

# THE NORSEMAN NEWS

Fall 2021



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
BRITISH COLUMBIA AVIATION MUSEUM

## Return of the Max *by Jack Funk*

This summer saw the return of Boeing's 737 Max to regular service out of YYJ. The Max was grounded in March 2019 after 2 fatal crashes related to the flight control system. I believe that this aircraft is now among the safest in the sky after all the scrutiny, testing and modification that has taken place over the previous 20 months. The Max is a modern version of Boeing's long serving B-737. The Max is a perfect aircraft for city pairings such as YYJ/YYZ. Long range, medium density, and fuel efficient. Here are a few of my photos of Maxes at our airport this summer!



737 Maxes of 3 carriers at Victoria International

## \*\*\* Notice of Annual General Meeting \*\*\*

The Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Aviation Society will take place at 1:00pm Saturday, 23 October 2021.

The AGM takes place in the Henderson Hangar and will be preceded by a BBQ luncheon between 11:00 til 12:30.

**For details, please see the member letter on page 10 of this issue and the member email sent on 23 September.**

## President's Message

### **Fall 2021**

Fall is here and a very busy and profitable summer is now behind us. Visitor numbers have been good and revenue from the gift store has been increasing significantly.

The last phase of the reconfiguration of museum interior space is nearing completion. The mezzanine in the restoration hangar has been enclosed and is becoming home to the new, enlarged and improved artefact storage area. We will be able to house all artefacts, uniforms and artwork not on display in a much improved manner. The former artefact room will become space for our IT volunteers (finally), and some additional office space. We will also be able to clear out the mezzanine in the library and use this space for additional book storage. At last all our spaces that are out of the public eye will be well organized and best use of space made!

We are hoping that the Piasecki helicopter will be arriving shortly. We have had a few procedural set backs with acquiring the CF104 but those should work themselves out in time. I visited it yesterday and it is rather forlornly sitting in the middle of the Comox Airpark having been displaced by a Buffalo. It is essentially complete but very scruffy with fading and peeling paint and some corrosion particularly under the wings. We hope that we will be able to restore it to its original glory and in some authentic markings rather than the current adopted celebratory scheme.

A few other things to note:

- Our AGM is set for Sat 23 Oct. Food will be provided. It is important that members attend as we need to elect a new board and adopt an updated constitution. Please take part in the nomination process and consider running if you want your voice heard.
- We are struggling to find volunteers to fill some very critical and important positions. We currently need a volunteer coordinator to ensure that our volunteers are well organized and working efficiently.
- We also need someone to organize events. We hope to hold a Kidsfest and Open House in 2022 if we can. Events are a very profitable venture for the museum. Over a couple of weekends this September we raised nearly \$7,000 from several of them. Most of these events are reasonably easy to organize as we provide the venue and some tables and chairs and that's about it. People who put on the events seem quite happy to arrange catering, entertainment, set up, tear down and clean up with relatively little work on our part.
- There is also a need for volunteers to step forward with the day to day care of our aircraft. Cleaning, ensuring that tires are filled with air, and other minor tasks are required to keep our star exhibits in good condition and presentable to visitors.

As always please contact any board member or myself if you have positive suggestions for improvement or questions.

Sincerely, David Jackson,  
President BC Aviation Museum



## Important Upcoming Dates

October - December 2021

Last issue I wrote that the pandemic seemed to be easing. Now we are in the fourth wave. As a result, Museum activities will continue to be affected as follows.

Speaker nights, volunteer lunches and other museum events are cancelled or postponed until further notice - however, since the Norseman News is published only four times a year, and pandemic-related events can change almost by the week, please continue to check happenings at the Museum's website or current Slipstream magazine for dates and events.

**See this issue's President's Message for details of the Annual General Meeting.**

### Join or Renew Your Membership



## Jackie Frampton 1937-2021



Jackie passed away peacefully in her sleep on the morning of August 15. Jackie was a fun-loving and adventurous person. She joined the BC Aviation Museum in 1996 and volunteered in a wide variety of ways throughout that period. Here she is painting the Anson using a brush and a roller. In recent years she worked as a cashier and was still doing this until early August. She was always ready to help when needed – manning the Lancaster cockpit at the Saanich Fair,

helping at Kids Fests and Open Houses, joining cleaning teams and serving volunteer lunches.

She is survived by her husband of 64 years, Dick, her son Denny and his wife Grace, as well as many family members and friends. Her memory will always be with us.



## Lt Robert Hampton Gray, VC., DSC., RCNVR Memorial Monument Dedication

One of the most beautiful days of the summer arrived just in time for the celebration, dedication and unveiling of the Lt Gray Memorial in front of the BC Aviation Museum on Sunday, 8 Aug.

The Project Team of Terry Milne (Project Manager), Stan Brygadyr (Secretary), Gerry Pash (Publicity & Ceremonial), Joe Buczkowski (originator) and BCAM President, Dave Jackson were ready to greet the 100 donor guests, local dignitaries and senior military to what turned out to be a flawless and beautiful ceremony as MC'd by Gerry. The assistance of CFB Esquimalt was most in evidence by the attendance of the Naval Band and Guard, as well as help with other facilities and worker-bees, the results being as formal in appearance as any military parade!

The playing of the national anthems of Japan and Canada started the ceremony followed by introductions of the many dignitaries. A Prayer of Invocation was followed by unveiling the covered panels, one by one, by selected VIPs then the Blessing and Dedication, Last Post, Silence, Lament (Piper), Rouse, reciting of the Act of Remembrance (Stan) and High Flight (Peter K-M). The descendants of Lt Gray, Dr Anne George (niece) and 5 others (2 great nieces and 3 great great nieces!) laid a wreath. Shortly thereafter the YAKFLT formation honoured Lt Gray with a flypast. Regrettably, Lt Gov Austin was unavailable to attend but she sent a message which was read, followed by speeches: MLA Olsen; VAC rep; L Gen Meinzing, Commander RCAF; R Adm

Topshee, Commander MARPAC; Mr Hatori, Consul General of Japan; Terry Milne; David Jackson; and, Dr Anne George. The programme concluded with the playing of the Royal Anthem. The entire proceedings went perfectly, followed by light refreshments so well organized and served by a BCAM team of volunteers lead by Russ and Anna Hudson.

It's been nearly 3 years since this Project was accepted by the BCAM Board, and now a beautiful \$100K memorial to a valorous British Columbian, the

last Canadian to be awarded the Victoria Cross, rests by the entrance to which all visitors may pay homage.



## New to the Collection:

### Grumman (de Havilland) Tracker CS2F/CP-121 1954

The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) selected the Grumman Tracker for Anti-Submarine Detection (ASW) operations. One hundred were built under license from de Havilland Canada and fitted

with Wright Cyclone engines built by Canadian Pratt and Whitney.

ASW gear included: retractable Magnetic Anomaly Detector (MAD), retractable radome; 70 million candlepower searchlight and sixteen sonobuoys. Homing torpedoes or depth charges were carried in the weapons bay and under each wing.

The first aircraft flew in May 1956 and they entered service in 1957. Operations off Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Bonaventure began

January 1959. Major updates were made to the aircraft during its life to improve ASW detection ion equipment. The first of those entered service in 1960. Further improvements to the ASW systems were made in 1966 and 1968.

HMCS Bonaventure was retired in 1970 and Trackers became shore based patrol aircraft later re-designated as the CP-121. They were finally retired in March 1990.

The BC Aviation Museum's Tracker was donated by the Military Education Centre in Chilliwack in 2021. It is similar to those used by the Royal Canadian Navy/Canadian Armed Forces based at Patricia Bay/Victoria International Airport with VU-33 Utility Squadron 1962 to 1974. In 1974 under Canadian Armed Forces Unification VU-33 was renamed 414 Squadron and transferred to CFB Comox, Vancouver Island.

A few Trackers enjoyed a second life performing one of the most British Columbian aviation tasks imaginable: fighting wildfires. Conair Group of Abbotsford, BC, converted a number of RCN Trackers to aerial firefighters. Eventually fully retired, they fought wildfires successfully in Canada and France.



An active C-121 at CFB Moose Jaw in 1982 (Wikimedia Commons)



The BCAM Tracker, Summer 2021. Photographed by Aaron Burton

## 75 Years in the Air by Kelly J Clark

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Victoria Flying Club will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but its history goes back even further than that. In fact, you could say that the history of Vancouver Island is the history of Canadian aviation. After all, the first all-Canadian plane, William Wallace Gibson's Twin Plane, was built in Victoria in 1910. With its central location between Vancouver and Seattle, Victoria and Vancouver Island were prime routes for aviation and it's really no wonder that the VFC has had such a long and storied history.



The modern VFC is the spiritual successor of a number of organizations. The first, the Aerial League of Canada, Victoria Branch, was founded in 1919 by more than a hundred aviators from the Great War. The League operated commercial flying routes and delivered mail between Victoria and Sidney, and later the mainland, and encouraged the growth of Canadian aviation through training and air shows, and worked toward standardizing flight qualifications.

After the Aerial League came the Victoria Aero Club (VAC) in 1928. With support from the Canadian Air League and the Dominion government, the VAC was given a de Havilland Moth for training and practice and a challenging mission: help Canada's aviation catch up with the rest of the world. Luckily, they weren't alone: the VAC operated alongside of British Columbia Airways out of their shared space at Lansdowne Air Field. There, the organizations provided all manner of airborne training and services both local and international. This arrangement proved quite beneficial until March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1929, when the de Havilland Moth crashed due to an engine stall. The pilot may have survived, but the plane and the club died on impact. The burgeoning membership soon moved elsewhere in search of aviation work. In 1931, the Lansdowne Air Field lost its license to operate commercially and the future of flight on Vancouver Island looked dismal at best.



Luckily, at least for Victoria's future aviators, the Second World War soon necessitated the training of new pilots. The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan required that all Canadian, British, Australian, and New Zealand aircrews were to be trained together in order to ensure a strategic degree of consistency and quality. Canada, for a wide



number of factors, was chosen as the ideal training ground, and the Royal Canadian Air Force founded the Patricia Bay Military Aerodrome near Sidney, BC, where they would train more than 131,000 crewmen before the war's end. Today, we know this site as the Victoria International Airport.

When the war ended, returning pilots were eager to keep flying, just like their forebears.

The Victoria Flying Club was founded in August of 1946. The VFC was able to negotiate temporary lodging with the RCAF at the Patricia Bay Military Aerodrome and officially incorporated on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1946. From there, it slowly grew a fleet of aircraft that it used to train new pilots and encouraged commercial and private flight for Vancouver Island. By the mid-60s, the fleet consisted of three Fleet 80s, a Cessna 150, a Beechcraft 23, and a leaded Piper PA-23. In 1965, the VFC was allowed to purchase Hangar 4E, which had been considered a surplus structure, for \$3,000 (about \$25,313 in 2021 dollars) — a tidy sum that provided a place to store planes, people, and the organization for the next seventy-five years. The VFC still operates out of the former Hangar 4E, though it thankfully enjoyed some major renovations in the 1970s to make it the comfortable space it is today.

Over the past seventy-five years, the VFC has trained some of the best pilots both in Canada and beyond. In fact, thanks to VFC alumnus Robert Thirsk, a former astronaut, the VFC can also boast training some of the best pilots in the galaxy. Today's VFC owes everything to the tenacity and dedication of the aviators who came before it. Aviation is not for the faint of heart, but it takes more than courage to weather the trials and tribulations, wars and bureaucratic loopholes, that punctuate the VFC's history. And so, as it approaches its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the VFC honours the spirit of adventure and perseverance that have kept it aloft. Although the fleet now boasts modern Cessna 172S aircraft and a Redbird Flight Simulator, its membership remains the same: full of passion, a love for aviation, and a boundless lust for open skies.



## The “Shilo” Lancaster FM 118 (and the FM 104 Connection) by Ted Syme

Lancaster Mk X FM 118, was built at Victory Aircraft in April 1945. Records indicate it arrived in England that same month at #32 Maintenance Unit at Lyneham, Wiltshire, and saw no combat action.

FM 118 returned to Canada later in 1945 and was placed into storage. In 1947 it went to the Canadian Army Currie Barracks, in Calgary for parachute training. It was formally struck-off-charge of March 22, 1948. After Calgary, it turned up at CFB Shilo, Manitoba, where it was used for live firing target practice.



Poor old FM 118 at CFB Shilo gunnery range, ca 1977



A well-perforated FM118 at CFB Shilo gunnery range, ca 1977

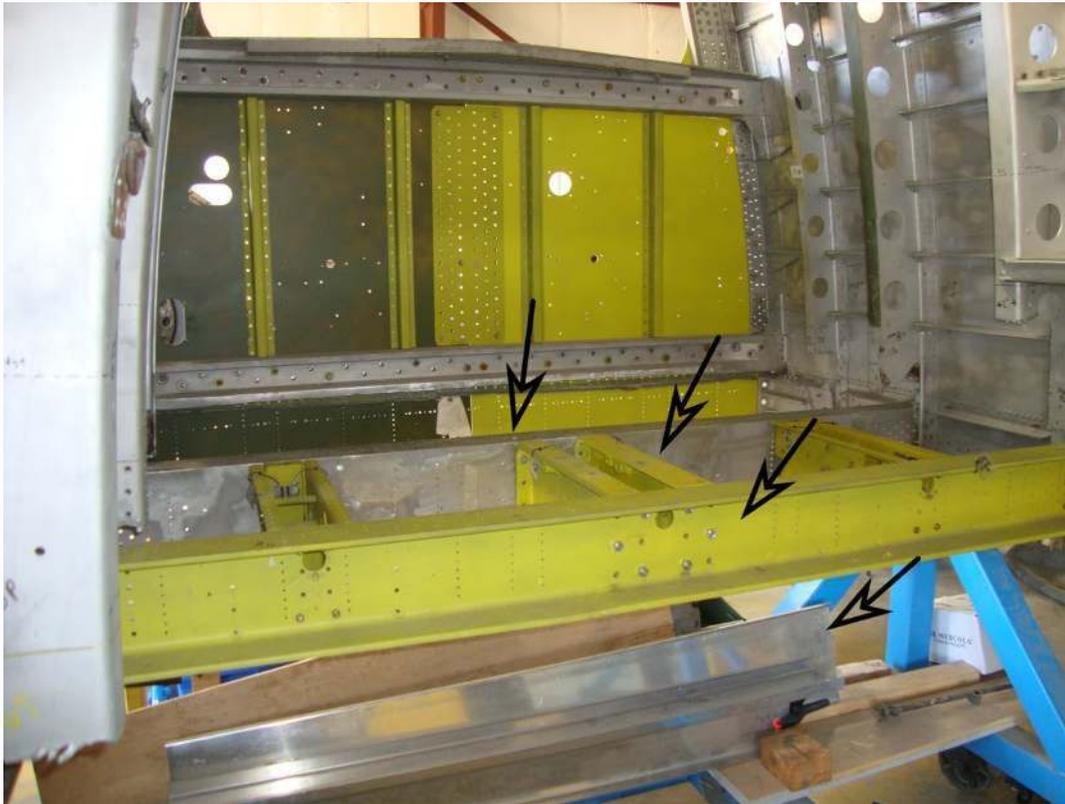
In 1989, the Nanton Lancaster Society, now Bomber Command Museum (of FM 159 fame) recovered the remains of the cockpit and several pieces of fuselage. It was hardly recognizable as an airplane, let alone a Lancaster.



A deal was struck with a Mr. Bernie Salter (UK fame for building a forward section of a wartime Lanc) for the remains of the cockpit section.

However Mr. Salter never managed to arrange the transportation to England, so it remained in the storage yard at Nanton, Alberta.

In 2004, the Toronto Aero Space Museum (TASM) arranged purchase of the cockpit section. As we know, TASM was the custodian of Lancaster FM 104, which had been on exhibit for many years at Toronto’s lakefront near Canadian National Exhibition grounds. TASM intended to use part of the FM 118 floor to repair the centre section of FM 104 floor that was originally cut out in fitting it to the concrete plinth at the Toronto lakefront.



FM 118 and new fabbed bomb bay cross beams, bomb slips and intercostals temporarily installed in FM 104, July 2021

Sections of this floor turned up in a container BCAM received from storage at the ex – CFB Edenvale, Ontario airport in 2018, along with a few new parts that were in the process of being fabricated. Earlier archived photos of these parts at TASM, show them installed in FM 104’s centre section. At that point in time, bullet and shrapnel holes were still visible.

Prior to being shipped to us, this damage appears to have been patched up by welding, and automotive body putty (which of course makes them usable for static display only) and some painted in zinc chromate primer.



Tag on a damaged stringer from FM 118 installed in FM 104, July 2021

Rebuilding FM 104’s centre section floor has started, and progress will be a challenge, as most of the bottom portions of the port and starboard fuselage frames were torch cut away. The cross beams attach to these areas of the frames. Guidance for repair and rebuild will use the remains of the rivet and bolt drilling patterns on FM 118’s cross beams, and not -so-great quality of scans of the original Avro drawings.



## BRITISH COLUMBIA AVIATION MUSEUM

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To all BCAM Members

The Annual General Meeting of the BC Aviation Museum Society will be held October 23 2021.

**A luncheon will offered at 11:00 am and the meeting will commence at 1:00 pm.**

This is a very important meeting at which a new Constitution and Bylaws will be presented for the approval of the membership.

As this is a “Special Resolution” it will require a 66% majority vote of the members in attendance to pass.

A package containing the following important information regarding what is proposed may be picked up at the Museum. Members who are considering attending the meeting are urged to review the material before the meeting.

The package contains:

1. BCAM Annual General Meeting 2021 Information;
2. BC Societies Act Basics of Special Resolutions Sept 18,2021;
3. British Columbia Aviation Museum Society Constitution and Bylaws with Proposed Changes;
4. BCAM Board Elections 2021 Transition Information
5. Board Member Responsibilities.

In addition five Board Members will be elected to carry on the work of the Museum

See the Information sheet attached for more information about what has been proposed by the Committee to review the Constitution and Bylaws and by the Operational Planning Committee. These committees have collectively put in over a year of work on research and writing.

The Museum is at an exciting stage in its history. We hope you will attend and cast your vote to determine the future of the British Columbia Aviation Museum Society.

Mac Duffield, Secretary

**Who Am I?** I am a figure involved in aviation (and other things). Can you guess who I am from the clues below? Submit your answer to [norsemannews@bcam.net](mailto:norsemannews@bcam.net) to gain recognition (verbal only, alas) in the next newsletter!

1. I was born in Vancouver in the last decade on the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the child of Scottish immigrants. After primary school in Vancouver, I was sent to Scotland to continue my education and then returned to Canada.
2. Back in Canada, I signed attestation papers six weeks after the start of the First World War and was posted to a Canadian Expeditionary Force infantry battalion.
3. I transferred to the Royal Flying Corp in 1915 as an observer, and was shot down in December that year. After recovering, I trained as a pilot. I joined 60 Squadron, RFC in April 1916 and shot down my first two enemy aircraft that fall.
4. In October 1916, under heavy enemy fire, I shot down a German balloon, and as a result, was awarded my first Military Cross. Still in October, I received a second Military Cross for engaging the enemy while escorting a bombing raid.
5. In November 1916, I was shot down again, was badly wounded, and taken out of combat. After the war, I returned to Canada and worked in business until the start of the Second World War, where I commanded the Air Station in Trenton ON, later the hub of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. In 1939, I was a founder of the first Air Cadet Squadron in Canada, in Vancouver.

The correct answer to the last issue's Who Am I is Helen Harrison Bristol. One correct answer this time, by Mike Valenti. Congratulations, Mike!

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