



**ODD JOB:  
COM-  
MERCIAL  
DIVER**

Commercial divers inspect, repair and help build underwater structures—like hydro dams and water intake pipes—and they're also the people who are called in for marine salvage operations, such as when a truck goes off the road into a lake.

**THE GOOD:** For starters, if you like being underwater, well...you're underwater. And whether it's welding a pipe or repairing a railway bridge, everything is more challenging down below. Guy Dobson, the owner of a commercial diving outfit in Winnipeg, Manitoba, also likes the travel, which has taken him as far away as Yellowknife. "We do get to see some nice country."

**THE BAD:** When you're 120 feet down at the foot of a hydro dam, there isn't a hell of a lot to see. And then there's the cold. And the claustrophobia. And the distinct possibility of having to dive in raw sewage, or some other heinous substance.

**THE PAYOFF:** \$20-\$25 an hour, depending on experience. —KB



**BUSH PILOT**

John Rees, 32, Stoney Rapids, Saskatchewan

Rees never knows what the day will bring. He may be hauling 100 barrels of gas to an exploration camp, shipping a diamond drill, flying geologists to a site or ferrying lodge tourists willy-nilly. And at night, chances are just as good that he'll be sleeping 600 kilometres away in a camp cot as in his own bed. And he wouldn't have it any other way. Rees suits up in his all-purpose blue coveralls and boards his baby, one of Transwest Air's \$2-million Twin Otters. The day he made captain on the Twin Otter was like finding his own Holy Grail, at least, that's how one of his regulars put it. Rees is more modest. "Being a bush pilot is a lot like being a skilled tradesperson." Except your job site can be 25,000 feet up with a cruising speed of 150 knots. Cool.

**WHAT HE LOVES ABOUT HIS JOB**

In a word, freedom. The way Rees sees it, bush piloting is one of the last jobs left with a modicum of romance and the chance to truly be your own boss.

**WHAT HE DOESN'T LOVE ABOUT HIS JOB**

In another word, bullshit. There have always been rules, but now Rees has to fill in 20 sheets of paper before taking any trip, anywhere. "Once I even had a boss who wanted us to wear uniforms." If you close your eyes, you can almost hear the hoots of derisive laughter filling the crew house when that short-lived directive came down.

**BEST MOMENT**

Finding a herd of 200,000 blue-nose caribou near the Arctic coast in the Northwest Territories. When

Rees spotted them, they were so tightly packed together, the ground below actually moved. Amazingly, after turning back to refuel, *poof*—they were gone.

**RIGHT STUFF REQUIRED**

Being able to do without a home life. You're never home. "You can't be that guy worried about your girlfriend being mad at you," Rees explains, because then you'll screw up. And if you do, "Things can go from 'Wow, this is a great day' to 'Ohmigod, what happened?' in a matter of five seconds."

**SHOW ME THE MONEY**

Rees pulls in about \$70,000 a year, but points out that he is at the top of the heap as a Twin Otter pilot with 10 years of experience. "It pays the most, goes the fastest, you get a co-pilot and it's the most fun." —KB

**HOW IT RATES**

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ADVENTURE THRILLS	7/10
LONGEVITY	10/10
PAY	7/10
OUTDOOR TIME	8/10
FREEDOM	9/10

PHOTO: JEFF BROWN; ABOVE: MIKE COURTNEY/JOHN REES