

VINTAGE WINGS OF CANADA

DE HAVILLAND

DHC-2 BEAVER

COMPILED BY VWC HISTORIAN DON MACNEIL



INTRODUCTION

Canada, of all nations, is considered the home of the “Bush Plane” and the de Havilland Beaver, when it was introduced in 1947, modernized and revolutionized bush flying. Sixty years later it is still recognized as one of the finest purpose built aircraft in the world with unequalled performance and capability.



A design team at de Havilland of Canada consulted with Canadian bush pilots such as Max Ward on their wish list of features for the ideal bush plane. Many of these features went into the prototype aircraft. Before long, the production Beavers developed a reputation as the “half-ton, pick-up of the air” to civilian operators around the globe or the “flying jeep” to the military organizations who flew them. Their capabilities as a utility aircraft were so outstanding that they were the first foreign aircraft purchased for the U.S. Armed Forces since the Second World War with 980 Beavers eventually placed in U.S. Air Force and Army service.

Over 1,500 Beavers have been sold to military and civilian operators to date in over 30 countries around the globe. Beavers are still used to transport just about any cargo or living thing from 45 gallon drums of fuel or dog sled teams for northern communities to relief supplies of any kind in times of disaster. The Beaver’s ability to land or take off in short distances is legendary. This allows Beavers using wheels, ski’s or floats to get into and out of areas not accessible by other aircraft.

The Vintage Wings of Canada Beaver is dedicated to those civilian and military pilots who have served their fellow countrymen. This aircraft was initially used by the Kenyan Air Force and later by a Kenyan locust control company. It flies on amphibious floats in the summer allowing it to land on water or land based airstrips. In winter, the floats are replaced by wheels, thereby increasing payload and cruising speed for winter flying.



Photo: Mike Henniger

Dimensions:

	Imperial	Metric
Wing Span:	30' 5"	9.3 m
Fuselage Length:	22'6"	6.9 m
Height:	9'	2.7 m

Weight:

Empty:	3,000 lb	1,360 kg
Fully Loaded:	5,100 lb	2,313 kg

Performance:

Maximum Speed:	135 mph	217 km/h
Cruising Speed:	115 mph	185 km/h
Landing Speed:	52 mph	84 km/h
Range:	800 miles	1288 km
Max Climb:	950 ft/min	290 m/min
Max Altitude:	15,000 ft	4,572 m

Beaver Origins

Beavers were designed and built by de Havilland of Canada, a Canadian subsidiary of the British de Havilland company and long-time builder of legendary aircraft such as the wartime Tiger Moth trainers and Mosquito fighter-bombers.

After the Second World War, de Havilland like many aviation companies, was struggling to remain viable. With the post-war revival of their Fox Moth training under way and production of the new Chipmunk trainer established, company President Phil Garratt gave the green light to launch their bush plane project. Fairchild Aircraft Ltd. who were already flying a similar bush plane prototype called the Huskey provided competition.

de Havilland made two decisions about the new bush plane that secured its success. First, they were successful in having the legendary bush pilot C.H. “Punch” Dickins accept a position as a company director and advisor. Second, through Phil Garratt’s friendship with James Young, Secretary of Canadian Pratt & Whitney, he learned that Pratt & Whitney were able to obtain government approval to re-manufacture their war surplus Wasp Junior engines to new condition. Had de Havilland used their own



Gipsy Queen engine, they'd have experienced a serious setback in aircraft performance and engine availability due to development problems with the British-designed engine. The Pratt & Whitney engines were more powerful and available at economical prices.

The Beaver was a success from the day it first flew due to the Pratt & Whitney engines, bush pilot-requested features and the de Havilland high lift wing flap and aileron design. Over the years, the design and performance has evolved and today Beavers are available with lighter, more powerful gas turbine engines and other performance enhancing modifications. While no longer in production, several companies re-build them to new condition and one company, Viking, has bought all of the engineering and manufacturing rights to the Beaver as well as other de Havilland aircraft that evolved from the Beaver such as the Otter, Twin Otter and Buffalo.

One of the famous people flying the Beaver today is the actor Harrison Ford who calls the Beaver his favourite aircraft.

Specifications and Performance

Wings – Strut-braced, high-wing with constant cord and large-span slotted flaps;

Fuselage – Square-sided, all-metal monocoque with flush riveted skin; an all metal tailplane with smooth skin covering.

Landing Gear – Fixed main gear and tail wheel; optional snow skis, floats or amphibious floats;

Power Plant – Pratt & Whitney Canada R-985-AN1/14B Wasp Junior reciprocating, 450 shp;

Propeller – Hamilton Standard constant speed, counterweighted, two blade propeller;

Accommodation – Single pilot cockpit and seven passengers or freight;

Manufacturer – de Havilland of Canada, Downsview, ON, Canada;

Armament – Not Applicable.

Origins of De Havilland Beaver 1588

1965 – Assigned De Havilland construction number 1588 and delivered to Kenyan Air Force on 6 April, assigned serial number KAF-III;

1978 – Sold in Sept. to East Africa Desert Locust Control Organization, Wilson airport, Nairobi, Kenya;

1980 – Registered to Lime Kiln (Properties) Ltd. Sold to Tamaam Inc..

1980 – 1992 Operated in Kenya by Tamaam Inc., of Anchorage, AK with USA registration N5595S, 28 Feb. 1990. Used to move big

game hunters into Kenyan outback. American registration cancelled 03 January 1992;

1992- 1999 Exported and registered in Kenya to Kisima Farm Ltd.(A. Dyer), Nanyuki, Kenya as 5Y-MMM;

2000 – Deleted from Kenyan Civil Aircraft registry 14 March.

2002 - Purchased by M. Potter and registered as C-GXPM.