

SKYWRITER

Calgary Recreational Flying Club COPA Flight 114





Volume 2

Our Mission

Promoting the safe enjoyment of aviation for pilots, aircraft builders and enthusiasts.



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Our Vision

Welcoming owners and pilots of all types of aircraft including ultra-light, amateur-built, certified and other types of aircraft.

Connecting members through regular meetings, monthly newsletters, our website, social media, BBQ's and fly-outs.

Exchanging knowledge and information about flying and flight safety, and aircraft construction and maintenance via meeting presentations, newsletters and other events.

Sharing and enjoying real-world flying adventures.

Featured on the Cover:

The Flightline at the 2023 annual Father's Day Fly-in at Glen Bishell's. See more details and pictures in the Sklywriter Update section on page 6.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



July/Aug 2023 President's Message BRIAN BYL

So far it's been a wild Southern Alberta summer. We've experienced some extreme weather this month with daily (or so it seems) thunderstorms and isolated, but extremely heavy, rain.

On Canada Day an EF5 tornado left a trail of destruction between Carstairs and Didsbury. Glenn Bishell and Mike Sweere got to see it up close and personal as it passed a mere 1½ miles north of Carstairs-Bishell CGB2 airport. Thankfully there were only very minor injuries, though nine homes and properties were damaged and three homes destroyed. Had the twister moved a little further south, the Bishell's and Sweere's properties might have been lost, along with all the airplanes based there.

There have been some aviation events so far this summer.

On the July 1st weekend The Alberta Air Tour travelled around to Fairview, Grand Prairie and Slave Lake. I'm not sure how many air participated but the event was very successful.

The annual Bishell Father's Day Fly-in Breakfast was a rousing success. Glenn mentioned there were over 15 aircraft that flew in including five aircraft from Indus! As usual there was lots of food and great company.

I have been getting ready to do some work on the 195 as I need to replace two cylinders. I have been using oil at a high rate and the company that overhauled the engine sent me two replacement cylinders, #4 and #5, on warranty. I consider that exceptional customer service and support considering the engine was overhauled in 2012 and has over 460 SMOH. They are quite sure that is the cause of the high oil consumption. I hope they're right. It will take a couple of days the swap them out. In the meantime it will nice to exercise the 150.

I did manage to get out flying twice in the past two weeks, once in the 195 and another sortie of almost 3 hours in the 150. On July 8 Mike, Pat and myself flew up to Ram Falls, Lacombe and back home. We arrived in Ram Falls shortly after 10 AM and left around 11:15. Even though the temperature was only 20C and a field elevation at 5,300' the increase in take-off roll was noticeable. I figured I used just under half of the 3,000' long runway. I certainly wouldn't want to attempt a departure out of there with warmer temperatures and a heavy aircraft. We enjoyed very smooth air.

So how did you like the June Skywriter? I thought our new Skywriter editor, Greg, did a bang-up job for his first attempt. Let's keep him inundated with articles, stories and photos to fill the pages.

Unfortunately our June BBQ/ Meeting was cancelled due to the forecasted crappy weather and that trend seems to be continuing. The executive is monitoring the weather and hopefully we will be able to reschedule it towards the end of July when the weather settles down. I don't think anyone wants to have their aircraft caught in a thunderstorm. We still plan to have it at Winters Aire Park/Indus Airport (CFY4) when it's a go. John Kerr has bought all the fixin's and is chomping at the bit. When we set the date he will accept any help you offer so contact him at (403) 714-0446. We'll keep you all informed.

In the meantime FLY SAFE!





Newsletter Update

GREG LABINE Director/Newsletter Editor



So here is our midsummer newsletter. Lots of material in this issue for your enjoyment.

Firstly I'd like to share a few pictures Stu sent me of Brian Vasseur, our club Vice President, flying his Zenair CH250. (Page bottom) After a long break from flying it's nice to see him back in the air. Looking good, way to go Brian!

I would like to thank all who provide me with pictures, stories and such. Its great to have a lot of material to draw from.

I've included some great pictures courtesy of Glenn Bishell of his Fly-in event. They follow below.

Also contained in this issue is the conclusion of my two part article about the Bomber Command Museum. I hope you enjoy it.

As well, there is the first part of a great article submitted by Stu Simpson. Another south of the border adventure, written in his exciting style that puts you right in the cockpit with him. It's a very full and detailed piece (which is odd for Stu, Lol) so I've broken it into a few installments. Other parts to follow soon.



Until next time, GREG.



Your host Glenn Bishell.
He said "We served over
120 meals and had 18
aircraft fly in. It was a
perfect day!"









Bomber Command Museum - Part II By Greg LaBine

The Bomber Command Museum of Canada in Nanton, Alberta had a special event back in May for the 80th anniversary of the "Dambusters". After they ran the Lancaster, the Halifax Crew ran one of their Bristol Hercules engines. Afterwards, I had an opportunity to speak one on one with their spokesman Karl Kjarsgaard, who is the Director of the Halifax Project. In our brief discussion he shared information that I was unaware of and totally enlightened by. So much so, that it becomes the focus of Part two of this article.

The organization is Halifax 57 Rescue Canada. They are in the process of restoring a complete and running Handley Page Halifax bomber with Bristol Hercules engines to be based at the Bomber Command Museum in Nanton, not just as a static exhibit but to actually run and taxi it as well.

There are only 3 intact Halifax Bombers remaining in the world, all are static display only:

1) Yorkshire Air Museum in York, England - This Halifax crash landed near Stornoway, Scotland January 13, 1945. The fuselage was then purchased by a chicken farmer and used as a coop. It was recovered and restored in 1984 using pieces from other Halifaxes. It's painted as "Friday the 13th" of 158 Squadron.



2) RAF Museum in London, England – April 27, 1942 this Halifax was part of the raid on the German battleship "Tirpitz" during which it took flak and made a wheels-up landing on frozen Lake Hoklingen in Norway but sank 12 hours later. Discovered in 1971 and recovered in 1973. It is displayed unrestored as a "crash diorama".



3) National Airforce Museum of Canada Trenton, Ontario – This Halifax was hit by flak April 24, 1945 and ditched in Lake Mjøsa in Norway. Discovered in 1991, raised 1995 by Halifax 57 Rescue. Restoration was completed in 2005.



The long-term plan for the Halifax 57 Rescue's current project is to have enough space in Nanton to house both the Lancaster and Halifax, run both and eventually taxi both. It would be the only runnable Halifax in the world, and the Bomber Command Museum would be the only museum with 2 runnable and taxi-capable WW II commonwealth bombers! Nanton town has promised 5 acres of land adjacent to the museum for this purpose.

Is the Halifax the most significant combat aircraft in Canadian aviation history?

Good question, so consider the following.

71% of all combat in bombers done by Canadians was done in the Halifax! 20% flew the Lancaster and less than 10% flew the 2-engined Vickers Wellingtons. So, it's a natural that a Halifax should be rightfully displayed next to the Lancaster.

During their service with Bomber Command, the Halifax flew a total of 82,773 operations and dropped 224,207 tons of bombs, while 1,833 aircraft were lost.

The Halifax was flown in large numbers by Commonwealth and Allied nations, such as the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Free French Air Force and Polish forces.

However, to give a bit of context, out of all 7-men Halifax bomber crews, the breakdown is as follows: A Tour is 30 combat trips. 24% of crews completed their Tours. Of the other 76% of Crews, 12% were injured or killed in training, 13% were shot down and became POWs, and 51% were killed in combat.

Imagine, the average age was 21-22 years old, flying 65,000 lbs of aircraft, burning 2,000 gallons of high octane fuel, carrying 8,000-10,000 lbs of bomb payload with minimal training and experience at night. All while being fired upon by enemies. Boys that were Men of great courage.

You would be surprised by how many names that appear on the Memorial Wall at the Bomber Command Museum are of Halifax bomber crews. We all owe a lot to this aircraft and the crews who flew in them.

I feel the Halifax is a victim of history much like the Hurricane. When you say "Battle of Britain" people think Spitfire. Although a beautiful and well performing fighter, they weren't the only one used. The Hurricane made major contributions to that battle but seems to lack the proper credit it's due. Likewise, with bombers all the attention is focused on the Lancaster, albeit a great bomber but, the Halifax should receive more recognition then it does.

After the war, they saved a lot of Lancasters but many Halifax aircraft were cut up. Some were used in various civilian roles such as freighters however, the last of the Halifax aircraft used in a military role was by Pakistan up to 1961.

Halifax 57 Rescue Canada is currently restoring a Halifax destined for the Bomber Command Museum of Canada In Nanton, Alberta. Due to lack of space there, it is being worked on elsewhere and as parts are completed they will be moved to the Nanton Museum.

They have 8 engines in total, 3 are in really good condition, 1 low time and 2 factory 0-timed. The other 5 are donors for parts such as cores, cylinders, etc. Some engines came out of a crate after sitting for 60 years. Imagine trying to un-pickle an engine after that long. Engine #1 is in hibernation, #2 was the one they ran that day.

The "Core" is the central piece of fuselage and wing portions from inboard engine to inboard engine. This piece of their Halifax was found in a scrap yard in Malta, south of Italy and purchased for a dollar a pound!

An undersea diving effort in Sweden recovered various parts including control surfaces, flaps, a tailwheel assembly and wing joint parts.

Karl said there is a lot of "Horse trading" required to move this project forward.



A museum in England had the wrong propellers (DC 3 props) on their static display Halifax. So the Halifax 57 guys 3D printed 12 perfect and correct blades for static display only, and traded them for 28' of Halifax wing that can bolt right on. To left, wing section being loaded for shipping to Canada.

They also found in crates 12 of the correct runnable propeller blades for their project and traded some spare Lancaster, Harvard and Merlin parts for them. See picture at right of a very happy Karl.



This organization is doing fantastic work saving this rare piece of Canadian aviation history and their motto says it all... "We Leave no Halifax behind".

For more info or to make a donation:

Just google **fundrazr 417498** to see a wealth of information on this project including update posts and videos, etc. There are 185 reports.

See this link for great videos:

https://www.timekeeperscanada.com/airpllanehunters-org

Also check out their Facebook page.





STU SIMPSON
Director

Okay, let's switch," Bob radioed from his Cherokee.
"Rog, switching." I pressed the frequency flop button on

the Cav's radio and saw the display change to 122.2."

"One."

"Two," I replied tersely.

"Great Falls Radio," Kirkby called, "This is Cherokee Charlie Foxtrot Xray Yankee Bravo on the Cut Bank RCO." The radio was silent as we waited, Bob and Carl Forman in Kirkby's plane, me in my Cavalier.

"Cherokee Foxtrot Xray Yankee Bravo, go ahead."

"Great Falls Radio, Foxtrot Xray Yankee Bravo, plus one, is approximately 5 miles north of the border at seven thousand five hundred on a trans-border flight plan looking for a transponder code, please."

"Cherokee Foxtrot Xray Yankee Bravo, you're with Golf Bravo Quebec Romeo?" the controller asked.

"That's affirmative"

The controller had us stand by for a moment, then provided our codes. We each tuned our transponders and a couple of minutes later passed over the almost invisible border with the United States. I marveled again, somewhat proudly, that it was the longest open and undefended border in the world.

A few minutes later I set the Cav down well behind Kirkby and Forman on Cut Bank's runway 14, and slowed enough to make the intersection taxiway. We rolled to the customs ramp, shut down, and opened our cockpit doors to stay cool in the warm morning sun as we waited for the customs officers to appear.

Cut Bank is often the first stop on our summer flying adventures. It's a convenient place to enter the US and then jump off for wherever we're headed. We're usually in the air again within half an hour.

This time, though, we sat in our planes for over half an hour waiting for the customs guys to even arrive. When they did show, the processing went extremely slowly as a new guy tried to work his way through the computer system that wasn't working. His training officer made some calls and eventually managed to get things operational. In the end, we spent an hour and a half at Cut Bank, a delay that would cost us later.

Freshly fueled and happy to be on our way again, we took off and headed south. We flew toward Helena near where we'd angle southeast for Ennis and another fuel stop. Our other option from Helena was to go southwest which would put us in a valley toward Butte and later Dillon along I-15. I went that way in 2019 with Doug Eaglesham and Dennis Fox. But back then we had better weather for it.



Cooling our heels on the hot customs ramp at Cut Bank, Montana

As it was, along the Ennis Valley, clouds bottoms menaced the mountain tops and tried to force us lower along our course. We scooted through their damp, drooping tendrils, not really worried because the valley was so wide. Our two planes had lots of room to maneuver should weather become more troublesome. We wondered, though, how far south it stretched. Would it block the Raynolds Pass that sat at 6800 feet?



Looking west in the Ennis Valley. That weather is sitting atop the valley where I-15 is.

About 35 miles north of Ennis we outran the lower clouds. Relieved, I looked west to see the weather causing havoc in the valley where I-15 sat. We clearly chose well.We fueled and pottied at Ennis, which is incidentally at 45 degrees north latitude, half way to the north pole or the equator, depending on direction which you're heading.

Now we faced a pretty hot and high takeoff from the 5400' high runway. Our density altitude worked out to about 7300 feet. Luckily, the pavement is 7600 feet long, so we were unlikely to have any issues.

The Cherokee accelerated along the runway, steadily gaining speed, but using much more ground than normal. Bob eased the Piper gently into the air and held the runway heading, gaining speed before his turn. He later described his takeoff as 'mushy'.

"Ennis airport traffic," I called, "Cavalier Bravo Quebec Romeo is rolling runway 34 in sequence. Left turn out southbound from Ennis." The Cav started forward as I pushed the throttle. My acceleration was good, but nothing like it is back at home. I too eased my plane into the air where it sped up much more slowly than normal. I'd have to get used to this because our route plan was going to take us to a lot of hot and high airports on this adventure.

I caught up to Bob climbing out southbound toward the Raynolds Pass a few miles south. Once we cleared the pass, we turned to the southwest for our final destination of the day, Pocatello, Idaho. But our reaching there was beginning to seem doubtful. Thunderstorms interrupted the horizon in various locations ahead. Some were waning, but more appeared to be growing. This is what worried us during the delay at the border.

The storms were still a long way off and more alternates became viable the closer we got to I-15. We flew along over Idaho's post-volcanic landscape which included calderas, lava fields, and sand dunes. I was very uncomfortable for the few minutes we spent above the lava. A forced landing there meant certain death on the jagged rock shards.

While we played chicken with the approaching thunderstorms we got to use the weather features on our ADS-B systems for the first time. It was tremendously helpful to see the storms cells on radar, but comparing the ADS-B radar image with what Bob and Carl were able to bring up on Windy.com showed the ADS-B image was a few minutes older than what Windy offered. We were operating in a visual environment, so we could look out the window for the best comparison. I wondered how that might go in an IFR situation.

We wound up having to set down at Blackfoot, a town about 20 miles up the road from Pocatello. We cooled our heels and pored over the radar for a bit more than an hour as a big cell battered our destination. Like a school yard bully bored with beating his victim, the storm finally trundled off to the northwest leaving us an unfettered path to our final landing of the day.



A fight we can't win. This storm forced us to divert to Blackfoot, ID, and wait it out.

Day 2

The morning was delightful. Clear blue skies surrounded us as we prepped our planes. We'd see some great sights today if our plan unfolded as we hoped.

After takeoff, Pocatello's controller cleared us southbound out of his airspace and we switched to our en route frequency.

"How high do you want to go, Stu?" Bob queried.

"How about 7500 feet to start?" I suggested.

"Roger that. I'm going to cruise climb to get there."

"Copy. Likewise. I'm at your six o'clock for three quarters of a mile."

We had the Malad City VOR punched in to our GPS's, though we'd be angling off to the southwest before we got there. We climbed steadily in the calm air enjoying how the sun captured the high valley below us and the mountains to either side. We chatted about various things like the landscape below, ADS-B, and Carl's new high falutin' Garmin GPS that he was practicing with in the Cherokee's right seat.



We soon turned more to the right, crossed a high ridge and made for the Lucin VOR in the middle of the desert west of the Great Salt Lake. We were headed for Wendover, a town that sits right on the border of Utah and Nevada. There are casinos on the Nevada side, but not on the Utah side.

Spring Bay, northern most reach of the Great Salt Lake.

The Lucin VOR passed by off our left wings and we were surprised to see there's actually an airport there in the middle of absolutely nowhere. It's a dirt strip with a couple of runways in seemingly good condition, and is marked as Restricted on the map. I got curious and learned that the owner's address comes back to an obscure bay in a shabby looking building shared by a VW repair shop in an industrial area in Long Beach, California.

A Google Earth satellite shot also shows a camouflaged single-engine Cessna in front of the only building on the site. Now, I'm not saying that Lucin might be an airfield used for clandestine governmental activities, I'm just saying what I saw. If you know what I mean.

We needed to be a bit more careful with our navigation now. We were approaching a block of restricted airspace that we needed to circumnavigate to the west to reach Wendover. We continued on around the restricted zone, which was bounded by a small range of mountains, and banked back to the southeast to set up for a long straight-in to runway 08.

We landed, fueled up, and parked our planes. We then spent about 45 minutes exploring the small museum on the field and enjoying the history of the place. I bought a souvenir shirt. I'm grateful that Bob and Carl agreed to accompany me on my dalliance to Wendover.

We lit out eastbound. climbing slowly over the bright white salt flats. We flew along a roughly 10 mile wide strip of airspace between previously mentioned restricted to the zone north and a similar one to the south. We passed just the famous south of Bonneville Salt **Flats** where a lot of land speed records have been set. That was cool to see, too.



The legendary Bonneville Salt Flats, home to many land speed records.

As we leveled off on the south side of the Interstate highway below us, I spotted an aircraft on ADS-B approaching from our 12 o'clock. We adjusted our position a bit more to the right for added clearance, and we increased our altitude. We watched our screens as the other plane got closer, and we all tried our best to spot it as it passed. But we never laid eyes on the guy.

To be fair, we were most likely looking for a white airplane a couple of miles away against a blazing white backdrop. I can see how we might not see it. Or perhaps it was a plane engaged in clandestine governmental activities. If you know what I mean.

We rounded the corner at the east end of the restricted airspace and set up for our next stop, Delta, Utah. We soon passed by the Simpson Mountains, and Carl declared they appeared lonely and sad looking. I thought Carl maybe ought to go back to figuring out his new GPS.

It was definitely getting bumpier in the afternoon heat and it was taking its toll on my forward speed. I was continually falling behind Bob as I was all over the throttle trying to keep my RPMs in the right range. I'd catch a thermal and the engine would surge toward red line, so I pulled the throttle back. In the next instant I was fighting a downdraft that required nose up and increased power. Kirkby's Cherokee has a constant speed prop, of course, so speed control for him was a piece of cake.

We refueled at Delta and climbed as fast as we could away from the desert heat. Small storm cells were forming ahead of us and we wanted to get past them before they blocked our way for good. We found ourselves near a small squall along our trajectory. It was clearly growing but it didn't amount to much while we were there. "That one didn't even get the windshield wet," Bob lamented. A few minutes later, another building storm did us the courtesy of a brief shower which was enough to clean both our windscreens.



The blazing red rock in the Valley of Fire State Park northeast of Las Vegas, NV.

I watched the miles wind down as we left more and more of them behind us. The landscape slowly shifted from one with desert grasses and shrubs to that of almost complete rock and sand. The outcroppings evolved into more rugged and dramatic looking ramparts as we approached the Las Vegas area, especially when we reached the Valley of Fire State Park. There the jagged, iron infused landscape glowed bright red in the falling afternoon sun. The startlingly blue-green waters of Lake Mead, which feeds the Hoover Dam, flowed into sight and we began the set up for our landing at Boulder City.

Boulder City is a small community on the southeastern outskirts of Vegas. Its airport is bordered less than two miles to the north by a small range of sharp mountains. We had a 23 knot southeast wind, which aligned well with BVU's runway 15. But the upslope wind against the heat soaked southern slopes of the ridge to the north created all sorts of chaos for our approach to the field. On top of that, the runway is sloped downhill to the south at nearly 3%.

Kirkby went first and floated well beyond half the runway length before he touched down. With the ass-kicking I was getting on left base and final, I reckoned that I'd be lucky to not have to go around. Surprisingly, my landing was exquisite, easily the best one of the entire trip. Please don't think I'm bragging because I have no idea how it happened in those conditions.

We found a spot at the north end of the field and for the next hour saw a terrific array of tactical aircraft doing takeoffs, landings,/ and touch and go's. We saw a B-52 fly over, as well as several F-16s in aggressor squadron colours. There were some F-15s departing, a four-ship flight of F-35s departing, and a four-ship of F-22s taking off. But the best thing was seeing a U-2 departing to the south. It was thrilling to see such a rare, amazing, and iconic airplane in person.

We spent three nights in Vegas as we toured various sights that didn't involve The Strip or any of the casinos. On one morning we headed out to where we could watch landings and takeoffs at Nellis Air Force Base, just north of the city.

We found a spot at the north end of the field and for the next hour saw a terrific array of tactical aircraft doing takeoffs, landings,/ and touch and go's. We saw a B-52 fly over, as well as several F-16s in aggressor squadron colours. There were some F-15s departing, a four-ship flight of F-35s departing, and a four-ship of F-22s taking off. But the best thing was seeing a U-2 departing to the south. It was thrilling to see such a rare, amazing, and iconic airplane in person.

STU



Calender of coming Aviation events



July 29-30 Red Deer Regional Airshow. It has been about 20 years since Red Deer last hosted an airshow. This year they will be featuring the Canadian International Air Races – Formula 1 Pylon Racers. This event will be only the second time an event of its kind has been held in Canada. The last was in Saskatchewan in 1985. Reno Nevada has been hosting air racing since 1964, but this year will be the last year for the Reno event. This should be an exciting airshow overall. (Thanks to Stu Simpson for sharing this one with me)

July 29-30 Lethbridge International Airshow

July 24-30 EAA Air Venture Oshkosh Wisconsin

August 4-6 Alberta International Air show Villeneuve Airport CZVL

Aug 26 Alberta Air Tour #3 - Tentative airports Josephberg, Villeneuve. More info shortly on Alberta Air Tour Facebook page

August 13 Westlock CES4 Drive/fly-in breakfast. Held every year on the second Sunday in August. Date to be confirmed for this year.

CRFC BBQ Meeting - Date TBD. There will be a separate announcement emailed out to everyone once date is confirmed.

If you have any future events, please feel free to forward the details to me so I may share them with the members. crufcnews@gmail.com

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Aviation Items for sale:

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Contact Ed Wawzonek (403) 286-2664 wzplane@yahoo.ca

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