

Where Paths Do Lead

Part II of the Gilchrist story

William Gilchrist's grandparents emigrated from Scotland to Puslinch, Wellington County in 18 . John Gilchrist and his wife Ann, nee Taylor, were natives of Skipness, Scotland. Their son Peter Gilchrist married Margaret Wilkinson in Puslinch. William Alexander was their youngest son. The Gilchrist family farmed in the Killean area of SW Puslinch, so many are buried in the Killean Cemetery.



William Alexander Gilchrist (1877-1956) married Mary Elizabeth Scott (1881-1958) of nearby North Dumfries Township, Waterloo County on 29 January 1908. William was then farming near Weyburn, SK and he and Mary returned to the west.



Their sons William McKenzie Gilchrist (1909-2003) and Peter Alexander Gilchrist b.1912 were born in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. Known as Bill and Alex the boys grew up on farm in the Weyburn area.

After attending Kelvington, SK and Chatham, ON high schools, Bill studied one year at the University of Manitoba, returning to Saskatchewan in 1931 to work in the zinc plant of the newly built Flin Flon mine. His teenaged brother Alex also worked in the zinc plant. Bill returned to school in Ontario in the fall and graduated from Queen's University with a degree in mining and metallurgy in 1936. Their parents had moved to the Nut Lake Indian Reserve, SK where their father William A. had been hired as Resident Farmer by the federal government.



Bill, left and Alex, right in photo

Alex learned to fly while working at the mine and in 1935 joined the Royal Air Force in the UK for a pilot's officer's course. By the time the Second World War broke out,

Alex was a Flight Lieutenant. His brother Bill also enlisted with the Royal Canadian Engineers.

Working at the Flin Flon mine as young men shaped both of their futures. Bill's mining and metallurgy degree led to a career in mining.

Below is Puslinch Historical Society's past president Anna Jackson's presentation to PHS at a Remembrance Day meeting of the society. She mentions the *Royal Air Force Escaping Society*, a charity set up in 1946 to provide help to those in the former occupied countries who put their lives at risk to assist and save members of the "Royal Air Forces" (that is, Air Forces of the British Commonwealth) who were attempting to escape and evade capture.

Eldorado's New Boss

Eldorado Mining and Refining Ltd., has a new boss. He is William M. Gilchrist, a genial and brilliant mining engineer who steps up to president from the post of vice-president in charge of operations.

Bill Gilchrist is a westerner by birth but like so many mining engineers, in his business career he has covered a lot of territory. He was born in Weyburn, southern Saskatchewan, in 1909 but attended high school at Kelvington, Sask. and Chatham, Ontario. He took one year at the University of Manitoba then switched to Queen's at Kingston from which he graduated in mining and metallurgy in 1936.

For the first three years after graduation Gilchrist worked in various mining operations in central Manitoba and northwestern Ontario, then joined the engineering staff of Preston East Dome Mines.

When the war came along, Gilchrist enlisted with the Royal Canadian Engineers and in 1945 was demobilized with the rank of captain. He went back to Preston East Dome as an efficiency engineer.

In 1946 he joined Trans American Mining Co., and was engaged in exploration and development work in the Northwest Territories. Eight years ago he was appointed chief engineer of Giant Yellowknife Gold Mines Ltd., and a little later vice-president and mines manager of Transcontinental Resources Ltd.

His connection with Eldorado dates to 1952. He was assistant manager of the Beaverlodge operations from that year to 1955, manager at Beaverlodge from 1955 to the beginning of this year when he became vice-president in charge of western operations. Last May he was moved up to vice-president in charge of operations.

Elected Director Westfield Minerals Limited



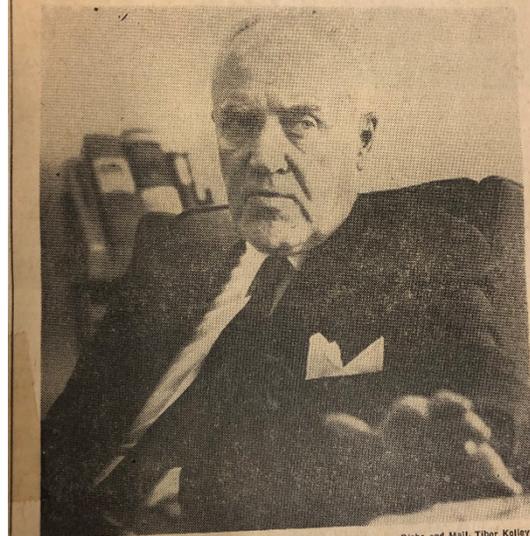
William M. Gilchrist

Mr. Patrick J. Hughes, Chairman and President of Westfield Minerals Limited, is pleased to announce the election at the recent annual meeting of shareholders of Mr. William M. Gilchrist to the Board of Directors. Mr. Gilchrist was President and Chairman of the Board of Eldorado Nuclear Limited from 1958 until his retirement in 1974 and is past president of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and a director of The Mining Association of Canada, Canadian Nuclear Association and a member of other Canadian mining and engineering associations. Eldorado Nuclear is the Canadian Government owned uranium producer and acts as agent for the Federal Government in the sale of a wide range of nuclear fuel products.

Westfield Minerals Limited is a Toronto, Canada based mining exploration and investment company, currently active in joint venture programs involving exploration of base metal, precious metals and uranium prospects in the State of Alaska, U.S.A. *

TORONTO, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1971

MAN IN THE NEWS



—Globe and Mail, Tibor Kotley

CANADA LAUNCHES WORLD SEARCH FOR HEAVY WATER SUPPLY
W. A. Gilchrist, Canadian Nuclear Association president, is concerned over shortage of heavy water expected to develop next year with completion of the third and fourth units at Pickering nuclear power station. Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. is looking for supplies from overseas. Story on Page B3.

Below is Puslinch Historical Society's past president Anna Jackson's presentation to PHS at a Remembrance Day meeting of the society. She mentions the *Royal Air Force Escaping Society*, a charity set up in 1946 to provide help to those in the former occupied countries who put their lives at risk to assist and save members of the "Royal Air Forces" (that is, Air Forces of the British Commonwealth) who were attempting to escape and evade capture.



—Central Press Canadian

IN COMMAND—Group Capt. P. A. Gilchrist, D.F.C., of the R.C.A.F., will command U.S. and Canadian air force units in Exercise Sweetbriar, the joint winter training operation to be held in Yukon and Alaska in February. Group Capt. Gilchrist is commandant of the joint air training centre at Rivers, Man. He is a native of Weyburn, Sask. He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Gilchrist, Blenheim road, Galt, Ont. Lieut.-Gen. Chamberlain, commanding general of the U.S. Fifth Army, controls the operation.

My first memories of WWII are limited to parties for departing community young men who had enlisted and were leaving for over-seas, some of them never to return. Our Church features a plaque listing the names of four, two of whom were from neighboring Beverly Township.

Other than those local memories, we had young family members who also enlisted, and were tragically listed as missing and presumably killed in action.

The person I will talk about had better luck. He was my father's first cousin, who had grown up in Saskatchewan, came with his brother to attend high school in Chatham, Ontario, where one of his Aunts lived. Alex had high hopes of attending University in an aeronautical course, but this did not work out, so he learned to fly at the mine at Flin Flon where he worked later as a young man. In 1935 he went to the UK, joined the Royal Air Force for a pilot officer's course. His training was in Iran, Egypt and India. By the time the war broke out he was a senior officer. CLIPPING. He was already a Flight Lieut. in 1940

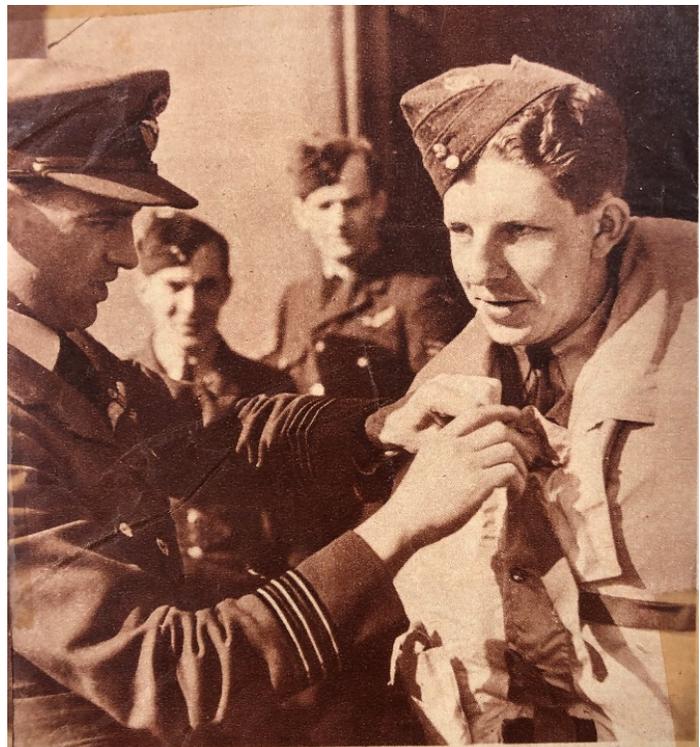
He flew over Germany many times before he was shot down and was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross, for showing great determination, courage and keenness in carrying out his missions at night over enemy territory.

In 1941 there was a report that he was on the Casualty list. His parents sent a cable "Name in Casualty List. Please cable particulars" and this is the typical Alex answer "Casualty List a mistake." His Mother wrote to us "Can you beat that for brevity!"

As a result of being missing for six months he became a member of the Royal Air Force Escaping Society which I first heard about at his funeral a few years ago. After being shot down, I believe he made his way to Switzerland, where he was probably linked up with the French Underground; I can remember him telling us that he felt every dog in France barked at him, as he walked across France on his way to Spain, and freedom.

When the first Canadian Bomber Squadron was formed in 1941 it was under the command of Wing Commander P.A. Gilchrist. After freedom, it was no longer safe for him to fly over Europe, so he spent the rest of the war in Atlantic Transport. Post-war he transferred to RCAF keeping his wing commander status; he took a course in National Defence and was then posted to Rivers as Group Commander of the joint air training centre at Rivers Man. then St. Hubert Air Base, on the South Shore at Montreal.

We were at his military funeral at Downsview in 1990 - a very impressive service; the reception following was at the Officers' Mess.



AIDED by Wing-Commander Gilchrist, D.F.C., since reported missing, Sergeant Air Gunner Martin, former telegraph operator tries out a new life preserver.