



Don Munroe

*Story of a Royal Canadian
Air Force Veteran*

*of
World War II*





Lest We Forget

Don Munroe

Don didn't think his Air Force stories would be all that exciting to members of St. Paul's Church. His time spent in the Royal Canadian Air Force was a very exciting time for a young man who had not been away from his home in London, Ontario until that time.

Right after joining the RCAF in 1942, he was sent to the old Normal School in Toronto to take his initial training. In the winter of 1942, he was sent to Goderich, Ontario, to learn to fly.

When Don had only 11 or 12 flying hours, he was sent on his first solo flight to the Kitchener-Waterloo Airport. On the way there, he flew through sunlight and repeated snow squalls. On the return flight, the snow squall changed to a complete blizzard and he had to let down to around 100 feet so he could see the ground. He kept flying by compass course until he reached Georgian Bay where he recognized the countryside just north of the airport. He turned south and flew for five minutes until he saw the rotating beacon at the Goderich Airport and landed safely on the snowy runway. This certainly tested all Don's flying skills.

After graduating from Goderich, he was transferred to Aylmer, Ontario to learn to fly more complex aircraft like the Yale and Harvard. Don graduated as a pilot with the rank of Sergeant in the spring of '42.

At his graduation, he was presented with his wings by Billy Bishop, V.C., the World War 1 flying ace. What an honour!





After receiving his wings, he was sent to instructor's school at Arnprior, Ontario. He completed his course and was assigned Flying Instructor at the Oshawa Airport. His contribution to the World War II war effort was mainly as flying instructor in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan at #2 EFTS at the Oshawa Airport. He trained many young men to fly.

He received his commission and was sent overseas and flew fighters for a year. While he was there, his wife, Isabelle, worked in the GM Aircraft plant where they built the famous Dehavilland Mosquito. This was the fastest plane in the aircraft arsenal at that time.

One special story Don likes to share is about the night he was the Duty Officer in the control tower. He was sitting there with all the lights on in the tower when a JU 188 long range fighter came across the airfield shooting 20 mm cannon as he came. Don was sure he was shooting at him because the tracers looked as though they were coming right at him. Actually, the plane was shooting at the railway station at Banbury just down the road. Don waited expecting the plane to come back and shoot him but it didn't come. Don speculated the pilot was thinking about the long trip back to Germany.

When the war was over in Europe, Don was to train to fly off an aircraft carrier and then be assigned to the Asian Theatre to fight the Japanese. When he reached Montreal on the way home, the VJ (Victory over Japan) celebrations were on and the war was at an end.

Don, thank you for the very interesting stories and thank you for fighting for us so we can be here to worship at St. Paul's.