



Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)

RCAF HALIFAX LW170 RECOVERY (424 Squadron)



LW170 Recovery
Phase I

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Progress Report No.12A July 1, 2006

By Karl Kjarsgaard (Project Manager)

Registered Charity 84586 5740 RR0001

Greetings to all of our members and supporters. This latest progress report is one of hope and promise with the many plusses and minuses of such an unusual and complicated historic venture, the Halifax Project, to save RCAF Halifax LW170.

As I look over the combat career of LW170 I see that her operation to Metz, Germany was on June 28, 1944 which took 7 hours and 25 minutes. Piloted by Lloyd Patten DFC and his crew, this was to be her longest combat mission ever flown by LW170. What a ride it must have been !

When I think about how good the enemy was at defending their positions and, with so many efficient ways to shoot down our bombers, I am truly in awe of the tenacity, perseverance, and sacrifice of our bomber crews to get through the terrible gauntlet of the Nazi war machine to bomb the target and somehow make their way back safely to home base.

And yet, so many of our valiant young aircrews did not make it home. They lie now together and in solitary graves all over Europe and the world. So many missing-in-action have no known grave, their final resting place in the depths of the sea, remembered only on the Runnymede Memorial in England.

Over 55,000 young aircrew were killed in these Bomber Command operations with over 10,000 of our own Canadian boys (763 of these "Canadians" killed-in-action were actually American volunteers in the RCAF) amongst this huge honour roll.

Thankfully, the Bomber Command Memorial Wall at Nanton, Alberta has addressed the needs of our entire nation by listing all the RCAF bomber crews killed-in-action on this beautiful black granite wall, truly a national memorial.

As we celebrate July 1, Canada Day and July 4, Independence Day we must remember these young people of our father's generation who, by their effort and sacrifice gave us this day. At a moment in history some 60 years ago, when our entire civilization was threatened with annihilation, it was our bomber crews who contributed greatly and saved the day. Indeed, as you celebrate the freedoms, holidays, and day-to-day life you have, remember those who gave this to you, your children, and those who will follow us.

FREEDOM is neither automatic nor free. It was bought with the lives of the aircrews

that we honour here and we must always remember this as we "Press on regardless..." in this most honourable project.

ON TO BUSINESS, THESE ARE THE HALI-FACTS:

Since our last report in April, Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada), this author, and our Directors have been very busy on the business, political scene, and elsewhere building up support for the Halifax Project.

(Please note that this is Progress Report No. 12A in keeping with the bomber crew tradition that whenever their 13th operation came up, if they lived that long, they would superstitiously stay away from that number and go for 12A. Hence No. 13 must become 12A, then on to 14.)

A constant activity of our group is the sales of our beautiful Halifax print, "INVINCIBLE ITEM" by noted artist Michael McCabe. We have been able to sell this print to eager customers all over Canada and the USA as well as the UK. Many Legions have purchased our print to hang in their buildings to show the Halifax as one of the great combat aircraft of the Allied forces.

Thanks must go to the Bomber Command Association in the UK and Secretary Doug Radcliffe for supporting our cause by endorsing the Halifax Project and promoting the sale of "INVINCIBLE ITEM". Not only did they let us include a story of the Halifax Project in their annual newsletter this year, "INVINCIBLE ITEM" was selected as the cover page image for this newsletter which went out to thousands of association members. (Doug Radcliffe OBE was a proud flight engineer of RCAF 425 Squadron on Halifaxes - well done Douglas!)

Our political forces have been rallied and we have some great supporters in this area. Laurie Hawn MP, Senator Anne Cools, and Ted Menzies MP are all firm believers in the project. Other Senators and MP's have been kept fully informed by these main political personalities. Laurie Lawn and I have met several times in the past 3 months to discuss how to garner funding and support for the Halifax Project. Senator Cools has provided much advice and her office has been most helpful in boosting our cause.



Minister Bev Oda of Canadian Heritage did send us a letter in early June concerning funding for the Halifax Project. While she did support the aims and objectives of our group she pointed out that her ministry did not have any programs that could assist in funding the actual location and recovery of LW170. She was aware that we had received a Cultural Properties grant for (\$150,000) when Halifax NA337 was recovered. The Minister did state that Canadian Heritage would consider helping with our new Halifax Project with a Cultural Properties grant when the aircraft was recovered. While this does not help us immediately with the Halifax Project we do intend on taking up this offer of Canadian Heritage. She also suggested we contact other Ministries for support for this project as it was directly concerned with the veterans and our special dedication group, the RCAF Americans.

After discussing this disappointment of no funding from Canadian Heritage with Laurie Hawn and Senator Cools, in early June we came up with a new plan to finally go full throttle on promoting the Halifax Project and the RCAF Americans in the USA. The initial work and USA contacts had already been in place and now we were ready to follow this plan to include the Americans.

All of a sudden, 2 things happened that made our plan become a real and great opportunity. Laurie Hawn was able to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the Americans in the RCAF and wanting to take the untold story to the people in the USA. After explaining the story of the significance of these RCAF Americans to Canada we now have a major ally and the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further to this, the Canadian Embassy in Washington, which helped us out last year on Remembrance Day 2005, has expressed an interest in helping us spread the word about the RCAF Americans in the very near future. This, in itself, would have been a very good start but even more good fortune has befallen us at this time.

While I was at Nanton in June at a meeting with museum directors, the Canadian president of the EAA, Jack Dueck, was in attendance. He has arranged that the Nanton Museum, because of its national prominence in Canada with the Bomber Command Memorial Wall and their restored Lancaster, would be invited to display and tell their story at the huge EAA national airshow, Air Venture 2006, in Oshkosh,

Wisconsin on July 24 - 30. The theme of the airshow this year is Bomber Command.

When I was introduced to Jack by the Nanton directors I immediately explained the significance of the discovery by Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) of the RCAF Americans, 700+ killed-in-action, to this great airshow theme and that the Halifax contribution should not be left out. Jack and the Nanton directors decided that the Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) and our Halifax Project could be included at their EAA display at Oshkosh. What an opportunity this will be to tell of the Canadian EAA, the great museum at Nanton, and Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) to finally share the unknown story of the "American Patriots - Canadian Warriors" to the hundreds of thousands of airshow visitors.

Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) directors Jim Blondeau, Chris Charland, and myself will all be there at Oshkosh to contribute to the Canadian EAA and Nanton display tent. Not only will the American heavy bombers be in attendance but thanks to Jack Dueck and the Canadian EAA members they have agreed to sponsor the costs for the Canadian Warplane Heritage Lancaster to come to Oshkosh to fly at the show. The RCAF will truly be represented in the air and on the ground at this great airshow.

As we are able to spread the story of Nanton, the Lancaster, the Memorial Wall, the RCAF Americans and the Halifax Project of our group we will be able to build great support for all our aims and objectives. This is a truly new and promising area to gain support and I hope to have good news of all the support we can gain in the USA. I will be reporting to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director of Operations Paul Throop as all the developments happen in Oshkosh. In addition the Canadian Embassy staff in Washington wish to be kept informed so that we can prepare to further build support coming out of the Oshkosh alliances as we move forward on the Halifax Project.

On the home scene our resident Halifax veteran and member, John Neal of Calgary, who is author of "Bless You, Brother Irvin" all about exciting bailouts of air force crews, has been eagerly selling his unique book all over Alberta and abroad. John has generously agreed to donate profits from his special book sale to the Halifax Project fund so that LW170 can be recovered and brought to the Nanton museum. He has had readings and sales venues all over Calgary and Alberta and is to be commended for his energy and sales determination to contribute to our honourable cause. Please see our "Bless You, Brother Irvin" promo page on our official website telling all about this special book and how you can purchase this fine book. Thanks John for all your hard work!

On a sadder note we have lost one of our keenest supporters and members, Floyd "Skip" Rutledge, a veteran and ground crew of RCAF 420 Squadron, who served in North Africa and England. Not only was he one of those unheralded heroes of our RCAF squadrons, those ground crews who had the highest serviceability rate of all bomber groups in Bomber Command, he was one of the few surviving Nose Art artists who painted the "Fangs of Fire" on a Wellington and a Halifax. In fact, Skip's Halifax nose art of "Fangs of Fire" was saved from the scrap yards in the UK and the actual skin from his Hallie is now on display at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. I have included a photo of a poignant moment during the dedication ceremonies of Halifax NA337 on Nov. 5, 2005 in Trenton when Skip presented me with a miniature recreation of "Fangs Of Fire" as a gift on that occasion.



After our first full year of operation in 2005 Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) had our annual directors and members meeting in June. Thanks to your support of donations, new memberships, and renewed memberships along with sales of "INVINCIBLE ITEM" we are in good shape to operate month to month. If only we could find that sizeable contribution to get Phase 1, the location and inspection of LW170 started, we would be on our way. All of our Directors believe that if we can do a good job at Oshkosh we will be able to begin building the financial support we need to save RCAF Halifax LW170. We have all the data to locate and inspect LW170, the tools are there, and the financing is the very last element required to begin our historic quest.

For those of you interested in a heads-up, reporter Michael Hammond, a keen media supporter of the Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada), who is now with the Canadian Press corps in Ottawa, has done a fine article on our group and the Halifax Project with a special accent on the support of Foreign Affairs Ministry and the RCAF Americans. He is letting his readers know all about our special expedition to the Oshkosh airshow to gain support for Nanton and the Halifax Project in the USA. Hope you are able to find the article in your local papers as it has just been sent out on the Canadian national wire service and will be picked up by each paper separately.

I have just found out that the article has gone out on the national wire service under a

google search of Halifax Bomber (use the google news category). I know that the Toronto Sun, Calgary Sun, and 10 other newspapers across the country are carrying the article. Also, the CBC radio station in Quebec wants to have a live interview with me about the Halifax Project on July 11 so hope this will generate some interest.

We have much hard work ahead of us in getting Canada and the USA to accept this as the search and recovery of one of the greatest aviation treasures and heritage symbols our countries' have ever known.

Thank you for your support. Please consider approaching your local Legion executive to promote the sale of a copy of "INVINCIBLE ITEM" to add to their historic images in their facility. Please do not hesitate to email or call with your ideas and suggestions to strengthen us as we proceed on our historic quest to bring LW170 home.

Best wishes to all,
Sincerely,
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