

# FLY NORTH

Volume 10, Number 3:  
July -September, 2018

## NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE

**Preserving and celebrating the diverse history of aviation in the northwest, through the collection and preservation of artifacts and stories of the persons and events that made this region unique in aviation history**

### NOAHC News -----

#### NOAHC Board 2018-19

Following the Annual General Meeting, the NOAHC Board met and chose the following office bearers:

**President** – Elizabeth Wieben  
**Vice President** – George Holborn  
**Executive Secretary** – Denise Lyzun  
**Treasurer** – David Sutton  
**Recording Secretary** - Victoria Bowen

#### Board Members:

David Bryan   Gerry Bell   Archie Gribben  
Mary-Alice Isaac   David Kemp   Helen Kyle  
Don McRae   Jim Milne

#### Red Lake Norseman Festival 2018

NOAHC Vice-President George Holborn attended the Norseman Festival in July, representing NOAHC and the Northwestern Ontario Air Search and Rescue Association (NOASARA). The fees for this event and George's expenses were graciously covered by NOASARA. Sadly there was no Norseman available to participate in the event this year. Instead, the regular fly-past consisted of three DHC-3 Otters, one of which along with a Superior Airways DHC-2 piston Beaver also gave flights around the festival site. It is expected that a couple of Norseman will return to the line-up in 2019.

Red Lake's iconic Norseman CF-DRD has been removed from its pylon in Norseman Park. A severe hailstorm in July 2017 caused major damage to the fabric covering of the fuselage and wings, allowing moisture from rain and melting snow to access the interior. Without timely repairs this could cause permanent damage to the structure of the aircraft. Restoration has begun. The fuselage is still in Red Lake and the wings have been removed to Gord Hughes' repair facility in Ignace. Information on how to help save DRD can be obtained by contacting [duane@norsemanfestival.on.ca](mailto:duane@norsemanfestival.on.ca)

#### Acquisitions:

NOAHC has received an RCAF WWII life-vest emergency light. It was donated by Ivan Rabideau, whose brother found it at



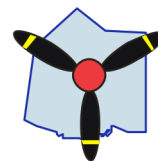
Bishopsfield in 1942. The light was carried in a pocket of the standard allied airforces life vest, commonly referred to as a 'Mae West' since when inflated it gave the wearer a profile similar to that of Mae West, a buxom movie star and sex symbol in the 1930s. The life vest supported the airman in the water and at night the light gave an indication of his location. The original owner of the light is unknown, but it may well have belonged to one of the trainees at No 2 Elementary Flying Training School at Fort William, which used Bishopsfield at various times in the early 1940s.

#### Hiring of Intern

Using funds made available from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and support from the Paterson Foundation, NOAHC has hired Jonathan Sheppard, a recent MA History graduate from Lakehead University, who has a strong interest in aviation. He will be involved in a range of activities, from researching various aspects of local aviation history, to greeting visitors to the Centre and providing information on our exhibits. Overseeing the use of the flight simulator by visitors to the Centre will also be part of his job. Jonathan began working at the Centre on September 10 and will be with us for a year.

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4. Bill Dicks – Bush Pilot



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## ***No. 2 Elementary Flying Training School: Fort William 1940-44***

Fort William's #2 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) was part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) set up in 1939 in an agreement between Britain and Canada to provide facilities and training for airman from all parts of the Commonwealth. With its wide-open spaces, good flying conditions and its distance from most of the conflict zones, Canada was considered ideal for such a scheme. By the time the Plan was terminated in 1945 it had graduated more than 130,000 pilots, navigators, flight engineers and other aircrew, and was judged a great success. The school in Fort William was created to train recruits, with no previous flying experience, to become RCAF and RAF pilots.

BCATP Organization Order NO. 19, issued on May 8, 1940 stated the following:

***Under the Joint Air Training Plan organization, 26 Elementary Flying Training Schools are to be established for the elementary training of pilots. These schools will be operated by civilian companies using aircraft supplied by the R.C.A.F. In addition to the civilian staff, there will be a small R.C.A.F. supervisory staff established at each school.***

***No. 2 Elementary Flying Training School is to open at Fort William on June 24th, 1940 and will be operated by the Thunder Bay Air Training School Ltd.***

The school opened on time with 26 Tiger Moths and 24 students from No. 1 Initial Training School in Toronto.

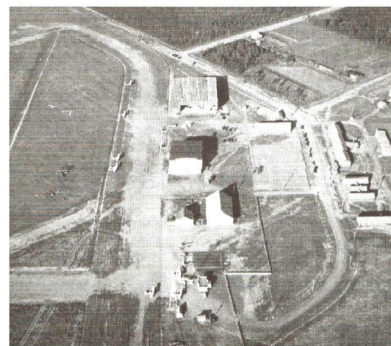
Daily reports on activities at each school were filed (on RCAF Form R65) by the Chief Supervisory Officer (CSO), an RCAF officer, and these have survived to be digitised by Heritage Canada, which has made them accessible to the public on the web. This article is based on these reports available at [http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_c12336](http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c12336).

The BCATP was a hierarchical system in which the new recruits spent a month at a Manning Depot to learn the rudiments of military life. From there they proceeded to an Initial Training School (ITS) where mathematics, navigation, aerodynamics, and other subjects were studied. Results there determined the recruit's next posting, some being considered suitable for flying training and others for navigation or wireless schools. Those considered suitable for pilot training were posted to an Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS), such as that at Fort William, to take an eight week course involving all aspects of basic flight and navigation and about fifty hours of flying in single engined "primary" training aircraft such as Fleet Finches or de Havilland Tiger Moths. Following graduation from EFTS, students went on to a Service Flying Training School to be introduced to more powerful and complex aircraft, such as the North American Harvard for potential fighter pilots, or the Avro Anson, Cessna Crane or Airspeed Oxford for those destined for multi-engined aircraft.

The EFTSs were operated as civilian flying schools, with a civilian manager in charge of civilian staff, mainly the instructors, and an RCAF CSO who dealt with issues such as the availability of aircraft, course administration and the welfare of the students. The instructors were a varied group; some had flown during WWI, others had been bush pilots or even commercial pilots, while some had been trained by the RCAF. All were considered civilians, employed by the flying club, but were given the temporary rank of sergeant. Those who had been trained in the RCAF instructors' schools and held RCAF rank joined the EFTS as being 'on indefinite leave without pay', becoming civilian employees of the

flying club. Many of the instructors were not happy to be teaching students to fly. They would have preferred to be in the regular air force fighting overseas. Some applied regularly for transfers, but these were seldom allowed since the provision of new pilots was considered paramount. One ingenious approach to dealing with the issue was attempted by two instructors at Fort William in January 1942. They were dismissed from the school after a breach of the low flying regulations over the city. Each was fined \$75.00 and returned to air force duty. A few months later another pair of instructors had the same result when they were found guilty of low flying over Bishopscote. One instructor from the Lakehead, mentioned several times in the daily reports was Oscar Sideen. He was considered one of the best as can be seen from the daily report for July 30, 1941, in which the CSO wrote, ***'The first 20 hour test of Course 33 was successfully completed by R98034 LAC Vaughan P.G.; thus Mr. Oscar Sideen once again not only soloed the first pupil, but prepared him for his test before anyone else.'*** In August of that year he entered service in the RCAF and on March 12, 1942 became Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) at the school. The daily report for August 10, 1943 notes that Pilot Officer O. Sideen was transferred to #19 EFTS at Virden, Manitoba.

At any one time there would be two courses in operation with a total of 80 – 90 students under training, which involved ground school as well as flying school. At ground school students took



***Fort William Airport in the early 1940s. The EFTS hangar is the building at the top. The RCAF barracks and admin buildings are at the left. (courtesy the Lyzun Collection)***

classes in mathematics as they applied to aviation and navigation, studied aircraft recognition, and spent time on the Link Trainer. On the flying side, students began with an instructor under dual control and were expected to solo in about 8 hours. The late Bill Turner, a NOAHC member for many years, trained at No. 2 EFTS, where he soloed after 7 hrs 55 mins. Some took less; others took longer and some never did make it. Further testing took place after 20 hours had been accumulated with success in a major test at 50 hours required for graduation from the course. At any stage of the process, a student might be considered unsuitable for further training and reassigned to ground duties or to aircrew training as a navigator, wireless operator or air gunner. When that occurred, a student was said to have been 'washed out'. Washout or wastage rates in the earlier courses are difficult to calculate, but in 1943 the rates began to be noted in the daily reports. Typically one or two trainees would be washed out over a week or two, but in June 1943, 8 had training discontinued in one day. Course wastage rates ranged from 15% to more than 50%. In some reports, no reasons were given for the wash outs. Others gave details. Failure to pass an air test was a common cause, but ***(continued on page 3)***

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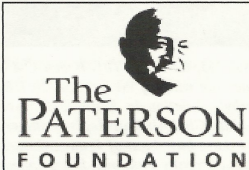
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NOAHC continues to host a monthly bingo at the Superior Shores Gaming Association on Memorial Avenue. The returns from these events make an important contribution to the Centre's revenue.

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## No. 2 EFTS (continued from page 2)



*de Havilland Tiger Moths of No.2 EFTS lined up ready for a day's training at Fort William in the early 1940s. Note the canopies, which were added to the normally open-cockpit plane to combat the cold weather in Canada.*

(courtesy the Lyzun Collection)

other reasons given included being 'temperamentally unsuitable', having 'poor eyesight and worries causing mental hazards', and there was one student who 'had his training ceased at his own request because of uneasiness in the air when flying solo'. Being washed out was traumatic for those who desperately wanted to be pilots, but some went on to become successful aircrew or groundcrew. One trainee washed out in May 1941, for example, ultimately attained the rank of Group Captain.

In the beginning, students at the EFTSs were expected to complete their training in 48 days but that was increased in March 1940 to 72 days. Despite that, one course in early 1941 took only 38 days to meet the requirements for graduation and the course that followed it took only 45. Few courses seem to have needed 72 days. Most were completed within 50 to 60 days and probably some would have needed less, but had available flying time reduced by bad weather or poor field conditions such as mud and slush on the runway.

Those students who graduated were transferred to a Service Flying Training School (SFTS) to train on larger and faster aircraft. Of the graduates from Course #74, who graduated in April 1943, for example, 11 went to #11 SFTS in Yorkton, Saskatchewan to fly Harvards and 2 to #12 SFTS in Brandon to continue their training on Cranes and Ansons.

*(to be continued)*

## *Bill Dicks - from farmer to flyer*



**The Dychakowsky brothers on the farm.**



**Bill at the dock with a Superior Airways Norseman**

*NOAHC thanks Kathleen Rae, Bill Dicks' daughter for providing the pictures and information on this page. Kathleen was less than a year old when her father was killed, and she is keen to find out more about his time in this area.*

*Kathleen would be happy to hear from any of our readers who may have known Bill or his brothers. If you send the information to NOAHC at [noahc@fbaytel.net](mailto:noahc@fbaytel.net) we will be happy to pass it on.*

*Bill Dicks was born on the Dychakowsky family farm near Rossburn, Manitoba, where his grandfather had homesteaded in 1904. He had two brothers, Roy and Peter. Bill was christened Wasyl Dychakowsky, but changed his name to William "Bill" Dicks. None of the brothers wanted to be farmers and saw aviation as their ticket away from the farm.*

*They were so keen to get into aviation that in 1952 the brothers pooled their resources and bought a Republic Seabee for \$3,000, although at that time none of them knew how to fly. Bill*



*learned to fly at the Thunder Bay Flying School and added his commercial pilot's licence while working in Sudbury. Roy also became a commercial pilot, while Peter trained as an aviation mechanic.*

**A Republic Seabee similar to the one that the Dychakowsky brothers bought**

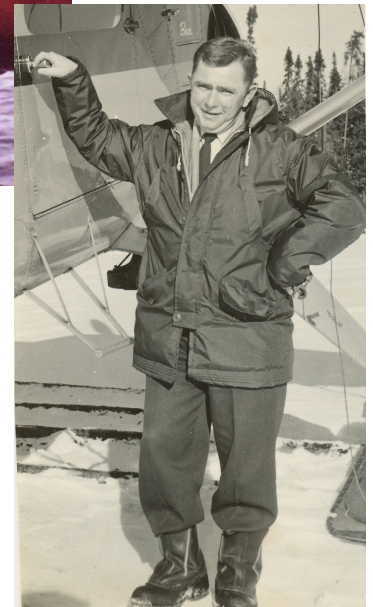
*Both Roy and Bill flew for Georgian Bay Airways of Parry Sound in the mid-1950s, before Bill moved on to Superior Airways in 1957. Roy remained in Parry Sound, but lost his life in 1960 when his plane crashed there.*



**Between flights –  
Bill sits at the door  
of a Superior  
Airways de  
Havilland Otter**

*Bill flew for Superior Airways between 1957 and 1962, before moving to the Marathon Pulp and Paper Company to fly their de Havilland Canada Beaver between the Lakehead, Marathon and Caramat as well as to the company headquarters in Wisconsin.*

*He later moved to B.C. to become a pilot for Trans-Provincial Airlines, where his brother Peter was an aviation mechanic. Sadly, Bill lost his life in an aircraft crash at Trapper Lake in B.C. in 1964, when he was just short of 30 years old.*



**Bill with the Marathon  
Pulp and Paper  
de Havilland Beaver**