

War Memories across Canada Conversation Kit:

Aerodrome of Democracy Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum Brandon, Manitoba



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130,000 pilots and other aircrew through the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) trained in Canada during the Second World War. Because of the wide-open spaces, proximity to American technology, and that it wasn't a combat zone, Canada was an ideal place for flight training. Servicemen from Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand trained at 151 different BCATP bases across the country.

Discussion:

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the BCATP Canada's greatest contribution to the Allied victory in the Second World War. Do you think this is true?

The RCAF memorial at the BCATP Museum in Brandon lists the names and ages of more than 18,000 members of the Royal Canadian Air Force who died during the Second World War. When the memorial was unveiled in 2014 it became Canada's first national RCAF memorial. Why do you think was it important to build it? Do you think it is significant to note the ages of the fallen air force members? How does knowing the age of the fallen soldiers influence your commemoration?

Activities:

Most commercial airports in Canada were built as BCATP bases. Research the wartime history of an airport in your community. Was it a BCATP base? Does the airport have a display of historical photos and other artifacts? Visit the airport, and imagine what it must have looked like during the Second World War. What are some of the stories associated with it?

Visit the Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum in Brandon, Manitoba, if possible. Alternatively, find an aviation museum near your community to discover the aviation-related wartime stories. Do you have a favourite?

Join the BCATP Museum [Facebook page](#) to learn more about the museum, military aircraft and the stories of war related to the BCATP.

Resources:

Websites

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan – Veterans Affairs Canada
<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/historical-sheets/britcom>
Available in [French](#).

Bomber Command Museum of Canada
<http://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/index.html>
Includes a link to photos and specifications of the BCATP aircraft.



Damaged Curtiss 'Kittyhawk' I aircraft
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Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum
<http://www.airmuseum.ca/>

Vintage Wings of Canada
<http://www.vintagewings.ca/>

Videos

RAF Aerodrome: The Story of the Swift Current
Airport (Southwest TV News, 2012)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UdBJ6FLjOg>
A short video about the BCATP training centre in
Saskatchewan. It also addresses the social and
community impact of the training centre during
the Second World War.

Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum, 2014
(Canada's History)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzibmDarRes>

RCAF Memorial Project: They Grew Not Old. BCATP
Museum, 2014
<https://vimeo.com/80638893>
A video about the history and purpose of the
RCAF Memorial Project in Brandon, Manitoba.

Training for Freedom: The British Commonwealth
Air Training Plan, 2013 (Virtual Museum of Canada -
Musée virtuel du Canada)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_mEn94hEM0
A short video showing the history of the BCATP.
Available in [French](#).

Books

Aces, warriors & wingmen: firsthand accounts of
Canada's fighter pilots in the Second World War.
Wiley, 2005.

All the fine young eagles: In the cockpit with
Canada's Second World War fighter pilots, by David
L. Bashow. Douglas and McIntyre, 2016 (updated).

[Aerodrome of Democracy: Canada and the British
Commonwealth Air Training Plan 1939-1945](#), by F.J.
Hatch. Government of Canada, 1983.

Behind the glory: Canada's role in the Allied air war,
by Ted Barris. Thomas Allen, 2005.

Training for Victory: The British Commonwealth Air
Training Plan in the West, by Peter Conrad. Western
Producer Prairie Books, 1989.

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