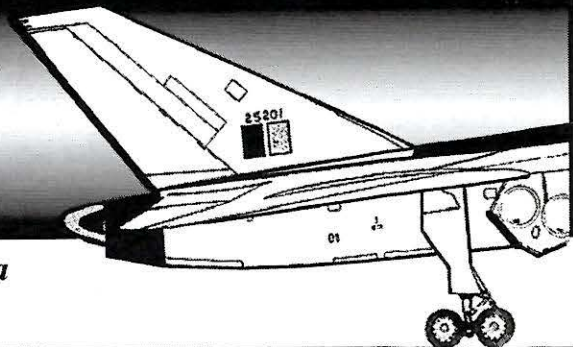


Pre-Flight



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

Vol. 25, No. 6

25th Year of Publication

November - December 2014



Mike Cooper-Slipper and Bill Sanders seen here at "FLIGHT 2000"
Original members of The Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada
"MAY THEY REST IN PEACE"

My History and Personal Experiences from 1921 until Our Return to Rotterdam.

by Bill Sanders,

Firstly, you may find this a very dull story to begin with, I will not mind if you skip a goodly part of my writings. I began life at 24 Stanley Gardens in Acton, London, W.3. This house was part of my family's business, a Laundry, which was located opposite the Main Gate of the D. Napier & Son Plant. From my early days I could hear the continuous roar of the Famous Napier Lion engines being tested for numerous world breaking record tests.

This was the time when I guess my great interest in aircraft and engines got embedded in my blood. I would like to make it quite clear there were other interests that could be with my father's business. Naturally it being a Laundry with Steam and Power was necessary. This was another interest in engines that I got involved, of course with steam a massive boiler was involved. At this stage, I was called upon on many occasions to help clean out the insides of this monster of all the scale which had accumulated there. Then there were times when attention had not been paid to the water level in the boiler and with a great roar the fusible plug in the fire box would blow. Also there was the 20 h/p single cylinder Steam Engine to be lubricated, maintained and repaired.

My schooling was the normal school system until I went down with scarlet fever that was in my early teens. At this point I was so far behind in learning I could not pass the exams to go on to the upper level, therefore, and fortunately for me my parents were able to stand the cost of a private school, it being Ealing College. I cycled the 5 miles or I took the bus, I became quite active in sports, swimming, cricket seeker and whatever else was going on until 1938 when after making several applications for employment to D. Napier & Son which was successful at the summer holiday period.

My first job was in the Engine Test Administration Department as the "Tea Boy" and general go here or go there with messages. Many times I had to take many test reports on the various engines that were in experimentation and tested in full size. These were the Lion, Observa, (a 6 cylinder comp. ignition diesel).

Founded 1989

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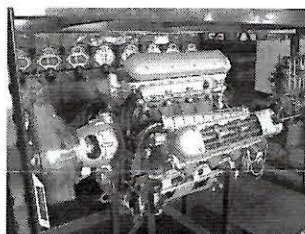
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From the President

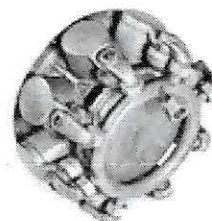
As your President, I am sending you one and all, my belated Good Wishes for the past Holiday Season and the Very Best for 2015.

For your information there has been a slight delay in issues, November-December 2014 and January-February 2015 of Pre-Flight. All should be resolved for the following issues and you should find them to have very interesting articles. I trust they will be informative and to your liking. In these issues we are honoured to reproduce a very interesting article by the late Bill Sanders, one of our original members. Bill recalls his history "From 1921 until Our Return to Rotterdam".

Frank Harvey



Lion engine



Whitehead Torpedo engine

Story Continues...

Rapier, Dagger III & VIII. And the 24 cylinder 2200 H.P. Sabre. One other engine I must mention and that was the 4 cylinder Whitehead Torpedo engine, an interesting beast, run on Shale and Caster Oil, run in a tank of water also utilizing 1500 P.S.I. air stored in two 20 foot long torpedo tubes.

Graduating, after a year as the Test Observer and producing all the necessary results for the Royal Navy Inspectors, I graduated to Test Observing. Calculating the test results and inspecting the stripped engine and compiling a comprehensive report for the A.I.D. This covers all the engines in production up until 1939 when the Dagger VIII and Sabre came into production and also the renamed Sea Line a version of the 11-A Lion which had the reduction gear removed to accommodate its installation in the Scott Paine fast Torpedo Boat.



Scott Paine Torpedo Boat

By the time 1942 came along I was getting itchy feet, the Sabre engine was in production and being installed in the Hawker Typhoon at Gloster Aircraft and Royal Air Force (RAF) Squadrons were being formed. I managed to get my services moved to the Service Department as they were in need of personal with experience and able to do ground testing engines in aircraft and diagnose and rectify carburetor and other accessory faults. The person doing the ground tests was responsible for doing whatever rectification the engine and installation was necessary.

By the mid 1942 I was packing my bags and leaving Gloucester for Duxford in Cambridgeshire where the first Typhoon Wing was being formed with Squadrons 56, 266 (Rhodesia) & 609 (West Riding). Within a few short weeks of training to get familiarized with the aircraft and the surrounding country they were taking part in sweeps over France. The first big involvement for the wing was the Dieppe Raid in part with many other squadrons of the RAF. A flight of 12 Typhoons took part

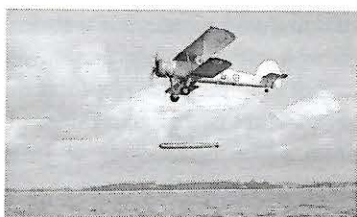
but as the aircraft looked so much like the new German F.W.190, we lost 3 or maybe 4 aircraft. The wing eventually split up and formed 181 Squadron at Snailwell near Newmarket. This was at Snailwell Field up to that time only used for Army Co-Op with Lysanders and not in very good shape for the Typhoon, very wet etc. Summerfelt Matting was installed for runways. However we did not stay there too long and moved again down south to form 124 Air Field at Lasham during the later part of 1943 all in preparation for the forthcoming landings in France. Our stay here was until early in 1944 when we up stakes again and reformed the Wing still as 124 Wing, but now it became all Canadian with Squadrons 438, 439 and 440 up until the Invasion when the Wing took off for France. At this time living under canvas came to an end and myself and the Hawker Representative took up Digs near Bournemouth, there at Hengistbury Head on the 6th of June we had a wonderful show of all the ships anchored in the Bay and the landing craft all on their way to the Normandy Beaches. As soon as a Beach Head had been established in Normandy the Wing was off to France and we were out of a job.

So now, we, that is the Hawker Representative and myself were out of a job, but it was not long before we were directed to Manston where at that time 181 Squadron was being re-equipped with Tempest, which was a much improved Typhoon, slimmer wings etc. and a more powerful Napier Sabre V. producing well over 2400 h/p. Now being located at Manston, several RAF Stations such as Tangmere and others were also visited to diagnose and correct any engine malfunction to get every possible Aircraft back into the air.



Tangmere Air Field

Manston was also the home base for a Fleet Arm Squadron of Fairy Swordfish (Sting Bags). We saw this squadron arrive and it was amazing to see most pilots had their personal baggage tied to the fuselage of their String Bag.



Fairy Swordfish

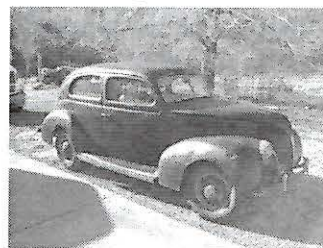
One of the many famous operations this Squadron took part in was when the three famous German War Ships snuck their way up the English Channel in a heavy blanket of FOG. The Swordfish Squadron dispatched 6 aircraft to intercept in zero visibility condition, but under these impossible conditions 3 aircraft were lost to the ships guns apparently without causing any damage to the Packet Battle Ships to delay their progress to the Norwegian Fiords.

During one of my periodic visits to the air fields on the South Coast, I was driving along the cliff road just passed Dover Castle watching at recent flight of Buzz Bombs pass when the Radar controlled guns fired hitting a couple of bombs, one went into the sea but the other headed in the direction of the gun emplacement and demolished one gun and crew.

While stationed at Manston we were accommodated in a Hotel in Cliftonville and we regularly went up to the roof at night to see the flights of Buzz Bombs pass over head not more than 50 feet above.

My next posting was to Sawbridgeworth a Satellite Station just north of London. Here # 3 Squadron was being re-equipped with Typhoons from the Hurricane in preparation for duty in France. My stay here was not too long but very enjoyable as I was able to make the odd trip to home and visits to the Napier Plant in Acton. From Sawbridgeworth my direction was heading to Bradwell Bay.

The Buzz Bomb days came to an end in late summer so we were moved to Bradwell Bay in Essex where 181 Squadron has been re-equipped with Tempest A/C on Buzz Bomb patrol off the Essex coast. We stayed here for several months until the bombs had stopped and the V.2 Rockets started, one of the first V.2 to hit England was only a few miles to the west of Bradwell Bay doing no damage except for an enormous hole in the ground. My time was terminated here as the Squadron moved on to other duties,



1938 Ford

I know not where so I was off again in my little 1938 Ford 8 to Bascomb Down near Salisbury in Hants to the RAF and the Aircraft and Armament Experimental Establishment to look after the needs of the Napier Sabre engines in a couple of experiment aircraft. One being the Blackburn Fire Brand and also the Typhoon with an annular cooling radiator positioned behind the prop.



Fairey Delta Droop Snoot

This was a very interesting stay because all the new aircraft were on test like the Meteor, Vampire, Warick, Mosquito, the Fairey Delta Droop Snoot (a test which the Concorde used) Martin Baker M.B.5 (with the Rolls Griffon installed, the M.B. 3 had a Napier Sabre installed.)

My next stop was to Ashton Down in Gloucestershire to the Typhoon O.T.U. which was very active, many pilots returning from the Middle East being converted to the Typhoon and all the electronic aids then available and all introduction to Rocket firing on targets in the Bristol Channel. Ashton Down was also # 20 Maintenance Unit for the Air force as such they accepted a great variety of the aircraft as follows: Mustang 1s, (Allison Engines) Typhoon and Lancasters from Canada. All these were inspected and prepared for distribution to various Squadrons throughout England. It was a very busy place to be with the Operational Training Unit, training new pilots and the M.U. testing all the new aircraft.

Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) came on the 6th of June and a great shutdown of the Station was enforced to prevent any mad merry making Pilots from attempting to fly aircraft.

It was now time to return to the plant and there was lots of talk going around that things were going to slow down and the War in the East would be soon over. Napier's ex Service Manager, Jim Cameron had taken a Service Managers position at de Havilland Engine Company at Leavesdon and was looking for personal with engine and field experience to staff his new department. In view of what was likely to happen at Napier's, several ex Field Service Engineers including myself made haste over to de Havilland Engine Company and all were accepted with a little arrangement from the Department of Labour this happened early in 1946

Life in a new Company and a new Department proved very interesting as all of us were getting our heads down and learning about all the new de Havilland Gas Turbine Products as well as the smaller reciprocating products (A great change from the 24 cylinder Napier Sabre engines.) This Service Department was a take over from the Aircraft Service Department that up until now had covered engine service problems, but now the Doves's and Heron's with the larger series of supercharged engines in production needed Service personal with wholly engine know how and experience to overcome engine problems.

My first assignment was to install and replace a set of ignition harnesses to a Gipsy Queen 6 in a Percival aircraft, ground test the engine and sign off the work in the logs as for and on behalf of the de Havilland Engine Company.

The next few months we learned all we could about the whole range of de Havilland engines and eventually were checked by the chief A.I.D. Inspector at Stag Land and given an official Company approval to carry out our work on the engines, rectify, inspect, modify test and sign out the work done.

Soon after the forgoing I was sent to Belgium, Brussels to work with the Airline Sabena who had received their first Dove with Gipsy Queen 6 engines. Working here I met two war time pilots who new at the time I was with the Wing at Duxford in 1942 and enjoyed several test flights over the Belgium Country side in the Dove doing stalls and many other maneuvers ex fighter pilots like to do in new aircraft.



Hawker Typhoon



Dove 1s

Members Matter

I would like to share with you an email Frank Harvey received thanking AHFC for their web site and showing the younger people are receiving the information keeping with our Mission Statement.

Frank:

I wanted to send you a 'thank you' for your webpage (<http://ahfc.org/links.html>). I am a mentor for a group of students at an after school program, and one of my mentees (Lauren) found your website while searching for information for a school project. I just wanted to let you know that your information has been a big help to us!

During her research, she came across an article that was very helpful to her and some of the other students! The article is "Moving Through the History of Flight: Inventors and Innovators" -<http://www.thepromove.com/Moving-Through-the-History-of-Flight-Inventors-and-Innovators.html>

Would you mind including it on your website for me? I thought that it would fit in well with your information, and my mentee will be happy to hear that you liked her idea! Let me know if you get the chance to update, and thanks again for great page!

Have a great day.

Joan Wilkinson

joan@afterschoolcareprograms.com

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." --Nelson Mandela

(Part two of Bill Sander's article) "My History and Personal Experiences from 1921 until Our Return to Rotterdam" will follow in the next issue of Pre-Flight.

Nicholas Doran, Membership