

# TURN AND BANK



Winter 2016

## Remembering Dan McGowan

*Alex Routh*

MY FRIEND DAN MCGOWAN died on Thursday night the 6th of October with his two devoted girls by his side, Honey his dog, and his true friend Robin McNamara. He will be missed. All my nonagenarian friends have died in the last 3 years, and all were Chapter 85 flying club buddies Dan McGowan, Charlie Longstaff and Alf Spence and a generation has now passed with Dan.

Dan grew up in Surrey and joined the RCAF at the age of 18 and became a pilot but never went overseas. He trained on Tiger Moths, got a few hours in Harvards, got 30 hours in Bristol Bolingbroke (Blenheim Mark IV's) and ended the war with 1200 hours almost all on Avro Ansons flying training missions for aircrew of all trades.

During the war several incidents stand out. One was when he was training as an airman, an Airspeed Oxford landed at his station and parked in a hangar. In the evening this was swarmed by the excited trainees because they'd never seen a multi-engine aircraft before. Everything was innocent fun until somebody pulled the landing gear lever in the cockpit and the Oxford sank to the ground. Dan said you've never seen people disappear so fast. They never found the guilty culprit and there was little damage.

There was an incident with a Bolingbroke he told me about where there was a failure to lockwire a gascolator properly resulting in a fire where he witnessed the crew burn to death. Kevin Maher mentioned that Dan rescued somebody from an aircraft on fire but he never mentioned that to me. Dan also had an engine failure with an Anson on take-off at night and landed straight ahead just running off the end of the runway with no damage. Dan's favourite version of the Anson was the

Mark 1 with the Cheetah engines which he said were very reliable, more so than the Jacobs.

Dan told me he always wanted to go overseas but they never let him. You don't necessarily have a choice in the military, but there was another factor. He was an excellent pilot there's no doubt, and that would have been reason enough to send him on active service after a training tour, but biology was against Dan as he had a growth spurt with all that good air force food ending up being 6'6" tall. Military airplanes are designed for average height bodies and most fighter aircraft for smaller than average, so he would not have fit in many, if any, operational types being that tall.

Dan consequently had a relatively safe war on prairie RCAF stations doing an important but unglamorous job. He grew so tall that the cuffs of his original issue battle dress jacket were inches above his wrists and trouser bottoms inches above his ankles causing an awkward flood pant look when not wearing flying boots. The quartermaster supply puked refused to exchange his uniform for a proper fitting one, even after he had patched the worn out knees and ankles. They of course were always wearing perfectly new kit. When the war ended Dan was a Warrant Officer 2nd Class (the 2nd highest non-commissioned rank attainable) and I think fed up and bored. In retrospect, he knew he had a safe war because so many of his friends didn't make it back. We looked at a group photo one day and he pointed out at all the faces he knew that didn't return.

After the war, Dan spent time farming, working in Ocean Falls and but eventually came back to aircraft working for Canadian Aircraft Products Building Floats. Kevin Maher described his career this way: Dan became a skilled sheet metal worker and machinist and spent much of his career building tooling and prototyping. A couple of his achievements were helping with the installation of the Twin Otter on floats when none of the

high priced engineers could get it right. He also installed water scooping floats on a Rockwell Thrush agricultural aircraft, turning it into a water bomber years before anyone else thought of the concept.

Dan eventually got involved in EAA Chapter 85 building a Stits Playboy which he put 1200 hours on before selling it. He was involved in restoration projects and was co-designer of the scale SE5 replica with Goguillot and the plans were drawn up by Tony Swain. They each built one and flew them to Oshkosh and made the cover of the EAA magazine. One had an engine failure on the way and made a forced landing. Later Dan was fooling around over Mud Bay in his SE5 and did a falling leaf maneuver that he couldn't recover from and crashed in the mud above the tide line. This resulted in back problems which plagued him for the rest of his life. His doctor late in life declared that Dan had a high mileage back as Dan was complaining about chronic back pain. He was losing inches and the Doctor couldn't believe had been 6'6" as he ended up losing at least 7" in height.

Dan's Playboy is still flying apparently, and the SE5 in the Langley Museum is Dan's even though it has "Gogi" painted on the side. Gogi was a director of the museum and that's why they did that. Tony Swain related an anecdote to me about his first flight in the SE5 where Dan, always a man of few words, was pre-flying the airplane with him and Tony was firing questions at Dan regarding the important speeds and procedures. Dan didn't really answer them and eventually looked Tony up and down replying impatiently, 'It's just an airplane!'

My friend Alf Spence had a 51' white Rolls Royce Silver Dawn and he had a business renting it out dressed in a chauffeur's uniform to wedding parties but only on one condition, that he and his wife be invited to the reception. I thought this a very strange request and asked him why. He said that after reaching a certain age you have outlived all your friends



Left: Jim Stunden (left) and Erich Munzer (right) discuss the chapter project with COPA president Bernard Gervais. Says Mr. Gervais: "This is the future". Below, Some fine gentlemen sport the Chapter 85 BBQ aprons for sale just in time for Christmas! Contact your executive for details.



## President's Report

Peter Whittaker / December 2016

A number of events have taken place at Delta Airpark and RAA Chapter 85 which have involved the Zenith 750 Cruiser project and Delta Airpark. The first of these was the move to get the pre-cover inspection for the Cruiser completed and then to get the fuselage off of the work table and onto its landing gear. This was completed in mid-September when the pre-cover inspection was carried out by MDRA inspector Jim Asprey on September 14th. With the inspection completed and approval given to proceed to final inspection, building got underway again and the fuselage was connected to its landing gear, lifted off of the workbench and it stood on its own gear for the first time on October 22nd. Since then, work has focussed on the wings, cockpit structure and the empennage. Saturdays have become the prime building day for members and visitors from Delta Airpark frequently drop in to check on progress. The Continental O-200 engine and accessories have been delivered Aero Sport Power in Kamloops for its initial assessment prior to rebuild. Eric Munzer (VP elect for 2017) has taken on the instrument panel building and most instruments plus the radio, transponder and intercom have been acquired.

The group decision was also made to install a Dynon Skyview system for flight and engine instruments and this is yet to be purchased.

In October, Peter Murphy donated a Microsoft flight simulator complete with flight controls, engine controls and three monitors. Peter is busy checking members out for simulator flying with a nominal fee being charged to help offset Cruiser 750 costs. This is a great way to stay familiar with the area during the current and lengthy wet season and to also stay dry while flying. At the October general membership meeting, which is our Annual General Meeting, elections were held for 2017 Executive and Directors. Most of the positions were retained by acclamation, of note were the election of José Font as Secretary and he takes over from Bruce Prior after years of stellar service in this role. Heidi Bekker stepped down as VP and Eric Munzer stepped forward and was elected as VP. Tom Boulanger will carry on as Treasurer and the membership will have to put up with yours truly as President for another year. The full list of Directors and the Executive will be posted on the Chapter website.

November has seen more wet and dreary weather with the exception of Remembrance Day which provided decent flying weather. John Macready coordinated

the days' events which involved 160 people in attendance and included Richmond 655 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets for the ceremony plus a flypast by 3 Harvards. After the ceremony, soup and buns were served to about 120 people resulting in no leftovers.

On November 16th, Boundary Bay Flying Club and Chapter 85 hosted a presentation by COPA CEO Bernard Gervais at the Chapter 85 roundhouse. Bernard gave a presentation on the current state of general aviation in Canada. Bernard was also given a pre-meeting tour of the Chapter 85 Zenith 750 Cruiser building project. Homebuilt or amateur built aircraft are recognized as a growth area in general aviation in Canada and the USA.

Our final event for the year will be at our next general membership meeting on the first Tuesday in December, and that is the Christmas Party and Potluck. This fall and the year in general has been an active one for the membership. The focus has certainly been on the 750 Cruiser building project, however Remembrance Day and the Annual Fly-In at the end of June were both events that benefited from a dedicated membership. As President, my sincere thanks go out to everyone in the Chapter for your efforts and enthusiasm since this is what really makes Chapter 85 tick.

### RECREATIONAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION CANADA

Vancouver Chapter 85

General Meeting

Tuesday November 1 2016

**Attendance:** 22 members attended. Executive Committee members attending: Tom Boulanger,

Shawn Connelly, George Gregory, Eric Munzer, Tim Novak, Bruce Prior, Hugo Regier, Sebastien Seykora, and Peter Whittaker.

**Call to Order:** At 1933 by President Peter.

**Minutes:** Motion (Lalonde/Macready) that the Minutes of the 4 October 2016 General Meeting be adopted. Carried.

### Tonight's Program

ATC's Nick Hill spoke about IFR and VFR procedures in the Lower Mainland. Members had been requested to bring their VTA charts to follow along with Nick's discussion. (when Nick asked to see a VTA from the audience, Mark obliged by passing him his 1985 edition...).

Nick told us that 14 of the 27 controllers at ATC are pilots. He also advised that there is some new phraseology: we should say, "...have traffic in sight" and not, "...have the traffic." Also in the western part of the Lower Mainland VFR airspace (mostly over Surrey and Coquitlam), the VFR ceiling is 2500 feet. Nick recommended flying below 2000 feet since the jets sometimes are at 3000 feet when passing through that area. Following Nick, Eric presented his circuit schematic for the Cruiser 750 instrument panel. A key feature will be a Dynon Skyview Engine Management System (EMS). A copy of the schematic is included with these minutes.

**Financial Report** Tom reported that we have \$19,100 in the bank, \$7,700 in chequing. We will end the year with about \$4,000 in chequing, and \$15,000 total. He advised we could spend up to \$10,000 on the Cruiser this year if needed. So far the Cruiser cost is \$39,200. A copy of Tom's report will be filed with the file copy of these minutes.

#### **New and Ongoing Business**

**Election Update:** Peter reported that Heidi had to step down after being elected a Director at the AGM. Cyril Hendersong has agreed to run for another 3-year term. Another Director needs to be found since Shawn Connelly was "re-elected" when he still had a year to run. The Executive Committee will work something out at their next meeting.

**Flight Simulator:** Two members have signed up, and five more are checked out. Two persons can be checked out at the same time. There was discussion on payment methods and it was agreed that, for now, members will log their time, and payment for their checkout and their flying hours will be on the honour system.

**Remembrance Day Ceremony and Lunch:** John reported that the planning is coming along well. The participants for the Ceremony process are lined up. Annie Boulanger will lead the food service team; she has a great recipe for the traditional soup. We have new flags and they need to be installed before Friday 11 November. We will need help on the day to roll out Trevor's Stearman and return it after the day's activities are over. The Ceremony Brochure/Program is posted on the Air Park Website (<http://www.deltaheritageairpark.org>).

#### **Committee Reports**

**Membership:** 2017 membership dues can be paid anytime (\$40/year for RAA national members and \$55/year for non-national members. The additional \$15 goes toward the meeting insurance provided by RAA national.

**Hangar and Workshop:** No report.

**Aircraft:** Peter Murphy has talked to the owner at Aerosport Power in Kamloops. Aerosport has agreed to evaluate our Continental O-200 at no cost. This is a sponsorship arrangement. If we agree to have them fix/rebuild it, there would be a charge for that. The engine should be delivered to them as soon as possible.

We are looking for donations or pre-payments of flight time for the Cruiser Project. We have received three \$100 donations to date and these were used to cover the added cost of the Matco slave cylinders for brakes on the co-pilot side. The simulator has earned \$100. Bruce will donate a Sigtronics SPA-400 Intercom with circuit diagram for installation. Custodian: No discussion.

**Vice-President:** No report.

**DapCom:** John advised that the Management Committee met last week at the RAA Clubhouse. John, Tom and Bruce met with Metro to discuss the Agenda in advance of the MC meeting and there were no unexpected issues. There is a candidate for DapChair for 2017 but this still needs confirmation.

John also reported that the Delta Heritage Air Park Operating Rules have been posted on the Delta website. They are an addendum to the GVRD-RAA Licence Agreement and are referenced in that Agreement.

**Newsletter:** No report. George had to leave early.

**Programs:** The December meeting will be the Christmas Party. In January, Sebastien will speak on IFR approach plates using the simulator to demonstrate flying the procedures. A new Program Schedule will be developed later for the rest of 2017.

#### **Announcements**

COPA National President and CEO, Bernard Gervais, will visit Delta Heritage Air Park on Thursday 17 November. He will confer with COPA Flight 5-Boundary Bay Flying Club, and then speak at the RAA Clubhouse at 1900. All Lower Mainland COPA Flights have been invited to attend and RAA members are also welcome. Come early if you want a seat...

More details will be posted on the COPA5-BBFC website as they are finalized (<http://copa5.wordpress.com>) and on the RAA website (<http://www.raa85.ca>).

**BC Pilots Association:** Mark Garner reported on plans and activities:

A few presentations are being planned for BCPA members. One of our members of the BCPA flew his Cessna 172 down and throughout the Caribbean. He will present and discuss the trip and destinations.

Another presentation is about going in the opposite direction, to the Arctic Ocean at Barrow, Alaska. This was a trip that was done last spring and is also very interesting. When the date and place are confirmed, we will let you know more about these.

The BC Pilots Association is also putting on a Co-Pilot In A Day course for those that would like to learn a bit more about communication, navigation and some procedures. It is a great course and includes a check ride for only \$39. We will let everyone know when we have finalized dates. It is perfect for spouses, flying friends and future aviators that want to know what is going on in the cockpit.

Also planned are seminars on iPads and navigation software, including Air Navigation Pro, FltPlan Go and ForeFlight, plus some General Aviation apps that are useful.

If you are interested, have suggestions, or wish to reserve a spot, email; [events@BCPilots.org](mailto:events@BCPilots.org). Keep informed by visiting our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/BCPilots](http://www.facebook.com/BCPilots)

**Remembrance Day Ceremony:** at the Air Park, starting at 1045.

**Next Delta Breakfast:** Sunday 13 November. Sponsored by DapCom and Air Park tenants. Next Delta Breakfast hosted by RAA: Sunday 8 January 2017.

RAA Chapter 85 Breakfast Base Team  
Supplies Purchaser (Sat or earlier)  
Bruce Prior

Batter Mixer & Table setup (Fri pm)

Peter Whittaker

Open Up & Start Coffee and Grill

Gerard Van Dijk

Tea and Coffee Runner / Helper

John Macready

Cashier and Ticket Issuer Tom Boulanger

Wait Staff

John de Visser, Perry delano, Alex MacKay

Pancake Flipper Eric Munzer

Eggs and Ham Bruce Prior

CleanUp All

The table above sets out the Base Team to ensure we are always set up to go. All RAA members are encouraged to take on one of the above positions at least once a year. Volunteers meet at 0800, have breakfast, and prepare for doors to open at 0900.

Next RAA General Meeting: Tuesday 6 December, Christmas Party. Next RAA Executive Meeting: Tuesday 17 January 2017.

**Next DapCom Meeting:** Thursday 24 November.

**Adjourn:** Motion (Boulanger/Munzer): that we adjourn. Carried. And we did, at 2206.



and family, you have no social life, and you need to mix with new people! I had never considered this problem of great age and outliving everybody you knew and loved before. If this situation were compounded by lifelong bachelorhood and no children as with Dan, you might be living a very lonely existence at the end indeed, and that was the path where Dan's life was headed.

I knew Dan in the 80's but not very well. I was an expat in Asia until 2005 and returned to Vancouver and Delta Airpark. My close association with Dan came when I was spending a lot of time at Delta working on my Emeraude. I didn't have a real job and Dan was long retired at this point and I would see him all the time alone in the coffee shop. It was a daily ritual for him to come to the Airpark, let his dog run free, and read old EAA magazines, but Delta is a lonely place most of the time especially on weekdays. I was going to the airpark one day when a car zoomed by me on Hwy 99 and I realized it was Dan. I tried to keep up with him but didn't want to go that fast. He was a more aggressive driver than I was but never seemed to get a ticket! Terry Wilshire claimed that Dan was depressed and he avoided him for that reason, but I think he was just lonely. Dan was the only guy in the coffee shop so I started to talk with him and we became friends.

I found him to be extremely well read and he consistently surprised me about his knowledge of science, history and interesting things in general, never mind his aircraft knowledge which was encyclopedic. He was a very interesting man to get to know. I started bringing my son to the airpark when he was 3 and

Dan always played with him and they were fond of each other. Naturally being a font of information, I would ask Dan about any technical problems I had and he always had good answers.

I had a problem with the Emeraude tie down points at the wingtips where there had been a little rainwater ingress. I discussed the solution I had in mind to cover the tops of the wings completely with no hole through the wing. My idea was to have a threaded insert to which you could screw a ringbolt in from the bottom anytime you needed to tie it down. The next day he presented me with a pair of machined mushroom aluminum inserts with a threaded hole. They worked perfectly. It was only after that that I learned he had two machine lathes in his basement and he could make anything. He made a beautiful propeller balancing device, he made an incredible hands free air gun riveting machine, he made his own hand rivet squeezer and on and on. Later when I had the Jodel, I had a problem with the tailwheel and needed to make my rudder horns wider where the cable attachment points are. Dan came up with the easiest modification when all other suggestions were too complicated and he even made the parts for me unsolicited!

He was always flying his Aeronca Champ with his dog. Some related the story where he was flying it from the back seat with the dog in the front and he would overtake other airplanes and hide by leaning back. It would then appear that the dog was flying the Champ from the front seat with no visible human. Dan kept his Champ outside for many years but the crows were pecking holes

in the wing fabric and it was time for him to rebuild it for the second time. At the age of 88 he rebuilt it with help from his friend Robin McNamara.

I would have done anything for him. We flew together to many places, Pender & Saltspring Islands, and Rowena and it was then that I learned about the many places that he used to fly to that had been shut down by successive property owners, we flew over those places and he would point them out to me.

Dan had a scathing intellect and a fierce sense of humour. I always told him jokes because he would get into paroxysms of laughter which was great to witness. At Christmas and Thanksgiving Robin McNamara and I would host dinner parties in the club house with Dan, Charlie Longstaff and other friends attending. We had a great circle of hangar friends and I had breakfast with Dan regularly and we would often dine together at the Sundowner or the River House Restaurant after a day of airplane fun at Delta.

Dan's lonely aging trajectory as I mentioned previously was inevitable given his lack of relatives but he did not die a lonely man at all. He had his friend's right to the end. His most loyal and precious friend was Robin McNamara who looked after him selflessly like a daughter. She looked after Dan because she liked him, enjoyed his company, was his devoted loving friend and he needed looking after. She stepped up and volunteered and did more than a fine job of that going way above and beyond the call of duty. Goodbye, old friend Dan: you will be missed. And thank you, Robin, for taking care of him for so many years.

*Don't forget to renew your memberships for 2017! Membership is \$40 or \$55 if you are not a national RAA member.*

**Volunteer for chapter activities:** we can always use people to help with upcoming chapter events like the Pancake breakfast, and of course the chapter fly-in in late June. If you want to help out, contact any member of the executive. Their contact numbers are on the club website.

## *News and Stuff*

bring them with you!

**Want to be part of the action?** Positions on the build team are open to all members, but spots are filling up fast! Let any member of the executive know if you are interested. The project is really coming along. We encourage the participation of young people as well - if you know any budding builder/aviators,

*The Turn and Bank is a Publication of Chapter 85 of the Recreational Aircraft Association of Canada. We are located at Delta Heritage Air Park 4103 104 St, Delta, BC V4K 3N3.*

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