

BOMBER COMMAND MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Fall 2022



Bomber Command Museum of Canada
Box 1051; Nanton, Alberta; T0L 1R0
office@bombercommandmuseum.ca.
www.bombercommandmuseum.ca

SALUTE TO 429 SQUADRON – 27 AUGUST 2022

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



429 Squadron CC-177 Globemaster over the museum



Author Greg Kopchuk presenting copies of his Squadron history to Major Victoria Chatzikirou, Acting C/O of 429 Squadron



429 Sqn CWO Blair Spencer with a nose art panel presented to the squadron by the museum

4 Wing Brass Quintet from Cold Lake

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well, this is supposed to be our fall newsletter, however it seems to be closer to Christmas this year. So many things have happened over the summer. Biggest news is the museum now has a Hispano Buchon in its collection. The Buchon is essentially a Rolls-Royce Merlin-engined Messerschmitt Bf109. The Buchon will be replacing our ME-109 mock up. Currently the Buchon is painted in the Spanish Air Force Livery. What the final appearance will be is still up for decisions.

The Lancaster this year will look a little different for the summer season. Our propellers will be out for servicing to ensure the safety of its operations. Through out the summer we will still be running aircraft but the Lanc may not have all 4 props spinning. This comes just after the Lanc received new tires and brakes. Hats off to the Lanc crew who work to keep the old girl in tip top shape.

In January we will be setting our summer schedule so hopefully by the spring newsletter we will be able to tell everyone what exciting things we have planned for 2023

As we approach the holidays and say goodbye to 2022, I want to send a big note of thanks to all our volunteers and supporters. This museum truly exists but for one reason only; that reason is you. From the entire Board and I, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year. -Rob Pedersen



The museum's Lancaster is dedicated to S/L Ian Bazalgette VC DFC who was killed near Senantes, France. Each summer, near the date of the Victoria Cross flight, our museum's friends at Senantes host a ceremony at the memorial site and at Baz's grave at the entrance to their town's church. On the same day, the museum has an engine run in Baz's memory. Senantes and Nanton are 'Twinned Communities'.



Bf 109 PROGRESS –FROM A ‘MOCK-UP’ TO A REAL AIRCRAFT

-Since 2014, the museum has displayed a full-size ‘mock-up’ of a Messerschmitt Bf 109 to help tell the history of Bomber Command’s confrontation with the Luftwaffe. We now have a ‘real’ Bf 109 on display.



Bf 109 partially reassembled at the museum



Bf 109 in Ottawa

The museum’s Messerschmitt Bf 109 is a Spanish-built Hispano HA-1112-M1L ‘Buchón’ (c/n 164) -a post-war variant of the Bf 109G-2 built under a manufacturing license with Messerschmitt. As the German-built Daimler-Benz V-12 engines were no longer available, the Buchóns were fitted with Rolls-Royce Merlin engines. They were armed with two 20 mm cannon and 80 mm rockets.

The installation of the Merlin V-12 engine makes the nose contours of the HA-1112 quite different from those of the original Messerschmitt Bf 109G, hence its nickname “Buchón” (pouter pigeon).

The museum’s aircraft served with the 7th Fighter Bomber Wing of the Spanish Air Force. Producers of the 1960s British film ‘Battle of Britain’ acquired the aircraft and used parts of it in aircraft featured in the film.

Canada’s Department of Defence Production purchased the Buchón from Spitfire Productions Ltd. of London, England, for the Canadian War Museum in 1967. Following restoration in 1986, the aircraft was finished in its original Spanish Air Force markings and placed on display. Since 1999 it has been in storage until being made available to the museum.

Thanks to Jade Line Holdings, Ocean Trailer, B&B Energy Services, and Smokin’ Iron Enterprises for their assistance in transporting our ‘real’ Bf 109 from Ottawa to the museum.

THE MESSERSCHMITT Bf 109

-The most-produced of the Nazi fighters, the Bf 109 played a role in the Luftwaffe’s battles with Bomber Command.

The Messerschmitt Bf 109 was designed in the mid-1930’s. Referred to as the Me 109 by Allied pilots and aircrew, it was one of the first truly modern fighters of its era. The Bf 109 featured all-metal construction, a closed canopy, retractable undercarriage, and a liquid-cooled, inverted V-12 engine. It is the most-produced fighter aircraft in history with almost 35,000 of all versions being built.

The Me 109 was the ‘backbone’ of the Luftwaffe’s fighter force from the Spanish Civil War to the end of the Second World War. It fulfilled multiple roles including bomber escort, fighter-bomber, day/night fighter, and ground-attack. Only when the Luftwaffe fighter pilots met the Spitfire in combat did they find an aircraft that could match their Bf 109s.

Most of the over 12,000 aircraft lost by Bomber Command were shot down by the Luftwaffe fighters. As the enemy’s leading day and night fighter during the early years of the war, the Me 109 had considerable success against Bomber Command aircraft.

The night-fighters that confronted Bomber Command operations were generally twin-engine aircraft such as the Ju-88 and Me 110 that carried two crewmembers and on-board radar. But during late 1943 and early 1944, Bf 109’s played a major role in the enemy’s highly-successful ‘Wild Boar’ operations in which single-engined aircraft were used at night. Visual contact was made by the fighter pilots aided by light from the burning target, target markers, flares dropped by other Luftwaffe aircraft, and searchlights.





The two panels at right were 'unveiled' at the museum's 'Salute to 429 Squadron' event

NOSE ART PANELS CELEBRATE THE HISTORY OF 429 SQUADRON

-Nose artist Clarence Simonsen painted two full-size panels for the museum's 'Salute to 429 Squadron' event.

RCAF Halifax JD372 was flown by 429 Squadron. The aircraft's nose art, 'Easy Does It Too!', featured a 'Gremlin' riding a huge bomb which is going to destroy Nazis. The aircraft's markings were 'AL-E'.

On 22/23 November 1943, JD372 was struck by flak, developed engine trouble, and returned to base. During the repairs, it is thought that the nose was repainted black and the original Gremlin nose art covered over. The unknown nose artist then repainted the nose art with name 'Easy Does It Too!'

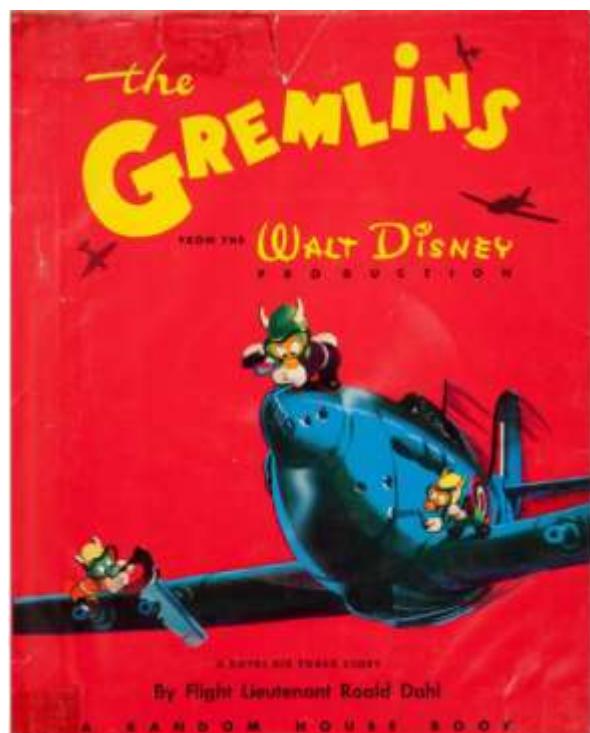
There is an interesting connection of this nose art to 'gremlins', a wartime Hurricane fighter pilot who became a well-known author of children's literature, Walt Disney, and James Bond. 'The Gremlins' is a book written by RAF fighter pilot Roald Dahl and published in 1943. It was Dahl's first book and was written for Walt Disney Productions in anticipation of a feature-length, animated film that was never made. As part of the story, Dahl created a series of characters called 'Gremlins'.

During the war, Royal Air Force pilots invoked these mischievous, mythical creatures as an explanation for mechanical troubles and mishaps.

Later in the war, Dahl became involved in intelligence, working with the well-known Ian Fleming (who later published the popular James Bond series). Roald Dahl's books include the children's classic, 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. They have sold more than 250 million copies.



Clarence at work at the museum



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 2022 member, we encourage you to renew for 2023.

-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

-In the past few months we have faced some significant challenges and scored some significant wins.



Just over a year ago we were faced with the sad news that our repeated attempts to start the Hurricane's engine at the completion of the restoration in 2019 had resulted in some significant water and acid build up which seized the engine. Early this year we pulled the engine from the airframe and moved it to Jack McWilliam's shop for teardown and rebuild. We had a tough time getting the parts we needed from Vintage V-12s but the o-rings and piston rings have finally arrived and with Brian Taylor's help we have been busy getting the heads and banks back together in the museum's engine shop. Next job will be to take them back into Calgary and drop them back onto the lower block. We hope to have her all back in one piece and making sweet Merlin noises early next year.

A second and even larger challenge has been sourcing plywood for the top skin of the Mosquito's wing. That too has taken over a year as our supplier in Austria was on a Covid shutdown and when they got back to work, they informed us that their wood source was in Russia, making it impossible to get any stock since the invasion of Ukraine. That triggered a year long search around the world for a manufacturer of the de Havilland B.S. 6V3 specification plywood. Proving once more that persistence pays, the 13 sheets of Baltic Birch needed for the structural repairs on the wing were delivered in early October, with the help of our friends at Avspecs in New Zealand. Huge thanks and a heavy sign of relief!

We've also been hauling crates of parts from our storage trailer in order to have winter projects for our dedicated volunteers. We've pulled the main landing gear and the engine firewalls from the crates and have turned our workers loose on cleaning, stripping and overhauling these components.

Drop by, say 'hi' and take a look.

Richard de Boer, Prez



LANCASTER NEWS



With the help of our museum friends at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Museum, a new Perspex nose blister is now at the museum. It will replace the one currently on the aircraft which has been damaged.



The propeller has been removed from the Lancaster's starboard-outer engine. An inspection will determine whether servicing is required.



Our museum has become a popular stop for motorcycle and car clubs. This group of Harley-Davidson enthusiasts visited on August 25th.

BUILDING EXPANSION

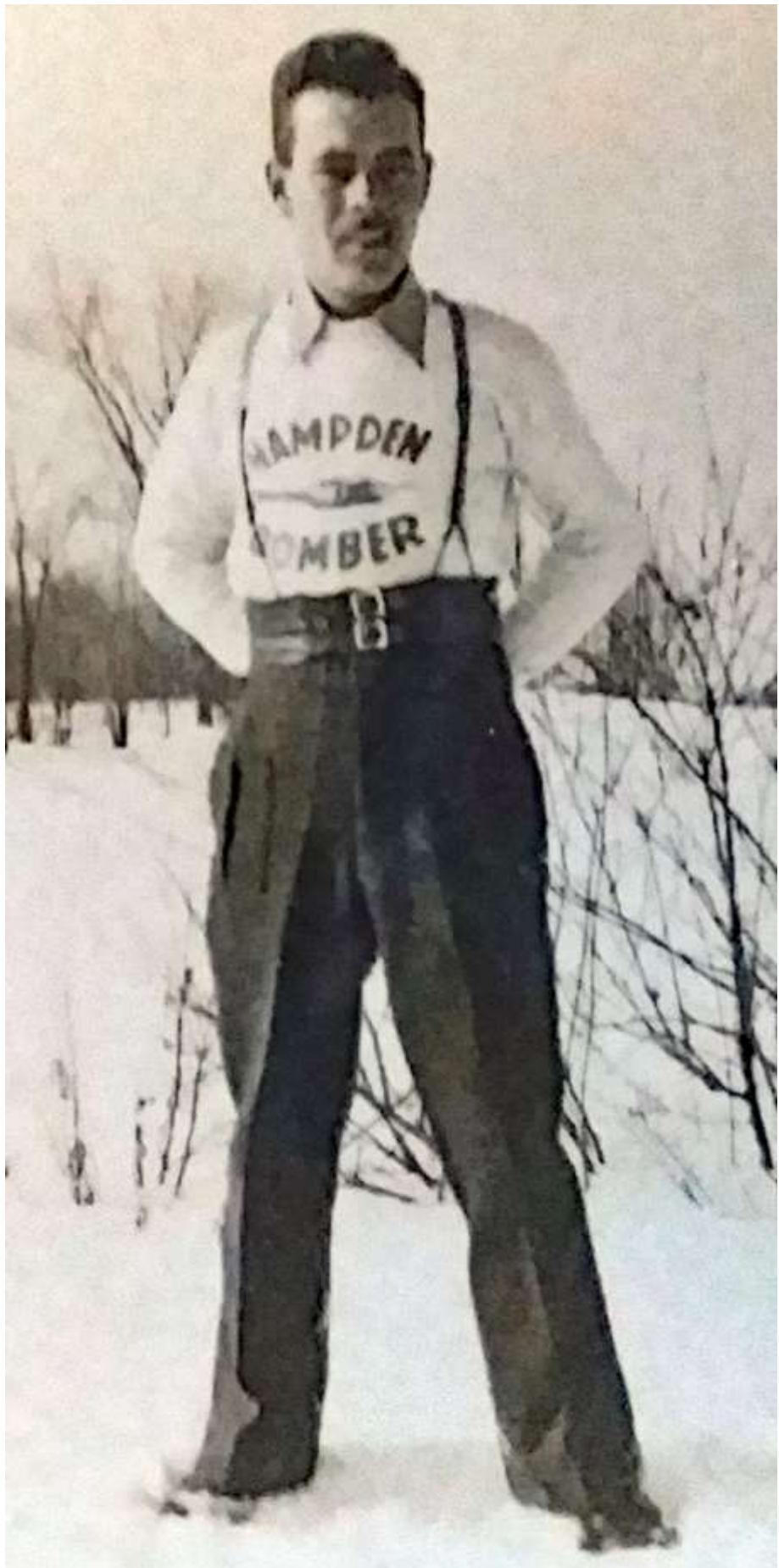
Although there has been little activity on the expansion front in the past few months, we are still actively seeking support for our project. The Town of Nanton is very much behind our expansion plans and is awaiting news of our successful funding initiatives. With the change in leadership provincially, and Conservatives being in the minority in Ottawa, it has made fund-raising more difficult. However, we will persevere and continue efforts to find supporters for this worthwhile project. A new "Home for the Heavies" is still our ultimate goal.

-Dan Fox,
Chairman Expansion Committee

SPITFIRE REPORT

We have made some great strides forward. We have acquired some highly sought after parts and brought them home to the BCMC. Lately I learned that a set of exhaust stubs would cost us about \$32,000 dollars to have produced, we made some inquiries and a few trades and picked up a full set for our Spitfire and all just for a few trade items. We also picked up an aileron drum and another carburetor for our Merlin as a spare. We did manage to locate a fuselage jig to build our Spitfire but the price is out of range at the moment so we hope to raise funds in order to acquire it and start showing our supporters what is being built. Just this morning we made a contact with a builder in the UK that is able to make us a set of rudder pedal tube assemblies and we will see if we can't make a deal of some sort to bring a set to BCMC Spitfire. As always I would like to send out a huge thank you to our supporters.

-Rick Featherstone,
Spitfire Project Lead



This recent addition to our photo archives shows Canadian engineer Sidney de Solla wearing a Hampden T-Shirt during WW II. Two Canadian Squadrons, 408 and 420, flew the Hampden.



The Mosquito being restored at the museum is a high-altitude, pressurized photo-reconnaissance aircraft. A display at the Calgary Mosquito Society's event illustrated how it was used to map the Canadian Arctic.



'Bikes and Bombers' 2022



The museum now has a 'cutaway' display that enables visitors to better understand the internal workings of the Bristol Hercules engine. The display was likely used as a training aid during the war. A plaque indicates that it was presented to the RCAF at the end of the war.

RCAF CIRCUS OPERATIONS

-A 'Circus' was a daylight operation in which a small number of Bomber Command aircraft were escorted by a large number of fighters. The targets were small and generally situated in northwest France, within range of the 'short-legged' RAF fighters. It was hoped the Luftwaffe would be enticed to come up and fight and be overwhelmed by the escorting fighters. It was meant to be an action of attrition rather than one of strategic importance. Exactly when the code-word 'Circus' came into being is obscure, but one imagines someone of WW1 vintage likened the mass of aircraft to be akin to the German Flying Circuses they had seen above the trenches during 1917-18.

The RCAF's first Circus operation took place on 17 September 1941 when six Hampdens of 408 Squadron set out to bomb the Shell factory at Marquise. 408 was led by S/Ldr W. J. Burnett DFC. Five of the bombers were damaged. Burnett's aircraft was among them and he lost his hydraulics, so was unable to open his bomb doors. In the end the bombers aborted the attempt as they were unable to identify the target and brought their bombs home. A 408 Squadron air-gunner claimed an Me 109 damaged.



408 Squadron RCAF Hampdens

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Appendix

R.A.F.
Form 341.

DETAIL OF WORK CARRIED OUT

By 408 Squadron, R.C.A.F.

SECRET

Page No. /

For the Month of September, 1941

Date	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	Crew	Dest	Time		Details of Sortie or Flight	References
				Up	Down		
17th	Hampden AE 351	S/Ldr. Burnett Sgt. Dillon Sgt. Reynolds Sgt. Morgan	Bombing Marquise	13.35	19.50	CIRCUS OPERATIONS: BOMBING SHELL FACTORY AT MARQUISE. sorties A 43 and A 46 were carried out by 6 Hampdens of this squadron in daylight. They reassembled with the fighter escort at Dangmes and set course for the French coast. Heavy and accurate flak was encountered en route from the coast with some light flak as well. The weather over France was very good but the leading Navigator Sgt. Dillon was unable to observe the target resulting in all six aircraft bringing their bomb load back.	A 43
"	AE 357	P/O Giddell Sgt. Marshall Sgt. Blane Sgt. Williams				A 44	
"	AE 349	P/O Constance P/O Hardingham Sgt. Corrie Sgt. Nevills				A 45	
"	AE 360	S/Lt. Clayton P/O Dench P/Sgt. Foster Sgt. Howell				A 46	
"	AE 356	P/O Campbell Sgt. Woods Sgt. Maxwell Sgt. Pearce				A 47	
"	AE 357	Sgt. Hall Sgt. Watts Sgt. Williams, G/F. Sgt. Allington				A 48	



RAF Stirlings on a Circus operation

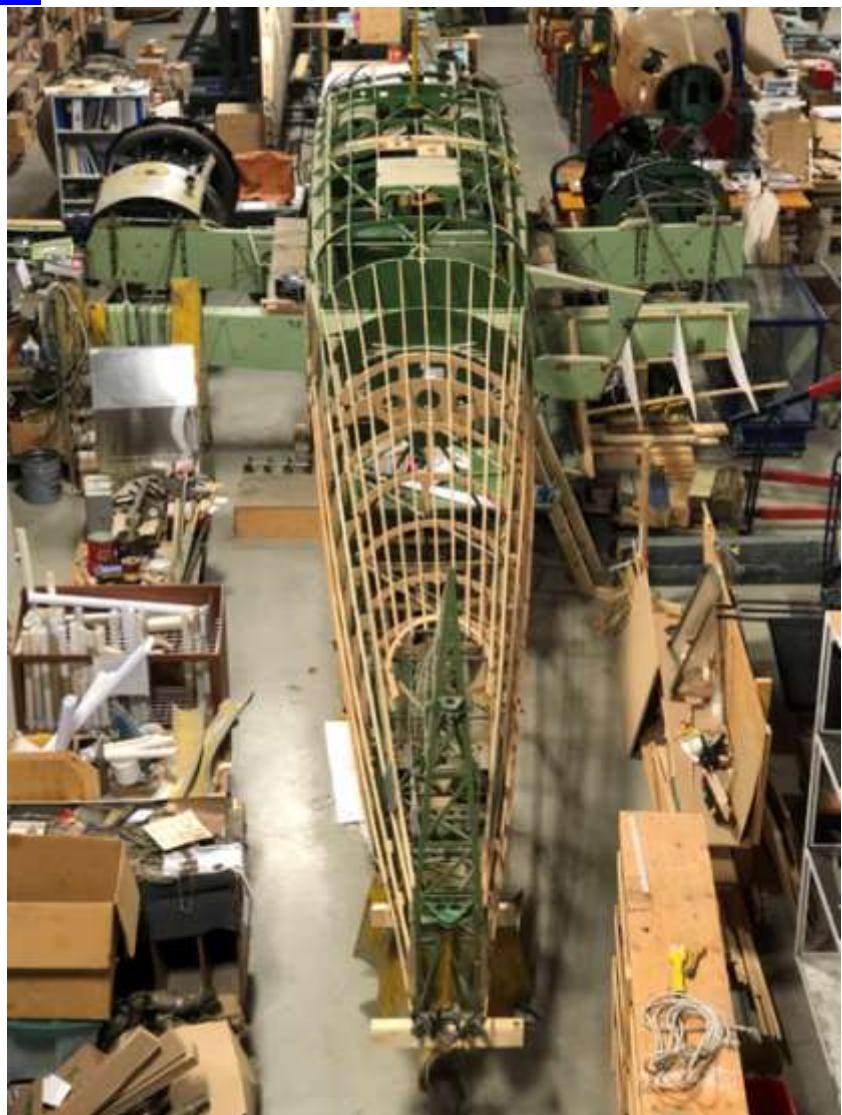
ANSON #7481 PROGRESS REPORT

Progress continues! Sometimes it is hard to see at just a quick glance. So many little pieces being worked on and then suddenly, they come together and there is a whole new 'look' to her.

The most recent update is the completion of the aft stringers. Annie has filled out well. Thanks to Terry Moynihan. He has painstakingly fabricated each individual stringer and attached it to the formers. When you look and realize that each stringer is hollow and attached to the 1/8" plywood former is small brass screws you can begin to see the craftsmanship that goes into building this.



An Avro Anson at a BCATP Service Flying Training School



FROM THE MUSEUM'S NEWSLETTER OF THIRTY YEARS AGO

-Our museum's Fall 1992 newsletter reported:

July Grand Opening a Huge Success! -

The July 25 Grand Opening of the new museum building drew a crowd estimated at over 3000!

The day turned out to be perfect weather-wise. Four hot air balloons started off a full day of events at 7:30 a.m. As these "flying machines" passed slowly north, from the south side of town from where they were launched, they floated past those early risers partaking of the pancake breakfast served by the local Lions Club. The Calgary Hot Air Balloon group also brought a special effects balloon which, when inflated, turned out to be a huge cow! It took 12 persons to get it launched. This 'cow's' flight was short as it landed just north of the new museum, after hovering nearly on top of the museum building.

It was open house in the museum all day, with many displays from other aviation groups such as the Calgary Aerospace Museum, Western Aviation News, CAF Recruiting, etc. Our Society's limited edition print was displayed and the artist, John Rutherford, was on hand with a display of many of his aviation paintings and prints.

Outside, there were displays of military vehicles, an ultralite aircraft and demonstrations of radio controlled aircraft. These models flew intermittently all day.

Your executive was very pleased with every phase of opening day and we made a lot of new friends that day. The evening banquet, with guest speaker Reg Lane, topped off an excellent day.

Grand Opening Flypast -

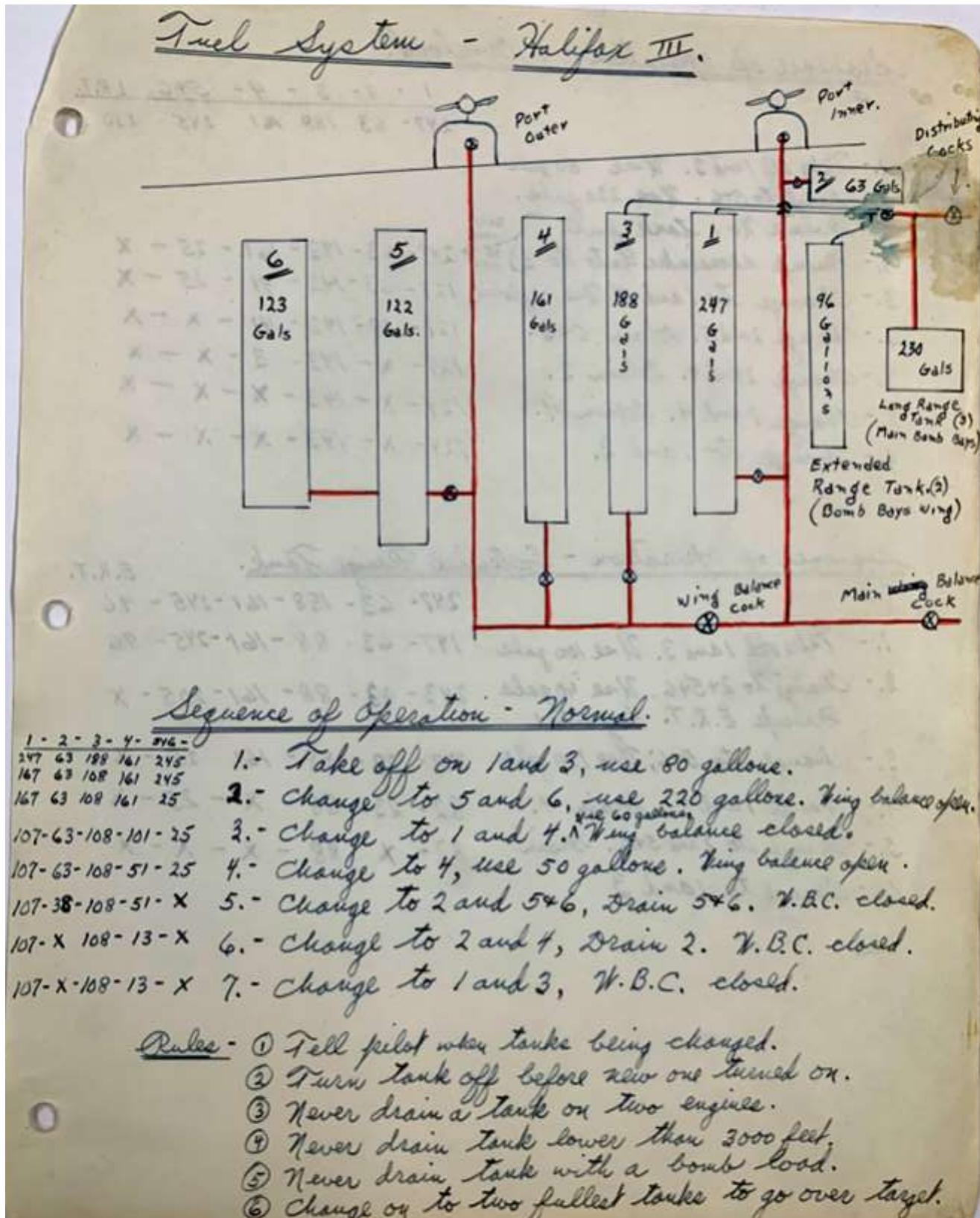
In the opening day celebrations the Tiger Moth, flown by Gordon Jones, was the lead aircraft for the flypast. It was followed by two D.H. Chipmunks, a Harvard and the four CAF Tutors. A Pitts Special did aerobatics after the main flypast.

(Video coverage of this day is available at the museum's on-line archives.)

RON JENKIN'S NOTEBOOK

-Our museum has had a connection with Calgary bomber pilot Ron Jenkins for some time, telling the story of his aircraft's 'Lady Orchid' nose art the fact that his aircraft's centre section continues to fly as part of the Canadian Warplane Heritage's Lancaster. Ron's detailed story maybe found in our on-line archives. Recently, Ron's family visited the museum to donate his handwritten and illustrated notebook that details a number of aspects of his training. It's a valuable addition to our archives.

Although Ron only flew Lancasters with 434 Sqn RCAF, he was posted to an HCU where he took detailed notes regarding flying the Hercules-powered Halifax, including how to handle its thirteen fuel tanks.



SGT. GILDEA'S DIARY - A RECENT ADDITION TO OUR ARCHIVES

-Sgt. Gildea was the bomb-aimer on F/O L.V. Rosser's Lancaster crew that flew with 115 Squadron RAF. Their navigator, F/S Gordon R. Todd was a Canadian. The handwritten diary begins on 6 March 1945. Sgt. Gildea describes in detail all the crew's combat operations, four flights dropping food to the starving Dutch, and two flights to bring ex-Prisoners of War back to England.

The following entry describes a daylight operation that was the crew's 'hottest trip ever'.

AIRCRAFT "H"			
	Took off at 09:30 hrs, on what proved to be the hottest trip ever. The Met gen was good, too bloody good, we didn't see a single cloud over enemy territory. One hundred aircraft took part in the attack, all Lancasters. Escort by six squadrons of Spitfires. Our squadron led the stream. The front line was very quiet, (the full before the storm.) They started moving it up about fifteen miles before the target area. Then the flak was as thick as ever I've seen it. The Hun defences being able to get a visual on us took full advantage of the opportunity. We saw two Lancs, get the chop. One had its portol tanks hit, and went down a flame, the other had its tail unit shot off. Four chutes were seen from the latter kite. One Spitfire caught a packet and went down in flames.		
	While I was leaning over my bombsight on the run up, a piece of shrapnel came through the perspex nose and missed my head by inches. It was the nearest thing to the chop that I've so far experienced, and I don't want to get any closer. Squidge the Engineer thought I'd bought it. Another piece pierced the fuselage by the side of the Co-pilot's seat. Lucky enough no one was hurt. I have come to the conclusion that this game is a game of chance. If you lucky you get through it, if not, well, it will at least be quick.		

HALIFAX NEWS



The main wing centre-section of our Halifax, all basic riveting complete just last week by Knox Tech at the Rebuild Shop in Ottawa. Three or four times a year we must make payments to them of \$4,000 to \$5,000 per payment. This is not a Cessna 150 we are building, it is a heavy bomber!



Vital to the future running of our Halifax Bristol Hercules engines, we have recently acquired three, NEW, internally inhibited with preservative oil, 'Hobson BH11 throttle-body injection carburettors.



Recently acquired Halifax cowlings

To support our Halifax Project, do a Google search and you can DONATE here: FUNDRAZR 417498
- OR - send a donation to BCMC and be sure to specify "Halifax Project".

TWO REMARKABLY SIMILAR STORIES OF VICTORIA CROSS HEROISM

-Sgt. James Ward RNZAF and Sgt. Norman Jackson RAF were awarded the Victoria Cross. Both ventured out onto the wings of their burning bombers to attempt to extinguish the flames.



SGT. JAMES WARD VC

After pilot training in New Zealand, 'Jimmy' Ward was promoted to Sgt and travelled to England in 1941. He was assigned as a co-pilot in Wellington bombers with 75 Squadron RAF at Feltwell. While returning from a raid on Munster on July 7, 1941, the Wellington was attacked by a night fighter which started an engine fire. Attempts to put out the fire using fire extinguishers aiming through a hole made in the fuselage were unsuccessful.

When the pilot, Squadron Leader Reuben Widdowson, a Canadian, ordered the crew to bail out, Ward proposed to climb out onto the wing to smother the fire using a canvas engine cover. The Wellington was flying at 200 mph at 12,000 feet. Sergeant Joe Lawton, also of the RNZAF, held onto Ward with a rope as Ward climbed out through the astrolabe onto the wing using a fire axe to make holes in the fabric for his hands and feet. He managed to put the fire out and the crew continued home. The bomber made an emergency landing at Newmarket without flaps or brakes. It ran into a hedge at the end of the runway and was damaged beyond repair. Upon returning to his squadron, Ward became a pilot with his own crew.

On 15 September, the crew's second mission was a raid on Hamburg. After releasing their bombs, the Wellington was attacked by a night fighter and set on fire. Ward steadied the plane so two of the crew could parachute out and they became POWs. Ward and the remaining crew were unable to evacuate the aircraft which crashed near Hamburg killing all aboard.

SGT. NORMAN JACKSON VC

Norman Cyril Jackson became a flight engineer in 1943 and joined 106 Squadron on Lancasters. Sgt Jackson completed 30 operations on 24 April 1944, but one sortie had been flown with a different crew. He chose to fly one more so he could finish his tour with his original aircrew. On the night of 26/27 April, Jackson's 31st sortie in Lancaster ME669 was a raid on the ball bearing factories at Schweinfurt.

After bombing the target, they were attacked by a German night fighter which caused a fire in a fuel tank in a wing. Jackson, already wounded from shell fragments, put on a parachute, took a fire extinguisher and climbed out of the aircraft onto the wing to extinguish the fire. Holding onto the air intake on the leading edge of the wing with one hand, Jackson fought the fire with the other. The wind knocked the fire extinguisher from him. The flames burned his hands, face, and clothes. The fighter returned with a burst of gunfire that sent two bullets into Jackson's legs causing him to fall off the wing. With the fire growing, the pilot ordered the crew to abandon aircraft. Four of the crew landed safely and became POWs.

Jackson fell 20,000 feet and fortunately his burning parachute still slowed his descent to limit his injuries to a broken ankle. The next morning, he managed to crawl to a nearby German village where he was taken prisoner. He spent ten months recovering in a hospital before being transferred to a POW camp.

Jackson's actions became known when his crew members were released at the end of the war. His Victoria Cross citation read in part, "Had he succeeded in subduing the flames, there was little or no prospect of his regaining the cockpit."

P/O WILLARD BOLDUC DFC

-An Indigenous RCAF air-gunner.

A member of the Ojibway First Nation, Willard John Bolduc joined the RCAF at North Bay, Ontario on 9 June 1941. He trained as an air-gunner at 9 Bombing and Gunnery School, Mont Joli, Quebec. Sgt. Bolduc was posted overseas during October 1942 and served as a mid-upper gunner on Lancasters with 15 Squadron RAF.

P/O Bolduc was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross during June 1944, the citation reading,
“Pilot Officer Bolduc has taken part in many operational sorties including attacks on such important and strongly defended targets as Berlin, Hamburg and Essen. In June 1943, while over Cologne, his aircraft was attacked by an enemy fighter. This officer's accurate fire damaged the enemy aircraft which broke off the attack and was probably destroyed. Another time during a sortie against Nuremburg his aircraft was attacked by a Junkers 88. While making the bombing run Pilot Officer Bolduc opened fire and the enemy fighter fell to the ground in flames. At all times this air gunner has set an inspiring example by his keenness and devotion to duty.”

P/O Boluc survived the war and was repatriated to Canada on 27 November 1944.



Following a two year hiatus, the Springbank Airshow was held this summer and our museum was part of it.

THE AVRO LANCASTER Mk II

-During the latter months of 1943 and for much of the 1944, while most of the 6 Group RCAF squadrons were flying Halifaxes, three of the Canadian Squadrons were operating Bristol Hercules powered Lancaster Mk II's.

With the advent of full-scale Lancaster production, the demand placed on Rolls-Royce Merlin engine production raised the possibility of bottlenecks occurring. That bottlenecks never occurred owes much to the Bristol company and its Hercules radial engine.

Four of these were fitted to Lancaster BT810 and flight tested on 16 November 1941 with good results. Since Avro's production lines were fully committed to building Lancaster Mk I's, a contract from Armstrong-Whitworth to build Lancaster Mk II's was accepted. Between September 1942 and March 1944, Armstrong-Whitworth built three hundred aircraft at Baginton.

Early in the production, bulged bomb-doors were introduced to accommodate 8000 pound bombs. H2S sets were not fitted to the Mk II's, and this allowed for the installation of FN64 belly turrets, although it does not appear that any of these were fitted to the Mk II's operated by the RCAF. Other differences involved the engines -bell shaped

spinner covers were fitted and Beaufighter patterned air intakes and flame damping exhausts were introduced.

The performance of the Mk II was similar to that of the Merlin-powered Mk I's and Mk III's, realizing a maximum speed of 265 mph at 14,000 feet and cruising at 167 mph. The Mk II had a superior rate of climb up to 18,000 feet, but progress above this level fell off quickly. Despite its altitude limitations, as compared to the Merlin-powered Lancs, many an RCAF pilot preferred the performance and handling qualities of the Mk II. As well, the air-cooled Hercules could sustain a greater degree of damage than the liquid-cooled Merlin and the barbed exhausts cut down on exhaust glow.

408 Squadron operated Mk II's from October 1943 to September 1944, 426 Squadron from July 1943 to May 1944, and 432 from October 1943 to February 1944. Three RAF squadrons, 61, 115 and 514, operated Lancaster Mk II's.



RCAF Lancaster Mk II

KEEPING CURRENT . . .

If you change your email address, please remember to let us know at
office@bombercommandmuseum.ca.

If this newsletter has been forwarded to you and you would like to receive future newsletters directly, please advise by email to office@bombercommandmuseum.ca.

This newsletter has been sent to members and supporters of the Bomber Command Museum of Canada. To have your name deleted from our list please advise office@bombercommandmuseum.ca.

We encourage you to forward this newsletter to others who you feel may be interested.

Our newsletters are also available via [Facebook](#).