



SKYWRITER

Calgary Recreational Flying Club COPA Flight 114



Our Mission

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

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.

THIS ISSUE

3- President's Message

4- Skywriter Update

5- IFR Flying

7- Monuments and Reflections

11- Decisions & Responses

13- Calendar

14- Classifieds

16- Your Executive

Featured on the Cover:

Club member and good friend Dirkjan Kiewiet in his Zenith CH 601.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

March 2025

BRIAN VASSUER



Welcome back to flying weather.

I was getting very depressed by weather that was too cold to even preheat the plane. While there's a bit more water from melting snow that I was hoping for I don't think that will hold me up too much.

Something important I needed to take care of this month was to do some night flying before daylight savings time kicks in. I was able to get in the plane and in the air at about 6:30PM but with DST that will be pushed back an hour. We are also at the time of year where daylight moves back several minutes each day so it won't be long until flying after supertime is possible again.

Having more daylight and warmer temperatures means it's also a good time to take a look at some of those annoying maintenance items that showed up over the winter. On my Zenair the antenna connector is loose and needs a new connector crimped on, the tire pressures need to be checked, and it's time to get rid of the winter grime.

If your plane hasn't flown since last fall then it's probably a good idea to give it a thorough going over before the first flight of the year. And don't forget to check the fuel sumps and drain all the condensation collected over the winter months.

I'm looking to see more activity out at Chestermere, Bishell's and Indus before too long.

WestJet has been kind enough to give me a six month leave of absence so I can fly for another operator full time throughout the summer. As an added bonus they have sent me on an ATPL course this month so I can get my exams done. That is very generous of them and will give me a good head start on my pilot career.

The meeting this month is March 12th at the Hangar Flight Museum.

See you there.

Brian

Newsletter Update

Newsletter Editor **GREG LABINE**



Spring is on the way!

At least it feels that way and I hope that holds true. However, having lived in Calgary since the early 1970's, I've come to realize that most often our winters usually give us one more good blast before departing until next fall. So I wouldn't be surprised to see a short little relapse of snow some time in March, April or May. We'll see, I guess.

With that in mind, you may notice I used a more summer looking picture for the cover this month. After the brutal February weather we've endured, I felt we needed a warmer picture to pick up everyone's spirits.

This Month we have more fascinating content on IFR flying from Brian Vassuer. We also have a fantastic piece from James Mcpherson on some of the monuments in this area of Alberta related to Aircrew who trained and some who met with tragedy during the BCATP era. (British Commonwealth Air Training Plan)

This is a favorite subject of mine as I am a history nerd and have a keen interest in stories on this subject. Additionally, having been a tour bus Driver/Guide for Brewster earlier in my life, I have a passion for Western Canadian history, especially within Alberta. This article, accompanied by some great photos, grabbed my interest immediately.

We also share a few member responses to the questions posed in an article published in Skywriter last month, by Stu Simpson called "Decisions, Decisions". Its interesting to see various perspectives on a subject such as this. It's great to see this sort of feedback and member participation in our club. We need more of this from our members.

I always appreciate your content and encourage your contributions to Skywriter, as I have to fill these pages every month. Please keep 'em coming!

I won't be attending the next meeting **Wednesday, March 12**, as I will be on a beach thinking about nothing! Hope you have a good one.

See you soon!
GREG.

IFR FLYING

By Brian Vasseur



Since I've had my IFR rating I've given a lot of thought to how useful this is going to be if most of the flying I do is in a slow airplane to an airport that may not be too far away. I have a few reasons why you may want to consider it.

The benefit to flying IFR on a mostly VFR day is that you ensure you have a legal way to depart from or arrive to an airport even if there is low cloud somewhere along the way. IFR flying has some fairly low weather limits even for GA, much lower than I would be comfortable flying VFR. Typically you would use the TAF to determine the expected weather at your destination and alternate.

The minimum requirements for an IFR departure are 1/2 SM (statute miles) visibility, and the ceiling can be below landing minimums. I've done this in a twin engine aircraft but I don't think I would do that in a single. The advantage here is this might help you get an early start on a morning with some fog that is taking a long time to clear, or really low cloud.

Landing limits for most IFR approaches are also pretty low. A GPS only approach might be one mile visibility and 500 foot above the airport while an ILS approach is often 1/2 SM and 200 feet with the right type of runway lights. This can be very helpful if a mild storm and low visibility moves in on your destination and you don't want to turn around and go home.

When you file IFR there is also a requirement to file an Alternate airport in case the weather at your destination drops below landing limits. There's no restriction on how close or far away it has to be as long as you carry enough fuel to get there plus another 45 minutes after that as an additional safety margin. The alternate airport weather minimums are a bit higher, commonly two miles visibility and 800' above the airport (or 600' if it has an ILS).

The actual requirements are much more detailed and have many special cases. What this does show is that filing IFR gives you a much better chance of being able to fly if the weather just isn't working to VFR flying that day.



One important point to note about winter flying is that IFR isn't as useful as it is in the summer. The key issue when the weather gets below 10C is that you may have icing to deal with, and most GA planes aren't equipped for any type of icing. The temperature drops about 2C for every thousand feet increase in altitude. The freezing level will be depicted on the second page of the GFA and is helpful to determine if you will be able to stay below that in cloud.

If the temp was 5C on the ground and you climb to 3000 AGL in cloud you may be below the freezing level and will start to ice up. The only thing you can do is get out of cloud or into warmer air. IFR flight plans require obstacle clearance along the entire route so you may not get a clearance to fly lower if you can't exit cloud into VFR.

If your airplane is equipped for IFR and you fly to or from airports with an IFR procedure there might be some value in having an instrument rating for those days when the weather just doesn't cooperate.

MONUMENTAL ACCIDENTS & SOME REFLECTIONS

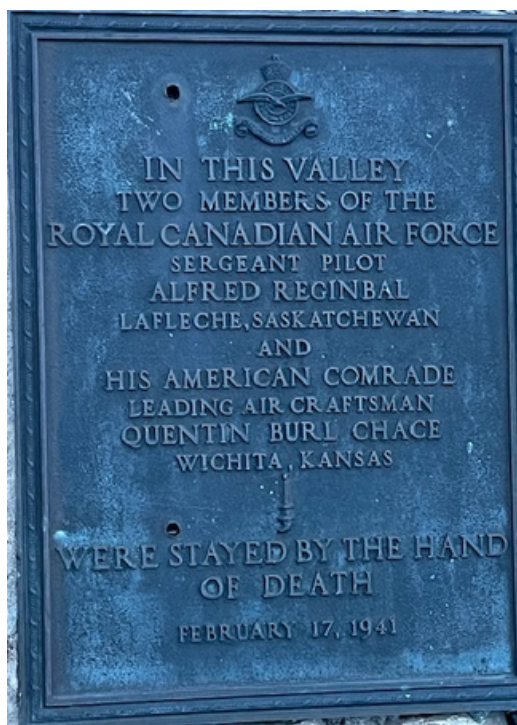
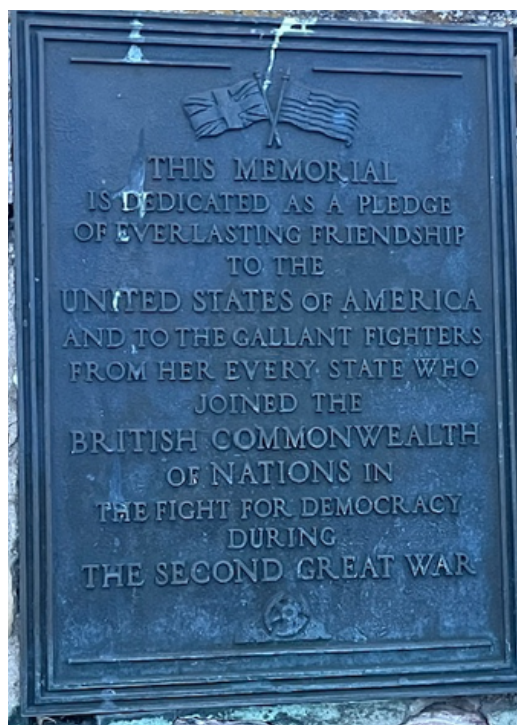
By James Mcpherson

I prefer the way less travelled, a preference which when combined with happenstance, makes for good stories. Here is one about three fatal mishaps which occurred during the WW II British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.



Each happened in our part of Alberta and each is commemorated by a physical monument. I did not seek them out, they were just waiting to be seen. They will do most of the story telling, and each has a bit of a twist of the tale for the attentive reader.

The first is located on the south side of Highway 1A (for some of us, still "The Old Trans Canada") just east of the Mini Thni reserve. Its bronze faceplate notes that on February 17th 1941 two members of the RCAF, one from Saskatchewan, one from Kansas , were "Stayed by the Hand of Death" nearby. Given these times of tariff tussles the words on the dedication plate ring now with hollow irony.



An internet search of the two airmen's names , pilot Alfred Reginbal "and his American comrade" Quentin Burl Chace, reveals a good deal more about these men, the accident (they hit a cable near the Bow River) and how the monument came to be.

A small twist in this tale is that somewhere between ordering of the heavy bronze plates and their casting, the name of the Canadian was misspelled.. an "n" instead of an "m" in what should be Regimbal , a much more recognizable name in La Fleche, Saskatchewan.

Another monument lies on Range Road 25A just north of the Big Hill Springs Road (aka Highway 567) a couple of miles east of the Provincial Park of the same name. This lovely single stone memorial dates from November 12th 1995 but presents as almost new.

It gives a detailed history of the crash and burn of a Tiger Moth on November 10th, 1941. Of note to me are the age of the instructor, the courage of his student and of course the heroism of a young woman, the local school teacher whose was awarded the George Medal for her actions . The words and pictures hint of the rigours of training and the risks necessarily taken to push through thousands of aircrew at what can truly be described as a breakneck pace. The pictures below are worth your study.

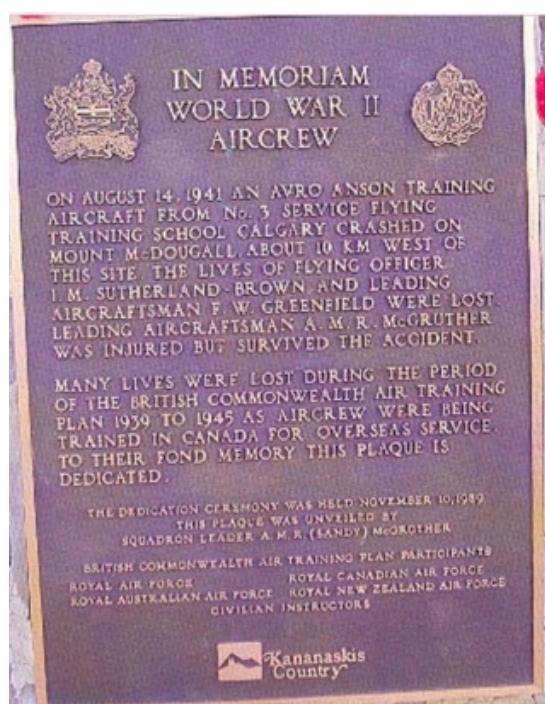


His efforts to save the instructor from the burning aircraft are vividly described as are the efforts of Frances Walsh to extinguish the flames on his clothing. But only under the photo do we learn that he died too. I am left wondering why the Banff/Canmore Air Cadets chose this accident in this place for this exquisite memorial. It reminds me of how dangerous wartime flight training was.

Once a client gave me the gift of a story about it. A superb pilot, he instructed for 2 years in Canada before going on to stellar active duty overseas in Europe, Africa, India and Asia flying VIP military people to and from every theatre of the war. He spoke of the tremendous push to get one class through, for another was right behind and the one ahead was desperately needed in Europe. Instructors knew full well that lessons were not always completely learned. Accidents in training were part of the calculations for victory.

He told too of being part of a group of instructors aloft in an Avro Anson studying a new piece of equipment. An Anson was a noisy classroom. Somebody seated well behind the pilot made a leaping reach over the pilot's shoulder and turned the yoke. The others then saw an aircraft miss them by inches. His words to me: "They would have lost all of them and it would not have been the first time"

His Anson anecdote brings me in suitable fashion to the last monument. It was dedicated on November 10th 1989 *"In Memoriam, WWII Aircrew"* and sits surrounded by bushes at the end of a short path that leads to a stunning lookout about midway along the Powderface Trail. That's the summer-only forestry road that winds through Kananaskis country from a point east of Elbow Falls southward to Sibbald Lake Recreational area. It's a wonderful drive.



The photos and screen shots tell the story of a doomed Anson and its RCAF crew. The plaque nicely underlines the training risks involved and understates an incredible multi-day rescue and survival story. The screen shots or a Google search give welcome amplification to the details given. No STARS flew to Mount McDougall then!

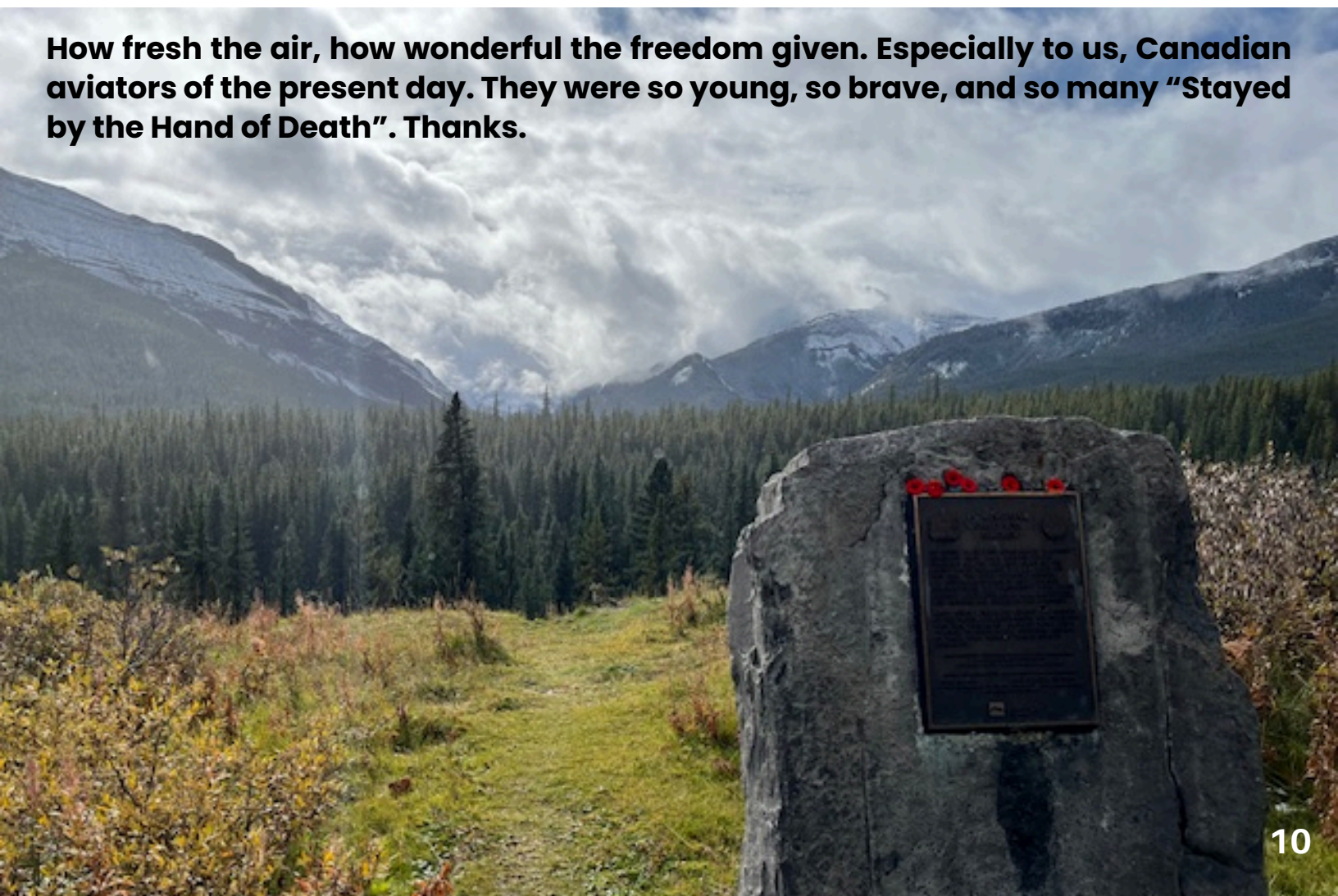
I stood alone at this place on a perfect afternoon last October. There were no cars and I had no company except for the wind whispering to the yellowing leaves of sunlit aspens. The silence was broken by the whump whump of a helicopter. It swooped and hovered for a few seconds then swerved away like a dragonfly towards the mountains to the West.

I naively thought that perhaps they were checking to see if I needed rescue! Later I learned, to my surprise, that this spot is part of Springbank's L R Helicopter's scenic flight route for tourists.

The Twist here? The plaque mentions by name the leading aircraftsman who survived, but did you connect the dots to the squadron leader who unveiled this cairn?

In the quiet that followed, aided by the tattered poppies and wreaths still glowing after eleven long months of wind and snow, I reflected. First of course on the loss of vibrant young men and on their bravery. I marvelled at their utter commitment to a cause . Could my generation have done it? Could the generations following mine do it? I really do wonder.

How fresh the air, how wonderful the freedom given. Especially to us, Canadian aviators of the present day. They were so young, so brave, and so many "Stayed by the Hand of Death". Thanks.



DECISIONS & RESPONSES

By Stu Simpson



Stu Simpson's "Decisions" article last month posed a few questions. He was looking for some feedback from any members who wished to chime in with their thoughts. Below appears the questions followed by member responses received.

QUESTIONS:

"Based on last month's article, I want to know what you think of a decision I once made, and what you'd have done in the same situation.

This wasn't a major life changing choice, or a dangerous do-or-die scenario. It was nothing dramatic at all, but there was a chance that it could have mattered. It's about a minor routing change during a mountain flight. (See article last month)

Was my choice a good one, or bad? Should I have stuck to my original plan? Was the deviation minor enough that it really didn't matter, or did it have a high potential to cause a great deal of grief for me and search responders, had I gone down?

So, what do you think? What would you do?"

Response submitted by Brian Taylor:

"I would take the deviation, My reasons are as follows:

- The highway pass is bad enough in a car, especially when traffic is heavy, never mind trying to land an airplane on the winding road; off road landing is into the trees or rocks.
- When an engine quits an airplane is a glider, as those 2 pilots that experienced it, that I have talked to described; they landed on roads even though the engine quit a fair way from the landing spot. From regularly reading the Aviation Safety Letter, it seems landings in tall trees are often fatal due to the fall afterwards, into water is worse. Thus I would be more inclined to fly high overhead (good to 12,500).
- Not necessarily applicable, but from other reading about amateur built aircraft accidents (in Kitplanes) amateurs are slightly better fliers but not as good mechanics as with certified GA, so we need to be more vigilant with engine and systems maintenance.
- From what I have read, a 406ELT is only moderately better than 121.5, so the SPOT or something like it is a great idea."

Brian Taylor (no mountain flying experience)

Response submitted by James Mcpherson:

"It's good to know about alternate routes in the mountains. Two front doors and two back doors are better than one.

I have flown that Castle Junction to Radium route a few times (a couple of times over Sunshine and down the Simpson River to Kootenay Crossing too) down Highway 93 south. That section just before Radium is daunting.

Thanks for the alternate route... maybe a good way up to Golden too. It looks very safe if clear weather all around, but study the topos first.

I had a similar mental exercise flying down Lake Minniwanka last summer. In summer, that route is all over water, with no roads along the shore. In winter, the lake is frozen over, therefore in my view safer. There are no roads on the Eastern part.

I had looked at topos at Carrot Creek pass where it leads out of it to near Harvie Heights. This, in fact, is the historic route into the Bow before Minnewanka was formed by dams away back when.

Only a few trails on Carrot, but I took it as I could see my way clear to the Bow Valley and it cut off quite a bit of over-the-water distance. I had put that as a possible route into my flight plan. FISE is available from the Banff area though for enroute changes.

Best default plan is to plan your route and fly your plan!"

James Mcpherson





Calendar of coming Aviation events

First Saturday each month-

CEN3 Three Hills, AB. Fly- Coffee 9:00 to 12:00 noon.

Second Saturday each month-

CYXH Medicine Hat, AB. Fly-in Breakfast 8:00 to 12:00.

Third Saturday each month-

CEK6 Flagstaff - Killam/Sedgewick, AB. Coffee and Treats by Shelly.

Third Saturday each month-

CEG4 Drumheller, AB. Coffee.

Fourth Saturday each month-

CEX3 Wetaskiwin, AB. Coffee 9:00 to 12:00

(Ed.- Thanks to Dennis Fox for furnishing info on these events)

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

CLASSIFIED

Buy and Sell

All things related to Aviation



Aviation Magazines

\$Free

EAA Vintage Aircraft, EAA Sport Aviation and AOPA magazines to give away. 35+ years, too many to show. I don't want to throw them away.

Brian Byl

(403) 861-6716

bbyl@shaw.ca

Medium IVO In-flight Adjustable Prop

\$4,200

Brand new still in box complete system Medium 3 blade 72" in flight adjustable Ivo Prop for sale that comes with manuals. Spinner included. Aircraft Spruce price is **\$5,250.** without spinner. My price is **\$4,200.** with spinner.

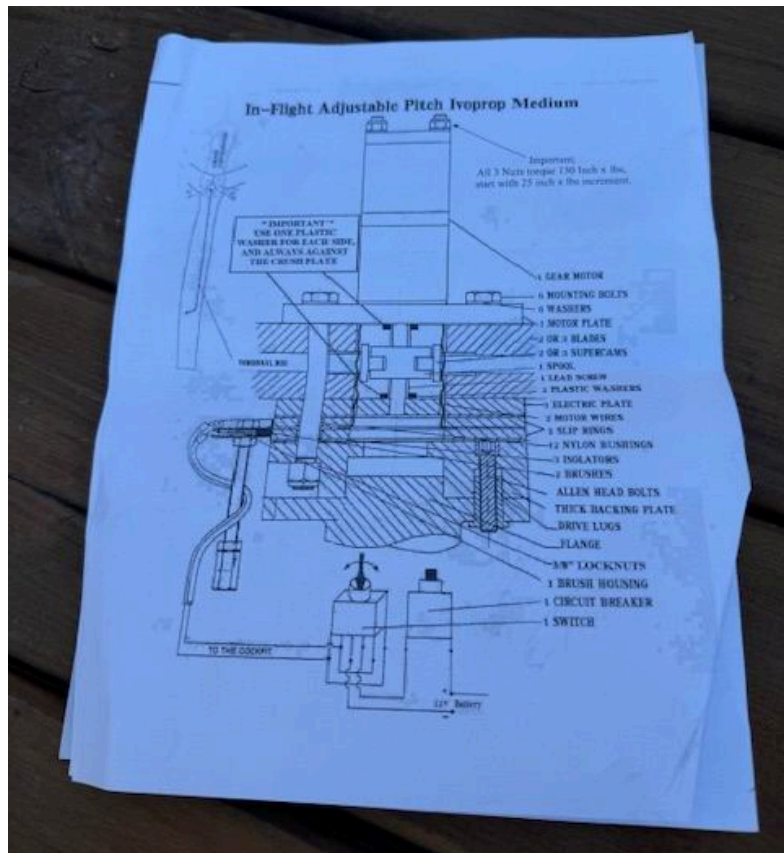
Al Baljak

(403) 708-0369

dolac91@gmail.com



Medium IVO In-flight Adjustable Prop



Al Baljak

(403) 708-0369

dolac91@gmail.com

Your Executive

BRIAN VASSEUR President brian@brianvasseur.com

ANDREW CROCKER Secretary/Treasurer anmcrock@telusplanet.net

JOHN KERR Director oreal_kerr@hotmail.com

AL BALJAK Director dolac91@gmail.com



www.crfcyyc.ca

www.facebook.com/flycrufc/

GREG LABINE Newsletter Editor crufcnews@gmail.com