

HUTCHINSON, JOCK

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# Air Force hero hangs up wings

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Staff Reporter

Forty years ago Jock Hutchinson was piloting a twin-engined Wellington in a raid over Greece when the plane was shot down.

Forced to ditch in the Mediterranean, Hutchinson — then a sergeant in the Royal Air Force — and his crew were safely picked up by a patrol boat and taken to Egypt. He was soon in the air again but his heroism was not to go unnoticed: a few months later he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Medal by King George VI during an investiture at Buckingham Palace at which Canadian heroes at Dieppe were also being honored.

The citation read in part: "decorated for his disregard of danger during operational flights over Germany, France, Italy, Greece, Crete, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania."

Now, as the veteran flyer hangs up his goggles,

he can look back on a colorful career spanning 42 years and more than 20,000 flying hours.



**JOCK HUTCHINSON**

His love affair with aircraft started in 1939. At 17, the young Scot from Edinburgh wasted no time in joining the RAF and was soon heading for the war-time skies.

"After the war ended I was still flying with the RAF and was part of the Independence War being

fought between India and neighboring Pakistan. A few months later I came to Canada looking for a job with Trans Canada Air, now Air Canada. They told me I was too old."

Hutchinson was 26.

He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and arrived at CFB Trenton for what would be a 10-year tour of duty. Initially attached to 102 Search and Rescue Unit and working on North Stars, Hutchinson later moved to 426 Squadron and finally to 437 Squadron and CL-44 Yukons.

In 1964 the axe fell and Hutchinson was one of 500 RCAF aircrew forced into early retirement by then minister of defence Paul Hellyer.

To use an old cliché, the sky was the limit and Hutchinson, with his wife Audrey in tow, was soon flying around the world. Ports of call included England, the Philippines, Japan and Malaysia.

It was during a stint flying a light passenger craft that Hutchinson figures one of the most humorous incidents occurred.

"I had agreed to take a pregnant native woman on board for a 40-minute flight. She was two weeks overdue but I was soft-hearted. We took off, the only two people on the flight. Halfway through I turned around and she was delivering the baby herself. We had no autopilot at the time so I was helpless. I suppose the turbulence from flying over the mountains set labor off. From that day on whenever I landed at her village, she was waiting with a pineapple for me."

In 1976 the couple retired to the Spanish island of Majorca. Hutchinson used the home as his base while flying for Swiss and Libyan companies. When doctors discovered cancer in Audrey, the Hutchinsons packed their bags and came to Canada where they bought a home on the Bay of Quinte.

"I figure I've flown about 20 different aircraft in 42 years, starting with the Tiger Moth and spending the last 20 on the Yukons."

His wife died in April and at 61, Hutchinson was left with time on his hands. Although still medically fit to fly, he decided to start another career — in real estate. Completion of a real estate program at Loyalist College left him ready to seek a job in the field.

The search starts today.



Jock Hutchinson during his tour of duty at CFB Trenton during the '50s and early '60s.