

CONTACT

Canadian Aviation Historical Society

New Brunswick Turnbull Chapter



Summer 2013

<http://turnbull1922.wordpress.com/>

From the President's Desk

Our Editor has produced and released the Summer issue in time for the Miramichi Air Show, August 24-25th. We will be passing some copies out to prospective members at the Show. Drop by our tent display if you are attending, and say hello.

We are again invited to display our aviation heritage at the Saint John Exhibition during 27-31st of August.

We are looking at the Charlo Air Show, and the possibility of attending it as well on September 7-8th.

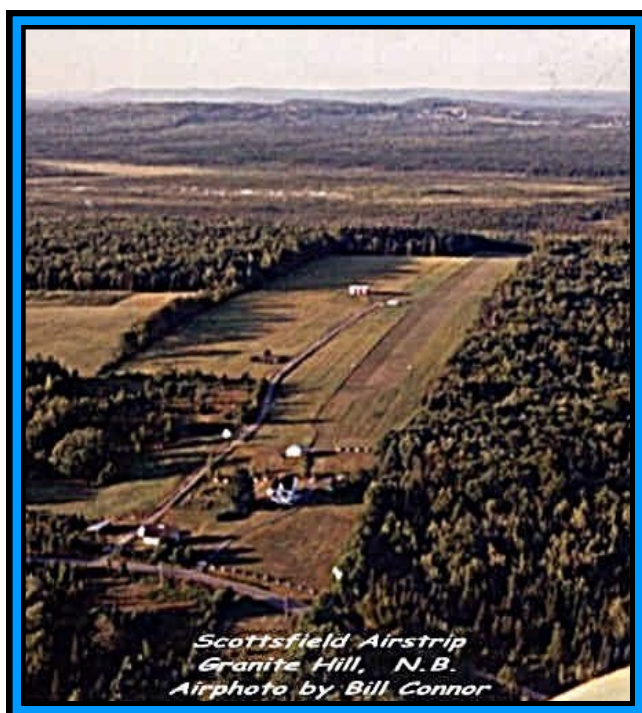
Director Harold Wright, Historian, has prepared a week of remembrance in Saint John entitled: 'Commemoration of the Battle of Britain Five', September 9-15th. The Service will be on September 10, 2013, at the Wade-Myles Aviation Park in Millidgeville.

On September 22, 2013 the Battle of Britain Memorial Service and Parade, sponsored by 250 Wing RCAF Association of Canada, will take place at the cenotaph in Kings Square, in Saint John. All are invited to attend these memorial services.

I would once again like to thank all the contributors to this newsletter and Peter Noddin from the Maine Aviation Historical Society for his two part article on the Mystery of Spruce Mountain.

Lots of activities for the aviation minded to attend.

Cheers, Jim Sultis



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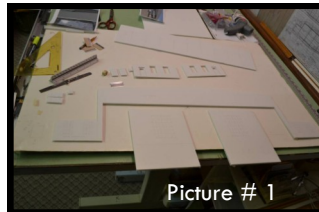


Building a Second World War Canadian Airbase Diorama

Norm Sheppard



In 2009, I was asked by a fellow aviation historical society member (Ed Matchett of Miramichi) to build an aircraft model to display in a small museum that is inside a recreation centre in Miramichi, New Brunswick, Canada. What started as a fairly simple project, soon turned into a major build of a diorama.

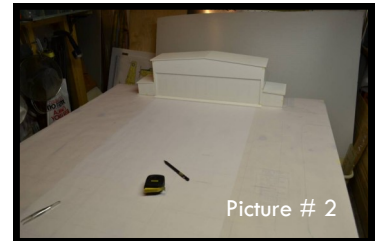


Picture # 1

The city of Miramichi is now located where the town of Chatham used to be. During World War II, Chatham was the home of a British Commonwealth Air Training Plan base, initially No. 21 Elementary Flight Training School, with Fleet Finch trainers, which was later moved to Neepawa, Manitoba. Chatham then became the home of No. 10 Air Observers School with dozens of Avro Ansons employed for training.

The initial request was for a large scratch built model of an Avro Anson, but a suitable display case to protect it was not present at the museum. After talking with the person who contacted me in 2009, we decided that a diorama would be a better idea, and the City of Miramichi offered to build a display case to suit the finished project. A plan was starting to form in my head.....since I had two Classic Airframes 1/48th scale Ansons in my stash and a couple of Modelcraft Mark 2 Harvards as well. After reading some articles about Chatham's history as an air base, I came up with a plan to build the front face of a BCATP hangar with aircraft on the tarmac in front of it. Ed Matchett of Miramichi, who worked as a young lad at the base during the war, gave me an aerial photograph of some Ansons parked in front of one of Chatham's hangars, so the project was started. Other pictures from Larry Millberry's books, gave me more to work with. A shot of a Mark XII Hurricane visiting # 10 A.O.S. from Dartmouth was found, and many Harvards from Summerside would stop over during cross country exercises as well. Also,

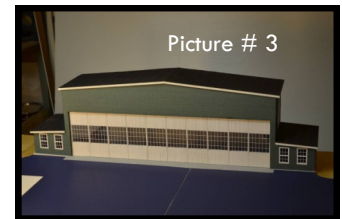
lots of military figures are available in 1/48th scale, and even some vehicles. So, I began the process of recreating a piece of New Brunswick aviation history.



Picture # 2

The base for the diorama was to be 4 feet square, and a suitable piece of plywood was acquired. The project would not be complete for another three years!

The hangar facade was built from scratch using artist's foam board, clear styrene plastic for the windows and various other plastic strips and sheets as needed.



Picture # 3

(Pictures 1 & 2) Sheets of simulated green shakes were used to emulate the wooden shingles that the original buildings had on the exterior walls.



Picture # 4

(Picture 3) 400 grit wet or dry sandpaper gave a tar covered roof look, (Picture 4) and the grounds surrounding the area were made from pre-mixed papier-maché, which was painted after application.



Picture # 5

(Picture 5) Simulated grass and weeds came from various products produced for diorama construction, and asphalt and concrete were painted on more artist board for the tarmac. (Picture 6)



Picture # 6

All constructed items were carefully built to be in the proper scale, for a realistic looking end product.

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Continued



I decided to build a staff car, complete with driver and a female attaché delivering some important documents.

(Picture 7) The car is a 1942 Ford staff car kit, painted as a Royal Canadian Air Force auto, and a Willys Jeep kit (Picture 8) rounded out the land vehicles.

Pilot and ground crew figures were given air force blue togs, and suitable aircraft were constructed to represent equipment that would have been seen at Chatham. Both Harvards represent aircraft from # 9 Service Flight Training School at Summerside, PEI.

(Picture 9). The Hurricane (Picture 10) was based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, but had visited Chatham at least once in its career.

Both Ansons (Picture 11) were flown by the well known pilot and instructor, George Neal, who served at the base during the war. Some miniature pallets and some 45 gallon drums and jerry cans were built and set in place. The final touch is large scale Fleet Finch model built by my late father, Clarke Sheppard, which hangs over the diorama as a reminder of Chatham's early



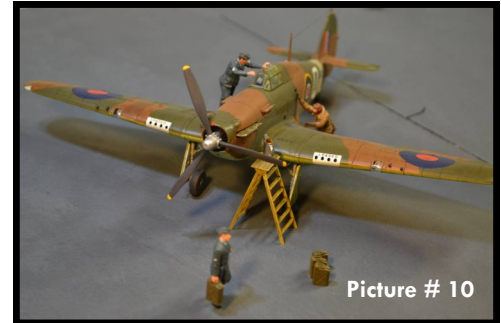
Picture # 7



Picture # 8



Picture # 9



Picture # 10



Picture # 11

days.

The finished product looks very convincing, (Picture 12) even though the figures are only about one inch tall. Hundreds of hours of construction, painting and detailing paid off, and the diorama is now installed

in the Golden Hawk Recreation Centre in Miramichi, NB. If you ever pass by the Tim Horton's coffee shop on the corner of Highway 11 and Maher Street, just south of the bridge



Picture # 12

over the Miramichi River, turn up Maher, go one block to Pollard Blvd, and stop at the Centre to see the display. There is also an RCAF CF-101 Voodoo nearby outside on a pedestal.





Cheeseman God is My Co-Pilot (Part Two) Harold E. Wright



"Two or three minutes delay in turning would have meant a crash"; "When flying over open water we often saw blue whales and killer whales beneath us . . . we saw millions of penguins in the rookeries on the mountains and a few of them on the ice . . ."

Soon their supply ship, the "William Scoresby", had only enough fuel to return to their base at Deception Island. Reluctantly Wilkins and his intrepid explorers ended their adventures for the 1929-1930 season, returning to New York in March 1930.

Cheesman Island, a small bit of rock off the north coast of Charcot Island in Antarctica, is named for Al, as well as a small lake south west of Lake Nipigon in Ontario. A second lake in Labrador, near the border of Quebec is called Cheeseman (sic) Lake on the Labrador side and Lac Des Marets in Quebec.



Al was not one to sit idly by and wait for an opportunity. He started his own Explorer Airways in Port Arthur, Ontario with the \$10,000 he received for his patented pedestal for attaching skis to planes. For most of the 1930s Al made a name for himself bush flying in northern Ontario. Then in July 1930 he made plans for another new adventure - a flight to Tokyo via Alaska and Siberia. While this trip was still in its planning stages, Al continued bush flying to ensure a steady income for his family. On one trip Al's goose was almost cooked! At 1,000 feet the Fairchild's engine died, restarted, and then backfired. This caused oil on the exhaust pipe to catch fire. Within seconds the plane was engulfed in flames. Although he had a parachute, Al brought the burning plane down onto the nearest lake.

When his mother heard about this incident she said; "I knew something was going to happen . . . Is he hurt? I have had a peculiar feeling for days, and as I hadn't received a letter for a month, I was worried. I wish Alward was not going to take that trip through Siberia, because he takes too

many chances. . . ." Al heeded his mother's words of concern. He did not make that flight to Siberia.

In the summer of 1937 Al became a member of a very select group of Canadian pilots who had flown in both the Antarctic and Arctic. That year he joined his friends Herbert Hollick-Kenyon and Sir Hubert Wilkins on a search for the Russian pilot, Sigizmund Levanevsky and his five member crew. The Russians disappeared on a polar flight from Moscow to California. For the next seven months Cheesman and his crew flew a twin-engine Consolidated PBY-1, nicknamed the "Gupta," from their base camp at Point Barrow, Alaska. For these dangerous and extremely cold flights, the crew was outfitted with two fur coats, two pairs of fur trousers, fur boots, socks, and mittens - all made to measure by the "Eskimo" women.



By Christmas there was still no sign of Levanevsky's aircraft. No flights were possible during the December full-moon period due to continuous clouds and bad weather. Wilkins, Cheesman and their crew celebrated Christmas over several days with many Christmas dinners! Even by mid-January 1938, the weather flying conditions were abysmal. The snow drifts were too high for a safe take-off. The PBY had an accumulation of salty hoarfrost that formed a solid coating of ice both inside and outside the "Gupta". By the end of their unsuccessful search in March, the team had flown over 35,000 miles.

Just before the start of World War II, Al coined the phrase which was used in the war movie title. A frantic call from a doctor told Al that a woman in bush country had been shot and needed to be immediately taken to hospital. Although it was now early evening, Al agreed to the flight. At last light Al set his Norseman down, guiding his aircraft around the many large rocks in the lake. A native guide met them and took the Doctor into the bush to tend to the woman. Al set up camp for the night.

The conclusion in the next issue.





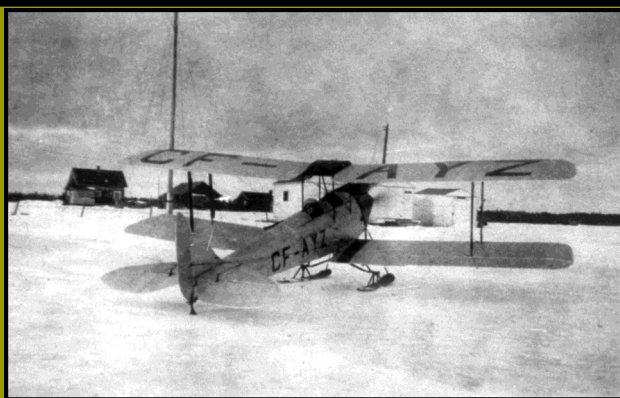
At a Glimpse

Obituary



MacLEAN, GARRY - 1944 - 2013 - Garry Burt MacLean of Riverview passed away on Saturday, July 6, 2013 at the Moncton Hospital. Born in Fredericton, he was the son of the late Murdoch and Glenith (Burt) MacLean. Garry was a Lawyer for 25 years and an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting and fishing. He was a member of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society and Keith Lodge # 23 F & AM. He will be

dearly missed by his wife Ruth, daughter Katie MacLean (Herminio Marquez) of Kalamazoo, Michigan, son Carl MacLean (Mary) of Riverview, sister Allyson Crosby of Moncton, grandchildren Malcolm, Grace, Olivia, Laughlan and Estela.



If anyone has information on this aircraft CF-AYZ, please contact:

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Special Thanks

Jim Sulis, Boyd Trites, Harold E. Wright, Norm Sheppard, Peter Noddin, Bruce Atkinson, Lise Goguen,

Aviation Quiz

Answers on Page 8

1. The Boeing 767 was introduced to challenge the Airbus 300 and 310. When did its inaugural flight take place?
2. What world record did Pan Am succeed in doing with a 747 in 1976?

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The Spruce Mountain Mystery Aircraft Wreck Solved! Part One

Peter Noddin

Maine Aviation Historical Society 2006



On Friday August 14, 1942 RCAF Avro Anson II JS 173 along with two other Ansons left # 8 S.F.T.S. Moncton on a ferry flight to Saint-Jean Québec with a planned stop at Mégantic. After encountering heavy clouds, two of the three aircraft arrived at their destination. The third, Anson JS173 got lost and crashed into Saddleback Mountain in a remote area near Katahdin Iron Works, Maine. Three of the four airmen on board died in the fiery crash. The fourth, AC2 Earl Machan, survived the impact but was severely burned when a fuel tank ruptured as he attempted to approach the cockpit area of the wreckage. Machan made his way down the steep southern slope of the mountain for about 90 minutes (@ 1.5 miles) and eventually found an open, but deserted, logging camp near the present day Merther Road at Mud Gauntlet Deadwater. A half hour later, one of the loggers returned to the camp and summoned a doctor from Brownville Junction. Machan was later loaded onto an ambulance in Brownville and sent to Dow Army Air Field Hospital in Bangor.

A USAAF search and medical party departed from Dow AAF on the evening of the 14th and located the Anson wreckage near Crater Pond on Saddleback Mountain on the afternoon of the 16th. They were joined by Squadron Leader Harry Bryant RCAF who had been detailed to investigate the crash and take custody of the bodies.

On the morning of Monday August 17th, the Bangor Daily News ran its second article about the crash with the headline "Unidentified Plane Wreckage Near Katahdin". The exact text of the short article was as follows:

"BROWNVILLE JUNCTION, Me. Aug. 16- (AP)- The wreckage of an unidentified plane was found today by army air and ground searchers who also located the Canadian Air Force plane which carried three fliers to their deaths about three miles north of the Katahdin Iron Works last Friday. No information was available immediately regarding the second aircraft, except that it was located about 12 miles north of the Katahdin Iron Works on Spruce Mountain. Searchers reported finding the bodies of the three Canadian airmen. One flier, Earl Machan, survived the crash and although

badly hurt, made his way to Katahdin Iron Works and reported that his comrades had burned to death. "

The weekly Piscataquis Observer, in Dover Foxcroft, ran a single article about the crash on Thursday, August 20 that stated "Search was made on Saddleback Mountain for the burned wreckage and Spruce Mountain was thoroughly inspected".

Thus was born the "Spruce Mountain Mystery Wreck". The



incredible thing is that there is no further mention of a second crash site in any of the military reports, newspapers, or in the written/oral history of the area. Because of the historical significance of Katahdin Iron Works, extensive historical research has been done in this area and extensive oral histories collected.

The basic Dow AAF records, base newspaper and the RCAF inquiry all simply refer to the Anson wreck being located. The Dow records and newspaper discuss the difficult terrain and poor weather (summer thunder showers) that hampered search efforts. The report of Squadron Leader Bryant in the RCAF inquiry incorrectly places the crash on White Cap Mountain (north of Big and Little Spruce Mountains which are in turn north of Saddleback Mountain.) Someone later crossed this out and wrote in "Saddlerock". The topo map of this era mislabels Saddleback Mountain as "Saddlerock". These two factors - confusion on the ground as to which mountain the wreck was on and poor topo maps are important pieces in the puzzle in solving this "mystery".

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With no further information, we have been left wondering what the unknown second wreckage was. A military aircraft can quickly be ruled out. There were very few military aircraft mishaps and "missing" plane incidents in Maine before 1942 and they all can be accounted for. There were several missing light aircraft, and some that remain missing to this day that could be candidates. My own family's oral history includes the operation of a set of sporting camps in the area that served as a "wet" vacation spot for the rich and famous during the prohibition era, with illegal liquor flown in from Quebec. On

more than one occasion a pilot took a payment and never returned. Nobody ever knew whether he had crashed, pocketed the money, or "double sold" the load to someone else.

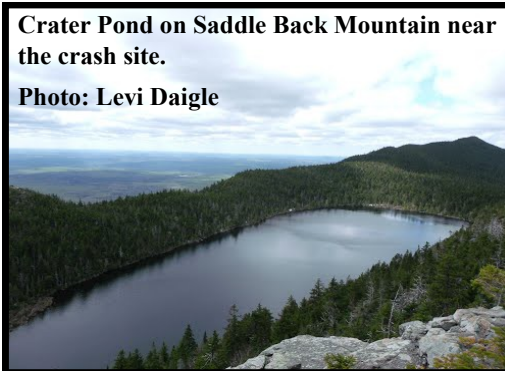
The most intriguing theory was put forth by members of my own organization, the Maine Aviation Historical Society, that the mystery aircraft could be the famous missing "White Bird". Somewhere, the details of a "weathered white aircraft wreck" located on Spruce Mountain worked its way into the legend. I have been unable to independently confirm this fact and I believe that I have all of the documents and oral histories available to the original researchers.

Spruce Mountain (Big and Little) is roughly on an alternate flight path that Nungusser and Coli, aboard the "White Bird" had in case of weather or low fuel issues, that would have put them into Montreal, Quebec.

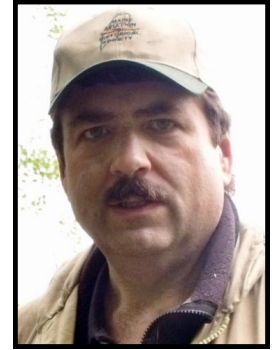
In the late 1990's, MAHS member Oscar Blue discovered an anomaly in some aerial photographs of Big Spruce Mountain that looked suspiciously like one of the "fuel oil drum" shaped fuel tanks of the White Bird. Air searches failed to identify the object and a ground search located no wreckage or tank in the area. One of the ground team leaders, the

Crater Pond on Saddle Back Mountain near the crash site.

Photo: Levi Daigle



Continued Peter Noddin



late Jim Chichetto, believed the anomaly to be a bare rock patch on the forest floor.

APPARANT TIMELINE OF EVENTS - Previous documentation.

Using only the newspaper evidence, RCAF inquiry, and Dow AAF War Diary excerpts, we would be left with the following rough sequence of events:

Friday, 14 August 1942

1. At 1430 - Aircraft crashes near Crater Pond on Saddleback Mountain. (Newspaper article puts crash at about 1330, RCAF at 1430)
2. At 1600 - A2C Machan finds camp. About 30 minutes later a woods crew member arrives to find him. According to the newspaper article in the Bangor Daily News he "talked freely" with those trying to help him. A doctor is summoned to the camp and Machan is treated there, then at the doctor's office in Brownville, and is eventually sent to Bangor by private ambulance.
3. Early evening - Fire Warden Fred Owens calls Dow Field in Bangor and Major Robert Ford dispatches a "party of medical officers and others".

Saturday, 15 August 1942

1. Presumably, ground and air search operations (as weather permitted) fail to locate the crash site.

Sunday, 16 August 1942

2. Squadron Leader Harry Bryant of the RCAF #3 Training Command joins the search team near Katahdin Iron Works. At the time of his arrival, the crash site has not been located, but some time later on this day it is.
3. The wreckage of an "unidentified plane" is found on Spruce Mountain about 12 miles north of Katahdin Iron Works. The Anson wreckage is found about 3 miles from Katahdin Iron Works. (Both of these distances are incorrect since both are just over 5 miles from Katahdin Iron Works.)

Monday, 17 August 1942

1. "Morning"- First group of Dow AAF personnel are relieved by a second who remove the bodies from the mountain. Bangor Daily News publishes article about the "mystery wreckage on Spruce Mountain". No further mention of the Spruce wreck is made in the



Other News

Continued from Page 7

news, Forest Service, Warden Service, or RCAF report. No oral history of the second wreck exists among that of the Anson wreck. For whatever reason, everyone was so disinterested in what was found that no news follow-up or official documentation is made.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS - The report of Captain Aaron Nelson USAAF

The "History of Dow Field Volume II" (Feb. 1942 to Apr. 1943) prepared by the Historical Office Headquarters 1379th AAF Base Unit in October of 1945 (AFHRA Microfilm Reel B2162) contains verbatim, a detailed written report of this search operation by Captain Aaron Nelson (p. 84 of document, frame 1275 of film). The report is about 2.5 pages long single-spaced and very detailed.

Nelson, the Commanding Officer of the 7th Air Base Hq. and Air Base Squadron at Dow AAF, led the search/recovery effort for this crash. This was in accordance with a general order that had been issued on April 8, 1942, putting the Air Base Hq. in charge of search operations.

According to this report, 1st Lt. John Kennard, a Medical Corps officer, led the first AAF team to arrive in the area at 1930 on Friday, 14 August. The team was made up of medical personnel with ambulances and the Base Engineering Officer. Kennard interviewed the doctor who had treated Machan in Brownville and then proceeded to the camp at which Machan had been found. With darkness, rain and no other injured personnel to treat, he left the detail there for the night and returned to Dow AAF.

Captain Nelson left Dow with Lt. Olson of the Military Police and a ground search party of 15 enlisted men at 0300 on Saturday 15 August. Arriving at about 0800, he set up a ground grid search in the area around the logging camp with men spaced about 50 paces apart. Around 1100, they were joined by 4 civilians who were familiar with the terrain and who had seen the plane fly over just prior to the assumed time of the crash. He utilized these men as guides and allowed them to "direct" the searching party.

Part Two will be in the Fall issue of Contact

Quiz Answers

From Page 5

1. The Boeing 767 first flight took place on September 26, 1981 in Seattle, Washington.
2. Pan Am's 747SP Clipper Liberty Bell returns after a world record for around-the-world flight of one day 22 hours 26 minutes. It took off on May 1 and refuelled in Delhi and Tokyo.

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