

FLY NORTH



NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE

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



NOAHC News ...

Archival donations

NOAHC member Sam Coghlan has sent us memorabilia that tells the story of his uncle Terence Coghlan, who was born in Fort William, flew with Bomber Command in WWII and on returning home became involved in commercial aviation. Terry's sister-in-law was Marion (Swaim) Coghlan who was involved in a tragic accident at the Fort William Aero Club in 1930 in which the club's chief instructor James Dickie was killed. (see *Fly North vol7, n3 2015*). Terry Coghlan's story is on page 2 of this issue.

Harold Kampher of Shuniah has donated 6 copies of Air Trails Pictorial Magazine originally published between 1945 and 1947. Being nearly 80 years old they are fragile, but in remarkable condition and still readable. They include articles on WWII and aviation in the immediate post war years. Few aviation magazines have survived from that time period so these are important historical documents and provide an interesting comparison with current aviation magazines



Memberships

As 2025 approaches it is time for membership renewal. Payment can be made by cheque, mailed to the Centre, or by cash and credit card at the Centre itself. E-transfers can be made to noahc@tbaytel.net

Air Cadet visit to the Centre

On Saturday, November 16, 2024, NOAHC hosted a visit by members of the 70 RCACS Elsie MacGill Air Cadet Squadron.



The cadets in the boardroom before touring the exhibits.

After being welcomed by Denise Lyzun the cadets were divided into sections and introduced to the different exhibits by volunteers, George Holborn, Archie Gribben, Dave Kemp and John Hill. John also guided some of the cadets through the flight simulator, which as always was a major draw for the visitors.

RCAF Centenary Coins

NOAHC has acquired a small number of the \$2.00 coins specially minted to commemorate the Centenary of the RCAF. Because of the limited number available purchases will be restricted to two per purchaser. They will go on sale at the Centre on December 7, between 1:00 and 3:30 at a cost of \$5.00 per coin.



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Terence Coghlan DFC – A Fort William Pilot

Terence (Terry) Coghlan was born in 1920 into a family of 12 children in Fort William. He enlisted in the RCAF at North Bay in July 1941 and following initial training was posted to #21 EFTS in Chatham, New Brunswick in January, 1942. Graduating from there in April 1942 he remained in New Brunswick at #8 SFTS in Moncton where he took advanced training on the twin-engined Avro Anson. This meant that the powers-that-be had recognized that he had the expertise (and perhaps the temperament) best suited for further training on multi-engined aircraft, leading ultimately to operations on a bomber squadron. He graduated from the Moncton school in September, 1942 and was commissioned. There followed a stint at #1 Flying Instructor School at Trenton, Ontario between October and December, 1942. After training as a flying instructor Terry was posted to #2 SFTS at Uplands in Ottawa where he seems to have trained future fighter pilots on the Harvard advance trainer until the Fall of 1943. In October of that year his record shows that he was posted to "Y" Depot in Halifax where he embarked for the ocean crossing to Britain. On arrival he would go to the RCAF Personnel Reception Centre (PRC) at Bournemouth on the south coast of England before being posted to an Operational Training Unit (OTU) where he would accumulate hours of training on larger multi-engined aircraft than those he had flown in Canada. The planes were probably Wellington twin engined bombers, but where is not clear from the surviving records. Flying time at the OTU would also provide experience in dealing with the vagaries of British weather and allow aircrew to get used to flying together. The next stage in the training process was to provide experience on the RCAF "heavies" such as the Handley Page Halifax and the Avro Lancaster and that was done at a Heavy Conversion Unit (HCU). Terence Coghlan and his crew were posted to 1669 HCU at Topcliffe in Northern Yorkshire where they practiced day and night sorties and fighter affiliation, which was intended to prepare them to deal with fighter attacks when they began to fly on operations over Europe. That came when they were transferred to 434 Squadron RCAF at Croft in Yorkshire. No. 434 Squadron had been adopted by the Rotary Club of Halifax, Nova Scotia and given the name "Bluenose" Squadron, after the famous racing schooner. (F/O Charles Fiori from Port Arthur was a navigator in 434 also and flew on many of the same missions as the Coghlan crew). Their first mission with the squadron was on November 16, 1944 when they flew a Halifax to bomb Julich. It was a six-hour flight and relatively uneventful except for some icing on the return leg. Between then and April 1945, the crew completed a tour of 30 missions. No mission could be considered routine, involving as it did the stress and danger of flying for 6 to 10 hours in darkness, in the cloud and fog common over Britain and Europe, shot at by anti-aircraft fire or attacked by night fighters. However, some operations were more dangerous than others. For example, the Coghlan plane suffered the loss of an engine twice and had to return to base on three engines; it was hit by flak over Hannover near the end of March in 1945 and less than a week later on the same night it was stalked by both an Me 163 rocket powered fighter and an Me 262, one of the first jet fighters, over Hamburg. In January 1945, the squadron was re-equipped with the Avro Lancaster, which could fly faster and higher than the Halifax with a bomb load as much as 2000 pounds heavier than the latter. According to the squadron operational reports in the



The Coghlan Crew
Back Row (l-r) George Wilson (w/op); Gerry Fullerton (a/g); Terry Coghlan (p); Howard MacAdam (b/a).
Front Row (l-r) Jack Robbins RAF (f/e); Peter Rawlyck (nav); Rudy St. Germain (a/g)

at the Bomber Command Museum in Nanton, Alberta, a common Halifax bomb load was around 7500, whereas the squadron Lancasters carried as much as 10000 pounds. The crew's last mission was on the night of April 4/5 to the synthetic rubber plant at Leuna. When they returned, Coghlan and his wireless operator were interviewed by an RCAF newsman and their picture appears on the 434 Squadron webpage. (www.rcaf434squadron.com)



Interview after returning from the raid on Leuna
(l-r) George Wilson (w/op), Sgt. J Badger (RCAF newsman), F/O Terence Coghlan (pilot)

Flight Lieutenant Coghlan was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) in September 1945, the citation noting that he "has completed numerous sorties against the enemy, the majority of which were attacks against such heavily defended targets as Stuttgart, Munich, and Hamburg. He has at all times displayed the greatest determination and tenacity in pressing home his attacks. He is a highly skilled and courageous pilot whose coolness under fire, devotion to duty, and display of a fine offensive spirit have served as an example to the whole squadron".

Terence Coghlan returned to Canada in July 1945, where he continued to fly, eventually accumulating 6,000 flying hours. He managed several bush charter companies which eventually became Nordair Ltd. and he became the Regional Operations Supervisor for the company. He died suddenly in March 1976.

With thanks to Sam Coghlan for providing the material that made this story possible



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Pioneers in Northern Aviation
Harvey Friesen and Cliff Friesen

New Exhibit on Pioneer Aviators in the North West

NOAHC member, Ron Hell, has created a poster exhibit to recognise the contribution of Harvey and Cliff Friesen to the development of the aviation industry in Northwestern Ontario.

This is the story of two brothers who built one of the most successful regional airlines in Canada, namely Bearskin Airlines. In text and pictures the exhibit records the founding of the airline by John Hegland at Big Trout Lake in 1963 and its acquisition by the Friesen brothers in the 1970s when it graduated from providing charter services to offering scheduled flights. With the provision of all-season airfields to remote First Nation communities in the north in the 1970s and early 1980s, the company expanded its scheduled flights to more than 20 of them. At about the same time the company acquired the Fairchild Metroliners that were to become the sole aircraft type in its fleet and began a period of expansion that saw new routes established to Toronto/Buttonville, Waterloo, Ottawa and Minneapolis-St. Paul. By 2003, the company was providing scheduled services to almost 40 destinations. That same year it sold its northern First Nation routes to Wasaya, and in 2017 it merged with Perimeter Aviation of Winnipeg, but retained the Bearskin name and brand.

It celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2023 and with its 22 Metroliners flying between 9 locations in northwestern and northeastern Ontario plus Manitoba, its iconic bear paw logo continues to be seen in the air above the north.



Aviation themed merchandise available at the Centre



Jigsaw Puzzles
\$5.00

Caps
\$15.00

NOAHC has a variety of new products that are now on sale at the Centre. These may be purchased during regular opening times on Wednesday and Sunday. The Centre will also be open on December 7, between 1:00 and 3:30 when purchases can be made.



Mugs
\$15.00

T-shirts
\$23.00



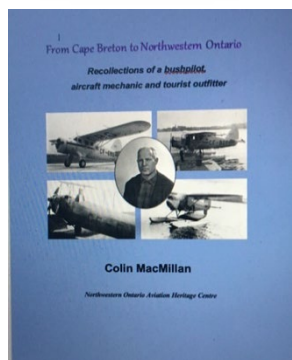
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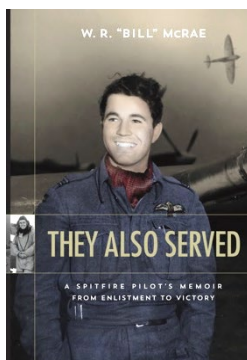


Celebrate the Centenary of the RCAF with a commemorative T-shirt and mug

NOAHC publications



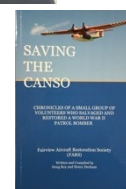
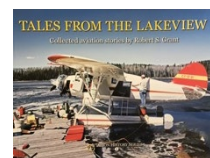
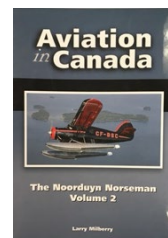
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