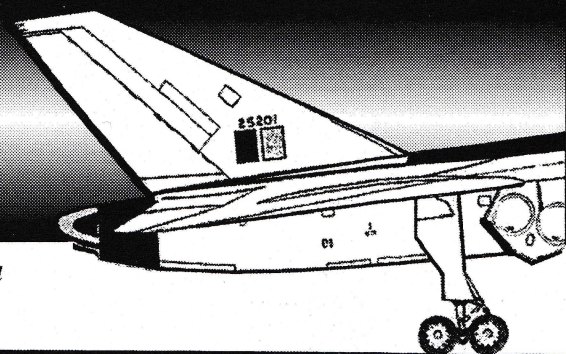


Pre-Flight



A Publication of the Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada
P.O. Box 246, Etobicoke "D", Etobicoke ON M9A 4X2

Vol. 22, No. 6

November - December 2011



The Second Incident

(Conclusion)

by
Gerry Barbour

People have their special ideosyncrasies, some endearing, others not. But so do animals, like dogs. Charlie is just one example. Since Gerry was hired as a 'factotum', he learned a lot about people and pets. Charlie had a problem that was natural to him. Gas!

His stomach would growl, followed by the distinctive noise and odour associated with that social "no-no". I would dump him off my lap quick-like when I heard that ominous rumble. Charlie never objected, merely passed the time of day and jumped back to his accustomed place and continued watching the game. The four of us were into it hot and heavy and Madam was winning, much to the disgust of the little ones, when a voice interrupted our game. "Well-well-this looks like seven nights in a bar room." A long-gearred individual clad in black, collar turned around, leaned over the veranda railing. The parson! Madam was mortified.

Founded 1989

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Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada



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From the President

On behalf of myself, the Board of Directors and all members, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Michael Brigham for all he has done for the AHFC both as Director and web master. Michael now takes on the task of husband and father, congratulations, and to Jason Machinski, our new web master who has taken over from Michael Brigham and brought our Web Site up to date, I thank you for the professionalism.

Keep those emails and letters ongoing to your MPs in OTTAWA to back the CASM in their fight to save 65 Carl Hall Road and the Museum.

I wish each and every one of you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year all the best in 2012.

Frank

The Second Incident (Conclusion)

Caught in the act of sinful card playing. Leaping over the veranda railing that man of the cloth took off his coat (why do parsons wear black. Dreadful colour) he pulled up a chair and said "Deal me in".

With 5 players things waxed hotter and hotter. The tide of fortune ebbed and flowed. I noticed the way the parson held his cards, how dexterously he shuffled, how easily and quickly he made his decisions and it began to dawn on me that this man knew cards. Commenting on the fact a swift look passed between us.

"Put myself through theological college playing the pasteboards, Laddie." Well, well. That's one way to reach an objective. Finally, throwing down the winning hand, he said " Deal me out. Must get on with the work of the Lord, you know. Don't have to rob the poor box to get my pint at the local pub. See you in church this Sunday"...and whistling cheerfully he strode away with the objections of the twins following him. "You can't quit now. We're losing."

Quite a fellow, I would hedge my bets if we ever played again. Church, did he say? That's where we ended up come Sunday morning. All of us, Charlie included. The girls raised such a fuss Madam relented. "He can come in the car but he must remain there and that's final". Wearing the Master's tie and jacket (somewhat too large) I ushered my charges into the De Soto and set off sedately for the parson's bailiwick. Madam led the way followed by the kids, and with a last wink at them, I stuffed Charlie under my jacket (I couldn't leave him in that hot car, could I?) and dutifully entered the house of the Lord. We occupied one pew. Madam, the two kids, then me, then Charlie. With the singing over the sermon began, and the parson was in rare form, in full song. He ranted on about the beach parties, the nude bathing (my ears perked up on that one), the new form of dancing, the gambling (a glance at us) and on and on. My attention span, never good at any time, began to waver. Reading the hymn book, I became aware of a rumbling sound. Oh, no. Oh, yes. Charlie erupted, and during a poignant moment of silence.

Second Incident ... *cont'd.*

That hard old bench acted like the best sounding board ever. The girls giggled, the congregation tittered, Madam was aghast. She glanced my way, saw Charlie's ears and shot me a venomous glance. The parson and Charlie never turned a hair. Closing his Bible with a regretful sigh that sterling man of the cloth gazed at his flock and said in a somber manner, "I get the message. Amen"

After singing Rock of Ages we filed out. Rock indeed. Just what Charlie needed. For him it was pee time. The madam however, was furious.

She fired me not once but twice on the way home. The family was in disgrace, her reputation was ruined. We (she) could never enter that church again.

Pointing a quivering finger at me, "Your fired (3rd time), get out and take that animal with you".

Suitably chastened, I pulled over, opened the door and calling to Charlie, stepped out and what happened next was like something out of a Hollywood movie. The screaming and yelling that took place on that deserted sandy road on that Sunday afternoon was wondrous.

"Charley's our dog"

"You can't fire Gerald. He owes me 25 cents. "We'll call Daddy."

"Gerald's teaching me the Australian Crawl."

What really brought Madam up short was when the twins pointed out that their Mother couldn't drive.

"We'll have to walk miles to get home."

Could Madam see herself walking in those spiky heels down that beach? No way. Too far. Too hot. Too tiring. Madam was one who liked her comfort. Ordering me back into the car, (How can you give orders to a person when you've fired them?) she said, "Drive on, I'll have Robert speak firmly to you when he arrives from New York."

Robert!!! The days had passed so pleasantly I had forgotten him. The atmosphere was decidedly cool for a day or two until the parson arrived for his weekly poker game (by now he was a welcome participant 5 players being better than 4). I had found church money spends just as well as wicked money).

A keen observer, he recognized the strained atmosphere and inquired thereon. The twins gleefully described in great detail what had actually transpired that fateful Sunday. He could not contain his merriment. Howling with laughter, doubled over, slapping his knee, the tears rolling down his cheeks, he pointed at me. "I thought it was you Laddie. You have the devil's look about you."

We played a few hands, he all the time assuring Madam that Gerald had done the right thing bringing that poor dog in out of the heat.

"Must take care of our animal friends you know!" Yes, please come to church next Sunday. Bring Charlie but don't feed him breakfast. No-his parishioners weren't upset, in fact they had congratulated him on the depth of his sermon and how well someone had accentuated the positive.

Finally throwing in his hand he took his leave, claiming he just had to tell the story to his cronies at the pub. "Over a pint, you know." I never saw him again, but I'll tell you this. If more churchmen were like him, the pews in their church would be filled on Sundays.

Alas, all good things must come to an end. It had become my custom to get the coffee perking and the toaster loaded before our jolly little foursome took off on their two mile morning gallop. This morning things were different upon our return. There was Robert sitting on the veranda, coffee in one hand and enjoying an enormous "Panatela" cigar. The twins screamed with delight. Charlie barked excitedly, bringing Madam, flushed and radiant from her bedroom. I retired to the kitchen not wishing to intrude on what was most certainly a joyous family re-union.

I prepared breakfast and instead of singing out in my usual "Come and get it or I'll throw it out", I appeared in the doorway and solemnly announced. "Breakfast is served." I can really do gentry when in the mood.

Grinning, the twins arose, Madam preceded her husband who took the opportunity to smack her lightly on the bottom, saying "Putting on a little weight my dear?. The boy must cook up good grub".

Later, seizing the opportunity while the "ladies" were beaching, the Master eyed me speculatively over the glowing tip of his cigar.

"Seem to have made an impression hereabouts, haven't you? My wife told me."

Second Incident ... cont'd.

Quite A vision of Charlie blasting off in church, a vision of Horace curled up on the bed, a vision of the spanking administered to one twin for whacking her sister with a badminton racquet, all these flashed through my mind.

Tapping the ash from his cigar, he said, "Watched your back with my daughters, did you? Whatever you did, they seem to have improved in manners. Eat better too, I understand."

He gave a deep sigh, "We'll be leaving shortly. Wife likes to have a few days before school starts. Get the kids settled down, you know."

Yikes!!! I had completely forgotten school. "What's the date, sir." "August 28." I had 3 days to get home.

Explaining my problem to his sympathetic ear, Robert rose, and extracting an envelope from his jacket pocket said, "Here's your pay. You've earned every penny. Care to be in my permanent employ? No? I thought not."

After a long pause, he said. "The children will miss you. Greatly, I'm afraid. I think that in order to avoid any goodbye problems, tears and such, why don't you plan on leaving quietly early in the morning?"

Then with a twinkle." I heard about Charley and church. That parson's a stuffed shirt." Not anymore Robert, not anymore.

Later, in the privacy of my room, I checked the contents of the envelope. Five Franklins. I was rich. Would I miss them? Yes, I would. Charley most of all. Passing by the pond where long ago, I had returned Horace to his native habitat, I paused. "Horace, you son-of-a-gun you did just fine. Be a good boy now, hear?"

The trip to the Canadian border was uneventful. I merely held up a sign with the words "Canada" and bingo, along came a car with Ontario plates. "Where to, Sonny?" "Toronto." "Us too. Hop in." A fast trip to T.O. I knocked on the door. My tearful Mother embraced me. Father? "Cut it a bit fine didn't you? School Monday. Don't be late."

My collie Mac?-He turned himself inside out. Stopping momentarily, he sniffed at my pant leg. Did he get a whiff of Charley? He curled up in his accustomed place-on my feet. I was home.

Members Matter

As we are fast approaching the end of another year, I would like to bring you up-to-date on a couple of things. I remind each and everyone of you who have expressed an interest in keeping the Canadian Air and Space Museum at 65 Carl Hall Road, Downsview open, to keep sending those emails and letters to your Member of Parliament. We cannot guarantee the Museum will stay where it is until the word comes down that it will remain.

I had the pleasure this past week to drop in and visit Matthys at his home near Komoka. Mark himself has done some work on his farm to go along with the memorial AHFC will erect in the near future. Mark now has a landing strip called WARREN FIELD on his property and alongside, a beautiful pond. This landing strip bears the name of F/Lt. Bruce Warren, 28, of New Toronto. He was the pilot in the crash of the Mk.I CF-100, 18102.

On behalf of the membership, I would like to thank Prof. Jason Machinski on the fine job he has done bringing our web site <http://www.ahfc.org> up-to-date. It has a professional appearance.

On a personal note, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those members who have sent in cards expressing their appreciation and thanks for the effort the Membership Secretary has done throughout the year. I means a lot when one receives a note of encouragement and thanks from members for efforts on behalf of the Aerospace Heritage Foundation.

I wish each and everyone, all our members, a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and Happy New Year. In this 2012 year, may our Foundation reach the significant goals set by the Board of Directors.



Mich

Nicholas Doran
Membrship