

BOMBER COMMAND MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

Volume 35 Issue 2



Bomber Command Museum of Canada
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www.bombercommandmuseum.ca

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the snow retreats and summer approaches, your museum readies itself for the 2022 tourist season. One major accomplishment in this preparation is a modification to the Lancaster. It is a testimony to the power of volunteers. The old tires on the Lanc were showing their age and we were at risk of blowing out one while moving it around. Our team of dedicated volunteers took the task upon themselves to change out the tires. Over many months a plan was put together and materials obtained. For the new tires & wheels, brakes needed to be rebuilt, tires obtained, wheels fitted and axles installed. To lift the Lancaster the jacks had to be rebuilt. All of this was accomplished by museum volunteers. Recognition and thanks to all who made this a reality. –Rob Pedersen

BUILDING EXPANSION REPORT

We have been busy in the past six months promoting our proposed new building expansion. As you may have heard, the new hangar would be 175 ft long and 140 ft wide with a 120 ft door at the north end. A [video](#) we had prepared for us detailing the new expansion, with the Lancaster taxiing in front, is available to view on our website.

We recently met with our MLA, Roger Reid, and our MP, John Barlow, to discuss funding possibilities. They are both very supportive. Part of raising the approximately \$4.5 million needed for the project, might involve matching funds, so we need to continue fund-raising. You can contribute on-line to the [Expansion Fund](#), starting with \$100, rising in increments from there.

Also, there are a couple of fund-raising opportunities coming up this year. On May 14th, in conjunction with the 617 Squadron Dambuster Raid Commemoration and bike ride, there will be a 'Bomber Bazaar Flea-Market', to be held in the hangar, while the Lancaster is outside for engine runs at 11:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. For only \$25, you can rent a table to sell your wares. Contact Ashley at the museum for details.

On August 27th, the highest bidder for the new donated cedar-strip canoe, will be announced. To place a bid, again contact Ashley at the museum.



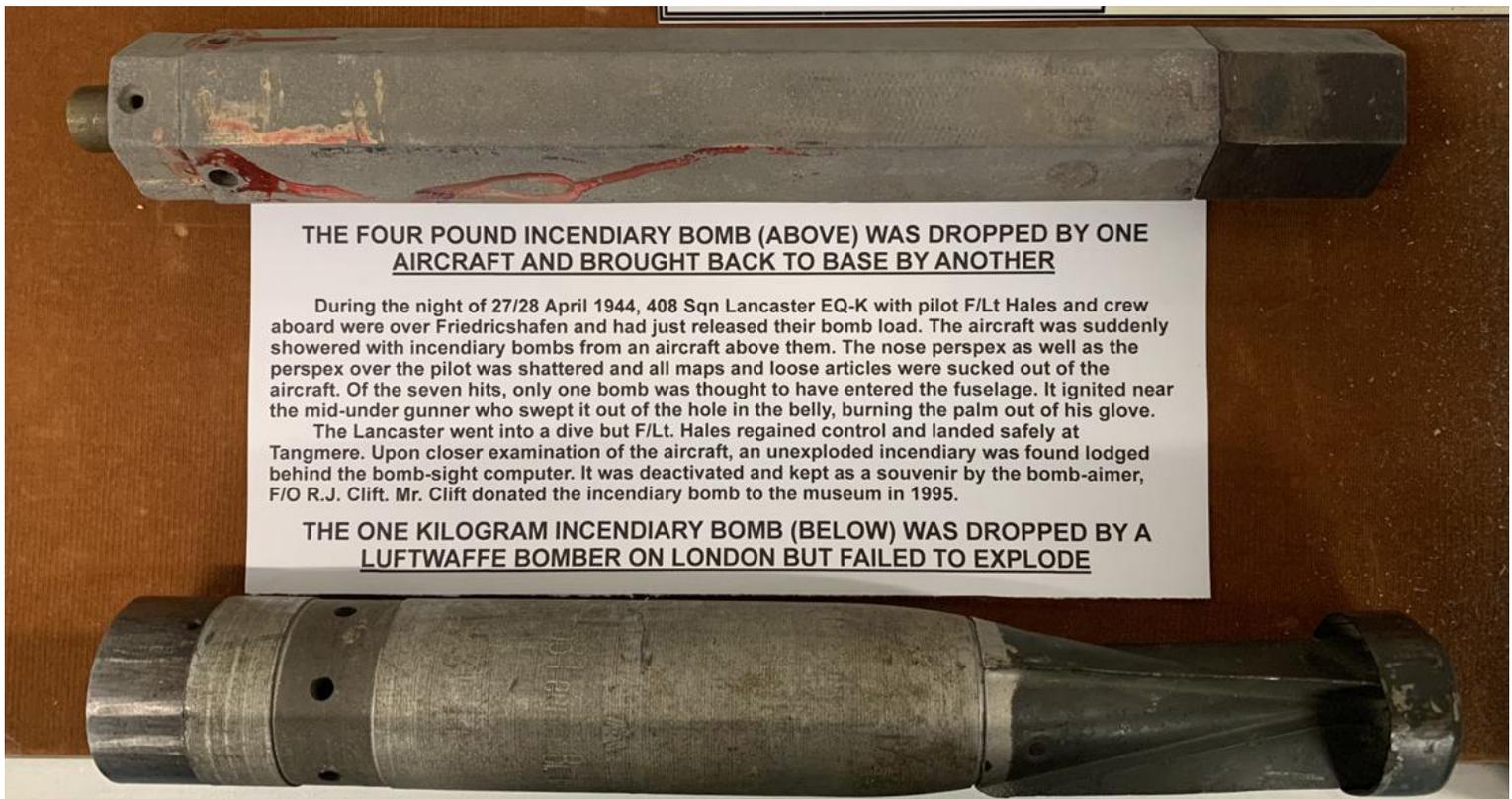
2022 SUMMER EVENTS

-The museum is planning to host a number of 'Engine Run Days' and special events this summer. Please note that not all of these events include Lancaster engine runs. A full schedule and up-to-date times and other details are always available at www.bombercommandmuseum.ca and will be announced in future Bulletins, and on Facebook as the event day approaches.

- May 14 -ENGINE RUN DAY AND FUNDRAISERS -617 Sqn Dambusters Day RAF Benevolent Fund Bicycle Ride and 'Bomber Bazaar' flea market (Tables to rent to support our expansion). LANCASTER ENGINE RUNS at 11 and 3.
- June 4 -Model Displays by the Rocky Mountain Model Club (No engine runs).
- June 25 -'MOSQUITO CELEBRATION DAY' -An update on the Mosquito restoration taking place in our restoration shop. LANCASTER ENGINE RUNS at 11 AND 2.
- July 2 -'BIKES AND BOMBERS' and BEER GARDEN -This always popular day will again be a highlight LANCASTER ENGINE RUN AT 2:00).
- July 23 -AMC Car Show with BRISTOL HERCULES ENGINE RUNS at 11 and 2.
- August 1 -NANTON PARADE DAY and IAN BAZALGETTE MEMORIAL LANCASTER ENGINE RUN at 2.
- August 27 -A 'SALUTE TO 429 SQUADRON' on the 80th Anniversary of its formation will include LANCASTER ENGINE RUNS, the launch of a squadron history book, and honour today's 429 as it flies the CC-177 strategic transport aircraft.
- September 16 -LANCASTER NIGHT RUN.
- September 17 -HALIFAX PROJECT UPDATE with LANCASTER ENGINE RUNS at 11 and 2.
- September 30 -'ONE DAY IN AUGUST' -the Dieppe Story -a presentation by author David O'Keefe and LANCASTER NIGHT RUN.
- October 1 -'THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC' Our museum's good friend Ted Barris will return to launch his new book. LANCASTER ENGINE RUN.

AN INCENIDARY COMPARISON

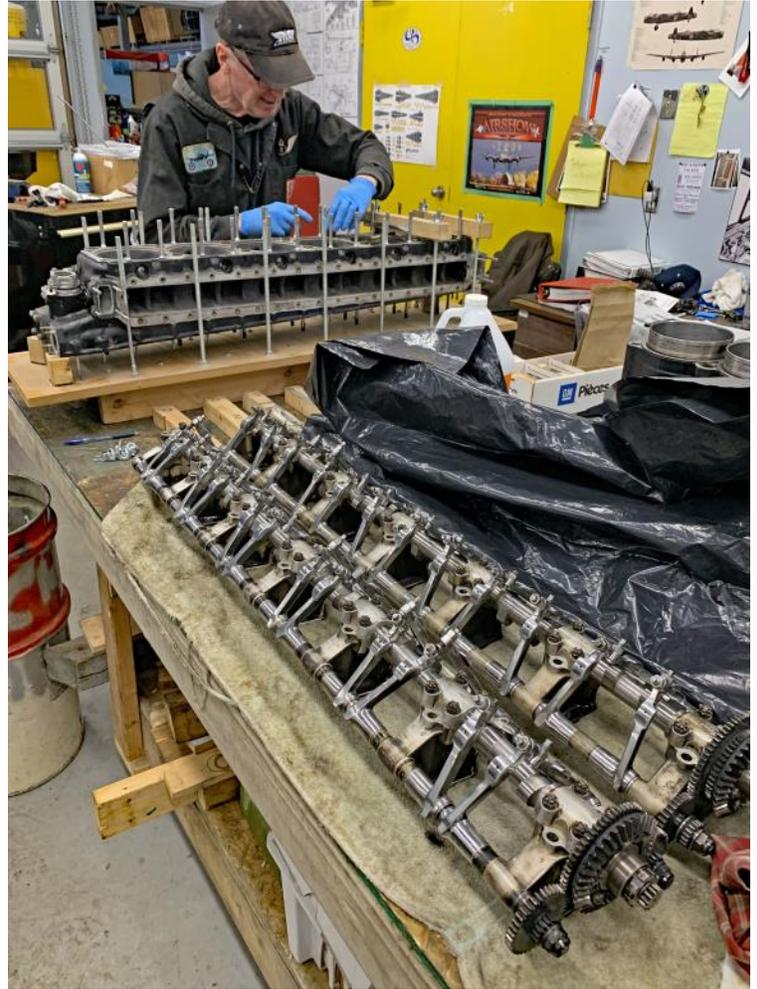
-The museum recently received a Luftwaffe incendiary bomb that is now displayed next to a Bomber Command incendiary. The Luftwaffe example was dropped on London. The Bomber Command example was dropped into a 408 Squadron Lancaster from an aircraft flying above it.



LANCASTER NEWS



A new spray bar system for the Merlins' radiators has been installed to help prevent our engines from over-heating during ground runs. Water is sprayed out of the nozzle onto the radiator.



Work continues on the reassembly of our 'fifth' Merlin. The engine required some new parts including these two new camshafts together with all new 'fingers'.

HARVARD NEWS



Representatives of Western Financial Group visited the museum to present a donation of \$5000 towards restoration the Harvard to runnable/taxiable status. The funds will be used to acquire the parts needed to mount our recently rebuilt Pratt & Whitney Wasp R-1340 engine.

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 include:

- Donations are not expected at the museum
- Free access to Lancaster fuselage tours
- Free Lancaster cockpit tours (during special events when available)

*Please check our website for details of membership options and benefits

Membership Options:

- Annual: \$40
- Family: \$75
- Museum Supporter (5 years): \$250
- Lifetime: \$1000
- Wing Commander's Club: \$5000

-If you are currently a 2021 member, we encourage you to renew for 2022.

-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) Family(\$75) Museum Supporter(\$250) Lifetime(\$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 or 403-646-2270

AN UPDATE FROM THE CALGARY MOSQUITO SOCIETY

-We're rolling into spring with a lot on the go. Maybe you've seen our Saturday volunteer crew lately? It just keeps getting bigger as people are passionate about the airplane and enjoy the culture we've created to support its restoration.



In response to a request that we shrink our footprint in the museum proper, we have taken down our large display board and removed the horizontal stabilizer and rudder, installing them back on the fuselage of the Mosquito. They look impressive, especially considering that they are sporting their original colours, markings and registration from 1956. This is probably the first time those major components have been together since the airplane arrived in Calgary in January 1965.



Our restoration focus is primarily on the Mosquito wing these days. Back in November we re-jigged the wing and secured the spars in advance of tackling structural repairs. With that completed, we have stripped all of the electrical, fuel, hydraulic and pneumatic systems from the wing so that we can focus on the wood itself. The top skin looks pretty badly weathered, because it is. The good news is that the top skin is actually double layered and below the grey layer the structure is pretty good. Our plan is to replace just the top skins. These vary in thickness with sections being 3 mm, 5 mm or 6 mm. We will be placing our order for birch plywood in mid March. The wood we are ordering is made to the exact same specifications as was used by de Havilland during the war, specifically BS 6V3. Ironically the manufacturer of this custom manufactured product is located in Austria. With the need for thicker sheets and with inflation, we expect the cost to run well in excess of \$1000 per sheet.

The flying Mosquito based in Vancouver has been sold to KF Aerospace in Kelowna. With that sale, we inherited a substantial collection of leftover hardware, shelving and Mosquito parts, which arrived in January. We have shared the shelving bounty with Karl who can now move some hefty Herc parts off the shop floor. We also spent two weekends installing new shelving in several of the storage trailers, again moving parts from the floors to new racks along the walls. All part of our 'Good Neighbour' policy.

One of the key acquisitions in terms of Mosquito parts includes 35 exhaust stubs. They are vital to our project as the originals went on 'walkabout' many years ago, and the stubs for our airplane are unique to this model of Mosquito. We have got someone who offered to make new stubs for us at \$2000 US per pipe. We may yet have to take them up on a small order as sadly our new exhaust acquisition consisted of 28 lefts but only 7 rights.

Off site, our quest to get the Hurricane engine running continues. We removed it from the airframe back in November and have stripped it down with the help of Brian Taylor. It seems that our numerous attempts to start it in Sept/Oct 2019 created a series of conditions that led to significant corrosion; to the extent that the pistons were solidly seized in the cylinders. Several wrist pins were also seized. We are now cleaning all the parts and just starting to put an order together to replace all of the seals and gaskets and few internal metal bits. Not good news, but we have a plan and are working it.

Remember to mark June 25 on your calendars as that is MOSQUITO CELEBRATION DAY at the Bomber Command Museum.

-Richard de Boer, Prez



ANSON #7481 PROGRESS REPORT

-Lights, Camera, Action! -Restoration is a strange process. It sees many, many, small steps which are then followed by a major milestone. I am happy to say that Annie has recently seen four such milestones.



After many weeks of pulling wire and twisting wire looms through the fuselage, Annie has lights! We hooked up a battery to the main service panel and flipped the switch. No smoke ... just illumination! Note the cabin lights and the downward identification lamp.



A little further back on Annie we can see that she is starting to fill out a little. New formers & stringers fill out the fuselage and given her a fuller body.



For Annie to soar with the eagles she will need wings. Two milestones bring her a little closer to obtaining her wings. The trailing edge is finally fitted with flaps & aileron. A little further to the rear, Annie's tail cone takes shape with ribs & stringers

SALUTE TO 429 SQUADRON –27 AUGUST 2022

-This special museum event will commemorate the Eightieth Anniversary of the formation of 429 'Bison' Squadron and 'launch' its wartime squadron history book.

Formed in November 1942, 429 Squadron RCAF flew Wellington, Halifax, and Lancaster bombers during the Second World War. Since 2007, the squadron has operated CC-177 Globemaster III strategic transport aircraft in support of Canada's military operations around the world.

The nephew of an airman who was killed while serving with the squadron, Greg Kopchuk, has been doing research and collecting information regarding the squadron's wartime history for over twenty years. This summer his squadron history book, 'Nothing to Chance –429 Bison Squadron during WW II' will be published.

The museum's 'Salute to 429 Squadron' will celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Squadron, its proud history, and the 'launch' of Greg's Squadron history book.

This full-day event will include special displays, presentations, demonstrations, and engine runs. Representatives of today's 429 Squadron have been invited and a flypast by a 429 Squadron CC-177 has been requested.



429 Squadron Lancaster and Aircrew in 1945



429 Lancaster with the squadron's 'AL' designation



429 Squadron CC-177 Globemaster

[THE HALIFAX PROJECT –The latest news . . .](#)

Greetings to all of you as we proceed to save and rebuild the Halifax. Let's have a look at a six minute video to give you a run-down of the work being done on the wings, engines, props and parts we are restoring and saving. [video](#)

So you can now see we have the hubs and all fixins' to assemble them. The big problem is that Halifax prop BLADES (2 meters long) do NOT exist, at least the ones that are in good enough shape to run on Bristol Hercules engines.

To make replica Halifax blades from scratch (to run on an engine) out of metal or carbon fibre or laminated hard-wood would be well over \$150,000 for 12 blades for a Halifax! Tekoa Machining, is working on the special propeller mods that allow us to substitute postwar blades. Cost \$7,000 to do the custom machining on the hub/spider assemblies to accept the post war blades!

We now have 84 NEW Hercules engine spark plugs costing us \$2,500 which is a bargain as the shop wanted \$50/spark plug when we started haggling.

I recently visited "Fort Knox", the Halifax REBUILDSHOP at Arnprior Ontario, helping Scott with final riveting of the Halifax center-section.

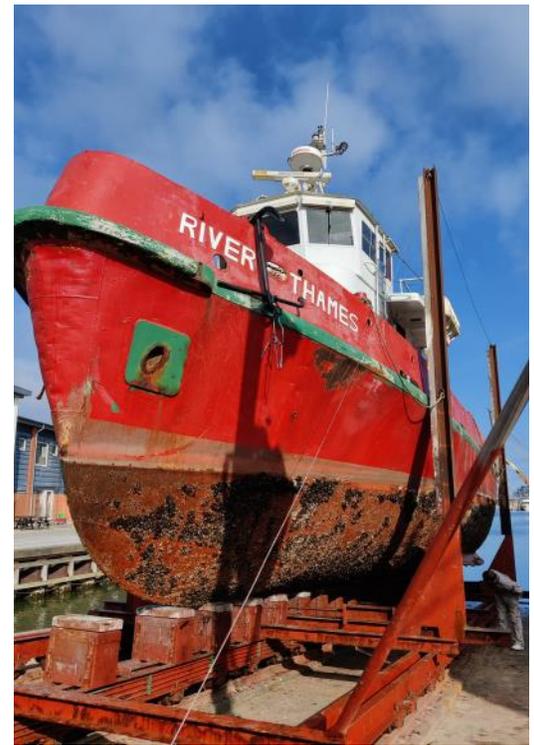
Next on the list is where Sweden come into the picture. Our tug RIVER THAMES was in drydock in Denmark to have the barnacles and gorp cleaned off the hull and have it painted and a rebuilt brass propeller, rudder and new sonar hull installed. We are almost ready for the next expedition to save Halifax HR871 (from June to July 2022).

In SWEDEN, they are gathering all the equipment needed. We need another diesel pump to uncover the Halifax in the sand and are looking into replacing the air compressor to fill up the divers' air tanks.

So bottom line is we need your donations and financial help to get ready and progress in 2022. You can assist by visiting "Fundrazr 417498" or through the [Bomber Command Museum website](#), specifying a donation for the "HALIFAX PROJECT".

We leave no Halifax behind!

Karl Kjarsgaard



GARDENING

-A new display at the museum introduces visitors to 'Gardening', which was the term aircrew used for the placing of air-dropped sea mines in enemy-used waters. This was an important, but lesser-known, aspect of Bomber Command's contribution to the war effort.

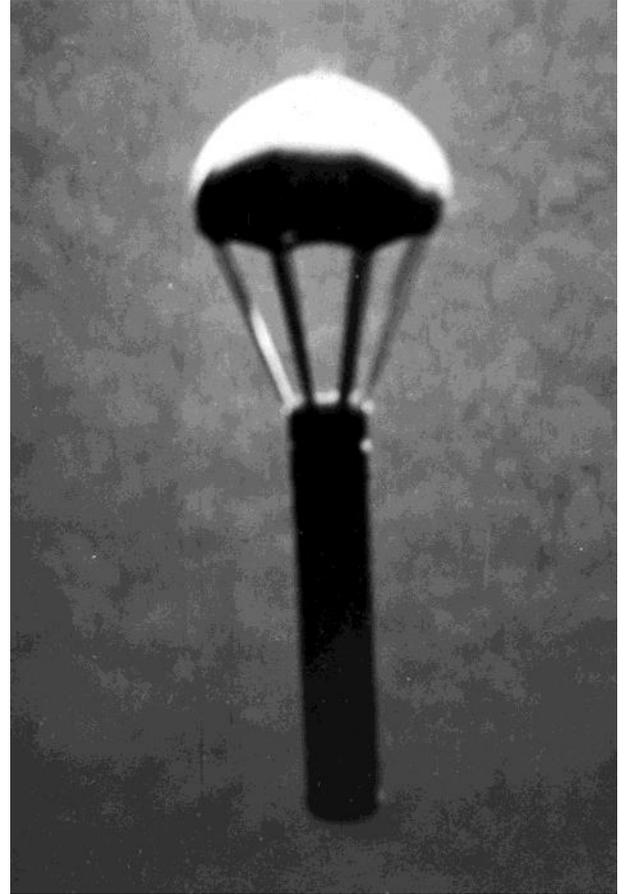
Bomber Command completed over 18,000 'gardening' flights, 'sowing' some 47,000 mines near enemy-used ports and shipping lanes and denying the Nazis the use of much of the Baltic Sea. This regular mining forced the enemy to deploy upwards of 20,000 military personnel and associated ships and equipment to deal with the mines and to place and man searchlight and anti-aircraft batteries to engage the bombers as they attempted to drop mines.

The coastlines were split into various targets and were given distinct code names, most (but not all) being the names of trees and plants. The mines themselves were referred to by the crews as 'vegetables'.

The mines weighed 1500 or 2000 pounds and were robustly designed so that they could be deployed from an aircraft flying at 200 mph from heights of between 100 and 15,000 feet.

Flown at night, a gardening operation was often the first combat flight for a new crew on a squadron. Although not as dangerous as a raid to a heavily defended enemy city, accuracy was essential and the bomber would generally fly below 1500 feet. This made them an obvious and easy target for flak.

Hundreds of Bomber Command aircraft failed to return from mine-laying operations.



'Vegetables' being delivered to 408 Squadron RCAF Hampden bombers

LANCASTER WHEEL REPLACEMENT COMPLETED

-In time for our summer season of engine runs, the Lancaster now rolls on a new pair of mainwheels and tires. This was a major project made necessary by the deterioration of the Lancaster tires, for which replacements are not available.

Shackleton wheels, tires and brakes were acquired and modified and two large hydraulic wing-jacks acquired and made operable to lift the aircraft for the switch. A tail trestle to steady and lift the rear fuselage during the change-over had to be designed and built as well.



After the first wheel switch (The port wheel and tire is Lancaster, the starboard is Shackleton)

After the second wheel switch (Both wheels and tires are Shackleton)

FROM THE MUSEUM'S NEWSLETTER OF THIRTY YEARS AGO

-Our museum's Spring 1992 newsletter reported:

New Museum Building Now Open -

Although numerous small projects remain to be completed, the Nanton Lancaster Society Air Museum opened to the public on the Victoria Day long weekend.

Painting was the priority for our volunteers in March and early April. A major moving weekend in late April involved fifteen volunteers and the use of Magwood Motor's forklift. All the display cabinets, engines, paintings, and other displays were moved from the old tourist information building and placed in previously planned spots in the new building. Several artifacts which have been in storage were moved to the museum as well. The move was a "maximum effort" but by Sunday afternoon everything was in place.

Since that date the effort has been directed towards the finalization of displays, placing pictures on the walls, and positioning artifacts and interpretive information in display cabinets.

Much remains to be done and there are numerous possibilities for future development but the Nanton Lancaster Air Museum is now open. We invite all our members and the public to enjoy what we have to offer and to learn more of the contributions made by Bomber Command to the WWII effort. Also artifacts from the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan are exhibited to tell the story of that tremendous wartime undertaking that trained some 130,000 aircrew from throughout the British Commonwealth.

TIRPITZ MODEL NOW ON DISPLAY

-For many years, the museum's 'Sinking of the Tirpitz' display has featured a large model of the Bismarck, the Tirpitz's sister-ship and numerous visitors have pointed this out. Now, thanks to Keith, we now have a beautiful, detailed model of the Tirpitz.

THE BATTLESHIP TIRPITZ

Commissioned in 1941, the German Navy's mighty 42,900 ton (38,100 tonnes) Tirpitz posed a grave threat to Allied shipping. Sister ship to the more famous Bismarck, Tirpitz was 824 feet (251 m) long and her engines produced 163,026 horsepower enabling a speed of 35.7 mph (57 kph). She carried a main armament of eight, fifteen inch guns capable of firing 1760 pound (533 kg) shells a distance of 22 miles (35.2 km) and had a crew of 2400 men. The Tirpitz saw limited action, spending her wartime career lurking in Norwegian fjords. However her presence obliged the Allies to maintain a large fleet in northern waters.



EARLY ATTEMPTS

The Tirpitz was first attacked by Bomber Command in January 1941 while it was being completed in a Wilhelmshaven dry dock. In April, 1942 the Tirpitz was attacked at low-level by Halifaxes and Lancasters but no bombs found their target. The Royal Navy attacked the battleship on a number of occasions as well, utilizing miniature submarines and carrier based aircraft. These attacks were somewhat successful but had little effect on the battleship's double layer of armour plate and the threat remained.

TO RUSSIA WITH TALLBOYS

In early 1944, British inventor Barnes Wallis finalized his design of the 12,030 pound "Tallboy." Designed as an "earthquake bomb" to destroy targets made of thick concrete, it was also capable of piercing the Tirpitz's armour plating. The Lancaster was the only aircraft that could carry it.

Placing the Tallboy on a target such as the Tirpitz required the use of the Stabilized Automatic Bomb Sight (SABS) which had also been under development. Although only used by two squadrons for precision attacks, the SABS was the most accurate bomb sight of WW II.



On 15 September 1944, Lancasters flew from an airfield in northern Russia to attack the Tirpitz which was at anchor in northern Norway. One Tallboy penetrated the ship, exited the keel, and exploded in the bottom of the fjord causing significant damage. The Nazis decided that it was not practical to make Tirpitz fully seaworthy again and she was moved further south to Tromso, but only as a semi-static, heavy artillery battery. However, Bomber Command was not aware of the extent of the damage.

In her new location, Tirpitz was now within reach of Lancasters flying directly from Britain. It was attacked again on 29 October. The weather was ideal until an unexpected wind shift covered the Tirpitz with cloud just before the Lancasters arrived. No hits were scored.



Commissioned in 1941, the German Navy's mighty 42,900 ton Tirpitz posed a grave threat to Allied shipping. Sister ship to the more famous Bismarck, the battleship carried a main armament of eight 15 inch guns. She saw limited action, spending her war career in Norwegian waters where she was a constant danger to Allied convoys bound for Russia. Her presence obliged the Allies to maintain a large fleet in northern waters to guard against her until she was sunk by Lancaster-delivered Tallboy bombs.

Although the battleship was painted with a camouflage pattern during 1943, it was not at the time it was sunk in November 1944 and the model was painted as it would have appeared at that time.

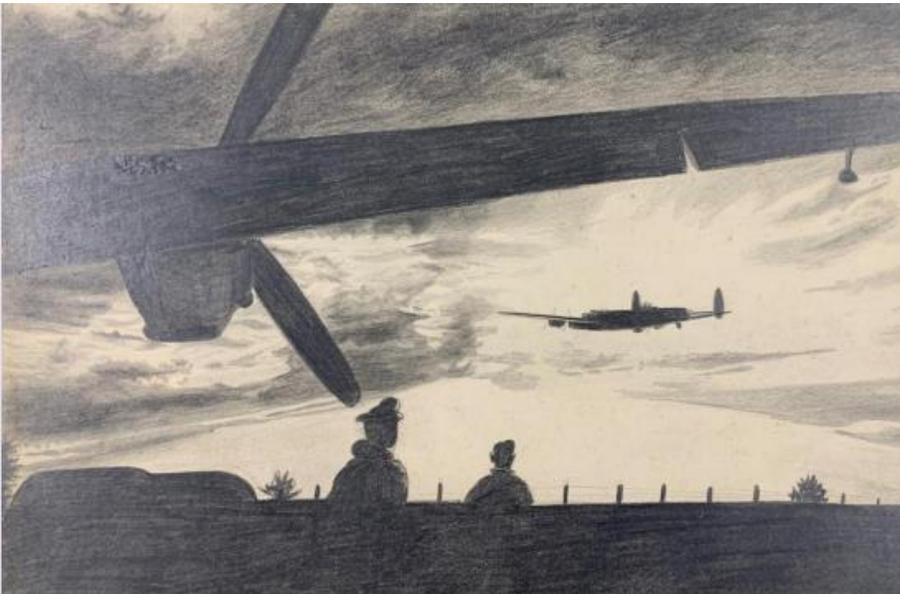
F/Lt WILLIAM WHITE DFC –An Artist in the RCAF

-A wonderful series of pencil sketches by a 626 Squadron pilot may now be seen in the 'Aviation Art' section of our on-line archives.

A resident of Ottawa, Thomas Ritchie served as a navigator with 433 Squadron RCAF. During 2013, he attended an estate sale where he noticed a number of pencil drawings and recognized their quality and that their subject was Bomber Command. Mr. Ritchie did some research, determining that the artist was F/Lt William A.T. White and locating documents related to his wartime service. After confirming their significance, Mr. Ritchie donated the drawings to the museum. It is not known whether the drawings were completed during F/Lt White's wartime service or after his return to Canada.

F/Lt William Andrew Telfer White DFC enlisted in the RCAF at Vancouver on 20 May 1942 and was posted to 3 Manning Depot, 6 EFTS, and 4 SFTS. He received his pilot's wings on 28 May 1943 and went on to fly Lancasters with 626 Squadron (Squadron Code 'UM'), completing thirty-three combat operations.

Artwork such as this, created by someone who actually served with Bomber Command, is both rare and very special.



FROM OUR MUSEUM ARCHIVES

-We have completed a major upgrade to the content of this impressive collection that now includes 1031+ different nose arts and 2057+ photos. As well as several dozen new nose arts and over 150 new photos, additional information and stories related to the nose arts have been incorporated. It's all available on our website.

- Search by aircraft type or nose art type.
- Try it out at <https://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/nose-art/>.
- If you have information or additional photos regarding a particular nose art that we can add, please let us know. If you have a photo and information regarding a nose art that is not in the collection please forward it to us at library@bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca. Remember though, this collection is limited to nose art of Bomber Command aircraft.



Bambi-2

Aircraft Halifax
Type:
Nose Art Bambi
Name:
Name On Aircraft
Origin:
Type: Animal
Artist Guerin, Eric
Name:
Air Force: RAF
Squadron: 640
Aircraft MZ500
Serial:
Summary: Halifax Mk. III, serial MZ500, No. 640 Squadron, 4 Group, based at "Ieconfield" Beverly, Yorkshire, 15 miles west of Hull_x000D_ The photos are from Navigator RCAF Les Corbett from Surrey, B.C._x000D_ The attached photo was taken in mid-August 1944, when the Halifax had completed 34 operations, marked on nose art_x000D_ The crew in photo would fly her o
Comments:



Photo File Name: Bambi-2-A
Photo Reference: NoseArtPhotos/Bambi-2-A.jpg
Caption: This is the air and ground crew mixed
Original or Replica?: Original



Photo File Name: Bambi-2-B
Photo Reference: NoseArtPhotos/Bambi-2-B.jpg
Caption: John Humphrey -wireless [London, England]_x000D_ Jack Stewart - Mid-upper [Pitlockery, Scotland]_x000D_ Eric Guerin - Bomb aimer [Macritius, France]_x000D_ Eric was also the French nose artist who painted "Bambi" and had escaped the Germans to fly with the RAF_x000D_ Vic Wynberg - pilot [Holland]_x000D_ Vic had also escaped form a Nazi concentration camn and crossed France to Spain then
Original or Replica?: Original



Photo File Name: Bambi-2-C
Photo Reference: NoseArtPhotos/Bambi-2-C.jpg
Caption: Dutch pilot Wynberg in cockpit.
Original or Replica?: Original

Bang_On-1

Aircraft Type: Halifax
Nose Art Name: Bang_On
Name Origin: On_Aircraft
Type: Other
Air Force: RCAF
Squadron: 425
Aircraft Serial: NR252



Photo File Name: Bang_On-1-A
Photo Reference: NoseArtPhotos/Bang_On-1-A.jpg
Original or Replica?: Original



Photo File Name: Bang_On-1-B
Photo Reference: NoseArtPhotos/Bang_On-1-B.jpg
Photographer: Harold Lindsay
Date: 1945
Original or Replica?: Original

Beer_is_Best-1

Aircraft Type: Halifax
Nose Art Name: Beer_is_Best
Name Origin: On_Aircraft
Type: Name_Only
Air Force: RCAF
Squadron: 433



Photo File Name: Beer_is_Best-1-A
Photo Reference: NoseArtPhotos/Beer_is_Best-1-A.jpg
Original or Replica?: Original

FROM OUR MUSEUM ARCHIVES

-F/O Frank Nelson's photo album

This 138 page, annotated photo album is the most complete we have in our archives. It begins with Frank's arrival at 2 Manning Depot in Brandon and ends with his discharge following a tour with 408 Squadron. Of particular interest are photos of a daylight operation beginning on page 26 and his 'The Story of an Operation' that begins on page 28. Have a look by scrolling down to 'Nelson, Frank' at <https://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/aircrew-chronicles/> .



DOLLY LOAD BEING RAISED UNDER AIRCRAFT.

LOADING THE PRESENTS TO ADOLPH.



PULLING UP 1000 POUNDS.



HYDRAULIC PORTABLE HOIST USED TO PULL UP BOMBS FOR HOOKING IN BOMB BAY. CAPABLE OF LIFTING 12000 lbs.



SAMPLE LOAD FOR GERMANY 8000 lb. BOOKIE, 3016 INCENDIARIES ON AIRCRAFT. CANS OF M16 INCENDIARIES ON DOLLY.

OUR MUSEUM'S LANCASTER WAS ALMOST LOST EN-ROUTE TO THE UK

-Like almost all of the Canadian-built Lancasters, our museum's FM159 was ferried across the Atlantic. The pilot was Clyde Pangborn, a celebrated American long-distance flyer. He was known as 'Upside-Down Pangborn' during his time as a barnstormer during the 1920's. In 1931, he became the first to fly across the Pacific Ocean non-stop. After joining the Royal Air Force in 1939, Pangborn assisted in organizing RAF Ferry Command and the Eagle Squadrons. In 1942, he flew Lancaster R5727 from the UK to Canada to be used as the pattern for Canadian Lancaster production. As a senior captain with Ferry Command, Clyde Pangborn made approximately 170 trans-oceanic flights. He obviously had a bad day at the controls of Lancaster FM159. Fred Hotson, the first officer on the flight, tells the story.

My next Lancaster (FM159) was with none other than Clyde Pangborn, the pre-war US air hero and round-the-world flyer. I thought it would be great to fly with an old pro, but the trip turned out to be the scariest of my twenty crossings. There wasn't much said as we strode out to Lancaster FM159, 29 May 1945. But I did mention to Pang that I had done an exhausting session of blind-flying instruction the day before, including recovery from awkward positions. He came back with, "That's good, the trouble with the young fellows today, they don't know their instrument flying."

We were somewhere between Seven Islands and Goose Bay, on solid instruments, when the artificial horizon toppled, useless. After caging the gyro, he remarked, "We'll have to go needle-and-ball," so I kept a close watch. A short time later the props were a little out of sync. I was about to do the small adjustment needed, but Pang leaned over to do the job himself running them through and smoothing them out. When he went back to the instruments he found we had built up considerable speed. Obeying his instincts, he began tugging on the controls -but the harder he pulled, the higher the speed. The G forces began to build excessively, indicating a classic example of a "death spiral." Without dual controls and with high G forces, all I could do was to shout, "take off bank -needle and ball!" I tried to point to the turn-and-bank instrument, which by now was at opposite extremes on the dial but I couldn't get out of the seat. Even raising my arms to point was a major effort.

The craziest part of this incident occurred when we broke into a short period of ragged cloud and saw a Dakota go across our nose - in what looked like a vertical dive. While it was bad enough going through the Dakota's altitude, so close that we could read its numbers, Pang's next statement was a classic, "Look he's crashing!" It was our windshield that created the illusion. We were in a vertical bank and going down fast. We were the ones about to crash if he didn't do something soon! Fortunately, there was a ragged ceiling about a thousand feet over the dark St. Lawrence where my ex-hero was able to level the wings and recover from the considerable dive.

His landing at Gander left much to be desired and, although the artificial horizon was replaced, it was with some misgivings that I took my seat for the flight over the Atlantic that night. The only word I spoke to Pang in Prestwick was "Goodbye." There was no need to review his failure to go to the needle-and-ball instrument as I had so recently been taught. Pangborn, unfortunately, was one of those captains who had to do everything himself -I might as well have stayed in Montreal.



Clyde 'Upside-Down' Pangborn



F/Lt. Fred Hotson

429 SQUADRON HALIFAX LV993

-The RCAF Bomber that flew the most operations.

Known as 'M for Mother', Halifax LV993 completed a total of ninety-five operations with 429 Squadron RCAF between 22 April, 1944 and 15 March, 1945. Her impressive bomb-tally was carefully recorded by LAC A.C. Robinson and possibly others.

The white bombs in the tally indicate night raids, the outline-only bombs indicate daylight raids. The three that show a large cylinder suspended by a parachute indicate a 'gardening' or mining operation.

Sadly, like every other Halifax Bomber, LV993 was scrapped shortly after the end of the war.

S/L Louis G. Neilly DFC and Bar

S/L Neilly of Gilford, Ontario completed two tours of operations, the first with 429 Squadron RCAF and the second with 405, the Canadian Pathfinder Squadron.

The Distinguished Flying Cross ribbon painted above the bomb tallies at right celebrates the awarding of the medal to F/Lt. Neilly who flew sixteen operations as LV993's pilot.

The DFC citation refers to one of F/Lt Neilly's operations when, "An engine failed shortly after takeoff, but he continued and successfully completed his mission. On the return journey, another aircraft was seen to fall into the sea.

"Displaying fine qualities of leadership, Flight Lieutenant Neilly obtained its position and instituted a search which resulted in seventeen people being rescued."

"F/Lt. Neilly has displayed a fine fighting spirit and outstanding gallantry."



The 95th and final addition completes LV993's bomb-tally



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