

## AIR FORCE STAINED GLASS HERALDRY

Published in the R.H.S.C. THE GONFANON Winter 2018

Steve Cowan, Comox BC

One aspect of heraldry not seen too often in our publications is heraldic stained glass. And one of the principal artisans of this craft is also one of our Branch members and executive. Tom Mercer is one-half of the partnership of Mercer & Schaefer Glasstudios of Victoria BC. Tom



Naval windows at St Peter & St Paul's Anglican Church, Esquimalt BC  
Photo from: [www.stpeterandpaul.ca](http://www.stpeterandpaul.ca)

was the stained glass artist that created the large series of naval badges and emblems at Saint Peter and Saint Paul's Anglican Church in Esquimalt BC.

Recently Tom's attention was to focus on military heraldry with creating and installing a series of air force stained glass windows at a retirement residence in Comox BC.

These new works were for the Berwick Comox Valley, located in downtown Comox. Recent additions to this facility included a large number of new residences and expanded facilities.

The Comox Valley is home to 19 WING of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The RCAF first operated a base here since 1942. With a large population of air force retirees, and several living at the Berwick Comox Valley, a facility

was designed to reflect the history and heritage of an air force mess. And to reflect the air force theme the new lounge at the Berwick is called the Grounded Pilot. To add to the aviation character, Tom designed and made a series of eight stained glass windows to decorate the Grounded Pilot.

These windows were made at the Mercer & Schaefer studio in Victoria. Using measurements of the desired window openings that had yet to be constructed, the design of the windows included the heraldic image of the various RCAF badges as well as the layout of the borders and panels to fill out each window. The heraldic RCAF badges included the current badge of the RCAF as well as 19 WING Comox and squadron badges of its lodger units, past and present. This includes historical units such as 33 Squadron, 409 Squadron and 414 Squadron as well as the current units as 19 Air Maintenance Squadron, 407 Squadron and 442 Squadron.



Tom brushing in the stained glass waterproofing. Photo provided by Mercer & Schaefer

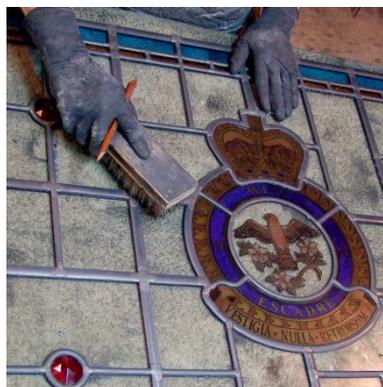


Once the windows were made and fitted to their frames they were brought to Comox for installation. Putting the windows into their allocated openings was very quick; the eight windows were installed in one day; two additional windows were ordered later and have not been completed. Each window was then given a polish and buff and a title label affixed to each for identification.

Various pieces on the light table to dexter ready for stain and to sinister with silver stain applied.  
Photos provided by Mercer & Schaefer.



Each window was assembled by soldering the stained pieces together;



Then a final buffing was done to bring out the tinctures;



And the final result is ready as shown in this close up.

Photos provided by Mercer & Schaefer.

While the windows have been installed in the Grounded Pilot lounge at Berwick Comox Valley, the construction of the facility still goes on. The windows add colour and light as well as providing the ambiance of a pub or military mess. We look forward to seeing the completed Grounded Pilot lounge while we enjoy a beverage admiring the Tom's stained glass windows of the Royal Canadian Air Force.



To dexter, Tom Mercer fitting and installing one of the windows. To sinister, a selection of installed windows. The surrounding lounge seating, tables and area are still being constructed.

Photos by Steve Cowan