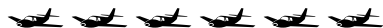




Fly North

Volume 5, Number 1:
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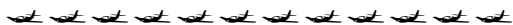


NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE

*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: In December, Kathy Crewdson and Ian Dew of NextLib took NOAHC's Oral History Project to Red Lake. They conducted three interviews and filmed aviation activity in and around Red Lake. NOAHC wishes to thank Brad Martin and Bearskin Airlines for facilitating the trip and Ellis Bottenfield for helping to arrange the interviews.

Such interviews are important in recording the aviation history of the northwest and to enhance our activities in that area NOAHC has renewed its contract with NextLib for an additional two years. We now have more than 20 interviews completed and by the end of the contract that number will be doubled.



Our newest corporate supporter



In Memoriam

Art Chepil made many contributions to the community in Thunder Bay, one of them being his support for the creation of an Aviation Heritage Centre in the city. He was a founding member of NOAHC and served on the Board of Directors until ill health caused him to resign.

Reno Roneki was one of the first to be interviewed for the NOAHC Oral History Project. He was employed at Can-Car and was able to provide an interesting perspective on the Company's early aviation activities.

NOAHC extends its condolences to both families

THE OTTERS OF NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Story and pictures by Winnipeg aviation
photographer and writer,

Robert Arnold



DHC-3 C-FGCV, c/n 2. This was the second DHC-3 to come off the assembly line back in 1953. The photo was taken at Kenora June 1988. At that time this was the oldest operating DHC-3 Otter in the world and was still earning its keep with Walsten Air Service. In 1995, the aircraft crashed and was written off. C-FGCV was deleted from the registry in February 1996 with the last operator being Walsten Air Service.

continued on page 3



A Piece of Flak ...

Why were Gord Stinson and many other Allied aircrew happy to see this particular airfield on their return from operations over Germany during WW II? For the answer see the article on page 2



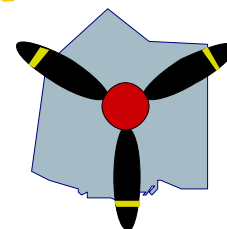
R.A.F. Woodbridge

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THE STORY BEHIND THE PIECE OF FLAK

Gordon Stinson enlisted in the RCAF in November 1941, took his pilot training in western Canada, received his wings in December 1942 and was posted to the UK in January 1943.

He trained on twin-engine Oxfords, then went to an Operational Training Unit, flying Wellington bombers. Here he picked up four of his aircrew - the Navigator, Bomb-aimer, Wireless Operator and Rear Air Gunner. They were then posted to a Heavy Conversion Unit where they trained on the 4-engine Halifax Bomber, and added a Flight Engineer and Mid-Upper Gunner, to complete the 7-man crew.

In December 1943 they joined 434 "Bluenose" Squadron, which was one of the Canadian 6 Group of RAF Bomber Command.

434 Squadron was equipped with the Mark V Halifax, fitted with Rolls Royce liquid-cooled Merlin engines, which were under-powered. This resulted in a slower airspeed and lower maximum height attainable than the other bombers taking part in bombing missions. Also, at night, when they did all their operations, the engine exhausts were very visible from below to enemy fighter aircraft. Consequently, their losses were substantially higher. Their squadron losses at one point reached 25%. The Squadron was formed in August 1943 and in December, after 4 months operation, the senior aircrew had survived 8 trips.

Each pilot was required to fly two trips with an experienced aircrew before taking his own crew into operations. Accordingly, on December 29, 1943, Stinson's first trip was as a second pilot on an operation to Berlin - a 7.5 hour flight. On their return trip, a single burst of flak on their port side killed the Flight Engineer, dazed the Pilot, who was hit in the face, took out the port inner engine, holed many of the fuel tanks, and disabled the aircraft's radio. Stinson received a small leg wound. The Pilot recovered to pull the aircraft out of its dive at 10,000 feet, and resumed heading for home. They landed at Woodbridge, which was an aerodrome on the east coast of England, designed to receive aircraft which were in trouble on returning from operations over enemy territory. Its runway was triple normal width, 3000 yards long with 1000 yards undershoot and 1000 yards overshoot clearances. On the final approach, at about 500 feet elevation, the port motor ran out of fuel. Quick action by the crew in the 'rest position', where the fuel cocks and fuel warning lights were, changed tanks, and the port engine restarted within a few seconds. This interruption pulled the aircraft well off the runway. However, at that instant the two starboard motors shut down. Again, prompt switching of tanks restarted the engines and the aircraft was back into alignment on the runway and landed safely.

At the end of February 1944, due to the high losses, the Mark V Halifaxes were taken off German targets. They were to concentrate on disrupting marshalling yards and strategic targets in France, in preparation for D-Day, and bombing the launch sites of the V1 Buzz Bombs, which were targeting London.

In May, 434 Squadron was equipped with the Mark III Halifax, which was fitted with higher-powered radial air-cooled engines. The modifications increased the performance to equal

those of the other bomber command aircraft. So attacks on German targets were resumed. With available fighter cover, in the summer of '44, some of the missions were carried out in daylight.

After his last trip to Castrop-Rauxel located in the Ruhr Valley, one of the most heavily defended areas of Germany, a piece of flak was removed from his aircraft. It is now on display at NOAHC

Stinson completed 39 operations on his tour in September 1944. He was posted to an Operational Training Unit at Silverstone, now the site of the famous Formula 1 car races. He instructed there until his return to Canada in July 1945.

Gord Stinson via Helen Kyle



Halifax Mk V with Merlin engines. Similar to the one flown by Gordon Stinson



Gord Stinson and his crew in front of their Halifax bomber

Standing: l-r Gord Stinson (pilot), Roy Evans (flight engineer), Bob Tucker (navigator), Al Borley (bomb aimer)

Kneeling: l-r Les Gibson (mid-upper gunner), Eric Blanton (rear gunner), Ron Burcham (wireless operator)

A piece of shrapnel from a flak burst that struck Gord Stinson's bomber over the Ruhr in 1944 is now on display in the Centre.

Our corporate supporters...



FLIGHTDECS

<http://flightdecs.ca>



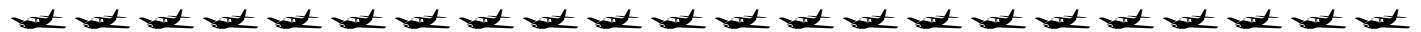
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THE OTTERS OF NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO.

During the mid 1980's and early 90's I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to travel several times between Winnipeg, Kenora and Ft. Frances. Along the way I would take in the gorgeous view of what Canada is really all about, the unsettled wilderness and bush flying. As a true aviation photographer I always had my trusty camera along for the ride and I was not disappointed. Along the way I would spot several remote floatplane bases with a variety of aircraft tied to their docks. I would stop in for a visit and would always be welcomed by those who were working on the docks at the time. As I would travel on, I would come across many more floatplane bases that would dot along the highway and I would of course stop at each one and always be welcomed with a big smile and in some cases a hot cup of coffee. It was as if they were honored that someone would want to take photos of their busy operation. The farther along I went, the more important and remote these bases appeared to be and you would quickly realize how important these aircraft and their pilots were to getting important supplies needed to this rugged and in many cases a very isolated part of the world. One might also realize that out here the airplane was for the most part the only connection to the outside world. They would bring to these remote communities the necessary food, fuel, medicine and many other supplies that are so desperately needed for life in the wilderness and even at times play the role of an ambulance.

With all this in mind, I felt it was imperative that I capture in a moment in time as many of these rugged and reliable machines in their natural surroundings. This particular segment of photos shows the DHC-3 Single Otter that served this rustic region.

Robert Arnold

These and other pictures of the DHC-3 Otter donated to NOAHC by Robert Arnold are on display at the Centre



DHC-3 C-FHXY, c/n 67. This aircraft was built in 1953. I took the photo while in Kenora May 1989. As you can see, at the time of the photo the aircraft was working for Lac Seul Airways. The current registry still shows it operating for Lac Seul Airways.



DHC-3 C-FITS c/n 90. This aircraft came off the line in 1956. On a trip to Pickle Lake in September 1989, I found C-FITS tied to the dock at Knobby's in Sioux Lookout. At the time of the photo the aircraft was operating for Slate Falls Airways.

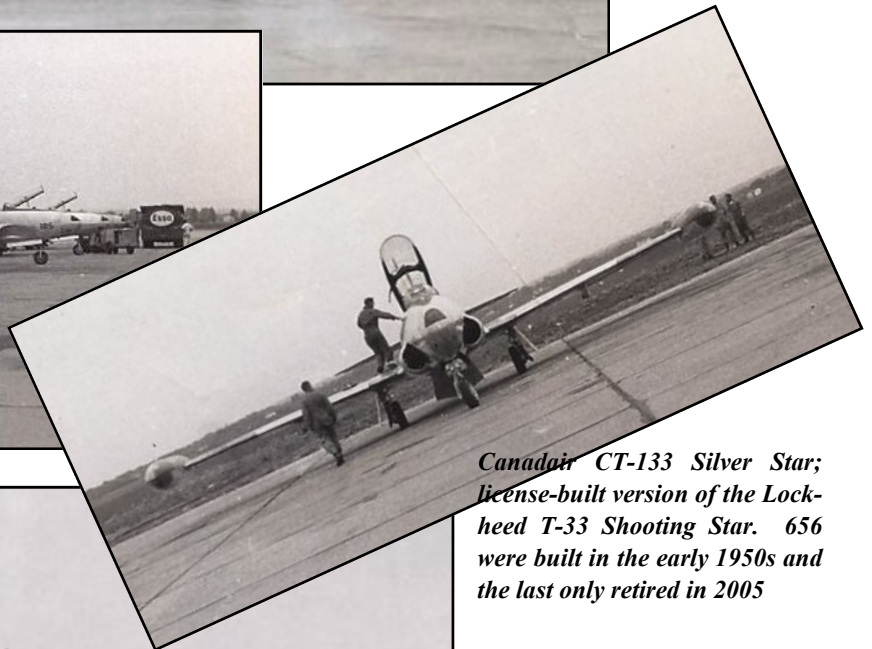
Military visitors to the Lakehead in 1956

In the summer of 1956, Dave Dowhos and his fellow Air Cadets learned to fly at the Thunder Bay Flying Club (see *FlyNorth* 4/3).

During breaks from training, Dave took these pictures of RCAF aircraft that passed through the airport that summer.



Avro Canada CF-100 all weather jet-interceptor fighter. The only Canadian designed fighter to enter mass-production



Canadair CT-133 Silver Star; license-built version of the Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star. 656 were built in the early 1950s and the last only retired in 2005



Douglas DC-3/C-47, the work-horse of military transportation and civil aviation for some 3 decades after its introduction in the mid-1930s

North American B-25, one of the most successful medium bombers of WW II. It served with the RCAF into the 1950s, this one with 406 'City of Saskatoon' Squadron

