



*Glen Parker, The Chronicle Herald photo*

## **Stanley Fly-In: Roar of aircraft engines fills the air**

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Whatever blows your hair back.

Jerry Wilcox eased the throttle forward on the 1900 horsepower, 14-cylinder Grumman aircraft engine during Saturday's 43rd Stanley Fly-In in Hants County. The powerful roar of the radial engine obviously delighted spectators and airplane owners gathered around at a safe distance.

Mounted on a specially designed trailer, this was only the fourth time Wilcox has run the big engine for the public.

"I got it in November of last year," the Fredericton resident said. "There was a group of five of us who rebuilt it."

This engine was in an Avenger torpedo bomber. The Avengers were designed in the mid-1930s and were last built in 1945. They were still in service well into the 1960s.

Tipping the scales at slightly over 900 kilograms, the engine runs silky smooth at 2000 rpm. Never designed to be featured on a poster for great fuel consumption statistics, it would use 65 gallons of 100 octane aviation gas per hour during its days in the air.

When Wilcox shut it down, the engine noise was replaced by applause from the appreciative spectators. The Grumman engine was one of a number of special attractions at the fly-in.

A Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources EC-120 Eurocopter was put through its firefighting paces with a number of water bucket drops. Glider and small plane rides were available. There were candy scrambles, hay rides and lots of private planes to look at.

Fly-in director Don Ledger said "on a day like this" he was expecting between 75 and 80 aircraft.

"They are coming in from all over," Ledger said as his eyes swept across the clear blue sky.

"There could be planes here from Maine, Ontario, Quebec and, of course, from all over New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island."

As of Saturday afternoon, Ledger was confident to call the fly-in a complete success.

Ross Keirstead agreed. He flew in from Sussex, N.B., with his homebuilt Richard VanGrunsvan aircraft. The sleek little 150 horsepower is a show stopper and was built in the basement by Ross and his son Rick.

“It’s a ball to fly and uses aviation fuel or car gas,” Keirstead said.

“I’ve flown it all over Canada. It took us about seven years and \$40,000 to build.”

The fly-in is hosted by Stanley Sport Aviation at its airfield in Stanley, about 22 kilometres northeast of Windsor.