

Dear Mr. Russell,

I want to thank you for the amazing Air Show this past weekend in honor of the Canadian Veterans from D Day 65 years ago. Your staff helped put on a day that I will (as well as others) remember for a long time.

I would like to share a memory with you from yesterday (Sunday). I was a volunteer member of the Niagara Patient Transfer Service shuttling veterans to and from the show. The many veterans we brought into the show were very pleased and shared many memories with our team and your staff. To sit and listen to these fine men, you could not help but shed a tear from some of the things these men went through over in Europe so long ago.

I had a pick up at 3pm in Niagara Falls at the Valley Park Seniors Home. I picked up two D Day Veterans and brought them to the show. Almost right away when picking them up, one of the gentlemen named John was a feisty guy and I knew right there he was extremely happy to be able to visit the show. We brought them to the fence line where the VIP section was and showed them their seats. Well let me tell you, John did not stay there long as he eyed one of the vintage planes parked near the VIP area. It was a Tiger Moth, a plane which John used to fly back in 1941. He went immediately to the fence and struck up a conversation with the two pilots. His eyes were transfixed on the plane as he remembered bringing his plane down on a particular flight damaging it. The two pilots were amazed at the short stories John shared. John was also one of the 1300 glider pilots who flew into France on D Day and he also flew the Hurricane.

As the conversation was ending, one of the pilots looked at me and asked if John would like to sit in the Tiger Moth....I did not have to ask, John immediately asked where he had to go to get to the plane. Myself and his escort from the home (Laura) walked him over to the area where the pilots met him. They place a "PILOT" badge on him and we then walked to the plane. Immediately this 92 year old man was like a 20 year old again, he was all over the plane remembering from such a long time ago. At this point, the pilot and myself helped John to the front cockpit and assisted him inside. As soon as he was seated the

rudder was active in motion as John was re-living his youth and pretending to fly. I was amazed to see John in the cockpit as the smile on his face was from ear to ear and the tears were falling on his face. Just then the pilot came over to Laura and I and asked if John was in good medical condition, we both said that he was. Then the pilot said " I would be honored if I could bring John up in the plane?" Laura and I looked at each other and were speechless. I walked over to John (who was still playing like a kid in the cockpit) and asked John if he wanted to go up! John stated "I have to now, I can't get this close and not go up!"

At that moment, right after John said that, I started to *get things* in my eye as there was tears present! I felt his pent up emotions and felt my heart getting heavy as I knew this was a time in John's life that he was waiting for to remember his past. There wasn't a dry eye in the immediate vicinity!

The pilot spoke to the Air Show Master and received permission to take the flight. We turned the plane around to await the Spitfire and Hurricane to land from their show (and wow those two planes are beautiful in flight). As soon as the two were down, John and his new found friend the pilot were off taxiing down to the airstrip to take off on a flight in which we will ALL remember the rest of our lives!

When the plane took off and was in the air, WE all clapped knowing John was in his glory and thanking God for this day! He spent 20 minutes in flight and returned with the same smile and a new story to share with everyone.

On the way home John could not help but to gloat about the ride and as I was walking him to the door he stated, "Matt thank you for bringing me to the show" "I would never have thought that I would have been in that plane at the age of 92". He then said that the pilot agreed to fly him again next year if John would come back. John said "God willing I will be back next year to fly that Tiger Moth again!" I then thanked him for the service to his country and he floated into the doors of the home still flying high from his experience.

Mr. Russell it is stories like this which makes your Air Show so special and powerful to all of us! This day will be a day I will

never forget! I wanted to share it with you and your staff! Your show contributes so much to our Veterans and to all Canadians!

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO to organize this weekend, and for restoring the planes in your collection!

Sincerely,

Matthew F. Tremblay

Niagara Regional Patient Transfer Service