

Halifax 57 Rescue (Canada)



RCAF HALIFAX LW170 RECOVERY (424 Squadron)



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Progress Report No.25

October 20, 2008

Registered Charity 84586 5740 RR0001

They say that patience is a virtue and that all good things come to those that wait. To all our members and supporters of the Halifax Project, I thank you for waiting for developments and news of our historic quest. While you have been waiting, visiting our website and saying 'when are these guys going to put up something', we have not been idle as yours truly and our Directors have been relentlessly moving forward towards our goal to find RCAF Halifax LW170.

On a human note, it should be mentioned that yours truly must be the fastest balding Project Manager this side of the South Saskatchewan with all the ups and downs and complications, hence hair pulling and tearing on this end, that have beset us in the Halifax Project.

But fear not, for we have good news of a new sonar ship with a new deal for the Halifax Project which we will be able to afford.

Myself and Director Jim Blondeau have just returned from St. Johns, Newfoundland where we met with and visited the owners and operators of the sonar ship "Polar Prince".

We met with Operations manager Mike Stephens and had a personal tour of this fine ship which is a converted Coast Guard ice-breaker that is being refitted with some new systems for its work as a deep sea sonar ship. In fact Jim and I stayed overnight on board in two well equipped cabins of the "Polar Prince" on Oct 18 while we were in meeting with Operations Manager Mike Stephens and his Chief Engineer.

During our time on board we had productive meetings with Mike and his staff about the Halifax Project. I gave them a full briefing on all of the exhaustive research and analysis that had gone into building up the Halifax survey area. I was also able to show them the 5 targets in our search box, with exact coordinates, that have been located by the Marine Institute's Fiona Fitzpatrick from studying a ocean bottom survey done 7 years ago.

Mike Stephens is an experienced ocean expedition manager and deep sea expert. He

was impressed that we had done our “homework” and could see that the sonar survey for the Halifax could be fairly straightforward from his operational end.

The “Polar Prince” is scheduled to go to the Mediterranean for some commercial work after her refit is complete in St. Johns in the next few weeks. The golden opportunity for us will be that when the vessel sails for the Med. the owners have agreed in principle to do the Halifax sonar survey, with the emphasis to survey those “hotspots” that our Irish friends have discovered from the past surveys. The sonar systems they use are very capable as they can survey down to depths of (10,000 to 12000 feet) well within the depth of the Halifax which is at over 5000 feet.

We also talked about costs to do this survey and they expressed the view that Halifax 57 Rescue would have to cover the costs of the sidestep to the Halifax sonar survey area and the time spent in the Halifax survey area but NOT the whole cost of mobilization or the voyage to Gibraltar and area. This is a generous gesture on their part and means that the costs to locate LW170 will be within our financial means if we are careful with our funding and resources.

Halifax 57 Rescue will have a financial update and more information on the Halifax sonar survey in the next Progress report 26 due out by November 5, 2008.

Please see below the photo of the Polar Prince in her heyday as a Coast Guard ice-breaker doing her thing in frozen water. (Back then she was called “Sir Humphrey Gilbert”)



The “Polar Prince” has been totally refitted with all the latest technology and with some new systems to be installed in the immediate future for her commercial jobs. She is over 210 feet long and can sleep 52 crew with all the amenities. She cruises at 11 knots and burns 6 tons of fuel a day so we know what the main costs will be for the Halifax survey.

(at survey speeds of 2 to 3 knots she burns 2 tons per day). Remember now, she is of ice-breaker construction and built like that brick you-know-what that we all talk about so she is built to operate on the Atlantic.

As our time was short for this first but vital meeting in St. Johns we have scheduled

another meeting with the directors of the "Polar Prince" in Halifax in the first week in November. This will be the time to discuss sonar survey details and costs for Halifax 57 Rescue. Immediately after this I will be sending out Progress Report 26 that will include our Remembrance Day greetings to all of you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a ship so start your engines!

As I listened to Mike Stephens say that they really want to help us in this historic project I realized this is the big break and opportunity we were looking for these past 3 years. . I pointed out to Mike that next year 2009 is the 100th anniversary of powered flight in Canada. If Canadians had to pick one, just one type aircraft that flew in RCAF combat that touched the most Canadians in all those 100 years, it would (arguably) be the RCAF Halifax.

And if this is the only RCAF Halifax known, of the 1230 Halifaxes and 605 Lancasters used by the RCAF, to have survived the war and the scrapyards then LW170 could be called the most historic bomber (with 29 combat missions including D-Day) in all of Canada's aviation history. (Now I will be looking forward to healthy debates and 'exchanges' of information with all the Nanton, Vintage Wings of Canada, CWH, and British experts) as to my spurious claims of such historic personal opinion.

To all my colleagues I say, may I buy you a cool one, while we discuss my opinion and end this by all of us agreeing that the sacrifice of all those great young people in the RCAF for our Freedom we have today is worthy of all our combined efforts to save our heritage and history..

In closing today let me address the concerns of those who are following the Halifax Project. If you are wondering why we must go to the ends of the earth and deepest parts of the ocean to save this Halifax, our mightiest aviation sword of Freedom, please come to the Nanton Lancaster Society Air Museum, Canada's Bomber Command Memorial, and stand for a little while at THE WALL with the names of the nearly 10,000 fallen airmen.

You will have your answer.

Keep your eyes on the target.

Sincerely,
Karl Kjarsgaard
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