



<http://www.cahs.ca/chapters/toronto>.

**Canadian Aviation Historical Society
Toronto Chapter Meeting
March 14, 2009
Meeting starts at 1 PM
-Under the Glider-
Toronto Aerospace Museum, 65 Carl Hall
Road, Toronto**

This meeting is jointly sponsored by CAHS Toronto Chapter and the Toronto Aerospace Museum- All CAHS / TAM members, guests and the public (museum admission payable) are welcome to attend.

Refreshments will be served
"Landing Fee" of \$2.00 will be charged to cover meeting expenses

**Next Month's Meeting April 11, 2010
Dinner Meeting - Armour Heights Officers Mess
Bar Opens 5:30 PM Dinner at 6:30 PM**

Last Month's Meeting 2



This Month:"The Jet Aircraft Museum, London Ontario"
Speaker: Rick Hammond Photo: "C-FUPP CT-133" Photo Credit - Kevin Moore

Last Month's Meeting

February Meeting

Topic: Eric Dumigan --- "Aviation Photo Journalist"

Speaker: Eric Dumigan

Reporter: Gord McNulty

CAHS Toronto Chapter 1st Vice-President George Toppie introduced well-known aviation photo journalist Eric Dumigan, widely respected for his exceptional photographs and website, www.airic.ca Eric was born in Montreal, Quebec, in 1964 and moved to Toronto in 1966. He currently resides east of Toronto in the small town of Brooklin with his wife, Bernadette. His father, Richard, and his grandfather were both avid photographers. Eric began taking photos and developing film and prints at nine years of age and he accompanied his father on visits to airports and airshows. Richard, who began

photographing aircraft in the late 1940s, has amassed more than 500,000 negatives. Eric's main passion is aviation photography and during the summer months he follows the airshow circuit in Ontario and the northeastern states.

For the past twenty years Eric has freelanced for several Canadian, American, French and British aviation magazines. He has published more than 200 articles and 1,500 photos as well as displaying photos in several aviation magazines --- including COPA Flight and Canadian Aviator --- and businesses. Eric enjoys photographing everything from weddings to wildlife. He is a Certified Photographic Consultant with the Society of Photographic Consultants and is also a member of the Society of Photographic Consultants. Eric works for Canada's largest photo finishing company as a Minilab Support & Quality Analyst.

The Dumigan family was well represented at



the meeting. Richard attended along with Bernadette. Fellow aviation photographers Parr Yonemoto and Gus Curujo also attended, underlining the widespread acclaim that Eric has earned for his outstanding photography. Eric presented a wide-ranging slide show that illustrated the broad scope and high calibre of his work. Some of his earliest photos were taken at the Toronto Island Airport, where he would take pictures of visiting participants in the CNE Air Show like Art Scholl of Super Chipmunk fame. In those days, there was considerably more access to the aircraft as security wasn't the issue that it is for photographers today. Much of Eric's early photography took place in and around Toronto, where he was quick to capture special aircraft like the Sikorsky Skycrane that was used in the construction of the CN Tower. Toronto is still a focus. For example, with the help of YYZ Airport Watch, Eric took photos of the first Airbus A380 landing at Toronto last year.

Eric's father still enjoys taking pictures. He likes to attend events such as the annual Orillia Aviation seaplane fly-in at Lake St. John when he can, continuing a long tradition. Eric's grandfather also took the occasional shot of aircraft and once captured the R-100 dirigible when it came to St. Hubert, Quebec in 1930. Some of the shots taken by Eric's father included the landing of the first Comet airliner in Canada, in BOAC colours, at Dorval airport. Richard was excited about the development of the Avro Arrow in the late 1950s and followed the flight tests at Malton from the end of the runway. His photos included a shot of the first Arrow, RL201, making its first landing and the second Arrow, RL202, taking off. Other especially noteworthy photos by Richard included a BOAC Stratocruiser taking off at Dorval, and an American Airlines Boeing 707 at Malton, taken from the parking lot of the old Terminal One.

In 1988, a photo of Eric's was published for the first time. It was a shot of the first flight of

the Mynarski Memorial Lancaster at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. The initial success motivated him to intensify his hobby. A full 20 years later, Eric did an air-to-air shoot of the same Lancaster. Calling it "a dream come true," Eric took the shots from the back of the CWHM B-25 Mitchell. The occasion was the museum's annual Flyfest in June. A Spitfire and a Hurricane from Vintage Wings of Canada based in Gatineau, Quebec, joined in for a spectacular flight. Eric has done considerable flying with Vintage Wings, not only over Gatineau but also over Geneseo, NY, site of an annual warbirds airshow held by the 1941 Historical Aircraft Group Museum. He presented fine shots of the Vintage Wings Kittyhawk over the Parliament Buildings last September and also the Canadian Forces Skyhawks parachute team over Gatineau. The Skyhawks were taken from a Buffalo. Eric, strapped into a full-body harness by two technicians, took the pictures from the back ramp of the aircraft. It wasn't for the faint of heart! Eric uses continuous focus and continuous motor drive to get his incredible shots. For example, he got eight frames per second to capture the jumpers as they left the Buffalo.

The replica First World War aircraft of the Brampton-based Great War Flying Museum are prominent in Eric's photos. He has flown with the GWFM on several occasions and showed nice photos of GWFM aircraft in a simulated Dawn Patrol flight at Geneseo, starting at 6:30 a.m. Air-to-air photography is always tricky. Aircraft are constantly moving up, down and around, and the wind factors in. Also prominent are the Second World War warbirds of the Ed Russell Group in Niagara Falls. Eric captured Russell's Messerschmitt BF-109E, a Spitfire, and a Hurricane together in a dramatic formation. In addition, he has done fine air-to-air photography with the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association based in Tillsonburg; Canadian wing walker

Carol Pilon in a Stearman flown by aerobatic pilot Rob Holland; and more.

Eric's favourite air-to-air situation is a dedicated shoot, where he gets to call the shots as opposed to being part of a group of airshow photographers who have already arranged the formations with organizers. In a dedicated shoot, Eric will do a thorough briefing on the ground, determining the call frequencies, altitudes that will be flown, certain backgrounds that will be planned, and so on. However, Eric noted the flying seldom goes as planned. It is, he said, "a frustrating kind of photography," in that the photographer can't move the aircraft to be exactly where he wants them to be. The best shots happen only when the pilots put aircraft precisely in the desired spot. Once he gets airborne, Eric always tells the pilot to go straight and level. He likes to take photos with the sun shining on the aircraft from a three-quarters front view. If three or four aircraft are involved, the risk increases and Eric emphasizes the need for all pilots to be really comfortable before they do any turns or manoeuvres. Once the formation is done, Eric likes to do an outside bank, where the aircraft that are the subject of the shoot break away from the photographer's aircraft for a nice angle. Safety is always paramount. Eric acts as a lookout for his pilot and if he sees any hint of anything going wrong, or someone coming too close, he will immediately tell his pilot to "break, break, break!"

Eric noted that pilots have different flying characteristics and personalities. "Some are way too close, some are way too far," he said. "It's challenging." The job can be all the more demanding when a fast aircraft like a Spitfire, for example, is being photographed from a Harvard. For an inside view, the Spitfire pilot has to slow down to stay in formation while the Harvard pilot must fly as quickly as possible to get the shot. One of the greatest rewards is to get striking photographs of rare formations. Eric photographed three P-40s in formation over

Geneseo, for example. He also obtained fine shots of the Battle of Britain Flight in September, over Ottawa, featuring the Lancaster with two Spitfires and two Hurricanes from Vintage Wings and Russell Group. Shooting aircraft with landmarks in the background is challenging too. Intermittent cloud can spoil the best plans. Nevertheless, Eric took excellent shots of the vintage Bellanca Pacemaker/Skyrocket hybrid "Miss Veedol II" flying over the Toronto skyline and the CN Tower when it made an appearance at the CNE air show in 2005. A Stearman Junior Speedmail, in a flight to celebrate the first U.S. air mail delivery in the U.S., made a beautiful picture over Niagara although the skies were cloudy when they were over the falls. Last spring, Eric enjoyed shooting an informal formation of Van's RV-series homebuilts. Each of the four pilots did a great job of holding their aircraft straight and level.

Eric has flown in a wide variety of "photo ships," including various Cessnas, Harvards, a Stearman, a Globe Swift, a Yak-52, a Tiger Moth, a Beech 18, B-25 Mitchells, the Buffalo, and others. A luxurious Beech Bonanza was by far the most comfortable. Shooting from Cessnas, he likes to remove the door. "I don't think my wife really realized what they meant until she saw me sitting in an open doorway at 3,000 feet over Orangeville," Eric said. He also tries to remove window glass if possible. Shooting through any kind of plexiglass is okay but it can produce distortion. In the Warbird Digest B-25, the back end is opened for photographers. Eric wore a full-body harness and crawled through the tunnel-like fuselage to get to the back, where he securely locked the harness on a hook. He got some impressive shots of another B-25 over Letchworth canyon south of Rochester, NY. Bernadette has occasionally joined in. Eric showed a photo of a Harvard taken by Bernadette from the ball turret of a TBM Avenger. The Harvard is probably Eric's

favourite photo ship, even though the photographer is strapped in, facing forward, and has to do a lot of twisting to get a good shot.

For ground-to-air photography, Eric noted that any pictures taken at a high shutter speed of more than 500th of a second will produce undesirable frozen propellers, making it look as if the engine is stopped. The idea is to catch the action, including the blur of the propeller, while choosing enough speed to ensure a sharp image. He likes to start at a speed of 3/20ths of a second and work his way down from there. But it's an inexact science. Sometimes he can really nail the shot at 1/25th of a second. On other days, especially in the wind, every shot will not be as sharp as hoped. Eric will increase shutter speed, if necessary, in order to get a sharp picture. On the other hand, a slow shutter speed can help blur the background, underlining the appearance of speed on a flypast, if desired. It's also essential to avoid shooting into the sun. As for the best site, Eric prefers to avoid show centre, in favour of the corners. Aircraft tend to be closer on the corners than at show centre. Another key is to hold the camera steady and to cradle the telephoto lens in your hands as you shoot.

Eric likes to pan the aircraft as they move into ideal position for a photo, rather than waiting for the aircraft to appear in the viewfinder. Timing is crucial and it's important to follow through in case an aircraft makes an unexpected manoeuvre. Cutout plastic bags with elastic bands help to protect expensive camera gear on rainy days. A really high-end telephoto lens isn't absolutely necessary. Good shots can be taken with a 300 mm telephoto. Nice cloudscapes can be shown with a 200 mm or smaller telephoto. It isn't always necessary to fill the entire screen with the aircraft. Big crowds and heavy security at air shows add to the challenge of ground-to-air photography. Eric likes to get to a show early, and is always looking for a place where he can get an unusual or

unexpected photo. Backlit pictures can be effective at times such as sunsets. Bernadette often urges him to include more people in his pictures. The historical record of the pilots, owners, crew, fans, etc. becomes more valuable over the years. Eric really enjoys candid shots, and makes optimum use of the special access that he has to various airshows and special events. Crowd shots are always good for airshows and they enhance a website.

Eric converted to digital photography in 2004. Before that, he had done a lot of his own darkroom work, so the transition from film and a new way of processing and editing images wasn't as imposing as it was for many photographers. Digital imaging revolutionized Eric's work. He can preview his pictures right away to see if he got the shots right, and can crop distracting background items from a picture to focus on the subject. He likes to crop photos into a four by six or eight by twelve size. With digital processing, shots can be sent to magazine editors much more quickly and inexpensively than film. The only problem is that editors are now demanding instant pictures! For most airshow work, Eric does a basic few adjustments to 'tweak' a picture. Most digital images need to be sharpened. Eric prefers to sharpen the raw image at the photo shop rather than using the camera features. Saving pictures is imperative. Eric puts his original pictures in storage and always saves his photos in another folder. Saying that hard drives on computers are very unstable, Eric advised the audience not to leave photos on hard drives. They should be burned to DVDs or to other external hard drives as a back-up.

Eric finished with photos taken in and around Toronto, including a June, 1997 event at Downsview, shortly after what was then known as the Toronto Aerospace Museum was started by Robin Murray. The Confederate Air Force happened to be in the area and they brought a Heinkel 111 and B-17 "Sentimental Journey." In

the fall of 1999, Eric attended a Bombardier employee open house at Downsview. Jan Zurakowski, the Avro Canada test pilot who flew the Arrow for the first time, visited in June, 2000 to inspect TAM's Arrow replica under construction. The sunset arrival of the replica Vickers Vimy at Downsview in May, 2005 was another highlight. A mainstay at Downsview, Eric has covered events such as the Chipmunk fly-in at TAM's Wings and Wheels in May, 2006; the rollout of the Arrow replica in October, 2006; the Beaver fly-in May, 2007; the 2008 fly-in with aircraft such as the Canadian Forces Arcturus; the 90th birthday party for George Neal in November, 2008; the 2009 fly-in with the Corsair from Vintage Wings, and more. What a collection!

Answering questions, Eric said he is currently scanning much of his father's files to digital. George Topple expressed his thanks to Eric. Bob Winson presented a gift to our speaker on behalf of the Chapter for a most entertaining and informative presentation. Keep an eye on his website. Eric has done much to promote aviation in Canada and we extend best wishes for future success. Our chapter has also added Eric's website to the "LINKS" section of our brand-new website www.torontoaviationhistory.com



Photo of speaker, Eric Dumigan, *Photo Credit - Neil McGavock*

Correction to February Flypast 44 - 5 Report on the December Meeting.

On page 2, Richard Sowden, president of the Great War Flying Museum, is a Captain on A330s at Air Canada, not A320s as published.



Netherlands Antilles Coast Guard Helicopter. *Photo Credit: Matt Clark*



Directions to the Canadian Air & Space Museum

By TTC: From the Downsview Subway Station take Bus 101 (Parc Downsview Park) which enters Parc Downsview Park and stops right at the museum's front door. Time enroute is 10 minutes. Alternately, you may take Bus 108 (Downsview) or Bus 84 (Sheppard West) both of which travel west on Sheppard Avenue along the northern edge of the Park. Ask the driver to let you off at the Downsview Park Entrance (it is well past the DRDC and Idomo buildings). Walk into the Park and follow John Drury Drive until you reach Carl Hall Road. Turn left at Carl Hall Road and continue east over the railway tracks to the Museum at 65 Carl Hall Road, which is on your right hand side. Approximate walking distance is 0.7 km.

By Taxi: Take the TTC Subway to the Downsview Subway Station and take a taxi from there. It will cost around \$9.00 one way, but it is a good option for tourists as the taxi will take you directly to the museum.

By Car: From the 401 Hwy East or West, exit at Keele Street North. Turn right on Sheppard Avenue, and follow Sheppard to the entrance of Downsview Park (first traffic lights). Turn right into the park (onto John Drury Drive) until you reach Carl Hall Road. Turn left at Carl Hall and continue east over the railway tracks to the Museum, which is on your right hand side. Parking is available at the front of the Museum. If you continue past the museum and turn right there is a large parking lot at the rear of the museum.



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 1st Vice-President - George Topple
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 Secretary/Treasurer - Bob Winson
 Directors –Murray Jolliffe
 Gord McNulty / Flypast Reporter
 Contacts - Chapter President
 howardmalone@rogers.com

CAHS Toronto Chapter Executive Committee 2009 - 2010

Associate Directors (Appointed)
 - Sheldon Benner
 - Donald Lawrence / Tech Services
 - Matt Clark / Flypast Editor
 flypast@xplomet.com

Memberships / Meetings Information
 rwinson@sympatico.ca
 (416) 745 – 1462

CAHS National Website: www.cahs.ca
 CAHS Toronto Chapter Website: www.torontoaviationhistory.com