

SAVE THE HAMPDEN

This is just in! Heavy snowfalls during December proved to be too much weight for the wings of this rare and important museum artifact of WWII Bomber Command. On December 26, the port wing broke under the weight of the snow, resulting in a great deal of damage.



The following news release has just been issued:

HEAVY SNOWFALL DAMAGES HISTORIC AIRCRAFT

Langley, British Columbia - December 28, 2008 - Despite the best efforts of museum volunteers the recent extreme weather in the lower mainland has caused considerable damage to some exhibits at the Canadian Museum of Flight in Langley, B.C. Hardest hit is the museums' Handley Page Hampden, a World War II bomber that was raised from the ocean depths off Vancouver Island in 1985.

Ongoing efforts to clear the rapidly accumulating snow from the wings of the aircraft were overwhelmed during the night of December 26 when a failure of the left wings internal structure occurred as a result of the weight of the snow on the wing. The wing separated from the fuselage and collapsed onto an adjacent display case containing one of the aircrafts' original engines. The wing itself suffered considerable damage at both the root and tip. Further damage is visible on the tail of the aircraft although a full investigation of this area has yet to be completed.



The museum's Hampden is the sole survivor of its type on display anywhere in the world although another example was recovered recently from a crash site in Russia and is under restoration in Britain. The twin engine Hampden was part of the Royal Air Forces' front line equipment at the start of World War II but was soon rendered obsolete and retired from active operations against Nazi Germany during the summer of 1943.

One hundred and sixty Hampdens were built in Canada during WW II and many were used on the west coast to train crews in the difficult mission of attacking enemy shipping with torpedoes. The museum's aircraft was lost on just such an exercise on November 15, 1942 when it crashed into the ocean moments after dropping a practice torpedo. Following its' recovery the aircraft was the subject of a long and challenging restoration to static display condition which was completed in 1998.

It is anticipated that a lengthy program of repair will be required to put the airplane back into displayable condition and the museum is putting out a plea for the public's assistance in providing both financial and practical support to help re-build this important piece of Canadian history.

For more information contact the museum at 604 532 003 or at cmflight@telus.net.



The photos speak for themselves. Donations would be welcome. Donors will receive an Income Tax Receipt. Can you help?

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