

Bob McElman, Doc McKeil, Brian Troniak, Dave Richards, and Sophie Demers-Saulnier. The fantastic paint job was accomplished by a volunteer team from 14 AMS led by Cpl Claude Aucoin and Cpl Alex Gagne.

103 Rescue Unit

No. 103 Search and Rescue Flight had been conceived in April 1947 at RCAF Station Dartmouth to aid aircraft in distress on trans-Atlantic service. In mid-October 1947, No. 103 moved from RCAF Station Dartmouth (12 Wing Shearwater) to RCAF Station Greenwood, where in 1950 it was renamed 103 Rescue Unit. After Unification in 1968, the unit was disbanded and the remnants were absorbed by 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron. 103 Squadron was reactivated again in 1977 at CFB Gander, NF, now 9 Wing Gander.

Today, search and rescue duties in this area are the responsibility of 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron,

based at 14 Wing Greenwood, utilizing the CC-130 Hercules transport and CH-149 Cormorant helicopter.

Other Featured Attractions

The Greenwood Museum now boasts on display a Canadair Argus, Lockheed Neptune, Avro Lancaster (now under a major reconfiguration), two Lockheed T33 Silver Stars, a Boeing-Vertol Labrador Helicopter, an Avro Anson Mk II and a SAGEM Sperwer Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). In addition to the Lancaster project, Museum volunteers are currently working on a Bristol Bolingbroke MkIVT and a Piasecki H-44 "Flying Banana" helicopter, which will be displayed in the Air Park several years hence. To keep up to date on these ongoing projects, as well as other Museum activities, see the Museum's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/GMAM.CA>) and the soon-to-be-revitalized Web Page (<http://gmam.ca/>).



The Tiger Moth which Gordon Jones flew as an instructor during the war years at No. 5 EFTS, then bought as a restored aircraft in 1994 and continued to fly it. (Don Molyneux photo)

Baking, Bribery and a Tiger Moth

By John Chalmers

Gordon Jones and a Fairchild Cornell in his days as a flying instructor during the war. (Jones collection)

Gordon Jones, sporting his pilot's wings, sitting in his Tiger Moth 1214 at the High River airport in October 2011. (Don Molyneux photo)

Wings Over High River, the story of Royal Canadian Air Force flying instructor Gordon Jones, by Calgary writer Anne Gafiuk, is not the book she intended to write. What she had in mind was a wartime romance novel about a small town girl and a farm boy in the days of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), set in southern Alberta when the prairie skies were abuzz with the sound of aircraft engines from several BCATP bases.

However, a visit to the Bomber Command Museum of Canada at Nanton, Alberta, in early spring 2011 resulted in a complete change of direction and intent for Gafiuk. At the museum, where she planned to do background research on the BCATP for use in the novel, she met volunteer Tink Robinson, who gave her a tour. He suggested she return in July 2011 to see the Vintage Wings of Canada tour fly over Nanton, ending at the Claresholm airport, 40 kilometres south of Nanton and the site of BCATP No. 15 Service Flying Training School during the war years. At Claresholm, where five yellow veteran airplanes from Vintage Wings of Canada from Gatineau, Québec had landed on a cross-country tour, she met Gordon Jones and her book project took off on a completely different flight path.

Returning to the museum at Nanton to continue research, she met with volunteer librarian Dave Birrell. "We know you have been talking to Gordon Jones and collecting his stories," he said. "We have been wanting to do this for years, but haven't got around to it yet." Birrell himself is the author of several books published by the Nanton Lancaster Society, the parent body of the Museum. Titles include *The Lucky Lancaster*, the story of the Museum's restored bomber, and *Baz*, a biography of Squadron Leader (S/L) Ian Bazgette Victoria Cross (VC), for whom the "Lanc" is dedicated, and who was one of the first to be installed as a Member of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame.

As Dave Birrell explains, "Gordon Jones had been a volunteer at the museum and performing flypasts at our special events for twenty years when we first met Anne Gafiuk. Documenting Gordon's extraordinary career was something we knew needed to be done. So the museum was delighted when Anne accepted our suggestion to take on the project. Her efforts and *Wings over High River* went well beyond what we had hoped for and the museum is proud to have published her book."

A freshly painted Dakota KN-451 feels the sun's rays for the first time as she is moved to 9 Hangar for a month of curing before being dismantled and moved to her permanent home in the GMAM Air Park.

What Tink Robinson and Dave Birrell had in mind was a book about of Gordon Jones, a resident of High River, Alberta, 30 km north of Nanton. During the Second World War, he served as an RCAF flying instructor, then flew for another 70 years after the war. Gafiuk accepted the challenge, dropped the idea of fictional romance and moved into the realm of reality with what could be called a conversational biography. As an ice breaker for the first time she met Gordon and his wife, Linora, Anne brought along one of her favorite baking treats, a lemon meringue pie. The bribe was effective. Over the next several months, lemon and raisin pies, brownies, cookies and cakes sweetened the conversation with Gordon. The end result was an engaging story primarily in Gordon's own words and the museum had the book it wanted.

The book is fully titled as *Wings Over High River: Conversations with A. Gordon Jones, The Biography of a BCATP Pilot Instructor*, the 8 ½ x 11 inch soft cover. Its chronicle began in August 2011 with the first conversation between Gafiuk and Jones. Born in Bangor, Saskatchewan on January 12, 1923, Jones enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force at age 18 at Saskatoon in 1941. After taking readers through his early days of training, he told of being posted to No. 5 EFTS in High River, where he trained as a pilot on a de Havilland Tiger Moth. In September 1941, he earned his wings flying Avro Ansons at No. 7 Service Flying Training School at Fort Macleod, Alberta, 110 kilometres south of High River. At graduation as a Sergeant pilot, his wings were pinned on him by First World War ace Air Marshal Billy Bishop VC, also one of the first to be installed in Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, in 1974. Expecting to be shipped overseas, Sgt. Jones, whose skill as a pilot had been noted by his superiors, was instead posted to No. 1 Flight Instructor School at Trenton, Ontario.

There he flew the Harvard and the Fleet Finch. Ready for assignment, Jones realized his first choice, returning to No. 5 EFTS at High River in March 1942, and at 19 years of age became an RCAF flying instructor. "Everybody was young back then," said Jones. "You had to grow up in a hurry." The Chief Flying Instructor and later Commanding Officer at No. 5 EFTS was John Ender "Jock" Palmer, a First World War ace who continued to fly until 1955 and was installed as a Member of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame in 1988.

The success of *Wings Over High River* is seen in release of its fourth printing in September 2014. Writer Anne Gafiuk has taken an original approach in

recording in Gordon's own words the story of an RCAF flying instructor who continued in the air with his beloved Tiger Moth until his death at age 90 on September 10, 2013. She has captured a story of a man who shared his love of flying with those he taught, and with civilians in organizations such as the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA), and the Flying Farmers, with which he was associated for many years. Fortunately, Gordon Jones was alive to see the launch of the book, held on December 1, 2012 at the Museum of the Highwood in High River. A favourite son of the town, he was honoured that month with the naming of a main access road to the High River Airport as Gordon Jones Way. Delayed by the devastating floods of 2013 in the High River area, the official dedication was made on September 28, 2014 when Gordon's wife, Linora, cut the red ribbon to declare the road open.

In the book, comments by Jones are interspersed with those of the writer and interjections by his wife, family members and friends. The result is that the reader sits in on the conversation, getting to know Gordon Jones personally while sharing coffee and pie with tales of flying in a Tiger Moth. The book is profusely illustrated with photographs from Gordon's collection, RCAF photos and historic images, and copies of documents from Gordon's service file, including his RCAF enlistment Attestation Paper, medical examination results, Personal Assessment, flying and training reports, and Record of Service.

To broaden the reader's perspective, included in the book are selected materials that were required reading for pilots, including excerpts from the Ground School Manual of No. 5 EFTS and Duties of Flying Instructors. Contemporary photographs, including the book's cover image of Jones with his Tiger Moth were taken by Don Molyneaux. Listed by name, date and type of aircraft are over 450 students Gordon taught to fly in Tiger Moths, Fairchild Cornells and other types including Cessna and Piper, from 1942 until 1998.

For most of his service, Jones was based close to his future home, teaching young pilots to fly at No. 5 EFTS. On April 15, 1943, he was commissioned as a Flying Officer, the rank he held at the closure of the station in December 1944. Shortly before that, Gordon and Linora were married and moved to Ontario, settling in Simcoe, Ontario. From there, Gordon continued with the RCAF as a Flight Testing Officer at Trenton and took his release after the war on October 16, 1945.

Gordon and Linora returned to the High River area and he bought the farm once held by his wife's

grandparents, and like other veterans, he acquired land through the Veterans Land Act. Farming then became Gordon's career for the next 40 years. He was as successful at raising cattle and growing grain as he was at flying, eventually operating 2180 acres (nearly 3 ½ square miles) and running 500 head of cattle. Farming became Gordon's life, but in 1967 he returned to flying, earning his Private Pilot Licence and buying a Piper Cherokee 235. In 1971 he began instructing again, this time for civilian pilots. His experience and expertise were recognized and in 1975 the Town of High River elected Gordon as chairman of a commission to see the establishment of a municipal airport.

Active with COPA and the Flying Farmers, Gordon's political experience was expanded by serving five terms from 1977-1992 on the council of the Municipal District of Foothills, including the position of Reeve. An airman never forgets his service, and in June of 1992 Jones helped organize the first reunion of personnel from No. 5 EFTS, with 200 attending. He rented a restored Tiger Moth to fly for the occasion and in 1994 bought that same aircraft. He flew it for the rest of his life. It was one he had flown himself during his wartime service, and is one of 106 Tiger Moths recorded in his log book. As part of Gordon's legacy, his Tiger Moth is destined to be placed at the Bomber Command Museum of Canada, which provided the motivation for Anne Gafiuk to record his story.

The value of *Wings Over High River* is that it is a story about someone involved in training pilots in the BCATP. It provides the personal perspective and comments from a flying instructor who went through the BCATP and taught others how to fly. By recording the memories of Gordon Jones, and rewarding him with home-baked treats, the author has ensured that his story is now part of the written record of another veteran of the RCAF, another story that will not be lost. It is also the story of a man who, like thousands of others barely out of high school, volunteered to serve Canada, not knowing how long the war would last. At war's end they returned to civilian life and distinguished themselves with success and remarkable careers.

On August 6, 2011, three days after first calling Gordon Jones, Anne Gafiuk flew with him in the Tiger Moth from the High River airport. For the next year and a half they developed a relationship in which Gordon recounted his experience in aviation and opened up his life to Anne. The original romance she planned to write became a different kind of love story, one between a man and a Tiger Moth. But she still

plans to write a romantic novel involving a young airman, and now she has the background she sought on the BCATP. Hooked on RCAF stories, Gafiuk has another wartime story project well underway for publication by the Nanton Lancaster Society.

Additionally, she has done extensive research on fatal accidents that claimed RCAF pilots who died in Canada while training during the Second World War, looking into the men's lives, interviewing family members and gathering material for publication. She continues to interview RCAF veterans about their wartime experiences while she still has the opportunity to do so, having learned that every airman who served in the war has a story to tell. For new contacts, a lemon pie is still used to start a conversation.

For more about Gordon Jones, see Anne Gafiuk's story at the website of Vintage Wings of Canada, www.vintagewings.ca. Then click on Vintage News, then History & Heroes, and scroll down to click on "Me and Mr. Jones." *Wings Over High River*, first published in 2012 by the Nanton Lancaster Society, 288 pages, is \$32 per copy, plus shipping. Order through the Bomber Command Museum of Canada, P.O. Box 1051, Nanton, Alberta. TOL 1R0, telephone 403-646-2270, www.bombercommandmuseum.ca.

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The mural painted by Doug Driediger in 1994 on the side of the TELUS building in High River, based on the photo of Gordon during an RCAF inspection. He is the airman shown at front right in the mural. (John Chalmers photo)