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Hometown hero proud of his combat experience

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

Few Canadians have the chance to fight in a war. Even fewer want to fight in a war. However, Georgetown's Canadian Armed Forces pilot, Captain David Deere said he feels honored he was able to fight.

"Some fighter pilots never get the chance to do their jobs for real. I feel fortunate I was able to," said the fighter pilot over the phone from Cold Lake, Alberta where he teaches pilots how to fly fighters at Canada's largest fighter pilot base.

Capt. Deere has been stationed at Cold Lake for six years but came back to Georgetown this weekend to sign autographs of his book, *Desert Cats*, which features first-person accounts of Canada's role in the Persian Gulf war.

"I wanted to do a book because I knew this war would be a significant historical and emotional event," said Capt. Deere. "Initially, I thought to make a glorified yearbook for the guys down there but soon, I realized the Canadian public should get to know what happened and who better to explain than the fighters who were there."

Capt. Deere's own story began when he enrolled at Kingston's Royal Military College studying for a Bachelor of Commerce degree before earning his wings at Canada's airforce base in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

Graduating in October 1985, he was immediately selected to fly fighter aircraft at Cold Lake. For six months he learned how to fly Canada F5 Freedom fighters before training on Canada's latest fighter, the CF18 Hornet.

Capt. Deere is a member of 441 squadron, a squadron that wasn't selected to fly to the Gulf when Canada's squadron based in Germany needed to be replaced. But he and another pilot from his squadron were called to augment the two squadrons.

"I had just finished a fighters weapons course, Canada's 'top gun' course, before I was called. I think that's part of the reason I was selected to go over," he said.

By December, he was one of many Canadian pilots on combat air control, protecting Canadian and American ships in the Gulf. "Canada held the responsibility



Georgetown native and CF-18 fighter-pilot Capt. Dave Deere was at Oxbow Books on Main Street in Georgetown Saturday autographing the book, *Desert Cats* he edited on the Canadian Air Task Force, of which he was a member, which fought in the Persian Gulf War. Georgetown resident Kyle Hancock, 13, was one of several who received an autographed copy of the unique book. While fighting in the Persian Gulf, Capt. Deere flew 36 missions. Since returning to his base at Cold Lake Alberta, Capt Deere has been working as a fighter-pilot instructor. (Herald Photo)

to protect the ships," he said.

In the days before the war actually started, the Canadian pilots also set up attack scenarios with coalition fighters and attended ground school to review intelligence and learn about Iraqi aircraft and bomb capabilities, he said.

On Jan. 17, the war started and Capt. Deere was busy protecting ships.

On the third day of the war, he began the offensive sweep escort missions escorting American F16's and British Tornados on strike missions.

"Our job was to clear Iraqi and Kuwaiti airspace of enemy fighters so the American and British jets could bomb," explained Capt. Deere.

He flew 36 combat missions and three bombing missions.

"It was exciting and scary," he admits. "The fear mostly occurred the night before a mission. Once I was in the cockpit, the fear was redirected to concentration on the work at hand and I just concentrated on trying to do the best job I could."

"You can't sit there and be scared and say oh, I'm going to die. You have to redirect that fear to aggressiveness and say its him or me."

Capt. Deere said having his older brother, 33-year-old Christopher Deere, there gave him motivation.

Christopher was on a British mine-sweeper as part of an exchange between Britain and Canada clearing the mines from the water for the larger ships to pass and Capt. Deere said he felt motivated to protect the ships because he knew he was also protecting his brother.

But for the boys parents, Audrey and Wyndham Deere, having two sons in the war and their third son in the airforce reserves wasn't easy.

"It was a very stressful time for us," admitted Mrs. Deere. "It really brought the war into our own home."

She said Capt. Deere had been able contact them several times over the phone and this made her realize the value of the human voice.

Capt. Deere spent three-and-a-half months in the Gulf, flying home one week after the war ended.

Though no Canadians were killed in the battle, he said the Canadians did make friends with the

Americans and found it "hard to take" when new acquaintances failed to return from their bombing missions.

He recalls one incident that particularly frightened him.

"On our first night of attack, as we were planning to head out, the air attack siren went off," he recalled. "The ground crew had run to shelter and I was just about to do that when my second in command started up the fighter aircraft. I couldn't leave him there so we took off with no light into the darkness, just concentrating on getting airborne. It was very intense and I was apprehensive. I wondered if a skud missile was going to hit us. That's when I realized, this is war."

He said flying over the Gulf, witnessing the explosions light up the night over the cities as bombs devastated Iraq was a memorable sight.

After leaving the Gulf, the first thing Capt. Deere did was give up his holidays to put together the book, *Desert Cats*.

He said support for the book and the role Canada played in the war had been great.

"The support from the Canadian public has been outstanding. I don't have any problems with the people who were demonstrating with an anti-war message because we gave them that chance to do that back home. We fought for their freedom."

Now, he's back to work as a fighter instructor. He plans to stay at Cold Lake a couple more years before trying out for the Snowbirds, Canada's aerobatic team.

Hydro Commissioner takes gloves off

By Ben Dummett
the Herald

A provincial government plan to amend the Power Corporation Act will mean higher yearly hydro-rate increases than would otherwise be expected, according to Gerry Trudell, Halton Hills Hydro Commission General Manager.

However, the commission has no intention of permitting the province to take such action, without a fight.

The proposed amendment, if passed, would give Ontario's New Democratic Party government the unlimited right to change Ontario Hydro's mandate, said Mr. Trudell. Ontario Hydro's current mandate limits the crown corporation to selling power at cost.

The local commission predicts if Ontario Hydro's mandate is expanded, it will be permitted to carry out a greater number of financial bail outs, similar to the one recently in Elliot Lake.

Ontario Hydro paid \$250 million to Elliot Lake as compensation for awarding a uranium contract to a Saskatchewan company.

The commission doesn't object to these kinds of payments, said Mr. Trudell, as long as they are not paid for through increased local hydro rates.

Mr. Trudell said letters expressing opposition to the proposed amendment have been sent by Halton's four hydro commissions to Ontario's Energy Minister, Premier Bob Rae and North-Halton MPP Noel Duignan.

Contacted Friday, Mr. Duignan said there is no way the proposed amendment will result in higher hydro rates than would have otherwise been the case.

Mr. Duignan disagreed the Elliot Lake bail out has anything to do with Ontario Hydro's estimation that 1992 hydro rates will increase 11.8 per cent over this year's rates.

He attributes the increase to fiscal mismanagement by the crown corporation.

The 1992 projected hydro rate increase is necessary to ensure Ontario Hydro reduces its debt load, said Mr. Duignan.

"People have got to realize Ontario Hydro's debt load is unacceptable," he said.

Sign up for "Music Signatures in Time"

Join the St. John's United Church congregation, in celebrating the completion of Phase 1 of their Renovation and Restoration project at a Celebration Concert entitled "Music Signatures in Time". The concert will feature sacred and secular works by famous composers who have left their signature of style through the musical ages. The program includes famous pieces by Handel, Schubert and Brahms as well as Andrew Lloyd Weber, and the eras will range from madrigal to English folk music.

The performers are a quartet of vocal artists from Toronto, one of whom is Carolyn Kwan, formerly Carolyn Bird, of the St. John's congregation, who will be singing alto. The featured artists are Carolyn Sinclair, accomplished soprano recitalist and oratorio specialist who has appeared with The Tudor Singers of Montreal, The Canadian Centennial Choir in Ottawa and locally, the Milton Choristers; Ming Kwan, tenor, formerly of the baroque Tafelmusik choir of Toronto; and baritone, Gordon Burnett, music

director of the Jubilate Singers of North York and the Repertory Chorus at the Royal Conservatory of Music. The group will be accompanied by Robert Miller, assistant organist of the Metropolitan United Church,

Toronto.

The concert will be presented Saturday, October 19, 1991 in the St. John's Sanctuary, 11 Guelph St., Georgetown at 8 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$8 for Seniors and Students. Tickets are

available at Haydn's Music Shoppe or by calling the church office, Tuesday to Friday mornings, 877-2531. St. John's is accessible to the handicapped. All proceeds will go to the Renovation and Restoration Fund.



Feature performers at St. John's United Church celebration concert, "Music Signatures in Time" include, (left to right); Gordon Burnett (baritone), Carolyn Sinclair (soprano), Robert Miller (piano), Carolyn Kwan (alto) and Ming Kwan (tenor). (Photo submitted)