

*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*

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**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.

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**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:

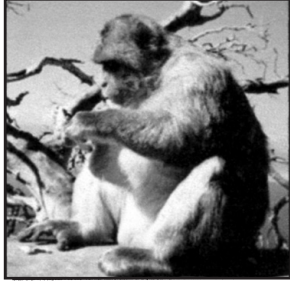
Spring 7 March  
Summer 27 June  
Winter 4 October

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[samf@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:samf@ns.sympatico.ca)  
1-888-497-7779 (toll free)  
1-902-461-0062  
1-902-461-1610 (fax)

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



### Editor's Grunts

Once again the dreaded deadline looms and once again I am confounded by unanswered questions: What does our readership want? Is the demographic of the readership roll changing as the years roll by? I almost had my thoughts gelled in a composition a week ago – then this @!#\$%^&\*()\_+ computer, just as I groped for the “save” option, chose to mutiny and wipe out hours of translating (putative) thought into printed word. This computer I now address as **Mister Christian!** I here try again though with great trepidation.

I know that our current membership is largely struthious in outlook (there's an oxymoron for you!): Heads buried in the sand, most of you refuse to accept that your name will, ere long, be struck from SAMF's roll of living members and that there is no host of new members being generated – There is no aircraft carrier to generate replacement naval members, and the Greenwood maritime aviation community has no real ties to Shearwater. **Whether to continue to be or to accept not to be in the near future** – that is the question.

My vote is to **continue to be** – on into the future and I offer this as a modus Operandi or editor's philosophy:

- 1 We select content to meet the nostalgia hunger of our members, both light and navy blue – in fine, memories of the camaraderie of the “good old days”: This content largely from anecdotes received from readers.
2. We dip into the more-distant past for the deeds of our forefathers to establish that naval aviation does have roots way back in World War 1 – from the very beginning of war in the sky -- this largely through the writings of Alan Snowie (now skylarking on a self-awarded sabbatical).
3. We serve the sense of duty of our old, out-to-pasture, warriors who want a say in the restoration of both the Naval and Maritime Air Forces by printing their “been there, done that” wisdom in pundit (wise old man) articles
4. We enlarge our readership by printing, in each issue, scholarly, comprehensive articles on maritime warfare subjects. These give the newsletter a bit of the flavour of a military journal (as do Snowie's World War 1 articles). A newsletter containing just messdeck yarns will die with the tellers of such: Will the last man to leave please turn out the light?

What my replacement's philosophy will be is your guess and his or her choice (this issue is my penultimate, possibly ultimate, kick at the can). Cheers Bill Farrell

### Late arriving Post Script:

### Valediction

I have been considering for several months handing over the editing of SAMF newsletter to some new editor skilled in the use of a computer for the compiling of content into digital form for our printer to process into printed and ready-to-mail form. My difficulties in making the leap from quill and parchment to mouse and disk are no secret. Given the time and freedom from other demands on my rapidly-dwindling time, I am confident that I could master those skills and also the skills germane to electronic publishing: I am not given that time. Accordingly, for this reason and also for subordinate health and family reasons I deem it timely to make the Spring Issue of SAMF Newsletter my final such opus: I will advise the Board to this effect immediately with the recommendation that it should begin a search for a person with the appropriate skills and with the time and enthusiasm to take on the role of editor.

Bill Farrell  
**North Africa - WW2**

At an airfield in North Africa during WW2, the routine was the same. At first light the alert would sound, pilots would run to their Hurricanes, start up and taxi out to the runway. At that point the all-clear would sound and they would taxi back to their dispersals and return to the sack.

One disgruntled pilot trained an ape to do this for him. All this went well until one morning when the all-clear didn't blow, and the planes all took off.

The pilot didn't see the ape again until after the war, when they were both group captains at AFHQ.

*(The Shearwater connection is seen in the image above the "Editor's Grunts" - appears to be ape-related. Kay)*

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**From the Curator's Desk**  
Christine Hines

I am very pleased to be among you once again after my maternity leave, and would like to thank the SAMF members, the staff and volunteers for their kind words of congratulations and support to Brent and myself. Wee Garrett has already spent more time in this museum than most children will in a lifetime!

I was very proud to see a completed Atrium upon my return; I must congratulate SAMF, Don Cash for his

design, Chuck Coffen who managed the project brilliantly, and all involved in the raising of the Atrium. This new entrance will enhance our operations in many ways, not the least of which is a more professional corporate image. The Grand Opening was held 6 April 2004. Look for coverage here in the newsletter and as well as [www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca](http://www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca)

It is with regret I must inform our members of recent changes to the SAM team. As of the end of February 2004, Administrative Assistant Sgt. Mary Ellen McWhirter has retired from the Air Reserve, and Rob LePine, our modeler and Gift Shop Manager, has left us for greener pastures in the model-making business. In addition, MCpl Tom Boyce, our Engineer, has taken a teaching position at 12 Air Maintenance Squadron, and will be leaving us as of the end of March 2004. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mary Ellen, Rob and Tom for their dedication and commitment to SAM during their time with us; their contributions will not soon be forgotten. Indeed, they will be missed. I'd also like to offer a warm welcome Bob Shufelt, our bookkeeper, who has jumped in to the breach to manage the Gift Shop, and to MCpl Julie Gallant, our new Administrative Assistant from the Air Reserve who will be on board as of 1 April 2004. Look for more on our new staff in a future edition of the SAMF newsletter.

Despite these staff changes, we have kept a busy pace readying ourselves for the Atrium opening, and we are anticipating the 2004 season to be an exciting one. In closing, I'd like to remember our colleagues and members in light blue as they celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the RCAF on 1 April 2004. I'd invite you to reminisce with us at the Shearwater Aviation Museum. Happy Spring!

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### Newsletter Name Change?

Not at this time but we thank several readers for their suggestions. The responses ranged from "keep the old title" to others with naval and aviation flavours. For the present we'll stick with Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation Newsletter but keep an open mind to future suggestions.

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### SAM VOLUNTEERS

Equally deserving candidates for "Volunteer of the Quarter" are Pat & Whitey Williamson. This dynamic duo have long been supporters and volunteers at SAM, and have given us many hours over the years. They both have a wealth of knowledge to share with our visitors, and are excellent SAM ambassadors. Whitey proudly regales stories of the carrier days, and paints an accurate picture of the role of naval aviation for our visitors. Pat, meanwhile, knows the gift shop inside out, assists shoppers with the right item to take away to remember their time in Shearwater, in addition to ensuring all visitors

are greeted and oriented for their visit at SAM. Congratulations to both Pat and Whitey on a job well done, and many thanks for all your efforts.



**Volunteers of the Quarter:  
Pat and "Whitey" Williamson**

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### **ARTIFACTS WANTED!**

**WRCNS items,  
especially uniforms!**

Please contact Christine Hines,  
at (902) 460-1083 or  
[awmuseum@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:awmuseum@ns.sympatico.ca)

Note: Receipts for charitable donations  
are available.

### USEFUL PHRASES TO USE.....

*Failure to plan on your part, does not constitute an emergency on my part!*

*Any connection between your reality and mine is purely coincidental!*

***The Atrium is now open for business!*** By Christine Hines

On 6 Apr 04, Col. David Martin, 12 Wing Commander and Chairman of the SAM Board of Trustees, and Mr. Bill Farrell, SAMF President, hosted a supportive audience numbering 120, to celebrate our new Atrium. Honoured guests included Mr. Peter Stoffer, MP for Sackville-Musquodoboit Valley-Eastern Shore; Mr. Kevin Deveaux, MLA for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage; Mr. Leonard Hill, Consul General to the United States of America; Captain (N) Roger MacIsaac, Base Commander for CFB Halifax, as well as numerous Board members from SAM and SAMF, SAMF members, volunteers, staff, and heritage colleagues.

Mr. Stoffer, MP and Mr. Hill, presented a US Flag from the Capitol in Washington, DC. This presentation further solidified Canadian-American relations and is most appropriate, considering the earliest days of what is now Shearwater was first manned in 1918 by a USN Detachment commanded by the Lieutenant Richard Byrd.

An Air Force Ensign was presented by Mr. Sandy Sanford from 111 Micmac Wing.

Raffle winners Mr. Wayne Pettipas and Mr. Charles Keating, who held the ribbon, and Mr. Gerry Marshall, who won the honour of snipping the ribbon, opened the Atrium with special help from Chuck Coffen's trusty Swiss Army knife scissor attachment.

Chuck Coffen, Atrium Projects Manager and SAM Manager, is to be congratulated on a monumental job well done in managing the construction.

We are very proud of the Atrium, and of the massive efforts the SAM Foundation to provide this fabulous facility to our visitors. We hope that you, our readers, supporters and volunteers, are equally as proud of your accomplishments. SAMF, with a membership 1000 strong, with such a large representation of the Naval Air Community, is a credit to the voluntary sector in Canada. Rest assured we think of you every day as we conduct business in our new digs! BRAVO ZULU SAMF!



***Continued: photo by Eugene Rogers***



**HELLO FROM THE ARCHIVES!!**

*By Christine Dunphy*

The SAM Library & Archives is as busy as ever. Thanks partially to John Eden's encouragement at CNAG, we continue to receive archival donations and our photograph collection continues to grow. We also keep getting new books such as *A Duel of Eagles, On the Battlefields*. We will be getting more money for books soon so if you have any suggestions, please do e-mail us. Hopefully we will receive a Young Canada Works grant this summer so we can have a student to help us with such things as cataloguing the maps and blueprints that are too large for the map cases. Hopefully our carpenter will be able to build a shelving unit for these items soon. Lately we've been getting more requests for photographs than ever. Soon images from the archives will appear in such things as an article by Richard Goette in *Canadian Military History*, a book by Tony Stachiw on the Canadian Naval Air Arm, and a book by Patrick Martin on Canadian Armed Forces aircraft finishes and markings. Please do remember! This place is for you to check out.

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**CORNWALLIS WEBSITE WINS MAJOR AWARD**

(From the St. George's Gazette)

Word has just been received that the Museum's website has been recognized as a top military site. The Award has been granted by Military.Com a large American website devoted to matters military. This award entitles the Cornwallis Military Museum to

display the Distinguished Military Site Award on its web page. Congratulations to our President and Webmaster, Douglas Moore.

[www.cornwallismuseum.ca](http://www.cornwallismuseum.ca)

***Congratulations from SAMF.***

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**NEWS RELEASE - RCC HALIFAX**

At 2122Z 4 Dec 83, RCC was notified by St Lawrence coast guard radio that they received a distress message from the cargo Ship, HO MING 5, in transit to Europe from Halifax. Msg stated that his cargo of wood had shifted and the he required immediate assistance. An aurora who reached the scene at 2354Z reported that the ship was listing approx 35 degrees and the crew wanted to abandon. A Sea King from the destroyer HMCS Iroquois, who was in the area, launched and hoisted 8 crew members off the stricken vessel at 051055Z. A zodiac from Iroquois picked up the remaining crew members.

Usual reliable sources indicate that the ship utilized pigeons to carry the initial distress message ashore. Subsequent to this situation, all Canadian Coast Guard Stns have been briefed to anticipate the arrival of HO MING pigeons when other company vessels are in our area.

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**OTTAWA NAVAL AVIATION RENDEZVOUS**

*from Laurie Farrington*

The 16th Annual Ottawa Naval Aviation Rendezvous will be held in the Bytown Crowsnest on Wednesday 19 May 2004 from 1200 to 1400. Those who shared life in aircraft carriers, naval air stations, and helicopter-carrying ships, and their guests, are

welcome.

A cash bar will operate and there will be a \$10.00 charge for lunch at the door. Any surplus funds will be donated to the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation.

Please note an elevator is now available for those who wish to reach the altitude of the Crowsnest with ease.

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A student became lost during a solo cross-country flight. While attempting to locate the aircraft on radar, ATC asked, "What was your last known position?" Student: "When I was number one for take-off."

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**SAMF FUND-RAISING DINNER / AUCTION**

**To be held: WO/Sgts Mess - 12 Wing Shearwater Saturday 19 June 2004, 1800 for 1900 hrs**

This is a major fund-raising event for the Foundation. Come out and support our Museum.

Tickets \$50 each (an Income Tax Receipt for \$25 will be provided.)

For tickets or further information, please call or write to any of the following:

Local Calls: 461-0062

Toll Free: 1-888-497-7779

Fax: 461-1610

Email: [samf@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:samf@ns.sympatico.ca)

VISA/Master Card, cheques, money orders or cash accepted.

**NOTE: Cutoff date for tickets - 12 Jun 04**

## Follow Me; I've Got Lots of Gas"

by Doug Hardwick

In the days of VC920 Squadron, in October of 1956 according to my log book, Colin Mason and I were to ferry two TBMs from Shearwater to Downsview. Just prior to start-up at CYXF, a two-and-a-half whom I did not recognize, asked me to take a female Air Force flight cadet, who had been visiting a friend for the weekend, to Toronto. I complained that we did not have a hard hat for her, nor even a headset. He assured me, quite firmly, that it did not matter and besides, she was already entered on the F-17. I was uncomfortable with this arrangement, but complied, giving her a cursory safety briefing.

Our flight plan was through the old "Thunder Alley", Fredericton, Millinocket, Megantic, to St. Hubert, where we would refuel. Colin was the leader, on his green ticket. Over Fredericton, at 14,000 feet, my fuel check showed a disturbingly high consumption. I conveyed this to Colin, who assured me that one of my tank indicators must be U/S and that we were in good shape.

Beyond Fredericton, the scattered low cloud became broken, then a solid undercast and at Millinocket, my consumption was still high using another tank. The weather was clear at St. Hubert, so we forced on. I soon realized that I was definitely in trouble and was able to convince my leader. Beyond Megantic, the weather cleared, but I had doubts about reaching St. Hubert and began to speculate on a forced landing. Was my passenger in the Observer's seat strapped in tightly? Colin tucked in close and observed that she was asleep with very loose shoulder straps. He jazzed his prop pitch and I rocked my aircraft to get her attention, but to no avail. Those long, narrow fields of the Eastern Townships looked quite inviting.



Colin declared an emergency with St. Hubert. On leaving 14,000 and switching to "low blower", my engine switched to what could be described as "auto rough". However, I found that it would run best with the mixture control nearly at idle cut-off, which was a blessing, since by this time, I was changing from tank to tank, almost running on fumes. St. HU came into sight and I was lined up for the longest runway. As I touched down at the button, the engine stopped for the last time. There was a great commotion of fire trucks and ambulances. In the midst of this, I climbed up to the Observer's bubble to apologize to my passenger for all the fuss. "What fuss?" she asked. She had only just woken up.

Ground crew from Downsview were flown in and they found that the solenoid-operated fuel primer was stuck ON, meaning that raw fuel had been squirting into the top six cylinders of the Wright Cyclone for the whole flight!

From then on, the Squadron check list, contained an item to ensure that on start-up, there would be an increase in fuel pressure as the primer switch was released.

The flight cadet made her own way back to Toronto.

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

**Of our 991 SAMF Members, 577 membership donations have not been received to date.**

**Our membership year is 1 Jan - 31 Dec of each year.**

**Regular Membership is \$30 per year - less than 8 cents a day. It only takes the payment of this years membership to bring you up to date.**

**For non members - now's the time. Let's hear from you as well.**

**You may call, write, fax or email your donation to any of the following:**

**461-0062 Toll free: 1-888-497-7779  
fax 461-1610  
samf@ns.sympatico.ca**

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## MID-AIR TRAGEDY

Leo Pettipas

28 MARCH 1949: A/LCdr(P) Robert "Bob" Alan Monks, CO of the Shearwater-based Operational Flying Training School, was piloting Sea Fury TG 123 on a routine acceptance test flight in the near vicinity of the airfield when he collided with a flight of four Harvard IIs that were practicing formation flying. Two of the Harvards and the Sea Fury crashed into Halifax Harbour off McNabs Island. Lost, in addition to Monks, were Lt(P)s Glen Hugh Hutton and Clarence James "Jimmy" Pulfer, and ABOM Joseph J.R. Cambray, all RCN.

*From Hands to Flying Stations by Stu Soward*

On Monday afternoon of 28 Mar 49, one of the most tragic and inexplicable accidents took place at Shearwater which shocked the entire Canadian Naval Air Branch. I was duty controller in the air station control tower, and two of the off-duty controllers, (Lts Whitey McNicol and Jimmy Pulfer, were airborne, engaged in proficiency flying as part of a flight of Harvards. The other two aircraft were piloted by Lts Glenn Hutton, an ex-Pacific War Corsair pilot who had served aboard the British carrier *Victorious* with McNicol and Roger Harris, who was attached to the OFTS. LCdr Bob Monks, the Commanding Officer of the OFTS had taken off in a Sea Fury for a routine acceptance test flight and was airborne that afternoon. The four Harvards had been practicing formation flying and were heading south to cross over the airfield. McNicol, the leader, had called for and received permission to pass over the airfield, and the flight disappeared from my field of view as he led them over the station.

Lts Ken Gibbs and Ken "Big Nick" Nicolson had just taken off in a Firefly Trainer, when suddenly Nick said to Gibbs, "Look, there's a mid air collision!" Gibbs looked up just in time to see two Harvards spinning down on the shoreline to the south of the station Marine Section, one with no tail and the other with a wing missing. They then crashed into the shallow water off MacNab's island. At the same time, they saw the Fury pass quite close, heading south-east over the harbour entrance, with white smoke trailing from the engine, flying in level flight at an altitude of about 1000 feet. The Fury was then observed to suddenly push over into a steep dive, then crash into the sea by MacNab's island. Nicolson stated that when he first noticed the Fury it appeared that Monks was attempting a barrel roll around the flight of Harvards, but something went horribly wrong as the fury hurtled through the formation.

As the tower air controller, I neither saw the Fury, nor did Monks ever request the necessary permission to enter the control zone. Neither was it customary to make an unauthorized pass at a flight of aircraft. It could never be established what went wrong, but Bob Monks, although a very experienced and capable pilot, had very little flying time on the Sea Fury and the

aircraft will certainly tend to momentarily flick over when flying at high speed if the control column is not handled carefully.

The effect of this terrible accident went out like a shock wave. Lt. Jim Burns recalls that all naval flying was temporarily suspended at the Air Station.



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## 2004 CNAG REUNION

The 2004 CNAG Reunion will be known as "the Quinte County Gathering", to be held from **17 - 19 September 2004**, in Trenton, Ontario on the Bay of Quinte.

For info contact

John Eden Email - [liljon@reach.net](mailto:liljon@reach.net) phone 613-394-0316

OR

Bob Findlay Email - [findrob@sympatico.ca](mailto:findrob@sympatico.ca) Phone 613-392-8459

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*"Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in, broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming - WOW - What a Ride!"*  
Rod Bays

## **Letters to the Editor and Selected navairgens**

### ***From Gordon Soutter***

Re the Newsletter: With all respect to those who have suggested what seems to be a pot full of names, I have but one comment. There can be nothing wrong with stating the obvious and continuing to call it the Newsletter.

I spent a career in PR and was involved with, and responsible for, a couple of similar "house organs" (another useless name) and in all the training we received at different times, we were always strongly encouraged to stay away from the "In" or cutesy names. Granted many of the names suggested truly mean something to some people but to tell the story immediately to anyone who may pick up a copy of an issue, the name

Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation  
N e w s l e t t e r

would seem to tell the complete story. I would see it (as I have attempted to display here) with the Foundation title carried in one line and the title Newsletter in larger body type standing alone below it.

I don't wish to belittle anyone's opinions or hurt any feelings but you did ask for opinions and I pass this along with what I feel to be the benefits of my experience.

Choice holiday greetings and all the best for the new year.

### ***Bob Bissell writes:***

Dear Kay Received the Fall 2003 newsletter the other day while relaxing in the British Virgin Islands and noted your request for a report on activities.

Perhaps Marsh has already told you about the TOT club, so this may be a repeat

We were in Antigua this year for Christmas and New Year. We were anchored in English Harbour where I was invited to join the Royal Naval ToT Club. Marsh is already a member as a result of his prolonged visits to English Harbour before he swallowed the anchor.

I accepted the challenge as I thought I was well versed in the Rum Protocol. However I soon discovered that this was all serious stuff and quite a formal daily routine, not just quaffing a TOT. To qualify as a member you need to be proposed and sponsored before the members for 7 consecutive days which is then followed by an impromptu interview during which your knowledge of the club, its objectives and the history of Admiral Lord Nelson are ascertained. I remember that we had his portrait hung in the Shearwater Wardroom which was doctored to show him wearing the wings of a Fleet Air Arm pilot. This on the assumption that if he were alive in our day he would certainly have been a Nasal Radiator! I did have to cast back my memory to visits to maritime museums, naval history and more recently to a small museum in the island of Nevis where he seemed to have left his seed.

As it turned out, enjoying a daily Tot for 7 days was the easy part. Nevertheless I was able to remember sufficient naval history to satisfy or baffle the examiner and was admitted to the club. The first duty was to declare a mismuster and stand all members present another TOT.

In our day "UP SPIRITS" was piped before dinner/lunch, but in English Harbour the club meets daily at various restaurants and watering holes in Nelsons Dockyard on a rote and sharply at 1800 when our glasses are charged with a full TOT (one half gill). Members and their invited guests assemble in a circle, the rum bosun conducts the ceremony, first by ordering cleanse your palate, then introducing guests and prospective members, announcements, a report of the actions of the Navy on that day in history and finally the loyal toast, ie the toast of the day followed by "The Queen, God Bless Her", and the TOT is drunk.



The daily toasts are slightly modified from our usage:

**Monday** Our Ships at Sea

**Tuesday** Our Friends

**Wednesday** Ourselves, As no one else is liable to concern themselves with our welfare

**Thursday** A Bloody War and Sickly Season. (A Bloody War and a Quick Promotion)

**Friday** A Willing Foe and Sea Room

**Saturday** Sweethearts and Wives - May they never meet

**Sunday** Absent Friends and Those at Sea

The RN TOT club in Antigua was formed on 31 July 91, 21 years after the last rum issue in the Navy. In addition to carrying on the tradition of toasting HM daily with rum, they organize entertainment for the Navy's West Indies guard ship on port visits and generally do good works in the English Harbour/Falmouth area. Just now they are supplying volunteer crew for TENACIOUS, a sail training barque.

While Marsh is shoveling snow, perhaps you are too, I have sailed 1500 NM up and down the eastern Caribbean. Now in Trinidad for Carnival. Next it's the Grenadines followed by a cruise to Guyana (former British Guyana). My brother reports that my mother would like to come too, but at 102 she is not too good at getting into the dinghy!

Meander II saw 2002 out in the magical city of Cartagena Columbia and had Christmas 2003 in the favourite British Caribbean island of Antigua in English Harbour. During the year she only covered 2760 n/m, but the crew covered many more during our six months away from her.

From Columbia we had a 4 day brisk sail to Jamaica, spending a week in Port Antonio. Then for the next month a windward course took us to Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the Spanish Virgins to arrive in USVI on 24 Feb. There we relaxed for several weeks. A final 5 day sail took us back to our regular lay-up port of Chaguaramus, Trinidad arriving 14 Apr. By the end of Apr Meander II was safely secured on land and we were wending our way home with a brief stop in Brampton to visit MUM & family.

After sorting out our affairs in Hampshire, we were keen to return to South Africa to visit daughters, grandson and friends. We divided our time between Durban and Johannesburg. We also fitted in a holiday in the Sun resort in the Drakensburg Mountains. By the 1st of Sep it was time to start on the return journey. A month in the UK, on to Canada for another week in Brampton and a chance to revisit with family & MUM who is now well into her 101st year. Still keeping us all on our toes.

The refit was a lengthy period on the hard which mainly involved painting of the hull, Meander is looking so good & attracting many compliments. During this time of re-commissioning we took a weeks holiday by flying to neighbouring Guyana. Rob has always had an interest in visiting as many of his shipping crew were recruited there. We did in fact meet with his agent for the very 1st time in almost 20yrs of communicating. It's a vast country sparsely populated offering interesting eco-ventures.

It is always hard for us to leave Trinidad as we enjoy the vibes & many cultural attractions we attend. After a week all seemed in order & having well stored, we with some reluctance, sailed on 19th of December directly for Antigua, so to start this years cruise.

Happy New Year to you all, Rob and Joyce, MEANDER II

**Jack Walter writes:** Dear Kay My Fall 2003 has arrived safe and sound as has my 2004 membership card. I don't know whether it is the right thing to do but I will enter the Rick ADLUM, ADLAM, ADLEM controversy. I always thought the spelling of his last name was "ADLEM." But, of course, my memory is

failing and I could be wrong. I did visit with Rick on several occasions after he retired near Victoria when I was gainfully employed in a business near and dear to Rick's heart. What I do remember about Rick was his temper and Tower of Strength as mentioned by Peter Charlton. Stories of his temper were legion. Here are two that I recall - you may delete any reference if you decide to print any of this - and they may be apocryphal since they occurred the better part of half a century ago. Anyway the first was his "Fibber McGee" closet that frustrated him so much when items fell out (it was a PMQ needless to say) that one day he nailed the door shut not caring what was inside. The other was the day when he had grown tired of hearing the same soap opera that his wife (forget her name) always listened to on the radio and he destroyed the radio. Not sure whether he actually blasted it with his shotgun or not! And then there was the time when Rick's dog, a beautiful (and appropriate) Irish red setter was in the kitchen when the Sunday ham was being removed from the oven. Somehow the pan slipped and the ham catapulted into the air with the dog catching it before it hit the floor. Rick probably would have killed the dog or done it permanent injury if he had been able to catch it.

Rod Hutcheson's comments of the life and demise of Naval Air Facility Summerside posed the question when did it shut down. I can't give the exact date. One would need a better historian than me for that information. However my log book shows that April 2nd 1956 was the last time I flew from there. It was a flight to XF (Shearwater). The next day I was flying from there.

Summerside was a great place to live and fly from. I think most of us would have been happy to stay there longer than we did. Our departure was advanced somewhat, I believe, because of the events of January 1956. Prince Edward Island was hit by a monumental ice storm that took out power and telephone lines over much of the island and lines were not restored in some areas until the summer. Power was out at RCAF Summerside for days and temporary electricity generation took some time to get up and running. We were fortunate that PMQ's had propane stoves so we could get a modest amount of heat from them which kept us from freezing. There was virtually no flying during January and most squadron members were sent on leave since there was very little to do but twiddle our thumbs.

Like the look of the latest newsletter but feel a bit disappointed that I couldn't recognize the sailor's rank or trade insignia and I thought he ought to have been noticeably associated with aviation like the airman and the soldier. But the we shouldn't sweat the small stuff should we?

**Eldon Morton writes:** (in part)

When I read the article 'Stringbag 944 —Where are you', by Leo Pettipas in the Fall 2000 newsletter, it reminded me of an article I'd read and saved from the Edmonton Journal. That story appeared in July 22 1998 and was written by Rodney Pike, a former c/o at the Naval Reserve Base Nonsuch here in Edmonton. (Article printed elsewhere in this newsletter.) I decided to contact Mr. Pike. He was not listed in the phonebook. I called Nonsuch and asked the Duty Officer if he had any knowledge of Mr. Pikes whereabouts and if he had any idea of what happened to the Swordfish. Being fairly young, he had never heard of Mr. Pike nor did he know anything of the Swordfish. He said there were a few old timers who met periodically at Nonsuch and that he would query them. He phoned back and advised that Mr. Pike had died and that there were no records remaining on the Swordfish. Apparently regulations state records need not be kept beyond a 10 year period, also when the Nonsuch base was moved from its original location in the river flats to its present location across from the Municipal Airport, files had gone missing. None of the old timers had any knowledge on the fate of the Swordfish either. This one vanished as did 944.

While living in Calgary during the 80's, I was told Mike Wasteneys also delivered another Swordfish to Tecumseh in Calgary, landing this one on the parade square. Perhaps Firefly Chapter can confirm? (E. Morton, 6407 - 149 Ave, Edmonton, AB T5A 1W1 telephone 1-780-475-4935) (Note: Article on the Edmonton Swordfish elsewhere in this edition.)

**From Pop Fotheringham :**

Dear Editor: Please extend my apologies to Ernest Cable and my thanks for his details surrounding the

selection of a Sea King replacement. The Navy will be the beneficiaries of a fine helicopter capable of excelling in the performance of its mission. I obviously dated myself as a member of a former era.

***Leo Pettipas writes:***

In the recent SAMF Newsletter, Rod Hutcheson opines that Naval Air Facility Summerside officially ceased to exist sometime in late 1954. In the RCAF publication *The Roundel*, it's noted that the last of the naval personnel departed Summerside in the fall of 1955. The official history of naval aviation states that the main party of VS 880 relocated from Summerside to AW in the spring of 1956 shortly after Maggie left for her West Indies cruise. Only someone's log book knows for sure

***From Ernie Tucker***

I was talking to Gord Soutter the other day, he didn't know that I was duty Jeep driver when we where anchored off Istanbul, turkey. King Farouk had abdicated and up went the blue Peter in the Middle of the night. I had to get guys back on board, loaded jeep on barge and was taken out to starboard side and hooked cables up. Luckily, I had got behind the wheel when I gave the signal to lift. We no sooner had left the barge when it broke loose. Thank God the crane operator was on his toes. I believe he saved my life. I would have beaten Maggie back to the med. Perhaps someone knows who was duty crane operator (1952).

***From Leonard Lewis***

Would like to enter my 2 bits worth in 'Name the Magazine - the 'Naval Gazer' or 'Naval Gazing'. If you're going to laugh, better make it a "Belly" laugh.

***Harry Carter writes:***

Dear Kay: Would you please pass on my thanks to all associated with production of the newsletter. The Fall 2003 issue was a real winner. It touched on so many facets of my own career that I was lost to the rest of the world for a whole day, reading it from cover to cover.

I found 'The Bismark Fiasco' enthralling. Although I was not yet in the FAA, it brought back a vivid memory which would possibly be of interest to other readers.

The night that the news of the 'Hood' sinking became public, I was sitting with an old friend who had just finished his seamanship training as a Boy Seaman and was awaiting his first ship. He had been sent to Scapa Flow to join it but was sent on leave because the ship had sailed. His remark on hearing the news was "My God, that was my ship." How fortunate for him since there were only a few survivors.

Re Mick Owens 'Regulating Branch in naval Air'. Generally, I think that they had a rather unpleasant job to perform and they did it well.

Here are a couple of anecdotes from my time in HMS Seaborn. I arrived in RNA Section, RCAF Station, Dartmouth via RMS Queen Elizabeth from Scotland to New York, New York to Halifax by train. However the last time I saw my kitbag, hammock and tool box was on the jetty in Gourock, Scotland. Thus, I was paraded before the R.O. for loss of kit. The RPO's prior remark was "I've been in the Navy for 36 years and have never lost my kit. You've been in 5 months and you've already lost yours." However, the charge was dismissed with the remark from the XO that the kit would possibly turn up.

After about a month, during which time I survived on the contents of my steaming bag and ditty boxes, I was advised that my kit was sitting on the jetty at the marine Section, and had been for a few weeks. My kit and I were thus reunited, all intact, although slightly mildewed.

Second anecdote. A defaulter was appearing before the Captain, the Charge was read out and the Captain said, "Who makes these allegations?" The RPO replied, "I'm the alligator, Sir." This almost disrupted the entire proceedings while those present struggled with suppressed laughter. The RPO, with his 36 years of service, was certainly not one to be laughed at! Strangely, I do not recall the outcome of the 'trial'.

I will have to close this account with my best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a great new year.

**Earl Vandahl writes:**

A Merry Xmas and Prosperous new Years to all at SAMF. Keep up the good work. I really enjoy the issues of the Newsletter.

Had a wonderful trip to the reunion last year and hope to make Trenton in 04.

Mick Owens reminiscing re the incident of VX10 brought back a lot of memories. As I recall, there were a number of high spirited matelots there and I am sure Mick could recall some real as yet, unpublished hijinks.

Incidentally Mick, it's spelled with an 'h'.

**From John Gourlie:**

Hi folks. All the best for 2004, especially young Ayers. How does he do it?

PS Mickey Owens remembers everything. I must have given him all the weak beer at the old Breakfast Club eh!

**From Jim Stegen**

Compliments of the Season Kay.

Had a good 50th Reunion for our Midshipman Course in Victoria. Will send copy and photos sometime in the New year.

Tell Bill, I really enjoy the Newsletter - he's doing a superb job.

*(I can imagine the stories that must have floated around that reunion. Am looking forward to the photo's. K)*

**Bruce Campbell writes:**

I am enclosing a snapshot of a Hawker Sea Hawk that I took in 1953 that you may wish to save in your archives. The picture has raised the question "What was a Sea hawk doing at Shearwater in the spring of 1953?"



I suspect it may have been doing winter trials in Alberta that year and was on its way back to the UK. It is interesting that there are no markings visible other than the national insignias. A check of Stu Soward's "Hands to Flying Stations" failed to find any mention of this aircraft.

I was on VS881 at the time, we sailed for the coronation shortly after this picture was taken. I have tried in vain to remember if we transported this Sea Hawk back to England on the Maggie but the old memory remains blank! Perhaps someone at the Museum can shed some light.

**From W.P. Rikely**

My relationship to Shearwater goes back a long time. I was looking through my log book recently and I note that, as a fighter pilot in the original 03 Squadron, we flew aboard the carrier HMCS Warrior out of Lee-on-Solent in the U.K. on 17 March 1946. The carrier sailed for Halifax and we were launched at sea on approaching the coast of N.S. to fly to the former RCAF Station Dartmouth.

This was to become our new permanent base and we were welcomed by the Air Force personnel on our arrival as we taxied in with our new Seafire MK 15s. At that time, these were state of the art' fighter planes and they were a treat to fly with their improved Rolls/Griffin engines, developing close to 2000 hp.

I hope that things are progressing well in the Museum. It contains a lot of wonderful memories for old naval aviators, of which I am proud to be one. With kindest regards. W.P. Rikely

**From: John Kinross <[jkinross@zamucen.com](mailto:jkinross@zamucen.com)>**

4 March 1958: LCdr(P) Brian Bell-Irving, RCN, lost his life while taxiing his VF 871 Banshee (serno 126333; call # 142) forward on HMCS Bonaventure. The a/c suffered a brake failure and plunged over the port side of the carrier. The pilot ejected but was seriously injured in the attempt. A valiant effort was made by the helicopter crew to save him but was hampered by the deployed parachute. The sea boat's crew from HMCS Haida, the plane guard DD, were able to cut the pilot free and lift him from the water. He was conveyed to the DD where unfortunately he succumbed to his injuries. LCdr Brian Bell-Irving, RCN, was buried at sea at sunset of the same day with full naval honours.

Brian Bell-Irving, Senior Pilot of VF 871, is remembered with a memorial chapel and stained glass window in HMCS Discovery, Vancouver. (His uncle was a WWII Mosquito pilot, and father a B/Gen). The Banshee brakes, a bastard combination of air and hydraulics, were then modified. His was the final sudden and unexplained brake failure, which until then been dismissed, except by the pilots that had them. I could go on....JJK

Post-script. The Banshee had a 300 ft Martin Baker. I always wondered if there was a retro fit for a zero ft. ejection seat.

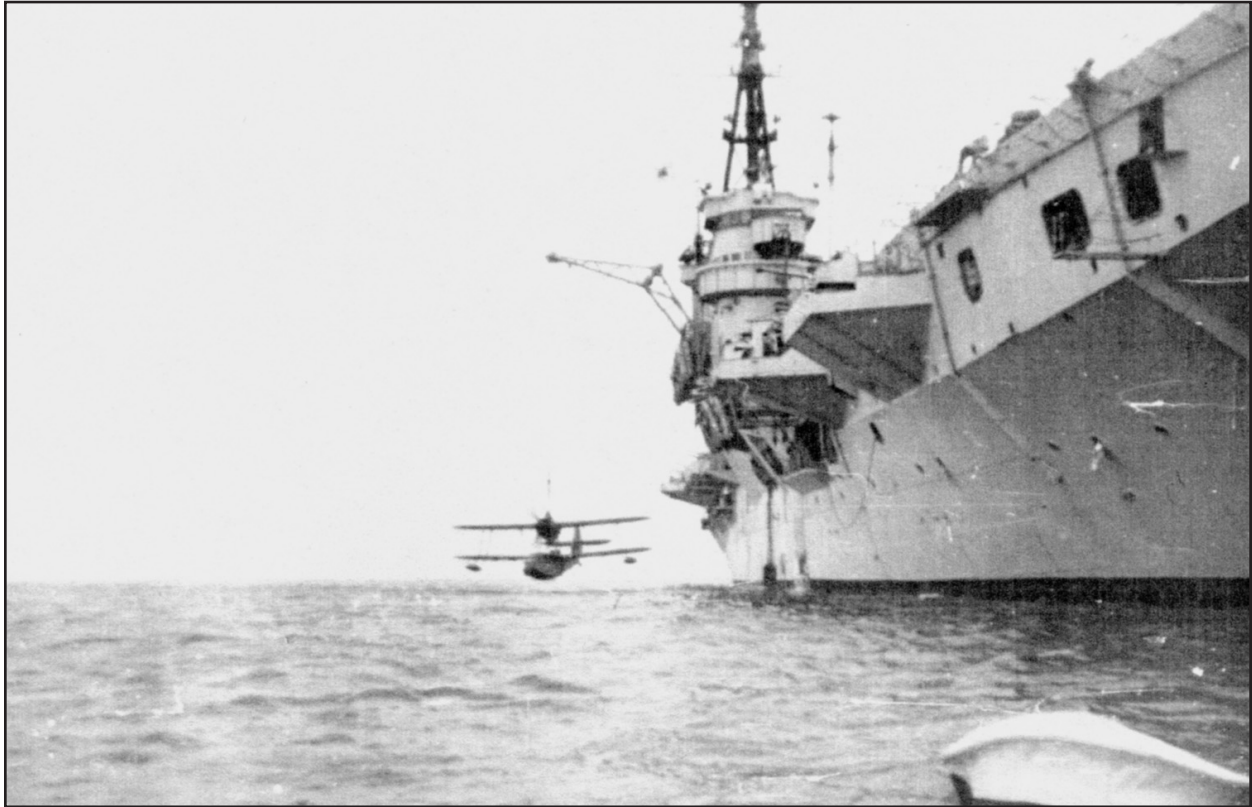
**Supermarine "Sea Otter"**

**From W. J. McDermott**

Hi Kay: This photo is proof positive that many years ago, the RN solved a number of contemporary aviation problems - problems very similar to those plaguing current military aviation, and especially the operators/maintainers of Sea Kings.

As can plainly be seen, sudden loss of power is not an operational problem, nor does a lack of training hours threaten the aircrew's ability to hover the aircraft at minimal altitude - even at night. Other benefits are low fuel consumption, simple navigation, seaworthy fuselage, lateral stabilizers on the wingtips, spare wing, and a conveniently attached retrieval system. At the time, I considered the whole setup as an Admiralty "anchor clanker" plot to maintain control of naval aviation. Your magazine's recent article about the messy attack on a German pocket battleship suggested my suspicions were spot on

In truth, the year is 1949/50. The aircraft is a **Supermarine "Sea Otter"** (for nitpickers please note propeller on front not back) being launched off HMS Vengeance - at anchor off the UK. I was aboard the Sea Otter as guest pumper because the hull leaked like a sieve and the bilge pump more suitable for a bicycle. It was the only aircraft I ever flew in where you could be outdoors, looking back at the pilot from the forward mooring access hatch.



If you look closely, the wind scoop in the galley scuttle of the Squadron Chiefs and Petty Officers Mess is deployed - example of early air conditioning - suggesting there was enough wind for takeoff. The only accommodation further forward than the Chiefs & PO's Mess was the cells. These were emptied in rough weather, but the air types learned to live in a rolling express elevator and ignore the thunderous banging of an anchor chain tube passing through the mess. **Those were the days!**

***Don Hunter writes***

Dear Kay: Back in April, 13 veterans were selected to attend the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Battle of the Atlantic, Liverpool England. I don't know if you heard, but I was one of those lucky vets who got an all expense paid trip compliments of the Dep. Of Veterans Affairs. It was a very short visit as we departed Ottawa May 1<sup>st</sup> for an over-night flight arriving in London the morning of May 2<sup>nd</sup>. We were taken to Liverpool via luxury coach. We attended several functions, had a pub night, delivered an honorary membership (for Fraser Harris) to Rolfe Monteith for him to get to Fraser-Harris. Laid the wreath on behalf of the Canadian Naval Air Group and attended the memorial service Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup> in the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, followed by the March Past of the many Vets from all the countries that took part in the Battle of the Atlantic. We returned to Ottawa on the 5<sup>th</sup> suffering a little jet lag.

***From Art Percy***

I really enjoyed the Fall 2003 Newsletter. I think it is great the way you manage to combine articles, letters, reminiscences, photographs, etc into such a professional publication. Keep up the good work.

***RAdm Ret'd Haruo Arai writes:***

Dear Members of SAMF. Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for the New year.

**From A. Boulanger**

Ahoy ya-all @ SAM; A hale and hearty Seasons Greetings to all of you. Keep up the good work.

Congratulations to Rolly West for his efforts. His career at Shearwater would certainly aid with the task. I wonder if his memory of a Squadron AMCRO, where a strategically placed furry creature in the routin orders (being read by a shipmate who disliked such things.). Said mate was reading the order standing in front of Chief Smiths office window, and on flipping a page, an uncontrollable reaction resulted in both elbows exploding the Chief's window to smithereens. The cleanup that followed ws probably the cleanest and fastest job ever done at Shearwater. Some time later, the Chief came down from the upper deck, sat down in his office for some minutes before a roar came out, "Where is my window", to which the nearly empty AMCRO staff replied, "What window" - innocence is bliss. BZ to all of you.

**Murray Caldwell writes:**

The unfortunate news about Dan Watters has caused the recollection of many events that occurred during my RCN years. Dan was part of my crew when we served in VS880 in 1960 and ' 61.

We began our life as members of the same crew during an Army-Navy escape and evasion exercise at Camp Gagetown in May of 1960. Needless to say, we became well acquainted during the survival week together and were better able to endure the rigors of prisoner status in the later stages because of the bonding that had occurred.

As I recall, Dan with his talents, procured most of the food that sustained us in the first week. His strength and endurance were truly amazing and what was designed as a trial, was actually a happy experience due to a large extent to Dan's participation.


Dan, on his own accord, would be the first to rise in the morning and would stoke the fire and put on water to boil. He would then mix up a brew consisting mostly of dandylon leaves. After pouring some of the contents into an old K-ration can he would then come to where I was sleeping, gently shake my shoulder and announce, "Your tea, Sir."

During the tour that we flew together Dan proved to be a wonderful asset to the crew. Not only that, but he was an interesting person to know with a vast general knowledge that covered a wide array of topics.

I could go on, probably for pages regarding stories about Danny Watters, but this missive is becoming much longer than I had intended. What I wish to convey is that in my opinion Dan represented so many of the things that were right about the RCN and the memories that I have are of a man that I'll always admire and hold in high esteem.

I'm sure that he will be missed by his close friends and family. I feel that many of us are better people because we knew him. Murray C. ("The Lamb" )

\*\*\*\*\*

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*I've drunk your health in taverns,  
And I've drunk your health at home;  
I've drunk your health so many damn times  
That I've almost ruined my own!*

*(From Rod Bays)*

## Searching for the Needle in the Haystack: Tracking the Detective Work Involved in SAR Operations

*2Lt Sonia Dumouchel-Connock  
Western Area Air Reserve Public  
Affairs Officer*

How do you find a small white object in the midst of thousands of miles of water, shoreline and rugged valleys? This is the enormous challenge facing military personnel when tasked with locating and rescuing downed aircraft. "It's like searching for a needle in a haystack," says Capt Dan Stanton, a Cormorant pilot and search and rescue (SAR) Searchmaster from 442 Transport and Rescue Squadron in Comox, BC. "We use all the resources available to try to find aircraft that have gone missing, and we continue to search until we exhaust every possible means of finding the missing pilots and passengers."

When an aircraft fails to arrive at its destination and does not call to announce it will be late, Victoria's Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) is alerted. If the aircraft is carrying an Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT), a device that emits a signal announcing to the rescue centre the position of the downed aircraft, a search and rescue crew is dispatched to the location of the signal to rescue the distressed aircraft. If the aircraft is not carrying an ELT, or if the aircraft's ELT is damaged in the crash, the position of the downed aircraft is not known and the detective work begins.

Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian Forces personnel working at JRCC get on the phone with airports along the flight path of the missing aircraft and start putting together a chronology of events. They try to ascertain such things as the condition of the aircraft during the various legs of its journey, the amount of fuel it was carrying, and the types of

navigation and emergency equipment embarked. Weather reports are analyzed to form a picture of the conditions the missing aircraft may have encountered, and information about the habits, character and experience of the pilot is obtained from friends and family. Every piece of information is a part of a jigsaw puzzle that, when put together, gives rescuers a picture of what might have happened to the missing aircraft. "We try to gather as much information as possible so that we can recreate in our minds what happened to the missing aircraft," says Capt Stanton. "With that information, we can then come up with the best plan of action to rescue the pilots and passengers."

A Buffalo aircraft and Cormorant helicopter, which are on continuous standby at 442 Transport and Rescue Squadron in Comox, can be dispatched within an hour to search the flight path of the missing aircraft.



As other aircraft become available and join in the search, the search plan becomes more complex. An area 15 miles on both sides of the flight path is investigated. A "creeping line ahead" search is made over water – once the aircraft has searched in a straight line in its designated search area, it turns around and examines a line parallel to the first, until the whole of the search area has been covered. In hilly areas where

this search pattern is not effective, searchers do a "contour" search. The aircraft circles around peaks and examines the hill at every elevation. "Searches are initially made at high altitudes," says Capt Stanton. "Crews look for columns of smoke, signals fires and so on." If the searches do not turn up the missing aircraft, searches are then made at lower altitudes.

To facilitate the search, a search headquarters may be established in an airport close to the search area, and manned by experience SAR aircrew and administrative staff. The search headquarters then assumes control of the search from JRCC, and a Searchmaster is appointed to coordinate the activities of the aircraft engaged in the search. Search headquarters is a place of bustling activity. Like detectives, the Searchmaster and other members of the headquarters gather information from various sources. The aircrafts conducting the searches call in situation reports every hour; calls are made to various radar and rescue stations to find out whether the missing aircraft may have been spotted or tracked. Sighting reports made by Coast Guard vessels, fishing vessels, pleasure craft and concerned citizens who think they may have seen or heard the missing aircraft are investigated. As the search develops, the maps on the walls delineating the search area become covered with more and more information. The search area is broken down into sections and assigned to a SAR aircraft for investigation. Areas that have been successfully searched are shaded and the locations of possible sightings are marked with coloured pins. "Our search and rescue personnel are skilled and experienced," says Capt Stanton. "Throughout a SAR operation, we work tirelessly to find the missing people and we try to remain optimistic about having a positive outcome."

442 Transport and Rescue Squadron in Comox has conducted 147 SAR operations, and three major SARs lasting more than three days, so far this year. The majority



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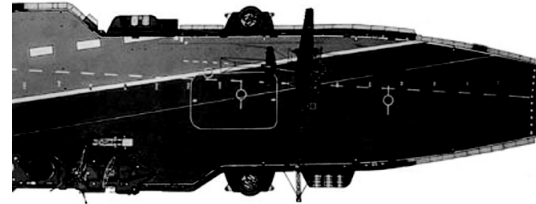
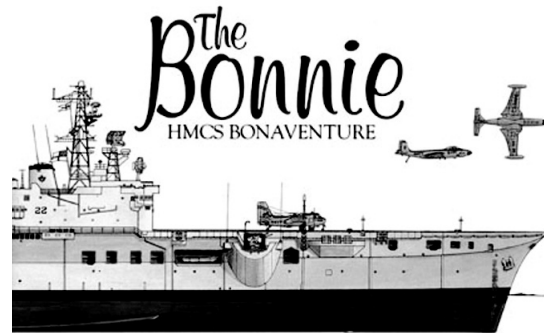
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Adam, J.B	Cottingham, J	Hayhoe, B	McQuarrie, L	Snelling, S
Antle, W	Cottingham, A.F	Headley, C.E	Mercer, W	Snelling, P
Aquanno, F	Cowell, S	Headley, A.C.E	Mercer, C	Snowie, A
Archer, R	Cowper, R	Headley, C.S	Merkley, G	Sterling, F
Arthur, B	Cox, G	Headley, M.T	Mills, S	Stevenson, J
Ashley, L	Cramton, D	Headley, D	Montgomery, B	Stewart, J
Aston, B	Cribb, J	Henry, J	Montgomery, M	Stoffer, B
Ayer, B	Cruddas, T	Hinton, G	Moore, A	Sturgess, R
Baily, D	Cuffe, H	Hodge, F	Moran, B	Stymest, F.W.C
Bamford, P.K	Cumming, D	Hodge, C	Morin, L.M	Suthers, R
Baptie, G	Currie, D	Hodgins, H	Moss, J	Symington, R
Bartlett, D	Currie, B	Hodgson, G.C	Mulgrew, J	Tagseth, A
Barwell, B	Cutts, J	Hunter, R	Myers, E	Tang, J
Bayne, D	Dance, G	Hunter, D	Nelson, R	Tateishi, J
Bays, R	Dannhauer, W	Hutton, G	Nickson, G	Tattersall, A
Beach, R.A	Davis, D	Hyndman, D.J	Nielsen, E	Teasdale, G
Beard, J	Davis, T	Ireland, B	Noble, G	Timbrell, B
Beard, R	Davis, N	Irving, D	Noble, R	Tonks, T
Bell, R.H	Daws-Knowles, C	Isenor, D	Northrup, H	Trenholm, R.A
Belliveau, R	Daws-Knowles, J	Jobin, G	O'Donoughue, R	Trenholm, W.A
Benson, J	Dawson, J	Johnson, D	Offley, G	Trerise, E.J
Benton, D.E	Dawson, J	Jones, W.A	Oland, B	Tripp, F.E
Berry, P	Dayton, F.J	Jones, D.A	Oxholm, B	Turner, J.A
Besharah, R.A	Del Fabro, G	Jones, D.M	Palmer, C	Turner, T
Betters, R.J	Deluce, S	Jones, T.J	Paquette, J	Utting, H.F
Beulieu, L	Deveaux, J.E	Janusas, E	Payne, J.H	Van Ek, B
Birks, J	Dibben, B.J.C	Kerr, R	Peacocke, D	Vangalen, J
Birks, J.H	Dick, A	Kieser, T	Peacocke, D	Vaughan, D
Blake, G	Dowdall, F	King, E	Peacocke, J.D	Veronneau, L
Bond, J	Down, F	Kjellstrom, K.J	Peacocke, D& M	Veronneau, J
Bosquet, A	Doyle, E	Knobby, G.D	Peacocke, J	Vipond, L
Boyle, T	Dubinsky, H	Knox, D	Penney, K.G	Voss, H
Bristow, A	Dutchak, W.R	Knox, M	Peters, D	Voutt, K
Brown, G	Eaton, B	Langman, M	Philco, M	Walker, B
Brown, K.F	Eden, J.B	Laquerre, J	Philippe, F	Wall, D
Browne, A.G	Edgar, E	Lavigne, P	Porter, H	Wall, G
Brunelle, P	Elder, D	LeFairre, F.E	Prout, D	Walper, K
Brushett, G	Fallen, T	Lemiski, J.E	Purple, G	Walton, O
Brygadyr, S	Falls, R	Liley, A	Purchase, D	Wannamaker, D
Buckoski, R	Fearon, H	Logan, R	Quirt, R.E	Wanner, R
Budd, R	Ferguson, I	Logan, J	Radcliffe, D	Wardrop, D.A
Cable family	Field, A.J	Lucas, F	Reage, A	Wardrop, W
Cable, E	Findlay, B	Lyons, R	Richardson, S	Washbrook, J.F
Cable, S	Flesher, J	MacDonald, L	Rioux, R	Waterman, K
Caldwell, G	Foley, D	MacDonald, S	Robinson, A	Weber, L
Caldwell, M	Forsyth, L	Mackay, M	Rock, H	Welland, R.P
Calver, B	Fox, A	MacMillan, R	Rogers, E	Welland, B
Carter, H	Friberg, A	MacNeil, J.A	Ross, D	West, R
Casement, B	Fulcher, R	Majeau, H	Rotherham, G.A	Whalley, A.L
Cassis, K	Ganong, W	Marlow, K	Roy, L	White, T
Caudle, D	Gascho, R	Marshall, G	Rudderham, F	Whyte, E
Chafe, C	Gibson, J	Matheson, D	Runciman, J.C	Widdows, B
Cheaters, R	Gibson, D	Mattatal, F	Ruppert, G	Williamson family
Chilcott, B	Gilchrist, J.A	McArthur, G	Rygh, P	Willis, F
Clarke, J.W	Gilhen, C.Y	McBain, R	Sandy, H	Willits, L
Clattenburg, P.J	Gillespie, A.W	McCaffery, F	Schroeder, W	Wood, L
Clifford, B	Goodall, M	McCarty, B	Scott, J.J	Woods, G
Cody, B	Gourlie, J	McDermot, J.W	Searle, J.V	Youngson, G
Coell, R	Graae, H.A	McFarland, E	Shaw, D	Zboril, R
Coffen, C	Graham, R	Mckay, J.A	Sherwood, R	
Coldham, G	Gruber, J	McKinney, B	Shortridge, K	
Collacutt, G	Halfkenny, C	McLaughlin, J	Silins, J	
Conner, S	Halladay, W	McLung, B	Skelton, D	
Conrad, F	Hammer, R	McMillan, G.J	Slack, E	
Conrad, S	Haveron, J.H	McNicol, D	Sloan, W	
Cornish, J	Hawkes, R	McNulty, J	Snelgrove, C	

more than three days, so far this year. The majority of aircraft and boating accidents occurring in the western search area occur during the summer months when more pleasure planes and boats are used by Canadians and foreign travellers wishing to enjoy the beautiful but rugged British Columbia scenery.

**Editor's Note: On 26 Jan 04 Jack McGee was installed as the Honourary Colonel of 442 Transport & Rescue Squadron.**

**Jack joined the RCN in 1958 through the Venture Plan and flew with 880 at Shearwater and in Bonaventure and on exchange with VS-27 in the USN on various carriers. He also served in Greenwood VP Squadrons and was the CO of 412 before Commanding Comox.**

**Since retiring he has had a variety of academic positions and is currently the President of the Justice Institute of BC.**

**We wish him well in his new appointment.**

## Article Length Limits

There is continuous internecine strife twixt Secretary and Editor over how long an article can be if we are to consider it for inclusion in this newsletter. Most publications have a rigid limit -- say 700 words or three thousand or whatever and demand that contributors limit their essays accordingly. Some will serialize articles -- half in one issue, half in the following. This works with weekly or monthly magazines but probably won't with a thrice-a-year rag like ours. Aged memories can't carry the first installment for four months and other subscribers will die between issues and so go to their reward wondering how the

story ends. Sad: and I don't want that on my (putative) conscience.

Some stories cannot be abridged or shortened because the reader would be deprived of the fine details that give such stories interest and evoke empathy. Accordingly, if I judge that a story will have wide appeal, I will find room for it but may ask the author to revisit his or her work to achieve what I call "poetic compression". Sometimes one well-chosen word can create in its reader as colourful an image as can a full sentence of subject, verb, object, dangling participles etcetera.

Don't overdo this, just KISS (Keep It Sententious and Short). And do write in while still you can. Old time is a flying! Ed. P.S. Our secretary is completely at odds with this policy I expect that she will add her two cents worth below. Ed.



## Firefly Restoration

Bud Ayer soldiers (sailors?) on and, little by little, PP462 becomes more and more recognizable as the Firefly FR MK I that graced Warrior's flight deck a half-century ago. When will this ancient war horse fly? Damned if I know! The current major delay

is the frustratingly slow pace of the propeller shop in Munich; and our repeated requests for delivery produce promises but not a firm shipping date. It's not a show-stopper -- other little odds and ends are being tidied up so that when the prop does get here it will go onto the front burner, the Griffon will be buckled on, the prop assembly will be married to it and we will hear the old Griffon's growl once again. I hate "kleeshays" but here's one anyway -- Failure is not an option.

*Bill Farrell Project Dogsboddy*

## Oshawa Naval Veterans' Club

*Host of the Royal Canadian Naval Association*

### 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion

Oshawa, Ontario 7.8 & 9 May 04

Committee Chairman: Des Steel

905-404-0833 email:

oshawanavyvets@sympatico.ca

## The Carrier Experience

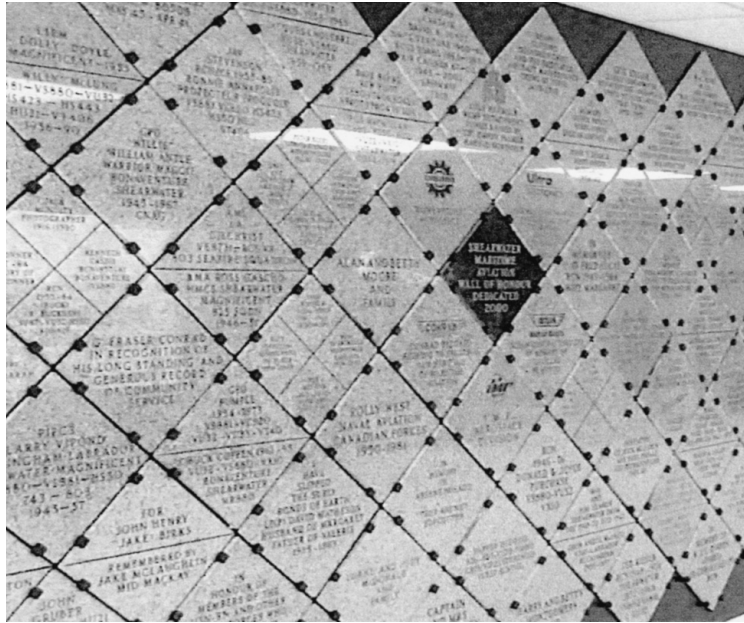
*It gave us moments of fear and loneliness, kinship and challenge, joy and sorrow, pride, tragedy, and triumph.*

*It became part of us then.*

*It will be with us till the end of our days.*

*(Submitted by Dave Gillis)*





**Bravo Zulu to Al et Al !**

Kay Collacutt has been bugging Alan Moore to draft an article describing the history of the Wall of Honour which has become the most lucrative single fund-raiser ever attempted by the Foundation. Alan said " I don't write articles let Eric do it" so here goes.

The idea originated at the CNAG Reunion in Trenton, Ontario in 1998 when we were given a tour of the CFB Trenton Museum. Their aircraft are displayed outside and along the walkway between the aircraft they had bricks inscribed with names of the financial supporters of the Museum. Someone once said "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery"; well I feel no shame in recognizing a good idea and that good idea was put forward at a meeting of the SAMF Fund-raising Committee, chaired by "Jav" Stevenson, where it germinated a while until the guidelines, colours, prices, size and location were sorted out and a co-ordinator was selected, Alan Moore. That, as they say, was

the start of something big; how big you ask? Over \$100,000 big! There are to date some 215 tile on the wall and I hope that we are not finished yet as there is room for at least 100 more. This has been a tremendous task for Alan, communicating with sponsors by email and telephone, co-ordinating with suppliers and coercing the Museum staff to provide the materials and site to display the wall to the best advantage. I think we can all agree that he deserves a big BZ from us all for his efforts. I would ask that if part of your history is imbedded in HMCS Shearwater or in RCAF Station Dartmouth wouldn't you like to have that fact recorded on the Shearwater Aviation Museum Wall of Honour? It is as easy as filling in the application form contained in this Newsletter. Come on Board friend. *(Note: No doubt about it, Al is doing an amazing job. Kay)*

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**FROM THE SECRETARY**

Hello everyone and *Happy Birthday, Aries.* Let's hope Spring is finally here.

As you will read elsewhere, the Atrium has been completed. Chuck Coffen has left no stone unturned to ensure it would be completed on time. Thank you also to Don Cash who designed the Atrium. You retired Navalair people have a wonderful place to ensure memories of your Shearwater days are kept in tact. We just have to pay for the new hangar, so keep your membership going and we really like your donations.

We are still looking for artifacts. Perhaps you have some hidden away and may reconsider to share them with us.

All the Gate Guardians are still not in the new hangar. Work is continuing on the Firefly - it will probably be a long time before it is airworthy or even Museum worthy. The Avenger? What can I say. God only knows if it will ever get in there. For a number of 'reasons'. work has ceased on it. Chuck had said it would be their next project....

The Museum continues to receive donations to assist with the Firefly; and, they have also received a generous donation to be used toward getting the HUP in shape, but the Avenger..... So why not start a 'Save the Avenger Fund' or 'Let's get another Avenger for the Museum Fund'. It doesn't have to be a lot - every cent counts. All donations will be gratefully received and you will get an Income Tax Receipt. Perhaps you would be willing to work on the aircraft in your spare time - well go ahead, offer your services.

What do you think of the cover of this issue? Would you prefer to have the 'banner' as before, showing aircraft etc? I would!

Jamie Archibald, an Engineering Student from Dalhousie University is the man of the hour when setting up our cover page. Bill tells him what he wants and there it is. Jamie is the Museum staff's computer whiz when it comes to setting up their programs or correcting any problems. Thank you Jamie.

Hopefully, we will see some of you at the Museum this summer or at the CNAG reunion in September. Take care! Keep in touch! If you can't make it to the museum, then visit us at: [www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca](http://www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca)  
Kay

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## NAVY DELIVERED PLANE IN DARING FASHION

BY Rodney Pike for the *Edmonton Journal* 27 Jul 98

This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Naval Reserves in Canada as well as the half-company of the Reserve in the Prince of Wales Armouries in Edmonton. I joined that company in 1937, was called up in 1939, and after the end of the Battle of the Atlantic returned to be the Commanding Officer.

At the start of the war, the Navy moved down to the flats, took over the Hudson Bay stables and built an adjoining drill hall and became a land-locked ship, HMCS Nonsuch. When I took over, it was still a going concern with a full complement.

I was informed that plans were being made to add Air



Training to the Reserves, and asked if we would like to have a Swordfish aircraft. The Swordfish, which were used in the First World War, were slow and considered out-of-date, but accomplished some major achievements in the Second World War. They torpedoed Italian battle ships, damaged the Bismarck and, flown off small aircraft carriers in the convoys, kept the German U-boats from shadowing the convoys.

During the Battle of the Atlantic, I was the CO of a Corvette that was part of a Canadian escort group. One of my duties was to screen the carrier when the Swordfish took off and landed. We had some anxious moments and admired the skill of the pilots.

One day, I got a call from a Lieut. Wasteneys of the Fleet Air Arm. He told me he had our Swordfish in an RCAF Hangar at the Municipal

Airport and said if it was brought down on a lowboy, a lot of wires would have to be taken down, but, if I could get permission, he said he thought he could land it on the ball diamond across the road.

I first called on the Air Force to get permission, but they sent me to the Department of Transport. The Senior Officer was away and the Officer on duty thought permission for low flying had to be obtained from the Chief of Police. I went to see him and he said it should be no problem and said he would also arrange for a fire truck.

I asked Wasteneys if I could fly down with him and went up with him to the airport. When an Air force Officer opened the hangar door he asked "Do you want to top up?" Wasteneys replied, "We are only going down to Nonsuch." The RCAF Officer gave Wasteneys an incredulous look and said, "This is something I muse see." I got in the back with the Observer and we taxied out onto the runway. It took a few minutes to convince the Tower that we were just going to land in the flats in the river valley.

We finally took off and flew low over the city and down into the river valley. Wasteneys' Flag Signal Officer, Lieut. Tom Colter, was on the ball diamond with his flags to tell him when to cut the engine the moment the aircraft cleared the telephone wires. We made a couple of circles first, and the noise of the aircraft echoing off the river banks was quite loud. Children poured out of the nearby school, and I could see crowds gathering on top of the hill by the *Journal*. The Observer with me in the back seat reassured me, "You don't need to worry Sir, all they need is the parts."

Wasteneys finally got us down, and we slid across the wet grass and up the side of the hill, did a ground loop and slid down the hill. The Flag Officer climbed up and took Wasteneys fingers from the console. Afterward we had a celebration in the Wardroom and that night Wasteneys was given celebrity status at the Hotel MacDonald. The Saturday night supper dance and a picture and

story appeared on the front page of the *Edmonton Journal*.

Wasteneys wrote to me later to tell me that, "Sadly, this status was not extended by the Director of Naval Operations in Ottawa. I hope he made out all right. After all, it took a fearless crazy pilot like him to stop the Bismarck. (See Mr. Morton's letter in *Letters to the Editor*)"

### **Leo Pettipas writes:**

In the book by Larry Milberry entitled "Sixty Years: The RCAF and CF Air Command 1924-1984", there appears a brief reference to what I interpret to be the Nonsuch Swordfish, serial number NR 948. Personnel with the Weather Experimental Establishment, which was headquartered at RCAF Station Edmonton in 1949, needed to construct an oil movement system in order to conduct their tests. One of the men involved, C.R. Thompson, is quoted on p. 234 as saying, "To build our test equipment we took a heat exchanger from an old Swordfish in the station scrap heap." I can't believe that this a/c was any other than the one delivered by Mike Wasteneys in '46. What became of it after 1949 is surely lost in antiquity.

### **From HMCS Nonsuch web site:**

HMCS Nonsuch now was an integral part of the armed forces of the City of Edmonton and continued to grow. New equipment was still being added and a thrill was provided the citizens when a fleet air arm was established and on September 28, 1946, a "Swordfish" aircraft arrived. As the airport was too far from the barracks, the pilot, Lt(N) M. E. Wasteneys decided to deliver it as close to "Nonsuch" as possible and the aircraft "sat down" in Ross Flats, only two blocks away from the naval base. This hazardous feat was the talk of the town for many days. Aboard the plane, besides the pilot, was the navigator, Lt(N) W. R. Windovor and LCdr R. Pike.

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**From: Leo Pettipas**



1 March 1954: Three marks of Fairey Firefly – FR Mk I reconnaissance fighter, T Mk 1 pilot trainer and T Mk 2 weapons trainer – were struck off strength. These a/c had long been phased out of service and were being held in stored reserve pending disposal. They were sold to Ethiopia for \$100,000. On this same date, Magnificent departed Halifax for GB for installation of up-to-date electrical and electronics gear. The above-mentioned a/c, 14 in all, were on board.



*And one came back. Ed.*

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## Courage

*(from the Editor)*

This might seem out of place in our newsletter but perhaps we do too much naval gazing (sic) and ignore the deeds of our comrades-in -arms in the other services. We got this from Les Rosenthal who, before he saw the light, served in a Lancaster squadron of the RCAF. It's a story of courage in battle and courage in defeating a handicap that makes one proud to be Canadian:

**From Les Rosenthal**

Thought you might be interested in reading an extract from a message I received last Thursday from an old college friend (UBC) who now lives in Ottawa. This guy was at Leeming, Yorkshire, which was the "master base" when I was at Skipton, the "satellite" field, although I didn't know him until we met at UBC after the war. Keep in mind that Dan is the same age as me, so he must have been all of 20&1/2, or less, at the time:



"This is the 59th anniversary of being shot up over Hanover and having a Lanc full of wounded and only two engines

to get home. The worst guy is still alive in TO, he lost his right arm and lung, plus ribs etc. He was in Sunnybrook Hospital for two years until 1947. I used to drop in to see him every time I passed through TO. He adapted to the handicap by opening a fish and chip joint at Pickering just as the generator hired thousands to build it and operate it so he did well. He took orders and his wife cooked until they expanded and made lots of money. He was the FE and I had his blood and guts all over me when we took a burst on the right side of the cockpit just as we were over the target."

Bye for now Dan

After UBC, Danny re-joined the RCAF and went on to be one of the first F-86 pilots and flew with the Air Div in Europe and later was sent to Turkey to teach them how to fly F-86's, which I think was hairier than his sortie over Hanover. Cheers, Les.

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## THE SAM SIM

It would seem that just yesterday I presented the crazy idea to Chuck Coffen that the museum could use a Flight simulator. He let me elaborate, so I shared my vision of selecting any aircraft and taxing Alpha Bravo to the button of Runway 28. I needed a hook to sell him on the idea so I offered a test run on any PC he could come up with and for added spice I said he would be flying his old



Search and Rescue Buffalo for the test flight. With the challenge laid down and accepted, a desktop PC was acquired and John Benson Jr. and myself set to loading the software.

On that special day, the computer was readied on a plain table on the upper floor of the museum, not too far from the staircase. I selected the Buffalo and placed it on the ramp at Shearwater in front of D hangar. With the engines running, I selected clear weather and no wind in daylight. John and I were ready, so we went to get Chuck from his office for the first test flight of the Sam Sim.

Upon returning with Chuck from his office we discovered museum patrons had heard the engines of the Buffalo at idle and came up from the main floor to investigate. They had slid into the waiting chair and had already taken off. This left the curator of the Shearwater Aviation Museum waiting in line for his own test flight. The month was August. The year was 1998.

With George Grant's craftsmanship and Rob LePine's artistry, we added a wooden aircraft-like tub to the mix from my simple drawing. The crowning touch was a T-Bird ejection seat that George installed on Teflon runners for easy slide adjustment. The word went out and soon we had people on the Sim constantly. That first air show that summer we were in a tent and the crowd came and came. Our popularity was such, that on the second day of that first Air Show, our rudder peddles shorted out our flight control system. I dashed off home to retrieve my joystick. Upon my return, the line up that I had left was still there. The patrons were so anxious, they were trying to climb into the seat with me still hooking up flight controls.

Well time has passed, and the Sim has grown older. It now has a very comprehensive scenery file, which includes Shearwater, Halifax waterfront and Halifax airport with the new terminal. 14 Wing Greenwood can be navigated to from Shearwater on a heading of 310 degrees. Once there, you can see all of their hangars displayed in their most colourful splendour. Take off once again, turn to a heading of 240 degrees. A few minutes later you will find yourself on approach to Yarmouth airport, which looks amazing with a Dash 8 parked on the ramp by the terminal. Other spectacular scenery additions also include C.F.B. Comox, Trenton, Goose Bay and Bagotville. The question is always asked, where would you like to fly today. Patrons have the look

of amazement etched on their faces the moment they sit down.

The SAM Sim has logged a few hours on the road over the years. New Germany High School in New Germany Nova Scotia was one of its last great shows. It was employed in a pre Remembrance Day ceremony there to give the students a sense of what it was like to take a Canso out of Halifax Harbour to patrol the approaches looking for submarines. At the same event, we had the prospective pilots try to master the Wright flyer to help celebrate First flight.

The list of attractions is long. We have been a regular at the Nova Scotia International Tattoo. The Nova Scotia International Air Show has been our second home. We made an appearance at the Nova Scotia Heritage Day in Truro Nova Scotia. Working with the Nova Scotia Community College, we helped pack them in at their career day. I have left out a whole host of other shows we have appeared at. I think it is safe to say the SAM Sim is well known far and wide.

This piece of apparatus is not without controversy. Other exhibitors at major events are unhappy with the perceived competition they face when the Sim is nearby. The ever-present comment that the Sim detracts from the museum is one that bugs me just a little. Some are not comfortable with a computerized simulator as a teaching tool, feeling perhaps the Sim is far from realistic, or that it is more an entertainment than a valid museum interactive display. Another opinion that has been expressed is that not all visitors have a high degree of competency with computers and may feel excluded by its use. Complaints regarding a lack of element-specific aircraft have also been received.

To better represent Naval Aviation, I have made it my personal crusade to scour the Internet to find Canadian Naval Aircraft that served at Shearwater. The majority of the Aircraft on the Sim are Internet add-on files, like the scenery. On the Naval side we have the Avenger, Tracker, Sea Fire, Sea Fury and even the old Sea King. The Firefly is on there as well as the Swordfish. A few new additions include the Banshee, T-33 and the H04S Horse.

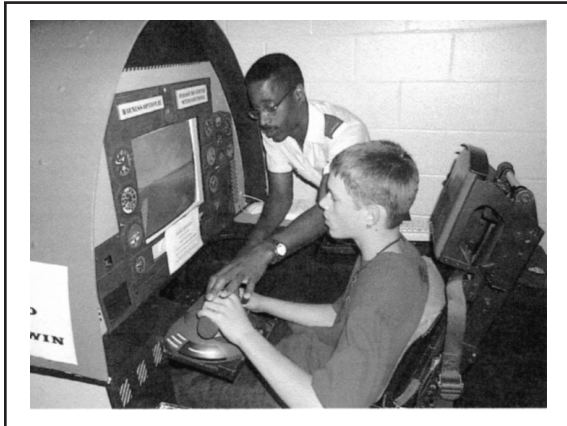
The aircraft collection is the one thing I am most proud of. To see my little idea grow to its present form takes one's breath away. I cannot describe the feeling I got when the resident V-22 Osprey detachment crew members enjoyed their own

machine on the Sim. This event occurred during their first visit to Shearwater from Pax River as well as during their current det. I have even entertained special requests such as the German Navy Tornado and Atlantic, requested by the German Navy marching band members during the Tattoo. I made them home sick by adding Northern German Scenery to the Sim. I have even filled the strange request for Clint Eastwood's Fire Fox as well as the Six Million Dollar Man's X-24.

As you can see the Sam Sim is a source of pride for me. I wish it and the Shearwater Aviation Museum and the staff, much success in the future long after I am gone.

Written by Master Corporal John Davidson AVN  
Tech 12 AMS (Note: Great job, John.)

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**NSCC CAREER DAY**



**FINISH THIS TUNE PLEASE!**

**HAPPY WARRIOR**

When we manned her in Belfast  
We thought that now at last,  
The RCN would sail again  
With 1000's of Officers and 3 or 4 men.  
But the ship you see, at Jetty 3, 's a carrier....

*(Note pls: Bill sings/hums this over and over (at least he thinks that's what he's doing); however, he's having a seniors moment trying to remember all the words. His seniors moments are now lasting days. Kay)*

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## IT WASN'T OUR NAVY'S FINEST HOUR

Dennis B. Shaw - February 2004



There was much more to my becoming a Canadian than the fact that my parents had sex in a specific geographical location. I, like Joey Smallwood, chose Canada, or to be more precise in my case, the Royal Navy chose Canada for me, as I was drafted here on loan shortly after the end of World War II. There is not a day in my life that I don't thank God the RN drafted me to this wonderful country. If after my life on earth has ended, and I'm lucky enough to arrive at the Pearly Gates, the first person I intend to ask St Peter to introduce me to "is that Jaunty who made that draft chit out for me". No doubt, my shipmates will recognize I'm quoting from an old Naval ditty.

I wasn't born in this great country, and although I had almost twelve years in the royal Navy, I have always been especially proud of serving in the Royal Canadian Navy and with the wonderful shipmates I had the honour of serving. Because of this background, I have always been ultra-sensitive to the fact that I never wished to do anything to bring disgrace to Canada or the Royal Canadian Navy. Unfortunately, I did fall off the wagon sometime in 1948 or 1949. It happened at the Wanderers Grounds during a Shearwater Flyers - Stadacona Sailors football game. I was caught urinating (that's pissing if you happen to be a Stoker) under the stands by none other than Admiral Bidwell and was promptly dispatched back to Stadacona in the paddy wagon. No charges were laid, which accounts in some measure, for the great admiration I always had for Admiral Bidwell. It was an OD's trick which was carried out by a fairly senior PO, who should have known better. I think that

recounting this incident fifty-six years after it happened adds emphasis to the sincerity of my previous remarks.

As a result of my pride in our Service, I have always been greatly disturbed by an incident which occurred in 1945. I'm



**HMCS Uganda**

referring to the voting situation which took HMCS Uganda out of the war. In order to write this article with a degree of knowledge and authority, I have read five books which deal with the subject, which are:

1. James Essex - Mutiny - The Odyssey of HMCS Uganda
2. Tony Keene - The Ship that Voted No
3. Joseph Schull - The Far Distant Ships
4. Tony German - The Sea Is At Our Gates
5. Jeffrey V. Brock - The Dark Broad Sea

I should point out to my readers that none of these books deal with the Uganda situation to the extent I would have liked. Was the failure to dwell on the subject prompted by a reluctance to criticize the Ships Company of Uganda (even though there was no reason to do so) or a desire to sweep the incident under the carpet? Fortunately, I don't have any restrictions on my point of view. I am not one to criticize politicians for all the problems of our country, as I have been

involved in politics, to some extent, over the last fifty years and know a little of the sacrifice that a political life demands. In the case of the Uganda affair, there is little doubt that the politicians were the ones who created an impossible situation for our senior naval Officers and the crew of the Uganda. They also brought embarrassment and possibly disgrace to a Service which had won the admiration of the free world. The decision Ottawa made which caused this incident, was a decree stating that all Canadian servicemen serving in the Pacific theatre of the war would be required to re-volunteer. Admiral Brock referred to the edict as "a disgraceful piece of political humbuggery", and I agree with him whole-heartedly. I'm sure it would warm the cockles of any Admirals heart to know a senile old Chief agrees with him!

When the vote was taken in Uganda, three hundred of the men voted to remain in the Pacific, while six hundred and five voted to go home. Incidentally, no senior Naval Officer was ever consulted by Ottawa concerning ramifications of this re-volunteering order. Let me state here that I fully appreciate the temptation that this re-volunteering presented to those who voted to go home. As many as seventy-five percent of Uganda's ships company had served on other ships. They, like all of us, were sick and tired of the war in 1945. However, I am somewhat baffled by the apparent lack of commitment to the other Commonwealth countries, particularly Australia and New Zealand, who were still very much involved in the war. Both Australis and New Zealand had left their war-dead scattered across Europe and North Africa and surely no Commonwealth servicemen fought more bravely than the Aussies and Kiwis. Did we not feel some sense of responsibility to now fight the war in their backyard? None of the books I have read even mention anything about our commitment to other nations of the Commonwealth, or a commitment to our American allies in the Pacific.

I believe our politicians made Canada a laughing stock with this re-volunteering for Pacific service decision. They also gave us the dubious distinction of being the only Navy in the world which ever had a ship vote itself out of a war. That is not something I take pride in. No doubt, politicians were responsible for the dilemma, but I'm still very much disturbed by the direction some of the Ships Company of Uganda took.

At the end of the war, I had the honour of marching in the Victory Parade in Sydney, Australia leading a platoon of men from my ship as a rather young PO. We were marching down one of the main streets in the downtown area of Sydney when an elderly Australian woman broke through the police ranks who were lining the route. She headed straight for me almost knocking the cutlass I was carrying out of my hand. "Thank you Son" she said in a very thick Australian accent. I've always thought it was the nicest thing that happened to me throughout the war. What a pity the same accolade could not have been accorded to some Canadian PO from HMCS Uganda. If there is a lesson to be learned from this affair, it is that politicians have to keep their bloody fingers out of Naval matters which affect the day to day conducting of a war and leave the running of our Navy to those who do it best - sailors.

Some of my readers may well ask "What the hell is he doing, bringing this incident up almost sixty years after it happened?" That's a valid question. The only excuse I can give is that I don't want to see it happen again to a Service in which I was so proud to serve.

I wish to express my thanks to the two shipmates who assisted me in the preparation of this article - Steve MacDonald and Rollie West - but the opinions stated, are strictly mine.

My conclusion, incidentally, was that this was not our Navy's finest hour.

*(First published in the Atlantic C&POs Assoc. Crown and Anchor Newsletter)*

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### Farewell For A While....

- Bower, Peter
- Buchanan, H.D. "Buck"
- Cummings (Latter), Margaret
- Daley, Dan
- Fotheringham, Mary
- Goodfellow, Fred
- Harrison, Bob
- Johnson, Bill
- Lowe, Mike
- MacIntosh, Jim
- Madgwick, Captain "Mook"
- Schaus, G. Padre
- Tanton, Peter
- Tuckwood, Bob
- Walker, Marg
- Watters, Dan
- Werner, Edward
- Widdows, Bill

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### The Hong Kong Connection

There came a call of appreciation for naval hospitality given a half-century ago on the far side of this planet. A retired Air Force officer



living in Vancouver called to express gratitude to Buck Buchanan for hospitality shown him by HMCS Iroquois (Capt. Wm. Landymore) way back in 1953 when Iroquois visited Hong Kong for a quick refit. The Air Force type was given passage from Sasebo to the Chinese city and accommodated onboard during the stay there. Fifty years later he called us to track down and thank the Senior Watchkeeper (Buck).

It is ironic in the extreme that Buck died just hours before we could give contact information. The naval air contingent in Iroquois was Buchanan, Wardrop and Farrell but Buck, as you might expect, was the one to go the extra mile in hosting the pigeon.

Ed.

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### Another Day in History

9 March 1946: Agreement was struck between the RCN and the RCAF, giving the Air Force management of all naval shore-based air-related activities, including support services such as air stores and major aircraft repair, overhaul and maintenance on behalf of the newly-formed Naval air branch. Much of this arrangement was to prove inadequate in short order, and its shortcomings in large part led to the Navy's eventual acquisition of RCAF Station Dartmouth in December of 1948.



CF104s over Germany - 1 CAG  
421 - 441 439 Squadrons

## REWARDING EXPERIENCE IN DEUTSCHLAND

by Rolly West

Very shortly after Unification, postings came into Shearwater for Naval Air personnel to go to Air Force units. Two such units were Lahr and Baden-Soellingen, West Germany. The first maintenance people to serve in the CF-104 squadrons were Bunny Houston and Dave LeClair who went to Lahr, followed by Jim Morgan to Baden.

When I arrived as the first Navy AEO in 1971, I joined the 1CAG maintenance organization which supported three Starfighter squadrons and a CT133 flight. On staff at that time was LCol Benny Oxholm, CO of 421 Sqd'n., and LCdr. Wally Sloan, who was serving in 441 Sqd'n. Soon to follow that year, but to Lahr and 4CMBG and 444 Sqd'n., Bruce Walker.

Other Naval Air types who served in 1CAG at Baden during my tour were LCol. Dave Bennett, CO of the Maintenance Sqd'n., Bill Fuoco with 439 Sqd'n., Clive Caton on 421 Sqd'n., Carl Snelgrove, Ray McKay, Gerry Young, Dave Stapleford, John Nichols, and John MacDonald. Also serving at Baden Tower were four ex-Naval Air types, Ron Lang, Ken Strickland, John Mawhinney, and Rob Roberts.

All ex Aircraft Handlers by-the-way. In following years, to name a few more who served in Germany and 1CAG ; Bob Brown, Ron Bezant, Dave Meldrum, and

Dave Banfield

I found that the ex-RCN people fit into the Air Force organizations, at all levels without incident. We got along well with our peers, aircrew, and support units. Of course routines were very different in Europe, and just like the Air Force personnel in Germany for the first time, learning curves were there.

It must be pointed out that facilities and support equipment was excellent over there. After having to "make do" for so many years in the RCN with hand-me-down equipment, it was a pleasure to have a good supply of GSE.

Upon my arrival at Baden I sensed a very positive attitude amongst the maintenance personnel towards their various roles. It was obvious that this greatly contributed to a very high level of aircraft serviceability. It is felt that their initiative made up for the inferior basic technical training received in the Air Force as compared to that given by the RN/RCN. Rarely did an aircraft fail to meet its mission because of maintenance. It was always a team effort, and that is why our Naval Air people fit in so well.

It is very easy for me to speak on behalf of those of us who served in Baden-Soellingen and Lahr, and say that our tours there were rewarding experiences of the highest degree. I guess one can also say that Unification provided some great opportunities for those who wanted to take advantage of expanding their knowledge beyond the borders Naval Aviation.

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## HMCS Assiniboine "Special Assignment"

by Fred Snooks - from *Certified Serviceable*

During the month of July 1968, I had the pleasure of being selected to head a detachment of technicians to sail in HMCS Assiniboine with one H04S helicopter. The purpose of this special duty was to provide air transportation for the Governor General of Canada, Roland

Michener, his wife and party on a tour of Newfoundland the North Shore of Quebec.

Originally, the helicopter was to share the sorties ashore with the ship's boat, but the Governor General enjoyed our aircraft so much, that we ended up carrying out 90% of the trips. Of course, this put an extra workload on the maintainers, but as usual they took it in their stride and kept the aircraft serviceable. Our only technical problem during the whole tour lay with the fact that we didn't have an auxiliary power unit (APU).

It was then necessary to use the Nicad battery for starting. In fact, the only major entry in the old CNA 700 was that which called for replacement of the regular battery. (PO Harrington did that.)

It was a wonderful trip. Hopping from one small coastal village to another with the Governor General, we never missed a launch. I got a little concerned at times, starting the aircraft ashore. The ship's Captain, Commander Gord Edwards, always had me on the bridge with him when the aircraft flew ashore. I kept the binoculars trained on the helicopter and advised him when I saw the rotor turning. It was great having a Pilot as Captain of the ship; we received the best of support and cooperation throughout the cruise.

The "Horse" was certainly a great aircraft for this type of role, and it was nice to return from a cruise with a maintenance record of 100% serviceability. There was a tremendous amount of pride amongst the crew - and so typical of a small detachment where aircraft serviceability was uppermost in all our minds: no task was too great to get the aircraft into the air.

This was a trip of all trips for me - first, having had the honour of being on a special detachment solely to transport the governor General of Canada, and secondly, having had the opportunity to visit places throughout my native Newfoundland and showing our wares to the people of that province.

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# HISTORY AND THE HISTORIC: CANADIAN NAVAL AVIATION

Leo Pettipas

## Introduction

### What is "history"?

History is the sum total of everything that ever happened in the past. Something that happened five seconds ago is as much a part of history as something that happened 500 years ago.

However, not everything that has ever happened is "historic". A historic event is something that's generally agreed to have been remarkable or significant -- sufficiently so as to merit commemoration by at least a segment of society. Some historic events are considered as such at the local or regional level, while others are of national and even global significance. Commemoration may take the form of a book, a plaque or some other public indicator of significance. The locality wherein a historic event took place is referred to as a "historic site", and artifacts associated with a historic site are "historic objects".

Not all historic events are considered as such because they were positive, happy or good. A great many of the things that transpired during the Second World War couldn't be considered in a positive light, but that doesn't make them any less historic. Nor are all historic events necessarily regarded as historic from the very day they happened: an event may achieve recognition and be considered noteworthy (that is, historic) many years after it actually took place. If such acknowledgement isn't forthcoming, the event will forever be a part of history, but it won't possess the quality of being well and truly historic.

Canadian Naval Aviation constitutes a portion of Canadian aviation history. It began and ended within a particular period of time (1945-1968) and comprised a complex series of events, actions and activities, many if not most of which have gone unrecorded by virtue of their daily routine and commonplace nature. Nonetheless, I believe that Canadian Naval Aviation as a whole should be considered a truly historic chapter in the country's past, and that the benchmarks of the formation's existence should be formally recognized and commemorated. I further believe that the site of what was once HMCS Shearwater, the home of Canadian Naval Aviation, is worthy of being considered a historic site.

### What are my reasons for holding these opinions?

The Canadian Naval Air Arm was never very big as far as air forces go, nor did it have the opportunity to prove itself in combat. Most Canadians today aren't even aware that it ever existed! My main qualifier for regarding Naval Aviation as a truly historic manifestation among Canada's military accomplishments lies with its progressive rise to the excellence it eventually achieved in carrying out its mandate.

Admittedly, the air arm's "track record" in its formative years (1946-1950) was far from distinguished; the accident rate and concomitant loss of life were hardly the stuff of legend. However, with the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Navy's assumption of an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) role, the stage was set for the development of a first-rate, world-class establishment whose reputation within the NATO alliance was second to none. It'll be my purpose below to review instances of the Canadian Naval Air Arm's progress; and to that end I'll draw upon a series of reports and accounts that bear witness to that achievement. The very best measure of the quality of one's work is assessment by one's colleagues ("peer review"), and such evaluation will play a prominent role in the paragraphs that follow.

### Historical Overview

For those readers who aren't entirely familiar with the subject, I'll begin with a brief overview of the history of the Service. During the Second World War, Canadian airmen served in the British Fleet Air Arm, and the ships' companies of two British escort carriers, HMS Nabob and HMS Puncher, were for the most part Canadian. Canada didn't possess its own naval air arm or aircraft carriers during the war; nonetheless, it was during that conflict that the foundations were laid for a post-war naval aviation, including the formation of air squadrons and the training of groundcrew. On 19 December 1945, four months after VJ-Day, Cabinet approved the establishment of a Naval Air Branch.



Between 1946 and 1970, Canada operated three aircraft carriers -- HMC ships Warrior, Magnificent and Bonaventure. No two of these vessels were in service at the same time; rather, they succeeded one another over the 24 years of Canadian carrier operations. Only the Bonaventure was actually Canadian-owned; the other two were loaned to Canada by the British.

HMCS Warrior was commissioned into the RCN in February of 1946. A Light Fleet carrier of the Colossus class, her major shortcoming was that she wasn't "arcticised" -- in other words, she was unsuited for winter-time use in the North Atlantic, the RCN's main area of operation. As a result, she was transferred to the more temperate climate of the West Coast during her first and only winter of active service with the RCN. Throughout her brief career with the Canadian Navy, Warrior was used primarily for training airmen in operating from an aircraft carrier. She was decommissioned in March of 1948 and returned to the Royal Navy.

Several weeks later another Light Fleet carrier, HMCS Magnificent, was commissioned into the RCN. The main difference between the two ships was Magnificent's ability (she was one of the improved Majestic class) to operate in arctic waters; and in fact one of her first voyages took her to Wakeham Bay, located at the extreme northern tip of Quebec on Hudson Strait. In the process, she and her two destroyer escorts achieved the distinction of being the first Canadian ships to carry the White Ensign into this country's arctic waters. During the 1950s, Magnificent, nicknamed "Maggie", participated in all of the major NATO sea exercises to be staged in the North Atlantic, and she was active in the Caribbean and Mediterranean as well. She was retired from the RCN in June of 1957 after nine years of productive and valuable service.

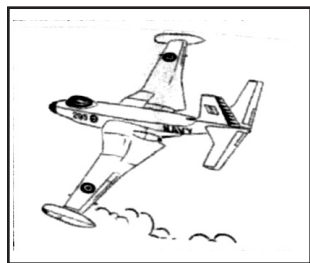
Both Warrior and Magnificent were of Second World War and early post-war vintage, as was the equipment with which they were fitted. During the early 1950s, three revolutionary innovations, all of British origin, were introduced into aircraft carrier design. These were the steam catapult for launching aircraft, the mirror landing-aid system for recovering aircraft, and the angle deck that provided a much-enhanced margin of safety and efficiency in carrier-landing procedure.

Neither Warrior nor Magnificent had any of these modifications. However, when the RCN ordered its third carrier from the British in 1952, provisions were made to have all of these innovations incorporated into it. Thus when HMCS Bonaventure was commissioned into the RCN in January of 1957, she was equipped with state-of-the-art gear. For the next 13 years, Canada's sole conventional aircraft carrier was a conspicuous element of the Canadian fleet and in NATO manoeuvres. In July 1970, Bonaventure was paid off and sold for scrap.

Throughout the two decades-plus of its existence, the RCN Air Arm was equipped with a variety of first- and second-line aircraft. In the early years, some of the machines used by the Navy were real museum pieces -- between 1946 and 1950, the inventory contained four different types of biplanes! At any rate, the record shows that no fewer than 620 machines, representing 18 different types, served with the RCN. In 1956, when the air arm was at its peak, a total of 15 squadrons were in operation.

When the Air Branch was initially formed in the latter half of 1945, it was outfitted with two squadrons of interceptors and two squadrons of fighter-reconnaissance aircraft. The former were single-engine Seafire XVs, direct descendants of the immortal Spitfire of Battle of Britain fame. In the summer of 1947 the RCN began to re-equip with another propeller-driven fighter (actually a fighter-bomber, appropriate to the supplementary role of Army support), the Hawker Sea Fury, considered by many to be the epitome of piston-engine fighter design.

Both the Seafire and Sea Fury were British aircraft; when the RCN finally entered the jet age in the mid-1950s, the Air Branch looked to the United States for fighters. The type selected was the all-weather, twin-engine, single-seat McDonnell Banshee.



Operating from Bonaventure, the Banshees, like their predecessors, were acquired primarily to protect the Fleet from enemy bombers and reconnaissance aircraft. Secondary roles included ground support for the Army, protection of the naval base in Halifax from aerial attack, and continental defence under the aegis of NORAD. In 1958 the Banshee was fitted with a pair of Sidewinder heat-seeking projectiles and in the process became the only type in the entire Canadian armed services at the time to carry air-to-air homing missiles. The Banshees were finally retired in the summer of 1962, and the era of the manned interceptor in the RCN came to a close.

In addition to the fighter-bombers, the RCN also flew a variety of reconnaissance and patrol/strike aircraft whose purpose it was to seek out and destroy enemy ships and submarines in times of war. The first such aircraft to enter service was the two-seat Fairey Firefly, a tried-and-true veteran of the Second World War. In order to fulfil its new-found NATO ASW mandate, however, the Navy needed a different class of carrier-borne patrol bomber. The best machine available in sufficient quantities was the American-built Grumman Avenger, originally a torpedo-bomber that was instrumental in the defeat of Japan in the Second World War. Between 1950 and 1956, the Canadians reworked the Avenger into a highly effective ASW vehicle. However, a new airplane designed "from the ground up" for anti-submarine patrol and strike was not only required but, by the mid-'50s, actually available. This was the Grumman Tracker, a twin-engine four-seater that represented the state of the art in its class. Crammed with electronic sensors

and detection equipment, and armed with rockets, homing torpedoes and depth bombs, these aircraft, of which 99 were built by deHavilland of Canada, were delivered to the RCN commencing in October 1956.

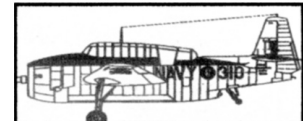
In addition to fixed-wing aircraft, the RCN operated four types of helicopters. These were used for such varied tasks as pilot training, cargo transport, mercy missions and search-and-rescue, forest fire fighting, ice reconnaissance for Canada's ice-breaker HMCS Labrador (it was with the aid of her helicopters that Labrador became only the second ship ever to circumnavigate the North American continent), and of course ASW. Sikorsky HO4S helicopters, teamed up with the Trackers and destroyer escorts and operating initially from Bonaventure, proved to be very effective in developing ASW tactics and techniques.

For as long as the Naval Air Arm was in existence, its main shore base was HMCS Shearwater located across the harbour from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Originally a Second World War aerodrome known as RCAF Station Dartmouth, the establishment was still in Air Force hands when the Naval Air Section was formed there shortly after the war ended. The Navy became master of its own house in December of 1948 when the airfield came under RCN ownership and was renamed HMCS Shearwater. Although Shearwater was headquarters of Naval Aviation, it was by no means the only home to naval air squadrons. One unit was permanently based at Patricia Bay airport on Vancouver Island, and Reserve squadrons ("Weekend Warriors") were stationed at Quebec City, Toronto, Hamilton, Calgary and Pat Bay. Commencing in 1948, front-line naval squadrons made annual appearances at Canadian Joint Air Training Centre Rivers, Manitoba to receive training in air support of ground troops at Rivers and nearby Camp Shilo.

On 1 February 1968, the Royal Canadian Navy was abolished, its personnel and resources being absorbed into the newly-formed Maritime Command of the Canadian Armed Forces. Several years later, Bonaventure was paid off, and for all intents and purposes Canadian Naval Aviation was a thing of the past. A Record of Accomplishment  
Record of Accomplishment  
The historical accounts that follow can be divided into two categories. One group comprises major innovations that influenced the direction of free-world naval aviation. The larger collection describes more routine but noteworthy accomplishments and events realized in the regular line of duty. After the signing of the NATO pact in 1949, Canada's Navy participated annually in joint operations with Allied fleets, and it was not long before the Air Arm was gaining the attention of senior officers of collateral Services. On 13 January 1950, the Fireflies of the 18th Carrier Air Group embarked in Magnificent for her third Caribbean cruise of her career with the RCN. The highlight of this voyage was "Caribex 50", which commenced in mid-March. The Canadian ships and aircraft were pitted against Phantom jets, Bearcats and Skyraiders of the USN, and the quality of the Canadian pilots did not go unnoticed by those with whom they were working. One Firefly crew was commended by the USN authorities for the "cunning and skill" with which it went about its business, while the Air Group at large was observed to deliver its low-level simulated torpedo attacks with such "realism", "skill" and "deception" that a number of American officers were "uncomfortably reminded of Pacific actions [during the Second World War] when the attacking planes were not manned by our friendly cousins from the north." As for the British, the Commander-in-Chief, America and West Indies Station, was "impressed with the way 'Magnificent' handled her aircraft." He might well have been referring to the fact that the Canadians' serviceability rate was 93%!

It was performances like these that led Commodore C.L. Keighly-Peach, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air) to justifiably declare that Canadian naval aviation "has won high praise from senior officers of older navies, with a longer experience in carrier-borne operations, and has in fact established a notable degree of overall efficiency." In his report for 1951, Commodore Keighly-Peach noted that "these far from insignificant achievements were crowned by the establishment of an accident rate that is currently lower than that of the Royal Navy."

In September of 1952, Magnificent, with air squadrons 871 and 881 embarked, participated in the first major NATO manoeuvres in the North Atlantic, code-named "Exercise Mainbrace". Here too the Canadians quickly established their superiority: the first "kill" of an "enemy" submarine was scored during the initial phase of the exercise by an RCN Avenger while on daylight patrol. This achievement earned a "well done" from the British Task Group Commander, flying his flag in HMS Theseus. Another Avenger crew accounted for a second submarine "sinking", this time while on a night-time anti-submarine patrol during phase two of Mainbrace. The record shows that these two sinkings were the only ones accounted for by aviators from the three carriers, HMCS Magnificent, USS Mindoro and HMS Theseus, in the task group. Nor were the aircrews the only members of the Canadian contingent deserving of credit; at the end of the cruise, which had seen Magnificent steam nearly 27,000 miles and her aircraft fly some 3300 air hours, the flight deck and maintenance crews could point with satisfaction to the fact that all 15 Avengers of 881 Squadron were serviceable and seven of the 10 Sea Furies of 871 Squadron were in operation. Little wonder that Magnificent's Captain, K.L. Dyer, declared at the end of the cruise that he was "very proud of the showing of the Canadian aviators, particularly in anti-submarine work."



In May of 1953, VF 871 and VS 881 embarked in Magnificent and proceeded to Great Britain to help celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. On the way over, flying operations were carried out, and on one occasion a Sea Fury suffered a barrier crash, causing considerable damage to the aircraft. The VF 871 Squadron Repair and Inspection Unit (RIU) began work on the machine at 2100 hours that same day, and 36 hours later, with minimum interruption, the aircraft was again in flying condition and ready for the Coronation Review Flypast. Said an officer in charge of the RIU personnel: "They take extreme pride in their work and feel that it reflects



on them personally if a single aircraft is idle when it should be flying. Hours of work don't mean anything to them, ... and to be able to see that aircraft take off is all the reward they ask."

This vote of confidence did not pertain to an isolated instance; it bespoke of the general attitude among and toward the Navy's groundcrew. Consider the words of Commander Ralph E. Fisher RCN (Ret'd), a former Air Electrical Officer, who in 1992 wrote in retrospect: "All of us have a deep and abiding pride in the history of building by Canadians of a highly professional and technically advanced seagoing air force over the all-too-brief 22 years of its life. As engineers who trained and served in both general and air duties with the RCN, we had a special regard for the air maintenance crews. Along with other shipmates in the carriers or helicopter-equipped destroyers, they shared the common dangers and difficulties of life at sea. In addition, they had to deal with the hazards and burdens of repairing and servicing aircraft and equipment in cramped hangars and workshops laden with the stench and explosive menace of high-octane gasoline and jet fuel, holding on against the roll and pitch of the ship in heavy seas. Not for them the luxury of a simple four-hours-on, four-hours-off watch routine, dining and dozing to a tidy and regular schedule. They worked unpredictable and generally long and hard hours to patch up and maintain machines subjected to the punishing conditions of day and night operations at sea in the North Atlantic. Here, a thousand miles or more from supply depots, they learned self-reliance, improvisation and ingenuity with relatively limited on-board repair facilities and spare parts. Under the leadership of dedicated Chiefs and Air Engineer Officers, they were a bright and cheerful brotherhood of young sailors, fiercely proud of their squadrons and can-do traditions."

It comes as no surprise that when the time came to dispose of the Avengers after eight hard-working years in RCN service, several private American companies bid for the surplus machines, "stating without reservation that these aircraft have far superior maintenance compared to all types of aircraft in the United States." It was clearly with considerable pride that the late Kenneth ("Big Nick") Nicolson, former pilot and Landing Signals Officer on Magnificent, stated in a presentation to the Canadian Aviation Historical Society on 7 June 1978 that "I would match [HMCS Magnificent] against any other carrier, American or British, of that period. For the equipment we had, a very high state of operations was maintained, several times with more success and efficiency than those in the fleet we were operating with."

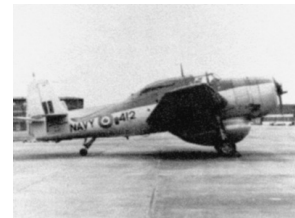
The following is a first-hand account, courtesy of former pilot Bob Bovill, of an operation conducted under the aegis of the RN's Londonderry-based Joint Anti-Submarine School by a VS 881 Squadron crew. It exemplifies not only the kind of work carried out by the unit but also the level of professionalism its crews achieved with the capable Avenger. An aircraft was launched from Magnificent into a pitch black, horizonless night sky in heavy rain somewhere off the Irish coast. About half an hour into the sortie the observer suddenly reported a firm radar contact at about 7 or 8 miles. The pilot immediately altered course towards it, the observer becoming increasingly certain that it was a surfaced submarine. The pilot took the aircraft down to an altitude of 50 feet, opened the bomb bay doors, and prepared to release the 11½-lb practice bomb that hung in the rack.

From that point, the observer kept track of the target, calling out the range and course changes as necessary. The observer's mate (OM) readied the sonobuoys and awaited word to launch the first one, while the pilot concentrated on his instruments. Upon glancing up at one point, he spotted a smudge of white water on either side of what was undoubtedly the conning tower of a submarine. He pressed the bomb release and the OM deployed the sonobuoy. That done, the pilot took the aircraft up so that the OM could lay the standard sonobuoy pattern. He confirmed that the buoys were all working and that he could hear the submarine, which by then had dived. The sonobuoy pattern was then extended in order to maintain contact with the quarry, and so it went until the operation was handed over to a relief aircraft.

During the ensuing "wash-up" ashore, the commander of the RN submarine rendered an account of the event as he and his crew experienced it. His report acknowledged that his vessel had indeed been successfully attacked, but seemingly attributed it to luck. The Avenger pilot then recounted the airborne scenario from his perspective, followed by his observer who detailed the all-important tracking of the submarine with the sonobuoys. To settle the matter, he displayed a sonobuoy plot that turned out to be almost identical to the track on the submarine's navigator chart. Clearly, the results were attributable to something more than mere luck!

The can-do attitude of the Canadian Naval Air Arm was expressed in a letter written to me in 1979 by the late Harry Hollywood, a former airborne early warning "Guppy" Avenger pilot. In speaking of Exercise Mariner, a NATO joint undertaking that ran from 16 September to 4 October 1953, Mr Hollywood wrote: "We operated day and night 24 hours a day and had one Guppy airborne all the time throughout the entire period. With four aircraft this was a great effort. Even the USN could not beat this with twice the number of aircraft."

Similar confidence was expressed by former Sea Fury pilots reflecting back on their experiences many years after the fact. A typical comment is that made by ex-Sea Fury pilot J.W. "Deke" Logan when he wrote several years ago: "We knew we were the elite among all Navy and Air Force pilots, as so many otherwise excellent pilots just were unable to cope with the demands of flying this superb aircraft from Maggie's flight deck." Compare that observation with this one provided by Ron Heath, another former naval pilot: "I served on exchange or trained with the RCAF, RAF, RCN, RN and the US Navy over fair periods of time, so I



had the opportunity to appreciate the quality of professionalism of a wide range of aviators; and by and large the professionalism, attitude and sheer guts of the people that served the RCN and therefore Canada were just outstanding."

Mr. Heath also voiced high praise for the engineering and maintenance people "who performed astoundingly well with the tools they were given to operate with." He is unequivocal in his recognition of both the air and the maintenance crews, who got the job done with "exceedingly rudimentary equipment, including aircraft carriers, but whose contribution excelled over that of the other navies and services with which we operated and competed." A. ("Archie") Benton, a USN exchange pilot with the RCN in 1953-54, was pleased to write: "I never had an assignment that I did not enjoy, but the Canadian tour with 871 [Squadron] was certainly the most memorable. This was in the main because the officers and men were outstanding, really terrific people."

I think it can be truthfully said that Canadians on the whole are not given to boasting and exaggeration. If Deke Logan and Ron Heath say that they and their colleagues were good at what they did, I for one am prepared to take them literally. And my motion would be seconded, I am sure, by the USN squadron commander who immediately prior to joint manoeuvres with Magnificent and VF 870 assured his troops that the Canadian contingent was a "small outfit which won't give us much trouble." As it turned out, a Canadian officer on course at the base overheard the comment and assured his hosts that the Sea Fury pilots would prove to be a force to be reckoned with. "The RCN fighter boys didn't let their backer down. 'Clobbered' was coined for the state the USN flyers found themselves in after the next day's exercise. The leader of the American squadron was the first to admit he had sadly underestimated Magnificent's pilots."

The Americans were not the only recipients of the RCN fighter pilots' attention. In the early '50s, the Royal Navy operated a fast torpedo-strike fighter called the Blackburn Firebrand. Some of these aircraft were based at Malta in 1951 when Magnificent was visiting the area during her first Mediterranean cruise with Ken Adams as the skipper. Writes Deke Logan: "As we were approaching Malta, the British asked our permission to carry out a simulated torpedo attack. This they attempted to do at dawn, but Commodore Adams wasn't napping; he shot a few of us off the catapult about an hour before dawn into the blackest night I can remember. Shortly thereafter, 'Big Art' McPhee vectored us right through the Firebrand flight -- they had dim navigation lights for station-keeping, but I don't think they even saw us until they felt our slipstream. They were completely demoralized and returned to Malta without completing the mission."

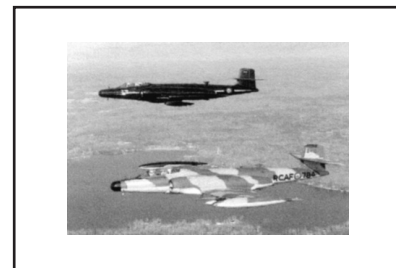
When in 1955 the Sea Furies began to be replaced with the jet-powered McDonnell Banshee, the tradition continued. The accomplishments of the Naval Air Arm during the jet era can be gleaned from reading Carl Mills' excellent book "Banshees in the Royal Canadian Navy". Truth to tell, however, the weary, second-hand Banshees were in a lamentable state of repair when they came into Canadian hands, not to mention the deficiency in even the most basic spare parts that plagued the program in its early days. The success with which the Navy met the challenge of putting the Banshee fleet in operating order prompted Bob Gibbons, ex-RCN, to state: "There is little doubt that the success of naval air in Canada was due in large measure to the skill, dedication and initiative of what had to be the finest corps of technicians found in any maintenance organization. In addition, the costly and uniquely comprehensive training programs for both the technicians and the technical officers employed in naval aviation produced the versatility and skills essential for such a small cadre to sustain availability and serviceability rates which were the envy of their USN and RCAF counterparts."

HMCS Bonaventure turned out to be a less than ideal platform from which to operate high-performance, twin-engine jet fighters. Shore-based operations, on the other hand, were another story. Time and again, the Sidewinder-armed Banshees proved themselves highly effective in intercept exercises against USAF B-47s and B-52s and the RCAF's CF-100s. No other unit in the 22<sup>nd</sup> NORAD Region exceeded the success rate of VF 870, and one senior naval historian went so far as to suggest that the squadron "was rated the top Canadian formation in North American Air Defence Command."

Because the targets in the NORAD exercises were manned and friendly aircraft, the attacks were simulated and the Sidewinders weren't actually fired at them. On one occasion, the missiles were fired, with impressive results. In 1959, the Banshee squadron was based for a time at RNAS Yeovilton in the UK, and the Royal Navy was interested in seeing how the Sidewinder performed. Half suspecting that the colonials with their American ordnance weren't likely to cause too much damage, the British lined up 10 rather expensive Firefly target drones for the Canadian pilots. Two days and six Sidewinders later, five of the pricey Fireflies lay on the bottom of the ocean and the Royal Navy prematurely terminated the costly affair before the expense got entirely out of hand!

What I would like to do now is cite several testimonies that were voiced shortly before and immediately following the disbandment of the last Banshee squadron in September 1962.

In one instance, the qualities of the Banshee pilots were acknowledged under no uncertain terms by the CO of USNAS Cecil Field, a very busy airbase from which VF 870 Squadron operated for several weeks in early 1962. The CO's commendation read in part: "While deployed at Cecil Field, VF 870 pilots consistently demonstrated superior aimanship by their knowledge and conformance to local rules, adherence to air traffic instructions and by practising



excellent radio discipline. The professional attitude and technique displayed by your pilots reflect credit upon your squadron and the Royal Canadian Navy. It is with great pleasure I extend to you and your squadron my personal commendation for the attitude and professional skill displayed during your tour at Cecil Field. It has been a distinct pleasure to have such an outstanding squadron aboard."

When it was finally announced that VF 870 was disbanding, the RCAF was quick to react. The CO of RCAF Beaverbank, a Pinetree Line radar station with which the Navy squadron had frequent occasion to work, commented in his farewell letter that "the Squadron served its country in a manner that left nothing to be desired." And from the Acting Commander of the Northern NORAD Region came the observation that "the willingness of the squadron personnel to provide as many aircraft as possible and to stand at readiness and to fly long missions regardless of the weather has earned the squadron a reputation of operational integrity second to none."

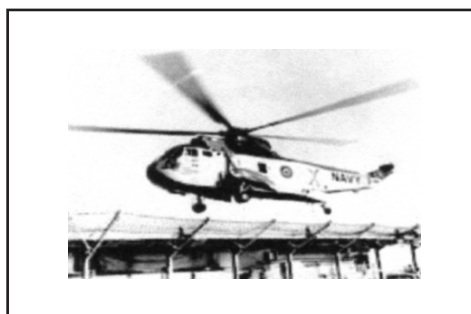
The latter half of the 1950s witnessed some remarkable advances in anti-submarine warfare technology and tactics. Just how involved the Canadians were in these developments is borne out in their production of the Anti-Submarine Warfare Tactical Navigation System (ASWTNS). This was an electro-mechanical navigational and tactical computer and display system designed to solve ASW plotting, display and tactical co-ordination problems. The Canadians acquired the prototype technology from the USN and proceeded to develop it; and by mid-1959 the system was in the final stages of evaluation. At that same time, the US Navy had decided to assess a fast nuclear-powered submarine's ability to detect and attack a task force at sea. The Americans invited the RCN to participate, in response to which experimental squadron VX 10 sent an ASWTNS-equipped Tracker.

During the ensuing exercise, the Tracker's crew, in a display of superb airmanship, accurately plotted the nuclear submarine's position for over 52 minutes of continuous operation, or about 47 minutes longer than had ever been done before! VX 10 could rightly claim to have conducted the first-ever continuous, real-time tracking of a submerged, unrestricted, high-speed, nuclear attack submarine – a truly historic achievement. The admiral in charge of the task force made determined recommendations for the most urgent procurement of the ASWTNS and its rapid introduction into USN service.

Understandably, there's a consensus of opinion that Canadian Naval Aviation achieved the apex of its fixed-wing ASW effectiveness and efficiency with the Tracker. Testimony to the RCN's practical ability and operational expertise appeared in the US magazine "Armed Forces Management" in the early 1960s, wherein it was stated (and I quote) that, "compared to Canada's efficiency, [the US] Navy suffers badly. For example, during one recent Canadian-U.S. Navy ASW exercise in the North Atlantic, a sub-finding contest was run between the two countries. One U.S. Navy pilot had this comment to make after the operation was concluded: 'They are the greatest submarine detection bunch I have ever seen. They were finding subs two days before we even knew they were in the area. In fact, I privately suspect they would wait 24 hours after they found one before telling us because they didn't want us to be embarrassed'."

It is worth pointing out that these events, and the kudos they earned, took place before the RCN received the considerably up-graded Mk 3 Tracker or the much-improved second-generation ASW helicopter, the Sikorsky Sea King.

The brains behind the "considerably up-graded Mk 3 Tracker" and the "much-improved Sea King" were the members of the Navy's experimental air squadron, VX 10. This unit was responsible for developing numerous improvements and innovations in seagoing aviation equipment. For a post-mortem on the squadron, which was disbanded on 30 June 1970, we once again turn to Ron Heath: "In summing up, let me say that perhaps of all the jobs I had in the RCN aviation, and I loved all the operational, active exposure I was fortunate to have, VX 10 more accurately epitomized the value of being as small and compact as our naval aviation component was, wherein a



few highly qualified officers and men, with very limited resources and an unquenchable desire to make the system work, did an incredibly professional job that paid off by bringing on stream, albeit in some very narrow specializations, some of the best there was in aviation in the world. No small achievement, and I am proud to have been a part of it."

No review such as this can be concluded without reference to the adaptation of the helicopter to the frigate/destroyer, a combination that was pioneered and perfected by the RCN between 1956 and 1962. Flight deck and hangar design and configuration, a rapid securing/quick-release/traversing system, and the necessary flight trials were all developed and carried out during this period. The result was an integrated set of made-in-Canada innovations that "brought a whole new dimension in anti-submarine warfare to the navies of the world."

The final comment goes to an individual who, though ex-Navy, was not part of Naval Aviation. Charles Lamb has written several books on the RCN, mainly having to do with the Second World War operations in which he took part. In speaking of the fate of the post-war Royal Canadian Navy and its demise with unification of the Armed Forces, Lamb calls attention to the disbanding of the Naval Air Arm and the release of many experienced aircrew. He quotes a "gleeful" airline recruiting officer whose company was only too pleased to welcome aboard "the finest pilots in the world."

## Conclusions

The above brief recollection of testimonies, achievements and events is by no means exhaustive. I think, however, that the sample provided supports my view that the history of Naval Aviation contains abundant noteworthy and remarkable accomplishments that are by their nature truly "historic". But there's an underlying moral to the story, and it is this: we often hear of the need to learn and profit from the lessons of the past. History is indeed an excellent mentor, but we must make creative use of this valuable resource. It's not enough to read historical works simply as a means of recreation and enjoyment; we must also apply such knowledge to our everyday problems. In other words, we must put our history to work.

In Canada today, we are very much in need of viable role models for our young people. We must be able to point to individuals and groups who, through their example, have demonstrated what Canadians can do, even though we're a small country in terms of population. The need for credible home-grown role models is essential in light of the overwhelming degree to which our youth are bombarded daily with foreign media material that bears no witness whatsoever to the nature and quality of things Canadian. I contend that abundant positive role models and examples are to be found in the history of the Naval Air Arm. The challenge isn't finding inspiring educational material for our children; it's finding the means of effectively introducing them to their history and heritage – of communicating to them the proud record of Canadians and Canadian institutions that have so clearly demonstrated the best of the Canadian way.

Clearly, the impressive Naval Air exhibits and the immaculate restorations of RCN aircraft at the Shearwater Aviation Museum, the Canada Aviation Museum and the Naval Museum of Alberta are a step toward creating a basic awareness. Beyond that, inclusion of selected accounts of Naval Air history in the public education curricula and the universities would be a most welcome and meaningful addition to the cause of promoting national pride and appreciation of what it means to be Canadian.

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## NO LIFE LIKE IT! HMCS BONAVENTURE SPRING CRUISE - 1959

### PO2 Air Mess Party, San Juan

FR	Mike Fasevich, Pat Murphy
MR	Ray Doucette, Bill ?, Emery Gagnon, Knobby Clark, Mike Lowe.
TR	Paul Muggah, Mick Owens, Bill Detchkoff, Herb ?, Eldon Howard, Unknown, Unknown, Paul Flemming (partly hidden) Henry Vandal