



1941-1945



1950-1972



1972-1979



**Distinguished
Flying
Cross**

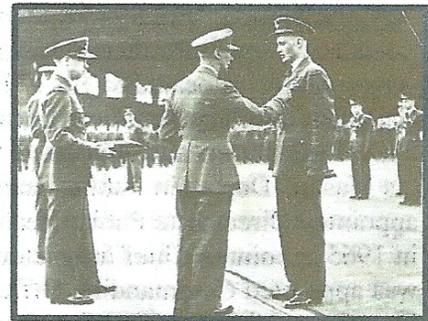


**Col D.H. Protheroe
DFC, CD, DDS, MPH, FICD**



**RCAF
Navigator**

Colonel David Harrison "Hap" Protheroe was born in 1922 in his home town of Elnora, Alberta. In October 1941 at the age of 19 he enlisted in the RCAF and following extensive training he graduated and was commissioned in the rank of Flying Officer. In 1943 he was posted to England entering WWII, where he was a navigator, flew twelve Sorties with No. 100 Squadron before transferring to No. 265 Squadron. On 11 August 1944 Flying Officer Protheroe was presented with the Distinguished Flying Cross by King George VI, awarded to him accompanied by the following Citation "Flying Officer Protheroe has taken part in many operational sorties, attacking some of the most heavily defended targets in Germany. He has had to face very adverse weather conditions on occasion but each time his skillful navigation has guided the aircraft to the target and back safely. On one occasion in January, 1944 his aircraft lost height from 19,000 feet to 3,000 feet in an uncontrolled dive while over Germany. Despite severe structural damage to the aircraft this Officer navigated it back to England where he gave his Captain every assistance in making a crash landing. Throughout his tour Flying Officer Protheroe has maintained a high standard of courage, cheerful confidence and devotion to duty."



With a very strong reluctance to talk about his experiences, Colonel Protheroe rendered a short, precise version of the hair raising occasion that resulted in his being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. His brief description went as follows: "We dropped sixteen thousand feet in ninety seconds and as a result, I lost all my navigational aids. That man Barney Magee should have been decorated, he made a helluva landing at 200 mph without ailerons, with his wheels down. We used all the runway and a mile of sand after it. The plane was a write-off".

Despite the fact that his Lancaster Bomber was shot full of holes by German night fighters and flak over such hot spots as Schweinfurt and Mannheim and ignored the order by Australians to the crew of six to bail out Flying Officer Protheroe navigated the Lancaster back to base against remarkable odds.

It should be noted that J14679 Flight Lieutenant David Harrison Protheroe's Log listed thirty four missions, his last on 25 February, 1944 over Augsburg Germany. His bomber was attacked by Gertman fighters, but saved by two RAF Mosquito's. His closing

statement in the log was "finished, we were absolutely exhausted and stressed out, and happy to have survived." Flight Lieutenant Protheroe enrolled in the University of Alberta's Dental Programs and graduated with a Doctorate of Dental Surgery in 1950 at which time he re-enlisted in the Royal Canadian Dental Corps. In March 1954 Captain Protheroe arrived at Headquarters 25 Canadian Field Dental Unit, Korea. His first assignment was with 'A' Squadron, Lord Strathcona Horse (RC). As a result of not having the benefit of their own Dental Team during their service in Korea, many members required extensive dental treatment,



involving extended hours of work. He received great deal of cooperation from the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers enabling him and his team (Dental Assistant, Pte J.F. Kennedy and Driver Pte Scotty Volkes) to accomplish a great deal in a relatively short period of time. He was pleasantly surprised one morning while arriving at the clinic to note a huge sign attached to it the van proclaiming "Painless Protheroe." Following his assignment with The Lord Strathcona Squadron Captain Protheroe was transferred to the 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Own Rifles, subsequently relocated to No 37 Field Canadian Field Ambulance, (Field Hospital) and Royal Canadian Artillery Regiment Locations respectively and finally to No 25 Canadian Field Dental Unit Headquarters and appointed Second-in-Command and promoted to Major. After completing his Masters Degree in Public Health he was posted to Director General of Dental Services and appointed Directorate Public Health Officer. In 1964 he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and in 1965 appointed Chief Instructor at the RCDC School. In 1967 Lieutenant-Colonel Protheroe was appointed Commanding Officer of No 35 Field Dental Unit Lahr, Germany. He was appointed Base Dental Officer, CFB Esquimalt in 1971. In 1973 he was promoted to Colonel and appointed Commanding Officer of No 12 Dental Unit, Halifax and subsequently in 1977, Commanding Officer of 14 Dental Unit, until his retirement in 1979. It should be noted that prior to his retirement in December 1979, Colonel D.H. Protheroe was the last serving member in the Regular Forces to wear the Distinguished Flying Cross. In summary, a very distinguished Officer with a very distinguished career in both peacetime and wartime conditions.