



ops!

This rather embarrassing photo of a not so old Caribou (A4-233) was taken at Richmond early in 1969, and shows what happens when the port side main gear “gets stuck”- see the difference in the photo. The “flipper doors” on the Caribou, the bits that cover the undercarriage when it has been retracted, are mechanically operated by the leg going up and coming down. However, if during a “D” service you put some stuff back the wrong way, the whole thing gets stuck—and this is what happens.

The pilot in this case was a bloke known to all as “Father” (Bob May), and he landed the aircraft with the noise turned off just like a roller blade—on its nose wheel at the front and its ramp door at the back. The fire crew laid a foam path on the runway, and as can be seen from the photo, they got it just right—just enough.

Fortunately, there were no injuries, apart from the Firey (Doug Bower) who slipped in the foam and skinned his knee. Doug can be seen kneeling, putting in the nose wheel lock. There were some apprehensive moments on board as the aircraft flew around for a couple of hours burning up fuel before attempting to land, and as soon as they got back on terra firma, and when they had stopped running, most blokes headed straight for the laundry to wash out the underwear. A day or two later though, and after a little bit of work from the framies who reskinned part of the belly and fitted a new ramp door, and after a damn lot of hard work from the radio bloke who had to replace the VHF/UHF antenna, she was up and flying again, though there weren't too many volunteers for the next test flight.