

At The Blast Fence by Jim Bruce

The Trans-Canada Air Lines Vickers Viscount depicted in my painting on the cover is a 724 Series Viscount registration CF-TGQ #609 delivered June 5, 1955. TCA received its first Viscount 724 CF-TGI #601 on December 12, 1954. The Viscount became operational on April 1, 1955 with daily round-trip service, Montreal-Toronto-Fort William-Winnipeg.

The blast fence was erected on the tarmac near TCA's line maintenance hangar to help mitigate the intensity of the engine run-up prop-wash from the Dart engines, thus protecting traffic and buildings on adjacent Ferry Road.

I joined TCA in Winnipeg on August 1, 1956 as an aeronautical draftsman assigned to the Engineering Department in the Overhaul and Maintenance Base at Stevenson Field (now Winnipeg International Airport). The Chief Engineer was an affable gentleman named 'Baldy' Torell. My boss was Chief Draftsman Leo Styrzula who became a good friend.

The TCA Winnipeg Base was where the Viscount and Douglas DC-3 fleet received line maintenance and were overhauled. My work consisted of preparing engineering drawings for service manuals and modifications to the aircraft.

From age 12, I wanted to be a commercial artist (a profession along with drafting now defunct). At 18, while working as a labourer on the construction of the Uptown Theatre on 8th Avenue in Calgary, the city where I had resided since birth, I had the epiphany that in the likely event that I didn't go to university, I was going to need a trade to earn a living. When my Father and Family were transferred by the CPR to Winnipeg in 1950, I finished my Grade 12 senior matriculation at the University of Manitoba.

I got a job as an office boy with Imperial Oil and started a 2-year evening course in drafting at the Musker Engineering Institute. After one year I was hired as a draftsman by MacDonald Bros. Aircraft (later Bristol Aircraft Western Ltd.). The experience I received there led to my being hired by TCA.

In 1960, I accepted a transfer to Montreal, the first of many co-workers who followed me. My wife Shirley and I had a two-year-old son and were expecting our second child at the time.

I remained with TCA four more years. These were eventful times for the airline as the huge base at Dorval was opened to maintain its expanding fleet of DC-8s, Vikings, Constellations, Bristol Freighters and the venerable North Stars. The maintenance of the Viscount continued to be done in Winnipeg.

In June of 1964, I left TCA to join the advertising department of The Montreal Star as a layout artist. After three years I was made an art director. My dream of becoming a commercial artist had come true. I also started to do aviation art.

In 1973, I left the paper to form an advertising services company, J.B. Graphics Inc. Two of my clients were Merck Frosst Canada and CAE Electronics the world's largest manufacturer of commercial flight simulators.

As an aviation artist I have received many important commissions and won awards for my work. My paintings are in the permanent collections of the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, Montreal Aviation Museum, Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada and the Alberta Aviation Museum. I was commissioned to design two aviation coins for the Royal Canadian Mint, the Avro CF-105 Arrow and the Avro CF-100 Canuck. I am a founding member of the Canadian Aerospace Artists Association. *At the Blast Fence* was painted in 2002.

At the Blast Fence has been donated by Jim Bruce to the *Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada*.