

MAY/JUNE 2018

FLIGHT LINES

CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM



**THE CLASSIC
FLEET FINCH**
In RCAF Service

**TRAGEDY CAME
TO POCKLINGTON**
Halifax "K-King has crashed!"



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FLYFEST

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JUNE 16 & 17, 2018

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& Wings***

July 29, 2018

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MAY/JUNE 2018

FLIGHTLINES

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Cover:
Fleet Finch #4738
KOOL SHOTS

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Volunteer Editor: Bill Cumming

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Readers are encouraged to submit articles and photos. All contributions published with the author's name is the opinion of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinions and policies of the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. Responsibility for accuracy rests solely with the author.

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EXHIBITION

Great Posters from the Great War;

Recruitment in Canada 1914-1918

Exhibit ends
June 17, 2018



News

Welcome

As we move into the spring season, there is a definite feeling of excitement in the air throughout the Museum, with many of the aircraft in final preparation for return of the summer flying season. As this is being written, pilot recurrent training is about to begin, and the Lancaster is being prepared to participate at a celebration in Washington, DC, during mid-April to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force. On 1 April 1918, the newly formed Royal Air Force was adopted when the Royal Flying Corps merged with the Royal Naval Air Service, establishing the world's first independent air force. A full report of this event will be published in the next issue of *Flightlines*.

In this issue, we look at the classic Fleet Finch trainer. Although just over 400 examples of this trainer served with the RCAF during days of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan in WWII, it provided valuable flight training for thousands of fledgling pilots in support of the war effort. We also look at the incident of a 405 Squadron Halifax bomber that crashed into the town of Pocklington, England when it returned from a mission. Although a tragic story, the story provides a lot of information about what the crash investigation revealed.

We receive feedback from the readership about *Flightlines*, providing their comments about the stories that are published. Particularly enjoyable is the feedback from veterans when a story in *Flightlines* jogs their memory of an experience during their time when they were in the military. We need to capture all these memories for future generations, to help them better understand the world we live in today.

Bill Cumming, *Volunteer Editor*
museum@warplane.com



DAVID BLAIS

AGM Report

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 17 March 2018 with a good turnout of members present. In addition to the normal business of the AGM and election of the Board of Directors, Dave Rohrer provided a report to the members. He publicly thanked Pam Rickards, VP Operations, on her pending retirement after 30 years of service to CWH, and introduced Pam's replacement, Sandra Price. He commented on 2017 as quite the year; with the 150th Celebrations, Air Force day, successful Fly Fest and the Community Charity Airshow, as well as the other events held at the hangar and the Birchall Leadership Award Dinner. Dave went on to say, "we are in a good financial situation, and are very stable. In our 46th year, we are creating our own history, but have to think outside of the box, and have to continue to be relevant to our community." At the end of the meeting, the following awards were presented (left to right):

The Peter Gutowski Memorial Award (presented to an outstanding volunteer pilot who through exemplary skill, talent, service, commitment and camaraderie, professionally demonstrated the ability and performance required to safely showcase the vintage aircraft) to Steve McIntosh.

The Douglas MacRitchie Memorial Award (presented for outstanding skill and contribution to maintaining and preserving aviation heritage through restoration, maintenance and care) to Mike Asma.

The Albert (Al) Rowcliffe Memorial Award (presented to the employee of the year in recognition of outstanding performance, superior dedication and a can-do attitude on the job throughout the past year) to Pam Rickards.

The Alan Ness Award (presented in recognition of an individual or group for service above and beyond what can normally be expected of a volunteer member) to Bill Rouw.

The Alan Shelley Award (presented to an outstanding Tour Guide/Duty Day volunteer who has represented the museum and its mission through their exemplary service, professionalism and commitment) to Oswald Zeijlstra.

Congratulations to all the award recipients!





AL MICKELOFF

75th Anniversary DAMBUSTERS

On 12 May 2018, join us at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum as we commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Dambusters. Learn about the Canadian involvement in the famous Dambuster Raid with a presentation at 1pm by accomplished author, journalist and broadcaster Ted Barris.

Ted Barris follows his well honed and highly successful approach of combining vivid characters with thumping narrative in his presentation of "Canadian Dambusters." Operation Chastise was the daring attack on German dams carried out on 16/17 May 1943 by Royal Air Force 617 Squadron Lancasters. Of the 133 airmen who took off on the Dams Raid, 30 were Canadian and 15 of them did not return.

After Ted Barris's hour long presentation, the Lancaster will be officially dedicated. This year in memory of this daring raid and the Canadian involvement, the port side of our Lancaster wears the markings of Wing Commander Guy Gibson's aircraft, AJ-G ED932. For leading the raid, Gibson was awarded the Victoria Cross and his crew (including two Canadians) each received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

We are also extending an invitation to family members of all Dambusters to attend this occasion.



75th Anniversary DAMBUSTERS

May 12, 2018





News

B-29 "FIFI" to visit the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum



DOUG FISHER

The B-29 "FIFI" is touring Canada this summer and is making a stop at Hamilton from August 30 to September 2. And, for the first time ever in Canada, "FIFI" will be offering flights for purchase.

The Boeing B-29 Superfortress is a four-engine, propeller-driven heavy bomber flown primarily by the United States during World War II and the Korean War. It is most well known for carrying out the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Only two B-29s remain flying today. Nicknamed "FIFI," the B-29 is operated by the Commemorative Air Force.

Additionally, the B-29 will be making her only Canadian airshow appearance in Brantford at the Community Charity Airshow, in formation with the Lancaster on Wednesday, August 29.

Further details at warplane.com.



TONI MCFARLANE

Welcome Sandra! New VP of Operations

Sandra Price (right) has been hired to replace Pam Rickards as the Vice President of Operations. She has started her museum indoctrination and will work with Pam for the next couple of months as she prepares to take over for Pam in June. Sandra comes to us with a solid background in client services, personnel administration and management, business systems and telecommunications.



CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

Aircraft Updates



AL MICKELLOFF

Fairey Firefly

The custom-made (and expensive) internal folding mechanism parts for the Firefly wings have finally arrived. There is still a fair amount of work ahead to install, but it's another step closer to seeing our flagship, the Firefly, back in the air.

de Havilland Tiger Moth

Steady progress is taking place on the refurbishment of the wings for Tiger Moth #8922. This is shaping up to be a good year at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, as several aircraft that have been under maintenance will be back flying again!



AL MICKELLOFF



AL MICKELLOFF

North American Harvard

Spring cleaning has started as Harvard (CF-UUU) is being stripped for a fresh paint job. It is expected to be painted and flying later this season.

The Classic Fleet Finch in RCAF Service

by Bill Cumming



KOOLSHOTS

"When I looked at those Fleets I just loved them right away. They looked like something that would fly! I liked their outline with the radial engine and so on, I had a real thrill; I felt, that's something I can handle." Those words were quoted by a RCAF Student Pilot, after first setting his eyes on the Fleet Finch.

The Royal Canadian Air Force was introduced to Fleet Aircraft of Canada, when it placed its first order in 1930 for 20 Kinner-powered Fleet 7 trainers. Known as the Fawn in RCAF service, a total of 51 Fleet Fawns would eventually serve with the air force. Most were stationed at RCAF Station Trenton, primarily in the flight training role. In service however, the Fleet 7s developed spinning problems. This led to the development of the Fleet Model 10.

AS A RESULT OF TESTING, THE RCAF REQUESTED SEVERAL MODIFICATIONS BE MADE TO THE AIRCRAFT TO MAKE IT SUITABLE FOR AEROBATICS WITH FULL MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

A Fleet Model 10D was loaned to the RCAF for evaluation. As a result of testing, the RCAF requested several modifications be made to the aircraft to make it suitable for aerobatics with full military equipment. The changes included making the wing spars from Douglas fir instead of spruce, heavier gauge tubing for the interplane struts and fuselage members, doubling the landing wires, and double wires on the underside of the tail plane. With these changes incorporated, Fleet designated this design the Model 16.

When the Fleet 16 was offered to the RCAF in 1939 for possible procurement as an elementary trainer, it met a warm reception. The Fawn was preferred by RCAF instructors to the more modern Tiger Moth, and it was felt that the new aircraft would be even better. On 11 July 1939, the RCAF announced that an order had been placed with Fleet Aircraft Ltd for 27 Model 16 trainers, powered by the 160 hp Kinner R-5-2. They were known by the RCAF as Finch Is and allotted serials 1001 to 1027. They were taken on RCAF strength between October 1939 and February 1940. Most were issued on delivery to the Central Flying School at Trenton.



CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

By this time, Canada was at war and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) was being organized. The Finch was selected as one of the two elementary trainers (the other was the Tiger Moth) to inaugurate this scheme. An order was issued in January 1940 for 404 Fleet Model 16B trainers, powered with the lower-powered 130 hp Kinner F3-5R engine. The lower-horsepower Kinner engine was specified for this order as the US military at this time was ramping up the production of Ryan PT22s for the US training program; as many 160 hp Kinner engines as possible were required to support that program. The Model 16B trainers, known as the Finch II, were delivered between March 1940 and March 1941 with RCAF serials 4405 to 4808. The first Finch II was flown at Fort Erie on 12 March 1940 with Fleet's test pilot Tommy Williams at the controls. Most Finch II trainers were delivered to the RCAF during 1940, with the final 69 arriving during the first months of 1941.

During the summer of 1940 a number of crashes occurred with Finches after they entered inverted spins. Two investigations were held into the crashes, one in Ottawa by Dr. J. Green of the National Research Council at the RCAF Test & Development Establishment, and the other by Fleet. The investigation held in Ottawa determined that if the height of the rear fuselage fairing was reduced, the aircraft recovered normally. Tommy Williams, using RCAF Finch 4764, felt the trouble had arisen due to the fitting of the two-piece tail plane, and after the gaps between the fuselage and the tail plane were taped over, the aircraft recovered normally. Consequently, a metal fairing was fitted to the fuselage on all Model 16s to minimize the gap, and the trouble disappeared.

SUITABLE FOR AEROBATICS WITH FULL MILITARY EQUIPMENT.



Fleet Finch IIs, circa 1942, No. 7 Elementary Flying Training School at Windsor, Ontario.
JACK MCNULTY COLLECTION



Attesting to the rugged design of the aircraft, a Finch II RCAF #4702 with No. 7 Elementary Flying Training School at London, Ontario, in an unusual state. This Category B accident happened on 14 May 1941. The Finch was returned to service with the RCAF until stuck off strength in October 1944.

BUD YOUNG VIA CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

Most of the Finches were used by Elementary Flying Training Schools (EFTS) as part of the BCATP; as well, Finches were assigned to the Central Flying School at Trenton. The Elementary Flying Training Schools were organized and run on a civilian-managed, commercial basis. At the outbreak of war, 14 flying clubs had been awarded contracts to train pilots, in addition to the eight that had been doing so since June 1939. A number of Finch aircraft were also issued to the Central Flying School at Trenton and to the Flight Instructor Schools that were opened as the Plan developed. One RAF Student Instructor Trainee recalls a training exercise "We were taught a patter. This so called patter tells the instructor how to explain to the student how the manoeuvre that is being carried out is actually accomplished. It becomes standard, so that all instructors use the same method for teaching students. We were supposed to be out practising our



Finch II RCAF #4372, No. 13
EFTS St. Eugene, Ontario,
circa October 1944.
MILBERRY COLLECTION



The first Fleet Finch I, RCAF #1001, now registered
CF-AAE. This aircraft is currently owned by the
Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin, Alberta.
Photo is circa July 1977. JACK MCNULTY COLLECTION



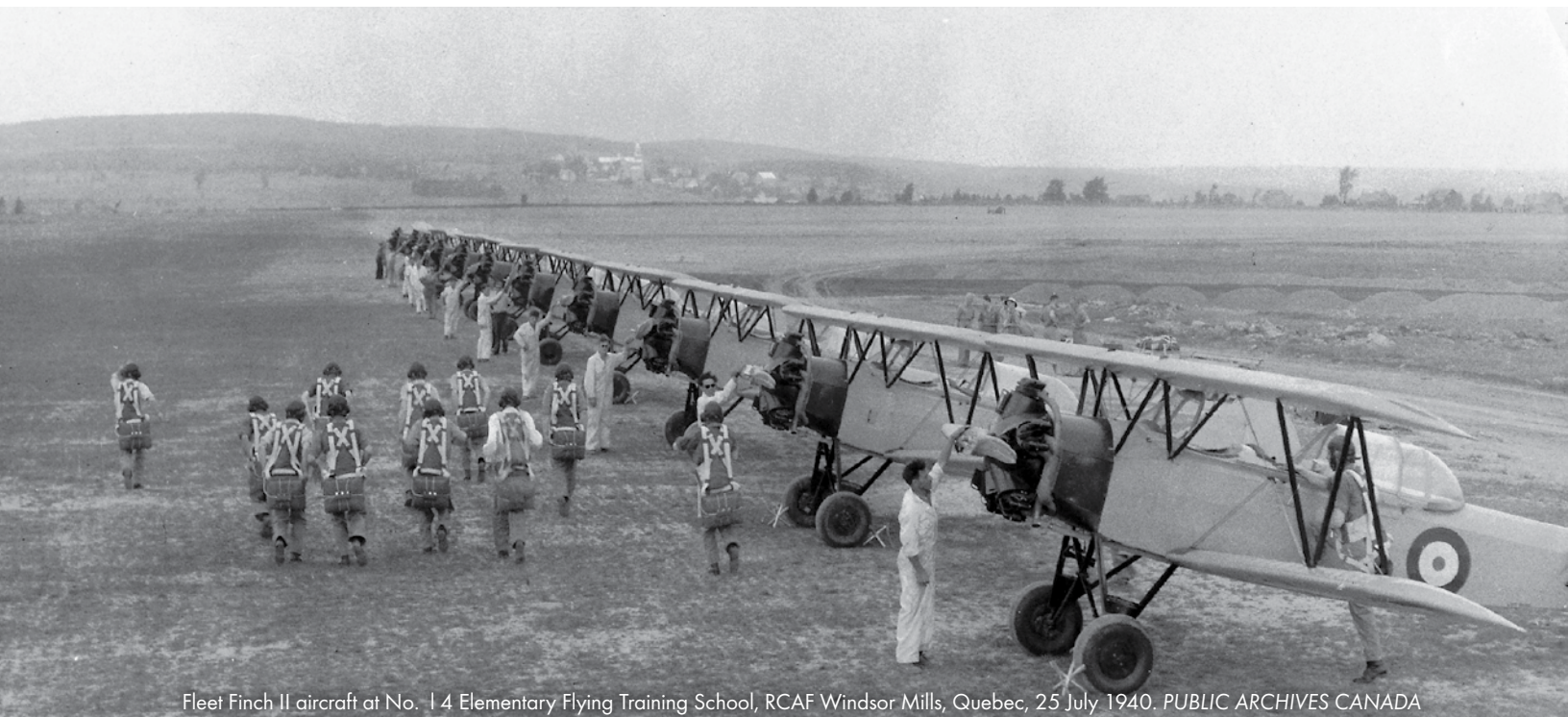
Fleet Finch I, RCAF #1005, Central Flying
School, Trenton; circa 1940. Note the absence
of the canopy. In regular RCAF service, the
Finch was operated with the canopy installed.
CANADA AVIATION AND SPACE MUSEUM

patter, but those Fleets were like old Sopwith Camels, so we'd get out and chase each other up and down the skyways and have a good time. We'd get on top of the clouds and do a lot of foolish things I wouldn't do now. When I think back to how we flew in those days, I wonder I'm still here."

**WE'D GET ON TOP OF THE CLOUDS AND DO A LOT OF FOOLISH THINGS I WOULDN'T DO NOW.
WHEN I THINK BACK TO HOW WE FLEW IN THOSE DAYS, I WONDER I'M STILL HERE.**

Throughout its operational life the Finch proved popular and versatile. It was capable of wheel, ski and even float operation, and although performance was not spectacular, the Finch's simple, rugged construction and pleasant handling characteristics endeared the aircraft to the air force. The Finch I with the larger 160 hp engine was supplied with full electrics, and the RCAF considered using this model for night training. However the aircraft was deemed unsuitable for night flying training, and consequently the Finch II was supplied with the lower 130 hp engine with no electrics. The Finch was highly regarded by the air force, and service and surviving records suggest that the Model 16 was preferred to the more numerous Tiger Moth supplied by de Havilland Canada.

The Finches continued in use until the summer of 1942, when they were eventually supplemented but never totally replaced by Fleet-built Fairchild Cornells. Almost all the RCAF's surviving Finches were withdrawn from service in October 1944, but the last of the Fleet Model 16s remained in service with the RCAF until 1947.



Fleet Finch II aircraft at No. 14 Elementary Flying Training School, RCAF Windsor Mills, Quebec, 25 July 1940. PUBLIC ARCHIVES CANADA



Cam and his Finch

As this issue of *Flightlines* is featuring the Fleet Finch, we took the opportunity to ask CWH lifetime member Cam Harrod about flying his Fleet Finch. Cam owns and operates Fleet Finch II, RCAF 4494, C-FDAF, and he is considered the highest-time Fleet Finch pilot in Canada today.

In Cam's own words, "Being an airplane brat, I come by the love of aviation naturally." His father, Charlie, started at the Hamilton Aero Club in 1936 (at the old Hamilton Airport) where he learned to fly and obtained his AME licence. His father also served as a flight instructor on the Finch with #9 EFTS at St. Catharines, Ontario, during the war. A cousin of his mother - F/L George W. Johnson - was a Spitfire pilot who served with both 411 and 401 RCAF Squadrons during the war, was awarded the DFC & Bar for his actions, and was the highest ranking Spitfire ace from the Hamilton area. Both of Cam's parents were instrumental in starting his aviation career. Cam joined the CWH Museum in 1978 to work on the Cessna Crane under the guidance of Ken Elliot. About a year later, he was one of the students sponsored through the Katimavik program on an AME apprenticeship to work on the restoration of the Lancaster under the guidance of Norm Etheridge.

Cam spoke proudly of the Finch, "It looks like a real biplane. When I sit back at airshows with the Stearmans and the Tiger Moths, all the people migrate to the Finch - it's just the look of the airplane. It is a big rugged-built Fleet airplane. The cockpit is roomy. A unique thing about the Finch aircraft is that it is a front-seat solo aircraft, which makes it a better airplane visually. However, the forward visibility is obstructed by the Kinner engine with one cylinder straight up the middle, and you have to look between the number 2 and number 5 cylinders when you are landing."

"With those big tires, the aircraft taxis beautifully over rough terrain with no problems. It's got heel brakes, and they are very effective and you have to be careful setting them up. If set up wrong and you are taxiing too quickly, you can put the airplane on its nose. I have never experienced that. Saying that, it is a pretty heavy airplane, weighing 1,870 lbs when fully loaded, and it's got a heavy tail and you can barely pick it up on your own. So you would have to do a lot to put it up on its nose. The oil tank is located just in front of your knees, so on those August days the oil tank gets pretty hot - you are never cold in a Finch. My Finch is restored in its original configuration with canopies, but I fly with the front canopy open in the summer months."

"My airplane has the 160 hp Kinner engine. On takeoff, it goes right away and the tail comes up quickly. The landing gear is unique on a Finch. The landing gear is kind of in two stages, as you come down on landing the gear spreads open and then sits down on the shocks; as you take off the gear kind of goes bow legged."

"The Finch climbs well with only the pilot, and can keep up with a Citabria in the climb. It cruises about 90 mph, not bad, burning 9 gph, better than a Stearman's performance. With the bigger engine, the Finch is a little heavier on the controls - not light like Tiger Moth controls. With the Fleet it is a bit like a truck and you can throw those controls around a bit. Once in the air it climbs nice and stable and being a little heavier on the controls you have to fly it. Like any antique airplane, it needs a little bit of rudder and aileron in turns, and will not come out of a turn unless you bring it out. It is not a balanced aileron airplane and you have to bring it out of the turn."

"It stalls about 52 mph, very uneventful, and unless you are a very experienced pilot you almost don't recognize the stall, it never shudders on the stall, just mushes. A very stable airplane, probably too stable for what it is asked to do. If trimmed properly, it is a hands-off airplane and will fly all day. Besides that, I have never had the Finch above 5,000 feet, but my father did one flight up to about 12,000 feet and barely made it there. I have restored my Finch as it was when it served with #4 EFTS at Windsor Mills, and tried to restore it as authentically as possible. In fact it has the Fleet stencils on every part."

Today, Cam is employed by Pratt & Whitney Canada as a production manager, as well as providing advice and guidance to other Fleet restoration projects, and contracting antique aircraft for the movie industry. Each year, Cam and his Finch support many of the CWH aviation events throughout the flying season.

COOL SHOTS



Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum's Fleet Finch II

In October 1987, Mr. Ralph Allen and Mr. Fred Deveaux donated their Fleet Model 16B Finch II to Canadian Warplane Heritage. In its light-blue fuselage colour with yellow wings, it arrived at the Mount Hope museum on the back of a flatbed truck and trailer from Lachute, Quebec.



Restoration of Finch #4738 in the '90s.
CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

The Finch was manufactured by Fleet Aircraft in Fort Erie, Ontario, in 1940 with manufacturer's serial number 623 for the Royal Canadian Air Force. It was taken on strength as a primary trainer on 27 December 1940 with RCAF number 4738, being assigned to No. 22 Elementary Flying Training School at RCAF Station Ancienne Lorette, Quebec (which eventually became Quebec City International Airport). On 19 October 1941, Finch 4738 suffered a Category C accident, was repaired and returned to service until it was struck off strength with the RCAF on 17 October 1944.

In 1962, the Finch was purchased by Ralph Allen and Fred Deveaux, and was completely rebuilt and given the civil registration CF-FUI. It achieved a bit of movie fame, being featured in Woody Allen's 1969 film *Don't Drink the Water*. During the filming, an antiquing process used on the aircraft damaged the fabric covering. After filming was completed in 1970, the Finch was recovered, overhauled and relicensed.



Finch #4738 while owned by Ralph Allen and Fred Deveaux in the 70s. CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

When the Finch arrived at the CWH Museum in 1987, a full restoration (both airframe and engine) was required before the aircraft could commence on a regular flying schedule. Located in the back of hangar 3 for the restoration, the Finch miraculously survived the devastating fire of the hangar during February 1993. The restoration project was completed in October 1995, when the Finch made its first flight in eight years. Fully restored to flying condition into its original RCAF colours and markings of Finch 4738, as based at No. 22 EFTS in 1943, the Finch joined the fleet of aircraft that salute the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.



CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

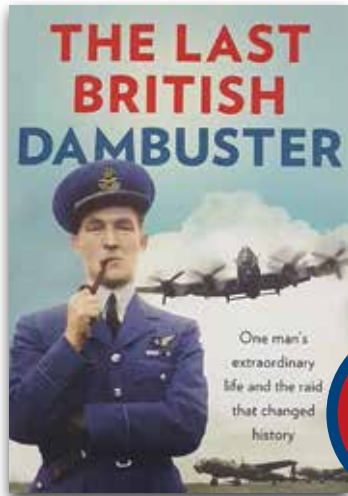


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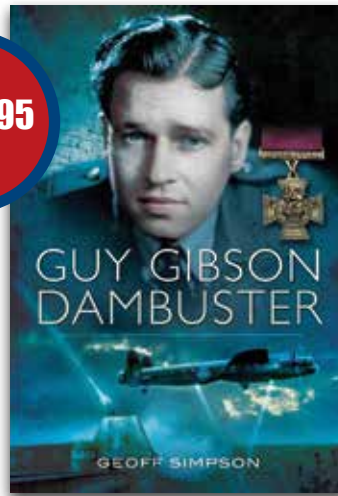
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RECOMMENDED READING



\$39⁹⁵

\$16⁹⁹



\$53⁹⁹

Lancaster B.III
Dambusters
1/72 Plastic Model



\$14⁹⁹
EACH

Canadian Warplane
Heritage Museum
T-Shirt Slate Blue



\$14⁹⁹
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Canadian Warplane
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T-Shirt Charcoal



\$23⁹⁹
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Lancaster Black
Plank T-Shirt



\$12⁹⁹

Canadian Warplane
Heritage Museum Mug
14 oz. Heavyweight



\$19⁹⁹

Avro Lancaster Tin Sign

MAY/JUNE 2018

FLIGHTLINES





Tragedy Came To Pocklington Halifax “K-King has crashed!”

by Peter Allam

Halifax B. Mk. II, Serial No. W7710, LQ-R, Ruhr Valley Express, 405 Squadron RCAF, a sister squadron aircraft to K-King, the Halifax that crashed into the town of Pocklington. IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

The 24th of July 1942 was dawning cool and clear, the first faint light on the horizon welcomed by the lilting song of a lone skylark. As night grudgingly gave way to day, the semi-darkness began to slowly fill with the rising thunder of Merlin engines, which heralded 405 Squadron’s return. A few short hours before, the young aircrews had been over the inferno of Duisburg, and now a silent, collective prayer was offered up for their safe deliverance. Black specks against the pale eastern sky, the Halifaxes were coming home, and for once, it seemed as if the Reaper was searching elsewhere for his victims.

THE THIRD AIRCRAFT K-KING HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MAKE ANOTHER CIRCUIT AND WAS DOING SO WHEN, WITHOUT WARNING, SWETMAN SAW A LONG TRAIL OF FLAME ERUPT FROM ONE OF THE LEFT-HAND ENGINES.

On the veranda of the watch office, Flight Lieutenant Bill Swetman checked his watch - it showed 4:50 am. A 405 Squadron pilot himself and the officer in charge of night flying, Swetman was carefully watching the squadron’s return, each squeal of tyres announcing another safe landing. First home was Sgt. Smith in U-Uniform, and the next two arrivals were already in the circuit, the first of which had already been given permission to land. The third aircraft K-King had been instructed to make another circuit and was doing so when, without warning, Swetman saw a long trail of flame erupt from one of the left-hand engines. Moments later, the Tannoy loudspeaker in the watch office crackled into life and the voice of K-King’s skipper, Flight Sergeant Bob Albright, filled the room - “Standby for crash landing!”



Counting them home. A scene in the watch office at RAF Snaith, very much like the one at Pocklington on the morning of K-King’s loss. IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Instead of continuing its turn in the circuit, K-King flew eastwards until, and when overhead the nearby town of Pocklington, Swetman heard the engine noise abruptly cease. To his horror, he saw the Halifax stall and roll onto its back. From the aircraft’s low height, he knew there could be no chance of recovery or escape, and seconds later a fireball and column of thick black smoke signalled the end of the Halifax and her young crew. With a heavy heart, Bill Swetman turned to the staff inside the watch office and shouted “K-King has crashed!”

Having also witnessed the final moments of the Halifax, Police Constable Lewis Falkingham was one of the first on the scene of the crash in New Street. Although the remains of the aircraft were still burning furiously, miraculously there had been no serious casualties on the ground. A young boy named John Fowler escaped virtually unharmed after a Merlin engine fell through the roof of his house and crashed onto the dining



CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

room floor, next to the Morrison air raid shelter under which he was sleeping. The town fire brigade soon had the blaze under control and the sun rose on a grim scene of destruction, the still smouldering wreckage of the Halifax lying blackened and shattered in the narrow street.

The loss on operations of any crew members was always heartbreaking, yet the loss of a crew in a circumstance such as this, when almost safely home and with the welcoming lights of the runway in view, seemed somehow particularly brutal and tragic. Just who were the young men who perished that summer morning within touching distance of safety and what could have caused such an accident to happen?

The crew of K-King were a very typical mix of nationalities. Already an experienced bomber pilot, and at 26 the oldest member of the crew, skipper Robert "Bob" Albright was a New Brunswick native. He had joined up in September 1940, and after successfully completing flying training, received his wings on 27 July 1941. Just two days later he was married, and after a painfully short wartime honeymoon, Robert embarked on a troopship bound for the UK. In January 1942, he started his first tour of operations flying Whitleys in 58 Squadron, before being posted in early April to a Halifax Heavy Conversion Unit.



Wing Commander Bill Swetman DFC, the watch tower officer when K-King crashed. *GLOBE & MAIL*

Also from Canada were Toronto native Navigator William Thurlow, and Wireless Operator Robert Hexter from London. Both 22-year-old Flight Sergeants had served previously on other bomber squadrons, and were already seasoned airmen. The baby of the crew at just 21 years was Air Gunner Thomas Owens from Westmount, Quebec. Although tender in years, the young Sergeant was himself no stranger to bomber operations, having previously served on 10 Squadron at Leeming in Yorkshire.

THE LOSS OF A CREW IN A CIRCUMSTANCE SUCH AS THIS, WHEN ALMOST SAFELY HOME AND WITH THE WELCOMING LIGHTS OF THE RUNWAY IN VIEW, SEEMED SOMEHOW PARTICULARLY BRUTAL AND TRAGIC.

The RCAF did not train any heavy bomber flight engineers, so as was usual in Canadian squadrons, the crew's Flight Engineer came from the UK. Sergeant Maxwell Apperson was born in 1918 in the town of Newtownards near Belfast in present day Northern Ireland, and he was married to an English girl. Also hailing from the UK was 23-year-old Bomb Aimer Sergeant William Colloton from Birkenhead, Cheshire, and Air Gunner Sergeant Albert Western, born in 1917 in the tiny south Devon hamlet of Brampford Speke.



Witness to tragedy. The National School in New Street, Pocklington, where K-King came to rest. POCKLINGTONHISTORY.COM

The seven men's individual paths finally met when they were posted into No. 405 (Vancouver) RCAF Squadron. Initially formed within 4 Group at Driffield in April 1941, the squadron moved to Pocklington in June from where it flew the RCAF's very first bombing operation on June 12/13. At the time of the loss of K-King, 405 Squadron's Commanding Officer was the highly experienced and respected Wing Commander "Johnny" Fauquier, later to gain fame with Pathfinder Force and as CO of 617 Squadron.

Of the airmen who ultimately became the final crew of aircraft K-King, the first

to become operational on 405 was William Colloton who flew to Le Havre in Wellington P-Peter on 12 April 1942 as part of Sgt. McFarlane's crew. Robert Hexter followed two days later on a raid to Dortmund flying in the crew of F/Sgt Hill. Shortly afterwards and no doubt accompanied by a sigh of relief all round, the squadron finally exchanged its venerable but war-weary Merlin-powered Wellington Mk. IIs for Halifaxes. Consequently during the changeover period, the squadron didn't fly any operations, and the Albright crew's next appearance on the Order of Battle was on the penultimate day of May.



405 Sqn Halifax Mk. II W7708 LQ-H bombing up at Pocklington, June 1942. Shot down by a night fighter just days after this photograph was taken, remarkably the whole crew survived to become POWs.

On that night, and for the first time under the captaincy of Albright himself, the crew took A-Apple on Operation Millenium, the historic first 1,000 bomber raid to Cologne. Perhaps not surprisingly, A-Apple became Albright's favourite aircraft and he flew it on most of his ops on 405. Although still with Albright as skipper, the crew lineup varied somewhat over the next few operations. On July 21st, Pilot George Strong, a 23-year-old from Vancouver, flew with the crew as "Second Dickey", in order to gain operational experience before captaining his own crew. The following night, on the fateful trip to Duisburg, Thomas Owens became the last airman to join the crew and consequently was tragically killed on his first operation with 405 Squadron.

SUSPICION QUICKLY FELL ON THE PORT OUTER ENGINE, WHERE EVIDENCE OF A MAJOR COOLANT LEAK WAS FOUND.



Sgt. Robert "Bob" Albright and Ella Mary Hull on their wedding day 29 July 1941. Bob Albright was the pilot of K-King when it was tragically lost on 24 July 1942. B. HUTCHINSON

RAF Pocklington's Station Engineer Officer began his investigation by examining the aircraft's accident records. Halifax Mk. II Series 1 W7769 had been built by Handley Page Ltd. at their Radlett factory and was released for service on 4 July 1942. Taken on charge by 405 Squadron and assigned the squadron codes LQ-K (K-King), at the time of the crash the aircraft had flown less than 20 hours.

The investigation at the accident site found that the Halifax had struck two houses in New Street, a corner of the roof of No. 24 having been demolished by the impact. The rear fuselage had broken off in the process, coming to rest against the side of the house, and part of a wing was found lying against the side of No. 22. The aircraft had come to rest with its nose buried in the road, hard up against the railings of the Pocklington National School. The undercarriage was found to be still retracted, right rudder trim was set and perhaps most tellingly, none of the propellers had been feathered.

Suspicion quickly fell on the port outer engine, where evidence of a major coolant leak was found. Both cylinder blocks were seriously overheated and burned and one exhaust valve had completely broken free. The Station Engineer Officer recorded his belief that because of the probable high leak rate, the



coolant level would have dropped below the temperature sending unit in the engine's coolant header tank, before a significant rise in temperature was indicated on the cockpit gauge, thus giving the crew little or no warning of an impending engine failure.

Investigating Officer Wing Commander Leonard Young recorded that the primary cause of the crash had been a rapid loss of coolant from the port outer engine leading to overheating, failure and fire. Tragically, examination of the aircraft wreckage also indicated that the Flight Engineer, possibly believing that the failure of the port outer engine was caused by a fuel supply problem may have then accidentally miss-set the wing tank fuel cocks, causing the previously unaffected port inner engine to fail as well. With both left-hand engines failed, W/C Young stated his belief that "The Pilot would have been unable to prevent the aircraft swinging over and spinning in."

Halifax crews were unfortunately only too familiar with engine coolant leaks and the poor layout of the fuel cocks, as recalled by the author's father, Bert Allam, from his own experiences of flying Mk. II, "The controls were mostly easy at hand, apart from the main engine fuel cocks, which were reached over the pilot's shoulder, the fuel tank change cocks, which were located at the bottom of the Flight Engineer's panel, and the fuel tank transfer cocks, which were situated near the rest bunks in between the



405 Squadron Commanding Officer W/C J. E. Fauquier at the controls of a Halifax in 1942. CANADIAN FORCES JOINT IMAGERY CENTRE



Fitters servicing the port Mk. XX Merlin engines of a 35 Squadron Halifax Mk. II in the summer of 1942. The large coolant header tank of the port inner engine is clearly visible. IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

wing spars. The Merlins were also rather prone to glycol leaks, identified by puffs of white smoke by day or fat white sparks by night. In the event of a serious leak, one was supposed to stop the engine and feather the prop, but to follow that rule, one would have sometimes been left flying a four-engined glider! Often we carried on and hoped for the best."

THE GALLANT YOUNG CREW OF HALIFAX K-KING LIE SIDE BY SIDE WITH 49 OTHER YOUNG ARMEN

The accident investigation complete, the wreckage of Halifax K-King was assessed as Category E2/FB (a write off – suitable only for scrap) and was struck off charge on 28 July 1942, the aircraft's flying life having lasted exactly 20 days. The families of F/Sgt. Hexter and Sgts. Western and Colloton requested that the remains of their loved ones be sent for burial elsewhere within the UK, and three days after the crash and under a leaden grey sky, 405 Squadron bade farewell to the other five crew members of aircraft K-King. The Operations Record Book recorded that squadron personnel joined with relatives and friends "... to pay tribute to those valiant men who went to their deaths for the cause of freedom. The bodies of F/Sgt. Albright, P/O Strong, F/Sgt. Thurlow, Sgt. Owens and Sgt. Apperson, draped with the national colours and covered with flowers were escorted by officers and men of the squadron, along with relatives and friends of the deceased, to the little churchyard of Barmby-on-the-Moor where full service honours were accorded before laying them to rest."

In death as in life, the gallant young crew of Halifax K-King lie side by side with 49 other young airmen who also lost their lives at RAF Pocklington in World War II. May their sacrifice be ever remembered.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Robert Albright's step-daughter, Beth Hutchison, in the compilation of this article.

From the Archives – The Monuments Men

by Erin Napier



Monuments Men Officers Walker Hancock, Lamont Moore, George Stout and two unidentified soldiers in Marburg, Germany, June 1945.

During the Second World War, Hitler and the Nazis planned and executed the theft of some of the greatest artworks of Western Europe. Looting has always been a part of war, but the extent to which the Nazis went far surpassed anything previously attempted. Theft of almost every imaginable item occurred, from paintings, sculpture and furniture, to gold, diamonds and currency. Stained glass, church bells, even entire libraries were victims to Nazi plunder. For Hitler, nothing was too large or important to steal.

The impact of these damaged and stolen cultural treasures became apparent, and the vast stores of Nazi loot became the responsibility of the Allied armies. Identifying, locating, securing and sorting the millions of stolen objects was a complex and often dangerous process. And so a team of trained specialists was sent overseas to help in the recovery. This group, called the Monuments, Fine Art and Archives Officers (MFAA) included art historians, curators and archaeologists, soon became known as the *Monuments Men*.

Although they were poorly equipped and orders were vague, the Monuments Men were often at the forefront of battle. As the Allies moved through occupied Europe, the Monuments Men put their lives on the line to safeguard the continent's cultural heritage and return art to its rightful owners.

One of their greatest triumphs was the discovery in Austria of the Altaussee salt mines. Hidden in tunnels 35 miles long, Hitler had stockpiled more than 6,000 works of art. A plot to blow up the salt mines before the Monuments Men arrived was foiled by local miners who refused to detonate the charges. Works recovered from the tunnels included paintings by Michelangelo and Vermeer.

Today, the legacy of the Monuments Men can be felt in every major museum. The art that is seen there may not exist today if it weren't for these brave men and women. It is through the efforts of the Monuments Men that an estimated 5 million pieces of art, precious objects, as well as countless historic buildings and statues were recovered. Yet for all the successes of this special military unit, which disbanded in 1946, it is believed that thousands of objects looted by the Nazi's, including paintings by Raphael and Monet, are still missing.

The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum will showcase an exhibit on loan from the Smithsonian Archives of American Art to tell the Monuments Men story. *Monuments Men: On the Front Line to Save Europe's Art 1942-1946* will be on display from June 22 to November 18, 2018.

2018 Calendar

May 12
DAMBUSTERS 75th Anniversary

June 16 & 17
Come fly with us at FLYFEST

July 7
AIR FORCE DAY
Past, Present & Future

July 29
VINTAGE WHEELS & WINGS

August 29
COMMUNITY CHARITY AIRSHOW
At the Brantford Airport

August 30 to September 2
B-29 "FIFI" Visit

September 22 & 23
CLASSICS OF THE GOLDEN AGE
Indoor Car Show

November 11
REMEMBRANCE DAY -
Large indoor service

November 17
SWING OUT TO VICTORY
Dinner & Dance

*Please visit warplane.com for additional updates. Dates subject to change.



CANADIAN WARPLANE HERITAGE MUSEUM

The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum



Pam Rickards,
Vice President of Operations

Have I really been here 30 years? That seems like such a long time. When I started to work here at Canadian Warplane Heritage, I had no idea what was in store for me. It has been an amazing journey watching the museum grow from two old WWII hangars to the world-class facility that is home to our collection today.

Who would have thought we would make this building our new home after the devastating fire of 1993 and the challenging three years following that. I have watched us grow from a small museum with a few members to a major business that is now the #1 visitor attraction in Hamilton. This achievement has not come without its challenges from the museum's creation by Dennis Bradley and under the management of R.J. Franks, who developed new revenue streams that helped to keep the wolves from the doors. Following R.J. Franks' retirement, Dave Rohrer became President and CEO and he has been successful in significantly reducing the museum's debt.

Over the years I have had the privilege to work with many good friends, colleagues and volunteers. I would like to especially thank Dave Rohrer for his friendship and mentoring. Dave helped me to grow both personally and professionally, and the museum is lucky to have such a great leader for the staff and volunteers. Our current staff are a very dedicated group of individuals who I shall miss very much. As the saying goes "there is no I in team" and this is very apparent in the team I have been fortunate to work with both now and during the past 30 years.

A friend said that I should relay a few stories from my time here at the museum. There are so many. Do I tell of the great bun fight in Hangar #4? Or perhaps the day when somebody's dog put its wet nose on the extension cord and blew all the fuses in the office? Or the day when a film crew sheared the head off a sprinkler in the TG Room and caused a leak so large that not only was the carpet floating but it was actually raining in the café? I can honestly say that there have been very few days during the past 30 years when I did not look forward to coming to work – ready for any new challenge that came our way!

Leaving the museum is bittersweet for me. Although I am looking forward to being more involved in the lives of my grandchildren and spending some more time pursuing various hobbies and interests, I am very much going to miss coming to work each day. As I have said to many new employees when they joined our team, life is never dull here!

I look back with gratitude at my experiences at the museum. As I leave, I am taking many of you with me in my memories. I will always remember the things we achieved together, the many successes we had, and the laughs along the way.

Lastly, I leave you with this thought. There is only ever one of each of us; we are unique. We are neither better nor less than anybody else but rather the best or least of ourselves. I am still working on finding the best of me. It is an exciting, ongoing journey. Thank you for being my travelling companions along a large and important part of my way. I am forever grateful for your stimulating company and the enormous collection of shared experiences indelibly printed on my mind.

Pam Rickards
Vice President of Operations
Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum



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