



## Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)

### RCAF HALIFAX LW170 RECOVERY (424 Squadron)



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**Progress Report No.10**    DEC. 20, 2005

By Karl Kjarsgaard (Project Manager)

Registered Charity 84586 5740 RR0001



Christmas time and the festive Christmas season is upon us. As the year 2006 approaches I want to wish all of our members and supporters a special thank you for all your help and encouragement this past year.

2005 has been The Year of the Veteran and it has been a wonderful year for those warriors of World War 2, the youngest being 78 years old, who were able to attend special functions as we celebrated the 60th anniversary of VE and VJ Day. Certainly the dedication ceremony of RAF Halifax NA337 at the RCAF Memorial Museum in Trenton, Ontario on November 5 was a highlight for our air force veterans. It seems like just a short time ago, after 2 years of effort, when I watched her rise up from the deep onto that Norwegian beach !

Those critical times in World War 2 when our society and its survival hung in the balance, defended by so many good and young people who fought for all of us, those times must always be remembered for their effort and sacrifice. The great symbol of Canadian excellence in combat is the RCAF and her crews, whose majority of airmen flew the Halifax to Allied Victory.

We who are carrying on, as the veteran's numbers are reduced with the passing years, must stay connected to the heritage and honour of these past warriors to keep us strong for what trials and tribulations of life lie ahead for us.

There can be no finer real life symbol of all these things just mentioned than Halifax LW170, a Canadian combat Halifax, which we must bring home to Canada. LW170 will be the best thing to happen to our country. It will also be the best thing for those poor Canadians, almost 2 full generations, who have had to grow up in a educational

system which puts Canadian history and excellence in combat at the bottom of their system's list of priorities. If only I could tell them how they have missed out, no thanks to their educators, on learning what it means to be a Canadian and help others to fight for world freedom.

Meanwhile, our Brit and American Allies knowing full well how important all of this learning is to our young people, do not know what all the Canadian fuss is about but find it amusing. Perhaps, right now, they are saying "Look, how strange, a Canadian with a bee in his bonnet !"

On to business, **these are the Hali-facts.**



In report No.9 I mentioned that Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) was being included in the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. on November 11. Director Chris Charland and myself flew down on Air Canada passes and attended the ceremonies. We were allowed to display our beautiful print of LW170 "INVINCIBLE ITEM" in the lower lobby of the embassy where we were able to hand out information on the Halifax Project. The Tom Withers family of Nellysford, Virginia was officially invited as special guests and Tom , an American RCAF air-gunner killed-in-action in a Halifax. was spotlighted in Ambassador McKenna's speech at the Remembrance Day ceremony. Flora Withers Ballard, Tom's sister, was presented with a set of Air Force Association sweetheart wings by the Ambassador as a symbol of gratitude to the Withers family. Tom's other sister, Margaret, could not attend but sweetheart wings were sent along to her with best regards.

Chris and I were most appreciative of all the help and hospitality provided by Ambassador McKenna and the Military Attaché's offices of Colonel Paul Drover, Lt. Col. Mike Dorey, and Lt. Col. Jamie Robertson. Much progress was made towards spreading the word of our Halifax Project to the American people with our special dedication to those unknown 704 Americans killed-in-action in the RCAF. This will help immensely in the near future as we go to the American press during the building up of our Halifax support and awareness in the USA.

Further to this, yours truly made a strong proposal to Alberta Cabinet Minister David Coumts on October 31 just before going to the Washington ceremony. Lloyd Patten DFC, pilot of LW170, also attended this meeting at the Alberta legislature along with Laurie Hawn, Conservative candidate and RCAF CF-104 pilot. I explained the full project to Minister Coumts with all the historical, technical, and financial aspects included. He was most attentive and stated that he would do his best to obtain funding from Alberta for the Halifax Project. I did explain that we have not received

any funding from the federal government for this national level project. I did receive some good advice from Minister Coutts on the politics of such a project and the support, or lack of support, that we should expect. Very educational, indeed.

While in Washington I was directed to Mr. Murray Smith, the official Alberta government appointee, who is charged with looking after the Alberta interests of commerce and trade in the U.S. I made a full proposal to Mr. Smith highlighting the Canada-USA bonds of the American volunteers in the RCAF. With Halifax LW170 coming to Alberta and dedicated to those forgotten American RCAF warriors killed-in-action this would be a fine goodwill project for both of our nations to rally around. Both proposals to Minister Coutts and Murray Smith are in process right now in Edmonton and I have high hopes for the approval of financial support by the Alberta government. Perhaps we will have a special present under our project tree soon. More in our next report.

Author John Neal is going great guns on the sale of his book "BLESS YOU, BROTHER IRVIN" about the exciting bailout adventures of Allied aircrew. John has agreed to donate proceeds of the sale of his unique book to the Halifax Project. He has sold hundreds of copies so far and remember every book sold is really a donation in kind to the Halifax Project. Please see the ad for "BLESS YOU, BROTHER IRVIN" on the main page of this website with all the details for buying this entertaining book about our aircrew bailouts. I highly recommend it for good reading.

Another project for fundraising which is proceeding very well, although about a month behind schedule, is the final preparation and autographing of the beautiful Halifax aviation print of LW170, titled "INVINCIBLE ITEM" by artist Michael McCabe. Yours truly has spent 18 days in late November and early December traveling back and forth across Canada collecting the signatures of every RCAF veteran still alive who flew LW170 during her combat career. Each veteran had to sign 500 prints that I had to ship in special boxes wherever I flew. As of Dec. 14 I had traveled over 14,000 miles criss-crossing the country and visited eleven men, average age 83, who flew LW170 in combat. They personally signed all 500 prints. The final signer is the artist, Michael McCabe, who is finishing signing all 500 this week.

Friends and members, I have seen some good and detailed paintings and images of Halifaxes over the past 20 years but none can compare with this beautiful close up print of our LW170. The print measures 3 feet by 2 feet, in brilliant colour on a daylight raid, with the 11 authentic signatures of the combat crew and the artist. This print is one of the best and certainly one of the last great signed Halifax paintings available. It is RCAF and all Canadian. I have not even advertised yet and still we have received orders for 26 prints so far.

The marketing of the prints will begin in early January. Please see all the details on the main website page for ordering your copy of "INVINCIBLE ITEM". We will have 500 signed as well as 250 unsigned for those looking for pricing options. Please do not wait too long to place your order.

I would like to ask all members and supporters who wish to see a beautiful image of Halifax in their Legion Branch or Airforce Association Wing to please promote this print to their branch executives. In order for us to proceed with our Phase 1 sonar survey in the summer of 2006 we must have sold almost all the prints by early May,

2006. The directors of Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) need your help to get the Project funding drive rolling NOW.

We have been getting good press lately as there have been several articles about "INVINCIBLE ITEM" in newspapers across Canada. I am sure you have seen the Ottawa Sun 2 page article on the Halifax Project expertly reported by Michael Hammond on Dec.18. These are the ways to get this project to the people for their support.

We must find government and corporate support and have begun this process also. We must now push forward in the New Year and gather all our funding and resources for Phase 1. I am counting on all of you for that "Maximum Effort" required.

Finally I wish to extend the warmest Christmas Greetings to all of you. Hoping that you will have health and happiness this season and in the New Year.

Keep you eyes on the target,

and Merry Christmas

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