

# ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

~ Contribution in the Korean War ~



- Canadian airmen flew more than 2,200 combat missions and more than 1,500 round-trip airlift flights during the Korean War.
- 1,000 Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and other Canadian aviators, contributed to the action.
- About 800 RCAF personnel were from 426 (Transport) Squadron.
- 426 Squadron made 599 round-trip flights between McChord Air Force Base (AFB), near Tacoma, Washington, and Haneda airfield in Tokyo while working with the USAF's Material Air Transport Service.
- 22 Fighter pilots flew exclusively with the USAF's 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing ( March 1952 until November 1953 ).
- The RCAF accounted for nearly 900 combat missions with nine MiG "kills", two "probables", and 10 "damaged".
- RCAF nurses were involved in about 250 medical evacuation flights in the Pacific and many more throughout Canada.
- Hundreds of de Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beavers in service with the US Army (known there as the L-20).
- 60 Canadair F-86 Mk II Sabre aircraft supplied to the USAF.



- **“Operation Hawk”, (July 25 1950 to May 25 1954) to the Canadian military portion of the Korean War airlift.**
- **The 426 Transport Squadron flew 12 Canadair C-54GM North Stars on 599 round trips (34,000 Flight hours) over the north Pacific, transporting 13,000 personnel and three million kilograms of freight and mail to Japan. There, cargo was offloaded for onward transit to Korea.**
- **RCAF Squadron Leader Andy MacKenzie was the only Canadian airman who became a Prisoner of War (POW) during the Korean War.**
- **The last official Canadian casualty of the Korean War, Major Edward Gower, was on his return flight from Korea to Calgary in December 1956 when his TCA North Star hit Mount Slesse (near Hope, British Columbia). The wreckage was found in May 1957 and the remains of all 62 crew and passengers rest on the mountain to this day.**
- **Canadians received 57 Commonwealth and US awards, medals, and commendations.**
- **RCAF pilots received eight U.S. Distinguished Flying Crosses and 10 U.S. Air Medals. Flight Lieutenant Ernest Glover was the last and only RCAF pilot to be awarded the Commonwealth Distinguished Service Cross since the Second World War.**



- **Flight Lieutenant Omer Lévesque, (who was already serving on exchange with the Americans when the war broke out) volunteered to fly F-86 Sabres with the United States Air Force. On December 17, Flight Lieutenant Lévesque took flight with the squadron's first operational sortie, taking on Soviet MiG-15s. He thus became the first Canadian and the first Commonwealth pilot to engage in jet-to-jet combat. He was also the first RCAF member to score a victory during the Korean War. Lévesque earned the U.S. Air Medal by flying 20 missions from December 17 to 20. On March 30, 1951, while flying as part of an escort of B-29 bombers, he earned the American Distinguished Flying Cross for his dogfight with several MiGs. The aircraft he shot down during that fight earned him the title "ace".**
- **Captain Patrick (served during WWII and Communication Expert) flew on six B-29 bombing missions and acted as the radar officer to analyze enemy radar and the available counter-measures equipment.**
- **High scoring pilots included Flight Lieutenant (F/L) Ernie Glover with three kills and three damaged, and Squadron Leader (S/L) Doug Lindsay with two kills and three damaged.**
- **RCAF flight nurses were trained at Gunter Air Force Base in Alabama and then participated in three month tours of duty carrying out medical evacuations (medevacs) from the South Pacific. 40 Canadian flight nurses were involved in nearly 250 medical evacuation flights from 1950 to 1955, bringing the wounded and injured from Tokyo through Honolulu and back to North America.**



**Claude LaFrance enrolled in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1947 and, after receiving his wings in 1948 at Centralia, Ontario, flew the DH-100 Vampire - Canada's first jet fighter. When the Korean War broke out, he was instructing on that aircraft at the fighter school in Chatham, New Brunswick.**

**The Americans were flying F-86 Sabres in Korea and the school switched to the Sabre in early 1952. So the young instructor was seconded to the U.S. Air Force to gain combat experience.**

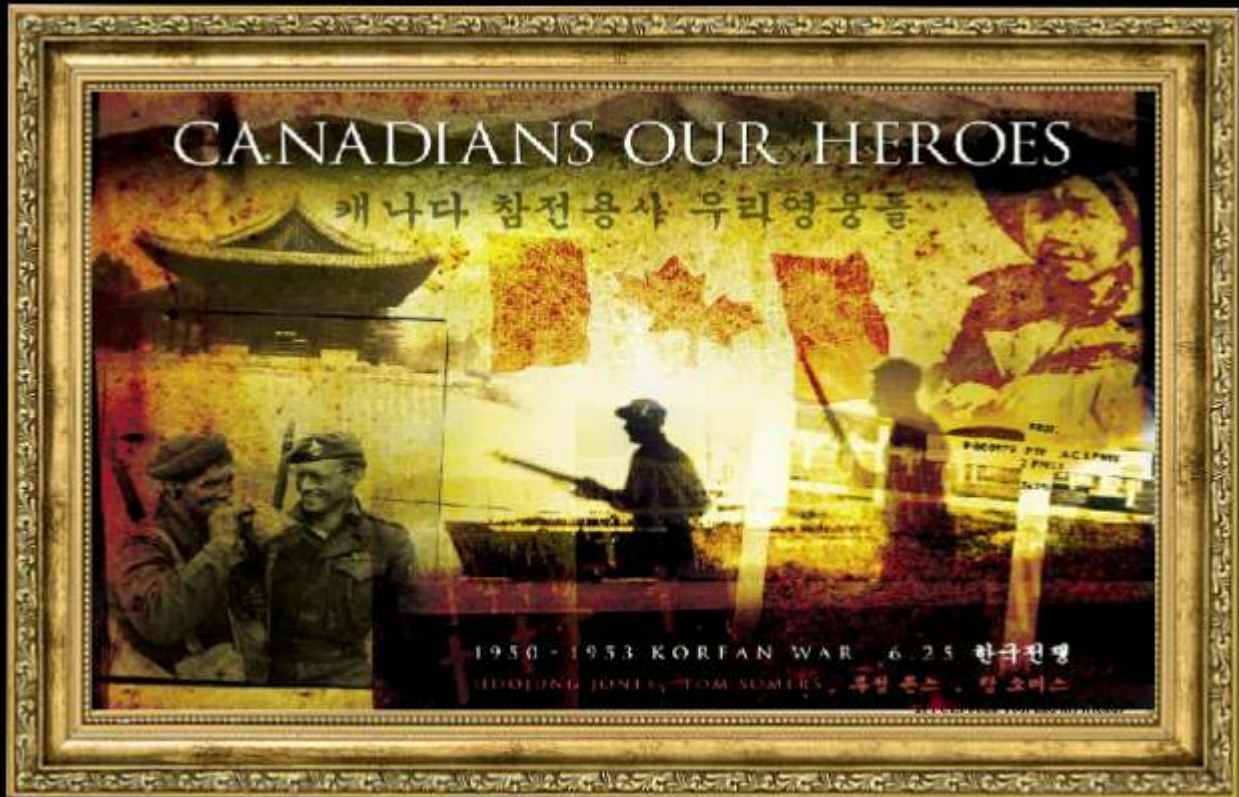
**"At that time, the Sabre was the only aircraft that had a chance against the Russian MiGs," LaFrance said.**

**May 1952, F/L Claude LaFrance was in Korea, flying as a wingman with 39 Fighter Interceptor Squadron in a Canadian-built Sabre. By the time he returned to Canada in October 1952, he had flown 50 missions, been promoted from flying officer to flight lieutenant, commanded a patrol of four aircraft and later a flight of 16 aircraft, and had shot down a MiG-15 (the pilot bailed out).**

**The Americans awarded him the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal for that success and for his leadership during his tour.**

**He served for 34 years with RCAF and retired as a Major-General.**

**Sources and photos credited to: RCAF and Veterans Affairs Canada**



Lt. Col. Douglas Warren(Right) with his twin brother Bruce



Flight Lieutenant Omer Lévesque

Photo credit: RCAF Archives



**Flight Lieutenant Omer Lévesque**

**Photo credit: RCAF Archives**



Andy Mckenzie, POW

Photo credit: RCAF Archives





RCAF North Star

Photo credit: RCAF Archives



RCAF Air nurses

Photo credit: RCAF Archives



**Eva Freeman served with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) during the Korean War. She is a member of the Korea War Veterans of Canada Unit 26, Hamilton.**

**Her husband, Bill Freeman was the founder of the KVA Unit 26, Hamilton and he served with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry during the Korean War.**

Photo credit : Korea War Veterans of Canada Unit 26



# The Republic of Korea Presidential Citation

Award to

**HooJung Jones Kennedy**



**She has been a dedicated volunteer to honour, remember, educate and preserve the legacy of Korean War Veterans for the past 20 years. As a Project Director of the Korea Veterans Association of Canada Unit 26 Hamilton, she co-authored and published a military history book called “Canadians Our Heroes 1950 - 1953 Korean War” with Tom Somers, a WWII and a Korean War Veteran in 2005. It was written in English and Korean and over 1,000 books were donated to Korean War Veterans, schools and libraries to educate people about the Korean War. She has organized various commemorative events, Korean War Veterans Appreciation Luncheons for 21 years and advocated for the Korean War Veterans’ rights and benefits (VIP -Veterans Independent Program) working with many Veterans, communities, all levels of governments and Veterans Affairs Canada. As Fundraising and Project Director (Government Grants and Sponsorship), she help to raise the funds to erect the Korean War memorials and monuments in Ancaster, Hamilton, Burlington, Brampton and Niagara Falls working with other dedicated committee members.**

**She and her husband Major(Ret’d) Don Kennedy presented over 220 “Ambassador for Peace” medals from the Korean Government to Korean War Veterans and family members in Canada and the U.S. travelling on their own expenses. They are also members of the U.S. Korean War Veterans Association Chapter 159 Sunshine State and the Royal Canadian Legion Post 144 Pinellas County, Florida. They have collaborated with various American Legion Posts, Veterans of Foreign War Posts and all levels of U.S. governments to honour Korean War Veterans. HooJung Jones Kennedy served as a Presidential Advisor to the Republic of Korea President for the National Unification Advisory Council (Toronto Chapter) between 2010 to 2017. Since 2018, she served as a Presiding Official at Canadian Citizenship ceremonies in Hamilton and areas, welcoming over 500 new Canadians.**

# “Operation Hawk”

To fly high and far over the land  
that they've never been to  
To fight fiercely and win for the people  
who they've never known

426 Squadron transported troops and cargo  
with RCAF North Star planes

The brave 22 RCAF Airmen who fought beside the USAF  
with F-86 Sabre Fighter jets

40 RCAF Air nurses cared for the many wounded  
by their side as they returned home

“Operation Hawk” was the code name  
of the Korean War Airlift.

Raising from the ashes and ruins of War  
a free Korea is reaching for the stars  
Saluting unsung heroes who came  
from thousands of miles away.



~ By HooJung Jones Kennedy ~



## **NOT IN VAIN**

**The crosses lined on silent field  
Speak mutely of war's deadly yield.**

**The guns are quiet**

**The battlefield still**

**The dead lie in peace until**

**We break faith and start anew.**

**Multitudes of dead would rise**

**With tears and fire in their eyes**

**And thunder:**

**"Listen to our cries!**

**Remain strong in defence.**

**Become not weak,**

**Remember Munich's past folly!**

**Heed the truth we speak.**

**Did we die in vain**

**Would you put our death to shame**

**Remembering how we died to save**

**Mankind from following us**

**To a lonely grave?"**

**By Major (Ret'd) Don Kennedy**



