

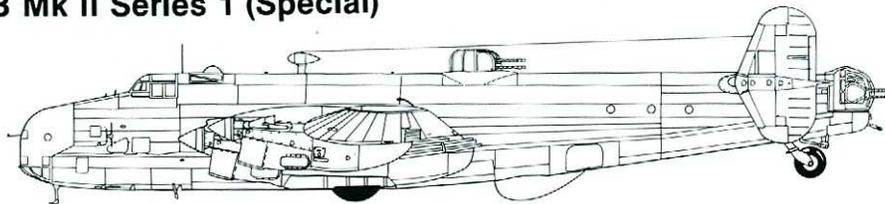
The RCAF Halifax B. Mk. V, “P” for Popeye



This image has been used a number of times in different publications and most times it is identified as being from No. 431 Squadron, and with yellow spinners. Wrong on both accounts.

The British Handley-Page Halifax prototype first flew October 1939, with the first production Halifax Mk. I delivered to RAF units in March 1941. From this point on the Halifax was a steady work in development appearing in nine bomber forms, from the Mk. I to the Mk. VII and the Mk. VIII transport version. The Mk. I flew with Rolls-Royce Merlin X engines, followed by the Mk. II and Mk. II [Series 1] Special, which flew with Merlin XX engines.

B Mk II Series 1 (Special)



The Mk. I flew with Rolls-Royce Merlin X engines, the Mk. II and Mk. II, [Series I “Special”], flew with Merlin XX engines. During production of the Halifax B. Mk. II aircraft, they ran out of British Messier undercarriage landing gear and this was replaced by British built Dowty landing gear. These bombers were given the designation Halifax B. Mk. V and delivered to RAF operational units beginning in June 1943. Due to a weakness in the castings of the Dowty landing gear the landing weight was restricted to 40,000 lbs. The Halifax Mk. V was produced in parallel with the B. Mk. II series I, [Special] and was identical other than the Dowty landing gear.

No. 434 (Bluenose) SQUADRON, R.C.A.F.



Badge: *A representation of the schooner "Bluenose"*

Motto: *"In excelsis vincimus"* ("We conquer in the heights").

Authority: *King George VI, October 1945.*

The squadron was adopted by the Rotary Club of Halifax, N.S., and took the nickname "Bluenose" in reference to the common nickname for Nova Scotians. The

badge depicts its namesake, the famous schooner Bluenose—one of the fastest and most graceful ships ever to sail the seas—the design being taken from that on the Canadian ten-cent coin.

No. 434 Squadron was formed at Tholthorpe, Yorkshire, on 13th June, 1943, as a unit of No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Group of Bomber Command. It began operations on 12/13th August and continued to operate from Tholthorpe until December, 1944, when it moved to Croft. There it remained based for the rest of its stay in England. Equipped first with Halifax V's, No. 434 converted to Halifax III's in May, 1944, and to Lancaster X's in December, 1944. During its tour with No. 6 Group the squadron flew 2,597 operational sorties on 199 operations, dropped/laid 10,575 tons of bombs and mines, and lost 74 aircraft and 68 crews on operations and training. Awards won by

individual squadron members totalled 121 and comprised 108 D.F.C.'s, six bars to D.F.C.'s, six D.F.M.'s and one B.E.M.

After V.E. Day No. 434 took part in Operation *Exodus* to ferry liberated P.o.W.'s home to Britain from the Continent. In June it flew its Lancasters back to Canada and three months later disbanded at Dartmouth, N.S.

On 1st July, 1952, the "Bluenose" name and number were revived with the formation of a fighter squadron at Uplands, Ontario. On 7th March, 1953, 16 Bluenose Sabres left Uplands on the first leg of a flight to Zweibrücken, Germany, where the squadron was to be based with No. 3 Wing of No. 1 Air Division.

Bases, etc.

Formed 13.6.43 as No. 434(B) Sqdn.
 Tholthorpe, Yorks. Jun. 1943—Dec. 1943
 Croft, Co. Durham Dec. 1943—Jun. 1945

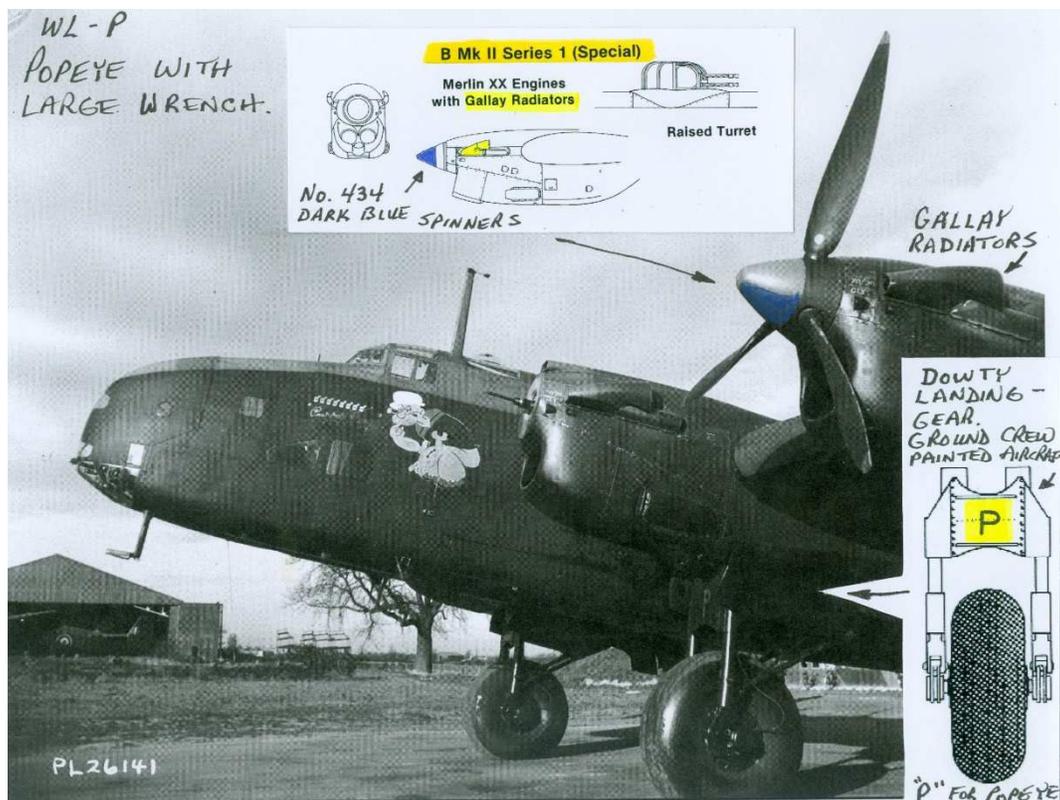
In Jun. 1945 sqdn. left Bomber Cmd. & flew home to Canada where it was disbanded 5.9.45.

Main Equipment (Code letters "IP"?)

Handley Page Halifax (Jun. 1943—Dec. 1944)
 e.g. B.V's (between Jun. 1943 & May, 1944)

DK248	K	DK260	M	EB256	S
EB258	T	LK634	T	LK666	T
LK894	K	LK945	T	LL168	S
LL171	T	LL179	K	LL285	K

No. 434 Squadron was formed on the Halifax Mk. V aircraft, with the first arriving on 20 June 1943, serial EB217. By 30 June 43, they had on charge four Mk. V bombers, and a total of twenty on charge by the end of July.

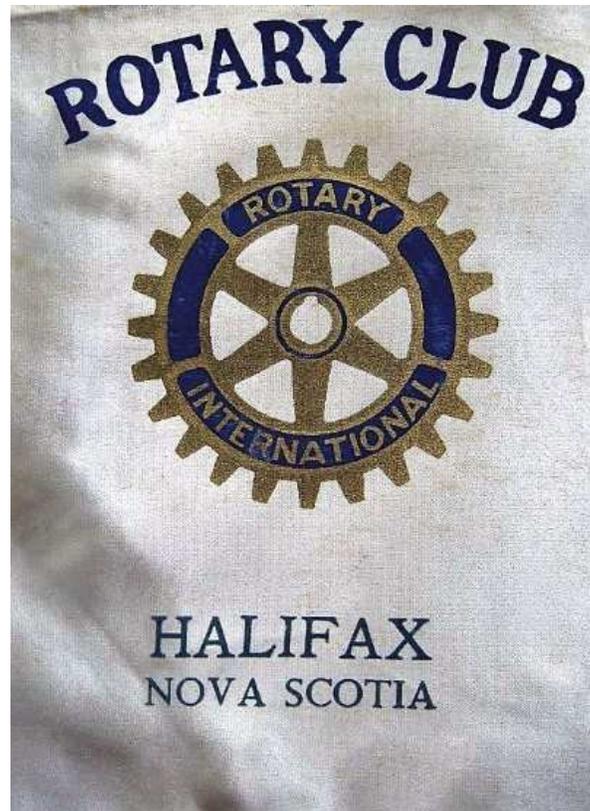


No. 434 Bluenose Squadron would fly three different Halifax bombers with the aircraft code letter "P". The first to carry the letter "P" was EB255, flying her first operation on 12 August 43, 17 Aug., and went missing on her third operation 22 August, to bomb Leverkusen, Germany.

The next "P" was Halifax Mk. V, serial LK916, F/Sgt. M. Flewelling took her to Montlucon, 15 September 1943. It is possible this was the P for Popeye in the photo image. LK916 completed fourteen more operations, then went missing over Berlin on 28 January 1944, P/O E. Devaney and crew. The RCAF sent 124 aircraft to bomb Berlin and nine failed to return, 434 lost four Halifax bombers and 30 crew.

The third and last Halifax Mk. V to wear letter "P" was LL288, flying her first operation on 25 February 1944. She survived the war and completed 22 more trips, then was replaced by the new Halifax Mk. III bombers in mid-May 1944. LL288 went to 1659 Heavy Conversion Unit at Topcliffe.

No. 434 [Bluenose] was adopted by the Rotary Club of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and took the official badge of the famous schooner "Bluenose." The flag of Nova Scotia and the banner of the Halifax Rotary Club take their Blue Saltire colors from the Scottish Flag called the Saltire or Saint Andrew's Cross.



On their first Halifax Mk. V squadron bombers, the ground crew painted each front of the propeller spinner in the dark Blue Saltire colors in honour of Nova Scotians, the schooner, and the nickname "Bluenose."

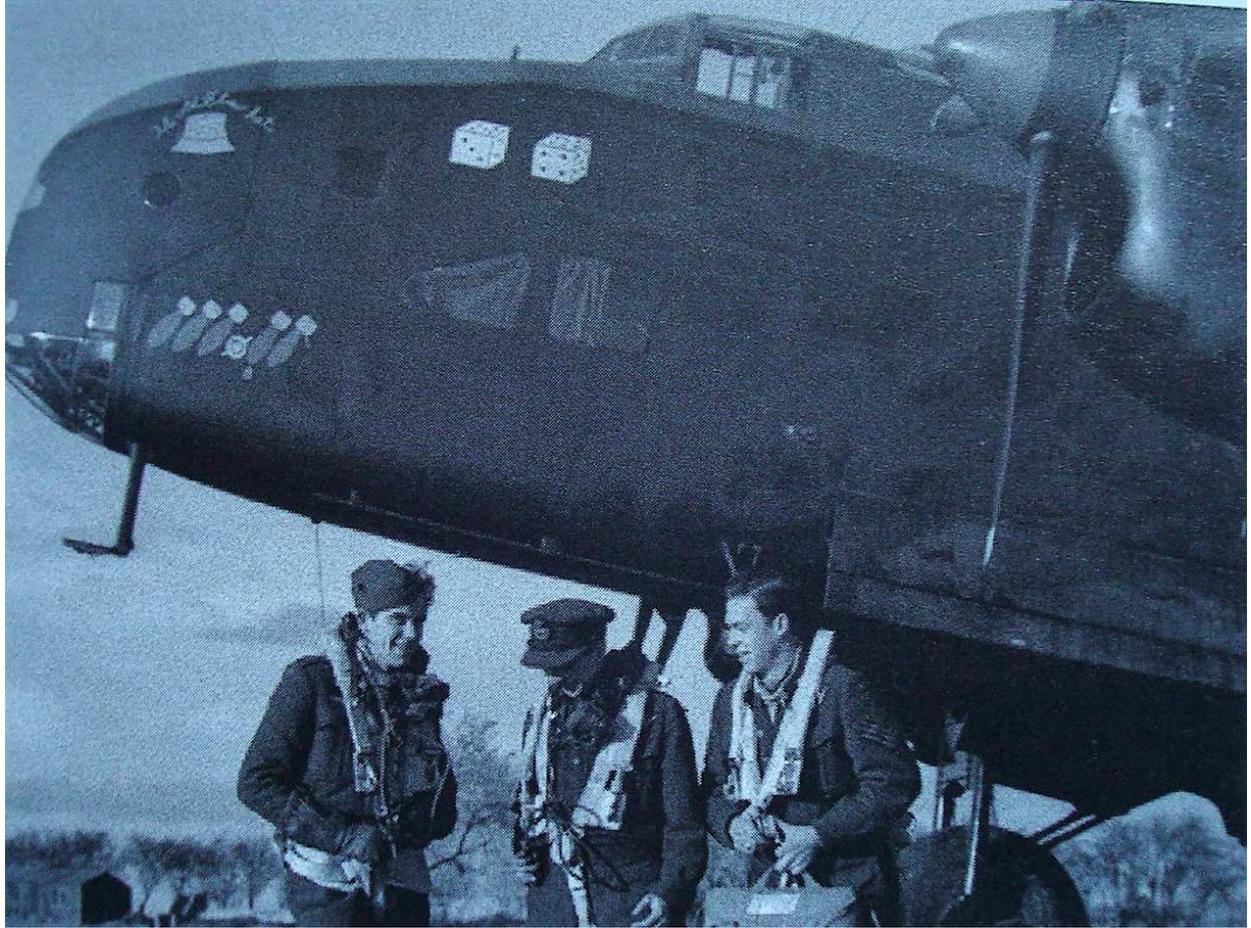
The following images can be ordered from the photo archives in Ottawa, and due to the shading of black and white film in WWII, the color has been identified as yellow by some historians.



No. 434 Squadron Halifax Mk. V., "Pubwash" PL19999.



No. 434 Halifax Mk. V, Skull and Crossbones, PL22138



No. 434 Halifax Mk. V, "The Old Straw Hat." PL26448