



Project North Star Newsletter

February 2006

Come on in ...



We're just about to attempt to unravel the mysteries of the knurled knob, so any assistance would be appreciated.

Tex

Tex Houston, aka Norm, our tripod crane specialist, has de-camped for those big open spaces where a guy who's used to shooting from the hip will have a chance to sharpen his six-shooter skills.



Now on course in the Mexican border region, Tex is researching the early history of the crane. We have been informed that the Greeks used a 50 foot crane which was "...all wood except for the pulley blocks and all operated by man power! (electricity was in short supply) It could lift 20 ton sections of stone pillars and rolled sideways on Beech wood rollers lying on wooden rails."

Let's hope the natives are friendly, the longhorns steer clear of the roadways, and the tumbleweeds keep tumblin' along.

Boffo Boffins

The Boffins at NRC are assisting the Project North Star Stalwarts, and have created what



appears to be an oversized jar opener.

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We are indeed very grateful, although lacking jars of such huge dimensions we will endeavour



to find a suitable application. A fine bunch of boffins they are, and many thanks for that delicious catered lunch. The *Masi Serego*



Alighieri Valipolicella Classico Superiore Anniversario 650 Anni 2000 was a fine complement to the meal.

Ted's PowerPack Engine Stand™

The PowerPack was an aviation first copied by many other manufacturers. The 12 cylinder Merlin PowerPack unit was standardized to allow quick exchange. *Ted's PowerPack Engine*

Stand™ is a massive welded steel frame of great size and strength, uniquely designed to hold and transport the Merlin PowerPack unit. The 27 litre 12 cylinder Merlin engine with accessories and PowerPack weighs about 3000 pounds. New elements added or under construction include: four large square plates bolted to the back of the frame, an inverted V-shaped front prop support, and a coat of glossy blue. Currently on the drawing board: a prop shaft support clamp. Design and fabrication courtesy of *Ted Devey*.



Ed Hogan

The third in a series of volunteer bios

Ed was born and grew up in Toronto. His first experience with flying was with 400 Squadron - City of Toronto - as an armament tech on



Vampires. This kept him very busy, since the Vampire had *four on the floor* (four 20mm. cannon under the pilot's feet). "You had to

remove the cannons and ammo from the plane and dismantle each cannon - lube, clean, then re-assemble - the cannon openings were covered and flags were hung on the fabric to indicate the plane was armed." After finishing school, Ed joined the RCAF regular force with the rank of LAC (Leading AirCraftsman). He trained as an aeroengine tech at Camp Borden on Rolls Royce Merlins c. 1953. This was the golden age of the RCAF - the fifth largest air force in the world and arguably the best. Ed was sent to Rockcliffe with 408 photo squadron, and hence to Whitehorse, Churchill, and Cambridge Bay to fly on mapping excursions aboard Lancasters, Dakotas, Cansos, and single-engine Otters. Distances were measured with LORAN (Long-Range Aid to Navigation) so that the maps were accurate. The Lancs were modified with long range fuel tanks, the turrets were removed, and renamed *AR Lancasters*. Ed decided to leave the air force in 1957. In an attempt to dissuade Ed, Squadron Leader Brown made Ed an offer he could refuse: "If you re-sign, you can be a corporal in six months!"

Ed joined Spartan Air Service and took part in high-level photo excursions in Mosquitoes. Spartan had just sold their small fleet of P-38's. The Mossies were doped silver. "At Spartan I worked on Mosquitoes, DC-3's, and Canso's -- changing engines and doing maintenance. I was with Spartan for three years. I spent one summer as a flight engineer on the Canso* doing magnetometer surveys near Lynn Lake and Churchill. This was all done at 1000 feet and the turbulence was constant. About this time two Cansos were lost up North in glassy-water landings. In 1957 Spartan started a helicopter section, and I decided that might be a good idea (operating Bell 47's - the bubble-canopied MASH helicopter), so I trained as an A/C Maintenance Engineer/category 5."

At that time Spartan got a contract with DND to provide support for the Mid-Canada Line (which ran from Hopedale, Labrador across to Great Whale on Hudson's Bay and continued west). Using Vertol H21 helicopters owned by DND but with civilian registration, Spartan had to supply each station with food, fuel and general

*named after the Canso Strait

support. The stations were about thirty to forty miles apart and had diesel-electric generators. "We had five H21's at Knob Lake, Labrador and three H21's at Great Whale River. The Mid-Canada Line was a microwave warning system. There was a lot of bad weather flying -- we almost lost two helicopters."

"In one instance the big cooling fan on the front of the engine failed, and a partial power landing took place on a frozen lake. The crew was rescued by helicopter and we spent a couple of days on the lake fixing the fan. In the second instance, the engine swallowed a valve, so we swapped the engine on the frozen lake. Sling delivery of the replacement engine was by helicopter, and the old one was slung out. The work this time took three days, with the temperature at or below -45 degrees F."

"We moved as a family to Shefferville (a town built by the Iron Ore Co. of Canada), and lived in a house trailer for 18 months. The trailer was sited right beside a gravel air strip. A grocery store, movie theatre, and Hudson's Bay store were the key features of the downtown core. I hunted caribou and ptarmigan."

"Each station was set up with a main facility where techs could live. Another building was set aside for equipment storage. One day an electronics technician left his workbench in one building to get something from the storage building. As soon as he opened the door to the storage building he was killed by a black bear. The door was kept locked, but the bear had come in through a window in search of the canned food. We lost a helicopter at the Hopedale, Labrador main radar station, which was about 100 miles North of Goose Bay."

"About 1963 I was offered an opportunity to train as a pilot, so I went to work for Universal Helicopters in Carp. I got my commercial fixed-wing licence with Bradley Air Services and a commercial helicopter licence. At Universal I flew Bell 47's and Hillier 12e's. Universal was a general charter service - working for the Geological Survey of Canada, and doing spraying, forestry, and firefighting work. Spent two summers in the Arctic Islands doing a geological survey - three months at a time living in tents. You would fly lines using aerial photos, accompanied by a *rock doctor*

(geologist). Also, recreationally, we would get in some terrific fishing. Arctic Char and speckled trout were in abundance. I made a lot of trips up and down the Mackenzie River, and around Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake."

"The Canso would land on the lake, dump off fuel drums, then set up fuel caches along lines we would have to fly in the helicopter. We would run across polar bears fairly regularly, as well as musk oxen, foxes and wolves. After a couple of years with Universal, I moved to Newfoundland – the company had got a contract with the Newfoundland Forestry Service, which was based out of St. John's. One other duty -- we looked for poachers in the Avalon Peninsula and down the Burin Peninsula. We enjoyed really good salmon fishing in the Avalon Peninsula."

"After Newfoundland, in 1968, I joined the Canadian Coast Guard – moved back to Ottawa, and continued to fly helicopters. By mid-June I was assigned to an icebreaker. We flew to Quebec City or Halifax to join up with an icebreaker. The icebreaker would clear a channel for the supply ships and oil barges that re-supplied all the outposts: Pond Inlet, Cambridge Bay, Resolute. One summer we picked up a mini-sub in Thule and took it up to Lancaster Sound. They put down listening devices which were recovered the following year. Another year we helped the S.S. Manhattan attempt the Northwest Passage. I was on the C.C.G.S. *Labrador* that summer." (note: the oil supertanker S.S. Manhattan came back with a big hole in the side)

"In 1974 I got a transfer to Prince Rupert where I flew the Sikorsky S61 -- the commercial version of the navy Sea King. I re-supplied lighthouses up and down the West coast. We were based at the heliport in Prince Rupert. The seaplane base was on an island opposite Prince Rupert."

"In about 1976 I was appointed as a civil aviation inspector after one year of training, and transferred from Ottawa to Edmonton. My duties included carrying out safety inspections on commercial carriers and doing pilot proficiency checks on helicopter pilots. On occasion, I discovered serious maintenance deficiencies, and unqualified chief pilots. In '84 I

was transferred back to Ottawa."

"*One guy died on my shoulder.* I was working at the Prescott Coast Guard base and I got a call from Search and Rescue at Trenton asking if I could pick up a lighthouse keeper who was having chest pains. I went out to the island (this was in a Bell 47) which was located at the far eastern end of the Thousand Islands, and as soon as I landed a guy about 55 walked out to the helicopter, climbed aboard, strapped himself in – and then I took off. Fifteen minutes over the lake I heard a grunt, and he fell over onto my shoulder. I needed both hands to fly the helicopter, so I continued on to Kingston Airport, where I was met by paramedics."

"The most enjoyable job I had: flying the Sikorsky S-61 out of Prince Rupert. The great scenery included mountains, whales, sunbathers, and a species of small deer unique to the Queen Charlotte Islands."



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