

FLY NORTH

Volume 7, Number 1:
January – March, 2015

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 mid-January NOAHC had a visit from April Butler, an independent filmmaker, who is under contract with the Calgary Mosquito Society to record the restoration of two aircraft the society is rebuilding. One is a de Havilland Mosquito and the other a Hawker Hurricane originally built at Canadian Car and Foundry in Fort William. To provide some background on the latter she interviewed newsletter editor, Dave Kemp, who has researched and written about the Can-Car Hurricanes, and Gordon Burkowski, author of *Can-Car: A History 1912-1992*, and a recognized authority on the history of the company.

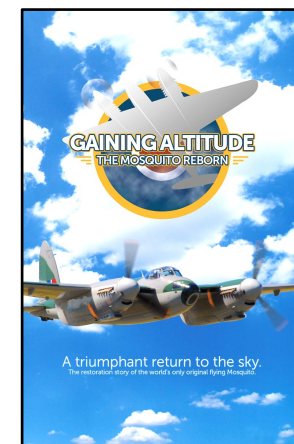


The aircraft being restored is a Mk XII Hurricane (RCAF 5389), one of a batch built by Can-Car for the RCAF in 1942. Over the years it has been owned by a number of individuals and groups, but it is now the property of the City of Calgary. In 2011, the city gave the task of restoring the aircraft to display condition to the Calgary Mosquito Society. The restoration

work is being done by Historic Aviation Services in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. The Society is also restoring a Mosquito and April has been contracted to produce videos of both restorations.

April Butler has worked for the CBC, CTV and Global networks as well as other Canadian television companies over the years and is an accomplished documentary film director whose films have been nominated for awards at prestigious international festivals. Her most recent production, publically funded by Kickstart donations, is *Gaining Altitude: Mosquito Reborn*, which premiered in November 2014. It follows the restoration of Mosquito that had not flown for 50 years, recording the work done by Victoria Air Maintenance to get the plane back in the air. In addition, the film includes archival footage and interviews with veteran Mosquito pilots.

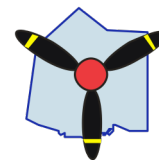
A trailer of the film can be viewed at gainingaltitudedocumentary.com and the full version can be obtained, either as a download or DVD at the Victoria Air Maintenance shop www.vicair.net. Check out more of April Butler's work at www.panproductions.com.



A Can-Car Hurricane from the same batch as that being restored by the Calgary Mosquito Society. Construction of this machine was funded in part by the local March of Dimes organization

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Air Search and Rescue – 1940s Style

This account is reproduced from a manuscript written by Colin MacMillan, pilot with the Ontario Provincial Air Service based at Pays Plat in the 1940s

“The only other search, rescue and salvage operation I was involved with was for one of our Air Service planes. I had been called up to Geraldton for some reason, now forgotten. While at the Forestry Office, a telegram was received from the fire tower watchman at White Otter Lake, some 80 miles east of Geraldton, stating that an aircraft had crashed in the bush about two miles west of White Otter Lake railroad station, about a mile north of the tracks, and that the station agent had dispatched several section men into the bush to locate it. Fiskar [Yorkie Fiskar was the District Forestry Officer at Geraldton] phoned Nakina to learn if either of the Twin Lakes aircraft was out on patrol. He was informed that Jim Kincade was, and should have been in the vicinity of White Otter Lake about the time the crash was reported. With that information Fiskar and I broke speed records getting to the seaplane dock at Little Long Lake. While I removed the mooring ropes, Fiskar ran over to the Little Long Lake Hospital, which was only a hundred yards away, to see if one of the hospital’s two doctors could come with us. Both doctors were out, but a little Finnish nurse, who had the afternoon off, volunteered to come. She was all dressed up for an afternoon of shopping, but we had no time for her to change, so she came as she was. We did not learn until we were in the air that this was her first flight.

On arriving at White Otter Lake we searched the vicinity described in the telegram for a half hour before locating the downed Gipsy Moth seaplane. It had crashed in a very dense spruce stand and could only be seen for a few seconds from directly overhead. We obtained a compass reading and landed on White Otter Lake, taxied ashore and tied up. Our nurse carried the first aid kit, Fiskar the hand compass and I cut trail. On reaching the crash site, about half a mile from the lakeshore we found Jimmie out of the plane, but in bad shape. What had happened was as follows. Jimmie had been out to a party the night before, and had little sleep. He obviously fell asleep while in flight, stalled the plane, which went into a spin, awakened just in time to recover from the spin, but did not have sufficient height to attain flying speed, so stalled on top of a thick stand of second growth spruce trees. The plane had little forward speed so all of the punctures in the wings and fuselage were vertical. Jimmie could have walked away uninjured if one of the spruce trees had not punctured the cockpit floor, then breaking off at about one inch in diameter, sliced the calf of Jimmie’s left leg open. The tree then glanced off some portion of the plane’s seat, which deflected it into Jimmie’s upper leg muscle. Coming out on the inside of his leg it carried on up to give him a bad gash along his chest. From there it caught the corner of his left eye and gave him a bad gash there, but fortunately did not damage his eye. Some eight feet of the tree passed through his leg. He was skewered on this tree until the section men found him. One of these men got a hacksaw blade from the plane’s tool kit and sawed the tree off, leaving a section in Jimmie’s leg, before getting him

out of the plane. Our little nurse examined Jimmie’s leg and advised that the section of the tree be left as was until it could be removed in an operating room. With the help of the section men we made a rough stretcher using our coats and a couple of poles. The nurse gave Jimmie a good slug of morphine, then with four section men carrying Jimmie and the rest of us breaking trail we made fair time getting back to the lakeshore. We spread my sleeping bag out on the cabin floor for Jimmie to lie on. Making him as comfortable as we could, we then took off and headed back to Geraldton.

Within a few minutes of tying up the plane we had Jimmie on the operating table. Both doctors had been called back from their golf game and were all set up waiting for us. Jimmie was in the hospital for about two months, rested at home for a couple of months, then came back to work on a non-flying job for a few more months. Within a year he was flying again with only a slight limp from his mishap.

The walk through the woods had not helped our nurse’s appearance. Her stockings were in shreds, her shoes were ruined, and although her dress was undamaged it needed a visit to the cleaners. She didn’t complain. Fiskar and I replaced the stockings and shoes and took her out to dinner. “



Colin MacMillan

Colin MacMillan was born near Sydney, Nova Scotia in 1910, only 7 years after the Wright Brothers’ first flight. With the growing interest in flying in the 1920s, the Cape Breton Flying Club acquired a field on the MacMillan family farm and established a base from which it could conduct its flying activities. After learning to fly in the early 1930s, he also

obtained an air mechanic’s certificate and flying instructor’s license. By the end of the decade he was at Can-Car in Fort William, where he worked on the Gregor Fighter and later the Hawker Hurricane line. When war broke out, Colin tried to enlist in the RCAF, but was told he was too old – at age 29! Wanting to fly, rather than continue on the assembly line at Can-Car he joined the Ontario Provincial Air Service, being stationed at Pays Plat for much of the time, where he was involved in forest fire fighting, search and rescue as well as maintaining the base. When the paper mill was established at Marathon he moved there to become a pilot for the paper company, flying company personnel and customers in and out of the town. After spending nearly 30 years in the north-west Colin retired in 1968, and in 1986 produced a manuscript, now in the Marathon District Museum, recording events in his life.

Colin MacMillan’s manuscript was made available to NOAHC by Stan Johnson of Marathon District Museum and the excerpt above is reproduced by permission of Lenny MacMillan

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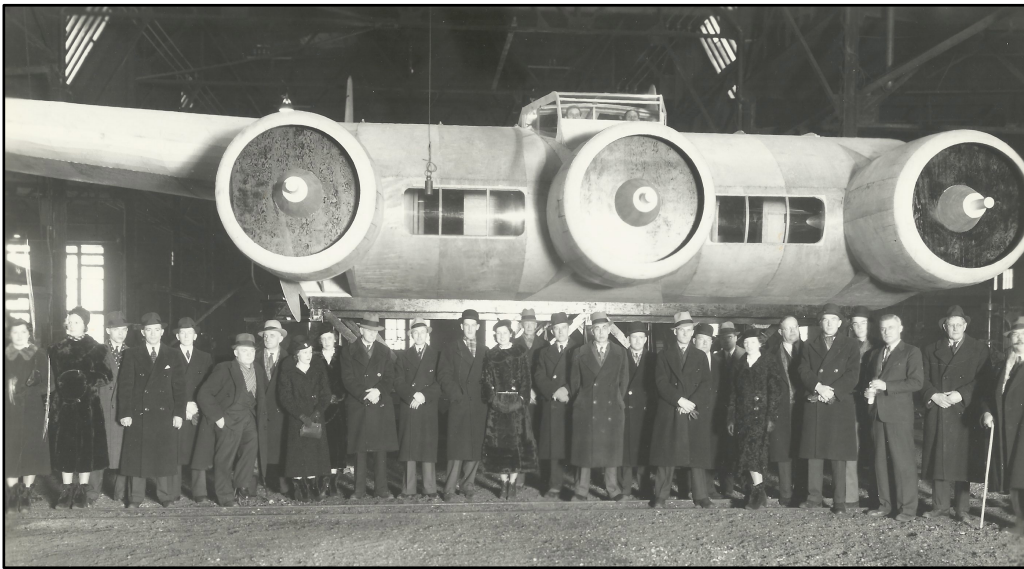
Stanley Rosevear: World War One Flying Ace. Stanley Wallace Rosevear was born in Walkerton, Ontario, in 1896, but grew up in Port Arthur, where his father was a teacher. While a student in Applied Science at the University of Toronto in 1916 he enrolled in the University Overseas Training Company and the following year transferred to the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). Following pilot training in Britain, and commissioned as a Flight Sub-Lieutenant, he went to France in July 1917, where he flew Sopwith Triplanes out of Bailleul as a member of 1 (Naval) Squadron. From the outset, Rosevear was recognized as a skillful, aggressive pilot, being mentioned in dispatches several times and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in October 1917 for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. As the citation in the London Gazette noted *"He has destroyed several hostile machines, and has also attacked and scattered parties of enemy infantry from low altitudes, on one occasion from a height of only 100 feet."* His squadron gained a reputation for its ground attack work, flying the Sopwith Camel, but Rosevear was also skilled in other aspects of aerial combat. In nine months at the front, he shot down 23 enemy aircraft. As a result of such activities he was awarded a bar to his DSC in March 1918. He was promoted to the rank of Captain when the Royal Flying Corps and the RNAS amalgamated to form the Royal Air Force on April 1, 1918, but later that month Stanley Wallace Rosevear lost his life when the plane he was flying crashed near Arras in France.

(A contribution to the Thunder Bay World War One Centennial Project)

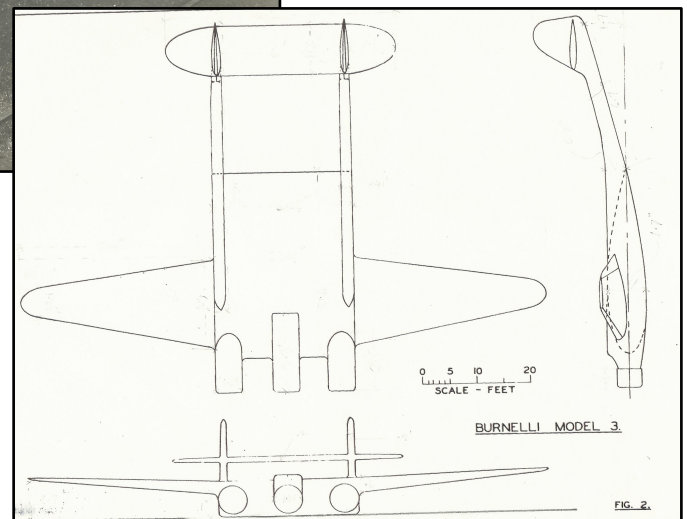
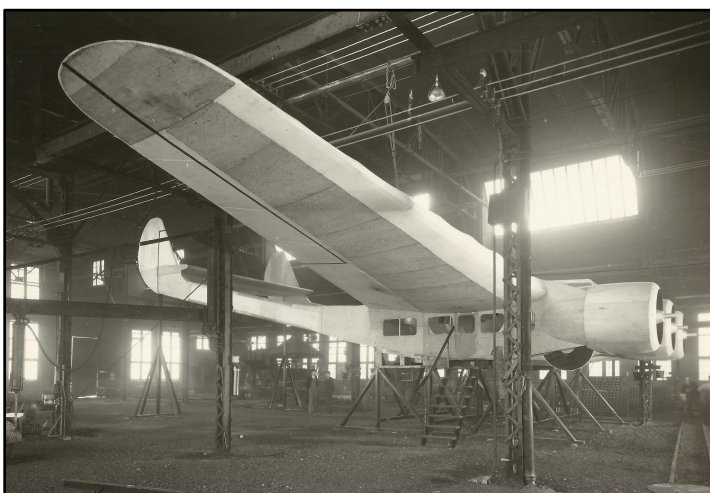
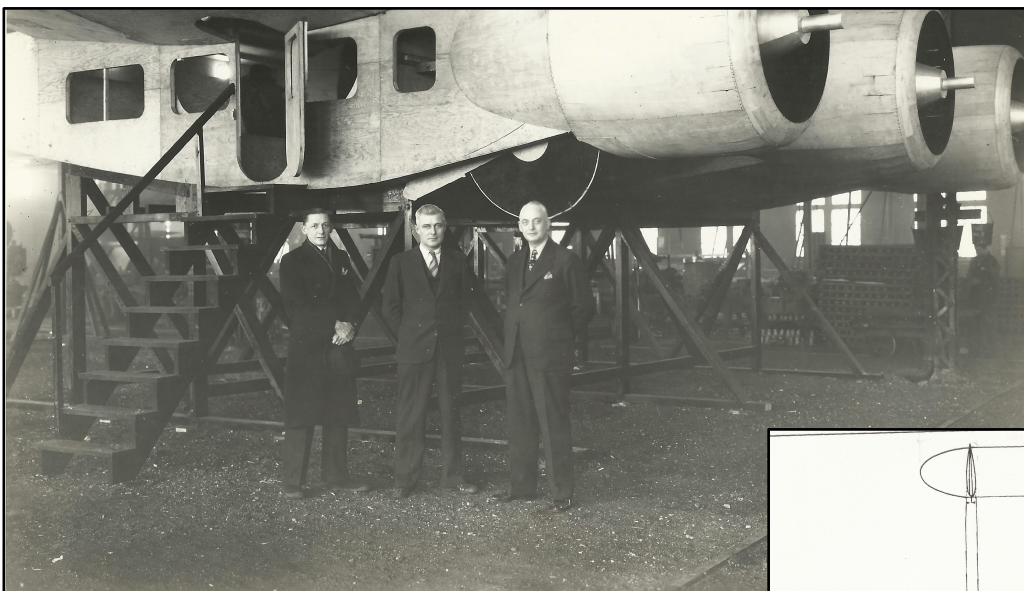


**Stanley Wallace Rosevear DSC
1896-1918**

Burnelli Design for Can-Car – a full scale wooden mockup at the Fort William plant in 1938



The July 15th, 1938 edition of the Fort William Times-Journal reported that a “life-size model of the Burnelli bomber, to which CCF has Canadian rights, arrived from the east”. It was described as a tri-motor type with a wingspan of 96 ft and a capacity of 32 persons. Given the number of dignitaries in the pictures it is clear that the aircraft was seen as an important development for Can-Car. It was designed by Vincent Burnelli, an American engineer, who promoted the concept of the lifting fuselage in which the body of the plane took the form of an aerofoil section rather than the conventional tube shape. This increased lift thus allowing shorter landing and take-off runs, as well as providing more efficient cargo and passenger space. Whether or not the design would have been a success will never be known. By late 1938, company was in the initial negotiations for what was to become the very successful Hurricane contract, and the development of the tri-motor did not advance beyond the mockup stage.



Even when fully employed on the Hawker Hurricane contract in 1942, the CCF management continued to think ahead, and commissioned wind tunnel testing of a 1/24 scale model of the Burnelli tri-motor.