



The NStar Chronicle

Project North Star Association of Canada

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North Star Restoration Report

Bruce Gemmill

During the last three months we have continued working on our two top priorities – Engine Nr.2 and the cockpit. Although we gained some new volunteers recently, others have not been able to continue working, so the overall level of effort has dropped since last spring.

Engines and QEC module

The restoral of Engine Nr.2 is still on track for completion in early 2012. The engine is nearly complete, with only a few sub-assemblies to be added. The engine was installed in the engine frame and this allowed many pipes, hoses and electrical components to be installed. The supercharger was recently installed, which was another major milestone for the engine crew. This went much quicker than installation on engine Nr.1. Work is also progressing on the various cowl panels and the remaining pieces of the cowl frame that make up the Quick Engine Change (QEC) module.



Merlin Engine Nr.2 being re-assembled in the engine shop.

Cockpit

Since completion of painting of the navigation equipment rack, most of the wires and cables have been re-attached, and work is underway to restore all of the equipment that was removed from the rack prior to painting.

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Navigation equipment rack.

The instrument panels have been installed and the new wood floor panels are almost complete. With the new floor in place, we will be able to add much more of the cockpit equipment that has been refinished and placed in storage.



Instrument panel installed.

The corrosion on the floor under this rack will be dealt with next. Work continues on the cockpit curtains and headliners.

Fuselage

The main belly compartment was stripped and painted over the summer. Recently, the interior pan-

els have been repaired and are being painted so these can be installed in the compartment. No work has been done on the flaps or horizontal stabilizers that were removed during the summer.



Horizontal stabilizer being removed from the tail of North Star 17515.

In the last update we incorrectly reported that the brakes had been sent out for overhaul. That was not the case. A quote was requested for the work, but a decision on whether to send the brakes out or restore them ourselves has not been taken. Similarly, our original plan was to send the stabilizers and flaps out for overhaul, but it may now be necessary for our volunteers to do this work.

A trial is underway to see if a set of de-icing boots can be constructed from strips of vulcanized rubber. The 'boots' would not be functional, but they would have the same appearance on the aircraft at a fraction of the cost of new boots.

Planned Restoration Work–2012

Over the next year we plan to complete most of the cockpit re-assembly, including floors, insulation and all the equipment that was previously removed, such as navigation and communication equipment, seats, instruments and other items now in storage. Next year we will restore the crew rest area and begin work on the main cargo compartment.

We also plan to install Engine Nr.2 and remove and disassemble Engine Nr.3.

PNSAC

PNSAC Trip to No. 8 Wing, RCAF Trenton

Bill Tate

On August 9th of this year, Project North Star Association of Canada held its first golf tournament at Loch March Golf Club.

In our post-game deliberations at the 19th hole, conversation started about another outing for the members of PNSAC which centred around a trip to visit the National Air Force Museum in Trenton. This was discussed later with Richard Lodge, our President, and the concept came to life at that point as a means to have more social interaction among our members.

The easy parts of this event to organise were the transportation and securing a time slot at the National Air Force Museum for a tour. The harder part, something to make the day more interesting, was to secure a visit to 8 Wing at RCAF Trenton. The biggest hurdle was that the station was winding up its deployment in Afghanistan and all personnel were getting caught with post-deployment duties which had them very busy.



Ted Devey, Bill Tate, and Mike Skubicky

My good friend, Captain Mike Skubicky secured a very interesting tour of the Squadron and he suggested a great restaurant called Rumours for "de-briefing."

I first met Mike Skubicky in 1990 while I was a First Officer on the B-727 and Mike was a second Officer. In short order we became friends as we both enjoyed our work and time away from work. During our layovers I learned how Mike started in Air Cadets (which I did as well), joined the Air Force (which I did not because of glasses) where he instructed on the Tutor at Moose Jaw. Posted to Cold

Lake, he flew the T-33, then joined the Snow Birds in 1985 as Opposing Solo, where he finished in 1986 as Lead Solo. A stint in the Snow Birds is for only two years and he finished his active career in the Air Force on the CC-130 Hercules. In 1989 Mike joined Air Canada, starting as Second Officer on the B-727. Laid off in 1993, he re-enlisted in the Air Force where today he is in the Operations Planning side of 424 Squadron.

Mike is the consummate professional and his very dry sense of humour can have you falling out of your seat even if you are securely strapped in. Working together was fun. Each time I would lean back to ask him a question, Mike would already be passing the information I needed. At Air Canada Mike is currently based in Toronto as a B767 Captain and if you are ever on board one of his flights ask to speak to him when you get to your destination; you will find him a delight to meet.

Our tour day started early on November 4th when most of us departed from the Canada Aviation & Space Museum at a rather early time of 07:00 with a quick stop in the west end to pick up our "west enders" along with five gallons of coffee to keep everyone awake. While enroute, with special thanks to Jim Riddoch, Robert Desjardins and Gary Dupont, we made sure everyone had their morning coffee and donuts. Thanks to the superior piloting skills of Jean-Pierre our bus driver, we arrived at RCAF Trenton ahead of schedule, which allowed the extra time for our very extensive tour at 424 Squadron and the National Air Force Museum.

Mike met our bus and transferred us to the military bus assigned to us for the ride over to the restricted side of the base as well as giving us our visitor passes for the day.

The tour started off with an extensive briefing on all aspects of Search and Rescue in Canada, and who has what coverage of the country and with what assets. After the briefing, there was a question and answer period with the Squadron Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Roy who was impressed with the level of questions that our group asked.

When we were finished with the briefing we all went downstairs into the hangar to tour both the CC-130 Hercules and the CH-146 Griffon employed by 424 Squadron for Search and Rescue. Once finished with the interior-exterior tour of the CC-130 and exterior tour of the CH-146 we proceeded to the ready room for the SAR Techs where we had another extensive briefing on the requirements for being a SAR Tech, the equipment used and the ongoing training for this very demanding military trade. We also got to watch a parachute rigger at work, and we heard

about the type of weather they operate in.



424 Squadron Hangar

When finished with the SAR Tech area, we all proceeded to the maintenance shops where engines, propellers, auxiliary power units, landing gear, and brakes are serviced. We were all impressed with the cleanliness of the work areas and the excellent briefings we received. That concluded our visit with 424 Squadron and we transferred back to our bus to proceed to the National Air Force Museum for the rest of our tour.

At the Museum we went into the restoration

shops where they had two projects under way; one was the restoration of a Lockheed Hudson and the other was the Avro Anson. Each aircraft had its own challenges one being metal and the other was metal with a wood wing. With today's aircraft being made from composite materials, the classically trained wood, fabric and metal aircraft maintenance people will become a very rare breed. This skill set could very easily be lost, so it is incumbent on all involved in restoration work to make sure that these skills are passed down to future generations.

One of the many highlights of the trip that day was to see the Halifax bomber and to hear of the challenges in that particular recovery and restoration. To me, just finding it in 700 feet of water was one thing, but to successfully raise it was another feat. There were many challenges in the restoration, first being corrosion, and missing parts which had to be re-made, but after many years of dedicated work it is now proudly displayed in its new home.

After the museum we all went to Rumours for the odd "adult beverage" of choice followed by very good German food.

In appreciation for the hard work, Captain Skubicky was made an honorary member of PNSAC and given our distinctive members-only golf shirt along with our ball cap, as a sincere token of our thanks for his making our trip to Trenton an outstanding success.

On the way back, conversation centred on how we all had enjoyed ourselves. This is now leading us on to our next excellent adventure, the trip to Hamilton in June 2012.

PNSAC

Notes from the President

Richard Lodge

As the year 2011 draws to a close we can look back at our many achievements. We have had an interesting and productive year and progress on the North Star restoration has been considerable.

Our Project Manager, Bruce Gemmill, has been joined by Garry Dupont as Deputy Project Manager. Garry has taken over responsibility for the restoration of Merlin engine # 2, which is enabling Bruce to spend more time managing the restoration of the aircraft itself. Later in this newsletter Bruce has provided his usual update on the restoration work.

The most noticeable progress this year has been firstly, in the cockpit where some very painstaking

work was carried out restoring the center console, the radio rack and other parts of the cockpit. Secondly, work has progressed rapidly on the restoration of Merlin engine # 2 which should be ready for re-installation on the aircraft in early 2012.

Our memberships in 2011 have increased and we will end the year with almost 100 paid up members. Many of our members cannot actually work on the restoration of the aircraft because they are only available in the evenings and at weekends when the restoration shop is closed. However, we are very keen to encourage as many people as possible to support the project and are always looking for ways to make membership more interesting and rewarding.

Following discussions with the Canada Aviation and Space Museum we are now able to offer a free family ticket for admission to the Museum with each

paid up membership. This is a valuable benefit for many members. In addition, in November, Bill Tate, our Vice President organized a very successful trip to RCAF Base Trenton and the National Air Force Museum of Canada. We hired a 34 seat coach which quickly sold out and there were several disappointed people who were unable to get a place on the trip.

In 2012 we are planning our next Quarterly Meeting on March 31 at the Vintage Wings of Canada hangar in Gatineau. This will provide a very interesting opportunity for members to see the magnificent Vintage Wings aircraft collection in a pleasant and uncrowded way. Later in the year, Bill Tate is organizing another bus trip, this time to take in the 2012 Hamilton Air Show hosted by the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum (www.warplane.com). The trip, June 15th through 17th, will also include visits to some wineries in the Niagara-on-the-Lake area. Once again we are hiring a 34 seat coach on which almost half the seats have already been sold. Anybody interested in joining the coach trip should contact Bill Tate at billtate@bell.net or send an e-

mail to info@projectnorthstar.ca for details.

We now have a new editor for the NStar Chronicle. Bruce Grant has taken over from Ron Lemieux, who did an excellent job for the last two years making the Chronicle more readable and interesting. Bruce will be happy to receive material for future editions of the Chronicle and would like to encourage members who have no previous writing experience to submit articles to him. He will then work with the writer to edit the article to make it ready for publication. Bruce can be contacted through info@projectnorthstar.ca.

Our communications continue to improve and we now have our own Facebook page under the name Project North Star. We are hoping to work with the Aviation and Space Museum to make this a useful addition to our existing Web site at www.projectnorthstar.ca.

If 2012 is as interesting and productive as 2011, we will all have a great year!

PNSAC

Calendar of Events

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|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| March 22, 2012 | Board of Directors' Meeting |
| March 31, 2012 | Quarterly Meeting |
| May 31, 2012 | Board of Directors' Meeting |
| June 9, 2012 | Annual General Meeting |
| | Board of Directors' Meeting |
| | Classic Air Rallye |
| July 1, 2012 | North Star on display on Canada Day |

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