

**A wise nation preserves its records, gathers up its muniments, decorates the tombs of its illustrious dead, repairs its great public structures, and fosters national pride and love of country by perpetual references to the sacrifices and glories of the past.**

-Joseph Howe, 31 August 1871

## EDITOR'S GRUNTS



You pay the salaries of these servants of ours -- instruct them! (Thanks to some who have spoken up loudly and clearly Shearwater may yet be saved from the real estate developers and maybe, if we agitate loudly enough, we'll get a Bonnie replacement).

*Cheers!*  
*Bill Farrell, Ed.*

## HMS VENGEANCE

*submitted by A. Snowie*

One of our readers (an AEO who shall remain nameless but whose surname suggests a cardinal point of the compass) opines that "Grunts" is pleonastic and given to verbosity and redundancy -- that it "makes broad the writer's literary phylactery" (not a verbatim quote you must realize -- knowing that engineers have trouble dealing with words of more than two cylinders): Therefore this will be short and sweet. (*In the name of all that's holy, what did he just say? K*)

The CNAG gathering at Halifax in October was mind-numbing. This gathering, in the twilight of their days, of old comrades from coast to coast and from foreign lands, to give witness to a camaraderie that must be (literally) unique in this or any country was marvellous to behold. We may have grumbled and bitched way back then: Now we want to relive those days. A "Good On Yer Cobber" award is due to the organizers and participants.

One closing thought: Service to our country and to the naval service doesn't have to end with retirement -- we retirees have a continuing duty to educate our politicians in matters of national defence. We have been there, done that. They, to a man, have not. We have a duty to give them direction when they stray off course. My own current experience tells me that they do respond to email, snail mail, telephone and face-to-face. Some actually listen! Go for it!

"Last WW2 British Aircraft Carrier to Return?" is the title of an article in the May edition of *Aeroplane* magazine. The ship in question is the former HMS Vengeance, recently decommissioned as the Brazilian navy's flagship Minas Gerais. She is the last of the sixteen Light Fleet Carriers built in the UK during the 1940's and as such has a place in the hearts of Canadian Naval Airmen. Three of her sisters served with the RCN: Warrior, Magnificent and Bonaventure.

Currently a "Save the Vengeance" Campaign is being mounted in Britain. If successful, the ship would become a Naval Aviation Heritage Museum, with examples of carrier aircraft from the Forties to the present day displayed on her deck. Finance is currently being raised for the purchase and ferrying costs, and an interim mooring in Southampton Water has already been promised if an Atlantic crossing can be arranged.

A rival tender comes from Rio's mayor who wants to retain the carrier for display in the city's harbour. Two other bids from oil companies, who wished to convert the ship for oil exploration support, have been rejected.

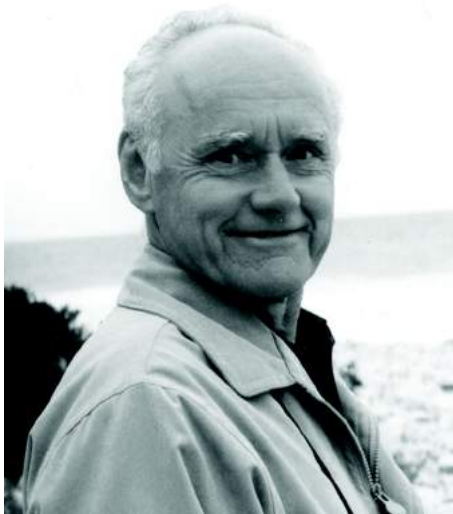
Fascinating thought - it would be nice to see a Tracker aircraft painted in Canadian colours mounted on this floating museum, wherever she is retained.

## New RN Carrier Update

**JSF STOVL Variant Selected for CVF**  
London September 30, 2002 -

The Defence Procurement Minister, Lord Bach, announced on 30 September 2002 the selection of the short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) variant of the Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighter to equip the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers. The carriers will, however, be designed to allow future adaptation to accommodate other aircraft designs if need be. The STOVL version of the F-35 meets the UK's requirement for a Joint Combat Aircraft to replace the Harrier, both for service afloat and ashore, retaining the flexibility offered by a "jump-jet" configuration, yet offering all the advantages of a modern stealth design. This version is also being adopted by the US Marine Corps. However, given that the new carriers are planned to have a service life of up to fifty years - longer than that expected for the aircraft - BAe Systems and Thales, competing for the design and construction of the vessels, have been asked to opt for a design which can be adapted to operate more conventional aircraft types if necessary later in the ships' lives. To this end, the ships will have the capability to be fitted with catapults and arrestor gear, although they will be built with the "ski-ramp" well-known from the Royal Navy's current Invincible Class carriers for STOVL operations. The UK is heavily involved in the Joint Strike Fighter project, with RollsRoyce leading the development of the lift system for the STOVL variant.

*Dave Shirlaw*  
*Editor,*  
*Seawaves Magazine*  
[www.seawaves.com](http://www.seawaves.com)



## President's Report

**F**all is here and it's time to reflect on what the Foundation stands for and what we in the Foundation are trying to do. First and foremost we exist to help the Museum preserve a vital part of Canada's history, the history of Maritime Military Aviation. We do this by promoting the museum, raising money for the Museum's expansion and improvements and by assisting in location of artifacts. This is our mandate.

It is important however to look beyond our mandate, to look at why we wish to promote the museum and raise money for the museum. Much of the Museum's effort is directed toward young people. Young people are the future of our country. Since there is no future without a past, it is important that the Museum receives as much help as possible so it can make this past vivid and meaningful to young people. By showing the youth of today what the youth of yesterday contributed toward the freedoms we enjoy, the Museum can help them understand the importance of having strong and modern armed forces. The youth of today can bring this understanding with them to the classroom, to family discussions and to college debates. This understanding of military history will instill in them the desire to support and indeed demand that Canada maintains a strong military posture. It is because of this vital work that we must do everything possible to support the Museum.

Most of us in the Foundation grew up with an understanding of the importance of a nation's military. By doing what we can to enable the Museum to preserve history and to pass on the lessons of the past to

young people, we in the Foundation are fulfilling our duty to Canada. Our work at the Foundation is as vital today as was our work when we actively served our country, whether in uniform or as civilians.

As we embark on another fiscal year, I offer my thanks to everyone who supported our efforts in the past. Your support during the last fiscal year has been astounding. I hope we are able to repeat our successes. Thank you one and all!

Soon we will be celebrating Christmas and the New Year. The holiday season is a time of giving thanks, of reflecting on family and friends and of planning for the New Year. May your Holidays be happy and healthy! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

*Eric Nielsen*

## From the Curator's Desk

**T**he high season for SAM is behind us, and it was a busy and productive time. The Youth Outreach Program was very active throughout the summer with numerous day camps and youth groups participating in structured periods of education and entertainment. Bravo Zulu to Richard Malko and Rebecca Beesley for their outstanding work in this program.

Our website ([www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca](http://www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca)) has been rearranged by summer student Jamie Archibald. We have received many favourable comments on the quality and content of the site.

The collection continues to grow. We have made good progress in cataloguing artifacts with the help of summer student Ian Peacocke (Doug's grandson). We have over 11,000 catalogued items in the collection.

On your next visit, you will be able to view and enjoy a superb exhibit featuring HMC Ships Bonaventure and Assiniboine. This 32-foot x 8-foot diorama has been put together by design consultant Don Smith and our modeller, Rob LePine. This is a "must see" display.

The progress on the Firefly Restoration Project is covered by the Project Officer's (Bill Farrell) report. Bill's energy, expertise and

enthusiasm have been the driving force behind this project. Nonetheless, he can use help to achieve our goal to fly in '03. Join the team.

Meanwhile, the old Gate Guardians are languishing under protective cover. The Banshee, H04S, Tracker, Harvard and T-33 are already on display along with our flagship, the Swordfish. Our Avenger has received some restoration work and is next in line for refurbishing.

SAM has acquired a second T-33 in excellent condition. We are investigating the feasibility of putting one of them on a pedestal next to the Museum. 406 OTS Squadron has a CF-5 Freedom Fighter on its strength as a training aid for the basic avionics technician (TQ3) course. The aircraft is kept in our new hangar, and the students receive instruction on-site in the Museum.

Through the efforts of Ernie Cable and our membership in the Canadian Aeronautical Preservation Association (CAPA), we have had a Piasecki HUP 3 donated to us from the Canadian Museum of Flight in Langley, B.C. The aircraft is in reasonably good condition, and can be refurbished to represent one of three that the RCN held on strength in the 1950's. Transportation to SAM is being made possible with support from the office of Air Force History and Heritage at 1 CAD HQ in Winnipeg, under the auspices of Mr. Don Pearsons.

Finally, the plans for an Atrium to connect our three buildings are well underway. The Foundation continues to do a fantastic job of fundraising for this addition. We plan to break ground about mid-April. Yahoo!! Bravo Zulu to SAMF.

*Chuck Coffen*  
Curator

No so Chuck, Bud Ayer is the unquestioned leader of this project.  
Farrell, Nsltr Ed and Project Dogsbody

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**Kent L. Noseworthy**, B.Sc., LL.B.

## The RCN: "We'll get our own."

*Submitted by Mike Kelly*

"A Critical Supply Line" in *Sea History* 68 does not mention the serious impact which U-boat attacks on western Atlantic ocean traffic had on Canada - at war since 10 Sep 39, and whose eastern ports, principally Halifax, were the assembly points for convoys crossing to the united Kingdom.

Imported Oil was critical to both the economy and the cross-Atlantic convoy operations. The eastern refineries - Montreal and Dartmouth (Halifax) - depended on crude imported by tanker from Texas, Colombia and Venezuela.

When, on 16 Apr 42, Admiral King ordered all tankers to be held in port, the Canadian Oil Controller prohibited his tankers from sailing. This stopped the sinkings, but oil stocks in Atlantic Canada dwindled to a meager 45,000 tons by the end of April - threatening all naval operations.

At this point, the chief of the (Canadian) Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral Percy Nelles, RCN, took unilateral action to get needed oil. Although the USN had prohibited tanker sailings, Admiral Nelles (later quoted by his staff officers as saying, "To hell with that, we'll get our own.") on 28 April ordered two RCN destroyers to proceed immediately to US and Caribbean ports to escort Canadian and Norwegian tankers to Halifax. On 1 May the Canadian Oil Controller ordered that the few tankers he had left would only sail under naval escort; this compelled the Royal Canadian navy to provide escorts for regularly scheduled coastal convoys. The RCN transferred four corvettes from mid-ocean escort groups for this duty.

These Canadian oil convoys continued until August 1942 when the USN finally established a comprehensive coastal convoy system. Four, and later six, RCN corvettes provided escorts for the Canadian oil convoys. The sinking of U-94 by HMCS *Oakville* on 27 August marked the climax of the campaign for the RCN. Mounting U-boat losses soon forced Admiral Donitz to move his boats back to the North Atlantic.

In all the RCN escorted 14 convoys including 76 tankers, between Halifax and the West Indies without the loss of a single ship.

*Arthur B. Harris, Troy, Michigan*



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## MILLENNIUM PROJECT

The project to place a tile on the Wall of Honour in memory of the following trades AH, AC, SE, AM, Air Bos'n and ATC has been completed and the tile has been mounted. The sum of \$750 was realized from the following:

CORNISH, Robert  
DESROCHES, Gabriel  
FASEVICH, Mike  
GILLIS, Earle, C  
JANUSAS, Edmund 'Ed'  
KJELLSTRUM, K.J.  
LOWES, Gordon  
McINTOSH, John (Frank)  
MacLEAN, Owen 'Bud'  
MILLS, James  
MORRES, Clive  
OSGOOD, Arthur  
PHILIPPE, Fern  
ROGERS, Eugene 'Buck'  
STEELE, George A. 'Dave'  
SHEPHERD, Robert  
TRINACITY, Edward 'Ed'

If anyone else wishes to donate in memory of the above trades, please send your donations directly to SAMF. I would like to thank everyone who made this project possible.

Thanks for Remembering!

*Eugene (Buck) Rogers*



## VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER

Sincere congratulations and a heartfelt Thank You goes out to Mr. Gerry Brushett. A former Volunteer Coordinator for SAM, Gerry has been selected as the Volunteer of the Quarter. Gerry has been a regular, and most reliable, volunteer Tour Guide since SAM opened its newly relocated and renovated doors in August of 1995. Over the years, Gerry has shared his wealth of experience and knowledge with visitors of all backgrounds and interests, educating one and all, as well as brightening our days with his "Joke of the Day". Bravo Zulu Gerry!

**Fall 2002**



## IN THE DELTA

Birks, Jake  
Davidson, Peers  
DeWolf, Adm  
Dillon, Charles  
Dorman, A  
Downie, Al  
Fox, Alex  
Fudge, M.M.  
Gick, Philip Adm  
Hay, Ronnie  
Johansen, Hal  
Jones, David  
MacGlashen, Archie  
Maxwell, Bill  
Richardson, Norm  
Schwenk, Tino  
Sopko, Bill  
Spratt, D  
Stapleford, Dave  
Stetchman, JW  
Vandewater, V  
Wadds, "Trigger"  
Young, Al

## THE POPPY

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
We are the dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;  
To you, from failing hands, we throw  
The torch, be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
*In Flanders fields.*

## Flak over Chezzetcook



## CANADIAN WARRIOR

From: Jim Burns <jamcor@shaw.ca>

Bill-

Re your summer edition - here are some photos of RE 8's from the training squadron at Aboukir. Egypt, circa early late 1918, early 1919. I gather the RE 8 was the basic training aircraft along with the Avro 504 K. The squadron was also equipped with more advanced aircraft such as the SE 5, Camel, Bristol, some bomber types. Fortunately Father had purchased a camera and some of his photos have survived. There are also three photos of the old man-one in 1916-buck private; one in 1919 with RFC regalia: and one from Camp Borden, circa 1944, where he was a link instructor at the EFTS all during the war-he piled up about 4000 hours on the link - can't imagine how I have his log books and couldn't count the number of students he worked with.

When the war ended it was not long before flying training ceased in Egypt and the cadets were anxiously waiting transport back to UK and to home. However the natives were restless and they were kept in Egypt to guard British depots and installations in the event rioting broke out. During this time a staff officer in the local command decided that the Flight Cadets should revert to their substantive ranks which meant loss of pay and status. The unit CO was powerless to do anything and the order was put into effect - great moaning and gnashing of teeth, especially amongst the Canadians. Before they left for Egypt they had been briefed by Bishop on the terms and conditions of their secondment to the RFC. The problem was getting in touch with Canadian authorities back in UK to let them know what had happened. Dad met a civilian who was returning to UK and gave him two letters - one to Bishop and one to the Canadian High Commissioner, both of which were eventually delivered. With the result that the Cadets were reinstated in short order with full back pay! The staff officer was cashiered.

I recently learned that Jake Kennedy's uncle was at Passchendaele as a member of the 49th Battalion, Loyal Edmonton Regiment, went over the top on the 30th October (two days after Father's day in the mud) - took out a German machine gun nest and was awarded the VC. Cool, eh?

The attachment RE 8's includes an Avro 504 - bottom right - I think the rest are self explanatory. Please feel free to use whatever you like-if you need more info, let me know.

*Good luck!*

*Jim*

From: "Leo Pettipas"  
<lpettip@mb.sympatico.ca> on  
Navairgen


Gentlemen: In the book "Certified Serviceable", it is noted that "In the later years a Petty Officer AO was delegated as the Air Controller [in the Chezzetcook tower] and on some occasions directed pilots to return to Shearwater for violating range procedures." How might a pilot "violate range procedures"?

Well, my insiders tell me that one wasn't supposed to follow one's ordnance toward the target to see if one scored a hit, but rather was supposed to immediately pull up after firing and do a climbing bank to port. This was to ensure that one wasn't struck by one's own ricocheting ordnance.

The story I heard was about a dashing lad who had on board his Tracker, and quite contrary to regulations, a non-aircrew-type passenger of the fair sex (I'm assuming she was a Wren). In a display of derring-do, our hero pickled off his rocket and followed it in to show his admirer what real air-to-ground was all about. Sure enough, the missile hit the lagoon and rebounded skyward, embedding itself in the nose of the a/c. I don't know who the pilot was, or how he explained the rocket in the nose or the girl in the cab, upon his arrival back at AW. In my publication, I will simply acknowledge that taking one's own fire was a hazard of not following the rules ...

Something else that won't grace the pages of my publication is another informant's reference to "little rubber wind socks" that were not uncommon about the premises of the Chezzetcook control tower. I take this to mean that the structure witnessed off-hours "collateral use" that had nothing whatsoever to do with shooting lead bullets.

Who said Canadian history is boring?

**BMO**  **Nesbitt Burns**

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## AN ANSON MEMORY

From Bill Moran

One of my memories of the Anson.

It was around the fall of 1949. An Anson piloted by Hal Welsh ran out of gas about ten minutes west of Moncton airport. Bill Farrell was in the right seat as Observer/Navigator. He did a wheels up landing in a farmer's cow pasture, fronting on one of the river bore inlet. They were on a search mission for a

and immediately turned off at the end of the newscast to save power.

Welsh did a good job of getting the plane down, the ground was soft and there was not a lot of damage. The wheels of an Anson protrude when in the retracted position so this helped to protect the fuselage and engine. The first step in the salvage operation was to get the plane up on its wheels. To do this we dug a sloping hole in front of each wheel with enough clearance that when we dropped the wheels the plane continued to rest on the fuselage. We could then check and do



missing RCAF Expeditor - not found then but discovered a decade or so later.

I was working in the maintenance Z2 hangar when they asked for volunteers, needed was a couple each of riggers and fitters to go to the crash sight to salvage the plane. I knew Joe Malone fairly well, and as the CPO in charge, he asked me if I wanted to go so I volunteered.

We drove down in his new Hillman Minx, he was getting mileage etc.. We were billeted at a Naval communication base in the area. This looked after our sleeping accommodations, but now arrangement had to be made at the crash site to feed us as we would be working in the middle of nowhere. This was done through an agreement with the farmer on whose land the plane had landed. It proved to be very interesting arrangement as it gave us an insight into the farm family's life. We ate with the farmer, his sons and hired hand. The women did not sit at the table with the men, but stood in the background and served us. The farmer had a radio that was car battery operated, the farm had no electricity. While we were there the radio was only turned on at 1 PM to hear the news

whatever repairs to the legs that were necessary. We then put something solid under them, hitched the farmers horses to the plane and they pulled it up the slope.

A decision was made that the plane would be flown off the farmers field to Moncton airport. We now began the repair work. The props had been bent so these were replaced, and some work was done on the engine. We riggers repaired what little there was to do on the fuselage and controls. To lighten the plane we removed everything from the inside that was not needed to fly it. The farmers largest pasture was chosen, (I assure you it was not that big) and the horses towed the Anson to one corner. The idea being that the plane would take off kitty-corner giving it more runway. To provide a firmer and more even surface we laid two not very wide rows of flat boards. Nobody was quite sure that the plane could actually get airborne. If the plane did not make it, there was not enough people in our group to cover the whole field to effect a rescue, so on the big day they brought a contingent of sailors from the communication base to stand along the fences so that they would be available if needed.

The pilot Reported to have been Commander Flying (Wings) got in the plane, ran it up and gave the thumbs up sign that he was ready to give it a go. The actual take off was hairy, the plane was slow getting up speed, was rocking and having difficulty staying on the boards, I thought for a moment he was going to abort, but he did make it, just, as he barely got over the fence at the end of the field and flew away to the Moncton airport.

We packed up at the farm and proceed by car to the airport. We put the plane back together, checked it out and it was signed off ready to fly. I don't remember how long this took but when it was finished we learned we flew back to Shearwater in the Anson!

Editor's Note: This was an embarrassing *mea culpa* for me - the error was mine, not Hal's. Bill Farrell.

## DEATH TO TURBINES

From Rod Bays

Ain't this the truth. Death to turbines!!! We gotta get rid of these turbines, they are ruining aviation. We need to go back to big round engines. Anybody can start a turbine, you just need to move a switch from "OFF" to "START", and then remember it needs kerosene after a while.. My PC is harder to start. Cranking a ROUND ENGINE requires skill, finesse and style. Only pilots and mechanics can do it right. Turbines start by whining a while, then they give a small lady-like poot and start whining louder. ROUND ENGINES give a satisfying clank-rattle, click-click, BANG, more rattles, groans, another BANG, a BIG macho fart or two, more clicks, a lot of smoke and fire and finally a serious low-pitched roar. We like that. It's a guy thing. When you start a round engine, your mind is engaged and ready for a fight and you can concentrate on a flight ahead. Starting a turbine is like flicking on a ceiling fan; useful, but hardly exciting. Turbines don't break often enough, leading to aircrew boredom, complacency and inattention. A ROUND ENGINE at speed looks and sounds like it's going to blow at any minute. This helps concentrate the mind. Turbines don't have enough control levers to keep a pilots attention. There's nothing to fiddle with during long flights. Turbines smell like a Boy Scout camp full of Coleman lanterns. Round engines smell like God intended flying machines to smell. I think I hear the nurse coming down the hall. I gotta go.... Cheers.... Rod PS: Also check out <[www.rarebear.com](http://www.rarebear.com)>



## CNAG Reunion 2002

"A Return to Where it all Began", was the theme for the 33<sup>rd</sup>. annual CNAG reunion, sponsored this year by the Atlantic Chapter and held Thanksgiving Weekend in Halifax at the Westin Hotel (The Old Nova Scotian), Shearwater Air Museum and 12 Wing Shearwater.

The reunion was well attended with a final count in the vicinity of four hundred attendees. All but two provinces, (Saskatchewan and Newfoundland & Labrador) were represented.

Other attendees included those from Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. Danny Chin and his daughter Carolyn Weir traveled the greatest distance, coming from Trinidad. Danny served five years in the early fifties and his presence was enjoyed by old acquaintances.

Proceedings got underway at the Westin on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> with registration beginning at noon and a "Meet & Greet" from 1800 hrs. to 2359 hrs. (No 1200 hrs. allowed here) This event, as always, was well attended and many old acquaintances were renewed between old shipmates, mess mates and neighbours.

Registration continued Saturday morning till noon and many took advantage of free time to take in the various attractions of Halifax and Dartmouth, including Pier 21, Canada's Naval Memorial, the last corvette HMCS Sackville, the Halifax Casino, the many shops of Halifax and Dartmouth and of course, the Halifax Waterfront which was found by many to be somewhat improved since earlier times.

A dinner and dance was attended by over three hundred and forty at the Westin Saturday evening. A tasty turkey dinner with all the trimmings, accompanied by wine from our own Jost Vinyard, was served by the hotel staff and great music was provided by the band Savoire Faire led by John Manders. Master of Ceremonies was Dennis Shaw and guest of honour was Vice Admiral Harry Porter Ret. Other head table members included John Eden, Chairman of CNAG National, Eugene (Buck) Rogers, President of Atlantic Chapter, John Freeman, Chairman of the 2002 Reunion committee and their spouses and guests.

At 1100 hrs. on Sunday a memorial church service was held in the new hangar at The Shearwater Museum. This service, led by Padre Charles Black, Ret. and attended by approximately three hundred and fifty, was probably the largest church

up and John, after being accused of having his khakis altered, admitted that his trouser waist had in fact been taken in. The rum issue team proved to be more generous with spillers than was ever the case aboard ship and many a salty dip was overheard. A



*Left to Right: Whitey Williamson, Sam Johnston, Buck Rogers, Ed Janusas and John MacLeod*

parade in Canadian Naval Air history. Dorothy Flight provided musical accompaniment for the service on the recently restored organ from HMCS Bonaventure. Al Moore and Eric Edgar read the scriptures and Owen Walton read the Roll of Remembrance. A Navy T-33, a Banshee and a Tracker and other service aircraft provided a fitting setting for a

photographer was on hand here and throughout the reunion to record many of the faces which hopefully we can put on the Museum's web site for future viewing.

At 1330 hrs. we climbed the hill one more time to the Sea King Club where 12 Wing Food Services Staff provided us with a bountiful brunch consisting of caesar salad,



service dedicated to the memory of those members no longer with us and those who could not attend for various reasons.

"UP Spirits" was held immediately following the service in the old hangar of SAM. (This did not cause a drop in attendance.) Rum Witnessing Officer was Whitey Williamson, assisted by Sam Johnston, Buck Rogers, Ed Janusas and John MacLeod, all decked out in their best pusser attire. Yes they still fit, but Sam admitted that he didn't need a belt to keep his bell-bottoms

garlic bread, seafood chowder and lasagna. Following brunch people lingered to enjoy the last moments of company and friendship with those whom we share a common bond from years of service in a unique organization.

After final farewells people departed to catch up on some rest before heading home and thinking of that reunion in the Vancouver area next year or the one in Trenton in 2004.

## HISTORY IN THE LOWER RANKS

*Cec Belbeck-P2AT writes:*  
([warceber@shaw.ca](mailto:warceber@shaw.ca))

Is there some reason that I am not aware of, why the lower ranks are very seldom, hardly ever, almost never - brought to our attention, reminded of, or spoken about? We were there too, and did our share. Somebody must have some records of our existence.

**From: Laurie Farrington**  
<[flaurie@rogers.com](mailto:flaurie@rogers.com)>

FYI. In the case of officers a weekly list of officer appointments/ postings (as reprinted on the navairgen distribution list) was published and widely distributed by the Director of Officer Personnel in Naval Headquarters. These were known as CW (Commissioned Warrant) Lists which are available in various naval archives. CW Lists disappeared after the unification process in the late 1960's. Other ranks were posted normally by message by the Manning Depots on each coast. I am not aware of lists for other ranks being distributed. If they were, they should be available in some naval archives.

**From: Allen Whalley**  
<[alonflight5@shaw.ca](mailto:alonflight5@shaw.ca)>

One of our Chiefs did sit down and record past events, after all. Red Atkins loaned me two interesting well written books to read. Beautiful design and covers included. The author was Chief Petty Officer "Scotty" Grant! assisted by Bob Murray. He put a lot of work and effort into these two books that would have had to have taken many hours of research as well as the writing, design and publication. But...guess what??? "Canadian Naval Aviator Casualties 1915-1919 1940-1968" is one book! The other..."Tabulated Histories of the Aircraft of the Royal Canadian Navy and the Canadian Armed Forces" [Maritime Air Group] June 1945-May 1997 Yep! He wrote about the aircraft and their crews. The last time I sat down and had a beer with Scotty, was at our reunion in Dartmouth in 1996. Had he lived, I would bet his next book would have been all about us lower deck guys? Wanna bet?? God bless you "Scottie" ..and happy landings!

Al

**From: Michael Owens** <[ma-owens@shaw.ca](mailto:ma-owens@shaw.ca)>

Hi Cec, This is from an old very humble Lower Deck type who was and is very proud to have been there. It did bring a back a memory that put everything in perspective. In the Med. on the Maggie our drivers were a bit nonplussed when a Firefly landed with a visit from Lord Admiral Louis Mountbatten. His pilot was a Petty Officer, RN. Yes, we should and are invited by Navairgen and SAMF to submit articles on our career and friends. They welcome it but we are ever so humble. It was a bit disturbing to read the Navairgen last week and learn all about the accident in which we had two true heroes save the lives of pilots and go on to enlighten us on the pilots later careers. What happened to the heroes, Bouchard and McLean. Does anyone out there know? Hope you are well and enjoying life Cec, all is well with me.

**From: Bill Farrell (Newsletter Editor)**  
[samf@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:samf@ns.sympatico.ca)

**SAMF Newsletter is hungry for "lower deck" stories. Bill Farrell Editor**

**From: Ted Kieser**  
<[tkieser@accesscable.net](mailto:tkieser@accesscable.net)>

I can only reiterate Bill's plea for stories to be submitted for the Newsletter. We may not be as professional as those slick magazine publishers in "Upper Canada", but we try and I think our editorial staff do a pretty good job. I know from my short tenure as editor, that occasionally, some submissions get mislaid. Usually, it is because we plan to include them in a later issue. However, things have a habit of disappearing, not because we want them to, but they just do. The only way we can tell the stories of Naval Aviation is if you all send them to us.

Cec Belbeck asks:" Is there some reason that I am not aware of, why the lower ranks are very seldom, hardly ever, almost never - brought to our attention, reminded of, or spoken about? We were there too, and did our share. Somebody must have some records of our existence"

Well, Cec, there is very little record

available for any group of former Naval Air people, commissioned or non-commissioned. As you know, "This Week in History" (seen on navairgen) is primarily only a record of appointments of officers. Very little other information is provided. I only wish that some record was available of appointments of non-commissioned personnel.

I cannot say that I agree with you regarding information being brought to our attention about lower ranks. A review of Navairgens and issues of the Newsletter show quite a number of such stories.(Could be more, though). Virtually all the stuff is received from people like you and I telling the story of our time in the service. That is the only way to get this information.

It is really up to us all to consider putting pen to paper (or hit the keyboard) and write the story of Naval Air. We all "did our share" There was never any doubt about that.

Let us hear from you all. Send stuff to Bill Farrell for the Newsletter. Put an article out on Navairgen too, but remember we only reach about one tenth of the people through this medium

We are all proud of our service in Naval Air. Let's show it! Cheers, Ted

From: "Leo Pettipas"  
<[lpettip@mb.sympatico.ca](mailto:lpettip@mb.sympatico.ca)>

Re. proud air types, or, why I'm a Naval Air historian, quote: "I'm Boomer. I'm looking through these idiot red goggles at the for'd bulkhead of Maggie's briefing room. The Stats Board says we're at 47N and 80W, or thereabouts. ... The clock says 2305 GMT. [Bob] Tuckwood nudges me. He's our observer's mate, a Petty Officer, Second Class. Did you ever try to tell a PO he's second class? If only those dummies in Personnel knew something about people." Bob Cocks

### NAVAL LORE - "A Quiz"

Passing a swifter is:

1. Indicative of a bowel disorder.
2. The overtaking of a "swift fast ship"
3. The cordage linking of capstan bars
4. None of the above



## A MANITOBAN “NAVAL ACE”

William “Bill” Henry Isaac Atkinson, D.S.C., M.I.D, RCNVR

**W**illiam “Bill” Henry Isaac Atkinson was born on 22 April 1923 and raised at Minnedosa, Manitoba. Later he made his home in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In the winter of 42-43, at the tender age of 19, Bill Atkinson made a decision that would alter his life forever: He decided to volunteer for naval service. It was cold Manitoban winter day, 13 Jan 43, when Bill Atkinson was accepted into the RCNVR at HMCS CHIPPAWA in Winnipeg. But, unlike others who were joining the Navy at that time, Bill did not have plans to go to sea on a convoy escort. Instead, he chose and was accepted into a special program that provided pilots to the Royal Navy.

Atkinson immediately went overseas to the United Kingdom where he did his basic flying training at HMS St. Vincent as a Leading Naval Airman, RNVR. He then was dispatched to RCAF Goderich for Elementary Flight Training School in 1943 and to RCAF Aylmer, Ontario for Service Flying Training School. He received his pilot wings in April 1944 and was promoted to Petty Officer Pilot RNVR on 1 March 1944. Administratively, he transferred back to the RCNVR at that time and assumed the commissioned rank of Acting Sub-Lieutenant (seniority dated 1 April 1944). In 1944 he was posted to HMS Macaw and RAF Erroll for Advance Flying Training.

His first active posting was to No. 761 RN Squadron in 1944 and to Royal Naval College Greenwich in 1944. He was promoted Sub-Lieutenant RCNVR on 1 October 1944 and then was posted to HMS Ravager for Deck Landing Training on Seafires. Later he was transferred to RNAS Puttalan (Ceylon) for advanced Flying Training on the Grumman Hellcat.

The US built F6F Hellcat was developed from the “Wildcat”. The Hellcat was, without a doubt one of the finest carrier-borne fighters available at the time. In its USN wartime service, Hellcat pilots were responsible for approximately 5,000 of the 6,500 Japanese aircraft that were shot down.

In December 1944 Atkinson was posted to the 1844 RN Hellcat Squadron aboard HMS INDOMITABLE. Soon after the RN fleet had been asked to carry out a strike on the oil fields and tanks at Palembang. The Americans had tried but without success. The



*A Hellcat N.F.II, as flown by Lt. W.H. Atkinson, RCNVR, 1844 Squadron Detachment aboard HMS FORMIDABLE, July 1945. Atkinson shot down the last three enemy aircraft for the Fleet Air Arm in World War II on 24 July 1945. (Photo: Bill Atkinson)*

targets in the Palembang area were at Songei Gerong, which had been the East Indies oil refinery for the Standard Oil Company. The other was at Pladjoe, the former Royal Dutch Shell refinery. Both were quite large and between them produced and supplied 50% of the oil used by Japan, including 75% of the vital aviation fuel.

On 24 and 29 Jan 45, Slt. Atkinson flew his Hellcat as a combat air patrol during carrier-borne aircraft attacks against the oil refineries at Palembang. In this operation the allied forces claimed thirteen Japanese planes and six probable at a cost to us of six corsairs and one Hellcat.

In early April 1945, Atkinson found himself participating in the strikes to neutralize the Sakishima Gunto Island group and in air strikes on Formosa. Called OPERATION ICEBERG these raids were designed to neutralize airfields that were being used by the Japanese to re-supply Okinawa.

In the initial raid on the Miyako Airfield Atkinson downed his first enemy plane as a wartime pilot, a Japanese “Betty” bomber, but he was only awarded a “probable kill”. On a subsequent raid, on 6 April 45 he scored his first confirmed kill, a “Judy” bomber.

Six days later, on 12 Apr 45, Atkinson shot down an enemy “Zero” which was credited to him as a “confirmed kill”. He was also credited with another “probable kill” which was a Japanese “Tony” fighter. The next day, on 13 Apr 45, he was confirmed with another “kill” of a Japanese “Betty” bomber. On 15 Apr 45 Atkinson shared in the destruction of a Myrt reconnaissance aircraft. These achievements were not without cost, and in an attack on Sakishima on 21 May 45 his aircraft was badly damaged by flak.

At the end of June 1945, while the INDOMITABLE was undergoing refit, the 1844 Squadron was relocated to HMS FORMIDABLE. Atkinson was in good company on the FORMIDABLE as other Canadians serving there at the time were Lt Robert Hampton Grey, Lt G.A. Anderson (1841 Squadron), Lt Charles Edgar Butterworth (1942 Squadron) and Lt. J.F. Ross (1842 Squadron).

During his attachment to FORMIDABLE, Atkinson achieved a rare distinction on the night of July 25. Four Hellcats were scrambled on a night combat air patrol. These were conventional Hellcat II's [F6F-5s] without radar, but their pilots had been trained in night flying. Shortly after assuming patrol, incoming Japanese aircraft were detected. Two Hellcats were forced to return to the carrier unserviceable. Slt Atkinson assumed the lead of the remaining two Hellcats and was vectored out on an intercepting course. Under a full moon, Atkinson identified the bandits as big, single engine “Grace” torpedo planes and took his New Zealand wingman, Sub-Lieutenant R.F. Mackie, into the attack. Atkinson latched on a pair of Graces and shot them both into the water



*Slt Bill Atkinson (right) shares the story of the night's adventure with Slt Mackie (left) after their return to HMS FORMIDABLE. (Photo: Bill Atkinson)*

while Mackie dumped the third. Then, in routing the other bandits, a fourth Grace was damaged and the enemy attack was completely broken up.

Atkinson was credited with shooting down three Grace Torpedo bombers, with Mackie claiming the fourth. Atkinson thereby established himself as the second Canadian "Naval Ace" of the Pacific war. A tragedy was also averted following the action that same night. Mackie lost his electrical system and radios in the skirmish; he became disoriented, had lost Atkinson and had no means of locating the distant blacked-out carrier. Fortunately, as Atkinson came in to land aboard and the carrier was illuminated, Mackie saw the distant flash of light and flew safely back to the FORMIDABLE.

The war was nearly over, but the Fleet Air Arm still had business to do. On a clear and sunny 9 Aug 45, after he had completed an earlier sortie, SLt Bill Atkinson was the friend who helped a fellow Canadian, Lt. Hampton Gray, RCNVR, of Nelson B.C., strap himself into his Corsair fighter-bomber in preparation for a raid at Onagawa Bay, Japan. In that day's raid Hampton-Gray sunk the Japanese Destroyer Amakusa, but was tragically killed in the process. For his valour, Lt Hampton Gray was awarded the Victoria Cross.

By war's end, most of SLt Bill Anderson's wingmates, both Canadian and Allied pilots, had perished. This is the sad truth behind the young pilot's valour and wartime exploits. But, for his intrepid flying, Atkinson was awarded initially with a Mention in Despatches which was followed by the Distinguished Service Cross "For gallant services in the Pacific. For gallantry, skill and marked devotion to duty in the Far East."

After the war, Atkinson stayed with the Navy. He served with the RCN as a Squadron Leader and as a pilot for the Banshee aircraft. In 1958 he was posted to HMCS Nootka as Executive Officer, and after being promoted to Commander in 1962, he assumed Command of HMCS HAIDA from 20 July 1962 to 22 September 1963. Later he became Commanding Officer of HMCS Venture, the Officer Training School. Commander Bill Atkinson retired from the RCN on 1 September 1973 and moved to Peachland, B.C.

In his naval career, Bill Atkinson flew a total of 3,400 Hours and accomplished 241 day deck landings and 34 night deck landings. He was one of only sixteen WW2 Fleet Air Arm pilots to achieve five or more air victories.



Christine Hines  
Curator of Collections

A new staff member has recently been seen digging into storage rooms, sorting through uniforms and processing new donations to the Shearwater Aviation Museum. Christine Hines, hailing from Saint John, New Brunswick, is a graduate of St. Francis Xavier University and Algonquin College of Applied Arts & Technology. Christine is a Museum Technician on staff at SAM as the Curator of Collections. Having had her start in the museum field in 1989, Christine has worked at a variety of museums at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. A contract at the Canadian War Museum introduced Christine to military collections; after having served as the Collections Manager for the Base Borden Military Museum since 1996, Christine joined the staff at SAM in January of this year.

Since January, a variety of artifacts relevant to the history of Maritime Military Aviation have come into the museum, including pieces by aviation artists Geoff Bennett and Paul Tuttle, as well as large personal collections of uniforms, accoutrements and documents of personnel having spent years in Shearwater, aircraft avionic components, technical manuals and photographs. Once artifacts are brought to the museum, Christine will research and catalogue the items that are needed for the collection and for adding to displays. Artifacts on display are rotated on a regular basis to ensure the preservation of our collection, and that the many treasures in our collection will have the opportunity to be seen by those who used them, and by members of the public to learn about the role of Shearwater in Canadian Military History. If you have items that would help us tell the story of Shearwater, Christine would like to meet with you!

## From the Archives...

I must say that it never ceases to amaze me how many people don't make use of SAM's Library and Archives - Open to the general public Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Is it because people are afraid of librarians? In response to a question posed by on SAMF member I must say, "There is more to SAM than old warplanes." This is the case not only in the museum proper, but also in its Library and Archives. SAM houses Shearwater's Bissett Memorial Library with reference books like "Jane's All the World's Aircraft," fiction by authors such as Kim Kinrade, and non-fiction books on a wide range of topics relating to Canadian military history and aviation. New books are purchased every year. Are there any titles you might suggest? There is a video collection that circulates with titles such as "The World at War." Documents are always being donated by people who have served here at Shearwater. When they do, I ask for biographical information to keep with the documents. There are line books, pilot's logs, and technical manuals. There are, also, approximately 7000 (Yes. That's 7000) photographs taken mostly here at Shearwater. If you wish, you can request that they be copied (For personal use and for a nominal fee). For more information, check the "Library and Archives" section of the SAM website.

*Christine Dunphy*  
SAM Librarian/Archivist  
(902)460-1011, ext.2165



## QUICK THINKING - COURAGEOUS ACTIONS

*An excerpt from Certified Serviceable written by  
Ron Beard*

After an accident on Board *Bonaventure* in March 1958 in which the rescue helicopter had problems releasing a Banshee pilot from his parachute and life-raft, it was decided that an Air Bos'n would fly as rescue crew member on the H04S helicopter. This role continued through to the early '70s, and needless to say there were many and varied incidents.

visibility and the movement of the destroyer, LS Bowen was required to be out on the step guiding the pilot with information on deck movement, height and positioning. For their actions, the aircrew were awarded the Queen's Commendation and their names published in the Canada Gazette.

On 12 June 1970, there was an incident during a rescue mission that won LS Gord Rowe recognition for true bravery. After picking up a US para-rescue man who had been dropped



*Ken Bowen's Presentation*

On the night of 18 Oct 65, the 'Angel' onboard *Bonaventure* was called upon to assist in the evacuation and supply to HMCS *Nipigon* following her explosion and fire. It was a dirty night, and because the H04S was not designed for night flying, a hairy experience was in store. With LS Ken Bowen in the back seat, the helo made several trips back and forth to *Nipigon*. Fire-fighting equipment had to be conveyed on the trip over, and on return to *Bonaventure*, a total of nine casualties were transferred.

On these trips, because of the

earlier, a Sea King commenced the return flight to *Shearwater* at 300 feet at 150 knots. The other crewman was standing up forward behind the co-pilot when suddenly the forward door opened and the crewman fell out. Somehow he managed to grab the stubwing of the pontoon. To assist him, the pilot banked the aircraft to starboard. At this point, Rowe went forward out the door and down the steps on the door and was able to get the other man back to the stairway and finally into the aircraft. For this act, Rowe was awarded the medal of Bravery by Governor General Roland Michener.

From "Terry J. Lynch"  
<tlynch1@cogeco.ca>

Looking back, it's hard to believe that we have lived as long as we have:

As children we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.

Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm day was always a special treat.

Our baby cribs were painted with bright colored lead based paint. We often chewed on the crib, ingesting the paint.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors, or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes we had no helmets.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times we learned to solve the problem.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on.

No one was able to reach us all day. We played dodge ball and sometimes the ball would really hurt.

We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank sugar soda, but we were never over weight; we were always outside playing.

Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment.

Some students weren't as smart as others so they failed a grade and were held back to repeat the same grade.

That generation produced some of the greatest risk-takers and problem solvers.

We had the freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all.

THINK ABOUT IT!!!

## AN RAF INTERLUDE

Pop Fotheringham writes:

Having avoided a desk job for the first eight years of my naval service, I found myself at NSHQ in a personnel appointment. This gave me an opportunity to access all the manuals relating to possible future courses and one caught my eye. The RCAF had a regular vacancy on the course at the RAF Flying College at Manby in Lincolnshire. There they granted a staff course qualification which included some interesting flying. From that date on I was a frequent applicant for this course despite it being for RCAF candidates. It was some years later when my application finally got some attention coinciding with an RCAF decision not to fill their vacancy. The air force wisely recognized that while I had a number of hours in Ansons, Oxfords and Expeditors, I had never flown heavier twins. I appreciated being sent to Saskatoon for an instrument course on Michells which



*Gloster Meteor*

got me over 50 hours on what was described as a heavy twin.

Arriving at Manby I was required to get a UK instrument ticket on Meteor 7's prior to joining the course. At that time the course was using Canberras and Meteor 8's. We were supposed to have been the first course to use Hunters but there had been a glitch in their production and they were not available for the start of our course. The Canberra was not what might

have been called a high performance aircraft but it had an unusual altitude capability for that time. On navex's we employed a cruise/climb technique flying at constant thrust causing a climb of about 1,500 ft. per hour as fuel was consumed. As those exercises commenced in excess of 45,000 ft. we reached what for me were spectacular altitudes. I was always amused at the requirement for filing flight plans with cruising altitudes as certainly the Meteors were not capable of intercepting and no civilian traffic was to be encountered at those altitudes. One aspect which rendered those flights even



*English Electric Canberra*

more unusual was the requirement for pressure breathing which I had not previously experienced.

On the course the student pilots were paired to fly Meteors as a section and the Canberra as alternating pilot/navigator. I was paired with W/Cdr. Len Trent who was one of three still serving VC's in the RAF. The course proceeded on what I assumed were staff college lines. While discussing strategic matters we flew exercises in the Canberras and in the Meteors while studies related to more tactical problems. One particular flight late in the course sticks in my memory. We were returning from a brief stopover in North Africa and arrived over the Channel at sunset in CAVU conditions. The lights were on, on the ground, but still good visibility at our 48,500 feet. A Hunter came up alongside and formed momentarily on our port wing tip, pulled up and away in the distance. The first Hunter squadron had recently been formed. Having 'qualified pfc' (passed flying college) I ended my time with the RAF. It had been a fascinating interlude which, as far as I know, no other Canadian naval pilot had the opportunity to experience.

## The Final Inspection

*-author unknown*

The soldier stood and faced God  
Which must always come to pass.  
He hoped his shoes were shining  
Just as brightly as his brass.

Step forward now, you soldier,  
How shall I deal with you?  
Have you always turned the other  
cheek?  
To My Church have you been true?

The soldier squared his shoulders  
and  
Said, No, Lord, I guess I ain't,  
Because those of us who carry guns  
Can't always be a Saint.

I've had to work most Sundays,  
And at times my talk was tough;  
And sometimes I've been violent,  
Because the world is awfully rough.

But, I never took a penny  
That wasn't mine to keep...  
Though I worked a lot of overtime  
When the bills just got too steep,

And I never passed a cry for help;  
Though at times I shook with fear.  
And sometimes, God forgive me,  
I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place  
Among the people here.  
They never wanted me around  
Except to calm their fear.

If you've a place for me here, Lord,  
It needn't be so grand.  
I never expected or had too much;  
But if you don't, I'll understand.

There was a silence all around the  
throne  
Where the Saints had often trod.  
As the soldier waited quietly  
For the judgment of his God,

Step forward now, you soldier,  
You've borne your burdens well.  
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets;  
You've done your time in Hell.

To all that serve.



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## Sea Kings In The Persian Gulf

*Colonel ESC Cable OMM, CD (Ret'd)  
Shearwater Aviation Museum Historian*

Author's Note: Canada's Sea King maintainers distinguished themselves in the Persian Gulf War. The performance of the aircraft and aircrews would not have been possible were not for the outstanding effort of the officers and technicians in Sea King maintenance organization who established several Sea King maintenance firsts! The following excerpt from a larger paper tells their story.

 On 2 August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait to gain control over its vast oil reserves. The United Nations was quick to respond by passing a series of resolutions that not only condemned Iraq but also sanctioned the use of offensive military action to enforce a trade embargo. This was the first UN authorization of offensive force since the 1950 Korean Conflict, which hopefully would cause Iraq to reconsider its actions and withdraw from Kuwait. On 10 August, Prime Minister Mulroney announced that Canada would support its allies by sending a Task Group of three warships to the Persian Gulf to help to enforce the embargo. Canadian participation in the Persian Gulf was dubbed "Operation Friction" and the Canadian Task Group consisted of the Tribal class destroyer (DDH), HMCS Athabaskan, the Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment ship (AOR), HMCS Protecteur and HMCS Terra Nova, an Improved Restigouche Escort (IRE). Athabaskan and Protecteur would each embark their normal complement of two Sea King helicopters.

It was not a fortuitous time for Canada to send a Task Group into a war zone. The navy had not recently upgraded its ships because it was preparing to take delivery of the first of the new ultra modern Halifax class frigates in a little more than a year. Similarly, the air force had not modernized its fleet of 30-year-old Sea Kings because the new Sea King replacement aircraft announcement was imminent. Therefore, to deal effectively with the Iraqi air and sea threats, it was essential that the ships and helicopters undergo major modernization before proceeding to the Persian Gulf. The navy was fortunate in that the required self-defence and command and control systems could be

borrowed from the Canadian shipyards where they were awaiting installation on the Halifax class frigates. Weighing the fact that Iraq possessed no submarines against intelligence warnings that Iraq's Islamic sympathizers could present a submarine threat at strategic "choke points", Maritime Air Group decided to convert the Sea Kings from an anti-submarine helicopter to a surface interdiction aircraft. However, the equipment to convert the Sea Kings would have to be purchased from the Americans. Maritime Air Group was successful in purchasing some equipment through Foreign Military Sales (FMS) but the door was slammed shut on other FMS deals once the American demand for same equipment became clear. Maritime Air Group selected Lieutenant Colonel Larry McWha, the Commanding Officer HS 423, to be the Task Group's Deputy Chief of Staff (Air) to be in charge of the air component; his first task was to supervise the stripping and re-equipping of the Sea Kings.

On 10 August, the same day that Prime Minister Mulroney announced that Canada would be sending a naval Task Group to the Persian Gulf, planning began in earnest at 0700 hours at Maritime Air Group Headquarters in Halifax. Upon LCol. McWha's recommendation Maritime Air Group approved *Protecteur* embarking three Sea Kings, in lieu of the standard two to provide insurance against the long tenuous supply line to the Persian Gulf. Next, for the maritime interdiction role in the Gulf it was agreed that essential equipment for the five aircraft include:

- A Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) optical system for night surveillance,
- A Global Positioning System (GPS) for accurate long range navigation,
- Stabilized day/night binoculars and night vision goggles (NVG's) for long range visual detection and identification of surface and air contacts,
- Chaff and flare launchers to foil radar guided and heat seeking anti-aircraft weapons and anti-ship missiles,
- Radar Warning Receivers (RWR's) to warn of the presence of hostile fire control or missile guidance radars,
- Laser Warning Receivers (LWR's) to warn of the presence of laser guided weapons,
- An infra-red missile jammer to foil infra-red guided anti-aircraft missiles,
- Nuclear, biological and chemical defence (NBCD) suits,
- A General Purpose door-mounted Machine Gun (GPMG), and

- Armoured seats and personal body armour for the aircrew.

A Missile Approach Warning System (MAWS) was also added later in the morning as the top priority as well as "Have Quick" secure UHF radios to be interoperable with other allied forces. The navy's goal was to have the equipment installed by 18 August for sea trials and ready to depart Halifax for the Middle East not later than 21 August – **in less than two weeks!**

The air force's connections with the United States and the United Kingdom through officer exchange programs proved vital in acquiring some of this additional equipment. Chaff launchers, for example, were expedited through official channels because of personal working relationships developed with the United States Navy. Maritime Air Group also used the unofficial channels to obtain information and training on some of the equipment that was purchased through the auspices of the Canadian Defence Liaison Staff in Washington despite a high demand for the same gear in the United States Navy. The arrangements for the chaff launcher purchase had moved so fast through the "old boys" net that the equipment was onboard a northbound Aurora aircraft before the American equipment manager realized that some of the launchers had been sold to Canada.

To make room for the new equipment and to compensate for the added weight, the Sea Kings' sonar systems and sonobuoy receivers would be removed. However, as a precaution against the submarine threat materializing, the navy agreed to embark these anti-submarine systems in the ships' holds to be ready for reinstallation. The magnitude of the technical effort that would be required was growing by the hour. To help overcome the technical challenges Maritime Air Group Headquarters approved the modification of a sixth Sea King to remain at CFB Shearwater to serve as a research, development, evaluation and training aircraft. Not only would this aircraft be a spare but it would also be available to solve technical problems unveiled after the Task Group aircraft had departed for the Gulf.

Installation Control Team

That Friday (10 Aug.) afternoon across the harbour at CFB Shearwater, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Hardy, the Base Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Officer (BAMEO), selected the tail numbers of the

aircraft to be modified based on the flying hours remaining before a major inspection was required. Work progressed throughout the remainder of the day and the weekend to locate supply sources for the new equipment, to develop pre-embarkation training plans for the operation and maintenance of the new equipment and to organize an engineering, installation, test and approval team for the new equipment.

Each new piece of equipment required an engineering assessment of the affects on Sea King's airworthiness, weight and balance, wire routing, electrical and cooling capacities, electromagnetic interference and safety before the installation design could be approved. The only way that the sailing date could be achieved was to have all of the air force's aircraft design and test authorities move from their offices across the country and work together at Shearwater. By late evening of Monday, 13 August all of the design engineers, engineering support personnel, test crews and approval authorities needed to commence the Sea King modification work arrived at Shearwater. They were briefed by LCol. McWha and Hardy at 2130 hours in the base conference room where they were dubbed the "Installation Control Team" (ICT) and the conference room became "ICT Central" a hive of incessant and intense activity 24 hours per day! Major Terry Robbins from the Directorate of Maritime Aircraft Engineering and Maintenance in Ottawa was selected as the ICT leader and Major Mike Creighton, Deputy Commanding Officer 423 Squadron, as his deputy and operational conscience.

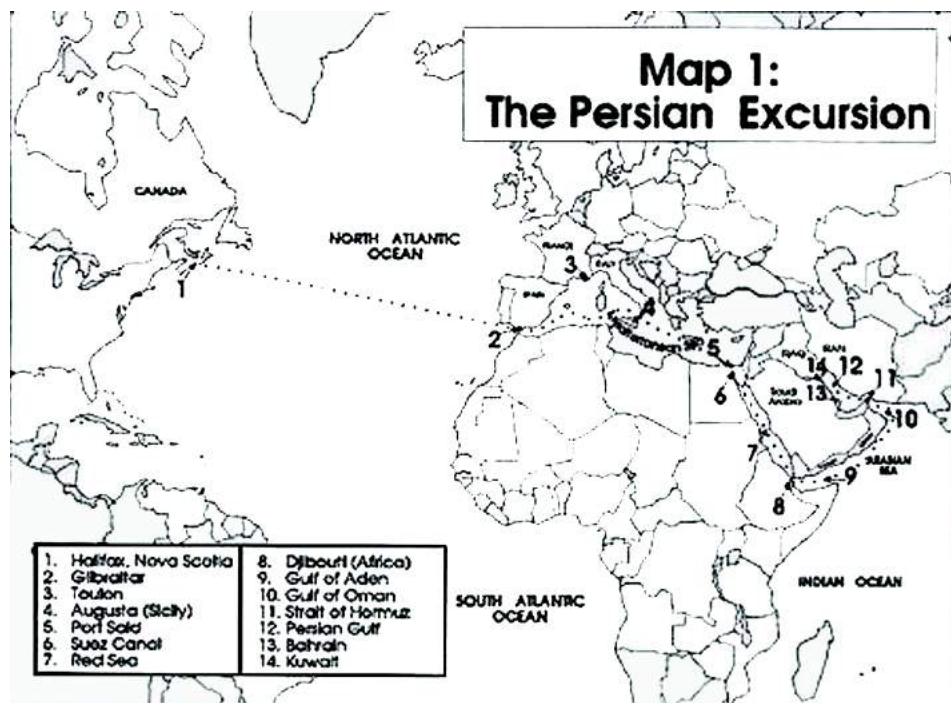
The ICT grew in complexity and size as the pace of work increased to what was gradually recognized as a Herculean challenge given the extremely limited time available. As the designs for the various modifications were signed off by all of the required authorities technicians were literally waiting at ICT Central's door to rush the drawings to hangar floor below to start drilling, riveting, cutting metal and fabricating wire harnesses. As problems were identified, and there were many, knowledgeable people had to be dedicated to the problem. All had to be well versed in how their proposed solutions could interfere with the other modifications; so the ICT matrix grew. By the time the ICT's work was done it had mushroomed to over 150 personnel.

A very welcome reprieve came when it was announced that the ships' sailing date had slipped to 24 August, as the ships' modifications were not progressing as

rapidly as planned. The reprieve did not lessen the pressure at Shearwater. It was originally planned that all modifications could be prototyped serially on one aircraft. However, because of the extremely compressed schedule, the various modifications had to be installed concurrently in different aircraft, tested, redesigned if necessary, and tested again. Once a modification was approved on its prototype aircraft, it was cleared for installation in the other Sea Kings. This process generally proved successful, however, because of the parallel installation methodology it was only later

a single step was omitted in the strict engineering regimen of the entire modification process! That evening the technicians halted work on the modifications to the six aircraft in order to turn the five departing Sea Kings over to the Base Aircraft Maintenance Branch for their pre-embarkation preparations.

There was, however, still much work to be done to each aircraft, but everything had been engineered, tested and approved to the point where the remaining installation work could be performed by the Base Aircraft Maintenance Branch detachment on board *HMCS Protecteur* while en route to the



that some modifications were found to interfere with other aircraft systems and caused unforeseen changes.

On 21 August, 187 hours after the initial meeting at 2130 hours on the 13<sup>th</sup>, in a small ceremony on the ramp in front of HS 423 Squadron's hanger, a tired Major Terry Robbins and his team presented LCol. McWha with a symbolic key to the first aircraft. This was a Herculean maintenance achievement that was unparalleled in Air Force history. The six aircraft had undergone major modifications that using normal maintenance practices would have taken eighteen months to complete, but under the operational pressures to have the aircraft ready to join their ships, the majority of the modification work was completed in only **ten days!** The ICT's around the clock efforts are even more remarkable when it is considered that not

Persian Gulf. For example, all the aircraft had been fitted with the mounts to carry the ALE-37 chaff launcher but not all were wired for them. Also, the FLIR picture was too jittery to be useable but a vibration absorbing isolation mount had been designed and successfully tested to eliminate the problem; production models, however, would have to be airlifted to meet the ships in Gibraltar. Notwithstanding the required work en route, the ICT, the army of technicians and the industry field representatives that performed much of the complex wiring, drilling, cutting, bending and riveting had accomplished a miracle. Tens of thousands of person hours had been expended to get the aircraft ready. All of the requested modifications plus a few others had been implemented with the exception of the Missile Approach Warning System and the "Have-Quick" secure

radios. Neither of these systems could be acquired in the quantities needed and testing had unveiled some significant engineering and integration problems.

The three ships, *HMCS Athabaskan*, *HMCS Protecteur* and *HMCS Terra Nova* departed Halifax on schedule on 24 August on the route in Map 1. The two Sea Kings requiring the least amount of installation work were embarked in *Athabaskan* and the three in need of the heaviest work in *Protecteur* as planned. Not only did the air departments on *Athabaskan* and *Protecteur* have to complete the installation work on the Atlantic transit but they also had to participate in the general ships' training for combat readiness and damage control.

#### Maintenance In The Gulf

The Sea Kings tasking became more and more diverse as the Persian Gulf deployment wore on, causing the available flying hours on each aircraft to be rapidly consumed even before the fighting started. In addition to the operational tasks of mine surveillance and merchant ship hailings, the Sea Kings were being used increasingly for ship to shore logistic runs. Tons of parcels and mail were arriving in Manamah with every Hercules flight and the Task Group was always in need of equipment spares in order to keep its ships and aircraft operationally ready. In addition, the Sea Kings were the main means of moving diplomatic, military and media visitors between ships and the shore, as well as for transporting senior staff officers to various national and multi-national conferences.

To support the rigorous flying program the Sea King technicians worked on a two-watch system, eight hours on and eight hours off, a regimen that was both physically and mentally demanding. In their daily routine the technicians paid special attention to corrosion and vibration control. The Sea Kings were getting old and brittle and even with normal use, the constant strain on the airframe brought on by corrosion and inherent vibration made them prone to metal cracks. LCol. McWha attributes the technicians' vigilant attention to cleanliness and the first rumblings of a vibration to keeping problems to a minimum. Consequently, attested McWha, "the Gulf birds, even when flown at high speed, were the smoothest flying Sea Kings in the fleet."

The five Sea Kings were initially chosen because of the high number of flying hours remaining before a major

maintenance inspection was required. However, since these hours were being consumed at a high rate the aircraft would require major inspections in theatre. These scheduled inspections, known as "periodics", are required after 500 hours of flying time and usually take three months to complete. The aircraft are stripped down, with every part inspected and repaired or replaced if needed. Periodic inspections had always been conducted ashore because the embarked air detachments lacked the required specialized skills and equipment. However, during the Gulf deployment no facilities were available ashore and the periodics would have to be conducted by the *Protecteur's* maintenance detachment, augmented by the four additional specialist tradesmen added at Maritime Air Group's urging. So, in November the dedicated air force professionals achieved a Sea King maintenance "first" by completing a Sea King periodic inspection at sea. The first periodic took 20 days, however, it was delayed by supply problems; subsequent periodic inspections took less than two weeks; a maintenance feat accomplished only through the technicians' perseverance and dedication.

After the ceasefire on 28 February 1991 the three ships and 423 Squadron\* were recognized for their outstanding performance in the Gulf. Specifically, the 423 Squadron's maintainers were singled out and awarded the Canadian Forces Commendation for their work in preparing and maintaining the five Sea Kings, which sailed with the Task Group. The Sea Kings accumulated over 2,500 flying hours during the eight-month deployment. The air detachments achieved a mission availability and completion rate of over 97 percent, possibility the highest achieved by any of the allied units in the Gulf.

\* 423 Squadron was also awarded "Gulf and Kuwait" battle honours in 1994.



We begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Cylinders are in, heads are on, trimbox is being fitted, carb and magnetos being refurbished, our Munich Propellor man thinks he has solved the corroded thrust bearing problem and our spirits are high. High enough that we have a new motto -- WE'LL FLY IN JULY! The response to this (from the lugubrious league) is "dream on" ; but, as the poets say," if you don't have a dream. how you gonna make a dream come true?"

Bill Farrell,  
Project Dogsbody



## First Canadian-Trained Naval Airmen — A Legacy

from Allan Snowie

Hello again Kay;

You should have received the Fed Ex photo of the first Canadian naval aviators trained in Canada... motley looking lot are they not? This photograph was taken by Charles Geale in June of 1916. The lads are sitting on the ramp of the three-bay corrugated metal hangar at Hanlan's Point on the Toronto Islands. From left to right they are: Ince; Van Nostrand (RFC); MacLaurin; Peberdy; Gooderham (with his elbow in front of his face); Hay at the rear (pipe in mouth); McLachlin (RFC) and Joy (RFC). Stretched out in front is Homer Smith. The photo is unique in that it has never been published before. Together with the other shots of Geale himself they could contribute to the story below: aye, Allan

Modern aviation is widely recognized to have begun in 1903 with the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. For Canada the dawn of aviation came six years later in 1909, when John McCurdy flew off a frozen lake surface at Baddeck in Nova Scotia. Yet it was a further six years before flying became a force in the Dominion. Drawn by the British Empire's call for aviators in a world war, young Canadians flocked to join the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) in 1915. In doing so, they played an essential role in the establishment of the flying training industry in Canada as well as throughout North America.

In the United States, Orville and Wilbur Wright flew for two years following their inaugural hop then retired to patent their invention. In 1908 they began to fly again and simultaneously litigated against anyone who infringed upon 'their' creation — the aeroplane, and specifically the lateral control known as wing warping — the ability to turn an aircraft in flight. These legal battles did much to hamper the development of aviation in the United States. Some believe this was a contributing factor to that nation's woeful lack of preparedness for the First World War.

Meanwhile, north of the 49th parallel, Dr. Alexander Graham Bell had formed The Aerial Experiment Association in 1907 at his summer home in Nova Scotia. With Mrs. Bell's financial backing, three young engineers, including John McCurdy, worked with the old inventor to "build a practical aeroplane". They invited Glen Curtiss, an American motorcycle

engine manufacturer, to join the Association as their experimental kites would require power. Following early experiments near the Curtiss factory at Hammondsport, New York, the first flight of an airplane, by a Canadian in Canada, was the frosty launch of McCurdy in the aircraft "Silver Dart" on February 23rd, 1909.

Later that same year when the Frenchman Bleriot flew across the English Channel, the Royal Navy sat up and took note. Britain was now "no longer an island" and the Admiralty recognized their own need for aviation in order to continue their traditional role as defenders of the realm. Initially they pursued airship technology but by 1911 began to concentrate on fixed-wing aircraft. In 1912, a Naval Wing of the Army's Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was established. The Royal Naval Air Service itself grew out of this Wing and was formalized in July 1914. When war broke out a month later,

protection of Great Britain. Submarines had grown to be more of a threat than any Admiral could have imagined. Tramp cargo steamers and pristine battleships alike were at risk from German Unterseebooten or U-boats, as they became more commonly known. The Dardanelles attempt to force the Straits and capture Constantinople was a naval failure. The British Army had been brought in to take Gallipoli. These soldiers, including Australian, New Zealand and Newfoundland troops, desperately needed air support. Finally, a scant few Zeppelin raids on England had caused widespread panic and the public clamoured for protection. As is usual in such scenarios, more pilots and aircraft were needed yesterday.

In America, Glen Curtiss's interest in aviation had grown into a conglomerate of aircraft and aero-engine companies.



*This photograph was taken by Charles Geale in June of 1916. The lads are sitting on the ramp of the three-bay corrugated metal hangar at Hanlan's Point on the Toronto Islands.*

*From left to right they are: Ince; Van Nostrand (RFC); MacLaurin; Peberdy; Gooderham (with his elbow in front of his face); Hay at the rear (pipe in mouth); McLachlin (RFC) and Joy (RFC). Stretched out in front is Homer Smith. The photo is unique in that it has never been published before.*

the RNAS mustered 39 landplanes, 52 seaplanes, and seven airships. The strength of this new service was 130 officers and 700 other ranks.

By early 1915 the Royal Navy was sorely stretched to fulfill its three wartime assignments: Anti-submarine operations, the Dardanelles campaign, and the aerial

However, like others, he was being hamstrung by the Wright Brothers' lawsuits. Ailerons had now taken the place of the wing-warping wires but the brothers, Orville and Wilbur, contended that their original patent covered all means of lateral control. Legally, however, their 1908 patents had not been filed for Canada and



therefore had no standing. To avoid the fees demanded by the Wrights; Curtiss happily set about manufacturing ailerons in Canada. Employing his former associate McCurdy as his Canadian representative, he opened the Curtiss Aeroplanes and Motors Limited (Toronto) in April 1915. The plant quickly grew beyond ailerons when a British Admiralty Naval Mission to Canada placed an immediate order for eighteen aircraft.

The Naval Mission had come to Ottawa to recruit potential pilots. The Canadian Prime Minister in concert with Rear Admiral Kingsmill, his Chief of the Canadian Naval Staff, granted approval. In brief, volunteers would be interviewed by Kingsmill in the capital or by his Flag Officers at Halifax and Esquimalt. Those applicants deemed suitable would be given a naval medical. The healthy would then be formally registered with the Admiralty as RNAS "Candidates". But, herein lay a catch: Each Candidate next had to secure his own flying certificate with his own funds before he would be accepted into the Royal Navy as a Chief Petty Officer pilot. Naval aviators would have to pay rather than accept, the King's shilling.

During this same period, the British Royal Flying Corps began a separate recruiting program in Canada under much the same terms but offered a commission as 2nd Lieutenant upon certification. The upgrade to officer status caused some Candidates to switch loyalties. This was quickly reversed when the Royal Navy initiated a midshipman-type rank for new pilots. Commissioned as Probationary Flight Sub Lieutenants, they would complete the probation period on graduation from 'advanced' flying schools in England. There was no shortage of Canadian volunteers for the RNAS. By the end of the year Kingsmill had accepted hundreds of Candidates — all of who would need to secure the required Federation Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) flying certificate.

Seeing this accelerating demand for pilots, McCurdy opened the Curtiss Aviation School at Hanlans' Point on Toronto Island. The fee for achieving the FAI certificate was \$400, about a dollar a minute. The first phase of the training, on Curtiss flying boats, would be followed by airfield training on JN3 'Jennies' at Long Branch, a converted rifle range just west of Toronto. These efforts by McCurdy represented three firsts for Canada: the first seaplane base, the first airfield, and the country's first flying school. On May 10th, the initial class of ten students, seven RNAS and three

RFC, began training, fulfilling their 400 minutes in 'flying leaps' of 10 to 12 minute increments.

By July 11th, Arthur Strachan Ince, an engineering student from Toronto, became the first pilot to graduate. His



*Charlie Geale*

examination was conducted by an official of the new Aero Club of Canada acting for the Royal Aeronautical Club of Great Britain. The test consisted of three solo flights while the examiner observed safely from the ground! The first two trips required figure eight manoeuvres with landings at a designated spot. The third flight was a climb above 300' followed by an engine cut and a glide down to landing. Earning FAI certificate number 1519 made Ince the first pilot to be trained and licensed in Canada.

That same day, Frank Homer Smith, another University of Toronto student and a Lieutenant in the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada militia regiment became the second graduate. Eager for his first taste of naval life, Smith soon departed for England in HMS Baltic. On July 12th, Douglas Archibald Hay from Owen Sound and Grant Armstrong Gooderham of Toronto received their probationary RNAS commissions. Together with Ince they sailed for England aboard SS Scandinavian on the 24th of July.

The three remaining naval candidates from the first Curtiss school

class graduated on July 20th. Two were from Quebec: Clarence 'Claire' MacLaurin, a draftsman from Lachine; and Charles Norman Geale of Westmount, a University of Toronto graduate civil engineer. The third RNAS aviator, Warner Hutchins Peberdy, came from Rugby, England. He was an Oxford-educated electrical engineer who had been working in New York but travelled to Canada to join the naval air service. All were enroute across the Atlantic by the end of the month.

On his arrival in England, Arthur Ince was sent to Naval Air Station Chingford for further flying training. While there he suffered the rigors of two flying accidents before graduating to 1 Naval Wing at Dunkirk. On the 14th of December, flying as an observer in a Nieuport 10 off the Belgium coast, Ince shot down a large German seaplane. A few minutes later his own aircraft had to force-land. It overturned and sank. Arthur escaped with a bruising on the head and was severely shaken by the immersion. Although theminesweeper HMS Balmoral Castle quickly picked up both him and his pilot, Ince's flying confidence was completely shattered. Reflecting on his three crashes he requested a release. His decision was not dissuaded by the award of a Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for his actions in shooting down an enemy aircraft, a rare occurrence in 1915, and a first for a Canadian. Granted release in February 1916; Ince immediately re-enlisted for armament duties. He served the remainder of the war at RNAS Calshot as Station Gunnery Officer.

Frank Smith spent his first two months in England at the Eastchurch air station before being sent to the Dunkirk Wing. That September he wrote home describing a bomb-dropping raid 30 miles across the German lines at Ypres: "at 12,000 feet, the enemy anti-aircraft guns got my range. In spite of circling and dipping on my part they put two holes in the seat of the aircraft and four in the wings." With less than thirty hours flying experience it is not surprising that by November, Smith too had entirely lost his nerve. He requested to have his appointment as a Flight Sub-Lieutenant terminated and applied for transfer to any other duty but flying. He was re-appointed as a Lieutenant RNVR for work with the RNAS. A Wing Commander during the Second World War, Smith served as an aide to Air Vice Marshal Billy Bishop, RCAF.

Douglas Hay and Grant Gooderham were both sent to Whitley Bay for flying and general duties shortly after their arrival in

England. On the 19th of September, a scant two days after logging on base, Hay was lost over the North Sea in a BE2c aircraft.

Hay's classmate Grant Gooderham soldiered on leaving a swath of disabled aircraft behind him. He crashed a BE2c that September, another on the 27 of January 1916 and yet another the very next day! He did however become night competent and gained operational experience against Zeppelins. Recommended for single-seat Nieuports he was one of the Royal Navy's first fighter pilots. In France with 6 Naval Squadron he force-landed a Nieuport 17 in June 1917. The next month, flying a Sopwith Camel, he brought down an Albatross DV but had his own machine badly shot up in the process. Following a two-month Canadian leave in early 1918 he returned to England to instruct for the remainder of the War. Gooderham reached the rank of Flight Commander with the RNAS and was Mentioned in Despatches.

In contrast to the shaky start experienced by these first four Curtiss graduates, Claire MacLaurin and Charlie Geale seemed to have better luck with initial appointments to seaplane training at Calshot Air Station. MacLaurin proved to be a very skillful pilot and his ability to command was soon noticed. He was given charge of the air sub-station at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight and promoted to Flight Lieutenant before the end of 1915. In a January 1918 report, the Commander of the Portsmouth Group wrote that the Bembridge station had carried out more patrols and flown more hours than almost any other in the RNAS. The award of a DSC in October 1917 to MacLaurin following his bombing of a U-boat noted that he "is especially deserving of decoration. Since Nov 1915 has carried out 262 patrols. On all occasions when patrols have been necessary in bad or doubtful weather has invariably undertaken them himself. Has never hesitated to carry out a patrol."

Sent to back to Canada as a recruiter for the new RCNAS in May 1918, Major Claire MacLaurin later joined the Canadian Air Force and took part in the first Trans-Canada flight in 1920. He was killed in a flying accident at RCAF Station Jerico Beach, Vancouver, in 1928.

Charles Geale's first operational flight was a bit of a non-starter. As co-pilot in a Curtiss H4, Geale's trip ended with engine failure and a forced landing off Dungeness. This was followed by a tow back to Dover behind HMS Amazon. However, like MacLaurin, Geale was very adept at seaplane handling and was

selected to instruct on the new Curtiss twin-engine 'Large America' H12 flying boats. By 1918 Geale was a squadron commanding officer in the new Royal Air Force. His logbook lists time on seventeen different aircraft types from the early pushers up to Sopwith Snipes. He returned to Canada in November 1918 and resumed his civil engineering profession.

Warren Peberdy completed his probationary time at Folkstone before going to France with 4 Naval Wing. In March 1916 he sustained neck injuries during a landing accident in a Twin Caudron at St. Pol. Surveyed as fit in August he was appointed to 2 Wing and HMS Ark Royal in Malta. A "capable and zealous officer" Peberdy failed to return from a Mediterranean scouting mission in January 1917. An Englishman, Peberdy was one of only six British-born pilots who trained at Curtiss, all others being native-born Canadians.

Although Toronto's Curtiss Flying School operated only during the summer and fall of 1915 and again in 1916, it left a legacy that should not be ignored. During that relatively short history, the school had no fatalities or serious accidents while one hundred and thirty Candidates achieved their flying certificates. Forty-eight of the sixty-seven 1915 graduates joined the RNAS followed by fifty-eight of the sixty-three 1916 graduates. Eighteen of these one hundred and six however, failed to pass their probationary training in England and were released. Approximately one third of the remaining eighty-eight died: nine were killed in aircraft accidents and twenty lost their lives in action. Twelve became fighter aces and accounted for a total of 109 enemy aircraft. Five were captured and became prisoners of war; one was interned in Holland. All together the eighty-eight won 25 British gallantry awards and 10 foreign awards for bravery as well as 16 Mentions. The Canadian Curtiss school alone could not solve the overwhelming problems of supply and demand for pilot training. With 284 RNAS Candidates registered in 1915 and only three seaplanes with an equal number of American instructors, it was evident that there would be a substantial logjam for phase one flying alone. By July 1915 a saturation point had been reached with this mass of aspiring pilots assembled in Toronto. One of those wait-listed was future Air Vice Marshal Raymond Collishaw. In a letter some fifty years later to Department of National Defence historians, Collishaw wrote that the pilots organized themselves into an assembly and was bombarded both the Admiralty and Ottawa

with letters and telegrams demanding that something be done. For one thing, money was running out. Collishaw noted that to be a pilot required finding a minimum of \$2,000.00. Flying instruction could cost up to \$500 and \$700 was needed to pay for the RNAS uniforms that were compulsory on being commissioned. Then there was food and lodging.

The Admiralty agreed to accept a limited number of the Candidates directly into the RNAS and called them to England as training facilities permitted. Once overseas they joined fellow countrymen who were transferring from the Canadian Army Expeditionary Force to naval flying. Ottawa, in turn, arranged travel for approximately 25 Candidates to Halifax for naval training at HMCS Niobe. Collishaw was appointed a temporary Petty Officer to lead this contingent, a rank that he lost immediately upon his arrival when real Petty Officers took over.

More than a hundred Candidates headed south of the border to earn their certificates at American flying schools. Hugh Adderley Peck, an architect from Montreal, attended the Thomas School at Ithaca, New York and graduated on the 23rd of July 1915, becoming the first of this group to do so. For the next year, over half of all FAI certificates issued by the Aero Club of America went to these Canadian "invaders". As an example, aviatrix Marjorie Stinson's first four students at her new flying school in San Antonio, Texas, were all RNAS types.

Those attending the various Wright Schools in Ohio, Georgia and New York might have noted the typewritten addendum to the official School pamphlet stating "Wheel control used exclusively." This was a reference to the Wright patent of lateral control. Wilbur had died of typhoid in 1912, an indirect result of the pressures of litigation. By late 1916, Orville gave up his patent demands as a "contribution to the war effort." Arguably, the so-called Canadian invasion of the American flying schools may have served to contribute even more towards that country's preparation for War. In December 1916, the Curtiss Aeroplanes and Motors Limited (Toronto) was sold to the British Government. A new Toronto company, Canadian Aeroplanes Ltd. began building aircraft and training RFC pilots. They carried out the mass production of both as industry and the country was now on a solid war footing. Similarly, all Royal Naval Air Service pilots could now train in Great Britain where large flying schools had been developed throughout the land.

When the initial class of seven

RNAS students began training at Toronto's Curtiss School in May 1915, the Royal Navy had just six Canadian pilots on its roles. \* By April 1st, 1918, when the RNAS and the RFC ceased to exist and were merged into the Royal Air Force, the RNAS had a strength of 2,900 aircraft and 55,000 officers and men. Nine hundred and thirty-six of the aviators were Canadians.

\*Names of the first 6 Canadians in the RNAS:  
DAWSON, Francis Gilmer Tempest; Chester, NS, Joined 16Sep14  
MULOCK, Redford Henry ; Winnipeg, Manitoba, Joined 20Jan15  
BARRON, John Augustus; Stratford, Ontario, Joined 17 March15  
KERBY, Harold Spencer; Hamilton, Ontario, Joined 21 March15  
BONE, John Turner; Calgary, Alberta, Joined 21Mar15  
MCGILL, Frank Scholes; Montreal, Quebec, Joined 01May15.



*Sounding a little like a weather forecast - Al Snowie and Windy Geale, Curator at Nowra*

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Email From Leo Pettipas to navairgen

Here are a couple of authentic accounts from the days when men were men and the Canadian Navy was Royal.

1. Once upon a time, when the world was young, a Shearwater pilot of some local renown was asked by a non-air type to take him aloft for some flying experience. The craft available for such ventures was the venerable station hack, ex-SNAM Tiger Moth serno 8865.

Into the air, Naval Airmen. They were over the Eastern Passage area when the passenger took over the controls, and it seemed to the pilot (the real one) that they were all over the sky; he had tried to confine his guest to attempting a few simple turns. The pilot decided to take over the controls and found, to his horror, that there were at least 6" play in the control column. Verily, thought he, visualizing the control wires all adrift, we are in trouble.

So he put the nose down and landed on the first runway he could see. Out came the aircraft Control Officer in a car, who gave the pilot a complete and unabridged verbal reprimand for ignoring the red flares and for landing without proper clearance. To which the pilot replied: "What would you do if all the balls came off your joystick?" End of story

2. The occasion was an impending visit to CANAS by the Chief of Naval Staff. There was to be a fly-past of Banshee and other noisy chunks of tin then in use by the RCN. One of the squadron CO's deemed it appropriate - seemingly with no concern for jet blast, prop wash and the inevitable turbulence arising therefrom - to bring up the rear in the elegant little Tiger Moth, white silk scarf and all.

Alas, it was not to be. While the CO did manage to get his flimsy steed in the air in one of the armament bays north of the tower, he found to his chagrin that it could make no headway - the wind was too strong! So he quickly landed, and then had to exit the machine post haste and try to stop it from rolling backward down the armament embankment on which he had touched down. The only damage to the "air"craft (sic) was a broken rib at the trailing edge of the lower port wing, which struck the pilot's knee as the a/c rolled back down the slope. Such are the plans of mice and men - a rather depressing end to an adventure that surely would have produced spectacular results had it been prosecuted according to design. *PS Can anyone remember who the CO was?*

By the way, Ted (G), the original question was - does anyone remember the Tiger Moth being used as the glider tug?



Royal Canadian Navy Tiger Moth

## LOWER DECK RECOLLECTIONS OF VS881 1951-1952

by Mick Owens

For maximum enjoyment of Mick's Article:

First - Put feet to a crackling fire  
Then - Pour 4 oz 151 Proof Lamb's Rum (sip, not gulp)  
Then - Pour 1/4 oz of 120 octane fuel into brandy snifter (sniff only)  
Then - Run a lawnmower with intermittent ignition at full throttle  
**Then - Enjoy a mental replay of flight deck and hangar memories**

A Squadron of one dozen turkeys of various vintages, I enjoyed spending two years maintaining them in 1951 and 1952. We had two Mediterranean Cruises and one of the greatest gangs ever mobilized. I list a few of my memories:

T.A. Wilson arc-welding his pliers to the fuselage while checking the batteries in our cab. After that, it was my job.

Moe Sangster of Air Headquarters holding court in the spark plug bay. A wonderful escape.

Tot time on your birthday, a very vague memory. Spillers from all!

Blackie Menard, George Woods, Joe Craik, Jack Moss, Gus Salkus

The Hangar Control Officer's infamous pipe, "Petty Officer Shah, if you hear me raise your right hand — If you don't, raise your left."

The look on the face of the RN Commander when he suggested that I was the poorest example of an LS he had ever seen, and I suggested that he had never met Bob Sutherland.

Ronnie's Bar in Halfar, Ambeat and Hopleaf

Scoop Maddock, the roving photographer

Fred Snooks, a fine Newfy fellow

Reg MacKinnon, a great guy, and the

huge sword he bought in the Bazaar in Turkey

Crabs, rats and the food at HMS Halfar, all with equal venom

A Sea Fury catching a wire and the screwdriver and pliers from the oil cooler duct come bouncing forward on the flight deck.

Paddy O'Connell catching a barrier and landing ABD on its nose. "If I'd have had five less knots", he explained.

Paddy O'Connell landing ABD so hard he burst both main tires. "If I'd have had five more knots!" He was a gentleman.

Searching 'A' Hangar for a bucket to check an oil filter. Finally found one just inside 'B' but it was nearly full of oily varsol. Threw the varsol over the side along with two Fury Centifugers. Sneaked the bucket back to 871 and never told a soul.

Opening the porthole between the quarterdeck and 'C' Hangar workshop and listening to the sorry tales of woe at defaulters. The excitement of getting caught.

Being appointed Killick of the Mess....Dear God!....The kiss of death!

A night ashore with Milt Droeske in Glasgow visiting Jean's relatives.

A pilgrimage to Rome from Naples to see the Pope at his summer home.

Changing an engine in 'A' Hangar with the forward lift down and half the ship's company watching and waiting for us to drop the damn thing. We didn't.

On instructions from the big Chief, Taff Hulla, doing a full RPM check on the port side of the flight deck without tying the tail down. Bit through my lower lip and almost peed my pants when the port olio dropped about two inches.

Flying ashore to Gibraltar with Lt bill Gourlay to recover a sick turkey. Relieved the crew and they left with our cab in the early afternoon. Finally had the thing serviceable and ready to return too ship. Night landing. Gourlay asked what the noise was back there and I had to admit it was my knees knocking. No problem.

Red Graham, Jack Gibson, Bob Cornish, Bill Costello, Jack Marsden, Whitey Gourlay.

Teresa in Belfast and her friend May who I introduced to Jim Hazen. They were amazed at how such a nice guy as Jim could be a Protestant.

Getting on the Barracas (sic) lift in Valetta and seeing all the locals making the sign of the cross.

Getting off the Barracus (sic) lift.

The gut, Bobby and Cookie.

Deep inside an engine bay when Hulla tells me that Admiral Mountbatten is in the hangar. "I was here first", I responded. Heard a chuckle and sneaked a peek and all I could see was shiny wellingtons, so I climbed further into the engine bay.

Bill Cody's landings. They were okay be he taxied forward like a little maniac.

Air Group Commander Dick Bartlett and Sqn C.O. Bill Atkinson, the best!

The Green empire, Don Drinkwater, Jake Leonard etal.

After cruise of '51, realized that Maggie didn't carry nose cowlings and they were almost irreparable. Night before sailing in '52, after a couple of trays of beer, we stole one off the cabs parked by Z2 hangar and brought it aboard with our personal effects. It proved to be a winner as we flew all twelve off in '52.

Working with Air Rigger, Gunner Campbell in 1952, I loaned him a stubby screwdriver. We had a radical lifestyle change in 1955. Gunner swore allegiance too the Queen as a Pilot and I pledged mine to Agnes as a husband. At a CNAG reunion in Edmonton in '95, Gunner returned my screwdriver, gift-wrapped. He's still a great guy!

Shore leave with Frank Dowdall to visit my brother Barney's grave in a Canadian Military Cemetery in France. Slept in a home for unwed mothers!

Jack Moss, Rolly West, Mike O'Connor, Denny Duggan

Final three rubbers of the magnificent Contract Bridge tournament. LS Owens and LS Dowdall against the commander

(S) McClure and the Navigator, L/Cdr Porter. Cheered on by the Sqn Pilots - Mickey and Frank prevailed.

My Divisional Officer, roger Fink. He really didn't deserve that!

Cleaning ABD with the whole crew helping. Bill Cody, Jack Cairney, T.A. Wilson, Shag Crawshaw and myself. Advised them not to leave their flying jobs.

Tot time for mismusters in the rum locker overseen by an American Exchange Officer, Twitch Hardenburg. He attempted to throw back a tot of neats like a real sailor and for a few seconds I thought we had lost him. He did start breathing again.

Engine change on ABD when we were 36 hours out of Halifax. Worked 28 hours straight and had all working but the hydraulic pump so it flew off, wheels locked down and only emergency hydraulics. Cody felt safe as he had the AEO, Al Brown sitting in the back. Great guy, Al.

Arriving Halifax with 7 days stoppage of leave to complete. Chief Hulla arranged to have me sent ashore to Shearwater without that documentation. They would need another killick of the Mess. The poor bastard!

Suck back and secure!

Each and every one of these salty dips has a real story behind it. The people were great. I was one of the luckier guys. I had been accused earlier of being Hulla's Minion by the Limey AEO Bryan Dawburn and I do believe he like my work when he was the Chief at TAG. He was a great guy to work for and called a spade a spade.

I regret that I will have omitted mentioning some of the people that I worked with but the memories do fade after half a century and I am certain that I'll remember you as soon as I mail this paper. It was great!

Mick

*(Hopefully Mick will continue to share his memories with us in future issues. K)*

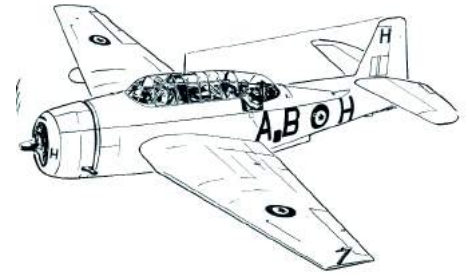
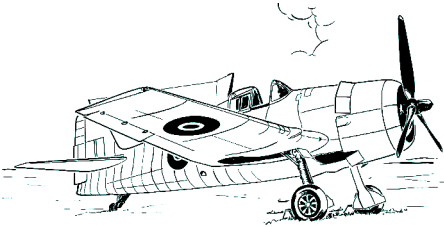


*The Good Old Days of Mae Wests and Leather Helmets*



Michael Nash Kelly  
Director of the Shearwater  
Aviation Museum.  
Wartime aircrew RCAF attached  
to RAF Coastal Command.  
Volunteer and trained with Tiger  
Force against Japan.  
Has been awarded the Queen  
Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee  
Medal.  
Mike is active with SAMF,  
particularly on the Fund Raising  
Committee.





881 Squadron Stories ...Please  
For our Spring issue we intend to feature 881 Squadron.  
Therefore stories and photos to Kay please (by February 15, 2003).  
We want input from all ranks - from wrench-benders to pilots.  
And clean humor too!



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President

## STRINGBAG 944...WHERE ARE YOU?

Leo Pettipas

At the close of the Second World War, there were two batches of Fairey Swordfish aircraft resident in Canada. One of them had formed part of the unit establishment of the 1 Naval Air Gunnery School (NAGS) based at RCAF Station Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. The others were housed at HMS Seaborn, an RN lodger unit at RCAF Station Dartmouth. Seaborn's role included the assembly, maintenance and repair of Swordfish embarked in the merchant aircraft carriers that operated in the North Atlantic.

Following cessation of hostilities, seven of the NAGS aircraft were purchased by Mr. Ernest Simmons of Tillsonburg, Ontario. Those that happened to be on-site at Dartmouth, however, were turned over free issue to the Canadian government by the RN in March of 1946 following the closing of Seaborn. There were 22 of these all told: 16 Mk IIs and six Mk IIIs.

The Mk II Swordfish differed from the earlier Mk Is in having the lower wings strengthened and metal-skinned so that they could carry and launch aerial rockets. The Mk III's were further distinguished by a prominent radome containing a Mk X ASV radar scanner between the main landing gear struts.

Eleven of these 22 ex-Seaborn aircraft were transferred to Reserve divisions across the country for use as ground instruction aids, another was put to the same use at SNAM, six more were taken on strength by FRU 743 for general, non-operational flying duties out of Dartmouth,

and one was reduced to spares and produce. The remaining two, one of which was a Mk III bearing the serial number NR 944, were forthwith placed in stored reserve.

The last of the RCN's Dartmouth-based Swordfish were finally retired in November 1948. The type did not immediately disappear from the scene, however; indeed, some rather colourful events involving the old warriors transpired after they had been put out to pasture.

One story involved a local band of brigands from the nearby fishing village known to station personnel as the "Eastern Passage Pirates". Their rather liberal philosophy of life seems to have included the opinion that government (read "public") property was theirs for the taking. Their acquisitive inclinations were no doubt facilitated by relatives working on the base, who were thus in a position to supply them with useful intelligence as to assets worthy of their attention ... like old airplanes awaiting disposal.

On one occasion, an officer noticed — in the full light of day, no less — that the engines were being removed with the aid of a gantry crane from the retired, ex-FRU 743 Swordfish parked off a nearby runway. When he asked why the engines were being removed, the Air Engineering Officer replied, "We're not taking those engines out."

As it transpired, the "workmen" were members of the Pirates who had already made off with and sold some of the engines for scrap, and were in the process of extracting the remainder for like purpose. It just so happens that this caper was taking place when the station was being handed over to the Navy. The Air Force was moving out, and with all the activity taking place on that account, the Main Gate attached no

particular significance to the odd engine being conveyed from the premises.

In another story, this same group of deteriorating Swordfish were eventually declared an eyesore, and continued efforts were made to dispose of them (these aircraft are shown in a photograph of the Shearwater dump published in the Fall 2001 edition of the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation Newsletter). After a long engagement with Headquarters, a signal was finally received giving approval to burn them on-site.

The local naval authorities proceeded to do just that, overlooking the fact that Shearwater was also a civil airport and the burning site was only a hundred yards or so off the main runway. On the day that the Stringbags were suffering their flaming demise, some in-bound airline passengers had thought that a nasty crash had just taken place, and were understandably shaken up by the sight of the blazing debitage.

Not all of the Shearwater Swordfish suffered this cruel fate. Jim Burns recalls a Swordfish undergoing restoration in Z2 Hangar in 1949-50. He notes that it was in fact around for quite awhile, but has no recollection of what happened to it. Similarly, Eric Edgar reports that former Fairey Aviation employees remember a Swordfish undergoing some rebuilding behind the Fairey hangar. They noted that the restoration work was not completed and, again, the ultimate disposition of the a/c is unknown. An aerial photo taken in August 1954 shows a Swordfish fuselage on the ramp behind the Fairey Aviation plant; this may be the same machine as the one alluded to above.

Something of a happy ending was realised in May of 1955, when a Swordfish in absolutely pristine condition was photographed in front of a Shearwater hangar (Fig. 1). This was the above-mentioned NR 944, and we can conclude that she had been the subject of a restoration project. For one thing, by 1955 the Swordfish as a type had been retired from active service for eight years, and the aircraft is unlikely to have remained in such excellent condition without some measure of restorative work being done on her. In addition, a side-view drawing of her (Fig. 2) was published in 1984 in the magazine *Scale Aircraft Modelling*. These two images - the photo and the drawing - depict NR 944 in the post-war RCN overall silver paint scheme, but with wartime British-type rather than early post-war RCN roundels. This spurious combination leads me to conclude that the aircraft had indeed been refinished, probably sometime during the



Fig 1. Fairey Swordfish III at Shearwater, circa 1955



early to mid-1950s.

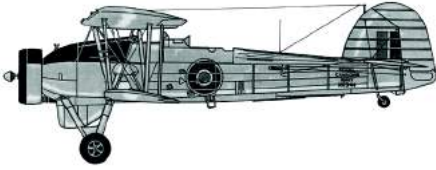
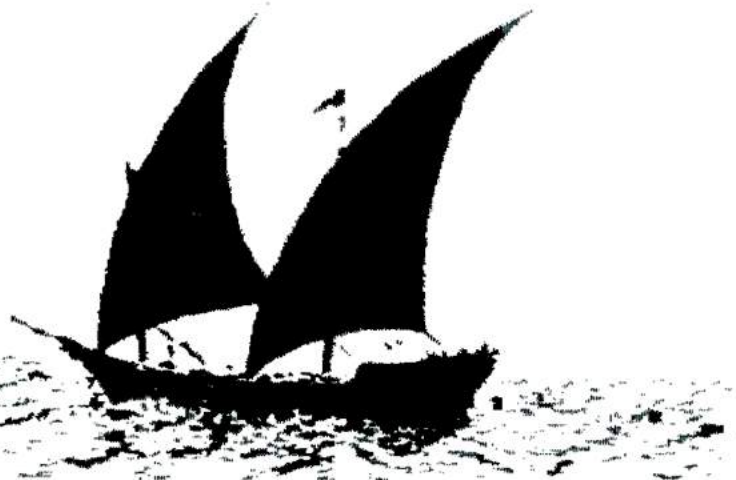


Fig. 2 Scale Aircraft Modelling 1984

944, it would seem, is one of them.

But the truly remarkable thing about NR 944 is not so much the rig she wore on that day in 1955 when she had her picture taken, but what became of her after that. Curiously, she seems to have vanished into thin air. She is not the same aircraft (serial number HS 469) that now forms part of the collection at the Shearwater Aviation Museum, nor is she the one (serial number unknown) reconstructed at Shearwater in the late '60s and now in the Canada Aviation Museum in Ottawa. Both of these machines were part of the Yarmouth group that had been purchased by Ernest Simmons shortly after the end of the war. Nor is she listed in any of the catalogues of surviving and restored aircraft in Canada and elsewhere.

Aviation lore is replete with tales of aircraft that vanished without trace. Swordfish NR



## SALTY DIPS

Mike Patterson's letter, elsewhere in this issue, led to his reference to a chapter in "Salty Dips". This extract is part of a piece of writing that rival's Melville's and Dana's works of grand literature. Until I read Mike's lines in Salty Dips, I subscribed to the saying attributed to the recently-graduated engineer "Yesterday I didn't know how to spell engineer and now I am one." Ed.

For too many months before arriving in India I had been closely associated with an intended replacement for the Swordfish and the Albacore, the Barracuda. I'd been put in charge of a Barracuda Special Maintenance Party. Our mission was to provide technical assistance to Squadrons converting to this new torpedo-bomber, which had a number of problems. The Barra, said to be underpowered, needed boost-override to get off the ground with a load. It had built-in dead weight. Early on, I believe, the Admiralty had specified a Fairey Battle type bombing aperture in the belly. Later, that idea was dropped and the hole skinned over, but the heavy reinforcing girders remained. And that was not the only design second-thought to plague the Barra.

The tail-plane had to be moved higher on the fin for more clearance for wing folding, putting extra stress on the tail-end of the fuselage. Further, the Barra's tail-wheel was apt to shimmy on landing - more torsional stress on the fuselage. To make matters even worse, the tail fuselage frames had half-round bites cut out of them to accommodate the A-frame arrester hook, when housed. These cut-outs add further points of stress, resulting in metal-fatigue cracks - a modification to beef-up frame 22 was intended to solve that problem. But the stress was on the fuselage skin, which now developed diagonal wrinkles.

Some Fleet Air Arm wag, who didn't seem to take this new threat to the enemy too seriously, lyricised: "Nothing could be cruder than that thing, the Barracuda. We roll it out on gala nights to quell

the rotten rumour that Britons of the modern time have lost their sense of humour." I agree with Ted Edwards' statement in *Salty Dips*, Vol 1: "A terrible aircraft."

The only operation using Barras I was involved in was the 3 Apr 44 attack on the battleship **Tirpitz** in Alten Fjord in Norway. Using the men of my Special maintenance Party, I modified the aircraft to carry a 1000-pound bomb in place of the torpedo. Pilots watching us seemed to get the wind up - they'd not done any dummy runs with the bomb, and seeing us cut holes in the belly didn't help. That wasn't part of the mod but, when we did a test fit with the bomb, its tail fouled the fuselage before it was home in the special crutches we'd fitted. So, remembering the built-in girders, we made cuts for the bomb tail-fins and rivetted top-hat section covers over the holes.

On that occasion Martlets and Barracudas were said to have scored some 20 bomb hits on the **Tirpitz**. She survived, but was kept out of action undergoing repairs after that and five later attacks, until finally sunk in Nov 44 with 6-ton bombs from RAF Lancasters.

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(REG)  
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Dear Editor:

I hope this is the correct E-address for letters to the editor, Bill, but it was the only one I could find in the current issue that seemed appropriate.

On page 6 of the Newsletter there is a poem and a letter re survival training. At the foot of the two columns is a photo depicting two large, I believe 6-man, rafts with two men in one and three in the other. It doesn't say so anywhere but seems to imply that this is a picture of some aspect of survival training. In point of fact, this was no drill!

This photo was taken around noon, on April 14, 1960, approximately 180 NM WSW of Bermuda, by a crewman of the German ship MS "Stenenfels", just prior to plucking my crew and I from the sea. We, the crew of VU-32 CS2F-1 1510, had ditched the aircraft in the dark and "on the dials" some 11 or so hours earlier. A copy of this and several other photos were very generously sent to me by that crew member and the one you've published is obviously a copy of one I sent to you some time ago, along with the story of the ditching.

The German sailor also sold a copy of this photo to a Toronto newspaper, as not long after this incident, I received a letter from an old high school friend (and former wartime RN FAA "Corsair" pilot) living in Toronto, Dave Mackay, with a copy of the news photo on which he had inscribed "Typical Navy", with "Wardroom" on the raft with two people and "Lower Deck" on the other! However, he wasn't quite right -- we were split up quite democratically, with Jerry McGreevy, the co-pilot, in one with Leading Seaman Wells Hodge, and Petty Officers Stu Beakley and Jerry Ryan with me in the other.

**Les Rosenthal**

**Frank Tripp writes:** (in part)  
(FETBRUN3530@webtv.net)

Congratulations on a job well done:- You and your gang really did it up brown. The stories were great, the photos were exceptional, ad your Salty Barbs, add a personal touch:- I did not realized that Bill Babbitt was a song writer at heart:- When I get a minute :- I will contact Kay, to order copies of our three Carriers and some of the reprints of Leo's Naval Aviation Books. Great to hear that the restoration is moving along, 2003 is not too far away.

Too bad about Ross Archer, a Good Ole Boy, one of the originals whotrained at HMS Gamecock in Nuneaton UK in '46. Gotta Go , time for my morning work-out:- got to keep in shape for 2003 Thanks again for the great job, Bravo to you and your crew. See you at the reunion.

## READERS COMMENTS & SELECTED NAVAIRGENS

Harry Dubinsky writes:

Hi Bill:

I don't know if you still remember me. I still remember you very clearly and vividly as if I'd seen you only yesterday. I refer to the article "Flashback to '53" on page 7 of your latest Newsletter. My name is conspicuously missing from the list of VS 881 flying personnel on HMCS Magnificent at that time. I was on board as a member of VS 881, flying as an Observer. I see from my logbook that throughout that whole cruise, except for one flight with Bob McLean, I flew with Johnnie Roberts, the Group Commander, a total of 47 flights and deck landings during that cruise. Going through all of the names that were listed in that article brought back many pleasant and interesting memories to me. I am looking forward to seeing you and everyone else who will make it to our reunion this coming October. With my best regards, (*From the Editor*) Harry, of course I remember another "ancient aviator". I look forward to meeting again. And Harry, the only thing that keeps me going as editor is the remarkable camaraderie of people I served with over a half-century ago and for whom naval aviation was a (if not the) highlight of their lives. We were (and are) a unique band of brothers. Also, our dominatrix secretary won't let me quit -- you saw her likeness by her column and that is the true Kay. Bill

**Tom Tonks** writes:

The summer edition of the nsltr jogged a mental cord when I read Jack Arnott's article which mentioned the demise of AB Tuck. Since Tuck was on board for a very short while he was relatively unknown to most of the Ships Company. I was on board as an Electrician attached to Air HQ and pronunciation of my name was similar to Tuck. By mid morning all the Air Pos were celebrating(?) my demise - by eleven A.M. as no one had seen me, many of the Ships Company and all of the Air Pos were convinced that I had been the victim of the

accident.

Since 11 o'clock was tot time, it now appeared that the air Pos had an extra tot to dispose of - which they proceeded to do so in a proper seamanship manner. When I arrived at the Mess at 12 O'clock I started down the ladder and from my vantage point, half way down, I could see that there was no rum left. Everyone seemed to be talking at once until they looked and saw what they all considered to be an apparition standing on the ladder. All talking ceased and even with all the ships noises you could still have heard the proverbial pin drop - until I broke the silence by proclaiming : "Where the hell is my tot?"

**Cal Wilson** writes:

I look forward very much to each issue of the Newsletter and read it with great enjoyment - time doesn't seem to dim the vivid memories!

On page 43 of the Spring Issue, you ran another 'A25' footnote that reminded me of prangs and resulting A25's in VC 920 in the 1950's. For each one we suffered, it used to be our custom to work up an appropriate verse as an addition to the singing of 'The A25'; recording the incident in (sometimes ribald) verse.

After its formation in May 1953, as the first Reserve Naval Air Squadron, our flying commenced, based at Downsview in Toronto, equipped initially with Harvards but later with TBMs and a C45 Expeditor.

After a busy summer of weekend and duck flying, working off the rust (most of us had not flown since 1945) in Oct '53 the Squadron flew to Shearwater for our annual 2 weeks NT. The program involved night flying in the Harvards and some air firing, as I recall.

On a day formation flight, I had an engine failure and ended up ditching off McNab's Island. (As far as I know, that was the only ditching of an AT6/Harvard on record in the Annals of the Navy.) A new



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verse to 'The A25' was soon added to document the incident:

We love the old Harvard, to fly it is fun  
When they load it with Rockets, and maybe  
one gun.  
But VC920 all shouted 'Hurray',  
When they fished 'Pitcher' Wilson from  
Halifax Bay.

In 1954, the Squadron began acquiring TBM Avengers and the Annual NT in Shearwater that year gave our pilots a chance to qualify on the Turkeys and get experience and time on the avenger, including some local area night flying. This led to a midnight incident that brought its 'moment of truth' to one VC920 pilot who managed to do a spectacular, spark-filled, wheels-up landing, and earn himself a ticket to immortality in the 'A25':

George Ballard's the Pilot who says with a grin:

"I can't help my flying  
when my finger's well in;  
Just flying by day is a bit of a lark -  
So I leave my wheels up when I land in  
the dark."

Early in 1955; the training target set for VC920 was Carrier Landing Qualification for our Avenger Pilots. The NT Program we set up was centered on CARQUALS in HMCS MAGNIFICENT, with training exercises at sea to follow.

Through the summer of 1955, 'Going to the Deck' became the target, and every weekend, the drill was to fly to Brantford with our TBMs for CFLPs (grateful memories of our indispensable LSOs, 'Big Nick' Ken Nicholson and Buddy Shell Rowell.)

We added another A25 verse for the Squadron History, when a (too) low-flying Pilot clipped the top off a local resident's TV aerial, on one landing approach:

At Brantford, on FCLPs we had fun.  
All of us that is, but Hugh Washington.  
He missed all the light planes  
The Glider Club too,  
But a TV antenna was too high for Hugh!

All the Avenger Pilots completed their CARQUALS successfully that year with only one mishap. Landing on for the first time, the C.O. had a minor collision with a 'Mule' on the flight Deck. (I wonder if they're still called that on present-day carriers.)

In 1956, after the usual pattern of FCLP work-up sessions at Brantford, VC 920 again got to 'MAGGIE' for re-qualifying

CARQUALS and a training cruise flying from the Ship.

During our FCLP training weekends at Brantford, Derek Tissington, our suave C.O. had finished one approach and landed with a spectacular windmilling ground loop, ending up 180 degrees to the runway, So we wrote, and sang:

Old 'Tiss' is a whiz in a TBM III  
Says 'Prangs on the Flight Deck are elementary  
At FCLPs I will show you some class  
As I cart wheel off the runway and land on my Ass.'

Those were wonderful days, and the flying we did, and the friends we shared it with, were a unique experience. For I think we knew, or certainly sensed, that the winds of change would soon bring an end to Naval Aviation as it was then, and to carrier flying we at least had had the chance to taste.

Cheers, and thanks - Cal

**Ozzie Ozgood** writes:

I read with interest Trafalgar Day Oct '47. That day was exciting, we were going to do a live shoot with bombs and rockets on a real sub. For reasons unknown to me, I ended up in the back seat of a Firefly driven by Lt Rice. I do not know our place in the line up.

I remember the take-off. We had just got off the floor when I heard "I hope your window is closed, I just lost my breakfast?" When we got up to altitude and on course it was not too bad.

I do not remember seeing any other planes - I just sat and goofed.

After some time, I heard "My turn, hang on." and then the plane dropped out from under me, then I came down and was pushed into the seat by the force of the dive. The dive seemed so long, then it slowed down for a split second, then he dropped the left wing and I saw the sub.

We flew across her and I saw her deck was underwater and there was white water on both sides of her stern. She looked very soggy. She must have been hurt before we got there. By the look of the water, I think Lt Rice hit her also.

After we pulled out of the dive, I heaved my ring into my beret After that, I lost all interest in what was going on. All I worried about was that I would die and scared I wouldn't and how to keep the contents of my beret from getting loose.

I think the Squadrons can claim her

- those were the days.

Dear Sir:

This is to advise you of the death of my brother Tom Graham Darling in Mexico on Aug 6.

As I recall, I sent some photo copies of newspaper articles to the Museum about Grahams World War II exploits. He scored a direct hit on the German Battleship 'Tirpitz' with his Barracuda dive bomber. Actually he spoke very little about his wartime experiences, but I recall them from the newspaper accounts.

As someone said to me the other day, "You were very lucky to have such a great brother." Indeed, he helped me in many, many ways. He was a fine chap.

Good luck with the museum and your newsletter. Sincerely, **Jack Darling**

*The Honorable Thomas Graham "Tommy" Darling. Born in Vancouver, BC 13/12/1917. Slt (Temp) RCNVR #14 Elementary Flying Training School, #31 Service Flying Training School, Lt(P) (Temp) RCNVR 18/03/1941. RNAS Donbristle for 824 RN Squadron 1943, RNAS Machrihanish for 824 (Barracuda) Squadron 1943, HMS Furious for 827 (Barracude) Squadron 1943, HMS Victorious for 827 (Barracude) Squadron 1944, HMS Formidable for 827 (Barracuda) Squadron 1944, HMS Furious for 827 (Barracude) Squadron 1944, RNAS Ronaldsway as Flight Instructor 1944, RNAS St Merryn for Air Strike course 1945, A/LCdr (P) (Temp) RCNVR 01/04/1945, Niobe in Air Section on Staff of Naval Assistant (Air) 1945 LCdr (P) RCN(R) 29/08/1946, Demobilized. Afterwards appointed as Judge of the Provincial Court of British Columbia. (Service Aircraft Flown: Barracuda Qualified with a Watchkeeping Certificate and an Executive Branch Officer qualified as a pilot for Naval Aviation under AFO 5025/1941.*

From Former **Surg/LCdr (P) Murray Mundle**

I enjoy your publication very much and would like to comment on a photo on pg 13 of the Summer 2002 edition. This was an authorized photo-op taken in the summer of 1957 with a backdrop of Peggy's Cove at the wester end of the low-flying area and the pilot was George Seymour in 389 in VU32. We also did a backdrop over the Angus MacDonald Bridge and Dartmouth. Both are in my rec room as I was the pilot of the A/C with the navy photographer doing the job.

I quit flying a few years ago when I sold my Taylorcraft BC-12D "cowpasture special".

Don Crowe writes:

I think I mentioned this incident to Tod Bays or Ted Cruddas in the Naval Aviators newsletter, but for it's worth...

I was probably not the first to suggest a museum, but in March 1960 just after HS50 had returned from a 3 month ASW exercise in Bermuda, the Squadron was having lunch with the admiral (can't remember at the moment who that was) and I was seated next to Captain Welland who was Captain of Shearwater at that time. I suggested that we refurbish one or two of every aircraft the RCN had flown and put one of each on hard stands on the road up from the Main Gate, and have a selection that we could fly at air shows.

Capt Welland said "Good idea Crowe. You've got the job!" I had to admit to him that I was doing my out routine and would be gone in about e weeks. He said "Well, too bad." And it really was!!

Besides being a fantastic start to a Museum, can you imagine the fun a guy could have had with that? (A retirement project?) Another missed opportunity. How many of those have I experienced.

At that time NAMS were using the Seafires parked at the waterfront to train fire fighters, pouring oil on them and burning them as training exercises. The aircraft were complete, engines instruments and the tires even still inflated. it was enough then to make a grown man cry. I traded a bottle of rum to a Chief at NAMS to get a drone prop for my wall. For a case of rum, I probably could have got a whole Sea fire.

I heard the story that some kids actually stole one and hid it. I saw the reputed "hot" Sea fire years later being rebuilt by the Canadian Warplane Heritage, and when I heard later that it was for sale, another pilot and I tried to buy it, but it went to the U.S.

Another note about vintage aircraft, I finally flew my Sea Fury last month after almost 6 years of having the engine in and out. It had had the engine reinstalled and been refurbished by "Aerocrafters" in Santa Rosa, CA. On the fourth flight I had a high oil temp low pressure problem and landed ok but too late to save the front master rod bearing. The engine is coming out again as I write. Very disappointing to say the very least. I hope to have it flying again by Jan 03.

I won't be racing it again and it will

be for sale. A guy can only beat his head against the wall for so long. It was sure great to fly it again. I would love to be in a financial position to donate it to SAM, but that is not in the cards.

**Editor's Note:** *The Museum needs a Fury and a couple of guys are ready to pony up a grand apiece. Can someone out there honcho a Fury Fund and maybe go for a corporate sponsor?*

**From: Dave Shirlaw** <dshirlaw@telus.net>  
Editor, Seawaves Magazine

Just finished reading the excellent article "The Tragedy of Success" by Stu Soward in the Spring Shearwater Museum Foundation Newsletter.

Does anyone know for certain which US Essex Class carriers were offered? Believe the first offered was USS Leyte (Hands to Flying Stations) and the modernized one possibly was USS Shangri-La as the latter was offered to the RN around 1965 after CVA 01 was cancelled.

**From: Allen Whalley**  
<alonflight5@shaw.ca>

Reference the question of the lost Avenger Page 15 SAMF latest newsletter: The aircraft was in formation alright and yes...they did enter into cloud and when they came out, Avenger 307 was missing! [ the crew names are correct] There was no mayday or call from the aircraft at any time. The flight was enroute from Bermuda to Summerside PEI, where the squadron was based. I was with the detachment working out of Yarmouth for about ten days aiding in the search. Only a main wheel was ever found by one of our destroyers. Until then...even the "Bermuda Triangle" often entered into our conversations. The squadron personnel records were also lost aboard ,including mine, which is noted across the top of my duplicate records. John "Whitey" White was a close friend and I recall the memorable Christmas eve party he threw [Christmas '53]...just five months earlier. Half of our squadron was in his home that night! Vi and

I spent a good hour rocking and rolling our new Studebaker out of one of those infamous PEI snow banks, that we tangled with, on our way home. We lost some wonderful guys in those days and none of them will ever be forgotten! I flew to Bermuda on that same detachment, with a two day stopover at Norfolk [we were waiting for favourable wind conditions] and recall that "quiet moment" when the pilot switched fuel tanks!! [he did caution us though, to stand by for a "moment of silence" because he was going to run the tank dry] Happy landings! Al

John Dymont writes:

I happen to live in a place where we are very interest in history and belong to two different historical societies where we try to record and remember our history.

An historical association it seems that most of the history which I read in our newsletter publication does not go back to when Shearwater originated. Back in 1939 I remember when most of the RCMP who were in their Marine Division were transferred to the RCAF Marine Section to operate the air Sea Rescue Section at the seaplane base, which eventually became known as E.A.C. Marine Squadron No 2, and was the only numbered non flying squadron in the RCAF.

I am sure that there is a wealth of information in your archives along with many pictures which would be very interesting to our membership. I was one of those R.C.A.F. "Sailors".

From **Kenneth Brown**

Hi Kay: I suppose I could use a more modern method of communication - email - but I still use the biblical approach to the

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keyboard 'Seek and Ye Shall Find'. And I don't have six hours to write this note. Congrats on another fine edition of the SAMF Newsletter - splendid!

The article "Recollections from the Tower" by Sheila Davis brought back some fond memories of my time as 'A' Stand at the CNAS tower. After a couple of months basic VFR training with COT at Malton Airport in 1956, I ended up at the tower under the tutelage of CPO Ken Daye. He was a great instructor and we became good friends. CPO 'Duke' Dutchuk was another outstanding 'A' Stander. In those days, we did 10 hr day shifts (0800-1800) and 14 hr night shifts (1800-0800). After night flying had secured and the last TCA flight had arrived (about 0030, I think) we would crank up the volume on the radios and phones get out the 'Scrabble' board, put on another pot of coffee (just throw the ground coffee into the boiling water, wait 3 minutes, sprinkle with cold water to knock the grounds down and enjoy!). The one who had had the last amount of sleep during the previous 48 hrs got to catch 40 or 60 or 80 winks during the silent hours. (There was always 2 on duty A & B Stand), until the first TCA flight out of Montreal (DC4's mostly) entered the control zone about 0600. Maritime Central Airways was operating DC3's out of Shearwater in those days and used the TCA hangar (#6?).

Lt's "Willie" Long & Dot Keilly manned "Dartmouth Approach Control and LCdr Bourque was SATCO (although I never saw him in the tower). "Darkie" Lowe was Cdr (Air) during the era 1956-58, and a year later I served under him as Deck Officer in HMCS Sioux when he was in command in 1959.

After some IFR training at Moncton ATC in 1958, I moved to Approach Control and relieved (I think) Dot Keilly. Willie Long and I did some pretty hairy VFR (?) X-countries to London, ON (he was from Woodstock) - like the January we got landing clearance at London (Crumlin) only to find out the gear was frozen in the 'up' position. After about 45 minutes of rather violent manoeuvres, Willie managed to shake the starboard main gear down, but the port gear did not yield. As we debated the merits of a one wheel vs no wheels landing, it was discovered that the starboard gear would not retract, giving added weight to a one wheel landing. Not to be deterred, Willie did some more "shake, rattle and rolls" in the circuit and ultimately "thunk" the port gear dropped and

we landed in -20 degrees F snowstorm on both wheels, about 5 minutes before the engine quit from fuel starvation (We were in a TBM.)

Following my stint in Approach Control, I did 8 years "fish-heading" time before returning to Shearwater in May 1967 for No 1 Tactical Coordinator Course at the Observer School. Then it was on to HS50 and flying in the back seat of brand new Sea Kings!

And so the story goes-----

PS I'm a graduate of #6 JAOBTC and a classmate of Bob Bissell, Jim Stegen, Ed Smith, "Pappy" Weise, Doug Chittenden, Fred Hawrysh, "Gunner" Campbell and a host of other 'also ran' Nasal Radiators.

**Make Democracy Work! Share your wisdom with your servants in Ottawa.**

***A Minister of the Crown reads and respond with encouragement and a touch of mushroom nutrient. Ed***

Dear Lt Cdr Farrell:

Thank you for your letter, received on 26 Jun 02 concerning Canadian military sovereignty and defence spending. I apologize for the delay in responding.

I also appreciate your enclosure of the Fall 2001 and spring 2002 issues of the SAMF Newsletter and your invitation to tour the military aviation museum and aerodrome.

Readers of your newsletter are encouraged to provide their feedback on the key defence issues currently under review by logging on the Defence Update Web Site, which can be accessed at [www.forces.gc.ca](http://www.forces.gc.ca) The Web site will remain active until Sep 20,02. Feedback received from interested Canadians will be summarized in a report to me and will help to guide the Government's decision-making process. The final report will also be posted on the Defence Update Web site.

Interested Canadians can also request a consultation package by contacting:

General Inquiries - Defence Update  
National Defence Headquarters  
Major-General George R. Pearkes Building  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K2

Telephone: (613) 995-2534

The tremendous dedication of serving men and women, coupled with the Department's capital program to modernize the Canadian Forces and give our people the right equipment to do their jobs, will ensure that Canada continues to make a real difference in the international security environment. For more information on these and other CF plans for the future, please visit the Department of National Defence Web site at [www.dnd.ca](http://www.dnd.ca) Once on the home page, you can access "Defence Plans, Priorities and Performance", which I think you will find of particular interest.

Once again, thank you for bringing your views to my attention and for the invitation.

Yours sincerely,  
The Honourable John McCallum, P.C., M.P.

**AEO Mike Patterson sent this in two years ago and this is a belated printing (Kay hid it in my briefcase.) As dogbody for the Firefly Restoration Team, it is clear to me that Mike is "out to lunch", but as editor, I am duty bound to publish it. Are you still alive Mike? Ed.**

MIKE PATTERSON WITH A "CON"

This is not for the space-short Newsletter, but I take our President's message to heart: "We look forward to hearing — both pro and con.

Pro Terrific, colour front cover of Winter '99 issue. Well worth saving or framing for one's office or study.

Con In my view "Worship of old warplanes" and their refurbishment at great expense works against SAM aim "To get our history on display", in the museum.

I am against the present gilded Firefly project, despite the fact that in 1947-48 I was AEO of 18 Carrier Air Group, 2 Seafire and 2 Firefly Squadrons. It is amazing how little foresight we had: "Firefly recovered from Ethiopia" — "prop in Munich" lacking funds. During 1944-45 we had A/C on deck and stored ashore kept in good condition erinol sprayed and dry inside with silica-gel.

But to put my money where my words are, I'm considering upgrading my

membership from Regular to Sustaining. However, I note that there are only two fund-raising projects: Heritage A/C and Firefly Restoration.

I'm keen to support displays in the museum of model aircraft, audio-visual, historic old photos that show the evolution of naval and maritime aviation, not only Canadian. Pictures of ships of all kinds carrying aircraft (Japanese submarines) aircraft, crews and first-person accounts as per Salty Dips. My chapter is in Vol III: 'Of Brigs and Barracuda'. Who can give me a run-down on what the SAM Library and Maritime Military Aviation archives consists of? I assume we have a copy of Jane's All the World's Aircraft. Is there an autobiographical section each of us can send a copy of our service record to. (In brief, I joined the RN FAA in Halifax in 1941, serving in Home Fleet, Med, India and Pacific, and became first Air Engineer to be appointed to Naval Headquarters in Sep 45.) As war broke out I was a makey-learn ground engineer with the Toronto and later the Hamilton Flying Clubs.

As former OIC Barracuda Special maintenance Party, I'd like to compare the Barra construction and performance and rate of serviceability with the Grumman Avenger I worked on in the Pacific. Along with the Corsair, Wildcat, Tigercat and Seafire.

Perhaps I could pursue this question on a visit to the RN Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton, Somerset, where I did my AEO teething on ex Battle of Britain Hurricanes. I'd much appreciate it if you could send the correct title and address of that Museum.

As you will note, I'm far more interested in making sure that the museum is well stocked with soft information about aircrew experience and aircraft technical detail then in keeping up mute hardware.

Compared to skill in combat, great art or sacrifice, which make men immortal, monuments of stone or metal provide minor evidence.

*Yours truly, Mike Patterson*

*(Note: I agree, partially, with Mr. Patterson's 'con'. I'd say time and personnel to work on refurbishing other Shearwater based aircraft is a critical concern. These 'other aircraft' are your history too. K.)*

## SHEARWATER, HOLLYWOOD NORTH

*From Mike Sandes*

Did you know that Shearwater became a sort of Hollywood for a short while way back when. A film of the Lindbergh flight across the Atlantic was being produced with Jimmy Stewart acting the part of this famous flyer.. It was called the "Spirit of St Louis".

Few people know it, but Shearwater was selected by Billy Wilder, the Director of films such as the "Seven Year itch" Marilyn Munro and "Sabrina". He flew to Shearwater in a B25 flown by Paul Manz an exceptional American Pilot who held the world's record for flying upside down for 5 hours as well as holding various other ridiculous flying records.

This gang from Hollywood took up residence at a small hotel in Dartmouth and stocked the rooms with good old Nova Scotia rum. I was appointed as liaison officer for the Group and cannot remember them breathing a sober breath during the time I was with them. First of all they wanted me to fly them around the local areas so that they could film a likeness of Lindbergh's final approach over the French Coast.

Dartmouth was quite similar since it had a low coast line and the fog was important and he crossed the Atlantic at only a few hundred feet. I flew these characters all around the craggy coastline that I knew so well and all I could hear from the back seat was "Get lower, get lower". I was quite experienced at low flying and had no intention of winning a World's record for low flying.

Eventually, I got them to the Bedford Basin and reminded them of the Halifax explosion and that there were explosives all around the Basin as well as quite close to their hotel. They quieted down. After this flight, we put Billy Wilder in his wheelchair and returned to the small briefing room assigned them and popped a cork out of the rum bottle they had been sipping in my back

seat.


Billy Wilder told me what a dumb duck Marilyn was and how the best scene involving a plumber putting his hand in her bathtub was cut out by the censors and that she was never able to remember more than four consecutive words. He suggested I should move to Hollywood and when I asked what kind of parts I could play, he rather upset me because he said because of my English accent, I could be a waiter or perhaps a butler!

Being a dumb Naval flyer, I quickly shot that down; but Paul Manz said I could join his flying circus as one of his pilots with a salary four times more than I was getting with our Navy. I told him I had a wife, three kids and a dog and where would we stay in Hollywood. In a trice he pulled out a photo of a 52 foot yacht and explained we could stay aboard until we found a suitable place. His flying circus consisted of 70 planes far larger than the RCN, I believe, and he wanted me to fly a home made aircraft in the Californian desert for a film about to be made. Luckily, I turned his offer down because that particular aircraft managed to just get airborne when the fuselage collapsed and broke in two parts and all that was left of it were some gray ashes strewn across the desert.

This is really what I wanted to tell you about, how Shearwater became a part of the Hollywood scene for a few short weeks and how I should have taken the job as a waiter because Errol Flynn was initially a bartender.

All the best and congratulations on your present appointment and I feel sorry for you only flying on one occasion in the back of my aircraft.

God Bless.  
Mike



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## SUPER TURKEYS

by Leo Pettipas Associate Air Force Historian

No doubt about it — by the time the year 1950 had drawn to a close, Canadian Naval Aviation was on a roll. The Cold War was underway; the NATO agreement had been signed the year previous; and the RCN, somewhat adrift in the early post-war years, had made a serious commitment to anti-submarine operations in support of Allied shipping in the North Atlantic. The Fairey Aviation Company of Canada Ltd had opened its doors just down the street from Shearwater in November '48, thereby providing Naval Aviation with a third hand in its equipment development plans. Replacement of the mediocre Firefly with the much more capable Avenger began in 1950, and the observer's mate (OM) crew trade came into being that same year to capitalise on the TBM's potential as a front-line carrier-borne ASW aircraft.

The first item of business was to modify the Avenger torpedo bomber to its new anti-submarine configuration. What emerged initially was the basic AS 3 Mk 1, and the strategy over the next five years was essentially to make a good thing better. In the early '50s scheme of things, the Mark 2 eyeball was still a key submarine detection device, and the observer's mate was perceived as an important player in this task. Trouble was, his look-out station, situated above the wings in the mid-upper position, was poorly suited to visual surveillance of the seascape.

So Faireys came up with the AS 3 Mk 2. This was essentially an AS 3 Mk 1 with a raised canopy above the mid-upper cockpit that gave the a/c a distinctly hump-backed appearance. The cockpit was fitted with a seat that could be raised and lowered, much like a barber's chair. From his elevated perch, the OM was better able to scan the ocean for snorkel tubes and surfaced submarines.

Two aircraft, serial numbers 53078 and 86175, were selected to undergo modification to Mk 2 prototypes. The pair thus became twins, not only in their initial appearance as Mk 2s, but also in the nature and scheduling of subsequent rework carried out on them and in terms of the squadrons with which they served. The initial mod work began in May of 1953 and was completed by December of that same year, whereupon both machines were allocated to VX 10 for trials and follow-on developmental work on type.

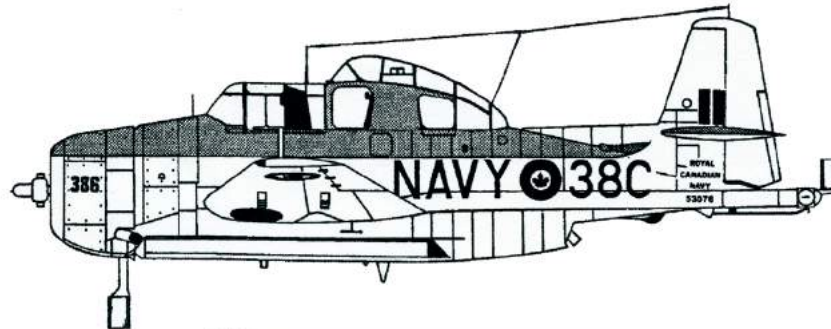
As it turned out, these two prototypes were the only Mk 2s to be produced; by the time they saw the light of day in late 1953, the Avenger's replacement — the Grumman S2F — was off the drawing boards and it wasn't long before the RCN was making plans to acquire it. Under

ASQ-8 MAD gear. Some 22 airframes were selected for this upgrade, designated "AS 3M", aka "Mike". This variant, a compromise between the Mk 1 and the Mark 2, was the premiere model of the Avenger in the operational (VS) squadrons until the advent of the Tracker.

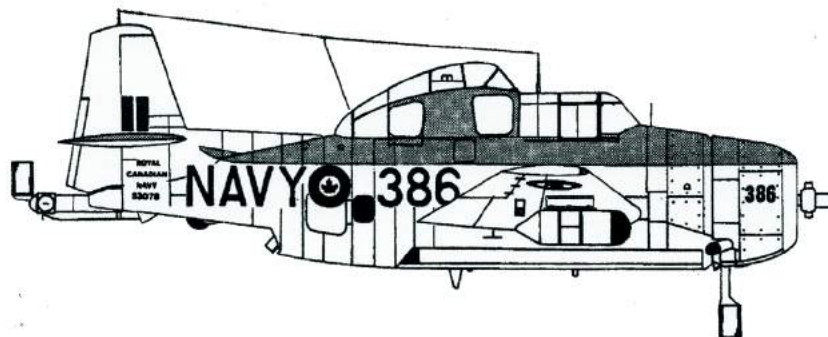
As it turned out, the two Mk 2 aircraft were also selected for Mike upgrades, and were transferred from VX 10 to the Fairey plant in April of 1955 for the purpose. In their new guise and designated "AS 3M2", they combined the salient features of the AS 3 Mk 1, the AS 3 Mk 2 and the AS 3M. Upon completion of their refits, they were returned to VX 10 where they remained until well into 1957, when they were drafted to VU 32 and its OM training programme. But change was in the wind: VU 32 was scheduled to begin re-equipping with the

Tracker in the spring of the following year. Plans to transfer them to VU 33 were cancelled. Their days were numbered.

The AS 3M2s, representing the end-product of six years of progressive improvement of the Avenger, were the ultimate in functional development and improvement of the type to appear in squadron service. With their combination of distinctive camel-back canopies, side-mounted MAD booms, and ECM cans positioned fore and aft, they were truly unique — the only two Avengers of their kind in the entire world. Considering that they were outfitted with all the bells and whistles (and then some) of the Navy's front-line aircraft, it is rather ironic that



PORT AND STARBOARD VIEWS OF RCN AVENGER AS 3M2, SERIAL NUMBER 53078, 1957



these circumstances, the costs of constructing a batch of Mk 2 Avengers wasn't considered economical, and the concept more or less died on the vine.

Nonetheless, improvements to the Avenger for its ASW role continued apace, pending the arrival of the Trackers. This included the installation of a variety of improved communications, navigational and submarine-detection and -tracking equipments, the most conspicuous among them being the AN/UPD-501 ECM and AN/

neither of them ever served in an operational squadron.

On 12 March 1958, the Navy's sole pair of Avenger AS 3M2s were declared surplus to requirements. Two months later they were struck off strength and sold, still together as a matching pair, to civilian interests by Crown Assets Corporation.

Many thanks to Bob Murray for providing key information in support of this project.

## PHOENIX SHEARWATER

By "John Cody" <

to Navaigen



*Red Arrows over Halifax*



*Snow Birds leading Red Arrows in formation*

Hello to all from the banana belt here in sunny Halifax. A very few words to let you know that things are now beginning to accelerate here at the field. It took a near-death experience to make it so The Canada Lands Company indeed took control of the runways and shut down 16/34. They are a very risk-averse organization. This certainly got the attention of the folks across the harbour in Government at all levels, and they are now talking with the CLC, the Halifax International Airport Authority, the Feds, HRM et al. Suffice to say for now that there is a tremendous amount of renewed interest in the field on the part of the Provincial Government, and they are spearheading the drive to get it up and running again.

The air show is only a part of what we will lose here in Halifax if Shearwater is allowed to continue its slow death. It is a Herculean effort to put on a show of this nature in the face of closed runways, deteriorating infrastructure, and a government (and Military I might add) that doesn't seem to care. However, the proof is in the pudding. The air show went on. The aerospace and defence industry folks who were here were delighted with it all, as we have learned how to stoke them properly over the last few years. It is an example of a classic public/private partnership, under the direction of retired LCol. Rodger Sorsdahl who is doing some very good work as the Executive Director of the show. Plans are already in the mill for the 2003 show.

I hope to keep you all up to date as this thing proceeds. As the old bull said to the young bull: He was going to stroll down the hill and get all the heifers, not run down and grab the first one. I will communicate to all of you with the next major development. I am hopeful that in the fullness of time, the Shearwater Military Industrial Airport will appear on the horizon, or some version of it. Patience!

Regards to all,  
*John M. Cody, Colonel (Retired)*  
*Board of Directors*  
*Nova Scotia International Air Show*







**CNAG CARRIES ON**

(submitted by Buck Rogers)  
Composed by former LSAC1 Stan W. Witwicki

Tune: Battle Hymn of the republic

In 1918 the Canadian Naval Air was born  
It served its country well for nigh on 50 years or more  
Our flag ws flown by CNAS through times of peace and war  
Now CNAG carries on

Chorus:  
Glory, Glory, it was years of work and fun  
Glory, Glory, oh we served for more than one  
Unification now is how the CAF is run  
And CNAG carries on

Nabob, Puncher, Warrior, Maggie were ships we sailed upon  
The Bonaventure was the last for finances were forlorn  
So now we just sit back and hope that lasting peace be born  
And CNAG carries on *Chorus*

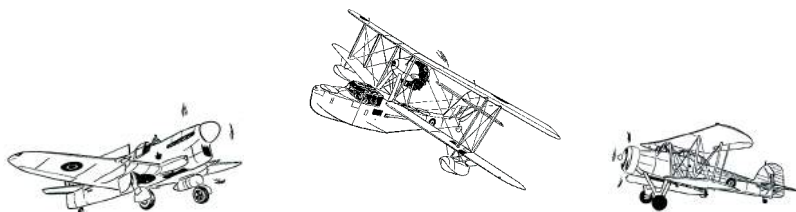
The squadrons there were many from 10 to 8 8 3  
They were manned by stalwart sailors who were dress by dungarees  
They kept them flying from the land, the ships and from the seas  
And CNAG carries on *Chorus*

We flew Swordfish, Walrus, Seafires, Fireflys and Avengers, too  
Also Furies, Trackers, Banshees, 'copters just to name a few  
They were fearless in their sorties to keep our forces there  
And CNAG carries on *Chorus*

The P's the O's and OM's were the sailors of the air  
They were dauntless in their efforts to keep our forces there  
Now they wonder how the CAF is going to compare  
And CNAG carries on *Chorus*

On the deck we had the A-F's, A-R's and the A-C's too  
Also A-O's, P-C's, A-E's and there were many others too  
They always kept them flying in a manner that they knew  
And CNAG carries on *Chorus*

Shearwater was the Base for all of us from coast to coast  
We climbed that hill for many years with little time to boast  
Now we at home are wondering just who and what to toast  
And CNAG carries on *Chorus*

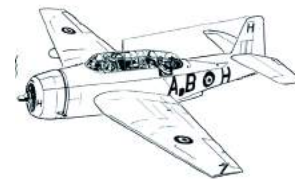
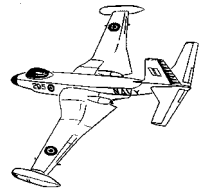


**A - 25**

They gave me a Seafire to beat up the Fleet  
I beat up the Nelson and Rodney for a treat  
Forgot the tall mast that stood on the Formid  
and seats in the goofers were worth 50 quid

CHORUS:  
Cracking show I'm alive  
But I still have to render my A25

When bats gives me high, I always fly higher  
I drift off to starboard and prang my Seafire  
The boys in he goofers all think I am green  
But I get my Commission from supermarine



**WORLD'S OLDEST KNOWN BIRD FOUND - STILL LOOKING FOR SEX**

By Anne Marie Owens



The oldest known wild bird in the world has been tracked down by bird banders in Britain. The 50 year old Manx Shearwater, a seabird that goes by the proper name Puffinus puffinus, was born back when Queen Elizabeth II was still a Princess and is preparing to celebrate her Jubilee year by breeding again. (Hmm - Shearwater's still looking for sex..... You don't say? K)

Until it was rediscovered off Wales recently, the gull-like bird had not been seen by ornithologists since *Roots* was on TV and Jonathon Livingston Seagull was a fading mid-70s cultural memory. It is a senior citizen in the avian world, where most specimens last only three or four years.

## THE TRAGEDY OF SUCCESS B PART II

by Stu Soward

As the HS 50 Squadron morning briefing in B hangar drew to a close in the early 1970s, a question arose concerning the ASW helicopter's role at sea during a hostile missile attack. This hypothetical battle scenario generated considerable debate among the aircrew and eventually became quite heated. Finally, the Squadron Commander rose from his chair quite prepared to cast the final word. A senior naval aviator much respected by all ranks, he declared that his crews would be expected to position their aircraft between the incoming enemy missiles and the high value surface units. Seasoned naval airmen slowly nodded their heads in acknowledgment of such sage, clear and unequivocal direction. Junior air force officers, however, who had only just recently begun to join HS 50 and the naval air environment, shifted rather uneasily in their chairs. Such operational resolve tended to confirm their initial impression and suspicions of naval aviation, and reinforced their intent to escape this foreign and, most assuredly, hazardous environment at the earliest opportunity.

Such was the abyss to be found between naval air arm veterans and their air force counterparts during this turbulent transition period of Canadian naval aviation. While naval airmen had been conditioned over time to embrace the dual-faceted "ready aye ready" and "can do" mantra of the RCN, air force officers subscribed to a somewhat more personal belief in self-survival and the ability to fight again. A generation of naval air "Venture" graduates, steeped in naval tradition and mission accomplishment, and experienced considerable difficulty in accepting such a perceived less altruistic air force ethos. The HS 50 missile debate epitomized a vast chasm between two distinct aviation cultures. The tragic loss of 'Skirt 20' and three airmen on a dark and rainy Sunday night off Sable Island on November 7, 1971 further convinced junior Squadron members that naval aviation represented a most formidable and unforgiving flight environment.

As the sole representative of Canadian naval aviation after the demise of the aircraft carrier in 1970, HS 50 eventually evolved into a large and unwieldy helicopter Squadron. Tasked in 1973 to provide 15 DDH Helairdets with the arrival

of four new Tribal class destroyers, it was not unusual for aircrew to remain strangers throughout an entire Squadron tour. Finally, in 1974, the Sea King community declared a "stock split", having been authorized to divide HS 50 into two sister Squadrons - HS 423 and HS 443. CFB Shearwater would remain the home of naval aviation, which now consisted of two sea-going HS Squadrons, HT 406 as the Sea King Operational Training Unit, and a shore-based fixed-wing Tracker Unit.

Since the introduction of integration to the Canadian Forces (CF) in the previous decade, the dilution of air power began to dominate the thoughts of senior airmen. As integration eventually mutated into unification, air force advocates became increasingly uneasy over the disbursement of aviation resources to the various functional Commands. Confusion generated by a 1971 Defense White Paper that had totally inverted Canadian defence priorities did little to appease their concerns. The words of Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, RAF became a rallying cry as he professed: "Air warfare cannot be separated into little packets; it knows no boundaries on land or sea other than those imposed by the radius of action of the aircraft; it is a unity and demands unity of action." The absence of an air force Commander's conference in the previous ten years appeared to confirm that the Canadian Air Force, as a viable military entity, was in danger of total eradication. Three major issues concerned the Canadian airmen: the air power shift from an independent air power status to mainly supportive roles, the total disregard for the indivisible character of air power, and the loss of air power doctrine within the fragmented air community. The definitive answer to such concerns appeared obvious and uncommonly unanimous among senior airmen; all air power resources must be situated under a centralized air environment. Only the means to the end generated rudiments of controversy yet acquiesced to the ultimate goal - a centralized air force command and control of all air assets and resources.

A 1974 military manpower crisis launched the critical first step towards an autonomous air force. Challenged by a period of severe fiscal restraint, the CF was directed to reduce military establishments by 10,000 personnel over a two-year period. In turn Admiral Boyle, Commander Maritime Command, identified his primary reduction measure as the elimination of an entire Maritime Patrol Squadron, consisting of 450 air force personnel and 6 Argus

aircraft. This unexpected and essentially unilateral decision startled senior airmen and accelerated efforts towards consolidating Canada's air resources. Ironically for naval aviation, it had taken an Admiral's decision to position the first stone in the air force foundation. Within a year, the concept of combining all air assets under the centralized control of Air Command became official CF policy. The fact that Headquarters for the new Command would be located in the home riding of the serving Defence Minister was purely fortuitous, of course.

The story detailing the genesis of Air Command provides an engaging study in modern organizational theory and military-political manipulation, yet falls beyond the confines of this paper. It is important to note, however, that the establishment of Air Command initially was intended to encompass only fighter, transport and air training units. Only later in the planning process was the notion expanded to include all military aviation resources, in particular army and naval aviation. To achieve this ambitious goal, senior air force leaders fully understood that the approval of both Maritime and Mobile Commanders would be required. There seemed little doubt that this would prove a formidable task, especially as both army and naval Commanders had become increasingly wary of the airmen's true intentions. In fact, it would take a direct order from the Chief of Defense Staff to motivate the army commander to relinquish his army aviation assets.

Having unwittingly served as an initial catalyst in the formation of Air Command, Admiral Boyle provided a second plank to the airmen's objective as he eventually, although somewhat reluctantly, agreed to the Air Command proposal. In fairness to the Admiral, his decision was somewhat hesitant and based primarily on the advice of his senior maritime air advisor, who indicated that to do otherwise would stifle the military careers of all naval airmen. Naval airmen at the time may have offered the Admiral a second opinion had one been so solicited.

The naval Commander did prove a tough negotiator, however, by attaching three conditions to his support of a distinct air formation: Maritime Air Group (MAG) Headquarters had to be co-located with Maritime Command (MARCOM) Headquarters; the MAG Commander must be double-hatted as the MARCOM Chief of Staff (air); and the MARCOM Commander would retain control of the MAG operating budget and training standard for all aviation

Operational Training Units. As a past veteran of National Defence Headquarters, Admiral Boyle subscribed to the popular bureaucratic axiom that "He who controls the cash wields the power", while naval control of the air training standard was expected to ensure adequate injections of naval priority, influence and response. Thus, to gain possession of all air assets and create an allied air force presence, senior air force leaders had little choice but to accept the unfavorable conditions, with the full intention of negotiating more favorable terms at a later date.

A secondary argument supporting the establishment of Air Command involved economy of effort, particularly with respect to new equipment acquisition. It is in this arena of air force sponsorship that the naval air community perhaps should have had their greatest trepidation. Future air force fleet rationalization plans and priorities held the potential of imitating the disastrous Royal Air Force/Fleet Air Arm (FAA) experience of forty years earlier. Historians and naval air veterans well remembered the British inter-war decision to position the FAA under air force rather than naval tutelage; a move that diminished naval aviation to a near calamitous pre-war state. Conversely, American and Japanese military forces had elected to leave naval aviation under traditional naval control and sponsorship, a choice that ultimately produced the two most powerful naval aviation arms in World War II.

From an organizational perspective, the command and control relationship introduced by Air Command was viewed as somewhat convoluted. It soon became obvious that naval aviation would be required to serve two masters, resulting in some troubling questions concerning allegiance, allies and aviation support requirements. The responsible/responsive ambiguity of the chain of command, exacerbated by being located on the periphery of the core air force, sentenced the Sea King naval air community to a permanent purgatory at the lower rungs of the air force priority ladder.

From an aircraft perspective, a mid-decade Sea King fleet enhancement program provided a much-needed engine and main transmission upgrade, as well as installation of a radar system to expand the operational role. Indicative of naval aviation ingenuity, the operationally limited weather avoidance radar immediately was employed as a primary surface surveillance sensor and precision approach aid. As the 1970s drew to a close, naval aviation was firmly entrenched, as a

new member of the air force family, yet remained somewhat dubious of future air force support and direction.

The 1980s witnessed three major events that dramatically influenced the future of Canadian naval aviation: acquisition of the CF-18 Hornet fighter aircraft, a return to three distinctive service uniforms and termination of the Cold War era.

The addition of the CF-18 fighter aircraft to the CF arsenal provided a means towards achieving air superiority yet came at considerable cost to a relatively small-budget air force. In actuality, the F-18 fleet represented such an expensive weapon system that procurement of aircraft weapons initially was delayed, as not to unduly alarm politicians and citizens with the total project cost. It quickly became obvious that future air force efforts, particularly concerning financial support, would be directed towards the fighter role. The prevailing adage, as recently espoused by a senior air force officer during a Shearwater Symposium, was that "an air force without a fast air fighter capability is truly only a flying club."

A mid-decade return to distinctive environmental uniforms had a devastating impact on the continued existence of naval aviation. The introduction of air force uniforms onboard naval vessels further polarized already divergent air force and naval factions into two distinct solitudes. The Sea King community, by now beginning to be depleted through attrition and disillusionment of an experienced cadre of naval air personnel, suddenly seemed to have little in common with their dark-blue naval compatriots.

Termination of the Cold War at the end of the decade introduced a harsh fiscal reality to the air force and entire CF. The 1989 military budget introduced dramatic funding restraints as political leaders sought to address chronic budgetary deficits through military retrenchment and cashing-in of peace dividends. Having entered such a dramatic downward spiral in defence expenditure, the question became one of weapon system survivability rather than operational enhancement. An ambitious 1987 White Paper was rendered obsolete almost overnight, overtaken by rival social priorities and drastic fiscal constraint. On the more positive side, six Sea King aircraft were modified as Bravo model acoustic trainers in anticipation of soon receiving new modernized and more sophisticated replacement helicopters. Finally, as the decade drew to a close, 443 Sqn aircraft and personnel were

dispatched to Victoria, BC to provide a permanent organic aviation capability to the Pacific fleet in support of a balanced fleet policy.

The start of the 1990s saw the MH community serve in war operations in the Persian Gulf, as 423 Sqn Detachments onboard HMCS ATHABASKAN and PROTECTEUR participated in Desert Shield and Desert Storm with impressive results. The new decade also introduced an increasing civilianization of the military establishment by assigning a dual emphasis towards service re-engineering and fiscal accountability, each aspect contributing to a dramatic downsizing of the defense department. A corporate lexicon rivaling the American 1960s MacNamara era became firmly entrenched within civil-military circles. Where BP had once alluded to Battle Procedure, it now denoted Business Planning, the art of employing business case planning procedures towards future defense requirements and procurement. The air force proudly sponsored Flight Plan 97, a 3-day garrison exercise that required all air force members to remove military uniforms and converse freely as equal team members. While the declared aim was to entice air force members towards a team-orientated approach to military affairs, the resultant effect on officer/NCM relationships appeared suspect and today still remains a hotly debated subject.

In 1993, the New Shipborne Aircraft (NSA) project achieved a signed contract status to purchase a fleet of British EH101 aircraft. Unfortunately, later in the same year, the project became a major federal election issue as a Liberal party ICON for fiscal extravagance. Shortly after successfully replacing the previous government and despite the threat of substantial financial penalties, the Prime Minister abruptly cancelled the contract and vowed to soon replace the venerable yet tired Sea King helicopter with a more economical solution.

A 1994 Defense White paper again appeared to solidify the NSA project, now known as the Maritime Helicopter Project (MHP). The White Paper decreed that "There is an urgent need for robust and capable new shipborne helicopters" and that future military acquisitions would be multi-purpose and combat-capable - attributes that clearly defined the MHP. Sadly in the same year, the Sea King community mourned the loss of two exceptional Sea King pilots in the fiery crash of Stinger 25, just outside Saint John, NB. From an initial establishment of 41 aircraft,

the Sea King fleet had through attrition now been reduced to 30 operational aircraft.

Today (1999), the status and frustration of the Sea King community perhaps can best be portrayed through a review of current air force financial planning documents. FY98/99 spending estimates indicate that a \$497 million Air Command National Procurement Estimate (NPE) budget will allocate \$208M or 41.2% to the CF-18 fighter fleet, with 11 other air force fleets forced to share the remaining \$289M. As a result, the Sea King fleet has been allocated \$48M or 9.6% of the total amount. (It is interesting to note that today's air force (2002) has been reduced to five core combat fleets.)

Unfortunately, the NPE budget represents the good news portion of the Sea King financial story, as the fleet has been allowed to steadily deteriorate. From an air force Operations and Maintenance (O&M) business plan perspective, financial support to the Sea King fleet on both coasts equals a paltry \$6.5M or 1.7% of the total air force annual budget. Incredibly, the entire Sea King fleet effort is funded to the same level as CFB Gander, or slightly less than the government has recently announced will be spent for a 21st century millennium party. Sadly, age, depleted maintenance experience, and a paucity of spare parts has established a permanent Sea King serviceability rate close to 35%, while each flight hour requires in excess of 30 man-hours of maintenance effort. Amazingly, the Sea King still continues to employ that antiquated 1970s weather avoidance radar system as a primary aid to surface surveillance, in conjunction with an outdated 1950s sonar system for ASW operations. A "wired for but not with" procurement policy has configured the Sea King fleet to accept limited quantities of FLIR, VOR/ILS, and self defense systems, rather than investing in total fleet fitment. Truthfully, today's Sea King weapon system has been reduced to an operational facade, a situation both painful and frustrating to naval airmen who continue to perform the most demanding aviation role within the military environment.

The challenges faced today within the CF are hauntingly similar to the integration/unification era of the late 1960s, circumstances that ultimately orchestrated the demise of the aircraft carrier. The Defense Department currently is handicapped by severe financial constraints requiring stringent force reductions. A 5-year DND capital acquisition plan has identified \$11B in equipment requirements yet only

designates \$6.5B in funding available for a sizable deficit of \$4.5B. A decision to cancel the MH program would save the defence budget in excess of \$2B in initial capital outlay, as well as appreciable operational, infrastructure, maintenance and ship alteration costs. Such a decision would allow the air force to initiate the CF18 Service Life Extension program, clearly the top air force priority. A military pilot shortage situation also would be resolved, as Sea King aircrew would be directed to other air force units, while total officer establishments could be drastically reduced through elimination of copious air navigator positions. Perhaps the most salient point of this most unsavory doomsday scenario involves the elimination of further governmental controversy concerning the selection of a new Maritime Helicopter. The current government is acutely aware of the potential for political disaster concerning such a replacement. The termination decision would be viewed as simply a small security sacrifice for the elimination of a political time bomb.

The most intriguing aspect of such a grievous political decision would involve the counter-arguments provided by its two major sponsors: the navy and air force. The navy is currently sliding away from its traditional one-dimensional ASW role towards a more general-purpose fleet concept, thus the requirement for large ASW-orientated shipborne helicopters could be viewed with relatively less priority. With an ever-increasing emphasis today being placed on Alternate Service Delivery, it is conceivable that commercial helicopter firms could provide the necessary logistical support required for naval operations on a lease or contract basis. Although naval leaders adamantly continue to profess the requirement for a modern Maritime Helicopter, there appears little doubt that logistic support ships soon shall assume the highest priority. Forced to choose between helicopters and the ALSC, the navy would select the latter for pure parochial reasons.

Senior Air Force leadership continues to maintain an historic disregard for the provision of naval air support, as evidenced through the current degraded status of the Sea King fleet and an inability to successfully progress the easily justified Maritime Helicopter program. In the near future, the CF 18 and CP 140 Aurora enhancement programs will demand substantial funding support, forcing other air force programs to the side. Lacking high-ranking, strategically positioned

champions for naval aviation within the air force, the MHP has every appearance of being "dead in the water." In the end, it is anticipated that both naval and air force elements would feign deep regret, yet reluctantly accept the unfortunate yet unavoidable political decision to cancel the MH program - a prophecy easily supported through historical analysis.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the TRAGEDY OF SUCCESS papers has been to trace the evolution of Canadian naval aviation from cradle to the contemporary, with an emphasis placed on military sponsorship. It truly is a story of great personal challenge, sacrifice and service neglect, a struggle of wills that today finds naval aviation on the precipice of extinction. Through such a survey, common themes have prevailed that help to understand the past and illuminate the present. Most importantly, such knowledge aids in selecting an optimum future course of action should national security leaders prove willing to learn and listen.

History has consistently demonstrated that naval aviation constitutes a quintessential asset to any serious national security force, yet demands considerable political will to maintain its existence. Political and military leaders need to appreciate the naval air capability and accept the substantial investment. In Canada's case, Prime Minister Mackenzie King offered the post-WW II opinion that "The Navy has no need for aircraft carriers. I had always opposed this from the start as unnecessary..." Brooke Claxton, as Defence Minister, further explained the Liberal policy as "...the political necessity of reconciling (defence) needs with budgets, votes and taxes." Such archetypal political concern over military expenditure leads to a second critical requirement of Canadian naval aviation B the necessity for commensurate military sponsorship.

Based on its traditional orphan status as an aviation arm operating within a naval environment, naval aviation continually has sought a strong sponsor, one capable of providing ample military justification and financial support. Notwithstanding the lack of Canadian political support for naval aviation, the failure to garner an adequate military sponsor is both surprising and disappointing. Nowhere was this message more evident than by the hasty and unsubstantiated 1969 decision to scuttle the aircraft carrier BONAVENTURE. Although neglect and