

# RCAF Identity in Bomber Command Squadron Names and Sponsors

John G. Armstrong

Royal Canadian Air Force bomber squadrons which served overseas during the Second World War were not only identified on the Commonwealth air forces order of battle by the customary squadron number but by a title or nickname as well. Additionally, Canadian squadrons received formal sponsorship and support, generally from Canadian communities or other organizations. In one instance the sponsor was a major Hollywood film studio which also mobilized its roster of movie stars to the cause. Needless to say, these practices were something of a departure from the general orthodoxy within the parent RAF, where the normal practice was to identify squadrons by a unit number only. Nor were they much observed within the other Dominion air forces. But for Canada they played a part in fostering the identity and *esprit* of the RCAF, publicizing the contributions of Canadian bomber crews and serving the policy of Canadianization.

Named squadrons existed prior to the outbreak of the Second World War in both the RAF and RCAF, but they were very few and far between, and most usually auxiliary (reserve) units from certain locales. More appeared after the war began, however, particularly during the Battle of Britain, where certain squadrons of Fighter Command had acquired nicknames which reflected the diverse mix of expatriate and Commonwealth nationalities who were included in the famous "Few." Examples included the Americans of the much-heralded "Eagle" Squadron, as well as squadrons piloted by Poles, Free French, Dutch and many others. There was also the RAF's 242 (Canadian) Squadron and, later, No.125 (Newfoundland) Squadron, a



distinguished night-fighter unit with at least 44 enemy intruders to its credit.<sup>1</sup> Some, but not all, of these names were adopted officially by the RAF.

More named squadrons appeared following the Battle of Britain with the decision advocated by the RAF's leadership that the building of a massive bomber force was Britain's best means of taking the war to Germany. Such names were adopted both to reflect substantial financial support and/or the presence of significant numbers of colonials or other nationals in certain units of Bomber Command. An Indian prince, the Nizam of Hyderabad, had paid for three bomber squadrons and one carried his state's name. Among other early examples were No.44 (Rhodesia) Squadron, the bomber force's first all-Lancaster unit, and No.75 (New Zealand) Squadron, where personnel from these Commonwealth members were concentrated. Three squadrons carried the name, if not necessarily the citizens, of Britain's Gold Coast colony, and there were more than a dozen other squadrons named for locales in the far-flung Empire. Additional bomber units represented the air forces of Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Netherlands and Free France over their occupied homelands.

Perhaps the most unusual name was that given 692 Squadron, marking the sponsorship of the Fellowship of the Bellows in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Doubtless the growing number of named squadrons to the otherwise numbered order of battle added interest and colour for those who followed Bomber Command's fortunes. It inspired a measure of public and service interest,

pride, and even recruits from these affiliations. It also tended to boost the image of an Imperial (and Allied) RAF, although there were those like Sir Arthur Harris, Commander of Bomber Command, who were very touchy about the perception that the so-called "coloured squadrons" evoked an image of a Bomber Command which was something less than a strictly British national force.<sup>2</sup> The appearance of the RCAF in Bomber Command, however, heralded the arrival of an organization very much determined to make its own mark as a distinctive entity.

When the first bomber squadrons of the RCAF began their overseas service with the formation of No.405 Squadron in April 1941, Canadian officials were understandably eager to publicize their accomplishments in order to win public support at home and boost morale and recruiting. The semi-official RCAF overseas publication *Wings Abroad* was a particularly popular and visible manifestation of this effort – much quoted at home – and its early issues made frequent references to the various numbered RCAF bomber squadrons. This Canadian publicity campaign roused British concerns over security from about the time of the disastrous Dieppe Raid (19 August 1942). The use of all squadron numbers heretofore found in the various feature articles and informal unit news columns of the newspaper was discontinued without explanation – but almost certainly at the behest of the nervous RAF censors. Also, the propensity of North American journalists for dramatic hyperbole had struck the more low key British as both crass and vulgar.

As much as it was necessary, the obvious need to protect unit identity information had the initial effect of frustrating the growing Canadian publicity campaign. Now the RCAF press releases were of necessity more discreet, focussing on the names of squadron and station commanders, "the squadron/station commanded by...." This was satisfactory enough in the case of units whose commanders were either popular or who lived long enough to become well known, but the results from a Canadianization standpoint did not always make for good copy. There was one instance, however, where the impact of the OC's presence and leadership was very inspirational indeed.

No.419 Squadron had been formed as the RCAF's third bomber squadron in December 1941 at Mildenhall, a No.3 Group station in Suffolk. The first officer commanding of the new unit was a young Canadian bomber veteran of the prewar RAF who had been a military flyer since 1935 and had been in the war since the beginning – Wing Commander John "The Moose" Fulton, of Kamloops, BC. As Jerrold Morris, one of the 419 originals to survive the war, remembered Fulton:

We were well led, Moose and his two Flight Commanders... were all Canadians in the R.A.F. Moose already had as much experience as it was possible to have accumulated at that stage of the war. He had completed one tour of operations in 'heavies,' and had flown nearly every type of plane in the Air Force, and all the German aircraft that had fallen into our hands. He wore the D.F.C. and the A.F.C., the latter being awarded for flying Wellingtons through our balloon barrage to test the detonators installed on the leading edge of the wings to cut the cables, and for his testing of enemy aircraft. He was twenty-six years old; a big man with carrot hair, a diffident manner and an engaging smile. Moose was seldom heard on the subject of discipline, but was held in such respect and affection by everyone, that he had only to issue an appeal to gain immediate response.<sup>3</sup>

The popular bomber leader was known to all as "The Moose." And it was not long before the members of the squadron were referring to their unit as the "Moose" Squadron, and themselves as the "Moosemen." Soon the airmen were looking for a moose head for their mess and a picture of the animal from which to style a squadron badge.<sup>4</sup> It was marvellous copy for the RCAF's overseas public relations staff. As one news release put it in June 1942:

seldom does a man receive as much admiration as does Moose from his squadron. They admire his flying skill, - 'he's a wizard pilot' - they admire him as a man and it is no exaggeration to say they revere him. Pilots, observers, wireless operators, gunners, ground crew, office clerks, all think the Moose the greatest man on earth. At a sergeants' dance, the biggest crowd is around the Moose, at an Officers' dance, he is the centre of attraction. The Group Captain commanding the station calls him Moose openly; the Grimy Mechanic calls him "Sir," to his face and then tells his pals that he and Moose had a chat about the engines.



The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of London hands to W/C John Fulton, DFC, AFC, the silver cigarette case on behalf of the Mayor and citizens of Kamloops, BC. By the time this picture was published in *Wings Abroad* Fulton had been posted missing in action.

His squadron is one of the hardest working in Bomber Command. It has consistently taken part in the biggest and most dangerous raids of the war. Cologne, the Ruhr, Rostock, Emden, are only a few of the targets attacked by Moose and his men. But the men would follow their shy, smiling wingco into hell if need be.<sup>5</sup>

This was heady stuff despite the hyperbole. A popular and distinguished OC, high morale, a respectably high Canadian manning level (347 out of 545 overall in June 1942),<sup>6</sup> and a growing record of efficiency, all combined to present an attractive, impressive and thoroughly Canadian picture, both within the RCAF and to the public at large. Shortly, the high profile Moose Squadron was formally honoured and eventually officially adopted by Fulton's home town in a ceremony presided over by the Lord Mayor of London, Viscount Bennett, Air Marshal H. "Gus" Edwards – the RCAF's senior officer overseas – and a host of representatives of units from British Columbia.<sup>7</sup>

It is sad to relate that Fulton died the night before the issue of *Wings Abroad* appeared bearing his picture accepting the honours from

his home town. Fourteen of 419's Wellingtons had taken off from Mildenhall to attack Hamburg under what their war diary described as "horrible weather conditions," including heavy icing. Indeed, most of the aircraft detailed for what was to have been a major Bomber Command effort were either unable to take off at all or were recalled. No.3 Group attacked Hamburg alone; but the force was very scattered and many were forced to turn back. Only 68 aircraft reported attacking the target, nine of them from 419. But the aircraft piloted by Fulton appears to have fallen victim to a night fighter in the vicinity of the Frisian Islands, as remarked by a last terse message back to base, "fighter wounded 500." The rest of 419 had returned safely. But "Moose's" fabled luck had finally succumbed to the grim statistical probabilities.<sup>8</sup> The effect on the squadron was devastating. As Jerrold Morris remembered:

a rough fix had been obtained on the aircraft, that placed it off the Frisians, but a thorough search right up to the enemy coast the next morning failed to find any trace of the plane, and none of the crew was ever heard of again. I thought of Moose fighting out there with a

damaged aircraft just above the water on a black night; if anyone could have brought her home he would. So passed one of the finest men who ever served in the Air Force, and a pall of gloom descended on his squadron. There were even tears. Three Group had lost five Wing Commanders in eight nights.<sup>9</sup>

But the legacy of Fulton's nickname lived on in 419 Squadron, as it does to this day. Soon there would be squadron members proudly calling themselves "Moosemen," the majority of whom had never met this courageous and determined young bomber leader.

No.419 was certainly by no means the first bomber squadron to foster a strong and cohesive unit spirit. But more significantly its high public profile seems to have had the effect of transcending RAF censorship rules. That is to say, this was one RCAF unit whose Canadian identity was not masked by its immersion in the RAF organizational infrastructure. This example inspired imitation by those concerned not only with instilling a stronger *esprit de corps* and Canadian identity among the sometimes reluctant aircrew being allocated to the current and new Canadian squadrons, but of furthering the wider manning and policy goals of Canadianization in general.

By the autumn of 1942, when preparations for the formation of No.6 (RCAF) Group, due for the new year, were well under way, other Canadian units had also begun to develop a slightly higher profile as visible manifestations of the RCAF overseas. Generally these tended to be the early arrivals which had the foresight not only to initiate the often lengthy proceedings involved in staffing a badge proposal through the Chester Herald (the ultimate bureaucratic authority for military heraldry) but which had also sought,

as part of the process, to distinguish heraldic links with the Canadian homeland. Thus, in September 1942, the approved badge of No.401 (Fighter) Squadron had appeared featuring a Rocky Mountain sheep's head caboshed.<sup>10</sup>

The first bomber squadron badge was approved a month later, in October. Air Commodore Nelles W. Timmerman, 408 (Goose) Squadron's first CO, later recalled the events which had led up to this approval in an unofficial squadron history:

Soon after the formation of 408 Squadron, Mr. Handley Page, the manufacturer of the Hampden, sent a cheque for fifty pounds to all the Commanding Officers of Hampden squadrons to be spent on anything they saw fit.

I was determined that 408 Squadron was going to be one of the first ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE squadrons to get an official heraldic badge. The Station commander, Group Captain Taafe, suggested that it was about time we went to London to "meet the Canadians," and so we arrived at RCAF Overseas

Headquarters, ensconced in an upper floor of Canada House, where we were welcomed by Air Commodore Leigh Stevenson and members of his small staff.

Among the matters discussed was my proposal to see the Chester Herald, the authority on matters heraldic, about a squadron badge. No objections were raised and indeed it was thought to be a good thing.

Next day, I found my way through rubble around St. Paul's Cathedral and found the office of the Chester Herald in the midst of a general shambles. I explained the purpose of my visit and suggested that the centre piece of the badge be a maple leaf in autumn colours, explaining

that I had admired the badge of Number 5 Royal Air Force Squadron which had a golden Roman V on a green maple leaf, signifying their co-operation, in World War I, with the Canadian Army.

Wing Commander Nelles W. Timmerman, first CO of 408 (Goose) Squadron.



Badge of 419 (Moose) Squadron RCAF, namesake of W/C John (The Moose) Fulton.



The Chester Herald regretted that this would not be possible because the wreath around RCAF badges was composed of maple leaves, unlike the RAF which has laurel; and so maple leaf was allowable for them, but not for us.

My next thought for something distinctly Canadian was a Canada Goose and this was settled on. The motto was simpler. I didn't want a Latin tag but a simple statement of why we were fighting the war. "FOR FREEDOM" said it all.

I gave him my fifty pounds, to have the bird painted, and departed. The badge was finally approved by the King in October, 1942, a year or so later. What channels and red tape it had to go through to reach that goal, I hate to think, but I believe it was all worthwhile and that 408's badge is the most distinctively Canadian badge of them all.

The badge can now be seen near the altar of St. Clement Danes Church in London, carved in slate and set in the floor, a very fitting tribute to a great squadron and many brave men.<sup>11</sup>



Badge of No.408 (Goose) Squadron.

The Goose was a fitting emblem for the bomber squadron. As a note affixed to the back of an official photo of the squadron badge (probably by Timmerman) explained, the Goose "is at home in Canada, England and Scotland. Its speed and powers of flight are indicative of the operational functions of the Sqn."<sup>12</sup> Somewhere along the line the squadron began to be referred to as the "Goose" Squadron, and the name stuck both in squadron social circles and in the realm of RCAF publicity and propaganda. Likewise the squadron's "nesting" place, RCAF Station Linton-on-Ouse was favoured with the name "The Goosepool." Indeed, this was the title given one of the columns dealing with events at Linton that ran for a time in the pages of *Wings Abroad*.<sup>13</sup> Of course this nomenclature was not necessarily subscribed to by the air and ground crews from 426 (Thunderbird) Squadron who shared the facilities at Linton, and whose own news column styled itself as "Thunder Flashes."<sup>14</sup>

It is difficult to determine at precisely what point the RCAF overseas authorities decided to take a policy approach to stimulating the momentum of this developing trend. Yet the

adoption of names for each individual RCAF squadron almost certainly became a matter of policy, for as an immediate post-war historical review prepared by No.6 (RCAF) Group staff noted:

Canadianism (sic) of the Group was reflected in the naming of Squadrons, the R.C.A.F. believing that this helped to develop a healthy *esprit de corps* among the personnel. It was also found that such names attracted considerable civilian interest, and enabled the public to follow more readily the exploits of individual units....<sup>15</sup>

Towards the end of 1943 there were few squadrons in No.6 (RCAF) Group which had not adopted a name. Likewise, most had been "adopted" by cities or organizations back in Canada "which supplied them with gifts and comforts and assisted in the furnishing of their messes and huts."<sup>16</sup>

Most, but by no means all, of the RCAF's bomber squadrons adopted the name of an animal, whether indigenous to Canada or not. Thus 408's Goose and the doubly-significant Moose of 419 had been joined by the Snowy Owl of 420 at Middleton St. George, the Tiger of 424 at Leeming, the French-Canadian Alouette of 425, the mythological Thunderbird of 426 at Dishforth, the Lion of 427 at Croft, the Bison of 429, the metaphorically misplaced Swordfish of 415 at East Moor (the unit had been transferred out of Coastal Command in July 1944), and the Porcupine of 433 at Skipton-on-Swale. It was not surprising that at least one was referred to the RCAF's order of battle as the "Flying Menagerie."<sup>17</sup>

Other bomber squadron names were chosen to reflect their adoption by specific communities in Canada, such as 405 (Vancouver) Squadron at Gransden Lodge, (the RCAF's contribution to the Pathfinder Group, which was by and large sustained by contributions of elite crews from Six Group), 432 (Leaside, Ontario) at East Moor, and 434 (Bluenose) Squadron at Croft, whose name (and the sponsorship of the Halifax Rotary Club) reflected the maritime heritage of many of the squadron aircrew.

By December 1943, only one RCAF bomber unit remained unnamed. Members of 428 Squadron possibly derived some satisfaction from this state, referring to themselves for a time as the "Nameless" squadron. Eventually, however, probably after there had been some prodding from above, *Wings Abroad* reported on 15 December that:

this week the lads have got together and selected a name for themselves, and henceforth it will be the "Ghost" Squadron, an expression which seems apt, having in mind the will-o'-the-wispishness of night-bomber operations. All that remains is for some Canadian community to take the squadron under its wing and "adopt" the boys.<sup>18</sup>

Eventually the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire in Toronto emerged to adopt the "Ghosts" and to join the growing list of communities and organizations sponsoring RCAF bomber squadrons. Most of the sponsors were towns or cities or, occasionally, various types of community service clubs.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps the most unusual organization to sponsor an RCAF bomber squadron, however, was a Hollywood movie studio.

The idea appears to have originated with the public relations staff at the RCAF's Overseas Headquarters. At a staff conference in March 1943 it was mentioned that they had approached the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer organization, famous for the symbol of the roaring lion which preceded

their motion pictures, with a view to adopting the Canadian Lion squadron. The PR men saw all kinds of mutual advantages to such a relationship from the standpoint of:

publicity, comforts for crews and ground-crews and the possibility of persuading M.G.M. players who are visiting American camps in the U.K. to include R.C.A.F. Units in their itinerary.<sup>20</sup>

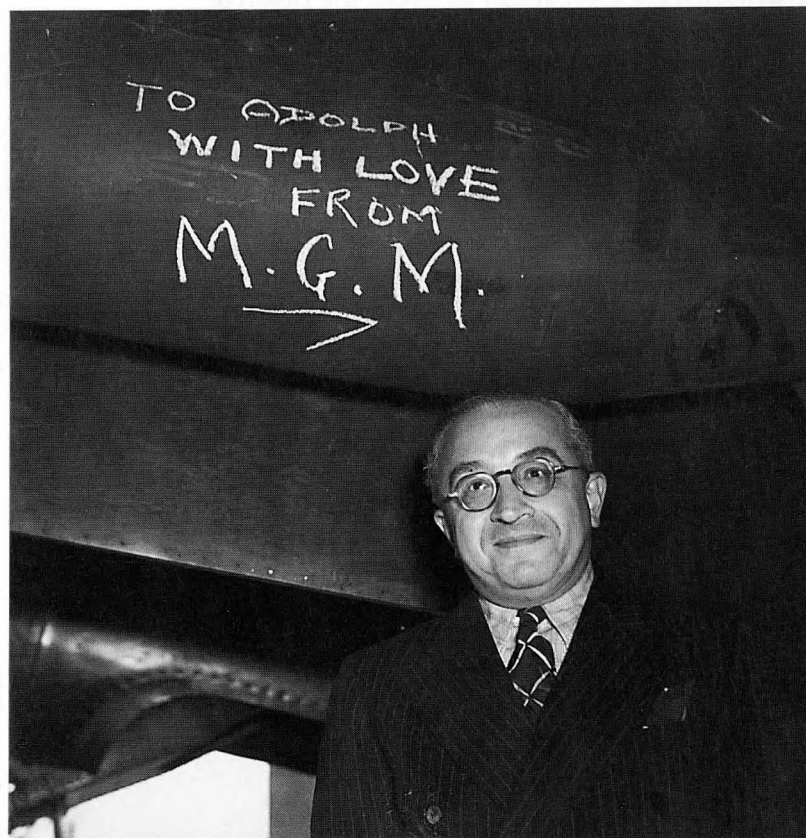
British officials of the film company were enthusiastic and cabled their head office. Hollywood responded almost immediately with the suggestion recorded in an ensuing staff conference at the Overseas Headquarters that:

each aircraft in 427 Squadron be named after a M.G.M. star who would adopt the crew and ground crew of that particular aircraft. It was also suggested that M.G.M. supply the Squadron with a bronze lion as mascot and that all personnel be given a small bronze medallion on a leather thong [which would also ultimately serve as a lifetime theatre pass for squadron members].<sup>21</sup>

The alacrity of MGM's response had the effect of prompting sudden caution on the part of Air Marshal Edwards "in respect of the publicity angle as it might easily lead to difficulties."<sup>22</sup> He also decided to ensure that authorities in Ottawa concurred with the project, an assurance which was granted, but with the codicil that "it be kept under strict control from service view point."<sup>23</sup>

Whatever extremes of show-business glitz the RCAF authorities may have feared, the results appear to have been beneficial both from the standpoint of mutually advantageous publicity and the morale, and the *esprit de corps* of 427 (Lion) Squadron. MGM's publicity director in England, Mervyn McPherson, had provided the RCAF's PR men with a list of the studio's inventory of Hollywood stars who might be considered for the honour of having their names affixed to 427 Squadron aircraft. He assured the Canadians that any one of the actors would be most honoured to be chosen to adopt a crew. There was one exception, however, in the case of the reclusive and publicity shy Greta Garbo, who might be better overlooked!<sup>24</sup>

*Samuel Eckman, Jr., managing director of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, posing with a "Lion" Squadron Handley Page Halifax B.Mk.V.*



*The privilege of carrying the name of the lovely actress Lana Turner on their aircraft was won by the crew of Sergeant E.A. Johnston (believed to be pictured).*



No.427 Squadron at the time had just begun the process of converting from Wellingtons to the four-engined Halifax V. Thus the news that their new aircraft were to be "adopted" by Hollywood stars of the squadron's choosing was both timely and welcome. MGM had many of the great names of the silver screen of the 1940's under contract, including such luminaries as Lionel Barrymore and Wallace Beery. But when squadron members gathered to vote on the preferred names for their new bombers, veneration for distinguished acting careers was not necessarily a priority. The top choices of the squadron for the seventeen names to be selected were the glamorous actresses Lana Turner, Greer Garson and Hedy Lamarr.<sup>25</sup> Of course other stars were recognized, among them Spencer Tracy, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Walter Pidgeon, George Murphy and Van Heflin.<sup>26</sup> But when MGM officials subsequently visited the squadron for the widely publicized and photographed adoption ceremonies, a draw had to be held for the privilege of chalking Miss Turner's name on a squadron aircraft, an honour won by Sergeant E.A. Johnson's crew "amid an ovation from the Squadron."<sup>27</sup>

For the most part the whole thing appears to have been a mutually beneficial publicity exercise. Nevertheless, it is clear from the squadron war diary over the ensuing months that the adoption also proved a helpful focal point for squadron morale, sense of identity, and *esprit de corps*. To what extent the stars' names actually became a part of the "nose art" which distinguished operational aircraft is not known. The creators of such endeavour tended to have their own ideas and aircraft and crews often had to be changed. Yet there were exchanges of correspondence between crews and actors and the letters received from several of the stars suggested an interest in

the squadron which went beyond the polite but transparent salutations which would have been dreamed up by a studio publicity department. For example, prayers and a Saint Christopher medal came from Greer Garson. Second Lieutenant Van Heflin, USA, writing under his real name of Emmst E. Heflin, promised his crew "a whale of a blow out - on me," when he came overseas with his field artillery unit. Future senator George Murphy also wanted to treat a crew to a night out in London even though he would be unable to be there himself. Unfortunately, his invitation in July 1943 to Pilot Officer A.M. Fellner's crew was not received: one of 427's original crews, and "all 'gen' men," they had been posted missing after an operation against Bochum on 12 June.<sup>28</sup>

Only one instance is known of a movie star actually visiting the squadron. The 427 Squadron War Diary entry on the subject was not without an element of tongue-in-cheek humour:

The Station was favoured by a visit by one of the foremost English actors - Robert Donat. The cast of the Bernard Shaw fantasy "Heartbreak House" with Mr. Donat as the venerable Capt. Shotover, which has currently had a successful run at the Cambridge theatre in London, performed the play as part of an E.N.S.A. show, and brought the house of Canucks down with tremendous rounds of applause. It was something new in the way of an E.N.S.A. contribution, and was very much appreciated. After the performance, Mr. Donat and the cast,

were entertained in the Officer's Mess, after the performance, and was quite surprised to learn and so were we, that a bomber of the Lion Squadron proudly bears the name of the M.G.M. film star. Donat was induced to return to Leeming to-morrow in order that photographs might be taken of himself alongside the bomber and it's crew - S/L Ganderton and mates.<sup>29</sup>

The foregoing suggests that some hasty "nose art" may have been arranged overnight. But when Donat faithfully returned the following day, he won a warm endorsement from aircrew not readily given to praising outsiders. Indeed, reading between the lines, the older man must have been very moved by the occasion.

The noted actor appeared to be quite an unassuming type of gentleman, very unaffected by his success and was very humble in his thanks for the tribute of having a kite named after himself.<sup>30</sup>

Other activities strengthened the squadron's association with their chosen animal. In November 1943 after a long correspondence to receive the personal permission of Winston Churchill, the squadron adopted as mascot "Mareth," a cub at the London Zoo which had been sired by a lion earlier acquired by the Prime Minister.<sup>31</sup> Not surprisingly, the lion rampant was also the prominent feature on the squadron's badge when it was approved by the

W/C D.A. Burnside, CO of 427 (Lion) Squadron, accepts the Leo the Lion mascot from M-G-M executive Samuel Eckman, Jr.



King and presented to the unit by Air Vice-Marshal Brookes in December.<sup>32</sup> By this time, however, their identity as "lions" was already quite firmly established, although the results were sometimes in forms of idolatry that had probably not been anticipated at the time of adoption. Indeed, one of the keynotes of the adoption ceremonies at Leeming in May 1943 had been the presentation by MGM of a bronze lion of "eighteenth century design - with an inscription commemorating the occasion" which the studio had hoped "would be worthy to stand in the Officers' Mess."<sup>33</sup> Stand it did through good times and bad as an honoured squadron totem. It may not have always received the degree of veneration the squadron's sponsors might have expected, however. Indeed, the brass lion's personal participation in one particularly undignified and raucous squadron festivity is documented in the War Diary as follows:

In one of the rowdiest mess whirls that has ever been experienced by any officer, either living or dead, members of the mess met last night to celebrate F/L Laird's award which also coincided with S/L Earthrowl's screening. During the course of the drenching, our Winco was instituted in the Royal Order of Leo's as the "Grand Lion," and was duly initiated under the revised policy in said Order, whereby all potential



Actress Greer Garson's autographed photo dedicated to the Lion Squadron. She also sent the men a handwritten letter and a St. Christopher medal.

Lions are required to (in official terms) osculate the rectum of Leo, the M.G.M. presentation. F/L A. Reilly, the station adjutant was permitted into the sacred order after going through the usual channels and has now become an Hon. member.<sup>34</sup>

The war diary's author probably did not realize that his words were recorded

for posterity and eventual scholarly scrutiny, nor would he likely have cared. It serves, however, as a characteristic example of the distinctive spirit growing within the RCAF's "flying menagerie." Each squadron had similar sorts of focal points, totems, songs and rituals and doubtless some squadrons were more successful than others from the standpoints of sustaining morale and *esprit*. Too many other factors such as leadership, living conditions, the ultimate horror of war, heavy casualties and high stress were all far more decisive determinants. Nevertheless, from the wider standpoint of establishing the identity and credibility of the RCAF overseas as a significant and visible component of the Allied war effort and fostering the identity of Canadian servicemen, the policy of naming and sponsoring squadrons was almost certainly successful. So strong were these name



Badge of 427 (Lion)  
Squadron RCAF

affiliations that they were employed extensively in the first popularized RCAF History which appeared in the war's immediate aftermath.<sup>35</sup> They were disdained by the more orthodox official history which appeared in the 1990s, however.<sup>36</sup> That was unfortunate. Nevertheless, the squadrons of the current Air Command which carry the wartime numbers continue to observe much of this proud heritage passed from their predecessors.

### Notes

1. The official history of No.125 (Newfoundland) Squadron is found within G.W.L. Nicholson, *More Fighting Newfoundlanders* (Government of Newfoundland, 1969), Chapter XIII, pp.398-446.
2. Harris to Sinclair, 13 August 1942 and 19 January 1943 (dated 1942 in error), Public Record Office [PRO] AIR 20/3798.
3. Jerrold Morris, *Canadian Artists and Airmen, 1940-45* (Toronto n.d.), pp.57-9.
4. *Wings Abroad*, 17 June 1942.
5. RCAF Overseas, Directorate of Public Relations News Release, circa 29 Jun. 1942, J. Fulton Biographical File, National Defence Headquarters, Directorate of History and Heritage [DHH].
6. 419 Squadron Operational Record Book (ORB), 30 June 1942, DHH.
7. *Wings Abroad*, 29 July 1942.
8. 419 Squadron ORB and annexes, 28 July 1942 and Martin Middlebrook, *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (New York, 1985), pp.290-291.
9. Morris, p.113.

10. Samuel Kostenuk and John Griffin, *RCAF Squadron Histories and Aircraft* (Toronto, 1977), p. 82.
11. *408 Squadron History* (Belleville, ON, 1984), p.6.
12. No.408 Squadron PRF, DHH, R S7 408.
13. *Wings Abroad*, 3 and 17 November 1943.
14. See *Wings Abroad*, 24 November 1943.
15. Historical Review, No. 6 (RCAF) Heavy Bomber Group, European Theatre, DHH 181.009 (D4720), p.3.
16. *Ibid.*, p.3.
17. See *Wings Abroad*, 24 November 1943, "Bisons Join RCAF's Flying Menagerie," p.5.
18. *Wings Abroad*, 15 December 1943.
19. For a complete list of sponsors see DHH 181.005 (D1649).
20. Extract from Staff Conference No.24, 19 March 1943, DHH 181.009 (D2325), ff.1.
21. Extract from Staff Conference No.25, 24 March 1943, DHH 181.009 (D2325). The medallions, when they were presented in November 1943, provided free admission to "any MGM theatre in the world." 429 Sqn. ORB, 10 November 1943.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Brown to Macinnes, 17 April 1943, DHH 181.009 (D2325), ff.10.
24. McPherson to Macinnes, 17 March 1943, DHH 181.009 (D2325), ff.6.
25. 427 (Lion) Squadron ORB, 22 May 1943, A complete list of names chosen is at DHH 181.009 (D2325), ff.4.
26. See DHH 181.009 (D5281).
27. 427 (Lion) Squadron ORB, 24 May 1943. For those who enjoy double entendre the author is obliged to report the aircraft "Lana's" fate as recorded in R.N. Roberts, *The Halifax File* (Richmond, Surrey 1982), p.46: "swung at Leeming and u/c collapsed, 16.6.43."
28. DHH 181.009 (D5281) and 427 (Lion) Squadron ORB, 12 June 1943. Fellner survived the war as a POW.
29. 427 (Lion) Squadron ORB, 28 October 1943.
30. *Ibid.*, 29 October 1943.
31. *Ibid.*, 13 October. 1943; *Wings Abroad*, 19 November 1943, p.3 and Spence to Chasanoff, 27 September 1943, DHH 181.009 (D2325), ff.26.
32. See 427 (Lion) Squadron ORB, 10 November 1943.
33. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1943 and McPherson to MacInnes, 12 April 1943, DHH 181.009 (D2325).
34. No. 427 (Lion) Squadron ORB, 23 October 1943.
35. Canada, Air Force Headquarters, *The RCAF Overseas* (Toronto 1911-49), 3 vols.
36. Brereton Greenhous *et al*, *The Crucible of War 1939-1945* (Ottawa, 1994).

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