



## November - December 2017 Issue

### RCMP Air Division: Celebrating 80 Years of Airborne Policing 1937 - 2017

By Neil Taylor

The RCMP's Air Division (now called the Air Services Branch) was the brainchild of one man – Sir James Howden MacBrien. MacBrien was born at Port Perry, Ontario on June 30, 1878 and at the age of eighteen joined the North-West Mounted Police. During the First World War, he served overseas with the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, Canadian Expeditionary Force and was wounded at Ypres. MacBrien continued to rise through the ranks and by war's end had attained the rank of Major General. In 1919 he was appointed Chief of the General Staff, Overseas Forces (Canada).

During these years, MacBrien developed considerable interest in aviation, so when he retired in 1927, he obtained his pilot's license and helped found the Aviation League of Canada, becoming its President in 1929. That same year, Imperial Oil presented him with a gleaming white de



Figure 1 - James Howden MacBrien with his Aviation League of Canada Gipsy Moth CF-AAA  
(RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman)

Havilland Gipsy Moth emblazoned with the markings CF-AAA. This was the first aircraft to receive the new registration reserved solely for Canadian aircraft – the two letter grouping, CF, followed by a three letter grouping – which had come into effect on January 1, 1929. General MacBrien used this aircraft extensively as he promoted aviation at air shows and other events across Canada.

On August 1, 1931, General MacBrien was recalled by Prime Minister R. B. Bennett to serve as Commissioner of the RCMP. From his previous work, MacBrien knew the value of

aviation, and he was determined to see the Force take advantage of this new technology. He was greatly assisted in his efforts by the historic 'Hunt for the Mad Trapper' that occurred in the winter of 1931-32.

Albert Johnson, a trapper and recluse, lived in a cabin close to Arctic Red River in the Northwest Territories. Natives in the area had complained of someone interfering with their trap lines, and the Aklavik RCMP detachment was dispatched to investigate. Johnson surprised the RCMP members, killing one and wounding another before disappearing into the bush. A manhunt was begun.

Wilfrid "Wop" May, flying Canadian Airways Bellanca Pacemaker, CF-AKI, was initially assigned to fly in supplies for the search party; then he began to search for the elusive Johnson. The fugitive was finally spotted near La Pierre House in the Yukon, and the search team was moved to that area. Eventually Johnson was cornered and a firefight ensued. Staff Sergeant Hersey was shot through the lung and began to bleed out. May landed beside him, and the search party loaded him aboard. In fifty minutes, Hersey was in the hospital in Aklavik, a journey that would have taken many hours by dogsled and likely would have cost him his life. "Wop" May had proven the utility of the aircraft – he had supplied the search party in the field, spotted the fugitive and had saved a life by quickly getting Sgt. Hersey to medical care.

RCMP Commissioner MacBrien saw other police uses for aircraft. In 1932 he arranged with the RCAF to fly RCMP observers on patrols over the east and west coasts in search of rum runners. Then in 1936 he embarked on an 11,000-mile airborne inspection tour of RCMP detachments, a feat that took a month to accomplish but would have been impossible if tried utilizing ground and water transportation.



Figure 3 - The RCMP's first four aircraft - de Havilland Dragonflies (CF-MPA, CF-MPB, CF-MPC, CF-MPD) (RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman)



Figure 2 - S/Sgt EF Hersey (2nd from left) and 'Wop' May (far right) in front of Bellanca CH-300 Pacemaker, CF-AKI, during the search for the Mad Trapper (Denny May Collection)

Given the success of these ventures, it came as no surprise that in 1936, when the RCAF announced that it could no longer offer its aircraft for rum runner patrols, Commissioner MacBrien arranged the purchase of four de Havilland Dragonfly aircraft for the newly established RCMP Air Section. Initially designed as a twin-engine luxury touring biplane, the Dragonfly was pressed into service on coastal patrol.

Each of the four Dragonflies was named after a flower beginning with the last letter of their

registration – *Anemone* (CF-MPA), *Buttercup* (CF-MPB), *Crocus* (CF-MPC), and *Dandelion* (CF-MPD). The ‘MP’ series of registration was strictly reserved for RCMP aircraft; this convention would be used for nearly all future RCMP aircraft purchases.

The Dragonflies were posted on the east coast to continue the RCMP’s anti-smuggling operations, but they also proved valuable in search and rescue missions.

In 1938, one Dragonfly (CF-MPD) was sold and replaced with a Noorduyn Norseman (CF-MPE) equipped with floats for northern operations. The following summer the Norseman was landing at Sioux Lookout, Ontario after a flight from Edmonton when it crashed, destroying the undercarriage and twisting the fuselage so violently that the aircraft had to be completely rebuilt and issued a new registration – CF-MPF.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Dragonflies and their pilots were taken over by the RCAF, leaving the RCMP with only the Norseman for police activities, which included flying around the Hudson Bay area destroying fuel caches to deny their potential use by the feared German U-boats.



Figure 4 - The RCMP's first two Beech D18S aircraft  
(CF-MPI in foreground, CF-MPH in background)  
(RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman)

At war’s end, the RCMP Air Division was reformed and three new aircraft were acquired – an ex-RCAF Grumman Goose amphibian (CF-MPG) and two new Beech D18S twin-engine transports (CF-MPH and CF-MPI). The following year a Fairchild Cornell (CF-MPK) was purchased for training purposes, and a high-wing Stinson Voyageur ‘Flying Station Wagon’ (CF-MPJ) with ski and float capabilities was bought for use in the north, often in connection with illegal liquor sale

investigations and the transport of prisoners and staff. By this time, the Air Division consisted of four detachments: Regina, Edmonton, Rockcliffe (Ottawa) and a mobile detachment utilizing the Grumman Goose and operating between Edmonton and Winnipeg.

1949 saw further growth in RCMP Air Division with the purchase of a Norseman Mk. V (CF-MPL) which replaced the older Norseman. It also began the RCMP’s close connection with de Havilland when the first of twelve DHC-2 Beavers (CF-MPM) was acquired, significantly improving the payload capacity of its short take-off and landing aircraft.

CF-MPM was based in Winnipeg and bore Cree syllabic characters on its fuselage and tail warning natives of the dangers of close contact with the airplane’s fragile fabric. This aircraft also served as an improvised courtroom on one occasion at Sawbill near Brochet, Manitoba.

As the size of the RCMP’s Air Division grew, the uses that the aircraft were put to also grew. After the war, the RCMP was charged with enforcing the Migratory Birds Convention Act, as

part of which, the Mounties were called upon to conduct an aerial census of the threatened Trumpeter Swan population. In another case, a police dog was flown into the scene of a break-in before the criminals' scents evaporated.

Criminals consistently underestimated the potential of RCMP airborne operations. In 1948 they robbed a bank in the small Saskatchewan community of Nipawin fully expecting to put themselves far from the crime scene before police arrived. RCMP officers, however, took the Regina-based Beech 18 and flew the 400 miles to Nipawin in less than four hours. The aircraft quickly spotted the fugitives and assisted the search party in making an arrest.

By 1955 the RCMP Air Division was in possession of its first DHC-3 Otter, CF-MPP, and it played a major role in the rescue of airmen from a USAF B-47 Stratojet bomber that exploded over northern Saskatchewan. Three crew members survived and were tended to by an RCAF parachute rescue team. The Otter with its STOL capabilities landed on a nearby lake before ferrying the survivors and rescuers to safety. In 1956, this same Otter effected another rescue when called upon to save the pilot of a Norseman forced down on an ice floe. The Otter safely landed on a stretch of solid ice, whereupon its crew had to drag a collapsible boat across two miles of snow to open water where they paddled across to the ice floe. The rescued pilot was then flown to Coral Harbour.



Figure 5 - RCMP Grumman Goose CF-MPG  
(Ron Dupas Collection, 1000aircraftphotos.com)

The following year, the Grumman Goose was involved in a unique operation ferrying a team of demolition experts into the Queen Charlotte Islands to blow up a Second World War-era Japanese mine that had drifted across the Pacific Ocean.

The first fatal crash involving an RCMP aircraft occurred on August 8, 1958 when a float equipped Beaver, CF-FHW, crashed on a hillside near Kamloops, B.C. It had been involved in a low-level sweep in search of a suspected murderer who had also wounded an RCMP officer. Three RCMP members were killed in the crash.

More fatalities occurred on July 13, 1963 when another RCMP Beaver (CF-MPO) crashed on approach to Carmacks, Yukon killing four RCMP officers and their prisoner. The aircraft was returning from Mayo where the prisoner had appeared as a witness in a contested court case. Witnesses indicated the aircraft was making a second circle around the airstrip when it rolled over and spun into the ground. An inquest was unable to pinpoint a cause for the tragedy although some individuals believe the crash was the result of wind shear.

On February 26, 1967 the RCMP's Beech18 Expeditor (CF-MPA), acquired in 1960, was destroyed in a massive hangar fire at the Edmonton Municipal Airport. Thirty-five aircraft were lost that day, including fifteen airplanes belonging to the Edmonton Flying Club and another four belonging to Northward Aviation. It is believed the fire started in the hangar's boiler room.

Despite these setbacks, RCMP Air Services continued to grow and embarked upon a period of modernization. New radio equipment was added to all aircraft enabling direct communication between aircraft, ground stations and individual police vehicles. Three Beech 18 Expeditors, the last three (of twelve) DHC-2 Beavers, the last three (of eight) DHC-3 Otters and the first two DHC-2 Turbo Beaver IIIs were acquired during the 1960s, along with a Beech 65 King Air A90 that was used extensively during Canada's Centennial Year for security details involving visiting Heads of State.

Two of the RCMP's de Havilland Beavers were also used for aerial security over Expo 67 and the Royal Yacht Britannia when the Queen visited in 1967.

During 1970-71 eight new DHC-6 Twin Otters were delivered to the RCMP Air Division as replacements for the older Beech 18s, single Otters and Beavers. These new aircraft could fly significantly larger payloads a greater distance, thanks to their increased five hour flight endurance range. Eventually fifteen Twin Otters in total were purchased. Several of these Twin Otters served in the North and were equipped with oversize, low-pressure 'tundra tires' for use on unprepared ground. Twin Otters posted at Iqaluit, Inuvik and Yellowknife were also fitted with special 'Omega' navigation equipment utilizing Very Low Frequency signals to provide greater navigational accuracy in remote areas.



Figure 6 - RCMP Twin Otter C-FMPN  
(RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman)



Figure 7 - RCMP Bell 212 C-FMPZ  
(RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman)

The RCMP acquired its first helicopter, a twin-engine Bell 212 (CF-MPZ), in 1971 and based it in Newfoundland. It achieved considerable fame when on February 6, 1975 it was involved in the rescue of eight boys adrift on an ice floe off the Newfoundland coast. The boys had drifted offshore and were being buffeted by high winds when the RCMP was called. As darkness fell, the pilot, Sgt. Douglas McKay, had to carefully maneuver over the floe which was being pounded by the heavy swell. Each boy was winched aboard and just as the last boy was picked up, the ice floe disintegrated.

The Bell 212, however, proved too costly to maintain, so the RCMP opted to buy Bell 206B JetRangers and 206L LongRangers in the future.

By the end of the 1970s, the RCMP air fleet had grown to 27 aircraft divided between three Inspectorates – western Canada fixed wing operations based in Edmonton, eastern Canada fixed wing operations based in Ottawa, and rotary wing operations also based in Ottawa. Further

changes were still to come as the Otters and Beavers were showing their age and more efficient aircraft were desired. The last DHC-2 Beaver (CF-MPQ) was written off in an incident at Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan in August 1986, and the last DHC-3 Otter (C-FMPO) was retired and sold to the Elks Air Cadets in Yellowknife, NWT in 1992.

The Grumman Goose which was originally acquired in 1946 was retired in 1994, after being in continuous public service longer than any other Canadian civil aircraft. The Goose has been saved and now resides at the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa.

While the RCMP has a favourable flight record with a minimum of accidents, the nature of aerial flight is such that accidents can never be fully prevented. The most recent fatal accident involving an RCMP aircraft occurred on August 15, 2000 at Teslin Lake, British Columbia. A Cessna 208 Caravan I on amphibious floats (C-GMPB) was being used to ferry members of the RCMP's Emergency Response Team and their dogs to the south end of Teslin Lake for a training exercise. After deplaning the dogs and passengers, the aircraft became lodged on a gravel bar, and it was dark by the time the aircraft was finally freed. Anxious to return to Teslin, the pilot and engineer decided to fly out and during their climb out, the Cessna stalled and plunged nearly vertically into the lake. Both the pilot and engineer were killed.

In 2000, the RCMP Air Division was awarded the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame's Belt of Orion Award of Excellence in recognition of the Division's history of providing safe, efficient and effective airborne support for the delivery of police service to the citizens of Canada. The Belt of Orion honours groups and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of aviation in Canada.

The myriad uses of RCMP are ever expanding, but today the primary activities are: prisoner transfers; police investigations in remote locations; movement of cargo, sensitive equipment, administrative and operational staff to support police operations; search and rescue operations; aerial surveillance; and, tactical deployment of emergency response teams.

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Today the RCMP Air Services Branch consists of approximately 40 aircraft and 150 employees based at 19 locations across Canada. The mainstays of the fleet are the 16 Pilatus PC-12/45s and

12 Cessna aircraft, primarily 208B Grand Caravans and 210R Centurions. The rotary wing force consists of nine Eurocopter AS.350s and EC-120s. There are also one Twin Otter and a Kodiak Quest float plane.



Figure 8 - RCMP Pilatus PC-12/45  
at Fort Macleod Airport  
(RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman)

All of these aircraft perform valuable roles for the RCMP, and if Commissioner MacBrien were still alive, he would most assuredly be proud of the continuing contribution his brainchild – the Air Services Branch – makes to federal policing in Canada.

## A Life in the Air Well Lived

By Jack Van Norman, Inspector (Ret'd), RCMP Air Division



Figure 9 - Dr. Ed Hudson's plane being towed by horse in March 1953  
(The Chronicles of Crandall)

level. As a result, Dr. Ed Hudson, in Hamiota, acquired his pilot's licence and a two seat Aeronca Champ aircraft to reach such isolated places in the district.

I was about five years old the first time I saw Dr. Ed arrive in his Champ and was awestruck at the wonderment of his aircraft and the beauty and grace of flight. I can still see that wonderful machine in my mind's eye and I think it was then that the love of flying was embedded in me. Dr. Ed continued to serve the isolated communities by air for several years until the roads were opened year-round. Dr. Ed was awarded the Order of Canada for being one of Canada's true country doctors. He was my first, of many, aviation heroes!

My interest in aviation continued throughout my youth and I spent many hours reading about aircraft of the world and building models. Our family had limited resources, and the idea of flying lessons was a far off dream. After I finished school I joined the RCMP, following in the footsteps of my three older brothers and took my basic training in Rockcliffe, Ontario, in 1962 where the training facility was adjacent to Rockcliffe RCAF Airbase. Lancaster bombers were flown daily out of Rockcliffe, and the almost overwhelming noise and close proximity to the ground caused a lot of members taking equitation training to find themselves unceremoniously dismounted from their startled steeds. I don't think the horses were really that startled, but simply found this to be a good excuse to unload unwanted passengers! Also at this time the Golden Hawks Demonstration Team made up of Sabre jets practiced overhead and was a thing of beauty. The grace and skills demonstrated could only be described as an aerial ballet!

Upon completion of training I was posted to General Police Duties in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. In those days you were expected to work 24/7 and days off were a privilege, not a right. One of my first duties was to direct traffic to the Airshow at the Yorkton Airport, which not only rekindled my interest in flying but left me covered from head to toe in dust from the gravel road. When I finally did get a day off, I returned to the airport, met with the flight instructor, Austin Ingham, and ended up borrowing \$400 to start flying lessons.

I was born and spent my early years on a farm in Decker, Manitoba. My mother was a Registered Nurse and was the "unofficial" provider of medical care for the area surrounding Decker. In the Forties the roads were not kept plowed in winter and the normal mode of transportation was by team and sleigh. The nearest doctor was in Hamiota, a distance of some fourteen miles – a considerable distance by team and sleigh resulting in limited access for emergency medical requirements beyond nursing

After acquiring my private licence, Austin asked if I wanted to continue on to my Commercial Pilot's Licence and apply for the RCMP Air Division. He felt I had the necessary skills and obviously enjoyed flying. I said it was just not possible due to lack of funds. He then offered me the chance to fly off my Commercial Licence and pay him back when I could – no interest! Austin was the second of my aviation heroes!

I completed my Commercial Licence in 1966 and immediately applied for the Air Division. I was accepted in 1967; my first posting was Ottawa, Ontario for advanced training. My first flight was with a pilot, S/Sgt. Rick Barks, in from Churchill, Manitoba for his Instrument Rating training on the Beech 18. He asked me to ride along as a safety pilot while he shot approaches at Uplands Airport.

Having come out of Yorkton flying a Cessna 140 to flying right seat in a Beech 18 was almost hard for me to comprehend and the flight, what I remember of it, was all a haze. The aircraft was CF-MPH and it is now mounted on a stand in Depot Division in Regina. During my brief posting in Ottawa I was checked out in the Beaver, a truly, remarkable aircraft and flew aerial surveillance over the Royal Yacht *Britannia* during the Queen's visit to Canada. The Beaver remains to this day one of my favourite aircraft.

My next posting was to Regina, Saskatchewan where I continued to fly the Beaver and was also given multi-engine and instrument training on the Beech 18. The Beech was a handful but under the training of S/Sgt. Brian Thomson, I qualified on it and spent the next four years gaining experience on both these machines. The Beaver was mainly dedicated to transporting Crime Lab people to court, resulting in landing "off strip" using pasture and stubble in the summer and skis in the winter. I think I ate in every Chinese restaurant in Saskatchewan. The Lab people made great passengers and some of the most enjoyable flying was done with them. I also obtained my float training on the Beaver in Prince Albert with S/Sgt. Gordie Hayden who, after completing a

thorough checkout on floats, followed tradition by dunking me off the float and then taking a picture, on my camera, of me floundering around in the water.

Other duties in Regina included doing migratory bird enforcement with Cpl. Norm Knowles as well as transporting Identification Members to crime scenes around the province. Cattle patrols were also carried out trying to curb rustling in southern Saskatchewan. While not directly involved in police work I learned a great deal about investigative techniques and evidence gathering.



Figure 11 - RCMP Turbo Beaver CF-MPA  
over Peace River, Alberta  
(RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman Collection)



Figure 10 - Beech 18 CF-MPH at RCMP Training Depot,  
Regina (RCMP Photo)

In 1970 I was transferred to Peace River where I flew the Turbo-Beaver – a standard Beaver with a PT-6 Turbine engine. This was a real performer and was often referred to as a Standard Beaver on steroids. John Demeriez trained me on the T-Beaver and we developed a friendship that exists to this day. John was a “bush” pilot in the truest sense of the word and provided yeoman service to the field members, especially those in the more isolated posts. While posted in Peace River I also attended Bush Survival Training in Hinton, Alberta and Arctic Survival Training in Resolute Bay, NWT where I got to build and live in an igloo for five days – quite an experience.

My next move was to Inuvik, NWT to fly a Twin Otter; here I would encounter the harshest conditions of my career. Extreme cold, high winds, and unprepared strips were common, but again, all interesting. During my posting in Inuvik we transported members to investigate the crash of an Electra at Johnson Point in the high arctic. Investigators were tasked with recovering the victims’ bodies and returning them to base for examination. Weather, with the wind chill, was -96 degrees F. We took aerial photos of the site and were amazed to see our members working in such adverse conditions. More heroes for my list!

It was also during my Inuvik posting that we were tasked with flying Prince Charles into Colville Lake, probably the most picturesque settlement in the North. Bern Will Brown was the “Boss” of the settlement and ruled with an iron fist. He was also quite an artist, and I have one of his paintings to remember our visit. The Royal Tour was quite an experience. Security was tight, of course, but the protocol demanded for a Royal Tour was very extensive. At the end of the flight the Prince came forward and thanked us personally – a true gentleman.

From Inuvik I moved to Thompson, Manitoba to open a new “Air Detachment”. The first year in Thompson we had two single Otters. Summer was great as the Otters were on amphibious floats and were a pleasure to fly. We even caught the odd fish while waiting for passengers! Winter was tough: we had no hangar and daily operations were done on the ramp. It generally took an hour to preheat the aircraft and prepare it for flight. Maintenance was extremely difficult in the cold, and one vision sticks in my mind – AME Glen Brown (later Air Division Chief Engineer) on the top of the single Otter changing the rotating beacon light at -45 below!



Figure 12 – RCMP Twin Otter CF-MPB at Winnipeg  
(Michael J. Ody Collection, [twinotterarchive.com](http://twinotterarchive.com))

In subsequent years in Thompson, a new Twin Otter arrived and a hangar was built – hog heaven! We had the best of both worlds – the Single Otter for shorter, routine flights requiring skis and floats, and the Twin Otter for all weather, faster flights with extended range. This combination gave the Thompson Sub Division Cadillac service.

My next posting was Yellowknife, NWT, at that time Headquarters for “G” Division, where CF-MPB, the original RCMP Twin Otter, was based. From Yellowknife we covered all of the NWT and some of the

Yukon. We flew a lot of hours due to the vast distances and flying times needed to reach remote

settlements. We carried a lot of “fresh stuff” to the various detachments as well as a few necessities not available in the isolated posts. My wife was often called upon to pick up things such as a certain colour of thread or some material not available in the settlements. I gained a great deal of respect for the members, and especially their wives and families, for living under very adverse conditions and giving their support to the Force. The North has a unique kind of comradeship second to none, and we will always remember our experiences there.

In 1981 we returned to Regina for a second time. We always enjoyed Regina since the structured flight duties gave us a great deal of time to spend with our families. The Twin Otter was on a quite rigid flight schedule – five days a week with very little weekend work – a far cry from what had been the norm for so many years. While in Regina we were tasked with assessing candidates for flight duties in Air Division; some of the finest aircrew I’ve ever seen were selected there. It was interesting to follow their careers after they joined Air Services.

In 1986 I was promoted to Inspector and transferred to Air Services Officer (West) in Edmonton where, with the Air Service (W) Aircraft Engineer, I was responsible for RCMP Air Services operations in Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon Territory, and the Western Arctic. Thirty Pilots, 20 Aircraft Maintenance Engineers, and 16 aircraft (involving seven different types including a Grumman Goose, Twin Otter, Beech 200, Cessna Caravan, Cessna Citation and some light aircraft) reported to us for flight and maintenance standards. I qualified on all types for flight test purposes and was pleased with the high standards maintained by all members. The dedication to duty and pride in their work was very evident and second to none.

There were also some helicopters based in the West that were supervised out of Ottawa. I had the privilege, several times, to get some “stick time” on the Jet Ranger. It was quite a transition from fixed to rotary and was described by S/Sgt. Dale Gillespie as “over thirty MPH it flies like an airplane – under thirty MPH its crisis management”! I couldn’t agree with him more! Rotary wing aircraft have proven invaluable as close support for RCMP members.

During the 1988 Olympics I was assigned to supervise Airspace Security. This involved close cooperation with Transport Canada, Calgary Police Service, and ABC Television. This was a year-long assignment requiring many hours of dedicated time to the Olympics as well as my regular duties. It was an experience of a lifetime to work on such a huge project, meet so many talented individuals and complete the assignment incident free.

I retired in 1994 after 32 years in the Force and would do it all over again if given the chance. I had a fulfilling and rewarding career which would not have been possible without the support, both to me and the Force, of my wife Marnie. She was awarded by the Commissioner with a “Second Man” award for her efforts.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Jack Van Norman joined the RCMP in 1962, serving continuously with them until his retirement in 1994. He still flies and is a Director on the Board of the Alberta Aviation Museum.*



Figure 13 - Jack Van Norman

## Horses, Motorcycles and Airplanes

By S/Sgt Jerry Klammer, Edmonton Air Services

As a young boy growing up on the family farm south of Vegreville, Alberta I was always fascinated watching the hawks soar on the air currents above the hay fields as I was baling hay. It was amazing to me that they could hold their wings still and remain suspended literally “in mid-air” while their eyes searched for the mice that fled before the sickle blades.

Little did I know then that I was witnessing and studying “Bernoulli’s Principle” without knowing the theorem that “when a fluid’s speed increases its pressure drops”. In retrospect I did not associate the principle with engine carburetors either while Dad worked on getting an engine to start.

Following High School I enrolled in the University of Alberta taking courses for entrance to Veterinary School at Saskatoon, but I left this pursuit when a close friend training at Depot Division in Regina urged me to become a member of the RCMP. I’d always been interested in the Force and in awe of the shiny high brown boots that I’d seen many times on the steps of the Vegreville Post Office as the local Constables marched up to pick up their mail.



Figure 14 - RCMP Beaver CF-MPS  
(RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman)

I was sworn into the Force at Edmonton on January 31, 1972 and arrived at my first posting six months later in early August. After serving at Vanderhoof, I was posted to Prince George Provost Detachment and had the pleasure of flying in the Beaver CF-MPS on straight floats escorting those who failed to “keep the peace and be of good behaviour”.

Another fond memory was flying in the back of the DC-3 on the commercial milk run west through Smithers, Terrace, Prince Rupert and Sandspit and return, picking up one or two passengers along the way. But word would spread, and the moccasin telegraph would inform the local Detachments that

an escort was coming through and the one or two would sometimes climb to 10 or 11. Although it made the airline more money, it caused the young Constable stress as upon landing in Prince George he tried to herd the men in tow to the parking lot and into the van. On one such occasion when we landed in Prince George and the half dozen stated that they “had to go to the washroom” or “wanted to buy some cigarettes”, I simply said “Okay, I’ll be in the black van with the buffalo on the door”. I was always so thankful when I counted the last one approaching the vehicle!

My third posting was in Ottawa at “N” Division next door to the Uplands Airfield and the Aviation Museum. Walking the cement in the museum and admiring the history of aviation continued to impress me, when I wasn’t busy with training duties in the equitation program for the Musical Ride selection process.

The English riding program was a memorable experience, especially when I was asked to ride a horse called “Jerry”. The Force names all of their horses born in a particular year by the same letter in the alphabet to more easily determine their age amongst the large number of horses that the Force raised.



Figure 15 - RCMP presenting Centennial (aka Jerry) to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in Ottawa  
(RCMP Photo)

Little did I know the first time I rode “Jerry” that his name was going to be changed to “Centennial” in honour of the Force’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and that he was to be formally presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the spring of 1977 in England.

To date in my career in the Force, I have been posted to twelve physical locations and have received eighteen paper transfers. It has been an amazing experience like no other.

My first entry in my Pilot’s Log Book purchased at Skyway Air Services Ltd. in Langley, British Columbia is dated February 8, 1978. The flight was performed in a PA-28-151 with me in the left

seat while Tom Waldron sat in the right for most of my training there. Tom played a prominent role in my aviation career.

On a side note – during that spring of 1978 not one airplane propeller turned for thirty-two days at the 2100 foot strip due to low cloud, rain and thick fog. It was a painful wait for a young pilot eager to get on with his flight training. By the completion of training my private flying had cost a total of \$1,400.00. The cost of aviation has certainly risen as those seeking a career in aviation can attest to today.

On April 19, 1979 I was posted to Chilliwack and flew into Vancouver with a C-172 about 2200 hours. I parked on the south side and cabbed it to the terminal to pick up my Mom and Dad who had announced they were flying out from Edmonton for a visit. I asked if it was okay to pick them up in an aircraft and fly back to Chilliwack. It was fine with Dad but there was a seed of doubt in Mom’s mind. Upon exiting the terminal I was asked where my car was and I pointed to a yellow car at the curb with a taxi logo on it. Mom and Dad exchanged glances and off we went to the south side, started the aircraft, taxied Alpha and after the mag checks were done was cleared to 08 for takeoff. As my hand advanced the throttle Mom’s scream to let her out went unheeded and shortly thereafter the lights of Vancouver gave way to the Fraser Valley and a landing at Chilliwack.

It was then that I learned Dad was to undergo surgery that summer and my help was needed on the farm while he recovered. It was during this time that I continued to pursue my aviation training at the Edmonton Flying Club, and my training and commercial ground school with Willie King who had the second greatest influence on my flying.

I would offer two comments on ground school aviation training. The first one concerns a reference to an engine fire in a C-172 manual where it states: if a fire starts increase the speed to over 120 mph to put the flames out. I always wondered how the fire would start in the first place because we were already doing 120mph. The second comment is why we were never told in Private Ground School that carburetor icing could ice over the idle jet; instead we had to wait until Commercial Ground School to learn this very important fact.

When I was posted in Burnaby Detachment I worked with three constables, all of whom I knew, and all of them became pilots in Air Services. I knew that I would never be able to pursue a posting in Air Services because the requirement at that time was a minimum of 1,500 hours and a commercial licence at age 28 and 2,500 hours and an ATR by age 30.

After my re-engagement I was posted to Slave Lake, Alberta and in 1982 the Constitution of Canadian Rights was enacted and age discrimination was no longer tolerated. I immediately applied to Air Services citing my 950 hours of experience.

In September 1982 I was posted to Regina Air Services for a thirty day suitability assessment. Upon walking into the hangar I met two engineers – Glenn Owen and Wayne Blackburn – who had the greatest sense of humour at my expense. Sitting in the corner of the hangar was a C-150 painted in the Force’s original blue and yellow Air Service’s colours. I was informed that “that aircraft” was to be my assessment aircraft for the month!

The third person who strongly influenced my aviation career and in particular my career in Air Services was Inspector Jack Van Norman. Jack was in charge of Regina Air Services and throughout the month was instrumental in shaping my career in Air Services. I would be remiss if I did not state that Jack was one of four Van Norman brothers who served in the RCM P and had *RCMP Quarterly* articles written about their tenure in the Force. I was privileged to work for Jack’s older brother Bob in Burnaby and his oldest brother Brian who was the Officer Commanding Peace River, which included Slave Lake Detachment where I was stationed.

My first RCMP log book entry was on September 7, 1982 when I left Regina with Jim Boyes with stops in Yorkton, Moose Jaw and Regina before continuing on to Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina with Jack Van Norman. It was a fantastic day!

In September 1984, John Paul II became the first Pope to step foot on Canadian soil when he launched a 12-day pastoral visit. I had been a Harley Motorcycle Instructor in Burnaby Detachment and was selected to perform escort duties for the Papal Visit in: St. John’s, Newfoundland; Halifax; Edmonton; Vancouver and Ottawa. I experienced two memorable experiences during this escort duty.

The father of one of our motorcycle riders had passed away the night we made ready in Ottawa to launch our tour, and we convinced the rider to stay with us on the tour as per his father’s wishes. During our practice ride at Flatrock, Newfoundland at the same time his father’s funeral was being held in British Columbia, one of the Bishop’s held a remembrance with our unit and Dave. Two mornings later we were waiting outside the Pope’s residence in the dark and a cleric

came out to us in the parking lot and asked Dave to come in and have breakfast with the Pope in tribute of his father's passing.

The second vivid memory occurred at 14,000 feet over Alberta in the vicinity of Vegreville in an Armed Forces Hercules. In order to transport the forty motorcycles four Hercs were used. I was briefly at the controls of a Hercules between Halifax and St. John's, and later for the flight from Halifax to Edmonton we had the same crew up front with ten motorcycles and riders in the back. The crew knew I was an aspiring RCMP pilot and invited me to come forward over Vermilion, Alberta to perform a Precision Approach Landing (PAR) into Namao. It was 0100 hours when I was awoken and went forward. While fastening my seat belt, the Loadmaster came to the flight deck and reported a fire in the cargo bay! I was climbing out of the seat before the Captain asked for it back. Back in the cargo bay visibility was only a few feet due to the smoke. The crew received orders to drop the ramp and jettison the bikes as it was unknown which one was the issue. Luckily just as the Herc strap knives were about to sever their bond with the bikes a crew member located the electric short which ended the fire issue. Our flight path was over the fields I worked in as a boy, and I could not imagine seeing our Harleys rolling down the ramp and into the dark night above those same fields.

Four years later I was posted to Vancouver Air Section, arriving there in October on the last day of the Olympics. I enjoyed watching all of the fireworks that had not been used over the summer due to weather issues and were saved for the last night of closing ceremonies.

Vancouver Air Services was the first posting of over 31 years of continuous flying with the RCMP Air Services. I have been privileged to have served at my postings of Vancouver, Edmonton, Air Service's Relief West, Thompson and once again Edmonton. Throughout the years strong bonds have developed with the men and women that I have worked with due to our common interest in aviation.



Figure 16 - RCMP DHC-2 Turbo Beaver C-FMPA  
at Edmonton City Centre Airport  
(Michael J. Ody Collection, [www.dhc-2.com](http://www.dhc-2.com))

It's difficult to choose which posting was best but working directly under Jack Van Norman in the Air Services West Relief position is the one I enjoyed the most. The Relief Position was a limited duration posting of two years and no one prior to me wanted to do two years, let alone the four that I enjoyed. In the first year I flew seven different types of aircraft: the King Air, Twin Otter, Single Otter, Turbo Beaver, Standard Beaver, C-210 and C-182. During this time I spent 33 months on the road away from Edmonton and was called upon to work during all the prime holiday periods when others wished to be at home with their families.

It was an exciting time. One week I would be asked to fly the Turbo Beaver at Kamloops, and the next week I was in the King Air out of London, Ontario flying into the airspace around New York to conduct business with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, while the following week I would be flying into Churchill with the Thompson Twin Otter. There were two concerns I had

working Relief for Jack: the first one was what was I going to eat for supper while on the road, and the second was coming home and lamenting to my family how difficult it was to be flying away from home all that time. I was the last pilot in Air Services to serve in a dedicated Relief Position.

My favourite aircraft in the Force was the Single Otter C-FMPO serial number 54 built in 1952. She was slow and difficult to fly and in some circles was known as “Pokey”. I never called her that and defended her virtues. I’ve acquired over 5,500 hours in both the Twin Otter and the Pilatus aircraft, but MPO, due in part to the fact that no one liked to fly her because she was slow, loud and difficult, became almost a personal possession.

When MPO was new her engine time between overhaul (TBO) was 800 hours and after 40 years



Figure 17 - Jerry Klammer Photo

of service and countless engine overhauls the TBO was increased to 1,200 hours. Normally one would think that the TBO would decline after all those years. When I first started flying her, valued advice from the Air Services Relief West Engineer resonated in my mind. “Jerry as long as the engine is pulling power on takeoff or in cruise you’re fine. But before you pull the power back look for a place to land, for as soon as the engine is not pulling power all the pieces in the engine will start to float”!

*EDITOR'S NOTE: S/Sgt. Jerry Klammer has served with RCMP Air Services since October 1986 and is currently the Senior Fixed Wing Pilot RCMP, Edmonton Air Services.*

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## Under the Engine Cowling

By Ken Knowles

Where does one start when asked to do a small biography of an aircraft maintenance engineer (AME) in the RCMP Air Services? Should we start with once upon a time? No, I don’t think we should do that.

I, like many before me with a fascination with airplanes, received a gentle push from my father to join Air Cadets. I guess I was sitting around watching too much television. Well I lasted about a year. The marching and being told what to do and how to do it just wasn’t working for me as a 14 year old. Especially when it was a 13 year old doing the bossing around. However that did not quell my fascination with the airplane.

During my school years I had many summer and part time jobs. The first aviation related job was being a re-fueler for Whitehorse Mountain Refueling in 1979. It was a great job and it was what started me down the aviation road.

After High School I was accepted to SAIT’s two year program of Aircraft Maintenance Technology. During the summer break we had been encouraged to get an apprentice job. This

would further our knowledge for the Transport Canada exams that we would eventually have to write. Being from the north, I was one of the very few in our class who was able to secure employment. The early 80's were not kind to aviation in Canada.

It was this first apprenticeship job that sold me on fixing planes. I had joined Alkan Air in Whitehorse and was blessed to work for a truly family-and-friends-run charter business. To this day I am still friends with many of those owners and co-workers. It was here that I learned so much from these great people. They set me up for what has been a pretty cool career and for that I am truly thankful to them. Unfortunately though, this job lasted only my first summer. I had been promised a job to come back to after my second year, but the aviation down turn in those 80's would not allow it.



Figure 18 - Aklak Air Twin Otter (Aklak Air Photo)

Once I completed my second year at SAIT, I had no prospect of an aviation job. I learned that the Chief Engineer with Alkan Air also had to move on. I guess I had made a bit of an impression on him or maybe he just needed to fill a vacant spot with a warm body, in any event he hired me and I found myself moving to Inuvik NWT. When I first arrived in May and met the owner of Aklak Air he said to me. "You ready to work? It's summer time and the sun doesn't set up here till winter. So now you will work. You can sleep when it gets dark". I thought to myself, oh boy what did I get myself into? I stayed for five years, and

enjoyed all of it. It was here with Aklak Air that I got my Twin Otter experience and started my application with the RCMP.

I left Inuvik and did come back to Alkan Air in Whitehorse. Aviation was rebounding. Home for me is Whitehorse, and I wanted to be there. It was almost four years later before I got the call for an interview with the RCMP. It was now 1988, and my interview was with Glen Brown, the chief engineer, AKA Director of Maintenance. I guess I fooled another one as I was hired and promptly moved from Whitehorse to Edmonton. I was going to be filling the position of Relief Engineer Air Services West. Who could say no to that? To me it was like hitting the big leagues. So I packed up my family and made the move to Edmonton, where I met my new boss Glen Owen.

Glen gave me a bit of time to settle in and adjust to my new home and duties. My first duties were to help the Edmonton Air Section guys out a bit while learning the ins and outs of ordering parts, shipping parts, and doing the paperwork the RCMP way, as well as learning the RCMP Admin Manuals (a chore in itself). Twenty-nine years later I am still finding things in those manuals. It wasn't long though before I started to do the relief part in Relief Engineer Air Services West. My first destination was the mighty metropolis of Prince Rupert and a date with a Grumman Goose.

CF-MPG, the Goose as she was called, was a very cool airplane. So cool in fact that when the RCMP retired her, she was donated to the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa.

Even cooler for me personally is my name in her log book. Being a part of something that contributed to Canadian aviation and then ended up in a museum – that's cool, at least it is to me.

Not having any experience on the Goose I was a little intimidated by the flying boat. MPG had been serving in the RCMP longer than I had been alive. It first started serving in the Force in 1946 after coming over from the RCAF, and it remained in service until 1994. Oh the stories are many and I only know a few. As it turned out I had nothing to fear on this trip as I was going to be working with the Prince Rupert base engineer Arp Reder. Arp had a wealth of knowledge on the Goose and to be able to work alongside someone like that makes the job easy and fun. It was also here in Rupert that I got a real taste of the camaraderie that was present in Air Services. We worked hard and after a hard day's work all of us would enjoy a beer at Sulley's. I would always be invited into their homes for dinner. Those were great dinners. They always had seafood mixed into the meal; after all you were on the BC coast. It was fantastic, I was part of the family. Those truly were some of the best times traveling all over Western Canada to our different bases and being welcomed into the homes of the guys that were based at those sections.

Maintenance on RCMP aircraft is just like maintenance on any Canadian registered aircraft – it stays fairly constant. Pilot's break them and we fix them, right? We all know that engineers have the tougher job. I say that with a bit of proof. My first Chief Engineer was a commercial pilot who became an AME and he told me so. I of course believe him. One other constant in the RCMP is that the people you work with are always changing: if it's not a promotion, it's a transfer or a retirement. So it is not long before Glen Owen retires and I get a new boss – a one of a kind, Doug McCauley, and this guy is a real character. Here is a fellow you can sit around the camp fire and tell stories about all night long. Now I am not going to tell any stories here, but I can assure you that when the RCMP Air Services members and retired members get together Doug McCauley's name is going to come up. On second thought, I do remember one story about Doug that I will tell. I am sure there are a few who may remember this one, because I know that I was not the only one given this lecture.

So there we are, Doug and I, and we are going to do a PT6 hot section inspection. The first thing we need to do is remove the prop. Now I am a junior guy, and if there's one thing I've learned over the years, it is to take direction from someone who has been around the block. Anyway, I disconnect the beta control arm and there is a bushing that is a part of the attachment hardware. Doug tells me not once, not twice, not three times, but more than four times not to loosen that bushing. I say I won't. An hour later we have moved onto other tasks and I can see him looking at all the different pieces we have disconnected and he says, "Knowles, what did you do with that bushing ?". I tell him it's right there, attached to the control arm. Again I hear two or three times not to loosen that bushing. He then finishes with, "If you loosen that bushing "you're up \*\*\*\* creek without a paddle." I couldn't let it pass. "Why Doug? Have you been up that \*\*\*\*



Figure 19 - RCMP Grumman Goose CF-MPG  
(RCMP Photo via Jack Van Norman)

creek without a paddle?" A few days later I was off to Prince Rupert for another five week stint. That was Doug.

After three years in the relief position and spending more time on the road than I did at home, I got to move over to Edmonton Air Section for a short time before returning to the relief position for one more year. I then got my second physical relocation. We were off to Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Labrador.



Figure 20 - Goose Bay, Labrador - May 2008  
(Wikipedia Commons Collection)

Goose Bay was a fabulous place; if you liked military aircraft and snow, this was the place. Goose Bay was a low level NATO military aircraft training base. My job here was to maintain the RCMP Twin Otter C-FMPW, the youngest Twin in the Force. In our smaller Air Detachments normal manpower strength was two pilots and one engineer. We were kept fairly busy providing service to the Labrador coastal detachments and the island of Newfoundland. One such job was to help the small community of Davis Inlet. Many may have heard of this place or remember it in the national news. It was a native community, and it had a very large

problem. Young people, not having much to do during the long winter months on the coast of Labrador, were sniffing gasoline and suicides were to the point of being an epidemic. Some fantastic volunteers got together and organized a minor hockey league. With little or no funds available to buy hockey equipment for the youth, a national drive for used hockey gear was organized. The military collected all this gear and flew it to Goose Bay in a C130 Hercules. All 20,000 lbs. of it was stored in our hangar to be delivered by C-FMPW. It was amazing to feel a part of something like that.

As an AME with the Force, I could be tasked with these other police duties when required. Today that is no longer the case. Our new engineers are civilian members and are no longer required to have anything to do with police content. That said though, we all carry a Top Secret Classification due to the work that we are conducting. In Labrador the RCMP always seemed to be lacking in manpower so I was often asked to help: everything from guarding prisoners, transporting prisoners on our Force aircraft, to providing security, once for the Prime Minister and once for the Queen of England. I also assisted the detachments of Happy Valley/ Goose Bay, Davis Inlet and Hopedale when manpower was short.

After my five years in Labrador I was once again transferred back west to Edmonton. I am still here today and, while writing this, lamenting the fact that there really is such a thing as the good old days.

Today I, with three other AME's, keep three fixed wing aircraft and one helicopter in serviceable condition. These four machines primarily provide support for Alberta however being a federal police force, we could be tasked at any time to any place in Canada. If deployed to major events



Figure 21 - Ken Knowles

we also travel with the aircraft to keep it functional during those extended deployments. Air Services has played many roles over many decades, but our main purpose is still to provide support for our front line members. As AME's our pride comes from being able to keep planes ready for any situation with which our police force may have to deal.

It has been a great career for me, but just like I am sure anybody that has had a great career will tell you, it has been about the people. The people and their personalities have made it great. I have definitely been blessed with being able to work with some really talented AME's and pilots over the years. We are still really good friends who stay in touch, reminisce about the good old days and remember those that have passed on. I think it's a testament to the family we became. Who could say no to that?

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Ken Knowles was born in Ontario but moved to the Yukon at an early age. He completed the AME program at SAIT in Calgary and joined the RCMP in March 1988. In 1999 he was transferred to Edmonton where he is posted today.*

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## Otters in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

By Karl E. Hayes

The RCMP Air Division was established in 1937, prior experience having conclusively shown the need for aircraft to effectively police such a large country as Canada. The force's first equipment came from de Havilland in the shape of four Dragonfly aircraft which were shipped from England and assembled by DHC. The Department of Transport reserved the CF-MP series of registrations for the RCMP.

A number of different types were acquired, including Beech Expeditors, Norsemen and a Goose. In 1949 the RCMP acquired their first Beaver, the first of an order for ten. The Air Division took delivery of its first Otter from DHC in 1954 and went on to acquire four more Otters from DHC as well as three from the Royal Canadian Air Force, to make a total of eight Otters operated. This total included one aircraft (CF-MPU) which was merely on loan to the RCMP from the military to bridge a gap until they acquired one of the new aircraft from DHC.

Of the other seven aircraft, two were written off in crashes (CF-MPW and MPZ), two were sold (CF-MPX and MPY), leaving three aircraft in service at the beginning of 1982. The bases for



Figure 22 - RCMP DHC-3 Otter CF-MPX  
(Ron Dupas Collection, 1000aircraftphotos.com)

these three are known and it is interesting to see how they moved about the country:

**CF-MPO** Acquired from the RCAF in October 1964, with total time at that stage of 1,691 hours. Based at The Pas, Manitoba 1964 to 1976; Ottawa, Ontario 1976 to 1978 and Edmonton, Alberta 1978 to 1992, although temporarily assigned to Inuvik, NWT for a period during the late 1980s.

**CF-MPP** Purchased new from DHC in 1954. Based at Churchill, Manitoba 1954 to 1971; Yellowknife, NWT 1971 to 1978 and Calgary, Alberta 1978 to 1983 when it was sold.

**CF-EBX** Acquired from the RCAF in October 1964, initially registered CF-MPK. Based at Whitehorse, Yukon Territory 1964 to 1972. In 1972 it was sold to EB Exploration for survey work, with an option to re-purchase, and was in fact bought back by the RCMP in 1974 but they retained the “fixed registration” of CF-EBX which it had acquired, as the RCMP’s own special ‘MP’ series of registrations was nearly used up. It was based at Thompson, Manitoba 1974 to 1978 and then moved to Goose Bay, Labrador. It was retired from RCMP service in October 1985 and sold in 1987, with total time at that stage of 13,498 hours.



Figure 23 - USAF Boeing B-47 Stratojet  
(USAF Photo)

The Otter was used by the RCMP for a multitude of tasks, including transfer and movement of personnel on investigations, escort of prisoners, hauling freight to the more isolated areas where their personnel were stationed, and search-and-rescue (SAR). Other occasional uses included searching for escaped prisoners and wanted criminals and even to trace stolen livestock and automobiles. In the SAR role, the RCMP Otters distinguished themselves on many occasions, in the best traditions of Canadian bush aviation. In February 1955 the Otter played a primary role in rescuing the crew of a USAF B-47 Stratojet which exploded in the sky above northern Saskatchewan. The crash occurred on February

12, 1955 and involved a B-47 assigned to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Wing at March Air Force Base, California, which exploded while flying as the number two aircraft in a loose trail, stacked formation of five B-47s enroute to Fairchild AFB, Spokane, Washington.

A major SAR operation, code named ‘Big Sandy Lake’ was launched, centred at The Pas, Manitoba as the bomber had crashed just to the north of there. A para-rescue team was dropped in by RCAF Dakota and located two survivors, and the body of a third crewman killed in the crash. One of the survivors was picked up by the RCMP Otter CF-MPP, which was based at Churchill at the time, and flown to The Pas. The other survivor, the Commander of the ill-fated B-47, was evacuated by an Otter flying for the Saskatchewan



Figure 24 - RCMP Otter CF-MPP  
(Karl E. Hayes Collection)

government, and was flown first to Cumberland House and then onwards to The Pas. A fourth crewman landed in a cluster of trees some distance from the crash site and survived 72 hours exposure to the Canadian winter before being rescued by helicopter. An RCAF Otter of 111 C&R Flight was also involved and flew in the USAF investigating team to the crash site.

That same year, CF-MPP also distinguished itself by making a flight to Arctic Bay at the extreme north-west tip of Baffin Island at latitude 74 degrees north, the furthest point that any single-engine civil registered aircraft had reached under its own power, and returned.

When Avro York CF-HIQ of Transair crashed near Rankin Inlet on a flight to Churchill in January 1967, its distress calls were picked up by an RCMP Otter en route to Eskimo Point with an expectant mother aboard. On the return trip, the Otter landed on the ice near the wreckage of the crashed York, picked up three crew and flew them to Rankin Inlet. When a Norseman en route from a DEW Line Station at Coral Harbour to Nottingham Island made a forced landing on an ice floe in May 1966, Otter CF-MPP landed on solid ice and its crew dragged their collapsible boat over two miles of snow to the edge of the ice, then paddled across to the floe and rescued the stranded pilot, who had been stuck on a tiny piece of ice for 12 days.



Figure 25 - RCMP Otter C-FMPO  
(Karl E. Hayes Collection)

The Otter served with the RCMP from 1954 until 1992, a remarkable total of 38 years of DHC-3 operations. The final aircraft to serve was C-FMPO, which had been based at the RCMP's hangar at the Edmonton Municipal Airport for many years up until its retirement from service in September 1992. It arrived at Yellowknife, Northwest Territories on October 1, 1992 on delivery to the 825 Elks Air Cadet Squadron, at which stage it had some 18,000 hours on the airframe. The Otter was acquired to provide enhanced training to the cadets, and for use by Yellowknife schools and community

organizations. According to a report at the time: "When the Otter is finally retired, it will be donated, along with its logs, to the Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, where it will be permanently displayed." This proposal somewhat overlooked the value of an aircraft such as the Otter, and having sat at Yellowknife for three years, C-FMPO was sold in Alaska in January 1996.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Karl E. Hayes is a retired solicitor who was born in Ireland and still lives there. He has a great interest in bush planes, particularly the Otter, and has written a detailed history of the 466 Otters built. He has travelled extensively within Canada and Alaska photographing Otters in their "natural habitat".*



Figure 26 - Karl E. Hayes

## Who shares the hangar? EAHS Member Organizations

Air Cadet Museum & Archives  
Civil Air Search & Rescue Association  
Edmonton Homebuilt Aircraft Association  
504 Blatchford Field Royal Canadian Air Cadets  
180-20<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Royal Canadian Army Cadets  
700 (Edmonton) Wing Air Force Association of Canada

Alberta Aviation Museum  
Edmonton Soaring Club  
Ex-RCAF Air Alliance  
Ex-RCAF Women's Association  
418 RCAF Squadron Association  
Ventura Memorial Flight Association



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