

# BOMBER COMMAND MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Fall 2020



Bomber Command Museum of Canada  
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Volume 34 Issue 2

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we approach the end of 2020 and we ready ourselves for what 2021 may bring its time for us to look back and count our blessings. The directors of the museum are very grateful for all the support we have received through out the year.

We were able to keep our doors open and welcome the public into the museum. Our attendance was at about half of our normal attendance; realizing that back in May we were not sure that we would even be able to achieve that.

Sadly we were not able to hold any public events which likely will carry well into the 2021 season. If 2021 improves we are hopeful that we will at least be able to offer some mid to late summer gatherings.

Another bright spot is that our shop nights have been able to continue, albeit with adjustments for Covid-19 protocols. The Lancaster, Anson and Halifax have all seen some major progress, even in the shadow cast by Covid-19. Looking back to what it must have felt like during the dark times of World War Two and adopting the motto of the Path Finders, our volunteers have indeed "Pressed on Regardless"

As I compile my list of wishes for 2021 I realize that, as yet another series of restrictions fall upon us, the future of the museum largely depends on the generosity of our museum patrons. Our continued existence as a functioning public exhibit relies on donations made. As our visitation dwindles and the weather turns cold; funds to keep the doors open and heat on will be severely restricted. Therefore I send out a plea to all museum supporters. I know that many folks have felt the pangs of empty pockets as jobs have been lost and shops closed. The museum will be grateful for whatever it may be that you feel you can share whether it be \$10.00, \$100.00 or even \$1000.00.

As 2021 approaches I wish the best to all, stay Safe. May a time of gentle skies be just around the corner.

Rob Pedersen  
President  
Bomber Command Museum of Canada

***The museum is currently open on weekends (10-4).***

## A VISIT FROM THE BRITISH ARMY

Our museum maintains a connection with the 'British Army Training Unit Suffield' (BATUS). This is a special flight of up to five Gazelle helicopters based at CFB Suffield that are used for reconnaissance and medivac purposes by the British Army at their training grounds on the base.

This summer, fifteen BATUS personnel came by ground and three were aboard a Gazelle helicopter. They were given a tour of the museum and our restoration hangar a demonstration of our rear-turret and a run-up of the Hercules engine.

With our summer events cancelled, the BATUS flight was a highlight and much appreciated.



## **A VERY SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY THE BAZALGETTE FAMILY**

*-Ilan Bazalgette VC DFC gave this framed photo to his parents in 1943 or 1944. It hung in the family home at New Malden, in greater London, during the final months of the war and afterwards. The photograph remained with members of the Bazalgette family until Charles Bazalgette, Ian's nephew, made arrangements for it to be presented to the museum.*

In 1990, prior to the construction of a museum building and when the museum's Lancaster was still on outdoor display, our aircraft was dedicated to S/L Ian Bazalgette VC DFC, the only Albertan to be awarded the Victoria Cross during the Second World War.

During September, Charles Bazalgette, Ian Bazalgette's nephew, donated this very special photograph to the museum and made arrangements to have it delivered by his wife's parents.

At least one astute visitor to the museum has noticed the Victoria Cross ribbon on Baz's uniform and the Pathfinder badge he is wearing and questioned how it was possible for this photograph to have been printed prior to Ian being killed. The answer is that Ian's parents had the VC insignia and the Pathfinder Badge as well, 'airbrushed' onto the photograph following Ian's death and the subsequent awarding of the Victoria Cross. This becomes obvious when one looks carefully at the photograph.

The museum is honoured to have this valuable artifact entrusted to our collection.



**Marion Bazalgette and her son Ian at the front door of their family home in New Malden, South London**



**The photograph was delivered to the museum by Charles Bazalgette's father-in-law and mother-in-law, Al and Ett McFarland. Ett has a further connection to the Bazalgette family in that her grandmother was Charles Bazalgette's mother's sister.**

# LARRY SUTHERLAND –THE RCAF'S ONE-EYED AIR GUNNER

*-While serving with 207 Sqn, Larry shot down seven fighters, including three in one night. Our museum played a minor role in the publishing of Larry's biography by his cousin, Gary Chisholm.*

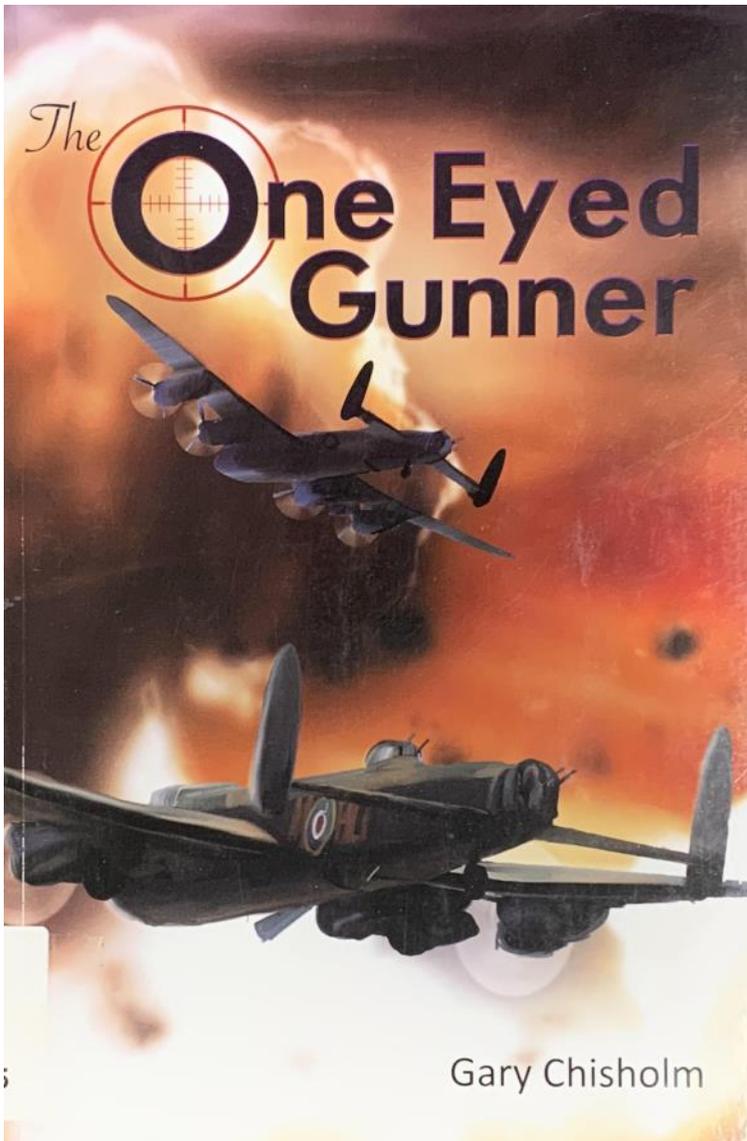
Known to his friends as 'Larry', Clarence Bentley Sutherland was born in East Mountain, Nova Scotia and joined the RCAF in 1942. During his physical examination physical to join the air force, it was discovered that his left eye couldn't move because of a birth defect.

Despite this, he was eventually accepted into the RCAF and posted to No.9 Bombing and Gunnery School at Mont-Joli, Quebec where he became an air gunner. It turned out that, for some reason, the bad eye meant he had exceptional night vision. That would turn out to be a big advantage during night bombing raids.

P/O Sutherland completed thirty-five operation on Lancasters with 207 Squadron. It is truly amazing that the first nine he completed were to Berlin, during what became known as 'The Battle of Berlin' -a time when Bomber Command experienced huge losses. During July 1944, he was awarded the DFC, the citation reading,

*"One night in June 1944, F/O Wallace McIntosh and P/O Sutherland were rear and mid-upper gunners respectively of an aircraft detailed to attack Cerisy. Just after crossing the enemy coast, Flying Officer McIntosh sighted a Junkers 88 coming in to attack. He promptly warned his pilot who took the necessary combat manoeuvre. Both gunners then opened fire, hitting the enemy aircraft with well placed bursts, causing it to spin towards the ground with both its engines on fire. Almost immediately another Junkers 88 was sighted. As the enemy aircraft came into range, Flying Officer McIntosh and his co-gunner met the attacker with devastating bursts of fire which caused it to explode in the air. Half an hour later, these gunners engaged yet a third enemy aircraft. Following their accurately placed bursts of fire, the enemy fighter fell away and was seen to catch fire before it hit the sea. Flying Officer McIntosh and Pilot Officer Sutherland defended their aircraft with great skill and resolution and undoubtedly played a large part in its safe return. Their achievement was worthy of high praise."*

Recently Gary sent Larry Sutherland's wartime memorabilia to the museum for inclusion in our archives. This included a one hour video interview that is available on our on-line archives collection.



7-12-44 25.30	M	WALLEN GREY 3FC M.V. GUNNER	OPERATIONS - FRET-DE-CERISY
			1 JU 88 SHOT DOWN (0156)
			1 JU 88 SHOT DOWN (0157)
			1 ME. 410 SHOT DOWN (0238)



**Larry Sutherland (second from the right)  
with his 207 Squadron crew**

## CANADA'S BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL WALL

*-Since 2005, when 10,643 names were inscribed onto the granite panels that make up the Memorial Wall, much research has been done as information becomes more readily available through the work of our museum and others. We are now in the final stages of honouring a large number of airmen who 'fell through the cracks' of history.*

Since the Dedication of Canada's Bomber Command Memorial, the names of 29 airmen have been added. Many of these were brought to our attention by family members and, after confirming that they do qualify, their names were added to the museum's 'Virtual Memorial' on our website and to the Memorial Wall itself.

Our volunteers have been working with the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln, UK, which has done extensive research into those killed while serving with Bomber Command and has made their work available to us. As well, various Canadian researchers have shared their work with us. Of course, both the gathering of information and its sharing is now much more readily accomplished through the Internet than was the case twenty some years ago when the basis of the list we initially had available was created.

Almost all the names to be added are from the following three situations:

-Canadians who enlisted directly with the Royal Air Force, prior to the outbreak of war. Most of these are already on the Wall but a significant number were omitted from the original list for unknown reasons.

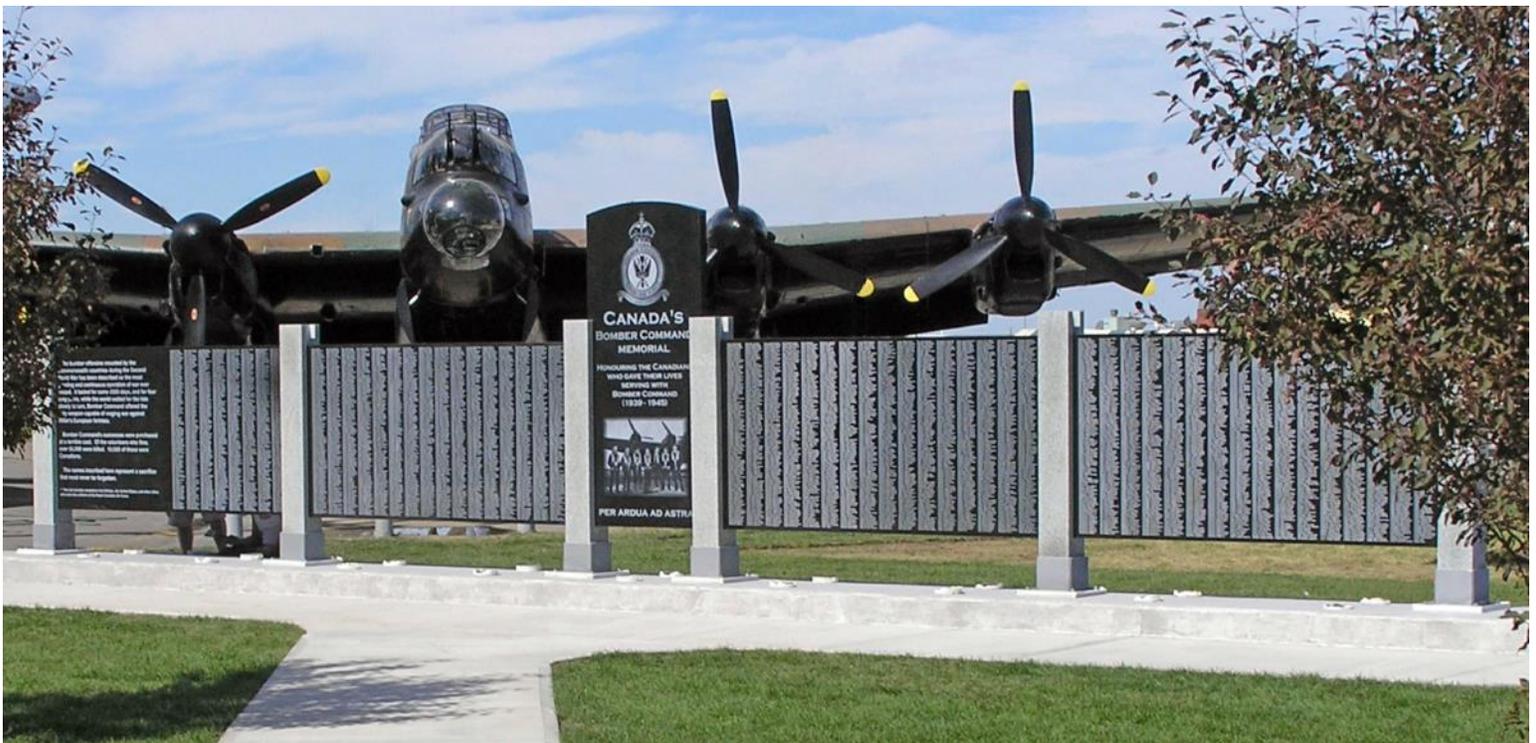
-Canadians who were initially overlooked, but are part of the International Bomber Command Centre's

list. Based in Lincoln, UK, this organization, through extensive, detailed research, has added the names of almost 3000 Bomber Command personnel who were not on the list that they began with several years ago. They have shared their information with us and assisted in other ways as well.

-Although 379 names on the wall are those of Americans who enlisted in the RCAF and were killed serving with Bomber Command while members of the RCAF, those of a number of other Americans 'fell through the cracks'. Most had transferred to the American Air Force but were sent back to their RCAF or RAF Squadrons prior to being posted to American units. While at these RCAF or RAF Squadrons, they were killed.

The research involved gathering the information required and in determining the names to be added required a lot of time-consuming work by our museum volunteers and the cooperation of the IBCC and others. Thank you to those who helped with this.

We anticipate that over two hundred names will be added to our museum's 'Virtual Memorial' and to the granite Memorial Wall itself.



## MEMBER'S SECTION

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE A VOLUNTEER-DRIVEN, REGISTERED CHARITABLE SOCIETY.  
We depend upon private donations for our operation and development. Please help if you can.

***-Support the Bomber Command Museum by becoming a member:***

### **Membership Benefits:**

- Donations are not expected at the museum
- Free access to Lancaster fuselage tours
- Free Lancaster cockpit tours (during special events when available)
- Free 'Berlin Blitz' virtual reality experience

### **Membership Options:**

- Annual: \$40
- Museum Supporter (5 years): \$250
- Lifetime: \$1000
- Wing Commander's Club: \$5000

***-If you are were a member in 2020, we encourage you to renew for 2021.***

***-For further details and to join the Bomber Command Museum visit:***

<http://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/membership.html>

*or,*

***Complete the following form and mail to:***

**Bomber Command Museum of Canada; Box 1051; Nanton, Alberta; T0L 1R0**

### BOMBER COMMAND MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

PROVINCE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP TYPE (Please circle):

Annual (\$40)    Museum Supporter (\$250)    Life (\$1000)    Wing Commander (\$5000)

MEMBERSHIP AMOUNT:        \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL DONATION:        \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED:    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

[An official receipt for tax purposes will be issued for donation of \$25 or more]

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

***Volunteer at the Bomber Command Museum of Canada:***

- Welcome visitors at our front desk and help them enjoy and learn at the museum.
- Work on a restoration project in our well-equipped metal and wood shops.
- Assist in our library and archives.

Contact: [visitorinfo@bombercommandmuseum.ca](mailto:visitorinfo@bombercommandmuseum.ca) or 403-646-2270

## **NORTH AMERICAN YALE –A ‘BACK-BURNER’ PROJECT**

*-The Yale played a relatively minor, although interesting role with the BCATP. Yales flew with No. 2 Wireless School in Calgary and have a direct connection to a Nanton airman. A major component of our museum’s Yale project was delivered to the museum recently.*

The Yale is a fixed undercarriage, lower powered, lighter weight version of the well known Harvard.

Early in 1939, 230 Yales were ordered by the Government of France. Just over 100 had been delivered when France fell to the Nazis. The remainder of the order, with their French stenciling and plates and instruments calibrated in metric measurements, was shipped to Canada.

Initially the Yales served as advanced trainers but when more Harvards became available, the Yales were relegated to the role of wireless operator training. In total, 119 Yales served with the RCAF.

### **THE MUSEUM’S YALE**

Designated as Yale 3404, the aircraft served at 6 SFTS at Dunnville, Ontario. In the early 1990’s, it was acquired by museum member Jon Spinks. Following Jon’s untimely death, the Spinks family donated the aircraft in memory of Jon.

Much progress has been made on the Yale restoration including the acquisition of a 'zero-time' engine. The rear fuselage was completely re-skinned and the tubular framework of the forward fuselage completely restored courtesy of Marcus Stephenson of Calgary. More recently, Marcus painted the rear fuselage.

Work has begun on the centre section but due to lack of space and other priorities, the Yale continues to be a ‘back-burner’ project.



**Rear fuselage prior to re-skinning**



**Marcus Stephenson with the Yale components**



**The recently delivered Yale rear fuselage section**

### **THE NANTON CONNECTION**

Clifford Garbutt was the son of Edgar and Helen Garbutt of Nanton. After graduating as a pilot, he served at #2 Wireless School. During a familiarization flight in a Yale, the aircraft crashed two miles east of Midnapore, just southeast of Calgary.

The RCAF crash report stated, "P/O Kennedy, the aircraft's pilot, was demonstrating stalling at a height of 1000 feet and got into a spin from which he did not completely recover." F/Sgt Garbutt was survived by his wife Melba and son Cliff jr. His is the only RCAF headstone in the Nanton Cemetery.



## **AIRSPEED OXFORD –SUPPORTING THE HHAS’S RESTORATION**

*-During the museum’s early years an Oxford centre section and many other parts were collected with the ultimate goal of restoring an Oxford for the museum. However, with the acquisition of a Cessna Crane and our current focus on the Avro Anson restoration, it was decided to donate our Oxford material to our museum’s friends at Penhold.*

Known to aircrew as the ‘Ox-box’, the Oxford was the first twin-engined monoplane trainer in the Royal Air Force. During WW II, it served in that role in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Southern Rhodesia as well as in the United Kingdom.

BCATP multi-engine SFTS’s in Canada utilized Ansons, Cranes and Oxfords. In Alberta, the only school to fly Oxfords was 36 SFTS at Penhold.

### **THE HARVARD HISTORICAL AVIATION SOCIETY**

A non-profit charitable society, the HHAS provides interactive and educational programming to commemorate and celebrate the unique history of the Penhold Military Base, the Bowden Military Base and the Red Deer Airport. An important part of this history is that of 36 Service Flying Training School.



**Service Flying Training School multi-engine trainers –Cessna Crane, Airspeed Oxford, and Avro Anson. Our museum has a taxiable Crane and our Anson restoration continues**



**The rudder and aft fuselage of the HHAS’s Oxford was completed by Barry Haliwell and is ready to be covered by fabric**



**The museum’s Oxford centre-section about to leave the museum for the HHAS facility at Penhold,**

## **THE LAST TALLBOY**

Canadian W/C Johnny Fauquier was the commanding officer of the elite 617 Squadron on 13 April 1945, as he led 34 Lancasters from 9 and 617 Squadrons to attack the enemy warships Prinz Eugen and Lutzow in Swinemunde Harbour in northwest Poland on the Baltic coast. However, the raid was abandoned because of cloud over the target. The aircraft all returned safely with their 12,000 pound Tallboy bombs after the long flight, Johnny landing after seven hours in the air. Tallboy bombs had been used to sink the German Battleship Tirpitz in November 1944.

Two days later, Johnny led twenty 617 Squadron Lancasters to attack the ships. It was another frustrating day as the raid was abandoned only eighteen miles from the target which was found to be covered by clouds.

The following day, 16 April, the squadron again took off to attack the warships in Swinemunde Harbour. This would be the third attempt to sink the Prinz Eugen and Lutzow. Johnny was concerned that the enemy fighters would be waiting for them to take advantage of the long, straight run-in that the Stabilized Automatic Bomb Sight (SABS) system required. He requested, and was granted, a long-range fighter escort.

However, no enemy fighters appeared as Johnny led the eighteen 617 Squadron aircraft over the harbour, but all but two of the Lancasters were hit by the heavy, radar-directed flak that was encountered. S/Ldr. Powell's bomber received a direct hit. The port wing was torn off and the aircraft spun into the ground near the target. Although one parachute was seen to open at about 2000 feet, all

seven crewmembers were killed. This was the last 617 Squadron aircraft lost during the war. The enemy defences still had to be respected even though, as it turned out, the last day of the war was just three weeks away.

Three Tallboys straddled the Lutzow, one striking between the dock and ship's moored side, blowing a large hole in Lutzow's armour plating below the waterline. She settled to the bottom at her moorings in less than fifty feet of water.

Although it was not known at the time, one of the Tallboys had landed in the shipping channel but did not explode.

Until 2020, the bomb lay undiscovered in the harbour when it was spotted by workers dredging the channel. Only its nose was sticking out of the bottom. Polish naval forces used a remote-controlled device to try to 'deflagrate' the bomb - a technique that, if successful, burns the explosive charge without causing a detonation. However, the deflagration process turned into a detonation, throwing up a large column of water into the air.

Fortunately, about 750 residents living nearby had been evacuated and there were no deaths or injuries.



**The museum's replica Tallboy**



## **AN UPDATE FROM THE CALGARY MOSQUITO SOCIETY**

After the temporary shutdown of the museum, we came back with a vengeance in early June to keep working on the Mosquito. In fact we seem to be experiencing a bit of a 'Covid bump' in volunteer participation as people want to make meaningful contributions, get out of the house and see some friendly faces. We now regularly see 20 people on any Saturday. So as not to overcrowd the shop on Tuesday evenings, we are not working that evening, but several of our regular volunteers come down during daylight hours through the week.

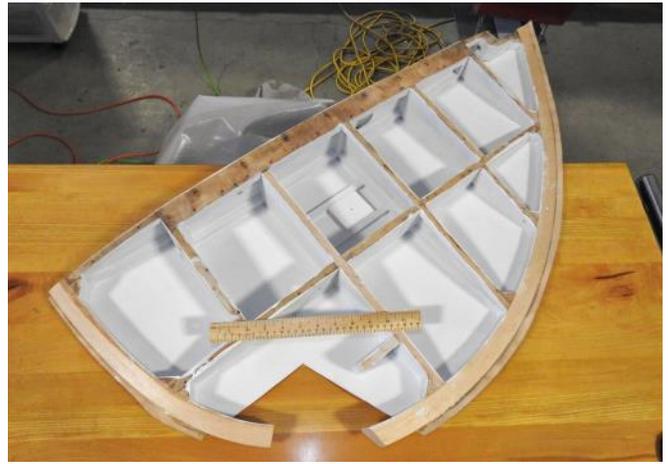
With the structural repairs on the fuselage now complete, we have expanded our work project to include a full strip down and rebuild of the horizontal stabilizer, flaps, wingtips and the wing itself. During the shutdown, we took some projects home to keep up momentum on the project, specifically the fuselage to wing side panels. These panels carry the control lines, fuel and hydraulic lines, etc. They were stripped bare, refinished and we are now starting to reinstall the hardware.

Gary T. has been very busy rebuilding the wingtips, the flaps and cutting new skins for the horizontal stabilizer. The wingtips are surprisingly complex pieces as they include drain holes, mounts for dipole antennas, nav lights, grounding straps and rear facing formation or resin lights.

We've made some major progress in removing the fuel tank covers from the lower wing and pulling all the tanks. These things hadn't see daylight since at least 1960, but look as good as new. Now begins the long and tedious job of removing all the hardware, electrical wiring and old paint from the fuel tank, undercarriage and bomb bays. Of course in the Mosquito, the bomb bay also included two fuel tanks as well. (And in a wooden airplane. What could go wrong...?)

The wing is in reasonable condition despite the weathered appearance of the upper surface, which bore the brunt of winter or two up at Cold Lake, AB when the airplane was shipped there in 1989 for restoration by 410 Squadron, but then abandoned and kicked out of the hangar. The worst damage to the wing is the loss of the leading and trailing edges, which were complete and in good condition when it left Calgary, but were almost completely destroyed.

We miss being able to share our work and passion with museum visitors and look forward to brighter days ahead for ourselves and the museum.



## **THE HALIFAX PROJECT**

As we progress into the fall and winter months we must NOT let up on what we (the Bomber Command Museum and Halifax 57 Rescue) can do to keep the Halifax rebuild going in Canada, in Ottawa with Knox Tech and in Nanton, Alberta at our memorial museum. Let me fill you in on the goings-on with photos first, and then a special video so you know we are moving ahead - Covid has not restricted us, only spurred us on to greater efforts.

Let us review WHAT is a "center-section" of a Halifax bomber and just how far Knox Tech has come to rebuilding this critical structure. See the first image - cutaway diagram of a Halifax showing the center-section outlined with RED and GREEN dots. THIS is the backbone and foundation of our Halifax! The RED and GREEN dot shape is 29 feet X 8 feet - that is HOW big the Halifax bomber is!

Now see in the 2nd photo an actual center-section of another Halifax after rebuild, Halifax NA337 on display in Trenton Ontario at the National Air Force Museum. (Halifax 57 Rescue was a part of the rebuild of NA337! )

Then see the 3rd photo at Knox Tech in Ottawa of the port (left) half (14.5 feet) of our Halifax project, laying face-down in the shop, waiting for the starboard (right) half to be attached. When attached it will be 29 feet long and 8 feet wide.

Further to this, see the 4th photo of the main landing gears and in the upper right the aluminium "rear wing box" sections (GREEN arrow) which will be bolted to the back half of the center-section shape.

Then look at the blueprint of the Halifax wing section, noting the RED arrow = main spar and the BLACK arrow = rear spar, that BLACK arrow is where the "rear wing box" bolts on, from the previous photo. Is the world's biggest jigsaw puzzle making some sense now?

Finally, peek out of the trenches where Knox Tech is labouring on our behalf, and look way WEST to see "unshaven Danish Canadian" in Nanton, Alberta putting the "cherry" on the resurrected Hercules engine, a new replica propeller dome. News of the Hercules death last year was greatly exaggerated and new life was breathed into our "pet monster" this spring. What better way to celebrate but with a new "chapeau".

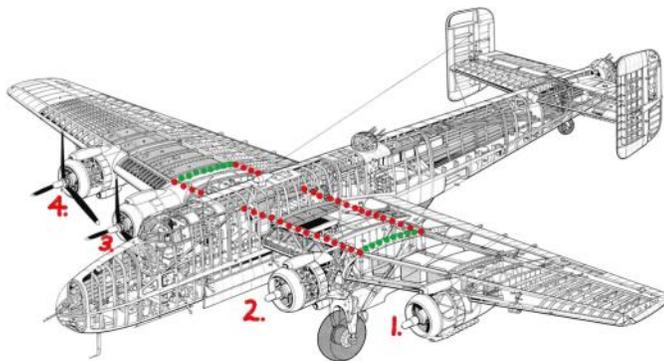
Adapt my friends, adapt. Keep that support coming in as we work today on what we have in our control, and when the vaccine is ready, we will be ready to make giant leaps and bounds on our Halifax rebuild.

Halifaxes do not grow (freely) on trees and Freedom is not free. Support us now as we save a true symbol (in aluminium) of honour, excellence, and the sacrifice of our Bomber Boys.

PLEASE DONATE and Support our "Halifax bomber project", please spell it out to BCMC as for the HALIFAX, by a DONATION today Pressing on regardless...

WE LEAVE NO HALIFAX BEHIND

Karl Kjarsgaard - Halifax Project at BCMC



## **BUILDING EXPANSION COMMITTEE REPORT –FALL 2020**

As I sit here, gathering my thoughts for this report, I cannot believe the changes that have happened in the past six months or so across the whole world. Covid-19 has changed the way we operate the museum, resulting in reduced visitor numbers, no major events, and donations to our expansion project have all but dried up.

However, we are not giving up our quest to build the new 175' X 140' hangar, to house the Lancaster and Halifax bombers. We have been meeting with several different building contractors and showing our expansion video to Town Council and other interested parties, including provincial and federal officials.

On July 25, the Alberta Minister of Culture, Leela Aheer, toured the museum and got to 'ride' in the Lanc during an engine run. She was very impressed with our operation, but so far nothing has transpired funding wise.

Again, we have adopted the motto of Bomber Command "Press on Regardless". If you can help, even with a small donation, it would be much appreciated.

-Dan Fox (Chairperson)



(l-r) Mayor Jennifer Handley, Minister Aheer, Museum Director Ian McCaughtrie, MLA Roger Reid, Pilot Brian Taylor, Museum Vice-President Dan Fox

## **LANCASTER WING JACKS UPDATE**

In order to lift our Lancaster bomber to service or replace wheels and tires, we first have to get her off the ground -no easy task considering her weight. Luckily, we have a pair of aircraft wing jacks, and after some time and effort, they are now in working order. They may be 'vintage' and not very pretty at the moment, but with the help of Precision Hydraulics in Calgary, we were able to find replacement parts, and everything moves as it should!

The next step will be to build lifting hardware to attach to the wings, and we will have to modify the height of the jacks, but nothing we can't overcome.



## **FROM THE MUSEUM'S NEWSLETTER OF THIRTY YEARS AGO**

*-Our museum's Fall 1990 newsletter featured three articles related to the Dedication of Nanton's Lancaster to S/L Ian Bazalgette VC DFC. One describes the outdoor ceremony when the 'F2-T' markings were unveiled and a second tells of the spectacular flypast salutes. The following describes the evening banquet.*

### **Bazalgette Dedication Banquet**

All 350 banquet tickets were sold prior to July 27, 1990. After a cocktail hour, President Dan Fox began the indoor ceremony by asking for the lights to be switched off. The distant droning of Merlin engines filled the Nanton Community Centre and the closed stage curtains gradually opened. The Merlins' roar filled the room as two spotlights illuminated a 1/8th scale Lancaster. This was to set the tone for the rest of the evening, as all those assembled stood in tribute to the Lanc!

Some guests who spoke during the evening were: Larry Melling, DFC (flew F2-T alternatively with "Baz"), "Hamish" Mahaddie, DSO, DFC, AFC, (organizer of the Pathfinder Squadrons), Ethel Broderick (Ian Bazalgette's sister), George Turner and "Chuck" Godfrey (Bazalgette's flight engineer and wireless operator).

One long-time resident of Nanton summed it up with, "It was the best event I've ever attended in my 65 years in the Nanton community!"



## W/C TIMMERMAN AND THE 408 SQUADRON CREST

The daughter of W/C Nelles Timmerman recently contacted the museum and told us the story of how her father had created the 408 Squadron crest –the first badge for any RCAF Squadron overseas. It was June 1941 and 408, the second RCAF Bomber Squadrons to be formed, was operating sixteen Handley-Page Hampden Bombers from the grass airfield at RAF Lindholme. W/C Timmerman had joined the RAF in 1936 and was 408's first commanding officer.

W/C Timmerman recalled that shortly after his arrival at 408 Squadron, Handley-Page Ltd donated £50 to each Hampden squadron, stating that C/O's were free to use the money as they saw fit.

Timmerman decided to seek approval to create a squadron crest, "My first choice for the centre of the badge was an autumn-coloured, red maple leaf, but for reasons having to do with rigid rules of heraldry, it was rejected. The Canada Goose, which I thought was also native to our country, was quickly approved. As for the squadron motto –*For Freedom*, it was an answer to a simple question, 'Why are we here?'"

The museum has had an on-going connection to 408 Squadron for almost 35 years. Based at CFB Edmonton, the squadron currently operates Griffon Helicopters and often attends museum special events..



## SPITFIRE PROJECT REPORT

The world situation has not made it any easier to locate and acquire pieces needed to help progress the project but we must endure. One very exciting piece that we did manage to find was a 4 bladed Rotol propeller hub. This hub reportedly was on a Seafire XV that was damaged nearby and that there were actually two of them. The damaged aircraft was disassembled and most of the pieces had been kept to repair and preserve the second aircraft. However, this hub survived all these years amongst other things and was hiding in plain sight when our team stumbled upon it and rescued it back to our repair shop. There is a lot of rust to contend with and it took us 3 shop nights just to remove one sleeve nut on the hub so we don't damage it or anything else on it. It will be a long process to take it apart and then clean and bring it back to life but that's half the fun.

We have also had a new recruit join the team by the name of Lewis Clarke and this young man has been making 3D printing of blocks needed to put our frame jigs together to start putting the frames together. This too is a very precise process with angles measured and changing as small as one degree so precision is everything and with Lewis help, we will get it right.

Our Merlin 68 is currently in a holding pattern until we can put it into a rotisserie to take it apart and make a list of pieces needed to rebuild this beautiful engine. The Merlin 224 for the Lancaster is currently in the shop in its rebuild.

We very much appreciate the support and help from our followers which I will now refer to as our "Ground Crew".

The continuation of the project is extremely important and we ask for your support in any way you can. The young men that flew these Kites did it to protect others and for our freedoms from tyranny. We need to see this to completion to keep their memories alive and educate future generations.

-Rick Featherstone -Spitfire Crew



## **A LETTER FROM SGT. HUGHES**

**-How Sgt Wilfred Sweeney met his death in the North Sea when returning from a raid over Germany is graphically told by a member of the Lancaster crew in which he was the rear gunner. The letter was written by Sgt D.C. Hughes to his mother and forwarded by her to Mr. and Mrs. F. Sweeney, knowing that they would be interested in their son's fate.**

Well mother I'll tell you something that I was going to keep from you, but on second thought, you'll find out sooner or later, and I'd rather I told you than someone else. You know how people exaggerate on a subject. On the 22nd of November we were on an operation (censored). The trip went easy until we got to the target. The flack wasn't too bad, but our trouble started (censored) bad weather conditions we couldn't maintain altitude. We came from (censored) down to (censored). The skipper (pilot) George asked us whether we wanted to throw our equipment and guns to lighten the aircraft, thus gain back our altitude or keep everything and go down to zero altitude and fly it out, using our luck. We all agreed to go down and fly it out. Down we went to (censored) and all went well until we got (censored) there the ground defence opened up at us and gave us a terrible raking – it was here that Wilf caught a packet, he was wounded in the right leg with flack – the skipper told him to leave his guns in the rear turret and get first aid for his leg – but he wouldn't, he said he'd stick by his guns. It seemed a lifetime before we got out of the flack and searchlight. All was quiet again, although we all knew we'd never make England, we didn't have enough petrol. We were in hope that we'd make the North Sea and crash land in the sea. It wasn't until we were over the Zuyderzee 'Sea that trouble caught up with us. A fighter attacked us at 400 yards. Wilt opened fire first and the fighter burst in flames and crashed into the sea. About this time we were over Holland and their defenses opened up, boy I thought hell had opened up instead. By this time we were so low that the skipper and the bomb aimer had to pull up for fear of hitting houses. The gunners took advantage of this low altitude and fired at searchlights and flack batteries. Between the two gunners they put over twenty-five lights and batteries out of action. The aircraft was torn with holes. But none of us were hit except Wilt, our rear gunner, and he went on firing. We finally got out over the North Sea. Then the skipper told us to take up crash stations and prepare for ditching. Everyone went about his job as though it were only practice. I told the skipper how many minutes petrol we had left and Jock (wireless op.) had given base the spot in which we were going to ditch. Once in our crash position we sat and waited, the skipper sang out the altitude over the inter-corn 100 ft-75ft—50 ft— hold tight—here. We hit the water once lightly, then the second time I thought the world had come to an end. God! what a crash! Then a split

second after the crash and there was a wall of water down on us. Out of my escape hatch goes the rear gunner, mid-upper gunner, and navigator, then myself. Well everything got a bit mixed. I was last out, but Ronny (mid-upper) went before me and he had to get stuck in the hatch. So there I was standing up to my knees in water, needless to say I was good and worried. But he finally got loose, when I got out there was only Johnny and Jack hanging on to the aircraft. Then I saw Jack slip off in the water. I thought he was a gonner, and Johnny was a bit off his head, he was hunting for the big dinghy but in the wrong wing. You see the big dinghy had already gone without us, because of heavy seas. So I went back into the aircraft and got the emergency dinghies, one of which I gave to Johnny and I inflated one for myself. Just then a big wave came and washed me into the sea. I was soaked to the skin, but was able to clamber into my little dinghy. I was about ten yards away from the aircraft, when she put her nose down and slid into the briny deep. I spent about an hour and a half by myself, all the time blowing like hell on my little whistle, hoping someone would hear me. Finally the fellows in the big dinghy heard me and paddled toward me. I spent the remainder of the time with them until we were picked up by an R.A.F. rescue launch. We were first sighted by Hudsons who radioed for the launch. In all we spent fourteen hours on the water, wet through and through. The boys on the launch rubbed us down good and hard and put us to bed. They are the ones we thank for not suffering from exposure. They did a grand job. Once ashore we were rushed off to hospital. I was the only survivor to come out of it without any ill effects, though four got bad coughs. Yes, we lost two of the crew, George the skipper, and Wilf the rear gunner. George was killed on impact when we hit the sea or otherwise drowned before he had a chance to get out. Wilf got out alright, but was drowned trying to get to the dinghy. As yet I still can't seem to realize them dead. They had so much to live for, both were engaged to be married. I'm beginning to think only the good die young, so I'm going to be a real devil. When we get out of hospital and back to camp they (the RAF) sent us off on leave. They gave us ten days' leave, then we went back, stayed three days, and again sent us off on ten days, which I am on now. We go back this Monday and are hoping to get a new skipper and gunner and get back to flying, and pay Jerry back in full for Wilf and George.

## ADVANCING OUR ON-LINE ARCHIVES

Our volunteers continue to make great progress reformatting and organizing the museum's archival material for permanent storage in our digital and on-line archives. This involves converting audio and video tape material to computer files and the sorting of thousands of pages of RCAF archival records into categories and chronological order so that they may be easily accessed and viewed on-line.

### 6 GROUP HEADQUARTERS DOCUMENTS

Almost ten thousand pages have been organized. Daily Reports are presented chronologically as are Summaries of Operational and Training Activities. Other sections include reports related to navigation, bombing, gunnery, enemy encounters, and communications.

### 6 GROUP STATION DOCUMENTS

Researcher Bill Cameron's detailed summaries and maps related to the eleven stations are now available. Our volunteers have organized all the station's daily diaries some of which are over 800 pages

### MARK X LANCASTER INFORMATION

Detailed records related to the Mk X (Canadian-built)

Lancasters was accumulated by museum volunteer Tom Palmer during the 1990's. We have recently 're-discovered' this collection and it is now available. This includes:

- a list of all the Mk X Lancasters that were lost in action organized by squadron and serial no.
- a list of all the Mk X Lancasters that returned to Canada, organized by the date of their Atlantic crossing. The information includes the aircraft's squadron, fuselage code, nose art name, and what became of each –assigned to post war RCAF units, struck-off-strength, or otherwise disposed of.
- a list of post-war, Canada-based RCAF squadrons and other units that were equipped with Mk X's, including a list of the serial numbers and fuselage codes of the aircraft.

### VIDEO ARCHIVES

A wonderful series of interviews recorded at the 405 Squadron 1999 Reunion were recently 'rediscovered', transferred from DVD to computer files and placed into our on-line storage. These include interviews with ground crew, WAAFs, pilots and flight engineers, caterpillar club members, and C/O Reg Lane.

#### Haste Makes Waste.

Recently an Air Bomber with only five minutes available, removed the safety-pin from the 2000 lb. bomb, made a bomb panel check and got off. He was so hurried that he did not notice that the indicator light did not go on, even though he went through all the motions.

As a result, since no check was made on crossing the English Coast, it was not until he reached the target that he found the bomb-panel fuses were missing, and he was forced to drop the 2000 lb. bomb manually. Of course the incendiaries were all brought back.

It should be remembered that no matter how little time there is available, the bomb-panel must be carefully checked. Any captain who is willing to take off without knowing whether or not he will be able to drop his bombs is a menace to the war effort. Had the bomb-panel check been carried out slowly and deliberately, a complete bomb-load would have reached the target and a crew would have carried out its duty. Always remember; the bombs come first. Without the bombs the aircraft is useless. All Squadron Bombing Leaders are reminded that they are responsible for the way in which crews carry out their bombing checks, and are to bring this story to the attention of all Air Bombers in the Squadrons. The expression "Haste makes Waste" was never more appropriate.

A reprimand from 6 Group Headquarters that was distributed to the Squadron Bombing Leaders

# [ANSON RESTORATION REPORT](#)

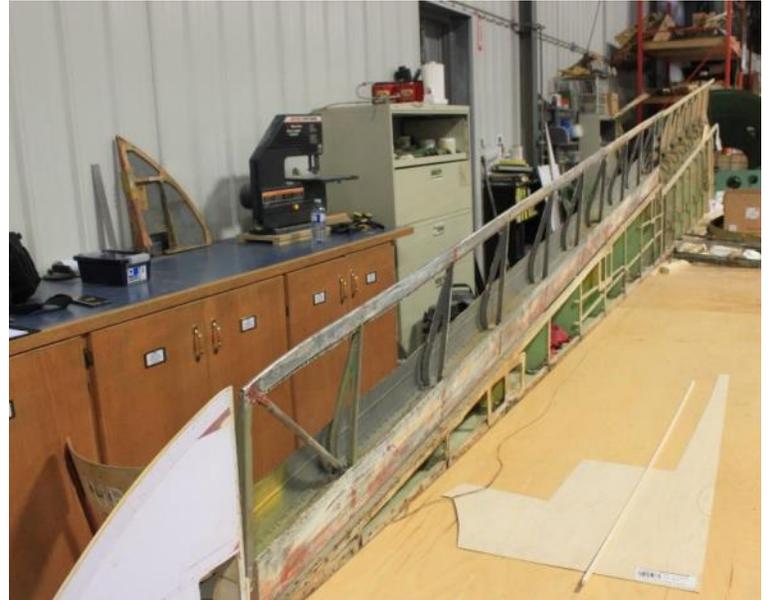
## TRAILING EDGE UPDATE

Well, it has been quite a year. The first part of the year with COVID-19 saw us isolated with no restoration happening on the trailing edge in the spring and most of the summer. Once restrictions were lifted the wing tip was completed and temporarily put in place. There were some challenges with the fabrication of the rib associated with fastening the tip to the main part of the trailing edge. The rib is actually split which I believed allowed the trailing edge to be made separate from the tip with the provision of installing the aileron and tip later in the manufacturing process. Now the wingtip is complete and ready to be glued in place.

To ensure the wingtip is aligned with the trailing edge we started the process of installing the aileron in place as a reference point to properly glue the wingtip in place. Sounds simple right. Not so-we were meet with more challenges.

Attaching the aileron to the trailing edge requires three aileron horns attached to rib #11, #14, and #17 and three associated bearing housing attached to the aileron. This involves a few unique parts as we found out. As we started our assembly process, we find out that there are aileron horns for the port side and aileron horns for the starboard side. The reason being is the ailerons are angled to the trailing edge to accommodate attachment to the bearing housing on the ailerons. This was an “ohh of course” moment. So, we then identified the port side aileron horns and the starboard aileron horns and sorted them accordingly. Another “ohh moment” was that the aileron horn that attaches to rib # 14 is different than the aileron which attaches to rib # 11 and #17. At this time, we are not sure way aileron horn #14 is different than #11 and #17.

Now for the bearing housing that is bolted to the aileron. We were fortunate to salvage bearing housings from a damaged aileron we found. Other



**Aileron and wing tip shown in the foreground. Preparing wing tip for alignment and installation.**

than the usual challenge of removing rusty parts, we discovered the bolt heads were a British Standard and the threads are SAE. This I have never run across before. It could be a standard that I am not aware of.

And now the actual bearings. The bearings seated in the bearing housing are rusted and beyond restoring. At this point, we are in the process of sourcing bolts and bearings. The actual bearings are self-centering which must accommodate any slight miss alignment between the aileron and the trailing edge. We are hoping we source these bearings which will fit snugly into the bearing housing.

So, this is an update of the discoveries we have had with restoring the trailing edge. We will follow up with our progress in the coming weeks.

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