



MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM

TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY



Newsletter

Spring 2023

Volume 14, Issue 2

Project Update

The Wall of Remembrance has been erected and awaits the mounting of the panels displaying the names of victims to be remembered as well as the names of the major donors.

The project site now awaits the arrival of the art piece, which is in the process of being fabricated.

At the end of March, a mock-up presentation of the Memorial to the Victims of Communism art piece took place at the fabrication site, with representatives from government, the fabricator, the construction company, and Tribute to Liberty in attendance. Attendees were all immensely impressed by the presentation and the skill and diligence of the fabricator. We look forward to the completion and unveiling of this very important project.

Please enjoy the photos from the memorial site and of the mock-up presentation in March. The fabricator, Dymech Engineering, has also provided a short article about the fabrication of the art piece.



Tribute to Liberty board member Ivan Grbesic at the Wall of Remembrance, April 2023.

Tribute to Liberty is a Canadian organization whose mission is to establish a memorial to the victims of Communism in the National Capital Region. Tribute to Liberty's Newsletter is published four times a year. If you would like to add an email address to our subscriber list please email info@tributetoliberty.ca.

Mailing Address: 629 Mill Park Drive, Kitchener, ON, N2P 1V4

www.tributetoliberty.ca

Charitable #: 814999660RR0001

The Arc of Memory

The *Arc of Memory* (AoM) is a piece of art which holds tremendous cultural and historical importance, and we at Dymech Engineering are honoured to be part of bringing that vision to reality. It has been an insightful journey learning about what the *Memorial to the Victims of Communism* represents through a range of individuals and organizations who have shared their efforts, knowledge, and history. For our part, as a team of engineers and fabricators, we take great pride in breaking down and building up such a remarkable and challenging project. My name is Oliver, and as the lead project engineer on the AoM, I would like to share some insight into a few aspects of that process to date.



Dymech Engineering has honed its craft in custom design, engineering, and fabrication – as a result, we felt confident that we could bring this sculpture to life. We began working on the AoM in 2022 with a detailed review of the sculpture designed by Paul Raff Studio. With a fine-toothed comb, we recreated the sculpture digitally from scratch using solar angle data, exactly as the design prescribed. Adjustments had to be made to over 35 areas within the sculpture to avoid tube interferences and overlaps in a manner which we felt preserved the form the original form and vision. In order to ensure longevity and structural integrity, decisions had to be made about the material, stock sizing, and the finish applied.

As the design phase progressed toward completion, we had to find a way to make it happen – which has been an ongoing collaborative effort between our engineers and fabricators, alongside external partners in machining, coatings, and structural design. In total, there are approximately 12700 components, and more than 6200 of which are completely unique parts. Significant time is invested in keeping organized and coordinating accurate labelling for parts made both in-

house and with our partners.

Many components are being fabricated with either 5-axis waterjet cutting or 5-axis milling to create holes in components so we can slide in the tube elements. If you can imagine, the primary structure of the sculpture consists of 367 fins ranging from 10ft-13ft tall and connected with a grid of over 5200 blocks. This structure needs to have precision cut holes at strictly defined locations and angles to accept the 4033 tubes. Every one of these tubes may pass through the structure in 1 to 20 places, so you can imagine how many precise cuts need to be made to accomplish this feat.

With components prepared, we can begin welding these parts together. The full sculpture has been divided into 12 sections to allow for transportation. We have designed a large custom jig which accepts on full section of structural components – this ensures that the individual parts are consistent between section assemblies so we can seamlessly integrate them together into the two arcs. Despite this, the highly unique nature of this project requires eyes on every single part from all sides, and we make individual adjustments by hand to each to compensate for any variance in material, machining, etc.



Once complete, the structural assemblies are lifted from the jig and raised upright. We then start incorporating approximately 300-400 tubes per section. We make some welds, then adjust the tubes, weld in a few more locations – and repeat until completion. This is where engineering really begins to transition into art, as we need to create the visual ‘flow’ inherent in the design. Currently, we have several sections complete, and several more at various stages in the production process.

My hope is that this gives some insight into the love, attention to detail, and talent that has been poured into

this project by all those involved, on top of the many years of hard work and dedication that proponents of this project put in to make it all possible. For those of us on the fabrication side, the *Arc of Memory* has been equal parts challenging and rewarding, and we are extremely excited to begin our installation at the *Memorial to the Victims of Communism* site this summer.



Mock-up presentation at Dymech Engineering.



Representatives from the National Capital Commission, Canadian Heritage, Pomerleau Construction & Tribute to Liberty.



Dymech engineer Oliver Richards & Tribute to Liberty board member Alide Forstmanis.



Tribute to Liberty Board Chair Ludwik Klimowski.





Tribute to Liberty board members Teresa Berezowski, Ludwik Klimkowski, Alide Forstmanis, Robert Tmej & Marcus Kolga.

History Unhidden *WWII Journey of the Czepiel Family*

Their story begins in Poland, who at the time fighting the Nazi German invasion. Despite the existing pact of non-aggression with the USSR, on September 17, 1939, Poland was invaded by the Soviets and was jointly partitioned by the Soviets and by Nazi Germany. The Soviets exiled hundreds of thousands of Poles to Siberia. Leonilla, Halina and their mother Zofia were forcibly taken from their home in Lwow, placed in cattle railway cars and shipped to the USSR on February 10, 1940. The Soviets had told mother and daughters and thousands of others that the reason for this mass transfer of population was to reunite them with their families. However, they did not know that their families and especially anyone who was an officer or who was educated, as their father and husband was, had been previously rounded up and shipped elsewhere as prisoners of war. Halina's and Leonilla's father, lieutenant Antoni Czepiel, was such a prisoner of war and was murdered in the Katyn Forest in 1940, alongside thousands of officers and intelligentsia who now lie buried in mass graves at Katyn. The sisters and mother ended up in the concentration camp in Semipalatynska Oblast, Siberia, in the northwest corner of Kazakhstan.

The Germans invaded Russia and the Soviets declared amnesty to Poles in 1943 thanks to the agreement between Gen. Wl. Sikorski and Stalin. Leonilla, Halina and Zofia joined the Polish compatriots under Gen Wl. Anders who was forming Polish Armed Forces under Soviet supervision and as such, all three women left



Tribute to Liberty board members Robert Tmej & Teresa Berezowski.

Russia through Kazakhstan, to Iran, then Persia, Iraq, Palestine and Egypt. From Egypt, the three arrived in England where they joined WAAFs (Women's Air Force Auxiliary). They went through military training and acquired different trades: mother Zofia became a nurse, Leonilla became a Wireless Operator at RAF Station Faldingworth, and Halina became an Equipment Officer at RAF Station Newton. While at Faldingworth, Leonilla met George Ogonowski, also an airman, and they were married on December 11, 1945.



From left to right: Zofia, Halina, Leonilla & Antoni Czepiel.

George was from Czestochowa, Poland, and was captured by the Soviets on two occasions but managed to escape both times, and made his way towards the Mediterranean Sea, eventually obtaining transport on a ship bound for England. The ship was torpedoed in the Mediterranean and sunk. George survived, was rescued by accompanying ships and eventually made it to England. He joined the RAF, became a navigator and obtained the rank of sergeant.



Leonilla and George were demobilised on January 3, 1947, but could not return to Poland because it now was under communist rule. As such, together with Zofia,

they emigrated from England to Brazil and rejoined Halina and her husband Marcelino Ostrovski, who had arrived in Brazil a few months earlier. Zofia left Brazil and emigrated to Canada around 1953, where she worked as a nurse in Toronto's St. Joseph Hospital. Leonilla and George stayed in Brazil for 8 years before emigrating to Canada. Leonilla and her husband arrived in Toronto in 1955.



From foreground: Leonilla, Halina & Zofia Czepiel.

This was a very good choice. Leonilla quickly found work as a nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital in Parkdale, where she worked for over 30 years. Though the war was over, the battle to free Poland continued. Zofia, Leonilla, Halina and their husbands continued the struggle to free Poland. Finally, Poland became independent once again and free in 1989, thanks to the efforts of thousands of ex-pats such as Leonilla, Halina and George. They were very active in the Polish Canadian Air Force Association "Warsaw" wing.

