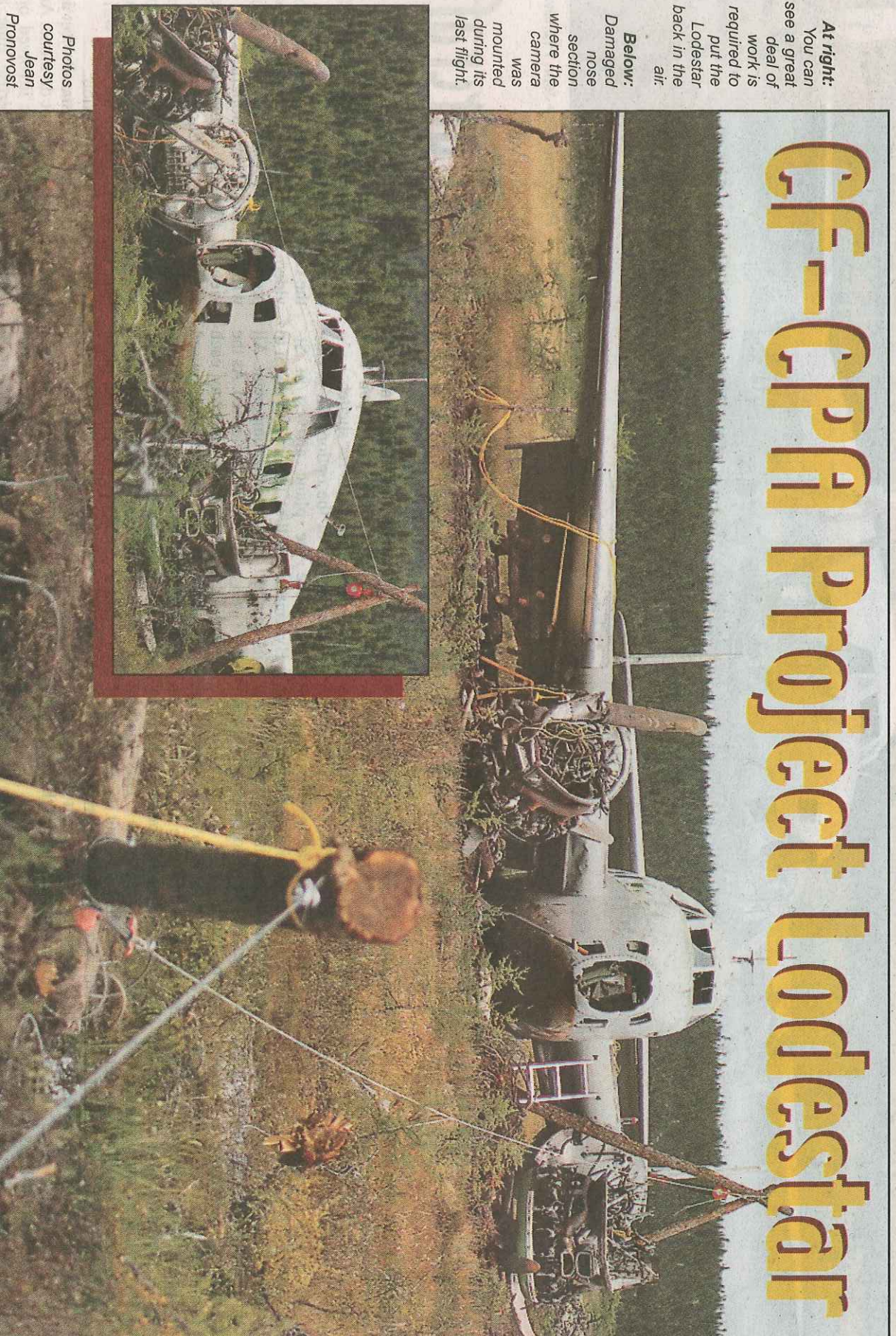


# CF-CPA Project Lodestar

**At right:** You can see a great deal of work is required to put the Lodestar back in the air.

**Below:** Damaged nose section where the camera was mounted during its last flight.



Photos courtesy Jean Pronovost

## Tundra survivor: Recovery of a Canadian historical aircraft

By MICHEL CÔTÉ

In the summer of 2004 during a routine flight to Northern Québec, Patrick Cloutier, bush pilot for Aventures Norpac noticed a familiar shape reflecting from the wilderness. It became clearer the closer he flew that this was not an ordinary aircraft.

As he circled for a second glance, he recognized the Lockheed Lodestar. Upon his return from dropping off a group of fishermen, he started his research and came to the conclusion this was in fact the Lockheed Lodestar that originally flew with Canadian Pacific Airlines during WWII. This was the start of what became known as the CF-CPA Project.

An extraordinary task awaits the group of dedicated members of the CF-CPA Project. The main objective of the group is to return an historic Canadian aircraft to the air.

CF-CPA is a newly formed group of aviation enthusiasts dedicated to restore, preserve and operate the 1942 Lodestar. The restored aircraft will serve as a tribute to the contributions of both the crews of Canadian Pacific Airlines and the RCAF Lodestar crews who served overseas during WWII.

The CF-CPA Project intends to restore the Lodestar to its original Canadian Pacific Airlines flying condition with complete 1942 original identification CF-CPA. The Lodestar, serial number 21177, served with Canadian Pacific Airlines during the Second World War.

### LODESTAR HISTORY

The Lockheed 18 Lodestar was the last twin-engine transport designed by Lockheed. The prototype, a Lockheed 14 Super Electra, lengthened by five feet, flew on Sept. 21, 1939. Designed for the commercial market, Lockheed found domestic sales slow due to previous commitments by airlines to buy the Douglas DC-3. A total of 96 Lodestars were ordered by foreign airlines in Canada, Africa, Brazil, France, Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, UK and Venezuela.

In addition to commercial markets, the Lodestar also flew in the military. The first military orders for the Lodestar came from the U.S. Navy. In 1940, the Navy ordered three variations, a seven passenger executive transport (R50-1), a personnel transport carrying 14, and a paratroop transport carrying 18.

In 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps had 13 Lodestars built and designated them as C-57. In addition, after the attack on Pearl Harbour, a number of civilian Lodestars were requisitioned and designated as C-56.

Between 1942 and 1943, the USAAC acquired 324 18-seat paratroop transports C-60A. Some of these aircraft were passed on to the UK. RAF versions were known as the Lodestar I

(C-56), Lodestar IA (C-59), and Lodestar II (C-60), and most were operated as medium-range transports.

After the war, some Lodestars were converted into executive aircraft while others went to work for small freight operators.

The RCAF acquired a small number of Lodestar aircraft for transport duties. Starting in 1943, No.164 Squadron flew Lodestar aircraft on a run from Moncton, New Brunswick, to Goose Bay, Labrador, transporting essential freight, equipment and personnel during the construction of the RCAF Station in Goose Bay.

### THE AIRCRAFT

The CF-CPA Lockheed 18 Lodestar was one of those slated to join the Dutch East Indies Air Force in Java in 1940, where it was given the serial number LT-926.

However, when the Japanese overran Java, the Lodestar was diverted (seized, might be a better term) by the U.S. Government to the Army Air Corps as a C-60-LO and given the serial number 42-108787.

The Army Air Corps never used the plane and released it to Canadian Pacific Air Lines in the early 1940s.

Canadian Pacific Railways purchased 10 bush airlines in a short period of time, finishing with the pur-

chase of Western Canadian Airlines in 1942, to form Canadian Pacific Airlines. In 1943, the first Lodestar was delivered to CPA and was registered as CF-CPA.

Canadian Pacific Airlines flew the aircraft until 1950, after which it was decommissioned and sold to Hollinger Ungava Transport from Sept.-lies, Québec. It served there until 1955 when it was sold to E.D. Bourque Aerial Photography of Ottawa.

On Aug. 20, 1960, while CF-CPA was performing aerial photography, it suffered fuel starvation and belly-landed 100 miles north of Schefferville, Québec. As a result of the pilot's extraordinary skills, no one was injured and the plane sustained only minimal damage.

Due to the extreme wilderness of the landing area, the owner of the aircraft did not feel it was worth recovering it and it has remained in the tundra these last 46 plus years until it was discovered by one of our members, Patrick Cloutier.

The CF-CPA Project was formed when Air Marcel Inc. founder Marcel Deschamps bought the aircraft in September 2006. Having had the desire to fly a biplane since he was very young, Marcel finally realized his dream of becoming a pilot at 50 years old. After earning his private pilot's licence, Marcel's passion for antique planes and their history has grown. He founded Air Marcel, a company whose mission it is to restore classic planes.

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Photo courtesy Jean Pronovost

# Tundra survivor: Recovery of a Canadian historical aircraft

The Lodestar is surprisingly in good shape even after more than 40 years in the tundra.

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Marcel is ready to pursue his passion with the CF-CPA Project, the crown jewel of his career. He hopes many will participate in this great adventure with him and his team.

Air Marcel already owns an impressive vintage aircraft collection such as; a 1943 Boeing Stearman, a beautiful 1946 Globe Swift, a 1965 Nanchang CJ-6A, a classic 1946 Piper Cub and a replica of a Pietenpol, plus currently in the works are the following projects: a second 1943 Stearman to be completed by next summer and a 1911 Blériot X11 military replica to be completed in 2009.

The first order of business is to recover CF-CPA, which will be no small task. The plane has been sitting in a swamp since 1960, where it belly-landed. The plan was to lift the aircraft in the summer to allow for meticulous inspection of the entire aircraft by a team of specialists. After which a decision will be made on how to bring the aircraft to St-

Hyacinthe, Québec for restoration.

There are several options being considered to retrieve the plane from its current location.

One of these is to dismantle the plane at the crash site, put the pieces on sleighs, and bring the dismantled plane to Schefferville or to St-Hyacinthe airport by truck.

Another one is to use a heavy lift helicopter to bring the dismantled parts to Schefferville, and then send them by train to St-Hyacinthe. This method would take less time but is very risky. If there were mechanical problems during the flight the pilot might have to drop the load which could end the restoration project.

Finally the other option is to repair the plane at the crash site, have it certified, build an ice runway for take off and fly it to St-Hyacinthe. All this of course, if the plane can be repaired and the weather cooperates.

During a typical winter at the crash site, the temperatures average minus 30

degrees Fahrenheit with high winds. Not the best conditions for the repair crew that will be using tents for shelter.

Regardless of the option that is chosen, once the plane arrives in St-Hyacinthe it will be taken apart down to its smallest manageable component. All parts will be labelled and cleaned. As the labelling and cleaning is underway, each part will be evaluated and either reused in the reconstruction, or held as a template for replacement parts.

We estimate that it will take seven to 10 years to completely return the plane to pristine condition and be ready to fly as it was in its glory days.

Last year the CF-CPA crew set up a camp and removed the engines and wings along with lifting the Lodestar on it's wheels for the first time since 1960. After evaluating the damage and a thorough inspection, options will be discussed in the next months to decide what option will be best to move the plane approximately 800 miles from the tundra to St-Hyacinthe.

More than 300 people attended the Oct. 20, 2007, open house at the St-Hyacinthe Airport where the CF-CPA team was introduced. Information on the restoration project as well as a short video of the work accomplished was presented. A documentary of the project will be produced hopefully to be viewed through television stations across Canada and Europe.

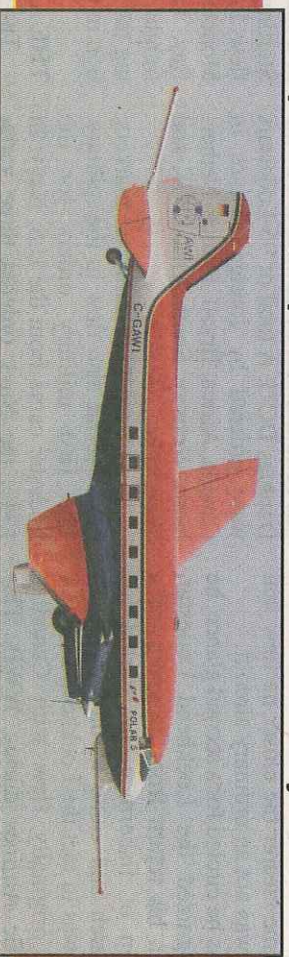
Spare parts such as two engines and an airframe are available to us for purchase. Upon inspection of these parts, over the winter 2008 a decision will be rendered on this acquisition.

The Lockheed Lodestar Project is a huge task that we cannot do alone. Anyone who wishes to get involved, or is ready to supply the expertise, time, and muscle are welcome to join us. All the help you give will go a long way toward getting CF-CPA back in the air.

For information on the project or to get involved, visit our website at [www.cf-cpa.ca](http://www.cf-cpa.ca). Keep 'em flying.

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