

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

FLIGHT LINES

CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM



80 GLORIOUS YEARS
Canadian Warplane Heritage's DC-3

THE STORY OF SID BREGMAN
And Spitfire MJ627



Gala

Featuring the
World Famous

Glenn Miller Orchestra



**Saturday
June 1, 2019**



**Tickets on sale January 11, 2019
warplane.com • 1-877-347-3359**

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

FLIGHTLINES

CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

President & Chief Executive Officer
David G. Rohrer

Vice President – Operations
Sandra Price

External Client Services Manager
Cathy Dowd

Controller
Brenda Shelley

Vice President – Finance
Ernie Doyle

Curator
Erin Napier

Education Services Manager
Howard McLean

Chief Engineer
Jim Van Dyk

Flight Coordinator
Laura Hassard-Moran

Donor Services Manager
Sally Melnyk

Marketing Manager
Al Mickeloff

Retail Manager
Shawn Perras

Building Maintenance Manager
Jason Pascoe

Food & Beverage Manager
Anas Hasan

Volunteer Services Administrator
Toni McFarlane

Board of Directors
Christopher Freeman, Chair

David Ippolito
John O’Dwyer
David G. Rohrer
Barbara Maisonneuve

Robert Fenn
Patrick Farrell
Art McCabe
David Williams

Sandy Thomson, Ex Officio
Bruce MacRitchie, Ex Officio
Nestor Yakimik, Ex Officio

Stay Connected



Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum
9280 Airport Road
Mount Hope, Ontario
L0R 1W0

Phone 905-679-4183
Toll free 1-877-347-3359 (FIREFLY)
Fax 905-679-4186
Email museum@warplane.com
Web warplane.com

- Subscribe to our eFlyer**
warplane.com/mailling-list-signup.aspx
- Read Flightlines online**
warplane.com/about/flightlines.aspx
- Like us on Facebook**
facebook.com/CanadianWarplaneHeritageMuseum
- Follow us on Twitter**
[@CWHM](https://twitter.com/CWHM)
- Watch videos on YouTube**
youtube.com/CWHMuseum
- Shop our Gift Shop**
warplane.com/gift-shop.aspx
- Follow Us on Instagram**
instagram.com/canadianwarplaneheritagemuseum

Volunteer Editor: Bill Cumming

Flightlines is the official publication of the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. It is a benefit of membership and is published six times per year (Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, July/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec).

Readers are encouraged to submit articles and photos. All contributions published with the author’s name is the opinion of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinions and policies of the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. Responsibility for accuracy rests solely with the author.

©2019 Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum.
All rights reserved.



Cover:
Our DC-3 painted as "Canucks Unlimited". *KOOL SHOTS*

Printed in Canada by



Welcome to 2019

As we move into 2019, the 47th year of Canadian Warplane Heritage's existence, planning is well underway for celebrations of our Golden anniversary in 2022. Reflecting back on my 45-year association with the museum, I have been fortunate to witness its growth from early beginnings in the old wartime hangars to the world-class museum it is today. As mentioned in the last issue of *Flightlines*, we will be producing a book to document our history from day one. An exciting project, but we need input from the membership and volunteers to provide your first-hand accounts of those early days. If you have an anecdote or story or memory from the early days, please feel free to contact us.

2019 will be another exciting year to be part of the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. Another busy flying program is planned for the coming year, and along with the other regular flying aircraft, we expect to see the Firefly, Harvard and Avenger return to the air.

In this issue of *Flightlines*, we tell the story of the Museum's DC-3 "Canucks Unlimited," one of the oldest DC-3 aircraft still operational in the world. The article highlights the colourful career of the aircraft. Although the museum's DC-3 is 80 years old this year, the DC-3 and its variants will always be known as the "Queen of the Skies."

Following on from the Spitfire theme as presented in the previous issue of *Flightlines*, we feature the story about RCAF pilot Sid Bregman of 441 Squadron, and his Spitfire MJ627. Spitfire MJ627 is still operational today, and CWH member Peter Allam relates his experience of flying in this classic fighter.

You will notice that in this issue of *Flightlines* we have slightly modified the layout and design of the magazine, to bring it up to a new presentation level. We welcome your comments about *Flightlines*, its articles, format and contents. Enjoy this issue!

Bill Cumming, *Volunteer Editor*
museum@warplane.com

NEW ARCHIVES SHELVING

After a week of installation, the museum's archives is being remapped and reorganized with a brand-new shelving system. The system is museum-standard for preserving and storing artifacts and increases storage capacity by 50 percent!



EMILY MILLAR

HARVARD UPDATE

The Museum's Harvard Mk. IV, RCAF #20213 (CF-UUU) was built by Canadian Car & Foundry, Thunder Bay, Ontario in late 1951. The aircraft saw service at four RCAF flying schools across the nation until it was sold to a civilian owner in 1965. It was the third aircraft to join the Museum after Dennis Bradley, Alan Ness and John Weir donated it in 1973. In 2019, #20213 is scheduled into the paint shop to be repainted exactly how it would have looked at RCAF Station Centralia, circa 1960.



AL MICKELOFF



AL MICKELOFF



STARFIGHTER REPAINTING

Following final stripping and prep work by volunteers, our CF-104D Starfighter, RCAF #12641, is scheduled to be repainted in early 2019. The RCAF era scheme markings are to be applied, then it will finally be remounted outside at the front of the museum. Watch for an article on #12641 in a future issue of *Flightlines*.

VOICES FROM THE PAST

Burma Memories

Since 2001, museum volunteers have been diligently video recording the World War II memories of air force personnel from World War II. To date, these Voices From the Past volunteers have recorded over 400 interviews. With editing assistance from Felipe Belalcazar, their latest finished production, *Burma Memories*, premieres in January on the Museum's YouTube page at www.youtube.com/user/CWHMuseum. *Burma Memories* features first hand experiences of Canadians flying Dakotas in Burma during World War II.

GREY CUP FLIES ON LANCASTER

Lancaster VR-A had a special guest on board for its Remembrance Day service flight - the Grey Cup! We couldn't resist adding our own touch and "zapping" it with our logo on its way into the aircraft.

DAVID BLAIS





BOLINGBROKE RESTORATION UPDATE

The Bristol Bolingbroke restoration has been the longest and more complicated aircraft restoration projects undertaken by the museum. For over 30 years, a dedicated and talented team has been working with several discarded and scattered Bolingbroke aircraft and parts in the hope of restoring one airworthy Bolingbroke aircraft for the museum collection.

At a recent team meeting with senior museum staff and this very dedicated and industrious volunteer restoration team, the status and scope of the project were reviewed at length. After a very thoughtful and open group discussion and in consideration of the real world challenges involved in restoring and then safely operating an airworthy Bolingbroke, it was decided by the team to continue to restore this Bolingbroke aircraft for ground operations.

The project team now has a new and achievable mandate and a plan to dedicate and welcome this completed Bolingbroke aircraft into the collection in honour of 119 "Tiger" Squadron during the museum's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2022.

We are excited about this new and achievable vision for the project and know that a complete Bolingbroke aircraft will be fitting tribute to all those staff and volunteers who have worked so hard over the last 30 years to complete this important restoration.

CANSO FLIGHTS

A full season of flying is planned for the Museum's PBY Canso this year. Timing for passenger rides has been extended to 60 minutes so that the Canso flies over Niagara Falls. Flight experience costs \$650 (plus membership) and a total of 4 seats are available per flight. Nothing beats the view from the side blister – great for photographers!

REMEMBRANCE DAY FLIGHT

Letter from Vince Jones, Lancaster Passenger

Flying in the Lancaster, especially on the 11th day at the 11th hour of the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI was unique in so many ways. What I didn't realize is how much my experience meant to everyone else around me.

My family came to attend and support the Remembrance Service and also to see one of my dreams unfold. I have a great uncle who was lost at the Somme in 1916, an uncle who was a sapper/paratrooper downed in a Stirling on D-Day, and a grandfather who survived WWI and WWII and was rescued off the beaches at Dunkirk, so family lore goes. My son was in the 2010 Canadian Battle Group for a tour of duty in Afghanistan. He is home and doing well. I know everyone has reasons for wanting to do this. These are just some of mine.

I'm still trying to process everything that transpired. The Hercules and B-25 escort was just another layer of WOW! For years I have been looking up whenever I hear the Lancaster coming... there is no mistaking the roar of those Merlins. My wife realized that this was important to me and so it became important to her. And it was amazing. I just wanted to share how special it was for us for different reasons. It could have been even colder and I don't think that I would have noticed. I certainly would never have complained. How could you, when you get just a small sense of what these young men went through for their families and for all of us.



DAVID BLAIS





FIREFLY WINGS

The Engineering Department are in the process of replacing the Fairey Firefly's internal wing folding mechanism parts with custom made replacements. These parts will allow the wings to be re-attached in the near future. The plan is to have the Museum's flagship airborne again for the 2019 flying season, with possibly even a trip to Oshkosh!

AIRSHOW CHEQUE PRESENTATION

For two years, CWH partnered with the Rotary Club of Branford to keep the Community Charity Airshow alive. The 2018 show was one of our most successful. In October, museum representatives presented the Rotary Club with a \$26,000 cheque for their half of the proceeds. The 2019 show is set for August 28th.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Museum's education programs have an astounding attendance of 20,000 students per year. Programs follow the Ontario Curriculum and are conducted in classrooms situated beside or under vintage aircraft. Ten percent of yearly instruction time is dedicated to Project High Flight, which allows Grade 6 students from inner city schools the chance to enjoy our exciting educational opportunities as well as transportation and a hot lunch free of charge.

Sunday
April 14, 2019

Drag Strip
Memories

HELLFIRE

NOSTALGIC RACE CARS • THOUSANDS OF OLD PHOTOS • MAGAZINES & PROGRAMS • OLD MOVIES • AUTOMOTIVE ART





Spitfire MJ627. JOHN DIBBS

To Dance The Skies

The Story of Sid Bregman and Spitfire MJ627

by Peter Allam

Far below, the hazy morning sunlight could be seen reflecting on a bend in the Rhine River, but this was neither the time nor the place for sightseeing. From the midst of a whirling melee of German fighters, Sid Bregman, the kid from Toronto, could see a Bf109 latch onto the tail of his leader, intent on destruction. With no time to lose, he yelled over the R/T "Black 5 - Break! Break!" and turned hard into the Bf109. Suspended in time and space, the enemy fighter filled his Spitfire's gun sight and his finger closed on the gun button. It was now or never.

But just how had this 22 year-old son of Russian émigrés come to be dogfighting Germans in WWII? Both Sid and his Spitfire had tales to tell of adventure and survival both in war and in peace, with each making their own small marks on history.

It was in July of 1922 that Fradel Bregman and her Polish-born three-month-old son Zalman had sailed from the free city of Danzig aboard the liner SS Estonia bound for Halifax. Originally hailing from Minsk in the then USSR Republic of Belarus, the Bregman's sought a new life in Canada. Fradel's husband, Mordechai, found a home in Toronto ahead of his family's arrival. The elder Bregmans soon became naturalized Canadian citizens, taking the names Max and Freda, and for their son they chose the name Sidney. He enjoyed a happy childhood in Toronto, but sadly, as his schooling finished, the war clouds were once again gathering. Wanting to do his bit, Sid enlisted in the RCAF in 1942.

**ORIGINALLY HAILING FROM MINSK IN THE THEN USSR REPUBLIC OF BELARUS,
THE BREGMAN'S SOUGHT A NEW LIFE IN CANADA.**

His pilot training successfully completed, the great day finally came in February 1943 when, with 229 hours in his logbook, Sid paraded alongside his course mates at Uplands to proudly receive his wings and a commission as Pilot Officer. A one-month operational training course at RCAF Bagotville followed, where he refined his skills at formation flying, conventional and dive bombing, and of course the all-important dogfighting and air-to-air gunnery. During the course on 28th of March, Sid took the controls of a fighter aircraft for the first time when he flew Hawker Hurricane II 5647 for 55 minutes. Training complete, Sid was finally declared operational and all that now remained was to receive his first posting to a squadron.





F/O Bregman and MJ627 at ALG B70 Antwerp-Deurne, September 1944. BREGMAN FAMILY.



Sid Bregman settles into the front cockpit of a Harvard. BREGMAN FAMILY.

AT THE HUGE VICKERS-ARMSTRONG'S CASTLE BROMWICH FACTORY IN ENGLAND'S INDUSTRIAL MIDLANDS, A MK. IX SPITFIRE, SERIAL NUMBER MJ627 TOOK TO THE AIR FOR THE FIRST TIME.

He didn't have long to wait and early June 1943 saw him posted to Gander-based 127 (Fighter) Squadron RCAF. A unit in the Eastern Air Command, the Hurricane-equipped squadron formed part of the east-coast air defences. Daily routine included practicing all the necessary skills required for an effective fighter squadron, including scrambles, battle climbs and interceptions, aerial gunnery etc, with regular dawn and dusk patrols thrown in for good measure.

The routine of squadron life was quickly established and Saturday, 27 November 1943 was an unremarkable day for Sid with two training flights in a Harvard. But unbeknown to him, nearly 3,000 miles away, a small but ultimately very significant event had taken place. At the huge Vickers-Armstrong's Castle Bromwich factory in England's industrial Midlands, a Mk. IX Spitfire, serial number MJ627 took to the air for the first time. It was just one of thousands of similar aircraft, yet this particular Spitfire was destined to have a very special place in Sid's life.

As the last weeks of 1943 ticked away, rumours began spreading that 127 Squadron was finally to move to England. Designated an Article XV squadron under the BCATP agreement, the move also meant a new squadron number with 127 becoming 443. The squadron personnel embarked at Halifax on the 29,000 ton troopship SS Pasteur, arriving in Liverpool in January 1944. The Squadron's first UK home was RAF Digby in Lincolnshire. It was there on 24th of February

that the name "Spitfire" made its first appearance in Sid's logbook when he took up Mk. VB BL319 for 30 minutes.

Further training followed into the summer of 1944, until in early July Sid was posted to a fellow RCAF fighter squadron No. 441 (Silver Fox), then based at Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) B3, located at Sainte-Croix-sur-Mer in Normandy. Several moves followed in quick succession as the Allied armies advanced across the Continent and by September, 441 was carrying out fighter sweeps and bomber-escort missions from ALG B70 near Antwerp in Belgium.

No.443 Squadron pilots arrive at Liverpool, January 1944. Sid Bregman is kneeling second from left. DND



In late September, Spitfire MJ627 herself arrived on the squadron, receiving 441 Squadron codes 9G-Q. Sid promptly claimed the new arrival as his own. As recounted earlier in this article, on 27th of September over the Dutch city of Arnhem (scene of the heroic but ultimately disastrous "A Bridge Too Far" episode just days before), 441 engaged a formation of some 15 Bf109s and Fw190s. Quickly latching onto the tail of one Messerschmitt, Sid saw his cannon shells strike home, and within a few seconds had claimed his first confirmed aerial victory. On his return to base, it was found that he had fired just 11 20-mm cannon rounds. Just two days later, Sid and MJ627 were again in action, this time tangling inconclusively with a Me262.

The mix of aerial engagements, ground attacks, and bomber escort missions continued to the close of the year until, at the start of 1945, the squadron was rested with a move north and a complete change of scenery. Based at RAF Skeabrae on the island of Orkney off Scotland's north-east coast, 441 also maintained a detached flight at RAF Sumburgh in the beautiful but remote Shetland Islands. As might be expected, life there was considerably quieter. Although Sid remained with 441 Squadron until its disbandment in August 1945, MJ627's stay in Scotland came to an abrupt end on 9th of March. During a routine patrol from Skeabrae, the Spitfire experienced engine problems that resulted in an off-airfield forced landing. Initially assessed as a write-off and heading for the scrap yard, Lady Luck now decided to smile on this particular Spitfire and the aircraft was re-categorized as "repairable off site". With repairs duly completed, she was placed in storage, future unknown.

The end of the war saw Sid return to his native Toronto and, after gaining a degree in architecture at the



Spitfire MJ627 undergoing maintenance, winter of '44/45. PHIL LISTEMANN

University of Toronto, he quickly established himself as a fine architect, later co-founding Bregman + Hamann Architects. Known today as B + H Architects, the company flourished and soon began receiving prestigious contracts such as those for The Eaton Centre, Niagara Falls Skylon, and the CN Tower redevelopment. Away from his drawing board, Sid also found time to pursue interests in the diverse fields of art and offshore yacht racing.

THE MIX OF AERIAL ENGAGEMENTS, GROUND ATTACKS, AND BOMBER ESCORT MISSIONS CONTINUED TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR UNTIL, AT THE START OF 1945

By 1951, the future for his former Spitfire was looking bleak but once again, Lady Luck smiled. Converted to two seat Tr. 9 configuration by her original manufacturer Vickers-Armstrongs, she began a new life as an advanced trainer with the Irish Air Corps as Spitfire 158, and served in that role at Baldonnel airfield for almost ten years. She finally retired from military flying in April 1960 with a total of 1,036 airframe hours and then served as a ground instructional airframe. By 1963, and surplus to Irish Air Corps requirements, the scrap man's axe was yet again casting its shadow over her.

But once more, the Spitfire's luck was in. She was purchased by English pilot John Crewdson, well known at the time for his involvement with movies such as "The War Lover" and "633 Squadron." It seemed that the silver screen beckoned for MJ627, but sadly no starring roles were to come her way. Instead she languished in storage, giving up the occasional part to keep other Spitfires flying. Finally, in the mid-1970s, she was purchased by brothers Maurice and Peter Bayliss, and a complete restoration was undertaken, during which time Sid Bregman was reunited with his loyal steed. After a 33-year sojourn on the ground and 50 years on from her first flight, in November 1993, MJ627 took to the air once again.

The Bayliss family operated the Spitfire until 2014, when she moved home to the Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar at the famed former RAF fighter station on the south eastern outskirts of London. The Heritage Hangar is one of the world's leading Spitfire restoration and operation centres and is currently home to 13 Spitfires as well as a Hurricane, Harvard, and the former Russell Aviation Group Bf109.



Thanks to the ultimate birthday present from my wife Carol, I was recently able to experience a once-in-a-lifetime trip in Sid Bregman's Spitfire. After a nail-biting two-day wait for the weather to improve, the third day dawned with a clear blue sky, bright sunshine and no wind – perfect flying weather. Pilot Don Sigournay, formerly with the Royal Navy Historic Flight and one of the most experienced Spitfire pilots in the country, gave me a comprehensive briefing. With flying suit and helmet donned, I strapped into the snug rear cockpit of MJ627, ready for starting.



In the guise of Irish Air Corps Spitfire 158, MJ627 basks in the sun on the ramp at Baldonnel in 1960. UNKNOWN

The 27-litre V12 eagerly sprang into life. After the necessary warming up, we turned onto the active runway where Don opened up the throttle to +6lbs boost. The Merlin's plummy growl turned to a deafening Tally-ho roar and with a firm push back in the seat we blasted off into the blue. Once in her native element, MJ627 climbed like a homesick angel and soon after levelling off, Don uttered the magic words, "You have control." It was almost surreal—we had just taken off from the RAF's most famous World War Two fighter station and now I was actually flying the legendary Spitfire. Even for a non-pilot, it was immediately obvious that everything ever written or spoken about the Spitfire was true—a unique combination of incredible power and lightning-quick finger-tip control responses, yet all delivered with peerless lady-like manners.

With 220 knots indicated, the Merlin purring contentedly up front and with the distinctive spade grip in my hand, I tried to etch in my memory the image of the green fields and pretty villages of Kent sliding past that beautiful elliptical wing - the very same graceful wing shape designed by R. J. Mitchell and Bev Shenstone - and the very same fields and villages over which the Battle of Britain had raged in 1940. All too soon we were heading for home but not before a chance for some aerobatics, concluding with (what else in a Spitfire?) an effortless Victory roll. After the classic curving approach, Don made a smooth landing. Accompanied by the characteristic crackling of the exhausts and hissing of the flaps, we taxied back in and shut down. Is it possible to sum up the experience? I have tried and failed many times since. Exhilarating, emotional, overwhelming—sometimes mere words just aren't enough. It was quite simply a magical, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

After a long, happy and successful life, in 2014 Sid made his final "Scramble" and slipped Earth's surly bonds, but I feel sure that every time MJ627 soars into the blue he is always up there with her, forever dancing the skies with his beloved Spitfire.

With thanks to Sid Bregman's family for their kind assistance in the compilation of this article.



Editor's Note: Spitfire MJ627's current owner Richard Verrall of the Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar (BHHH) has offered the readers of Flightlines a discount with a Promo Code should they wish to book a flight in the Spitfire. It would be nice to reinforce the Canadian connection.

After the flight of a lifetime, the author (CWH Member Peter Allam) and Spitfire MJ627, September 6 2017. AUTHOR.

Member Profile

Clare Short

by Mo McIntosh

Clare Short, a native of Hamilton, graduated from Central Secondary School in Applied Electricity. He worked at Dofasco for two years before joining the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC). While employed with the CIBC, Clare enrolled in university extension courses, became a Fellow of the Institute of Canadian Bankers (FICB) and held several branch and Head Office positions. Clare stayed with the CIBC for 39 years, retiring as manager of the Grimsby branch in 1993.

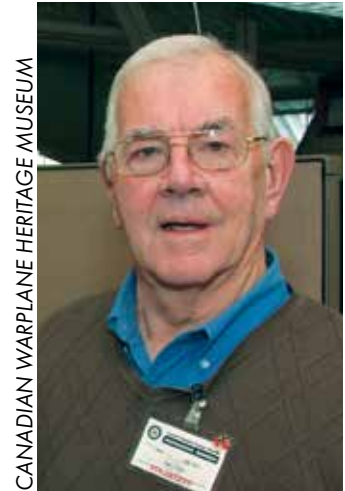
Clare joined the Lancaster Support Club in 1988 after witnessing the inaugural flight of the Lancaster. Having a lifelong appreciation of commercial and warbird aircraft, he knew he wanted to become involved in the CWH Museum after retirement. His wife bought him a membership in 1993.

Voices From the Past was put together by Pam Rickards and Howard Muchnick. They realized that veterans were leaving and their stories were not being captured, and the two of them put together a proposal to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for funding of a project. Pam asked Clare if he was interested in working on the project, thereby putting together a team of nine. In 2001, they began capturing the vets' stories on video. The team has now interviewed more than 400 people; from those who built the aircraft to flight crews and others involved in the air war, including Dutch civilians on the ground during Operation Manna (the humanitarian food drops carried out to relieve famine in German-occupied Holland).

Clare spoke to an archivist from McMaster University several years ago and was told that in spite of all the electronic means available, hard copy is still the best way to save this type of data. Voice recognition has come a long way in the last sixteen years, but is not economical yet. There are many ways we can use the raw data to benefit the Museum and it can be used by authors and short-story writers. The main object, as recognized by Pam and Howard, was to capture the stories while the veterans were still alive, and they did.

Being involved with Voices has been one of the highlights of Clare's career, and as he commented, it has been a pleasure and honour to meet members of this great generation. Neil McGavock took over the Chair of Voices From the Past project from Clare, and continues to steer the direction of this valuable project.

Clare happily resides in Grimsby with Claire, his wife of 63 years. They have a son and daughter, plus two granddaughters and a great-granddaughter. Clare joined CWH for the airplanes, but what keeps him here are the people and their stories of those who built, flew and maintained the aircraft.





Canadian Warplane Heritage's DC-3 80 GLORIOUS YEARS

by Bill Cumming

CWH's Dakota C-GDAK in its current colour scheme and markings. This aircraft is maintained in flying condition and is active with the Museum's flying program. *KOOL SHOTS*

THE TRANSITION OF THE DOUGLAS DC-3 CIVIL TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT INTO ONE OF THE VITAL STRATEGIC WEAPONS OF WORLD WAR II MARKS A CRUCIAL CHAPTER IN THE EVOLUTION OF MILITARY AIR TRANSPORT

Few, if any, of the many onlookers at Clover Field, Santa Monica, California, on 17 December 1935 could perceive the significance of the first historic flight of the Douglas DC-3 to commercial aviation. It revolutionized the concept of transportation and eventually touched the lives of people throughout the world. The transition of the Douglas DC-3 civil transport aircraft into one of the vital strategic weapons of World War II marks a crucial chapter in the evolution of military air transport. Having served with most of the world's air forces, it received many names and designations: DC-3, Dakota, C-47, C-48, C-49, C-50, C-51, C-52, C-53, R4D, Skytrain, Skytrooper, Li-2, PS-84, Gooney Bird, Dak, Tabby, Spooky, Puff the Magic Dragon and other unofficial names. It was an extremely versatile aircraft and was characterized by General Dwight D. Eisenhower as "one of the single pieces of equipment which did most to win the war." No aviation museum would be considered to be complete unless a DC-3 variant was among its artifacts.

The Douglas Commercial series commenced with the one and only DC-1, which first flew on 1 July 1933. It was followed by the up-rated DC-2, the first example making its maiden flight on 11 May 1934. A number of DC-2s went on to serve with airlines, and some examples entered military service. Although advanced in design, the DC-2 had deficiencies. During the latter part of 1934, a conversation between Donald Douglas and Cyrus Rowlett Smith, President of American Airlines, laid the foundation for the DC-3 transport.



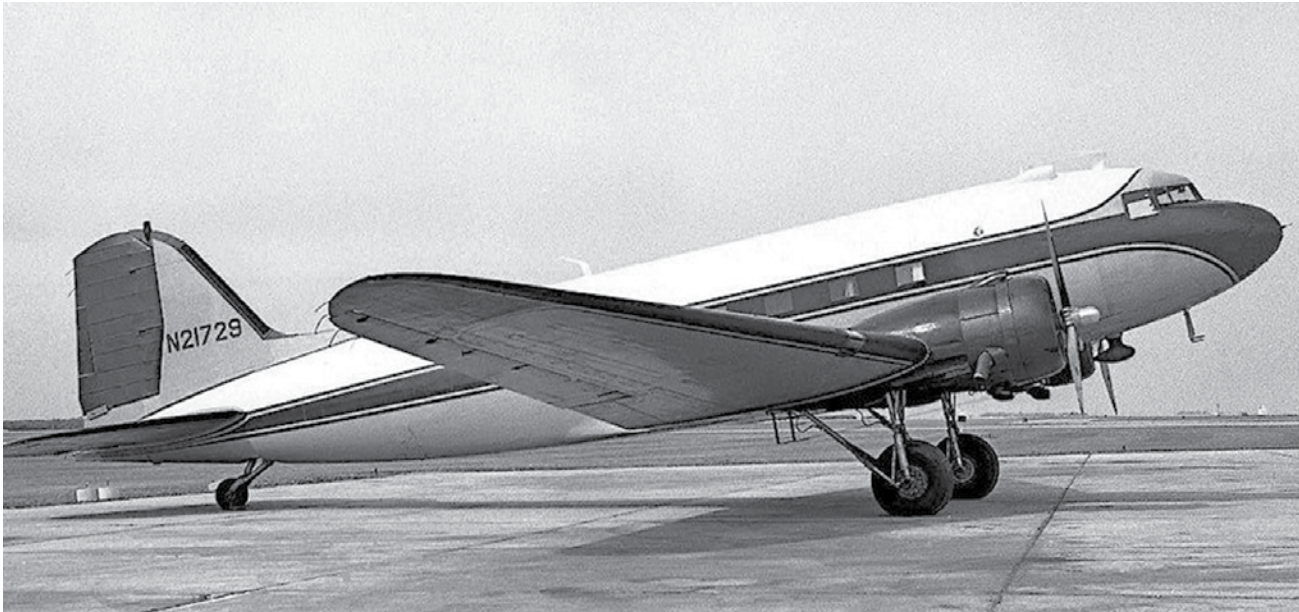
DC-3 NC21729 in Eastern Airlines markings as Eastern "347". Circa 1940.
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The initial flight of the first DC-3 was on 17 December 1935 (which coincided with the 32nd anniversary of man's powered flight). There was no prototype DC-3. In one of the most successful manufactured undertakings, 10,654 DC-3s and derivatives were built between 1935 and 1947 by Douglas Aircraft, and another 2,500 DC-3 type aircraft were produced in Japan and the USSR.

ALTHOUGH ADVANCED IN DESIGN, THE DC-2 HAD DEFICIENCIES

CWH's DC-3 when it belonged to University of North Dakota circa 1969.
UND VIA CHUCK SLOAT COLLECTION





CWH's DC-3 at Winnipeg during Sept. 1972, shown here with Crystal Shamrock of Minneapolis in a two-tone green scheme. TIM MARTIN

Canada introduced the C-47 Dakota into RCAF service in 1943, when four squadrons of the RCAF Home War Establishment (Nos. 164, 165, 168 and 12) were equipped with this aircraft. The Commonwealth Air Forces uniformly referred to the aircraft as the Dakota. Three additional squadrons were then formed overseas by the RCAF to operate the Dakota on transport duties. During August 1944, 435 & 436 squadrons were formed in India, followed by the formation of 437 Squadron in England, in September 1944.

In 1981, the museum's DC-3, C-GDAK, joined Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. It was a tired and worn out airplane, was 43 years old, and had in excess of 81,000 hours of flying time on the airframe. Prior to joining CWH, C-GDAK had visited Hamilton Airport on a number of occasions, painted in the colours of Colonel Charles Young's C-47A "The Argonia" of the 39th Troop Carrier Group, USAAF. "The Argonia" was the lead aircraft for the massive airborne assault force of 4 June 1944.

DURING THESE OPERATIONS, THEY WERE UNDER ENEMY AIRCRAFT ATTACK AND GROUND FIRE, BUT NEVER LOST AN AIRCRAFT TO GROUND FIRE.

Following its arrival at the Museum, C-GDAK was rebuilt over a 14-month period under the guidance of CWH's resident engineer at the time, Gary Taylor. With support from the 435-436 Burma Star Association, the DC-3 was finished in the markings of a C-47 Dakota assigned to 436 Squadron with RAF serial KN456. Emblazoned across the fuselage cabin area was the title CANUCKS UNLIMITED, an unofficial squadron nickname.

During the summer of 1944, the Allied armies were on the offensive, and fighting a hard campaign in India and Burma to drive back the Japanese invaders. The requirement to supply the Allied 14th Army at the front lines in Burma across a 2,000 mile supply line from depots in India and Pakistan was answered with air power and the formation of a major air transportation service in south-east Asia. Two of the RCAF overseas squadrons formed in India were created for this service. Both 435 "Chinthe" and 436 "Elephant" squadrons were assigned to 229 Group; part of an RAF/RCAF/USAF military airline known as "Combat Cargo Task Force".

The squadrons moved to the Burma front and became engaged in supply dropping to the 14th Army in the jungle, until 31 August 1945. Often during these operations, they were under enemy aircraft attack and ground fire, but never lost an aircraft to ground fire. They faced the constant threat of forced landing or bailout over impenetrable jungle. As there was an absence of a continuous front, many of the drop-zones (DZ) were postage-size dimensions and loads had to be thrown

out of the aircraft in small bundles. "Kickers" needed three or four passes to clear the cargo, consequently giving the enemy more opportunities to shoot at the Dakota. During the rainy season, the squadrons were assailed by the most formidable enemy of all—the tropical monsoon. But during their brief tour in the Far East, 435 and 436 Squadrons flew more than 25,000 sorties carrying 56,000 tons of cargo and 30,000 passengers. After hostilities, both squadrons moved to England and provided transport service to Canadian units on the Continent until disbanded in 1946.

The original KN456 made its first flight on 27 March 1945, carrying USAAF number 44-76596. It joined the Royal Air Force in Nassau as KN456 on 4 April 1945, and was subsequently assigned to the South-East Air Command (SEAC) on 29 April 1945. Serving with 436 Squadron until September 1947, it was returned to England and attached to the No. 12 Maintenance Unit, RAF. Suffering a Category 1 accident on 9 November 1948, KN456 was declared surplus and scrapped.

435 AND 436 SQUADRONS FLEW MORE THAN 25,000 SORTIES CARRYING 56,000 TONS OF CARGO AND 30,000 PASSENGERS

C-GDAK, which had carried US registration NC21729, was built as a DC-3-201B for Eastern Airlines—Eastern "347." Joining the airline on 17 June 1939, it stayed with Eastern until 1952. Many DC-3s were impressed for military service during the opening days of World War II, however after much research, there is no positive indication this particular DC-3 saw any military service. Briefly joining the Purdue School of Aeronautics on 12 June 1952, it was operated by the school before joining North Central Airlines in March 1953. It flew with North Central until 1964. Between 1964 and the time it joined CWH, there were a number of owners of the aircraft, including the University of North Dakota, which used the aircraft between 1969 and 1972 to shuttle athletic teams around the country. Acquired by Paul Weske in 1977, it was restored as "The Argonia," making appearances at a number of air shows for the next couple of years. In 1979, Mr. Ray Mabrey purchased NC21729 from Paul Weske and became sole owner of the airplane. In February 1981, he traded it to Mr. Jack Ormes in exchange for a Canadair T-33. Dennis Bradley acquired the DC-3 from Mr. Ormes in 1981, and donated it to the CWH Museum.

As NC21729, attending the 1978 Confederate Air Show in Harlingen, Texas. Note the absence of Argonia nose markings. *BILL CUMMING*





CWH's DC-3 Dakota, shortly after it arrived in Hamilton in 1981 undergoing restoration to a 436 Squadron Dakota, registered C-GDAK. CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

With over 82,000 flying hours, DC-3 C-GDAK is approaching its 80th birthday. It is not the oldest active or highest-time DC-3 in the world today, but it is still well maintained and flown by Canadian Warplane Heritage, and it looks better than it ever has. It is currently painted in a sand brown-green colour scheme, complete with the SEAC two-tone blue markings. As a tribute to both of the RCAF squadrons that served in Burma during World War Two, the port side of the DC-3's fuselage proudly wears the markings of 436 Squadron, representing Dakota KN456 (Z) complete with the Canucks Unlimited titling, and the starboard side of the fuselage is painted in the markings of Dakota KN563 (X) of 435 Squadron.

Today, CWH's DC-3 CANUCKS UNLIMITED is active with the members' ride program, appearing at various aviation events, and used as a "jump ship" for the Hamilton Sport Parachute Club at airshows. The DC-3 may be old, it may be slow, but it is reliable, available and undemanding. This "Queen of the Skies" will soldier on longer than many of us will.

CWH's Dakota when serving with North Central Airlines at Chicago Midway Airport, circa mid 1950's. MIDWAY AIRPORT HISTORIANS



CWH's Dakota C-GDAK shortly following its initial restoration as "Canucks Unlimited". Hamilton 1982. BILL CUMMING

2019 Calendar

March 9	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 11 am
March 24	HERITAGECON XIII Model Contest & Sale
April 14	DRAGSTRIP MEMORIES Back by popular demand!
June 1	75TH ANNIVERSARY D-DAY GALA
June 15 & 16	Come fly with us at FLYFEST
July 6	AIR FORCE DAY Past & Present
July 28	VINTAGE WHEELS & WINGS
August 27	AIRSHOW DINNER
August 28	COMMUNITY CHARITY AIRSHOW At the Brantford Airport
September 28 & 29	CLASSICS OF THE GOLDEN AGE Indoor car show

2019 Closures

January 22 to 28 inclusive

February 26 to March 5 inclusive

April 1 to 9 inclusive

*Please visit warplane.com
for additional updates.
Dates subject to change.

How Can I Help?

Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum is proud to recognize those supporters who have made significant contributions to our Museum over the past year and we are thrilled to add the following to our donor walls:

Cornerstone - \$100,000

Canso Investment Counsel Limited

Wings of Gold - \$25,000

Norman Etheridge

Wings of Silver - \$10,000

In Memory of Captain Thomas (Toast) McQueen,
401 Squadron, RCAF

"Friends of Flight" Memorial Hangar Doors - \$2,000

George J. Edwards, Forever in our Hearts

In Honour of Captain Thomas McQueen, Remembered by SGI

Walter R. Wintermute, Craftsman - Supporter - Friend, CWH Volunteer 1988 - 2018

In Memory of our Father, F/O Lew Stienstra, BCATP, RCAF; 1923 - 2015

Ron + Bette Page = Plane Great, Mentors & Aviation Historians

S/L Eugene Maliszewski, Armia Polska, FAF, RAF, RCAF, 618 (Queen City) Sqn., Toronto

"Friends of Flight" Wall - \$500

In Loving Memory of Earl Norman Ackles, Flight Sergeant 1943 - 1945

Trevor & May Meldrum, 69 years happily married, Trevor a 30 yr. museum volunteer

In memory of Joe Kemp

In Memory of Alan & Carla Rutherford, IPMS Hamilton, July 2018

Life Members now include:

Russell J. Reed

Graham Secord

Mark Kelleff

Jim Rundle

John R. Srigley

Eric Kerrigan

Frederick Galway

Zenon Fedun

Doug Brown

John Selders

Larry Buckmaster

George Moon

Graham Scott

Vijay Mistry

Linton Murray



BBC

1943 Berlin Blitz



New Virtual Reality Experience



Coming March 2019



warplane.com



9280 Airport Road, Hamilton, ON L0R 1W0

1-877-FIREFLY (347-3359)



EXPERIENCE BREATHTAKING VIEWS FROM THE CANSO



FLIGHTS ALSO AVAILABLE IN:



AVRO LANCASTER



BOEING STEARMAN



B-25 MITCHELL

Book your flight at warplane.com!

CANADA		POSTES
POST		CANADA
Postage paid		Port payé
Publications Mail		Poste-publications
40069628		