

George (Bob) Langdon



Born: 1924
Regina, SK

Died: January 17, 1996
Campbell River, BC

Family: Wife Jacqueline
2 daughters, 1 son
4 grandchildren

R.C.A.F.

Pilot

B.C. Airlines

Island Airlines (owner)

An integral role was played by Bob Langdon and his Seabees in shaping the future of aviation in the Campbell River area. He was a very well-known figure and in 1971, on the 70th anniversary of the seaplane base on Tyee Spit, Campbell River Heritage Museum produced a puppet show, called "Bob and his Seabee", telling the story of the seaplane service being moved from Willows Hotel to this new location.

Bob joined the RCAF in 1944 and was trained as a gunner though he never saw active service. After the war, he lived in Vancouver working first on coastal steamships, then for Boeing Aircraft Factory and finally driving a taxi to pay for flying lessons at Richmond Aero Club, where he earned his pilot licence in April 1946.

In 1948, Bob started flying commercially for **BC Airlines** in Vancouver and by the end of the year he had become pilot and base manager for the company in Campbell River. The advent of a floatplane service in this area was life changing for people living in isolated communities, and for the logging camps spreading along the coast. As well as freight hauling and flying passengers, **BC Airlines** flew an average of 4 medivac flights a week sometimes under very difficult flying conditions. On one memorable occasion, the first baby to be born in an aircraft in Canada arrived in Bob's Seabee.

The growth and development of the area made possible by the burgeoning seaplane service resulted in Campbell River becoming an economic hub and service centre for Northern Vancouver Island. In 1951, Bob had **BC Airlines** moved to Tyee Spit where it was better protected from the weather. In 1959, he decided to start an airline of his own, Island Airlines, also at the Spit. By the mid 1960's this location was the busiest seaplane base in the world. At its height, Island Airlines employed 50 people and owned 25 seaplanes each flying over 1,000 hours a year.

In the 1970's with business increasing to serve the growing logging industry, Bob's company had bases at Campbell River, Tofino, Gold River and Powell River. They also had a flight school at the airport and one of only two Cessna dealerships in Western Canada.

In 1977, Bob sold Island Airlines to a Vancouver company and retired to run Ferndell Trailer Park. He belonged to several service clubs including the Kinsmen and Rotary and in the 1960's had served on the hospital board and on the school board.

