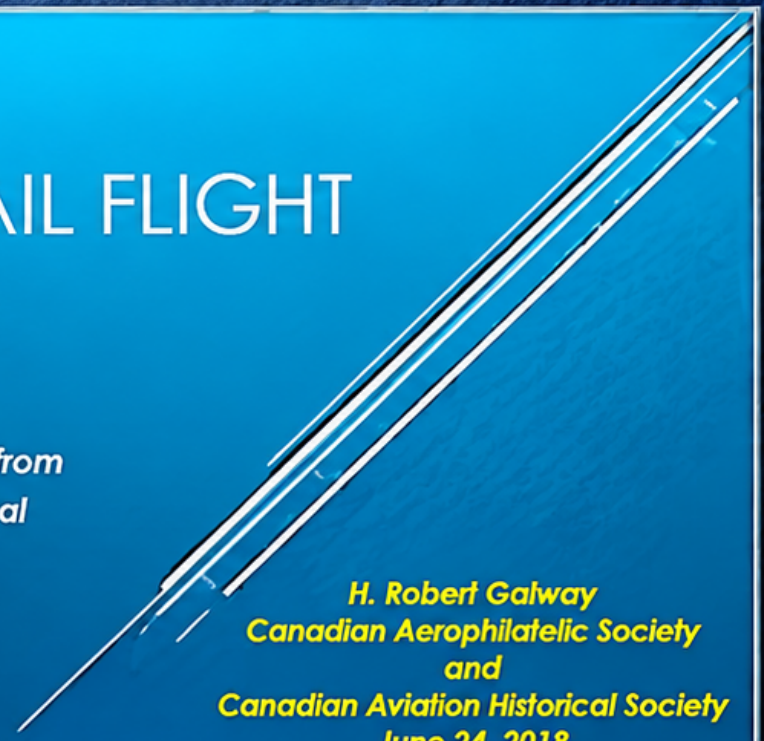
The First Air Mail Flight In Canada

THE FIRST AIR MAIL FLIGHT IN CANADA

Capt. Brian Peck R.A.F. flies 124 letters from
the Bois Franc Polo Grounds, Montreal
to
Leaside Aerodrome, Toronto
June 24, 1918



H. Robert Galway
Canadian Aerophilatelic Society
and
Canadian Aviation Historical Society
June 24, 2018

THE FIRST AIR MAIL FLIGHT IN CANADA

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the Bois Franc Polo Grounds, Montreal
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H. Robert Galway
Canadian Aerophilatelic Society
and
Canadian Aviation Historical Society
June 30, 2018



This 1928 view is looking northeast up McRae Drive to Laird Drive, at the Canada Wire & Cable Company (on the southeast corner of the intersection) and Durant Motors (the large factory complex to the right of the Canada Wire water tower). Back then the area was still very sparsely developed.

Gordon H. Jones photo/Northway Survey Corp. Ltd.

A Centenary Celebration Of the First Airmail Flight In Canada

RAF Capt. Brian Peck
Montreal to Toronto
June 24, 1918





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Gordon H. Jarrett photo/Northway Survey Corp. Ltd.

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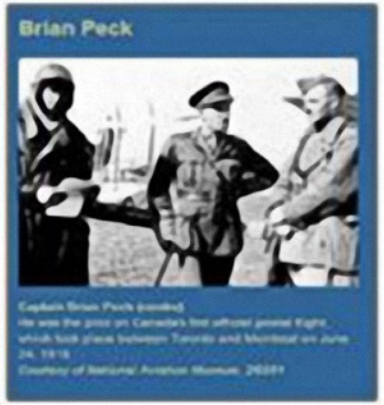






Capt. Brian Peck in JN4 "Canuck" enroute with Escort and JN4 in Leaside Aerodrome Hangar 1917





Capt. Brian Peck in JN4 "Canuck" over & on the Ground at the Montreal Bois Franc Polo Grounds

A Centenary Celebration Of the First Airmail Flight In Canada

RAF Capt. Brian Peck Montreal to Toronto June 24, 1918

Brian Peck



Captain Brian Peck (centre)
He was the pilot on Canada's first official postal flight, which took place between Toronto and Montreal on June 24, 1918.
Courtesy of National Aviation Museum, 26951


Capt. Brian Peck (RFC)
Flying Canada's First Airmail
Montreal to Leaside Aerodrome
June 24, 1918







Capt. Brian Peck in JN4 "Canuck" Departing the Montreal Bois Franc Polo Grounds June 24, 1918

Carrying a cargo of 124 "Air Mail" Letters and a case of "Old Mull" Scotch Whiskey


THE TORONTO DAILY STAR

ITALIANS LAUNCH A NEW ATTACK

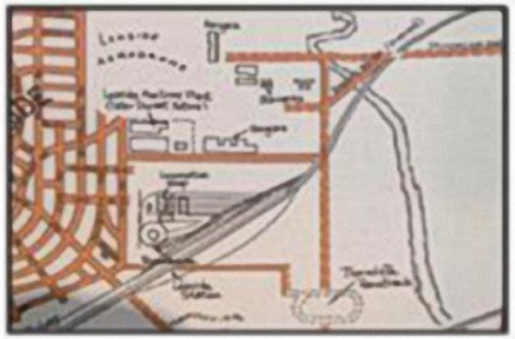






A Centenary Celebration Of the First Airmail Flight In Canada

RAF Capt. Brian Peck Montreal to Toronto June 24, 1918







TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 1918. The Star

CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIC SOCIETY

FIRST AIRPLANE MAIL HERE FROM MONTREAL

Despite Heavy Wind, Captain Peck Makes Trip in Seven Hours.

Seven hours and twenty-five minutes after receiving a sealed mail bag from the hands of the postmaster at Montreal, Captain Brian Peck, of the 83rd Squadron, R. A. F., dropped out of the clouds and made an easy landing on the aerodrome at Leaside carrying the first aerial mail in Canada from Montreal to Toronto. The mail bag was rushed by automobile to the Toronto Post-Office and part of it delivered by special carriers to the addresses reaching their hands within the hour from the time of arrival.

Six hours actual flying time was taken in the transportation of the historic mail from Montreal to Toronto. The time was greater than it would have been had the wind been favorable, but the aviator had to face a moderately strong wind and was forced to descend at Kingston for gasoline and again at Deseronto while making the trip which marks a new era in the annals of the Dominion.

Air Mail Arrives at Leaside Aerodrome

June 24, 1918

A Centenary Celebration Of the First Airmail Flight In Canada

RAF Capt. Brian Peck Montreal to Toronto June 24, 1918



CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIC SOCIETY

Aerophilatelists are interested in the development of air mail services, and collect covers carried by the different air mail routes.

The CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIC SOCIETY has about 150 members, and membership is open to all.

The CAS provides a forum for the exchange of information among Canadians who are interested in any aspect of world-wide aerophilately, and for collectors from around the world who are interested in Canadian Aerophilately.

The Society provides:

- a quarterly journal *The Canadian Aerophilatelist*;
- a question-and-answer service for mystery air mail stamps and covers;
- a small reference library that can be searched for information on particular topics;
- representation of Canadian aerophilatelists at national and international levels.

MEMBERSHIP

Everyone is invited to join the CAS.

Membership fees are $15 for one year, $25 for two years.

Members receive a 32 page, full colour journal, sent as an easy to open .pdf attachment to an email.

Fees can be paid by PayPal to Brian Wolfenden at bjnepean@trytel.com or mail Brian at 203A Woodfield Drive, Nepean, Ontario K2G 4P2

A printed copy of the journal, in black and white, is also available.

A Centenary Celebration Of the First Airmail Flight In Canada

RAF Capt. Brian Peck Montreal to Toronto June 24, 1918

Wings Over Leaside June 30
A Downhome Celebration

Plans are going well for the Saturday June 30 celebration the 100th anniversary of Canada's first airmail delivery at Leaside Aerodrome June 191 (the actual delivery date was June 24, 1918), by a Curtis JN4 (Jenny) Canuck.

Local organizations and businesses and individuals are donating to the Great War Flying Museum (near Brampton) to cover the flyover costs and are also supplying posters.

July 24-July 1 The Leaside Pub hosts Jeremy Hopkin's exhibition of period photos of the airfield, home of the of the R.A.F. 89th Training Squadron (now the shopping centre), and of world-famous airfield visits and happenings.

Saturday June 30
2pm The Leaside Pub host members of the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society, Canadian Aviation Historical Society, the Great War Flying Museum. Leaside gardens and generous Leaside business sponsors.

Wings Over Leaside at 3.30pm
The Sopwith 1 1/2 Strutter fighter/bomber from the Great War Flying Museum, piloted by Kees Van Berkel shows its paces. A celebration of Canada's first airmail delivery at Leaside and a tribute to the pilots who trained at Leaside and served with gallantry and distinction during 1914-1918 war.

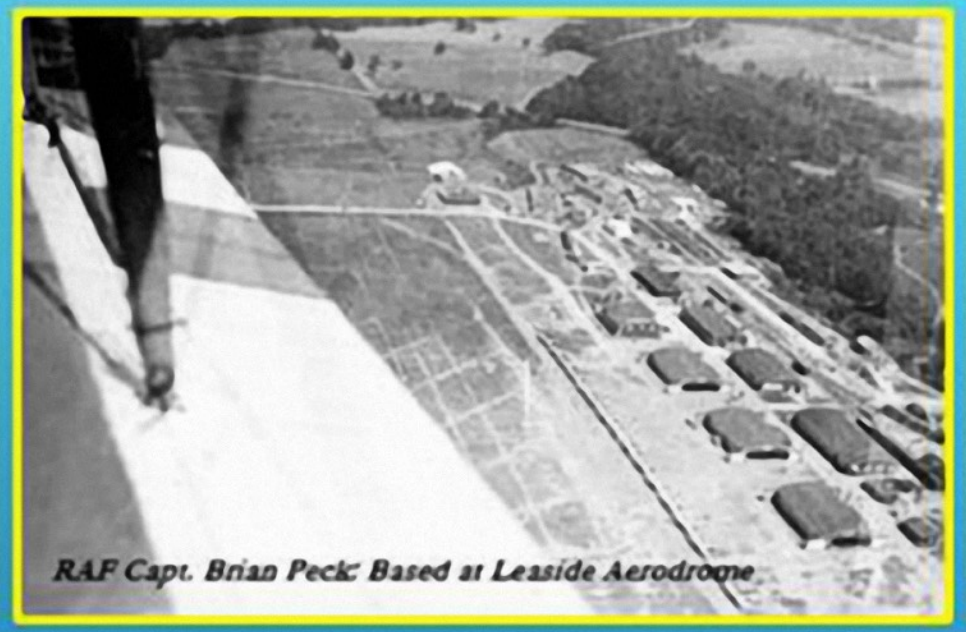
4-7pm at The Leaside Pub
Climax Jazz Band and Dorothy Rose
Canada's Forces' Sweetheart (95 years young) Dorothy Rose joins Climax in songs from the nineteens and twenties.

Great War Flying Museum Donations
If you would like to help cover the cost of the flyover, you can send a cheque directly to the Great War Flying Museum, 13691 McLaughlin Rd, Cheltenham Ontario L7C 3L7, specifying that your donation is intended to support the June 30 Wings Over Leaside flyover. The museum is a registered charity, eligible for tax deduction purposes, so request a receipt.

A Centenary Celebration Of the First Airmail Flight In Canada



RAF Capt. Brian Peck
Montreal to Toronto
June 24, 1918



RAF Capt. Brian Peck: Based at Leaside Aerodrome



RAF Cadets based at Leaside Aerodrome

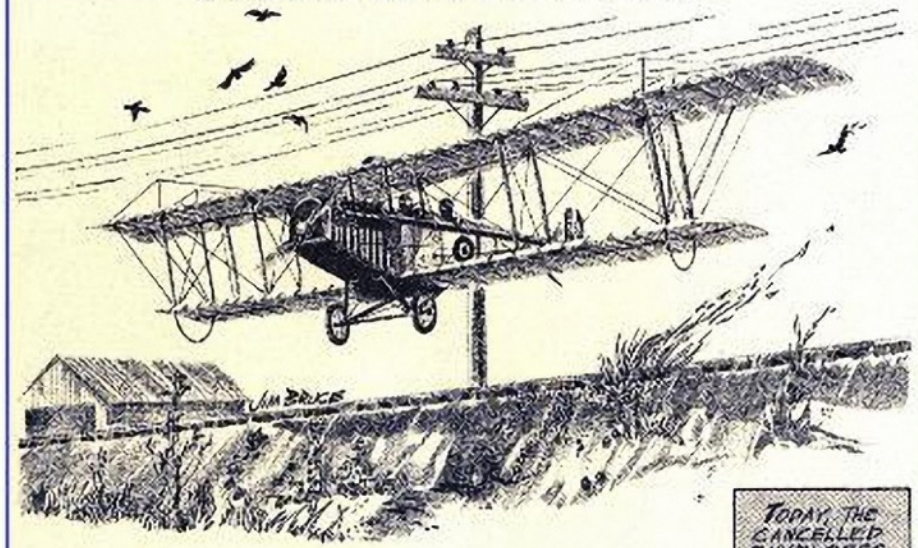
A Centenary Celebration Of the First Airmail Flight In Canada

RAF Capt. Brian Peck
Montreal to Toronto
June 24, 1918

IN JUNE, 1918, THE IDEA OF SENDING AIR MAIL FROM **MONTREAL** TO **TORONTO** — VIA A CURTISS **JN4** BIPLANE RETURNING TO ITS R·A·F· BASE AT LEASIDE — OCCURRED TO **GEORGE LIGHTHALL** AND **EDMUND GREENWOOD** OF THE AERIAL LEAGUE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE…

AT 10:30 AM, TUESDAY, **JUNE 24TH** — UNDER POSTAL AUTHORIZATION — THE JN4, PILOTED BY CAPT. **BRIAN PECK**, DEPARTED FROM BOG FRANC POLO GROUNDS. IN THE FRONT COCKPIT, CORP. **MATHERS** HELD A BAG CONTAINING **120** LETTERS PICKED AT RANDOM FROM THE TORONTO MAIL…

IN ADDITION TO ITS CREW AND FULL FUEL TANKS, THE PLANE CARRIED — UNKNOWN TO AUTHORITIES — A CASE OF **'OLD MULL'** WHISKY, PICKED UP IN 'WET' QUEBEC BY PECK FOR DELIVERY TO A FRIEND'S WEDDING IN 'DRY' ONTARIO…



WITH THE HEAVY PLANE RELUCTANT TO GAIN HEIGHT, PECK HAD TO DUCK **UNDER** TELEGRAPH WIRES BESIDE RAILWAY TRACKS BORDERING THE END OF THE FIELD…

BEFORE HE WAS ABLE TO GAIN SUFFICIENT ALTITUDE TO TURN ON COURSE FOR TORONTO, HE WAS OBLIGED TO MANOEUVRE FRANTICALLY AT TIMES TO AVOID OBSTACLES IN THEIR PATH…

AT 4:55 PM, THE AIRMEN LANDED SAFELY AT LEASIDE AND PRESENTED POSTAL OFFICIALS WITH **CANADA'S FIRST AIR MAIL** — AND TO A HAPPY BRIDE AND GROOM WENT A WELCOME ADDITION TO THEIR WEDDING CELEBRATION.

TODAY, THE CANCELLED ENVELOPES CARRIED ON THIS FLIGHT ARE WORTH MORE THAN $200 EACH - AND ONE WAS INCLUDED IN THE COLLECTION OF **KING GEORGE V**

124 covers were carried and delivered to the Postmaster in Toronto. They were given a special triangle cancellation dated June 24th 1918.
A cover from this historic flight sold for $1,600 in August 2015.
Catalogue value in "The Air Mails Of Canada & Newfoundland" US$2,000.00
http://www.brianwolfenden.com/









THE TORONTO DAILY STAR

26TH YEAR. TWENTY PAGES. TORONTO, TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 1918. LAST EDITION TWO CENTS.

ITALIANS LAUNCH A NEW ATTACK

PRISONERS STILL FLOWING IN ON ITALIAN FRONT

Scope and Importance of the Italian Success Is Growing Hourly.

ITALIAN CAVALRY FAR BEYOND PIAVE

Reported That Troops of Archduke and Von Wurm are Surrounded.

ITALIANS ADVANCE ON MOUNTAIN FRONT

LONDON, June 25— The Italians have started a counter-offensive in the mountain region, it was learned from an authoritative source this afternoon. The Austrians are making a strong resistance, but the Italians have gained.

HOPE TO REPEAT.

Washington, June 25.— Italian forces are preparing for a great drive against the Austrians in the Trentino—and expect to repeat the disaster inflicted upon the enemy along the Piave, official Rome cables declared to-day.

BRITISH MAKE RAIDS ON GERMAN TERRITORY

Independent Air Force Drops Tons of Bombs on Rhine Cities

AUSTRIANS RUSH UP RESERVES TO AVERT DISASTER

Retreat Continues Under Immediate Fire of the Allied Artillery.

ROUT IS COMPLETE; LOSS PUT AT 200,000

Enemy Flings Rifles and Cannons Into the River in Mad Rush.

PUTS FOE'S LOSS AT 200,000

FAMINE IS REAL IN DUAL EMPIRE REVOLT IS NEAR

Conditions are Similar to Those of Russia's "Black Winter."

PARTS ARE STARVED TO DRESS WINDOWS

If Present Crisis Is Overcome General Famine Looms Ahead for Winter.

ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST AERIAL MAIL IN TORONTO.

NOT NECESSARY TO SHOW CARDS EVERY MINUTE

Many Popular Misconceptions About Registration Receipts Cleared Up Today.

CONFERENCE HELD IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

Penalties, However, for Failure to Register in Effect Now —Not Month Hence.

TORONTO OFFICER WAS IN ZEEBRUGGE RAID

Lieut. A. C. Turner, R.N.V.R., Arrives Home on Furlough of Three Weeks.

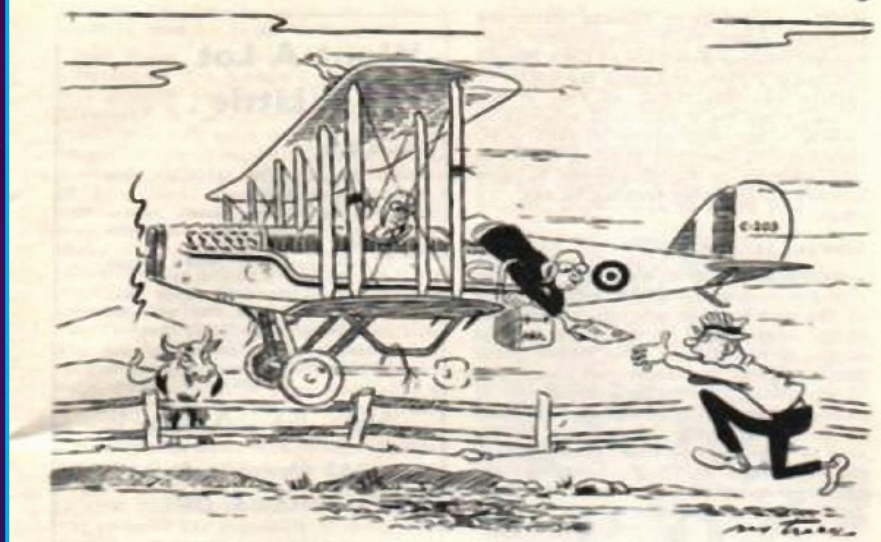
J. PATRICK O'LEARY IS COLONEL'S BATMAN

Man Mentioned in Guelph Raid Is Cousin of Michael O'Leary, V.C.





Canadian Philatelist, Vol. 11. No. 1, January-February, 1960 Brian Peck Article



Canada's Pioneer Air Mail

By Wing Commander F. H. Hitchins
Air Historian

At 4.55 on the afternoon of Monday, 24 June 1918, a Curtiss JN4 biplane landed on the Royal Air Force aerodrome at Leaside, north-east of Toronto. To the casual observer there was nothing unusual about the arrival of the aircraft; it was just another in the dawn-to-dusk round of "circuits and bumps". Nevertheless the "Jenny" had just made history, for nestled at the feet of the mechanic in the rear cockpit was a brand-new mail bag containing about 150 letters bearing a special cachet that marked them as Canada's first officially sanctioned air mail.

Although no fanfare of trumpets heralded his landing, Capt. Brian A. Peck, the pilot of the aircraft, had won for himself a place in Canada's aviation hall of fame as the Dominion's first air mail pilot.

A native of Montreal and a graduate of Lower Canada College and McGill University, Brian Peck enlisted in the artillery on the outbreak of war in 1914 and, after almost two years service with a field battery, transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in March 1916. On completion of training as a pilot, he joined an army co-operation squadron in France with which he flew R.E.2Cs and R.E.7s over the battle-front for several months.

Posted back to Canada early in 1917, Capt. Peck was placed in charge of the Cadet Wing at Toronto when the R.F.C. began to organise its training establishment in Central Ontario. His work with the Wing, and in particular the energy and skill which he displayed in setting up a School of Military Aeronautics before the trained staff arrived from England, received high commendation from the

WC. F.H. Hitchins; RCAF Air Historian

Quebec Heritage News: July/August 2010 Vol. 5 No. 10

My Great-Grandfather, Captain Brian A. Peck

by Hannah Peck
Grade 6
Arundel Elementary School, Arundel QC
Teacher: Marion Hodge

The flight that almost wasn't. Brian A. Peck, my great-grandfather, was a captain in the Royal Air Force. He was originally from Montreal, but he was in Leaside, Toronto. Captain Brian Peck was very eager to visit Montreal. He ceased the opportunity of visiting by suggesting to do a flying exhibition over Montreal to encourage more people to join the Air Force. The general agreed with Captain Peck's idea.

Early on a Friday morning, June 20th, 1918 to be exact, Captain Peck, with Corporal Mathers as passenger, set off from Leaside. The aircraft used was No. 230, one of the regular JN4 Curtiss training planes.

In spite of low, darkening clouds and a strong wind, Captain Peck had to fly low for most of the flight. He only made one stop in Deseronto for fuel. They landed safely at Bois Franc Polo Grounds in Montreal at noon.

A heavy rainfall made the recruiting flight impossible and prevented Captain Peck and the other pilots from returning to Leaside on the Sunday as they had planned.

Since they couldn't return Sunday, the president and the treasurer of the Montreal Aerial League thought of the idea of sending mail back in Peck's plane. Peck was honoured to do it. He ended up taking 120 letters with him.

So when Captain Peck finally took off on Tuesday, June 24, 1918, it was quite a ride. Captain Peck had to duck under telegraph wires along a railroad track and he just missed hitting a bridge. A couple miles later, they started to run out of fuel, so they had to stop in Deseronto to fill up the gas tank with automobile gas. Captain Peck finally landed in Leaside, successfully completing the first airmail in Canada!

Miss Hannah Peck; Great-Grandaughter