

Victor (Vic) Hugh Pearsall, SOM

Vic was born at Luseland, Saskatchewan on March 31, 1915 which now makes him 96 years of age.

Vic's early life was not typical. For example, he learned to operate a movie projector and coordinate the sound well before he was 15 and then he and his father provided a transient moving picture service throughout west central Saskatchewan for a number of years following which Vic expanded the business into the north-west part of Saskatchewan

One of Vic's earliest airplane rides was with Bill Windrum of the Saskatoon Aero Club. Bill supported Vic in his decision to take up flying and became his instructor while Vic was only 15 years of age. It has only been in recent years that Vic has acknowledged that he misled the government when he said he was 16 when he was only 15. Vic passed all of his flying tests while still 15 but his license was not issued until two days after his 16th birthday.

Vic began flying commercially into and in the north shortly after WWII and was one of the first to establish a commercial fly-in fishing camp which was located on Cree Lake. Many, if not most, of his customers were Americans who came back from year to year. During those early years, Vic, with the aid of a number of Chipewyan Indians, built a landing strip at the north end of Cree Lake to service a fish plant he operated from the site. Although now grown over with trees, it was not that many years ago that one could still make it out as one flew over. Vic discontinued his northern commercial flying in about 1980 when he lost his Cree Lake fishing camp to a forest fire. He and three other partners replaced it with a recreational lease cottage on Durant Lake which is part of the Water Found River system and is about 35 miles north west of Points North Landing

Vic's private pilot's license expired in November 2007 and he decided not to renew it even though his MD said he would pass the medical. He last flew his 172 in the summer of 2007 and, reluctantly, acknowledges that his flying days are over.

At the time of receiving his private pilot's license, Vic was the youngest person in Canada to have done so. At the time of allowing his license to lapse, Vic was the oldest pilot in Canada. No one has held a Canadian private pilot's license longer than Vic's 81 ½ years.

Vic has received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit and the Queen's Centennial Medal. He has been inducted into the Battlefords' Wall of Fame. He has been inducted into the Saskatchewan Aviation Hall of Fame and his photo appears with those of the other inductees in the John G. Diefenbaker International Airport Terminal in Saskatoon. He has been named Pioneer of the Year by the Western Canada Aviation Museum in Winnipeg. He has been named Pioneer of the Year by the Luseland Museum Board of Directors and much of his memorabilia appears in the Museum in Luseland. He was awarded the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association Award of Merit.

Over the years Vic has owned numerous aircraft including a 150, a 172, a 180, a 185, a Sea Bee and an Anson: the last of which he piled into a poplar bluff one night in the fog just north of Glaslyn. When pressed he will admit that he was flying a load of fish and a non-paying passenger out of the north on the way to Murray Lake: none of which he was licensed to do. He is less reluctant to admit that he flew from Cree Lake to La Loche one night in a rain storm to deliver a Doctor friend who had been seriously injured. As the history is, there was one light on in La Loche and it was over the RCMP detachment front door which was on the water front. He saw the light, dropped down below the tree line and out of the rough water and landed in the bay finishing up by the detachment.

It was a common sight to see Vic's and others' pontoon planes moored in front of his home on Murray Lake and to see him coming in from or taking off to one of his innumerable trips into the north to fish and hunt.

When Vic's friend, Harvey Walker, prepared this summary, he had numerous other tales to tell about Vic and his flying but felt that more might be too much. He does recall that Vic had over 7,000 recorded hours of flying in the north

On a lighter note, some may remember the bar at Cochin when, in its heyday, one had to line up on Friday and Saturday nights to get in the main beverage room or the patio. In addition, on the weekends Vic had one of his employees in the cooler wearing a parka, warm boots and winter mitts. Vic would call back a take-out order and it would come down a roller ramp through a draped hole in the cooler. Vic's bar had the highest volume of beer sales in Saskatchewan during the six months: May to October; each year the bar was operated by him.

Vic and his late wife, Lydia, ran the bar, a hotel, a go-cart track, a trampoline park, a dance hall and the equally famous Lydian's café. Vic tells how he brought Bobby Curtola in

for two nights on a weekend and upped his normal dance hall admission fee from \$3 to \$5 and paid for the hall in that one weekend.

Vic and Lydia owned much of the creek property on the south side of Lehman Creek both east and west of the highway. They sold most of that property in 1973 and all of the balance over the next 10 or so years keeping only their home place which is now up for sale.

Vic and Lydia lived on the home place during the summer and in Florida over the winter. Vic continued that routine after Lydia's death until 2006 when he passed up Florida in the winter to spend that time in Vancouver. Age took its toll and Vic has been in a nursing home since the late winter of 2009 and, in particular, at Lady Minto Health Care Centre in Edam since the summer of 2009.

Over the years Vic and Lydia made many friends from the Moosomin and Saulteaux Reserves and in the north country and valued those friendships.

As Vic sees the end of his life approaching he tells many interesting and engaging stories of native and non-native friends and how important they have been to him.