

Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)



RCAF HALIFAX LW170 RECOVERY (424 Squadron)



LW170 Recovery Phase I

[Finding LW170](#)

[Progress Reports](#)

[Combat History](#)

[Halifax 57 Rescue](#)

[Credentials](#)

[Membership](#)

[Forum](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Links](#)

Progress Report No.30

September 12, 2009

Registered Charity 84586 5740 RR0001

Greetings to all our members and supporters. I hope you had a good July and August.

I have noticed that even if I was in Ottawa on one side of the country or out in Alberta the weather was very unpredictable and without steady warm weather for very long. Only now are we getting some good weather at our Alberta base at Canada's Bomber Command Memorial –the Nanton Lancaster Society Air Museum.

There are several items to talk about in this report and they deal not only with Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) progress in our great quest to find RCAF Halifax LW170 but also in the progress and displays at the Nanton Museum in the summer of 2009.

All of these efforts and special activities have been done to honour the crews of Bomber Command and the RCAF. This great sacrifice and effort of these young aircrews some 60 years ago gave Canada and indeed, all the world, the gift of Freedom and peace. Such a priceless gift at such huge cost must always be remembered and cherished.

It is our task, and indeed honour, to remind today's new generation of the events of 60 to 65 years ago when the Allies were victorious over tyranny and the great contribution of Canada in this conflict.

How great might this contribution be, for there are some of you who read this that are some of the unfortunate ones who were not taught a full and comprehensive history of Canada's contribution in the Second World War in Canadian schools.

Canada was **NUMBER 1** in all the free world for having the highest percentage of their population serving in the military in the years 1939-1945!

And if this statement above is a revelation to you, then you need to go back to your teachers and school boards, as well as your MLA's and MP's and ask why was I not taught of these things of Canada's great military contribution and excellence to help save the world from tyranny ?!

While this important question needs to be asked all across the nation we will soldier on carrying out our mission of passing on the message of the sacrifice and excellence in the air of our grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, and our loved ones.

Their efforts back then must be highlighted now and into the future, by our continued efforts at our home base museum in Nanton, and in our historic quest to find and recover RCAF Halifax LW170.

“Press on regardless...”

ON TO BUSINESS – THESE ARE THE HALIFACTS:

Let me first bring you up to date on the planned Halifax sonar survey which was due for this summer. Originally we had planned to go out on our designated sonar ship the POLAR PRINCE when she was scheduled out on a commercial sonar job this summer. We would piggyback our historic Halifax sonar expedition on a commercial oil exploration sonar job. This would allow Halifax 57 Rescue to be able to afford the deep water sonar services without paying the expensive mobilization and start-up costs.

In theory this was great for us and we could have gone to look for our Halifax this summer if all had gone according to plan.

Now, how many of you had fully planned for the banking crisis and were prepared for the commercial market crunch?

Well, the POLAR PRINCE and her owners were unable to follow through on their commercial contract as much activity of sonar work, especially in the oil exploration business, went into a big holding pattern. Even after great second effort and talking to 3 oil and mining companies in July and August, who could have used a special ship such as the POLAR PRINCE - a sonar equipped civilian ice-breaker, work could not be found.

So now we are on hold for the Halifax sonar survey as a consequence of the commercial companies backing off on exploration until the economy picks up again.

For those of you wringing your hands and saying “when are we ever going to go look for the Halifax?” and “will we ever see another Halifax come to Canada’s shores?” let me assure you that whatever is humanly possible we will do to make this happen.

The author of this report has not come this far to be deterred and neither should you. Let me give you the skinny on this - with a perspective that you must understand.

In 2005, Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)’s first year in existence we proposed this historic quest as the ultimate tribute to our crews of Bomber Command with the revelation of the discovered existence of RCAF Halifax LW170, the most historic Canadian combat aircraft in all of our years of flight. We had NO major funding NOR a ship NOR scientific data on our Halifax.

In 2006, as interest and support grew with all our new members, the money started to come in and much positive recon. on our proposed sonar survey was done. Political support was raised and the public came to realize it was technically possible to find our “aluminium needle in the haystack”. The Irish Marine Institute definitely was interested and provided great assistance and a possible ship with the money still rolling in – but not quite enough for us to do the survey for our Halifax yet.

In 2007, we had promise of a possible ship with, “lo and behold”, exact Irish sourced coordinates of 5 hard targets laying in the Halifax survey area, the biggie target only 1 miles west of where eyewitnesses say LW170 sank in to the deep. (our search just got easier to find our “needle”) And still the money continued to roll in, thanks to so many around the world

who have joined us in our quest.

In 2008, we received great donations from proud Canadians and all over the world that brought up to the point of saying “we’re ready to go financially” if only we could find a ship and owner who would help us. And then I went to Malta and fortuitously met a skipper of a ship there who said “I know just the people in St.John’s, Newfoundland who will help you find your Halifax!” and the POLAR PRINCE popped up out of nowhere

In 2009, who would have “think it” about all the financial troubles but do you not see how far we have come? And if we have come this far and we know we have our target and we have the resources and the power to do this, should we doubt or falter now?

I seem to recall some of my air force heroes who did NOT falter once upon a time when Canada desperately needed them. So let us say to ourselves and each other “ WE CAN DO THIS!” just like those 20 year olds said to their buddies and the world while gaining us our Freedom 65 years ago. Keep faith with us as we forge ahead in our honourable mission.

While the saga of our Halifax continues, I wanted to pass on to you the great work done by our partners at the Nanton Lancaster Society Air Museum - Canada’s Bomber Command Memorial. They are a great team and it showed in all that was done from May - 2009 forward through this summer.

Let me summarize the great events put on these past months in word and image that proves that these folks really are the people’s choice as a national calibre memorial museum.

The Nanton Museum all-star team, after making their Lanc become only the 4th Lanc in the world with running Merlins, was able to schedule 5 special Merlin engine runs (to coincide with our Memorial events) planned on May 30, June 26, July 23, Aug.15, with the final engine runs scheduled on Sep.26! So if you are waiting to see these beauties run do not wait too long as we will be putting the Lanc away soon to do more maintenance and prepare for winter storage. Sat.SEP.26 is the last Merlin run this year!

Lancaster, friends and Merlin music



courtesy of Sheena Read – Nanton News

Let me list off to you all the good work done at the Nanton Museum this summer.

May 30 was Lanc Merlin runs at the Planes, Trains, and Elevators weekend which was our town's open day to visit Nanton. You could see the Museum with an open invitation to visit our vintage train store "Ultimate Trains" and the rebuilt authentic giant grain elevators. This was a great beginning and warm up for our later highlighted main events in July and August.

On June 27 was the museum's tribute to one of the best collectors and "scroungers" in our formative years, Jonathan Spinks, who helped the museum in its beginning years and collected untold numbers of valuable artifacts for Nanton. It was good tribute event for such a valuable guy as Jonathan and well done. Jonathan would have been thrilled when we cranked up the Merlins as the highlight of the day.

July 23 was a very special date. "Jack Allan Day" was to honour a Nanton hero who flew Hurricanes in North Africa in World War 2 and then went on to become a Wing Commander in the post-war RCAF and became the Commanding Officer of the famed GOLDEN HAWKS 1960-1962. Not only did we have the Merlin runs but we had presentations all day long for the crowds, including an update on the Halifax Project by yours truly. But the finale of the day was a flyby over the town of the Snowbirds and Hawk One, the rejuvenated Golden Hawks F-86, as a tribute to Jack Allan. I still get goose-bumps writing about it and below you will see a couple of great photos provided by reporter Sheena Read of the local NANTON NEWS. It was a special day for sure.

Snowbirds and HAWK ONE fly over the NANTON RCAF flag
NOTE: The RCAF emblem at the top of the flagpole is over 2 feet across
So this tells you the size of our RCAF flag!



HAWK ONE solo flyby by Dan Dempsey at Nanton



Finally, our big annual Memorial event was held on August 15 called “Remembering Baz”, a tribute to Squadron Leader Ian Bazelgette VC DFC who was the only airman born in Alberta to be awarded the Victoria Cross in World War 2. It was one of the most poignant and heartfelt ceremonies in our museum’s history when the town of Senantes, France (the finally resting place of Ian Bazelgette) and the town of Nanton were officially twinned , with dignitaries from both towns in attendance at Nanton. With all of the presentations and displays as well as the Merlin engine runs it was a very special day. Of special note was the attendance of Senator Anne Cools who traveled all the way from Ottawa and was our guest speaker at our memorial ceremonies. Senator Cools is one of the most influential Senators in recent times and a powerful figure and lady on Parliament Hill. The Nanton Museum with the Memorial Wall is starting to be noticed for the quality of its mission amongst many of our leaders and this recognition is appreciated.

Just to add a bit of spice to the recipe of this report I have included 2 photos below of the French delegation and our “living historians” gathered by the Lanc just after the official twinning of Senantes, France and Nanton, Alberta in honour of Squadron Leader Ian Bazelgette VC DFC. Also included is a photo of Senator Cools and yours truly going for a flip in our fully restored “liason” Jeep around the patch after her great speech at these ceremonies This was no doubt her first Jeep ride and the thrill of riding with this particular driver will probably generate memories for her for years to come!

**Back row Don Thomas – Victoria, Mayor of Senantes – Christian Gavelle, Don Zorniak -
 Winnipeg, Simeon Desloges - France, Alain Ducatel - Calgary,
 And front row Frederick Carstad - Winipeg, Bob Campbell – Victoria
 Note memorial wreaths in centre of group laid by French delegation in honour of
 S/L Ian Bazelgette VC DFC**



Courtesy of Alain Ducatel

Senator Anne Cools and Karl



Courtesy Fred Hollowell

In finishing off this report let me say that although the Halifax Project is on hold and it looks like we will have to plan for next summer but we are determined to find a solution.

The directors of Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) and the ship-owners of the POLAR PRINCE will be meeting this week Sep.14 -17 in Ottawa to brainstorm and network to acquire new commercial work for this special ship.

We will meet with our political advisors and supporters and see what options and

opportunities are available for the POLAR PRINCE. Her commercial well being ensures the future for the Halifax Project and our success. Standby for further in the next report on these important matters.

If our membership and supporters have contacts and people who can assist us in finding solutions for both the ship and our project we would appreciate your support and suggestions.

We remain dedicated to honouring our warriors, their excellence, and their sacrifice.

Keep your eyes on the target.

Sincerely,
Karl Kjarsgaard
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