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THE OFFICIAL
JOURNAL OF
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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September 2017

Lady Fanny Lucy Houston

British philanthropist whose money build the S.6B, the direct predecessor of the Supermarine Spitfire and Hawker Hurricane.

Described as “English benefactor, philanthropist, adventuress and patriot”.

Described as “paranoid with religious delusions and declared mentally unfit to manage her own affairs , Her political opinions were extreme (she supported Mussolini)”.

The high speed S.6B had a supercharger that got up to 2,500 hp. Its “R” engine , later modified into the Merlin, was designed to bring home the Schneider Cup trophy to Britain in 1931. (The coveted cup, initiated in 1913 by Jacques Schneider, French armament king , carried great prestige.)

Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald’s socialist government refused funding for the race. The news that the government would not provide money had cut the legs out from under a dedicated team of RAF flyers who had won the previous two races in 1927 and 1929. It had to be won a third time to be retired to Britain for good. The decision was a blow to aircraft development in Britain. **A £100,000 donation by Lady Houston changed all that.**

Lady Houston’s third and final marriage, in 1924, was to Sir Robert Houston, 1st Baronet, member of parliament for West Toxteth, and a shipping magnate. Robert Houston is described as “a hard, ruthless, unpleasant bachelor”. They lived as tax exiles on the island of Jersey on their yacht. Sir Robert then suffered a series of mental disorders and Lucy was said to have employed a food-taster to ensure that he was not being poisoned. Even so Sir Robert mysteriously died on his yacht Liberty on 14 April 1926, leaving his widow roughly £5.5 million. She then left Jersey and returned to England.. There she then negotiated with the British Government the payment of death duties. “I didn’t have to pay death duties,” she said “but I did—£1.5 million. Winston Churchill was chancellor of the exchequer then and I had a soft spot in my heart for Winston” Churchill had only good things to say about her and often visited her London house.

Lady Houston’s donation had a two fold outcome. The gift gave Lucy Houston an opportunity to attack the Labour government, with the declaration: “Every true Briton would rather sell his last shirt than admit that England could not afford to defend herself.” The Prime Minister could not ignore the patriotic fervour that she generated and so yielded.

The second outcome was with the Supermarine Aviation Works in Southampton. There were only nine month to prepare and so Supermarine’s designer Reginald Mitchell could only update the existing airframes. Rolls-Royce increased the power of the R -Type engine by 400 hp. To 2,500 hp. The improved aircraft Supermarine S.6B won the trophy. R. J. Mitchell knew now from experience gained with seaplanes that a high speed fighter was an ultimate goal.

Lady Houston’s gift provided a valuable impetus to the development of engine technology that would ultimately vital in the Second World War in particular the Battle of Britain. The lessons learned in building racing seaplanes also helped Reginald Mitchell to develop the Supermarine Spitfire. As Arthur Sidgreaves, the managing director of Rolls Royce, commented at the time: “It is not too much to say that research for the Schneider Trophy contest over the past two years is what our aero-engine department would otherwise have taken six to 10 years to learn.”



S.6B



The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,
September
19th,
2017**

7:00 pm

At the
Petty Officers’
Mess
HCMS Tecumseh

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CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The
CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is a non-profit registered society
which fosters the study of the
military and the police, and the heritage of
Canada, the British Empire, and the world
as well as the preservation of military
artifacts and records.

The CMHS meets once every calendar month
at: Petty Officers' Mess
HMCS Tecumseh
1820 - 24th Street SW
Calgary AB T2T 0G6

Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on
Tuesday, September 19th, 2017
19:00 (7:00 pm)

At the Petty Officers' Mess, HMCS Tecumseh.
Members are reminded that an offering of foodstuffs for the Legion Food Bank is considered your unofficial entrance fee to our regular scheduled meetings.

The unofficial agenda of this meeting will be:
Introduction of guests, Minutes of last meeting Correspondence, Membership report Treasurer's report, Old business / New business Break, Show & Tell
The President, **Allan Ross** would like to invite everyone to remain after the meeting for an informal time of fellowship.

Racing Fever Gripped by Schneider Cup fever more than a million people descended on the south coast. Rain and high winds cancelled Saturday's contest. Sunday, Sept 13th they watched in glorious sunshine, Lady Houston and guest waited on the afterdeck of her yacht Liberty. Radio listeners in Britain and Europe heard running commentaries. Transmissions by short wave and Marconi beam reached Canada and the United States.

The Race.

The two contestants, both Supermarine S.6Bs, prepared to take off from Le-on-Solent to begin the 217.48-mile course before an audience of nearly a million, crowding the coast of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. As his blue and silver S.6B, S1595, was pushed off its barge near Calshot Castle, Flight Lt. John N. Boothman speculated on whether he would complete the triangular 33-mile laps seven times as planned. Even with five long fluted radiators down each side of its fuselage, he feared that his plane would be unlikely to last more than 90 minutes before the engine, which had hitherto never run longer than 27 minutes, started to melt on its mountings.

Taking off at 1:02 p.m., Boothman ran the first lap in 5 1/2 minutes, averaging 343.1 mph and reaching nearly 380 mph in the straightaways. From then on, however, his average speed gradually went down, until his seventh lap average was 337.7 mph. By that time, uneven fuel consumption had altered the trim, causing his plane to list to the left, but that was not enough to stop him from streaking over the finish line and then making a triumphant circling turn over Calshot Castle to the sound of a cheering crowd and ships' bells and whistles.

The Schneider Trophy race had ended with a bang rather than a whimper after all — in only 47 minutes, Boothman had averaged 340.08 mph, establishing the Supermarine as the fastest airplane in the world. He had won the Schneider Cup for Britain for all time. Boothman would have felt exhilarated but for leg cramps and had to be pried out of the cockpit.

In the wild scenes that followed, and unheard of thing happened. A happy group of RAF officers escorted Lady Houston in honor to the Royal Yacht clubhouse. Women had always been barred, even the Queen. Lady Houston was taken in to celebrate and no one said anything.

In 1932 Lady Houston offered to give £200,000 to strengthen the British army and navy. The National Government refused. In 1933 she financed the Houston-Mount Everest Flight Expedition, in which aircraft flew over the summit of Everest for the first time. Lady Houston was a supporter of Sir Oswald Moseley and of the embryo fascist party established in Jersey in the 1930s. She also achieved notoriety for sunbathing naked in the garden of her Jersey home. She was so upset by the abdication crisis in 1936 that she stopped eating and died of a heart attack on 29 December 1936, at the age of 79.



Painting of the Supermarine S.6B with Flight Lt. John N. Boothman



The Lady and Supermarine's Aviation's winning team

Minutes of the meeting of the Calgary Military Historical Society

Meeting held on Aug 15, 2017 at the Petty Officer's Mess, HMCS Tecumseh

1. Meeting called to order By President Allan R. at 7:05 PM. 20 members in attendance.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting.

No omissions or corrections. Member Mike C. moves that the Previous Meeting Minutes be accepted. Seconded by Barry E. Approved.

3. Newsletter. No issues or concerns.

4. Treasures Report.

Report by Floyd S. for both June and July. Lists of monies collected from book auctions, donations etc. Listing of expenditures. Floyd reports with last month expenses a slight decrease. Member David L. moves that the Treasures report be accepted as reported.

Seconded by Bob M. Approved.

5. Membership Report.

Report by Floyd S. for both June and July. Total 45 members (1 Life, 2 Hon, 42 Regular).

Member Mike C. moves that the Membership report be accepted as reported. Seconded by Member Susan E. Approved.

6. Correspondence: None

7. Announcements:

- Calgary Military Show - October 7, 2017 event at Hillhurst Sunnyside. For table rentals & show information Contact Martin.
- AACCA Thorncliff Gun Show - Sept. 14, 2017.
- Military Museum - Hill 70 presentation by Dr. John Scott-Kohn - Sept. 14, 2017.

8. Old Business.

- Thanks to Brian Hanning for donating a box of books.
- Thanks to Frank for the round of drinks to the members present.

9. New Business: None

BREAK

10. Ticket book auction:

- Conducted by David G.
- Book Auction - "The Candy Bombers - The Untold Story of the Berlin Aircraft and America's Finest Hour" donated by Darrell K.

11. Show and Tell:

Alan R. - Stettler Independent's Remembrance Day article and list of WWI & WWII veterans

Floyd S. - Hand held black light, discusses use with insignia.

David G. - 20+ year old grave stone rubbing, researching individual; 66th Battalion insignia.

Barry E. - WWI CASC Divisional collar badges.

Majorie N. - Questions & discusses repair & preservation of her husband's WWI certificates.

Alan Mac. - Discusses repo medals, problems with recent Victorian period repos ie. originals stamped with swivel fastener as repos cast with fixed fastener.

Dave S. - Discusses facebook group page item, questioning requests.

Mike C. - Set of medals South Africa & WWI service to Patrick Kane; Commemorative shield 1921 Pacific National Exhibition for Best Draft Horse.

Bob M. - Two Serbian Orders of St. Saban, 5th & 4th Class; Six Luxemburg medals 1940-45 including their "Cross de Guerre"

Darryl K. - Centurion Tank 20lb shell casing; WWII Bombardier 1/2 wing.

Garry M. Discusses British Naval GS Medal.

John E. - Discusses MCC of C Journal 409 Squadron article and uncle's service as pilot & insignia.

Stewart E. - Question/discussion about WWI soldiers exhumed in Europe repatriated to Canada.

12. Adjournment:

President Allan R. calls for motion to adjourn. Member Barry E. moves to adjourn. Seconded by Mike C. Approved.

Editor's Note. Spotted this item that is up for auction in the next few days.
At the :**Rock Island Premiere Firearms Auction**



Scarce U.S. Colt Model 1890 Gatling Gun with Tri-Pod

Estimated Price: \$80,000 - \$110,000

**Serial: # 497, Manufacture: Colt . Model 1874 Gatling Gun. Gauge: 45-70,
Barrell: 31 inch Part Octagon**

Description; This is an excellent example of a rare Colt Model 1890 Gatling Gun mounted on a tri-pod. The Model 1889 was essentially an improved version of the Model 1883. In 1889 Gatling returned to the well proved classic design of the exposed barrels as used in the Indian War campaign. Some of the improvements included a device called the "Murphy Stop", (a cocking switch) a new type carriage and the feed port was interchangeable with the special Bruce feed or use of the old style gravity feed magazine. Similar to the Model 1883, the Murphy stop allowed the gunner to disengage the cocking mechanism while unloading the gun and during training exercises without ammunition. The control knob was in a more convenient location on the cascabel plate and operation was more positive since the knob had to be pulled out as well as turned. This model features ten 31 inch 45-70 barrels, (5 inches of the muzzle end are octagon), has an overall length of 49 inches and weighs approximately 200 pounds without the tri-pod and has a rate of fire of 525 rounds per minute. Essentially all models manufactured from 1889 to 1892 were identical. The breech end of each barrel is numbered 1 thru 10, proofed "V/P/eagle head" and "R.A.C." (Rinaldo A. Carr) inspected. The breech end of the breech housing is marked with the corresponding barrel number. The sights are mounted on the right side of the frame. The rear of the magazine feed port is marked "PATENTED/FEB. 11, 1890/R.A.C.". The top of the receiver is engraved "Gatling Gun/Patented/Manfd at/COLT'S ARMORY/Hartford, Conn. U.S.A./MODEL 1890./No 497 CAL. 45/SEB"(Capt. Stanhope E. Blunt). The gun is mounted on a reproduction tri-pod. The U.S. Army purchased 18 Model 1890 Gatling Guns (serial number 492-509), with this gun being one of those, 17 Model 1891s and 18 Model 1892s. These were the last 45-70 Gatling Guns ordered by the U.S. Government. The Gatling Gun had a huge impact on the battlefield and changed the face of wars forever.

Condition; Fair. The metal surfaces have a gray patina with some scattered minor pitting. The brass components have a very pleasant aged patina. The markings have been re-engraved, and are now clearly legible. Mechanically fine. The magazine is incorrect for this gun and does not fit. The tri-pod is very good with some moderate pitting under the black finish on the metal portion. A nice, rare U.S. Government Model 1890 Gatling Gun, one of only 18 purchased by the U.S. Government and one of the last 45-70 caliber Gatling Guns purchased by the U.S.