

This lovely Christmas card was dropped off at the clubhouse (along with a nice box of chocolates) just before Christmas.

Hugo is about three-years old and loves airplanes and the airport. His “Glamma” brought him to the airport this fall and we noticed him hanging onto the fence. We invited them in to look at a couple planes and he eventually felt brave

enough to sit in one. He’s welcome back anytime!

VFC members love to share their passion for all things aviation and maybe we’ll hear sometime in the future that Hugo did go on to become a pilot!

## *Happy Valentine’s Day to you!*

*Especially those who are living or have a loved one with chronic illness and are enduring trying times.*

*I know that many of you are putting on a brave face every day and are just trying to keep going. Please know that your friends at the airport and especially here at the Flying Club have your back!*



## 2023 Christmas Pot Luck Supper and Party



The Salvation Army. \$450.00 was hand-delivered to the House of Hope and was much appreciated

### Prizes went to:

- Door Prize: Chuck Ross
- Greenest: Louise Parey
- Redest: Bree Johnson
- Christmasy: Alison Crerar
- Glittery: Pauline Readner

About 35 people enjoyed a fabulous dinner and party at the clubhouse Tuesday, December 12, 2023. Everyone looked very festive and no one went home hungry! Great food, great company, plenty of laughter and fast-paced games led by Social Convenor, Alison Crerar. The gift-exchange was well received and all those who participated appreciated the well-thought-out presents. Members gave generously to our “Charity of Choice”



The loaded food table



Del Desrosiers and Cal Desrosiers



Darcy and Sherrie MacPhee, Clare Johnston, Dianne and Don Usher, Cal Paley



Mark, Bree, and Wyatt Johnson



Stu McLean, Terry Shannon, and Bev Bonner



Chuck and Marion Ross



Dianne and Don Usher



John Eaton



The Organizers: Marion Ross, Alison Crerar, Pauline Readner



Clare Johnston



Bill More



Alison Crerar



Everyone enjoyed opening the gifts! AME Mark Johnson with his wife, Bree, and 2-year-old son, Wyatt



Toby and Steve Foord, Diana Birrell



Cal and Louise Paley



Keith and Pauline Readner



Stan Owen with daughter, Ashley, and Roberta Drinkwater



Since 1997, it has been a Club tradition to pass on the “*Stress Test for Pilots*”. It is a bottle of Crown Royal held securely in a welded frame made by Tim Ralston who was the club’s Treasurer and owner of Kal-Air Repair. **Pauline Readner** has the privilege of holding onto the whiskey until the next Christmas Party when we will see who the next lucky recipient will be.

**Koffee Klatch**

January 3, 2024 – coffee-time at the clubhouse...

One end of the table is The Snowflakes hosting Mike McGinty, past Commander of the BC Dragoons, and his friend, Andrew Mills, retired from the British Army to Austria. Andrew was visiting Mike over the holidays and was keen to meet other RV formation fliers. He belongs to a team but they only fly four or five times a year although when they fly, they do Europe!

Consensus was that we are very, very lucky here in Canada with our freedom to fly!

Coffee (or cold beverage of choice) is available at the clubhouse anytime for members and guests (prices are posted). Coffee/tea is complimentary for visiting pilots who drop in during Koffee Klatch.

The daily get-togethers happen about 10:00 and sometimes there are even goodies to be had!

Brewed coffee or tea is 50¢ a cup or \$1.00 per day; Keurig pods are \$1.00 per cup.



## Terrific Presentation at the January Meeting

Another super evening spent at the clubhouse! It was our regular meeting night (third Tuesday of every month) on January 16, 2024 and we enjoyed a delicious meal of barbecued hamburgers complete with salads and a slice of pie for dessert (all for only \$10.00!) and then, after a short meeting, heard from **Ryan Zaworski** of Okanagan Fix Wings Ltd., based at the Vernon Regional Airport.

"With Over 20 years in the aircraft maintenance industry Ryan is able to provide aircraft maintenance to customers with confidence. Ryan brings a level of premium quality and safety to a whole new high. He comes from a family of aviation professionals and has been involved in aviation his entire life."

"The Okanagan Fix Wings Ltd team is led by Founder and PRM Ryan Zaworski, alongside Holly Zaworski, the Parts Department Manager and co-owner. Chad Roberts, the Production Manager and AME, joined in 2022, enriching the team with his extensive experience. They are joined by AMEs Griffin Victor and Mackenzie Henry, and Apprentice AME Jager Larsen. The company also benefits from the support of experienced contract AMEs, an essential part of the team's growth. This dedicated team ensures comprehensive and expert service for all aircraft maintenance needs."

<https://www.okanaganfixwings.ca/>

[www.instagram.com/okanagan\\_fix\\_wings](http://www.instagram.com/okanagan_fix_wings)



VFC President, Pauline Readner presents a small token of appreciation to Ryan Zaworski for his terrific presentation (l-r) Pauline Readner, Ryan Zaworski, Holly Zaworski, Chad Roberts from Okanagan Fix Wings Ltd.

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## Anyone interested in a Flying Companion / Pinch Hitter Program?

The Board/Executive have been brainstorming ideas and one of the suggestions was to investigate the interest in a Flying Companion course. Do you have friends or family who regularly fly with you? Are they interested in being more involved – to really assist the pilot? Or you may be a regular passenger in a light aircraft and worried about what you should do if anything ever happened to the pilot in an emergency.

The course would be designed to give you all the basics to get you involved, so that you are able to enjoy your flying experiences much more; give you the basics, teach you how to land the aircraft safely just in case the unthinkable was to happen.

Please let us what you think or if you had any suggestions about what you would like to see the Vernon Flying Club. Contact us at [flyingclubvernon@gmail.com](mailto:flyingclubvernon@gmail.com) with your ideas and suggestions!

**Club T-shirts Available for Purchase at the Clubhouse**



\$30.00 for members,  
\$35.00 for non-members

CYVK on the back; VFC  
logo on the front

Thanks, Edie Schleiss for  
modelling the shirts!



Old logo designed by our own Rick Thorburn! Makes a great  
night-shirt! Only a couple left! On sale for \$10.00

**Questions of the Month**

What was a Cessna Seneca?

Hint: Think Skyhook

Answer will be in next newsletter.

While descending through 400' AGL on final approach for landing, the pilot observes the airspeed is 5 knots slow and slowly decreasing while the descent rate is constant at approximately 600 fpm, the runway threshold is steady in the windscreen, and the aeroplane is centered with the runway centerline. To stabilize the aircraft prior to descending below 200' AGL the pilot should;

- pitch down to correct airspeed then trim
- increase power to correct the descent then trim
- increase power while pitching down to correct both airspeed and descent rate then trim
- increase power while pitching down to correct airspeed while maintaining a steady descent then trim

Reference: PPL Flight Test Guide and Flight Training Manual



**BUSINESS AT THE VERNON REGIONAL AIRPORT**

The Vernon Regional Airport is a City owned and managed facility located on approximately 38.5 hectares (95 acres) at an elevation of 1141 feet above sea level approximately 8 kilometres (5 miles) southwest of downtown Vernon.

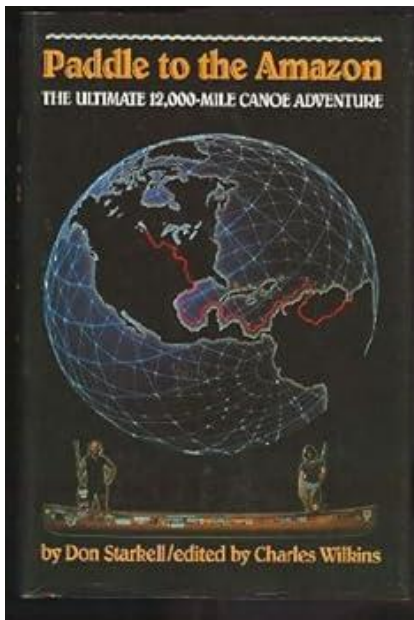
Vernon Regional Airport is a commercial airport that houses industrial-based businesses focusing on aircraft manufacturing and maintenance as well as a base for corporate, commercial, and general aviation.

There are 14 businesses on the field that employ approximately 120 people. Cumulatively the Airport contributes 30 million dollars annually to the local economy and has become a major economic generator for the region.

The City of Vernon has completed Phase I of a multi-phase upgrade to the airport since assuming control in 1998 with the goal of continuing to attract new business to the Vernon area.

Advantage Helicopters	Monashee Helicopters	Okanagan Skydive
Aurora Aviation Academy	Mountain Air Helicopters	Rotech Motor Ltd.
Kal Aviation Group	Okanagan College Trades Training Centre	Skytek Aircraft Services
Leading Edge Aerospace	Okanagan Fix Wings	Vernon Flying Club

**Book Recommendation from VFC Members:**



***Paddle to the Amazon***, The Ultimate 12,000-Mile Canoe Adventure (1987)

This is the true story of an epic journey in a 21-foot canoe from Winnipeg, Manitoba down the Red River into the Mississippi River system to New Orleans and into the open seas of the Gulf of Mexico. A dad and his two teen-aged sons embarked on an adventure that would almost kill them many times and challenge their abilities and courage constantly. At Veracruz, Mexico one of the boys announced that he was quitting, since to continue meant almost certain death.

Father and son fought their way around the Yucatan Peninsula and along the war-torn coasts of Central America to the top of South America and the mouth of the Amazon. They were shot at, robbed, searched, roughed up and even jailed. But they were also constantly befriended, helped, given shelter, nursed back to health, and given food by people who were themselves starving.

Twenty-three months it took to complete the voyage and this book is a fascinating read.

**Cal Paley** lent the book to **Chuck Ross** and it is in the flying club exchange library if you want to borrow it.

## **CASARA Corner**

By Kathy Jorimann, CASARA/PEP Air Area Deputy for Vernon

### **CASARA's (Civil Air Search and Rescue Association) Involvement in the search for the missing helicopter near Revelstoke (January 5-7, 2024)**

John (John Jorimann, zone commander for PEP Air Central Zone) received the call from the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre (JRCC) at about 7:00 on the Friday evening. They wanted a CASARA plane to home an ELT (Emergency Locator Transmitter) signal near Revelstoke. The Hercules and the Cormorant were already enroute. We dispatched an IFR crew from Kelowna who flew into the wee hours of Saturday morning until they had to return to Kelowna. Meanwhile, the Cormorant had only made it to Salmon Arm due to deteriorating weather conditions.

At about midnight, it was agreed that we should send a CASAR ground homing team for early Saturday morning. John then dispatched two CASARA ground homing specialists from Vernon who drove through a snowstorm to arrive in Revelstoke several hours later.

On Saturday morning, the search consisted of members from the RCMP, REVSAR (Revelstoke Search and Rescue), our ground homing team, and members from Parks Canada. Together, they decided to dispatch a CASARA RPAS team (Remotely Piloted Aircraft System – drone) from Kelowna. This drone team drove to Revelstoke and were there later that day.

Throughout the day, the weather hindered the flying search and the drone was only able to fly for a short while. Meanwhile, ground search teams continued to home the ELT signal and navigate the steep slopes near the suspected search area. The Cormorant was not able to make it to the search area and the Herc that was supposed to be coming with the technology to search for a cell phone was grounded due to a bird strike.

After a long day of searching, we attended a Zoom debrief meeting where it was decided that, since the weather was expected to improve on Sunday, the search would continue throughout the next day using REVSAR and the ground homing team on the ground and the drone and the Cormorant in the sky.

At about noon, the search area was determined to be fairly small and the Cormorant winched two SARTECHS (Search and Rescue technicians) to the ground and, on foot, they homed weak ELT signal. In time, they smelled Jet fuel and followed the scent to the site. They later recalled that, although all the aircraft had flown over the site many times, smelling the jet fuel aided them in finding the helicopter. Evidently, the helicopter was on its side, with the ELT antennae pointing towards the hill; making it very hard to home. It was also covered in several inches of snow, much of it had fallen before any planes were even dispatched. They noted that there weren't even many trees chopped off so there wasn't really anything visual to detect from above.

In summary, this was an extremely difficult search with all parties working extremely well together, using all available assets which resulted in a successful search.

*Ed. The pilot and only sole on board was found deceased, likely killed upon impact. Our condolences to his family and friends.*

## Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT)

Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs) are radio beacons that are carried on board aircraft and triggered in the event of a crash or other unplanned downing.

ELT is a generic term describing the equipment that broadcast distinctive signals on designated frequencies and depending on the application, may be automatically activated by impact, or be manually activated. An ELT may be any of the following:

**Automatic fixed ELT** – An automatically activated ELT which is permanently attached to an aircraft.

**Automatic portable ELT** – An automatically activated ELT which is rigidly attached to an aircraft but readily removable from the aircraft.

**Survival ELT** – An ELT which is removable from an aircraft, stowed to facilitate its ready use in an emergency, and manually activated by survivors. The two types of ELT now in service are the 406 MHz ELT and the 121.5 MHz ELT.

406 MHz ELTs transmit a 406 MHz digital distress signal containing information on the type of emergency, the country and identification code of the beacon, and other data to assist search and rescue operations; and a lower-powered homing signal on 121.5 MHz to guide search and rescue teams to the aircraft once they arrive in the general area.

121.5 MHz ELTs transmit an analog signal on 121.5 MHz containing only an audio alert, intended to serve both as a distress signal and a homing signal.

### ELT System

The ELT is designed to transmit a digital distress signal to satellites that are a part of the COSPAS-SARSAT SYSTEM. These satellites transmit the captured signal to the reception station on the ground. The signal is transmitted on the 406.028 MHz and is used to precisely locate and identify the ELT.

The ELT transmits 121.5 MHz and 243 MHz signals to facilitate the final approach of the distress scene (homing).

The ELT operates manually or automatically by means of an acceleration (G-Switch in accordance with EUROCAE ED-62 standard). Any encoding protocol defined by COSPAS/SARSAT can be used with ELT including country code assignment.

The ELT system transmits on 3 frequencies, 121.5 MHz (Civil) and 243 MHz (Military) homing signals and 406 MHz to the COSPAS-SARSAT satellite system. The battery pack, installed in the ELT housing, supplies the power to operate the system.

The satellite system transmits the 406 MHz distress signal to a Local User Terminal (LUT) when the LUT is in range. The LUT receiving range is a radius of approximately 2500 km (1367 NM). When the LUT is not in receiving range, the satellite system stores the distress signal until the transmission is possible. The LUT automatically processes the distress signal to identify and show the position of the aircraft to a radius of approximately 1.8 km (5900 ft.). The processed data is transmitted to a Mission Control Center (MCC). The MCC sends the data to an applicable Rescue Coordination Center (RCC), where Search and Rescue (SAR) operations are started. The 121.5 MHz and 243 MHz signals are used to find the aircraft in the final stage of SAR operation.

The ELT, installed in the aircraft, transmits distress signals. It can be operated automatically or manually. The battery pack supplies the power to operate the ELT. The Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver locates the position of the ELT for approximately 60 meters. The ELT transmits the position within minutes following the distress.

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**Operation Modes**

**Automatic Operation:** Occurs when the ELT is connected to its system in the aircraft and the gravity switch detects an impact sufficient to start transmission.

**Manual Operation:** Occurs when the ELT is connected to its system in the aircraft and you do a self-test (BITE) when the ON-ARMED-TEST/RESET switch on the remote control panel is in the "ON" position.

**Accidental Operation:** Occurs when the gravity switch starts transmission without an emergency (e.g. hard landing). The unwanted transmission stops, when the ON-ARMED-TEST/RESET switch on the remote control panel is pushed to the TEST/RESET position and held for more than one second in this position.

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**WestJet Ambassador from Mount Royal University Aviation Program**

A proud mama, **Melissa Brown (Hewson)**, contributed these photos of her daughter, **Kensie**, and some of the ladies in the MRU aviation program touring WestJet in Calgary.

Kensie was voted to be the WestJet Ambassador for the school for this school year.

Pictured are Andy, Kensie, and Gillian. All second-year students.



Kensington (Kensie) Hewson



**FOR SALE at Vernon, BC****2019 SEAWIND 3000****\$200,000 USD**

The Seawind's outstanding speed and fuel range makes it the only true cross-country amphibian.

SEAWIND 3000 C-FEWR

Completed November 20, 2019

Engine: Lycoming IO 540 K1B5 300HP  
Propeller: Hartzell HCE2YR-1BF

Total Time 207.2 Hours

- 4 Custom sport seats
- 3 axis electric trim transferrable to co-pilot
- dual controls and brakes for co-pilot
- 110 gallons fuel capacity in 4 lockable tanks
- fuel transfer pumps for fuel balancing
- electric boost pump
- auxiliary boost pump for high altitude flying
- low fuel warning light
- 1 Bendix King 155 TSO Radio
- 1 Bendix King KT76 C Transponder
- 1 Garmin 296 GPS Map
- Engine fire detection system
- Engine Halon fire extinguishing system
- Vision Microsystems engine monitor
- Fume detection system
- Hydraulic Wheels, flap and nosewheel steering
- Standby manual hydraulic pump
- Radio Master switch
- custom control lock for all 3 controls
- Electric bilge pump
- 4 place intercom
- Very effective cabin heating and defrost
- Canopy cover

**Ted Malewski Cell 250 351-6377**  
**tmalewski28@outlook.com**



## What is the coolest line a pilot has said to the passengers?

Submitted by Alison Crerar

I was on a crowded flight to Texas. A woman boarded with a terribly upset 3-year-old who was crying and carrying on. You could tell she was already at her wits end. A flight attendant walked over and asked the baby's name, which turned out to be Elias. A few moments later, a voice came out from the cockpit on the PA system.

"Elias? This is Santa."

The little boy sat up, focused on the disembodied voice.

"Elias, I want you to be a good boy so I can bring you something really good at Christmas, so no crying or fussing, ok?"

The little boy was wide-eyed as he nodded. He was quiet the whole flight.

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The pilot had really banged the plane onto the runway and was dreading having to stand at the door and thank the passengers as they exited. He was certain someone would have a comment, but no one did. He started to relax when everyone had gotten off except a little, old lady with a walker. But when she finally made it up the aisle, she stopped and asked, "Did we land or were we shot down?"

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As a plane was flying it started shaking very badly and soon the pilot got on and announced I'm very sorry folks but we have just lost power to one of our engines we are going to try and restart it please remain calm." A terrified man shouts out please tell us how far will one engine get us? Pilot pauses then answers the man, "All the way to the crash site. "

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I had a late-night Southwest flight to Rochester NY last week. It was the terminus for a long flight that had stopped twice. The pilot thanked the passengers and then said: "Now I want to tell you the same thing my father told me on my 18th birthday. Get your stuff and get out!" and for the children onboard, we are nearly there and will remain nearly there till we get there!"

This is your captain speaking. I'm working from home today. Have a safe flight!"

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About halfway between London and Paris on Christmas Eve the pilot came on the PA with an announcement:

"Ladies, Gentlemen and especially children: I've just seen Santa and his reindeer pass by our aircraft and wave to me, if the children will look out your windows now you might still get to see him."

I'm not a child but I still looked.

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We were waiting to take off at around midnight from LAX to New Zealand—a very long flight almost entirely over water with virtually no land in between. We were delayed because of a “malfunction.” The pilot came on the intercom and explained that he was waiting for a replacement part and that it would be arriving shortly. Groans were audible throughout the full 747. He then said: “Ladies and gentlemen, I share your disappointment. But we’re going on a long flight, and I can assure you that I would rather be on the ground wishing I were in the air, than in the air, wishing I were on the ground.” After a moment of stillness, applause erupted.

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It came from a flight attendant about 15 years ago. “We have a woman pilot and a woman co-pilot on this flight. You are flying in an unmanned plane. ”

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Years ago, there was a very low-cost airline called PSA (Pacific Southwest Airlines). The other airlines hated the cheap competition. Once, I was on a United Airlines flight. As we flew over the Sacramento area, the pilot announced, “If you look to your right, you will see PSA passengers deplaning from their flight.” Looking out the windows, we saw a group of skydivers jumping out of their plane.

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After an international flight of over twelve hours, everyone was eager to disembark as soon as we landed. However, we had a long taxi to the terminal and then a long wait for another plane to leave so we could taxi to the assigned gate. Despite the flight attendant’s announcement asking everyone to stay seated until the captain gave the signal that we were stopped, several passengers unlatched their seat belts and stood up to retrieve baggage from the overhead bins.

At that point the captain’s voice came over the loudspeakers. “Ladies and gentlemen, as you might imagine, after such a long flight with hundreds of passengers, the lavatories are in terrible shape. If you would like to help us out, please stand to indicate your willingness to help clean them.”

Everyone was seated immediately.

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## **VFC \$1,000.00 Scholarship – Applications Accepted to March 31, 2024**



Vernon Flying Club Scholarship offers \$1,000.00 to a licensed pilot living in B.C. who is continuing flight training.

Application forms can be found on the website and must be emailed to [flyingclubvernon@gmail.com](mailto:flyingclubvernon@gmail.com) by March 31, 2024.

## He was the only German POW interned in Canada to successfully escape and make his way back to Germany.

### *Luftwaffe POW Escapes in Ontario*

On January 24, 1941, Luftwaffe Oberleutnant Baron Franz von Werra was aboard a train that was transporting him to a newly constructed Prisoner of War Camp in Ontario. When he saw his chance, he jumped from the train and safely landed in a snowbank.

Von Werra, a twenty-six-year-old German pilot, was shot down during the Battle of Britain and shipped to Canada along with a thousand other German POWs after making multiple escape attempts in Europe. After exiting the POW train, he hitchhiked towards the American border. At the St. Lawrence River, he stole a boat and rowed across the freezing water in the middle of a winter storm. He was the only German POW interned in Canada to successfully escape and make his way back to Germany.

How did this happen? At the beginning of 1941, the United States was still a neutral country and could not legally return von Werra to the Canadian authorities. Instead, he was charged with illegally entering the country and immediately the German Consulate paid his bail. After spending several months partying in New York he jumped bail and fled to South America. Once there, he obtained a fake passport in Rio de Janeiro and flew back to Berlin. Von Werra was killed in action only a few months later.

While over 600 of the 34,000 German POWs interned in Canada during the Second World War attempted to escape, many of them enjoyed their time in Canada and fell in love with the country. After the end of the war several former German POWs chose to return to Canada and apply for Canadian citizenship.

**Franz Xaver Freiherr von Werra** (13 July 1914 – 25 October 1941) was a German World War II fighter pilot and flying ace who was shot down over Britain and captured. He was the only Axis prisoner of war to escape from Canadian custody and return to Germany apart from a U-boat seaman, Walter Kurt Reich, said to have jumped from a Polish troopship into the St. Lawrence River in July 1940. Werra managed to return to Germany via the US, Mexico, South America, and Spain, finally reaching Germany on 18 April 1941.





Oberleutnant von Werra was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on 14 December 1940. His story was told in the book *The One That Got Away* by Kendall Burt and James Leasor, which was made into a film of the same name, starring Hardy Krüger.

### **Biography**

Franz Freiherr von Werra was born on 13 July 1914, to impoverished Swiss parents in Leuk, a town in the Swiss canton of Valais. The title of Freiherr (equal to Baron) came from his biological father, Leo Freiherr von Werra, who after bankruptcy, faced deep economic hardship. Because his relatives were legally obliged to look after the Baron's wife and six children, his cousin Rosalie von Werra persuaded her childless friend Louise Carl von Haber to permit the Baron's youngest, Franz and his sister, to enjoy the benefits of wealth and education. The von Habers did not tell the children their true origin.

Werra joined the Luftwaffe in 1936 and was commissioned a Lieutenant in 1938. At the beginning of the Second World War he was serving with Jagdgeschwader 3 in the Battle of France. He became adjutant of II Gruppe, JG 3 and was described as engaging in boisterous 'playboy' behavior. He was once pictured in the press with his pet lion Simba, which he kept at the aerodrome as the unit mascot. Werra scored his first four victories in May 1940, during the Battle of France. Downing a Hawker Hurricane on 20 May, two days later he claimed two Breguet 690 bombers and a Potez 630 near Cambrai. In a sortie on 25 August during the Battle of Britain, he claimed a Spitfire west of Rochester, and three Hurricanes, as well as five destroyed on the ground for a total of nine RAF planes eliminated. The details of the actions are unknown, as the incident has not been found in British records.

### **Capture and escapes**

On 5 September 1940, Werra's Bf 109E-4 (W.Nr. 1480) was shot down over Winchet Hill, Kent.

Werra crash-landed in a field on Loves Farm and was captured by the unarmed cook of a nearby army unit. He was initially held in Maidstone barracks by the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, from which he attempted his first escape. He was digging with a pickaxe while guarded by Military Police Private Denis Rickwood, who was armed only with a small truncheon. There is no mention of this escape attempt in the book *The One that Got Away*. He was interrogated for 18 days at the London District Prisoner of War "cage" Trent Park, a country house in Hertfordshire which before the war had been the seat of Sir Philip Sassoon. Eventually, Werra was sent to POW Camp No. 1, at Grizedale Hall in the Furness Fells area of pre-1974 Lancashire, between Windermere and Coniston Water.

On 7 October he tried to escape for a second time, during a daytime walk outside the camp. At a regular stop, while a fruit cart provided a lucky diversion and other German prisoners covered for him, Werra slipped over a dry-stone wall into a field. The guards alerted the local farmers and the Home Guard. On the evening of 10 October at around 11:00 p.m., two Home Guards found him sheltering from the rain in a hoggarth (a type of small stone hut used for storing sheep fodder that is common in the area). On being removed from the hut he knocked the lamp to the ground, extinguishing the light, then he quickly escaped and disappeared into the night. On 12 October, he was spotted climbing a fell. The area was surrounded, and Werra was eventually found, almost immersed in a muddy depression in the ground. He was sentenced to 21 days of solitary confinement and on 3 November was transferred to Camp No. 13 in Swanwick, Derbyshire, also known as the Hayes camp.

In Camp No. 13, Werra joined a group calling itself Swanwick Tiefbau A.G. (Swanwick Excavations, Ltd.), which was digging an escape tunnel. The tunnel can still be seen at the Hayes Conference Centre. On 17 December 1940, after a month's digging, it was complete. The camp had forgers who equipped the escape group with money and fake identity papers. On 20 December, Werra and four others slipped out of the tunnel under the cover of anti-aircraft fire and the singing of the camp choir. The others were recaptured quickly, leaving Werra to proceed alone. He had taken along his flying suit and decided to masquerade as Captain van Lott, a Dutch Royal Netherlands Air Force pilot. He told a friendly locomotive driver that he was a downed bomber pilot trying to

reach his unit and asked to be taken to the nearest RAF base. At Codnor Park railway station, a local clerk became suspicious but eventually agreed to arrange his transportation to the aerodrome at RAF Hucknall, near Nottingham. The police also questioned him but von Werra convinced them he was harmless. At Hucknall, a Squadron Leader Boniface asked for his credentials and von Werra claimed to be based at Dyce near Aberdeen. While Boniface went to check this story, von Werra excused himself and ran to the nearest hangar, trying to tell a mechanic that he was cleared for a test flight. Boniface arrived in time to arrest him at gunpoint, as he sat in the cockpit, trying to learn the controls. Von Werra was sent back to the Hayes camp under armed guard.

In January 1941, **von Werra was sent with many other German prisoners to Canada** on the SS Duchess of York, in a convoy departing Greenock on 10 January 1941, guarded by HMS Ramillies among others. His group was to be taken to a camp on the north shore of Lake Superior, Ontario, so Werra began to plan his escape to the United States, which was still neutral. On 21 January, while on a prison train that had departed Montreal, he jumped out of a window, again with the help of other prisoners and ended up near Smiths Falls, Ontario, 30 miles from the St. Lawrence River. Seven other prisoners tried to escape from the same train but were soon recaptured. Werra's absence was not noticed until the next afternoon.

After crossing the frozen St. Lawrence River, von Werra made his way to Ogdensburg, New York, arriving several months before the US entered the war and turned himself over to the police. The immigration authorities charged him with entering the country illegally and Werra contacted the local German consul, who paid his bail. He came to the attention of the press and told them a very embellished version of his story. While the U.S. and Canadian authorities were negotiating his extradition, the German vice-consul helped him over the border to Mexico. Werra proceeded in stages to Rio de Janeiro, (Brazil), Barcelona, (Spain) and Rome, (Italy). He finally reached Nazi Germany on 18 April 1941.

### Return and death

On his return to Nazi Germany, von Werra became a hero. Adolf Hitler awarded him the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross (Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes). Werra was assigned the task of improving German techniques for interrogating captured pilots, based on his experiences with the British system. Werra reported to the German High Command on how he had been treated as a POW, and this caused an improvement in the treatment of Allied POWs in Germany. He wrote a book about his experiences titled *Meine Flucht aus England* (My Escape from England), although it remained unpublished.

On 22 June 1941, German forces launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. Two days later, Oberleutnant Wilfried Balfanz, the commander of I. Gruppe of Jagdgeschwader 53 (JG 53—53rd Fighter Wing), was killed in action. In consequence, Oberleutnant Ignaz Prestele briefly commanded the Gruppe until von Werra was appointed the Gruppenkommandeur (group commander) on 1 July. At the time, I. Gruppe was based at Hostynne.[10]

In early August 1941, I. Gruppe withdrew to Germany to re-equip with the new Bf 109 F-4 at Mannheim-Sandhofen Airfield. On 20 September, the Gruppe relocated to the Netherlands where they were based at airfields at Katwijk, specifically Fliegerhorst Katwijk, and Haamstede where they were tasked with patrolling the Dutch airspace. On 25 October 1941, Werra took off in Bf 109 F-4/Z (Werknummer 7285—factory number) on a practice flight. His aircraft suffered engine failure and crashed into the sea near Katwijk. von Werra was presumed killed, though his body was never found.

### Film

Von Werra's story was the subject of the 1957 film *The One That Got Away* starring Hardy Krüger as Franz von Werra. The film was based on a book by Kendall Burt and James Leasor published in 1956. A documentary called von Werra (with clips from *The One That Got Away*) was released in the 2000s.

**Upcoming Guest Speakers and Activities**

The Board has a packed schedule planned for 2024 including some fantastic guest speakers.

The February meeting will feature **Rob McDicken**, (currently flying the Citation with Kal Tire Aviation Group) who will talk about his adventures flying waterbombers and other fantastic aircraft.

**Pi Day** (3.14) is on March 14<sup>th</sup> where pie and coffee will be served at 10:00.

On March 19<sup>th</sup> we have **Pete Wise**, hailed as a BC search and rescue legend, with 2024 marking 60 years of service to SAR! Pete is also the local 'go-to' for all things animal related, having operated Wise Wildlife Control Services out of Coldstream for many years.

On April 16<sup>th</sup> **Dave Crispin** will be on hand talk to the club members about the advantages of getting into a Murphy Aircraft kit building project.

The Annual **Rust Remover** is scheduled for Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> with the always enjoyable **Friday Night Social** planned for May 3<sup>rd</sup>. More details to come.

And, don't forget the delicious **Pancake** Breakfasts! These are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month (except December) from 8:30 to 10:30.

**VERNON FLYING CLUB / COPA Flight 65  
2023 / 2024**

PRESIDENT: Pauline Readner  
 VICE PRESIDENT: Derek Riphagen  
 TREASURER: Betty Lee Longstaff  
 SECRETARY: Marion Ross  
 DIRECTOR: Alison Crerar



COPA CAPTAIN: Art Ratte  
 COPA Co-CAPTAIN: Derek Riphagen  
 COPA Navigator: Keith Readner

Temporary Newsletter Editor: Marion Ross

VFC Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

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