

## Seeing “Dad’s Plane” an emotional experience for Jenny Harrington



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A few simple words scribbled on the interior wall of a Second World War era aircraft led to an improbable connection between the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum and the relatives of a wounded soldier.

Jenny Harrington’s father, British Serviceman Charles Stanley Pryer, was wounded in Germany in February 1945. He was evacuated from the front lines aboard a C-47 Dakota from the Royal Canadian Air Force and, sometime during his flight, scribbled the following inside the aircraft:

“DVR Pryer. Lodres. Bridport. Dorset. Wounded in Germany, 27-2-45. Blighty 3-4-45”

The message indicates the date he was wounded and when he was evacuated on the Dakota back to England. Pryer was one of nearly 300 wounded soldiers evacuated from the front lines on this Dakota. After hearing about the discovery, one of the museum’s volunteers, Mike Tabone, was able to track down his surviving relatives in England.

“Something I knew nothing about, you know, and it leaves you saying, why didn't you tell me more about it, dad? All of it brought my dad back. It sort of sparked memories of him. He was always a good dad, a really good dad,” said Jenny Harrington, one of Pryer’s daughters.

Originally built in 1944, this [Douglas C-47 Dakota](#) served in the Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War, flying more than 200 missions before being retired from military service. It would find a second life with Environment Canada until it was donated to the [Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum](#) in 2014.

In 2015, it underwent a restoration that included it being restored to the paint scheme it would have worn at the end of the Second World War with 437 Squadron RCAF. The work also removed some interior cladding of the aircraft, which revealed up to eight messages written on the walls of the Dakota by soldiers from the era.

“All of us at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum are very honoured and pleased to share this aircraft with Jenny Harrington, the aircraft that brought her father and so many other wounded soldiers back home for medical treatment and to their loved ones,” said David G. Rohrer, President & CEO, Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. “When we found the signature of her father, Charles Stanley Pryer, in the aircraft we realized what the 437 RCAF Dakotas did for so many soldiers. Now, to be able to share this aircraft and her father’s story in person with his daughter is an event we could not have dreamed would be possible. It will be a very special day for everyone.”



Air Canada flew Jenny Harrington from England to Toronto so she could finally see “Dad’s plane” in person and see the spot her dad would have been in 77 years earlier.

“As the son of a Second World War veteran myself, it is a privilege to be a part of this moment. Being able to connect Jenny with some of her father’s history from the Second World War is truly a moment we at Air Canada are very honoured to help with. She should be very proud of the sacrifice her father made. Giving her the opportunity to see his handwriting in this Dakota will certainly give her a sense of closure to her father’s story,” said Murray Strom, Senior Vice President of Flight Operations for Air Canada.

“I’ll just soak it all up and the memory will stay with me for the rest of my life,” Jenny Harrington said. “It’s now a part of my history, as it was with dad. You can see him sitting in the plane. You can just imagine how it was and being wounded. But why did they do it? They obviously wanted to leave their mark and tell someone one day that they were there.”

Pryer served with the Royal Army Service Corps during the Second World War. The corps’ role was mainly supply and transport. How he was wounded remains unclear to the family as he did not talk about it much, Jenny said.

The passenger version of the C-47, the Douglas DC-3, flew for Trans Canada Airlines (Air Canada) from 1945 to 1963.

[https://mraircanada.mediaroom.com/Seeing-Dads-Plane-an-emotional-experience?fbclid=IwAR3r5LP-jL7c1Wmtrb4peU8v9k-Arj\\_DsOpLBOAo7rKHuPybMzy7imfU6CM](https://mraircanada.mediaroom.com/Seeing-Dads-Plane-an-emotional-experience?fbclid=IwAR3r5LP-jL7c1Wmtrb4peU8v9k-Arj_DsOpLBOAo7rKHuPybMzy7imfU6CM)