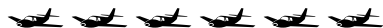




Fly North

Volume 4, Number 3:
July—September, 2012



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 held its Third Annual General Meeting on Thursday, June 21, 2012, with 20 members in attendance. Denise Lyzun read the minutes of the 2011 AGM. Jim Milne provided the President's Report, detailing the activities of the Centre over the previous year. Dave Sutton gave the Treasurer's Report. It showed that NOAHC is in good financial shape. The 2012-13 Board was also elected at the meeting.

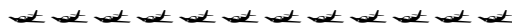


Jim Milne presents the President's Report

From the President's Report: One of the highlights of the year was the book signing for Rich Hulina's *'Bushplane Flying Captured'*, which attracted a capacity audience. As well as signing and selling books, Rich gave an excellent presentation on the aircraft depicted in the book and all that was involved in photographing them and preparing the results for publication. Copies of the book are available from NOAHC.

Over the year, the Oral History Committee, with the help of Nextlib, has continued to conduct interviews with individuals who helped to create the aviation history of the northwest and short clips of some of these are available on our updated website at www.noahc.org

We have also recently purchased an archival system to record donations to the centre catalogue them in proper museum fashion. Several members have made power point presentations to the Gyro and Rotary Clubs to gain community support and we have made our presence known at various conferences in the area.



Since the AGM, Helen Kyle, Kathy Crewdson and Ian Dew have travelled to Fort Frances to conduct aviation history interviews and two more were completed in September. David Bryan and Helen Kyle have mastered the complexities of the archival recording system and after much work over the summer now have our records up-to-date.

Bombardier/Can-Car Celebration



This year marks the 20th anniversary of the arrival of Bombardier in Thunder Bay. The company took over the former Canadian Car and Foundry plant in 1992 continuing a railcar manufacturing tradition that had begun a century ago in 1912 when Can-Car came to Fort William. Recognizing the significance of the dates, and the important role that Can-Car played in the history of the Lakehead, Bombardier held a series of events during the week of June 25 to 30 to celebrate the anniversaries. Activities included a Retirees' Breakfast (which attracted a considerable number of former Can-Car employees), plant tours and a public Open House.

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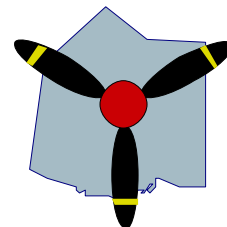
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Bombardier/Can-Car Celebration—continued

NOAHC was represented at all of these events and was given the opportunity to set up a display. The latter included a table illustrating the wartime activities of Can-Car, with pictures and models of the Hurricane and Helldiver. Steve Melnick of Lakehead Models, one of our sponsors, provided a scale, radio-control model of a Hurricane which enhanced our exhibit ([see picture below](#)). A poster presentation of Can-Car's interest in the designs of Vincent Burnelli was also part of the display as were a number of aviation items of local interest. The NOAHC set up attracted a steady stream of visitors—perhaps as many as 3000 on Saturday alone—making our activities known to a wider audience and allowing us to find out about the interesting aviation artefacts and stories that are out there in the community. As a result, the Oral History group made contact with a former “Rosie” who became so expert at riveting that by the age of 17 she was teaching others how to do the job. She will be one of those we interview this fall. One of the artefacts that came to light was the wing tip of a Hurricane that had crashed west of the city ([see below](#)). We were able to include it in our display.

Bombardier's willingness to allow us to participate in their celebration is very much appreciated.

One of the highlights of the week was the designation of the former Canadian Car and Foundry plant as a site of national historic significance. In addition, Elsie MacGill, Chief Engineer at the plant in charge of the Hurricane production, was recognised as a person of national historic significance. Sponsored by Parks Canada, plaques erected in front of the Bombardier plant were unveiled to commemorate the events.



*Part of the NOAHC display at
the Bombardier/Can-Car celebrations*



*Hurricane wing tip
from 1941 crash west of
the city.*

*Donated to NOAHC
by
Ed Knutson*

Air Cadets Learn to Fly

From *The Daily Times-Journal*,
Fort William, Friday July 13, 1956



“Seen above are ten air cadets from the various squadrons in Northwestern Ontario who are currently engaged in taking flying lessons at the Thunder Bay Flying Club. The lessons will enable the cadets to obtain their private pilots licence with the government paying the cost. Kneeling left to right are Neil McLeod and Bill Sylvester of 66 Fort William squadron along with Roger Campbell and Hugh Reid of 227 Geraldton squadron. Back row left to right are Harold Hill, Bernard Allard and Rod Mackay of 84 Port Arthur squadron along with Erskine Flook, Dennis Murray and Dave Dowhos of 85 Port Arthur squadron. The cadets are awarded the flying lessons under a scholarship basis. In years past the capable direction of the Thunder Bay Flying Club has led to the Lakehead cadets winning country-wide recognition”

Where did they go from there?

Neil McLeod became a Medical Doctor

Bill Sylvester became a Senior Airline Captain with American Airlines and flew out of O'Hare in Chicago.

Roger Campbell obtained a degree in Pharmacy (he still flies his own float plane)

Hugh Reid became a Senior Airline Captain with Air Canada and flew the Toronto- Frankfurt- Toronto route.

Harold Hill from Kaministiquia went straight into the world of work and eventually became a Trustee at the Lakehead District School Board

Bernard Allard became a contractor

Rod McKay became a TV camera man and filmed the first splashdown of the Apollo missions

Erskine Flook obtained a Civil Engineering degree

Dennis Murray obtained a Bachelor of Commerce degree and an Ontario Teaching Certificate

Dave Dowhos obtained a Mechanical Engineering Degree and an Ontario Teaching Certificate

(With thanks to Dave Dowhos for providing the picture and the follow-up information. Dave was interviewed by the Oral History team in September)



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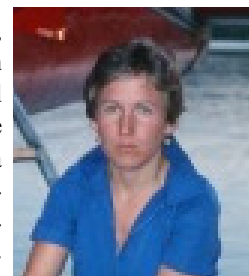
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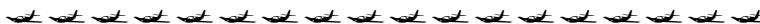


In Memoriam: Roberta Taylor—1946-2012

With the death of Roberta (Robbie) Taylor on June 25, 2012, Canadian aviation lost one of its pioneering women pilots. Her contribution to the industry was recognised when she was selected as the 2011 recipient of the Elsie MacGill Northern Lights Award, presented annually to a Canadian woman "who has demonstrated enthusiasm, courage and personal accomplishment in the aviation or aerospace industry". In the 45 years she spent flying as a commercial bush pilot in north-western Ontario, or on fire patrols and air search and rescue mission in British Columbia, she demonstrated all of these qualities. (see *FlyNorth* v3no4 for a report on the award)



On behalf of the NOAHC board and membership, *FlyNorth* extends condolences to Robbie's family.



The following obituary appeared in the *Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal*

Robbie Taylor passed away on June 25th, 2012 in the Victoria Royal Jubilee Hospital, B.C. after a brief illness.

Robbie was born in 1946 in Fort William, and was the youngest daughter of Orville and Roberta Wieben. Following the path of her older siblings, she trained to become a pilot, and started her working career with the local family airline business, Superior Airways in Thunder Bay. After spending many years working here she moved with her husband to British Columbia where they started their own aviation business. Prior to moving, Robbie served as an alderwoman in Thunder Bay from 1973-74 and again in 1976.

She later returned to university and graduated with a Masters Degree in Social Work, which led to a teaching career at the University of Victoria until her death.

Robbie was active in several aviation organizations, most notably the Ninety-Nines, (International Women Pilots Association) and was the recipient of the Amelia Earhart Scholarship Award and more recently the Elsie McGill Northern Lights Award.

Robbie is survived by; her children Murray Taylor (Lisa), Steven Taylor (Roberta), Melanie Fraser (Adam); sisters Elizabeth Wieben (Robin Webster) Kay Oldham, brother Donald Wieben (Margaret) as well as grandchildren Trey, Curtis, Alyssa and Stirling

She was predeceased by her youngest brother Howard and parents Orville and Bobbie Wieben .

Trans-Canada Airlines Models

NOAHC's TCA North Star and Viscount models have been fitted with stands and with spinners in the case of the Viscount.

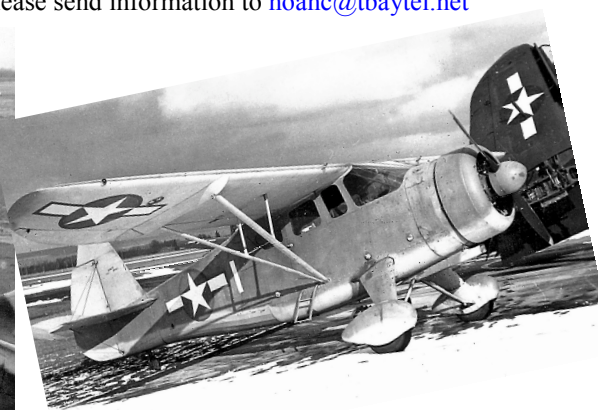
The plan is to incorporate the models in a larger display that will highlight the activities of Trans-Canada Airlines and its successor, Air Canada, at the Lakehead.



Saved from the dumpster... The photographs on this page were about to become garbage when they were saved by Nancy, wife of NOAHC Board member, Don McRae. Nancy realized they would be of interest to the Centre and passed them on to us via Don. The pictures were probably taken in 1943 or '44 when the Can-Car plant was building the Curtiss Helldiver for the US Navy. Each of the 835 aircraft that the plant produced had to be test flown before delivery. In most cases, a few minor adjustments were all that was required after a test flight, but in the case of Helldiver number 210 there was obviously a malfunction serious enough to cause it to crash land before it could return to the airport. ***Fly North*** would be happy to hear from anyone who can provide more information on the accident. What caused it? Where did the plane come down? Who were the people standing on the wing of the downed aircraft? Who were the members of the recovery crew? Please send information to noahc@tbaytel.net



Helldivers lined up at Fort William ready for delivery to the United States



A Howard DGA 15 used to ferry US delivery pilots to Fort William



Helldiver down



A recovery crew prepares to return the aircraft to the plant

