

50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain

by Tim Porter
As taken by the Daily Gleaner

For most soldiers and historians the date Sept. 15, 1940 stands out as the day Hitler was handed his first defeat, and was the first step in the eventual liberation of Europe.

Air servicemen on both sides of the Atlantic commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain this weekend. The Royal Canadian Air Force Association in Fredericton held a parade and Cenotaph service Sunday, remembering the many lost in the Second World War.

The summer of 1940 was a turning point in the dominance of Nazi Germany in Europe. The British were the underdog, staring down the German invaders across the English Channel after the Battle of France was lost.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill promised resistance to the Germans on the beaches, in the fields, in the streets and in the hills. He emphasised the extreme importance of the battle in the rest of the Western world by saying the survival of the Christian civilization depended on it.

The onslaught of the German

Luftwaffe, fresh from its many victories on the continent, intensified in August, 1940. On Sept. 15, the Luftwaffe launched its largest raid over London and southeastern England. However, the British Fighter Command was prepared for the raid and the Luftwaffe lost 56 aircraft. Although Fighter Command lost 28 of its own planes, the defeat proved too much for Hitler, who dreamed of landing troops on British beaches, and the German blitz began with night-time bombing raids on British cities and factories.

Joyce Reid, president of the 252 Lord Beaverbrook Wing of the RCAF, says that the local group feels that there is a significant tie between the role their veterans performed in the Second World War and the Battle of Britain.

Along with association members, other veterans, cadets, local dignitaries and individuals took part in the memorial service at the Cenotaph. Lt. Gov. Gilbert Finn was the review officer at the ceremony, as the participants marched past the reviewing stand in front of the Beaverbrook Art Gallery.

The service was followed by a fly past of helicopters from the 403 Helicopter Operational Training Squadron.



Remembering:

The Royal Canadian Air Force Association in Fredericton held a parade and Cenotaph service last Sunday to remember the many lost in the Second World War.

(Photo by Pat FitzPatrick)

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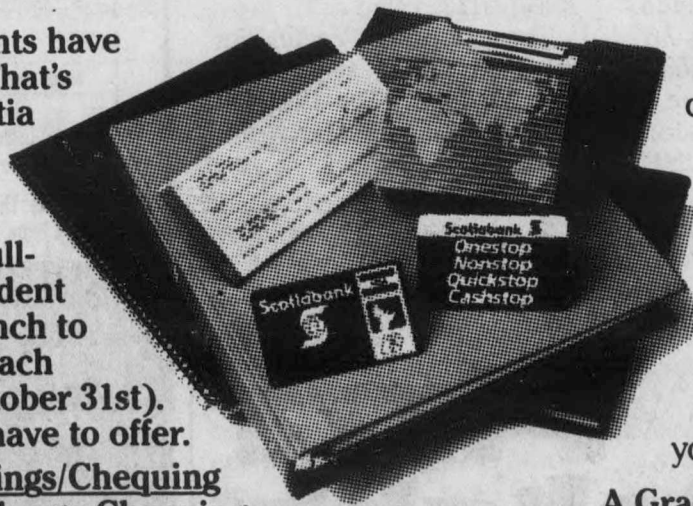
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