

Air cadet squadron shares the day

BY CECILIA NASMITH
AND MANDY MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

COBOURG — It was a positively triumphant day for Cramahe Township resident Bill Baluk Saturday — and the Cobourg air cadets were an important part of it.

Fourteen young cadets and two staff from the 598 Sabre Squadron formed the colour party in the dedication of a memorial cairn for which Mr. Baluk has worked three years to raise the money.

The cairn commemorates the 431 Iroquois Squadron and the 434 Bluenose Squadron, Canada's Halifax and bomber squadrons based at Burn, Tholthorpe, Croft and Yorkshire, England.

"I personally think it was a very good honour for the kids

who were able to make it down," said squadron Lieutenant Jim Hulsman, who noted that many of his contingent are away at special training camps.

Mr. Baluk was eager to have the Cobourg youth participate because, when he was stationed with the Cobourg OPP detachment for six years during the 1950s and 1960s, he was an instructor with the squadron. He later rose to the position of commanding officer of the

squadron.

Their membership eventually rose from 98 to 125, at which point it broke off into Cobourg and Port Hope squadrons, Mr. Baluk related.

His association with the squadron ended when he was transferred to Timmins, but he was pleased with the performance they gave Saturday.

"They did a beautiful job and added a lot to the whole rededication," he said.

"I have heard a lot of favourable comments on how well they behaved and how smart they looked."

The cairn is now officially part of the RCAF Memorial Museum in Trenton, following a ceremony attended by former crew members, ground staff and family members of those who served in the two units.

Mr. Baluk himself was in the 431 with the Lancashires at Croft.

The units are still in action, he noted. The 431 is now the Snowbirds, and the 434 is the tactical-support twin-engine fighters in Nova Scotia.

But it was the past that was honoured last weekend in the well-attended ceremony. Mr. Baluk did not count heads, but he noted that he put out 126 chairs and there were still people standing.

Among those who came were:

- Peter Crees, former RCAF flight engineer with the 434, shot down in 1943.

- Hal Wilde of the 434, who holds a Distinguished Flying Cross.

- Allan B. Todd, author of *Pilgrimage of Grace* on the Croft aerodrome, who is currently writing a follow-up book.

- Moris Jowett of the 431, who holds a Distinguished Flying Medal.

- Former prisoner of war Jack Daugherty, who was also shot down in 1943.

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