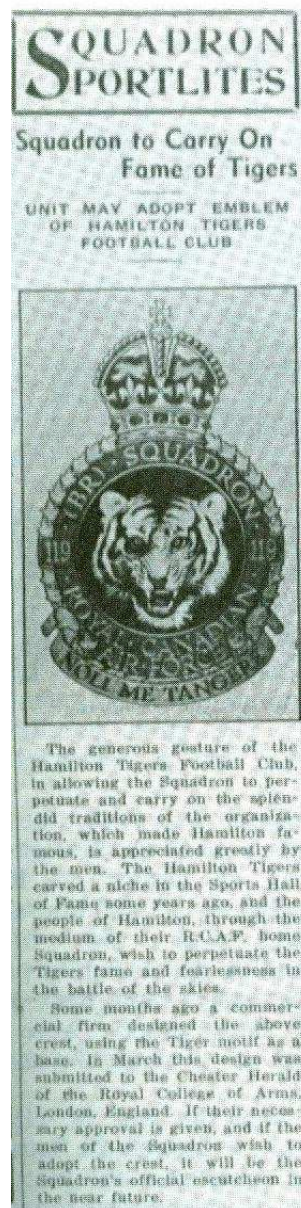


## The Correct History of the No. 424 Squadron [Tiger] Badge from Nose Art

The original "Hamilton Tigers" nickname and badge represented the City of Hamilton and the very first squadron formed in their city. No. 19 [Auxiliary] Squadron RCAF was formed in Hamilton, Ontario, on 15 May 1935, and began flying four tiger moth aircraft in May 1937. They were renumbered No. 119 Squadron on 15 November 1939, and called to full duty when war was declared [England] 3 September 1939. They left Hamilton [for Western Air Command] on 4 January 1940 and flew out of Jericho Bay, B.C. from 9 Jan. 1940 to 15 July 1940.

On 21 July 1940 the squadron returned to Eastern Air Command at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, to meet the threat of the growing German U-boats. On 23 August 1942, S/L H Wigle took over command at Sydney, N.S., at which time approval was granted for an official crest. The Hamilton Tigers Football [rugby] club allowed the use of their tiger which was prepared by artist J.D. Heaton-Armstrong, then submitted to the Chester of Herald of the Royal College of Arms, in London, England.



The original Bomber/Recon. image of 1942.



*Official No. 119 Squadron badge, which featured the Hamilton Tigers Football [rugby] club image. The squadron was called "Hamilton Tigers" with motto - [touch me not] approved by King George VII, October 1942. This first tiger insignia was used in Canada until the unit was disbanded at Sydney, Nova Scotia, 15 March 1944.*

### *The History of the second Tiger Insignia*

#### *[and the forgotten "Erk" who created the badge]*

No. 424 Squadron began to form at Topcliffe, Yorkshire, England, 15 October 1942, under No. 4 Group RAF Bomber Command. They had no badge, motto, or connections to the City of Hamilton. Wing Commander H.M. Carscallen, DFC, a Canadian pilot who had been on operations since the beginning of the war, became the first Commanding Officer on 20 October 1942. The next two months marked a period of intensive training, and by the end of December the squadron had 122 aircrew and 289 ground crew. On 1 January 1943, they became part of the newly formed No. 6 [RCAF] Group of Bomber Command. In the next four months they took part in major bombing raids on targets as Cologne, Wilhelmshaven, Oldenburg, Essen, Hamburg, Duisburg, and mine laying [gardening] at the Frisian Islands, Heligoland, and Den Helder. On 1 May 43, they were taken off bombing operations and informed they were part of a new formed Canadian Wing going to North Africa. The squadron aircrew departed England for North Africa, [Tunisia] on 16 May 1943, flying new tropicalized Vickers Wellington B. Mk. X bombers. The ground crew were issued tropical gear and departed by boat, arriving in Algiers on 26 May. A young artistic air engine mechanic from Calgary, Alberta, was part of the ground crew, LAC Matthew Cecil Ferguson.



LAC Mat Ferguson from Calgary, Alberta. [From his wife Levina]

Beginning in mid-June 1943, Calgary artist Mat Ferguson painted at least nine squadron Wellington bombers with Canadian Nose Art and one contained the side profile of a tiger on a Maple Leaf with name "The "A" Train". The name was in reference to a train that was leaving track "A" in a Canadian train station.



Ferguson nose art on Wellington aircraft North Africa



*"Marie and Black Bull" painted by Ferguson at Kairouan, Tunisia, North Africa July 1943*

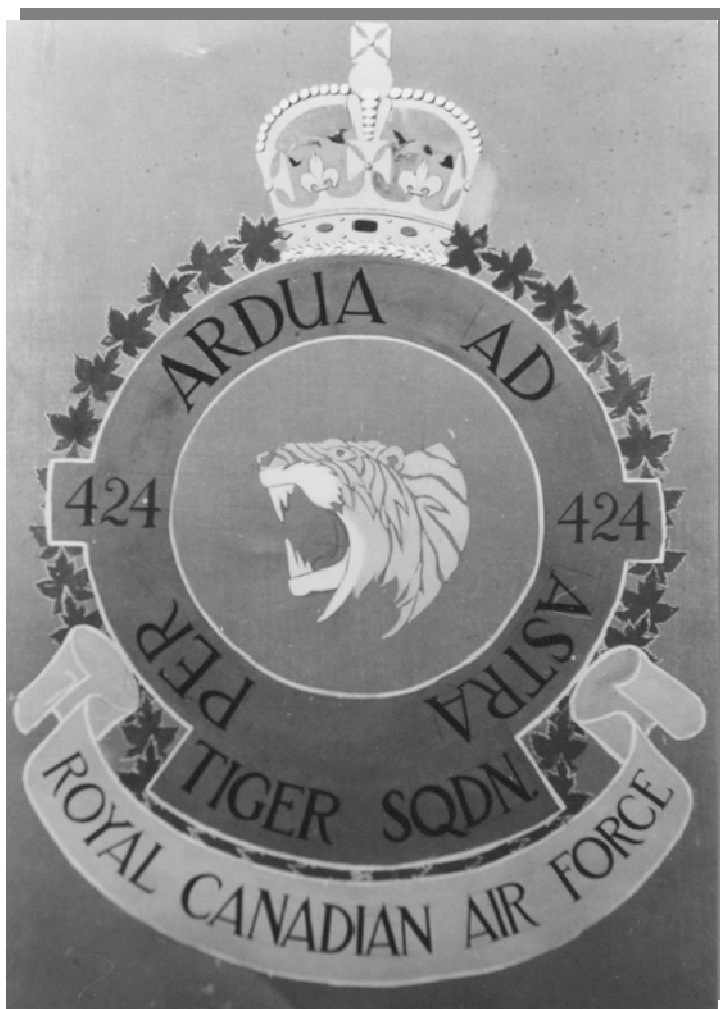
On 6 November 1943, No. 424 Squadron returned to No. 63 RCAF base in England, Skipton-on-Swale, where they received new four engine Handley-Page Halifax Mk. III bombers. The original aircrew of the North African flown Wellington [The "A" Train] request Mat Ferguson to repaint the same Tiger "A" Train nose art on their new Halifax. [Mat Ferguson on far right] Halifax Mk. III, serial LV951, code QB-A.



*On 10 March 1944, the City of Hamilton was advised that No. 119 ["Hamilton Tigers"] Squadron was being disbanded by the RCAF on 15 March. No. 119 died that day but the City of Hamilton "Tiger" would live on.....*

In May 1944, the City of Hamilton decided to officially adopt No. 424 Squadron and a special committee of prominent citizens was set up. The new fund was called the "Hamilton Tiger Squadron fund". Each month supplies of cigarettes, lifesavers, gum, and chocolate bars were sent to the squadron through the Canadian Red Cross.

The Squadron was officially adopted by the City of Hamilton in September 1944 and received the nickname "Tiger" Squadron. In October, Mat Ferguson painted the new squadron badge which was the same art as the nose painting on the "A" Train. This nose art was loved by all squadron members and voted to become the new squadron badge. The Ferguson painting was submitted to the Chester Herald of the Royal College of Arms and for some unknown reason the British rejected the Ferguson badge and created a new badge which is today the official 424 badge. This badge was approved by King George VI in June 1945.



*This is the original Mat Ferguson drawing [from his photo album] submitted to the British Chester Herald*

Pilot Jack Dundas [born in Hamilton] recalled when the British design appeared the Canadian 424 squadron members refused to wear it and called it the "Fucking British Dog". This caused a small munity and the C.O. [W.C. G.A. Roy] had to step in and inform his squadron this was their official badge, like it or not, that was it.



*This is the official No. 424 Squadron badge [British dog] worn in Trenton by the squadron today.*

The squadron members ask Mat Ferguson to create a new cloth badge using the original "A" train image. This drawing was mailed to Mrs. Ferguson in Calgary, with instructions to have 100 cloth badges made by Crest Craft in Saskatoon. Mrs. Ferguson divided the new cloth crests into three packages of 33 and mailed them off to her husband [Mat] in England. She kept the 100<sup>th</sup> badge which is pictured below. The 100<sup>th</sup> Tiger badge was donated to Bomber Command Museum of Canada, Nanton, on 12 May 2003 by Mrs. Ferguson.





The most amazing part is the fact the Mat Ferguson rejected badge from the "A" Train nose art, is still worn [unofficially] today by the squadron members. As you can see it is by far the most impressive "Tiger Squadron" insignia. Mat Ferguson was murdered in his backyard in Calgary in 1982, so he never knew the lasting power of his little nose art; he created on a Wellington bomber in far off North African 1943. I was very lucky to meet Mrs. Levina Ferguson just two years [2001] before she passed away from cancer. Thanks to this brave lady, the true story of the 424 Tiger squadron Badge was saved. God Bless her.



Clarence Simonsen and Mrs. Levina Ferguson – Nanton 12 May 2003

No. 424 [Tiger] Squadron received British built Lancaster Mk. I and III aircraft, which they flew from January to October 1945. They remained in England after the end of war in Europe, transporting British and Canadian troops from Italy back to United Kingdom. They were disbanded on 15 October 1945. Mat painted nose art on at least three of the Lancaster aircraft.



*This was Mat Ferguson's last nose art painted on Lancaster serial NG484, code QB-L, and taken from his photo Album in 2001. Repainted by Simonsen 2003, for Nanton Museum. Original art idea from Walt Disney*







The unofficial badge created by Mat Ferguson is still in use today.

The sad fact remains that the true history of the Mat Ferguson creation is still not recorded in the RCAF history books and this proud LAC is still forgotten by the very members that still fly and use his unofficial badge.

***This error must be changed!***

Mat Ferguson became the first “Erk” who created No. 424 Squadron nose art history and the first to be forgotten by the passage of time. A second WW II “Erk” was also the man who created the postwar image of Mustang fuselage art, and again LAC Tom Walton has been forgotten by his squadron and the City of Hamilton

Postwar artist LAC Thomas Walton from Hamilton, Ontario.

Hamilton born Sgt. Thomas Walton served as a wireless/air gunner on a No. 428 [Ghost] squadron Lancaster KB864. Tom was the nose artist who decorated both sides of his bomber with impressive paintings completed on request of his American pilot. They returned to Canada on 8 June 1945.



Photos from Tom Walton

Tom Walton returned to the postwar world of art, becoming an art director in the City of Hamilton. On 15 April 1946, No. 424 [City of Hamilton] Squadron was formed as an RCAF Auxiliary squadron and LAC Thomas Walton became a member.

From November 1950 until September 1956, the squadron flew the North American Mustang Mk. IV. On each side of the fighter fuselage a large yellow tiger was painted posed on a rock searching for prey.



In 1997, Clarence Simonsen freehand painted the nose art of KB864 on the movie prop Lancaster nose section in the Nanton [Bomber Command Museum of Canada]. A few years later the original nose artist Tom Walton came to Nanton. I insisted Tom repaint his original "Sugar's blues" but being the perfect gentleman he is, he just said, "Leave her as she is, just change the shoes and skirt to the correct color Green."

Tom and I became close friends and he shared his full history with me. When I ask about his postwar career, he surprised me by stating he rejoined the RCAF Auxiliary in Hamilton and he was the artist who painted the Tiger insignia on all the squadron Mustang aircraft.



*Tom Walton was very kind to autograph this 242 Squadron Mustang print in 1998*





***Not original Tom Walton replica but close [author collection 1996]***