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Ask Me About:

My Background:

My interest in wartime was sparked by growing up on a former World War Two airfield in Saskatchewan. As well, my family was deeply patriotic. My grandfather served in the cavalry in World War One, my father and uncles were RCAF veterans, and the women in my family were active volunteers on the home front.

My Idea for a Book:

I spotted a newspaper photograph many years ago of a British woman in uniform, bent over an aerial photograph, studying it with a stereoscope. It looked like a fascinating occupation, and I longed to know more about it.

My Lead Character's Occupation:

Aerial photographic interpretation – what it is, why women were good at it, and how it helped win the war. For example, it was a woman who detected on an aerial photograph the very first jet-propelled bomb in history.

Canada's Unsung Heroines:

Canadian women in uniform – why they weren't allowed to enlist for the first two years, how many served, and what types of duties they performed. And why their contribution, in my opinion, has been overlooked.

Two Personal Anecdotes About Writing Bird's Eye View:

1. Several years ago, my husband and I visited the former RAF Medmenham in England, now a luxury hotel called Danesfield House. As we were walking about the grounds, a woman overheard us and introduced herself as Eileen Scott, a former WAAF who had served at Medmenham. In spite of living in the nearby village of Leighton Buzzard, she hadn't returned to the station since 1945 – until that very day. I whisked her off to the dining room for lunch and plied her with questions. Her answers provided several nuggets of realistic details for my book. I don't believe in magic, but this was an extraordinary chance meeting.
2. In 2011 my husband and I visited Peenemunde in northern Germany, to see the original site of the V-weapons factory. It is now a very small, understated museum (Germans are reluctant to celebrate their military accomplishments, for obvious reasons), but it does

have examples of the real V1 and V2 weapons on display. This visit had personal significance. In 1942 my husband's father, who was a teenager at the time, was apprenticing at one of the first jet engine factories in Berlin when he was drafted into the German armed forces and sent to Peenemunde to work on the V-weapons. Some months later, he heard that his family home had been bombed, and he was given a forty-eight hour compassionate leave to visit his parents in Berlin. That very night, August 17th, 1943, a six-hundred bomber raid made the famous surprise attack on Peenemunde, decimating the factory and killing hundreds of workers. His narrow escape impacted my own life.