>
<i>Cruising Speed</i>	<i>175 mph (282 km/h)</i>
<i>Service Ceiling</i>	<i>22,000 ft (6,705 m)</i>
<i>Range</i>	<i>750 miles (1,207 km)</i>
<i>Wingspan</i>	<i>41 ft 11 in (12.78 m)</i>
<i>Construction</i>	<i>Welded steel tube fuselage with wooden wings and tail, all covered in fabric</i>

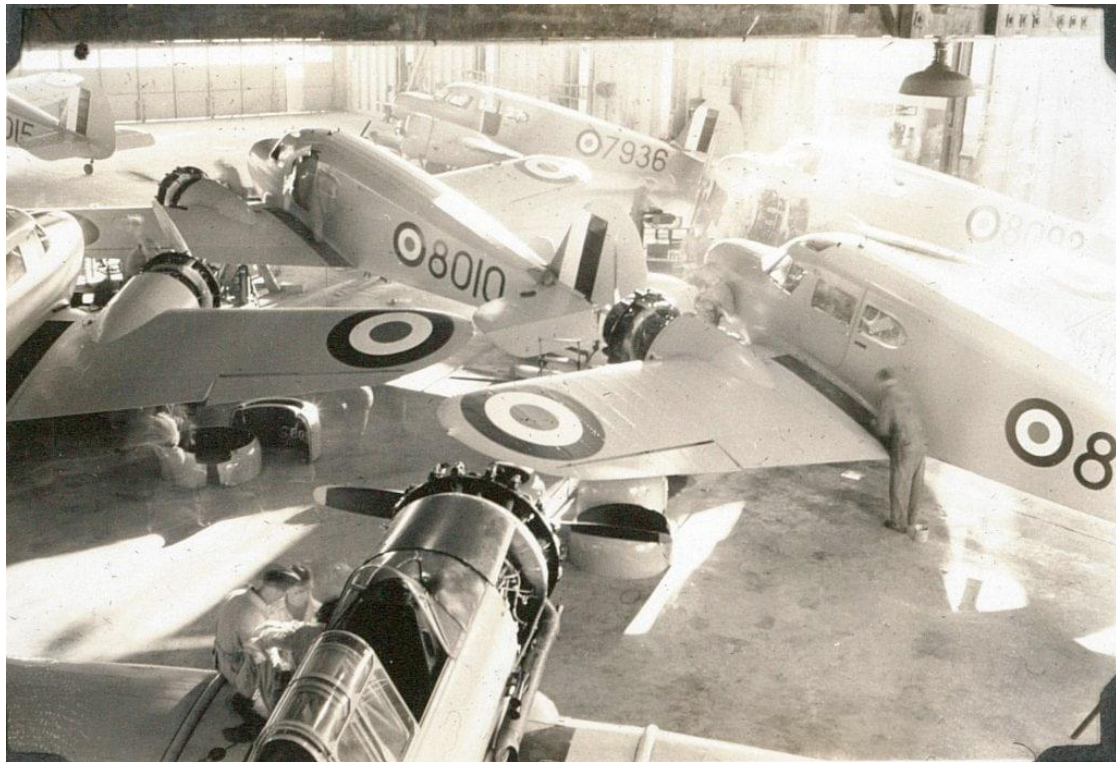
Clare was on Course # 52, which ran from March 30 to July 17 of 1942.
Training Timeline and Curriculum:

In 1942, the training program at an SFTS typically lasted 16 weeks, structured as follows:

- 1. Intermediate Training (8 weeks): Initial transition to more powerful, multi-engine aircraft.*
- 2. Advanced Training (6 weeks): Focused on complex multi-engine techniques and night flying.*
- 3. Bombing & Gunnery (2 weeks): Final specialized training before graduation and receiving "wings". **

Source: www.richthistle.com





No 11 Service Flying Training School, Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The “Cranes Roost” (1942) ~ (Photos courtesy of John Griffin and 1 Canadian Air Division Heritage).

The training was intense, designed to turn ‘Elementary’ graduates into multi engine pilots ready for overseas deployment. For Clare there was as much time spent on the ground as in the air. Navigation, Airmanship and Engines. Meteorology and Radio. He spent 26 more hours in the Link Trainer.



In the air he had to learn Asymmetric Flight: how to fly the Cessna Crane on one engine, which was notoriously difficult. They used to say, “When the left engine fails, the right one would take you to the scene of an accident”...

With both engines turning the propeller clockwise, the failure of the left engine would cause such yaw and roll towards that engine that the aircraft was almost impossible to fly.

Source: Yorkton.ca

The Cessna Crane was otherwise a very docile aircraft to train in. But the lessons Clare learned about engine failure were very important. A fully loaded Wellington bomber could have similar characteristic, especially dangerous at take-off.

The town of Yorkton a few kilometres away was initially “dry”, but Clare and the students would still descend on the town when spare time allowed, or they could perhaps relax in the Sergeant’s Mess.



Source: Yorkton.ca

After 16 weeks, Clare graduated with 42 other cadets and they officially received their “Wings” or Pilots Flying Badge, from Wing Commander George E Sellers, officer commanding on July 17, 1942.

Clare had flown another 190 hours in the air (an equal mix of solo and dual flight), 40 hours flying just by instruments (without being able to look outside the Aeroplane). This was in addition to the 26 hours on the Link simulator trainer and still managed another 32 hours as a passenger. This would have been logged as pilot monitoring (important for any student practicing on instruments without any outside reference to have someone

else in the cockpit making sure they were the right way up and not flying into a water tower or mountain).

Remarks from his examiners included:

“A good pilot, not very smooth but otherwise capable and accurate. Above average on instruments”

And

“Hard working student. Above average ability”

The Chief Instructor noted that Clare had passed all tests required for Pilots Badge. It was interesting to note that the Chief Instructor was still marking that he would not recommend Clare for “Commissioned Rank” (Officer) and further under the evaluation of qualities as an Operational Pilot he was ranked only “Average” for “Determination and Initiative”....(Ed. What!..clearly they did not know Clare like we do, “Above Average” surely?)

Not only was Clare sewing the “Wings” onto his Tunic, but also his Sergeant Pilot stripes, his promotion from LAC automatic with his graduation from No.11 SFTS, Yorkton.

Clare's photograph with his newly sewn wings, also shows that in true pilot style of the 1940's he had let his hair grow over the 16 weeks!



Clare had finished in the top half of the class. A school dropout, the farm boy from rural Manitoba, the “trouble with maths’ student, the “General Duties” ambition, had, though **Determination** and grit, made it!

As a final side note to Yorkton:

Today at the Yorkton Water Park, hanging from the ceiling above the water slide is a large bright yellow Cessna Crane replica, marked with the number 7862. The same number as the actual Cessna Crane at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, the same number that may well be marked in Clare’s Logbook. I wonder how many of those careening down the slide, have any idea that the rush of blood and adrenalin they are experiencing are not unlike those Clare experienced in the yellow Cessna Crane above them.



Clare received two weeks leave and a new posting. Along with six of his fellow graduates, he was posted east to No.1 General Reconnaissance School (GRS) in Summerside, Prince Edward Island. Of his graduating class, 11 students were posted to Instructor School and 12 others to a second GRS at Charlottetown. PEI.



415-064 #1 GRS summerside, PEI

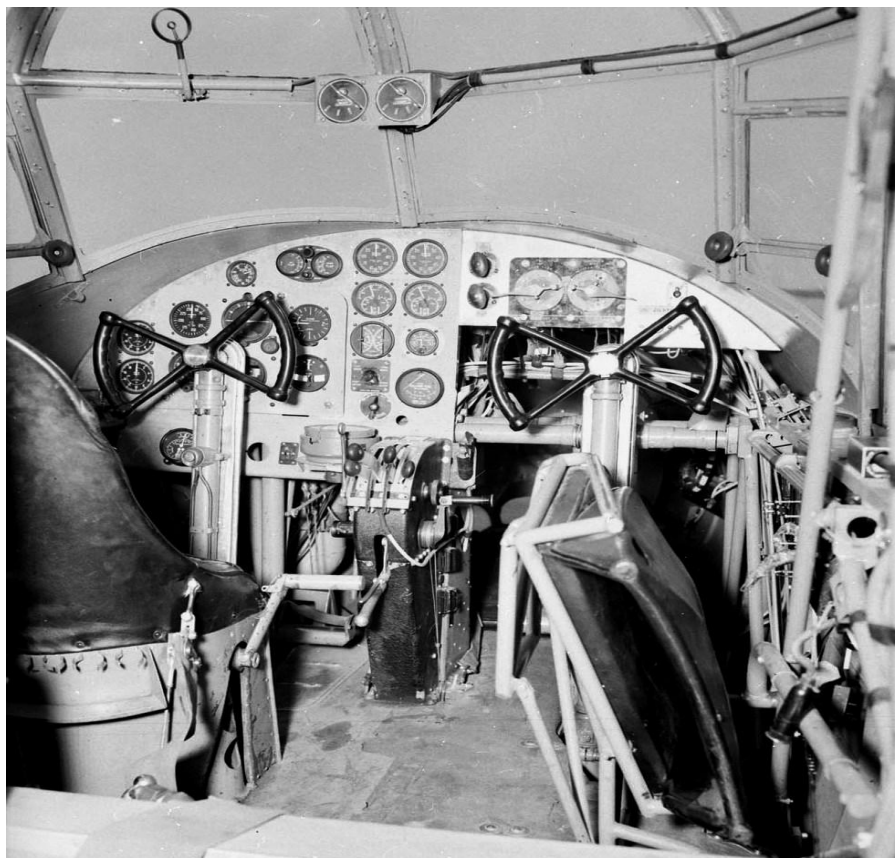
Source:National Defence/RCAF.info

No.1 GRS was formed on July 06, 1942, just weeks before Clare arrived. The General Reconnaissance School trained pilots and air observers in the techniques required for ocean patrol. It was the equivalent to an Operational training Unit (OTU), and last stop before aircrew were assigned to operations. The topics included DR Navigation, Astro Navigation, Compasses and Instruments, Meteorology, Signals, Reconnaissance, Coding, Ship Recognition, Aerial Photography, and Visual Signals. Aircrew spent 9 weeks at a General Reconnaissance School.

It utilised the Avro Anson Twin engine trainer:



Source: Silverhawkauthor.com/Tom Walsh



Source: Silvererhawkauthor.com/Library and Archives Canada.

Previous experience and reports from 1940 and 1941, and as late as summer of 1942, indicated that Pilots and Navigators trained in Canada to the SFTS level were ill equipped and trained for deployment even to the English Operational Training Units. Lack of coastal, poor weather, night, navigation and ship

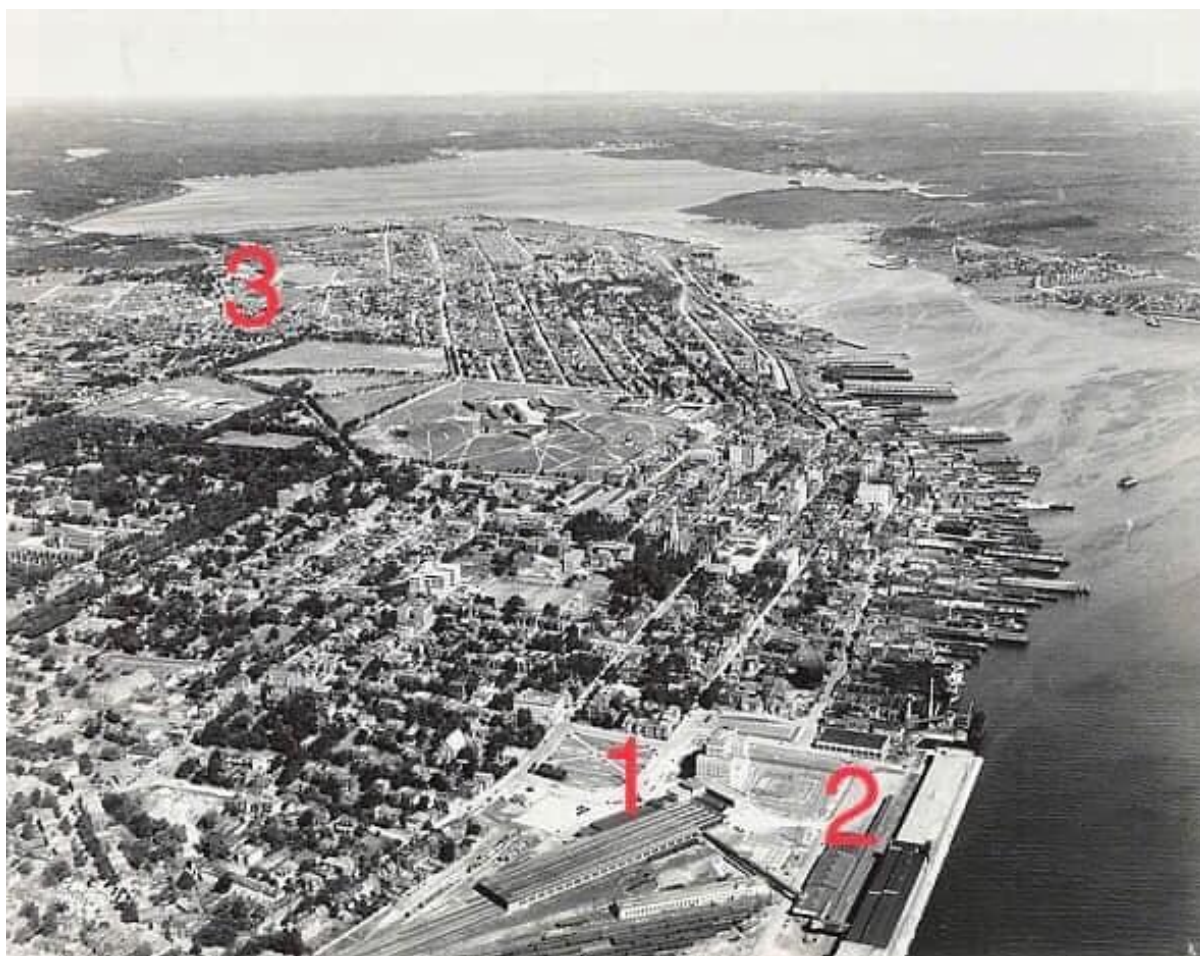
identification skills had led to numerous fatal accidents at the OTU level. The General Reconnaissance Schools, like No. 1 in Summerside, PEI (which was converted from a SFTS in July, 1942) were an answer to this training shortfall and Clare was one of the earlier beneficiaries.

The school was one of many units that participated in the Battle of the Gulf of St Lawrence. German U-Boats had succeeded in sinking 23 ships in the Gulf, but were continuously harassed and disrupted by Operational Training Units, like No.1 GRS from May to November 1942. The Ansons were armed with 250lb bombs to serve as “Aerial Scarecrows”. It is more than likely that Clare, as part of his training, took part in these operations. In August of 1942, while Clare was training and flying with the school, one of No. 1 GRS Avro Ansons went missing with the loss of four crew.



Source: Royal Air Force Image....for illustration purposes only.

Clare was immediately posted to No. 1 “Y” Depot Halifax, and embarkation to England for his next adventure.



An aerial view of Halifax illustrating the location of the Canadian National Railroad Station (red # 1) , Pier 21 Ocean Terminals (red # 2) and No. 1 “Y” Embarkation Depot (red # 3). The Halifax Harbour is foreground and right with the Bedford Basin in background. (Source: [Library and Archives Canada Collections website](https://www.libraryandarchives.ca/collections))

Clare boarded a ship on Oct 28, 1942, and arrived in England on November 05, 1942. As with so many RCAF pilots before and after he was immediately transferred to No. 3 Personnel Reception Centre (PRC) in Bournemouth, on the south coast of England.

Here Clare was given further equipment, escape dingy preparation and water egress testing, an exposure to English cooking especially soggy brussels sprouts and egg powder, and to frequent German “Raider” night bombing raids on the city and hotels that housed thousands of Canadian forces personnel.



Source: Bournemouth Echo.

Clare was at No. 3 PRC for just three weeks before his next posting and a surprise...

He was posted on November 30, 1942, to No. 7(Coastal) Operational Training Unit (OTU) at Limavady, Northern Ireland. Here he would convert to Vickers Wellington Bombers, probably find and gain experience with a full crew and get further training.

But first his surprise...

On November 29, 1942 (backdated to July 16, 1942, when he got his pilot's badge, Russell Clare Scott was promoted to Pilot Officer (PO) Scott with a new service number J20438. We cannot be sure how Clare reacted to the news that he was now an Officer.

For us, reading his service records and following his "Determined" progress and despite all the recruiting officers, ground and flying instructors, school commanders... in fact, all the naysayers who said and wrote that Clare was not "Officer Material", we think we would have, at the minimum, muttered some version of "go away" perhaps stronger, to all of them!

So, Pilot Officer Scott, was off on the next step towards his destiny. Joining him on that trip to Northern Ireland and 7(C) OTU was a fellow pilot named Manley Lyall Brechin, who also had just been promoted to Pilot Officer. PO Brechin and PO Clare Scott knew each other.



They had met at Yorkton in early 1942, and were in fact on the same course at No. 11 SFTS, where they both got their wings on the same day graduating from the same class.

In July of 1942, they both went to Prince Edward Island, to join General Reconnaissance Schools, and fly Avro Ansons in the Gulf of the St Lawrence. Different schools though; Clare to Summerside and Manley to Charlottetown, separated by just 60 kilometers.

They completed their courses and arrived in Halifax at the same time, boarded the same ship to England to Bournemouth and now to Limavady and No 7(c) OTU. Manley as Second Pilot to Pilot Clare in a Wellington.

We will talk more about PO Manley Lyle Brechin in another issue, but he and Clare would now be First and Second pilots in the same Wellington to the end just 168 days from the finish of the Limavady course on March 09, 1943.

This was a three-month course combining conversion to Wellington Bombers, crew assimilation and some 50 flying hours of experience, with bombs, torpedoes, leigh light execution and oversea and poor weather navigation. This was the last stop before an operational squadron.



RAF Limavady with Wellingtons from No 7(C)OTU dispersed around the site Source: historyfare.co.uk

Much like at The No. 1 GRC, in Summerside, and the anti U boat operations in the Gulf of St Lawrence, No. 7(C) OTU at Limavady was active in U Boat patrols in the Irish Sea and the Atlantic even during the crew training and was just as dangerous. Three complete Wellington crews and aircraft were lost while Clare was training there.

After graduation on April 11, 1943, Clare and Brechin were transferred to No. 21 OTU at Morten, in the Marsh in central England. This was again more operational training getting ready for overseas operations.

From No. 21 OUT, Clare and Brechin moved to the Ferry Training Unit at Hurn for the specialized long distance navigation training. This unit was part of RAF Transport Command.

On the May 4, 1943, they set off for the Mediterranean Air Command (MAC) formally Middle East Command, flying the Wellington to No. 22 Personnel Transit Centre (PTC) located at Almaza near Cairo Egypt.

No. 22 PTC was an important staging point for Aircrew personnel moving between postings or arriving in the Middle East Operations. It was centrally located.

The middle east and the Mediterranean were not in any way like the East Coast of Canada or the West coast of Northern Ireland, so it must have been quite the shock to Clare, to arrive in this barren landscape without continuous rain. The RAF was aware of the dramatic change, so for Clare and crew it was back to school. In this case, a move to the RAF Shallufa Air Base, they were transferred to No. 5 Middle East Training School (5 METS). It was also known as the Middle East “Torpedo” Training School

Shallufa was also home to 458th Squadron RAAF, but just as Clare and crew were arriving for their Mediterranean theatre training, 458th was packing up and heading to Tunisia.

No. 5 METS operated as a specialised Torpedo Training School, structured to provide advanced, theatre-specific instruction for crews like Clare’s — men who had already mastered the fundamentals but needed further expertise in Mediterranean maritime operations.

It included:

- Torpedo Strike Specialization: Crucial for the key mission to disrupt the enemy supply lines to North Africa.
- Theatre Indoctrination: Training for the unique “Middle East” conditions, including navigation over desert and sea and operating in high heat conditions.
- Operational Readiness: Involving live fire exercises and mobility practice so that crews were ready for immediate deployment to front line squadrons.



Wellingtons out of Shallufa.

After the intense training at No. 5 METS, Clare and crew returned to No. 22 PTC at Almaza on July 26, 1943. He was ready, trained and you bet, ‘Determined.’

On August 03, 1943, P.O Russell Clare Scott was transferred to 458th RAAF Squadron. Oh, and one more thing: He was promoted again to Flying Officer (FO). (“.....them all and their “he won’t be an officer” ...”).

458th RAAF was now at Protville, Tunisia, so off to Protville it was for Clare and crew. (As a side note, our Uncle Michael Wagstaffe and current Squadron co-President Bill Wake arrived on the scene and joined 458th at Protville just one week earlier)

We cannot be sure, because we have not seen Clare’s logbook, but it is likely that after he had settled into his tent and made acquaintance with the flies, Clare would have been taken on a flight for local familiarization and likely an introduction flight with a senior officer, perhaps as with our uncle with Squadron Leader Johnson.

Two days after joining 458th, Clare flew his first mission as Captain, a 7-hour armed patrol on the night of August 05/06, 1943 in Wellington E for Echo. The flight was off the East Corsica coast (Chippa Point and Cape Corse). For this first operation flight, Clare was joined by two experienced 458th members. Flying Officer Suddaby (who normally Captained his own crew) flew as an additional pilot, monitoring and Flying Officer Cundy, an experienced navigator flew as second pilot, but as navigator monitoring. Other members of Clare’s regular crew, F.O. J. Hillen (navigator), Sgt W.E. Dixon (WAG), J. Whittaker (WAG) and M.E. Windsor (WAG) also flew on this first mission. Second pilot and friend Manley Brechin did not fly on this occasion as we expect he would be doing his own local squadron training.

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AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SERVICE
			UP	DOWN	
"	F/S. Bishop Sgt. Hinchin F/O. Walker Sgt. Cox Sgt. Baldwin Sgt. Batten	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. "	2030	0545	Shipping recon. East C Point - Cape Corsica t
"	F/O. Scott F/S. Hillen F/O. Cundy Sgt. Dixon Sgt. Whitaker Sgt. Windsor F/O. Suddaby	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. " " Pilot	2120	0550	Armed recon. East Cors Cape Corse.
"	W/O. Elliott F/S. Kemp F/O. Gavin F/O. Christie Sgt. Lewis F/S. Donaldson	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. " A.G.	2120	0620	ditto
"	F/S. Britton F/S. Farrell Sgt. Boulton	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G.	2025	0515	Shipping recon. betwe

The flight was uneventful, or at least as uneventful as 7-hours at night, low over the water, in enemy territory, 7,700 kilometres from home, could be!

Clare and crew had survived their operational crew and now were part of the squadron operation rotation. They were up in the air again on the night of the 7/8th August, with full crew including 2nd pilot F/O Brechin. This time an almost 9-hour flight in Wellington "D" to Chiappa Point, a key enemy monitory point in southern Corsica. Corsica at this point (still three months from its liberation) was the base for close to 100,000 Italian and German troops.

His third mission with 458th was on the night of 11/12th August. Another 8-hour flight as Captain with his crew. This time a reconnaissance over the Italian Coast around Cape Campanella and Fiumara Grande. This area would see significant battles later in 1943, involving Canadian troops from the Seaforth Highlanders and the Calgary Regiment, fighting through the thick mud and steep ravine walls to capture San Leonardo:

- The battle for the Fiumara Grande (often linked to the Moro River) was part of the Allied attempt to break through the German defences south of Ortona, Italy, in December 1943.

- The Fighting: The steep banks and the river itself were difficult obstacles; German troops were entrenched, and mud bogged down allied vehicles.
- Significance: The area was part of a "hard-fought" campaign where German forces utilized the natural terrain, including rivers and ravines, for defensive lines, resulting in intense, small unit fighting.

Source: Juno Beach centre

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		F/O. Edwards F/O. Trenons Sgt. Waite Sgt. Walden Sgt. Lee	Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. " "			Alsto.
"A"		F/O. Giddaby Sgt. Durne Sgt. Hills Sgt. LaPalme Sgt. Evans Sgt. Griffin	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. " "	1930	0430	Recco, East coast Corsica.
"B"		F/O. Bishop Sgt. McVinch F/O. Walker Sgt. Cox Sgt. Baldwin Sgt. Batten	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. " "	1935	0415	Recco, Italian coast - Cape Campanell Island.
11/12	"H"	F/O. Scott F/O. Hillen F/O. Breckin Sgt. Dixon Sgt. Windsor Sgt. Whitaker	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. " "	1934	0415	Recco, Italian coast - Cape Campan Piumara Grande.
"K"		F/O. Davidson Sgt. Bazer Sgt. Cuppard Sgt. Warricher Sgt. White Sgt. Knight	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. " "	1935	0530	Recco, East coast Corsica.
"B"	"G"	W/O. Elliott F/O. Henry F/O. Gavin F/O. Christie Sgt. Lewis Sgt. Donaldson	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. A.G.	1942	0438	Recco, Elba Island - Leghorn.

WORLD RECORD OFFICE

Clare's fourth operation was on the night of the 13/14th August 1943, an "Armed Rover" up and down the Italian Coast. 7 hours

According to the squadron records, summary, F/O Clare Scott and crew were part of a 5 Wellington offensive search. All aircraft returned safely.

On the night of 13/14th August five Wellingtons of this Squadron were despatched on offensive searches for enemy shipping from Elba to Spezia, from Cape Palimo to Cape Vaticano (co-operation with Naval Units - one UK off Italian Coast) East of Sardinia and Corsica. The Captains were: F/Sgt. Bishop, F/Lt. Price, F/Sgt. Graham, F/O Down^s and F/O Scott. No attack was made, owing to absence of enemy shipping in the patrol areas, and all aircraft landed between 0427 hours and 0600 hours.

Clare's fifth operation was very eventful. On the night of the 17/18th August 1943, here is the quote from the squadron summary:

“Also on this night, five Wellingtons ..were dispatched between 1930 hours and 2337 hours on the following shipping patrols.....the Captains were F/O Davidson, W/O Elliot, F/O Driver, F/O Downs (Ed. That would be “Brush” Downs, our Uncle’s pilot and including in the crew Bill Wake, squadron co-president) and F/O Scott (Ed. Clare and crew).

At 2254 hours F/O Downs sighted a motor vessel (M/V) of 3000 tons and four other M/V’s on course 350deg, speed 8 knots, off the coast near Rome. Two torpedo attacks were made on the starboard beam of the M/V, down moon path” from a height of 60 feet and at a range of 600 yards. No results were observed. After the attack intense and accurate light flak was sent up by the escort vessels.

F/O Scott left his patrol and went to this sighting and at 0010 hours sighted the convoy. He made an attack on a bearing of 190 deg into moonpath and dropped two torpedoes from a height of 60 feet at a range of 800 yards. No results were seen. Flak from the escort M/Vs resulted in a few hits in the fuselage.”*

All aircraft returned safely.

*1. “Into the Moonpath” (Moon is behind the TARGET)

- **The Position:** You are looking **toward** the moon. The target ship is between you and the moon.
- **What you see:** You are looking "down the moonpath." The target appears as a sharp, black **silhouette** against the bright, shimmering reflection on the water.
- **The Goal:** High visibility for aiming. This was the preferred "firing position" because it made it very easy to see the ship's outline and calculate its speed for a torpedo shot.



Source: Key Aero

The picture above is a 221 Squadron dummy attack on a Royal Navy ship, but was taken in December 1943 and provides a good indication of what F/O Downs and F/O Scott were facing.

On the evening of August 20, 1943, Clare got to enjoy a formal dinner in the Officers Mess. Visiting dignitaries were Air Vice Marshal Sir Hugh P. Lloyd, K.B.E./C.B/M.C/D.F.C. Air Officer Commanding Coastal Forces and Air Commodore K.B.B. Cross, D.S.O/D.F.C.

Three days later, on the night of August 23/24th it would be the sixth and final operation for Flying Officer Russell Clare Scott and his crew.

That night four squadron Wellingtons were dispatched between 1956 hours and 2158 hours to carry out offensive shipping searches. Clare and crew took off from Protville, Tunisia in Wellington Mk X111 "R" M.P.706 at 1958 hours.

From the squadron ORB:

"The aircraft of which F/O Scott was the Captain and which was on patrol of area Civitavecchia-Elba-Leghorn, failed to return. At 2300 hours one of our other Wellingtons intercepted a message from it requesting instructions but this message was not received at Base or Group. At 0155 hours Group received a message from the aircraft requesting instructions and at 0200 hours Group replied that it had nothing to communicate. When the aircraft became overdue, Group and Malta attempted to contact it by W/T for a considerable time without success. The missing Crew comprised: F/O Scott (Captain), F/O Brechin (2nd Pilot), F/O Hillen (Navigator), Sgt. Windsor, Sgt. Dixon and Sgt. Whittaker (W/Ops.)"

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DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT
				Up	Down	
August 22/23	"B"	S/Lt. Thompson F/O. Barrett S/Lt. Blakely F/O. Kernott F/Sgt. Pipping F/Sgt. Minnie Sgt. Gough	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. W.A.G. W.A.G.	2124	0625	Over patrol - Elba and North East Corsica and 47 miles North along Italian coast.
	"K"	W/O. Armstrong Sgt. ...	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. W.A.G. W.A.G.	1855	0450	A.S. Search for dinghies in between N.E. Sardinia and Italian Coast.
23/24	"A"	F/O. Scott F/O. Brechin F/O. Hillier Sgt. Windsor Sgt. Dixon Sgt. Whittaker	Captain 2nd. Pilot Navigator W.A.G. W.A.G. W.A.G.	1958	Missing	Anti shipping recon. Civitavecchia - Elba - Leghorn.
	"X"	Sgt. ... Sgt. ... Sgt. ...	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. W.A.G. W.A.G.	2155	0600	Anti shipping recon. east coast of Sardinia and Corsica and Elba Island.
	"H"	Sgt. George F/Sgt. Adams Sgt. Johnston Sgt. Green Sgt. Dodds Sgt. Wilson	Captain Navigator 2nd. Pilot W.A.G. W.A.G. W.A.G.	1956	0440	Anti shipping recon. from Corsica to West of Elba - 40 miles from Leghorn to Genoa and 20 miles seaward.
	"G"	F/O. Driver F/O. Holt	Captain Navigator	2158	0604	Anti shipping recon. Anzio - La Rocca Fort - Bocca F Anzio.

No further news or evidence of the crew was heard or seen.

Clare's parents would have been advised that he was reported missing. Clarence Scott, his friend from recruiting in Winnipeg two and a half years previously, would also have been informed, perhaps first, and perhaps it was he who advised Clare's parents first.

Almost a year later, his Parents now in Brandon Manitoba received the "Official Royal Canadian Air Force Casualty Notification (the one with the "black" borders)

"Now Presumed Dead" For Official purposes.

OFFICIAL ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE CASUALTY NOTIFICATION														
NUMBER	J20438 (295115)	RANK	FLYING OFFICER	UNIT 458 SQDN M.E. (OVERSEAS)										
TRADE	PILOT (G.L.)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>R.C.A.F.</td> <td>R.A.F.</td> <td>R.A.A.F.</td> <td>R.N.Z.A.F.</td> <td>OTHER</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			R.C.A.F.	R.A.F.	R.A.A.F.	R.N.Z.A.F.	OTHER	X				
R.C.A.F.	R.A.F.	R.A.A.F.	R.N.Z.A.F.	OTHER										
X														
NAME	SCOTT, RUSSELL CLARE													
MARITAL STATUS	SINGLE	RELIGION	U.C.	CANADIAN YES										
FRENCH CANADIAN		OTHER												
NEXT OF KIN AS SHOWN ON REC. OF SERV. & RELATIONSHIP	MR. JOHN G. SCOTT (FATHER) X ADDRESS 1828 COLLEGE AVE, BRANDON, MANITOBA.													
NAME ADDRESS D.A.B.	MISS ANGELA G. SCOTT SAME ADDRESS.													
NEXT OF KIN AS SHOWN ON CAS. SIG. & RELATIONSHIP	MRS. J.G. SCOTT (MOTHER) ADDRESS 1828 COLLEGE AVENUE BRANDON, MANITOBA.													
FATHER'S NAME ADDRESS	MR. & MRS. JOHN GEORGE SCOTT, 1828 COLLEGE AVENUE, BRANDON, MANITOBA.		LIVING ON ENLISTMENT	YES										
MOTHER'S NAME ADDRESS			LIVING ON ENLISTMENT	YES										
WAS MEMBER ATTACHED TO R.A.F. AT ANY TIME? YES/NO														
IF CASUALTY OCCURRED IN CANADA DID MEMBER HAVE SERVICE OUTSIDE CANADA DURING WAR WITH THE GERMAN REICH? YES/NO														
IF ON LEAVE, STATE DATE LEAVE COMMENCED AND WHETHER ON LEAVE WITH OR WITHOUT PAY?														
CASUALTY DETAILS:														
AUTHORITY CAS. SIG. NO. BOMBER MAIL LETTER DATED----23-JUNE-44.														
PREVIOUSLY PREVIOUSLY REPORTED "MISSING" 24-AUGUST-43 AFTER AIR OPERATIONS (OVERSEAS) (AIRCRAFT FAILED TO RETURN TO ITS BASE AFTER A SHIPPING RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHT BETWEEN LEGHORN AND GIVITAVECCHIA, ITALY)														
NOW "PRESUMED DEAD" 24-AUGUST-43 FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES.														

In October of 1944, his mother was sent, via the local chaplin the memorial cross, given to mothers or widows of Canadian service personnel who lost their lives.



In October 1946 his parents received a letter including his “operational wings” The RCAF Operational Wings pin (often called the "flying A**hole" by aircrew) was introduced to honor personnel who completed a full tour of operations against the enemy or were killed after one or more sorties.



The RCAF did not give up its search for more information. In March of 1947, his parents received a letter from the Missing, Research and Enquiry Service advising that “*despite all possible efforts...no further information on aircraft or crew since they were reported missing....and in view of this, it can only be concluded that the crew perished at sea.....*”

In 1952 his parents were sent a letter advising that after so long an interval that it must be presumed that their son, Russell Clare Scott, does not have a known grave. It goes on to say that general memorials will be erected to commemorate all those that do not have known graves. One of these memorials will be erected in Malta and that the name of their son will appear on that memorial.

The Malta Memorial was built and inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II in 1954. We visited the memorial and paid our respects and remembered F/O Russell Clare Scott J.20438 in 2025.

According to records, Clare was eligible for the following Service Awards
The Defence Medal, Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp, General Service
Medal, The 39-45 Star and the Italy Star.



We will Remember a very determined young warrior.

Flying Officer Russell Clare Scott. J20438
Killed in Action August 24, 1943
458th RAAF Squadron
Malta War Memorial, Panel 10 Column 1



Flight Lieutenant
Russell Clare
Scott (Pilot)
And His Crew
Members Missing
In Action
August 24th 1943

Clare was born
in 1919,
Minnedosa, MB
to Jack & Esther
Scott



Source: <https://www.458raafsquadron.org/honour-roll/servicemens-stories/scott-r-c>

And the Banjo? you may well be asking, the banjo in the title?

Stay tuned for the next issue and all will be revealed.
(Ed. I hate it when people do that!)

ANZAC Day 2026 Remembrance

Dear Members,

As ANZAC Day approaches, it is important that we pause to reflect on its profound significance to our nation and our Association.

This day stands as a symbol of unity, remembrance, and respect for all Australians, New Zealanders, Great Britons, Canadians and South Africans who have served, particularly those who gave their lives in defence of our countries.

We hold a special responsibility to honour the memory of every man who served with 458 Squadron RAAF during World War 2. Their courage and commitment helped shape the history of our Squadron and contributed to the broader efforts that defined the ANZAC spirit. It is especially important to remember those members of 458 Squadron who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Their legacy lives on through our shared stories, commemorations, and continued fellowship.

Let us all make a conscious effort this 2026 ANZAC Day to gather, reflect, and ensure that the sacrifices of our comrades are never forgotten. Whether you attend a dawn service, lay a wreath, or simply pause for a moment of silence, your actions help preserve the memory of those who served and those who fell.

Lest We Forget.

