

Flying Fire Trucks

The History of Aerial Fire Fighting in Canada

UPDATE - 2007

Once again, I find myself tardy; failing to send out the quarterly updates I originally said that I would. I must apologize, but its nice to see people asking about my progress. Apparently people are actually interested in what I'm doing.

Some of you may recall that I have been working on another major writing project, a family biography. The first half is nearing completion and will chronicle my grandparent's activities from 1937 through to 1965. There's some pre-war barnstorming, the BCATP, founding Alberta's largest flying school and charter company, and many of the adventures that entailed. It will be available through my website as individually downloadable chapters.

Progress has been made with Flying Fire Trucks, primarily with two companies in Calgary in the early 1960s, Canspec Air Transport Ltd., and Cascade Drilling Co. These companies only existed for a short time so finding reliable information has been a challenge.

Several years ago, the Province of Manitoba started contracting agricultural spray planes as air tankers. As a result, I've had to add two more companies to my research. Being new, their activities should be reasonably easy to document.

I decided to organize my manuscript, cleaning up my notes and getting it closer to submission to a professional editor. I was surprised just how far along I've gotten with some of the chapters. The data was there, I just needed to organize it. As of March, my manuscript for Flying Fire Trucks stands at 103,619 words, on 163 pages, and in 43 chapters. Not bad for someone who was challenged assembling enough thoughts for a 400 word essay back my school days.

My plan for 2008 is to finish the nearly complete chapters, head to the North for some interviews, and to Saskatchewan where I plan on catching the province's Trackers before they disappear.

Trevor McTavish