

## Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)

Progress Report (Number 9) October 21, 2005

Registered Charity 84586 5740 RR0001  
by Karl Kjarsgaard (Project Manager)

As I think back over the past 11 years, from the first moment in 1994 that I saw the sonar image of RAF Halifax NA337 popping out of Tore Marsoe's briefcase in the coffee shop in Oslo, Norway, I have been truly amazed and thankful.

To think that an airplane and all the people associated with her should have such a powerful and lasting influence on my life and the lives of my friends is a wonderful thing. So many people putting their best foot forward and giving so much of their energy to help save not only an aircraft but also a national and international symbol of Freedom and the sacrifice of thousands of good people to keep all of us free.

On November 5th, 2005 RAF Halifax NA337 will be dedicated at the RCAF Memorial Museum at Trenton, Ontario. Over the past 9 years Halifax NA337 has been painstakingly rebuilt by her restoration team of air force engineers and volunteers, transformed from a waterlogged hulk to an aviation gem of great historical value. To those members of the rebuild team who restored NA337, with their "midas touch", all of Canada and the aviation world thanks you for all your good work.

I always saw in my mind's eye, from the very start, this scene of talented and determined people rebuilding NA337 and bringing her back to life for all the world to see. What I did not foresee, thanks to some very cunning people, was that I would not be one of those rebuilders as they finished this wonderful restoration.

But in every cloud is a silver lining. If I had not moved on and kept my associations with all those good people I met through the NA337 project, who helped me towards our ultimate goal, we would never have discovered LW170 of the RCAF, the ultimate and most historic combat Halifax to have survived the war.

During all the celebrations this year of the 60th anniversary of Allied victory I have observed that the ranks of those young aircrew of 18 and older, who fought for us in Halifaxes and other fine aircraft so long ago, are rapidly thinning. It causes me a lot of pain to see this for so many of my heroes were my friends. Tony "notso" Little, tail gunner of a Halifax, is one of those "gone West", and so many more. I will remember them always.

Once again I would like to thank certain unwitting people, for their misguided efforts have strengthened our cause for RCAF Halifax LW170. There is a truly large number of Canadians, an increasing grass roots movement, of children and grandchildren of those Halifax and Air Force veterans, who have finally realized that their schools, teachers, and governments have stopped teaching about the great sacrifice and excellence of the Canadian air force crews, those very men who are their family members.

The RCAF was the 4th largest air force in all the free world in World War 2. On top of this 1 out of every 4 airmen in the British RAF was a Canadian! On every city block in every town across this

nation there is at least one home who had a family member in the RCAF or RAF. Now the extended families of these air force veterans are coming to us in ever increasing numbers and asking why have these people and institutions ignored their air force warriors and our military forces. We have had many sincere requests to find out every single detail and all the deeds of our brave aircrews who were their fathers and uncles and grandfathers and cousins. They truly need to know.

Some "progressive" people in power today say that the deeds of our family members 60 years ago, especially our military combat history is "old history" and we must move on to a "new and improved" world. I would love to fire off a vernacular response to this but it will not appear here for reasons of taste and decorum.

There are 2 quotes that I love which give great strength to our cause and explain it all to those who do not "see".

"The only thing new in this world is the history you do not know " and "Iron does not become steel till it goes through fire." In every stage of Canada's evolution we have gone through the fire of combat with our warriors, showing by deed, that they were second to none. Canadian warriors have been awarded 96 Victoria Crosses since this highest award for Valour in combat was initiated in 1853!

From before Vimy Ridge to Allied Victory in 1945 and beyond, our nation has always been a leader in fighting for Freedom and the rights of the people. The Steel of our nation was forged in the fire of combat, even more so than it ever was in peacekeeping.

If a person denies our military history and excellence of our warriors in combat by not spotlighting or teaching of their deeds and sacrifice in schools, universities, and historical institutions that person weakens our national identity and undermines the foundation for our future. The members of Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) are going to uphold our great military history and preserve the memory of our air force veterans.

We welcome all the children and grandchildren and nephews and nieces and cousins of our air force crews. Our veterans are glad you will remember them and are comforted that you are going to be a vital part of our group's strength and future.

There is no finer international symbol of all I have stated above, not only to Canadians but also to Americans as well as the British, of this contribution of the RCAF in Allied Victory than the symbol of the Handley Page HALIFAX.

LW170 is straight ahead.

On to Business, **These are the Hali-facts:**

The Directors of Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada), including yours truly, have been very busy on several fronts in promoting the Halifax Project.

On August 20th Jim Blondeau, Father Harry Schmuck, and myself attended the exciting and moving dedication ceremonies of the Bomber Command Memorial Wall at the Nanton Lancaster Society Museum at Nanton, Alberta.

You may remember Father Harry, who was a mid-upper Halifax Air Gunner on RCAF 432/426

Squadrons, and post-war became a priest of the Catholic Church. Not only did we enjoy this dedication of "THE Wall" memorial to our bomber crews, which of itself puts Nanton in a class of its own for Canadian tributes to our bomber crews, but our own Jim Blondeau wrote a song of dedication just for this event. Father Harry spoke of his comrades whose names are on this Memorial Wall and introduced Jim to the dignitaries and crowd, who sang a truly moving song of tribute to the 10,000 plus fallen of the RCAF on that wall.



We were very pleased to support this special event and be a part of the ceremony. We cannot thank and compliment the Nanton executive and members of the Nanton Museum enough for all their hospitality and efforts for this wonderful Memorial. We are very pleased to be partners with Nanton on the Halifax Project and believe they are the best Bomber Command memorial in all of Canada. They officially ran the rebuilt starboard-inner Merlin of their Lanc for the first time in over 50 years at the ceremony and it was a real treat to hear that "music" again.

On a personal note, yours truly is in the final stages of a move from Ottawa to Nanton as my home, as we progress with the Halifax Project. I felt that with the support and encouragement of the Nanton people along with all the possibilities in Alberta that I had to show my allegiance to them and our mutual aims. I am looking forward to helping make Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) an integral part of this great memorial to our bomber crews. I will advise everyone when I have changed addresses but for the immediate future all Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) addresses and phone numbers remain the same.

Fund raising is progressing well. In fact, author John Neal's new book "Bless You, Brother Irvin", all about exciting bail-outs using the parachute, has been printed and is for sale from John through this website. For every copy of "Bless You, Brother Irvin" sold, John Neal will be donating funds to the Halifax Project for recovery of LW170. Please look at our special promo page (on our website title page under the heading "NEW - BLESS YOU, BROTHER IRVIN - SALE" all about the book and where to purchase a copy. This would make a great gift for a veteran or family member. Remember every copy sold will add funds and support our project. I am counting on all members and supporters to pass this book sale info on to all interested parties! The cost is \$ 25.00 per copy.



Further to fundraising, I am pleased to announce that after much hard work to prepare the painting of RCAF Halifax LW170 we are finally ready to go to the printers next week. After scores of hours of collaboration with artist Michael McCabe a beautiful and detailed painting of LW170, depicted on her 26th op in July, 1944, will be released soon for sale as a true collectors painting. After printing next week yours truly will be traveling from New Brunswick to B. C. with all the LW170 prints (500) to have them personally signed by the artist and 10 to 12 men who actually flew LW170 in combat in the RCAF in 424 Squadron.

This could be the most unique painting of a RCAF Halifax ever to be offered to our members and the public. It took us hundreds of hours of research to find all these LW170 crewmen still alive whose average age is 82 years old. This must be one of the very last signed limited-edition aircraft prints ever to be offered for general sale. Russell Earl of Estevan, Saskatchewan will be the high-time signer of the print as he flew LW170 no less that 11 times in 1944!! To say he is enthusiastic to get his hands on a print of his old "Item" is an understatement.

Please remember there will be only 500 signed prints available so stay tuned to the website and keep in touch with me to be advised when the prints come available. We estimate that the prints will be ready for sale November 15th, 2005. The price for a signed print will be \$150.00 (\$Canadian \$) plus postage (to be announced). Final details will be forthcoming on this website before the sales officially begin.



To get the ball rolling on announcing the Halifax Project to official organizations, and promoting sales of "Bless You, Brother Irvin" and the painting of LW170, John Neal and I made a special trip to Red Deer, Alberta for the annual convention of the Air Force Association on October 6th to 8th. (see above photo of John and Karl at their convention display booth) We greatly enjoyed the selling of books, promoting the painting of LW170, handing out data and information all about Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada). Not only was I able to speak to the national assembly of the Association for 7 minutes about our group but also spoke with the Chief of the Air Staff, General Lucas, about the Halifax Project. He is now fully aware of our objectives and aims.

Also, an avid supporter of our project is Laurie Haan, (RCAF ret.), an investments executive in Edmonton. He and I did meet at this convention and were able to discuss ways and means of gathering financial support in Western Canada for the location and recovery of RCAF Halifax LW170 to the Nanton Museum. As Project Manager these contacts in high level circles are taken very seriously and we do believe we have a wonderful opportunity to raise our financial support needed in the near future. Please standby for more on these developments in my next report.

Considering the potential funding that will come in from the book and LW170 prints, we do believe in taking the initiative to raise money on our own. We certainly believe we should receive backing from government and corporate sources, considering the great historic nature of our project. With the right meeting of minds, those with vision and fortitude, soon we will have the support we need.

On the United States front, as you already know, we have had great initial support from quite a few Americans who have become members of our group. This included several American veterans who, in 1940-1941 over 7000 strong volunteered for the RCAF before Pearl Harbor, and fought for Canada's freedom. I visited the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C. in the summer of 2005 and gave a full briefing to our Canadian military attaches' of our Halifax Project. I tried to stress the importance of this historic project to them and the significance to all the American people. When I showed them the names and hometowns of over 700 U.S. citizens killed-in-action in the RCAF, the majority killed while in combat on the Halifax, they said they would try to help us in our quest.

I am very pleased to announce that on Nov.11th at the Canadian Embassy, at their special Remembrance Day ceremony, several family members of Tom Withers an American in RCAF 405 Squadron who was killed-in-action in 1942, have been especially invited for this ceremony. Chris Charland and myself as Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) Directors will travel to Washington D.C. to be in attendance to further our cause in the USA. Further to this, with all the press and VIP's invited, Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) will be allowed to have a display and promote the Halifax Project with all those interested. This is a great help to us to tell of those Americans who fought for Canada in the RCAF as this story has never been fully passed on to our American neighbours. We know we will be able to raise support from this opportunity and we thank Ambassador Frank Mckenna and all his staff for their assistance in our historic quest.

Let us keep our eyes on the target.

Press on Regardless...

Sincerely  
Karl Kjarsgaard

Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)

Registered Charity No. 84586 5740 RR0001

website: [www.57rescuecanada.com](http://www.57rescuecanada.com)

email: [57rescuecanada@rogers.com](mailto:57rescuecanada@rogers.com)

phone: 613 - 835 - 1748