

**Press Release: 23 August 2011
For Immediate Release**

**WWII era B-25 Mitchell Bomber restored by Alberta Aviation Museum
Volunteers**

A derelict WWII era B-25J Mitchell Bomber which had been sitting in a farmer's field for more than 40 years is finally ready for display with the dozens of other rare and historically significant aircraft at the Alberta Aviation Museum.

The restored aircraft represents a typical Mitchell bomber of the 1950s and sports the markings of "Daisy Mae", a 418 Squadron bomber that was, in 1957, accidentally crashed against the walls of the very building in which it will now be displayed. Terry Champion, the pilot involved in the 1957 crash, will be at the controls of the restored aircraft as it is officially rolled out in a dedication ceremony on Saturday September 3, 2011 at 1:00PM.

When restoration began six years ago, "Daisy Mae" was used as a source of parts for other aircraft, had only a partial tail, no wings, nose, nose wheel, or engines, and served as a home for pigeons and chickens. When recovered by museum volunteers, parts scattered about the aircraft and stored in farm outbuildings formed the basis for the restoration effort.

More than 45,000 man hours have been contributed by as many as 40 volunteers in this restoration effort. Funding, primarily from 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron Association resources, has reached nearly \$210,000 to date.

The volunteers demonstrated dedication and hard work throughout each difficult stage of the restoration process, but the camaraderie of the entire crew (including a sprightly 94-year-old retired airplane mechanic and a 16-year-old teenager who volunteers with his dad), is perhaps the most important reason why this restoration has been such a success.

The public is invited to the roll-out ceremony for the B-25J "Daisy Mae" Mitchell Bomber on Saturday September 3, 2011 at 1:00PM at the Alberta Aviation Museum, 11410 Kingsway Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta.

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For more information contact:

Cliff Adams

418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron Association

(780) 476-8834 or Cell (780) 974-5725

Email: cliffada@telusplanet.net

Background:

From 1946 to 1957, 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron R.C.A.F. Auxiliary flew B-25 Mitchell bombers from Blatchford Field (now City Centre Airport) in a Tactical Bomber role. The Mitchells were a common sight and sound over Edmonton as the aircraft were returning from missions from across Canada.

The restored B-25 Mitchell that will be rolled out on Saturday, September 3rd, was recovered from a field north of Lamont in 2002. The hulk sat on the farm of Terry Harrold (Terry himself was a former 418 Pilot) since it had been purchased in the early 1960s from Crown Assets, the agency tasked with disposal of surplus aircraft from the military. The restored aircraft now bears the markings HO 251 and tail number FW251 to represent the original aircraft that was accidentally crashed in 1957 against the side of the very building that is now the Aviation Museum. The aircraft is rigged and painted to be representative of the bombers formerly flown by 418 (City of Edmonton) Squadron Auxiliary R.C.A.F. during the 1950s. It also bears the image of the Grey Cup in celebration of the Grey Cup wins of the Edmonton Eskimos in 1954, 1955 and 1956.

On the right side of the restored aircraft, "Daisy Mae", from the comic strip "L'il Abner", is pictured. Originally created by Al Capp, Dogpatch characters such as Daisy Mae, Black Rufe and Hairless Joe have been carried as nose art by 418 Squadron aircraft since 1944, following a special arrangement between the Squadron and the cartoonist.

The recovered and restored Mitchell, originally bearing the number 5273, was one of 74 B-25J Mitchells purchased by the R.C.A.F. in 1954 to make up for attrition of earlier R.C.A.F. inventory and to supply various second line R.C.A.F. units. The aircraft had been a navigation trainer with the U.S.A.F. from 1944, when it was built, to 1954 when it was sold to Canada. It continued in that role with the R.C.A.F. The original FW251 was a B-25D model that had been acquired from the R.A.F. in 1944 and had been used in a variety of roles in Canada. Neither aircraft saw combat in WWII.



The restored aircraft as it was found and recovered in October 2002



The aircraft at the start of the restoration process; June 2004



The aircraft restored as “Daisy Mae” in August 2011

**More information: Contact Cliff Adams
(780) 476 8834
cliffada@telusplanet.net**