

# 434 Niagara

## BULLETIN



Vol. 24 no 1 Sept - Oct, 2021

### General Meetings

3rd Thursday of each month at

Branch 4 RC Legion

383 Morningstar Avenue Welland ON

# ***We proudly promote the glorious tradition of the RCAF***

## **434 Wing Board of Directors**

### **2020-2021**

Chairman – Bill Heron .....	H - 289-820-8712
1 st Vice Chairwoman – Julie Sheppard.....	H - 905-734-6307
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman - Norm Sonnenberg.....	H - 905-834-6722
Secretary Treasurer - George Groff.....	H - 905-734-4948
Membership Chair - Jeanette Lee.....	C - 905-359-3531
	C - 289-723-2544
Bulletin Editor – James Allan .....	H - 905-685-6787
Kit Shop Chairman - Rod Lee.....	C - 905-359-1975
	C - 289-686-8636
Director At Large – Wesley Pierce.....	H - 289-820-9827
Honourary Director – F/L Tom Vance.....	H - 905-834-8155
Wing Padre - Rev John Cathcart.....	H - 905-384-4660

#### **COMMITTEES**

Air - Cadets Capt - Julie Sheppard  
Audio Visual - Rod Lee  
Phone Committee - Jeanette & George  
Programs - George & Board  
Sick/Visitation - Jeanette Lee  
Publicity - Board

#### **ROYAL CANADIAN LEGIONS**

Welland	Branch 4	Office	905-734-3611
		Canteen	905-734-6601
Port Colborne	Branch 56	Hall	905-834-9512
Fort Erie	Branch 71	Hall	905-871-8682
Fonthill	Branch 613	Hall	905-892-6293

**Published by**

**434 (Niagara Peninsula) Wing**

**Email: [434wingrcafa@gmail.com](mailto:434wingrcafa@gmail.com)**

**Royal Canadian Air Force Association of Canada**

# Chairman's Report August 2021

The time passes quickly and here we are already into August with Olympics behind us albeit a year later than should have been, but we continue on regardless.

We have managed to hold a few Board meetings but like so many of you a general meeting has not been possible, for us here at 434 Wing it has been since last December which looking back seems like a lifetime. It has been two years since we held our Banquet and Awards Dinner and this too is in the all too distant past. We are hopeful that we can look forward to an improving future.

We have set up our Committee for the Battle of Britain ceremony scheduled for September 19<sup>th</sup> 2021. To this end the Committee have had one meeting to lay the groundwork for this upcoming event besides the work put in by the Committee we have been extremely lucky to have the City of Welland fully co-operate with us in this endeavour

Normally this occasion would be held at our local Legion but due to the current health situation we have moved to Chippewa Park Cenotaph.

We continue the work required and do the best we can through these challenging times.

We remain in contact with the Air Cadets and as to their status and the programs they are planning with the hopes that they will be able to resume perhaps September or October.

Once again we have fundraisers planned for later in the year and as before, I encourage all members to participate where possible. If you have an idea or a suggestion for a fundraiser please bring it to the attention of any of our Board members all ideas will be given consideration.

On a sad note, we were sorry to learn of the resignation of Susan Arsenault our Ontario Group President. Susan's expertise and knowledge of the workings of this organization were and still are invaluable. I was lucky to enough to meet Susan at the AGM in Orillia when she decided to throw her hat in the ring and run for President, she struck me as being a genuine down to earth person. Susan will be sorely missed. We wish her well and thank her for her time (although short) as Ontario Group President.

As a late entry to this report, this morning an email informs me that Walter Peckham is the new Ontario Group Chairman, congratulations Walter we wish you every success.

Please stay healthy, be safe and we will persevere.

Bill Heron  
Chairman

*Per Ardua ad Astra*

## Membership and Welfare

I would like to thank all our members for quickly forwarding their dues for the 2021-2022 season.

Hopefully we are finally getting ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic and looking forward to a better year. Keep safe and hope to see our membership in September!

Jeanette Lee

Membership and Welfare Chairperson

## Kit Shop / Web Site News

We are researching platforms to support our website which is currently down. Unfortunately our previous platform crashed and the cost of rebuilding it is prohibitive. We hope to be up and running with a new website before too long.. I do thank everyone who has supported our site.

Rod Lee

Kit Shop Chairman

## Board of Directors Meeting

August 7, 2021



# Board of Directors Meeting

June 25, 2021



Timber, 434 Niagara's Mascot, was also present

# The Snowbirds by Chmn William Heron

I will assume that a great many will be familiar with the RCAF Air Demonstration team we call the "Snowbirds".

But at the same time, I wonder how many will know that long before the Snowbirds became what they are today 431 RCAF Squadron was part of Bomber Command during WW2.

Formed at Burn, Yorkshire, England November 11<sup>th</sup> 1942 431 Squadron originally came under the direction of 4 Group and was known as the RCAF's 28th – 11<sup>th</sup> Bomber Squadron formed overseas,

The only non-Canadian to command the Squadron was W/C John Coverdale RAF. His two Squadron Leaders were S/L Mulford & S/L Marshall. W/C Coverdale failed to return from an operation to Krefeld June 2/1943, S/L Marshall failed to return May 13/1943 & S/L Mulford failed to return June 11/1943. So for such a young Squadron they had lost their Commanding Officer and both Flight Commanders within a period of approximately six weeks a devastating blow.



Jennifer Casey March 1, 1985-  
May 17, 2020

Originally equipped with Wellington X the Squadron were now equipped with mark V Hali faxes and training began on July 16<sup>th</sup> when 8 crews were sent to Topcliffe for Conversion training.

The Squadron remained at Burn as part of 4 Group until July 14<sup>th</sup> 1943 when it was relocated to Tholthorpe and became part of 6 Group; they remained there until December 9/1943 when they once again were on the move to what would be their home for the duration of the war, this time they moved further north to Croft the second most northerly Bomber Command base with only Middleton St. George a little farther to the northeast.

In May of 1944 the Squadron converted to Mark III Halifaxes and before year's end they would be flying the Canadian built Lancaster X.

Since their formation in 1942 and until May 1945, this Squadron flew 2584 sorties including airlifting 240 POW's back to England. Operational hours totalled 14,004.

Amongst their personnel, the following honours and awards were given

1 DSO – 63 DFC – 10 DFM – 2 CGM – 1 MID

431 Squadron today take on quite different role, but now known as  
431 AD Squadron, aka

**"The Snowbirds"**



They have entertained at many air shows displaying their expertise in formation flying and aerobatics

So the next time you see our Canadian Snowbirds in the air remember there is a long history to this Squadron.

Our thanks to those that were part of it then and to those who are part of it now.

And we WILL remember all who have lost their lives serving with both 431 (Iroquois) Squadrons and 431 AD (Snowbirds) Squadron – may they Rest in Peace.



# Seaplanes in the Pacific

Seaplanes played a crucial role in the Pacific during WWII. The seaplane was relied on for missions ranging from reconnaissance, to fuel distribution, and rescue operations of downed pilots and sailors. With China and Russia currently increasing their influence in the Pacific and China targeting US territory, the importance of the seaplane in the Pacific varies among world powers.



## China's "Fish Dragon" AG600

It can carry dozens of armed troops, tons of cargo, and has a maximum speed of 350 mph, a cruising speed of 310 mph, a range of 2800 miles and a service ceiling of 20,000 feet. It has the ability to access islands in the South China Sea which are subject to territorial claims.



## Russia's "Mermaid" Beriev Be-200, a jet powered seaplane

Originally developed as a crew-swap aircraft for nuclear submarines. It has been used extensively as a water bomber in fighting forest fires, also for search and rescue and can be outfitted for anti-submarine warfare.



## US Navy Curtiss SOC-1 Seagull from WWII

Apparently the US does not believe in seaplanes as it does not have a single operable seaplane for employment today in the Pacific.

# Tom Vance Celebrates his 99th Birthday!

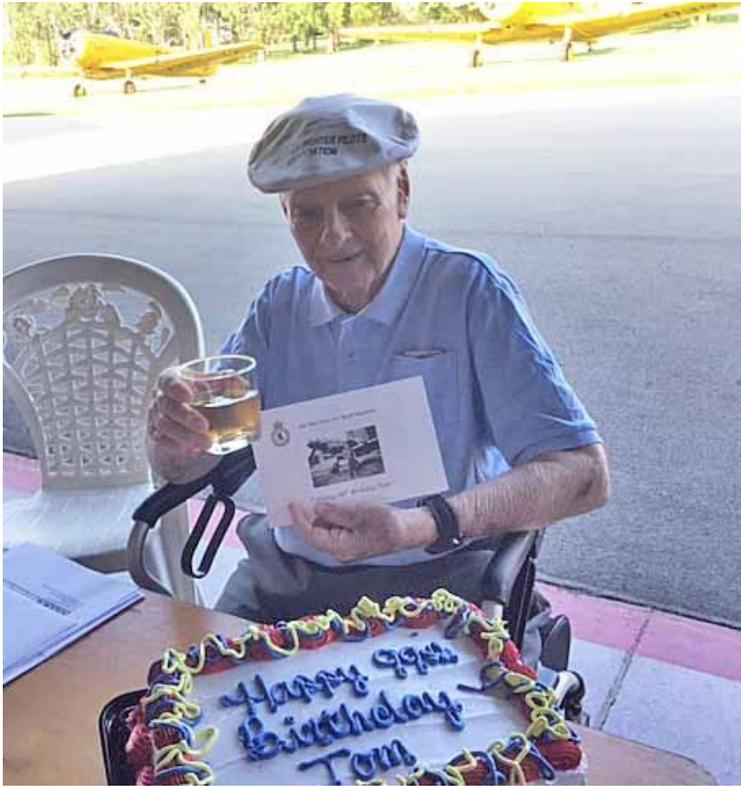
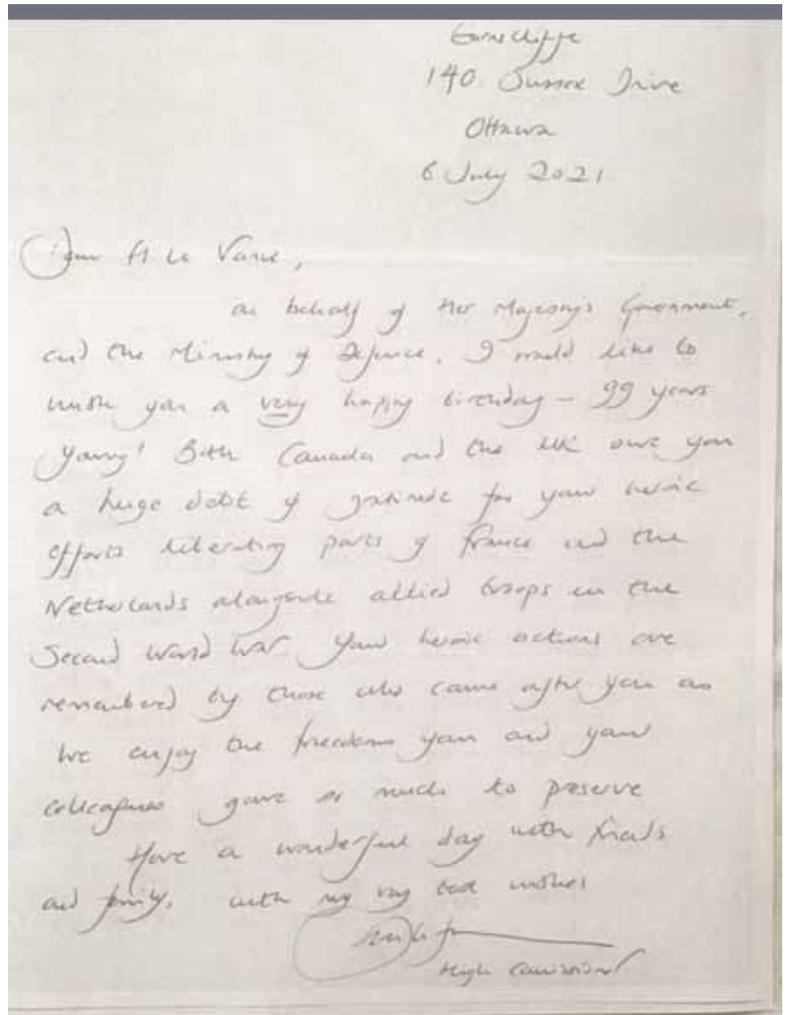


Photo by N. Sonnenberg

**Tom Vance celebrated his 99th birthday in July with a small group of invited friends, several of whom flew in for the celebration at Alf Beam's airfield.**



**Handwritten Letter from the British High Commissioner to Canada for Tom's Birthday**

## Wording of Letter

Earnscliffe  
140 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa,

6 July 2021

Dear Fl. Lt. Vance,

On behalf of Her Majesty's Government and the Ministry of Defence, I would like to wish you a very happy birthday - 99 years young! Both Canada and the UK owe you a huge debt of gratitude for your heroic efforts liberating parts of France and the Netherlands along side Allied troops in the Second World War. Your heroic actions are remembered by those who came after you as we enjoy our freedom you and your colleagues gave so much to preserve

Have a wonderful day with friends and family.

With my very best wishes,

Susan Le Jeune  
High Commissioner

# In the News

## Appointment



**Timber**, a rescue dog and a Border Collie/Bernies Mountain Dog, who resides in Welland, ON, has consented to be the Official Mascot for 434 Niagara Wing. It is anticipated that he will bring inspiration, happiness and good fortune for all members. Timber attended the first Board of Directors Meeting of 2021 on June 25, and greeted each attendee. Timber also serves to bring attention to the employment of service canines for veterans with PTSD.

## 434 Niagara Wing Receives Proficiency Award

## Norm Sonnenberg, 2nd Vice President, celebrated his birthday in June at Drag Lake, Haliburton



# In the News



**Chinese J-20 Stealth Fighter**

At the **Zapad 2021 military exercises**, held in China's northwestern Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, which concluded on August 13th, Chinese and Russian forces, 10,000 strong, demonstrated unprecedented levels of interoperability using a joint command and control system. A highlight of the exercises which signified their importance was China's deployment of J-20 stealth fighters, which marked the first time they were deployed alongside foreign forces.

The J-20 joined the PLA Air Force in March 2017, and is one of just two fifth generation fighters in large scale production worldwide alongside the American F-35

The presence of the J-20 symbolises that the Western Bloc and its allies will not have a monopoly on stealth fighter technologies in the event of a major war. the J-20's deployment could have potentially been intended to show Russian forces the benefits of fighting alongside the PLA in such a way — namely access to very advanced hardware much of which only China and the U.S. currently field.

## The Typhoon to be enhanced.



**The Eurofighter Typhoon**

The Typhoon is an advanced swing-role fighter aircraft that has simultaneously deployable air-to-air and air-to-surface weapons capabilities. Currently, the model is in service in nine countries: the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar, but not in Canada.

The Typhoon has seen combat in Libya, Iraq, and Syria. The aircraft has a maximum speed of Mach 2 (approx: 1,522 mph/2,447 kph), and a maximum altitude of 55,000 ft (16,764m). Its two Eurojet EJ200 engines each have a thrust power of 90kN.

Eurofighter Jagdflugzeug GmbH and the NATO Eurofighter & Tornado Management Agency (NETMA) signed a 300 million euros (\$352 million) contract for the next phase of Eurofighter Typhoon capability enhancements.

The contract covers several components of the Typhoon fighter, such as operational improvements of the Meteor beyond-visual-range, air-to-air missile, and the shift to new E-scan radar.

It also includes improvements to the system's Brimstone precision air-to-surface operations, cockpit display formats, interoperability enhancements through the development of the MIDS Link 16, radio, and general improvements to the Defensive Aids Sub-System.

The deal involves the four Eurofighter Partner Companies: BAE Systems, Airbus Germany, Airbus Spain, and Leonardo.

# In the News

## Egypt Purchases More Rafales from France



On May 3, 2021 the Egyptian Defense Ministry signed an agreement with France for 30 more Rafales for US \$4.5 billion. These will be added to the 24 Rafales already purchased making Egypt the largest purchaser of French aircraft, overtaking India and Qatar.

### Rafale Purchases

Egypt previously –24 Rafales

India—36 Rafales + option on 18 more

Greece—18 Rafales

Qatar—24 Rafales + option on 12 more

The Egyptian contract also includes contracts to purchase a spy satellite and two multi role tanker transport (MRTT) aircraft from Airbus



Airbus A330 multi role tanker transport, two of which are to be purchased by Egypt as part of the same agreement.

## MiG-35 Entering Batch Production



MiG-35

The MiG-35 is positioned as a light multirole fighter to compete with the likes of the Dassault Rafale. Among other improvements over the MiG-29M, it has 25% more thrust, an advanced radar, improved fire control system and better sensors to detect enemy targets. The MiG-35 has several improvements over the current crop of Russian jets to make the job of pilots easier such as landing in auto mode and G-force protection system. It has some major advances that make it comparable to the best of Western fighter jets- an AI-Powered Target Recognition System and an all-new Active Electronically Scanning Array (AESA) radar.

# In the News

## CAE and Leonardo Create Joint Venture to Provide Operations Support at Decimomannu, Sardinia

CAE of Montreal and Leonardo have created a joint venture called Leonard CAE Advanced Jet Training Srl. The joint venture will support the operations of the International Flight Training School (IFTS) at the Decimomannu Air Base in Sicily, Italy. It will provide training support services, including full maintenance and operation of the M-346 fighter trainer aircraft and its ground-based training system along with support for the operation of IFTS base facilities. The IFTS will operate a fleet of 22 Alenia Aermacchi M-346 advanced jet trainer jets.

## Past Canadian Involvement in Decimomannu

The Decimomannu Air Base came under the control of the United States Army in 1943 after the Armistice of Cassibile signed on September 3, 1943. In April 1957 an " Air Weapons Training Installation" (AWTI) unit was established by the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) to be used as air-to-air gunnery and compliment the French Air Base at Rabel-Sale, Morocco. It was actively used by Canadian, German and NATO forces. In December 1959 an agreement was signed between Italy, Canada and West Germany, which regulated the use of the air base and firing ranges associated with it.

**“This posting turned out to be the most enjoyable posting of my Air Force career.”**

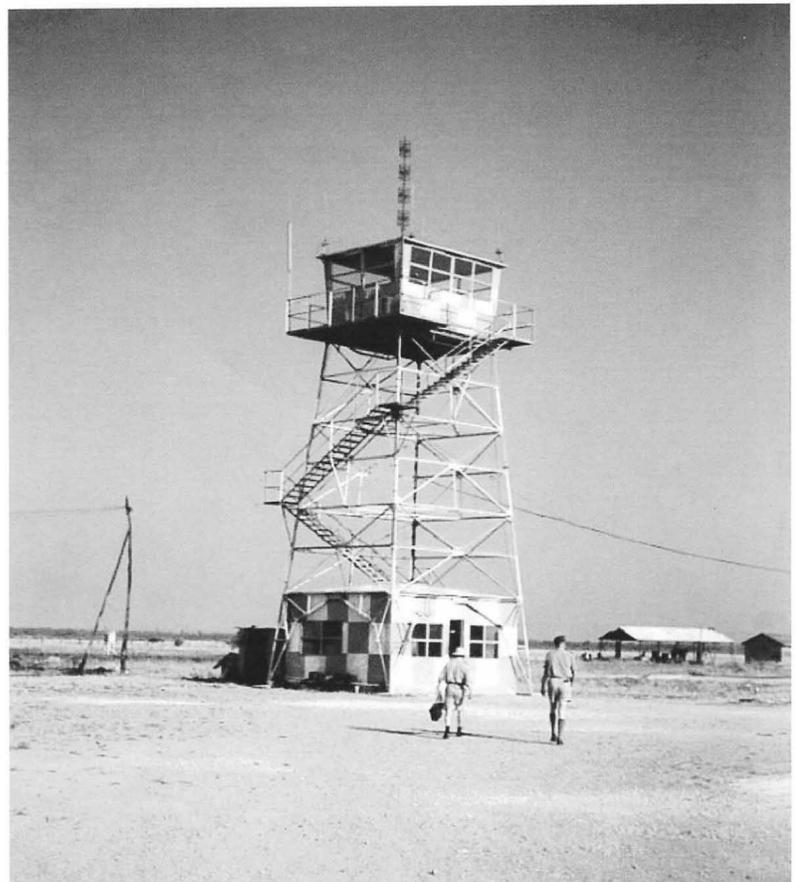


**434 Member and former Director Charles Leguerrier was posted to the Decimomannu Air Base in 1960. The following is his account of life at the Air Base.**

Sardinia is the second largest island in the Mediterannian. The island is 150 miles in length and 75 miles in width. Cagliari is the capital.

The air base of Decimomannu in Sardinia was chosen as a tri service air to air gunnery base used by the RCAF, the German air Force and the Italian Air Force. The base became operational in June 1957.

I was transferred to Sardinia in 1960 and became part of a contingent of seventy Airmen to provide logistics to the RCAF squadrons when they came from our bases in France and Germany. The squadrons came with their pilots and ground-crews for a two week period of air to air gunnery over the Mediterranean. The base had a T33 which was used to tow the drogue nets that the pilots shot into with colored bullets. The net was then dopped back at the base and retrieved and scored.



**Control Tower at Decimomannu Air Base**

# In the News

Continued - Chuck Leguerrier -

The base was 50% Italian 25% Canadian and 25% German. The Italians provided barracks for the personnel who came with the squadrons from France and Germany. Deci air Base was inland about 25 miles from Cagliari where we all lived with our families in apartments across from the beach. Our working hours were from 7 am to 3 pm. I was there from 1960 to 1962 when the RCAF were flying f86 sabres.

Our COPSO was Squadron Leader Duke Warren and he relates a problem they had and I quote. "One persistent problem we had was with power failures at the control tower. When the control tower was unserviceable you had F86 F84 G91s and the odd North Star all milling around and acting like midair collisions looking for a place to happen. It turned out that when the espresso machine in the hangar was on the same circuit as the control tower so when they were both used at the same time the fuse blew. The chief controller had previously assured me there was a standby generator that would automatically kick in. After one failure I asked him to show me how it was done. So he said to me that when there was a failure he automatically sent some one to start the generator." I am sure there are other stories like this one.

This posting turned out to be the most enjoyable posting of my Air Force career. We were like a big family oblivious to the cold war. We had an all ranks mess in a hotel we rented on the beach of the Poetto.

**"All the way, it was just a fantastic time in our lives" Sam Newman**



**Sam Newman**, (Capt) Ret'd who was also posted to Decimomannu with Chuck Leguerrier, has commented:

"Fortuitous for any and all the Canadian who will eventually head back for the Island of Sardinia, and the Capa Frasca Weapons Range, to carry out this Pilot training. Along with several hundred other Canadians who activated RCAF Air Weapons Unit (AWU); commencing in 1957 and kept it operating until the end of the 60's, it was a remarkable location while providing Weapons Training for 1 Air Div Aircrew, proving systems of our Canadian a/c, the F-86, CF 100, and the CF 104's during their 2 week deployment from the Fighter Wings on the continent, and upgrading their Sea Survival training."

Sabre Pilots of 434 Squadron 1960-61  
Decimomannu



James Craik– Photo

# In the News

Continued—Decimomannu

## International Flight Training School at Decimomannu

Italy is constructing a new “Top Gun” training school at Decimomannu to be fully operational in 2022. The campus will include an entire building that will house the Ground Based Training System (GBTS) with classrooms and the latest generation simulation systems. The flagship will be the so-called Live, Virtual and Constructive (LVC) training capability which allows ground simulator pilots to “see” real pilots in the air and train alongside them, while pilots in the air can “see” the simulated aircraft through their on-board programs. Thanks to this revolutionary system, it is also possible to generate “red air” scenarios that include hostile aircraft. In addition to the 22 M-346 jet trainers, the training program employs the M-346 ground-based training system, including the advanced full-mission simulator jointly developed by Leonardo and CAE. CAE and Leonardo have a longstanding industrial relationship and we are pleased to invest jointly with Leonardo and the Italian Air Force in this groundbreaking public-private partnership to operate the International Flight Training School,” said Marc-Olivier Sabourin, Vice President and General Manager, Defence & Security International, CAE.



“The partnership between Leonardo and CAE will support the M-346 Integrated Training System, which is a pivotal element of a modern and innovative Lead-In to Fighter Training (LIFT) program for next generation pilots.”

The RCAF has made no announcement as to whether they will send pilots to the new advanced training school.

**Alenia Aermacchi M-346**

---

## Nigerian Air Force takes Delivery of Three JF-17B Aircraft from Pakistan on May 21, 2021



The JF-17B is a lightweight, single-engine, fourth-generation multi-role combat aircraft developed jointly by the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex and the Chengdu Aircraft Corporation of China.

**Top speed:** 1,960 km/h

**Range:** 3,482 km

# Boramae Park, Dongjak-gu, Seoul, Korea

The beautiful and expansive Boramae Park contains a section for aircraft as a reminder that the Park was created on the former grounds of the Republic of Korea Air Force Academy. The aircraft which include a transport aircraft, a Cessna T-37, a helicopter and a fighter jet have proven to be very popular with visitors, including young children, who want to have their picture taken with the aircraft. Boramae translates as “young hawk” in Korean and the word is often associated with aircraft.



# Sponsors

## Giant Tiger

Wayne Zatorski – Store Owner  
200 Fitch St., Welland, ON, L3C 2V9  
(905) 735-0963

## M.T. Bellies

Tap & Grillhouse John Clark  
871 Niagara St., Welland, ON  
(905)-788-9474

## Sobeys

Ron Kore  
110 Highway # 20,  
Fonthill, ON L0S 1E0

## McDonalds Restaurant

Joanne Martin  
569 Main St. W., Port Colborne, ON

## Serge Maveev

Owner operator  
111 Shaw St., Welland, ON L3B 5X4  
(905)-735-4434

It's  
with

## Botanix

Steve Moes  
1361 Rice Rd., RR2, Welland, ON L3B 5N5  
(905)-892-5832

## Mike Knapp Ford Sales LTD

Mike Knapp, President  
607 Niagara St., Welland ON, L3C 1L9  
(905)-732-3673

## Boggio

Fonthill Pharmacy  
165 Hwy 20  
Fonthill, ON  
(905)-892-4994

## Legion

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 4  
383 Morningstar Ave., Welland, ON

