

Dedicated In Memory Of Airman By Joyce Henderson from Flin Flon in Retrospect 1950

Phil Foster, charter member of the Rotary Club and owner of the Hudson Bay Plumbing Company, left Flin Flon in 1940, to enlist with the Royal Canadian Air Force. Foster remarked before leaving Flin Flon, that if anything happened to him while he was away, he had seen to it that funds for continued community service would be provided. Foster resigned from the R.C.A.F. with the intention of fighting for Finland when that country was attacked by Russia. When he arrived in Washington, he learned that the conflict was over, and Germany was marching on Norway. Armed with a letter from the Norwegian Consul to the King of Norway, Foster paid his own passage to England hoping to fly for the Norwegian Air Force. The single, thirty-one-year-old Foster, tried to join the Royal Air Force, and after finally convincing them of his civilian flying expertise, was given an Anson trainer. Later he was posted to the coastal command at the Shetland Islands base as Squadron Leader and Flight Commander in a Canadian Blenheim squadron. Foster claimed the weather was so cold in the Islands, that, "Flin Flon's climate was decidedly warm by comparison".

He made many reconnaissance flights over Norway with Pilot 'Officer A. N. Briggs, a twenty-six-year-old from Winnipeg who was his observer, and Flight Sgt. J.M. Jamieson, a twenty-seven-year-old lad from London, Ontario. Foster had gained the name of the 'Flying Plumber' from his buddies because he "peddled pipes and fittings to miner's homes in Northern Manitoba".

On May 26, 1942, while flying his ship 'Flin Flon Floozie 3rd', he was shot down while on an operational flight over Norway. Foster was killed along with Jamieson, and Briggs was taken prisoner of war. Foster and Jamieson are buried in the churchyard at Egersund, Norway.

In December 1942, the Rotary Club received a letter stating that Squadron Leader Phil Foster had willed the Club \$10,000. The sum was to be realized from the sale of Foster's business (Hudson Bay Plumbing Company), which he hoped would be purchased by four former employees. The will stipulated that \$1,000 was to be paid to the Flin Flon Rotary Club annually for ten consecutive years. The funds were to be used for community service. In mid-March 1943, the will was brought to the courts for a decision on whether or not the document was valid; if the employees were entitled to a share of the profits dating back to 1940 (the date Foster joined the Air Force); and if the money in Foster's bank account was part of the business or of a personal nature. The matter of Foster's will carried on for several months as one of the employees was in the armed services and had to be contacted by mail. Finally on August 9, 1943, his Lordship, Mr. Justice Donovan, at a sitting of the Court of King's Bench in The Pas, in connection with the will, refused to accept as valid the document produced by H. C. Hall, bookkeeper of the Hudson Bay Plumbing Company. During the sitting which carried on for over a week, two handwriting experts, Maurice Jacob and Sgt. Radcliffe, R.C.M.P. gave conflicting evidence as to the validity of the signature of Phil H. Foster on the document. In addition, the court ruled that all employees of the plumbing company were declared to be entitled to share in the profits.

In his will Foster left \$1,000 a year to the Rotary Club, to be used for community welfare. The court ruled that the Rotary Club was to receive the proceeds of the sale of the plumbing business, including equipment and material on hand as of May 26, 1942, when the owner of the business was killed while on active service. They were also entitled to all accounts in connection with that business on that date. It was also ruled that the relatives of the deceased airman were to receive the building and insurance and all else, other than the assets allotted to the Rotary Club. The lawyers representing the beneficiaries were O. F. Wright KC, Fleet G. Whitaker. and D.A. Ross KC. J.A.

Campbell KC acted for the Rotary Club. On June 20, 1947, the Rotary Club announced their decision to develop Jubilee grounds as a park and modern playground at an estimated cost of \$12,000. An amount of \$7,000, made up from the bequest of Phil Foster, had been set aside for the project, and the additional amount required was to be raised through the annual Rotary Carnival and Exhibition. The park had been under the supervision of the Municipality for a number of years, as the Rotary Club were unable to support the cost of maintenance. The Rotary Club decided to rename Jubilee Park and call it Rotary Children's Park. On July 28, 1950, the Rotary Club dedicated the area to the memory of Phil H. Foster. The Elks Youth Band was in attendance, as were several children who had been invited to attend the dedication to hear how the park was established for their benefit. Clarence C. Sparling KC, and RCAF veteran, gave the address and said Foster's life had been exemplified in verse - 'the glory of life is to love, not to live, to give, not to get, and to serve, not to be served.' Rotary President, Archie Walker drew aside the flag veiling a bronze plaque while Canon R.B. Horsefield, dedicated the plaque, pool and rest room in Foster's honor. The plaque read "In loving memory of a fine citizen and benefactor this children's pool and rest room is erected and dedicated to Squadron Leader Philip H. Foster R.A.F. who gave of his time, money and effort during his lifetime in the interests of youth and later gave his life in flying operations over Norway on May 26, 1942, in order that youth and mankind alike might survive. Greater love hath no man than this"