

A FOUND BROTHERS PHOTO ALBUM

Disposal of the RCAF's huge airplane inventory at war's end had been swift. And in some cases it had not been wise, for soon after War Assets had done most of its work the RCAF realized it needed Lancasters for rush conversion to anti-submarine capability. Sadly, most of the Lancs had been chopped up or sold to farmers and others.

One company which had purchased Lancasters was Found Brothers Aviation of Malton, Ontario which had acquired forty-four aircraft located in southern Alberta, paying a few hundred dollars each. The Founds also had a large number of Merlin engines and tons of spares. Their main interest lay in getting their own single-engine bush plane into production, and this meant being versatile and adaptable. They viewed surplus aircraft as a potential source of revenue, and they were right. The Canadian government was soon dealing with the Founds, buying back Lancasters, Merlins and spares, and paying market, not scrap, prices. This generated some of the funds needed by the Founds to pursue their own aircraft production plans.

Of special interest in this story is KB895, one of the later-built Canadian Lancs. It joined 434 Squadron in the spring of 1945, so may not have seen any action, and was struck off strength January 2 1947. It was then sold to a farmer near Penhold, Alberta, who had an unusual scheme in mind for it. He raised it up on cement columns and was planning to drop walls around it to give himself a novel tool shed, but like many such ideas, this one languished and eventually the farmer got rather tired of looking at his private Lancaster.

Then help arrived. A Lancaster (FM213), newly overhauled and modified by de Havilland, ground looped at Trenton. Its centre section was badly damaged and it was feared that the plane was finished. But the RCAF looked into repairing it, and consulted de Havilland, which in turn contacted Found Brothers Aviation about providing a complete centre section.

The Founds soon located KB895. Did the farmer wish to sell his airplane? You bet he did! Soon the job of stripping it was underway, supervised by N.K. Found, with help from the farmer and some local hands. First the Lanc had to be hauled down from its perch and bit by bit dismantled. This done, a big float was brought in and the huge centre section was trucked to the rail siding at Penhold. There was only one railway flatcar in service in Canada that could accommodate the load, and it was brought west from Halifax. The centre section was shipped to de Havilland, and the damaged Lanc was eventually back in the hands of the Air Force.

Lancaster FM213 is now the Mynarski Memorial Lancasters, kept in flying condition by Canadian Warplane Heritage and its centre section remains that of KB895 of 434 Squadron.

-Larry Milberry

There's even more to the KB895 story. Its connection with Calgary's Ron Jenkins and the 'Lady Orchid' nose art KB895 carried are described at <https://www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca/s,ronjenkins.html> .

Regarding the scrapping of RCAF Lancasters, a son/nephew of the Found Brothers recalled that the brothers, "made a fortune on the spark plugs and the thousands of spares because they contained platinum."





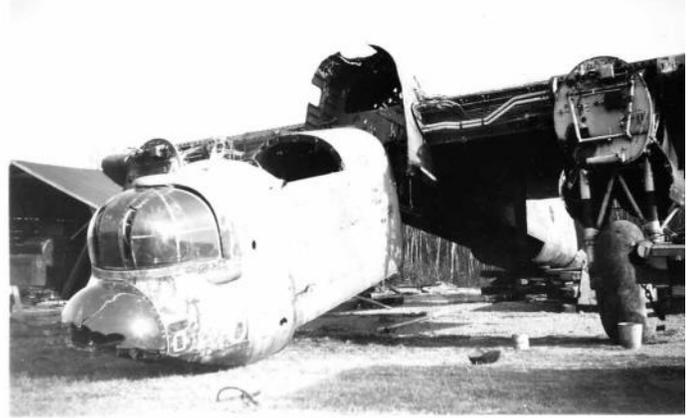
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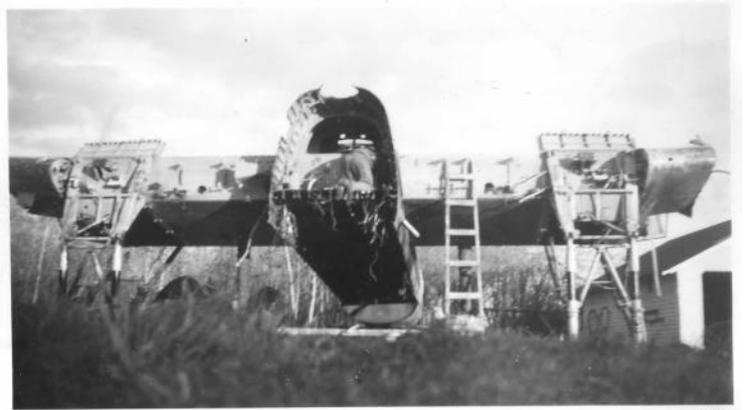
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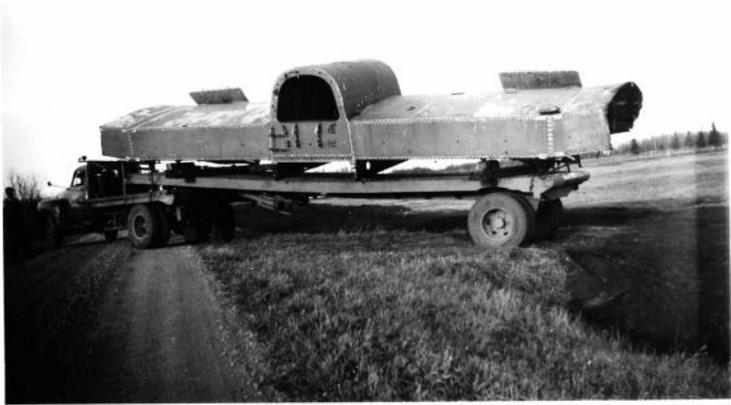
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m3



m2



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m6



m5



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m9



m8



m7



M12



M11



M10



M14



M13