

JANUARY 1952

While arrangements were made to get the surprise guests to RCAF Trenton, they enjoyed some unexpected hospitality. As one visitor reported, *"I always wanted to see Canada but not so quickly and under such circumstances. Such hospitality! I never expected anything like it. It's almost as if they were expecting us."*

Soon a bus appeared from Port Hope Bus Line with driver Keith Burley, to take the group to Trenton. From there, transport was organized to Newark – their intended destination.

Mechanics arrived from the U.S., but Canadian regulations did not allow them to work on the plane. It had only slight damage - the tips of the propellers were bent, but control surfaces were workable. Sanderson Aircraft (Toronto) were hired to work on the aircraft. The old props were replaced. But two local men – Ron Gagne and Fred Ito – accomplished the arduous task of getting the plane up from its resting place in the field during that severe winter weather. Pits were dug, with ramps going into the pits to make a roadway. Fred's D7 tractor pulled the plane up to the same level as the field. The damaged underbelly of the plane was patched with nylon sheeting soaked in glue. A 1500 foot runway pointing northward was prepared.

On January 10th, Californian pilot Charles Rector and his mechanic Gordon McBride fired up the engines, and to the roar from a crowd of spectators, achieved take-off at 2:30 pm. along the makeshift runway, narrowly missing the utility wires along Hwy 2. They flew to Trenton, and next day to Malton en route back to California. Thus ended an exciting event at the tranquil town of Cobourg.



"Commando Restored" was taken at Oakland, California on September 13, 1952



*Two passengers with the Stewardess, Sandy Daine (centre).
(Going to the bus.)*



Three weeks after it landed, the plane took off again. Pilots were Charles Rector and Gordon McBride of Burbank California. It took 1000 ft of the makeshift runway to get the craft airborne.