

# Navy vet's calendar supports aviation industry



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Norman Etheridge proudly shows one of his 2006 aviation calendars.

By GILLIAN CORMIER  
Special to The Champion

Milton's Norm Etheridge is paying out of his own pocket to ensure Canada's world war aviators are remembered 365 days a year.

Mr. Etheridge, a 79-year-old veteran who served in the Royal Canadian Navy from 1943 to 1957, invested six months of his time and \$15,277 of his money to produce a calendar honouring the Canadians who served in the Canadian Air Force (CAF) and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF).

The purpose of the project was to donate the 2,500 calendars to various organizations that could then sell them for \$20 each as a fundraiser. So far, nine museums across Canada and the Georgetown Cancer Assistance Society (CAS) are selling the calendars to raise money for their endeavours.

"It started this year with my friends in Nanton, Alberta," said Mr. Etheridge.

The Nanton Lancaster Society is building a memorial wall to remember the Canadians of Bomber Command who were lost.

"When I saw this, I said 'what can I do?'"

He then became the project engineer, but it didn't stop there.

"I then wanted to help museums all across the country," he said.

In October he began work on the calendar and used his aviation resources, along with his own extensive knowledge on the subject, to compile the information for the 14-page tribute to CAF/RCAF.

The calendar is made up of three parts. Each month has a picture of a Canadian-flown First World War or Second World War aircraft as well as daily anecdotes giving an account of what happened in Canadian aviation that day, and a description of a Canadian aviation hero.

Mr. Etheridge has worked on five other calendars, but this is the first he produced on his own and the first where all the money was given away.

"If I wanted a calendar on cats, it would cost \$20," he said. "It would have 12 pictures of cats, and that's it. You get so much more in this calendar — it's historical."

Mr. Etheridge wrote to 20 museums across Canada and offered them free copies of the calendar to sell, and nine enthusiastically agreed.

The museums don't get much national money, he explained, so they rely on visitors to generate the money they need to maintain historic airplanes. "The museum in Windsor was quite pleased," he said. "I gave them 300 and they sold them all in one weekend."

That's \$6,000 the museum wouldn't have had without Mr. Etheridge's help.

He also decided to give 500

copies to the CAS, a volunteer group that assisted his wife in getting to Hamilton for treatment.

"They're such a wonderful group," he said.

This year marks the 'Year of the Veteran' and the 60th anniversary of VE Day, and Mr. Etheridge hopes veterans and their families will be able to read about events or friends from wartime days. Particularly, he hopes his investment will help those young and old remember what Canada owes to veterans.

If all the copies of his calendar are sold, Mr. Etheridge could potentially raise \$50,000 for the museums and the CAS.

But for his part, Mr. Etheridge said that the project had nothing to do with money.

"The only reason I did it was for the satisfaction," he said.

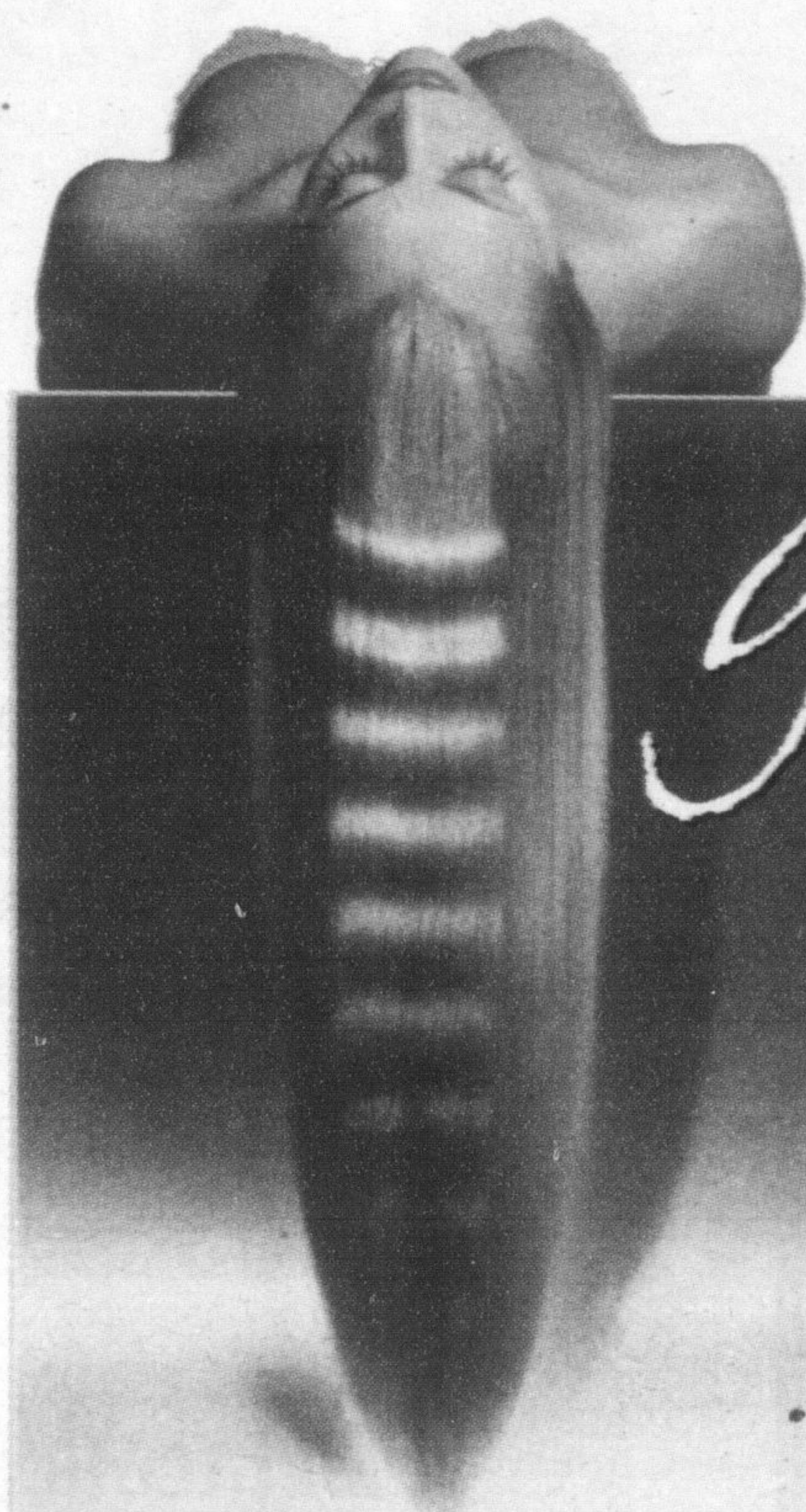
He said he wanted to give something back to the aviation industry that has served him well and provided him with a lifetime of pleasure.

"That will be payment enough," he said.

The calendars are now available at the Georgetown Cancer Assistance Society, the Toronto Aerospace Museum in Downsview and the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton, as well as many other museums across the country.

Those wishing to purchase a calendar may also contact Mr. Etheridge at (905) 876-1584.

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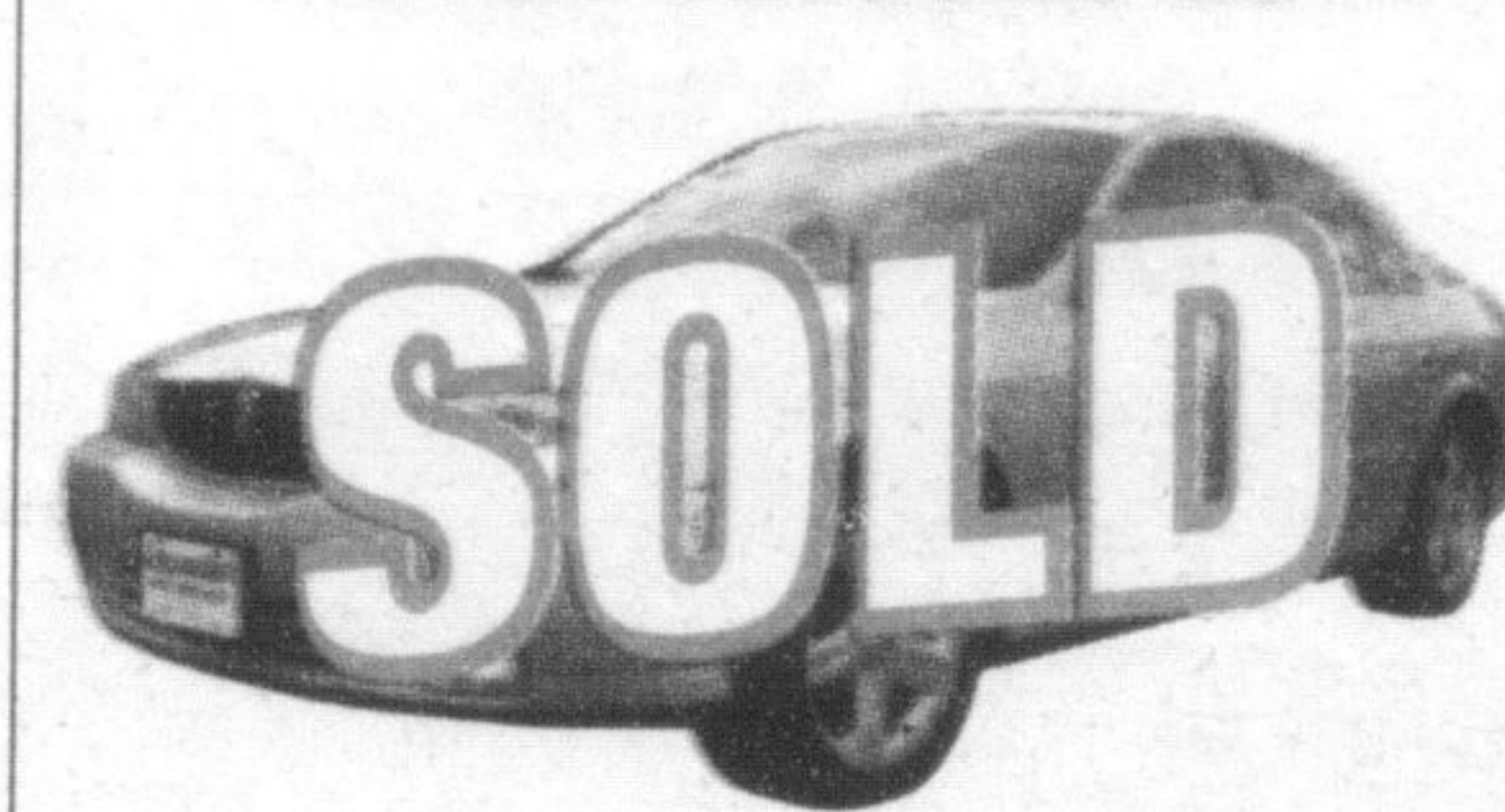
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