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Instruments, Switches, Radios & Rudders: True Stories from the Great White North and Beyond

By Samuel Cole

Having grown up across Canada's Northland, where his father was a bush pilot, Sam Cole started his flying career in such northern towns as Rainy River, Red Lake and Pickle Lake. Qualified as both pilot and air engineer, he edges up the totem pole from Cessna to Beaver, Norseman, Otter, Beech 18, DC-3 and HS748 There's rarely a dull moment along the way

Sam takes us through his early years, describing in detailed, easy-to-read fashion the endless duties of northern aviation. Whether hauling groceries or fuel oil to Hudson's Bay Co. posts or other traders on the native reserves, carrying endless loads of smelly fish, supporting the summer tourist trade on one side, then, forest fire fighting operations on the other, flying prospectors and all other types of northerners wherever they needed to be in whichever season, Sam lays it all out. It's mainly about floats and skis, with all the details, as with the big, complicated DC-3 skis. There are many winter tales with all the details of ops at minus 40 with the Beech 18, DC-3, etc. On the subject of cold weather, we really get the blow by blow (blow pots included), as re. the P&W R-985 (Beaver and Beech), R-1340 (Otter) and R-1830 (DC-3).

Sam is a born raconteur. When it comes to describing his fellow aviators and all the relationships built up over the decades, he really has a knack. Since he suffered from wander lust, he's often on the move, so we get insights into all sorts of operations –Ontario Central, Bradley Air Service, Patricia Air Transport, Austin Airways, etc. Naturally, you'll read (in the detail you want in an aviation read) about many of the "characters" who typify life in the bush. Even some of the craziness in sleazy, run-down hotels in places like Pickle Lake and Red Lake gets covered. There also are harrowing accidents and rescues. It's all put down on paper in the best style of the rugged, dedicated, professional bush pilot (a bit rough on the literary edges, but that's part of the book's charm).

Sam finishes with his eventual move out of the bush into "civilization". What a contrast – you can be sure of that when a hardcore bush pilot trades cockpits from a smelly, overloaded, ice-laden, creaky old Beech or DC-3 with one engine faltering, to a shiny new Wardair 747. Closer to the end, Sam gives us the blow-by-blow in the 2000s flying for such offshore carriers as Japan Airlines (he has a way of contrasting cultures). What an finish to a fantastic life's story!

Book specs 234 pages, softcover, photos, appendix, glossary

This is a northern aviation lore book that you'll enjoy to the hilt. Well worth the price of admission. \$35.00 + \$14.00 post anywhere in Canada + tax \$2.45 TOTAL \$51.45 Cheque to

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Be sure to keep on reading and keep in touch ... Larry

PS be sure to keep an eye on my aviation blog www.canavbooks.wordpress.com