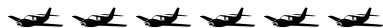




Fly North

Volume 5, Number 4:
October-December, 2013



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: On Sunday, October 20, 2013, NOAHC opened for the first time in its new location. The Centre is now open again on Sundays from 1-4:00 in the afternoon.



The opening also gave us the opportunity to celebrate Liz Wieben's Elsie MacGill Northern Lights Education Award, which she received earlier this year (for full story see *Fly North* Vol 5:No 3)

Veterans' Appreciation Day: On Sunday, November 3, 2013, NOAHC celebrated the achievements of four local World War II RCAF veterans - Archie Fowler, Ted Murphy, Gord Stinson and Bill Turner (page 3)

Helen Kyle introduced the veterans, each of whom gave a short account of his service career. Archie Fowler and Ted Murphy remained in Canada, while Gord Stinson and Bill Turner served overseas.

Archie Fowler talked about his time as a drogue operator at gunnery school in Macdonald, Manitoba. The Lysanders and Battles in which he flew trailed drogues which served as targets for fighter pilots and air gunners training at the school. By the time the war was over he had 1200 hours in his log book.

One of those who may well have shot at one of Archie's drogues was Ted Murphy who also trained in Macdonald. Ted joined the RCAF at age 18 and was sent to become an air gunner. As well as shooting at drogues, the gunners used camera guns in their training. After completing his course, Ted was posted to fly in Lancasters on the east coast.

After training in Canada, Gord Stinson was transferred to England to become a pilot in Bomber Command. He graduated from flying twin-engined Wellington bombers to the four-engined Halifax, one of the RAF's heavy bombers. Gord was posted to 404 Squadron, RCAF - known as the Bluenose Squadron. There he flew 39 combat missions over Europe, was wounded, had his plane peppered by shrapnel from exploding flak and was forced to land his disabled Halifax at an emergency landing field. After his tour of operations

Gord trained other pilots on Wellington bombers at an Operational Training Unit (OTU)

Bill Turner also flew with Bomber Command. Enlisting at 18, he trained in Canada and was posted to England in 1944. The following year he became a heavy bomber pilot on Lancasters, but by that time the schemes for training aircrew had been so efficient that there was a surplus of pilots and, with the war drawing to a close, Bill did not need to fly any combat missions. Wanting to make use of his training, he volunteered to fly against the Japanese, but the war in the Pacific ended before he got there.

World War II was particularly dangerous for airmen. Bomber Command had the highest casualty rate of any branch of the services, with more than 55,000 men killed on operations. In training the casualty rate was also high with more than 5,000 lost. With such numbers we were lucky to have our four veterans with us to be able to honour them for what they did under such dangerous and difficult circumstances.

Mystery solved ...



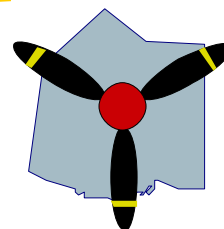
Fly North, Vol 4:No 3 included pictures of the crash of a Curtiss Helldiver. Ray Snyder has provided the story behind the pictures. The pilot was Charlie Skinner, a test pilot at Can-Car. On coming in to land, one of the undercarriage legs would not come down so he belly-landed the plane with both wheels up, the only serious incident he had in all his time as a test pilot. The woman in the picture is his wife Rachel. Charlie and Rachel were Ray Snyder's grandparents. Thanks for the information, Ray

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OUTWITTING THE WEATHER - Part II

by William Turner

After the bear had gone...I soon drifted off to sleep.

A short while later I was awakened by the sound of rain drumming on the roof. Within a few minutes it was coming down in sheets, and was soon joined by hail. I was struck by the irony of all I had gone through only to have the aircraft damaged by hail anyway. Fortunately the hail stones remained small and did not cause any damage. The rain continued throughout the night.

As daylight started to break, I crawled out of my bag and looked at the sky. It was overcast, but there was plenty of ceiling and visibility was good. My first problem was to get the aircraft away from the dock. The wind was still blowing so I kept a rope tied to the dock until I could get the engine running. When I released the rope and the plane started to move things got interesting. As the centre of the floats moved past the dock the wind started to blow the nose of the aircraft toward shore. Not to worry. Once the heels cleared the dock, I could get turned out toward the middle of the lake. You guessed it. It didn't work out that way. As I was still congratulating myself on completing a tricky manoeuvre, I ran aground. I shut down the engine and reluctantly inspected the float for damage. Fortunately there was none, but I was hoping that I would not have to get into the water. As it worked out I got the airplane off with some vigorous work with the paddle. Of course, once the aircraft was off the rock, the wind again became a factor as it started to push me toward shore. More vigorous paddling allowed me to get far enough away from shore to allow me time to get in and fire up the engine. By now I was thinking that I'm far too old for this. Fortunately, once again, my trusty Lycoming fired right up and I was soon under way.

I levelled off at 700 feet with my VHF antenna in the clouds. Visibility was good. Overall the weather was more than adequate for an old bush pilot. Again it was too good to last. The ceiling soon began to descend, and of course, so did I. At these low altitudes map reading becomes a challenge in this country. After about 15 minutes without seeing a familiar landmark, I decided it was about time to do a "180 back". Just then I spied a familiar lake just ahead. I decided this would be a good place to wait out the weather. While I was making my inspection pass around the lake I spotted a tent camp on an island. Under the circumstances, it looked like a nice place to spend some time. I landed and tied the airplane up on the leeward side of the island. It was all pretty uneventful, except for slipping on a rock and bruising my elbow (and my pride). It was now about 7:00 a.m. and time for breakfast. Rain began to fall once again as I sat in the airplane eating my breakfast of a banana, a bran muffin and a canned soft drink. All seemed right with the world, so I thought a little exploring would be useful. The tent camp appeared to have been erected in the spring and would probably remain there until fishing season ended. All of the equipment on site was securely locked in a large metal box, with the exception of an old black coffee pot.

To amuse myself when it was not raining I pumped the floats, checked the oil and gas, and generally looked the entire airplane over very carefully. When it rained, I climbed back into the airplane and read everything contained therein. This included the interception procedures, the log book and a booklet on search and rescue. At noon my stomach alarm went off and I devoured the

remaining contents of my cooler, which consisted of a piece of cheese, a bran muffin and another soft drink. I wasn't concerned. The weather had to clear eventually. I was just bored. Next time I pack the survival kit, it will contain a couple of paperbacks.

The rain continued throughout the day. Cold fronts are supposed to pass quickly, but this one was showing no signs of doing so. As supper time approached I decided it would be a good time to open the survival kit. This consists of a two pound coffee can packed with the usual dried stuff. I selected a package of dried vegetable soup.

After supper, the ceiling began to lift, and it was soon clear enough to fly. Once again I climbed into the Rebel and was quickly airborne. Heading south, I once again found the base of the clouds at 700 feet off the deck. After fifteen or twenty minutes of dead reckoning and looking for a familiar landmark, and just when I thought I would be home in time for the ten o'clock news, the ceiling started to get lower. Fortunately I soon spotted a familiar lake and again decided to put down for a while. It was now about 8:30 p.m. and there was only about another hour of daylight remaining. I spent the hour watching the sky hoping for signs of clearing. Unfortunately, it was not to be. One of the ads from Murphy Aircraft shows two people sleeping in the fuselage of a Rebel. I wondered if anyone had actually done it outside of an advertising campaign, so I cleared all the equipment from one side of the fuselage and rolled out my sleeping bag. It was actually very comfortable, or at least it would have been if I had a mattress of some sort. Not having a bear to worry about, I slept quite well.

When daylight came, I looked outside to find nothing but clear, blue sky. I fired up the engine and was soon winging my way south toward home. The first thing I did upon landing was to have a shower and brush and floss my teeth. Once I had breakfast and was working on my second cup of coffee, I picked up the phone to call Bud and close my flight note. In the course of the conversation, I asked about the storm two nights previous.

"What storm?" he asked. "All we had was a few minutes of light rain."



The Murphy Rebel built by Bill Turner and his son Bill Jr. It had won an award at the Oshkosh Air Show just before the events described in this article.

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The men and their machines ...



Archie Fowler flew as a drogue operator in Westland Lysanders and Fairey Battles in Macdonald, Manitoba, providing target practice for fighter pilots and air gunners



Gord Stinson was a Halifax pilot with 404 "Bluenose" Squadron. He flew 39 missions over Europe, was wounded and awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross



Ted Murphy joined the RCAF at age 18. He trained as an air gunner in Macdonald, Manitoba and went on to serve in Lancasters in eastern Canada.



Bill Turner joined up at the age of 18 in late 1942. By 1945 he was flying the Lancaster heavy bomber in England, but the war ended before he went on operations.

Some pictures from recent NOAHC events - Opening of our new premises; Celebration of Liz Wieben's Elsie MacGill Northern Lights Award; RCAF Veterans' Appreciation Day



courtesy K. Lyzun

Liz Wieben with her award



Full house at Veterans' Appreciation Day



Bill Turner's wings, medals and dog-tags



RCAF World War II vets - l to r : Ted Murphy, Gord Stinson, Archie Fowler, Bill Turner



courtesy G. Bell

Helen Kyle introduces our guests



courtesy G. Bell

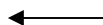
*Cutting the cake ----
Bill Turner
does the
honours*



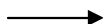
courtesy D. Bryan



*Future aviators,
Griffin and Zane
Hlady enjoy a piece
of cake*



*Local aviation
legends engage in
some "hangar
flying"!*



courtesy D. Bryan