

RCAF C-17 transports very special museum Aluminum from Alberta to the U.K. to be part of the Bomber Command Memorial

A Royal Canadian Air Force C-17 Transport took off from Lethbridge, Alberta on Remembrance Day with 800 pounds of aluminum that was once part of a wartime RCAF Halifax Bomber. The metal will become part of the £6,000,000 Bomber Command Memorial currently under construction in Green Park, London.

The aluminum is being provided by the Bomber Command Museum of Canada to draw attention to the fact that 10,000 of the over 55,000 airmen lost with Bomber Command during World War II were Canadians.

Halifax Bomber LW682 was part of 426 "Thunderbird" Squadron RCAF. It was shot down in 1944 and crashed into a swamp in Belgium. The seven Canadians and one Briton aboard were killed. The bodies of three of the Canadian airmen, missing in action and entombed in the Halifax bomber, were recovered in 1997 and given a full military funeral in Gerardsbergen, Belgium.

The recovered parts of the Halifax were all saved and brought to Canada. Some of the parts were used in the restoration of the Halifax currently on display at Trenton, Ontario. The unusable aluminum was saved due to the rarity and heritage of this RCAF metal and was then melted down into ingots to be used into the future for Air Force Memorials, plaques, and statues by the Bomber Command Museum of Canada.

The design of the roof of the 8.5m tall pavilion was inspired by the geodetic construction used in the Vickers Wellington bomber. The Memorial will incorporate the aluminum ingots that were once the Canadian Halifax bomber into the roof panels that cover the Wellington geodetic pattern roof supports. The pavilion will house a larger than life sculpture of seven aircrew and contain inscriptions and carvings.

If completed on schedule, the Bomber Command Memorial will be Dedicated in June 2012.

Interestingly, the RCAF C-17 aircraft that carried this special shipment is part of 429 "Bison" Squadron which flew Halifax Bombers during World War II.



Architect's rendering of the Memorial's interior



Architect's rendering of the Bomber Command Memorial



Dave Birrell, Lt. Col. Jason Stark (429 Sqd C/O), and Karl Kjarsgaard



Karl Kjarsgaard, who led the recovery team in 1997, loading ingots onto the C-17 in Lethbridge