

RCAF Serial # 5301 Comet Mk 1A & Mk1XB

De Havilland, Hatfield, UK	Aseembled	D.H. c/n 06017
De Havilland, Hatfield, UK	First flight	21/02/53
Delivered to RCAF / 412 Squadron	Delivered	18/03/53
Withdrawn from service & placed in storage	Stored	April 1954 to 26 July 1956
Modified to Mk 1XB standard at Chester, UK	Modified	1956 - 1957
First flight at Chester, UK as Mk 1XB	First flight	2 August 1957
Damaged in heavy landing at Reykjavik, Iceland; flown to Hatfield, UK for u/c repairs	Flight Incident	March 1962
Withdrawn from RCAF service & awaiting disposal instructions	Struck off Strength	16 September 1963
Ferried to RCAF Stn <i>Mountain View</i> for storage	Last flight	30 October 1963
Purchased by Eldon Armstrong	Sold	30 July 1965
Cannibalized at <i>Mountain View</i> for use as spares for #5302 & scrapped	Scrapped	Oct 1965
Nose section to CA&SM	Preserved	1965 - Current

March 18, 1953. Handed over to the Royal Canadian Air Force at Hatfield for two months of intensive training flights to South Africa, India, and Singapore.

May 9, 1953. #5301 established an unofficial record by flying from London to Beirut (2,250 miles) in five hours, 10 minutes.

May 29, 1953. #5301, becomes the first pure jet passenger aircraft to cross the Atlantic, landing at Uplands Airport in Ottawa at 18:51 GMT on May 29th. RCAF *Sabres* were briefed to intercept the *Comet* over Montreal and to escort it to its historic landing at Uplands. The route selected for this crossing of the Atlantic was from London Airport to Keflavik (1,180 miles, flight-plan time 3 hr 15 min); Keflavik to Goose Bay (1,495 miles, flight time 4 hr 15 min); Goose Bay to Ottawa (870 miles, flight time 2 hr 30 min). The total time for the journey of 3,545 miles was 10 hr 20 min, compared with the normal piston-engine transport time of 16 to 18 hours. On its delivery flight # 5301 carried two complete crews, some 14 ground-crewmembers, and three D.H. representatives who were to remain to support the RCAF *Comets*. The first crew, captained by S/L J.D. Dickson, Flight Commander of Comet Flight, comprised F/L's D. Broadfoot, K. Wark, C. Brown and F/O C. Baine. The second crew who flew the long leg to Goose Bay was S/L. S. Olsen, F/L's R. Herbert, D. Stewart, R. Chalk and Sgt. W. Hoehn. The journey of 3,545 miles took just 10 hours, 20 minutes, to unofficially break the Atlantic speed record. The *Comet* was greeted at Uplands by a large crowd and many Canadian officials, and subsequently conducted a trans-Canada demonstration tour visiting various locations.

April 1954. #5301 was withdrawn from use following the accident of G-ALYY: at this point it had flown 670 hours (recorded as of September 9, 1954).

July 26, 1956. The aircraft was flown back unpressurised from Canada to Chester in the UK to be rebuilt as a Comet IXB with revised standards, new engines and equipment.

August 2, 1957. Having been rebuilt, the aircraft made its first flight as a Mk 1XB from Chester. The next day, it departed for tropical trials and on September 16th was flown to South Africa for flight tests, returning on September 23rd.

September 26, 1957. After five weeks of trials and training flights, the aircraft returned to Ottawa via the Azores and continued to be used in a training role until mid-November.

November 1, 1957. #5301 was returned to active service with 412 Squadron in roles of high-speed / high-altitude radar penetration, high-speed transport and for VIP duties. It made regular transatlantic crossings in support of the Canadian NATO fighter bases.

September 16, 1963. Both the RCAF *Comets* were retired as of 16 September 1963. On October 30th, 1963 the aircraft was ferried to RCAF Station *Mountain View* airfield for storage pending disposal. After acting as a spares ship for the other Comet (#5302), which was sold in 1965, the aircraft was broken up with only the nose being saved.

1965. The nose section was presented to the National Aviation Museum (now the Canada Aviation & Space Museum) at Rockcliffe, Ottawa, Canada. The nose was put into storage at the museum and has never been on public display since delivery from the RCAF in 1965. The museum originally reported that the nose section contained a certain amount of radioactive paint that would have to be treated before the *Comet* could be displayed to the public. The nose currently sits away from public view in the storage hangar surrounded by other artefacts.

RCAF Serial #5302 Comet Mk 1A & Mk1XB

de Havilland, Hatfield, UK	Assembled	D.H. c/n 06018
De Havilland, Hatfield, UK	First flight	25 March 1953
Delivered to RCAF / 412 Squadron	Delivered	26 February 1953
Withdrawn from service & placed in storage	WFU	1 May 1956 - Sep 1957
Modified to Mk 1XB standard at Chester, UK	Modified	1956 -1957
Re-delivered to the RCAF	Returned	2 January 1957
Withdrawn from RCAF service & awaiting disposal instructions	SOS	16 September 1963
Ferried to RCAF Stn <i>Mountain View</i> for storage	Last flight	30 October 1963
Purchased by Eldon Armstrong & registered as CF-SVR	Purchased	30 July 1965
Purchased by Bob Quigley Aircraft Sales	Purchased	1965
Purchased by B. Dallas Airmotive and US registered as N373S	Purchased	July 1967
Purchased by Lisbon Development Company	Purchased	1968
Purchased by The Aldebaran Company	Purchased	Nov 1968
Purchased by Mr. Buddy Reid	Purchased	1969
Purchased by Mr. R.C. Rose	Purchased	Feb 1970
Sold for scrap in Miami, FL	Scrapped	1975

May 9, 1952. Shortly after the handover of the aircraft to the RCAF crews on April 13th, it was used for extensive crew training. On this day, the BOAC *Comet* Captain Cliff Alabaster trained the RCAF crew by flying with Squadron Leader Lloyd and Flight Lieutenant Hussey from London to Beirut. The same crew returned from Beirut to Rome and Rome back to London on May 17th.

June 1953. After flying from London via Iceland and Goose Bay, Labrador, #5302 arrived in Uplands, Ottawa. The 3,550-mile delivery flight was completed in a total elapsed time of 14 hr, of which 9 hr 23 min was flying time. This is one hour less than the time taken by #5301, which experienced strong headwinds. The second aircraft also carried two complete flight crews, under S/L Roland Lloyd, along with 19 passengers - 17 members of 412 Squadron plus two de Havilland representatives.

May 25, 1956. Having been withdrawn from use in April 1954, the aircraft was stored for two years and then flown by de Havilland pilots, John Cunningham and Pat Fillingham, to Chester, UK to be converted to Mk1XB standard, with work starting by July 1956. When work was completed in mid-1957, when the aircraft was flown from Chester to Hatfield for crew training and test flying.

September 16, 1957. The aircraft departed the UK on RCAF crew training to Africa. The route took both the RCAF *Comets* via Rome, El Adem, Khartoum, Entebbe, Salisbury and finally to Johannesburg before returning to Hatfield on September 23rd.

September 26, 1957. The aircraft was returned to 412 Squadron in Canada and by November was returned to service as a high speed/high altitude radar penetration aircraft, as a high-speed transport and for VIP duties.

September 16, 1963. Both RCAF *Comets* were retired, and later, on October 30th, #5302 was ferried to RCAF Station *Mountain View* airfield for storage pending disposal.

July 30, 1965. The aircraft was sold to Mr. Eldon Armstrong for planned use as an executive transport. It was registered CF-SVR and flown to Mount Hope near Hamilton, ON. The *Comet* remained at the airfield until 1968 when it was sold to the aviation broker, B. Dallas Airmotive.

1968. Re-registered N373S, the aircraft was flown to Miami airport in Florida for proposed charter work. As a result of numerous operational problems, the aircraft was never able to be used for the proposed work and it passed through several more owners before it was finally broken up at Miami in 1975.