



Sqn Ldr E. A. McNab, 24 October 1940

PHOTO: DND PL 909

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Tim Woods Services

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Canadian High Commission
Macdonald House
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Tel: 071-629 9492

RAF Squadrons carried out with remarkable courage. And while these few Canadians were flying to Britain's defence, many other Canadians were making their own contributions in Britain's support.

Canadian-born Lord Beaverbrook became Churchill's minister of aircraft production. By August 12, 1940, Beaverbrook had stepped up fighter production to 500 planes per month, far exceeding the German aircraft production.

Sir Victor Hubert Tait came to Britain from Winnipeg in

G/C H de M Molson OBE,
Commanding Officer RCAF
St Hubert Station (1945)

Pilots of No 242 (Canadian) Squadron scramble to awaiting aircraft, 8 February 1941.

PHOTO: DND PL 3055



the First World War. He later joined the RAF, developed an unparalleled expertise in signals and communications, and played a major role in the RAF's fledgling radar system – often considered one of the key factors in the Battle of Britain. Tait was later referred to as 'the quiet Canadian who masterminded the radar war.'

While the Battle raged in Britain, Canada was implementing – at Britain's request – the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Almost overnight, more than 100 training schools staffed by the RCAF started turning out over 130,000 new pilots, wireless operators, gunners and navigators. King George VI called this 'the most striking feature in the magnificent effort which Canada has made towards winning the war.' President Roosevelt later described the Plan as 'one of the grand conceptions of the war, grand in both design and execution.' He was referring to this Plan when he called Canada the 'aerodrome of democracy.'

During the first year of the war, Canada also provided food and supplies to Britain – more, on a per capita basis, than any other nation.

But during the summer of 1940, it was the fighter pilot who laid his life on the line in Britain's defence. Of the 102 pilots who flew in the Battle of Britain, 47 died in the skies over England – the vanguard of some 14,500 Canadian airmen who died overseas before the war was over. On September 15, we pay tribute to these 47 Canadians who 'flew with the few', and paid the ultimate price for our freedom.