



# HARVARD HISTORICAL AVIATION SOCIETY

presents,

## *Harvard Flyer*

SUMMER 2024 ISSUE



### **ANOTHER GREAT TRIP TO THE CANADIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE!**

Gary and Jodi, the HHAS President and Vice President hit the road once again to Saskatchewan, to visit the Saskatchewan Aviation Museum and take in the Canadian Aviation Historical Society Conference. This year, they were once again thrilled to make new friends in the historical space, and hear the stories of so many Canadian aviators. This year, they were able to meet 101-Year old WW2 bomber pilot Crash Harrison, who defied the odds in his many adventures and significant crashes. We are pleased to share his story in this edition of the Harvard Flyer, and encourage our supporters to read his amazing story in **CRASH HARRISON: TALES OF A BOMBER PILOT WHO DEFIED DEATH**, You can find this book online or at Indigo!



**50/50 TICKETS**

**TICKET SALES ALL SUMMER!  
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### Reginald "Crash" Harrison

#### New Book Celebrates Saskatchewan Veteran

Reginald "Crash" Harrison grew up on a Saskatchewan farm during the Dirty Thirties. He worked hard as a youngster doing chores, herding cattle in the ditches, and earning spending money by trapping weasels and gophers.

As fighter pilots practised doing loops in the sky above his family's farm while training for the Second World War, Reg's urge to fly grew even stronger! Seeking adventure and skirting danger, Reg enlisted with the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1942. He became a skilled pilot, completing 19 bombing missions and surviving four frightening plane crashes - none of which were his fault. Several other times during his wartime service, if Reg had done just one thing differently, he would have died.

Reg Harrison became one of the few Canadian members of the famed "Guinea Pig Club" after receiving reconstructive skin graft surgery during the war. He was named an Honorary Snowbird with the renowned Canadian Forces aerobatics display team which flies under the same squadron number as the one in which Reg served in England.

Nicknamed "Crash" by a fellow airman, Reg Harrison took that name to heart and proved he could pilot a bomber, complete his missions, and survive numerous crashes and close calls. He also became a gentle yet strong leader and an inspiration to his crew, other service personnel, and all who hear his amazing story.

Read more about Crash Harrison in the newly published book "Crash Harrison, Tales of a Bomber Pilot Who Defied Death"



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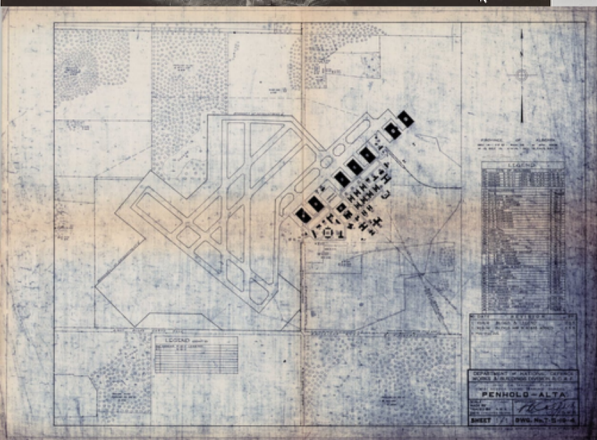
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### The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan

In 1935 the voters defeated the federal Conservatives of R.B. Bennett and returned the Liberals of W.L. Mackenzie King, a government which "proved to be the most aviation-minded government the country has seen." C.D. Howe, initially Minister of Harbours and Railways, took civil aviation from the Department of National Defence and placed it within a new Department of Transport in 1936. Similarly, he pushed on construction of the Trans-Canada Airway, with airports across the country every 100 miles (160 kilometers) and emergency landing fields every 50 miles (eighty kilometers). By 1938 a framework of 94 airfields was nearing completion.

Red Deer, midway between the metropolises of Calgary and Edmonton and at that time with a population of 2,377 was a logical location for an airport. In 1938 the City considered the purchase of 240 acres for an airfield, but the Department of Transport selected a site at 14-37-38-W4th, centered on the farm of the Hives brothers, Tom, Jack and Sid, northwest of the village of Penhold. Construction leveled runways in 1938 and completed the Department's few buildings, radio range and a nearby beacon in the summer of 1939. A storehouse and garage were moved from the old radio range site.

The Canadian government signed an agreement with Britain and other members of the Commonwealth in December 1939 which stipulated that Canada's chief contribution to the war effort would be the training of aircrew through the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). The Plan operated 107 schools and 184 ancillary units in Canada and produced 131,553 aircrew, nearly half those employed by the entire Commonwealth air forces throughout the war. With their flat terrain, open spaces and generally favourable flying weather the prairie provinces became home to many of the BCATP schools.

Want to learn more about the British Commonwealth Air Training Program? Visit us online at [penholdbase.ca](http://penholdbase.ca) and check out our history page!







# INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED?

## MONDAY NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM IS BACK!

There are plenty of projects on the go at the museum for those interested in the history of the region, and the accomplishment of working on restoring aircraft!

Every Monday, our museum volunteers gather at numerous locations (including the Red Deer Regional Airport and the Innisfail Big Bend Airport), to work on our Airspeed Oxford and DeHavilland Tiger Moth projects. These projects are ran by volunteers and there are plenty of opportunities to learn a new skill or two from our experts around the room! Get out and volunteer with this amazing group, no experience is needed! Reach out to us at [info@penholdbase.ca](mailto:info@penholdbase.ca).

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, for regular updates on our restoration projects and upcoming events!



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### See You At The Boot Scootin' BBQ Red Deer!

The Harvard Historical Aviation Society will be on site at the Western Days Boot Scootin' BBQ on July 18th, at the Red Deer Regional Airport. Come out for an afternoon of fun that includes lunch, games, and entertainment! Visit us at the Skywings Aviation Hangar!

**WESTERN DAYS**

# Boot Scootin' BBQ

*Presented By:*

**JULY 18** **11AM - 2PM**

**Red Deer Regional Airport**

SKYWINGS AVIATION HANGER

ENTERTAINMENT FROM:  
DUSTIN FARR

★ BBQ ★  
BOUNCE HOUSES  
FACE PAINTING  
ICE CREAM  
GAMES  
& MORE!

CHARITY:  
DRESS FOR SUCCESS

### Volunteer Spotlight: GARY HILLMAN

We always say, you don't need experience, come out and volunteer! That is because the HHAS is blessed to have so many knowledgeable volunteers who are willing to take the time and teach new skills to those who come out and support the projects! Gary Hillman is the BEST teacher, and many of our volunteers have learned more skills than they can count from his infinite wisdom! Gary is our Vice President of the Harvard Historical Aviation Society, and it would simply not be the same amazing place to learn without him! Thank you Gary for everything you give back to those around you!



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### Support The Harvard Historical Aviation Society With Our DeHavilland Tiger Moth Project!

Be a part of history! We are fundraising for our Tiger Moth Project with a commemorative patch! Stitch your patch on a coat, a bag, or even your favorite leather vest you take on your Harley! 100% of profits from the sales of this crest will support the build of the Tiger Moth, and support the Harvard Historical Aviation Society bring back a piece of history to Central Alberta!

Patches are \$10.00 Each and can be ordered by contacting [info@penholdbase.ca](mailto:info@penholdbase.ca)!



Wanting to Assist With A New Project? The Harvard Historical Aviation Society has been donated two Link Trainers; and are hoping to get one of these Link Trainers running and functional! Looking to take on the challenge? Get in touch with our team at [penholdbase.ca](http://penholdbase.ca)

### YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS

- ✓ Retention of History
- ✓ Preservation of Artifacts
- ✓ Community Programming
- ✓ Facility Retention and Growth
- ✓ Recovery & Restoration of Historic Aircraft

1 year: \$20.00  
Lifetime: \$200.00



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