NAMES, NOT NUMBERS, MEAN PLENTY TO CANADIAN AIRMEN

Moose, Bluenose, Iroquois Are Among Famous Bomber Squadrons

JEALOUS OF TITLES

(Written for the Canadian Press by Sqdn.-Ldr. T. C. McCall)

With the R.C.A.F. in England, Nov. 3.—(CP)—A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but you can't make the lads of the R.C.A.F. bomber group believe it. Around airfields of the Canadian bomber group names have come to mean something, and many squadrons now operating have acquired nomenclature for themselves other than the dry, official combination of numbers.

Legendary Leader

For example, blank-blank-blank squadron has become better known to Canadians everywhere as the Moose Squadron, a name which conjures up visions of might and devotion. The Moosemen are proud and jealous of their name and have reason to be. It was given them by a former commanding officer, the legendary Wing Commander John (Moose) Fulton, D.S.O., D.F.C., A.F.C. Reported missing more than a year ago, "the Moose" left behind him a name which has been perpetuated by what is regarded by many as the ace bomber squadron of the R.C.A.F. The squadron, incidentally, has been adopted by the town of Kamloops, B.C. Wing Cmdr. Fulton's birthplace, and the link is still strong.

Then there is the Goose Squadron, whose crest bears a Canada goose in full flight. The name was chosen because it was wholly Canadian in character and the motto "for freedom," has a meaning which Canadians with a long tradition of freedom under the British crown can appreciate. The goose which flies straight and true, has its mechanical counterpart in the huge Lancasters in which Canadian airmen carry out their nightly missions.

Thunderbird

The Indian camps of Canada's west gave a third R.C.A.F. squadron its name. When a former commanding officer, Wing Commander S. S. Blanchard, of Brandon, Man., who is presumed dead, asked for suggestions, the name Thunderbird was brought forth. A Thunderbird totem pole was given the squadron by the well-known naturalist Tony Lascelles, of Banff National Park, who pointed out the Indian belief that such totems are responsible for all the grief or happiness of life. The motto, "On wings of fire," followed. These nights when the Lancasters, now commanded by Wing Cmdr. W. H. Swetan, D.F.C., of Kapuskasing, Ont., take to the skies, with them goes the name and the spirit of Canada's original citizens.

The tribe of Indian warriors who through the early days of Canada's settling fought alternately with and against the British, have lent their name to another squadron. This is the unit commanded by Wing Cmdr. W. F. (Bill) Newson, D.F.C., of Victoria, B.C., which recently adopted the name Iroquois. The Iroquois were among the most feared of the Six Nations group, and the Halifaxes which these modern warriors use as weapons are becoming as feared throughout Germany as were the arrows and tomahawks of their red-skinned namesakes.

When another Halifax squadron commanded by Wing-Cmdr. C. E. Harris, of Annapolis Royal, N.S., began its operational career, a name was sought which would typify some characteristic of the squadron. A canvass of personnel indicated a large number of residents of Canada's Maritime provinces and the name Bluenose, of the Lunenburg fishing fleet, was adopted to serve as a symbol of all Maritimers (and Nova Scotians in particular). Although it is impossible to paint the plastic noses of the Halifaxes, ground-crew members have done the next best thing, and the large propeller spinners all bear a striking-looking coating of bright blue paint.

One of the better-known squadrons of the group is the Lion Squadron, commanded by Wing-Cmdr. R. S. Turnbull, D.F.M., of Goven, Sask. The Lion, as one of the kings of the animal world, has come to be a symbol of British might and the name is apt for that reason alone.

An English city, Bradford, early this year formally adopted another R.C.A.F. bomber group squadron which at the time was commanded by Wing-Cmdr. J. A. P. Owen, of the Royal Air Force. Subsequently the squadron became known as the City of Bradford Squadron and it is now led by Wing-Cmdr. J. D. "Pat" Pattison, D.F.C., Toronto.

The most recent R.C.A.F. squadron to acquire a name is that commanded by Wing-Cmdr. C. W. A. McKay, of Vancouver, which will be known henceforth as the Leaside Squadron in honour of the town of Leaside, Ontario, near Toronto.

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