

86 ASU AAS Patton-Cunnington

By WO Cory Gill and Capt Craig Fettes

Recently, the Aircraft Arresting System (AAS) Section of 86 Airfield Systems and Utilities Flight (86 ASU) was awarded the Patton-Cunnington Trophy for their role in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) AAS Modernization Project. This prestigious trophy is awarded annually by 1 Canadian Air Division and recognizes a significant engineering project completed by a unit, with focus being placed on benefit to the Canadian Forces (CF), project complexity, planning and design, project execution and logistical difficulty.



The trophy memorializes the Second World War actions of two construction engineer officers from 1 Canadian Pioneer Battalion. On September 21, 1940, after a daylight bombing raid against an aircraft production plant in England, Lieutenant J.M.S. Patton and Captain D.W. Cunningham removed an unexploded 226 kilogram (500-pound) bomb from the factory floor. For their actions Lt Patton was awarded the George Cross "for an act of the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger" and Capt Cunningham was awarded the George Medal "for an act of great bravery".

An AAS is an energy absorbing system that is used to rapidly stop NATO and other allied tail hook equipped fighter aircraft in the event of an in-flight emergency or an aborted takeoff. These systems are vital to our sovereignty and to safeguard the investment Canada has made in our present and future aircraft and pilots.



86 ASU RM Techs proudly display Patton-Cunnington plaque. In the background is a rebuilt BAK-12 AAS for the Fire Fighter Academy at CFB Borden

From left to right: WO Gill (AAS Supt), Pte Kiley (AAS Tech), MCpl Burke (AAS Crew Chief 2i/c) and Sgt Best (AAS Crew Chief)
Photographer: Pte Conway

The AAS Modernization Project will result in the replacement of all aircraft arresting systems throughout the Air Force, systems that at up to 50-years old and are either inadequate, obsolete or beyond their life cycle. The AAS Life Cycle Manager, project officers from Ottawa and engineers from 1 Canadian Air Division have been working diligently to build new infrastructure and install new

equipment. To date, 86 ASU has completed AAS upgrades at CFB Greenwood, CFB Comox, CFB Trenton, CFB Cold Lake, FOL Inuvik and Mirabel Int'l Airport.



RM Techs installing body stakes on a Mobile Aircraft Arrestor System at CFB Comox.
Pers in Photo: MCpl Pollock (86 ASU AAS Tech), Pte Kiley (86 ASU AAS Tech) and 3 x Comox pers (RM Techs)
Photographer: Sgt Segall

The AAS section of 86 ASU is the “hands on” operating structure of the AAS Modernization Project. It is the centre of excellence for AAS across the Canadian Forces. In addition to being the sole section that conducts AAS Team Leader Qualification courses, it completes 2nd and 3rd line maintenance on all AAS nationwide and is the only section that maintains and deploys Mobile Aircraft Arresting Systems (MAAS). The trade responsible for upgrading, maintenance and training with regards to the AAS is the Refrigeration and Mechanical Systems Technician Trade, a technically diverse trade capable of anything from HVAC maintenance to overhead door installation to AAS maintenance.



Group photo of a completed Mobile Aircraft Arrestor System install at the Atlantic International Airshow in Charlottetown, PEI in support of 2012 Op Connection.

From left to right: Lt Weatherby (Const Engr), Cpl Duhaney (8 Wg Fire Hall), Cpl Martel (8 Wg Fire Hall), Cpl Grenier (AAS Tech), Sgt Nadon (3 Wg AAS Team Leader in Training) and WO Gill (AAS Team Leader)

Special thanks to Maj Steve Button, Capt Steven Vezina, MWO Jean-Marc Beriault, MWO Luc Gauthier, MWO Alain Roy and MWO Craig Tucker, who have all contributed extensively to the AAS modernization project.



Installation Certification of an AAS at 8 Wg Trenton.