

# Terrace Bay - Schreiber

# NEWS

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## Parachutists perform practice perfectly

By Dave Chmara

The military aircraft flying low over the towns of Terrace Bay and Schreiber the afternoon of August 15 wasn't a sign of a Soviet invasion. Nor was it a sign of an upcoming war or bombing.

What was actually occurring was a training session by the 424 Transport and Rescue Squadron which is based at the Trenton, Ontario Air Force Base.

The CC115 De Havilland (now Boeing) Buffalo aircraft arrived at the Terrace Bay airport at 3 p.m. the afternoon of August 15.

After a couple of passes to choose a location to drop two Search and Rescue Technicians (SAR Techs), Team Leader Master Corporal Mike Simpson and Team Member Master Corporal Marty Maloney parachuted from an altitude of roughly 1,200 feet and touched

down with picture perfect precision just off the tarmac.

The next half hour was spent briefing those people who were to pick up the two SAR Techs in boats from the actual training flight which was to take place over White Sand Lake.

About a dozen people were given a "nickel and dime" tour of the CC115 Buffalo and then the Terrace Bay/Schreiber News staff was shown the plane and had emergency procedures explained to them - just in case. After all, the Buffalo is a plane that is a quarter of a century old.

Then came the time for the training flight.

The Buffalo has an amazing take off capability of a mere 1,500 feet and can land in an even shorter space of only 550 feet.

Once airborne, there was some time to kill while the ground team drove to White Sand Lake and

set-up in preparation for the jump.

So, Aircraft Commander Major Jeff Foss took the crew and passengers for a flight over the Slate Islands. The clear blue sky and low winds made for a perfect flying day and the crystal clear, sparkling blue waters around the Slaters was a photographers dream.

Then it was time to head for White Sand Lake and Simpson and Maloney began to get their gear ready to make the jump into the lake.

Everyone in the plane had headsets which transmitted the entire conversation taking place in the cockpit, and from anyone else in the plane that had anything to say.

Knowing the plane was 25 years old was somewhat disturbing in itself - another scary moment occurred when we heard

a voice transmitted from the cockpit saying "oops". We never did find out what happened but when you're flying it can make you somewhat nervous.

Another tense moment came when I was being strapped in my position at the back of the plane. The cargo door is lowered and this is where the SAR Techs jump from. First Officer Lieutenant Scott Case had strapped me in but had to check to make sure the cord attached to me was short enough to stop me from falling out the plane.

He motioned me forward and I took a step. Another motion and another step. One more time this took place and the nerves were getting tense. You see, I was approaching an escape hatch that, as Corporal Maloney had explained to us before take off, only required 45 lbs. of pressure

to dislodge. By the time the motioning and forward movement was stopped I was less than a foot from said door.

I was just waiting for some turbulence to come up and there'd be some real searching and rescuing going on.

Upon arriving at White Sand Lake, the boats were spotted that were to retrieve the two SAR Techs and the rear cargo door was opened.

During the first pass, a small cylinder attached to a parachute was dropped to give the crew an idea of wind strength and direction and also to determine where Master Corporals Simpson and Maloney were to jump from.

The Buffalo circled once more and by this time Simpson and Maloney were ready for their descent.

The order came to jump, they leapt from the plane and were gone in less time it takes to blink an eye. Then, further back, the two could be seen parachuting down over White Sand Lake.

From my vantage point at the rear of the plane it looked as if they would certainly land in the bush beside the lake but, in the next pass, the parachutes of the two could be clearly seen next to the boats that had been waiting for them.

Then it was time to return to the Terrace Bay Airport. The day provided for clear viewing of Schreiber and Terrace Bay, the clear cutting that has taken place in the area, the highway and camps along the way, gravel pits, train tracks, the dump and then Kimberly Clark and a long line of pollution that was visible for as far as the eye could see.

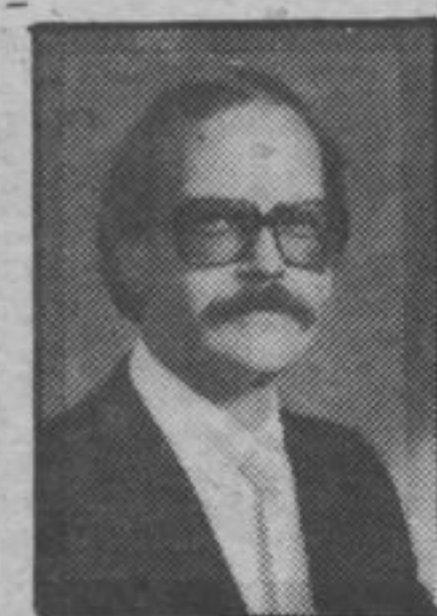
Then the crew spotted the airport and brought the Buffalo in for a smooth landing to complete the training for the day.

They proceeded to "button up" the plane for the night and headed out to camp for a night of relaxation and partying before heading back to their home base in Trenton the following morning.



Master Corporal Mike Simpson jumps out the rear cargo door during a Search and Rescue practice held over White Sand Lake August 15. The 424 Search and Rescue Squadron held training exercises here and headed back to their home base in Trenton, Ontario the following morning.

Photo by Dave Chmara



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