

VETERAN OF THE WEEK

12-18 October, 2025

130143 Flight Lieutenant Douglas Orville Evjen

No. 416 Squadron

Royal Canadian Air Force



Photo: Flight Lieutenant Douglas Orville Evjen. Courtesy of Gord Evjen.

Douglas Evjen was born on September 6, 1930, in Cabri, SK. He was the son of Helmer and Grace Evjen and brother to Gordon Evjen of Swift Current. Douglas grew up on a farm south of Abbey, SK and attended elementary school in Roe before moving to Swift Current in 1942 where he completed schooling at Oman School and the Swift Current Collegiate Institution. He then attended one year of post-secondary education at the University of Saskatchewan before enlisting in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in December 1949 at the age of 19. Douglas completed his pilot training and received his wings at the RCAF Station in Centralia, ON. He then joined the No. 416 Squadron at the RCAF Station Uplands in Ottawa which was reactivated in 1951 as a fighter unit for European operations as part of Canada's Cold War presence. He was trained to pilot the P-51 Mustang fighter, the T-33 Silver Star jet, and eventually Sabre fighter jets. On September 28, 1952, his Squadron proceeded overseas as part of Operation "Leapfrog II" arriving at RCAF Station Grostenquin (2 Wing) in France on October 11, 1952. Canada deployed four wings consisting of three squadrons each to Europe to function as Canada's western European air defense commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) during the Cold War. Douglas was awarded a Special Service Medal for honourable service while posted to a NATO unit.

Douglas participated in special training events throughout Europe and Africa including countries such as Austria and Morocco and was honored to represent his squadron at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in London in 1953. Douglas returned to Canada in May of 1955 to practice with the Sabre pilots' aerobatics team. An accident tragically took his life at the young age of 24 on May 13, 1955, just days before he was to return to Swift Current. His plane collided with another aircraft while coming in for a landing after a routine training exercise near Chatham, NB. Douglas was laid to rest at the Swift Current Mount Pleasant Cemetery. He is commemorated in the *"In Service of Canada (1947-2014) Book of Remembrance"* in the Memorial Chamber of the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill. He is also one of 107 airmen's names inscribed on the Honour Roll on the Sabre Pilots Memorial at the RCAF Memorial Museum in Trenton, ON.