



Captain RC "Bob" PENROSE
DFC

CA RCAF TCA AC OWA



13 Aug 18

Initial Flight Plan

32,000 Hours

20 Aug 05

Final Flight Plan

A proud descendant of Cornish pirates, Robert C. (Bob) Penrose was born August 13, 1918, in Penticton, British Columbia. Though born far from the sea and having neither parrot nor sword, he led a life of high adventure. Robert had two older siblings, brother William and sister Elizabeth. The three were known as Billy, Betty, and Bobby.

Bob spent his formative years hauling apple boxes in the family orchard, singing in church choirs and for Sunday teas, building bicycles from salvaged parts, and racing home-built kayaks on Lake Okanagan. He did whatever he could during the Depression to make money, from growing and selling rhubarb to cutting lawns. There was nothing wrong with Bob's math skills; by age ten he was contracting out for 25 cents odd jobs for which he was paid 50 cents. His entrepreneurial skills gave him the time and means to pursue his lifelong passion for sport, especially badminton and golf. At 16, he won the Central BC Junior Men's Badminton Championship. Much later in life, at 80, he would score his second hole-in-one.

Bob also did well in school, and he learned invaluable lessons in life along the way. Before the Depression really hit, Bob attended Vernon Preparatory School. Reverend Augustus Clark Mackie administered most of the discipline, which consisted of the loss of privileges or, worse, the cane. Bob remembered well one of his misdemeanors. After suffering bloodied shins playing field hockey against an older and bigger girls' side, he took a swipe at an Amazonian rival. Asked if he had swung at her, Bob said no. Earlier that day, he had shared math answers with a fellow student. Caught on both counts, the headmaster administered his corporal punishment. His lesson, Bob would recall with a grin, was "Never lie and cheat, at least not on the same day."

Bob's love for flying began with his first ill-fated flight off the garage roof with his mother's umbrella. Finding this unreliable, he haunted the Penticton airport, catching rides by helping to wipe down airplanes. His first ride was in 1933 with Ginger Coote, a famous BC aviation pioneer, who was also Air Canada Captain Pat Leslie's uncle.

Bob graduated from Penticton High in 1936. Jobs were very scarce, but through connections at the badminton club, Bob landed a job in the stockroom at Woolworths for \$8.50 a week, and he sold badminton racquets at the club. In 1937, Bob joined the Canadian Bank of Commerce. In mid-1938, he was transferred to Fernie B.C. to a three-man branch in a town decimated by the depression. He lived above the bank and

ate most meals at the Northern Hotel, which took care of his huge salary of \$33.33 a month.

In 1940, Bob did one month of compulsory service in the army and found out that flat feet were not what they were looking for and that long route marches were not what he was looking for. He marched from parade ground to cockpit, enlisting in 1941 in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

RCAF World War II

Training

Bob enlisted in the air force in the fall of 1941 and was sent to Manning depot in Edmonton. Their deluxe accommodations were the old horse barns on the Edmonton fair grounds. Their time was spent mostly marching on the parade square or peeling spuds and waxing floors for going AWOL some nights.

Next came Initial Training School (ITS) at a college in Saskatoon. Most of their time was spent in classrooms on aircraft, mathematics and navigation. By this time, Bob had a close knit group of friends which included Max Strange, who served on every station and squadron with him throughout his air force career. Others included Al Nicol and Alec Schierman. ITS was always a fight to ensure one was going to be a pilot; navigators were in demand and academic standing alone did not guarantee ones selection as a pilot.

Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) in Prince Albert was Bobs next posting. This was a civilian flying school and the instructors were mostly former bush pilots. There was only one air force officer on the station. Recruits were trained on Tiger Moths, and most soloed after eight hours of instruction. The bush pilots were excellent instructors and gave them every opportunity to succeed. Bob finished second in the graduating class; flying time about 85 hours.

Bob, Max Strange and Al Schierman arrived at #7 Service Flying School (SFTS) at MacLeod, Alberta, November 21, 1942. Al Nicol was posted to Saskatoon. The aircraft were Avro Ansons. With twin engines, they at first appeared to be too big and cumbersome. Bob was awarded a gold bracelet for graduating first in his class, and commissioned as a Pilot Officer March 17, 1943. He now had a grand total of 220 hours and 15 minutes flying time.

They tried to post Bob to High River as an instructor, but he traded postings with an RAF student and, on April 2, 1943, wound up at RAF 31 GRC in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. This was an Astro navigation school. The commanding officer was a Wing Commander whose initial greeting was that we were to learn navigation and, if we did not, we would die and in fact deserved to die. Alex Schierman and Max Strange were still with Bob. PEI was dry, so on Saturdays they had a bar special before going into Charlottetown for a good meal at the Old Spain and then to a dance hall.

Staff pilots would fly them out into the Atlantic, and they would act as navigators. Bob noted that they seemed to be in a semi-lost position on many trips. On one memorable trip, Al Schierman was the number one navigator and Bob was supposed to get

bearings and drifts with flame floats and smoke floats; but they had no visual contacts with the ocean. Bob hurled all the floats out to no avail. Finally on the way home, Al gave Bob a chit for the pilot to alter course 30 degrees to starboard. They saw a hole in the clouds sometime later and there was Charlottetown. Bob asked Al how he had determined the 30-degree correction. Al said, our morning lecture said navigation was 50 percent common sense. I figured we were a long way south of track so 30 degrees alteration might find PEI. Somehow they managed to survive and were posted next to RAF Debert on #31 OTU on Hudson aircraft.

Debert was a big step for Bob, Max, and Al. They had not flown for two and a half months and the Hudson was a much better aircraft to fly. In fact, the Bay of Fundy became known as Hudsons Bay. The instructors were nearly all 407 Demon Squadron types, a squadron that was wiped out three times. Bobs instructor was too informal, and Bob felt that his first solo in the Hudson was far more risky and dangerous than the Tiger Moth and Anson solos. On graduation, or survival if you like, some were posted to Nassau and some to coastal command in Canada. Bobs crew consisted of a navigator, Ken Schmitz, and two wireless operators, Doan and Johnson. Max Strange and Bob opted for overseas. By this time, they were considered to be coastal command qualified. By August 21, 1943, Bob had a grand total of 320 hours.

For Bob's mother, it was difficult to see him going overseas. Bobs brother Bill, with 158 Squadron, was lost March 27 1943 on his ninth mission over Berlin, a long tough target.

On about September 10 1943, Bob set sail from Halifax aboard the Queen Elizabeth. Eighteen passengers occupied a stateroom built for two. There were some 20,000 troops on board with air cover the whole way. The ship kept a maximum 32 knots and their cabin near the stern shook and rattled all day and night. The crossing took four days and ten hours.

In November 1943, Bob was posted to RAF Ossington in the Midlands. We were transferred from Coastal Command to Bomber Command. His stay at Ossington was short. The next station was Gamston, a satellite of Ossington. The accommodation was cold and damp, and the meals were terrible mostly Spam, wooden sausages and Brussels sprouts. They flew Wellington aircraft (Whimpy), which was quite forgiving but had noisy Pegassus engines.

Bob and Ken Schmitz were crewed with a bomb aimer, Keith Caspell, and two air gunners, Roy Pettigrew and Jack Curl. One memorable flight out of Gamston was a Bulls Eye on Portsmouth. They were a reserve crew and called in when one crew took sick. That evening Bob's crew got half the briefing, so Ken took the other navigator's flight plan. The flight was supposed to fly due south to Portsmouth, on to London and back to base. On the south leg the wind had picked up from the north and their ten p.m. takeoff was also a decoy for German radar as the big boys were going to Berlin. Portsmouth was supposed to be clear and also London. On ETA over Portsmouth, they had broken cloud and were unable to pinpoint their exact location. They flew east and then west over some lights and soon realized they were being fired upon. Two aircraft appeared, one on each wing, and they recognized them as a Beaufighter and a Beaufort. They flashed their navigation lights and were gone. They turned due north and saw Portsmouth some twenty minutes later. Then they saw the lights, or rather

searchlights, of London, so headed there just in time for a German air raid and barrage balloons beeping away. They flew on unscathed and back to base.

The next morning Bob was called in to the C.O.'s office and asked what in God's name were you trying to do last night! Bob indicated to the C.O. that he realized that they were over Cherbourg, not Portsmouth, and under German fire, and so they headed north to Portsmouth. The C.O. then asked Why in the hell did you go over London? Sir, Bob said, our morning lecture said press on regardless so we completed the exercise. The C.O. simply shook his head and dismissed him. Ken was upset and upon rechecking the navigation log, found out the previous navigator had made a flight plan error of ten minutes on the south leg.

After some 50 hours dual and solo on Wellingtons, they were transferred to the RCAF Heavy Conversion Unit on Halifaxes in 6 Group Bomber Command at Topcliffe, Yorkshire. At Topcliffe, Bob had his crew of navigator, Ken Schmitz, wireless operator Ken Doan, bomb aimer Keith Caspell, middle gunner Roy Pettigrew, tail gunner Jack Curl and his final crew member, Jack Davidson, a flight engineer. The Halifax looked big, black and formidable. Bob could only hope his 412 hours of flying would give him sufficient experience to handle the monster.

Training went well except for a couple of bad weather days when they had to make several somewhat scary approaches to find the airport and runway. However, on March 24, they nearly ended their days.

They were to fly a bull's eye operation on Paris to drop leaflets telling the French that help was on the way and that Eisenhower was in total command. Their aircraft came out of the hanger after a maintenance check, so they were last to be airborne. It was ten o'clock at night, a pitch-dark night on takeoff. At about 500 feet, Jack yelled there was a fire in their starboard inner engine and they seemed to have lost all power on the right side. Bob could only remember pulling back on the other port engines and keeping 120 mph on the clock on descent. God was obviously his co-pilot as they belly-landed in a field. The nose split wide open and all crewmembers scrambled to safety. The aircraft was completely enveloped in flames and ammunition from the eight turret guns was popping off. The tail gunner had rotated his turret but was caught up by his feet and rescued by a crewmember. The only things left of the aircraft were the two port engines.

The field where they had crash landed was directly behind a pub called The Green Tree in the town of Little Ouseburn, some 15 miles west of York and 12 miles from takeoff. They were welcomed to the pub as saviours of the town. After numerous drinks, ambulances from several airdromes arrived and they were escorted to a hospital in Thirsk. They bailed out of there to the Golden Fleece pub after making out a somewhat hazy report for the C.O.

Later, they learned that apparently the propeller and reduction gear flew off the starboard outer into the starboard inner, which caught fire and immediately spread to the fuel in the wing tanks. The dinghy reversed in the wing and also inflated and flew away.

Bob and crew were back flying the next day. They felt surviving the crash was a good omen for a chance to live through a tour of ops.

Before going on operations, Bob and crew were sent to Dalton for a two week commando course. The first day was a five-mile run with some army Lt. Officer yelling at them. The army called them pigeons. They were introduced to a field of barbed wire and had to crawl under it. Next came an underground tunnel of pipes just big enough for a body, and finally a barricade where one had to swing on a rope to go over the top. For their final days on course, they were loaded into transports with no outside vision and driven to and deposited on the Yorkshire Moors. They were stripped of all money and identification. Bob and three others found a little pub and the lady in charge hid them when the army came in. They got back to base in one piece, after two days of dodging the brown jobs. Some smart boys hid their money and got a train to London.

#427 Lion Squadron, Leeming, Yorkshire

Bob and his crew arrived at Leeming, Yorkshire, the base of #427 and #429 squadrons on April first. Five other crews, all of whom had trained together with the RAF on Wellingtons and then Halifax's, arrived with Bob's crew at the same time. They were led by pilots Pete Cronyn, Dave Perry, Max Strange, Mosely-Williams and Pete Kelly.

The commanding officer was Bob Turnbull, who had risen from a sergeant pilot to Wing Commander in some fourteen months. Turnball looked at Bob and his crew and said, They will send their mothers next.

Beginning life on #427 squadron was a time of mixed feelings. Bob and crew found the squadron in a depressed state. Operations were shut down for two weeks due to a shortage of crews and aircraft because of big losses on Nuremburg and Leipzig. The losses of A and B flight commanders and most of the green crews did not sound very good for future survival. It was an uncomfortable start for Bob and crew.

Bobs first three trips were as second dicky where he accompanied experienced crews. His own crew stood by hoping he would return. The Dusseldorf trip with W. C. Turnbull was an eye-opener for things to come lots of flak, searchlights and German fighters over the Rhur Valley, nicknamed Happy Valley.

When arriving over targets, it was not unusual to find searchlights were everywhere. If ones aircraft was coned (that is, caught in the path of three searchlights), very few escaped because they could calculate your altitude. The anti-aircraft fire was concentrated and shells would burst horizontally and vertically. One could smell the cordite as the shells exploded with fragments hitting the aircraft. German fighters were off to one side or above us, and they could be seen because of the glare from the fires and searchlights. Bombing missions over Germany were always on dark nights with no moon, and the target time usually between 10 p.m. and 1 a.m.

Some trips were unforgettable. On one, the target was a trainload of Tiger tanks at Arras, just north of Paris. Unfortunately, the RAF were doing likewise at Amiens some thirty miles away and bombing only thirty minutes before us. When all TIs (target indicators) went down over Arras, the Luftwaffe was already airborne at Amiens and moved over to Bobs target to greet them. They were bombing at 5000 feet and lost 22 out of 125 that night. Max Strange managed to crash land at Gamston, near Folkestone.

He was well shot up, with no hydraulics or flaps, and the tail gunner had half his face shot up.

Another mission was a raid on Stuttgart, which had to be bombed from northeast to southwest. We were routed south of Paris and east toward Metz. Just before Paris a Junkers 88 came up under Bob's aircraft and shot off the plastic nose section. The bomb aimer, Keith Caspel, navigator Ken Schmitz and wireless operator Ed Doan were all in the area but not hit. The fighter's tracer shells seemed to envelope the aircraft. Before heading southwest over Germany, they were hit again and this time lost their starboard-outer engine. They dropped their bombs, and then were attacked again by a fighter. They corkscrewed and dived, turning sharp left and right and went down to a minimum safe altitude over France. Bob had trouble controlling the aircraft during the corkscrew maneuvers and limped back to base. Bob missed the first approach due to strong crosswinds, but finally landed, went to debriefing, got an ounce of rum, and then bacon and eggs for breakfast. After four hours sleep, Bob was called to the C.O.'s office. The C.O. was ready to court martial him. When the Junkers 88 shot off the nose section, one of the shells hit the bomb-dropping timer. As a result, they had only dropped one bomb on Stuttgart and brought the rest back to base. In doing so, they had put the ground crew at risk with a load of live bombs. It also accounted for the trouble Bob had controlling the aircraft during a subsequent fighter attack whilst on three engines. Bob was given a reprimand.

Hamburg on July 28, 1944, was a fireball of a target. The city was ablaze, but the mission was going after the submarine pens just west of the city. They saw a lot of strange things in the air like fireflies. Intelligence informed the crews later that they had seen the first German rocket planes the M.E.163.

Hamburg was Bob's 30th mission, and 28 of those missions had been flown in their first love L London Halifax III. The aircraft was well patched up and the engines time had expired. The C.O. offered Bob and his crew the opportunity to fly Love to its final resting place. They flew it down to Hootin Park, near Liverpool and said farewell to their friend with a bottle of wine. Bob's call sign on final approach was love in the funnel. It was difficult to say goodbye to Love, it had saved their lives many times. Like so many it was scrapped for parts and metal. There were 6,750 Halifax's made, but all that remain are two planes that were recovered from Norwegian waters and one other constructed from the parts of many that had crashed in Yorkshire. One Halifax has been rebuilt and resides in Trenton, Ontario.

August 12, 1944, was a nightmare. Bob and crew were bombing Brunswick, just west of Berlin, and using radar H2S plus P.P.I. (position indicator) because the target was under heavy cloud. Their route took them between Bremen and Hamburg and south towards Hanover. Fighters were everywhere and they had six attacks en route to the target. They dropped bombs on the P.P.I. on a navigator countdown. Bob was sure that as soon as Ken Schmitz had counted nine, eight, seven, Keith Caspell had let the bombs go because the aircraft seemed to feel much lighter. On the way out, they encountered seven more fighter attacks, and Bob's 131 pounds was exhausted from his gunners yelling corkscrew right or corkscrew left. They were chased right over Bremen, and ended up in searchlights. Bob couldn't see anything because of the glare. Ken Schmitz said, keep turning. I'll tell you to stop when we are headed out to sea. Back at Leeming

base by 3 a.m. they looked like ghosts at interrogation. The doctor prescribed double rums.

The war was a time of unparalleled adventure, camaraderie and sadness. In August 1944, returning overdue to base at 2 a.m., Bob found his buddy Mosley-Williams waiting for him on the tarmac. Bob asked, what are you doing up so late? He replied, what took you so long? Two months later, Mosley-Williams was killed in combat and never found. Unfortunately, along with Mosley-Williams, Dave Perry, Pete Cronyn, and Pete Kelley also did not survive and their bodies were never found. They were all very close. Bob thought of them, and all their crewmembers, often throughout his life. Sixty years later, in October 2004, Bob was reunited with them in spirit when he visited the Commonwealth Air Memorial, near Runnymede, to touch his lost friends names etched in stone.

In total, Bob flew 40 missions. Bob and Ken Schmitz were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) at Buckingham Palace by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. He and his crew were fortunate to survive their tour of operations. Good luck was the essential ingredient. Most new crews on arrival figured seven missions as a hurdle to survive. Bob was our hero, but he maintained that the only heroes of war were his comrades and brother who never came home.

Post-Tour

Following his tour, Bob took a brief test pilot course with Hanley Page. They did first flights of new aircraft and deliveries to various squadrons. Later, he checked out on Lancasters and did similar deliveries to squadrons. There was also an Oxford aircraft at the base which he checked himself out on, and he did some trips with wounded to main hospital centers. In all, Bob tested and ferried some 50 Halifax and Lancasters out of Leeming base until August 15th, 1945.

On August 23rd, Bob and Max Strange volunteered for Far East duty and were posted to Bassingborn, south of Cambridge, to 422 Squadron. This base had been a U.S. 8th Air Force Base and home of the Memphis Belle, a much fabled bomber. They formed new crews and started ground school and flight training on Liberator Mark V aircraft.

While at Bassingborn, he was sent to an American base at Warton, near Blackpool. He took a course on the Minneapolis Honeywell autopilot. On completion, he hitched a ride to Borington base near London on a U.S. General's Liberator. On takeoff, the right undercarriage collapsed and the aircraft cartwheeled off the runway. They all got out after using a fire axe to open the escape door. After a few drinks, the General provided a DC3 for our trip to Borington. Ironically, it was on this base in 1943 on the same runway that a Liberator took off and crashed into a school in the village of Freckleton, killing some 39 children. The crash also took the lives of 10 airmen and 14 civilians. A new school was built by the G.I.'s and most people on-board the Liberator Bob was on were in fact U.S. army newsmen who had come for the opening of the new school.

Bob and Max Strange joined 437 Squadron. Originally based in India, 437 had become a DC3 transport squadron. After initial training at Odiham and Croydon bases, they were posted to Brussels on October 15th, 1945, where they stayed until June 3, 1946. Bob

had a crew of four, navigator, co-pilot and radio operator. They flew army and VIPs to Copenhagen, Hamburg, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Naples and also to the Nuremburg trials. They witnessed two days of seeing the likes of Goering, Hess and other Nazis.

At Odiham, their London base, and at various other bases, they could exchange ten to twenty pounds of foreign currency so they made frequent trips and could pick up coffee beans and cigarettes for barter on the continent. In Hamburg, at the Atlanta Hotel, they would leave cigarettes in their packs with the hat-check girl and get bottles of Mumms champagne in return. In Copenhagen, they met Jan Faistor who had been an underground leader and who showed them his father's venetian blind shop with a secret arsenal of weapons in a loft. During the war, he sabotaged German ships in Hamburg harbour as a frogman. Nuremburg was interesting, but a dangerous city for walking at night in uniform so they walked down the center of streets.

On June 15th, 1946, Bob and others flew six DC3s from Odiham to Prestwick to Reykjavik, Iceland. Then on the 16th, the long trip to Goose Bay, Labrador, via Prince Christian, Greenland. They had four 100-gallon fibre tanks in the fuselage that were gravity-fed and used first. They all made it to Goose Bay with not much fuel to spare. The next day, they went on to Rockcliffe, Ottawa, where they shot the place up at 200 feet. The C.O. was not impressed but they couldn't care less. The C.O. finally relented and said thank you.

Post-War TCA, Air Canada & Family

Upon his return to Vancouver, Bob joined Western Air Command. The C.O., noting Bob's slender six-foot frame that weighed all of 129 pounds, asked Bob if he had been a prisoner of war. Bob replied, No, I was a prisoner of Brussels sprouts. Within three months, Bob was convinced that he could never be a peace-time warrior.

Happily, while Bob was at the Vancouver airport with 50 air cadets, a Lancastrian landed from Prestwick. On board was Capt. George Lothian and navigator Pete Powell. Bob had picked Capt. Lothian up one day in 1945 in Prestwick because he had wanted to visit an engineering officer at Leeming Base. Pete Powell went to Vernon Preparatory School when Bob was there in the 1930s and had also been at Leeming after two tours on Pathfinder bombers, and had been a Wing Commander with DSO and DFC plus bar. They told Bob to join Trans Canada Airways (TCA). Two weeks later, Bob joined TCA on November 1st, 1946.

On graduation Bob chose to fly out of Vancouver, then transferred to Montreal and the Transatlantic Division a year later. In late 1947, Bob was first officer on a North Star M.I. en route to London via Sydney, N. S. when their undercarriage struck an unlighted rock obstruction at the runway approach. The aircraft up ended, and an engine and wing caught fire. All passengers and crew got out safely but the aircraft was consumed in flames.

Bob returned to Vancouver in 1950 for two years, before returning to Montreal in 1952 and back on the Atlantic run. He was promoted to Captain in 1954 on DC3s. He also joined 401 Reserve Squadron in Montreal, which had Harvards and Vampires to play with. Wendy Reid was the commanding officer.

Bobs life changed forever when in August 1957, at the ripe age of 39, he became engaged to Mary Louise Weir, a stewardess with TCA. They married on November 9th, 1957. As Bob would say, it was the best decision I ever made in my life. In short order, Bob and Marylou had daughter Patricia in December 1958, built a home in Beaconsfield outside Montreal, and then son Robert in October 1960. Bob enjoyed his years in Montreal including happy times spent at the clubs (Montreal Badminton & Squash, Summerlea Golf, Lake Shore Ski) and with wonderful friends.

The West beckoned and the family moved to Delta (Tsawwassen) in 1972. Bob and sister Betty enjoyed friendly competition to grow the best sweet peas and roses. As in Montreal, Bob and Marylou continued to host family and friends for countless days and dinners of conversation and celebration.

As a pilot, Bob's reputation was one of a superb pilot and instructor a pilot's pilot. Over his 33 years with TCA/Air Canada, Bob flew most of the aircraft types up to the B-747 in training. In his commercial career he flew the Lockheed 1415 and 1815, the DC-3, North Star, Viscount, DC-9, DC-8 and the B-707. His total commercial flying time was over 29,000 hours. Bob also instructed new pilots and captain conversions for four years, in which time he contributed to the standardization of flight training, both in the air and in the simulator.

Bob enjoyed overseas flights to the European continent and the U.K., but some of the most enjoyable time was the nine years spent flying out of Montreal to the Maritimes and Newfoundland. The weather was always a challenge at certain seasons and instrument flying was at a high standard by all pilots who flew the eastern routes. Never to be forgotten were the layovers in Sydney, Cape Breton. In the 1950s and 1960s, nearly all flight crews were adopted by Ritchie and Hazel MacCoy, two wonderful people who welcomed them into their home on layovers. Their name became a legend amongst TCA and Air Canada DC3 and Viscount crews.

Bob was involved with IFALPA for five years and assigned to work on the All Weather Panel and blind landings. This involved work on CAT I, CAT II, and CAT III. At the time, the problem for the pilots was to cool the enthusiasm of industry salesmen and government officials who were eager to accept the inflated claims of manufacturers. During Bob's time with IFALPA, they also introduced a standard lighting system for all airports in the world after much international wrangling. Following Ross Stevenson, Bob was Chairman of the Air Canada Safety Committee for five years. He was responsible for getting amber taxi strip lights implemented.

Along flying and IFALPA, Bob was active in CALPA for 15 years. Bobs commitment was never more evident when, as retirement approached, he understandably took a heightened interest in the Air Canada Pilot's Pension Plan. He uncovered a major deficiency that, if it were not addressed, would cost him and his fellow pilots a substantial loss in income in their retirement years. Bob climbed what seemed like an insurmountable mountain of bureaucracy and complacency. In 1977, after eight months of work, over two hundreds of letters, and countless calculations and graphs, he succeeded in having the graduated pension cap addressed and cap raised from \$44,000 to \$60,000.

In August 1978, Bob turned sixty and retired, reluctantly, from Air Canada. He enjoyed every flight and his loyalty to Air Canada never waned. Shortly after his retirement, Wendy Reid called to say that a new airline, Ontario World Air, was starting. This led to a two-month course at Boeing in Seattle on Boeing 707 aircraft. Ontario World Air flew charters over much of the world. It paid poorly but was a wonderful education. Most memorable were the flights out of Singapore, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. These were flights carrying poor and mostly young refugees who had fled Vietnam on boats via the China Seas. There were many wonderful and heartbreaking stories to be told by these people. These flights were staged through Athens, then Dubrovnik, and finally Bahrain. The two aircraft were in seventy-one countries in two years, and Bob was in sixty per cent of these countries. Bob left the airline after two years because of poor maintenance standards, and the airline went bankrupt a few months after.

The fact is, Bob never retired. Throughout this life he remained on active duty. He had a lifelong passion for reading, knowledge, and business. Bob was involved in many enterprises, including start-up of a match company. His most important and cherished contribution to enterprise was his role as an active director for daughter Patricia's textile recycling company.

Above all, Bob invested in people, and made a fortune in friendships. His life was lived with vigour, integrity, humour, and kindness. A consummate master of ceremonies, Bob engaged one and all with his quick wit and way with words. He was a confident, compassionate leader who always spoke his mind and took a genuine interest in all whom he knew. As his legion of lifelong friends can attest, with Bob in your corner, you knew you had a fierce and loyal advocate.

Bob adored Marylou, his love of 48 years. They had a strong sense of identity, both as individuals and as a couple. They could disagree and still laugh about it. Once, when one of two baked potatoes exploded in the oven, Dad remarked, "look at your potato!" Mum countered, "what makes you think that was mine?" Both broke out laughing.

Bob was ever a proud and loving father, and he was Grandpa to cherished grandson William (Will) Robert Penrose, named after his brother Bill.

Thinking back over his war years and his good fortune to have survived, Bob would say, I feel every day is a bonus and I am most fortunate to be here with my wonderful family and friends. Bob lived every day like it was a gift and carried with him throughout his life a can do attitude. His motto was "get on with it".

Bob died on August 20, 2005, of pulmonary failure. He was 87. Upon learning of Bob's death, fellow pilots whom Bob had instructed 40 years earlier wrote that they had tried to emulate his confidence and professionalism during their careers.

To the very end, Bob was young at heart, reveling in play with grandson Will and talking about how much he wanted to travel into space. Not long before he died, Bob rose at 3 a.m. to watch the Shuttle Discovery land. I just wanted to see them home safely, he said. Once a pilot, always a pilot.