

FAMILY OF FOUR RCAF DAMBUSTER AIRMEN TO GATHER AT THE BOMBER COMMAND MUSEUM FOR A SPECIAL PRESENTATION

On Saturday, April 22nd at 11:00 am, as part of the museum's commemoration of the First Operational Flight of the Lancaster Bomber, a special presentation will be made prior to a start-up of the museum's Lancaster Bomber.

Shere Lowe, daughter of John Fraser who was shot down over the Mohne Dam and became a Prisoner of War, will present a very special photo album to Jim Heather. Jim is the nephew of Ken Earnshaw who was the navigator on the same aircraft as Fraser. Earnshaw was killed when the Lancaster crashed. The photo album, together with Fraser's logbook and other Dambuster-related documents, had been stolen from the families in the 1990's.

Also attending will be Joe McCarthy jr, son of Squadron Leader Joe McCarthy, a pilot who attacked the Sorpe Dam and Rob Taerum, the nephew of Harlo Taerum, navigator of the lead aircraft on the raid that was flown by Wing Commander Guy Gibson.

For background information on the Dambusters: <http://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/damsraid.html>

THE STORY OF JOHN FRASER'S LOGBOOK AND KEN EARNSHAW'S RCAF PHOTO ALBUM

(On April 22, an RCAF photo album, stolen 20 years ago, will be returned to its rightful owner)

1943 -During the Dambusters Raid by 617 Squadron of Bomber Command, F/Lt. John Hopgood's Lancaster is shot down over the Mohne Dam. His navigator is Ken Earnshaw from Bashow, Alberta and his bomb-aimer is John Fraser of Nanaimo, B.C. Ken Earnshaw is killed. John Fraser parachutes from the aircraft, evades capture for ten days, and then is taken Prisoner of War. Sadly, John is killed in an accident during 1961.

1990's -Alex Bateman, an amateur historian in the U.K. who specializes in the history of the Dambusters, contacts a number of the families of deceased Dambuster aircrew and asks to borrow logbooks and other artifacts/memorabilia related to the Dams Raid. He claims that this is in order to further his research. John Fraser's widow loans Bateman her husband's logbook. The Earnshaw family loans Bateman Ken's RCAF photo album.

-The logbook of a participant in the Dams Raid is both a treasured family heirloom as well as an historic artifact with a current value to private collectors of £10,000 or more.

2003 -John Fraser's daughter, Shere Lowe, contacts the Bomber Command Museum of Canada, attends the museum's 60th Anniversary Commemoration of the Dams Raid, develops an interest in her father's story, and learns of his logbook which was not returned by Alex Bateman. Shere continues to learn details of her father's story through becoming involved in the 617 Squadron Association, meeting Dams Raid veterans and their families, and travelling to the Mohne Dam where he was shot down.

-Shere begins efforts to re-acquire the logbook for her family by making a request of Alex Bateman who is residing in London. Over the next decade, Bateman agrees to return it, advises Shere that it has been lost in the mail, forges a document that he alleges was written by Shere's mother which gave him permanent possession of the logbook, and claims that it has been stolen during a burglary at his home. These are only a few of the various devious efforts he utilizes in order to deter Shere and her family from acquiring their logbook or even finding out what Bateman did with it. During this time, Shere arranges for media stories to be published, both in the UK and Canada, regarding her quest to re-acquire the logbook but Bateman refuses to return it.

2015 -Finally, through Shere's relentless efforts, a police investigation is launched and eventually Bateman is charged with the theft of the logbook. During the investigation, Ken Earnshaw's missing photo album is located in Bateman's flat in London.

February 2017 -A five-day trial is held at which Shere and her Mother testify and Bateman continues to claim that the logbook had been stolen from his flat. Bateman is not believed, is convicted of the theft, and sentenced to two years in prison. The judge referred to Bateman as "despicable" and that he "lied repeatedly" and "conducted a cruel charade" in order to keep the logbook from the Fraser Family.

-Bateman continues to claim his innocence and refuses to say what happened to the logbook.

-Police give Shere Ken Earnshaw's photo album, asking her to return it to the Earnshaw family.

April 2017 -Shere has not given up hope of someday locating and acquiring her Father's logbook.

-John Fraser and Ken Earnshaw were shot down together on the Dams Raid in 1943. At 11:00 am on April 22, John's daughter, Shere Lowe and Ken's nephew, Jim Heather, will meet at the Bomber Command Museum of Canada in Nanton, Alberta and Shere will return Ken Earnshaw's RCAF photo album to the Earnshaw Family.



**F/Lt. Hopgood's Lancaster over the Mohne Dam
[Artwork commissioned by Shere Lowe]**

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/10/dambusters-logbook-thief-jailed-two-years/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4212128/Alexander-Bateman-jailed-stealing-Dambusters-log-book.html>