

## September - October 2017 Issue

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### Tony Cashman: Life as a Halifax Navigator

By Elinor Florence



Figure 1 - Tony Cashman  
(Elinor Florence Collection)

Author and journalist Tony Cashman is famous for his lifelong contribution to the history of Edmonton, Alberta -- but less known for the significant role he played in World War Two, completing a full tour of thirty operations as the navigator in a Halifax bomber.

I was delighted to receive a telephone call from noted historian, Tony Cashman of Edmonton, Alberta. The 94-year-old author of sixteen books and ten plays, and the recipient of many awards, Mr. Cashman wanted to tell me how much he enjoyed my wartime novel, *Bird's Eye View*.

He doesn't use the computer, so I asked him how he found my number. "I did it the old-fashioned way," he said dryly. "I called directory assistance."

Since I was planning to visit Edmonton, Tony invited me to lunch at his neighbourhood club, The Derrick Club. Over a long lunch, he checked me up on a few errors I had made in my novel, in spite of all my research and fact-checking.

For example, the boys in my novel called their bombing runs "missions." According to Tony: "The term mission was an American term, but we thought it was pretentious. We called it either a trip or an op (short for operation)."

And when one of my characters is almost struck by a flying bomb, she yells: “It’s a bomb! Run!” Nobody ran from a flying bomb, said Tony, because nobody knew where it would land when the engine cut out. Instead, my heroine would have yelled: “It’s a bomb! Get down!”

There were several other points that only someone who was there would know. However, Tony’s endorsement of the novel was high praise indeed coming from such a recognized author. And I seized the opportunity to interview Tony about his own wartime experiences.

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Figure 2 - Tony Cashman, Age 6  
(Tony Cashman Collection)

Anthony Cashman was born in Edmonton on April 29, 1923. His father was a veteran of World War One and a mining engineer involved in installing electric tramways in mines. The family lived in various towns in the United States from 1927 to 1934, to be closer to their father’s work.

Tragically, when Tony was 11 years old, his father died of dengue fever while on a trip to the Philippines. His mother moved Tony and his two younger brothers back to Edmonton.

Tony was only sixteen when the war began, and he was afraid it would end before he was old enough to participate. When he was nineteen, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. “My plan was to become a Spitfire pilot, like everyone else.”

He was sent to Initial Training School in Saskatoon, then Elementary Flight Training School in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. “That lasted long enough for the instructors to decide I should try something else, so I went to No. 2 Air

Observer School in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, to train as a navigator.”

Tony sailed from Halifax in February 1944, on a converted cruise ship, the *Andes*. “There were 3,500 of us on a ship designed for 900. They could produce only two meals a day. After 10 days on the Atlantic, when it was at its least appealing, we arrived at Bournemouth in the south of England. Spring was busting out all over. I never had such a case of spring fever. It was marvelous after the dark, hungry days at sea.”

From there Tony went to Wigtown, Scotland by train to begin advanced flying. “That was to see whether people who could navigate in Canada, where the terrain is laid out in squares, and where lines run north-south or east-west, and the town lights are on, could adapt to navigating in the blackout, using only radio signals and the occasional star.” Three of the twenty guys in his course couldn’t adapt, and were sent back to Canada.



Figure 3 - Tony Cashman, December 1943  
(Tony Cashman Collection)

The next step was operational training at Lossiemouth, Scotland. “We had been training as individuals, and now we began working together as a crew. Sixty of us arrived, enough for ten crews: 10 pilots, 10 navigators, 10 bomb aimers, 10 radio operators and twenty gunners.”

“It was all very informal. The chief of flying operations told us: ‘Sort yourselves out into crews and be ready to fly on Friday!’

“Our crew was composed of pilot Frank Plumb from Toronto; Wireless Operator Ernie Morris from Peterborough, Ontario; Tail Gunner Bill Warner from Osnabruck Centre, Ontario; myself from Edmonton; and two old-timers: Mid-Upper Gunner Glen McMillan, a CNR brakeman from Sioux Lookout, Ontario; and Bomb Aimer Larry Edge, a rancher from Cochrane. Later we added Royal Air Force Engineer Harry Braithwaite from the Lake Country of northwest England.

“We would be together until the end of the war in Europe – through the worst of times, and yet the best of times.”

The crew began their training on twin-engine Wellingtons, which had been the RAF’s front line bomber at the start of the war, and then moved to Riccall in Yorkshire to train on the four-engine Handley Page Halifax. Tony’s crew was assigned to 78 Squadron at RAF Brighton, twelve miles southeast of York.

I asked Tony about his first trip, and because he has such an excellent memory, he remembered it in detail. “On the damp morning of November 30, 1944 we heard we were on ops. Our target was Duisburg. There was no fear, just intense curiosity. We would get the answer to the question we had been thinking about. All through training, we were all wondering what it was like to get shot at. Winston Churchill said that after a cavalry charge, it is exhilarating to be shot at without result. He was certainly right on the first trip, but it became less exhilarating on each trip.

“My first encounter with acute fear happened on my approach to Duisburg. On newsreels the flak appeared as soft white puffs, but it didn’t look very important. In reality you can see red needles flying out of the flak, shards of red hot metal!



Figure 4 - Tony Cashman with ‘The Green Hornet’  
(Tony Cashman Collection)

“On each trip there were always some moments of acute fear, which built up into residual fear. Every trip there were 30 seconds of acute fear while we flew straight and level across the target, and the camera clicked over seven times. If we had had pulse meters attached to our wrists, I’m sure the speeds would have been startling!”

Between raids, Tony spent some time cycling around the countryside on an odd contraption. “I bought a bicycle in Scotland for one pound. A blacksmith made it from assorted scraps and painted it green, so I called

it *The Green Hornet*. It was often borrowed by other people, and if they were riding home late at night they sometimes didn't make the turn and ended up in this pond, which we called Dogpatch."

Tony also recalled two other memorable raids: "On December 26, 1944, in support of the Americans, we were caught up in the Battle of the Bulge. St. Evith in Belgium was a marshaling yard used by the Germans. The American bombers in East Anglia were socked in. It was overcast in Yorkshire as well, made worse by the coal fires burning in the buildings. You could see pillars of black smoke rising and being absorbed into the clouds. It was like taking off at night. Only ten of us got off before the murk enclosed our airport. We bombed the rail yards, but then we had to land in Scotland and we were stuck there for two days.

"On January 2, 1945, we went on a raid to Ludwigshafen. The bombing height was 18,000 feet. We started to climb but couldn't get above 11,000 feet because of the electrical system. So we flew three miles to the left and below the main bomber stream.

"Suddenly there was a huge blue flash that rose as high as 15,000 feet in the dark. A chemical plant had exploded! We had a side view, but the people above couldn't see it, so we had a private viewing of this phenomenon."

Like all bombing crews, Tony had his share of 'near things', as close calls were termed in the RAF. "We had a 'near thing' taking off on one trip. The takeoff is always dramatic, because twenty-six aircraft with call letters from A to Z would have to get off in fifteen minutes, so it was very crowded. The planes had to keep fairly close.

"In the control tower, we had a great controller named Nobby Clark. He had a voice like a BBC announcer. (By the way, all Clarks were called Nobby. All Wilsons were called Tug, and all Sloans were called Tod.) Nobby was nearsighted but he could visualize where all twenty-six planes were at any given time.

"During this takeoff period, with 104 Hercules engines roaring, there was a tremendous noise. Each aircraft would crawl up to the end of the runway. In quick order, our Q-Queen was third in line, then second, then first, and then we were turning onto the runway, waiting for the smooth voice in the tower to say: 'Q-Queen cleared for takeoff.'

"The front of the aircraft rested on the big wheels with the nose pointed upwards, and the tail wheel was small. The aircraft would make a slithering motion like a dog sliding around on ice on his hind legs, until it straightened out and began to move forward. We were rolling, hauled forward by four engines spinning the propellers at 2,400 revolutions per minute, aware that our 'kite' was carrying four tons of TNT, plus incendiary bombs, plus 2,000 gallons of volatile aviation fuel, some of it carried in tanks on the wings. The pilot controlled the direction, and the bomb aimer sitting in the co-pilot's seat controlled the four throttles.

"I was sitting half-way back, looking through the window on the left side. We were accelerating smoothly, when I saw that we were in trouble. We were away from the runway and onto the





advice. They were married on August 30, 1950 in St. Joseph's Cathedral in Edmonton. Tony's brother John was the best man, and Veva's sister Margaret was the bridesmaid.

Tony and Veva raised three sons: Hal, Bernard, and Paul. Tony now lives with his son Hal. His youngest son Paul followed in his father's footsteps and became an editor for the *Edmonton Journal*. In 1956 Tony published his first history book called *The Edmonton Story*, based on his radio broadcasts.

That was just the beginning of a long career. To date, Tony has published sixteen books of local history and ten plays. In 2014, Tony received the Alberta Order of Excellence. It was the latest in a long line of awards including Edmontonian of the Century in 2004, the Historical Society of Alberta annual award in 2010, and having a new Edmonton neighbourhood named after him in 2011. On April 29, 2017, Anthony Cashman celebrated his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday. Happy birthday,

Tony, and thank you so much for your service to your country and your lifelong contribution to Canadian history!



Figure 8 - Elinor Florence and Tony Cashman (Elinor Florence Collection)

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Elinor Florence of Invermere, B.C. first interviewed Tony Cashman for her popular Wartime Wednesdays blog. The story was included in her anthology of veteran interviews, titled: My Favourite Veterans: True Stories From World War Two's Hometown Heroes.*

*Elinor is also the author of a bestselling wartime novel called Bird's Eye View, about a Saskatchewan farm girl who joins the RCAF in World War Two and becomes an interpreter of aerial photographs. To learn more about Elinor and her books, or to sign up for her free blog, visit her website at [www.elinorflorence.com](http://www.elinorflorence.com) or call her at 250-342-1621.*

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## The Edmonton Aero Club Struggles to Get Organized - 1928

By Ken Tingley

The Edmonton Flying Club has played an active role in the life of the city, and especially of its airport, since almost the moment of the founding of the airport. The establishment of the club was fraught with the usual roadblocks and problems associated with setting up any organization tied to government support and regulation.

First attempts to retain an acceptable air engineer for the club ran into red tape; such issues exemplified the Edmonton and Northern Alberta Aero Club in its formative years. Edmonton engineer Percy Handford originally wished to upgrade his skills to overhaul de Havilland Moths and Cirrus engines at Camp Borden, Ontario, but was directed to contact R.A. Loader at the de Havilland plant in Toronto. Squadron Leader A.T. Cowley, acting on behalf of the Controller of Civil Aviation, noted that the de Havilland company was "very anxious that the [two] club engineers should be thoroughly familiar with their aircraft...." Cowley indicated the following situation regarding air engineers' private instructional courses in the spring of 1928:

*The only course in mechanics in the Royal Canadian Air Force is the service training given to recruits. It will be necessary, therefore, for your two young men to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force for a period of three years.... In regard to your mechanic spending a few days at High River, I am to advise that he will be perfectly free to do so but the messing accommodations there are very limited and it will probably be necessary for him to make his own arrangements for living in the town of High River, which is about 1 1/2 miles away from the aerodrome....*

*The actual date at which your aircraft can be delivered from High River will depend upon the success of your instructor at Camp Borden [i.e. E.C. Burton] but the aircraft are at present at High River where they will be erected and test flown. It would, therefore, be in order for your mechanic to report at High River at any time.*

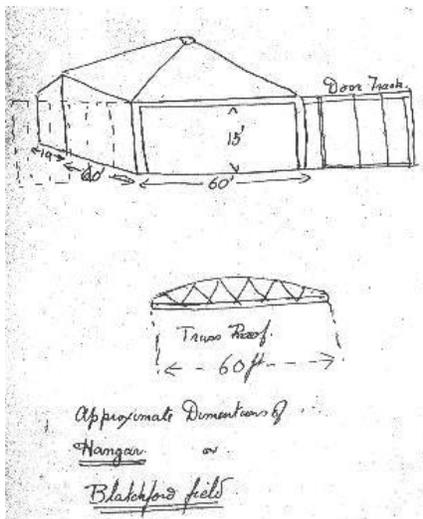


Figure 9 - Sketch of first hangar at Blatchford Field  
(NAC, RG 12, Vol 2270, File 5258-771)

Historian Stan Gordon, in his report for the Reynolds-Alberta Museum, *The History of Aviation in Alberta to 1955*, describes a very close and important relationship between Blatchford Field and the Edmonton Aero Club by 1928. City Engineer A.W. “Bert” Haddow recommended to the City Commissioners a policy by which the control of aviation facilities could be handed over to the Aero Club, while maintenance of the field and buildings could remain under the control of the City. Six months later a memorandum of agreement was noted by Haddow, stating that the City would provide, construct, maintain and operate the field. The City also would provide and maintain the hangar, while the Aero Club would pay for light, power, telephone, gas and water and fuel for operating the public hangar (though it would not have gas and water for some time).

If other companies or private individuals wished to lease sites and erect a hangar they would be required to pay a “use of field” rental to the club. The Aero Club also might operate any service stations constructed on the airfield site. The City would provide and maintain lights, including those in the hangar, the wind cone, and floodlights, while the club would operate field-landing lights and regulate traffic. Traffic revenue would be turned over to the club, which then would submit quarterly statements to the City. This agreement was subject to revision and renewal at the end of each year.

The Edmonton and Northern Alberta Aero Club signed an agreement with the Department of National Defence on March 29, 1928, with Cy Becker and James Bill signing for the Club. This agreement provided for the first two aircraft, under the *Standard Conditions for Light Aeroplane Clubs and Associations Canada*, and specified that the club provide a flying field which filled the requirements of the *Air Regulations* (1920); provide storage for the aircraft and equipment from the Department of National Defence; arrange for an air instructor and licensed air engineer; have a roll of at least thirty members prepared to qualify as pilots, and at least ten who were already qualified and were "desirous of continuing to fly". The Department of National Defence would then provide two aircraft and additional necessary equipment; a \$100 grant for each

student who qualified for a pilot's license; periodical inspection of aircraft; and a board of inquiry to investigate any accidents. *Order in Council P.C. 1878*, 24 September 1927, confirmed this agreement.

Red tape once more entangled the process when Becker was informed that the agreement had been improperly signed. James Bill had signed as the Party of the Second Part, where the Deputy Minister's name should have appeared. The first de Havilland Moth, G-CYYG, to be delivered



Figure 10 - de Havilland Moth G-CYYG outside Blatchford Hangar  
(Alberta Aviation Museum Collection)

by air from High River, was held up further while this bureaucratic issue was resolved. When this was cleared up, it was the plan to have the club air instructor pick up the first plane in High River and fly it back to Edmonton. The second aircraft, G-CALB, was to be shipped from Toronto, where de Havilland had a branch. This aircraft was not to be ready until towards the end of May and was to be shipped by train direct to Edmonton.

The application for the two aircraft (under provisions of *Order in Council P.C. 1878*) is an interesting document. It provides a concise picture of the club in its earliest days. The date of incorporation for the club was January 19, 1928, and its first permanent address was 42 Garipey Block, Edmonton, Alberta.

The executive included: Charles (Cy) Becker, President; James (Jimmy) Bell, Vice President; John Sydie, Second Vice President; Enock Loveseth, Treasurer; James Bill, Secretary; Tweedie Campbell Sims, Manager Director; Simon Algernon Yorke, Lecturer; Kenneth A. Blatchford, Director; James Victor Horner, Director; J.D. Oliver Mothersill, Director; John Michaels, Director; Alvin Donald Kennedy, Director; A. Stewart Matheson, Director.

The legal description of the "air harbour" where the club was operating, was given as "Blatchford Field, Edmonton Municipal Aerodrome." The facilities for housing the Department of National Defence aircraft consisted of a "well-constructed wooden hangar, single span truss roof, full length sliding doors, building approximately 60' by 70'. Height to roof 15'. All round cottage peak roof."

Club personnel consisted of E.J.A. Burke, who had about 2500 hours of flying and instruction on all types of aircraft at this point, including the Moth. Burke was employed by the club for the season at \$200 per month and also two dollars for each dual instructional flying hour up to 300 hours, and one dollar after that. Percy Hanford was the air engineer (Qualified Air Engineer Certificate #209, March 14, 1922). Hanford was employed by the club for the season at one dollar per flying hour of all machines flown, with a minimum of \$100 per month.

Thirty-six members appear on the application as prepared to qualify as pilots. These were:

Thomas Armitage [druggist]; Russell Foy Brinkman [chauffeur]; James D. Bryant ["gentleman"]; Alex. Lowery Clarke [accountant]; Robert Copeman ["gentleman"]; Carlisle Blake Dagg [salesman]; John Dunn [farmer]; Cyril Ellinger [dairyman]; Clarence Entwisle



Figure 11 - Gladys Walker (nee Graves) poses by G-CYYG  
(Alberta Aviation Museum Collection)

[telegrapher]; Wilbur Claude Gallinger [student]; Harry Gilbert [auto body building]; Gladys Graves [secretary]; James Victor Horner ["gentleman"]; Stanley Irvine [teamster]; James Jefferson [Inspector]; Charles R. William Mager ["gentleman"]; Chester E. Moffat [advertising manager]; Alexander Sutherland [student]; Richard P. Owen [student]; George M. Peterson

["gentleman"]; Carl Douglan Pullman [an American citizen; electrician]; Arthur

Rankin [clerk]; John Holmes Rutherford [an Irish citizen; electrician]; Albert William Sewell [salesman]; Charles Gordon Smail [surveyor]; Robert E. Souther [carpenter]; Kenneth G. Thompson [mechanic]; Wilfred M. Thompson [mechanic]; Alfred H. Want [clerk]; Frank Brown [salesman]; Joseph P. Jubinville [mechanic]; William C. Proudfoot [master mechanic]; E.R.R. Field [student]; John Ross [student]; F.S. Robinson ["gentleman"].

The first club members also included the following twelve qualified pilots: Charles Becker [with 1000 hours]; James Bell [with 500 hours]; Alvin D. Kennedy [with 400 hours]; Alfred E. Koch [with 400 hours]; Wilfrid R. May [with 800 hours]; Raymon G. McPhie [with 150 hours]; John S. Tarbolton [with 500 hours]; James M. Taylor [with 400 hours]; Thomas E. White [with 700 hours]; James Bill [with 50 hours]; Walter J. Beaumont [in the Civil and RAF Reserve; 250 hours]; Frank Donnelly [with 700 hours, military and commercial].



Figure 12 - de Havilland Moth G-CYYG  
(Alberta Aviation Museum Collection)

In June 1928 the Edmonton club was prepared to receive its Moth, as were the Granby Aero Club in Quebec, the Aeronautical Association of Canada in Toronto, and the Regina Flying Club. True to form, red tape again played a role. Flying Officer G.S. Abbott, writing for the Controller of Civil Aviation, reported that receipts given on delivery of the aircraft had been found to be not in order, "and it is now found necessary to issue receipt vouchers and inventories covering this equipment, in lieu of receipts given by your club."

Abbott later visited the Edmonton club and completed the examination of several commercial pilots. Flight Lieutenant F.V. Walsh, Commanding High River Air Station, complained of the tests working at cross-purposes with established plans.

It seems that Ottawa and Alberta experienced real trouble in coordinating their plans during the first years of the club. Walsh reported:

*As previously arranged with Air Headquarters, these pilots were to fly to High River and complete their tests, the flight to High River being regarded as a cross country flight.... One of these pilots forwarded his application here ... and on 'phoning the*

*President of the Edmonton Aero Club, asking him when we could expect this gentleman and the others, we were told that Mr. Abbott had completed their tests, but they had yet to do a triangular cross country trip. These instructions are directly opposed to those given in [an] Air Headquarters' wire....*

*The President of the Club was very surprised to hear that Mr. Abbott had not informed me that he had completed the applicants' tests and had changed the instruction previously issued. The situation now is, that these commercial pilots will now have to wait until I can spare the time to visit Edmonton. If there are many of them I cannot afford to stay in Edmonton for two or three days waiting for these gentlemen to do triangular courses, particularly at this time of the year as the weather is very uncertain.*



Figure 13 - Uncrating Edmonton Aero Club Moth G-CALB  
(Alberta Aviation Museum Collection)

R.A. Loader, General Manager of De Havilland Aircraft of Canada, Ltd., notified Abbott on July 4, 1928 that Moth G-CALB “will be dispatched as rapidly as possible.” Edmonton finally was to get its second Moth.

The club also applied to set up a meteorological station at the aerodrome in late 1928. “The aerodrome stands on the 2,200 feet contour, is flat with level ground around it,” Simon Yorke wrote in a report to Ottawa. “The Club

mechanic lives in the hangar itself, and we intend to fly all winter, and on the days when flying is impossible, the hangar will be used for instructional work on rigging, maintenance and constructional details of aeroplanes for our Commercial and Private pilot’s ground school courses....”

Yorke further argued the case in September. “We therefore would be in a position to look after, and properly attend to such a station, more especially, as the writer has himself looked after such a station at Harrow School, England.” Among the requested equipment was a strut thermometer, which “would be useful for exploring the upper air, especially in winter time, as in this district we get some very curious inversions of temperature previous to the start of a Chinook wind.”

During 1928 the Edmonton Aero Club continued to struggle to get its organizational details worked out. But it soon would come into its own.

*EDITOR’S NOTE: Ken Tingley became the first municipal Historian Laureate in Canada when he was named to the position in April of 2010. During his two-year tenure, Tingley published “Ride of the Century: The Story of the Edmonton Transit System” and “My Heart’s in the Highlands: The Building of a Historic Edmonton Community”.*



Figure 14 - Ken Tingley

## Beacons of Liberty: Part II

By Tim Mallandaine

Nothing demonstrates character more than the things people say about someone after they have passed. Of pilot John Mallandaine a friend wrote:

“I met your father in early 1967, just a day or so after the great hanger fire of March 3, 1967 at the Edmonton Industrial Airport. Little did I know that he would become my first mentor and a very influential person in my life.

“I know he saw and experienced a great deal of death and destruction during the war and during his time as an accident investigator. During one of our long evenings up north your dad told me a story that I was to never, ever repeat. All the players have now gone to the great hanger in the sky so I feel it’s appropriate to share. Sorry John, but it is a great story.

“It seems that when your dad was courting your mother, without anyone knowing what he was doing, he roughly measured the distance from his future father-in-law’s back door to the nearby barn. One bright day, flying formation with fifteen others, your dad instructed said others to wait in formation while he went down to say hello, ever so briefly, to his future in-laws. When he lined up with the narrow space between the house and the barn he estimated that he was doing approximately 400 mph. He said that, at the last minute, he had to stand the Spitfire up on a wingtip to go between the buildings. Then, to his horror, he glanced into the rear view mirror only to see all fifteen of his buddies following him. Apparently, every window, dish, cup or anything porcelain was destroyed due to the shockwave and harmonics times 16.

“Every leading man in Hollywood can only dream about the momentary thrill that your dad must have experienced back then at 400+ mph.” (OK, so that might work in a movie.)

“In October of 1968 I had a heavy piece of equipment crush my legs. Christmas morning your dad came into my hospital room and took me home for a visit on a stretcher. I was in an active surgery ward and still hooked up to a morphine drip. Don't ask about how many strings he pulled. I'll tell anyone listening what type of humanitarian John Mallandaine was. He was my friend, first mentor and a first class pilot. There are a great many other stories, and they all speak to the humility and understanding of this giant of a man. Thanks John! You will be missed but never, ever forgotten.”

### Pilot Investigator

John spent the last 17 years of his career working in accident investigation. His son introduced him to legendary experimental aircraft builder and flyer, Terry “The Birdman” Jones. He became best of friends with Terry and took great interest in ultralights and experimental aircraft. The result



Figure 15 - Terry "The Birdman" Jones  
(Tim Mallandaine Collection)

was the first draft of Canada's handbook for ultralight and experimental aircraft.

Bringing into focus just how dramatic experiences in John's investigator life could be, in January of 1984 he had the unfortunate responsibility of investigating the Birdman's untimely death in an aviation accident.

A month later John's wife also passed away but his buddies kept him going. He worked tirelessly to keep ever fewer fellow veterans and pilots in touch by doing newsletters for the Quarter Century Aviation Club and Fighter Pilots Association. He religiously attended war crew reunion dinners with one particular buddy and, on August 24, 1987, he married that buddy. Barbara Galliver, nee Barbara Beckett, with whom he'd noted a "first and only date" in his life log, had married his post-war reserves B-25 co-pilot, Bill Galliver. Bill had also passed away early.

John relocated to Bowser, on the east coast of Vancouver Island, and set up an ingenious vacuum driven manufacturing system for inflating lap tables. Over the years, he built and sold (mostly gave away) over 5,000. A good many of the wartime crew visited Bowser, and John and Barbara continued to attend veteran functions across the country.

In a rare war-story moment, John told a few tales to one of his grandsons. He recounted sitting down to an aircrew dinner across from a woman who had farmed in Europe before the war. She was not much of a fighter pilot fan as a few friendly pilots had flown over her farm and shot up her horse. John spent most of that dinner red-faced and silent as he had a first-hand recollection of the horse-shooting incident. He also said something about he and a friend 'borrowing' a plane to get to London while on leave. Due to the shortage of pilots, not much happened. They put it back.

John retired from the Ministry of Transport the same month that he married Barbara. He said this was necessary as MOT refused to move their office to Bowser. As a retirement gift, his son gave him a 1/7th scale P-51 Mustang model kit hoping they might finally pilot a remote controlled aircraft. As it turned out, the gift was the first event that would figure in the story of how *Y2-B: Edmonton Special* grew beyond fond memories.



Figure 16 – Presentation of "Beacons of Liberty" painting to the people of Jersey on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation flight, May 9, 1995

(Tim Mallandaine Collection)

### **The Painting**

What was to become *Beacons of Liberty* started in the mind of a Kitchener, Ontario, TV reporter named Jack Carpenter (now deceased). Jack was born on Jersey and evacuated during the war as a child. He wanted to commemorate the fact that Canadians flew the last mission of the war. He asked Rich Thistle to do a painting to be donated to the people of Jersey. Rich agreed and Jack started phoning people in Jersey and in Ottawa. Rich, excited about

the commission, told his friend Len Wilson who produced his log book showing he had flown that mission.

Eventually, with a bit of back and forth, the artist, the pilots and the wives all went to Jersey for the gifting event. Rich recalls that the trip began as a horror story of flight delays, cancellations, aircraft landing early due to engine trouble, lost luggage and near-demolished painting crates. However, as the plane taxied at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, the pilot announced the details of the excursion to Jersey to all the passengers and things started to turn around.

In Rich's words: "I've never met a pilot I didn't like."

After many anxious moments, everyone was finally surrounded by those who understood the significance of Rich's painting and the trip. He pulled off the cover and the painting found home in the country it depicted. John and the other two pilots co-signed each of seventy-five reproductions. Unfortunately, Wing Commander J. A. Storrar had passed on March 29 of that year. Six of the party, the three pilots included, experienced a first-class aerial tour of the islands. For the pilots who flew the mission, a half century before, this remained the highlight of the trip.

The story of *Y2-B: Edmonton Special* doesn't end there. In fact, that was just the beginning. 442 Squadron now resides in Comox doing Air-Sea rescue work, and on January 15, 1998 an article appeared in the local paper:

*Mr. John Mallandaine, a former World War II fighter pilot and currently a resident of Bowser, B.C., approached the museum staff last year with a proposal to donate a 1/7 scale P-51 Mustang kit if it could be built in the colours of his wartime aircraft, "Edmonton Special." The staff agreed and the curator, Corky Hansen, spent the better part of the winter months literally whittling away at the parts to create a truly special display aircraft. The scale aircraft was officially put on display at the Comox museum on Friday 9 January, by Mr. Mallandaine and a companion, Mr. Harry Furniss, also a wartime fighter pilot.*

Yes, that is the same model Tim gave John for his retirement ten years earlier. He found out his father had given the model away when he received a copy of the article. He wrote the following note to his father who was preparing for bypass surgery. It offers a good deal of insight into the relationship between veterans and their families.

*"You and I always looked at things quite differently. I am glad that we have learned to talk to one another. As a child it was great having a dad who was a pilot ... even though it would have been nice if you were around a bit more ... but, only because we all missed you so very much. I was proud of your work as a pilot and an aviation investigator and grateful for the sacrifices you made to deliver parcels that Christmas when you were self-unemployed. I am grateful for all you did to work with Mom through many difficult years of her ill health. I am sure that it was not easy, or without its rewards. You are a steadfast man, and I respect and love you very much for that. I've come to better understand the contributions you made during the war and how*

events like that can make you a part of a unique group of comrades. Having such profound experiences makes it difficult to share with those who didn't go through it with you. You know, hardly a week goes by that I don't bump into someone who speaks highly of you."



Figure 17 - "Edmonton Special" featured on cover of Scale Modeler (Tim Mallandaine Collection)

And so, as the story goes, father and son didn't get to fly remote controlled aircraft. But, they did have a long history of fond memories. Not many children got to go back to school talking about flying north, searching for downed airplanes, fishing to feed dog teams, sleeping in the Fort Chipewyan jail, describing the thrill of flying under bridges while chasing rivers and the weightlessness effect of a zero-gravity parabolic arc 'or' ... the moose in their garage.

Edmonton Special pops up again in March of 1996. It appeared in an issue of *Scale Modeler*, the world's largest-selling modelling magazine. For the article, Randy Lutz, a famous modeler, historically recreated Y2-B's markings. He kindly presented his model to John but it's currently MIA.

Y2-B: Edmonton Special had come to be known the world over.

### One Story Ends and Another Begins

To really know men like John you had to know the stories of their exploits as told by friends and family. That's why stories like this one are so very important. While John Mallandaine wasn't always around, he never let anyone down when they really needed him. He was the unsung hero to those he helped, and simple common respect for the man left them with these words: "I never met a pilot I didn't like."



Figure 18 - John Mallandaine receiving model of his P-51 Mustang from the model's creator, Randy Lutz (Tim Mallandaine Collection)

John had a penchant for meticulous details. You could see it in his flight logs showing over 25,000 hours of flight experience; every line beautifully hand printed. He ended his life log with two simple sentences: "Ten years later writing autobiography. Still hanging in there."

He went on hanging in there, too, for just over 90 years. His health was failing, he'd developed diabetes, was diagnosed with Parkinson's and then with pancreatic cancer. As usual, he managed it all with a ceaseless quiet dignity.

On November 22, 2011 John Mallandaine passed away in Nelson BC.

This story does not end there, nor should it ever end. Those who knew John are ever grateful for his love and for the example he set. He would not want to be remembered, wouldn't want the fuss. He would, however, want us to remember that his "Band of Brothers" were the "Beacons of (Our) Liberty."

And so, on Remembrance Day in 2013 at the Capitol Theatre at Fort Edmonton Park, John's son and grandson, Alyx, presented a three-screen multi-media event which told this story, too. Images of Gypsy Moths, Spitfires and Mustangs flew across three integrated screens narrated with stories, poetry written by some of the "Band of Brothers," and some war-time music, too. John's granddaughter, Sarah, sang songs made famous by Vera Lynn: "There'll Be Bluebirds Over The White Cliffs Of Dover" and "We'll Meet Again."

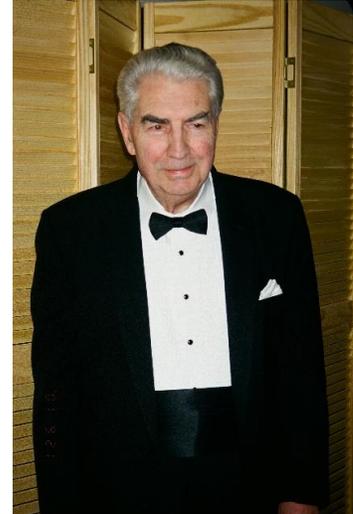


Figure 19 - John Mallandaine  
(Tim Mallandaine Collection)

This work was presented twice more on Remembrance Days, in the County of Strathcona Council Chambers (2014) and in Memorial Hall at Robertson-Wesley United Church (2015). In 2016 the detailed work began to amass all of the historical resources, to bring together hundreds of pages of text and thousands of document and image scans, toward the goal of a detailed website at [www.EdmontonSpecial.com/ca](http://www.EdmontonSpecial.com/ca).

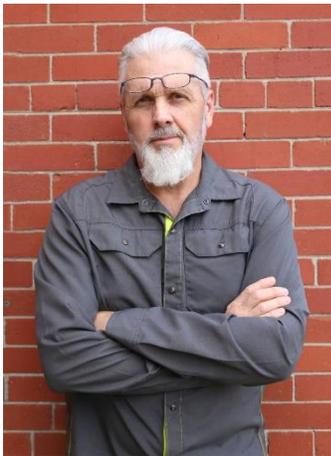


Figure 20 - Tim Mallandaine

The story of "The Beacons of Liberty" a.k.a. *Y2-B: Edmonton Special* goes on. The work of remembering what's important continues.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Tim Mallandaine isn't a pilot but he did love to fly with his father, John Mallandaine. Tim has taught voice and performance excellence for almost forty years and has worked creatively, in media and events production, for longer. Tim DOES take his work with remembrance and aviation history quite seriously and tries very hard not to let that get in the way of his enjoyment of the people and the stories. Tim can be reached at [tim@songkraft.com](mailto:tim@songkraft.com)*

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## **The Martin Mars: From Flying Dreadnought to Behemoth Air Tanker**

By Neil Taylor

As Japanese-American relations continued to deteriorate in the mid-1930s, United States military planners viewed the vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean as a significant barrier to American interests in the Far East. While the United States Navy's Pacific Fleet was the principal means of projecting military force in this distant region, planners were beginning to search for aircraft that could traverse the watery dominion and deliver a knockout punch to the enemy. Enter Glenn L. Martin.

In 1938 the United States Navy issued a proposal call for a long-range, maritime reconnaissance bomber. Four companies were invited to bid: Boeing Aircraft Company, Chance Vought Aircraft, Consolidated Aircraft Corporation and the Glenn L. Martin Company. Martin was already a successful producer of flying boats having produced the China Clipper series flown by Pan Am in the Pacific. He had also developed a twin-engine flying boat, the Model 162, for ocean patrol and anti-submarine operations. The Model 162, which became the Martin PBM Mariner, entered operation with the U.S. Navy in September 1940 and by the end of the Second World War had sunk ten U-boats.

For the 1938 request for proposal, Glenn L. Martin decided on a scaled up, four-engine version of the Martin PBM Mariner called the Model 170. The aircraft was massive – 117 feet 3 inches in length with a 200 foot wingspan. It was powered by four Wright R-3350-8 engines rated at 2,200 hp each and a loaded weight of 144,000 pounds.

Glenn L. Martin envisioned an armada of these flying boats that could fly thousands of miles before delivering a devastating strike on the enemy. He proposed the installation of five turrets, each sporting a single .30 calibre machine gun. A total bomb payload of up to 10,000 pounds could be accommodated in bomb bays located under each wing.

Martin nicknamed his flying boat the “sky battleship” or “flying dreadnought”. He boasted that his aircraft was “more formidable than the battleships of the present day because she cannot be shot down unless her wings literally are shot off”. He further claimed that torpedoes could not sink her and shellfire could not stop her, and her firepower was such that an attacker could be blasted from the sky long before it could seriously damage the armoured giant.

The Navy was impressed with Martin’s plans and authorized production of a prototype designated the XPB2M-1. Martin chose to call his new flying boat Mars, after the Roman god of war. The prototype shared the general hull design and twin fins of the Martin Mariner but on a much larger scale. It also contained two miles of internal piping and 7.5 miles of wiring. Since the Mars was designed with a range of over 6,700 miles, patrols would be long and the crew of thirteen needed amenities not found in most aircraft of the time. Within the aircraft’s fuselage was room for a galley, showers, sleeping quarters and even separate officers’ and enlisted men’s messes.



Figure 21 - Martin 170 XPB2M-1 Mars (Bureau No. 1520)  
(Jacques Trempe Collection, 1000aircraftphotos.com)

The prototype, assigned Bureau Number (BuNo) 1520 by the U.S. Navy, was nicknamed *Old Lady* and was launched ship-style on November 5, 1941 with a bottle of champagne across the nose and a backwards glide into Dark Head Creek alongside the Martin factory outside Baltimore, Maryland. Testing began immediately but on December 5, 1941, two days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a taxiing test went terribly wrong. The #3 engine threw a propeller

blade, severely damaging the fuselage and triggering an engine fire. Before the fire could be put out, the engine, engine mount and part of the starboard wing were consumed. Repairs delayed completion of testing until November 1942, but by that time changes in warfare placed the original “sky battleship” concept in serious doubt.

The success of aircraft carriers had changed the nature of ocean warfare. Slow moving, long range patrol bombers, like the Mars, would be extremely vulnerable to attack by nimble, heavily armed fighters. What was needed, however, was long-range cargo aircraft capable of carrying heavy loads above submarine infested waters.

As a result, the U.S. Navy instructed Martin to convert the Mars from a patrol bomber to a long range transport. The prototype had its armament, bomb bays and armoured plating removed, to be replaced by enhanced cargo space and reinforced decking. The converted transport, now re-designated as XPB2M-1R, first flew in July 1943 and was officially turned over to the U.S. Navy on November 27, 1943. Crew training commenced with VR-8 at Patuxent River, Maryland, then *Old Lady* was transferred to transport squadron VR-2 based at Naval Air Station Alameda in California.

*Old Lady* performed admirably, primarily flying on the California – Hawaii route, hauling 10 tons of cargo at a time. So impressed was the Navy with the aircraft’s performance that an order for twenty additional transports, designated JRM-1s, was placed with Martin. These production aircraft differed significantly from the prototype by incorporating a single vertical tail fin and rudder, a longer hull (now 120 feet in length), four-bladed propellers and Wright R-3350-24WA Cyclone engines rated at 2,500 hp.

The first production JRM-1, christened *Hawaii Mars* (BuNo 76819) was delivered to the Navy for evaluation testing in late July 1945 but it was destroyed two weeks later in a landing accident on Chesapeake Bay.

The fall of Japan led the U.S. Navy to re-evaluate its need for a large fleet of Martin Mars transports. The original production order for twenty aircraft was reduced to six. By the end of 1946, four more JRM-1s were delivered and named after Pacific island chains on the aircrafts’ main transport routes – *Philippine Mars* (BuNo 76820), *Marianas Mars* (BuNo 76821), *Marshall Mars* (BuNo 76822), and *Hawaii Mars* (sometimes referred to as *Hawaii Mars II*, BuNo 76823).

The final Martin Mars produced was designated a JRM-2 because it used the new 3,000 hp Pratt and Whitney R-4360-4 power



Figure 22 - Martin 170B JRM-2 "Caroline Mars" (Bureau No. 76824)  
(David J. Gauthier Collection, 1000aircraftphotos.com)

plant. It was christened the *Caroline Mars* (BuNo 76824). The new engines increased the payload capacity of the Mars, and the Navy decided to upgrade the JRM-1s with the same engines, leading to their re-designation as JRM-3s.

The Martin Mars had an immediate impact on the U.S. Navy's airlift capacity as it serviced transport routes along the west coast of the United States and across the Pacific Ocean. On February 24, 1949, the *Caroline Mars* set a new record for passengers carried in a single flight when it flew 202 passengers and four crewmen from NAS Alameda to NAS North Island, San Diego. The next day it broke that record by carrying 222 passengers and crew on the return flight to NAS Alameda.

The Martin Mars provided yeoman service to the U.S. Navy – from 1946 through 1956 the five airplanes flew more than 12 million miles while carrying over 250,000 passengers and thousands of tons of cargo, everything from jeeps and spare parts to blood plasma and foodstuffs. During the Korean War they carried wounded U.S. servicemen back to the United States for treatment.



Figure 23 - JRM-1 *Marshall Mars* burning near Honolulu, Hawaii, April 5, 1950  
(United States Navy photo)

One more aircraft was lost during operational service with the U.S. Navy. On April 5, 1950, the *Marshall Mars* was flying off the coast of Oahu on a maintenance flight when one of its engine's caught fire. The crew made an emergency landing and escaped unscathed, but the aircraft was consumed in flames.

The remaining four Martin Mars soldiered on until 1956 when the Navy decided there were more efficient transportation options available. The final military flight of the Mars occurred on August 22, 1956. The four JRMs

were hauled out of the water and beached at NAS Alameda. For three years they sat forgotten until the Navy decided to sell them for scrap. Hugo Forrester bought the aircraft for \$23,650 and their fate appeared sealed.

Luckily, for history, Dan McIvor, then chief pilot for MacMillan Bloedel, a major forestry company in British Columbia, heard of the pending sale. He was aware of experiments using aircraft to fight forest fires, but results to date had been disappointing. The aircraft being used, such as the Junkers Ju 34, the Grumman Goose, the Grumman TBM Avenger and the Boeing Stearman, had little water carrying capacity, and McIvor believed that the Mars had the size and potential water lifting capability to tackle major forest fires.

After convincing MacMillan Bloedel to get involved, McIvor set his sights on other major timber companies, and in due course, B.C. Forest Products, Pacific Logging, Tahsis Company and Western Forest Products joined forces with MacBlo to establish Forest Industries Flying Tankers

(FIFT). McIvor went back to Hugo Forrester and persuaded him to part with the four aircraft for a total of \$100,000 – a bargain basement price of \$25,000 per plane. McIvor also pursued the U.S. Navy’s stock of spare engines and parts, amassing enough material to keep the planes flying for years to come.

Converting the former transport aircraft to aerial tankers was not an easy task. Fairey Aviation of Canada Ltd., based out of Patricia Bay Airport (renamed Victoria International Airport in 1959), was assigned the task. First, all cargo handling gear was removed, the engines were replaced and 7,200 U.S. gallon tanks of plywood and fiberglass construction were installed in the fuselage, fed by two pickup probes/scoops that could be lowered into the water as the aircraft flew at wave height. A full load of water could be taken onboard in this manner in under thirty seconds.

Two aircraft were initially scheduled for conversion, the *Marianas Mars* and the *Caroline Mars*. The *Marianas Mars*’ conversion was completed in the spring of 1960. Tragically it was lost while fighting its third fire of the 1961 fire season on June 23 west of Nanaimo, British Columbia. For some reason, it appears the *Marianas Mars* was unable to drop her load of water and crashed into a forested hillside. All four crew members were killed.

The *Caroline Mars* never completed conversion. While anchored at the Victoria International Airport, it was struck by Typhoon Freda on October 13, 1962. The aircraft broke free, flipped and had its back broken. The wreckage was scrapped.



Figure 24 - Forest Industries Flying Tankers Hawaii Mars, C-FLYL, at Lake Elsinor, California, June 1998  
(Jorge A. Dietsch Collection, 1000aircraftphotos.com)

FIFT didn’t let these setbacks alter its faith in the Martin Mars. The remaining two aircraft – *Hawaii Mars* and *Philippine Mars* – were pressed into service in time for the 1963 fire season. They performed admirably, in one case extinguishing a fire without ground crew support. By the end of the fire season the two air tankers dropped 495,000 gallons of water. Two years later, in 1965, the two air tankers dropped over 1,000,000 gallons of water on British Columbia fires – the first time the million mark had ever been achieved.

For forty-four years, the *Hawaii Mars* and *Philippine Mars* served FIFT with distinction, even as the company itself was experiencing change. In 2001, FIFT became Flying Tankers Inc. Over the years, various partners withdrew from operations, concerned with the air tankers’ \$2 million annual operating cost. By 2006, Flying Tankers Inc. was a wholly-owned subsidiary of TimberWest Forest Corporation. Senior management concluded that other private sector interests could better address its fire-fighting needs and on November 10, 2006 the two remaining Martin Mars were tendered for sale.

Considerable interest was shown by the heritage community in preserving these two historic aircraft. The Glenn L. Martin Aviation Museum in Maryland teamed with the British Columbia Aviation Council to start a fund-raising program for the purchase of both aircraft. Their efforts were unsuccessful, and on April 13, 2007 TimberWest announced the sale of the aircraft to Coulson Forest Products of Port Alberni, British Columbia. The tankers were based at Sproat Lake near Port Alberni and operated by Coulson Flying Tankers, a subsidiary of Coulson Aircrane Ltd.



Figure 25 - Coulson Flying Tankers Hawaii Mars  
(Peter Carbin Collection, 1000aircraftphotos.com)

The *Hawaii Mars* attacked fires in California in 2007 and 2009 while the *Philippine Mars* was undergoing extensive renovation. However, on August 23, 2012, the Coulson Group announced that the *Philippine Mars* would be retired and flown to the National Naval Aviation Museum at NAS Pensacola, Florida. In preparation, the aircraft was repainted in its original U.S. Navy colours. Numerous delays ensued and it has been reported that the U.S. Navy has now put the acquisition on hold.

In 2013, the British Columbia government ended its contract with the Coulson group for the use of the *Hawaii Mars* opting to use more modern aircraft, such as Coulson's Lockheed C-130 Hercules, for fighting fires in the province. The government also found smaller amphibious aircraft to be a more viable option, since they could scoop water from upwards of 1700 water bodies in the province, while the *Hawaii Mars* could only access 113 lakes.

The *Hawaii Mars* was brought back into action briefly on a 30 day contract in 2015 during a particularly troublesome fire season but the giant aircraft has not flown operationally since. In 2016 it attended AirVenture Oshkosh, the famous airshow of the Experimental Aircraft Association. During demonstration activities at the airshow, the *Hawaii Mars* struck the bottom of the lake and sustained damage to its hull. The aircraft was subsequently returned to its Sproat Lake base where it has been undergoing repairs. While many have advocated reactivating the behemoth to help fight fires in British Columbia's worst ever forest fire season, it is still undergoing maintenance, and is reportedly up for sale.

Whatever the future holds for the *Hawaii Mars* and *Philippine Mars*, we hope a suitable venue is found for their continued preservation and exhibit. These truly amazing aircraft have a wonderful story to tell, and it is hoped future generations will be able to view and experience these giants of the air.

## Who shares the hangar? EAHS Member Organizations

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