



Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)

RCAF HALIFAX LW170 RECOVERY
(424 Squadron)



LW170
Recovery
Phase I

Progress Report No.52

March 17, 2014

Registered Charity 84586 5740 RR0001

[Finding
LW170](#)

[Progress
Reports](#)

[Combat
History](#)

I have just returned from a special trip to the UK to find all the Halifax engine, propeller, and vital components we need for our Halifax Project. It was an intensive period of traveling with 12 hour days of meeting museums, collectors, and officials who are instrumental to our immediate and future goals of a Halifax bomber for H57RC and our parent museum at the Bomber Command Museum of Canada.

I will explain all the details of my finds and discoveries while visiting the UK further down in this report. This activity includes a meeting with the Irish Marine Institute at a London convention to discuss the future sonar exploration to look for our RCAF "aluminium holy grail", Halifax LW170 ditched in 1945 in deep waters.

I am most pleased with this particular progress which you all know is why we, Halifax 57 Rescue, began this historic quest.

[Halifax 57
Rescue](#)

[Credentials](#)

But let me explain a new quest which takes precedence and has arrived on our Halifax 57 Rescue doorstep from which we must not turn away. In the long run of our projects this could be the most poignant, and a stepping stone to a LW170 recovery, if we can just rally our energies and forces for this new "rescue".

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Once in every decade or so, unusual special projects and certain situations will pop up for which H57RC is best suited to tackle, with our completion of said project to pay tribute to our Bomber Boys.

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Let me detail for you what has transpired in recent weeks as I visited the UK and made a special trip to Berlin, Germany. Acting on a lead from long time H57RC member Chuck Tolley, a RAF 158 Squadron historian, I went to Germany on Feb. 21 to do reconnaissance on a potential bomber crew recovery and their Halifax from a swamp north of Berlin!

[Links](#)

I met with the local aviation archaeology group LAO (Luftfahrtarchäologie Oderland) who have discovered the resting place of Halifax HR980 of RAF 158 Squadron in which 5 bomber crew are missing-in-action and believed entombed inside. In August 1943 this Halifax was damaged by night fighter and did a forced landing on the swamp with no survivors. 2 of the crew were found and buried but the Halifax sank in the mud before the other 5 airmen could be taken out of the aircraft. Please see the crew list below.

Aus. 414463	F/Sgt.	BURGUM, V.A.	Pilot	Missing	R.A.A.F.
1391079	Sgt.	BUCK, P.L.	Nav.	Missing	R.A.F.
1578243	Sgt.	HEMPSTOCK, D.R.A.B.		Missing	R.A.F.
R/716374	F/Sgt.	HARRISON, G.R.	A.G.	Missing	R.C.A.F.
1175980	Sgt.	COX, A.	WOAG	Missing	R.A.F.
Aus. 421595	Sgt.	HARBER, H.C.	A.G.	M.B.K.	R.A.A.F.
1202248	Sgt.	HILL, R.	F/E.	Missing	R.A.F.

Sgt. Cox and Harber are the ones discovered first at the Halifax site in 1943 and they are buried at a Commonwealth Graves location. The other 5 airmen, the Bergum crew, are still inside which includes Sgt. Gordon "Jake" Harrison RCAF of Brooklyn, Nova Scotia which is near Liverpool!

Please read the article about Halifax HR980 and her crew. Just Google:

"Halifax HR980" and see the first part of the story.

As I visited the swamp site last month where Halifax HR980 and her crew lie under the mud I agreed with the LAO group that we must do what needs to be done to give them honour and rest and give the families closure.

The crew list (above) was from LAO and is from the actual crash investigation papers done in 1947 by a RAF officer, the report was forwarded to RAF HQ and passed on to the RAAF HQ in Australia, as well as RCAF HQ.

So, for over 70 years these young airmen, who made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us laid in the mud of the swamp and nothing was done to rescue them, even when details of the exact location of the Halifax were fully known to all who could have recovered them, but did NOT!

But a special new team is going to change all that and we need your help.

While I stood on the Halifax HR980 crash site I recounted to LAO that our Canadian group had pumped out a swamp in Belgium and recovered RCAF Halifax LW682 and her 3 missing crew for the families of these Canadians. I also explained that this German swamp was almost identical conditions, was a viable project if we formed an international team, and used the same pumping techniques as we did in Belgium. The LW682 Project in Belgium cost around \$25,000 just for the pumping and digging in 1997.

LAO was agreeable to this as they were concerned about having all the 5 missing crew families' permission and a team with the expertise and funding to do the job. They have done other aircraft land recoveries but this HR980 project is special and requires funding they do not have, which they estimated would be in the area of 50,000 Euros = \$76,000 Can.

The LAO group are very sincere and have made sure that honour, rest, and closure are very much part of what they do when they recover these aircrew and their aircraft. I whole-heartedly support their efforts in doing these historic projects.

The landowners are the German Forest Service and they expressed cooperation for this project with the proviso that we could not do the actual recovery until Oct. 2014, with preparation work possible for the HR980 site before this date.

I explained I would go back to Canada and that H57R would begin fundraising and rally support for the HR980 project.

This could be the ultimate Remembrance project for 4 nations if we can just raise the support needed. I know that those of you who have supported H57RC and the Bomber Command Museum in all our projects will feel, just like I do, that we cannot turn our back on this HR980 Project and recovering our missing bomber boys.

Halifax 57 Rescue Directors and Bomber Command Museum of Canada Directors have already agreed to support the HR980 Project. So far, I have received over (\$20,000 cash) and support in kind already from H57RC benefactors and supporters for the HR980 Project!

I have not gone public yet or formally approached high level officials of the Canadian government or corporate officials but I will in the coming weeks. This will be, as we approach the fall of 2014 and Remembrance Day week 2014, one of the most high profile Remembrance projects of the decade. These officials all know of Halifax 57 Rescue, the Bomber Command Museum of Canada, and our historic projects string of successes.

I am assuming they would support our HR980 Project financially and I think that a 50/50 fundraising effort would be reasonable, whereby all funds that we raise on the H57RC side for the HR980 Project should be matched by our government. After all, this support would be a sign of appreciation of our veterans' sacrifice and Freedom they have given us. I am hoping for our government's cooperation as this is a great opportunity to be seen as pro-active in this historic project of a very high profile on the international stage.

Right now, let us deal with our mission of recovery and Remembrance for there is a Halifax and her 5 missing crew waiting for us.

Thanks to John Williams of Australia who is the long time researcher and spark plug behind this possible recovery, for his aunt was the fiancée' of the pilot Bill Bergum of HR980. John has fought for years for a recovery of the 5 missing guys, to no avail until he found some Johnnie Canucks who are willing to help.

Thanks to John, I am in email and phone contact with 4 of the 5 families of the missing airmen on 3 continents. I have even talked with the SISTERS of 2 of the missing airmen, 92 and 94 years old respectively, who would dearly love to know their brothers have been found and laid to rest in their lifetimes.

I already have our first funds from a major benefactor who also wishes to volunteer and will come with me to a swamp in Germany in late 2014 for the Remembrance adventure of a lifetime. Are you one of these intrepid souls, too?

Will you help support this most special recovery of our 5 guys and their Halifax? I await your response to this most special appeal for financial help for the HR980 Project!

On to Business- these are the HALI-FACTS:

I have made some very good progress on finding those little gems we will most certainly need for our Halifax Project such as turrets, propellers, engine parts and all the many items that do not grow on Lancaster trees or in B-17 gardens. We must find the real McKoy and I have been making progress in these areas.

The giant 3-bladed DeHavilland Halifax propellers are turning out to be hard to find but I have found 2 cores of these propellers which are actually Stirling propellers (exactly the same as Halifax props).

Thanks to Pino Galardi of the Stirling Aircraft Project we have our first donor prop hub which should yield a prop spider which is the heart of a Halifax prop. See the photo below of this gem. This unit is being

de-assembled by our friends at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Center at East Kirkby, UK and should be available for pick up soon.



Also, Halifax 57 Rescue did a favour for the Bomber Command Museum of Canada and the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Center by the shipping and delivering of a Lancaster prop spinner from Canada to East Kirkby, UK as "Just Jane" has a very weary spinner that needs replacing on one of their Merlins, so that they can continue with their engine runs this season in the UK. Hands across the water and all that, supporting each other to continue the Merlin Music wherever it is played. See the photo below of Andrew Panton and Harold Panton receiving the Canadian Lanc spinner from yours truly on my last trip to the UK.



In addition, we have located another Stirling hub and will be de-assembling this unit when we can pick it up in the near future.

Also, for those of you who did not see our Christmas report here is the ultra rare Halifax nose perspex we got from a trade in the UK and which is now safely back in Nanton after crating and shipping across the ocean by our good friends at Air Canada Air Cargo at London Heathrow.



From the good old boys network in the UK I was able to locate (4) more Bristol Hercules engines in very good condition and I am dealing on these engines which are located in the UK. I hope to have a deal on these units soon so will keep you advised on these engines. Considering all the Hercules parts and spares we have, we are well on our way in having the makings of 4 running Hercules engines in the near future.

The beginning work on the Malta Halifax-Hastings center sections and wing pieces we recovered has been done in Ottawa as George Roskopf has been working away on the heart of a Halifax main spar for us. Unfortunately, H57RC lost our shop and space at the commercial shop in Ottawa due to redevelopment of this acreage and so we have to store the wing sections back at our friend's storage yard, the Canada Aviation and Space Museum. Thanks to Stephen Quick for his kind consideration and services at this national facility. We are planning a new venue in Ottawa to continue this vital Halifax main spar and center section rebuild for our Halifax Project and hope to make an announcement soon regarding a new rebuild location.

I have just got off the phone with Falcan Industries in Fort MacLeod and they are building us a NEW twin axle trailer (gratis) for our Bristol Hercules engine runs, so that we can share these exciting Hercules engine runs with those of you who come to our events at the Bomber Command Museum of Canada but we will also be taking our Hercules engine runs on the road to air shows and gatherings all over the district to add a whole lot of spice to our displays as we honour our bomber crews.

Remember, there is only 1 museum in North America that RUNS both major types of RAF Bomber Command engines in their events and displays, the Merlin and the Hercules, and it is our own Bomber Command Museum of Canada in not-so-little Nanton, Alberta. See below a photo of your truly eating oil and smoke as we start the Hercules just after the engine runs of our Lancaster



We are very much looking forward to our first full season in 2014 of running our Lancaster FM159, the Ian Bazelgette VC Memorial Lancaster, with all 4 Merlins running! So your choice, the "music of the Merlins" or the "rock-and-roll of the Hercules". We hope to see

you this summer.

In addition, I received a call from the keen group at the Solway Aviation Museum in northern UK and they were willing to donate to H57RC some tail section Halifax parts they had recovered which included a 10 foot by 3 foot section including the complete tail wheel casting and housing! This will be a welcome addition to all the components we need for our Halifax rebuild in the coming months. I was able to pick up these tail sections last week while on my parts gathering trip.

Also, showing up at the Solway Aviation museum from Scotland was our H57RC founder Ian Foster who drove down from Glasgow, Scotland for a short visit with us and in tow he had some rare Halifax parts that he donated to our cause.

I must mention other good friends, Ken Cothliff and Julie of Leeds, for their hospitality and friendship while I was staying in Leeds and pursuing all things Halifax. Ken's father was a Halifax pilot and was killed-in-action so our efforts on the Halifax Project strike close to home for him. He is a keen supporter of our cause in the UK.

Positive developments for the Halifax LW170 quest are building as the Irish Marine Institute officials met with me in London as we ironed out details of a sonar search which could begin as early as this summer. They now have a new mini-sub and access to special sonar which could pinpoint LW170 and we have those targets plotted within our search box which could be LW170. That is the good news. The costs for such a search will be charged by the day and the search for the Halifax would be done in conjunction with - added on to a science survey that they will do in these waters. So progress and recognition for our project as a special historic survey is much appreciated by H57RC. More on this as the summer progresses.

We are doing OK on finances and budget for week to week operations at H57RC but this HR980 Project will be on the front burner as we strive to do special fund raising for this. This recovery of crew and aircraft is a win-win-win for all concerned and we do urgently need your support to make this special project succeed.

Let me, once again, explain how you can donate to these projects. Please read the following below and know that your donation is vital.

We urgently need Corporate and personal sponsors for these historic projects and below are 4 ways you can help us keep our Halifax Projects going:

- 1) Donate funds to Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) via the postal services – see our 2 addresses available at the end of this report. Make cheques out to “Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)”.
- 2) Try our New PAYPAL internet payment method for all who have purchased or contributed online (via your PAYPAL account) to our worthy and honourable charity. Go to our website www.57rescuecanada.com and see the golden “DONATE” button which immediately donates these funds to our cause from anywhere in the world (if you have a PAYPAL account!).
- 3) Donate your unused stocks, bonds, and securities to our Halifax 57 Rescue - Royal Bank Discount Brokerage account and receive a “full market value” tax receipt credit for the donation of these securities. You will not have to pay income tax on the profit portion side of this transfer and donation. You receive full tax deductible credit for said donation. It is a win-win for all concerned.
- 4) Purchase a beautiful limited-edition signed print of our Halifax LW170 “INVINCIBLE ITEM” for (\$165.00 including postage) or an unsigned print for (\$60.00 including postage). This has to be one of the finest prints of a combat Halifax that has ever been produced. We still have half of the 500 signed prints available to all you Halifax fans. See www.57rescuecanada.com for all our Halifax print info.

And remember,

WE LEAVE NO HALIFAX BEHIND

Sincerely,

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