



The NStar Chronicle

Project North Star Association of Canada

Volume 8 | Issue 3 | October 2012

Project Manager's Annual Progress Report – September 2012

Bruce Gemmill

During the last three months we have continued working on our two top priorities – Engine #3 and the interior of the North Star. Since our last report, engine #3 has been completely disassembled and the cylinder block cleaned and clear-coated. Much work was done on the interior of the aircraft while it was outside for the summer. As usual, our volunteer workforce was reduced as people took much needed holidays and enjoyed the summer.

Engines and QEC

The restoration of engine #3 is progressing very well. Since removal this spring, the engine has been completely stripped of all accessories, pipes and hoses, and the engine completely disassembled. The block, cylinders and pistons have been cleaned and work has begun to reassemble this engine. Due to the reduction in available volunteers, no work has been done on the engine frame. The spinner from pro-

pellor 2 was stripped and repainted to repair damage from the weather while the aircraft was outside. The earlier type of paint did not stand up to the elements. We hope the new paint will survive better.



Richard Lodge and Garry Dupont, Merlin Cylinder Head

Contents of this volume:

Project Manager's Annual Progress Report – September 2012	1	Retired Airline Pilots of Canada (RAPCAN)	5
North Star Anniversary	3	2nd Project North Star Invitational Golf Tournament	6
Notes from the President	4	Creating Facebook and Twitter accounts	7
		Calendar of Events	8
		Board Members' Contact Information	8

Nr 3 Engine

The third engine was removed in early May, and already much of the disassembly of the engine has been done. Again, we are hopeful that this engine can be completed even faster than the last. It is significant that we are now more than halfway through the restoration of all engines (and propellers) for our North Star. This is a testament to the dedication and expertise of our engine shop crew.

Cockpit and crew area

The cockpit is now considered complete, although some items, such as seats and work tables for the navigator and radio positions have not been installed. These could be placed in the aircraft, but it would severely restrict the space available for tours, and we feel it benefits the project to show off the completed work to as many people as we can. Tours of the aircraft have proven to be very popular.

The crew lounge, just aft of the cockpit, was stripped of all equipment, including heater ducts, water tank and pipes in the ceiling, then stripped and masked for painting. This included removing the doors to the main wiring panels and replacing one of the hinges. The wall in the galley was also removed and replaced and several areas of corrosion were repaired. The galley itself was removed last year, and is in need of a total restoration involving a lot of sheet metal work to repair corrosion damage.



North Star Toilet

The forward washroom was also stripped of furnishings and the flooring removed. The door was removed earlier and has been completely refinished. The crew lounge and washroom were painted in the original colour scheme, and work is now underway to restore the equipment items removed, so they can be re-installed over the winter. The under-floor has

sustained corrosion damage and this will need to be repaired before the new flooring can be installed.

Across from the washroom is a small compartment which used to house the auxiliary power unit or APU. This was used for ground starting the aircraft, but was removed some time during the service life of the North Star. The compartment was converted to a coat and baggage stowage area, but still contained a power inverter in a large wall cabinet that had to be removed so the compartment could be stripped and painted. The cabinet was refurbished and has been riveted back in place. The power inverter has been disassembled, cleaned and painted, and will soon be re-installed in the cabinet.

Fuselage

The forward belly compartment was painted this summer; the floor panels will be restored in the shop and re-installed. This area is almost complete. The mid belly compartment was stripped of floor panels and other items, then cleaned and prepared for painting. This compartment was painted silver and is now ready for the floor panels and miscellaneous hardware to be installed. The floor and wall panels will be cleaned and painted and the hatch will be restored this winter in the shop.

The trial to construct de-icing boots from strips of vulcanized rubber has been successful. Work can now begin to build the new set of 'boots'.

Planned Restoration Work–2012-2013

This fall we will continue work on engine #3 and begin the restoration of the engine frame and all the engine ancillaries, such as the auxiliary gearbox and electrical equipment. We will also restore all the equipment and furnishings removed from the crew area, forward washroom, APU compartment and belly stowage. These are a lot of items to work on, so the shop will be very busy this winter.

We also hope to tackle several large projects, such as rebuilding the galley and restoring the main cabin heater ducts. We would also like to restore the main cargo doors, as these are prone to leaking when the aircraft is outside.

We have also launched an appeal for donations so we can build troop seats to put in the main cabin. These seats were an important part of the equipment in the North Star, but were removed before the aircraft came to the museum. PNSAC has decided to fund the materials and our volunteers will build the seats. When finished, they will be donated to the mu-

seum for display inside the North Star when restoration is complete.

Next spring we expect to begin restoring the main

cabin. This will require removal of the wood cargo floor for a thorough cleaning and inspection. We expect to find some corrosion damage that will require repair.

PNSAC

North Star Anniversary

Bill Upton, Canadair Historian, CASM Volunteer

August 2012 marked the 65th anniversary of the roll-out of Canadair North Star C-54GM serial number 122, bearing Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) registration 17515 from the Main Plant facilities at Canadair Limited in Montreal.



In this aerial view of the Canadair facilities on August 1, 1947, numerous C-54GM North Stars destined for the RCAF can be seen behind the Main Plant. Tarpaulins on the nacelles cover the engine mounting bulkheads on all of the aircraft. North Star 17515 can be seen as the third aircraft from the left on the tarmac with a tarpaulin around its rear fuselage. Against the building, the second aircraft from the left is sister ship 17514, later to become civil registered as CF-SVP-X serving many years with the National Aeronautical Establishment in Ottawa, and being the last flying North Star aircraft. (Canadair via Bill Upton Collection)

The first known photographs of RCAF 17515 were taken by Canadair photographers on August 1, 2, and 4, 1947, during a routine plant aerial photo session and typical ground-based photo shoots for record keeping and historical purposes. Five unpainted RCAF C-54GM North Star aircraft can be seen parked against the Main Plant with six others lined along the outer tarmac, the only markings seen

on each aircraft are their RCAF registrations and the early blue/red post-war Type 1 roundels. All are without their signature Rolls-Royce engines, due to a severe backlog in deliveries of the Merlins from the United Kingdom.



Looking north behind the Main Plant facilities, North Star aircraft parked along the tarmac comprised, seen from L-R: 1751?, 17511, 17515, 17516, 1751?, and 17517 in this ground-level photo recorded on August 2, 1947. (Canadair via Bill Upton Collection)

In order not to impede the unrelenting aircraft production line, the engineless North Star aircraft had been unceremoniously rolled out behind the Main Plant until such time as engines were made available, whereupon the individual aircraft were brought back in to the final line to have the power plants installed. A subsequent series of ground and flight tests would be made toward final acceptance and delivery of each aircraft to the RCAF.



With a protective tarpaulin draped over the cockpit and another wrapped around the rear cargo door area, shiny C-54GM RCAF 17515 is seen on the tarmac, closest to the camera, in this photograph taken on August 4, 1947. (Canadair via Bill Upton Collection)

Per the official RCAF record cards for this aircraft, North Star 17515 was finally completed by Canadair Limited on 15 March 1948. At that time it had been taken-on-strength and delivered to No. 9 (T) Group, 426 "Thunderbird" Squadron at Dorval, Quebec, to replace North Star 17502. On April 1, 1948, it was first recorded as being transferred to RCAF Air Transport Command.

In another seven months we can look forward to the next significant anniversary, 65 years since the first flight of the last surviving North Star.

PNSAC

Notes from the President

Richard Lodge

As I write this piece sitting on a flight from the UK to Canada, I am contemplating what we have achieved in the eight years of PNSAC operations. I have spent ten days combining a family event in the UK with a nostalgic visit to some volunteer-operated preserved railways in Wales and the South of England. These preserved railways continue to go from strength to strength and achieve things which would not have been contemplated a few years ago.

As an added bonus, the preserved Avro Vulcan V bomber flew over where I was staying one afternoon. That this plane is actually flying is another example of determination and dedication by a group of volunteers. Avro Vulcan YouTube video

PNSAC is a young organization and as such has much to learn from the preservation and restoration movements in the UK and elsewhere in Canada. We must continue to have a "can do" attitude in everything we attempt to do whilst at the same time avoiding putting our energies into something which only has a marginal chance of success.

In 2012 we have achieved some significant firsts

while continuing to make good progress on the plane restoration as described elsewhere in the Newsletter in the Project Manager's Progress Report.

In addition to the very successful June trip to the Hamilton Air show organized by Bill Tate, we have very recently made an appeal for donations from members to fund the provision of troop seats in the restored plane. The appeal has been most successful and has reached our target of \$4,000 in less than a month.

We now have over 100 members and the success of the Troop Seat Appeal is a good example of how we can do things as a stronger group which we probably would not have attempted to do previously.

In the next year or two we will have some significant challenges to overcome both in the complexity and size of the items to be restored and also in dealing with some of the less glamorous work such as polishing the outside of the plane.

In meeting these challenges we must work with the Museum to plan the work well in advance and also continue to say "we can do it" even though the tasks may seem, at the outset, to be daunting or beyond our resources. The accomplishments of other preserved aircraft and railway organizations are good examples for us to follow.

PNSAC

Retired Airline Pilots of Canada (RAPCAN)

Bill Tate

Last fall at a monthly RAPCAN Capital Chapter luncheon at the RCAF Mess on Gloucester St. in Ottawa, Captain Jim Strang, retired A-340 Captain advised me the Annual General Meeting for RAPCAN would be held in Ottawa in September 2012. During our conversation, Jim asked me if Project North Star Association of Canada could assist the Ottawa Chapter of RAPCAN in making sure all would have a good time.

Not only did the association's members want to visit the North Star, they also wanted to visit the DC-9 and some wanted to have a close-up view of the F-86 in the storage hangar. The majority of people received their command promotion on the DC-9 and some of them started their early jet experience many years ago on the F-86 Sabres. These visits were quickly approved, along with the booking of the Bush Theatre with the assistance of Mr. Stephen Quick, Director General of the CASM.

There were some logistical hurdles to overcome: RAPCAN had no idea how many people would be coming to Ottawa. Based on previous annual general meeting history, from a low of 30 to a high of 300, a figure of 125 was suggested for planning purposes. For the PNSAC planning, how many people would want to come to the CASM and see the North Star versus the Vintage Wings of Canada Air Show which was running concurrently? As we got closer to the date the visit to the North Star was chosen by 71 people. There were several former North Star pilots from Trans Canada Airlines who added interesting insights into the aircraft currently being restored by PNSAC.

The day started with Richard Lodge welcoming the group in the Bush Theatre with an additional welcome by Stephen Quick. Next followed a Powerpoint presentation highlighting the work to date followed by a 50/50 draw. Having some insight of the pilot psyche and knowing there would be a two hour beer call at the RCAF Mess before dinner I made an off the cuff suggestion. That suggestion was: "Rather than accept the cash and have fifty of your closest friends hit you up for free beers at the Mess, better to make a cash donation of the winnings back to PNSAC". It was most appreciated that the winner did just that, and it made Mr. Paul Labranche, our guardian of the vault very happy as well.



DC-9 and friends

Our own Mike Irvin made sure that the DC-9 was shown in the best possible way. After the tours of the North Star, DC-9, engine shop and restoration area, eight former F-86 pilots were allowed a close and personal view of their former aircraft. It was amazing to watch as over fifty years of time evaporated on their faces when they went up the step ladder to see their old airplane. Much to the relief of Jim Strang, the tours were finished in time to allow for a visitation of the CASM exhibits and still make beer call.



Rolf Geiger in the Machine Shop

In conversation with various members of RAPCAN they all expressed that this was an incredibly detailed restoration with a discipline that has far exceeded anything else that they have seen. A well deserved salute for those who work on the North Star and for the ambassadors of PNSAC who gave their time to show what we have done on the restoration of this iconic aircraft.

PNSAC

2nd Project North Star Invitational Golf Tournament

Ron Lemieux

PNSAC members, volunteers and guests gathered at Loch March Golf and Country Club on August 15, 2012, for the 2nd Project North Star Invitational Golf Tournament. Unfortunately, the Wyndham Championship starting in Greensboro the next day prevented all of the PGA Tour's major stars from participating in what will undoubtedly become one of the premier events of the golf season.



The weather was exceptional and the Loch March course, in spite of the unusually dry season, was spectacular. It isn't hard to understand why the club was again chosen to host the event.

Most participants met for breakfast in the club's dining room, an opportunity to meet new members and their guests and to renew acquaintances. A few chose to take advantage of the excellent practice fa-

cilities, hoping not to spoil a good walk.

The first of our four groups teed off shortly after 10:00 am., and we were back in the clubhouse by mid-afternoon for a late lunch, a pint or two and the usual disclaimers. Tom Glaser won the prize for being closest to the pin, and his playing partner Peter Trobridge had the longest drive. It was therefore no surprise that Tom and Peter walked away with the "cup" for low score of the day, albeit by a mere stroke. Highest score was indeed high, that team having reportedly lost more balls than were misplaced repairing one of the actuators on No. 2 Engine.

Loch March graciously offered free rounds of golf to our prize winners.

It was a great day, and PNSAC would like to thank Danielle Nadon and the staff of the Loch March Golf and Country Club for helping making it such. Our thanks also go to Bill Tate for putting together another successful event on behalf of the association.



See you next year!

PNSAC

Creating Facebook and Twitter accounts

Drew Hodge

As you might know, Project North Star maintains a Facebook page and a Twitter account. If you'd like to use these social media technologies to keep in touch with our activities and to follow the progress of our restoration project, this article provides a brief introduction and shows you where to find further information.

To read the PNSAC Facebook page and to receive our updates by way of Twitter, you must have your own Facebook and Twitter accounts. You don't need both accounts, of course – you can choose to follow PNSAC using only Twitter, for example. Quite frequently however, a PNSAC posting on Twitter, a 'tweet', which is limited to 140 characters, might include a link to our Facebook page where you'll find more detailed information and photos about the subject of the tweet.

As long as you have an Internet connection and an email address, a computer, a tablet computer, or a modern smart phone, you can create Facebook and Twitter accounts to follow PNSAC.

Facebook

The Facebook social networking service has attracted over a billion users since it started operating in 2004. When you register for a Facebook account, you create a personal profile and then add other Facebook users as 'friends'. Depending on the security settings you make in your account, you can exchange messages and photos with your friends, and arrange to receive messages when your friends update their Facebook pages.

To set up a Facebook account, visit Facebook.com and be prepared to provide details such as your name, email address, and a password. The following link takes you to a free series of

videos that comprise an excellent tutorial about how to set up and maintain a Facebook account: <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/facebook101> - Facebook 101.

Twitter

Twitter, launched in 2006, hasn't been around as long as Facebook, but it has over half a billion users worldwide. Like Facebook, it's also a social networking service, but rather than provide users with on-line pages to publish their photos and personal updates, Twitter is a *microblogging* application. Users read messages from accounts they've chosen to 'follow', and send text messages, read in turn by *their* 'followers', that can be anything up to 140 characters long. Such messages are called 'tweets'.

As a registered user, you can read and send tweets using the Twitter website, the short message service (SMS) system of your cell phone, or by way of applications (apps) on a smart phone, or tablet computer.

To learn more about Twitter, how to create an account, who to follow, and how to tweet, watch the video tutorial at this link: <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/twitter101> - Twitter 101

Following PNSAC

When you've set up your Facebook and Twitter accounts, read the PNSAC Facebook page and follow us on Twitter by clicking these icons:



PNSAC

Calendar of Events

November 24, 2012	Board of Directors' Meeting
December 1, 2012	Quarterly Meeting
March 21, 2013	Board of Directors' Meeting
March 30, 2013	Quarterly Meeting
June 6, 2013	Board of Directors' Meeting
June 15, 2013	Annual General Meeting
June 15, 2013	Board of Directors' Meeting (post AGM)
June 27, 2013	Board of Directors' Meeting (first meeting of new Board)

Board Members' Contact Information

PNSAC Executive

Richard Lodge
 Director, President; Fund Raising
 613-612-4920
rsllodge@gmail.com

Bill Tate
 Director, Vice President; Special Events, Quarterly Meetings
 613-523-8817
billtate@bell.net

Bruce Gemmill
 Director, Project Manager; Membership
 613-841-7248
dbgemmill@rogers.com

Garry Dupont
 Director, Deputy Project Manager
gkdupont@magma.ca

Bruce Grant
 Director, NStar Chronicle Editor
r_b_grant@yahoo.ca

Drew Hodge
 Director, newsletter typesetting, website, social media
ldhodge@gmail.com

Phil Chrysler
 Merchandise
chrysler937@rogers.com

Roger Button, BA. MA. LLB.
 Corporate Secretary
rgrbtt@gmail.com

Paul Labranche
 Treasurer
plabranche@andrews.ca

Newsletter

Editor: Bruce Grant

Typesetter: Drew Hodge

PNSAC Newsletter¹ email address:
info@projectnorthstar.ca – Attention: Editor
 Web site: www.projectnorthstar.ca
 Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PNSAC
 Twitter: @pnsacomms

¹This newsletter is typeset using L^AT_EX. The style package used for the newsletter (PNSAC.sty) is a modification of GRASSnews.sty belonging to the Geographic Analysis Resources Support System (GRASS). The modification was made possible by kind permission of the Editor-in-Chief of GRASS-News.