

FLY NORTH

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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 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015

The Northwestern Ontario Aviation Centre will hold its Annual General Meeting at the Centre, 430 Waterloo Street, on Thursday, June 25, 2015 at 7:00 pm. The purpose of the AGM is to receive reports and to elect the Board of Directors.

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NOAHC News

NOAHC continues to have its monthly 'Casual Thursdays' where topics of aviation interest are shared and lots of coffee and conversation are enjoyed. In February we shared some interviews that we have done with local aviators. An interview with Gord Leamy, a retired local water bomber pilot with the Ministry of Natural Resources was featured.

In April, a video highlighting the history of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources was shown and members were introduced to excerpts from a manuscript prepared by Colin Macmillan describing his life as a bush pilot in the northwest. (One of the stories from the manuscript was featured in the January-March, 2015 issue of **FLY NORTH**)

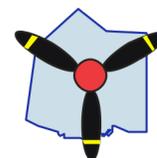
Please come out and join us at these events. Bring along any friends who you think might be interested.

Explore Northwest Ontario's Rich Aviation History

NOAHC is featured in an article prepared for the Northern Ontario Travel webpage by Kathryn Lyzun a local, award-winning writer. The article recognizes the important role of individuals, such as the area's bush pilots, and the 'Rosies', who produced the Hurricanes and Helldivers at Can-Car, in the aviation history of the north-west. It also makes reference to less well known episodes in the region's past, such as the crash of a nuclear bomber north of Thunder Bay in the 1950s and the flight out of the city in 1971 which became the first successful Canadian aircraft hijacking. It also includes pictures of some of the displays at the Centre. This is a well-written, well-illustrated article, providing lots of publicity for NOAHC. Look for it on the Centre's webpage or at the following site - <http://www.northernontario.travel/thunder-bay/explore-northwest-ontarios-rich-aviation-history>

New name for Winnipeg Aviation Museum

The second largest aviation museum in Canada is in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was founded in 1974 as the Western Canada Aviation Museum (WCAM), with the aim of preserving and promoting Canadian aviation history. The aircraft on display reflect Winnipeg's role as a major hub for aviation development in central Canada. They include bush planes such as the Stinson Reliant and the DHC Beaver, military aircraft such as the Canadair Sabre as well as the iconic Vickers Viscount airliner which, wearing Trans-Canada Air Lines and Air Canada colours, once operated from the hangar in which the Museum is now located. Since its inception, the museum has been recognized by aviation enthusiasts as the WCAM, but in December 2014 it was given permission to use the designation "Royal" in its title and has been renamed **The Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada**.



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*The Recovery of Superior Airways
Republic RC-3 Seabee CF-FCD.*

By Robert Arnold

The behind the scenes details are few, but sometime back in early 1981 contact was made between the Western Canada Aviation Museum (WCAM) and the Wieben family concerning the possible recovery of a former Superior Airways Republic RC-3 Seabee that had crashed in the bush, three miles north of Rosspport Ontario, on October 29, 1952. After some research was done by the museum, we soon discovered this particular Seabee was c/n 352, CF-FCD. With this information in hand, plans were soon made to retrieve the fuselage and wings that were now located on two different properties near the outskirts of Thunder Bay.

By the middle of October 1981, we had put together a team of two people. They consisted of Bruce Emberley, then Executive Director of the WCAM along with myself.

It was on an early and snowy Friday morning, October 30th when Bruce dropped by my Beresford Avenue residence in Winnipeg. Here we gathered any extra tools and jacks that might be needed along with the museum trailer that had been stored overnight at my residence. Shortly after we double checked everything and made sure we had all we might need, we began our eight hour trek to Thunder Bay.

After driving all day and well into the late evening, we arrived in Thunder Bay where I had prearranged an overnight or two stay with my uncle Eric and his wife Anne. Being the caring and giving people they both are, they also allowed us to make their home our base of operations and also a place to hang our hats while we were in Thunder Bay.

We were woken up early Saturday morning to the pleasant smell of bacon and eggs that were being prepared by my aunt. After a nourishing breakfast, we began preparing for the drive to the Wieben's property just outside of Thunder Bay. We also discovered our recovery team had grown by one as my uncle Eric was now quite eager to lend a helping hand wherever possible. Knowing the fact that we were about to load a rather large piece of aircraft, we knew an extra hand or two would sure be welcomed.

After consulting with our hand written directions, we made a brief drive to one of the Wieben properties where we found Liz Wieben patiently waiting for us. It was quite cool and damp that day and we all went inside to warm up and it wasn't long before

Liz had the kettle on to make us all a piping hot cup of coffee to warm up along with a hearty lunch. Needless to say we were looked after very well during our stay. We then sat back and chatted for a while as we warmed up before we headed back outside where Liz proceeded to show us where the surprisingly intact remains of the fuselage was located.

We soon discovered that getting ourselves and our equipment to where the fuselage was located would soon become an issue. After trudging through snow that was still falling and was now almost two feet deep on the ground, we finally reached the fuselage section where we found it still relatively intact while being covered in a thick blanket of snow that fell overnight. With all the newly fallen snow, and what was still falling, we thought it might be a real struggle to get the trailer anywhere near enough to the fuselage. With the help of Bruce's 4-wheel drive Ford Bronco, and the aggressive tires Bruce recently had installed, we were able to position the trailer in a place relatively close to the front of the fuselage.

After a bit of a struggle and some fine-tuning with the trailer's position, we were soon able to carefully winch the fuselage through the deep snow and slide it onto the trailer. With all hands on deck we then proceeded to secure it to the trailer with tie-down straps. With the sun setting fast we headed back to my uncle's place for the night.

Sunday morning found us up quite early again. This time we were given directions to a different location where we would find the two wing sections. After meeting with a gentleman there, he kindly took the time and showed us the two wing panels that were located under a lean-to located between two buildings. As we pulled them clear of the lean-to we were quite happy to find that except for a crumpled wing tip, they both were in amazingly good shape. All that was left to do now was clear the wing panels of any snow and load them onto the trailer, then safely strap them into position along side the fuselage.

With the recovery itself now complete, we thanked the gentleman for his time and then headed back to my uncle's place, our base of operation. We went in for one last visit while my aunt prepared a hearty lunch for us before we left. Shortly after we finished lunch we gathered our gear, said our goodbyes and were on our way back to Winnipeg.

We arrived back in Winnipeg during the early hours of Monday morning November 2nd, 1981. The aircraft was stored in the back yard of my residence in Winnipeg. The following weekend I towed the Seabee to one of the museum's remote storage sites located near Selkirk, Manitoba. Currently the aircraft is stored in a museum compound located near St. Andrews, Manitoba.

Republic RC-3 Seabee: The Seabee was designed in the mid-1940s as an inexpensive, all-metal amphibious aircraft. It was designed to meet an anticipated large demand for a light, sports plane from men who had learned to fly during World War II and wanted to continue to use their piloting skills. That demand was much less than expected and only 1060 Seabees were built during the 1946-47 production run.

A number of Seabees were operated in northwestern Ontario. Superior Airways owned several, Marathon Paper operated one for a short time and Joseph Leutschafft flew one out of Pickle Lake in the 1970s. The Seabee was a four-seater, suitable for fly-in fishing trips and for carrying freight. To increase the payload for the latter some owners removed the wheels and operated the aircraft as a floatplane rather than an amphibian. Seabees are still flying in North America but none here in the northwest.



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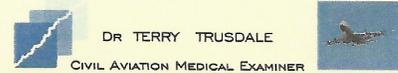
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Marion Swain: When the Fort William Aero Club was formed Marion Swain was one of its first women students and by mid-1930, at 18 years of age, she had graduated as a pilot. Her son, Sam Coghlan, sent *FLY NORTH* the accompanying photograph, which shows Marion in one of the Club's Gypsy Moths. Unfortunately her flying activities were cut short when she was involved in a flying accident. On a flight with James Dickie, the Club's chief instructor, the plane in which they were flying spun into the ground. Dickie was killed and Marion received critical injuries. She recovered, but never flew again.

Watch for more of the Marion Swain story in the next edition of *FLY NORTH*



photo courtesy of Sam Coghlan

Republic RC-3 Seabees in Northwestern Ontario



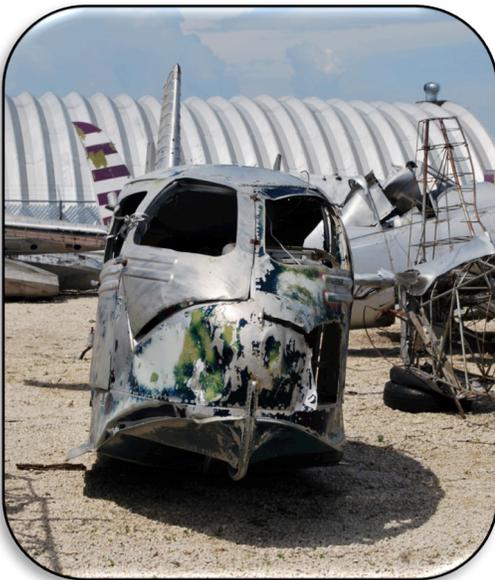
Robin Webster and Liz Wieben about to remove snow from CF-FCD



On the trailer ready to go



Fuselage and wings on arrival in Winnipeg



The remains of CF-FCD in the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada compound at St Andrews, Manitoba



The pictures of CF-FCD appear courtesy of Robert Arnold.

See story on page 2



courtesy Jim Haines

Seabee CF-FSG c/n 919, pictured to the left was built by Republic Aviation in June 1947. It was delivered to Curtiss-Reid Flying Services of Montreal and acquired by Joseph Leutschaft of Pickle Lake in 1972. It was operated in the northwest into the mid-1980s, being sold on to Wayne Lovenuk of Pickle Lake at some point. It appears in the 1985 newsletter of the Seabee Club International, being offered for sale by Bev and Wayne Lovenuk. In June 2001 its Civil Registration was cancelled and since 2006 it has stood outside a restaurant in Sioux Lookout. **FLY NORTH** would be happy to hear from anyone who can fill in the gaps in the CF-FSG story.