



418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron history

Two years into the Second World War, on November 15, 1941, the Royal Canadian Air Force formed 418 Squadron at Debden, England. In March of 1942 the Squadron was fully operational, equipped with the Douglas Boston Mk III, and assigned to Night Intruder duty. Their role grew in scope through the war, with Night Intruder missions targeting supply trains, shipping, and factories, or dropping propaganda leaflets on Occupied Europe. In 1943, they converted to the newer and faster de Havilland Mosquito, and added Day Ranger missions to their repertoire.

In 1944, the City of Edmonton officially adopted 418, which henceforth became known as 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron. The city organized care packages of cigarettes, candy and gum to be sent overseas. Members of the Squadron would return to Edmonton on leave to speak about the war effort. By the war's end, 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron became the RCAF's top scoring unit in terms of air-to-air and air-to-ground kills, during both day and night, thanks to its ace pilots, including Russ Bannock and Johnny Caine of Edmonton.

When the war ended, 418 Squadron disbanded, but tensions with the Soviet Union led to the unit being reactivated as an Auxiliary (Reserve) Squadron, headquartered in Edmonton, in 1946. From 1946-1957, the Squadron operated from Blatchford Field, flying B-25 Mitchell medium bombers in defence of the Canadian North.

Changes in government priorities shifted the Reserves away from a potential combat role, and in 1958 the Squadron, now headquartered at Namao, converted to the Beechcraft Expeditor, and in 1960 the de Havilland Otter. Through the 1960s and early 1970s they would fly these aircraft in the light transport and search and rescue role. In 1975, the Squadron paired with 440 Squadron at Namao and converted to the Twin Otter, continuing to fly light transport and search and rescue missions on evenings and weekends. This activity continued throughout the 80s and early 90s. The unit was disbanded when 1994 when the airbase at Namao was transferred to the army and became the Edmonton Garrison.

Today, former members of the Squadron stay in contact through the efforts of 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron Association, which maintains a history gallery at the Alberta Aviation Museum to honour the contributions of the Squadron and its members over its 53-year history.