



# HARVARD HISTORICAL AVIATION SOCIETY

presents,

## Harvard Flyer

SPRING 2025 ISSUE



**THE HARVARD HISTORICAL AVIATION SOCIETY IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES INTERACTIVE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO COMMEMORATE AND CELEBRATE THE UNIQUE HISTORY OF THE PENHOLD MILITARY BASE, BOWDEN MILITARY BASE & THE RED DEER AIRPORT**

### Harvard Historical Aviation Society Has Big Plans

From Paul Cowley, Red Deer Advocate March 26, 2025

Harvard Historical Aviation Society is looking for partners to help get a \$3.5 million museum off the ground.

Society president and co-founder Jodi Smith appeared before Red Deer County Council on Wednesday to update them on the organization's history and its goal of creating a museum to showcase the society's small fleet of historic aircraft.

A proposed design for the 24,000-square-foot museum shows a ground floor big enough to showcase several planes, including an Airspeed Oxford currently being restored in a society's member's Innisfail garage. A mezzanine would have room for the society's restored Tiger Moth training plane.

Smith said the goal is to create a building that can be used for community events and not just a showcase for historic artifacts.

"I don't want it to be a space that is a stagnant museum," Smith told council's governance and priorities committee.

By opening up the building to other groups, the society hopes to introduce new audiences to the Red Deer Regional Airport's aviation history, including its role in the Second World War as a training base for hundreds of Allied pilots.

The non-profit, volunteer-run society has 10 acres of leased land surrounding its small airport museum and sees an opportunity to work with other groups, especially the Springbrook Community Association, which wants to build a community centre to serve the growing community.



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### No 36. Service Flying Training School (1941-1944)



Early in the Second World War it became obvious in Britain that operational pressure on airfields left little scope for aircrew training. In the BCATP negotiations the British proposed to send a number of training schools to Canada. After the fall of France in May 1940 much British airspace became unsafe, yet expansion of the RAF demanded more aircrew training, and the British increased the number of schools to be sent to Canada. These were part of the BCATP, but paid for by Britain, manned largely by the RAF and intended for RAF trainees.



As part of this programme the nucleus of No. 36 Service Flying Training School assembled at West Kirby in England in August 1941, sailed from the Clyde to Halifax aboard HMT Stratheden, then travelled to Penhold aboard two special trains. On 23rd August G/CW.B. Farrington, DSO, RAF, assumed command of the station. The purpose of the school was to train future pilots of multi-engine aircraft to wings standard. The trainees already had learned basic flying on light aircraft at an E.F.T.S. and now undertook more advanced flying and navigation on the relatively high-performance Airspeed Oxford. Four courses each of about sixty students trained at once, on a course which was lengthened several times over the course of the war, but ran about twenty weeks. Problems of aircraft serviceability and weather could delay the prospective pilot's progress. With the equipment of the time, snow removal or compaction could be a problem and, if compacted, wet, soft runways during the spring thaw could cause training interruption. The strength of the school reached a high of 1,496, including both trainees and staff, in early 1944.



A total of 1,284 pilots graduated from No. 36 S.F.T.S., over a thousand of them members of the RAF. Inevitably, there were fatal accidents, the first a crash on 24 December 1941, from which one student, LAC D.A. Phillips, succumbed in hospital. He, like most of the twenty fatal casualties at the school, was buried in Red Deer Cemetery.







JOIN US AT LOCAL EVENTS AS WE SHARE AVIATION HISTORY WITH CENTRAL ALBERTA



May 31, 2025

### RED DEER FLY-IN DRIVE-IN BREAKFAST

The Red Deer Fly-In Breakfast at YQF will be held the same day as the Props and Pistons show and shine! Bring out your aircraft for the day, or bring the family for a great meal, and some up and close experiences with aircraft!



September 20, 2025

### GIRLS IN AVIATION DAY - DATE ANNOUNCED!

Each year, the Red Deer Regional Airport hosts Girls In Aviation Day, where young aspiring aviators have the opportunity to explore careers in aviation, while encountering hands on activities and mentorship. The date has been announced, so mark it in your calendars!

### HARVARD HISTORICAL AVIATION SOCIETY VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Save the date: April 23rd will be the annual Volunteer Appreciation, stay tuned for updates!

April 23, 2025



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT : SHANE COCKRIELL

Shane Cockriell has been volunteering with the non-profits of aviation for as long as he can remember, but the work he does to support the Harvard Historical Aviation Society is truly amazing. From working to improve our space for our volunteers, to supporting the tiger-moth project as it moves to the next level, Shane is a diligent volunteer that jumps into every project with both feet! We are so grateful to have Shane as a volunteer of the Harvard Historical Aviation Society, and an important member of the Tiger Moth restoration team!



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