

Aircraftwoman Joan Mavis Cracknell

Royal Canadian Air Force - Women's Division

Family Life:

Joan Cracknell was born to Mabel Hands and Eric John Cracknell on July 3, 1923, at Ottawa, Ontario.

She attended Ottawa Ladies College from 1939 until 1942 when she began training as a Stenographer with John Graham & Co. in Ottawa.

After the war Joan attended University of Toronto to qualify as an Occupational Therapist.

She worked at the St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital as an Occupational Therapist from 1945 until 1980, at which point she moved to Warton.

The first time she retired to Bruce Peninsula, and then obtained a job at Grey Bruce Home Care. She traveled the world, and given her love of fast cars, she owned a yellow Porsche.

Joan retired from Grey Bruce Home Care in 1990 and moved to Mallory Beach Road, where she lived until 2021 when she moved to Kelso Villa.



Decorations:

Medal of Merit

Military Service:

Aircraftwoman Cracknell signed up with the RCAF's Women's Division at Ottawa, July 1943. She was AW1 and then was subsequently promoted to AW2.

She did her basic training at Rockcliffe Airport, Ottawa and completed her Morse Code training at Montreal.

Aircraftwoman Cracknell was deployed to a facility outside of Vancouver where she served as a Wireless Operator.

She received messages in Morse Code from naval ships in the Pacific Theatre. She was held to strictest of secrecy as the messages often contained vital privileged and confidential information that would have been disastrous in enemy hands.

While on leave Aircraftwoman Cracknell hitchhiked in uniform with other servicewomen from Vancouver to San Francisco. They were treated very well by American civilians who thought that they were RCAF Officers.

Lessons Learned:

“How to be a part of a team and given the wonderful opportunity, upon discharge, to attend University, which would not have happened if she had not served in the RCAF. This experience gave me the desire to travel worldwide. Which I have done.”