

Arctic flight commemorated

Thirty years ago, a Canadian *Lancaster* bomber descended to 1,000 feet over the desolate military station of Alert on Ellesmere Island in the Arctic. Its mission was a routine parachute re-supply drop to the small, isolated garrison of men below.

It never made it; the big cargo chute tangled in the plane's tail elevators, and the bomber nose-dived into the ice below. Nine men — seven airmen and two scientists — died.

On July 31, the thirtieth anniversary of the mishap, another big cargo-carrying aircraft descended into Alert on another kind of mission. Aboard were 15 relatives who had never seen the graves of their kin in the frozen Arctic.

Also along were 22 members of the Canadian Armed Forces to conduct a memorial service and lay wreaths at each gravesite, near the runway where the bomber went in. There, a stone cairn sits on a plain overlooking the Lincoln Sea, with nine graves in a row before it.

Task continues

An inscription on the cairn reads, "the task in which they died continues", a testimonial to all Canadian airmen who lost their lives in the development of Canada's Arctic. The Alert crash was the only one during the almost 40 years that military flights have been re-supplying the station.



A Canadian Forces Hercules flies over the monument erected in memory of the Canadians who died 30 years ago in an airplane accident at Alert.

The memorial project took a couple of years to plan and the biggest problem was tracing relatives of the crash victims. Last-known addresses of most of them date back 13 to 29 years. Parents have passed away, wives have remarried, and children and other relatives have moved elsewhere.

However, through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other sources, families of two of the victims were located, comprising 15 people. Relatives included Germaine Dubé of Quebec City, wife of Flying Officer J.F.L. Dubé, a

radio officer, her two children and their spouses, and three brothers and three sisters of the late radio officer and their spouses; and Gail Lalond of Ottawa, a sister of Flying Officer J.E. McCutcheon, also a radio officer, another sister, and their husbands.

A memorial plaque dedicated to the flyers will be placed on a new radio transmitter building at Alert, naming it *Lancaster Hall*. The building provides the Arctic station with an essential communication link to the south as did *Lancaster* aircraft in the 1950s.

Quebec's shipyards booming

Quebec's major shipyards are booming, even though they will not build more than one ship in 1980.

Vickers Canada Limited, Davie Shipbuilding Limited and Marine Industries Limited, are expected to turn out more than \$400-million worth of such things as offshore drilling rigs, railway cars and nuclear reactors this year.

Vickers, based in Montreal, was the first to diversify.

It scaled down its shipbuilding activities in 1969 and by 1975 had shifted its attention to the more lucrative defence business, refitting Canadian warships and building classified armaments for the United States defence department. It also thrives on refitting commercial ships and building components for Candu nuclear power stations.

President Harold Blakley said the company has been profitable all along, but is now growing at an annual rate of 10 to 15 per cent. He projects revenues of between \$75 million and \$100 million this year.

Davie and Marine have followed Vickers' example. Davie is now producing drilling platforms, while Marine's revenues come increasingly from rail cars and hydro-electric generating equipment.

Largest industrial employer

Davie, the largest industrial employer in the Quebec City area, faced a grim future just two years ago. The slump in ship demand has emptied its order books and the number of workers had fallen to 1,400 from 2,500.

Employment has since climbed back to 2,200 and the company has \$200 million in orders for jack-up drilling rigs.

Louis Rochette, Davie's chairman and chief executive officer, expects his company's sales will be up to about \$130 million this year.

"We think we'll be able to go on selling these rigs for another five or ten years," he says.

He and Davie's president and chief salesman William White decided in 1978 there was no percentage in waiting for shipbuilding to pick up. They decided to build drilling rigs, which are much in demand in the Maritimes and anywhere offshore oil is to be found. Davie now ranks third in the world as a jack-up rig manufacturer.

Marine, the only one of the three companies with a ship under construction, lost \$3 million last year. But it expects to turn a profit this year through sale of generators and turbines to the James Bay hydro-electric project.