



HARVARD HISTORICAL AVIATION SOCIETY

presents,

Harvard Flyer

SPRING 2022 ISSUE



WE ARE READY TO HIT THE ROAD

2022 is already looking up, with events kicking off in every direction and the Harvard Historical Aviation Society Calendar quickly filling up! Keep you eyes peeled for our remote team- as we share the amazing history of Central Alberta Aviation and promote aviation in youth across the region. We will be displaying history, selling aviation attire and toys, and of course fundraising for our many projects and our museum build!

Are you hosting an aviation focused event in Alberta in 2022 and looking to have the Harvard Historical Aviation Society present? Are you a leader of a board or group, and would love a presentation from our society about the meaningful impacts that Central Alberta had to the efforts of war around the world? **We would love to see YOU! Send a message to penholdbase.ca and LET'S TALK HISTORY!**



Co founders Gary Hillman and Jodi Smith stand in front of the newly displayed Airport History Display at the Tucana Aviation FBO at the Red Deer Regional Airport.

Coffee At The Museum



Be sure to follow us on Facebook as we re-start our weekly "coffee with the museum" each Saturday this summer! Looking to talk aviation or learn about the history of your community? Have little ones who are mesmerized by airplanes and want to learn some cool things? Visit us for coffee, right beside the Springbrook General Store!

May 4th, A Day Of Remembrance



Please join us May 4th, on Hollands National Day of Remembrance as we remember the last two airmen of No 36 SFTS. *Details Continued On Page 2*

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"There is only a black spot among the trees"

Memorial ceremony for FO David Merry and LAC George Conway will be held on May 4, 2022 at 8 PM.

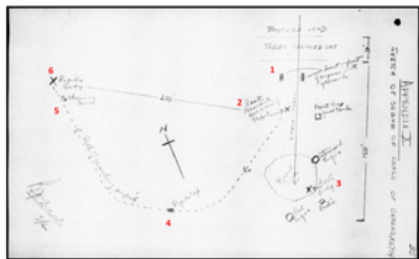
The last airmen from No. 36 SFTS, Penhold to die were instructor, David Merry from Trinidad and his pupil George Conway from New Zealand. Shortly after they took off in an Airspeed Oxford aircraft on a night flying exercise to Bashaw late in the evening on May 4, 1944 the area was enveloped in dense smoke. The smoke was so dense that on their return leg of the flight in the early hours of May 5, 1944 vision of the ground from the plane was totally obliterated. While flying low attempting to find the landing field in the dense smoke their plane crashed about 1 ½ miles southwest of the base. Both men died in the crash.

The HHAS is planning a short memorial service for these two airmen at the site of the crash on May 4, 2022 at 8 PM. The crash site is owned by Elizabeth and Dirk Appel who were born in Holland. We chose to hold this memorial on the day and at the time of Remembrance Ceremonies in Holland. The remembrance ceremony will be short and flowers will be laid at the site of the crash. We invite everyone who is interested to attend.

To get to the memorial/crash site from TWP RD 372, which runs along the southern boundary of the airfield, go south on RR 282 for 1 ½ miles. To get to it from Hwy 592, west of Penhold, go north on RR 282 for a little over ½ mile.

Release Names Crash Victims

CALGARY, May 12—(CP)—The names of the two fliers killed when their plane crashed south of Penhold Thursday night, and the object of a five-day search, have been released. One was Flying Officer David Merry, whose father lives at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, and the other LAC. Georg Conway, whose mother, Mrs. D. J. Conway, lives at Bluff, Southland, N.Z.



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Page 35, Appendix X

- Sketch of scene of crash
1. Engine impacts
 2. Seat, parachute and Sutton harness of LAC Conway
 3. Body of F/O Merry
 4. LAC Conway's hat
 5. Chewing gum package
 6. Body of LAC Conway

This image and content has been modified to suit the published article by The Log Book Project (<https://the-log-book-project.com/>)



L/AC. G. D. Conway,
of Bluff, killed on
active service.

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The Tiger Moth Gets It's Wings!

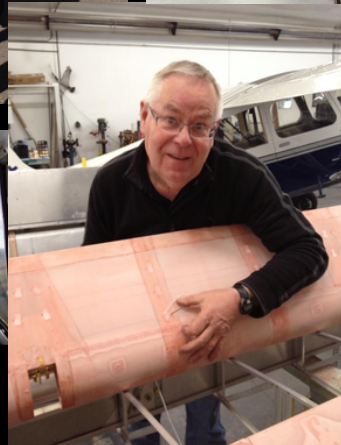
The Tiger Moth is almost ready for fabric covering! This is a huge step forward for our build team, and means we are one step closer to a historical aircraft returning to the air! Our struts and fuel tank have now been trial fitted, which means that the Tiger Moth is starting to look like a real plane!

This project has brought together all areas of expertise, from engine built to structural design to some excellent parts sourcing from around the globe. The Tiger Moth team has been working diligently and are always looking for volunteers! Looking to learn about airplanes? We are always accepting of new recruits!

Volunteer Spotlight: Gary Hillman

Gary's love for aviation is simply unmatched. This co-founder of our Harvard Historical Aviation Society, and owner of Hillman Air has been a part of the Red Deer Regional Airport for more years than he cares for us to say outloud! With history in the Red Deer Airshow, the Red Deer Flying Club, and of course the Harvard Historical Aviation Society; if you need help with a project Gary is always the first to offer a hand.

He is a true steward of aviation; and was even awarded a volunteer appreciation award at the International Aviation Show "Sun N Fun". Gary's passion for keeping the history of aviation in Central Alberta alive keep the organization motivated and moving forward. Thank you Gary, for continuing to be a leader and a mentor to many!



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Finding History Where You Least Expect It

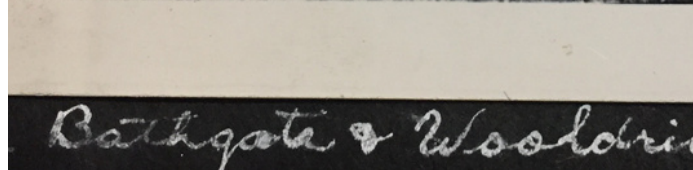
While going through some old family photos (from before my time) I came across a couple of photos that blew me out of the water.

The first photo found (right) shows an Airspeed Oxford with my grandfather, Clyde Stauffer's barn in the background! The second photo I had found showed the Stauffer family standing in behind the wing of this Oxford. My mom was wearing the pilots helmet, and beside her dad with her mom (my grandmother) on the other side. My uncles, one on the wing and the other standing in front of my mom along with the hired man. So many of my closest relatives alongside the history that means so much to me.

The Story is that the aircraft landed there with engine trouble. A guard was sent to secure the aircraft over night till mechanics could fix it and they flew it out the next day. The inscription on the photo says the pilots were Bathgate and Wooldridge.

I was excited to learn my family had a small and short connection to the BCATP training days out of RAF Station #36 Penhold.

HHAS Co-Founder and Vice President: Gary Hillman



Airspeed Oxford Project

Work continues in the background on the Airspeed Oxford Project! Dave (one of our newest volunteers, welcome!) has been busy cataloging and tagging parts, and is doing a great job itemizing every detail of the airplane. This is allowing us to see what we have, what we need, and what is surplus.

The woodwork continues, as parts of the aircraft are located that are not salvageable and must be rebuilt from scratch. Lucky for the Harvard Historical Aviation Society, we have an amazing group of volunteers with immaculate attention to detail! We are always looking for support on projects such as the Oxford. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please contact us today at info@penholdbase.com!



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F/L Alec Elliott, Instructor at No. 36 SFTS Penhold and Halifax Bomber Hero by Bill Mackay

No. 36 SFTS Penhold closed in November, 1944. Many of the instructors had been at stationed at Penhold since the fall of 1941. However the base started winding down in the winter of 1944 and some instructors were repatriated to operations (Ops) and qualified on combat aircraft. In the case of F/L Alec Elliott No. 36 SFTS in February 1944 and was posted to RAF No.10 Operational Training Unit at Abingdon, UK. On the 5th June 1944 his crew was formed and in July they were recognized as Best Crew. He was then posted to No. 41 Base & No 1658 Heavy Conversion Unit at Riccall, Yorkshire to train on Handley Page Halifax bombers. Following training he was posted to 158 squadron at Lissett, Yorkshire. The crew's first Operational mission was to Bochum in Germany, ten other missions followed before the fatal crash outlined below. F/L Elliott made sure that all of his crew were safely out of the plane before he baled out but he was too late.

The information below was compiled by his son, David Elliott and researcher Linda Ibrom.

Flight Lieutenant Alec Elliott was piloting Halifax bomber Mk.III NR252 coded NP-B during an operation to Hanover on January 5/6, 1945. The aircraft left Lissett at 1647hrs and successfully bombed the target but failed to return. On the homebound journey his plane was hit by a night-fighter destroying the H2S blister and moments later, a second attack destroyed the ammunition trays and conveyors of the four guns of the rear turret. Arriving at the Dutch-German border flying due West, only two engines were operable and after consulting with Norris, the navigator, it was considered advisable by Elliott to divert the course to the South in an attempt to reach an Allied-held airport in Belgium.

At that moment the Halifax was attacked again and the third engine was put out of action, together with the elevator trimmers, rendering the plane unmanageable. McMahon the Mid Upper Gunner reported from his turret that he saw flames passing him from the wing fuel tanks. Pilot Elliott ordered his crew to bale out. Sadly, having waited for all his crew to jump, he left the plane too late and was found dead close by his crashed aircraft with his parachute half-opened. The Halifax crashed at 20:15 ;16km West of Almelo in the Overijssel province of Holland. Flight Lieutenant Alec Elliott was twenty-five at the time of his death and is buried in the Cemetery at Hellendoorn, Holland.



The crew consisted of:

- F/L Alec Elliott - Killed in Action (Pilot)
- Sgt W Morton - Evader (Flight Engineer)
- F/Sgt Michael "Mick" Norris - POW (Navigator)
- F/Sgt Ian Croad - Evader (Bomb Almer)
- F/Sgt Paul Watson - Evader (W/Op/Ag)
- Sgt Don McMahon - POW (M/U Gunner)
- Sgt Ralph Dickson - Evader (Rear Gunner)





F/L Alec Elliott, Instructor Continued....

Flight Lieutenant Alec Elliott was born on the 21st August 1919, the son of Robert and Lilian Elliott of 62 Heath Road, Twickenham, Middlesex. He was educated at St. Mary's School, Twickenham continuing to Christ's Hospital (a 'public' school), Horsham and finally in 1938 to Cambridge University.

On 31st July 1940 he was recommended for Pilot Training and a commission and enlisted in the RAF at Uxbridge on 3rd August 1940. After further training he graduated from No. 3 Service Flying Training School at Cranwell with 83.4% and was posted to No. 2 Flying Training School at Syerston, Nottinghamshire in April 1941 for a Flying Instructor's Course. After being commissioned as a Pilot Officer, on June 1, 1941 he was stationed at RAF No 14 SFTS as a Flying Instructor before being sent to Canada, arriving at No. 36 SFTS, Penhold, Alberta in the Fall of 1941. He was promoted to Flying Officer on 6th October 1942 and Flight Lieutenant on 7th June 1943.

Alec met his wife, Gladys Benton of Innisfail, Alberta, when he was stationed at Penhold, a few miles from her home. They were married in July, 1942 and had a son, David Alec. In February, 1944 when he was repatriated to Britain his wife and son followed him in convoy across the

Atlantic. Gladys and David resided at Alex's family home in Twickenham until the end of the war in 1945 when they returned to Canada. On December 29, 2006 Gladys was buried in Alec's plot in the Hellendoorn Cemetery. The epithet on Alec's headstone is: 'Deeper than speech, our love stronger than life, our tether'. On Gladys's headstone in the same plot: 'Together again'.



Alec Elliott with his car when he was an instructor at No. 36. SFTS, Penhold.



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You Are Invited

HARVARD HISTORICAL AVIATION SOCIETY
Volunteer Appreciation Supper
Friday April 22nd, at 5:30pm
Red Deer Flying Club at the Red Deer Airport.



RSVP if attending by Monday April 18th, to
jodi@penholdbase.ca
or call/text 403.358.8278.
Please indicate who you are when you RSVP.

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer with the Harvard Historical Aviation Society?

We are always looking for new members of our teams, and no experience is necessary to become a part of aviation history! We are currently looking for assistance in the following areas:

1. Aircraft Builds and Maintenance
2. Fundraising and Event Planning
3. Ticket Sales and Event Support
4. Inventory and Asset Management

Email info@penholdbase.ca or contact us on social media today!



SHARE AVIATION HISTORY!

25 Year Anniversary Stamps: \$25.00 Per Booklet
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