

# AIRPLANE CREEK MEMORIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY

September 26, 2015



The dedication and planning by Lt. (Navy) Ron Shore CD, and his fund raising with Legion Branch 280 Vedder Golden, came to a successful conclusion at Thompson Regional Park in Chilliwack on Saturday, September 26.

Family members of the airmen of bomber B 24 Liberator KK241 that crashed on Mt. Welch on June 1945, local dignitaries and invited guests gathered for the Dedication Ceremony for the Airplane Creek Memorial. Descendants of the airmen came from England, Scotland, Norway and New Zealand.

The colour parties were from the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 280 Vedder Golden and from the Branch 147 Airwolf (Chilliwack) Cadets and were augmented by the pipe band from Legion Branch from South Burnaby.

Stories were given by persons involved with the discovery of the crash site and by the earlier memorials that had been destroyed by nature. Also speeches were given by Ron Shore, MP Mark Strahl and the descendants of the airmen.

There was a fly past by, which had been prevented earlier due to poor flying conditions. Finally there was the gift to each of the attending descendants of a special presentation case with a Canadian flag and the dedication, "On behalf of a grateful nation" from the Government of Canada.

Captain (retired) Ted Bowman formerly C. O. of the RCAF 861 Silverfox (Abbotsford) and 147 Airwolf (Chilliwack ) Cadet squadrons, began his story with the phrase:

"A man is not truly dead until he is forgotten" That seems a fitting epitaph to those airmen who died tragically far from their homes in 1945 when the war was all but over.





Rank	Name	Age
Sgt	Stanley ALDRIDGE	20
Sgt	Albert Eric BROADBENT	19
Sgt	John Randall DALE	32
Sgt	William Peter Watt DRUMMOND	24
Sgt	Isaac GIBBONS	19
Sgt	James Leonard Gordon HAMMOND	20
Fg Off	Arthur William David HILL	21
Sgt	David Robertson LANGLANDS	33
Plt Off	Gilbert Ewart Ellis LONG	21
Sgt	Graham MURRAY	20
Sgt	William Thomas SWATTON	34

Contributors:  
 Veterans Affairs Canada, BC Yukon Command of The Royal Canadian Legion,  
 Royal Canadian Legion Branch #280, Western Concrete, Kedhic Concrete,  
 LMS Steel Group, Friends of Old Canada, Ron Shore CD, Wishbone Furnishings

Here are some photos from the ceremony



Branch 280 Vedder Golden & Squadron 147 Cadets



Master of Ceremonies:  
Lt. (Navy) Ron Shore CD



Placement of Wreaths by  
Descendants of Airmen





Presentation of Commemorative Canada Flag "On behalf of a grateful Nation" to each descendant in turn.





Fly past by the Fraser Valley Blues, substituting for the planned fly past by 442 Squadron (Victoria) who had to go and rescue a diver.

They performed several passes and we were blessed especially as the heavens opened soon afterwards, as can be seen at the wreath laying and presentations, which came after the fly past.



Frances Langlands, niece of airman Sgt. David Robertson Langlands; Frances is Scottish but now lives in Norway.



Fay Jenkin from London England, sister of Frances, hence also niece of airman Sgt. David Robertson Langlands





Nick Hammond  
from Auckland,  
New Zealand,  
nephew of airman  
Sgt. James Leonard  
Gordon Hammond



March off of colours and pipe band



Memorial showing wreaths laid by the descendants of the airmen

## Postscript:

There was a lot of information given in the talks and stories by the speakers. The constraints of this writer's time and concern about article length, meant that a lot of interesting material was not reported above.

Perhaps more of these stories about the history could be written here in this postscript if anyone would like to send them to me, please, e-mail: [columbia.49@shaw.ca](mailto:columbia.49@shaw.ca) I will add them in this Postscript.

Here is a story:

### **Sgt David Robertson Langlands RAF**

#### **A personal remembrance from Derek Watson**

Sgt David Robertson Langlands was my friend and neighbour . Our families shared the same residence in Aberdeen, Scotland from 1939 until 1945.

David had been a police officer for 10 years. He was married to Ina Bannerman just two months before war was declared.

Although only a student at the time David was a very integral part of my life. From David came my interest in aviation, radio communication, service in Air Scouts, and Air Training Corps attached to 612 Auxiliary Squadron, Dyce, Aberdeen.

Gardening was a hobby with David and he lost no time in including all of us in the digging and preparation of Victory Garden, supplementing vegetables etc. which were a scarce commodity during the war.

Prior to his entering RAF he had been increasing his skills operating Morse Code with the intention of becoming a radio operator. During these practice periods I became interested in the process, so he rigged up another Morse key and proceeded to mentor me until it became a new "language" skill. (This was to lead to a 60 year involvement in radio communication) .....  
.....thank you for that David!

Upon enlistment we were gratified to hear he was being posted to Canada for further training ( a "Safe Haven" ?).....

After the war in Europe was declared over, we were anticipating that his homecoming would soon follow. Imagine the shock, anger and despair when we were informed of the events of June 1st 1945.

Although I followed him to Canada five years later, it was not until my retirement in 1992, that through research, I learned the full details of bomber B 24 KK241. I had always vowed to find and visit David's final resting place to pay my respects and a final goodbye.

In 1999 with the help of Brian Walton (a documentary film maker from Chilliwack) I was led to the base of Mt Welch and to the cairn that was erected by the Air Cadets.

I cannot describe to you the emotions that enveloped me as I stood at the cairn, reading the names inscribed on that stainless steel plaque; yet there was a serene calm that seemed to descend over that small alpine clearing.

It was then that I placed a wreath in memory of David and his crew .....

The time was 10 am....the day was June 1st... it was 54 years later almost to the minute.....

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[Derek Watson was present at the Memorial Dedication Ceremony and placed a wreath for his friend David Langlands. He was also reunited with David's nieces who came from overseas to place wreaths themselves. All three received commemorative Canada Flags from the Government of Canada - photographs will be added tomorrow - editor]

Presentation and formatting of report and all photos by Peter-William Slade; with story on Sgt Langlands by Derek Watson formerly with 107 Squadron Air Training Corps Aberdeen Wing, Dyce, Scotland (attached to 612 Squadron R.A.F.).

[for more information about the events concerning the memorial from 2013 onwards, including the recovery of the engine by our engineers and armed forces, please see Simon Grant's article in the drop down menu "Missing Airmen Memorial" under the "News" tab].