

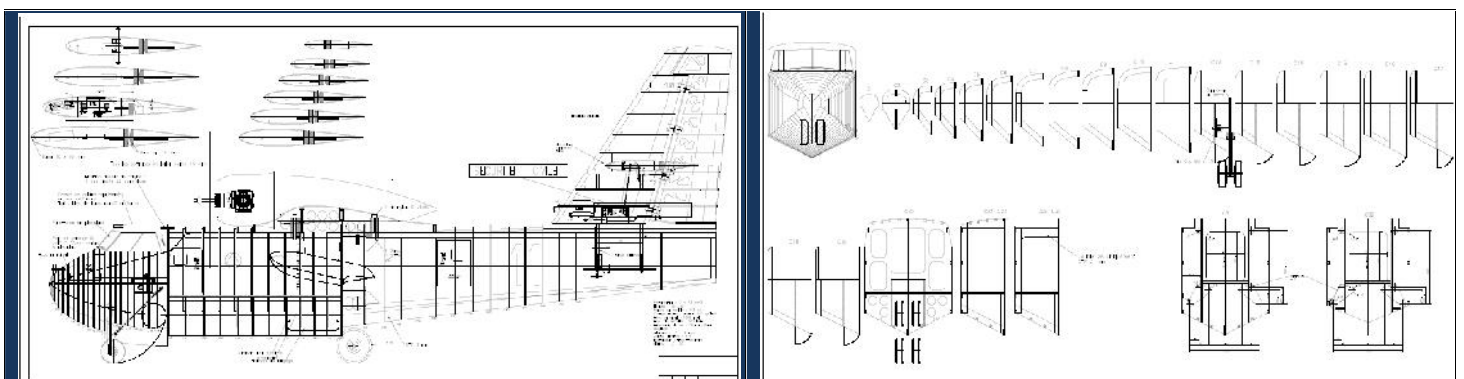
CANADAIR CL-215 Big Scale, Around 2.5m Wing Span (90")

The **Canadair CL-215 (Scooper)** was the first model in a series of firefighting [flying boat amphibious aircraft](#) built by [Canadair](#) and later [Bombardier](#). The CL-215 is a twin-engine, high-wing aircraft designed to operate well at low speed and in gust-loading circumstances, as are found over [forest fires](#). It is also able to land and take off from short, unpaved airstrips.

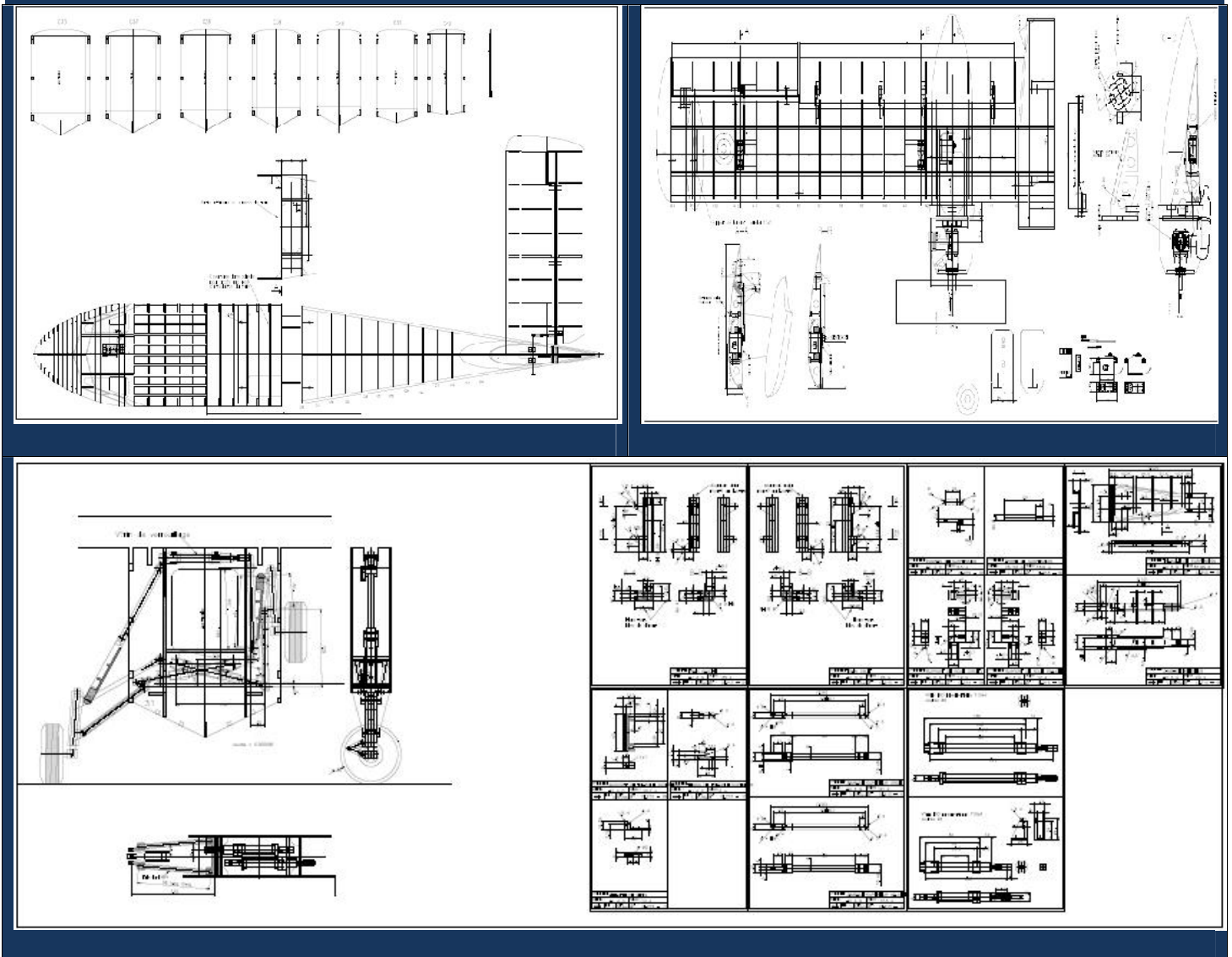


Design and development

The CL-215 can be traced back to early projects by Canadair, the CL-43 and CL-204. The CL-43 was conceived as a logistics aircraft and based on the design from the [Canadian Vickers](#) built **369 Canso** (variant of [Consolidated PBY Catalina](#)).^[1] Arising from an earlier 1960s research study at the company, the original concept was for a twin-engined [floatplane](#) transport, that was altered into a "firefighter" as a result of a request by forestry officials in the [Quebec Service Aérien \(Quebec Government Air Service\)](#) for a more effective way of delivering water to forest fires. The 1962 preliminary design, the **CL-204**, was a purpose-designed [water bomber](#) that evolved into an amphibian flying boat configuration, powered by two 2,100 hp (1,566 kW) [Pratt & Whitney R-2800 piston engines](#), shoulder-mounted. The definitive design known as the CL-215 received a program go-ahead in February 1966 with its [maiden flight](#) on 23 October 1967.^[2] The first delivery was to the [French](#) civil protection agency ([Sécurité Civile](#)) in June 1969. Production of CL-215s progressed through five series ending in 1990.



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Variants

In 1987, the **CL-215T** was announced, with improvements in handling brought about by design changes to the wings and [empennage](#), and more powerful [Pratt & Whitney](#) turboprop engines. Originally the follow-up CL-215T was to be a simple turboprop-powered development of the CL-215, and Canadair converted two aircraft in 1989 to act as development aircraft. The first of these flew on 8 June 1989. Retrofit kits for CL-215s to the new standard are offered, but Canadair elected not to build new CL-215Ts and instead developed the [CL-415](#).^{[[citation needed](#)]}

Modifications

[Cascade Aerospace, Canada](#), offers CL-215 to CL-215T engine retrofits using the Bombardier kit and [Pratt & Whitney Canada PW123AF](#) engines and is currently the only conversion kit installer in the world.^[4]

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Operators



One of [Minnesota DNR's](#) Scoopers. The department lent the aircraft to the effort to fight the [California wildfires of October 2007](#), and it is seen here at [Fox Field](#)

Water tanks with fire suppressant tank at the rear. At the top of the tanks are funnels that spill excess water out of the aircraft.

Over a period of 21 years beginning in 1969, 125 of these aircraft were built and sold to customers in 11 countries.