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A Brave Albertan F/O Gordon Johnson Cory

Gordon “Gord” Johnson Cory was born in 1922 in Brooks, Alberta to Wilbur and Gladdis Cory. Gord’s brother Allan was born in 1927, and unfortunately his mother Gladdis passed away in march of 1933. Their father would remarry in 1937 to Catherine McRae. Gord worked with his father at their family drug store in Brooks before they moved to Vancouver in 1940.

Gord’s Father Wilbur was a veteran of the First World War, who served with the 50th Battalion (Calgary), before transferring to the RAF as a marine fleet Observer.

Like his father, when the Second World War broke out Gord quickly enlisted in May, 1941 with the RCAF. He graduated from No. 4 Initial Training School in Edmonton on July 12, 1941. He then went on to no. 10 Air Observer School where he made many friends including George



Sweanor who would go

on to be a part of the Great Escape and later write a book titled “*It’s All Pensionable Time*” where he mentions Gord (See excerpts below). Gord later graduated as an aerial Navigator Observer from the Astral Navigational School in Pennfield Ridge, Quebec in 1942.

Receiving a commission as an officer, F/O Cory would proceed overseas to eventually be assigned to 424 Tiger Squadron where he flew in Wellington Bombers as a Navigator. He was involved in a crash landing on February 6th of 1943 during his service with the squadron.

His luck ran out on March 12th 1943, when his aircraft was shot down by German air ace Melfred Meurer while on a raid to Essen, Germany. He along with four other members of his crew died in the crash. He is buried in Uden War Cemetery in Holland.

His tombstone is engraved:

“He Gave His Life So Those Less Worthy Might Live”



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CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The 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

Acknowledgements and Thanks

The March supplement was provided by President Dave Love.

The 1st April Extra was written by Rory from the [Boer War Forum](#). We thank him for allowing us to publish his work.

It was forwarded to us by long time member Mike Clare

This story and article was researched, written and provided to us by Member Garrett Lapp

Missions

On February 6th 1943, Wellington Z1692 "QK-L" took off from Topcliffe airfield at 17:22 Piloted by P/O Caldwell on a mine laying mission. His crew included five others, F/O Cory - Navigator, F/Sgt Topping - Bomb Aimer, WO2 Larson - Wireless Operator, F/Sgt Parker - Air Gunner, and extra airman Sgt Ferguson - Air Gunner. There was a thick cloud over the dropping point however the mines were still released successfully. On their approach to land, the generator failed, and at 22:02 they crash landed, sustaining damage to both propellers and the nose of the aircraft.

During the Battle of the Ruhr, on the night of 12/13th of March, 1943 A total of 457 aircraft took off on a bombing raid targeting the Krupps' factory in Essen. These aircraft included 158 Wellingtons, 156 Lancasters, 91 Halifaxes, 42 Stirlings, and 10 Mosquitos. One of the bombers that took off that day was Wellington BK348 "QK-J" of 424 Tiger Squadron, piloted by P/O Caldwell. The crew that day included four others, F/O Cory - Navigator, F/Sgt Topping - Bomb Aimer, WO2 Larson - Wireless Operator, and F/Sgt Parker - Air Gunner. Their Wellington bomber took off from the RAF base at Topcliffe at 19:36. While over Holland their aircraft was attacked by a German night fighter (Bf 110) piloted by German air ace Manfred Meurer. Shortly after at 22:25, Meurer would secure the Wellington bomber as his fourth kill of the day when it crashed into the ground near Echteld, killing all five Canadians on board. In all, 23 allied aircraft would not return from the raid, with P/O Caldwell's crew being the only one from 424 Squadron to not return. All five crew members are buried together at the Uden War Cemetery in Holland. The average age amongst them was 23.



424 "Tiger" Squadron

Crew of Wellington III BK348 "QB-J" Shot down by German air ace Manfred Meurer over Holland, while on bombing raid to Essen on March 12th, 1943.

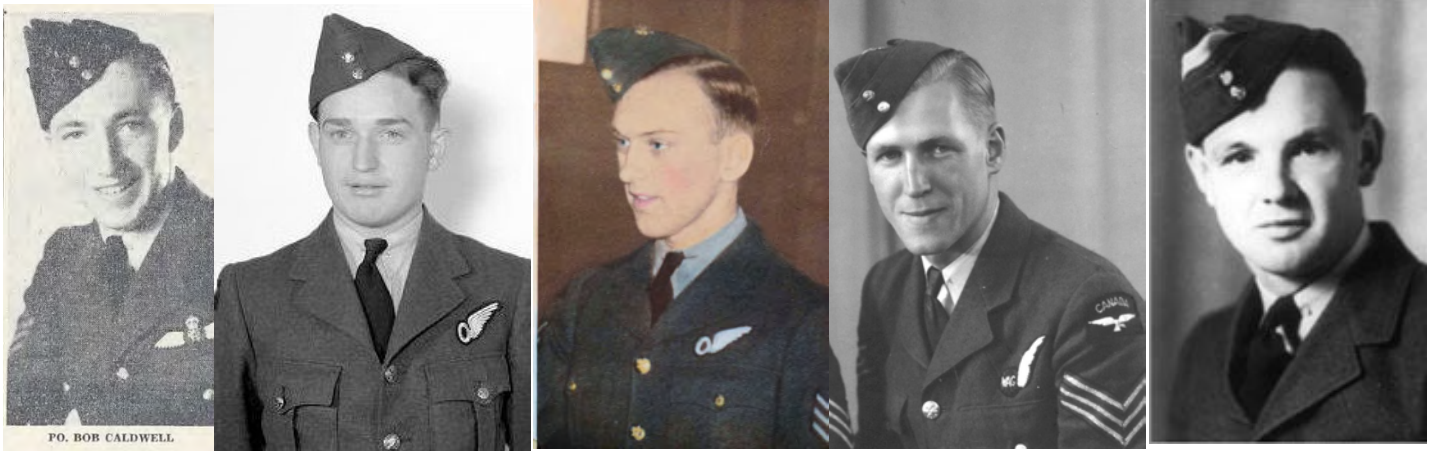
Pilot J16785 P/O Robert G Caldwell RCAF KIA

Navigator J11240 F/O Gordon J Cory RCAF KIA

Bomb Aimer R103759 F/Sgt William F Topping RCAF KIA

Wireless Operator R102165 WO2 Alfred P Larson RCAF KIA

Air Gunner R92418 F/Sgt Leslie A Parker RCAF KIA



P/O Caldwell
Age 22

F/O Cory
Age 20

F/Sgt Topping
Age 24

WO2 Larson
Age 23

F/Sgt Parker
Age 28



Vickers Wellington Bomber (Wiki)



Hauptmann Manfred Meurer
 65 victories in 130 missions.
 KIA January 22nd, 1944. Age 24



Canada's Bomber Command Memorial,
 Nanton AB¹.



Personal Accounts of F/O Cory

F/O Cory is mentioned several times in the book *“It’s All Pensionable Time”* by F/O George Sweanor as they trained together while in Canada, and became friends. From the perspective of Sweanor, some of the excerpts mentioning Cory are as follows:

“We would now be posted to one of the 11 Bombing and Gunnery Schools for a 6-week course. At the time of our graduation, 19 January 1942, there were openings at Fingal, and Mountain View in Ontario and Mont Joli, Quebec, and we were allowed to choose in order of our standings on the AOS course. I wanted to go to Mountain View because it was the closest one to Port Hope. [...] Only one graduate wanted Mont Joli, so the lowest ranking members of the course were assigned to fill its vacancies. This brought a howl of protest from one who had worked barely hard enough to pass. He would not go to Mont Joli! Gordon Cory, a fine gentleman from Vancouver whose marks had earned him a choice, gave up his preferred choice to placate a man who did not deserve it, and I was disappointed in our course director for allowing it, but we all knew that Gord would be a much better advertisement in French-speaking Canada for English-speaking Canadians than our loud-mouthed complainer.”⁷

“Gordon Cory, en route from 424 Squadron in Topcliffe to London on leave, took time to visit me at Manby. I had not seen him since Bournemouth and I was frightened at the change I saw in him. I had liked Gord and his boyish humour and generosity. His wit had brightened our course back in Chatham, but now he was much older, bitter, and scared. He told me that our mutual friend, F/O John ‘Lofty’ Monckton (observer, age 23, of Victoria, BC) had gone missing in his 426 Squadron Wellington on a Cologne raid. Sometime later I learned he was shot down over Holland by a night fighter. He, and 3 other crew members were killed, one became a POW. Gord went onto predict that at the rate his squadron was losing aircraft, he would himself soon be on the ‘missing’ list. I tried to cheer him up and, at the same time, subdue my own gnawing fear that was never far below the surface. I showed him a cheerful letter that I just received from Dave Starratt with whom we had both trained in Canada. Dave was now in Ferry Command at Moreton-in-Marsh, have been transferred from the Atlantic to the Middle East run. Dave mentioned that he was writing to Gord the same evening, and there is something about old friends that goes a long way in cheering a guy up because Gord became more of his old self as we reminisced. When he left to spend the rest of his leave in London he was in the proper mood to enjoy it - and I felt a lot better, too.”⁷

”[while as a POW in Stalag Luft III] I was still worried about Gordon Cory’s fate, and thought there would be no harm in asking the [German] major if anyone by that name had passed through here lately. He replied that he did not remember the name, but that he would check for me. [...] Twenty minutes later the major returned with a sad face. “I am very sorry to tell you that your good friend, Flying Officer Gordon Cory, is buried in Hertogenbosch, Holland; he was killed when his bomber was shot down; he was not as fortunate as you.” So, Gord was dead.

Continued

The apprehension that he had displayed at Manby had predicted his fate. When I joined aircrew I knew the risks, but I never imagined the full anguish of losing good friends, one after another, until numbness sets in, and the tears no longer flow. "God damn it!" Gord was more to me than just a statistic. I started to whisper a prayer, but anger made me ask: "Why should I beg? God, if there is a shred of decency left in you, take good care of Gord - or answer to me for it.- and that goes for Pat, too!" The fact that I liked the major made me all the angrier. Why do decent types have to fight and kill decent types? If there was a God responsible for all this then he was one hell of a poor manager.⁷"



No. 10 Air Observer School. Gord Cory stands seventh from left and George Sweanor kneels fourth from left. Others are not identified, but did sign the back of the original photo! (see below)

A. "Stork" Stinger ¹⁴⁰	TORONTO ONT.	NUMBER R 105060
D. J. Courtney	MONTREAL. QUE.	R. 79458
Jodd Kindree	TORONTO ONT.	R 105543
H.C. Johnson	PERTH N.B.	R 84926
A.G. Pyatt.	ST. CATHERINES. ONT.	R 103227
C.D. Huskins.	SHELBORNE N.S.	R 88246
M. McQuar	TORONTO. ONT.	R 119123
DB Hembroff	WINNIPEG. MAN.	R 100003.
Gordon Fleming	LANCOWIER. B.C.	R 101327
A. Edmister	MONTREAL. QUE.	R 104577.
Owen A. Smith	ELMJEANE ONT.	R 123226
George J. Swanson	PORT HOPE ONT.	R 123104
J. Ronald Smith	PARSBORO N.S.	R 88242.
A.H. Lerner	WINNIPEG MAN.	R 102421
Bryant. W.J.	TORONTO. ONT.	R 112574
DeCarato	TRURO. N.S.	R 88173
R.B. Lyon	PENETANGUISHENE ONT.	R 119135
J.P. Amy	NEW WESTMINSTER B.C.	R 97885
Gahwinis.	HALIFAX N.S.	R 76364.
McCommy	LONDON. ONT.	R 116775.
G.H.F. Carter	VAUCRESSON FRANCE.	R 108493.
H.C. Irwin	ILBERTON ONT.	R 99686
J.W. Patterson	IRELAND.	R 104975
Pat Powell	COPPER MOUNTAIN B.C.	R 79423
A. Stevenson	TORONTO. ONT.	R 97022
Ala J.	TORONTO ONT.	R 107771

The reverse of the above group photograph, actually signed by some of these individuals. See below for more detail on these men.

Identifying the signatures:

- 1 F/O Allan J Stringer- KIA 1944
- 2 A F Courtney
- 3 Todd Kindrae
- 4 F/L V C Johnson- Observer
- 5 -
- 6 C D Hushins
- 7 F/L Malcolm McIver DFC - KIA 1944
- 8 D B Hembroff
- 9 F/O Gordon J Cory - Navigator KIA 1943
- 10 A Edmiston
- 11 Owen A Smith -
- 12 F/O George Sweanor - Bomb Aimer POW 1943
- 13 J Ronald Smith
- 14 F/L A H Lerner - Observer
- 15 P/O W J Bryant - Navigator
- 16 Dave Starratt
- 17 -
- 18 J P Amy
- 19 -
- 20 A E Conway
- 21 S/L Gordon H F Carter DFC & Bar - Observer Evaded 1943, POW 1944
- 22 H C Irwin
- 23 F/O James T Patterson - Bomb Aimer/Navigator POW 1944
- 24 F/L Patrick A Powell DFC - Navigator
- 25 A Stevenson
- 26 -



Gord (back, right) while at no. 10 Air Observer School
Reverse inscribed: Powell, Patterson, Conway, Carter, Cory



Bronze Plaques To Be Affixed To Cenotaph Listing EID Casualties

(Contributed)

In August, 1949, the E.I.D. Branch No. 63, Canadian Legion, decided that a Cenotaph should be erected in Brooks in honor of their comrades who had paid the supreme sacrifice.

In the fall of the same year a corner of the E.I.D. Park on Railway Avenue was obtained through the generosity of the Eastern Irrigation District, and the monument itself was built. In the spring of 1950 the sidewalk was completed.

All work done up to this point was paid for from funds donated by citizens of the district, but funds raised by public subscription ran out then. The Legion out of its own funds paid for further improvements, such as the gate

and posts, flagpole and an attractive flower bed.

It is now proposed to erect two bronze tablets listing the names of those who fell in the two World Wars. A photo of the one being made in honor of Second war veterans is shown above. To have these manufactured will cost an additional \$500, and the Legion is now appealing to everyone in the E.I.D. for donations to finish this work and make the Cenotaph a memorial worthy of the honored dead.

Donations may be forwarded to: Secretary, Canadian Legion, at Brooks or be handed to one of the following canvassers: G. E. Maxted, H. J. Peattie, Wm. Pick, H. N. Bushell or C. J. Maxted.



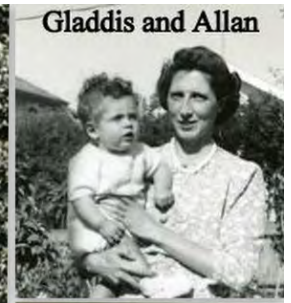
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Above: Wilfred Cory and his fellow observers c.1918.
His location in the photo is unknown.

Above Right: Photos of Gord and Wilbur Cory, with family⁴.

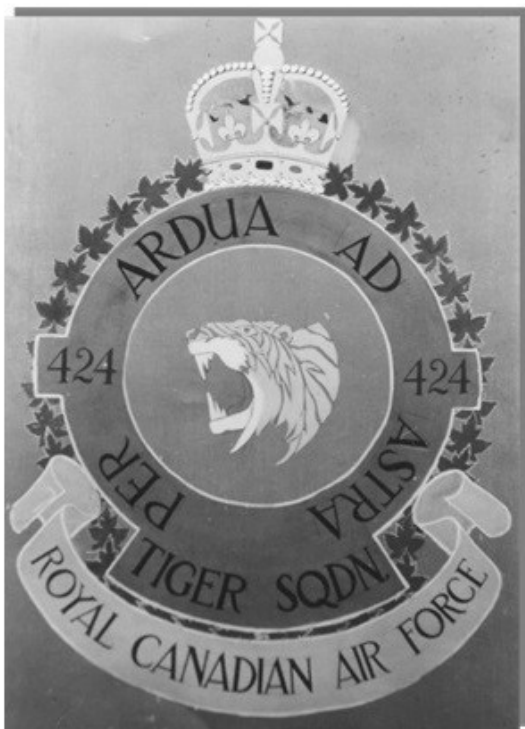
Lower Right: Wilbur Cory later in life⁴.



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6. Garrett Lapp: all other photos (no copyright)
7. Literature:
Sweanor, George. It's All Pensionable Time: 15 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force. PDF Ebook: Neverdark, 2014



WW2 Squadron Patch



Currant Squadron Patch