



Image by: Heath Moffatt Photography



Quarterly Newsletter

The Flight Deck

The Perfect Adventure: a journey of rediscovery.

This special edition is dedicated to showcasing the ambitious and adventurous PBY journey rediscovering her incredible heritage.

I will say no more and let producer Michael Hockney explain the adventure in his own words... except to say this is another of those "Way to Cool Moments" and a true once in a lifetime adventures.

TCPS Staff



The Perfect Adventure

PBY journey of rediscovery

As one does as a creative person, it often becomes necessary to head to the pub and stare at the bottles behind the bar and consolidate the day's achievements and dream up great ideas. The process to the outsider can give the false impression that the person is unhappy or otherwise engaged in some personal disaster, nothing could be further from the truth.

It was upon noticing me on several occasions during my after-work solace upon the mahogany in the old Boondocks that an affable older chap approached me in a

very direct way and said "So, how's it going.... I see you are here a lot, what's your story". Not taken aback, but rather pleased to have someone's interest I replied I was a photographer and I often went there to have a good think, "Being a Brit, it is something we do," I said. "Ah, so you're from the old country?" came the reply in a wistful kind of tone. I had seen the guy before but there was something quite charming about his personality that I had not noticed before. "My family is from Barra" he said and I told him I had lived 11 years in Scotland in both Aberdeen and the windswept West Mainland of Orkney. With that thought I walked to where I kept a special beer bottle, it was sitting high up amongst the omnipresent bric-a-brac of the Boondock's interior. "Here" I said, "That's me" and I pointed to the Viking on the bottle of Orkney Island Brewery Skull Splitter Beer. "That's me on a Scottish bottle of beer". My new friend was very intrigued and obviously impressed and from this point many hours of great conversation was to follow. I had just met 'Wee Jackie' McNeill.

Well, conversations flowed on a whole manner of topics over 2016, the fairer sex, boats, Scotland and aircraft. Unbeknownst to me Jack was a great aviator and he was making me relive my air cadet days back in the UK in the 1970's when I would do the inevitable square bashing with Lee Enfield 303's so as to get a place inside the cockpit of a DE Havilland Chipmunk and get some flying hours in. At the time I was building model planes like it was going out of fashion, I would say I had over 150 and my aircraft recognition skills were really very good.

Talking to Jack was easy because I knew my aircraft and he could see that; but I wasn't a pilot, I was a photographer. Inevitably we talked about my career and I talked about my 5 years in Russia, my past documentaries and exhibitions.

The Russia element Jack really liked hearing about and he talked for hours about his time in Alberta and the sea of planes that came up from the States and ended up in marshalling yards at Edmonton Airport. In those days lend lease was in full swing to supply Russia and droves of Russian women aviators would come to Edmonton to fly them into war on the eastern Front. Jack was obviously exceptionally knowledgeable and very open minded and I listened. He talked a lot about his youthful lifeguarding days in Vancouver, but that's another story you can read in his book that was recently published, *Forty years Throttle to Bottle*.

Fast forward to 2017. "So, you look like you are in need of an adventure", Jack said. "Yes, desperately", I replied. "How about taking a plane to document the BC coast, your

photographs are spectacular, you should do it, I can show you where to go".

The next day we drove to Victoria Airport and Jack took me to meet someone he wanted to introduce, "he is a salt of the earth kind of guy, you are really going to like him" and with that we opened some heavy hanger doors. There before me was a smiling bespectacled man who obviously knew Jack well; it was Bob Dyck, the owner of Shady Lady, a 1943 Canadian Built flying boat that saw active service in WWII.

Upstairs in a lofty office, introductions over, my mind raced at the possibilities as the two seasoned pilots talked. Jack had just set a seed that was going to blossom into the largest and most ambitious initiative I have ever put together; to take a 74-year-old flying boat half way across the world and back.

I asked Bob, "Can this plane get from here to Europe and back". There was only the mildest of pauses and Bob smiled back with a good dollop of eye contact seriousness and said, "yes". Jack knew where I was going with this. "Could we work together because I have an idea to take the aircraft up the BC coast to make a documentary". Again, with only the slightest of pauses, Bob smiled and said "yes". The BC part was Jack's idea but I saw a much bigger project. A week later I had the concept for a BC coastal documentary followed by a trans-Canada leg taking the plane onward to the Mediterranean then as far east as Taganrog in southern Russia, through maritime Europe, Scandinavia, The UK Iceland, Greenland and back through Canada's arctic to eventually land back in Victoria.

I called it *The Perfect Adventure: a journey of PBY Catalina's journey of rediscovery*. Yes, I know, she is not a Catalina but the Canso is not known outside of Canada so I have to be allowed an element of artistic license when it comes to dealing with selling the project to a world audience.

So, what is *The Perfect Adventure all about*? How is it coming together? When will it happen? These are all the questions I usually get asked as a producer so probably the best thing to do is introduce the project goals as I have outlined them in the project documents...

- In May 2018 a World War Two veteran Canadian flying boat, a [PBY Catalina](#) ("Canso" in Canada) named "Shady Lady" is going to take to the air and fly to 22 countries and over sixty towns, cities and communities in a once-in-a-lifetime celebration and a unique journey of re-

discovery. The ambitious project is the brainchild of Canadian photographer [Michael Hockney](#), based in Sidney BC. His bold initiative has been endorsed by [The Royal Canadian Legion](#) and [The Royal Canadian Air Force Association](#) for its ability to reconstruct an important time in Canada's history to honour the Canadians who flew the aircraft.

- The purpose of the flight will be to provide a platform for The Government of Canada to promote its sovereignty and stewardship of The Arctic, make a World Tourism Campaign for The Government of British Columbia, commemorate The pilots of WWII on the Centenary of The Royal Air Force, visit WWII Catalina bases, produce a film documentary of the flight and its mission, lay wreaths at the wreck sites of HMS Hood and the Battleship Bismarck and honour the history of Lend Lease and The Atlantic Convoys. This epic flight can never happen again and marks the end of an era.
- In the commission of this extraordinary endeavour diplomatic missions, documentary film producers, news crews, veterans, First Nations, cultural, scientific and educational institutions worldwide will be positively engaged to the benefit of all Canadians and mankind in a spirit of cooperation and understanding.

I did say it was ambitious, and it is but there is nothing here that cannot be done. Currently my job is to secure funding and bring everything together as quickly and efficiently as possible. In the end it is simply a 450-hour flight in a solid reliable and airworthy 74-year-old flying boat, with lots of stops on the way. Of course, it is more than that, but quintessentially it is a commemorative journey which will achieve many things as **Shady Lady** travels the globe. In 2018 the RAF celebrates its 100th birthday and the World Cup is being held, the opportunity for this Canadian plane to fly the Canadian banner is right up there for all to see. It is a reminder of our past sacrifices and the spirit of world friendship that makes us what we are as Canadians. My hope is that upon our return, **Shady Lady** will have made a positive legacy through her travels and the interactions the crew are going to have and that she will become a permanent flying museum for all to enjoy for decades to come.

To find out more on **Shady Lady** and the progress of the project go to www.theperfectadventure.ca or if you have an interest in joining the project or can help in creative

input and our financial goals please email michael@theperfectadventure.ca The initiative is supported through endorsements by both The Royal Canadian Legion and The Royal Canadian Air Force Association and we are proud to have them aboard.

Michael Hockney
Sidney
BC
Canada
December 5th 2017

The Perfect Adventure: a journey of rediscovery; For its ability to reconstruct an important time in Canada's history to honour the Canadians who flew the aircraft.

The Perfect Adventure is Endorsed by:
[The Royal Canadian Air Force Association](#)



[The Royal Canadian Legion](#)

