

William (Bill) Cove



Born: March 29, 1933
Airdrie, Alberta

Died: December 5, 2023
Calgary, Alberta

Family: Wife Beverley

2 sons, 1 daughter
Grandchildren and Great
Grandchildren

Transit Bus Driver

Victoria Flying Services

BC Airlines

PWA

Bill Cove Airline

Coulson Airplane Ltd.

Bill Cove entered the workforce aged 15 as a copy boy for Victoria Daily Colonist. In 1950 he moved to C&C Transportation, hauling freight and passengers on the airport run. At the airport, he met a couple of TCA pilots who joked with him about his tendency to speed and suggested he became a pilot. He was interested in the idea but hadn't thought it was feasible for an ordinary boy like him. With a lot of encouragement he signed up for flying lessons at the Victoria Flying Club and earned his private licence in 1956. He earned his commercial licence and float plane endorsement a year later and began to look for a new job in the Aviation business.

At this time pilots were being laid off and jobs were scarce so Bill and his flying instructor Ray Schofield came up with a plan to start their own business out of Victoria with Ray running the flying school and Bill handling charter flights. They enlisted the help of **Bill Sylvester** and together they created Victoria Flying Services Ltd. Bill Cove could not afford shares in the company and became an employee getting his first aviation job flying Cessna's 150 and 172 and a Luscombe 8E. The company did well with the flying school, maintenance and scheduled flights but the charter business was slow to start.

On a flight into Alert Bay, Bill had encountered **Jack Moul**, Chief Pilot of **PWA**, who suggested Bill should contact him in the spring about a possible job. As it happened, Jack was out of the office when Bill finally decided to call on him and Bill instead spoke to **Bill Waddington**, in the **BC Airlines** office opposite, who persuaded him he would be better off with **BC Airlines** than with **PWA**. After a short test flight, Waddington hired him for more than double what he was earning at Victoria Flying Services.

Bill was sent to Port Alice to fly Beavers. Port Alice was totally isolated with no roads and the seaplanes were constantly busy. He became the official 'gofer' for northern Vancouver Island. In 1964, He left Port Alice to take over the base at Nimkish Lake and stayed there until Christmas 1965: The townspeople wrote a farewell letter in which they said "your assistance, encouragement and happiness has been an integral part of the lasting

friendships you cultivated in our valley".

Bill moved from Nimkish to Ladner continuing with **BC Airlines** which was later purchased by **PWA**. He stayed on with **PWA** for one year, then worked for CANFOR as a pilot until 1976, followed by Weldwood as Aviation Manager and Chief Pilot until 1987, when he moved to Port Alberni and became Aviation Manager for Coulson Airplane Ltd. He retired four and a half years later after a near fatal accident, with 23,000 hours in the air.

After retirement, Bill arranged bus tours, continued to buy and sell aircraft through Bill Cove Air Ltd, the company he started in 1976, and still had the occasional flying contract

for more information see 'Flying the Frontiers vol3' by Shirlee Smith Matheson.

