



Canadian Forces Base Trenton Commanding Officer Col. Leighton James helped unveil a restored Second World War Lancaster bomber KB882 Thursday in Picton at Base 31 which will serve temporarily as a heritage exhibit until it is returned in a few years to an expanded home at National Air Force Museum of Canada. JACK EVANS

Restored Lancaster bomber officially unveiled at Base 31 in PEC

JACK EVANS

Base 31's NO. 1 Hangar was filled with politicians, commanding officers, 8 Wing Concert Band and hundreds of spectators Thursday afternoon for a full program of speeches.

But the star of the show had nothing to say.

World War II Lancaster Bomber KB 882, built in Canada, simply spread its magnificent wings over the large assembly and enjoyed the show.

The plane sports an amazing history, one of the first to run off the assembly line at Malton in 1944, then a few months later was part of a 1,000-plane raid during the Second World War and went on to go on a total of 12 missions, helping to drop a total of 64,000 bombs.

It continued in active service into the 1950s on mapping and intelligence missions, especially in northern Canada, finally put to rest in 1952, when it was purchased by the City of Edmundston.

Then, in 2017, a delegation from the Air Force Museum of Canada attended the Edmundston Museum to discuss getting the plane for

that museum.

Deputy Edmundston Mayor Karen Power, one of several from that city attending, admitted that there was some opposition to the

plan, but the realization of continued maintenance costs, plus a more suitable show place finally won agreement.

The whole operation was de-

scribed at several points as "collaboration." The afternoon started with an impressive "fly-over" by an authentic B -25 Mitchell bomber, courtesy the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum.

Belleville radio personality Paul Ferguson presided to introduce a parade of speakers, starting with Susan Scarborough, chair of the Air Force Museum Board, who later assisted in the official "unveiling" of the plane with Base 31 CEO Tim Jones.

It was Kevin Windsor, executive director for the Trenton air museum, who outlined the history of KB882, followed by MP Ryan Williams and Education Minister Todd Smith, Bay of Quinte MPP.

Williams paid tribute to the air crews who played such a key role in the Allies winning the war, along with horrendous losses.

Smith traced the history of Camp Picton and its contribution as a British Commonwealth Training Centre.

Then there were the mayors – Jim Harrison of Trenton, Steve Ferguson of Prince Edward County and Karen Power for Edmundston.

Harrison recalled "dropping in" on the reconstruction of the plane at Base 31 and said: "It just blows

you away."

Ferguson turned to look at the plane behind him and commented: "Absolutely gorgeous." He traced the collaboration of his council, the Air Museum and Base 31 as part of the project.

8 Wing C/O Col. Leighton James, commented that the Lancaster "holds so much significance." He also recalled his own training in gliding as an Air Cadet at Camp Picton. He talked about the "quiet good" of all the volunteers and people involved in "collaboration" to make the project successful.

Also speaking was Lieut. Col. Barry Tang of 8 Wing based Aerospace, Telecommunications, and Engineering branch.

Following the dedication, there was a silent memorial, with the playing of The Last Post and Reveille by band members plus a piper's lament.

Another highlight was an announcement by Tim Jones that the hangar and the plane would become the focus of a new museum on the complex to be expanded as a new permanent attraction.

However, in a few years the Lancaster will be returned to the National Air Force Museum of Canada at CFB Trenton.



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