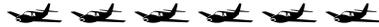




Fly North

Volume 5, Number 2:
April-June, 2013



NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE

Preserving and celebrating the diverse history of aviation in the northwest, through the collection and preservation of artifacts and stories of the persons and events that made this region unique in aviation history

NOAHC NEWS: - We've moved! -

Earlier this year the property at 430 Waterloo Street was sold and our new landlord asked NOAHC to move. Luckily the move was to a location in the same building and although no move is simple, it was at least better than having to relocate somewhere across town. With a new multi-year lease now signed there will be no need for another move in the near future. In mid-April, the NOAHC Board and a group of volunteers moved our archives, artifacts and display cabinets. The new premises have slightly more space than what we had previously and have a better layout. In addition to having an office and space for storage and research, there is also a large room which will accommodate our existing displays and allow us to develop new ones. We have already installed several additional display cases. Two other rooms have been set up to provide exhibits on the aviation activities of Can-Car and Bush Flying in the North. The main room can be set up to accommodate lectures and other presentations.

Board members and volunteers have been busy setting up our displays, which will include exhibits on the activities of the flying clubs at the Lakehead, the Elementary Flying Training School and the Paterson Spitfire. Some are done while others remain works in progress. However, by the time of our reopening later this summer, everything should be in place.

Watch for the announcement of our Grand Re-opening.



Part of the "Bush Flying in the North" display

Trans-Canada Air Lines: The back page of this issue contains photos showing Trans-Canada Air Lines activities at the Lakehead. NOAHC's Oral History group has interviewed Lena McIntyre, the first TCA Reservations Agent at the Lakehead. For a short excerpt of that interview visit our web-page at www.noahc.org and click on video interviews.



Save the Canso: On May 8 this year this trailer with its unusual cargo was seen at County Fair Plaza. On the trailer were two aircraft engines from a Consolidated Canso aircraft. They are part of a restoration project, based in Alberta, to put a Canso back in the air. The effort is spearheaded by Don Wieben, of the local aviation family who once operated Superior Airways out of Fort William. Don's sister, Liz, is the vice-president of NOAHC. The engines from the aircraft that Don recovered in the NWT are no longer operable and are being transported to Newfoundland to be swapped for a pair that can be certified for operation in the restored aircraft. For more information visit the project web-page. www.savethecanso.com



The two P&W R1830 engines on the trailer

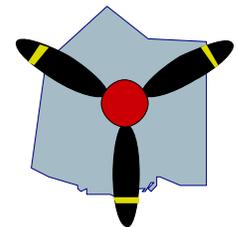
Liz Wieben and two of the Canso crew

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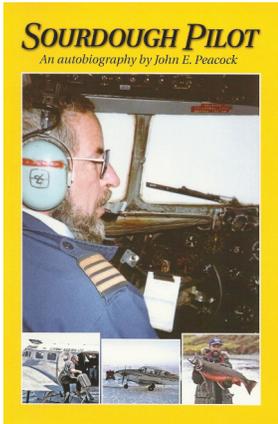


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Sourdough Pilot - An Autobiography by John E. Peacock

**Published by John E. Peacock,
Navan, Ontario (2012)**

**229 pages, 200 photographs, 3
appendices.**

ISBN 978-0-9684688-2-1

Given the current popularity of northern aviation, generated by the television series, “Ice Pilots” and “Arctic Air” John Peacock’s book is a timely one. It matches, and indeed often surpasses, the real and imagined drama of these programs with stories told in a style that makes them both gripping and convincing. The result is a very readable book. Each chapter deals with the author’s work with a particular company or airline and is headed by a list of all the aircraft flown by him at that time, with individual aircraft identified by type and registration number. Additional detail is provided in the Appendices. For example, time spent on specific aircraft - single or multi-engined, wheels, floats or skis, day or night, dual or in command - is listed for an impressive total of 21,976 hours. In many cases, the place names that were in use during the period that the book covers have changed, and a useful appendix provides the new names currently in use. A glossary of terms used in the book which may not be familiar to all readers is a helpful addition. These days most of us will be able to identify a GPS, but how many know what a Herman Nelson is? The book is lavishly illustrated throughout with 200 previously unpublished photographs from the author’s collection.

The adjective “Sourdough” in the title originated in the Klondike Gold Rush. It came to mean someone who had spent a long time in the north and survived the harsh environment – particularly the winters - of the region. After forty years of northern flying, Sourdough Pilot is a title that certainly fits John Peacock.

Born in Newfoundland when it was still a separate country, John Peacock moved to Ontario with his family when he was young. After studying forestry at the Lakehead Technical Institute in Port Arthur and a couple of years working as a timber cruiser in Newfoundland and a tree planter in northwestern Ontario, he had saved enough to begin flying lessons. This he did in 1958 at the Lakehead Flying School, one of the aviation enterprises started by O.J. Wieben. He went at it with gusto, so much so that in less than two years at the Lakehead he had gained his commercial pilot’s licence, instructor’s rating and had accumulated close to 1100 hours of flight time in his log book, on wheels, floats and skis. By 1960, John was running the Flying School and was averaging some 120 hours a month in the air mainly instructing students, two of whom were O.J.’s own children. In addition, he did charter work for Superior Airways, another of the Wieben companies, flying fish, replacement parts and other cargo across the northwest. It is clear that this early work provided many adventures and some close calls from which he learned and which were to stand him in good stead in his subsequent flying activities in the north.

As well as providing John Peacock with valuable flying experience northwestern Ontario also had another positive impact on him. It was there that he met his wife Marion, who for more than 50 years shared the ups and downs of his flying and business ventures. The Peacocks spent ten years in northwestern Ontario following their wedding in 1960, with a stint in southern Ontario in the late 1960s when John was executive director of the Canadian Business Aircraft Association. A year and a half flying a desk seems to have been enough for him and in 1969 he returned to the north as Assistant to the President of Superior Airways. Despite the exalted title he did everything from hauling fuel to Port Hope or fish from Pickle Lake to repairing engines in the open in the middle of winter, all the while being chief flying instructor at the Lakehead Flying School. However, the heavy work schedule, which often involved as many as 30 days at a time away from home, was not ideal for a young family, and in 1971 the Peacocks left the Lakehead and headed north to begin a new life in the Arctic.

John spent the following 28 years flying in the north, where his experiences certainly established him as the “Sourdough Pilot” of his book title. As he did in northwestern Ontario, John was involved in all aspects of the aviation business, flying passengers and freight, training and checking pilots, repairing and replacing engines often under less than ideal conditions. He flew for a number of different airline companies and also established Peacock Air, to provide transportation for a fly-in hunting and fishing operation - Peacock’ Yukon Camps - which he and his wife established in 1983. Flying in the Arctic was no picnic. In the days before Global Positioning Systems (GPS) were developed northern pilots had to face areas of compass unreliability and limited radar coverage. Weather conditions were often marginal for flying. Whiteouts, icing, freezing rain, fog and extreme temperatures all contributed to dangerous situations. John Peacock’s two crashes were associated with bad weather. A whiteout when he was landing at Nash Creek led to his Cessna 185 tipping into a gully at the end of the runway. More seriously, in 1991, while carrying out a moose survey north of Haines Junction a downdraft hit his plane at 300 ft, pushing it into the ground. In that John received cuts to his face and head that required 21 stitches and suffered a cracked vertebra. The book also details incidents with less serious consequences, such as the engine failures, caused by cracked cylinders, that he experienced while flying DC-3s. The problem was eventually solved by altering take-off and landing procedures, but not before John had experienced 20 of these malfunctions. On a sadder note he also chronicles the fatalities associated with weather conditions, equipment malfunction or, in some cases, pilot error.

Throughout the book, the technical aspects of flying in the north are well described, often in great detail, along with the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of various aircraft types. While this makes it a book for the aviation enthusiast, those who are interested in other aspects of the north are not left out. There are stories of hunting and fishing, the nature and development of different communities from larger cities such as Yellowknife to small hamlets like Old Crow, and the changes in the north associated with the mineral development and oil drilling that were increasing at the time. It is also a people book, mentioning well known personalities from Pope John Paul II to Peter Gzowski, but in many ways it is a tribute to the everyday people who lived and worked in the Arctic, particularly those involved in aviation, like John and Marion Peacock, who contributed to the modern development of the region. All in all, this is an excellent book, well worth reading.

David Kemp

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The Derelict Aircraft of Northwestern Ontario

From the mid 1980's to the early 1990's, I have had the fortunate opportunity to travel the many miles of breathtaking scenery along the highways of Northwestern Ontario. While visiting Kenora I found a haven for retired aircraft and equipment at Kuby's Aircraft. There were several types of bush aircraft in various states of repair and others for parts.

Another location I found interesting was the Fort Francis and Rainy River area. Along the way to Fort Francis and Rainy Lake I would pass the floatplane base at Nestor Falls. Here you could not find a friendlier group of people. Back in the day I would find at any given time Beech 18's, DHC-2 Beaver's, DHC-3 single Otters and a few Cessna 185's tied to the dock. Today, Nestor Falls is still a hub of activity with the many DCH-2 Beavers and Cessna 185's that visit daily.

Another couple of interesting places I found included Sioux Lookout and Atikokan. Here I found several aircraft, that once graced the skies above, parked in the weeds. Some of them looked as if they were parked yesterday and waiting for a new day of work while others looked as though they had worked a hard life and time had taken its toll. It was quite obvious that over the many years of neglect, the remaining aircraft had deteriorated to a point of no return.

Along the many miles of the Northwestern Ontario countryside, I found many aircraft that were either on floats, tied to a dock or parked on wheels at the local aerodrome. As time goes by, I consider myself quite fortunate to have discovered these unique aircraft and airframes that were hidden from view, neatly tucked away in the many bushes and fields. It was only Father Time that has made these former warriors of the air "The Derelict Aircraft of Northwestern Ontario".

Robert W. Arnold



Picture provided and data researched by Robert W. Arnold

Watch for additional photography on this topic in future issues of FlyNorth

CSL-37 Noorduyn Norseman c/n 348 CF-HQD.

The aircraft was delivered to the USAAF as 43-5357 in 1944 and later worked for several operators in the US. On July 19, 1954 it was sold to Rainy Lake Airways out of Ft. Francis as CF-HQD then registered to Ontario Central Airlines out of Kenora in 1960. Damaged in an accident near Lac Seul, in 1968, it later went to Slate Falls Airways. Its C of A was cancelled May 27, 1982. On February 21, 1983 it was registered to Aircraft Technical Services and the fuselage was reported sold to John Knutson for use in rebuilding CF-OBG c/n N-29-1

The above photo was taken on a visit to Atikokan July 1988.

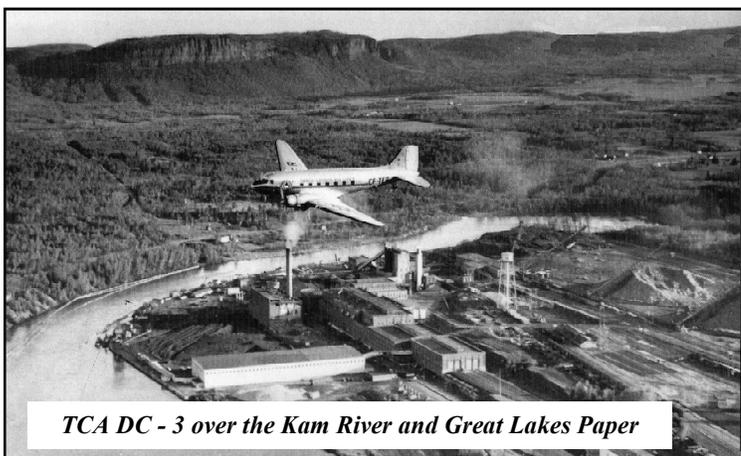
Trans-Canada Air Lines at the Lakehead



TCA Lockheed 14, used on the Fort William-Duluth route, over the Lakehead grain elevators



Inauguration of the Great Lakes route in July 1947. Served by DC-3s it provided the Lakehead cities with east-west flights linking them to all of Canada



TCA DC - 3 over the Kam River and Great Lakes Paper



Canadair North Star. An uncommon visitor to the airport. Most North Stars operated long distance and international flights

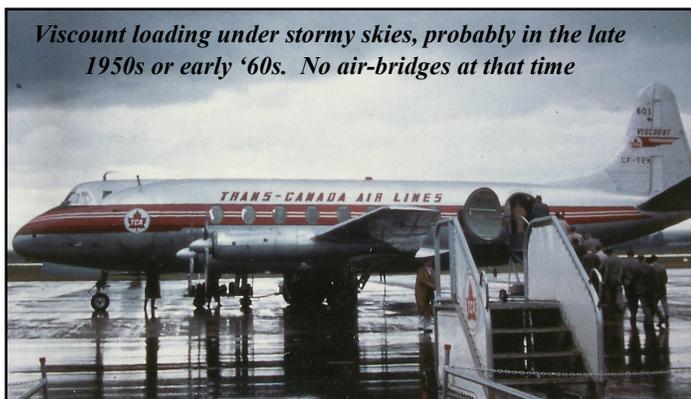


First day cover commemorating the first flight between Fort William and Duluth

(Source unknown)



For a short period between 1953 and 1955, TCA used Bristol Freighters to move cargo



Viscount loading under stormy skies, probably in the late 1950s or early '60s. No air-bridges at that time



TCA bag tag donated to NOAHC by Robert Arnold

Except where indicated, all pictures on this page are from the Jim Lyzun Collection