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Lost Lodestar, a Tundra Survivor

In the summer of 2004 whilst on a routine flight to Northern Québec, bush pilot Patrick Cloutier of Aventures Norpaq noticed a familiar shape reflecting in the wilderness. As he circled he recognized the form as an abandoned Lockheed 18 Lodestar. Upon his return to base his research revealed the Lodestar, serial 2177 originally flew with Canadian Pacific Airlines (CAP) in WWII. The discovery was to be the beginning 'CF-CPA Project' whose objective is to return the aircraft to the air in its 1942 CPA colours. Registered as it was, CF-CPA will serve as a tribute to the contributions of CPA and the R.C.A.F. Lodestar crews of WWII. The RCAF acquired a small number of Lodestars in 1943, No.164 Squadron flew them on a run from Moncton, New Brunswick to Goose Bay, Labrador. They transported essential freight and personnel during the construction of the RCAF Station in Goose Bay. This Lodestar (CF-CPA) was slated to join the Dutch East Indies Air Force in Java in 1940 as LT-926. However, when the Japanese overran Java, it was diverted by the U.S. Government to the Army Air Corps as a C-60-LO 42-108787. The Army Air Corps never used it and released it to CPA in the early 1940s. To form CPA in 1942, Canadian Pacific Railways purchased ten bush airlines and in 1943 their first Lodestar CF-CPA was delivered. CPA flew with the airline until 1950 and was sold to Hollinger Ungava Transport from Sept-Iles,

Québec. It served there until 1955 and was sold to E.D. Bourque Aerial Photography of Ottawa. On August 20, 1960, it suffered fuel starvation and was belly-landed 100 miles north of Schefferville, Québec. No one was injured in the incident and the plane sustained only minimal damage. Due to the extreme remoteness the owner did not feel it was worth recovering and CPA has remained in the tundra these last 46 plus years. The 'CF-CPA Project' was formed when Air Marcel Inc. founder Marcel Deschamps bought the aircraft in September 2006. Having always having the desire to fly a biplane, Marcel finally realized his dream, becoming a pilot at 50. Since earning his private pilot's licence, Marcel's passion for antique planes and their history has grown and he formed *Air Marcel*. Marcel is ready to pursue his passion with the Lodestar regarded as the crown jewel of his impressive aircraft collection. This includes, a 1943 Boeing Stearman, 1946 Globe Swift, Nanchang CJ-6A, 1946 Piper Cub and a replica Pietyenpol. Additionally projects are a second Stearman to and a 1911 Blériot XII. CF-CPA has been sitting in a swamp since 1960 and the plan is to lift the aircraft this summer to inspect the airframe. A decision will then be made on how to bring the aircraft to St-Hyacinthe, Québec for restoration. There are several options being considered, one is to dismantle the plane and put the sections on sleighs and bring it to Schefferville or to St-



ABOVE: Right side view of the Lodestar shows the remarkable skill of flying the crew did during there landing limiting the damage considerably. (CF-CPA)

BELOW: Inside view of the fuselage shows the damage and vandalism the Lodestar has sustain. (CF-CPA)



Hyacinthe airport by truck. Another is to use a heavy lift helicopter to lift the dismantled parts to Schefferville and then by train to St-Hyacinthe. The final option is to repair the plane at the crash site, build an ice runway and fly it to St-Hyacinthe. All this of course, if the plane can be repaired and the weather cooperates. During a typical winter the temperatures average minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit

with high winds – not the best conditions for the crew that will be using tents for shelter.

Regardless of the chosen option, once the plane arrives in St-Hyacinthe it will be taken apart down to its smallest manageable components. They estimate that it will take seven to ten years to completely return the plane to pristine condition. For information on the project or to get involved, check out their website at www.cf-cpa.ca

Michel Côté



The CF-CPA project wants to restore the Lodestar in the original of 1942 colours of Canadian Pacific Airlines. (CF-CPA)



Marcel Deschamps and his beautiful Boeing Stearman. (CF-CPA)