

*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 Perfect (preferred ) or Word. We will format the text for you.

Graphics are best 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  
PO Box 5000 Stn M  
Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

**Deadlines for receiving newsletter submissions are:**

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Summer           20 June  
Winter            15 October

**To Contact Us:**

[samf@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:samf@ns.sympatico.ca)  
[kcollacutt@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:kcollacutt@ns.sympatico.ca)  
1-888-497-7779 (toll free)  
(902) 461-0062  
(902) 461-1610 (fax) or (902) 720-2037(fax)

**Newsletter Staff:**

Editor: Bill Farrell  
Cover Designer: Jamie Archibald  
Secretary: Kay Collacutt

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

Another winter has passed us by! With the spring quickly approaching and the visitor season soon upon us, we at SAM have a few bits of good news to share with you. The new hangar is now full; March saw a frenzy of activity to move the Avenger and our Firefly restoration project into the museum proper. Despite the fact that the restorations are not complete, the aircraft are of far more value to the collection in the museum than stored away out of sight. It is our hope that the heightened exposure of the aircraft will serve to recruit new restoration volunteers, and will also provide our audiences with a wonderful interactive exhibit of seeing the restorations in progress. Part in parcel of the Firefly move is the completion of the propeller rebuild, and its safe arrival from Germany in late February. Special thanks go to Bud Ayer, John Webber, Ernie Smith, Mick Stephenson and Wayne Pettipas, as well as the 12 Wing Recovery Team under the direction of WO Bob King, for managing the move brilliantly.

Over the winter we were honoured by the presence of Mr. Siegfried Rempel, a conservator from the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa, who conducted an inspection of SAM in February. Sponsored by the Directorate of History and Heritage in Ottawa, Mr. Rempel has been touring the CF museums preparing a report on our facilities, conservation and exhibit practices, as well as addressing public access issues. Good news; your team at SAM scored well! More from the museological world, intern Jessica Goreham has joined us for a six-week placement until late April. Jessica, a second-year student in the Applied Museum Studies program at Algonquin College in Ottawa, will be assisting us with cataloguing and collections management tasks. Welcome aboard Jessica!

If you've noticed lately that this column has been advising you of staff changes, there's more to

come. It is with regret that I must tell you that we're losing two of our longest serving staff members. Chuck and Alma Coffen are both retiring from SAM staff positions, Chuck from his Managerial role, and Alma from her post as Volunteer Coordinator. Thankfully, both will continue to volunteer at SAM. Chuck and Alma have put their mark on the Museum, both dedicated to moving the Museum forward. Their accomplishments at SAM have been many, and I hope you will join me in expressing sincere thanks and appreciation for all of their efforts. Please look for "Coffen Tributes" elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter.

The new fiscal year will see a concentration on exhibits; repairing the older ones, improving signage and the planning and installation of new exhibits will keep us hopping during the tourist season. I hope you can join us during the high season to see what's new and in progress at SAM.  
Happy spring!

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**7<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MODEL MAKERS  
SHOWCASE AND CONTEST  
19 March 2005**

*In support of the SAM.  
by Robert S. LePine*

All and all, it was a good show. We had fantastic support from model suppliers such as Terry Higgins of Sky Grid and Monogram / Revell! Local businesses including maritime Hobbies and Crafts and Nautilus Aquatics and Hobbies supported the hobby by donating as well!

The show attracted approximately 400 people and raised approximately \$1,182.00 for the Museum and promoted what I feel is the best and most cost effective hobby around!

Displays were spread among 90 tables; everything from ships, planes, armour, automotive, re-enactment groups (our Civil War

guys), wargamers and one excellent wood carver were there for all to see. Model collections were on sale; a full plastic model contest went on up in our art gallery, and everywhere you looked, people were practicing their craft!

I want to thank all volunteers who, as always, stepped up and made this show one of the smoothest EVER. Without all of you, I couldn't have done this! My most sincere thanks.

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**UPCOMING SAMF FUND-  
RAISING EVENTS**

**7<sup>TH</sup> Annual Dinner/Auction**

**18 June 2005  
WO & Sgt's Mess  
12 Wing Shearwater**

**Limited Seating (150)**

**Tickets \$50 each**

**Tickets may be purchased  
at SAMF or by calling  
461-0062 (SAMF Secretary)**

***Tax receipt provided for  
50% of each ticket.***

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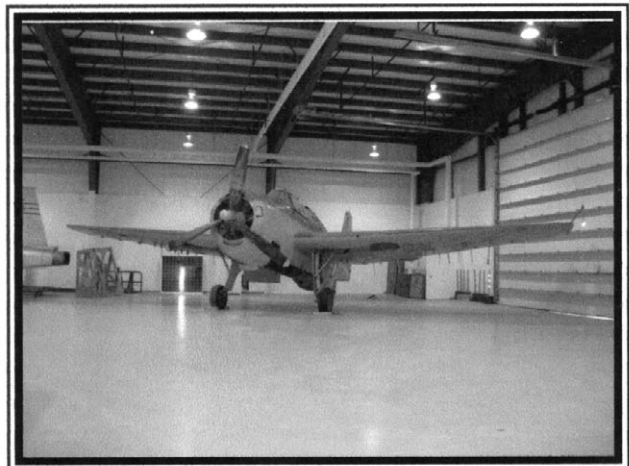
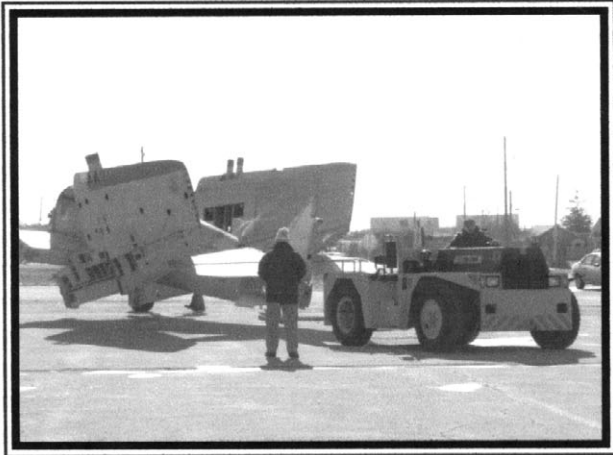
**Wine, Cheese, Art & Craft  
Show**

**22 October 2005 -  
7:30PM**

**Shearwater Aviation Museum  
12 Wing**

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**FIREFLY AND AVENGER ARRIVE**  
(See [www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.cs](http://www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.cs) - What's New)





## AVENGER COMING ABOARD

The last newsletter indicated there is a distant glimmer at the end of the tunnel for completing the Firefly refurbishment and the museum is looking ahead on how best to restore an Avenger to static display condition. The Museum currently owns Avenger 85861, which was retrieved from the bottom of Bedford Basin; however, because of corrosion and its very delicate condition, restoration will be difficult and will incur significant costs. If the restoration costs prove prohibitive the Museum is alternatively investigating the acquisition of an ex-RCN Avenger from Forest Products Limited in New Brunswick who are selling their Avenger water bombers for a mere \$ 95,000. Regardless of the aircraft selected the cost will be very significant so now is a propitious time to start raising funds for the Avenger restoration.

The drawing of an Avenger on the front inside cover of the Summer 2004 edition of the newsletter raised a few eyebrows because the markings were incorrect. Strangely, the markings in the drawing represented none of the three RCN Avenger paint and marking schemes. So when we actually get to the point of painting our restored Avenger we have to ensure that we get it right. There are three paint schemes from which to choose as 85861 likely wore them all.

When 826 Squadron took delivery of the first Avengers from the U.S. Navy in 1950 they were painted midnight blue overall and still retained their U.S. Navy markings and insignia. Shortly after arriving at Shearwater Royal Canadian Navy markings were reportedly applied by Fairey Aviation, but for unknown reasons the RCN markings did not follow any particular standard. This is peculiar because the RCN's Fireflies, which the Avengers were replacing, had long conformed to the naval standard. But there are numerous Avenger examples where the original stars and the stripes of the American insignia were still discernable under the Canadian markings and the maple leaf was almost star-shaped reflecting the American star. Some of the early Avengers were devoid of Canadian identification letters and some even retained American numerals.

The first standard Canadian markings appeared on the midnight blue Avengers and consisted of three white identification letters forward of the roundel on each side of the fuselage. The first two letters were invariably "AB" indicating 826 Squadron aircraft. The third letter identified the

individual aircraft within the squadron. This third letter was also painted on the tail above the red, white and blue fin flash, and on each side of the cowling ring. No. 825 Squadron Avengers were never painted in this overall dark blue paint scheme, consequently the 825 Squadron letters, "BD" were never painted on the dark blue Avengers. Roundels were painted on the upper surfaces of both the starboard and port wings. The underside of the starboard wing was painted with the RCN's ICAO white identification letters "VG" while the three identification letters were painted in white under the port wing. The words "Royal Canadian Navy" and the U.S. Navy Bureau Number were painted beneath the tailplane on both sides of the fuselage. To make the markings more discernable against the dark blue paint scheme the roundel and, on some aircraft, the fin flashes were outlined with a yellow border in the first version of the original paint scheme.

A variation of the dark blue paint scheme was introduced when Fairey Aviation modified the first two Avengers from the U.S. Navy TBM configuration to the RCN anti-submarine AS 3 version. The aircraft retained their overall dark blue colour and white letter markings; the most noticeable change placed the squadron identification letters "AB" left of the fuselage roundel and the single aircraft identification followed the roundel. These first two modified Avengers were identified as AB\* Y and AB\*Z (\* = roundel). Also the words "Royal Canadian Navy" and the U.S. Navy Bureau Number were full letters and numerals vice the stencilled characters.

By March 1951 the second version of the Avenger paint scheme began to make its appearance. The most conspicuous change was that the overall dark blue was replaced by a two-tone scheme comprised of the upper third of the fuselage and upper surfaces of the wings and tailplanes painted gloss dark grey while the remainder of the aircraft was painted gloss light grey. All letters and numbers were painted black but the positioning convention of the squadron and individual aircraft letters remained the same as the latter variation of the first paint scheme. Also, the conventional maple leaf was retained, as was the yellow border around the roundels.

In late 1952 the third and final paint scheme was adopted for all operational RCN aircraft. The two-tone grey colour scheme was retained but the marking system was totally revised. The word "Navy" was now painted to the left of the

fuselage roundels and a three-digit number was painted to the right of the roundels. On the underside of both wings roundels were painted at the outer tips. Under the starboard wing the word "Navy" was painted immediately inboard of roundel while the three-digit number was painted in the corresponding position under the port wing. The roundels in all positions were smaller than those of the previous paint scheme, and the yellow border was deleted.

The introduction of the three-digit number in the RCN is curious in that the three digits were not simply the last three digits of the Bureau Number as in most other air fleets, but followed the Royal Navy practice of assigning 100 series numbers to single-seat aircraft, 200 series to two-seat aircraft and 300 series to three-seat aircraft. Being three-seaters, the Avengers were assigned 300 series numbers; however since there were 125 Avengers in the RCN there were not sufficient 300 series numbers to go around. Consequently, 93 AS 3 and 3M Avengers were assigned numbers 301 – 393. To alleviate the demand for 300 series numbers, the eight AEW 3W2 Avengers (Guppies) were assigned 400 series numbers 411 – 418 and; three Avenger AS 3's which served as prototypes for one Avenger 3M and two Avenger 3M2's were allocated numbers 431, 420 and 421 respectively; it is not clear when the Avenger 3M's and 3M2's were assigned these numbers as they may have been assigned when these aircraft were AS 3's. Twenty-one AS 3 Avengers were un-numbered. Experimental aircraft were assigned 700 series numbers, although it is not clear that any Avengers assigned to VX 10 ever carried a 700-block number. Aircraft assigned to training units were numbered in the 800 series while naval air reserve squadron Avengers were assigned 900 series numbers reflecting that the five RCN air reserve squadrons were numbered in the 900 series.

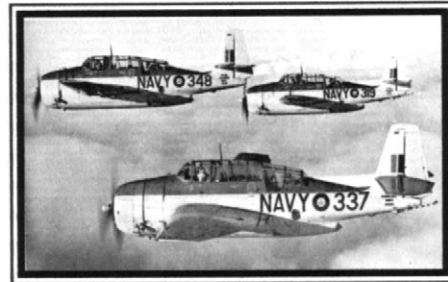
We would like to hear your thoughts on the restored Avenger's paint scheme and of course would gratefully provide a tax receipt for any financial contributions that will make it happen!

*Ernie Cable  
Shearwater Aviation Museum Historian*

*Note: The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Leo Pettipas who has written seven books on Canadian naval aviation. These books*

*contain much more detail on RCN aircraft paint schemes and are available through the SAM gift shop.*

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## THE SAILOR'S BRIDE

She knows before she weds  
That her's will be a lonely bliss,  
Living for the welcome home,  
Or on a farewell kiss.  
Waiting for a letter  
She is longing to receive,  
Following a map  
Or looking forward to a leave.  
Her's will be the homely tasks,  
Cheered by a memory,  
While he will ride the storms  
and pit  
His strength against the sea.  
She'll make her own decisions,  
And she'll hope that they are  
right.  
She'll envy other wives whose  
husbands  
Come home every night.  
She knows before she weds, the  
part  
She's got to play  
Yet sometimes it is hard to  
watch  
And wait and work and pray.  
May God bestow his blessings  
For her patience and her pride,  
And warm her lonely heart be-  
cause  
She is a Sailor's bride.

Don't get all carried away with  
that sentiment now; first a  
poetic word of caution.

Before you run off and propose,  
A word of caution Jack.  
A home and loved ones, I suppose  
Seems just the proper tack.  
Never again would you be alone  
From the day that you are caught;  
And the only thing you may call  
your own  
Is your pusser issued tot.

Note: (In part) *This was the BRIDE issue of the Free Press. It was though it only appropriate that some mention of the Sailor's Bride should be made. This little poem (author unknown) would bring a lump the size of an allotment cheque, to any sailor's throat.*

From the Dartmouth Free Press 11 Jun 64  
**submitted by Jim Adam**



## EDITOR'S GRUNTS - Reality Check revisited:

These may be the penultimate words some readers will see from this Editor. Some recipients may be drawing close to quitting the Newsletter distribution list - those few who have chosen not to take out or not to renew membership in the Foundation and who have no interest in the preservation of our shared heritage.

The following screed (a screed is defined as an unduly long harangue) may be offensive to some but it is not intended to be; it is simply a blunt statement of opinion and feeling: it may also, I am well aware, be "flogging a dead horse".

Many years ago there sailed the high seas and exceptional band of seamen - sailed in and flew from Warrior, Magnificent and Bonaventure and made our Navy's mark as peer in skill and audacity, if not in size, with the great navies of the world. For many of us, the Naval Air experience was a defining epoch of our lives, full of adventure and fun and danger. Living! To quote one of our Directors it was also "a time when lifelong friendships were made and bonds cemented".

Putting this newsletter together "ain't easy" but every time temptation says "chuck it - who cares anyway?" we get a letter from someone whose life continues to be enriched by savouring, in memory, those great days. Then a perverse and pernicious sense of duty to old comrades kicks in and jumping ship becomes an untenable option. We sailor on.

Now I recognize that not all who served in Naval Air retired from active service with sweet memories of tropical harbours, awe of the antiquities of Malta, Greece, Egypt and scores of other ports of call - and with reverence for Neptune's might and moody empire in its stormy rages and its tranquil calms, in its arctic blasts and its seductive balmy breezes. Some had bitter experience that still rankles. Some just never got caught up in the spirit of Naval Air. These latter are not zombies (living bodies without souls) but persons who by nature or by cultural nurture are unable to take pride in the part they played in youth, in Canadian Naval Aviation. A reality check tells the Board this may be the time to reconsider its pursuit of membership in the ranks of these unfortunate few. (*I think they are zombies. K*)

For the rest of you guys "Hang in there!" - for your annual membership of thirty dollars (only the equivalent of one beer every two weeks) you can travel time in these pages and maintain the bonds of friendship set in that defining epoch of your life. You won't die of thirst! *Cheers! Ed.*



**From the President**  
*(Eugene (Buck) Rogers)*

I would like to express thanks to the Directors who showed the confidence to vote me President of the SAM Foundation. It is an honour and privilege and I look forward to a productive year.

I have served 47+ combined years in the RCN, CF and CF Reserve. I have been a Life member of SAMF for ten years. Preserving our heritage is important to me.

The foundation requires constant funding to reduce the loan debt, restore and acquire heritage aircraft and artifacts. This is acquired through membership fees, the tile program, fund-raising and donations. If making a donation, please specify where the funds are to be directed.

I wish to inform you that the Avenger and Firefly aircraft are now housed in SAM's hangar where work will continue towards their restoration through the work of dedicated volunteers.

Membership in the SAM foundation is a constant source of funding. Keep your membership up to date, encourage others to join - especially former service acquaintances, family members and friends. Your support is vital!

The Board sends our sincerest thanks to Bill Farrell for his contributions as President of SAMF.

Have a happy, healthy and safe summer.

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**PLEASE NOTE  
CAREFULLY!**

### **SAMF AND SAM**

There appears to be some confusion between SAMF (Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation) and SAM (Shearwater Aviation Museum).

Although they both have a common objective, (establishing a historical portrayal of Shearwater and Maritime Military Aviation), they each have separate and distinct responsibilities in achieving this.

WHAT IS SAMF? SAMF is strictly a non-profit organization that was created in 1987 comprised of volunteer supporters and is an entity on its own. It supports the SAM (Shearwater Aviation Museum), but is not part of the SAM. The object of SAMF is to raise the necessary funds (through SAMF Memberships and donations) and acquire artifacts and other memorabilia to meet the objectives of the SAM. The SAMF employs various methods in obtaining donations from membership dues to fund-raising events such as Dinner/Auctions, Golf Tournaments and Wall Plaques. Donors are listed in the Donators Book on display in the Museum and on the donors Recognition Board for those who have accumulated donations of more than \$1000.

***Some donations are being sent directly to the Museum and therefore may be deposited to the Museum account rather than the SAMF account and not credited to your membership in the Foundation or to your***

***total SAMF donations. Please ensure your cheques etc are made payable to SAMF.***

WHAT IS THE SAM? (In part) The SAM comes under the directorship of 12 Wing through a Board of Trustees. All decisions regarding the Museum are carried out under this directorship. Daily operation of the Museum is carried out by a General Manager, Manager, Curator, and with several people in their employ - Shearwater Historian, Archivist, plus part time employees and volunteers. The SAM is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the Museum.

The purpose of the Museum is to acquire and conserve artifacts and documents which best serve to exemplify the history and technology of Maritime Military Aviation. Accreditation as a CF Museum qualified it for a small operating grant which along with "in kind" staffing and maintenance support, are the only means directly available to the Museum to foster growth portraying its heritage. Hence the need for SAMF.

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### **TERMINOLOGY**

**What are the names of the two airborne anti-submarine detection systems incorporated in Canadian patrol aircraft nicknamed 'The Girls'.**

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## **SOMETHING IN THE WATER**

*--by Allan Snowie*

### ***Speech to the United Services Institute of Nanaimo & North Island 2004***

When a former Naval officer addresses a group of veterans on a topic of "Something in the Water"; I am sure that the Army and Air Force types all think - Well, sounds like their silly boats are coming apart!

Actually, this title refers to that charming old expression that our fathers and grandfathers used to describe the good things in life; everything from a fine harvest crop to a family with a beautiful bevy of daughters. "It must be something in the water"

Ladies and gentlemen, it would seem that there was indeed something in the drinking water of this region at the turn of the 20th century. Drawing a line from Cobble Hill in the south, through Nanaimo and north to Parksville, you have the birthplaces of three of Canada's greatest naval aces, Raymond Collishaw, Joseph Fall and Charles Hickey. Together these three young men brought down 118 enemy aircraft during the First World War.

Before I talk further about these local lads; let us look at early aviation in North America and Great Britain leading up to the War to end all Wars.

The Wright Brothers, we know, flew 100 years ago this past December. Unfortunately they then began years of litigation against anyone who "stole" their invention. As a direct

result, the United States would be woefully unprepared to fly when they did join the Great War in 1917.

For Canada, an Aviation Experimental Association, funded by Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, wife of the great telephone inventor, got us off the ground, or rather, a Cape Breton frozen lake, in January 1909. This aircraft, named the Silver Dart, was flown by John McCurdy of Nova Scotia. The engine was supplied by Glen Curtiss, a motorcycle builder and racer, who came from New York State.

We were not far behind the British. Their first flight was only in 1908. The Admiralty's Royal Navy and the War Office's Imperial Army were initially not very interested in these third dimension machines. However, a flight across the English Channel by the Frenchman Louis Berliot during the summer of 1909 made the military powers realize that Britain was no longer an island.

By 1912 a Royal Flying Corps was formed with a Naval and a Military wing. The Army side saw aircraft as simply a standby method of reconnaissance, an adjunct to their prized troops of cavalry. The Navy, from the outset, however, saw aviation as a means of carrying the fight to the enemy. In other words, as an offensive weapon.

The military wing recruited their pilots from the various British Army battalions. These appointments were seen as temporary postings with the individual returning to his regiment in due course. The first

leaders of the military wing were also fairly bureaucratic and staff minded.

The navy wing, on the other hand, was made up in part of, shall I say, some individuals that ship's captains were happy to disembark. Furthermore, the new and outgoing First Lord of the Admiralty, a young Mr. Winston Churchill, happily viewed his aviators as being fellow adventurers.

Not surprisingly, the Naval and Military Wings soon went their separate ways and the Royal Naval Air Service was created. The old Victorian naval officers felt that RNAS stood for Really Not A Sailor. The young Edwardian pilots however, countered that the initials stood for Rather Naughty After Sunset.

In July 1914, the driver of a vice-regal visitor to Serbia became lost and took a wrong turn. This brought the next in line to the Austria-Hungarian Empire within revolver range of a Serbian nationalist. A short month later a "damned foolishness" of domino alliances plunged the world into its first global conflict.

When the German armies stormed through neutral Belgium, the RNAS sent their aircraft to Antwerp to help stem the onslaught. Falling back from an initially unstoppable enemy, the pilots pinpointed and bombed the German troops and cavalry. Because of the limited range of the aircraft and the changing landing fields, a fleet of cars was arranged to take fuel and parts to any aircraft caught out. The RNAS lads bolted boiler plates to the vehicles, including a Rolls-Royce, and they



mounted machine guns on the open roofs. Operating like modern-day pirates they harassed the enemy just as much as did their aircraft. These activities caught the attention of Churchill and the tanks that would later appear on the Somme were a direct result of this Naval innovation.

It goes without saying that pilot attrition and aeroplane losses soon followed. A Royal Navy mission to North America ordered several flying machines from the manufacturer Glen Curtiss. Since he was being plagued by Wright Brothers lawsuits in the United States, Curtiss opened a plant in Toronto. Furthermore, he hired his old Silver Dart partner McCurdy to manage this first Canadian aircraft factory.

The British naval mission also asked Admiral Kingsmill of the Royal Canadian Navy if he would recruit pilots. Kingsmill readily agreed but the catch was that these Candidates had to have their pilot license before they would be accepted as Temporary Probationary Flight Sub Lieutenants. (Now there is a lowly rank -- somewhere junior to Pilot Officer!)

To alleviate this licensing problem, McCurdy opened the first flying school in Canada. When its rolls were quickly filled, Canadian Candidates flocked to the various schools in the United States for lessons. Katherine Stinson's school in Texas is one that owes its initial financial success to these first students.

In total, 936 sons of the

Dominion would fly with the RNAS. Unlike their brothers in the Army or the Royal Flying Corps, they saw all areas of the 4-year conflict. Not only Anti-Submarine and Anti-Zeppelin patrols out of Great Britain, but also flying and fighting over the Western Front, Mesopotamia, German East Africa, Gallipoli, Romania, and even in Russia in 1919.

It is the "Ace factor" which draws most readers to aviation interest about the war. We see numerous glossy covered books depicting a red Fokker Triplane; and today "Snoopy vs. Red Baron" cartoons proliferate. In brutal reality, the ownership of the skies over the Western Front was a bloody, hard-fought battle conducted in flying machines that initially were little better than spruce and fabric kites with unreliable engines. High above Flanders Fields pilots needed to quickly develop a situational awareness in order to survive.

The reason for this Ace interest is fairly straightforward. By Christmas, 1916, the world was quite literally sick to death of the dreary war. The retreat from Mons, Gallipoli, the Somme and other countless casualty clashes had created a war of attrition that was supposed to have been over by Christmas 1914! The much vaunted Royal Navy had not even performed well and the Battle of Jutland was not the expected modern day Trafalgar victory but a sad series of signaling failures and sunk ships.

Heroes were needed and the skies would provide them. Having said that, please know that most of these aviators likened it more to murder than to being a hero. They were killing

fellow pioneer airmen. However, the synchronized machine gun that could fire between the propeller blades had ended all chivalry.

In 1917 and 1918, the RNAS fielded eight fighter squadrons in France. The leading ace, and the second highest ace in five of these squadrons was a Canadian. Three of these leading squadron aces were young men who grew up on the drinking waters of this Vancouver Island area:

**Raymond COLLISHAW** was born in Nanaimo, BC.

He became Canada's greatest Naval Airman of the First World War attaining over 60 victories..



In June of 1917, Collishaw put together "The "Black Flight", a fighting team of five Canadians serving with 10 Naval Squadron. Consisting of Mel Alexander of Toronto, Gerry Nash of Stoney Creek ON, John Sharman of Oak Lake MB, and Ellis Reid of Belleville ON, they accounted for 68 enemy aircraft in just two months. Reid and Sharman were killed in the actions and Nash became a prisoner of war. I would ask you to compare their totals to that of the famed French Lafayette Escadrille

comprised of 38 American pilots who accounted for 199 enemy aircraft over a period of two years.

Collishaw remained in Britain with a Royal Air Force permanent commission and led an RAF Squadron against the Bolsheviks in 1919. He attained the rank of Air Vice Marshal during the Second World War and is singular in destroying the Italian Air Force during the North African Desert campaign.

Raymond Collishaw is of course, the most recognized aviator from this area. In fact if anyone here does not know of "Collie", I refer them directly to Chairman Ted Brothers of the Vancouver Island Military Museum for flogging. It has been through the doggedness of Ted and his Museum colleagues that the airport terminal at Nanaimo was finally named in honour of your most distinguished flier.

The Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame inducted Collishaw as a Member in 1973 with the following citation: "No airman has served on more enemy fronts with greater distinction, and his indomitable spirit, despite adversity, gave such leadership to those under his command, as to have been of outstanding benefit to Canadian Aviation."

**Joseph Stewart Temple FALL**, was farmer's son from the Cowichan Valley. As an aside, one of his school-mates was the only Cowichan-born recipient of a title, Air Marshal Sir Philip Livingston -- but that's another story.....

Flight Sub Lieutenant Joe Fall

served with 9 Naval Squadron and saw his first actions over Vimy Ridge. On April 11th, 1917 while escorting a bombing raid on Cambrai, he drove down one of several hostile machines attempting to attack the bombers. During the fighting, Fall became detached from the rest of his formation and was set upon by three enemy aircraft. He drove one down in flames and caused another to break off and limp back to its own lines. By skillful maneuvering, Fall then attacked the third and sent it crashing. Skillful may be an understatement when one considers that some of this fighting took place at a height of only 50' above the trenches! However, the twenty-one year old Canadian managed to get back across the lines and land safely. His aircraft was riddled by hostile gunfire from aircraft, infantry and cavalry.

In Fall's own words. "When I landed, the wings dropped down to the ground like a hen over a brood of chicks". Now, does that not sound just like a farmer's son? The cross-bracing landing wires on his biplane had been shot apart. The wings had only been held intact by the flying wires and on touchdown they collapsed.

For this triple victory, Joe Fall won the first of three Distinguished Service Crosses. He is the only aviation triple DSC holder in history. By December 1917 he had brought down 36 enemy aircraft and two observation balloons.

Following a Canadian leave in early 1918. Fall returned to England in time for the amalgamation of the RNAS and the RFC into the Royal Air Force

on April First 1918. He instructed and test flew with the school of aerial gunnery and fighting. For this work he was awarded a new RAF decoration, the Air Force Cross.

When the War ended, Fall, like Collishaw, was granted a permanent commission in the RAF. In 1920, at the first Post-war air show, the Hendon Aerial Pageant, he led an aerobatics formation of five Sopwith Snipes. You could say that Joe was our first "Snowbird Lead".

Flight Lieutenant Fall served in Iraq and Egypt in the early 1920's and then with the Experimental group at Farnborough. He thus became one of our early test pilots.

A Squadron Leader by 1930, the bachelor aviator was brought to ground by a pretty face in 1933 when he met and married his wife Jane, our graceful guest here today. Who says blind dates don't work! Mrs. Fall, you and your family honour us with your presence. Thank you.

When the Second World War loomed, now Wing Commander Fall was appointed CO of the RAF Station in Malta. This was followed by promotion to Group Captain and a posting to Alexandria in Egypt. A rather close neighbor was a chap called Rommel.

In 1943 G/C Fall and family returned to Canada and he assumed command of No 33 Elementary Flying Training School at Carberry, Manitoba. He retired from the service in 1945.

Joe Fall came back to the Cowichan valley and its fine waters to start a dairy farm. He

worked long hours and raised champion Jersey milk cows. In 1988, this 93 year old Canadian finally succumbed to the polio that he had contracted in the mid-East during his early 1920's tour. His flying aside, I believe that his living with post polio syndrome alone speaks volumes about the caliber of this most determined and amazing man.

The third of our local heroes is **Charles Robert Reeves HICKEY**, of Parksville, who transferred to the RNAS from the Canadian Mounted Rifles in February 1917. With trench warfare stalemated, many young Canadian Soldiers volunteered for the Flying Services Clean sheets and a lack of lice may also have been a motivating factor. However, each "Dawn Patrol" was tantamount to fixing bayonets and going over the top -- sometimes thrice daily!

Like our two other Vancouver Island fighter pilots, Hickey proves a natural. He is reported as being "A very determined air fighter." In April 1918 he makes a capture when he forces down a German reconnaissance aircraft in Belgium. This was his ace-making fifth victory and it was almost his last.

Hickey landed alongside and tried to keep a crowd of Belgian civilians away and to prevent the German pilot from burning the machine. He was too late and a timing device blew up the aircraft killing several civilians. Hickey was burned about the face and hands. Not one to suffer long, he soon returned from hospital and over Ostende on his first flight brought his victory total to six.

By the Fall of 1918, Hickey was a 21 victory ace and a Flight Commander. He had been awarded the DFC and Bar and was recommended for the DSO. Then tragedy. Diving through cloud on enemy aircraft his wingman collided with him and the mangled aircraft fell to earth. He is listed as Killed on Active Service 03 October 1918.

The third of October 1918! Charlie Hickey almost made it through to the November 11th Armistice.

He was not alone in death. "Pilot Wastage", was the cruel term that the Royal Navy used to describe the deadly attrition, and Canada lost 181 of her 936 Naval Aviators during the war. While a soldier enlisting in the Canadian Expeditionary Force faced a one in eleven chance of being killed; our first naval pilots withstood a one in five factor.

Naval Historians seem to ignore the fact, but during the First World War, not one Royal Canadian Naval Ship fired a single shot in anger. Canada's greatest naval contribution to the 1914-18 War effort was her Naval Aviators. Fifty three of these Naval Officers became Aces. On other fronts, Zeppelins were shot down and enemy submarines and ships sunk.

Many of these fliers remained in the military and from the Second World War you may recognize the names of former RNAS aviators who served with the RCAF: Air Chief Marshal Lloyd Breadner, Air Marshal's Robert Leckie, Wilf Curtis & Frank McGill. Those of you who have taken flying lessons studied the manual, From the Ground Up,

written by Canadian RNAS pilot Sandy Macdonald.

May I conclude by thanking you and the local Air Force Association for your Air Cadet Sponsorship. You are contributing to Canada's future in the aerospace industry. Like the three Gentlemen I have spoken about, you provide a positive role model for our younger generation. And, obviously you too believe that there is still something in the waters of this area.....

Moving ahead on the subject of drinking..... The Naval Toast of the Day for today, Wednesday, is to "Ourselves". Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Ourselves.

NOTE: Following this talk, Mrs. Fall unveiled a commissioned painting of her late husband, Group Captain Joseph Fall DSC, AFC. The painting was presented to the Vancouver Island Military Museum.





**Chuck Coffen, The Quick Version:**  
(by Christine Hines)



A native son of Newfoundland, Chuck was awarded his wings in the RCN in 1961. During the course of Chuck's career, he served with VU 32, VS 880, VX 10, 429 Tactical Squadron, 426 Squadron, with stints at Air Transport Command, Air Command HQ, before going back to VS 880 as Operations Officer, to be followed by his post as Executive Officer for VS 880 in 1981. After serving as CF liaison

officer in Bermuda, Chuck went to 424 Squadron as CO in 1982. He left Trenton for a post at NDHQ as HQ Secretariat Air Analyst before arriving in Norfolk VA for four years, working as CINCLANT HQ Operations and Exercise Planner, then Intelligence Officer and Exercise Planner for SACLANT HQ. By 1992, Chuck was back in Shearwater as Base Administration Officer; he left that position in 1993. It was hard to leave Shearwater then too: Chuck served as Chairman for the Shearwater International Airshow in 1994, and retired from the CF in September of 1994, with 6000 flying hours under his belt and having flown ten varieties of service aircraft. Upon the retirement of the former curator, Chuck was hired by 12 Wing Shearwater as Curator, a position he held until 1 April 2003, followed by service as SAM's Facility Manager until 30 March 2005. Under his leadership, with the constant support of SAMF and 12 Wing, Chuck has ensured the progressive development of SAM, which has earned SAM a reputation as one of the foremost Canadian aviation museums. From all of us at SAM and SAMF, a hearty Bravo Zulu and a heartfelt Thank You to Chuck for his many years of dedicated service.

**Alma Coffen,  
Volunteer Coordinator**



Alma, after many years as SAM's Volunteer Coordinator, has also decided to hang up her hat.

Alma's years of service have echoed those of Chuck's; we are fortunate indeed that she has been so committed to the Shearwater Community over the years, and given so much of her time to

SAM, both as Volunteer Coordinator and as a Gift Shop Volunteer. A special Thank You goes out to Alma for all of her contributions to SAM and to the Volunteer

Program. Your voice will be missed at the other end of the phone!

\*\*\*\*\*

**WILD FIRES**  
from Ron Beard

Things are not always what they seem.

A photographer from a well-known national magazine was assigned to cover Southern California's wildfires. The magazine wanted pictures of the heroic work the fire fighters were doing as they battled the blazes.

When the photographer arrived on the scene he realized that the smoke was so thick that it would seriously impede, or even make impossible, his obtaining good photographs from ground-level.

He requested permission from his boss to rent a plane and take photos from the air. His request was approved, and via a cell phone call to the local county airport, necessary arrangements were made. He was told a single-engine plane would be waiting for him at the airport.

He arrived at the airfield and spotted a plane warming up outside a hangar. He jumped in with his bag, slammed the door shut, and shouted, "Let's go!"

The pilot taxied out, swung the plane into the wind, and roared down the runway. Within just a minute or two of his arrival they were in the air.

The photographer requested the pilot to, "Fly over the valley and make two or three low passes so I can take some pictures of the fires on the hillsides."

"Why?" asked the pilot.

"Because I'm a photographer for a national magazine," he responded, "and I need to get some close-up shots."

The pilot was strangely silent for a moment; finally he stammered, "So, you're telling me you're not the flight instructor?"

\*\*\*\*\*

**Naval Aviators and Kindred Souls,**



Once again there will be a Naval Aviation Rendezvous (NAR) in the Crow's Nest of the HMCS Bytown Wardroom, Ottawa, on Wednesday, 11 May, 2005, at 1200. Anyone who flew or took part in any way are welcome!

Note that this date also coincides with Laurie Farrington's birthday, and as he had organized this great meeting over the years, it will also be a tribute to him.

Cost is \$10 for soup and sandwiches, cash bar, extra proceeds as always to SAMF.

Please pass the word to any that might be interested, and inform Gord Edwards of intended attendance.

This is the first warning. There will be reminders!

Details on my web site:

[www.edcom-innovations.com](http://www.edcom-innovations.com) **click on NAR!**

**Gord Edwards**

\*\*\*\*\*

**The Sailor's Word-Book**

A copy of the above said book was republished recently here in Almonte, Ontario, close to Ottawa. I received a copy for Christmas.

It was first published by Admiral W. H. Smyth in 1867.

It is full of wonderful words. Did you know a BANJO is "The brass frame in which the propeller of a steamer works. ... "

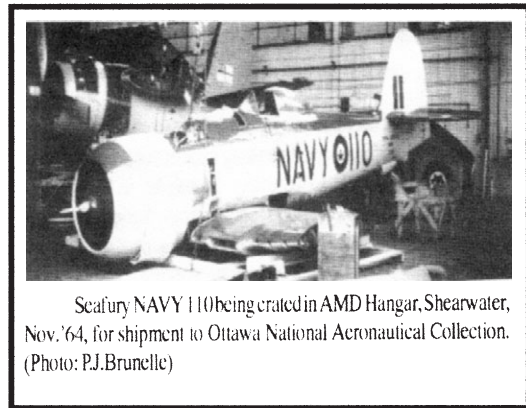
I consider it communal property. If, in your reading, you come across a word that puzzles you, e-mail me at [sandy.dewar1@rogers.com](mailto:sandy.dewar1@rogers.com) and I will crack it for you. **Sandy Dewar**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Anyone have a Fury in their back yard?**

We have been asked when/if the Museum will get one into the Museum. Who knows? Here's a photo, showing one being crated in AMD Hgr for shipment to Ottawa National Aeronautical Collection from Shearwater - lucky Ottawa.

P2AR Ed Janusas, Stu Mingo and J. B. Adam



Seafury NAVY 110 being crated in AMD Hangar, Shearwater, Nov. '64, for shipment to Ottawa National Aeronautical Collection. (Photo: P.J. Brunelle)

"dismantled" this aircraft at McKenzie(?) Flying Club, Moncton airport and transported/supervised this Seafury to AMD Shearwater. *Ed Janusas Nov 91*

\*\*\*\*\*

**BONNIE/MAGGIE REUNION  
Halifax, NS  
1,2,3 July 2005**

**The Last Bonnie/Maggie Reunion**

**For Info contact:**

Peter/Ann Kent 902-455-2533  
Dave Bradshaw 902-876-7450

web info: [www.fleetclubatlantic.ca](http://www.fleetclubatlantic.ca)

**(Note: A special thank you to Peter and Ann Kent and Dave Bradshaw for all you've done to ensure this great time.) I'm told the only reason this is called the Last Bonnie/Maggie Reunion is because they have no one willing to take over running it. Surely someone out there would be willing to Chair the event. Kay)**



## **AVENGER BEING RESTORED AFTER 19 YEARS IN WATER**

*By Jim Gourlay - Staff Reporter The Mail Star dated 22 Sep 72*

Shearwater will soon have a third veteran aircraft to display in what is becoming known as the Base's Museum.

Personnel from 406 Maritime Operational Training Squadron are volunteering hours of their spare time and effort to the formidable task of restoring the Avenger aircraft which lay at the bottom of Bedford Basin for 19 years. The WW11 aircraft was retrieved from the Basin earlier this year by navy divers using a submersible and taken to

Shearwater. Many felt restoration was an impossible task but appear to be altering their minds as the project progresses.

The man in charge of the work WO D. F. Cawthra, supervisor of the technical training department of VT406 Sqn said yesterday he too felt the task impossible when he first saw the outward appearance of the aircraft. But, when he took a closer look and scraped away some of the dirt and corrosion, he said, "she's not in too bad shape, really." The magnesium wheels originally on the single-engine Avenger had been thoroughly eaten away by the corrosive salt water, he said. But stainless steel parts were as good as new and the fuselage surprisingly good. One of the aircraft's batteries up in the nose section had been burst open in the crash when the plane went down in 1953, the result being some corrosion around that area. Elevators, rudder, flaps, bomb-bay doors and the propellor ha all been badly twisted but were not beyond repair, according to WO Cawthra. Some real problems were being encountered though, in acquiring replacements for parts which were either missing or beyond repair.

WO Cawthra said he had discovered two private flying companies involved in bud-worm spraying in New Brunswick were using old Avengers. Through a series of deals and swaps he had acquired some of the necessary parts. By a fortunate coincidence the training school at Shearwater had retained, through some oversight, an old non-functioning Avenger engine which will be installed in the aircraft under restoration.

Men working on the project had encountered very little difficulty with corroded bolts and moving parts, said WO Cawthra. There had still been gasoline, although somewhat altered in texture in the old rubberized, self-sealing gas tanks, and there was still air in the shock absorbers on the undercarriage.

The pilot who ditched her, he said, had performed a "perfect" crash landing in the Basin. The aircraft was only damaged where she had first hit the water. She had also been damaged during tricky salvage operations.

He estimated with men working on the project only in their spare time and difficulty in obtaining authentic parts, it would likely be at least another year before the plane was ready to be mounted beside a Banshee Fighter and a Tracker anti-submarine aircraft already on display on the Base.

The Avenger would only be restored to authentic outward appearance. It would be impossible as well as unnecessary to replace her insides.

VT406 Sqn CO, Major K. P. Sheedy said the navy divers from Granby had gained quite a bit of experience from the salvage operation. Similarly his men would, no doubt, gain experience from the restoration project. Almost all 100 or so men in the squadron had indicated their intention to offer volunteer time and effort towards completion of the work.

\*\*\*\*\*



## MY FIRST TIME

Joe Paquette

It's not really my fault. I didn't initially choose to be a pilot in the Royal Canadian Navy. I found out in Centralia after I had passed selection that my dream of becoming a submariner or a diver was not to be. We don't have any slots for what would now be called "Mars" officers said the uniformed gentleman on the other side of the table. "Do you want to be a pilot?"

"Well I'll fly jets then!" says I who had not yet been up in an airplane of any kind.

"We are phasing out the jets." says he.

"Well I will fly helicopters then!" says this naïve 16 year old.

"You can't go right on to helicopters.," says the increasingly difficult officer.

"What else is there?" say I, trying to be helpful. With that he held up a black and white postcard with a picture of a "TRACKER" on it and I was on my way to becoming a carrier pilot.



When I finally got to VS-880 some five years later it was inevitable that I was going to have to prove my mettle sooner or later and do some of that "carrier stuff".

I somehow determined that if I became a Landing Signals Officer (LSO) candidate, I would learn more and more about carrier landings and thereby enhance my own survival. . Did I mention that LSOs also got single cabins ... God bless 2S.

As an LSO in training, I was given a slot in the Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP) program at Debart. Not only did I learn what to look for in aircraft approaching our "deck" but also I would learn the techniques of flying a carrier pass myself, and before my non-LSO contemporaries. With luck, I would even get to do it for real on one of my first cruises. Yes, and in spades.

My logbook shows that I did five sessions of FCLPs and was crewed up with Bill Brunlees, Davy Jones (Rest his soul), Ed Vishek and Bob Jackson. All remained friends over the years so it couldn't have

been too bad.

I joined HMCS BONAVENTURE on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1965 and we sailed the next day. I was excited to finally be heading out to sea to do Anti-Submarine Warfare from the deck of the carrier. The fact that Portsmouth, Belfast and Stockholm were on our list of ports of call only added to my excitement. My first Crew Commander had been Charlie Coffen but for the last four months I had been teamed up with Alf Holmes ... the world was ours! My own carrier landing was the furthest thing from this humble co-pilot's mind

When we finally got clear of Halifax Harbour and the duty fog bank, the flying program began. During the first launch, I was part of the "spare crew" whose job it was to pre-flight and warm up the spare aircraft in the event that it was needed. As luck would have it, the spare aircraft was needed and we had to scramble out of the spare and take over the running but unserviceable TRACKER at the catapult. To say that I was impressed by the subsequent marshaling and taxiing display into "Fly One" would be a gross understatement ... but I did get my first look at a carrier take-off.

Once we were parked, I headed for the LSO platform where I was to get a look at my first carrier landings.

The next day I discovered that my learning curve was going to steepen considerably. Don McBride (another LSO in training) and I were on the flying program for Carrier Landing Practice (CLP). Our FIRST carrier take-off and landing was going to be "ours". I hadn't even seen the thing from the air and now I was going to have to get on and off the thing on my own ... well not quite on my own because Tony Cottingham had drawn the short straw and would be riding shotgun with me. To qualify I would have to complete six successful "touch-and-go" hook-up passes followed by three traps.

I'll continue with my Journal entries for May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1965:

"Our first take-off from the BONNIE was a free deck launch. ... I remember letting off the brakes and applying full power, ... then the end of the deck went by and I was in the air. Physically I was in the air; mentally I was still putting on my flying suit. We climbed into the DELTA pattern to let my knees stop shaking so that I could hold the rudder still. From 1000 feet that carrier looks mighty small.

After about half an hour we were called from the DELTA to join the CLP pattern. The fun beginith. My mind, which had caught up, began to fall behind again. Of my landings I remember little (mind caged I guess) (note: this was written the next day). Each time I lined up at the deck, a little voice would be saying 'This is physically impossible, this airplane will not land on something that small.' At the same time, another voice was saying 'they said if you fly the "meatball", It can be done.



That process continued with each and every "touch-and-go". A couple of time I thought I was getting too slow as I felt the stick shaker and that made me a little twitchy (Right!) .I later found out that it was only Tony in the right seat indicating the need for a correction. (Note: My journal notes "Some indication". It was now time for my hook-down pass)

"Well I choked up when they told me it was my final landing, an arrested one. I had a hell of a time coming around the "90" and things looked pretty grim as I rounded out on final. I was high and not lined up. In fact I was so high that I didn't even have a "meatball". It was a rough ride with.. (Tony).. banging the control wheel, no meatball, no line up and the deck getting closer. (Note: Wayne Halladay remembers this and was concerned about how he would explain my demise to my wife Joan.)

This is not in my journal but I can now confess that because of the motions Tony was making with the stick and because I was running out of ideas, I virtually let go of the controls and ceased flying. Tony, obviously being unaware of the fact that I had just given him control, wasn't really flying it either.

Noting unorthodox approach, the LSO gave us the "wave-off" lights and called it out loud and clear on the radio, but heck in order to do the wave-off, one of us would have had to be flying. We hit left; traveling left but picked up #1 wire and that saved

our (my) bacon.

Tony has always had a special place in my heart since that day. He never seemed to hold the fact that I tried to kill him against me and I always bought him drinks as a way to assuage my guilt. In fact I sometimes bought his son drinks as well since I didn't feel my debt could be paid in one generation.

There was a bit of pay back on Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 1967 when I rode shotgun for the first time. I had the right seat for nine hours of day and night CLPs on the USS YORKTON. Tony, if you are reading this, I offered up every one of those nine hours up to you.

They say that you always remember your first time ... and they are right!

\*\*\*\*\*

## Route to becoming an Admiral

Three men are sitting stiffly side by side on a long commercial flight.

After they're airborne and the plane has leveled off, the man in the window seat abruptly says, distinctly and confidently, in a low voice, "Admiral, United States Navy, retired. Married, two sons, both surgeons."

After a few minutes the man in the aisle seat states through a tightlipped smile, "Admiral, Untied States Coast Guard, retired. Married, two sons, both judges."

After some thought, the fellow in the center seat decides to introduce himself. With a twinkle in his eye he proclaims, "Master Chief Petty Officer, United States Navy, retired. **Never married! Two sons! Both Admirals!**"

*From Barry Keeler (Adm Ret'd)*

\*\*\*\*\*

## CANADIAN NAVAL AIR

Gray birds in the dawn of light.  
Gray birds in the day and night,  
who keep their watch for me and you,  
carrier based on a sea of blue.

Who's vigil often cast in fog,  
by radar and sonar do their job.  
Keeping track of sub and ship,  
friend or foe on every trip.

And at flights end when all return,  
safe to their haven, thanks to God,  
each and every one will say  
They made it safely back today.

From arctic ice to the Caribbean.  
They keep the sea lanes free from foe.  
And many a fisherman, merchantman, tug,  
owe their lives to these brave "matelot".

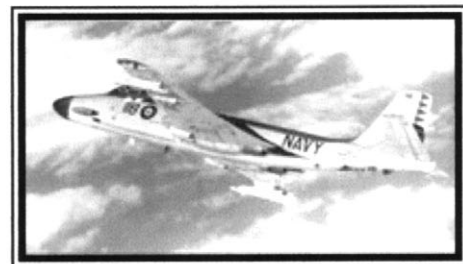
Call if Naval Air esprit de corps,  
coastal command from ship and shore  
they carry on watch for me and you,  
the men of the Squadrons in navy blue.

To "Puncher" and "Nabob" and "Warrior" by fame  
"Bonaventure" and "Maggie" these men all came,  
from their homes on the Prairies, the cities the sea,  
a call from their country, a call to be free, and they came.

"Swordfish" and "Seafire", "Fury", "Avenger",  
"Tracker", "Sikorsky", "Sea King" and "Bell",  
"Walrus" and "Firefly", "Albacore", "Anson",  
all did their job and all did it well.

The flying banana; "Piasecki" by name,  
The "Harvard" and "Banshee" and T-Bird" fame,  
"Barracuda" and "Beechcraft", "Exploder" to all,  
They were part of our lives now in memory hall.

As we gather together once more in "up spirits",  
take a moment of silence for shipmates passed on.  
Who kept this young country from perilous grave,  
from all walks of life, they were "sons of the wave".  
*J. Walter Clarke Copyright 1984*







### **OM COURSE #7**

**Back Row** - L to R - Charles Winship, Brayman, Don Wannamaker, Frank Zurna, Murray Detckoff, MacDonald, Greenbury, Tully, Wilkson. **Front Row** L to R - Don Hill (Midnight), Marshall, Clark, Jones.

*Submitted by D. Wannamaker*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Please note well.**

### **CONTACT DIRECTORY**

**SAMF is constructing a 'Contact Directory' of all names on our newsletter distribution list. The Directory will show telephone numbers, name, resident addresses and email addresses. It was suggested that this would be a great way for friends to keep in touch.**

**IF YOU DO NOT WANT ANY, OR ONLY PART OF YOUR INFORMATION POSTED ON OUR WEB SITE, PLEASE ADVISE AT YOUR EARLIEST. CALL TOLL FREE 1-888-497-7779 OR IN THE LOCAL AREA 461-0062.**

**IN ADDITION YOU MAY EMAIL US AT [SAMF@NS.SYMPATICO.CA](mailto:SAMF@NS.SYMPATICO.CA) OR WRITE TO US AT PO BOX 5000 STN MAIN, SHEARWATER, NS B0J 3A0.**



## **ACROSS THE FLIGHT DECK**

### **MEMBERSHIP IN SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION**

It has recently come to the attention of CNAG National that a large number of our Group who are now receiving the SAMF Newsletter are not currently members of the Foundation. SAMF operates at arm's length from the museum and is dedicated to raising funds to support current SAM projects such as the Firefly A/C Restoration and the proposed Avenger A/C project. These funds are raised in a number of ways including the "Wall of Honour" tiles, an annual golf tournament, dinner and auction, sale of memorabilia and through annual memberships and donations. Regular membership in SAMF is \$30.00/year or \$2.50/month or around 8 cents /day - a small price to pay for the preservation of our proud Canadian Naval Air heritage. I encourage everyone who is not a member to contact the SAMF and pledge their support by becoming a Regular member. For those who are able to contribute more, other classes of membership are also available including Sustaining (\$100.), Patron (\$250/yr) and Life (\$500.). Applications are included in this newsletter.

*John Eden CD, CNAG Chairman*

### **CNAG 35<sup>th</sup> REUNION**

"All readers are reminded that the 35th Annual Canadian Naval Air Group (CNAG) Reunion will be held in Victoria, BC with the local Banshee Branch acting as Hosts.

This event, including registration, meet & greet, Up-Spirits, dinner & dance (to the Swiftsure Band), and Church Service will be held on Thanksgiving Weekend, October 7, 8, & 9, 2005, in the Palm Court/Crystal ballroom of the Fairmont Empress.

A limited number of rooms have been set aside; and, for reservations call: 250-384-8111 or 1-800-441-1414. Rates are \$110.00 (Fairmont), or \$142.00 (Deluxe). Reference: Canadian Naval Air Group.

Registration costs are: \$105.00 member/\$115 non-members". Registration contact is:  
Red Atkins, Reunion Chairman,  
416 -16th Street,  
Brandon, MB R7A 4X9,  
tel: 204-571-9151 or fax  
204-571-9164 and e-mail [redandeileen@westman.wave.ca](mailto:redandeileen@westman.wave.ca). *Thanks John Arnold"*

\*\*\*\*\*

## READERS COMMENTS

### *From Bill Cody*

I'm happy that the old TBM is being promoted for display in the Museum as it was the litmus paper that saved the Air Branch from being scrapped.

This is not to detract from the fine work done by the Fireflies and Sea Fires as well as by subsequent replacements such as Sea Furies, Banshees, Trackers and the various Helicopters including the Sea Kings.

As you are aware, the main problems with the Fireflies and Sea Fires, were:-

1. Spare Parts from the UK;
2. Limited endurance particularly of Sea Fires;
- 3 Deck prangs and sometimes ditchings;
- 4 Limited Night Flying capability;

As I understood it, the "Buzz" was that HQ was considering the demise of the entire Branch due to the accident rate including fatalities and questionable operational results.

When the Turkeys arrived, all of those problems were resolved and HQ reconsidered the matter, especially after 15 TBM's went on a ten hour flight at night searching for the Carrier and 4 escorts returning from the European cruise.

For those reasons, I maintain that the Turkey should be given a special place in the RCN Air Branch history in the Museum Setting.

I well remember poor old Swig struggling to keep station and sweeping across the formation back and forth, and my own experience with Rod Lyons as an observer (passenger for the ride in the mid-upper) during that long flight when we finally spotted the Carrier Group in foul gale force winds and my engine "Farted" at the bottom end of a dummy torpedo attack on Maggie. My Finger trouble for not switching tanks before descending That flight originated in Shearwater, proceeded south towards Bermuda and returned to Shearwater.

There were many other successes by the Turkeys until the Trackers came on strength.

By Golly, I am shaking from reliving some of those days and being aware of other Operations by those who carried the Turkey Torch, i.e., the near disaster when the entire Squadron was caught up in the air with a fog blanket all over, and hundreds of miles from the nearest Land. It was a Miracle.

Say Hi to your Faithful Secretary and be kind to her.  
Bill

VMT Bill for both contribution and memories. I too sweated out the long ten-hour haul -- many anxious hours in the Ops Room on South Street when you guys had been out of radio touch for hours. Minutes seemed like hours until some checked in as they approached Yarmouth. I was one of the jackasses who conceived, planned and executed that stretch-to-the-limit operation and, believe me, I would have been more comfortable in an Avenger with fuel gages courting the empty mark than pacing the Ops room floor and exchanging worried glances with the rest of the Ops Team. In planning we were guided by the book figures on fuel consumption -- but what if someone had not leaned to the maximum? or a tank had failed to feed when selected? But you guys on the front line did show that Naval Air had the right stuff -- true professional warriors. A belated Bravo Zulu from me!

P.S. I always try to be kind to Kay -- **But it ain't easy!** *Bill Farrell*

### *Harry Dubinsky writes:*

Kay and Bill: I commend both of you for the excellent job you do on the SAMF Newsletters and in particular this last Fall 2004 edition. Very well done!

### **BRAVO ZULU from Stan Brygadyr**

If you haven't realized why so few "submissions" come your way for the "newsletter", I can pass you the scuttle-butt which says you, Bill and Kay, do such a great job that the rest of us are afraid we won't match your excellence. I know, as I have personally failed: A Bravo Zulu to you both, and a particular "mention-in-dispatches" to Ernie Cable for the Historical Articles which add to the newsletter.

I'm sure the strain of yet another project, the most worthy but financially needy "Avenger" project, is difficult and a real challenge for all involved. Let's hope this appeal will be over quickly and successfully, and a "steady-state" achieved in the near future (or does that not happen with museums?)

Good Luck with the "Avenger".





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NOTE: Membership year is 1 Jan - 31 Dec

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- Building Fund Artifacts In Memory of Firefly Restoration Avenger Project In Honour of No specific Category

Holiday greetings etc

Note: If 'In Memory', 'In Honour', holiday greetings etc., please provide name and address for recipient or family to receive a letter of acknowledgement from our Secretary.

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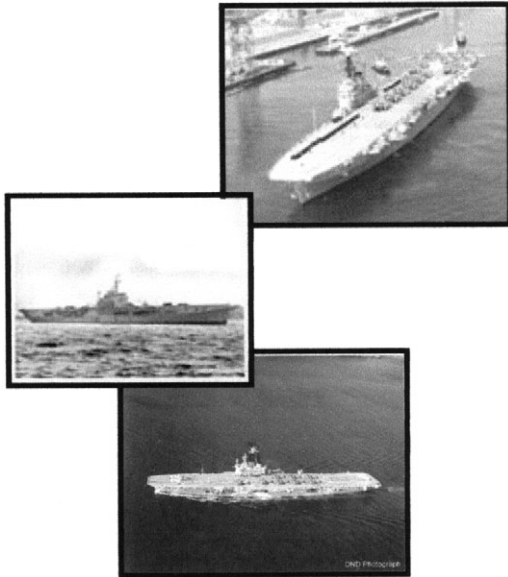
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\*\*\*\*\*



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The tile in the "Wall Of Honour" are high quality marble tile, 12 inches square. All letters will be in the upper case configuration [capitols] and the tile will be mounted in a diamond orientation as opposed to a square orientation, with the line of your message running diagonally across the tile. You have four options to choose from:

1. Option "A": One half tile 12" by 12" by 17" and triangular in shape, with up to 5 rows of 3/4" letters for a maximum of 60 letters and spaces. The longest row can accommodate up to 20 letters and spaces. The remaining 4 rows will decrease as the border/edge of the tile dictates. It should be noted that the upper half of a tile will start with a short row and the lower half with a long row.
  
2. Option "B": The full tile with up to 6 rows of 1" letters for a maximum of 55 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate up to 16 letters and spaces. The remaining rows will decrease as the edge of the tile dictates.
  
3. Option "C": The full tile with up to 10 rows of 3/4" letters to a maximum of 120 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate 20 letters and spaces each. The remaining rows above and below centre will decrease as the edge of the tile dictates.

The colour of the tile will be "Belmont Rose". The only exception to this will be a black dedication tile. If submissions require any alteration, the subscriber will be contacted by phone or E-Mail [ if you forward your own E-Mail address ] by the co-ordinator for further discussion. The co-ordinator is Al Moore and can be contacted at 902-434-1726 or by E-Mail at [benmoor@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:benmoor@ns.sympatico.ca) Wall Tile orders to be made through SAMF Secretary

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Address: _____	_____
City: _____	_____
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Option Choice: Option 'A'      Option 'B'      Option 'C'	

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*Please check engraving details for accuracy before sending. We cannot be responsible for misspelled words on your order form.*

**Option 'A'**



**Option 'B' & 'C'**





**PLANNED GIVING**

There are two primary ways in which gifts may be made to the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation: by giving a gift of money or securities as a Gift (Inter Vivos) or by making provision in your Will for the giving of a gift to the Foundation. Remember, a Will “speaks” for us from the date of death, since Wills are revocable and thus any Tax Benefits of a gift to the Foundation, through a Will, cannot be realized until one dies. A gift (Inter Vivos) i.e. a gift NOW does benefit from a **reduced rate of Income Tax**. So don’t wait for Spring - DO IT NOW!

**Requests made by Will:** In your Will, you may leave a lump sum bequest or a bequest of a specified percentage of the remainder of your estate, or a bequest specified as “ the rest and residue of your estate” to the Foundation. You may also make a gift of property or securities (stocks, T Bills, bonds, GIC’s) to the Foundation by means of a provision in your Will.

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**Request of Life Insurance:** The gift of a Life Insurance Policy can be an effective way of offering a benefit to the Foundation on your death. You may either give an existing policy which you may no longer need, or a new policy obtained specifically for the purpose of making a donation to the Foundation. In both cases, the Income Tax benefits of such gifts can be very important to the foundation and to you. Consult with your Insurance Agent re the specifics of such benefits.

Or **BY MEANS OF A SIMPLE CODICIL TO YOUR CURRENT WILL.** (The following is a simple Codicil which can be added to your present Will.)

---

**“Codicil Number One to the Last Will and Testament of \_\_\_\_\_**

Which Last Will and Testament is dated this \_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_. I hereby add to that said Will as follows:

I give, devise and bequeath to the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid out of my general estate.

Signed and dated this \_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

In the City of \_\_\_\_\_ Province of \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Witness: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Testator

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Bedford Warren writes:**

I continue to enjoy the SAMF newsletter. Seeing Howie Chapman's comment on page 18 of the last letter prompted me to forward my membership for another year. Howie C and I were "messmates" (M18) on "Maggie" for about a year '50 to '51. Howie worked Air Radio and I Air Radar. It turned out to be one of the most interesting years of my life.

My late wife and I attended about seven CNAG reunions in the '70&'80's - the most memorable for me, I guess, was in Halifax.

Wishing you continued success.

*(From Kay: Thank you for your note. On one or two occasions, it was suggested we cut out the Readers Response etc but your note just proves what I've said all along - these letters bring back happy memories of past days and friends. Keep them coming.)*

**From Al Bristow:**

It's pretty sad when an old Crabfat (from the late 60's, early 70's) has to dip into his meager resources to help out the even more ancient Naval Aviators. Is an "Avenger" like half a "Tracker" or something? Good luck with the acquisition. *(Hmmm - Nope I won't print what I'm thinking. I'll take it whence it comes. Kay)*

**Mike Patterson writes:**

Dear Bill: Congratulations on your happy discovery. It really made my day. So I poured myself a scotch, to raise in toast to you for your sage perception: That engineers can not only spell, but write above the level of nuts and bolts. Sometimes.

**Donald James writes:**

Your "SAM Foundation Newsletter Fall Edition" was passed on to me recently and upon reading the article on page 19 reference "U-190 at Sea" I would like to recount an event that happened to me personally in May of 1942, if permissible. I am not looking for medals or heroism but wish to bring this story to light as Naval authorities were prevented from follow up because of a stubborn Captain we served under on "Maid of Sterling" hauling gypsum and barite from the Bay of Fundy area.

I was denied entry to the Naval Service because of my age, so I joined MN ship "Maid of Sterling" March or early April of 1942. We had so many trips from Windsor to Walton NS area and Rockland Maine to Portsmouth U.S.A. but not having a diary or confirmation of dates of much trying for some. I would point out that we left Walton NS loaded with gypsum and barite on either the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> of May around 2300 hours as the tide answered properly then.

I was the helmsman on duty with the Chief Mate "Fiander" when shortly after slipping the jetty with a good rate of speed even coal fired the tide was with us also I spotted the silhouette and outline of a long looking submarine with the fluorescence sparkler of her hull and rigging giving a good outline against the blackened skyline. Being brave and looking for action I prong the wheel to Port expecting action, but within moments the Mate on lookout rushed in to grab the wheel to correct back on course, thinking I had lost control. Upon resuming course down the Fundy the Chief Mate realized then what had happened too late, whether he would have rammed in the same position or not.

However, shortly after the abrupt maneuvering the Captain rushed from his sea cabin and after out stories, he informed us as he saw nothing and to get back to our watch.

Looking back time wise and communication gap it would prove useless, however I was determined to what I had seen, very plainly, so wrote to Naval Dockyard mailed the letter in Rockland Maine and believe in those days the mail got through somehow and by the time we reloaded and returned to Walton the message had gotten back to the Captain. Of course, having friends in the right places he denied the existence of a submarine in the Bay of Fundy! Tearing a strip off the both of us for what had happened he retained my services but fired the Chief Mate ( He didn't have to pay me as much of course).

Following up the story of the U-Boats in later years and from a story Inspector Symonds of the RCMP wrote in the Toronto Star weekly, I found out about my Submarine U-213 Captained by OBLT. ZS Ameleing Von Varendorff landed a spy Lieutenant Langbrien on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1942 30 mile SW of Saint John near the village of St.Martin.

U-213 had been up in the Bay of Fundy are for at least 2 days without being discovered and as the U-Boat Captain said he was having great

difficulty holding his load in the water with the tide and often scraping bottom! The reason I mentioned the dates before as either the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> of May is because it was possible either one was our sailing date or it could have been the 14<sup>th</sup> of May in which case he could have followed us down after having being discovered.

Any information I attempted from people and articles drew blanks therefore I went further for the log of U-213 which did me no good either as I found out she had turned to Brest in June 1942. All were killed on her next journey July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1942 when the load was depth charged by the sloops "ERNE", "ROCHESTER" and "SANDWICH". This was a sub with different configuration/oddity which only 6 were built for U-213 would have been a sister.

Bill/ Kay;

It was great to see the pictures of my first ship, HMCS Warrior, and read about its life in the RCN in the Fall '04 issue. (I was christened in the ship's bell.) I served in a few others somewhat later in life ('66 - '87), but I always thought of Warrior as "my first".

Leo Pettipas' description of her operations and activities was well written and very informative. As a Past National President of the Navy League I was surprised to see that Warrior carried some Sea Cadets "as guests of the Navy League". The League must have had a bit more clout back then.

It was also very interesting to read Jacques Cote's account of the accident on 7 Dec 48 that killed Lt(P) John Marshall ("Marsh") Stewart. I'd heard other accounts over the years - mostly from his widow, my late Mum, Barbara (Howe) Stewart (much later, Barb Marshall), but none so vivid as from the No.3 in the formation. Jacques, thank you for the kind words about my father.

I regret that I don't get out to see the Museum (and my HMS Illustrious battle ensign that's on loan there) very often, but I do enjoy reading the Newsletter as soon as each issue comes out. Bravo Zulu on the great work producing it.

**Cheers, Bob Stewart, Capt, B737, CanJet Airlines**

Hot as blazes in the sunny south but the rum punch soothes and cools. No sign of that buddy of mine in PEI, must be still snowed in. **Best rgds/ Bob Bissell/ MEANDER 11**

### **Pop Fotheringham writes:**

Hi Kay: Leo's article In the Beginning brought back memories of navigation aids available in Warrior. She had a radio beacon which transmitted a letter for each 30 degrees of arc in a clockwise direction about the ship. Receipt of a letter from the beacon indicated the arc's in which you were located relative to the ship. One learned to remember the sequence of each arc's letter by knowing that A Damn Fine Girl Kissed Lonely Marine Near River Solent Under Water. The human mind is indeed a strange piece of equipment. How could such useless trivia come so easily to mind when five items listed just 15 minutes ago are so difficult to recall in the grocery store? Lets hope that youth may be found to keep up the great work at Shearwater.

### **To 'Wild Bill'**

Greetings old friend and fellow back seat driver. Received your letter re: obtaining an Avenger - hard to believe the SAM doesn't have one after all these years. However, as they say "Better late than Never."

Please find enclosed my cheque to help getting started. Hope you are feeling reasonably well. **Cheers John Shee**

### **From William Rikely**

Reference is made in the SAMF president's recent letter concerning the possible procurement or restoration of an Avenger airframe. My contribution is enclosed.



*(Handsome devil. K)*

I have many fond memories of the old Avenger, having flown it day and night during my long service career with the RCN. Former Naval Aviators like me, who made the transition from British aircraft to



the USN's American built Avenger, will recall the differences they experienced. It was a treat to go from a cramped, cold and unfriendly cockpit, to the spacious and well laid out interior of the avenger. The illuminated chart board, which was stowed like a drawer when not in use, was a very useful aid to navigation. Later on, in command of a frigate, I had one of them installed on the ship's bridge. It was simple to understand and operate in fleet manoeuvres, changing station and computing relative bearings and distances from other ships in company.

Good luck with this project. I will follow it with interest.

**Jack Moss writes:**

Dear Kay: with reference to comments in the SAMF Fall 2004 Newsletter concerning Avenger aircraft identification markings, I have no doubt that the markings you chose for the illustration in the previous Summer issue were taken from an archival photograph.

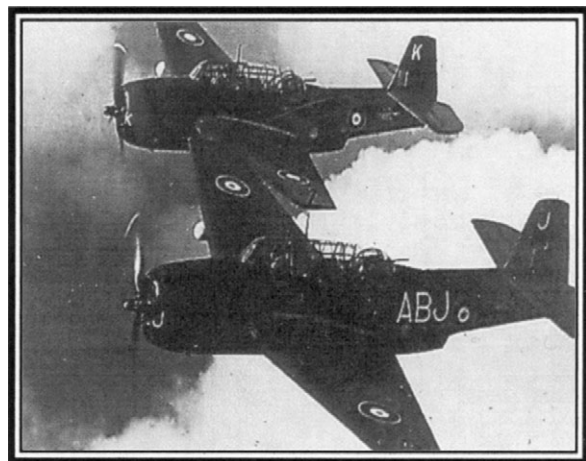
I was one of the technicians draft to 826 Squadron when the Avengers were taken on inventory. They did not conform to the standard paint scheme and marking identification drawings for RCN aircraft. They were USN gun metal blue in colour and were fitted with their original gun turrets. The masking outline where the former white star and stripes had been painted over was still prevalent. The attached photographs, taken in 1950 by the ship's photographer aboard HMCS Magnificent, show the original RCN identification. Three alpha characters, representing the squadron and individual aircraft, preceded the roundel. A red, white and blue vertical ensign was painted on the tail fin. One of the photos shows only the roundel on the fuselage and the individual aircraft identification letter on the engine nose cowling and tail fin.

The Avengers were later modified under contract with Fairy Aviation. The gun turret was replaced by an observer's station together with other changes. The aircraft were also painted in the standard RCN sky blue and sea grey colours with identifications showing AB as the squadron designation followed by the roundel and the individual aircraft identification letter.

As an aside, in 1950 the RCN adhered to the practice of assigning a Pilot, Fitter and Rigger to a specific squadron aircraft. In the accompanying

photographs, Lt Roger Fink was the Pilot of "J" for Jigger, Gus Salkus was the fitter and I was the Rigger. Lt Fred Townsend was the Pilot of "K" for King, John Gourlie was the Fitter and Les Shatford was the rigger. Great days. As a further aside, photographs could be purchased from the ship's photographer for a fee determined by one's interest and the type of photograph. If you were broke, a tot of rum was accepted in lieu of cash. I gave up my tot for three days for the photo of "J" for Jigger.

*(Sorry Jack, couldn't get a better picture from your copied photo. K)*



**From Windy Geale**

Kay, It is a while since I have talked with you. Today I received a copy of your latest brochure and am impressed. I am also pleased to hear that you have moved the Avenger in out of the weather. I note the large price tag of one of the New Brunswick Avengers and assume that it is high as they possibly are considered as being capable of being made air worthy. I would suggest you have a look at the market for Avengers which are not financially viable to be brought back to flying state. I think if you do trawl the American and Canadian markets you may well find a suitable air frame. Just a thought.

well ! Cheers! Al

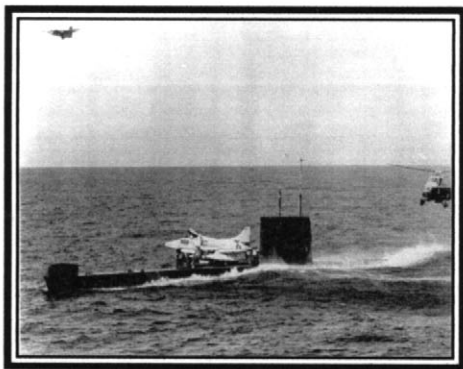


As for us I am still the Curator of Australia's Museum of Flight(AMOF) which incorporates the Australian Naval Aviation Museum. Although it is down to one day a week I end up with enough work to keep me busy for the rest of the week. Incidentally we have forty air craft on display and being right next to the main runway of HMAS ALBATROSS the visitors can enjoy lunch and watch the helos from the four RAN squadrons fly. The RAN Historical flight is on the base and active . The base is on high security.

This summer, it is fall now and sorry to tell you that it is a lovely warm day in the thirties and the pool beckons we have had quite a lot of Canadian visitors.

Must away but once again delighted to hear the Avenger is now under cover. Windy

Windy sends the following photo as well.:



**Al Whalley sends:**

Have attached a couple of photos. Hope all is



Flying Club Capers - Navalair is well represented on the west coast..Al Whalley and "fighter"



Al Whalley & Bob Potter at Norfolk Virginia navalair base having a "Stand easy" waiting for favourable winds for the jump to Bermuda in Avenger TBMs from Summerside PEI 1954 .

### **Canada's Flag - the Navalair Connection**

by Al Whalley.

Not long after acquiring my little CF-GJO in 1962 while stationed in VU33 i decided to give it an identity that most people could identify with. After all, she was my "second love" at the time and I liked to show her off!

First of all, I named and christened her 'Friendship Seven II' after John Glenn's space capsule. A good friend and fellow member of our Squadron, Ron Greenbury, a genius with screen painting, created interest and admiration wherever the touched down. Thanks Ron, and god Bless! Then I decided to add a "Canadian" touch, which was my 'Three Maple leaves" (cut out from a red ensign)

and Canada's motto "from sea unto sea" in Latin, placed under the cockpit, just as we did on 825 Sqn's Firefly's where the pilot's, engine and airframe mechanic's names were located, back in the '40s.

It was my personal flag and creation. It never occurred to me at the time to 'patent' it! Perhaps I should have.

**John Carr Electrical Mechanic (Air) HMS Warrior 1957 wrote:**

I administrate an association for all ex members of HMS Warrior from 1946 - 1958 and am very interested in the times when she was on loan to Canada. I have been in touch with Leo Pettipas for some time and he informs me that I may be able to obtain a copy of the December '04 issue of the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation Newsletter my postal address is: A.J. Carr. 91 Westley Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7UW, United Kingdom.

I have in my possession a bulkhead plaque of HMCS Warrior, also some details of the HMCS Warrior bell and the transfer between or two countries of relevant bells, which I would like the opportunity to explore further.

I would also be pleased if you could include details of our association in a further newsletter, requesting any ex members to get in touch, and give any memories they may have of there time on board.

Our association includes men who served on Warrior during the Korean War (as an equipment and manpower supplier) and also during the peace keeping force at Vietnam when it transferred over 3000 refugees from North to South Vietnam which was followed by the Presidential Citation. Then Warrior was the Command ship during the Nuclear Tests at Christmas Island (Operation Grapple) in the Pacific during 1957 and finally sold to the Argentinian Navy in 1958 and finally scrapped in 1971. Ex members of HMCS Warrior may like to know what became of the ship after its return to UK.

As its motto states 'HAUL TOGETHER'. May I

wish you all the best for 2005 and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

**Ed Janusas writes:**

Perhaps you can forward the following story in the next bulletin. The story behind this photo.

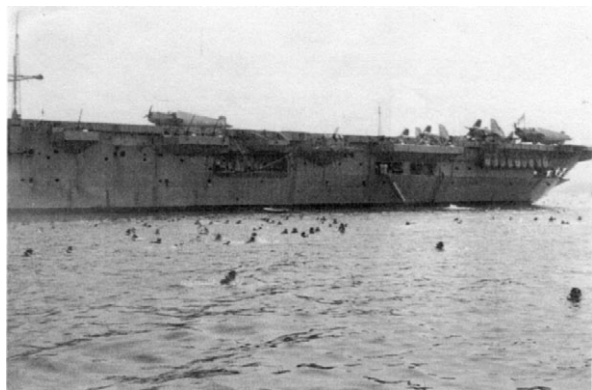
If you look closely at this picture you will see Maggie Ships' company in the Med Aug '51 at an 'Abandon Ship' exercise, 'smoking' in the water! Well they are! How could they be smoking in water after jumping in, then inflating their life-belts and still keep their cigarettes dry?

The answer is that a day or two before this exercise was to take place someone got the idea that not smoking and staying in the water for an hour they would die without a cigarette that long. They would go to Sick-bay and request one or two condoms for the purpose of water-proofing a few cigs and matches.

The Sick-bay Tiffy could not understand this run on condoms when we were not due into port for another week or so. Wasn't long before he realized what was going on after which he put a stop to that, so he would have some "c" left for legitimate purposes. *Hmmm....*

We were all protected by our own boats - whalers/cutters manned by riflemen in case of any "sharks" that may have been attracted by juicy Canadians.

Over and out...Ed.



(Can't tell if they are smoking Ed but we'll take your word for it.)



**From George Pumple**

Dear Kay et al - Howdy from Calgary. Have just received the Fall 2004 Newsletter and am shocked at how long the post office took to get it out here to the far West.

Now the real reason for this note. I read with dismay that there may not ever be an Avenger aircraft in the museum unless us ex dark blue jobs dig into the old pocket book. Having been a "Turkey driver" (with the extra long, extra muscular right arm to prove it - yes the Turkey ailerons were not "differential" in that the up-going did not additionally assist the down-going aileron so that lots of muscle was required to bank the aircraft). Please accept my donation toward the cause. Yes, I pranged a Turkey (crash & burn-ex) so feel doubly toward helping locate another. Good luck in your quest.

Keeping a low profile but still presenting a moving target out here in the West. Keep up the good work, you guys in Shearwater. Merle and I enjoy reading the Newsletter. TTFN, George.

**Colin Macaulay writes:**

Dear Kay - Hope you're surviving the Atlantic winter out there. I presume this is Ian MacKay's Avenger that you're trying to get restored. A very deserving project!

Would appreciate a catalogue if you can send me one. (Sorry Colin, the Gift Shop does not have a catalogue; however go to their web site I believe they have a list there - oops they call it a menu - hopefully you'll have a computer - other than that - I'm sorry. You can call them direct 1-902-720-1083. OR if you call me on our toll free line 1-888-497-7779, I'll transfer you over. Kay)

[www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca](http://www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca)

**Richard Ratcliffe writes:**

Hi - Can hardly believe it's March already - in just over a month, I will be joining all returning "snowbirds" bound for the Sunrise Trail and Wallace - that's between Shinimicas and Tatamagouche, which is always good for a laugh if you say it fast enough.

I'm enclosing my 2005 membership dues and have included my son-in-law, also a bump for the "Turkey" Fund. Everyone in Naval Aviation knows the Avenger saved our bacon - had the Firefly

attrition rate continued from the deck Naval Aviation in the RCN would have been in peril. The TBM was a natural on a heaving deck - and a fearless warrior against the Japanese in the Pacific.

I also enclose the Piper which may be of interest to your editorial staff. I am a Life member of the ECSAA and will pass future issues to you as well. The article on what might have happened in the planned invasion of Japan is really strong food for thought and horrendous as the two Atomic bomb drops were, they did in fact save hundreds of thousands of lives.

PS Note the date of writing - the low pressure system now heading up the East Coast dropped all kinds of rain on us two days ago - I'm thinking of all the snow it's going to drop on you!! Merry Easter!

**Ron Bosquet, CD, MPA writes:**

Dear Bill and Kay: congratulations on a fine festive story and cover about Warrior in your SAMF Newsletter - Fall 2004. I am particularly thrilled as the article brings back many memories of a "Happy Warrior". At the time of this cruise, I was an ABAH3 (Aircraft Handler) RCNVR living in M3 Mess on the Main Deck (starboard side) forward. Yes indeed, it was snowing lightly on the memorable day. I remember having secured Flying Stations and the next pipe was "Hands to stations for entering harbour." This meant a rush to the Mess to change into our Number 3's and prepare to line the Flight Deck, if not to your part ship, under the direction of Petty Officers' Peter Hope and Ratcliffe waiting for us up top, along with Chief Greco, our Divisional Officers LCdr Jim Hunter and Lt Ted Davis (Batsman). I am going to leave you on the Flight Deck to make a few comments about the article as written. At page 8 of the newsletter, under the heading "Remains in Service", fourth para states Squadron 803 did not come out with Warrior as its planes were not allowed to fly off carriers... he said. These planes ... modified... later. I must challenge this statement. If my memory serves me well, I distinctly remember holding the chocks in a range of Seafires on the flight deck ready for take off. By the way, there is not much space between the main plane and the deck under a Seafire, hold on to the tire and look at the director, keep your head down. The Squadron Fitter (RN) was very frustrated with the cartridge start on non start of the aircraft engines. So to my recollection we did fly 803 Squadron Seafires during our trip.

Further at page 9, first para. Yes the Warrior was

escorted to the Panama Canal, but before entering the Canal in the early evening hours, we (ships Company) under the direction of Commissioned Officer Shady Lane ( of forcastle fame) had to remove parts of the sponsons physically to allow clearance in passage through the Canal. On the Pacific side, we engaged in a series of exercises with Uganda and Crescent. In one of the manoeuvres, Uganda came straight at us amidships between the antenna and stopped in the water. It was quite a sight to look down from the flight Deck right into Uganda's guns and forcastle.

In the last para of page 9, the inauguration parade for the new President of Mexico was attended by some of the crew members.

Recently I met shipmate Dan Marcus, in Ottawa, we discussed anecdotedly, the Warrior article in the SAMF Newsletter. It turns out that Dan was one of those 100 participants that went to Mexico City and marched in the parade. By the way, Dan is Don Loney's brother in law - small world, sixty years later.

In closing, I must say that I and many other retired CNAGer's have enjoyed all the rhetorical anecdotes that are published in the present and previous SAMF Newsletters. They are always appreciated and enjoyed by the readership. Keep up the good work. BZ to all the staff and Editor.

*Yours Aye, Ron*

*(Great letter, Ron - we love a good 'challenge'. Thanks Kay)*

***From Ken (G) Millman:***

Thank you for your AVENGER SONG letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> and especially the photo on the back. WOW, what a surprise, just great.

Enclosed find my donation and I wish you all much good fortune on your fund-raising as the AVENGER certainly deserves its place in naval Air history.

I enjoy reading the Shearwater Mag and thank you and staff for your untiring efforts.

Thanks again.

***From David Edwards:***

I enjoy reading the SAMF Newsletters that have been sent to me.

Kindly enrol me as a member for 2005.

***Ted Gibbon writes:***

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$50. This donation is made on behalf Barry Montgomery and results from a standing bet we have on two annual football games - The Gray cup and the Vanier Cup.

Unfortunately the Lions threw this years game so that the Est won; however, I take some solace in the fact that Barry is an Alouette fan and is not beholden to the Argonauts. Should be a tough year for him.

The College game was a disappointment.

GO FLYERS!!

*Cheers, Ted*

***From Davis Edwards***

Dear Kay. Enclosed is a cheque for the avenger fund. I am now pretty much a stay-at-home semi-caregiver as I need to be handy to wife Dorothy when she falls out of the sky onto the floor or can't reach the top cupboards.

We still do cross-continental camping trips hauling our beds and toilet behind our truck. Last year, we spent 85 nights at it and this year plan to visit family on Vancouver Island and Prince George, BC and points in between.

I remembered recently a Christmas Party in SWANSEA for orphans. Your father was involved.

Give our regards to Bill Farrell. The Newsletter just gets better and better.

I had a run in with the Saviour of Ceylon when he was Commandant of RMC and I was Staff Officer at CATARAQUI. He wanted the reserve division for RMC. Withe the help of some brown guys from NDHQ, I frustrated Len for five years despite the fact he was aided and abetted by an aviator Commodore of my clan who was Chief of Naval Reserves!

*Yours, Davis*

***A note from Murray Decker***

Enclosed a donation for the Avenger fund. It was fifty years ago (March 31/55) I had my first flight in an Avenger as a member of #8 OM Qualifying Course. Cheers **Murray**

***From Sidney Snelling***

My very good friend (Moe Sangster) , also shipmate passed away December 2005. I will always carry with me the fond memory of the last time we were dressed in blues and saluted the Quarterdeck for the last time, March/52.

Life didn't end as we remained together in Winnipeg for awhile then on to Edmonton. Moe finally got sent to Vancouver. Visitations, also reunions in Vancouver, kept us in touch. For me a very sad loss.

I know if he still was here today, he would not want to miss the opportunity of donating to the Avenger Project. Having said so, I am pleased to forward a cheque on his behalf. *(Thank you Mr. Snelling. Kay)*

***How ended up in the air branch of the RCN - from Eric Atkinson***

I think all the older hands in Shearwater remember Vic Poirier. I first met him in HMCS Cornwallis. He was a re enter a division ahead of me. I told him I was going to be a Stoker and would be going to HMCS Naden for course when I left here. He said he did not need a course as he was a Stoker during the war. Later after Cornwallis, Naden, Stad I was drafter to HMCS MicMac and ended up on a steaming watch under Acting Leading Stoker Vic.

In the Spring of '51, Vic and I came up after the middle watch in the engine room, sat down to get a little fresh air before turning in, when Vic looked over the port side and could see the Maggie steaming with us (we were acting as plane guard) and said: Look at that - the Maggie all dark. I bet all the air types are in their micks and us poor stokers standing middle watches. The air types got it good, fly all over, chum with the pilots. We should transfer to the Air Branch. Over the next couple of months as we stood our steaming watches, Vic kept talking about transferring. He even had a plan. (Vic, if you remember, was always to wheeler-dealer). His plan was wait till the Capt was away or on leave then put in our request for transfer to the RCAF when the Jimmy was Acting Capt. He was a Pilot and was not fond of the RCAF so when I went up in front of the Jimmy he asked why I wanted to transfer to the RCAF. I said

what Vic told me to say, to work on aircraft, Sir. The Jimmy said they work on aircraft in RCNAS Shearwater. Application to be made. About turn. A couple of months later I was piped to the chief Stokers office. He said: Air type you got 20 minutes to do your out routine and get off my ship. So there we were in HMCS Shearwater on manual party awaiting course. I spent 27 happy years in the Air Branch serving ashore and afloat.

***Tom Sawyer, CPO, RCN Ret'd writes:***

Time for membership renewal with a little extra and to say thanks for the Fall '04 newsletter - the most interesting to me due to the article on Warrior.

It brought back a lot of memories that were long forgotten. I Commissioned Warrior in Belfast and stayed with her until Sep 47, having signed 5/47.

My Branch was Communications as a Coder - with WW11 over, cryptography diminished to the extent that Comm O or the Supply Officer took over. I found myself standing watches on the flag deck handling a lot of R/T (an excellent position for watching prangs!) and 10" projector messages. As noted in station QBFJ . I kept busy when not on watch in the SDO. Terry was my nickname that I used after getting teed off with the questions related to the name Tom, ie where is Huck Finn, how is Becky Thatcher?

One of the ongoing 'natters' between East and West coasters was the weather - the east coast was cold, foggy and snowy while the West Coast was Lotus Land - all sunshine and warmth - absolute silence from the West Coasters when we arrived in Victoria to be met with six inches of snow!

When 835 Sqdn went to Pat Bay for flying, I was sent there as Sqdn Communication's number and was probably the last person to talk to L/Cdr Tattersall's A/C on Xmas eve when the three a/c left Pat Bay for Sea Island (Vancouver). I had a photo of him by his "Firefly" that a few years ago I gave to a close friend of his - an RCAF Mosquito Pilot. If you are interested, I'll see if it is still available. There is a little further to the loss of the a/c. In my RCN Reg Force career, I served in three RN submarines and Commissioned Ojibwa, Canada's firs 'O' boat. When I transferred from the RCN to the Reserves in '72, I wrote and passed the MOT Masters Exam and ended up as skipper of the "Auguste Piccard" - a submersible converted to a submarine with a diving depth of 2400 ft. In '76 we



did a project for BC Hydro looking for a break in the 100 ft ridge off Galiano Island - the hoped for break being a gap where a natural gas pipeline could be laid to Vancouver Island. The area we surveyed would have been on the a/c flight path so a close watch was made for any "suspicious" objects ie a/c. None was found after 30 years immersion in salt water. Do you know if anything was ever located?

My involvement with CNAG came about in a strange way. In '89 I was contract manager ships with 403 CFTSD in Vancouver and wanted a transfer to 202 CFTSD that was currently refitting Nipigon in Port Weller Dry Dock, St Catharines. The transfer was arranged by the Staff Officer, CFTSA Toronto who was John Eden, an old badminton partner/adversary in the mid '50's. He told me of the Swordfish project and invited me out. Within 15 minutes of arriving he had me standing on the fuselage with the center part of the upper wing on my back while it was permanently attached. I met a fine bunch of 'airey fairies' on the project and stayed with the project until it was shipped off to Shearwater.

The article by Tom Tonks is somewhat similar to my service career. I was born in '26. By adding a couple of squiggles to the '6' it became a '2' thus making me in 1941 the age of 18 instead of the true age of 14. On 27 Jun 41 I became NC2 Sawyer and sent to St Hubert. Two weeks later with no basic training I found myself manning a machine gun pit in Gander, Nfld. I was posted to 36 OTU Greenwood in Jan 42 and in '02 was a guest of honour at Greenwoods 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I failed the Air Crew Medical (eyesight), did not like the idea of ground crew so I applied for and transferred to the RCNVR in Jul '42. In the transfer process of documents the forgery of my birth certificate was noted and at 16 booted out. Because of my RCAF time, it was deemed or presumed I had done new entry training. At 17 ½, I was back in the Navy. Again because of my previous service no new entry training was required. In 1950 as a member of the RCN(R) I was asked if I would consider going on active service which I did and served in Korea on HMCS Sioux where I turned RCN While on disembarkation leave, I received a telegram to report to Cornwallis for "New Entry Training". On arrival at Cornwallis I stood before the Training Officer dressed in #1s, two badges gold, a hook and WW!! Ribbons. His comment was "you are passing out with the division on Friday." So with 50 years service in the RCAF, RCNVR, RCN(R) and RCN etc, like Tonks, I have never done a days new entry training to which probably many a Parade

Ground GI would say 'that's obvious'. Still, knowing my left foot from my right was good enough for me to be in the Naval Contingent for the Queen's Coronation.

While visiting RNAS Yeoville in the UK, I purchased a large print of a Swordfish, had it framed and gave it to John Eden to take to SAMF - hope you got it.

### ***There's No Life Like It.***

In 1947 the RCAF had bought some Wing Towed Targets (WTT) to replace the standard ones. The WTT was originally developed to provide more realistic targets for merchant ship gunners and later used air-to-air for calculating gun sights. The WTT were rather heavy aircraft replicas with a sixteen foot wing span and fitted with wheels for landing.

The RCAF were to tow the WTT from a DC3 and their tests were to be done from Greenwood. As I had some experience with WTT in the UK, I was asked along for the tests.

Greenwood was not in commission, but under care and maintenance and used mostly as an alternate for Air Canada.

On the day of the test, with the WTT at full trail, a sudden call "I've aborted. I've lost my baby." The WTT was down somewhere east of Greenwood. We found the WTT had come down at a farm. It had sheared off a power pole and taken out the side of a barn. The farmer didn't seem too perturbed as he assumed that he would get a new barn and nobody or animal had been harmed.

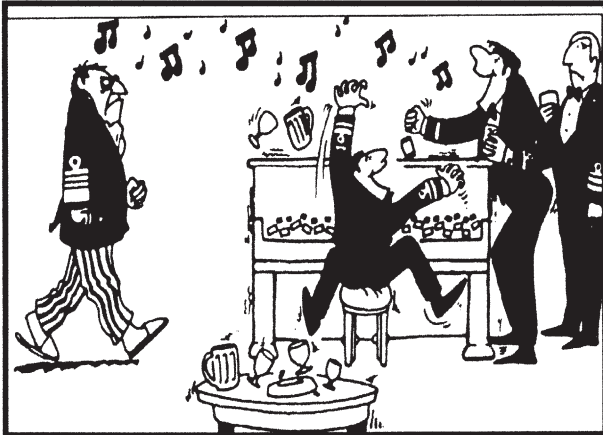
It was back to Greenwood. The SWO cleared lower deck and then went down the parade. Where are you from? Alberta - fall in on the left. Where are you from? Toronto, Ont.- fall in on the right. Where are you from? Early Grey, Sask - fall in on the left. Where are you from? Regina, Sask - fall in on the right etc. The sorting having been completed. All those on the right - dismissed. All those on the left - go down to stores and draw a pail, we have a mess of cows to milk. *(There was no name attached to this article. Kay)*



### **SPLICING THE MAINBRACE - PAT BAY**

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the New Canadian Flag I was reminded of the sad day when we lost our White Ensign. This is a photo taken in The Chiefs and Petty Officers' Mess at VU33, Patricia Bay, BC, when we "spliced the mainbrace" in true Naval fashion to say goodbye to our beloved Ensign.

I was pleased that Canada had finally got a new flag, but I never did understand why the three Services lost their distinctive ensigns, the RCN's white ensign, the Canadian Army's red ensign and the RCAF's Air Force blue ensign. That really wasn't necessary and perhaps we should start a movement to get them back, now that the Tri Service fiasco has passed. *H.J. (Curly) Hoare ex CPO 1C*



## I'M A SEA KING CHAP

*(Lumberjack Song)*

I'm a Sea King chap and I'm OK  
I fly all night  
And I sleep all day.

I go to brief  
I get dressed up  
With Mae West and a boat  
And if I ditch my SEA KING  
I hope like hell I float.

He's a Sea King chap  
and he's OK  
He flies all night  
And sleeps all day.

I stay aloft  
I fly around  
For four long hours or more  
And when its time to charlie  
My arse is Bleedin' sore.

I get undressed  
I bath and scrub  
And then go to the Mess  
I drink my nine tots daily  
And seldom have much less.

He's a Sea King chap  
and he's OK  
He flies all night  
And sleeps all day

I eat my food  
I drink my ale  
I've put on several pounds  
But if the doctor weighed him  
He'd keep him on the ground.

I hate grey ships  
I hate fixed wing  
I hate the whole damned scene  
I'm only really happy  
When I fly my machine

He's a Sea King chap  
and he's OK  
He flies all night  
And sleeps all day

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## Mr. Dithers

Where thou goest, Mr. Dithers?  
Now that you've been home awhile  
Had your fill of local problems?  
More important jobs on file?  
While the third world waits for answers  
You can help allay their fears  
Better go, and take some taxes  
Show our succor, far and near.

Don't you worry when you're thither  
We Canucks can run things fine  
Just come back for same sex marriage  
That's your baby valentine  
So far dude, you've run a dandy  
Seinfeld skit since you got in  
Programs full of noble nothing  
Pardon if we don't buy in.

Did our Forces fight for nought then?  
Did they not instill some pride?  
Canada became our own then  
Thanks to them, the ones who died  
As our country's rep grows tattered  
What has "Dithers" got to say?  
Listen to his inane chatter  
This is now "The Canadian Way".

*Submitted by Ken Millar*



**From the Secretary:**



In our last edition, the editor made comments about how he used to look and how he looks now after working with me over the past 5-6 years. Really Bill - you look just the same now as then.

However as far as I'm concerned - it's a different story. The photo shown here (taken a few years ago....) is how I used to look and this one shows how much I've changed in the past 5-6 years working with Bill. (No derogatory comments.)



Lots of excitement with the arrival of the Avenger and Firefly into the Museum. Museum staff have no idea when work will begin, just that it will. Time will be required to round up people to work on it - a few retired people who had Avenger experience during their service time have offered.

Thank you to those who sent in donations. Much appreciated. As always, you can be counted upon. You're great!

Other news is that SAMF has our own Web Site - take a look. [www.samfoundation.ca](http://www.samfoundation.ca) It's still under construction but we're getting there. We will be featuring a 'Rogues Gallery' - maybe your photo will appear. Hope you like what you see so far.

Our Annual Dinner/Auction will be held 18 June 2005 at 1800 for 1900. We always have lots of fun at this event. We'll see you there.

Don't forget to keep those stories coming. Mickey Owens, you've been quiet for a while - let's hear from you. Joe Paquette is a great story teller - hopefully his stories will keep coming. Actually some others of you told great stories also.....hmm.

Oh yes - I almost forgot. At times we are unable to get clear copies of photos for the newsletter. We do the best we can - please bear with us.

Take care everyone. Keep in touch.  
Kay

*PS Better late than never - Happy Birthday Aries.*

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**From the Crowsnest**

**Vol 15 No. 2 Feb 1963**

**Weddings:**

SLT Vernon R. Miller, Shearwater, to Valerie Louise Jones, of Biggar, Sask.

**Atlantic Command Lower Deck Promotions (Air Branch)**

**To CPO 1st Class:**

C2NA4 Churlish, JW  
C2NA4 Mills, HM  
C2EA4 Cassidy, IM

**To CPO 2nd Class:**

P1WA4 Crawford, JE  
P1NA4 Doucette, JR  
P1NA4 Wooder, FK  
P1AT4 Peters, EL  
P1EA4 Caudle, DA  
P1RA4 Walker, AS  
P1AW3 Burton, RE

**To PO 1st Class:**

P2WA3 McKinney, WJ  
P2NA3 Parsons, HN  
P2AT4 Corrigan, AG  
P2AT4 Foster, GD  
P2AT4 Owens, ML  
P2EA4 Graham, TB  
P2RA3 Hughes, KE  
P2AW3 Plumpton, RF

Four CS2F2 Trackers of VS-880 Squadron and two T-33 Silver Stars of VU-32 Squadron were deployed to Bermuda February 1<sup>st</sup> to support exercise "Maple Spring 63".

RCN ships in the Bermuda are from January to mid-March include destroyer escorts, frigates, minesweepers, the mobile repair ship, HMCS Cape Scott and a submarine.

In overall Command of "Maple Spring 63" is Commodore R. P. Welland, Senior Canadian Officer Afloat (Atlantic).

*Submitted by John MacLeod*

## DEDICATED TO ALL WHO FLEW BEHIND ROUND ENGINES

We gotta get rid of those turbines, they're ruining aviation and our hearing...

A turbine is too simple minded, it has no mystery. The air travels through it in a straight line and doesn't pick up any of the pungent fragrance of engine oil or pilot sweat.

Anybody can start a turbine. You just need to move a switch from "OFF" to "START" and then remember to move it back to "ON" after a while. My PC is harder to start.

Cranking a round engine requires skill, finesse and style. You have to seduce it into starting. It's like waking up a horny mistress. On some planes, the pilots aren't even allowed to do it...

Turbines start by whining for a while, then give a lady-like poof and start whining a little louder.

Round engines give a satisfying rattle-rattle, click! - click, BANG, more rattles, another BANG, a big macho FART or two, more clicks, a lot more smoke and finally a serious low pitched roar. We like that. It's a GUY thing...

When you start a round engine, your mind is engaged and you can concentrate on the flight ahead. Starting a turbine is like flicking on a ceiling fan: Useful, but, hardly exciting.

When you have started his round engine successfully your crew chief looks up at you like he'd let you kiss his girl too!

Turbines don't break or catch fire often enough, leading to aircrew boredom, complacency and inattention. A round engine at speed looks and sounds like it's going to blow any minute. This helps concentrate the mind!

Turbines don't have enough control levers or gauges to keep a pilot's attention. There's nothing to fiddle with during long flights.

Turbines smell like a Boy Scout camp full of Coleman Lamps. Round engines smell like Gas as God intended machines to smell.

*(To navairgen by Jerry Watson)*

*From Kay: I asked what it meant by a 'round engine'. So for all you out there who didn't know, here it is. No No don't say that. I know you really didn't know either.*

Hi Kay,

Round engines have cylinders arranged in a circle, as opposed to in line engines which have the cylinders in a row.



Examples are: TBM, Harvard, C-45, Tracker, Argus, and many more, all have "round" engines, which makes the front end of the A/C round in single engine aircraft.

The Firefly has a long nose, because it has an "in line" engine, with the cylinders in a row.

Jet engines don't have any cylinders, of course. JW

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## NICKNAMES

In the course of my reading and research, I have come across nicknames of Naval aircrew, mostly pilots, mainly dating from the Second World War. The nicknames were obviously conjured up in consideration of the individuals' surnames, and are invariably amusing if not downright clever. Here are fourteen of them: "Sheepy" Lamb, "Crusty" Pye, "Dickie" Bird, "Boot" Nethersole, "Dusty" Miller, "Soupy" Campbell, "Duke" Norfolk, "Red" Knight, "Fanny" Adams, "Bushy" Shrubsole, "Windy" Geale, "Groucho" Marx, "Junior" Young, and "Isaac" Newton. There was also a "Boris" Morris, but the "Boris" may in fact be his real name. Leo Pettipas

Does anyone have any to add?

I came across a few more clever/amusing naval air nicknames in the literature. One was an Englishman named "Friar" Tuck by his confreres. Another Englishman was "Ginger" Hale (Ginger 'Ale as some Kippers might pronounce it). Yet another was a Yank, surname "Lee", who flew from the USS Yorktown. His nickname (and I'm not making this up) was "Ugh" -- "Ugh" Lee! I also think there was a guy at Shearwater called "Bunker" Hill. Leo

*From Bill Gillespie: "Dinger" Bell*

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**SHEARWATER FLYERS HOCKEY TEAM**  
**1957 - 1958**  
**MARITIME ARMED FORCES HOCKEY LEAGUE**  
**CHAMPIONS**

**BR - Bud Kidd (Coach), Armstrong, Briard, Granville, Scotland, Saleski, MacDougall, White, Gagnon (Manager)**  
**FR - Fairbairn, Veysey, Parker, McNeil, Beazley, McGrath, Shatford, McBain, Darche**



## To Air Engineer by Flying Horse

**“Hands to station for leaving harbour;  
Special sea duty men close up.”**

That departure signal, of all ships, I first heard aboard H M S Agamemnon in Halifax harbour, shortly after I'd joined the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm in 1941.

The day before, when I'd stepped aboard as a raw recruit with no new entry training, my naval indoctrination was quick and to the point. Halifax was at war.



*Mike Patterson*

A gruff Chief Petty Officer, my fathers' age, barked: "Number?" "Not Known", I replied pointing to the N/K in my new brown pay book. Grunting in dismay, he put my name, rank and trade on the ship's watch bill and said: "First of Port, is your watch, your mess: 4P for'd. The killick will show you where to stow your gear. Find your fellow watch-keepers, learn the ship's routine, obey all pipes and repeat orders, as spoken. Now carry on for'd" I went the way he'd pointed, kit bag under arm, hammock on shoulder; a man working on a gun pointed to an open companionway where I found a ladder down to my mess, which in my first days at sea became my cradle for more morsels of seagoing lore from old salts.

Mess mate, Leading Air Fitter Marsden, and his Ark Royal oppo Clifford and I, the only air techs in the "Aga" an 8000 ton minelayer, on which we were borne for passage to the UK, became members of the ships's Damage Control Party, and the DC Centre our action station.

What? Ship's damage control ? I wondered; what can I do, an untrained tadpole of nineteen, and not even a seaman. The Damage Control Officer answered that: He made me a messenger with emergency lamp in hand, in case the telephone or lights were knocked out. Thus my main task, between action stations, was to find my way about the ship and to learn the names of compartments and machinery. In the process I found that the best place to sling my hammock was alongside the DC Centre, to avoid the scramble up a ladder in the rolling ship for Action Stations. Marsden and Clifford did the same. The DC Centre was amidships on the main deck and housed in the after superstructure, between rows of mines mounted on rails running fore and aft, red-leaded and each bearing ominous detonator prongs. Lying in my hammock there I found the salt-laden, cold air better than the fuggy smell of the crowded mess deck. There was youthful curiosity I listened to the crash of great seas on the deck overhead. As well as the constant slosh of several inches of the water on the deck below my hammock and periodic gurgles from the scuppers, as it drained away. Always, of course, my sea boots hung within easy reach, to pull on before stepping down.

One day, as we stood by, waiting for the pipe: "Secure Action Stations:, Mr. Roby, the DCO, spoke about a near disaster that had struck when the ship was foundering in giant seas under gale force nine. During an extreme roll, bilge water in the boiler room had surged high up the walls hitting an electrical switchboard, caused short circuits, and bilge pumps ceased to function. Then an electricity station failed for the same reason; with no current all telephones went dead. Still worse, the boiler room electrical explosion had tripped a feed water pump, reducing water pressure to the boilers. The normal head of steam fell, with no telephone, the engineer rushed from the engine room to the bridge and cried: "Steam emergency in boiler room, please reduce speed." For a time the ship became incapable of sufficient movement ahead against the high seas, and became even more subject to extreme rolling. Finally, bit by bit the Chief Stoker was able to nurse one boiler, then the other and delicately build up the boiler pressure to create a normal head of steam. Furthermore, Mr Roby, waving to our large cargo of mines, said what a risky business it was to steam a ship with so much top weight and sensitive power units.

Yes, Agamemnon had barely escaped a near-fatal crises from her ever-present, implacable enemy the tempestuous North Atlantic, But with 1942, another crises loomed in favour of the German U-boats aim of severing Britain's umbilical-like merchant ship supply convoys. Churchill wrote of the hazard as that of: " A diver deep in the sea, kept alive minute by minute on his air-pipe while seeing a shoal of sharks biting at it." Because from early 1942 the number of U-boats had increased until up to forty were operating in the wide zone of the North Atlantic which meant more convoys could be sighted and attacked. Further, it was then that C in C Donitz began to attack shipping using U-boats formed into wolf packs. At the time of course, I was not aware of such things. Nor did I understand the win or lose the war implication of the situation at sea.

But when I got to London, I was in for a shock. There my uncle worked for the Ministry of Sea Transport, and was engaged in compiling the total tonnage of merchant ships sunk, and in comparing it with the lesser tonnage of replacement ships being launched. Thus did I learn, early in 1942, that Donitz's U boat packs had prospects of winning the Battle of the Atlantic. And what was even worse, Uncle Jim told me about the virtual annihilation by U Boats of two major convoys in four days, a loss of 32 merchant ships, of 154,715 tons, with the loss of only one U-boat. Years later I read details of that case and found it was totally unprecedented in the history of naval warfare.



As to convoys: when the Agamemnon slipped and paused in the offing for a time I remember that I was able to look inland through the Halifax narrows and see a large fleet of merchantmen anchored in Bedford Basin, waiting to be assembled into a convoy. But our ship had sailed alone and gone directly to the off shore gunnery practice range. There I had my first experience at seeing a stream of glowing red tracer bullets skimming off over the grey waves from our anti-aircraft battery, and toward the tug-towed target.

After that shoot, our ship remained hove-to until joined by our escort, one of the fifty ex USN four-stack destroyers, manned by Poles. However, in the often-present, all-enveloping Newfoundland fog bank we lost sight of our escort, and later heard she'd dropped astern with engine failure. Sailing alone at our ship's best cruising speed, may have been our better option. In zigzagging convoys all ships had to sail a much longer course and at the speed of the slowest ship; often around nine knots, or less.

Our landfall was the Scottish Clydeside, the birthplace of thousands of ships over the ages and the source of the old song: " A rom-in the glomin, with a lassy by my side." Our place of landing Greenock and our next destination by rail was the Fleet Air Arm home base near Portsmouth, the naval air station, airfield and seaplane slipway, H M S Daedalus. There, after I'd become better acquainted with my messmates, the training facilities and aircraft, I realized that I was a neophyte in a kingdom ruled by the mythical godfather of all naval air technicians: Daedalus.

For in Greek mythology Daedalus is the Athenian master craftsman who forged the magic sword that made Peleus victorious in battle. Daedalus also devised the Labyrinth, a complex, irregular network of passages for King Minos of Crete, in which the Minotaur lived. That jack of all trades may have also done a bit of plumbing on the side; for in the queen's chamber in the palace of Knossos, beneath an elegant dolphin fresco, is a small bedroom and a lavatory with what seems to have been a flush mechanism. King Minos was delighted to welcome so skilled a craftsman. So Daedalus lived there in high favour. That is until Minos learned that he had helped Pasiphae to couple with Poseidon's white bull. So Minos locked Daedalus in the Labyrinth, together with his son Icarus. It was not easy to escape from Crete since Minos kept all his ships under military guard.

So master craftsman Daedalus made a pair of wings for himself, and another pair for Icarus, the quill feathers of which were threaded together, but the smaller ones held in place by wax. As he secured the wings to Icarus he said with tears in his eyes: " My son be warned; Neither soar to high, lest the sun melt the wax; nor swoop too low, lest the feathers be wetted by the wee". Then he slipped his arms into his own pair of wings and they flew off. "Follow me closely" he cried, "Do not set your own course". As they flew

away from the island flapping their wings, the fisherman and shepherd who gazed upwards mistook them for gods from Mount Olympus. They were flying in a north-easterly direction when Icarus broke formation and began soaring up toward the sun, emotionally elated by the captivating lift of his great sweeping wings. Then, when Daedalus looked over his shoulder, he could no longer see Icarus, but scattered feathers floated on the waves below. The heat of the sun had melted the wax and Icarus had fallen into the sea and drowned. Daedalus circled around until the corpse rose to the surface and then carried it to the nearby island where he buried it. To this day, that island is known as Icaria. Could that be a caution to modern aviators to keep formation?

A run ashore from Lee, on Silent Naval Air Station, back in those days, was mainly a pub crawl in Pompey or Gosport, with little of the fair sex in sight. But on return by bus there were often WRNS, hard to rate in the blackout and always two by two for protection. Not that was any defence against raunchy salvos. Such as when a lad called out in high falsetto "Dus ya luv me dear? Or is that thing just yer flashlight."

In contrast, my first date there was low key. We met in a tea shop and later went on to a pub, when she wore a proper hat and gloves and insisted that we sip our half pints of mild and bitter in unheated, empty salon. There I could hear the jolly uproar from the warm, smoky bar next door. She may have been well known in the village and had to guard her reputation, if seen with a common matelot. About a month later, sheltering with many others during an air raid in the London Underground was more fun. Or an evening at the Palais de Dance in the wartime Covent Garden Opera House. There I danced with a girl, in town for the evening, who was also wearing white gloves. Which I guessed was the current style. But when I took her to dinner at the Chicken Palace in Leister Square she carefully wiped all her cutlery and ate with her gloves on' an odd form of elegance, I thought.

When I'd joined, Halifax was clearly at war, then the U-boat peril, the fury of the Atlantic, the blackout of England and my first air raid, were reminders of the perils of war. But early in 1942, I was sent away to technical schools, which was like being in a reserved occupation. And gives me nothing to relate of naval air interest. Our lives then were safe and most school days humdrum.

#### **Apart from two characters who livened things up.**

At first light in the mess the wake up call by burly, red-faced Polly Redford, our two-badge killick of the mess, began when he shot out of his cabin and marched up and down the mess playing his bagpipes at full blast. Now hearing the pipes coming from a distant hillside can be a pibroch delight but in our confined quarters, the sheer cacophony of that reverberating sound was excruciating to the ears.

Another personality was CPO Lydiard. As I doubled across the parade ground one day with former shipmate "Mars" as per rule, we were hailed by the Chief, an irascible PTI and former naval lightweight boxing champ. We stopped. He came, looked us over and growled at my mate in low-pitched cockney: "look-at -chan, and again in higher pitch, "Look-at-chat, leedin and an all, sausage on yer arm. Gimee yer tiffen." He said reaching for Mars cap. "Jost wot I thot" he snarled finding the cap sloppy-salty and lacking its inner stiffening ring. At which the Chief screamed out: "Twigs en ta twees an no gwomet en ta tiffen" " Now smartly at ta double twenty laps", he said as he went off at the trot to the Guard House to record the name in the hat, the offence and punishment; the Duty Regulating Petty Officer would see to the rest; As my oppo began his twenty lap run around the perimeter of the large parade ground. I wondered if the Chief could have been related to Art Lydiard the marathon runner who popularized the jogging habit and wrote the books: " Rune to the top" and "Run for your life."



After months of courses on Bristol and Rolls Royce engines, Rotol propellers, superchargers, carburetors and other accessories I was drafted to a Swordfish squadron, destined for one of our new escort carriers, I hoped. But before joining, I had leave and a chance to visit Uncle Jim in London, who was at the Ministry of Sea Transport, compiling tons of ships sunk with the tons of new ships launched. Due to wartime security, he didn't mention the figures but just said: " The latest news is very grave."



U-boats were on a wave of success at that time. After the war Cajus Bekker, formerly a Naval Intelligence Officer in Germany published the best description of Britain's 1942 precarious situation at sea, when C in C Grand admiral Carl Donitz had reported to Hitler:

" I do not believe that the race between the enemy shipbuilding and the submarine sinking is in anyway hopeless. The total tonnage the enemy can build will be about 5,000,000 tons in 1942, which means we will only have to sink 400,000 to 500,000 tons per month" furthermore, by June 1942 Donitz began taking delivery of 30 new boats a month. And by the end of June he had 250 operational U-boats, against losses of only four boats a month. In 1939 Germany had only 56. All of which gave Donitz good cause to believe he could win the war for Hitler. German successes at sea were greater than on land, due to the failures of Sea lion. Stalingrad and North Africa, so that Hitler became inspired with new confidence in the U-boat Arm.

### **On the other hand, hope on our side existed.**

Just as in the case of the Battle of Britain, when the scales of war were tilted in our favor by the combination of tactics and technology; radar, radio fighter direction from the ground and the bravery and skill of pilots flying the outstanding spitfires and Hurricanes; that attained the supremacy in the air which prevented Hitler's Sea lion invasions plan.

However, to bring about a similar change in the Battle of the Atlantic was going to take much longer. August 1942 ended with the U-boats still in the ascendancy, having sunk another half a million tons of allied shipping in the Atlantic during the month. Yet, instead of the previous loss rate of four, ten U-boats a month were failing to return. Although shipyards replaced those losses, Donitz loss of experience U boat crews began to reduce his chance of winning.

Meanwhile, I was becoming more conversant with the Swordfish MK I during the summer of 1942; of which there had been a large expansion in numbers. The FAA's 13 first-line squadrons, at outbreak of war, had been increased to 25, and then backed up by a further 22 second-line squadrons. Despite the fact that the Swordfish, as a first-line maritime attack aircraft was wholly obsolete by current aircraft technical criterion, when the monoplane reigned supreme, a total of 992 Mark I's were built by Fairey and Blackburn. By mid 1942 many of these aircrafts were flying from 28 naval airfields in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, when the Mark I really came into its own as a rocket-armed destroyer of enemy coastal shipping and U-boats.

As our squadron operated first at worthy Down, near Lee, and later at Inskip, I noted how the old 'Stringbag' was a riggers delight: with easy to maintain fabric covered fuselage structure of durable stainless steel in four sections to ease repair by replacement, along with steel-ribbed wings and control surfaces subject to straightening and doped fabric patch quick fixes, in case of flight deck prangs.

For my part as an air fitter Engines, the Bristol Pegasus radial engine was equally simple to maintain. Often I armed it up and tested its performance at full throttle by flicking the switches and noting cylinder firing response, running on one bank of spark plugs at a time. That oft-repeated daily drill over time must have enhanced my ear sensitivity to the point where I could detect an off-tune engine even before a full test run up.

Despite my courses on Rolls Royce engines, the powers at Daedalus kept me on the Bristol Pegasus by drafting me to RNAS Hatston for the Engine Overhaul Workshop, in the Orkney Islands. After crossing tide-rip Pentland Firth aboard the little steamer St. Ninian, named after Scotland's first Christian leader, I was surprised to see the grand fleet of battle ships, moored end to end, looking vulnerable after the Pearl Harbour attack Battleship King George V, Prince of Wales and others.

Yet, causeways were being built between the islands at that time to prevent further U-boat attacks such as the sinking of the battleship, Royal Oak in 39. ***Home fleet scuttlebutt claimed a KGV crewman had been seen making amorous passes at a sheep on isle Hoy hillside. Which caused the fleet order signal: " all unseemly noises in boats passing or coming alongside the KGV shall cease" Meaning we could no longer go: Baa, Baa" at the CinCs flagship.***

At Hatston I became a full-time Pegasus engine overhaul and test specialist, apart from one surprised assignment when Martlet (Wildcat) fighters were grounded due to an engine defect. The Wright Corporation flew in modification instructions, parts and a machine tool. I did the work on twelve Cyclone engines. Grumman Martlets of 804 Squadron flying from the Orkneys, shot down one of Goring "wonder" new anti-shipping bombers the Junker Ju 88. *A water cask on deck with hole in top for dipping from, hence term: scuttlebutt for ships rumor.*

On the other hand, we guys didn't live for airplanes alone, so when the Padre suggested we meet with the WRENS – who we rarely saw as they lived off the base– to form a concert party, we were all for it. I got the chippy to make us a capstan for the sea shanties, and rope and hose pipe for the Drunken Sailor etc. One scene; when the curtain went up we saw two WRENS busy in an office one doing her hair, the other her nails. Then a pipe sounded: "Hands to tea and shift to night clothing" The girls take nighties out of their desk drawers and start to strip to cries of "Take it Off." As the curtain came down.

The test pilot, Lt. Hamilton, did the classic speech of Henry V before the Battle of Agincourt, by Shakespeare. Standing on a stump, as we stood before him, back to the audience in our balaclava helmet chainmail, pike staff in hand.

I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,  
Straining upon the start,  
The game's afoot:  
Follow your spirit; and, upon this charge ( He draws his Cry "God for Harry England and Saint  
George: sword)  
(We raise our pike staffs and all shout  
"Hurrah–Hurrah"

A WREN Petty Officer with a good voice sings the song the Padre composed: " There's a Ring around the Moon Tonight, guarding my Man on the Sea"

Our version of Drunken Sailor, " What Shall We Do with the Sassy Lassy", using a midshipman with good legs, in short skirt and blond wig, was too sexy to get the Padre's OK, but it would have been a real crowd-pleaser. We had even written text for the audience to shout out, on what to do with the lassy. Such as: "Make her climb the friggen riggin," as we all looked up.

### **The Flying Horse**

The moon, the core of Greek myths, made the horse honoured for its moon-shaped hooves. And the winged horse Pegasus was bred from the blood of Medusa with headdress of snakes, claws and teeth that turned mortals to stone at sight. All of which gave the Swordfish a myth-like aspect when it was wedded to the Bristol Pegasus engine.

### **Facts of Life — in the air.**

As all naval-air folk know the forces of: thrust, drag, lift and gravity must be in judicious balance to attain reliable flight.

As I grew up on a beach below our house, I was captivated by the sight of birds that flew. The lazy, scavenger gulls on the top of the bank, had only to spread their wings at the cliff edge to soar away effortlessly on the updraft; which I also did in my dreams.

And to find out how the Wright brothers also did that clever trick, a full scale model of their aircraft was mounted on the roof of a van; that model took to the air at about thirty miles an hour; proving the Wrights had it just right with their parallelogram of forces.

At central Tec, to design an aero-engine, I used a thermodynamic formula to calculate the exact dimensions needed in a four stroke suck, squeeze, bang, blow engine to produce a given amount of horsepower, at so many revolutions per minute in number of cylinders, bore, length of stroke and combustion chamber size. Under adiabatic expansion.

As a boy, I knew about a similar interaction of forces when I built sailing craft: The centre of effort of the sail must be placed just abaft of the hull's centre of resistance, to give the craft a weather helm; the trick is to know how to find those two points. But that's another story, kids, meanwhile don't move the mast on your model yacht, or it won't sail.

### **Plumbers Wings**

The many Pegasus engines of the squadron I tuned and ran up, and those overhauled and performance tested at Hatston, had led on to higher things: As step by step the master air artificer Daedalus was helping me to sprout engineering wings.

Also about then, Warrant Officer Owen, my Divisional Officer suggested I sit for Education Test II and study the technical library text books and manuals, he'd selected for me. On another day, a travel warrant from the AEO's office was my ticket to fly down to Donibristle in the DH Harrow transport for a written exam and interview by a Captain. Two months later I was sent to London to call at queen Ann's Gate near Admiralty Arch, where I had a chat over a cup of tea with an affable, white-haired Engineer Rear-Admiral.

### **U-boat Update**

On consulting my Journal about that London visit, I find that Uncle Jim, at the Ministry, had told me about the biggest convoy battle so far in which twenty-one allied ships were sunk, and only one U-boat lost, in a four-day action.

### **The Germans had defeated the British convoy system**

The Admiralty, I'd visited that day, wrote later: " in the first 20 days of March 1943 the Germans came close to disrupting communication between the New world and Old... It appeared possible that we should not be able to continue to regard convoys as an effective system of defence."

But on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March U663, commanded by Lt. Heinrich Schmidt, reported sighting an aircraft carrier as part of a convoy escort. As the Battle of the Atlantic reached its final crisis, besides "Escort Groups, " Support Groups " to attack U-boats on their own, independently of convoys were formed.

Furthermore, the German Achilles heel – U-boats on the surface recharging batteries– was then exposed to air patrols right across the Atlantic. The two-day 'air gap' in the mid-Atlantic was closed at last. For instance on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 43 when U203 was shadowing a convoy, Swordfish from the new escort carrier HMS Biter attacked and made the U-boat dive, the destroyer Pathfinder completed her destruction. And the constant air patrols then made U-boat attacks increasingly hazardous.

A major part of the increased Atlantic air patrol was also provided by Merchant Aircraft Carriers. Swordfish Revisited by Ernie Cable in Fall 2004 contains a definitive description of the important anti-submarine roles played by MAC-ships, Swordfish and Grumman Martlets.

***To be continued next issue.***