

The Flyer

Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame

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Logo joins Hall of Fame

At long last, and without fanfare, Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame and its logo, the Silver Dart, have been united in one location--here at the Reynolds-Alberta Museum.

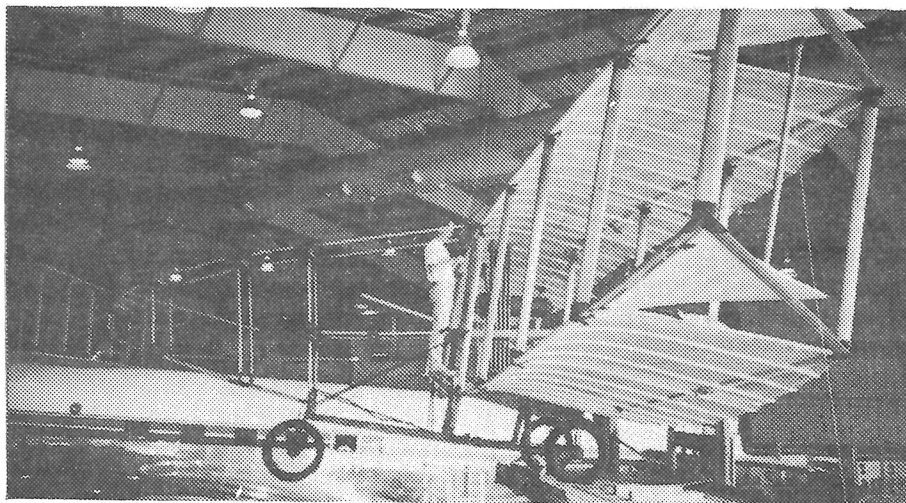
Not only was the Silver Dart the first aircraft to fly in Canadian skies, but it exhibits technology more recent engineering has simply refined or re-combined. Its cambered wings, tricycle undercarriage, linked nose-wheel steering and rudder control, canard stabilizers, and ability to carry passengers are all features of today's aircraft.

It was arguably the first to use ailerons, a term coined by French aviators, amazed at the lateral control provided by the "little wings". Hinged surfaces, positioned at the outer ends of the wings, were controlled by pilot shoulder movements.

The original Silver Dart, of course, was demolished on August 2, 1909 during a demonstration at Camp Petawawa. In a futile attempt to convince Canadian army personnel to use the new-fangled flying machines, J.A.D. McCurdy made four successful flights. He even took Casey Baldwin up as a passenger.

On its fifth landing, however, the narrow motorcycle wheels bit into the sand, the Dart up-ended, and McCurdy managed to escape with little more than a broken nose. Officers solemnly declared to the War Office, in official triplicate reports, that flying had no place in modern defence.

Their stance quickly changed when Canada found herself at war in 1914, and years later a monument was erected,



Greg Davis, No. 1 crewman on the Reynolds team, puts finishing touches on the mounting lines for the Silver Dart. He also keeps the aircraft agleam, and turns their props regularly.

proclaiming Petawawa the birthplace of Canadian military aviation.

In fact the first replica of the Silver Dart was built by the RCAF to mark the golden anniversary of flight in Canada. This replica is housed in the National Aeronautical Collection in Ottawa. More were built to mark the 75th anniversary, and one was gifted to the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon, England.

The RAF willingly accepted it to commemorate its flight as the first by a British subject in the British Empire. A few years later, the museum dismantled it, and moved it to their storage facility at RAF Cardington in Bedfordshire.

It's thanks to Byron Reynolds this historic craft is now in Wetaskiwin. He, along with four local volunteers, mounted a retrieval expedition to England in mid-April. Negotiations had occupied a year, and the repatriation agreement

stipulated Reynolds assume full financial and physical responsibility for the aircraft on an as-is where-is basis.

Once there, they found the job facing them bigger than they'd planned. Although their freight agent had supplied a shipping container, its inside measurements were not quite what the doctor ordered. With specs and measuring tapes in hand, they realized a lot more dismantling would be required to stow it all safely inside.

The container arrived in Wetaskiwin May 27. The Reynolds crew began re-assembly in early June, and by June 28, awaiting favorable weather, they were ready to roll it across the tarmac to Reynolds-Alberta Museum.

Here it hangs, near the nose section of the Avro Arrow, recently replicated by Allan Jackson. In between lie 50 years of Canadian aviation history.

Future of Hall depends on support

It has been over six months since the Alberta board was elected to office. Since then, we have spent a great deal of time assessing our present situation, and developing plans for the future.

As many of you know, the Hall has been virtually in limbo for a number of years. It has gone through a difficult move out of the Convention Centre in Edmonton to

Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin, which had to be accomplished in a minimum of time with little or no planning.

As a result, we have artifacts, furniture, tools, and various display materials located in storage facilities both here in Wetaskiwin, and in Edmonton. We have no inventory for things that were put into storage, and developing one is a labor-intensive job. Be warned we will be soliciting help for this project.

It is entirely due to the perseverance and tenacity of Peg Johnson that the Hall exists today. Humble thanks are due her from both the Alberta and National Boards.

In our plans for the future, the Alberta board has decided to push onward and upward, and has concluded that a re-structuring is necessary. Our immediate need is for a Chief Administrator/Comptroller to oversee the administration. One other staff person (Jennifer Romanko) is all we can afford at present.

Financially we are solvent, but we are far from rich. If we are to

progress in the future we must increase our fund-raising efforts. This matter was addressed at the National Board meeting Nov. 1.

We feel that the Hall has the potential to become a truly nationally-recognized institution. To gain this recognition, we must develop a vision, and follow it.

The tasks before us are monumental. They will require a great deal of effort from the board, the shareholders, the friends, and volunteers of the Hall.

We are all a part of the structure of the Hall, and for the Hall to stand on its own, we must all participate. It is imperative to know we can rely on your help to realize our vision.

Contact the Hall of Fame office here in Wetaskiwin at (403)361-1351 and put your name forward as a volunteer. It's amazing how many mountains we can move with the efforts of a few good people.

The success of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame will depend on the support it receives--from those already mentioned, and from the National Board.

--Gord Wallis, President

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Submissions of letters, stories, book reviews, photos, art and whimsey are welcome, and will be considered for publication as space permits. We reserve the right to edit and condense submissions. Payment is unlikely.

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New Alberta Division board elected

This is the first newsletter since a new board of directors was elected to the Alberta Division by shareholders last May 30. Elected directors, their positions, and their terms of office in years (in brackets) are:

Executive:

President: Gord Wallis (2)
Vice-President: Robert Ward (2)
Treasurer: Peter Jenkins (2)
Secretary: Keri James (2)
Executive-Director: Bill Buckham (1)
Past President: Joe McGoldrick

Directors:

Clare Agar (1)
Robert Audette (1)
Curt Carruthers (1)
Richard deBoer (2)
Lloyd Johnston (1)
Robert Matheson (1)
Lee Urquhart (2)

THE PURPOSE OF CANADA'S AVIATION HALL OF FAME...

To explore and initiate every responsible measure available to elevate, protect and preserve the names and deeds (for the enlightenment of present Canadians and generations yet to come) of those persons both alive and dead, whose contributions to the advancement of Canadian aviation, or acts of supreme gallantry in the arena of aerial combat while a member of Canada's armed forces, have been of superior benefit to the nation.

(Bill) Casey goes to bat for RAM

A mighty cheer went up that day in Mudville when Casey advanced to the bat.

Bottom of the ninth, two men out, the Mudville Nine down 4-2.

Citizens of Wetaskiwin can empathize. A \$multi-million tourist facility stands virtually empty much of the winter. Government budget cuts bite deeply, leaving little or no money for advertising, and forcing adjustments in staffing and revisions to planning and marketing activities.

Last March, new facility manager Bill Casey came on the scene, stepped up to the plate, and he's gone to bat for RAM.

"There's a lot of unrealized potential here. Everybody who's ever been here agrees we have a dynamic, exciting museum, with a unique product and some wow! vignettes," he says.

"We just have to find ways of getting the secret out there. And after we draw people in the front door, we have to provide an experience they won't soon forget."

Casey hasn't rushed into things. There's ease in his manner, pride in his bearing, and still after nine months, a smile on his face. All the bases at RAM were loaded, and he's taken the time to step back from the plate and consider the programs, the problems and the possibilities. He sees every frustration as a challenge.

"There's a lull in excitement right now," he says. "When the museum first opened, there were a lot of hopes and dreams generated in this community, but many were not realized. We are working at building bridges."

He's been shoring up partnerships on which RAM's success relies--with the Wetaskiwin business community, with other museums, with automobile and transportation industries, the Friends of RAM, Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, even with the Reynolds-Alberta Museum Advisory Board which ceased to exist last winter after their terms of office ran out.

"The Friends carry a large load, and they're doing just a super job. The Advisory Board provides long-term mentorship and guidance. They'll be appointed soon, but unfortunately, I don't have that benefit right now."

The museum's three-fold mission as a centre for entertainment, for heritage education, and for rentals of artifacts and space provides Casey with a unique opportunity.

"We have a wonderful mix here, and maintaining a workable balance is one of our goals. The relationships we form determine who will come to make use of the museum."

He says the future success of RAM will require the hard work and co-operation of every member of the team.

"We need the people in the Wetaskiwin community acting as ambassadors for RAM, and we need to ensure visitors leave here feeling good about their experience, and anticipating coming back."

Nine months into his tenure, he has held a marketing session in Edmonton. Many of the best minds in Wetaskiwin, together with those from other museums, brought forth new ideas and looked at old ones in new ways.

Although there's much untapped potential on the international tourist market ("There's a corporate executive in Florida just busting his keester to fly up here and take in what we have--and he can do it because we're right on the Wetaskiwin airport!"), the session identified RAM's primary market focus as families within a three-hour travelling distance.

"That means repeat visitors, and we're always going to have to develop new programs and exhibits, and rotate artifacts so the museum provides new experiences for them."

Since the arrival of the Duesenberg last summer, the Classic Car Show, the Provincial Quilt competition, and Snowmotion (a lighthearted look at winter transportation) have been held in the East Hall. This provides a ready-made venue to showcase "theme" events that tie into the season, or are attracted from other museums.

The entire museum--the artifacts highlighted, the restaurant, the giftshop, the interpretive programs--can all reflect the event being held in the East Hall.

That's the kind of ball game Bill Casey has been playing since he came to RAM. It's a game he knows well for he's been involved in community projects since he graduated from the U of A in 1971 with a degree in recreation administration. He worked as a senior manager with municipal governments prior to joining the provincial government in 1978.

Casey has not thought about life after RAM because there are too many exciting things happening here.

Odds are there will be joy in Wetaskiwin before he's through.

"I won't be out there soliciting a move in two or five years," he says. "I'm planning to stay here as long as they'll have me, making RAM grow."

Trivia

*The mind is like a parachute:
they both function at their best
only when open.*

*Life is like a dog sled team:
if you ain't the lead dog,
the scenery ain't that great.*

45th Avro Jetliner reunion a special affair

Here I was, main lobby at the Holiday Inn Toronto, Sunday, Aug. 7, 1994, rubbing elbows with Mario Pesando on one side of me and John Archibald on the other.

I thought: "This is really starting out to be one heck of a weekend!"

I was here for the 45th reunion of the first flight of the Avro Canada Jetliner. This was the first flight of a commercial jet transport in North America, and it must be the best-kept secret in the western world! Even today, there appears a look of utter amazement on the faces of people who are told this fact--a look which turns into a warm smile and the often-heard quote: "I didn't know that!"

To actually attend such an event was more than I would have thought possible a few years ago. Most of the great individuals who planned, designed, built and flew this revolutionary aircraft were right here in the same room!

Just to be here, to witness so many people warmly re-aquainting themselves one with another, melting away the years, left me with a feeling of more than awe.

There was Jim Floyd, the designer, pilots Don Rogers and Mike Cooper-Slipper, chief Avro Arrow test pilot Janusz Zurkowski, Orenda jet engine developer Paul Dilworth.

Mario Pesando was with A. V. Roe Canada Ltd. at its beginning. Bryan Wood was the resident hydraulics genius, and John Archibald worked under him and ended up working on the Saturn V Rocket engine which pushed mankind to a lunar landing in 1969.

The celebration began with a private "hangar flying" session in the large convention hall around 1600 hours. The greeting line quickly dissolved as more and more old friends came streaming through the doorways, and they were swept away in remembrance of earlier days.

Display tables surrounding the outer walls were loaded, and I would have liked more time to read the huge collection of Avro headlines--those yellowed and tattered pieces of history that tugged at your inner feelings.

After dinner, a roll call went out, and 35 or so people made their way up to the



Jim Floyd with John Archibald and a model of the Avro Canada Jetliner at Floyd's induction into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame (1993).

platform to stand with Jim Floyd. These were the people present tonight from the original Jetliner Team, and it was heartwarming to hear the prolonged applause of the rest of us who appreciate their aborted contribution to Canadian aviation.

It will not be forgotten. Jim Floyd and Janusz Zurkowski (and one or two others) have been inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, at least in part for their efforts with Avro Canada.

While I was here, I made it my business to display some of the pictures and handiwork of Allan Jackson who lives in Wetaskiwin. Beginning with a dream in 1987, he now has a full-scale nose section of the Avro Arrow in the hangar at Reynolds-Alberta Museum, and has already begun the second stage.

Close to midnight, a chap approached my table. With tears in his eyes, he pulled from one of his jacket pockets a small white plastic wheel and data plate which had been taken from Arrow 203 while it was on Death Row. He had hung onto these small parts all these years, and he gave them to me to give to Allan. He was overjoyed to finally come across someone who cared enough to build his very own Arrow.

The next day, I headed up with Bryan Wood and John Archibald to Ottawa and the National Museum of Aviation. With a letter of introduction from Byron Reynolds to Chris Terry, head curator, we

were put in very good hands, and allowed into parts of the museum not usually open to the public.

My main task here was to measure and record every single angle and dimension of the one remaining main gear leg so that Allan Jackson can one day accurately duplicate it for his project.

Awesome, powerful, and dignified are the only words I can come up with to describe the hacked-off nose of Arrow 206. A full 17 feet above the ground, it looks to be still standing on guard.

It was August 10 when I boarded my flight home in Toronto. We taxied past the old Avro hangars with the letter mounting points still visible. They could be completed in the mind like a child's connect-the-dots puzzle.

I sent a note up with the stewardess to the First Officer, wishing him and the crew a nice day, and asking did he know this was the anniversary of the first Canadian Jetliner.

Much to my surprise, he came back later and spoke to me about the note. No, he didn't know about the Jetliner at all. Seems as if History repeats itself.

This is a condensed version of the moving account of the 45th Avro Canada Jetliner celebration written by Cam Bailey of Edmonton. Cam is a shareholder, he volunteers for Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame and the Friends of Reynolds-Alberta Museum, and he is a member of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society. TKJ