

# BOMBER COMMAND MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021



Bomber Command Museum of Canada  
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[www.bombercommandmuseum.ca](http://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca)

Volume 35 Issue 1

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Spring is upon us, blue skies are returning but sadly our doors are still closed. We eagerly watch the news but continue to see the hospitalization and ICU numbers climb.

Perhaps there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon as news was sent out to event organizers that possibly by mid-summer, outdoor events will once again be possible. I am sure you can see, that without our doors open and our many wonderful visitors filling the museum, things are very quiet around here indeed. This unfortunately means that our finances are very quiet as well.

To help keep the museum alive in the minds of the public our team has been very busy on all of our social media platforms bringing you as much in the way of museum news as possible. From the exploits of the Halifax and Halifax restoration project, to Snippets from our archives, news from the museum rings out. Several new books have been penned and now are available online in our gift shop. Several new projects underway include a virtual interactive online tour of the museum and the presentation of a recent 3D scan of the

Lancaster using a LADAR scanner. Yes the museum is going high Tech!

Much work has been put forth, during this period of isolation, to continue to bring you the stories of Canadians in Bomber Command. It is with these stories of Canadians in mind, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice, that I now turn to you seeking assistance. With our doors closed and visitations reduced to virtually zero our coffers continue to be drained. The museum survives only on the support of folks like you, without your continued support the museum's existence itself is threatened. It would be very sad indeed if when the restrictions are lifted, your museum was not able to re-open its doors.

Even the smallest donation will go along way in ensuring that our doors open again and that the Symphony of the Merlins and the Roar of the Hercules once again rings out through the town of Nanton. Please dig deep, what ever you can spare will be greatly appreciated, whether it be \$50.00, \$100.00 or even \$500.00.

Rob Pedersen, President

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## RCMP PHOTO SHOOT

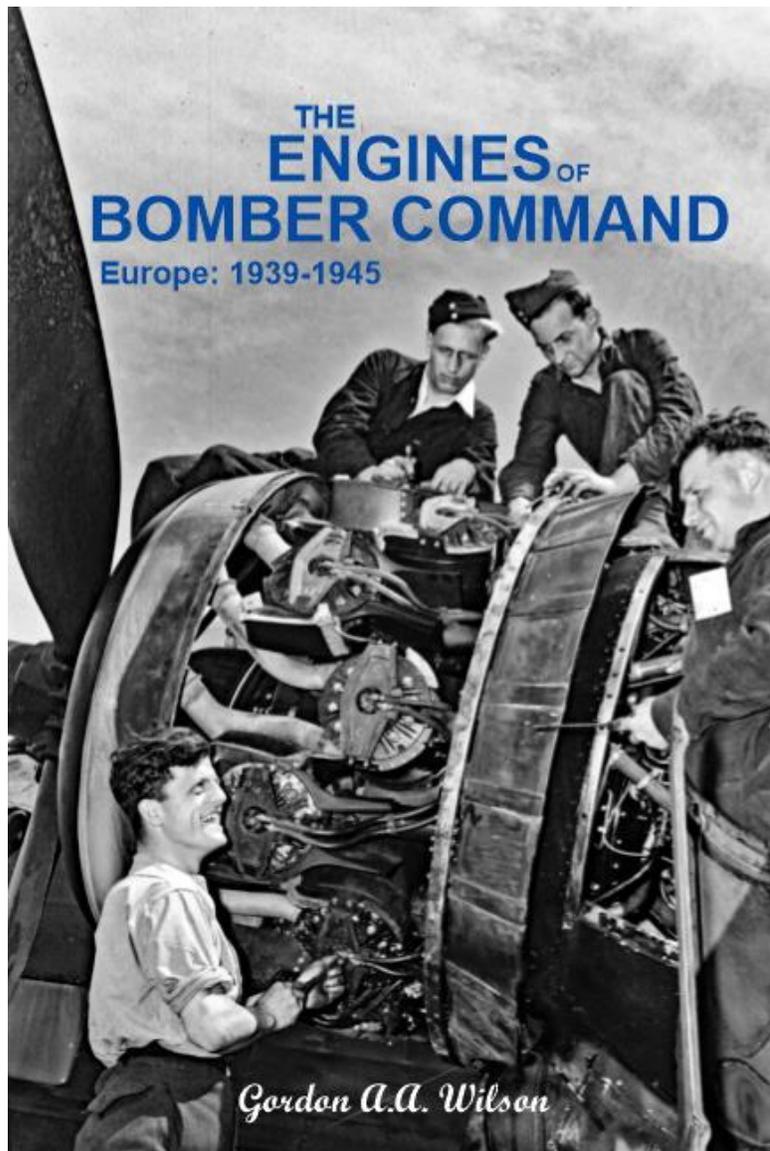
On March 30, 2021, Constable Ken Jones from the local RCMP detachment, requested permission to do a photo shoot in front of the Lanc. The reason was that their office lady, Carmin, is leaving and her dog, Dexter, has been a big part of the detachment. This was done as a going away gift showing Dexter with the local members.



## **'THE ENGINES OF BOMBER COMMAND' by Gordon Wilson**

*-As a Canadian Armed Forces pilot, Gordon Wilson flew CF-100's with 414 Squadron for six years prior to a twenty-six year career with Pacific Western and Canadian Airlines and seven years operating Safeflight Consulting. During retirement, Gordon has written, 'NORAD and the Soviet Nuclear Threat', 'Lancaster Manual', 'The Lancaster', and 'The Merlin'. 'Bomber Command –The Men, Machines, and Missions' will be released in the fall of 2021.*

*A museum volunteer and supporter, Gordon wrote and donated the manuscript for, 'The Engines of Bomber Command', which the museum has recently published.*



[6"x9"; 204 pages - Available at [the museum's on-line store](#)]

The Bomber Command Museum of Canada works towards acquiring and restoring aircraft that run and are taxiable, bringing to life the history that we present. In particular, the museum is unique in that we operate and display running examples of the two significant engines that powered the aircraft of Bomber Command.

Gordon's book fits right in with our collection and the museum's focus.

The engines were the very heart of the aeroplanes of Bomber Command. The crew who started them, and flew them, the men and women who maintained them, and the aeroplanes that carried them to the enemy relied upon these powerful wartime piston engines that had been engineered to their peak of performance.

The fuselage was the body to carry the crew and armaments, but it was the engines that turned the body of the bomber aeroplane into a living, breathing instrument of war.

'The Engines of Bomber Command' introduces the reader to the development of these engines and then focuses on the Rolls-Royce Merlin and the Bristol Hercules -the engines that powered the Wellingtons, Stirlings, Halifaxes, Lancasters, and Mosquitoes.

The final chapter describes the restoration and running of the Merlins and Hercules that may be seen and heard at the Bomber Command Museum of Canada.

'The Engines of Bomber Command' is the sixteenth book published by the museum, all of which pertain directly to the museum's mandate to honour those who served with Bomber Command and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

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## **FILMING FOR THE HISTORY SHOW**

On March 31, 2021, Rob Lennard and his Director of Production, Carmen, with the Director of History Show, came to the museum to film some two minute segments related to aircraft of WWII. Richard de Boer was invited to host the segments involving the Mosquito and the Blenheim. Dan Fox was asked to do short presentations on the Ian Bazalgette Memorial Lancaster and the Dam's Raid of 1943. Our museum will be recognized and given credit on the upcoming show, so it was a worthwhile endeavour.

## 426 SQUADRON RCAF HALIFAX LW682

*-The museum's role to incorporate the aircraft's legacy into RCAF Flying Wings*

During 2017, the Bomber Command Museum of Canada presented Lt. Gen. Mike Hood, commander of the RCAF, with eight aluminum ingots formed from the skin of Halifax LW682. The plan was to incorporate this special, historic material into the wings worn by Royal Canadian Air Force personnel with flying qualifications.

The story of this very special aluminum began in 1944 when F/O Wilbur Bentz's 426 Squadron RCAF Halifax was shot down, forgotten for fifty years, and then recovered in 1997. The aluminum from the aircraft was acquired by the Bomber Command Museum of Canada. In 2012 much of the aluminum became the ceiling of the Bomber Command Memorial in London. It has now been integrated into the wings worn by RCAF personnel with flying qualifications.

P/O Wilbur 'Wib' Bentz was born in North Bend, B.C. and received his wings at Brantford, Ontario in April 1943. On the evening of 12 May 1944, P/O Bentz piloted 426 Squadron RCAF Halifax LW682 (OW-M) on a raid to Leuven, Belgium. The aircraft was attacked by a Messerschmitt Bf-110 flown by Luftwaffe ace, Martin Drewes. It crashed into a marsh and exploded, killing all eight aboard. Because of the boggy ground, very little from the aircraft could be recovered and only five bodies were located. Within 24 hours the remains of the aircraft's other crewmembers sank into the marsh together with Halifax LW682.

After coming across his uncle's letters, P/O Bentz's nephew, Jay Hammond, visited the site and realized that his uncle's remains were right below his feet. Under the sponsorship of 426 Squadron Association, Canada's Halifax 57 Rescue Association recovered Halifax LW682 with the assistance of the Belgian Aviation History Association. The team also recovered the remains of the three Canadians still in the aircraft, P/O Bentz, Sgt. J.W. Summerhayes, and Sgt. F. Roach. Their families attended the burial of the airmen who were interred next to their five crewmates.

The recovered aircraft parts were transported to Canada and some were used in the restoration of Halifax NA337 now on display at Trenton, Ontario. The unused aluminum was melted and formed into ingots. The ingots were acquired by the Bomber Command Museum of Canada and placed in storage to be used for memorial purposes.



**New RCAF Wings in 2021**



**Jay Hammond in 1997  
with LW682 wreckage**



**Lt. Gen. Mike Hood in  
2017 with an ingot**



**Inserting Halifax Aluminum into  
an RCAF Pilot's Wings**

# 'THE CANADIAN BOMBER COMMAND SQUADRONS'

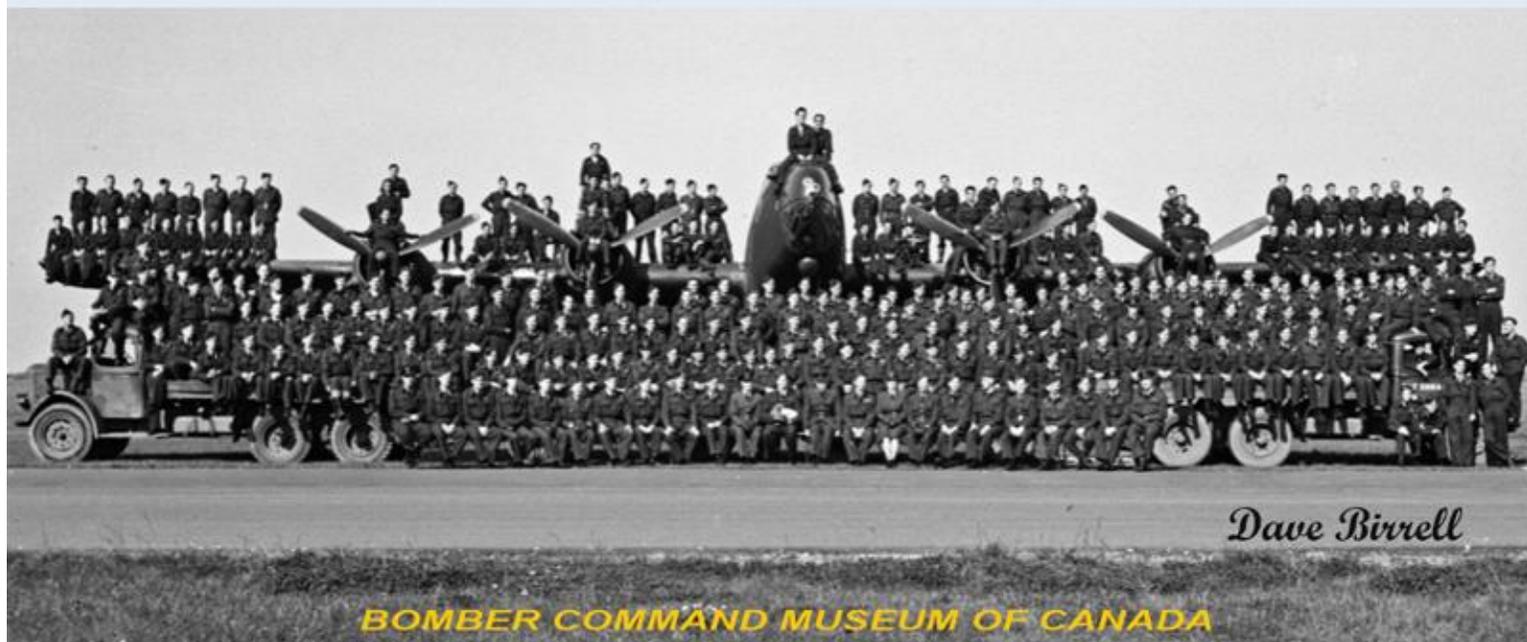
*- Their Story in Their Words -*

*-Making extensive use of the museum's substantial archives collection that includes RCAF documents, this book focuses on the Canadian Squadrons -from the formation of 405 Squadron during April 1941, the formation of 6 Group and its operations, 405 Squadron's Pathfinder operations, the end of the war, and finally the return to Canada of seven Squadrons with their Lancaster aircraft during June 1945. The book has been published by the museum.*



# THE CANADIAN BOMBER COMMAND SQUADRONS

*-Their Story in Their Words-*



**BOMBER COMMAND MUSEUM OF CANADA**

[8.5"x11"; 164 pages - Available at [the museum's on-line store](#)]

The Canadian contribution to the massive effort that was Bomber Command during the Second World War was huge. 10,400 Canadians were killed -almost one quarter of Canada's wartime dead.

Although the majority of the Canadians who served with Bomber Command did so with Royal Air Force Squadrons, by war's end there were fourteen fully operational RCAF Squadrons capable of sending over three hundred aircraft to enemy targets.

Through archival photos and excerpts from wartime documents, this book tells the story of the young Canadians who served with the Canadian Bomber Squadrons -their efforts during the early years and how they evolved as the war progressed, the technological changes, and the tactical and strategic evolution that contributed to the ultimate victory.

Also included are stories of individual heroics and sacrifices as recorded by the airmen themselves at their debriefings.

## 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.

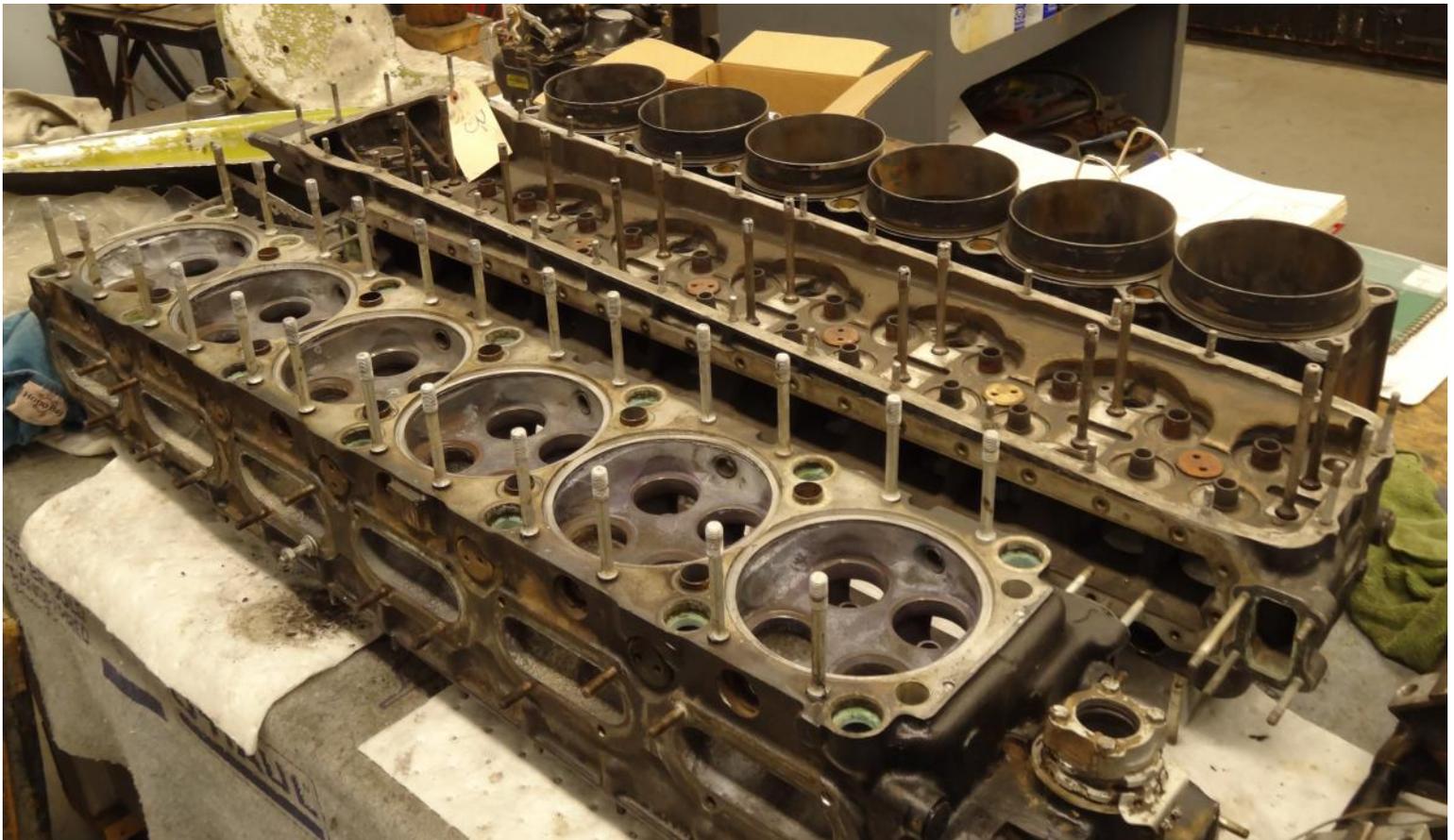
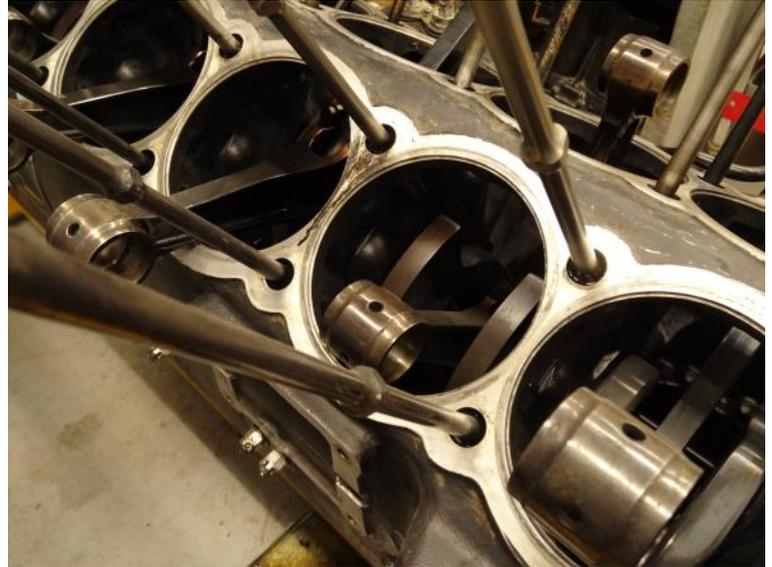
Contact: [visitorinfo@bombercommandmuseum.ca](mailto:visitorinfo@bombercommandmuseum.ca) or 403-646-2270

## THE FIFTH MERLIN

*-From the very beginnings of the museum, the plan always was to restore Lancaster FM159 to be a runnable, taxiable aircraft. However, active work to restore the first Merlin did not begin until 2001. The inner starboard engine first ran in 2005, the starboard outer in 2008, the port inner in 2012, and finally the port outer in 2013. With a small group of volunteers, working for a few hours on Tuesday evenings, it took a while.*

*Now our Merlin crew is working on a fifth Merlin in order to have it available as a spare and, as well, to have it mounted on a trailer for demonstration runs at special events and at airshows.*

*We will then be able to display and run, side-by-side, the Rolls-Royce Merlin and the Bristol Hercules –the two engines that powered Bomber Command.*



The Fifth Merlin awaiting re-assembly in the museum's engine shop

## **THE HALIFAX PROJECT**

THE aircraft in the 97 years of the RCAF, that flew in RAF Bomber Command, in which OVER half – more than 50% - of the casualties of 10,500+ Canadian airmen were lost, was the Halifax heavy bomber. We at BCMC and H57RC must save a Halifax for Nanton!

To that honourable end, the Halifax bomber recovery and restoration is STILL moving ahead while the world is handcuffed by Covid! Please read all about our progress at our special Halifax website, where I have done 3 UPDATES (with many photos and videos) since our last BCMC newsletter. Go to “Fundrazr 417498” on a Google search, or try clicking on this link: [https://fundrazr.com/Halifax57?ref=ab\\_A6u530A0ayRA6u530A0ayR](https://fundrazr.com/Halifax57?ref=ab_A6u530A0ayRA6u530A0ayR)

Our underwater Sweden salvage of RCAF Halifax bomber HR871 will continue as scheduled this summer in MAY and AUGUST. All is in readiness for this historic recovery!

Also, we have started on the Halifax Propeller hubs and will be reporting on the 4 HUBS as their rebuild and assembly progresses, because we have found a supplier of Halifax propeller hub parts! See our 1<sup>st</sup> photo of all the hubs and innards of hubs we have collected so far. This has got to be the world’s largest collection of Halifax prop hubs! Do NOT ask me about Halifax propeller blades YET, that is another story!

To review, the Hercules engine #3 rebuild, the refurbishment with removal and replacement of rusty heads, cylinders, and sleeves is NOW complete for all you Bristol Hercules fans! Our patient - engine #3, has now got a clean bill of health to run and “play” again. See the 2<sup>nd</sup> photo of the re-assembled #3 Hercules with 14 new cylinder heads in front, for each cylinder, only 252 head bolts to install and torque down!

Remember, Hercules #1 engine for our Halifax bomber is running well, on our airshow display trailer, with Hercules engine #2 – refurbished and all set to run, on full display in the main hangar. Now with #3 Hercules doctored and refurbished – look ma, no rust – we will have #3 engine buttoned up early this summer. Then on to Hercules #4 rebuild and assembly later on in 2021 -2022!

The main core of our Halifax bomber, the wing center-section 29 feet X 8 feet, has been rebuilt and is being assembled in Ottawa by Knox Tech. See the 3<sup>rd</sup> photo of the wing being riveted back together by Scott and his team, soon to be trucked out to Nanton later in 2021 to be re-united with our Hercules engines. You can see the latest video and photos here, just go to “REBUILDSHOP” on Facebook or click on this LINK: <https://www.facebook.com/rebuildshopKT/>

Now, if you think all this did NOT cost any money to do, remember the minimum cost of all this progress is about, on average \$2,800/ month just in hard costs for parts and materials to keep going, truly a champagne idea --- on a beer budget!

Will you help by a DONATION to keep the Halifax Project going!?? We would love to have your donation in any form – any amount, as this will keep us going to save a Halifax for BCMC and Nanton.

So exciting times ahead on the world stage and home front as we pay the ultimate tribute to our bomber boys, saving and restoring a Halifax bomber in tribute to their honour, excellence, and sacrifice. WE LEAVE NO HALIFAX BEHIND.

Cheers, Karl Kjarsgaard – Curator – BCMC and Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada) email: 57rescuecanada@rogers.com



# CANADA'S BOMBER COMMAND VIRTUAL MEMORIAL

*-Thanks to our museum's volunteers, a complete and thorough review and update of our 'Virtual Memorial' list is now 'live'. The names of over two hundred airmen who had previously 'fallen through the cracks of history' have been added and numerous corrections to existing names and related information have been made. With some new features incorporated, this represents our museum's 'master list' of Canada's Bomber Command Losses.*

*Hopefully in the near future, we will be adding 216 names to Canada's Bomber Command Memorial Wall.*

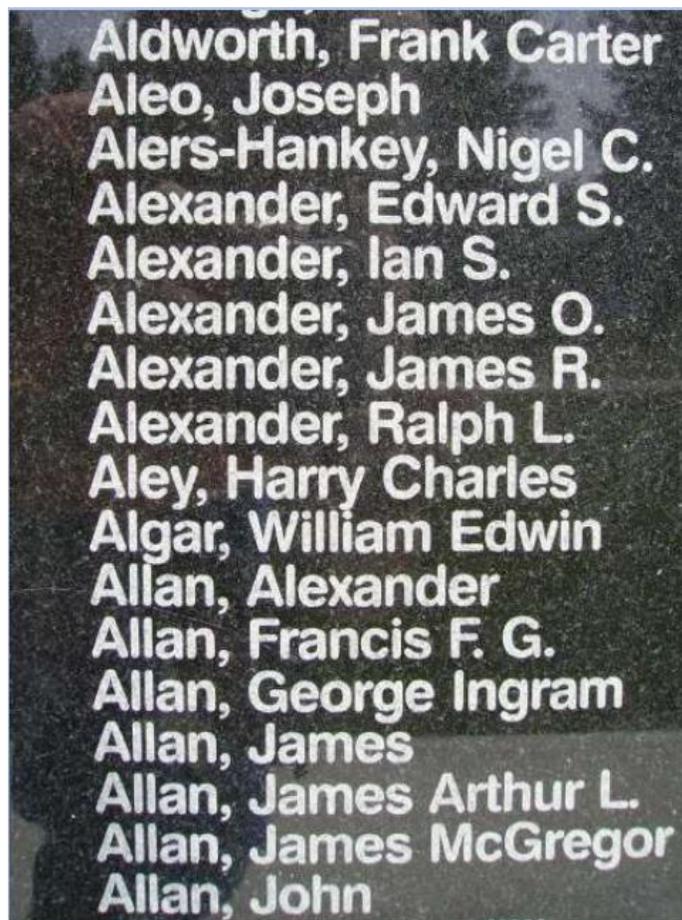
## Aircrew Losses

- Bomber Command Losses
- Canada's Bomber Command Memorial Wall
- View Individual Names on Memorial Wall
- [Canada's Bomber Command Virtual Memorial](#)  
Searchable Database of 10,872 Names
- IBCB Bomber Command Losses Database
- RCAF Overseas Casualties
- RCAF Casualties in RCAF Bomber Squadrons
- RCAF Casualties in Canada
- Airmen Killed, Wounded, POW, Evaded by Unit
- Canadian Airmen Lost by Hometown
- Canadian Airmen Lost by Date
- Commonwealth Airmen Lost in Canada by Date
- Americans Killed Serving in Bomber Command
- The Nanton Cenotaph
- Nanton's WWII Air Force Losses

The above list includes the Virtual Memorial as well as various lists and other information regarding Canada's Aircrew Losses.

It may be accessed at:

[www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/aircrew-losses/](http://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/aircrew-losses/)



Note the link to 'View Individual Names on Memorial Wall' which provides access to 680 photos such as the above, enabling visitors to our on-line archives to see individual names.



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

## **-Soooo, Did We Get Anything Done This Past Quarter?**

Just because the museum has been closed since early December doesn't mean that we quit working. Home projects have been our way of continuing to make progress on the Mosquito restoration.

Gary T. and Dick S. both have a set of flaps at home and have been de-skinning them, repairing the inside ribs and re-skinning them. There, that one sentence covers about 140 hours of work.

Gary has also done a great job on rebuilding both wingtips.

Andy W. has some of the fuselage mechanical components on the go such as the elevator bob weights and throttle bell cranks and fuel valves.

Jack and Colette have been busy with working on the pilot's seat. Though it looks stock, Spartan replaced the armour plated back rest with plywood and replaced an arm rest with one that they made themselves.

Restoration aside, we are constantly engaged with members and with people who have projects on the go related to our airplanes. In March we did a Zoom version of our Annual General Meeting with about 30 members in attendance. A PowerPoint of our work over the past couple of years is available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIOoTWCuW4k>

At the meeting we also welcomed new board member Michael Harrison, a long time 'hands on' volunteer.

Author Gordon Wilson asked if we could supply any photos for his new book on the Engines of Bomber Command. The book was just released at the beginning of April and we were pleased to see that he used a number of our photos.

We had a request from the Museum Program Coordinator of the EAA who was putting together a presentation on the P-38 displayed at their museum in Oshkosh, WI. Turns out their bird is a former Spartan Air Services photo mapping airplane and he was looking for photos and info. We were happy to oblige.

We've also been busy working with Alberta's History Wrangler, Rob Lennard who wanted to include some two minute vignettes on historic military airplanes in his latest television program. We met with Rob first at the Hangar Flight Museum to cover the Hurricane and then down at the Bomber Command in late March to do a few pieces, along with Dan Fox and Karl Kjarsgaard, on the Mosquito, the Lanc, the Boly and other airplanes.

And that's what we've been doing in the first quarter of 2021.



## **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.

If you recall in our previous story on our wing jacks, we had issues making them go up as they were supposed to. We were able to locate rebuild parts for the pump mechanisms and along with a lot of cleaning and some fresh oil, success – they worked!

Unfortunately, we weren't home free yet. When testing the lifting height, we had leaks. It was apparent that 20 plus years of non-use and sitting outside in the weather didn't do the internals any good. Back to Precision Hydraulics!

With some expert advice, encouragement, and assurances that we should be able to obtain more parts, we proceeded to do some more disassembly. Not being a hydraulic repair shop, it took a bit of thinking and ingenuity. With the aid of our forklift, scissor lift and creating some special tools, we were able to get to the root of the problem. Hard to believe the jacks worked at all!

Next step was cleaning and honing the decades of rust and contaminated oil from the cylinders while we crossed our fingers and waited for the anticipated parts. Our good fortune continued, and after a couple of weeks I received a call, they found new parts, come and get 'em!

Replacing worn out piston cups and seals required tools a bit bigger than what we have on hand at the museum, so with the help of NL Smith and Sons who loaned us the necessary tools, that part of the job went smoothly. After a few hours of re-assembly, we are now hopefully set to do some heavy lifting!

As usual, our volunteers have made all of this happen, and in particular, a big thanks to Dan Fox and Todd Lemieux. There were a couple of days we all went home looking worse for wear and wearing the odour of 25 year old oil and water.

Next step will be manufacturing lifting hardware. If all goes well, we will be ready for the new(er) wheels and tires for our Lanc when they arrive.



**Looking down from a ladder inside a cylinder after piston, shaft, and rusty oil and water removed**



**A piston end showing damaged cup and seals**



**An entire shaft and piston viewed from the top of the shaft**

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## **LANCASTER FM159 HAS BEEN SCANNED**

On March 18, 2021, the museum hosted Peter Boyle, president of Valour Canada, and Pete Dawson, University of Calgary Archaeology Professor, along with a team of students from the Geomatics Department, who performed a 3D scan of our Lancaster. They scanned the exterior and interior of the Lanc, which took most of the day, using a \$100,000 camera. We expect the finished version of the scan in the near future.

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

***-Our museum's Spring 1991 newsletter reported on the completion of the first phase of our museum building.***

### **The Lancaster Bomber Moves to its Home in the New Museum -**

Phase I of the Nanton Lancaster air museum building is a reality! NLS now has a home wherein to display artifacts and the Ian Bazalgette Memorial Lancaster. Soon we will be installing restored turrets, panels, etc.

The building was made possible through the faith and generosity of NLS members, Legions, Aircrew Associations, the Province of Alberta, corporations, town of Nanton and supporters near and far.

Construction did not begin last fall as the society had hoped. It wasn't until April when excavation started and the footings and foundation of the 16,000 sq. ft. museum were put in place.

the general contractor, G & JD Construction, had the backfilling and gravel fill completed by May 6 when the building package arrived.

That day three semi-truckloads of building materials were unloaded and over half the steel frame erected. By May 31 the walls and roof were nearly complete and the annexes framed in.

During the winter months NLS member (also partner in G & JD Construction), John Dozeman, approached many of acquaintances in the construction supply business for contributions to the museum project. Through his efforts such items as 40 cubic metres of concrete, dimensional lumber for framing the annexes, excavation for the foundation, concrete pump work, fill gravel, etc., have been donated. John's company is also donated materials and labour.

Due to the overwhelming support received to date, the museum building shell is much farther along than the executive had projected. One thing should be mentioned. The construction to date is not a finished building. However, we now have a structure that can be worked on in stages as funding becomes available.



**Moving Lancaster FM159 to her new home on May 25, 1991**  
A video taken that day is available from our on-line archives at  
<https://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/media-vault/>

## **BUILDING EXPANSION REPORT**

As covid 19 regulations continue to negatively affect the museum, our fund-raising efforts have slowed considerably. However, our enthusiasm and determination to complete our expansion have not been affected –we will carry on with “knocking on doors” until our four million dollar goal has been realized.

# FROM OUR MUSEUM ARCHIVES -AN Me262 ATTACK

*-Thirty of the Luftwaffe's jet fighters swarmed two hundred Canadian bombers during a daylight attack.*

On 31 March 1945, Bomber Command dispatched 469 aircraft to attack the Blohm & Voss shipyards at Hamburg where new types of U-Boats were being assembled. It was to be a daylight raid.

Two hundred of the bombers were from 6 Group. The end of the war was just over a month away. However, it was still a dangerous time for Bomber Command aircrew.

As the third wave flew over the target in a loose 'gaggle' formation, the 6 Group bombers were swarmed by thirty of the Nazi's new Messerschmitt 262's. Operational in mid-1944, the Me 262 was the world's first jet-powered fighter aircraft. With a maximum speed of 900 km/h (560 mph), it was armed with four 30 mm. cannons and some carried 50 mm rockets.

F/O Don Saunders, a 424 Squadron pilot, was amazed at their speed, "I felt as if we were standing still. The gaggle closed in and we were wing tip to wing tip . . . creating the closest formation of bombers I have ever seen! Each time the jets came the gunners were at work." F/O Saunders saw five bombers shot down.

Eleven bombers, eight Lancasters and three Halifaxes, were lost during the raid, most being shot down by the Luftwaffe's jets. Of the eleven shot down, eight were from 6 Group.



AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	RE
			UP	DOWN		
Lancaster T KB889	F/O Dawson, J.	J4467 P	0628	1205	Target: HAMBURG. Primary. 0904 hrs. 18,100 ft. 029°T. IAS196. 10/10th cloud. Ident. and bombed smoke puffs red. No results seen. Peer attack. T/A 0904 hrs. 18100 ft. ME262 stbd quarter 50 yds. R/G and MU/G fired obtaining strikes over whole A/C which went down out of control. Claim probably destroyed. T/A 0904 hrs. 18100 ft. ME262 stbd. beam. 300 yds closed firing R/G and returned fire. No damage, no claim. T/A 0904 hrs. 18,100 ft. ME262 astern above closed firing. R/G returned fire. No claim. Bomb Load same as "C".	
Lancaster V KB911	F/O Haliburton, G. F/O Rathwell, G. F/O Legaarden, C. F/O English, R. F/S Green, R. SGT English, A. SGT Hanlin, J.	J38360 P J40731 Nav J40524 B/A J43126 WO/AG R276476 MU/AG R216283 R/AG R225289 F/E	0625		Target: HAMBURG. This A/C took off at 0625 hrs. since when nothing has been heard. Bomb Load same as "C".	
Lancaster W KB844	F/L Coghlan, T.	J14087 P	0605	1149	Target: HAMBURG. Primary. 0904 hrs. 18,100 ft. 029°T. IAS190. 10/10th cloud. 8,000 ft. tops. Ident. H28 and red puffs. No detail due to cloud. Gaggle derisively faced fighters as we saw many jet propelled fighters ME 163 and ME262. T/A 0906 hrs. 18100 ft. ME262 attacking Lano. below. MU/AG fired short burst 800-100' yds. No claim. Bomb Load same as "C".	

*A.P. Blackburn*  
(A.P. BLACKBURN) Wing Commander,  
Commanding Officer  
No. 424 Squadron (R.C.A.F.).

## **ADVANCING OUR ON-LINE ARCHIVES**

### ***-The Ray Wall Collection -“A Prairie Boy Remembers”***

Ray Wall was an enthusiastic supporter of the Bomber Command Museum, donating several artifacts during our early years. Following Ray's passing, his family donated the story of his wartime career that he had written, together with a wonderful and carefully preserved collection of several dozens of letters, his logbook, photographs and other material that document his wartime experiences as a 408 Squadron bomb-aimer and Prisoner of War. It is one of the most complete and carefully preserved collections held in our archives.

Recently one of our volunteers has used the story Ray wrote and a selection of his documents and images to create an illustrated article for our archives.

Ray's story is one of seventy-one 'Aircrew Chronicles' available in our on-line archives at:

<https://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/aircrew-chronicles/>.

An excerpt is below:



What a shock and a change of environment. One day flying with the R.C.A.F. and without much concern and somewhat divorced from the war due to the nature of flying. The next day, shot down with our aircraft in flames and crashed, both of our gunners killed in the attack and the remaining five as prisoners in Germany.

Being the only officer on the crew and a Flying Officer by this time, I was separated and taken by the Luftwaffe guards on a train through Hannover to solitary confinement to the Dulag Luft at Frankfurt-On-Main. It was a bit sticky at the railway station at Hannover as the civilians were making threatening sounds and gestures at me as we waited to transfer to another train.

Dulag Luft was a holding place where interrogators tried to weaken your thinking with questioning, hot and cold cells, and constant brilliant lights and a small window high so you could not see out. There was considerable discomfort here with bread, water and weak soup only being a foretaste of things to come for the next months until liberation in May of 1945. From solitary confinement a prisoner would be questioned but as prisoners we had been alerted that all we had to give was our name, rank and number. I certainly had no secrets to divulge anyway and at the end a German officer told me what Squadron I was from and who the commanding officer was, a Wing Commander Jacobs.

After a week in cells I was moved to another holding area of the same camp and soon a group of us were loaded into French railcars for a journey to a permanent prison camp. The boxcars were labelled "eight horses or forty men" and they went beyond that capacity for us as we could not all lie down at once and so had to take turns. The three day trip to Eastern Germany was very unpleasant. Almost no food and few stops. Water, if you wanted it was from the boiler of the steam engine on the train.

Our destination, Stalag Luft III at Sagan was located about 110 Kms south-east of Berlin and nearly at the Polish-Czechoslovakian border. Even

## **THE FEW –by Jack Meadows**

***-The complete transcript of Winston Churchill's famous quotation –He wasn't just referring to the fighter pilots.***

Most of us who heard at the time of Churchill's famous pronouncement about "The Few" did so via radio or newspapers. We were suitably moved and then got on with the job (as an RAF Flying Instructor at the time, I have no personal axe to grind here). Only recently did I come upon a full transcript of what he actually said in the The House on August 20, 1940. It was an eye-opener.

***"The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of world war by their prowess and by their devotion.***



***“Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few. All hearts go out to the fighter pilots whose brilliant actions we see with our own eyes day after day, but we must never forget that all the time, night after night, month after month, our bomber squadrons travel far into Germany, find their targets, often under the heaviest fire, often with serious loss, with deliberate, careful discrimination, and inflict shattering blows upon the whole of the technical and war-making structure of the Nazi power. On no part of the Royal Air Force does the weight of the war fall more heavily than on the daylight bombers who will play an invaluable part in the case of invasion, and whose unflinching zeal, it has been necessary in the meantime on numerous occasions to restrain.”***

It must have been the media -the fighter boys were too busy and anyway more generous- which quickly pre-empted the tribute for that more visible and glamorous section of the RAF which ever since has basked in glory that was rightly its but not its alone. For, as Churchill said, the bomber boys were doing their own bit just as nobly, if less spectacularly.

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### **KEEPING CURRENT . . .**

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