



Finding a sad piece of aviation history

by Geoff Stevenson

It's only about 80 kilometres from downtown Victoria to Mount Bolduc. Of course, that's in a straight line - and in the backwoods of British Columbia there are very few straight lines, as we were about to discover.

The plan seemed simple enough: We'd get on our dirt bikes, ride the pavement to Halfmoon Bay on the south shore of Lake Cowichan, then

head more or less south on the Renfrew and Gordon River logging roads.

So club member Ernie Lalonde and Joel Thompson, who's ridden extensively off-road with us both, did that one day in March. They found what they thought was the right turnoff to Mount Bolduc and headed uphill, in search of the wreckage of a plane that had crashed on the mountain in 1944.



Harry Steiner shows how to ride the Mount Bolduc road - or what passes for a road in these parts.

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Next Breakfast/Brunch

Sunday, April 12



WHERE:

Mary's Bleue Moon Café
9535 Canora Road
Sidney

WHEN:

9:30 am



Backroad navigation seems a black art



Ernie, Geoff and Joel (from left) admire a recent plaque to the Mount Bolduc crash victims. A smaller bronze memorial is nearby.

Several hours later - and after a two-hour hike through the woods - they concluded they had been on the wrong road and rode back to Victoria, having seen not a trace of the plane.

More research was clearly needed. A good friend who's been to the wreck site more than once, gave us detailed directions and we set out again on a sunny day later in the month. (This time we also had the

crash coordinates: N. 48deg. 43.607, W. 12deg. 18.087)

This time we were four: Joel and Ernie led the way and I joined Harry Steiner, who rides a BMW GS650 Dakar. (Joel was on his Husaberg 520, Ernie rode a Suzuki DR650 and I took my Honda CRF250L).

Harry's a professional mapmaker and (not surprisingly) an expert when it comes to using a GPS (as

we were about to discover).

We met at the A&W in Lake Cowichan for coffee (and breakfast for some). Harry pulled out a wonderful Samsung GPS with a color screen the size of a big paperback and we reviewed our route.

This time, we found the turnoff to Mount Bolduc road and began to climb. The wreckage lies at around 3,500 ft. and it was soon clear that



Wreckage of training flight found



This Bendix radio was state of the art in 1944.

we were at last on the correct road.

Nevertheless, we had to stop a couple of times to consult Harry's GPS. The last turnoff was a particularly steep pitch with lots of loose gravel and rocks, but we were finally at the right place.

There are no signs on the road, just a couple of colored ribbons to show the track that leads to the site. This is probably intentional; as a small sign amid the wreckage reminds us: "The area you are entering is a war grave. Take nothing and leave only respect."

Clambering up the hill amid the wreckage was a humbling experience. There were plane parts everywhere - and mostly in small

pieces, which hinted at the force of the impact.

The plane, a twin-engine Lockheed Ventura bomber, cruised at about 300 mph and we could only imagine the impact of flying into a hillside at that speed.

It had left Patricia Bay (the site of today's Victoria International Airport) April 25, 1944, on a training flight to Tofino. All six crew members were killed (probably instantly) and the men are buried among the ruins, honored by a simple bronze plaque in the forest.

At first, the military knew only that the plane had failed to return to base. An aerial search began

(some of the searching was done by a dirigible based at Tillamook, OR; many of you will have seen the hangar that housed these airships - it's been the site for the Tillamook Air Museum for many years, although its future is uncertain), but this was unsuccessful.

The day after the plane disappeared, two loggers in the area saw smoke rising from the hillside. The first party sent out on foot to investigate found nothing. A second air search eventually discovered a 200-foot-long swath cut through the trees and, atop a peak a quarter-mile away, the wreckage of the plane.



This landing gear is among the few pieces to have rusted. It's steel, of course; most of the remaining wreckage is aluminum.



Further hunting expeditions planned



Geoff, Harry and Ernie (from left) amidst the Lockheed Ventura wreckage.

A later ground party found what was left of the plane and the coroner decided to bury the six bodies there.

The biggest plane sections we saw were part of the fuselage and much of a wing section. Smaller bits included most of one of the 2,000hp, nine-cylinder radial engines, a section of the landing gear, a radio and part of the tail.

We took some photos (and wondered whether some unprincipled visitors had removed parts of the wreckage over the years), then headed home.

Those of you who ride off-road know that going downhill can often

be harder than heading up. A lot of the secondary roads on Mount

Bolduc contain rock the size of a baseball (and, in some cases, more softball size); when this is steep, it can be pretty challenging.

However, nobody went down, although the novice in this group (me) was working fairly hard in places.

The ride would be hard on a big GS (800 or 1200), but anyone with off-road experience can probably make it up Mount Bolduc on a smaller bike with knobbies.

We've discovered that there are at least three other wreckage sites just a day's ride from Victoria. We're researching these assiduously: The goal is to find them all first out time out - preferably without a multi-hour slog through the woods on foot in heavy riding gear. Harry, be sure to bring that terrific GPS again, please.



The view from Mount Bolduc is pretty impressive (if you can ignore the clearcuts).



BMW recalls nearly 49,000 motorcycles in US and Canada

BMW is recalling nearly 49,000 motorcycles in the U.S. and Canada because flanges that hold the rear wheel can crack if bolts are too tight.

The recall covers multiple models including certain 2005-2010 R1200GS and R1200RT motorcycles, as well as the 2006-2010 R1200GS Adventure and the 2007-2010 R1200R, 2007 R1200S and K1200R Sport. Also included

are the 2005-2007 R1200ST, the 2008-2009 HP2 Megamoto, the 2006 HP2 Enduro, the 2008-2010 HP2 Sport, and the 2005-2008 K1200S, 2006-2008 K1200R and K1200GT. The recall also covers the 2009-2011 K1300S, 2010-2011 K1300R, and the 2009-2010 K1300GT.

BMW says if bolts that hold the rear wheels to a flange are over-tightened, the flange can crack. If

that happens, the bolts can loosen and the wheel may not stay secured to the bike.

The problem was discovered after a 2004 motorcycle crashed in Spain last August. BMW says the rider and passenger were bruised and scraped.

The recall is expected to begin April 21. Dealers will replace the aluminum flange with a steel one at no cost to owners.

Join BMW RVI on Facebook

With the goal of better, faster and flexible communication, BMW RVI has launched a members-only Facebook Group in the new year. The URL will be: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bmwrvi/>

Here are a few points to consider

- Posts will only visible to group members, namely, members of BMW RVI.
- BMW RVI will require members to be approved or added by an administrator before they can access the group. As the membership list evolves, access to the

group will be adjusted.

- The BMW RVI Facebook page will not be used for commercial purposes.
- Members receive notifications by default when any member posts in the group. Group members can participate in chats, upload photos to shared albums, collaborate on group documents and invite members who are friends to group events.

Members who are familiar with Facebook will need only to request

to join the page by entering the URL in the search box and then click <Join Group> in the top right-hand corner. Approval will occur in a day or two.

If you do not have a Facebook account you can create one. For step-by-step instructions go to

- <https://www.facebook.com/help/>
- There are numerous websites that provide advice on security when setting up and using a Facebook account. Do a web search using “Facebook security.”

Club 2014/15 Event Schedule

Date	Event	Location
Sunday, April 12, 2015	Monthly Gathering	Mary's Bleue Moon Café
Saturday, April 25, 2015	Cow Bay Run	Cow Café in Cow Bay
TBD May	Annual BCCOM MLA Ride	Victoria
Saturday, May 2, 2015	Monthly Gathering	Olympic View Golf Course
TBD May	BMW Demo Ride	Island BMW
Sunday, May 17, 2015	Monthly Ride	Saltaire Pub / Ladysmith
Friday-Monday, May 22-25, 2015	49er Rally	Mariposa, California