

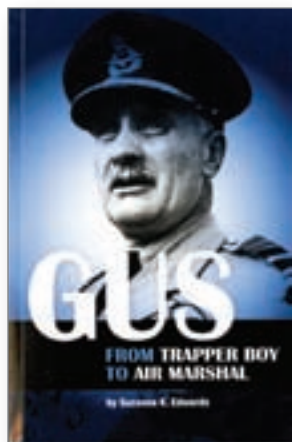
Anne Pennington is Production Manager at Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre and is presently Civilian Chair of the 8 Wing Defense Women's Advisory Organization. Her mother was a member of the RCAF Women's Air Division in the Second World War and a peace-time member until her career was ended because of pregnancy in the late 1950s. She remembers her mother's stories of the time span Spencer's work covers including how she missed the Air Force and often wonders how different her mother's story might have been in another era.

Notes

- 1 Emily Spencer, *Lipstick and High Heels: War, Gender and Popular Culture* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy, 2007), 4.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 87.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 125.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 125.

- 5 *Ibid.*, 136.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 53.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 56.

- 11 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 82.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 82.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 179.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 180.



GUS: FROM TRAPPER BOY TO AIR MARSHAL

BY SUZANNE K. EDWARDS

RENFREW, ONTARIO:
GENERAL STORE PUBLISHING HOUSE, 2007
234 PAGES ISBN 978-1897113745

Review by Major Bill March

Suzanne Edwards' book is a rarity in Canadian military history circles; a full length examination of a senior Canadian airman. That this airman happens to be her father, and that the book is not a full-fledged scholarly publication, does not detract from either her accomplishment or the importance of the subject. Although, arguably, Air Marshal (A/M) Harold "Gus" Edwards is a pivotal figure in the history of the Canadian Air Force, it is equally true that he deserves study as a leader whose attributes cut across service boundaries.

petitioned to join the fledgling Canadian Air Force (CAF). For most of the next six years, he would pilot flying-boats on mapping and forestry patrols from various locations in Manitoba. Between 1926 and 1933, he held various staff appointments in headquarters in England and Ottawa before returning to flying operations in the Maritimes. Promoted to the lofty rank of

A/M Edwards' early career could be used as a primer for the study of air power in Canada. He joined the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) as a pilot in 1915 and flew bombing missions in France. Shot down in April 1917, he was taken prisoner by the Germans and despite attempting to escape several times, he remained their "guest" until the end of World War I. As a Captain in the Royal Air Force (RAF), Edwards joined 47 Squadron supporting the Allied intervention against the Bolshevik government in Russia. Finally demobilized in July 1920, he returned to Canada where he

Wing Commander (W/C) in 1936, he was one of the most experienced permanent force officers serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) prior to World War II.

As the RCAF rapidly expanded during the early years of the war, Edwards found his leadership and management skills put to the test as the Air Member for Personnel. He was responsible

for recruiting, manning, discipline, pay, medical, and chaplain services; appointments; promotions; retirements; postings; supervision of the reserve and compilation of staff estimates; amongst other tasks. These duties were made all the more critical as the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) “kicked into full-gear” and thousands of RCAF personnel were shipped overseas. Promoted to Air Vice Marshal (A/V/M) in August 1941, his dedication caused him to work long hours, contributing to an ever-weakening state of health.

A forthright and pragmatic individual, Edwards never turned away from a fight –especially if he felt that it was the right thing to do in the interests of his beloved Air Force. His strength of character and moral courage allowed him to tackle issues such as attempting to eliminate the racial restrictions of the RCAF’s recruiting policy. Although ultimately unsuccessful in his attempt to broaden the RCAF’s pool of potential talent, his unceasing efforts resulted in a reputation for meeting controversial problems head-on. Therefore, in October 1941 when the Minister of National Defence for Air was looking for someone to take charge of the RCAF Overseas Headquarters, he turned to Edwards. He had recognized in him the combination of leadership and stubbornness that would get the job done.

In part Edwards’ task was to bring a sense of purpose and professionalism to the headquarters in London and this he did post-haste. However, his other task was to fashion, in the face of British reluctance, a Canadian identity for the RCAF in the European theatre of operations. Although the majority of RCAF personnel would serve with RAF units during the war, Edwards’ pursuit of the so-called policy of “Canadianization” paved the way for the creation of Canadian squadrons throughout the RAF’s order of battle. The RAF held to the principle that RCAF personnel, regardless of national desires, would be posted as they saw fit. Edwards fought to ensure that Canadian airmen, and eventually groundcrew, would serve in Canadian squadrons and formations. The crowning achievement for his efforts would be the establishment of No. 6 (RCAF) Group of Bomber Command. Edwards’ single-minded pursuit of his goals ruffled official feathers both in London and Ottawa, but it was his failing health that led to his replacement in late 1943 and his early retirement in September 1944.

Finally upon his death in February 1952, the RCAF, for the first time in its history, buried an Air Marshal.

I mentioned at the beginning of this review that *GUS* is not a scholarly publication in its truest sense, but this should be viewed as a strength and not a weakness of the publication. While Ms Edwards has provided ample context by referring to more formal histories of the events that surrounded her father’s life, it is her inclusion of personal stories, papers and memories that allow the reader to delve into the more intimate qualities that make a leader. For example, while Volume II of the official history of the RCAF, *The Crucible of War, 1939–1945*, provides an in depth examination of A/M Edwards’ efforts with respect to the RCAF overseas and Canadianization, it does not allow the reader to understand what was going through his mind as he accepted such a formidable challenge despite his declining health. Ms Edwards fills in this blank by referring to a letter the A/M wrote to his mother prior to his departure:

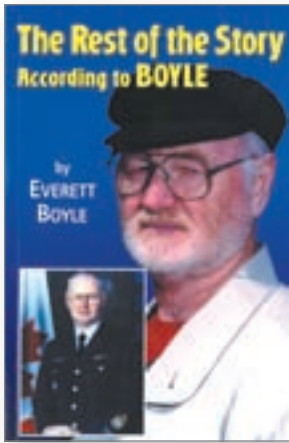
“...although my station is high and my spirit and courage higher I am not unmindful of the task that faces me. There will be danger but I am not unaccustomed to that.... There will be problems to face that I have seldom faced before: there will be battles to fight the like of which I have never heretofore contemplated. There will be matching of wits and a front to put on. The cost in money will tax my meagre resources for governments seldom compensate their servants. There will be great jealousy and a measure of hate from among my enemies of whom, I am thankful, I have many: for most men are made by their enemies. But as I told you when I took on my present appointment ‘such are the penalties on them that rise.’ I may fail (may God grant that I don’t!) and if I do it will not be in consequence of a faltering effort or a baseless conscience. It will not be for want of heart or courage or any of the human things I have striven so hard throughout my life to understand and achieve, but rather, defeat if it comes shall be laid across the threshold of the door which opens and discloses the frailties of human beings.”

In short, A/M Edwards was a professional, the sum of his experiences and training, who was able to face any challenge confident not in the knowledge that he would succeed, but in the certainty that he would do his best.

A/M Edwards was a leader in every sense of the word. As such, his story is worthwhile reading by students of history, leadership and command. Although a combat veteran, his battles during the later part of his life were fought against professional lassitude, bureaucratic inefficiency, political myopathy, and imperial superiority - problems which, in

one form or another, remain with us today. Ms Edwards is to be congratulated for writing an extremely readable and interesting account that puts a human face behind the "mask of command" of this senior RCAF officer. We can only hope that other authors will be inspired by Ms. Edwards' efforts and seek to examine other Canadian air-leaders in a similar fashion. ■

Major Bill March, a maritime Air Navigator working on unmanned air vehicle concepts and doctrine, has taught Canadian defence and air power history at the undergraduate level. He is currently pursuing his doctorate in War Studies at the Royal Military College.



THE REST OF THE STORY ACCORDING TO BOYLE

BY EVERETT BOYLE

BURNSTOWN, ONTARIO:
GENERAL STORE PUBLISHING HOUSE, 2002
297 PAGES ISBN 1-894263-49-9

Review by Major Bruno Paulhus

Whether it was due to leaks to the media of an embarrassing sexual harassment incident involving a senior officer and a young private under his command or it was simply a good program to initiate, in the late 1990s the Canadian Forces (CF) adopted the policy that all members would receive Standards for Harassment and Racism Prevention (SHARP) training. Through his book, *The Rest of the Story According to Boyle*, Mr. Everett Boyle relates both his involvement in the handling of the sexual harassment incident, which was exposed by Maclean's magazine, as well as numerous other incidents of harassment and ineffective leadership in the Canadian Air Force that he witnessed throughout his career.

CWO Everett Boyle (Retired) served the CF for 37 years. Through the course of his career he gained a reputation of being "a hard-nosed disciplinarian who would not stand for any sort of abuse of power, authority, rank, or

position, especially if the abuse was directed at defenceless subordinates."¹ As a result of his willingness to fight for what he believed was right, the last years of his highly successful career were marred.

In the first five chapters of the book Mr. Boyle relates the circumstances of the sexual harassment incident and the ensuing investigation that, as the Base Chief Warrant Officer, he was involved in. Mr. Boyle speaks of his discussions with his own superiors and the two subordinates he was attempting to help through their personal ordeal. Beginning in Chapter Six, he recounts experiences with other officers from earlier in his career that he believes contributed to the unfavourable manner in which he was treated and the lack of support he received during the investigation of the sexual harassment incident. He also

¹ Everett Boyle, *The Rest of the Story According to Boyle* (Burnstown, Ontario: General Store Publishing House, 2002), 6-7.