

SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Fall 2003 

AS YOU WERE!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS
celebrate the solstice





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

THIS ISSUE...

Cmdre Fraser-Harris.....pg 7

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The Bismarck Fiasco.....pg 23

And other stuff....

THE COVER
The underlying theme of the cover illustration is the essentiality of high morale in our Armed Forces; and morale is founded upon Service traditions. The uniforms speak to tradition

Submissions

Text submissions can be either paper, email or electronically produced, Word or Word Perfect. We will format the text for you.

Graphics are best submitted as an original photo (not a fax). If submitted electronically, they should be 300 dpi and a .tif file. A .jpg file at 300 dpi is acceptable if no compression is used. We will attempt to use any pictures, whatever the format.

We welcome Jamie Archibald to our Newsletter team. Jamie designed the cover of this issue and the summer issue as well.

NOTE WELL: When sending mail of any kind, newsletter articles, letters, membership renewals, donations etc, **please ensure the envelope is addressed correctly** to the: Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation or SAM Foundation. Deadlines for receiving newsletter submissions are:

Spring 7 March
Summer 27 June
Winter 4 October

Contact us:

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Important Notice! Please do not use stamped envelopes issued in previous newsletters. The stamps are invalid and your letters will be returned from the post office or forwarded to the dead letter office.

Wing Commander's Christmas Message

As the festive season approaches we look forward to embracing the spirit of Christmas that makes the event both enjoyable and memorable. Although the hustle and bustle of preparation and celebration seems to consume our lives, it is time to pause and reflect on events that have influenced our common area of interest, the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

As Chairman of the Board of Trustees for SAM, I have watched the Museum grow at an astonishing rate even in the short time since I assumed command of the Wing last January. The reputation of SAM throughout the heritage community is well established as a thriving and professional institution. The intrinsic value of preserving our maritime military aviation heritage has long been recognized as an important thread in the fabric that defines 12 Wing. The support of the SAM Foundation has provided a synergism that has perpetuated a continuous pattern of growth that is establishing the museum as a world-class institution. The most recent example of SAMF support is the atrium, which is under construction and will be completed and ready for the start of our 2004 season next spring. The atrium was funded entirely by the fund raising efforts of the Foundation. This generous support is in addition to the monthly commitment to helping pay off the CFCF loan for SAM's new hangar.

The members of SAMF are to be commended for their contribution to the preservation of Shearwater's heritage. Without you, SAM would not have achieved those once

thought pipe dreams that have become reality. Bravo Zulu to President Bill Farrell, Past President Eric Nielsen, the Board of Directors and the membership at large who have truly made it happen. Thanks to you, 2004 promises to be a great year for SAM.

To all a merry and safe Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings all! This will be brief, as I hope all Board of Directors meetings will. The trust the AGM placed in me in electing me President, together with the incessant zoilean nagging of our Secretary, should keep me focused on our Foundation's aim of helping SAM develop from its present respected state into a truly world class aviation museum. Tall order! Long way to go!

The President, as I see the job, is the servant of the Board and simply a referee in all debate on initiatives and questions raised by his fellow Directors.

There will be a Board meeting in November. The first item will be a vote of thanks to our departing President, Eric Nielsen, for so many months of dedication.

WLD (Bill) Farrell

(You'd best remember that second para K)

FROM THE MANAGER'S / CURATOR'S DESK

I write this report as Manager and Acting Curator since Christine Hines, our curator, is currently on Maternity leave caring for her bouncing baby boy, Garrett. Congratulations to Brent and Christine. Christine is scheduled back to her desk by February 2004.

Another high season has come and gone - where does the time go? Again we have had a successful year despite such obstacles as SARS, blackouts and hurricanes. By the way, we survived Hurricane Juan with only a few shingles lost in the Library building; they have since been repaired.

The big news this quarter is the progress on the construction of the Atrium. The basic structure is finished and the interior about fifty percent complete. The heating system is complete as is the rough-in electric work. We should be able to occupy the building by Christmas, but we will spend the winter setting up the Gift Shop and our new entrance.

We are still within the \$130,000 budget which was entirely funded by a grant from the Foundation. SAMF is an incredibly successful and vibrant organization and because of your efforts SAM is the envy of all the Canadian Forces Museums across the country.

Whereas the Atrium is the last large capital project for the foreseeable future, we shall concentrate on smaller projects such as exhibit enhancement and development which will better tell the fascinating story of life at Shearwater. The story that defines our heritage.

Thanks and Bravo Zulu to the President, Board of Directors and all members of SAMF. Without your support it would still be a dream.

As the yuletide approaches, I wish all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Chuck Coffen

Odds and Sods on Membership

The survival of the Foundation is dependent on the support of the Members and their dues. The dues collected from the Members are used to cover the operating cost of the Foundation. This way, all funds donated to the Building Fund or Firefly Fund go directly to the fund designated. Anything surplus to the year's Operating requirements is transferred to the Building Fund.

We have 965 members. Of these 965, 283 have not brought their membership up to date since 2001 and before. At \$30.00 per Member, that means we are trying to operate at \$7140.00 less than what our membership indicates we should be operating with.

It only takes the paying of this years membership to bring you up to speed. Come on - \$30 - less than 8 cents a day. Paying now will cover you until December 2004. If everyone on the newsletter distribution list were paid up members, the load of supporting the Foundation / Museum would not fall on the 682 paid up members (this number includes 156 Life Members - the Museum needs your continual support, hopefully this is not just a one shot deal).

Thank you all for your continuing support! .

Then there are the rest of the retired Naval Air people, who talk the talk, but fail to walk the walk. There are over 3000 ex-Naval Air people out there who do not belong to the Foundation. Just think what we could do for the preservation of Naval Air if they all became members. If you know of any of them, please ask them to join the Foundation

A year or so ago our Editor and now the new SAMF President, Bill Farrell, wrote: "When the Guard is changed - when we throw the torch to younger hands - our names and our stories will mean little, if anything, to the new Guard." This is happening now, sadly to say. Although the Museum itself is supported by the Base, (Wing), through 1 CAG and Formation Halifax, members of the Base, (Wing) do not have the time to take an interest in the Foundation / Museum that they once did; consequently, there is only one serving member of 12 Wing who is a member of the Foundation. This is not to say that there is no support from the Wing in other ways. The CO, 12 Air Maintenance Squadron, supplies personnel from his unit to repair and refurbish museum aircraft, when time permits, and of course there are two or three Wing members who assist in the Museum on their own time,

all of which is appreciated.

Membership Dues are as follows:

Life \$500 (1 time only)
Patron \$250
Sustaining \$100
Regular \$30

For additional information on membership and payment, please use the membership form in the centre section of this newsletter.

Thanking you in advance for your support and dedication, I wish you and yours, Seasons Greetings.

Bill Gillespie Acting / Membership



IN THE DELTA

Butts, Thomas
Fraser-Harris, ABF
Haley, Bob
Horne, Eric George
Law, Jack
Monk, Floyd
Morris, Denis G.
Niven, Lee
Orr, Cdr Stan
Payton, Weldon
Reaume, Tony



EDITOR'S GRUNTS

Here comes the SAMF Winter 03 issue at you and we are still without appreciable guidance as to what you readers want. It's like shouting into Echo Canyon and getting no echo. So I spend much of my time groping – not in the sensual California Gubernatorial sense but in the mental sense of groping for an editorial philosophy. The Californian pastime could be a more gratifying use of my spare time?

So here are the factors that play about in my putative mind when I select content for the issue Secretary Kay and I are now assembling (Kay disagrees with most of my decisions on personal principle and distaff proclivity) and there is frequent uncivil dialogue between us: In the end I prevail; because she concedes that I am the boss!

1. The camaraderie that was born during the days of carrier aviation in the RCN has not only survived separation of us individual ancient warriors by time and by geography; it has matured like a vintage wine or a well-aged single-malt whiskey. Recollections from *the good old days* enable us all to travel time backwards to days of excitement, fun, adventure, terror and the whole gamut of emotions that run in the veins of young warriors. Accordingly there are mess deck yarns and wardroom yarns and flight deck yarns here for you to savour.

2. Some of you had remarkable ringside seats at, and were participants in, battles that led to tragic defeats and battles that

turned the tide to victory at sea. We publish these, not just for you:

our aim is to let Canadians across the land know that, despite the smothering plethora of movies about how the British and the Americans won the war, we Canadians *more than fought our weight in the past.*

3. Occasionally lest we become, or are perceived to be, obnoxiously self-adulating, we will select egregious heroes from other nations and other services to praise.

4. Warriors? Yes, that was our profession. We were seagoing, airgoing warriors – all of us who made the ships and the aircraft go. Warrior is a noble calling – perhaps the noblest of all; but in these days of political correctness and soft foreign policy the public has to be reminded that the freedom it enjoys was handed to them by warriors, not politicians. When this newsletter is quoted or copied in other publications we get that message out: *In time of danger, not before, God and the sailor we both adore: the danger o'er God is forgotten and the sailor slighted*

5. I am mindful as I grope (in the mental sense only) that we, as retired warriors, are freer to speak our minds on defence issues than are currently-serving warriors: and we, *who have been there, done that*, owe it to our successors to speak up for them. We will make space for punditry in every issue. Your newsletter goes to the Commons Defence Committee and to media defence pundits across Canada.

6. Lest we get *too* serious we make room for jokes and cartoons and keep a bank of them to draw on to round out issues and to let the public know that warriors are also normal humour-loving humans, not soulless *Terminators*. Some readers are passable poets and we even have a bank for their

offerings: we call it our *Doggerel Bank*.

7. Lastly, we publish, over Secretary Kay's Zoilean harping, what she calls "long boring articles". These are usually on subjects perhaps more germane to proper military journals but it is by including such that we may expand our readership to include people who have not had the blessing of the kind of life we have had (so far).

8. Second lastly, while our membership demography dictates that we cater primarily to naval aviation we do not forget our brothers-in-arms who wear that old czarist-colour uniform: Ernie Cable has written a remarkable account of the heroic exploits of an RCAF Squadron Leader who Churchill dubbed *The Saviour of Ceylon*. It is lengthy and will appear in the Spring issue: not long and boring: Gripping! It should be compulsory reading, in the interests of national pride, in schools and universities across the land.

9. Third lastly: the use of esoteric words here is not *to make broad the literary phylactery* but simply to irritate our secretary -- to whom words of more than four cylinders are anathema.

Bill Farrell

(If you can smile when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame. Bill was smiling when he wrote this ... K.)

RESURRECTION FROM THE DELTA

Once again, by the awesome powers invested in us as editors, we hereby resurrect one Faye Davis. We goofed! Sorry about that!

Fraser-Harris Honored by CNAG

Considered one of the founding Fathers of Canadian Naval Aviation, Commodore A.B.F. Fraser-Harris CD RCN (Ret'd) DSC & Bar, Legionnaire of the Legion of Merit (USA), was recently inducted as an Honorary Member into the Canadian Naval Air Group (CNAG). Cmdre Fraser-Harris has the distinction of being the first Commanding Officer of HMCS Shearwater (1948), the first Canadian named as Director of Naval Aviation (1954) and the first Canadian naval aviator to command a carrier (HMCS Magnificent - 1956). Captain (Retired) Rolfe Monteith CD RCN made the presentation on 24 June 2003 at the FAA Museum in Yoveldon England on behalf of the CNAG.



Cmdre Fraser-Harris was born in Halifax, joined the RN as a cadet in 1930 and trained as a naval pilot in England. He had numerous wartime appointments as a fighter pilot that gained him honors and promotions notably the attack on the cruiser "Königsberg" in Bergen Norway and low level attacks on airfields in North Africa. On both occasions he was shot down but returned to combat operations and was one of the key planners in the build-up of Naval and RAF squadrons in preparation for "D" Day operations. For his heroism during WWII he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross was Mentioned in Dispatches (MID) and later received a bar to his DSC. In 1951, as Commander, Canadian Destroyers during the Korean conflict he was awarded a further MID by the Queen and the Legion of Merit by the USA for "expert seamanship and sound judgement and devotion to duty in the highest tradition of the Naval Service

The Commodore's wife Jeannie, his daughter Diana and husband Alan Dinsdale, Ann Discombe and son Justin Penketh were special guests for the occasion. Other in attendance included Naval Adviser Canadian High Commission, Captain (N) Phil Webster and wife Heather; Head Naval Historical Branch (MoD), Captain Christopher Page RN; Captain (Ret'd) George Baldwin RN and wife Hazel, colleague from 807 Squadron, and representative of Norwegian SKUA Research Team, Klas Gjolmesli. The Fleet Air Arm Museum staff were represented by Director Graham Mottram, Curator Cdr. David Hobbs RN, and Chief Engineer Dave Morris.

Following a warm welcome by Graham Mottram in the SKUA exhibition area Rolfe Monteith emphasized that CNAG was recognizing the Commodore's outstanding contribution to Canadian Naval aviation during his 35 years of service. He went on to highlight a number of significant events in his extraordinary career with both the Royal Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy. The sentiments expressed in Admiral Bob Falls email seemed appropriate for the occasion and were read by Ann Discombe.

"This singular honour of Honorary Membership in the Canadian Naval Air Group is a reflection of the high regard in which you are held by this splendid group of stalwarts. Those who have known and worked for and with you since your arrival at RCN Air Station Dartmouth have a particular admiration and respect for your energy, innovative ideas, leadership and skills from which we all profited.

The presentation scroll and accompanying biography illustrate perfectly the remarkable facets of character and accomplishment through two wars and a very cold war that have marked you in history as the pre-eminent Canadian Naval Aviator. My sincere congratulations, Fraser, and my best wishes to both you and your favourite supporter Jeannie, who I feel I know but have yet to meet, Bob"

In his opening remarks the Commodore expressed his deep appreciation to the CNAG organization for bestowing such an honour upon him and wished to thank most sincerely all those involved in preparing the documents and organizing the event. He then remarked that he felt obliged to reflect on his interesting career but to focus on his place of birth Canada and the Canadian Navy - his observations could be compartmented into the past, the present and the future.

As to the past, on his arrival in Canada following WWII he found the fledgling Canadian Naval Air ill-disciplined both in the air and on the ground. Most aircrew had no wartime operational experience and far too many were keen to return to civilian life. The navy had performed with distinction in its wartime convoy protection and anti-submarine role during the five year Battle of the Atlantic but this inevitably led to a lack of appreciation of the role of Naval Air in fleet operations - there was therefore a long uphill struggle ahead. Despite such constraints Canadian Squadrons and Carriers eventually became recognized for their professionalism during the long Cold War Era.

With regard to the present, once the Russian military threat ceased, Canada participated widely in the UN Peacekeeping operations and established a high reputation for an evenhanded approach to political and ethnic confrontations. He recalled that while in command of the carrier HMCS Magnificent in late 1956, they were dispatched to Egypt to transport the Canadian UN contingent to the Suez Canal area. This operation clearly demonstrated the importance of

having a ship to provide logistic support and command and control capability. The Commodore observed that consideration should be given to greater involvement of the RCMP in this area.

As to the future, fresh thinking was essential as the Western World now faced a new phenomenon – an unknown enemy – international terrorism. References to “Axis of Evil” was not helpful because the terrorist threat was bred as a result of expressions of capitalism and the failure of democracy – the widening gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” provides fuel for the terror campaign.

The formalities concluded with a presentation to the Commodore by Chris Page of his Term Photograph at RNC Dartmouth in 1930. Also, Klas Gjølmesli presented the Commodore with the throttle control lever with the bomb release button from his Skua aircraft that was shot down during the Norwegian Campaign in April 1940. It had been salvaged by the Norwegian Skua recovery team from the bottom of the fjord.

Note: The presentation scroll and biography designed by Ralph Fisher and Bob Banks are available at www.ncf.ca/cnag

By John Eden

OLD SAILORS NEVER DIE! NOR DO THEY FADE AWAY.

I don't know how many of you were "forced" to serve with the Air Force after 1968, but for those of us who did in the "Lower Deck" ranks we had to endure a lot of animosity from the "RCAF" Officer aircrew; some more than others. By way of example when I first joined VP 415 in Summerside, I had to be interviewed by the "Flt Commander". As we were still in the transition phase of uniform changes I, like many of us, was still wearing my RCN "Chiefs" hat badge. When the Flt Cmdr saw it he told me to get rid of "that Sheriffs badge" immediately! So as I was trained to do I followed orders and made the change. The next day I went around the Squadron and took a list of Crabfat Officers who were still sporting "RCAF" Hat Badges which, by the by, included the CO. I then went to the Flt Cmdr and politely informed him that I would be "Stating A Grievance" against him for issuing the aforementioned order to me while overlooking his fellow "Crabbies" use of unauthorized uniform wear. The next day an order was issued by the CO for everyone to begin wearing the generic Air Force hat badges. I withdrew my grievance.

This was just one example of the abuse some of us took. On more than one occasion I was witness to

some Sr. Officer making very rude and disrespectful remarks about "things Naval". I'd be interested to know if others were the object of similar occurrences.

I guess one shouldn't complain, for as they say, "the pay was the same", but damn I hated integration!!
Yours Aye, Terry J. Lynch



VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER

Sincere congratulations go out to Mr. Roland "Rolly" West, a dedicated volunteer here at SAM since it moved into its present location in August of 1995. Helpful and reliable, Rolly has been selected as the "Volunteer of the Quarter", always saying that "the people" are what is important. Rolly has spent many hours and days over the years helping in the SAM's Library and Archives. His wealth of knowledge and experience, from his career and his life here at Shearwater, has helped us identify literally thousands of records (mostly photographs), and answers many the questions posed by visitors. Bravo Zulu, Rolly

Canadian Cyberquote from Bill Cody

For those who can remember when Canada's Navy was Royal and Blue, I offer the following "Quote":

Quote: the military has always been more loyal to Canada than the Canadian Government has been loyal to its military. - Peter Worthington. Unquote.

Could there be a connection between that thought and the fear of a military revolt? What better defence than the principle of divide and conquer as was done with the Green uniform thing. Go figure.

34th CNAG REUNION

The Canadian Naval Air group gathered for their reunion 10-12 Oct 03 at the Executive airport Plaza Hotel, Richmond, BC. About 155 "old salts" and spouses enjoyed a weekend reliving Naval experiences, stories and just reminiscing times spent together.

Friday was registration and "Meet and Greet". It was the highlight of story telling and renewing acquaintances while enjoying finger foods. Saturday morning brought the directors together for their annual meeting followed by "Up Spirits" with seven old sailors in various original uniforms, carrying out the duties of the Rum Issuing Party. The Naval Reserve Band entertained with musical selections and a sing-song. Cocktails at 1800 was followed by a delicious Buffet Banquet featuring a lot of sea food. BGen (Ret) Ben Oxholm was guest speaker - he related many incidents familiar to most present. Music by the Dal Richards Orchestra kept the dance floor filled.

Sunday morning Church Service was led by Salvation Army Major Ron Butcher - ex Naval Air. Roger Rioux read in memoriam the list of departed members since the last reunion. Sunday afternoon, Linda Jones and Co., entertained in true Naval style with songs, sing alongs and lots of good spirit.

The Steveston Branch of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans Association invited reunion members to their Oktoberfest with "Umpah Band" and appropriate food.

Buck noted that the Directors approved sending \$500 to the Naval Museum of Alberta and \$1000 to Halifax for the Save the Public Gardens fund.

It was a great ending for a great Reunion. Congratulations to Swordfish Chapter. Hope to see you at the Sea King Chapter in Trenton for 2004 Reunion.

from Minnie and Buck Rogers

In addition to the Rogers report, John Eden advised the following:

CNAGer of the Year is Mr. Bob Murray of Ottawa. Congratulations Bob.

The CNAG Board of Directors will be submitting

a nomination to NDHQ to enter Cmdre Fraser-Harris to the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame. As well, the CNAG National Office will be submitting



Bruce Walkers name to the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame.

L - R Creighton Johnston, Steve MacDonald, Lloyd McInnis, Tony Keeler, Harvey Hodgins, Robert Budd.



L-R Bob Casement, Buck Rogers, John McIntosh, Don "Spider" Sheard, George Davey, Stan Witwicki, Roger Rioux

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

How about a column from each of you for the spring issue. Let's have "news from away", PLEASE!



Back Row L - R P1RA Ben Beckett, C1AT Chuck Hynes, Lt(P) George Daugherty, P1AT Jim Hadden, P1EA Al Lowe

Front Row L-R P2OM Ken Wooder, ABAR R.L. Smith, LSOM Hank Henry, LSAF Ken English, LSAR Rolly West, LSOM John Detchkoff, LSWA Kerry Briard (Missing from photo: LSAF Don Kavanaugh)

RCN Techs Train with USN *by Rolly West*

When the RCN decided to purchase the S2F-1 anti-submarine aircraft to replace the aging Avenger, it was also decided to send maintenance personnel to the USA for on-the-job training on this new aircraft. Prior to 1954, the only extended tours with the USN were usually given to aircrew and air engineers. In February of that year, the first group of RCN techs headed South to NAS Norfolk, VA, to serve with the USN on VS-26 Sqn. LCdr Dickie Bird and LCdr Robbie Hughes lead the detachment which consisted of the following people: Bob Spicer, Art Turnbull, Gus Gower, DB Tetlock, George Hotham, Bob Matchett, Ron Andrews, Bill Cowan, Bob Cade, Bill Campaign, John Scott and George Stubbings. These were the first RCN groundcrew to

operationally work with the S1F-1 Sentinel (it was renamed the Tracker later in the year or early 1955). They were also the first to experience flying operations at sea aboard an angled-deck carrier (USS Antietam).

The second contingent of techs arrived on the Norfolk scene in April 1955. Members of that crew were Chuck Hynes, Jim Hadden, Al Lowe, Ben Beckett, Frank Wooder (Observers mate), Kerry Briard, RL Smith, Ken English, Don Kavanaugh, George Otley, Hank Henry (Observers Mate), Rolly West and later on Lt (P) George Daugherty.

All RCN personnel serving with the USN were attached to HMCS Niagara in Washington, DC. The Joint Staff there looked after administrative needs and financial matters, but apart from that attachment, we were members of the USN squadron and became

"Yanks for the RCN". We worked their routines, worked alongside fellow-American tradesmen, lived in their barracks (single people), traveled ashore, sailed and lived with our squadron-mates aboard their carriers and fit right into their way of life.

Upon arrival on the Squadron, a CS2F-1 familiar course was set up for all techs at the Naval Air Training det in Norfolk. After completing the course, personnel were assigned to their respective places of employment throughout the squadron. Some went to workshops, others went to line servicing as Plane Captains. The servicing role was similar to that in Canada, except crews comprised of all trades, and all were qualified to ground run the aircraft engines (a task carried out each day on all serviceable aircraft).

As an Air Frame Tech assigned to the metalsmith repair shop, I gained a wealth of hands-on-experience. The USN philosophy of aircraft maintenance in those days was different from what was experienced back in Shearwater, in that they encouraged component repairs within the squadron resources as much as possible. Hence we were really introduced to repair and overhaul within our own squadron shops.

The Engine Mechanics had similar experiences in their workshop in that they disassembled and rebuilt components along with their normal engine maintenance tasks. The Electricians and Avionics people also found out that they had the liberty of carrying out repairs and tests on equipment that they would normally have sent to a Base repair facility. The Weapons Techs had little difficulty adapting to the USN routines and fit in quickly with their American counterparts.

In order for the Rigger and Fitters to gain more experience on the Tracker, those technicians changed roles and worked at their opposite trades. This was to prove most beneficial for their future roles as Aviation Technicians in the RCN/CF.

June 1956 brought into NAS Norfolk the third and last Canadian contingent. Just prior to their arrival, our Squadron, VS-26, disbanded and we were assigned to VS-36. Hence the new group did their tour with that unit. Leading this last bunch was Roy Findlay, Dean Rawding, Cyril Heaton, Bill McKinney and John Harrington. They too, were rotated through the squadron and sailed aboard USS Valley Forge as we did. Upon their return to Shearwater, a year or so later, they like us, were dispersed into VX-10, VS-881, VS-880 and the Naval Aircraft Maintenance School.

Speaking for all those RCN people who served with the USN during that unique period, it was a technical experience of a lifetime and we learned much about the Tracker to bring back to the RCN. We also learned not to sell USN maintenance practices

short, because their techs were good, and very dedicated and effective in their roles. The Officers and Men of VS-26, VS-16, VS-36, USS Antietam and USS Valley Forge were tremendous hosts. I'm certain that the information learned and the times spent on these tours, greatly assisted in the transfer over to the Tracker programmes both at Shearwater and in Bonaventure.

CHRISTMAS GIFT - CHALLENGE

BY Eugene 'Buck Rogers

I challenge each present member of the SAMF to encourage or enrol their family or family members a part of the Foundation - perhaps as a Christmas gift.

A membership could be in the form of gifts for special occasions or to commemorate a special event (birthday, anniversary etc)

As we know, some people have already made the gesture and have increased our membership - I've met the challenge - have you? With the present aging membership, new generation involvement is needed to carry on **our heritage**.

(Ed. Names of members are listed in our donor recognition book in the Museum entrance.)



Job Description Of These Characters? Anyone?

- Crusher
- Jaunty
- Ziggulmn
- Buffer
- Captain of the Head
- Snotty
- Master at (of) Arms
- G.I.
- Tiffany
- Deck Ape

A MUSEUM IS BORN

BY Tom Tonks

A Naval Airman sadly said,
Our heritage will soon be dead.
Another said, Oh No! My chum;
We shall build the Shearwater
Museum.

A room in Warrior block
became,
Full with artifacts of our fame.
This one room now would grow,
To another building we all know.

The SAM Foundation soon
would be,
The driving force to raise
money,
To bring our aircraft all together,
Under one room out of the
weather.

SAMF Trust got off the ground,
To raise money from all around.
The future now shall remember
us,
For all too soon we return to
dust.

Readers Comments and Selected Navairgens

From: "Jim McCaffery"
<mijnarf@mars.ark.com>

Correction!!!!

Some time ago I sent in a story about the wire recorder jamming in flight and the solution, in the spur of the moment, was to chuck it out the open door. I claimed the perpetrators were Creighton Jono Johnston and Harry Duke Windsor.

It seems the story has been published in the SAMF Newsletter (I haven't seen it yet), and I had the names wrong. Fortunately I will probably see Harry in Brantford Ont next month, so will be able to provide him with a token drink of sarsaparilla as an apology.

The following clarification was received from Jon Main who currently resides in the Middleton N.S. area...

Jimmie: Great story; you almost got it right, but it was Johno and me! I, being junior crewman was sent back to change the reel. In the process I dropped the reel and lost some of the loops of wire which I

loosely wound back onto the reel, so naturally the thing wouldn't work properly. The pilots were hollering for me get the job done and I went forward and asked Johno what to do. We thought about ten seconds and sort of came up with the same brilliant idea together.

Johno, being bigger, sat on the upper step and pushed the door open with his feet and then threw out the eraser. I was sitting scrunched on the lower step holding the pencil inserted thru the spool. The spool burnt thru in a flash, I burnt my fingers slightly, even thru the gloves and let go! Pandemonium followed, the spool was ricocheting around the back and me and Johno were all over each other trying to escape, for some reason both of us into the electronics compartment. God, it was excitement and panic at the same time!

By the way, a day or so later, somebody, (Mike Hammer I think), came looking for the lost reel so that the data could be looked at!. We said, "somehow it just got lost". yours, aye. *Jon-Lumpers!*

From: Peter Charlton
For the Editor:

Once is a Typo. Twice suggests the need for a correction, just for the record of course. Re 880/881 history, page 29 last time and page 10 this time. I believe we are talking about Ricky ADLAM (not Adlum). Ricky was indeed slight of build and red haired. He was of Welsh and Cape Breton extraction (he once told me his Grandmother was bilingual - In French and Gaelic with no English). He was both hot tempered when necessary; and a Tower of Strength, Always. He was my Squadron Chief in VS880 from the time I arrived at Shearwater till we re-equipped with Trackers and Ricky was relieved by Roy Findlay. I was privileged to count Ricky as a firm friend till he died while retired from the Service and living near the Pat Bay airport. See also "Certified Serviceable", Pages 91, 94 & 95. *(Are you sure Adlam is th correct spelling Peeter? (Picky)*

From: Curly Hoare
<matelot@shaw.ca>

In the summer 2003 newsletter, I saw two items that caught my interest. The first was on page 9 under the heading "Boost". The writer used the example 47 inches of boost. On American aircraft engines, the manifold pressure was given in inches of mercury. British aircraft used the term "pounds boost". The example the writer used ie 47 inches would have been 47 inches of mercury on an American engine and 47-29 or +18 pounds boost on a British engine. The British example deletes the standard atmospheric pressure of approx 29psi, as the British system started at 0. I could be corrected on this, but it has been some 50 years since I was in contact with these figures.

The second item I noted was on page 17 and I have attached an explanation of Davy Jones' Locker that I discovered in "Why Do We Say It?", a Castle publication.

I found the Summer issue as usual, absolutely full of interesting items. Keep up the good work!

From: John Thompson
<jthompson@nexcim.net>

'Thumbs Up'. A memory. ...

A recent blurb in the SAM newsletter, compliments of Jim McCaffery stated the origin of thumbs up.

It brought back an incident that happened on the Electronic Countermeasures phase of my trade group four course. If I remember right, Art McCluskey was class leader that week and the communication's type showing us to the classroom asked Art if everyone was present and Art gave him an affirmative thumbs up. The com-rate gasped and asked "one missing?" Naturally every time a thumb went up during the next few weeks the whole class gasped in unison "One missing?"

From: Bob Findlay

Hi Kay;

Another informative newsletter which I enjoyed very much. Keep up the good work. In the Spring 2003 names please, the second from left is John Shiska. Unfortunately, he was killed in a car accident in the early 70's near the Imperial Oil refinery.

From Adm Barry Keeler

Hello Kay,

The recent SAMF Newsletter was a real treat to read. From my perspective it is the "best" edition published thus far. That says a lot coming from a non-aviator. *(Sorry you weren't so lucky (ha), but thanks for the comments. Kay)*

From: Jack McGee

Thanks for the great Newsletter. I find it full of great tales, but Joe Paquette's story brought back great memories of the debriefing in the Squadron and at the bar.

**From Ken Belch,
855,885 Sqns and Ruler**

Dear Bill:

Re your Summer 2003 Edition. As I read your outline of your perceived reasons for the newsletter to exist, it struck me that most of the reasons were looking backwards. You may wish to consider whether we have enough experience from among the readership to be able to solicit some concepts of how best to put together the navy of the future.

As a for instance, one might assume that the most likely role for our navy of the future is peacekeeping. Most obviously, our politicians are trying to give us a service based on the US, even down to the point of numbering our squadrons. Because of restricted dollars, we end up with a "little of this and a little of that" and nothing that can really be significant in meeting anything of consequence.

When I was perusing the history of our wartime escort carriers, it struck me that with modest outlay, we had ships that could move troops and aircraft, providing the potential of a coordinated base of operation in any part of the world. Peacekeeping does not require heavy-duty armour plated ships and nuclear propulsion. Consider the RULER (typical escort) had a displacement of 15,000 tons; it carried 24 planes and a complement of 700. Perhaps our forces could use this style of equipment in numbers to be overall more effective than currently organized.

Likely our thoughts would be brushed aside by the boffins, but it might be a subject worth debating.

From Guy Laramee

To the Editor:

SAMF Newsletter looking for a new name. Why Not "Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation News Magazine.

By the Way - I have in my possession several copies of the Crowsnest (Magazine).

Lately I came across a news item about Admiral Fraser-Harris called Hero Keeps Upper Lip Stiff at 86 and I believe that it would be appropriate to reproduce it in the forthcoming newsletter - sorry, magazine! I was in HMCS Magnificent when Fraser-Harris was the Captain and I met Fraser-Harris again in 1953 when I was the Air Engineer of VC920 and the other Naval Aviation Squadrons. The expression "an Officer and a Gentleman: sure fitted Fraser-Harris to a Tee! Well done Fraser-Harris. I am also 86. Will meet you again in 14 years when you are the Captain of the new Super Carriers

From the Editor: An Article from CNAG re Adm Fraser-Harris is printed elsewhere in the newsletter.

BISSELL AND DEMPSTER

We're awaiting more highlights of your retirement odysseys; and Marshall, was it an Admiralty Pattern anchor you swallowed?

**Ernest Cable, Colonel (Ret'd)
Former Deputy Commander
Maritime Air Group**

Dear Editor

I read with interest Pop Fotheringham's comments concerning the selection of the Sea King replacement in the Summer 2003 Newsletter. I fully support his comment that the selection of the Sea King forty years ago was an excellent choice. The Sea King was so successful that it revolutionized ship borne ASW by

exceeding operational expectations of augmenting the ships' capability and foraging ahead to become the ships' primary ASW weapon system. However, I do not share his concern that naval requirements for the Sea King replacement will be subordinated to Air Force requirements.

As an Air Force Officer with over thirty years of maritime aviation experience, including a three-year tour at the U.S. Navy's Naval Air Development Center, and having been intimately involved in the Sea King replacement process, I can assure the good Captain that the Navy's requirements are paramount in the Sea King replacement program. It would be ludicrous to think that the replacement will satisfy only Air Force requirements. Through continuous consultation and liaison with their naval confreres, Air Force officers with extensive maritime aviation backgrounds have proven to be the best qualified for developing naval air requirements. These are the same Air Force officers who fly and maintain the Sea King fleet at sea; the same Sea King aircrews that won international recognition in the Persian Gulf for their maritime interdiction prowess and for leading coalition ships around mine fields and oil slicks that could have fouled ships' seawater cooled machinery. These are the same Air Force aircrews whose innovative spirit expanded the role of the Sea King beyond ASW and into peacekeeping and peacemaking roles such as night surveillance over the deserts of Somalia. These are the same Air Force maintainers that developed the techniques for the first ever Sea King periodic inspections at sea; the same maintainers that developed a "Wartime Aircraft Maintenance Plan" (WAMP) that produced 96 percent Sea King mission completion rate under harsh climatic and wartime conditions that were never envisaged.

With guidance from their dark blue brethren these Air Force officers established operational requirements in such areas as

ship-helo compatibility, numbers of aircraft to satisfy the operational concept, navigation and communication interoperability with ships, sonar compatibility with the ships' towed arrays and performance in littoral waters, radar and electro-optical sensors for over-the-horizon targeting and defensive electronic support systems. The Air Force's role is to recommend to the Navy a number of airframe and sensor suite options that meet the naval requirements. The advantage of this arrangement is that the Air Force is continually acquiring aircraft and avionics for its other aircraft fleets and is current with the latest aviation technologies. Even if the Navy had an "air" capability, procuring a helicopter once every forty years would make it a virtual novice in the aircraft procurement business.

After the Navy's operational requirements have been established the Air Force must develop its own needs to effectively support the naval requirements. Specialists in aircraft logistic support, maintenance and training including the use of flight simulators and maintenance trainers must determine the best means for supporting the operational requirements. These decisions will determine the number of aircraft in excess of the operational requirement that will be required to accommodate the training and maintenance demands. Again, experience from supporting other Air Force aircraft fleets is transferable to the Sea King replacement. Also, economies of scale such as selecting suitable engines and avionics common to other Air Force aircraft greatly reduce logistic support, maintenance and training costs over the life expectancy of the aircraft.

I believe it is anachronistic to think of separate Air Force and Navy requirements for the Sea King replacement. Our maritime airmen and their ship borne brethren have a common goal of extending the effective range of the ships' weapon systems through air

power. Today's NATO forces emphasize the need for joint (inter-service) and combined (international) operations; the exceptional interoperability of our maritime air and naval forces during both peace and wartime conditions is often cited as the textbook epitome of joint operations in Canada. Our maritime airmen are doing their best to promote the Navy's air interests; we, now, jointly need to elicit stronger support for the Sea King replacement program from our government.

From: John Thompson

A memory ... John Thompson
A recent blurb in the SAM newsletter, compliments of Jim McCaffery stated the origin of thumbs up. It brought back an incident that happened on the Electronic Countermeasures phase of my trade group four course. If I remember right, Art McCluskey was class leader that week and the Communication's type showing us to the classroom asked Art if everyone was present and Art gave him an affirmative thumbs up. The Com-rate gasped and asked "one missing?" Naturally every time a thumb went up during the next few weeks the whole class gasped in unison "One missing?"

From: Rod Hutcheson

The Summerside interlude

Dear Editor, I have been following with interest the correspondence in the Newsletter from Messrs Arnott and Whalley concerning the relocation of 31SAG to Summerside in the early-to-mid 1950s. Perhaps, just for the record, I can add a few details to help clarify memories of this not well known event of 50 years ago.

It all began with the decision in early 1953 to overhaul the Shearwater runways and at the same time construct a major new runway to handle jet traffic. With 30CAG off to the coronation, 31SAG was moved lock, stock and barrel to the disused airfield at

Scoudouc, N.B., outside of Moncton, which had been opened up for this purpose. The Main Party actually made the move on 23 June 1953 with aircrew and aircraft following immediately thereafter, thus leaving Shearwater pretty well empty. At that time, if memory serves me, our Group Commander was "Knothead" Knox (a fine gentleman ably supported by his lovely wife Anne), "Pappy" Macleod ran VF870 and Ted Davis had VS880. Our AEOs were Les Brown and Yves Maynard and I was the ALO. Perhaps uniquely for an Air Group, in view of our independent status we were also blessed with our very own supply officer in the person of Ed L'Heureux. Thanks to Ed we discovered just how well you could eat in a small independent establishment!

Our sojourn at Naval Air Facility Scoudouc was a bit like being let out of school—well out of sight and sound of the brass at Shearwater. And who could forget those Acadian belles, or those Shediac lobsters! The latter provided for some of us a hard lesson in the consequences of mixing large quantities of lobster with equally large quantities of beer—a hangover not to be believed! Our summer culminated with the SAG putting on a bang-up live firing show at the CNE in Toronto, after which a flight of VF870's Sea Furies headed cross-country to visit the west coast. Sadly, their accompanying Avenger, piloted by my Naval College classmate George Noble, crashed in Kenora killing both him and a crew member. His squadron mates of that time may be interested to hear that the RCNC class of '45-'47 recently commissioned a portrait of George that now hangs in his memory in the Castle at Royal Roads.

Since the heating plant at Scoudouc was well beyond practical repair and we were not yet welcome back at Shearwater, in September '53 SAG moved to P.E.I. and NAF Summerside came into being. I doubt if the RCAF ever

did recover from suddenly being landed with the likes of Birks, Schroeder, et al! For our part, the island winter was a rude shock after the pleasures of an Acadian summer. I well remember the snow that swept horizontally across the airfield piling deep drifts inside tightly secured hangars and around PMQs to the point where entry could be made through an upstairs window! In those days, of course, the only way off the island, other than by air, was via the ferry---and the only route to the ferry was via a dirt road where the local farmer lay in wait with his tractor ready, for a price, to pull your car out of the bottomless red gumbo. Definitely on the plus side, however, were the Malpeque oysters which could be acquired by the bushel from the local fishermen. Who remembers sitting around an oyster-filled bathtub, surrounded with cases of brew, and shucking oysters with screwdrivers?

In March '54, by which time VF870 was virtually disbanded to make pilots available for jet conversion, the Avengers of VS880, now under the command of Fred Townsend, headed for Bermuda. I remember the occasion particularly well because I happened to be on leave skiing in the Laurentians. There I was, enjoying a beer in one of the many drinking establishments in St. Sauveur, when: phone behind bar rings--barmaid answers--looks around and spots me--hands over phone and I'm recalled off leave to proceed directly to Bermuda as an advance party of one! In this case the Mounties did indeed get their man. After the rigours of a Summerside winter, spring in Bermuda was not hard to take and a lot of hours were logged out of Kindley Field. Sadly, however, on the return flight to Summerside a squadron Avenger disappeared over the North Atlantic with the loss of the pilot, Jim Holden, and crew of three.

Unfortunately, having got this far I am unable to bring this little bit of history to a tidy end. I was appointed to VS881 aboard Maggie in September 1954 and do not know precisely when NAS

Summerside officially ceased to exist, although I feel it was sometime in late-1954. So there is a question for your readers---somewhere out there a log book must exist with an entry for that final Avenger flight from Summerside back to Shearwater. When was it and who made it?? Cheers, Rod Hutcheson.

From: Peter Cook in England to Whitey Williamson

One thing that has been amiss since Jerry Storey passed on has been the regular updates he was able to give me on the firefly project at Dartmouth. I am delighted to see that you and your wife have connections there. There is much interest in this project among my contemporaries in the UK and I get enquiries on a regular basis, particularly from my colleagues in the 14th CAG Reunion Association, of which I am a member. Progress on PP462 is much sought after here in the UK. I know that there is a newsletter circulated that follows the restoration but have been unable to obtain access to it despite my best efforts. Is there any chance of you setting up a link for me that I can then obtain a copy on a regular basis and thus satisfy the enquiries here? If there is a charge involved I would only be too happy to pay. I am still an "aviation nut" and do much research for the CAG archives etc. (Note: Mr. Cook is on the SAMF Mailing list and a copy of the last newsletter, with a letter from him in Readers Response sent to SAMF, was mailed to him in late summer.)

Approach Control

O'Hare Approach Control to a 747:
"United 329 heavy, your traffic is a Fokker, one o'clock, three miles, eastbound."

United 329: :Approach, I've always wanted to say this... I've got the little Fokker in sight."



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Please report any sightings to:
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You know you're getting 'marvelously mature' when.....

Getting 'lucky' means you found your car in the parking lot.

FLYING HIGH *From an old and yellowed and undated newspaper clipping.
Plus ca change, plus ca meme chose.*

Ottawa has announced plans to contribute up to \$2.25 million to match funds raised by the volunteer Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation in its current \$4.5 million campaign.

That's welcome news, and should provide encouragement to prospective donors, for what should turn out to be a first-class aviation museum at Shearwater.

Plans include construction of a 20,000 square foot addition to the existing 13,500 square foot building, to house one of the three remaining Fairey Swordfish, an aircraft which distinguished itself during the Second World War.

"We're quite confident that over a five-year period, we can raise our half of the cost" says Vice Admiral (Ret.) Harry Porter, Chairman of fund-raising efforts.

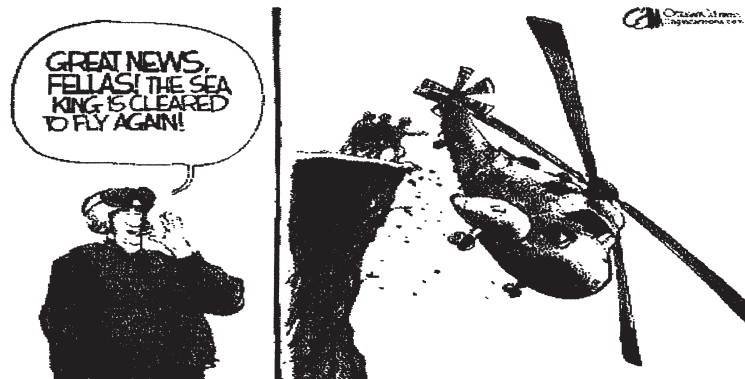
Editors Note: *We did it ourselves! The \$2.25 million turned out to be yet another renege~~d~~ promise. Anyone surprised?*

Cybernote Revisited *by Ted kieser*

This is just a note to all of you who no longer shave with a straight razor and who have ventured into the realm of the computer! For information, see the Shearwater Aviation Museum web site at: www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca There is a lot of good information on this site, and, thanks to the Museum's Christine Dunphy, new stuff is being added all the time. Christine is always happy to receive suggestions to improve this fine web site. Additionally, you are encouraged to send her your email address and other information so she may enter or update the 'Email Directory' on the site. This is a great opportunity for people to find old friends. For those of you who have already registered, drop in and check that the information is up-to-date. And, are you subscribed to 'NAVAIRGEN'? If not, go to the museum web site and click 'Naval Air Net', then select 'NAVAIRGEN' and follow the instructions to subscribe.

The NAVAIRGEN network was established to facilitate communication among former Naval Air personnel but it is not necessarily limited solely to that group. Any former Maritime Aviation personnel or people with an interest in Maritime Aviation are welcome. It was developed to provide a method of exchanging relevant information to a large group at once, thus obviating the necessity of sending individual messages. The net also serves as an excellent vehicle for exchanging information about things computing, email and other internet educational features.

Check out the Shearwater Aviation Museum home page. Sign up or update your information on the site today!



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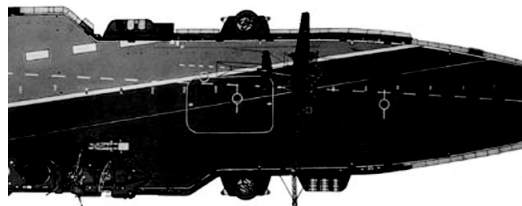
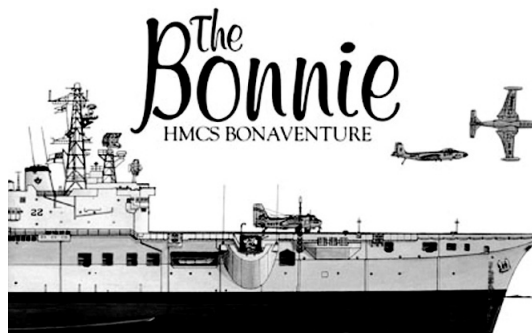
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- The Grumman Avenger in the RCN \$17.95
- The Hawker Sea Fury in the RCN \$15.95
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FROM THE ARCHIVIST

As far as acquiring things go, this has been an above average year for the SAM Library & Archives. With the closure of Stadacona's film library, we were lucky enough to receive more than a 150 VHS and 16mm. films along with the equipment needed to view them right here at SAM. As usual we have acquired more naval aviation related pictures and slides, and our yearly book budget has almost been spent on such books and videos as "A tradition of excellence," a five part history of the RAF, "Sailors, slackers, and blind pigs," and "Brave Soldiers, proud regiments: Canada's military heritage." Prof. Orest Cochkanoff has also recently donated a large collection of his books and magazines. People might also be interested to know that some footage of H.M.S. Nabob housed here may be used in CBC's "Canada's War : the lost colour archives" which will air this spring. Remember! This is a lending library. If you live in the area you can take most of the books and videos home for three weeks

Reminiscing... from Mick Owens

Regulating Branch in Naval Air

It is time someone gave some ink to the law enforcement guys with whom we dealt ashore and afloat while in Naval Air. The standing joke was that the qualifications to become an RPO was the ability to read and write but not necessarily both. We all, at some time, dealt with

them. Some were good experiences and some not so good. Some of the names I recall are Kerridge, Ish the Commish, Gillis, McNaughton, Howie Plank, Paul McCarthy, Terry Temple and good old Sam Ketchum Peters. As a Leading Seaman I had the Reg Office Drivers job on duty watch for a few months and did get to know them. I even got to like a couple of them. They tolerated me. I leave you with a few anecdotes about this group.
Mick

Traffic Control

Everyone knows that traffic control is a mean job in places like Toronto but they don't realize that it was a delicate issue on the base at Shearwater. After all, there must have been fifty cars on the base on a busy day. Only the Reg Branch could screw it up. They were responsible for issuing car passes and enforcing the laws.

One morning in the sixties when on VX10, I was in early to get the jobs organized and the XO, Dave Tate, came into AMCO. I wished him a good morning and he snarled like an enraged animal. His blue eyes were just apopping and I knew him well enough to know that this was serious. I was soon to learn the cause of his concern. The RPO's had replaced a YIELD sign with a STOP sign the previous evening and they confiscated his base car pass when he didn't stop that morning. He was furious and proceeded upstairs to prepare for briefing. Five minutes later P2AT Bill Cooper came in and he had had the same problem and asked for my advice. The

timing was perfect, Dave had just voiced his complaints to the aircr3ews before briefing started and I told Cooper that the XO could probably help. Cooper entered the room and Dave asked what he could do for him. Cooper asked that Dave get his pass back for him. Amidst the peals of laughter from the briefing room I heard Tate say: "You tell Owens to watch his back." I drove carefully for a week or so.

Howie's Electrolux

One of the first stories I remember about the RPO's was when Howie Plank assumed responsibility as the house-mother of 65 Block. It was recently occupied and was a bit of a mess so it had to be painted. Howie could be quite the disciplinarian and some of the OD's were waiting for n opportunity to pay him back for some chintzy kitmusters. He decided that he would paint the office the easy way and showed up with his wife's new Electrolux and the bottle for paint that came with it. He rigged the thing and plugged the hose into the exhaust end and it worked. After painting a bit, he turned it off to go to the heads and when he returned it refused to spray. Yes, some OD had rerigged it on the vacuum end and Howie sucked that pussier green paint into the machine. Poor old Howie!

Master-At-Arms

As a re-entry Leading Seaman in HMCS Cornwallis, my normal duty was looking after the gunnery stores in the Leadership School. I was often seconded to the Master-At-Arms office to assist when needed. On one occasion, I was called upon to escort an

AB Steward to Captain's defaulters. He was charged with stealing spirits from the wardroom and selling same diluted over the bar. Actually, the lower deck types admired the guy for his enterprising abilities. On the way from cells to defaulters, I topped in at the master's office and the master gave the kid some free advice. "You just stand there and say nothing, admit nothing and play dumb and it will be better for you", said the Master. The kid says, "Thanks Chief". The master corrects him, "It's not chief, it's Master". The AB responds, "Don't let it go to your f—ing head!" Did you ever see a big grown man explode?

Rounds

The Captain made rounds ashore once a week and this was the big day for the RPO wh would run ahead and announce the arrival of the Captain and his retinue. To the RPO this was very important and he would parlay it into such importance that he would reach a frenzy. One day on VX-10 things weren't going too well. The HSS-2 we were using for trials was down and the real pressure was on. In this atmosphere there was a scream in the hangar, the RPO. He shouts to the Chief, "the Captain is coming, the Captain is coming, do you want him to come in through the side door or the main hangar doors?" Chief Vandal looks him squarely in the eye, hesitates a few seconds for impact and replies, "I don't give a damn if you lower him through a hole in the roof!" One perplexed RPO

New Name for SAMF Newsletter

Suggestions:

- The Navalair** - Leo Pettipas
- The SAMF News Magazine** - Guy Laramee
- Blue Sea Sovereignty** - Bill Farrell
- Sea Spirit** - Bill Farrell
- Spirits of Our Fathers** - Bill Farrell
- SAMF Journal** - Leo pettipas
- Jet Blast** - Al Snowie
- Highground** - Al Snowie
- Goofers** - Al Snowie
- The Flight Deck** - Dan Neumann
- The Prop Wash** - Dan Neumann
- SAMF Approach** - Kay
- SAMF Contact** - Kay
- Air Waves** - Don Loney

_____ You the reader

Cut off date is 1 Jan 04. Like that old curse so many of us heard, "Speak now or forever hold your peace."



LITTLE KNOWN NAVAL HISTORY

The U.S.S. Constitution (Old Ironsides) as a combat vessel carried 48,600 gallons of fresh water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea. She carried no evaporators (fresh water distillers). However, let it be noted that according to her log, "On July 27, 1798, the U.S.S. Constitution sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum."

Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping." Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum. Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine. On 18 November, she set sail for England.

In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war and captured and scuttled 12 English merchantmen, salvaging only the rum aboard each. By 26 January, her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, and though unarmed, she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whiskey distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of single malt Scotch aboard by dawn. Then she headed home.

The U.S.S. Constitution arrived in Boston on 20 February 1799, with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, NO rum, NO wine, NO whiskey and 38,600 gallons of stagnant water.

GO NAVY! Now these guys knew how to drink!

Larry Zbitnew



1951 UNTD OBSERVER TRAINING CLASS

from John Dawson

Rear row: (l to r) Dick Winter, Rufus Reid, Tim Evans, Harvey Goossen, Cam Mitchell, Bill O'Brien, Ray Donais
 Front Row (l to r) John Dawson, Roger King, Ted Kieser, Clarence (Red) Robinson

THE GREY CUP

Remember those great Grey Cup parties the messes used to have: a couple of TVs back to back and the east/west fans facing one another lobbing missiles and rude commentary back & forth? Remember the chili and the chowder with lots of s--t bags in it, the beer and the friendly bets motivated more by regional loyalty than football knowledge? Did anybody remember what the score was the next day? or care? The biggest party of the year!

Apparently it isn't done much anymore however the tradition lives on. Ted Gibbon (west) and Barry Montgomery (east) have an ongoing bet (beginning in '56) on the Grey Cup and have expanded the rivalry to include the Vanier Cup. They make a modest wager on the outcome of each game and trade insults by email until the game is over when the loser of the bet must donate the stakes to the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation in the winner's name who, of course, gets the tax receipt. Great fun and it helps the cause.

Why not give it a try with some remote buddy who supported a different side those many years ago. Here is a start: Fernie Baloney was a helluva lot better QB than Sam Etcheverry, Angelo Mosca was a Wuss and Jackie Parker could out run every Alouette in Montreal.

Cheers, Ted Gibbon



H M C S PRETENDER 1970

BY Rolly west

When people think of the demise of the Bonaventure, it is common among most to remember only that last Tracker being launched in Bedford Basin from her flight deck. Well it wasn't the end of the carrier in Canada's Navy, because Bonnie had one more operational cruise whereby aircraft and air technicians could perform their ware. It all took place during the period Jan through Mar 1970, after the Bonnie was pressed back into operation in a role to support the fleet at sea with Sea King aircraft, spares and technical support.

HMCS Protecteur was originally scheduled to sail as the fleet AOR in support of the fleet for Operation Maple Spring '70. However, whilst in St John , NB, mechanical problems were discovered (shaft misalignment) and she was prevented from sailing. The bonnie was hurriedly made ready for sea and sailed with the fleet of five DDH's for the Carribean. Onboard "Pretender" was one Sea King, one H04S, a maintenance detachment of technicians from the Base Technical Branch at Shearwater, T58 engines and assorted spares for the aircraft.

As the AEO i/c of the detachment, I had 28 mechanics of all aviation trades which included Chief Knobby McNabb and PO's Tom Graham, Tom White and Wayne Fairbairn. The very-qualified Sea King techs of this detachment more than proved their worth during this cruise. In fact, only three days into the cruise South, they showed their mettle in support of a DDH aircraft which came aboard the carrier's flight deck.

A Sea King on launching from its Ship's deck clipped a main rotor blade. The aircraft was diverted to the carrier for an emergency landing. A main rotor blade was quickly whisked from the carrier's hangar deck topside to await the incoming aircraft. Chief M cNabb instructed the flight deck crew to recover the Sea King on the aft lift. The aircraft made an uneventful landing, the aircrew deplaned, and in my company went into the Ship's island for coffee. In the meantime, the techs had lowered the elevator a few feet, changed the blade, inspected the aircraft for damage and reported the aircraft ready for a ground run, all before the aircrews had finished their coffee.

On another occasion, all five aircraft from the DDH's were on the carrier's flight deck undergoing repair by the carrier detachment. All snags were repaired in minimum time, and the aircraft returned to their respective ships in time to meet their operational flights. Throughout the cruise, demands were made on

the carrier for helicopter maintenance support whether it be at sea or in port (San Juan, Roosevelt Roads or Port of Spain).

Once again, the carrier, with air techs aboard came through and provided the fleet with the support it needed to sustain air operations at sea, just as HMCS Protecteur and HMCS Preserver are doing today. This replacement role by HMCS Bonaventure was her last for aircraft operations and was so nicknamed HMCS Pretender, a name to fall in line with Provider, Protecteur and Preserver.

THE BONNIE

I want to go down to the Sea again
To cruise on the dark blue og
On a carrier, of course,
In a sub hunting force
Thinkin' Bonnie's the one for the job.

She sailed the ocean for thirteen years
And thousands of miles she logged
The Atlantic was home'n
Conducive to roamin'
Despite the cruddy old fog.

I'd be wanting to look for the boys in the bar
Getting primed before belting a tune
Then they'd sing of the pilot
Whose deck diving habits
Scared the hell out'a all in the room.

We crossed the equator (the north circle later)
Amid such commotion on deck
There were carquals and sustops
And painting the rust spots
And visits from Neptunus Rex.

For Bonaventure was the pride of the fleet
Hearts of oak had the boys in the crew
And the good ship BV,
Was always at sea
(The fisheads, they don't have a clue!)

Thats it from the sender, whose pleased to remember
This minuscule bit of the tome.
Before ending I ought to,
Remember her motto
Twas "Not for ourselves alone".
Ken Millar

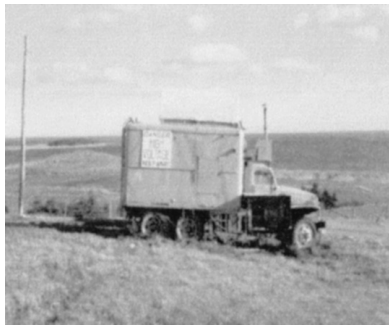
MOBILE TOWER AT CHEZZETCOOK

From: Leo Pettipas

Through the good offices of Ralph Fisher, my attention was called to a mobile control tower that was built in the early '50s by Fairey Aviation for use at AW in ADDL exercises. It comprised a basic truck fitted with a large square box aft of the cab. A plexiglass observation enclosure was installed atop the box. The brainchild of Phil Munro, it was dubbed the "Yellow Peril". In due course it was transferred to the Chezzetcook Range, where it served as a supplementary control tower. I would like to add an account of it to my history of the Range, but I have a few questions about it. Can anyone recall:

- (1) when it began to be used at the Range;
- (2) when use of it at the Range ceased;
- (3) just what its function was while at the Range;
- (4) whether it was (a) permanently transferred to the Range, or (b) moved back and forth between the Range and CANAS to serve various functions at the two sites?

I have a photo of the YP, taken by Phil in 1962, by which time it appeared to have become a permanent fixture at the Range. I can send individual copies of the pic if anyone would like their memories refreshed. Can anyone answer the above questions, or otherwise provide information about this vehicle?



THE YELLOW PERIL

Phillip R. Munro

It was 1951 and there were three of them; a Panel Truck, a Communications Truck and a Radar Van. All painted yellow indicating their function as airport ground vehicles. They belonged (as much as any Naval stores can belong to anyone) to the Ground Radio Section at HMCS Shearwater. Into this smooth running operation came a not so young but inexperienced Lieutenant (L), right out of the long (L) course to relieve the incumbent, (a nine year commissioned (L) officer) and to set the world straight. So much for attitude!

He began by renaming Ground Radio to Ground Electronics, more fitting, as the Section was responsible for the GCI and GCA as well as other radars on the base. Then he took it upon himself to learn to drive and gained an MT-6 which allowed him to drive all three vehicles anywhere in the Province, much to the amusement of his very capable staff. Thrilled with this new taste of freedom, he drove around the base with gay abandon and the Communications Truck, when under his control, was soon dubbed the "Yellow Peril" by a

brother (L) Officer who had an innate capability with descriptive English.

One night when the Lieut(L) was Duty Technical Officer; there was no night flying and he was in the Tower playing cribbage with the controller who complained that the Air Station needed a mobile control tower which could be set out alongside the duty runway to facilitate touch and go as well as simulated deck landings. The existing problem was that the control tower was too far from the landing path.

The idea began to form and after discussions with his senior CPO, the Lieut(L) agreed to sacrifice the Communications Truck for conversion to a mobile tower. Of course proper authority was required and there followed letters, briefs, and memos until the plan was finalized and approved. The Lieut(L) in his administrative ignorance figured that work would now begin and within a short time the mobile tower would be alongside the runway conducting ADDLS.

The first stumbling block was Maritime Tel & Tel who steadfastly refused to permit a wireless connection to their lines. Thus, the envisioned ability of the mobile tower operator to reach base telephones directly came to naught, and we had to settle for a wireless link to the Control Tower.

Next came the necessity to award a contract for the work, which in turn required a specification to be written. Eventually, a contract was awarded to Fairey Aviation for the installation of a perspex dome, benches for communication equipment, a generator on the running board,

and finally at the insistence of the senior tower controller, an escape hatch.

The communications gear was installed by the ground electronics personnel and the completed product was, without ceremony, driven onto the airfield and placed alongside the duty runway. It actually worked!

However the whole process took such a long time from conception to completion that the Lieut(L) had reached the end of his appointment and was at that time holding a WW II Tribal together with chewing gum and string, arguing with dockyard mateys, and avoiding contract award like the plague!

Meanwhile, Sea Furies and Avengers were using the mobile tower and someone realized that the bombing range at Chezzetcook could enjoy improved communication at low levels when the Air Station Control Tower was blocked by terrain. So the beast was driven to Chezzetcook, and apparently served its purpose for some time. As the years wore on and technology advanced, Seafuries were replaced by Banshees and Avengers gave way to Trackers. Bonaventure, with her landing mirror and angled flight deck altered the nature of Naval flying. By 1961, even the Banshees were gone and the original need for the bombing range faded into history.

The Lieut(L), now a LCdr serving in Bonaventure visited Chezzetcook with family and found the old mobile tower, rusty in spots; a relic of things past but still yellow. It rested quietly on the hillside, used only by Trackers. The local populace no longer heard the roar of Banshees, nor did the younger pilots who had taken

up the challenge of Naval Air from those who had gone before. Yet there remain a few to this day who remember (fondly I hope) the days of Chezzetcook, Sea Furies, and Munro's Yellow Peril.

SOLAR STORM BENEFIT

The recent solar storm shed, unlike hurricane Juan, an unexpected benefit: it caused a time warp in cyberspace that gave this newsletter access to items of interest from newspapers yet to be printed; an example follows:

Disassociated Press, Tokyo, 15 March 2009;

The Canadian warship CW Pearson has arrived in Brisbane, Australia for replenishment and crew change after a two-month period of intense relief work here in Japan – work aiding our own defence and civil forces in succour to the population of these islands after the devastating earthquake of last November. The Canadians were remarkably well suited to dealing with this scale of disaster, drawing on their own homeland experience gained in rescue action in the Great Vancouver Earthquake of a year ago.

CW Pearson is a multi-purpose warship designed to be rapidly reconfigured from fleet carrier war duty to peace duty for aid to nations in distress from natural or even man-made catastrophies. The rapidity of the response of Canada to Japan's emergency was truly exemplary. Pearson had just returned to her homeport in the Shearwater Rapid Response Dock/Aerodrome/Barracks Facility at Halifax – this after some hard fighting in the recent battles here in the Western Pacific -- when the quake struck Japan. Pearson immediately disembarked her complement of F35 fighters and her battalion of Canadian Marines, embarked a full hangar-load of pre-packed containers filled with disaster relief supplies and equipment; also a field hospital --

all within 48 hours! Key medical personnel were flown directly to Japan. CW Pearson's helicopters, which many of you have seen in our skies, remained onboard and we are grateful for their rescue efforts here throughout Pearson's stay.

Many of our citizens were perplexed by the multi-racial, multi-lingual diversity of Pearson's crew asking "how can you tell a Canadian from other nationalities, they all look so different?" The answer appears to be "by their deeds". It is perhaps not surprising that Pearson's crew point to their country's new motto "Noblesse Oblige".

It is rumoured that Canada intends to further assert itself as a credible independent player in foreign affairs by building a similar ship for a West Coast Rapid Response Force. This ship to be based in Victoria and may be named CW Vanier.

Ichi Bon , correspondent,, foreign desk, Tokyo.

War Against Terrorism

The Canadian Government has decided to assist the USA in the war against terrorism. They have agreed to send:

2 of their largest battleships
6,000 ground troops
6 fighter jets

After the exchange rate, the USA will receive:

1 canoe
2 Mounties
12 flying squirrels

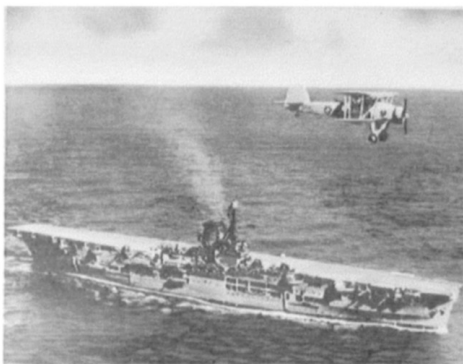
THE BISMARCK "FIASCO"



TERRY GODDARD

A Naval Air Warrior Remembers

The 23 May 1941 was an ordinary day in harbour at Gibraltar - "dull". Gib unlike most ports had few bars, and fewer whorehouses - if any. The causeway to La Linea was only accessible through a guardhouse - British on one side - Spanish on the other. Recent book tales of frantic recalls et all the night Ark sailed are rubbish. Access to the dockyard was through a gate locked at 2230hrs, few, if any Officers or Men missed this curfew.



Swordfish over Ark Royal

On board the "Ark Royal" - other than Command for whom I can't speak; there was a Mediterranean insular attitude - the invasion of Crete - a disaster - Bobby Bradshaw's - "DSC" exploits from Halfar Malta - seemed he sank a ship a night - generally providing 10 Group with the ship's name! When would we do another run up the "Med" doing a "Ramrod" and against airfields in Sardinia - just to make sure that they knew we were there!? (An aside - After one such excursion having taken more than normal flak and running rough but deciding to give the return a chance - we had to ditch - got out a good MAYDAY position and were

picked up 9 ½ hrs later by "H69" - HMS Foxhound. I slept through an "IT!" bombing attack!)The war in the Atlantic - despite the terrible merchant ship losses was not a page one item in our thoughts. Indeed, no idea about the sad state of affairs in the UK and the war itself.

Thus, at about 0230 hrs 24 May, when woken by the ominous and urgent thumping of the screws at flank speed - thoughts were not about "DKM Bismarck" and the North Atlantic, but a return trip up the Med. Then later, when on deck and being confronted by the grey and troubled Atlantic we greeted each other with smug smiles. Placing the right hand on the left breast we were in the know!

Sharnhorst and Gneisenau had left Brest. Ho Hum - another chase and they would scurry back to harbour. No word from Command as to what we were really doing. I missed Capt Holland>(*1)



Sharnhorst

I thought he was just great (my collateral duty was the seaplane tender which he liked to use - my first command! With Maund's arrival, this became a Ship's Officer duty. I don't believe I ever spoke with Capt Maund. The ship's camaraderie changed.

Morning of 24 May was dreadful. "Hood" our pride and joy had been sunk by Bismarck. A bolt out of the blue - like "Custer" we wondered where the hell had Bismarck come from and how the hell did Hood get sunk. Unbelievable - shattering to morale.

Then the buzz was that we were off to provide cover for a 20,000 Troop Convoy (WSSB). Repulse and Victorious having been withdrawn to

join in the hunt for the "Bismarck". But now there was a dramatic change in mission - apparently Admiralty had decided to take a risk and leave the 20,000 Troop convoy unprotected! Unknown to us "Ark's" aircraft had become their last chance to get the "Bismarck". A **violent** course change - off to the northward at maximum speed. (*2) I don't recall any momentous feelings of now or never, that we were the last hope, nor do I recall any do or die heroic briefings. The sinking of Hood continued to be a gloomy topic. I think most of us thought that like Scharnhorst and Gneisenau had in the past, the Bismarck would successfully scurry back to port.

On the 25th we heard about the Swordfish from Victorious attacking the Bismarck. We understood some aircraft had got lost navigationally not by Bismarck's anti aircraft fire. The buzz went round that Victorious' Beacon was not working and that the Force Admiral had ordered Victorious' Captain Bovell to turn off the searchlights he had turned on the clouds to home his aircraft. Capt Bovell bless his heart then signaled the flagship using his brightest 20" signal projector!! (*3)

May I digress here. Background synopsis generally refer to the Swordfish as a typical product of the Naval Air Service being starved for funds in that it was low in the RAF's priority list and Admirals being instinctively committed to the future of the dreadnought could not accept money from the Naval Budget being used for Naval Aircraft. (*4) In the result, all writers without exception refer to the Swordfish as a slow obsolete open cockpit inadequate range aircraft. I suggest that this was not the view of those of us who flew in the Swordfish. Our experiences in Norway - Dunkirk and the Mediterranean built up a great sense of trust in the Swordfish. It had shown that it was a beast for taking punishment - I don't recall hearing about any ditching due to engine failure (credit shared by groundcrew and engine).

Its flying abilities were better than the TBM - Devastators - Dauntlesses and Kates. It could, by personal experience, out-manoeuvre an ME109 on the deck. It could carry a heavier bomb load than a Wellington.

I don't think any other aircraft could have operated as successfully as did the Swordfish - during the Bismark flight operations - rise and fall of the round down - no less than 56 feet - 60 knot winds with green ugly water over the bow.

In other words we did not feel that it was obsolete. Indeed, I think we felt our survival chances in a Swordfish were as good if not better than in anything else!

Morning of 26th was confused chaos - weather was bloody! Indeed, it gave one pause for worrying thoughts. At first light some Swordfish were sent out on a Protective Patrol to see if Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were nearby! At about 0830 my squadron 818 was ranged to carry out a search for Bismarck. A pandemonium of motion - a frantic slip - slide - push - hold to range position. Shear bloody guts - brute strength and determination by deck and aircraft handling crews. The tension became very taut, for reasons not known Scharnhorst and Gneisenau had not induced the degree of self introspection which target "Bismarck" now did.

Briefing took place in the Ops Room - I don't remember a briefing Room! The briefing was brief. No momentous oration - courses for search - weather - winds - carrier datum and MLA. No info of other forces - I don't remember any pictures of Bismarck other than Janes Fight Ships. At this time, I suggest most of us were more worried about take-off and landing than the Bismarck. No plane guard - waiting for take-off was quite grim - scary! The tenseness was relieved by the dogged grins on soaked wind blown faces of deck crews. They were magnificent. Really in harms way - but exuding nothing but a thumbs up attitude. There is something intangible in the British other ranks - Bull Doggish stoicism and attitude which compels their officers to behave as officers should behave. So you put on a brave face - let them know that you will do your best to not let them down. History, as was the case here, clearly shows that the British Sailors and Soldiers, without credit, win battles and wars despite the oft time foibles of their officers. The wait on deck seemed interminable - green water gushing down the deck - roaring gusty wet wind - rough violent pitching and rolling - anxiety all round. We lurch into wind, finally its our turn. Lumber slowly up a hill,

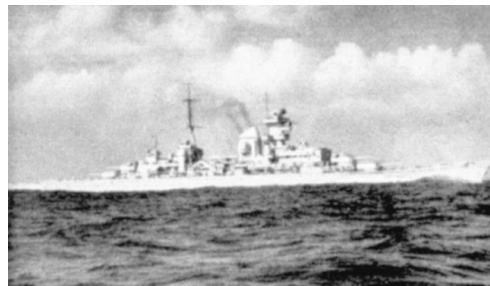
airborne at island , and oh yes! There's some guy holding up a blackboard with a revised datum! Fat chance plot will be changed! Once airborne thoughts of toppling or flying into the ocean were displaced by need for other thoughts. Agree it is best to get above the muck to get on our way. At about 5000 ft find a window between top of muck and bottom of towering cumulus. Agree to stay there - as always get beacon fine tuned. Thoughts now hesitantly switched to Bismarck. No breaks in the muck below us. After about 15 minutes agreed we should get below it. A hairy descent - sweaty - broke through at about 600 ft - watching altimeter had been quite an experience!. Visibility remained lousy. Air unstable - bumpy with showers - miserable! Really unpleasant - then without warning or expectation we were in the clear - no cloud - calmer seas - good visibility - sweating and dry mouth ease up! Better start looking.

I don't recall any feeling of the urgency to get "Bismarck Now!" In the past, we had looked for a never-found Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. Disappointing but seemingly not critical - as long as they were boxed up in Brest, what harm? Under the balm of the nice weather, desire, intestinal fortitude to find Bismarck rapidly increased. Completed outbound and step aside legs without incident. About 15 minutes on return leg, picked up RAF sighting report - really excited - where was it - anywhere near. Lettered position used by RAF not on chart. Nothing from Ark to tell us where. Heated discussion as to whether we should ask. No other transmissions heard. Decided to stay quiet. A maelstrom of thoughts cascaded through our conversations shouted down the voice pipe - remember - angry disappointment that we would not get an opportunity to avenge the Hood. Happy! If guilty thoughts that, hell it would not be us attacking the Bismarck. Let the RAF and Home Fleet wherever they are, do the job. Ho Ho Then we were back in the bloody weather - course and beacon agree - ached it again! Ark still taking green water. As usual, lets us mill around for a time before turning into wind! Finally about 1500 hrs, its our turn. Didn't see any prangs. Let's not be the first! No plane guard gives pause for thought as does rock and roll of plunging round - down. Obviously made it. Debriefing was brief. Really there was little interest in our adventures.

Intense activity getting 820 Sqn ready for a strike. Can't comment on 820's take-off other than to note - ironically - that Stewart Moores position in

Admiralty prior to joining 820, involved ship and aircraft recognition. Had something to eat. One of the axiomatic things one should do when one has the chance is sleep. I slept for about an hour and a half. I don't remember feeling any jealousy that I was not on the strike. We were not aware that due to plotting errors etc, Home Fleet had screwed up and steered in the wrong direction and was now unable to intercept Bismarck, unless Ark's Swordfish slowed the Bismarck down. Rumours that 820 had attacked the Sheffield spread throughout the ship. Surely not!

The strike returned to worse conditions than at take-off. Three of them pranged. Fortunately stayed on the deck. Without a plane guard there was no future in ditching and Renown didn't even pretend to be one ploughing around up ahead on port bow. Then we heard the details of 820's attack on the Sheffield. At least Sheffield knew what she was doing - unlike "KGV". She recognized the aircraft as Swordfish and by exemplary seamanship avoided the two torpedoes which were on target and running! Only two. For perhaps with divine intervention, but more probably by improper setting of the duplex pistols all of the others had exploded soon after entry. Initial disbelief and dark humour was soon replaced with cynical anger.



Prinz Eugen

Christ - Command didn't even know where its cruiser escort was - where or what the Home Fleet was doing - where or what Vian was doing with his destroyers - was Prinz Eugen with the Bismarck? - where she was was not known - but at least it seemed that Bismarck was somewhere ahead of Sheffield, tho' even this was not certain.



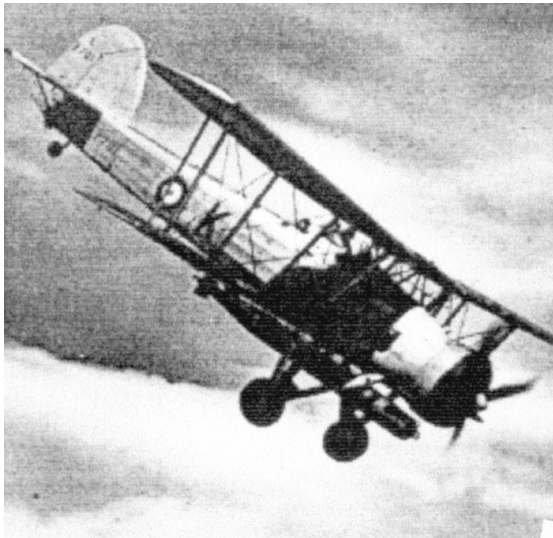
Bismarck

Things were very confused. No direction had been received from the Commander in Chief. The weather continued to get worse, wind, rain and round down pitching, looking at least 60 feet - green water over the bows - made thoughts of just flying, very scary. Indeed, surely it was not possible. Alternately pleased and disappointed. Very mixed emotions. After much gossip and mutterings, word came down that 818 Squadron all aircraft plus three others were to go on a strike. This time, the torpedoes would be armed with contact pistols. Didn't understand then and don't now - why in heavy seas duplex would explode on the waves and contact wouldn't. Seemed bass ackwards. Anyway - briefing was tense - no squadron tactical briefing - we had done it before - we would play it by ear and do it again. Position of Bismarck about 15 miles ahead of Sheffield. No course and speed. General instruction was find Sheffield and she would point the way to Bismarck. Still no information as to where Prinz Eugen - Home Fleet and Vian were. Feelings were taut - not adversarial - but questioning, certainly we considered the weather cause for deep concern - fear maybe? However, I don't recall any greater sense of awe that it was the Bismarck as opposed to an airfield RamRod - a run at Strasburg etc. Sure dry mouth - lack of interest in talking - I wouldn't describe it as a determined resolve, rather a numb sense of it has got to be done. Just remember Ark's motto: "Pro Bono Publico No Bloody Panico."

Nobody must see that you have some very disturbing introspective feelings, particularly the Flight Deck and Aircraft Ground Crew - again working as they were - on a slippery deck - braced against rock and roll - wind and rain and green water! As soon as we started engines, the Swordfish wanted to take off. It is to their credit that there was not a disaster on deck. Their demeanor and drill was perfect. Every man knew

his task and cockily did it. Indeed, sitting in the Range was a scary do - and bloody miserable in the driving rain. Notwithstanding written articles of lumbering Swordfish taking off through green water we were airborne by the island., well over the swirling green stuff - would you believe it - the situation must have been so "FUBAR" in Command that there was no last minute notice board being waved at us. As one "Wag" later joked, they didn't know where the Sheffield nor Home Fleet were - maybe they didn't know where they were! After usual delays, airborne about 2115 hrs. No sign of Tim Coode nor anybody else - did a quick circuit of Ark just below cloud at about 600 ft - joined by two of our flight - no sign of number two our wing man. Set course for Sheffield - visibility about ½ mile - tune beacon - check course. Then very strange, the three crews were laughing at each other - sort of can't believe this is happening - but laughing. Continued on at about 500ft. Spread the other two out to scouting position. About on eta Sheffield popped up out of the muck about 45 minutes after take off. Brought the other two in and buzzed the Sheffield. They seemed to be forgiving. Blokes waving etc. Sheffield altered course and ceased zig zagging. So off we went - still the three of us - the 3rd sub flight - my aircraft, as it always seemed to be - then and in other theaters Malta, Indian Ocean etc was "K" for King. Agreed we had to get height so up we went into the swirling wet muck - awful. We broke at about 5000 ft in between irregular layers. Other two rejoined. So still three of us. Rather strained and dry mouthed in close formation. No grins - we were stressed. According to information, Bismarck should be about 15 miles ahead of Sheffield. Odd gaps in cloud gave fleeting glimpses of sea - no Bismarck. Should we have stayed below clouds at 500 ft - Christ - nothing to do but go back to Sheffield. Will we find her - worst of all we were really scared that we would not find the Bismarck. More a matter of we didn't want to be considered cowards rather than any thoughts that it was all up to us. Found Sheffield sitting in the clear - she set course again. So did we. Back into the murk again - up to about 5000 ft. Feelings very mixed but ardently hoping we would find the bloody Bismarck. Just past ETA - despair set in - and certainly questioning gestures from the other two. Feeling very guilty and unsure. But then thunderous - crackling roars as though a number of

express trains in a tunnel had roared by! We shook! Bismarck had opened fire at us with its main 15" armament - well she found us - or as Admiral "Lutjens" decreed "He" the Bismarck - too good to be a "She" had found us. But thank heavens we had found HER. Without delay, and not as oft time reported, maneuvering for a position for twenty minutes - what nonsense - we dove down. Bits of ice breaking off with a static crack heightened the tension as we lost height - altimeter spinning - seemed we would never break clear - certainly a half crown - sixpence experience - but we did - again at about 500 ft. Jesus, there was Bismarck on the starboard bow - guns belching - flames - smoke and tracer - looked toweringly awesome. Whether mesmerized by Bismarck or not, I don't know, but as far as I can recall we were on our own - didn't see any other aircraft. Quite a bit of bow spray and funnel smoke - turned - dove to sea level -



I mean just above the heavy seas - and went in - feeling angry and excited. Reports state that the intensity and accuracy of the Bismarck's fire compelled us to turn away before dropping torpedoes. Rubbish - why give them any more opportunities - we went straight in - rather like a moth to a flame. Just prior to drop, a skid jink to the left.

The Bismarck was enormous - drop in a trough and up to 400 ft and away - still all alone. Turned to look at Bismarck and lo and behold there was an explosion and smoke on Bismarck's port bow. Excitedly in plain language reported "one hit port bow" - asked by "Ark" to confirm and did so. Went

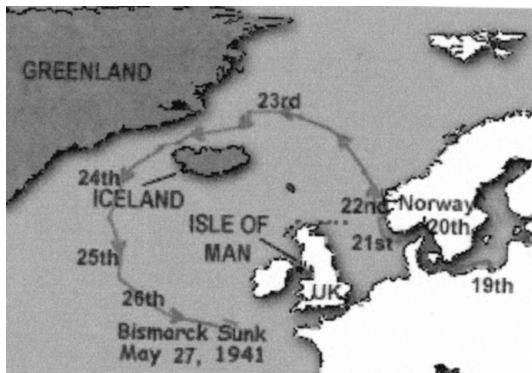
up to six thousand in the clear. Set course for "Ark" confirmed it with beacon. Up ahead spotted another Swordfish - it was Geoffrey Fausett flying with an enormous and painful bunion on his neck - contentedly smoking a big cigar. Didn't agree with his course so continued on our course alone. Sighted Ark about 2200 hrs - getting dark. Joined the gaggle of aircraft circling around - getting darker and the weather had not improved. Elation of attack evaporated - again dry mouthed. Ark still fiddling around. Finally turns into wind - it is dark - about 2220. Got the affirmative and came aboard. A sweaty event. I was quite certain that the hit I reported was a "K" for King hit and I so reported at debriefing. Got criticized by a sniveling "looker" that I should not have claimed the hit - but I reaffirmed my conviction that it was a "K" for King hit. Subsequently in the varying accounts of the action, hits are credited to at least five other aircraft - no mention that I have found for "K" for King - annoying! Debriefing was tense - Command having received Tim Coode. CO 818

Sqn report of "No Hits" seemingly were reluctant to credit any other report. However, Sheffield reports that Bismarck was steering north west and erratic led to some second thoughts. It was initially accepted that Bismarck had been hit on the port side - then a hit on the starboard quarter and later a hit on the port quarter. I believe that it is now concluded that there were four hits!

A great sense of sadness watching the gallant Bismarck crew trying to fight whilst being pounded to hell by ships guns and torpedoes

Of one thing I am clear - although the debriefing was disorganized and it took a lot of repetitive statements to convince Command that yes, there had been hits - that it was "Tony Beale" who went in alone on the starboard side who put the torpedo into the rudders. For a brief period - in the confusion, there was a strong buzz that we were going to launch a third strike. Then about an hour later on, it would be a dawn strike! I do believe we were "rather relieved"! Morning briefing quite different - calm and organized - weather still lousy - but better than it had been. Everybody very cocky. All the Swordfish had shown how they could take punishment and fly. Three had pranged and one had too many hits to repair. We had quite a few. About 0920 hrs third strike took off - weather much improved -

Bismarck was in the clear. Cruised around her and Home Fleet at about 2000 ft. Only ack ack encountered came from King George V whose gunners had mistaken the Swordfish - wheels and all, for German aircraft. Friendly fire? Their shooting was way off! CO asked permission to attack - not given. The Bismarck was now an ugly burning hulk - still being pounded mercilessly by the Home Fleet - battle flag still flying. Very mixed feelings - controversial and illogical. Whilst wanting to go in and drop our torpedoes - a great sense of sadness watching the gallant Bismarck crew trying to fight whilst being pounded to hell by ships guns and torpedoes.



I note Rodney fired six for one hit. We were four for thirteen! Without doubt we were exuberant that the Fleet Air Arm had done its stuff and very cynical that CinC would have Rodney - Norfolk and Dorsetshire fire torpedoes and deny us the opportunity to use ours! There was a lot of black - angry humour that no way the Fleet Air Arm was going to be allowed to "sink the Bismarck" (Tried to find the many cartoons to this effect, but regret, I couldn't.) **Note:** The reason CinC detached Sheffield to shadow Bismarck was that he did not believe aircraft could do it!?

After Dorsetshire's attack, it was clearly over. We ditched our torpedoes and returned to the ARK. Whilst landing on, a German Heinkel attempted to bomb the Ark, to no avail. Sheffield had returned and she and Renown put up a pretty good defence. Returned to Gib and happy greetings.

The Bismarck fiasco was over. Fortunately we had left before the sad scene of those gallant German sailors being abandoned in the angry seas, some clinging to the ships sides as they got under way!

It is a pity that accounts of Arks aircraft actions are so varied and scarce. Why doesn't Admiralty do some research and get an agreed standardized version. For example the many accounts of Midway are all similar and emphasize the role played by their aircraft and crews.

*1 His words and actions made it quite clear that "Ark": under his command was a single entity whose unified purpose was to exploit the spatial potential of this aircraft.

*2 Flight operations at this time were two plane anti-submarine patrols - sea - wind and visibility had become most unpleasant. Goofers had a hayday with go rounds and ugly landings. Certainly one was aware that - better not go in the drink as destroyers had left to refuel. No plane guard - did not see U556! We also remembered a catapult launch - ditching - all three crew members bobbing and waving in the water as they passed down the port side. Then a sickening thump thump as the fail safe depth charges exploded - a horrid sight as they slumped still and silent.

*3 A touch of "Nelson"! (The allusion being to Horatio Nelson holding his telescope to his glass eye so that he could deny seeing his Admirals signal to break off action.) Worthwhile to note that in stark contrast to "CinC's " orders, in similar circumstances Adm Spruance and Capt Mitscher USN ordered "Turn on the search lights" to them as documented - despite dangers. Fliers were sacred to them!!

*4 The first Sea Lord in justifying the need for Naval Aircraft stated "Aircraft were second only in importance to Naval Gunner".

*5 DUPLEX A. Torpedo pistol activated by either a magnetic field as it passes under the target ship or by direct impact against it's hull.

Addendum re “marksmanship”.

Torpedoes Launched

8 by aircraft from Victorious	1 Hit Probably 2	24-25 May
13 by aircraft from Ark Royal	3 Hits Probably 4	26 May
3 by Cossack	0 Hits 0140	27 May
1 by Cossack	0 Hits 0335	27 May
2 by Maori	0 Hits 0137	27 May
2 by Maori	0 Hits 0656	27 May
4 by Zulu	0 Hits 0121	27 May
4 by Sikh	0 Hits 0128	27 May
12 by Rodney	1 Hit	27 May
8 by Norfolk	1 Possible hit	27 May
3 by dorsetshire	1 Hit Possibly 3	27 May

From the Editor:

Not all of our readers will be familiar with some of the WW 2 acronyms and names in this account:

Goofers: The ship's non flight-operations crew members who festooned the island and sponsons during flying operations to view take offs and landings that had the potential to be spectacular, sometimes tragic.

MLA: Mean Line of Advance. A prediction of the intended course and speed of the carrier to enable sorties to find the carrier when returning from missions (where to expect to find your mobile airfield in a featureless ocean)(MLAs were often reliable).

Beacon: A carrier's coded VHF radio homing beacon (useful if the MLA changed during the sortie).

Round-Down: The after end of the flight deck, so called because it curved downward.
Sheffield: An RN cruiser with which the Swordfish exchanged "friendly fire".

Prang: Slang for crash (possibly of **onomatopoeic derivation**prraannnggg!)

Duplex Pistols: Torpedo warhead exploding devices activated by either direct impact or by the magnetic field of the target ship.

Vian: Admiral's surname. **FUBAR:** The "BAR" stands for Beyond All Recognition.

Half-Crown / Six Pence: British coins roughly equivalent in diameters to our Loonie and Dime respectively. Refers to involuntary stress-induced sphincter spasms in aircrew.

Touch of Nelson: Refers to Horatio Nelson's holding his telescope to his glass eye so that he could truthfully deny seeing his Admiral's flag signal message ordering him to break off the action he was engaged in (turn a blind eye to)(micro managing?).

Ramrod: An attack/raid on an enemy airfield.

Goddard, at 80, with son
This ancient warrior defies
aging.





FIREFLY RESTORATION PROJECT

We seem to have slipped into “The Horse Latitudes” (some call this band of South Atlantic seasonally windless seas “Doldrums”): We progress, but at knots that keep the Dutchman’s Log seemingly almost stationary. As each component of this remarkably complex warplane – complex even by today’s standards – comes under the eye and wrench of the indomitable Bud Ayer some new evidence of corrosion or decay comes to light. Decades of baking in an African desert sun, without the benefit of run-ups and servicing will do this – even to the best of Rolls-Royce engines and Fairey airframes.

That having been said, we sail on with the adage that “the best way to peel a sack of potatoes is to take one potato at a time and peel it”. The potato in hand at this moment is the impellor of the coolant pump. ACAM is opening up the pump on the Griffon in their museum at Halifax International so that we can measure with calipers and replicate.

There are, no doubt, more potatoes lurking about to challenge us but, hey, if a job is without serious challenges is it really worth spending time on? As the Air Force says “Per ardua ad astra” and as 825 Squadron says “Nihil Obstat”.

Bill Farrell Project Dogsboddy

SAAC

Shearwater Aerospace Action Committee has been in action for eighteen months – ever since the handing over of the greater part of CFB Shearwater to Canada Lands Company (CLC) for disposal. The effect of that transfer was the immediate shutdown of the principal runway (34-16). The shutdown is to be permanent and north and south ends of the runway, together with hundreds of acres of infield and surrounding

infrastructure destined for urban development and access roads thereto.

Several air-minded and defence-minded individuals and companies banded together to lobby governments at all three levels to preserve Shearwater as a complete aerodrome for both fixed-wing and helicopter operations – not as a helicopter-only facility. SAAC was then born and has now got the attention, but not the action, of politicians at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. SAAC’s vision is one of a combined General Aviation and Military Aerodrome to promote the preservation of this irreplaceable national defence asset against unforeseen military fixed-wing needs and at the same time to promote the nurturing of defence and general aviation related manufacturing and servicing industrial enterprises. That vision has been prosecuted vigorously with the political VIPs but it has been difficult to draw their attention away from the more urgent matters of Sunday shopping, same-sex marriages and like issues. Perhaps VIP stands for Vision Impaired Politicians?

THE LAST WORD

From the Secretary

Thank you to everyone who helped make this a banner year for the SAMF.

To the visitors who dropped in, Ted Gibbon along with Barry Montgomery, Nancy and Gordon Smith, Mr & Mrs Gordon Coldham, Mike Fasevich (to name a few), it was great seeing you.

In the last issue, I asked if anyone had a spare Avenger in their pocket. Lo and behold a note from R. Horton arrived with photos of Avengers, taken by his daughter, at the Fredericton, NB airport - apparently there are nine Avengers for sale. Don’t all rush to Fredericton....

That’s it for now .

Take care - and to you and yours, Happy Holidays.

Kay



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