

# De Havilland Aircraft

December 21, 1929

Starting in the late 1920s, land in the Downsview area was being used for airfields—Barker Field, the Canadian Express Airport and the Toronto Flying Club. In April 1929, the de Havilland Airfield was built after de Havilland Aircraft of Canada purchased 28 hectares (70 acres) of farmland along Sheppard Avenue West. They began with a staff of 35 in a 1,858-square-metre (20,000-square-foot) plant next to the railway (now repurposed as Centennial College Bombardier Centre for Aerospace and Aviation at 65 Carl Hall Road). De Havilland Aircraft was a pioneer in Canadian aviation. De Havilland Aircraft of Canada began operations in Downsview in April 1929.

*The first de Havilland facility at 65 Carl Hall Road.*

With the onset of World War II, de Havilland manufactured aircraft for the Royal Canadian Air Forces (RCAF) and British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and provided employment for workers (men and women) which helped sustain the local economy. Unable to meet the demands of wartime production, de Havilland acquired more land beside their plant to build additional facilities.

*A team of workers at the de Havilland plant.*

Between 1936 and 1938, de Havilland added a paint shop, hangar, and a main building south of the original plant (now the [Downsview Park Sports Centre](#) at 75 Carl Hall Road). De Havilland grew to employ 2,400 employees. In 1942 alone, they produced 362 Ansons, 550 Tiger Moths and developed the [Mosquito](#) fighter-bomber. De Havilland marked a number of firsts—and significant achievements in Canadian aviation history—at their plant in Downsview, including the celebrated [Beaver](#) and [Mosquito](#).

*A promotional poster from 1960 with the de Havilland fleet.*

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|------------------------|------|-----------|
| DHC-2 Beaver           | 1947 | \$21,000  |
| DHC-3 Otter            | 1953 | \$80,000  |
| DHC-4 Caribou          | 1961 | \$425,000 |
| DHC-5 Buffalo          | 1965 | \$1.55M   |
| DHC-6 Twin Otter       | 1966 | \$248,000 |
| DHC-8 Dash 8           | 1984 | \$4.35M   |
| Bombardier Global 7500 | 2019 | \$73M     |

*Aircraft Selling Prices when first available on the market.*

Shortly after the end of World War II, de Havilland resumed commercial operations. In the mid-1950s, in response to the onsite military expansion, de Havilland moved its operations to modern facilities in the southeast quadrant of the Downsview lands.

*A public airshow at Downsview in 1946.*