

Henry Miles Carscallen - An RCAF officer in Gander

Henry Myles Carscallen, DFC, CD, BSc, was born in Hamilton Ontario, 09 Nov 1908. He was a graduate of Royal Military College and Queen's University, with a BSc in Civil Engineering.



Carscallen began his military career as a Second Lieutenant with the 11th Hamilton Field Battery. In 1932, he was appointed Provisional Pilot Officer and was awarded his wings on 23 May 1933. From 1934 to 1938, much of his time was spent on photo survey work. He attained the rank of Squadron Leader in April 1939 while in Dartmouth. In June 1940, he commanded the first RCAF detachment in Gander.

As a pilot with No. 5 Bomber Reconnaissance Squadron, at the outbreak of WW2, he flew one of the first war patrols off Canada's East Coast. S/L Carscallen and crew flew this first mission on 17 June 1940, in Digby 744, from Gander. This was an anti-submarine patrol which returned early, due to failing light.

On 15 Sept 1940, again flying a Digby bomber, he made a reconnaissance flight over St.Pierre-and-Miquelon. This immediately provoked a riot between the crew of a pro-German Vichy vessel and the pro-Allied Gaullist population... hard to tell if this should be classified as a good-will tour or action against the enemy!

He was promoted to Wing Commander in March 1941 and is seen here with an unnamed crewmember.



He ferried a Liberator to England in July 1942 and shortly after arriving overseas, he was attached to No. 424 RCAF Bomber Squadron. He was promoted to Group/Captain in October that same year and made a Station Commander.

Effective July 1943, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). His citation referred to his outstanding bravery and skill during operations, many of which were anti-submarine patrols involving long distance flights of a hazardous nature.

In February 1944, he was repatriated to Canada and assumed command of the RCAF Station, Dartmouth, and at the same time was appointed Aide-de-Camp to the Governor General.

Later, he served on the Canadian Joint Staff Washington D.C. as Air attaché. In July 1945 he was posted to Guam as observer, as the war against Japan was not yet over and still expected to be long and dirty. The atomic bomb of 06 August cleared up that speculation.

In December 1960 he was promoted to Air Vice Marshall and appointed Air Officer Commanding, Training Command.

He died in Ottawa in October 1986. One could say from his bio that operations in Gander – and elsewhere – were in good hands.