



Don Cavanaugh

Sorry the Newsletter is late this time guys – but in late February, our new newsletter editor, Bob Byrnes slipped on the ice while walking his dog and fell and struck the back of his head - doing himself serious injury (concussion). He spent four days in the hospital in great pain while they tried to contain the buildup of pressure – surgery was contemplated to relieve the pressure but was eventually ruled out - the alternative was a long period of extreme pain which Bob toughed out -along with problems with double vision & Lord knows what - in short Bob has been through a rough time. He is

reasonably well now and I'm sure we all join in wishing him a complete recovery.

I only found out a couple days ago that Bob cannot write the newsletter yet - so this newsletter may be a bit rough – but take heart- Bob is planning to write it next month.

So on to club affairs:--

President's Message

Brave flyers have already observed the inauguration of the new flying season! 2008 has started well. C.L.O.C.A., the Central Ontario Conservation Authority, our landlord, has demonstrated an eagerness to maintain security for the field and our installations. Our friends at Durham College have renewed their commitment to host our meetings in a community partnership. The snow, ice, and frost seem to have protected the landing surface from some of the harm that might have befallen it, and luck was with us in terms of some other potential damage that did not materialize; the grass appears to be in good shape. There's money in the bank to maintain and improve the field and fund events. Already in 2008 volunteer efforts by members have continued Whitby Aeromodellers' tradition as a great club.

It's easy to forget some safety precautions in our eagerness to get back into flying. Remember to secure your plane from moving in the pits, carry it out and back, and keep your fingers out of the prop. Check for damage before flying again after an upset. Avoid flying over hikers, people on horseback, and park employees and vehicles. Use a spotter to alert you to pedestrians on the field and low-flying aircraft. The on-course from Oshawa Airport's runway extends right over our neck of the woods, and Brooklin is a checkpoint for traffic arriving from the training area north of us. We are inside the Oshawa Control Zone, protected airspace which extends from the ground to 3000 feet above sea level. Helicopters and ultralites cruise at the same height as our models!

Let's also try to be good neighbors in terms of noise

I am obliged to write my monthly rant about the gate locks. The park relies on club members to keep the gate locked to avoid having cars where they don't belong. Please always scramble the lock combination to keep it and the park's lock from disappearing. Please check the photo on the website to see how the two locks need to be positioned on the chain. Lock-to-lock was last year. This year's solution is thanks to Doug Wood.

Let's fly! Safety first!.....

John Alford

Club Meeting Fallout 16 Match 2008

The meeting (held in the usual spot Durham College - 1610 Champlain Ave, Whitby) was convened by President John Alford shortly after 7:00 p.m. There were 22 in attendance.

These included new member Doug Hamilton who is a former WAM member and Don McDougall who is a prolific builder and who has recently retired to live in Brooklin. Don & Doug – you are both welcome to the club - we're very happy to have you & will look forward to seeing you at the field!

Bill Thorne was also in attendance as a visitor – Bill is well known to many of us - being a member of the Ajax club and a pylon racer at the Whitby field.

Treasurer, Howard Smith reported that we now have 29 members - which includes 2 associate members and 2 juniors. (It's time to join guys!!)

Heydenshore was reviewed and more details are included in the column below - but the bottom line is that the club made \$670.00 this year. Of this \$230.00 was spent to buy a grand prize - which was not needed because later, another grand prize was very generously donated to the club by Kelly Curl of "Flying Stuff Hobbies"- so we already have the grand prize purchased for next year. Attendance was down at only about 145 paying customers. In that regard, Ken Currell said that in 2002 -initial attendance started at 535 people. Don Moss noted that attendance in 2004 was 242 people, and 195 in 2005. I know that (excluding vendors), attendance in 2006 was 233 and in 2007 was 197. John Alford notes that Attendance was down this year in swap meets held by other clubs in the area.

A phone call to Eric Genzer - organizer of the Oakville Club Swap Meet held the same day (2 March) revealed that they were down considerably in numbers as well so we may not have done each other any good. Eric made an interesting comment I'll pass on to you – he said that their numbers had declined over the years so he did not necessarily feel that our attendances were down because we held our events on the same day (although it may be a minor factor) but rather the changing nature of the hobby – nobody is building models anymore ARFs are so cheap and perform so well so that people just buy new aircraft rather than a used one at a sale and in most cases they can get them in the air faster. Eric noted "the guys in the west end

consider the Heydenshore Sale to be the premiere swap meet in the Toronto area"- nice to hear.

Whether Eric is right or not is frankly beyond me - I have no idea - but whether he's right or not - swap meets are a lot of fun even though I buy stuff I have no earthly use for! - and you get to see guys you never see otherwise.

For show & tell we had the following;_

Dave Parton had a Tiger Moth he'd recently purchased - built from a Pacific Models kit.

Ross Gammage had a Quadra powered Ugly Stick which he had modified as Ross often does.

Ken Currell had a power pack modified from a Makita battery pack for use as a field box power source for your electric starter. Ken wants \$51 for the pack

Heydenshore (2 March 2008)

Heydenshore was a resounding success again this year!! 30 tables were rented out of 32 available. The leading vendor with 5 tables was the "Moss R/C" team staffed by Jim & Don Moss & assisted this year by Jim's son Cody. Their five tables were covered by the usual array of beautiful hand-built models, balsa wood & plywood, and other assorted supplies- every item at unbelievably low prices. By the way - the Moss' can help you out with many phases of your building project including balsa, vacuum-forming canopies, fibreglass parts and computerized vinyl trim for your model - reach them at 905-728-5560.

Kelly Curl of "Flying Stuff Hobbies" in Ajax was there with his electric model kits, motors and supplies covering his 3 tables. Kelly specializes exclusively in electrics and can help you straighten out any problems with electrics you might run into - reach him at (905)-619-3768 - this year. Kelly had a young chap working with him who amazed the crowd by flying a small electric "Walker 4#3 electric helicopter around the room over the heads of the crowd. This terrific little gizmo is available from Kelly for around 150 bucks. Ron Bott of Pinnacle Hobbies was back again this year with his usual huge display of engines, radios, all kinds of hardware and lots of supplies for electric flyers. Ron's knowledge of R/C is legendary & he spent a lot of time talking to guys about their problems. Ron also put on a most impressive indoor flying display with his Megatech "Avion' indoor BiPlane - flying it in circles and figure-eight patterns around the room. Cam Pierce occupied four tables featuring a lot of completely built models and about four impressive 1/4 scale half-built WWI scale ships which were immaculately crafted and about ready to cover. Anson Poon of Matrixsolution Hobby came out from Toronto and displayed two tables full of electrics supplies including some impressive "25-size" outrunner motors selling for only \$40.- Prices are indeed coming down. Other club members were there selling some of their personal stuff -- these included Barry Fletcher, Doug Crawford and Ross Gammage (apologies to anyone I forgot). Ron Brownell, president of our sister Oshawa club was there with two tables selling the estate of the late Rich Howe -- he had some fantastic bargains including a beautiful Fokker Eindecker model which went quickly.

Bill Thorne of the Ajax Club set up a promotional display of the Ajax Club's fine flying field and clubhouse. Many members of the Ajax Club, including Bill, participate in our pylon racing and are all great guys.

So it was that, in this writer's opinion, the vendors collectively made this year's Heydenshore Sale the best in recent times. They all very ably contributed to the support of our club by staging a fantastic variety and volume of things to buy - and the support of each of them is greatly appreciated by the Club.

There were drawings every hour for nice door prizes and a final drawing at the end of the event for the grand prize which was a complete Ready To Fly indoor helicopter, radio, battery & charger - an ESKY Lama V4 which was donated by Kelly Curl of "Flying Stuff Hobbies" and won by Cody Moss. Here's a picture of Kelly presenting the prize to Cody Moss while our President John Alford presides. The Club is very grateful for your generous support Kelly.



Much thanks goes to the members who came out and helped make the event a success. They are the heart of our club and we thank them all. On the same subject- it is difficult to imagine how the club would ever manage to have the Heydenshore Sale without the competent and cheerful help of Marlene Coulby and her three fine sons. During the six weeks or so leading up to the event, Marlene was busy renting

the tables to the vendors - which is a frustrating job trying to make everybody happy by finding adjacent tables for each vendor - who sometimes change their minds about how many they want - and some guys want to be next to their buddy- so there was a lot of juggling going on. Marlene takes it all in stride and in so doing provided an outstanding group of vendors. She looks after the whole kitchen by ordering in all the food and drinks and then this year she and the boys did all the cooking and selling at the food counter. They were still there cleaning up in the kitchen when everyone else had left. Our hats are off to Marlene and her sons their terrific effort again this year.

Don't miss the April Meeting 20 April 2008

It's held at Durham College - 1610 Champlain at 7:00 p.m. and will be the last meeting before next fall so you guys really ought to make the effort - come on out and meet your fellow club members, drink some coffee & have a great evening.

Final Thoughts

The Federal Liberals in Ottawa are in such a state of confusion - they're starting to stab each other in the front!!Mike Duffy

CANADIAN AVIATION HISTORY – George “Buzz” Beurling



George Beurling (on the right above with Middlemiss) was born in Verdun (now a suburb of Montreal), Quebec in 1921 His home life, made a distinct impression on his personality and attitudes throughout his life. His father was a devout Presbyterian church goer and there were daily bible studies, frequent reading of the Scriptures and weekly attendance at church. (Later - as a young adult - George, switched allegiance to a stern Evangelical sect called the Exclusive Brethren who interpreted the Bible literally and were dead set against pleasures of the flesh, or for that matter, most other pleasures - tobacco and alcohol were shunned and George never did take up drinking, smoking or swearing - highly unusual for ex-air force veterans..

Nevertheless, as a child, George managed to have fun in and around his home in Verdun and on his relative's farm. He was athletic and became a good swimmer, although he didn't participate in team sports.

George was not a good student and his marks were barely above passing - he had a passion for airplanes and often skipped school and hung around LaSalle Road airport outside of

Verdun every chance he got doing odd jobs for the mechanics. The only books he was interested in were about flying, especially tales about the WWI aces. He studied the tactics and aerial battles of WWI, discussing them and arguing with anyone who would listen. One day at the Verdun airport, one of the pilots offered to take him up for a spin in an airplane if he got his parent's permission. He rushed home and asked them. His mother jokingly said, "Sure George, you can go to the moon." So he got his first flight at the age of 9 and was totally hooked on flying. He first took the controls of an airplane when he was 12, and soloed in the winter of 1938 when he was 17 years old. He quit school in grade 9 and left home, taking a train to Gravenhurst, Ontario. There he got a job hauling air freight into the bush for mining companies. It was dull work, but he got many hours of flying time logged and was responsible for navigating as co-pilot, building up a great store of practical experience in "seat-of-the-pants" flying so that at a young age he had already become a seasoned pilot. Beurling tried everything that came along his way that had anything to do with flying. In Edmonton he joined a flying competition that included several RCAF pilots. He won the event. He was anything but humble on receiving the prize. He told the crowd that if the pilots from the RCAF was the best Canada could do, then they were in trouble. Several years later when he was rejected by the RCAF, he attributed the rejection to his comments in Edmonton, and carried a chip on his shoulder for the rest of his life.

He then went to Vancouver hoping to get a commercial license where he learned about American Claire Chennault and the Flying Tigers, based in Burma and fighting with the Chinese in their war with Japan.

To digress a bit - The Flying Tigers were essentially a private contractor formed under Presidential sanction and manned by ex US military pilots under the command of Claire Chennault who was a master of air combat fighting techniques. They flew Curtiss P-40B "Tomahawk" aircraft - each bearing the famous "shark-mouths" painted on the nose of the aircraft and the group was correspondingly called the "Flying Tigers". The P-40B was fitted with two 20 mm and four 30 caliber machine guns which gave it tremendous destructive power. It was fitted with defensive armor plate and was reasonably maneuverable and generally superior to the Japanese Ki-27 "Nate" and Ki43 "Oscar" fighter aircraft they faced and the pilots were much more capable. There were 3 squadrons of 30 aircraft each and were based in Burma. The aircraft were later replaced by the P-40E "Kittyhawk" with somewhat improved performance. They began combat missions on Dec 20 1941 (12 days after Pearl Harbor), and while operational - they destroyed over 300 Japanese aircraft whilst losing only 14 pilots - one of the most impressive combat performances of the Second World War. They were however enormously outnumbered making every mission extremely dangerous and most of the 90 P-40s were lost in combat or destroyed by Japanese bombs. Replacement aircraft were supplied but faced with severe attrition, they were disbanded on 20 July 1942 and replaced with regular USAF units.

Beurling was inspired by the fame of the Flying Tigers and was determined to join them. He learned that they had a recruiting office in Seattle so he signed on as a deck hand on a steamship out of Vancouver whose first stop was Seattle, and upon landing there - he jumped ship and headed for the recruitment office. They were impressed with his flying records but when they found out he'd entered the US illegally, they threw him in jail where he languished for about two months. Eventually they drove him to the Canadian border and dropped him off.

WWII was on and George tried to join the first RCAF, but his poor academic record got him booted out of the recruiting station. He took this to be a personal slight because he had made remarks against RCAF pilots in Edmonton...

As the Russians and Finns were in battle against each other he decided to head to Europe and join the Finnish air force fighting against the Russians. The Finnish embassy in Montreal insisted on his parents permission as he was still only 18. His parents refused to give it. Determined to get into the fighting he signed onto a munitions ship, the Valparaiso going to Glasgow. George immediately went to the RAF recruiting office who were impressed with his flying abilities, but told him that they would need a birth certificate before they would sign him. Unfortunately, George hadn't brought his birth certificate along. Off back across the Atlantic he went for the document, surviving a direct torpedo hit on his ship. And then back again to England. This time the English signed him immediately.

Beurling was sent to a large training school in the north of England for a short time, as he was already a licensed pilot. The next stage of training a fighter pilot was to an Operational Training School (OTS) flying Supermarine Spitfires. He studied under the ace Ginger Lacy, who was eventually renowned for shooting down 30 Germans, including the Heinkel 111 bomber that had hit Buckingham Palace. In the final stages of fighter training he astounded instructors with his air-to-air gunnery, consistently scoring direct hits on the drogue targets. Ginger Lacy offered him a commission on the spot, but perhaps distrusting officers, or more likely due a lack of self confidence, he turned it down. He announced that he preferred to live with the Sergeant Pilots. Once posted to 403 Sqdn, RCAF he was again offered a commission, and he again turned it down.

He apparently felt that he had more in common with the NCOs and enlisted men on the base than with the officers. He was quite popular with the fitters and riggers that looked after his aircraft, as he took an interest in the aircraft and their work. He would take them up in the squadron's Miles Magister, for aerobatic displays - which included buzzing the local communities, or soccer games - flying so low that the players were forced to lie flat on the field to avoid being hit. These antics gained him his first nickname "Buzz". Upon entering operational service, his commanding officer placed him in the Tail-End-Charlie position. At this time the British were still flying in a flight of 4 aircraft, with three flying in a V, and with one aircraft flying behind and slightly above the others. This pilot was to weave back and forth inside the V watching for the enemy behind them. It was nearly impossible to maintain this position, while weaving and looking out for enemy aircraft. The Tail-End-Charlie frequently did not make it back to base as the Germans attacked him first. It was a seriously flawed tactic that the English eventually abandoned, but it cost many pilots their lives before they got around to it. The Germans used a loose finger-four formation, with two planes flying as a pair. They could see behind each other and attack targets as well. One day in March, 1942 on a sweep over northern France in Spitfire Vs, George recalled: "we were in the air, our tails in the sun, vulnerable to attack, when I announced "Huns in the Area" -- five minutes later we got bounced and I got shot." Disregarding protocol, he pulled out of formation with three Focke-Wulf 190s on his tail. His engine hood was shot away, a shell splinter grazed his ribs and he figured himself for dead meat! In desperation he dropped his landing gear and flaps, slowing instantly, and the Germans overshot him and flew away. On returning to base he lit into his commanding officer in front of everyone - "did they expect him to maintain formation and just sit there while they shot him down"??". While justified, it showed poor discipline on his part. Shortly after he was transferred to 41 Squadron, RAF. He had more problems with his new commanding officer, but he downed his first German. At 24,000 ft over Calais, - five FW-190s attacked him while in the Tail-End-Charley position. Cannon shells slammed into his wings knocking out his own cannons. He pulled straight up into the sun, the FW-190s followed and shot past him, as they had more speed, having just pulled out of a dive. As they climbed past him, he lined up on the middle plane and fired his four 0.303 Browning machine guns. The German aircraft exploded, tearing off the wings and splitting the fuselage. Back on the ground he was chewed out for breaking formation! Beurling

was furious because he knew the tactics they were using contravened everything he'd ever read about aerial combat!

Yet again, two days later, over Calais he was in the Tail-End-Charlie position when he spotted a flight of 190s below them and heading their way. The rest of the flight ignored his warnings, as usual. This time he didn't wait to be on the receiving end of the German's cannons, broke formation and dove on the Germans, scoring a perfect deflection shot on the lead plane. It fell away smoking and crashed into the sea. Once again he was reprimanded for disobeying orders by leaving formation. Disgusted with the stupidity of his commanding officers, he offered to take the place of a married pilot who didn't relish being posted to Malta, and was promptly granted permission to do so.

Getting to Malta was problematic, as the Germans and Italians were trying to cut it off and pound it to pieces. Any ship getting within range of Axis bombers flying from Sicily were in grave danger and German U-boats prowled the waters. The 16 new Spitfire Mk Vs and their pilots destined for Malta were shipped in the aircraft carrier HMS Eagle. When they were within flying range of Malta (600 miles) the pilots were given instructions on the heading and approximate distance to the island and flew off the deck of the Eagle. This was difficult to do as the Spitfire was never designed for this. The technicians onboard Eagle put wedges in the flaps to hold them at 50% (Spitfires had only 2 flap settings, full up and full down), then the pilots had to rev their engines to the max while standing on their brakes. The deck officer waited until the Eagle rose on a wave and signaled them off. Once off the deck the Spitfire would drop close to the ocean before flying. Once altitude was gained, the pilots dropped flaps all the way, the wedges fell out and then retracted their flaps and flew on to Malta. He arrived at the height of the siege of Malta by the German Luftwaffe and Italian Regia Aeronautica. They were pounding the island night and day to blast it into submission. Malta was the perfect location to stage interception raids on Axis ships trying to reinforce General Rommel in North Africa. Their main airbase, Takali Field, was a shambles. There was a small shack for an ops room, the revetments for aircraft were made of broken rock and sandbags, and slit trenches abounded. It was blinding white and hot as hades in the day. Every morning the operational pilots would have to go out and sit in their aircraft on 1 minute notice. As the sun rose higher the all metal fighters heated up like ovens. The commanding officer of 249 Squadron RAF on Malta was S/L Stanley Grant, with FL Laddie Lucas as flight commander who developed a great relationship with Beurling..

Soon after arrival Beurling had his first taste of action out of Malta when he and two others were sent up to intercept what turned out to be 15 Me 109's. Four of them got on the tail of one of the other Spitfires when Buzz closed on them and blew the tail off one - sending it crashing into the Mediterranean. They all returned safely and while walking away from their Spitfires Buzz realized that he could fly with the best the Axis had and come out on top. One of the other pilots, Raoul Daddo Langlois (nicknamed Daddy Longlegs") smiled at Buss and said "Good Show Beurling"

Beurling had found a home (such as it was) and he became obsessive to be the best fighter pilot possible, - he made copious notes in a black book that he carried with him. In it, he made detailed calculations on the angles, speeds and shots that he had made and missed so he could work out how to hit the target the next time. He developed a set of equations that he committed to memory that allowed him to perfect the art of the deflection shot. Deflection shooting was difficult at that time as the Spitfire V had only a ring and bead for an aiming device. Learning how to lead a plane so your shells hit the same space as the aircraft did at the same time was tricky to learn. Many never did, but Beurling mastered it.

On July 6 he got to put into practice what he had learned when 8 Spits were sent to intercept 3 Italian Cant bombers heading for Malta. They were escorted by no less than 30 Macchi 200

fighters. Beurling led the assault diving straight through the Macchi formations and pulling up to fire on a big, Cant bomber. His first burst hit the pilot blowing off his head, the second took out an engine. Despite the damage, it made it back to base in Sicily flown by the bomber aimer/observer. Beurling turned quickly and fired directly into an Italian fighter, knocking it down in flames. He lined up another Italian fighter but it dove sharply to get away. Beurling followed all the way from 20,000 feet to 5,000. The Italian had no choice but to pull up and George caught him square in his sights. The Macchi blew up. Later the same day he led an attack on 2 Junkers Ju-88s escorted by 20 Bf-109s. A wild dogfight broke out and 2 German fighter pilots headed right for Beurling. He circled tightly and caught a 109 with a long burst from 800 yards and at a nearly impossible angle. He hit the fuel tanks and it went down in flames. In one day he increased his kill to 5 and became an ace. Back at base the other pilots snubbed him by not throwing an acknowledgment party of his ace status. He was only interested in attacking Germans. He admitted that he was a loner, but Lucas explained to him in simple, direct language that if he didn't fly as a team, he would be posted into the desert at some even more God-awful post than Malta. George flew with his wingman as well as he was able, however, over Malta most dogfights ended up being a single Spitfire against many enemy aircraft.

It was on Malta that he received his second nickname, "Screwball" - a name he earned by trying to kill as many flies as he could by attracting them to bait on the floor - then stamping them with his foot -- at the same time calling them "screwballs". So George Beurling became "Screwball" to Malta and eventually to the world. The name suited him and what's more he liked the name - it fed his ego and made him feel like an accepted member of the team. Malta was a hectic station, with frequent, large scale raids by Germans and Italians. But the AA gunners on Malta quickly became the most proficient in the world with the constant practice they had. Many Axis aircraft were knocked down by the islands ground defenses, as well as the Spitfires. By July 11 he had shot down two Bf-109s, three Machi 202s, had a probable kill on a 109 and damaged a Junker 88 bomber.

His marksmanship had become a legend. He once reported he had fired 5 cannon shells into the cockpit of an enemy plane. Allied soldiers found the plane with 5 cannon holes in the cockpit. A fellow Spitfire pilot said of Beurling that "he was so successful for two reasons - he had mastered deflection shooting and he had fantastic eyesight which enabled him to see enemy aircraft long before anyone else. Moreover he had an instinctive feel for the aircraft which he flew very precisely, avoiding fancy aerobatics in combat - his sensitive feel made him the master of the Spitfire as a gun platform so that he used very little ammunition.

Editors Note:-

Bob Byrnes - our new newsletter editor once ran across a man here in Toronto who had flown with Beurling in Malta, and who told Bob that Beurling ordered his ground crew to load only minimal amounts of ammunition in his Spitfire to reduce it's weight and increase the climb rate - and he still had plenty of ammo. Along the same line - I recall years ago speaking to a ground crew member who armed Beurling's aircraft on Malta - who said that after Beurling had returned from a mission where he's shot down a German aircraft -- there were only four rounds fired!!

On July 14 1942 -three Bf-109s and 2 Italian Reggae 2001 fighter/bombers jumped him. He turned towards the Italians figuring they could do less damage to him, as they were not equipped with cannons, but his aircraft was shot up pretty bad. Back at base he counted 23 holes in his aircraft. He got even a while later downing his first Reggae and damaging a J-88. Beurling once observed that the Italian pilots were braver than the Germans but easier to shoot down because they concentrated on fancy aerobatics and maneuvers to escape whereas the Germans would usually run away when things got tight. So it was that on July 27 1942

Beurling dealt the Italians a hard blow by killing their leading ace, Captain Frio Knuckled and shooting down his wingman, Sarg. Maj. Faliero Gelli. Together they had knocked down 8 Spitfires over Malta.



Gelli (pictured above with Beurling about to attack) never saw him coming, he hit the wingman's radiator and engine sending him down to crash on an island. He was captured and made a prisoner and thus survived the war. Knuckled was killed outright seconds later. Beurling was lining up on a third Macchi. when two Bf-109s came up after him. He peeled off and attacked the Germans, hitting the leader in the fuel tanks and sending him down in flames. He was on a roll. He landed, refueled and went back up to attack four Bf-109s. He shot down one in flames and received credit for a damaged plane that limped out of the fight smoking badly. For his amazing day's work he received the Distinguished Flying Medal. Near the end of July '42, he shot down another Bf-109, and his superior officers finally had to promote him to an officer and ordered him to accept. The press were anxious to interview him, and it wouldn't do to have the top fighter pilot in Malta be a Sergeant Pilot. So he became a Pilot Officer, much to his disgust. He, and many of the surviving pilots, were exhausted by the physical demands of fighter combat, stress, heat, poor nutrition and a form of dysentery they called "the Dog". Beurling had lost 50 lbs since arriving in Malta., the Germans and Italians were close to shutting down the island by cutting off it's food supplies. He was bed ridden for a week, but managed to drag himself into the air to battle the Messerschmitts that circled Malta. Several flights of Bf-

109s jumped him. He managed a short burst that brought down a 109, but his comrades shot Bearding's plane to pieces. He crash landed in a field because his parachute was too loose for him to jump out. By the end of August he collected a shared victory over a J-88 that had been separated from its fighter escort.

He was again bed-ridden for several weeks due to continued weakness from the poor quality food. In the middle of September he took a plane up but got badly shot up. A few days later he attacked 18 German fighters. One blew up when he hit the oxygen bottles, another fell away smoking and a third went down in flames. Then came October '42. The Axis powers pulled out all of the stops to crush Malta. It was a vicious battle, half of Beurling's squad was shot down in one week. His only close friend, a fellow Quebecer, was killed. After that he had no more friends, it was easier that way.

By the 14th of October 1942, Beurling had shot down 5 more German planes, three in one day - a feat which normally merited a VC. Three flights of Spitfires scrambled to intercept 95 Axis planes. Buzz spotted them first, but his radio died and he couldn't contact the others. He piled into the Axis formations, damaging a Junker 88, and downing 2 Bf-109s. Going home he came across a damaged J-88 and shot it down. Actually the huge enemy formations worked in his favor, as the large number of German and Italian fighters created confusion. Like Bishop he adopted the fast sneak attack and a quick withdrawal method. He could usually count on damaging or downing the first aircraft he attacked, and he got out with the resulting confusion - then circle and pick off stragglers or wait for a favorable chance to attack again. His last fight over Malta was spectacular. He led 8 Spitfires in an attack on eight J-88 bombers and 50 fighters. He cut out a bomber and shot it down, but the rear gunner hit him in a finger and forearm. He attacked and damaged a 109 in front of him, but two behind him shredded his tail and wings with cannon fire. He dove fast for the water, losing the Germans. Coming out of the dive he spotted a 109 below him and shot it down. But a Me 109 caught up to him and fired - wounding Beurling in the heel, a shell grazed his elbow and ribs and shrapnel splattered into his left leg. The controls were jammed with the throttle wide open and the Spitfire spun down from about 18000 feet. Beurling finally struggled free of the aircraft at about 2000 feet and parachuted into the sea.

He was rescued shortly after by a launch which found him floating in blood-stained water babbling about the bible that his mother had given him. The rescue squad searched his pockets and found it. He was patched up as well as they could on Malta and spent some time in hospital before being sent back to Britain.

The flight back was in a Liberator bomber converted to a transport. The nineteen passengers rode in the bomb bay and fuselage without seats. George flew along with fellow Canadian ace "Billy the Kid" Williams and fighter pilot A.H. Donaldson. The aircraft ran into a ferocious thunder storm near Gibraltar. Low on gas the pilot approached the lone strip at Gibraltar, but missed two thirds of the runway. The aircraft tried to go around but even with the engines at full throttle the B-24 stalled and crashed into the water. Beurling opened the emergency door and jumped just as the plane hit the water. He managed to swim the 160 yds to shore, despite a heavy cast on his foot. Only Donaldson, Bearding and another passenger survived. Bearding was hospitalized with shock and an infection in his wounded heel.

Back in England, the newsprint media flocked to his bedside and printed everything he said. One reported wrote "here was a youth with hidden courage".

Back to Canada

Buzz was sent back to rest in Canada and Prime Minister Mackenzie King milked his presence with a "photo-op" after a 21 hour flight across the Atlantic. The next day he was given a hero's welcome parade through Verdun and Montreal. People lined the parade route despite a cold, slashing rain. Nearly 10,000 people packed the Verdun arena to see their hometown hero. The CBC sent an announcer to broadcast the whole spectacle to the rest of Canada. Being big about it, AC deNiverville, the senior officer for the RCAF No. 3 Training Command admitted that they made a mistake in not taking Beurling when he had applied. Buzz was not

enthusiastic a participating in Victory Loan Drives,-- he was exhausted and suffering from battle fatigue.

He gave a press interview that has been retained in the National Archives of Canada. In it he described a horrifying scene that, according to his brother David, haunted him in nightmares for years. In it he is attacking an Italian fighter aircraft.

From Brian Nolan's book *Hero*, he quotes:

"I came right up underneath his tail. I was going faster than he was; about fifty yards behind. I was tending to overshoot. I wove off to the right, and he looked out to his left. I wove to the left and he looked out to his right. So, he still didn't know I was there. About this time I closed up to about thirty yards, and I was on his port side coming in at about a fifteen-degree angle. Well, twenty-five to thirty yards in the air looks as if you're right on top of him because there is no background, no perspective there and it looks pretty close. I could see all the details in his face because he turned and looked at me just as I had a bead on him. One of my cannon shells caught him in the face and blew his head right off. The body slumped and the slipstream caught the neck, the stub of the neck, and the blood streamed down the side of the cockpit. It was a great sight anyway. The red blood down the white fuselage. I must say it gives you a feeling of satisfaction when you actually blow their brains out."

He was undernourished after the starvation diet on Malta, and his wound in his heel festered. He was secretly admitted to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal for several weeks. After a full physical recuperation, although one foot was permanently shorter than the other, he was sent to help sell war bonds all across Canada. He made appearances at flight training schools, army camps and factories. He promoted Victory Bonds and enlistment. But he was a poor public speaker and he resented the boring work. When asked by a reporter about it he snapped "if I were ever asked to do that again I'd tell them to go to hell or else ask for a commission on the bonds I sold". In March, 1943 he was near the end of the bond drive in Vancouver. It was there he met Diana Whittall, the daughter of a respected Vancouver family. They dated, and went out swimming while he was there. They would marry 14 months later. By the spring of 1943 he was fit for duty. The RCAF was pressuring the RAF into transferring him, however, and in the end Beating applied for the transfer with a letter to AC deNiverville. Back To Europe

Buzz was sent back to England and after a short attempt at gunnery training, was transferred to the RCAF in September, 1943. Monty Berger, an Intelligence Officer in 403 RCAF Squadron, convinced his superiors that Beurling was personable and willing to help. So Beurling was posted to 403 Squadron again flying from Kenley in Kent, headed by the Canadian S/L Hugh Godefroy. The famous English ace Johnny Johnson was WingCo Flying of 127 Airfield at Biggin Hill.

It turned out that the continental air battles were a piece of cake compared to Malta, with flights of 50 or more Spitfires flying over German territory at once. Bored with massive fighter sweeps, he began to break formation and go off alone, leaving his wingman exposed. He soon got into trouble with his commanding officers for this irresponsible behavior. Nevertheless he still shot down an FW-190 aircraft in Sept aircraft and another in December 1943 (the last of his career), raising his total to 32.

Unhappy with flying sweeps, Beurling requested command of a flight of Mustangs in order to carry out deep penetration, free-roaming raids into Germany. His request was turned down. Disciplinary problems annoyed his commander - primarily his stunting of a Tiger Moth at zero feet over his airfield eventually led to his wing commander, W/C Hugh Godefroy DFC, to threaten him with a court martial; subsequently, Beurling was transferred to 126 Wing HQ and then to 412 Squadron RCAF where he ran into similar problems of insubordination and low-level stunting. He was granted an honorable discharge from the RCAF and sent home. He applied to the USAF but they rejected him too.

After The War

George Beurling was lost without the excitement of combat and the recognition it gave him. Commercial airlines turned him down for fear he would wreck a plane or drive off customers.

He was reduced to begging on Montreal street corners. In 1944, his short marriage came to an end.

Beurling was invited to fly P-51s for the Israeli Air Force. En route through Europe, - on takeoff from Ube Airport in Rome, Italy, Beurling fatally crashed his Norseman transport aircraft. Reports on what happened are varied. But the Norduyn Norseman is an aircraft known to be tricky on takeoff if the pilot was not familiar with it. On May 21, 1948, the front page of the Montreal Gazette reported that George Beurling and his friend, an American fighter pilot, Moshe Cohen, were dead. His engine cut on take-off, and in a desperate attempt to get his Norseman back on to the field he spun in. Sabotage was suspected but never proven. George Beurling was buried in Rome, but, in 1950, reinterred at Mount Carmel Cemetery in Israel with full military honors

Beurling's awards included a DSO, DFC and a DFM and bar. In his hometown of Verdun, Quebec, a street is named in his honor as well as a high school - The Beurling Academy.

So Buzz Beurling was a bit of a character - he could not get along with other men or women, all of which which seemed to drive him toward a single purpose - to become the best fighter pilot who ever lived - and he may very well have succeeded!!

The Whitby Flyer is written by:



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