



## Aviation Memorabilia Newsletter

Since 1995



**Maritime Central Airways DC-4**

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the NetLetter, an Aviation based newsletter for Air Canada, TCA, CP Air, Canadian Airlines and all other Canadian based airlines that once graced the Canadian skies.

The NetLetter was created in 1995 by [Vesta Stevenson](#) (RIP) and [Terry Baker](#) and is published on the **second and fourth weekend** of each month. If you are interested in Canadian Aviation History, and vintage aviation photos, especially as it relates to Trans-Canada Air Lines, Air Canada, Canadian Airlines International and their constituent airlines, then we're sure you'll enjoy this newsletter. Our website is located at [www.thenetletter.net](http://www.thenetletter.net)



## **Women in Aviation**

**Okanagan Pionairs Profile - Gretchen Aird Dawson**



The year was **1951** and a young girl named **Gretchen Wood Aird** who was born and raised on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, relocated with her family to Canada, settling in Toronto. It wasn't long before Gretchen's father's work took the family to Winnipeg then on to Vancouver where Gretchen completed her education. Her claim to fame while in Vancouver was babysitting Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau's** Mother, **Margaret**

### **Sinclair.**

It was in Vancouver where this attractive young lady set her sights on becoming a stewardess with the then **Trans-Canada Air Lines**, she was accepted by the airline and completed her in-flight training in Montreal in May of 1960.

Initially based in Toronto, Gretchen was transferred to Vancouver, however her longing to fly the Caribbean routes took her back to Toronto, where she eventually left the Airline in 1966.

Gretchen served as stewardess and occasionally purser on the North Star, Super Constellation as well as the Viscount, Vanguard and the DC-8. She flew on the inaugural DC-8 return flight to Montreal to attend TCA's training school.

She served the company with a passion and that passion led to the creation of **Canadian Maple Wings Association** in 1980, an association of Stewardesses and Flight Attendants that Gretchen started in 1977. Canadian Maple Wings Association (CMWA) has grown and remains a social entity of a proud group of wonderful men and women who strive to preserve TCA and AC's aviation history as well as continuing to nurture the airline family.

Gretchen was also instrumental in having CMWA members hostess the **TCA Wartime Pilots Reunion** in Toronto in 1983. Additionally she organized CMWA members as volunteers at the **Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum** in restoring **Canada's Lancaster MK.X VR-A** for its debut flight in Toronto in 1988. Working with Air Canada, Gretchen arranged to have original Stewardesses on board their 50th anniversary celebration of "**Sentimental Journey**" for the L10-A CF-TCC flight across Canada to all 50 stations that TCA and AC had

served over the past 50 years. Eight wonderful ladies, (CMWA) members were selected to do the job. Incredible PR for Air Canada!

She continues to volunteer for several organizations and served as an Airport Ambassador at YLW from 1999 to 2009, for ten years. Now that is dedication!

Gretchen has one son and two loving grandsons who reside in Cochrane, Alberta. She and husband Jim reside in Lake Country in the interior of BC. A somewhat brief career, but one full of fond memories and lifetime friendships.

(Reprinted from **Pionairs Okanagan District newsletter** - Spring/Summer 2017).



## Reader Photos

## Submitted

**Neil Burton** has sent us this information –



What began as a search for a photo, to obtain names, and a date, has ended up in a paper on a tour of **Prince Philip** to B.C and Canada's north.

Photo is courtesy of **Mrs. Smuland**, widow of late **A.W. (Al) Smuland** (1928-2005).

Al was a **Pacific Western Airlines** pilot on Fulton Field (Kamloops Airport) from 1955 to the early 1960's.

**Photo:** Photographer, reception committee, location and year all unknown. Image not located in Vancouver Sun, nor Victoria Daily Colonist during period of Royal tour.



Here's a photo of **Al Smuland**, PWA pilot with **CF-HEP**. It appears this aircraft was part of the PWA fleet from late 1956 to 1960.



[Click Here](#) to read the full story submitted by **Mr. Burton.**



## TCA/AC People Gallery



 **airOntario**

 **airNova**

 **NWT air**



### **In the beginning... how it all began.**

*In 1937, Canada parliament created a Bill (74) to cover the establishment of Trans-Canada Air Lines.*

Following are excerpts from the Parliamentary debates from 1937.

### **JOURNALS : SENATE JOURNALS, 18TH PARLIAMENT, 21ND SESSION : VOL. 75.**

Measures have been enacted to provide for the establishment of a **Trans-Canada Air Service**, and for revision of the capital structure of the **Canadian National Railways**.

#### **Trans-Canada Air Lines Act. 1937:**

- **April 5** - A message was brought from the House of Commons by their clerk to return Bill (74), intituled: "An Act to establish a corporation to be known as Trans-Canada Air Lines," to which they desire the concurrence of the Senate.

The said Bill was read for the first time, and with leave of the Senate, it was ordered: That it be placed on the Orders of the Day for the second reading at a later stage of this sitting.

Pursuant to the Order of the Day, the Bill (74), intituled: "An Act to establish a corporation to be known as Trans-Canada Air Lines," was read the second time, and referred to the Standing Committee on Railways, Telegraphs and Harbours.

- **April 7** - The Right Honourable Senator Graham, from the Standing Committee on Railways,

Telegraphs and Harbours, to whom was referred the Bill (74), intituled: "An Act to establish a corporation to be known as Trans-Canada Air Lines," reported that they had gone through the said Bill, and had directed him to report the same to the Senate with several amendments, which he was ready to submit whenever the Senate would be pleased to receive the same.

- **April 8** - A message was brought from the House of Commons by their clerk to return Bill (74), intituled: "An Act to establish a corporation to be known as Trans-Canada Air Lines," and to acquaint the Senate that they have agreed to the amendments made by the Senate to the said Bill, without amendment.
- **April 10** - The Clerk read the titles of the Bills to be assented to, as follows: An Act to incorporate Trans-Canada Air Lines.

(Remember, it was called Trans-Canada Air Lines **NOT** Trans-Canada Airlines! - eds)

The planned change of the company name to Air Canada began June 1st 1964.

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### **Found in the "Between Ourselves" magazine issue May 1947.**

At 4:00 p.m. EST on April 15th, 1947, the **CF-TEM North Star**, TCA's new Queen of the Atlantic, left the ramp at Dorval to begin its first trans-oceanic flight to London, England via Goose Bay and Prestwick.

### **TCA inaugural to London, England.**



The crew who flew the first North Star from Montreal to Britain.

Left to right: Navigating Officer **H. T. Warkentin**, Radio Officer **A. J. Blackwood** (Flight Radio Supervisor CGTAS), First Officer **D. E.**

**McInnes**, Captain **G. W. McLaren**, **Mr. Symington**, Purser-Steward **Douglas V. Miller**, Captain **J. L. Rood**, Flight Operations Superintendent, CGTAS, who flew as check pilot on the flight.

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From the "**Horizons**" magazine issue dated **March 1981**.

On March 7th, 1981 Captain **Al Shaw** and his crew taxied up to the Edmonton cargo terminal. They had just completed the maiden flight of the company's first **Lockheed L1011-500, C-GACF** fin # 551 c/n 1202, following acceptance of the aircraft from the manufacturer in Montreal on February 26th.

Edmonton had the honour of being the first station visited and marked the official opening of the new cargo terminal. The next day the aircraft visited Calgary and then Vancouver.

On March 11th, under the command of Captains **Jim Down** and **Al Shaw**, the aircraft went on its first regular service to London, England via Edmonton.

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From the "**Between Ourselves**" magazine issue dated **November 1943**.



Here is the first executive for the Montreal T.C.A.R.A. (Trans-Canada Air Lines Recreation Association) - **George Dyce**, Secretary; **Paul Carrier**, Treasurer; **Noel Humphrys**, V.P. **Dave Tennant**, President.

Issue dated **January 1944**.

**Moncton T.C.A.R.A.** was formed on November 19th, 1943, the following were the executive elected during an event held for the Moncton personnel at the Brunswick Hotel.

**T. A. McMahon**, Chief Cargo Clerk, President; **G. L. Barbour**, Maintenance, Vice President; **S. D. Leonard**, Assistant Station Manager, Treasurer; **W. E. Weldon**, Operations Clerk, Secretary;  
(Unfortunately there was no photo available – eds)





Alan Rust

## US Diplomat Was Investigated for Spying as a Kid Because He Kept Writing Boeing Asking for Photos

(Found at [www.flightaware.com](http://www.flightaware.com))

**Note:** *Since I know that many of our readers are aviation enthusiasts or more bluntly put "aviation nuts" , I thought you may be able to relate to this story.*

By most standards, **Robert F. Dorr** lived the most all-American, patriotic life anyone possibly could. He served in the Air Force, he was a diplomat with the State Department from the 1960s to the 1980s, and he went on to be a successful author and TV pundit about military affairs. But as a teenager, Dorr was investigated by the FBI for potential espionage. His crime? He kept writing to Boeing asking for photos of their planes.

Dorr died in June 2016 from a brain tumor at the age of 76, and will be remembered for his writings on military history. But his newly released FBI file, obtained by Gizmodo through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, is actually quite humorous in retrospect, given his interests. Back in the 1950s, when he was still just a kid, the Pentagon and the FBI were concerned that he might be a spy.

**When he was 14 years old**, Dorr wrote multiple letters to companies like Boeing, asking for 8x10 glossy photos of their latest planes (see letter below). His devotion was like that of a fan enamoured with his favorite singer. But the FBI was alerted to this unusual activity and opened an investigation.

For the full story [please click here](#).

Public Relations Office  
Flight Refueling, Inc.  
Friendship International Airport  
Baltimore, Maryland

Gentlemen:

I understand that the Navy's Vought F7U-3 Cutlass can now be fueled in flight by the probe and drogue system developed by your company. I am interested in this phase of aviation, and I would like to have two 8 x 10 inch glossy photographic prints showing the F7U-3 being refueled by an AJ tanker plane. If you could send me these two photos, it would be greatly appreciated. They will not be reproduced. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

S/ Robert F. Dorr  
Robert F. Dorr



Robert Dorr in 2003



## CPAir, Canadi>n People Gallery



### Maritime Central Airways

timetable effective May 1st, 1943.

From collection of **Bjorn Larsson**.

[Click Here](#) for more MCA timetables.

See "Wayne's Wings" (below) for more about the history of MCA.

From the **PWA "Flightlines"** magazine issue dated **November 1986**.



**Pacific Western Team** wins 5th Annual Air B.V.I. Interline Regatta. The **Air BVI Perpetual Trophy** was won by PWA teams consisting of **Gerry Maguire, Joe Wood,**

**Kees Fransbergen**, pictured in our photo from the left.



**Forty-eight big sailboats** competed head to head with sailors from Finland, Germany, Norway, the Caribbean, Canada and the USA. There were sixteen teams sailing three boats per team.

The boat skippered by **Kees Fransbergen** placed 2nd and the boat skippered by **Spike Sheret** came 13th. The boat skippered by **Joe Wood** came 10th just ahead of **Gerry Maguire** at 11th place. The Air Canada entries came in at the 5th, 7th and 33rd, judged 4th overall.

The photo shows the **P.W.A.** employees and spouses who attended the **5th Annual Air B.V.I. Interline Regatta**. **Terry & Ruth Wiley, Dale Green, Gary & Valerie Witzman, Joe & Rita Wood, Spike & Joan Sheret, Anne Morrison, Kees Fransbergen, Dennis Nagy** and **Gerry Maguire**.

(The photo has 17 faces, but only 13 names - eds)

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Issue dated **December 1986**.

PWA company history was made on November 14th 1986 by the **Passenger Charter** department with the operation on the first revenue flight of the B737-300 aircraft **CF-PWD** fin 301 en-route to Manzanillo, Mexico commanded by **Geekie Barnes** and **Herman Linder**. The first cabin crew were **Sharon Levacque, Dorothy Muirhead, Donna Gould, Jenny Jones** and Manager, Flight Operations **Terry James**.

Two B737-300's and one B737-200 were leased from **Monarch Airlines** in the U.K. The first aircraft was

delivered on November 11th, 1986 having been flown from the U.K. to Canada via Goose Bay and Toronto.

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### Goodbye old friend.



Saturday April 26th, 1986 was recorded in P.W.A's history books, for it was on that day that the **Lockheed Electra** flew for the last time on scheduled service. The Electra was acquired by P.W.A. on March 15th, 1971 initially for

the Arctic Re-supply role. In later years it serviced many Northern Alberta and Arctic communities.

The crew who brought aircraft 182 home, from left: F/O **Dale Leschiutta**, F/A **Becky Barnett**, Captain **Bud Sawatzky**, F/A **Margaret Kennedy**, Engineer "**Shortie**" **Juengel**, 2nd Officer **Danny Buskirk**.



## Wayne's Wings



**Wayne  
Albertson**

### Maritime Central Airways

**MCA** was founded by **Carl Burke** from PEI and **Josiah Anderson** from Moncton, NB in 1941 operating in the Maritime provinces as well as Newfoundland and Labrador (before joining confederation).

Beginning with a fleet of only two aircraft, a **Boeing 247** and a **Fairchild 24**, the fleet would later grow to include six **DC-3's**, 3 **DC-4's**, one **DC-6** and a **Vickers Viscount**. By 1953, MCA was the third largest airline in Canada after TCA and CP. **Nordair** actually began life as a subsidiary of MCA in 1957 and would evolve into a major carrier on its own by the 1960's. MCA was acquired by **Eastern Provincial Airlines** in 1963.

It is always such a pleasant surprize to find that historical aircraft have been preserved for our enjoyment. The

original Boeing 247D operated by MCA was delivered to **Pacific Air Transport** in July of 1933 and would later be transferred to the **United Airlines** fleet when that airline reorganized in 1934.

**Registration NC13347** would be acquired by the **Royal Canadian Air Force** in 1940 and deployed in support of the war effort. In 1941 it was acquired to launch **MCA** and re-registered under **CF-BTB**. I have not been able to confirm the circumstances by which the aircraft was acquired by the RCAF and then MCA. Does anyone have any details to pass along?

In 1945 it began a series of leases to various airlines operating in North and South America until it was acquired by the [Museum of Flight Foundation](#) of Seattle, Washington where it has been preserved in UAL livery under its original registration NC13347.

I also found that one of the **DC-3's** has been preserved at the [Aero Space Museum](#) in Calgary, Alberta. RZJets shows the aircraft originally delivered to the **United States Air Force** and then later acquired by MCA under registration **CF-BZI** some time around 1956. It would then serve **Inter-Provincial Pipelines** of Edmonton until being acquired by **Northwest Territorial Airways Limited** and was a part of the **Buffalo Airways** fleet for the TV series [Ice Pilots NWT](#).

Pictured: Douglas DC-4 Registration CF-MCB

Sources and additional information:

[MCA at Wikipedia](#)

[MCA at WorldHistory.Biz](#)

[MCA fleet at RZJets.net](#)



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## Reader's Feedback

**Wolfgang Walter** sends us this information -

Hello Guys, I was not aware of this newsletter and will look forward to your reviews coming forward. Having read the introduction, I just wanted to point out a couple of things; **Transair** purchased **2-B737 in 1967** and the Boeing sales rep, **Hal Cope** became president for a short term.

Also interested to read about **CF-TGI** the Viscount; its last duties were with Transair and I happened to be based in northern Manitoba at the time. We put it on our Lynn Lake run, as it was in great shape and offered what would have been a luxury interior. We bought it in a deal with AC for \$1.00; did many a weight/balance during the mid '60's.

Continue the good work... **Wolf**

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**Betty Draper** has sent us this information from the **Leader-Post** issue **April 11th, 1947** -

### **Big Welcome for a Big Plane**

When a number of T.C.A. officials arrived in Regina on board one of the new four engine **DC-4** aircraft there was a large crowd to welcome them. The occasion was the 10th anniversary of the founding of Trans-Canada Air Lines. The aircraft had flown from Winnipeg and, after the brief stop at Regina, continued on to Calgary and Edmonton.

(The photo was of poor quality, but the aircraft was the North Star - eds)

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In [NetLetter nr 1359](#), we had this photo from the Regina Public Library sent to us by **Morley Plummer** with a request for the event to be identified.



**Betty Draper** has been investigating this and concludes the following is related. The photo is most likely the inaugural service held on April 3, 1939.

From the **Regina Leader Post** issue **April 1st, 1939**.

The official seal of the **City of Regina** will make one of its rare trips outside the city hall early Sunday April 3rd, 1939. At 12.10 a.m. it will be carried by the **Mayor A. C. Ellison** to the municipal airport, to affix the city seal and the mayor's signature to a parchment scroll of congratulations aboard an east-bound Trans-Canada Air Lines plane, one of the first two inaugural passenger flights.

The scroll was being carried up the Pacific coast April 1st morning by **United Airlines** and before it reaches **Regina**

will have been signed by the mayors of **Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Lethbridge** and **Vancouver**.

When it reaches **Montreal**, it will have been signed by the mayors of **Regina, Winnipeg, North Bay, Toronto** and **Ottawa**. The scroll will be presented to **Prime Minister W. L. MacKenzie King**.

Two passengers destined for Regina will be aboard the Trans-Canada Air Lines plane that roars out of Toronto airport Saturday night to inaugurate the west-bound passenger run of T.C.A.

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From **Leader-Post** issue **April 3, 1939**.

Crew for the east-bound flight were **Captain Bruce Middleton**, First Officer **Bill Barnes** and Stewardess **Miss Norte Wallace**. On the west-bound plane, the crew were **Captain Lewis Leigh**, First Officer **Gil McLaren** and Stewardess **Margaret Wilson**. Bad weather over the mountains and at the Pacific coast put a crimp in the first day's passenger flight. At noon Monday the first west-bound plane, which did not stop at **North Bay** because of fog, went on to **Kapuskasing** and had passed through **Regina** early Sunday, was still grounded at **Lethbridge**.

The second west-bound plane, through Regina early Monday, was also grounded at Lethbridge. The east-bound first flight also ran into trouble with weather. The plane was grounded by snow at Ottawa, and passengers, including **Mrs. E. Flaherty** a member of the Vancouver's "Flying Seven" executive women's flying club, completed the last lap to Montreal by train. The second east-bound flight was being held at Vancouver waiting improved weather conditions.

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**Russell Brown** has sent us this information referring to the photos sent in by **Alan Way** in [NetLetter nr 1361](#).

The photos of unknown RCAF aircraft at **Stevenson Field** in 1931 are **United States Army Air Corps Martin B-10 bombers** that entered service in 1934. They were state of the art for the time, faster than any fighter aircraft in service. These photos are very rare as they show what must be an American squadron visit about 1935 - 1940.





## Odds and Ends

**For many people, flying is an experience to look forward to**, thanks to the aircraft's ability to shrink the world for the purposes of business, pleasure or adventure. More than 60 years since the dawn of the commercial jet age, making a flight is statistically proven to be safer than the journey to and from the airport by road or rail.

Despite the huge advances in technology, operating standards and safety over the past several decades, for some, the prospect of leaving the ground in a jet-propelled metal tube is a terror inducing threat that can keep them from visiting friends and family, going on holiday or advancing their careers. So, how can those with an overwhelming dread of flying be helped to address their fears?

For the past 30 years, **British Airways** has sought to do just this through a regular series of courses staged at locations in the UK and overseas open to people who want to beat their phobia and to the skies. Named "**Flying with Confidence**", the initiative is run at **London's Heathrow** and **Gatwick airports**, and additionally at **Dublin, Edinburgh, Manchester, Dubai** and **Johannesburg**.

For the nervous flyer, however, no amount of statistics can remove the fear that something might happen to them. While many who are feeling such unease may get themselves through the flight experience somehow - by perhaps resorting to medications or alcohol. BA notes that one in four people has a fear in flying.

(source [Flight International February 2017](#))

(I remember many years ago, **Mike Jackman** (Certificated Aircraft Technician) used to hold similar classes out of the Air Canada hangar in YVR - Alan)



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## Terry's Trivia and Travel Tips

Terry Baker, co-founder of the NetLetter scours the internet for aviation related Trivia and Travel Tips for you,

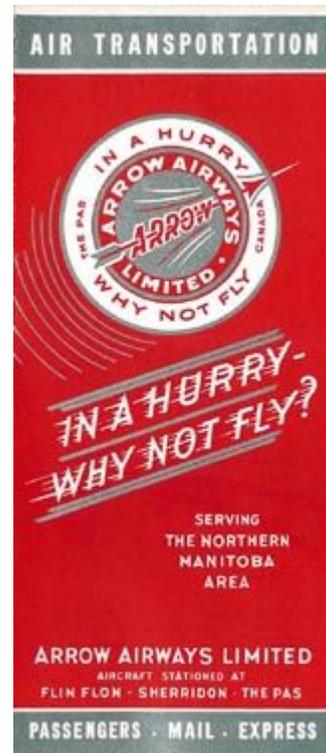


Terry  
Baker

our readers, to peruse.

**Arrow Airways Limited** timetable  
effective November 1st, 1939.

From collection of  
**Bjorn Larsson.**



### **PARK 'N' FLY.**

Aeroplan partner, **Park 'N Fly**, is offering all active and retired **Air Canada employees** an opportunity to save 25 percent when parking at all Park 'N Fly airport facilities across Canada.

For a list of airport parking facilities, visit the [Park 'N Fly Web site](#). To take advantage of this discount, present your Air Canada identification card, business card, or a letter confirming employment. You must use this current code at exit: 31737 \*\*\*

\*\*\* This current code is subject to change and expiry date depending on the airport facility used.



## **Smileys**

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Our cartoon by Frank Freeland is from the "**Between Ourselves**" magazine issued **February 1955**.



Terry Baker | Alan Rust | Wayne Albertson  
Ken Pickford (missing from photo)  
NetLetter Staff for 2017  
(you can read our bios at [www.thenetletter.net/history](http://www.thenetletter.net/history))