

Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)



RCAF HALIFAX LW170 RECOVERY (424 Squadron)



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Progress Report No.27

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Registered Charity 84586 5740 RR0001

Last night I was burning the mid-night oil while poring over the deep sea charts and important Halifax LW170 data for the plotting our sonar search box to find this international aviation treasure.

As Project Manager I am amazed, now that I think back to when we first started our historic quest over 3 years ago, at how this project has found so many of you out there. Hundreds and even thousands of people who have been touched by this trusty old "aluminium" steed of air combat, the Handley Page Halifax, have stuck with us and our cause. (We are averaging 10,000 hits per month on our Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) website!)

Just as in life, sometimes the energy and interest wanes but we always come back to our roots. There is no stronger aviation roots than those where a group identifies with one type of aircraft and feels it is a sentimental favourite.

We want to know more and more about the aircraft and how she fits into our history. For some of you it is historical or family or comrades but we are tied together for we remember the great effort and sacrifice of our warriors in the air.

Such great cost for something so precious as Freedom !

And when there is knowledge that such an aircraft as the Halifax is missing from our museums and historical collections we sense that something important is missing from our heritage. We need a solid reminder, a symbol of the excellence and honour of our aircrews who fought for our Freedom.

We should give our best effort to finding and recovering LW170 as she is truly one of the most accurate and authentic symbols of the excellent Canadian participation in Allied and RAF Bomber Command.

I do not think that any surviving combat veteran aircraft in Canada (there are only a handful of these bone fide combat warbirds in this country) that can match the record of our LW170 with 29 combat missions over Europe including D-DAY.

So we must press on, even if the energy seems low at times and we have a few disappointments along the way, so that we can say we were there when the going was tough and we persevered to success and victory.

We know a whole generation of young airmen who did the above and we must remember and honour them, making the Halifax Project be an ideal international tribute to our bomber crews.

“Press on Regardless...”

On to Business – these are the HALIFACTS:

All of you are aware that 2009 is the 100th anniversary of powered flight in Canada and there are many celebrations and events planned.

Our good friends and partners at “Canada’s Bomber Command Memorial”, the Nanton Lancaster Society Air Museum have a great list of summer events planned for 2009. They warmly invite one and all to come out to Nanton to see our Bomber Command Museum, just south of Calgary, Alberta.

Please look on their extensive website www.lancastermuseum.ca and see all the special events planned including 5 special days when they will be running their rebuilt Merlins on the Lanc. All of these events are listed under “Special Events”, so you can plan your trip to Nanton based on all the events this summer. Every month there will a special event.

The big annual memorial event in 2009 being the Aug.15 event with the theme “Remembering Baz”, a tribute to the Lancaster pilot and Victoria Cross winner Ian Bazalgette who was a Canadian from Alberta.

I include below a wonderful article about RAF Squadron Leader Peter Piejus of George, South Africa printed in their local newspaper. We should be very grateful to Peter Piejus, for you see he was the pilot of LW170 who ditched her so gracefully on Aug.10, 1945. His piloting skill in putting LW170 down so gently that fateful morning is the main reason that we now have hope in finding the only known surviving RCAF Halifax of the 1230 Halifaxes used by our Canadian Squadrons. A big thank you to Peter’s daughter, Roz, who is a keen supporter of Halifax 57 Rescue and sent us this article all the way from South Africa.

[Click on one of the images to expand it.](#)





Further to personal adventures, I should mention a documentary that has just been produced by our Halifax 57 Rescue Director James Blondeau, who is a film producer with “DUNROBINCASTLE.com”. This is a really poignant story of Remembrance that happened in 2008. It is titled “ORTONA TOUR 2008”

I was an eyewitness (member of the film crew) to this story of the journey of body and spirit of 1500 high school students and 200 teachers who made a special pilgrimage to Italy in Nov. 2008 to visit the battlefields of Italy where the Canadian Army fought in World War Two. The highlight of their week-long tour was to visit the village of Ortona which the Canadian soldiers liberated at Christmas in 1943 with a special ceremony at the cemetery where 1400 Canadian soldiers killed-in-action are buried. It truly was an adventure of the highest order for these young Canadian students and James captured it all on video.

If you are interested in seeing learning more about this ORTONA adventure just go to www.dunrobincastle.com and click on the castle to see more on ORTONA. The documentary is 90 minutes long and sells for \$30. James hopes to share his documentary with a network station next year as a Remembrance Day program. Well done, Jim.

With regard to the Halifax Project things are moving ahead with plans to do the sonar survey this summer. Our deep sea sonar ship “Polar Prince”, which is planning on doing the LW170 sonar search, is being refitted with all the improvements to its gear. The “Polar Prince” will then will be going overseas from Halifax, Nova Scotia this summer to do a commercial sonar contract for a European customer.

The ships owner has agreed they will do the sonar survey to find Halifax LW170 while they are in transit and enroute to do their commercial work. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to get that critical sonar location and image of LW170 which we must have if we are to move to Phase 2, the actual recovery of this historic RCAF bomber.

The costing for these deep sea sonar services, for a ship the size of the Polar Prince – 200 feet, is charged by the day. As I stated that I have been plotting and estimating the basic costs for the sonar survey based upon previous estimates.

If we are fortunate with weather and ship’s equipment (and if the Irish coordinates of our main target hotspots they have discovered in our Halifax survey box prove to be

accurate) we are looking at a minimum of (3 to 5 days) to finish the sonar survey. Even with the best prices charged by the ships owners of "Polar Prince", which they have agreed to, we are still looking a a very sizeable bill for such special sonar services.

Thanks to all of our loyal and die-hard supporters, especially in 2008, we have accumulated just under \$40,000. in cash and pledges, for the sonar survey.

As Project Manager I am also responsible for the day-to-day operations of Halifax 57 Rescue. In order to protect our nest egg for the critical sonar survey I have only allowed funding for our most basic monthly costs to come out of our H57R(C) chequing account while holding on to the majority of our donated funds in a special Sonar account.

For the past 2 years all other costs incurred by Halifax 57 Rescue have been paid from my own personal finances so as to protect the sonar fund account from being depleted. I hope that all of you will take this as a sign of my dedication to seeing this project through to success.

Our charities accountant and our Directors are aware of my covering these costs and have asked me to keep a record of all my expenditures with the possibility that in the future, should we be successful in our quest, that it would be possible to provide restitution for my present support of this vital project.

With that background to our finances let me just say, based on my experience these many months in investigating sonar ship services and costs, that we are NOT out of the woods in covering our sonar survey costs. I believe, considering all variables and contingencies for such a special historic project, that we should have another \$20,000. in our funding to cover our financial requirements.

I do not mention this because I want to take the financial strain off of my position. There is only one main reason. We do not want to lose out on a unique opportunity to find the most historic combat aircraft in our century of aviation history just because we came up short of (\$5,000 to \$10,000) during the critical and formative Phase 1 of the Halifax Project.

During these difficult financial times all of us have to prioritize and I hope you will see that this project is very special which will help find and give back to us the most important aircraft in all of our 100 years of powered flight.

If you believe in the giving to a good cause, a good charity that will do their best with your funds, then we are your special group who have earned your support by resolute and determined efforts on your behalf to save our national aviation treasure, Halifax LW170.

Now we that have talked about our important budget and current events I wanted to let you know that I will be meeting with the Bomber Command Association in Hendon, England soon to discuss, on behalf of the Nanton Museum and our historic group, our participation and support of the new Bomber Command Memorial planned for downtown London, England. This will be the first and foremost tribute in the UK to all the 55, 000 Bomber Command aircrew killed-in-action.

Canada's Bomber Command Memorial, the Nanton Lancaster Society Air Museum, is very keen to support this UK Memorial cause and has made their wishes known to all at the Bomber Command Association HQ in London. Almost 1 million pounds sterling has been raised so far for this memorial and we hope to hear more about this wonderful project and report back to you soon on the developments.

For all of you who donated in 2008 the Charitable Tax Receipts have been sent out. We do appreciate your support and hope you will continue to support our historic project in this most special 100th year of powered flight in Canada and during these critical times in the Halifax Project.

LW170 is out there and she waits for us !

Sincerely,
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