

BRIG. GEN. PAUL HAYES

LIVING THE FREEDOM OF FLIGHT FOR MORE THAN SEVEN DECADES

Brigadier General Paul Hayes (retired) has had a passion for flight since he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) at age 18 in 1951. Over his flying career, he has accumulated more than 8,000 hours flying military aircraft, helicopters and general aviation aircraft. Holding a commercial Class 1 IFR pilot's licence, Paul is a member of COPA, AOPA, EAA and is a Past Director and Chairman of COPA.

At the end of grade 12, Paul joined the RCAF Auxiliary as a member of 411 Fighter Squadron in Toronto as a summer job, training initially as an Airframe Technician. After graduating high school, he was recruited by the RCAF regular forces and began flight training on the Harvard MK2. Paul grew up in a single parent home, with two younger sisters. Paul recounts, "My father died when I was in high school. He was a heavy smoker and smoked three packs a day, passing away at 48 years old from heart failure, when I was 15 years old. My mom was not totally happy about me joining the Air Force, mostly concerned about the potential hazards of flying."

In the summer of 1953, Paul graduated his flight training courses, received his wings and was commissioned as a Flying Officer (a war time rank). He transitioned to jets in the fall of 1953, flying Vampires, a dynamic single seat jet fighter. Transitioning from the piston powered Harvard to the Vampire required studying the Vampire flight manual, writing an exam, successfully completing a blindfolded cockpit test, followed by starting the engine and going flying.

Paul enrolled at the University of Toronto and graduated in 1956 with a B.A. in Geography. He began flying general aviation aircraft in 1954 having been checked out in both a Piper Cub and an Aeronca Champ at the Maple Airport.

While attending UoT, Paul flew out of

Canadian Forces Base Downsview, accumulating close to 300 hours annually flying weekends and in the summer. In the summer of 1956, he was checked out in the T33 jet trainer and Sabre jet fighters. After completing his university degree, the regular Air Force recruited him with an operational posting to fly North American F-86 Sabres in Germany.

In the summer of 1957, Paul was posted to 422 RCAF Squadron in Baden Germany. Paul then spent close to three years with the German Air Force, 73 Wing, teaching jet fighter tactics in Sabres. The Luftwaffe had purchased 250 Sabres from Canada, all built by Canadair in Montreal. Paul transitioned 50 German pilots onto the Sabre, 15 of whom had flown in WWII.

Paul returned to Canada in the spring of 1964 as a Captain and was assigned to an administrative position. During the Cold War, the RCAF maintained an operational readiness status through ensuring that all pilots kept flying. Flying 100 hours per year ensured that he kept all his ratings. Posted to western Canada, Paul flew T33s out of RCAF Station Gimli, Man., while rotating through a variety of ground postings. Paul was posted to Gypsumville, Man., a new DEW Line radar station north of Winnipeg. To keep his flight hours up, he would drive to Gimli and fly T33s to various military bases.

He subsequently rejoined 411 Squadron and later became the Squadron Commanding Officer. In 1980, he was promoted to the rank of Colonel and appointed as the Commander of the Air Reserve Wing in Toronto, which included 400 and 411 Squadrons, which he helped converting to tactical helicopters.

Paul was promoted to Brigadier General in 1987 and posted to Winnipeg, the RCAF's Air Command headquarters. As Commander of the Air Reserve Group, he commanded 2,500 people, encom-



▲ Paul Hayes in a T-33 around 1954.

Military Aircraft	Hours
Harvard	600
Vampire	400
T33	900
Sabre	1,800
Beech 18 (C45)	400
Otter - wheel, ski, float	2,100
Helicopter	1,000

passing eight flying squadrons, plus other support units. He was part of the Department of Defense's Strategic Planning Group, reporting directly to the Commander of the Air Force. Paul continued to fly during his administrative postings with his last six trips in the Air Force in the back seat of CF18s. Paul retired from the Canadian military in 1990.

Paul was active in AeroCan Aviation Specialists, which he co-founded in 1983. He worked on a variety of consulting projects around airport design, operational requirements, airline manufacturing and telecommunication companies. During the last decade of his life, Paul maintained his flight skills and proficiency flying a Cessna 182RG. ✈️