



## **Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)**

Registered Charity 84586 5740 RR0001

**PROGRESS REPORT No. 32**

January 24, 2010

Greetings in this New Year, hoping you and yours had a great Christmas and will have a healthy and happy 2010. Much is happening as the Halifax Project continues in its quest to find LW170.

Along the way of our historic journey we have met and shared the heritage of the Halifax around the world and with the families, children, and grandchildren of our Halifax veterans. I would like to relate a new story about a Halifax veteran, his secrets, and his long lost British comrade who has been discovered and will be able to help tell of the mystery of our Canadian.

Just before Christmas, Martin Wearns of Thunder Bay called this author to order 4 of our great Halifax prints "INVINCIBLE ITEM" for his family as presents. While we talked he lamented that his grandfather, Gerald Morrison who flew as a Canadian in RAF Halifaxes with 78 Squadron, had only once ever spoken to any of his family about his bomber ops and the shoot down of his Halifax. Gerald was captured and was POW for over 2 years. They knew almost nothing about his wartime experiences and he passed away just a few years ago without telling the family his story.

Having researched the bomber crews quite often I told Martin I would check in some special POW files at the UK national archives. In early January I was able to find out there were 2 or 3 survivors of the shoot down and I finally found Morrison's POW liberation report. He wrote in this debriefing report how he had escaped twice, was punished by being put in chains, and survived the deadly forced winter march in 1945 of (600 km.) through Germany from POW camp to POW camp, finally escaping while on the march and getting back to American lines !

I then found the POW liberation report of his crew mate survivor Ken Markillie who was a Brit on Morrison's crew and hailed from the village of Long Sutton, Lincolnshire. As Martin's family had so little to go on (except for the exciting details of Gerald Morrison's POW report escapes, at least) I decided to hunt up the relatives of Markillie who might still live in Long Sutton (Markillie was born in 1918 so I did not think he was alive at 92 years old).

Using the internet and the BT phone directory I found several Markillie's in the village and decided to do some sleuthing. Lo and behold, imagine my amazement, when the first Markillie I phoned was Ken Markillie of 78 Squadron RAF, hale and hearty !! We talked for several minutes about his own memories of ops and the shoot down while I explained about our Halifax quest. He was quite surprised and pleased that someone knew what a Halifax was.

I then asked him if it would be ok if I put him in touch with the grandson of Gerald Morrison in Canada as the family wanted to know all they could find on his combat career as Gerald never talked about it after the war. There was a pause on the other end of the transatlantic phone and then Ken Markillie exclaimed "Gerald Morrison survived the war??!!".

Both of them never knew the other had survived and they had gone to separate POW camps suffering the same hardships but never able to find out about the other. It was a very interesting call to say the least.

And now the 3 sisters of Gerald Morrison and Martin and all the family in Thunder Bay will have been in touch with the last human link to Gerald's combat crew. I am sure there will be a few revelations thrown in there. Martin says he plans to go to the UK this summer to see Ken Markillie and capture from his grandfather's comrade every bit of information he can.

Another bomber crew story found, and OUR heritage will live on.

Press on Regardless...

On to business – these are the Hali-facts:

In December Capt. Mike Stephens of Deep Ocean Research and the "Polar Prince" and myself renewed our sonar survey contact and agreement with Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) to perform the sonar survey to RCAF Halifax LW170. Our agreement is contingent upon the "Polar Prince" and her commercial sonar work being done in 2010 with our Halifax survey being piggy-backed on the commercial work and while transitting to our Halifax survey box.

Considering the costs and logistics involved in such a sonar survey we are getting a great price with the best cooperation and enthusiasm we could hope for, from Mike and his company. Mike is fully aware how historic and rare LW170 is and what she means to Canada and the aviation world, as well as the prestige of the "Polar Prince" and her team IF our (Phase 1-locating Halifax LW170) is successful.

I will be putting out another Progress Report as soon as we have pending major news on the commercial contracts for the "Polar Prince". It is hopeful and looking good for a new contract soon so standby for further.

I am in the midst of sending out the tax deduction receipts for all those generous people who made those great donations in 2009. If you are one of those people you should have them in the mail by the end of January. Thank you for supporting our cause.

We hope you will continue to help us into the future in 2010 as we persevere in our great quest to find and recover Canada's rarest combat bomber. We must remain strong financially and be ready to go this summer!

Remember, there are several ways to donate and support us at Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada).

You can make a cash donation as always OR you can purchase a Halifax bomber print of our LW170, one of the best images of the venerable old Halifax out there for sale, "INVINCIBLE ITEM", which are the Halifax veteran signed limited-edition type (\$165.00 including shipping) or in the standard version unsigned for (\$60.00 including shipping).

The new method we set up last year was to promote donations in the form of stocks, bonds, or securities that you may have in your possession. By signing these stocks over to us ( via the new Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) Royal Bank Brokerage account) you can donate your stocks at their fair market value and receive a tax deductible receipt for the full value amount of the stock AND you avoid the capital gains tax of the profit which may have accrued on said shares.

Peter Walker and Charlie Yule have recently made great donations in this way and we truly appreciate their generosity.

NOTE: Our tax accountants have advised Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) we must charge the \$20. membership fee for all donations sent to us. This means that when we send out a tax deductible receipt for a (\$ 1000.) donation, the tax receipt will be for (\$980.). Please check your tax receipts for this slight adjustment to our procedures. Thank you. KK

Please renew your memberships and donations as 2010 will be a very formative year in our historic quest for Halifax LW170. Remember there are 2 postal addresses to send donations and they are listed at the bottom of this report along with the website, email address, and phone numbers.

Please have a look at the Nanton Museum website and see all the news at [www.lancastermuseum.ca](http://www.lancastermuseum.ca) Especially note the Lancaster engine run dates and mark them on your calendar as you do not want to miss the "Merlin Music" and special events planned. No less than 7 special events and run ups of the Lanc are planned from May to September, so plan your vacations and weekends off to include these great events.

The special Nanton Museum memorial and tribute event, always put on in August will be on the Aug. 21<sup>st</sup> and this year it will be "A Tribute to the Flight Instructors", the men who taught the aircrew of all our air forces to fly. It promises to be a good memorial theme to these unsung heroes.

A most special memorial project, that will most likely be one of the most fitting in all the world for the 55,000+ men killed-in-action in Bomber Command, is the "Bomber Command Memorial" planned to be built in London, England within the next 2 years. Millions of pounds sterling have been raised so far. I am pleased to announce that all the Directors of "Canada's Bomber Command Memorial" in Nanton have strongly supported the Bomber Command Association in the UK in this great effort.

A wonderful story is happening here as you may remember that in 1997 I was Project Manager for the recovery of RCAF Halifax LW682 from a swamp in Belgium. We found the 3 missing crew members we sought entombed inside and were able, after inviting all their families over for a full military funeral, to lay them to rest in Gerardsbergen, Belgium.

Not only this but the local authorities allowed the recovery team to save and conserve all the Halifax parts from this recovery. Nothing was wasted from this hallowed site and even the crushed aluminium was melted down into ingots and shipped back to Canada with the Halifax parts. The ingots have finally made their way to Nanton and are being kept in storage at the museum to be used for future memorial purposes such as plaques and statues.

Now it appears that the Bomber Command Association and British officials planning the Bomber Command Memorial in London have accepted our idea to use RCAF Halifax LW682 ingots in the construction of this international memorial to Bomber Command. What a wonderful honour that this metal and essence of the sacrifice of our bomber boys should be included in such a great memorial that honours the huge sacrifice of all the 55,000. Amazing things happen when the effort is made to save history for our future generations.

We will have more on this exciting new Memorial in the UK soon, as Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) and Canada's Bomber Command Memorial in Nanton work with our Bomber Command Association allies in England, when we work out the details of incorporating RCAF Halifax metal into this great project.

In closing this report let me say that now is the "quiet time" before the action of this year 2010 when we must prepare for our Project to commemorate our bomber crews. We must think of them and remember what they did, against all odds, and then we will have renewed energy to carry on in our honourable quest for LW170. Perhaps a visit to "The Wall" and the 10,000 names is in order for you and yours to see with your own eyes the enormity of the sacrifice of these young bomber crew warriors, for each and every one of you.

Keep your eyes on the target

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