

# THE NORSEMAN NEWS

Fall 2022

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
BRITISH COLUMBIA AVIATION MUSEUM



## Open House 2022!

(All Open House photos by **Aaron Burton**)



## President's Message

### **Fall 2022**

A big thank you to our Cashiers and Tour Guides who have all added extra volunteer shifts in order to allow the museum to operate six-days a week during the summer. Thank you all! We have had an increasing number of visitors who are giving great feedback on the outstanding displays and service at the BC Aviation Museum, this is all due to our outstanding volunteers!

We were all very sad to hear of the passing of Marcus the museum cat. Marcus was a much-loved fixture around the museum for many years until the Covid-19 quarantine left him alone much of the time. Fortunately, Marcus was taken in by Bob and Lucia Brown who cared for him with love and affection during his final years. Special thanks also to Connie Barr who paid for Marcus food and care and to the many volunteers who helped care for Marcus over the years.

The last few months have been busy for the BC Aviation Museum. We enjoyed a visit from Dave Rohrer, CEO of Canadian Warplane Heritage, and Jim Van Dyk, Chief Engineer at CWH, and others for a tour of the museum. The group was very impressed with our displays, especially the children's area and the interactive displays around the museum. Board member and Tour Guide lead, Steve Nichols, has made visits to the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville, Oregon, giving us valuable insight to how other aviation museums operate and display their aircraft; while board member Dave Jackson brought back important information and contacts from his visit to the South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum in Doncaster, England. Visits such as these give the BC Aviation Museum the opportunity to create connections across the country, and around the world, increasing our profile and giving us the opportunity to learn and grow our collection with a forward-looking approach.

The Museum took second place in Black Press Readers' Choice Awards this year. A photographer was at the museum on Aug. 4 to take a picture for the supplement which was published on Aug. 18th.

I would like to thank every volunteer who helped out at the BCAM Open House in any fashion. After a break of two years, we came back with a bang and were thrilled to welcome thousands of guests to enjoy a day of aviation-themed fun. From our organizers and logistics to our greeters, cashiers, parking attendants and cleaners, to the kids' activity coordinators and tour guides, every aspect of the event was handled in a friendly and professional manner. Every participant I spoke to was happy to be included and was enjoying the wonderful day. We had excellent media coverage which was boosted by the inclusion of Harbour Air's electric De Havilland Beaver and its historic flight from Richmond to Pat Bay. Many thanks to board member Mike Ingram for coordinating with Harbour Air and making this significant event happen.

A special thank you goes to board member Cindy Ingram for organizing an absolutely outstanding event which every member of the BC Aviation Museum can take pride in.

Enjoy the autumn – see you at the museum!

Laura Lavin, President, BC Aviation Museum



## Important Upcoming Dates

October - December 2022

- October 15 Saturday Norseman Engine Run Up at 12:00 noon  
November 11 Friday Remembrance Day and Hampton Gray Memorial  
November 19 Saturday Norseman Engine Run Up at 12:00 noon  
December 17 Saturday Norseman Engine Run Up at 12:00 noon

Rumour has it that Speaker Nights may be returning in the new year. Details are being ironed out, and more news will appear soon. Since the Norseman News is published only four times a year, please continue to check happenings at the Museum's website or current Slipstream magazine for dates and events.

The Museum is now open winter hours: six days a week, Thursdays through Tuesdays, from 11am til 3pm, from 1 October until 30 April. The museum is closed every Wednesday, as well as Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day 2023.

## **New Editor for the Norseman News**

Rumour also has it that a new editor for the Norseman News has been found! Your current editor has decided creating the Newsletter from far away Cowichan Bay was too lonely, and will happily pass it on to someone closer to the Museum. Your soon-to-be ex-editor has instead opted for a weekly trek to the Museum itself, and can be found volunteering in the library from 10am to 3pm every Tuesday.

Stay tuned!

*Dave Byrnes*

## **Think about volunteering!**

The Museum is always looking for volunteers to take on various roles, from working the till and welcoming visitors, to guiding tourists, to working on the collection, to helping out on special events.



Contact Peter Garnham if you'd like to help. Peter's contact details are on the last page of the newsletter.

More Open House photos  
by Aaron Burton



**B C Aviation Museum**



## Hampton Gray Memorial Team Awarded Silver Medallion

You are all aware of the fine Memorial Monument so prominent in front of the museum honouring Lt “Hammy” Gray and his RCNVR aviator colleagues who served so valiantly with the British Fleet Air Arm during the Second World War. The Project Team of “Four Old Navy Guys”, who laboured for over 3 years on the project, have recently been given the Silver Medallion



Award and Commendation for “Outstanding Service to the Naval Association of Canada” from the association (NAC). Also, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, on receiving the Historical Folio (detailed documentation) of the project, has written saying that the Team is “to be commended for their dedicated and lengthy efforts to honour the Canadians who served in the Pacific and for ensuring Lieutenant Gray’s memory lives on”. For anyone who wishes to read about the military exploits of Lt Gray and the whole story of how this project came together and was carried out in partnership with BCAM and NAC support, a copy of the Historical Folio is held in the library.

*Stan Brygadyr*

## The BC Aviation Museum Celebrates A Double Retirement



Penticton Tanker Base (Troy Keswick)

22 September 2022. This week the BC Aviation Museum will experience a unique ‘first’ with the simultaneous retirement to the museum of both an aircraft and its pilot. The aircraft is the Convair CV580, a large, twin-engine turboprop that spent more than 20 years as an air tanker fighting fires in British Columbia and abroad. At the controls will be Grahame Wilson, a pilot with 40 years experience flying aircraft that were also fighting those fires. Both will make a final flight from Abbotsford to Victoria before retiring to the museum; the aircraft to be put on display for public viewing, and Grahame volunteering as a

tour guide to show visitors how aviation shaped the province.

The aircraft was built in 1956 as a Convair 440 ‘Metropolitan’ - a twin piston-engine, all-metal airliner that seated 34 passengers in a pressurized cabin. In 1956 it entered service with Sabena Air of Belgium, where it operated for 12 years before being sold in 1968 to Frontier Airlines of Denver, Colorado, and modernized to a turboprop airliner designated the Convair 580. Frontier operated the airliner for 17 years until sold to Sierra Pacific Airlines of Tucson, Arizona, with whom it remained for a further 15 years. Exported to Canada, it was then converted to an air tanker configuration and in the year 2000 entered operations with Conair of Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Given the ending of the current fire season and following a final 22 years as an air tanker, Conair donated the retiring Convair 580 to the BC Aviation Museum.

Grahame, a BC native and Victoria resident, learned to fly at Langley, BC, in 1976. After several years of instructing and flying for small companies he began a 40-year career with Conair; first by flying light 'bird-dog' spotting aircraft and then moving on to air tankers. Looking back on his career, Wilson fondly recalled every year with Conair as 'special'. But of all the aircraft experienced over his lengthy career, Grahame considers the time he both flew and trained others on the classic Convair 580 as the most enjoyable and fulfilling. As for retirement, he admits it is 'scary and unknown' but looks forward to continuing his 48-year association with aviation through the museum. Among those who will be there to witness Grahame's final landing on his favourite aircraft will be his mother, who is in her 90s.



Photo: Courtesy Grahame Wilson

As a post-war converted turboprop civilian airliner, the Convair CV580 air tanker will compliment the museum's existing A-26 Invader, which started as a World War II twin piston-engine bomber before conversion to the air tanker role. Both aircraft are in Conair livery, and both served several decades combating forest fires in British Columbia and abroad. So important is this task to the economic and biological health of the BC forest industry, the museum also mounts a permanent display of photos, storyboards and artifacts that inform and educate visitors about aviation in the vital forestry sector.

Both the Convair CV580 and its pilot, Grahame Wilson, will find a new home at the BC Aviation Museum, located on the grounds of the Victoria International Airport on Vancouver Island. It features aircraft and displays depicting 150 years of military, commercial and private aviation history in the Province of British Columbia. For information and hours of operation go to [www.bcam.net](http://www.bcam.net). *Doug Rollins*

## Letters

I read with interest the retirement of the Convair 580, Tail #55. In the news the pilot referenced the Lake Country fire of 2017. We were camped across Okanagan Lake on that very hot and windy day, and had quite the view of this small disaster unfolding. I got a number of good photos of various aircraft in operation, including this one of #55 and the bird dog. I hope you can use this photo, and I do have other photos of this event. These photos still give me the shivers.

Best Regards

John Rodall, Ladysmith, BC



Photo: John Rodall

## **Beam Me Up, Scotty** by Doug Rollins

Beam Me Up, Scotty!



The above quote, along with classic lines such as “I’ve got no power”, “I canna change the laws of physics” , “Aye, the haggis is in the fire now for sure”, and “We need more dilithium crystals, Captain” are all associated with the character “ Scotty”; the Chief Engineer aboard the Starship Enterprise on the pioneering 1960s sci-fi television series, Star Trek. That character was played by a Canadian actor from Vancouver, BC; James Doohan.

When World War II broke out, a 20-year old Doohan signed up in 1940 and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Artillery Corps. Storming Juno Beach, France, on D-Day (6 June 1944), Doohan personally accounted for two German snipers and led his troops through a mine-field late in the day to establish a defensive perimeter on a nearby ridge. That same evening, returning from a divisional meeting around midnight, Doohan was shot six times by a nervous sentry; four in the legs, one in the hand and another in the chest.

Doohan somehow survived. A silver cigarette case given to James by his brother saved him from a fatal chest wound, but a good portion of his right, middle finger was amputated, and he suffered severe leg wounds. His damaged finger would be carefully concealed during the rest of his professional career. After a lengthy recovery back in England, he was sent for pilot training. This involved the use of an Auster AOP ; a militarized version of the American Taylorcraft sport plane that would flit around the frontlines and call in shell-fall for artillery units. Flying low and slow in an unarmed tube-and -fabric light plane over heavily armed enemy troops eager to remove a menace to their health and security was not for the faint-hearted or those hoping for a lengthy career, but Jimmy relished the thrill of it all.

Doohan proved to be a gifted pilot who could do wonders with the light and nimble little sport plane. He was posted to No. 666 (AOP) Squadron at Andover, England, as a Royal Canadian Artillery Officer flying in support of 1st Army Group Royal Artillery. One day in the spring of 1945 he was challenged to do the impossible; fly the little Auster on a slalom course through a line of telephone poles that bordered nearby mountains. Most thought this impossible with the need to duck under the wires and not strike the ground below, the tight turns required by the mountain, and the need to

execute the rapid but precise control inputs dictated by the close spacing of the poles. The large crowd assembled to witness this attempt was amazed when Doohan pulled it off. Word of the feat spread rapidly and he was soon labeled “the craziest pilot in the Canadian Air Force”. However, the war ended before Doohan was able to demonstrate his prowess with the Auster on the battlefield .

Now back in Canada, Doohan fell into radio and television work and in the early 1950s was cast as forest ranger Timber Tom in the Canadian version of Howdy Doody, and in a pioneering Canadian sci-fi series; Space Command. The latter series also featured a future Star Trek cast member, William Shatner. For 50 years, James Doohan was credited with roles in thousands of radio, TV and film productions including The Twilight Zone, Outer Limits, The Fugitive, Bewitched, Fantasy Island, Magnum P.I, Bonanza, The Man From U.N.C.L.E. and Hazel. However, it was in his role as the irrepressible Scotty, the Chief Engineer on the Starship Enterprise, that forever defined Doohan. He passed away in 2005 at the age of 85.

Normally this would have been the end of a legendary epic, but for James Doohan, the story continues to this day. Honouring a final wish to be “... laid to rest under the stars”, in the fall of 2005 Doohan’s ashes were shot into space on a brief suborbital flight before parachuting back to earth. Then, in August of 2008 they were launched on a Falcon 1 rocket with the intention of being placed in low earth orbit. Unfortunately, the launch failed and the payload was destroyed during re-entry. Undaunted, some of Doohan’s ashes were aboard the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft when it was successfully orbited in May of 2012 during a test flight of the Falcon 9 rocket. The spacecraft re-entered the atmosphere about a month later and was destroyed.

And then, on Christmas Day of 2020 it was revealed that a few of Doohan’s ashes had been smuggled aboard the International Space Station in 2008 by Richard Garriott. He is the son of an American astronaut, Owen Garriot, and a wealthy video game developer who paid about \$30 million each for two flights to the space station aboard a Soviet Soyuz spacecraft. Some of Doohan’s ashes were laminated on a card memorializing the actor and slipped under a floor-panel of the Columbus



Module of the space station, where they remain to this day. And so, over 100 years after his birth on Planet Earth, some mortal remains of the actor who portrayed Scotty still range in what was referred to in the legendary Star Trek series as The Final Frontier.

**Who Am I?** I am a figure involved in aviation (and other things). Can you guess who I am from the clues below? Submit your answer to [norsemannews@bcam.net](mailto:norsemannews@bcam.net) to gain recognition (verbal only, alas) in the next newsletter!

1. I was born in eastern Canada a few years before the start of the Great Depression.
2. Too young to fight in the Second World War, instead I joined the Air Cadets part way through the war. This led to the first time I left the ground, as a cadet-passenger in an RCAF Avro Anson.
3. Cost was always an object; I was only able to pay for a half-hour at a time, but I was able to score time toward my private licence. Never mind "8 Hours to Solo", I made my first solo after fewer than four hours.
4. The military was not recruiting in the immediate postwar years, so I kept at private flying and eventually acquired a commercial licence, intending to become a bush pilot.
5. When the RCAF began actively recruiting in 1950, I followed some friends and joined up. This was the beginning of a long and interesting career with Canada's air force, where I flew as a fighter pilot for more than three decades – including being a founding member of Canada's first aerobatic team.

The correct answer to last issue's Who Am I, Rolie Moore, was submitted by Cheryl Thorpe and Mike Valenti **Congrats!**

**The British Columbia Aviation Museum**  
**1910 Norseman Road, Sidney, B.C. V8L 5V5**  
**Ph. 250 655 3300 Website: [www.bcam.net](http://www.bcam.net)**

**Your Board of Directors:**

President:	Laura Lavin	250 889 5105	<a href="mailto:president@bcam.net">president@bcam.net</a>
Vice President:	Peter Garnham	250 727 1150	<a href="mailto:petergarnham@bcam.net">petergarnham@bcam.net</a>
Secretary:	Cindy Ingram	250 589 3863	<a href="mailto:cindyingram@bcam.net">cindyingram@bcam.net</a>
Treasurer:	Mike Ingram	250 881 2660	<a href="mailto:mikeingram@bcam.net">mikeingram@bcam.net</a>
Directors :	Dave Jackson	250 656 0254	<a href="mailto:davejackson@bcam.net">davejackson@bcam.net</a>
	John McManus		<a href="mailto:johnmcmanus@bcam.net">johnmcmanus@bcam.net</a>
	Richard Mosdell	250 507 1441	<a href="mailto:richardmosdell@bcam.net">richardmosdell@bcam.net</a>
	Steve Nichol	250 884 3915	<a href="mailto:stevenichol@bcam.net">stevenichol@bcam.net</a>
	Pat Phillips	250 652 4201	<a href="mailto:patphillips@bcam.net">patphillips@bcam.net</a>

**Other Very Nearly Important People:**

Administrative Assistant::	Julia Cairns	250 655 3300	<a href="mailto:juliacairns@bcam.net">juliacairns@bcam.net</a>
Aircraft Archives/Librarian:	Doug Rollins	250 655 3300	<a href="mailto:library@bcam.net">library@bcam.net</a>
Artifacts:	Michelle Harris		<a href="mailto:artifacts@bcam.net">artifacts@bcam.net</a>
Membership Records:	Bob Saunders	250 889 1228	<a href="mailto:accounts@bcam.net">accounts@bcam.net</a>
Volunteer Coordinator	Peter Garnham		<a href="mailto:petergarnham@bcam.net">petergarnham@bcam.net</a>
Restoration Shop Manager	Clive Sparks	250 889 8040	<a href="mailto:clivesparks@bcam.net">clivesparks@bcam.net</a>
Gift Shop	Darlene Melnyk		<a href="mailto:giftshop@bcam.net">giftshop@bcam.net</a>
Norseman Newsletter:	Dave Byrnes	778 848 4677	<a href="mailto:norsemannews@bcam.net">norsemannews@bcam.net</a>
General Enquiries:	Julia Cairns	250 655 3300	<a href="mailto:juliacairns@bcam.net">juliacairns@bcam.net</a>
Ground Maintenance:	Sally Atton	250 656 9464	<a href="mailto:robotton@shaw.ca">robotton@shaw.ca</a>
eBay Sales	Sandy Peel	250 658 5171	<a href="mailto:sandypeel@bcam.net">sandypeel@bcam.net</a>

**Please contact Editor at: [norsemannews@bcam.net](mailto:norsemannews@bcam.net) with your ideas and comments for future newsletters** or in writing to

The Editor, Norseman News, BCAM, 1910 Norseman Road, Sidney, B.C. V8L 5V5 CANADA